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 (former) Pembroke High School
other names/site number Indian Education Resource Center

2. Location

street & number Intersection of Highway 711 and State Road 1561 N/A not for publication
city or town Pembroke N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Robeson code 155 zip code 28372

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 forth 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.)

Jeffrey Crow Acting SHPO 19 July 95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State of 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 Entered in the National Register 9/1/95
Date of Action
Name of Property: Pembroke High School (former)

County and State: Robeson County, North Carolina

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- [ ] private
- [x] 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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Education - School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Recreation - & Culture - Museum
- Education - School

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Other - WPA School

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation - Concrete
- walls - Brick
- roof - Asphalt
- other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
# Pembroke High School

## Name of Property

(former) Pembroke High School

## County and State

Robeson County, North Carolina

## 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**
- **Ethnic Heritage: Native American**

## Period of Significance

1939 - 1945

## Significant Dates

1939

## Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

## Cultural Affiliation

N/A

## Architect/Builder

Unknown

## Narrative Statement of Significance

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

## 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:
(former) Pembroke High School

Name of Property

Robeson County, North Carolina

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than One Acre

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

1
Zone 1
Easting 6,4,8,0
Northing 3,8,3,9,5,0,0

2
Zone
Easting
Northing

3
Zone
Easting
Northing

4
Zone
Easting
Northing

[Box checked] 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 Susan Holladay

organization Consultant

date June 1, 1995

street & number 504 S 3rd Street

city or town Wilmington

state N.C.

telephone (910) 763-8631

zip code 28401

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

street & number

city or town

telephone

state

zip code

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 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 20503.
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Pembroke High School is located approximately one block west of Pembroke State University at the northeast corner of Highway 711 and State Route 1561. The south side elevation, which is also the facade, faces Highway 711, locally known as West 3rd Street. The east and north property lines are shared with Pembroke State University, the former location of the high school. On the six-acre site, the gymnasium (Building B on Exhibit A), was erected in 1953 and (Building C on Exhibit A), the cafeteria, in 1957. (See Exhibit A) The school complex is sited on relatively flat land, just north of the railroad tracks that run east and west through town parallel to Highway 711. The landscaping of the public side of the 1939 building features a well-tended lawn with shrubbery and a row of mature deciduous trees that impart a campus-like feeling. There is a semi-circular drive on the south side of the school that creates a formal entry to the historic building.

The nominated setting of the building is bounded by a service drive on the east side that extends north and northwest off the front semi-circular drive. A paved walkway intersects the service drive and runs northwest, then southwest, where it joins a V-plan walkway, the westernmost part of which joins the west wing of the school building. The outer perimeters of this series of walkways form the north and west boundaries of the setting, which is completed by an arbitrary east-west line from the intersection of the walkway and western elevation of the building to the edge of State Route 1561. The south boundary of the setting is the edge of Highway 711.

The (former) Pembroke High School is a solidly impressive one story brick school building with a very basic and functional layout. The plan is completely symmetrical, consisting of a main central entrance that opens into a north-south hallway that terminates at the arched entry of a small lobby that leads into the auditorium block on the north elevation. Wings on either side of the main entrance extend east and west. Each wing contains a central corridor with five classrooms and one bathroom. Following its vacancy for almost a decade, the building underwent an estimated $190,000 renovation in late fall 1992 in which all labor and material were donated. Reports revealed that the structure was in surprisingly good condition, and the majority of the restoration involved replacing glass in the original wooden sash and repainting the interior. The plan of the building was not altered, and most of its original features remain entirely intact. The importance of the renovation lies in the fact that it was a total community effort that once again
Description (continued)

emphasized the cultural importance of the school. It is equally important to stress that none of the historic integrity of the building has been compromised through previous vandalism or its recent renovation.

The structure is built entirely of brick in the common bond pattern and is trimmed with sandstone entablatures, watertables and sills. It consists of five rows of stretchers to one row of headers. An asphalt shallow hip roof covers the building and it rests on a raised foundation defined by watertables. The south-facing facade is dominated by a central recessed entrance pavilion approached by five concrete steps. The double-leaf wooden doors are surmounted by a three-part transom composed of multiple panes and flanked by sidelights. The brick parapet over the main entrance is supported by sandstone inscribed with "Pembroke High School." To the east of the main entrance is a brass plaque that reads:

Federal Works Agency
Public Works Administration
John M. Carmody
Federal Works Administration
Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the United States
Pembroke High School 1939

The east and west wings are slightly set back from the entrance pavilion. The fenestration throughout the wings is composed of double-hung wooden sash in a nine-over-nine pattern. It is arranged in paired groups of three sash within wooden surrounds with sandstone sills.

The north elevations of the wings are identical to the main ones except for two small dormers between the two pairs of triple sash. The east and west elevations are blind except for double-leaf wooden doors surmounted by sixteen-pane transoms under a stoop.

The auditorium block extends from the center of the north elevation about 75 feet. The east side has an entrance with a concrete wheelchair ramp, while there is a standard doorway on the west side. There is a chimney that services a coal-burning furnace on the west side of the auditorium, with a small opening for access into the boiler room north of the doorway. The east and west
Description (continued)

Elevations of the auditorium have two sets of paired windows that recently have been partially covered with plywood.

The interior reflects much of the same symmetrical composition of the exterior of the building. The main entrance and hallway of the corridors have the original hardwood floors. The plastered ceilings are about fourteen feet high and the door openings to all of the rooms are approximately eight feet, including the glass transoms.

To the east of the entrance foyer lies the former principal's office and to the west a former administrative office. Each corridor is introduced by a very plain plastered archway from the foyer. There is a matching archway leading into the auditorium block. The foyer walls are plastered above the plain wooden wainscoting. The auditorium is introduced by a lobby that is distinguished by dark-stained beaded board on the walls and ceiling. The lobby is flanked by small offices.

Beyond the lobby is the large auditorium that is the focal point of the interior plan. A former stage rises about six feet from the floor and is covered in hardwood. Wooden steps with flanking platforms allow access to the stage on its east and west sides. The stage area has been enclosed with modular plywood panels and houses an extensive exhibit of Native American artifacts. On the east and west sides of the former performing area there are entrances to the stage and what were dressing rooms. A suspended ceiling with light panels has been installed in this room, the area is now used for storage.

Again, the original features of the building, such as the window frames, windows above the doorway and dormers are all intact. Their historic integrity has not been challenged over the fifty-six year existence of the structure.

Statement of Significance

The Pembroke High School located at the intersection of Hwy 711 and State Road 1561 in Pembroke, N.C. is a Public Works Administration project whose sole purpose was to house a high
Statement of Significance (continued)

school for Native American students in Robeson County. After almost a century of educational negligence towards the Indian community, the need for Pembroke High School was recognized locally by the Robeson County School Board, and supported by Federal building programs of the New Deal Era. The building project was launched in 1938 after much discussion by the Robeson County School Board about the specific need for a Native American High School in Pembroke. It opened for classes in the Fall of 1939. The specific cultural affiliation of Pembroke High School marks its unique contribution to the Native American community of Robeson County, both during its period of significance and today, as it is still being used by The Indian Education Resource Center, a division of the Robeson County School Board dedicated to educating school children about Indian customs, artistic expression and lifestyle. The former schoolhouse houses Native American artifacts, artwork and hold educational seminars for school children in the area. The history of the Lumbee Indians is kept alive by the presence of this structure and the efforts of Indian Solidarity Inc., an organization concerned with the preservation of local Native American history and culture. Its importance lies not only in its unique historical ethnic affiliation, but also in that its current use is dedicated to much of its original purpose.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION AND ETHNIC HERITAGE CONTEXT

At the turn of this century, public education programs in North Carolina were, at best, in their infant stages. However, with the election of Governor Charles B. Aycock in 1900 as Governor of North Carolina, the previously apathetic state of education was about to change. With Governor Aycock came a new push for the improvement of public education that had been neglected during most of the nineteenth century. Efforts aimed at improving public education had come to a halt with the onset of the Civil War. "After the war, schools became part of the bitter political struggles of the Reconstruction." Hindered by poverty, poor transportation, and post-war devastation, North Carolina's public schools suffered from indifference and the popularity of a laissez-faire politics. During the 1890s, however, several progressive educators rose to prominence. Men like Charles McIver, C.B. Aycock, and James Y. Joyner entered public life with a professed support for a more effective state-supported school system. They believed that economic and social progress in North Carolina was hindered by widespread illiteracy. The growing industrialization of the United States illustrated to these supporters of the New South the need for a vastly improved public education system because, as noted in Jim Sumner's article, "... an illiterate work force was ill equipped to
Statement of Significance (continued)

deal with the demands of industrialization. Governor Aycock led a firm and successful campaign based on a platform of providing universal education in North Carolina.

It was more than simply the education of young white males that fueled Aycock's resolve. He strongly advocated what he called universal education, which was the right of all men and women to a publically supported education. The Governor described his program as an effort "... to open the door of hope to the disfranchised negro and throw to the white man the challenge: 'Live up to your heritage and educate yourself and your children, or abdicate your citizenship.' "

Aycock's preliminary plans for education were composed of four major policies. They were:

a) A four-month school term for every child;
b) Construction of simple schoolhouses;
c) Special schools for the handicapped and
d) Expansion of teacher training in colleges and in the University of North Carolina.:

Each of these four policies were wisely executed and set the stage for educational success in this state in the following decades.

The effects of Aycock's plans were widespread and affected children in every county in the state. This was especially true in Robeson County, with its large Native American population. In 1885 the Lumbee Indians of Robeson County had no public schools despite the substantial amount of property ownership and population of Lumbee in the region. In addition, the state constitution was revised in 1835 to legally prohibited the Lumbee children from attending white schools. Finally, by the start of the Civil War, the Indians were forbidden to have their own schools because of discrimination that arose from racial violence.

The turning point for Indian education in Robeson County appeared with the help of State Representative Hamilton McMillan in 1863. He completed a genealogical survey of the Lumbee Indians that linked their heritage to the tribes of the Lost Colony. Ultimately, McMillan's research led to support of his thesis by the General Assembly, and in 1885 legislation provided the Lumbee Tribe with their own public school. Section two of this law provided "That said Indians and their descendents shall have separate schools for their children, school committees of their own race and color, and shall be allowed to select teachers of their own choice, subject to the rules
Robeson County was unique in its tri-racial school system under which the Indian students were educated separately from the white and black students. Likewise, blacks and whites were educated separately. By the turn of the century, Thompson reported, "Regardless of the prevailing apathy toward education and the numerous hurdles encountered by Indians, some progress was being made in Indian schools." At that time, over 1000 Indian children were of school age in Robeson county, therefore the need for school buildings was undeniable. "As a result, seven frame school houses were provided for the Indians, and $503 was appropriated to operate their public schools for the year 1885." In the two years following, the Indian Normal School in Robeson County was established and allotted $500 a year for operation. The building, located in Pembroke, was built from public subscription funds and opened for classes in 1887. It emerged as Pembroke State University and was the only institution of high learning solely for Native Americans in the United States. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, progress in Native American public schools in the state depended upon recruitment of teachers trained at the Normal School. In 1895, the number of school age children in Robeson County increased to 1,424, and according to Thompson, "The percent of increase in attendance for the Indians at school was much greater than that of either whites or blacks." For many years the University housed the local high school and elementary school, however, the elementary school was moved to another facility after 1926. The high school remained a part of Pembroke Normal School until 1939, the same year that Pembroke High school began classes in its new brick building for grades eight through eleven.

The planning and construction of the new high school building took three years. In 1936, as a result of expansion plans for the Indian Normal school, the Robeson County Board of Education was reminded of their responsibility to provide adequate facilities for an Indian high school. Since the Normal School could no longer supply a space for the high school, the Board of Education was obliged to construct a brick, ten-room schoolhouse on the present six-acre tract of land for the purpose of educating the Indians of Robeson County at the high school level. The land for the new high school in Pembroke was purchased by the Robeson County Board of Education on March 14, 1930 from W.H. Lowry and his wife Cossie Lowry. Construction on the site did not begin until 1938, when funds were received from the Public Works Administration, as denoted by the plaque on the south entrance. The first graduating class of Pembroke High School was in the year 1940. The 1939 building was used as a high school until 1968 and shortly after this time it
Statement of Significance (continued)

was designated for use as a middle school and finally in 1991, was declared surplus and abandoned by the county school system.15

Cliff Sampson, Chairman of Indian Solidarity Incorporated, and his organization petitioned the Robeson County Commissioners for control of the property, and in October of 1991 the building was leased to the organization by the Robeson County Board of Education, which still officially owns the structure. Indian Solidarity, an organization dedicated to the interests of the Indian community, in turn leased the property to Indian Education, a division of the Robeson County School System.16 A public concern began in early 1992 for the old high school and in March there was a community outcry about its deteriorating condition. Vandalism had become a frequent problem so the Indian population made a public plea for the restoration of the building and its conversion into a community center for the town.17 During the initial discussions about the fate of the historic school there was widespread disagreement about the responsibility for funding a rehabilitation project. The Robeson County School Board members were reportedly concerned about the vandalism to the building, but asked the county commissioners to look to elsewhere for money for repairs.18 Restoration finally began in late 1992 with funding that Dr. Woods, director of the school system’s Indian Education Resource Center, received from the federal government to run her program. Most of the materials needed for the renovation project were purchased with this money. The remainder of the materials, such as the glass and paint, were donated by local businesses such as the LOF Glass Company of Pembroke. A member of Indian Education was a Probation Officer for Robeson County who proposed that the school project become a community service site for many public offenders. Thus all of the labor was performed at no charge to Indian Education by community service workers.19

Currently the Indian Education Resource Center, as the Pembroke High School is now known, leases the structure from the Robeson County Board of Education. Its purpose is to educate school children about the history and contributions made by Native Americans to the United States, and specifically south-central North Carolina. One of the most important missions of the Center is to preserve artifacts relative to Native American history and culture.20 The school now provides space for local art galleries and former public school classrooms are still used for instruction. The value of this building to the Native American community in Robeson County is immeasurable. The former high school is continuously used for community and cultural activities involving school
Statement of Significance (continued)

children of all races. It is an invaluable source of local as well as national, Native American history. The present use of the former high school as a community as well as educational facility, reflects the tradition that developed in the 1920s and 1930s that a school building is a community resource. The continuing existence of Pembroke High School was, and remains, an active sign of ethnic diversity in its community.

NOTES


2"A Brief History of North Carolina’s Early Twentieth Century Public School System", 3-4.


Statement of Significance (continued)


14Robeson County Deed Book, pages 274-275, 1930-1931.


16Information supplied by Cliff Sampson, Jr.


19Information supplied by Clifton Sampson, Jr.
Statement of Significance (continued)


Major Bibliographical References

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Robeson County Deed Book, page 274-275. Robeson County Register of Deeds, Lumberton, N.C.


Sampson, Clifton, Interviews.

Major Bibliographical References (continued)


VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
The boundaries of the nominated parcel are delineated by the heavy line on the accompanying map marked "Exhibit A".

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION
The boundaries for the (former) Pembroke High School were chosen to provide an appropriate setting for the 1939 school and to exclude the two later school buildings on the same lot.
EXHIBIT A
(former) Pembroke High School
ROBESON COUNTY, NC
@ 8/10" = 100'

A/ indicates angle and # of photograph

Building A is Pembroke High School

Nomination parcel boundary

Hwy. 711 Also Known as W 3rd St.