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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic (Thematic Nomination) PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA, 1870-1940 (VHLC File #07-1175)

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number Various (see individual inventory forms) N/A not for publication

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Augusta code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_x_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	_x_ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	_x_ both	___ work in progress	_x_ educational	_x_ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	_x_ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_x_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
x thematic group	___ being considered	_x_ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	N/A	___ no	___ military	___ other: vacant shop

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (see individual inventory forms)

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Augusta County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Staunton, Virginia state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (See Continuation Sheet #1)

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Augusta County Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes _x_ no

date 1978-1984 ___ federal _x_ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Middlebrook Grade & High Schools (Middlebrook Historic District, NR, 2/10/83)
1981 State Survey
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

history." To qualify under this criterion, which stresses historical significance, a school must illustrate an important historical development in the county, such as the improvement of black schools or the first efforts at consolidation. Criterion C refers to architectural value, providing for properties "that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction" or "that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction." Educational resources included under this criterion can either illustrate a pattern common to this class of resources or reflect individuality or variation within this theme. Criterion C justifies selecting the best examples from each class or resources by evaluating the architectural significance and integrity of each structure. All nominated resources must be eligible under one of these criteria but not necessarily both, although several of the nominated schools are significant for both reasons.

All of the surveyed schools eligible under these criteria were evaluated to assess whether they possessed integrity. Several kinds of integrity were considered essential for educational buildings; namely, location, setting, feeling, and association. The original location, a well-preserved setting, and appropriate feeling should all be present to convey the function of the school building and to illustrate its role in the rural community. Those examples that have been moved or in which the setting has been dramatically altered have lost much of their feeling and have not been considered eligible. For a building to have integrity of association, it should either display a typical, unusual, or rare extant plan or type or reflect an important historical scene, such as the development of vocational education or the improvement of black education.

When assessing the kinds of integrity involved in a building's physical condition, namely workmanship, design, and materials, the individual building needs to be compared to others within its class. For example, the low survival rate and more dramatic alteration of most one-room schools justify accepting a lower standard of physical integrity for this category than for consolidated schools which survive in larger numbers and in better condition. Educational resources fall into three classes: (1) one-room ungraded schools, (2) two- or three-room graded schools, and (3) consolidated schools of four rooms or larger. The plans and forms for each category will be discussed, outlining the features that must be present for an example to possess physical integrity in its class.

One-room schools illustrate the initial stages of public education in Virginia. After the new 1870 state constitution mandated public education for both white and

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
x excellent	___ deteriorated	x unaltered	x original site
x good	___ ruins	x altered	___ moved date N/A
x fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

With the unifying theme of "Public Schools in Augusta County, Virginia, 1870 to 1940," this nomination studies the changes in rural education in Virginia. The thematic format affords the opportunity to examine the evolution of school building forms, from one-room schools to larger consolidated schools, as they reflect the history of rural education. The chosen period begins at the establishment of free public schools in Virginia, based on strong local control and guidance, and extends through the first major phase of consolidation, which brought increased state control over the educational process. The nomination includes representative or significant buildings from the three major classes of educational resources, one-room schools, two- and three-room schools, and consolidated schools of four or more rooms. Examples from each class have been chosen to illustrate the diversity of forms and styles. Although this nomination focuses on one particular county, it serves to illustrate the developments occurring in rural schooling throughout the State.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The basis for this nomination is an intensive architectural survey of Augusta County conducted by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission between 1978 and 1983. Educational buildings were among ten resource categories identified and documented. The forms that characterized school architecture soon became evident, and knowledge of these types, along with oral history and documentary sources, helped identify schools that had either been remodeled or altered since their closing.

An analysis of the survey data, prepared as an RP3 study unit called "Historic Resources in Augusta County" for the statewide preservation plan, revealed that only two schools had been nominated to the National Register, and that these buildings had been nominated because of their location in a historic district. Traditionally, school buildings have not been considered significant on an individual basis, unless they demonstrated exceptional historical or architectural importance. Consequently, the Augusta County study unit suggested that representative examples of public school buildings be included within a thematic nomination, since these structures are significant as illustrations of the broad pattern of educational history in the County as well as the State.

The nominated buildings were chosen predominantly from the survey data, with documentation from county histories and the Augusta County School Board. Further research into schools not previously surveyed because of demolition or alteration was conducted to determine the historic context of the surviving examples. As a result of this research, several additional buildings were discovered and surveyed in July and August of 1984. Also, at this time previously surveyed buildings were reexamined to obtain more current photographic coverage and to check the building's condition and status.

Criterion A and C prove most useful in evaluating the significance of these educational resources. Properties are eligible under criterion A if they are associated with "events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

black students, Virginia created a network of country schools, generally one-room schools, within walking distance of every student. While some of these early schools were private schools integrated into the new public system, many new schools were built in the 1870s and 1880s. One-room schools continued to be commonly used through the early twentieth century. The first local efforts of consolidation of white schools in the 1910s and 1920s closed many of these smaller schools. However, one-room schools remained in black communities and more mountainous or isolated regions of the County until 1950.

Augusta County's one-room schoolhouses follow fairly standard designs similar to those across the State in the late nineteenth century--simple rectangular blocks with gable roofs. The entrances on post-Civil War schoolhouses generally moved from the side walls, found in the private antebellum "field schools," to the gable end, used in the northern states. Some of the County's earliest schools, including Walker's Creek, Westview, and Sunnyside, had two front entrances. A single transom-lighted central entrance, sometimes flanked by windows, proved more common in the late nineteenth and twentieth-century examples. Two or three six-over-six or nine-over-nine sash pierced the side walls. In the 1870s, log and brick schools were most common, but by the 1880s and 1890s, frame construction became overwhelmingly more popular among the newly constructed schoolhouses. These more utilitarian structures had little decoration except for the occasional use of decorative eaves brackets, seen at the 1909 Estaline School. Chimney location changed from the mid-nineteenth century to the late nineteenth century. The only two antebellum examples, one of brick and one of log, have gable end chimneys opposite the entrance gable, and these chimneys contained fireplaces. All the surviving post-1870 schools had central stove flues which served wood or coal stoves.

Like the exterior, the interior of these buildings remained quite plain. A 1932 Fire Insurance Survey revealed that wood sheathing, sometimes painted, covered the walls of most of the one-room schools, with the occasional use of plaster above the sheathing. A few had plaster on all the walls. Blackboards or "blacked strips," painted yearly, stretched across the gable end opposite the door and the adjacent ends of the side walls. The ceilings were also sheathed with wood. The unaltered Westview Schoolhouse retains some wooden shelves in the corners. Interior plans offered little variation until the early twentieth century when new State guidelines were issued. The Estaline Schoolhouse was one of two 1909 one-room schools built in the Estaline Valley with a narrow cloakroom located off the front door.

Since most of these schools were closed and sold in the first half of the twentieth century, one-room schoolhouses have been the most threatened and least preserved of the three classes of educational resources. The survey, using oral history and historical documents, located over twenty-five standing one-room schools, most either remodeled or abandoned. Others may exist, but they have been moved or so dramatically altered that their original character and use is difficult to determine.

The physical integrity of the nominated schoolhouses has been considered high if the building retains the essential features of design and function. The nominated

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

examples display the scale, massing, and proportion associated with these forms without any major additions which would distract from the original form. In most cases, the fenestration patterns and chimneys have not been altered.

A greater degree of alteration has been accepted in the integrity of the interior plan and finish. All but three of the surveyed examples were at one time divided into rooms and used as dwellings or shops. Two schools with their original plan have been included. Three other nominated schools--Kiddsville, Moffett's Creek, and Mt. Meridian--have simple board partitions which could easily be removed. Most of the nominated schools have not been modernized and do not currently contain modern plumbing or heating facilities in the original room.

Basic integrity of materials and workmanship should be present despite alterations in the interior plan. All the nominated resources retain their original choice and combination of materials on the exterior. Two schools are rare examples of once-common building materials and workmanship--the brick Glebe School and the log Walker's Creek School. Interior workmanship is not of an exceptional or innovative quality in any of these schools due to the utilitarian function and meager funding for these early schools. However, interior finish should be considered significant if it displays evidence of or is consistent with local vernacular forms and techniques.

Two of the nominated one-room schoolhouses rate particularly high in integrity of association. The Kiddsville School is one of the few surviving and least altered late nineteenth-century black schoolhouses in the County. Estaline School, built in 1909 and closed in 1950, was one of the last operating one-room schools for white children due to its location in a more isolated mountainous region in western Augusta County.

The second class of educational resources, two- and three-room schools, illustrates the next stage of development of rural schools. Augusta County boasted several two-room schools as early as the 1880s, only ten years after the establishment of the public school system. Some began as one-room schools, enlarged by a one-room addition, while others were originally built as two rooms. With this arrangement, schools were divided into the primary room serving grades one through three and a secondary room for grades four through seven. The third room of the three-room schools was often used for some high school instruction. These larger graded schools became increasingly popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and many remained in use until 1950.

Greater variety of form exists for this class of resources than for one-room schools. Two-room schools can be divided into two types, those originally built as two rooms and those enlarged from one to two rooms. Examples of the first type were usually long, rectangular frame buildings with a longitudinal facade facing the road. Either one central or two adjoining doors, flanked by two windows to each side, pierced the facade of most of the pre-1920 examples. A central partition divided the space into rooms of equal size, and a stove flue along the partition served both rooms.

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

As with one-room plans, there was little applied exterior decoration along the partition serving both rooms.

After the State began its School Building Service in 1920, several new ideas were introduced into the familiar two-room plan. When the facade remained on the longitudinal wall, the entrances to each classroom were often moved to the end of the facade. Occasionally, the entrance was placed in the gable end of the building. Larger, multi-paned windows replaced the smaller six-over-six or nine-over-nine sash, greatly improving interior lighting to meet new specifications. Rows of clustered windows would extend along either the front or back longitudinal wall and sometimes on both walls. Many of the post-1920 two-room plans built in Augusta County were for black students and unfortunately have either been razed or have deteriorated considerably. All of the two-room schools were of frame construction with one 1920s example covered with brick veneer.

The greatest variety exists among the second type of two-room schools which were built in two parts. Local patrons and trustees made the decisions for the type and nature of the additions to one-room schools, creating different forms. Some examples, such as the Westview School, were enlarged to copy the long two-room form with its longitudinal facade. The addition, slightly larger than the original school, was built off the original entrance gable, and new exterior doors were created for both rooms in the center of the new facade. However, the resulting school plans more often reflected the two-part evolution of the building. At Moffett's Creek, the new addition created an "L"-shaped design, which kept the exterior entrance into the older room. The new room was only accessible through the old room.

The interior of these schools followed similar designs to one-room schools. Wood sheathing, plaster, or a combination of the two finished the walls and ceiling. Blacked boards stretched across one or several sides. Since most two-room schools were built before 1920 when the School Building Service was established, there is greater variety in interior finish than would be found among later consolidated schools.

Two-room schoolhouses also have a low survival rate, with the majority of these buildings having been razed or remodeled. In many cases, these examples were destroyed when more modern consolidated schools were built in the town. The survey documented only eleven two-room schools, although the historical records indicate they were once quite common. Standards of integrity suggested to evaluate two-room schools are similar to those for one-room schools with a few variations. The basic design elements--form, scale, massing, and fenestration--should all be preserved. In several Augusta County examples, changes made to convert the school into a dwelling--additions which obscure the original form, significant alterations to fenestration patterns, applications of brick veneers, and modernization and remodeling of the interiors--have compromised the original exterior design of the building and thus eliminated these buildings from consideration.

(See Continuation Sheet #5)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The three nominated two-room schools generally display higher standards of integrity in interior design than one-room schools. Of the two examples of the second type of two-room schools, Westview and Moffett's Creek, one retains its original plan while the second has a temporary board partition in one room. Westview has the best-preserved interior finish of all the nominated resources in both the first and second classes, retaining all its wood sheathing, the "blacked strip," and some shelves in the corners. Moffett's Creek also retains most of its interior finish and has been modernized besides the addition of electricity. All of the examples of the first type have been more dramatically altered, so only one example has been chosen. Mt. Zion has been divided into rooms inside, but it still suggests its original character.

The only three-room school remaining in Augusta County has been included in this nomination as a rare example of a once common type. The Verona School meets the basic standards of integrity suggested for two-room schools, retaining its basic form, fenestration, materials, and workmanship on the exterior. Like other three-room schools of the early twentieth century, the Verona School displayed a front longitudinal two-room block with a central entrance leading into a hallway. The additional room was located in a rear ell. These three-room plans followed a domestic scale, often with the cross gable and front porch as at Verona, that characterize vernacular houses of the period. Although the building has been moved back slightly from its original location on the road and the interior has been remodeled into a motel office, the Verona School remains an important example of this three-room plan in the evolution of school building plans.

By the turn of the century, many communities, particularly small towns, began to build more modern schools of four rooms or larger. The new Country Life Movement during the first decades of this century boosted this development by advocating larger schools which could provide a better education for rural students and in the process improve country life. Due to the more recent construction and the higher survival rate of these consolidated schools along with the better historical documentation on the razed examples, the development of these consolidated plans and styles can be more easily traced and studied.

First in this series of larger schools came four-room schools following a more domestic design and scale than the later consolidated schools. Built between 1900 and 1915, these school buildings assumed the familiar I-house form--a two-story, single-pile, central-passage design with two rooms on each floor. The balanced facade, usually seven bays with a central entrance; the front cross gable; and the simple one-story wooden porches found on these schools proved remarkably similar to the vernacular houses of the period. These schools illustrate the local dependence on familiar forms in the first attempts to create larger graded school designs. Most of these schools were of frame construction and have all been demolished. The only surviving example, the Mt. Sidney School, is also the only documented brick school of this type.

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

By the 1910s another larger consolidated school design became more popular in Augusta County. This design, found first at the Greenville School of 1910, is a two-story rectangular central-passage plan. Its double-pile arrangement allows for a total of eight rooms in comparison to the earlier four-room schools. Most of the documented and surviving examples are of brick, with only one frame example. Of the eight documented examples of this form, four remain, but only one has remained as a school. This nomination includes three of these schools--the Weyers Cave School, still in use; the Middlebrook School, now vacant and unaltered; and the Craigsville School, recently renovated into apartments following the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

In 1920 the State Board of Education began a School Building Service which sold school plans to the counties at a minimal charge, saving money from architectural fees. This service provided both "standard" plans as well as more customized "special" plans to meet the needs of the particular community. The State plans clearly reflected the new progressive philosophies and reforms adopted by the state, especially in regard to the expanded role that these new country schools should play in the country. The most important additions were an auditorium/gymnasium and/or a community center, or one room which served all three functions. Since schools were increasingly envisioned as a focus for community life in this period, the proposed community center would ideally provide a room for local activities to improve and educate its citizens. The auditorium/gymnasium could be used for school or town plays and programs and provide indoor recreational facilities after the introduction of physical education into the curriculum in 1920.

The new, more diversified curriculum mandated by the State also encouraged the integration of other more specialized rooms and spaces into the new consolidated school complex. The State plans increasingly included offices, chemical laboratories, and libraries. With the new vocational education programs in agriculture, industrial arts, and home economics, new spaces were required for these activities as well. Sometimes these classrooms were included within the building itself, especially for home economics. However, in the 1920s detached shop buildings were increasingly built on high school grounds for agriculture and industrial arts. A few school plans included lunchrooms in the 1920s and 1930s, but it was not until the 1940s that larger kitchen/cafeteria additions, supported by full-time cafeteria staff, were added on to the existing schools.

Augusta County's consolidated school plans changed dramatically with this new School Building Service. The first decade of this service witnessed great variation in school plans, since many schools were custom-designed for the particular community. Besides the addition of more specialized spaces, one of the most obvious changes was from two to one story. Only two two-story schools were built in Augusta County after 1920, whereas all the previous consolidated schools had been two stories. Four of this group of eight assorted 1920s plans had full, raised basements, providing additional space lost with the second story. In three of these four schools, the basement

(See Continuation Sheet #7)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

contained a large auditorium/community center. Two other examples from this period boasted both community centers and an auditorium/gymnasium. The Middlebrook High School, built in 1922 largely with community money, clearly reflects the new spirit of the consolidated school as a community center; it contains a large gymnasium, separate auditorium, and basement kitchen and dining hall/community center.

By the mid 1920s, Augusta County began to rely increasingly on a new "standard" plan produced by the School Building Service, and this design became the most common plan through the 1930s. Between 1923 and 1925, Augusta County built four examples of a new one-story plan with a central auditorium/gymnasium, encircled by classrooms on each side. The central entrance leads into a small entrance foyer with a classroom on each side and then proceeds directly into the gymnasium. Classroom wings extend along each side of the gymnasium. In all examples, the classrooms open up to the large central space. Within this basic plan, the number of classrooms varies from four at New Hope to ten at Fishersville. All four schools had separate library and office space, and some had stages serving the auditorium. In all cases, the partially finished basement later became the lunchroom and sometimes had classroom space as well. The styles of these buildings vary. Three hint at the Colonial Revival style with large central wooden porticos, while the New Hope School reflects the contemporary Art Deco style. The County School Board contracted with the Eutsler Brothers of Grottoes, one of the best-known local contracting firms in the early twentieth century for the construction of all four of these examples.

Seven additional examples of this standard plan with a central auditorium were built between 1927 and 1937. The major difference in these plans and the four earlier examples was the removal of the front classrooms; the main entrance led directly into the auditorium and not into a front hall. This plan proved so popular that it was the only new school plan used by the County between 1929 and the early 1940s. All seven of these examples were constructed by the Augusta County School Board's new maintenance department, established in 1927. The Maintenance Department took this standard plan and adapted it to the needs of each community, varying the number of classrooms from four to seven. Additional classrooms could easily be added at the end of the side files of rooms. The exterior style of these school buildings also became more standardized, with most hinting at the Colonial Revival styles. The first five examples were of brick construction, while the last two, dating to 1937 and 1938, were frame.

Since a higher percentage of consolidated schools survive, the standards for determining integrity for the extant examples must be more strict than for the other two classes of educational resources. The nomination includes representative examples of each major building plan including the early four-room plans, the 1910s eight-room plans, the 1920 and 1930s central-auditorium plan as well as an example showing the diversity and essential characteristics of the 1920s State plans. In selecting these examples from the larger group of consolidated plans, an assessment of integrity of design, workmanship, and materials became critical. The schools must exhibit the

(See Continuation Sheet #8)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

essential elements of both exterior and interior design. On the exterior, the buildings should retain their original scale, massing, fenestration, and stylistic features. Although most of the schools were enlarged, the addition should not be too obtrusive or detract from the design of the original building. In many cases, these additions were located behind the school or were sometimes detached from the original building, and hence do not disturb the building's early character.

Inside, the school should retain its original plan, or alterations made while the building was still used as a school, as well as much of its finish and materials. Eight of the ten nominated schools display high standards of physical integrity in both the interior as well as the exterior. As the only surviving example of the early four-room plan, the Mt. Sidney School has still been chosen despite some exterior alterations which have in fenestration and interior remodeling into apartments. On the interior, the 1917 Craigsville School has been more altered than the other two nominated resources of its type, but the remodeling into apartments followed the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

In selecting examples of each plan or form, several consolidated schools have been chosen because they possessed special historical significance in the history of Augusta County's education as well as serving as good examples of their particular type. The Augusta County Training School, a late example of the central-auditorium plan, was the first consolidated black school in the county and followed the more vocational "training school" concept popularized for black high schools in the early twentieth century. Weyers Cave School has been recognized locally for its leading role in the development of vocational education in the State, with the establishment of the now nation-wide Future Farmers of America here in 1927. Middlebrook High School provides the best local example of the progressive-era ideal of the modern school as community center. North River High School was the first consolidated high school built in Augusta County, and one of the first in the region as well.

Nominated Schools

One-Room Schools

1850-60: Glebe Schoolhouse
1850-70: Walker's Creek Schoolhouse
1873: Moffett's Creek Schoolhouse (see also Two-Room Schools)
1874: Westview Schoolhouse (see also Two-Room Schools)
1877: Kiddsville Colored Schoolhouse
1886: Mt. Meridian Schoolhouse
1909: Estaline Schoolhouse

Two-Room Schools

1873; 1880s: Moffett's Creek Schoolhouse (see also One-Room Schools)
1874; 1885-90: Westview Schoolhouse (see also One-Room Schools)
1880s: Mt. Zion Schoolhouse

(See Continuation Sheet #9)

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

Three-Room Schools

1911: Verona Schoolhouse

Consolidated Schools

1912: Mt. Sidney School
1916: Middlebrook Grade School
1916-7: Weyers Cave School
1917: Craigsville School
1922: Middlebrook High School
1925: New Hope High School
1927: Crimora School
1930: North River High School
1937: Deerfield School
1938: Augusta County Training School (Cedar Green)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

immediately to this demand and "took hold of the schools with a good deal of energy."[2] Despite local opposition, Augusta County had established 88 schools the first year. By 1872, the number had increased to 137 and continued to fluctuate around this figure for the remainder of the first decade. According to the first Annual Report, Augusta County progressed quite rapidly in establishing free schools because the patrons continued to pay part of the teachers' salaries, augmenting the state's salaries: "By this combination of private with public means, schools...are likely to be so multiplied as to furnish a full supply for the wants of the people."[3]

In the early years, Augusta County rented quarters in churches, meeting halls, and older school buildings. The first Annual Report expressed optimism that the existing private schools could be obtained at "little or no public cost" and converted into public schools.[4] Two years later, the Annual Report stated that many of these old schoolhouses were "repaired and supplied with more comfortable furniture."[5] In 1873, the County began to buy and to build school buildings, and the number of County-owned schools increased dramatically over the following two decades. In 1880, Augusta County spent over $5,000 on school buildings, the second largest amount spent on this category of any Virginia county. By 1890, the Augusta County School Board owned 164 of its 176 schools, with the total school property valued at over $80,000.[6]

The majority of Augusta County schoolhouses in the first few decades were one-room buildings. Out of 115 schools in 1871, all but seven contained one room. Ten years later, 136 of the 150 were still only one room. The first decade witnessed the greatest variety in building materials, with 27 frame, 76 log, and 12 brick schools the second year. Log schoolhouses proved most common across the state in

(See Continuation Sheet #10)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	_x_ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	_x_ architecture	_x_ education	___ military	_x_ social/
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	x humanitarian
_x_ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
_x_ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	_x_ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 19th & 20th Centuries **Builder/Architect** Various (See inventory sheets)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The years between 1870 and 1940, from the establishment of the free public school system through the early consolidation movement, proved to be a critical period in the development of rural education in Virginia. During this period, rural schools were transformed in character from "local, semi-autonomous institutions which existed largely outside of formal governmental structures to ones which incorporated and reflected a new bureaucratic conception of government."[1] This transformation affected all aspects of the rural school experience, from the selection of teachers and design of the curriculum to the construction and location of school buildings. Progressive-era reformers, viewing the network of one- and two-room schools across the state, were instrumental in introducing many reforms to modernize Virginia's schools to make them keep pace with urban and northern schools. Virginia incorporated many of these new ideas into its educational programs in the early decades of the twentieth century, most notably the consolidation of smaller schools, the development of high schools, the improvement and diversification of the curriculum, and the construction of more modern, better-equipped school buildings.

This nomination traces this critical period in the development of rural education in one Virginia county--Augusta County in the Shenandoah Valley. Since Augusta County has remained primarily rural through the twentieth century, a large number of school buildings from the period survives. A recent comprehensive county survey identified all of the known educational buildings and provided the basis for this study. School buildings express within a concrete form the actual local response to state-wide educational policies, bridging the gap between the proposed reforms and the local reality of schooling. Nineteen examples of different building forms and styles have been chosen for inclusion in this nomination including 7 one-room schools, 3 two-room schools, 1 three-room school, and 10 consolidated schools. Taken together, the selected schools illustrate the evolution of school building forms, from the locally planned and built one and two-room schools to larger consolidated schools based on plans and specifications furnished by the State Department of Education. As a thematic group, the nominated resources are historically and architecturally significant in documenting the social and cultural history of rural education in Virginia.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Underwood Constitution of 1869 mandated that Virginia establish a system of free public schools to open for the 1870-1 school year. Augusta County responded

(See Continuation Sheet #9)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

this first decade. The Annual Report statistics and contemporary accounts attest to the large number of log schools, often in primitive condition. By 1880-1881, the number of log and brick schools in Augusta County had dropped to 12 and 3, respectively; while the number of frame schools rose to 125. Clearly the new schools built during the first decades were overwhelmingly of frame construction, replacing the earlier log and brick buildings. By 1885, the one-room frame schoolhouse had become the predominant form throughout the state and symbolized the new public school system.[7]

Although relatively small in the first year, the number of schools established for black students grew in the following decades. The second Annual Report from 1871-2 revealed that black patrons in Augusta County enthusiastically supported the new public schools:

> Though generally poor, they have in many instances shown a liberality of labor and means in building houses and supplementing salaries worthy of imitation by the whites, while the children have sometimes walked from four to five miles in attending school and have progressed satisfactorily in their studies.[8]

In 1870, with a black population of 22% in the County and Staunton combined, only 11% of the county schools were black. However, ten years later, with 26% total black population, the County operated 19% of its schools for black students. The number of black schools peaked in 1900 at 20% of the total county schools. Black schoolhouses in these years displayed forms similar to their white contemporaries, usually one-room frame schools.[9]

Clearly one of the most significant developments in the evolution of public schools in the late 19th century proved to be the increase in the number of graded schools, schools containing more than one room. Throughout the late 19th century, the State strongly encouraged the development of graded schools as one of the primary means of improving rural education. Ten years after the establishment of the public schools, Augusta County had ten two-room and four three-room schools. By 1890, the number of two-room schools had more than doubled to twenty-two. These graded schools were usually located in large towns or villages, such as Middlebrook, Greenville, Mt. Sidney, Stuarts Draft, or New Hope.[10] Instruction in these schools would usually be divided into a primary room, for grades one through three; an upper room, for grades four through seven; and often some high school in a third room.

With the loose structure of Virginia's public school system in the late 19th century, local officials and patrons had considerable control over the daily operation of the schools. Because the state-appointed county superintendents were paid only as a part-time position to handle their many responsibilities, they delegated numerous administrative activities to the trustees of each district. The trustees then became

(See Continuation Sheet #11)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

the governing body for their jurisdiction. Working closely with the patrons, the trustees made major decisions from choosing teachers to determining the locations of the schools. The procedures involved in the construction of new schoolhouses illustrate the partnership that developed between patrons and trustees in the day-to-day operation of the schools. Both the trustees and the patrons supplied the needed materials, from the hardware to school supplies such as brooms and water buckets. Patrons often furnished a sizeable amount of the labor and often donated the land as well, complicating school buildings.[11]

A new image of the public school evolved at the turn of the century in Virginia. Progressive era reformers noted in the late 19th century that country life, particularly in the South, was not keeping pace with the improvements found in American cities. In the first decade of the 20th century, President Roosevelt appointed the Country Life Commission to explore the underlying "problem" of country life. As country people flocked to the cities for better work and educational opportunities, Roosevelt feared the decay of the rural lifestyle that had formed the basis of American culture. The Commission determined that the poor quality of the one-room and two-room schools contributed significantly to this decline in country life and hence advocated federal assistance to improve rural schools. Educational reformers and sociologists joined in this drive, arguing that schools should play a major role in developing the qualities of leadership and cooperation so essential to modern rural life. Country schools should be "modernized," to adapt to a new vision of country life. This new philosophy led in the early 20th century to more control over local schools by the State Board of Education, diminishing the power and authority of local trustees and patrons.[12]

Reformers ideally pictured the new rural school as a community center, training both children and adults and hence serving as a catalyst for social change. According to the Cooperative Educational Association:

> Every public school in Virginia is a community center where the citizens may unite for the improvement of their educational, social, moral, physical, civic, and economic interests.[13]

State Superintendent J. D. Eggleston envisioned the "modern" school as a "more dignified and beautiful structure," with large playgrounds, a school garden, and an agricultural plot, along with facilities for manual training, domestic science, and a more diversified curriculum. By serving as a center for the formation of children's clubs, cooperative industries for women and men, and citizens' leagues, the new country school would "socialize the isolated districts" and "maximize the community life against the individual."[14]

Beginning in 1906, the state legislature passed several financial incentives to encourage the construction of modern school buildings. The Williams Building Act of

(See Continuation Sheet #12)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

1906, the Strode Act of 1908, and a 1916 act all appropriated loan funds for new construction or enlargement and repair of old schools. Permitting schools to borrow money from the Literary Fund, these acts created a boom in school construction. Between 1910 and 1923 alone, the value of Virginia's school property increased from 8½ to 39 million. Augusta County clearly benefited from these funds. Out of 57 dated schools included in a 1932 Fire Insurance Survey, 45 were constructed after 1906. Thirty-five were built after 1916, with the majority constructed in the 1920s. Six of these new schools were subsequently enlarged between 1916 and 1932. Community and patrons leagues raised much of the money to match these state funds, proving "instrumental" in erecting "new and modern school buildings."[15]

By attaching directives for school construction to these new loan funds, the State began to more closely supervise school construction. The Williams Act required that any building plans be approved by the state and local superintendents and further required the State Board of Education to select school furniture. The Strode Act included specifications on ventilation, lighting, design, and toilet facilities. The 1916 act further refined these specifications.[16]

In addition to financial assistance for school construction, the State Board of Education began a plan and design service to save the county schools the costs of architects fees while providing plans meeting the most modern specifications. By 1911, the Department of Public Instruction was furnishing without cost plans and specifications for 16 schoolhouse designs, including two, three, four, six, and eight-room schools. In 1920, this service was moved to the newly established Division of School Buildings, which furnished plans, advised on sites, wrote specifications for buildings, and supervised their construction. Historian J. L. Blaire Buck argued that this service "established high standards of construction and of design throughout the state."[17] By 1923, the State had also appointed a State Supervisor whose sole responsibility was for school buildings.

Even after the establishment of the plan service, the county school boards still assumed responsibility for school construction. The state plans provided only a basic outline, but the construction details were left up to the builder. Between 1920 and 1927, the School Board hired individuals or construction firms for each building. Although responsible for determining the details and supervising the construction, these builders were often assisted by local citizens, who donated much of the labor. By 1927, the Augusta County School Board had established a Maintenance Department, headed by G. G. Shaver. Shaver supervised the construction of buildings after 1927, hiring his own building crew for both new schools and additions. By the 1930s, the Maintenance Department had begun to adapt the "standard" central-auditorium plan for each project, making their own changes and modifications to this familiar design without plans from the State.

(See Continuation Sheet #13)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

In 1946, the Division of School Buildings discontinued the production of working plans, due to the large amount of proposed building after the war. The county school boards were required to hire an architect and put the building out to contract. The Division revised, advised, and collaborated with private architects and engineering firms on all proposed designs. After this date, the Augusta County Maintenance Department was no longer involved with either new construction or additions.[18]

The boom in building construction during the early 20th century resulted in a decrease in the number of schoolhouses and an increase in the number of rooms. Consolidation--"the grouping of small schools into a central school"--became one of the major goals in rural education. Reformers argued that consolidated schools could best meet the challenge of the modern country school. Statewide, the number of schoolhouses, which peaked in 1901, dropped considerably by 1915 due to consolidation. In Augusta County, the number of schoolhouses dropped from 189 in 1900-1 to 143 by 1915-6 and 102 by 1925-6. In 1925, the County employed 54 trucks to transport an average of 25 students. The 1931-2 Annual Report observed that 64 schools had been closed since consolidation began in the County. Since most of the new schools were larger than four rooms, the number of rooms still increased steadily in this period from 244 in 1901 to 329 by 1931.[19]

In Augusta County, the process of consolidation continued the movement from one-room to two- and three-room graded schools. By 1911-2, out of 141 total schools, Augusta County had 35 two-room schools and 20 schools with three or more rooms. By 1931-2, there were only 20 one-room schools, 19 two-room schools, 2 three-room schools, and the remainder were larger, consolidated schools over four rooms. Schools with over four rooms were increasingly built in larger towns and villages such as Greenville, Churchville, Middlebrook, Craigsville, or New Hope. However, between 1900 and 1920, the County built numerous three-room schools in smaller communities such as Sherando, Verona, and Mt. Pisgah. Many of these three-room schools contained one room which could serve as an auditorium/community center, still responding to the new image of the country school.[20]

Along with consolidation came the high school movement. With modern facilities, a diversified curriculum, and a higher level of instruction, the new high schools epitomized the idea of the modern country school. In 1906, Virginia passed the Mann High School Act to "establish and maintain a system of public high schools."[21] Although the State had authorized secondary education as far back as 1875, the Mann Act proved to be the first serious attempt to fund, develop, and regulate high schools. Statewide statistics reveal the phenomenal growth of high schools in the ensuing decade, from 74 in 1905 to 118 in 1906, 448 in 1912, and 575 in 1917. With the mushrooming interest in establishing high schools across the state, Virginia increased the available loan funds over this decade, further stimulating this growth.[22]

(See Continuation Sheet #14)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

By 1911, ten of Augusta County's larger consolidated schools offered some high school instruction. Augusta County boasted 14 accredited high schools by 1922-3, by far the largest number in any Virginia county. However, it was not until 1923 that the County built its first high school building. High schools were often built on lots adjoining the elementary school, as at Middlebrook, Greenville, Churchville, New Hope, or Stuarts Draft. In some of the smaller communities in the 1920s, like Spottswood or Weyers Cave, the newly constructed consolidated school housed all grades, from the primary level through high school. By 1925-6, Augusta County boasted 11 accredited four-year high schools, all with modern plants.[23]

With these new consolidated schools came the realization of several other progressive-era reforms, such as the extension of the school term, more efficient teacher supervision, and improved curriculum. Beginning in the 1910s, new subjects were added, ranging from music, drawing, agriculture, and industrial arts in the elementary schools to bookkeeping, shorthand, typing, agriculture, homemaking, industrial arts, and laboratory science in the high school. The expansion of the curriculum led to the incorporation of new rooms into the State plans. The most notable additions were large rooms used as an auditorium, community center, and gymnasium. After physical education was added to the curriculum in 1920, intermural sports programs were introduced, usually basketball and baseball. The new gymnasiums provided more consistent practice space for this increasingly popular program. The School Building Service encouraged the inclusion of an auditorium, preferably with a stage, as schools developed literary and music clubs which staged programs for the community. Community rooms, occasionally with kitchens, provided space for the community programs advocated by rural sociologists.[24]

State plans included a variety of other more specialized spaces, including libraries, chemical laboratories, and lunchrooms. The state established a matching fund to encourage the establishment of school libraries in 1908, and community leagues and women's clubs often helped raise the needed match. In the mid-1920s, the state appropriations were increased and a state superintendent of libraries was appointed. Augusta County schools had only three libraries in 1911, but the number had risen to 66 by 1920-1. Chemical laboratories were one of the first specialized classrooms to be introduced, and were commonly found in the 1910s and 1920s in the larger schools. With the growing emphasis on improving children's health in the 1920s, women's clubs began to provide hot and nutritious lunches in some schools. Although state plans rarely included lunchrooms in the 1920s, makeshift space was used until the school cafeteria program became more popular in the 1940s.[25]

To make country schools fit country life, Virginia introduced vocational programs in agriculture and home economics. In 1908, the State provided funds to establish departments of agriculture and domestic economy in ten agricultural high schools across the state. In 1916, federal grants-in-aid under the Smith-Hughes Act were made available in Virginia and, along with the 1929 George Reed Act, stimulated the further

(See Continuation Sheet #15)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

development of vocational education in the state. Part of these grants was appropriated for new building and for purchasing equipment.[26]

Augusta County proved to be progressive in its introduction of vocational programs. In 1923, the County established two Smith-Hughes agricultural high schools, and the programs brought immediate popularity. The following year, four schools boasted agricultural departments. By 1931-2, county high schools had six four-year agricultural programs and three two-year programs. One of the County's major contributions was in the establishment of the Future Farmers of America. This large, nationwide network of agricultural clubs began at Weyers Cave High School in 1927. Originally called Future Farmers of Virginia, the clubs became popular so quickly that by 1928 a national club organization had been established. Home economics first entered into the local curriculum in the late 1910s, often taught by students at the Harrisonburg State Teachers College. In the 1920s, many of the high schools established more permanent departments with a home economics teacher included in the faculty. Several schools provided vocational training for adults in the community through night courses and vocation schools, further enhancing the image of the school as a community center.[27]

With the improvement of white schools in the early 20th century, black schools began to lag further behind in educational training. Several philanthropists observing this development established funds for the improvement of black schools in the South. In 1908 the Jeanes Fund was established to provide money for teacher supervision and training and for industrial education, considered at that time to be the most appropriate training for blacks. The John F. Slater fund, begun in 1882 to aid teacher training, gave substantial financial assistance to the development of high schools between 1911 and 1952. Julius Rosenwald began his subsidies for the construction of improved black schools in 1916.[28] With the Rosenwald fund, "well-planned and well-built schoolhouses sprang up all over the state of Virginia."[29] These new schools conformed to the planning requirements previously developed by the state for white schools.

Yet, despite these advances, Augusta County's black schools progressed rather slowly. As late as 1931-1932, none of the black schools were over two rooms. Half of the county's 20 one-room schools and eight of the 11 two-room schools served black students, and only four of these met the requirements for "standard" elementary schools. The 1932 "Fire Insurance Survey" on Augusta County schools reveals that five of the 11 black schools surveyed were built before 1882, one was built in 1917, and the remaining five, four of which were two rooms, were built between 1926 through 1930.[30]

Augusta County had no public high school for blacks before the Augusta County Training School in 1938. Previous to this time, the county sent students to the black high school in Staunton. The concept of the "training school" emerged in the early 20th century to strengthen graded schools, to provide better teacher training

(See Continuation Sheet #16)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

facilities, and to promote industrial and vocational education.[31] Augusta County's training school, built over 20 years after the first such school in the state, had lost some of the idealism inherent in the original goals. The school assumed more of the character of a consolidated school without the special vocational emphasis of the first Virginia training schools, and remained the only black high school in the County for many years.

By the late 1930s, Augusta County had passed through its first major phase of consolidation. More modern consolidated schools had been built in each part of the county, closing the majority of the one- and two-room schools. The next few decades brought more changes--the integration of schools in the 1950s and the further consolidation of schools within each district in the 1960s.

AMcC

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[1]William Allen Link, "Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1981), p. 276.

[2]Virginia School Reports, Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871-2 (Richmond, 1972), p. 20.

[3]Ibid., 1870-1, pp. 5-6.

[4]Ibid., p. 10.

[5]Ibid., 1872-3, p. 38.

[6]Ibid., 1880-1; 1890-1.

[7]Ibid., 1871-2; 1880-1; Link, p. 101.

[8]Virginia School Reports, 1871-2, p. 34.

[9]Ibid., 1870-1; 1880-1; 1900-1; Jedediah Hotchkiss, Historical Atlas of Augusta County, Virginia (Chicago: Waterman Watkins & Co., 1885), p. 36.

[10]Virginia School Reports, 1880-1; 1890-1.

[11]Link, pp. 75-77, 153, 267.

[12]Ibid., p. 276.

(See Continuation Sheet #17)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Footnotes

[13]J. L. Blaire Buck, The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952 (Richmond, 1952), p. 257.

[14]J. D. Eggleston, "Consolidation and Transportation in Virginia," University of Virginia Alumni Bulletin III, No. 3 (July 1910), p. 254-5.

[15]Clay Catlett, Economic and Social Survey of Augusta County, University of Virginia Record Extension Series, Vol. XII, No. 7, January 1928 (Charlottesville), pp. 102-3; Harold K. Robison, "Fire Insurance Survey of Augusta County Public Schools," (Insurance Company of North America, Philadelphia, Penn., May 1932).

[16]Buck, p. 144; Link, p. 277.

[17]Buck, pp. 211, 347; Virginia School Reports, 1911-12.

[18]Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1946-7 (Richmond, 1947), p. 181.

[19]Eggleston, p. 252; Catlett, pp. 106-7; Virginia School Reports, 1900-1, 1915-16; Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1925-6, 1931-2.

[20]Virginia School Reports, 1911-12; Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1931-2.

[21]Buck, p. 142-4.

[22]Ibid., p. 168.

[23]Virginia School Reports, 1911-12; Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1925-6, 1922-3, p. 121.

[24]Buck, pp. 176-81, 240; Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1920-1.

[25]Buck, p. 156; Virginia School Reports, 1911-12.

[26]Link, p. 311; Buck, pp. 140, 267.

[27]Catlett, p. 102; Buck, p. 249; Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1931-2.

[28]Buck, pp. 158-9, 161, 205.

(See Continuation Sheet #18)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Footnotes

[29]Buck, p. 205.

[30]Robison, "Fire Insurance Survey"; Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1931-2.

[31]Buck, p. 205; Link, pp. 354-6.

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(See Continuation Sheet #19)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet # 18

10. Geographical Data

See Individual Inventory Forms

Acreage of nominated property N/A

Quadrangle name N/A Quadrangle scale N/A

UTM References N/A

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Individual Inventory Forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

organization VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION date November 1984

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national _X_ state ___ local

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 H. Bryan Mitchell

title H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION date December 11, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

See Continuation Sheet for Justification date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

GPO 894-765