

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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**1. Name of Property**

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historic name Whittaker Memorial Hospital  
other names/site number DHR # 121-5072

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**2. Location**

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street & number 1003 Twenty-Eighth Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Newport News (Independent City) vicinity N/A  
state Virginia code VA county N/A code 700 zip code 23607

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**4. 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 the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- X building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: HEALTH CARE Sub: hospital

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT
Modernistic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof OTHER (Built-up)
walls BRICK
other N/A

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

HEALTH/MEDICINE
ETHNIC HERITAGE

Period of Significance 1943-1959

Significant Dates 1943, 1957

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder William Henry Moses, Benson L. Dutton, Charles Thaddeus Russell

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
X Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Hampton University

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 0.92 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 9 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 18, 374297, 4094437. Row 2: 2, See continuation sheet. Row 3: 3, See continuation sheet. Row 4: 4, See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Harding Sadler, Historical Architect Kimberly M. Chen, Architectural Historian
organization Sadler & Whitehead Architects, PLC date 30 March 2009
street & number 800 W. 33rd Street telephone 804.231.5299
city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23225

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Ms. Delphine White, Key Elements, L.L.C.
street & number 355 Crawford Street, Suite 608 telephone 757-576-5505
city or town Portsmouth state Virginia zip code 23704

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form.

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

**Summary Description:**

Whittaker Memorial Hospital, built in 1943, is located in the southeast quadrant of the city of Newport News in the Brookville Heights neighborhood. The area is often referred to as the East End and comprises the heart of Newport News' African-American community. The hospital is sited on the northwest corner of 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Orcutt Avenue, and occupies the entire east end of the block bound by 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> streets, and Orcutt and Roanoke avenues. Brookville Heights is a neighborhood of single family houses with a core of public uses – the Doris Miller Community Center, Whittaker Memorial Hospital, and Huntington Middle School – arrayed along two blocks of Orcutt Avenue.

The 42,500 square foot hospital building was constructed in 1943 with additions in 1957 and 1966. The central mass is three stories tall and has two-story wings. The earliest portion of the building has a symmetrical T-plan. The building has a concrete frame, with concrete roof and floor slabs, and curtain walls constructed of brick that is laid in a six-course American bond pattern. Whittaker Memorial Hospital incorporates both Moderne and Art Deco influences with a strong horizontal orientation that is emphasized by alternating bands of yellow and brown bricks. The darker bricks organize the regularly punched window openings on all elevations. The primary entrance, which incorporates Art Deco elements, is set on an angle facing 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Detailed Description:**

Site

Whittaker Memorial Hospital is sited in an area where the blocks are laid out in a regular grid pattern. The north-south streets are eighty feet wide and the east-west streets are sixty feet wide and edged with concrete curbs and narrow grass strips that are planted with widely spaced crape myrtles. Concrete sidewalks encircle each block. The blocks are subdivided into twenty-five foot wide lots designed to encourage modest residential development. With the exception of the Doris Miller Community Center and Huntington Middle School to the west and a medical clinic to the east, Whittaker Memorial is surrounded by residential development. Asphalt parking areas abut the hospital on the south and east sides. There are narrow lawns on the west and north sides with ornamental shrubs planted next to the building's west elevation.

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Building Evolution

Whittaker Memorial Hospital is composed of three sections constructed during separate building campaigns. The 1943 section is a symmetrical, T-shaped building. The two-story west elevation, facing Orcutt Avenue, was ten bays wide on the first and second stories. The building mass stepped up from two to three stories at the four center bays. A two-story rear wing extended six bays to the east. The 1943 portion of the building had a fifty-eight bed capacity. A second phase, constructed in 1957, increased the hospital's capacity to eighty-one beds with a three-story, T-shaped addition at the north end of the 1943 building. The west (Orcutt Avenue) elevation was increased by seven bays on the first and second stories and by nine bays on the third story. A two-story rear wing extended four bays to the east. The final phase of construction in 1966, added a third story to the rear wings. This phase also included one- and two-story additions to the ends of the rear wings. These additions gave the building a U-shaped plan and increased the hospital's capacity to 126 beds.

Exterior

The entire building is set on a raised basement and has a concrete frame structure, with concrete block partitions, and curtain walls constructed of brick laid in a six-course American bond pattern. The building has a horizontal composition that is emphasized by alternating bands of glazed yellow and variegated bricks. The bands of variegated bricks organize the regularly punched window openings on all elevations. The window sills are a continuous rowlock course of yellow brick that encircle the building and each wall is topped with a continuous yellow brick rowlock. The walls between the windows and from the rowlock to the heads of the windows are filled with bricks in varying shades of tan, brown, and orange. The areas below the rowlocks are constructed of brick of a uniform yellow color. The majority of windows, with the exception of the third-story windows on the west elevation of the 1943 portion are two-over-two, double-hung wooden sash with horizontal lights. Many of the lower sashes have lamb's tongues at the meeting rail which indicates that these second generation windows were improperly installed. Early photographs indicate that the original windows were one-over-one double-hung sash.

The primary entrance faces 28<sup>th</sup> Street at the building's southeast corner. The landing in front of the diagonally placed primary entrance is approached by eleven concrete risers framed by triangulated cheek walls that are topped with a rowlock course. The bottom four treads wrap the face of the cheek walls. The entrance is contained within a projecting one-story block that is clipped back to meet the walls of the building and topped with a rowlock course. Filling the void between the brick piers on the face of the entrance block is a brushed aluminum storefront system with single-leaf doors flanking a fixed glass panel. There is a three-part transom over the doors and fixed panel and a rectangular aluminum

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canopy supported by four tie rods over the transom. Rising above the entrance at the joint of the sections of the building is a decorative, vertical element that is three headers wide. The center header is slightly recessed from the flanking bricks. An early photograph shows that the original entrance was composed of four, horizontally stacked casement windows flanking a central circular entrance protected by a semi-circular canopy.

The building's secondary entrances are composed of single-leaf flush metal doors. A canopied ambulance bay on the east end of the north wing is accessed by a driveway that dips down to the basement level. The canopy, a non-contributing addition to the building, is supported by a low brick wall.

Interior

The building has an undistinguished utilitarian interior. The main entry opens into a square entrance lobby at the first floor. The main administration area is accessed via this lobby. Double-loaded corridors extend to the east and north from the lobby. The corridors are finished with concrete and vinyl tile floors, plaster or drywall walls and ceilings, and yellow ceramic tile wainscoting. Typical offices and patient rooms have the same finishes, absent the ceramic tile wainscoting. There are two operating rooms at the east end of the north wing. The walls of both operating rooms are surfaced with green ceramic tile from floor to ceiling. The interior is in poor condition and several areas have been vandalized.

The overall character of Whittaker Memorial Hospital is utilitarian and institutional. The building has been expanded and altered over the years, but the interior and exterior architecture conveys the building's historic use as a hospital.

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary Statement:**

Whittaker Memorial Hospital is a significant resource in the city of Newport News. The hospital is the manifestation of the vision of two African American physicians to provide quality medical care to the growing African American population of the city. The facility was conceived and survived during an era of segregation and isolation for both African American patients and physicians. Prior to the founding of Whittaker Memorial Hospital in 1908, the only medical care available to African American citizens in Newport News was a clinic housed in the city jail. The hospital has been housed in three buildings over the course of its history – a rented house, a frame hospital built in 1915, and the current building constructed in 1943. Whittaker Memorial Hospital served the African American community in Newport News until it closed in 1985. The 1943 Whittaker Memorial Hospital building represents the work of prominent African American architects, William Henry Moses, Jr. and Charles Thaddeus Russell, and Benson Leroy Dutton, an African American engineer. It is possibly one of a few African American hospitals in the United States that was built by African American physicians and designed by African American architects. The property's period of significance began with the construction of the current hospital building in 1943 and continued through the early years of the Civil Rights Movement until 1959.

**Criteria Consideration:**

Whittaker Memorial Hospital meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the areas of health/medicine and ethnic heritage, because it is closely associated with the broad patterns of racially segregated public and private medical services during the first three-quarters of the twentieth century. The development of the hospital was in response to the restrictions placed on African American patients and physicians during the Jim Crow era. The building does not appear to meet Criterion Consideration G (exceptional significance), and therefore its period of significance does not continue up until 1985 when the hospital was closed at this location.

**Historical Background:**

Local Historic Context:

Whittaker Memorial Hospital was constructed in 1943 in the city of Newport News, which is located at the

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tip of the Virginia Peninsula on the eastern bank of the James River where the river enters the Chesapeake Bay. Newport News, which was chartered in 1896, was once part of Warwick County, one of the original eight Virginia shires. The city developed as a result of the eastern extension of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and the establishment of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. The city's early corporate boundary represents the core of the present day downtown -- west of Oak Avenue and south of 34<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1952, the remainder of Warwick County was chartered as the City of Warwick, and in 1958, the cities of Newport News and Warwick were consolidated as the Corporation of Newport News. Whittaker Memorial Hospital is located in the southeast quadrant of the city of Newport News in the Brookville Heights neighborhood. The area is often referred to as the "East End" and comprises the heart of Newport News' African-American community.

It can be argued that the establishment of Whittaker Memorial Hospital grew out of the phenomenal industrial expansion in Newport News, which was possible because of the transportation networks developed during the Reconstruction period. The eastern expansion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway was the vision of Collis P. Huntington (1821 – 1900) who dreamed of "a new transportation network that would connect the west, the Ohio Valley, and the coal mines of West Virginia with a new port" in the east.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1865, agents for Huntington began purchasing land along the southeast coast including Warwick County, Virginia, and in 1869, Huntington purchased the nearly bankrupt Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. In 1880, nearly 18,000 acres purchased on Huntington's behalf were transferred to the Old Dominion Land Company, and in 1881, Newport News was selected over five other Virginia locales as the Atlantic deep water terminus for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.<sup>2</sup>

The railroad brought West Virginia bituminous coal to the port for coastal shipping and export. The purpose of the Old Dominion Company, evolved into planning the City of Newport News and building the piers and other infrastructure needed to support the new enterprise. Old Dominion also donated land for civic structures, including white and African American schools, the courthouse, the public library, and Riverside Hospital.<sup>3</sup> In 1886, the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company, now known as the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, was chartered to repair the ships that served the railroad hub. The first ship was delivered in 1891 and by 1897 the shipyard had a contract to build three warships for the Navy. Between 1918 and 1920, the shipyard delivered twenty-five destroyers and employed 12,000; and by 1943, employment had grown to 31,000.<sup>4</sup> Many of the laborers employed by the shipyard were African American.

Between 1900 and 1920, the population of Newport News grew from 19,635 persons to 35,596 persons. By 1950, the city's population reached 42,358. In contrast, the African American population of Newport News grew modestly between 1900 and 1910, from 6,846 to 7,259 but, nearly doubled between 1910

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and 1920 reaching 14,077. African American population grew steadily between 1920 and 1950 reaching 18,214, out pacing the rate of total population growth in Newport News. "It was during this period (the early decades of the twentieth century) of dramatic industrial growth that the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company rose to world eminence. The influx of black laborers to serve this enterprise spurred the development of a kindred professional community to meet their various needs."<sup>5</sup> Whittaker Memorial was a part of this development.

Health Care and Segregation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

The institution that was to become Whittaker Memorial Hospital was founded in 1908. During this period, racial segregation in all things especially medical care was the norm. "Hospitals either denied African Americans admission or accommodated them, almost universally, in segregated wards often placed in undesirable locations such as unheated attics or damp basements."<sup>6</sup>

The role of hospitals in providing of health care for both blacks and whites has changed significantly from the early nineteenth century to the present. In the early nineteenth century, hospitals were often departments of alms houses and functioned primarily as welfare institutions. Hospitals were peripheral rather than central to providing medical care, educating medical professionals, or conducting research.<sup>7</sup> Slave hospitals were encouraged on the larger plantations and there were a few hospitals and infirmaries for slaves and free African Americans in larger southern cities. "Few institutions in antebellum America existed specifically for the care of African Americans, and most medical facilities in the south excluded them. Contemporary racial customs and mores also restricted black access to hospital care in the North."<sup>8</sup>

During and following Reconstruction, white communities and some municipalities established hospitals for African Americans. These institutions were usually separate and certainly not equal. Some of these early institutions were the successors of the Freedman's Bureau's efforts to provide health care for recently emancipated slaves. Among the earliest of these white-sponsored segregated hospitals was Dixie Hospital and Nurse Training School established in 1891 at Hampton Institute, in Virginia. Ironically, black physicians were not allowed to practice at many of these segregated hospitals.<sup>9</sup> "Confronted with racism in American medicine, black people responded by establishing their own institutions. It should be noted that black-created hospitals arose within the context of the solidification of Jim-Crow laws in the South and increased racial tensions in the North."<sup>10</sup> African American physicians, educational institutions, churches and fraternal organizations began to establish black controlled hospitals during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. In 1901, two out of the thirteen physicians in Newport News were black, and by 1907, eight out of the

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thirty-nine practicing physicians were African American.<sup>11</sup> These African American physicians were not allowed to treat patients in local hospitals, including Dixie the African American hospital at Hampton Institute. Most medical care for African Americans was home based and therefore isolated and sporadic.

Prior to 1908, the only medical facility for African Americans in Newport News was a clinic at the city jail.<sup>12</sup> In 1904, “a Southern white man, Clarence Porter Jones, M.D., called a meeting of the eight Negro doctors of Newport News.”<sup>13</sup> The meeting resulted in a closer organization of the African American physicians and ultimately led to the construction of Whittaker Memorial Hospital.

History of Whittaker Memorial Hospital

Doctors Walter T. Foreman and Robert L. Whittaker led the effort to establish a hospital in Newport News operated by and for African Americans in Newport News. Dr. Walter T. Foreman was born in Talbot County, Maryland in 1877. Orphaned shortly after his birth, he was raised by an aunt. Foreman graduated from Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C. He began studying law at Shaw University, in Raleigh, North Carolina but, soon turned his attention to medicine and entered Leonard Medical College also at Shaw.<sup>14</sup> He graduated from Leonard in 1904 and was licensed to practice medicine in Virginia in 1905. Foreman committed suicide in 1923, at the age of 46.<sup>15</sup> Robert L. Whittaker was born in Illinois around 1880. He graduated from Hampton Institute in 1897, from Leonard Medical College in 1904, and was licensed to practice medicine in Virginia in 1905. Whittaker died in 1912 at the age of 32.

In 1908, Foreman, Whittaker and two other physicians, William P. Dickerson and W. T. Jones, leased four rooms on the second floor of 617 27<sup>th</sup> Street from the family of James A. Fields (1844 – 1903). James A. Fields, a prominent African American attorney, had his office and residence at 617 27<sup>th</sup> Street from 1897 to 1903. Field was Virginia’s first African American judicial officer; he served in the General Assembly, and was the Commonwealth Attorney for Warwick County.<sup>16</sup> In 1914, the Whittaker Memorial Association, with a Board of Trustees, was established to provide governance and financial support to the hospital. By 1915, the Association had raised funds to construct a hospital at 1014 29<sup>th</sup> Street, adjacent to the site of the current Whittaker Memorial Hospital building.

According to a contemporary account, “The land was donated by Mr. George B. West, a southern white man in Newport News; the plans were drawn by Mr. E. H. Bentzel of the Hampton Institute Trade School; and the building erected by Mr. A. B. Gaines, a colored contractor of Newport News, at a cost of about \$8100.”<sup>17</sup> Attribution for the design and construction of the building on 29<sup>th</sup> Street has also been given to William B. Holtzclaw, a contractor and architect with offices in Hampton and Washington, D.C.<sup>18</sup>

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The hospital was a three-story, Colonial Revival style frame building with a gambrel roof and a two-story porch across the facade.<sup>19</sup> The contemporary account described the new hospital as follows: "The building has twenty-two beds and is modern in every detail. It is more than a hospital, for the reason that it has an out-patient free clinic for the destitute sick."<sup>20</sup> The hospital also included a nursing school, which closed in 1932 after having graduated 112 nurses. "When the new hospital on 29th Street opened in 1915, some thought it should be named after Foreman for his instrumental role in raising money to open the hospital," but instead Foreman insisted that the hospital be named for his colleague and friend, Robert L. Whittaker, who died before the dream of an African American owned and operated hospital was realized.<sup>21</sup> William P. Dickerson took over as administrator until he retired in 1922 and Foreman acted as chief surgeon until his death in 1923.

"Whittaker would grow into an institution for the black community in Newport News, a training ground for black nurses, doctors and administrators, and a symbol of what blacks could achieve amid segregation."<sup>22</sup> During the 1920s and 1940s, "hospitals became essential components of this new scientific medicine, as sites of clinical practice and medical education of all physicians."<sup>23</sup> The transformation of hospitals and the creation of black controlled hospitals coincided with the nationwide increase in the number of "black physicians from about 900 in 1890 to about 3500 in 1920."<sup>24</sup> In 1943, utilizing funds from the 1940 Lanham Act (Public Law 76-849), a new fifty-eight bed facility was constructed adjacent to the 1915 hospital, which was demolished prior to 1950. The Lanham Act provided funds for the building of defense-related industries and was used to fund initiatives which supported workers in those industries, such as child and health care. The three-story, T-shaped, glazed yellow brick building was designed collaboratively by two African American architects, William Henry Moses and Charles Thaddeus Russell, and an African American civil engineer, Benson L. Dutton.<sup>25</sup> Additions in 1957 and 1966 increased the hospital's capacity to 126 beds.

Dr. E. Stanley Grannum became the new administrator when the new Whittaker Hospital opened in 1943. He served Whittaker in that capacity until his death in 1974. His administration was an era of growth at Whittaker but he also grappled with the effects of desegregation: a drain of black patients and doctors to larger, better-equipped hospitals. The hospital struggled to make money and often could not meet basic needs. Nurses took sheets home and washed them and a Trustee who owned a grocery store in Hampton allowed Grannum to charge the cost of food to a private account in order to keep the doors open.<sup>26</sup>

Despite financial hardship for the hospital, African American doctors thrived professionally at Whittaker in the 1940s, 1950s and most of the 1960s. "Samuel K. Ashby, a Norfolk native, arrived at Whittaker in 1947 from Harlem Hospital in New York to take the position of house physician. For \$200 a month, plus

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room and board, he managed the emergency room, checked on patients and, in general, handled any problem that arose during the day."<sup>27</sup> C. Waldo Scott joined the staff of Whittaker Memorial in 1948. Scott was born in Atlanta in 1916 and moved to Newport News two years later. In 1936, he graduated cum laude from Howard University with a bachelor's degree in science earning his master's degree the following year. "In 1941, he graduated cum laude with a medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School. In 1952, by a 3-2 City Council vote, Scott became the first black person this century appointed to the Newport News School Board."<sup>28</sup> He is the father of Robert C. Scott, the first black congressman from Virginia since Reconstruction. Dr. Scott died January 9, 1993, at the age of 76.

Troubles followed the 1966 expansion of the hospital. "Patient occupancy rates were 92 percent in 1964 and 82 percent in 1965. In 1966, the year the new wing opened, occupancy dropped to 79 percent and continued falling every year until 1975. In 1963, the hospital had a staff of 140 which included eighteen physicians. The staff dropped to a low of eleven doctors in 1973. For five years, 1970 to 1975, Whittaker closed its emergency room. A report issued in 1973 by the Peninsula Planning District Commission's health-care facilities committee recommended converting the hospital into an outpatient clinic."<sup>29</sup> Grannum and others successfully blocked this from happening. After the emergency room reopened in 1975, the hospital experienced a brief revival and within two years twelve new doctors had joined the staff. But, patient numbers dwindled in the late 1970s.

By the 1970s, the protests of the Civil Rights era and the slow-acting effects of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. The Board of Education* finally began to erode the segregation of public and private institutions. With the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1965 Voting Rights Act legal segregation was abolished. "Many civil rights activists had believed that the integration of medical facilities would be a two-way process: black patients and staff would integrate white hospitals and white patients and white staff would integrate black hospitals. ... Integration proved to be a one-way street – out of black hospitals."<sup>30</sup> White physicians were no longer required to admit and treat their black patients in black hospitals and black physicians were no longer dependent on black medical institutions for their professional survival or advancement.<sup>31</sup> "In 1919, some 118 black hospitals existed in the United States. In 1944, there were some 124 in operation. By 1993 the number of historically black hospitals had declined to 8."<sup>32</sup>

In 1985, to escape the perception that Whittaker was a public hospital, the hospital's board made the decision to construct a new hospital in a different location and to change the name to Newport News General Hospital. To help finance the new hospital the Whittaker Memorial Hospital, on the corner of 28<sup>th</sup> and Orcutt, was sold. Since closing in 1985 the hospital building has housed a number of publicly oriented uses. In 1992, the Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board, the publicly funded

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mental health agency, began offering a range of treatment programs at this site. In 1995, the empty Whittaker Memorial Hospital building opened as a boarding house. This facility was closed in 1997 by Newport News City officials for building for code violations. In February 1999, the Salvation Army rented space in the 64,000-square-foot building for its Peninsula administrative offices and a 55-bed homeless shelter. The building is under new ownership and will soon be renovated for use as a senior residence.

The Architects of Whittaker Memorial Hospital:

Whittaker Memorial Hospital is one of at least eighteen hospitals or clinics designed by African American architects prior to 1944, based on projects listed in African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865 – 1945. Among the earliest hospitals listed is the Presbyterian Hospital (1920) designed by Vertner Woodson Tandy in Humacao, Puerto Rico. Julian Francis Abele designed three hospitals and a clinic – the Curtis Clinic at Jefferson Medical College (1929) and Episcopal Hospital (1933) in Philadelphia, Windber Hospital (1933) in Windber, Pennsylvania, and Duke University Hospital (1940) in Durham, North Carolina. John Clavon Norman Sr. designed Staats Hospital (1939) in Charleston, West Virginia and Edward Egington Birch designed Lyons Hospital (1940) in Covington, Kentucky. Four of the listed hospitals are associated with historically black colleges. The Lowman Hospital (1920) at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina was designed by Miller Fulton Walker. Louis Edwin Fry, Sr. designed the hospital at Prairie View A & M College, Prairie View, Texas (1929) and the Infantile Paralysis Hospital at Tuskegee Institute (1940). In 1931, Moses McKissack, III designed the Hubbard Hospital at Meharry Medical College, located in Nashville, Tennessee. He also designed the Mental Health Center at Meharry Medical College (1931) and the Health Center at Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee (1942). Several hospitals were built by black fraternal organizations or black physicians. Moses McKissack, III designed Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou, Mississippi for the Knights and Daughters of Tabor (1940). Provident Hospital (1928) in Baltimore, Maryland was founded by African American doctors and designed by Albert Irvin Cassell. Trinity Hospital (1932) was established by three African American physicians in Detroit, Michigan. It was designed by Helen Eugenia Parker, one of the earliest female African American architects in the United States. The latest of these four African American hospitals, established by African American physicians and designed by an African American architect was Whittaker Memorial (1943).

Design of Whittaker Memorial Hospital is attributed to prominent African American architects, William Henry Moses, Jr. and Charles Thaddeus Russell, and Benson Leroy Dutton, an African American Engineer.

William Henry Moses, Jr. was born in Cumberland County, Virginia on August 20, 1901. In 1922, Moses

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graduated from Central High School in Philadelphia and enrolled in Pennsylvania State University. He withdrew after two years and moved to New York City where he worked for Vertner Woodson Tandy,<sup>33</sup> who was said to be “the foremost African American architect practicing in New York City during the first half of the twentieth century.”<sup>34</sup> Moses eventually received his Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from Pennsylvania State University in 1933 and did postgraduate work in architecture at New York University in 1939. In 1934, Mr. Moses joined the faculty Hampton Institute to teach architectural drawings. During his 37 years at Hampton, he initiated the architecture curriculum at the university and managed it through full accreditation by the National Architectural Accrediting Board in 1969.<sup>35</sup> William Henry Moses Jr., died October 19, 1991, at the age of 90.<sup>36</sup>

Born in 1875, Charles Thaddeus Russell was a native of Richmond, Virginia’s Jackson Ward neighborhood. His early education was in Richmond Public schools and in 1893 he attended Hampton Institute where he received a certificate in carpentry. “In 1901, Russell became supervisor of the Carpentry Division at Tuskegee Institute...Russell taught carpentry and supervised the carpentry work on all the campus buildings.”<sup>37</sup> In 1907, Russell returned to Richmond to accept a dual appointment at Virginia Union University where he became an instructor in Manual training and superintendent of grounds. He also opened an architectural practice. His first commission was for the design of the Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank completed in 1910. This commission established Russell “as the first African American to maintain an architectural practice in Richmond and probably the first to do so in the Commonwealth of Virginia.”<sup>38</sup> Over the next forty years, Russell designed a number of buildings in Richmond’s Jackson Ward community, including banks, insurance companies, funerary establishments, and churches. He designed the Attucks Theater in Norfolk and the First Baptist Church in Portsmouth in collaboration with his former student, Harvey Nathaniel Johnson. His last major project, in collaboration with Hugo Van Kuyck, was the moving of the Belgian Friendship Complex from the site of the 1939 New York World’s Fair to the campus of Virginia Union University. Charles Thaddeus Russell died in 1952 at the age of 77 in Richmond, Virginia.<sup>39</sup>

Benson Leroy Dutton was born in Philadelphia in 1910. In 1933, he became the first African-American to graduate from Pennsylvania State University's College of Engineering. From 1935 to 1940, he was a project engineer for the National Park Service in York, Pennsylvania. In 1940, Dutton joined the faculty at Hampton University as an engineering professor. “In 1942, he became the first black registered civil engineer in Virginia. At the naval training station he taught some of the premiere interracial and coed classes in engineering. Mr. Dutton left HU (Hampton University) in 1947 to establish a school of engineering at Tennessee State University in Nashville and was its dean until 1956, when he was named chief bridge design engineer for the city of Philadelphia. In 1965, he moved to Washington to work for the U.S. Office of Education, where he became director of the Office of Federally Assisted Construction

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in 1970. He retired from the federal government in 1977.”<sup>40</sup> Benson Leroy Dutton died January 21, 1992. He was 82.

In addition to Whittaker Memorial Hospital, the Moses-Dutton-Russell collaboration produced “the Madeline Foreman residence (1943), the Uganda ballroom (1943), the Butler Oak Park War Housing (1944), the Earl Wilson residence (1944), the Dr. John A. Singleton residence (1945), the First Baptist Church Home for the Aged (1948), and the Robert Jones residence (1949).”<sup>41</sup> Each of the gentlemen had significant independent careers as architects, engineers and educators.

Conclusion:

Whittaker Memorial Hospital is significant because it was a private African American hospital established by African American doctors and designed by prominent African American architects prior to the integration of public and private hospitals. The building filled the medical needs of the Newport News African American community from 1943 to 1985.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**UTM References**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The nominated property is all of the property identified as Parcel # 307010152 with the Real Estate Assessor's Office for the City of Newport News, Virginia.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundaries enclose the entire parcel historically associated with the 1943 Whittaker Memorial Hospital.

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

**Property:** Whittaker Memorial Hospital (120.5072)  
**Location:** 1003 28<sup>th</sup> Street, Newport News, Virginia  
**Photographer:** Melanie Moran, Johannas Design Group  
**Date:** January 2009  
**Photograph File:** Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
2801 Kensington Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia

**Photograph Number:**

- 0001 West Elevation, Looking Southeast
- 0002 South Elevation, Looking North
- 0003 Southeast Corner, Entrance Looking Northwest
- 0004 South Elevation, Looking North – joint 1943 bldg. & 1966 addition
- 0005 Northeast Corner, Entrance Looking Southwest
- 0006 South Elevation 1966 & 1957 additions
- 0007 Southeast Corner, Ambulance Bay Looking Northwest
- 0008 North Elevation, Looking Southwest
- 0009 Typical Stair
- 0010 First Floor, 1966 North wing Looking Northeast
- 0011 Second Floor, 1943 building Looking South
- 0012 Third Floor, 1957 addition, typical rooms on west side of corridor Looking North

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<sup>1</sup> Ashley M. Neville and Sarah Meacham, "National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, Medical Arts Building (121-0223)" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 28 February 2002) Section 8, pg. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nn.northropgrumman.com/about/history.html>

<sup>5</sup> Calder Loth, ed., Virginia Landmarks of Black History (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995) pg.127.

<sup>6</sup> Vanessa Northington Gamble, Making a Place for Ourselves: The Black Hospital Movement, 1920 – 1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). pg. 5 - 6.

<sup>7</sup> Gamble, pg. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Gamble, pg. 5 - 6.

<sup>9</sup> Gamble, pg. 7 - 8.

<sup>10</sup> Gamble, pg. 10 – 11.

<sup>11</sup> Mary C. Taylor, "National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, Smith's Pharmacy (121-5066)" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 17 January 2002) Section 8, pg. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Biggins, "A History of Health-Care Concern - East End Hospital Honors Board Chairman With Wing Dedication" Daily Press (Newport News, VA) 4 March 1993, and Gregory Cherry, "National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, James A. Fields House (121-5004)" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 15 January 2002) Section 8, pg. 4.

<sup>13</sup> The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, "Whittaker Memorial Hospital" The Southern Workman, XLVI (January through December 1917), March, pg. 140.

<sup>14</sup> William Burnham, "Doctor's Career Halted By Sting Of Segregation." Daily Press (Newport News, VA) 9 February 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur W. Hafner, ed. Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804 – 1929, American Medical Association, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Gregory Cherry, "National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, James A. Fields House (121-5004)"

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(Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 15 January 2002) Section 8, pg. 4.

<sup>17</sup> The Southern Workman, pg. 141.

<sup>18</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, The Virginia Architects 1835 – 1955: A Biographical Dictionary (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997) pg. 205.

<sup>19</sup> E. Stanley Grannum, "Whittaker Memorial Hospital, Newport News, Virginia," Journal of the National Medical Association Vol. 56, No. 2 (March, 1964), pg. 120.

<sup>20</sup> The Southern Workman, pg. 141.

<sup>21</sup> Burnham, "Doctor's Career"

<sup>22</sup> Burnham, "Doctor's Career"

<sup>23</sup> Gamble, pg. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Dreck Spurlock Wilson, ed. African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865 – 1945 (New York: Routledge, 2004) pg. 296.

<sup>26</sup> William Burnham, "A Source of Pride for Us - Whittaker Hospital Became Newport News General" Daily Press (Newport News, VA) 9 February 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Burnham, "A Source of Pride"

<sup>28</sup> Jeff Long, "16th Street Bridge Dedicated To Former East End Physician," Daily Press (Newport News, VA) 29 August 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Burnham, "A Source of Pride"

<sup>30</sup> Gamble, pg.193.

<sup>31</sup> Gamble, pg. xii and 193.

<sup>32</sup> Gamble, pg. xi.

<sup>33</sup> Wilson, pg. 295.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, pg. 389.

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<sup>35</sup> Wilson, pg. 295, and Obituary, "William H. Moses Jr., Hampton University Department Founder," Daily Press (Newport News, VA) 24 October 1991.

<sup>36</sup> Obituary, Moses, 1991.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson, pg. 364.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Wilson, pg. 365.

<sup>40</sup> Obituary, "Benson L. Dutton, Ex-Hampton University Professor," Daily Press (Newport News, VA) 25 January 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Wilson, pg. 296.