

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JAN 7 1981
DATE ENTERED FEB 4 1981

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

Plant City High School

AND/OR COMMON

Tomlin Junior High School

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

North Collins Street (West side 600 block)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Plant City

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Florida

CODE

12

COUNTY

Hillsborough

CODE

057

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: Vacant (partial)

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Plant City

STREET & NUMBER

Drawer C

CITY, TOWN

Plant City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hillsborough County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Tampa

STATE

Florida

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The modified-Georgian Revival Plant City High School and grounds are located on a 210' x 214' block in one of Plant City's oldest residential neighborhoods. The three-story red brick structure stands as an impressive contrast to the pre-dominantly frame housing stock lining the tree-shaded streets bordering the school property. The basic square mass of the flat-roofed structure is relieved on each elevation by projecting pavilions and decorative blond brick accenting in the segmental relieving arches over the second and third level casement and pivotal-transom windows, the string course between the first, or ground, and second level and the cap of the simple, stepped parapet. The east and west elevations are treated as the principal elevations, each featuring a central four-bay fluted Doric-columned pedimented portico that shelters the entrances on the second, or main, level. The east elevation serves as the formal entrance to the classroom portion of the building with an oversized central entrance bay set with double-leaf, five panel doors and a deep small-light transom.

The lively rhythm of the eastern elevation with its shallow end pavilions and regular fenestration arrangement is repeated on the end, or north and south, elevations where shallow central pavilions express the stairwells and access to the plain exterior metal fire escape stairs. Less fluid is the western elevation with its deep central pavilion that defines the auditorium. The portico, shelters the matching entrance bays set with double-leaf doors, is flanked by shorter windows that do not convey the same gracefulness as the windows used elsewhere. The bay adjacent to the break for the pavilion projection also deviates from the established fenestration pattern in alignment and size to accommodate access to the exterior fire escapes.

The interior plan of the school survives in a remarkably complete state of preservation. The varied room arrangement clusters the classrooms around the periphery of the building to maximize natural illumination and ventilation while the wide halls follow a U-shaped plan to the interior of the building around the auditorium. The main stairwells are located at the northern and southern ends with secondary stairwells flanking the auditorium on the western end. The cafeteria is located on the ground level below the nearly 1,500 seat auditorium. Throughout the building the woodwork is simply detailed. The open-course staircases feature Colonial Revival newels and balustrades. Classroom walls are plaster with plain applied chairrail board and built-in blackboards. Interior doors have glazed upper panels and are set beneath a deep, operable two-light transom. Floors on the upper levels are wooden while those on the ground level are concrete. Few of the furnishings were built-in, being instead free standing oak bookcases, specimen cases, and they were removed when the building was vacated in 1972.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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

+1914

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Biggers, Willis R. (Tampa, Florida)
Dudley & Carlton

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Plant City High School, (Plant City, Florida) constructed in 1914, stands in a tangible expression of civic achievement in this small, but prosperous, agricultural and trading community. The high school, which is architecturally the most significant, early educational building in Plant City, served as the educational and cultural center of the community until the building was closed in 1972. The high school was the object of great civic pride and was a benefit to the community. Lyceum programs, class plays, recitals, musicals, and lectures, all took place in the high school. Non-academic programs, such as political speeches, concerts, community club meetings and performances by professional entertainers were also held at the high school, taking advantage of the school's large, 1,500 seat auditorium.¹

Plant City (incorporated, 1885) was a central Florida trading community named in honor of railroad magnate, Henry B. Plant. Plant's South Florida Railroad was the major stimulus for growth of this city.² The city had a population of 1200 by 1900.³ During the first decade of the twentieth century, the population doubled to approximately 2500.⁴ By 1914 the school age population had outgrown the existing public school facilities that had been constructed in 1893, and expanded in 1903 and 1909. A new high school was needed, so in December, 1913, a majority of the qualified voters in Plant City cast their ballots and approved a \$40,000 school bond issue to raise revenue for the construction of the school.⁵

A lot owned by Dr. Olin S. Wright on Collins Street was purchased in March, 1914, for \$10,000. The funds were obtained from the Hillsborough County Board of Public Instruction's general school fund.⁶ The lot was not as large as the Board had initially desired, but "it was perhaps the most convenient that could have been secured other than the present location of the existing school campus."⁷ School authorities reasoned that "it was best to acquire an additional site because the existing buildings were too valuable to tear down in light of Plant City's growth rate and the anticipated need for the old as well as the new facilities."⁸

The building was designed in a modified Greek Revival mode by Willis R. Biggers,⁹ a little-known architect who practiced in Tampa between 1911 and 1917.¹⁰ On May 12, 1914, the contract for the construction of the building was awarded to the local firm of Dudley and Carlton for \$36,800.¹¹ The contract specified that all walls and partitions would be "brick from Plant City's Roux Composition Brick Company".¹² The opening of the new high school, heralded as a "great occasion in the history of the town"¹³ was held in the auditorium on January 29, 1915. The Courier editorial proclaimed that day "one of the Red Letter days in Plant City history... The building, its equipment and the children and the teaching force who occupy it are a source of great pride to the people of eastern Hillsborough County".¹⁴ Principal S.L. Woodward summarized the value of the building and the important

(See Continuation Sheet)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one (1)

QUADRANGLE NAME USGS Plant City, East

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 min

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 389425 3090660
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Block 14, S. P. Thomas Addition.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rolla L. Queen, Historic Sites Specialist & Mary McCahon, Architectural Historian (HTHCPB)

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management December 3, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

The Capitol

(904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Tallahassee

Florida

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

[Signature] 12-12-80

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 2/4/81

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 2/3/81

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RECEIVED	JAN 7 1981
DATE ENTERED	FEB 4 1981

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET one ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

institution it housed in his dedication address when he stated that "one cannot measure the value of this beautiful building by the \$50,000 expended in its erection and equipment, but it must be measured by the increased efficiency for the pupils and the resultant benefits to the city as a whole".¹⁵ The more commodious facility permitted an expanded curriculum which included art, music, manual training and domestic arts. Well equipped laboratories were provided for teaching physics, biology and chemistry.¹⁶ In 1920, a highly successful agriculture department was added. According to the State Supervisor of Agricultural Education, this department, during its first term, produced the best outdoor laboratory.¹⁷

At the time Plant City High School was built, the Hillsborough County system was one of, if not the best, in the State of Florida.¹⁸ This was due primarily to efforts of the German-born Ludwig W. Buchholz (1855-1935) who was Superintendent of Public Instruction in Hillsborough County from 1887 to 1901 and 1909 to 1913.¹⁹ In addition to stimulating a dramatic increase in the number and quality of public schools in the county, in 1887, Buchholz established the program of in-service teacher training to improve the teaching skills of teachers in the county system. The innovative program was repeated in school systems throughout the state with great success.²⁰

In 1915, the Hillsborough County Board of Public Instruction adopted the "six-three-three plan." It was only one of fifty-seven school systems in the country where grades were organized in this form.²¹ Endorsed by the United States Commissioner of Education and the National Education Association, the plan restructured the former system of eight years of lower school and four years of high school to six years of lower, three of junior high, and three of high school. While this plan provided a better transition from the lower grades to high school, the introduction of new subjects into the curriculum was judged to be an effective measure to hold the students attention.²² The "six-three-three plan" is still the philosophy behind the organization of the curriculum in the Hillsborough County system as it is in many of the other school systems, although there has been a definite trend during the past fifteen years towards the middle school philosophy.²³

For a short period during World War II, Plant City High School doubled as a "strawberry school". In eastern Hillsborough County the nine-month school year was arranged to run from April through November so that the students would be available to assist in the labor-intensive cultivation and harvest of strawberries, an important mainstay of the east Hillsborough County economy.²⁴ The city school had not previously operated on the summer schedule because many of the rural campuses included a high school curriculum. The labor shortage caused by the War, however, mandated that the Plant City High School offer both a summer and winter schedule between 1943 and 1946.²⁵ Thus, for a brief period, Plant City High School was part of an unusual regional custom where the school year was adjusted to agricultural interests. This lasted until July, 1956.²⁶

As with all schools around the country, the Plant City High School has produced a number of successful and prominent personalities who have achieved significance on the national, state, and local levels. A few of these are:

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RECEIVED	JAN 7 1981
DATE ENTERED	FEB 4 1981

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET two ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

William Reece Smith (Class of 1943), a former Rhodes Scholar and president of the American Bar Association during 1980;

Charles R. Bender (Class of 1932), the first Floridian to graduate from the United States Coast Guard Academy and former Commandant of the Coast Guard;

James M. Walter (Class of 1940), founder of the Jim Walter Corporation, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of building materials, specializing in the construction of partially finished houses;

James Redman, a state legislator from 1966 to 1978;

James Shelton Moody (Class of 1932), a state legislator from 1948 to 1957 and circuit court judge from 1957 to 1974;

James D. Bruton (Class of 1926), a former judge who served in the Florida House of Representatives.²⁷

Several other graduates of Plant City High School have gone on to serve their community in locally elected or appointed positions, or have become lawyers, doctors, and educators. Some of these are:

Paul Sidney Buchman (Class of 1941), City Attorney;

Theodore J. McCall, City Manager (1941-1967);

Nettie Mae Draghon (Class of 1938), appointed first female City Manager in 1975;

Betty Barker (Class of 1940), first woman elected to a city or county governing body in Hillsborough County, Florida, she served on the Plant City Commission;

David E. Bailey (Class of 1934), educator and co-author with Quintella Geer Bruton (1926) of Plant City: Its Origins and History.²⁸

The East Hillsborough County Historical Society has worked since the Hillsborough County School Board deeded the 1914 High School to the City of Plant City on January 21, 1975, to see that the building is preserved and again becomes an integral part of the fabric of the community. Their untiring efforts have resulted in an adaptive use feasibility study prepared for them by the Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board and the University of Florida School of Architecture in 1977-78, and permission from the Plant City Commission for the legal right to rehabilitate the building.²⁹ The Historical Society raised \$28,000 to have the building reroofed in the spring of 1979, and is currently anticipating more funding from both public and private sources to convert the structure into a community center with an auditorium.

The historic and practical appeal of the project in the community is broadly based. Several former classrooms have been rehabilitated as memorials to prominent Plant Citians who were active supporters of the High School project. Henry S. Moody (1895-1980), a respected pharmacist, had a long and distinguished career of public service. He was a city commissioner from 1948 to 1956 and again from 1968 until 1976, and served as Mayor of Plant City for three terms in 1949, 1950 and 1972. He was also active in numerous civic organizations, and in 1972 was lauded by Plant City Civic clubs as "a remarkable man of energy, wisdom, integrity and unquestionable ethics" in naming Moody Man of the Year.³⁰

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET three ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Otis M. Andrews (1906-1979), the manager of the local McCrory store for forty years between 1930 and 1970, was also an important and respected community leader, serving as a city commissioner continuously from 1953 to 1976, during which he served several terms as Mayor of Plant City. In 1973 he was awarded the civic club's Outstanding Citizen Award.³¹

Additional memorial funds have been established to honor numerous others who have contributed to their community, making the rehabilitation of Plant City High School as much a civic accomplishment as its initial construction.

FOOTNOTES:

¹The Courier, 1915-1935.

²Bruton, Quintella and D.E. Bailey, Plant City: Its Origin and History. (St. Petersburg: Valkyrie Press, 1979), p. 81.

³Bruton, p. 115.

⁴Bruton, p. 163.

⁵The Courier, January 29, 1915.

⁶Ibid., March 27, 1914.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Hillsborough County Board of Public Instruction. Minutes Vol. 4, p. 212.

¹⁰Polk's Tampa City Directory (Jacksonville; R.L. Polk Publishing Company, 1910-1920).

¹¹The Courier, May 15, 1914.

¹²Ibid.

¹³The Courier, January 8, 1915.

¹⁴The Courier, January 29, 1915.

¹⁵Ibid.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 7 1981
DATE ENTERED	FEB 4 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET four

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

¹⁶ Bruton, op. cit., p. 277.

¹⁷ The Courier, January 20, 1921.

¹⁸ The Courier, October 12, 1915.

¹⁹ Public Information Office of Hillsborough County Schools. L. W. Buchholz. (Tampa Educational Media Center, n.d), p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

²¹ The Courier, August 24, 1915; Also verified by 1915-1916 Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Florida.

²² Ibid.

²³ Farmer, Frank M. Hillsborough County Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, personal interview October 31, 1980.

²⁴ Bruton, op. cit., p. 140.

²⁵ The Courier, 1942-1946.

²⁶ Tampa Public Library. Vertical File: Strawberry Schools.

²⁷ Smith, W. Reece, Sr. (Father), Personal interview. November 3, 1980; Bruton, op.cit. p. 448; Burton, p. 308; Martin, Joseph, Personal interview. October 31, 1980; Walter, James M., Personal interview October 29, 1980; The Miami Herald. April 29, 1979; Tampa Tribune, May 13, 1980, December 14, 1978;

²⁸ Draughon, Nettie Mae, Personal interview, November 6, 1980; Barker, Betty, Personal interview, November 5, 1980; Bruton, p. 304.

²⁹ Bruton, p. 422.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 299-300.

³¹ Ibid.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 7 1981
DATE ENTERED	rtB 14 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET five ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

- Barker, Betty. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon. November 5, 1980.
- Bruton, Quintilla G. and Bailey, David E., Jr. Plant City: Its Origin and History. St. Petersburg: Valkyrie Press, Inc., 1977.
- Draghon, Nettie Mae. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon, November 6, 1980.
- Farmer, Frank M. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon, October 31, 1980.
- Hillsborough County Board of Public Instruction. Minutes. Vol. 4. Tampa.
_____. Subject File: County School History. Tampa
- Karyuksaw. 1916, np.
- Martin, Joseph. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon. November 5, 1980.
- Mitchell, Omar. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon, October 31, 1980.
- Polk's Tampa City Directory. Jacksonville: R.L. Polk Publishing Company, 1910-20.
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- Smith, W. Reece, Sr. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon, November 3, 1980.
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- Tampa Tribune. 1915, 1965-80.
- The Miami Herald. April 29, 1979.
- The Courier (Plant City) 1915-1947.
- Walter, James M. Personal interview with Mary E. McCahon, October 29, 1980.