

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational 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 Washington Graded and High Schoolother names/site number Washington Elementary School, Washington Gifted and Talented Magnet School

2. Location

street & number 1000 Fayetteville Streetn/a ☐ not for publicationcity or town Raleighn/a ☐ vicinitystate North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27601

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

Jeffrey G. Crow SHPO 12/10/04

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

Edson H. Beall2/2/05

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	4	buildings
0	0	sites
2	3	structures
0	0	objects
4	7	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

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof SYNTHETIC

other

Narrative Description

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

Washington Graded and High School
Name of Property

Wake County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is: n/a

- ☐ **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/black

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1923 – 1954

Significant Dates

1923-1924, 1949

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Sayre, Christopher Gadsden, Architect

W. B. Barrow and Son, Builders

Berryman, George, Architect

Kenyon, Worth, General 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: Southern Historical Collection and North Carolina Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill

Washington Graded and High School
Name of Property

Wake County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16.46

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	713180	3960800
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	17	713100	3960520

3	17	712740	3960640
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	17	712860	3960820

☐ 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 Cynthia de Miranda and Sarah Woodard
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date May 28, 2004
street & number Post Office Box 1171 telephone 919/682-2211
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

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 _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ 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 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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Washington Graded and High School
Wake County, North Carolina

Narrative Description

Washington Graded and High School is a two-story edifice on a raised basement standing on a ridge above Fayetteville Street, just south of downtown Raleigh. The 1920s school, Depression-era terracing, the circa 1942 track and culvert over Rocky Creek, the 1949 gym, and modern recreation structures comprise the site. Both the school and the gym to the south face east. Four mobile classrooms are located behind the gym, to the west. Sidewalks surround the main building and, in front, crepe myrtles and mature shrubs accent the terraced bank that slopes down to South Fayetteville Street. The nominated parcel of land consists of about sixteen and one-half acres. This is the property associated with the school today and is made up of most of three historic tracts: all of the original 2.7-acre lot on which the 1924 school building stands, most of a 6.7 acre parcel purchased in 1927, and about two-thirds of an 11.6-acre tract that the school board bought in 1942.

When completed in 1924, the school stood among the single-family bungalows and cottages of Fourth Ward, an African American neighborhood. After World War II, urban renewal projects surrounded the school with highways and a public housing project. The four-lane Western Boulevard-Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, which runs east-west, visually and physically disconnects the school from downtown Raleigh to the north. McDowell Street, a southbound four-lane road, lines the west side of the school property, although a wooded area behind the school visually blocks it from the school. Walnut Terrace, a mid-twentieth-century public housing complex, stands to the east, across Fayetteville Street. The few surviving reminders of the earlier neighborhood are south of the school, where little has changed. Rocky Branch divides the southern edge of the school property from Mount Hope Cemetery, which served several African American churches located on South Street. The woods, creek, and cemetery and the residential nature of the housing complex—although not the original pattern of the neighborhood development—are part of the continuum of traditional land use in the area.

The school's construction did not include plans for landscape design. Parents of Washington School students consulted North Carolina State University landscape architects for advice on improving the school grounds and as a result, in the 1930s, the Public Works Administration installed terracing. Crape myrtles and mature shrubs occupy the terraces today. In 1996, a driveway was constructed on one of the terraces creating slopes down to Fayetteville Street on the north and south ends of the terraces.

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Washington Graded and High School
Wake County, North Carolina

Mature trees dot the property, and a tall, man-made earthen mound rises north of the school building. Parking areas are located to the north and west.

South Carolina architect Christopher Gadsden Sayre designed Washington School in the early 1920s, during a period when he also designed other Raleigh schools, including Hugh Morson High (not extant), Murphey Elementary, and Wiley Elementary. Sayre's Washington School is a two-story brick building laid in five-to-one common bond with glazed terracotta and cast stone trim on a full-height brick basement. The main block and three wings create an E-shaped footprint. The roof is hidden behind the parapet but is probably nearly flat.

The symmetrical façade comprises five sections: a slightly projecting central pavilion five bays in width flanked in turn by recessed bays and slightly projecting end pavilions. Windows in the central pavilion are paired; on other planes windows are grouped in banks of five. Molded-stone window hoods trim the second-floor windows, while first-floor windows feature plain, flat stone lintels. A stone water table runs around the building at the height of the top of the basement-level windows, and a stone belt course encircles the building at the sill height of the first-floor windows. The cornice consists of stone molding and a projecting glazed terracotta band decorated with rectangular panels inset with stylized crossed vines. Above the cornice, the crenellated brick parapet is punctuated with carved diamond-shaped glazed terracotta panels and capped with angular stone coping. A more elaborate square panel occupies the parapet above the entrance.

The building's focal point is the main entrance, centered and deeply recessed in the front elevation. A glazed terracotta surround trims both the Tudor-arched entry and the windows above. The molded surround creates quoins around the doorway and the upper-level windows. Above the entry, a recessed panel reads "Washington School" in raised lettering. Above this and below the second-story windows, another panel contains griffins flanking a shield with the construction date of 1923. The double-leaf front door, a modern metal replacement of the original, is flanked by sidelights and surmounted by a large, multi-light, segmental-arched transom. Cast-stone moldings trim the entire composition.

As school needs changed and the student population increased, three additions were made to the building. In 1927, a three-story, fourteen-classroom block was appended to the rear of the south wing using the same brick, stone, and glazed terracotta trim as the original building. The new space simply continued the corridor plan of the original, shorter wing.

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Washington Graded and High School
Wake County, North Carolina

Exterior changes came when additions were made to the north (side) elevation in 1996 and to the west (rear) elevation in 2000. The north addition houses five classrooms and begins at the northeast corner of the main block and extends west. On this addition, a cornice of molded stone trim, replicating the water table on the original block, encircles the structure at the height of the original water table. Above the cornice, diamond-shaped cast stone panels decorated with raised quatrefoil designs adorn the wall plane. The second addition, built in 2000, is attached to the back or west side of the auditorium space. The building creates a broad P-shape with a hyphen housing a corridor and two classrooms leading to a cafeteria. Both additions are one-story brick structures with large plate-glass windows. The space between the original building and the additions creates a courtyard with planting beds, permanently-marked game outlines, such as hopscotch and four-square, and history and science displays.

A renovation in 2002 gutted the building's interior. The building's wooden windows were replaced with modern double-hung sash with muntin patterns matching the originals. While corridors and classrooms generally follow the original layout, which consisted of classrooms flanking a linear corridor along the center of the main block and corridors down the two end wings, almost all interior materials on all floors are new. Dropped ceilings have been added; they terminate about two feet in front of the windows where a boxed space allows the windows to retain their original height.

A few vestiges of the original interior remain. The auditorium, historically the most ornamented room in the building, remains intact. Located in the middle leg of the building's E-shaped footprint, opposite the front entrance, the auditorium has been remodeled as a library or media center. The stage remains, however, along with the original garland-motif plaster molding that outlines the proscenium arch and the heavy plaster crown molding that encircles the room. Plaster-encased beams trimmed with plaster molding span the auditorium ceiling between the side walls. Original wood flooring is located in the wings and backstage area. One other remnant of the original interior is a mantelpiece in the receptionist's office. Fluted pilasters on rectangular plinths support a simply trimmed bracketed mantelshelf. Rectangular tiles surround the firebox.

These renovations and additions reconfigured the floorplan, so that today, Washington has thirty-seven classrooms. Twenty-six occupy the original, main building, which housed forty-four classrooms after 1927; four are in mobile classroom units; five are located in the north addition; and two occupy the west addition in a space between the original school building and the cafeteria. In the past and currently, administrative offices operated in rooms on the front of the building immediately south of the main entrance.

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Washington Graded and High School
Wake County, North Carolina

Historically, the cafeteria was in the basement, but today, classrooms are housed in the basement and the cafeteria is located in an addition. Science labs and the library were originally located in classrooms on the school's main floor.

In the early and mid-twentieth century, Washington Graded and High School fielded tennis, football, baseball, and track teams, but the gym and track are the only extant historic athletic facilities.

Gymnasium, 1949, contributing building

The gymnasium stands south of the school building. George Berryman, an architect operating in Raleigh between 1946 and 1959, designed it; Worth Kenyon was the general contractor. Completed in April 1949, the tall, one-story, brick building features a shorter one-story vestibule block at the east (front) elevation. The entrance to the vestibule is deeply recessed in a slightly projecting center bay flanked by three windows on each side. Each window is set in a recessed vertical panel that terminates at the bottom along the flat, cast-stone water table. The cornice and coping on both sections of the building are also simple, flat, cast-stone bands. Windows along the sides of the building were originally large, as indicated by the surviving brick lintels and cast-stone sills; most of the window area has been infilled with brick, leaving space for small, two-light windows at the top. Like the interior of the school, the interior of vestibule block has been completely remodeled. The gymnasium interior, however, retains its original wood floors, exposed steel roof trusses, and exposed brick walls.

Track and Culvert, ca. 1942, contributing structures

The school's track, a contributing structure, is an oval of fine gravel laid out on a flat parcel of land between Rocky Branch and Gas House Branch. The oval is oriented along a northwest-southeast axis parallel to Gas House Branch. The school board purchased the land in 1942 and the track was created after that date. Grassy space for play is located inside the track and on the land to the south of the track, between the track and Rocky Branch. A late twentieth century chain link fence (noncontributing) surrounds this area and a concrete culvert (contributing) with brick facing and brick balustrades connects the athletic fields with the main school yard.

Mobile Classrooms, Playground, and Amphitheater, late twentieth century, noncontributing buildings and structures

Four mobile classroom units, all noncontributing buildings, stand behind the Gymnasium. These are one-story buildings with wooden stoops, vertical siding, and low-pitched side-gable roofs. A modern playground area occupies open space to the west. Noncontributing

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picnic tables, other playground equipment, and a small noncontributing amphitheater are located between the school building and the mobile classrooms.

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Washington Graded and High School
Wake County, North Carolina

Washington Graded and High School, built in 1923-24, is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Black Ethnic Heritage and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Organized in 1866 and rooted in Northern missionary aid before becoming a public facility, Washington School's history is representative of the development of urban public schools for African American students in North Carolina. Washington Graded and High School, Raleigh's first African American public high school, was built during a time when the state of North Carolina funded construction of large consolidated schools. Designed by South Carolina architect C. Gadsden Sayre and completed in 1924, Washington School exhibits a Tudor Revival Motif common to school buildings from this period. While well executed, the architectural style is restrained in comparison to Sayre's Wiley Elementary School, built concurrently by the city for white children. In addition to the 1924 school building, the site includes a circa 1942 track and 1949 gymnasium. The period of significance extends from 1924, the year the school opened, to 1954, the fifty-year date established for meeting Criteria A and C. Although the school continued to operate after 1954, this time period is not of exceptional significance.

Education and Black Ethnic Heritage Context:

Public Education for African Americans in Raleigh and Wake County

Publicly sponsored education in Wake County dates from the state legislature's 1825 establishment of the Literary Fund, an endowment that provided matching grants to counties for the purpose of constructing buildings and hiring teachers. In 1839, the legislature divided the state into school districts with authority to levy taxes to finance schoolhouse construction. Every county in the state tapped into the Literary Fund before 1850. In 1852 the state established the Office of Superintendent of Common Schools to oversee the burgeoning school system, which observers generally recognized it as the best in the South by the onset of the Civil War. By then, the state legislature and local governments had spent over three million dollars on North Carolina's public schools.¹

Lawmakers excluded African Americans, however, from all formal systems of education in North Carolina—both public and private—after an 1831 state ban on teaching them to

¹ Charles Lee Smith, *History of Education in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Government Printing Office, 1888), 169; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), *The History of Education in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1994), 9; and William K. Boyd, "The Finances of the North Carolina Literary Fund," *South Atlantic Quarterly* (July and October 1914): 4.

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Washington Graded and High School
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read and write. Unofficially, some African Americans in North Carolina continued to find instruction as Moravians and Quakers, who had been educating free and enslaved African Americans before 1831, quietly continued to do so afterwards. Their efforts, however, could reach only a very small number of pupils, as could the clandestine efforts of private individuals.²

After the Civil War, diverted attention and depleted funds—rather than advances in racial harmony or expansion of educational opportunities—left the state's African American and white school-age children on a nearly level playing field with regard to public education. Between 1866 and 1868, North Carolina lawmakers abolished the Office of Superintendent of Common Schools and dissolved the Literary Fund.³ The state's once-lauded education system disintegrated, making the chances that a child of either race would receive a public education equally unlikely.

A new state constitution, ratified in 1868, came to the rescue of public education, officially if not practically speaking. The constitution directed the legislature to create "a general and uniform system of public schools, wherein tuition shall be free of charge to all of the children of the State between the ages of six and twenty-one years."⁴ While the inclusive language reversed all previous bans on educating African Americans, constitutional amendments in 1875-1876 expressly implemented segregation.⁵ The 1868 constitution also created the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and an educational fund with specific funding sources that could not be used for other purposes.⁶

In addition to constitutional mandates, however, public education needed a strong popular commitment to public funding, and many whites in North Carolina did not favor

² Wilma C. Peebles, "School Desegregation in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1954-1964" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1984), 2-4; Adelaide Fries, Stuart Thurman Wright, and J. Edwin Hendricks, eds., *Forsyth: The History of a County on the March* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 70-71; C. Daniel Crews, *Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church That Endures* (Winston-Salem: Moravian Archives, 1998), 18, 23; and Emma King, "Some Aspects of the Work of the Society of Friends for Negro Education in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 1 (October 1924): 405.

³ NCDPI, *History of Education*, 10; and Boyd, "Finances," 22.

⁴ North Carolina State Constitution of 1868, quoted in NCDPI, *History of Education*, 10.

⁵ The 1875-1876 North Carolina Constitutional Amendments are listed in Hugh Talmage Lefler, ed., *North Carolina History Told by Contemporaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 351.

⁶ NCDPI, *History of Education*, 10.

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the local taxation necessary to augment state money.⁷ Schools remained underfunded and instruction brief. According to an 1875 state school superintendent's report, white students' school terms averaged seventeen weeks in Wake County and African Americans' terms averaged nineteen weeks. The next decades brought little improvement in the length of school terms for either race. School terms in 1892, in fact, showed a decrease in average term length for both races: under sixteen weeks for white students in Wake County and just over sixteen weeks for African American children. The county superintendent noted that about seventy-five percent of Wake County children attended school.⁸

This lethargic mindset was not universal. Some white leaders and citizens began organizing schools for white children after the Civil War, but African American leaders in particular saw education as an investment that would improve their children's prospects and communities. Thus, while many whites, especially those in rural areas, remained somewhat apathetic about education, African American leaders and Northern white philanthropists and missionaries began to create schools for African Americans. In the 1870s and 1880s, North Carolina's first African American graded and normal schools opened in Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Washington. In 1877, the State Colored Education Convention, composed of 140 delegates from forty counties, met in Raleigh to plan statewide educational improvements. African American newspapers such as the *Charlotte Messenger* called for the establishment of new schools to help young African American men improve their prospects and better themselves. The papers followed the development of schools as well as their students, reporting on attendance numbers, describing construction of new school buildings, and covering graduation exercises. Normal schools in Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Franklinton, Goldsboro, Plymouth, Salisbury, and Winston began training young African American teachers.⁹

These strides were impressive but limited. Increasingly during the late 1800s, as post-war economic strains lessened and some measure of prosperity returned, state and local public dollars became available to white schools. African American schools received no state monies and only minimal local support before 1910, when the state legislature began making state funds available to African American schools. Instead, African American

⁷ Needham Y. Gulley, "The History of Education in Wake County," *North Carolina Education* 10 (September 1943): 54.

⁸ The superintendent reports are cited in Gulley, "History of Education in Wake County," 23 and 54.

⁹ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African-Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 100-102.

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schools relied almost entirely on donations from local citizens, leaders and parents, from philanthropists (usually from the North), and from African American and white churches. As a result, facilities and supplies for African Americans were considerably inferior to those afforded to white students.¹⁰

In the state's most progressive urban areas, such as Raleigh, Durham, Winston, Greensboro, Charlotte, and Wilmington, students of both races fared somewhat better than students elsewhere. Raleigh's earliest African American schools included the Johnson High and Normal School (not extant), established by the Friends Freedman's Aid Society of Pennsylvania in 1865; and the Washington Graded School, established by the American Missionary Association of New York City in 1866. The line demarcating public and private operation of schools at this time was blurry. Even after the Raleigh School Board purchased the Washington School building in the late 1800s, the school continued to operate mostly with private funding and religious backing. Similarly, Raleigh Township organized and supported an elementary division at the Friends Freedman's Johnson School in 1877 and offered night classes for adults there. By 1879, Johnson was the largest school for African Americans in Raleigh.¹¹

By the 1880s, Raleigh was home to several African American schools: East Raleigh School (later known as Garfield), Johnson, Washington, and Oberlin. Local leaders established Crosby School in 1897 to relieve crowding at Garfield.¹² The author of an 1884 publication extolling the virtues of Wake County named local African American schools Shaw University and Saint Augustine's College and mentioned the "good graded schools in Raleigh . . . where colored children receive instruction for a period equal to that of the whites. Fifty-six hundred and eighty-five colored children received instruction in these [city and county] schools in 1883."¹³

Nevertheless, the state's education system at the end of the nineteenth century was

¹⁰ Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *History of African Americans*, 102, 154-155; Hugh Victor Brown, *A History of the Education of Negroes in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Irving Swain Press, Inc., 1961), 32-34.

¹¹ Lynn Belvin and Harriette Riggs, *The Heritage of Wake County, North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1983), 82; and Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake, Capital County of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Capital County Publishing Company, 1983), 608.

¹² Mrs. J. M. Barbee, *Historical Sketches of the Raleigh Public Schools, 1876-1941* (Raleigh: Mitchell Printing Company, 1943): 9, 56.

¹³ Exposition Committee, *Wake County, North Carolina: Its Resources, Its Products, and Its People* (Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton, and Company, 1884), 10.

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generally poor and, for African Americans, poorer still. North Carolinians' ability to read had deteriorated throughout the last half of the century; by the late 1800s the state's illiteracy rate was second only to South Carolina. In the first years of the twentieth century, Wake County spent \$3.00 for the education of each child of school age, slightly more than the state average of \$2.63 per child. Massachusetts, meanwhile, spent \$26.42 per child.¹⁴

Slowly, however, legislators and influential politicians began demanding better public schools, prompted in part by New South advocates' calls for better-educated workers in the new industrialized economy.¹⁵ D. A. Tompkins, North Carolina's leading industrialist, believed the South could supply the entire world with manufactured products if only the region would "follow [the North's] lead, and never rest till our people lead the world in education."¹⁶

Certainly, advocates of improved schools believed in the benefits of better education, but the motives of some were not entirely benevolent nor were their efforts necessarily directed toward children of all races. The 1868 constitution provided universal suffrage for males regardless of race.¹⁷ In 1900, North Carolina voters passed an amendment to the state constitution creating a literacy requirement for voting. The intention was to reduce the numbers of African Americans eligible to vote, but North Carolina's high illiteracy rate put many whites in danger of losing the vote as well. Lawmakers had included a "grandfather clause," preserving the right to vote for any man who had been eligible prior to 1867 and to lineal male descendants of those voters. This loophole, however, was set to expire on December 1, 1908. In order to retain the franchise, white men and boys had to learn to read and write.¹⁸

As a gubernatorial candidate, Charles B. Aycock is most famous for his pro-education campaign platform, but he also firmly supported African American disfranchisement. In a campaign address, Aycock promised an "era of good feeling" in which racial violence,

¹⁴ Wake County Public Schools (WCPS), *Biennial Report: Wake County Public Schools*, (Raleigh: Wake County Public Schools, 1907), 11.

¹⁵ "The Development of North Carolina's Public School System through 1940," unpublished and undated report (available at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, N.C.), 4.

¹⁶ D. A. Tompkins quoted in George Tayloe Winston, *A Builder of the New South, Being the Story of the Life and Works of Daniel Augustus Tompkins* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1920), 127.

¹⁷ 1868 Constitution in Lefler, *Contemporaries*, 338.

¹⁸ "Development," 4-5.

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such as the 1893 race riots in Wilmington, would no longer occur and all white men would be partners in the New South movement. Aycock's address continued:

Life and property and liberty from the mountains to the sea shall rest secure in the guardianship of the law. But to do this, we must disfranchise the Negro. This movement comes from the people. . . . To do so is both desirable and necessary—desirable because it sets the white man free to move along faster than he can go when retarded by the slower movement of the Negro—necessary because we must have good order and peace while we work out the industrial, commercial, intellectual, and moral development of the State.¹⁹

Oddly, improving education and disfranchising African American voters went hand-in-hand, and by 1900, most North Carolina voters favored both. Regardless of Aycock's motives, his election marked the start of renewed government and public interest in education. The result was improved education for both races, though at uneven rates.

During the 1910s, educators such as James B. Dudley, Charles H. Moore, and Nathan C. Newbold began speaking out about the appalling conditions at African American schools. Dudley and Moore were both African American educators in prominent positions: Dudley was the president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Greensboro, an African American school, and Moore was a professor who surveyed the state's African American schools for the State Teachers Association. Nathan Newbold, who was white, became the Agent for Rural Black Schools in 1913 and became first Director of the Division of Negro Education upon its creation in 1921. With the aid of philanthropic concerns such as the Jeanes, Peabody, Rosenwald, and Slater Funds, Newbold hired supervisors and teachers for rural African American schools and built new facilities. Between 1915 and 1932, the Rosenwald Fund subsidized 813 buildings in North Carolina, including schools, teachers' residences, and industrial education shops—more than in any other state.²⁰

Through the work of the Division of Negro Education and with continued support of philanthropic funds, educational opportunities for African Americans in urban areas

¹⁹ R. D. W. Connor and Clarence Hamilton Poe, *Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1912), 218-219.

²⁰ Brown, *History of Education of Negroes*, 48; Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *History of African Americans*, 123-124, 155; and Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 65 (October 1988): 387, 406, 408.

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continued to expand during the late 1910s and into the 1920s, although the schools still lagged far behind their white counterparts. Unlike white schools, African American schools often remained dependent on private money to subsidize the lopsided distribution of public education dollars.²¹

The 1920s saw a concerted effort to consolidate small, scattered rural schools into centrally located facilities serving a larger student body. Improved roads contributed to consolidation, and students began riding to more distant consolidated schools rather than walking to the nearby schoolhouse. Consolidation's physical legacy is the erection in the 1920s of hundreds of new brick school buildings and the closure of thousands of one- and two-room frame school buildings across the state. Most counties did not provide transportation for African American students, however, so while whites rode buses to large brick schools, African Americans continued walking to the surviving frame schoolhouses. Through the work of the Division of Negro Education, the African American community, and philanthropic organizations, the rural African American schoolhouses of the early twentieth-century were generally more refined than the few first-generation African American school buildings, usually crude log structures.²²

Rural consolidation's building boom prompted revised state design standards that included a new focus on architecture, and these standards applied to urban as well as rural schools. As in the countryside, large masonry school buildings with libraries, electricity, heat, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and drinking fountains replaced older buildings in the state's rapidly expanding towns and cities. Again, white schools received most of the funding and attention: state expenditures on schools for urban whites totaled over \$3.5 million in 1923-1924, while in the same fiscal year, the state spent only slightly more than \$500,000 on schools for African Americans in cities. Despite these discrepancies, urban African Americans managed to benefit from the changes of the 1920s more than rural African Americans did. In cities, African American parents and leaders canvassed for new school buildings with increasing success, although the resulting buildings usually

²¹ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 173.

²² Kelly Lally, *The Historic Architecture of Wake County, North Carolina* (Raleigh: Wake County Government, 1994), 119-120; Beth P. Thomas, "W. E. B. DuBois School," National Register Nomination, March 13, 1993, section 8, page 6; and Murray, *Capital County*, 603.

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housed more grades (often elementary and secondary grades under one roof) and more children per building than white schools of similar square footages.²³

Beyond the school buildings themselves, another improvement to the state's educational system came in the 1920s when the State Department of Public Instruction began accrediting high schools. In order to be classified as a standard high school, a facility had to provide:

a school term of not less than 160 days, four years of grades of work beyond the seventh elementary grade, three teachers holding required certificates, not less than forty-five pupils in average daily attendance, a program of studies approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and such equipment as may be deemed necessary by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to make the instruction beneficial to students.²⁴

By 1924, twenty-one African American high schools earned accreditation, including four normal schools (which offered two- or three-year curriculums to train teachers), three rural schools, and fourteen urban schools.²⁵ Between 1923 and 1929, the number of North Carolina public schools offering "recognized work" on the secondary level for African Americans students grew from 26 to 111. The number of accredited four-year secondary schools grew from eight to fifty-four.²⁶ The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools accredited the following African American public high schools for the first time in 1934: Brick Tri-County High in Brick; James B. Dudley in Greensboro; William Penn in High Point; Ridgeview in Hickory; Washington High School in Raleigh; Washington High School in Reidsville; and Williston in Wilmington.²⁷

²³ W. F. Credle, "Public School Buildings," November 28, 1928, Special Subject File in the Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C. Attendance numbers, number of classrooms, and square footage of school buildings as reported in High School and Elementary School Principals' Annual Reports from schools across the state, 1918-1947, Department of Public Instruction Records (white schools) and Division of Negro Education Records (African American schools), State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

²⁴ Brown, *History of Education of Negroes*, 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁶ Hollis Moody Long, *Public Secondary Education for Negroes in North Carolina* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932), 104.

²⁷ Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *History of African Americans*, 156; Brown, *History of Education of Negroes*, 61, 64; Anderson, *Education of Blacks*, 204; and Hugh Victor Brown, *E-Qual-ity Education in North Carolina Among Negroes* (Raleigh: Irving Swain Press, Inc., 1964), 129-130.

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With better school buildings and instruction, the number of African Americans enrolled in public schools skyrocketed. In 1922-1923, 1,477 African Americans were enrolled in public high schools across the state; two thousand were enrolled in private high schools. By 1927-1928, eleven thousand African Americans attended public high schools and thirty-six hundred were enrolled in private institutions. The total number of African Americans graduating from high school also soared, from 310 statewide in 1922-1923 to two thousand in 1927-1928.²⁸

Despite gains, African Americans, especially those living in rural locations, still found private institutions a necessary supplement to the public program of African American education, particularly at the high school level. Private schools often provided a better education that more effectively prepared students for college. For some rural African Americans living in counties where public secondary education was nonexistent, private schooling was the only option. Notable secondary schools in North Carolina included Palmer Memorial Institute in Guilford County and Laurinburg Institute in Scotland County.²⁹ African Americans in Raleigh had access to private preparatory education at local colleges. Shaw University maintained a high school department until the mid-1920s and Saint Augustine's College conducted high school courses into the 1940s. Graduates, however, were often boarding students from out-of-town or out-of-state.³⁰

After the progress of the 1920s, the state's system of public education did not see a major overhaul until the 1950s. The baby boom generation hastened another school-building campaign, which in turn prompted an update in curriculum and architecture, and the system of racial segregation finally began its long, slow death. Like many Southern states, North Carolina maintained a completely segregated public school system until forced to comply with the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that declared the practice unconstitutional. In 1957, twelve African American students in Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem attended previously all-white schools. Other counties slowly desegregated schools, but it was not until after 1965 that most of the school districts in the state integrated. The freedom-of-choice plan, enacted in 1965, was an attempt to allow parents to choose which schools their children would attend. In 1968, a federal court judge ruled the plan unconstitutional and an invalid means of

²⁸ "Facts About the Present Status of Negro Education in North Carolina." [1929?], in the Special Subject File in the Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

²⁹ Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *History of African Americans*, 156-158.

³⁰ High School Principal Reports, Shaw University and Saint Augustine's College, 1918-1947, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

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desegregating schools. The push for the desegregation of the state's public school system eventually resulted in cross-town busing of students to achieve racial integration in the 1970s.³¹ Raleigh followed a similar pattern. The first African American children transferred to white schools in 1960, and while a few others followed later that decade, full integration did not happen until 1971.³²

Also during the mid-twentieth century, physical education, along with vocational training, gained importance as part of a well-rounded curriculum aimed at giving white and African American students functional skills rather than solely preparing the area's brightest students for college. Athletics and sports also helped unify the school population. As schools consolidated, students traveled farther, often well out of their local neighborhoods, to attend school with children from a wider geographic area. Physical education classes helped foster teambuilding among the students, and athletic facilities allowed school teams to compete, giving all students, whether athletic or not, a focus for enthusiasm now that school spirit and community spirit were not always one in the same. As a result, administrators across the nation added playing fields and gyms to their campuses.

History of Washington School

In 1866, the Reverend Fisk P. Brewer came to Raleigh on behalf of the American Missionary Association of New York (AMA) to help educate the city's African Americans, newly freed from slavery. (The AMA had been established before the Civil War as an interdenominational missionary and abolitionist society; after the war, however, it became an official body of the Congregational churches.) Brewer, upon arriving in Raleigh that fall, reported to the AMA that roughly half the city's population of about six thousand residents were African American. Five schools, most started by Northern aid organizations, provided classes to over six hundred African American children. Brewer also noted that one school started by the New England Freedman's Committee taught white children: the Washington School, which held classes in an old

³¹ Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *History of African Americans*, 171-173; and William W. Peek, "History of Public Education in North Carolina: The Middle Years of the Twentieth Century," available in PDF at the North Carolina Public Schools website at www.ncpublicschools.org/students/history_of_ed.pdf (September 9, 2003).

³² Peebles, "School Desegregation," 97-98; and Thomas, "W. E. B. DuBois School," section 7, page 9.

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church building rented from the church trustees.³³ This school—started only a year earlier—folded in the autumn of 1866, and Brewer's sister Adele Brewer began teaching classes for African American children in the space on behalf of the AMA, retaining the name Washington School. The Brewers also welcomed white children into the school, and both races attended together for a short while, taking classes in separate rooms. Neither African American nor white children seemed entirely comfortable. In late 1866, Brewer wrote to the AMA that the African American children "do not relish the coming of white children into the school," and by February 1867, Brewer reported that all the white children had dropped out owing to ridicule for attending "a freedmen's school."³⁴

Adele Brewer continued teaching the African American students in rented space while her brother worked to get a dedicated school building constructed. Through Fisk Brewer, the AMA purchased six acres at East South Street between McDowell and Manly Streets. With some financial help from the Raleigh Education Association (the local chapter of the Freedmen's Education Association) and labor from some students and parents, Rev. Brewer orchestrated construction of a two-story wood-frame school building.³⁵

Enrollment nearly doubled after the students moved to their new building late in 1867; the missionaries taught seventy children in daytime classes and twenty-five adults at night, in addition to Sunday school classes. The students moved again in 1869, to a smaller building just completed by the AMA on an adjacent lot. This move accommodated the leasing of the larger building for a new African American department

³³ While the *Raleigh Times* reported in a September 4, 1978, article that the school was named for Booker T. Washington (1865-1915), he is not the school's namesake. The Washington School Alumni Association believes the school was named for George Washington, although no written documentation has been located. Telephone interview with Susan Bridges, representative of the Alumni Association who attended both Washington Graded and Ligon High Schools, by Sarah Woodard, September 30, 2003.

³⁴ Summary description of the American Missionary Association Archives (Selections) in the Manuscripts Department at the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Fisk P. Brewer to G. Whipple, September 18, 1866, Brewer letters, AMA Archives Microfilm, Southern Historical Collection (hereafter cited as AMA film); *Catalogue of Washington School* (Raleigh: The School, 1875-1876), 3; Brewer to Whipple, November 8, 1866, as quoted in Maxine Deloris Jones, "A Glorious Work: The American Missionary Association and Black North Carolinians, 1863-1880 (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1982), 268; and Brewer to Whipple, February 6, 1867, quoted in Murray, *Capital County*, 608-609.

³⁵ Brewer to Whipple, September 18, 1866, AMA film; Murray, *Capital County*, 608-609; and Linda Simmons-Henry and Linda Harris Edmisten, *Culture Town, Life in Raleigh's African American Communities* (Raleigh: Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, 1993), 104, 112.

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within the existing North Carolina School for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind. The department—the only school for African American blind children in the nation—continued to operate in the 1867 building until 1874, when Washington students returned. The First Congregational Church of Raleigh took over the smaller building.³⁶

The city of Raleigh acquired the Washington School in the late 1870s or early 1880s and added it to the local school system, making Washington a public elementary school.³⁷ Maxine Deloris Jones, whose 1982 doctoral dissertation explores the AMA's work in North Carolina between 1863 and 1880, reports that this sort of transaction occurred throughout the state. "One of the most significant AMA contributions," Jones asserts, "was that its schools helped form the basis for the public school system in North Carolina." S. S. Ashley, the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction in the late 1860s, was himself a former AMA missionary. Ashley corresponded with AMA officials, encouraging the conversion of AMA schools to free public schools by having the school boards pay teachers salaries. In Wilmington, for example, the AMA's Williston School became a public school over the course of a few years in the late 1860s and early 1870s through cooperation between the missionary society and the local school board.³⁸

Raleigh's growing school-age population was quickly too large for the fledgling city school system. Even the 1881 City Directory reported that neither African American nor whites had "proper school buildings" and opined that "As public spirit becomes improved, it is hoped that the city will erect two large and substantial structures, one for each race, with accommodations for two thousand children."³⁹ The city directory did not mention that Raleigh had no public high school for African Americans, as Washington and other African American city schools offered primary grades only. Shaw University and Saint Augustine's College offered high school classes in private academies, and the city paid residents' tuition for a time, in an attempt to provide a high school education to

³⁶ Murray, *Capital County*, 600-601, 609; and *Catalogue*, 3.

³⁷ The acquisition date is variously put at 1875, 1877, and 1882. See Linda Harris, *An Architectural and Historical Inventory of Raleigh, North Carolina* (Raleigh: N.C. City of Raleigh Planning Department and Raleigh Historic Properties Commission, 1978), 35; Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42; Murray, *Capital County*, 609; and Simmons-Henry and Edmisten, *Culture Town*, 112. No information was found to confirm a date in the DPI records at the State Archives or through deed research at the Wake County Register of Deeds Office. Washington is not listed as one of the city's four public schools for African Americans in Emerson's 1881 city directory; see Charles Emerson and Company, *Raleigh Directory, 1880-1881* (Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton and Company, 1880), 37.

³⁸ Jones, "Glorious Work," 121-122.

³⁹ Raleigh Directory, 1880-1881, 37.

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Raleigh's African American students. Shaw and Saint Augustine, however, began scaling back their programs in the 1920s and each eventually closed.⁴⁰

By the 1910s, parents of Washington School students, rather than waiting for public spirit to improve, began lobbying for a new publicly funded school building to replace the deteriorating nineteenth-century structure. Despite monthly meetings with city school superintendent Edward P. Moses, the school board was slow to act. In 1914, the group of Washington School parents became a formal Parent Teacher Association (PTA), continuing their involvement with the school and their lobbying efforts for a better facility.⁴¹ In 1921, when Samuel B. Underwood became Raleigh Public School's Superintendent, he announced to the board that:

Raleigh's chief school problem is a financial one....The school needs of Raleigh have accumulated where it is necessary to expend a large amount to give the children proper school facilities, to give the voters an opportunity to decide in favor of the child's welfare.⁴²

In April 1922, the voters indeed expressed favor for their children's welfare by approving a million-dollar bond issue to build new city schools. Five schools, including Washington, would be replaced with fireproof buildings. Just two years later, citizens passed a \$1.3 million bond issue to build three more schools.⁴³

Christopher Gadsden Sayre, a South Carolina architect with a local office, designed Washington's new school building. Sayre also designed three other schools in Raleigh during the same period: Hugh Morson High School (not extant), Wiley Elementary School (included in the same bond issue as Washington), and Murphey Elementary School, all built for white students. Like Morson, Wiley, and Murphey, Washington's design followed state mandates requiring fireproof brick construction. Washington School also had specialized rooms for a library, auditorium, cafeteria, and labs for

⁴⁰ Simmons-Henry and Edmisten, *Culture Town*, 105; Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 41; High School Principal Reports, Shaw University and Saint Augustine's College, 1918-1947, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; Susan Bridges interview.

⁴¹ *The Carolinian*, October 28, 1961.

⁴² Underwood quoted in Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 30.

⁴³ *The Carolinian*, September 28, 1961; and Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 30-32.

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biology, physics, and chemistry. Construction began on the new school in 1923 at its new location on South Fayetteville Street; the building was completed in 1924.⁴⁴

Although Washington Graded and High School was a state-of-the-art building, it was still second-rate when compared to the city's new white schools. The PTA purchased the library's first five hundred books and made significant donations to the business department, but students used textbooks discarded by the city's white high schools. Construction had not included landscaping, and the building "looked like a structure set on one side of a miniature mountain," according to one recollection. The grounds apparently remained in their unfinished state for several years, until advice from landscape gardeners at nearby North Carolina State University and labor from the Progress Works Administration created the terraced design.⁴⁵

Despite the disparity in facilities, the school developed a strong faculty that included graduates of African American colleges and universities such as Saint Augustine's, Shaw, Talladega, North Carolina A&T, Wilberforce, and Howard. The school's curriculum included coursework in African American history as early as the 1940s. Cultural pride was also evident in graduation ceremonies, which regularly began with James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing," listed in programs from as early as 1935 as the "Negro National Anthem." Washington School provided varied extracurricular activities, the selection growing as the school became more established. Students could play football, baseball, basketball, and tennis and run track in the 1920s. They produced the *Washington High School Mentor*, a monthly publication. By the late 1930s, students could join girl's glee club, dramatic club, social science club, band, and student council.⁴⁶

Overcrowding in the 1924 occurred almost immediately, however. Fourteen of the building's thirty classrooms housed the high school section's 465 students, for an average of thirty-three pupils in each classroom in 1926-1927. In 1927, the city built a fourteen-room addition on the south end of the school, more effectively dividing the high school and elementary sections. By the 1939-1940 school year, 717 high school students

⁴⁴ Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42; and High School Principals' Annual Reports, Washington School, 1926-1927, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

⁴⁵ *Raleigh Times* May 17, 1979; Principals' Annual Reports, Washington School, 1926-1927, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; and *The Carolinian*, September 28, 1961.

⁴⁶ Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42; Principals' Annual Reports, Washington School, 1927-1927, 1934-1940, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

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attended classes at Washington in addition to the elementary students. Faculty included twenty-seven high school teachers and twenty-one elementary teachers.⁴⁷

In the mid-1940s, officials made preparations to build a new elementary school and a gymnasium next to Washington and convert the existing building to house only high school classes. "With the removal of elementary grades," school superintendent Jesse Sanderson told the *News and Observer*, "there will be room for an adequate cafeteria and library facilities." The existing cafeteria conditions made news just a few months later, when students petitioned Sanderson to provide a greater variety of food prepared in a more sanitary fashion. The petition also indicated that there was not enough food to serve all the students. Sanderson replied to Washington Principal Akins that "It was readily apparent five years ago that the Washington cafeteria was inadequate....The fact that not only the Washington School Cafeteria but the whole school building is inadequate for the program we need is the reason for the building plans which the school board is making." Although space for the new buildings was not lacking because the city had purchased eleven and one-half acres southwest of the main building in 1942, limited funding for all the city's school building programs delayed numerous projects. In addition to financial constraints, the committee researching a new high school for African Americans ultimately decided the high school should be located "nearer the center of the negro residential areas," possibly in the Chavis Heights neighborhood, rather than on the Washington property. Thus, at Washington, officials erected only a track and the gym, which provided much-needed space for gym classes, assemblies, meetings, and basketball games.⁴⁸

The construction of the track occurred after 1942, when the school board purchased the land southwest of the school building where the track is located.⁴⁹ Most of the land in that parcel is on a plateau between Rocky Branch and Gas House Branch. A concrete culvert with brick facing created passage from the main school yard across Gas House Branch to

⁴⁷ Principals' Annual Reports, Washington School, 1926-1927; 1939-1940, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; and Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42.

⁴⁸ *News and Observer* January 25, 1946, and April 18, 1946; *Raleigh Times* May 17, 1979; Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42; and Raleigh City Administrative Unit [Raleigh Public Schools], Minutes of the Board of Trustees, December 2, 1947, February 10, 1948, and April 6, 1948.

⁴⁹ Division of School Planning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Wake County Survey of Facilities, 1976-1977* (Raleigh, Division of School Planning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1977), 4.165.

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the new field. Currently, the track's surface is fine gravel, laid out in an oval. Bleachers, landscaping for playing fields, or other built features do not exist.

On May 12, 1948, Raleigh's school board authorized additions at Eliza Pool School and Broughton and gymnasiums at Hayes-Barton School (Underwood Elementary School) and Washington. The board instructed the building committee of J. D. Clark, LeRoy Martin, and Jesse O. Sanderson to select the architects for the projects. Over the summer, the group chose Raleigh architect George Berryman for the Washington gym project, and in August, Worth Kenyon won the general contracting bid. Trull Plumbing and Heating installed the building's plumbing, and Vickers and Ruth set up the heating system. The board awarded the electrical contract to Thompson Electric Company. In September, the board authorized additional funding for the removal of unexpected rock at the site. On April 26, 1949, board members inspected the new gym and then met in the Washington School Cafeteria where they unanimously voted to accept the building as complete.⁵⁰

Although the school board discussed building a new African American high school as early as 1947, the city did not take action until the early 1950s. In 1953, the all-African American Ligon High School opened, and Washington's high school department closed. Washington became a junior high school and continued educating African American students.⁵¹

Also in the 1950s, the Raleigh Housing Authority began acquiring property on twenty-seven acres east of Washington School for the purpose of clearing "substandard buildings" and replacing them with a low-rent housing project. Walnut Terrace opened late in 1959, providing housing to about three hundred African American families. The urban renewal project left Washington School as one of the very few reminders that an established, pre-World War II neighborhood once existed here.⁵²

In 1971, the city reorganized Washington School as a racially integrated Sixth Grade Center. It was the city's largest sixth-grade school that year, and officials anticipated that seventy percent of the 660 students would be white students from West Raleigh. The city and county school systems merged in 1976, and the school became part of the Wake

⁵⁰ Raleigh City Administrative Unit [Raleigh Public Schools], Minutes of the Board of Trustees, May 12, 1948, August 4, 1948, September 22, 1948, and April 26, 1949.

⁵¹ *Raleigh Times* May 17, 1979 and Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42.

⁵² *News and Observer* May 15, 1959; and Simmons-Henry and Edmisten, *Culture Town*, 111.

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County Public School System. After surviving a 1978 abandonment threat from the Board of Education, which felt needed renovations would be too expensive, the county school board again reorganized the school and in 1982 created a magnet school for kindergarten through fifth grades. A new name reflected the change: Washington Gifted and Talented Elementary Magnet School. In 1996 and 2000, two substantial additions were made to the north and west elevations, and in 2002, major interior renovations occurred. In the first few years of the twenty-first century, Washington's student population has remained steady at around six hundred, or slightly more than half its population when the school had fewer classrooms and housed twelve grades. During the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, Washington School and its faculty and students have earned many awards and honors, continuing a tradition of outstanding faculty, curriculum, and extracurricular activities recognized as early as the early 1940s.⁵³

Educational Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century

The earliest schools in Raleigh held classes in small houses scattered across the township. In 1876, the Centennial Graded School opened to "all the white children of the township," offering class in the sixty-year-old former Governor's Mansion on Fayetteville Street. In 1886, Centennial Graded moved into a new building with a "slate roof, brown stone window sills, penitentiary press brick front, ten classrooms, [and] assembly hall."⁵⁴ The city built another brick school building in 1905: Raleigh High School was a two-story building of fourteen hundred square feet, housing an auditorium and with classrooms on each level and in the basement.⁵⁵ Centennial Graded and Raleigh High were exceptions: all schools for African Americans and most schools for whites built in Raleigh before the 1920s were frame.

North Carolina's school consolidation of the 1920s produced great change in school design. The local and state efforts to consolidate one- and two-room schools into larger buildings in turn prompted state officials to create design standards for new school buildings. The standards aimed to provide fireproof, sanitary buildings and symbols of

⁵³ *Raleigh Times*, September 17, 1971; Current School Profiles, Wake County Public School System Website, <http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/school-profiles/index.html> (September 9, 2003); Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 42; and "Washington Elementary celebrates winning national award," at www.wcpss.net/news/poston/washington_award_2003/index.html (September 9, 2003).

⁵⁴ Barbee, *Historical Sketches*, 11.

⁵⁵ High School Principals' Annual High School Report, Washington School, 1918-1919, Division of Negro Education Records, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

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civic pride. The new recommendations included prominent locations, athletic facilities, flowerbeds, steam heat, indoor plumbing, standard lighting, drinking fountains, and an auditorium that could also be used by the community.⁵⁶ To satisfy the demand for fireproof construction, brick, concrete, and stone emerged as the preferred construction materials. E-, U- and T-shaped floor plans created wings to house auditoriums, libraries, and gymnasiums while providing more exterior wall space to accommodate windows and let in natural light. In 1920, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Eugene Clyde Brooks wrote:

The old log schoolhouse and the small frame houses heretofore used are rapidly disappearing and in their places the officials are erecting in the rural districts modern brick buildings . . . In place of the small poorly lighted, poorly equipped school houses may be found today eight, twelve, or sixteen room brick buildings with auditorium, located on the great highways that are now spanning the state.⁵⁷

The state's adoption of design standards, while grounded in the rural consolidation movement, endowed the same physical legacy to urban school plants. W. F. Credle, an official with the state Division of Schoolhouse Planning, wrote in 1928 that the standards secured "the utmost educational value in the architecture of the school buildings and the usefulness and beauty of the entire school plant." Credle also recognized "the improvement in the architectural exteriors of both city and rural schools" as one of the notable educational improvements in the late 1920s.⁵⁸ In both locales, however, the school facility improvements of the 1920s disproportionately benefited white students.

The 1921 creation of the Division of Negro Education within the State Department of Education fostered curriculum improvements at African American schools but did not always yield physical plant advancements comparable to the progress at white schools. Most African American schools constructed in North Carolina in the 1920s transpired with minimal public dollars. African American students continued meeting in small frame buildings usually funded by local citizens, churches, and private charities like the Rosenwald Fund. Hollis Moody Long, from Columbia University's Teachers College noted:

⁵⁶ John J. Blair, *Schoolhouse Planning in North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1923), 27-28.

⁵⁷ Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1920-1921, 19, quoted in "Development," 8.

⁵⁸ W. F. Credle, "Public School Buildings," unpublished report dated November 28, 1928, Special Subject File, Division of Negro Education, State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

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One rarely sees a Negro school [in North Carolina] which is comparable to the schools for whites in the same community. Buildings for Negroes are, almost without exception, badly over crowded, and ground space is limited to three or four acres. . . . Frequently the physical equipment, such as desks and laboratory apparatus, found in Negro schools is that which has been discarded by the neighboring white school.⁵⁹

Raleigh and Wake County reflected these statewide patterns in the 1920s as school officials built new brick schools across the city and county. At the end of 1927, thirteen schools were under construction.⁶⁰ Wake County Schools Superintendent John C. Lockhart worked with Berry O'Kelly, a prominent member of the county's Negro School Committee to encourage use of the Rosenwald Fund, but here, too, the construction of larger brick school buildings generally benefited white students.⁶¹ As late as 1949, a researcher found Wake County African American schools woefully behind their white equivalents:

In general the schools are inadequately housed and their inside appearance is poor. The furniture in most cases, is old and out of date. The artificial lighting is almost wholly inadequate. A coal-burning heater in each classroom is still used for heating purposes in nineteen of the twenty-five schools.⁶²

In addition, only eleven of the twenty-five schools surveyed for the study had indoor plumbing.⁶³

The education of African American children—including the construction of school buildings for them—was not a priority for the Raleigh school board through the early twentieth century. Years of lobbying finally convinced the city superintendent to approve construction of a new high school for African American students. Once completed in 1924, Washington Graded and High School was the finest school building available to the city's African American pupils. Its architecture is considerably more restrained than

⁵⁹ Long, *Public Secondary Education*, 105.

⁶⁰ Graydon Wright Jordan, "A History of the Wake County Schools" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1943), 97-112.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 97-102.

⁶² Kelley Wallace, "A Survey of the Negro Schools of Wake County, North Carolina" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1949), 84.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 75-84.

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Wiley Elementary, a school for white children built at the same time and designed by the same architect, but generally, Washington matched, architecturally, the brick school buildings being built for the city's white students.

Washington's construction occurred during a school building boom that furthered the career of Christopher Gadsden Sayre, an Atlanta-based architect most well known for his school designs. The boom also resulted in the construction of Needham Broughton High School in the late 1920s, the design of which firmly entrenched William Henley Deitrick as Raleigh's foremost architect.⁶⁴

C. Gadsden Sayre, the architect for Washington School as well as thirty-three other public school buildings in North Carolina, including Hugh Morson High School (not extant), Wiley Elementary School, and Murphey Elementary School in Raleigh, was born in 1876 at Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. As a youngster, he moved to Anderson, South Carolina with his parents but received his early education at Porter Military Academy in Charleston. He graduated from South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina) in 1897 with a Bachelor of Science degree. Sayre worked as a mechanical and civil engineer and surveyor in South Carolina until 1906 when he opened his own architecture office in Anderson. James J. Baldwin practiced with Sayre from 1909 until 1915. In 1922 or 1923, Sayre opened an office in Raleigh on the second floor of 303 South Blount Street, but maintained an Anderson address as his residence. Raleigh City Directories list Sayre's local office through 1924. From 1925 until 1929, Sayre lived in Greensboro, North Carolina, returning to Anderson before his death on October 12, 1933. Curiously, his obituary records the life of a prominent businessman, but says nothing about his work as an architect. An editorial in the Anderson *Daily Mail* referred to him both as a businessman and as a "builder" who faced adversity with "good cheer," perhaps an implication that the hard times of the Great Depression had a negative impact on his work.⁶⁵

Among the many schools built in Raleigh during this surge in construction, three stand out architecturally and historically: Needham Broughton High School (NR, 1985), Wiley Elementary School, and Washington Graded and High School. Needham Broughton High

⁶⁴ Ruth Little, "The Architecture of William Henley Deitrick and Associates, from 1926-1960," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, September 1997.

⁶⁵ Biographical sketch of C. Gadsden Sayre in the Charlotte Vestel Brown Collection, North Carolina State University Special Collections, and (Anderson) *Daily Mail* cited in Davyd Foard Hood, "Boyden High School," National Register Nomination, 1995, section 8, page 28.

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School, built to educate Raleigh's most affluent white population, features fine architectural detail that won Deitrick the American Institute of Architects 1930 outstanding school prize.⁶⁶ Broughton is a Romanesque Revival structure with a long, horizontal facade highlighted by a buttressed clock tower rising two stories above the main building. The steel-framed building has three stories faced in random ashlar, local granite, and orange brick and trimmed with cast stone; it is capped by a tile roof. When the school opened in the fall of 1929, it served more than seven hundred students; in the 1950s, it was one of the largest high schools in the state.⁶⁷

Wiley Elementary School, also designed by Sayre, is Raleigh's most architecturally outstanding elementary school. C. V. York Construction Company, responsible for much of the development of the Hayes Barton and Bloomsbury neighborhoods, was Wiley's contractor. The steel-framed Tudor Revival building has three-stories and a brick exterior. Cast stone creates rusticated window openings and bas-relief panels fill spaces between the banks of windows on the façade. A stringcourse, water table, and cornice are also cast stone. Concrete bas-relief figures decorate the castellated parapet on the front and ends of the building. These figures—one with a book and a torch, another with a compass, and a third reading a book—represent ideas, math, and reading, respectively. Wiley's auditorium, now used as a library, features a coffered ceiling, a balcony, a heavy plaster cornice, pilasters with stylized Corinthian capitols, and a segmental arch stage trimmed with plaster molding.

Although deficiencies between African American schools and those for white children were severe in many instances, Washington Graded and High School—built about the same time as Wiley and Broughton—stands with those two schools as one of the best examples of 1920s school architecture in Raleigh. Designed by the same architect, Washington and Wiley share many Tudor Revival design features, although Washington's exterior and original interior architectural expression is more restrained. Washington, Wiley, Broughton, and other brick school buildings erected in the 1920s across North Carolina share classically derived and revival features as well as state-mandated amenities such as libraries and auditoriums. The architecture and spaces within these schools represent increased attention to education and overriding concerns of the day about sanitation and healthfulness. The notable, but less elaborate ornamentation of

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Waugh, *North Carolina's Capital, Raleigh* (Raleigh: Junior League of Raleigh, 1967), 177.

⁶⁷ Raleigh Historic Properties Commission, "Needham B. Broughton High School," Raleigh Historic Property Designation Application and Report (Raleigh, July 1985), 5.

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Washington (when compared with Wiley) and the housing of so many grades in one building are also tangible reminders of the role of architecture in the inequality of segregation.

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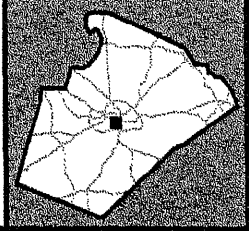
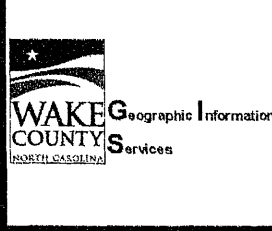
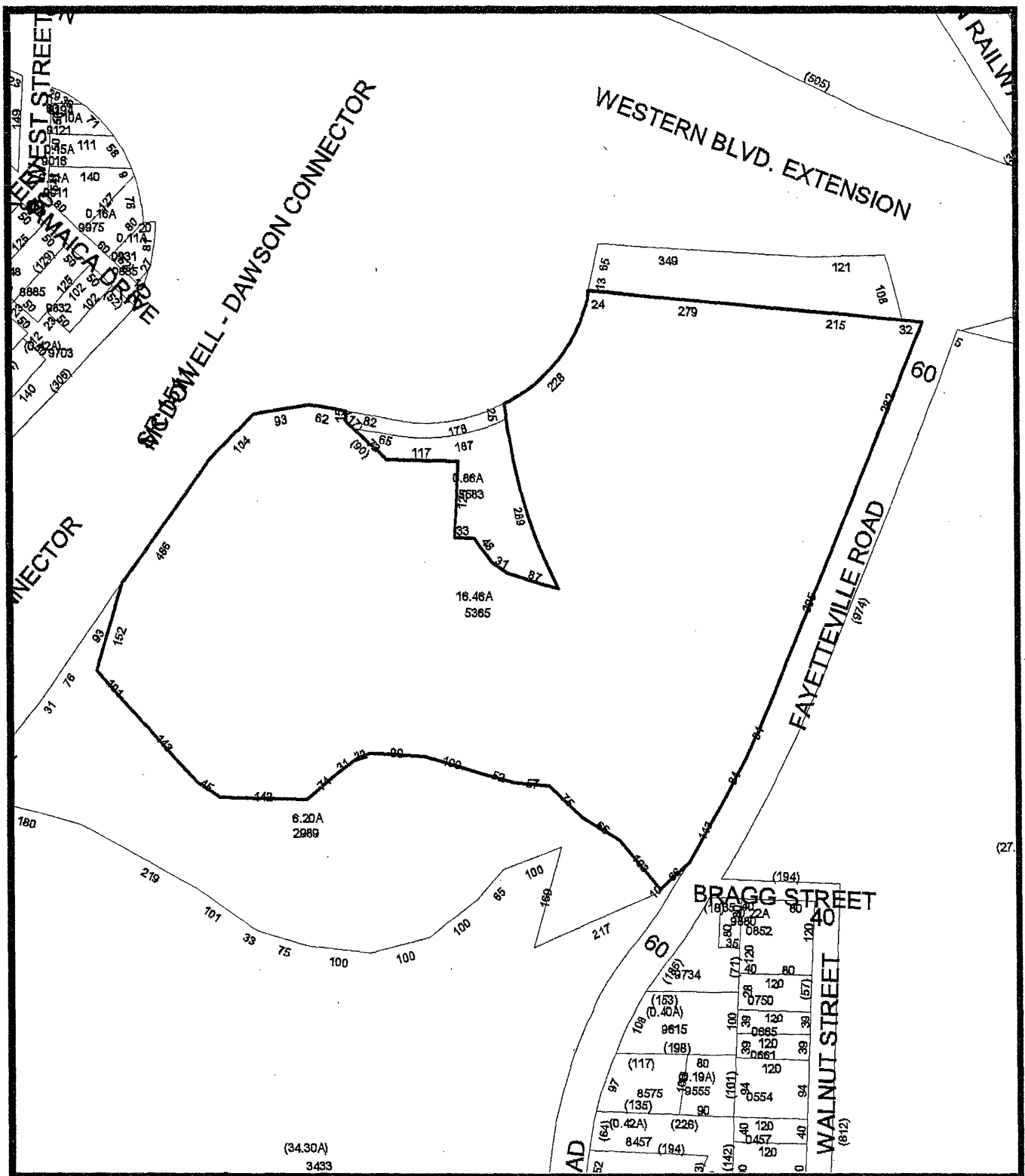
10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Washington Graded and High School boundary follows the parcel lines of the tract of land on which the school stands, parcel number 5365. This boundary is shown in bold lines on the accompanying Wake County tax map.

Boundary Justification

The Washington Graded and High School boundary encompasses the 16.46-acre tract created through acquisitions in 1923, 1927, and 1942 and historically associated with the school.



Washington Graded and
High School
Raleigh
Wake County, NC

