

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 688 576

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RECEIVED NOV 1 1978

DATE ENTERED DEC 14 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Monticello High School

AND/OR COMMON
Old Elementary School

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
College Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Monticello

___ VICINITY OF Sixth

STATE
Georgia

CODE
13

COUNTY
Jasper

CODE
159

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Civic Involvement

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Jasper County Board of Education

STREET & NUMBER
Room 126, Jasper County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Monticello

___ VICINITY OF Georgia

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Superior Court

STREET & NUMBER
Jasper County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Monticello

STATE
Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

4

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	(Interior)	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Monticello High School (or Old Elementary School) is typical of early-twentieth-century public-school architecture. A T-shaped, three-story structure (two stories and a basement), the Monticello High School has a brick exterior of multicolored-face brick in stretcher bond with brick also being used in various places for ornamentation. In comparing the present structure with the 1922 plans, it is evident that no exterior structural changes were made except the addition on the north side of a metal covering for the walkway leading to the street and the loss of a wooden flagpole on the apex of the pedimented parapet.

The center bay of the east facade, which protrudes approximately three feet from the remainder of the facade, is framed on each side by ivy-covered brick quoins. A triple stone arch is the central focus of this facade. The central arch frames the doorway leading to a small T-shaped foyer; the other two arches are filled on the lower half by wooden balustrades. On the right wall, as one enters this foyer, is the cornerstone which was placed there in 1922 and contains the names of the architect, builders and trustees.

Above the three arches, the facade is ornamented with three inlaid panels, the outer two having a center tile diamond. The central panel is an oblong piece which supports the lighting fixtures. Windows are atop each of the panels, with the central window being the largest. Above the windows is a pedimented parapet framing a terra cotta cartouche. A small wrought-iron balcony is directly below the central window.

Each wing on either side of the central bay has symmetrically distributed windows in horizontal ranges.

A brick design in the shape of a large rectangle has been created on the north and south ends of the main block on either side of the central window. A similar feature is found at the west end of the auditorium extension on the windowless wall framing the central chimney. The bricks have also been used decoratively around the windows on the north and south facades of the auditorium extension. The three windows and single door on each side are framed by inset panels of brick moldings and a small rectangular panel of fifty or so header bricks, in the center of which is a diamond made of four tiles.

A variety of materials was used for the coping and the horizontal string courses. The parapet coping is of cement, while the upper course (at the ceiling level of the second floor) is of wood on the main block and cement on the auditorium extension. At the base of the first-floor line, the lower course is of stone throughout the structure.

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The main block of the school contains three floors. The basement originally had four classrooms, two of which are now used for a retirement program for the elderly; the other two have been converted into a kitchen and a hall. Two restrooms and two storage rooms are also here.

The main floor contains four classrooms of equal size, two office rooms on either side of the entrance, and the entrance to the auditorium. The second floor has five classrooms and the entrance to the balcony of the auditorium.

The auditorium extension contains three levels, the upper two being the auditorium and the balcony, the lower one being the cafeteria and kitchen. This extension was damaged by a fire in the kitchen in September, 1977, and was repaired and restored in the spring of 1978. The cafeteria and kitchen cover the hole lower floor of this extension. Entrance ramps for the handicapped have been added. The steam-heating system has been repaired, and a sprinkler protection system is planned.

The building retains most of its original flooring, but the classroom ceilings are now covered in accoustical tile. All classrooms have "cloak rooms" running the width of the rooms at the inside ends.

The site has recently been seeded with grass to prevent erosion, but otherwise has had a minimum of landscaping through the years. Adjacent to the nominated property is a one-story brick gymnasium built in the 1930s and a one-story frame public library. A cement walkway connects the main entrance steps as well as those of the north and south facades and runs from the east or front facade to College Street where brick pillars with the date 1924 were placed.

Apparently all vestiges of the earlier structures on the site, and all temporary structures, were covered by the current school building when it was completed.

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1922 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Henry Hunter Jordan

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Monticello High School (recently known as the Old Elementary School) is significant as the first county-wide school for Jasper County. Consolidation was a movement underway in post-World War I Georgia to improve education for the young by offering state financial support for high schools consolidating into better facilities. This building is also representative of a style of architecture that was typical of educational and municipal structures in the early twentieth century.

The physical failure of the original school building on this site and state interest in improving education by consolidating merged in Monticello in 1920. The land where the Monticello High School was constructed had been an educational site since 1890 when the Monticello Academy, the city-funded high school, was built on the Penn-Rogers Tract.

It was to this site of educational facilities on a main thoroughfare, College Street, in Monticello, a city of 1,400 population in 1920, that the city turned when necessity arose for a new high-school building. Originally the building also was to include a grammar school, although it would serve only city pupils.

The Monticello Board of Education, created in 1907, had maintained the old academy by local taxation, but as the 1920s dawned, the local newspaper began to report the poor conditions of the facility. Teachers reported in May that on rainy days the rooms became "bathing pools."

In 1919, the Barrett-Rogers Act passed the state legislature. It had been designed to provide incentives to rural counties to consolidate their schools, especially the high schools, in order to receive additional state funding. Although for high schools the new law only promised \$1,000 annually, and that to be used for the salary of principals or an assistant teacher, the effect was tremendous. The state superintendant of schools reported to the legislature in 1921, for the year 1920, that to receive the \$100,000 statewide, 63 high schools spent five times the amount in order to qualify. They spent their county funds on building, equipment, libraries and laboratories. Another end result was seen as closer communication between the towns and the counties, and the local boards of education were

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finally given guidelines of "what to do" in order to qualify as better schools. The law's purpose had been realized "to give the remotest country boy and girl as good a chance for a high school education as those living in the towns and cities." To qualify as a standard-grade high school was expensive for many communities.

Georgia's constitution of 1877 had specifically forbade state funds for high schools, and thus "legislative hostility" toward the public high school had caused varying standards to develop in each community, with many having no high school at all. The 1919 act had provided for one school in each county. An amendment to the constitution in 1912 had gone part of the way in reducing Georgia's legal difficulty, but the state superintendant of education's stirring report for 1918 (distributed to the 1919 legislature) laid all the cards on the table. It was only after this confrontation between government and education that the legislature revamped the entire system. The Georgia Assembly codified the existing education laws, passed the Barrett-Rogers Act, setting aside half the state revenues for education, to begin in 1920, and requiring compulsory attendance. This latter act caused attendance to increase by 40,000 new pupils in 1920 alone. The finale of this crusade was the Elders-Carswell Amendment, which was approved by a statewide vote on November 11, 1920. This amendment required each county to levy taxes for its own schools, something never done before, and forced the counties to share the educational responsibilities of their young people with the state. Georgia's constitution of 1877 had specifically provided funding for colleges, but not high schools, and thus for over 40 years the only changes had been amendments to the constitution.

When the necessity arose in Monticello for a new schoolhouse, then, the local citizens had to make themselves available for the state funding. In 1920, the legislature abolished, by act, upon the request of Monticello, the city board of education, and deleted from the city charter the right to levy taxes for schools. With these changes, the Monticello schools then fell under the jurisdiction of the county board of education, established statewide under the constitution of 1877.

On August 21, 1920, the citizens of Jasper County elected five trustees for the school district. This and other evidence of local support indicate how the town prepared for its new school. In November of that year, a tea

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was held at which the guests donated money for new playground equipment. At a meeting of the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) the state school inspector lectured on the needs of the local educational program, including a new school building and a gymnasium. In February of 1921, a "book shower" was given by the PTA at which books were donated for a reading program, with the books eventually going into the new school library.

In February of 1921, the trustees of the Jasper County Board of Education voted unanimously to ask for an election for a bond issue of \$80,000. Of this amount, \$72,500 would be used for the school building, and \$7,500 for equipment. The election was scheduled for March 11, 1921.

The need for a new school and the apparent division in the county over whether one was needed or not, caused a massive campaign by citizens of all ages who supported the bond issue. Adults and children alike were active in lobbying for passage of the bond issue. The school children paraded in the streets carrying banners, some of which read, "Bonds or Umbrellas" (a reference to the leakage in the old building), "Have a Heart and Vote for Bonds," "Barn or Bonds." The parade ended with the students singing on the courthouse steps, "Glory to Jasper." Another parade was held the day of the election, with first and second graders handing out literature favoring the bond issue.

The Monticello News, in a stirring front-page editorial on election day, summarized the community's needs:

Vote For Bonds

... No citizen has the moral right to impede the progress of a community... opposing the passage ... purely from selfish motives.

DON'T BE A STUMBLING BLOCK!

Monticello has the opportunity today to go forward and keep apace with other progressive towns....

The bond issue passed, the bonds were issued, and in the fall of 1921, the old school closed. The high-school students met that year (1921-22) on the second floor of the courthouse, while the elementary- or grammar-school

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students met at the Florence House. Shortly thereafter, the old school (the Monticello Academy) was demolished. Parts of the old building were moved to a black residential area of the town to form a Hall of Learning.

The new public consolidated-high-school contract was let to West Point (Georgia) Iron Works and the architect was a Monticello native, Henry Hunter Jordan, born in 1894, a 1915 graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology. Mr. Jordan, whose career as an architect has spanned six decades still works in Atlanta. In addition to schools (this being his first), he contributed to the built environment by designing shopping centers, private homes and commercial structures.

On September 7, 1922, the new school opened for the academic year. A pageant was held in the new auditorium shortly afterwards to celebrate the opening. The auditorium continued for decades as a useful place for civic activities.

The school remained the academic center of Jasper County for forty years as "The Monticello High School" until 1952, when it was reduced to the status of a city elementary school, serving in this capacity until 1974, when it was closed. In 1976, the Jasper County Historical Foundation, Inc. rallied when efforts were begun to demolish the school, and this organization has sought to preserve the school and adapt it into a multi-use community center. Part of the building is being used for the Older Americans of Jasper County, Inc. for meals and recreation for citizens over sixty years of age, and the Foundation plans to restore part of the building to use as its headquarters. It presently has a lease on it for three years, as well as a 1978 letter of intent to pass title.

Summary

The Monticello High School has been a significant and integral part of community life since it was opened in 1922, and plans for the future are to recycle it to once again become a focal point for community activity. The children who paraded in the streets for its funding in 1921 -- then aged six, seven and eight -- are now the "older Americans" involved not only in using the building for recreation programs, but also as members of the Foundation seeking to preserve it. The school represents one epoch of Georgia

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and Jasper County's educational history, where the needs of the state and the community met, to provide a better educational framework for all concerned. It also serves as a focus for the awareness of historic preservation in a community where preservation has not been a major concern previously. The preservation and restoration of this schoolhouse, where many of the community's residents spent several years of their lives, is the core around which other preservation efforts might radiate.

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Bibliography &
CONTINUATION SHEET Verbal Boundary ITEM NUMBER 9 & 10 PAGE 2

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Joiner, Oscar, of Statesboro, Ga., author of forthcoming "History of Education in Georgia," sponsored by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, telephone interview, March 14, 1978, by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.
- Georgia Laws (various years) and Georgia Code.
- "Monticello District School, Monticello, Ga.," Robert and Company Architects and Engineers. Atlanta: Henry H. Jordan, architect..., plans, 1921.
- The Monticello (Georgia) News, 1921-22 and 1976-77 issues (located at the Probate Judge's Office, County Courthouse, Monticello, Ga.
- Powell, Harvey J., ed. The Experiences of Erasmus H. Jordan (Monticello, Ga., 1972).
- Letters and interviews with Mrs. Charles E. Brooks, Sr., Monticello, Ga., 1977 and 1978.
- Interview with Henry H. Jordan, Atlanta, Ga., 1977, by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.
- Research by Mrs. Irene R. Malone, Monticello, Ga.
- Personal inspection by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., spring 1978.

10. running south along College Street for 190 feet (in front of the school) to a point. Thence at a right angle along a line running west to a point where a line drawn behind the west or rear facade of the auditorium extension (and 35 feet from it) intersects the southern boundary. Thence at a right angle and following northerly along the said line drawn 35 feet from and parallel to the west or rear facade of the auditorium extension until it intersects with West View Street. Thence easterly along West View Street to the point of origin.

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