

NPS Form 10-900  
(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

535



OMB No. 10024-0018

# 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 an 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.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Jackson County High School  
other names/site number Fox Middle School

## 2. Location

street & number 707 School Drive NA  not for publication  
city or town Gainesboro NA  vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Jackson code 087 zip code 38562

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 Gary Holter Date of Action 7/8/2009

Jackson County High School  
Name of Property

Jackson County, TN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	1	structures
		objects
2	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION-School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
EDUCATION-School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other WOOD  
VINYL

**Narrative Description**

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

Jackson County High School  
Name of Property

Jackson County, TN  
County and State

**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.)

- 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** N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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)

ARCHITECTURE  
EDUCATION

**Period of Significance**

1939-1959

**Significant Dates**

1939

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

ARCHITECT: Marr and Holman, Nashville, TN

BUILDER: Gorrell, F.C., and Sons, Russellville, KY

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- 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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Jackson County Board of Education

Jackson County High School  
Name of Property

Jackson County, TN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approx. 1.2 acres Gainesboro 325 SW

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>620474</u>	<u>4023473</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

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 Andra Kowalczyk Martens

organization Thomason and Associates date December 22, 2008

street & number 1907 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S. telephone 615-385-4960

city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Jackson County Board of Education (Contact person: Joe Barlow)

street & number 711 School Drive telephone 931-268-0119

city or town Gainesboro state TN zip code 38562

**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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

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## DESCRIPTION

### INVENTORY:

#### 1. Jackson County High School (C)

The Jackson County High School is located at 707 School Drive in Gainesboro, Jackson County, Tennessee. Gainesboro, the county seat of Jackson County, had a population of 879 in 2000 and is located south of Cordell Hull Lake on the Cumberland River. Designed by the Nashville architectural firm of Marr and Holman, the Jackson County High School building was constructed to the southeast of downtown Gainesboro in 1939 as a project of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. Facing School Drive to the east, the Jackson County High School is a two-story, brick Colonial Revival building. The paired multi-light windows, two story pedimented portico, and embellished door are important features of the Colonial Revival style on this school building.

The school building served as the Jackson County High School from its opening in 1939 until 1969. At that time, high school classes were moved to a new building north of Gainesboro, and the subject building became the Fox Middle School. Classes for middle school were held here until ca. 2000. Since that time, the building has been vacant with the exception of the rear, one-story wing that is used for storage and classrooms. Currently, local officials are seeking adaptive re-use recommendations for the building.

The main entrance of the school building faces east, with a metal flagpole (ca. 1950) in front of the school. Close to the street is a ca. 1970 wood sign reading "R. M. Fox Middle School, Home of the Blue Devils."

A concrete sidewalk spans the length of the building. Perpendicular concrete sidewalks run along the sides of the building from the street to the rear parking lot. Also, a concrete sidewalk spans the distance from the street to the entrance portico. The floor under the portico is of poured concrete, and there are three concrete steps leading to it. To the left (south) of the portico is a short, concrete, wheelchair ramp.

The Jackson County High School is a two-story building in the Colonial Revival style with a brick exterior of six-course American bond, a concrete foundation, and a hipped roof of asphalt shingles. To each side of the central, two-story entrance portico, and on each story, are five pairs of nine-over-nine, original, wood sash windows with concrete sills. Each pair of windows on the first story has a soldier course lintel. Six original, metal downspouts descend from the gutter on the façade. At the center of the façade is the two-story, wood portico with a gable pediment. The gable field has horizontal wood board siding and a central, circular window. The pediment is supported by four square columns, clad in vinyl ca. 2000. The portico's frieze has applied lettering reading, "ROBERT M FOX ELE." Under the portico is a central entrance with a pair of ca. 1970, single-light glass and metal doors with a large, ca. 1970 plate glass transom above. This entrance has an original wood surround consisting of fluted pilasters and an entablature with a dentiled cornice. Within the portico area, the entrance is flanked by single, nine-over-nine, original, wood sash windows with concrete sills and soldier course lintels. Above the entrance is an original, twelve-over-twelve, wood sash window flanked by six-light sidelights, all with a concrete sill. The entire window group is flanked by single nine-over-nine, original, wood sash windows.

The south elevation of the school building has a pair of ca. 1970, single-light glass and metal doors with a ca. 1970 plate glass transom above. A ca. 1985 metal canopy extends from above the doors to the adjacent Board of Education building (not included in the nomination). On the second story of the south elevation, centered above the entrance, is a

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

pair of nine-over-nine, original, wood sash windows with a concrete sill and a soldier course lintel. To either side of the central bay is an original, metal downspout descending from the gutter.

The west elevation of the main body of the school building is broken by the rear gymnasium/auditorium section. On this elevation, between the south end and the intersection with the gymnasium/auditorium section, there are two pairs of nine-over-nine, original, wood sash windows with concrete sills on the lower and upper story. The lower pairs also have soldier course lintels. On the rear roof are two eyebrow dormer vents. The majority of the rear (west) elevation of the main body of the school building consists of the intersection of the two-story gymnasium/auditorium, which forms a T with the main body of the school building. The gymnasium/auditorium is also of six-course American bond brick and has a hipped roof of asphalt shingles. Its south elevation consists of four bays, each with a multi-light steel, fixed and awning design window with a concrete sill and a soldier course lintel. To the inside of each of the outer two bays is an original, metal downspout descending from the gutter.

At the westernmost bay of the south elevation, there is a one-story, perpendicular wing. The main body of the two-story gymnasium/auditorium is set back from this wing. In this setback portion, above the one-story wing, there is a ca. 1970 plywood and metal addition of unknown purpose or access. It has openings covered with plywood and a shed roof of metal. At the intersection of the gymnasium/auditorium and the one-story wing, under the westernmost window, is a shed roof lean-to covering an access to the partial basement. A coal furnace was used to heat the school since its construction, and a coal chute door to the basement is located by the lean-to.

There is a chain-link fence enclosing the side lot between the gymnasium/auditorium elevation and the concrete sidewalk running along the entire southern side of the school lot. The fence is approximately six feet tall and was installed ca. 2000. The area is now overgrown with tall weeds.

The one-story wing constitutes the west or rear elevation of the school building. It has a concrete foundation, an exterior of stretcher bond brick, and a slightly pitched gable roof of asphalt. The south elevation of the wing consists of three bays, each originally having a multi-light, steel fixed and awning windows. The central window has been removed and infilled with a ca. 2000 metal door and metal siding. On the west (rear) elevation of the one-story wing, there are two multi-light, steel windows of the same size as on the south elevation; two multi-light, steel windows of a larger size; a ca. 1970 metal door with a narrow single-light glass; and six more multi-light, steel fixed and awning windows. The entrance bay was originally a window bay, with stretcher bond brick infill around the door. There is a slightly inclined concrete pad leading to the door from the parking lot. The rear or west elevation of the two-story gymnasium/auditorium, with an exterior brick chimney, is visible to the east of the one-story wing. On the north elevation of the wing, there is a multi-light, metal steel and awning window, an infilled window opening with a ca. 1970 paneled door and stretcher bond brick, and two smaller multi-light steel windows. Above the door is a metal, shed roof canopy. There is a two-foot high concrete pad off the entrance, with two concrete steps on both the east and west side of the pad. All windows on this rear, one-story wing have concrete sills and soldier course lintels.

The gymnasium/auditorium's north elevation is identical to the south elevation. The north wall of the gymnasium/auditorium ties into the rear (west) elevation of the main body of the school building, which has two pairs of original, nine-over-nine, wood sash windows and two single windows of the same kind on the lower story. All have concrete sills and soldier course lintels. On the upper story are four pairs of original, nine-over-nine, wood sash windows with concrete sills. An original, metal downspout divides this portion of the west elevation in equal halves.

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

The north elevation of the main body of the school building has ca. 1970, single-light glass and metal doors with a ca. 1970 plate glass transom above. A ca. 1980 sheet metal canopy extends from above the doors to the adjacent, detached, ca. 1960 cafeteria building. On the second story of the south elevation, centered above the entrance, is a pair of nine-over-nine, original, wood sash windows with a concrete sill and a soldier course lintel. To either side of the central bay is an original, metal downspout descending from the gutter. The upper story also has two single nine-over-nine, wood sash windows, each with a concrete sill and a soldier course lintel.

Upon entering through the central portico on the east facade, a short entrance hallway leads to the north-south central corridor of the school. In the entrance hallway there is a bronze plaque noting the role of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works in the construction of the school building. Along each wall of the main hall are original, metal lockers on each floor. At each end (north and south) of the main hall is a concrete stairwell with metal railing, turning ninety degrees to ascend to the upper floor. These stairwells also provide access to the exterior on the ground floor through ca. 1970 doors. Classrooms, two offices, and two restrooms are located along the east and west walls of the lower story. Classrooms, a library, and an original cafeteria converted into a classroom are on the second floor. The gymnasium/auditorium extends as a T from the main body's west façade, terminating at a one-story, perpendicular wing whose rooms originally were a football locker room, a band room, and other classrooms.

From the point where the entrance hall and main hall meet on the lower floor, the first two rooms to the north, on the east wall, are administrative offices. In one, there is an original steel vault and an original sink fixture. There is a classroom at the northeast corner of the main hall and another across the hall at the northwest corner of the building. Continuing south along the west wall are separate boys' and girls' restrooms. At this point the gymnasium/auditorium intersects the main hall. At the southwest corner of the main body is another classroom. East of this room, across the hall, is a double classroom that was the chemistry laboratory. It has an interior wall with an original six-light glass and wood door joining the two rooms. The lab was originally furnished with special lab tables and sinks and a long built-in wall cabinet for the storage of chemical materials and equipment. The room retains only its original wood cabinets with three-light double doors.

On the second floor, there is a classroom in the southeastern corner of the building. The next room to the north was the cafeteria with a dining area and an adjoining kitchen. The remainder of the rooms along this east wall of the second floor included a library and a small leisure room. Each room is accessible from the main hall. Some of these rooms are accessible to each other via doors on interior separation walls. The library and leisure room adjoin each other in this manner. There are two doors between the kitchen and the cafeteria. This arrangement allowed students to enter one, make a U, collect a lunch, and exit the second door to the eating area. As the student body grew, these two rooms became classrooms and a detached cafeteria building was constructed ca. 1960 to the north of the school building. There are three classrooms along the west wall of the second floor.

Throughout the school building, floors are of concrete. The lower floor is finished with glazed square tiles; on the upper floor, some classroom floors are covered with linoleum tile, thin carpet, or paint. Many of the classroom walls are covered with ca. 1970 wallpaper. In some instances, the wallpaper has been removed from the exterior walls below the windows, revealing the original plaster over brick. One interior wall, between the small room in the northeast corner and the adjacent classroom (former home economics room) to the south, is faced with square, textured, terra cotta tiles. Florescent light fixtures are suspended from the classroom ceilings, and each room has an original steam radiator. Most classrooms measure approximately 22' x 36', with the science room length doubled. On the first and second floors, doors from the main hall into classrooms and offices are ca. 1970 replacements of wood with a single clear glass transom. Interior classroom doors, joining various rooms, are original, six-light, two-panel

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

wood design. At the front of each classroom, an original chalkboard is intact, though some are covered with dry erasure board. The height of the chalkboards from the floor is consistent, at approximately three feet. Outer walls have original wood sash windows as described on the exterior. At the rear of classrooms, many closet doors are original, wood panel; in some rooms, original wood panel cabinets are present.

The two entrances to the gymnasium/auditorium from the main hall have ca. 1970 replacement, wood, double doors with metal push-bar handles and single glass light. The original, hardwood floor of the gymnasium/auditorium is intact. On the floor of the gymnasium/auditorium there are two basketball courts, the larger one being the standard size for high school ball (84' x 50') and the concentric, smaller one, for elementary school ball (74' x 42'). At center court is a ca. 1970 Fox Middle School emblem reading "Home of the Blue Devils." The ceiling is vaulted with metal trusses, and the surface of the ceiling has been sprayed with acoustical/insulation foam. Several single, metal light fixtures are suspended from the trusses. The large casement windows along each side wall (north and south), as described on the exterior, allow for ample natural light within the gymnasium/auditorium. Along these side walls are original, wood bleachers, five-high per side. The wall surface of the gymnasium/auditorium is block covered in plaster and painted, with pilasters between the casement windows.

At the far (west) end of the auditorium is the stage, which is approximately three feet high and faced with brick. The stage has a proscenium arch with plastered walls. This is flanked by ca. 1970 replacement, wood doors with metal push-bar handles and a single glass light that lead behind the arch. The original depth of the stage is approximately twenty-five feet, though a particleboard partition has been installed and decreases the visible portion of the stage to ten feet. This partition has a central opening to access the remaining portion of the original stage. The stage is accessible from the gymnasium/auditorium floor at end by three wood steps. Stage curtains are suspended, and the foremost curtain is from ca. 1970 with "FES." (Fox Elementary School seems to have been used interchangeably with the name Fox Middle School.) Original curtains remain behind this first one. To either side of the stage, the rear, one-story wing can be accessed. At the north end are concrete steps leading up to a dressing room/football locker room. The room has a concrete floor and has been compartmentalized for storage. There is an original, six-light, two-panel wood door to this room, and walls are of brick and painted. Additionally, in this stairwell there is a ca. 1970 wood, exterior door. Similarly, at the south end of the stage, concrete steps access two classrooms along the west wall of the wing. These rooms are currently in use and have concrete floors, brick or block walls, and a dropped ceiling of foam acoustical panels and inset florescent light fixtures.

## Portable classroom (NC)

2. There is a ca. 1980 portable classroom on the side lot between the gymnasium/auditorium elevation and the concrete sidewalk running along the entire northern side of the school lot. This temporary building is of metal construction and sits on a concrete foundation. There are plans to remove the building.

## Flagpole (C)

3. In front of the school building is a metal flagpole (ca. 1950).

## Sign (NC)

4. Close to the street is a ca. 1970 wood sign reading "R. M. Fox Middle School, Home of the Blue Devils."



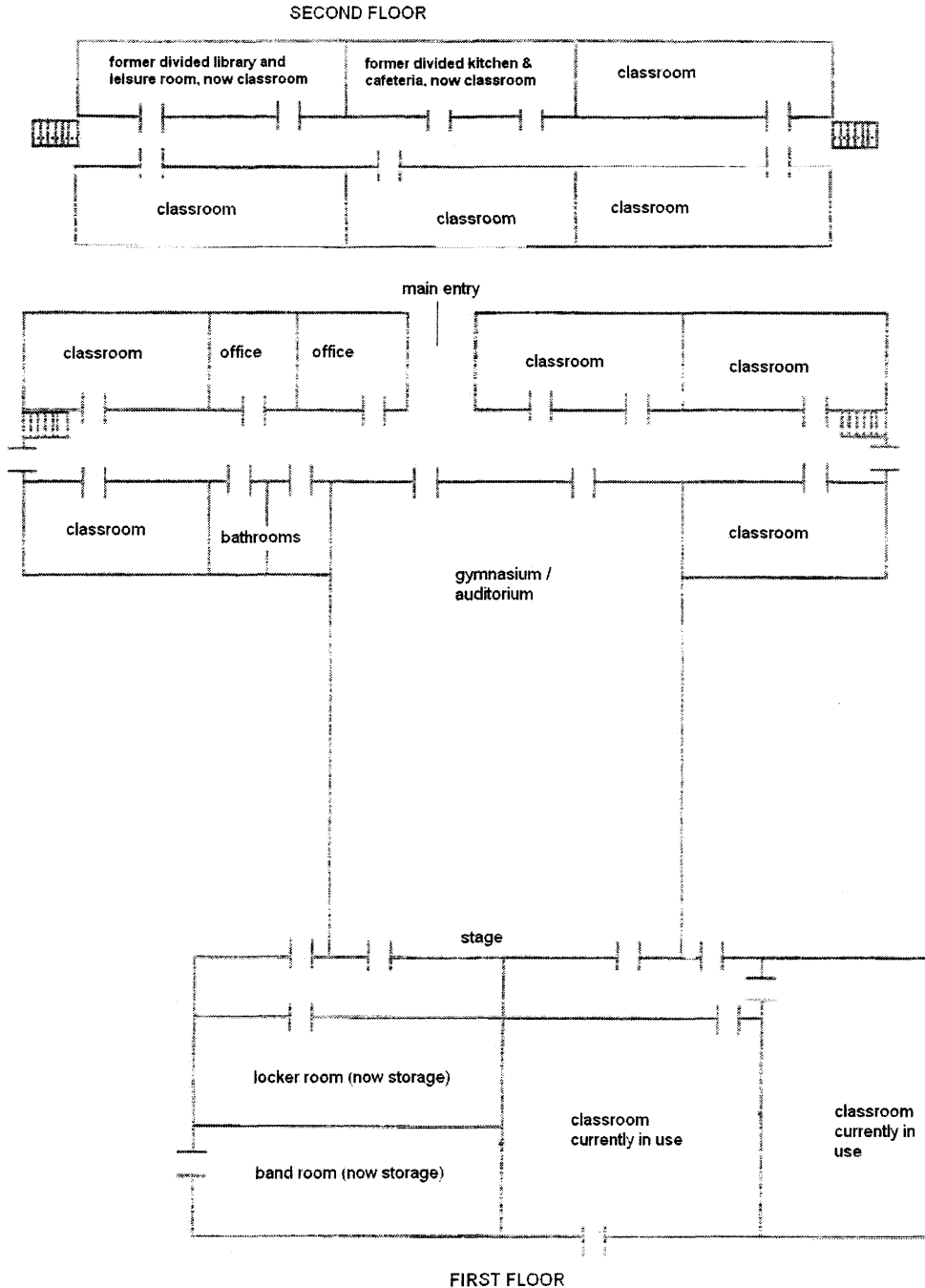
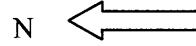
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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

Sketch plan Not to Scale



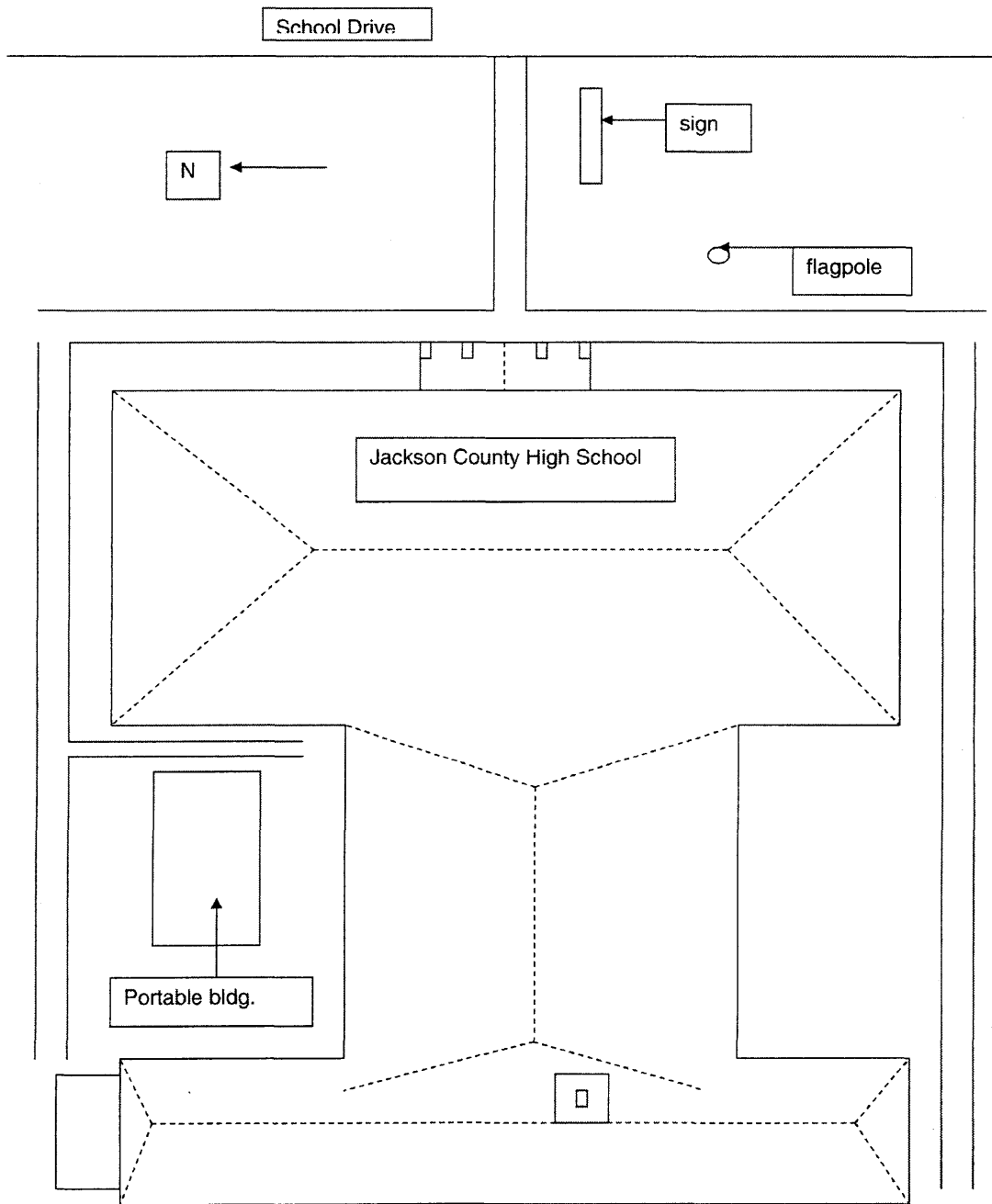
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

Site plan



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### SUMMARY

The Jackson County High School is significant under National Register criteria A and C for its role in the Jackson County public school system and for its architectural design. The school building has classrooms along a north-south corridor and a gymnasium/auditorium wing extending to the west. The school was originally built with county bonds and Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (Public Works Administration or PWA) funds to serve as the Jackson County High School in the county seat of Gainesboro. After it opened in 1939, the school provided secondary education for county students until 1969, when a new high school was built, and the building became Fox Middle School. Designed by the Marr and Holman architectural firm of Nashville, Tennessee, it was constructed in the Colonial Revival style with a brick exterior and wood detailing. The building is illustrative of the modernization of public school building design in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Few major alterations have occurred to the building. The entrance's large columns are covered in vinyl, yet are still intact. Some classrooms have had wallpaper added to wall surface, however in many cases, even this is starting to come unattached, exposing original wall surfaces. The building is largely vacant but retains much of its original architectural character, interior and exterior floor plans, and detailing. The building retains its historic and architectural integrity.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### Background

Gainesboro, Tennessee, is located in upper Middle Tennessee, just south of Cordell Hull Lake on the Cumberland River, and is the seat of Jackson County. The Jackson County High School is located southeast of downtown Gainesboro. Jackson County was established in 1801, and its county seat was Williamsburg, named for pioneer Sampson Williams.<sup>1</sup> The history of formal education in Jackson County dates to 1806, when Sampson Williams and Moses Fisk established the Montpelier Academy at Williamsburg. Fisk, a graduate of Dartmouth College originally came to Tennessee to establish a mission school for Cherokee people. He and Williams also established the Fisk Female Academy at Hilham, then in Jackson County.<sup>2</sup>

Gainesborough, as it was then spelled, was made the county seat in 1817 on land donated from David Cox. The town was named for General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, who fought with Jackson at the battle of New Orleans. Gainesboro was officially incorporated in 1820.<sup>3</sup> In 1837, the Montpelier Academy was relocated to Gainesboro. The school was rebuilt following an 1877 fire and served the students of Gainesboro until 1900. During the nineteenth century other schools were established in Jackson County. Philamath School, along the present-day north county line, was a rural church school built in 1858. Flynn's Lick Academy was established four miles south of Gainesboro in the late nineteenth century. Offering dormitory accommodations to students from many adjacent counties, the school

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<sup>1</sup> Moldon Tayse, "Jackson County," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*; online, <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/> accessed September 29, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "A History of Schools in Jackson County, Tennessee;" online, <http://www.tngenweb.org/jackson/Jacksch.htm> accessed September 29, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Tayse.

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Jackson County High School  
Jackson County, Tennessee

curriculum included Latin, Greek, Higher Mathematics and Sciences, German, Psychology, and Music. Tuition costs were no more than \$3.50 per month, and board could be bartered using any provisions at market price.<sup>4</sup>

During the nineteenth century, many state legislative efforts attempted to standardize a public school system. These were thwarted by disorganization and insufficient funds. Governor Andrew Johnson made a sincere effort to fund an operable state school system with the incentive of additional funds from taxes going to the school systems. However, the Civil War curtailed his plan.<sup>5</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, school for both black and white students suffered from inefficiency and lack of funds. Due to the remote location of so much of Tennessee's population, no workable plan could meet the needs of all students. It was not until 1885 that state law allowed municipalities to initiate new taxes for secondary schools; a similar law allowed counties to do the same in 1891. It was 1899 before the state required each county to maintain a secondary school facility.<sup>6</sup>

In Jackson County, by the early twentieth century, schools included Chicken Coop, Cumberland Valley Preparatory School, Granville Seminary, Jennings Gap, Tannerhill Lodge, Male and Female Institute, Teels Chapel, and Wartrace Academy. By 1926, there were over sixty schools across the county.<sup>7</sup> In 1927 Jackson County built a school building on Main Street for secondary schooling for freshmen through senior grades. The building was of brick and had steam heating and two restrooms. The building was valued at \$40,000; its equipment, \$3600; and its grounds, \$3000. At the beginning of the 1929 school year, teacher John L. Meadows reported the Jackson County High School student body consisted of sixty-nine boys and forty-nine girls. Of the total 118 students, 102 remained in February through May of 1930. The school terms was 180 days.<sup>8</sup> Today the building houses Gainesboro Elementary School.

This early high school building was designed for a capacity of 300 pupils. As the county grew, the high school building reached and surpassed its capacity. By the beginning of the 1937 school year, the situation was untenable: 450 of 500 eligible county students attended the high school.<sup>9</sup> At that time, the school operated on a budget of nearly \$13,000 per school year. Salaries accounted for most of this figure, totaling \$9,510. Other expenses included janitor wages of \$100, fuel at \$200, water at \$100, and lighting at fifty dollars. Cash on hand was \$2,801.<sup>10</sup> Minutes from meetings of the Jackson County Board of Education indicate that the county moved to issue municipal bonds for a new high school building project, when hopes of receiving a federal grant of \$46,000 began to fade. The original amount of \$100,000 of bonds was decreased to \$75,000 by the first of January 1938.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "A History of Schools in Jackson County, Tennessee."

<sup>5</sup> Cynthia Griggs Fleming, "Elementary and Secondary Education," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*; online, <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/> accessed September 29, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "A History of Schools in Jackson County, Tennessee."

<sup>8</sup> Principal and Teacher Annual Recordbooks, Jackson County High School, 1929-1930, Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>9</sup> Entry October 10, 1937, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953, Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>10</sup> "1937-1938 High School Budget," in Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. I, 1926-1937, Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>11</sup> Entry January 1, 1938, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

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## Jackson County High School

The federal grant to assist in the building of a new school came through on April 16, 1938 in the amount of \$46,791. With \$75,420 from bonds, Jackson County had by May of 1938, sufficient funding to proceed with the purchase of land for the construction and equipping of a new high school building. Conflicts of interest marred the process of site selection. The delay put the federal grant in jeopardy, as Jackson County had agreed to start construction on a new school building within ten weeks from the awarding of the grant. A motion was made to abandon previous recommendations for land acquisition and “immediately proceed to select some other site for such building” in order that “work may begin speedily.”<sup>12</sup>

By August of 1938, the county had hired the Marr and Holman architectural firm of Nashville, Tennessee, to design the new school building. The plans for the Colonial Revival style Jackson County High School were accepted by the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (later known as the Public Works Administration) and the Jackson County Board of Education.

Thomas Marr opened his architectural office in 1897, after working as a draftsman for Nashville architect George Thompson and studying architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Joseph Holman began working for Marr as an office helper in 1904, but Holman’s business acumen and wide-ranging social contacts enabled him to rise ultimately to the role of partner. In 1910, the firm of Marr and Holman, Architects, was formed. The firm expanded from mainly residential designs to public and industrial buildings. During the 1910s and 1920s, the firm designed theaters, schools, hotels, and other commercial buildings across the Southeast. Marr and Holman designed the campus buildings of Marr’s alma mater, the Tennessee School for the Deaf in Knoxville (NR 12/4/96), as well as the Tennessee State Supreme Court building. The firm completed many buildings during the Depression, including private and public projects. The Classical Revival Noel Hotel (NR 10/10/84) was completed in 1930 on Fourth Avenue, now part of Printer’s Alley Historic District (NR 8/26/82). Also completed in 1930 was the Rich-Schwartz Building, now part of the Fifth Avenue Historic District (NR 10/10/04 and 12/5/83). The East Nashville High School (NR 1/25/02) and the Nashville U.S. Post Office (NR 11/15/84) were completed in 1932 and 1934 respectively. Many of these designs were of Neo-Classical or Art Deco styles favored during the period. After Thomas Marr’s death in 1936, Joseph Holman continued to operate the firm until his death in 1952.<sup>13</sup>

The contracting firm of F. C. Gorrell and Sons, of Russellville, Kentucky, constructed the building, which progressed smoothly through 1938. In December of that year, Government Inspector J. Bud Ray appeared before the Board of Education to make a few recommendations. He advised that a stoker be added to the boiler, the installation of which would pay for itself quickly in fuel savings; also, Ray advised that felt applied beneath roof shingles would protect the roof and act to insulate rooms more efficiently. Ray also noted the absence of auditorium bleachers. As the federal grant was intended to represent 25% of the total cost, Jackson County’s contribution of approximately \$75,000 fell short, and Ray expressed concern that the county would not be able to meet the government match. The board,

<sup>12</sup> Entry May 23, 1938, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Boatner, “Thomas Scott Marr: A Biography,” in *The Nebraska Journal*, Omaha: June 1936, 183-85; “Marr and Holman, Architects: Agency History,” from The Records of the Marr and Holman Architectural Firm, 1911-1929,” in Tennessee State Library and Archives’ Marr and Holman Collection; James Draeger, “Marr and Holman Architectural Firm,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*; online, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/> accessed September 29, 2008.

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however, swiftly moved to approve the additions and authorized the Superintendent, L. M. Botts, to get estimates on materials “needed to furnish the building in first class condition.”<sup>14</sup>

The effort to complete a new school building as up-to-date and modern reflects the progressive trend in architecture to provide efficiently designed space in a safe environment. As sanitation and health issues came under scrutiny in the early twentieth century, citizens and public officials came to focus attention on good health and safety standards. Efficiency and simplicity of building design proved conducive to a safe and orderly learning environment.<sup>15</sup> Designs for school buildings became specific as to dimensions, spatial organization, window-to-floor area ratio, ceiling height, and construction materials. Fenestration, for example, was considered in relation to total wall and classroom area, in order to provide proper lighting by which to read and write. Also, storage cabinets and closets, located at the interior wall and rear of classrooms provided students with a separate space for coats and belongings. The thought was that uncluttered desks would help students focus on school work. Classrooms were originally furnished with modern student desks in which the arm of the chair served as a writing table. Beneath each chair was a steel shelf where the student could place books, minimizing clutter. All of the rooms were constructed with sound-dulling floors, to prevent the interference of activities outside any given classroom. All of these considerations promoted an environment conducive to learning. The school library was a large, well-lighted room, and furnished with four-person study tables and chairs. Health and hygiene were also important. On the first floor, next to the principal’s office was a First Aid room with a regulation hospital cot. The cafeteria arrangement separated the kitchen where food was prepared from the dining area. The gymnasium/auditorium provided dressing rooms, complete with individual lockers and showers for sports team or stage performers.<sup>16</sup> All of these features illustrate the modern design and philosophy of school construction of the period.

The Jackson County High School building exhibits the essential features of what was then considered an up-to-date high school building. Serving grades nine through twelve, high schools ideally had classrooms designed for up to forty students per classroom, the dimensions of which should have been thirty to thirty-one feet long, twenty-two feet wide, and twelve feet high. Classrooms should have wood or concrete floors and painted or plaster walls, with wainscoting if desired. Glass area of windows should be 16 – 20% of the floor area. One or two doors leading to the hall should have a clear glass panel or a clear wire glass pane and swing 180 degrees into the hallway corridor. A transom above should be hinged the bottom and swing into the classroom.<sup>17</sup> Corridors and stairwell recommendations included walls with painting or plaster with optional wainscoting. Stairwells should be of fireproof material such as concrete or metal. Modern standards dictated one stairwell, four feet in width, for every 200 students.<sup>18</sup> The corresponding features at Jackson County High School met these recommendations. With approximately 450 students, Jackson County High School’s eleven classrooms adequately met the recommendations. While the school’s classrooms varied in size, most are approximately 22’ x 36’, with twelve-foot ceilings. Classrooms had concrete floors and doors that

<sup>14</sup> “1937-1938 High School Budget;” “Entry December 31, 1938, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen Swallow Richards, “Human Ecology and the Habits of Sanitation in the Modern Urban Environment,” in Chris J. Magoc, ed., *So Glorious a Landscape: Nature and Environment in American History and Culture* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 142-43.

<sup>16</sup> “Jackson County’s New Central High School Building – Description,” in *Jackson County Sentinel*, 1939.

<sup>17</sup> John J. Donovan, *Method of Procedure and Checking Schedule for Planning School Building* (New York: The Bruce Company, 1931), 34-41.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

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swung into the hallway with transoms above. The school's two five-foot wide stairwells, one at each end of the building, are of concrete construction and meet the safety recommendations for the size of the school's student body.

Likewise, the interior components of the classrooms at Jackson County High School exhibit the model standards of the period. Unlike in elementary schools, chalkboards in high schools were ideally a consistent height of three feet from floor, as is the case at Jackson County High School. These are located at the front of the classrooms, as recommended. Classroom closets or cabinets are at the rear, and heating radiators are located below windows.<sup>19</sup> The ideal placement of a high school auditorium could be at the end or off of the center of the school building. The gymnasium/auditorium of Jackson County High School is located off the rear wall of the school building, at its approximate center. The size of the auditorium is in proportion to seating capacity: a 1200 member audience would need a space of 102' x 62' with a ceiling at 38'6" from the floor. The stage should rise three to four feet above the audience floor. The depth of the stage should be a minimum of twenty feet.<sup>20</sup> Jackson County High School's gymnasium/auditorium dimensions meet these requirements, and the stage depth is appropriate as well. The vaulted ceiling over the gymnasium/auditorium exceeds forty feet in height. The stage at the west end of the floor is between three and four feet in height. While the stage area has a temporary partition or stage prop currently, the original stage is approximately twenty-five feet deep.

A final inspection of the new Jackson County High School took place in June 5, 1939. Minor adjustments were listed before the Board of Education. These included removing varnish from blackboards, installing screens on doors and windows, hanging light fixtures, and completing various plumbing tasks. The Board of Education agreed that upon completion of the final work, it would accept the building and acknowledge the contract as fully complete.<sup>21</sup>

Though the school was completed and opened in 1939, minutes from a Board of Education meeting on January 3, 1941 hinted at a growing problem. At the meeting, there was discussion of contracting someone to dig a well at not only the Jackson County High School, but also Granville Colored School and Morrison Creek School.<sup>22</sup> The situation of a dwindling water supply at the new high school became an emergency by mid-1943. Lack of water to flush toilets warranted the closing of the school because of unsanitary conditions. At the behest of "numerous taxpayers and citizens for the county," the Board of Education appealed to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Gainesboro to connect the school with the city water supply. The Town agreed to run water pipes to the school and supply water at the current rates.<sup>23</sup>

The first class to have completed four years at the Jackson County High School graduated in 1943 with sixty-two students. The Class President was John Taylor Butler. Valedictorian of the class was Marie Scott. The class "sweetheart" was Fay Ola Clark, and the "Prince of Personality" was otherwise known as Carl Cummings. The principal that year was Rhea Kido, and the librarian was Ara Pharris. Maggie Bybee was one of four English teachers, as was Jimmie Askew, who also taught Music. Mollie Williams was head of the Home Economics Department, and

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Donovan, 65-68.

<sup>21</sup> Entry June 8, 1939, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>22</sup> Entry January 3, 1941, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>23</sup> Entry July 30, 1943, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

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the school also offered a Commercial Department. Estelle Gailbreath and Freeman Crowder were the schools two mathematics teachers. Nancy Darwin taught history and English. The school's two science teachers were Clifford Gentry and A. Johnson, who also taught agriculture, a subject also taught by Robert Fox. Fox later became Jackson County School Superintendent during the 1950s. When the Jackson County High School moved to a new location in 1969, the subject building became the Robert M. Fox Elementary School, named in honor of this former high school teacher and superintendent.<sup>24</sup> Fox's son, John, was a student of Jackson County High School and later became a teacher. John Fox is currently the mayor of Gainesboro.

A former Gainesboro mayor, Therold Richardson, was among the 1943 graduating class. The impact of the modern equipped school was significant for Richardson and other students whose families lived a distance from Gainesboro. From its opening, Jackson County High School was served by seven all-steel buses operating throughout the county, providing transportation to rural students who were otherwise without means to get to and from school. Richardson particularly recalled the impact of the new busing system. Richardson started at Jackson County High School as a freshman in its first year of operation. His family lived approximately five miles from town, and attendance would have been difficult for him without the new bus service. Before busing, Richardson remembered that some students boarded during the week at the rooming house across Main Street from the earlier high school building. Busing removed this extra expense and enabled more students to attend high school.<sup>25</sup>

An incident in 1946 gives an idea of what the school board felt was important. The school board met for the specific purpose of discussing the suspension of four male students at the high school. On April 13, 1946, all four boys and their parents appeared before the board. The fathers appealed to the board to reconsider the suspension of the four students. Minutes of the meeting only note that "the matter was discussed by both parents and Board." Board member Mr. Spurlock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Allen, "to allow the boys to return to school on condition that they are willing to (sic) back to school and absolutely go straight for the remainder of school, that they are allowed to take part in full graduating exercises and honors that they were previously entitled too (sic), that they be allowed to return without further punishment since they have been out of school for a week. All voted aye on this motion. The following letter was sent to the high school and a copy given to all the parents.

Dear Mr. Whitefield,

This is to inform you that the Jackson County Board of Education has met today on the case of the four boys who were suspended from Jackson County High School.

The Jackson County Board feels that the Boys (sic) have done wrong, that have committed a serious crime. They have done things that should never have happened. The board feels that the school was right in punishing the boys. The board feels, however, that the boys have been punished to a great extent already. The purpose of a school is to develop character. The board is hoping to give the Boys (sic) a chance to develop character and to prove to the school authorities that they are willing to make things right...

<sup>24</sup> Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1953-19-- Jackson County Board of Education; White Studio photo "Jackson County Central High School Senior Class of 1943."

<sup>25</sup> Therold Richardson, Interview with Kristen Luetkemeier, 12 December 2008, Gainesboro.



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The letter continues, reiterating the Board's hope that rescinding the boys' suspension would serve a greater purpose, making an example to the whole student body of Jackson County High School:

The Board is not upholding the boys in this kinds of conduct but hopes that since it has happened that it will cause the boys to see the seriousness of the matter and to think before they ever commit another act of this kind. We hope that the whole student body will be warnwd (sic) against the acts of this kind and they will be more serious of mind and conduct.<sup>26</sup>

Jackson County High School served students beyond providing a basic curriculum of mathematics, history, science, and English. The school's purpose to prepare students for post-graduation vocations is evident in its elective courses and extra-curricular activities. The school had an Agricultural Department, located in the rear wing behind the gymnasium/auditorium. It consisted of a large, well-lit classroom and a workshop. The Commercial Department had individual typewriters and taught commercial subjects for the first time in the high school's history. Typing classes were available to male and female students, and the Commercial Department produced a school newspaper. The school library was very popular, stocked with fiction, non-fiction, and reference books for student use. The Home Economics Department was equipped with brand new appliances and furnishings for the teaching homemaking skills. The facilities consisted of a dining room-living room, a sewing room, five large kitchen sinks with built in cabinets, four new electric stoves, and a new Frigidaire. Athletics were available for male and female students after school hours. The girls' basketball team was especially successful throughout the school's history, and the school also had a football team, well supported by the very popular pep squad.

Principal and teacher annual record books available beginning in the 1958-1959 academic year provide additional information about student demographics, staffing, curriculum, and activities. As the only high school in Jackson County, the size of the student body and the number of teachers employed there continued to increase over the years. John Brown was the high school principal in 1958 and continued in the position until the 1975-1976 year. The school employed eighteen teachers from 1958-1959 through 1965-1966; 21 teachers worked at the high school the next two years. School terms were 180 days. Student enrollment ranged from 465 in 1958-1959 to 497 in 1968-1969. Between 89% and 92% of the entire student body was promoted each school year; the remainder either withdrew or was retained. Bus transportation served approximately 85 % of the students enrolled in that period. The state-issued record books from 1958-1959 through 1965-1966 include a line on the cover for the race served by the school; the Jackson County High School was "white" then.<sup>27</sup>

In June of 1964, the Board of Education proposed building a new high school and remodeling the existing high school building for use as an elementary school. The Board of Education's meeting minutes indicate the topic was discussed over the next two years, and in June of 1968 it began considering bids for a new high school building. James Watts of Carthage, Tennessee, made the lowest bid. His breakdown for the new facility was \$878,343 for the main building, \$142,061 for the auditorium, \$485,165 for the gymnasium, and \$105,068 for equipment. The Board negotiated the main building down to \$861,255.68, though meeting minutes do not indicate the final costs of other components of the facility. The Board and Watts signed a contract in July of 1968 for a new high school to be constructed north of town.

<sup>26</sup> Entry April 13, 1946, Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. II, 1937-1953 Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>27</sup> Principal and Teacher Annual Recordbooks, Jackson County High School, years 1958-1959 through 1968-1969; Principal and Teacher Annual Recordbooks, Fox Elementary School, years 1969-1970 through 1975-1976.

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In October, the Board approved payment requests for both James Watts, contractor, and Nashville architect R. Bruce Draper, architect.<sup>28</sup>

In May of 1969, the Board of Education met to approve a list of teachers for the new Fox Elementary School, which began meeting in the former Jackson County High School building in the fall of 1969. At this time, changes to the building consisted of the installation of new doors, such as interior classroom doors and exterior doors at the north and south ends of the main body of the school building. Classroom walls were wallpapered at this time, covering the original brick and plaster. It does not appear that chalkboards were re-positioned for graduated height of middle school students. That year, 481 students enrolled; 420 passed into the next grade and 33 withdrew. The term lasted 200 days. The school curriculum included physical education, social studies, health, history, English, art, math and science to students in fifth through eighth grade. The Fox Elementary School operated in the building until ca. 2000. Since then school building has been empty, except for the south portion of the rear wing, in which continuing education classes are held. There is some school-related furniture strewn throughout the halls and classrooms, not in the sense that the building is being used for storage.

The building retains much of its original features, character, and design. In addition to its contributions to the county school system, the Jackson County High School is representative of the Colonial Revival style school buildings of the mid-twentieth century. The Colonial Revival style was often used for public buildings constructed during the early-to-mid-twentieth century, including under New Deal programs like the PWA.<sup>29</sup> The Jackson County High School is a notable local example from this time period. The style reflected the attention to efficiency and simplicity through its spatial arrangement and organization. The building retains much of its original floor plan, exterior and interior detailing and overall integrity. The school building is currently under study for adaptive reuse into a multi-use arts and/or governmental office center.

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<sup>28</sup> Entry June 27, 1968, entry July 24, 1968, and entry October 17, 1968, in Jackson County Board of Education Minutes, Vol. III, 1953-19-- Jackson County Board of Education.

<sup>29</sup> Carroll Van West, *Tennessee New Deal Landscape, A Guidebook*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 49, 58, 59, 61-65, 69-74, 83, 98.

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Jackson County High School consists of approximately 1.2 acres of a 6.6-acre tract within the city limits of the Town of Gainesboro in Jackson County. The parcel is listed as Map 060A, Group C, Parcel 002.00. This parcel bounded on the east by School Drive for approximately 950 feet and on the west by State Highway 56 for approximately 700 feet, immediately south of the intersection of those two roads. It is partially bounded on the southwest by Oak Street for approximately 250 feet. The boundary proposed for this nomination includes only the area with the subject building, the portable classroom, and the front lawn with flagpole and sign. This boundary still includes School Drive as the east delineation and State Highway 56 as the west delineation. The southern boundary line is an imaginary line drawn along the sidewalk approximately three feet south of the subject building from east to west, intersecting with School Drive and State Highway 56. The northern boundary line is an imaginary line drawn along the sidewalk approximately three feet north of the subject building (and includes the portable classroom) from east to west, intersecting with School Drive and State Highway 56. The boundary includes the area behind (west of) the subject building, which formerly was occupied by buildings no longer extant.

## VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The proposed boundary for the Jackson County High School includes only that portion of the 6.6-acre parcel containing the school building (contributing), a metal, portable classroom (non-contributing), and two associated structures: a contributing flagpole and non-contributing sign. The modern buildings to the immediate north and south of the nominated building are connected minimally to the historic building by 1980s metal canopies. These buildings do not add to the historic character of the Jackson County High School and are excluded from the nomination boundary.

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## Photographs

Jackson County High School, Gainesboro, TN

Photographs by: Kristen Luetkemeier, Thomason and Associates

Date: September 9, 2008

Location of digital images: TN Historical Commission

1 of 17 East façade, looking northwest

2 of 17 East façade and north elevation, looking west

3 of 17 Rear (west) and south elevations, looking east

4 of 17 North elevation, looking south, showing portion of portable classroom

5 of 17 West elevation of main block of school building, showing portion of portable classroom

6 of 17 Interior of classroom, showing original, interior door joining rooms

7 of 17 Interior of classroom, showing original chalkboard

8 of 17 Interior of administrative office, east wall

9 of 17 Interior of gymnasium/auditorium, looking west

10 of 17 Interior of football locker room

11 of 17 Interior of main hall, looking north

12 of 17 Interior of northern stairwell, looking north

13 of 17 Library on second floor, facing northeast

14 of 17 Lobby/entrance hall, facing east

15 of 17 Plaque in lobby, on south wall.

16 of 17 Sign in front of school, facing north

17 of 17 Flagpole in front of school, facing west

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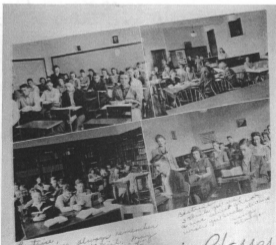
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Jackson County Central High School upon completion.



These pictures, from the 1942 yearbook, show original classroom interiors.