United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM  

1. Name of Property  
| historic name          | Monroe Street School |
| other names/site number | J.C. Price High School; Livingstone College, S.E. Duncan Education Building |

2. Location  
| street & number          | 1100 West Monroe Street |
| city or town             | Salisbury |
| state                    | North Carolina |
| code                     | NC |
| county                   | Rowan |
| code                     | 159 |
| zip code                 | 28144 |

3. State/Federal Agency Certification  

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this Nomination 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, or locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  

[Signature and date]  

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal Government  

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

[Signature and date]  

State or Federal agency and bureau  

4. National Park Service Certification  

I, hereby certify that this property is:  

☐ Enter 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 and date]  

[Signature and date]  

[Other or federal agency and bureau]
Monroe Street School
Rowan County, North Carolina

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: private
Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
Cat: EDUCATION Sub: School

Current Functions
Cat: Work in Progress Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification
LATE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Classical Revival

Materials
foundation: Concrete
roof: Tar
walls: Brick
other: Metal

Narrative Description: See Continuation Form Section 7, page 1
Monroe Street School
Rowan County, North Carolina

8. Statement of Significance

See Continuation Form, Section 8, page 1

Applicable National Register Criteria

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.)

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- removed from its original location.
- a birthplace or a grave.
- a cemetery.
- a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- a commemorating property.
- less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

EDUCATION
ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

Period of Significance
1923-1954

Significant Dates
1923, 1941

Significant person(s)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance: See Continuation Form Section 8, page 1
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography: See Continuation Form Section 9, page 1

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: N.C. Department of Cultural Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 1.25 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

17 546600 3947640

Verbal Boundary Description: See Continuation Form Section 10, page 1

Boundary Justification: See Continuation Form Section 10, page 1

11. Form Prepared By

Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. date 12-01-03

2228 Winter Street telephone (704) 376-0985
Charlotte, N.C. 28205

Property Owner

Livingstone College telephone (704) 216-6219
701 West Monroe Street
Salisbury, N.C. 28144
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet  

Section Number 7  Page 1  Monroe Street School  
Rowan County, North Carolina  

7. Narrative Description

Monroe Street School is situated at the northwest corner of Monroe and Lloyd streets in a residential neighborhood of Salisbury, North Carolina.¹ The school sits across Monroe Street from the campus of Livingstone College, a 125 year old, private college founded for African American students by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The college is the centerpiece of the Livingstone College Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of single and multiple family dwellings constructed between the late nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries. Constructed in 1923 and enlarged in 1941 and 1960, the school building is separated from the street by a grassy lawn and mature shade trees. A playground and ball field, which are enclosed by a chain link fence, are located behind the building.

Monroe Street School is a three story, red brick building that originally had a roughly T-shaped plan. After a fire in 1941, three story, stairwell wings were added to the east and west ends of the building, and in 1960, a two story, red brick addition (housing a cafeteria, library, storage room, and classrooms) was built along the west elevation. The main block of the school has a flat parapet, lined with concrete coping, and a broad, flat, concrete cornice that visually delineates the parapet. (The cornice and parapet were reputedly added after the fire.) The brick walls are laid in a five-course common bond with darker header rows giving the building a subtle, horizontal banding. A row of stretchers visually defines the top of the slightly recessed, brick base. The symmetrical, three bay facade features a central entrance and banks of steel sash, awning windows (five windows per grouping), which were added after the 1941 fire. The entrance is sheltered by a flat-roofed porch (1960) supported by square, brick piers, and the glass and metal, double leaf doors are modern replacements. Recessed doors, one within the east stairwell wing and two on the rear elevation, all open onto porches with round-arched openings. Housing the school auditorium, the three story, rear wing has the same horizontal, brick banding as the main block, as well as a few of the original double hung, wooden sash windows.

On the west side of the building is the flat roofed cafeteria addition. Built in 1960, the addition has a red brick exterior and a recessed, double leaf entrance capped by a transom. The first story of the front elevation features two tall, fixed light windows linked by a high band of awning style windows while a continuous band of awning windows is found on the second story. The windows on both levels are sheltered by slatted, metal screens that project from the walls. The west elevation of the addition is blind, and the rear elevation is punctuated by steel sash, awning windows. Decorative, one story, brick wing walls extend from the west elevation of the cafeteria addition.

¹ The school is oriented to Monroe Street, which follows a northwest-southeast alignment. Thus, the school faces southwest. However, for the sake of simplicity, the building will be described in the following narrative using the cardinal points. The front elevation of the school, which faces southwest, will be called the south elevation, the two sides (southeast and northwest) will be described as the east and west elevations, and the rear (northeast) will be described as the north elevation.
The interior of the school has a truncated T-shaped floor plan with a double loaded, transverse corridor opening on to a short, entrance hall. Throughout the interior are ten foot ceilings, stuccoed plaster walls, wooden baseboards and chair rails, hardwood floors, molded door and window surrounds, and asbestos tile ceilings over the original plaster ceilings. Both two panel and three panel, six light doors are found throughout the interior. Some classrooms also retain their original glass pendant light fixtures. Carpet, wood paneling, and dropped, acoustical tile ceilings have been installed in areas of the building, particularly on the first floor, but original materials appear to remain underneath these additions.

Just inside the main entrance (which appears to date to the 1960 modifications) is a small foyer, separated from the entrance hall by an original doorway and a short flight of stairs. The doorway accommodated double leaf doors, which are now gone, but the molded, wooden surrounds and sidelights are intact. The entrance hall is flanked by administrative offices. The long classroom corridor terminates at east and west vestibules that house stairwells. The original classroom doors, with three vertical panels and six upper lights, remain as do the double leaf, horizontal panel and glass doors that divide the corridor from the end vestibules. Also surviving intact are the multiple light, pivot windows found beside the doors into the classrooms. These windows allowed for cross ventilation in the days before air conditioning. The west end of the vestibule opens into a new hallway defined by what was originally a brick exterior wall and the concrete block wall of the 1960 cafeteria addition. The first floor of the addition contains an open lunchroom and a smaller, kitchen with ceramic tile floors and walls. The lunchroom has linoleum floors, exposed concrete block walls, composition tile ceilings, and original light fixtures. A smaller room has been partitioned within the larger lunchroom.

The two end staircases to the upper floors are notable for their wooden, Craftsman styling. The stair treads are wooden, and the railings are closed with tongue and groove, wooden panels and simple, square newels. The second floor has a single, double loaded, transverse corridor that features the same classroom and corridor doors as those on the first floor. Unlike the first floor, however, the second floor doors have operable transoms. The school auditorium is reached from the middle of the second floor corridor. Although the auditorium has suffered some water damage from roof leaks, the room has many of its original features from the early 1920s including rows of metal and wood seats, the original balcony with its I-beam pier supports, schoolhouse pendant lights, and a large stage along the rear wall. The original library is also found in the middle of the second floor, occupying the area above the front entrance hall. A new and much larger library was constructed above the cafeteria as part of the 1960 building campaign. The new library has an open plan with offices along the east wall. Like the cafeteria below, the library has concrete block walls and steel sash windows. The third floor also has a single corridor, lined with classrooms. With the exception of dropped, acoustical tile ceilings, the interior finishes on the second and third floors appear to date to the school's original construction in the early 1920s.

The Monroe Street School survives substantially intact. The 1941 fire did little damage to the building interior, and the modifications made during the 1960 construction campaign were largely confined to the west end of the building. Dropped ceilings, carpeting, and some interior partition walls have been added to portions of the interior since the 1960 campaign, but otherwise, the school reflects the building programs undertaken during the school consolidation era of the 1920s to early 1950s.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Monroe Street School
Rowan County, North Carolina

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8. Statement of Significance

Monroe Street School meets National Register Criterion A for both education and ethnic heritage. Constructed as an African American public high school in 1923, the three-story, red brick building is an institutional landmark in the history of education in Salisbury. When completed, it became Salisbury's only African American public school, replacing a much smaller and overcrowded, frame, graded school for black students. In its simple, yet clearly modern, scholastic design, Monroe Street School illustrates North Carolina’s progress in providing public education for African Americans during the 1920s. The building was constructed across the street from the campus of Livingstone College, an African Methodist Episcopal Zion college, and was originally named J. C. Price High School, in honor of the college’s first president. The name was changed to Monroe Street School in 1931, when a larger facility serving exclusively as an African American high school was opened in Salisbury and given the name, Price High School. Monroe Street School played a pivotal role in the academic life of the city’s African American students until 1971 when it underwent full racial integration. Now called the Samuel E. Duncan Education Center of Livingstone College, the vacant building is undergoing rehabilitation for the school’s teacher training program.

A fire in 1941 led to some exterior modifications, but the interior suffered little damage. The Monroe Street School building retains its architectural integrity.

The period of significance extends from 1923, when the school building was constructed, to 1954. Although the building continued to function as a public school until the 1980s, the property does not have the exceptional significance required under 36 C.F.R. 60 to extend the period of significance to within the last fifty years.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Monroe Street School
Rowan County, North Carolina

Historical Background/Education and Ethnic Heritage Contexts

Monroe Street School represents the culmination of efforts spanning six decades after the Civil War to improve the public education of African American children in Salisbury. In common with the entire state, progress in public education occurred slowly in the aftermath of the Civil War. Shortly after the war, the federal government played a leading role in the development of black schools in North Carolina. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau), created in 1865 to aid former slaves, started dozens of public schools throughout the state. Subsequently, the North Carolina State Constitution in 1868 established the uniform, public graded school system, and authorized a limited number of tax dollars for the construction of schoolhouses and the education of "all the children of the State between the ages of six and twenty-one years". In 1875, voters amended the constitution, dividing the school system into three separate systems serving white, African American, and American Indian students. In 1880, Salisbury became just the third city in the state to create a publicly funded graded school (with a separate room for each grade) for white students (Hanchett 1989: 388-389; Hood 8:13-14; Brawley 1953: 280-286; Noble 1930: 202-203; Woodard 2002: 8:1-2).

Despite the formation of a statewide graded school system, amidst North Carolina's post-Civil War economic travails all public schooling was severely underfunded. Public money for non-white schools, in particular, was rare. Indeed, although African Americans paid taxes for the building of schools, few schools for black students were constructed entirely with public funds. Rather, tax dollars went largely into white facilities while black schoolhouses—when built at all—were often constructed with donations of land, labor, and money from the black community. At the beginning of the twentieth century, one in five white adults in North Carolinian were illiterate, and one-half of all African American adults could not read (Hanchett 1989: 388-389; Hood 8:13-14; Brawley 1953: 280-286; Noble 1930: 202-203; Woodard 2002: 8:1-2; Opperman 2003: 1).

Northern philanthropic groups and churches offered some private financial support for black education, but they concentrated on teacher training. Philanthropies such as the George Peabody Fund and the John F. Slater Fund, and religious groups like the American Missionary Association mainly supported preparatory schools and colleges. In North Carolina, the Presbyterians established Barber Scotia College in Concord and Charlotte's Biddle Institute (later Johnson C. Smith University); the Episcopalians founded St. Augustine College in Raleigh where the Baptists founded Shaw University; and the Methodist Church started Bennett College in Greensboro. In 1879, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church established Zion Wesley Institute in Concord, but moved the school to Salisbury in 1882, and renamed the institution Livingstone College in 1887. Located on the northwest side of the city, Livingstone College was exceptional among these historically black schools in that it was conceived and operated by African Americans (Brown 1980: 8: 1-2; Hanchett 1989: 392-394).

All these schools enrolled students from a wide range of educational backgrounds and thus included classes for illiterate and semi-literate pupils as well as for those who were academically qualified. Livingstone College provided preparatory grammar and high school classes in addition to the curricula in classical and theological education,
teacher training, and industrial arts. Until the 1920s, the college offered a grammar school and a high school (Brown 1980: 8:2-3; Opperman 2003: 1).

Livingstone College attracted highly educated and academically motivated African Americans who valued formal schooling and encouraged the formation of local private schools for their own children and others. In 1889, at least seven private black schools existed in Salisbury, including the grammar and high schools at Livingstone. In the 1890s, a kindergarten for African Americans known as the Josie Davis Cutter School was located at the corner of West Horah and South Craige streets near the college. Also in the 1890s, Mary Dodge opened a private school near Livingstone that taught black children through the fourth grade. A parochial school, Piedmont Institute, was established beside Dixonville Baptist Church in 1903 and apparently operated at several locations until 1928. In 1912, this three-teacher institute served sixty-six African American students. In 1905, the Reverend Wiley H. Lash started St. John's Lutheran School in a log dwelling. The school operated for twenty-five years, supported by African American Lutheran congregations. About 1906, the Cora Jenkins School and the Alice Brown School were started in houses in the neighborhood. The Reverend Hercules Smith ran a private school on West Horah Street near the college between 1908 and 1910, and during the years 1914 to 1918, Adeline Curry Jones taught black students in her home near the campus (Opperman 2003: 2).

Public schooling for both African Americans and whites throughout the state began to improve during the early years of the twentieth century. Under the leadership of Governor Charles B. Aycock, who is remembered as the "Education Governor", a statewide campaign began to improve the quality of schools. Between 1900 and 1910 nearly 3,000 educational facilities were constructed, the state budget for schools tripled, and the value of educational property increased five-fold. The state approved a measure to lend money to counties for improving schools and directed counties on the construction of such facilities. In 1903, the state passed a law that required all plans for public schools to be approved by the State Superintendent (Lefler and Newsome 1973: 589-591; Huffman 1989: 8:1-3; Opperman 2003: 1-2).

In general, the reforms of the early twentieth century brought great improvement to the public school systems of North Carolina. However, funding and reform efforts were not applied equitably, with public schools for whites receiving more funding and better equipment than schools built for African American children. For example, between 1900 and 1918, 5,070 new rural schools were built for whites, but only 1,293 for African Americans. Black rural and city schools were typically smaller than those for whites, and funding for facilities, teachers, and books lagged well behind the tax dollars for white schools. The state's first public secondary schools for African Americans were not built until 1918 (Huffman 1986: 8:2; Long 1932: 3).

Starting in the 1920s, major new campaigns were launched at both the state and local levels to modernize the public school system for both whites and blacks. Chronic school overcrowding and the beginnings of the school consolidation movement generated growing public support for bond issues and tax dollars to support education. The North Carolina legislature passed a series of appropriations for Special Building Funds in 1921, 1923, 1925, and 1927. During this period ninety-nine of the state's one hundred counties borrowed money from these funds to erect over 1,000 schools. In 1921, the Division of Negro Education in the State Department of Education was established,
which included a full-time director and an inspector authorized to supervise the building of secondary schools for black students. Between 1922 and 1929, the number of secondary schools for African Americans soared from twenty-six to 110, and enrollment jumped from 1,448 to 13,231. Into the 1940s, a number of one and two teacher schools in overcrowded, frame buildings remained in North Carolina, and the construction of substantial, masonry consolidated public schools for African Americans would not be completed until after World War II (Huffman 1986: 8:4; Long 1932: 4).

About 1887, Salisbury’s first black, graded public school, Salisbury Colored Graded School (closed in 1922 and now gone), was opened. Located on the south side of Salisbury, in the African American neighborhood of Dixonville, Salisbury Colored Graded School by 1900 operated in a two-story, frame building near Dixonville Baptist Church. The facility was quickly pressed for space, containing just six classrooms for 329 students in 1912. The addition of grades eight and nine in 1917 and grades ten and eleven in 1922 exacerbated already crowded conditions in the school. Professor L. Hamilton Hall, who served as principal between 1911 and 1922, would later become principal of Monroe Street School (Opperman 2003: 3-4).

In Salisbury, starting the 1920s, the school board initiated an aggressive program to improve public schooling. The city was rapidly expanding. In 1915, Salisbury annexed land north of town that quickly developed into large residential areas for Southern Railway workers. Residents passed a series of bond issues and special taxes to construct or modernize schools for both white and African American students. Plans began for a new high school for white students (Boyden High School, National Register 1996) and major additions to three existing white elementary schools. Funds were also approved for an African American high school, and in 1923, the present Monroe Street School, a modern, three-story, brick school, was built across from Livingstone College. Although built with funds designated for a new high school, Monroe Street School also served African American students in the elementary grades (Hood 1996: 8:15-17; Opperman 2003: 4).

The new school was originally named J. C. Price High School for Livingstone College’s first president, Joseph Charles Price (1854-1893). An African American educator and religious leader of national stature, Price assumed the helm of the young college in 1888. Josephus Daniels, statesmen and publisher of the Raleigh News and Observer, hailed Price as “the most remarkable Negro I have known”, and in 1893, the year of Price’s early death from Bright’s Disease, Frederick Douglass called him the best hope of the black population (Brown 1980: 8:1-2).

The school drew students from the grammar school and high school departments of Livingstone College, as well as from Salisbury Colored Graded School, both of which soon closed. Thus, Salisbury’s public education for African Americans was now consolidated in one modern building. The school was simpler and smaller than the half million dollar, Collegiate Gothic, Boyden High School (1926) built for Salisbury’s white students. Nevertheless, the handsomely designed and well-constructed facility shared Boyden High School’s emphasis on up-to-date scholastic design and interior layout, characteristic of the modern schools of the consolidation era. The T-shaped, three-story building on Monroe Street was a dramatic improvement over the cramped conditions at the graded school. The building stood on a large grassy tract with space for playing fields, and boasted banks of large windows for natural
light, and spacious, well-ventilated classrooms that opened onto central corridors. There were also separate
administrative offices, a library, and an expansive auditorium (Bishir 1990: 395; Opperman 2003: 5; Hood 1996).

Enrollment at the school steadily increased, and in 1932, a larger public high school for African Americans was
constructed at 1300 West Bank Street, several blocks west of the Monroe Street institution. The new facility took the
name J. C. Price High School and served students in grades eight to twelve. The building on Monroe Street became
an elementary school and was renamed Monroe Street School at the suggestion of principal, L. Hamilton Hall, who
transferred to the new high school. The succeeding principal was Annie Rose Lowery, who held that post until 1951
when the school board replaced all female principals with men. In 1951, the school housed sixteen teachers and
500 students (Opperman 2003: 5).

Between the construction of J. C. Price High School in 1932, and complete racial integration in 1971, Monroe Street
School was one of three African American public schools in Salisbury. The third facility was Lincoln School, a much
smaller, one-story, brick elementary school that opened in the Dixonville neighborhood in the 1920s. Lincoln School
was later converted to a vocational school and remains standing (Opperman 2003: 5-6; Sanborn Fire Insurance

In 1941, shortly after summer recess, a fire destroyed the roof of Monroe Street School, and smoke damaged the
interior. However, the original interior woodwork in the auditorium, classrooms, and other areas survived
substantially intact, and the building was repaired and reopened for the 1942-1943 school year. The renovated
Monroe Street School included a series of changes to improve fire safety. A new roof with a higher parapet was
constructed, and fire escapes were added along the side and rear elevations. Furthermore, stair towers were built at
each end of the main block to facilitate egress from the building during emergencies. Also during the 1941
rebuilding, school officials took the opportunity to construct a new three-classroom wing on the west side of the
school. While these changes took place in 1941-1942, the displaced students attended Price High School. Further
modifications to the site were made in 1960 when a new wing was constructed on the west elevation for a cafeteria,
library, lounge, and additional classrooms (Opperman 2003: 6; Salisbury City Board of Education Minutes 1960).

On August 29, 1962, the Salisbury School Board began integrating its school system, and three African American
students from Monroe Street School enrolled in the formerly all-white Frank B. John Elementary School. The following
year, North Carolina passed its first anti-segregation law, and through the decade, schools in Salisbury and across
the state were slowly integrated. Complete integration in Salisbury took place in the school year of 1969-1970 when
all of the city's high school students began attending Boyden High School (renamed Salisbury High School). Monroe
Street School remained an active, all-black school during the 1960s with nineteen teachers and a peak enrollment of
640 students. Its long era as an African American school ended in 1971 when the building was gradually converted
to a fully integrated, central school for special programs (Hood 1996: 8: 27; Salisbury Post, March 30, 2003; Opperman 2003: 6).
In 1985, Livingstone College acquired the building, renaming it the Samuel E. Duncan Education Center in honor of a former Livingstone College president. Until 2003, the center contained the college's teacher education program which is experiencing significant growth in enrollment. The building is now closed for renovations before resuming its role as the Education Department of Livingstone College (Opperman 2003: 6; Adam-Square 2003).
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Monroe Street School  
Rowan County, North Carolina

9. Major Bibliographical References


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Monroe Street School
Rowan County, North Carolina


10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:
The property being nominated to the National Register comprises roughly one-third (or approximately 1.25 acres) of the current tax parcel as shown on the accompanying Rowan County tax map. The tax parcel encompasses the entire city block bounded by Monroe, Lloyd, Horah, and Partee streets. The National Register boundaries include the school building, its front lawn to Monroe Street, its side yard to Lloyd Street, its yard extending north to the midpoint between Monroe and Horah streets (approximately 200 feet from Monroe Street), and its setting of roughly twenty feet on the west side of the building.

Boundary Justification:
The National Register boundaries encompass roughly one-third of the current tax parcel (a total of 3.58 acres) to include the school building and its immediate setting. This boundary delineates the school property during the period of significance and excludes areas within the block north and west of the school which were occupied by houses during the pre-1954 era.

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Date of Photographs: October 2003

1. Front (South) and East Elevations, View Looking Northwest
2. Front (South) Elevation, View Looking Northwest
3. Windows, Front (South) Elevation, View Looking North
4. Rear (North) Elevation, View Looking South
5. Rear Elevations, View Looking Southeast
6. Rear Doorway, View Looking South
7. Interior, Hallway, First Floor
8. Interior, Classroom, Third Floor
9. Interior, Stairway
10. Interior, Auditorium
Monroe Street School, 1950
Salisbury, Rowan County

(Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950)