



PENN SCHOOL National Historic Landmark District

First School in the South for Formerly Enslaved West Africans

May 31, 2023

Ms. Hall,

Calhoun County Resources Incorporated (CCRI) began in December 2008. Our organization was formally organized as a 501-C3 non-profit to protect the John Ford High School from being demolished. This school was segregated all black until 1970. It was the center for all social activity in St. Matthews for blacks before integration. CCRI began talking to all that would listen, eventually, we were successful, and we prevented the school from being demolished. Today the school is being used as the community center. Also, part of the building is being used as a Police Station. This is a win-win for everyone.

As a result of our success, the old west end library was given to CCRI. The west end library was also built as a library for blacks only before integration. The present building opened in 1960. Today we (CCRI) have a restoration project to restore the building like new. It will be used for meetings for CCRI as well as for any group that might need meetings. If there's any additional information needed, you can reach me by email at bernielwright18@gmail.com or by phone at 803.614.5881.

POST OFFICE BOX 126, 16 PENN CENTER CIRCLE WEST, SAINT HELENA ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA 29920

PHONE: 843.838.2432 • EMAIL: INFO@PENNCENTER.COM • WEBSITE: WWW.PENNCENTER.COM

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