



**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Carol S. [Signature] for [Signature] 7-23-01  
Signature of certifying official Date

W. Ray Luce, Director, Historic Preservation Division and  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Entered in the National Register 9/9/01
  - determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
  - determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
  - removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
  - other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
  - see continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

EDUCATION/SCHOOL

### Current Functions:

EDUCATION/SCHOOL

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/COLONIAL REVIVAL

### Materials:

<b>foundation</b>	Brick
<b>walls</b>	Brick
<b>roof</b>	Asphalt
<b>other</b>	N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Colbert School is located in small town of Colbert, Madison County, Georgia, approximately 8 miles east of Athens. Constructed in 1924, the school is a balloon-frame building with a red brick veneer with Colonial Revival elements. The building has an asphalt shingle roof and a continuous brick foundation. The school is one-story, built in the H-plan with a central main block flanked by two wings (Photograph 1). Two identical front-gabled wings that serve as main entrances characterize the exterior. Each arched entrance has archivolt expressed in brick coursing (Photograph 2). The central section contains four evenly spaced windows. Colonial Revival details include wide eaves and overhangs and gable returns. Other details include circular gable vents and transom lights above the entry doors.

The interior is arranged with a large central block on the main axis, which contains the auditorium, and a wing on each end on the cross axis. The wings contain hallways that access classrooms (Photograph 9). The building was designed to segregate elementary and high school students. The interior retains its hardwood floors. Walls are beaded board wainscoting and plaster (Photographs 9 and 10). The auditorium also has beaded board wainscoting and the original seats are intact (Photograph 12). Each classroom door is paneled and has a glass transom that opens and closes with lifting hardware (Photograph 10). Original blackboards remain in several classrooms. Three original chimneys are present, two in the high school wing, one in the elementary wing.

In 1928, two classrooms and a hallway were added to the rear of the elementary wing of the school. The same were added to the high school wing in 1942. Also in 1942, a classroom and lunch room were added on the basement level. In 1955, a one-story addition was constructed to the east of the high school wing to house a kitchen, classrooms, office space, restrooms, and a teachers' lounge. Designed in the "modern" or International style, it features bold, unornamented geometric forms, a

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 7--Description

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flat roof, exposed concrete frame, large windows, and red-brick panels. Also in 1955, replacement windows were installed in the original window openings. In 1960, a second addition was constructed to the east of the 1955 addition (Photograph 4).

Two outbuildings are located on the property: the 1940 Vocational Agriculture Building and the c. 1948 gymnasium. The Vocational Agriculture Building (Photographs 13-16) is a wood-frame, side-gable structure with a metal seam roof and exposed rafters. The gymnasium (Photographs 16 and 17) is a wood-frame, side-gable clapboard building. Clerestory windows provide natural light. The interior is a large open space housing a basketball court and bleachers (Photograph 18).

There are two noncontributing buildings on the nominated property. A one-story front-gabled building is located west of the main school building. It is brick veneered with a low-pitched roof. The second noncontributing building is located across the street from the main school building northwest of the Vocational Agriculture Building. It is a two-story, concrete block building with a gable roof. The building has three large doors on the east facade and is used for equipment storage. The buildings were constructed outside the period of significance.

The school is located in a large open block with a curved driveway. A large mature hedge lines the front facade of the main block of the school, and five hardwood trees line the street opposite the elementary wing of the school.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally       statewide       locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A       B       C       D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**  N/A

A    B    C    D    E    F    G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Architecture  
Education

**Period of Significance:**

1924-1960

**Significant Dates:**

1924-Colbert School constructed.

1928-Addition to elementary school wing constructed.

1940-Vocational Agricultural Building constructed.

1942-Addition to high school wing constructed; classroom and lunchroom added to basement.

1948-Gymnasium constructed.

1955-Addition to east end of building constructed.

1960-Second addition to east end of building constructed.

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

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**Section 8--Statement of Significance**

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**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

N/A

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### **Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

Colbert School was constructed in 1924 to serve as the elementary and high schools for the Colbert community. The school served as the only educational facility for white children in Colbert during this time period. In 1955, Madison County consolidated its schools and Colbert School became Colbert Elementary School serving grades 1 through 8. In 1966, grades 6 through 8 were moved to a middle school and grades 1 through 5 continued to use Colbert Elementary School until 1981. The building was leased to the City of Colbert in 1983 and now houses the Head Start program and other community-based programs. Colbert School is significant in the area of architecture as an excellent example of an early 20th century community school. The character-defining features include the H-plan of the building, its one-story height, large windows, and the Colonial Revival elements. Most consolidated public schools in Georgia built between the 1920s and the 1940s share those design characteristics, although many were built in the Craftsman style and a few reflect English Vernacular Revival stylistic influences. The "modern" additions to the school are excellent examples of how the International style was adapted to public school architecture in Georgia from the 1940s through the 1960s. As in many small towns, these additions are the only fully developed examples of the International style in the community. The school is significant in the area of education for the typical activities that would have occurred at a community school in the early 20th century, and as the only school serving white children in Colbert.

#### **National Register Criteria**

Colbert School is eligible under National Register Criterion A in the area of education for the typical activities that occurred as the only school for the white community in Colbert during the historic period and under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a good and intact example of an early 20th century community school in Georgia.

#### **Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

Colbert School is eligible for the National Register under Criteria Consideration G as a property that has achieved significance in the last fifty years for the 1955 and 1960 additions to the 1924 building.

#### **Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance represents the period in which Colbert School and its outbuildings were constructed and functioned as a community school.

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### **Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

The school, the Vocational Agriculture Building, and the gymnasium are the three contributing resources included in the nominated property. Two noncontributing resources are included in the nominated property, one of which is used as a storage shed. These resources were constructed after the period of significance.

#### **Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

**\*\*Note: The following history was compiled by Burke Walker, Preservation Planner, North Georgia Regional Development Center, "History of the Colbert School Building," 1998. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

Colbert is a community that developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily as a result of the railroad. It is a community that served the transportation, agricultural, and commercial and residential needs of the area. The town was originally named "Five Forks" (renamed Colbert in 1909), a name given to the five roads that traveled through the town connecting with Diamond Hill, Danielsville, Crawford, Comer, and Athens.

One of the earliest schools that served Colbert residents was Whitehall School, located east of Colbert near the junction of State Road 72 and State Road 172. In 1891, a school was established in Five Forks on the corner of Sixth Street South and Fifth Avenue. The school's first teacher was Mr. Manley. In 1892, Five Forks population totaled 50. The 1900 census reported 141 residents in Five Forks. The school served 40-50 students in 1899 and the number grew to 80 students by 1900.

By 1901, Five Forks operated two schools, one for white children and one for African-American children. As Five Forks prospered the town grew and demand for schools increased. The schools that existed between c. 1890 and 1923 were locally funded and staffed. The Old Colbert School, a simple two-story school building with a large bell tower, served white children between c. 1901 and 1923. Its principal was Tom W. Long. The African-American school, known as Waggoner's Grove School, served the African-American community between c. 1895 and 1932. In 1901, its teacher was Mr. H.C. Moon. Waggoner's Grove School's early history was associated with the New Hope Methodist Church in Five Forks.

In October 1924, plans were made to construct the Colbert School. The school was funded through a local bond issue and public subscription without state or federal assistance. A site for the school was obtained on the corner of Fourth Street North and First Avenue in Colbert. The school building exceeded school standards of the day. The building contained an auditorium that seated 250 people. On either side of the auditorium, two wings extended. One wing consisted of three rooms and an



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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office for high school classes and another identical wing to provide for elementary classes. The school's exterior was equally substantial, made of brick veneer that represented a vast improvement over previous school buildings in Colbert.

Several other school-related buildings occupied the school grounds and were completed around 1924 as well. A home economics department was constructed on the west side of the school. This building was constructed of clapboard and other materials from the pre-1924 school in Colbert. Miss Hallie Strickland served as the first teacher for this new building and department. The home economy building was razed in the 1950s to provide for more playground space adjacent to Colbert School. A school gymnasium was also located at the rear of the school. It was constructed by parents and citizens in Colbert using salvaged material from the old Colbert School. The gymnasium saw a great deal of activity and use, especially boys and girls basketball. The gymnasium remained in active use until it was replaced by the current gymnasium which was constructed in 1948.

In 1925-26 Colbert School had six teachers. These teachers were responsible for both elementary and high school classes. One teacher, Ruby Griffeth Hardman, was paid \$60.00 a month. This amount was provided through the local school board and payment was given when it was available, usually in \$5 and \$10 portions. Salaries for the teachers were hard to come by because of the new school's construction costs. Teachers often boarded with local residents and became active members in the community. Parents were responsible for providing all student materials and services including text books, lunches, and transportation. During cold winter days, students and teachers gathered around pot-bellied stoves for class in order to keep warm. The school was administered by a superintendent and principal who were accountable to The Colbert Board of Trustees, a board of five members.

Only four years after its construction, Colbert School expanded. In 1928, two classrooms and a hall were added to the elementary wing. The school's expansion coincided with the growth of the Colbert commercial and residential areas. At this time, Colbert, as a city, provided services related to commerce, transportation, the railroad, agriculture, and a place of residence in Madison county. This era of prosperity ended in the late 1920s with the economic ruin caused by the boll weevil and consequent decline in cotton agriculture. During the 1930s, however, the school continued to educate area children.

In 1940, a Vocational Agriculture program was added to the curriculum. It also required a new building that was constructed in the area in front of the Colbert School on a one acre lot purchased by the school for this purpose. The new building contained classroom space, offices, a shop and canning plant. This facility provided necessary services to the community beyond instruction. Farmers in the community brought equipment to the Vocational Agriculture building for repair. They also canned and preserved foods produced by area farmers. In 1942, two additional classrooms and

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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a hall were added to the high school wing of the school. Another classroom and lunchroom were also added on the basement level. The lunchroom is significant because it was the first in the county.

The Colbert School gymnasium was razed in 1950 due to its poor condition. Donations were accepted by residents in Colbert for a new gym. Plans for the new gymnasium included expansion of the play area and a new lunchroom. The new gym was a large clapboard building with clerestory windows to light the interior and a raised basement level with windows for the lunchroom. By moving the lunchroom from the main school building, additional space was created for classrooms and eventually used as a library in the school building. The new gymnasium was constructed between c. 1948 and 1950.

In 1955 high schools were consolidated in Madison County and centralized in Danielsville. Colbert School would no longer serve high school students. In that same year an addition was constructed to the east of the 1924 building. The addition housed a kitchen, classroom, office space, new rest rooms, and teachers' lounge. At this time, the name changed to Colbert Elementary School and served grades 1 through 8. In 1960 the addition was extended. Later, in 1966, grades 6 through 8 were transferred to the consolidated South Madison Middle School three miles from Colbert. Grades 1 through 5 continued to use Colbert Elementary School through the 1970s. In 1981, the Board of Education vacated Colbert Elementary School. The Board of Education leased the school to the City of Colbert in 1983. The Colbert Head Start began using the elementary wing of the school in 1988 for classrooms and, in the same year, "The Clothes Closet" began using the high school wing to sell clothes to the needy. Today, both Head Start and "The Clothes Closet" continue to use the school.

Throughout the town's history, Colbert was committed to educating its children. School buildings were paid for by contributions by residents. The school also served as a focal point within the community, with all its services and activities. The Colbert School building evidences this past and continues to provide a needed educational facility within the community.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Colbert Committee. Memories of Our Home Town: Colbert, Georgia 1776-1976. 1976.

Colbert High School, Senior Class. Treasured Memories of School Days, 1936. 1936.

Porterfield, Mildred and Barbara Roush. Colbert Historic District Information Form. July, 1983. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia. With Supplemental Information.

Walker, Burke. Historic Property Information Form. December, 1998. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia. With Supplemental Information.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued  
date issued:
- 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:

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Approximately 2.5 acres

**UTM References**

A) Zone 17 Easting 295531 Northing 3768689

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property follows the original parcel of land on which the school was constructed in 1924 and includes the school building, the gymnasium, and the Vocational Agriculture Building.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Holly L. Anderson, National Register Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 156 Trinity Avenue, SW, Suite 101  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** July 23, 2001

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** ( ) not applicable

**name/title** Burke Walker  
**organization** Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center  
**street and number** 305 Research Drive  
**city or town** Athens **state** Georgia **zip code** 30605  
**telephone** (706)369-5650

( ) **consultant**  
(X) **regional development center preservation planner**  
( ) **other:**

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Colbert School  
**City or Vicinity:** Colbert  
**County:** Madison  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** August, 2000

### Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 18: Front facade with elementary wing entrance in foreground; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 18: Detail of elementary wing entrance; photographer facing north.
- 3 of 18: Front facade with high school wing entrance in foreground; photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 18: 1960 addition; photographer facing west.
- 5 of 18: East facade of elementary school wing; photographer facing west.
- 6 of 18: North facade of elementary school wing; photographer facing south.
- 7 of 18: Detail of windows on elementary school wing; photographer facing west.
- 8 of 18: West facade of elementary school wing; photographer facing east.
- 9 of 18: Interior, hallway in elementary school wing; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 18: Interior, classroom; photographer facing southwest.
- 11 of 18: Interior, classroom; photographer facing east.
- 12 of 18: Interior, auditorium; photographer facing east.
- 13 of 18: Vocational Agriculture Building, front facade; photographer facing southwest.
- 14 of 18: Vocational Agriculture Building, east facade; photographer facing west.

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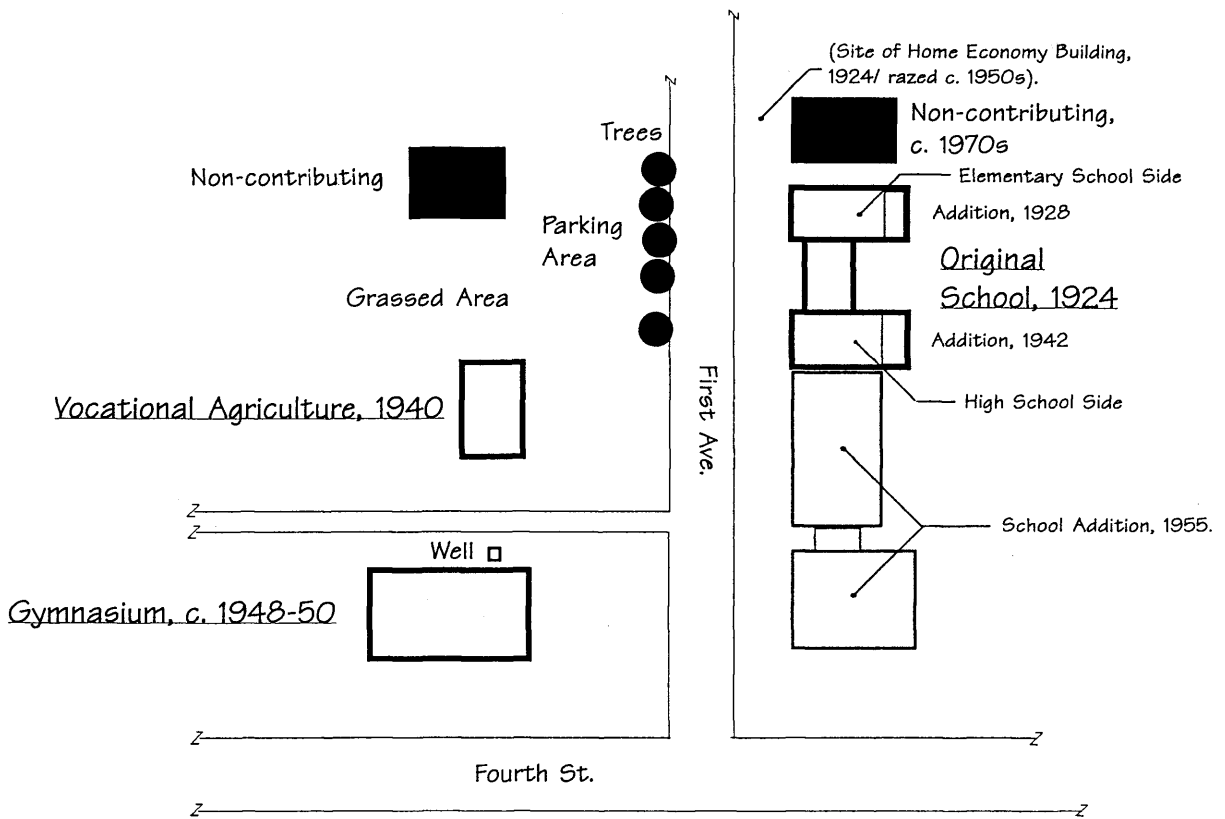
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**




**Photographs**

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- 15 of 18: Vocational Agriculture Building, interior; photographer facing southwest.
- 16 of 18: Vocational Agriculture Building and gymnasium; photographer facing east.
- 17 of 18: Gymnasium, east and south facades; photographer facing northwest.
- 18 of 18: Gymnasium, interior; photographer facing south.

Colbert School  
 Colbert, Madison County, Georgia  
 Site Plan  
 Scale: Not to scale  
 North: →



-  Original, Historic Building
-  Addition
-  Non-Contributing

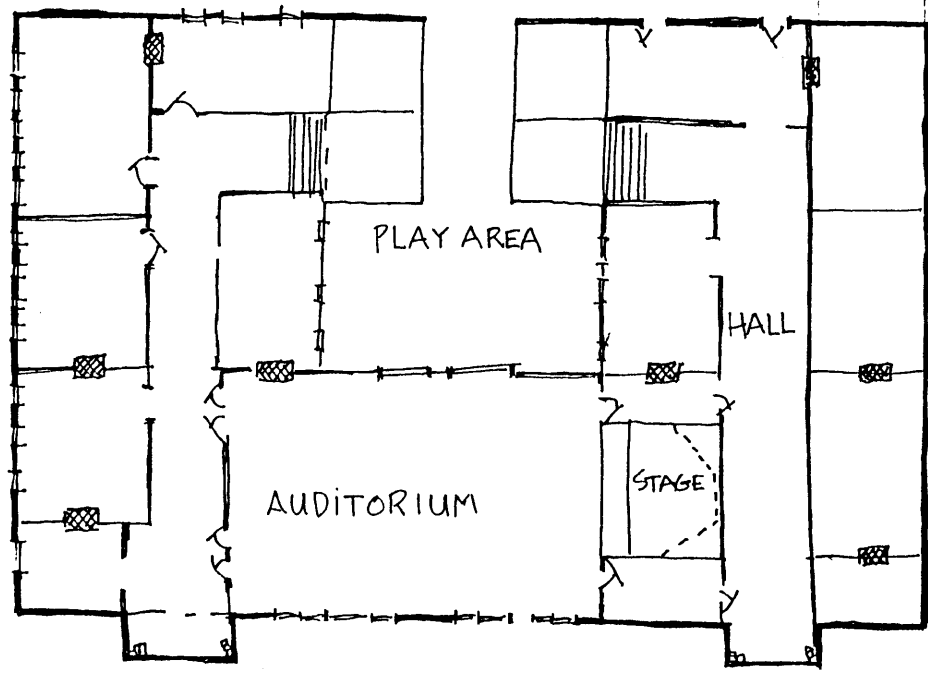
**SITE PLAN**

**Property:** Colbert School  
**Location:** Madison County, Georgia

**Not to Scale**



**Prepared by N.E. Ga RDC**



FLOOR PLAN

Original School building, 1924, and addition, 1928/1942.

(not to scale).

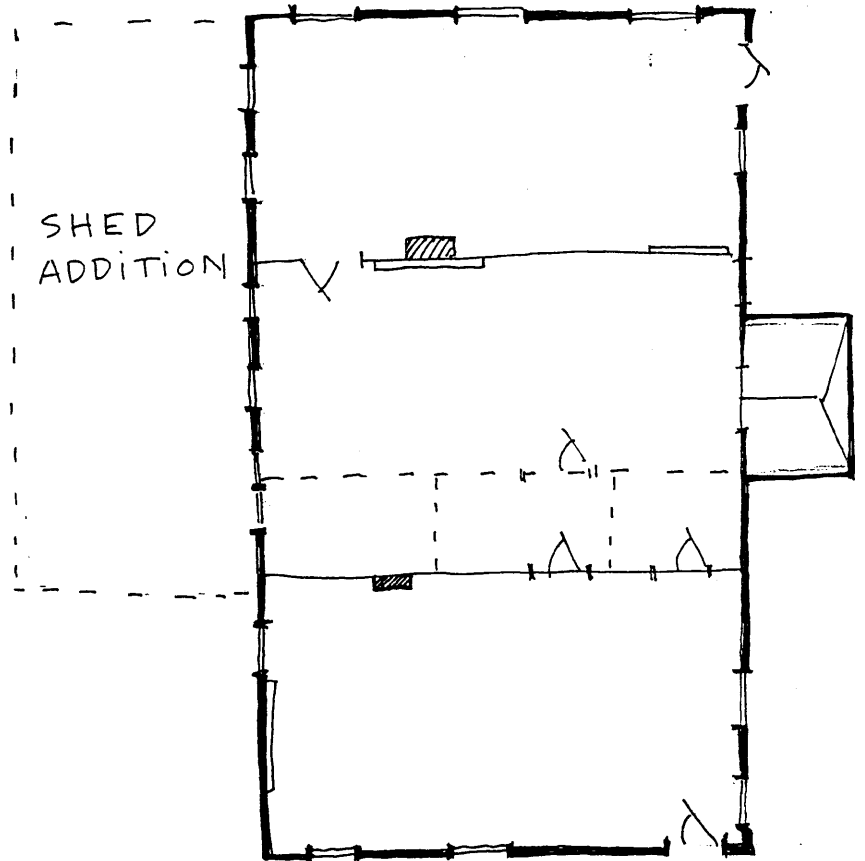
Colbert School  
Colbert, Madison County, Georgia  
Floor Plan  
Scale: Not to scale  
North: ↑



FLOOR PLAN

Vocational Agriculture building, 1940.

(not to scale)

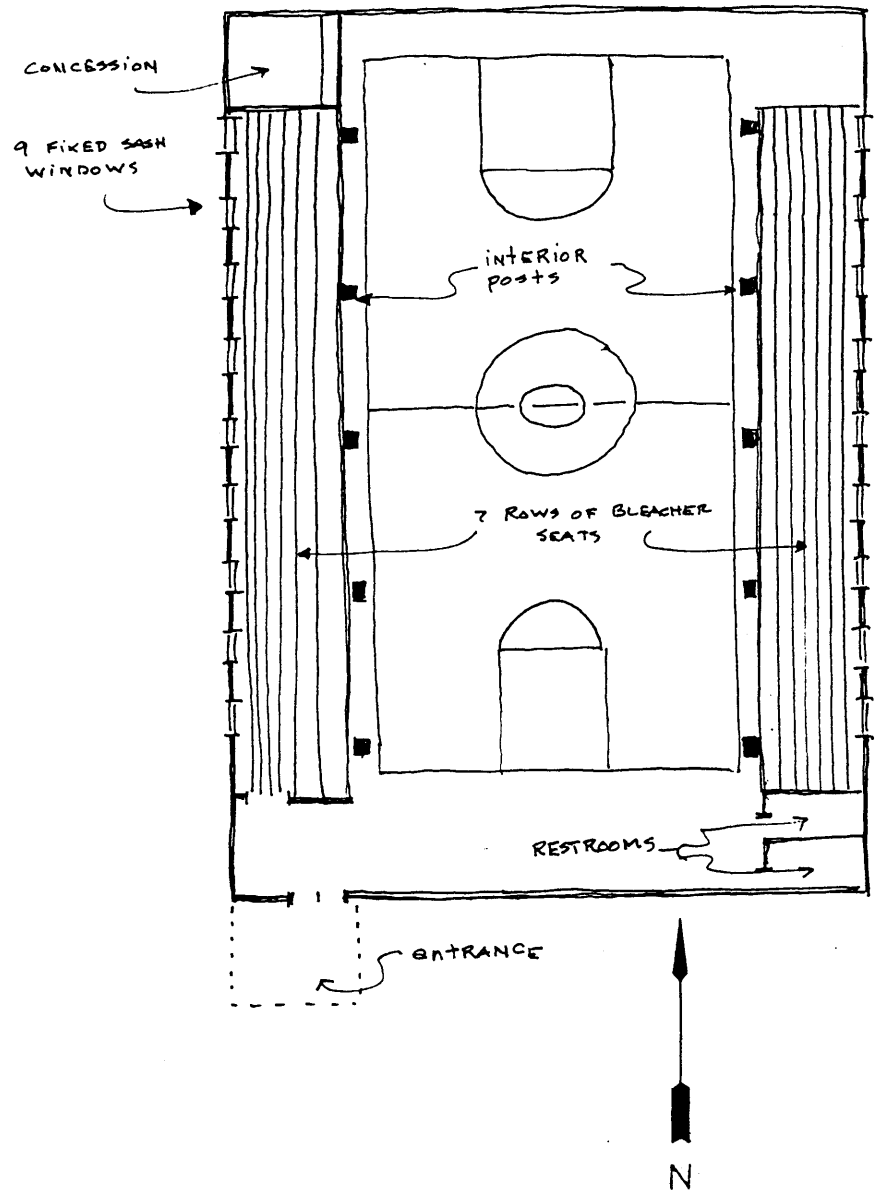


Colbert School  
Colbert, Madison County, Georgia  
Vocational Agriculture Building  
Floor Plan  
Scale: Not to scale  
North: →

FLOOR PLAN

Gymnasium building, c. 1948-50.

(not to scale)



Colbert School  
Colbert, Madison County, Georgia  
Gymnasium  
Floor Plan  
Scale: Not to scale  
North: ↑

Colbert School  
Colbert, Madison County, Georgia  
National Register Boundary:  
Contributing Resource: ●  
Noncontributing Resource: ○  
Scale: On map  
North: ↑



# Colbert School

## Colbert, Georgia

Mapscale 1 : 2,000

Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center - 1999

