

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Cleveland School

Cleveland, Rowan County, RW0806, Listed 01/10/2019
Nomination by Heather Slane and Cheri Szcodronski, hmwPreservation
Photographs by Heather Slane, June 2018



Front façade (south elevation), and side (west elevation) of school, facing northeast



Former auditorium, looking southeast

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Cleveland School

Other names/site number: R. A. Clement School

Name of related multiple property listing:
Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 216 Krider Street

City or town: Cleveland State: NC County: Rowan

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION - school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL - clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER - four-teacher Rosenwald school, plan no. 4-A

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

FOUNDATION - brick

WALLS – brick

ROOF – asphalt shingle

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Narrative Description

Cleveland School is located at the north end of Krider Street and Clement Street, which parallel each other and connect at a loop north of the Rosenwald school. The building stands approximately one-half of a mile northeast of downtown Cleveland, at the north end of a historically African American area, and approximately twelve miles northwest of Salisbury, the county seat of Rowan County. The school complex includes two historic buildings: the 1930 H-shaped Rosenwald school and the 1942 Auditorium. The nearly one-acre site features level terrain, cleared of trees with the exception of a single tree at the south end of the property shading the 1956-57 playground, with a metal slide and metal-framed swing set. The school complex retains its rural context with low-density, single-family houses (most dating to the 1940s and 1950s) along Krider and Clement streets to the south and west, a single house to the north with cleared fields (now a city park) beyond it, and undeveloped, wooded land and a small cemetery to the east. Two frame buildings, constructed in the 1940s and associated with the school, were constructed east of the school, now on a separate parcel, though have been moved or demolished and are thus, not included within the nominated boundary. A 1948 school, constructed to enlarge the Rosenwald school, stands approximately 1000 feet to the south, at the northeast corner of Clement and East Main streets, on a separate, non-contiguous parcel and under separate ownership. Therefore, it is not included within the nominated boundary.

The 1930 four-teacher, brick Rosenwald school stands near the center of the parcel with the Auditorium immediately to its north. The H-shaped school faces south, originally constructed at the north end of Krider Street, which terminated at the school. However, Clement Street was extended, likely in 1960 when it was paved, and the two streets currently form a loop just north

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

of the school.¹ Setbacks on the east, west, and north sides of the school are shallow with only narrow patches of grass on three sides. There is a small grassy area between the two north wings of the school and the Auditorium, and south of the school is a rectangular, fenced grassy area with swings and a slide at its south end. A paved sidewalk extends from Krider Street, around the left front (southwest) wing, accessing the original west entrance to the auditorium. Without a paved parking area, visitors park on the west side of the school, adjacent to the paved walkway.

1. Cleveland School 1930; ca. 1945 Contributing Building

Cleveland School is a symmetrical, one-story, H-shaped building originally constructed in 1930 following a modified version of Plan No. 4-A from Samuel L. Smith's *Community School Plan, Bulletin No. 3* and featuring four classrooms flanking a central auditorium. However, in 1942, after the construction of the freestanding auditorium to the north, the original auditorium was divided into three classrooms with a hallway on the west end.

The school features a four-bay-wide, side-gabled core flanked by projecting one-story, front-gabled classroom wings with slightly lower rooflines, resulting in an H-shaped plan. It has a running bond brick veneer with soldier-course watertable, louvered vents in the side gables, and an asphalt-shingled roof with boxed eaves and partial gable returns. Nine-over-nine wood-sash windows extend all the way up to the fascia and have wood frames and brick rowlock sills. (Some windows are boarded on the exterior to protect them from vandalism after their recent repair and reconstruction). Small, rectangular foundation vents are located throughout the building, just below the watertable.

The south elevation of the center section features two groups of four windows each (rather than the typical groupings of three windows in Plan No. 4-A), centered on the façade and flanked by entrances, a replacement hollow-core metal door on the west end and a replacement six-panel wood door on the east end. Each entrance is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch supported by a square wood column, the smaller porches constructed in place of a centered, full-width porch prescribed by Plan No. 4-A. The west entrance is accessed by a later concrete ramp, installed in the 1970s for the building's use as a community center, that runs along the interior elevation of the southwest wing. The east entrance is accessed by a concrete stoop on a brick foundation. Projecting classroom wings that flank the auditorium on the south elevation are without fenestration on the interior elevations and south gable ends with the exception of a five-panel wood door that opens to the east shed-roofed porch, adjacent to the intersection of the center section. In lieu of the paired windows on the gable ends as prescribed by Smith's Plan No. 4-A, each of the four gable ends (two facing north and two facing south) has a brick panel, framed by stretcher- and soldier-course brick with concrete squares at the corners. Three small concrete

¹ Beatrice Click Powe. "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)." Survey Site No. RW0806, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC, 4 (hereafter referred to as "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004).")

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

diamonds are inset in the center of each panel and there is a rectangular louvered vent in each gable with a brick rowlock sill.

The east elevation of the school features grouped windows lighting two classrooms and a central library. Windows are grouped with six windows lighting the south classroom and three windows each lighting the library and north classroom. Wood-framed six-light windows light a basement-level room at the north end of the east wing, with a single window each on the east and north elevations, though both have been boarded. The interior elevation of the northeast wing has a five-panel wood door that opens to the north classroom. It is accessed by concrete block steps and is sheltered by a shed roof on a knee bracket. To its north, an exterior brick stair leads down to the basement-level room at the north end of the wing. The stair is sheltered by a shed roof supported by square posts on a brick knee wall and has exposed rafter tails. Plywood sheathing enclosing the stair was added in the 1970s.

The north elevation of the center section features two groups of four windows each. The easternmost window was converted to a doorway in the 1950s, providing access from the adjacent auditorium to the newly installed bathrooms, but has recently been returned to a window opening, the brickwork below being patched to match. The interior elevation of the northwest wing has a five-panel wood door that leads to the north classroom. Like its corresponding door on the northeast wing, it is sheltered by a shed roof on a knee bracket and accessed by a concrete block stair. An original school bell is attached to the north elevation of the center section of the building, adjacent to the entrance.

The west elevation of the school features two groups of six windows each lighting the two classrooms of the west wing. Centered between the grouped windows is a projecting, wood-framed shed. The small, gabled addition, constructed in the 1940s to house the boiler, has plain weatherboards, a 5V metal roof with exposed rafter tails, and paired plywood doors on the west elevation.

The historic layout of the building interior was altered, likely in the late 1930s or early 1940s, with the removal of the permanent cloak screens and the construction of small corner closets in each classroom.² It was altered again in 1942 with the division of the auditorium into three classrooms with a narrow hallway at the west end and in 1950 with the construction of boys' and girls' bathrooms and principal's office in the east of the center classrooms. However, because the alterations to the floor plan were made so early in the school's history and while the school was still in use, the finishes of the later classrooms largely match those of the original classrooms. Additionally, a wall was constructed on the west end of the library in the 1950s, creating the hallway prescribed in the original plan. The only floor plan change that post-dates the period of

² A February 14, 1929 letter from W.F. Credle, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund to George Howard, Superintendent of Rowan County Schools, grants approval for the gable end windows to be excluded from the building and cloak screens to be installed in lieu of cloak closets. The approval indicates that the cloak screens were originally constructed. However, it is likely that they were removed in the late 1930s or early 1940s to accommodate larger classes due to overcrowding at the time. The corner closets feature five panel wooden doors and finishes that match earlier changes throughout the school, indicating that their construction was an earlier change. See Section 7 page 7 for more detailed description of these closets. "W.F. Credle to George Howard," February 14, 1929, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 4.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

significance is the creation of a wide, opening between the two classrooms of the west wing in the 1980s and the subsequent casing of that opening in 2015, resulting in a single open space. Finishes throughout the interior include original wood flooring, beadboard wainscot on the lower one-third of the walls with a narrow chair rail and wide baseboard, wide wood panels secured with narrow battens covering ceilings and the upper two-thirds of the walls, and five-panel wood doors with three-light transoms throughout the interior. Later pendant fixtures are located in all of the classrooms.

The main entrance, on the west end of the south elevation, opens to a narrow, full-depth hallway from which the two classrooms of the west wing and the two classrooms on the west end of the former auditorium open. A wide, shallow closet projects into the hallway, centered between the classroom doors on the west side of the hallway. It has a five-panel door and finishes matching the rest of the hallway and interior, indicating that it was likely installed during the auditorium renovations in 1942 to serve as a cloakroom for one or more of the classrooms in the former auditorium space. The original southwest classroom has a small closet at its southeast corner, likely installed in the late 1930s or early 1940s to replace the wider cloak screen originally constructed. It has a five-panel door and the classroom's wainscot and paneled walls with battens extend around the closet. The classroom also has an original bulletin board on its east wall, just north of the door. It has flat-board trim and extends partially into the wainscot. The northwest classroom has an interior, five-panel door with transom to the hall, a five-panel exterior door on its east wall, and a later, raised stage at its north end. The wall separating these two classrooms was largely removed in the 1980s, though the opening was cased in 2015 and a seam in the flooring remains.

Classrooms on the west end of the former auditorium space extend east from the narrow entrance hall, their east wall bisecting the east group of windows on the north and south elevations. The result is six windows lighting each of the west classrooms and two windows each on the north and south ends of the east classroom. The west classrooms are accessed via original doors on their west walls, adjacent to the exterior walls of the building and opening to the hallway. Like the doors to the original classrooms, they are five-panel doors with operable three-light transoms. Both classrooms retain original chalkboards and/or bulletin boards. Door openings on the east end of both classrooms were installed about 2015 and open to the hallway and bathrooms in the former third classroom.³ The opening intersecting the south elevation extends all the way to the windows and has a boarded transom above while the opening from the north classroom retains a narrow wall adjacent to the windows.

The classroom on the east end of the former auditorium was subdivided in 1950 to accommodate boys' and girls' bathrooms, each with six stalls, and a principal's office. The space was reconfigured about 2015 to allow for two smaller, modern bathrooms, a closet, a small office space, and a wall with hollow-core wood door separating the north and south ends of the remaining hallway, all constructed of frame walls with drywall or wood paneling. The south

³ The three classrooms constructed in the auditorium space were never adjoining. When the bathrooms were constructed in 1950, students had to go outside of the building in order to enter the bathrooms, at which time a window on the north elevation was converted to a door. The rooms were opened to one another and the door removed and window reinstalled in 2015.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

bathroom and office have hollow-core wood doors while the north bathroom has a five-panel wood door. All have vinyl flooring and dropped ceilings, while the remaining hallway retains wood floors and paneled walls and ceilings matching the other classrooms. A modern six-panel door on the south wall of the hallway opens to the east porch and a five-panel door with boarded transom opens to the southeast classroom. A hollow-core door with boarded transom on the east wall of the hallway opens to a small hall that accesses the library and north classroom.

The southeast classroom features finishes matching the other classrooms, though the ceiling has been removed, temporarily exposing the roof framing. It has a small closet at the southeast corner and original chalkboards and bulletin boards on the south and west walls. A five-panel door with boarded transom at the west end of the north wall opens to the small hall leading to the library and northeast classroom. The hallway has finishes matching the rest of the building. However, the hallway, which was prescribed by the Rosenwald plan, was not constructed until the 1950s. Thus the east wall of the hallway, separating it from the library is drywall with a hollow-core door without a transom, and a bulletin board remains on the west wall of the hallway.

The library has wainscot with paneled walls and ceilings above, except the 1950s west wall. It retains an original chalkboard on the south wall, a built-in corner cabinet in the northeast corner with four-light glass doors, and original bookshelves extending along the lower one-half of the north wall, with the beadboard wainscot visible at the back of the shelves. The northeast classroom is accessed via a five-panel door with boarded transom at the north end of the hall as well as from the exterior by a five-panel door on its west wall. Its finishes match those of the other classrooms, including an original chalkboard on the north wall and bulletin board on the west wall.

A basement-level room beneath the northeast classroom is accessed via an exterior stair on the interior elevation of the northwest classroom wing. The concrete stairs have a brick retaining wall and are sheltered by a shed roof on square posts that rest on the brick wall and were enclosed with plywood sheathing in the 1970s. A six-light-over-three-panel wood door at the base of the stairs opens to the northwest corner of the room. It has a concrete floor, exposed brick walls laid in a six-to-one common bond, and beadboard ceiling with exposed pipes that run to and from the bathrooms to the southwest. A wood beam bisects the room north to south, supported by square wood posts. The room initially served as an agriculture room until a separate building was constructed in 1945, after which it served as a cafeteria store for students to buy items, including milk, to supplement their packed lunches.⁴

⁴ Personal Interview with R.A. Clement School alumni (Brenda Avery, Walter Rawson Culbertson, Lonnie Gaither, Leonard Hall, Armeda Harper, Alonzo Hunter, Catreliia Hunter, Rachel Hunter, James Johnson, Grace C. Jones, Diana Moriniere, Brenda Pierce, Pamela Ramsey, Joyce Smyre, Carolyn Snipes, Laura Spaulding, Bernice R. Taylor, and Paula Waiters) by Heather Slane and Claudia Brown at R.A. Clement School, June 21, 2018, (hereafter referred to as "Alumni Interview").

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

2. Auditorium

1942

Contributing Building

Located directly north of the Rosenwald school, with only a narrow passage between the two buildings, is a one-story, front-gabled, brick auditorium with rectangular massing measuring roughly thirty-five feet wide and seventy feet deep. The building historically faced west, toward Krider Street, with secondary entrances near the east end of the north and south elevations. The concrete block building has a brick veneer, laid in a running bond, with a soldier-course brick watertable, parapeted gables with brick coping, and an asphalt-shingled roof with exposed rafter tails. It has paired nine-over-nine wood-sash windows with rowlock brick sills, all boarded on the exterior. The windows are in varying states of disrepair, many with missing or broken mullions and muntins. Most foundation vents on the north and east elevations have been boarded.

The west elevation was historically three bays wide with paired doors centered on the façade and flanked by single nine-over-nine windows. However, with the conversion of the auditorium to classrooms c.1952, the entrance was bricked in and the south window converted to a door with transom. The plywood door has a boarded transom and is sheltered by a metal shed roof on metal knee brackets. The left window remains in place, but has been boarded. The parapet has a lighter, redder colored brick than the main level of the building, indicating that it may have been reconstructed. However, portions of the top part of the south elevation are also constructed with this lighter brick, suggesting that the brick may have simply been part of a different order.

The north elevation is six bays wide with four pairs of windows on the west end, a single window on the east end, and a former entrance between them. The paired doors, likely accessed by a wood stair, were removed when the building was converted to classrooms and the opening infilled with brick and a small six-over-six wood-sash window. The east elevation, facing Clement Street, is two bays wide with paired windows. The parapeted gable has partially collapsed, exposing the roof structure to wind and rain. The south elevation, facing the Rosenwald school, matches the north elevation with four pairs of windows on the west end and a single window on the east end. The original entrance remains intact on this elevation, comprised of paired nine-light-over-one-panel wood doors in a flat-board wood surround, accessed by a single concrete step.

The interior of the building, though slightly deteriorated, largely dates to the 1950s conversion of the building from auditorium to classrooms. The three classrooms are arranged with one each on the east and west ends of the building and one in the center. The west classroom is accessed via a single door on the west gable end. The center and east classrooms are accessed off of a small hallway just inside the entrance on the south elevation. Closets in the corners of the classrooms likely date to the 1950s, though several of the rooms have been further subdivided with the addition of bathrooms and other frame walls, changes that likely post-date the period of significance. The classrooms have tiled floors, exposed concrete block and brick on the exterior walls, drywall or plywood paneling on the interior walls, and in some cases, plywood installed over the lower one-third of the exterior walls with a chair rail above, meant to replicate the

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

wainscoting in the main building. The ceilings have acoustic stick-on tiles and the classrooms retain chalkboards and bulletin boards with flat-board wood trim.

The west classroom has a small closet at the northeast corner, obscuring the northeast window in that classroom, and chalkboards and bulletin boards spanning the east wall. The door from the hall to the center classroom has been removed and the center classroom has a two-part bathroom in the northwest corner, with the toilet utilizing an earlier closet that obscures the window, and the sink located in an outer, partial-height room sheathed with plywood paneling. Chalkboards are located on the east wall and bulletin boards on the west wall. The door to the east classroom has also been removed and the east classroom has a bathroom in the northwest corner, lit by the small window that replaced the paired doors on the north elevation. A chalkboard spans much of the west wall and later frame partition walls with plywood paneling have been installed to create a room in the northeast corner. Cabinetry in that room indicates that it was used as a kitchen or home economics room.

3. Swing Set

1956-57

Contributing Structure

Located south of the school, is a grassy area utilized as an outdoor play area. A metal-framed swing set with four swings is located at the south end of the current parcel, just east of a metal slide. Both were erected in 1956-1957, donated to the school by the Town of Cleveland.⁵

4. Slide

1956-57

Contributing Structure

Located south of the school, is a grassy area utilized as an outdoor play area. A metal slide is located at the south end of the current parcel, just west of the swing set. Both were erected in 1956-1957, donated to the school by the Town of Cleveland.⁶

Integrity Statement

Cleveland School retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, material, feeling, and association. Located on its original site, the building retains its historic setting with low-density residential development south and west of the school, and open and wooded areas to the north and east. A playground, with equipment dating from the 1950s, further contributes to the property's historic setting, feeling, and association.

The 1930 Rosenwald-funded building retains high material integrity including the original brick exterior and wood-sash windows, wood flooring, beadboard wainscot below paneled walls and

⁵ "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)," 4.

⁶ "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)," 4.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

ceilings, many of the original five-panel wood doors, and closets and blackboards in most of the classrooms. Material changes are limited to the replacement of several doors and the installation of vinyl flooring, dropped ceilings, and drywall or wood paneling in the bathrooms, office, and adjacent hallway. The overall massing and layout of classrooms remains intact, though the floor plan was altered when the auditorium was subdivided into classrooms in 1942 and the east classroom further divided into bathrooms in 1950. However, the design and construction of the alterations, specifically those dating to 1942, are in-keeping with the design and materials of the original school and represent changes made while the building was still in use as an African American school. The area divided in 1950 is still used as for restrooms and office space, and although the area was reconfigured in 2015, the wall and floor finishes remain in the area that was not subdivided. Other plan changes include the removal of most of the wall between the west classrooms and the construction of a wall on the west side of the library, though the latter change occurred within the period of significance and is in keeping with the original Rosenwald plan.

Though it is in deteriorated condition, the design and construction of the auditorium is in keeping with typical 1940s school design and construction. The building retains its original massing with the classroom configuration dating to the 1950s while the school was still in use. It maintains its original brick exterior, the majority of wood-framed windows, and paired exterior wood doors on the south elevation. Other exterior doors were removed at the time of the 1950s renovation, though the openings are still discernable. All together the school complex retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to convey the property's historic feeling and association.

General Statement of Archaeological Potential

The school is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological remains, such as trash deposits, privy features, and other structural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the Cleveland School. Information concerning institutional culture and African American identity, as well as the spatial organization of outdoor activities and the character of daily life at the school, can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the school. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE – AFRICAN AMERICAN

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Period of Significance

1930-1968

Significant Dates

1930 – original 4-teacher school constructed
1942 – separate auditorium building constructed and original auditorium divided into
classrooms
c. 1952 – auditorium building subdivided into classrooms

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

1930 Rosenwald School - Wilson Brothers from Spencer, NC
1942 Auditorium – Charles C. Benson & Sons, architect from Wilson, NC
Eisele Construction Company from North Wilkesboro, NC

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Cleveland School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, locally significant in the areas of Education and African American Ethnic Heritage. It is significant for its association with African American education in Rowan County from 1930 until 1968. This school was one of five schools in the county financed and constructed with the assistance of the Rosenwald fund. Cleveland School served African American elementary and high school students in grades one through twelve in the Cleveland community and the northwest portion of Rowan County. The period of significance begins in 1930, when the school was completed, and

Cleveland School

Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina

County and State

ends in 1968, when the school was closed due to desegregation. The Cleveland School is also eligible under Criterion C at the local level for Architecture. It is significant as an intact example of Floor Plan No. 4-A, with modifications, from Samuel L. Smith's *Community School Plan, Bulletin No. 3*. The distinctive characteristics of the four-teacher school plan, building form, and architectural details have remained largely unaltered since the school was constructed in 1930, and the school retains a high degree of integrity. Only, one other Rosenwald school remains extant in Rowan County, the Salisbury School (now J.C. Price High School), however, it is an urban, sixteen-teacher example designed with Colonial Revival detailing.

The historic and architectural context for the Cleveland School is provided in the related Multiple Property Documentation Form "Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina," context pages E3-51, "The Rosenwald School Building Program in North Carolina, 1915-1932." The school building falls under property type Rosenwald School Subtype II, pages F52-55, and meets the registration requirements for the school subtype, pages F56-57. Specifically, the school was built between 1915 and 1932 utilizing funds provided by the Julius Rosenwald Fund; retains good architectural integrity including an intact design, workmanship, and materials; retains its original location in a rural setting; and was constructed using an approved modified design, as was commonplace in North Carolina.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Cleveland School

Five schoolhouses were constructed in Rowan County with the assistance of the Rosenwald Fund between 1919 and 1932. Rowan County, located in central North Carolina, was established in 1753 from Anson County. It was named for Matthew Rowan, the governor of North Carolina at that time, and the county seat is Salisbury.⁷ The southeastern border of the county is formed by the Pee Dee River, and Interstate 85 connects the county to Greensboro to the northeast and Charlotte to the southwest. The town of Cleveland, located in northwest Rowan County, was incorporated in 1883, then known as "Third Creek." In 1887, the name was changed to Cleveland, although the origin of this name is unknown. The county is primarily agricultural, with cotton as its primary cash crop through the early twentieth century when cotton crops were devastated by the boll weevil insect. Many continued to grow cotton in spite of the difficulties caused by the boll weevil, while others left cotton farming for dairy operations. Early twentieth-century industries in Cleveland included Thompson Veneer Company, Rowan Milling Company, and three cotton gins, which were replaced in the late-twentieth century by Freightliner Trucks manufacturing plant, Grinnell Corporation fire safety equipment, and Quantum knit fabrics and yarn.⁸

⁷ Jay Mazzocchi, "Rowan County," *NCpedia*, www.ncpedia.org/geography/rowan (accessed July 2018).

⁸ Harry T. Sifford, "Towns of Rowan County," Unpublished Manuscript, Edith M. Clark History Room, Rowan Public Library, Salisbury, NC, 12, 14; Katherine Sanford Petrucelli, ed., *The Heritage of Rowan County, North Carolina, Volume I, 1991* (Salisbury, NC: The Genealogical Society of Rowan County, Inc., 1991), 47.

Cleveland School

Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina

County and State

A small number of schools were operated by African American churches in Rowan County after the Civil War, but by the early twentieth century, educational opportunities for African American children remained limited. Most rural schools offered a few years of elementary school, with students attending school for only two or three months each year. The first high school was Dunbar School in East Spencer, which began as a one-room school around 1900 and grew to include high school grades in the 1920s. Livingstone College offered post-secondary education, having been founded in Concord as Zion Wesley Institute in 1879, then being relocated to Salisbury and renamed in 1882.⁹ The first African American school in Cleveland was a log building built in the late 1870s, although its exact location is unknown. By the early 1900s, it had been replaced by a frame building, also in an unknown location.¹⁰

As with much of the South, the Rosenwald Fund program brought new opportunities for African American education in rural Rowan County, which constructed five schools using Rosenwald Fund grants. The smallest of these were the one-teacher Rockwell School (1919-1920) in the southeastern portion of the county and the two-teacher North Spencer School (1919-1920) located just north of Salisbury in the northeastern part of the county. In addition to the Cleveland School, Bear Poplar School (1930-1931) was also a four-teacher school located in the western part of the county. Salisbury School (1931-1932), later named J.C. Price High School, was by far the largest with a sixteen-teacher plan, and the only school constructed in an urban area.¹¹

In August 1927, William Credle, North Carolina's Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, visited Rowan County and met with Superintendent George Howard who informed him that the Board of Education intended to build two African American schools, one at Bear Poplar, the other at Cleveland. Credle in turn wrote to A.T. Allen, State Superintendent of Public Schools, that Howard intended to build the new schools and endorsing Howard's forthcoming application for a loan from the State Literary Fund to do so.¹² That September, the Board of Education passed a resolution authorizing the loan application for \$6,000 to build a six-room school at Cleveland, which was approved by the state in October and accepted by the Rowan County Commissioners the following February.¹³ Credle then notified Howard that the Rosenwald Fund would provide a grant for the school, once it had been completed and inspected.¹⁴

⁹ Louise Marie Roundtree, "A Brief Chronological History of Black Salisbury-Rowan," 1976, North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 14-17.

¹⁰ "J.H. Knox to Flossie Martin," October 19, 1971, R.A. Clement School Folder, Miscellaneous Rowan-Salisbury Schools Collection, MSS 2001-03, Edith M. Clark History Room, Rowan Public Library, Salisbury, NC.

¹¹ Fisk University, "Cleveland School," Rosenwald Fund Database, <http://rosenwald.fisk.edu> (accessed July 2018); Thomas Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. LXV, no. 4, October 1988, 440-441.

¹² "W.F. Credle to A.T. Allen," August 13, 1927, Department of Public Instruction, Division of Negro Education, Correspondence of the Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, July 1927-June 1928, Box 4, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC (hereinafter referred to as "Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 4"); "W.F. Credle to Dr. George Howard," August 13, 1927, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 4.

¹³ Rowan County Board of Education Minutes, September 5, 1927, Volumes 3 & 4, Microfilm C.085.94003, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC (hereinafter referred to as "BOE Minutes"); BOE Minutes, October 2, 1927; BOE Minutes, February 6, 1928.

¹⁴ "W.F. Credle to George Howard," March 2, 1928, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 4.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

With approval from the Rosenwald Fund to move forward, plans for the school began to take shape. In November of 1928, the Board of Education purchased a three-acre site from Monroe and Maggie Cowan for the school.¹⁵ The site straddled present-day Clement Street, which wasn't extended to the north end of the school until 1960. They approved Rosenwald Plan No. 4-A for the building, which included four classrooms, a library and office, and an auditorium.¹⁶ The board directed Howard to handle all arrangements for the school's construction with the assistance of one of the board members.¹⁷ The initial Rosenwald Fund application for the school was made during the 1928-1929 school year, however, construction on the school had not yet begun by that time, so the application was resubmitted the following year.¹⁸

Howard initially considered a modified version of Plan No. 4-B (to face east or west) for the school, but ultimately chose Plan No. 4-A (to face north or south) instead. He requested approval from Credle for several changes, which were granted, including using cloak screens rather than building full walls for cloak rooms, eliminating the gable end windows from the cloak rooms in favor of decorative brick panels, changing the entrance on the south (front) elevation from a single, centered entrance to two entrances at the extreme left and right sides, installing the front windows in groups of four rather than three, and eliminating the partitions dividing the library and office to create one larger room instead.¹⁹ The contract for the school's construction was awarded to Wilson Brothers from Spencer, North Carolina, for a total of \$9,950.²⁰ The Rosenwald Fund provided a \$1,200 grant, the Board of Education provided \$8,500, in part through a loan from the state Literary Fund, and the community raised \$250.²¹ The school opened on January 30, 1930.²² Cleveland School received additional assistance from the Rosenwald Fund in 1932 for vocational equipment and in 1936 for library resources.²³

At the time of its construction, Cleveland School was the largest school building for African American children in Rowan County, which had thirty-three African American schools, most being one-room schoolhouses.²⁴ The school did not have electricity when it was built, so it was

¹⁵ BOE Minutes, November 5, 1928; "Monroe Cowan and wife, Maggie Cowan, et al, to The Board of Education of Rowan County," Deed Book 327, Page 152, November 14, 1928, Rowan County Register of Deeds, Salisbury, NC.

¹⁶ BOE Minutes, November 5, 1928.

¹⁷ BOE Minutes, December 3, 1928.

¹⁸ "W.F. Credle to S.L. Smith," Department of Public Instruction, Division of Negro Education, Correspondence of the Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, July 1929-June 1929, Box 5, North Carolina State Archives (hereinafter referred to as "Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 5"); Fisk University, "Cleveland School," Rosenwald Fund Database, <http://rosenwald.fisk.edu> (accessed July 2018).

¹⁹ "George Howard to W.F. Credle," February 13, 1929, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 5; "W.F. Credle to George Howard," February 14, 1929, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 5.

²⁰ BOE Minutes, October 7, 1929; Rosenwald Fund Database.

²¹ Rosenwald Fund Database; Rowan County Negro Progress Committee, "Negroes in Progress, 1943-1953," North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 112.

²² "Negroes in Progress," 112.

²³ "Annual Report to Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1931-1932, Disbursements for Vocational Equipment," Department of Public Instruction, Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 8, "Rosenwald Fund, 1930-1932" Folder, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC (hereafter referred to as "DNE, Special Subject File, Box 8"); "Rosenwald Libraries, 1935-1936," Department of Public Instruction, Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Rosenwald Fund Aid, 1927-1942, Box 13, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

²⁴ BOE Minutes, July 7, 1930; BOE Minutes, June 1, 1931. Note: There were sixty-nine white schools and thirty-three African American schools reported by the Board of Education during the 1929-1930 school year.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

heated with coal stoves. Electricity was installed sometime in the 1940s, along with radiators and a frame, gable-roofed boiler room on the west elevation. It was built with outdoor privies (no longer extant), and it was 1950 when indoor bathrooms were constructed. Children brought their own cup from home to drink from the well using a bucket and dipper, which was later replaced with a hand pump.²⁵

Children who lived closest to the school were required to walk, often hiking across fields, through woods, and across creeks. Bus transportation was provided for those who lived further away, although some students had to walk a mile or more to reach the bus stop. The buses were often driven by older students, and children knew to be waiting when the bus arrived or they would be left behind. So many students rode the buses that they often didn't return home until well after dark. The buses were often in poor shape, as they were given to the African American schools after the white schools obtained new ones.²⁶ At least one bus was provided for the Cleveland School by 1937, but the school's transportation needs were such that another was added the following year.²⁷

The school day for elementary and high school students began with devotionals at 7:30. Students studied spelling, English, and math from textbooks discarded by nearby white schools, adding geography, science, French, citizenship, home economics, and agriculture as the school grew. By the 1950s and 1960s, classes were typically about twenty to twenty-five students, and there were very few combined classes. Students brought their lunches from home and usually ate in their classrooms, sharing with students who did not have enough to eat. During recess, they played games or played on the small playground, which included swings and a slide and was purchased for the school by the PTA. Students could play basketball and participate in band or chorus, and as the school grew, additional extracurricular activities were added, including Student Council, Science Club, Drama Club, Library Club, Future Teachers of America, Bus Driver Association, intramural basketball and softball, Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Future Business Leaders, cheerleading, Monogram Club, and the school newspaper.²⁸ They also had special events each year, including a May Day festival, operettas for the community, and field trips to the beach, the mountains, and sometimes the state fair in Raleigh. They participated in the county fair and 4-H home demonstration contests by baking or canning, sewing or knitting, and showing livestock. Physicians came to the school to provide immunizations, and a dentist also visited the school every fall. School was dismissed around 3:00 each day.²⁹

Alumni recall that teachers worked hard to help the students succeed, but they were also strict and paddled students who misbehaved or failed to do their homework. Few teachers actually lived in Cleveland. Instead, they either commuted to the school daily or boarded in town during

²⁵ Alumni Interview; BOE Minutes, July 5, 1932.

²⁶ Alumni Interview.

²⁷ BOE Minutes, August 7, 1937, March 7, 1938, and May 12, 1938.

²⁸ George C. Knox, "High School Annual Report, R.A. Clement," 1962-1963 (Box 92), 1963-1964 (Box 119), 1964-1965 (Box 143), 1965-1966 (Box 164), 1966-1967 (Box 183), 1967-1968 (Box 196), Department of Public Instruction, Division of Instructional Services, Supervision and Curriculum Section, High School Principals' Annual Reports, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC), (hereafter referred to as "Principal's Reports [date]").

²⁹ Alumni Interview.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

the week.³⁰ Initially, principals at the school also taught classes, but by about 1950 this was no longer standard.³¹ Reverend J.M. Morton was the first principal at the new school, followed by Rose D. Aggrey, who had served as the county supervisor of African American schools since 1929, became principal in 1933.³² Isaiah McClain served as principal from about 1935 until 1946. In 1945, a group of parents from the school requested that he be replaced for a more strict disciplinarian. Although the board took no action at that time, S.E. Biggers was appointed principal in 1946, serving until 1951.³³ James A. Clarke was principal 1951-1956, followed by George C. Knox from 1956 until the school closed in 1968.³⁴

In 1935, the Board of Education began plans to consolidate smaller schools into larger ones in order to provide more variety in coursework, decrease the overall cost of teacher salaries by decreasing the number of teachers, and decrease the overall cost of maintaining school buildings by decreasing the total number of schools. That year, a teacher was transferred from one of the schools in the Spencer district, while Whites School in the Cleveland district was consolidated with the Cleveland School and one of that school's teachers transferred as well.³⁵

The following spring, N.C. Newbold, the North Carolina Director of Negro Education, presented plans for further consolidation of African American schools in Rowan County. Newbold's plan aimed to consolidate all the smaller schools in the county with the larger Cleveland, Granite Quarry, Bear Poplar, Aggrey Memorial, and Dunbar schools, reducing the number of African American schools from thirty-four to just five. Although implementation of this plan would require increased investment in transportation, it would serve to pool school resources and provide opportunities for students in the most remote portions of the county to go to high school.³⁶

It is unclear whether the Board of Education fully adopted Newbold's plan or not, but consolidation took place in earnest between the late 1930s and the early 1950s. Around 1938,

³⁰ Alumni Interview.

³¹ Isaiah McClain, "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement," 1941-1942 (Box 13), 1942-1943 (Box 14), 1943-1944 (Box 15), 1944-1945 (Box 16), 1945-1946 (Box 17) and S.E. Biggers, "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement," 1946-1947 (Box 18), 1947-1948 (Box 26), 1948-1949 (Box 26), 1949-1950 (Box 26), Department of Public Instruction, Division of Negro Education, High School Principal's Annual Reports, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC (hereafter referred to as "Principal's Reports, [date]"); S.E. Biggers, "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement," 1950-1951 (Box 19), Department of Public Instruction, Division of Instructional Services, Supervision and Curriculum Section, High School Principal's Reports, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC (hereafter referred to as "Principal's Reports [date]"); Alumni Interview.

³² BOE Minutes, September 2, 1929, and August 7, 1933; "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)," 1-2.

³³ Principal's Reports, 1941-1951; BOE Minutes, July 2, 1945; "1st R.A. Clement School Reunion Held," *The Salisbury Sunday Post*, July 4, 1976, Miscellaneous Rowan-Salisbury Schools Collection.

³⁴ James A. Clarke, "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement," 1951-1952 (Box 19), 1952-1953 (Box 19), 1953-1954 (Box 19), 1954-1955 (Box 19), 1955-1956 (Box 50) and George C. Knox, "High School Annual Report, R.A. Clement," 1955-1956 (Box 50), 1961-1962 (Box 74), Department of Public Instruction, Division of Instructional Services, Supervision and Curriculum Section, High School Principal's Reports, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC (hereafter referred to as "Principal's Reports [date]"); Principal's Reports, 1962-1968.

³⁵ BOE Minutes, July 1, 1935, and December 2, 1935.

³⁶ BOE Minutes, March 20, 1936, April 13, 1936, and May 4, 1936.

Cleveland School

Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina

County and State

Brookside and Piney Grove schools were consolidated with Cleveland School.³⁷ In 1941, a group representing Jump and Run, Erwin Temple, Second Creek, Hart, and Mt. Vernon schools in the Woodleaf district requested to be consolidated with Cleveland School.³⁸ Around 1940, Avery School was consolidated with Cleveland School, followed by York School in 1948.³⁹ Barber and Rock Hill schools were also consolidated with Cleveland School, although the exact dates are unclear. By 1953, consolidation was complete and rural students were served by six African American elementary schools (Aggrey Memorial, Bear Poplar, China Grove, Granite Quarry, Dunbar, and Cleveland), three of which also offered high school classes (Aggrey Memorial, Dunbar, and Cleveland).⁴⁰

High school subjects were being taught at the school informally as early as the mid-1930s. In 1936, a school representative approached the Board of Education to request another teacher be added to the school “so that some high school subjects could be taught as heretofore.”⁴¹ By 1939, the school had grown to the point that all available space was used, with five teachers in the original classrooms and library, and two additional teachers sharing the auditorium. It was likely during this period that the original cloak screens were removed, to provide additional space for students in each classroom, and moveable cloak screens, with blackboards on the reverse, and smaller corner closets installed. The Cleveland School PTA presented a petition to the Board of Education requesting additional classrooms, especially for high school students, many of whom were not attending school due to the overcrowded conditions at that time.⁴² In 1940, the Board approved a new auditorium for the school, to be built of brick and large enough to seat four hundred people, although the building was not actually that large.⁴³ After its completion in 1942, the original auditorium in the Rosenwald school was divided into three classrooms.⁴⁴ The Cleveland School auditorium was the only auditorium for African American students in that part of the county, so Dunbar School in East Spencer held its graduation ceremonies there instead of at their own campus.⁴⁵

In 1940, a representative from the community requested that the Board of Education include a basement under the new auditorium to house agriculture classes, with the community members either funding the digging or doing the work themselves.⁴⁶ The Board approved the basement rooms and appointed a committee to look into the feasibility of the basement, which was ultimately dug by the community members beneath one of the classrooms in the original Rosenwald school building instead.⁴⁷ Although originally used for agriculture classes, by the

³⁷ BOE Minutes, April 5, 1937, February 7, 1938, and April 4, 1939; Petrucelli, *The Heritage of Rowan County*, 61.

³⁸ BOE Minutes, April 7, 1941; Petrucelli, *The Heritage of Rowan County*, 61.

³⁹ BOE Minutes, April 4, 1939, April 5, 1943, and August 2, 1948.

⁴⁰ Petrucelli, *The Heritage of Rowan County*, 61. Note: The City of Salisbury had its own urban school system with two elementary schools and a high school.

⁴¹ BOE Minutes, October 26, 1936.

⁴² BOE Minutes, December 4, 1939, and March 4, 1940.

⁴³ BOE Minutes, April 24, 1940.

⁴⁴ History of the R.A. Clement Alumni Association, unpublished manuscript provided by Angelo Franceschina, project preservation consultant.

⁴⁵ Alumni Interview.

⁴⁶ BOE Minutes, May 6, 1940.

⁴⁷ BOE Minutes, July 1, 1940; “Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004),” 2.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

1950s it was a cafeteria canteen where students could buy milk, snacks, and other small items to supplement the lunches they brought from home.⁴⁸

Agriculture and vocational agriculture classes were of particular interest to the students at the Cleveland School. Since Cleveland is a rural community in a rural county, most of the students came from farm families. In the 1930s, rural schools in Rowan County could opt to alter their schedule to half days during the harvest so children could help their families pick cotton and other crops, based on their individual needs and attendance.⁴⁹ In the 1940s, the Board of Education approved a divided term for the African American schools in the Cleveland, Woodleaf, and Mt. Ulla districts in which they began the school year in July rather than September, then closed from late September until November 1st for the harvest, reopening for the remainder of the six-month term required by state law once the students had helped their families harvest their crops.⁵⁰ In the 1950s and 1960s, they had returned to a half day schedule, with dismissal at noon in September and October. Alumni recall that some children spent all day in the fields with their families, only attending school on rainy days.⁵¹

With new space added to the school for vocational classes, the board attempted to gain matching funds from the state to hire an agriculture teacher for the 1940-1941 school year, but were unsuccessful.⁵² The community made the request again in 1941, and during 1941-1942 school year, seventeen students in grades one through three took agriculture classes.⁵³ In 1943, the community requested the addition of a farm repair shop, offering to pay a portion of the cost if the Board of Education would pay the rest. Although the final funding is unclear, the frame building was added to the campus later that year, followed by a similar two-room, frame building to house English and science classes in 1945.⁵⁴ Both buildings were constructed east of the Rosenwald school (prior to the extension and paving of Clement Street), but are no longer extant, the former demolished and the latter having been moved after the closure of the school.⁵⁵ In addition to vocational classes, during the 1944-1945 school year, to prepare young men for entering the military, R.A. Clement School offered driver education, basic field tactics, and nutrition courses to high school boys.⁵⁶

As opportunities for agricultural education expanded, so did opportunities for high school education for African American students in Rowan County. In 1941, there were only two recognized African American high schools, J.C. Price High School in Salisbury and Dunbar School in East Spencer. During the 1941-1942 school year, this number grew to five African American schools offering high school classes, including grades eight, nine, and ten at Cleveland

⁴⁸ Alumni Interview.

⁴⁹ BOE Minutes, May 4, 1931.

⁵⁰ BOE Minutes, July 6, 1943, September 7, 1943, May 1, 1944, November 6, 1944, June 4, 1945, June 10, 1946, and July 7, 1947.

⁵¹ Alumni Interview.

⁵² BOE Minutes, October 7, 1940.

⁵³ BOE Minutes, April 7, 1941.

⁵⁴ BOE Minutes, July 6, 1943; "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)," 2.

⁵⁵ "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)," p. 4.

⁵⁶ Principal's Reports, 1944-1945.

Cleveland School

Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina

County and State

School.⁵⁷ Eleventh grade was added the following school year, twelfth grade was added in 1946, and the first graduating class was the Class of 1948.⁵⁸ It was during that time, in 1941, that the school was renamed R.A. Clement School in honor of Rufus Alexander Clement, who donated land in 1878 for the first school for African American children in Cleveland.^{59,60}

Owing to consolidation and the addition of the high school grades, by 1947, the school had again outgrown its building, so school representatives requested additional land and classrooms, specifically petitioning the Board of Education in 1948 to purchase land near the R.A. Clement School for a new high school building.⁶¹ The school delegation had identified potential sites for the new school, and the board visited the school to select the most desirable property, settling on seventeen acres owned by the Kerr family, located just southeast of the Cleveland School at the northeast corner of Main and Clement street.⁶² Although the owner was not initially interested in selling the land, the Board of Education was able to buy the property by the fall of 1948.⁶³

The board invited architect L.N. Boney, a prolific Wilmington architect who specialized in brick schools, to advise on the design of the new high school.⁶⁴ However, Charles C. Benson & Sons from Wilson was hired to draw plans for the school.⁶⁵ Eisele Construction Company from North Wilkesboro was awarded the general contract for \$73,943. Charles V. Dellinger of Yadkinville was awarded the plumbing contract, Miller and Smyre of Hickory was awarded the heating contract, and City Electric Company from Salisbury was awarded the electrical contract. The total cost of the new building was \$84,792.⁶⁶ The high school building at the northeast corner of Main and Clement streets was completed in 1948, at which point the original Rosenwald school building became the elementary building.⁶⁷ Although the elementary and high school buildings were not adjacent to one another, the school remained a union school, meaning it was considered a single campus with grades one through twelve.⁶⁸

Further change and growth came to the school during the 1950s. Home Economics was added to the curriculum for the 1949-1950 school year. It was offered to grades nine through twelve, although only girls participated, and adult classes were also offered.⁶⁹ Indoor bathrooms were

⁵⁷ Principal's Reports, 1940-1942. Note: The schools offering high school classes in 1941-1942 were JC Price High School (Salisbury), Dunbar School (East Spencer), Granite Quarry (Granite Quarry), Aggrey Memorial (Landis), and R.A. Clement School.

⁵⁸ Principal's Reports, 1942-1943 and 1946-1947.

⁵⁹ "J.H. Knox to Flossie Martin," October 19, 1971, Miscellaneous Rowan-Salisbury Schools Collection.

⁶⁰ This log building was later replaced by a two-room frame building known as the "Little Red School," which was used sometimes as overflow classroom space, but is no longer extant.

⁶¹ BOE Minutes, June 2, 1947, and April 5, 1948.

⁶² BOE Minutes, April 5, 1948, and May 3, 1948. Note: The family name is spelled both Kerr and Carr in the Board of Education Minutes.

⁶³ BOE Minutes, May 3, 1948, June 7, 1948, July 6, 1948.

⁶⁴ BOE Minutes, December 6, 1948.

⁶⁵ BOE Minutes, March 7, 1949. Note: Charles C. Benson is spelled both Benson and Benton in the Board of Education Minutes.

⁶⁶ BOE Minutes, April 22, 1949.

⁶⁷ "Negroes in Progress," 111.

⁶⁸ Principal's Reports, 1954-1955.

⁶⁹ Principal's Reports, 1949-1950.

Cleveland School

Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina

County and State

also added to the Rosenwald school at that time.⁷⁰ A new gymnasium was built north of the 1948 high school for the 1951-1952 school year.⁷¹ The auditorium sat two hundred people and the school's PTA purchased curtains for the stage; the building also had locker rooms.⁷² A cafeteria was constructed at the high school during the 1955-1956 school year and opened during the 1956-1957 school year.⁷³ Although the county school system remained segregated in the 1950s, white and African American teachers were paid equally, based on their level training.⁷⁴

In 1965, Rowan County established a voluntary integration program. Nine students from R.A. Clement School were assigned to West Rowan High School, which had previously been an all-white school, for the 1965-1966 school year, some of whom volunteered themselves, some were volunteered by their parents, and some were assigned against their own wishes. Alumni recall often being the only African American in their classes, and being largely ignored by white students until they realized how well the African American students did in school.⁷⁵

After graduation from R.A. Clement, many students attended college, becoming teachers, nurses, business owners, or other professional careers, while others joined the armed forces.⁷⁶ Some alumni experienced integration for the first time in their college or military classes. Many became teachers, and they often found themselves the only African Americans in their schools among both their colleagues and their students.⁷⁷

In 1968, full integration came to Rowan County, bringing significant changes to R.A. Clement School. The 1930 Rosenwald building was closed, and the students were transferred to Cleveland Elementary School.⁷⁸ The 1948 high school building became West Rowan Junior High School, and the high school students were transferred to West Rowan High School.⁷⁹ West Rowan Junior High School remained the middle school until a new building was constructed on Highway 70 in 1993.⁸⁰ The white community resisted desegregation, and alumni recall teachers enforcing segregation by having white children line up in front of black children for the buses, white parents trying spit on African American bus drivers, and white teachers giving African American students poorer grades than white students for equal work.⁸¹ The Ku Klux Klan also marched on the R.A. Clement School campus, and although it scared the children, the event passed without serious confrontation.⁸² Alumni felt a strong sense of being unwanted at school and of white students being afraid of them, recalling that it was "simply that you were black. That was all they needed."⁸³ In spite of these challenges, the students remained eager to learn,

⁷⁰ Alumni Interview.

⁷¹ "Negroes in Progress," 111; Principal's Reports, 1951-1952.

⁷² Principal's Reports, 1954-1955; "Negroes in Progress," 112.

⁷³ Principal's Reports, 1955-1956; Principal's Reports, 1956-1957.

⁷⁴ "Negroes in Progress," 9.

⁷⁵ Alumni Interview, Carolyn Snipes and Catreliia Hunter.

⁷⁶ Alumni Interview.

⁷⁷ Alumni Interview.

⁷⁸ Alumni Interview.

⁷⁹ Alumni Interview.

⁸⁰ "R.A. Clement Second Grade," June 18, 1994, Miscellaneous Rowan-Salisbury Schools Collection; Alumni Interview.

⁸¹ Alumni Interview, Arnedra Harper and Pamela Ramsey.

⁸² Alumni Interview.

⁸³ Alumni Interview.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

and their parents encouraged them that they could “hold their own” academically with white students and teachers.⁸⁴

In 1969, the Board of Education sold the Rosenwald building to the West Rowan Neighborhood Center Advisory Council (WRNCAC), a nonprofit organization formed by former R.A. Clement School PTA members. In the 1970s and 1980s, the building was used a community center with senior, preschool, and Head Start programs operating there. By 2003, the building was vacant and in disrepair, so WRNCAC began stabilization efforts. Over the subsequent decade, the roof was replaced, structural repairs were made, and the masonry, windows, floors, and front porches were repaired.⁸⁵ In 2015, the organization received a \$50,000 grant from Lowe’s and, with help from local Lowe’s volunteers, they renovated the two west classrooms into one large community assembly room with a stage.⁸⁶ Future plans for the school building include a children’s library in the original library, a memorabilia room in the southeast classroom, and updated mechanical and electrical systems.⁸⁷ The R.A. Clement Alumni Association is also active in the restoration of the school, holding fundraisers, raising awareness, and hosting alumni reunions.⁸⁸

Architecture of Cleveland School

Cleveland School’s design embodies the character-defining elements of the Rosenwald Fund’s standardized plans. Samuel L. Smith, Director of Schoolhouse Planning for the Rosenwald Fund, developed a set of school plans that minimized construction costs, maximized classroom space, and capitalized on natural features of the school’s site. Cleveland School was constructed using a modified version of Smith’s Floor Plan No. 4-A from *Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3*, which included three classrooms with cloakrooms, a library, an auditorium, and an industrial room.⁸⁹ Modifications to the plan were approved in advance by William Credle, North Carolina’s Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, and included using cloak screens rather than building walls for cloak rooms, eliminating the gable end windows in favor of decorative brick panels, moving the front door from the center of the south (front) elevation to the extreme left and right sides, installing the front windows in groups of four rather than three, and eliminating the partitions dividing the library and office to create a larger room instead.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Alumni Interview, Pamela Ramsey.

⁸⁵ “The Rowan County Board of Education to West Rowan Advisory Council,” Deed Book 542, Page 244, October 29, 1969, Rowan County Register of Deeds, Salisbury, NC; History of the West Rowan Neighborhood Center Advisory Council, unpublished manuscript provided by Angelo Franceschina, project preservation consultant.

⁸⁶ David Purtell, “R.A. Clement School get new life in Cleveland,” *Salisbury Post*, May 25, 2015, Miscellaneous Rowan-Salisbury Schools Collection.

⁸⁷ History of the West Rowan Neighborhood Center Advisory Council.

⁸⁸ History of R.A. Clement Alumni Association provided by Angelo Franceschina, project preservation consultant.

⁸⁹ S.L. Smith, “Floor Plan No 4-A, Four Teacher Community School, to Face North or South Only,” *Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3* (Nashville, TN: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1924), 12; Mary Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 56-57, 94-111; Hanchett, “The Rosenwald Schools,” 400-405.

⁹⁰ “George Howard to W.F. Credle,” February 13, 1929, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 5; “W.F. Credle to George Howard,” February 14, 1929, Rosenwald Correspondence, Box 5.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Of the five Rosenwald schools constructed Rowan County, only Cleveland School and the Salisbury School (J.C. Price High School, 1931-1932) remain extant, while Rockwell School (1919-1920), North Spencer School (1919-1920), and Bear Poplar School (1930-1931) have been lost. The J.C. Price High School (NR listed in 2010) is an urban, sixteen-teacher plan that represents the latest phase of building design by the Rosenwald Fund. In 1931, a revised version of the school plan booklet was released with Colonial detailing applied to the earlier forms, which were modified with additional ornamentation by local architectural firm Barbee and Yoe.⁹¹ The Cleveland School, on the other hand, is the county's only surviving example of the simpler, earlier designs included in the 1924 school plan booklet.

⁹¹ Davyd Foard Hood, "J.C. Price High School," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2010, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC, Section 8, Page 18.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Biggers, S.E. "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement." 1946-1947 (Box 18), 1947-1948 (Box 26), 1948-1949 (Box 26), 1949-1950 (Box 26). Department of Public Instruction. Division of Negro Education. High School Principal's Annual Reports. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Biggers, S.E. "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement." 1950-1951 (Box 19). Department of Public Instruction. Division of Instructional Services. Supervision and Curriculum Section. High School Principal's Reports. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Clarke, James A. "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement." 1951-1952 (Box 19), 1952-1953 (Box 19), 1953-1954 (Box 19), 1954-1955 (Box 19), 1955-1956 (Box 50). Department of Public Instruction. Division of Instructional Services. Supervision and Curriculum Section. High School Principal's Reports. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Department of Public Instruction. Division of Negro Education. Correspondence of the Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund. Boxes 4 and 5. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Department of Public Instruction. Division of Negro Education. Special Subject File. Boxes 8 and 13. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Fisk University. "Cleveland School." Rosenwald Fund Database. <http://rosenwald.fisk.edu>.

The Genealogical Society of Rowan County, Inc., 1991.

Hanchett, Thomas. "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina." *The North Carolina Historical Review*. Vol. LXV, no. 4, October 1988.

History of R.A. Clement Alumni Association, unpublished manuscript provided by Angelo Franceschina, project preservation consultant.

History of the West Rowan Neighbor-Hood Center Advisory Council, unpublished manuscript provided by Angelo Franceschina, project preservation consultant.

Hoffschwelle, Mary. *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Hood, Davyd Foard. "J.C. Price High School." Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2010. North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC.

Knox, George C. "High School Annual Report, R.A. Clement." 1955-1956 (Box 50), 1961-1962 (Box 74), 1962-1963 (Box 92), 1963-1964 (Box 119), 1964-1965 (Box 143), 1965-1966 (Box 164), 1966-1967 (Box 183), 1967-1968 (Box 196). Department of Public Instruction. Division of Instructional Services. Supervision and Curriculum Section. High School Principals' Annual Reports. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Mazzocchi, Jay. "Rowan County." *NCpedia*. www.ncpedia.org/geography/rowan.

McClain, Isaiah. "High School Principal's Annual Report, R.A. Clement." 1941-1942 (Box 13), 1942-1943 (Box 14), 1943-1944 (Box 15), 1944-1945 (Box 16), 1945-1946 (Box 17). Department of Public Instruction. Division of Negro Education. High School Principal's Annual Reports. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Personal Interview with R.A. Clement School alumni (Brenda Avery, Walter Rawson Culbertson, Lonnie Gaither, Leonard Hall, Arnedra Harper, Alonzo Hunter, Catrelia Hunter, Rachel Hunter, James Johnson, Grace C. Jones, Diana Moriniere, Brenda Pierce, Pamela Ramsey, Joyce Smyre, Carolyn Snipes, Laura Spaulding, Bernice R. Taylor, and Paula Waiters) by Heather Slane and Claudia Brown at R.A. Clement School, June 21, 2018.

Petrucci, Katherine Sanford, ed. *The Heritage of Rowan County, North Carolina, Volume I, 1991*. Salisbury, NC:

Powe, Beatrice Click. "Historical Sketch of R.A. Clement School (Revised in 2004)." Survey Site No. RW0806. North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC.

R.A. Clement School Folder. Miscellaneous Rowan-Salisbury Schools Collection. MSS 2001-03. Edith M. Clark History Room, Rowan Public Library, Salisbury, NC.

Roundtree, Louise Marie. "A Brief Chronological History of Black Salisbury-Rowan." 1976. North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.

Rowan County Board of Education Minutes. Volumes 3 & 4. Microfilm C.085.94003. North Carolina State Archives. Raleigh, NC.

Rowan County Negro Progress Committee. "Negroes in Progress, 1943-1953." North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Rowan County Register of Deeds, Salisbury, NC.

Sifford, Harry T. "Towns of Rowan County." Unpublished Manuscript. Edith M. Clark
History Room, Rowan Public Library, Salisbury, NC.

Smith, S.L. "Floor Plan No 4-A, Four Teacher Community School, to Face North or South
Only." *Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3*. Nashville, TN: The Julius
Rosenwald Fund, 1924.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): RW0806

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

1. Latitude: 35.735051 Longitude: -80.669097

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary is shown by a black line on the accompanying map, drawn at a 1"=200' scale and aligning with the boundary of the tax parcel (#250086).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary includes approximately 0.75 acres of the original 3 acres historically associated with the school. It includes all of the property that lies west of Clement Street, which bisected the parcel when it was extended to the north end of the school in 1960. The eastern two-thirds of the original tract are under separate ownership and retain no historic buildings. The boundary includes the two historic school buildings, historic playground equipment and adequate acreage to provide appropriate context.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Heather Slane, Architectural Historian
name/title: Cheri Szcodronski, Architectural Historian
organization: hmvPreservation
street & number: P.O. Box 355
city or town: Durham state: NC zip code: 27701
e-mail: heather@hmvpreservation.com
telephone: 336-207-1502
date: August 2018

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Property Name: Cleveland School

County and State: Rowan County, North Carolina

Photographer: Heather M. Slane

Date: June 2018

Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina

1. Cleveland School
facing northeast
2. Cleveland School
facing northwest
3. Cleveland School
facing south
4. Cleveland School
facing east
5. Cleveland School - Hall
facing north
6. Cleveland School – Classrooms 1 and 2
facing north
7. Cleveland School – Classroom 3

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Rowan County, North Carolina
County and State

facing west

8. Cleveland School – Classroom 3
facing east
9. Cleveland School – Hall
facing north
10. Cleveland School – Classroom 5
facing west
11. Cleveland School – Hall
facing south
12. Cleveland School – Auditorium
facing southeast
13. Cleveland School – Auditorium
facing northwest
14. Cleveland School – Auditorium Classroom 2
facing north
15. Cleveland School – Playground
facing southwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Image from NC-HPOweb

Cleveland School
216 Krider Street
Cleveland, Rowan County, NC

Site Map with National Register Boundary

█ National Register Boundary

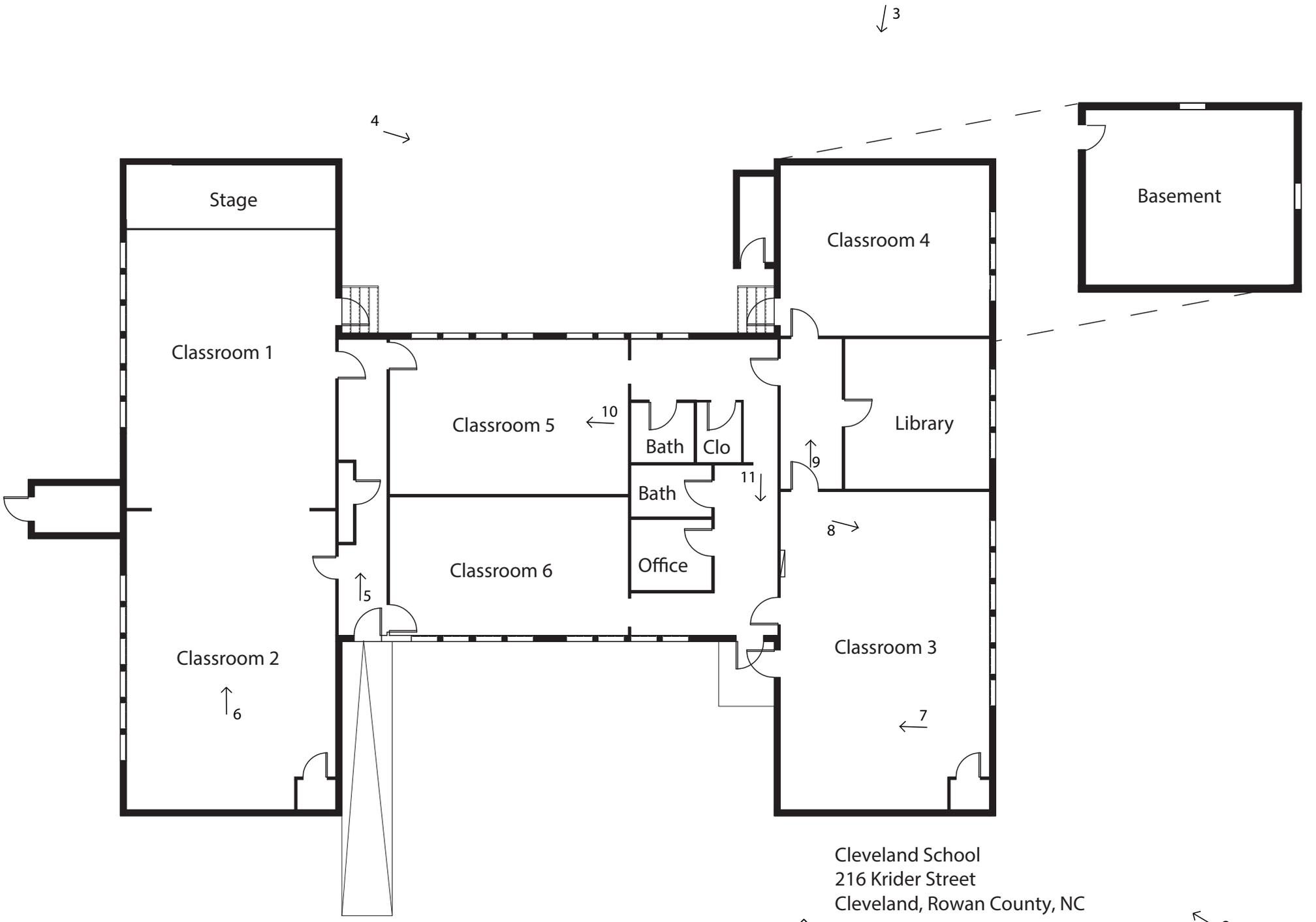
- 1. Cleveland School, 1930, c. 1945
- 2. Auditorium, 1942
- 3. Swing Set, 1956-57
- 4. Slide, 1956-57

Lat/Long Coordinates:
35.735051, -80.669097



Scale: 1" = 200'



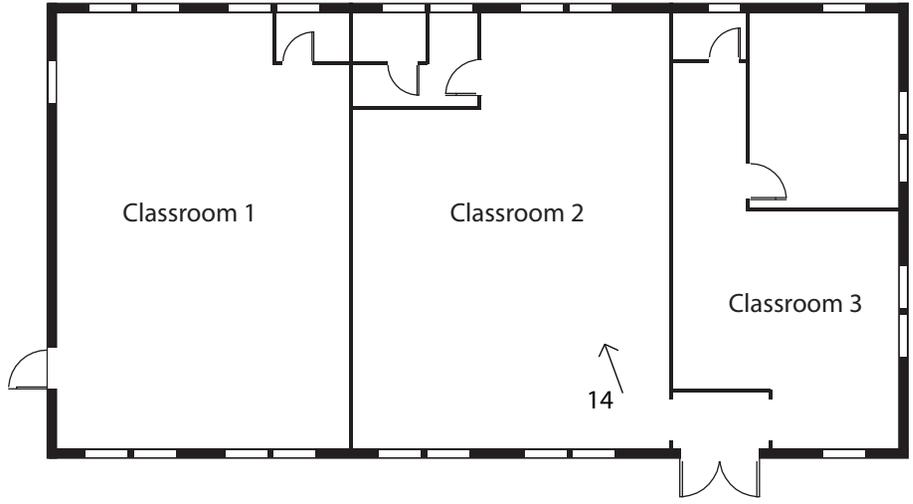


Cleveland School
 216 Krider Street
 Cleveland, Rowan County, NC



First Floor Plan and Photo Key
 Not To Scale

12 ↘



14 ↗

↖ 13

Cleveland School Auditorium
216 Krider Street
Cleveland, Rowan County, NC
North ↑
First Floor Plan and Photo Key
Not To Scale