DGT 3 0 1989

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines* for *Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property			
	ite Public School Histori	c District	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
other names/site number 8Co	61		
	· ·		
2. Location			
street & number E. Dorch at	N. Bryant Street	n/a	not for publication
city, town Ft. White		n/a	vicinity
state Florida code	FL county Columb	ia code (223 zip code 3203
. Classification	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	·····	
Ownership of Property	Category of Property		ources within Property
private	building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
x public-local	x district	3	2 buildings
public-State	site		sites
public-Federal	structure structure		structures
	🗌 object		objects
		3	2 Total
name of related multiple property lis	stina:	Number of cont	ributing resources previously
n/a			tional Register0
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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Education: School		tions (enter categories from instructions) on; School
Recreation & Culture: Auditorium	Recreat	ion & Culture: Auditorium
	Vacant:	Storage Facility
7. Description Architectural Classification enter categories from instructions)	Materials (en	ter categories from instructions)
	foundation _	Brick
Other: Masonry Vernacular	foundationwalls	Brick Brick
	walls	Brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property antionally sta	in relation to other properties: atewide 返 locally	
Applicable National Register Criteria XA B C C]D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	D E F G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) Education	Period of Significance 1915–1939	Significant Dates
Social History		1936
		1938
	Cultural Affiliationn/a	
Significant Person	Architect/Builder Unknown/ A.J. Green	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

See continuation sheet

Major Bibliographical References

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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	A)
	See continuation sheet
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # 	Primary location of additional data: State historic preservation office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify repository:
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of propertyl acre	
UTM References A 1 7 3 3 4 7 0 3 3 1 1 5 9 0 Zone Easting Northing C 1	B L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L
Verbal Boundary Description	

Beginning at the NW corner of the intersection of Dorch and Horton Streets, proceed north 210' to the northern boundary of Lot 3. Then proceed west 480' along the northern boundary of Lots 3 & 4 to the driveway. Then proceed south 210' along the east curbline of the driveway to the NE corner of the intersection of the driveway and Dorch Street. Then proceed 480' east along the north curbline of Dorch Street to the point of origin. See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel of land that surrounds the historic buildings on the campus of the Fort White Public School, and has been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara E. Mattick/ Historic Sites Specialis	t
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation	date October 1989
street & number R.A. Gray Blg., 500 S. Bronough Street	telephone904-487-2333
city or townTallahassee	

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Section number ____7 Page ____ Fort White Public School Historic District

<u>Summary</u>:

The Fort White Public School Historic District consists of five buildings on the Fort White Public School campus in Fort White, a small, rural community in southern Columbia County, Florida. The contributing resources include three masonry vernacular buildings: a 1915 High School Building (Blg. #7 on maps), a 1936 Auditorium (Blg. #3 on maps), and a 1938 Elementary Classroom Building (Blg. #2 on maps). These are the oldest buildings on the campus. The district also includes two, noncontributing portable classroom buildings (Blg. #'s 18 & 19 on maps), temporarily placed in the southwest corner of the district. With the temporary buildings, the district has a contributing ratio of 60%. When the High School Building is restored and in use again, the noncontributing, temporary buildings will be removed from the district.

The district, as delineated in Map 1, is bounded by Dorch Street on the south, Horton Street on the east, a covered walkway adjacent to the Auditorium and Elementary Classroom Building on the north, and a parking lot on the west. The nomination is submitted as a district because of the two separate periods of development represented by the contributing resources.

Setting:

The brick High School Building was constructed in 1915 on the site of a previous wooden school building, located on the northwest corner of Dorch and Horton Streets, in a residential section. It contrasted greatly with the frame vernacular homes surrounding it. This was the only building on the campus until 1921 when a wooden building for the school's agricultural program was erected adjacent to the brick school. The Auditorium and Elementary Classroom Building were built in 1936 and 1938, respectively. There were numerous oak, pecan and ornamental trees on the site and in the surrounding neighborhood.

From the 1940s through the 1960s, the campus was expanded, as shown in Map 2. More buildings were added to the campus, so that there are presently thirteen additional

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permanent buildings, including elementary school classrooms, a cafeteria, a gym and field houses, and numerous temporary buildings (Photos 1 & 2). A football field and baseball diamond are located east of Horton Street (Photo 3). The school, however, is still surrounded by a neighborhood of well maintained residences of primarily wood frame construction. Some houses date from the 1880s to early 1900s, though there is some infill from the 1950s. Some of the old oak and cedar trees remain on campus, and there are now younger ornamental trees as well. The immediate neighborhood includes older, large pecan trees and ornamental plantings that are as old as the houses they surround (Photo 4). The areas immediately surrounding the High School Building remain open green spaces, except for the temporary buildings on the west side (Photo 5). Open; removable, covered walkways are attached to the buildings, but do not destroy the integrity of the buildings' architecture or setting (Photo 6).

Present Physical Appearance:

HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING (1915/1922)

The High School Building is a rectangular, two and a half story, masonry vernacular building, with a red brick exterior, on a brick foundation. Italianate influences are evident with a square, three story, hip roofed bell tower at the main entrance, and wide eaves with exposed roof rafters. The main block of the building has a hipped roof covered with metal shingles. Two brick chimneys and a hip roofed dormer pierce both the east and west sides of the roof. The dormers have square, louvered openings. A stone water table surrounds the building. The windows of the main block of the building are uniformly five-light, aluminum awning windows arranged in groups of four. They have stone sills (Photo 7).

The <u>main facade</u> (south elevation) is distinguished by the square, three story bell tower. An arch accesses the main entry which has double doors with five horizontal panels and a four-light transom. Four concrete steps flanked by low cheeks lead up to the entry. The east and

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west walls of the entry have single, five-light, aluminum awning windows. The second floor of the tower has paired windows of the same type, while the third story of the tower has louvered, arched openings. The tower is flanked by four windows on the first and second floors.

The fenestration of the <u>east and west elevations</u> is identical, with three groups of four windows on the first and second floors. The only difference is that at the first floor of the west elevation there is a single door, side entrance, accessed by five cement steps with cheeks between the first and second set of windows (Photo 8). A 1922 addition to the rear of the building is evident upon close inspection, revealed only by a slight difference in the brick. The <u>north elevation</u> is similar to the south elevation, with the same window configuration and a central entrance on the first floor. A metal fire escape is attached on this elevation (Photo 9).

The interior of the High School Building has a central, north-south corridor with three classrooms on each side on both floors. Wooden stairways to the second floor are located at each end of the corridor. The first floor corridor has a brick arch at the south entrance and between classroom numbers 3-4 and 5-6 (Photo 10). The bell tower has a foyer on the first level, a small room on the second floor, and a bell chamber on the third level. Interior features of the building include the original plaster on wood lath walls, wooden floors under linoleum, wainscoting, ceilings, and baseboards (Photo 11).

<u>Alterations</u>:

The original 1915 building had only four classrooms (numbers 1-4 on the accompanying floor plan), and the stairway at the south end led to an auditorium on the second floor. In 1922 a two story addition on the north end of the building provided two additional classrooms on each floor. Great care was taken to conform with the original 1915 building: an identical second stairway was added at the north end of the central corridor, and the same kind of wainscoting was applied in the corridor. In 1936, after the construction of a separate auditorium was under way, the

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upstairs auditorium was remodeled to create four classrooms and a central corridor.

Although the High School Building has been altered somewhat over the years, it is remarkably intact, displaying almost all of its original features. Old photographs show that at one time, wooden stairs led to the second floor on the east and west sides of the bell tower. Metal brackets remain, showing where the stairs were attached. The only major alterations made after the period of significance are the installation of fluorescent light fixtures and the replacement of the original 2/2, double hung sash windows with aluminum awning windows sometime in the 1960s. The size of the windows, however, was not changed, and the building's original sense of balance and symmetry has been maintained. The school bell was removed in the early 1970s, and is now displayed in front of the current Fort White Public School on Highway 47, approximately four hundred yards north of the bell tower.

AUDITORIUM (1936)

The Auditorium is a one story, rectangular masonry vernacular building with a red brick exterior. It is located just northeast of the High School Building, and faces Horton Street (Photo 12). It has a front gabled, asphalt roof. A gable roofed porch with gable returns is attached to the east elevation (main facade). The porch has three round arched entries, each with a stone keystone and springers. The central arch, approached by four concrete steps with brick cheeks, is larger than the two that flank Corresponding doors with fanlights provide access to it. the interior (Photo 13). The north and south elevations are distinguished by six 6/6 double hung sash windows with fanlights (Photo 14). A shed roof extends from the west elevation of the building (Photo 6). The interior includes a six hundred seat auditorium (Photo 15), a stage, restrooms, and a boiler room. All of the original fixtures and finishes are intact.

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<u>Alterations</u>:

The only major alteration to the building was the installation of air-conditioning (date unknown). This resulted in the insensitive insertion of equipment in several of the windows, something that can be easily reversed.

ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM BUILDING (1938)

The Elementary Classroom Building is a rectangular, one story, masonry vernacular building with a red brick exterior, located just northwest of the High School Building. It has a front gabled roof, covered with asphalt and accented with knee braces and exposed rafter ends. The main facade (south elevation) has a central, arched entry with double doors, each with fifteen fixed lights. The entry is flanked by two 6/6 double hung sash windows (Photo The east and west elevations each have two groups of 16). five 9/9 double hung sash windows (Photo 17). The north elevation has a central entry, but no windows. The international sector is the sector backward of the se The interior is divided into four classrooms accessed from the outside by the doors on the north and south elevations. Each classroom has its own closet and restroom. The installation of airconditioning is the only major alteration to the building (date unknown).

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SUMMARY

The Fort White Public School Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education because it includes the oldest school buildings in Fort White and southern Columbia County. It is significant in the area of Social History because it has continuously served as the region's primary cultural center since its construction in 1915. Its period of significance is, therefore, 1915-1939.

CONTEXTS

Columbia County and Fort White

Columbia County was created on February 4, 1832, and included a much larger area than it does now. It took its present form in 1862. The earliest references to Fort White describe a Seminole War military outpost, located on the Santa Fe River, approximately five miles west of the present community of Fort White. Settlement was slow in the southern portion of the county until after the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). Lack of transportation facilities and disruptions during the Civil War period retarded development. By 1870, however, the community was established, based primarily on the prospect that a railroad line was to be constructed in the area. The town was incorporated in 1884, and surveyed and platted in 1890. The economy was based on phosphate mining and agriculture. Cotton, vegetables, and oranges were the chief crops until the freezes of 1896 and 1897 virtually destroyed the orange industry.

New railroads were built in Columbia County in the 1880s and 1890s. The original hopes were finally realized in 1888 when the Savannah, Florida and Western Railway completed a line between Fort White and Lake City, the county seat in the northern part of the county. Major roads also passed through the area, and Columbia County became an important transportation hub for North Florida. The county's population steadily increased, from 7,335 in 1870 to 17,689 in 1910.

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Fort White was the second most populated community in the county. By 1900, the town's population was nearly 2,000, and it became the cultural and economic center for the southern part of Columbia County. The economy had expanded to include farming, citrus, timber, cotton, and phosphate. The citrus industry died out completely after the turn of the century, phosphate mining declined c1910, and the boll weevil destroyed the cotton industry shortly before World War I. Today, the principal industries in the Fort White area are farming and timber harvesting. Fort White remains the second largest community in Columbia County.

Although the date of the establishment of Fort White's first school is unknown, school board minutes indicate that there was a school for white students in 1890. In 1893, it was open for a five month term and had an enrollment of 124 pupils. A second school house, also for whites, was built in 1897 and occupied in 1898. It had three rooms with two teachers and a principal. There also was a separate school for blacks in the immediate Fort White area. None of these wooden buildings remains.

Overcrowding was a continual problem in the early 1900s, and on September 4, 1904, the school board was requested to approve an enlargement of the Fort White School. Funds were designated for that purpose. Four years later, another request was made to enlarge two classrooms.

Works Progress Administration

In 1933, a national public building program came under the planning authority of the New Deal's Works Progress Administration. Over \$700 million was spent on some 1300 new buildings which stood as the architectural manifestation of the federal presence in "1,085 communities that had not previously owned a federal building."

Florida shared in the federal work relief programs of the New Deal era, which left a typical legacy of public buildings and structures. According to Florida historian Charlton Tebeau,

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By June 1938 the WPA had completed 137 projects that included forty-two schools, twenty-seven water works, and six sewer systems. In 1940 relief employment was being provided for 1,185 persons per month. In another count through June 1940 the WPA had constructed 6,206 miles of highways and streets, built 245 new schools and imporved another 208, had constructed 1,237 bridges and viaducts, 6,272 culverts, 146 parks, 191 playgrounds and athletic fields, and 24,533 sanitary privies.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

By 1915, it was evident that an entirely new school facility was needed in Fort White. The May 1915 school board minutes show that initial plans called for construction of a brick building with four classrooms downstairs and a large auditorium with a seating capacity of approximately 225 upstairs. The estimated cost was \$6,000. The board required that the school patrons, who had insisted on the use of brick, pay the cost of shipping the building materials to Fort White and provide a means to deliver them to the construction site.

In June 1915, W.J. Snell was appointed as project director for construction at a fee based on 5% of the project costs. The building plans were to be kept in his office. It is unclear, however, whether he was the architect of the building. The low bid of \$5,900, submitted by A.J. Green, a local contractor, was accepted.

The building was ready for occupancy on September 6, 1916. Ten new schools had been built in Columbia County from 1914-1916, but the Fort White Public School was the only one constructed of brick. It opened as a junior high school with four teachers and an enrollment of approximately seventy-seven students. The program carried students through the tenth grade. The school grew rapidly, and by March 1917, there were about one hundred students enrolled. Plans were made that year to grade and beautify the grounds.

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School consolidation began in Columbia County in 1920, and the Fort White School was consolidated that year, taking in students from the rural schools in the surrounding forty square miles. Overcrowding again became a problem. In 1921, a wooden agriculture building was constructed adjacent to the school. New buildings have been added to the campus over the years, and this building was demolished at some unknown date.

In July 1921, the Fort White Trustees requested the addition of four rooms to the school. The request was granted, and in 1922 two classrooms were completed on both the first and second floors at the north end of the original 1915 building, at a cost of \$5,470. They were well used, for by 1923 the Fort White Public School had been upgraded to being a senior "B" high school with twelve grades. The only senior "A" high school in the county was Columbia High School in Lake City. At the elementary level, there were six teachers and 222 students, and the four year high school section had three teachers and thirty-seven students. The school enjoyed a good reputation, and it was noted in the state's biennial school report that the Fort White School had "such an enviable record that several counties have made inquires and have asked for detailed reports as to how the school was established." In 1926, a proposal to remodel the upstairs auditorium into new classrooms, and build a new auditorium and a primary building was discussed as a means to handle the persistent overcrowding problem. This suggestion was not followed, however, until the 1930s.

In 1936, Columbia County benefitted from a number of Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects. The county received \$106,000 which was used primarily for the National Guard Armory and City Hall in Lake City, and roads and buildings in O'Leno State Park. The program, however, also included some proposals approved by the Columbia County school board, including additions to the old junior high school in Lake City and an auditorium at the Fort White Public School. Construction on the new auditorium began in April 1936. In August the board approved plans to renovate the old upstairs auditorium in the original building to create four classrooms and a central hallway.

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In March 1937, Fort White's trustee on the school board requested the construction of a new four room primary building based upon a recommendation by the Florida Department of School Building Services. On April 15, 1938, the school board approved the construction of such a building as a \$4,000 WPA project. It was occupied by the first four grades in September 1938.

The Fort White Public School, the only two story brick facility in South Columbia County, served the area not only as the major school, but also as the primary social center. From 1915 to 1939, in addition to school functions, it was utilized to host political rallies, community gatherings, and meetings for Veterans Adult Education and the Farm Bureau. Chatauqua programs were often held for a week at a time, and from 1920 to 1930, silent movies were shown.

The Auditorium and the Elementary Classroom Building have had continuous use since their construction, but the original 1915/1922 building was closed in 1969 when the Columbia County schools were again consolidated. A new school for the elementary students was built adjacent to the original buildings in 1970, and the high school students were bussed to Columbia High School in Lake City. Since 1975, the 1915/1922 building has been used as a storage facility. Recent growth in the Fort White area, however, has created a need for more classroom space. Upon the completion of current efforts to refurbish the facility, the 1915/1922 high school building will be reopened as classroom space for students of southern Columbia County.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

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- Florida. <u>Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public</u> <u>Instruction of the State of Florida For the Two Years</u> <u>Ending June 30th, 1916</u>. Tallahassee, 1916. Also for the bienniums ending in 1918, 1920, and 1924.
- Florida School Bulletin. Vol. 1, No. 5 (September 1924). Special issue on "Consolidation of Schools".
- The Lake City Citizen/Reporter. May 28, 1915; June 4, 1915; and September 1, 1916.

Secondary Sources

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- Tebeau, Charlton. <u>A History of Florida</u>. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs 1
Section number _____ Page _____

1 `	2) F(3) B(4) 19 5) B(6) N(ort White Public School Historic District ort White, Columbia County, Florida arbara Mattick 989 ureau of Historic Preservation, Tallahassee, FL orthern boundary, showing Auditorium and noncontributing building outside boundary; camera facing W of 17
2	1-5) 6) 7)	Same as for Photo 1 Northern boundary, showing noncontributing, temporary buildings and rear of the Elementary Classroom Building; camera facing E 2 of 17
3	6)	Same as for Photo 1 Intersection of Dorch and Bryant Streets, showing field house and athletic fields E of the district 3 of 17
4	2) Fo 3) T 4) 19 5) T 6) Fo	igh School Building and Campus, Fort White Public School Historic District ort White, Columbia County, Florida ruett George, Jr. 989 ruett George, Jr. ort White Public School Historic District, showing the relationship to Dorch Street and Bryant Street; camera facing N of 17
5	2-5) 6)	emporary Buildings (Blg. #'s 18 & 19 on map) (noncontributing), and High School Building (Blg. #7 on map), Fort White Public School Historic District Same as for Photo 4 W elevations; camera facing E 5 of 17

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs 2
Section number _____ Page ____

6 1) Typical covered walkway between buildings, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) Auditorium and walkway, N elevation; camera facing S 7) 6 of 17 7 1) High School Building, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) Main facade (S elevation); camera facing N 7) 7 of 13 8 1) High School Building, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) W elevation; camera facing E 7) 8 of 13 1) High School Building, Fort White Public School 9 Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 1 6) N elevation; camera facing SE 7) 9 of 17 10 1) High School Building, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) First floor central corridor, showing stairway, arch, ceiling, and wainscoting; camera facing S 7) 10 of 17 11 1) High School Building, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) Upstairs classroom; camera facing S 7) 11 of 17

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs 3 Fort White Public School Historic District

Section number _____ Page _____

1) Auditorium (Blg. #3 on map), Fort White Public 12 School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) SE elevation; camera facing NW from across Horton Street 7) 12 of 17 1) Auditorium, Fort White Public School Historic 13 District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) Main facade (E elevation); camera facing W 7) 13 of 17 14 1) Auditorium, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) S elevation; camera facing NW 7) 14 of 17 15 1) Auditorium, Fort White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) Interior; camera facing W 7) 15 of 17 1) Elementary Classroom Building (Blg. #2 on map), Fort 16 White Public School Historic District 2-5) Same as for Photo 4 6) Main facade (S elevation); camera facing N 7) 16 of 17

 1) Elementary Classroom Building, Fort White Public School Historic District
 2-5) Same as for Photo 4
 6) W elevation; camera facing E

7) 17 of 17





ROAD STATE



Classrooms 1-----740 2----740 3----755 4----755 5----690 6-----690

> Support Areas 7-----900 8-----120

Classroom Area 4370 Support Area 1020

Total This Floor 5390 Total Building #7 10,780

Approximate Square Footages Were Derived from Field Measurement of Facility





Support Areas 7----900 8-----120

Classroom Area 4730 Support Area 1020

Total This Floor 5390 Total Building #7 10,780

Approximate Square Footages were derived from Field Measurement of Facility





Auditorium Area----3500 Support Area-----1860 Total This Building----5360



21.15



Approximate Square Footages were derived from field measurement of facility.



BUILDING #2 Old Elementary School - Existing

Approximate Square Footages were derived from field measurement of facility

