

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Ahoskie School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 105 North Academy Street not for publication N/A

city or town Ahoskie vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Hertford code 091 zip code 27910

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crows
Signature of certifying official

SHPO 7/18/05
Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

____ entered in the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the
National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the
National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Ahoskie School

Name of Property

Hertford County, NC

County and State

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)

 X building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>EDUCATION</u>	Sub: <u>school</u>
<u>RECREATION AND CULTURE</u>	<u>monument/marker</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: monument/marker
RECREATION AND CULTURE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

roof asphalt

walls brick

other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Ahoskie School
Name of Property

Hertford County, NC
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 a grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1929-1955

Significant Dates

1929

1937

1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Boney, Leslie N., architect

Mooney, C. B., builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Ahoskie School
Name of Property

Hertford County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 9 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 18 321180 4017640
2

Zone Easting Northing
3
4
See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Keane
organization Retrospective date April, 2005
street & number 2001 Metts Avenue telephone 910-815-1096
city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28403

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ahoskie School Restoration Committee, Inc. (president: Charles Hughes) and the Town of Ahoskie
street & number P. O. Box 821 (Committee address) telephone 252-332-5914
city or town Ahoskie state NC zip code 27910

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Ahoskie School
Hertford County, NC

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Ahoskie School sits on an approximately nine-acre parcel of flat land on the northwest corner of Academy Street and West Main Street in downtown Ahoskie. The 1929 brick Classical Revival-style building faces east and replaced a smaller two-story brick 1910 school building. A 1937 one-story brick agricultural building sits behind the school facing south, while a 1940 one-story brick home economics building is situated north of, and aligned with the school. A 1940 brick and concrete block gymnasium is located west of the school and south of the agricultural building. The athletic field is west of the gymnasium. A 1955 Department of Transportation highway historical marker commemorating the site of the first 4-H club in North Carolina at Ahoskie School is situated near the front of the property and is a contributing object. In addition, two low brick gates that were constructed in 1937 and flank the front sidewalk, are also contributing objects. A building associated with the school, but not part of the nomination is a ca. 1960 brick band and music building. The band and music building is excluded from the nomination as it is a noncontributing building and is located across Main Street from the rest of the campus. A ca. 1940 concrete-block storage building and a ca. 1980 metal storage building on the eastern edge of the school property are not included with the nominated acreage because of their extremely deteriorated condition.

The two-story Ahoskie School is in alignment with Academy Street, a busy east-west highway that runs through the center of town. Situated at a prominent intersection, the school is also adjacent to Ahoskie's commercial district. Magnificent large oak trees create a park-like setting in front of the school. Residential neighborhoods are located west and north of the school property, while commercial buildings are situated east and south of the school.

1. Ahoskie School	1917, 1929	Contributing Building
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The brick Classical Revival-style Ahoskie School consists of a two-story central block built in 1929, projecting, two-story flanking wings attached by covered brick connecting walkways, and a rear one-story auditorium. The south wing is contemporary with the primary building. The 1917 north wing, the oldest surviving building on the campus, served as the auditorium/gymnasium for a 1910 school (no longer extant). The wings connect to the central block by enclosed walkways.

The 1929 Ahoskie School is a classical, two-story, load-bearing-brick masonry building. The architecture incorporates classical features with contemporary Art Deco-influenced elements. The seventeen-bay main block features a central three-bay slightly projecting pavilion with a stylized cast-concrete door surround, consisting of fluted pilasters topped by a flat urn design. The symmetrical fenestration of the pavilion consists of paired windows flanking the central entrance and three paired windows at the second level. A large cement panel over the

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Ahoskie School
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door is inscribed with the words, "Ahoskie School." A decorative band of arched brickwork in the frieze extends the width of the pavilion above the second floor windows.

The school's façade is highlighted by inset cast concrete panels and blocks between the first- and second-floor windows and along the parapet. The bank of windows on either side of the pavilion includes a single, a triple, two singles, a triple, and a single. Soldier course brick lintels with cast concrete stylized keystones surmount each window. Although boarded over with plywood, the six-over-six double-hung wood sash windows throughout the school remain intact. The building is additionally enhanced by cast concrete sills, lintels, and a water table. A flat, stepped parapet roof spans the school's central block and wings.

Flanking concrete steps with a solid brick balustrade lead to a raised brick and concrete entrance platform fronted by a cast concrete balustrade. A half-circle cast-iron fence at ground level between the steps originally enclosed a no-longer-extant small pool with a central statue. The recessed double-leaf door features sidelights and a six-light transom. Two additional entrances, opening into stairwells, are located at either end of the central block.

The facades of the flanking wings are enhanced with large rectangular panels of brick and cast concrete. Inset within each panel is a classical cast concrete and roundel plaque. Both wings also feature central slightly projecting entrances with recessed double-leaf doors topped by a transom and surmounted by paired windows at the second level.

The fenestration of the 1917 wing's north elevation has four sets of paired windows at each level. A single-leaf door is placed near the west end of the wall. A metal-stair fire escape rises from front to rear along the north elevation to a second-story central entrance. The south elevation also has four sets of paired windows at each level. The south, east, and north walls of the wing were refaced with brick in 1929 to match the appearance of the new structures. The original brickwork of the west (rear) elevation, featuring six-to-one bond, was left exposed, as was the brick segmental arches over the five second-story windows. A one-story appendage consisting of two small storage rooms is attached to the back wall of the north wing.

The fenestration of the 1929 wing's south elevation has single and double windows at both levels, in addition to a deeply recessed, double-leaf door with a roundel. The north elevation of the wing has single and triple windows at each level. A central door on the rear (west) elevation has been boarded up with plywood. A second-level, recessed opening is aligned above the door.

A 900-seat, one-story auditorium with a flat roof is located on the rear (west) elevation of the main block of the school. The north- and south-side elevations of the auditorium feature four large round-arched multi-pane windows with keystones separated by brick buttresses with cast

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Ahoskie School
Hertford County, NC

concrete caps. A double-door entrance is located near the west end of each side wall. The rear (west) elevation of the auditorium includes five bays separated by brick buttresses. The three single, central windows have been bricked over, while the double windows on either end are boarded over with plywood. The windows feature soldier course lintels with cast concrete keystones. The auditorium also has a raised, stepped parapet roof with terra cotta coping. The rear elevation of the central block of the school has single and triple windows at both levels. The school has three chimneys, one in the north wing and two in the central block.

The floor plan of the central block is a typical arrangement of classrooms served by a transverse corridor. On the first floor, the auditorium, flanked by two classrooms, is located on the west side of the main corridor, while classrooms, central offices, and end stairwells are on the east side. The original wood floors, plaster walls, interior doors, and beaded tongue-and-groove ceilings remain intact throughout the school's central block. The central corridor and classrooms also exhibit wide baseboards and a chair rail. Steam radiators remain in the halls. Built on a sloping floor, the auditorium features approximately 900 fixed seats. The elevated stage is served by two dressing rooms.

The layout of the second floor includes four classrooms, a central storage room, and bathrooms at opposing ends on the west side of the corridor. The east side has four classrooms, a library, and an extracurricular room.

The first floor of the 1929 south wing originally had six classrooms separated by a central corridor and a stairwell at the west end. The second story had four classrooms and two science laboratories. A cafeteria, kitchen, storage room, and janitor's room were located in the first floor of the 1917 wing, while the second level had three classrooms.

Integrity Statement

The exteriors of the main building and the south wing have not been altered since its construction in 1929. The exterior of the 1917 north wing has remained unaltered since its refacing in 1929. The interior building fabric of the two wings is quite deteriorated. The north wing has major roof leaks with resulting structural, framing and masonry problems, although the exterior walls are reparable. The roof on the south wing has collapsed destroying the interior woodwork. The masonry walls, however, appear to be in good overall condition. Roof leaks in the main building have damaged approximately thirty percent of the interior woodwork. The steel structural members used in the construction of the main building and south wing remain sound. Although much of the interior of the north and south wings will need to be replaced, the doors and windows are salvageable, as is the majority of the woodwork in the central block.

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Ahoskie School
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2. Agricultural Building 1937, 1940, 1949 Contributing Building

The Agricultural Building sits approximately eighty feet behind the main block of the school at the northwest corner of the 1940 gymnasium. Facing south toward Main Street, the building is set back approximately 200 feet from the road. The one-story brick building with a high hipped, standing-seam metal roof has three construction periods. The seven-bay façade of the 1937 portion has a central door with sidelights. A classical inspired hipped-roof portico supported by square posts resting on brick knee walls is approached by four concrete steps. Although currently covered with sheets of plywood, the six-over-six sash windows throughout the building remain intact.

In 1940, the rear of the building was extended approximately twenty feet. The roof over the extension was reconfigured into a gable roof. The north (rear) wall of the extension includes large double-leaf wood doors and a small window. In 1949, a rear, one-story, gabled ell was added to the north elevation. At the same time, a side-gable addition, approximately thirteen- by thirteen-feet, was attached to the west side of the original block of the building. The main block of the building includes nine windows on the east-side elevation and seven windows on the west-side elevation. The rear ell has six windows and a door on the east side and seven windows on the west side. There is a chimney in the northwest corner of the rear ell and a circular vent in the gable. The small west-side addition includes a six-over-six window on the west wall and a small window positioned under the eave on both the north and south sides.

A large open classroom with a narrow storage room in the southeast corner comprised the original section of the building. The 1940 extension of this room provided additional classroom space and a tool shed in the northwest corner. A small office and a bathroom separated by a short, narrow hall and a twenty-three- by thirty-four-foot classroom constitute the 1949 rear addition.

The interior building fabric, including wood floors, plaster walls, beaded tongue-and-groove wainscot and ceilings, and a molded chair rail remain intact. A brick chimney, originally located along the rear wall of the 1937 building is now positioned near the center of the front room. A wood ladder provides access to the attic through an opening in the ceiling. Several metal support poles are positioned near the center of the front room.

3. Home Economics Building 1940 Contributing Building

The one-story brick home economics building sits approximately forty feet north of the school, facing east. The building is approximately fifty- by thirty-five-feet, has a brick foundation and a high hipped roof with asphalt shingles. The central, recessed, double-leaf door is flanked on each side by three six-over-six sash windows with soldier course lintels. Three

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concrete steps with brick knee walls capped with cast concrete lead to the central entrance. The south elevation has two windows, one larger than the other, while the north elevation has two single windows and a set of paired windows. The rear (west) elevation has two paired windows flanked on either side by a single window and a single door near the north end of the wall. A handicap ramp with metal railings leads to the rear entrance. An interior chimney rises from the east slope of the roof. A narrow wood entablature encircles the building.

Designed to duplicate a small house, the interior includes three front rooms and a large rear room with a kitchen and pantry located at the south end of the room and a bathroom in the northeast corner. The front middle room was the living room and includes a fireplace with a brick mantel. The southeast room was designed to be the dining room, while the northeast room was the bedroom. The large rear room was set up for cooking and sewing classes. The building is in excellent condition and the interior building fabric, including wood floors, plaster walls, ceiling fixtures, kitchen cabinets, and dining room cupboard remain intact.

4. Gymnasium	1940	Contributing Building
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A two-story brick gymnasium is located directly behind (west) of the south wing of the high school. The building faces south toward Main Street. The building measure 142 feet long by 118 feet wide. The gymnasium has eight bays on the north and south elevations. There are three windows in each gable end. The interior walls are concrete block with brick columns separating the bays. The gym floor is maple and in good condition. The remaining floors are concrete. The gymnasium includes six basketball goals: one regulation court and two half courts. The walls are approximately twenty feet high to the eaves and approximately forty feet to the roof peak. The building includes two one-story brick sections with flat roofs, one on the east elevation and one on the west elevation. Boys and girls locker rooms and storage rooms are location in the one-story sections. The gymnasium is currently owned by the town of Ahoskie and utilized as a recreation center for the community.

5. Gates	1937	Contributing Object
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Two short, brick columns with stepped wing walls, each topped by a concrete pyramidal cap supported by four short concrete posts, flank the front of the sidewalk leading to the school entrance. The United Daughters of the Confederacy erected the gates in 1937 as a veterans monument. The front of each column is affixed with a plaque. The plaque on the left column is inscribed with the following words: "Memorial by Ahoskie Chapter U.D.C. 1937." The plaque on the right column reads: "To Confederate and World War Veterans."

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Ahoskie School
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6. Highway Historical Marker	1955	Contributing Object
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A North Carolina metal highway historical marker is situated on the front lawn of the school near the sidewalk in front of the school's south wing. The sign reads: "4-H Club. First in North Carolina, organized at Ahoskie in 1909 as the Corn Club. Beginning of present large organization of rural youth in state."

7. Athletic Field	1928	Contributing Site
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A large open field, formerly the football field, is located adjacent to and west of the gymnasium building. The field is bounded by Main Street to the south, Curtis Street to the west, and North Street to the north. The field is currently owned by the town of Ahoskie.

Rehabilitation Plans

Adaptive reuse plans call for the conversion of the school into residential one-bedroom units and meeting rooms for senior citizens. Plans call for the retention of the original interior moldings and doors, repairing or replacing elements as needed. Mature trees and landscaping will be retained as much as possible and the grounds will be enhanced with additional landscaping. The agriculture and home economics buildings will also be renovated and adaptive reuses for the buildings are being planned.

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Ahoskie School
Hertford County, NC

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ahoskie School fulfills Criterion A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, locally significant for its association with the history of education in Ahoskie, North Carolina. The administration of Governor Charles B. Aycock (term 1901-1905) ushered in a new era of educational reform in North Carolina. State-mandated efforts aimed at curriculum expansion and improvement also resulted in the construction of a generation of handsome school buildings throughout North Carolina. The opening of the newly built Ahoskie School during the 1929-1930 school year, replacing an earlier 1910 school, marked a new era of education for the children of Ahoskie and the surrounding region.

Ahoskie School also meets Criterion C as an excellent local example of school building design of the consolidation movement. Designed by prominent Wilmington architect, Leslie N. Boney, the impressive two-story Classical Revival-style building conveyed the growing consensus that public education was vital to community development. With its distinctive classical façade, improved school design, and modern plumbing and electrical systems, Ahoskie School included all the requisite features determined essential for a modern school of the time period. The period of significance extends from 1929, the year the school opened, replacing an earlier 1910 school building, to 1955, during which time Ahoskie School was the Town of Ahoskie's principal elementary and high school, playing a prominent role in the education of the area's children. The post 1955 period is not of exceptional significance. The school and its history have become an integral part of the community and the building stands as a local landmark.

Historical Background and Education Context

Hertford County was a largely rural and sparsely populated county during the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1843, the population of the area now known as Ahoskie was only about seventy-two. The Chowan and Southern railroad, begun in 1887, passed through this area carrying timbers from Hertford and Bertie counties to sawmills in undeveloped areas of the region. A post office was established for the area on September 18, 1889. In 1890, the newly formed Norfolk and Carolina railroad selected a route through Ahoskie for their passenger train after a wealthy landowner in Winton, Hertford's county seat, refused to sell his land for a railroad right-of-way (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 493-495).

The town of Ahoskie incorporated on January 24, 1893. By this time the town had a post office, a large department store, a sawmill and gin, a school, and a Baptist church. The Mitchell, Jenkins, and Hayes families owned the majority of the land surrounding the town and they began to subdivide their property into commercial and residential building lots. During the next six years, the town's population doubled, businesses increased, and new residences were built

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Ahoskie School
Hertford County, NC

(Parker, J. Roy, p. 517). Ahoskie continued to grow and prosper throughout the twentieth century, eventually becoming Hertford county's largest and most populated town.

Schools in Hertford County before the Civil War were very few and widely scattered. In 1839, a statewide public school law was passed. The provision of the act made it possible for each district in a county, which raised by local taxation the sum of thirty dollars for school support, to receive twice that amount from the Literary Fund. The census of 1840 reveals that there were no universities or colleges in Hertford County, there were three grammar schools with a total of sixty-eight scholars and six primary schools with a total of 105 scholars, all of which were private schools. The total population of the county in 1840 was 7,489. By 1850, there were thirteen public schools in the county with thirteen teachers and 378 students. Taxation for the schools amounted to \$390.00 and public funds came to \$730.00. Often of log construction, the schools were small, one-room buildings, sparsely furnished with only rough benches for the students and a desk for the teacher. Schools were in session for an average term of about eighteen weeks (ninety days) and the average teacher's salary was from \$18.00 to \$25.00 a session (Parker Brothers, Inc., pp. 32-35).

By 1858, Hertford County reported nineteen school districts with seventeen schools. There were 368 male children and 226 female children attending school. The average length of a school session had decreased from eighteen weeks to ten weeks and the average teacher's salary was still only about \$26.00 per month. Students were being taught spelling, reading, arithmetic, geography, and grammar. In 1860, the average length of the school term had increased to twenty-one weeks. Many of the schools in the county closed during the time period of the Civil War (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 35).

After the Civil War, schools were opened in various parts of the wooded area that is now the Ahoskie vicinity. Poor roads and the difficulties involved in traveling even a few miles, resulted in numerous one-room, one-teacher schools (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 330). A new North Carolina state constitution ratified in 1868 granted that the General Assembly, through taxation, would provide a uniform system of free public schools for all children in the state between the ages of six and twenty-one. Each county in the state was to be divided into a convenient number of districts, in which one or more public schools would be maintained at least four months of every year (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 37). As a result of these provisions, the schools in Hertford County made rapid progress after 1869. By 1885, there were twenty-four school districts in the county with 582 children attending an average school term of four-and-one-half months (ten weeks). There were a total of twenty-three schools with twenty-nine teachers and an annual teacher's salary of \$29.00. The curriculum included arithmetic, geography, English grammar, North Carolina and United States history, physiology, hygiene, and civil government (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 332).

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Little progress occurred in the county's schools between 1885 and 1900. Although the number of children attending school had increased somewhat by 1900, the value of public school property had decreased from \$6749.00 in 1885 to \$4647.00 in 1900 and the total disbursements for public school education decreased from \$9,077.22 in 1885 to \$6,373.29 in 1900. The average length of a school term also decreased from about eighteen weeks in 1885 to fourteen weeks in 1900. The average monthly teacher's salary remained about \$28.00 per term throughout the time period (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 44).

Early in the twentieth century, Governor Charles Brantley Aycock, an educational proponent, worked tirelessly on behalf of public schools. He urged the General Assembly into expanding school spending resulting in improved facilities, higher teaching standards, establishment of libraries, and lengthening of the school term to four months (sixteen weeks). Local school districts were increasingly taxed for school support and the 1903 legislature passed a bill that loaned money to counties for badly needed school construction (*The Development of North Carolina's Public School System Through 1940*, p. 5).

The governors who followed Aycock continued his pro-education policies. A compulsory attendance law was passed in 1907. In 1913, the legislature established a statewide property tax for the support of schools. New colleges were established to train teachers, teaching standards were raised, text procurement procedures were improved, libraries were constructed and school terms were gradually lengthened to six months. More importantly, enough schools were built to house the state's burgeoning school population (*The Development of North Carolina's Public School System Through 1940*, p. 6).

The citizens of Hertford County gradually became cognizant to the need of public education, and in 1905 the General Assembly passed an act to incorporate school district No. 5 for white students in the town of Ahoskie. The district was to be known as the Ahoskie Graded School District (Parker, J. Roy, p. 48). Built in 1895 by Dr. Paul Mitchell on one of his town lots, by 1907 the Ahoskie School had a school term of 120 days (twenty-four weeks) and enrolled twenty-two boys and seven girls at the high school level. The two-story frame school employed two high school teachers and offered a two-year course of study. The school building included an assembly room and classrooms downstairs for the primary students and two rooms upstairs for the high school. The school was financed partly by the county and partly by donations from Dr. Mitchell and other citizens. Dr. Mitchell was the school's supervisor and most of the teachers roomed and boarded in his home (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 338). North Carolina's first 4-H Club was organized in 1909 in Ahoskie with the meetings held at the Ahoskie School. Organized initially as the Corn Club, it was the beginning of the present large organization of rural youth in the state.

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In May 1909, the citizens voted a special school tax of fifty cents on the \$100 property valuation. They also voted for a new school building and a lengthy controversy ensued over the location of the new school with Dr. J. H. Mitchell and Mr. J. R. Garrett leading two factions. It was finally agreed to put the school on land owned by Dr. Mitchell in west Ahoskie on the same site as the frame school building. On August 18, 1910, J. H. and Lita Mitchell, J. A. and Nettie Mitchell, and George H. Mitchell sold two acres of land on the corner of St. John's and Academy streets to the Board of Trustees of Ahoskie Graded School District, Inc. (Deed Book 52, p. 228). The county record of the actual cost of building the two-story brick school was \$7,000.00. Completed in February 1910, the school's first commencement was held there in the spring. Ahoskie School had a term of twenty-eight weeks and an enrollment of ten boys and thirteen girls in the high school with two high school teachers. The elementary classes had an enrollment of 112 students with two teachers. The first 4-H Club meeting, initially known as the Corn Club, in North Carolina was held at the school the same year. By 1911, the high school began offering a three-year course of study. During this year, the money appropriated by the county was supplemented by \$400.00 from local taxation. Of these funds, \$700.00 was used for the principal's salary, \$350.00 for teachers' salaries, and \$68.83 for fuel, maintenance, and other incidental expenses (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 348).

By the end of the 1916 school term, it was determined that more space was needed for the school. Energetic citizens raised \$1000.00, the county donated the same sum, and work on the new auditorium began by the fall term. By February 1917, the auditorium was completed and the first commencement was held there in May. By 1918, there were seven high school teachers and the high school course of study was extended to four years (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 355).

When school opened in the fall term of 1920, there were 300 students enrolled and three extra teachers were employed. Again, it was determined that more room was needed. Because money for new buildings was scarce, the Board of Trustees took it upon themselves to turn the auditorium into additional classrooms. The same year, the State recognized the Ahoskie High School as an accredited high school in District No. 11. By 1922, enrollment was higher than ever as children from outside the district were admitted into the school for a slight fee. A frame building was constructed to take care of the overflow. It was later used for the kindergarten, commercial, and band classes (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 356).

Music classes were introduced to all the grades during the 1922-23 school year. The local newspaper began dedicating an entire page to Ahoskie school news and titled it *The Warwhoop*, a forerunner of the student newspaper published by the students of Ahoskie High School (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 357).

Consolidation of some of the county's smaller schools into the Ahoskie School during 1924 and 1925 increased pressure to secure a new school building in Ahoskie. A building

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committee presented an application for a loan from the State Building Fund for \$75,000.00. The loan was approved in 1928 and once again a controversy ensued over a site for the new building. After considerable debate among the local citizens, it was finally determined that the school would be built on the same site as the old school. Architect Leslie N. Boney of Wilmington was selected to draw the plans for the new school and C. B. Mooney of Mocksville was awarded the construction contract at \$64,395.00. An additional \$10,180.00 was appropriated for plumbing and heating (*Hertford County Herald*, Jul. 19, 1928, p. 1).

A contract was awarded to Mr. Copeland of Rich Square to move the 1895 frame building farther back on the school grounds. The new building would be built partly on the site where the frame building had stood. The frame building (no longer extant) would continue to be used by the school during the fall session of the 1928-29 school term. The 1910 brick building was destroyed and the 1917 auditorium was converted into a gymnasium and used as a wing of the new building with a corridor joining them. A corresponding south wing was also connected to the main building by a corridor. The completed school building included eight high school classrooms, sixteen elementary classrooms, two science laboratories, two commercial rooms, two home economic rooms, a library, a large reading room, an auditorium, a principal's office, a reception room, and a gymnasium with showers and dressing rooms (*Hertford County Herald*, July 5th and 26th, 1928).

The January 24, 1929 issue of the *Hertford County Herald* reported that the south wing of the school building was practically completed and classes being held in the old auditorium would move into the new wing within two weeks. Work on remodeling the auditorium building into a gymnasium would then commence. On February 7, 1929, it was reported that an additional \$20,000.00 was needed to finish building the Ahoskie School. The *Hertford County Herald* also reported that 900 opera chairs had been purchased from the General Seating Company to furnish the school's new auditorium. By May 30, 1929, the stage in the auditorium was ready for commencement exercises. It was reported that the stage settings, wings, scenery, and curtains, purchased from the Universal Scenic Studio, Inc., in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, had been installed. Sixteen graduates received their high school diploma as the first graduating class from the new Ahoskie School.

Enrollment for the 1930-1931 school term totaled 480 students: 369 elementary students and 160 high school students. (*Hertford County Herald*, Sep. 18, 1930, p. 1). Extracurricular classes included glee club, dramatics, debating, piano, Young Tar Heel Farmers' Club, journalism, Beta Club, Boy Scouts, 4-H Club, band and athletics. The first invitational basketball tournament was sponsored in the spring of 1931. Further consolidation took place with the closing of Winton High School, Brantley's Grove, and Harrell's Elementary School. A home economics class was added to the curriculum in 1931 (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 364). The

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school had also formed a football team known as *The Indians* (*Hertford County Herald*, Sep. 24, 1931, p. 1).

In 1933 the State legislature passed the statewide uniform eight months school term. The ad valorem tax on property was discontinued and charter and district schools were abolished. There were four districts in Hertford County with Ahoskie designated district No. 2. Supplementary staff and curriculum were added to the high school during the 1935-36 school term. By this time there were twenty-four teachers including teachers for home economics, commercial classes, band and piano. The school installed the commercial (business education) department, revived the debating team, built a truck shop, organized a Parent-Teachers' Association, and organized a school band. The United Daughters of the Confederacy sponsored the first tubercular clinic at Ahoskie School in 1935 (Parker Brothers, Inc., pp. 364-365)

The demand for a vocational agriculture building was met in 1937 when the county authorized the construction of a \$4,000.00 one-story brick building. The building included a classroom, workshop, tool room, library, office, and vestibule. The department instructed forty boys during its first year (*Hertford County Herald*, Nov. 18, 1937, p. 1). The school paper, *The Pow-Wow*, was also first published during the 1937-38 school year.

The Ahoskie chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy contributed several projects to the Ahoskie School during the 1937-38 term. They purchased a bookshelf for the high school library and donated twenty books to the school. On either side of the school entrance, lighted columns (no longer extant), given in memory of Civil War and World War I veterans, were completed and presented to the school with an impressive ceremony. They also erected the brick gates flanking the front walkway. The chapter gave the school one United States flag, twelve Confederate flags, five pictures, fifty song books, and one copy of *The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy* by Jefferson Davis (Parker Brothers, Inc., p. 205)

The July 6, 1939 issue of the *Hertford County Herald* reported that the Ahoskie School would soon add a home economics building to its campus. Funds for the building program were provided under a State Literary Fund loan. An appropriation of \$4,000.00 was designated for the construction materials for the home economics cottage, but it was estimated that another \$20,000.00 were needed for labor. It was reported that work on the one-story brick cottage would get underway by the middle of July (*Hertford County Herald*, Jul. 13, 1939, p. 1).

In October of the same year, plans were announced for a \$30,000.00 gymnasium; seventy-five percent to be financed by the Works Progress Administration and twenty-five percent by the county. Plans for the new gymnasium, drawn by architect Frank Benton of Wilson, specified for the brick structure to be 142 feet long and 118 feet wide and "modern in every respect" (*Hertford County Herald*, Oct. 12, 1939, p. 1). Plans for the building were

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approved by the Hertford County Board of Education in December 1940. At the same time, plans were made for the extension of the vocational agriculture building for a cost of approximately \$1,500.00 (*Hertford County Herald*, Dec. 19, 1940, p. 1). With the completion of the new gymnasium, the north wing of the school was converted to a kitchen and cafeteria.

The school continued to play a pivotal role in the life of the Ahoskie community and surrounding area for the next 48 years. Significant events included the conversion of the school to a high school in 1955. Integration of the Hertford County schools began in 1966 with total integration achieved by 1969. The following year, a new high school opened in Ahoskie and the school became a middle school for grades six through eight. Ahoskie School closed its doors in 1988 and the school has been vacant since that time. On March 19, 1998, the Hertford County Board of Education transferred title of Ahoskie School, including 3.28 acres, the main school building, the home economics building, and the agriculture building, to the Ahoskie School Restoration Committee, Inc., a non-profit corporation (Deed Book 543, p. 65). The gymnasium and athletic field were transferred to the town of Ahoskie. The Ahoskie School Restoration Committee is working with the Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA) to renovate the school building and convert it into a housing facility for senior citizens, thereby ensuring the facility will continue to maintain its presence as an important structure in the community.

Architecture Context

The beginning of the twentieth century brought a new awareness of the role architecture played in establishing the proper attitude and respect for education in the minds of the citizens of North Carolina. Books were written on the proper construction of modern schools and detailed descriptions given on everything from the size of the rooms and hallways to the importance of playground equipment. Specifications detailed the placement of lighting, plumbing, and electrical fixtures, all rather recent innovations for schools at the time, to be included in the new buildings.

While in most instances, the county boards of education contracted with architects for the construction of new schoolhouses, the State Department of Public Instruction, through the planning division, reserved the right to review all plans. Local officials and architects could choose their own plans, but only if they met with state approval.

The National Educational Association recommended that a minimum of fifty percent of a school's total floor area should be used for instruction; these areas included classrooms, libraries, labs, workshops, assembly halls, stages, and gymnasiums. Non-instructional areas included stairs and corridors, restrooms, walls and partitions, administrative space, and closets. State officials recommended that new schools be situated near the center of population in order to equalize school populations and to reduce transportation costs. They favored the use of

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architects who provided clear blueprints and specifications. Concrete, brick, and stone were the materials recommended for even the smallest buildings. Double use of areas such as a stage/gymnasium was recommended. It was also advised that each of these modern schools include a low pressure steam heating plant, standard indoor plumbing, standard lighting, a pressure water tank, drinking fountains, and the all-important auditorium (Blair, pp. 26-28).

The end result of these numerous guidelines and recommendations by state officials was the proliferation during the early decades of the twentieth century of rural and small-town schools which were remarkably similar in plan and quality. While the facades may include differing degrees of detail, the interiors and floor plans exhibit few deviations from each other. The typical school was two stories, constructed of brick or stone, built on a "U", "L", "H", or "T" plan, with a low hip roof, numerous windows, and transverse corridors. Many exhibited Classical Revival or Gothic Revival exterior details.

Ahoskie School incorporated many of the suggestions and ideas being extolled for a modern school building. Two stories in height and of brick construction, the school's impressive Classical Revival façade with Art Deco-influenced details is reflected in the emphasis on the central pavilion with the elaborate door surround including cast concrete fluted pilasters topped by a flat urn design. Additional cast concrete design details on the building's facade include keystones, sills, lintels, a water table, and classical plaques centered within a rectangle outlined in concrete. The new school included twenty-four classrooms, two science laboratories, two business education rooms, two home economic rooms, a library and reading room, an auditorium, administrative offices, and a gymnasium. The layout included a transverse corridor with rooms on either side. Situated on a large city lot, there was plenty of space for a playground and for the later additions of the detached 1937 agricultural building, 1940 home economics building, and 1940 gymnasium.

The school board selected Leslie N. Boney of Wilmington as the principal architect for the 1929 Ahoskie School. The design influence of Leslie N. Boney's architecture firm is evidenced today throughout the state having completed projects in seventy-four of North Carolina's one-hundred counties. In the early 1900s, the firm established itself as a pioneer in educational facility design, playing a leading role in consolidating many of the state's one-room schoolhouses. Many of the firm's early school buildings are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The efforts of the Boney architectural firm in educational design helped in establishing much of North Carolina's existing school facilities (Boney Architect newsletter, June 20, 2003).

Additional consolidated schools in the northeastern region of the state include the 1922 Murfreesboro High School, also located in Hertford County, the 1926 Central High School, in Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, and the 1929 Woodland-Olney School in Northampton

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County (NR, 1997). The Murfreesboro High School is a two-story-on-a-raised-basement building featuring a Colonial Revival central portico. The school is typical of schools built during the early years of the twentieth century. Like the Ahoskie School, it featured large classrooms, a cafeteria, an attached auditorium, administrative offices, and fire-proof stairwells. Banks of paired six-over-six windows illuminate the classrooms. Restrained brick designs highlight the façade of the building. The school campus also includes detached ca. 1940 agriculture and home economics buildings, situated directly behind the main school building. The school, through adaptive reuse as a history museum, retains a prominent presence in the small town of Murfreesboro.

Designed by architect Eric Flanagan of Henderson, the Woodland-Olney School opened for grades one through twelve in 1929, the same year as the Ahoskie School. The new school provided children of the Woodland area with a state-of-the-art building, complete with central heating, good lighting, spacious classrooms, and an auditorium. The two-story brick Classical Revival-style school is situated on a large parcel of land at the edge of town. Like the Ahoskie School, the U-shaped building wraps around a one-story auditorium. The school features paired windows, a Classical Revival-style portico, pilasters, and decorative yellow brick horizontal bands (Keane, Sec. 7, p. 1).

Central High School, built in 1926 and designed by Wilmington architect Leslie N. Boney, was built as the consolidated high school for white students in the central section of Pasquotank County. Like the Ahoskie School and most consolidated schools of the era, the Colonial Revival-style school focuses on the central portico. Slender Tuscan columns support the pedimented portico. The decorative brickwork of the facade consisting of brick soldier courses for the continuous lintel, water table, and front raised panels on end wings are consistent with Boney's school designs. As with the previously discussed schools, Central High School incorporated spacious classrooms, modern plumbing and heating systems, good lighting, and a modern cafeteria. A detached frame three-room school was moved onto the property in the 1930s and used as a workshop for the agriculture classes (Butchko, p. 87).

North Carolina's surviving schools built during the consolidated era are reflective of the increasing awareness among the state's officials of the importance of providing modern school facilities at a centralized location, thereby improving the educational experience and upgrading the quality of life for both rural and urban school children. Ahoskie School, once the most popular venue for the town of Ahoskie's community affairs, remains an important and prominent local landmark in the town.

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Ahoskie School
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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel includes an approximately nine-acre lot located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Main and Academy streets in the town of Ahoskie. The boundary line is delineated on the attached Hertford County Tax Maps 5993.17 and 5992-05, being part of parcel 0169.

Boundary Justification

The property boundary for the Ahoskie School entails an approximately nine-acre tract owned by the Ahoskie School Restoration Committee, Inc. The tract includes the 1929 Ahoskie School, the 1937 agricultural building, the 1940 home economics building, the 1940 gymnasium, and the athletic field. The boundary is drawn to exclude two badly deteriorated storage buildings dating to ca. 1940 and ca. 1980.

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National Park Service

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Section Photos

Ahoskie School
Hertford County, NC

The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property: Ahoskie School

County and State where Property is Located: Hertford County, North Carolina

Address: 105 North Academy Street

Name of Photographer: Beth Keane

Dates of Photographs: November 8, 2004

Location of Original Negatives: North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh

Photographs:

Photograph 1: Façade (east elevation) and north elevation; camera looking southwest

Photograph 2: South elevation; camera looking north

Photograph 3: West elevation; camera looking east

Photograph 4: Interior; central hall

Photograph 5: Front gates; camera looking west

Photograph 6: Agricultural Building; camera looking northeast

Photograph 7: Home Economics Building; camera looking northwest

AHOSKIE SCHOOL
First Floor
Ahoskie, Hertford Co., NC



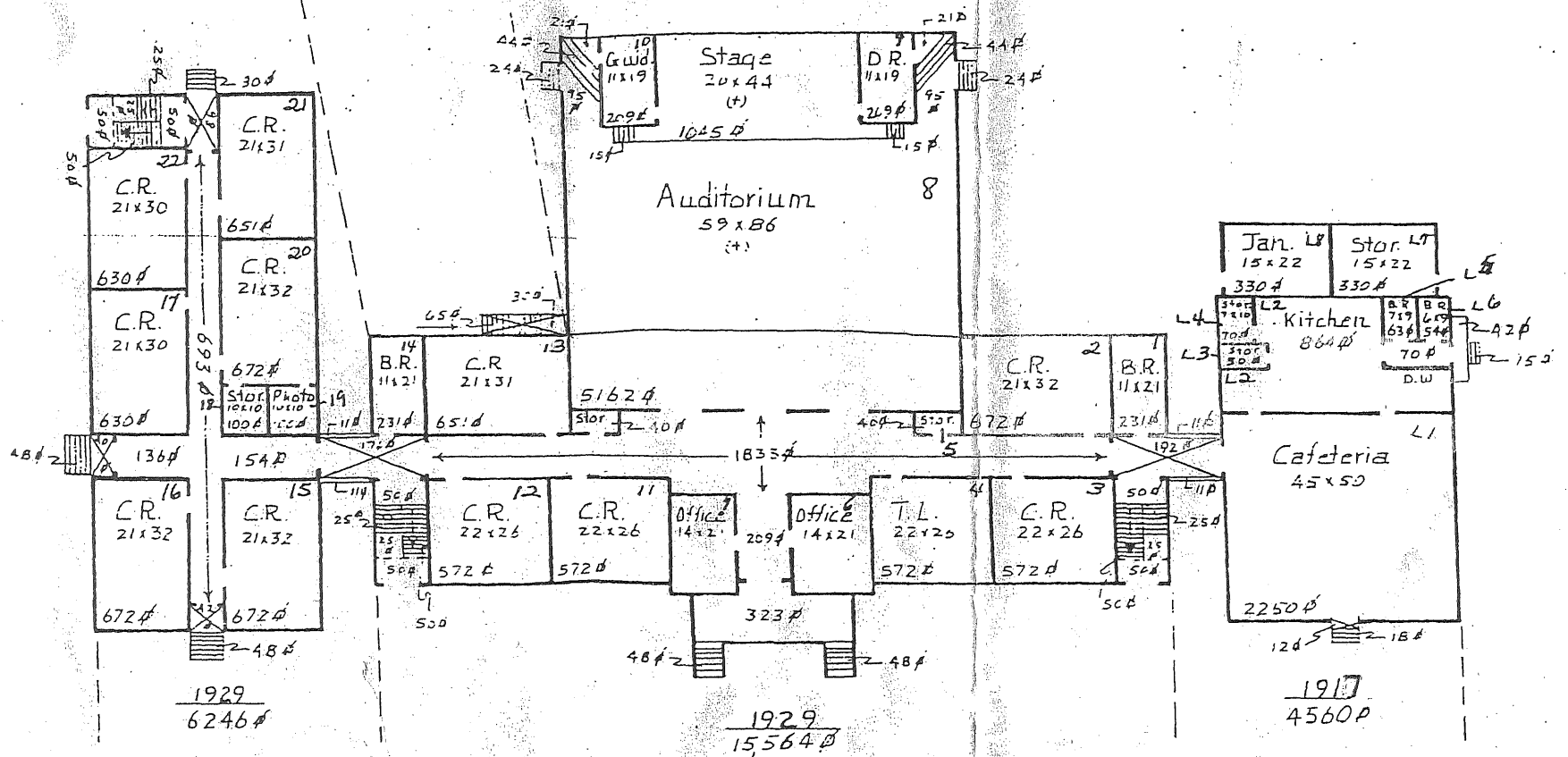
Stor.
D.W.

Storage
Dish Washing

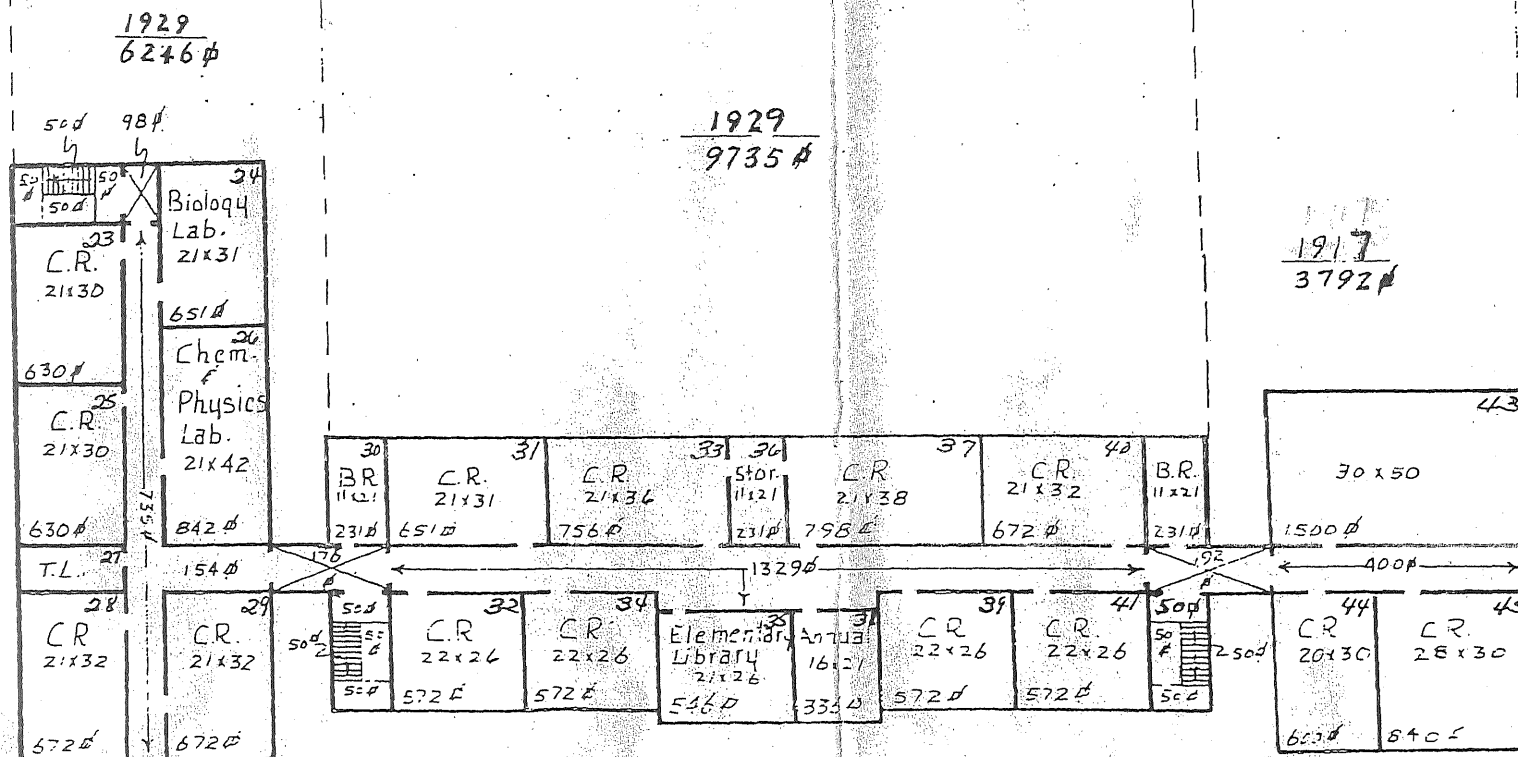
Boiler Room
21 x 43

903 #

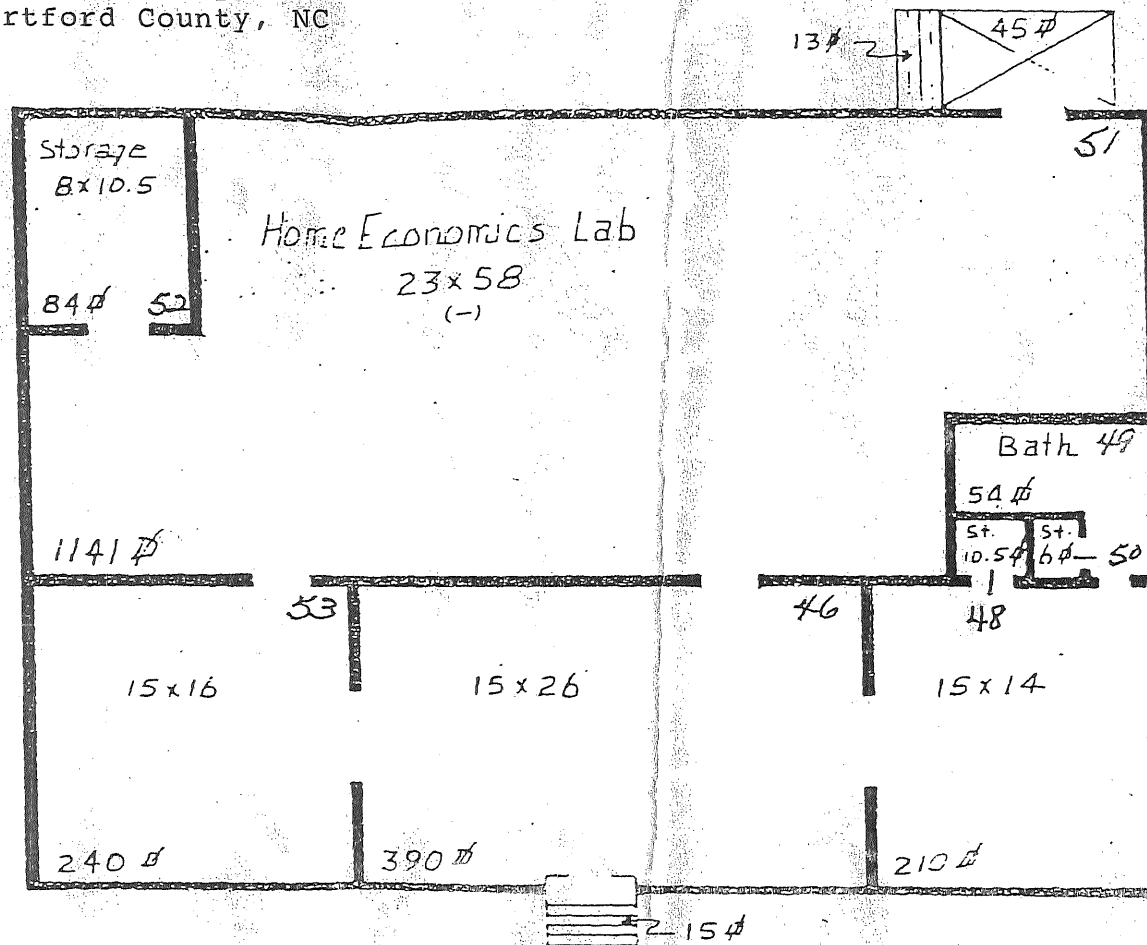
Basement



→ N



AHOSKIE SCHOOL
 Home Economics Building
 Ahoskie, Hertford County, NC



1940
 2360'

AHOSKIE SCHOOL
 Agriculture Building
 Ahoskie, Hertford Coun
 NC



1949
 946 ϕ

13x13.5

2335 ϕ

1949

175.5 ϕ

67
 Tool Shed
 9x11.5
 103.5 ϕ

Aq. Shop
 47x55
 (-)



24 ϕ

66
 Storage
 6.5x18

117 ϕ

2341 ϕ

65

64
 Office
 4.5x9.5
 428 ϕ

19.3 ϕ

32
 45x8.5
 383 ϕ

782 ϕ

26 ϕ

C.R.
 23x34

1937

1940
 540 ϕ

AHOSKIE SCHOOL
Ahoskie, Hertford Co., NC
Site Plan

Private Property

Colony Ave.

Private Property

North Street

Academy Street

Curtis Street

Main Street

