

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Murphey School

Hillsborough vicinity, Orange County, OR0467, Listed 08/20/2009
Nomination by Megan Privett
Photographs by Megan Privett, August 2008



Facade view, auditorium on right



Rear view

(Oct. 1990)

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 an 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 Murphey School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 3729 Murphy School Road N/A not for publication
city or town Hillsborough vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Orange code 135 zip code 27705

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ 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 certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	1	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)

EDUCATION: school

EDUCATION: education-related

EDUCATION: secondary structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation brick

walls wood

brick

roof metal

asphalt

other concrete

Narrative Description

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

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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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education _____
 Architecture _____

Period of Significance

1923-1959

Significant Dates

1923 _____
 1936 _____
 1959 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Linthicum, Henri C., Architect _____
 Woods, W. H., Builder _____
 Kane, George, Contractor _____

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: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 7.03 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 678860 3988780
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
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 Megan Privett
organization _____ date 11/6/08
street & number PO Box 227 telephone 502-320-9504
city or town Saxapahaw state NC zip code 27340

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Jesse (Jay) Miller
street & number 7923 Morrow Mill Road telephone 919-616-2190
city or town Chapel Hill state NC zip code 27516

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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Materials (cont.):

Foundation stone

7. Narrative Description:

Located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Old NC 10 and Murphy School Road in the Chapel Hill Township in rural Orange County, Murphey School occupies a roughly 7.03 acre parcel near the Durham County line. The property has a Durham mailing address but it is in the Hillsborough vicinity, standing approximately 6.7 miles from that town. Old NC 10 is a lightly traveled corridor connecting Durham and Hillsborough. The one-story, brick rectangular main building was designed by Henri C. Linthicum of the architectural firm Linthicum and Linthicum. The building is joined at a right angle to a rectangular auditorium addition and sits in its original location far back from and facing Old NC 10 with a generous flat grass-covered lot in front and to the west of the property. To the north of the property across Old NC 10 are a handful of residences and a few exist to the southeast behind the property and across Murphy School Road. To the south of the school but on the same parcel sits a well house, water tower, maintenance trailer and frame bungalow that served as a teacherage. Pieces of original playground equipment also dot the south portion of the lot, providing yet another link to its past days as an operating elementary school. A gravel drive at the east of the lot serves as the primary access route to the property, secured from the street by a metal gate. It runs through the school yard to the south and around the front of the teacherage to the west. A second metal gated entrance is located to the northeast of the school, and a gravel drive runs parallel to the east elevation of the property and then merges with the primary entrance. In the front school yard a large oak tree shades the lawn and a handful of oak trees are located to the rear (south) and east of the school. Trees also line the southern and western boundaries of the parcel. A border of low stone walls, now deteriorating, encapsulates the school complex property, running along the east and north of the lot. The physical surroundings of the property are generally rural and wooded in nature, with the Norfolk Southern railroad running approximately 750 feet to the north of the property and Old NC 10.

Sometime after 1960, the "e" in Murphey was dropped so that the school was commonly referred to as the "Murphy School." Thus, the spelling of "Murphy School Road" differs from the historic name.

Murphey School

1923, 1936, Contributing Building

Exterior of Main Building:

With Spanish Revival- and Classical Revival-style elements, Murphey School is a well-preserved brick consolidated school built in 1923 with an auditorium added in 1936 to the west of the school

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building. The one-story building has a hip-on-hip roof covered in pressed metal shingles designed to imitate terra cotta tiles and a projecting central hip roof front entrance on the north elevation. Metal pinnacles on the roof ridgelines also imitating terra cotta tiles add additional ornamentation. The ridgeline of the roof is covered temporarily with a long narrow section of metal roofing. Groupings of four six-over-six wood sash windows flank the entrance section, which comprises two arched nine-over-nine sash windows on either side of the front door. The window sills are composed of rows of headers. Brick corner pilasters at each corner of the entry bay and also at the junctions of the entry bay and main façade complete the symmetry of the façade. The multi-pane and paneled door has a wood surround and a tall arched transom that matches the arched windows that flank it. The arches of the entry bay windows are connected by soldier-course springers. At a later date (c. 1970-1990) a small porch not in keeping with the architectural style of the building was added over the front entrance, but it has since been removed. Concrete steps lead up to the front door. At the southwest corner of the school building is a hip roof west wing with a secondary entrance on its north elevation that also connects the main building to the auditorium. This entrance also has a brick round arch with weatherboard infill in place of the transom over the multi-pane and paneled double-doors. The building is executed in brick veneer laid in a running bond (frame construction underneath) separated from a continuous brick foundation by a soldier-course water table. A soldier course also sits beneath the overhanging wooden tongue-and-groove boxed eaves. The simple exterior wood trim is in keeping with the style of small, rural consolidated schools. Original features such as the imitation terra cotta tile roof and the wrought iron hardware on the exterior front door hint at Spanish Revival-style influences popular in the 1920s. The exterior of the school building is remarkably intact with very few changes to original materials and architectural features.

The east elevation contains only two large door openings on the hip roof east wing projecting from the southeast corner of the main block. Brick round arches surmount the doors and concrete steps lead up to the doorways from the lawn. Brick pilasters flank each of the doors. The door opening on the east elevation is now covered with T-III siding. According to oral sources, it possibly once served as a side entrance or a drop-off point for children transported by bus. The doorway facing north on the east elevation has also been filled with T-III siding, as well as a two-over-two horizontal sash window. Overhanging wooden eaves provide shelter and shade.

The south elevation is symmetrical, containing three groups of four six-over-six sash windows, flanked by pairs of narrow four-over-four sash windows with brick pilasters separating and defining each grouping into five sections on the rear elevation. In the center of the south elevation and sitting partially below grade level is a damaged brick boiler room, square in shape, with an exterior chimney that is stuccoed above the roof line rising vertically through the eaves of the main

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building at the northeast corner of the boiler room. There is a doorway on the east elevation of the boiler room below grade and concrete stairs that lead downward towards the door. The top half of the boiler room walls and the roof has been destroyed.

Interior of main building (See attached floor plan):

The school's plan is arranged in a double-loaded east-west running corridor with six primary rooms. The front entrance opens directly into what could have been a classroom. However, according to oral history source Mike Giovanni, it is possible that the side entrance located on the east elevation was used by students as the primary entrance to the school. The central classroom containing the front entry opens into the central corridor. Boys' and girls' bathrooms are located to the south off entry foyers at each end of the corridor to the east and west. Double-doors with ten-light transoms and glazing in the upper halves separate the east and west end foyers from the hallway, auditorium, and secondary exits. The two central rooms on the south portion of the building are combined through an opening in their shared wall to make a combined library/cafeteria room. A portion at the east end of the combination room was partitioned for use as the principal's office. Due to the creation of the principal's office, there is no door from the eastern section of the library/cafeteria. To the west of the library/cafeteria is the kitchen which has a pass-through window on the north side of the shared wall. All other rooms contain an original wooden five-horizontal-panel door with a metal or glass doorknob. Each room also contains one high, eight-light casement window that opens to the hallway for ventilation purposes. The oak floors are substantially intact but portions have been removed due to damage. The walls are plaster except for the horizontal bead-board wainscoting that extends a little more than halfway up the wall in the hallway. The baseboards and window and door surrounds are simple. An original decorative pressed-metal ceiling treatment and a narrow pressed-metal egg-and-dart crown molding still exists, though damaged, in most of the rooms. The bathrooms retain their original toilets and urinals contained in bead-board stalls. The floors in both the girls' and boys' bathrooms are concrete and the sinks appear to date to c. 1955-1975.

Auditorium Addition Exterior:

The Murphey School auditorium is remarkably intact, containing nearly all of its original materials, windows, and architectural features. Added to the main building in 1936 and neoclassical in style with a classical Doric portico supported by four square-in-section paneled columns, the brick auditorium is a tall one-story building rectangular in plan with a wooden cornice and wide frieze. The portico does not extend the full width of the auditorium and its pediment is punctuated by a lunette window with a keystone in its center with a simple wooden cornice and frieze. The auditorium and its portico have front-gable v-crimp metal covered roofs with a small arched eyebrow dormer on the east and west roof slopes of the

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building and a band of original metal tiles at the building's ridge line. Three paneled double-doors topped with neoclassical transoms (containing muntins in a star motif) and heavily corniced surrounds pierce the façade. Two wooden pilasters that match the square columns flank the three entrances. Also visible are exposed porch ceiling beams in the portico. A brick soldier course separates the building from its continuous foundation. Concrete steps and low brick knee-wall extend north from the portico.

The east and west elevations of the auditorium contain a row of tall, arched, slightly recessed multi-light sash windows surrounded by a border of brick with a cast keystone and springers. The east elevation has a total of four bays; the west elevation has a total of six bays. Each window has a cast stone sill above a square recessed panel of patterned brickwork with four cast stone accents.

The west elevation fenestration is similar to the east elevation with its row of large arched windows. On the south end of the west elevation is an exit with four-light-over-panel double-doors with a round-arched transom at the same height as the windows. Concrete steps with metal railings lead to the double-doors. On the extreme south end of the west elevation is a small six-over-six sash window topped with a gauged arch with cast stone sash.

The south elevation is characterized by its classical-style gable roof and boxed cornice with returns. An elliptical window with four cast keystones pierces the gable. Two high six-over-six sash windows under gauged brick arches with cast-stone sills on the outside edges of the elevation illuminate the rear stage rooms.

Interior:

The auditorium's interior is a vast open space of plaster walls dominated by a rounded apron-front paneled wood stage at the south end as well as the large arched windows on the east and west walls. Plain plastered pilasters extending to paneled ceiling beams stand between each window. Six evenly-spaced original pendant light fixtures hang from the ceiling, though some have broken or missing globes. The stage opening is surrounded by a wooden paneling treatment and still retains its original red and gold velvet curtains. Two small backstage rooms, each with vertical beadboard on the walls, are at the east and west sides of the stage. Each room contains a small window on the south elevation and has circular stairs leading down to doors to the auditorium's main floor. Two square openings in the south wall near the ceiling flank the stage, and possibly were used for speakers or stage equipment. A wooden baseboard extends around the perimeter of the main room at the intersection of the walls and the maple floors. Three double-door entrances on the north elevation open to the porch. Directly across from each other on the east and west walls near the south end of the auditorium are double-door exits. The exit on the west

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elevation is topped with an arched transom light that matches the arched windows. Portions of the ceiling and the floor are damaged and/or missing.

Teacherage

c. 1923, Contributing Building

Constructed c. 1923 and possibly designed by Henri C. Linthicum, the teacherage is a one-and-one-half story frame bungalow with a one-story gabled ell. While constructed with a typical bungalow form, it exhibits little of the architectural detailing common to that or any other style. The house features a side-gable roof that engages the full-width front porch; a shed-roofed dormer with paired three-over-three sash windows rests on the roof's front slope. The building is covered in German siding and has simple wooden trim. The teacherage faces west towards the back of the schoolyard rather than toward Murphy School Road, reinforcing its role as an integral part of the school complex. Four wooden square-in-section posts support the porch sheltering a central door flanked by two tall six-over-six sash. The front door is rectangular solid beveled-glass and wood with original hardware. It also retains its original wooden screen door. Its porch flooring and central steps are concrete and its foundation is made of brick pillars that have been filled in with stone and painted. Two interior stuccoed chimneys extend from the roofline on the north and south ends. The north and south elevations mirror each other and each contain two bays of six-over-six sash on the first-floor level and two bays of six-over-six sash plus an unusual horizontal three light window at the east end of each elevation at the half-story level to light the bedroom closets.

The rear, or east elevation, can be divided into two parts: the southern half containing the original house and a modern enclosed porch (c. 1950-1965) and the northern half containing the garage addition (c. 1950-1970). The southern half contains one six-over-six sash window on the main block and a gable ell with two bays: one three-over-three sash window and a pair of casement windows (casement screens open to the interior) with eight lights each. The modern enclosed porch has in a tight group: one narrow window with three lights running horizontally; a metal six-panel door; and two windows with three metal awning sash each. The garage addition, making up the northern half of the east elevation and extending northward from the main house, has a shed roof and two open garage bays on its north elevation. Three large windows pierce its east elevation, one with twenty-four lights in the center and two with eighteen lights on the north and south ends of the elevation. It too is covered in wooden German siding and its interior walls are unfinished with exposed studs and joists. The interior of the garage has a poured concrete floor. The garage addition is supported by cinder blocks and three wooden posts on its north elevation.

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The bungalow has a central-hall plan with four rooms on the first level and an ell with a kitchen, bathroom, and back porch (now enclosed) at the east end. The two pairs of rooms on either side of the hall mirror each other and have a door opening in the center of their shared walls. The walls throughout the first floor of the teacherage are plaster except for in the enclosed porch where there is German siding and in the kitchen where paneling and beadboard wainscoting cover the walls. The kitchen also retains early, possibly original, wooden cabinets. A window opening that formerly contained a window that opened onto the rear porch now serves as a pass-through to the enclosed porch. The ceilings on the first floor are plaster and the original wood flooring is oak. Wooden window and door surrounds are executed in a simple fashion with a raised bead and molding on the outer edges.

The wooden stair, with a molded handrail, simple square balusters, molded square newel post, and molded square pendants, leads west along the south wall of the hall to the second floor. The walls and ceilings of the second floor are sheathed with horizontal, narrow, flush boards. The second floor contains a central hall illuminated by the pair of three-over-three sash dormer windows. No baseboards or crown molding exists but quarter-round molding has been placed where walls meet at the corners and where the walls meet the floor and ceiling. Two rooms flank the hall, each with a large closet under the eaves at the room's east end. Corner fireplaces with simple post-and-lintel mantels serve each of the four first-floor rooms and stove pipe openings in the chimneys serve the second story. The teacherage retains original features including baseboard moldings, hardwood floors, door and window surrounds, five-and-six-paneled doors, and door hardware. Two original light fixtures (round metal conical base with two light bulbs hanging from metal chain) hang from the ceilings of the first- and second-floor halls. Original push-button light switches survive in some of the rooms as well. The overall impression of the interior is a light, open space that is modest in design and detail.

Well House

c. 1932, Contributing Structure

The one-story, square well house occupies part of the south yard behind the school building. It is constructed of brick laid in a common bond with a side-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. Wooden tongue-and-groove sheathed overhanging eaves and a central door compose the primary architectural features. The central wood five-paneled door pierces the south elevation and a square metal opening, most likely a former flue or vent that was later capped, extends from the center of the roof's ridge. The other elevations are blind. Inside the well house are a water piping and plumbing system, exposed brick walls, and a wooden tongue-and-groove ceiling with exposed ceiling joists.

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Water Tower

c. 1936, Contributing Structure

Constructed of metal, the water tower occupies part of the south yard behind the school. Its cylindrical tank sits atop metal trusses and supports; a central water pipe and three supports at the outer edges of the tower that terminate at concrete blocks on the ground. A full-length metal access stair still exists; it is attached to the side of the tank and one of its supports. An article in the *Chapel Hill Weekly* on May 22, 1936 stated, "The water tank on its long stilts is painted green and tucked cleverly in a clump of trees, so that it does not stand forth against the sky startlingly as tanks often do."¹

Maintenance Trailer

c. 1980-1990, Non-Contributing Building

A single-wide trailer with a rounded bow-front eight pane bay window on the north elevation. Both the east and west elevations have an attached wooden porch. The roof is flat except for a very slight gable.

Murphey School and its associated buildings sit vacant but are undergoing restoration, in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office, for its future use as a retreat center for non-profit agencies and a site rental facility for special events.

¹ "Orange County's New Schools," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, May 22, 1936, p.1.

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Summary Statement

Murphey School meets National Register Criterion A on the local level in the area of education and Criterion C for architecture. Murphey School opened as a consolidated school in Orange County in 1923 and closed in 1959, thus the period of significance for Murphey School is from 1923 to 1959. The school site includes a rare surviving teacherage, constructed c. 1923 from salvaged materials from the former Mt. Hope School once located nearby. The survival of a teacherage makes Murphey School especially notable as the only remaining example in Orange County with a like complex. The school played an important role in rural community life as well as the educational development of Orange County. It reflects statewide trends in school consolidation and embodies a distinct architectural style associated with early twentieth-century educational reform. Murphey School is also significant as an intact school influenced by the Spanish Revival-style in Orange County and for its Neoclassical-style auditorium addition. Defined by a symmetrical façade flanking a central projecting entry bay, the school's brick façade features groups of large arched windows and doors. Its hipped metal roof imitating terra cotta tile is especially notable. The 1936 auditorium was funded through a Works Progress Administration (WPA) grant and displays a prominent Doric portico and arched windows. Architect Henri Colvin Linthicum, a specialist in school design and partner with his father in the architectural firm Linthicum and Linthicum, designed Murphey School. W. H. Woods of Durham served as the builder/contractor.

Historical Background and Education Context

Located in rural Orange County and constructed in 1923, with a 1936 auditorium addition, Murphey School represents the early twentieth-century consolidation movement in North Carolina's public education system. Consolidation, improved transportation services, and centralization transformed the public school system especially during the early twentieth century and after World War I. Consolidation was viewed as a great equalizer between rural schools and city schools as it created fewer larger schools from many smaller schools with a higher volume of students separated into grades for instruction. Murphey School met new demands for students' well-being and higher educational standards through its facilities and new organization of class instruction according to grade level. Named for North Carolina's "Father of Public Education," Archibald D. Murphey, Murphey School and similar consolidated schools came to fruition only after years of development and reform of the state's public education system throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Murphey's 1817 report on education

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recommended a publicly financed system of education. However, it would take much longer for North Carolina's elected officials to act upon his visionary proposals.²

While North Carolina boasted a good school system during the antebellum era, after the Civil War the state's schools either remained stagnant or declined until the State Constitution of 1868. During the Reconstruction era and up until the turn of the twentieth century, few educational opportunities existed for the majority of North Carolinians. In 1839, seven years after Murphey's death, with the passing of a legislative act that created school districts throughout the state, those districts were allowed to tax in order to fund the construction of schoolhouses. The new state constitution created a public education system free for all children and allowed for the establishment of the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.³

By the turn of the twentieth century public education made greater strides in North Carolina with increased state and federal tax funds for schools. In 1913 the Compulsory Attendance Act passed requiring children between the ages of eight and twelve to attend school four months out of the year. Prior to this act, only about half of North Carolina's school-age children attended on a regular basis.⁴ Another impetus behind the enhanced education system was Governor Charles B. Aycock, who pledged to improve public education and encouraged the frenzy of new school construction that provided larger, improved facilities. One-room frame schoolhouses were soon replaced with larger permanent brick or stone buildings and children were grouped into classes by age and grade level. According to historian Jim Sumner, around 3,400 public schools were constructed between 1900 and 1915. This trend is known as the consolidation movement, and it would soon spread and proliferate throughout North Carolina as it had nationwide.⁵

With consolidation, many leading educators believed that students could receive a higher-quality of education with large classes, better-trained teachers and upgraded facilities that could also act as community centers. From 1918 to 1920, Dr. Edgar W. Knight, a noted scholar of education in North Carolina, authored a series of informational leaflets on the benefits of consolidation, especially for rural schools. Knight claimed that North Carolina had experienced great progress in education after World War I and that the state's rural schools had not kept pace with those in

² Caswell County Historical Association, *Archibald Debow Murphey: Biographical Sketch*, 2007, www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nccha/biographies/archibaldmurphy.html, accessed September 2008.

³ Martin, Jennifer and Sarah Woodard, Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., "Survey of Wake County Public Schools/Final Report," (Raleigh: State Historic Preservation Office, 2002), p. 1-6.

⁴ Sumner, Jim. "A Brief History of North Carolina's Early Twentieth Century Public School System," *North Carolina Historic Preservation Office Newsletter* (Spring 1990), p. 2

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6-16.

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towns and cities. With eighty percent of North Carolina's population living in rural areas, the majority of people were not receiving an adequate education. Knight pressed that consolidation was the answer to improving the rural school problem, stating, "It means more comfortable, convenient, and attractive and better equipped school buildings. In such buildings the health and the morals of the children are safeguarded to a greater degree than is possible in the smaller one-room school." Included in the plan of consolidation endorsed by Knight was a teacherage, a feature constructed on the Murphey School property.⁶

For consolidation to fulfill its purpose, Knight also admitted that the state must first embrace a policy of road building in order to transport rural students to the newly consolidated schools that possibly were not located within walking distance. Without the "Good Roads" movement during the 1920s, consolidation would not have been successful. Knight encouraged each consolidated school to purchase wagons or buses and to hire dependable drivers. In 1925 Orange County operated five school trucks costing \$1680.70 for oil, gas and repairs and \$783 for drivers.⁷ Knight explained that though the new consolidated school would be more expensive than its older counterpart, the costs to the taxable district would be offset by state funding available through programs such as the State Special Building Fund, established to provide funding to each county for the erection of public school houses. Another aid to local school districts was the Division of Schoolhouse Planning, created in 1920 by an appropriation from the legislature to assist the State Board of Education in providing sufficient buildings for public instruction. The Division of Schoolhouse Planning set new design standards for educational facilities and helped to organize their construction.⁸

Even with the great solution of consolidation, many rural newly consolidated schools sat in strong contrast to their sister schools in the city. Often small rural schools like Murphey School were inadequately staffed and short on materials and equipment. Rural schools, including elementary and high schools, emphasized more of an agricultural education due to the number of students who would choose professions such as farming and domestic life. In Orange County there were forty-seven rural schools in 1925 with ninety teachers. Orange County public schools' agricultural departments not only focused on farming methods in the community, but also instructed adult farmers and organized county fairs.⁹

⁶ Knight, Edgar W. "The Consolidation of Rural Schools," 2nd ed., *University of North Carolina Extension Leaflets*, vol. 3, no. 8, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1920), p. 5-18.

⁷ Andrews, Nita. "A Study of the Public Schools of Orange County," Masters Thesis, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1925), p. 65.

⁸ Knight, Edgar W., p. 5-18.

⁹ Andrews, Nita. p. 64-66.

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The standardization of the design and furnishing of new school buildings during the 1920s and 1930s became increasingly more common. Chief considerations in determining the general plan were orientation, natural light and ventilation, flexibility for future additions, aesthetic fitness, and economy. Other new standards for buildings recommended statewide were steam heat, indoor plumbing, drinking fountains, and an auditorium that could double as a gymnasium and also host community gatherings.¹⁰ These standards of the new rural school would make it successful and help to unify rural areas.

In addition to novel standards for consolidated school buildings, North Carolina educational leaders called for higher standards for teachers, preferring those with some kind of professional training. As of 1925, in Orange County approximately half of all teachers only held elementary certificates.¹¹ Proponents of consolidation claimed that with multiple schools combined together, a surplus of teachers would be created, with only the best-trained chosen for positions in the new consolidated school. In 1938 North Carolina required at least one teacher per grade with a "Class A" certification in order for a school to be accredited. Educators also believed that teachers in rural consolidated schools needed to integrate more into the community, and with few options in the country for boarding, many school districts constructed teachers' homes or "teacherages" for the purpose of housing rural teachers. Educational scholars claimed that not only would the teacherage allow for teachers to develop relationships with community members, but it would also provide social fellowship for single female teachers by living with their co-workers; the teacherage becoming, "a self-evident necessity and a good investment for the district"¹²

The superintendent of Orange County schools at the time of the construction of Murphey School was Robert Claytor, who served a total of thirty years in the position and led the consolidation of schools in the county. Orange County applied for \$50,000 of the \$5,000,000 of the State School Fund for the purpose of erecting new schoolhouses during the early 1920s. Half the cost of each new school was to be paid for by local tax districts in Orange County. The county also hired the Henri C. Linthicum, of the architectural firm Linthicum and Linthicum of Durham, to draw plans for new school buildings throughout Orange County. This father and son team, led by Hill C. Linthicum until his death in 1919, promoted their firm as specializing in the design of educational facilities.

¹⁰ *Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1938*, publication no. 206 (Raleigh: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Prepared by Division of Instructional Service), p. 13-25.

¹¹ Andrews, Nita. "A Study of the Public Schools of Orange County," Masters Thesis, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1925), p. 70

¹² Arp, Julius Bernhard. *Rural Education and the Consolidated School*, (New York: World Book Company, 1920), p. 151-155.

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Originally, the Orange County School Board planned to construct a new University School, but then decided to consolidate University with Mount Hope and other surrounding schools, thus creating what would become Murphey School. The only additional school in the district that was not consolidated to make up Murphey at the time was St. Mary's School. The board selected and purchased a new site rather than rebuilding on the site of the old University School, naming the new school after the famous educational scholar, Archibald D. Murphey. Architect H. C. Linthicum designed the plans for Murphey School and the contracting was awarded to W. H. Woods of Durham for \$8,995. A heating plant was installed for \$1,275. The building plans specified wood frame and brick veneer construction for the school's primary material, but only after a recommendation by Linthicum (the original plans called for hollow tile construction). Apparently, Mr. Woods had not satisfied the school board with his masonry skills, and a settlement was made between him and the Orange County School Board. This agreement called for Mr. Woods to "deduct \$25 from the contract price on account of a look of cement in the mortar."¹³ Mr. Woods also constructed the teacherage for an extra cost of \$800 for labor. According to the Orange County School Board minutes, construction had already begun on the new Mt. Hope School that was to be consolidated with Murphey School, therefore, the board elected to tear down what had been built so far of the Mt. Hope School and transport its materials to the Murphey School site to be used as a seven-room "Teacher's Home." The board applied the \$800 earned from the sale of the old University School towards the Teacherage.¹⁴

Architect Henri Colvin Linthicum of Durham, was hired by the Orange County School Board to draw plans for many new school buildings and designed Murphey School. Henri Linthicum was born in 1886 and spent part of his childhood in Henderson, North Carolina. His father, Hill C. Linthicum, came to North Carolina in 1880 from Virginia and became one of Durham's leading architects, specializing in educational buildings. Henri C. Linthicum followed his father's profession when he chose to practice architecture, establishing a business in Raleigh. He remained in Raleigh until his death in 1952. The architectural firm of Linthicum and Linthicum designed schools often in a "T" plan that could be adapted to one-, two-, or three-story buildings with adherence to the state code for heating, lighting, ventilation and fire exits. Henri Linthicum's father, Hill C. Linthicum, eventually went on to be instrumental in establishing the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and serving as the chapter's first President from 1915 to 1919, the year of his death.¹⁵ Murphey School opened in 1923. It contained three classrooms plus

¹³ Orange County Board of Education Minutes, 1872-1962, microfilm (Raleigh: State Archives Research Room, c. 073. 94002), June 15, 1923.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 30-95, p. 535-548.

¹⁵ Bishir, Catherine, Charlotte V. Brown, Carl R. Lounsbury and Ernest H. Wood III, *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990),

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a combined library/cafeteria room (which also could be used as a classroom space), a kitchen, two bathrooms, drinking fountains, two entry vestibules on the east and west sides, and a central corridor dividing the rooms. Murphey School taught grades one through seven and employed around three to four teachers; one of them also serving as a principal. The first principal and teachers are unknown; however, in 1930 Mr. H. F. Pickett was approved as principal.¹⁶

By 1929 North Carolina public schools totaled 5,500 elementary schools with 19,500 teachers and almost 750,000 students. Approximately three-fourths of these students were enrolled in rural schools. The average school term length was 150.5 days. The training of teachers had improved tremendously by this time, with the rate of teachers without college degrees decreasing from 32.2% to 12.3% from 1925 to 1929. During this period, the consolidation movement had spread widely, with over 900 one-, two-, and three-teacher schools eliminated and 172 consolidated schools added.¹⁷ However, the onset of the Great Depression caused new school construction to slow and teachers' salaries to decline; still, enrollment and attendance continued to show improvement. The Great Depression made school particularly difficult for rural children, as their help was needed more than ever on the farm. Many children during the depression attended school only sporadically and with inadequate clothing and school supplies.¹⁸

During the 1934-1935 school year Murphey School enrolled 182 students and was one of nine schools plus Chapel Hill city schools in the Orange County district. The district comprised the following schools in addition to Murphey: Hillsboro, Orange Grove, Saint Mary's, Caldwell, Efland, Aycocock, Carrboro, White Cross, plus the Chapel Hill schools.¹⁹ In 1936 Murphey School added an auditorium wing (thirty feet x eighty feet) onto the west elevation of the building. The addition, along with several other school construction projects for Orange County, was funded through a federal Works Project Administration grant that called for an "auditorium and sewerage plant at Murphey school." The grant to the Orange County School Board from the federal government

p. 318, 337-338. Anderson, Jean Bradley. *A History of Durham County*, (Historic Preservation Society of Durham, Duke University Press, 1990), p. 177-180. Jackson, C. David and Charlotte V. Brown, *The North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects, 1913-1998*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Chapter, The American Institute of Architects, 1998).

¹⁶ Orange County Board of Education Minutes, 1872-1962, microfilm (Raleigh: State Archives Research Room, c. 073. 94002), p. 95.

¹⁷ Slinkard, Thomas Raikes. "Public Education in North Carolina During the Depression, 1929-1933," Masters Thesis, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1948), p. 1-13.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 76-79. Davis, Anita Price. *North Carolina During the Great Depression: A Documentary Portrait of a Decade* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. publishers, 2003), p. 128.

¹⁹ Division of Schoolhouse Planning, *Study of Local School Units 1935-1936*, Department of Public Instruction, (Raleigh: State Archives Research Room), table 5.

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totaled \$155,454. The cost for the Murphey School addition totaled \$16,365 and included in addition to the auditorium: a new water supply, indicating that the construction of the water tank occurred in 1936, the renovation of the Teacherage, and a new sewage system and plumbing. George W. Kane was selected as the general contractor for the project, with plumbing installed by Jobe-Blackley and heating by J. L. Powers. WPA projects, part of the New Deal programs from the Roosevelt administration, provided relief work for the unemployed and funding for the construction of schools and internal improvement projects across North Carolina, and elsewhere, during the 1930s. As a result of the New Deal, the federal government intervened in the lives of many North Carolinians. Author Anthony Badger states of North Carolina during the New Deal era, "In a time of mass unemployment the New Deal provided direct relief to as many as 300,000 clients a month and gave work to over 200,000 of the state's jobless."²⁰ Murphey School was one of ten school projects in Orange County during 1936 receiving WPA grant money from the federal government. The architect of the auditorium is unknown. On June 1, 1936, the board inspected the new auditorium at Murphey School and approved it with only minor changes. Also in 1936, an electric range was ordered for Murphey School in hopes that a power line would soon be installed by the Durham Public Service Company.²¹

With many children at Murphey School desiring to attend the Hillsboro school throughout the 1930s and 1940s, numbers began to decline. Frequently throughout this period, parents sought the board's permission for their children in the Murphey School district to attend the Hillsboro elementary school. According to the minutes for November 1, 1948, a parent appeared before the board stating that, "regardless of the teachers employed at Murphey School they would insist on their child attending school at Hillsboro because they believed it to be a better school." The board at many times throughout this period refused to allow children to attend Hillsboro if they lived within the Murphey district, but, after strong persistence from parents, they eventually gave in with the condition that these children who desired to attend school in Hillsboro provide their own transportation. Still, the Orange County board faced a tough battle as students deliberately

²⁰ Badger, Anthony. *North Carolina and the New Deal*. (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1981), 41.

²¹ Orange County Board of Education Minutes, 1872-1962, microfilm (Raleigh: State Archives Research Room, c. 073. 94002), p. 151-157. "Orange County's New Schools," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, May 22, 1936, p.1. "Work on School Building Awaits Melting of Snow," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, January 3, 1936, p.1. In March of 1930 the committeemen of Murphey School appeared before the Orange County School Board to solicit their interest in building a new room onto Murphey School. The board approved the application and in June of 1930 elected to provide \$300 for the new room. However, this "new room" referred to in Orange County School Board minutes is unknown. There is no physical evidence where an addition would have been made; it also could have been an addition that was razed with the construction of the 1936 auditorium.

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ignored the rules and continued to ride the school bus to Hillsboro for school. By 1947 Murphey School had the lowest student-to-teacher ratio in the county, and an agreement was made to retain the seventh grade at Murphey until higher attendance warranted its transfer to the elementary school in Hillsboro. Nevertheless, with numbers dwindling, Murphey School continued to hire around three teachers almost every year. In 1948 Murphey School enrolled only around seventy pupils and the board decided to transfer the seventh grade to the Hillsboro school.²²

The principal's reports available for Murphey School date from 1946 to 1950, towards the latter part of the school's operation. In 1946 Mrs. J. M. Harris served as principal as well as a teacher for the fifth and sixth grades. The other teachers were Mrs. Myrtle Walker, Mrs. Erna Link, Mrs. Chas F. Hudson and Miss Florence Roat. Students at Murphey School engaged in extracurricular activities such as the 4-H Club and chorale. A parent-teacher association existed at Murphey School as well. Some of the improvements that Principal Harris listed for 1946 included, "Improved lunch room by obtaining new chairs, tables, and new curtains, reupholstering state furniture, and purchasing new cooking equipment." During the 1949-1950 school year a physical education program had been implemented. Additionally, an art teacher from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was employed part-time.²³

Post-World War II public schools in North Carolina continued to consolidate and improve their facilities, but they also faced new concerns including desegregation and the large influx of children with the baby boom of the 1950s. Murphey School continued to employ around three teachers each year and attendance dwindled. This can in part be explained by the influx of residents to the cities during the early part of the twentieth century, and later the congregation of middle-class families in the outlying suburbs. The low attendance rate was also due to the prejudices and opinions of local residents regarding the quality of the school. Murphey School closed in 1959, and its students transferred to the elementary schools in Hillsboro. The board agreed to lease the empty school building to the Mt. Herman Baptist Church for one year at the rate of \$25 per month. In 1963 the Underwood family purchased the property at a public auction.²⁴ Some time during the early 1970s it was used as a nightclub until the mid-1980s; it sat vacant from 1986 until its purchase by Jay Miller in March of 2008.

²² Orange County Board of Education Minutes, 248-250.

²³ Division of Institutional Services, *Elementary and Secondary Education Section: Elementary School Principals' Annual Reports, 1924-1950*, Department of Public Instruction (Raleigh: State Archives Research Room).

²⁴ Orange County Board of Education Minutes, 1872-1962, microfilm (Raleigh: State Archives Research Room, c. 073. 94002), p. 402-487, p. 3.

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Architecture Context

Murphey School is one of two early consolidated elementary schools surviving in Orange County. In his manuscript for the Orange County survey publication, architectural historian Richard Mattson states of Murphey School, "...Murphy School clearly illustrates how the construction of centralized rural schools and better roads went hand in hand after World War I."²⁵

Early schools in Orange County, including those constructed during the antebellum era through the late nineteenth century, typically were one or two room log or frame buildings. With consolidation came new standards for school buildings including materials that were durable and permanent, steam heat, indoor plumbing, and standardized plans and designs. Generally, consolidated schools were much larger in size with a more diverse range of facilities beyond general classroom space such as an auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria space, library, and lavatories. Murphey School reflects these statewide trends for school buildings within the greater consolidation movement.²⁶

Common to consolidated school buildings during the 1920s, Murphey School contains Spanish Revival- and Classical Revival-style elements with its symmetrical façade and striking Neoclassical-style auditorium (1936) with a Doric portico. Wide bands of windows dominate the façade and brick pilasters flank the corners of the main building. Murphey School is constructed of a brick veneer over a wood frame structure, with an unusual hipped roof of metal shingles designed to imitate terra cotta tiles. Murphey School reflects influences of the Spanish Revival style popular during the 1920s through its metal terra cotta-imitation roof as well as its wrought iron hardware and central arched windows. The Classical Revival style grew prevalent during the 1920s and particularly during the Great Depression, when the nation embraced a return to former period styles iconic of solidarity and stability. Architectural historian and author Catherine Bishir notes a connection between the support of these styles and the national political scene: "In North Carolina and throughout the South, this emphasis on efficient and orderly planning and on classical and colonial styles meshed conveniently with white Democrats' triumphant return to the old political order."²⁷

²⁵ Mattson, Richard L. "History and Architecture of Orange County, N.C.," (Raleigh: State Historic Preservation Office, 1996), p. 61-62.

²⁶ Orange County Survey Reports, "Historic Resources of Orange County," Orange County Multiple Property Documentation Form, (Raleigh: State Historic Preservation Office, 1993), p. 21-22, 39-43, 79. *Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1938*. publication no. 206. Raleigh: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Prepared by Division of Instructional Service, p. 13-25.

²⁷ Bishir, Catherine. *North Carolina Architecture*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 430, 457-470.

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A few similar schools still existing in Orange County are comparable to Murphey School. St. Mary's School, still intact, was constructed in 1931 as a Colonial Revival-style school to replace the original log structure (now destroyed). It is located on the east side of SR 1548, .12 miles north of its junction with SR 1002, also in Orange County near Murphey School. It too received a 1936 WPA brick auditorium addition, Neoclassical in style with three bays of twelve-over-twelve sash and four brick pilasters topped with a brick pediment with a central lunette window. The St. Mary's School auditorium is similar to the one located at Murphey School in style and form, but is much less elaborate with fewer striking features. Seven other additions have been constructed on the site since 1931. Due to consolidation with the Hillsborough School system, St. Mary's School closed in 1943 and then reopened in 1970 as a private college preparatory school. Wilson Library (1928-29) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, along with several other buildings on that campus containing classical porticos, may well have influenced the design of the Murphey School auditorium addition. Another extant example similar to Murphey School in Orange County is the intact White Cross School (c. 1933) located on the north side of NC 54 200 feet west of its junction with SR 1952. It is also of brick construction with four classrooms and a central auditorium space. White Cross School is considerably more modest in design and smaller than Murphey School. Its most prominent features are its projecting side wings as well as groups of windows on its elevations. White Cross School contains a recessed porch sheltered by a side-gable roof supported by four wooden posts. A small pediment sits over the central door on the façade. Three other classroom buildings make up the White Cross School complex.

Congress established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in April of 1935 to take over the relief programs of the Public Works Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. This agency provided funding for employment projects such as the construction of roads, municipal buildings, schools, and national parks, beautification of cities and towns, and the painting of murals. Badger notes that "From 1935 to 1942 the WPA spent \$173.7 million in North Carolina."²⁸ One of ten school projects funded through a WPA grant in Orange County, Murphey School's new auditorium and water system was similar to the treatment at nearby St. Mary's School. New schools constructed in the county with WPA funding included West Hillsboro School, Hillsboro Negro School, and Chapel Hill High School. The remaining six projects, like Murphey School, were given funding for the purpose of constructing an addition and adding technological updates. These schools are: Carrboro School, Aycok School, St. Mary's School, Orange Grove

²⁸ Badger, Anthony. *North Carolina and the New Deal*. (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1981), p. 41.

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School, Chapel Hill Negro School, and Hillsboro School. Out of these ten WPA school projects, Murphey School and St. Mary's School are the only extant identified schools.²⁹

A frame bungalow constructed as a teacherage to the south of the school stands as the only survival in Orange County of its kind. The nearest known surviving teacherages are the (former) Knightdale School Teacherage, Leesville School Teacherage, and Fuquay Springs Teacherage in Wake County. Constructed in 1940, the large two-story Knightdale School Teacherage possesses a hip roof, brick veneer construction, a pair of dormer windows and Colonial Revival-style elements. The Leesville School Teacherage is another notable example built c. 1906 as a two-story, frame, double-pile house with a triple-A roof. The Fuquay Springs brick Craftsman-style teacherage constructed c. 1925 with a 1947 addition is another survivor, and along with the Knightdale and Leesville school teacherages was constructed specifically for the purpose of housing teachers. According to author Julius Arp, North Carolina had constructed five teacherages for public consolidated schools as of 1920.³⁰ Occasionally erected in rural areas, teacherages served the purpose of providing boarding as well as companionship for teachers in locations with few options for housing. Bungalows became very popular in Orange County during the 1910s and 1920s, embodying concepts such as simplicity and efficiency. Their quick construction and affordability also enhanced their attractiveness to families hoping to purchase a home of their own. Bishir states of the housing type, "Bungalows suited North Carolina's needs and habits."³¹ Bungalows often possessed a broad roof, Craftsman-style elements such as shed dormers, wide overhanging eaves but no brackets, and exposed rafter ends, and an open, informal floor plan. The Murphey School Teacherage contains a central-hall plan, and typical Craftsman-style bungalow form with a shed dormer but no other overt stylistic features on the exterior. The large multi-light windows and symmetry are reminiscent of the Colonial Revival style as are the simple post and lintel mantels on the interior.

²⁹ Davis, Anita Price. *North Carolina During the Great Depression: A Documentary Portrait of a Decade* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. publishers, 2003), 130-132. "Orange County's New Schools," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, May 22, 1936, p.1.

³⁰ Arp, Julius Bernhard. *Rural Education and the Consolidated School*, (New York: World Book Company, 1920), p. 151-155.

³¹ Bishir, Catherine. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990, p. 500.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes approximately 7.03 acres shown on the accompanying Orange County tax parcel map as track # 712462, at a scale of 1" = 200'.

Boundary Justification

The nominated area provides an appropriate setting and is historically associated with the Murphey School complex which includes the Murphey School building, teacherage, well house, and water tower. Old NC 10 (SR 1710) forms the northern border of the parcel, outlined by a stone retaining wall. Murphy School Road (SR 1714) makes up the eastern border of the parcel, also delineated by a dilapidating stone retaining wall. The southern and western borders of the tract are heavily wooded and undeveloped and follow along the individual property lines.

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Photographs

All Photos:

Murphey School
3729 Murphy School Road, Hillsborough vicinity
Orange County, NC

Photos taken by Megan Privett on August, 2008
Negatives located at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

1. east elevation
2. south elevation
3. façade, main school building
4. façade, facing southwest, auditorium addition
5. west elevation, auditorium addition
6. south elevation and water tower
7. façade and setting
8. well house, façade
9. library/cafeteria combination room, facing southeast
10. auditorium interior, facing south
11. teacherage, façade
12. teacherage, interior hall and stair, facing west
13. maintenance trailer, west elevation (non-contributing)