1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory

Other Name/Site Number: Dorchester Center

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 8787 East Oglethorpe Highway (U.S. 84) Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Midway Vicinity:

State: Georgia County: Liberty Code: 179 Zip Code: 31320

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	__	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	___ buildings
___	___ sites
___	___ structures
___	___ objects
1	___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ 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 ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Educational Facility Sub: Education-related

Current: Social Sub: Civic

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Georgian Revival

MATERIALS:
Foundation: Concrete
Walls: Brick
Roof: Shingles
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory is located in a rural area of northeast Georgia within the town of Midway. Midway is situated approximately equidistant between the Altamaha and Savannah rivers, giving the town its name. Dorchester Academy was founded by the American Missionary Association (AMA) following the Civil War as a primary school for African American children. The dormitory building sits on a grassed lot surrounded by non-historic structures. Once a part of a sprawling school campus, the boy's dormitory is the only remaining structure to survive from the boarding school era. The current boy's dormitory dates from 1934. In 1932 a fire destroyed the 1890s building and the American Missionary Association, which at that time owned the school, rebuilt the boys' dormitory.[1] The Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory is a two-story, rectangular building with a rear ell addition, designed in the Georgian Revival style. The building is of brick construction with a hipped roof and two interior chimneys.

Architect George Awsumb is credited with the design of the dormitory, which included features such as steam heat, a living room and library on the first floor, and student bedrooms on the second floor. All of the education related buildings, with exception of the boys' dormitory, were demolished in the 1940s, shortly after the school closed its doors in 1940. The boys' dormitory thereafter was converted into a community center, a role which it still serves today.[2]

Exterior

Windows throughout are double-hung sash with nine-over-nine lights on the first floor, and six-over-six on the second story. All the windows are topped with lintels; however, those located on the first story are detailed with keystones. The front façade consists of a fifteen-bay front, while the entrance to the former boys' dormitory is accented by a three-bay, two-story central portico. The front entrance consists of double glass doors topped by a leaded fanlight. Pedimented frontispiece entrances are located at each five-bay end. The doors located at the five-bay end consist of board-and-batten construction with transom lights. Whereas the two rear doors originally mirrored the double-glass door design used in the entrance, they have since been replaced with solid frame doors. The exterior of the building is also decorated with corner quoins and modillions. The building contains a one-story brick-veneered rear ell addition built in the 1950s. The addition is of brick construction with six-panel doors on its three exterior walls. The addition was originally built with a flat roof but because of water leaks, the roof has been altered into a hipped roof design.

Interior (First Floor)

Double-loaded corridors are located on both floors of the interior with the first level being intersected by a central entrance hall. Finish materials located throughout the building include wood floors, plaster walls with chair rails, acoustical tile ceilings, and six-panel doors with overhead transoms. Stairs are located at opposite ends of the long corridor. The majority of the rooms on the first floor are small bedrooms with closets at either side of the doorways. Directly opposite the front entrance on the first level is the sitting room. This room was used as a training classroom during the Citizenship Education Program occupation and contains a fireplace with a brick hearth and a classically detailed chimney piece. The brick fireplace has been replaced by a gas stove, which is surrounded by a removable black panel. The fireplace has suffered no permanent alteration. The wall located on either end of the fireplace has framed, recessed wall panels that seem to have been initially designed as bookcases. Originally, French doors topped with a fanlight led from the sitting room to the outside, and on

[1] Jeanne Cyriaque, "The Dorchester Academy Museum of African American History," *Reflections* 4, no. 4 (November 2004): 1. *Reflections* is a publication of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Ebony White, "Dorchester Academy: Keeping the Memory Alive," *Reflections* 2, no. 2 (March 2002): 5.

[2] Cyriaque, "Dorchester Academy Museum," 1; White, "Dorchester Academy," 5.

the opposite side of the room, into the first floor corridor. The door leading to the outside has been replaced with a solid frame door, whereas those that previously led to the corridor have been temporarily removed for repairs. Directly adjacent to the sitting room are two bathrooms that have remained relatively intact. The room located on the south rear side of the building is known as the "history room." The walls in the history room are decorated with murals dating from 1974 that illustrate the history of Dorchester Academy.

The cafeteria/kitchen area is housed in the rear "ell" addition, and is also known as the auditorium/classroom. The auditorium consists of concrete block walls, metal-framed windows, a drop tile ceiling, and linoleum tile flooring. The wall facing the interior corridor contains an elevated stage area with a set of stairs that lead down into the rest of the room. A new linoleum floor was installed in the early 1990s replacing the older tile flooring. The kitchen is located on the east end of the ell.

Interior (Second Floor)

The majority of the rooms on the second floor are small bedrooms with closets located at either side of the entrance. A large meeting room on the northeast side was created between 1976 and 1978 by removing the walls of four of the original bedrooms. The room is currently used by a Cub Scout troop, and therefore known as the "Cub Scout Room." Some of the rooms are modestly furnished with beds and small tables or desks reportedly dating from the 1960s.

Setting

The entrance to Dorchester is framed by an iron gate sponsored by the class of 1927 with the words "Dorchester Academy" inscribed over the top. Two historical markers are situated at either end of the gate. Several non-historic structures surround the boys' dormitory but are not associated with Dorchester's period of significance during the 1960s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) occupation of the premises. These ancillary structures and buildings are not from the historic period and therefore are not included within the boundary of the nomination. Located to the northeast of the dormitory is a brick church built in 1963, the African American Midway Congregational Church, that replaced an older wood-framed church that previously occupied the site. Directly to the west of the church is a concrete-block cottage originally built in 1947 to house the church pastor. This building is currently used as the Dorchester Academy Museum of African-American History to interpret the history of Dorchester Academy, and its later use by the SCLC during the 1960s.

Since the 1970s Dorchester has been used as a community center, and to this end, a barbecue pavilion, swimming pool, pool house and softball field were added to the complex. Since then the swimming pool has been in-filled and the softball field is no longer extant. A new barbecue pavilion has been erected directly adjacent to the pool house. Northwest of the dormitory is a new playground, while an older one formerly sat directly in front of the boys' dormitory. The dirt road that formerly bordered the boys' dormitory on its northeastern edge was paved with asphalt in 1995. Poured concrete walkways that border the perimeter of the boys' dormitory and extend out toward the former site of the swimming pool, were replaced between 1995 and 1996. The Dorchester Improvement Association is the current owner and steward of both the boys' dormitory and the museum.[3] The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Emancipation Proclamation Group, and the Dorchester Academy Improvement Association, currently use the center for meeting space.

[3] A large portion of the 1986 National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form for "Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory" has been utilized for the physical description section of the nomination since the building has remained relatively intact since its NRHP listing.

Integrity

The Dorchester Boys' Dormitory has undergone some minor changes but remains highly intact from its period of significance. The alteration to the roof of the rear ell addition from a flat roof to a hipped roof design does not diminish the property's integrity or deter from the building's original design scheme. One of the bedrooms on the first floor has been converted into a history room whereby murals have been painted on all four walls. The interior walls of four of the second story bedrooms were removed to create one large room between 1976 and 1978. In 1997 Dorchester Academy embarked on a restoration project whereby they have refurbished and painted exterior soffets, window frames and trim. Other improvements include restoring and repainting some of the dormitory rooms, replacing the heating system located in the annex, and making repairs to sections of the roof.

These minor changes have not compromised the overall design, materials and workmanship of the boys' dormitory. Moreover, the dormitory is still surrounded by a rural setting much as it was during its period of significance. Historic 1960s photographs depicting the training workshops in the sitting room and the auditorium depict these important rooms much as they are today. Further, original furnishings used during the SCLC training workshops can still be found in some of the rooms. Because only small changes have been made to the building since its period of significance during SCLC's occupation of the site, the building retains its feeling and association as the main site for citizenship education training during the civil rights movement.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: _ Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A X B X C _ D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A _ B _ C _ D _ E _ F _ G X
NHL Criteria:	1 and 2
NHL Exception(s):	Exception 8
NHL Theme(s):	II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements 2. reform movements IV. Shaping the Political Landscape 1. parties, protests and movements
Areas of Significance:	Education Politics/Government Social History Ethnic Heritage - Black
Period(s) of Significance:	1961-1970
Significant Dates:	January 1963
Significant Person(s):	Septima Poinsette Clark
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A
Architect/Builder:	N/A
Historic Contexts:	"Racial Voting Rights in America" XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements M. Civil Rights Movement

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Dorchester Academy is nationally significant as the primary site of the Citizenship Education Program sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) between 1961 and 1970. The Citizenship Education Program formed the basis for the very successful SCLC Voter Education Project (VEP). The citizenship training program was responsible for educating thousands of Southern blacks about their rights as American citizens, and providing them with the necessary skills to pass the voter registration test. After the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment following the Civil War, southern whites implemented such barriers as the white primary, poll tax, grandfather clause, and literacy tests, to deny African Americans their right to vote. Increased voter registration was one of many goals Southern blacks fought for during the civil rights movement in an effort to gain equality and end systematic discriminatory practices that violated the rights guaranteed to them by the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.[4] Dorchester is also associated with the planning meetings for the Birmingham Campaign. During a two-day retreat in January 1963, eleven top SCLC officials met to discuss Project "C," Wyatt T. Walker's blueprint for a coordinated attack against segregation in Birmingham, one of the South's most staunchly segregated cities. For nine years Dorchester Academy served as the main training site of the Citizenship Education Program, and during that period was successful in establishing 897 citizenship schools throughout the South by "providing full citizenship through education."[5]

The property is also associated with civil rights activist Septima Poinsette Clark, whose vision and grassroots organizing made the Citizenship Education Program successful. Considered the "queen mother of the civil rights movement," she was responsible for developing the citizenship education model and overseeing the program from its inception in 1956 until 1970, five years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Taylor Branch, author of the Martin Luther King Jr. biographical trilogy, credits Septima Clark with having "one of the most powerful impacts on the whole scene."[6]

Dorchester Academy is being nominated for National Historic Landmark status under Criterion 1 as the main training center for the Citizenship Education Program and as a meeting place for the top leaders of the SCLC, and under Criterion 2 for its association with the productive life of Septima P. Clark.[7] The site is being nominated under Criterion Exception 8 because the Citizenship Education Program was headquartered at Dorchester Academy less than fifty years ago, between 1961 and 1970. The site meets the criterion exception because of the important role that citizenship education classes played in furthering the goals of the civil rights movement and ultimately the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By developing and empowering local blacks, the citizenship classes galvanized local black leaders to participate in the "greatest mass movement in American history."[8]

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[4] Townsend Davis, *Weary Feet, Rested Souls: A Guided History of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 188; Jacqueline Anne Rouse, "We Seek to Know…In Order to Speak the Truth: Nurturing the Seeds of Discontent - Septima P. Clark and Participatory Leadership," in Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, eds. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 96, 113; Grace Jordan McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," in Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline A. Rouse, and Barbara Woods, eds. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 93.

[5] McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 93; Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 113.

[6] Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-1963* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 575-79, quoted in Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 96.

[7] Davis, *Weary Feet, Rested Souls*, 188-189.

[8] National Park Service, *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*, 2002 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior), 16; McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 95.

Introduction

The passage of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution officially established full citizenship rights for African Americans, while the Fifteenth Amendment granted them their right to vote. However, for over a hundred years African Americans were denied their rights as citizens through the segregation of public schools, public accommodations, and the systematic denial of their constitutional right to vote. Voter registration tests throughout the South were deliberately designed to deny African Americans the right to vote, as were other machinations such as the grandfather clause, white primary, poll tax, and literacy tests. Tactics such as violence and intimidation were also employed to keep blacks from registering to vote.[9] For example, in March 1948 black voters were kept away from the polls in Wrightsville, Georgia, by Klansmen who paraded through town announcing that "blood would flow" if blacks attempted to cast a ballot. The threats worked as few African Americans turned out to cast their votes the following day. That same year, Isaac Nixon, a black veteran, was murdered after ignoring threats by two white men and casting a ballot in a Georgia election.[10] Southern blacks faced many obstacles in becoming enfranchised citizens. Voting rights became just one of several rights that the civil rights movement fought for vociferously through the court system and nonviolent direct action. The civil rights movement of the 1960s dealt with the issue of de facto segregation and discrimination that affected virtually every facet of public life for African Americans.

Septima Clark, a teacher from Charleston, South Carolina, successfully paved the way for increased voter registration throughout the South by developing a curriculum that attacked the high illiteracy rates that plagued the African American community.[11] Voter registration was an integral facet of the fight for civil rights in this country and Clark was at the forefront of the grassroots effort to make voter registration a reality for those that lacked the necessary skills to pass the voter registration tests. Initially, the goal of the citizenship schools was the enfranchisement of southern blacks; however, a more long-term goal of "citizenship education for democratic empowerment" became the driving force behind these schools.[12]

The citizenship schools were first sponsored and developed under the auspices of the Highlander Folk School, a training school for labor organizers that later developed into a school for civil rights leaders. The school sponsored the citizenship school program from 1957 until 1961, at which time the program's headquarters was transferred to the SCLC and housed at Dorchester Academy in Midway, Georgia. Septima Clark joined the staff of the SCLC to continue her work with the citizenship schools and retained complete control over the program. Under the care and direction of the SCLC, the citizenship school movement witnessed major success with the training of seven hundred teachers and the registration of fifty thousand voters by 1963.[13]

The Origins of the Citizenship Schools and the Highlander Era

Highlander Folk School was founded as a movement halfway house on November 1, 1932, a term used by sociologist Aldon Morris to denote "change-oriented institutions." The school was founded with an emphasis on education as a means toward social change, placing its energies in the areas of organized labor, civil rights, and Appalachian reform.[14] By 1953 the school switched its emphasis from organized labor reform to civil

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[9] National Park Service, *Civil Rights in America*, 7.

[10] Steven F. Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969* (New York: Lexington Books, 1999), 129-130.

[11] Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 97; Sandra B. Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools, 1957-1961," in Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods, eds. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 171 and 174.

[12] Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 170.

[13] Ibid., 174.

[14] Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995) 70; John M. Glen, *Highlander: No Ordinary School* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 25.

rights work as a result of differences of opinion between Highlander and the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) "over the aims and functions of labor education."[15] Highlander's leaders realized that "racism presented the greatest obstacle to the kind of economic and political order that they had envisioned since 1932."[16] Clark got her introduction to Highlander at a 1954 workshop on public school desegregation she attended at the behest of Anna Kelly, a former student at Highlander. After her experience at Highlander, Clark returned to her community of Charleston urging local interracial organizations to make use of the resources Highlander had to offer.

The origins of the citizenship school program can be traced to the efforts of Mr. Esau Jenkins, a native of Johns Island, South Carolina, a farmer, local bus driver and the sole registered black voter on the island. Septima Clark invited Esau Jenkins to a workshop at the Highlander Folk School in 1954 where the idea arose to establishment a citizenship school. The first school was established in the Carolina Sea Islands where Clark had first taught as a young schoolteacher, and it became the prototype for the many schools that would be established throughout the South. Meetings were held in the rear of a cooperative store named the Progressive Club. These schools were designed to teach rural adults to read and write, but to also complete such basic tasks as filling out a check and reading road signs, with the goal of registering African American voters and building citizenship skills. The voter registration classes proved successful as they quickly spread throughout the other South Carolina Sea Islands, thereafter to Alabama and Georgia, and eventually throughout eleven southern states.[17]

In the 1950s Jenkins founded a bus service that at the time was the only means of transportation for the islanders to the mainland and to jobs in Charleston, mainly as tobacco workers and longshoreman. During his daily trips to and from the mainland, he took the opportunity while on the one-hour ferry ride to educate other fellow Johns Islanders about the importance of the vote in securing improvements for the island.[18] Conditions on Johns Islands in the late fifties were anything but comparable to other cities in the United States. Partly due to its isolation from the mainland as part of a chain of barrier islands that extended from South Carolina to Georgia, the island was occupied by a large population of blacks known as Gullah, after a West-African-English dialect they spoke, which was a remnant of slave days as a result of their geographic isolation. Johns Islanders and the people from the other barrier islands were the descendants of slaves that worked the rice and sugar plantations that once dotted the area. Although their relative isolation had a positive impact through the survival of their culture, it was also detrimental in that islanders were plagued with poor and sub-standard living conditions.[19] "Isolation from the mainland for hundred of years created a people [who] have been substantially by-passed by the mainstream of American life and development."[20]

While working as a bus driver, Alice Wine, a resident of Johns Island, mentioned to Jenkins that she had only made it through the third grade but was interested in becoming a registered voter if someone would take the time to teach her to read and write. Jenkins was compelled by this request to help his fellow Johns Islanders to become franchised citizens, and thus he began teaching his passengers the information that they needed in order to register. He passed out copies of the South Carolina laws on registering and voting, and began reviewing it

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[15] Glen, *Highlander*, 2-3.

[16] Ibid., 3.

[17] Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 171-172; McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 85.

[18] Andrew Young, *An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), 138-139; Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 73.

[19] Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 170.

[20] H. Blake, "The Visions of Myles Horton," 1961, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, box 82, folder 8, quoted in Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 170.

line by line. Registrants were required to read aloud sections of the South Carolina constitution, a deterrent for those blacks who were illiterate. During the hour-long ride between the island and Charleston, Jenkins taught the passengers the necessary material in order for them to pass the registration test. The men and women memorized those sections about which they potentially would be tested, and thus were able to pass the registration test despite their inability to read and write. Mrs. Wine was one of the passengers who successfully utilized memorization as a means to pass the registration test. However, she was still intent on learning how to read and write, and thus asked Mr. Jenkins if there was a local school that would teach her these skills. After approaching the school principal and local minister on the island, both of whom were too afraid to get involved, he requested the help of Septima P. Clark and the Highlander Folk School. [21]

Highlander had attempted for a while to attract residents to the workshops from the Sea Islands. Clark's first teaching job was on Johns Island, and consequently she had a personal connection to the island and its residents. She heard about Esau Jenkins' work with voter registration on the island, and, being a former student of hers, persuaded Jenkins to attend a workshop at Highlander in 1954. Moreover, Jenkins was a respected leader of his community and had even attempted in the mid-fifties to run for a position on the Johns Island school board, but because so few black were registered to vote on the island, a defeat was inevitable. Nonetheless, impressed by Jenkins work with the islanders, Clark offered to help establish an adult education program on the island to help the islanders learn how to read.[22] "She wanted the school to be nontraditional, interesting and aimed specifically toward voter education and the most immediate needs of the people. They wished to stay away from the public night-school type of adult education programs, which had proved to be extremely ineffective."[23]

She asked Myles Horton, founder and director of the Highlander Folk School, for help in establishing this nontraditional school. Aid came in the form of a fifteen-hundred dollar loan from the Highlander Folk School. The funds came from a $56,150 grant that the school received from the Schwartzhaupt Foundation for the continuation of their leadership training program.[24] Jenkins and his group, the Progressive Club, used the money to purchase a dilapidated building and fix it so that the school was located in the rear of the building, and a cooperative store at the front. The store was established as a ploy to deter interference from the island's white residents, with no windows installed in the two rear rooms where the actual teaching took place. The twenty-six members that comprised the club bought items from the store amongst themselves. With the profits from the sales they were eventually able to repay the loan so that Highlander could fund the teacher that would be teaching at the Progressive Club.[25]

Many variables made the Sea Islands an outstanding testing ground for the citizenship schools. Even though many of the Sea Islanders lived at a subsistence level, a large portion owned their own farms or operated small businesses. Horton saw this as favorable since the residents did not have to fear losing their employment from disapproving white bosses. In addition, the geography of the area allowed Highlander Folk School teachers the ability to approach each island as a separate individual project, hence making the establishment of citizenship schools a more manageable task. The staff could use their experiences on Johns Island to improve the program on the other Sea Islands. Horton believed that all these factors augmented the ability of the citizenship school program to become a very successful undertaking on the Sea Islands. Horton was also sensitive to the fact that

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[21] Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 73; Young, *An Easy Burden*, 140.
[22] Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 72-73; Young, *An Easy Burden*, 140; Glen, *Highlander*, 189.
[23] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 140.
[24] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 131; Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 171; Glen, *Highlander*, 193.
[25] Cynthia Stokes Brown, ed., *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement* (Navarro: Wild Tress Press, 1986), 47; Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 73. The Progressive Club was initially started in the late 1940s by Jenkins as a fifteen member club whose goal was to provide legal aid to blacks. Glen, *Highlander*, 189.

the program would more likely succeed if black leaders were at the forefront doing the work, while Highlander oversaw matters from a distance. Since Highlander was fiscally responsible for the program, it wanted feedback on its progress. To meet this requirement, Myles Horton hired Septima Clark in 1955 to file reports with Highlander so that they could determine the level of success they were having in developing community leaders, create training manuals, and secure funds for the citizenship school program. Following her dismissal from her job as a Charleston school teacher because of her affiliation with the local NAACP, Clark accepted Horton's offer for a full-time position to organize and conduct the citizenship classes, recruit participants, and conduct fund-raising to keep the program operational. In order to raise funds for the program, Clark traveled throughout the United States speaking with friends, sponsors, and benefactors of Highlander. Clark worked at Highlander as the Director of Workshops and chief fundraiser for the Citizenship school program from 1957 until 1960, at which time the program transferred to the SCLC because of threats by white segregationists to shut down the school because of its integrated nature.[26]

The first class on Johns Island was taught by Bernice Robinson, a beautician and dressmaker with no prior teaching experience. She was also Septima Clark's cousin and an NAACP recruiter in Charleston County. Most importantly, however, the islanders trusted Robinson because she knew Esau Jenkins from when she previously worked with him on a voter-registration campaign. This was exactly the kind of person Clark and Myles Horton were seeking. They needed someone the islanders could relate to and who had no formal teaching education that might intimidate them and reduce her effectiveness in dealing with such a non-traditional set of students and environment. In addition, Robinson was also familiar with the Highlander program, having already attended a workshop at the Highlander Folk School. On January 7, 1957, Robinson taught her first class at the Progressive Club, and reminded the group, which consisted of ten women and four men, that she was not a teacher and that they would navigate through the process together. Having brought some elementary level materials, she quickly realized that they were too juvenile for the adults. She then proceeded to ask a very important question of the students – "what did *they* want to learn?" This fundamental question was the cornerstone of the curriculum later developed by Robinson and Clark for the Citizenship Schools.[27]

The students' first concern was learning how to write their names. They then proceeded to learn how to read in order to complete such basic tasks as reading the newspaper, the Bible, and the sections of the South Carolina state constitution they needed familiarization with in order to register as voters. Other tasks the students wished to learn included filling out order blanks for catalogues and completing money orders. The curriculum that Robinson developed centered on the needs and experience of the students. Vocabulary lists were developed from words that had relevance to their everyday lives as farmers and words they would need to know to pass the voter registration test, words such as *tomato*, *cotton*, and *register*. Robinson developed stories from the students' experiences as farmers, and used them to teach the students how to read. Those with some reading skills would read the stories aloud to the rest of the group, and did the same with newspaper articles. The men were particularly interested in learning simple arithmetic to be able to keep account of the hours they worked and the amount of cargo they moved at their jobs at the Charleston wharf. In addition, they held discussions on such concepts as citizenship, democracy, and the powers of elected officials. Robinson used the voter registration form and reviewed different sections of the document and how to properly fill it out. From these experiences, Clark, with the help of Robinson and her personal experience with the citizenship classes, developed a workbook on voting, social security, taxes, and the function of the county school board which

[26] Glen, *Highlander*, 191; Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 108-110.

[27] Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 73; Glen, *Highlander*, 194; Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 172.

would be known as *My Citizenship Booklet*.[28]

The success of the citizenship classes and the methods employed by Robinson are evident in the rapid proliferation of classes throughout the other South Carolina Sea Islands. Classes were initially held for a two-month period during the "laying by season" in January and February, and were held twice a week for two hours. From the initial fourteen students, eight successfully became registered voters. This success spurred the establishment of five schools the following year in the neighboring Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands and in North Charleston. This time, however, the classes were held for three months between December and February. Clark was a frequent visitor to the other Sea Islands to promote the establishment of citizenship classes. Once local leaders showed enough interest in establishing a program on their island, Clark and Robinson were intimately involved in the process of establishing citizenship classes by ensuring that local black leaders were properly trained for the task by taking prospective teachers to workshops at Highlander Folk School. Ultimately, thirty-seven schools were established throughout the South Carolina Sea Islands by 1961, with approximately 1,300 participants. During this period, the citizenship schools spread throughout other towns in the South, primarily Huntsville, Alabama, and Savannah, Georgia. The success of the voter registration program on Johns Island was such that the percentage of black registered voters on the island increased by 300 percent between 1956 and 1960, while 232 out of 245 students that attended the citizenship classes in 1960, became registered voters.[29]

By mid-1959, Myles Horton and others began to realize that perhaps Highlander was too small an organization to fulfill the role that Horton envisioned for the citizenship school program. Requests for the establishment of new schools poured into Highlander as interest increased among other southern communities to follow in the steps of the South Carolina Sea Islands. The volume of requests was more than Highlander could adequately handle. Horton's ambition was to have the program burgeon to the point where it would service thousands of people, a goal that required a large amount of funding. Even if Highlander had been willing to administer such a program, running the Citizenship School Program would detract from the school's other programs having to make it its one and only endeavor. With the success experienced at Huntsville and Savannah, the Highlander staff was even more convinced that a civil rights organization should overtake the responsibility of overseeing the Citizenship School Program. At the same time, Ella Baker, who helped found the SCLC and served as acting and associate director, attended a workshop at Highlander with the conviction that SCLC voter registration efforts could be enhanced by adding an adult education component. Another factor, the constant harassment and red baiting that the school experienced from unsympathetic white segregationists, motivated Horton to transfer the program to prevent its demise alongside Highlander Folk School.[30]

It was also around this time that Wyatt Tee Walker, executive director for the SCLC, observed that numerous liberal philanthropic organizations were widening their scope to include civil rights organizations. This was yet another factor in setting the stage for the transfer of the Citizenship School Program to the SCLC.[31] "King and Walker were drawn to the vision of a multifaceted attack on segregation in a targeted town – with Clark training the registration workers and teachers, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee) students sitting in,

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[28] Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 74; Glen, *Highlander*, 194-95; Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 172.

[29] Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 110; Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Citizenship Schools," 174; Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 74; Glen, *Highlander*, 198-199.

[30] Glen, *Highlander*, 199-200; Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters*: *America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Touchstone, 1988), 381; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 120; Ralph E. Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997), 15.

[31] Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 381.

King preaching, and Walker coordinating the attack."[32] Moreover SCLC had the added incentive of undertaking the Citizenship School project since Clark already had an influential donor financially supporting her work at Highlander. Walker viewed this as an opportunity for additional funding of other SCLC sponsored projects.[33]

After attending a student civil rights conference at Highlander, Andrew Young, a young minister from New York, and Associate Director of the Department of Youth Work of the National Council of Churches of Christ, was contacted by Myles Horton with a job offer to administer the Citizenship School Program at Highlander.[34] Being originally from the South and feeling the need to return there to work with the civil rights movement, particularly after his attendance at the Highlander conference, Young simultaneously wrote to Martin Luther King Jr. to ask his guidance on how he could best serve the movement. King offered Young a position with SCLC; but Young instead accepted Horton's offer. Young became the new administrator for the citizenship program and would play an important role in finding it a new home.[35]

SCLC's Move to Dorchester

In 1961, under immense pressure from white segregationists to shut down Highlander Folk School, Myles Horton suggested that the Citizenship School program be definitively transferred from Highlander to the SCLC. As a result of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate public schools, and the added paranoia of a Communist threat in the United States, white segregationists once again began to "denounce the school as a Communist training center bent on fomenting racial strife and disrupting established values and institutions in the South."[36] Between 1954 and 1961, when the school's opponents were finally successful in closing down the school; the staff experienced a constant flurry of attacks against their character and personal safety, were subjected to all sorts of government investigations, and were victims of negative publicity. By the late 1950s, the Tennessee state legislature launched the final attack against Highlander that would bring about its undoing. A raid conducted by the state attorney resulted in two trials and the repeal of Highlander's charter, eventually leading to the confiscation of the school's property in 1962. Precisely when Andrew Young was ready to relocate to Monteagle, Tennessee, to start his new job as administrator of the Citizenship School Program, he found himself scrambling to find a new home for the program.[37]

At the time SCLC was ready to accept the Citizenship School Program, a new dilemma arose: the grant that had been awarded to Highlander by the Field Foundation could only be transferred to a tax-exempt organization, a status that SCLC did not have. After discussions with the American Missionary Association (AMA), the organization accepted the responsibility of administering the funds on behalf of SCLC. The AMA was suited to the task since they had an established history of funding adult education programs and community service programs. The next step in the process was to find a site that would serve as the new home of the Citizenship Education Program. Young recommended either the Penn Community Center located on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, or the Dorchester Academy in Midway, Georgia. Both of these facilities had previously housed black Reconstruction era schools administered by a church. Young decided that housing the Citizenship Education Program would be a natural extension of the sites' previous use. The decision finally came down to the fact that the AMA held title to the Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory. The AMA paid Young's salary

[32] Ibid., 382. SNCC was one of five major civil rights organizations composed of young college students. Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement*, 247.
[33] Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 381.
[34] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 129-131; Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 153.
[35] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 130-132.
[36] Glen, *Highlander*, 207.
[37] Ibid.

in addition to making improvements to the school in preparation for housing the Citizenship Education Program. The AMA improvements allowed for the accommodation of sixty people, and the addition of a new stove for the kitchen. From the moment in 1959 when Myles Horton decided that the program should be handled by an organization that could accommodate the rate of growth the Citizenship Education Program was experiencing, it took nearly two years, until August 1961, for all the specifics to be worked out. Although the Citizenship Education Program was no longer housed at Highlander, it remained as a consultant to the program while Septima Clark and Andrew Young transferred to SCLC. Already being a part of the SCLC staff as one of its top members from Atlanta and brought into the organization by Wyatt T. Walker, Dorothy Cotton joined the Citizenship Education Program staff during this time as an educational consultant. Bernice Robinson remained at Highlander as a consultant to SCLC; later she too, transferred to SCLC.[38]

Interestingly, Dorchester Academy had been used in the 1940s for voter registration drives, shortly after its conversion into a community center. These activities foreshadow Dorchester's use by the AMA for the Citizenship Education Program. The Dorchester Cooperative Center (DCC) started operating in 1937 in addition to the boarding school. The boarding school ceased operations in 1940 when Liberty County provided public schools for African Americans. In 1943, the Dorchester Cooperative Center hired Claudius Turner as its director. Turner initiated voter registration drives and organized the Liberty County Citizens Council, a group that educated prospective voters.[39]

Voter Training at Dorchester

The staff reported to the SCLC Atlanta office in 1961 and worked in conjunction with Wyatt T. Walker in establishing the school at Dorchester. Local residents were hired to do the cooking, make the beds and get the facility in order for the Citizenship Education Program staff. Septima Clark was in charge of the overall program as supervisor of teacher training, while Andrew Young served as director of the program, and Dorothy Cotton acted as "cultural emissary for SCLC, utiliz[ing] music and folklore as vehicles for generating interest and support among rural blacks," as the program's educational consultant.[40] During the first month the program operated out of Dorchester, the staff traveled throughout the southern states recruiting students. One of the first projects at Dorchester centered on the community of Savannah, Georgia. A local activist, Hosea Williams, wanted to recruit people in the community to register to vote, but, according to Clark, he "didn't know that he had to teach them to read and write so they could answer the thirty questions that the Georgia [literacy test] had for them to answer."[41] Clark came into the Savannah community to canvass and work with Hosea Williams to help organize the local community, ultimately establishing the Savannah Citizenship School. With the citizenship school formula in place, Williams ultimately established eighteen other schools throughout southern Georgia.[42]

During their time at Dorchester, Young, Clark and Cotton drove all over the South recruiting prospective students that they would bus to Dorchester for training. The school rented a Greyhound bus that would originate in New Orleans and make its way throughout the Black Belt. The dormitory could accommodate sixty students, but sometimes as many as seventy were sent for the one-week session. Classes were held for five days

[38] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 134-135, 144; Glen, *Highlander*, 204; Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 174; Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 237.

[39] Cyriaque, "Dorchester Academy Museum," 1.

[40] Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 113; Brown, *Ready From Within*, 62-63.

[41] Septima Clark, interview by Eugene Walker, typescript, July 30, 1976, Atlanta, GA, 5-6, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, RSS-SPC, quoted in Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 114.

[42] Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 114; Brown, *Ready From Within*, 62.

once a month, with all of the students' expenses underwritten by the SCLC through grants received during the life of the program. A day-by-day curriculum armed the students with a plan to return to their communities and teach citizenship classes themselves. The weeklong workshops started on Monday morning, with students arriving at the school the previous evening. Mondays started with a plenary session where Andrew Young, Septima Clark, and Dorothy Cotton shared their experiences with the Montgomery March, in order to place the work they would be doing throughout that week within a larger context. On Monday evening, students viewed the "The Nashville Sit-In Story," a film about the desegregation of public accommodations in Nashville through the use of nonviolence, with the college students giving their own testimonies. The story served as an inspirational tool for the work they would accomplish during the week. During subsequent days the students would break into smaller groups, with one group in the auditorium and two others in the classrooms, where they would learn about civics, education and organizing techniques. The structure of the sessions throughout the week would consist of teaching organizing techniques, education, and politics sessions in the morning, with the afternoon reserved for relaxation, while the evenings were spent viewing filmstrips followed by discussions. On Saturday evening a banquet was held to mark the last day of the weeklong workshop. Martin Luther King Jr. was frequently the banquet's keynote speaker. Following the banquet on Saturday evening the students would return to their hometown to attend church services the following morning. The workshops were structured to allow participants to share the information and knowledge they had acquired during their stay at Dorchester with others at their church, with the aim of recruiting students for the establishment of citizenship classes in their own communities.[43] In the first installment of the Citizenship Education Program newsletter, published in 1965, the staff notes that "although we were saddened to see people leave for home we felt a sense of great happiness, accomplishment and confidence as we looked forward to continuing to work, better prepared for having shared a week together at Dorchester."[44]

Clark recognized from the very beginning that although the curriculum might be rudimentary, the success of the program rested upon students being treated as adults. One of the cornerstones of her teaching technique involved asking the students questions. "The process of learning involved group sharing, group catharsis."[45] The classes involved lessons in "practical civics," which provided students with information on the inner working of the courts, the differences between federal and state laws, what rights they were guaranteed under such laws, and what it meant to be a citizen. Improving literacy skills was another emphasis of the workshops. The students learned to improve their reading by using the newspaper and forms that they might normally encounter, such as IRS and social security forms, and job and driver's license applications. A local banker participated every month in teaching the Dorchester students the basics of banking and the handling of money. Another facet involved lessons in African American history and in nonviolent protest philosophy, with Jack O'Dell teaching a class on the era of Reconstruction. Every evening, the students congregated in the auditorium to participate in vespers and group singing led by Dorothy Cotton.[46]

Clark supervised the sessions at Dorchester and culled teachers from a group of which many could hardly read and write. The goal was to train the students and target the most promising to develop their skills as teachers. They were taught the correlation that existed between voter registration, voting, and the ultimate result of effecting change at a personal level and in their own communities. Eventually, local leaders would return to their communities and continue the work of the citizenship classes and subsequently increase the number of

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[43] Brown, *Ready from Within*, 63; Young, *An Easy Burden*, 143-146.

[44] Southern Christian Leadership Conference, "June Workshop is Memorable; Sixty-Five Attend Dorchester," *CEP News* 1, no. 1 (September 1965): 1, Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference 1954-1970, Records of the Program Department, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

[45] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 147.

[46] Ibid., 147-148.

registered voters.[47] The SCLC had identified 188 "crucial counties that had black majorities across the Deep South but almost no black registered voters." According to Young, their "South wide focus was on the Mississippi Delta, the black belt of Alabama, scattered areas of Georgia and Florida, the eastern shores of North Carolina and South Carolina, and the tidewater area of Virginia."[48] By 1963, the success of the program was evidenced through the registration of 50,000 new voters and seven hundred trained teachers, all of whom were impacted by the Citizenship Education Program. Citizenship classes were established in such diverse venues as private homes, beauty parlors, barber shops, and in outdoor venues frequented by the local African American community. Ultimately, the student's experiences with the citizenship schools galvanized them to become further involved with the movement by participating in demonstrations, establishing SCLC chapters in their own communities, and even running for public office. Many notable civil rights leaders got their first experience with the movement by attending the citizenship classes at Dorchester.[49] Tyrone L. Brooks, a Citizenship Education Program graduate who later joined the SCLC staff, credits Clark as being a "champion of education" who believed that the civil rights movement could not have developed without education.[50] "The 'less militant' aspects of the movement like the Citizenship Schools were a significant mobilizing factor throughout the movement, often serving as 'quiet structures' behind what appeared to be spontaneous uprisings."[51]

On February 2, 1962, O'Dell, SCLC fundraiser and director of SCLC voter registration, unveiled a new flow chart for registration that included Clark's citizenship education classes at Dorchester. King would embark on what he coined the "People-to-People" tour, where he would speak to blacks throughout the South and recruit volunteers to send to Dorchester for training. Those who showed the most promise would be trained as teachers so that they could establish citizenship schools in their own communities and in turn increase the number of registered voters. On the first People-to-People tour in February 1962, through the combined efforts of King, Wyatt Walker and Dorothy Cotton, they were successful in recruiting 150 volunteers to send to Dorchester for training. Clark's citizenship education classes formed the foundation of SCLC's Voter Education Project (VEP), with hundreds of students being recruited shortly after the VEP was officially launched by the SCLC. The Voter Education Project was an initiative of the Kennedy administration in an attempt to keep civil rights activists off the street. The program was premised upon offering them financial incentives to support voter registration drives sanctioned by Justice Department litigation. In June and July 1961, the government acted as an intermediary between several philanthropic organization and civil rights groups to work out an agreement whereby organizations such as the Taconic Foundation and Field Fund would fund the suffrage campaigns. Nonetheless, the SCLC used the People-to-People tours to funnel students to Clark's citizenship education classes, which would in turn augment the success of the organization's VEP when recruits were then channeled to registration projects.[52]

The Citizenship Education Program experienced substantial growth under the auspices of the SCLC. Not only was it drawing students from throughout the South, but by 1965 it was increasingly receiving students from the North and West.[53] Essentially, the citizenship program was the backbone of the successful Voter Education Project started in 1962 by the SCLC, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), NAACP, the Urban League, and SNCC. The Citizenship Education Program was one of the many organizing and protest tools developed to

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[47] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 309.
[48] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 143.
[49] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 309; Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 238-239.
[50] Georgia State Representative Tyrone L. Brooks, telephone conversation with author, February 7, 2006.
[51] Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 239.
[52] Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 575, 576, 588; Neil Foley and others, *Racial Voting Rights in America Theme Study* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, draft 2005), 60.
[53] SCLC, "June Workshop is Memorable," 1.

further the cause of the movement. The citizenship school staff also had the task of laying the groundwork to prepare the local community to accept the SCLC when they entered a community, with the goal of furthering the work already started by emissaries of the Citizenship School Program in Dorchester.[54] According to civil rights veteran Andrew Young, Clark's work with the citizenship schools was "the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built."[55]

Birmingham Campaign Planning, 1963

Dorchester, as the main center for the Citizenship Education Program while under the auspices of the SCLC, was also the site of a very important retreat. For two days beginning on January 10, 1963, it was the site where SCLC staff members developed the strategy for the Birmingham Campaign. Partly due to the violence that erupted during the Birmingham Campaign, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[56] A group of eleven high-ranking SCLC staff members, including King, Walker, Ralph Abernathy and Young, gathered at Dorchester to discuss what Walker code-named "Project C," for confrontation.[57] Prior to the Dorchester retreat, Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth, as pastor of Birmingham's Bethel Baptist Church and founder and president of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), met with King in December 1962 to discuss coordinating efforts between SCLC and ACMHR for an organized attack against segregation in Birmingham. Relations in Birmingham, Alabama, were so poor that the city was known as "Bombingham." King had been searching for an opportunity to create a crisis large enough through nonviolent demonstrations, to trigger Federal intervention and bring a legal end to segregation; Birmingham presented such an opportunity. Shuttlesworth was one of those present at the Dorchester planning retreat that following January. Dorchester proved an ideal meeting place for the SCLC staff to discuss the lessons learned from Albany and to develop strategy for the Birmingham Campaign.[58]

Wyatt Walker presented to the SCLC staffers a blueprint for Project C that would unfold in four stages. First, sit-ins would be conducted in order to attract awareness to their desegregation platform while simultaneously holding nightly mass meetings. Secondly, a boycott of downtown businesses would take place in order to cripple the economic infrastructure of the city, with subsequent larger demonstrations taking place. The third stage required staging mass marches that would result in the enforcement of the boycott and the filling of the jails. The last stage consisted of calling on outside help if the leadership decided that external aid was needed in order for them to paralyze the city. The Birmingham Campaign had six campaign objectives: the desegregation of lunch counters and all public facilities in all downtown stores, the immediate implementation of fair hiring practices in downtown stores and in all city departments, the annulment of all charges against those arrested during sit-in demonstrations, the re-opening of all city parks and playgrounds that had been closed to avoid integration, and lastly, the establishment of a biracial group to work jointly toward the

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[54] Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 96.

[55] Brown, *Ready from Within*, 70.

[56] Amie A. Spinks, "Sixteenth Street Baptist Church National Historic Landmark Nomination," (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2004), 10. According to historian Glenn T. Eskew, author of *But for Birmingham*, a discrepancy exists in the details of the January 1963 Birmingham planning meeting that took place at Dorchester. He claims that it was during the second Dorchester meeting in September 1963 that the SCLC staff actually discussed the lessons learned from their experiences at Albany and discussed strategy for the Birmingham campaign. Eskew refutes Branch's telling of the story in *Parting the Waters*, where he states that Walker presented a blueprint for the Birmingham campaign titled "Project C," and not a single change was made to his proposal. However, Andrew Young in his memoir *An Easy Burden*, who was one of those present at the Birmingham planning meeting, corroborates Branch's retelling of it in *Parting the Waters*.

[57] Garrow, *Bearing the* Cross, 225; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 688. The other members of SCLC present at the Dorchester retreat were: Dorothy Cotton, Clarence Jones, Jack O'Dell, Stanley Levison and James Lawson. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 688.

[58] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 81, 224; Matt Garcia et al., *Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, draft, 2005), 89; Young, *An Easy Burden*, 188.

desegregation of all public schools in Birmingham.[59]

Walker's Birmingham proposal is considered one of his finer moments, and "not a comma of the blueprint was altered when he finished."[60] Following Walker's presentation, the group essentially spent their time discussing the plan and praying that it would work. According to Walker, it was at Dorchester that they "decided on Birmingham with the attitude that they may not win it, we may lose everything. But we knew that as Birmingham went, so would go the South. And we felt that if we could crack that city, then we could crack any city."[61]

The citizenship training done at Dorchester was incorporated into the Birmingham Campaign from its inception. Andrew Young temporarily shifted his responsibilities to include the recruitment and training, not only in citizenship education but in nonviolence, of people from Birmingham at Dorchester prior to the Birmingham Campaign, with the goal of moving into the community and continuing that training once the campaign got under way. The regular monthly sessions at Dorchester were suspended during the Birmingham Campaign so that the staff could temporarily focus their attention on recruiting and sending activists from Birmingham to the weeklong sessions at Dorchester.[62] Ultimately, Birmingham not only managed to garner national media attention, but the SCLC was successful in involving the Kennedy Administration when the President sent his Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Burke Marshall, to act as an intermediary between the civil rights leaders and the white business community.[63] Events in Birmingham, particularly the September 15, 1963, bombing of the Sixteenth Street Church where four young African-American girls were killed while attending Sunday school, spurred the Kennedy administration to initiate passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[64]

According to Dr. Wyatt T. Walker:

> Change in the South could not have happened without Dorchester. We met at Dorchester on three different occasions to begin citizenship education and to plan and develop Project C, where we voted unanimously to support it. Dorchester was always in our consciousness because it had more continuity, more focus, as a result of the training and citizenship programs being conducted there. Dorchester suited us in many ways. It provided meeting and dormitory space for the entire staff where we stayed overnight, we could relax and play softball, and we were not under the watchful eye of the major media networks. This was necessary for what we were trying to accomplish.[65]

Septima Clark

Septima Poinsette Clark was born in Charleston, South Carolina on May 3, 1898. Her mother, Victoria Warren Anderson, was from Haiti, while her father, Peter Porcher Poinsette, had been a former slave at the Joel

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[59] Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 222; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 689.
[60] Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 690.
[61] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 228.
[62] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 192, 278.
[63] Garcia et al., *Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, 91.
[64] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 291.
[65] Dr. Wyatt T. Walker, interview by William Austin, President, Dorchester Improvement Association, and Duke Burruss, Georgia Southern University, May 4, 2004.

Poinsette plantation. Clark attended Charleston's Avery Normal Institute, a private school where she trained as a teacher, one of the few professions open to African American women during that time. She earned her degree in 1916, but because African Americans were not allowed to teach in Charleston public schools, she accepted a teaching position at the Promise Land School on Johns Island. While teaching on the island, Septima's career in adult education began when she became involved in teaching the islanders how to read their bibles and the various handbooks of the organizations to which they belonged to. She also taught workshops addressing health issues, a chronic issue among the island's residents. During her residency on the island Clark met her future husband, Nerie Clark, a sailor. During her three year residency on the island, Clark also became involved in the NAACP.[66]

Clark then took a teaching position at Avery Normal Institute, her alma mater, from 1919-1921. Upon her return to Charleston, Clark participated in a campaign to integrate the teaching faculty of the Charleston public schools. Through the combined efforts of artist Edwin Harelston and former reconstruction Congressman Thomas E. Miller, they were able to collect between 10,000 and 20,000 signatures on NAACP-circulated petitions. This led to the passage of a 1920 state law that integrated the teaching faculties of the Charleston public school system. In May 1920 Septima married Nerie Clark and had two children with the first child passing away merely a month after her birth. In 1925 Clark became a widow when her husband died of kidney failure. Clark once again returned to Johns Island in 1927 and taught there until 1929 when she relocated to Columbia, South Carolina, where she resided until 1946. Having difficulties supporting her son as a single mother and with most boarding houses having a policy against allowing young children, in 1935 Clark sent her only son, Nerie Jr., to live with his paternal grandparents in North Carolina. He remained in Hickory, North Carolina until he finished his education.[67]

With her child under her in-laws' care, Clark earned her B.A. from Benedict College in 1942 and her M.A. from Hampton Institute in 1945. She had the opportunity to study rural sociology and curriculum-building at Atlanta University in 1937 under the tutelage of W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the preeminent African American scholars of the time.[68] "Du Bois' lectures on racism and segregation helped Clark understand the link between protest and education and assured her that dedication to the eradication of segregation was a noble pursuit."[69] In the years Clark resided in Columbia, she became affiliated with several local civic groups, including the NAACP, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and the Palmetto Education Association. She also received an invaluable experience that precluded her future work in citizenship education in the civil rights movement. She was asked by Wil Lou Gray, the head of the South Carolina Adult Education Program in 1935, to develop a curriculum that would help functionally illiterate African American adults from nearby Camp Jackson, to read. Nearly half of the male adults that tried to enlist in the military were rejected because of illiteracy. Clark taught the soldiers basic tasks such as signing their pay slips, reading bus routes and counting. Septima's experience teaching illiterate soldiers formed the basis of the curriculum for the citizenship education classes she would develop years later.[70]

Clark returned again to Charleston in 1947 to care for her infirm mother, and resided there until 1956. She became involved with the local NAACP and served as its membership chairperson. In 1956, however, South

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[66] Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement*, 54-55; *American National Biography*, vol. 4, s.v. "Clark, Septima Poinsette." Joel Poinsette is responsible for bringing to South Carolina from Mexico the poinsettia, named after the Poinsette family. Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement*, 54.

[67] McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 87; Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1993), 249.

[68] Hine, *Black Women in America*, 250; *American National Biography*, vol. 4, s.v. "Clark, Septima Poinsette."

[69] Hine, *Black Women in America*, 250.

[70] Hine, *Black Women in America*, 250; McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 88.

Carolina passed a law barring state or city employees from holding membership in any civil rights organization. Clark refused to relinquish her membership in the NAACP and consequently lost both her job and her retirement benefits. She had taught as a teacher in South Carolina for forty years when she was fired. Losing her employment in the Charleston school system proved fortuitous since it allowed her more time to participate in social activism. Subsequently, Myles Horton hired Clark to work as Highlander's director of workshops. She remained with Highlander until 1961 when the program was transferred to the SCLC, where she remained as director of education and taught until her retirement from the organization in 1970.[71]

Upon her retirement from the SCLC, Clark received the Martin Luther King Jr. Award for "great service to humanity." Her post-SCLC career involved conducting workshops for the American Field Service, raising funds for scholarships, organizing day care facilities, and continuing her work as a spokesperson for civil rights. Ironically enough she was elected to the Charleston School Board in 1975. She received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 1978 from the College of Charleston. In 1976 she was awarded the Race Relations Award by the National Education Association and in 1979 received the Living Legacy Award from President Jimmy Carter. She was presented with the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian award, in 1982.[72] Historian Grace Jordan McFadden states that: "The depth of her [Septima Clark] commitment, the magnitude of her faith, her power of endurance, and her unrelenting crusade for justice allowed her to put into operation a program of citizen participation that transformed American society."[73]

Conclusion

The Citizenship Education Program operated at Dorchester from 1961 until 1970, and during that period, 897 Citizenship Schools were established throughout southern African American communities. Although Lyndon B. Johnson signed the 1965 Voting Rights Act on August 6 of that year, the SCLC Citizenship Education Program continued operating until 1970; passage of the law did not guarantee immediate and unanimous enforcement. Between 1964 and 1969, black voter registration increased from 43 percent to 62 percent throughout the South.[74] A program that started at the back of a cooperative store with fourteen students burgeoned into what Myles Horton considers one of Highlander's most successful programs. He views the citizenship schools as the "spark that helped ignite the civil rights movement throughout the South;" the program infiltrated and was active in eleven Deep South states.[75] According to Andrew Young "it was the Amzie Moores, the Fannie Lou Hamers, the Vera Pigees, the Septima Clarks, and the uncommon common black people of the South who, year after year, through their dedication and sacrifices made the Southern civil rights movement possible. They were not the publicized leaders of the media, spokesmen like Martin Luther King, but they were the core of the movement."[76] Sociologist Aldon Morris notes in his book *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* that "movement activists of various persuasions stated repeatedly that the Citizenship Schools were one of the most effective organizing tools of the movement."[77]

Comparison of Properties

The Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory is one of two Citizenship Education Program training centers

[71] *American National Biography*, vol. 4, s.v. "Clark, Septima Poinsette."
[72] Hine, *Black Women in America*, 251.
[73] McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 96.
[74] Foley and others, *Racial Voting Rights*, 90.
[75] Rouse, "We Seek to Know," 113; Oldendorf, "The South Carolina Sea Island Citizenship Schools," 180; McFadden, "Septima P. Clark and the Struggle for Human Rights," 95.
[76] Young, *An Easy Burden*, 143.
[77] Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 239.

established by the SCLC. The second training location, the Penn Center, is a contributing resource to the Penn School Historic District in Frogmore, South Carolina, which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974 as one of the first Southern schools for emancipated slaves. Citizenship classes were conducted at the Penn Center starting in 1963, with the center being used by the SCLC staff until the late 1960s. The "Racial Voting Rights in America" National Historic Landmarks theme study (draft, 2005) recommends both properties for further NHL evaluation. While both were training centers, Dorchester is the property that had a closer association with Septima Clark's productive career and the two-day retreat in 1963 to discuss strategy for the Birmingham Campaign, followed by two subsequent retreats involving preparations for Birmingham.

Also identified in the theme study was the Highlander Folk School, where the Citizenship School Program was first administratively housed in Monteagle, Tennessee. The school temporarily closed in December 1961 and was later transferred to Knoxville as the Highlander Research and Education Center until 1971. The school building located in Monteagle no longer retains a high degree of integrity due to interior and exterior alterations.

The Progressive Club, located on Johns Island, South Carolina, is where the first citizenship classes in the nation took place in 1957 in the rear of a cooperative store. The original building was demolished and replaced in 1963 with another building, where citizenship classes continued. Due to deterioration, the building no longer retains a high degree of integrity.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ 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:

__ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): Library of Congress, Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954-1970.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
17	455940	3518240

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory is the footprint of the building which includes the original 1934 building and the addition. An accompanying map titled "Plat of 24.3 Ac. Of Lands of American Mission," illustrates the footprint of the boys' dormitory.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary considers the integrity of the exterior and interior spaces for its appearance from the period of significance.

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
September 20, 2006