

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

  X   New Submission            Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

African American Schools in Virginia

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

African American Public Schools in Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968

**C. Form Prepared by:**

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date March 17, 2025

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Julie D. Langston DIRECTOR 3/27/2025  
Signature of certifying official Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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- Tier 1: 60-100 hours (generally existing multiple property submissions by paid consultants and by Maine State Historic Preservation staff for in-house, individual nomination preparation)
- Tier 2: 120 hours (generally individual nominations by paid consultants)
- Tier 3: 230 hours (generally new district nominations by paid consultants)
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## INTRODUCTION

The material herein is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of the Interior or the National Park Service.

The purpose of this Multiple Property Document (MPD) is to provide a context for Virginia's African American schools. As of this writing, the historic context "African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968" has been developed. This MPD may be updated at a later time to include additional contexts that concern schools from other historic periods, private schools, postsecondary institutions, and other places, events, and people associated with African American education in Virginia.

## The Long Reach of Virginia's Colonial History

Research regarding the early history of public education in Virginia has been strongly influenced by Cornelius J. Heatwole's *A History of Public Education in Virginia*, published in 1916. Heatwole was routinely cited by educational history researchers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. During research for this MPD, case studies about public education in different Virginia localities written between the 1950s-early 2000s illustrate

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this tendency.<sup>1</sup> According to Heatwole, England's first forays into "public" education were embodied in the Poor Laws passed between the 1560s to 1660s. Such laws rested on two principles: that the state held responsibility for providing "industrial training" to the poor and that the government could levy taxes to pay for such training. Both children and adults were expected to be gainfully employed and, for poor families, state officials had authority to place children in apprenticeships in order to learn a trade or skill that would lead to employment by the time the child grew to adulthood.<sup>2</sup> The English colonies in North America used these same laws during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with Heatwole noting, "Virginia followed them more strictly than the other colonies."<sup>3</sup>

Heatwole went on to explain that Virginia society mirrored that of England and, originally, was comprised of two classes: a small landed gentry class and a larger laboring (or "servant") class. Due to their generally higher levels of education, the gentry included clergy of the Anglican Church, the state-sponsored church of the Virginia colony. The laboring class included English, Scottish, and Irish indentured servants as well as enslaved and free Africans. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a "merchant" class also had been established, composed of merchants, tradesmen, artisans, and "cultured" indentured servants.<sup>4</sup> The gentry, synonymous with the "planters" who owned huge plantations, were the ruling class of Virginia and would remain so until the 1860s. Due to the lack of contesting groups, planters exercised almost complete hegemony over Virginia's social, physical, political, and economic development. Plantations were so large that a single individual owned as much as 6-10 square miles of land, whereupon hundreds of people, most of them enslaved, resided. Plantations were established along Virginia's numerous waterways, which were cleared by enslaved laborers, allowing water-borne traffic to be the dominant form of transportation into the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the large swaths of plantation lands and the unimproved condition of most overland travel routes, few towns or villages were established in Virginia during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Members of the gentry held all of the political offices in Virginia

<sup>1</sup> Case studies identified during research for this MPD that cited Heatwole include the following: Hazel F. Weaver, *The History of Public Education in Fauquier County, Virginia, 1871-1954*, Master's Thesis, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1955; Sarah James Simmons, *The Development of Schooling in Floyd County, Virginia, 1831-1900*, D.Ed. dissertation, 1987, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va.; Paul Everett Behrens, *A Survey of Negro Education in Louisa County*, Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., 1949; William Allen Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.; Linda H. Rowe, *A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 0373, 1997, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Va.; Foney G. Mullins, "A History of the Literary Fund as a Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia," D.Ed. dissertation, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va.; and Maral Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Lucy F. Simms School," National Register nomination, 2003, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/115-5035/>.

<sup>2</sup> Cornelius J. Heatwole, *A History of Education in Virginia* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 2, 4-7. Although Heatwole's influence on historical research concerning education in Virginia is readily apparent, his research methodology is less so. The bibliography in his *History of Public Education in Virginia* includes primary and secondary sources but few are directly cited in the main body of the text. Later researchers, however, including those cited above, do include citations to specific sources as well as each author's own analysis and conclusions; such work was done in accordance with accepted academic standards of their time of writing. Published a decade later, Alrutheus Ambush Taylor's *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), which includes two chapters about African American public education, includes numerous citations throughout the text and, therefore, is cited herein more often than Heatwole's work. Perhaps because Heatwole's book was comparatively recent and/or Taylor conducted his own research with primary and secondary sources, Taylor did not cite Heatwole or include Heatwole's book in his own book's bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Cornelius J. Heatwole, *A History of Education in Virginia* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Cultured" indentured servants were aristocratic Scottish and Irish prisoners of war who had been captured by the English during various revolts against English rule and sent to the colonies as punishment. Upon completion of their indenture period, such men were free to remain in Virginia and, if savvy and lucky enough, to become members themselves of the colony's gentry. See Heatwole, p. 18-19.

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and managed the colony to benefit their financial interests, especially with regard to tobacco cultivation and sale. The planter class contributed some of the best-known leaders of the American Revolution and, accordingly, remained largely intact after the founding of the United States. As with all other things in Virginia, this small group of individuals also almost exclusively controlled Virginia's gradual development of an educational system from the 1620s to 1860.<sup>5</sup>

For all Virginians, the Virginia colony's organization according to these political, social, economic, and class interests powerfully influenced the provision of public education for over 350 years. This MPD concerns specifically the public education system as it has served, or failed to serve, African Americans in Virginia. The first historic context prepared for this MPD primarily concerns public schools for Black students from the 1860s to 1968. Due to the pervasiveness and longevity of the systems that became entrenched during the colonial period, at least brief explication is necessary in order to understand how Virginia's first statewide public education system came to be in 1870.

### Controlling the Purposes of Public Education

Along with the adaptation of England's Poor Laws to colonial society and the uncontested control of Virginia by a small planter class, three significant trends that have shaped provision of public education and African Americans in Virginia originated during the colonial era. First, enslavers of African persons asserted their right to determine educational needs of the people they enslaved. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this assumption of power expanded to become a widespread belief that White people in general rightfully should control all aspects of public education in Virginia. Second, parents were granted almost exclusive control over the type(s) and extent of education that their children would receive. Compulsory education was nonexistent in Virginia from the 17<sup>th</sup> century into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Third, education for children was widely understood to be for the purpose of creating the next generation of productive adults who would contribute to society through their work and their moral rectitude. These assumptions shaped and, in some ways, stunted development of local and statewide public education systems in Virginia prior to the Civil War (1861-1865) and continued to shape public education policies from 1870 to the 1960s.

The consequences of Virginia's inherited legal tradition, the centuries-long dominance of a small group of elites, and assumptions of authority for provision of particular types of education to different groups of people are discussed in the following sections of this MPD. The historic context explains how individual, private schools for African Americans in Virginia were founded on a sporadic basis between the 17<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but no local tax levies for school operations existed during this 250-year span. "Public" schools, in the sense that any child could attend such a school, came and went as support could be drummed up for them. Most often, fees were charged to each student's family in order to pay for a teacher's salary and a building's maintenance as a schoolhouse.<sup>6</sup> During the Civil War, industrious individuals organized schools for emancipated African Americans in the parts of Virginia that were held by the U.S. military. These ad hoc schools served children and adults and typically offered instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other

<sup>5</sup> Cornelius J. Heatwole, *A History of Education in Virginia* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 16-26.

<sup>6</sup> Local tax levies for funding public schools were not identified during research for this MPD. It is possible that some Virginia localities may have had some form of public funding for education during discrete periods. Additional research is needed to ascertain the presence and extent of any public school funding mechanisms that may have existed in Virginia between the 17<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Parochial schools operated by Anglican (later Episcopal), Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, and other religious orders also existed in Virginia during the colonial and early republic periods, but operated primarily through donations from a religious organization and/or individual donors. Such schools were not considered to be public in the same sense as government-sponsored schools.

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introductory subjects. After the war ended, the federally-operated Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau) began to organize public schools for African Americans. Most were located in urban areas, such as Richmond, Norfolk, and Alexandria. Although the Freedmen's Bureau operated only until 1872, the educational opportunities it had provided became a template for subsequent public education projects in Virginia. Wealthy individuals, such as Emily Howland, also occasionally took it upon themselves to found schools for African Americans, and a few individual localities, such as Petersburg, established local public school systems between 1865-1870.

Virginia's 1870 constitution mandated creation of a statewide, racially segregated public education system that would be maintained until the late 1960s. Between 1870-c. 1902, progress toward building new schools and hiring teachers was hampered by competing priorities among the state's political leaders.<sup>7</sup> The General Assembly voted repeatedly to prioritize payments for the state's debts incurred between the 1790s-1850s for financing internal improvements (i.e., canals, roads, and railroads) over public education. Although African Americans generally seized educational opportunities, White government officials and the general public were often skeptical about providing public education to African Americans and Virginia Indians, which they perceived as a potential threat to the entrenched social order that long had benefitted the White ruling class. By 1900, however, the rapid pace of change in American society had convinced a large enough percentage of Virginians that public education was a necessity in order for their children to be equipped to work in emerging industries.<sup>8</sup>

Continued progress toward creating a modern public school system was hampered in 1902, when a convention of politicians ratified a new state constitution without input from voters. The Virginia Supreme Court upheld the legitimacy of the convention in its 1903 *Taylor v. Cunningham* decision. Among the most notorious aspects of the new constitution were mandates for a poll tax and a literacy test, both of which had to be met before an individual Black, White, or Virginia Indian male could cast their vote. Due to the low level of literacy across all working-class racial groups, which had reached about 50 percent by 1900, the new constitution disenfranchised many thousands of voters for decades.<sup>9</sup> The new constitution also enshrined racial segregation in Virginia law, which resulted in legally-sanctioned segregation of all aspects of Virginia life, from schools to parks to private clubs and movie theaters; these laws stood until passage of federal Civil Rights legislation during the 1960s. Conversely, the new constitution created a more effective means for funding public schools, established uniform standards statewide for certifying teachers, made school attendance compulsory, called for a state board of education, and set forth minimum standards for school buildings in terms of size, heat, ventilation, and

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<sup>7</sup> Competing interests have affected funding for public school construction and operations up to the present. The 1870-c. 1902 period is distinguished by the difficulties intrinsic to establishing the Commonwealth's first ever statewide public school system while Virginians also coped with emancipation of enslaved persons, social and political struggles over Black Virginians' civil rights, physical destruction in places subjected to military battles, and general recovery of the state's economy and infrastructure.

<sup>8</sup> Various studies of public education in Virginia have echoed Heatwole's assertion that, after 1870, many White Virginians were skeptical of public schools from the colonial era through the 1860s because the only publicly-funded schools were for destitute children. Heatwole argued that many White parents believed that sending their children to such schools amounted to "pauperizing" themselves. Due to Heatwole's aforementioned influence on the understanding of Virginia's history of public education, his finding has been repeated in numerous secondary sources. It was not within the purview of this MPD to conduct research into records created by middle- and working-class people regarding public education to ascertain the truth of this narrative arc. Therefore, Heatwole's supposition is included here as a footnote but will not be addressed in the main body of the historic context. Future investigations may identify evidence to support or refute Heatwole's claim.

<sup>9</sup> No women had the right to vote in Virginia until ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. Women voters also were subject to Virginia's poll tax and literacy test until both were struck down as unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court's *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* case. The legal framework within which the Supreme Court worked began to be established during the Reconstruction Era with ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

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natural light.<sup>10</sup> The 1902 constitution and the racial inequities it required gradually were dismantled by U.S. Supreme Court decisions and passage of federal civil rights legislation; finally, in 1971, a new constitution, without racial restrictions, was adopted.<sup>11</sup>

The following sections describe the gradual creation of public education in Virginia. First, the limited educational opportunities for all Virginians, and particularly for African Americans, from the colonial era through the 1860s is summarized to provide a frame of reference for the gradual progress that occurred after the Civil War. The Reconstruction Era was a period of major changes in society due to creation of the legal framework that recognized African Americans as full citizens, the 1870 Virginia constitution that required establishment of a statewide public school system, and the early organization and funding of racially segregated, local public schools. The consequences of Virginia's 1902 constitution are discussed, followed by the overall maturation of the segregated public school system and responses among African American communities to the pervasive lack of taxpayer funding for their schools. These events led to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century litigation led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and countless courageous individuals to dismantle racially segregated schooling entirely. The historic context concludes with passage of federal civil rights legislation, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act, as well as major U.S. Supreme Court decisions that struck down the legal basis for segregation, concluding with the *Green v. New Kent County* ruling in 1968.

### How to Use this Multiple Property Document (MPD)

This MPD will facilitate nominations of African American schools in Virginia for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/ or the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR). Due to a variety of circumstances, the historic records of such schools may be incomplete, particularly for schools that predate the 1950s. However, the historic context herein provides the framework and context within which a school may be nominated, regardless if written records specific to that school's operation have been lost. Oral history, historic photos, and the recollections of school alumni and community elders often are valuable sources of information that may be included in a nomination for a school. Much remains to be discovered about the generations of work and advocacy that African Americans poured into their schools and incorporated into the Nation's story. Because the structures, contents and materials of historic schools may be the last surviving evidence in the built environment that represents the work of these communities to use education as a means to seize citizenship and expand democracy, documentation and preservation of these buildings is of utmost importance.

Both the VLR and NRHP recognize three levels of significance for historic properties: local, state, and national. All three levels are equally important to the historic registers. Local significance most often is used to nominate properties for the simple reason that significant historic trends, events, and people with which the property is associated most often affected its local community. Some properties may be significant to a broader geographic area that encompasses multiple localities or an entire state. A property's significance at the statewide level is demonstrated by the reach of its influence due to important historic events and/ or people at the property. As an example, leaders of the Virginia Teachers Association, a statewide professional organization for Black teachers, successfully advocated for a variety of improvements that directly affected advancement opportunities for students, teachers, and administrators at African American schools. The school, office, or dwelling where he or

<sup>10</sup> Susan Breitner, "Constitutional Convention, Virginia (1901–1902)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/constitutional-convention-virginia-1901-1902>.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia has had six constitutions, in 1776, 1830, 1851, 1864, 1870, 1902, and 1971; and numerous constitutional amendments. Only the 1870 and 1902 constitutions are discussed herein with reference to their influence on public education for Black Virginians.

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she was based during their time as a leader of the VTA, therefore, may have statewide significance as the place most closely associated with their historically significant work. The individual schools where he or she taught over the course of a lengthy career may be significant at the local level as a place where that person's influence was felt in the community's school. National significance is ascertained in a similar fashion. A property with national significance is directly associated with the history of the United States because it illustrates the nationwide impact of events or persons. At times, a property may have more than one level of significance.<sup>12</sup> Staff at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) will assist applicants with identifying the applicable level of significance for the place that will be nominated for listing in the VLR and/or NRHP.<sup>13</sup>

## AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF VIRGINIA, C. 1870-C. 1968

### Educational Opportunities in Virginia, Colonial Era to 1860

From the arrival in 1607 of the first English colonists in Virginia until 1776, no organized, colony-wide public school system existed in Virginia. During this 170-year period, for people of European and African descent,<sup>14</sup> families with means typically paid private tutors to educate their children in whatever subjects and level of detail they deemed appropriate. Religious instruction, with emphasis on teaching children to read the Christian bible, often was heavily emphasized in tutoring for a young student. Wealthy young men and women had additional opportunities for education through tutoring or other means, depending on their families' interest in higher learning. Male Virginians could attend the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, which was founded on February 8, 1693, with a royal charter authorizing a "College of Divinity, Philosophy, Languages, and other good Arts and Sciences."<sup>15</sup> A Grammar School was established at the College to prepare male students for a classical education rooted in study of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. In families that were not wealthy or who preferred to focus on practical education, children learned from their elders skills that were necessary for daily living and assuring their families' overall welfare. Children also routinely were apprenticed to an adult, who may have been a relative or friend of the family, in order to learn a trade. Destitute families had almost no access to formal education during the colonial era.<sup>16</sup>

No one in colonial Virginia was forbidden access to education by law. Regarding enslaved people, however, only their enslavers decided what type and extent of education they would receive. Enslaved Africans recently brought to Virginia through the international slave trade usually had not had an opportunity to learn to speak English and, often, they practiced religions other than that of the colony's established Anglican Church. Some White enslavers did not believe that Africans could or should practice Christian worship, while Anglican

<sup>12</sup> Far more detailed guidance about determining a property's level of significance is available in the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, which is available online at [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15\\_web508.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> DHR's staff directory is at <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/staff-directory/>.

<sup>14</sup> African American educational opportunities that also were available to White children in Virginia are identified as such throughout this MPD. Often, such discussions will concern differences in educational opportunities between the two groups. Educational programs that pertain solely to African American students are identified as such. Provision of different types of education to children of Native American descent is not within the scope of this MPD, but certainly is an important topic worthy of documentation with an MPD.

<sup>15</sup> "About W&M: History & Traditions," The College of William and Mary, no date, <https://www.wm.edu/about/history/>.

<sup>16</sup> Both children and adults of all genders engaged in paid employment in colonial Virginia, with "records at Colonial Williamsburg [showing] women working in nearly every trade, owning businesses, buying and selling goods at high rate for merchant practices, running taverns, printing a newspaper, and so on. If it is an aspect of colonial economics, women are very much present." See Amanda Doggett, "To Make Ends Meet: Working Women in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century," March 18, 2021, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/living-history/to-makes-ends-meet/>.

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religious leaders argued that encouraging conversion to Christianity was integral to their work. Occasionally, the two perspectives found common ground through selective use of limited schooling and biblical verses to reinforce the necessity for “servants to obey masters,” while also teaching newly enslaved people to speak and understand English. Anglican clergy conceded to this approach while also prioritizing baptism of enslaved people.<sup>17</sup> The assumption that White enslavers had authority to decide the purpose and worth of education for people they enslaved created an enduring tradition (later encoded in law) of restrictions on all African Americans’ educational opportunities. Paternalism, racism, and distrust were at the root of this centuries-long practice. Enslaved Virginians of African descent responded in a variety of ways that included 1) surreptitious instruction at least sufficient for reading, writing, and basic arithmetic; 2) arguing for religious instruction, in keeping with the Protestant belief in self-determination that dovetailed with self-directed study of the Christian bible rather than merely receiving biblical lessons from clergy; and 3) seeking other self-improvement opportunities without their enslavers’ knowledge. In addition to these methods, Black Virginians who were not enslaved also sometimes had the option of moving to places that allowed them greater opportunities, both in the North American colonies and across the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>18</sup>

*Bray Schools*

The first forays into “public” schooling in colonial Virginia typically were limited in availability, scope, and duration. For example, the English Crown authorized the Anglican Church to operate schools for orphans and children of “paupers” or otherwise destitute families. With regard to educating enslaved persons, the Associates of Dr. Bray, a philanthropic organization founded in 1724, established a series of schools in New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia for the purpose of providing religious instruction to enslaved people. Virginia’s first Bray School was located near the College of William & Mary; a second operated for a time in Fredericksburg. Other schools that copied the Bray model also existed around the Virginia colony, usually at the behest of an enslaver; interestingly, some entrusted teaching duties to enslaved men. The total number of enslaved children who received instruction at the Bray schools and similar private schools is not known, but estimates are that perhaps 200 students attended the Williamsburg school and another 40 participated in the Fredericksburg school. Records of schools condoned by enslavers are rare.<sup>19</sup> Due to the American Revolution, all Bray schools ceased operation during the mid-1770s as the Anglican Church no longer functioned as the established church in Virginia. Education for most White children was fairly similar to that provided to African

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<sup>17</sup> Antonio Bly, “Literacy and Education of the Enslaved in Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-literacy-and-education-in-virginia>; Linda H. Rowe, *A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1997, published as Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 0373* (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2000), p. 4-6. Both Anglican Church officials and lay members occasionally struggled with reconciling their religious beliefs about the equality of all Christians with the routine practice of enslaving people of African descent. Members of other religious sects, such as the Religious Society of Friends, reached consensus objections to slavery during the late 17<sup>th</sup> through mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. These perspectives ultimately were the seeds for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century abolitionist movement. For example, see Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank, eds., *Quakers and Abolition* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2014). Many enslavers, on the other hand, remained intransigent in their hostility to the concept of educating anyone who was not part of the elite planter class.

<sup>18</sup> Linda H. Rowe, *A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1997, published as Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 0373* (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2000), p. 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Antonio Bly, “Literacy and Education of the Enslaved in Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-literacy-and-education-in-virginia>.



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American students, with religious instruction receiving the most emphasis. Anglican priests often operated ad hoc schools where they tutored White children for a fee.<sup>20</sup>

Among current critiques of the colonial-era schools are the deleterious effects of their founders' motives for emphasizing religious and "moral" instruction to students. Education advocates at the time argued that all children and society benefitted from instilling socially-approved values in young minds in order to lead young people to becoming productive adults contributing to the greater good of society, a goal that has changed little across the succeeding centuries. Status quo racial, gender, and class norms, however, also were reinforced to maintain Virginia's social order, which consisted of a small, elite class of "planters" who controlled the colony's political, economic, religious, and social realms, a much larger population of free White people of varying levels of economic and political success, free persons of color,<sup>21</sup> and enslaved people of African descent. Despite these limitations, approximately 5 percent of enslaved people in Virginia were literate by the time the American Revolutionary War began.<sup>22</sup>

*Private Tutors, "Pay" Schools, and the Virginia Literary Fund*

Following the American Revolution, some of the intellectual elites whose philosophies had propelled the decision to overthrow English rule turned their attention to creating an educated and informed citizenry capable of sustaining the new republic. Thomas Jefferson's promotion of education as a means of instilling civil responsibilities in the newly independent United States is among the best known. Between 1779-1784, he proposed a public education system that would provide three years of education to boys and girls, as well as a system for educating enslaved persons, but neither garnered sufficient support from his peers. In 1817, Jefferson submitted to the General Assembly a bill for authorizing a statewide system of public education, which also failed.<sup>23</sup>

During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, White Virginians of means continued to hire tutors for their children. More often, a group of White families pooled resources to create a neighborhood "pay" school.<sup>24</sup> Contributing parents selected the school's location, usually at a site owned by one of the families, such as a fallow field, paid for a schoolhouse to be constructed, hired a teacher, and agreed on the curriculum to be taught. Teachers usually

<sup>20</sup> William Allen Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, May 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 55-56; Linda H. Rowe, *A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1997*, published as Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 0373 (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2000), p. 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> By about 1800, the term "free person of color" was assigned to anyone who was not enslaved but who did not appear to be entirely White in their lineage. In Virginia, Native Americans and anyone who was not enslaved but had some trace of African ancestry was classified by government officials, such as census takers, as a "free person of color." Native Americans insisted upon proper identification of their tribal association whenever possible, but White authorities often ignored these entreaties.

<sup>22</sup> Antonio Bly, "Literacy and Education of the Enslaved in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-literacy-and-education-in-virginia>.

<sup>23</sup> Linda H. Rowe, *A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1997*, published as Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 0373 (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2000), p. 6-7; "Thomas Jefferson's Bill for Establishing A System of Public Education, [Ca. 24 October 1817]," Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-12-02-0095>; Antonio Bly, "Literacy and Education of the Enslaved in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-literacy-and-education-in-virginia>.

<sup>24</sup> These locally organized, fee-charging schools also were known as "Old Field Schools" and as "community" schools.

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received a fee per pupil, which meant that their total salary depended on the number of students enrolled.<sup>25</sup> Private boarding schools also gradually became more numerous across the Commonwealth. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, numerous private academies for both boys and girls operated throughout Virginia. Of varying quality, they typically lacked any measurable standards for their curricula, duration of instruction, and academic rigor. In 1796, the General Assembly had passed legislation allowing county governments to create “primary” schools to educate children from poor families. Schools sponsored by Presbyterian, Catholic, and Episcopal churches to educate the poorest children also were permitted to operate in Virginia. Many White Virginians, however, rejected these limited “public” schools because they objected to paying taxes for the education of others’ children. As of 1846, just nine counties had acted to establish a primary school within their respective jurisdictions.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in 1811, the General Assembly established a Literary Fund that initially was intended to provide loans to localities seeking to “establish schools for the education of the poor.”<sup>27</sup> Reflective of Virginians’ longstanding opposition to taxes, revenues for the Literary Fund were raised from “fines, forfeitures, penalties, confiscations, escheats and debt repayment for the War of 1812.”<sup>28</sup> With only a small portion of its resources being utilized for public primary schools, in 1818 state legislators used the Literary Fund to set aside \$15,000 annually to support the newly established University of Virginia, which not coincidentally was founded by Thomas Jefferson; Virginia Military Institute, the Commonwealth’s only other public institution of higher education, received an annual \$7,500 allocation from the Literary Fund. By 1850, just two localities in Virginia had created locality-wide public schools systems: the City of Norfolk and neighboring Norfolk County.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> William Allen Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, May 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 55-56; Richard G. Salmon, “The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today’s Difficulties,” *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p.1-2; Cornelius J. Heatwole, *A History of Education in Virginia* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 48-57. Heatwole concluded that Virginia’s undemocratic society, controlled as it was by a small, wealthy class, could not accept the democratic ideal of a free and educated citizenry for the betterment of the new republic. Planters also were loath to tax themselves for an educational system they themselves would not use. See *A History of Education in Virginia*, p. 101. Heatwole’s conclusions were repeated in numerous studies of Virginia’s history of public schooling.

<sup>26</sup> Marianne Julienne and Brent Tarter, “The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the->; “... To The Encouragement Of Learning”: Virginia’s Literary Fund,” *The UnCommonWealth: Voices from the Library of Virginia*, November 23, 2022, <https://uncommonwealth.virginiamemory.com/blog/2022/11/23/to-the-encouragement-of-learning-virginias-literary-fund/>; Antonio Bly, “Literacy and Education of the Enslaved in Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slave-literacy-and-education-in-virginia>; William Allen Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, May 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 55-57.

<sup>27</sup> “... To The Encouragement Of Learning”: Virginia’s Literary Fund,” *The UnCommonWealth: Voices from the Library of Virginia*, November 23, 2022, <https://uncommonwealth.virginiamemory.com/blog/2022/11/23/to-the-encouragement-of-learning-virginias-literary-fund/>; Linda H. Rowe, *A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1997*, published as Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series – 0373 (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2000), p. 7; Cornelius J. Heatwole, *A History of Education in Virginia* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 104-107. Since the Literary Fund was created, the General Assembly has had a long and unfortunate history of diverting monies from the Literary Fund to noneducational purposes, which has contributed to chronic underfunding of public schools in the Commonwealth into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. See Richard G. Salmon, “The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today’s Difficulties,” *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 1-12. For a detailed history of the Literary Fund, see Foney G. Mullins, “A History of the Literary Fund as a Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia,” D.Ed. dissertation, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va.

<sup>28</sup> Richard G. Salmon, “The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today’s Difficulties,” *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Marianne Julienne and Brent Tarter, “The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the->; William Allen

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### *State Restrictions on Educational Opportunities*

Meanwhile, the few educational opportunities previously available to enslaved African Americans and many free people of color largely were eliminated between 1800-1860. White enslavers grew increasingly worried about slave insurrections in the wake of the successful revolt in Haiti in 1791 and events in Virginia, such as the carefully planned Gabriel's Rebellion in 1800 and Nat Turner's Revolt in 1831. Believing that literacy aided planning of such rebellions, enslavers sought to cut off every avenue to schooling of any kind for enslaved persons. Responding to this pressure, between 1805-1832 the Virginia General Assembly passed a series of laws that severely restricted the movements and autonomy of all African Americans in the state and were especially pernicious toward enslaved persons. Formal educational opportunities for free African Americans evaporated and teaching of enslaved people to read and write was outlawed entirely.<sup>30</sup> Although open operation of schools for African Americans generally ceased, both free and enslaved individuals continued to find opportunities to learn to read and write, as well as resisting other restrictions imposed upon them by race-based laws.<sup>31</sup>

### *"Common" Schools*

While Virginia and other slaveholding states rejected public education during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, government-funded schools began to be welcomed elsewhere in the U.S., particularly the industrial Northeast. During the 1830s, Horace Mann, secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, began to advocate for "common" schools<sup>32</sup> that would be supported by taxpayers and open to all students regardless of race and without charge of any fees. Mann and his supporters subscribed to the notion that formal schooling was

Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, May 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 55-56; Kenny Barnes, "Virginia and the Morrill Act of 1862," Online Exhibit: The Land Grant System Black Inclusion and Community Building, Virginia Tech, no date, <https://historylab.squarespace.com/the-land-grant-system-virginia-and-the-morrill-act-of-1862>.

<sup>30</sup> Antonio Bly, "Literacy and Education of the Enslaved in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.virginia.org/entries/slave-literacy-and-education-in-virginia>.

<sup>31</sup> Evidence has been found indicating that enforcement of draconian laws varied widely throughout Virginia. See Ellen D. Katz, "African-American Freedom in Antebellum Cumberland County, Virginia," *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, April 1995 (Vol. 70, No. 3), [https://scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu/cklawreview/vol70/iss3/4/?utm\\_source=scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu%2Fcklawreview%2Fvol70%2Fiss3%2F4&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu/cklawreview/vol70/iss3/4/?utm_source=scholarship.kentlaw.iit.edu%2Fcklawreview%2Fvol70%2Fiss3%2F4&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages), pp. 927-991. Similar to Heatwole, Katz argues that, during the antebellum era, Virginia law was structured to address only two classes although Katz divided the groups by race and legal status, Whites and enslaved African Americans. Free persons of color occupied a "third class" whose precarious legal condition nevertheless allowed them to acquire real property. Katz found that, since the colonial era in Virginia, property ownership had endowed individuals with additional legal recognition, such as the right to enter contracts, to file litigation regarding breach of contract, and to testify in court. For these reasons, in addition to providing a means to build generational wealth, Black Virginians placed a premium on land ownership beginning during the colonial era and continuing throughout the Black freedom struggle (further information about this struggle can be found in the webinar series by the Michigan Council for the Social Studies at <https://mcssmi.org/The-Long-Civil-Rights-Movement>). Note that Jacquelyn Dowd Hall is credited with originating the term "Long Civil Rights Movement" in the article, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History*, March 2005, <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/movinglr/longcivilrights.pdf> pp. 1233-1263. Historian Larissa Smith asserts that Hall sees the "civil rights unionism" of the 1930s-1940s that evolved from the coalition-building of the Great Depression-Era "New Deal and the Popular Front as the 'decisive first phase' of the Long Civil Rights Movement. Certainly, Black activists such as Luther Porter Jackson were open to and worked to forge coalitions with white activists where they could, but those coalitions were always tentative. Moreover, those groups – such as the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, the Southern School for Workers, and labor unions who embraced racial equality – did not survive the domestic anticommunism of the late 1940s and early 1950s. What was left standing was the NAACP and the struggle waged by Black communities." Larissa Smith, State Review Board member, June 11, 2025, review comments for African American Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Documentation Form, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

<sup>32</sup> Such schools also were referred to as "primary" schools in some studies.

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necessary to assure a literate, productive, and civically engaged populace, essentially the same goals as those espoused by Virginia's colonial-era education advocates. The common school movement took root in Northeastern cities and prompted creation of the first statewide public school systems in the country. Importantly, by this time, the highly decentralized nature of public education in the United States had been established and continues up to the present. The rationale lay in the early republic era's preference for a weak federal government: "Because the Constitution does not mention education governance in particular, states have primary authority over education. States [would] make key decisions about the number of school days, academic content standards, testing, graduation, teacher certification, and much more, while passing on some authority to local districts and school boards."<sup>33</sup> Southern states, however, including Virginia, opted against systematic adoption of public school systems and, instead, continued with a patchwork of limited private and public options that failed to reach the majority of potential students. Among the consequences of Virginia's disinterest in public education was a low literacy rate, ranging from 25 to 50 percent of White Virginians by 1850. That literacy among Black Virginians was in the same range, however, is evidence that enslaved and free people of color had found ways to obtain at least some education despite laws forbidding their access to schooling.<sup>34</sup>

### Educational Opportunities for African Americans in Virginia, 1861-1869

The outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861 upended Virginia's long-established social and political order. The vast majority of White Virginians of all classes, regardless if they personally enslaved anyone, supported the Confederate States of America and its cause to retain slavery as a cornerstone of society.<sup>35</sup> U.S. government and military officials initially refused enlistment of African American volunteers in the U.S. military when armed conflict began. In mid-1861, however, U.S. General Benjamin Butler decreed that self-emancipated African Americans were "contrabands of war" because the Confederate military had forced enslaved Black Virginians to build earthworks and perform other labor for military purposes. The U.S. Congress quickly passed what became known as the First and Second Confiscation Acts, which freed all enslaved persons in territory occupied by U.S. military forces and authorized the U.S. military to employ freedom seekers as wage laborers. Thereafter, all territory in the Confederate states that was held by U.S. military forces was considered "free" and freedom-seeking African Americans traveled to these areas by whatever means they could find. Federal resistance to enlisting Black men in the U.S. military continued through 1862 but Black volunteers and some White military officers organized all-Black units anyway. The strong desire of African Americans to fight for their freedom, coupled with the war's staggering toll in casualties, convinced U.S. officials to abandon restrictions on Black military service. President Abraham Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, included authorization for all Black men to enlist in the U.S. army; however, soldiers were assigned to the racially segregated United States Colored Troops (USCT) and placed under command of White

<sup>33</sup> Nancy Kober and Diane Stark Rentner, "History and Evolution of Public Education in the US," Center on Education Policy, Graduate School of Education & Human Development, The George Washington University, Washington D.C., 2020, p. 6

<sup>34</sup> Nancy Kober and Diane Stark Rentner, "History and Evolution of Public Education in the U.S.," Center for Education Policy, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 2020, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606970.pdf>, p. 3; William Allen Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, May 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 55-56.

<sup>35</sup> For the origin of the term "cornerstone" with regard to slavery, see Alexander H. Stephens, "Corner Stone Speech," Speech, March 21, 1861, reproduced at Teaching American History, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/the-corner-stone-speech/>, and Henry Cleveland, *Alexander H. Stephens in Public and Private with Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1866), digitized at <https://archive.org/details/alexanderhstephe6114clev/mode/2up>, pp. 717-729.

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officers.<sup>36</sup> In 1864, USCT soldiers also voted in the presidential election. Individuals from Northern states that allowed absentee voting for soldiers participated in the election in this fashion. The 5<sup>th</sup> USCT were among the U.S. troops that had captured New Market Heights and Fort Harrison in Henrico County, Virginia, on September 29, 1864. The USCT's contributions and valor later were recognized when 14 African American soldiers were later awarded the Medal of Honor for their battlefield actions. Thirty-nine days later, on November 8, 1864, 194 members of the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT voted for the candidate of their choice.<sup>37</sup>

### *United States Colored Troops (USCT) and Regimental Schools*

Ultimately, over 185,000 African Americans served in the USCT. The men distinguished themselves through their service on the battlefield in every major theater of the war, as well as their eagerness for self-improvement and education. Recognizing the need for literate soldiers to carry out military directives and to understand maps, commanders organized "regimental schools" in securely held territory, through which USCT soldiers could learn to read, write, and calculate. Military chaplains often doubled as teachers in the regimental schools. In some documented cases, Black soldiers organized their own schools, purchased books, and hired teachers. Buildings of all types, including churches, abandoned dwellings and government buildings, and unused barracks, were converted to schoolhouses.<sup>38</sup>

### *Schools Supported by Private Volunteers and Donations*

Black women and children also sought freedom by reaching Union territory, sometimes accompanying or following a male relative and other times on their own. As the amount of U.S.-held territory in Virginia increased during the war, "slaveholders near Union armies in northern Virginia, southeastern Virginia, and along the Chesapeake Bay reported frequent mass exoduses."<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, freedom seekers from throughout Virginia opted for self-emancipation rather than waiting for liberation. At military camps, just as soldiers did, civilian men and women used wages from their employment as laborers, nurses, cooks, laundresses, sutlers, and other occupations to create schools for their children. They also received aid from religious societies whose members held the conviction that all people had the right to read sacred texts. The American Missionary Association (AMA) offered assistance early in the war to the emancipated communities. The first "Sabbath School," which provided instruction to adults and children, was established on September 15, 1861, by AMA missionary L. C. Lockwood. Just two days later, Mary S. Peake opened a "day school" for African Americans in Hampton. Peake, a free African American woman, had been educated in Alexandria before the war began. "Day schools" in the parlance of the period were those attended by students only during the day, as opposed to boarding schools, where students lived full time while attending school. In 1863, General Butler used government funds to continue Peake's work, opening the Butler School for Negro Children. The AMA, meanwhile, opened additional schools in U.S. military-held territory in Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth,

<sup>36</sup> Andre Fleche, "United States Colored Troops, The," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/united-states-colored-troops-the>.

<sup>37</sup> "Richmond National Battlefield Park to Honor Black Soldiers' Voting in 1864," *Richmond Free Press*, October 10, 2024, <https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2024/oct/10/richmond-national-battlefield-park-to-honor-black-soldiers-voting-in-1864/>.

<sup>38</sup> Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, and Leslie S. Rowland, "Emancipated Citizens," *Constitution* Vol. 6 (Fall 1994), [https://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Emancipated%20Citizens%20\(Constitution\).pdf](https://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Emancipated%20Citizens%20(Constitution).pdf), p. 78–81; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> Jaime Martinez, "Slavery during the Civil War," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slavery-during-the-civil-war>.

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Yorktown, and Suffolk. In addition to AMA, the Society of Friends, National Freedmen's Relief Association, and Boston Educational Society opened schools in Virginia while the war still raged.<sup>40</sup>

### *Freedmen's Bureau Schools*

As soon as the war ended, emancipated people and Black military veterans poured their energies into organizing schools, churches, cemeteries, and mutual aid societies as they began to build autonomous communities throughout Virginia. An important source of federal assistance was the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, often referred to as the Freedmen's Bureau, established by the War Department on March 3, 1865. The Bureau supervised relief and educational activities for freedpeople as well as everyone displaced by the war (regardless of race), including provision of food, clothing, housing, medical aid, schools, and legal assistance. The Bureau also "assumed custody of confiscated lands or property in the former Confederate States, border states, District of Columbia, and Indian Territory." Such property had been confiscated from individuals and governments that took up arms against the U.S. Working with the Bureau's assistance, Northern benevolent societies, such as the AMA, as well as wealthy individuals and Black churches eagerly offered donations of every kind. A top priority was schools, from the elementary through college levels and for both children and adults. Important to note is that African Americans in Virginia quickly demonstrated their desire for schools to be integrated. Historian Luther P. Jackson documented a protest that occurred in December 1867 in Elizabeth City and Warwick counties (including today's cities of Hampton and Newport News), when more than 500 Emancipated people signed a petition to abolish racial segregation on railroads and steamships and in public schools.<sup>41</sup> A measure of the high demand for education among emancipated people was reported in January 1866, less than a year after the Civil War's end: 90 schools staffed by 195 teachers were already in operation with 12,898 students enrolled. Other assistance included enforcing contracts (including for labor and for land sales) between former enslavers and freed persons, helping Black people to find relatives and/or to relocate, assisting Black veterans with obtaining back pay, bounty payments, and pensions, and legalizing marriages of freed people that, prior to the Civil War, had not been recognized under state law when enslaved people were considered to be property. Much of this work was accomplished in just three-and-a-half years, from June 1865-December 1868.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, and Leslie S. Rowland, "Emancipated Citizens," *Constitution* Vol. 6 (Fall 1994), [https://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Emancipated%20Citizens%20\(Constitution\).pdf](https://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Emancipated%20Citizens%20(Constitution).pdf), p. 78–79; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 137-138.

<sup>41</sup> Luther P. Jackson, a significant scholar and civil rights activist, wrote a recurring newspaper column about "Rights and Duties in a Democracy" during the 1940s. Jackson used his column to educate readers about both the rights and responsibilities that African Americans held toward themselves, their communities, and the nation. He also wrote about the historical contributions of Black men and women. Jackson's manifold career included his tenure as a history professor and chair of the History Department at Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University) and a longtime association with Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History) After earning degrees from Fisk University, Columbia University, and a doctorate from the University of Chicago, Jackson conducted groundbreaking research in the history of African Americans by utilizing primary source materials, "including birth, marriage, and death records, tax records, property deeds, legal and court records, military records, and other government documents," newspapers, family papers, and oral history interviews. The exacting research and analysis that Jackson undertook provided a methodology for documenting the histories of people often marginalized or excluded from historical narratives written by White historians. Jackson's work also disproved the widely held assumption among White scholars that Black Americans had little history other than the subjugation of slavery. See "Luther Porter Jackson – Highlighting Black History," Document Bank of Virginia, Library of Virginia, 2025, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/290>.

<sup>42</sup> "Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction," National Park Service, January 9, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/anjo/andrew-johnson-and-reconstruction.htm>; "The Freedmen's Bureau," National Archives, Research Our Records, African American Heritage, no date,

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The Bureau also responded to “White terrorists [who] threatened and attacked teachers and students, and burned down schoolhouses along with Black churches and businesses to intimidate Black communities.”<sup>43</sup> For example, in then-rural Fairfax County where U.S. military forces held territory, approximately 15 schools were established between 1864-1868. According to additional documentation for the Floris Historic District (NRHP 2017; 029-5179), most of the schools were constructed on land purchased and donated by Northerners. One such example was the Herndon School, also known as the Frying Pan School, a reference to a nearby community. Completed in June 1866, this schoolhouse once stood northwest of the current historic district boundary on land owned by John Webster of New York. Just five months later, a group of unknown individuals set the building on fire. The Freedmen’s Bureau quickly arranged for construction of a new building using materials supplied by the Bureau and the log schoolhouse opened on January 2, 1867.<sup>44</sup>

*Teacher Training and Industrial Education*

Ralza Manly served as the Freedmen’s Bureau’s Superintendent of Education in Virginia. Among his priorities was the creation of the Richmond Normal & High School, a training school for Black teachers designed to enable Black communities to provide instruction to Black children without reliance upon White educators.<sup>45</sup> The Freedmen’s Bureau’s Ninth District Superintendent, Brigadier General Samuel Armstrong, obtained sufficient funds from the AMA to found the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (today’s Hampton University).<sup>46</sup> “Normal schools,” as they were known at the time, focused on teacher training with a curriculum that typically offered two years of instruction. They were intended to provide training for would-be elementary school teachers, for whom demand was greatest in Virginia with the opening of hundreds of new elementary schools occurring across the state. While the majority of normal school students were women, men also could enroll in normal schools. No standardized training requirements, however, existed yet in Virginia. Some teachers in newly formed elementary schools had just a few months of training whereas others had completed multiple years of formal instruction. The need for normal and industrial schools was great. Looking back on the period, Virginia education leader James Solomon Russell wrote, “scarcely five out of a hundred [local African Americans] could read and write. The schools were poor, terms short (three or four months), teachers for the most part poorly trained, and nine-tenths of the [Black] people were tenants and renters.”<sup>47</sup>

[https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau?\\_ga=2.131340751.1335478042.1711646823-291601855.1705958387](https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau?_ga=2.131340751.1335478042.1711646823-291601855.1705958387); “The Freedmen’s Bureau: New Beginnings for Recently Freed African Americans,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, no date, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/freedmens-bureau-new-beginnings-recently-freed>; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 140-141.

<sup>43</sup> “The Freedmen’s Bureau: New Beginnings for Recently Freed African Americans,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, no date, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/freedmens-bureau-new-beginnings-recently-freed>.

<sup>44</sup> Anna Maas and Jean Stoll, “Floris Historic District Additional Documentation,” January 2017, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/029-5179/>, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Scott Britton Hansen, “Education for All: The Freedmen’s Bureau Schools in Richmond and Petersburg, 1865-1870,” Master’s Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, May 2008, <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2399&context=etd>, p. 11, 94-95. Although White educators, benevolent organizations, and philanthropists from Northern states often supported formal education for African Americans, they often approached Black communities with paternalistic beliefs that inherently limited the agency of individual African Americans. White southerners, including educators, on the other hand, maintained a generally hostile attitude toward schools for Black people, believing that formal education would cause African Americans to forget their “place” in the traditional Southern hierarchy that placed wealthy White people at the pinnacle and people of color at the bottom of society.

<sup>46</sup> “History,” Hampton University, no date, <https://home.hamptonu.edu/about/history/>.

<sup>47</sup> “Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged],” Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p.8, 10. For a detailed history of normal schools as



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Numerous Black and White educators, including Russell and Manly, also embraced the concept of “industrial education” for African American freedpeople. During the 1870s, the groundbreaking of this philosophy occurred at Hampton Institute, and the combination of academic and industrial education, which included home economics, thereafter long was known as the “Hampton Model.” During the slavery era and the war years, many Black families had been fragmented and reunification required months, if not years. In the interim, Black women often were heads of households and needed paid employment to support their families. White educators and benevolent societies believed that “industrial education” would provide women with the necessary skills to take jobs deemed appropriate for their sex at the time, such as sewing, laundering, child care, and cooking. Under Manly’s direction, industrial schools were established in both Richmond and Petersburg, along with primary schools for children.<sup>48</sup> For men, too, industrial education was presented as their best option for achieving autonomy. Recognizing both the dire circumstances in which the majority of Black Virginians lived, as well as the fragility of White tolerance for their independence, Russell argued that “a school of longer term, giving both academic and industrial training so as to increase [students’] economic and industrial efficiency, was their great need, and that material and social uplift could only come through increased efficiency, industry and thrift” as was taught at industrial schools.<sup>49</sup> The emphasis on trades education also was reflective of the limited employment opportunities available to Black men in Virginia and other southern states. Widespread discriminatory employment practices limited most Black men to menial jobs, often those that required the dirtiest and most dangerous work in industry, agriculture, and construction. By providing formal training in industrial and agricultural trades, educators sought to impart to Black students the skills necessary to become independent entrepreneurs and landowners with more control over their livelihoods.

Reliance on industrial training, in particular, had many shortcomings that Black advocates readily identified. A top concern related to emphasis on industrial training at the expense of academic coursework. At the time, elite White culture was considered synonymous with American culture and many African Americans had ambitions to contribute to and benefit from the arts and professions of late 19<sup>th</sup> century American society. Academic instruction as well as specialized training, whether the student wished to become a sculptor, writer, accountant, or lawyer, was necessary not only to gain entrance to such fields but to convey the legitimacy of African Americans engaged in these pursuits. By matching or exceeding the accomplishments of White contemporaries, Black students would demonstrate their right to occupy leadership positions and to shape social, political, and economic spheres for the benefit of all. Second, by attaining influential positions, Black Americans could begin the work of eliminating the discriminatory practices that hindered racial progress, such as the employment practices described above. These ambitions did not begin during the Reconstruction Era; free people of African descent had argued for these rights since the colonial era. With the elimination of slavery in the U.S., African Americans believed they were now positioned to achieve long-deferred goals for themselves and their communities.

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conceptualized during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early 1920s, see Betty Jo Whitaker Simmons, *An Historical Analysis of the Development of Teacher Training at the State Normal School, Farmville, Virginia, 1884-1924*, Ph.D. dissertation, March 1988, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.

<sup>48</sup> Scott Britton Hansen, “Education for All: The Freedmen’s Bureau Schools in Richmond and Petersburg, 1865-1870,” Master’s Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, May 2008, <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2399&context=etd>, p. 110-116; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 213-215.

<sup>49</sup> “Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged],” Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p.8, 10.

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*Privately-Funded Schools*

In addition to the Freedmen's schools, privately sponsored schools also were founded. In Petersburg, for example, the Episcopal Church (as did many other denominations as well as wealthy individuals) had sponsored a freedmen's school and Sunday school for Black people immediately after the war. Northern White women and volunteers from the local Grace and St. Paul's Episcopal Churches, both of which had majority White congregations but also included Black members, supported the schools. In February 1868, the privately-funded Peabody Education Fund donated \$2,000 toward establishing a public school system in Petersburg, on the condition that the City raise another \$20,000 for the purpose, which was accomplished. The robust support for education allowed the City of Petersburg to organize its tuition-free public school system in 1868, two years prior to the creation of Virginia's statewide public school system in 1870. Giles Buckner Cooke, a White former Confederate officer, served as principal of the freedmen's school, dubbed Elementary School No. 1. With its all-Black student enrollment, Elementary School No. 1, also known as Harrison Street School, was the first public school to open in the city.<sup>50</sup> Also in Petersburg, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia established an "annex" to its Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria that came to be known as Bishop Payne Divinity School. The school provided thorough academic preparation to Black men from all Protestant denominations, including Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal (AME), and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) to serve as ministers and, thus, advanced the goal held by many Black communities to establish self-sufficient churches and worship practices.<sup>51</sup> Individuals often led creation of schools for African Americans immediately after the war. In Harrisonburg, Martha Smith and Phoeby Libby, both natives of Maine, founded a "mission school" in 1868. Classes first convened in an upper story of the Scanlon Hotel, then moved to the basement of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.<sup>52</sup> A frame, one-room schoolhouse was erected in 1870 and remained in use until 1882. By this time, the school had been absorbed into the local public school system and a new brick building with four classrooms was erected. Now called the Effinger Street School, the building remained in use until the late 1930s.<sup>53</sup>

African Americans themselves also funded schools. Their heroic measures demonstrated their commitment to educating their children despite the economic difficulties of the postwar years and the ongoing prejudices they

<sup>50</sup> Joan Gunderson, "Segregating the Sacred in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, 1864-1948," Panel presentation: "How Southern Protestants Made (and Remade) Race," American Society of Church History, January 5, 2009, New York City, [https://www.academia.edu/104019967/\\_Segregating\\_the\\_Sacred\\_in\\_the\\_Episcopal\\_Diocese\\_of\\_Virginia\\_1865\\_1948\\_?ri\\_id=453328](https://www.academia.edu/104019967/_Segregating_the_Sacred_in_the_Episcopal_Diocese_of_Virginia_1865_1948_?ri_id=453328), p. 3; William Obrochta & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "Giles Buckner Cooke (1838-1937)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/cooke-giles-buckner-1838-1937/>.

<sup>51</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 17-18; George Freeman Bragg, *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore: Church Advocate Press, 1922), p. 174; Nicole Myers Turner, *Soul Liberty: The Evolution of Black Religious Politics in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), p. 89-94. Prior to the Civil War, Virginia state law had required White supervision of all Black congregations, whether composed of enslaved or free African Americans. Establishing worship practices that suited their own beliefs and needs was a high priority for many Black Virginians after the war.

<sup>52</sup> The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, conferenced formed in Virginia in 1846; congregations with conservative Southerners who supported enslavement created the conference after splitting with antislavery congregations. In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, joined eight other denominational conferences to create the United Methodist Church conference in Virginia. See "XIII. Historical Statement," *Journal of the Virginia Annual Conference*, <https://doc.vaumc.org/2012Journal/Historicalstatement.pdf>, p. 201.

<sup>53</sup> Maral S. Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Lucy F. Simms School," National Register nomination, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/115-5035/>, p. 8/5-8/6. Absorption of postwar, privately-financed schools routinely occurred in numerous jurisdictions as local school boards undertook creation of public school systems from the 1870s-1890s. The Effinger Street School was notable as the place where educator Lucy F. Simms taught classes for decades. The maturation of public school systems and Simms's significance are discussed in subsequent sections below.

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faced from White Virginians who resented their emancipation. Often such support came in the form of their own labor and materials either purchased or donated by the community to build and maintain school buildings. Additionally, in 1867, historian Alrutheus Ambush Taylor wrote, “the freedmen contributed to the support of 155 schools and supported 68 completely. In communities requiring tuition, parents paid sums varying from 10 cents to 50 cents weekly, and aggregating \$12,286.50 in 1870. In 1870, they contributed to the support of 215 schools and owned 111 buildings.”<sup>54</sup> The Freedmen’s Bureau stopped supporting schools in Virginia in 1870 because the Commonwealth’s public school system was getting underway. By this time, 18,000 Black students were enrolled in schools staffed by 412 teachers.<sup>55</sup>

Due to the Freedmen’s Bureau’s financial constraints, few new school buildings for Black students were erected between 1865-1870. The Bureau more often rented space in existing buildings, such as churches and stores, where classes were held. Although Ralza Manly served as the titular superintendent of education, each school operated independently in terms of its schedule, curriculum, and staff. Proponents for African American education during this period almost universally decried the need to seek private donations in order for schools to operate.<sup>56</sup> Manly reported that 20,000 African Americans had learned to read at Virginia’s Freedmen’s Bureau schools between 1865-1870, an impressive figure, but one that also demonstrated the extent of need. As General Armstrong wrote in 1870, “all that has been done is as a drop in the bucket.”<sup>57</sup>

A more organized, systematic approach to education clearly was necessary in order to address the disorderly assortment of schools that had been established during the 1860s. First, however, civil rights for African Americans in the former Confederate states had to be firmly grounded in law.

## Reconstruction Era Begins (1865-1870)

### *Establishing Citizenship and Civil Rights of African Americans during Reconstruction*

The Reconstruction Era is particularly significant in American history because the legal framework that established African Americans as full and equal citizens dates to this period. Due to the rise of Jim Crow laws and institutionalized White supremacy, the new legal protections were only sporadically upheld and protected between the 1890s-1950s. Without the constitutional amendments and laws discussed below, however, African Americans in Virginia would have lacked recourse or legal standing for the lawsuits filed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that chipped away at Jim Crow segregation for more than 50 years. Such lawsuits, as well as the Reconstruction Era framework, ultimately resulted in the stunning successes of the 1950s-1960s, when the U.S.

<sup>54</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 142. Taylor cited annual reports by John W. Alvord, General Superintendent of Freedmen’s Schools, from 1866-1870.

<sup>55</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 143.

<sup>56</sup> Scott Britton Hansen, “Education for All: The Freedmen’s Bureau Schools in Richmond and Petersburg, 1865-1870,” Master’s Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, May 2008, <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2399&context=etd>, p. 113-114, 117-119. The extreme poverty of many emancipated African American families also distressed well-meaning federal authorities and Northern philanthropists. Virginia’s economy had been shattered by the war, but White authorities’ parsimoniousness, coupled with hostility toward any improvements in conditions for emancipated people, hampered Virginia’s recovery for decades. For example, see Brent Tarter, *A Saga of the New South: Race, Law, and Public Debt in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016); John G. Deal, Marianne E. Julienne, and Brent Tarter. Foreword by Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan, *Justice for Ourselves: Black Virginians Claim Their Freedom After Slavery* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2024); and Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

<sup>57</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 143-144.

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Supreme Court struck down various legal precedents that had fettered civil rights progress and Congress passed a series of landmark federal civil rights-related acts.

### Emancipation Proclamation and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had freed enslaved people in the Confederate states. Slaveholding states that had not seceded were not impacted by his proclamation. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, passed by Congress in January 1865 and ratified by the necessary three-fourths of states in December 1865, ended slavery as it had existed in the U.S. since the colonial era.<sup>58</sup> Most of the defeated Confederate states, including Virginia, ratified the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment in hopes that they would quickly be readmitted the U.S.<sup>59</sup> However, the legal status of African Americans who had been enslaved before the war remained uncertain, as did that of Southerners who had fought in the Confederate army and navy. Returning home, Southern White elites quickly regained control of local and state governments in 1865-1866 and quickly demonstrated their refusal to recognize emancipated African Americans as equal citizens by passing laws that soon earned the moniker "Black Codes." Such laws attempted to remove the new-found freedoms of emancipated people and to reinstate slavery by forcing African Americans to work for any White person who demanded their labor, often without recompense. The Virginia General Assembly joined in this effort by passing, in 1866, an act "for the Punishment of Vagrants." The law ostensibly targeted unemployed males and females, but all African Americans were subject to it. Officials arrested or hired out to work anyone they accused of having no means of support or of refusing to work in protest of low wages. The law provided no options for appeals in court. For a time, the law ended a labor shortage on plantations that had begun during the war when freedom seekers fled for U.S.-held lands.<sup>60</sup>

### Civil Rights Act of 1866

Incensed members of Congress organized to eliminate recalcitrant actions such as the Black Codes. The House of Representatives and Senate passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866. Remarkably forward-looking and egalitarian for its period, the legislation stipulated the following rights: "to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and [access] to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens, and shall be subject to like punishment, pains, and penalties, and to none other." The law forbade discrimination on the bases of race or previous enslavement and recognized that Americans "of every race and color" possessed these rights. This legislation was the first time that either body of Congress had legislated upon

<sup>58</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment excepts involuntary servitude that is exacted as "punishment for crime whereof the party shall been duly convicted."

<sup>59</sup> An exception was Tennessee, which had taken its first steps toward readmission in January 1865, four months before the Civil War ended. Tennesseans who had fought secession four years earlier convened to select a nominee for a new governor and to plan a vote on amending Tennessee's constitution to abolish slavery. Approximately 25,000 voters approved the constitutional amendment and elected a Unionist governor. In December 1865, Tennessee requested to be readmitted to the U.S., but the Republican majority in Congress refused to seat a Congressional delegation from the state until it also ratified the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The Tennessee state legislature ratified the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment on July 18, 1866, and the state officially rejoined the U.S. on July 24, 1866. By acceding to the Republicans' requirements, Tennessee was spared martial law under a military governor as was imposed on the other seceded states. See Robert Tracy McKenzie, "Reconstruction," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, October 8, 2017, <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/reconstruction/>; and "Reconstruction and Rebuilding," Tennessee State Library and Archives Education Outreach Program, no date, <https://tnsoshistory.com/chapter7>.

<sup>60</sup> "1861 to 1876: Reconstruction," Virginia Museum of History and Culture, no date, <https://virginiahistory.org/learn/story-of-virginia/chapter/reconstruction>; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 15-18.

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civil rights.<sup>61</sup> President Andrew Johnson vetoed the bill, but Congress overrode his veto on April 9, 1866. Importantly, the law was the first attempt by Congress to demonstrate that emancipated African Americans were entitled to the rights of U.S. citizenship and, as such, was a prelude to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (discussed below). The new law's requirement that the same punishment for the same crime was to be meted out regardless of the perpetrator's race was a direct response to the Black Codes that had levied different penalties for Black people convicted of crimes versus White individuals. Furthermore, the law stated that White public officials who discriminated against African Americans would be subject to fines or imprisonment for their actions.<sup>62</sup>

Writing in 1989, the historian John Hope Franklin stated, "the law did not explicitly grant federal court jurisdiction to remove legal disabilities in state law, which is an indication that Congress did not merely intend to confer under the Act a right to nondiscriminatory state laws." In other words, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 did not accompany state laws regarding the rights enumerated above. Rather, the federal law supplanted state laws concerning these rights. Franklin continued, "Thus, the framers intended to enforce rights secured by the United States Constitution and not simply an equality in state-conferred rights. They left no question that they intended to apply federal authority over civil rights to private individuals." The Civil Rights Act of 1866, therefore, went beyond requiring that state laws treat all individuals as equal citizens. Instead, only the federal law would be applicable with regard to equal treatment under the law.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, a major weakness of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was the failure to include voting as one of the enumerated protected rights. Without unimpeded access to the franchise, African Americans could not express their views, participate in selection of their elected representatives, or otherwise have a say in the actions of government. Congress would address citizenship and voting rights more explicitly with the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments, discussed below.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

On June 8, 1866, Congress passed the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, which granted citizenship to all persons "born or naturalized in the United States," including formerly enslaved people.<sup>64</sup> Section 1 of the

<sup>61</sup> The 1866 Civil Rights Act is considered a prelude to both the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution. See "Civil Rights Bill Passes, 1866," Architect of the Capitol, no date, <https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/civil-rights-bill-passes-1866>; and John Hope Franklin, "Civil Rights Act of 1866 Revisited," The Matthew O. Tobriner Memorial Lecture, *The Hastings Law Review* Vol. 41 (June 1990), <https://repository.uclawsf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=tobriner>, p. 1135-1148. Also see George Rutherglen, *Civil Rights in the Shadow of Slavery: The Constitution, Common Law, and the Civil Rights Act of 1866* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), as quoted at <https://www.law.virginia.edu/scholarship/publication/george-rutherglen/627491>: "the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was the first civil rights act in U.S. history and laid the foundation for all subsequent civil rights legislation. This legislation served as the model for the Fourteenth Amendment and authorized Congress to play a role in defining constitutional rights, a process continued by every subsequent piece of federal civil rights legislation."

<sup>62</sup> "Civil Rights Act of 1866," *Ballotpedia*, [https://ballotpedia.org/Civil\\_Rights\\_Act\\_of\\_1866](https://ballotpedia.org/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1866) and John Hope Franklin, "Civil Rights Act of 1866 Revisited," The Matthew O. Tobriner Memorial Lecture, *The Hastings Law Review* Vol. 41 (June 1990), p. 1142.

<sup>63</sup> John Hope Franklin, "Civil Rights Act of 1866 Revisited," The Matthew O. Tobriner Memorial Lecture, *The Hastings Law Review* Vol. 41 (June 1990), p. 1142. Interestingly, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was not undermined by the U.S. Supreme Court in the same ways that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment would be during the 1870s-1890s. Instead, as Franklin noted, "Neither the United States Code, new legislation, nor judicial interpretation, dislodged it from its secure position as a veritable bulwark in the protection of the rights of citizens." See Franklin, p. 1136-1137. For additional analysis of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, see Robert J. Kaczorowski, "Enforcement Provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1866: A Legislative History in Light of *Runyon v. McCrary*," the Review Essay, and Comments: Reconstructing Reconstruction," *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol 98 (1988-1989), p. 565-595.

<sup>64</sup> With this language, Congressional leaders intended to overturn the U. S. Supreme Court's infamous 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sanford* decision, in which the Court found that African Americans were not U.S. citizens. "Birthright citizenship" is the principle that a person born within the U.S. is automatically a citizen. This clause did not apply to Native Americans, however, who were not legally declared U.S. citizens until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924.

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amendment provided all citizens with “equal protection under the laws,” which had the effect of obligating states to extend the Bill of Rights to their populations; in 1873, the U.S. Supreme Court interpreted Section 1 quite differently from its authors and ruled that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment did not extend the Bill of Rights to the states with its *Slaughter-House Cases* decision, which is discussed below.<sup>65</sup> Section 2 authorized the federal government to reduce representation in Congress for states that denied their residents the right to vote. Representation of Congress also now was based on the totality of a state’s population, thus eliminating the “Three-Fifths Clause” in the original document, which counted enslaved people as “three-fifths” of a person. Three aspects of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment that are not well known today were, at the time of passage, of immense importance to the former Confederate states. Section 3 of the amendment barred Confederate military and state government individuals who had broken an earlier oath to uphold the Constitution and had “engaged in insurrection” against the United States from holding “any civil, military, or elected office without the approval of two-thirds of the House and Senate.” Section 4 asserted that all debts incurred by state and federal governments to put down the Confederate rebellion “shall not be questioned.” Simultaneously, this section prohibited the Confederate states from levying taxes or using public funds to repay debts accrued during the Civil War or to compensate former slave owners for the emancipation of people they had enslaved. With sections 3, 4, and 5 of the amendment, Congressional leaders attempted to avoid restoration of the prewar order in which a small, elite class of wealthy plantation owners had held the majority of political and economic power across the South. Finally, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment granted Congress the power to enforce this amendment and, along with the Civil Rights Act of 1866, extended congressional authority to protect Americans’ civil rights in ways that had not previously been recognized or utilized.<sup>66</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in July 1868 after three-fourths of the states had voted in favor of it, including the former Confederate states of Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida. The other six former Confederate states refused to ratify the amendment. The civil rights of Black men and women in these states continued to be unrecognized by state and local officials as well as the general White population, all of whom meted out violence and retaliation against Black people for trying to exercise their rights.

### Reconstruction Acts of 1867

In light of southern states’ reluctance to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, in 1867, Radical Republicans in Congress determined to establish a more stringent process for the former Confederate states to follow in order to reenter the U.S. and reacquiring their representation in Congress. In March, both houses of Congress passed the First and Second Reconstruction Acts of 1867, overriding President Andrew Johnson’s veto. The two laws divided the former Confederate states into military districts governed by U.S. military generals and laid out the conditions each state had to meet in order to be readmitted to the U.S. Military occupation of the 11 states that had comprised the Confederacy continued until 1877.<sup>67</sup> To gain readmission to the U.S., each Southern state

<sup>65</sup> “14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution: Civil Rights (1868),” National Archives and Records Administration, March 6, 2024, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/14th-amendment> and Erwin Chemerinsky, “The Supreme Court and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: The Unfulfilled Promise,” *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* Vol 25, No. 4 (June 1, 1992), <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/vol25/iss4/2>, p. 1143-1157.

<sup>66</sup> “Landmark Legislation: The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment,” United States Senate, no date, <https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/14th-amendment.htm>. As noted above, however, the U.S. Supreme Court disagreed with Congressional members over the extent of federal authority in protecting civil rights.

<sup>67</sup> President Abraham Lincoln’s plan for readmitting seceded states to the U.S. had required just two steps: swearing of an oath of allegiance to the U.S. by a minimum of 10 percent of the state’s population and formation of a government loyal to the U.S. Lincoln’s assassination on April 14, 1865, created a political vacuum that Republicans in Congress and Andrew Johnson, newly elevated to the Presidency, fought to fill. Some Republicans argued for treating the seceded states as conquered enemies. Johnson argued for a three-step process: ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment; repudiation of state debts associated with the war; and abrogation of their ordinances

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had to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Each state also had to write a new constitution for itself that included recognition of the franchise for Black men and then had to be approved by a majority of voters, including African American men.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, many of the Confederate civilian and military leaders lost their right to vote and to hold elective office for a time. Simultaneously, the law affirmed the rights of formerly enslaved Black men to vote and to hold office. Through these means, Congressional leaders hoped to prevent a return to the status quo ante in Southern society. Coupled with the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Reconstruction Acts expressly protected the civil rights and physical safety of African Americans exercising their rights through provisions aimed at the Ku Klux Klan and other White vigilante organizations that terrorized African American communities in an attempt to reassert White control. U.S. military troops enforced the law in states, such as Virginia, that were under military occupation. The Third Reconstruction Act of 1867 authorized the military governor of each occupied state to remove state officials from office.<sup>69</sup> Only by meeting the criteria set out in the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 could former Confederate states regain full recognition and federal representation in Congress. Once African Americans were able to participate in the political process, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment gained the final votes it needed for ratification by all of the former Confederate states. On July 9, 1868, the votes by Louisiana and South Carolina met the required threshold of approval by three-fourths of states to become part of the Constitution.<sup>70</sup>

### 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Congress passed the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment on February 26, 1869. Section 1 stated, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”<sup>71</sup> The phrasing of the amendment explicitly referred both to a person’s race or skin color as well as whether they had at any time been enslaved. However, this version of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was considerably more moderate than other versions that Congress considered, including one that disallowed voter eligibility tests based on lack of literacy or property ownership, or the circumstances of a person’s birth (for example, because the father’s identity was not known). Another version stated simply that all adult males over the age of 21 were eligible to vote.<sup>72</sup> Because all American women lacked the right to vote at this time, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment originally concerned only the voting rights of men of color. Section 2 of the amendment granted Congress power to pass laws to protect voting rights. Interestingly, Oliver H.P.T. Morton, a U.S. Senator from Indiana, pushed through an amendment to a bill that covered readmission of Virginia,

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of secession. The Reconstruction Acts of 1867 were stricter than Lincoln or Johnson had preferred. See Robert Tracy McKenzie, “Reconstruction,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, October 8, 2017, <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/reconstruction/>; “Reconstruction and Rebuilding,” Tennessee State Library and Archives Education Outreach Program, no date, <https://tnsoshistory.com/chapter7>.

<sup>68</sup> “Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction,” National Park Service, January 9, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/anjo/andrew-johnson-and-reconstruction.htm>; “Landmark Legislation: The Reconstruction Act of 1867,” The Civil War: The Senate’s Story, United States Senate, no date, [https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Civil\\_War\\_AdmissionReadmission.htm](https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Civil_War_AdmissionReadmission.htm). Universal suffrage for women in the U.S. did not arrive until 1920 with ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment; African American women and members of other minority groups did not gain unfettered access to the franchise until federal civil rights legislation passed during the 1960s.

<sup>69</sup> “Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction,” National Park Service, January 9, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/anjo/andrew-johnson-and-reconstruction.htm>; “Reconstructing Citizenship,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, no date, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/reconstruction/citizenship>.

<sup>70</sup> “Reconstructing Citizenship,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, no date, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/reconstruction/citizenship>.

<sup>71</sup> “15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Voting Rights (1870),” National Archives and Records Administration, May 16, 2024, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/15th-amendment#transcript>.

<sup>72</sup> “Passage of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment,” PBS: American Experience, no date, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/grant-fifteenth/>.



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Mississippi, and Texas to the U.S. which required the three states to ratify the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment as a condition for their return to the Union.<sup>73</sup> On February 3, 1870, the necessary three-quarters of states had voted to ratify the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

African American men routinely participated in elections across Virginia and the rest of the country for about a decade, although not without resistance among White supremacists. As noted above, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment did not address other potential tests that could be applied to would-be voters. Consequently, within a few years, White-dominated state legislatures, including Virginia's, began to create obstacles to voting, such as literacy tests, poll taxes, and basing eligibility to vote on whether a person's grandfather had voted during the 1860s ("grandfather clauses"). A majority of Virginia's voters approved legislation allowing a poll tax in 1876; Black voters were vastly outnumbered by White voters in the election.<sup>74</sup> While such laws primarily were aimed at African Americans, White people who were not literate or who could not afford to pay a poll tax also were disfranchised. Targeting of working-class White people adhered to the generations-long behavior by White elites to maintain their monopoly on power from the colonial era up to the Civil War. Passage of restrictive voting laws marked the next phase in Southern White elites' resistance to the democratic reforms that occurred after the Civil War.<sup>75</sup>

### Virginia Constitutional Convention, 1867-1868

The Reconstruction Acts of 1867 included adoption of a new state constitution as a major condition for former Confederate states (except Tennessee) to be readmitted to the U.S. Virginia's constitutional convention occurred from December 3, 1867 to April 17, 1868. Delegates to the convention were chosen in local elections, with African American men participating for the first time in a Virginia election. Twenty-four Black men<sup>76</sup> were among the 105 delegates, who elected Federal judge John C. Underwood, a lifelong abolitionist, to serve as president of the convention. Radically liberal for his time, Underwood even supported women's suffrage, an opinion not shared by the vast majority of his male counterparts. Underwood also viewed Virginia's planter class with frank contempt and argued that their hegemony had impeded Virginia's progress for generations. Due to his forceful personality, the delegates drafted a constitution that included major democratic reforms. First among these was enfranchisement of African American men, as required by congressional legislation. A second provision concerned disfranchisement of numerous Virginians who had served in the Confederate government and armed forces; this action went beyond the typical targeting of Confederate leadership to include rank and

<sup>73</sup> Morton, a vocal proponent for Reconstruction and civil rights for African Americans, inserted the language due to partisan interests in Congress and at the state level who sought to prevent ratification of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. In many states outside the South, White populations often did not want to extend the franchise to African Americans. Ultimately, however, ratification of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment proceeded, and Virginia, Texas, and Mississippi each ratified it as required by Morton's legislative amendment. See Earl Maltz, "The Coming of the Fifteenth Amendment: The Republican Party and the Right to Vote in the Early Reconstruction Era," *Louisiana Law Review*, Vol.82, No. 2 (Winter 2022), p. 395-451.

<sup>74</sup> Brent Tarter, "Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/fifteenth-amendment-to-the-u-s-constitution>. The 1876 law was overturned during the brief period that the Readjusters Party held power in the General Assembly and Governor's office during the early 1880s. Virginia later passed other laws that restricted the franchise.

<sup>75</sup> "Reconstruction Era: About," National Park Service, February 27, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/reconstruction/about.htm>; "15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Voting Rights (1870)," National Archives and Records Administration, May 16, 2024, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/15th-amendment#transcript>; "Landmark Legislation: The Fifteenth Amendment," United States Senate, no date, <https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/15th-amendment.htm>.

<sup>76</sup> "Attendance Records of the State Constitutional Convention, 1867-1868," *Document Bank of Virginia*, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/258>.

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file soldiers, sailors, and government bureaucrats.<sup>77</sup> The 1868 constitution included a provision to allow amendments to the document, the first time that Virginia's constitution had included this mechanism. County elections and government also were restructured to create a "board of supervisors" who would be elected by voters rather than the antebellum system of a single official appointing people to various offices. Secret ballots replaced voice votes in such elections. Both measures were intended to undermine machinations of a small elite to hold all the levers of power at the county level. The new constitution renounced both the right to secession and the doctrine of "states' rights" and recognized the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the land. Another section of the constitution stated that "all citizens of the State are hereby declared to possess equal civil and political rights and public privileges."<sup>78</sup>

Another requirement of the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 that Virginia had to meet was creation of a statewide public school system. Unlike antebellum schools, the new constitution mandated that a "uniform" system of public schools would be established; although "uniform" could be interpreted to mean that all schools would adhere to the same standards and practices, the term was not defined in the final document. The constitution called for a rather unwieldy state board of education, to be composed of Virginia's governor, attorney general, a superintendent of public instruction (to be appointed by the General Assembly), and three popularly elected "school trustees" in each "township" in each county. The original composition of the state board was intended to emphasize that schools would be locally controlled rather than managed by a centralized authority in Richmond. The fixation on local control had characterized pre-Civil War efforts to create schools as well. With the 1868 constitution, a funding mechanism also was established, but under control of the General Assembly, which would levy property taxes to pay for the new school system. The antebellum Literary Fund also would continue to be available and counties were given authority to use additional taxes to pay for their education costs. Given the complexity of creating a new statewide system from scratch, the constitution granted each locality until 1876 to have its local schools fully operational.<sup>79</sup>

Delegate Thomas Bayne, a dentist and Underground Railroad operative who had self-liberated in 1855 when he traveled to Massachusetts, represented Norfolk during the constitutional convention. Bayne argued strenuously in favor of racially integrated public schools and introduced an amendment to the draft constitution to the convention that schools would be "free to all classes, and no child, pupil or scholar shall be ejected from said schools on account of race, color, or any invidious distinction."<sup>80</sup> The proposal was voted down by a majority of 56 to 15, a tally that was considerably lower than the total 105 delegates participating in the convention. Although it is often reported that the new constitution required segregation, technically, the document was silent on the matter of race. The constitution assigned responsibility for creating the statewide school system to the

<sup>77</sup> Brent Tarter & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "John C. Underwood (1809–1873)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/underwood-john-c-1809-1873>; "Attendance Records of the State Constitutional Convention, 1867-1868," *Document Bank of Virginia*, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/258>.

<sup>78</sup> "1868 Constitution," Library of Virginia, 2019, <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/constitutions/discover/#constitution-1868>; "Attendance Records of the State Constitutional Convention, 1867-1868," *Document Bank of Virginia*, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/258>.

<sup>79</sup> Marianne Julienne & Brent Tarter, "The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the>; Richard G. Salmon, "The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today's Difficulties," *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Bayne, as quoted by Marianne Julienne & Bren Tarter, "The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the>.

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General Assembly. Racial equality advocates correctly anticipated that the General Assembly would design the system to be racially segregated.<sup>81</sup>

In 1869, Virginia voters approved the constitution by a vote of 210,585 in favor and 9,136 opposed.<sup>82</sup> This action, coupled with ratification of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments, completed the steps Virginia was required to take in order to regain admission to the U.S. On January 26, 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant signed congressional legislation allowing the Commonwealth's congressional delegation to return to the U.S. House of Representative and U.S. Senate.

### Virginia's Public School System Begins in 1871

The legislature appointed William Henry Ruffner to serve as the first Superintendent of Public Instruction. Despite that no Literary Fund monies had yet been disbursed to localities, the first public schools opened in November 1870 and, by the end of the year, the nascent statewide public education system included "more than 2,900 schools, with about 130,000 pupils, and more than 3,000 teachers. The number of schools for Negroes reached 706; the number of pupils enrolled, 38,554; and the average daily attendance, 23,452, or 23.4 per cent of the [total] school population enrolled [in public schools]." <sup>83</sup> Given the lack of a state appropriation, these first schools continued to rely on private "subscriptions" (or tuition), students' parents subsidized teacher salaries, and local governments levied their first property taxes for the purpose of funding schools.<sup>84</sup> Although all schools were supposed to be staffed, funded, and operated on an equal basis, from the outset those for Black and Native American children received a small fraction of the tax dollars expended on schools for White students.<sup>85</sup>

As a system being built almost from scratch, the first few years of Virginia's public school system often included haphazard efforts to provide the required educational coursework, which originally consisted only of elementary grades 1-7. The earliest public schools often were held in private homes, churches, and rented spaces above stores. The first purpose-built schools were small, log or frame one-room buildings where a single teacher taught all grades. A uniform statewide school calendar had not yet been established and, often, school terms were as brief as three or four months. Annual reports prepared by William Henry Ruffner, who had been appointed by the General Assembly, documented the efforts under way and obstacles encountered through annual reports (discussed below).<sup>86</sup>

Many of the earliest school buildings predated 1870 and had been essentially given to localities to function as public schools. Examples include the Holley School (NRHP 1990; DHR #066-0112) and Howland Chapel

<sup>81</sup> Marianne Julienne & Brent Tarter, "The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the>.

<sup>82</sup> "Attendance Records of the State Constitutional Convention, 1867-1868," *Document Bank of Virginia*, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/258>.

<sup>83</sup> Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p.146. Taylor drew statistics from the Annual Reports filed by Ruffner.

<sup>84</sup> Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 146-147; Richard G. Salmon, "The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today's Difficulties," *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Richard G. Salmon, "The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today's Difficulties," *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 2. Regarding the Jim Crow era's inequitable educational opportunities for Native Americans in Virginia, for example, see Laura J. Feller, *Being Indigenous in Jim Crow Virginia: Powhatan People and the Color Line* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2022; <https://doi.org/10.38118/978080619607>).

<sup>86</sup> Marianne Julienne & Brent Tarter, "The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the>.

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School (NRHP 1991; DHR #066-0110), both of which were founded in Northumberland County by Northern philanthropists, Sallie Holley and Emily Howland, respectively. In 1874, John and Elizabeth Pearson donated land for the construction of a school that was named in their honor.<sup>87</sup> To aid emancipated African Americans, religious organizations sponsored parochial schools that provided instruction to children during the day and adults during evenings, such as the Presbyterian Church-sponsored Thyne Institute in Chase City, Mecklenburg County and the Episcopal Church-sponsored Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial Institute in Lawrenceville, Brunswick County.

The educational practices with origins in the colonial era continued to influence methods that White government officials, philanthropists, and professional educators used with regard to establishing and operating schools for African American children. Coursework that emphasized reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar, along with "moral instruction" to build "character and virtue" were widely agreed upon as necessary for African Americans to be informed citizens.<sup>88</sup> White officials and others also expected Black children to receive "industrial education" that focused on teaching boys basic skills in masonry, carpentry, smithing, crop cultivation, livestock care, and other manual trades, while girls were taught laundering, sewing, and cooking that would enable them to work as domestic servants. However, as Black Virginians gained agency in operation of community institutions, they advocated vigorously to maximize the full range of academic and vocational educational opportunities available to them.

*Public School Funding*

In 1870, the General Assembly passed a law to create funding mechanisms for the new public school system. Writing in 1926, Alrutheus Ambush Taylor summarized the law as follows: "School funds were to be obtained from a capitation tax of one dollar assessed on eligible males, a property tax of ten to fifty cents on the \$100 valuation and the income from the Literary Fund. Additional assessment on property not to exceed fifty cents on the \$100 might be made in northern counties and districts."<sup>89</sup> Taxation at the state level, however, was not conducted as anticipated.<sup>90</sup> In what would become a discouraging long-term trend, state legislators in the General Assembly deprioritized funding for public schools in favor of other projects.

Starting in 1871, debate over spending priorities immediately resulted in reduced budgetary allocations for schools. Following passage of the Funding Act to reduce the state debt, two factions in the General Assembly, the "Funders" and "Readjusters," argued over the best means for Virginia to pay off its debts that had been incurred between the early 1800s to 1860 to pay for "internal improvements," such as canals, turnpikes (which charged tolls), and roads (which did not charge tolls). A provision of the law allowed state taxes to be paid by private holders of interest-bearing coupons on bonds that had been issued years earlier to finance construction

<sup>87</sup> This area in Northumberland County had precedent for individuals taking action to redress effects of enslavement. For example, in 1861, John Coffey and his three brothers, had been manumitted by William Coffey IV, who also manumitted their mother, Phillis Coffey. William Coffey bequeathed to Phillis Coffey and their children his 374-acre plantation and all his personal property. Biographical information about the Coffey family was provided to the author by local historian Corazon Sandoval Foley, Little Zion Baptist Church Historical Marker Project, February 25, 2024.

<sup>88</sup> Nancy Kober and Diane Stark Rentner, "History and Evolution of Public Education in the US," Center on Education Policy, Graduate School of Education & Human Development, The George Washington University, Washington D.C., 2020, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 146.

<sup>90</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 5, 8-10. On p. 5, Ruffner also included a quote from the *Educational Journal* monthly magazine published by the Educational Association of Virginia that described the lack of state funding.

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projects. Consequently, state revenues decreased and the General Assembly looked for other methods to continue debt payments. Because West Virginia had benefitted from some of the internal improvements projects prior to its wartime split from Virginia, the Funding Act had included a section assigning one-third of the debt as West Virginia's responsibility. West Virginia, however, refused to do so for decades, until intervention by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1919, almost 50 years later. The Funders were adamant that Virginia had to address its debt immediately or risk its credit worthiness, while the Readjusters believed that the debt principal could be readjusted, thus lowering the Commonwealth's overall obligation and protecting other priorities, such as the new public school system.<sup>91</sup> Through the rest of the 1870s, the Funders' position prevailed but, in 1879, the Readjusters won control of the General Assembly and, in 1881, the Governor's office. In 1882, the Riddleberger Act was passed and reduced both the debt principal and the interest owed. Between 1871-1879, the Literary Fund was among the revenue sources that the Funders had tapped to pay Virginia's debt; the antebellum debt principal was finally paid off in 1937.<sup>92</sup> The damage to the nascent public school system was documented by William Henry Ruffner, Virginia's first State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in his annual reports.

*State Superintendent's Annual Reports and 1920s Retrospective*

William Henry Ruffner's first report documenting the launch of Virginia's public school system was issued to the General Assembly in December 1871. The report contains a curious blend of statistical data and Ruffner's musings about education and pedagogy.<sup>93</sup> Ruffner began by summarizing the organizational efforts carried out with appointment of county school superintendents and district school trustees in 1870. Local officials then commenced data collection regarding the number of schools within their jurisdictions, number and condition of school buildings, and number of school-age children and young adults eligible to attend school. Private schools were included on the assumption that most would be absorbed into the public school system. Many of these private schools dated to the 1860s and had been founded variously by individual philanthropists, the Freedmen's Bureau, and local community members.<sup>94</sup>

Ruffner noted the disparities in educational opportunity in rural areas versus urban areas. In Virginia's largest cities, including Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk, graded schools with multiple teachers and enrollments of several hundred students already existed and a higher percentage of eligible students were enrolled. In rural areas, establishment of a public school required a minimum number of 20 students to be enrolled and the one-

<sup>91</sup> Even during highly partisan periods, Virginia's elected officials have cooperated on their shared priority to maintain Virginia's credit worthiness up to the present day.

<sup>92</sup> Richard G. Salmon, "The Evolution of Virginia Public School Finance: from the Beginnings to Today's Difficulties," *The Virginia News Letter*, Vol. 86 No. 3 (June 2010), p. 2; Brent Tarter, "The Virginia Debt Controversy," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/debt-controversy-the-virginia>. Tarter also explained that the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, passed on July 9, 1868, prevented former Confederate states from using taxpayer funds to repay debts incurred during their rebellion: "neither the United States nor any state shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void."

<sup>93</sup> As was the case with many White educators of his time, Ruffner's beliefs about the value of public education for African Americans were steeped in racism and paternalism. The merits of public education for Black Virginians, in his opinion, lay in its usefulness for inculcating "moral character" in students such that they would grow up to be productive but obedient citizens. Education historians, beginning with Alrutheus Ambush Taylor in *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), have evaluated that Ruffner's reporting of statistical data is based on empirical data and those findings are included herein as applicable. Ruffner's educational philosophy is not within the purview of this MPD.

<sup>94</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 4-5

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room schools were managed by a single teacher.<sup>95</sup> Ruffner noted that the major difficulty encountered with opening new schools lay with the General Assembly's failure to appropriate the promised state funds to assist localities with constructing schoolhouses, furnishing them, purchasing textbooks, and paying teachers. Localities generally met with success for levying new property taxes to pay for schools, which Ruffner and other education advocates used as evidence for widespread public support for the new public school system. Despite that localities also had resorted to "subscription services" (essentially, tuition) for some public schools, overall the new system ended the fiscal year with a deficit in August 1871. Ruffner urged legislators to remedy the debt immediately and henceforth to appropriate the promised Literary Fund monies to school operations for the 1871-1872 school year.<sup>96</sup>

Regardless of location, schools at this point required only a modest assortment of furnishings to be considered well equipped: a desk and chair for a teacher, "comfortable" desks and chairs for students, a few extra chairs for visiting school trustees and county superintendents, "bucket and ladle, brooms and brushes... blackboards, wall maps, charts, and other valuable helps to instruction" along with a 3- or 4-inch tall platform for the teacher at the head of the classroom comprised the entirety of his list. In terms of other typical expenses, Ruffner listed fuels for making fires; regular cleaning and maintenance, school ledgers for teachers to record students' attendance and grades, and stationery for county school officials. Initially, school curricula were similarly modest, encompassing reading, writing, arithmetic, penmanship, grammar, and, to some extent, geography. The list of textbooks recommended by the State Board of Education reflected the limited scope of the curriculum (Figure 1).

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<sup>95</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 15-16.

<sup>96</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 8-10, 18.

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## TEXT BOOKS, ETC.

The Board of Education, between the 8th day of February and the 5th day of June, 1871, adopted the following text books and other articles for the use of the public schools of the State, allowing the local school authorities to decide which of the two series of Spellers, Readers, Arithmetics, Grammars, Geographies and Dictionaries should be used in the schools of their respective counties:—

*Spellers*—Holmes's and McGuffey's.

*Arithmetics*—Davies' and Venable's.

*Geographies*—Guyot's and Maury's.

*History of United States*—Holmes's.

*Wall Maps*—Guyot's.

*Numeral Frames*—Bancroft's.

*Numerical Charts*—Walton and Cogswell's.

*Readers*—Holmes's and McGuffey's.

*Grammars*—Bullions's and Harvey's.

*Writing Books*—Spencerian system.

*Dictionaries*—Webster's and Worcester's.

*Terrestrial Globes*—Schedler's.

*Numerical Tables*—Walton's

*School and Family Charts*—Willson and Calkins's

The Board also recommended for the use of the schools the slates offered by Geo. L. Bidgood, of Richmond, and the chalk crayons offered by J. A. Bancroft & Co., of Philadelphia.

Figure 1. List of textbooks recommended by the State Board of Education (Image Source: : William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871], p. 195)

Children's families were expected to purchase their textbooks; for those who could not afford to do so, textbooks were to be provided, but the stigma of accepting such "charity" prevented some families from sending children to school. Compulsory attendance requirements did not yet exist.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 11-12, 16.



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The intrinsic failures of racially segregated education already were emerging by 1871. One of the earliest concerns regarded numbers of schools being established for White students versus African American students. In localities where the number of White and Black students attending school were essentially equal, more schools had been built for White students; the same held true in localities where fewer White youth were enrolled than African American children.<sup>98</sup> This practice caused a lower student to teacher ratio in White schools compared to African American schools (Figure 2). Evidence of the disparity is demonstrated in several more of the tables Ruffner attached to his 1871 report (Figures 3-5).

Table No. 1.

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	SCHOOLS.			TEACHERS.									PUPILS.																						
	White.	Colored.	Average number of months taught.	White.		Colored.		Monthly salaries.		Enrolled.	Average attendance.		Per cent. of school population enrolled.		Per cent. of school population in average attendance.		Per cent. of those enrolled in average attendance.		Average No. of pupils to teacher.		Cost of tuition per month.		Enrolled.	In average attendance.	Per pupil enrolled.	Per pupil in, av. attend.									
				Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.		Male.	Colored.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.													
Accomac county—																																			
Pungoteague.....	5	3	5.30	4	1	1	1	\$40 00	\$40 00	\$40 00	260	142	194	112	34	21	26	17	75	79	57	44	66	66	\$0 86										
Lee.....	4	1	4.25	4	3	1	1	50 00	50 00	50 00	261	181	150	19	20	19	12	12	57	60	65	38	75	1 28											
Metomkin.....	6	0	4.55	6	0	0	0	35 00	35 00	35 00	453	82	232	16	47	10	24	5	81	80	69	36	51	1 00											
Atlantic.....	9	1	4.65	8	3	0	0	25 00	25 00	25 00	445	106	270	59	56	23	33	13	60	56	50	29	51	86											
Islands.....	1	1	4.55	1	1	0	0	35 50	35 00	30 21	124	—	66	—	33	—	18	—	52	—	62	55	40	77											
County.....	26	7	4.72	16	11	5	2	36 23	32 09	34 76	1,346	410	911	298	37	19	22	12	59	66	59	36	58	96											
Albemarle county—																																			
Scottsville.....	10	6	4.71	12	4	—	—	27 44	27 44	27 44	357	309	212	194	40	27	24	10	59	62	42	25	66	1 10											
Rivanna.....	7	4	4.67	6	4	1	—	28 79	28 50	28 71	234	200	143	99	31	20	19	10	61	49	39	22	74	1 30											
Charlottesville.....	5	5	4.12	5	3	2	—	36 69	35 24	35 96	162	351	117	234	21	28	15	18	72	64	51	34	71	1 06											
Samuel Miller.....	8	2	3.96	4	6	—	—	33 07	30 00	31 21	247	57	179	50	24	7	18	6	73	88	30	23	1 04	1 36											
White Hall.....	8	2	5.	3	5	—	—	30 00	30 00	30 00	258	63	174	81	36	9	22	8	60	81	35	23	56	1 37											
County.....	58	19	4.52	28	22	4	3	29 96	30 38	30 13	1,288	980	525	618	31	30	20	13	64	68	40	25	76	1 21											
Alexandria county—																																			
Jefferson.....	1	1	4.55	—	1	—	—	40 00	40 00	40 00	44	66	24	29	33	28	18	12	55	44	55	26	80	1 06											
Arlington.....	2	1	4.68	1	1	—	—	37 50	45 50	44 25	82	141	49	57	58	59	35	24	60	40	56	26	74	1 54											
Washington.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—										
County.....	3	2	4.63	1	2	—	—	37 50	44 87	43 40	126	207	73	86	34	37	20	15	58	42	55	26	76	1 40											
Alexandria city.....	4	2	5.	2	8	1	5	55 00	38 07	46 53	601	508	388	264	28	42	18	22	65	52	69	41	60	1 10											
Alleghany county—																																			
Belling Spring.....	5	—	4.6	5	—	—	—	28 18	—	28 18	190	—	108	—	24	—	19	—	57	—	38	22	74	1 30											
Covington.....	4	1	4.2	3	1	—	—	27 50	25 62	26 68	100	48	96	33	44	40	—	28	60	60	42	26	44	1 08											
Clifton.....	3	—	4.33	3	—	—	—	41 23	—	41 23	80	—	85	—	23	—	15	—	69	—	27	18	1 54	2 28											
County.....	12	1	4.58	11	1	—	—	31 50	25 62	30 60	430	48	259	83	33	22	20	15	60	60	57	22	53	1 36											

Figure 2. Sample of Table 1 showing counts of schools, teachers, and students during the 1870-1871 school year (Image Source: William Henry Ruffner, Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871 [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871], p. 156)

<sup>98</sup> It is possible that settlement patterns in rural and urban areas may have influenced density of the student population and the number of schools needed for each student to be within walking distance of a school; the generally wretched conditions of roads in rural areas limited distances that students could travel to schools. White Virginians owned more land than African Americans in 1870-1871 and likely were more widely dispersed across the landscape as a result. African Americans often were limited to enclaves in both rural and urban settings due both to personal financial limitations and broad discriminatory practices that precluded their opportunities to purchase property. In Loudoun County, the Willisville Historic District (NRHP 2019; DHR #053-5116) is an excellent example of a rural African American settlement that dates to Reconstruction. In urban areas, a greater number of students meant that larger, graded schools with more than one teacher often were built; however, graded schools in rural areas were a rarity in 1870s Virginia. The number of graded schools in urban areas that served Black students is not known at this time. All of these topics warrant additional research that is beyond the scope of this project.

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The above table includes the total number of segregated schools in each locality's school districts, the races and numbers teachers, and the races and numbers of students. Interestingly, with regard to the average number of students per teacher, Ruffner did not break the totals down by race, but rather by total enrollments and average daily attendance (Figure 3). He used the same method for calculating the tuition paid per student. This tactic, therefore, disguised two of the methods for evaluating parity in the racially segregated school system. The salaries paid to teachers are listed according to sex, male or female, but not race, which also obscures whether White and African American teachers were receiving the same pay. Discriminatory pay practices were a recurring problem encountered by Black teachers throughout the segregation era and, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were the subject of some of the earliest lawsuits filed with the intention of dismantling segregation. Arguably, Ruffner's reporting methods owed in part to his conviction that public education was beneficial to all students. Given the shortfall in state funding in 1870-1871, he also may have sought to demonstrate the overall cost of education per student in order to bolster arguments for increasing the Literary Fund disbursements to localities. This supposition is indicated in a second table (Figure 3), in which Ruffner provided counts of students by race and sex in each local district as well as state disbursements, teacher salary expenses, values of school buildings, and revenues raised through local tax levies.

Table No. 2.

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	SCHOOL POPULATION, Between 5 and 21 years old.	Amount apportioned from State funds.	Amount paid and to be paid to teachers from public funds.	Amount paid and to be paid to teachers from other sources.	Cost of education, except teachers' pay.	Total cost of public education.	Value of property owned by district.	Amount of district indebtedness.	Estimated yield of county tax for pay of teachers and county superintendents for 1871-72.	Estimated yield of district tax for district purposes for 1871-72.						
	White.		Colored.													
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.												
				Total.												
Accomac county—	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Pungoleague .....	425	331	347	319	1422	\$1,206 70	\$1,400 00	\$—	\$139 00	\$1,520 00	\$—	\$ 90 00	\$—	\$900 00		
Lee .....	662	623	362	321	1968	1,672 80	1,250 00	—	245 00	1,495 00	—	—	—	1,825 00		
Metompkin .....	811	470	171	140	1292	1,068 20	1,085 00	—	50 00	1,135 00	50 00	50 00	—	—		
Atlantic .....	453	376	275	180	1284	1,091 40	1,375 00	—	—	1,375 00	—	—	—	500 00		
Islands .....	209	159	14	6	388	329 80	241 66	—	8 10	249 76	—	8 10	—	400 00		
County .....	2260	1959	1180	906	6364	5,400 90	5,351 66	—	442 10	5,793 76	50 00	148 10	5,500 00	3,425 00		
Albemarle county—																
Scottsville .....	456	431	581	598	2066	1,756 10	2,087 75	—	453 90	2,521 65	100 37	—	—	1,800 00		
Elivanna .....	384	370	506	480	1742	1,480 70	1,475 50	—	440 00	1,915 50	—	340 00	—	1,750 00		
Charlottesville .....	409	347	604	638	1996	1,696 60	1,483 50	—	600 00	2,083 50	—	200 00	—	1,700 00		
Samuel Miller .....	540	469	425	424	1858	1,579 30	1,237 50	—	—	1,237 50	—	103 25	—	350 00		
White Hall .....	404	394	356	316	1479	1,287 15	1,500 00	—	—	1,500 00	5 25	—	—	800 00		
County .....	2193	2011	2483	2454	9141	7,760 85	7,764 25	—	1,493 90	9,258 15	114 62	443 25	7,500 00	4,800 00		
Alexandria county—																
Jefferson .....	57	75	134	103	360	387 60	400 00	—	148 40	548 40	—	—	—	150 00		
Arlington .....	69	71	131	106	377	396 10	650 00	120 00	410 80	1,180 00	200 00	—	—	400 00		
Washington .....	44	52	48	32	176	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50 00		
County .....	170	198	313	241	922	783 70	1,050 00	120 00	559 20	1,729 20	220 00	—	1 1/2 m. on \$	550 00		
Alexandria city .....	1060	1097	603	610	3370	2,830 50	3,800 00	—	2,058 71	5,858 71	—	—	2,593 00	—		
Alleghany county—																
Bolling Spring .....	300	257	21	18	596	506 60	540 00	108 25	110 00	758 25	—	35 00	—	—		
Covington .....	185	160	52	65	471	400 35	535 00	25 00	35 00	595 00	—	30 00	—	240 00		
Clifton .....	145	145	35	28	354	300 90	355 00	181 00	20 00	556 00	—	—	—	—		
County .....	628	574	108	111	1421	1,207 85	1,430 00	314 25	165 00	1,909 25	—	65 00	—	240 00		
Amelia county—																
Leigh .....	190	191	452	477	1310	1,113 50	1,131 00	—	—	1,131 00	—	—	—	450 00		
Giles .....	175	175	457	459	1266	1,076 10	1,058 00	353 35	190 85	1,612 18	—	190 85	—	513 00		
Jackson .....	158	153	350	318	959	815 15	825 00	—	—	825 00	—	—	—	175 00		
County .....	623	499	1259	1254	3535	3,004 75	3,014 00	353 35	190 85	3,558 18	—	190 85	1,300 00	1,138 00		

Figure 3. Sample of Table 2 showing school district enrollments by race, state funds disbursed to each district, aggregate payments of teacher salaries from public and private sources, value of school buildings, local school system indebtedness, and amounts raised through local tax levies (Image Source: William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871], p. 174)

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In table 3 of his report (Figure 4), Ruffner continued the theme of laying out costs without distinguishing between the race of either students or teachers. With this table, Ruffner listed the total number of school buildings in each local district, the estimated number of new buildings that were needed to house the full local population of school-age residents, the total number of enrolled students per district, and their subjects of study.

Table No. 3.											
COUNTIES  AND  CITIES.	SCHOOLS.			PUPILS.							
	Number opened.	Number yet needed.		Number enrolled.	Number studying						
		Average 20 pupils.	Average 15 pupils.		Spelling.	Reading.	Writing.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	Other branches.
Accomac .....	32	24	1	1956	1856	1199	916	746	226	325	21
Albemarle .....	57	33	16	2268	1935	1531	1247	947	357	446	52
Alexandria .....	5	.....	1	333	332	256	217	116	29	106	6
Alexandria city .....	6	.....	.....	1109	1109	923	948	723	389	485	.....
Alleghany .....	13	.....	11	478	456	346	307	188	105	73	25
Amelia .....	24	13	.....	1068	849	739	536	399	187	250	38
Amherst .....	34	24	11	1054	940	766	538	390	330	283	38
Appomattox .....	19	6	5	859	821	656	483	354	177	213	17
Augusta .....	88	36	10	3553	3360	2900	2497	2026	695	749	116
Bath .....	4	8	4	129	129	99	83	70	24	24	1
Bedford .....	49	45	3	2065	1975	1700	1029	908	474	436	101
Bland .....	17	14	1	704	621	510	243	206	156	70	11
Botetourt .....	40	13	14	1747	1547	1046	1075	823	690	724	130
Brunswick .....	25	21	12	1089	1099	696	522	335	213	208	63
Buchanan .....	17	7	2	618	599	97	44	21	7	.....	.....
Buckingham .....	41	47	7	1522	1427	1057	610	397	237	199	28
Campbell .....	31	23	4	1268	1132	975	698	560	320	329	32
Caroline .....	33	22	2	1580	1333	1098	657	538	261	415	19
Carroll .....	37	20	8	1779	1332	1008	715	715	548	260	14
Charles City .....	12	1	4	562	546	417	274	225	125	156	4
Charlotte .....	36	34	20	1554	1446	1136	712	491	214	245	6
Chesterfield .....	34	30	20	1851	1704	1487	1063	896	403	628	86
Clarke .....	16	3	.....	810	791	604	431	397	138	206	32
Craig .....	13	.....	19	441	393	267	193	155	75	46	13
Culpeper .....	30	8	9	1245	1112	888	782	546	393	380	94
Cumberland .....	19	13	7	766	733	467	355	278	150	170	59
Dinwiddie .....	30	9	2	1316	1279	786	437	361	183	192	10

Figure 4. Listing of existing schools, number of needed additional schools, total student enrollments by locality, and their subjects of study (Image Source: William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871], p. 188)

In his summation of the data that Ruffner included in his reports, researcher Alruthus Ambush Taylor wrote:

The general average for [Black] school attendance was nearly as good as that of the whites; and in many counties, the average attendance record of the Negroes was better. On the other hand, the number of Negro schools was not as large as the white, in proportion to the population... The

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difficulty of procuring suitable school houses was a serious hindrance to the progress of education among the blacks. The district money bore a small proportion to public necessities. Thus school accommodations were largely obtained by the use of old school houses, or by private subscriptions. These circumstances often gave advantages to the whites when no injustice was meant.”

Writing in 1926, Taylor found weaknesses in Ruffner’s report regarding teachers, their race, and their training. Although Taylor and Ruffner agreed that both Black and White parents preferred for a teacher of the same race to be assigned to a Black or White school, Taylor noted that their reasons sharply differed. African American parents feared that their children would not thrive with a White teacher, while White parents and government officials rejected out of hand the possibility of a Black teacher at a White school. Taylor noted that the paternalistic impulse felt by White educators toward encouraging the “moral advance” of African Americans accounted both for the concerns of Black parents and White officials’ comfort with White teachers in African American schools. Black educational administrators were discriminated against by White officials as well. As an example, in Norfolk, the schools for Black students that had been established prior to 1870 had two White and two African American administrators and an African American superintendent. All three of the African American leaders were dismissed when Norfolk joined the statewide system.<sup>99</sup>

Well-trained teachers ranked among the top concerns of educators and families across Virginia. Because so many new schools had opened in Virginia over a brief span, Ruffner averred in his 1871 report that a teacher shortage immediately occurred. Localities were forced to hire poorly qualified teachers, especially in rural areas, where a teacher may have had only a few months of training. In urban areas, on the other hand, he argued that, because well-educated White people who had fallen on financial difficulties, especially women, turned to teaching as a way to make ends meet were benefitting the public schools.<sup>100</sup> Taylor, on the other hand, argued that normal schools were producing enough graduates to fill most teaching posts; he also quoted a similar argument made by Dr. Walter H. Brook that the Richmond Negro Normal School, established by the Freedmen’s Bureau, had been operational long enough to graduate enough qualified teachers to fill the positions in Richmond then held by poorly trained individuals.<sup>101</sup>

Common ground also existed with regard to improving Virginia’s nascent public schools. Top among these appears to have been recognition that all teachers benefitted from continuing training as pedagogical theories evolved, Ruffner collaborated with the Educational Association of Virginia to promulgate guidance in the association’s monthly magazine, *Educational Journal*. Eight pages “were every month placed under the control of the Superintendent, and proved to be a highly important means for conveying information, and for educating

<sup>99</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 15, 17; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 150-151. On p. 160-163, Taylor explained that the problem of disengaged White teachers in Black schools persisted for at least a decade in some places. Taylor described an 1880 situation in the Navy Hill neighborhood of Richmond, where Black parents pointed out that their children performed better in schools with African American teachers versus White teachers and, therefore, petitioned the local school board to hire only Black teachers for their schools. The parents also argued that many of the White teachers were grossly unqualified and negligent in performing their duties, without repercussions from local officials.

<sup>100</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 13-14.

<sup>101</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 151-152, 161-162.

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school officers, teachers, and other readers of the *Journal*, in the ideas and methods of the school system.”<sup>102</sup> The Educational Association of Virginia, a Whites-only organization, was founded in 1863 in part to promote professional development for teachers. During the 1860s, both White and Black teachers had formed “reading circles” that met weekly or monthly to discuss new books, articles, and other media concerning educational theory and practice. For Black teachers, these meetings eventually led to the creation of the Virginia Teachers Association in 1887. Ruffner lavishly praised all forms of ongoing training for teachers. Regarding the concept of “teacher institutes,” which were intended to provide additional training for both White and Black teachers, Ruffner enthused about the localities that had taken initiative to sponsor such gathering and those that had subscribed to educational trade publications and purchased books for their teachers’ use.<sup>103</sup> He further recommended that the General Assembly establish a state-sponsored normal school, preferably in Richmond and sponsor what he termed “ambulatory normal schools” with a permanent staff who would travel the Commonwealth to offer training sessions to teachers.<sup>104</sup>

Over the course of a decade, Virginians made considerable gains in education and literacy levels. Taylor discussed the progress among White and African American populations through his own review of Ruffner’s annual reports. In his 1926 analysis, he included two tables from Ruffner’s 1880 annual report. The first included a breakdown of the total number of Black and White student-age populations in Virginia, the percentage of eligible people who were enrolled in school, and the average total number of students who attended school between 1870-1880 (Figure 5).<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p. 4. “Our History,” Virginia Education Association, no date, <https://www.veanea.org/about/history/>. The organization’s website summarizes its origins as follows: “On December 29, 1863, the Educational Association of Virginia was founded at a statewide meeting held in the basement of the First Baptist Church in Petersburg. Its mission: ‘By all suitable means, to promote the educational welfare of Virginia and of the whole country.’ The Virginia State Teachers Association in 1925 formally became the Virginia Education Association.” Until 1967, the Virginia Education Association accepted only White teachers to its membership. For additional information about the Virginia Education Association’s history, see J. Rupert Picott, *History of the Virginia Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1975) and Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965*, Ed. D. dissertation, 1981, Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary (Paper 1539618582), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>.

<sup>103</sup> Ruffner did not specify if White and Black teachers had equal access to such training and materials. Taylor did not discuss discrimination against Black teachers when it came to training opportunities during the 1870s.

<sup>104</sup> J. Rupert Picott, *History of the Virginia Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1975), p. 54-56; Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965* (1981), Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary (Paper 1539618582), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858p.28-32>; William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), p 15, 138-144. Ruffner’s desire for a state-sponsored normal school was not fulfilled until 1884, when the State Female Normal School in Farmville (today’s Longwood University) opened; Ruffner served as the school’s first principal. The school accepted only White students through the 1950s. Normal schools are discussed in greater detail in various sections below.

<sup>105</sup> Ruffner continued as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction until 1884. Throughout his tenure, he issued annual reports to the General Assembly that documented the statewide school system’s growth, progress, and setbacks. Many of the Annual Reports prepared by Ruffner and his successors between 1871-1973 have been digitized and may be found at <https://www.google.com/books> as of this writing. The Library of Virginia maintains a complete collection of all annual reports on microfilm.

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TABLE I: STATISTICS OF ENUMERATION, PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL  
POPULATION ENROLLED, AND AVERAGE ATTENDANCE <sup>106</sup>

Yr.	Enrollment of Pupils		Per Cent of School Pop. Enrolled		Average Attendance	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
1871..	92,112	38,976	37.6	23.4	53,667	23,735
1872..	119,641	46,736	48.4	28.6	69,116	26,372
1873..	113,263	47,596	44.8	27.7	64,709	26,466
1874..	121,789	52,086	47.3	29.3	69,929	28,928
1875..	129,545	54,941	46.2	27.1	74,056	29,871
1876..	137,678	62,178	49.1	30.7	80,521	34,722
1877..	139,931	65,043	49.9	32.1	82,029	35,814
1878..	140,472	61,772	50.0	30.4	82,164	34,300
1879..	72,306	35,768	25.7	17.6	44,540	21,231
1880..	152,136	68,600	48.3	28.5	89,640	38,764

Figure 5. 1870-1880 rates of school attendance among Black and White students (Image Source: Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* [Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926], p. 165; reproduced from William H. Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1880, Part I: Tenth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending July 31, 1880* [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871])

In a second table from Ruffner's report, the total number of White and Black schools and teachers in Virginia were listed between 1870-1880 (Figure 6). Throughout this decade, the number of schools for White students was roughly two to three times as many as those for Black children. The steep decrease in the number of schools for both groups of students in 1879 was due to the General Assembly's decision to divert \$250,000 of Literary Fund monies from schools to other uses; previously, an average of \$80,000 had been diverted each year. Ruffner (as quoted by Taylor) warned in his 1878 annual report to the legislature that the entire public school system was in danger of breaking down. The total number both of White and Black students had been almost halved as localities could not afford to operate many of their schools. The number of schools for both groups of children decreased by approximately 40 percent.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 156, 166



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TABLE II: NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND NUMBER OF  
TEACHERS THEREIN <sup>40</sup>

Yr.	Number of Public Schools		Number Public School Teachers	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
1871.....	2,278	769	2,580	504
1872.....	2,788	907	3,493	360
1873.....	2,787	909	3,378	379
1874.....	2,908	994	3,472	490
1875.....	3,121	1,064	3,723	539
1876.....	3,357	1,181	3,984	636
1877.....	3,442	1,230	4,069	671
1878.....	3,399	1,146	3,930	673
1879.....	1,816	675	2,089	415
1880.....	3,598	1,256	4,088	785

Figure 6. 1870-1880 numbers of schools and teachers in Virginia, according to race (Image Source: Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* [Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926], p. 166; reproduced from William H. Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1880, Part I: Tenth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending July 31, 1880* [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871])

Even taking into account the financial straits of the 1877-1878 school year, Taylor assessed that there were roughly three schools for White students for every one school for Black youth throughout the 1870s. At this time, the school-age population of White children was approximately double that of Black children. Faced with these inequities, Black communities responded with fervent support for their children's schools. Taylor wrote:

With the increasing interest of the Negroes in education... the school became a social center for the race in competition with the church. Most of the parents who had been denied the opportunity for education themselves took pride in visiting the schools to hear their children spell and read. The public exercises of these schools and especially those closing the terms usually attracted almost everybody in the community. They were all eager to hear the essays, declamations, and recitations of these developing youth. So popular became education among the Negroes that parents who kept their children at home to work were generally branded as unworthy citizens.<sup>107</sup>

In 1875, a group of African American men formed the Virginia Educational and Historical Association. Educator John W. Cromwell served as the first president, while three clergy, Rev. James H. Holmes, Dr. W. B. Derrick, and Dr. Walter H. Brooks also held leadership roles. The organization dedicated itself to gathering "statistical and historical matters of special interest to the Negro race; to promote the cause of education; 'to aid

<sup>107</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 157.

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in the instruction of such youths as by their persevering talents and general worth, give promise of usefulness to the State and country; to encourage by the dissemination of useful knowledge the development of scientific and mechanical ideas; and generally to incite the colored race to the highest achievements.”<sup>108</sup> The themes contained within this quote shaped African Americans’ approach to education for generations, and Cromwell, who is discussed in greater detail below, was among the most influential educators in this vein. Recognizing that the uneven support for public education conveyed by White Virginians lay, at least in part, in racist assumptions about African Americans, Black educators set about collecting empirical data to create counterarguments. Importantly, the inclusion of historical data would be used against dismissals of African Americans as a people “without history” due to the loss of so much familial and communal continuity during the slavery era. Such efforts grew over time and, by the time Virginia native Carter G. Woodson formulated Negro History Week, was a hallmark of history classes in schools attended by African Americans. Education, furthermore, was understood to be the best means through which children would reach their full potential. The “dissemination of useful knowledge” was a perennial expectation, too, both in terms of teaching individual students and the expectation that, upon reaching adulthood, young people would themselves become purveyors through contributions to their communities. “Scientific and mechanical ideas,” meanwhile, spoke to the larger zeitgeist of late-19<sup>th</sup>-century Virginia, and the U.S. in general. Due to the dizzying pace of scientific discoveries and technological innovations, improvement societies for agricultural, industrial trades, homemaking, family and public health, and many other concerns proliferated. People of all ages needed access to “scientific and mechanical ideas” in order to thrive. Lastly, the Virginia Education and Historical Association made clear that African Americans would not be content with moral instruction for their betterment as citizens; rather, “the highest achievements” would be pursued. This conviction fueled African American public education for decades to come, even in the face of growing hostility from the White majority in Virginia.

Individual African American educators also had profound impacts on their local communities. Among these are Isabella Gibbons and Lucy F. Simms, whose contributions are included here as an example of the types of educational work conducted by women and men across Virginia during the Reconstruction Era. Although born enslaved during the 1830s, Isabella Gibbons had learned to read and write as a child. By the time she was an adult, she was enslaved by a University of Virginia professor, a situation not unusual at the University during the antebellum era. Although marriages of enslaved people were not recognized under Virginia, Isabella met a man, William Gibbons, who also was enslaved by a professor, and they married during the 1850s. After emancipation, Isabella Gibbons established an informal school for adults and children, teaching them to read and write. Anna Gardner, who came to Virginia on behalf of the New England Freedmen’s Aid Society, travelled to Charlottesville to open a “free school,” meaning that tuition would not be charged to students. The New England Society was one of many philanthropic organizations that opened schools for freed people in former Confederate states after the Civil War ended. Gibbons first attended Gardner’s school for her own benefit, earning a diploma in 1867, then became a teacher. She moved to the city’s newly created public school system in 1870 and continued to teach for more than fifteen years, while her husband served as a Baptist minister for one of the many African American congregations that formed during the Reconstruction Era.<sup>109</sup> Such congregations sought autonomy to practice religious services as they felt called to do, to encourage

<sup>108</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 157-158. Taylor’s writing included a quote from an article that appeared in the *Richmond Enquirer* on August 25, 1875.

<sup>109</sup> “Changemakers: Isabella Gibbons (1830s-1890),” Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/290>.



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literacy so that congregants could read sacred texts themselves, and to foster community wellbeing by encouraging education and mutual assistance to their contemporaries.<sup>110</sup>

In Rockingham County, Lucy F. Simms embarked on her teaching career during the 1870s. Following her emancipation, she attended Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute (today's Hampton University), graduating in 1877. She first taught for a year or two in the small freedmen's community known as Zenda in Rockingham County before moving to Harrisonburg. Several women from Northern states had come to Harrisonburg during the 1860s to teach at schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau and stayed after the city began its public school system in 1870. Among the schools that were built was a one-room elementary school on Effinger Street in the Newtown area, where emancipated people had established a new neighborhood for themselves. Simms joined their ranks about 1880 and, not long after, the city's school board finally agreed to replace the overcrowded schoolhouse with a new graded school that opened in 1883. Despite her relatively short career, Simms served as acting principal for the 1883-1884 school year, likely because she had completed her teacher training at Hampton Institute, making her more qualified than many of the teachers then employed in Harrisonburg. Teaching, however, was Simms's passion, including professional development for teachers. For decades, she helped to organize summer training schools, some of which she taught herself, and to found a county "teachers association" that served as an organizing body for Harrisonburg's Black teachers. Sims also was a member of the Negro Teacher's Association and School Improvement League of Virginia, both of which advocated for public funding for school construction, operations, and maintenance as well as teacher training and equalization of teacher salaries. Simms also continued to teach elementary grades full time until her death in 1934.<sup>111</sup>

### *Private Funding Sources*

As has been discussed above, private funding proved invaluable to establishing Virginia's public schools during the Reconstruction Era. Historical studies have identified numerous individuals who were moved to participate directly in education by becoming teachers themselves, by paying for construction of schools and hiring of teachers and, in some cases, by moving to Virginia in order to play direct roles in education. A small number of these individuals is discussed below; numerous other people played significant roles in the history of public education for African Americans during Reconstruction and can be discussed in nominations submitted under this MPD and/ or by updating the MPD itself in the future.

### Mary S. Peake (1823-1862)

Mary Smith Kelsey Peake, a native of Norfolk, was the child of a free woman of color and an English immigrant. She was educated in Alexandria, which at that time, was part of Washington, D.C., which, unlike Virginia, had not outlawed schooling for persons of African descent. Peake returned to Virginia as a young adult and, while living in Hampton, is known to have secretly taught African Americans during the late 1840s. In 1861, Peake started a school for freedom-seeking African Americans who had reached Fort Monroe, which was occupied by the U.S. military for the duration of the Civil War. Peake taught both children and adults until

<sup>110</sup> For example, see "Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged]," Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p. 13-14.

<sup>111</sup> "Changemakers: Lucy F. Simms (c. 1857-1934)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/13>; Maral Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Lucy F. Simms School," National Register nomination, 2003, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/115-5035/>, p. 5-6.

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her untimely death from tuberculosis in 1862. The site of her school was on land that later comprised the campus of Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute (today's Hampton University).<sup>112</sup>

Sarah A. Gray (ca. 1847–January 8, 1893)

Born free in Alexandria, Sarah A. Gray helped to establish a school for African American freedom seekers in Alexandria in October 1861 and taught classes throughout the war. She went on to establish the Excelsior School in 1867, likely with the support of the Freedmen's Bureau and/or private donations from individuals or philanthropic organizations. In addition to reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, which typified the basic elementary curriculum during the Reconstruction Era, Gray taught her female students fine needlework "as a way for them to earn a living."<sup>113</sup> Combining academic subjects with skills training was a character-defining aspect of schools for African Americans in Virginia throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Alexandria's public school system began in 1870 with African American boys and girls assigned to different schools. Gray taught at the Hallowell School for over a decade. Due to the dedication of its faculty, Hallowell School grew to include high school courses during the 1880s. Gray undertook ongoing training that included traveling outside Virginia to learn about pedagogical theories and methods, which emerged on a continual basis as public education became increasingly professionalized during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>114</sup>

Emily Howland (1827-1929)

Among the best known of these individuals is Emily Howland, an abolitionist from New York who had spent years teaching, first in a school for free Black girls in Washington, D.C., and then at a freedmen's camp. She moved to Northumberland County at the end of 1866 where she purchased a 350-acre tract she named Arcadia located among several of the emancipated, extended families she had come to know while in Washington, D.C. Howland established her school in 1867, using her personal wealth for the purpose of constructing a new building for the purpose; she paid for construction of another school at Kinsale in Westmoreland County in 1870. Although she wanted to operate her school on an integrated basis, local White families were disinterested. Howland soon deeded the school to a group of trustees. The building doubled as a church for the local First Baptist Church congregation until about 1920, hence its historical name, Howland Chapel School. The school continued in operation as a private school until 1921, when Howland turned over its management to the Northumberland County school board; the building remained in use as a public school for Black children until 1958. The school was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1989 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.<sup>115</sup> In 2008, a teacher's cottage that had been built for the Howland School was moved onto the school building's current tax parcel. Such dwellings were built in rural areas to provide housing for teachers who were hired from outside a rural community. The house also included a two-room wing where industrial arts classes were taught. Howland sold the house and an associated 23-acre tract to the Taliaferro family in 1890 and it passed through ownership of several families until the early 2000s.

<sup>112</sup> "Changemakers: Mary S. Peake (1823-1862)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/3>.

<sup>113</sup> "Changemakers: "Sarah A. Gray (1847-1893)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/216>.

<sup>114</sup> "Changemakers: "Sarah A. Gray (1847-1893)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/216>; Tiffany D. Pache, "Black Education in Alexandria: A Legacy of Triumph and Struggle," City of Alexandria, Alexandria Community Remembrance Project, <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/Black-Education-2.pdf>, p. 9, 12-13.

<sup>115</sup> Jeffrey M. O'Dell and Carolyn H. Jett, "Howland Chapel School," National Register nomination, December 20, 1990, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0110/>.

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Caroline F. Putnam (1826-1917) and Sallie Holley (1818-1893)

An abolitionist who grew up in Massachusetts and New York, Caroline Putnam met Sallie Holley, a native of New York, at Oberlin College in 1848. Both women engaged in extensive abolitionist work for the American Anti-Slavery Society until the Civil War began, after which they commenced working with freedmen's communities. During the late 1860s, the two women moved to Northumberland County at the urging of Emily Howland. Putnam and Holley worked with the Black community at Lottsburg to build a school in 1869. Putnam and Holley were not personally wealthy but relied on Northern friends for donations and the voluntary labor of local African Americans to build a succession of three modest schoolhouses between 1869-1887; the 1887 building remained in use until the 1910s, when a fourth school building was erected by African American tradesmen. Following Holley's death, Putnam had remained in Northumberland County and sought to continue assisting Lottsburg's African American community with improving and adding onto their school, which by this time had been named in Holley's honor. In 1917, control of the school passed to a board of trustees composed of local African Americans and, under their supervision, the 1910s building, which was added onto in stages between the 1922-1933, continued in use as a school until 1934, when Northumberland County assumed responsibility for its operation as a public school. Holley Graded School, as it was then known, finally closed in 1959. The building was preserved by volunteers in Lottsburg's African American community and returned to public use during the 1980s, first as an adult education center and then as a general purpose community center and museum.<sup>116</sup> The school was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1989 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.

Rosa L. Dixon Bowser (1855-1931)

Rosa Dixon Bowser, who received her early schooling at Freedmen's Bureau schools in Richmond, attended the Richmond Colored Normal School, which had been established for teacher training under Ralza Manly's leadership immediately after the Civil War ended. Over the course of her long career, she would be involved in public education as well as community improvement efforts that centered around improving conditions for women, children, and families. Following the establishment of the city's public school system in 1869, local officials determined to build a school for African American children in a Black neighborhood in Jackson Ward. The original building, designed by African American architects Boyd and Turpin, opened in December 1871 and Bowser taught here for many years. In 1884, she became the supervisor of the school's faculty. Like many of her peers, Bowser embraced vocational training alongside education. She provided training in homemaking skills to neighborhood women, organized reading circles for teachers, and was a founder of the Virginia State Teachers Association, for which she served as president for a time. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she also became involved in educational programs for at-risk girls and women. Coinciding with these efforts, Bowser's founded the Richmond Woman's League in 1895 and was among the founders of the National Association of Colored Women and of the Virginia State Federation of Women's Clubs. The women's club movement dovetailed with the Progressive Era social reform movement and the women's suffrage movement, all of which

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<sup>116</sup> Jeff O'Dell, "Holley Graded School," National Register nomination, March 1989, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0112/>; Jeffrey M. O'Dell and Carolyn H. Jett, "Howland Chapel School," National Register nomination, December 20, 1990, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0110/>.

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focused on improving social conditions through women's active participation in social, cultural, and political activities.<sup>117</sup>

*Philanthropic Funds Between 1870-1900*Peabody Fund

Wealthy businessman George F. Peabody established the Peabody Education Fund in 1867. It is believed to be "the first multi-million dollar education foundation in America." Peabody designated a board of trustees to administer the fund with the purpose of aiding the former Confederate states. He specified that the money was to be expended on education for "common" African American and White youth rather than those from wealthy families, with the schooling to be at the primary and, eventually, secondary levels, but not for post-secondary education. The Rev. Barnas Sears, D.D., served as the fund's agent and spent time in Virginia in February 1868 to ascertain conditions in Richmond and other parts of Virginia. Sears exercised considerable autonomy in deciding when and where to disburse aid. A priority was creation of free public school systems in each state and Sears and his subordinates traveled southern states to argue for state and local taxation to pay for such schools. Upon the establishment of Virginia's, Sears designated donations to an assortment of Virginia schools for White and Black students, including those who were orphans (Figure 7). Teacher training ranked as another priority of the Peabody Fund and Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute was among the first recipients of donations. Although the Peabody Fund remained active until 1910, its impact in Virginia was limited primarily to the most populous areas because only graded schools were eligible to receive allocation. Rural, one-room schoolhouses were not, therefore, able to benefit from Peabody's largesse.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> "Changemakers: Rosa L. Dixon (1855-1931)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/210>; Dara A. Friedberg, "Baker Public School," National Register nomination, November 2015, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR\\_to\\_transfer/PDFNoms/127-0877\\_Baker\\_School\\_2016\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/127-0877_Baker_School_2016_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 12-13; .

<sup>118</sup> "Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: Peabody Fund," Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>; William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* (Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871), 17.

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## APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE PEABODY FUND.

STAUNTON, VA., Dec. 19, 1871.

Rev. W. H. RUFFNER—

Dear Sir:—

During the school year October 1870—October 1871, the appropriations from the Peabody Fund to the State of Virginia were as follows:

Richmond, public schools .....	\$2,000	Fincastle, public schools .....	\$300
“ normal “ .....	1,000	Lexington, “ .....	300
“ (colored), .....	800	“ (colored), public schools).....	200
Petersburg, public schools.....	2,000	Manassas, “ .....	300
Alexandria, “ .....	1,000	Buchanan, “ .....	300
Norfolk, “ .....	1,000	Falls Church, “ .....	300
“ (colored), “ .....	500	Etrick (near Richmond), “ .....	300
Portsmouth, “ .....	1,000	Louisa C. H. (colored), public schools.....	200
Lynchburg, “ .....	1,000	Butler school, near Hampton (colored),	200
Staunton, “ .....	1,000	Hampton Normal school.....	800
Manchester, “ .....	700	Hollins' Institute, normal department.....	500
Wytheville, “ .....	650	Dr. Broadus for orphans, normal pupils,	300
Danville, “ .....	600	Teachers' institutes.....	500
Edinburg, “ .....	450	Journal of education.....	200
Woodstock, “ .....	300		
Strasburg, “ .....	300		\$19,000

I do not know the exact date of the year of some of these schools, especially at Falls Church, Danville and Louisa Courthouse. \* \* The present year we shall give over \$30,000 to Virginia.

Yours, truly,

(Signed),

B. SEARS.

Figure 7. List of Donations to Localities for Public Schools from the Peabody Education Fund in 1870-1871 (Image Source: William Henry Ruffner, *Virginia School Report, 1871: First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the Year Ending August 31, 1871* [Richmond, Va.: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent Public Printing, 1871], p. 192).

### John Slater Fund

Somewhat less well-known today is the Slater Fund, established in 1882 by Connecticut businessman John F. Slater. With his fund, Slater sought to build upon the successes of the Peabody Fund, but aid would be directed solely to schools for Black students. Thus, the Slater Fund became the nation's first educational philanthropy dedicated solely to educational opportunities for African Americans. Slater contributed \$1 million of his personal fortune to endow the fund, which, by the 1930s, contributed a cumulative total of \$2.2 million to African American schools in the South. Although the Fund aimed to support public elementary (and later, high) schools, initially, a substantial portion of the Fund's donations went to normal schools, including privately-operated entities such as the Hampton Institute (today's Hampton University) and the Hartshorn Memorial

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Institute in Richmond (Figure 8). Such donations were made due to the necessity for training African American teachers to work at the growing number of public schools for African Americans in southern states.

<b>HAMPTON INSTITUTE—Hampton, Va.</b>	
General S. C. Armstrong, Principal. Officers and teachers, 83; students, 614—Indians, 132, Negroes, 482. Slater appropriation, \$2,500—used as follows:	
General expenses of institution.....	\$1,000 00
Technical instruction.....	1,000 00
Student aid.....	500 00
Total.....	<u>\$2,500 00</u>
 <b>HARTSHORN MEMORIAL INSTITUTE—Richmond, Va.</b>	
(Organized 1880; Baptist Home Missions.) Property, \$40,000. Rev. L. B. Tefft, Principal. Teachers, 8; students, 103. Slater appropriation, \$650—used as follows:	
Teacher in cooking and sewing.....	\$ 365 00
Student aid.....	285 00
Total.....	<u>\$ 650 00</u>
Cost of maintenance from the beginning, about \$35,000.	

Figure 8. Slater Fund Donations to Hampton Institute and Hartshorn Memorial Institute in 1890 (Image Source: "Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen," (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1891), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.14700/>, p.45).

After the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as high schools began to operate in larger southern cities and towns, the Slater Fund provided appropriations to the relatively few high schools for Black students as well. To this end, the Fund is credited for helping to promulgate the notion of African American "training schools," which combined 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and sometimes 11<sup>th</sup> grade academic courses with industrial training.<sup>119</sup> Training schools developed at

<sup>119</sup> Phyllis Leffler and Julian Bond, co-directors, "Slater Fund, John F.," Explorations in Black Leadership, 2007, <https://blackleadership.virginia.edu/glossary-terms/slater-fund-john-f/>; "Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: Peabody Fund," Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>. In 1937, the Slater Fund, Peabody Fund, Jeanes Fund, and Virginia Randolph Fund merged to form the Southern Education Foundation, Inc. The early-20<sup>th</sup>-century Jeanes and Virginia Randolph funds and the 1930s formation of the Southern Education Foundation are discussed below.

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the same time that vocational, home economics, and agricultural training were emerging as specialized high school curriculum options for White students. Indeed, writing in 1891, the Fund's Education Committee Chair, J. L.M. Curry claimed, "It cannot be doubted that the success of industrial training in the Negro schools has had much to do with the development of opinion, throughout the Southern States, of the importance of this part of education in the white schools of the country."<sup>120</sup> With just two or three high-school grades, however, training schools had more limited academic curricula than the four-year high schools attended by Virginia's White children starting about 1905. At this time, grades 8-11 were classified as "high school," which meant that African Americans' high school education would have ended after 10<sup>th</sup> grade and for White students, such education would have ended after 11<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>121</sup> White students also were not required to take industrial training instruction, whereas Black children were required to do so.

Explaining the Fund's position that public educational opportunities for African American students should include a blend of academic coursework and industrial training, both John F. Slater and J. L. M. Curry parroted arguments of the need to educate Black children that dated back to the colonial era. Quoting Slater, Curry wrote in 1891:

The John F. Slater Fund is for the "uplifting" of "the lately-emancipated population of the Southern States and their posterity," and to make "them good men and good citizens." The means suggested for accomplishing these desired results were "Christian Education" and "instruction of the mind," "associated with training in just notions of duty toward God and man..."<sup>122</sup>

In more pragmatic, less lofty terms, Curry went on to state,

Manual training as fostered by the Fund should not be, primarily, to make engineers, architects, carpenters, brick masons, of pupils. The object should rather be to modify traditional methods so as to make more useful members of society. A Boston teacher describes it as practical education in the use of hand-tools and machinery in wood and metals, not for application in any particularly trade but for developing skill of hand in the fundamental manipulations connected with the industrial arts.<sup>123</sup>

One interpretation of Curry's argument is that Black students should continue to learn manual labor skills using hand tools, despite that, by the 1890s, the increasingly rapid proliferation of technological and scientific innovations of the period had rendered many traditional manual skills obsolete. By forming the base of the labor pool, however, and being concentrated in low-skill, low-paying jobs, African Americans would perform what necessary manual work remained while also freeing White workers to pursue more lucrative opportunities, thus reinforcing the racial hierarchy as it had existed in Virginia since the colonial era.

Yet in some lights, Curry's statements are a pragmatic assessment of late-19<sup>th</sup>-century American society, when social classes were rigidly separated and one's ability to move up the socioeconomic ladder rested almost

<sup>120</sup> "Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen," (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1891), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.14700/>, p. 36.

<sup>121</sup> "1960 to 1970: Growth Continues," Fairfax County Public Schools, 2024, <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/history/growth-continues>. In 1946, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade of public schooling was authorized by the General Assembly.

<sup>122</sup> "Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen," (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1891), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.14700/>, p. 12.

<sup>123</sup> "Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen," (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1891), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.14700/>, p. 18.

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entirely on their social connections. As was discussed above, prior to the Civil War, Virginia's social classes had essentially been stagnant since the colonial era, with a small class of elite enslavers holding the majority of wealth and power. During the Reconstruction Era, some shuffling amongst the classes occurred. Bankruptcy ruined many former enslavers' prospects. Those who could navigate the business opportunities of the "New South," such as railroad construction and industrial development, as well as exploiting social capital, were able to restore familial fortunes. Consequently, by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, individuals who had risen to the top of Virginia's class hierarchy often were only a generation removed from enslaving African Americans. Undoubtedly steeped in the Victorian era's class hierarchy's himself, Curry asserted that,

With the exception of teachers and preachers, possibly, of physicians, there is, at present, little necessity for the special knowledge which fits for the higher professions... What is needed, along with a common school education, is some practical knowledge, some mechanical or manual skill, which will be immediately available in wage-earning... Manual training, thorough and varied, becomes essential to dignify labor and show its indispensableness and impart habits of steady and intelligent industry.<sup>124</sup>

Overlooked by White philanthropists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the rapid creation of working, middle, and upper classes in Black communities, particularly in cities throughout the former Confederate states. Black families that had been free prior to the Civil War, some for many generations, tended to rise to the top of their Reconstruction Era communities. Already property owners and entrepreneurs, and already educated at least to some extent, these individuals and families were poised to make the most of newly emerging opportunities; they also often were committed to uplifting all of their community. Discussing the architecture of Virginia's Black neighborhoods, such as Richmond's Jackson Ward, Richard Guy Wilson wrote,

Though much research remains to be done on the work of African American architects, builders, and tradesmen in Virginia, it is already well established that in the decades after the Civil War Black brick masons, stone cutters, carpenters, and contractors were increasingly called upon to design and build structures for Black clients. This was especially true in the state's larger cities, where [Black] neighborhoods...in Richmond and eastern downtown Norfolk were lined with residences, theaters, Freemasonry and Masonic halls, bars, and other commercial enterprises owned by and erected by African Americans. This was true despite the fact that formal [design] education for African Americans in the state was limited to courses in the building trades offered at some Black colleges.<sup>125</sup>

While the imaginations of White philanthropists were limited, the same could not be said of African Americans, who seized on every opportunity that came their way. Black teachers and community leaders emphasized educational advancement as a means to contribute to racial uplift at every level. Their formidable creativity would be challenged as Jim Crow segregation became enshrined in Virginia law in 1902, but they persisted.

### Reconstruction and the New South in Virginia, 1870-c. 1900

Despite the protections created by federal legislation and the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution, White southerners continued to use violence to suppress the civil rights of African Americans. As an online

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<sup>124</sup> "Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen," (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1891), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbaapc.14700/>, p.

<sup>125</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, "Revisiting Virginia Architecture: Notes on Overlooked African American Contributions and Other Developments," *SAH Archipedia*, Society of Architectural Historians, no date, <https://sah-archipedia.org/essays/VA-03-001>.



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exhibit about the Reconstruction Era by the National Museum of African American History and Culture explains, “In 1870 and 1871, Congress passed three laws known as the Enforcement Acts, which invoked the power of the federal government under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to intervene when states failed to protect the rights of citizens. In 1875, Congress passed [another] Civil Rights Act, which guaranteed all persons equal access to public accommodations, including theaters, hotels, and transportation, and allowed anyone denied services on account of race to seek restitution in federal court.”<sup>126</sup>

### *U.S. Supreme Court Decisions Undermine Civil Rights Laws*

Between 1873-1896, however, the U.S. Supreme Court repeatedly undermined the 14th Amendment’s power to protect the constitutional rights of African Americans. In 1873, “the Supreme Court held that the Fourteenth Amendment Privileges or Immunities Clause was not meant to change the relationship between the federal and state governments or protect rights from state interference.”<sup>127</sup> A decade later, in the *Civil Rights Cases* decision, the Supreme Court justices ruled that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution applied only to government conduct, not that of any private parties. If a private party discriminated against someone, that individual’s only option was to seek relief in state courts. By the 1880s, however, state legislatures nationwide were enacting laws that mandated racial segregation in different aspects of everyday life; while segregating newly created public schools was the most common tactic, laws requiring segregation in other types of public spaces, such as parks, and private spaces, such as theaters, also were increasingly ubiquitous. Finally, the Supreme Court’s 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision created the doctrine of “separate but equal” and applied it to all types of public accommodations, whether public or private. In the majority opinion, the justices argued that federal legislation could recognize the equality of all people’s civil and political rights, but was powerless to require social equality. Further, the Court found that African Americans who objected to being required to accept separate accommodations on the basis that segregation intrinsically imposed inferiority upon them were themselves creating any sense of inferiority they believed they were experiencing.<sup>128</sup> That the majority opinion’s careful distinction between political and civil equality versus social equality, however, soon led to the restrictions on political and civil rights collectively known as Jim Crow would not move the Court to reconsider the separate but equal doctrine for more than 55 years.

### *1876 Presidential Election and Withdrawal of Federal Troops from Former Confederate States*

Due to antidemocratic actions and intense partisan conflict during the 1876 presidential election, the outcomes in South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana were hotly contested. White vigilantes and Democratic party members who were hostile to the extension of voting rights to Black men had used violence and intimidation to suppress voting. Widespread fraud with regard to handling of ballots and results also occurred. Democratic and Republican senators and congressmembers, state legislatures and governors, and Supreme Court justices engaged in protracted negotiations to settle the election’s results. The deadlock finally was broken when Southern Democrats agreed to recognize Republican Rutherford B. Hayes as the election winner, in exchange for federal funds to pay a larger share of infrastructure improvements in the former Confederate states and for an end to federal occupation of the southern states. Enough Republicans agreed to the deal as well, despite

<sup>126</sup> “Reconstructing Citizenship,” National Museum of African American History and Culture, no date, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/reconstruction/citizenship>.

<sup>127</sup> “14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution: Civil Rights (1868),” National Archives and Records Administration, March 6, 2024, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/14th-amendment> and Erwin Chemerinsky, “The Supreme Court and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: The Unfulfilled Promise,” p. 1143-1157.

<sup>128</sup> “*Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896),” National Archives and Records Administration, February 8, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/plessy-v-ferguson>.

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understanding that White southerners almost certainly would retake control of local and state governments and elections for federal offices and that Black Americans in those states likely would lose many of the rights they had so recently attained. Sympathetic to African Americans' cause for their rights, Hayes attempted to maintain some federal oversight of elections and protection of Black men's franchise through use of his presidential veto. Ultimately, he could do little in the face of a Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, which controlled the federal budget and refused expenditures to maintain a federal military presence in the unrepentant former Confederate states.<sup>129</sup>

*African Americans Fight for Their Rights*

In the face of mounting obstacles, African Americans, without resorting to violence, fought for their rights in state legislature, in Congress, and in the courts through the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Writing in 1926, Alrutheus Ambush Taylor explained that the Conservative<sup>130</sup> and Republican parties both had included African American men in their ranks through ratification of Virginia's new constitution. By 1873, however, former enslavers and White conservatives had gained control of the Democratic party and, in state elections that year, presented an overtly hostile attitude toward the state's Black population. Accordingly, most Black Virginians turned to the Republican party to exercise their political rights. With Governor James L. Kemper, a former Confederate general, taking office in 1874, the Conservative Party began the work of undermining the rights granted to African Americans in the recently ratified state constitution.<sup>131</sup> As explained above, however, during the 1870s, state politics were dominated by disputes among the "Funders" and "Readjusters" over how to alleviate Virginia's debt, which had adversely impacted provision of funding for the newly created public school system. African Americans participated in both sides of the debate, regardless that the "Funders" generally consisted of White conservatives who held little regard for the Black population's civil rights. Taylor noted that, "It was easier for those Negroes to support the native whites when they held positions in which they derived their support altogether from this element, such as bar-keepers, barbers, house servants, porters, cooks, and the like."<sup>132</sup> Simultaneously, the Republican Party in Virginia was riven by competing interests, with many members placing personal gain ahead of more altruistic motivations. Should African American political leaders call out such behavior, they often were met with hostile responses from across the party's White membership. Following the outcome of the 1876 presidential election, African Americans found themselves with a steadily dwindling number of White allies, which contributed significantly to the growing restrictions on their political and civil rights through the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>129</sup> "Reconstruction Era: About," National Park Service, February 27, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/reconstruction/about.htm>; Richard Wormser, "Hayes-Tilden Election (1876)," The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow, no date, [https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_events\\_election.html](https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_election.html); Sheila Blackford, "Disputed Election of 1876," Miller Center, University of Virginia, 2024, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/disputed-election-1876>.

<sup>130</sup> As it was called during the late 1860s and 1870s, the Conservative Party included a mix of Whigs, former Jeffersonian Democrats, and nativist populists, or Know-Nothings, and eventually coalesced to become the Democratic Party; importantly, this was not the same as the Jeffersonian Democratic party of the antebellum era, despite the similarity in party names.

<sup>131</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p 264-267. Taylor's project was among many investigations of African American history that were conducted with support from the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Founded by Carter G. Woodson, the organization today is known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Both it and Woodson are discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections below.

<sup>132</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 269.

<sup>133</sup> Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, *Historic Resource Study: Reconstruction and the Early Civil Rights Movement in the National Capital Area* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Capital Area, Resource Stewardship and Science, Division of Cultural Resources, 2021), p. 327-330.

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As ascertained by researchers at the Library of Virginia, a total of 92 African American men served as delegates or senators in the General Assembly between 1869-1890. Black delegates also participated in Virginia's 1868 constitutional convention. These political leaders hailed from across the state, with a substantial percentage from Southside Virginia where the majority of enslaved Virginians had lived prior to the Civil War. Their earliest major victories included voting, along with their White counterparts, to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution and to pass legislation to create the statewide public school system mandated in Virginia's new constitution. Holding close their responsibilities to represent the interests of African Americans, particularly those so recently emancipated, African American legislators introduced bills "to establish fraternal organizations to provide relief and burial benefits for the indigent; to incorporate cemetery and memorial companies; to improve roads and bridges; and to establish a maximum ten-hour day for farm laborers with a minimum wage of \$1.00 a day."<sup>134</sup>

Alrutheus Taylor assessed the period between 1873-1882 as lacking in substantial achievements on the part of Black elected officials, but due more to the inability of White Republicans to view them as truly equal and to the financial depression that struck the U.S. during the mid-1870s. The election of the short-lived Readjuster Party's candidate, William Mahone, in 1881, opened a brief window of opportunity. That year, the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (today's Virginia State University), the state's first public postsecondary educational institution open to Black men and women, was authorized through legislation introduced by Dinwiddie County delegate Alfred W. Harris (1853–1920). Other victories included the aforementioned 1882 legislation to reduce Virginia's debt without sacrificing state funding for public schools, creation of a state mental institution for African Americans, prohibition of use of whipping posts as a means of punishment, and repeal of poll taxes. Other lofty ambitions, such as integrating juries, eliminating severe punishments for minor offenses, and removing laws against miscegenation failed, but demonstrated the vastness of Black leaders' vision of a truly equal society as was promised by the Reconstruction Era constitutional amendments and civil rights legislation.<sup>135</sup>

*Lodge Bill of 1890*

Concurrent with the efforts of Black legislators to protect the rights of their constituents, White supremacists used increasingly violent tactics to intimidate African Americans and prevent them from exercising their rights. The Ku Klux Klan was the most infamous of the organized efforts to terrorize Black people. Lynching of African Americans in Virginia had occurred since the colonial era, but starting about 1880, such crimes increased in frequency and severity. White-majority state legislatures passed discriminatory laws that targeted African Americans' ability to earn fair wages, use commercial transportation, exercise the franchise, and seek legal protection in local and state courts.<sup>136</sup> In Congress, the Lodge Bill of 1890, so named for its author, Henry Cabot Lodge, attempted to create federal oversight of elections. Southern Democrats dubbed it the "Force Bill," in an effort to paint the proposal as a new federal intrusion into matters properly managed by state and local officials. The "states' rights" argument had originated among Southerners as justification for secession and was

<sup>134</sup> John Deal and Mari Julienne, editors, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "The First Civil Rights: Black Political Activism After Claiming Freedom," The UnCommonWealth, February 22, 2023, <https://uncommonwealth.virginiamemory.com/blog/2023/02/22/the-first-civil-rights-black-political-activism-after-claiming-freedom/>.

<sup>135</sup> Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), p. 279-281, 283; John Deal and Mari Julienne, editors, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "The First Civil Rights: Black Political Activism After Claiming Freedom," The UnCommonWealth, February 22, 2023, <https://uncommonwealth.virginiamemory.com/blog/2023/02/22/the-first-civil-rights-black-political-activism-after-claiming-freedom/>.

<sup>136</sup> Brendan Wolfe, "Lynching in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lynching-in-virginia/>.

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a central tenet of the Lost Cause movement that emerged even before the Confederate surrender at Appomattox. Although the House passed the legislation, the Senate did not and the bill failed.<sup>137</sup>

Among the most eloquent of arguments regarding the necessity of the legislation was South Carolina Congressman Thomas Ezekiel Miller's:

There are other things of more importance to us. First is the infernal lynch law. That is the thing we most complain of. It is a question whether when we go to work we will return or not. Second, they have little petty systems of justices who rob us of our daily toil, and we can not get redress before the higher tribunals. Third, we work for our task-masters, and they pay us if they please, for the courts are so constructed that negroes have no rights if those rights wind up in dollars and cents to be paid by the white task-masters....

Yes, gentlemen, we want office; but the first and dearest rights the negro of the South wants are the right to pay for his labor, his right of trial by jury, his right to his home, his right to know that the man who lynches him will not the next day be elected by the State to a high and honorable trust; his right to know that murderers shall be convicted and not be elected to high office, and sent abroad in the land as grand representatives of the toiling and deserving people.<sup>138</sup>

The political setbacks of the 1870s-1890s were grievous to the wellbeing of Virginia's African Americans. Often overlooked regarding this period, however, is the wisdom of Black Americans in creating self-sustaining communities composed of their own fraternal, social, financial, religious, and educational institutions. By making the most of their educational options, encouraging thrift and entrepreneurship, and supporting one another's efforts, African Americans in Virginia and across the country found ways both to outwit those who sought to subjugate them and to cultivate cordial relationships with White people who disdained the crude violence of populist and vigilante groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>139</sup> African American educators of this period often articulated effective arguments that recognized the limitations imposed on Black people while explaining the means through which, over time, African Americans would overcome those limitations.

### *Teacher Training and Normal Schools, 1868-1900*

For Black students, private and public colleges and universities (many, but not all, of which were coeducational) opened at a steady clip after the Civil War. Between 1880-1890, the nationwide number of Black colleges and universities increased from 45 to approximately 64.<sup>140</sup> In Hampton, Virginia, the private, coeducational Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (today's Hampton University) was founded in 1868 with a twofold mission: to train teachers to staff the hundreds of new, racially segregated public schools that

<sup>137</sup> Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, *Historic Resource Study: Reconstruction and the Early Civil Rights Movement in the National Capital Area* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Capital Area, Resource Stewardship and Science, Division of Cultural Resources, 2021), p. 327; Elisa Hink, "The Federal Elections Bill and the End of Reconstruction in 1890," Calvert Undergraduate Research Awards, University of Nevada Las Vegas, May 2022, <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/award/54>.

<sup>138</sup> The Library of America, "The Federal Elections Bill of 1890: Thomas E. Miller (1849-1938)," Story of the Week From Jim Crow: Voices from a Century of Struggle, Part One: 1876-1919 (Library of America, 2024, p. 124-127; originally published in the Congressional Record, 51st Congress, 2nd Session), October 13, 2024, <https://storyoftheweek.loa.org/2024/10/the-federal-elections-bill-of-1890.html>.

<sup>139</sup> Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, *Historic Resource Study: Reconstruction and the Early Civil Rights Movement in the National Capital Area* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Capital Area, Resource Stewardship and Science, Division of Cultural Resources, 2021), p. 328.

<sup>140</sup> "Key Events in Black Higher Education," The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, no date, <https://jbhe.com/chronology/>.

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were created in Virginia during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and to teach men an industrial or agricultural trade.<sup>141</sup>

Virginia's first normal schools often were at a level that would be considered high school today, in part because no standardized training curriculum for teachers yet existed in the Commonwealth.<sup>142</sup> For would-be African American teachers, initially, private institutions, such as Hampton Institute, often served as normal schools and admitted both men and women to their programs. In 1883, James Solomon Russell founded the Saint Paul Normal and Industrial Institute, affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Aiming higher than the typical normal school curriculum, the Saint Paul normal school offered three years of coursework. Graduating students earned teaching certificates for elementary schools.<sup>143</sup> The academically-grounded curriculum included U.S. history, algebra, physics, geography, English literature, penmanship, and composition. The normal school initially focused on providing training for elementary school teachers, for whom demand was greatest in Virginia with the opening of hundreds of new public elementary schools occurring across the state during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Public high schools scarcely existed in Virginia prior to 1906 and are discussed in subsequent sections below.

### Land Grant Institutions

While a handful of Virginia's private and public universities, including the University of Virginia, Hampden-Sydney College and the College of William and Mary, predate the Civil War, the first major organized effort to establish higher education in the U.S. came in 1862 with the Morrill Act. This legislation allocated to each state in the U.S., including the then-seceded Confederate states, a share of federally-owned land in the western territories that had been taken from almost 250 Native American tribes. The land was to be sold so that the proceeds could be used to establish an agricultural and mechanical college; such institutions are colloquially called land-grant schools.<sup>144</sup> In 1872, the General Assembly voted to direct one-third of Virginia's allocation to Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute (now Hampton University) and two-thirds to the newly formed Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (today's Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University or Virginia Tech).<sup>145</sup> In 1887, the Hatch Act added another \$15,000 annual allocation to land grant colleges to

<sup>141</sup> Victoria Leonard, Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Kayla Halberg, "Belmead Boundary Increase 2024," National Register of Historic Places additional documentation, June 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/072-0049/>, p. 82-83, 90; Mary Jackson, Marian Veney Ashton, Lena Downing-Handy, and Charles R. Lawson, "Julius Rosenwald High School," National Register nomination, August 5, 2023, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0075/>.

<sup>142</sup> For in-depth discussion of typical normal school curricula and how teacher training evolved from the 1860s-1920, see, for example, Betty Jo Whitaker Simmons, *An Historical Analysis of the Development of Teacher Training at the State Normal School, Farmville, Virginia, 1884-1924*, Ph.D. dissertation, March 1988, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va., and Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia's Normal Schools: A History of Virginia's State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

<sup>143</sup> Standardized teacher certification practices were not established in Virginia until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>144</sup> Kenny Barnes, "Indigenous Lands Fund the Morrill Act," Online Exhibit: The Land Grant System Black Inclusion and Community Building, Virginia Tech, no date, <https://historylab.squarespace.com/the-land-grant-system-exhibit-indigenous-lands-fund-the-morrill-act>.

<sup>145</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Hampton University," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 27, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hampton-University>; Kenny Barnes, "Virginia and the Morrill Act of 1862," Online Exhibit: The Land Grant System Black Inclusion and Community Building, Virginia Tech, no date, <https://historylab.squarespace.com/the-land-grant-system-virginia-and-the-morrill-act-of-1862>.

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fund research, which originally focused on agricultural concerns such as livestock breeding and crop diseases.<sup>146</sup>

The “Second Morrill Act” was passed in 1890 and required states to allow Black students to attend land-grant schools, whether by integrating an existing school or establishing a new, segregated school for African Americans. The 1890 legislation, however, did not provide states with additional lands to sell for establishing new schools. Hampton Institute continued to receive the portion of Virginia’s land grant funds that were designated for Black students until 1920. That year, the land grant allocation was switched to Virginia State College (today’s Virginia State University), which was founded on March 6, 1882, when Delegate Alfred W. Harris, a Petersburg attorney, succeeded in persuading the General Assembly to pass legislation to charter the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. The school was the first public institution of higher education for African Americans in Virginia and, as its name indicates, its mission included both teacher training and college-level academic courses. A significant aspect of the school’s founding was that African American men and the then-State Superintendent of Public Instruction comprised the Board of Visitors. Additionally, these leaders envisioned the new college would, in addition to its normal school, grow to provide classical education, professional schools of law and medicine, and academic studies in sciences and technology. An important difference, however, between the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Acts was that the 1890 legislation lacked provision of an endowment similar to the 1862 law, and, furthermore, the colleges funded through the 1890 Morrill Act were chronically underfunded by parsimonious state legislatures. Consequently, Black land grant colleges were set up to be fundamentally unequal to White colleges.<sup>147</sup>

The wider trend of creating agricultural and mechanical colleges dovetailed with the rapid, widespread advances in science and technology occurring across the U.S. (and worldwide) as new frontiers in chemistry, physics, electrical engineering, and other advanced sciences were fueling rapid industrial development.<sup>148</sup> For Black students, however, not only were their educational opportunities curtailed by segregation and underfunded public institutions, their financial and employment opportunities were impacted by rampant discriminatory employment practices. Even highly trained professionals, including doctors, lawyers, and engineers, found it difficult to obtain employment in the public and private sectors. In Virginia, African Americans’ educational options would be further curtailed during the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries as White conservatives reconsolidated their monopoly on political power throughout the Commonwealth.

### *Black Leaders and Educators Shape Pedagogy, c. 1870-c. 1915*

<sup>146</sup> Kenny Barnes, “Expansion of the Land-Grant System,” Online Exhibit: The Land Grant System Black Inclusion and Community Building, Virginia Tech, no date, <https://historylab.squarespace.com/land-grant-system-exhibit-expansion-of-the-landgrant-system-at-virginia-tech>.

<sup>147</sup> Committee on the Future of the Colleges of Agriculture in the Land Grant University System, Board on Agriculture, National Research Council, *Colleges of Agriculture at the Land Grant Universities* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1995), <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/4980/chapter/2#8>, p. 1-8; “History of VSU,” Virginia State University, no date, <https://www.vsu.edu/about/history/>; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia’s Normal Schools: A History of Virginia’s State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 71-75; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press., 1996), p. 495.

<sup>148</sup> Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, “The Shaping of Higher Education: The Formative Years in the United States, 1890-1940,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter 1999), [https://scholar.harvard.edu/goldin/files/the\\_shaping\\_of\\_higher\\_education\\_the\\_formative\\_years\\_in\\_the\\_united\\_states\\_1890-1940.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/goldin/files/the_shaping_of_higher_education_the_formative_years_in_the_united_states_1890-1940.pdf), p. 38-40.

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Throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Virginia's African American communities made considerable progress, particularly in the Commonwealth's largest cities and towns. Thriving middle-class professionals and business owners had established banks, legal and medical practices, mutual aid organizations, churches, fraternal organizations, and manufacturing and retail businesses. As explained above, however, their achievements were threatened by duplicitous White political leaders whose interest in African Americans ended with obtaining their vote, and their lives were increasingly vulnerable to racial terrorism by White vigilantes. To withstand these adversities, many African Americans sustained their certainty that education would equip themselves and their children with the tools needed to resist oppression. Several of the best-known Black educators of the period articulated an argument that took a long view toward racial uplift; of these, the best known are Frederick Douglass, who had been born enslaved in Virginia and liberated himself, and Booker T. Washington, a native Virginian whose lifetime accomplishments are most often associated with the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Three other Virginians, John Wesley Cromwell, James Solomon Russell, and Virginia Estelle Randolph, also made important contributions to pedagogical practices in Black schools. To some extent, each of them accommodated the pedagogical theories of White philanthropists such as John F. Slater and George F. Peabody, who argued for the industrial institutes and normal schools that typified the most common types of educational facilities available to African American Virginians during Reconstruction. Because rampant discriminatory hiring practices, however, meant that African American men and women often were hired only for low-paying jobs, these Black educators hoped that students at such schools would graduate with enough skills and knowledge eventually to acquire and manage their own farms successfully or to start a small business or shop that would allow them greater autonomy.<sup>149</sup>

### Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)

Frederick Douglass, a Virginia native who self-liberated, became one of the best-known intellectuals of late-19<sup>th</sup> American society. His experience as an enslaved child who had managed to attain literacy despite state laws against educating enslaved people was fundamental to his lifelong work for human rights. Douglass devoted much of his professional life to the abolitionist movement and was among its most eloquent orators. He also supported women's suffrage decades before the movement to gain the franchise for women would gain sufficient momentum to be made fact through the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Although renowned in his lifetime as a self-educated man, Douglass spoke consistently of the need for formal education to maintain a literate, socially and economically productive, and civically-engaged citizenry. He joined his contemporaries in the Northeast, such as Horace Mann, in arguing for the creation of a system of public "common" schools open to all children. An important difference between Douglass's and Mann's philosophies and those of Virginia's elites since the colonial era lay in their call for all students to attend the same schools, and for each student to be able to attain their ambitions without regard to their skin color or social class.

In 1871, Douglass moved to Washington, D.C., where he hosted leading intellectuals, civil rights activists, and elected officials and, with his gift for oratory, remained in great demand as a speaker. In 1894, a speech he gave at the opening of the opening of the Colored Industrial School in Manassas, Virginia, summarizes his argument that a combination of academic and practical instruction would serve the interests of young students:

To found an educational institution for any people is worthy of note; but to found a school in which to instruct, improve and develop all that is noblest and best in the souls of a deeply

<sup>149</sup> The long view philosophy did not meet with universal approval among the Black community. Other Black leaders argued that African Americans had every right to demand immediate access to quality education, employment of all types, property ownership, the franchise and holding elected office, and all of the other trappings of citizenship enjoyed by their White counterparts. Their perspectives are discussed in a subsequent section below.



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wronged and long neglected people, is especially noteworthy... We are to witness here a display of the best elements of advanced civilization and good citizenship. It is to be the place where the children of a once enslaved people may realize the blessings of liberty and education, and learn how to make for themselves and for all others the best of both worlds... The colored people, to be respected, must furnish their due proportion to each class. They must not be all masters, or all servants. They must command, as well as be commanded... The school which we are about to establish here, is, if I understand its object, intended to teach the colored youth, who shall avail themselves of its privileges, the use of both mind and body. It is to educate the hand as well as the brain; to teach men to work as well as to think, and to think as well as to work... <sup>150</sup>

Thus Douglass struck a balance in explicating that the purpose of schooling was to allow each student to find their role for contributing to society. In order to do so, students would be best equipped if they were taught how to perform both physical and mental work. The above quote refers only to African American children because he was attending the dedication of a school for Black students. Examination of his lifelong contributions, however, attest that he believed all students, regardless of skin color, would so benefit.

### Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)

Booker T. Washington, who became a nationally-known figure during the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, was born into slavery in rural Franklin County, Virginia, in 1856. As a child he felt acutely the pains of being denied an education while the White children of his enslaver's family were taught in a "pay" school. When the Civil war ended, Washington moved with his family to West Virginia, where, though still a child, he worked in a salt furnace and then in a coal mine to help support his family. Similar to Douglass, Washington embarked on a course of self-education, first by teaching himself the alphabet and then with evening tutoring sessions offered by a local teacher. Washington continued working while completing an elementary school level of education, and, upon hearing of the newly founded Hampton Institute in Virginia, he made his way, largely on foot, to the school, where he excelled in both the academic and industrial training that characterized the aforementioned "Hampton Model." In his biography, Washington wrote, "At Hampton, I not only learned that it was not a disgrace to labour [*sic*], but learned to love labour, not alone for its financial value, but for labour's own sake and for the independence and self-reliance which the ability to do something which the world wants done brings."<sup>151</sup> After graduating from Hampton Institute, Washington was invited to form a new normal school in Alabama. Washington shaped the curriculum at the resultant Tuskegee Normal and Industrial School to follow similar educational models as those at Hampton Institute. Washington's theories also strongly informed the county training schools that were built in rural Virginia between the 1910s-1930s; these schools are discussed in subsequent sections below.<sup>152</sup> Due in part to Washington's prodigious skills and

<sup>150</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Blessings of Liberty and Education: An Address Delivered in Manassas, Virginia, on September 3, 1894," The Frederick Douglass Papers Project, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana, <https://frederickdouglasspapersproject.com/s/digitaledition/item/19104>.

<sup>151</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography* (Garden City, New York Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1901), as quoted in Scot A. French, Craig Barton, and Peter Flora, *Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in Virginia*, Historic Resource Study. Booker T. Washington National Monument (N.p.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of Education, History Program, Northeast Region, 2007), p. 12.

<sup>152</sup> Today, Washington is known, as well, for his partnership with wealthy businessman Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Company. The two men formulated a program for aiding Southern rural Black communities where local and state governments had failed to provide adequate schoolhouses. Rosenwald funded a pilot project Washington had designed, which resulted in construction of 6 schools in Alabama in 1912 and he donated \$25,000 to finance matching grants to other localities in need of schools. Washington's Tuskegee Institute staff supervised the building projects and disbursement of funds. By 1915, the collaboration among



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energy, the “Hampton Model” was popularized across the former Confederate states. Additionally, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Washington pioneered coupling private philanthropic donations with community-based fundraising and local school boards matching funds to build new schools for African American students across the South.

Since Washington’s death in 1915, his contributions to education and African American communities have been repeatedly re-evaluated. He has been referred to as an “accommodationist,” willing to settle for the leftovers of a society dominated by White supremacy. Indeed, many White people who held little regard for educating African Americans at least tolerated the industrial education model. They believed that Black children were being trained only for menial jobs, to accept just a sliver of their citizenship rights, and to be persuaded that the existing social order ought not be challenged.

Washington also has been lauded as a shrewd pragmatist who focused on racial advancement by providing the first generations after slavery with the practical skills they needed to establish independent lives:

Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

Important to understanding Washington’s philosophy is the context within which he lived and worked. Within a decade of the Confederates’ loss, the vast majority of political, financial, and social leadership remained under the control of those who had fought to maintain slavery. Between the 1880s and 1910s, Washington witnessed the almost complete erosion of the civil rights that were supposed to have been guaranteed by the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution. His urging of his contemporaries to create and maintain self-contained communities beholden to anything from White people, therefore, may be understood as a strategy for survival in the face of mounting obstacles. With the industrial education model that White southerners tolerated, and through self-sufficiency and thrift, Black people would be able to acquire property, establish businesses, obtain higher education, and provide aid to those experiencing difficulties. Such autonomy, at least, might spare the

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Washington, Rosenwald, and Tuskegee had accomplished completion of 300 new schools for African American students. Washington died in 1915, but Rosenwald and the Tuskegee Institute, now under the leadership of Margaret Murray Washington, carried on the program. In 1917, Rosenwald created a nonprofit corporation, the Rosenwald Fund, to which he donated from his personal fortune. Ultimately, between 1913-1917, approximately 5,538 schools in 15 states were built over the duration of the program. In Virginia, 664 schools and 18 teachers’ dwellings were constructed, primarily in rural localities. Many counties had multiple schools. Now known as “Rosenwald schools,” these properties have been documented in a separate Multiple Property Document and, therefore, are not discussed in further detail herein. See Bryan Clark Green, “Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041),” Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>, p. 6-8.

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majority of African Americans from the worst excesses of racial hatred, such as lynchings,<sup>153</sup> race riots,<sup>154</sup> and forced expulsions<sup>155</sup> from entire towns, cities, and counties. Virginia was not spared such crimes.<sup>156</sup>

Over time, additional interpretations of Washington's legacy will continue to emerge. Regardless of future findings, the industrial education model that he helped to establish and perpetuate was thoroughly incorporated into Virginia's public schools for African American children from the start of Virginia's public school system in 1870 through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

### John Wesley Cromwell (1846-1927)

John Wesley Cromwell, a native of Portsmouth, and his parents and siblings attained freedom by 1851, by which time they had relocated to Philadelphia, which hosted a thriving Black population. Following completion of his education at "the Institute for Colored Youth, a Quaker school," between 1865-1871, Cromwell led an itinerant life that including teaching at schools in Pennsylvania and Maryland, as well as in Portsmouth and Norfolk County, Virginia.<sup>157</sup> In 1871, he received admittance to Howard University's law school while also working for the federal government in Washington, D.C., where he lived off and on for more than a decade. Upon graduating, among his most notable cases as an attorney was *William H. Heard v. the Georgia Railroad Company*, which he argued before the Interstate Commerce Commission. In addition to serving as an organizer for the Republican party, Cromwell devoted his prodigious energies to publishing and editing a weekly newspaper, *The People's Advocate*, 1876-1884, helping to found the National Colored Press Association and the American Negro Academy, serving as an officer in the Virginia Educational and Literary Association, and chairing a committee that established the Virginia Educational and Historical Association.<sup>158</sup>

In 1879, Cromwell became president of the Banneker Industrial Education Association. The organization was named to honor Benjamin Banneker, an African American surveyor who had worked with a survey team during the early 1790s to define the boundaries of Washington, D.C., after it was selected as the permanent U.S. capitol

<sup>153</sup> "History of Lynching in America," NAACP, no date, <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/history-lynching-america>; Equal Justice Initiative, "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror," Third Edition, 2017, <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/>.

<sup>154</sup> "Racial Violence in the United States Since 1526," BlackPast, no date, <https://www.blackpast.org/special-features/racial-violence-united-states-1660/>.

<sup>155</sup> Elliot Jaspín, "Leave or Die: America's Hidden History of Racial Expulsions," *Austin American-Statesman*, September 26, 2018, <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/2016/10/14/leave-or-die-americas-hidden-history-of-racial-expulsions/9957542007/>. For further reading, see Elliot Jaspín, *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

<sup>156</sup> For example, see "Charlotte Harris Lynched, 6 March 1878," Virginia Department of Historic Resources State Highway Marker, 2020, <https://vcris.dhr.virginia.gov/HistoricMarkers/>; "Thomas Washington Lynched," Virginia Department of Historic Resources State Highway Marker, 2021, <https://vcris.dhr.virginia.gov/HistoricMarkers/>; "James Horace Carter Lynched," Virginia Department of Historic Resources State Highway Marker, 2022, <https://vcris.dhr.virginia.gov/HistoricMarkers/>; "Isaac Brandon Lynched, 6 April 1892," Virginia Department of Historic Resources State Highway Marker, 2018, <https://vcris.dhr.virginia.gov/HistoricMarkers/>; "Leonard Woods Lynched," Virginia Department of Historic Resources State Highway Marker, 2020, <https://vcris.dhr.virginia.gov/HistoricMarkers/>; "Young Man Lynched for Allegedly Frightening White Girl in Leesburg, Virginia," Equal Justice Initiative, no date, <https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/nov/08>; Oliver Mueller-Heubach, David A. Brown, and Lori Jackson Black, "Gwynn's Island Historic District," National Register nomination, January 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/057-5467/>. This footnote is not a complete listing of all of the racial crimes that have been committed in Virginia.

<sup>157</sup> Donald Gunter & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "John Wesley Cromwell (1846-1927)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/cromwell-john-wesley-1846-1927>.

<sup>158</sup> Donald Gunter & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "John Wesley Cromwell (1846-1927)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/cromwell-john-wesley-1846-1927>.

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city. For many years, Cromwell's educational philosophy dovetailed with that of Booker T. Washington and other proponents of industrial education. In 1889, Cromwell returned to the education field, serving as a teacher and principal at schools in Washington, D.C. By this time, he had decided that industrial education and securing of community prosperity were insufficient to the needs of African Americans. Having witnessed the rise of Jim Crow segregation, Cromwell came to the conclusion that, just as political power had taken away the civil rights gained during Reconstruction, political solutions were necessary to reinstate those rights. Additionally, his interests focused on history as much as education and he published several books between 1904-1924, including *The Early Negro Convention Movement*; *The Jim Crow Negro*, *The Negro in American History: Men and Women Eminent in the Evolution of the American of African Descent*; and *The Challenge of the Disfranchised: A Plea for the Enforcement of the 15th Amendment*. Cromwell also wrote at least two historical articles, one about the 1831 Nat Turner Insurrection and another about the history of Black churches, both of which appeared in the *Journal of Negro History*, which was founded by fellow Virginian Carter G. Woodson.<sup>159</sup>

### Reverend James Solomon Russell (1857-1935)

Reverend James Solomon Russell, an Episcopal minister who had been educated at Episcopal schools in Petersburg, founded Saint Paul Normal and Industrial Institute in Brunswick County during the 1880s. As of the mid-1880s, he later wrote, "scarcely five out of a hundred [local African Americans] could read and write. The schools were poor, terms short (three or four months), teachers for the most part poorly trained, and nine-tenths of the [Black] people were tenants and renters." Thus, he determined, "a school of longer term, giving both academic and industrial training so as to increase their economic and industrial efficiency, was their great need, and that material and social uplift could only come through increased efficiency, industry and thrift."<sup>160</sup> With these statements, Russell aligned himself with the racial uplift theories of several of his contemporaries. Originally named Saint Paul Normal and Industrial Institute and supported by donations from the Episcopal Church as well as numerous private individuals, the school Russell founded emphasized teacher training and industrial education alongside academic coursework at what today would be considered the secondary level. A distinguishing factor was that Saint Paul offered a three-year curriculum instead of the two-year length at most such institutes. In 1889, agricultural training was added to the curriculum.<sup>161</sup> Russell appears never to have wavered from his multi-pronged pedagogical approach. Writing in 1919, he stated that the objectives of Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School were to offer "The highest Christian and moral education, coupled with a trade of some kind and a thorough English academic education, so that students may return to their respective communities and become useful citizens and efficient members of society."<sup>162</sup>

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, land ownership was widely recognized as a path to creating family wealth. Through agricultural education, young Black farmers would learn the latest, scientifically-proven agricultural methods which, over time, would allow farming families to increase yields and income and then to gain independence by moving from tenancy to buying their own land. Farming their own property allowed Black

<sup>159</sup> Donald Gunter & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "John Wesley Cromwell (1846–1927)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/cromwell-john-wesley-1846-1927>.

<sup>160</sup> "Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged]," Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p.8, 10. Note that the school's name changed over time. James Solomon Russell used the name Saint Paul Normal and Industrial Institute. Following his death in 1935, the possessive Saint Paul's came into use and appears to have been retained for the remainder of the school's history.

<sup>161</sup> Philip Stanley & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "James Solomon Russell (1857–1935)," *Virginia Encyclopedia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/russell-james-solomon-1857-1935>.

<sup>162</sup> "Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged]," Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p. 13.

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families to retain all of the income generated through their efforts, rather than paying a large percentage to a landowner. Additionally, the land itself would increase in value (taking into account fluctuations in local real estate) and was a tangible asset that could be used by children and grandchildren for their own pursuits. In 1919, Russell described the economic impact on students of Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School and the larger community when he cited statistics about material improvements in the lives of local Black residents:

Other local results are the complete revolution of moral, material and educational conditions in its home county. When the School began its work the log cabin reigned supreme, most of the [Black] people were renters and tenants, scarcely any owning land, ten thousand acres comprising their ownership. The county ranked among the poorest and least progressive in the State. To-day the log cabin is a thing of the past. Frame houses of two, three, four and even six or more rooms, painted, have taken its place. Instead of 10,000 acres, the Negroes now own 63,000 acres of land, valued at [\$530,814], the greatest valuation of Negro-owned farm land in the State, and with one exception the greatest number of acres owned by Negroes of any county in the State. The total personal and real property of Negroes, including town lots, according to the report of the Auditor of Public Accounts for the State and the Personal Property and Land Books of the County, are of the assessed value of \$937,799. Aside from these strictly material results, the criminal expenses are among the lowest in the State. The jail has been known to be empty for six months at a time, and the colored people of Brunswick are now ranked among the most thrifty, industrious and law abiding in the State.<sup>163</sup>

In 1919 in a publication used for fundraising, Russell emphasized the practical effects of the school's alumni on their home communities:

Numbers of the School's students have gone into backward communities, helped to build schoolhouses and churches, encouraged the people to buy land, start bank accounts, build better houses, schools and churches, and improve home surroundings. One graduate went into a backward rural community, started a Sunday school, then a parish school. Through her efforts a neat church was built, a two-room parish school, a rectory for the minister, etc. Another [alumnus] was the moving spirit in getting a tubercular hospital built in a North Carolina town. Another began in a rural community as teacher. The people were backward; she worked and secured a little home, setting an example of thrift that was soon followed. Now the community has many home owners, a neat schoolhouse, and a comfortable church building. In numerous other instances St. Paul's graduates and students have gone home and encouraged the old folk to quit the log cabin and build a better house. Frequently the new and the old are seen standing together, concrete examples of education and progress.<sup>164</sup>

Russell's 1919 descriptions of the school's alumni initiating positive change in communities presages by more than 40 years the types of civil rights activism of the late 1950s-early 1960s, when Black and White

<sup>163</sup> "Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged]," Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p. 14. Russell's inclusion of incarceration costs is notable because local and state vagrancy laws of the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras targeted Black men to compel them to perform unpaid "convict" labor for private and public purposes, including farming and road building. Russell's message presumably was, at least in part, that improved education and financial opportunities made the Black community of Brunswick County less vulnerable to exploitation through vagrancy laws.

<sup>164</sup> "Story of The St. Paul Normal and Industrial School [Catechetically Arranged]," Lawrenceville, Virginia, 1919, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t3cz75g91&seq=3>, p. 17.

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students, religious leaders, and social justice organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference worked cooperatively (and sometimes competitively) on voter registration drives, literacy programs, and community organizing to attain positive advances for underserved and marginalized communities in the American South. This quiet approach to community improvement succeeded during a fraught era in Virginia's history. The state's 1902 constitution, passed through political machinations rather than the will of Virginia voters, enshrined Jim Crow segregation in state law, while the continued lynching of Black men, women, and children throughout the first half of the twentieth century and the growing influence of the Ku Klux Klan, made even ordinary aspects of daily life in Black neighborhoods subject to violence. Similar trends occurred throughout the former Confederate states and the wider U.S.

Writing in 1926, James Solomon Russell touted the following table of census data for Virginia (Figure 9) as proof of the success of agricultural training for Black Virginians:

Year	No. of Farms	Total Acres in Farms	Average Acres per Farm	Total Value All Farm Property	Value of Farm Land	Value of Livestock
1920..	30,949	1,373,761	44.4	\$69,203,453	\$38,711,105	\$8,932,575
1910..	32,228	1,381,223	42.9	34,774,150	18,860,331	5,386,541
1900..	26,566	1,031,331	38.8	12,915,931	6,823,240	2,223,781

Figure 9. U.S. Census Data for Black-Owned Farms in Virginia, 1900-1920 (Image Source: James S. Russell, "Rural Economic Progress of the Negro in Virginia," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 11 No. 4 [October 1926], p. 560).

Russell argued that the steady increase in property ownership, the rapidly increasing value of the agricultural lands and livestock, and the increase in total number of Black-owned farms demonstrated important progress for rural Black Virginians. Russell credited the work and thrift of African American families for these successes. He noted, in particular, that nearby Mecklenburg County had the highest total of land owned by Black farmers in Virginia, and that Brunswick County was a close second. In his other writings, Russell cited similar statistics as proof of the effectiveness of practical education providing a means for building wealth in the Black community.

Although Saint Paul Normal and Industrial Institute was a private school, from its inception, students enrolled in the normal school gained teaching experience in local public schools. Upon graduation, these same students were employed across Virginia as public school teachers. Due to Saint Paul's three-year curriculum, alumni likely could boast greater depth of expertise in academic subjects as well as educational theory.<sup>165</sup> In

<sup>165</sup> Saint Paul Normal and Industrial Institute began its collegiate department of teacher training in 1922. Four years later, the teacher training department received accreditation by the Virginia State Board of Education. The school was renamed Saint Paul's Polytechnic Institute on December 30, 1941, when the school's charter was amended to allow a four-year academic curriculum, and industrial and education began to be phased out of the curriculum. In 1957, Saint Paul's trustees and administration renamed the school Saint Paul College in recognition of its transition to a four-year, liberal arts school; the long-lived agricultural training program ended around the same time. For additional information, see Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Victoria Leonard, "Saint Paul's College 2024 Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase," National Register nomination (draft), August 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

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recognition of both James Solomon Russell's and his school's historical significance, Saint Paul's College was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

### Virginia E. Randolph (1870-1958)

Born just a few years after slavery ended in the U.S., Virginia Estelle Randolph was among the first generation of Black leaders to be born free. A native of Richmond, she came of age, however, as civil rights for African Americans were under assault by White supremacists seeking to reverse the gains made during Reconstruction. She attended Richmond's Baker Public School (NRHP 2016; 127-0877) and the Richmond Colored Normal School. Like many Black women who attained education through the state's nascent public school system and normal schools, Randolph became a teacher, first in Goochland County at the age of just sixteen and then, in 1892, in Henrico County, where she would spend the remainder of her career. Like many of her contemporaries, Randolph saw the value of combining practical training with academic instruction along with community involvement in schools:

To prepare students for the workforce, Randolph adopted a "holistic" mode of teaching that fused the academic and the vocational at the elementary school level. In addition to providing education and career training, she engaged students by teaching them a home economics program of sewing, carpentry, cooking, and gardening. Randolph also worked to instill a sense of community, involving parents in Willing Worker Clubs and school improvement leagues, and organizing Sunday school services on weekends. Her successful approach, detailed in a manual entitled *The Henrico Plan*, would later influence hundreds of Jeanes teachers throughout the south and was eventually disseminated internationally.<sup>166</sup>

Through these contributions, Randolph came to the attention of the managers of the Negro Rural School Fund, established by Anna T. Jeanes through a bequest from her estate in 1907 with assistance from Booker T. Washington. Colloquially known as the Jeanes Fund, the organization paid salaries for African American teachers who would provide supervision and training to less experienced colleagues. The preceding year, Jackson T. Davis had assumed the role of superintendent of African American instruction in Henrico County. He had requested the county school board provide funds to allow Jeanes to offer training to other county teachers, but the board opted not to appropriate the necessary money. Upon learning of the Jeanes Fund, he recommended Randolph and she was named the first Jeanes Supervisor Industrial Teacher in October 1908, a role she continued for more than 40 years. At this point, Randolph's career converged with other important forces in Virginia's segregated public school system, including Davis himself, other philanthropic funds, such as the Phelps-Stoke Fund and the General Education Board, and the evolution of vocational education in Virginia through the first half of the 20th century. These events are discussed in further detail in subsequent sections below. As an heir of the industrial education movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Randolph played a direct role in its promulgation across the U.S. as well as countries in Asia and Latin America.<sup>167</sup> Concerning the

<sup>166</sup> "Virginia Estelle Randolph: Updating the Historical Records," Virginia Humanities, September 8, 2021, <https://virginiahumanities.org/2021/09/virginia-estelle-randolph/>. Home economics was an emerging field when Randolph began teaching. According to the gendered norms of the period, girls received home economics instruction while boys focused on industrial and agricultural training. These topics are discussed in further detail in a subsequent section.

<sup>167</sup> "Changemakers: Virginia Estelle Randolph," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/100>; James Sheire, "Virginia Randolph Cottage," National Historic Landmark nomination, July 31, 1974, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/043-0043/>. Now the location of the Virginia Randolph Museum, the Virginia Randolph Cottage originally functioned as a purpose-built home economics cottage and was constructed with federal funds in 1937; the cottage was associated with the Virginia Randolph Training School.

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legacy of Virginia Randolph's contributions to African American education, professor Samuel Chiles Mitchell of Richmond College (today's University of Richmond) wrote in 1933, "Her work ranks with that of Booker T. Washington. It has lacked the spectacular element that attaches to the great principal of Tuskegee; but in significance it surpasses, in some ways, even his achievements. Virginia Randolph has done the common thing in an uncommon way."<sup>168</sup> Randolph's career was emblematic of the dedication that African American teachers brought to their work as well as their creativity in finding ways to maximize severely limited resources. The Jim Crow era of segregation was at its height during Randolph's working life, making her achievements the more remarkable.

### Virginia's Jim Crow Segregation Era Begins

Notwithstanding the valiant efforts of African Americans from the 1860s-1890s, White-dominated Southern legislatures resumed passing discriminatory laws restricting access to voting and other rights of African Americans. Outnumbered African American legislators and voters could not prevent their legislatures from taking these actions and the U.S. Supreme Court had rendered the federal government almost powerless in the matter. After the withdrawal of federal troops when Reconstruction ended in 1877 and the systematic removal of African Americans from political offices, by the 1890s, descendants of the White elites who had controlled Virginia prior to the Civil War once again held the majority of political power. Buttressed by the Supreme Court's imposition of the "separate but equal" doctrine in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, Southern legislatures soon set about writing new state constitutions that made segregation and racial discrimination legal in all aspects of public life. With these actions, the "Jim Crow" era of segregation began across the country, with multiple ethnic and racial minorities targeted by discriminatory laws. In the former Confederate states, including Virginia, segregation laws and increasingly commonplace acts of racial terror, lynching, and other acts of intimidation forced African Americans into second-class citizenship.<sup>169</sup>

### *1902 Constitution of Virginia and Progressive Era Reforms*

Virginia's Democratic Party machine and Progressive Era reformers met in an unlikely fashion during the 1901 constitutional convention. Conservative Democrats sought to restrict suffrage of all African Americans in Virginia as well as poor and working-class White Virginians, who because of their poverty and, often, illiteracy, were deemed socially unworthy. Poll taxes and literacy tests were the methods proposed to limit the franchise. The poll tax was required to be paid a minimum of six months in advance of an election and to have been paid for three successive years. A written application for voter registration, to be completed without assistance, was later added as another requirement. Civil War veterans and their sons (because women could not vote) were exempted from both poll taxes and literacy tests. Delegates to the constitutional convention, all of whom were political leaders, ratified the constitution themselves rather than presenting the new document to Virginia's voters. The Virginia Supreme Court upheld this maneuver in its 1903 *Taylor v. Commonwealth* decision.<sup>170</sup>

One consequence of disfranchising tens of thousands of voters was the increased power of the Democratic political machine, which faced little opposition due to overwhelming support from White elites, while the Republican Party, favored by African Americans since the 1860s, was marginalized for decades. Furthermore,

<sup>168</sup> Elvatrice Belsches, "Virginia Estelle Randolph (1870–1958)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/randolph-virginia-estelle-1870-1958>.

<sup>169</sup> "Reconstructing Citizenship," National Museum of African American History and Culture, no date, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/reconstruction/citizenship>.

<sup>170</sup> Susan Breitner, "Constitutional Convention, Virginia (1901–1902)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/constitutional-convention-virginia-1901-1902>.

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the longstanding county court system, with officials chosen by local residents, was abolished and the General Assembly was given authority to appoint judges and other local officials, concentrating even more power in the Democratic machine. The constitution's most harmful effects, however, lay in its adoption of the "separate but equal" doctrine in all aspects of public life and society in Virginia. Racial segregation now was mandated in all levels and areas of residents' lives, from private clubs to public schools, commercial transit to theaters, and so forth. Segregation laws in Virginia were enforced into the 1960s, with political resistance to their removal remaining strong throughout the period. Only the federal government, goaded into action by the Civil Rights Movement, eventually would end Virginia's Jim Crow era of segregation.

With regard to public education, the 1902 constitution has been noted for its inclusion of a selection of Progressive Era reforms. These included creation of state agencies to regulate railroads, workmen's compensation, and industrial development.<sup>171</sup> Such expansion of oversight of private business operations marked a new phase in modernization of Virginia's state government. A hallmark of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would be the steady growth of government activities and services at the local, state, and federal levels, despite the organized and adamant efforts of the conservative Democratic machine to resist such expansion, especially during the decades-long leadership of U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, who would play a prominent role in Virginia's resistance to school desegregation during the 1950s-1960s. Other new constitutional provisions concerning education reflected the expansion of state powers, with the State Board of Education now empowered to establish and enforce minimum standards for school curricula and teacher certification. For the first time in state history, school attendance became compulsory, a response to the fact that thousands of school-age children were kept from school either by parents disinterested in education or by employment of children in a period that lacked child labor laws of any kind. The problem of children from poorer families having access to textbooks was addressed, somewhat, by provision of free textbooks; African American children, however, continued to be underserved in this regard as they were allowed to use outdated books that had been discarded by White schools.<sup>172</sup> In terms of stabilizing funding sources for local school systems, the Commonwealth was required to levy an annual property tax "of not less than one or more than five mills on the dollar."<sup>173</sup> With the new constitution, appropriations of school funding were regulated to be based on school population, but was based on the total population of residents aged seven to twenty, not just those enrolled in school. Local school district boundaries now were required to follow the boundaries of the sponsoring locality; previously, some school district boundaries crossed county lines, which had complicated allocation of local tax revenues for school operations.<sup>174</sup> Finally, reformers sought to insulate the public education system from political interference. The makeup of the State Board of Education was expanded to include three professional educators in addition to the Governor, Attorney General, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the latter of whom, going forward would be a professional educator who was elected rather than appointed. The State Board

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<sup>171</sup> Susan Breitner, "Constitutional Convention, Virginia (1901–1902)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/constitutional-convention-virginia-1901-1902>.

<sup>172</sup> *State/Local Relations & Service Responsibilities: A Framework for Change*, Report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia, Senate Document No. 37, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, 1993, p. 85-86.

<sup>173</sup> Foney G. Mullins, A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 50.

<sup>174</sup> *State/Local Relations & Service Responsibilities: A Framework for Change*, Report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia, Senate Document No. 37, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, 1993, p. 85-86.



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of Education also was granted power to issue rules and regulations to standardize all school operations. Local school boards also were simplified, with a superintendent appointed “for each school division.”<sup>175</sup>

Additional reforms followed in 1906, in part due to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joseph Eggleston, who was elected state superintendent in 1898 (the first year that the position was elected rather than appointed by the sitting governor). That year, the General Assembly passed the Mann High School Act, which authorized creation of a system of high schools across Virginia. That law was followed in 1908 by the Williams Building Act, which permitted localities to borrow money from the Literary Fund to pay for school construction as long as the building plan had been approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. These legislative acts represented another unprecedented incursion of State involvement in local educational affairs, but were widely recognized as necessary due to the continued inadequacy of public school facilities in most localities. Additionally, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, high school education increasingly was understood to be a necessity as the period’s dizzying pace of technological innovations and social complexities demonstrated that secondary education was necessary in order for communities to compete for burgeoning commercial and industrial developments.<sup>176</sup> Another indication of the growing complexity of the statewide public school system was evidenced by the documentation that a locality had to submit with its funding request: building plans, an argument justifying the need for a new school, such as increased enrollments or inadequate buildings, and agreement by the local government to levy a tax specifically intended to pay off the loan.<sup>177</sup> Initially, the maximum loan amount available was just \$3,000 or 50 percent of the construction cost, which nevertheless was sufficient to finance dozens of new high schools for White students across Virginia. Most localities denied African American students access to public high schools on the basis that these students’ education should be limited only to elementary grades and manual trades.

The loan amounts available through the Literary Fund increased in 1908 to \$10,000. That year, the Strode Act provided a \$25,000 subsidy to local school systems for the creation of graded schools. Through this legislation, the first round of school consolidation began, with the intended goal of eliminating one-room rural schools. Only White children, however, benefitted from consolidation efforts, as local officials had no interest in such expenditures, even if they were subsidized with state funds, for Black pupils. Due to the influx of new revenue from interest on previous loans, the Literary Fund’s overall financial condition improved, which increased legislators’ confidence in the financial viability of providing state loans to locality for building schools. In 1914, the General Assembly reduced the interest rate and, two years later, increased the maximum loan amount to \$15,000, and raised the ceiling on localities from the original one-half of construction cost two-thirds of the cost.<sup>178</sup> With these measures, the outlines of Virginia’s financing methods for an increasingly modern public school system became discernible, at least with regard to schools for White students. African American students

<sup>175</sup> Foney G. Mullins, *A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 50; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia’s Normal Schools: A History of Virginia’s State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 102-103.

<sup>176</sup> Foney G. Mullins, *A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 51.

<sup>177</sup> Foney G. Mullins, *A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 52; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia’s Normal Schools: A History of Virginia’s State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 98-99.

<sup>178</sup> Foney G. Mullins, *A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 53; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia’s Normal Schools: A History of Virginia’s State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 99.

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and their families and communities, however, especially in rural areas continued to be forced to rely on the generosity of private benefactors to secure educational opportunities for themselves; these are discussed in greater detail below.<sup>179</sup>

*Standardizing Teacher Training and Certification Begins*

Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century changes in public school curricula paralleled rising expectations among most Virginians in the realm of their children's education, although racist attitudes meant that many White Virginians continued to oppose public education for African Americans. Black communities, meanwhile, continued to be vigilant about securing as much education as possible, including by raising standards for certifying public school teachers. Pay for Black teachers often was lower than that for White instructors, but the teaching profession was one of the few careers open to African Americans, particularly women, who continued to enter the field in growing numbers. Because education was held in such esteem, Black communities rallied together to supplement teacher salaries and to provide them with books, globes, maps, and other equipment. The upward arc in teacher training and overall educational expectations also fulfilled Booker T. Washington's and James Solomon Russell's confident predictions that such progress would follow on the heels of the creation of an educated working class made up of industrial tradesmen, independent farmers, and women knowledgeable of domestic arts and sciences.

Due to the racially segregated character of public schools in Virginia and throughout the South, training of Black women and men to assume teaching positions was prioritized in educational settings sponsored by philanthropists and religious organizations such as Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School and Hampton Institute in Virginia.<sup>180</sup> The highest demand continued to be for elementary school teachers, as those schools were far more numerous than junior or senior high schools for African American students as late as the 1940s. Women held the majority of teaching positions, especially for elementary grades. Regarding the steadily increasing teacher training standards, in 1919, James Solomon Russell reported that 48 of Brunswick's County's 54 Black teachers had been trained "in whole or part at Saint Paul's." The same year, the County agreed to pay the salaries of four teachers, or half of the needed faculty, at a proposed "practice school" where the normal institute students could obtain teaching experience as part of their training.<sup>181</sup> In 1922, Saint Paul's began its collegiate department of teacher training; in 1926, the teacher training department received accreditation by the Virginia State Board of Education.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>179</sup> For decades, Black communities, especially in rural areas, lobbied tirelessly for public schools beyond the elementary grades, but local school boards often resisted authorizing secondary schools. Many White residents across Virginia remained hostile to Black students receiving any formal education at all. See Mary Jackson, Marian Veney Ashton, Lena Downing-Handy, and Charles R. Lawson, "Julius Rosenwald High School," National Register nomination, August 5, 2023, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0075/>.

<sup>180</sup> Just as students were segregated by race, most often teachers were as well. While a White teacher might work at a Black school, the reverse was never true.

<sup>181</sup> "Educational and Religious Work at St. Paul N. and I. School," *The Southern Missioner* (Vol. 29, No. 3) March 1919, p. 22, 23, 26. In 1919, Saint Paul's College leaders also attempted to raise money to create a maintenance fund, a necessary condition in order for a proposed library to be built under the auspices of Andrew Carnegie. Based on publicly available lists of Carnegie libraries in Virginia, it appears that the campus did not receive a new library building through Carnegie's fund.

<sup>182</sup> Saint Paul's College 4 Life, "James S. Russell High School," February 25, 2021, [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story\\_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591).

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In order to meet growing demand for teachers, during the early 1900s, the General Assembly finally was convinced that Virginia's network of Reconstruction Era normal schools, which largely dated to the brief period when Radical Republicans controlled the governorship in 1881-1885, were more akin to high schools than to postsecondary education, could no longer fulfill the Commonwealth's needs. In 1882, the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (today's Virginia State University) became the first public normal school for African American students, and, two years later, the State Female Normal School at Farmville (today's Longwood University) was created through legislative action and opened in March 1884.<sup>183</sup> As its name suggests, the normal school at Farmville accepted only female students who, due to the period's segregationist practices, were all White. A normal school for male students began in 1888 at the College of William and Mary but it was only one department in the four-year, liberal arts college and its creation owed as much to efforts to revitalize the school as to bring more men into the ranks of public school teachers.<sup>184</sup> Due to heteronormative gendered societal beliefs of the period, women were considered better suited for teaching elementary-age children than men, but men held leadership positions in public schools, such as principal, local boards of education, and as superintendent at the local and state levels. Virginia's network of normal schools expanded in 1908 with incorporation of two more normal schools for White women in Harrisonburg (today's James Madison University) and Fredericksburg (today's University of Mary Washington). Another normal school was authorized in 1910 in Radford (and became today's Radford University).<sup>185</sup>

Meanwhile, by 1890, White conservatives had removed all of the African American members of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute's Board of Visitors and required all students to participate in industrial training while the school's academic offerings began to be scaled back. The first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought further travails to the school. In 1902, with White supremacy and Jim Crow segregation enshrined in the new state constitution, backlash against Black Virginians' educational progress continued when the General Assembly revised the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute's charter, curtailed its collegiate curriculum, and changed its name to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. Although elementary and industrial education still held a grudging role in Virginia's public school system, White supremacists sought to emphasize that academic aspirations beyond these would not be accepted. In 1908, agriculture was added to the school's industrial training curriculum.<sup>186</sup> The normal school, however, continued its teacher training program as Black teachers were needed for segregated elementary schools.

At all of Virginia's normal schools, after 1908, teachers began to be trained for teaching at the high school level. Accordingly, the state's normal schools offered two years of high school coursework to incoming students into the 1920s, by which time most localities had at least one high school for White students. With expanding curricula at the elementary and secondary levels, normal school students began to receive more

<sup>183</sup> Dedicated to training White women, the State Female Normal School was previously known as Farmville Female Seminary from 1839-1860, Farmville Female College from 1860-1875, and Farmville College from 1875-1884.

<sup>184</sup> Betty Jo Whitaker Simmons, *An Historical Analysis of the Development of Teacher Training at the State Normal School, Farmville, Virginia, 1884-1924*, Ph.D. dissertation, March 1988, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va., p. 3, 4, 13, 53, 121-122; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia's Normal Schools: A History of Virginia's State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 71.

<sup>185</sup> Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia's Normal Schools: A History of Virginia's State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 101.

<sup>186</sup> "History of VSU," Virginia State University, no date, <https://www.vsu.edu/about/history/>; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia's Normal Schools: A History of Virginia's State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 79-80, 106-107.

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specialized pedagogical training. For example, drama, literature, physical education, and music were added to the curriculum for would-be teachers who wanted to specialize in a particular area of study.<sup>187</sup> As their academic curricula expanded, starting in the 1920s, the normal schools began to be renamed to reflect their loftier purposes.<sup>188</sup> In Farmville, for example, the normal school became the State Teachers College at Farmville in 1924. Also during the 1920s, the General Assembly ameliorated and/or reversed some of its earlier actions concerning the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Ettrick. The Commonwealth's land-grant program moved from the private Hampton Institute to the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in 1920, thus providing much-needed additional revenue for the school's operation and placing it on equal footing with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University as Virginia's only two land-grant schools. Three years later, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute's collegiate program was restored and, in 1930, the school's name changed to Virginia State College for Negroes, a name that confirmed its mission was akin to those of other state teachers colleges in Virginia.<sup>189</sup>

In concordance with the growth of state normal schools, Virginia's teacher certification requirements were stiffened through the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Originally, local school boards had been empowered to determine if a person met appropriate requirements to teach in their elementary schools. In 1904, the General Assembly authorized the State Board of Education to create a State Board of Examiners that would be charged with evaluating would-be teachers' credentials and issuing a teacher certification. Over the next 20 years, the Commonwealth would repeatedly update the certification requirements, in part to take into account older, experienced teachers who had begun teaching before the state normal schools were established, the rapid expansion of high school education for White students between 1906-1920s, and the varied curricula offered at public and private normal schools in Virginia, including Hampton Institute, Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial Institute, and Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. The varying needs of public schools also were taken into account. For example, rural schools consistently were underserved in comparison with urban schools, with many teachers refusing to accept positions in rural areas. In 1908, the General Assembly authorized the State Board of Education to place one-year training programs at selected high schools, which would allow students who had completed three years of high school and the training curriculum to teach in rural elementary schools. Over the next four years, a complicated system of 38 different levels of teacher certifications was created, each reflective more of the multiple paths that individuals had taken to become teachers as opposed to the teacher training that was then being offered at normal schools. For example, certification of experienced teachers who had begun teaching during the 1870s-1890s and had not had an opportunity to attend a normal school was a particularly thorny issue, as removing

<sup>187</sup> Betty Jo Whitaker Simmons, *An Historical Analysis of the Development of Teacher Training at the State Normal School, Farmville, Virginia, 1884-1924*, Ph.D. dissertation, March 1988, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va., p. 82-83.

<sup>188</sup> As normal schools were the only postsecondary institutions in Virginia that admitted female students, administrators worked to position their schools on a more equal footing with male-only schools such as the University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State College, and Virginia Military Institute. These efforts coincided with the successful campaign for ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which extended the franchise to women. For a discussion of the evolution of normal school's evolving curricula within the changing expectations of women's roles in society, see Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia's Normal Schools: A History of Virginia's State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

<sup>189</sup> "History of VSU," Virginia State University, no date, <https://www.vsu.edu/about/history/>; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press., 1996), p 495. Hampered by continuous underfunding, especially when compared to state appropriations for White colleges and university, Virginia State College nevertheless grew in stature during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. A two-year branch campus opened in Norfolk in 1944, during the height of World War II. The Norfolk campus expanded to a four-year curriculum in 1956 and became Norfolk State College (today's Norfolk State University) in 1969. Virginia's State's official name was shortened to Virginia State College in 1946, and, in 1979, the college became a university upon passage of legislation by the General Assembly.

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them from classrooms would have greatly exacerbated Virginia's perennial teacher shortage. This approach quickly proved to be too unwieldy and, in 1917, certification requirements were simplified to just seven types. Teachers who were certified to teach at the elementary and secondary level held collegiate professional or normal professional certificates; such teachers had completed the most advanced schooling, often beyond Virginia due to the Commonwealth's limited postsecondary opportunities then available to women. Those certified to teach elementary school held elementary professional, collegiate, special, second grade, and first grade certificates, with the associated formal education requirements in descending order. To cope with teacher shortages caused by upheavals of the World War I period, emergency certificates also could be issued by local school boards. Some certifications were reserved for African American teachers, for whom White bureaucrats held lower expectations both in terms of their teaching ability and the need to educate Black children beyond basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>190</sup> By the late 1920s, certification standards were based on institutional credits and, for the most part, the state examination was discontinued, a practice that indicated the standardization of normal school curriculum that had occurred over the preceding decade.

Discriminatory practices prevented African Americans from pursuing many of the most rigorous programs of studies and was reflective of the White supremacist belief that Black students' academic education should be minimal. As discussed in preceding sections, however, administrators of Black normal schools continuously campaigned to improve and expand their curricula, grow their student enrollments, and attract accomplished faculty. Where formal educational opportunities were curtailed, teachers associations helped to make up the difference.

### Virginia State Teachers Association<sup>191</sup>

Starting during the Reconstruction Era, Black teachers worked together to make the most of the circumstances within which they worked. In 1883 in Richmond, a "reading circle" for teachers formed and, in subsequent years, more reading circles were established across the state. Several of these, such as a group in Farmville in 1884, lasted only for the duration of the summer institutes that provided the first professional training for many teachers and supplemented the normal schools that the Freedmen's Bureau and private donors had organized during the late 1860s-early 1870s. Even as normal schools were established in many of Virginia's larger cities, the summer institutes and reading circles continued to serve teachers in rural areas; the aforementioned Peabody Fund helped to underwrite the costs of the summer institutes. Such groups were a forerunner to the more formal professional development practices that would come during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A summer institute held in Lynchburg in 1887 was the first to be organized and taught by Black teachers native to Virginia and included James H. Johnston, Rosa Dixon Bowser, and Dr. Webster Davis, among others. The following year, Johnston was appointed president of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (today's Virginia State University) in Petersburg and the Virginia Teachers Reading Circle was housed here. This organization proved to be the nucleus for the Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA). Along with Johnston, Bowser and Daniel B.

<sup>190</sup> John Randolph McCraw Jr., *The Legal History of Teacher Certification in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, Ed.D. dissertation, 1987, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 59, 70, 87-94, 99-102, 108, 115. McCraw covered the legal and regulatory processes related to teacher certification from the colonial era to the mid-1980s, but did not discuss the impacts of White supremacy and discriminatory practices aimed at Black teachers during this span.

<sup>191</sup> The history of the Virginia Teachers Association has been addressed in different publications, including J. Rupert Picott, *History of the Virginia Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1975) and Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965* (1981), Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary (Paper 1539618582), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>. The VTA originally was known as the Negro State Teachers Association of Virginia, and went by an assortment of names in succeeding decades, including State Teachers Association of Virginia, Virginia State Teachers Association, and Virginia Association for Education. In 1948, the appellation Virginia Teachers Association (VTA) was adopted. The VTA merged with the all-White Virginia Education Association in 1967.

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Williams served as the association's first elected presidents.<sup>192</sup> In 1904, the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (later renamed the American Teachers Association) formed as the national counterpart to the National Education Association, an all-White organization. John Robert Edward Lee of Alabama served as the organization's first president. In addition to education, both organizations included health and housing in their respective missions; as with the VSTA, these multiple advocacy interests attracted interest far beyond that of professional educators.<sup>193</sup>

The VSTA struggled both in terms of organization and finances in its early years, a reflection of the difficulties faced by Virginia's public school system in general and particularly with regard to schools for African Americans. As discussed above, Virginia lagged behind other former Confederate and slaveholding states in most aspects of launching its public school system, including tax revenue, student enrollments, teacher training, and creation of high schools.<sup>194</sup> The Commonwealth's overall poor performance prompted Progressive Era reformers, including many who supported the cause for African Americans' education, to lobby state legislators to take action, primarily through the vehicle of the Cooperative Education Association, founded in 1904.<sup>195</sup> The resultant bills – the Mann High School Act of 1906 and the Williams Building Act and Strode Act in 1908 – directed the majority of new funding to schools for White students.<sup>196</sup> In 1907, again in Ettrick at the renamed Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, a similar organization, the School Improvement League, formed to exert similar influence on behalf of Black students and was made up of African American parents, teachers, community leaders, and business owners. The School Improvement League merged with the VSTA in 1909. With a potential membership base that extended far beyond teachers and principals, the merged organizations soon had local chapters established across the Commonwealth. James Solomon Russell, J. Alvin Russell Sr., and Genevieve C. Whitehead were among the educators at Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial Institute who were cited as influential in this phase of the VSTA's history; Hampton Institute faculty, including Robert R. Moton, W.T.B. Williams, T.C. Walker, and Allen Washington, also filled important roles, as did John M. Gandy and James T. Phillips of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. Black educators also promoted broader ideas for community improvement that had embraced much of the mission at Saint Paul's since its founding: "better health, better homes, and better farms." In response to this mission, the Negro Organization Society emerged as an offshoot of the VSTA but with leaders and educators participating in both groups. Together, these groups also responded to the deepening strictures of Jim Crow segregation that were unleashed after adoption of the 1902 state constitution. Finally, the period's expansion of education advocacy by African American community leaders also attracted attention from philanthropists within and beyond Virginia, which prompted increased contributions toward filling the gap in public funding for schools through privately-funded

<sup>192</sup> Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965* (1981), Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary (Paper 1539618582), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>, p. 13, 15-18. Other accounts of the VTA's history include Luther P. Jackson, *History, Virginia State Teachers Association* (Norfolk, Virginia: The Guide Publishing Company, 1937) and Thelma D. Perry, *History of the American Teachers Association* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1975).

<sup>193</sup> "American Teachers Association and ATA Affiliates, 1911-1986," George Washington University Gelman Library, no date, [https://searcharchives.library.gwu.edu/repositories/2/archival\\_objects/247985](https://searcharchives.library.gwu.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/247985), which cited Thelma D. Perry, *History of the American Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1975).

<sup>194</sup> Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965* (1981), Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary (Paper 1539618582), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>, p. 21-22.

<sup>195</sup> Jennifer McDaid, "Cooperative Education Association," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/cooperative-education-association>.

<sup>196</sup> William A. Link, as quoted in Scot A. French et al., *Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in Virginia* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2007), p. 277.

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programs.<sup>197</sup> These programs, in turn, helped to build the school types identified herein as Privately/Publicly Financed Schools and discussed in greater detail below.

*Private Funding Sources and Industrial Education*

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Booker T. Washington had become a widely recognized, authoritative advocate for the improvement of African Americans' lives through education. Impressed by his accomplishments, President Theodore Roosevelt invited Washington to the White House in 1901, an occasion that prompted Washington's growing influence among elite White political and business leaders who were sympathetic to the cause of improving life for African Americans in the South. Through his connections, Washington met John D. Rockefeller and Anna T. Jeanes, each of whom created a philanthropic fund to advance Black education (see below). In 1906, Rockefeller introduced Washington to Henry Huttleston Rogers, a director of the Standard Oil Company who also was president of the Virginian Railway that ran from West Virginia across Virginia to the ports in Hampton Roads.<sup>198</sup> Washington convinced Rogers to donate toward the construction of three schools for African Americans in rural Alabama and, ultimately, to fund a total of 46 new school projects. Rogers's sudden death in 1909 ended this collaboration, but it provided a proof of concept for using private donations to build public schools for Black pupils in the rural South.<sup>199</sup>

A parallel federal effort emerged around the same time, known as the Country Life Movement. A commission appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt studied circumstances in the vast rural areas that still made up much of the United States. Although cities were growing rapidly with spiraling rates of industrialization, immigration, and modern infrastructure development, rural areas had seen few improvements. The loss of rural population to employment opportunities in cities drained youth and energy from rural areas. Poor-quality educational opportunities also were cited as reasons for relocation to cities. Progressive Era social reformers determined that rural schools could be revitalized to serve communities at large as places for continuing education, social events, and meeting spaces for clubs. The women's club movement, in particular, was recognized as a phenomenon that could relieve the isolation experienced by women living on isolated farmsteads. School curricula also was recommended to expand to include instruction that would prepare students for adult life, including industrial and agricultural training and home economics.<sup>200</sup>

Following Washington's example and agreeing with his educational philosophy, numerous White philanthropists, particularly Northerners, created a range of foundations and funds to support African American education throughout southern states during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; several of the major funds are summarized below. Many of the individuals involved often crossed paths and informed one another's work. They also shared Washington's approach to industrial education, a term that covered a broad range of educational initiatives that served multiple ends: fulfillment of "the needs of the mass of rural blacks by

<sup>197</sup> J. Rupert Picott, *History of the Virginia Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1975), p. 54-56; Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965* (1981), Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, College of William & Mary (Paper 1539618582), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>, p. 24-26.

<sup>198</sup> The Virginia Railway itself was significant for its economic impact in Virginia; see Michael J. Pulice and John Kern, "Virginia Railway Passenger Station," National Register nomination, April 4, 2003, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/128-5461/>.

<sup>199</sup> Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>, p. 7.

<sup>200</sup> Betty Bird, "Armstead T. Johnson High School," National Register nomination, December 1, 1997, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/096-0113/>, p. 8.7. The uneven expansion of vocational and home economics education in schools for White and African American students is discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections below.



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teaching them basic skills, habits of thrift and work discipline, and values of Victorian morality; ... a smokescreen behind which its white (*sic*) supporters could provide resources to black education; ... political cover for support among southern whites for minimal black schooling; [and] for northern philanthropists, ... a means by which to funnel funds to African American education.”<sup>201</sup> Jackson Davis, a Virginia native and graduate from the College of William and Mary, played a central role in facilitating philanthropic investments in Virginia’s African American schools. He was appointed the local superintendent of Black schools in Henrico County in 1905 and later became a state inspector for the Virginia State Board of Examiners, the body authorized in 1904 to certify teachers who lacked a postsecondary degree instead on the basis of examinations. Due largely to the efforts of Black educator Virginia E. Randolph (discussed below), Henrico County’s African American schools received acclaim for their incorporation of industrial education. Davis was selected to serve as the first state supervisor of Black education, a position that Virginia officials authorized only after John D. Rockefeller’s General Education Board agreed to pay its salary.<sup>202</sup>

Similar to many efforts by well-meaning White philanthropists that are discussed herein, the philanthropic projects concerning industrial education operated on the assumption that Euro-American culture represented the pinnacle of civilization. Their efforts, therefore, on behalf of African Americans and other people of color were based on



Figure 10. In this 1937 photo, African American students learn about manual labor with wood blocks while White students are taught about history and monasteries with a hands-on model (Image source: Cassandra Newby-Alexander et al., *Hampton Roads: Remembering Our Schools* [Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2009], p. 54.

<sup>201</sup> William A. Link, “Jackson Davis and the Lost World of Jim Crow Education,” published jointly by the Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library and The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, May 2000, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/related-resources/jackson-davis-and-the-lost-world-of-jim-crow-education/>.

<sup>202</sup> William A. Link, “Jackson Davis and the Lost World of Jim Crow Education,” published jointly by the Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library and The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, May 2000, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/related-resources/jackson-davis-and-the-lost-world-of-jim-crow-education/>. Link added that, “In 1915, [Davis] became affiliated with the General Education Board [GEB] as a field agent, though he remained based in Richmond, in which capacity he remained until 1929, when he was made assistant director. Becoming associate director [of the GEB] in 1933, Davis moved his offices to New York City in 1937, and in 1946 he became the GEB’s vice-president and director.”



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the assumption that non-White cultures were intrinsically inferior.<sup>203</sup> The differences between educational approaches for Black children versus White children remained stark for decades, as is evidenced by a 1937 photo of educational materials for children in two of Norfolk's segregated schools (Figure 10, above).

As had been the case for African Americans since the colonial era, however, once equipped with the means to undertake educational initiatives, Black educators and their community allies deployed creativity, political savvy, and tremendous energy to shape industrial education to suit their own ends.

### Anna T. Jeanes Fund

Booker T. Washington's experience with using philanthropic donations to improve educational opportunities for Black students prompted Anna T. Jeanes, a Philadelphian who previously had made large donations to Virginia's Hampton Institute and the Tuskegee Institute, to request his assistance with designing her own foundation. Created upon her death in 1907 with a \$1 million endowment, the new foundation included Washington and Hollis B. Frissell, principal of Hampton Institute, as trustees. J. H. Dillard served as the fund's first president. The foundation was known variously as the Fund for Rudimentary Schools for Southern Negroes, the Negro Rural School Fund, Inc., the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation, and, finally, simply as the Jeanes Fund. Jeanes specified that the Fund's sole purpose was assisting small, rural, elementary, African American schools in the South and integrating industrial education with the limited academic subjects typical of these schools. The emphasis on industrial education accorded with Washington's own educational philosophy and with Hampton Institute's inclusion of industrial training at the postsecondary level since the 1860s, both of which were based in the aforementioned conviction that economic progress through practical training had to precede eventual racial equality. A distinguishing aspect of the Jeanes Fund lay in its provision of salaries for "industrial teachers" assigned to a group of schools, such as at the district or county level, to teach children skills such as "sewing, canning, basketry and woodworking."<sup>204</sup> Jeanes also donated a total of \$1.2 million to the General Education Board, discussed below.

### Jeanes Teachers

The Jeanes Fund also paid salaries for African American teachers who would provide supervision and training to less experienced colleagues. Such instructors were known as Jeanes Teachers. As explained above, Virginia Estelle Randolph served as the first Jeanes Supervisor after local school superintendent Jackson T. Davis, who knew Hampton Institute president Hollis B. Frissell, sought funding for Randolph to train other teachers in Henrico County's 20 rural schools for Black students. Randolph provided a model for other Jeanes Teachers and Supervisors throughout the southern states and, for 40 years, she traveled extensively to provide them with direct training as pedagogical methods evolved. Along with teaching practical skills to elementary students,

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<sup>203</sup> For more in-depth discussion, see, for example, Eric S. Yellen, "The (White) Search for (Black) Order: The Phelps-Stokes Fund's First Twenty Years," *The Historian* Vol. 65 No. 2 (Winter 2002), p. 319-352, and William A. Link, "Jackson Davis and the Lost World of Jim Crow Education," published jointly by the Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library and The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, May 2000, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/related-resources/jackson-davis-and-the-lost-world-of-jim-crow-education/>.

<sup>204</sup> "Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: Anna T. Jeanes Foundation (1907)," Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>.

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Jeanes Teachers organized fundraising campaigns to purchase school materials, supplement teacher salaries,<sup>205</sup> pay for schoolhouse repairs, provide community programs concerning health and hygiene, and visit students' homes to encourage parents to ensure their children attended school regularly.<sup>206</sup> In 1936, during the depths of the Great Depression, the Jeanes Fund's trustees asked Jeanes Teachers to raise \$50 from within their communities to create the Virginia Randolph Fund to honor the first Jeanes Supervisor. The money was to be set aside "for the promotion of the ideas and ideals typified by Miss Randolph."<sup>207</sup>

Another significant Jeanes Supervisor was Indian Hamilton (c. 1879-1950), who taught in King William County and held this position for almost 20 years. Hamilton was born in King and Queen County, a rural locality along the York River a short distance southeast of Fredericksburg. The daughter of freedpeople, Hamilton graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. She arrived in King William County in 1913, where she taught in a two-room school. Hamilton's community aid efforts aligned with those of the Jeanes Fund, and most notably included raising money for construction of the King William Training School, which was completed in 1923 and was where Hamilton taught for 30 years. The training school included grades 1-9, thus providing education two grades beyond a typical elementary school at the time. Hamilton also advocated for longer school calendars to provide more educational opportunities and promoted teacher training opportunities through collaboration with postsecondary institutions. Her public service career further included chairing the Better Schools Program sponsored by the aforementioned Negro Organization Society and serving on the executive committee of the Virginia State Teachers Association.<sup>208</sup>

During the early 1900s, the Jeanes Teachers and Jeanes Fund converged with other philanthropic efforts, including the Phelps-Stoke Fund and the General Education Board. Both of the latter organizations also supported industrial education and "extension agents" who worked with various programs associated with the Country Life Movement to improve health, housing, agricultural practices, and other aspects of rural life.

### Phelps-Stokes Fund

Remarkable for the scope of her vision, Caroline Phelps Stokes conceived the Phelps-Stokes Fund as a philanthropic fund dedicated to education for Africans, Native Americans, and persons of African descent, to promoting interracial and international cooperation, and to improving or building new multiple-family dwellings for lower-income residents in her native New York City. A bequest of her estate in 1909 provided the initial \$1-million endowment. Other Stokes and Phelps family members donated to the Fund over the years, too, while Anson Phelps Stokes, along with educator Thomas Jesse Jones, served as long-time directors. In addition

<sup>205</sup> Salaries for all Virginia teachers were low when compared to their peers in other states, and salaries for Black teachers often were 50 to 65 percent lower than those of their White counterparts.

<sup>206</sup> Elvatrice Belsches, "Virginia Estelle Randolph (1870–1958)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.virginia.org/entries/randolph-virginia-estelle-1870-1958>.

<sup>207</sup> "Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: The Virginia Randolph Fund (1937)," Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>. The Virginia Randolph Fund merged with several other education funds in 1937 to form the Southern Education Foundation (discussed below). In 1954, the Virginia Randolph Foundation was established to provide scholarships to Henrico County high school students seeking to continue their education. Fifty years later, the foundation made its fund one of 50 scholarship programs managed by The Community Foundation (see <https://www.varfoundation.org/about.html>).

<sup>208</sup> "Changemakers: India Hamilton (ca. 1879-1950)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/357>; Bryan Clark Green, "King William Training School (VDHR #050-5010)," National Register nomination, March 2006, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, p. 8/8. In 1952, King William County named Hamilton-Holmes High School in honor of Indian Hamilton and another local educator, Samuel B. Holmes.

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to funding Black schools in southern states, including Virginia, the Phelps-Stokes Fund paid for American educators (including Henrico County's Jackson Davis in 1944) to travel to Africa to learn about African history and to promote American-style schooling in various African countries. In Liberia, the Fund created the Booker T. Washington Institute. The Fund also provided seed money for the creation of the United Negro College Fund and, in partnership with the federal Office of Education, paid for a major national survey of American public schools conducted by Jones in the mid-1910s (the study's findings are discussed in a separate section below).<sup>209</sup>

### General Education Board

The General Education Board sprang from a 1901 Pullman train tour of the American South by White educators and business leaders, including multimillionaire John D. Rockefeller Sr. In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the group attended the Fourth Conference for Education in the South to learn more about the state of public education in the former Confederate states. Suitably appalled, the group, under Rockefeller's leadership and \$1-million endowment, formed the General Education Board (GEB). By 1907, Rockefeller's donations totaled \$43 million. Similar to James Solomon Russell's conviction that land ownership, improved farming practices, and self-employment in trades would elevate Black communities economically and, thereby, create a stable foundation for all other forms of community uplift, the GEB's directors focused their earliest efforts on agricultural and industrial education. While the GEB, like its contemporaries, may have operated on the belief that industrial education represented the maximum level of education within the grasp of African Americans, the financial contributions the GEB made to Black county training schools and teachers provided significant support, especially with regard to teacher training.<sup>210</sup> Virginia's Jackson Davis served as a GEB agent starting in 1915 and continued to work for the GEB for the remainder of his career.

The GEB further was associated with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century educational trend of creating "demonstration projects" and funding "extension agents" who would travel a specified area on a regular basis to provide training in new farming methods to local White and Black farmers on a segregated basis. White extension agents were hired to work with White farmers, while Black extension agents did the same with Black farmers. From 1906 to 1914, the GEB worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to create over 100,000 demonstration farms promoting "scientific agriculture" across the South.<sup>211</sup> The GEB involved itself in other projects of the Country Life Movement, which promulgated other vocational training and home economics education in an effort to improve rural quality of life and to modernize the economies of Southern states that had recovered unevenly since the Civil War. By the 1920s, the GEB also moved beyond its initial focus on

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<sup>209</sup> "Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: Phelps-Stokes Fund," Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>; Phyllis Leffler and Julian Bond, co-directors, "Phelps-Stokes Fund," *Explorations in Black Leadership*, 2007, <https://blackleadership.virginia.edu/glossary-terms/phelps-stokes-fund>.

<sup>210</sup> "Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: General Education Board," Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>; William A. Link, "Jackson Davis and the Lost World of Jim Crow Education," published jointly by the Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library and The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, May 2000, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/related-resources/jackson-davis-and-the-lost-world-of-jim-crow-education/>; see also James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

<sup>211</sup> Teresa Iacobelli and Barbara Shubinski, "The General Education Board," January 5, 2022, <https://resource.rockarch.org/story/the-general-education-board-1903-1964/>.

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industrial and agricultural training at the elementary school level to offer donations to Black colleges and universities.

Washington-Rosenwald Schools

As the various philanthropic funds began operations in the South, Booker T. Washington maintained his focus on building new rural schools for Black children. One person in his network, Paul Sachs, a founding partner of Goldman-Sachs, served on the Tuskegee Institute's Board of Directors and suggested that Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, might be interested in continuing Washington's school construction projects. Sympathetic to Progressive Era causes, Rosenwald already had donated to industrial education programs for rural African Americans and, therefore, knew of Washington's successes in the field. Washington soon invited Rosenwald to join Tuskegee's Board of Directors and, in 1912, he convinced Rosenwald to contribute toward construction of six new schools in central Alabama, using a financing model similar to that of Washington's 1906-1909 project with Henry Huttleston Rogers. Clinton Calloway, director of Tuskegee's Extension Department, managed the construction projects along with Washington himself. Impressed with the project's results, in 1914, Rosenwald decided to fund a percentage of the construction costs of 100 more schools in Alabama over the next three years, provided that the state department of education, local officials, and local residents also lent their support. The requirement that state and local education officials had to support each project marked a departure from earlier philanthropic programs to build schools, in which White officials had happily stood aside to allow private money to pay for public schools in Black communities.<sup>212</sup>

Another result of this experiment was *The Rural Negro School and Its Relation to the Community*, a landmark, nationally influential 1915 publication that provided detailed guidance on all aspects of school construction, including selection of an appropriate site, landscape design, provision of necessities such as a drinking water supply and privies, inclusion of demonstration gardens and playgrounds, and construction plans for a variety of frame school houses ranging from a single classroom to multiple classrooms.<sup>213</sup> Plans for related buildings, including teachers' dwellings, student dormitories, and industrial arts shops, were provided in the publication as well. Countless rural school plants, including those for White, Native American, and children of other races and ethnicities, were built in the U.S. according to *The Rural Negro School's* guidelines or on standardized plans that closely followed the authors' recommendations. The architectural drawings were prepared by Robert Taylor and W. A. Hazel, both at Tuskegee. Character-defining features of these modest frame buildings included large windows that provided ample interior light, sufficient interior space for the intended student enrollment, and adequate ventilation and heating. Virginia native George Washington Carver, meanwhile, created the garden layouts, planting guidance, and lesson plans for agricultural and home economics instruction.

Rosenwald, impressed by the innovations and successes of the Alabama project, incorporated his own foundation, the eponymous Rosenwald Fund, in 1917 to assure that such construction projects would continue in all of the southern states. The schools built for African American students under the auspices of the

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<sup>212</sup> Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>, p. 6-8; Mary Jackson, Marian Veney Ashton, Lena Downing-Handy, and Charles R. Lawson, "Julius Rosenwald High School," National Register nomination, August 5, 2023, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0075/>, p. 19-20.

<sup>213</sup> Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* (Tuskegee, Alabama: The Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915).

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Rosenwald Fund are not covered by this MPD; rather, they are addressed in the MPD entitled “Rosenwald Schools of Virginia.”<sup>214</sup>

Southern Education Foundation, Inc.

In 1937, the Peabody Fund, Jeanes Fund, Slater Fund, and Virginia Randolph Fund merged to form the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) with the goal of improving educational opportunities for all people in the southern states, “with special regard for the needs of the Negro race.”<sup>215</sup> The organization’s mission extended from elementary to postsecondary education. Apparently hampered in its early years by the Great Depression and onset of World War II, the SEF charted new territory for itself starting in 1945 by delving into efforts to increase employment of African Americans in southern state boards of education and creating leadership programs for Black residents to advocate for African American schools. These undertakings are related to the increasingly bold Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (discussed in subsequent sections below).

*Early High Schools in Virginia*

Another aspect of the first 40 years of Virginia’s public school system was its emphasis on elementary education, roughly the first through seventh grade. By 1900, Progressive Era activists, mostly women, including Richmond’s Lila Meade Valentine and Mary-Cooke Branch Munford, were forming “education leagues” to advocate for greater investments in public schools and, in 1904, organized the aforementioned Cooperative Education Association. The new group worked with local White and Black communities to press for school improvements, although did not challenge the racially segregated system itself.<sup>216</sup> Due to the CEA’s statewide campaign efforts, approximately 50 education leagues formed across Virginia.

Statewide, Virginia had just 75 high schools by 1906 and accreditation, curriculum standards, and school calendars were still in the process of being standardized. Persuaded to invest in secondary schools for the first time, the Virginia General Assembly passed the Mann High School bill, which authorized an appropriation of \$50,000 in state funds to aid localities with constructing high schools. The 1908 Williams Building Act permitted localities to borrow up to \$10,000 from the Literary Fund to pay for school construction as long as the building plan had been approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. State and local officials directed the new funding only to high schools for White students, with the total number of high schools throughout Virginia increased to 360 as of 1910.<sup>217</sup> As an example, by 1909, Loudoun County had three

<sup>214</sup> The full text of the MPD is available at [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/012-5041\\_Rosenwald\\_Schools\\_2004\\_NRHP\\_MPD\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/012-5041_Rosenwald_Schools_2004_NRHP_MPD_FINAL.pdf). National Register nominations for Virginia schools nominated under the MPD may be found at <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/?jsf=jet-engine:register&tax=collection:342>.

<sup>215</sup> “Southern Education Foundation: 157 Years,” Southern Education Foundation, Inc., 2019, <https://southerneducation.org/who-we-are/timeline/>.

<sup>216</sup> Jennifer McDaid, “Cooperative Education Association,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.virginia.org/entries/cooperative-education-association>. As explained above in the discussion of the Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA), in 1907 in Petersburg at the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (today’s Virginia State University), African American educators found it necessary to form the School Improvement League in order to advocate more strongly for African American schools and students. Parents, teachers, community leaders, and business owners joined the school leagues. The School Improvement League merged with the VSTA in 1909.

<sup>217</sup> Jennifer McDaid, “Cooperative Education Association,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.virginia.org/entries/cooperative-education-association>; Foney G. Mullins, A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 51, 53; Benjamin D. Burks, *What was Normal about Virginia’s Normal Schools: A History of Virginia’s State Normal Schools, 1882-1930*, Ph.D. dissertation, January 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.,

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accredited high schools, all for White students. Between the 1900s-1920s, county school superintendent O. L. Emerick oversaw consolidation of the still-rural county's one- and two-room schools for White students, but left the schools for Black students largely untouched. A small exception was Union Street School (NRHP 2023; 253-5117) in Leesburg, which received a one-room addition between 1927-1930, thus allowing the addition of high school courses on the building's second floor; it is not known if the high school was accredited by the state board of education. An additional teacher also was hired, bringing the total number of teachers at the school to four. The county's White students, meanwhile, had access to nine four-year accredited high schools by the late 1920s.<sup>218</sup>

### Case study: Mecklenburg County's African American Schools, 1910s-1930s

In Mecklenburg County, high schools for White students were erected in Chase City and South Hill in 1908. Both schools were built entirely with public funds; however, it does not appear that tax dollars were made available for any Black high schools at this time. The County's overall investment in schools for Black students from the 1870s-1910s is not entirely clear. As was true in most other localities across Virginia, African American communities were forced to raise private funds to build public schools for their children. In South Hill, the first documented instance of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century, public school for Black children came in 1915, when the local Black community in South Hill formed a school league to raise money to rent space in the True Reformers Hall for use as a school; the spacious meeting rooms typical of fraternal halls often were easily repurposed for use as classrooms.<sup>219</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Robert Walker, Rev. and Mrs. J.H. Simmons, and Robert Walker were the league's original officers. Over the next three years, the school league raised \$1,200 in private funds to acquire land and build a two-room elementary school.<sup>220</sup>

The parents' league next set their sights on a county training school for Black students.<sup>221</sup> Between 1920-1925, the group raised \$3,000 in private donations to obtain a \$1,500 grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Serving the entire county's school-age children, the new school had an enrollment of 200 students for grades 1-7. In 1927, Black families raised still more funds to pay for construction of an agricultural shop building, making the new school officially a county training school that offered high school classes, too, albeit with more emphasis on vocational rather than academic courses.<sup>222</sup> A second high school was built in Clarksville

p. 99. Also in 1908, the Strode Act provided a \$25,000 subsidy to local school systems for the creation of graded schools, with the goal of consolidating schools and eliminating one-room rural schools. The vast majority of the consolidated schools served only White students. Important to note is that, in rural localities, such consolidation only became possible with substantial road improvements, which occurred on an uneven basis from the 1910s-1930s, largely due to unprecedented federal investments in road transportation. For additional information, see Virginia Department of Transportation Office of Public Affairs, *A History of Roads in Virginia: "the most convenient ways,"* (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia, 2002), <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/15781>.

<sup>218</sup> Jane Covington, "Union Street School," National Register nomination, September 14, 2022, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, p. 21.

<sup>219</sup> The True Reformers Hall likely was affiliated originally with the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers, an African American fraternal organization. For additional information, see Donna Hollie, "Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/grand-fountain-of-the-united-order-of-true-reformers>.

<sup>220</sup> Frank L. Nanney Jr., *South Hill, Virginia: A Chronicle of the First 100 Years* (Winston-Salem, NC: Frank L. Nanney Jr. and Jostens Inc., 2001), p. 99-100.

<sup>221</sup> County training schools typically combined academic coursework with vocational training, and often offered classes only through 10<sup>th</sup> grade (the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grades constituted high school at this time in Virginia). Due to academic curriculum shortcomings, most training schools were not fully accredited by the state board of education. County training schools are discussed in more detail in a subsequent section below.

<sup>222</sup> Frank L. Nanney Jr., *South Hill, Virginia: A Chronicle of the First 100 Years* (Winston-Salem, NC: Frank L. Nanney Jr. and Jostens Inc., 2001), p. 99-100.

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during the mid-1930s to serve Black students in the western half of Mecklenburg County; it had a single teacher and 100 students ranging in age from 13 to 22. As with the training school, the Black community had to raise private funds, donate materials, and perform construction work themselves to assure students would have access to adequate facilities, including a cafeteria for hot lunches. Private individuals also purchased school buses and donated their time and labor to transport students to the school. West End High School received accreditation from the State Board of Education in 1939. Each of the secondary schools included vocational, agricultural, and home economics in their curricula.<sup>223</sup> Additionally, during the 1930s, New Deal programs offered vocational education opportunities to adults at the county's public schools after the students' school hours had ended. Federally-sponsored vegetable gardens that were planted and maintained by local residents were established at the schools, as well as opportunities for learning how to can foods properly. The yields from the vegetable gardens also were used to supplement free lunches in school cafeterias.<sup>224</sup>

*Early School Consolidation and Documenting Unequal Educational Facilities in Virginia, c. 1910-c. 1930*

A hallmark of the Progressive Era was the collection of data as activists and reformers attempted to apply scientific principles to the social ills of the period. Data collectors fanned out across the country to investigate a myriad of people, places, and activities. Coal mines, assembly-line factories, clerical workers, spread of contagious disease, and educational achievement were just a few of the topics to capture the interest of reformers.<sup>225</sup> Newly emerging social sciences, including sociology, psychology, economics, and statistics provided methodologies for examining the problems at hand. Through extensive data gathering and application of professional expertise, Progressives sought to bring about social change with recommendations based on empirical data and rationality. With the hope that these tactics would be more effective than the emotional appeals that had characterized earlier reform movements, Progressives argued that the true causes of a social problem could be identified as well as the most efficient methods for solving the problem. These new experiments in documenting society were not always accurate or successful, but they began the process of building bodies of evidence that continue to be studied today. With regard to Virginia's racially segregated

<sup>223</sup> Ann Garnett Miller, "Recounting the Proud Heritage of Black Education in Mecklenburg County," *Southern Virginia Now*, February 22, 2012, <https://www.wehsnaa.org/BlackEdMeck.pdf>, p. 2-3. Note that the provision of vocational education in Black schools throughout the former slaveholding states was *not* equivalent to the same such education in White schools. Black high-school-age students often were limited primarily, if not exclusively, to vocational classes in "training schools," which often offered classes only through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Even these types of schools were scarce in rural Virginia through the 1940s and, often, they were not fully accredited in the same fashion as four-year high schools for White students (8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grades constituted high school in Virginia until 1946, when 12<sup>th</sup> grade was added). At "training schools," Black students were steered toward training for low-paying manual trades and work as domestic servants in the belief among White inhabitants that such jobs were the only ones "appropriate" for them. A more detailed discussion of this topic is found in John L. Rury and Shirley A. Hill, *The African American Struggle for Secondary Schooling 1940-1980* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012).

<sup>224</sup> Heather Fearnbach, "John Groom Elementary School," National Register nomination, May 27, 2017, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/301-5063\\_John\\_Groom\\_School\\_2017\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/301-5063_John_Groom_School_2017_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 19.

<sup>225</sup> The eugenics movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century also engaged in intensive data collection, but utilized fallacious methods to confirm prevailing social, class, and racial biases. Today, eugenics is a cautionary example of the harms caused by inappropriate application of "scientific methods" to create proscriptions for social reforms and the disastrous outcomes that followed. For more information, see Elizabeth Catte, "Eugenic Sterilization in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, July 25, 2023, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/eugenic-sterilization-in-virginia> and Gregory Michael Dorr, *Segregation's Science: The American Eugenics Movement and Virginia, 1900-1980*, Ph.D. dissertation, 2000, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

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public education system, three major studies documented the unequal conditions between schools for White versus Black pupils.<sup>226</sup>

*Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States, 1912-1916*

Despite the best efforts of philanthropists, activists, and Black community leaders, in terms of academic opportunities, access to modern equipment, and modern buildings, the quality of public schools for Virginia's African American students was demonstrably inferior to that available to White students throughout the segregation era. In the face of such challenges, Black educators from the elementary through postsecondary levels created curricula designed specifically for their students, including lessons about African and African American history that would not become commonplace in most public schools until the 1960s or later. A towering figure in this effort was Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), a native Virginian who obtained a doctorate in history at Harvard University. In 1915, Woodson formed the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) and later, in 1916, he established the *Journal for Negro History*, both of which were responsible for groundbreaking research and publications. Woodson went on to create Negro History Week in 1926. Over the course of his long career, Woodson amassed an extensive collection of primary source materials and publications by African American scholars. Determined to disprove the myth that African Americans were a "people without history" due to their centuries of enslavement, Woodson wrote 21 books that included *The History of the Negro Church* (1921), *The Negro in Our History* (1922), and *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933). He also dedicated considerable energy to making his collection accessible to other researchers and invited peers at Black institutions to publish their findings in the *Journal for Negro History*, thus exponentially increasing the impacts of his life's work. Throughout his career, Woodson maintained steadfast independence from undue influence by White philanthropic organizations, an approach that cost him during his lifetime in both material and reputational impacts. Many White philanthropists were accustomed to dictating terms of their donations to Black recipients, which rankled the fiercely driven Woodson. Woodson also opted not to affiliate with an African American college or university. A vocal critic of Jim Crow policies, Woodson ignored potential personal dangers even while traveling in southern states. The extent of his contributions, which reverberate to the present day, demonstrate that Woodson's insistence on charting his own course was successful.<sup>227</sup>

Deeply embedded and involved in their local communities, many African American teachers followed a similar course in developing their own expertise. Because they understood the adversities their students faced, Black teachers found ways to encourage students to academic achievement even in the face of daunting obstacles. The aforementioned Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA) provided its membership with updated pedagogical guidance and fostered collaborative relationships among educators at all levels. Many of these efforts were poorly understood by outside observers, as occurred when a first-of-its-kind survey of segregated schools for African Americans commenced during the mid-1910s.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>226</sup> College and university faculty and graduate students in various disciplines, including education, economics, history, and sociology, also contributed numerous investigations – often more narrowly focused on a specific locality, group, pedagogical theory, or educational institution – including those cited throughout this MPD.

<sup>227</sup> Jacqueline Goggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), p. 32, 34-35, 66-85; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 523-524.

<sup>228</sup> The immense responsibilities imposed on and assumed by African American teachers during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is further discussed in Michael Fultz, "African American Teachers in the South, 1890-1940: Powerlessness and the Ironies of Expectations and Protest," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Winter 1995), p. 401-422.



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In 1912, Thomas Jesse Jones, a Welsh-American who completed his doctorate at Columbia University and then worked at a New York City settlement house, began a four-year research project on behalf of the private Phelps-Stokes Fund and the federal Office of Education.<sup>229</sup> Various sources described Jones as an educator, a sociologist, a founder of the social studies discipline, and a “specialist in the education of racial groups.” Jones supervised a multiple-state survey of 748 Black schools, of which 635 were private high schools, and just 68 were public high schools and 27 were county “training schools.”<sup>230</sup> Among the survey’s enduring contributions was documentation of the gross underinvestment in public schools for Black children then occurring across the country, which included the finding that, at the national level, per capita public school expenditures for White children stood at approximately \$10.06 while that for Black children was \$2.89. With regard to this finding, Virginia was not an exception, although the state’s relative poverty in comparison to some other states is indicated by the expenditure of just \$3.78 per White child and \$1.98 per Black child. That said, White students in Virginia received 50 percent more public funds than did Black students.<sup>231</sup>

On the basis that over 50 percent of teachers in Black schools themselves had completed six grades of formal education, Jones’s report recommended that teacher training at “junior” (or two-year) colleges was a critical need. He used the private Hampton Institute as a model to use for founding additional colleges for this purpose.<sup>232</sup> At this time, in addition to the privately operated Hampton Institute, Virginia had three other schools that offered the curriculum that Jones recommended. In Powhatan County, the private girls-only St. Francis de Sales School, 88 students were enrolled in grades 6-8 and 50 students in high school as of 1915.<sup>233</sup> With its combined curriculum of academic courses, teacher training, four years of high school, and domestic arts, the school was operating precisely as Jones and many other education professionals believed to be most effective for serving the needs of Black children. Another private school for African Americans, the coeducational Saint Paul’s Normal and Industrial Institute (later Saint Paul’s College) in Brunswick County, provided postsecondary teacher certification programs, as well as academic and industrial training curricula. The Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, the only publicly-funded school in the group, had been forced to abandon much of its postsecondary academic curriculum in 1902, but continued to offer a teacher certification curriculum. The Jones survey also found that secondary educational opportunities for Black children beyond 7<sup>th</sup>

<sup>229</sup> The purpose of the Office of Education (forerunner to today’s U.S. Department of Education) was collection of statistics and other data about schools of all types across the country. See “An Overview of the U.S. Department of Education,” U.S. Department of Education, May 14, 2018, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/what.html/>.

<sup>230</sup> M. N. Work, review of *Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, Bulletins No. 38 and 39, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), at University of Chicago, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.2307/2713796>. See also Ben A. Smith et al., “Social Studies and the Birth of NCSS: 1783-1921,” *Social Education* (November/December 1995), <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/59/7/social-studies-and-birth-ncss-1783-1921>, and Andrew Barnes, “Thomas Jesse Jones, the Phelps Stokes Commission, and Education for Social Welfare in Colonial Africa,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*, July 30, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.653>.

<sup>231</sup> M. N. Work, review of *Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, Bulletins No. 38 and 39, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), at University of Chicago, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.2307/2713796>, p. 92. Dollar amounts are not adjusted for inflation.

<sup>232</sup> M. N. Work, review of *Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, Bulletins No. 38 and 39, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), at University of Chicago, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.2307/2713796>, p. 93.

<sup>233</sup> Amanda Bresie, *Veiled Leadership: Katharine Drexel, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and Race Relations* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023), p. 156.

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grade almost exclusively could be had only at privately-funded schools, such as the aforementioned St. Francis de Sales School in Powhatan County.<sup>234</sup>

The empirical data collected by the Jones project provided irrefutable evidence that Virginia's and other states' racially segregated public school systems were not meeting the "separate but equal" doctrine established by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. African American educators and civil rights advocates would utilize information such as this to argue for changes to school funding practices and, starting in the 1930s, would begin to file federal lawsuits as a means to force local school districts to remedy the inequities. This legal strategy is discussed in subsequent sections below.

Yet aspects of Jones's recommendations mirrored the prejudices and assumptions common to White educators during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the Great Migration of Black people from rural Southern states to industrialized Northern cities already well underway, Jones's report emphasized the continuing need for agricultural education to arm Black people with the skills necessary to prosper. Moreover, African American educators such as Booker T. Washington and James Solomon Russell had made an economic-based argument for industrial and agricultural educational opportunities for Blacks students more than 30 years earlier than Jones. Washington's successes in this regard, including the creation of the aforementioned Jeanes Fund and Rosenwald Fund, as well as the Tuskegee Institute itself, likely informed Jones's recommendations for improving educational opportunities for Black children.<sup>235</sup> By the 1910s, however, African American educators were no longer willing to accept vocational training alone as suitable preparation of Black students for their working lives. In particular, the menial trades that often were the only training options now were considered inadequate both to the times and to the rights of African Americans to have unlimited educational and employment opportunities. Well-established urban Black neighborhoods filled with Black-owned businesses, churches, fraternal halls, and residences, such as Jackson Ward in Richmond, Vinegar Hill in Charlottesville, and Mechanicsville in Danville, demonstrated the financial stability that Washington, Russell, and their contemporaries had argued was necessary in order for African Americans to establish a stable foundation for new aspirations. Improving public schools, including the creation of high schools, were a keystone to continued advancement.

In his report, furthermore, as Jones described the marginal training of many Black teachers (which had prompted his aforementioned recommendation for "junior colleges" to be established), he also had criticized African American communities' support for public schools. Reflecting on Jones's career in 1930 shortly after Jones's death, Carter G. Woodson, a longtime critic of Jones's research methods and findings, said

Taking the well established and amply supported Hampton Institute as his criterion, Jones reported as questionable and unworthy of support many of the struggling Negro schools which, although below standard, had educated and inspired thousands of Negroes who would not have

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<sup>234</sup> M. N. Work, review of *Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, Bulletins No. 38 and 39, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), at University of Chicago, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.2307/2713796>, p. 93; Scot A. French et al., *Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in Virginia* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2007), p. 16-18.

<sup>235</sup> M. N. Work, review of *Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, Bulletins No. 38 and 39, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), at University of Chicago, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.2307/2713796>, p. 93; Scot A. French et al., *Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in Virginia* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2007), p. 16-18.

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received any education at all if these schools had not been established and maintained at the lower level.<sup>236</sup>

In short, Black communities had made the most of the resources available while operating within an extremely difficult social, political, and economic environment. Thus, the elementary and, where present, secondary schools serving Black communities both were sources of pride and worthy of respect.

School Consolidation and the Virginia Public Schools Education Commission's Report to the Assembly of Virginia, 1919

Another facet of Virginia's efforts to modernize its public school system concerned consolidation of small schools to create larger schools. State board of education officials argued that consolidation would create "economies of scale" that would facilitate improved educational opportunities at lower costs. Schools with larger enrollments also were expected to provide more intellectual stimulation to students, particularly for those who lived in isolated areas. Between c. 1900-c. 1920, the first wave of school consolidation projects involved schools in urban settings, where shorter distances made it easier to funnel students from multiple neighborhoods to a single school. Consolidation held the possibility of making rural schools more akin to urban schools in terms of curriculum and amenities, such as libraries and science labs. Improved rural schools also would, it was believed, help to prevent outmigration from rural areas by people who sought greater opportunities elsewhere. The longer distances between communities and the generally wretched conditions of roads in rural localities, forestalled consolidation in many places, particularly Virginia's mountainous counties, into the 1920s. Historic records referred to "wagons" that transported students to schools; most often, the term referred to automobiles and buses, but in rural localities with the poorest roads, the wagons might have been horse-drawn.<sup>237</sup> As with every other aspect of Virginia's segregated school system, consolidation of White schools and publicly operated transportation for White students consumed the majority of resources that were made available by state and local officials.

Dissatisfied with the rate of progress being made to modernize the public school system, in 1918, the General Assembly authorized a statewide study of school facilities for all students, to be supervised by the newly created Virginia Public Schools Education Commission and a "special advisory board" that focused on African American schools. The commission hired Dr. Alexander Inglis of Harvard University to carry out the study. Published in 1919, the resultant report covered a wide range of topics that included state education laws, the perennial teacher training needs, local school district organization and administration, public health concerns that could be addressed through improved sanitation and hygiene, and the quality of school buildings. Schools were ranked on a scale from A to E, based on factors that included heating and ventilation, furnishings, equipment, window number and size, and window shades.<sup>238</sup>

In a chapter devoted to African American education, the commission noted that the majority of Black Virginians lived in rural areas of Virginia's Tidewater and Southside regions, and in urban centers throughout

<sup>236</sup> Carter G. Woodson, "Thomas Jesse Jones," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (January 1950), p. 107.

<sup>237</sup> William Allen Link, *Public Schooling and Social Change in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920*, Ph.D. dissertation, 1981, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., p. 293-295. The earliest mention of "wagons" in the Virginia Department of Public Instruction archives occurred in 1921-1922, when "348 wagons and buses were publicly operated for school transportation," according to Brian J. Daugherty and Alyce Miller, "'A New Era in Building': African American Educational Activism in Goochland County, Virginia, 1911-32," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 128, No. 1 (2020), p. 63.

<sup>238</sup> Phyllis McClure, "Rosenwald Schools in the Northern Neck," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (2005), p. 128-129.

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the state; small concentrations of African Americans also resided in mining towns in the mountainous counties of southwestern Virginia. Both the total population of African Americans and Black student enrollments comprised roughly one-third of Virginia's residents.<sup>239</sup> McClure noted that the commission presented an argument for improving schools for Black students that appealed to Whites' financial interests in retaining a resourceful and productive rural workforce. Coupled with a narrative of education as a means of "moral uplift" for African Americans – or, more specifically, of inculcating Black students with a sense of duty and acceptance of secondary status – the economic appeal was intended to neutralize ongoing hostility among White supremacists toward any form of education for Black children and adults.<sup>240</sup>

Among the empirical data collected by the commission were that approximately 85 percent of African American students attended one- and two-room rural schools, that school calendars continued to be erratic (and out of compliance with state laws), and that just three four-year, accredited high schools existed in Virginia: Armstrong High School in Richmond, Booker T. Washington High School in the City of Norfolk, and Mt. Hermon High School in Norfolk County. Three-year high schools were found in Lynchburg, Petersburg, and Danville, and Portsmouth planned to build such a school in 1919. Rural localities tended to have shorter school terms than city schools, with pronounced differences in the average length of more than 7 months for White schools and six months or less for African American schools. Likewise, student-teacher ratio schools at African American schools were considerably higher than at White schools, while salaries for African American teachers were lower than White teachers received.<sup>241</sup> As with the 1912-1916 study, *Negro Education: A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, the Virginia Public Schools Education Commission's 1919 report added to the growing body of evidence regarding intrinsic disparities in the racially segregated public school system.<sup>242</sup>

Exclusion of African American Schools from the Consolidation Movement and the *Public Education in Virginia Report, 1928*

Both rural and urban schools for African American pupils were excluded from the consolidation and modernization movements that characterized Virginia's public school system improvements of the 1910s-1920s. Yawning disparities in funding for segregated schools also persisted throughout this period. As of 1920, the overall valuation of school property dedicated to White students stood at approximately \$20 million, while for Black students, who comprised 30 percent of the overall student population, school property value was \$2.68 million. During the 1910s, school terms for White children were, on average, 22 days longer than for

<sup>239</sup> Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, p. 197.

<sup>240</sup> Phyllis McClure, "Rosenwald Schools in the Northern Neck," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (2005), p. 128.

<sup>241</sup> Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, p. 199-202, 204-205.

<sup>242</sup> An important aspect of the cultural milieu in Virginia at the time the 1919 survey was published was the consequence of World War I on racial relations in Virginia and nationally. The "Red Summer" of 1919, masked as anti-Bolshevik and anti-Communist panics, included 25 race riots across the country that targeted African American communities, while individual Black veterans were attacked and lynched by White supremacists. This topic is beyond the purview of this MPD, but has been the subject of extensive research that has documented numerous specific events. For example, see Equal Justice Initiative staff, "Lynching in America: Targeting Black Veterans," Montgomery, Ala.: Equal Justice Initiative, 2017), <https://eji.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/lynching-in-america-targeting-black-veterans-web.pdf> and "Black Veterans Killed in Fight for Democracy in U.S.," Zinn Education Project, no date, <https://www.zinnedproject.org/collection/black-veterans/>.

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Black children; a decline to a disparity of 10 days per term occurred during the 1920s, but only due to philanthropic donations and private money raised in Black communities. The necessity for Black communities to raise the additional money for extending the calendar year, as well as paying for repairing schools and supplementing salaries of African American teachers, came to be known as the “double tax,” in part because state tax revenue appropriated for education was not entirely returned to Black communities. State funds were distributed to each locality based on the total number of students within the jurisdiction. Local school board records demonstrate, however, that the majority of the money went to White schools; funding intended for Black students, therefore, was redirected. As an example, therefore, in Goochland County, \$14.87 of tax dollars per White pupil were expended, compared to just \$4.20 per African American pupil.<sup>243</sup> Similar evidence of vastly unequal schools abounds throughout Virginia. Representative examples include Fairfax County, Alexandria, Princess Anne County (now the City of Virginia Beach), Nelson County, and Goochland County.

During the 1910s in Fairfax County, African American students in the Floris area continued to attend school in an 1870 building, while their White counterparts had three new, successive elementary schools built for them over the same span.. White children also were transported on a county-funded school bus, while Black students walked to school or were driven in a privately-owned bus by a community volunteer. The one-room 1870 school finally was replaced in 1932 with a Washington-Rosenwald school. County-supported bus transportation followed in 1937. Meanwhile, an indication of the racial tenor of the period was indicated by an August 5, 1925, Ku Klux Klan parade of 200 people that concluded on public school grounds in Herndon.<sup>244</sup>

In the city of Alexandria in 1871, local school officials rejected an offer from M. E. Stratton, a principal at an African American normal school on Alfred Street to absorb her Freedmen’s Bureau-era school into the city’s school system to serve as a high school. The city did not build a public high school for White students until 1916, due in large part to particularly ingrained and persistent reluctance to embrace public education at all; a second high school followed. In 1932, teachers at the Parker-Gray School that served African American students, on their own initiative, created a high school curriculum and taught the classes, but the school was not an accredited high school. Meanwhile, city officials applied for federal funding to build a new consolidated school, Mount Vernon High School, for White students; the massive school complex was completed in 1935. The city’s first high school for Black students finally opened after World War II.<sup>245</sup>

In Fredericksburg, the trajectory of the city’s first African American high school was influenced by the Reverend Beatrice Henry Hester (1895-1972), a relentless advocate for civil rights and educational opportunities throughout his life. Upon completing a divinity degree at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Hester became pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site). During the 1920s, Hester began hosting adult classes for literacy education in order to help local African Americans register to vote (although a range of discriminatory practices still prevented most Black Virginians from registering or successfully voting). Hester did not hesitate to call out discriminatory practices carried out by local government officials and departments against Black Fredericksburg residents. From 1925-c. 1928, Hester published a weekly newspaper, *Shiloh Herald*, in which his fiery editorials decried voter suppression, lack of educational opportunities, and violence against African Americans. Nationally-known African American activists, including W. E. B. DuBois, Mary

<sup>243</sup> Brian J. Daugherty and Alyce Miller, “‘A New Era in Building’: African American Educational Activism in Goochland County, Virginia, 1911-32,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 128, No. 1 (2020), p. 50-51, 66-68, 71, 73.

<sup>244</sup> Anna Maas and Jean Stoll, “Floris Historic District Additional Documentation,” January 2017, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/029-5179/>, p. 13-14.

<sup>245</sup> “Black Education in Alexandria: A Legacy of Triumph and Struggle, Part 2: Separate and Not Equal, 1870-1954,” City of Alexandria, Virginia, December 11, 2023, <https://www.alexandriava.gov/cultural-history/black-education-in-alexandria-a-legacy-of-triumph-and-struggle#Part2SeparateandNotEqual18701954>, p. 11, 17-18, 23.

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McLeod Bethune, Thomas Calhoun Walker, and the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., spoke at the church over the course of Hester's tenure. For about a decade, Hester taught at the private Fredericksburg Normal and Industrial Institute (also known as Mayfield High School). Established in 1905, in part due to the leadership of Shiloh's previous pastor, the Reverend James E. Brown, the school provided the only high school classes available to Black students in the city as well as surrounding counties; the curriculum adhered to the industrial training model. During Hester's teaching career, the school was absorbed into the local public school system. A new school was built in 1925 in the Mayfield neighborhood of Fredericksburg, where it became informally known as Mayfield High School. This school later was replaced by Walker-Grant High School (discussed below in subsequent sections).<sup>246</sup> Hester's career illuminates the interconnections that typified African American churches, schools, and civil rights advocacy during the Jim Crow era. Through the leadership of charismatic, dedicated, and highly energetic individuals such as Hester, Black communities utilized creative methods to organize and mobilize intertwined campaigns for educational improvements and civil rights that eventually brought down every excuse for "separate but equal" schooling in Virginia.

As occurred in Fredericksburg, reuse of former "White" schools after students were transferred to newly built, consolidated schools occurred on a regular basis. A rural example is the Pleasant Ridge School in Princess Anne County (now part of the City of Virginia Beach). The school was first a two-room school for White students, located on Charity Neck Road, near the Charity United Methodist Church, and was named Charity Neck School. The half-acre property for the school was purchased in 1886 by the Trustees of the Public Free School of Pungo Magisterial District "for the purpose of erecting a House for the Public Free School."<sup>247</sup> Overall, the school served grades one through seven, with the lower grades using the smaller room, then "graduating" to the big room. At the end of seven grades, they received a certificate of completion. Charity Neck School remained active until 1916, when the School Board built a consolidated elementary school for White students.<sup>248</sup> The school remained at the Charity Neck Road location until ca. 1918, when the larger section was moved approximately one mile to its current location alongside the Asbury Christian Fellowship Church to serve as a one-room school for African American children of the Pleasant Ridge area. According to local oral history, the building replaced an earlier Pleasant Ridge School that had burned.<sup>249</sup> Rowena T. McFadden, who taught at the Pleasant Ridge School from 1936-1946, recounted that the school had a tin stove and brick chimney in the center of the room; students would tend the fire and maintain the supply of wood and helped with many of the operational tasks. The stove was replaced every year. The water supply consisted of a bucket sitting on the bookshelf at the back of the room. The students sat on benches, five to a bench, and their desks were the back of the bench in front of them. Before electrical wiring was installed during the early 1940s, the building's large windows provided the only source of light. Outside, privies for the students were erected according to the period's sanitation guidance. To alleviate overcrowding and the high student-to-teacher ratio, younger students

<sup>246</sup> Heather Dollins Staton and Mark Olson, "Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site)," National Register nomination, May 2015, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/111-0096/>, p. 20-24. The *Shiloh Herald* likely fell victim to the onset of the Great Depression. The church was listed in the National Register and the Virginia Landmarks Register in 2015.

<sup>247</sup> *Deed and Will Books, Princess Anne County, Virginia*, #61, p. 233: September 4, 1886; Marcus Pollard, Victoria Leonard, Colleen Betti, David Brown, "Pleasant Ridge School Historic District," National Register nomination, December 22, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/134-0399/>, p. 18.

<sup>248</sup> Mary Reid Barrow, "Tiny school may graduate to historic status," *Virginian-Pilot, The Beacon*, February 22, 1990, p. 4; Barbara Murden Henley, *Glimpses of Down-County History: Southern Princess Anne County* (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Eco Images, 2013), 130; Marcus Pollard, Victoria Leonard, Colleen Betti, David Brown, "Pleasant Ridge School Historic District," National Register nomination, December 22, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/134-0399/>, p. 18-19.

<sup>249</sup> *Deed and Will Books, Princess Anne County, Virginia*, #61, p.234: September 4, 1886; Henley, *Glimpses of Down-County History*, 130-32.

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attended school in the morning, until eleven o'clock, while older students attended from eleven to three o'clock in the afternoon; approximately twenty-five students were present for each school session. The school year ran from September to June although students often had to assist their families with spring planting and fall harvesting or by working for pay on other local farms. Indicative of the community's socioeconomic status, about half of the Pleasant Ridge students could not afford school supplies or books.<sup>250</sup>

Although the Washington-Rosenwald school construction program accounted for the majority of school construction for African American students in Virginia from 1917-1932, other private individuals also saw fit to assist Black communities with building schools. An example is Nelson County's 1920-1921 Shipman Colored School, later renamed Ryan Hall Elementary School to reflect donations and support received from wealthy financier Thomas Fortune Ryan and his second wife, Mary T. Ryan. Thomas Ryan had been a longtime supporter of Nelson County's nascent public school system, and, with his first wife, Ida Barry Ryan, had donated toward construction of schools for White students. The couple also supported private Catholic schools. Between 1917-1925, Thomas and Mary Ryan provided financial support for construction of a new schoolhouse for the Shipman community near their Nelson County estate, while also providing a cottage for a White teacher's use at Oak Ridge School and supplementing that school's teacher salaries. The Ryans donated another \$1,000 toward the Shipman school in 1924; currently, it is believed that the money paid for a one-room addition to the recently completed schoolhouse, an indication of overcrowding in the building. At this time, Nelson County's public school system possessed all of the characteristics typical of Virginia's segregated schools. With a total school age population of 5,088 pupils – comprised of 3,346 White students and 1,742 Black students – the county had 92 schools as of 1922-1923, with 66 for Whites children and 26 for Black children. The county's 145 teachers included 32 who were African Americans; no White teachers taught at Black schools in the county at this time and, therefore, the student-teacher ratio was considerably higher in African American schools. Given the county's rural character, 78 of the schools still were one- or two-room buildings. Likely due in part to overcrowded conditions, Black children attended school regularly at a lower rate (44 percent) than did White children, (60 percent). As occurred in other localities, County school officials required Black communities to raise money and donate labor and materials for building and maintaining their public schools. As an example, in August 1923, the local school board approved construction of a new two-room school, which would replace two one-room schools, on the condition that Black residents provide a total of \$400 in cash, labor, and materials for the project. While the county's rural character changed little, the total number of schools had declined to 67 properties, of which roughly 44 held a single classroom. With New Deal-era road improvements of the 1930s, Nelson County's schools for White children began to consolidate more rapidly, and by 1940 there were a total of 56 schools in the school system, including 4 high schools for White students. Bus transportation also became readily available for White students by 1940. Meanwhile, the number of schools for Black children had increased to 27 schools and only minimal consolidation had occurred, such as the 1923 two-room school that had been built, and the county's first high school for African American students was built in 1941.<sup>251</sup>

The uneven pace of school consolidation and modernization in Virginia owed in part to the intrinsic inequities of the racial segregated system that continued to be maintained, as well as to overall inadequacy of public funding to meet the requirements of a modern education in terms of school plants, curricula, and teacher qualifications. These shortcomings were documented at length in the second statewide survey of Virginia's

<sup>250</sup> Henley, *Glimpses of Down-County History*, 131-32; Marcus Pollard, Victoria Leonard, Colleen Betti, David Brown, "Pleasant Ridge School Historic District," National Register nomination, December 22, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/134-0399/>, p. 19.

<sup>251</sup> Kristin H. Kirchen, "Ryan Hall Elementary School," National Register nomination, June 2022, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/062-5230\\_RyanHallElementarySchool\\_2022\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/062-5230_RyanHallElementarySchool_2022_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 26, 28-30, 32, 36.

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public schools. This time undertaken under the supervision of M. V. O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin, the project's resultant report was published in 1928.

Not surprisingly, the report found that "continuing discrimination by local school authorities in the allocation of state funds and school buildings, low pay for African American teachers, non-enforcement of compulsory school attendance, and an overall indifference to African American education" prevailed in localities throughout Virginia.<sup>252</sup> Moreover, the report noted that, "The survey staff have found the people in some of the communities they have visited quite lukewarm toward free education for all children," and, as was urged during the 1910s, "If they were convinced that education is essential for the welfare of the individual and of the State, they would undoubtedly devise ways and means to provide at least an elementary education even for children living in remote localities."<sup>253</sup> The argument rested on an appeal to the pragmatism of White people at all levels of society that educational opportunities for all children would improve economic circumstances for all Virginians. The intractability of White school officials and ordinary residents in refusing to provide such an educational system, however, demonstrated that, in a contest between practical concerns and White supremacy, the ideology of subjugating African Americans prevailed more often than not.

In terms of empirical data collected for the 634-page 1928 report, including a dizzying assortment of tables and statistics, the successes and failures of Virginia's public school system since 1918 were thoroughly documented. Among the findings that were included, as of 1925-1926, Virginia had 3,602 classrooms, which broke down to one classroom per 60 Black school-age children. Approximately 70 percent of school-age African Americans were enrolled in public schools at the time. In comparison, a classroom was provided per every 37 White school-age children, of whom 31 students were enrolled per classroom; the overall school attendance rate stood at approximately 84 percent among the White school-age population.<sup>254</sup> The 14 percent difference in school attendance rates owed to many causes. The failure of local school systems to provide adequate schools, well-trained teachers, and schoolbooks and other equipment was the largest contributor. For families experiencing financial straits, parents were forced to calculate the potential value, or lack thereof, of a poor education that offered little hope for a child to better their circumstances to obtain higher-paying work, versus the immediate income potential of a child joining parents to work in agricultural fields, factories, mills, and mines. Regardless of their own education level, parents who believed that their child's education represented a tangible opportunity to achieve a quantifiably improved station in life went to extraordinary lengths to secure educational opportunities for their child.

In rural localities, during the mid-1920s the value of school buildings for Black students averaged \$1,329 while buildings for White students averaged \$6,147. Two-thirds of rural schools for Black pupils had just one classroom, "only mere shacks in hundreds of cases."<sup>255</sup> This finding would not have surprised state officials

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<sup>252</sup> Phyllis McClure, "Rosenwald Schools in the Northern Neck," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 113, No. 2 (2005), p. 130.

<sup>253</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 12.

<sup>254</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 282.

<sup>255</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 282.



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who were familiar with Jackson Davis's photographs of rural African American schools taken between 1915-1930, while he served as a field agent for the General Board of Education (Figures 11-12).<sup>256</sup>



Figure 11. Rural Schoolhouse in Chesterfield County, 1915-1930 (Image Source: Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va., <https://search.lib.virginia.edu/sources/images/items/uva-lib:329473?idx=0&x=0.429&y=0.316&zoom=1.08&page=1>).

<sup>256</sup> The digitized Jackson Davis Photo Collection is held at the University of Virginia's Special Collections Library and is available online at [https://search.lib.virginia.edu/?q=keyword:{Jackson+Davis+Collection+of+African+American+Educational+Photographs}&pool=images&sort=SortRelevance\\_desc&filter={%22FilterDigitalCollection%22:\[%22Jackson+Davis+Collection+of+African+American+Photographs%22\],%22FilterSubject%22:\[%22Virginia--Regions+and+states+by+name%22}\]](https://search.lib.virginia.edu/?q=keyword:{Jackson+Davis+Collection+of+African+American+Educational+Photographs}&pool=images&sort=SortRelevance_desc&filter={%22FilterDigitalCollection%22:[%22Jackson+Davis+Collection+of+African+American+Photographs%22],%22FilterSubject%22:[%22Virginia--Regions+and+states+by+name%22}]).

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Figure 12. Rural Schoolhouse in Middlesex County, 1915-1930 (Image Source: Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va., <https://search.lib.virginia.edu/sources/images/items/uva-lib:329473?idx=0&x=0.429&y=0.323&zoom=1.08&page=1>).

Another collection of photographs of Virginia's public schools was compiled by the State Department of Education's Division of School Buildings. The new School Buildings Service program's employees took photographs of numerous schoolhouses for White, African American, and Virginia Indian children as part of an effort to program that "sought to reform plans for the design and construction of consolidated schools" throughout Virginia (Figure 13).<sup>257</sup>

<sup>257</sup> John Kern, "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia," October 2000, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf\\_files/SpecialCollections/VA-072\\_SW\\_Virginia\\_School\\_Buildings\\_2000\\_DHR\\_report.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/SpecialCollections/VA-072_SW_Virginia_School_Buildings_2000_DHR_report.pdf), p. 7-9. Kern added that "A total of 3,100 public school photographs have been accessioned by the Library of Virginia. The collection has been digitized and arranged alphabetically by unit of government. Each photograph is numbered, the photograph is titled by the name of the school, and the dates of photographs are provided when known." The digitized collection is online at [https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LVA\\_INST:01LVA&collectionId=81105517680005756](https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LVA_INST:01LVA&collectionId=81105517680005756).

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Figure 123. Pittsylvania County School for African American children, no date (Image Source: Virginia Department of Education, Division of School Buildings, Photographs of Public Schools, 1900-1963 (Accession 31032, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.)

Along with the inadequate schoolhouses, Virginia's Black students and teachers contended with "plain backless benches, crude, homemade double desks, and badly abused, discarded desks from white schools... And there is a general absence of window shades, maps, charts, globes, supplementary reading material, a sufficient amount of blackboard, and such other aids as are commonly necessary to make school work effective."<sup>258</sup> As explained above, African American communities had little recourse but to make up for these shortcomings themselves. Fundraising rallies, church donations, and special dinners were among the tactics used, thus providing a means of community building and social cohesion as well as improving neighborhood schools.

### *High Schools and Training Schools for Black Students in Virginia*<sup>259</sup>

Along with the overall inequities in segregated public school systems, the provision of high school education became an increasingly urgent need in Black communities by the 1920s. The pace of industrial and technological advances during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had opened up tremendous employment opportunities, but these were out of reach of African Americans with little to no education. Completion of elementary education through 7<sup>th</sup> grade provided lesser returns as well. The elevated academics of secondary schools not only equipped students for many of the industrial and technical occupations that emerged, but created opportunities for high-achieving students to obtain a college education and entry to a professional

<sup>258</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 284.

<sup>259</sup> An important aspect of early high school educational opportunities in Virginia is that some African American families sent their children to live with relatives in out-of-state cities, such as Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, so they could attend high school. Such out-state-schools, however, are not within the purview of this MPD.

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occupation. African American communities in rural and urban localities developed increasingly sophisticated advocacy strategies to extract public funding from local and state school officials.

### School Leagues

School leagues became the vehicle for much of the community organizing that occurred and, within two decades, formed the backbone of local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (today's NAACP), the civil rights organization that led the effort to dismantle Jim Crow segregation altogether. Also known as countywide leagues or patron leagues, school leagues began to organize during the 1910s, such as the aforementioned league in Mecklenburg County. The leagues raised funds, served as community forums, organized advocacy campaigns, and marshaled collective effort toward communal goals. The organizations also were training grounds for community leaders who managed yearslong campaigns to wrest concessions from school officials. In Goochland County, school league activists including Dr. Gilbert (A.G.) Blakey, George Walter (G.W.) Hayden, John T. Cooke, T. A. Daniel, and George Henry Dickerson were instrumental to school improvements in their communities. The men regularly attended county school board meetings between the 1910s-early 1930s, often to present petitions from school leagues, and were entrusted with representing their communities with the highest degree of respectability and sagacity. By making themselves known among White officials, Blakey, Hayden, Cooke, Dickerson, and others like them in African American communities across Virginia risked their personal wellbeing and safety. Their skillful navigation of the tempestuous nature of White supremacy required political savvy coupled with intellectual agility and considerable courage. School league members also became well-versed in state education laws and regulations in order to identify specific violations by local officials, and kept meticulous records of private community contributions that had been made. For example, in an April 1924 letter to Goochland County's school board,

the patrons of Second Union School wrote to Goochland County schools Superintendent S. C. Cottrell regarding the budget being considered by the school board. The letter was signed by the Second Union School League and its president, T. A. Daniel. It noted that the budget manual claimed the "county pays all expenditures" for the school, but that this was not the reality. The letter pointed out that the "instruction[al] salaries for teachers are not as the manual has laid out [and] therefore we are not willing to give anything for instruction until teachers are properly paid." In reference to the operations portion of the budget, the patrons pointed out, "We have no trucks, our children have to walk. ... Chalk, erasers, other articles for schoolrooms have not been furnished by the Board, [and] we have received only two books for indigent pupils. The last Diplomas [were] given in 1919. Therefore we gave no expenses for operation." The Second Union patrons also explained that they were not receiving any benefit from the budget item "Auxiliary Agencies": "We have no Library, the Board has not given us anything. We finished this building ourselves." Regarding the school itself, the patrons pointed out that "we raised the amount we were asked for our new building."<sup>260</sup>

The significance of such actions encompassed multiple levels. First, the right to petition the government was a hallowed right of American citizenship and, by exercising it, African Americans were claiming their citizenship rights. Second, Black communities demonstrated their intention to resist inequitable treatment by refusing to

<sup>260</sup> Brian J. Daugherty and Alyce Miller, "'A New Era in Building': African American Educational Activism in Goochland County, Virginia, 1911-32," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 128, No. 1 (2020), p. 55-56. "Auxiliary agencies" were activities and programs that were in addition to required curricula. Libraries and physical education, for example, originally were considered part of auxiliary agencies, but over time were reclassified to become an expected component of a school's physical plant and curriculum.

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contribute to public schools when the local school board failed to live up to its obligations under state law. Third, such actions conveyed to local officials that African Americans residents would not allow them to act with impunity. The second and third aspects have particular weight in Virginia, as White elites had prided themselves on the “Virginia Way” of maintaining peaceful, cooperative racial relations since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in contrast to the more violent tendencies of states in the Deep South.<sup>261</sup> Based on the Virginia Way tradition, therefore, decorous communication from African Americans to White officials was expected to be met with respect, even if White officials chose to ignore the petition or to respond with a partial concession.

The mixed results of Black Virginians’ advocacy for high schools between the 1910s-early 1930s demonstrated that working with White officials the “Virginia Way” was only partially successful. Through collaborative partnerships with White philanthropic organizations, however, county training schools became an option where common ground could be found with state and local school officials. As originally conceived during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “training schools” were intended to offer at least one to three years of high school classes, with an additional year of training for would-be teachers. With elementary education still the primary focus of Virginia’s public school system at the time, the “training school” would meet the period’s rapidly growing needs for elementary schoolteachers. The Slater Fund, under the direction of James Hardy Dillard, became a proponent of such schools in 1913 and his organization provided funding toward creating such schools. Local White school officials, more interested in maintaining a supply of minimally trained workers, often mandated an industrial training curriculum for training schools while neglecting the original teacher training concept.<sup>262</sup>

### High Schools for African Americans

As explained above, the rapidity of advances achieved by African Americans, particularly in Virginia’s cities, had created well-established neighborhoods of professional, middle-, and working-class residents who expected more of their local schools. Black communities in rural locales had fewer resources, while recognizing that improving education represented one of the best means for improving their circumstances. Consequently, the first high schools for African American students to be built in Virginia were located in mostly urban settings, while county training schools proliferated across the rural landscape. The Rosenwald Fund played a particularly significant role in the progress made with county training schools, and this program is described in detail in the separate MPD, *Rosenwald Schools in Virginia*.<sup>263</sup>

The John T. West School was built in 1906 in the Barboursville area of Norfolk County; the neighborhood was annexed by the City of Norfolk in 1911. Upon the annexation, the school began to host both elementary and high school grades, making it the first school in the city to offer high school education to African American students. Importantly, the 1906 building was designed by a local architect, William T. Zepp, which reflected a depth of resources in Barboursville as well as the clout of the large African American population in

<sup>261</sup> Regarding a White elite’s apology for the “Virginia Way” see, for example, *Richmond News Leader*, “Not the Virginia Way. (February 9, 1926),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 9, 2021, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/primary-documents/not-the-virginia-way-february-9-1926/>. In-depth analysis of the “Virginia Way” is available by Emily A. Martin Cochran, “*It Seemed Like Reaching for the Moon*”: *Southside Virginia’s Civil Rights Struggle Against the Virginia Way, 1951-1964*, Ph.D. dissertation, 2021, University of South Carolina, <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7244&context=etd>.

<sup>262</sup> “Explanation of Database Topics and Organizations: Anna T. Jeanes Foundation (1907),” Jackson Davis Collection, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, no date, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/about-the-jackson-davis-collection/explanations/>.

<sup>263</sup> See Bryan Clark Green, “Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041),” Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>.

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the Norfolk area. Multiple schools similar to the two-story, brick John T. West School were built in Norfolk during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, the Presbyterian Church had operated the private Norfolk Mission College for African Americans since 1883, but a single high school could not adequately meet the growing demand for high school coursework. In 1911, David G. Jacox, principal at John T. West School, petitioned the City School Board to begin high school classes and the board approved one year; the following year, a second year of high school was added, and a third year in 1913, until the State Board of Education endorsed creation of a full four-year high school. Upon the school board's agreement, John T. West School became Virginia's first accredited high school for Black students. An addition to the 1906 building was completed in 1913. Importantly, the new curriculum followed the classical education (or liberal arts) model found at White high schools, rather than the industrial training model that typified most Black schools of the period. In 1914, John T. West School also became the first local Black school to field a football team. School teams were organized into segregated leagues and African American teams did not play against White teams. School athletics, however, would become an area of common ground that was important to White and Black communities alike and, over time, became a regular feature in both White- and Black-owned local newspapers.<sup>264</sup>

In Newport News, the local school board set aside a single room at the John Marshall Elementary School in 1919 to offer high school classes to African American students. A single teacher, Inez Bernice Sanders, and 54 students comprised the first academic session. In 1920, the school moved to a four-room, frame building that previously had housed the Joseph Parker School. That year, Lutrelle Fleming Palmer was hired as the high school's principal and two teachers composed the faculty.<sup>265</sup> The frame building quickly became overcrowded, prompting a four-room addition in 1922-1923. With the cooperation of Newport News School Superintendent Joseph Saunders, plans began to build a new high school. Attorney and newspaper editor Joseph Thomas Newsome (1869-1942), who was a towering figure in the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia's Tidewater, soon secured the land for a new school campus in the East End area of Newport News. Among Newsome's activities and accomplishments were helping to lead the Newport News Negro Business League, founding Trinity Baptist Church, acting in 1923 as a founding member of the Tidewater Bar Association (Virginia's first bar association for African American attorneys who were denied admission to those led by White attorneys) and later serving a term as its president, and helping to organize the Voters league in Warwick County (which later became part of the City of Newport News) during the 1930s.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Kimble A. David, "John T. West School," National Register nomination, August 27, 1999, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/122-1004/>, p. 8/5-8/8; "A History of Booker T. Washington High School," Booker T. Washington High School, 2024, <https://www.npsk12.com/domain/358>. In 1916, the City of Norfolk acquired the Norfolk Mission College campus and transferred public high school classes here from the John T. West School, which continued as an elementary school. In 1922, a new school campus was erected and named Booker T. Washington High School. The 1922 building was replaced in 1975 and Booker T. Washington High School continues in operation. The former John T. West School was demolished in 2006. Additional information about the significance of school athletics during the segregation era is available at "Athletics," Virginia Interscholastic Association, no date, <https://viastory.org/athletics>. The website is a collaborative project of Virginia State University, the VIA Heritage Association (VIAHA), Teaching for Change and other institutions, and includes information about art, leadership, and academic programs that the Virginia Interscholastic Association also provided to students.

<sup>265</sup> Hattie Thomas Lucas, *Huntington High School: A Symbol of Community Hope and Unity, 1920-1971* (Yorktown, Va.: Pub. Connections, 1999), p. 19-20.

<sup>266</sup> Hattie Thomas Lucas, *Huntington High School: A Symbol of Community Hope and Unity, 1920-1971* (Yorktown, Va.: Pub. Connections, 1999), p. 21-23-; "Changemakers: Joseph Thomas Newsome (1869-1942)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/25>; Brent Tarter, "Joseph Thomas Newsome (1869-1942)," 2023, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998- ), [http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Newsome\\_J\\_Thomas](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Newsome_J_Thomas).



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Figure 134. Collis P. Huntington High School, Newport News, Virginia, as it appeared in 1924 (Image Source: Hattie Thomas Lucas, *Huntington High School: A Symbol of Community Hope and Unity, 1920-1971* [Yorktown, Va.: Pub. Connections, 1999], p. 21).

Named for railroad magnate Collis P. Huntington, the new high school opened in 1927 (Figure 14).

Huntington was another towering figure in the city's history, having founded in 1890 the shipbuilding concern that became Newport News Shipbuilding; this endeavor and his railroad brought tremendous industrial development to Newport News, which incorporated as a town in 1896. Huntington's various companies paid for new, segregated housing developments for employees as well as schools for both White and Black children in each neighborhood. Lutrelle Fleming

Palmer served as the principal of Huntington High School from 1920-1943. Also a civil rights activist and member of the local NAACP chapter, in 1937 Palmer helped to instigate a series of lawsuits over unequal pay for Black teachers after his own daughter was offered a salary 36 percent lower than that of White teachers in Newport News. The Virginia State Teachers Association voted unanimously to file the lawsuits in partnership with the NAACP. This legal campaign is discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections below. Huntington High School continued to operate for the duration of the segregation era.<sup>267</sup>

In Richmond, local educator James Heyward Blackwell (c. 1864-1931) earned a degree from Richmond Theological Institute (today's Virginia Union University) in 1880 and spent his working life teaching in public schools. Manchester, a city located south of the James River across from Richmond, was slow to establish public schools for African Americans. In 1882, a school opened with the Reverend Anthony Binga, who had tutored Blackwell when the latter was a youth, serving as principal and Blackwell and two others hired as teachers. Blackwell was promoted to principal in 1888 and commenced creation of a three-year high school curriculum. In 1910 after Manchester and Richmond merged, Blackwell's school was renamed Maury School and became part of Richmond's public school system. Because Richmond's school board prohibited African Americans from serving as head administrators at its schools, Blackwell was removed from the position he had held for 22 years. Because the school board was slow to hire a new principal, Blackwell continued to serve as the de facto principal until 1916 while also teaching. He retired in 1922. Blackwell's working life was similar to his peers in Richmond and other Virginia places as he also devoted himself to community uplift. Along with participating in fraternal organizations and Baptist Sunday schools, Blackwell, with his sons, was involved in building and loan, insurance, and real estate businesses that served African Americans. Between 1922-1931, he managed two employment agencies, one of which served Black teachers.<sup>268</sup>

<sup>267</sup> "School Namesakes and History," Newport News Public Schools, 2024, <https://www.nnschools.org/schools/history.html>.

<sup>268</sup> John Kneebone & *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "James H. Blackwell (ca. 1864-1931)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/blackwell-james-h-ca-1864-1931>; "Changemakers: James Heyward Blackwell (c. 1864-1931)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/254>. Maury School later became an elementary and junior high school that, in 1952, was named James H. Blackwell School,

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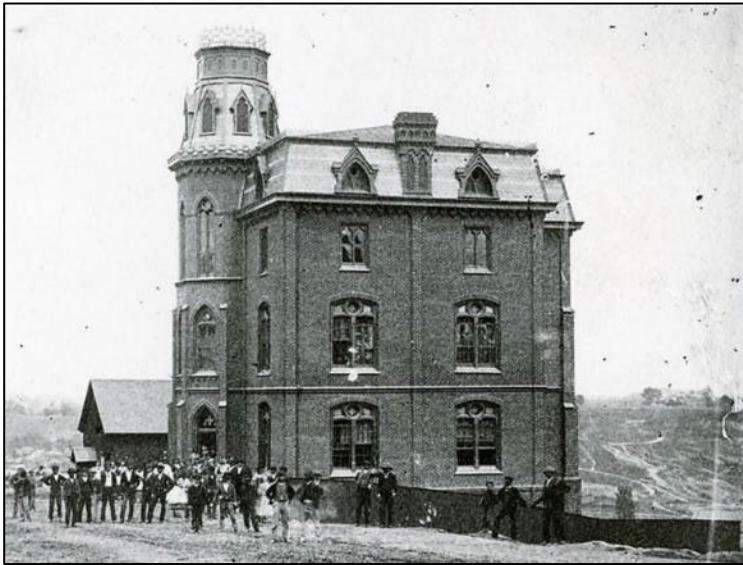


Figure 14. Original Armstrong High School Building, no date (Image Source: Richmond Public Schools, Armstrong High School, <https://ahs.rvaschools.net/about-us/history>).

Meanwhile, across the James River in Richmond, the Richmond Normal & High School originated as a Freedmen's Bureau school in 1867 and later became known as the Colored High and Normal School; in 1876, the Richmond School Board acquired the property. Between 1873-1906, school administrators and teachers implemented a growing curriculum and added high school grades; a year of normal school training beyond the 12<sup>th</sup> grade was available for student teachers. In 1910, the school moved to an existing building (Figure 15) that originally had served White students and it was renamed Armstrong High School. The normal and high school programs were separated in 1917. Following years of overcrowding, the high school moved to a newly-constructed building in 1923, while the Booker T. Washington Junior High School was established here. Like other high schools in urban settings, Armstrong High School

offered a classical (liberal arts) curriculum, as well as home economics education (the popularity of which is discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section below).<sup>269</sup>

In Roanoke, Lucy Addison (1861-1937) followed a route to creating a high school for African Americans that was similar to her peers in other Virginia cities. After graduating from a private school in Philadelphia, she first taught in Loudoun County, then moved to Roanoke in 1886. The following year, she was named interim principal of the First Ward Colored School, before being appointed assistant principal, a position she held for 30 years while also teaching. In 1916, the Roanoke School Board voted to approve construction of a new school for the city's African American students, which opened the following winter. In 1918, Addison was named principal of the new Harrison School (NRHP 1982; 128-0043), which originally provided education through eighth grade. By adding new coursework over the next few years, Addison made the Harrison School a high school as well, which was accredited in 1924 by the State Board of Education. At this time a rapidly growing city with a thriving industrial base, Roanoke soon required another high school that was erected in 1928-1929 and named Lucy Addison High School (128-6480; VLR 2025; NRHP pending) in recognition of Addison's decades of service. Harrison School became an elementary school, a role it continued into the 1960s.<sup>270</sup>

The 1928 survey report of Virginia's public schools, prepared under the direction of M. V. O'Shea, listed the names and locations of accredited public high schools for African Americans that had been established thus far:

Harrison High School, Roanoke  
Booker T. Washington High School, Norfolk

<sup>269</sup> Armstrong High School, "About Us," Richmond Public Schools, no date, <https://ahs.rvaschools.net/about-us/history>; "Historic Richmond Colored Normal School," National Park Service, April 28, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/historic-richmond-colored-normal-school.htm>. Today, the Second Empire building that housed Armstrong High School is part of the Maggie Lena Walker National Historic Site in Richmond.

<sup>270</sup> "Changemakers: Lucy Addison (1861-1937)," Library of Virginia, 2011, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/83>. Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, "Harrison School," National Register nomination, April 1982, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/128-0043/>, p. 3-4.



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Dunbar High School, Lynchburg  
Huntington High School, Newport News  
Norcum (*sic*) High School, Portsmouth  
Peabody High School, Petersburg  
Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (H. S. department), Petersburg  
Virginia Randolph Training School, Glen Allen, Henrico County

Just one accredited public “junior high” school was listed, the Effinger Junior High School (also known as the Effinger Street School) in Harrisonburg.<sup>271</sup> In total, therefore, Virginia had a total of 8 four-year, public high schools for African American students in 1928, with five having been established since 1920. Of note, only the Virginia Randolph Training School was considered to have been located in a rural jurisdiction and this likely has much to do with Randolph’s stature in the education field.<sup>272</sup> Randolph herself had raised the funds to build an industrial arts school in Henrico County through private donations and fundraising events. With this money, she purchased land in 1910 and deeded it to the county school board. In 1915, the school was named the Virginia E. Randolph Training School in her honor. Randolph also raised money to build a dormitory for students who came from far afield to attend the school and often took students into her own home as well. The frame buildings burned in 1929, but Henrico County built a new building, this time with brick, and named it Virginia Randolph High School. A brick cottage where Randolph taught home economics was added to the campus in 1937 (NHL 1974; 043-0043). In 1969, the former training school and high school was repurposed as the Virginia Randolph Education Center.<sup>273</sup>

In addition to eight public high schools, Virginia also had eleven private high schools for African Americans, out of the total of approximately 392 four-year high schools in the Commonwealth. The total enrollment of Black students in the public high school numbered 5,729 for the 1925-1926 school year, compared to 53,093 White students enrolled in high school. Virginia’s total number of African American school-age children stood at 216,802 that year, whereas the White school-age population was 484,732. Interestingly, the 1928 statewide survey report on Virginia’s public schools faulted White high schools for offering predominately a classical (liberal arts) education while neglecting vocational training. A balance of curriculum options was recommended that included college preparatory academics as well as agricultural, technical, vocational, and home economics instruction; the recommendation, however, would not be implemented primarily in White schools for another two decades.<sup>274</sup>

### County Training Schools

For the vast majority of Black Virginians who lived in rural areas, county training schools offered some high school education. In 1918, the first statewide survey of Virginia’s public schools noted that the General Education Board and Slater Fund had helped to establish 18 county training schools across the Commonwealth. The purpose of training schools, as explained in 1918, was

<sup>271</sup> “Junior” high schools did not yet have a consistent definition at this time. Some in Virginia enrolled grades 6-8, for example, while others enrolled grades 7-9. Over time, grades 7-9 came to be understood as comprising “junior” high school.

<sup>272</sup> M. V. O’Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 286.

<sup>273</sup> Times-Dispatch Staff, “Virginia Randolph,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 6, 1998, Updated September 19, 2019, [https://richmond.com/virginia-randolph/article\\_a5b501a3-7f86-5062-a524-251f33f0511c.html](https://richmond.com/virginia-randolph/article_a5b501a3-7f86-5062-a524-251f33f0511c.html).

<sup>274</sup> M. V. O’Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 143, 157, 286-287.

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to establish a good central rural school, sometimes by consolidation, offering thorough work in the elementary grades, and from two to four years of high school work, including the industries having to do with the country home and farm. A simple course in teacher training is offered in the highest grade. A typical plant consists of a class-room [sic] building, a work shop, a teachers' home, and perhaps a small dormitory for boarding students. Most of the schools represent only a simple and crude beginning and will require several years to work up to the high school grades.<sup>275</sup>

The purpose of training schools such as these was to retain African American populations in rural areas in order to meet White farmers' agricultural labor force needs. Thus only "industries having to do with the country home and farm" were included in the curricula at such schools. The inclusion of a single year of teacher training at such schools served to prepare students either for additional instruction at a normal school or, often, to teach in an elementary school in a rural locality, where certification standards continued to be far less stringent than the period's educational professionals recommended. Additionally, training schools were a necessary link between elementary schools and postsecondary institutions in order for Black communities to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining.<sup>276</sup> Autonomous communities were important to African Americans as a means of demonstrating the depth and breadth of African Americans' skills and talents and of providing mutual assistance in times of need. White authorities and onlookers, on the other hand, insisted on autonomy in order to maintain strict racial separation while also justifying the parsimonious portion of publicly-funded investments that were permitted to go to Black neighborhoods, including schools, improved roads, public parks, and extension of modern water, sewer, and electrical services.

As of 1928, just 35 such schools across the Commonwealth's 95 counties had been created. M. V. O'Shea's 1928 report to the Educational Commission of Virginia described the schools and noted the considerable inequities in funding their construction:

They offer not only elementary work but usually from two to four years of high school work as well. They carry also practical vocational courses for both boys and girls, and originally at least, did something toward the training of teachers for the rural schools. For this work they have been enabled to secure teachers and equipment above the average for the rural schools. The idea is to have one strong, central school for colored youth in as many counties as possible. The colored people, and philanthropic persons, have contributed largely towards the erection and maintenance of these schools. However, they become public property. The survey staff observer saw one of the schools erected at a cost of \$10,000, all of which the colored people had to pay except \$100 appropriated by the public school authorities. In a neighboring county the observer saw another county training school erected by the colored people at a cost of \$8,000, toward which the county gave only \$500. In still another county he learned that the school board is requiring the colored people to raise \$500 this year in order to add a high school grade to the work of the school. However, these are the only public schools that offer any high school

<sup>275</sup> Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, p. 201.

<sup>276</sup> Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, p. 201; John Randolph McCraw Jr., *The Legal History of Teacher Certification in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, Ed.D. dissertation, 1987, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 59, 70, 87-94, 99-102, 108, 115.

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training to rural colored youth in Virginia. One of this group of schools the [Virginia Randolph Training School] has become a fully accredited, four-year, high school. The school property usually consists of five acres of land at least, a class room [*sic*] building, a shop for vocational work, and in some cases a dormitory.<sup>277</sup>

Almost all of the county training schools that were erected in Virginia between c. 1910-c.1931 were under the auspices of the Julius Rosenwald Fund.<sup>278</sup> Such schools followed the detailed design requirements published by the Rosenwald Fund in the organization's 1924 publication, *Community School Plans* by architect Samuel L. Smith at the Fund's headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee. Robert R. Taylor, among the first professionally trained African American architects in the country, also served as the principal architect for the Tuskegee Institute, where Booker T. Washington had initially conceived of a program for building schools with a combination of private and public funding.

County training schools also were erected through other means, such as grants from the General Education Fund and John Slater Fund or private donations such as those given for the Virginia Randolph Training School in Henrico County. Regardless of funding source, the training schools generally utilized design principles similar to those published by the Rosenwald Fund; the typical features of the standardized plans are discussed in more detail in Section F. Furthermore, the teachers at county training schools and Black communities did not feel beholden to the intentions of private donors or their local school board when it came to following an industrial training curriculum. As Colleen Marie Betti noted in her study of three African American schools in Gloucester County during the 1920s-1930s, "the teachers and patrons of the schools did not always continue the industrial programs once the schools were built, instead often teaching classical curriculums including Latin. And even when they did institute industrial training, they ignored the message of Black inferiority."<sup>279</sup> Two of the Gloucester County schools were high schools – the public Gloucester County Training School and the private Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial Institute; the latter "despite its name, championed a classical education and college preparation by the 1920s."<sup>280</sup> The third school was Woodville Elementary School (NRHP 2004; 036-5045).

### Laboratory Schools

A less documented school type in Virginia during the 1920s came in the form of "laboratory" schools that were associated with normal schools in some fashion. A precise definition of "laboratory" schools has never existed and the concept has evolved considerably since it was first conceived during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, two types of laboratory schools existed. The first were used for teacher training and typically were affiliated with or on the campus of a normal school, college, or university. The second type of laboratory school was used for research into different aspects of education, such as testing new pedagogical theories; these usually

<sup>277</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 143, 157, 285.

<sup>278</sup> See Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>.

<sup>279</sup> Colleen Marie Betti, "Go Ahead and Erect the Buildings Themselves": *An Archaeological Study of Three Black Schools in Gloucester County, Virginia*, PhD dissertation, 2023, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://core.ac.uk/download/582228788.pdf>, p. 71.

<sup>280</sup> Colleen Marie Betti, "Go Ahead and Erect the Buildings Themselves": *An Archaeological Study of Three Black Schools in Gloucester County, Virginia*, PhD dissertation, 2023, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://core.ac.uk/download/582228788.pdf>, p. 6.

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existed as colleges and universities.<sup>281</sup> The State Board of Education's 1928 statewide school survey report explained that "Liberal arts colleges everywhere in the United States have found it not at all inconsistent with their function to give education courses that center about actual teaching as the laboratory for demonstrating the processes of education and preparing students for teaching."<sup>282</sup>

In Virginia, two examples of laboratory schools were examined during research for this MPD. The first was the James S. Russell High School that originated during the mid-1920s, when Brunswick County entered a contract with Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial Institute to provide limited high school education to the County's Black students on the Saint Paul's campus. Saint Paul's accommodated the request by adding high school classes to its coursework schedule, and the high school students also participated in the college's industrial, agricultural, and domestic sciences training. The Saint Paul High School was located on the college's campus into the early 1950s. In this fashion, Brunswick County made available a secondary education similar to a county training school, but without incurring the cost of building and maintaining a public school. Saint Paul's Normal and Polytechnic Institute's education majors also obtained the requisite classroom experience that was now necessary as part of their teacher certification.<sup>283</sup> It is likely that each of Virginia's public, state normal schools operated laboratory schools at some point in their history, but additional research is needed to confirm this supposition.

The D. Webster Davis High School in Ettrick, Chesterfield County, operated under the auspices of Virginia State College. Cortlandt Matthew Colson served as the school's principal, while his sister, Edna Meade Colson, directed Virginia State's Department of Education. Under C. M. Colson's leadership, six full-time teachers, all of whom held master's degrees, and as many as fifteen student teachers taught a total of 250-265 students enrolled in the vocational and academic high school coursework. The school's original building, originally named the Campus Training School, was an elementary school offering grades 1-7; constructed in 1920 on Virginia State's campus, its name likely was owed to its use as a venue for training student teachers. In 1940, a second building was erected. The 1920 building was renamed D. Webster Davis High School while the 1940 building was dubbed Matoaca Laboratory Elementary School. Intermingling of college faculty with the high school's teachers, and high school students' attendance at some college courses, occurred on a regular basis. The interactions among all three schools provided a means to study students' response to educational practices and to hone teacher training. Accredited by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes in 1942, D. Webster Davis High School participated in the nationally-important project, *The Secondary School Study*, concerning progressive African American high schools, that the General Education Board funded between 1940-1946. The high school closed in 1948 with completion of Chesterfield County's Carver High School and its building later was converted to serve as a dormitory for Virginia State students.<sup>284</sup>

Additional research is needed to ascertain the names and locations of other former African American laboratory schools that were associated with the 20<sup>th</sup>-century progressive education movement. The influence of the

<sup>281</sup> Maia Cucchiara, "New Goals, Familiar Challenges? A Brief History of University-Run Schools," *Perspectives on Urban Education* (Summer 2010), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ894472.pdf>, p. 96-97.

<sup>282</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 30, but did not identify any specific laboratory schools then operating in Virginia.

<sup>283</sup> Saint Paul's College 4 Life, "James S. Russell High School," February 25, 2021, [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story\\_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591).

<sup>284</sup> Craig Kridel, *Progressive Education in Black High Schools: The Secondary School Study, 1940-1946* (Columbia, S.C.: Museum of Education, University of South Carolina, 2015), p. 35-39.

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Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes and of *The Secondary School Study* that the General Education Board funded between 1940-1946, also warrant further investigation.

*Uneven Expansion of Vocational Training and Home Economics Educational Opportunities*

Vocational training and home economics emerged during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as separate educational specialties from the industrial and agricultural training that had been commonplace during the latter decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The aforementioned Hampton Institute had led the way for developing each of these as specialized curricula since the 1870s. With high schools becoming more commonplace, educational, political, social, and commercial interests became convinced that by adding vocational training and home economics to high school curricula, students would be better prepared for finding employment and rearing healthy families (with the latter concern almost exclusively that of women). As with every other aspect of public education in Virginia, the implementation of the new coursework differed between schools for White students versus those for Black students.

“Home economics” as a professional field began to develop at Black schools, beginning with Hampton Institute during the 1870s and emerged as the professionalized study of home economics by the 1900s. As with study of the industrial and agricultural trades, home economics was directly associated with the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which together created “land grant” colleges for White and Black students, respectively, across the U.S. Educators of the era argued that, just as farmers and tradesmen benefitted from learning the newest, science-based practices, wives and “homemakers” warranted similar training. “Activities such as cooking, housecleaning, sewing, laundry, care of the sick, and sanitation were all to be transformed and modernized through the application of scientific theories and techniques... the land-grant schools, along with a few private institutions, established courses of instruction in what was generally called ‘domestic science.’”<sup>285</sup>

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act, which provided federal support in perpetuity for vocational, trade and industrial, and agricultural education, as well as home economics, in public school systems. By law, home economics was the only one of the three educational tracks accessible to girls. The legislation was supported by an unusual coalition that included the American Federation of Labor, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Education Association, General Federation of Women’s Clubs, American Home Economics Association, and Progressive Era reformers.<sup>286</sup> The Federal Board for Vocational Education (FBVE) was created to oversee the law’s implementation, while states were required to create state-level boards for the same purpose and to match federal appropriations for educational programs. Reporting directly to the U.S. Congress, the original FBVE’s members included the U.S. Secretaries of Commerce and Labor, the U.S. Commission of Education, and private citizens representing labor, agriculture, manufacturing, and commercial interests. The law also provided federal funds for training instructors that would be supervised by state boards of education. Finally, the agricultural education training carried out under the Smith-Hughes Act was required to include high school students, young farmers out of high school, and adult farmers.<sup>287</sup> In 1929,

<sup>285</sup> Martin Heggstad, “About: Home Economics,” HEARTH: Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, History, Cornell University, no date, <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/collections/hearth/about>; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 213-215.

<sup>286</sup> John Hillison, “The Coalition that Supported the Smith-Hughes Act or a Case for Strange Bedfellows,” *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 1995), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ504569.pdf>, p. 4-11. All of the vocational education programs became coeducational following passage of the Education Amendments of 1972. The section of the law widely known as “Title IX” protected all people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

<sup>287</sup> Angela M. Giordana-Evans, *A History of Federal Vocational Education Legislation in the Twentieth Century*, L.C. 1043U.S., 75-126 ED, Congressional Research Service, Education and Public Welfare Division, Updated May 12, 1975, p. 6-7.

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Congress appropriated additional federal funds for vocational education by passing the George-Reed Act, which authorized an increase of \$1 million annually from 1930-1934 toward expanding vocational and home economics education.<sup>288</sup>

Due to the availability of financial support at the federal (and, for many schools, at the state) level, as well as public demand, agricultural education quickly became part of school curricula in Virginia's rural public schools for White students. An assortment of agricultural clubs, such as those sponsored by the 4-H organization and "corn clubs" and "canning clubs" led by local agricultural extension agents also began to be organized in White communities across the Commonwealth. Many of these focused on a specific topic of interest, such as poultry, corn, soybeans, and other commodities. Counterparts for girls were oriented toward home vegetable gardening and preserving. With interest in agricultural accomplishments revived, communities began to organize county fairs where children and adults showed their livestock, handiwork, various foods, and other products to an appreciative audience. Such fairs were racially segregated.<sup>289</sup>

As with so much of Virginia's public education system, even with ample federal and state support, local school boards opted not to invest in vocational training at schools attended by African American pupils. The 1928 school survey report to the state's Educational Commission explained that Jeanes Fund teachers provided agricultural and industrial arts instruction in rural African American schools but that "the [local school board] makes practically no provision for such instruction." Approximately 60 Jeanes teachers worked across rural Virginia, their salaries paid by the private Jeanes Fund, primarily in the localities with greater concentrations of African American residents in the Piedmont, Southside, and Tidewater regions. Jeanes teachers taught "cooking, sewing, simple woodwork, work with reeds and raffia, and simple agriculture." The report also noted that home economics and agriculture were part of the curriculum of African American county training schools with "specially trained teachers and kitchen and shops... However, it is disappointing to find a number of these kitchens and shops inadequately provided with even the minimum equipment needed for effective work. And the same is true of a number of the industrial departments in the city schools."<sup>290</sup> The concerns among African Americans that industrial arts education provided little preparation for their children to attain skilled employment and achieve higher education aspirations, therefore, were well placed.

Furthermore, in such conditions from the 1910s-1930s, Black students typically received academic coursework only to the tenth or eleventh grade and spent approximately half of their school day on industrial training. Male students were expected to learn basic skills in one or more manual trades, such as masonry, smithing, carpentry, or agriculture-oriented skills including crop cultivation and livestock care, but were not provided equipment or materials for hands-on experience. White education officials anticipated they would spend their working lives as laborers performing menial work, and would not ever rise to the level of skilled work or be promoted to supervisory positions, nor have the means to operate the large farms that mechanized agriculture was making possible. Female African American students, in keeping with gendered and racial norms of the period, were

<sup>288</sup> Betty Bird, "Armstead T. Johnson High School," National Register nomination, December 1, 1997, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/096-0113/>, p. 8.7.

<sup>289</sup> "Virginia Agricultural Education History," Virginia FFA Association, no date, <https://www.vaffa.org/ffa-history>; Danielle Dreilinger, *The Secret History of Home Economics: How Trailblazing Women Harnessed the Power of Home and Changed the Way We Live* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2022), p. 61; Anna Maas and Jean Stoll, Floris Historic District 2017 Additional Documentation, National Register nomination, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, p. 16-17. For more information about the 4-H organization, see Kiera Butler and Rafael Roy, *Raise: What 4-H Teaches Seven Million Kids and How Its Lessons Could Change Food and Farming Forever* (Oakland, Ca.: University of California Press, 2014).

<sup>290</sup> M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 287.

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expected to focus their efforts on domestic skills to prepare them for employment as maids, cooks, and housekeepers for White households. Although vocational training was a valued part of the curriculum at many White schools in rural areas, four years of academic coursework for all students was the norm and almost all such high schools were accredited by the State Board of Education. Due to the inequities in curricula and equipping, secondary schools for Black children were not always accredited. African American educators and administrators fought hard to elevate both academic and vocational training opportunities through whatever means they could find, often by forming their own organizations, such as the new Farmers of Virginia and New Homemakers of America.

New Farmers of Virginia and New Homemakers of America

Virginia, perhaps, holds a unique role in the history of agricultural education because two of the most enduring student farmers' educational organizations were founded here. In September 1925, a small group of men, Edmund C. Magill, Henry Casper Groseclose, Walter Stephenson Newman, and Harry Warriner Sanders, all of whom were agricultural educators at various universities, founded a statewide organization focused on educating student farmers at the high school level. They selected the name "Future Farmers of Virginia" (FFV). Educators from other states and territories quickly learned about the new educational group and began forming their own. In 1928, the Future Farmers of America (FFA) became a national organization. Although FFA was not segregated at the national level, state and local chapters in Southern states, including Virginia, were racially segregated. In 1927, at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (today's Virginia State University), Professor George Washington Owens formed the New Farmers of Virginia (NFV) as a counterpart to the FFV. Dr. Harvey Owen Sargent, at that time the federal agent for Vocational Agricultural Education for Special Groups,<sup>291</sup> had suggested this endeavor to Owens. The NFV was received with enthusiasm among rural Black Virginians and its mission soon spread to other states. The national New Farmers of Virginia (NFV) organization was founded in 1935 and headquartered at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. In addition to practical education, both organizations emphasized development of leadership, character, citizenship, thrift, cooperation, patriotism, and other virtues among students.<sup>292</sup>

Home economics emerged as a specific disciplinary and professional field during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The persistence of home economics educators expanded the field continually and contributed to changing expectations and opportunities for women. Graduates of home economics program went on to careers in the food industry, textiles and clothing, hotel and restaurant management, interior design, public-sector policymaking, nonprofit management, public health, social work, nutrition, child development, consumer protection and advocacy, and standardization of textiles and other consumer products. Although the 1918 Smith-Hughes Act mandated inclusion of home economics in high school curricula, student organizations were not created until 1945, when African American students and educators founded the New Homemakers of America, and the Future Homemakers of America (FHA) was founded by White educators. Both organizations served the same mission to educate young women in domestic skills, health and nutrition, and financial and budget management, while also providing character-building and leadership opportunities. FHA and NHA chapters quickly were established at high schools throughout Virginia. In 1948, the State Advisory Board of Virginia met in Mecklenburg County to discuss "The Farm and Home as a Unit for Better Living." Speakers at

<sup>291</sup> "Special groups" included African American, Native American, and Latin American populations.

<sup>292</sup> Antoine J. Alston, Dexter B. Wakefield, and Netta S. Cox, *Images of America: The Legacy of the New Farmers of America* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2022), p. 7-8, 11, 13-14. The two organizations "merged" in 1965, although in effect, the NFV essentially ceased to exist while the FFA continued its usual operations, albeit now with a racially integrated membership of educators and students at its local, state, and national levels. In southern states, the merger of local chapters often proceeded more slowly due to local resistance to integration.

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the meeting included a home management specialist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm and Home Administration, as well as the director of the USDA's extension service program and a local farm demonstration agent; the cooperative extension service, another arm of federally-funded agricultural and home economics education, had been established by the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act alongside vocational training and home economics education. The NHA and FHA merged in 1965, again with the White organization, FHA, essentially absorbing NHA, the Black organization.<sup>293</sup>

### Significant Educators

African American educators made significant contributions to vocational and home economics education in Virginia, although considerable work remains to document the full range of this topic. As research continues, it is anticipated that this MPD may be updated to include educators who made significant contributions to their communities and to the field of education.

National Register nominations for individual properties also are expected to continue to identify such individuals, such as the 2020 nomination for River View Farm in Albemarle County, the lifelong home of Mary Carr Greer (1884-1973). Greer spent her career in Albemarle County, first teaching at the Jefferson School, an elementary school. In 1915, she was hired to teach Domestic Science at the recently established Albemarle Training School. With assistance from the John F. Slater Fund, a two-room addition had been made to the existing three-room Union Ridge School. As additional teachers were hired and a two-year high school curriculum added, the Union Ridge Graded School was renamed Albemarle Training School and became the county's first high school for African American students. Greer attended public school in Albemarle County and completed two years of teacher training at the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Ettrick. Over the course of her career, she continued her education by taking summer classes at Cornell University, Virginia Union University, Hampton Institute, and Fisk University. When Greer began at the Albemarle Training School, the high school coursework included home economics, agriculture, and manual industrial arts, alongside an academic curriculum that included English, math, chemistry, biology, history, French, and Latin. In addition to Greer, the faculty included John G. Shelton, who served both as principal and as a vocational instructor, Jackson Burley, agriculture, and Julia Shelton and Bessie Taylor, who together taught the academic classes. In 1922, Greer notified Shelton that she also wanted to teach academic classes, having recently passed a state certification examination to teach English. After Shelton retired in 1930, Greer was named the new principal of Albemarle Training School and also returned to Virginia State College to complete a bachelor's of science degree in 1933. For the remainder of her career, in addition to teaching American history, government, and home economics, and serving as principal, Greer oversaw extracurricular activities, including a music club, 4-H club, May Day and Field Day, and community events at the school. Greer retired from teaching in 1950 but continued to be very active in community life, including a wide assortment of civic clubs, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Sunday school, and the National Association of Negro Women's Clubs, as well as organizing the first retired teachers club in Albemarle County. She also worked closely with her husband, Conly Greer, to deliver cooperative extension demonstrations to local African American farming families. Conly Greer provided agricultural demonstrations to men while Mary Carr Greer demonstrated various domestic skills training, such

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<sup>293</sup> "FCCLA: About: History," Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, 2023, <https://fcclainc.org/about/history>; "State Advisory Board of Virginia Met in Mecklenburg County Sept. 7-8," *Suffolk News-Herald*, September 14, 1948, p. 7. In 1974, male students began to be permitted to join FHA. In 1999, FHA was renamed to Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).



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as canning and preserving food, to women. Greer's remarkable career was recognized in 1974 when Albemarle County named a newly completed school Mary Carr Greer Elementary School.<sup>294</sup>

## Great Depression, New Deal, and World War II, 1930-1945

The Great Depression began during the second half of 1929 with a series of events that caused economic activity to plummet in the U.S. The most famous of these was the stock market collapse in October 1929, which was precipitated by rampant speculation and an unsustainable, rapid increase in stock values. With values far exceeding the actual worth of many stocks, investors rushed to sell in order to avoid losses, but too few buyers were willing to purchase stocks at what now were recognized as vastly inflated prices. The market effectively collapsed on October 28-29, 1929, an event that sent shock waves throughout the U.S. economy and soon spread internationally. Economic conditions worsened during 1930-1931 as a series of regional "panics" caused numerous banks to fail and many bank customers to lose their life savings. The frozen financial markets paralyzed economic activity and forced a steep decline in the domestic industrial and commercial sectors, leading to widespread unemployment.

Elected to the U.S. presidency in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt had campaigned on the promise to end the Great Depression by offering a "New Deal" to Americans. Upon taking office in 1933, he initiated a multiple-pronged plan for utilizing the power of federal action to improve the national economy and everyday life for millions of working Americans. An assortment of new agencies were created under Roosevelt's leadership, including the Public Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, Federal Writers Project, Tennessee Valley Authority, Federal Housing Authority, Federal Works Agency, National Labor Relations Board, Social Security Administration, and numerous others that were designed to put people back to work, stabilize their financial status, and protect their rights as employees.

Work-relief programs aimed to alleviate unemployment through federal funding of thousands of construction projects across the U.S. State and local governments also often contributed funds but lacked the resources to match the federal contribution. Through "work-relief," federal administrators averred, employment and receipt of a fair wage would build morale among suddenly-impooverished Americans more effectively than providing them with charitable outlays of food, clothing, and shelter. Most work-relief projects were intended to benefit the general public in some way; the majority of construction projects, for example, either occurred on property owned by local, state, or federal government agencies or provided modernized services and/or infrastructure to the public. While federal policy did not officially sanction racial segregation, however, neither did federal officials contest these practices. Consequently, African Americans and other underrepresented communities were not served by New Deal-era work-relief programs to the same extent as White communities.<sup>295</sup>

In Virginia, segregation of public works projects occurred at multiple levels. With state and local authorities' input, projects were selected by the federal agencies that provided funding and administrative oversight. As had been the case with Virginia's school funding since 1871, the majority of public works funding was spent on projects that benefitted White communities. Second, work-relief labor forces were organized into all-White, all-Black, and other racially-based groups that were kept separate from one another even during work on the same project. Additionally, due to longstanding, rampant discriminatory practices in Virginia, African Americans and

<sup>294</sup> Liz Sargent and Steve Thompson, "River View Farm," National Register nomination, August 17, 2020, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/002-1229/>, p. 46-52. Conley Greer served as an agricultural extension agent for decades. His contributions to the field also are discussed in the nomination, p. 54-60.

<sup>295</sup> Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p. 34-39, 94, 99.

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other underrepresented communities received fewer employment opportunities per capita than White Virginians and, furthermore, they typically were limited to the most difficult and dangerous work. Finally, although African Americans employed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration (WPA), Civil Works Administration, and other agencies participated in building publicly-owned parks, recreational facilities, stadiums, and auditoriums, they were not always granted admittance to these places upon completion.<sup>296</sup> An example is the Norfolk Azalea Garden, which received a WPA grant that employed approximately 200 African American women who used only hand tools to create a 25-acre garden in just one year. The garden opened in 1938 but African Americans were refused entry until the 1960s.<sup>297</sup>

With the exception of some Northern Virginia localities adjacent to Washington D.C., where expanding federal employment opportunities helped to buoy local economies, the Great Depression persisted in Virginia until the outbreak of World War II in Europe on September 1, 1939. Despite a widespread isolationist movement in the U.S., the war brought about a sudden and prolonged demand for defense industry workers at Hampton Roads shipbuilding facilities and at chemical and munitions plants in other parts of the Commonwealth. The following September, the U.S. instituted a military draft that pulled massive numbers of military personnel to Virginia. The sudden influx of public and private expenditures resuscitated the state's economy and brought renewed energy to social and political changes that had been building for many years.<sup>298</sup>

*Construction of Schools in Virginia by the Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration*

Already operating on inadequate funding, Virginia's public education system suffered considerable losses in the early years of the Great Depression. State and local funding dropped by 25 percent or more, which caused pay cuts and elimination of positions for teachers, halted construction of school projects, and shortened school years. Throughout the 1930s, Virginia ranked among the bottom 20 percent of states in terms of literacy rates, expenditures on public schools, and teacher salaries. In a selfless show of dedication, many teachers continued to work without pay in order to avoid early school closures and agreed to delayed paychecks in order to allow localities more time to accrue revenue.<sup>299</sup>

The federal aid provided to Virginia's public elementary and secondary schools could not reverse the consequences of decades of underinvestment on the part of state and local officials. Between 1933-1937, the Public Works Administration (PWA) funded replacement or renovation of 175 school buildings that housed approximately 35,000 students. Although these were important projects to their local communities, the PWA expenditures affected only a small fraction of Virginia students. As of 1940, the Commonwealth's total school-

<sup>296</sup> Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p. 82-83, 185.

<sup>297</sup> Nate Code, "Land and Labor Acknowledgement Statements," Norfolk Botanical Garden, March 24, 2023, <https://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org/garden-for-all/>.

<sup>298</sup> The impacts of African Americans' military service on their desire to elicit change in Virginia is an important consequence of World War II which warrants further study, but is beyond the purview of this MPD. Large numbers of African American men and women enlisted in the military branches to defend the nation against attack after the U.S. entered the war in December 1942. Military members saw the direct effects of dismantling totalitarian societies abroad and gained firsthand experience with the equal treatment in free societies that they were denied in the U.S. The war's veterans came home well equipped to organize and participate in civil rights actions and, accordingly, were targeted by White supremacists with racist violence. For example, see Bryan Greene, "After Victory in World War II, Black Veterans Continued the Fight for Justice at Home," *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 30, 2021, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/summer-1946-saw-black-wwii-vets-fight-freedom-home-180978538/> and Equal Justice Initiative staff, "Lynching in America: Targeting Black Veterans" (Montgomery, Ala.: Equal Justice Initiative, 2017), <https://eji.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/lynching-in-america-targeting-black-veterans-web.pdf>.

<sup>299</sup> Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p. 34, 36.

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age population (ages 6-16)<sup>300</sup> consisted of 160,245 children who were classified as “nonwhite” and 423,916 of whom were classified as “white,” making a total of 584,161 school-age individuals.<sup>301</sup> During the 1939-1940 school year, a total of 568,131 Virginia students were enrolled in school. Additional aid for public schools in Virginia arrived via the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which over the course of its existence carried out renovations to 894 school buildings in the Commonwealth and built 67 entirely new schools. The renovation projects added running water, school kitchens for preparing hot lunches for students, libraries, and other features that placed thousands of students in modernized educational facilities for the first time.<sup>302</sup>

Established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Executive Order 6174, on June 16, 1933, the PWA oversaw a comprehensive public works program through authority granted by the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act of the same year. In 1939, the PWA was placed within the Federal Works Agency, which was established to serve as the coordinating agency for most federal public works activities. Its purpose having been fulfilled, the PWA was abolished in 1943 during World War II. Between 1933-1939, the PWA provided \$1.16 billion in federal funding for 7,282 educational building projects across the U.S. and its territories, reaching 2.5 million students and adding 60,000 classrooms to the nation’s schools. More than 70 percent of all public school construction projects between 1933-1939 received PWA assistance and, of these, more than half were built in rural communities while approximately one-third were consolidated elementary schools. The types of school construction projects that received PWA investment were the same as those that the Virginia Board of Education and local school boards had been undertaking for decades: increasing the number of classrooms to meet growing enrollments; replacing obsolete buildings; consolidating schools; and improving existing buildings to include modern equipment and spaces. Modern heating, ventilation, and sanitation systems were prioritized for all school projects. Schoolhouses often were electrified as new municipal and rural power plants were established through other New Deal programs, particularly in cities and towns. To meet federal matching requirements, localities were authorized to borrow from Virginia’s Literary Fund.<sup>303</sup>

Raymond V. Long, who created numerous standardized school designs between 1923-1937, administered the federal school projects on behalf of the Commonwealth. Although the PWA developed its own minimum

<sup>300</sup> In Virginia, teens could leave high school without graduating at age 16. Under state compulsory school attendance laws, the “legal dropout” age for high school students rose to 18 in 1988.

<sup>301</sup> For a more detailed analysis of PWA spending on African American schools in Virginia and other southern states, see Robert C. Weaver, “The Public Works Administration School Building-Aid Program and Separate Negro Schools,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July 1938), p. 366-374.

<sup>302</sup> Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p. 61, 91-92; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Census of Population: Volume 4, Characteristics by Age, Marital Status, Relationship, Education, and Citizenship, Part 4. Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia,” (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/population-volume-4/33973538v4p4ch6.pdf>, p. 677; Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, January 1993), p. 52. Neither a breakdown of expenditures on schools according to racial makeup, nor an inventory of all public schools erected in Virginia through New Deal programs, has been identified as of December 2024. In 1938-1939, Virginia had 24 schools constructed through New Deal programs that had been listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register. The majority of these were funded by the PWA. Examples of African American school projects included Baker Public School (NRHP 2016; 127-0877) in Richmond, Booker T. Washington High School (NRHP 2014; 132-5011) in Staunton, Lucy F. Simms School in Harrisonburg, Stafford Training School (NRHP 2013; 089-0247) in Stafford County, Armstead T. Johnson High School (NRHP 1998; 096-0113) in Westmoreland County, and Calfee Training School (NRHP 2022; 125-0034) in the Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County. The number of New Deal-era schools listed in the historic registers was obtained from the Virginia Cultural Resources Information System. The Watson Elementary and High School in Covington was another PWA project, but this building has been demolished.

<sup>303</sup> *America Builds: The Record of PWA* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), available at <http://thehistoryexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/americabuilds00unitrich.pdf>, p. 128.

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standards for various aspects of schools, such as classroom sizes, the agency deferred to state and local officials on building designs, including architectural style. Long's office provided numerous drawings and specifications, some of which were used multiple times.<sup>304</sup> Along with standardized drawings for elementary and high schools, plans for "program" buildings for home economics, industrial arts, and agricultural shops, were created by Long and his staff.<sup>305</sup>

An example of an African American school property that includes two schoolhouses with standardized plans is found at the East Suffolk School Complex (NRHP 2003; 133-5046). Now within the corporate limits of the City of Suffolk, the complex originally stood in Nansemond County.<sup>306</sup> The first schoolhouse at the property was an elementary school erected with assistance from the Julius Rosenwald Fund in 1926-1927; rather than utilizing one of the Fund's standardized plans, a design by Long's office was selected. Unlike many African American elementary schools in Virginia at the time, the school provided classes through eighth grade, which may have factored into the design selection. The East Suffolk Elementary School is a Colonial Revival style, one-story brick building with a modestly-sized, centered, projecting entry bay flanked by blind end walls of hipped-roofed wings. On the interior, the central auditorium is encircled by corridors with classrooms along each corridor's outer perimeter. The primary entry opens to a vestibule with the auditorium's entry on the opposite side. The floor plan is efficiently organized with ample circulation space and the building's community-oriented auditorium is easily accessed from the main entrance. Variations on this plan continued to be used during the 1930s and beyond. A central auditorium remained a key feature of schools for White students as well as African American pupils into the 1950s.<sup>307</sup>

As explained in the complex's National Register nomination, during the 1930s, the local African American community succeeded in convincing school officials to seek New Deal program funding for the addition of a high school to the property. PWA funding was utilized for the project with approval from the State Board of Education. Long's office again provided drawings, dated October 1938, which took care to complement the earlier elementary school's Colonial Revival style in terms of the high school's orientation, masonry materials, and hipped roof clad with standing-seam metal, although the high school had a larger footprint. On the interior, a double-loaded, lateral corridor bisects the building with eight classrooms to either side (Figure 16). Five other rooms include offices and a dedicated space for a library. The original plan called for a kitchen that would prepare hot lunches, but that space later ended up being designated for use as a classroom. An agricultural shop was added to the complex in 1944. During the use of equalization litigation, remodeling in 1950 included an updated heating system; a detached gymnasium constructed in 1951, followed by a cafeteria wing on the high school in 1952; and a separate home economics cottage was built in 1956. Originally named the Nansemond County Training School, the academic curriculum included grades nine, ten, and eleven, with courses that included English, history, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and civics. Home economics also was offered and agricultural instruction was added in 1941. The high school's initial enrollment stood at 227 students. Indicative

<sup>304</sup> Jane Covington, "Arcola Elementary School," National Register nomination, November 28, 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/053-0982/>, p. 14-15.

<sup>305</sup> Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>, p. 8.

<sup>306</sup> Nansemond County merged with the City of Suffolk in 1974.

<sup>307</sup> Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>, p. 3-4, 8.

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of the advances made in teacher training since the early 1920s, all of the faculty and the principal had college degrees, an increasingly common circumstance at African American schools throughout Virginia.<sup>308</sup>

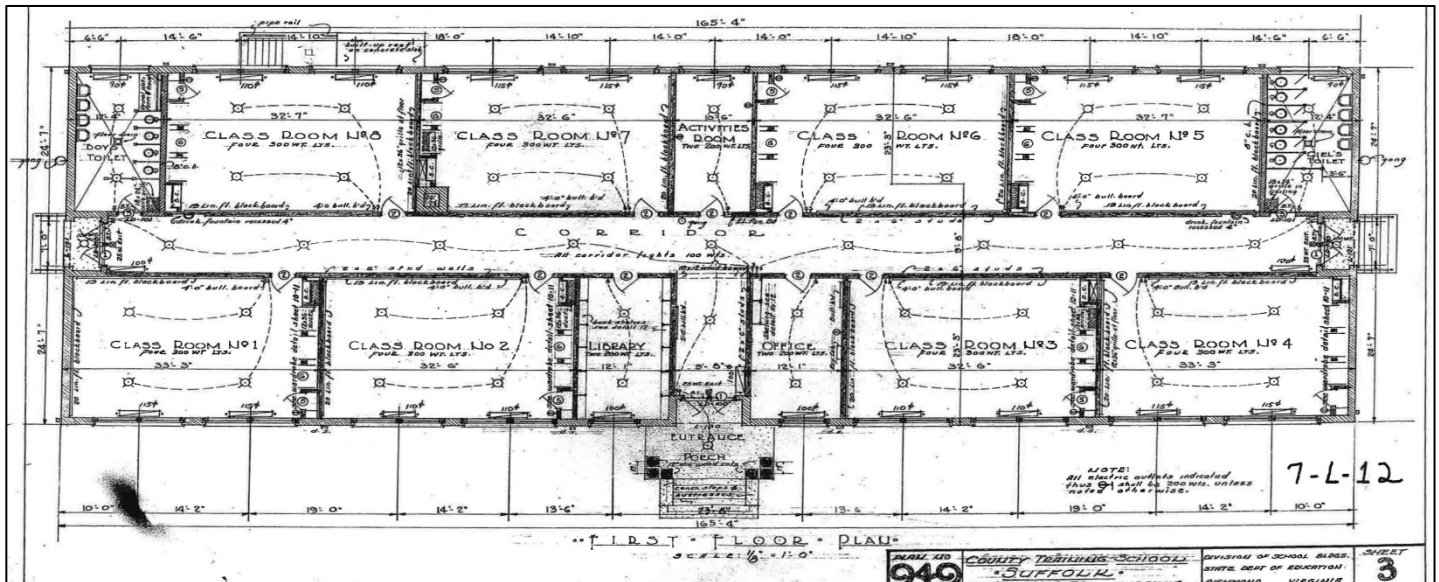


Figure 156. October 1938 Floor Plan for the Nansemond County Training School, Prepared by the Division of School Buildings, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond).

Citing annual reports prepared by the State Department of Education, the nomination's author found that the construction costs and furnishings for the Nansemond County High School totaled \$39,284.45. In 1938-1939, of the 43 undertakings, 37 projects occurred at schools serving White students, and 6 were at African-American schools. The total cost for the construction in 1938-1939 in Virginia was \$4,365,431.16, which included architects' fees.<sup>309</sup> The figures indicate that approximately 86 percent of the 1938-1939 federal allocation was directed to improving schools for White students. The disparity in funding likely owed in part to sheer demographics, as White residents constituted the majority of Virginia's population at the time, although in some localities the percentage of African American residents reached 30 to 40 percent of the total. Federal authorities also deferred to state and local officials' recommendations on projects to receive funding. Thus did longstanding discriminatory practices in Virginia's public school funding assure that the disbursement of the federal funds would not be equitable. Particularly in rural areas, which characterized the vast majority of Virginia at the time, one-, two-, and three-room rural schools that lacked electricity, heating systems, and indoor plumbing continued to operate in Black communities. African American schools in towns and cities, meanwhile, often were antiquated in design, overcrowded, and in poor repair. When added to the preceding 50 years' worth of inequities in funding for African American education, the lopsided nature of the 1938-1939

<sup>308</sup> Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>, p. 4-5, 8, 10-12. The 1920s East Suffolk Elementary School remained in use until 1966, when a new East Suffolk Elementary School opened across an open field from the existing school complex. The high school was converted for use as a middle school until its closure in 1979. In 1987, the former high school was adaptively reused to house a community center with a branch library, computer lab, and public space for meetings.

<sup>309</sup> Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>, p. 11.

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federal allocations is only an additional piece of evidence that demonstrated the structural racism intrinsic to Virginia's public school system during the segregation era.<sup>310</sup>

*Continuing Professional Development and the Virginia State Teachers Association*

Along with emphasizing ongoing professional training for Black teachers, during the 1930s the Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA) began developing a Black history curriculum, a goal also espoused by national educational leader Carter G. Woodson. The VSTA worked with Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History on the curriculum content. The project also is likely associated with the progressive education movement that began during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and with Lutrelle Fleming Palmer's (1888-1950) leadership of the VSTA. Palmer served as the first principal of Collis P. Huntington High School, starting in 1920. A graduate of the historically-Black Wilberforce College (today's Wilberforce University) and of the University of Michigan, he also held a master's degree earned at Hampton Institute (today's Hampton University) and an honorary doctorate bestowed by the private Virginia Union University in Richmond. A softspoken but deeply committed civil rights advocate, Palmer used his position as executive secretary of the VSTA between 1926-1944 to involve the organization in civil rights activism, particularly the teachers' salaries equalization campaign (discussed below). Under his leadership, more than 95 percent of Virginia's 4,000+ African American teachers joined the VSTA, making it a statewide force to be reckoned with. In 1940-1941, Palmer served as president of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, which sponsored *The Secondary School Study* that was funded by the General Education Board between 1940-1946.<sup>311</sup> The study surveyed administrative and pedagogical practices at seventeen high-performing Black high schools in Southern states, including Palmer's Huntington High. The information gleaned then was promulgated through various professional education journals and conferences to encourage further development of progressive educational theories in African American schools.<sup>312</sup> For reasons never disclosed, the City of Norfolk School Board fired Palmer in 1943, despite his role in making Huntington High School one of the most-recognized Black secondary schools in the South. At the time, the school board was in the midst of a lawsuit filed by Dorothy E. Roles concerning salary equalization (discussed in greater detail below). Given the circumstances, it appears

<sup>310</sup> "Negro Education Discussed by J. M. Gandy," *The Daily Press*, November 27, 1937, p. 9. Examples of substandard schools still in use during the 1940s include Ryan Hall Elementary School/ Shipman Colored School, built c. 1920 and still operational in 1961 (see [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/062-5230\\_RyanHallElementarySchool\\_2022\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/062-5230_RyanHallElementarySchool_2022_NRHP_FINAL.pdf)) and Union Street School, built in 1883 and still in use through 1959 (see [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/253-5117\\_Union\\_Street\\_School\\_2022\\_NRHP\\_nomination\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/253-5117_Union_Street_School_2022_NRHP_nomination_FINAL.pdf)).

<sup>311</sup> For more information about the study, see Craig Kridel, *Progressive Education in Black High Schools: The Secondary School Study, 1940-1946* (Columbia, S.C.: Museum of Education, University of South Carolina, 2015).

<sup>312</sup> During the 1930s-1940s in African American schools, "progressive education" referred to teaching methods, curricular development, and interactions between teachers and students in a cooperative fashion to provide pupils with education that was relevant to the circumstances of their lives. Teachers encouraged students' development of critical thinking skills to engage in a dialog-based learning style rather than memorizing information by rote. Teachers also were trained to be mindful of the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of their students as the youths learned to navigate the deeply racist societies in which they lived. Instilling democratic principles in students through their educational experience aimed to arm young people with skills and knowledge to resist White supremacy while utilizing their rights as citizens to contribute to their communities. The roots of progressive education extend to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the pedagogical theory has incited considerable debate for more than a century. See Craig Kridel, *Becoming an African American Progressive Educator: Narratives from 1940s Black Progressive High Schools* (Columbia, S.C.: Museum of Education, University of South Carolina, 2018); Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, "Progressive Education in Black and White: Rereading Carter G. Woodson's *Miseducation of the American Negro*," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (August 2015), p. 273-293; John W. David, "Negro Education Versus the Education of the Negro," Address delivered at the Annual Founders Day Exercises of Hampton Institute, 78<sup>th</sup> Year, and in memory of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, 107<sup>th</sup> Year, on January 27, 1946, printed in *Negro History Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 7 (April 1946), p. 158-161. The influence of the progressive education movement on African American schools in Virginia warrants additional study that is beyond the current scope of this MPD. Future investigations are likely to identify individuals and schools with significance for their contributions to progressive education.

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likely that Palmer's involvement in civil rights activism through the VSTA and other organizations factored into his dismissal. Three more Black teachers and two elementary school principals also did not have their contracts renewed that year, but their identities are not known at this time.<sup>313</sup>

In November 1937, *The Daily Press* in Newport News published an overview of a presentation by Dr. John M. Gandy, president of Virginia State College in Ettrick. Gandy spoke at length about teacher education progress at Hampton Institute (today's Hampton University), Virginia State College, and Saint Paul's College since the 1880s. Among other milestones, Gandy reported that, during the early 1930s, 432 Black teachers held collegiate professional teaching certificates, 104 held collegiate teaching certificates, and 1,733 held normal professional certificates. Older certificates for elementary, junior high, and high school teachers also were among the credentials held by Black teachers in Virginia. Gandy added that the Virginia Board of Education already had announced its intention to instate new professional certifications for teachers in September 1942, with only four-year academic programs leading to professional collegiate, collegiate, and vocational trade certificates to be offered to would-be teachers. Starting at the same time, school principals at the elementary and high school levels would be required to hold master's degrees. Gandy noted that Virginia's public school curriculum was in the process of being revised and that student teachers would be expected to have in-depth familiarity with the new standards. A nine-month school term and a minimum teacher salary both had been established uniformly across Virginia by 1937. Black teachers, however, were offered considerably lower salaries than those for White teachers, which prompted the VSTA and its individual members to work with the NAACP to address the inequities.<sup>314</sup>

### *Equalization Lawsuits During the 1930s-1940s and Reestablishing 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment Rights*

White educators, philanthropic funds, and government officials continued to favor agricultural and trades education for Black students through the 1940s. Black educators, families, and communities, however, long ago had set their sights on more options for their children. In 1915, the passing of Booker T. Washington had marked the end of a particularly influential voice in support of industrial education. In counterpoint, Black leaders including Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), A. Philip Randolph (1889-1979), and W. E. B. DuBois (1868-1963) were vocal, widely-known, and influential leaders who argued that industrial education and other limitations on academic achievement served primarily to limit most Black

<sup>313</sup> "L. F. Palmer," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (January 1951), p. 119-121; "Educational Leadership: Principal L. F. Palmer and W. D. Scales," Museum of Education, College of Education, University of South Carolina, no date, [https://www.museumofeducation.info/hunt\\_leaders.html](https://www.museumofeducation.info/hunt_leaders.html); Craig Kridel, ed., *Becoming an African American Progressive Educator: Narratives from 1940s Black Progressive High Schools* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina, 2018), p. vi; Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965*, Ph.D. dissertation, 1982, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>, p. 37-38, 40, 43; Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration,'" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 19. Undeterred by his abrupt dismissal, Palmer took a full-time position at Hampton Institute, where he focused on teacher training and developing an off-campus student internship program. During his career, Palmer's many roles also included serving as vice president of the American Teachers Association from 1930-1932; co-chairing the Peninsula Interracial Committee from 1937-1939; and participating in local community organizations such as the Red Cross and Boy Scouts as well as civilian housing and evacuation programs during World War II. He died in November 1950, at which time the Newport News *Daily Press*, a White-owned newspaper, editorialized, "Lutrelle Palmer was animated by a soft-spoken, gentle, patient personality. He easily won the respect, even reverence, of the hundreds of boys and girls who passed through Huntington High." For a more detailed discussion of Palmer's career in Virginia, see Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr., *History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965*, Ph.D. dissertation, 1982, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-v941-v858>, p. 53-67, including the VSTA's involvement in equalization lawsuits during his leadership.

<sup>314</sup> "Negro Education Discussed by J. M. Gandy," *The Daily Press*, November 27, 1937, p. 9. Gandy was head of Virginia State College for Negroes (today's Virginia State University) in Petersburg.

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Americans to second-class citizenship. Funneling young Black men into agricultural and industrial work, and young Black women into domestic service, meant that their financial opportunities were curtailed, their academic potential untapped, and their ability to demand equal rights hobbled. In a marriage of labor interests with education, with Randolph's leadership Black unions also factored into the growing movement to remove obstacles to employment and economic progress.<sup>315</sup>

Luther Porter Jackson (1892-1950)

Dr. Luther Porter Jackson is an example of a Virginia educational leader and civil rights activist whose lifetime contributions reflected Virginia's changing political environment from being limited to a constrained assortment of tools to push against the boundaries of segregation to, by 1948, issuing open declarations for the end of discrimination against Black citizens and the end of segregation altogether. His contributions in the fields of education and civil rights evolved from the 1920s through the 1940s. Recruited by Carter G. Woodson, starting in 1925, Jackson worked with the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) to transcribe and publish historic records concerning African Americans in Woodson's *Journal of Negro History*. A history professor at Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University), he spearheaded fundraising in Virginia to support the ASNLH's educational mission, including recruiting support from Jeanes supervisors, the VSTA, and African American community organizations and unions. In turn, Woodson's Associated Publishers published several of Jackson's works, such as *Virginia Negro Soldiers and Seamen in the Revolutionary War* (1944) and *Negro Office Holders in Virginia* (1945). Jackson's *Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860* (1942) broke new ground by utilizing local government land records, deeds, wills, and registers of free people of color, along with federal census data, to describe the contributions and accomplishments made by African Americans while disproving racist stereotypes about their abilities and intellectual prowess. These activities comported with Jackson's approach to civil rights activism by working for change within the existing system. Over time, he built a network of like-minded activists through his involvement in the VSTA, NAACP, Petersburg Negro Business Association, Southern School for Workers, Southern Conference Education Fund, Southern Regional Council, and Southern Conference for Human Welfare. Committed to principles of democratic government, Jackson moved beyond educational projects to advocate for African Americans' involvement in civic activities and soon to direct action. He helped to establish the Petersburg League of Negro Voters in 1935, which provided the template for the Virginia Voters League created in 1941 at a VSTA conference. From 1942-1948, Jackson wrote a weekly newspaper column for the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, entitled "Rights and Duties in a Democracy," that educated readers about democratic process and means for exercising their vote. His coverage and analysis of the *Alston v. Board of Education of the City of Norfolk* brought attention to the landmark decision's contribution toward advancing equity in Virginia's segregated school system. With his prodigious research and analytical skills, Jackson also compiled an annual report, *The Voting Status of Negroes in Virginia*, that quantified the impact of African American voters despite the many ways the franchise had been circumscribed by Jim Crow laws. In 1942, Jackson lent his support to the Durham Manifesto, issued by a group of African American academics that announced they were "fundamentally opposed to the principle and practice of segregation." A decade prior to the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, Jackson and other members of the Virginia Civil Rights Organization challenged segregation on Richmond's public transit system. In 1948, Jackson joined dozens of southern civil rights leaders at a meeting of the Southern Conference Educational Fund at the University of Virginia that included traveling to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello to issue a declaration on civil rights. Included in the declaration's text were a call for abolition of "segregation and discrimination against racial, religious, and

<sup>315</sup> J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 114-116.



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national groups” and urging readers “to speak out against discrimination... to guard against prejudice in thought, word, and deed, to cultivate the habit of thinking of all persons as individuals, rather than as members of a group.”<sup>316</sup> Jackson’s evolution from a willingness to accommodate segregation to calling for its end now was complete.

Edwin Bancroft (E.B.) Henderson (1883-1977) and Mary Ellen Meriwether Henderson (1885-1976)

Edwin Bancroft (E. B.) Henderson and Mary Ellen Meriwether Henderson were educators and civil rights advocates in Falls Church and Fairfax County for more than 60 years.<sup>317</sup> E. B. Henderson was a highly accomplished educator who had studied at the University of the District of Columbia, Howard University, Columbia University, and Harvard University. In 1907, he created one of the first basketball teams for African American males in Washington, D.C. From then on, he included sports and athletics education in his work by advocating for creation of local sports facilities, organizing track meets, and creating athletic associations among African American schools. While living in Falls Church, Fairfax County, in 1915, Henderson served as the first secretary for the newly formed Colored Citizens’ Protective League, which was founded to combat a local proposal to force relocation of African Americans in Falls Church to a specific area. The battle was rendered moot when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down such tactics as unconstitutional in its 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* ruling. The league soon successfully applied to become a local branch of the NAACP, thus becoming the first rural chapter in the state. E. B. Henderson’s civil rights advocacy also included disputing racially discriminatory practices in housing, law enforcement, transportation, schools, and other public facilities, as well as encouraging African Americans to register to vote. For his selfless service, “Henderson was met with threatening letters and telephone calls, cross-burnings, and Ku Klux Klan visits.”<sup>318</sup> Equally dedicated to civil rights and education advocacy was Henderson’s spouse, Mary Ellen Meriwether Henderson. In 1935, as a teacher and principal in segregated Falls Church schools, she had conducted a study of inequities in Virginia’s segregated school system, which influenced Arlington County’s decision to build a new school in Falls Church. “Her study became the model for legal redress against inequality in the public schools throughout the state, and the N.A.A.C.P. used this model in its advocacy.”<sup>319</sup> The Hendersons also were involved in salary equalization litigation. E. B. Henderson served as president of the Virginia state conference of the NAACP in 1955-1956. During the late 1950s-early 1960s, Mary Ellen Henderson served on the County committee that provided oversight of local school desegregation process.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>316</sup> Jacqueline Goggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), p. 78, 116, 125-126; Dennis Dickerson, “Luther Porter Jackson (1892–1950),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/jackson-luther-porter-1892-1950>; Southern Conference Educational Fund, “A Declaration of Civil Rights,” approved at a Conference on Civil Rights at Madison Hall, University of Virginia, November 20, 1948, and Adopted the Same Day at Monticello, <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b122-i215/#page/1/mode/1up>; Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 197-198.

<sup>317</sup> Due to the Hendersons’ significance in the history of civil rights and education, their house was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 2012. See Courtney E. McCall, “Dr. Edwin B. and Mary Ellen Henderson House,” Virginia Landmarks Register nomination, December 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/110-0221/>.

<sup>318</sup> “Changemakers: Edwin Bancroft Henderson (1883-1977),” Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/300>.

<sup>319</sup> Courtney E. McCall, “Dr. Edwin B. and Mary Ellen Henderson House,” Virginia Landmarks Register nomination, December 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/110-0221/>, p. 17.

<sup>320</sup> “Changemakers” Edwin Bancroft Henderson (1883-1977),” Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/300>; Courtney E. McCall, “Dr. Edwin B. and Mary Ellen Henderson House,”

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Charles Hamilton Houston (1895-1950), the NAACP, and Equal Protection Under the Law



Figure 17. Charles Hamilton Houston (second from left) and the Howard Law School defense team in the George Crawford trial in Loudoun County in 1933 (Image Source: Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery, Harvard University, 2024, <https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/alumni/charles-hamilton-houston>).

Starting in 1930, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began charting the legal strategy that would begin dismantling the widespread inequitable practices used by state and local boards of education. A comprehensive discussion of the many legal precedents that were made is beyond the scope of this MPD. What follows is a summary of the most salient events identified to date as pertains to Virginia's

segregated public school system during the 1930s-1940s.<sup>321</sup>

Dr. Charles Hamilton Houston, a brilliant legal strategist, was born in Washington, D.C., in 1895 (Figure 17). He completed a bachelor's degree at Amherst College in 1915 and taught for two years before joining the U.S. Army to serve in World War I. A commissioned officer, Houston also acted as a judge advocate, which allowed him to witness directly the American military's racist practices toward Black soldiers. He himself survived a lynching attempt while in France after White American soldiers saw him speaking with a French woman. Recalling his experience, Houston said, "The hate and scorn showered on us Negro officers by our fellow Americans convinced me that there was no sense in my dying for a world ruled by them. I made up my mind that if I got through this war I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back."<sup>322</sup> For the remainder of his life, Houston combined his legal expertise, intellectual abilities, and unswerving commitment to civil rights to dismantle the legal underpinnings of the "separate but equal" doctrine that undermined African Americans lives' at every turn.

In 1919, Houston entered Harvard University Law School, where he excelled in his studies. He became the first Black law student to take a coveted position on the editorial board of the *Harvard Law Review*. He graduated from Harvard as the first African American to earn a doctoral degree of Juridical Science. Houston's legal

Virginia Landmarks Register nomination, December 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/110-0221/>, p. 10, 14-21.

<sup>321</sup> Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the NAACP's legal tactics concerning public schools between the 1930s-1960s. Among the books that are specific to Virginia are Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018); Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016); Genna Rae McNeil, *Groundwork: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Oliver White Hill Sr., *The Big Bang: "Brown v. Board of Education" and Beyond; the Autobiography of Oliver W. Hill Sr.*, Jonathan K. Stubbs, ed. (Winter Park, Fla.: Four-G Publishers Inc., 2000); and Matthew Lassiter and Andrew Lewis, eds., *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998).

<sup>322</sup> "Charles Hamilton Houston: 'The Man Who Killed Jim Crow,'" Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery, Harvard University, 2024, <https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/alumni/charles-hamilton-houston>. For a much more detailed discussion of Houston's legal career and contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, see Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001.

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career began in 1924 in Washington, D.C., at the law practice of his father, William Houston, who had established one of the first Black law firms in the city. When the American Bar Association refused his admission, as it did to other Black lawyers, Houston became a cofounder of the all-Black National Bar Association. In 1929, Houston became the vice dean of the Howard University School of Law, at that time a small, unaccredited program that offered part-time, evening courses. He quickly set about transforming the curriculum, removing ineffectual faculty, and mentoring students.<sup>323</sup> By the time Houston left the university in 1935, both the Association of American Law Schools and the American Bar Association had accredited the school.<sup>324</sup>

Houston developed much of the framework for his approach to using the courts to obtain meaningful progress on securing civil rights for African Americans while he was at Howard University. In 1933, Houston had agreed to serve as chief counsel for the defense of George Crawford, an African American man who had been accused of murder in Loudoun County. The case was tried at the Loudoun County Courthouse in Leesburg, to which Houston brought an all-Black defense team that included Thurgood Marshall. The NAACP decided to provide legal representation in order to contest Virginia's practice of excluding African Americans from juries. By refusing to include a White lawyer on his team, Houston also used the case as an opportunity to demonstrate the prowess of Black attorneys. Prior to this case, the NAACP had hired White lawyers for civil rights and criminal cases throughout the southern states in the belief that White judges and juries would be more amenable to hearing arguments from fellow White individuals. The Crawford case also allowed Houston to test the legal strategy he envisioned for undoing the "separate but equal" doctrine that justified segregation.<sup>325</sup>

In 1935, Houston agreed to serve as the NAACP's first general counsel, a position that allowed him to refine his approach to undermining segregation through litigation. Houston's strategy rested on two insights. First, operation of truly "separate but equal" publicly funded schooling, services, and systems was financially unsustainable for local and state governments. Culturally and ideologically conservative with a commitment to minimal taxation, Southern politicians had backed themselves into a corner with segregated schools; for generations, they had catered to White racism by building a school system riddled with systemic inequities and encouraging general hostility to government intervention in most aspects of society. The prospect of raising enough revenue to build truly equal, but racially separate, public school systems was neither politically nor economically feasible for Southern states. Second, Houston determined that, by creating a body of litigation in which courts recognized these inequities and required remediation, he could use the court system's reliance on *stare decisis* to remove the legal underpinnings of segregation. The legal term, *stare decisis*, refers to the

<sup>323</sup> Among the students mentored by Houston were Thurgood Marshall, who went on to found the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Virginia native Oliver W. Hill, who served as lead attorney for the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP. Towering figures in American jurisprudence, Marshall and Hill separately and together argued numerous landmark civil rights cases, several of which are discussed in subsequent sections below.

<sup>324</sup> "Charles Hamilton Houston: 'The Man Who Killed Jim Crow,'" Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery, Harvard University, 2024, <https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/alumni/charles-hamilton-houston>; "Charles Hamilton Houston," NAACP, 2024, <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/civil-rights-leaders/charles-hamilton-houston>.

<sup>325</sup> Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 86-87. Although Crawford was convicted of murder, largely through circumstantial evidence, Houston and his team were credited for their robust defense strategy that is believed to have resulted in Crawford's receipt of a prison sentence rather than the death penalty. For a detailed discussion of the legal case, see Nancy A. Holst, "Loudoun County Courthouse," National Historic Landmark nomination, January 29, 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0006/>. In 2023, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors approved renaming the building where the Crawford case was tried to Charles Hamilton Houston Courthouse. The building was designated a National Historic Landmark in December 2024. See "Loudoun County, Virginia," 2024, <https://www.loudoun.gov/5937/Charles-Hamilton-Houston-Courthouse>.

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practice of looking to precedent to shape American jurisprudence. When considering a legal matter, courts and judges refer to prior rulings and opinions as a means of maintaining consistency in interpreting the law.<sup>326</sup>

At the NAACP, Houston commenced the search for suitable court cases in order to test and refine his theory. To try the cases, he recruited some of the finest legal minds of the period, including Thurgood Marshall, Houston's star student from the Howard University Law School. In 1935, the exclusion of African Americans from a jury pool brought Houston before the U.S. Supreme Court to argue the *Hollins v. State of Oklahoma* case. Including the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment in his argument, Houston demonstrated that Jess Hollins had been deprived of his civil rights, in part due to the systematic rejection of Black people from serving on the jury that heard his criminal case. The Supreme Court's ruling resulted in another jury trial for Hollins who, like George Crawford, was found guilty but was not sentenced to death.<sup>327</sup>

In 1936, Thurgood Marshall argued before the Maryland Court of Appeals in the *Murray v. Pearson* case. Donald Murray had applied to the University of Maryland School of Law and was refused admission on the basis of his race. Houston and Marshall argued that Murray had been denied equal protection under the law as required by the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Court of Appeals Judge ruled that Murray's rights could be restored by admitting him to the law school but also found that he could be kept completely segregated from White students without violating the equal protection clause.<sup>328</sup> The case was a forerunner to a similar case out of Missouri where Houston and his team's equal protection argument also was used, known as *State ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*. The litigation concerned Lloyd Gaines's efforts to obtain admission to the University of Missouri Law School, an all-White school, because the state's public African American school, Lincoln University, did not have a law school. The State of Missouri had entered agreements with all-Black law schools in neighboring states to which African American residents could be admitted. Rather than accept attendance at an out-of-state school, Gaines sued for admission to the University of Missouri. The State of Missouri attempted to settle the lawsuit by paying for Gaines's tuition to attend an out-of-state law school. In December 1938, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that, because Missouri had a law school for White students but none for Black students, the state had failed to uphold its constitutional obligation to provide a "separate but equal" educational opportunity. Instead of sending Gaines out of state to obtain the education he sought, Missouri was obligated to admit him to its only public law school at the University of Missouri. Additionally, the Supreme Court refused an argument by the State of Missouri that a law school could be established at Lincoln University as redress, because no such school yet existed for Gaines to access. Finally, rather than

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<sup>326</sup> Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 83-85; "Charles Hamilton Houston, Lawyer, Architect of the Civil Rights legal strategy: 1895-1950," Americans Who Tell the Truth, 2024, <https://americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/charles-hamilton-houston/>; "Understanding *Stare Decisis*," American Bar Association, December 16, 2022,

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_education/publications/preview\\_home/understand-stare-decisis/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/publications/preview_home/understand-stare-decisis/).

<sup>327</sup> "About Charles Hamilton Houston," Amherst College, 2024, <https://careers.amherst.edu/resources/about-charles-hamilton-houston/>; "Hollins v. State of Oklahoma (1935)," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2024, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=HO013#:~:text=In%201935%20in%20Hollins%20v,he%20died%20there%20in%201950.>

<sup>328</sup> "Donald Gaines Murray and the Integration of the University Of Maryland School of Law," Thurgood Marshall Law Library, University of Maryland, 2024, <https://www2.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/specialcollections/murray/>.

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considering the constitutionality of the “separate but equal” doctrine, the Supreme Court justices referred to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution, which required equal protection under the law.<sup>329</sup>

By the time the *Gaines* case was decided in 1938, Houston had surrendered leadership of the NAACP Legal Committee to Thurgood Marshall. Like many of his peers, Houston worked long hours with single-minded determination. He traveled the country, without regard for his personal safety, to document racist practices, including unfair treatment of African Americans in courts, schools, transportation, and other aspects of public life. His research, backed up with a voluminous collection of photographs, informed his legal strategies. He paid a heavy physical toll for his toils, and health problems were among the reasons he returned to private practice in 1940. Houston also clashed with some colleagues over his approach to civil rights litigation, such as his insistence on using only African American lawyers. Through their continued collaboration, however, Houston and Marshall, who remained at the NAACP, would craft the litigation that finally struck down school segregation; these events are discussed in greater detail below.<sup>330</sup>

### Union Street School and Douglass High School, Loudoun County



Figure 168. Union Street School, Built in 1883, as it Appeared in January 1938; the School Remained in Use through 1959 (Image Source: Virginia Department of Education, Division of School Buildings. Photographs of Public Schools, 1900-1963 (Accession 31032, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia).

In 1939, Charles Hamilton Houston returned to Loudoun County at the request of the local Countywide League to determine if the Union Street School (NRHP 2023; 253-5117), built in 1883 and still in use despite its lack of electricity, modernized heating and ventilation, library, cafeteria, or auditorium, might be suitable for litigation (Figure 18). At this time, the building housed elementary grades for Leesburg’s students as well as the “County Training School” on its second floor, despite that the equipment and furnishings needed for industrial, agricultural, and home economics education were entirely absent. Furthermore, the school’s poor condition and lack of a functional fire escape posed safety hazards to the students and teachers. Leesburg’s Black community and the Countywide League argued that a new high school was needed and that the

Union Street School warranted closure due to its unsafe condition. The County School Board chose to ignore these concerns, thus prompting the Countywide League to ask for Houston’s advice. Although a lawsuit was not filed, in March 1940, Houston sent a certified letter addressed to local school superintendent O. L. Emrick that

<sup>329</sup> “Charles Hamilton Houston, Lawyer, Architect of the Civil Rights legal strategy: 1895-1950, Americans Who Tell the Truth, 2024, <https://americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/charles-hamilton-houston/>; “Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada,” Oyez, 2024, [www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/305us337](https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/305us337); “Charles Hamilton Houston,” NAACP, 2024, <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/civil-rights-leaders/charles-hamilton-houston>; “An Organized Legal Campaign,” Separate is Not Equal, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, 2024, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/3-organized/legal-campaign.html>.

<sup>330</sup> “An Organized Legal Campaign,” Separate is Not Equal, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, 2024, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/3-organized/legal-campaign.html>; Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 89.

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included the following statements, which echoed the arguments he made in court regarding equal protection under the law, as well as the necessity for immediate action and the potential financial costs of inaction<sup>331</sup>:

I have advised my clients that in my judgement you and the Board of Education can be enjoined from continuing to hold school in a building dangerous to life and limb, and that they are entitled to call on you and the Board of Education to see that a safe place for the students is provided at once, either by making the present building safe or by moving the students to other quarters. I have advised them that after notice, which I herewith give you formally on their behalf by sending this letter by registered mail, you and the Board of Education are personally liable for any harm which may befall the children from continuing to force them to go to school in a death trap... I call your attention again to the complete lack of equipment in the Loudoun County Training School building for any instruction in science, chemistry, physics, zoology and botany particularly... Another parent wants a home economics course for her daughter. This is being taught in the schools for white children but not in the schools which Negro children attend. I have advised this parent that she is entitled to have her daughter receive from you and the Board of Education a home economics course equal to that given the white children... On the matter of bus transportation I understand that you and some of the officials take the position there is no necessity of providing more transportation for Negro students when the school buildings which Negroes attend are already overcrowded. As I pointed out to the Board of Education, the right of equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment is a personal right, and the individual Negro child denied bus transportation which is given to white children is not concerned with overcrowded schools. He is concerned with his own individual education. Overcrowded schools is no answer to the request of Negro children to be furnished bus transportation to schools on the same basis as the white children.<sup>332</sup>

Meanwhile, as Black communities had been compelled to do many times over, private funds were raised to purchase land for construction of the new high school during the 1930s. Over several years, the Countywide League hosted “bake sales, rummage sales, dances, ball games, field days, recitation programs, and any other fundraising activities they could think of to raise money.”<sup>333</sup> The needed land, totaling eight acres, was acquired in October 1939, with a local Black contractor, Willie Hall, cosigning on the promissory note. The following December, the land was conveyed to the Loudoun County School Board for one dollar. Hamilton’s continued involvement in the situation appears to have prompted action by the local school board during the spring of 1940, but alleged budget shortfalls in the County’s budget and the State Literary Fund’s delayed progress until December, when the school board announced it would apply for a loan from the Literary Fund. Construction of the school commenced in early 1941 and was far enough along to permit the partial use of the new, consolidated Douglass High School (NRHP 1992; 253-0070) starting in September 1941. The National Register nomination for the school does not mention federal involvement in the property.<sup>334</sup> The standardized Board of Education

<sup>331</sup> Teckla H. Cox and Richard Calderon, “Douglass High School,” National Register nomination, August 30, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>, p. 8/6.

<sup>332</sup> Charles H. Houston, correspondence to O. L. Emrick, March 16, 1940, as transcribed in Teckla H. Cox and Richard Calderon, “Douglass High School,” National Register nomination, August 30, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>, p. 8/11-8/16.

<sup>333</sup> Teckla H. Cox and Richard Calderon, “Douglass High School,” National Register nomination, August 30, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>, p. 8/6.

<sup>334</sup> Jane Covington, “Union Street School,” National Register nomination, September 14, 2022, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, p. 23-29.



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design used for the building (Figure 19) makes it quite similar to the Nansemond County Training School described above.<sup>335</sup>



Figure 179. Douglass High School, Loudoun County (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>).

The Loudoun County School Board opted to abdicate its responsibility to furnish and equip the building adequately, providing only desks. Once again, the African American community, including parents, teachers, the Countywide League, and private individuals, raised money to acquire chairs for the auditorium, “curtains, laboratory equipment, a piano, equipment for a home economics department, equipment for a band, and numerous other items.”<sup>336</sup> A later \$2,000 loan from the Literary Fund resulted in construction of a concrete block shop building for which

students did some of the construction work. Another two acres of land was acquired at a later date to build a gymnasium. Douglass High School functioned as Loudoun County’s only Black high school until the county’s schools desegregated in 1968.<sup>337</sup> As for the county’s segregated elementary schools, after World War II, several schools for Black children were replaced or improved, but the Union Street School in Leesburg remained in operation. Minimal indoor plumbing and electricity finally were installed in 1954, yet the building’s sole source of heat, wood-burning stoves, was never upgraded. The elementary school finally closed in 1959. As noted by Jane Covington, “Although it remained in use until the mid-twentieth century, the building never had a library, laboratory, cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium, all features that had been commonplace at schools for White students starting in the 1910s.”<sup>338</sup> The building’s continued use for decades after modern mechanical and electrical systems had become commonplace is a particularly stark example of the structural racism and prejudice demonstrated by local and state government officials, and accepted by White residents, during the segregation era.

### Litigation for Equalizing Teacher Salaries

Charles Hamilton Houston’s early 1930s work in Virginia, including a speaking and fundraising tour, revived NAACP activities at local branches across the Commonwealth, including in Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg,

<sup>335</sup> Jane Covington, “Union Street School,” National Register nomination, September 14, 2022, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, p. 23-29.

<sup>336</sup> Teckla H. Cox and Richard Calderon, “Douglass High School,” National Register nomination, August 30, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>, p. 8/7-8/8.

<sup>337</sup> Teckla H. Cox and Richard Calderon, “Douglass High School,” National Register nomination, August 30, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>, p. 8/8.

<sup>338</sup> Jane Covington, “Union Street School,” National Register nomination, September 14, 2022, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, p. 19, 27.

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Alexandria, Hampton, and Roanoke. In 1934, the Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA), an organization made up of Black educators, began to coordinate with the NAACP to identify opportunities for litigation based on the vastly unequal salaries paid to Black teachers versus their White counterparts. Houston was adamant that such lawsuits had to come from the affected parties rather than being imposed from outside. The fear and intimidation used to prevent African Americans from resisting discrimination, however, made it difficult to find people who were able to withstand the associated threats, whether to their livelihoods or their physical safety. Also important to note is that Houston never regarded the equalization strategy as an end in itself; rather, he used equalization litigation as part of his larger strategy toward eliminating school desegregation altogether. Furthermore, Houston and other NAACP attorneys, particularly Oliver W. Hill and Spottswood Robinson in Virginia, understood that the campaign to dismantle segregation in education had to be led by Black teachers, parents, and students. That struggle became an organizing vehicle for the NAACP in the 1930s and 1940s. By 1941, the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP was the largest state conference in the nation.<sup>339</sup>

The equalization strategy achieved a milestone in November 1937, when the membership of the VSTA celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a meeting at Hampton Institute and the conference delegates voted unanimously to join the NAACP's plan to achieve salary equalization through litigation. According to an editorial supporting the VSTA's decision, at this time Black teachers, supervisors, and supervising principals from the elementary through high school levels received an annual salary of \$547 for the 1936-1937 school year, while their White counterparts were paid \$913. A similar disparity occurred with per capita expenditures on students: \$14.12 per African American child versus \$28.58 per White child. The expenditure average included the costs of schools, salaries, and equipment. The higher student-to-teacher ratio for Black teachers compared to White teachers persisted as well, with African American teachers responsible for 18 percent more students despite their lower pay rate. The editorial explained that the gap in formal teacher training between African American and White teachers had narrowed to just 5 percent, on average. Black high school teachers, meanwhile, received a 32 percent lower salary than did White high school teachers. Furthermore, the salary gap had increased over the preceding 30 years, despite the major gains made by African American teachers in their

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<sup>339</sup> Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 84-85; Larissa M. Smith, State Review Board member, June 11, 2025, review comments for African American Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Documentation Form, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.



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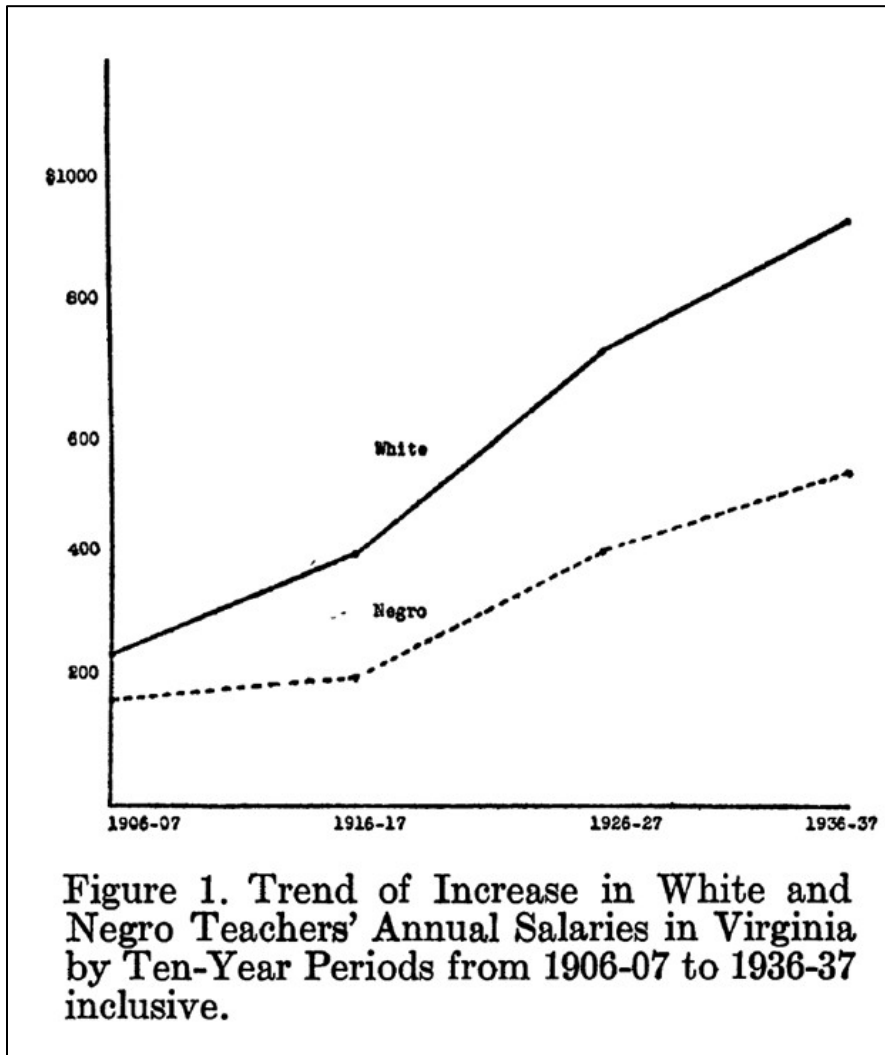


Figure 20. Graph display of increasing teacher salary disparity over 30 years (Image Source: C. H. T., "Editorial Comment: Equalization of White and Negro Teachers' Salaries in Virginia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April 1938), p. 117).

formal education. While salaries for White teachers had increased by 375.3 percent over the 30-year period, African Americans' salaries had risen 310.7 percent. The editorial included a graph that displayed the salary disparities (Figure 20). With regard to the wellbeing of Black students, a 1939 study prepared by the State Department of Education revealed that just 26 percent of high school-age Black students were enrolled in public schools and only 50 percent of that group attended regularly. The study also found that Virginia had 109 high schools that offered at least some secondary education to African American students, but only 54 of them were fully accredited by the State Board of Education.<sup>340</sup>

Between 1938-1940, the NAACP pressed two lawsuits against the City of Norfolk's public school system on behalf of two Black teachers who were being paid a lower salary than White teachers with similar responsibilities. Aline E. Black (1906-1974) filed the first lawsuit. A graduate of Virginia State College, she had obtained a master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1935. When the Norfolk Teachers

Association and the VSTA asked for a volunteer to challenge the city school board's unequal pay system, Black volunteered. Thurgood Marshall was part of Black's legal team. In March 1939, however, the local court dismissed her case and, before she could file an appeal, the Norfolk School Board effectively fired her by refusing to renew her teaching contract for the next school year. The court found that Black consequently had lost her standing to continue the lawsuit. Loss of employment long had been one of the most effective tools for punishing African Americans who dared to resist Virginia's hierarchical racial order. Such people also were blacklisted among other potential employers. Faced with the high likelihood of losing their ability to make a living, many Black people had no choice but to find other ways to claim their rights. The involvement of the NAACP, however, and the support provided by local branches, introduced a new dimension to civil rights activism. With its national reach, the NAACP could bring both media attention and private donations to

<sup>340</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 24-25.

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what previously had been matters known only at the local level and often not even reported upon in White-owned newspapers.<sup>341</sup>

Melvin O. Alston, also of Norfolk, replaced Black as a plaintiff. A principal and teacher at Norfolk's Booker T. Washington High School, Alston was being paid a salary just two-thirds of that paid to White male principals.<sup>342</sup> The U.S. District Court dismissed Alston's suit in February 1940 on the basis that he had signed a contract that included the salary he would receive and, therefore, he had no standing to sue the school district. The use of contracts permitted local school boards to argue that salary differentials were not based on race but rather on the results of negotiations between the board and individual teacher.<sup>343</sup> Alston's legal team, which included Marshall and Oliver Hill, successfully appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. As Houston had done with other lawsuits regarding African Americans' access to professional and graduate programs, union representation, and restrictive covenants, the NAACP attorneys argued that Norfolk had violated Alston's 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment right to equal protection under the law. The City of Norfolk appealed the case but the U.S. Supreme Court decline to hear it, thus leaving in place the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling. *Alston v. Board of Education of the City of Norfolk* became a landmark case in the salary equalization campaign. The Court of Appeals had found that the Norfolk school board paid unequal salaries to teachers solely based on race, which was an unconstitutional act on the part of government. Furthermore, the Court of Appeals had ruled Alston's case qualified as a class action lawsuit, meaning that the City of Norfolk had to equalize salaries of all Black teachers employed in its school system. Furthermore, the VSTA and other teachers' associations now could file suits on behalf of their respective memberships. This finding removed the necessity to find an individual willing to be named in a lawsuit, but, by this time, more individuals were willing to step forward in order to benefit the group. Perhaps recognizing the power of collective action, local officials proved to be more respectful, or perhaps wary, of a lawsuit filed by an association. The NAACP and teachers in other Virginia localities, including Petersburg, Danville, Richmond, Mecklenburg County, Chesterfield County, and Goochland County, began planning to file similar lawsuits. Some localities, as had been anticipated by the NAACP attorneys, opted to settle rather than take on the expense of a legal case, including Mecklenburg and Goochland counties. Aline Black, meanwhile, had been rehired and returned to teaching science at Booker T. Washington High School, from which she retired in 1970.<sup>344</sup>

Not all of the court cases in Virginia were settled as easily. For example, in the case of *Dorothy Roles et al v. School Board of Newport News*, the local school board was found to have engaged in unconstitutional discrimination against Black teachers. The judge ordered the board to equalize salaries starting with the 1943-1944 school year. The Newport News School Board adopted a new pay schedule, but teachers were moved to

<sup>341</sup> Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 88; Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration,'" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 17-19; "Changemakers: Aline E. Black (1906-1974)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/35>.

<sup>342</sup> Since the 1870s, Virginia's public school systems had paid White men the highest salaries, followed by White women, Black men, and Black women.

<sup>343</sup> Ada F. Coleman, "The Salary Equalization Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1947), p. 237.

<sup>344</sup> Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 88, 125-126; Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration,'" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 18-19; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press., 1996), p. 23-24; Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p.86-91; Ada F. Coleman, "The Salary Equalization Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1947), p. 238, 241; "Changemakers: Aline E. Black (1906-1974)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/35>.

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the new schedule en masse without regard to their seniority. Consequently, White teachers with less experience were being paid higher salaries than their more experienced Black colleagues. The maximum salary for White teachers, according to the new schedule, also remained higher than that available to African American teachers. The VSTA filed a second lawsuit on behalf of the teachers. In May 1945, the Virginia Teachers Association (as the VSTA had been renamed) won its suit and the Newport News School Board was found to be in contempt of court. The only remediation available to the board was to pay teachers with the same amount of experience, same college degree, and performing the same duties the same salary without regard to race, and to make retroactive salary adjustments for affected Black teachers. Finally, the court ordered the school board to pay all of the court costs, which totaled approximately \$30,000. The latter requirement likely caught the attention of school boards across Virginia and throughout the South. As Houston had intended, maintaining a segregated, discriminatory school system was becoming very expensive indeed.<sup>345</sup>

On a separate but closely related front, at the VSTA Conference in 1940, the NAACP had conducted a three-day legal clinic and discussed how the Alston case was applicable throughout Virginia. Along with pay disparities, teachers asked if lawsuits could be filed regarding the many other disparities in Virginia's public schools, ranging from school buildings, overcrowding, and lack of equipment to bus transportation and overall funding for routine operations.<sup>346</sup> Houston's plan to make segregation too expensive for local school boards to bear was gaining momentum. The successes achieved with salary equalization had created a considerable range of legal precedents that Houston, Marshall, Hill, and the rest of the NAACP legal team could use for future legal actions. By the late 1940s, the attorneys had accomplished their goal of eroding the foundations for the "separate but equal" doctrine and, indeed, the edifice that long had justified segregation began to crumble.

### Trends in Vocational Education

In the midst of the growing legal disputes concerning segregated public schools, vocational training continued to be an interesting example of increasing convergence of training opportunities for White and African American students. By no means were these opportunities provided in equal measure to both groups of Virginia's students prior to the late 1960s. But whereas state and local officials would deeply resent federal intervention in dismantling school segregation, they welcomed federal involvement in vocational training. The dissonance in these responses is indicative of the essentially irrational nature of Jim Crow segregation in a modern society, while also, potentially, suggesting that at least some common ground remained among otherwise competing interests.

During the 1930s, federally-funded vocational education opportunities in industrial agricultural, and home economics for adults were held at public schools after the students' school hours had ended. Such programs aimed to equip unemployed, primarily male workers with new skills in a variety of trades. New Deal infrastructure projects, particularly those to create or expand electrical transmission networks, bring indoor plumbing to lower-income communities, and build public water and sewer systems provided the employment opportunities for retrained workers. Another common project at local public schools involved federally-sponsored vegetable gardens with an aim to teach lower-income families how to grow their own vegetables in order to supplement often-meager diets. Under the supervision of agricultural extension offices, such gardens were planted and maintained by local residents, particularly women, along with opportunities for learning how

<sup>345</sup> Ada F. Coleman, "The Salary Equalization Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1947), p. 240-241; Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration,'" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 19; Alfred K. Talbot Jr., "The Virginia Teachers Association: Establishment and Background," *Negro History Bulletin*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January-February-March 1982), p. 8-10.

<sup>346</sup> Ada F. Coleman, "The Salary Equalization Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1947), p. 238.

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to can foods properly. The yields from the vegetable gardens also were used to supplement free lunches in school cafeterias.<sup>347</sup> After the U.S. entered World War II in December 1941, the gardening programs transitioned to the federal government's famous "Victory Gardens" initiative, which asked Americans to plant gardens for their personal needs in order for commercially-raised produced to be devoted to the war effort.

After World War II, vocational education and home economics continued to be popular in rural areas. By this time, many students were more interested in academic coursework to prepare for the burgeoning white-collar professions of the postwar era. Regarding high-school level programs, the Vocational Education Act of 1946 (also known as the George-Barden Act) overhauled the federal vocational education program to allow states to have greater flexibility in managing their programs, to permit apprenticeship programs as part of vocational education, and to add new fields, such as healthcare, fisheries, diesel engine operation and repair, navigation and piloting, and commercial fishing, to the overall array of training programs. Such efforts increased the appeal of vocational education for school-age and adult students who, for a multitude of reasons, did not or could not seek employment fields that required extensive academic preparation. In 1951, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported that 86,882 school-age and adult students statewide were enrolled in agricultural classes, an increase of 10,000 students compared to the previous year. Of this number, approximately 7,400 veterans were eligible for agricultural classes through military benefits that became available after World War II; veterans typically convened in adults-only classes held at high schools during evening and weekend hours. Another cohort of 14,530 students were enrolled in farm machinery repair classes, learning skills that were increasingly in demand due to the continued mechanization of many aspects of farming. Both Black and White students participated in the vocational coursework.<sup>348</sup> Reflective of the long history of such instruction, in April 1952, the busy student members of the New Homemakers of America and New Farmers of America chapters in Mecklenburg County held their "annual social" at John Groom Elementary School (NRHP 2018; 301-5063). The students also celebrated National NFA Day on April 4 and honored Booker T. Washington for his "great contribution in vocational education," and were looking forward to their "Federation Ball."<sup>349</sup>

In 1958, Congress amended the 1946 law to allow establishment of "area" or regional vocational training programs and provide funding for program administrative and instructional costs. Five years later, Congress expanded training options again with the Vocational Education Act of 1963, which provided grants to states for implementing new training options for individuals in high school, young adults out of school, people who had been underserved while in school, and adults in need of training or retraining to learn new trades or skills due to rapid changes in skilled labor fields. States receiving the federal aid were required to develop and implement multiple-year plans for vocational education and to update their plans on a regular basis. Options for home economics education were expanded alongside those for industrial and agricultural fields. Approximately 4 million Virginians were enrolled in vocational training as of 1963. Although the 1963 law

<sup>347</sup> Heather Fearnbach, "John Groom Elementary School," National Register nomination, May 27, 2017, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/301-5063\\_John\\_Groom\\_School\\_2017\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/301-5063_John_Groom_School_2017_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 19; *State/Local Relations & Service Responsibilities: A Framework for Change*, Report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia, Senate Document No. 37, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, 1993, p. 95.

<sup>348</sup> "Agricultural Classes Total 86,882 for Year in Virginia," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 8, 1951, p. 6; "Many Veterans Studying Agriculture," *The South Hill Enterprise*, October 17, 1946, p. 1. In addition to mechanical trades, veterans also took coursework to become extension agents and agricultural educators as well as general farmers or specialists in poultry or livestock.

<sup>349</sup> Willie Wilson, "N.F.A. Chapter News," *The South Hill Enterprise*, April 17, 1952, p. 2.

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required matching funds from states in order to access federal aid, the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 eliminated this requirement.<sup>350</sup>

Local newspaper coverage in Virginia during the 1960s often included discussion of the value of high school vocational training. The federal Vocational Education Act of 1963 directed federal funds to construct vocational schools for high school students. Amended during the late 1960s, the law included home economics training, which now emphasized both homemaking and wage-earning (albeit still according to the period's gendered norms).<sup>351</sup> In 1964, *The South Hill Va. Enterprise* ran a syndicated column by a Dr. Benjamin Fine of the North American Newspaper Alliance in which the suitability of vocational coursework was endorsed for the 50 percent of high school students who, at that time, did not seek, or could not obtain, a college education. Vocational education, alongside academic coursework, could entice such students to earn their high school diplomas rather than opting to drop out of school altogether and would equip these students with necessary skills for employment.<sup>352</sup>

For these reasons, the trends in vocational education warrant further study in terms of how they influenced public school operations; the effects of expanded vocational training on the socioeconomic status of graduates; and the potential for productive relationships among African American and White communities during a period that otherwise was fraught with racial tensions.

### Virginia's Equalization Strategy and Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Civil Rights Movement, c. 1946-c. 1968

Due to labor and materials shortages during World War II, little construction occurred that was unrelated to military and civil defense needs, thus bringing school construction essentially to a halt. The NAACP's legal team, however, continued to make gains in the federal court system. Utilizing the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment became the keystone to legal cases involving a range of discriminatory practices that impinged on African Americans' civil rights. In the 1944 decision, *Steele v. Louisville and Nashville Railroad et. al.*, a group of African American employees file suit after they were targeted for removal by the all-White Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, which the Louisville & Nashville Railroad had recognized as the bargaining unit for its employees in several locations. NAACP attorney Charles Hamilton Houston's argument rested on an interpretation of the Railway Labor Act that required a union to represent all employees at a union workplace, without regard to race and including non-members of the union. The Supreme Court agreed, again on the basis that equal protection was required under the law, in this case with regard to labor relations.<sup>353</sup>

<sup>350</sup> Angela M. Giordana-Evans, *A History of Federal Vocational Education Legislation in the Twentieth Century*, L.C. 1043U.S., 75-126 ED, Congressional Research Service, Education and Public Welfare Division, Updated May 12, 1975, p. 16, 18-20, 22-24, 30, 32, 41-42, 45; Chris Zirkle, "The History of Vocational Teacher Education," The Ohio State University, 2024, <https://voc-ed.ehe.osu.edu/2014/07/01/1960-1979/>. The 1968 amendments also included a mandate for each state to update and revamp its teacher certification requirements for home economics and agricultural educators in time for the 1972-1973 school year. By 1973, the total number of individuals enrolled in vocational training had risen to more than 12 million. High school students comprised 7.35 million of those persons; the federal government estimated that, by 1978, approximately 11 million high schoolers would be so enrolled. Alongside the traditional industrial, agricultural, and home economics training, office, distribution, and health programs had become widely popular among students enrolled in vocational education.

<sup>351</sup> Chris Zirkle, "The History of Vocational Teacher Education," The Ohio State University, 2024, <https://voc-ed.ehe.osu.edu/2014/07/01/1960-1979/>. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 replaced the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.

<sup>352</sup> Dr. Benjamin Fine, "More Vocational Courses Could Prevent Drop-Outs," *The South Hill Va. Enterprise*, February 20, 1964, p. 1.

<sup>353</sup> "Charles Hamilton Houston, Lawyer, Architect of the Civil Rights legal strategy: 1895-1950, Americans Who Tell the Truth," 2024, <https://americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/charles-hamilton-houston/>; "Steele v. Louisville Nashville Railroad Co. et al.:

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Houston, Marshall, and other attorneys on their team also found success with the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's equal protection clause as it applied to private property. In American law, private property rights have been treated with particular care by the courts and traditionally with great reluctance to allow state action to impinge on those rights. During the late 1940s, NAACP attorneys decided to test whether use of racially restrictive covenants in property deeds would be enforced by the courts. Three cases, *Shelley v. Kraemer* from Missouri, *McGhee v. Sipes* from Michigan, and *Hurd v. Hodge* from Washington, D.C., were considered by the U.S. Supreme Court. Each case concerned property sales to racial groups to whom such sales were prohibited in the respective deed for each property. Opponents to such sales file lawsuits to require the courts to enforce the restrictive covenants. The U.S. Supreme Court decision found that such covenants were constitutional as they pertained to private actions, but also that private individuals were not obligated to abide by such covenants. Moreover, the Supreme Court ruled that judicial enforcement of a covenant was unconstitutional because the courts in Michigan and Missouri would have violated the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's equal protection clause, while the court in Washington D.C. would have violated the 1866 Civil Rights Act.<sup>354</sup>

Having established a set of precedents in which the U.S. Supreme Court had recognized the state's responsibilities to uphold the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Charles Hamilton Houston, Thurgood Marshall, Oliver White Hill, and other NAACP attorneys began formulating a strategy to abolish segregation in public schools. Houston, however, would not live to see the fruition of this plan, as on April 22, 1950, at age fifty-four, he suffered a fatal heart attack.<sup>355</sup>

The string of legal victories occurred concomitant to other wartime changes in Virginia. The sudden, explosive growth of the Hampton Roads region, which included Norfolk, Newport News, Hampton, and Portsmouth, caused by a surging military population and defense-related industries brought thousands of new, permanent residents. Suburbanization around Washington, D.C., had grown quickly during the 1930s concomitant with Roosevelt's creation of new federal agencies. The 1941-1943 construction of The Pentagon in Arlington County, the growth of military installations near the capital city, and creation of related infrastructure had a similarly transformative effect on northern Virginia localities. In cities and towns across Virginia, defense

Enforcing Non-Discriminatory Representation under the Railway Labor Act," Casemine, 2024, <https://www.casemine.com/commentary/us/steele-v.-louisville-nashville-railroad-co.-et-al.-enforcing-non-discriminatory-representation-under-the-railway-labor-act/view>.

<sup>354</sup> "Charles Hamilton Houston: 'The Man Who Killed Jim Crow,'" Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery, Harvard University, 2024, <https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/alumni/charles-hamilton-houston>; "Charles Hamilton Houston," NAACP, 2024, <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/civil-rights-leaders/charles-hamilton-houston>; "Charles Hamilton Houston, Lawyer, Architect of the Civil Rights legal strategy: 1895-1950," Americans Who Tell the Truth, 2024, <https://americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/charles-hamilton-houston/>; DC Historic Preservation Office, "Civil Rights Tour: Legal Campaigns – *Hurd v. Hodge*, Landmark Supreme Court Case," *DC Historic Sites*, 2024, <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/1030>.

<sup>355</sup> "Charles Hamilton Houston, Lawyer, Architect of the Civil Rights legal strategy: 1895-1950," Americans Who Tell the Truth, 2024, <https://americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/charles-hamilton-houston/>. Many other important civil rights cases were filed during the 1940s that are beyond the purview of this MPD. Challenges to segregation were made on multiple fronts, notably *Smith v. Allwright* in 1946, which concerned all-White political primaries; *Morgan v. Virginia* in 1946, regarding segregated interstate bus travel; campaigns against poll taxes and literacy tests that suppressed voting; and hiring in the burgeoning defense-related industries that began during the war, and was sustained with the onset of the Cold War. See Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001; Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018; Genna Rae McNeil, *Groundwork: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Oliver White Hill Sr., *The Big Bang: "Brown v. Board of Education" and Beyond; the Autobiography of Oliver W. Hill Sr.*, Jonathan K. Stubbs, ed. (Winter Park, Fla.: Four-G Publishers Inc., 2000); and "Civil Rights Movement in Virginia," Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 2024, <https://virginiahistory.org/learn/historical-book/civil-rights-movement-virginia>, among many other books, articles, and websites, for additional information.

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industries sprang up and the economic impetus they created ended the last lingering remnants of the Great Depression. When the war ended in August 1945, Virginians already were more than a decade into economic and industrial development trends that would transform vast swaths of rural and urban landscapes.

For Black Virginians, the wartime dissonance of fighting for democracy abroad while facing discrimination, lynching, and racial terror in American armed forces and on the home front had forged new resolve in overturning the Jim Crow laws that curtailed every aspect of their lives. Full equality, not just desegregation, remained their overarching goal: to receive an equal share of the benefits of American citizenship, while participating on equal footing with White Americans in the messy processes of democracy. The United Negro College Fund was founded in 1944 to benefit the nation's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), not to desegregate either them or all-White postsecondary schools. Similarly, the aforementioned progressive education movement sought to foster civically-engaged young people who both understood American democracy and exercised their rights fully in a fashion that not just ignored, but entirely discredited, White supremacy.

### *Equalization Strategy Lawsuits Concerning Segregated Schools*

Between 1947-1949, the NAACP and Virginia's Black communities commenced the next stage of their equalization legal strategy. Steady increases in salaries for Black teachers illustrated the progress that was being made on this front (Figure 21). With regard to equalizing the segregated schools themselves, in 1948, a case from Surry County reached the U.S. District Court. County school board officials were charged with discrimination due to the lack of an accredited high school for Black students, lack of bus transportation, inequities in buildings, equipment, and libraries, and unequal salaries for school staff. The court

ordered the County to equalize salaries over the next two school terms and to provide the court with a report on equalization of facilities by mid-September 1948. A cascade of lawsuits followed, stretching the NAACP's legal team thinly. By June 1948, the litigation campaign included 63 of Virginia's 102 school divisions. While many of the lawsuits were settled out of court, Virginia school officials were alarmed by several court rulings that stated unequivocally that racial discrimination in public schools was illegal. These included a case from Gloucester County that also embroiled King George County, where school officials in both counties refused to recognize the right of Black children to attend White high schools despite that no Black high school existed in either county. King George officials suspended all high school classes in biology, chemistry,

TABLE I AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY OF WHITE AND NEGRO TEACHERS OF VIRGINIA, PER CENT NEGRO OF WHITE, BY TERMS AND BY SEX: 1940-41 to 1949-50 Average Annual Salary*						
School Term	Women		Men		Per Cent Negro of White	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	Women	Men
1949-50	\$2,160	\$2,209	\$2,719	\$2,520	102.3	92.7
1948-49	2,081	2,124	2,613	2,434	102.1	97.2
1947-48	1,927	1,962	2,515	2,300	101.8	91.4
1946-47	1,735	1,724	2,315	2,040	99.4	88.1
1945-46	1,486	1,418	1,987	1,956	95.4	98.4
1944-45	1,360	1,264	2,030	1,661	92.9	81.8
1943-44	1,254	1,124	1,877	1,440	89.6	76.7
1942-43	1,081	910	1,431	1,071	84.2	74.8
1941-42	857	632	1,400	824	73.7	58.9
1940-41	805	553	1,272	726	68.7	57.1

\*Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commonwealth of Virginia, *Annual Report*, for the terms listed. Figures for 1940-41 and 1941-42 are medians; all others are means.

Figure 181. Table from Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction Annual Report, as reprinted in Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration,'" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 19.

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physics, and geometry rather than conceding the necessity for such coursework for Black students, and were held in contempt of court and fined for their actions. A lawsuit from Pulaski County that reached the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1949 included the court's declaration of their "solemn duty" to strike down "forbidden racial segregation."<sup>356</sup> Such results, while astonishing to White officials who had paid lip service to "separate but equal" schools for generations, did not achieve substantial equalization in and of themselves.<sup>357</sup>

For example, from the 1930s to the early 1950s, Mecklenburg County had continued to consolidate the county schools for White students in order to create fewer, larger schools. Their effort was accelerated by fires that caused extensive damage to local schools. South Hill's elementary school for White children was destroyed by fire in April 1932. The South Hill High and Grammar School, a building with ten classrooms, was hastily erected and opened in October of that year.<sup>358</sup> In April 1942, the La Crosse High School for White students was destroyed by fire and students completed the school year at South Hill High School.<sup>359</sup> Consolidating schools typically resulted in lower maintenance costs and larger enrollments, which created efficiencies that facilitated expanded curricula. A total of 13 consolidated White schools had been erected in Mecklenburg County by 1946, including high schools in Chase City (built 1908 with subsequent additions), Boydton (built 1913 with subsequent additions), Clarksville (built 1915 with subsequent additions), Buckhorn (built 1919 with subsequent additions), South Hill (built 1932 after a fire), and La Crosse (built 1942 after a fire). Six elementary schools for White children were constructed between 1930-1934 and a seventh school dated to 1919. Between 1942-1944, a community cannery was erected at four White schools to aid families with preserving their homegrown produce as part of the home front's contribution to World War II; community canneries also were segregated by race.<sup>360</sup> Five of the White high schools had an agricultural shop building or, in one case, a manual training building. Purpose-built home economics buildings were added to the campuses at Clarksville High School in 1945 and Buckhorn High School in 1949, while Boydton High School received a new cafeteria in 1937 and an auditorium in 1949.<sup>361</sup>

In comparison, none of the schools for Black students had been consolidated. Mecklenburg County operated 53 Black schools as of 1950. Also at this time, classes beyond seventh grade were offered to Black students at the mid-1920s Mecklenburg County Training School in South Hill, as well as the originally private Thyne Institute, established c. 1876<sup>362</sup> and acquired by the Mecklenburg County school system in 1946, located in

<sup>356</sup> Resume of NAACP Legal Conference, Kansas City, Missouri, 21 June 1948, Group II, Box A-41, NAACP Papers; Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to 'Integration,'" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 20-22. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals quotes are as cited by Wilkerson on p. 22 of his article in the *Journal of Negro Education*.

<sup>357</sup> During the 1940s-1950s, White and Black civil rights activists also formed coalitions to break the stranglehold of the Byrd Machine on Virginia's political system at the local, state, and federal levels. Harry F. Byrd (1887-1966), a conservative politician and segregationist who served as a state senator, Virginia governor, and U.S. Senator, opposed the New Deal, the Civil Rights Movement, and other trends to modernize Virginia both culturally and economically. Although impactful to overall progress toward civil equality, the political struggles against the Byrd Machine largely are beyond the purview of this MPD. For further information about Byrd and the Byrd Machine, see Larissa M. Smith, *Where the South Begins: Black Politics and Civil Rights Activism in Virginia, 1930-1951*, Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2001, p. 218-299 and Ronald Heinemann, "Harry F. Byrd (1887-1966)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/byrd-harry-f-1887-1966>. Byrd also led the political resistance to school desegregation during the late 1950s to early 1960s, and these events are discussed in subsequent sections below.

<sup>358</sup> Frank L. Nanney Jr., *South Hill, Virginia: A Chronicle of the First 100 Years* (Winston-Salem, NC: Frank L. Nanney Jr. and Jostens Inc., 2001), p. 79.

<sup>359</sup> Frank L. Nanney Jr., *South Hill, Virginia: A Chronicle of the First 100 Years* (Winston-Salem, NC: Frank L. Nanney Jr. and Jostens Inc., 2001), p. 106, 125.

<sup>360</sup> No information was found regarding canneries at Black schools during research for this nomination.

<sup>361</sup> School list provided by staff at Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Boydton, Virginia, August 5, 2024.

<sup>362</sup> "About Us," Thyne Institute Memorial Inc., no date, <https://www.thyneinstitutememorial.com/blank-1>.



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Chase City. In Clarksville, the mid-1930s West End High School also offered classes beyond seventh grade for Black students.<sup>363</sup> The Mecklenburg County Training School campus was expanded in 1940 with a cafeteria and an auditorium around 1942, but the 1925 building itself was destroyed by fire in late 1942. For years thereafter, Black high school students and teachers were forced into makeshift temporary buildings on campus as well as private dwellings, to continue holding classes.<sup>364</sup> Sixteen of the African American elementary schools dated to the 1910s, another sixteen were built during the 1920s, fourteen were from the 1930s, and three dated between 1942-1949. The remainder of the Black elementary school buildings still in use as of 1950 predated 1910.<sup>365</sup>

Calfee Training School, Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County

Just as African American communities often had to campaign for years to have a school building erected for their children, efforts to equalize the schools often required many years of work. An example occurred in the Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County, where the Calfee Training School was erected between 1918-1920 by adding two high school grades, eighth and ninth, to an existing elementary school. At this time, inequities in public school expenditures were quite stark. In 1923, the County applied for a Literary Fund loan and passed a \$75,000 bond issue to pay for construction of a new 20-classroom, consolidated elementary school for White children in the southern part of the county. The same year, the local school board contributed \$4,000 toward a total construction cost of \$4,800 for a two-room elementary school for Black children built under the auspices of the Rosenwald Fund. By the mid-1930s, Calfee Training School offered four years of high school education but was not fully accredited. Pulaski County's Black students who sought a full four-year high school education could attend the Christiansburg Industrial Institute (NRHP 1979; 154-5004) 30 miles away in Montgomery County; no bus transportation was provided to students. With New Deal programs under way, Pulaski County applied for PWA funds to build a new elementary school in the Town of Pulaski, as well as a loan from the Literary Fund. Built at a cost of \$82,000, the school opened in October 1937. The County had other federal projects underway to renovate and add onto various schools and, after pressure from the Black community, began to consider adding onto Calfee Training School as well, including construction of a new eight-classroom building for coursework while the existing building would be converted to an auditorium and the classrooms used for vocational and home economics training. In November 1938, the building was destroyed by fire. Chauncey Harmon, a VTSA member who had volunteered to be named in an equalization lawsuit in 1938, and Dr. Percy Casino Corbin, a Texas native who opened a medical practice in Pulaski in

<sup>363</sup> According to Ann Garnett Miller, West End High School was destroyed by a fire during the early 1950s. The school's name does not appear on the County's list of schools in use as of 1950, but the name does appear in Mecklenburg County School Board meeting minutes from 1951, and a reference to the school's destruction is recorded in the December 10, 1951, meeting minutes. See Ann Garnett Miller, "Recounting the Proud Heritage of Black Education in Mecklenburg County," *Southern Virginia Now*, February 22, 2012, <https://www.wehsnaa.org/BlackEdMeck.pdf>, p. 2 and Mecklenburg County School Board meeting minutes, December 10, 1951, p. 37, scan of minutes provided by Mecklenburg County Public Schools staff, Boydton, Virginia.

<sup>364</sup> Heather Fearnbach, "John Groom Elementary School," National Register nomination, May 27, 2017, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/301-5063\\_John\\_Groom\\_School\\_2017\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/301-5063_John_Groom_School_2017_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 15, citing Archie G. Richardson, *The Development of Negro Education in Virginia, 1831-1970* (Richmond, Virginia: Richmond Chapter Phi Delta Kappa, 1976), 29; Frank L. Nanney Jr., *South Hill, Virginia: A Chronicle of the First 100 Years* (Winston-Salem, NC: Frank L. Nanney Jr. and Jostens Inc., 2001), p. 106.

<sup>365</sup> Information about the County Training School and Thyne Institute was included on a school listed provided by staff at Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Boydton, Virginia, August 5, 2024.

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1913, led a campaign to build a new high school for African American students that would be equal to the White high school.<sup>366</sup>

The Pulaski County School Board argued for constructing a new building that would house only eight-classrooms to replace the Calfee Training School building that had been lost to fire. The promised auditorium and vocational training spaces were not included in the County's plan. Corbin and Harmon led a campaign to build support for including these facilities in the new building. At the same time, the County was planning to use PWA funds to build a new gymnasium at the White high school, at a cost of \$10,000 more than the entire construction budget for replacing Calfee Training School. Both Corbin and Harmon wrote to the local *Pulaski Southwest Times* newspaper to argue for the school improvements, and netted support from local White organizations that included the Rotary Club, Baptist, Christian, Methodist, and Christ churches, and two women's clubs. Corbin and Harmon also succeeded in attracting wider media interest from *The Roanoke Times* and the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* newspapers to increase pressure on the school board. In December 1938, the board announced a plan to reuse the brick from the destroyed school building, along with its \$5,200 insurance settlement, to include a combined gymnasium/auditorium and two industrial training classrooms with the new eight-classroom building. Out of a total budget of \$39,650, the PWA provided \$31,000 in federal funds which, added to the \$5,200 insurance payment, meant that the local school board paid just \$3,450 for the new combined elementary and high school building. The National Youth Administration, another New Deal program provided part of the labor to build the schoolhouse.<sup>367</sup>

Dissatisfied with the outcome, Harmon and Corbin consulted with J. Thomas Hewin Jr., an attorney with the Virginia Conference of the NAACP who already was in the midst of evaluating equalization strategy lawsuits in Middlesex, Alleghany, and Surry County. In addition to its parsimonious outlay for Calfee Training School, in 1938-1939, Pulaski County had set a school term of 180 days for White students and just 168 days for African American pupils. While the Virginia Board of Education estimated that a minimum level of education during the 1938-1939 school year cost \$36.00 per student, the County spent barely half that, \$18.61, per capita for Black students. As was true throughout Virginia, Black teachers in Pulaski County were paid less than White teachers. Joining petition projects organized by Harmon and Corbin, Willis P. Gravely, a high school teacher at Calfee Training School, circulated a petition for equalization of teacher salaries. Faced with growing pressure, the Pulaski County School Board agreed to pay tuition for African American students in Pulaski County who wanted to attend a four-year high school with an academic curriculum so they could attend Christiansburg Industrial Institute. A fully accredited high school affiliated with the Baptist Church since the 1860s, the school was located in Montgomery County, 30 miles from the Town of Pulaski. The board also agreed to purchase a school bus and provide transportation to the high school students, but tabled the matter of equalizing teacher salaries. The high school classes at Calfee Training School, meanwhile, were eliminated, as were Harmon's and Gravely's positions. Although not stated on the record, the reasons for their dismissal likely was related to their activism. Such reprisals were typical responses to anyone who stepped up to lead public pressure campaigns against White officials on behalf of African American and other marginalized communities.<sup>368</sup>

<sup>366</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 16-20.

<sup>367</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 20-23.

<sup>368</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 24-26.

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Figure 192. 1948 photographs of drinking water fountain at Gloucester County Training School (top) and indoor fountains at Botetourt High School (bottom) (Image Sources: Docs Teach, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/fountain-gloucester-training-school> [top] and Docs Teach, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/botetourt-high-school-fountains> [bottom]).

During the 1940s, Pulaski County, along with Montgomery County and the City of Radford, acquired the Christiansburg Institute for use as a regional public high school. When his son started high school, Corbin discovered that the Pulaski County students could not fully participate in school activities and access the library and science labs due to their bus's schedule for the long trip back to Pulaski. Somewhat insulated from financial reprisals by his medical practice and several business interests, Corbin decided to resume the campaign for an equalized high school for Black students in Pulaski. He again contacted the NAACP for assistance. In December 1947, attorneys Oliver W. Hill, Martin A. Martin, and Spottswood William Robinson III filed a lawsuit, *Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, et al.*, in the U.S. District Court in Roanoke. They argued that the regional high school for African American students was unequal to the high school education provided to Pulaski County's White students, representing a violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Although the District County ruled in the County's favor, the Fourth Circuit of Appeals overturned the decision. The Corbin lawsuit was one of six equalization strategy lawsuits that the NAACP filed during the 1940s. In (1949), Judge Alfred Dickinson Barksdale ruled in the school board's favor. On appeal, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit reversed the lower court's decision, handing a win to Corbin and the NAACP.<sup>369</sup>

#### 1948 Equalization Strategy Lawsuits

Other equalization strategy lawsuits filed in Virginia during the late 1940s included *Arthur M. Freeman, et al. v. County School Board of Chesterfield County et al.*; *Margaret Smith v. School Board of King George County, Virginia*, and *T. Benton Gayle, Division Superintendent*; and *Alice Lorraine Ashley v. School Board of Gloucester County, Virginia*, and *J. Walter Kenny, Division Superintendent*. Each was filed in 1948 by the NAACP. While details of the three differ, they were ruled on together due to the similarities in the discrimination that African American students faced in their local schools

and because each of the plaintiffs claimed their school districts discriminated against them based on their race,

<sup>369</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 27.



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Figure 203. Photographs of typical classrooms at Gloucester County Training School (top) and Botetourt High School (bottom) (Image Sources: Docs Teach,

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/gloucester-training-school-classroom> [top] and Docs Teach,

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/botetourt-high-school-classroom> [bottom]).

in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. As part of their legal filings, the NAACP attorneys included photographic evidence of the disparities in school conditions, such as the differences in provision of drinking water and classroom number and sizes in Gloucester County (Figures 22, above, and 23, at left). Along with these differences, Botetourt High School, Gloucester County's high school for White students, featured central heating, indoor plumbing, and a lower student/teacher ratio in roomier classrooms. The Gloucester Training School only had outdoor privies, no central heat, and high student/teacher ratios as evidenced by its overcrowded classrooms. The local school board's expenditures per capita on White versus Black students also was disproportionate, with \$81.63 representing the average cost per White student and \$51.49 the average for Black students. U.S. District Court Judge Charles Sterling Hutcheson ruled that each local school system failed to meet the "separate but equal" doctrine created by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, and even noted that the cost of equalizing segregated schools was prohibitively expensive for each locality. Due to constraints on judicial action imposed by the *Mills v. Board of Education of Anne Arundel County [Maryland]*, 311 U.S. 693 in 1940, Hutcheson could not issue specific instructions on how the equalization process should proceed, making it a limited victory for the NAACP and Virginia's African American residents. The NAACP, however, filed contempt charges against school officials in Gloucester for not complying with Hutcheson's order.<sup>370</sup>

Although Hutcheson's ruling left the matter of school equalization unsolved, Virginia officials began to respond to the string of legal victories with attempts to demonstrate that segregated school systems could, in

fact, be made equal. Moreover, after World War II, hundreds of new public schools were needed across

<sup>370</sup> G Schultz, "Equalization and its Role in Dismantling Racial Segregation in Virginia Public Schools," National Archives, May 3, 2022, <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2022/05/03/equalization-and-its-role-in-dismantling-racial-segregation-in-virginia-public-schools/>; Larissa M. Smith, State Review Board member, June 11, 2025, review comments for African American Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Documentation Form, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond. Full citations for photographs in Figures 22 and 23 are as follows: Photograph of a Drinking Fountain at the Gloucester Training School, View of the Entrance to the Botetourt High School and Drinking Fountains, View of a Classroom at Gloucester Training School, View of a Botetourt High School Commercial Arts Classroom; 1948; Civil Action No. 174; Alice Lorraine Ashley, et al. v. School Board of Gloucester Co. and J. Walter Kenny, Division Superintendent; Civil Case Files, 1941 - 12/31/1998; Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

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Virginia due to population growth and well over a decade of limited new state investment in schools due to the Great Depression and wartime shortages. Additionally, by the time the war ended, life in Virginia had transformed in remarkable ways due to New Deal projects that included rural electrification, creation of the segregated state park system, extension of public sewer and water systems in many Virginia cities and towns, highway construction and rural road improvements. Mushrooming growth in population and employment opportunities brought on by wartime industries, military expansion, and a greatly increased federal government presence in the Commonwealth added to the demand. Parents throughout the Commonwealth understood that a modern education had become more important than ever in order for their children to prosper in a rapidly changing society. Furthermore, the infamous Baby Boom also was underway, along with more than a decade of pent-up consumer demand, while suburbanization and a greatly strengthened labor movement contributed to the creation of a stronger, expanding middle class. These and other macro trends in American society brought about demand for new public schools in rapidly growing suburbs and modernization of all public school facilities across Virginia.

As noted above, during the 1930s, side-by-side comparisons even of newly constructed Black schools to White schools demonstrated the continued inequality of the respective school plants. Documentation compiled through studies such as the 1928 O'Shea Report, 1939 State Board of Education study, and others also provided ample evidence of the inequities. Since the 1920s, a school for White children typically had included an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, library, fully equipped science labs, and other educational amenities, such as a curriculum with college preparatory classes, a variety of academic and special interest clubs, a range of athletic programs for boys and girls, and a fully equipped marching band and a choir. In comparison, by the end of World War II, a school for Black students might, for example, have a combined auditorium and cafeteria ("cafetorium") or, occasionally, a combined auditorium and gymnasium, but lack science labs, an athletic program, and a full academic curriculum with foreign languages, advanced science and math courses, and business education. Although the General Assembly had authorized the addition of a twelfth grade to high schools in 1946, few African American high schools offered this grade nor were the majority of Black high-school age youths even enrolled in high school.

On a related front, President Harry S Truman, sickened by widespread acts of violence perpetrated against Black veterans after World War II, had, in 1946, established The President's Committee on Civil Rights with the charge of examining how African Americans' constitutional rights could be upheld. The committee's December 1947 report, *To Secure These Rights*, documented discrimination nationwide with regard to voting rights, education, housing, and "public accommodations," meaning hotels, restaurants, theaters, and other places open to the public. The report included four essential rights: to "safety and security of the person," to "citizenship and its privileges," to "freedom of conscience and expression," and to "equality of opportunity."<sup>371</sup> The latter phrase, in particular, represented a new phase in the Civil Rights Movement, as it was a more affirmative approach to implementing civil rights beyond the traditional concerns about voting, citizenship, and even of personal safety. While these areas of civil rights had focused on legality and upholding rule of law, "equality of opportunity" considered proper outcomes of civil rights protections in all aspects of American life:

It is not enough that full and equal membership in society entitles the individual to an equal voice in the control of his government; *it must also give him the right to enjoy the benefits of society and to contribute to its progress* [emphasis added]. The opportunity of each individual to

<sup>371</sup> Charles Erwin Wilson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (United States: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), available online at <https://blackfreedom.proquest.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/civilrights1.pdf>, p. 6, 8-9.

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obtain useful employment, and to have access to services in the fields of education, housing, health, recreation and transportation, whether available free or at a price, must be provided with complete disregard for race, color, creed, and national origin. *Without this equality of opportunity the individual is deprived of the chance to develop his potentialities and to share the fruits of society* [emphasis added]. The group also suffers through the loss of the contributions which might have been made by persons excluded from the main channels of social and economic activity.<sup>372</sup>

The President's Committee also noted the overall diversity of the American populace, including people of Asian, Central and South American, African, and European descent, with a multitude of language, customs, and religious beliefs. On the heels of the atrocities and crimes against humanity committed during the war, the committee's language and inclusivity reflected the trajectory of postwar humanism that profoundly influenced international relations, particularly the formation of the United Nations and the assumption of the United States as a global defender of human rights. Truman, too, had been persuaded by wartime events to become a belated supporter of civil rights for African Americans. Acting upon the committee's recommendations, in July 1948, Truman signed Executive Orders 9980 and 9981 to desegregate, respectively, the federal workforce and all branches of the U.S. military. Although the military branches were given years to complete the process, Truman's action astonished White supremacists. Truman, a grandson of enslavers in the border state of Missouri who had brought learned racial prejudices into adulthood, seemed an unlikely harbinger for a new phase in the civil rights struggle.<sup>373</sup>

Southern Democrats in Congress quickly organized a revolt against Truman's call for passage of civil rights legislation, and no new laws were passed prior to the 1948 presidential election. Despite the formation of the States Rights Democratic Party, colloquially known as the Dixiecrats, to oppose Truman's nomination for president by the Democratic Party, Truman won the election. Although defeated, Dixiecrats remained prominent in state and local politics, including joining White Citizens Councils and other "massive resistance" efforts to thwart racial desegregation during the 1950s-1960s.<sup>374</sup>

### *State Grants for "Equalization" of Public Schools*

In Virginia, the 1949 Virginia gubernatorial primary represented the first opportunity for Virginia voters to voice their choice to lead the Commonwealth in the wake of Truman's actions. Francis P. Miller, John S. Battle, and Horace H. Edwards, competed for the Democratic nomination. As noted above, the Byrd Machine continued its firm hold on Virginia's conservative politics, and the gubernatorial race was enlivened by a falling out between Edwards and one of Byrd's operatives, Everett R. Combs. Edwards proposed a new 2 percent sales tax to pay for educational needs. Advising candidate John S. Battle, in April 1949, Combs countered with using surplus state funds for the same purpose but without creating a new tax. Edwards and Miller split the anti-Byrd machine vote and Battle won the election.<sup>375</sup>

<sup>372</sup> Charles Erwin Wilson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (United States: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), available online at <https://blackfreedom.proquest.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/civilrights1.pdf>, p. 9.

<sup>373</sup> "Harry S Truman and Civil Rights," National Park Service, Harry S Truman National Historic Site, no date, [https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/TrumanCivilRights\\_NatlPark.pdf](https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/TrumanCivilRights_NatlPark.pdf).

<sup>374</sup> "Dixiecrats," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, 2024, <https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/dixiecrats/>.

<sup>375</sup> "Francis Miller Dies; Virginia Politician," *The New York Times*, August 5, 1978, p. 22, <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/08/05/archives/francis-miller-dies-virginia-politician-he-opposed-the-byrd.html>; Larry Hall, "Horace

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From 1950 to 1954, Battle's administration used the aforementioned surplus monies to provide the first-ever state grants to localities for school construction; previously, the Commonwealth had only offered low-interest loans to localities. As had occurred in preceding eras of major new public investments, elementary schools were prioritized, this time, according to state government officials, "to accommodate the first wave" of the baby boom generation (children born between 1946-1964) who were reaching elementary school age.<sup>376</sup> A desire to house all elementary students in schools separate from those of high school students also factored into the project selection process. For localities under pressure to equalize their segregated schools, the new state aid provided some much-needed relief. The "equalization" effort went beyond school plants. In 1952, Battle's administration also established a \$10 million fund to complete equalization of salaries for Black and White teachers across Virginia. Both the school construction and salary expenditures came to be regarded as measures to thwart lawsuits against Virginia's segregated public schools, which on paper were required to operate as "separate but equal" facilities, but always had failed to do so.<sup>377</sup>

By this time, conservative White Virginians had convinced themselves that the recent progress made in the Civil Rights Movement was an international Communist conspiracy. In 1948, Virginia state senators Lloyd Bird and Garland Gray had called for creation of a committee to examine textbooks used by public schools for any sign of Communist influence. The committee called for new textbooks that would "'instill in hearts and minds a greater love for Virginia and a perpetuation for her ideals.'" <sup>378</sup> In response, the state Senate convened the Virginia History and Textbook Commission, which decided to create new textbooks for use in the fourth, seventh, and eleventh grades. The commission members espoused allegiance to the "Lost Cause" narrative concerning the Civil War, including perpetuating myths that African Americans had benefited from enslavement, that the Confederate States had been rightful inheritors of the American Revolution in safeguarding freedom and liberty, and that the racial uplift efforts of the Reconstruction Era had failed without qualification. Across the first half of the 1950s, the committee worked on the new textbooks, despite opposition from multiple points, including the NAACP, Black Virginians, and educators who doubted the scholarly soundness of the committee's work. Such concerns slowed, but did not halt, the rewriting of textbooks and the first edition, for fourth graders, was issued for the 1956-1957 school year. Seventh- and eleventh-grade textbooks followed a year later. The books became entwined with Virginia's "massive resistance" to school desegregation, which is discussed in greater detail below in subsequent sections. Furthermore, as part of the package of Massive Resistance laws enacted at that time, the General Assembly formed committees to "investigate" the NAACP for Communist association and to undermine the work of its attorneys in Virginia<sup>379</sup>

Hall Edwards," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998– ), 2023,

[http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Edwards\\_Horace\\_Hall](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Edwards_Horace_Hall); James Sweeney, "John Stewart Battle (1890–1972)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/battle-john-stewart-1890-1972>.

<sup>376</sup> Peter R. Henriques, *John S. Battle and Virginia Politics, 1948-1953*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1971, p. 78-82, 131-132; James Sweeney, "John Stewart Battle (1890–1972)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/battle-john-stewart-1890-1972>; "City, Area Counties Push School Completion," *Danville Register and Bee*, September 7, 1952, p. 11.

<sup>377</sup> Peter R. Henriques, *John S. Battle and Virginia Politics, 1948-1953*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1971, p. 127-131.

<sup>378</sup> Adam Dean and Ashley Spivey, "The Virginia History and Textbook Commission," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, September 6, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/the-virginia-history-and-textbook-commission>.

<sup>379</sup> Adam Dean and Ashley Spivey, "The Virginia History and Textbook Commission," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, September 6, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/the-virginia-history-and-textbook-commission>.

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Equalization Era Schools from c. 1946-c. 1954

Meanwhile, Virginia's equalization strategy with regard to school plants had continued on a separate track, first in response to court decisions and then with funding funneled to localities from state surplus funds during Governor John Battle's 1950-1954 administration. In the state's 1950-1952 budget, the state allocated \$45 million for unconditional grants that localities could access to improve their overall quality; use of the money to pay for "equalization" of schools was not explicitly mentioned in the budget language, but widely understood to be an acceptable expenditure.<sup>380</sup>

Ralph Bunche High School, King George County

In direct response to the aforementioned 1947 Federal District court case, *Margaret Smith, et al v. School Board of King George County, Virginia, et al*, Richmond Civil Action No. 631, Ralph Bunche High School was one of the first equalization schools constructed in the Commonwealth.

King George County had offered limited high school education to African American students since the 1910s, when the County Training School was established. During the Great Depression, the County had not availed itself of federal funding to build any schools for African American students. Similar to its companion lawsuits, *Arthur M. Freeman, et al. v. County School Board of Chesterfield County et al.* and *Alice Lorraine Ashley v. School Board of Gloucester County, Virginia, and J. Walter Kenny, Division Superintendent*, extensive photo documentation demonstrated the vast inequities between the County Training School and the all-White King George High School. While the County Training School lacked basic elements such as indoor plumbing and a central furnace for heating, the all-White school featured modern indoor restrooms, central heat, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium. The curricular inequities also were evidenced, with King George High School offering the necessary equipment, books, and course offerings for an academic, four-year high school diploma, while the Training School remained mired in the outmoded "industrial education" model of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unequal teacher pay based on race also was addressed in the lawsuit.<sup>381</sup>

W. Lester Banks, executive secretary of the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, steered much of the organization's efforts in the *Smith v. King George County* case. Martin A. Martin was hired to lead the case; he was a partner with Oliver W. Hill and Spottswood Robinson III in the Richmond-based of Hill, Martin and Robinson firm. To build a body of evidence regarding the County's failure to provide "separate but equal" schools, County officials were compelled to provide copies of minutes of school board meetings; teacher and staff contracts; schedules, scales, records, rosters and studies of all salaries; records of all teacher qualifications and experience; a schedule of all capital outlays for White and African American schools; and the number of buses in operation for the same. With Judge Sterling Hutcheson having ruled against the County, King George officials attempted a remedy similar to that first pursued a couple of years earlier by Pulaski and Montgomery counties and the City of Radford: creation of a regional high school for students in King George and Stafford counties as well as the City of Fredericksburg. The plan did not come to fruition and, on July 31, 1948,

<sup>380</sup> Foney G. Mullins, *A History of the Literary Fund as a Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*, D.Ed. dissertation, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 58.

<sup>381</sup> Marcus R. Pollard, "Ralph Bunche High School," National Register nomination, November 28, 2005, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/048-5007/>, p. 8/7, 8/16.



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Hutcheson ordered the County to equalize the segregated school system, although he did not issue specific instructions for doing so.<sup>382</sup>

With the school term beginning in September 1948, King George County's school board had little time to equalize school plants. The County failed to add indoor plumbing and central heating to the County Training School, to create and equip science labs, to provide a library with a sufficient collection of books, or to begin construction of a gymnasium. Simultaneously, the school board dropped some academic courses from the King George High School's curriculum to "equalize" the coursework between the two schools. On September 9, 1948, ten students from the training school, accompanied by Martin and members of the press, attempted to register for classes at King George High School on the basis that the training school had not been equalized as ordered. Martin and the students faced an immediate, hostile response from White government officials and members of the public, as well as then-Governor William Tuck, who said, "the advocates of the so-called 'civil rights' program sponsored by President Truman will not force upon the people of Virginia this curse of nonsegregation [*sic*]..." The ten students were not permitted to enroll at the all-White high school. Local White residents circulated a petition calling for the county's African American residents to disavow association with the NAACP in exchange for construction of a new school for Black students. The recalcitrant school board also lowered pay of teachers at the County Training School by designating them as "assistants" to the King George High School faculty members. Martin immediately filed a lawsuit to equalize the teachers' pay, while Judge Hutcheson ordered County officials to his court to demonstrate why they should not be held in contempt. County officials responded with a plan to hold a special election for a bond issue of \$150,000 to pay for construction of a new school.<sup>383</sup>

The necessary bond was approved by voters and construction of the new high school for African American students commenced in the spring of 1949. County officials offered to name the school in honor of Dr. Ralph Bunche, who had served as a United Nations mediator and helped to negotiate an armistice among Arabs, Israelis, and Palestinians in 1949; he went on to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. At the new school's dedication in September 1949, a congratulatory telegram from Bunche was read to the audience and Hampton Institute president Dr. Alonzo G. Moron gave the keynote address. The newly built Ralph Bunche High School (NRHP 2007; 048-5007) offered a science laboratory, "commercial" classroom for business education, a library, three classrooms, a clinic room, a combined auditorium and gymnasium with two dressing rooms, storage rooms, restrooms, and a principal's office. The school plant was entirely modern with indoor plumbing, electricity, and heating and ventilation systems. Attorneys on both sides of the lawsuit filed a motion to dismiss the case, and Judge Hutcheson obliged. In 1957, a classroom addition was erected on the rear of the 1949 building because the old training school buildings finally were being demolished.<sup>384</sup>

The "Battle Funds" were used to build new schools for White children as well. For example, in Mecklenburg County, between 1952-1954 state aid was expended to build four new, consolidated high schools, two for

<sup>382</sup> Marcus R. Pollard, "Ralph Bunche High School," National Register nomination, November 28, 2005, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/048-5007/>, p. 8/8-8/9.

<sup>383</sup> Marcus R. Pollard, "Ralph Bunche High School," National Register nomination, November 28, 2005, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/048-5007/>, p. 8/10-8/13.

<sup>384</sup> Marcus R. Pollard, "Ralph Bunche High School," National Register nomination, November 28, 2005, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/048-5007/>, p. 8/13-8/16. Ralph Bunche High School closed in 1968. The County utilized the building for various purposes into the 1990s. After being left vacant for many years, the property was acquired by Ralph Bunche Alumni Association, which secured funding to stabilize and preserve the building for future community use.

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African American students and two for White pupils.<sup>385</sup> Aside from legitimate needs to increase school capacities for larger enrollments and deferred maintenance and construction due to the Great Depression and World War II, use of “Battle Funds” for improvement of White schools served as a sop to White Virginians who remained hostile to expenditures of any tax dollars on African Americans for any reason.

James A. Bland High School, Wise County

In Southwestern Virginia in Wise County, Cato Hadrass (C.H.) Shorter served as principal of Appalachia Training School, a two-classroom, frame building with a donated library that was constructed in 1938; two more classrooms were built shortly afterward. Along with his wife, Mary Beatrice (McClellan) Shorter, C. H. Shorter is still remembered in the local community for the extraordinary lengths they went to provide young people with educational opportunities and professional skills training. Mary Shorter served as an unpaid office assistant for many years, while Shorter endeavored to expand students’ exposure to different types of employment beyond the coal mines that dominated the local economy. In 1940, Shorter recommended changing his school’s name to Central High School, thus removing the growing stigma associated with “training schools” due to their limited curricula. Shorter also forged a good relationship with Wise County’s superintendent for public instruction, Dr. J. J. Kelly, who included African American schools in initiatives such as including home economics and business education in all of the local high schools.<sup>386</sup>

With an eye toward avoiding the lawsuits that had occurred in other Virginia localities, in 1952, Wise County officials sought \$150,000 in state aid to build a new African American high school. Two years later, the County also received \$408,460 to build a new high school for White students and \$200,000 to improve Pound High School. Wise County architect Charles B. McElroy designed Bland High School to include a lobby, administrative offices, library, science laboratory, six classrooms (of which two were set aside for home economics and business education), a combined auditorium and gymnasium, a separate cafeteria, and detached shops for agricultural and vocational training. At the completed school’s dedication in January 1954, local and state officials voiced optimism that “equalized” schools such as James A. Bland High School would forestall growing calls for desegregation of public schools.<sup>387</sup> Their optimism proved to be erroneous.

*Desegregation Lawsuits: Davis v. County School Board and Brown v. Board of Education*

As “Battle Funds” were being used to build modern public schools for African American students, two groups of civil rights activists precipitated events in Virginia that contributed directly to school desegregation throughout the country. On April 23, 1951, led by young Barbara Johns, the students who walked out of Robert Russa Moton High School (NHL 1998; 144-0053) in Farmville, Prince Edward County, protested the overcrowded conditions and limited opportunities at their school versus the all-White high school nearby. Typical of its era, the 1939 high school lacked the gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium with fixed seating that were common features at all-White high schools. Even student lockers were not provided. Designed to house 180 students, by 1950, Moton High School was overflowing with 477 students enrolled. Offered a matching state grant in 1947 to expand the school, Prince Edward County officials refused to provide a match. Over the

<sup>385</sup>For a discussion of Mecklenburg County’s equalization schools, see Lena McDonald and Ashlen Stump, “Park View High School,” National Register nomination, September 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/058-5573/>.

<sup>386</sup>Math Rowe et al., “James A. Bland High School, Wise County,” National Register nomination, July 16, 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/101-5013/>, p. 25-30.

<sup>387</sup>Math Rowe et al., “James A. Bland High School, Wise County,” National Register nomination, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/101-5013/>, p. 18.

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next sixteen years, the county's government and White residents would prove to be extraordinarily resistant to the notion of formal education for African Americans.<sup>388</sup>

The Moton students' walkout was a seminal moment in Virginia's, and the nation's, history. As a direct, public action by young people affected by segregated education, the event marked the transformative influence that young adults would have on the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s-1960s. The boldness of the walkout highlighted both the extremity of the poor conditions at Moton High School as well as the resolve of African American students to demand better for themselves and their peers. Earlier generations of African Americans had worked within the "Virginia Way" to mitigate whatever aspects of Jim Crow law they could accomplish within a society that had been dominated by elite White conservatives for centuries. Moderation and respectfulness had been demanded of African Americans seeking improvements for their communities, with the unspoken threat of violence ever-present beneath the surface gentility of race relations. The Moton students threw aside the Virginia Way to join young people in other southern states who were ready to take a hard stance on throwing off the shackles of Jim Crow.

In Farmville, the Reverend L. Francis Griffin and the First Baptist Church where he served as pastor provided a vital refuge for the striking students. Himself a fiery personality with little patience for the Virginia Way, Griffin headed the local NAACP branch and served on the Moton Parent Teachers Association (PTA). His frequent appearances at local school board meetings, where he argued for improvements to African American schools, made him a known figure to Prince Edward County authorities. Griffin and the church's congregation offered their building as a meeting space for the student strikers and NAACP attorneys Spottswood Robinson III and Oliver White Hill. The two lawyers had arrived with the intention of telling the students to return to school, as the national NAACP organization then was investigating cases in other states in order to file a lawsuit challenging segregated schools. The students' dedication to their cause, which at that time was to equalize schools, persuaded the attorneys that they had found the case they needed, not to argue another case for the equalization strategy, but instead to press for desegregation of Virginia's schools.<sup>389</sup>

Local and state officials and Virginia's White residents reacted to the student walkout with outrage and contempt. African Americans in many communities justifiably feared violent reprisals. The Moton students, still led by Barbara Johns, and the Reverend Griffin remained steadfast. Griffin, in a fiery rebuttal to local critics, said in a sermon at First Baptist Church, "...I don't have a thing and never will have at the price of human dignity. Still, I will have that which no man can take from me, my individual right to think as I choose and inner freedom..."<sup>390</sup> As a measure of his devotion to the cause, Griffin also organized a petition signed by parents of 117 Moton High School students for a lawsuit to end segregation of the local schools. The case, *Dorothy E. Davis, et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, et al.*, named after the first person who signed the petition, was heard by a three-person panel of federal district judges in Richmond in February 1952.

<sup>388</sup>Jarl K. Jackson and Julie L. Vosmik, "Robert Russa Moton High School," National Historic Landmark nomination, December 1994, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/144-0053/>, p. 9-10, 15.

<sup>389</sup> John Kern and Lena Sweeten McDonald, "First Baptist Church," National Register nomination, October 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/144-0027-0167/>, p. 12-13; Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 208-210; Jarl K. Jackson and Julie L. Vosmik, "Robert Russa Moton High School," National Historic Landmark nomination, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, December 1994, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/144-0053/>, p. 10-12.

<sup>390</sup> John Kern and Lena Sweeten McDonald, "First Baptist Church," National Register nomination, October 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/144-0027-0167/>, p. 13.

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Virginia Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond joined the defense team, which also included two lawyers from elite Richmond firms, while Robert Carter joined Hill and Robinson to represent the plaintiffs.<sup>391</sup>

Lead attorney Oliver W. Hill stated in his opening argument that true equality of education could not be achieved without desegregation. Throwing down the gantlet for his legal adversaries, Hill added that he would “demonstrate by evidence the invalidity of segregation itself.”<sup>392</sup> The case provided the NAACP lawyers with the opportunity to refine a new argument about the detrimental psychological effects that African American children experienced because of segregated education.<sup>393</sup> This premise had debuted in 1950 in the *Briggs v. Elliott* case out of Clarendon County, South Carolina, but two members of a three-judge panel found that equalized schools were not discriminatory; the dissenting jurist, J. Waties Waring, wrote in his dissent that “segregation is per se inequality.”<sup>394</sup> With regard to *Davis v. County School Board*, Charles Sterling Hutcheson and two other federal judges, Armistead Dobie and Albert V. Bryan, heard the case at the Richmond federal district courthouse. The plaintiffs brought multiple social scientists to testify about the effects of segregation while the Prince Edward County team presented evidence of the work undertaken to equalize the county’s segregated schools. In their ruling in favor of the County, the judges found “no harm in segregation” for either race. The plaintiffs and NAACP attorneys did not agree and began work on an appeal.<sup>395</sup> The next year *Davis v. County School Board* was grouped with four similar lawsuits before the U.S. Supreme Court, again with Oliver W. Hill and Spottswood Robinson III, along with Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund, representing the Prince Edward County plaintiffs.

On May 17, 1954, *Davis v. County School Board*, along with four similar lawsuits in other segregated states, were ruled on simultaneously by the U.S. Supreme Court in a ruling known as the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision. The Supreme Court declared that laws requiring racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional and instructed that school systems be desegregated. “On May 31, 1955, the Supreme Court remanded the five original *Brown* cases, including the *Davis* case from Prince Edward [County], back to their respective federal district courts for implementation. As part of this action, the Supreme Court declared that school desegregation should occur ‘with all deliberate speed’” without specifying a timetable for doing so. These instructions are known as *Brown II*. Smith adds, “The year between the two decisions gave

<sup>391</sup> Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 216-219.

<sup>392</sup> Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 220.

<sup>393</sup> The research behind the argument concerning psychological effects was not always fully explained or well understood by participants in litigation to end segregation during the 1950s. Over the preceding 15 years, Drs. Kenneth and Mamie (Phipps) Clark, had conducted research of young children’s psychological development, which included their self-esteem. In a series of experiments colloquially known as the “doll tests,” the Clarks studied children’s preference for a White doll over dolls with dark skin tones and concluded that Black children, regardless if they lived in the North or South, had internalized societal notions that Whiteness was preferable to Blackness. Although their research did not concern children’s academic performance, it was used to argue for desegregation in public schools. Jurists latched onto the sense of inferiority reportedly felt by Black children in their finding that segregation violated the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. They did not cite the totality of the Clarks’ findings, which included that racism was endemic to American society and that school segregation also harmed White children. For more information, see Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 214-215; “Brown v. Board and the ‘Doll Test,’” Legal Defense Fund, 2024, <https://www.naacpldf.org/brown-vs-board/significance-doll-test/>; and “Kenneth and Mamie Clark Doll,” National Park Service, April 11, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/brvb/learn/historyculture/clarkdoll.htm>.

<sup>394</sup> Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 213-215.

<sup>395</sup> Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 219-233.

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White southern conservative politicians time to develop means by which they might ignore or delay or undermine the *Brown* decision.” In 1954, Virginia Attorney General Lindsay J. Almond provided guidance to the Mecklenburg County Board of Education that reflected these developments. The *Brown II* instructions also placed the burden of enforcing *Brown* on individual Black plaintiffs and their families, along with the NAACP.<sup>396</sup>

Aftermath of the *Brown v. Board of Education*, U.S. Supreme Court Decision, 1954

Although willing to go along with “equalization,” Virginia’s conservative political leadership chose to resist integration. With the encouragement of U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd Sr., Virginia’s state and local officials first responded with delay tactics that included simply ignoring the ruling, continuing “equalization efforts,” and requesting guidance from Virginia’s Attorney General at the time, J. Lindsay Almond, who found that the decision did not require Virginia to begin desegregating local schools immediately. As an example, the minutes for the Mecklenburg County School Board meeting on June 14, 1954, show that the members voted unanimously to approve construction of two new high schools; although not explicitly stated in the minutes these new schools were Bluestone and Park View, both to be built for White students. For their next item of business, according to the minutes, local Superintendent of Public Instruction Dowell J. Howard directed the members’ attention to a May 27, 1954, letter from Almond to the State Board of Education and Howard’s May 28, 1954, memo that he had prepared; copies of each document were included with the minutes.<sup>397</sup>

Referring to the *Davis v. Prince Edward County School Board* case that originated in Virginia rather than the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the State Board of Education had requested from Almond guidance on “what is the legal vitality and efficacy of section 140 of the Constitution of Virginia, and the statute enacted pursuant thereto, providing, in substance, that white and colored children shall not be taught in the same school?” In his correspondence, Almond quoted the Supreme Court’s finding “separate but equal” education is “inherently unequal” and violates the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He also explained that the Supreme Court had sent each of the class action lawsuits that made up *Brown v. Board of Education* back to lower federal courts for re-argument, which left the method for addressing the unconstitutionality of “separate but equal” education yet to be determined. Almond’s guidance read as follows:

Pending a final adjudication, it is my opinion that section 140 of the Constitution of Virginia, and the statute of Virginia enacted pursuant thereto, remain intact and unimpaired, imbued with full legal vitality and efficacy.

It is clearly manifest from the Court’s opinion that it reserves judgment on the matter of final disposition of the cause before it until it could be further advised as to matters procedural relating to adjustment to the Court’s opinion on the basic issue.

<sup>396</sup> Larissa M. Smith, State Review Board member, June 11, 2025, review comments for African American Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Documentation Form, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond. The complexities of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision are discussed in numerous books and articles. For example, see Robert J. Cottrol, Raymond T. Diamond, and Leland B. Ware, *Brown v. Board of Education: Caste, Culture, and the Constitution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003) and Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004) [reissue]. A pithy summary of the landmark ruling is at Margaret Edds, *We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team that Dismantled Jim Crow* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), p. 234-258.

<sup>397</sup> Mecklenburg County School Board meeting minutes, June 14, 1954, p. 229, scan of minutes provided by Mecklenburg County Public Schools staff, Boynton, Virginia.

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You have also requested my opinion, in the event I conclude that our constitutional and statutory provisions retain vitality, as to whether the State Board of Education would be within its legal rights to direct the Division Superintendents throughout the State to proceed with plans for the coming school year on the same basis as have heretofore obtained.

It is my opinion that the Board would have full legal authority to issue such directives, in view of the Court's retention of the question as to how and when the Court's opinion on the basic question is to be implemented.<sup>398</sup>

In his May 28 memo, Howard provided quotes from the May 27, 1954, State Board of Education meeting itself:

In view of the opinion of the Attorney General on this day rendered, to which we adhere, the Board proclaims the following policy:

The local Boards of Education are hereby advised to proceed as at present and for the school session 1954-55 to operate the public schools of this State on the same basis as they are now being operated and as heretofore obtained.<sup>399</sup>

According to the Mecklenburg County Board of Education minutes, the members received both documents without discussion. The Board moved on to a discussion about acquiring additional school buses for transportation of students to school.<sup>400</sup> Private resistance to the *Brown v. Board of Education* was not as muted. In 1954, the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties led private efforts to resist school desegregation. The Mecklenburg County chapter of this organization stated in October 1954 that the ability to “pass on to our children and grandchildren the proud heritage of the white race” was at stake.<sup>401</sup> Two years later, the organization claimed to have 12,000 members in chapters across Virginia.

### *Massive Resistance to Desegregation in Virginia*

Virginia's response to the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling played out over the next fourteen years. The complexities of state and local actions, numerous lawsuits, and state and federal court rulings cannot be discussed in their entirety in an MPD such as this. The following discussion is a very broad summary of some key actions by government officials and includes representative examples of circumstances that occurred at individual schools. This summary is intended to provide a framework that can inform further investigations, not to limit the range of significant events and individuals who may be discussed in nominations submitted under this MPD. Furthermore, “Massive Resistance,” while a well-known term in Virginia's history, is subject to confusion among researchers. For example, some sources cited in this MPD refer to Massive Resistance as the “Stanley Plan;” writers cited herein have ascribed different aspects of state resistance to desegregation variously to the Gray Committee's recommendations, the Stanley Plan, and/or to the Massive Resistance legislative acts;

<sup>398</sup> A copy of Almond's two-page letter to the State Board of Education was included in the Mecklenburg County School Board meeting minutes for June 14, 1954, after p. 229; scan of minutes provided by Mecklenburg County Public Schools staff, Boydton, Virginia.

<sup>399</sup> A copy of Howard's one-page memo to the Mecklenburg County School Board was included in the Board's meeting minutes for June 14, 1954, after p. 229; scan of minutes provided by Mecklenburg County Public Schools staff, Boydton, Virginia.

<sup>400</sup> Mecklenburg County School Board meeting minutes, June 14, 1954, p. 229, scan of minutes provided by Mecklenburg County Public Schools staff, Boydton, Virginia.

<sup>401</sup> The quote of the Mecklenburg County chapter's statement is found in Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 63.

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and cited scholarly articles often do not include specific references to legal cases filed in state and federal courts in opposition to Massive Resistance. These and other inconsistencies make it difficult to compose a concise and precise discussion of Virginia's response to the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling from 1954 through 1968. To expand upon information provided herein, future researchers are advised to refer to multiple sources, including primary documents, the many transcriptions of relevant lawsuits that are available online, and the works of legal historians with expertise in this field.

In 1954, the newly inaugurated Governor Thomas B. Stanley formed a committee chaired by Garland Gray of Sussex County, which was charged with "studying" the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and how Virginia would respond. The Stanley administration further developed other methods of resistance, such as "interposition," which attempted to revive the "nullification" argument of the pre-Civil War era, in which states possessed "sovereign" rights to refuse to implement federal laws with which they disagreed. Also, part of the Lost Cause mythology, "states' rights" repeatedly had been used by Southern states such as Virginia to abridge the citizenship rights of African Americans. In 1956, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a package of legislation consisting of twenty-three separate segregation measures. Later dubbed "Massive Resistance" in a nod to Byrd's call to resist integration, these new laws affected only public schools.<sup>402</sup> The General Assembly first altered Virginia's constitution to legalize tuition grants in order to create an opportunity for White parents to enroll their children in private schools and, thus, avoid public schools altogether. Yet another provision permitted local school boards to desegregate their public schools voluntarily. When, in 1955, Arlington County's school board did just that, however, the General Assembly "revoked Arlington's right to have an elected school board."<sup>403</sup> Although various aspects of the Massive Resistance legislative package were struck down over the subsequent handful of years, its tactics shaped many Virginia localities' responses to federal court rulings into the mid-1960s. Among the longest lived of these was "school choice," also known as the "Perrow Plan," which ostensibly created a path for local school systems to desegregate but, because the process was controlled by local school boards, resulted in little concrete action.<sup>404</sup>

Between c. 1954-c. 1965, most Virginia localities attempted to operate their public school systems as if the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling did not exist.<sup>405</sup> In Charlottesville, events associated with Jefferson Elementary School (NRHP 2006; 104-5087) and Jackson P. Burley High School (NRHP 2020; 104-5276-0064) are representative of the tumultuous legal environment concerning school desegregation in 1950s Virginia. In 1954, at the request of the local NAACP branch, Oliver W. Hill examined the conditions at both schools, along with other African American schools in the city. In October 1955, Hill represented fourteen-year-old Olivea Ferguson and 43 additional students to petition the city's school board to desegregate its schools, with a specific request to desegregate the all-White Venable Elementary School and Lane High School. The board refused to take action, prompting the NAACP legal team to sue the City of Charlottesville. In July 1956, U. S. District Judge John Paul ordered the school board not to refuse students admission to the schools solely on the

<sup>402</sup> James Hershman, "Massive Resistance," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, February 7, 2023, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/massive-resistance>.

<sup>403</sup> Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 47-48. Considerable information about Arlington County's desegregation process is available at "Project DAPS: Exploring the Desegregation of Arlington Public Schools," Charlie Clark Center for Local History at Arlington Public Library, 2017, <https://projectdaps.org/>.

<sup>404</sup> Sara K. Eskridge, "Thomas B. Stanley," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/stanley-thomas-b-1890-1970/>, as cited in *Preliminary Information Form for Martinsville Historic District 2019 Boundary Increase*, Kayla Hallberg, Commonwealth Preservation Group, Norfolk, VA, 2020, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond; Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 74-75.

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basis of race. As the school board continued to delay taking action, in 1958, Ferguson, now a sixteen-year-old rising senior at Jackson P. Burley High School, led a group of students in a walkout demonstration. An equalization era school, Burley High had opened in 1951 with an enrollment of 582 African American students. The consolidated high school replaced three high schools at the city's Esmont and Jefferson schools as well as the Albemarle Training School in Albemarle County. After the federal judiciary again ruled in Ferguson's favor in January 1959, the recently-elected Governor (and former Attorney General of Virginia) J. Lindsay Almond ordered the closure of Lane High and Venable Elementary to avoid their partial desegregation. Around the same time, Judge Paul issued a similar finding for Warren County High School and, in Norfolk, U.S. district court judge Walter E. Hoffman ruled that six all-White schools in the city had to desegregate. In response to the assortment of rulings, Almond ordered all nine schools, with a collective enrollment of almost 13,000 students, to close rather than partially desegregate. Both state and federal court found that the school closures violated the students' rights under the U.S. and Virginia constitutions. In 1959, Olivia Ferguson and a small number of African American students were admitted to Lane High, but only to receive tutoring in an office, separate from their White classmates. Ferguson later would recall the high personal price that she paid for her participation in desegregating Charlottesville's schools. While her peers at Jackson P. Burley High School went about their usual activities, Ferguson and her fellow Black students at Lane High were denied opportunities to participate in school programs. For her high school graduation, she received only a certificate that listed the classes she had completed.<sup>406</sup> Nevertheless, Ferguson's Library of Virginia Changemakers profile states, "in 1963 [Ferguson] earned a bachelor's degree in childhood education from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University). She later earned a master's degree in education from Trinity College, in Washington, D.C. After spending her career as an educator outside Virginia, Olivia Ferguson McQueen received her official high school diploma from the Charlottesville Public Schools on May 25, 2013. Decades after her challenge of segregation and personal sacrifice, she became a symbol of resilience and hope for the cause of equal access to education for all children."<sup>407</sup>

Meanwhile, in Richmond's Chimborazo neighborhood, several formerly all-White schools were converted to serve African American students. The Chimborazo School, which had opened in September 1905 with 377 White students and been expanded in 1911, closed at the end of the 1957-1958 school year. The Nathaniel Bacon School, which had opened in September 1915, and the East End Junior High School, which dated to September 1929, also closed. White students previously destined to attend these school instead were distributed among the Robert Fulton, Highland Park, Chandler and John Marshall schools. African American students were pulled from the Chimborazo and George Mason schools to enroll at Nathaniel Bacon School, to which a ten-classroom addition was erected in 1960. East End Junior High reopened in September 1959 with an enrollment composed entirely of African Americans students in grades seven and eight.<sup>408</sup>

<sup>406</sup> "Changemakers: Olivia Ferguson McQueen (1942- )," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/255>; Maral S. Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Jefferson School and Carver Recreation Center," National Register nomination, August 15, 2005, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5087/>, p. 22-24; Maral S. Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Jackson P. Burley High School," National Register nomination, June 10, 2020, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5276-0064/>, p. 18-21; James Hershman, "Massive Resistance," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/massive-resistance>.

<sup>407</sup> "Changemakers: Olivia Ferguson McQueen (1942- )," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/255>.

<sup>408</sup> Kimberly Merkel Chen, "Oakwood-Chimborazo Historic District," National Register nomination, September 29, 2003, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0821/>, p. 154. In addition to continuing school segregation into the 1960s, the management of this handful of Richmond schools is directly associated



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Around the same time, as an onslaught of state and federal judicial rulings dismantled core elements of Massive Resistance, then-Governor J. Lindsay Almond was faced with growing concerns among White Virginians over how the Commonwealth was reacting to the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. “White parents in Arlington, Norfolk, and other cities formed large public school committees and joined together on December 6 [1958] to form the Virginia Committee for Public Schools, which developed into the largest citizen organization involved in the public school desegregation process.”<sup>409</sup> At almost exactly the same time, “Almond began to hear more influential voices of dissent about the school closings. At a December 1958 dinner meeting in Richmond, twenty-nine of the state’s ‘leading businessmen’ told him that the crisis was adversely affecting Virginia’s economy.”<sup>410</sup> Leaders of the Virginia Industrialization Group, these same businessmen were highly influential in the establishment of Virginia’s statewide community college system, which offered more advanced vocational training to recent high school graduates as well as adults of all ages. The crossover of school desegregation and vocational training on this occasion plays into the aforementioned larger vocational education trends then occurring in Virginia during the 1950s-1960s.<sup>411</sup>

In Pulaski County, the aforementioned Calfee Training School is representative of the complicated history of “pupil placement” boards and “school choice” plans in Virginia. One of the original provisions of Massive Resistance had been the creation of a three-person Pupil Placement Board composed of gubernatorial appointees who were tasked with reviewing all applications for student reassignments. Such applications primarily were filed by Black parents seeking to enroll their child in a White school that was closer to their home and/or that offered classes and programs not available at local African American schools.

After parts of the Massive Resistance legislative package were struck down by state and federal courts in 1958-1959, Almond appointed a legislative commission to come up with a new version of pupil placement that would satisfy judicial requirements while still avoiding full desegregation of public schools. The commission, headed by Mosby G. Perrow, a state senator, placed authority for school assignments placed in the hands of local school boards. The “Perrow Plan,” like the preceding Pupil Placement Board, required African American parents to name themselves in the public record, itself a suppressive tactic meant to discourage families from contesting segregation. In areas with particularly virulent White resistance to

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with other major trends in Richmond’s developmental history. The socioeconomic makeup of the Oakwood and Chimborazo neighborhoods where the schools were located had changed substantially since the 1910s, from a majority-White, largely working-class population to a majority-Black middle- and working-class neighborhood. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, suburbanization trends in Richmond, and other Virginia cities, had gradually drawn middle- and upper-class White residents from urban cores, leaving behind racially and ethnically diverse middle- and working-class populations. White working-class residents often then relocated to previously middle-class, White, inner-ring neighborhoods in a pattern of self-segregation that persisted through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The phenomenon, often dubbed “White flight” because relocation of White residents generally appeared to precipitate such demographic shifts during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, is illustrative of the self-segregation patterns that have been identified in numerous places across the U.S. and forecasted the ongoing challenges to achieving full integration up to the present. The intermingling of suburbanization, self-segregation, and “white flight” has been studied for decades and remains a challenging field of inquiry. For example, see Leah Platt Boustán, “Was Postwar Suburbanization ‘White Flight’? Evidence from the Black Migration,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 125, No. 1 (February 2010), p. 417-433; Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Brian J. Daugherty and Charles C. Bolton, *With All Deliberate Speed: Implementing Brown v. Board of Education* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2008); and Robert A. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond Virginia, 1954-89* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

<sup>409</sup> James Hershman, “Massive Resistance,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/massive-resistance>.

<sup>410</sup> James Hershman, “Massive Resistance,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/massive-resistance>.

<sup>411</sup> See Richard A. Hodges, “The Founding of the Virginia Technical College System,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, July 1, 2022, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/the-founding-of-the-virginia-technical-college-system>.

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desegregation, such actions could result in personal threats, vandalism of property, financial reprisals, and acts of violence. Furthermore, school assignment decisions were not made during public meetings and the applications were decided upon solely by local school board members who were not required to follow specific guidelines for making the assignments. Also referred to as the “freedom of choice” plan, local pupil placement boards remained in place into the mid-1960s. The overwhelming majority of school reassignment applications were denied but, for a time the process provided some cover for local school systems to claim they had adopted a desegregation plan that complied with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.<sup>412</sup>

In 1958, parents of students assigned to Calfee Training School had applied to have their children reassigned, but the local school board did not act upon the recommendations of the then-in-place Pupil Placement Board. In August 1960, federal judge Roby C. Thompson ordered Pulaski County and ten other Virginia school districts to recognize the Pupil Placement Board’s assignments. Pulaski County officials complied with the order but, over the next six years, the County continued to limit desegregation to a handful of students per year. In 1966, the Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare determined that the County’s actions were ineffective and ordered immediate and complete desegregation of Pulaski County’s public schools. The Christiansburg Institute, William Gresham Elementary School, and Calfee Training School all closed that same year.<sup>413</sup>

*Civil Rights Leaders in Education*

School desegregation proceeded at a halting place in some Virginia localities during the early 1960s. Numerous individuals undertook the difficult work of pushing their local school boards to enact desegregation plans. Individuals who were not professional educators also stood up for Black students during the 1950s-1960s civil rights demonstrations that followed the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Lynchburg’s Diamond Hill Baptist Church (NRHP 2011; 118-0060-0057), during the 1958-1963 pastorate of the Reverend Virgil Wood, became

a place where mass meetings were held to plan actions to register voters, to turn out the vote or to promote racial healing in the City. It was a place where meetings were held about the integration of public schools or the desegregation of local lunch counters, or to plan protests against unfair hiring practices. It was a rallying point where participants gathered to begin demonstrations and marches, and where audiences assembled to hear speeches by various luminaries in the local and the national Civil Rights movement. and organizations.<sup>414</sup>

Wood himself was credited with instigating many of these actions. He also served on the Lynchburg Interracial Committee, formed by Lynchburg’s city manager in an effort to ameliorate racial tensions. Students at nearby

<sup>412</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 28; James Hershman, "Massive Resistance," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/massive-resistance>; Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 76-77.

<sup>413</sup> Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 29; Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 76-77. Calfee Training School reopened in 1966 as a kindergarten and then, in 1975, was converted to serve as a child development center operated by Pulaski County. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare later was split into the Department of Health and the Department of Education.

<sup>414</sup> Kevin L. Moore, "Diamond Hill Baptist Church," National Register nomination, May 25, 2010, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/118-0060-0057/>, p. 8/6.

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Dunbar High School attended many of the meetings at Diamond Hill Baptist Church. At Wood's invitation in 1961, Reuben Lawson, an NAACP Legal Defense Fund attorney, met with students, parents, and community members at the church to discuss desegregating the city's schools. Lawson soon filed Lynchburg's first school desegregation lawsuit, *Jackson v. The School Board of the City of Lynchburg Virginia*. The lawsuit petitioned the court to have students Cecelia Jackson, Linda Woodruff, Owen Cardwell, and Brenda Hughes admitted to the all-White E.C. Glass High School. In November 1961 Judge Thomas Michie ordered the Lynchburg School Board to admit two of the students to Glass High and asked the City to submit to him a plan for desegregating the entirety of the city's public school system. The school board complied in February 1962 with a proposal to desegregate one school grade per year over a total of twelve years. Although Judge Michie approved the plan, the plaintiffs appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court, which reversed the approval of Lynchburg's desegregation plan. City officials opted to continue litigation, and the NAACP, as well as local African Americans, pressed on for almost a decade. During the course of the legal maneuvers, the City proposed several methods for desegregation, none of which were approved by federal courts until 1971, making Lynchburg one of the last Virginia localities to desegregate its schools.<sup>415</sup>

An unknown number of other individuals have yet to be identified for their significant contributions to public education and school desegregation in Virginia. The examples cited above are intended to illustrate that professional educators, individual students and parents, and community leaders played important roles in the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia. Future updates to this MPD, it is anticipated, will include additional research into such persons and the specific nature of their contributions.

### *Prince Edward County Closes Its Public Schools*

With regard to how localities responded to the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling and to Virginia's assorted responses, Prince Edward County stands alone for its reaction.<sup>416</sup> In January 1959, the General Assembly repealed Virginia's compulsory school attendance law and devolved responsibility of operating public schools to local school boards. Termed the "local option," this new authority also permitted local officials to close their public schools altogether. After being ordered on May 1, 1959, to integrate the county school system, the following month Prince Edward County's Board of Supervisors chose to exercise its "local option" by voting not to fund its schools. White parents with the means to do so organized private schools. In 1955, White parents created a private foundation to raise money for establishing a private school, the Prince Edward Academy, for their children to attend; they also utilized state tuition grants and county tax

<sup>415</sup> Kevin L. Moore, "Diamond Hill Baptist Church," National Register nomination, May 25, 2010, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/118-0060-0057/>, p. 8/7-8/11; Bob Vay, "USDC Western District of Virginia, Lynchburg Division, Civil Action Case #534-Jackson et al vs. School Board of Lynchburg," Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE), August 28, 2018, <https://dove.gmu.edu/index.php/2018/08/28/usdc-western-district-of-virginia-lynchburg-division-civil-action-case-534-jackson-et-al-vs-school-board-of-lynchburg/>. The complexities of the Lynchburg desegregation process are indicative of the immense challenges faced by African Americans to achieve equal educational opportunities for their children. The discussion of such circumstances in this MPD can barely touch on the most salient aspects and further research for nominations of individual schools will be necessary. The variety of reference sources cited in this MPD are intended to provide an accessible place for researchers to begin their investigations.

<sup>416</sup> The response of Prince Edward County during Massive Resistance has been subject to extensive study. See <https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/school-desegregation/prince-edward> for a partial list of websites and books concerning the topic. A compilation of court cases, newspaper articles, correspondence, speeches, organizational statements, and other primary sources also has been published; see Brian J. Daugherty and Brian Grogan, eds., *A Little Child Shall Lead Them: A Documentary Account of the Struggle for School Desegregation in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019).

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credits.<sup>417</sup> The methods they used were studied by White segregationists throughout the South. The founding and ongoing operation of what were termed “segregation academies” is not well known outside of academic circles, but warrants additional study, in part because many schools that began as segregation academics have remained in operation up to the present. It is not, however, anticipated that private schools that originally were founded as Whites-only segregation academies will be included as a resource type that may be nominated under this MPD.

No public schools operated in Prince Edward County from 1959 to 1964. During this 5-year span, few options existed for the county’s African American children. Some families sent their children to live with friends and relatives so they could continue attending school. Many families lacked the financial resources to pay tuition for their child to attend a school outside the county. The American Friends Service Committee offered a placement program that resulted in approximately 70 children being placed with foster families, sometimes far beyond Virginia’s borders. Meanwhile, volunteers, including African American teachers formerly employed at local public schools, held classes in churches, fraternal halls, private dwellings, and other spaces to provide at least some educational experiences for the affected students. They did not operate full-fledged private schools because that may have jeopardized litigation against the County. Freed of state curriculum restrictions, these schools also provided citizenship, black history, arts, and current events instruction as well as recreational activities. They were not full-fledged schools, because the black community did not want to get into the private school business or jeopardize the NAACP suit, but over two years, approximately 600-650 children attended them. The Virginia Teachers Association<sup>418</sup> also provided educational assistance. National notoriety for Prince Edward County arrived when Edward R. Murrow, a journalist with CBS, covered the story in a program entitled “The Lost Cause of 1959.”<sup>419</sup>

In August 1961, when the federal court in Richmond ruled that public school monies could not be used to fund segregation academies, many of Prince Edward County’s White working-class residents no longer could afford tuition at the private schools. The newly elected president, John F. Kennedy, and recently appointed U.S. Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy were prodded to take action regarding Prince Edward County’s refusal to operate a public school system. Robert Kennedy was persuaded to help raise funds for the privately-operated Prince Edward County Free Schools, which operated from 1963-1964 due to donations from the National Education Foundation, various private philanthropic groups, and individuals.<sup>420</sup> Otherwise, the Justice Department had little effect on the slow pace of litigation working its way through the federal court system. The Reverend L. Francis Griffin had filed another lawsuit, this one known as *Griffin v. County Board of Prince Edward County*, to require the local school system to reopen. The case finally reached the U.S. Supreme Court in March 1964 and, two months later, the justices ordered the County to reopen its public schools. NAACP attorneys Frank D. Reeves, Henry L. Marsh III, and Samuel W. Tucker had argued the case,

<sup>417</sup> “The Closing of Prince Edward County’s Schools,” Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 2024, <https://virginiahistory.org/learn/civil-rights-movement-virginia/closing-prince-edward-countys-schools>; Katy June-Friesen, “Massive Resistance in a Small Town,” *Humanities*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (September October 2013), <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/septemberoctober/feature/massive-resistance-in-small-town>.

<sup>418</sup> The Virginia State Teachers Association had dropped “State” from its name by this time; the organization continued as the Virginia Teachers Association until its merger with the Virginia Education Association in 1967.

<sup>419</sup> “The Closing of Prince Edward County’s Schools,” Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 2024, <https://virginiahistory.org/learn/civil-rights-movement-virginia/closing-prince-edward-countys-schools>; Katy June-Friesen, “Massive Resistance in a Small Town,” *Humanities*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (September October 2013), <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/septemberoctober/feature/massive-resistance-in-small-town>.

<sup>420</sup> The Worsham High School (NRHP 2010; 073-5064) functioned as a freedom school for one year. Additional information about its history is at <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/073-5064/>.

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while Griffin once again withstood intense pressure to withdraw from his civil rights activism.<sup>421</sup> The extraordinary circumstances in Prince Edward County were not repeated in other Virginia localities. In 2003, the General Assembly apologized for its role in depriving the county's African American students of the five years of public education owed to them, while Prince Edward County "held a symbolic graduation ceremony for the 'lost generation'."<sup>422</sup>

## Legal Segregation Ends

With passage of the federal 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act, Black Americans secured the civil, social, and political rights to which they were entitled as equal citizens. The Civil Rights Act included a ban on racial discrimination in hiring and employment practices, opening up a far more diverse array of professions and occupations than historically ever had been available. A variety of resistance tactics to complete desegregation, however, continued to be utilized in Virginia and throughout the U.S.

The federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 empowered the U.S. Attorney General to file school desegregation lawsuits and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (a predecessor to the U.S. Department of Education) to withhold federal funding from school systems that discriminated against Black students. The law, however, did not require immediate desegregation of all public schools to achieve racial balance in the makeup of students, faculty, administrators, or staff. Thus did the "freedom of choice" strategy evolve in Virginia to continue the façade of school desegregation in Virginia localities. Parents and students selected their preferred school and, in theory, the local school board now was required to assign students to a particular school without regard to the school's existing racial makeup or the student's race.

On June 18, 1965, *The (Danville) Register* reported that "freedom of choice" plans complied with the 1964 Civil Rights Act and that most school placement applications concerned high school students. Examples cited included Halifax County, where the number of Black students at formerly all-White high schools had increased from just two in 1964 to 48 in 1965. Of 347 such applications in Henry County, a total of 189 Black students were transferred to previously all-White high schools. In Mecklenburg County, according to the newspaper, of the 121 applications for student transfers, 27 were for Black high school students to attend Park View and 23 to go to Bluestone High School.<sup>423</sup> As is described by scholar Brian Daugherty, both students and their families met with resistance, bullying, and threats of violence. In 1967, a Black grandfather reported a gunshot fired at his home after he enrolled his grandchildren in a majority-White school. The same year, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare found that Southside localities, including Mecklenburg County, had not met the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requirements. Black student enrollments at Mecklenburg's formerly all-White schools stood at 1.14 percent.<sup>424</sup> The 1960 and 1970 decennial censuses demonstrate that the county's rate of desegregation had barely begun as of 1967. In 1960, the decennial census recorded that Mecklenburg County's

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<sup>421</sup> Tucker worked as an attorney affiliated with the NAACP in Virginia and was a member of the law firm Hill, Tucker, and Marsh, which included Oliver White Hill and Henry Marsh.

<sup>422</sup> "The Closing of Prince Edward County's Schools," Virginia Museum of History and Culture, 2024, <https://virginiahistory.org/learn/civil-rights-movement-virginia/closing-prince-edward-countys-schools>; Ronald Heinemann, "Moton School Strike and Prince Edward County School Closings," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/moton-school-strike-and-prince-edward-county-school-closings>.

<sup>423</sup> "Area Negro Applications For Transfers Mainly For High Schools," *The (Danville) Register*, June 18, 1965, p. 3-B.

<sup>424</sup> Brian J. Daugherty, *Keep on Keeping On: The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 111.

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“non-white” individuals comprised 46.8 percent of the county’s population.<sup>425</sup> For the 1970 census, percentages of “Negro” individuals were shown on a national map that included county boundaries; counties were shaded according to their approximate percentage of “Negro” residents. Census results showed by Mecklenburg County’s Black residents comprised 30-49.9 percent of the total population.<sup>426</sup>

*Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, U.S. Supreme Court Decision, 1968

In 1968, the Fair Housing Act outlawed racial segregation in housing and required equal access to rental and owner-occupied property. Massive Resistance laws, however, still stymied desegregation in most localities. In the spring of 1968, a lawsuit originally filed in 1965 by Black parents in Virginia seeking to integrate local schools, *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, reached the U.S. Supreme Court, along with similar cases filed in Tennessee and Arkansas. Alexandria native Samuel Wilbert Tucker (June 18, 1913–October 19, 1990) argued the case.<sup>427</sup>

In New Kent County, a rural county situated between Richmond and Williamsburg, residential patterns were broadly integrated due to the dispersion of the majority of Black and White residents across agricultural tracts. Black parents argued that geographic zoning of school districts, therefore, would immediately and effectively end segregation in the local school system.<sup>428</sup> The Supreme Court decision, *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, on May 27, 1968, forced all school districts to complete integration of all public schools at all levels, as follows: facilities; student enrollments; faculty and staff assignments; transportation; and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the Supreme Court ruled that placement of students in a public school must be based on geographic zoning. The decision overturned the last of Virginia’s state-level Massive

<sup>425</sup> This percentage represented an 11 percent decrease in the number of African Americans residing in Mecklenburg County as of 1950. Reasons for the decline in total numbers of Black residents in rural Virginia localities warrant further study but are not within the scope of this nomination. See “U.S. Census Bureau, By County 1950 and 1960,” 1960 Census of Population, Supplementary Report PC (S1)-52, p. 59.

<sup>426</sup> “U.S. Census Bureau, By County 1950 and 1960,” 1960 Census of Population, Supplementary Report PC (S1)-52, p. 59; “U.S. Census Bureau, Distribution of the Negro Population, by County,” 1970 Census of Population, Supplementary Report (June 1971), p. 3.

<sup>427</sup> Tucker was a lifelong civil rights activist and attorney. “In August 1939 he organized at the Alexandria Public Library one of the earliest sit-ins in the struggle for equal rights...As the Virginia NAACP’s (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) lead attorney for decades, Tucker tried scores of discrimination and segregation cases related to schools, teacher pay, and jury selection before local, state, and federal courts... Tucker sat on legal teams that litigated to reopen Prince Edward County’s public schools when they closed rather than desegregate after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), as well as to end tuition subsidies for white students to attend private academies.” See “Changemakers: Samuel W. Tucker (1913-1990),” Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/402>.

<sup>428</sup> Such broad integration existed throughout most of Virginia’s rural areas, including Mecklenburg County. Towns and cities, however, continued to have substantial residential segregation. Integrating independent school districts in towns and cities, therefore, could not be achieved through geographic zoning. Use of bus transportation to integrate schools by transporting both Black and White students as necessary to different schools in order to achieve desegregation was introduced during the early 1970s. The method, however, met with immediate resistance as many parents objected to their children attending schools far from their homes; such objections also provided cover in some quarters for continued resistance to integration. In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* struck down use of busing across local jurisdiction boundaries, such as busing of students from residences located in a city to a suburban school in a different jurisdiction, such as a county. The decision particularly applied to metropolitan school desegregation plans. The means of desegregating Virginia’s public schools, therefore, due to the *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* decision applies primarily to the Commonwealth’s rural localities, not to independent cities such as Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Roanoke, and Alexandria.

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Resistance to integrating all levels of public schools, from elementary grades through graduate and professional schools.<sup>429</sup>

All of the remaining Virginia localities that had thus far resisted desegregation finally settled whatever litigation still working through the court system and complied with federal court orders to desegregate their public school systems. As an example, the minutes of the Mecklenburg County School Board's meeting on July 8, 1968, state that the County was among 10 localities that had been instructed by U.S. District Court (Richmond) Judge Robert R. Merhige Jr. to submit desegregation guidelines based on the Supreme Court's findings in the *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* decision.<sup>430</sup> Similarly, nearby Brunswick County's high schools were integrated in 1969 in the consolidated Brunswick High School (constructed c. 1955) on the outskirts of Lawrenceville, while the former James S. Russell High School in Lawrenceville became a middle school.<sup>431</sup>

The national significance of the *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* decision serves as a logical ending date for the period of significance of the "African American Public Schools in Virginia" historic context. Significant historic events associated with the struggle for equitable public schools have occurred since 1968 and future updates to this MPD may address these. For example, in major urban localities, such as Norfolk, considerable conflict occurred over bussing of students to achieve integrated school enrollments. After desegregation, many African American teachers and administrators saw their careers adversely affected by their absorption into a school system that was entirely controlled by their White counterparts. Black students also struggled in environments with mostly White teachers and staff, many of whom made no effort to mask their disdain for desegregation. Programs such as Head Start were introduced to offset the impacts on children living in challenging environments. Pathologizing of the typical range of children's needs and behaviors, however, created new struggles for children from all backgrounds. The use of affirmative action and other equal employment opportunity measures helped to ameliorate some of the adverse effects on Black teachers and administrators, but also caused additional resentments among White counterparts. The rapid diversification of Virginia's overall population since the 1970s, particularly in northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, the Richmond metropolitan area, and, increasingly, throughout all localities, brought dozens of new ethnicities, languages, and cultural practices to the Commonwealth. Simultaneously, housing patterns have caused many public schools to reintegrate, this time based more on class than race. All of these topics are worthy of future investigations, as are the significance of Virginia's historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), private schools from throughout the state's history, and individual leaders in provision of education to African Americans from early childhood through post-graduate studies. Much work remains to be done.

<sup>429</sup> Sara K. Eskridge, "Thomas B. Stanley," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/stanley-thomas-b-1890-1970/>, as cited in *Preliminary Information Form for Martinsville Historic District 2019 Boundary Increase*, Kayla Hallberg, Commonwealth Preservation Group, Norfolk, VA, 2020. Since the 1940s, Virginia's public universities and colleges, segregated since their founding dates, had admitted only an occasional student of color when a parallel education program was not available at Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University). Two of the oldest schools, the College of William & Mary and the University of Virginia, also have documented the presence of enslaved individuals on campus who worked on construction projects, for individual faculty members, and for students attending the schools. See <https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/> and <https://mel.virginia.edu/>.

<sup>430</sup> Mecklenburg County School Board meeting minutes, July 8, 1968, p. 3, scan of minutes provided by Mecklenburg County Public Schools staff, Boydton, Virginia.

<sup>431</sup> Saint Paul's College 4 Life, "James S. Russell High School," February 25, 2021, [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story\\_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591).

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## F. Associated Property Types

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## INTRODUCTION

This MPD includes public schools in Virginia that served African American students between c. 1870-c. 1968. Specific resource types and subtypes discussed below are based on the results of archival investigations completed as of this writing. The increasing rarity of properties associated with the significant historic themes identified herein, along with the historic and recent trends that have caused many of these properties to disappear, must be taken into account when evaluating a property's Register eligibility and integrity.<sup>432</sup>

Discussed in more detail below, the four resource types documented to date include Community Built School Buildings, c. 1870-c.1902 (with 2 subtypes); Privately/ Publicly Financed Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931; New Deal Era School Buildings, c. 1932-c. 1945; and Equalization Era School Buildings, c. 1946-c. 1968. Below are registration requirements for each resource type. Tables listing common architectural elements of each resource type also are provided. The tables are not comprehensive; variations among properties is not only typical but essentially universal. Additional registration requirements may be added in the future, including for specific subtypes, as more survey data becomes available and this MPD can be updated accordingly.

<sup>432</sup> The seven aspects of integrity are Location, Setting, Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. Integrity is discussed in detail as part of the registration requirements for each property type that has been identified to date in this MPD.

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Resources associated with this MPD may be eligible for Register listing under one or more of the National Register eligibility criteria, as summarized below. Multiple areas of significance may be associated with resources linked to this MPD. The potential applicability of each Criterion and Area of Significance are discussed in more detail below and are intended to be a starting point for evaluating the significance of a resource. The areas of significance, in particular, are not intended to be limiting, and do not necessarily represent the full universe of potential areas for which a resource may be significant.

This MPD provides an overview of the significant historic themes with which Virginia's historic African American schools are associated. The MPD's applicable content may be noted by reference in a nomination for an individual property, and need not be repeated in the nomination form. Resources nominated under this MPD will require additional research specific to their history. A resultant nomination will provide explanation of the property's current condition, significance, and integrity, as well as explain how the property meets the Registration Requirements described below.

### Applicable NRHP Criteria

#### *Criterion A*

Resources that functioned as African American public schools in Virginia constructed between c. 1870-c. 1968 may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for their direct associations with significant events and broad patterns of history. Schools that began as privately-funded and operated endeavors but later became public schools, or effectively functioned as public schools through agreements made with local school boards, also may be nominated under Criterion A.

To be considered for listing under Criterion A, a property must be associated with one or more significant events or patterns that occurred over time as discussed in the historic context. Resources may be eligible for listing under Criterion A in the following areas: (1) **Social History**, for their significant association with the Civil Rights Movement, social/civic activism, and/or their contributions to everyday African American life from c. 1870-c. 1968; (2) **Education**, for their significant association with provision of public education to African American students during the segregation era; (3) **Ethnic Heritage: African American**, for their significant association with the experiences of African American life in Virginia during the segregation era and/or the Civil Rights Movement, particularly with regard to the other areas of significance identified herein.

#### *Criterion B*

In order for a property to be considered eligible for listing under Criterion B, the resource must illustrate the achievements of an individual whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented, and are associated with the historic contexts of this MPD. According to NPS guidelines on applying the National Register Criteria for Eligibility, "A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group." Additionally, the subject property must be associated with the significant person's "productive life, reflecting the time period when [they] achieved significance. In some instances, this may be a person's home; in other cases, a person's business, office, laboratory, or studio may best represent [their] contribution."

Although numerous research projects have documented significant educators who worked in Virginia throughout the segregation era, no systematic, statewide effort to document such individuals has been

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conducted. In communities across Virginia, whether in a rural, town, or urban setting, it is likely that still more individual educators who made significant contributions in accordance with the registration requirements of this MPD have yet to be identified. Additional research and oral history interviews may reveal individually significant persons and/or critically important details to support the development of a successful Criterion B argument for an individual property's nomination.

Because limited site-specific research was conducted as part of the archival research during this project, the educators mentioned herein are, by no means, the only people who meet Criterion B for the purposes of this MPD. To demonstrate a representative range of significant contributions made by various individuals, the teachers and administrators discussed herein are shown to have achieved significance for their local contributions to African American social, civil rights, and/or education history; some of these persons are discussed above in Section E and still more are included below in the statements of significance for the four property types identified to date.

*Criterion C*

Resources associated with this MPD may be eligible for listing under Criterion C in the area of **Architecture** if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the "work of a master." Currently available research has demonstrated that many of the properties identified herein are illustrative of a distinctive "type" or collection of distinctive resources. For example, one-room, frame, gable-roofed schoolhouses are frequently mentioned in historic records and have been surveyed in numerous localities. The earliest examples of these predate the creation of standardized requirements for interior lighting, heating, and ventilation, student/teacher ratios, placement of furnishings, and provision of educational materials. Rare examples of log construction have been identified; most early schools were frame construction. Such resources also exemplify significant vernacular types, materials, and/or craftsmanship, particularly those examples built by African American carpenters, masons, and other craftsmen from c. 1870-c. 1931. Therefore, the fact that the earlier buildings described herein do not adhere to an established building type or style should not be construed as adversely impacting their architectural and design significance or their overall integrity.

Standardized school plans began to proliferate during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Certain design features, particularly banks of large windows, became commonplace and, often, the schoolhouses were larger, with two or more classrooms. Masonry construction in towns and cities came into use, while rural schools often still utilized frame construction. During the same period, construction materials were standardized in terms of dimensions, density, fire resistance, and other qualities. The Virginia Department of Education began to provide localities with an assortment of architect-prepared plans during the 1910s, a practice that continued into the 1930s. As time went on, schools became larger due to consolidation and to growing student enrollments.

During the New Deal, federally-funded projects often were the work of an architect, usually an individual based in Virginia or Washington, D.C. The Colonial Revival style was perennially preferred in Virginia, although other nationally popular styles, such as Art Deco, Art Moderne, and International Style, occasionally were utilized for large projects in towns and cities. Following World War II, Modern Movement styles were adopted on a widespread basis. Their simplified, resilient materials, lack of applied ornamentation, and modular spaces allowed for faster construction and reduced costs. During this period, the Virginia Department of Education ceased preparing its own standardized plans but reviewed school designs prepared by architects hired by localities on a project by project basis. Many of these architects, whether individually or working within a firm, produced designs for a range of project types from educational to ecclesiastical, residential, commercial, and industrial. Throughout each of these periods, pedagogical theories informed school designs, generally with

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emphasis on engaging students with their instructional materials and instructors in a productive fashion. As pedagogical theories evolved, were retired, or were replaced with new approaches, school designs followed suit, an example of American architect Louis Sullivan's truism that "form follows function."

Properties may also be eligible under Criterion C if they represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (i.e., historic districts). In Virginia, a commonly found example of such a district concerns late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century schools that are collocated with African American churches and cemeteries. Between c. 1870-c. 1931, church congregations often sponsored and supported schools for African American children by providing monetary donations as well as land upon which to build a school. As these schools were closed, ownership of the building often reverted to the church trustees and the building would be used for other purposes, including Sunday school, community meetings, and storage. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, some of the buildings had been rehabilitated to serve as museums and community centers. Another example of a district is a school campus with multiple buildings, often from different periods, such as a New Deal era school with an equalization-era addition and/or an earlier schoolhouse converted for use as a shop, lunchroom, or other function. During the New Deal and Equalization Era, particularly in urban and suburban locations, ancillary, purpose-built resources, such as industrial and agricultural shops and home economics cottages, were included in school campus designs, as well as structures such as athletic fields, basketball courts, paved parking lots and sidewalks, and drainage systems. Such campuses are evaluated as historic districts.

**Landscape Architecture**, defined as "the practical art of designing or arranging the land for human use and enjoyment," also may be an applicable area of significance for African American schools.<sup>433</sup> In the *National Register Bulletin: How to Evaluate and Nominate a Designed Historic Landscape*, such landscapes further are defined as

a landscape that has significance as a design or work of art; was consciously designed and laid out by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, or horticulturalist to a design principle, or an owner or other amateur using a recognized style or tradition in response or reaction to a recognized style or tradition; has a historical association with a significant person, trend, event, etc. in landscape gardening or landscape architecture; or a significant relationship to the theory or practice of landscape architecture.

For African American schools built between c. 1870-c. 1968, identification and evaluation of the designed landscape should be done within the context of schoolyard design principles of a property's historic period. The earliest schools, particularly those that were located within makeshift quarters such as private dwellings and rented commercial spaces, likely had no specific landscape design. Purpose-built schools dating to c. 1870- c. 1902 often operated with such minuscule funding that only the most essential landscape elements, such as a well and outdoor privies, were part of the schoolyard.

Landscape design at Black schools dating to various historical periods has not received considerable scholarly attention for an assortment of reasons. The topic is, however, significant as it pertains to the overall design, construction, and operation of segregated schools in Virginia. By the 1910s, landscaping of rural and town/urban schoolyards was a consideration for educators, local and state school officials, and architects and

<sup>433</sup> *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C., U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1997), p. 41; J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987).

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landscape designers. Furthermore, the perennial emphasis on agricultural training at rural African American schools made vegetable gardens and farming demonstration areas a logical part of a typical schoolyard. Proponents also recognized that vegetable gardens, berry patches, and fruit trees could provide additional sustenance for students and their families. Finally, inclusion of ornamental plants, a manicured lawn, and a flagpole were part of the school's presentation to an often-hostile White public that such properties were desirable and respectable places. Due to the refusal of local school boards to devote an equal share of funding to schools for Black and White students, however, landscaping of many rural schoolyards was often minimal. The limited financial means of many rural African American communities curtailed landscaping as well.

During the post-segregation era, continually inadequate school budgets forced many localities to dispense with "extras," and extensive ornamental plantings, school gardens, agricultural demonstration areas, and other landscape elements often were classified as such, even when the desirability of such landscape features remained high. Furthermore, due to the ephemeral nature of vegetative plantings and the likelihood of building additions, modifications, and/or wholesale replacement of architectural resources, for many school properties, the integrity of a historic landscape design may be too eroded for an observer to ascertain the property's original or historic landscape elements.<sup>434</sup>

Although circumstances indicate that intact historic landscape designs at African American schools are likely to be rare today, nevertheless inclusion of Landscape Architecture as an area of significance in this MPD is warranted. School-specific landscape design at African American schools has been a distinct practice at least since the 1915 publication of *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*, by Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel.<sup>435</sup> This booklet is commonly associated with the Rosenwald Fund, which was established in 1917, but the publication's building plans and guidance were widely used for school construction projects funded through other means. Many of the guide's recommendations addressed practical concerns, such as the selection of a site, orienting a schoolhouse to maximize interior light, providing proper drainage, and digging a well. Aesthetics also were addressed with guidance on the selection and placement of trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants, judicious use of fencing, and placement of an agriculture demonstration project. Charles E. Greening, in his c. 1922 article, "The Relation of Landscape Architecture to the Public Schools," described the positive effects of landscape architecture on students' conduct and education.<sup>436</sup> While shaped by the larger, more prosperous communities where he lived in Michigan, his recommendations were applicable and adaptable to African American schools in Virginia. Based on research to date, it appears to be more likely that the formal designs Greening recommended will be found at urban and suburban schools dating between the 1920s-1940s. Among the characteristics of such designs were provisions of a range of plant types for students' science education, beautification of school grounds as a means of presenting a positive appearance to the local community, and use of school vegetable gardens for agricultural instruction.

For the most part, lower-income African American communities could not afford to incorporate every element recommended in *The Negro Rural School* (nor could they persuade local school boards to include these features). However, historic photos, alumni recollections, correspondence, school board meeting minutes, and other sources demonstrate that individual design elements were a part of c. 1870-c. 1931 school properties. For

<sup>434</sup> It is possible for archaeological investigations, coupled with archival research and oral history, to gain a more nuanced understanding of how a school's landscape changed over time, but such work pertains more to restoring a historic landscape, rather than to the significance of the historic design. Landscape restoration projects are not within the purview of this MPD.

<sup>435</sup> Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*, (Tuskegee, Alabama: The Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915).

<sup>436</sup> Charles E. Greening, "The Relation of Landscape Architecture to the Public Schools," (Monroe, Mich.: The Greening Nursery Company, c. 1922), scanned copy online at <https://www.loc.gov/item/22023339/>.

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example, selection of appropriate locations for outdoor privies and wells was essential for sanitation purposes. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the importance of home-grown fruits and vegetables for low-income families sometimes made a school garden a priority as such produce could be included in school lunches or sent home with students. Moreover, a neat schoolyard conveyed a sense of respectability to the larger community, including White school officials and community residents who doubted the need for African American schools. Finally, with Virginia's perpetual emphasis on agricultural education, school gardens and vegetable plots were utilized for training students in various cultivation methods; for girls, their home economics instruction also included preserving food through canning, salting, and drying.<sup>437</sup>

School facilities designed by professional architects, particularly those of the New Deal and equalization eras between c. 1932-c. 1968, generally included landscape designs that addressed concerns that Greening identified and that are still applicable today, such as grading, drainage, provision of ingress/egress for school buses and automobiles, parking, signage, playgrounds, athletic fields, and a paved circulation network. Due to financial constraints, ornamental elements often were limited to evergreen plantings at building entries, a flagpole within a bed of decorative grasses and annuals, and a similar assortment of plantings alongside a permanent school sign. Larger schools with greater financial means may have included vegetable gardens, ponds, and specimens of native and exotic plants to supplement classroom instruction. By the 1930s, however, inclusion of demonstration farm and garden plots in rural schoolyards had fallen out of favor, largely because most African American educators and parents demanded curricula that focused on academic subjects. Vocational, agricultural, and home economics instruction continued in public schools, largely through the influence of federal legislation and funding for such programs.

Important to note is that a property may retain integrity of setting without having significance in the area of Landscape Architecture. An example is a small, rural district that includes a church, school, and cemetery in their original locations, with decorative foundation plantings, historic signage, a gravel entry drive, grassy parking area, and a capped well. The district's setting has high integrity, but these features do not comprise a significant designed historic landscape. Another example is an individual property for which the original landscape design was minimal, even when an architect designed the building(s). Equalization era schools, for example, may have landscape designs that address the most essential concerns for drainage, parking, and ingress/egress of vehicles, but lack any association with the period's formal design theories. While such a landscape is unlikely to have significance in the area of Landscape Architecture, retention of all of the historic elements will contribute to the property's integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

*Criterion D*

Resources associated with this MPD may also be eligible for listing for their significance in the area of **Archaeology** due to their potential to yield important information about history (or pre-history). Most often, resources listed under Criterion D are archaeological sites. No archaeological investigations were performed as part of the development of this MPD. However, there is the potential for archaeological resources to be identified that are associated with known resources that are no longer extant. This may include school buildings, auxiliary resources such as agricultural shops, community canneries, home economics cottages, playgrounds, privies, a baseball diamond or other type of athletic field, fences, and school gardens. Additional research and investigation will be required in order to nominate properties that are significant under Criterion D in association with this MPD. To date, archaeological investigations at African American schools have not been

<sup>437</sup> Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*, (Tuskegee, Alabama: The Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915), p. 29-26, 41-42, 52-56. 72, 75.

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routinely conducted in Virginia. However, Colleen Marie Betti recently demonstrated the archaeological potential of such properties in her 2023 dissertation, *“Go Ahead and Erect the Buildings Themselves:” An Archaeological Investigation of Three Black Schools in Gloucester County, Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2023). Should future investigations occur, this MPD may be updated to include registration requirements for African American school properties with significance in the area of Archaeology or a related discipline.

### *Criteria Considerations*

Regulations for the National Register and Virginia Landmarks Register programs have established that some property types, including cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years are not typically considered to be eligible for the National Register.<sup>438</sup> Such properties may be listed, however, if they meet the following Criteria Considerations:

A. a **religious property** deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance. For the purposes of this MPD, such properties include schools that were originally established by a religious organization, that received funding from religious organizations, and/or that were denominational schools before becoming public schools. Some African American public schools received donations from religious organizations and such schools also meet Criteria Consideration A.

B. a building or structure **removed from its original location** but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event. For the purposes of this MPD, such properties include schoolhouses that were relocated during their period of significance as part of the overall property’s educational use, schoolhouses that were relocated to prevent their demolition during 20<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure development projects such as urban renewal and highway construction (events that themselves typically are of historic significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development and/or Social History), or schoolhouses that were relocated after their public school function ceased in order to preserve them for other uses. Specific circumstances of a given school building’s relocation must be described in the property’s nomination.<sup>439</sup>

C. a **birthplace or grave** of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life. With regard to individuals of historical significance in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: African American, for the purposes of this MPD, their birthplace or grave may be nominated if the criteria consideration is met.

D. a **cemetery** which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, from association with historic events. For the purposes of this MPD’s

<sup>438</sup> Beth L. Savage and Sarah Dillard Pope, *National Register Bulletin, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 1997), p. 25. This bulletin provides detailed guidance about each criteria consideration and examples of property types that meet them. Nomination authors are advised to review this bulletin closely before beginning work on a nomination for a property that must meet one or more of the criteria considerations.

<sup>439</sup> From time to time, relocations of historic schoolhouses to make way for new infrastructure has continued up to the present. Altered environmental conditions are known to have adversely affected some schoolhouses, necessitating their relocation. An example is the Cornland School (131-0111) in the City of Chesapeake, which was moved due to the onset of recurrent flooding at its original site. See <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/131-0111/>. Before relocating a historic building, consultation with DHR staff is strongly advised in order to assure that the relocation process can retain the resource’s eligibility for Register listing.

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context, African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968, entire cemeteries have not often been documented for association with an individual school property or an educational historic district.<sup>440</sup> From the 1860s-1920s, African American church congregations often supported local schools by donating some of the church's land for the schoolhouses. Properties with former schoolhouses, a historic church building, and an associated church cemetery have been found throughout rural Virginia. Examples include the Pleasant Ridge School Historic District (NRHP 2024; 134-0399) and Averett School and Wharton Memorial Baptist Church and Cemetery (NRHP 2021; 058-5127). Additionally, should this MPD be expanded to include additional historic contexts and property types, Criteria Consideration D may be applicable in some instances.<sup>441</sup>

E. a **reconstructed** building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived. For the purposes of this MPD's context, African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968, reconstructed school buildings are unlikely to meet Criteria Consideration E. Should a reconstructed building be proposed for nomination under this MPD, the specific circumstances of the reconstruction project must be described and its significance under one or more of the areas of significance identified above must be demonstrated.

F. a property primarily **commemorative** in intent of design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance. For the purposes of this MPD's context, African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968, a commemorative resource on a school property, such as a statue, park, landscape design, or other resource type, may meet Criteria Consideration E. Should a commemorative property be proposed for nomination under this MPD as currently written, the specific circumstances of the property's creation, design, age, tradition, and/or symbolic values must be demonstrated and the property must have significance under one or more of the National Register eligibility criteria and be associated with the African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968 context.

G. a property achieving **significance within the past 50 years** if it is of exceptional importance. The provision of public education to African Americans between c. 1870-c. 1968 was succeeded by decades of effort to complete desegregation of public schools, continued community activism to secure equitable public resources for the education of Black students, and unintended consequences on the professional careers of Black educators, among other events and trends. "Exceptional" significance is understood to refer to historic events, trends, and/or individuals considered by their associated audiences, participants, peers, members, scholars, and/or others to have been particularly important in the property's history. Nominations for properties to which Criteria Consideration G is applicable must detail the specific circumstances of the exceptional significance.

<sup>440</sup> In Powhatan County, two former private schools for African American students had an associated cemetery at the former Belmead plantation. St. Emma's Military Academy and St. Francis De Sales School for Girls. St. Emma's was founded by Louise Drexel Morrell and her husband, Edward de Vaux Morrell. St. Francis was established by Katharine Drexel, founder of the Catholic order of Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Nuns who taught at the two schools between the 1890s-early 1970s were buried in the cemetery on the property; after the schools closed, the order's nuns continued to reside here into the 2010s. Family and slave cemeteries associated with the property's history as a plantation also exist on the property. For additional information, see Victoria Leonard, Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Kayla Halberg, "Belmead Boundary Increase 2024," National Register additional documentation, June 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/072-0049/>.

<sup>441</sup> Another option for nominating a property that includes a church, school, and cemetery is by way of Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, Kayla Halberg, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Churches in Virginia" Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), pending review by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board on September 18, 2025. It is possible for a property to meet the registration requirements in both MPDs. Effective strategies for nominating such a property will vary on a case by case basis. The staff at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources will provide guidance.



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## Evaluating Historic Integrity

There are seven aspects that are assessed to determine whether or not a resource retains historic integrity to convey its significant associations. These aspects are Location, Setting, Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. A significant resource is not required to retain all seven aspects of integrity in order to be eligible for nomination under this MPD. Rather, the aspects of integrity that are associated with the property's specific area of significance are needed. Evolved aspects of integrity may be identified and associated with the nature of the property's historic significance.

An important quality of many resources that may be nominated under this MPD is that they typically are associated with individuals and communities during a period of political, economic, social, civil, and educational restrictions. As such, the integrity of a resource that is associated with an area of significance identified in this MPD must be evaluated according to the pervasive circumstances of the period of significance as African American people and communities experienced them. For example, some buildings may have been originally constructed for one use, but altered to accommodate a change in use (e.g., former school buildings that were adapted to serve as dwellings, apartment buildings, adult education spaces, or community centers) or were expanded over time (such as a New Deal-era school with 1950s additions to achieve "equalization").

Some resources associated with this MPD are no longer in use and have been vacant for a number of years. While vacancy has often led to significant deterioration, poor physical condition does not equate to poor integrity. Instead, the presence of character-defining features that are most closely associated with the property's period and area(s) of significance inform the integrity analysis.

During their property's period of significance, property owners often carried out repairs utilizing readily available materials and workmanship as needed for routine maintenance; such changes do not automatically constitute a loss of integrity. With regard to some school buildings, changing local code requirements during the mid- to late-20th century, in particular, may have prompted repairs, renovations, and alterations that were mandatory in order for the school to remain in use.

Furthermore, alterations made during a property's period of significance, such as additions or material changes, were frequently viewed as improvements that symbolized a community's progress or were associated with a legal victory, or other events or trends that a community would have celebrated.

Therefore, when evaluating a property's integrity of workmanship, design, and materials, the alterations and repairs associated with any or all of the above factors are to be examined in the context of the property's area(s) and period of significance.

Within historic Black neighborhoods, extensive demolition, displacement, and new construction occurred between c. 1940-c. 1980 due to highway construction and urban renewal projects carried out by federal, state, and local governments. Local zoning practices that permitted the establishment of land uses, such as industrial, large-scale waste disposal, recycling, energy generation and transmission, mining, and similar activities that are incompatible with an educational facility are also common in both urban and rural settings. Such projects and land uses were rooted in professional practices now identified as structural and environmental racism.

A historic resource affected by incompatible activities and planning decisions will have changes to the location, setting, feeling, and association in places where these events occurred. The consequences of such activities and projects are part of the significance of surviving resources associated with African American education between

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c. 1870-c. 1968 because they are illustrative of the many challenges overcome by Black individuals and communities during the segregation era and the fight for civil rights for African Americans at a level unprecedented in the nation's history.

Analysis of a property's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, therefore, must take into account the effects of incompatible infrastructure construction on an individual property and should be understood as contributing to that property's integrity.

### Associated Property Types

Analysis of the survey data in the Virginia Cultural Resources Information System (VCRIS) at the Department of Historic Resources has yielded considerable information about the array of African American school properties that have been surveyed across the Commonwealth. To date, four property types have been identified: Community-Built Schools, c. 1870-c. 1902; Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931; New Deal Era Schools, c. 1932-c. 1945; and Equalization Era Schools, c. 1946-c. 1968. Two subtypes of Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools have been identified: school buildings that do not follow a standardized plan and those built according to a standardized plan. Each property type and the two subtypes are discussed in detail below.

Although many hundreds of historic schools have been surveyed and recorded in VCRIS, as of November 6, 2024, a total of 219 such buildings have been identified as historically African American schools. This number does not represent the total universe of extant Black schools dating to the segregation era. Full utilization of all of the VCRIS data is not possible at this time, due to a lack of information in the database that identifies those that once served only African American students. Furthermore, resources flagged as demolished in VCRIS, and resources identified as being constructed using Julius Rosenwald Foundation funding were removed from the analyzed data.<sup>442</sup>

Of the 219 African American schools recorded in VCRIS as of November 6, 2024, 47 properties date to c. 1870-c. 1902 and, for the purposes of this MPD, are classified as Community-Built Schools. The Privately-/ Publicly Financed Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931, are the most numerous property type, with a total of 99 surveyed schools. New Deal Era Schools, c. 1932-c. 1945, number 30 properties, as does the Equalization Era, c. 1946-c. 1968 type. With regard to schools that have architectural elements from more than one historic period, the earliest historic period is used to classify the property. To demonstrate the geographical distribution of the surveyed schools, the breakdown of property types is displayed on Location Maps 1-16, which are in Section G of this MPD. The distribution of schools is concentrated in Virginia's urban centers and in rural jurisdictions that have historically had a large percentage of African American residents and relatively little redevelopment of school properties. Northampton County has the highest number of surveyed rural schools, while the City of Richmond has the highest number of schools in an urban setting.

The VCRIS survey data also was analyzed to identify the typical settings within which African American schools are currently located. The data bear out the findings explicated in the historic context, with the majority of schools located in rural areas of Virginia, especially those dating between c. 1870-c. 1932. A total of 87 surveyed schools are in rural localities. Urban and town settings together comprise the second-largest group of

<sup>442</sup> Schools built due to funding from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation may be nominated under the MPD by Bryan Clark Green entitled "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>.

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schools, with 37 and 31, respectively, or a total of 68 schools altogether. For 21 properties, the survey data is indeterminate with regard to setting. The remaining 43 schools that have been surveyed are in various settings, including unincorporated hamlets and villages, suburbs, or along transportation corridors. This data is depicted in Section G on the Settings Map, which illustrates the geographical distribution of schools according to their setting.

**Table 1. Classification of Setting Types, Organized by School Construction Date and Number of Recorded Schools**

Setting Type	Construction Date: c. 1870-c. 1901	Construction Date: c. 1902-c. 1931	Construction Date: c. 1932-c. 1945	Construction Date: c. 1946-c. 1968	Unknown Construction Date:	Total Number of Schools in Each Setting Type
Hamlet	3	6	2	0	0	11
N/A	7	8	1	3	2	21
Rural	21	51	7	8	0	87
Suburban	2	4	1	8	0	15
Town	5	7	8	11	0	31
Transportation Corridor	0	1	1	1	0	3
Urban	5	16	10	6	0	37
Village	6	6	0	1	1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>219</b>

Important to note is that the above observations are based on properties that have been recorded in VCRIS to date and identified as historically African American schools. The VCRIS data have been compiled in an unsystematic fashion through numerous surveys conducted over many years by disparate parties. Some localities have been surveyed more extensively than others of similar character. Additional historic African American schools routinely are identified and added to the VCRIS database. The data, therefore, shown on the attached maps and in this MPD are not comprehensive and should not be interpreted as such.

### Property Type 1: Community-Built Schools, c. 1870-c. 1902

#### *Description*

This property type includes four variations on public schools for Black children that were operable between c. 1870-c. 1902.

- Churches that historically doubled as public schools between c. 1870-c. 1902.
- Purpose-built public school buildings that were erected between c. 1870-c. 1902.
- Private purpose-built schools that either
  - predated c. 1870 but were converted for service as public schools between c. 1870-c. 1902, or essentially functioned as public schools through agreements made with local school boards;
  - were erected between c. 1870-c. 1902 and were converted to public schools during this same period or at a later date, or essentially functioned as public schools through agreements made with local school boards.

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The assortment of building types and dates of construction in the Community-Built School Buildings property type is reflective of the often-haphazard creation of local public school systems in Virginia between c. 1870-c. 1902. This period's extension of a right to public education to all African American Virginians for the first time in the Commonwealth's history, however, is of transcendent significance and warrants including the range of school buildings as is currently known to have existed. Presently, it is not known if purpose-built schools outnumbered those in makeshift spaces, nor has the precise process and chronology of moving Black students into purpose-built schools been fully defined.<sup>443</sup> For the most part, Black communities received little support from their local government to pay for construction of schools during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Commonwealth of Virginia had established its Literary Fund in 1811, but did not provide state funding for school construction until 1908 with passage of the Williams Building Act.<sup>444</sup> Given the dearth of public money for school construction, individual property owners and Black churches often donated land and materials for building a school, while community volunteers performed the necessary labor. Books, furnishings, and other equipment also either were donated or procured through use of private funds. Standardized school building plans had yet to be developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Virginia. Extant schools that date between c. 1870-c. 1902, therefore, embody the vernacular construction methods of their communities, particularly those of Black carpenters, masons, millers, and other tradesmen.

Of the 49 schools currently identified as historically Black schools dating to the c. 1870-c. 1902 period, based on VCRIS data analysis their settings are as follows:

- Hamlet – 3
- Setting Not Listed – 7
- Rural – 21
- Suburban – 2
- Town – 5
- Urban – 5
- Village – 6

### Schools Within Churches and Purpose-Built Schoolhouses Donated by Churches

Many of the African American churches that have been listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places are known to have functioned themselves as schools, at least in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Such buildings doubled as schoolhouses during the school year, and the emphasis on Sunday school as part of weekly church activities was meant to provide adults with educational opportunities, too.<sup>445</sup> Public school teachers often led Sunday school classes. Few, if any, alterations were made to African American churches in order for them to double as schools. Consequently, a church's historic function as a public school may be indicated only in church records, oral history, historic photos, or other archival

<sup>443</sup> After Virginia's 1870 constitution was ratified and localities thereafter were required to establish local school systems, private dwellings, churches, and rented spaces in commercial buildings were among the facilities pressed into service as schools. Identifying such properties is typically done through archival research. Insufficient data has been compiled, however, to establish registration requirements for such resources. A building that served an educational purpose on a transient basis may be significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Social History and/or Education. Given the lack of pertinent data, however, registration requirements for such properties cannot be established at this time.

<sup>444</sup> The Williams Building Act allowed localities to borrow money from the Literary Fund, and localities paid back the debt through proceeds from local taxation.

<sup>445</sup> For example, see John R. Kern and Michael J. Pulice, "St. John's Episcopal Church," National Register nomination, April 2008, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/139-0008/>, p. 4, 6.

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materials. Churches that doubled as schools between c. 1870-c. 1902 may be nominated under this MPD using the same registration requirements as those described below for purpose-built schools.

Over time, as both school enrollments and church congregations grew, housing public schools in separate buildings became increasingly necessary. Due to the paucity of public funding for schools, particularly those for Black children, African American church congregations and other community leaders often would negotiate with local school officials to establish a public school, often using church-owned property, by donating the land and, not infrequently, the materials and labor with which the schoolhouses were erected. In cases where a separate, purpose-built school was erected adjacent to a church or on other donated land, the building had many, if not all, of the typical design characteristics of this property type, as summarized above. While used as a public school, the building and the land on which it stood typically were owned by the local school board. When the building ceased use as a public school, localities were free to dispose of the buildings as they preferred. Typical scenarios included:

- The school boards returned ownership of both the building and land to the party, such as a church's board of trustees or heirs of the original donor, that originally had donated them.
- Former schoolhouses sometimes were sold and moved to a new location.
- In some instances, the school board retained ownership of the building and land without immediately finding a new use for the property.
  - It has not been unusual for church congregations to purchase a former school building and land at a later date, sometimes several decades after the public school function ceased.
  - Similarly, some localities opted to return ownership of the school property to the original donor many years after a schoolhouse was unoccupied and unused.

A small sampling of the churches that are known to have housed and/or sponsored schools include Alexander Hill Baptist Church (NRHP 2017; 014-5054) in Buckingham County; Alfred Street Baptist Church (NRHP 2004; 100-0049) in Alexandria; Cedar Hill Church (NRHP 2002; 081-5466) in Rockbridge County; Davis Chapel (NRHP 2004; 100-5015-0006) in Alexandria; First Baptist Church (NRHP 2017; 137-5071)<sup>446</sup> in Williamsburg; First Baptist Church (NRHP 2002; 107-0039) in Covington; Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Church (NRHP 2004; 000-1138) in Arlington County; and Wharton Memorial Baptist Church (NRHP 2021; 058-5127) in Mecklenburg County.

### Typical Design Characteristics of Purpose-Built Schools

Surveyed examples of Community-Built Schools erected between c. 1870-c. 1902 are typically one to two stories in height, frame or (less often) brick construction, with a gable roof clad with standing-seam metal. The buildings vary in size, style, construction method, and materials. Community-Built Schools may also include historic additions or alterations and/or various types of outbuildings or secondary education buildings that were utilized during the property's period of significance. Based on analysis of VCRIS data, some of the schools featured front porches. While the majority of surveyed schools were one- to two-room buildings of frame construction, a few examples of larger buildings were identified. Stylistic influences on the buildings generally

<sup>446</sup> See David Lewes and Mary Ruffin Hanbury, "First Baptist Church," National Register nomination, December 21, 2016, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/137-5071/>. The National Register nomination for First Baptist Church in Williamsburg concerns the sanctuary built in 1956. The congregation's 1856 church was razed during the 1950s as part of the Colonial Williamsburg project. First Baptist Church's association with Reconstruction Era schools is discussed on page 15 of the nomination.

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are limited, but widespread availability of mass-produced ornamentation allowed for inclusion of decorative flourishes typical of the late Victorian era, such as brackets, molded window surrounds, and railings and balustrades.

Due to their “makeshift” nature, extant examples of late-19<sup>th</sup>-century schools for African Americans can be difficult to identify, particularly in rural localities. Cassandra Burton’s *African-American Education in Westmoreland County* includes photos of several examples of schools that later were converted to dwellings (Figures 24-25). When such adaptation occurs, the original form, footprint, and massing of the schoolhouse may be almost entirely engulfed. In Figure 24, it is not immediately apparent which part of the dwelling is comprised of the schoolhouse.

Other examples of schoolhouses converted to dwellings leave the original building largely intact on the exterior, such as the example in Figure 25. A screened-in porch that spans the current façade is the only obvious exterior alteration to the former Oak Grove “Colored” School. Many late-19<sup>th</sup>-century schoolhouses were front gable buildings with the primary entrance centered on a gable wall and windows along the side walls. It is possible that the current façade dates to the building’s conversion to a dwelling. A missing element is a flue or chimney that likely was necessary for use of a wood- or coal-burning stove to heat the building. Such alterations as these complicate the task of identifying former schoolhouses that now are dwellings. Evidence of such a building’s original use is needed to confirm the original educational function and may be found in historic photos, school board records, deeds, oral history



Figure 24. The first school in Colonial Beach for African American students was a frame, one-room building. It was sold in 1942 and adapted for residential use (Image Source: Cassandra Burton, *African American Education in Westmoreland County* [Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999], p. 11).



Figure 215. When the former Oak Grove “Colored” School was converted for use as a dwelling, indoor plumbing was added immediately. The screened-in porch on the facade was added at an unknown date (Image Source: Cassandra Burton, *African American Education in Westmoreland County* [Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999], p. 28).



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interviews, newspapers, and similar records.

### Examples of Purpose-Built Public Schools

In Virginia's larger towns and cities, where substantial populations of African Americans lived in discrete neighborhoods, many public schools for Black students originally had been established by the Freedmen's Bureau between 1865-1868. Due to the extreme needs created by the Civil War, these first schools usually were in haphazard locations including warehouses, churches, stores, dwellings, and barns. The founding of the public school system in 1870 led many Virginia localities to assume control of operation of Freedmen's Bureau schools.



*Figure 226. Union Street School in Leesburg, Loudoun County (Image Source: Jane Covington, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, 2022). One of the enduring characteristics of purpose-built schools dating to the late-19<sup>th</sup> century was inclusion of multiple large windows to maximize natural light within the classrooms. Although schools for White students began to be electrified as part of the school consolidation process of the 1900s-1920s, African American schools in many rural localities were not modernized. Therefore, large windows continued to characterize schools for Black children into the 1930s.*

In Leesburg, Loudoun County, the first public school for Black students was collocated with Mt. Olive Baptist Church until the early 1880s. In 1883, the town's school district acquired a 0.8-acre lot to build a new schoolhouse for African American students. The two-story, four-room Union Street School offered education through 7<sup>th</sup> grade (Figure 26). The funding sources for the building's construction have not been fully identified; county school board records indicate that an assortment of private donations, as well as state funding, were used to pay for the school system's operations at this time.<sup>447</sup> In 1887, a second school for African Americans was built in Leesburg's Gleedsville neighborhood. The slow rate of school construction in Loudoun County, according to the county's first superintendent for

public instruction, owed to opposition of local elites who worried that public education would "promote the interests and elevate the condition of Negroes and lower classes of whites at the expense of property holders." John Gleed, a landowner for whom the neighborhood was named, convinced the Leesburg school district to acquire a lot on Mountain Gap Road for a school. The Mountain Gap "Colored" School was a one-room, frame, front gable building with two large windows on each side elevation.<sup>448</sup>

Loudoun County offered its Black students no options to continue public schooling beyond 7<sup>th</sup> grade. For an unknown duration, Union Street School principal John C. Walker (c. 1871-1953) taught 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes

<sup>447</sup> Jane Covington, "Union Street School," National Register nomination, September 14, 2022, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, p. 18.

<sup>448</sup> Leslie Wright, "Mt. Olive Methodist Episcopal Church," National Register nomination, June 20, 2004, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/053-0994/>, p. 8.

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in his own home but received no compensation from public funds for his extra work; instead, parents paid him with their own money. Starting in 1894, when the Manassas Industrial Institute (discussed below) became a public school, Loudoun County's Black students could attend high school there but only if their families could afford to pay tuition.<sup>449</sup>

Another Reconstruction Era school that remained in use as a public school into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was Rock Run School (NRHP 2004; 044-5171) in Henry County. The original sponsor of the school is not known, but Henry County acquired the property in 1882. Built as a one-room schoolhouse, Rock Run was somewhat unusual because it was frame construction at a time that most rural schools in the region were still log buildings. A second classroom was added to the building at an unknown date. According to an oral history interview with an alumnus who attended Rock Run School during the 1940s, the building was never modernized, nor was it

equipped by Henry County with desks, chairs, and other furnishings. Textbooks were shared among students and remained in use for many years. The school finally closed in 1955.<sup>450</sup>



Figure 237. Josephine City School in Clarke County (Image Source: Department of Historic Resources, Calder Loth, 2003, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/168-5027/>)

A fourth example of a purpose-built public school in Virginia that dates to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is the Josephine School (NRHP 1995; 168-5027), located within the Josephine City Historic District in Clarke County (Figure 27). In 1882, the local school district acquired a parcel from African American property owner Thomas Laws and, a few months later, announced that sealed bids to construct a new schoolhouse had been received.

Josephine City had been founded by emancipated African Americans during the 1870s. Situated south of the Town of Berryville, the community encompassed about 40 acres that had been accrued by Black landowners over time. Completion of the building was announced in a December 7, 1882, issue of the local newspapers, the

<sup>449</sup> Jane Covington, "Union Street School," National Register nomination, September 14, 2022, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5117/>, p. 18. When a one-story addition was added to Union Street School during the late 1920s, the local community named it the Walker Room in honor of John C. Walker. Recent research has revealed that the materials for the addition came from a rural school in the Lower Sycolin community a short distance south of Leesburg. Reuse of materials was another method used by African American communities to improve educational facilities when local school boards would not do so.

<sup>450</sup> Michael J. Pulice and Kay Slaughter, "Rock Run School," National Register nomination, July 2005, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/044-5171/>, p. 4, 6-8.



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*Clarke Courier*.<sup>451</sup> The frame, one-story schoolhouse building was moved 100 feet from its original location about 1930, after the Josephine Training School was erected on a 5-acre parcel directly to the south. Now clad with stucco, the building's footprint, form, and massing have not been greatly altered over time, but for a diminutive, c. 1960 lateral extension that houses a restroom. The side-gable building's four-bay façade has two centered entries with a large multiple-light window to either side. Each entry leads to a classroom that originally was finished with narrow wood flooring, tongue-and-groove wainscoting, and plain trim with corner blocks. A door connected the two classrooms, each of which also featured a small cloakroom for students' use.<sup>452</sup>

### Private Schools Converted to Public Schools

Many of the private schools established by philanthropists, donors, and education activists during the earliest years of Reconstruction eventually were absorbed into Virginia's nascent public school system. Examples include the Howland Chapel School and Holley Graded School discussed above in Section E. In Prince William County, a public school system began to be established in 1868-1869, prior to the ratification of Virginia's new constitution. These first schools were created under the 1846 state law that allowed "private subscriptions" to finance school operations. The county's first purpose-built public school was erected in 1872 and had two stories, with one room per floor. As did most localities, Prince William County first concentrated its efforts on creating a countywide system of elementary schools before turning attention to public schools for higher grades. By 1890, the county featured 30 schools for White children and 38 schools for African American children. Enrollment consisted of 2,353 White pupils and 1,104 Black students.<sup>453</sup>

Through the leadership of Jennie Serepta Dean (1848-1913), who spent half a decade raising the necessary funds, the coeducational Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth opened in October 1893. Frederick Douglass, a renowned abolitionist, spoke at the school's dedication the following autumn. Dean had been born enslaved in 1848 and, after the Civil War ended, she worked as a domestic servant in Washington D.C. She began her educational career as a Sunday school founder and teacher in 1878. Several of the Sunday schools she helped to establish grew to become church congregations. Like many Black educators of the period, Dean incorporated practical training in her schools, focusing first on cooking and sewing classes offered on Saturdays. A women's suffrage advocate, Dean also met other prominent women in Virginia, including Emily Howland, who provided Dean with the money to construct the first building, Howland Hall, at the Manassas

<sup>451</sup> Maral S. Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Josephine City Historic District," December 1, 2014, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/168-5029/>, p. 35. The 1882 schoolhouse was converted into a home economics demonstration space and agricultural shop for the training school students. A large portion of the training school's construction cost was paid for by the Black community using private funds. The Josephine Training School was enlarged in 1951 and became the Johnson-Williams High School. When County schools desegregated in 1966, the high school was converted for use as the Johnson-Williams Middle School and operated in this capacity until closing permanently in 1987.

<sup>452</sup> Maral S. Kalbian, "Josephine City School," National Register nomination, November 28, 1994, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/168-5027/>, p. 2-3.

<sup>453</sup> Marianne Julienne and Brent Tarter, "The Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the>; Julia C. Gentry, "The History of Public School Education in Prince William County, Virginia, 1871-1900, 1906-1956," Master's Thesis, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1957, p. 17-18, 25. Interestingly, about two decades later, Andrew Carnegie, a wealthy industrialist and philanthropist, offered \$1,000 to establish a public library for the county, if a third story could be added to the school. The library was dedicated on January 1, 1900.

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Industrial School's newly purchased site. Donations from other private individuals financed additional construction as well as the acquisition of furnishings, books, and equipment.<sup>454</sup>

In terms of scope and curriculum, Dean's efforts in many ways paralleled those of James Solomon Russell in Mecklenburg County, with the notable difference that the Manassas Industrial School was secular. A combination of academic coursework and training in skilled trades, including carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, agriculture, canning, laundry, and sewing, was provided to students. Students boarded at the school and paid tuition, usually through their labor rather than cash payments. The school's agricultural work, which covered the majority of the 200 acres of school property, provided much of the food consumed by faculty, students, and staff. Student enrollment typically numbered approximately 150 students. The academic curriculum expanded steadily, growing to include mathematics, natural sciences, geography, physiology, literature, and music, as did the roster of trades coursework for both girls and boys. Male students also participated in a pseudo-military program that included drills and serving "guard duty." Such training was intended to instill discipline and was used at many schools during the late 19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>455</sup> With her charismatic personality and skillful advocacy, as well, perhaps, as Prince William County's proximity to Washington D.C., Dean secured a meeting that included herself and students and faculty with President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906. The following year, Andrew Carnegie provided a major gift of \$10,000 to pay for construction of a building that housed a library, school administrative offices, and classrooms. The prominence of Carnegie himself and the scope of the gift brought the Manassas Industrial School to the attention of additional philanthropic funds and individuals. Such accomplishments allowed Dean to continue the Manassas Industrial Institute's operations as an independent institution.<sup>456</sup> By this time, Virginia's Jim Crow era was well underway and "the school operated under increasingly difficult economic, political, and social conditions."<sup>457</sup> Although Dean's passing in 1913 represented a significant blow to the school's operations, the private school continued serving Black students for another 25 years. In 1938, Prince William County acquired the property to serve as a regional, public high school, which continued to operate until 1959.<sup>458</sup> The County's purchase of the campus came more than 30 years after the first public high school for White students opened. The newly acquired high school had a rocky beginning but, as had become common with Virginia's public secondary

<sup>454</sup> John W. Sprinkle Jr., "Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth," National Register nomination, October 18, 1993, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/155-0010/>, p. 8/1;

"Changemakers: Jennie Dean (1848-1913)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/213>.

<sup>455</sup> St. Emma's Military Institute, a Catholic parochial school in Powhatan County, operated as Virginia's (and perhaps the nation's) only military school for African American, male students. Institutions such as Manassas Industrial School offered only some aspects of such training to supplement their overall curriculum. For additional information about St. Emma's Military Institute, see Victoria Leonard, Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Kayla Halberg, "Belmead Boundary Increase 2024," Virginia Landmarks Register nomination, June 2024, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va., <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/072-0049/>.

<sup>456</sup> John W. Sprinkle Jr., "Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth," National Register nomination, October 18, 1993, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va., p. 8/2-8/3; "Changemakers: Jennie Dean (1848-1913)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/213>; Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, et al., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press., 1996), p. 273; Julia C. Gentry, "The History of Public School Education in Prince William County, Virginia, 1871-1900, 1906-1956," Master's Thesis, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1957, p. 46-47.

<sup>457</sup> John W. Sprinkle Jr., "Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth," National Register nomination, October 18, 1993, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va., p. 8/2-8/4.

<sup>458</sup> "Changemakers: Jennie Dean (1848-1913)," Library of Virginia, no date, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/213>; John W. Sprinkle Jr., "Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth," National Register nomination, October 18, 1993, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va., p. 8/1; Julia C. Gentry, "The History of Public School Education in Prince William County, Virginia, 1871-1900, 1906-1956," Master's Thesis, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1957, p. 50.

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schools, offered academic classes and vocational training that were similar to what had been offered at Manassas Industrial Institute since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>459</sup>

### Formerly White Schools Converted for Use as African American Schools

A small subset of Community-Built Schools originally served as public schools for White pupils before they were repurposed for use as African American schools. Such conversions occurred when outdated schools serving White children were replaced with new buildings. This tactic was another facet of the unequal school facilities that characterized the segregation era. The c. 1887 Number 18 School (NRHP 1997; 030-0135) in Fauquier County originally functioned as a one-room schoolhouse for White children in the vicinity of the rural village of Marshall. In 1908, a consolidated school for White students opened in Marshall, and Number 18 School was repurposed as a school for nearby Black students. The building continued this function until 1964, when it finally closed as a public school. The school's closure came upon completion of the consolidated, still-segregated Northwestern Elementary School near Rectortown. Fauquier County was among the many Virginia localities that resisted desegregation of public schools until the 1968 *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* Supreme Court decision finally forced an end to de jure segregation practices in public schools.<sup>460</sup>

As of November 2024, just six other formerly all-White schools that were converted have been recorded in VCRIS. Such conversions occurred based on local school board decisions and conditions at the time. Some repurposing was associated with larger systematic efforts, such as the consolidation of White schools, while others were converted due to changes in racial makeup of the neighborhood they served. The period of use as a public school also varied based on local conditions. At the John Morris Farm (062-5034) in Nelson County, a c. 1870 one-room schoolhouse served White pupils until the two-room Bryant School opened in 1921, after which African American students attended the schoolhouse at the Morris Farm. No other information is yet available concerning the school's history.<sup>461</sup> The former Keswick School (002-0965), built c. 1890, was a three-room, frame building that originally was for White students. By 1915, it had been reassigned to serve African American students. The building remained in use as a school into the 1950s, at which time it was converted to a dwelling and substantially altered.<sup>462</sup> In Isle of Wight County, the Gay School (046-5029) was a c. 1900 two-room, frame schoolhouse originally built for White pupils. It was converted to a Black school at an unknown date and closed by 1940, after which the c. 1900 building was converted to a dwelling.<sup>463</sup>

Repurposed schoolhouses sometimes were relocated after a new school for White students was erected. Such was the case with the aforementioned Pleasant Ridge School (NRHP 2024; 134-0399) in the former Princess Anne County (now the City of Virginia Beach). A portion of a larger c. 1886 schoolhouse constructed for White students, the building section that became Pleasant Ridge School was moved to its current location c. 1918 to

<sup>459</sup> Julia C. Gentry, "The History of Public School Education in Prince William County, Virginia, 1871-1900, 1906-1956," Master's Thesis, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1957, p. 26-31.

<sup>460</sup> Glen Ellen Alderton, "Number 18 School (Marshall)," National Register nomination, May 15, 1997, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/030-0135/>, p. 8/4.

<sup>461</sup> "John Morris Farm," VCRIS record, 062-5034, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 1998.

<sup>462</sup> "Keswick School," VCRIS record, 002-0965, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 2008.

<sup>463</sup> "Gay School," VCRIS record, 046-5029, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 2022.

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serve Black pupils in grades 1-7. The schoolhouse closed in 1956 when its students were reassigned to the newly built, equalization era Seaboard Elementary School.<sup>464</sup>

In Richmond, two schools that originally served White students were repurposed due to changing racial makeup of the neighborhoods where they stood. Built in 1872, the Leigh School (127-0424) originally functioned as a public school for White pupils. In 1909, the building was repurposed to serve as a high school for African American students, and it was renamed Armstrong High School. The high school moved to a new facility in 1922, after which the 1872 schoolhouse became Booker T. Washington Elementary School. In 1956, the schoolhouse was renamed again, as Benjamin Graves Middle School, and continued to function as such until it closed in the early 1970s. The building is within the Jackson Ward Historic District (NHL 1978; 127-0237), a nationally significant, historically African American neighborhood. Similarly, the Fairmount School (NRHP 2005; 127-0308) stands in the North Church Hill neighborhood, which originally developed with a majority-White population and transitioned to a majority African American neighborhood by the mid-1950s. Originally built in 1895, with substantial additions constructed in 1908-1909, 1915-1916, 1924-1925, and 1950, the building was designated an African American school by local officials in 1958 as part of overall resistance of City officials to school desegregation.<sup>465</sup>

For nominations prepared under this MPD, because the significance of schools that once served White students, is associated with their function as segregated schools converted to serve African American students, the significance of these converted schools will most often be evaluated within the context of the period when Black pupils were enrolled. Properties with areas of significance, such as Architecture, that may predate the school's use as a school for African Americans, may have a period of significance that begins earlier.<sup>466</sup> Based on the information available as of November 2024, therefore, these seven schools should be considered according to the context of Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931, New Deal Era Schools, c. 1932-c. 1945, and/or Equalization Era Schools, c. 1946-c. 1968. Registration requirements for all of these resource types is provided below.

### *Significance*

African American schools erected between c. 1870-c. 1902 are classified herein as "Community-Built Schools" because of the private methods that were necessary to finance their construction and operation. Almost all localities funneled the majority of public funds to schools for White children. Black communities often relied on donations from philanthropic funds, wealthy individuals, and local fundraising activities to build schools. African American property owners, including churches, fraternal organizations, and individuals, routinely donated land to a locality in order to have a school constructed. Black communities also donated construction materials and labor to build the schools, as well as private funds to furnish and equip the schools.

Schools in rural areas, which comprised the majority of Virginia at the time, generally had a minimum enrollment of 12-15 students who were taught by a single teacher. These early schools were placed within what

<sup>464</sup> Marcus Pollard, Victoria Leonard, Colleen Betti, and David Brown, "Pleasant Ridge School Historic District," National Register nomination, December 22, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/134-0399/>, p. 15, 20.

<sup>465</sup> Bryan Clark Green, "Fairmount School," National Register nomination, December 22, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0308/>, p. 8/4-8/5.

<sup>466</sup> For example, see Marcus Pollard, Victoria Leonard, Colleen Betti, and David Brown, "Pleasant Ridge School Historic District," National Register nomination, December 22, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/134-0399/>

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was considered a walkable distance for children and often originally were collocated in a building such as a church, fraternal hall, or private dwelling. Purpose-built schoolhouses for White students were built at a more rapid rate than those for African American children. Many of the first purpose-built schools for Black students were located in Virginia's cities and larger towns, where local communities often had better financial fortunes than rural Black enclaves. These buildings typically were within a racially segregated neighborhood or only a short distance removed from the neighborhood. During the 1880s-1890s, purpose-built rural schools began to be erected, generally only as private economic circumstances permitted because public funding remained scarce.

African American community leaders often used a combination of diplomacy, tact, determination, and confidence to convince White school officials to accept the establishment of schools for Black children. One such individual, the Reverend Isreal Cross (1832-1911), had been born enslaved in Nansemond County in 1832 but was permitted to learn to read and write (receiving much of his instruction from his enslaver's White children). Cross's intellectual and spiritual traits prompted a White minister to offer Cross the use of his personal library so that he could become a preacher. All of these activities occurred during the period in Virginia's history when state law forbade enslaved people to be taught to read and write. It is not known currently what prompted the exceptions made for Cross. After the Civil War, Cross briefly attended a Richmond seminary before returning to his homeplace, where he formed Mount Sinai Baptist Church and Piney Grove Baptist Church. Cross also advocated for education and land ownership as expedient means of racial uplift and land records demonstrate that Black property owners acquired land in the vicinity of the two churches. Likely due to his own education, as well as an engaging personality, Cross himself accumulated considerable landholdings. On multiple occasions, he donated land to the Nansemond County School Board to facilitate construction of public schools for Black children and convinced officials to permit multiple classrooms if the Black community provided the necessary labor. In exchange, the County paid each teacher's salary.<sup>467</sup>

Housed in makeshift buildings – often barns, churches, and homes – nineteenth century schoolhouses did not project the primacy of state power but blended into the topography. Indeed, schools embodied central features of their social surroundings. In an isolated, rural society, they were intensely local; in a culture that valued family above all, they were family-dominated; in a society based on strict racial and class rankings, they reflected widespread social inequality; and in an impoverished agricultural economy, they were poor and makeshift... Yet for all of its shortcomings, Virginia's public school system grew dramatically between 1870 and 1900.<sup>468</sup>

By Link's calculation, "the numbers of black and white schools, teachers, and enrolled and attending pupils tripled" during these 30 years, which provides a concrete testament to the value placed on education in African American communities throughout this period.<sup>469</sup>

### *Registration Requirements*

In order to qualify for listing under this MPD, Community-Built Schools must be directly associated with the "African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968" historic context that is presented in Section E of this MPD. Nominated properties must be significant in the area of **Ethnic Heritage: African American** and

<sup>467</sup> Kimble A. David, "Mount Sinai Baptist Church," National Register nomination, June 2, 2006, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5249/>, p. 8/5, 8/10.

<sup>468</sup> William A. Link, as quoted in Scot A. French et al., *Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in Virginia* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2007), p. 10.

<sup>469</sup> Scot A. French et al., *Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Segregated Education in Virginia* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2007), p. 10-11.

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one or more of the following areas of significance: **Education, Social History, Architecture, and/or Landscape Architecture.** Such properties should retain sufficient physical integrity that conveys their significant association with one or more of the areas of significance identified herein. As summarized above, the following Community-Built Schools may be nominated under this MPD:

- Churches that historically doubled as schools between c. 1870-c. 1902.
- Purpose-built public school buildings that were erected between c. 1870-c. 1902.
- Private schoolhouses that either
  - predate c. 1870 but were converted for service as public schools between c. 1870-c. 1902, , or essentially functioned as public schools through agreements made with local school boards; or
  - were in operation between c. 1870-c. 1902 and were converted to public schools during this same period or at a later date, , or essentially functioned as public schools through agreements made with local school boards.

*Aspects of Integrity*Location and Setting

The Community-Built Public School resource type, inclusive of its four variants, often was situated within a segregated residential area during its period of significance. The type often remains in its original location. Small, frame, purpose-built schoolhouses, however, may have been moved after they ceased functioning as a public school. Relocation that occurred during the property's period of significance will not affect integrity of setting. If the building remains on its original parcel but was moved after its period of significance, the building's integrity of location and setting is considered to be largely intact. The circumstances of the building's relocation after its period of significance are to be evaluated on an individual basis when evaluating its integrity of location.

Due to urban renewal and highway construction between c. 1940-c. 1990, widespread destruction of African American neighborhoods occurred in Virginia. Relocation of a schoolhouse due to such practices may have taken place during or after the property's period of significance. The planning practices that caused fragmentation and erasure of Black neighborhoods are themselves often significant historic trends and events. Therefore, the schoolhouse's relocation affects the resource's integrity of location and setting but does not automatically eliminate such integrity. It is possible, for example, that the relocated building will have integrity of location and setting due to significance it may have gained in the area of Community Planning and Development and/or Social History and/or other areas of significance related to c. 1940-c. 1990 planning practices.

With regard to setting, in rural areas Community-Built Public Schools often stood in a residential area situated along the outskirts of a town or within an unincorporated Black community with origins that extended back to the Reconstruction Era or earlier. In urban areas, Community-Built Public Schools generally were located within a segregated Black neighborhood. In all types of settings, such schoolhouses may stand on the same property as an African American church. The setting of Community-Built Public Schools may have been entirely residential in character, or have included a mix of residential and other uses, such as commercial, recreational, educational, religious, and social. Because many Black neighborhoods experienced extensive demolitions due to c. 1940-c. 1990 highway construction, urban renewal projects, and/or local zoning for land uses and activities incompatible with a neighborhood's or individual resource's original character, the setting of

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a Community-Built Public School may have been altered. In such cases, these alterations are part of the resource's integrity of setting rather than a negative effect because the consequences are part of the direct association of surviving resources with significance in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and related areas of significance such as Social History and Community Planning and Development. The incompatible activities and uses are illustrative of the many challenges overcome by Black individuals and communities prior to and during the dismantling of Jim Crow segregation and establishment of civil rights for African Americans at a level unprecedented in the nation's history and represent another facet of the structural racism that caused segregated public education to be the norm in Virginia between c. 1870-c. 1968.

### Design, Materials, and Workmanship

The design, materials, and workmanship of Community-Built Public Schools vary based on whether the resource originally was a church, a purpose-built public school, or a schoolhouse that originally was operated by a private entity before becoming a public school. Between c. 1870-c. 1968, standardized plans for schoolhouses were not yet widely available. Schoolhouses from this period usually were erected by local carpenters, tradesmen, and masons to meet a community's specific needs and financial means. Building form, footprint, size, and massing, location of entries and windows, and interior plan varied widely. Although large windows often are found on early schoolhouses, the presence of smaller windows should not be automatically considered to be a later alteration. Availability of materials often dictated a building's individual features. Careful examination of a building may be necessary to determine original design elements and materials. Historic photos, correspondence, local school board records, and oral history also may provide helpful insight into a schoolhouse's design and materials over time.

The materials used to erect all variations of Community-Built Public Schools were often amassed through donations and may have included materials salvaged from other types of earlier buildings, as well as leftover materials from another project. The quality of donated materials is likely to have varied, necessitating subsequent replacement of poor-quality materials and those subjected to hard use. Over time, purpose-built public schools dating between c. 1870-c. 1902 transitioned from being primarily log to frame and, less often, masonry construction.

Replacement of materials in kind are appropriate when needed to keep a resource in good repair and active use. Where historic materials have been replaced with functionally and/or visually similar but newer types of synthetic materials, a resource's integrity of materials and workmanship is somewhat diminished depending on the extent of the replacement materials and whether the alterations occurred during the property's period of significance. Some materials, such as asbestos, aluminum, and vinyl siding, asphalt shingles, and aluminum-framed window sash were introduced during the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are, themselves, of historic age and contribute to integrity in their own right, even if such materials replaced earlier finishes such as weatherboard siding, wood shingles, and wood-framed sash.

Extensive use of replacement materials after the property's period of significance may result in proportional erosion of integrity, depending upon the resource's materials, design, and workmanship during its period of significance. Additions on buildings that date to the resource's period of significance and allowed the building to continue or expand its historic use do not erode integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Those alterations that postdate the period of significance are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to understand the resource's continued integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

For the most part, purpose-built schoolhouses erected between c. 1870-c. 1902 embody the vernacular construction methods of their time and place. Such buildings offer an opportunity to study the work of artisans

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and craftsmen and how they evolved from the original construction to repairs made over time. Construction methods changed considerably during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of standardized, mass-produced materials of different types as well as increasingly comprehensive building codes for light, ventilation, heating, and safety. Consequently, repairs made during the latter years of a schoolhouse's period of significance may demonstrate such evolution in workmanship. Poorly rendered repairs made after a property's period of significance can adversely affect a building's integrity of workmanship, depending on the extent to which earlier workmanship has been erased or removed.

With regard to the former public schools that may be open to the public today, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that may be applicable to ensure equal access to and within the interior. Such retrofits to comply with the ADA's accessibility requirements shall not be considered alterations that impair the property's integrity. Typical alterations include erecting a ramp to permit entry to the building's main entrance and/or alternate entrances, widening of some doors, and/or removal or lowering of thresholds at exterior or interior room entries. To comply with ADA, provision of drinking water and restrooms for site visitors, if offered, is not required to be within the historic building; a separate building for these purposes may be provided elsewhere on the property.

The following table lists the common physical features of purpose-built school buildings erected between c. 1870-c. 1902 that have been recorded in VCRIS.

**Table 2: Common Elements of Community-Built School Buildings, c. 1870-c. 1902**

Element	Typical Components and Materials
Stories	Generally, one to two stories, but typically no more than three
Foundation	Continuous, pier, or raised Materials: brick, concrete (block or formed), stone (fieldstone, cobblestone, limestone, random rubble), wood, parged
Structural System	Frame or masonry (brick)
Exterior Treatment	Wood Siding (weatherboard, clapboard, German-Style), brick, stucco, wood shingles, or some combination. Exterior detailing often includes wood corner boards; some may include stone quoins or brick pilasters, belt courses, buttresses, or other brick detailing. Common alterations to exterior materials include vinyl, composite, stucco, asphalt, asbestos, or some combination of such siding.
Roof	Typically gable (side, front, or cross) or hipped, though shape may vary. Roof details may include exposed rafter tails, overhanging eaves, gable end vents (often louvered), belfry/cupola, and chimneys. Materials: most common are standing seam or corrugated metal, though some include pressed metal, tin, or asphalt shingles.



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Element	Typical Components and Materials
Entrances	Typically, single or double leaf; usually wood. Common replacement materials include fiberglass or composite.
Windows	Typically, wood sash, double hung windows, though they may range in style and material.
Additions	Historic additions are common, but not requisite for listing. If additions were constructed after the period of significance, they should not overwhelm the original building, unless they are specifically tied to the use of the property as a Community-Built School during the resource's period of significance.
Interiors	Interiors were not evaluated as part of this project; however, they should generally retain their historic plan and circulation pattern. Many are historically one- to two-rooms, though larger examples may include more rooms. Common interior alterations include additional interior partitions, installation of kitchen and bathroom fixtures, removal of flooring materials such as wood, carpeting, and asbestos or other vinyl covering, covering of original beadboard wall and ceiling finishes with gypsum wallboard, and paint.
Secondary Resources	Community-built schools may have secondary resources, but they are not required for listing. Common secondary resources include privies, outbuildings, and other educational buildings. Former schoolhouses that were converted to dwellings may have attached or detached garages and/or carports.

Integrity of design, workmanship, and materials for churches that doubled as schools between c. 1870-c. 1902 may have evolved depending on the length of time that the building continued its function as a church. Churches that were altered after c. 1902 may no longer retain features that were in place during their use as a public school. Although still historically significant for other reasons, such buildings may not have the necessary integrity of design, workmanship, and materials for nomination under this MPD.

### Feeling and Association

Location of a Community-Built Public School within or adjacent to a historically segregated area of residential resources, or mixed with commercial, recreational, educational, religious, and social uses, will contribute to the resource's integrity of feeling and association. The retention of associated historic-age properties in proximity to the school building contributes to its integrity of setting and, therefore, integrity of feeling and association. It will not be atypical, however, for a Community-Built Public School to be in a location affected by the types of extensive demolition, displacement, new construction, and/or incompatible land uses and activities noted above with regard to integrity of location. A resource affected by such activities will have changes to its location, setting, feeling, and association. Analysis of these four aspects of a property's integrity, therefore, must take

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into account the effects of such alterations on an individual property and, where applicable, should be understood as contributing to that property's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship contribute to integrity of feeling and association related to the Community-Built School's original period of construction. The generally substandard character of many Community-Built Schools was recognized by state and local government officials by c. 1910. In some localities, little effort was made to improve such buildings or to replace them entirely into the 1920s or later, by which time Community-Built Schools most often were retired from service. Alterations associated with subsequent significant events, which most often date to c. 1902-c. 1931 additions and updates, may affect the property's integrity of feeling and association with regard to its original construction period. Such alterations, however, if significant in their own right, will not eliminate the property's overall integrity of feeling and association. Concerning any Community-Built Schools that remained in educational use between c. 1931-c. 1968, remodeling, additions, and other alterations associated with the New Deal and Equalization eras also are likely to be significant in their own right and, therefore, will not erode the property's overall integrity of feeling and association.

## Property Type 2: Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931

Schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931 are classified herein as Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools. Within this category, there are two resource subtypes, which are categorized on the basis of how their construction was funded and/or if a standardized plan was utilized. Subtype A includes schools built primarily with donated funds, materials, and labor, *and* the buildings were designed by local builders and craftsmen without reliance on a specific standardized plan. Subtype B consists of schools built with a combination of private donations and public funding, often with privately-donated materials and labor, *and/or* the building was erected according to a standardized plan. Between c. 1902-c. 1931, standardized plans became increasingly available through sources such as the Tuskegee Institute, Rosenwald Fund, Virginia Board of Education, and other organizations. Note that Rosenwald Fund plans were widely available and sometimes were used to build schools for which construction was funded by localities and private groups that did not receive Rosenwald Fund grants.<sup>470</sup>

Both of the Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools property subtypes feature highly variegated schoolhouses that are reflective of a variety of trends in school design. Between c. 1902-c. 1931, rural schoolhouses comprised the majority of the school buildings for African American students in Virginia. Most of these were modest one- to two-room buildings that displayed fairly consistent designs, materials, and workmanship, but their specific form, footprint, and interior plan were varied. Towns and cities tended to build larger, more substantial schools than rural localities, especially after c. 1910. Evolving pedagogical theories during these three decades informed schoolhouse designs in terms of classroom sizes, student-to-teacher ratios, and provision of light, heat, and ventilation. Starting in the 1910s, the widespread promulgation of standardized school designs lent some

<sup>470</sup> Schools that were built under the auspices of the Rosenwald Fund are described in the "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia" MPD and such schools may be nominated under that MPD if they meet the registration requirements therein. See Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>. Washington-Rosenwald schools that do not meet the registration requirements in that MPD may be nominated under the "African American Schools of Virginia" MPD if the schoolhouse in question meets the registration requirements herein. For example, a property that includes a Washington-Rosenwald school to which a New Deal era or equalization era addition was appended may be nominated under this MPD. One such property is the Rosenwald-Felts School (NRHP 2024; 113-5041), built in 1926 in accordance with a standardized two-teacher plan promulgated by the Rosenwald Fund and expanded in 1956 during the equalization era. See Craig A. Wilson, "Rosenwald-Felts School," National Register nomination, May 10, 2024, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/113-5041/>.

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consistency to school buildings erected in multiple localities. Local variations, however, almost always were present and were manifested in the placement of the primary entry, presence or lack of a porch, door and window sash types, presence or lack of architectural detailing, roof type, and other elements. In many cases, a standardized plan may have informed the majority of the building's appearance, but the specific construction materials and methods utilized were the product of local builders' experience and expertise as well as the types of new, salvaged, and/or donated materials that were available for use.

Taking into account funding methods, architectural details, and/or use of standardized plans differentiates Subtype A and Subtype B schools. Private funding sources typically developed their own project requirements that influenced school building design, curriculum, and staffing. Because of their overall influence on how school facilities in Virginia were constructed and evolved over time, with similar effects on curriculum requirements, it is important to identify the subtype to which a given school belongs. Because of the parallel tracks on which privately-funded schools versus fully publicly-funded schools took toward construction, they are associated with similar historic trends, but with idiosyncrasies important to each subtype from c. 1902-c. 1931. The following description provides a summary of the physical characteristics of each subtype as well as specific design differences between the two subtypes. The statement of significance addresses the commingling of historic trends in philanthropic programs and public school funding that are significant to each subtype. With regard to integrity, the similar age and period of construction for both subtypes means that this aspect of the registration requirements is applicable to both.

*Description*Common Characteristics of Subtype A and Subtype B Schools

According to the 1919 Virginia Public Schools Education Commission's statewide survey of Virginia's public schools, about 85 percent of African American students, totaling approximately 95,052 pupils, who did not live in cities attended one- and two-room schools at that time. Approximately 13,567 Black youth in rural areas were enrolled in schools with more than two teachers.<sup>471</sup> Lamenting the condition of school buildings for African American children, the 1919 report described them as "poorly built, wretchedly equipped and in many

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<sup>471</sup> Note that the statewide survey report made no distinction based on funding methods for school construction and it is not known how many of these students may have been enrolled in Washington-Rosenwald schools or other private-funded buildings.

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(A) Hickory Hill. Chesterfield County.



(B) Whitestone. Lancaster County.



(C) Gravel Hill. Amelia County.

**TYPICAL COLORED SCHOOL BUILDINGS.**

- A. A splendid type of four-room rural school.  
B. A typical county training school, colored patrons contributing over half of the cost.  
C. The usual type of Negro rural school.

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Figure 28. Illustration of typical African American rural schools as of 1918 (Image Source: Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, between pages 206-207).

cases impossibly overcrowded.”<sup>472</sup> The report included photographs of different types of African American rural schools to illustrate both typical circumstances as well as an example of a well-designed and well-built school (Figure 28). The variations in their form, footprint, massing, architectural style, and materials are indicative of the range of c. 1902-c. 1931 public schoolhouses then in use. Some of these followed a standardized plan, but may have included variations due to locally-specific needs. Unknown builders also likely erected some of these schools, utilizing their professional experience and/or meeting design specifications provided by their client. In some instances, localities hired professional architects to design schools, but the extent to which this approach was utilized is not currently known.

A few exterior features that are common to most schools of this period, however, have been identified. Large windows and chimneys or flues were necessities when interiors were lit primarily with natural light and wood- or coal-burning stoves provided the only source of heat. A prominently-located main entry also was a common characteristic.

With regard to electricity and indoor plumbing and their impact on school designs, important to bear in mind is that, by the 1910s, electrical service had become widely available in Virginia's cities and most of its large towns. On the other hand, due to discriminatory practices, African American neighborhoods often did not receive electricity, sewers, paved roads, and other aspects of modern infrastructure until the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century. In African American communities where indoor electrical lighting was available, the number and size of windows became less essential for effective classroom instruction. Also of note is that electrical service remained scarce in most parts of rural Virginia until New Deal electrification projects began to be undertaken during the late 1930s. Rural schools for African American and White students, therefore, continued to require large windows for adequate indoor lighting.

Extension of public water and sewer service to Black neighborhoods in towns and cities similarly was delayed

<sup>472</sup> Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, p. 206. The report also noted, “In particular the Rosenwald fund is arousing activity in the erection of good buildings for colored [sic] children, providing, under certain conditions of cooperation by the colored [sic] people and by the state, \$400 to complete a one-teacher building, and \$500 for building a school house of more than one room. Already forty-six buildings have been erected at a total cost of \$80,000. Of this amount the Rosenwald fund gave \$22,000, and the colored [sic] people raised \$25,000.”

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by structural racism, which necessitated continued reliance on privies and externally-sourced drinking water for students and teachers. In rural areas, African American schools most often had privies into the 1940s, and sometimes later. As septic system technology began to be included in rural school construction, the need for privies declined. On-site wells with hand pumps remained a typical drinking water source at rural schools into the 1950s. For school buildings not originally equipped with modern mechanical systems, indoor heating, plumbing, and electrical wiring often were paid for with equalization grants of the late 1940s-1950s.

According to VCRIS data, the following general observations are applicable to Publicly-/ Privately-Financed Schools dating between c. 1902-c. 1931. African American schools in urban settings appear to be larger and have more sophisticated architectural designs with high-style influences. Details such as a “projecting central bay” or an “entry vestibule” begin to be included in descriptions of buildings dating to this era. Newly available materials, such as reinforced concrete and glass blocks, were utilized for urban schools by the 1920s before spreading more slowly into towns and, rarely, rural areas. Overall, schoolhouses were larger than the purpose-built schools constructed between c. 1870-c. 1920. The 1920s schoolhouses typically had more than one classroom, whether they were in an urban, town, or rural setting. In towns and cities, 1920s schools generally had three or more classrooms, while one-room schoolhouses remained the norm in rural areas into the 1930s (and sometimes later). Compulsory school attendance laws and increased interest in formal education likely accounted for the enrollment growth that necessitated larger buildings. Additions are recorded on more schoolhouses that postdate c. 1902 when compared to the school buildings that predate c. 1902. Secondary educational buildings, such as shops for industrial and agricultural training, also were recorded at these schools. At least 8 of the recorded Publicly-/ Privately-Financed Schools later were converted for residential use. Another schoolhouse, Cornland School (NRHP 2015; 131-0111) in the City of Chesapeake, was moved from its original, flood-prone site to a new location; the relocation was approved by the National Park Service, allowing the property to retain its National Register listing.<sup>473</sup>

Of the 99 Publicly-/Privately-Built Schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931, without use of Rosenwald Fund grants, that are recorded in VCRIS, their settings are as follows:

- Hamlet – 6
- Setting not listed – 8
- Rural – 51
- Suburban – 4
- Town – 7
- Transportation Corridor – 1
- Urban – 16
- Village – 6

The following reports documented the physical attributes of African American schools in Virginia between c. 1915-1928 and are a useful source for understanding and evaluating the design, materials, and workmanship of any Publicly-/ Privately-Financed School erected between c. 1902-c. 1931:

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<sup>473</sup> Karen Lang Kummer, “Cornland School,” National Register nomination, January 2015, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/131-0111/>, and Lena S. McDonald, “Cornland School 2023 Update,” National Register nomination additional documentation, May 2023, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/131-0111/>.

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- Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919).
- M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928).

Each report included broad summaries of information regarding the physical conditions of school buildings for African American students, often presented in tables (Figures 29-33). Annual reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia also include statistical data about public schools, such as numbers of one- and two-room schools and of consolidated schools organized by locality, numbers of students enrolled in each school type, and statewide total numbers of schools built of brick, log, or wood frame. Data in each of these sources are of a broad-based quality that did not include information about design, workmanship, and materials of individual schoolhouses; however, such data can be useful for comparative analyses of a specific schoolhouse against local or statewide datasets.

TABLE 108

*Showing the aggregate of all ratings assigned to the buildings, grounds, and material equipment of non-city schools of Virginia, 1918-19*

TYPES OF SCHOOLS	Number of schools	Ratings					Ratings				
		Number					Per cent				
		A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
<b>WHITE</b>											
One-room.....	162	347	757	1,072	1,053	1,155	8	17	25	24	26
Two and three rooms.....	141	538	963	1,096	771	487	14	25	28	20	13
Four rooms and over.....	104	803	855	720	400	133	28	29	25	14	4
Total.....	407	1,688	2,573	2,888	2,224	1,775	15	23	26	20	16
<b>COLORED</b>											
One room.....	112	121	302	628	789	1,173	4	10	21	26	39
Two and three rooms.....	46	111	238	319	301	278	9	19	26	24	22
Four rooms and over.....	9	23	61	77	52	37	10	24	31	21	14
Total.....	167	255	601	1,024	1,142	1,488	6	13	23	25	33

Statistical Tables

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Figure 249. Table showing rated conditions at White and African American schools according to a standardized questionnaire; rankings descend from A to D (Image Source: M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 379.

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**TABLE 104**

*Showing the ratings assigned to all non-city buildings investigated for various items  
concerning the school plant and equipment<sup>1</sup>*

GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS	Ratings									
	407 white schools					167 colored schools				
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1 General character of grounds.....	115	131	87	54	20	17	59	54	28	9
2 Condition of grounds.....	20	93	182	96	16	1	21	100	37	8
3 Accessibility.....	214	109	64	19	1	55	46	54	9	3
4 Location on site.....	145	149	73	31	9	29	64	56	15	3
5 General plan of building.....	42	94	94	113	64	5	14	25	69	54
6 Entrances to building.....	92	86	112	79	38	9	27	29	64	38
7 Stairs and hallways.....	37	34	38	35	17	1	1	6	4	7
8 Heating.....	53	86	150	116	2	16	8	40	99	4
9 Ventilation.....	22	67	106	143	69	3	3	25	94	42
10 Adequacy of windows.....	192	29	81	27	78	31	6	43	17	70
11 Arrangement of windows.....	50	124	80	103	50	2	23	17	63	62
12 Cloakrooms.....	50	74	58	43	182	3	13	15	23	113
13 Interior walls.....	40	129	136	80	22	4	30	53	55	25
14 Outside condition of repair.....	87	102	98	99	21	13	36	39	62	17
15 Inside condition of repair.....	51	141	120	83	12	13	37	44	53	20
16 Cleanliness.....	32	137	149	71	18	11	48	68	26	14
17 Water supply.....	59	104	143	78	23	11	30	65	53	8
18 Toilet facilities.....	38	120	118	86	45	11	24	49	44	39
19 Condition of toilets.....	13	88	114	118	74	3	22	52	41	49
20 Fuel storage facilities.....	46	53	60	54	194	1	18	25	16	107
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>										
1 Teachers' desks.....	37	90	86	86	108	4	4	16	45	98
2 Pupils' desks.....	36	87	163	99	22	0	12	32	47	76
3 Arrangement pupils' desks.....	64	100	137	74	32	4	19	46	37	43
4 Maps, globes and charts.....	29	62	108	98	110	0	2	12	37	116
5 Blackboards.....	26	82	120	130	49	4	12	24	43	84
6 Pictures.....	13	55	88	88	163	2	2	7	26	130
7 Window shades.....	33	62	70	84	158	2	15	22	31	97
8 Libraries (books).....	52	85	53	37	178	0	5	6	4	152
Aggregate total.....	1,688	2,573	2,888	2,224	1,775	255	601	1,024	1,142	1,488

<sup>1</sup> For explanation of ratings, see note at end of Chapter XVII.

Statistical Tables

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Figure 30. Table showing rated conditions at specific aspects of "non-city" White and African American schools according to a standardized questionnaire; rankings descend from A to D (Image Source: M. V. O'Shea, Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 375).

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**TABLE 105**

*Showing the ratings assigned to one-room non-city schools investigated for various items concerning the school plant and equipment<sup>1</sup>*

GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS	Ratings									
	162 white schools					112 colored schools				
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1 General character of grounds.....	16	49	45	38	14	7	36	41	21	7
2 Condition of grounds.....	0	22	73	58	9	0	9	67	29	7
3 Accessibility.....	77	46	34	5	0	34	32	36	7	3
4 Location on site.....	36	64	41	15	6	14	41	43	12	2
5 General plan of building.....	6	17	26	68	45	1	4	10	51	46
6 Entrances to building.....	14	25	45	53	25	0	11	20	48	33
7 Stairs and hallways.....	1	1	0	2	6	0	0	0	1	0
8 Heating.....	8	23	57	73	1	10	4	24	70	4
9 Ventilation.....	1	14	35	74	38	1	0	11	69	31
10 Adequacy of windows.....	39	8	43	13	59	11	4	29	15	53
11 Arrangement of windows.....	19	17	21	70	35	1	5	5	48	53
12 Cloakrooms.....	4	22	20	2	114	1	3	8	10	90
13 Interior walls.....	10	41	56	37	18	3	15	31	39	24
14 Outside condition of repair.....	15	33	43	54	17	5	15	28	48	16
15 Inside condition of repair.....	14	54	44	39	11	6	20	30	39	17
16 Cleanliness.....	5	50	62	34	11	6	28	50	18	10
17 Water supply.....	4	31	79	33	15	5	18	39	43	7
18 Toilet facilities.....	10	44	49	31	28	8	13	25	33	33
19 Condition of toilets.....	3	34	51	38	36	1	15	31	28	37
20 Fuel storage facilities.....	9	15	13	18	107	0	6	13	7	86
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>										
1 Teachers' desks.....	8	21	25	40	68	2	2	5	30	73
2 Pupils' desks.....	8	28	54	53	19	0	4	17	30	61
3 Arrangement of pupils' desks.....	20	23	55	41	23	2	8	31	23	36
4 Maps, globes and charts.....	1	8	27	43	83	0	0	5	19	88
5 Blackboards.....	3	29	36	62	32	2	2	14	22	72
6 Pictures.....	2	7	15	31	107	1	1	2	11	97
7 Window shades.....	5	16	12	27	102	0	5	12	17	78
8 Libraries (books).....	9	15	11	1	126	0	1	1	1	109
Aggregate total.....	347	757	1,072	1,053	1,155	121	302	628	789	1,173

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Figure 31. Table showing rated conditions at specific aspects of one-room "non-city" White and African American schools according to a standardized questionnaire; rankings descend from A to D (Image Source: M. V. O'Shea, Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 376).



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TABLE 106

*Showing the ratings assigned to two-room and three-room non-city schools investigated  
for various items concerning the school plant and equipment*

GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS	Ratings									
	141 white schools					46 colored schools				
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1 General character of grounds.....	37	54	33	12	5	10	18	11	6	1
2 Condition of grounds.....	2	32	70	31	6	1	8	28	8	1
3 Accessibility.....	70	38	22	11	0	18	9	17	2	0
4 Location on site.....	46	59	24	10	2	12	19	11	3	1
5 General plan of building.....	16	40	42	31	12	4	8	12	15	7
6 Entrances to building.....	40	34	37	18	12	8	13	7	14	4
7 Stairs and hallways.....	6	10	11	14	7	1	0	3	1	6
8 Heating.....	21	29	61	30	0	6	2	13	25	0
9 Ventilation.....	8	20	39	49	25	2	2	11	20	11
10 Adequacy of windows.....	81	9	25	8	18	16	2	12	2	14
11 Arrangement of windows.....	17	61	30	24	9	1	14	11	13	7
12 Cloakrooms.....	15	31	25	30	40	2	7	6	12	19
13 Interior walls.....	12	46	48	32	3	1	13	16	15	1
14 Outside condition of repair.....	35	34	35	34	3	5	20	7	13	1
15 Inside condition of repair.....	18	52	45	26	0	6	16	10	11	3
16 Cleanliness.....	10	48	53	24	6	3	18	14	8	3
17 Water supply.....	15	36	52	32	6	4	9	23	9	1
18 Toilet facilities.....	7	42	46	34	12	2	9	20	9	6
19 Condition of toilets.....	3	27	35	47	29	1	6	18	12	9
20 Fuel storage facilities.....	4	18	21	24	74	0	10	8	8	20
EQUIPMENT										
1 Teachers' desks.....	14	30	36	25	36	2	2	8	12	22
2 Pupils' desks.....	8	36	63	31	3	0	6	12	14	14
3 Arrangement pupils' desks.....	13	41	55	26	6	1	7	14	12	6
4 Maps, globes and charts.....	4	25	47	40	25	0	1	4	16	25
5 Blackboards.....	10	32	51	39	9	2	8	8	18	10
6 Pictures.....	2	21	41	35	42	1	0	5	11	29
7 Window shades.....	8	25	24	35	49	2	8	8	11	17
8 Libraries (books).....	16	33	25	19	48	0	3	2	1	40
Aggregate total.....	538	963	1,096	771	487	111	238	319	301	278

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Figure 32. Table showing rated conditions at specific aspects of two- and three-room "non-city" White and African American schools according to a standardized questionnaire; rankings descend from A to D (Image Source: M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 377).

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TABLE 107										
<i>Showing the ratings assigned to non-city schools having four or more rooms investigated for various items concerning the school plant and equipment</i>										
GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS	Ratings									
	104 white schools					9 colored schools				
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1 General character of grounds.....	62	28	9	4	1	0	5	2	1	1
2 Condition of grounds.....	18	39	39	7	1	0	4	5	0	0
3 Accessibility.....	67	25	8	3	1	3	5	1	0	0
4 Location on site.....	63	26	8	6	1	3	4	2	0	0
5 General plan of building.....	20	37	26	14	7	0	2	3	3	1
6 Entrances to building.....	38	27	30	8	1	1	3	2	2	1
7 Stairs and hallways.....	30	23	27	19	4	0	1	3	2	1
8 Heating.....	24	34	32	13	1	0	2	3	4	0
9 Ventilation.....	13	33	32	20	6	0	1	3	5	0
10 Adequacy of windows.....	72	12	13	6	1	4	0	2	0	3
11 Arrangement of windows.....	14	46	29	9	6	0	4	1	2	2
12 Cloakrooms.....	31	21	13	11	28	0	3	1	1	4
13 Interior walls.....	18	42	32	11	1	0	2	6	1	0
14 Outside condition of repair.....	37	35	20	11	1	3	1	4	1	0
15 Inside condition of repair.....	19	35	31	18	1	1	1	4	3	0
16 Cleanliness.....	17	39	34	13	1	2	2	4	0	1
17 Water supply.....	40	37	12	13	2	2	3	3	1	0
18 Toilet facilities.....	21	34	23	21	5	1	2	4	2	0
19 Condition of toilets.....	7	27	28	33	9	1	1	3	1	3
20 Fuel storage facilities.....	33	20	26	12	13	1	2	4	1	1
EQUIPMENT										
1 Teachers' desks.....	15	39	25	21	4	0	0	3	3	3
2 Pupils' desks.....	20	23	46	15	0	0	2	3	3	1
3 Arrangement pupils' desks.....	31	36	27	7	3	1	4	1	2	1
4 Maps, globes and charts.....	24	29	34	15	2	0	1	3	2	3
5 Blackboards.....	13	21	33	29	8	0	2	2	3	2
6 Pictures.....	9	27	32	22	14	0	1	0	4	4
7 Window shades.....	20	21	34	22	7	0	2	2	3	2
8 Libraries (books).....	27	39	17	17	4	0	1	3	2	3
Aggregate total.....	803	855	720	400	133	23	61	77	52	37

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Figure 33. Table showing rated conditions at specific aspects of two- and three-room "non-city" White and African American schools according to a standardized questionnaire; rankings descend from A to D (Image Source: M. V. O'Shea, *Public Education in Virginia: Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent Public Printing, 1928), p. 377).

Coupled with the school survey reports and annual state superintendent's reports, online historic photograph collections provide a fuller understanding of the range of African American school buildings erected between c. 1902-c. 1931. For example, see the

- Virginia Department of Education, Division of School Buildings, Photographs of Public Schools, 1900-1963, Library of Virginia, [https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LVA\\_INST:01LVA&inst=01LVA\\_INST&collectionId=81105517680005756](https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LVA_INST:01LVA&inst=01LVA_INST&collectionId=81105517680005756).
- Jackson Davis Collection of African American Education Photographs, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/>.
- Edward H. Peebles Prince Edward County (VA) Public School Photographs, Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU Scholars Compass, [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec\\_photos/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec_photos/).

The Division of School Buildings began to photograph public schools during the 1920s as the State Department of Education and local school boards were beginning the next wave of school consolidation. The collection is

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not a systematic, statewide survey. Rather, it is a record of schools for White and African American students in various states of repair, including some that have been abandoned and others that are still under construction. The photos range in date from c. 1900 to the 1960s. Interior and schoolyard images are part of the collection as well. Coverage from locality to locality, however, is uneven. Lack of a photograph of a particular schoolhouse in this collection should not be construed to mean that the building was not a public school.



Figure 25. Warrenton Training School as it appeared in 1930 (Image Source: Virginia Department of Education, Division of School Buildings, "Photographs of Public Schools, 1900-1963," Accession #31032, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond), [https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LVA\\_INST:01LVA&inst=01LVA\\_INST&collectionId=81105517680005756](https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/collectionDiscovery?vid=01LVA_INST:01LVA&inst=01LVA_INST&collectionId=81105517680005756).

As explained above in Section E, African American schools often were excluded from consolidation efforts. County training schools, however, were among the new school types that were being established in Virginia starting in the 1910s. Such schools often included elementary grades as well as grades 8-10 or 8-11. An example is the Warrenton Training School (Figure 34), which was constructed in 1930. The building is strikingly similar to the Julius Rosenwald High School (NRHP 2023; 066-0075; Figure 35), erected between 1916-1919. Although erected under the auspices of the Rosenwald Fund, the high school was not built precisely according to a standardized plan published either by the Tuskegee Institute or the Fund. Its exterior design may have been based on Design No. 13 in the 1915 publication entitled *The Negro Rural School and its Relation to the Community* by Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, but the interior plan did not follow this published design.<sup>474</sup> Both schools, however, are illustrative of the physical and visual similarities of Black schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931, and of the typical design features and materials of such buildings regardless of whether a standardized plan was followed.



Figure 35. Julius Rosenwald High School in Northumberland County (Image Source: Department of Historic Resources, 1974, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0075/>).

The Jackson Davis African American Education Photographs collection was created by Jackson Davis, a White educational reformer who served as Henrico County's school superintendent between 1905-1909, during which time he worked with Virginia Estelle Randolph. From 1910-1915, Davis worked at the Virginia Department of

<sup>474</sup> Mary Jackson, Marian Veney Ashton, Lena Downing-Handy, and Charles R. Lawson, "Julius Rosenwald High School," National Register nomination, August 5, 2023, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0075/>.



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Education as a state agent for African American schools. Starting in 1915, Davis went to work for the General Education Board. Most of the photographs in the Jackson Davis Collection at the University of Virginia were taken between 1915-1930. Similar to the Division of School Buildings photos, Davis's were not taken as part of a systematic survey of schools across Virginia. Davis took photographs during his site visits to various schools as his work with the General Education Board dictated. Many of the photos were taken at schools outside Virginia. The collection, however, has been organized in an online, searchable database.<sup>475</sup> The photographs are copyrighted and prohibited from commercial use; therefore, no images from the collection are included herein.



Figure 27. Felden Elementary School, Prince Edward County (Image Source: Edward H. Peeples, 1962-1963, Prince Edward County [VA] Public School Photographs, Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU Scholars Compass, [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec\\_photos/37/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec_photos/37/)).

Dr. Edward H. Peeples investigated school conditions in Prince Edward County between 1959-1961 and took 100 photographs of the Black schools in use prior to 1959.

Additionally, Peeples photographed earlier school buildings, most of which had ceased to be used by the late 1950s. An example is the Felden Elementary School (Figure 36). The L-plan, frame building was erected with typical construction materials and features of the period, such as brick piers, wood frame construction with weatherboard siding, groups of windows, separate entries to the interior rooms, and a cross-gable roof with an interior brick flue. Serving grades 1-5, the school's capacity was 90 students. A small privy stood to the rear of the building. The building's tripartite groups of large 2-over-2 wood sash are indicative of the reliance on natural lighting, as shown in Figure 37. In addition to showing furnishings, a group of interior photos documented simple window trim, a wood- or coal-burning stove that stands directly in front of a blackboard, stacked-panel wood doors, tongue-and-groove, narrow wood flooring, and what appears to be log wainscoting topped with tongue-and-groove wood installed horizontally. Such materials were utilized at African American schools statewide between c. 1902-c. 1931. Some towns and cities switched to brick construction during the 1910s-1920s, but otherwise the finish materials did not change substantially during this period.



Figure 267. Felden Elementary School, Prince Edward County (Image Source: Edward H. Peeples, 1962-1963, Prince Edward County [VA] Public School Photographs, Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU Scholars Compass, [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec\\_photos/43/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec_photos/43/)).

<sup>475</sup> See <https://small.library.virginia.edu/collections/featured/jackson-davis-collection-of-african-american-educational-photographs/>.

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Figure 288. Five Forks Elementary School, Prince Edward County (Image Source: Edward H. Peeples, 1962-1963, Prince Edward County [VA] Public School Photographs, Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU Scholars Compass, [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec\\_photos/15/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec_photos/15/)).

Five Forks Elementary School (Figure 38), dates to 1918 and, when in use, housed grades 2-5 with a capacity for 60 students. In addition to the schoolhouse, the property had three small outbuildings and a privy. A hand pump provided drinking water from a well on the property.

Built a decade later, the Mercy Street Elementary School (Figure 39) bears a strong resemblance to Washington-Rosenwald schools of the 1920s, but also could have been built according to a State Board of Education design. The building's frame construction, large windows, and separate entries to its two classrooms are typical of the standardized designs and specified materials that were widely in use for African American schools by the 1920s in Virginia.



Figure 299. Mercy Street Elementary School, Prince Edward County (Image Source: Edward H. Peeples, 1962-1963, Prince Edward County [VA] Public School Photographs, Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU Scholars Compass, [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec\\_photos/32/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/pec_photos/32/)).

Perhaps due to the volume of new schools that were erected as well as the rapid advances in school building design, researchers have compiled collections of photographs and archival records concerning African American schools between c. 1902-c. 1931. Such collections may be found at colleges and universities in their special collections libraries, at the Library of Virginia, and at online repositories such as the Gutman Library's "African American Education 1740-1974" at Harvard University.<sup>476</sup> In the more recent past, various private organizations, local governments, state historic preservation offices, and individuals have compiled collections of historic photographs. Excellent examples include Fairfax County's African American

History Inventory<sup>477</sup> and the site Black Education in Alexandria: A Legacy of Triumph and Struggle.<sup>478</sup> Even if the photographed buildings no longer survive, the information available in the images and associated historic records provides invaluable assistance with evaluating extant buildings and understanding their design, materials, and workmanship.

<sup>476</sup> The Gutman Library's online collection is at <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/aaeducation>.

<sup>477</sup> See <https://fairfaxaahi.centerformasonslegacies.com/>.

<sup>478</sup> See <https://www.alexandriava.gov/cultural-history/black-education-in-alexandria-a-legacy-of-triumph-and-struggle>.

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Virginia Department of Public Instruction and School Building Service Standardized Plans, 1911-1930s

The State Department of Public Instruction (later the Department of Education) began to provide a series of 16 free standardized plans and specifications to local school boards starting in 1911. By 1920, the department's Division of School Buildings had been established and staffed with professional architects. In addition to preparing standardized plans, the division supervised construction projects and assured that minimum standards for heat, ventilation, light, quality of materials, and other factors were met. The standardized plans incorporated the period's pedagogical theories.<sup>479</sup> During the 1920s, the second wave of consolidation of White schools in Virginia was well underway. This activity dovetailed with the reform of local school districts, with a single board of education established in each locality, in order to streamline implementation of the State Board of Education's rapidly evolving policies for improving public education in terms of curriculum, teacher training, and students' performance. In his *Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia*, Department of Historic Resources staff member John Kern wrote that

The new standard plan for consolidated schools ... provided for a one-story design with a central assembly-study hall fronted and often flanked by classrooms. Generally of brick construction, the one-story schools were built above a partial, or sometimes a full, raised basement. In the standard plan provided by the State Board of Education in 1921, a central entrance opened onto a foyer that provided access to the assembly room and to front ... classrooms on each side of the foyer. The assembly room provided direct access to all bordering classrooms, while side exits opened directly from classrooms onto the school yard. The standard plan called for placement of a heating system and bathrooms in the raised basement. The elimination of outdoor privies and the provision of a central assembly hall embodied changes that made the new consolidated schools centers for progressive advances in rural life... Virginia Department of Education School Buildings Service Architectural Plans ... have been conserved and inventoried by Selden Richardson at the Library of Virginia.<sup>480</sup>

The assembly room called for in the standardized plan doubled as space for public community activities, thus fulfilling community service functions encouraged by social reformers of the period who sought to improve the quality of life in rural areas. Between 1919-1939, two-story variants of the standardized consolidated school plan had been promulgated. The central auditorium typically was retained in this plan, although some local variations in southwest Virginia were built without an auditorium, likely because an adjacent school building already had such a space. Specialized spaces for libraries, home economics, and science laboratories also began to be included in plans dating between World Wars I and II.<sup>481</sup>

As noted above, local school boards generally excluded African American students and schools from school consolidation efforts. Several examples of such schools have been documented in Virginia cities, but with

<sup>479</sup> Betty Bird, "Armstead T. Johnson High School," National Register nomination, December 1, 1997, on file at the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/096-0113/>. With regard to the pedagogical practices of the period, the nomination cites J.L. Blair Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952* (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1952).

<sup>480</sup> John Kern, "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia," October 2000, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf\\_files/SpecialCollections/VA-072\\_SW\\_Virginia\\_School\\_Buildings\\_2000\\_DHR\\_report.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/SpecialCollections/VA-072_SW_Virginia_School_Buildings_2000_DHR_report.pdf), p. 7-8.

<sup>481</sup> John Kern, "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia," October 2000, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf\\_files/SpecialCollections/VA-072\\_SW\\_Virginia\\_School\\_Buildings\\_2000\\_DHR\\_report.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/SpecialCollections/VA-072_SW_Virginia_School_Buildings_2000_DHR_report.pdf), p. 7, 9.

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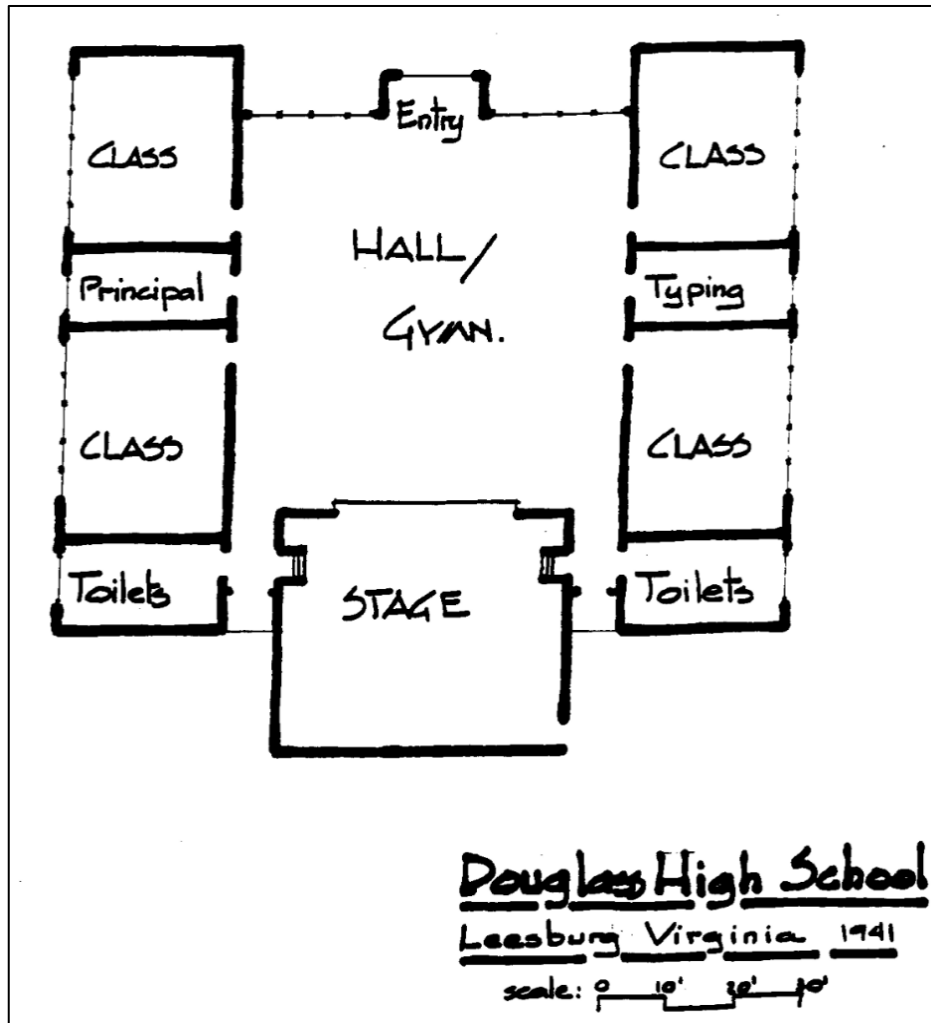


Figure 40. Example of Central Auditorium Plan promulgated by the Virginia Board of Education (Image Source: Teckla H. Cox and Richard Calderon, "Douglass High School," National Register nomination, August 30, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Education, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-0070/>, p. 7/3.)

modifications meant to reduce construction costs and to reflect the second-class status White officials assigned to all Black schools during the segregation era. One such example is the aforementioned Douglass High School (NRHP 1992; 253-0070) in Leesburg, Loudoun County (Figure 40). The floor plan that accompanies the nomination depicts a central combined gymnasium/auditorium with a stage at one end and flanking classrooms, restrooms, and two office spaces. The building's entry leads directly to the gymnasium/auditorium, while doors along each longitudinal wall of the central space access each of the adjacent rooms.

Additional examples of African American schools with a central auditorium standardized plan are the Douglas (*sic*) School (NRHP 2000; 138-5002) in Winchester, Lylburn Downing School (NRHP 2003; 117-5002) in Lexington, and the aforementioned East Suffolk School Complex (NRHP 2003; 133-5046), which originally was a county training school.<sup>482</sup>

All four of these buildings are of more substantial construction than the typical frame one- and two-room rural schoolhouses that date between c. 1902-c. 1931. The standardized buildings feature Colonial Revival stylistic motifs, such as red brick walls, white-painted trim, and primary entries accented with a projecting porch with columns and plain friezes. Minor variations in the stylistic detailing allow each building to appear unique to its environs. Banks of large, wood-frame, double-hung, multiple-light sash are a dominant element of the side elevations. The interior plan is indicated by the higher roofline of the gymnasium/auditorium (Figure 41).

<sup>482</sup> See Sharon Harris and Judy Humbert, "Douglas School," National Register nomination, May 1999, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/138-5002/>; J. Daniel Pezzoni and John Kern, "Lylburn Downing School," National Register nomination, May 1999, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/117-5002/>; Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>. The City of Suffolk and Nansemond County merged in 1974.

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*Figure 41. Douglas School, Winchester, features Colonial Revival architectural design and a raised, hipped roof that indicates the location of its gymnasium/auditorium (Image Source: Department of Historic Resources, Scott Brooks-Miller, 1999, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/138-5002/>).*

### African American Schools in Some Urban Areas

During the 1910s-1920s, Virginia's larger cities, such as Richmond, Charlottesville, Norfolk, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Newport News, and Hampton, boasted large, well-built African American schools with sophisticated architectural detailing, such as the above Douglas School in Winchester. Such projects reflected the greater economic status and political influence that African American communities had in these cities as well as the standards adopted by the local school boards. Sober presentation of well-built schools, regardless of the race of the students attending them, were part of the image these cities sought to project as part of the period's local booster programs to attract new investments and industries.



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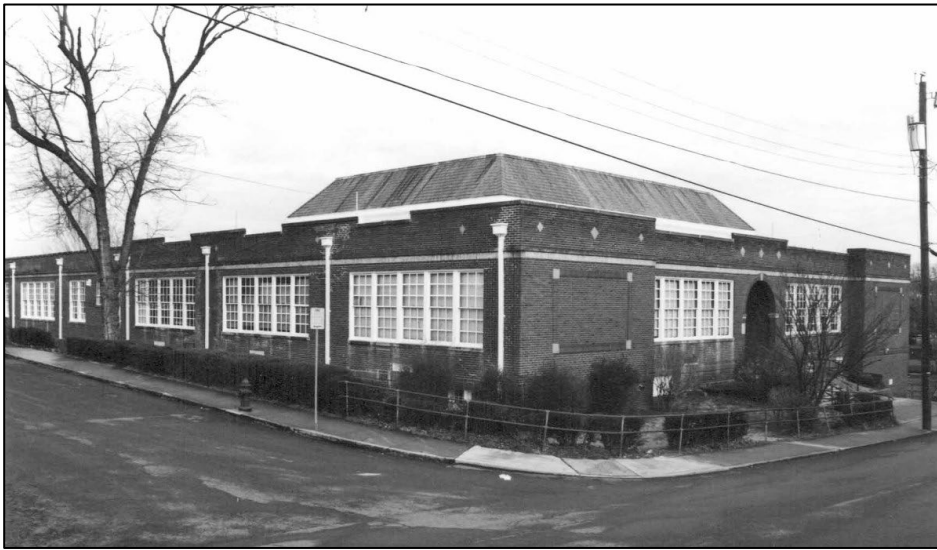


Figure 302. C. 2005 view of Thomas Jefferson High School with façade at right, City of Charlottesville (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5087/>).

Another prime example of an architect-designed 1920s school in an urban setting is the aforementioned Thomas Jefferson High School (NRHP 2006; 104-5087) in Charlottesville. The building's earliest section, erected in 1926, was a five-bay, brick edifice with a central auditorium (Figure 42). Based on drawings held by the City of Charlottesville, the State Board of Education's Division of School Buildings had commissioned architect Charles Calrow from the

Norfolk firm of Calrow, Brown and Fitz-Gibbon to design the building. Featuring a central auditorium, principal's office, library, seven classrooms, home economics classroom, and a cafeteria, the school offered spaces typical of an African American four-year high school during the 1920s. In keeping with the aforementioned practice of including an ornamented primary entry in the Colonial Revival style, the Jefferson High School's façade had a centered, round-arched entry bay with recessed double-leaf doors and flanking multiple-light sidelights topped with a transom. Groups of large, double-hung, multiple-light, wood sash flank the entry and are duplicated on the side elevations. As was typical with standardized plans, the Jefferson High School's architectural drawings may have been utilized for multiple projects in different localities; for example, the Lucy F. Simms High School in Harrisonburg is similar in appearance but was erected in 1939 using a plan provided by the State Department of Education.<sup>483</sup>

Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* (Tuskegee Institute, 1915)

As explained above, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* provided guidance on both school building designs and landscape designs for rural African American schools. The booklet often is associated with the Rosenwald Fund, as it was created under Booker T. Washington's supervision by Tuskegee Institute faculty after Washington began collaborating with Julius Rosenwald. Guidance and buildings plans in the publication were utilized for numerous schools that received no Rosenwald Fund grants. The booklet included methods for maximizing natural light and ventilation through use of large windows, siting, and north/south or east/west orientation of a building to maximize capture of sunlight. Simple drawings for a "one-teacher" and a "central" (five-classroom) building were included (Figures 43-44), along with guidance on

<sup>483</sup> Maral S. Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Jefferson School and Carver Recreation Center," National Register nomination, August 15, 2005, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5087/>, p. 7/3-7/4; Maral Kalbian and Margaret T. Peters, "Lucy F. Simms School," National Register nomination, 2003, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/115-5035/>.

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remodeling existing buildings for use as schoolhouses. Reflective of the financial limitations and preponderance of rural African American communities, the designs called for wood frame buildings with gable roofs and brick or stone piers. Experienced local builders, masons, and carpenters could easily erect such buildings as such materials and forms already had been used widely for rural churches, dwellings, and schools for decades. Similar to the rural schools of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, typical materials and finishes included weatherboard siding, double-hung wood sash windows, tongue-and-groove flooring, beadboard wainscoting, plaster, fiberboard, or tongue-and-groove wood finishes on upper walls, and similar materials on ceilings. Each classroom had at least one classroom and a cloak room. An “industrial” or “work” room for providing basic instruction in handcrafts also usually was included in schoolhouses built according to the 1915 publication.<sup>484</sup>

During the 1910s, Booker T. Washington assumed that the majority of rural schoolhouses would be one-room buildings, but recognized that a larger “central” or training school also would be sought in some localities. Drawings for each building type were included in *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* (Figures 45-46).

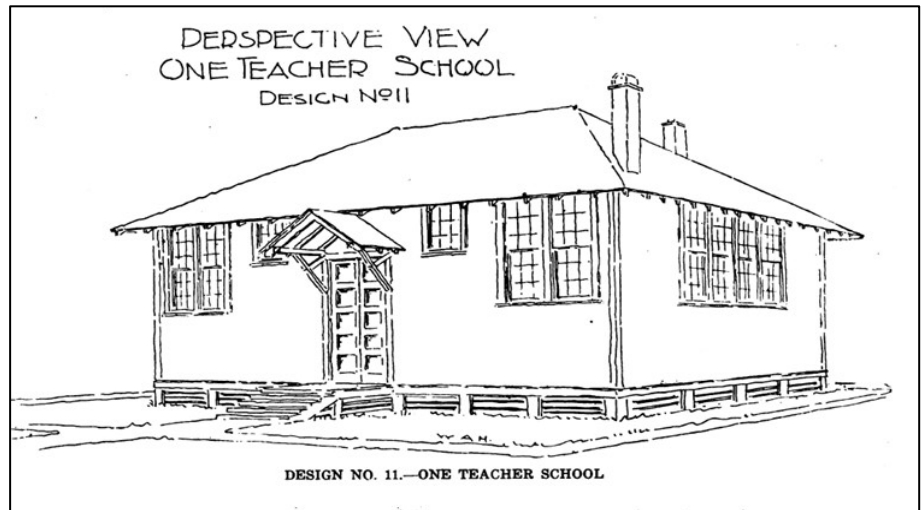


Figure 313. Elevation drawing of a one-teacher school (Image Source: Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* [Tuskegee

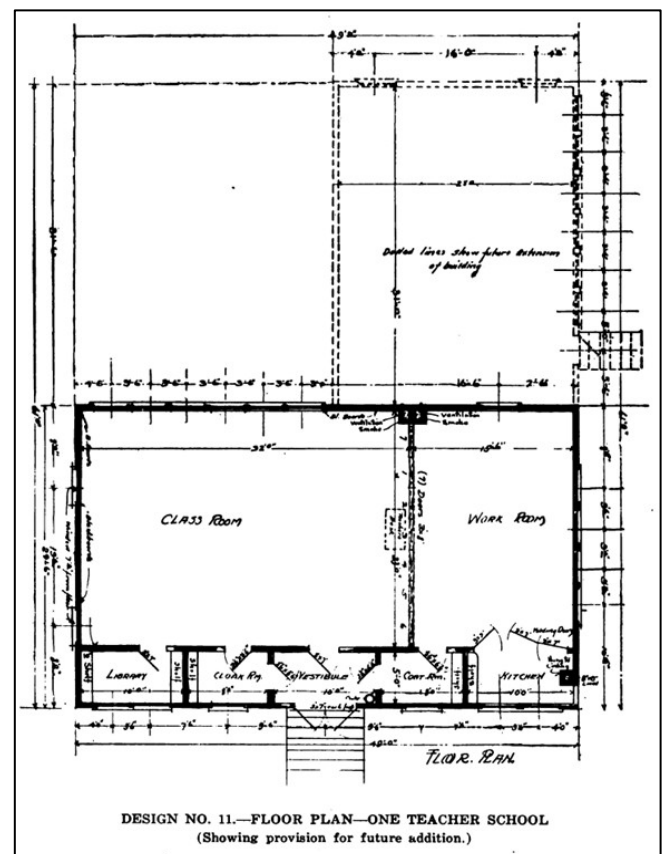


Figure 324. Floor plan for a one-teacher school ((Image Source: Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* [Tuskegee Institute, 1915], p. 12).

<sup>484</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “Revisiting Virginia Architecture: Notes on Overlooked African American Contributions and Other Developments,” Society of Architectural Historians, SAH Archipedia, no date, <https://sah-archipedia.org/essays/VA-03-001>; Bryan Clark Green, “Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041),” Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>, p. 14.

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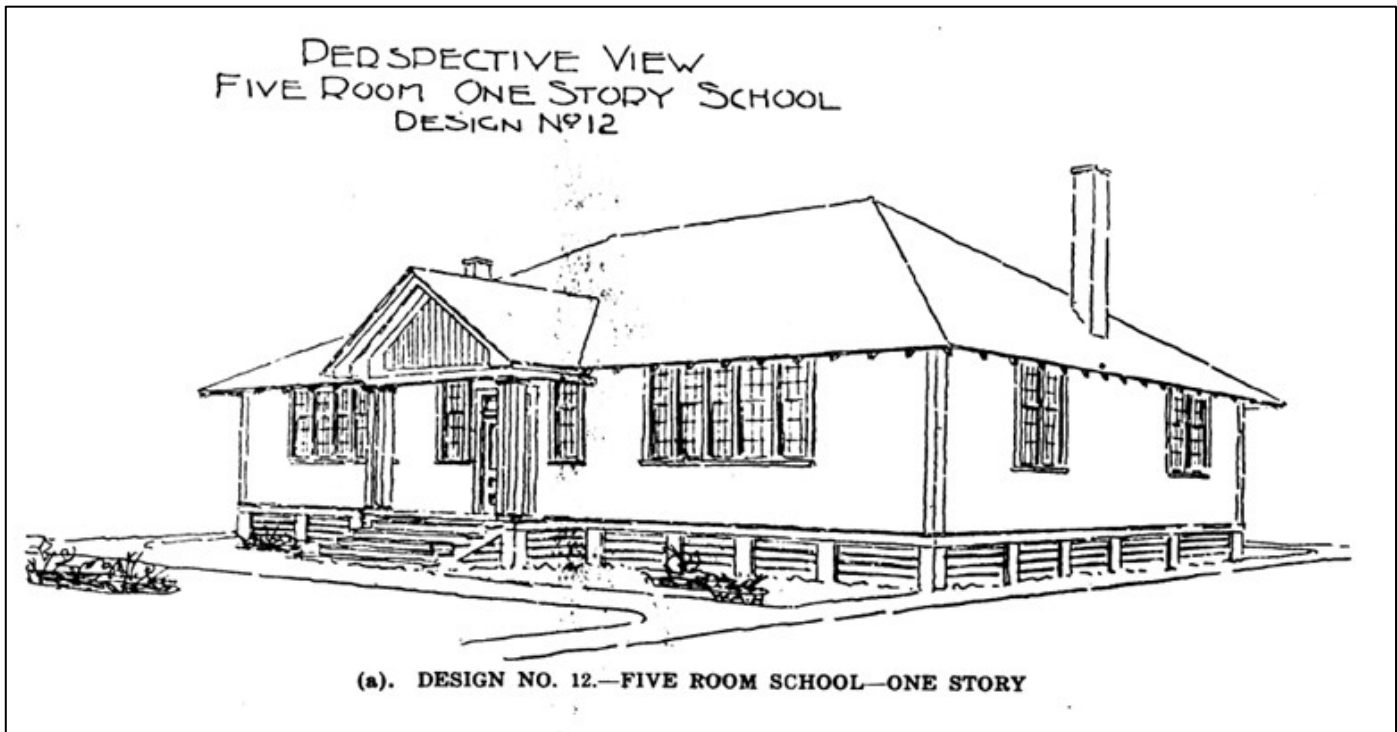


Figure 345. Elevation drawing of a five-classroom school (Image Source: Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* [Tuskegee Institute, 1915], p. 84).

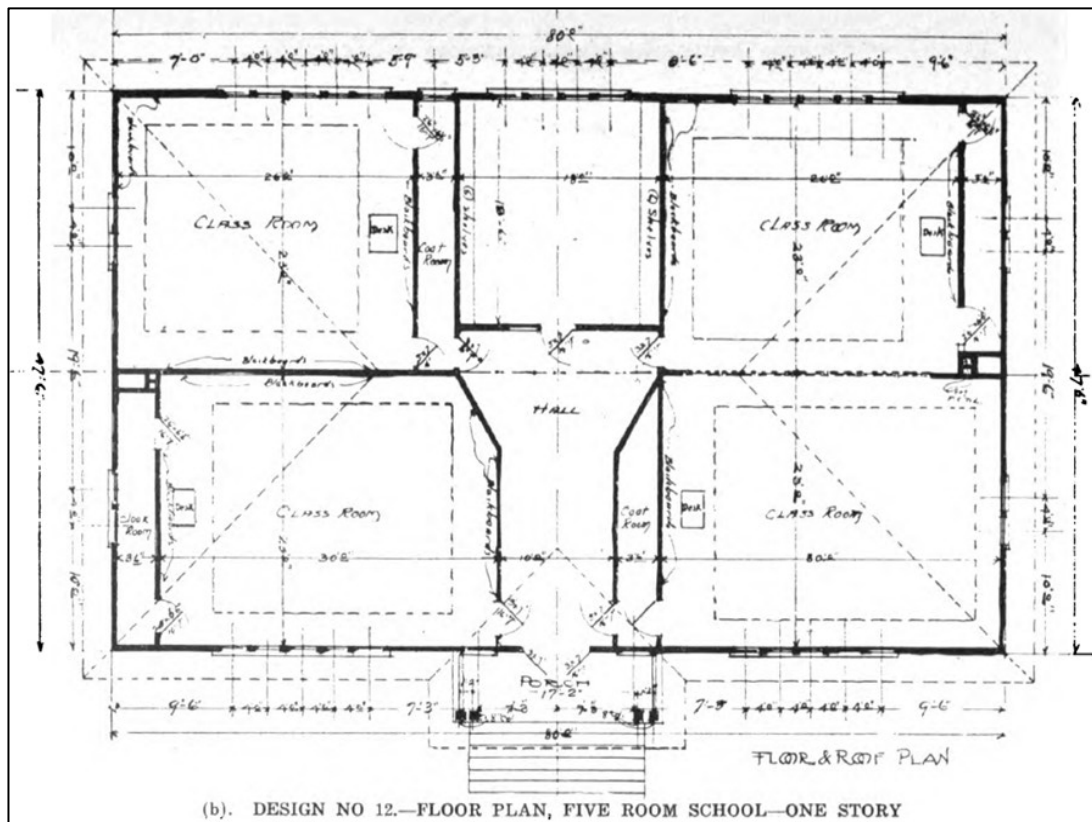


Figure 336. Floor plan of a five-classroom school (Image Source: Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* [Tuskegee Institute, 1915], p. 85).

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Landscape Design Guidance

With regard to landscape design, native Virginian George Washington Carver, a nationally-known scientist and inventor on the faculty at Tuskegee Institute, prepared the guidance on layout and plantings for schoolyards in *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*. The pamphlet begins with guidance on site selection for a new school and recommends that a minimum of two acres be acquired to provide ample space for the building, playground areas, a school garden and orchard, and a baseball diamond behind the school building, and a semicircular driveway with a demonstration area in front of the schoolhouse (Figure 47).

Chapter four of the booklet is devoted to recommendations for types of plants and design of beds to be used to landscape the schoolyard. Gardens were advised to be enclosed with fencing to protect the beds from damage. Shade trees and fruit trees would help to keep the schoolhouse and playgrounds cooler during hot southern summers and the produce would supplement students' lunches. Raspberry and blackberry hedges served both decorative and nutritional functions. Carver's suggestion to include a manicured grass lawn in the schoolyard was in keeping with the period's well-established middle-class practice of maintaining such lawns around dwellings, churches, government buildings, and other properties visible to the public. Carver also created a list of native trees, shrubs, vines, and flowers that could be transplanted from nearby woodlands or grown from seed, as appropriate; included advice for dealing with pests and diseases; provided a list of gardening tasks to be completed each month of the year; and explained how to build cold frames, raised beds, and other gardening-related structures. In addition to a chapter devoted to school vegetable gardens, the 1915 publication features guidance for home gardens, where students could gain educational benefits and their families would enjoy higher yields. Athletics are touched upon in the guide, and by the 1920s would be a somewhat common activity with at least a baseball diamond or a field for football becoming part of many rural schoolyards; organized athletic teams for interscholastic play, however, would not become common until after World War II, and then would be more common in cities and towns than in rural areas.

A landscape design for "central" or training schools was included in *The Negro School* as well (Figure 47). Such schools were anticipated to occupy larger lots of at least six acres to allow space for the students' educational and recreational activities. The design assumes that agricultural education will be a major component of the school's curriculum, with ample space set aside for a "small farm" to grow cash crops in addition to a school vegetable garden. Designated areas for poultry, an orchard, a vineyard or berry patch, and grain lots are called for in the design. The schoolhouse itself occupies the southwest corner of the design in Figure 48, and is approached by a semicircular driveway. Behind the schools are playgrounds for girls and boys, with the latter area including a baseball diamond. A workshop, barn, chicken coop, and water tank are spread across the southern half of the six-acre lot. A small teacher's cottage also was included in the design.



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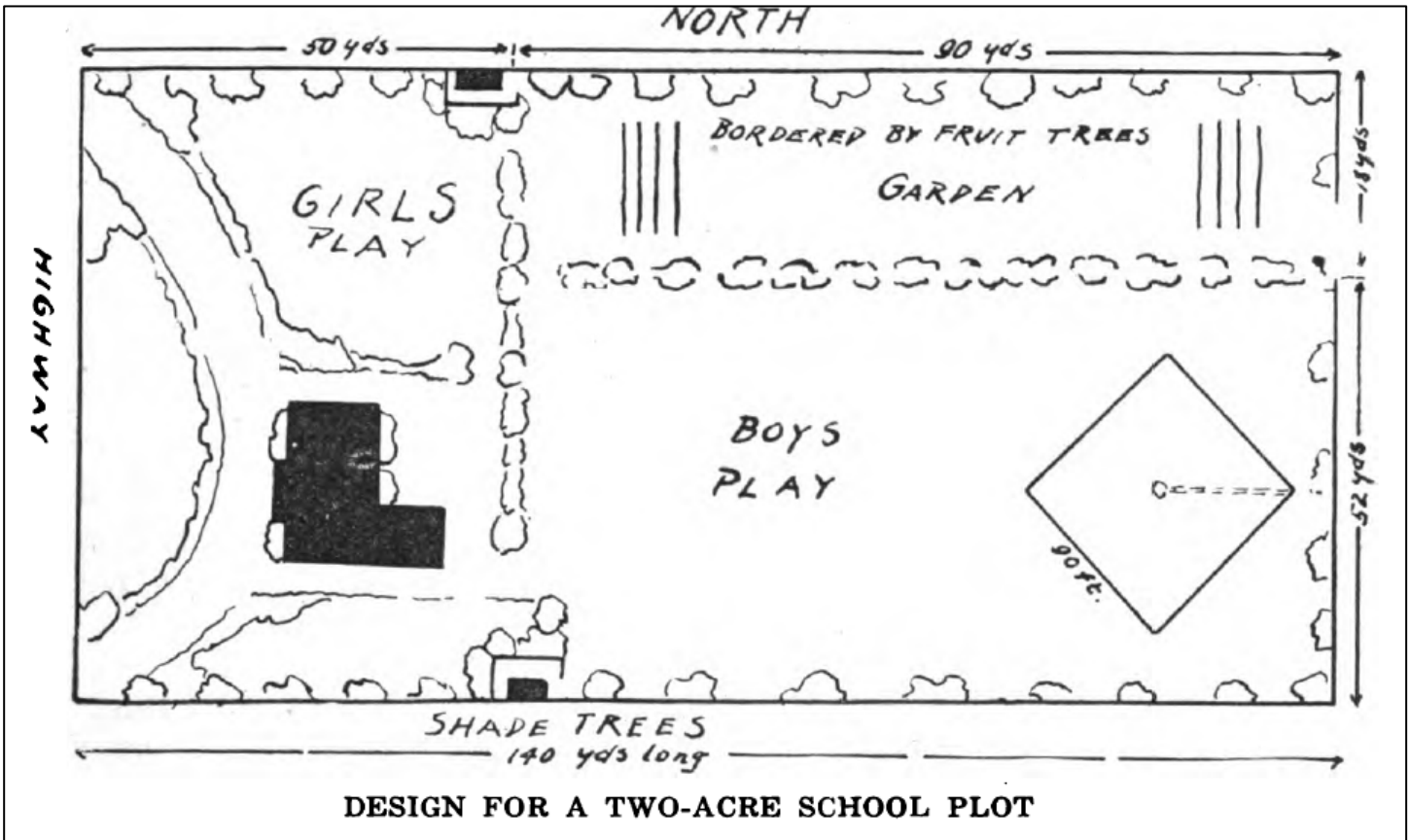


Figure 35. Landscape design for a rural school on the recommended 2-acre lot size (Image Source: Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* [Tuskegee Institute, 1915], p. 9).

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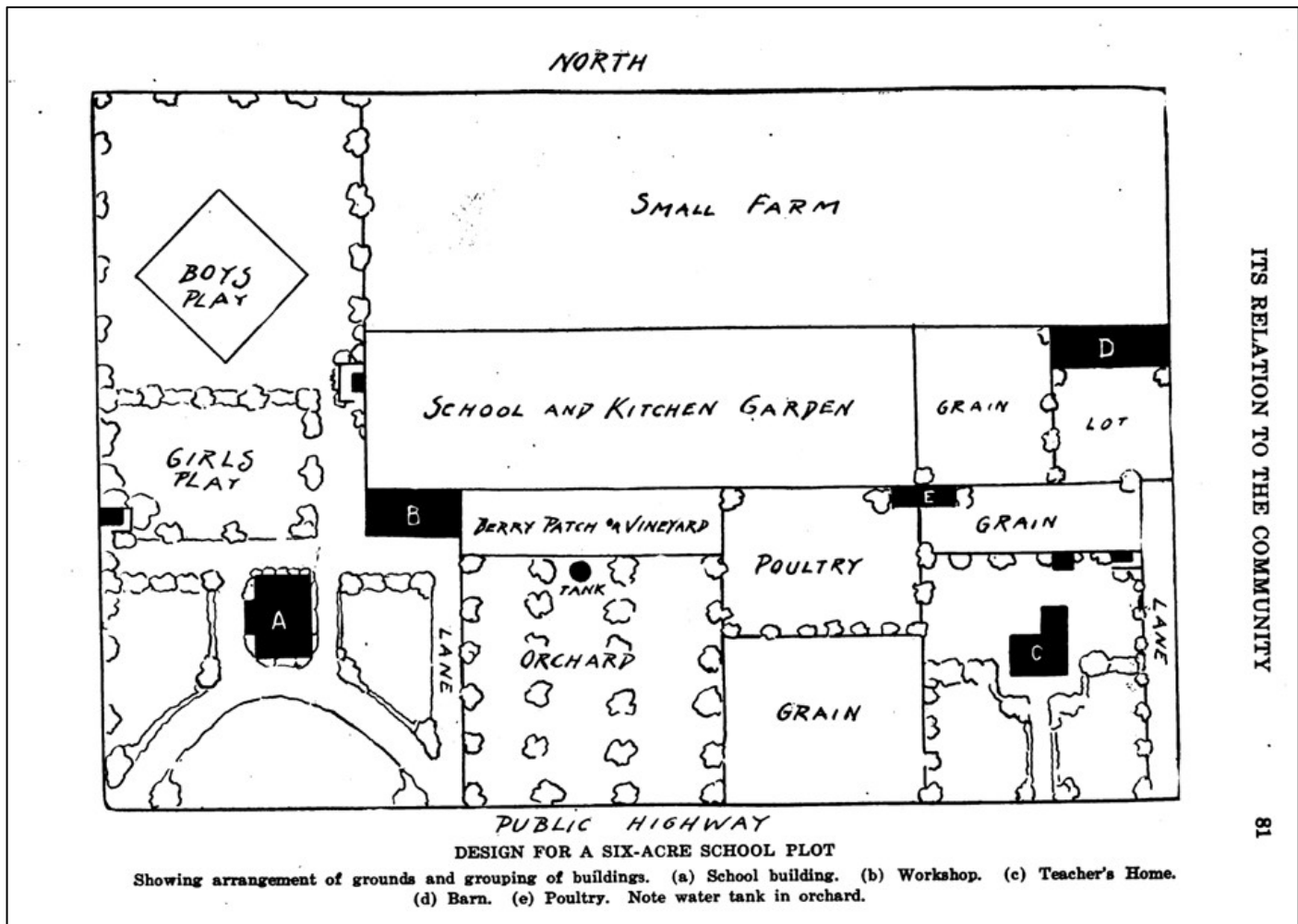


Figure 368. R Landscape design for a "central" rural school on the recommended 6-acre lot size (Image Source: Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* [Tuskegee Institute, 1915], p. 81).

Due to the ephemeral nature of vegetation, alterations to school lots to accommodate different transportation types and/or additions and alterations to school buildings, and prolonged vacancy of many rural African American schools, few properties with extant historic landscape design elements have been identified to date. Historic photos of schools, however, suggest that schoolyards often included at least a few features of the landscape designs included in *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*, as well as other period publications (Figure 48).

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Figure 379. Clockwise from top left: Cross Roads School, Rough Creek School (Charlotte County), Andrew Farmer School, and Galilee School (Charlotte County), each of which includes a semicircular driveway and decorative plantings (Image Sources: Fisk University [top left image] and Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Cultural Resources Information System)

To date, few nominations for African American schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931 in Virginia have included a focus on landscape elements. Perhaps the best recent example of a discussion of historic landscape elements is in the nomination for the Buckingham Training School (NRHP 2015; 208-5001), a Washington-Rosenwald School located in the Town of Dillwyn, Buckingham County. The terraced site includes a capped well, a flight of concrete steps from the schoolyard down to a sports field, and sites of a one-room school and a 1924 Rosenwald school, all of which are contributing, as well as a 1932 vocational shop building (one of only 11 such educational buildings partially funded by the Rosenwald Fund in Virginia).<sup>485</sup>

In her 2023 dissertation, archaeologist Colleen M. Betti examined spatial uses of schoolyards at three African American rural schools in Gloucester County.<sup>486</sup> Among her many findings, Betti averred that, “Spatial analysis of schoolyards through distribution maps is crucial to understanding daily life at schools. While the schoolhouse

<sup>485</sup> Niya Bates, William Canup, Carolyn Mess, and Marc Wagner, “Buckingham Training School,” National Register nomination, August 14, 2014, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/208-5001/>, p. 6, 9.

<sup>486</sup> Colleen Marie Betti, “Go Ahead and Erect the Buildings Themselves”: An Archaeological Study of Three Black Schools in Gloucester County, Virginia, PhD dissertation, 2023, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://core.ac.uk/download/582228788.pdf>, p. 229-247.



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was the center of school life, the schoolyards were used for recess, fuel storage, outhouses, trash disposal, and community events. Artifact distributions can reveal details about where activity areas in schoolyards were located, what kinds of trash disposal patterns were used, if children used spaces in different ways from adults, and the locations of buildings.”<sup>487</sup> Such archaeological investigations also may be used to identify landscape design features, such as locations of ingress/egress driveways, fencing, and formerly cultivated beds. Faunal analysis can further inform the types of plantings that once were present within a schoolyard. Although these types of field investigations and analyses typically are performed for archaeological study and for landscape restoration projects, greater recognition of the potential significance of schoolyards with regard to Criterion C (Landscape Architecture) and Criterion D (Archaeology – Historic) will lead to increased understanding of historic activities at African American schools.

Samuel L. Smith, *Community School Plans* (Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1924)

As explained in the historic context above, Washington-Rosenwald schools were built in Virginia between c. 1917-c. 1932. The schools were built according to standardized designs in *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* by Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel, and to a subsequent publication, architect Samuel L. Smith’s *Community School Plans*. He created floor plans and exterior renderings of seventeen different school types, ranging in size from “one teacher” to “seven teacher” schools. Although Smith was employed by the Rosenwald Fund, his designs were widely used for school construction projects that did not receive Rosenwald Fund grants. Such schoolhouses are typically one-story, frame construction with an east/west orientation intended to maximize sunlight in interior spaces. A few examples of two-story schools also were built in Virginia; these may have been rare at the time or, in the decades since their construction, simply were not recognized as examples of Smith’s designs. Almost all of the documented examples of schoolhouses that follow a Smith plan are modest in scale with little or no detailing; where ornamental details are present, Colonial Revival or Craftsman accents were the most commonly deployed. Smith’s *Community School Plans* also included two designs for teachers’ dwellings and a “Sanitary Privy.”

Continuing the trend toward standardizing materials and workmanship, the designs in *Community School Plans* were accompanied by specifications for materials, construction methods, and guidance on site location and landscaping. The character-defining banks of large windows on the longitudinal elevations of Washington-Rosenwald schools remained a constant in all of Smith’s school designs. The windows, accompanied by building orientation toward the sun, maximized interior lighting in places where access to electricity remained scarce. In recognition of varied site conditions and availability of land to build a school, Smith drew two separate versions of each standardized schoolhouse plan to achieve the preferred east/west orientation for capturing sunlight. Smith also explained how a light-reflecting color scheme and window shades facilitated reliance on natural lighting. Even plans for the arrangement of students’ and teachers’ desks were specified to make the most of sunlight.

Smith included an industrial room in each of his school designs, as such instruction continued to be a hallmark of the Rosenwald Fund and other philanthropic organizations that sought to improve educational opportunities for Black students. Over the years, recollections of school alumni and retired teachers, however, have demonstrated that “industrial” rooms often were given over to storage or other utilitarian functions as teachers and students devoted their time to academic coursework instead.

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<sup>487</sup> Colleen Marie Betti, “Go Ahead and Erect the Buildings Themselves”: An Archaeological Study of Three Black Schools in Gloucester County, Virginia, PhD dissertation, 2023, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://core.ac.uk/download/582228788.pdf>, p. 229.

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As with Taylor and Hazel's 1915 publication, Smith took into account that local schools often doubled as community activity centers. To that end, movable partitions between classrooms were specified, which could convert two small rooms into a space for meetings, socials, fundraisers, plays, concerts, and other events on a routine basis. Although he did not go into as much detail as George Washington Carver had in terms of site selection and landscape design, Smith echoed the recommendation of a minimum two-acre site to allow for all of the presumed outdoor activities occurring at most schools. Playgrounds for boys and girls, gardens and agricultural demonstration plots, and privies screened from view by vegetation were featured in his designs. Although also included, teachers' dwellings appear to have been rarely built at most of Virginia's rural schoolhouses between c. 1902-c. 1931. Such buildings, however, may have been located on adjacent plots and ceased use as teacher housing within just a few years of their construction. Subsequent ownership transfers and alterations would have made such buildings difficult to identify as associated with a Publicly-/Privately-Built School.<sup>488</sup>

Formerly White Schools Converted for Use as African American Schools

A small subset of Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools originally served as public schools for White pupils before they were repurposed for use as African American schools. Such conversions occurred when outdated schools serving White children were replaced with new buildings. This tactic was another facet of the unequal school facilities that characterized the segregation era. As of November 2024, just six examples of such schools dating to c. 1902-c. 1931 have been identified. Because the significance of these schools, for the purposes of this MPD, is associated with their function as segregated schools serving African American students, the significance of these converted schools is more properly evaluated within the context of the period when Black pupils were enrolled. Based on the information available as of November 2024, therefore, these six schools should be considered according to the context of Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931, as well as that of New Deal Era Schools, c. 1932-c. 1945 and/or Equalization Era Schools, c. 1946-c. 1968, if applicable. Registration requirements for all three of these resource types is provided below.

To date, two rural schools have been identified as part of this subset. Craddockville School (001-5405) in Accomack County dates to c. 1902 and was converted for use by African American students in 1914; the school closed in 1947. In ruinous condition at the time it was recorded in 2016, the resource continues to be owned by the County.<sup>489</sup> In Middlesex County, the former Rappahannock High School was erected in 1912 and functioned as a school for White students until a consolidated regional high school opened during the early 1930s. A local businessowner acquired the property and used it for storage but, after a 1936 fire destroyed the Middlesex County Training School that served Black pupils, the training school was moved to the former Rappahannock High School building, which again functioned as a school for a three-year period while a new training school was constructed. Upon completion of the St. Clare Walker School Complex (VLR 2024; 059-0078), the Middlesex County Training School moved to the new campus in 1939.<sup>490</sup>

In the City of Newport News, the c. 1918 Central Grammar School (121-5067) was erected in response to rapid population growth during World War I due to the presence of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and other national defense-related industries. The school served White pupils until the 1960s, when it was converted to function as

<sup>488</sup> Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/>, p. 14-15.

<sup>489</sup> "Craddockville School," VCRIS record, 001-5405, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 2016.

<sup>490</sup> "Rappahannock High School," VCRIS record, 059-0051, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 1992.

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a segregated school only for Black students until the City finally was forced to desegregate its schools in 1971. This building ceased its function as a public school that year, but reopened as a community center in 1974.<sup>491</sup> The c. 1910 Franklin School (127-0433) originally was operated by Chesterfield County before its land was included in an annexation by the City of Richmond in 1914. The schoolhouse operated as a White school until 1960, when its students were reassigned. In 1961, renamed Swansboro Elementary School, the school began to serve African American children and is associated with the City's stiff resistance to school desegregation court orders.<sup>492</sup> Also in Richmond, the John B. Cary School (NRHP 1992; 127-0824) was constructed in 1912-1913 as a school for White youth. The property's National Register nomination does not discuss its conversion to serving African American students in 1954, when the schoolhouse was renamed West End School. By this time, the neighborhood where the school stands had become majority Black and this is likely the reason for its conversion.<sup>493</sup>

A more recently documented property, Rocky Branch School in Dinwiddie County, includes a portion of the former Sutherland School, erected for White students during the 1890s and closed after the first wave of consolidation in the rural county during the 1910s. The Rocky Branch Baptist Church congregation and community members purchased a one-classroom portion of the building in 1928 and moved it to the c. 1913 Rocky Branch School site to append to their existing one-room school.<sup>494</sup>

### *Significance of Subtype A and Subtype B Schools*

Because almost all localities continued to devote the majority of public funds to schools for White children between c. 1902-c. 1931, the strategies for building schools in African American communities retained many of the characteristics of those deployed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>495</sup> African American community leaders maintained use of a combination of diplomacy, tact, determination, and confidence to convince White school officials to accept establishment of schools for Black children. As progenitors of the significant historic trends associated with African American schools, such individuals made enduring contributions to their communities. With the ascent of Jim Crow law in Virginia's 1902 constitution, racial hostility against African Americans made their work more challenging. As explained in Section E, northerners sympathetic to African Americans

<sup>491</sup> "Central Grammar School," VCRIS record, 121-5067, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 2001. The period of significance for Central Grammar School extends beyond c. 1965 and is associated with the response to school desegregation court orders in Virginia's larger cities, including Newport News, Hampton, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Richmond, and Petersburg. The post-desegregation historic context may be added to this MPD at a later date.

<sup>492</sup> "Franklin School," VCRIS record, 127-0433, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 2021.

<sup>493</sup> "John B. Cary School," VCRIS record, 127-0824, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated in 1998; Paul L. Weaver, III, "John B. Cary School," National Register nomination, October 31, 1991, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0824/>.

<sup>494</sup> Lena McDonald and Ashlen Stump, "Rocky Branch School," National Register nomination, pending review by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board on September 18, 2025, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

<sup>495</sup> Schools for Virginia Indian tribes were still rarely a consideration by local or state education officials. Churches sometimes sponsored "mission" schools that offered elementary education to Virginia Indian children. To obtain anything beyond a rudimentary education, Virginia Indian children had to leave their homes to attend federally-operated schools on reservations in Oklahoma, Minnesota, and other western states. See Laura J. Feller, *Being Indigenous in Jim Crow Virginia: Powhatan People and the Color Line* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2022; <https://doi.org/10.38118/978080619607>; E. Alexander, "A Guide to the Virginia Department of Education Indian School Records, 1936, 1968," (Accession Number 29632. Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2022), <https://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi00189.xml>; and Ashley Layne Atkins Spivey, *Knowing the River, Working the Land, and Digging for Clay: Pamunkey Indian Subsistence Practices and the Market Economy 1800-1900*, PhD Dissertation, 2017, College of William & Mary, Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects.

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but unwilling to challenge the period's racial norms provided some assistance with alleviating the educational inequities in Virginia and throughout the southern states. Several new philanthropic funds devoted to providing "industrial training" schools for Black students were established, such as the Jeanes Fund, Phelps-Stokes Fund, General Education Board, and Southern Education Foundation. Private individuals also occasionally still sponsored construction of individual school buildings. During the first wave of rural school consolidation, outdated frame buildings that had been used for White children were sold or given to Black communities to serve as schoolhouses. Responsibility for moving the building to an African American neighborhood typically fell to the community. In town and urban settings, reuse of formerly White schools occurred less often as these buildings tended to be more substantially built and could not easily be moved to an African American neighborhood. Finally, many of Virginia's African American schools continued to owe their existence to the private donations of materials, land, labor, and funds made by Black communities themselves through their fundraising efforts. Community events, such as dinners and socials, as well as special collections at churches and fraternal organizations, were held on a regular basis to meet incremental goals for improvements. Black-owned businesses also supported local schools by providing materials, labor, and cash donations. Meanwhile, local school boards continued to extract from African Americans donations of land, money, materials, and labor before agreeing to build a school. Some localities also required African American parents to contribute to teachers' salaries and to provide either dedicated housing or at least room and board to them. These demands were not made on White communities, where taxpayer dollars paid by all residents were spent instead of being equitably distributed to all schools in a locality.

The 1919 statewide report noted that some localities assigned one teacher to work at two different schools, which roughly halved the amount of instruction the students otherwise would have received. A few localities, none of which were named, held school terms for African American children only every other year.<sup>496</sup> Despite such continued blatant inequities, African Americans developed continually more sophisticated methods for extracting a share of public resources for their children's schools. The growing economic clout of African American businesses and neighborhoods, particularly in towns and cities, aided these efforts. While the majority of Black Virginians had been disfranchised, they could utilize other types of social, financial, and political influence to persuade local and state government officials to take action for school improvements. Philanthropic organizations, such as the General Education Board, Slater Fund, and Phelps-Stokes Fund, similarly developed more sophisticated arguments for bolstering public education for White and African American students in Virginia.

Whether located in urban, town, or rural environments, African American schools were deeply intertwined with other community institutions and in the lives of community residents. Black parents, teachers, community leaders, and students looked at their schools with pride as places that imbued children with the skills needed to resist White supremacy and receive formal, academic education that would enhance students' abilities to be productive, successful adults. Although the popularity of agricultural, home economics, and vocational education fluctuated between c. 1902-c.1931, these training programs instilled valued skills that African American students were free to deploy as they saw fit, rather than as White society proscribed, to become entrepreneurs, and to seek better job opportunities within and beyond Virginia. During the Great Migration that began c. 1910, African American populations declined in many rural Virginia localities as Black residents

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<sup>496</sup> Virginia Public Schools Education Commission, *Report to the Assembly of Virginia: Survey Staff's Report to the Education Commission* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Company, 1919), available online at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.virginiapublicsc02virg/?st=gallery>, p. 197-200.

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sought better opportunities in Northern, Midwestern, and Western states. White government officials and business boosters recognized that school improvements were effective in stemming loss of trained workers.

Finally, the architectural design and landscape design of African Americans schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931 are significant. As detailed above, examples of Subtype A and Subtype B schools embody numerous significant aspects of public education architectural trends during this period, including evolving pedagogy, vernacular construction methods, materials, and design, and professional design standards. The creation of standardized plans by professional architects represents an important aspect of the architectural significance of African American schools. The standardized plans promulgated by the Tuskegee Institute and the Rosenwald Fund, as well as those issued by the Virginia Department of Public Instruction's School Buildings Service (later the Department of Education's Division of School Buildings), were widely popular. Currently, it is not known how many public schools for Black children were built in Virginia according to standardized plans. Due to the loss of historic records and the schoolhouses themselves, it may not be possible to ascertain the full universe of such schools that once existed. The surviving examples, therefore, warrant careful study and documentation.

Starting in 1911, the Division of School Buildings standardized designs provided the classrooms, administrative offices, and specialized educational and recreational spaces that became typical of most consolidated public schools over the course of the first several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because consolidated schools most often served only White students, however, comparatively few such schools were built for African American children. When deployed at African American schools, moreover, the standardized designs were stripped down to what were considered by local and state officials to be the most essential elements. Side-by-side comparisons of schoolhouses built to standardized plans should be accordingly informed.

Furthermore, use of a standardized plan did not mean that standardized materials and construction methods were the norm between c. 1902-c. 1931. This period saw the use of vernacular construction methods and materials gradually being replaced by use of standardized materials that did not require the same extent of specialized knowledge and artisanship as earlier periods. Such materials included dimensional lumber, various types of wall cladding, such as fiberboard, mass-produced baseboards and door and window trim, and metal roofing. New areas of expertise, however, were needed to create and install the newer materials correctly, and the availability of such may have varied from place to place. Although Division of School Buildings architects provided the plans and technical assistance to local school boards, the hiring of contractors and acquisition of materials varied even within the same locality. Therefore, extant schoolhouses may include a blending of such methods and materials, which also is a topic worthy of additional study.

With regard to architectural design, Colonial Revival and Craftsman have been documented most often at African American schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931. The exterior stylistic influences may be limited to prominent features, such as schoolhouse entries, symmetry of fenestration, roof framing and shape, and light patterns of window sash. Interior finishes may be more difficult to distinguish from those found in earlier public schools in Virginia. Tongue-and-groove hardwood flooring, wainscoting, wall and ceiling finishes, and plain baseboards, window trim, and door casing remained easily attainable and affordable, making them popular for school projects. Fiberboard was a popular wall and ceiling finish material during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century because it was even more affordable and could be painted. Plaster finishes continued to be used on walls and ceilings as well. As noted above, the selection of such finishes likely depended on availability of both the materials and the craftsmen with expertise in their application.

Both the Tuskegee Institute and Rosenwald Fund circulated guidance regarding landscape design at African American schools. The extent to which the State Department of Education did so between c. 1902-c. 1931 is not

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clear at this time and warrants further study. The landscape designs that were available emphasized provision of both necessities, such as a drinking water supply and placement of privies, as well as recreational and educational amenities, including playgrounds, baseball diamonds, vegetable gardens and small orchards, and demonstration plots for crops. Aesthetic considerations in how an African American school presented itself to the community also factored in through the recommended use of decorative plantings, inclusion of a flagpole, a manicured lawn, and a semicircular entrance drive. As this topic has thus far not been widely studied in Virginia, it is not known at this time how many African American schools in rural, urban, and town settings may have included these kinds of landscape design elements. For schoolhouses that fell out of use and may have remained vacant for many years, most traces of visible landscape features may be lost. Schoolhouses that were expanded and modernized between the 1930s-1960s also may have lost historic landscape elements. Archaeological investigations and faunal analysis may lead to improved understanding of an individual schoolyard's landscape design, and may occur on a more regular basis in coming decades. Oral history interviews and historic photographs also may be useful for documenting such aspects.

*Registration Requirements of Subtype A and Subtype B Schools*

In order to qualify for listing under this MPD, Subtype A and Subtype B examples of Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools must be directly associated with the "African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968" historic context that is presented in Section E of this MPD. Nominated properties must be significant in the area of **Ethnic Heritage: African American** and one or more of the following areas of significance: **Education, Social History, Architecture, and/or Landscape Architecture**. Such properties should retain sufficient physical integrity that conveys their significant association with one or more of the areas of significance identified herein. As described above, Subtype A includes schools built primarily with donated funds, materials, and labor, and the buildings were designed by local builders and craftsmen without reliance on a specific standardized plan. Subtype B consists of schools built with a combination of private donations *and* public funding, often with privately-donated materials and labor, and/or the building was erected according to a standardized plan.

*Aspects of Integrity*Location and Setting

The Privately-/ Publicly-Built School resource type, inclusive of its two subtypes, often was situated within a segregated residential area during its period of significance. The type often remains in its original location. Small, frame, purpose-built schoolhouses, however, may have been moved after they ceased functioning as a public school. Relocation that occurred during the property's period of significance will not affect integrity of setting. If the building remains on its original parcel but was moved after its period of significance, the building's integrity of location and setting is considered to be largely intact. The circumstances of the building's relocation after its period of significance are to be evaluated on an individual basis when evaluating its integrity of location.

Due to urban renewal and highway construction between c. 1940-c. 1990, widespread destruction of African American neighborhoods occurred in Virginia. Relocation of a schoolhouse due to such practices may have taken place during or after the property's period of significance. The planning practices that caused fragmentation and erasure of Black neighborhoods are themselves often significant historic trends and events. Therefore, the schoolhouse's relocation affects the resource's integrity of location and setting but does not automatically eliminate such integrity. It is possible, for example, that the relocated building will have integrity

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of location and setting due to significance it may have gained in the area of Community Planning and Development and/or Social History and/or other areas of significance related to c. 1940-c. 1990 planning practices.

With regard to setting, in rural areas Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools often stood in a residential area situated along the outskirts of a town or within an unincorporated Black community with origins that extended back to the Reconstruction Era or earlier. In urban areas, Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools generally were located within a segregated Black neighborhood. In all types of settings, such schoolhouses may stand alongside an African American church on land donated to the local school board by the church trustees to facilitate establishment of a school. This practice became less common by the 1910s-1920s as schools grew in enrollment and required more space. The setting of Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools may have been entirely residential in character, or have included a mix of residential and other uses, such as commercial, recreational, educational, religious, and social. Because many Black neighborhoods experienced extensive demolitions due to c. 1940-c. 1990 highway construction, urban renewal projects, and/or local zoning for land uses and activities incompatible with a neighborhood's or individual resource's original character, the setting of a Privately-/ Publicly-Built School may have been altered. In such cases, these alterations are part of the resource's integrity of setting rather than a negative effect because the consequences are part of the direct association of surviving resources with significance in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and related areas of significance such as Social History and Community Planning and Development. The incompatible activities and uses are illustrative of the many challenges overcome by Black individuals and communities prior to and during the dismantling of Jim Crow segregation and establishment of civil rights for African Americans at a level unprecedented in the nation's history, and represent another facet of the structural racism that caused segregated public education to be the norm in Virginia between c. 1870-c. 1968.

### Design, Materials, and Workmanship

The design, materials, and workmanship of Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools vary based on whether the resource was constructed by local craftsmen using an assortment of donated materials, designed by a local builder or by a professional architect, and/or funded by a philanthropic organization that required use of certain design specifications. Between c. 1902-c. 1931, standardized plans for schoolhouses became widely available, particularly after c. 1915. Schoolhouses erected between c. 1902-c.1914 usually were built by local carpenters, masons, and other tradesmen to meet a community's specific needs and financial means. Building form, footprint, size, and massing, location of entries and windows, and interior plan varied widely. Although large windows often are found on early schoolhouses, the presence of smaller windows should not be automatically considered to be a later alteration. Availability of materials often dictated a building's individual features. Careful examination of a building may be necessary to determine original design elements and materials. Historic photos, correspondence, local school board records, and oral history also may provide helpful insight into a schoolhouse's design and materials over time. Designs of schoolhouses after standardized plans were published in booklets such as *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* and prepared by professional architects for the Virginia Department of Education became more consistent in terms of form, massing, footprint, locations of door and window openings, and interior plans. Note that schools built after the 1915 publication of *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community* and other publications of the Julius Rosenwald Foundation may have been built according to one of the Foundation's standardized plans without utilizing Rosenwald Foundation grants. In such cases, the building in question may be nominated under this MPD rather than the Rosenwald Schools in Virginia MPD.



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The materials used to erect all variations of Privately-/ Publicly-Built Schools were often amassed through private donations and may have included materials salvaged from other types of earlier buildings, as well as leftover materials from another project. The quality of donated materials is likely to have varied, necessitating later replacement of poor-quality materials and those subject to hard use. By the 1920s, construction materials became more consistent due to the specifications included in architect-prepared, standardized plans, particularly for schools located in towns and cities. Small rural schools, meanwhile, retained many of the design characteristics that had been established by the 1910s. While frame construction continued to be utilized in rural settings, schools in towns and cities began to feature masonry construction during the 1910s, a trend that increased during the 1920s but was never universal.

Replacement of materials in kind are appropriate when needed to keep a resource in good repair and active use. Where historic materials have been replaced with functionally and/or visually similar but newer types of synthetic materials, a resource's integrity of materials and workmanship is somewhat diminished depending on the extent of the replacement materials and whether the alterations occurred during the property's period of significance. Some materials, such as asbestos, aluminum, and vinyl siding, asphalt shingles, and aluminum-framed window sash, were introduced during the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are, themselves, of historic age and contribute to integrity in their own right, even if such materials replaced earlier finishes such as weatherboard siding, wood shingles, and wood-framed sash.

Extensive use of replacement materials after the property's period of significance may result in proportional erosion of integrity, depending upon the resource's materials, design, and workmanship during its period of significance. Additions on buildings that date to the resource's period of significance and allowed the building to continue or expand its historic use do not erode integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Those alterations that postdate the period of significance are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to understand the resource's continued integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

For the most part, purpose- built rural schoolhouses erected between c. 1902-c. 1931 embody the vernacular construction methods of their time and place. Such buildings offer an opportunity to study the work of artisans and craftsmen and how they evolved from the original construction to repairs made over time. Schools in towns and cities, on the other hand, are more likely to feature materials and workmanship associated with the standardization of construction practices. Such methods changed considerably during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of standardized, mass-produced materials of different types as well as increasingly comprehensive building codes for light, ventilation, heating, and safety. Repairs made during the latter years of a schoolhouse's period of significance may demonstrate such evolution in workmanship. Poorly rendered repairs made after a property's period of significance can adversely affect a building's integrity of workmanship, depending on the extent to which earlier workmanship has been erased or removed.

With regard to the former public schools that may be open to the public today, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that may be applicable to ensure equal access to and within the interior. Such retrofits to comply with the ADA's accessibility requirements shall not be considered alterations that impair the property's integrity. Typical alterations include erecting a ramp to permit entry to the building's main entrance and/or alternate entrances, widening of some doors, and/or removal or lowering of thresholds at exterior or interior room entries. To comply with ADA, provision of drinking water and restrooms for site visitors, if offered, is not required to be within the historic building; a separate building for these purposes may be provided elsewhere on the property.

The following table lists the common physical features of Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools between c. 1902-c. 1931 that have been recorded in VCRIS.

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**Table 3: Common Elements of Privately-/Publicly-Built School Buildings, c. 1902-c. 1931, Subtypes A and B**

Element	Typical Components and Materials
Stories	Generally, one to two stories, but typically no more than three
Foundation	Continuous, pier, or raised Materials: brick, concrete, stone (fieldstone, random rubble), wood
Structural System	Typically, frame or masonry (brick), though may be constructed with other systems such as log or reinforced concrete.
Exterior Treatment	Wood Siding (weatherboard, clapboard, German-Style), brick, stucco, stone (granite), or some combination. Exterior detailing may include wood corner boards or other details such as water tables, quoins, glass blocks, pilasters, or columns. Common alterations to exterior materials include the use of bricktex, vinyl, asbestos, aluminum, or fiber cement siding.
Roof	Typically gable (side, front, or cross) or hipped, though shape may vary. Larger buildings may have multiple roof types, such as a hipped central section and flanking gable-roof wings  Roof details may include exposed rafter tails, overhanging eaves, boxed cornices, gable vents (often louvered), dormers, belfry/cupola, parapets, and chimneys.  Materials: most common are metal (standing seam, corrugated, tin, or terne), though other materials may include asphalt, composition, or slate shingles.
Entrances	Typically, single or double leaf; usually wood. Common replacement materials include fiberglass or composite. Some include recessed entries, entry vestibules, or porches.
Windows	Typically, wood sash, double hung windows, though they may range in style and material.
Additions	Historic additions are common, but not requisite for listing. Many schools may include additions designed to accommodate school expansions and modernizations. If additions were constructed after the period of significance, they should not overwhelm the original building, unless in cases where such changes are specifically tied to the continued use of the property as an African American public school during the property's period of significance.

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Element	Typical Components and Materials
Interiors	Interiors were not evaluated as part of this project; however, they should generally retain their historic plan and circulation pattern. Many rural schoolhouses historically had one to two classrooms, though numerous examples historically grew to include more rooms. Common interior alterations include additional interior partitions, retrofitted kitchens and bathrooms and later remodeling; auditorium, cafeteria, and gymnasium additions; covering of original wood flooring materials with carpeting and asbestos or other vinyl material, covering of original beadboard, fiberboard, or plaster wall and ceiling finishes with gypsum wallboard, and paint. In towns and cities, schoolhouses may have plaster walls; often, plaster has been covered with gypsum wallboard.
Secondary Resources	Private/ Public schools may have secondary resources, but they are not required for listing. Common secondary resources include entrance drives, planting beds, and other landscape features, as well as outbuildings, sheds, and vocational training shops. At rural schools, sites of privies also may be present; such sites are less likely to be visible in town and urban settings.

### Feeling and Association

Location of Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools within or adjacent to a historically segregated area of residential resources, or mixed with commercial, recreational, educational, religious, and social uses, will contribute to the resource's integrity of feeling and association. The retention of associated historic-age properties in proximity to the school building contributes to its integrity of setting and, therefore, integrity of feeling and association. It will not be atypical, however, for a Privately-/Publicly-Built School to be in a location affected by the types of extensive demolition, displacement, new construction, and/or incompatible land uses and activities noted above with regard to integrity of location. A resource affected by such activities will have changes to its location, setting, feeling, and association. Analysis of these four aspects of a property's integrity, therefore, must take into account the effects of such alterations on an individual property and, where applicable, should be understood as contributing to that property's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship contribute to integrity of feeling and association related to the Privately-/Publicly-Built School's original period of construction. The generally substandard character of many Publicly-/Privately-Built Schools was recognized by state and local government officials by c. 1931. In some localities, little effort was made to improve such buildings, or to replace them entirely, into the 1940s, by which time Publicly-/ Privately Built Schools often were retired from service. For those that remained in educational use, alterations associated with subsequent significant events, particularly New Deal and/or equalization era additions and updates, may affect the property's integrity of feeling and association with regard to its original construction period. Such alterations, however, are likely to be significant in their own right and, if so, will not erode the property's integrity of feeling and association.

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According to VCRIS data, the following general observations are applicable to New Deal Era Schools dating between c. 1932-c. 1945. As a group, the newly erected schools were somewhat larger, particularly in urban areas, than schoolhouses from earlier periods. Similarly, in urban settings, high-style architectural influences were apparent, particularly Colonial Revival, Art Deco, and Streamline Moderne, in exterior ornamental details. Overall, new Black schools built during the relatively brief New Deal Era had more modern designs and materials, again primarily in urban and town settings. In rural areas, traditional materials and vernacular designs were still prevalent and the buildings are generally smaller and simpler in form, size, and educational spaces, with many still lacking features, such as auditoriums, libraries, and science labs, that had been commonplace in consolidated White schools since the 1910s. Many local school boards continued to defer consolidation of rural schools for Black children, which inhibited replacement of outmoded schoolhouses. Newly-built New Deal Era Schools typically remained in use through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and often received Equalization Era remodeling and additions, which extended their lifespan. During the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, New Deal Era Schools began to be disposed of by local school systems. The overall good quality of construction of New Deal Era Schools made them adaptable to new uses, such as multiple-family housing, and the mid-1970s advent of federal historic tax credits proved to be an important financial incentive that encouraged reuse of the buildings rather than demolition.

Of the 30 New Deal Era Schools recorded in VCRIS as historically African American and erected between c. 1932-c. 1945, their settings are as follows:

- Hamlet – 2
- Setting not listed – 1
- Rural – 7
- Suburban – 1
- Town – 8
- Transportation Corridor – 1
- Urban – 10
- Village – 0

Far more New Deal Era Schools than the amounts listed above were built in Virginia; from 1933-1937 alone, the Public Works Administration provided funding to erect 225 new schools, make improvements to approximately 115 existing schools, and construct 64 school auditoriums, cafeterias, dormitories, and housing for teachers.<sup>497</sup> Data regarding how many of these projects concerned White schools versus African American schools has not been found. Although the smaller sample size of surveyed New Deal Era Schools in VCRIS makes direct comparisons with earlier schools difficult, for the first time in the history of Virginia's public school system, a majority of new schoolhouses, 18 of the total 30, were erected in town and urban settings rather than rural areas. As noted above, this transition likely was due to several trends, including the larger populations and greater

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<sup>497</sup> Robert C. Weaver, "The Public Works Administration School Building-Aid Program and Separate Negro Schools," [The Journal of Negro Education 7, no. 3 (July 1938)], p. 366, as referenced in Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>, p. 19.

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prosperity of many African American neighborhoods in towns and cities versus rural populations, as well as greater political and economic influence of said larger Black populations on urban governments.<sup>498</sup> Willingness among town and urban officials to apply for federal aid for financing school construction and remodeling projects for African American students also tended to be higher than in rural areas. Based on research conducted to date, the following New Deal agencies were involved with school projects in Virginia: Public Works Administration, Civil Works Administration, Virginia Emergency Relief Administration, and Works Progress Administration.

As with earlier periods, school buildings erected between c. 1932-c. 1945 represent a range of sizes, styles, and features. Although Colonial Revival remained the most popular architectural style in Virginia, including for New Deal Era school buildings, a few examples of Modern Movement designs have been documented. Richmond's Maggie L. Walker High School (NRHP 1998; 127-0414) is among the grandest Art Deco designs (Figure 50) for



Figure 50. Maggie L. Walker High School as it appeared in 2020 (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Calder Loth, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0414/>).

this resource type. The Richmond school board hired the venerable Richmond-based Carneal, Johnston & Wright architectural firm to design the new school building. The firm long had been a preferred designer for academic buildings and their selection by the Richmond School Board's is indicative of the prominence that Maggie L. Walker High School would hold in the city. The property's 6.5 acres had been the site of an African American school since 1883. The 1938 building's sheer scale sets it apart from the majority of African American schools that were erected during the New Deal Era. The Public Works Administration disbursed a \$209,250 federal grant that covered approximately 45 percent of the school's total construction cost. Although Richmond's conservative mayor, Fulmer Bright, had been disinclined to accept federal money due to ill-informed fears of federal meddling in local affairs, he was goaded into action by African American activists and White progressives.<sup>499</sup>

Utilizing "stylized Neoclassical ornamental treatment," the building's Art Deco style was most pronounced in the 5-bay central entrance bay, composed of cast concrete that features symmetrical vertical scoring and the

<sup>498</sup> Although the vast majority of African Americans remained disfranchised during the New Deal Era, Black residents had become highly skilled at exercising political pressure in other ways. White government officials who wished to present a progressive image of their locality as part of a larger boosterism scheme to attract new industry also were more open to the "Virginia Way" of managing race relations as discussed above in Section E.

<sup>499</sup> Mary Harding Sadler, "Maggie L. Walker High School," National Register nomination, May 4, 1998, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0414/>, p. 7/1-7/2.

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school's name rendered in Art Deco lettering above the central three windows. The three entry bays retained double-leaf wood doors with single-light sash and metal-framed, industrial-style, awning and hopper sash with twelve lights. Use of metal-framed sash on schools had not yet become prevalent in Virginia, nor had the steel and concrete interior framing deployed at the high school. Enhancing the sense of verticality typical of Art Deco design was a series of vertical panels of brickwork with shallow reveals that indicated the locations of vertical framing members. Inlaid green tiles in a diamond pattern accented the panels. In contrast, the red-brick veneer laid in common bond, above a smooth, cast concrete-faced raised basement, and the cast concrete stringcourse above the second-story windows reflected the generally horizontal massing of the main block and its flanking wings. Interior finishes were finer than was typical of African American schools, even others built with federal aid during the 1930s. In particular, the vestibule and lobby featured coffered ceilings and plaster cornices with Egyptian motifs, as well as linear scoring evocative of the Art Moderne style. Paneled wood casework and molded trim, along with yellow-glazed concrete block wainscoting beneath four-inch, smooth, concrete blocks arranged to mimic ashlar, further ornamented the interior spaces. The building's lobby led to the two-story auditorium's entrance, with double-loaded corridors flanked by classrooms and administrative offices extending laterally from the central block to terminate in a Y-plan. A cafeteria and lunchroom were in the basement level beneath the auditorium. The rear doors of the auditorium opened to the two-story gymnasium, which was above locker rooms, mechanical equipment, and storage spaces in the basement. The concrete-paved forecourt provided a more formal entry to the high school than heretofore had been typical of African American schools in town and urban settings. Athletic fields and a parking lot also occupied a large portion of the 6.5-acre campus.<sup>500</sup>

A distinguishing aspect of Maggie L. Walker High School's design was its original emphasis on vocational training. High school students who sought an academic curriculum attended Armstrong High School, also in Richmond. At Maggie L. Walker High School, the inclusion of multiple spaces for vocational training and home economics classes set it apart from the training schools of the period. One classroom wing was devoted to girls' home economics instruction and vocational instruction spaces consisting of a laundry and beauty parlor, in keeping with the period's gendered norms for such instruction. Vocational training for male students was housed in another wing and included "classrooms for public service training" and a "masonry department."<sup>501</sup> In addition to high school students, the school provided vocational classes to adults during the evening. Instruction in the following trades were offered: "practical nursing, beauty culture, tailoring, barbering, general mechanics, welding, bricklaying, carpentry, shoe repair, chef cooking, meat cutting, typewriting and shorthand, bookkeeping, business English, commercial law, advertising, retailing and effective speech."<sup>502</sup> During the early 1940s, additional academic coursework was added to the high school curriculum. Through its athletics events, extracurricular activities, evening classes, musical performances, and other offerings, the high school became a major community center for Richmond's African American residents, particularly those residing in the vicinity of the Jackson Ward and Carver neighborhoods.

<sup>500</sup> Mary Harding Sadler, Maggie L. Walker High School, National Register nomination, May 4, 1998, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0414/>, p. 7/1-7/4. The school is named in honor of Maggie L. Walker, a nationally-significant businesswoman who founded a successful bank, lead the International Order of St. Luke mutual aid organization, and served as a community leader in Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood. Walker's home was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975. The nomination for the property is available at <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0275/>. In 1978, her former home was designated a National Historic Site; see [https://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/maggie\\_walker/index.html](https://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/maggie_walker/index.html) for additional information about the site.

<sup>501</sup> Mary Harding Sadler, Maggie L. Walker High School, National Register nomination, May 4, 1998, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0414/>, p. 7/2, 7/4.

<sup>502</sup> Mary Harding Sadler, Maggie L. Walker High School, National Register nomination, May 4, 1998, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/127-0414/>, p. 8/7.



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In the small city of Covington, the combined Watson Elementary and High School is representative of the New Deal Era Schools erected in small cities and towns in Virginia. The building was constructed with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds in 1938-1939 (Figure 51). The Alleghany County School Board, which at that time also managed Covington's schools, received a \$122,575.50 federal grant that was expected to cover approximately 45 percent of the estimated cost to build both Watson and a new high school for White children. The school board hired the locally-prominent Roanoke architectural firm of Smithey & Boynton to design both schools. Smithey & Boynton designed a number of New Deal Era schools in southwestern Virginia localities, including Salem High School, City of Salem, (1933), Clearbrook High School in Roanoke County (1938), and Whitewood High School in Buchanan County (1940). The local contracting firms of C. W. Barger and J. F. Barbour and Sons were awarded contracts to construct the two schools. Covington voters approved a bond sale to raise \$150,000 to cover the remaining construction costs. Of these funds, \$53,292 was budgeted to build the Watson School, leaving approximately \$219,000 to devote to building Covington High School (NRHP 2008; 107-5180).<sup>503</sup> Smithey & Boynton designed both schools, along with the contemporaneous Rivermont (NRHP 2022; 107-5181) and East Covington elementary schools, to feature streamlined Art Moderne design elements.<sup>504</sup>

Watson School, for example, is austere in character with minimal ornamentation. Its horizontal massing is emphasized by a stone water table and multiple corbeled brick stringcourses above and below the banks of wood, 12-over-12, double hung sash that extend across the longitudinal walls, as well as a corbelled cornice with stone coping defining the roofline. The centered primary entrance is fronted with brick cheeks with curved front edges. The recessed, wood, double doors were topped with a transom featuring geometric lights. The building's lobby included terrazzo flooring and walls were entirely tiled with small square tiles with variegated colors. The building's corridors and stairwells featured walls tiled with beige, rectangular tiles, while each classroom had built-in wood cabinetry and shelves. These materials were typical of the resilient finishes that were deployed in Virginia's public schools by the 1930s. In addition to classrooms, a library and principal's office were included in the original design. A bronze plaque in the first-floor corridor reads: "Federal

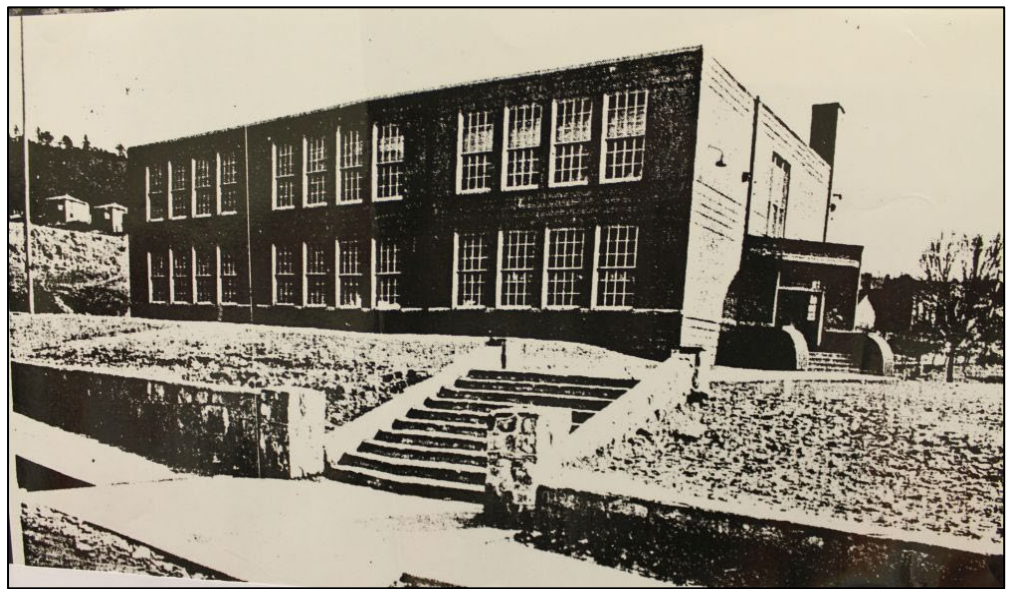


Figure 381. C. 1940 photo of Watson Elementary and High School, City of Covington, with façade at right and side elevation at left (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, VCRIS)

building's lobby included terrazzo flooring and walls were entirely tiled with small square tiles with variegated colors. The building's corridors and stairwells featured walls tiled with beige, rectangular tiles, while each classroom had built-in wood cabinetry and shelves. These materials were typical of the resilient finishes that were deployed in Virginia's public schools by the 1930s. In addition to classrooms, a library and principal's office were included in the original design. A bronze plaque in the first-floor corridor reads: "Federal

<sup>503</sup> John R. Kern and Michael J. Pulice, "Covington High School," National Register nomination, February 2008, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/107-5180/>, p. 8/4. Another New Deal Era school in Covington, Rivermont School, was erected in 1938 and has design and historic significance similar to that of Covington High School. See Heather Fearnbach, "Rivermont School," National Register nomination, December 3, 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/107-5181/>.

<sup>504</sup> Heather Fearnbach, "Rivermont School," National Register nomination, December 3, 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/107-5181/>, p. 26.



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Emergency Administration of Public Works/ Franklin D. Roosevelt/ President of the United States / Harold L. Ickes/Administrator of Public Works/ Watson School/1939.” Although not listed in the historic registers, the former Watson School was recommended eligible for both the NRHP and VLR in 2022.

In the Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County, the aforementioned Calfee Training School’s 1938-1939 construction had been the subject of considerable local debate, which is discussed in Section E of this MPD. Its design, however, is a representative example of the more traditional Colonial Revival architecture that typified many of the New Deal Era Schools in Virginia (Figure 52). The one-story, T-plan, brick building features the classically-inspired symmetry and pedimented central entry bay that are character-defining features of the style as it was deployed for educational buildings during the New Deal Era. The central block is defined by parapets at each gable end, with a hip-roofed extension to either side. The paired window sash have 9-over-9 wood sash, although the splayed lintels shown in the standardized architectural plans provided by the Board of Education School Building Service were replaced by a course of soldier bricks. The brick veneer is laid in a variant of Flemish bond while standing-seam metal clads the roof. The ornamented centered entry, composed of wood Doric pilasters, a plain frieze, and molded pediment, surrounds the recessed, double-leaf, wood, nine-light entry doors topped with an 18-light, rectangular transom. Centered on the front block’s rear elevation, a one-story, original wing is composed of matching materials. In 1951, a one-story, telescoping, rear addition containing a cafeteria and teacher’s restroom was constructed with use of equalization funds. A bronze plaque affixed to the façade reads, “Federal Works Agency/ Public Works Administration/ John M. Carmody/ Federal Works Administrator/ Franklin D. Roosevelt/ President of the United States/ Calfee Training School/ 1939.”

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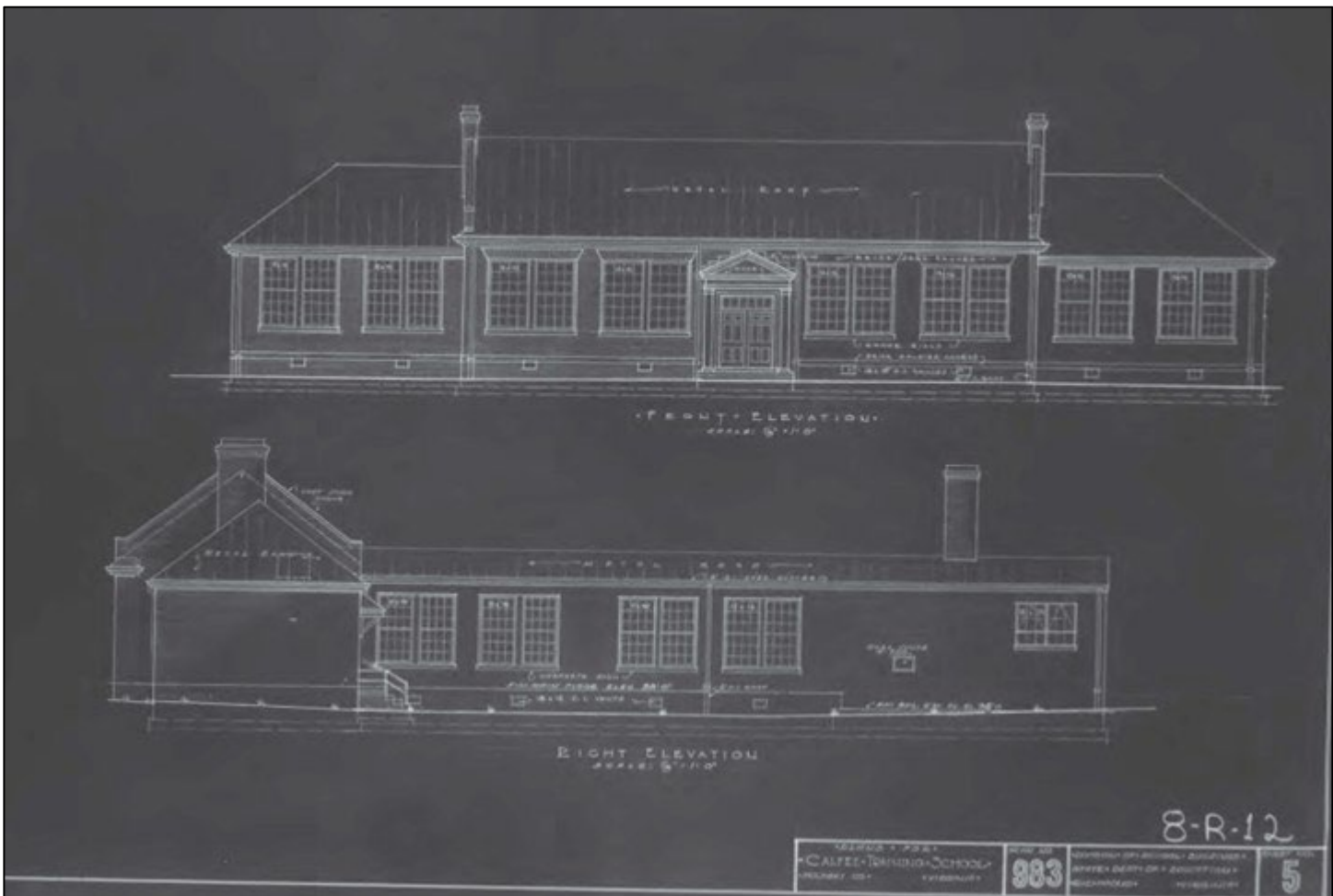


Figure 392. Top, 2021 photo of Calfee Training School as it appeared in 2021; Bottom, elevation drawings of Calfee Training School, Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County (Images Source: Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>).

The Calfee Training School's interior spaces consisted of four classrooms flanking the centered main entry, with another four classrooms, a principal's office, restrooms, and two utilitarian spaces for a fuel room and furnace room housed in the rear wing (Figure 53). Home economics instruction took place in one of the classrooms. The lack of a cafeteria, library, and science labs demonstrated the inequities in provision of academic education to the African American students. The vocational and industrial education space that had

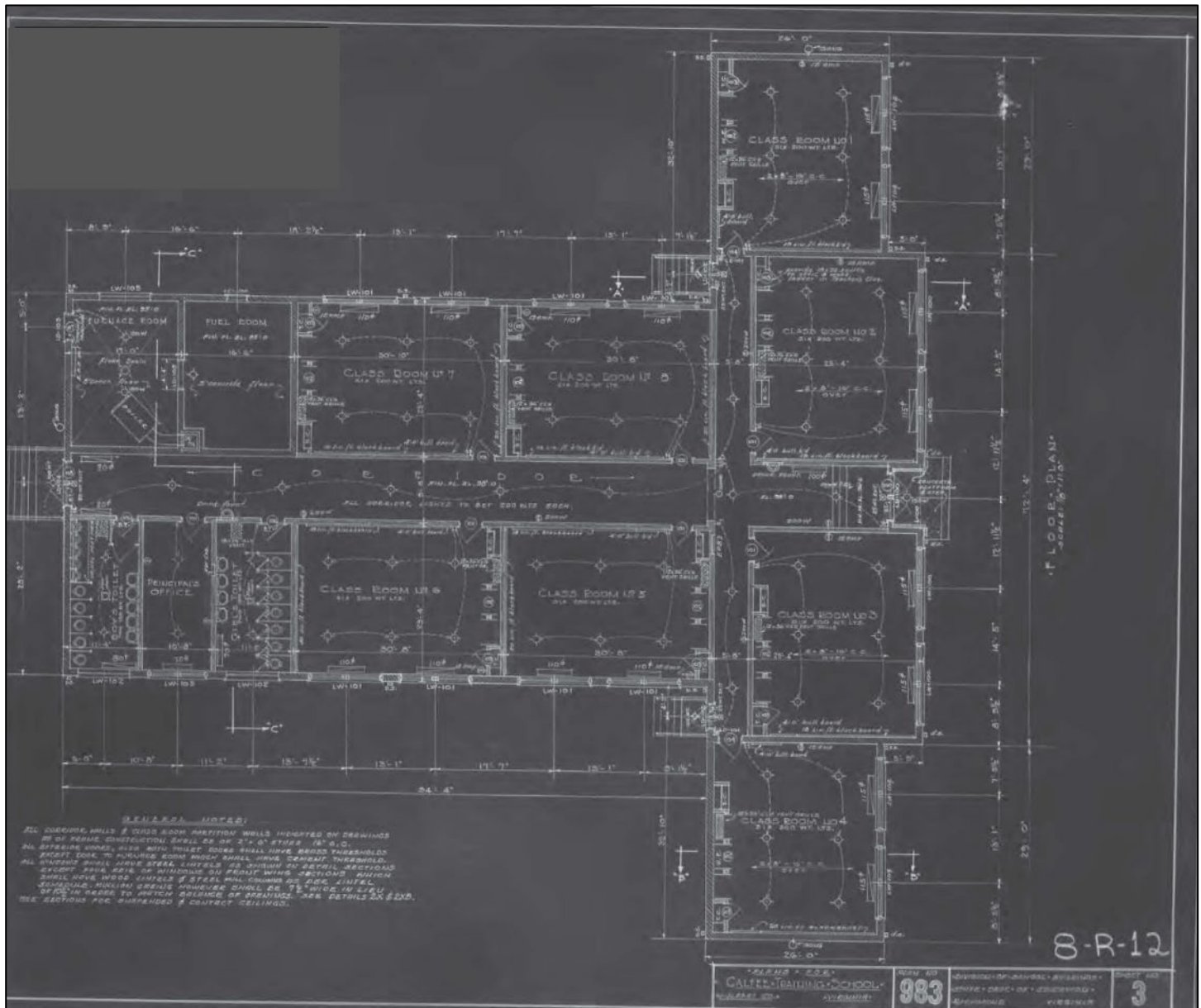
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*Figure 403. Floor Plan of Calfee Training School, Town of Pulaski, Pulaski County (Image Source: Alison Blanton and Kate Kronau, "Calfee Training School," National Register nomination, September 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/125-0034/>)*

been lost to a 1938 fire were not replaced; students interested in those classes instead were required to use bus transportation to the aforementioned Christiansburg Institute in neighboring Montgomery County. Although the plans were labeled for the construction of Calfee Training School, the date of the original drawings that were created by the State Department of Education's Division of School Buildings is not known at this time. The modest nature of the educational spaces suggest that the standardized plan could have been created a decade or more prior to 1938.

A scaled-down version of the Calfee Training School's design is found at the Stafford Training School (NRHP 2013; 089-0247). Built of concrete blocks, the one-story, side gable central section featured a symmetrical



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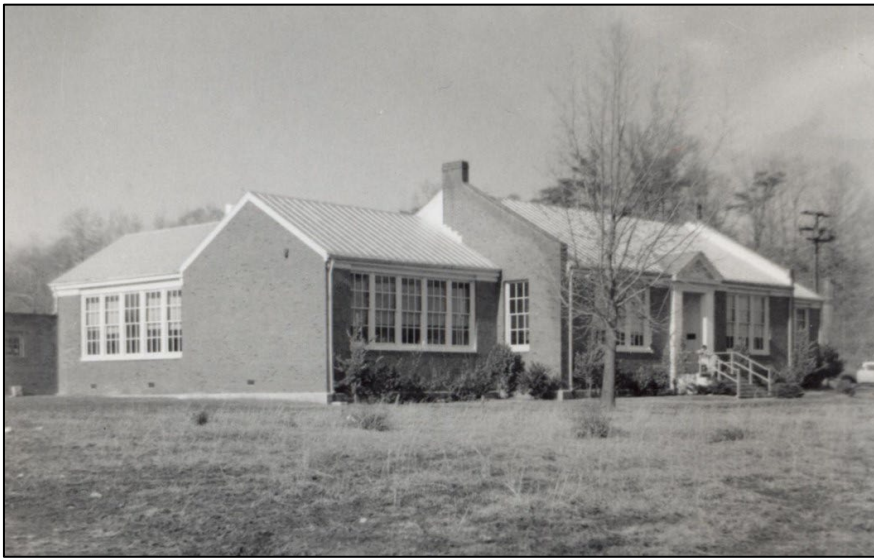


Figure 414. Stafford Training School as it appeared in 1961, shortly after the red-brick veneer was added to the building. The side-gable extension on the main block and rear wing were equalization-era addition (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/089-0247/>).

façade with a centered entry and flanking groups of three window sash with 6-over-6 lights (Figure 54). Parapets defined each gable end and the roof was clad with standing-seam metal. The centered entry was highlighted by a smooth, concrete block surround that resembled ashlar, a concrete frieze with horizontal bands, and a molded pediment with a plain tympanum. The slightly-recessed, double-leaf wood doors were topped with a rectangular transom with five vertical lights. A bronze plaque next to the entry reads, "Federal Works Agency/ Public Works Administration/ John M. Carmody/ Federal Works Administrator/ Franklin D. Roosevelt/ President of the United States/ Stafford County Training School/ 1939."<sup>505</sup> The concrete block exterior walls originally were painted

white. In 1960, the red-brick veneer was added (Figure 54). When completed, the building had four classrooms, with two to each side of the entrance vestibule. A fifth classroom was added in 1943 as a rear ell located right-of-center on the main block's rear elevation. When completed, the building lacked indoor plumbing and a central heating system. Privies stood to the rear of a baseball diamond that was added in 1940. Each classroom was heated with a wood-burning stove.<sup>506</sup> The schoolhouse's lack of indoor plumbing, heating, and electrical systems were typical of rural schools for African Americans, including those built with federal grants. Such conditions also could be found at rural schools serving White students, primarily those with small enrollments. Consolidated rural schools with larger student enrollments, almost all of which served only White children, required indoor plumbing to meet sanitation standards.

Stafford Training School's interior finishes are representative of the transition from traditional materials to newer material. The interior walls are exposed, painted concrete block, which was becoming a standard treatment for virtually all of Virginia's public schools during the 1930s. Far more resistant to hard wear than plaster, fiberboard, and sheetrock wall finishes, concrete blocks were an economical material as well. To enhance resilience, tile wainscoting often was applied to the lower portions of concrete block walls and usually consisted of thick ceramic tile with a glazed finish. Flooring in New Deal Era Schools increasingly consisted of poured concrete, usually covered with asbestos, linoleum, or other long-wearing flooring, while the tongue-and-groove hardwood flooring that had characterized most schools for the previous half-century were phased out.

Within the West Point Historic District (NRHP 1996; 325-0002), the Beverly Allen School is among the later examples of a New Deal Era School in Virginia. Completed in 1941, the one-story, side gable front section has a centered entry flanked by groups of five large, double hung, wood-framed window sash. The flat-roofed entry

<sup>505</sup> Norman Schools, "Stafford Training School," National Register nomination, August 24, 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/089-0247/>, p. 4.

<sup>506</sup> Norman Schools, "Stafford Training School," National Register nomination, August 24, 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/089-0247/>, p. 4-6.

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porch is accented with Tuscan columns and an oversized, plain frieze. The recessed entry is composed of wood, two-panel, nine-light double doors topped with a rectangular six-light transom. At this time, it is not known if the brick veneer was original to the building or a later improvement, as occurred at Stafford Training School. The building opened as an elementary school but, the following year, a one-story, gable-roofed rear wing was completed to house high school classes. The addition spans the front block's rear elevation and both of its longitudinal elevations feature groups of double hung, wood sash matching those on the façade. The rear gable end has a single, centered, recessed entry with a pair of wood double doors. The schoolhouse became an elementary school after 1954 before being retired from service in 1966. The building is named in honor of Beverly Allen Sr. (?-1910) and his son, Beverly Allen Jr. (1859-1918), both of whom were significant individuals in West Point through their lifetime contributions.<sup>507</sup>

As noted above, many existing schools were expanded and improved during the New Deal Era. Such improvements included landscaping to address drainage problems, repairs to address myriad damage, new additions, and interior remodeling. One such example was the Switchback School (NRHP 2013; 008-5042), later known as Union Hurst School, in Bath County. Built in 1924 with partial funding from the Julius Rosenwald School, Switchback occupied a steep hillside site that was typical of the county's rural, rugged terrain (Figure 55). The two-classroom building with a full basement was built according to a standardized Rosenwald Fund design that closely matched a State Board of Education standardized plan, except that as built, the schoolhouse featured a single, centered entry rather than separate entries to the two classrooms. A small, frame, one-story teacher's cottage also was erected nearby during the 1920s, likely because the property's low population density and rural, steeply rolling topography made nearby housing difficult to find. Throughout its history, Switchback School served a small enrollment of students that appears not to have exceeded double digits in number. In 1933, a two-classroom addition placed at a slight angle to the right of the original frame section allowed 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-grade classes to be added to the curriculum; a fourth frame addition followed in 1960. The 1933 addition appears not to have been constructed with federal funds. Approximately 14 students were enrolled in the high school classes at this time. The school's name was changed to Union Hurst about the same time that the high school curriculum was added.<sup>508</sup>

<sup>507</sup> Katie Gibson, personal communication to authors, September 8, 2024, concerning Beverly Allen School, West Point, King William County, Virginia; Alonzo Thomas Dill, "Beverly Allen (1859–1918)," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998–), published 1998, revised 2022, [http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Allen\\_Beverly](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Allen_Beverly). The Beverly Allen School's considerable significance in the areas of Education and Social History is discussed below in the statement of significance for New Deal Era Schools.

<sup>508</sup> Gibson Worsham, "Switchback School," National Register nomination, June 8, 2013, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/008-5042/>, p. 5, 15-16.

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The school's steep hillside location created issues with the building's stability and drainage. To remediate these, during the late 1930s, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers built terraces around the school, held in place by stone retaining walls composed of coursed fieldstones with thick mortar joints (Figure 55). Pipe rails were placed atop each wall for safety purposes. Simultaneously, access to the brick basement was altered to allow access to the remodeled interior, which now housed a small cafeteria and a library. A rectangular, concrete block and stone cistern for water collection was built into the rear retaining wall to collect rainwater and supply the building with potable water. Although a level space created by the CCC during the 1930s served as a playground, no playground equipment was installed "as late as 1959."<sup>509</sup>



Figure 425. Top: Switchback School in Bath County as it appeared in 1931-1932; bottom: Switchback School as it appeared in 2013. The fieldstone retaining wall in the foreground of the bottom image was erected during the late 1930s.

The high school at Union Hurst served the community until 1945 when students began to be bused 25 miles to the aforementioned Watson Elementary and High School in Covington. In 1950, the frame privies that stood behind Union Hurst were replaced by a "sanitary toilet" built of concrete block with a concrete septic tank beneath it. The "sanitary" or "outdoor toilet" likely was considered to be a major improvement over the traditional pit privies that typically were made available to students in rural areas because septic tanks prevented the waste from contaminating adjacent groundwater. Union Hurst's brick basement continued to be used as a cafeteria

and library through the 1950s, while the former high school classroom was used for programs and meetings. A portion of the 1960 frame addition included a cafeteria, which was relocated from the basement. One of at least five African-American elementary schools in Bath County, Union Hurst continued its function as a public school until 1965 when the county schools were fully integrated.<sup>510</sup>

<sup>509</sup> Gibson Worsham, Switchback School, National Register nomination, June 8, 2013, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/008-5042/>, p. 5, 15.

<sup>510</sup> Gibson Worsham, Switchback School, National Register nomination, June 8, 2013, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/008-5042/>, p. 6-7, 14, 16.

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### *Significance*

As segregated schools continued to be required in Virginia throughout the New Deal Era, Black Virginians maintained their dedicated advocacy and support for their children's public education. The period also is associated with the first major federal involvement in state and local public schools through provision of federal grants to pay for construction of new schools and repairs to existing schoolhouses. The aid, driven by efforts to revitalize local economies during the Great Depression, not only improved many African American schools but also provided much-needed employment opportunities. The first equalization strategy lawsuits, concerning teacher salaries, also were filed between c. 1932-c. 1945, and began laying the groundwork for dismantling segregated public schools altogether. A number of individual educators participated in the Civil Rights Movement in addition to their educational work. Educators' organizations, notably the Virginia State Teachers Association, also played a significant role in civil rights activism. Voter registration and educating Black Virginians about their constitutional rights were typical pursuits. Although Jim Crow segregation exercised heavy-handed interference in all aspects of life in Virginia, the onset of World War II in 1939 marked the beginnings of a major shift in Americans' opinions of how a democratic society should operate. The consequences of this evolution in attitudes regarding segregation played out more fully during the Equalization Era, which is discussed below.

With their interior plans, classroom sizes, large windows, and varied educational spaces, New Deal Era Schools also embodied significant pedagogical trends, such as progressive education, of the 1930s to early 1940s. Although schools for Black children usually had simpler architectural designs, many African American educators were enthusiastic proponents of progressive education tenets. Even those working in older schoolhouses incorporated progressive education coursework on a routine basis; the above-noted disuse of the "industrial arts" room in Washington-Rosenwald schools, for example, indicated that teachers preferred to focus their students on academic achievement. The movement's holistic emphasis on each student's wellbeing and cooperative approach to instilling critical thinking skills and democratic values were intended to help students grow into productive adults capable of exercising and defending their civil rights. Progressive educators such as Lutrelle Fleming Palmer, who served as the principal of Huntington High School in Newport News from 1920-1943, had a profound influence that extended beyond their individual schools and communities. The faculty of Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University) in Chesterfield County and at Saint Paul's College in Brunswick County also played important roles in research and implementation of progressive educational theories at their respective laboratory schools, D. Webster Davis High School and James S. Russell High School. The influence of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes and the General Education Board's 1940-1946 *Secondary School Study* also are facets of the progressive education movement that warrant additional research.

Notwithstanding the trend toward academics in African American schools, vocational and home economics education continued to be a prominent feature of school curricula. The most progressive schools, such as Maggie L. Walker High School, offered sophisticated vocational education options, while smaller, poorly-funded and -equipped schools continued the historic focus on basic manual trades. Specialized education buildings, such as industrial and agricultural shops and home economics cottages, commonly were mentioned in newspaper articles and project proposals concerning New Deal Era school campuses for both Black and White students. Due to the aforementioned lower levels of investment in African American schools, however, such buildings tended to be of modest size and utilitarian design. Rather than building a cottage, local school boards also opted merely to designate a classroom space for home economics. Architectural resources associated with vocational and home economics education are significant, but many of them have been lost due to subsequent construction projects on school campuses and/or replacement with new, updated facilities. Students' and



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parents' interest in vocational and home economics education also has fluctuated over time, which affected student enrollments in such coursework. Federal support and funding for such instruction, however, assured that these training options remained part of school curricula throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While the federal aid provided to Virginia's public elementary and secondary schools represented an important investment in public education for African Americans, it was insufficient to ameliorate decades of underinvestment in public education by the Commonwealth's state and local officials. Between 1933-1937, the Public Works Administration (PWA) funded replacement or renovation of 175 school buildings that housed approximately 35,000 students. Additional aid for public schools in Virginia arrived via the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which over the course of its existence carried out renovations to 894 school buildings in the Commonwealth and built 67 entirely new schools. The renovation projects added running water, school kitchens for preparing hot lunches for students, libraries, and other features that placed thousands of students in modernized educational facilities for the first time. From time to time, other federal agencies, including the Civilian Conservation Corps and National Youth Administration, also participated in school improvement projects.<sup>511</sup> Neither a breakdown of expenditures on schools according to racial makeup, nor an inventory of all public schools erected in Virginia through New Deal programs, were found during research for this MPD, and these topics certainly warrant further study.

The types of school construction and improvement projects carried out with federal aid and local bond issues between c. 1932-c. 1945 continued preceding 1920s efforts by the Virginia Board of Education and local school boards to increase the overall number of classrooms as school enrollments increased, to replace obsolete buildings, to consolidate schools, and to add modern equipment and spaces to existing schools.<sup>512</sup> Due to the structural racism intrinsic to the state's public education system, however, the vast majority of such projects were devoted to schools for White students. The total cost of school construction projects in 1938-1939 in Virginia was \$4,365,431.16, with approximately 86 percent of the federal allocation directed to improving schools for White students.<sup>513</sup>

African American schools of the New Deal Era continued to be built without modern heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing systems, even in localities where such features were commonplace at White schools. Particularly in rural areas, one-, two-, and three-room, frame schools lacking electricity, central heating systems, and indoor plumbing continued to be the only options provided for Black communities by indifferent local and state officials. African American schools in towns and cities likewise often were antiquated in design, overcrowded, and in poor repair.<sup>514</sup> Because federal officials generally accommodated the segregationist practices of White officials, the majority of federal aid, even for large infrastructure improvement projects such as provision of public water and sewer systems and rural electrification, benefitted White communities at a

<sup>511</sup> Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p. 61, 91-92; Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, January 1993), p. 52.

<sup>512</sup> *America Builds: The Record of PWA* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), available at <http://thehistoryexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/americabuilds00unitrich.pdf>, p. 128.

<sup>513</sup> Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>, p. 11.

<sup>514</sup> Examples of substandard schools still in use during the New Deal and even Equalization eras include Union Hurst School in Bath County (see <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/008-5042/>); Ryan Hall Elementary School/ Shipman Colored School, built c. 1920 and still operational in 1961 (see [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/062-5230\\_RyanHallElementarySchool\\_2022\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/062-5230_RyanHallElementarySchool_2022_NRHP_FINAL.pdf)); and Union Street School, built in 1883 and still in use through 1959 (see [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/253-5117\\_Union\\_Street\\_School\\_2022\\_NRHP\\_nomination\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/253-5117_Union_Street_School_2022_NRHP_nomination_FINAL.pdf)).

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disproportionate rate. Consequently, while the impact of New Deal Era federal programs on the overall provisions of public education in Virginia was significant, its importance in the history of African American education in the Commonwealth should not be overemphasized to the exclusion of other educational trends of the period.

The extent of the continued inequities in public education demonstrated the dire need for reform. Under the leadership of Charles Hamilton Houston, the NAACP's legal team began to develop its litigation strategy, with the first priority being to demonstrate that localities could not afford to maintain truly "separate but equal" public school systems, and the ultimate goal being dismantling the "separate but equal" doctrine altogether. The two successful lawsuits to equalize teachers' salaries, *Alston v. Board of Education of the City of Norfolk* and *Dorothy Roles et al v. School Board of Newport News*, discussed above in Section E, are far from the only important education-related litigation that occurred in Virginia during the New Deal Era. Future research concerning specific schools and local school systems, as well as actions by the Virginia State Teachers Association and individual educators, will certainly identify other significant events associated with this aspect of the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia.

Among the architectural trends for Virginia schools during the 1930s, the State Department of Education's Division of School Buildings, under the direction of Raymond V. Long, created numerous standardized school designs between 1923-1937, but gradually moved away from this practice by the early 1940s. Localities began to hire architects to design new schools, such as Maggie L. Walker High School in Richmond, which was designed by the long-established Carneal, Johnston & Wright firm. On other occasions, such as Calfee Training School and Stafford Training School, earlier standardized plans were customized and updated as needed for late 1930s construction projects. Long's office reviewed the construction plans and projects, as well as provided numerous standardized drawings and specifications as a basis for the new schoolhouses along with associated home economics, industrial arts, and agricultural shops.<sup>515</sup>

The architectural design and landscape design of African American schools erected between c. 1932-c. 1945 are significant. As detailed above, the State Department of Education phased out its practice of creating standardized school designs during the 1930s. The involvement of federal agencies in funding construction projects led to most localities commissioning an architect to custom-design a school or to modify an existing standardized plan as needed. Many of the New Deal Era Schools in Virginia were architecturally significant as works of major architects and architectural firms in Virginia, such as Smithey & Boynton in Roanoke and Carneal, Johnston & Wright in Richmond. Although vernacular construction methods and/or materials may have remained in use on a limited basis, most schools by this time were built utilizing standardized materials and methods. Currently, it is not known how many public schools for Black children were custom built in Virginia according to architect-prepared plans. On the other hand, it is possible that some localities with particularly tight budgets replaced aging rural one-, two-, and three-room schoolhouses with newer buildings built according to older plans, albeit with mass-produced instead of locally-sourced materials. Due to loss of historic records and the schoolhouses themselves, it may not be possible to ascertain the extent to which such practices occurred during the New Deal Era.

In urban and some larger town settings, African American schools tended to be larger, consolidated schools, such as Maggie L. Walker High School in Richmond, Lucy F. Simms School (NRHP 2004; 115-5035) in

<sup>515</sup> Jane Covington, "Arcola Elementary School," National Register nomination, November 28, 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/053-0982/>, p. 14-15; Kimble A. David, "East Suffolk School Complex," National Register nomination, September 5, 2002, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/133-5046/>, p. 8.

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Harrisonburg, and Booker T. Washington High School (NRHP 2014; 132-5011) in Staunton, all of which also feature Art Deco stylistic detailing. Art Moderne and, to a lesser extent, International Style, elements also were utilized in the period's schools, but Colonial Revival continued to be the favorite style. The Calfee Training School, Stafford Training School, and Beverly Allen School described above are all examples of Colonial Revival design as applied to a public school in Virginia. These three schools also were built according to earlier standardized plans created by the State Department of Education's Division of School Buildings. With regard to construction materials and methods, steel, cast and poured concrete, glass block, and concrete blocks were widely utilized. Brick veneer or exposed, painted concrete block were exterior wall treatments, while roof cladding for gable and hipped roofs most often were clad with metal. The roofing for flat roofs varied as metal, built-up, bitumen, and concrete all were used during the New Deal Era; most of these materials failed over time and were replaced with newer roofing materials, such as mineral felt and asphalt and, later, rubber and synthetic membranes.

Typical interior finishes by the 1930s, such as terrazzo flooring, concrete flooring with linoleum or asbestos tile flooring, ceramic tile wainscoting and painted concrete block walls, and gypsum wallboard for partitions of spaces, such as offices and storage closets, became commonplace in newly built schools, in large part due to their durability and affordability. More traditional wood doors with multiple lights, wood window and door trim and baseboards, wood shelving, and wood built-in cabinets also continued to be utilized. The combination of materials is indicative of the New Deal Era as a transitional period between the traditional architectural styles, workmanship, and materials that once had typified public schools in Virginia to the more industrial materials of the post-World War II era. Window sash also were associated with this transition, with both wood, multiple-light, double hung sash used as well as steel-framed, multiple-light windows with awnings, hoppers, and/or casement types found at schools for African American students.

At pre-1930s schools that received repairs and new mechanical systems, the existing traditional construction materials usually were not altered, except as needed to create an indoor plumbing or ventilation system. Some care was taken to render designs of additions to be complementary to that of the existing school, such as at the above-mentioned East Suffolk School Complex (NRHP 133-5046; 133-5046). The typical simplicity of architectural design and detailing of earlier African American schoolhouses made this a relatively easy task. Earlier schools with New Deal Era alterations will have architectural significance should they retain the characteristic-defining aspects discussed for the preceding periods as well as those discussed above for the c. 1902-c. 1931 period.

Additional research is needed with regard to newly built schools in rural areas. As noted in Section E, many rural localities retained late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouses long after they had become outmoded, fallen into disrepair, and even hazardous to occupy. The extent to which such schools were replaced during the New Deal Era is not known at this time. Inadequate school conditions that were documented during the subsequent Equalization Era certainly suggest that many such outdated buildings had not been replaced during the New Deal Era. Due to poor planning and parsimonious budgets, even New Deal Era schools, such as Robert Russa Moton High School (NHL 1998; 144-0053), built in 1939 in Farmville, Prince Edward County, became quickly outdated due to overcrowding, lack of maintenance, and failure to include modern mechanical systems; as explained in Section E, the poor conditions at Moton High School led to a student walkout in 1951 that became a nationally significant event in the Civil Rights Movement.

Landscape design at New Deal Era Schools most often consisted of grading the construction site and installing driveways and parking lots for school buses. By this time, parking lots for faculty and visitors also were being included in landscape designs. Placement of athletic fields became another consideration subject to professional

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design. All of these characteristics are most often found at Black schools in town and urban settings. Those in rural localities more typically had minimal grading and a single driveway for buses, and generally lacked other features. Provision of such landscape preparation, however, represented a new phase in planning for most segregated schools serving African American students. As noted above, many rural Black schools, even those newly built, often lacked indoor plumbing systems. In some instances, the “sanitary toilet” replaced traditional privies. While strictly utilitarian in purpose, presence of a concrete-block outdoor toilet is an indication of a slightly higher level of investment in the school’s overall landscaping plan. Similarly, the locations of wells and handpumps for drinking water are also worthy of noting. Thus, for the most part, while not necessarily significant in the area of Landscape Design, which traditionally focuses on aesthetic qualities, the landscaping of New Deal Era Schools warrants attention along with consideration of the property’s overall architectural design.

The inclusion of gardens, demonstration plots, and orchards that was widely recommended for rural and small-town African American schools between c. 1915-c. 1932 do not appear to have been a typical feature of newly built schools dating to the New Deal Era. Oral history interviews and historic photographs are likely to be helpful for documenting a given school’s landscaped aspects. Additional research into this topic is needed to ascertain typical conditions. For schoolhouses that fell out of use and may have remained vacant for many years, most traces of visible landscape features may be lost. Schoolhouses that were expanded and modernized between the 1930s-1960s also may have lost historic landscape elements. Archaeological investigations and faunal analysis may lead to improved understanding of an individual schoolyard’s landscape design, and may occur on a more regular basis in coming decades.

In limited cases in larger cities, such as Maggie L. Walker High School in Richmond, the landscape design included ample hardscaping and decorative features that adhered to a formal design meant to convey artistic as well as functional values. When intact, such landscape designs may be significant in the area of Landscape Architecture. Much more rarely, the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, or another New Deal federal agency undertook landscaping repairs at existing schools, such as Switchback School (NRHP 2013; 008-5042) in Bath County. Further research is needed to identify other Black schools that may have significant landscape designs.

Important to note is that some materials widely utilized at public schools starting in the 1930s, such as asbestos and lead-based paint, later were identified as dangerous to human health and were removed through various means. At times, asbestos removal processes also proved to be harmful due to the release of asbestos fibers into the surrounding environment. Removal of asbestos, lead paint, and other toxic substances from school buildings should not be construed as adversely affecting a school building’s architectural design and integrity.

## Registration Requirements

In order to qualify for listing under this MPD, New Deal Era schools must be directly associated with the “African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968” historic context that is presented in Section E of this MPD. Nominated properties must be significant in the area of **Ethnic Heritage: African American** and one or more of the following areas of significance: **Education, Social History, Architecture, and/or Landscape Architecture**. Such properties should retain sufficient physical integrity that conveys their significant association with one or more of the areas of significance identified herein.

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*Aspects of Integrity*

Location and Setting

The New Deal Era School resource type often was situated within a segregated residential area during its period of significance. The type typically remains in its original location. Small, frame, purpose-built schoolhouses in rural localities, however, may have been moved after they ceased functioning as a public school. Relocation that occurred during the property's period of significance will not affect integrity of setting. If the building remains on its original parcel but was moved after its period of significance, the building's integrity of location and setting is considered to be largely intact. The circumstances of the building's relocation after its period of significance are to be evaluated on an individual basis when evaluating its integrity of location.

Due to urban renewal and highway construction between c. 1940-c. 1990, widespread destruction of African American neighborhoods occurred in Virginia. Relocation of a schoolhouse due to such practices may have taken place during or after the property's period of significance. The planning practices that caused fragmentation and erasure of Black neighborhoods are themselves often significant historic trends and events. Therefore, the schoolhouse's relocation affects the resource's integrity of location and setting but does not automatically eliminate such integrity. It is possible, for example, that the relocated building will have integrity of location and setting due to significance it may have gained in the area of Community Planning and Development and/or Social History and/or other areas of significance related to c. 1940-c. 1990 planning practices.

With regard to setting, in rural areas New Deal Era Schools typically stood in a residential area situated along the outskirts of a town or within an unincorporated Black community. Consolidated rural schools may have been erected on a parcel that was equidistant to several communities or neighborhoods. In towns and cities, New Deal Era Schools generally were located within a segregated Black neighborhood. The settings of New Deal Era Schools may have changed over time. For example, formerly rural areas may have experienced suburbanization over time, often brought on by construction of highway networks. In towns and cities, areas that once were entirely residential in character may have been altered by highway construction, urban renewal projects, and/or local zoning for land uses and activities incompatible with a neighborhood's or individual resource's original setting. Places that once included commercial, recreational, educational, religious, social, and other functions may have been similarly altered by such practices. In cases where a New Deal Era School's setting has changed considerably, the evolution of its environs must be described and the significance of such alterations should be evaluated. Adverse changes to setting that were the result of discriminatory practices and structural racism are part of the direct association of surviving resources with significance in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and related areas of significance such as Social History and Community Planning and Development. The incompatible activities and uses are illustrative of the many challenges overcome by Black individuals and communities prior to and during the dismantling of Jim Crow segregation and establishment of civil rights for African Americans at a level unprecedented in the nation's history, and represent another facet of the structural racism that caused segregated public education to be the norm in Virginia between c. 1870-c. 1968.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship

The design, materials, and workmanship of New Deal Schools vary based on whether the resource was constructed under the auspices of a federal aid program or through some other means of financing. Careful examination of a New Deal Era School is likely necessary to determine original design elements and materials.

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Historic photos, correspondence, local school board records, and oral history also may provide helpful insight into a schoolhouse's design and materials over time.

By the 1930s, the State Department of Education had a wide-ranging collection of standardized architectural designs for school buildings, but ceased preparing such plans for new projects. Instead, Department of Education staff reviewed school designs prepared by architects hired by localities on a project by project basis. It is not yet clear to what extent localities hired architects to design schools for African American children, particularly those in rural areas; earlier standardized plans may have continued in use in some localities or be utilized for discrete construction projects. Therefore, building form, footprint, size, and massing, location of entries and windows, and interior plan varied to suit local needs. Building codes for light, ventilation, heating, and safety had been widely adopted by this time and also informed overall design of school buildings. To lower design costs, architects generally continued to use many of the standardized floor plans and other elements that had been established during the 1920s. In cities and towns, large windows continued to be a character-defining feature of public schools, but electrical lighting had become the norm for classrooms, offices, corridors, and other interior spaces. Electrical lighting continued to be relatively rare at rural schools for Black students, even after New Deal rural electrification projects began, which meant that large windows continued to be the principal source of interior light. The presence of smaller windows should not be automatically considered to be a later alteration; however, starting in the 1970s, many localities opted to reduce window openings on older schools in attempts to lower heating and air conditioning costs. Such alterations may be reversible, but first should be investigated to establish if they have significance in their own right.

The materials used to erect all variations of New Deal Era Schools were often specified in architect-prepared, standardized plans. Such plans may have been prepared by State Department of Education architects, architects hired by local school boards, as well as architects who had created publications such as Samuel Taylor's *Community School Plans* (Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1924). In rural areas, reliance on donated construction materials decreased as localities assumed more responsibility for managing school construction projects. Extraction of private funds from African American communities to pay for such work continued to be a routine tactic. In towns and cities, construction materials for New Deal Era Schools generally were purchased en masse. Regardless of the schoolhouse's location, materials consisted of standardized, mass-produced lumber, bricks, concrete blocks, decorative cast stone, window sash, doors, roofing finishes, tile, linoleum, and terrazzo flooring, wall and bathroom tile, lighting and plumbing fixtures, and other elements. While frame construction continued to be widely utilized in rural settings, schools in towns and cities were almost entirely of masonry construction by the 1930s.

Replacement of materials in kind are appropriate when needed to keep a resource in good repair and active use. Where historic materials have been replaced with functionally and/or visually similar but newer types of synthetic materials, a resource's integrity of materials and workmanship is somewhat diminished depending on the extent of the replacement materials and whether the alterations occurred during the property's period of significance. Some materials, such as asbestos and lead paint, were almost ubiquitous by the 1930s, but later fell out of favor due to their toxicity. Removal of toxic materials in and of itself in no way diminishes a resource's integrity of materials; poorly considered methods to replace such materials, however, may reduce a property's overall integrity of materials, particularly if such replacements were poorly installed and/or maintained, thus leading to damage or failure of historic materials. Other popular materials, such aluminum-framed window sash and glass blocks, may have been replaced during remodeling campaigns aimed at improving a building's energy efficiency, updating its aesthetics, or a lack of maintenance staff trained in their proper care and repair. Finally, some replacement materials, such as aluminum and vinyl siding and asphalt or composite shingles, may be

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themselves, of historic age and contribute to integrity in their own right, even if such materials replaced earlier finishes such as weatherboard siding or wood or slate roof shingles.

For the most part, replacement materials that date to a property's period of significance will not erode integrity of materials, although integrity of workmanship and design may be eroded depending on the quality of the materials used and skill of the workers who installed them. Replacement materials that postdate the property's period of significance may result in proportional erosion of integrity, depending upon the resource's materials, design, and workmanship during its period of significance. Additions on buildings that date to the resource's period of significance and allowed the building to continue or expand its historic use do not erode integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Those alterations that postdate the period of significance are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to understand the resource's continued integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

For the vast majority of New Deal Era Schools, professional builders and contractors performed all of the necessary labor to erect school buildings. It is possible that, in some rural localities, local craftsmen and tradesmen continued to build small, frame schoolhouses. Such individuals also likely were hired to maintain and/or repair schools of all ages that were in use during the New Deal Era. Vernacular construction methods and workmanship, therefore, may be embodied in some New Deal Era Schools, particularly modest buildings in rural localities. Schools in towns and cities that were erected using standardized materials according to standardized construction practices embody the workmanship of the period; such materials and methods long were considered by many architectural historians to be of lesser quality and significance. Field investigations and research, such as that related to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, have provided ample evidence that the workmanship and materials of c. 1931-c. 1945 are worthy as they contribute to a property's overall integrity. Meanwhile, repairs made during the latter years of a schoolhouse's period of significance are likely to demonstrate similar types of workmanship; it may be difficult to discern original materials and workmanship from those dating to the c. 1946-c. 1968 Equalization Era, but generally this will not be necessary if these occurred within the property's period of significance. As noted above, poorly rendered repairs made after a property's period of significance can adversely affect a building's integrity of both materials and workmanship.

With regard to the former public schools that are open to the public today, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that may be applicable to ensure equal access to and within the interior. Such retrofits to comply with the ADA's accessibility requirements shall not be considered alterations that impair the property's integrity. Typical alterations include erecting a ramp to permit entry to the building's main entrance and/or alternate entrances, widening of some doors, and/or removal or lowering of thresholds at exterior or interior room entries. If offered, provision of drinking water and restrooms for site visitors is not required to be within the historic building; a separate building for these purposes may be constructed elsewhere on the property. For buildings that remained in public use into the late 20<sup>th</sup> or early 21<sup>st</sup> century and received retrofits to restrooms, entries, and other spaces to comply with ADA, such alterations should not be construed as adversely affecting the building's integrity of design or materials.

The following table lists the common physical features of New Deal Era Schools between c. 1931-c. 1945 that have been recorded in VCRIS.



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**Table 4: Common Elements of New Deal Era Schools, c. 1931-1945**

Element	Typical Components and Materials
Stories	Generally, one to two stories, but typically no more than three
Foundation	Pier, continuous, poured/slab, or raised Materials: brick, concrete
Structural System	Typically, frame or brick, though may be constructed with other systems.
Exterior Treatment	Weatherboard, brick, stucco/parged, vinyl, asbestos, or some combination. Exterior detailing may include decorative stone or concrete details, buttresses, belt courses, quoins, and/or glass blocks.
Roof	Typically, gable, hipped, or flat, though shape may vary. Larger buildings may have multiple roof types, such as a hipped central section and flanking gable-roof wings  Roof details may include open eaves, exposed rafter rails, gable end vents (often louvered), parapets, or chimneys.  Materials: most common are metal, rubber membrane, or built-up roofs, though other materials, such as slate or asphalt shingles also have been documented.
Entrances	Typically, single or double leaf; usually wood or metal.  Common features include recessed entries, porches or porticoes, projecting vestibules/ entry bays/ entry towers, or covered entries.  Entries often feature ornamental detailing in Colonial Revival, Art Deco, and other popular styles of the period.
Windows	Typically, wood sash or metal window sash, including ribbon windows, though they may range in style and material and light pattern.
Additions	Historic additions are common, but not requisite for listing. Many schools may include additions designed to accommodate school expansions and modernizations.  If additions were constructed after the period of significance, they should not overwhelm the original structure, unless they are specifically tied to the use of the property as an Equalization Era School during the period of significance.

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Element	Typical Components and Materials
Interiors	<p>Interiors were not evaluated as part of this project; however, buildings should generally retain their historic plan and circulation pattern.</p> <p>Common interior alterations include retrofitted kitchens and bathrooms; auditorium, cafeteria, and gymnasium additions and later remodeling; covering of original wood flooring materials with carpeting and asbestos or other vinyl material; occasionally, original linoleum and/or terrazzo flooring may have been covered by later materials; covering of wall finishes with gypsum wallboard; installation of drop ceilings featuring grids of acoustic tiles to lower ceiling height; and paint.</p> <p>Wall finishes vary; larger schools often have tiled walls up to approximately 6-8 feet with plaster or wallboard above; wall finishes at smaller schools, especially in rural areas, may have plaster, fiberboard, gypsum wallboard, tile, or some combination thereof.</p>
Secondary Resources	<p>New Deal to World War II Era schools may have secondary resources, but they are not required for listing. Common secondary resources include industrial and agricultural shops, sheds, and other utilitarian outbuildings, modular classroom units, and other educational structures.</p> <p>Landscape elements are likely to include ingress/egress driveways for school buses and automobiles, paved or gravel vehicular parking lots, landscape designs with ornamental plantings, flagpoles, and monument-type signage, sidewalks, and athletic fields.</p>

### Feeling and Association

Location of New Deal Era Schools within or adjacent to a historically segregated area of residential resources, or mixed with commercial, recreational, educational, religious, and social uses, will contribute to the resource's integrity of feeling and association. The retention of associated historic-age properties in proximity to the school building contributes to its integrity of setting and, therefore, integrity of feeling and association. It will not be atypical, however, for a New Deal Era School to be in a location affected by the types of extensive demolition, displacement, new construction, and/or incompatible land uses and activities noted above with regard to integrity of location. A resource affected by such activities will have changes to its location, setting, feeling, and association. Analysis of these four aspects of a property's integrity, therefore, must take into account the effects of such alterations on an individual property and, where applicable, should be understood as contributing to that property's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship contribute to integrity of feeling and association related to the New Deal Era school's original period of construction. Alterations associated with subsequent significant events, particularly equalization era additions and updates, as well as those meant to allow the school to remain in use following desegregation, may affect the property's integrity of feeling and association with regard to its original construction period. Such alterations, however, if significant in their own right, will not eliminate the property's overall integrity of feeling and association.

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According to VCRIS data, the following general observations are applicable to newly-built Equalization Era Schools dating between c. 1946-c. 1968. African American schools in rural, town, and urban settings were now being constructed of cast and poured concrete, cast concrete, concrete blocks, and brick. Interior walls typically were concrete block rather than wood studs sheathed with gypsum wallboard. Modern Movement styles, particularly the International Style, were utilized most widely. Some localities continued to prize Colonial Revival ornamentation, at least for building exteriors. Consolidation of rural schools finally began to include African American schools, generally in response to growing pressure from African American-led equalization and desegregation litigation, activism, and public demonstrations. Newly built Equalization Era schools did not follow standardized floor plans, but they include spaces by that time considered standard for public schools, such as kitchens suitable for preparing hot lunches for large student enrollments, as well as cafeterias and auditoriums (or combined “cafetoriums,” which housed both functions), and libraries. The period’s larger schools also usually included a gymnasium, which may have been designed to serve as an auditorium, primarily through inclusion of a stage along one side of the space. In such cases, a separate cafeteria often existed, but not always. The Stafford Training School’s (NRHP 2013; 089-0247) combined gymnasium/auditorium/cafeteria meant “school staff [were] putting up tables and chairs during the lunch period, rearranging chairs for an assembly program, and clearing it all out for physical education.”<sup>516</sup> Due to their larger size and inclusion of modern mechanical systems, Equalization Era Schools also had a high number of classrooms, specialized educational spaces such as science labs and music rooms, more administrative spaces, and, for the first time as a routine matter, boiler/ furnace rooms and mechanical rooms. In keeping with the trend of separating elementary and high school campuses, for the first time buildings specifically designed for each group of students were built for African Americans. The “junior high” schools of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century also occasionally were built for Black pupils in 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades.

As school consolidation was an integral part of the Equalization Era, the schoolhouses that predated c. 1932 and had not been improved during the New Deal Era generally were replaced with a new, larger building in a location roughly equidistant to the communities and neighborhoods from which student enrollments were drawn. Replacements of pre-1930s schools, however, were not universal and many African American continued to attend antiquated schools into the early 1960s. Also between c. 1946-c. 1968, New Deal Era Schools, many of which had housed inadequate educational features at the time of their construction, generally, but not always, were upgraded with additions to increase the number of classrooms and to add specialized spaces such as libraries, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, music and art rooms, and science education labs. Mechanical systems also often were introduced or upgraded in New Deal Era Schools. For newly-built Equalization Era Schools, inclusion of a modern mechanical system was a standard feature, although economies in design continued to be sought.

Consolidated schools located on the outskirts of growing cities and towns became increasingly common as suburbanization and sprawl development became increasingly commonplace in Virginia. Nowhere in Virginia was more profoundly affected by population growth and suburbanization than the Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads regions. The rapid expansion of the federal government and national defense needs that had begun during the 1930s brought hundreds of thousands of new residents to Alexandria, Arlington County,

<sup>516</sup> Norman Schools, “Stafford Training School,” National Register nomination, August 24, 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/089-0247/>, p. 5.

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Fairfax County, and Loudoun County. The extensive buildup of military installations in the Hampton Roads region fueled similar development and population growth. The post-World War II Baby Boom also had long-term demographic effects on Virginia's public education system, with school enrollments rapidly swelling as the children of this generation reached school age. Many public schools in use during the Equalization Era were expanded multiple times to accommodate the increasing numbers of pupils. Therefore, the evolved forms and footprints of equalization schools during their period of significance should be considered within the context of changing ideas about what equalization should include, and advocacy of local communities for further improvements in terms of facilities and curriculum. The growing enrollments also finally forced closure of at least some outdated schools that could not be effectively expanded and updated, even by the parsimonious standards directed at African American schools at the time; a precise number of closures is not known at this time. Louise Archer Elementary School in Fairfax County is an example of an Equalization Era School that received three additions, all due to expanded enrollments, during the Equalization Era.<sup>517</sup>

VCRIS data includes just 38 schools that are known to have served solely African American students during the Equalization Era. Of these, their settings are as follows:

- Hamlet – 0
- Setting not listed – 3
- Rural – 8
- Suburban – 8
- Town – 11
- Transportation Corridor – 1
- Urban – 6
- Village – 1

Two schools in the Town of Bedford, Bedford County, are illustrative of Equalization Era trends: the Bedford Training School, which was built in 1929-1930, expanded in 1939-1940 (the New Deal years), and converted to a consolidated elementary school in 1954, and its replacement, the nearby Susie G. Gibson High School for Black students (Figure 56).<sup>518</sup> Bedford Training School originally began as a one-story, brick, Colonial Revival building with four classrooms over a basement, built according to a custom plan, "Design 14-F," but with standardized details for the windows. Character-defining stylistic elements include the building's symmetrical fenestration, red-brick veneer laid in a Flemish bond variant with diapered brick panels at each end of the façade. The centered, round-arched entry includes a cast concrete keystone and a multiple-light panel above replacement metal doors. Large window openings, each with four double-hung, multiple-light replacement sash, flank the entry. A wood cornice extends beneath the low, stepped parapet that defines the roof's edge. The New Deal Era expansion was a two-story rear wing with more classrooms. With its red-brick veneer laid in the same

<sup>517</sup> "Our History (1948-1970)," Fairfax County Public Schools, 2024, <https://archeres.fcps.edu/about/history/1948>.

<sup>518</sup> See Katie Gutshall et al., "Bedford Training School," National Register nomination, March 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5019\\_BedfordTrainingSchool\\_2021\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5019_BedfordTrainingSchool_2021_NRHP_FINAL.pdf); Katie Gutshall et al., "Susie G. Gibson High School," National Register nomination, June 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5017\\_SusieGGibsonHighSchool\\_2021\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5017_SusieGGibsonHighSchool_2021_NRHP_FINAL.pdf).

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Figure 56. Top, Bedford Training School and bottom, Susie G. Gibson High School, Town of Bedford, Bedford County (Image Sources: Kate Kronau, Katie Gutshall, and Mary Zirkle, 2020, Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-5019/> and Katie Gutshall and Kate Kronau, 2021, Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/141-5017/>, respectively).

Flemish bond variant, flat roof, and rectilinear form, the addition blends well with the original block. Also on the property was a frame schoolhouse that dated to 1912 and housed elementary students. During the equalization era, Bedford Training School was renovated to serve as a consolidated elementary school for African American children. Garland Gay, an architect from Lynchburg, supervised the renovation and alterations made to the 1929-1930 original building and 1939-1940 rear addition. When the project was finished, the school included “nine classrooms, a library, a kitchen, a small administrative office, boys’ and girls’ toilets, and a teachers’ lounge. Specified finishes included new composition tile floors and acoustical tile ceilings.”<sup>519</sup> Some interior finishes, such as doors, were replaced to make their design uniform throughout the building. The frame 1912 building was demolished during the renovation. Bedford County’s public schools began to desegregate slowly under a School Choice Plan during the 1965-1966 school year, but this tactic was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court’s *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* decision, after which complete desegregation of the school system occurred in 1970. At that time, the former Bedford Training School closed and the building was renovated to house Bedford County School Board offices, which

accounts for some loss of integrity of the building’s interior plan and finish materials.<sup>520</sup>

Susie G. Gibson High School, completed in 1954, is an example of International Style architecture applied to a public school (Figure 56). Character-defining elements include its overall horizontal massing, off-center main entry, bands of windows with metal-framed sash and six stacked horizontal lights, and minimal ornamentation that is expressed primarily in the fenestration, materials, and juxtaposition of horizontal planes, rather than applied details. The building was custom-designed by architect Stanhope S. Johnson, a Lynchburg-based architect who contributed hundreds of designs for educational, institutional, ecclesiastical, and other functions throughout Virginia and in other places along the East Coast. The interior was designed to include double-loaded corridors flanked by classrooms, specialized spaces including a library, gymnasium, cafeteria,

<sup>519</sup> Katie Gutshall et al., “Bedford Training School,” National Register nomination, March 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5019\\_BedfordTrainingSchool\\_2021\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5019_BedfordTrainingSchool_2021_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 5-6, 19, 21.

<sup>520</sup> Katie Gutshall et al., “Bedford Training School,” National Register nomination, March 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5019\\_BedfordTrainingSchool\\_2021\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5019_BedfordTrainingSchool_2021_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 6, 21-22.



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auditorium, and science education laboratories, as well as administrative offices and mechanical rooms. The finish materials of vinyl composition tile floors, dropped ceilings with grids of acoustical tile, and exposed, painted concrete block walls were typical of the newer, highly resilient materials deployed in public schools.

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Figure 437. Ralph Bunche High School, King George County (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Calder Loth, 2023, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/048-5007/>).

Another early Equalization Era School is the aforementioned Ralph Bunche High School in King George County (Figure 57). Designed by architect Samuel N. Mayo and constructed by Howard-Mitchell Construction Company, both of Richmond, the modestly-sized, L-plan building displays International Style influences in its low-slung horizontal massing, flat roof, off-center main entry, and juxtaposition of horizontal planes between the one-story main block and two-story gymnasium. The original five-bay facade is relatively unadorned; however, the front entrance is detailed with the original mosaic granite aggregate door surround with a wood transom and modern double-leaf aluminum frame doors. The original four-over-four single-

hung sash windows also remain on the façade, while the gymnasium has six-over-three sash. In 1957, a lateral addition with a setback from the main block was constructed. From the main entrance, the combined gymnasium/auditorium is directly across the vestibule. A stage within the space, as well as flanking dressing rooms and storage closets, complete this section of the building. Extending laterally from the entrance vestibule is a double-loaded corridor with flanking classrooms and a mechanical room. The corridor features tile wainscot with painted cinder block walls above, while the interior walls of classrooms originally were finished with smooth plaster and 9-inch-square asphalt tiles covered the concrete slab floors. Fredericksburg-based architect John J. Ballentine Jr. designed the 1957 addition, which included four additional classrooms, administrative offices, and a basement-level kitchen and cafeteria. Interior finish materials included dropped ceilings with grids of acoustical tiles, metal-framed doors and windows, slate windowsills, painted concrete block walls, and asbestos tile flooring. A separate vocational shop building was added to the campus in 1960 and has utilitarian concrete block walls, concrete flooring, and jalousie windows. Construction of the high school was due to the 1947 Federal District court case, *Margaret Smith, et al v. School Board of King George County, Virginia, et al*, Richmond Civil Action No. 631, which was among the earliest of the equalization strategy lawsuits in Virginia that concerned school facilities.<sup>522</sup>

In Lynchburg, the Armstrong Elementary School, completed in 1954, is a representative example of Equalization Era elementary schools in Virginia (Figure 58). The building features the character-defining

<sup>521</sup> Katie Gutshall et al., "Susie G. Gibson High School, National Register nomination, June 2021, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, [https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5017\\_SusieGGibsonHighSchool\\_2021\\_NRHP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/141-5017_SusieGGibsonHighSchool_2021_NRHP_FINAL.pdf), p. 25-26.

<sup>522</sup> Marcus R. Pollard, "Ralph Bunche High School," National Register nomination, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/048-5007/>, p. 7/1-7/4.

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Figure 448. Armstrong Elementary School, City of Lynchburg (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Calder Loth, 2024, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/118-5320/>).

aspects of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, stripped-down, Art Moderne design: horizontal massing, brick-veneer walls, bands of large, multiple-light, aluminum-framed window sash connected by cast concrete sills and lintels, a flat roof with cast concrete coping, and a right-of-center entrance within a two-story, slightly projecting bay. The twelve-bay main block houses classrooms, while a slightly lower extension includes the combined cafeteria and auditorium (or “cafetorium”), with the kitchen in a one-story side wing, and the taller gymnasium spanning the cafetorium section’s rear elevation. A small side extension on the gymnasium houses the boiler room. Inclusion of all of these spaces marks Armstrong Elementary School as a fully modern schoolhouse meant to be equal to

the schools serving White students. The main entrance opens into a lobby, and the main staircase is directly across from the double-leaf doors. The classroom section has double-loaded corridors with staircases at each end. The corridors, lobby, and staircases all have glazed tile wainscoting with painted concrete block walls above, ceilings clad with acoustical tiles, and composition tile flooring; finishes in the classrooms are the same, except that no wainscoting is present. Similar finishes were used in the cafetorium and kitchen. The gymnasium’s finishes are typical of the period: maple flooring painted as a basketball court, concrete block walls, and an exposed metal truss roof. Armstrong Elementary School was constructed using Equalization Era “Battle Funds.” Lynchburg’s public school system was experiencing the same overcrowded conditions that characterized the post-World War II period with rapidly growing enrollments and many of its outdated schoolhouses in poor repair. The 1917 Armstrong School originally was proposed to be expanded and renovated, but when Battle Funds became available, the city school board opted instead to construct a new facility. The new Armstrong Elementary was completed in March 1954, only a couple of months before the Supreme Court issued its *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ordered desegregation of public schools, without providing a specific timetable for doing so.<sup>523</sup>

Although later derided in popular opinion for their “cookie-cutter” appearance, during the 1950s, International Style schools were lauded as more approachable and of human scale than the monumental styles of preceding periods. In Virginia, however, this observation applies largely to schools for White students as modest size and design had characterized public schools for Black students since the 1870s. As mentioned above, the rapid school enrollment increases during the Equalization Era forced most localities to erect new schools and to add onto existing buildings. The demand for classroom space, coupled with the streamlined minimalism of the International Style, resulted in hundreds of public schools with low-slung, horizontal massing, ribbons of windows, flat roofs, and asymmetrical placement of primary entrances. The energy crisis of the 1970s prompted many school officials to attempt to conserve energy by replacing these schools’ bands of original metal-framed,

<sup>523</sup> Ashley Neville and John Salmon, “Armstrong Elementary School,” National Register nomination, March 9, 2012, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/118-5320/>, p. 7/2-7/4, 8/7-8/10.



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multiple-light sash. At many school buildings, smaller, fixed sash were placed within window openings that had been reduced in size through use of various infill materials, such as bricks or concrete blocks, insulation clad with synthetic siding on the exterior and gypsum wallboard on the interior, and newer exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) that attempted to mimic the appearance and performance of stucco or masonry. Alternatively, original window sizes may have been retained, but the replacement sash materials and light patterns differed from the original sash, such as when multiple-light, metal casements were replaced with double-hung, aluminum, one-over-one sash. Exterior wood doors often were replaced as well, often with commercial-style entries and/or metal security doors. Such alterations rarely were sympathetic to the Modern Movement styles of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouses. By the 1980s, the International Style had long been out of favor in Virginia, and the Equalization Era schools often were criticized for lacking aesthetic appeal. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, many such schools were retrofitted with Post-Modern elements such as freestanding covered walkways with gabled parapets, oversized columns, a second iteration of replacement doors and/or window sash, exterior paint, and other treatments. During the early 21<sup>st</sup>-century, most Equalization Era schools were considered inadequate for educational needs, especially the computer information technology infrastructure that had become essential to students' classwork and teachers' and administrators' daily duties. Consequently, relatively few Equalization Era schools remain in use as public schools today. Erroneous perceptions of Equalization Era schoolhouses include that they still are widely in use and are ubiquitous in most localities. An unknown number of these properties have been lost to demolition. The architectural significance of Equalization Era school buildings, particularly their Modern Movement aesthetics, have been downplayed by many historic preservationists. Coupled with the often-overlooked historical significance of the Equalization Era Schools resource type, reconsideration of c. 1946-c. 1968 school campuses is warranted in order to identify those that are eligible for listing in the historic registers.

Important to note is that some materials widely utilized at public schools during the Equalization Era, such as asbestos and lead-based paint, later were identified as dangerous to human health and were removed through various means. At times, asbestos removal processes also proved to be harmful due to the release of asbestos fibers into the surrounding environment. Removal of asbestos, lead paint, and other toxic substances from school buildings should not be construed as adversely affecting a school building's architectural design and integrity.

### *Significance*

Equalization Era Schools are significant for their association with the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia, particularly the successful litigation that resulted in desegregation of the statewide public school system. Their architectural design embodies the advances made by Black Virginians in provision of public education on a more equal basis, as the original designs of such schools generally included modern mechanical systems, cafeterias, gymnasium, auditoriums, and specialized educational spaces that were introduced to schools for White pupils during the 1910s. Earlier schools with Equalization Era additions are similarly indicative of such progress. If compared side-by-side to White schools, a typical African American Equalization Era School was not fully equal, however, and the intrinsic inequities of racially segregated schooling remained on display. As NAACP attorney Charles Hamilton Houston had anticipated, few localities could afford to operate fully equal, yet racially separate, public schools on a parallel basis for White and Black students.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> School desegregation for children enrolled in Virginia tribes also resulted from legal rulings such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954. The complexities of full equality for indigenous children, and for each of Virginia's resident tribes, however, occurred within its own context that is entirely separate from the rights achieved by African Americans in

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Although local school boards' response to equalization strategy litigation is commonly credited with compelling construction of Equalization Era Schools, it is not clear if such concerns always prompted action. In Brunswick County, the aforementioned James S. Russell High School, a laboratory school that had been hosted on the campus of Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School since the mid-1920s, was proposed for replacement during the 1940s, at which time the high school enrolled 585 students. Under the leadership of two Black business owners, Oris P. Jones and John Brown, Brunswick County parents advocated for construction of a new high school that would be comparable to the high school for White students. Brown also donated land to the County for the new school's site. Brunswick County's school board superintendent, R. Lee Chambliss, asked that Saint Paul's continue to host the high school through 1950 while the County contracted for a new high school to be erected at County expense. This positive development may have been influenced by the availability of the aforementioned "Battle Funds" to pay for school construction, but the proposal to use only County funds for the new Russell High School appears to have been unusual. The long-standing, cooperative relationship between Saint Paul's College and local leadership that allowed teacher training at various County schools, and the College hosting of the high school on its own campus, may account for the apparently congenial process of building the new high school. The first group of African American students arrived at the newly completed building in 1951. H. Leslie Giles served as the first principal and James B. Cooley as the first assistant principal. While the new James S. Russell High School offered the same types of vocational education programs as area high schools for White students, such as Park View High School in Mecklenburg County, more important was its academic program's alignment with those of White schools. Not coincidentally, Saint Paul's began phasing out industrial and agricultural training during the 1950s as the school transitioned to a four-year, liberal arts college.<sup>525</sup> Around the same time, Saint Paul's entered an agreement with Mecklenburg County to create a teacher training program at another Equalization Era school, the recently constructed East End High School for Black students in the county. The program would provide training for student teachers in the College's "cadet teacher" training program. On the recommendation of the County Superintendent, the County school board voted in support of the proposal.<sup>526</sup>

In the Town of West Point, King William County, the Allen family had strongly influenced public education for Black students since 1870, when Beverly Allen Sr. (?-1910) purchased lot number 105 in a neighborhood adjacent to today's Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. Allen and his wife, Harriet White Allen, a midwife, hosted a Freedmen's Bureau school in their personal residence; two white women from Boston, who resided with the Allens, taught classes for children during the day and for adults during the evening. Beverly Allen Sr. worked as a fisherman and oysterman on the Mattaponi River, a trade that provided more autonomy and financial recompense for African Americans than many other types of work in Reconstruction-Era Virginia.<sup>527</sup> Allen was elected to the Town Council for a single term from 1872-1874. The Allens' son, Beverly Allen Jr. (1859-1918),

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Virginia during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See, for example, Ashley Layne Atkins Spivey, *Knowing the River, Working the Land, and Digging for Clay: Pamunkey Indian Subsistence Practices and the Market Economy 1800-1900*, PhD Dissertation, 2017, College of William & Mary, Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects.

<sup>525</sup> Saint Paul's College 4 Life, "James S. Russell High School," February 25, 2021, [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story\\_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php/?story_fbid=270243398051110&id=101715271570591).

<sup>526</sup> Mecklenburg County School Board Minutes, 1955-1957, October 10, 1955, no pagination, records on file at Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Boydton, Virginia. Saint Paul's also continued to host an elementary school on its grounds, but information about this school, including its precise location, was not found; it is not clear if the elementary school was a public institution or may have been an Episcopal Church parish school. The former James S. Russell High School continues in use today as the James Solomon Russell Middle School.

<sup>527</sup> With regard to the significant contributions of African American oystermen and fishermen, see Ashlen Stump, et al., "Historic Resources Associated with African American Watermen of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay," Multiple Property Documentation Form, March 2, 2023, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/500-0007/>.

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attended Hampton Institute, using funds his parents had meticulously saved for years. Upon graduation in 1881, the younger Allen returned to West Point, where he served as a teacher and school principal for 35 years. In 1893, Allen Jr. married Alice Burns, also a teacher, and the couple reared 11 children in addition to being actively involved in the affairs of West Point's African American community. The family lived in the dwelling erected by Allen Sr. in 1870, and he resided with them until his death in 1910. After falling ill in late 1917, Beverly Allen Jr. passed and was buried in West Point. Alice Burns Allen continued to teach until her retirement in 1939. In 1941, the aforementioned new brick school for African American pupils was completed and, two years later, was renamed Beverly Allen School to honor Allen Sr. and Allen Jr. The building initially served students from elementary through high school (at that time ending with 11<sup>th</sup> grade).<sup>528</sup>

After World War II, the diminutive Beverly Allen School became overcrowded and the African American community in West Point sought access to a high school education that would be equal to that provided to White students at West Point High School. In 1951, West Point resident James Dobbins attempted to enroll his daughter, Rosetta, at the all-White high school in town. When her admission was denied, solely on the basis of her race, Dobbins refused to send Rosetta to the newly completed Hamilton Holmes High School, 18 miles outside of West Point. He was charged with violating state compulsory school attendance laws. County and Town officials insisted that busing West Point's high school students to Hamilton Holmes High would be sufficient. African American parents and students objected to the proposal due to the lengthy bus trip and the inferiority of Hamilton Holmes High compared to West Point High. Attempting to force compliance, in July 1952 the West Point school board ended high school classes at Beverley Allen School and announced that the town's high school students would attend Hamilton Holmes that fall; the schoolhouse continued to serve as an elementary school. In September 1952, Dobbins and his daughter Rosetta, now accompanied by a group of African American parents and their children, went to West Point High School to enroll in classes. Their admission again was refused and the offer to bus the students to Hamilton Holmes was reiterated. In February 1953, Dobbins and several other parents were sentenced to 30 days in jail and a \$50 fine for refusing to send their children to the segregated school in King William County. Resultant litigation continued for four more years, until January 21, 1957, when the Virginia Supreme Court ruled that the County's and Town's refusal to admit Black students to West Point High School had violated the equal protection clause in the U.S. Constitution's 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and that the charges against the group of parents for violating the school compulsory attendance law was erroneous.<sup>529</sup>

A few years later, in the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, the federal case, *David F. Anderson, et al vs. The School Board of the Town of West Point, et al* was heard. The lawsuit concerned ten Black students denied admission to West Point High School after the Town's school board and the County's superintendent of schools had shifted responsibility for school admissions to the Massive Resistance-era State Pupil Placement Board. All African American students in West Point who sought to attend a White school within the Town's incorporated boundaries had their applications coded and flagged before they were sent to the state board. The State Pupil Placement Board was found to have a different review process for applications submitted for Black students compared to those for White students. The board's membership claimed not to have realized that the Town did not have a separate high school for Black students; the high school classes once offered at Beverly

<sup>528</sup> Alonzo Thomas Dill, "Beverly Allen (1859–1918)," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998–), published 1998, revised 2022, [http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Allen\\_Beverly](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Allen_Beverly).

<sup>529</sup> "Dobbins v. Commonwealth," Justia U.S. Law, referring to 198 Va. 697 (1957), *JAMES DOBBINS v. COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA*, Record No. 4252, Supreme Court of Virginia, January 21, 1957, <https://law.justia.com/cases/virginia/supreme-court/1957/4252-1.html>. Beverly Allen Elementary School closed when West Point's public schools completed the desegregation process during the 1965–1966 school year. See Alonzo Thomas Dill, "Beverly Allen (1859–1918)," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Library of Virginia (1998–), published 1998, revised 2022, [http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Allen\\_Beverly](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Allen_Beverly).

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Allen School had ended after Hamilton Holmes High School opened in 1951. The state board agreed not to review applications for students living in West Point who sought to attend the Town's high school, removing themselves from the process of preventing the town's Black students from changing schools. The court also ruled that the local school boards and division superintendent of schools must submit a plan to end discriminatory application procedures concerning elementary schools. A new, local pupil placement board was created in response, and it, too, was found to be racially biased. Due to the inadequate progress made by local pupil placement boards toward desegregation, the 1968 *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* Supreme Court ruling declared that all public schools in the U.S. must desegregate immediately.<sup>530</sup>

While the Civil Rights litigation was occurring, Virginius Bray Thornton III (1934-2015) grew up attending Beverly Allen School and developing his sense of justice and equality by resisting racial oppression in his hometown of West Point. Thornton, his sister Lucy, and several of his classmates comprised the group of students who refused to attend Hamilton Holmes High School. After graduating as the valedictorian of the Beverly Allen School, he earned a bachelor's degree at Richmond's Virginia Union College (today's Virginia Union University) and a graduate degree at Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University) near Petersburg. He met the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King in 1957 when the latter gave a lecture at Virginia State. Three years later, Thornton became a founding member of the nationally significant Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which coordinated training and organizing of student demonstrations across the southern states. One of Thornton's training sessions concerned the McKenney Library (NRHP 2025; 123-0009) in Petersburg, where he participated in demonstrations to integrate the public facility and led the student movement at Virginia State. In 1960, Thornton became the first African American person admitted to the University of Virginia's Department of Arts and Sciences. He remained an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement and taught at Hampton Institute (today's Hampton University), Pennsylvania State University, and Massachusetts Bay Community College, among others, during his long career.<sup>531</sup> The significant contributions made by Thornton to the 1950s-1960s student movement are representative of the extent of accomplishments made by graduates of segregated African American schools of all types in Virginia. Further research concerning individual historically Black schools will identify educators, administrators, and students who made important contributions to their community and to Virginia's history.

In Arlington County, the formerly all-White Stratford Junior High School (NRHP 2004; 000-9412), built in 1949, became the first school in Virginia to begin desegregation with the admission of four African American students. Stratford was among four junior high schools constructed in Arlington County after World War II to accommodate the locality's mushrooming student enrollments. Designed by Washington, D.C.-based architect Rhees Evans Burket, Sr., the building also is an example of the International Style architecture that prevailed for public schools in Virginia during the 1940s-1960s. The building's capacity for 1,000 students evidenced both the County's intense population growth during the war as well as the influence of the Baby Boom, with school-age children born after the war flooding into schools by the early 1950s. In 1956, the NAACP filed a series of federal lawsuits against the local school systems in Arlington County, the Town of Front Royal, and the cities of Charlottesville and Norfolk. This litigation prompted the General Assembly's passage of the package of anti-integration legislation known as "Massive Resistance." Among the provisions of the new laws was creation of the aforementioned State Pupil Placement Board, which rejected applications submitted by Black pupils to be assigned to all-White schools. Judge Albert V. Bryan ruled in favor of the Arlington County students, as did

<sup>530</sup> "Beverly Allen Elementary School," Desegregation of Virginia Education, referring to USDC, Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond Division, Civil Action Case #3365, *David F. Anderson, et al vs. The School Board of the Town of West Point, et al*, <https://dove.gmu.edu/index.php/tag/beverly-allen-elementary-school/>.

<sup>531</sup> "Virginius Thornton," Cvillepedia, July 26, 2024, [https://www.cvillepedia.org/Virginius\\_Thornton](https://www.cvillepedia.org/Virginius_Thornton).

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federal judges in the other localities, which prompted those local school systems to close schools rather than integrate them. In January 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court declared such actions unconstitutional. Arlington County officials opted to allow the original four Black applicants to attend Stratford Junior High School. On February 2, 1959, with approximately eighty-five Arlington police officers present to prevent disruptions, Ronald Deskins, Michael Jones, Lance Newman, and Gloria Thompson entered Stratford Junior High School to enroll in their classes.<sup>532</sup>

Although prolonged by litigation and various forms of resistance and delays, the relatively peaceful desegregation of Stratford Junior High School was typical of the first stages of desegregation in Virginia's local public school systems. Opposition to desegregation did not disappear, however, and further litigation was necessary to end segregated public schools. The aforementioned *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* Supreme Court ruling in 1968 forced an end to the assorted tactics that local school boards had used to avoid desegregation since 1954.



Figure 59. Albert Harris Elementary School, City of Martinsville (Image Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, VCRIS, 2015).

Throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s, many local school systems also resisted desegregation by continuing to attempt to prove that “equalized,” segregated schools were constitutional. According to VCRIS data, the Albert Harris Elementary School (120-5092) was erected in the city of Martinsville in 1961 (Figure 59). The small school served an enrollment of approximately 100 students. Completed at a cost of \$44,000, obtained by the city through a Literary Loan fund, the building had the first electric heating system in the local school system, which marked a technological advance even as the City

resisted modernizing its approach to public education., In 1968, the new, desegregated Martinsville High School was completed based on the same construction design.<sup>533</sup>

### Registration Requirements

In order to qualify for listing under this MPD, Equalization Era Schools must be directly associated with the “African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968” historic context that is presented in Section E of this MPD. Nominated properties must be significant in the area of **Ethnic Heritage: African American** and one or more of the following areas of significance: **Education, Social History, Architecture, and/or Landscape Architecture**. Such properties should retain sufficient physical integrity that conveys their significant association with one or more of the areas of significance identified herein.

<sup>532</sup> Carrie E. Albee and Laura Trieschmann, “Stratford Junior High School,” National Register nomination, April 2003, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/000-9412/>, p. 8/13, 8/21-8/23.

<sup>533</sup> Lawrence Mitchell, “Albert Harris School,” Preliminary Information Form, June 4, 2015, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond; “Albert Harris School,” VCRIS record ,120-5092, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, last updated July 23, 2015.

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### *Aspects of Integrity*

#### Location and Setting

In urban and town settings, the Equalization Era School resource type often was situated within a segregated residential area during its period of significance. The type is not suitable for removal from its original location. The boundaries of the school property may have been reduced, especially if the property no longer functions as a public school. Localities often subdivide former school properties with large campuses for redevelopment purposes, while leaving the historic school building itself intact. The building's integrity of location and setting, therefore, may be compromised but not entirely eliminated, particularly if effective and suitable landscaping and vegetation plantings screen later redevelopment of adjacent acreage. Where feasible, such remediation should be compatible with the landscape designs that typified the Modern Movement.

Due to urban renewal and highway construction between c. 1940-c. 1990, widespread destruction of African American urban neighborhoods occurred in Virginia. The planning practices that caused fragmentation and erasure of Black neighborhoods are themselves often significant historic trends and events. Therefore, the Equalization Era School's integrity of location and setting may have been altered. It is possible, however, that such alterations may have gained significance in their own right in the area of Community Planning and Development and/or Social History and/or other areas of significance related to c. 1940-c. 1990 planning practices.

Within towns, Equalization Era Schools generally were built in segregated neighborhoods with a majority of African American residents. In rural areas, Equalization Era Schools typically stood on parcels with multiple acres in a location that was equidistant from the various neighborhoods and communities from which the student enrollment was drawn. The settings of Equalization Era Schools in town and rural settings may have changed over time due to suburbanization trends, often brought on by construction of highway networks and/or gentrification.

In all settings, areas that once were entirely residential and/or rural in character may have been altered by highway construction, redevelopment, encroachment of new development on agricultural lands, and/or local zoning for land uses and activities incompatible with the school's original setting. In cases where an Equalization Era School's setting has changed considerably, the evolution of its environs must be described and the significance of such alterations should be evaluated. Adverse changes to setting that were the result of discriminatory practices and structural racism are part of the direct association of surviving resources with significance in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and related areas of significance such as Social History and Community Planning and Development. The incompatible activities and uses are illustrative of the many challenges overcome by Black individuals and communities prior to and during the dismantling of Jim Crow segregation and establishment of civil rights for African Americans at a level unprecedented in the nation's history. They are representative of the structural racism that caused segregated public education to be the norm in Virginia between c. 1870-c. 1968.

#### Design, Materials, and Workmanship

The design, materials, and workmanship of Equalization Era Schools are more consistent than previous periods due to the widespread use of International Style architectural design and the use of standardized, mass-produced

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construction materials that called for standardized construction methods. For the most part, localities hired architects to prepare custom designs for individual schools. In limited instances during which multiple schools were slated for construction, a single overall design for the building may have been selected while site preparation was customized to each location. Mecklenburg County, for example, hired Richmond-based architect Samuel N. Mayo in 1952 to prepare a single design for its Equalization Era West End and East End high schools for African American students and used the same tactic in 1954 for its Bluestone and Park View high schools for White students. State Department of Education staff continued to review proposed school designs and to provide technical assistance to localities on a project by project basis. A general contractor typically was responsible for day-to-day construction work on the school. Therefore, building form, footprint, size, and massing, location of entries and windows, and interior plan varied to suit local needs. Building codes for light, ventilation, heating, and safety also informed overall design of school buildings.

A similar design process was carried out for Equalization Era additions to older schools. As noted above with the former Bedford Training School, architects often attempted to blend the design of additions to make them complementary to earlier buildings. In situations where budgets were limited, however, an addition with minimal design treatments might be appended to a Colonial Revival schoolhouse, usually as a rear addition. An example of this approach is the John Groom Elementary School (NRHP 2018; 301-5063), where the original 1949 Colonial Revival building has a similar 1950 auditorium and cafeteria wing and, appended to the latter, a 1960 classroom wing of Modernist design that clearly differentiates it from the earlier sections.

In cities and towns, large windows continued to be a character-defining feature of public schools, but electrical lighting had become the norm for classrooms, offices, corridors, and other interior spaces. Electrical lighting finally began to be included in newly built rural schools for Black students, and was installed, to varying degrees, in earlier buildings that remained in use. The presence of smaller windows should not be automatically considered to be a later alteration; however, starting in the 1970s, many localities opted to reduce window openings on older schools in attempts to lower heating and air conditioning costs. Such alterations may be reversible, but first should be investigated to establish if they have significance in their own right.

The materials used to erect all variations of Equalization Era Schools were specified in architect-prepared plans. Although some localities continued to extract donations of land from African American communities prior to the mid-1950s, purchase of mass-produced, standardized construction materials typically was the responsibility of the local school board. Regardless of the schoolhouse's location, materials consisted of standardized, mass-produced lumber, bricks, concrete blocks, decorative cast stone, window sash, doors, roofing finishes, tile, linoleum and terrazzo flooring, wall and bathroom tile, lighting and plumbing fixtures, and other elements.

Replacement of materials in kind are appropriate when needed to keep a resource in good repair and active use. Where historic materials have been replaced with functionally and/or visually similar but newer types of synthetic materials, a resource's integrity of materials and workmanship is somewhat diminished depending on the extent of the replacement materials and whether the alterations occurred during the property's period of significance. Some materials, such as asbestos and lead paint, were widely used from the 1940s-1960s, but later fell out of favor due to their toxicity. Removal of toxic materials in and of itself in no way diminishes a resource's integrity of materials; poorly considered methods to replace such materials, however, may reduce a property's overall integrity of materials, particularly if such replacements were poorly installed and/or maintained, thus leading to damage or failure of historic materials. Other popular materials, such as aluminum-framed window sash and glass blocks, may have been replaced during remodeling campaigns aimed at improving a building's energy efficiency, updating its aesthetics, or lack of maintenance staff trained in their proper care and repair. Some materials, such as aluminum and vinyl siding, fixed sash, metal-framed



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commercial-style entry systems, and walkway coverings comprised of metal posts with aluminum-clad roofing, may be themselves original to the property. Similarly, if used as replacements for failing original materials, such materials may be of historic age and may have significance in their own right.

For the most part, replacement materials that date to a property's period of significance will not erode integrity of materials, although integrity of workmanship and design may be eroded depending on the quality of the materials used and skill of the workmen who installed them. Replacement materials that postdate the property's period of significance may result in proportional erosion of integrity, depending upon the resource's materials, design, and workmanship during its period of significance. Additions on buildings that date to the resource's period of significance and allowed the building to continue or expand its historic use do not erode integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Those alterations that postdate the period of significance are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to understand the resource's continued integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

Equalization Era Schools were built by professional builders and contractors who performed all of the necessary labor. Schools that were erected using standardized materials according to standardized construction practices embody the workmanship of the period; such materials and methods long were considered by many architectural historians to be of lesser quality and significance. Field investigations and research, such as that related to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, have provided ample evidence that the workmanship and materials of c. 1946-c. 1968 are worthy as they contribute to a property's overall integrity. Meanwhile, repairs made during the latter years of a schoolhouse's period of significance are likely to demonstrate similar types of workmanship; it may be difficult to discern original materials and workmanship from those postdating the c. 1946-c. 1968 Equalization Era, but generally this will not be necessary if they are in-kind to those present during the property's period of significance. As noted above, poorly rendered repairs made after a property's period of significance can adversely affect a building's integrity of both materials and workmanship.

With regard to the former public schools that are open to the public today, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that may be applicable to ensure equal access to and within the interior. Such retrofits to comply with the ADA's accessibility requirements shall not be considered alterations that impair the property's integrity. Typical alterations include erecting a ramp to permit entry to the building's main entrance and/or alternate entrances, widening of some doors, and/or removal or lowering of thresholds at exterior or interior room entries. If offered, provision of drinking water and restrooms for site visitors is not required to be within the historic building; a separate building for these purposes may be constructed elsewhere on the property. For buildings that remained in public use into the late 20<sup>th</sup> or early 21<sup>st</sup> century and received retrofits to restrooms, entries, and other spaces to comply with ADA, such alterations shall not be construed as adversely affecting the building's integrity of design or materials.

The following table lists the common physical features of Equalization Era Schools newly built between c. 1946-c. 1968 that have been recorded in VCRIS.

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**Table 5: Common Elements of Equalization Era School Buildings, c. 1946-c. 1968**

Element	Typical Components and Materials
Stories	Generally, one to two stories, but typically no more than three
Foundation	Continuous, poured/slab, or raised Materials: brick, concrete
Structural System	Typically, concrete (reinforced or block) or brick
Exterior Treatment	Brick (often veneer), cast stone, concrete, stucco, or some combination.  Exterior detailing may include decorative brickwork or cast concrete details, belt courses, water tables, sills and lintels, and/or glass blocks. Some buildings may retain historic recessed lettered signage within brick or concrete surrounds.
Roof	Typically, flat or hipped, though shape may vary.  Larger buildings may have multiple roof types, such as a hipped central section and flanking flat-roofed wings  Roof details may include low parapets with metal or cast concrete coping, chimneys, or smokestacks.  Materials: most common are metal, rubber membrane, or built-up roofs, though other materials may include asphalt shingles.
Entrances	Typically, single or double leaf; usually metal-framed with large lights.  Common features include recessed entries, projecting vestibules/ entry bays/ entry towers, or covered entries.  Although entries continue to be visually prominent features of buildings, the ornamented entries typical of previous periods are rare. Earlier buildings may retain Colonial Revival, Art Deco, or other stylistic details while their Equalization Era additions are minimalist Modern Movement styles.
Windows	Typically, metal ribbon windows, ranging in style, material, and light pattern based on the building's massing and scale.

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Element	Typical Components and Materials
Additions	<p>Historic additions are common, but not requisite for listing. Many schools may include additions designed to accommodate school expansions and modernizations.</p> <p>If additions were constructed after the period of significance, they should not overwhelm the original building, unless they are specifically tied to the use of the property as an Equalization Era School during the period of significance or have gained significance in their own right.</p>
Interiors	<p>Interiors were not evaluated as part of this project; however, they should generally retain their historic plan and circulation pattern.</p> <p>Common interior alterations include retrofitted kitchens and bathrooms; auditorium, cafeteria, and gymnasium additions and later remodeling; replacement or covering of original linoleum, concrete, or asbestos tile flooring with carpeting and vinyl composition tile; occasionally, original linoleum and/or terrazzo flooring may have been covered by later materials; covering of wall finishes with gypsum wallboard; replacement of drop ceilings featuring grids of acoustic tiles with newer suspended ceiling systems; and paint.</p> <p>Most schools have tiled walls up to approximately 6-8 feet with painted concrete blocks above; in administrative spaces, partitions clad with gypsum wallboard are typical.</p>
Secondary Resources	<p>Equalization Era schools are likely to have secondary resources, but they are not required for listing. Common secondary resources include industrial and agricultural shops, sheds, and other utilitarian outbuildings, and modular classroom units.</p> <p>Landscape elements are likely to include ingress/egress driveways for school buses and automobiles, paved or gravel vehicular parking lots, landscape designs with ornamental plantings, flagpoles, and monument-type signage, sidewalks, and athletic fields.</p>

### Feeling and Association

Location of Equalization Era Schools within or adjacent to a historically segregated area of residential resources, or mixed with commercial, recreational, educational, religious, and social uses, will contribute to the resource's integrity of feeling and association. The retention of associated historic-age properties in proximity to the school building contributes to its integrity of setting and, therefore, integrity of feeling and association. In urban settings, it will not be atypical for an Equalization Era School to be in a location affected by the types of extensive demolition, displacement, new construction, and/or incompatible land uses and activities noted above with regard to integrity of location. A resource affected by such activities will have changes to its location,

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setting, feeling, and association. Analysis of these four aspects of a property's integrity, therefore, must take into account the effects of such alterations on an individual property and, where applicable, should be understood as contributing to that property's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. Equalization Era Schools outside of cities may be located in formerly rural settings where suburban sprawl has altered the character of the setting. Often, however, the school property itself retains its original boundaries and setting. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship contribute to integrity of feeling and association related to the Equalization Era School's original period of construction. Alterations associated with subsequent significant events, particularly post-segregation era additions and updates, as well as those meant to allow the school to remain in use following desegregation, may affect the property's integrity of feeling and association with regard to its original construction period. Such alterations, however, if significant in their own right, will not eliminate the property's overall integrity of feeling and association.

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## G. Geographical Data

This MPD covers the entirety of the Commonwealth of Virginia, which is composed of 95 counties and 38 independent cities and includes 190 incorporated towns within the counties. Through a combination of research and project team expertise, a range of property types were identified across Virginia for their association with African American Public Schools of Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968. Review and analysis of historic schools with an association with African American education in Virginia that have been recorded in DHR's Virginia Cultural Resources Information System (V-CRIS) were also undertaken as part of the development of this MPD and the property types discussed herein.

A total of 219 schools were analyzed as part of this project; resources recorded in V-CRIS that were unable to have their association with African American education confirmed based on available data, resources flagged as demolished in V-CRIS, and resources identified as being constructed using Rosenwald Foundation funding were removed from the analyzed list (see Section H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods, Project Parameters and Limitations for more information). The final list of analyzed schools included resources that were spread across 66 counties and 25 independent cities in Virginia and ranged from rural, suburban, and urban settings.

Following the table below are maps depicting the geographic distribution of surveyed resources associated with each historic period (c. 1870-c. 1901; c. 1902-c. 1931; c. 1932-c. 1945; c. 1946-1968).

**Table 6: List of Virginia Counties and Independent Cities represented in the analyzed data**

County/Independent City	Number of Schools
Accomack County	6
Albemarle County	10
Alexandria (Ind. City)	1
Alleghany County	2
Augusta County	1
Bedford County	4
Bristol (Ind. City)	1
Buckingham County	2
Buena Vista (Ind. City)	1
Caroline County	1
Charles City County	1
Charlotte County	1
Charlottesville (Ind. City)	2
Chesapeake (Ind. City)	1
Chesterfield County	1
Clarke County	4
Covington (Ind. City)	1

County/Independent City	Number of Schools
Culpeper County	1
Danville (Ind. City)	2
Dinwiddie County	1
Essex County	3
Fairfax County	7
Fauquier County	12
Floyd County	1
Fluvanna County	2
Franklin County	3
Frederick County	2
Fredericksburg (Ind. City)	2
Giles County	1
Gloucester County	1
Goochland County	1
Grayson County	1
Green County	1
Halifax County	10

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County/Independent City	Number of Schools
Hampton (Ind. City)	1
Hanover County	6
Harrisonburg (Ind. City)	1
Henrico County	2
Henry County	3
Isle of Wight	2
James City County	1
King & Queen County	1
King George County	1
King William County	1
Lancaster County	1
Lee County	1
Lexington (Ind. City)	1
Loudoun County	14
Louisa County	1
Lunenburg County	4
Lynchburg (Ind. City)	3
Madison County	1
Martinsville (Ind. City)	2
Mathews County	2
Mecklenburg County	2
Middlesex County	2
Montgomery County	3
Nelson County	3
Newport News (Ind. City)	2
Norfolk (Ind. City)	2
Northampton County	4
Northumberland County	1
Orange County	3
Page County	2
Petersburg (Ind. City)	2
Pittsylvania County	2
Portsmouth (Ind. City)	1
Powhatan County	3
Prince Edward County	3
Prince George County	1
Prince William County	4
Pulaski County	1
Richmond County	1
Richmond (Ind. City)	9
Roanoke County	1

County/Independent City	Number of Schools
Roanoke (Ind. City)	2
Salem (Ind. City)	1
Southampton County	4
Spotsylvania County	1
Stafford County	1
Staunton (Ind. City)	2
Suffolk (Ind. City)	2
Surry County	1
Sussex County	2
Virginia Beach (Ind. City)	2
Westmoreland County	3
Williamsburg (Ind. City)	1
Winchester (Ind. City)	1
Wise County	1
Wythe County	2
York County	1

Table 7: Settings represented in the analyzed data

Setting	Number of Schools
Rural	87
Urban	37
Town	31
Setting not Listed in V-CRIS	21
Suburban	15
Village	14
Hamlet	11
Transportation Corridor	3
Total	219



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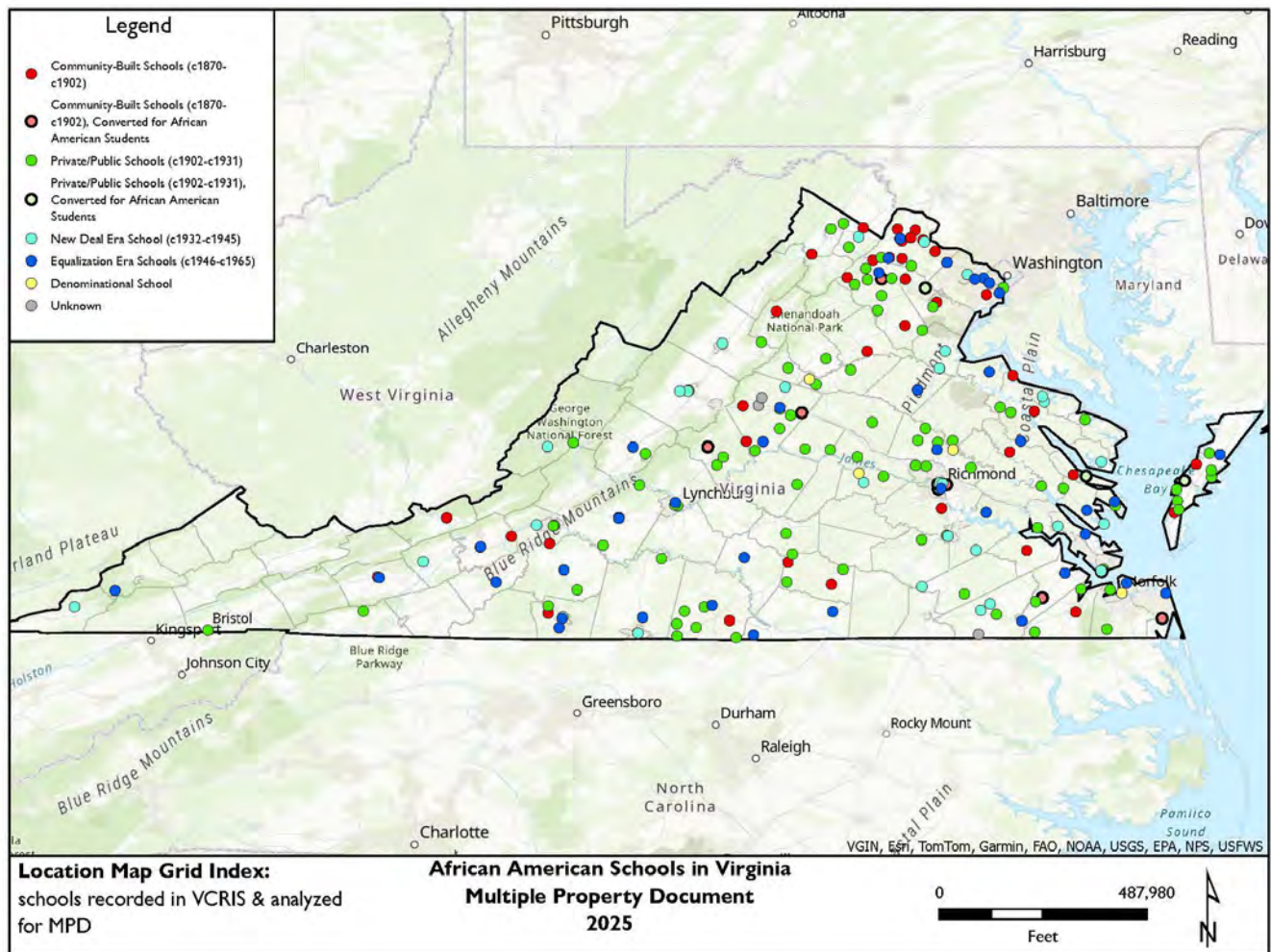
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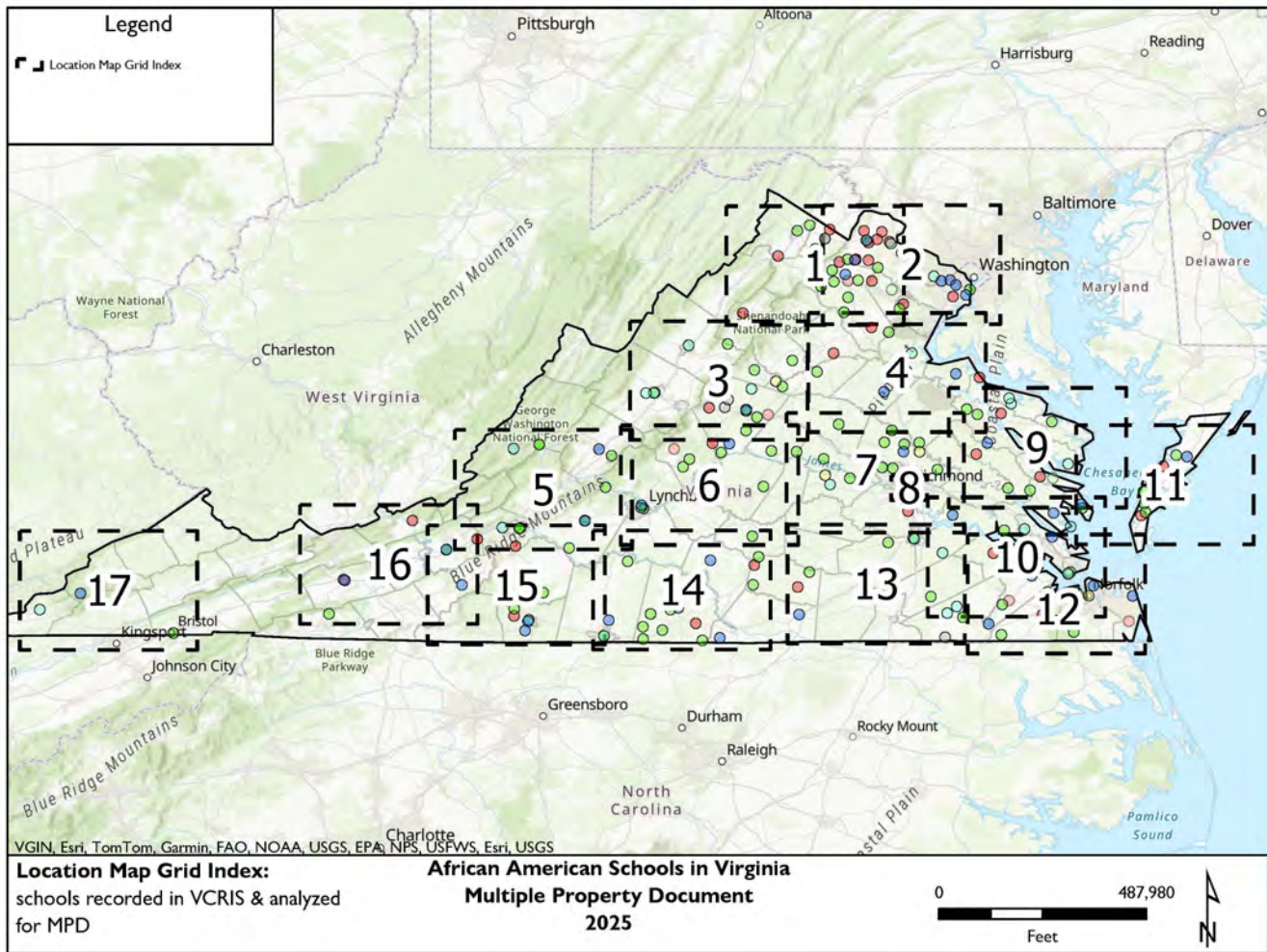
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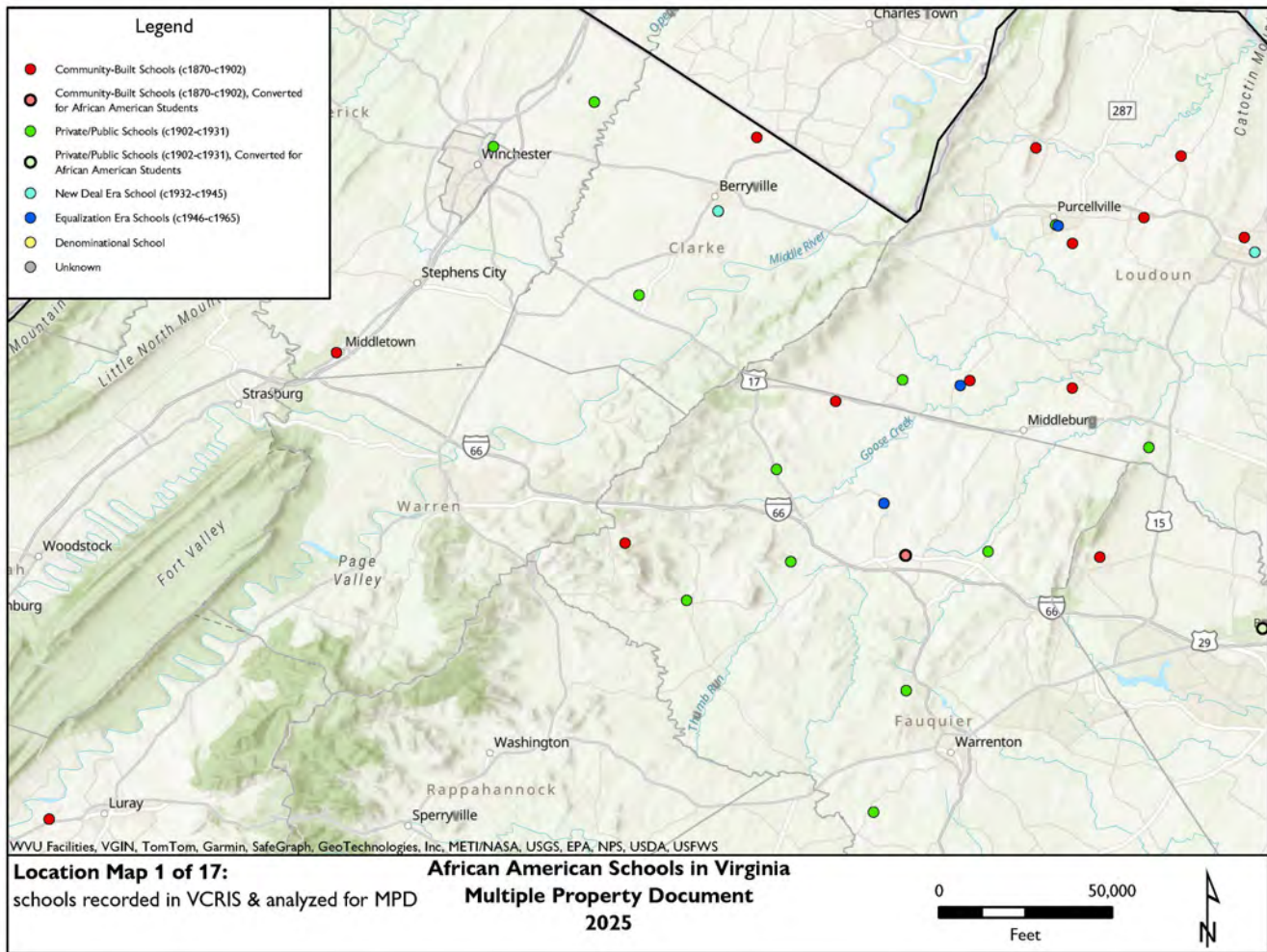
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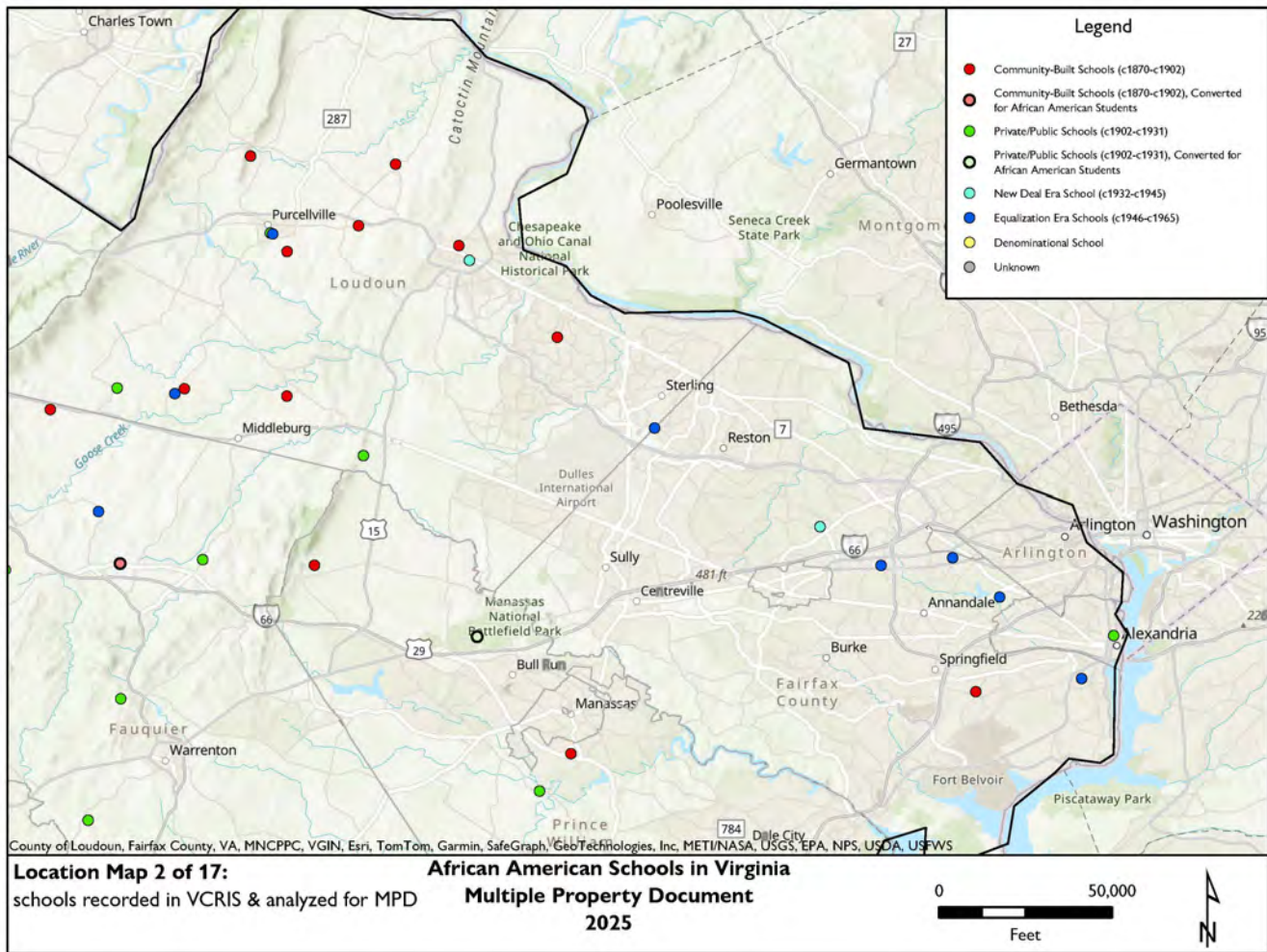
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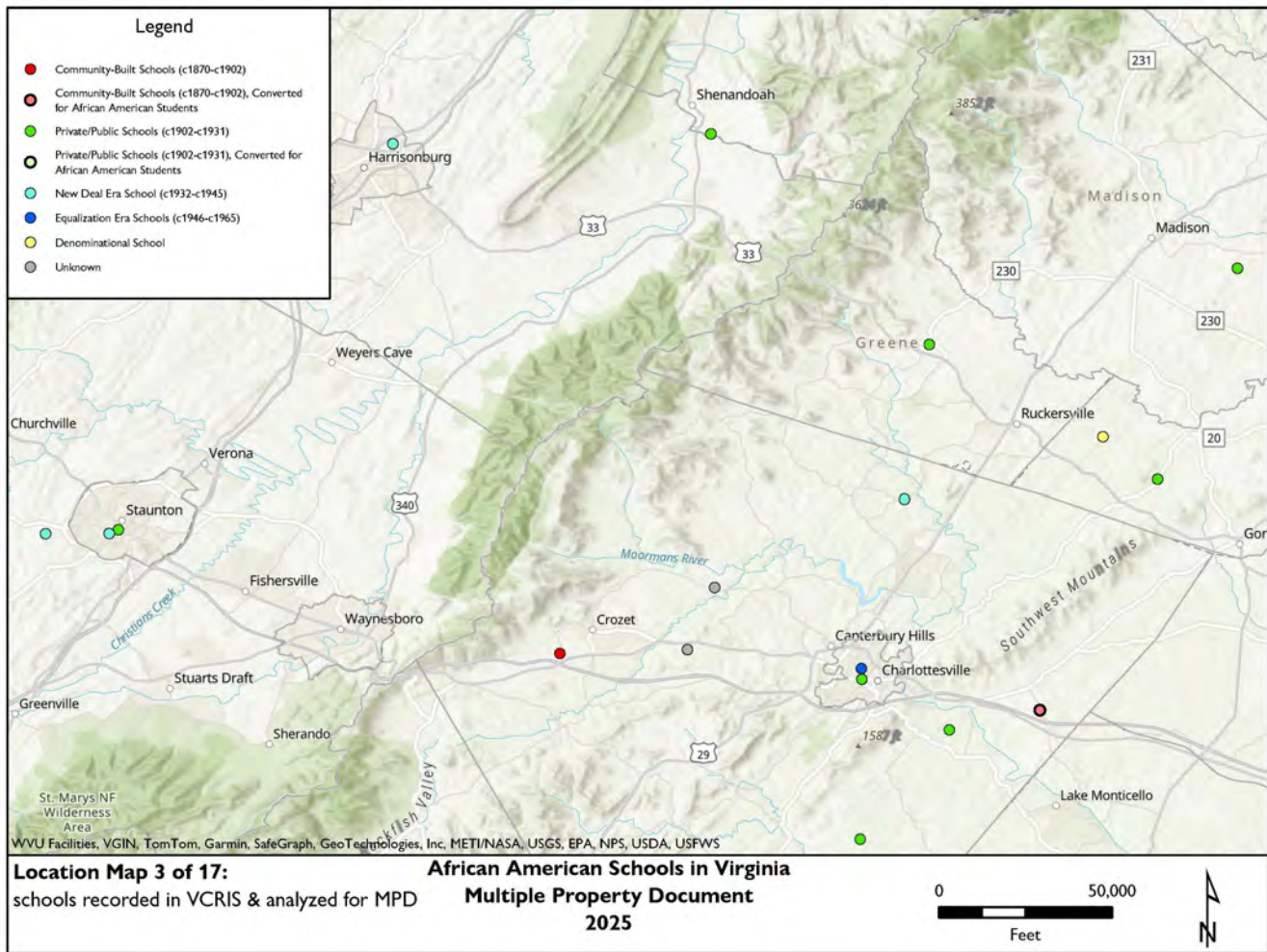
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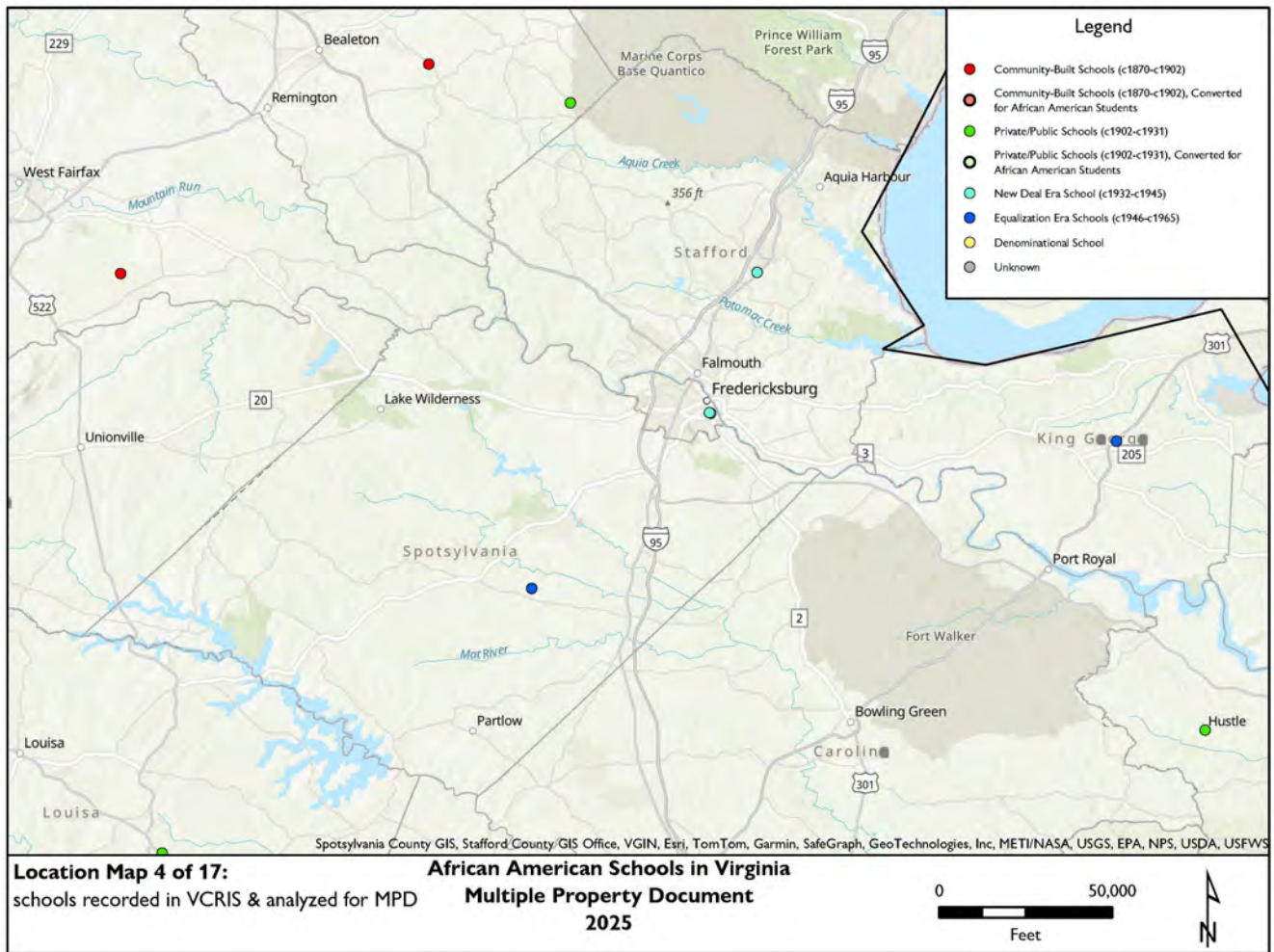
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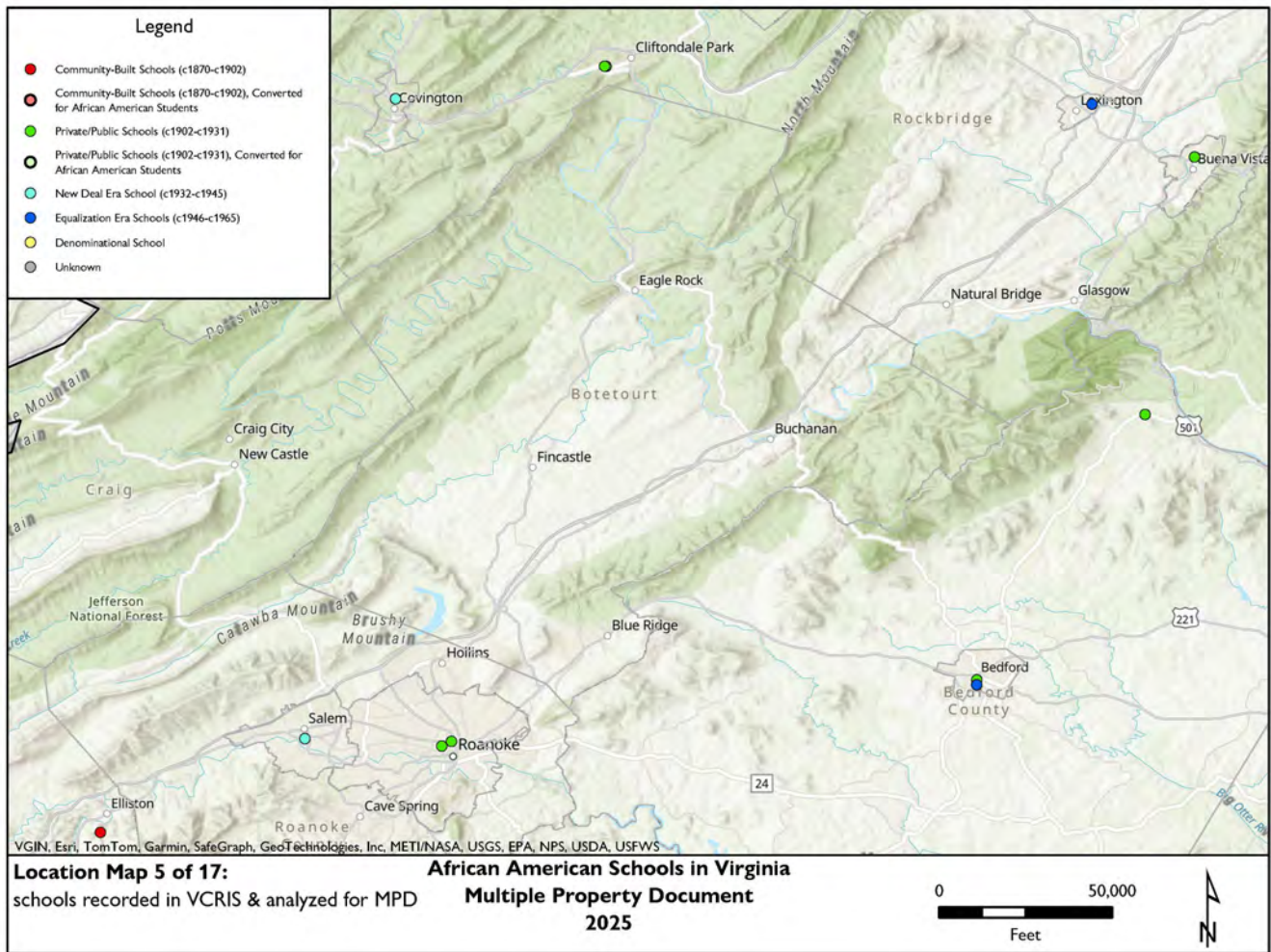
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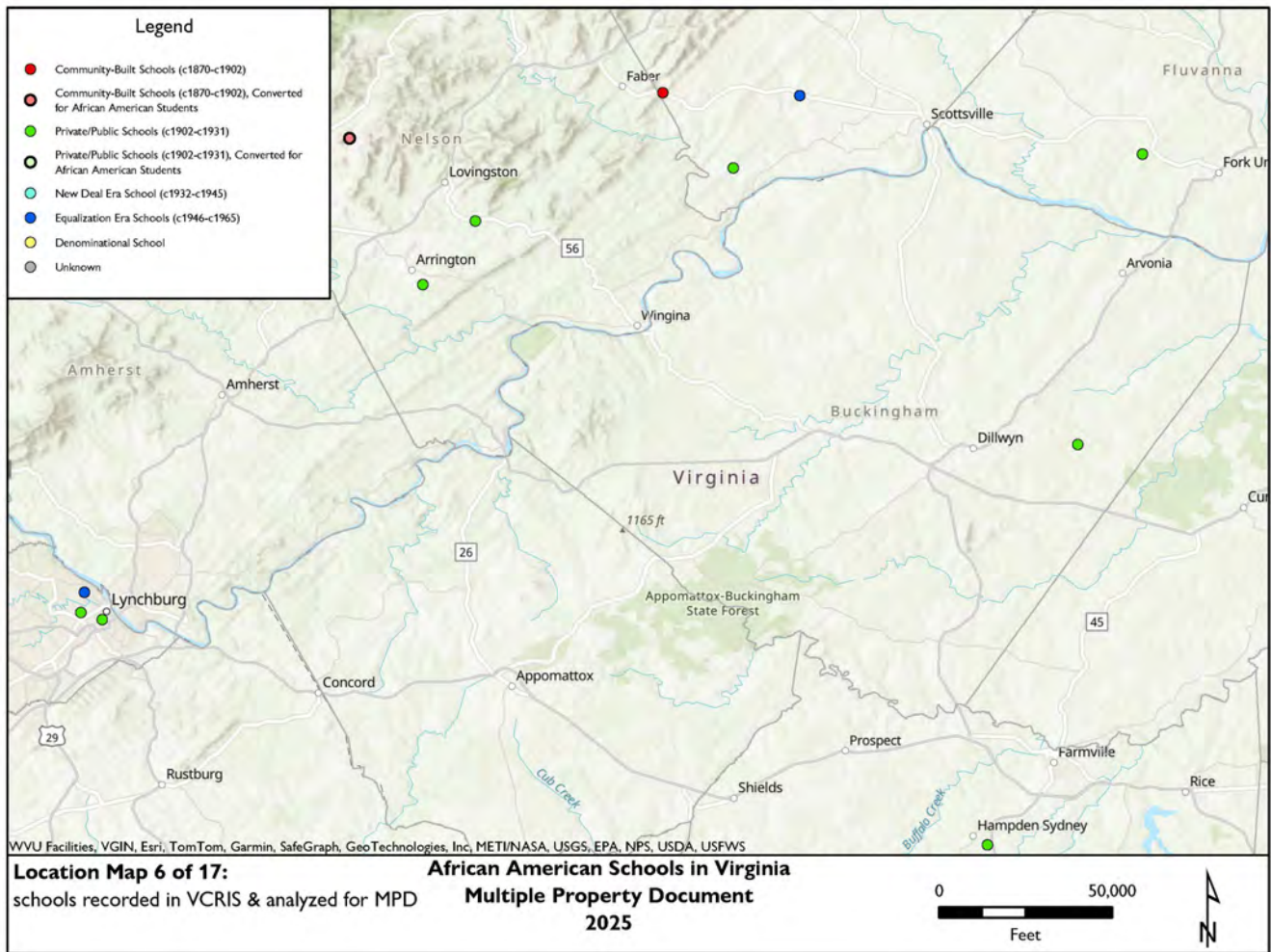
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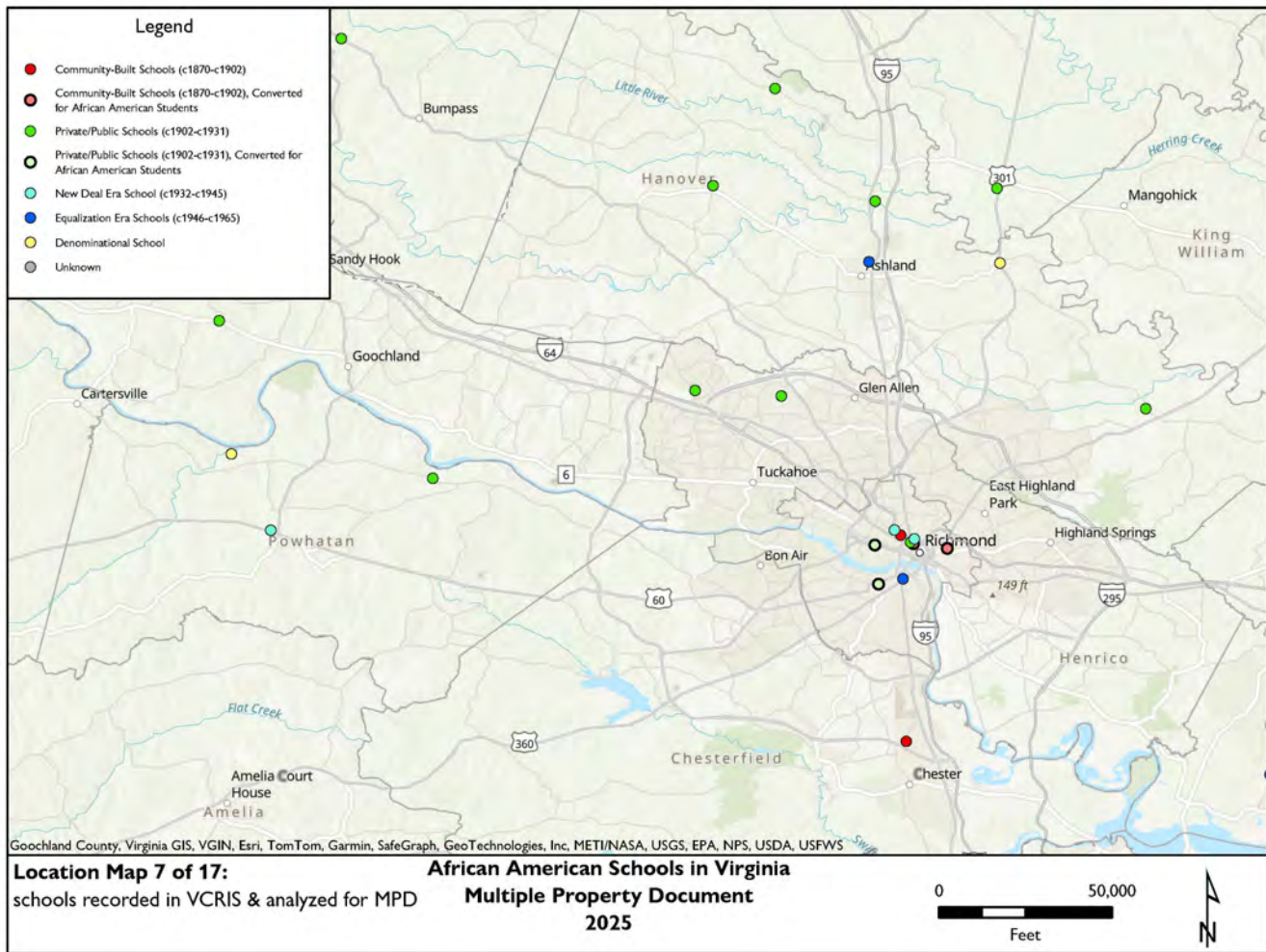
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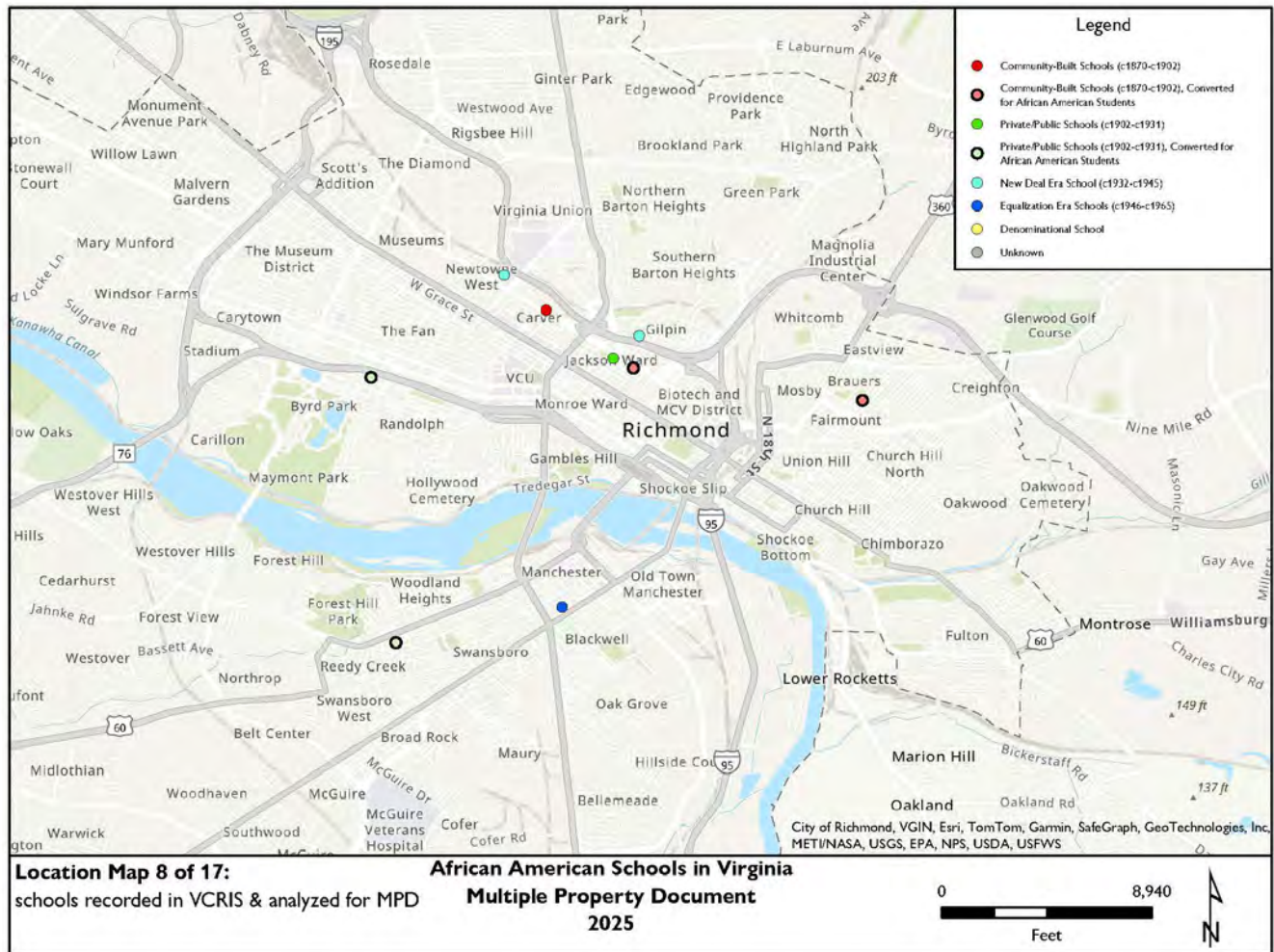
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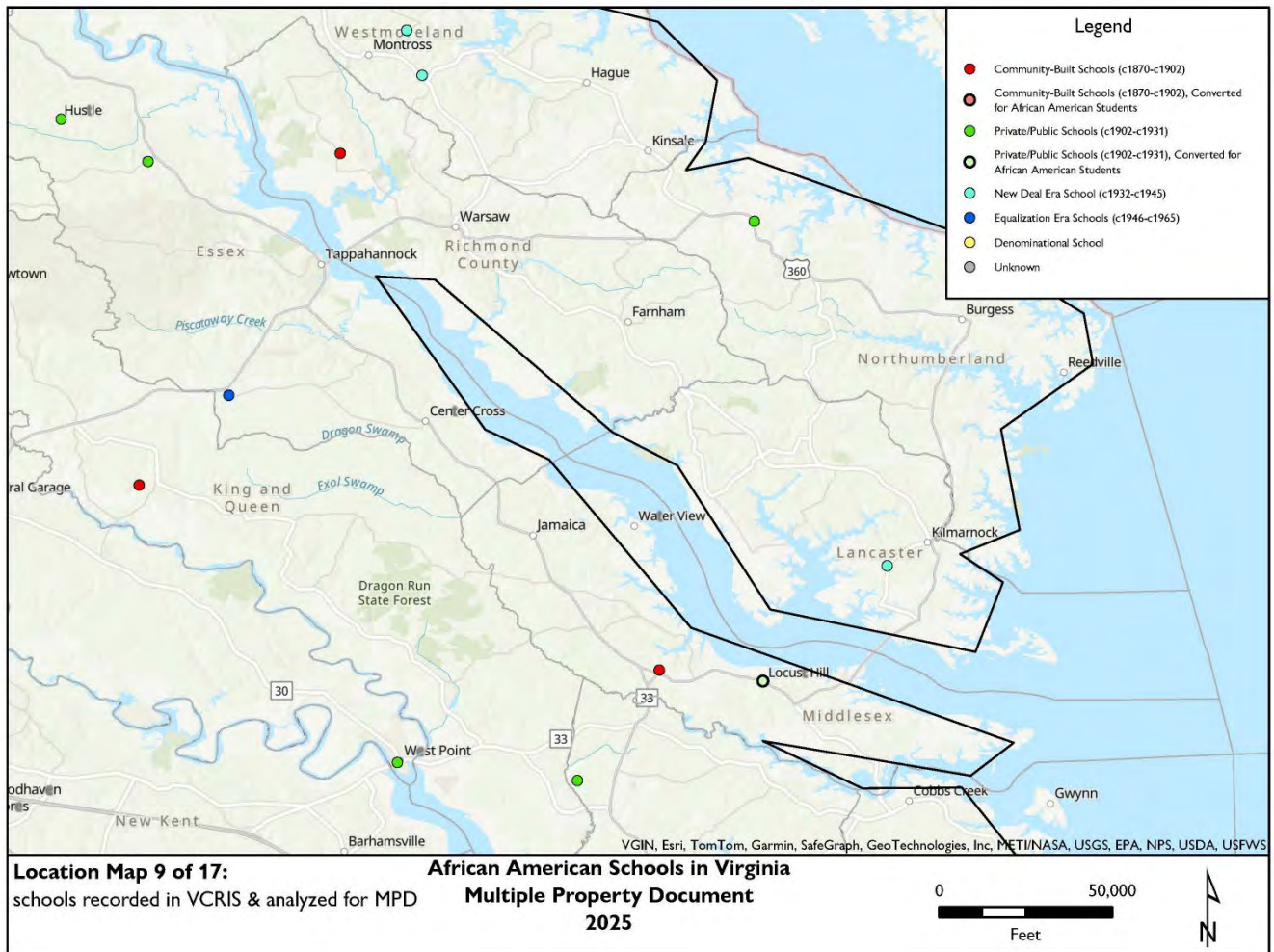
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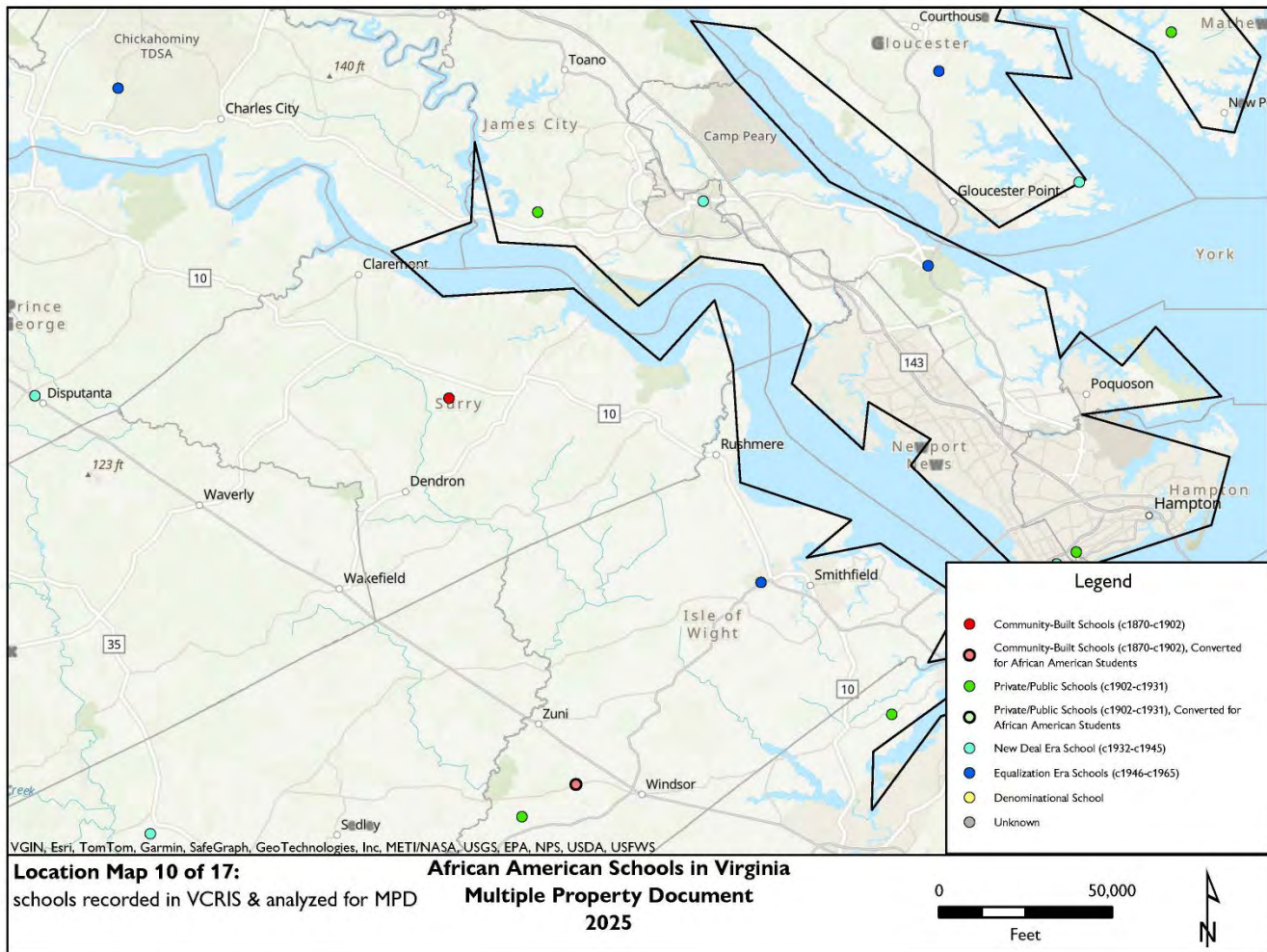
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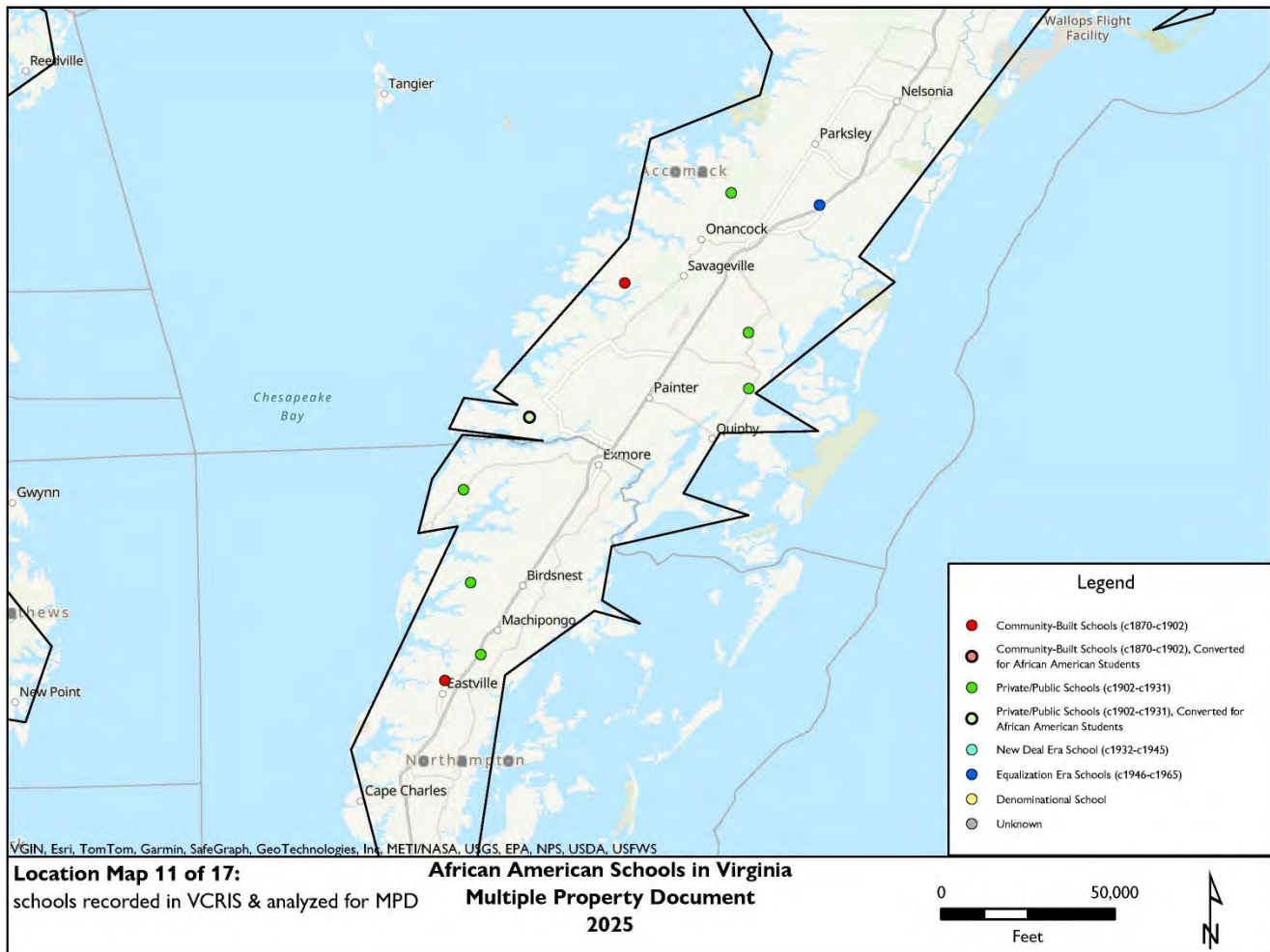
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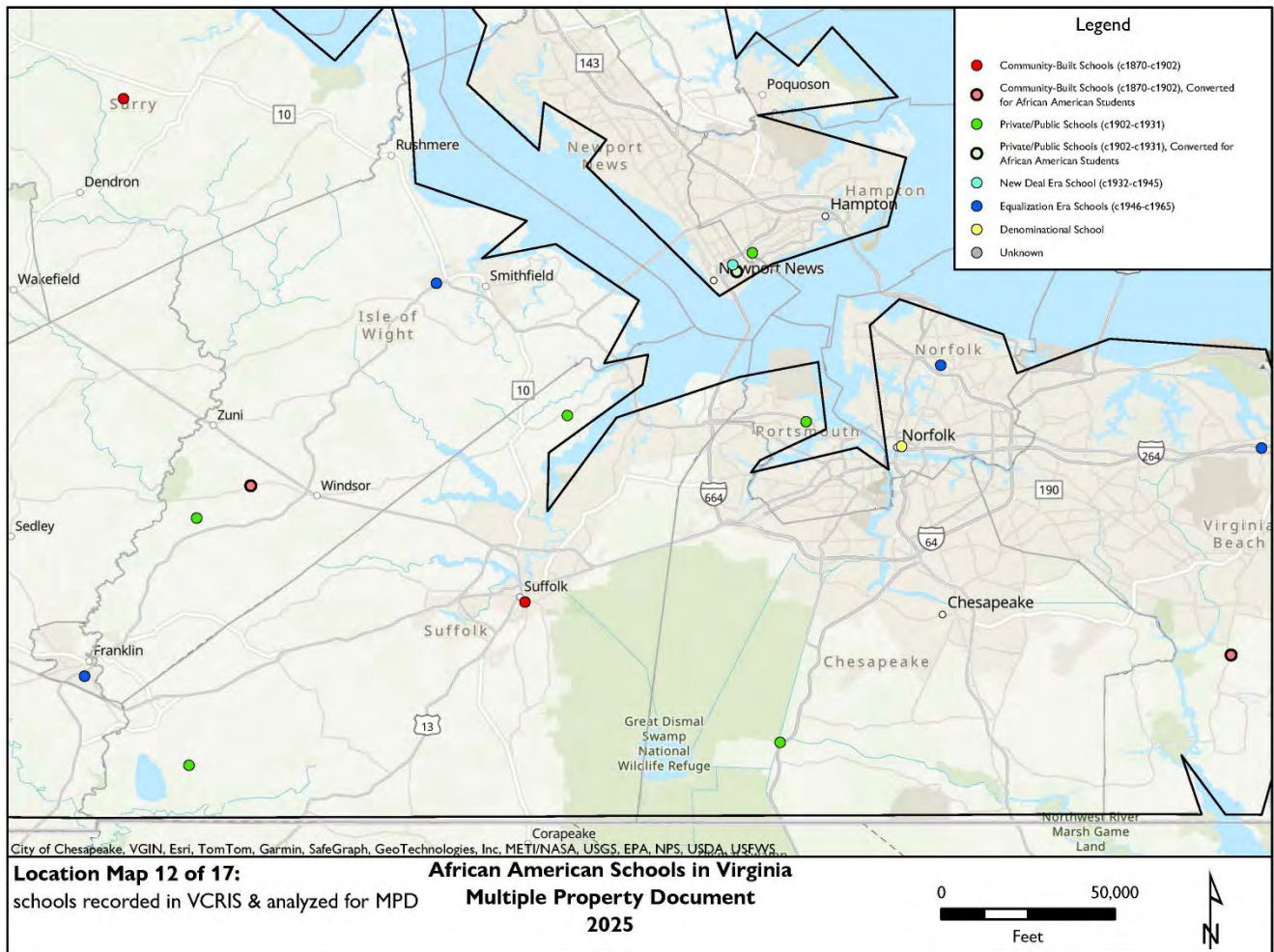
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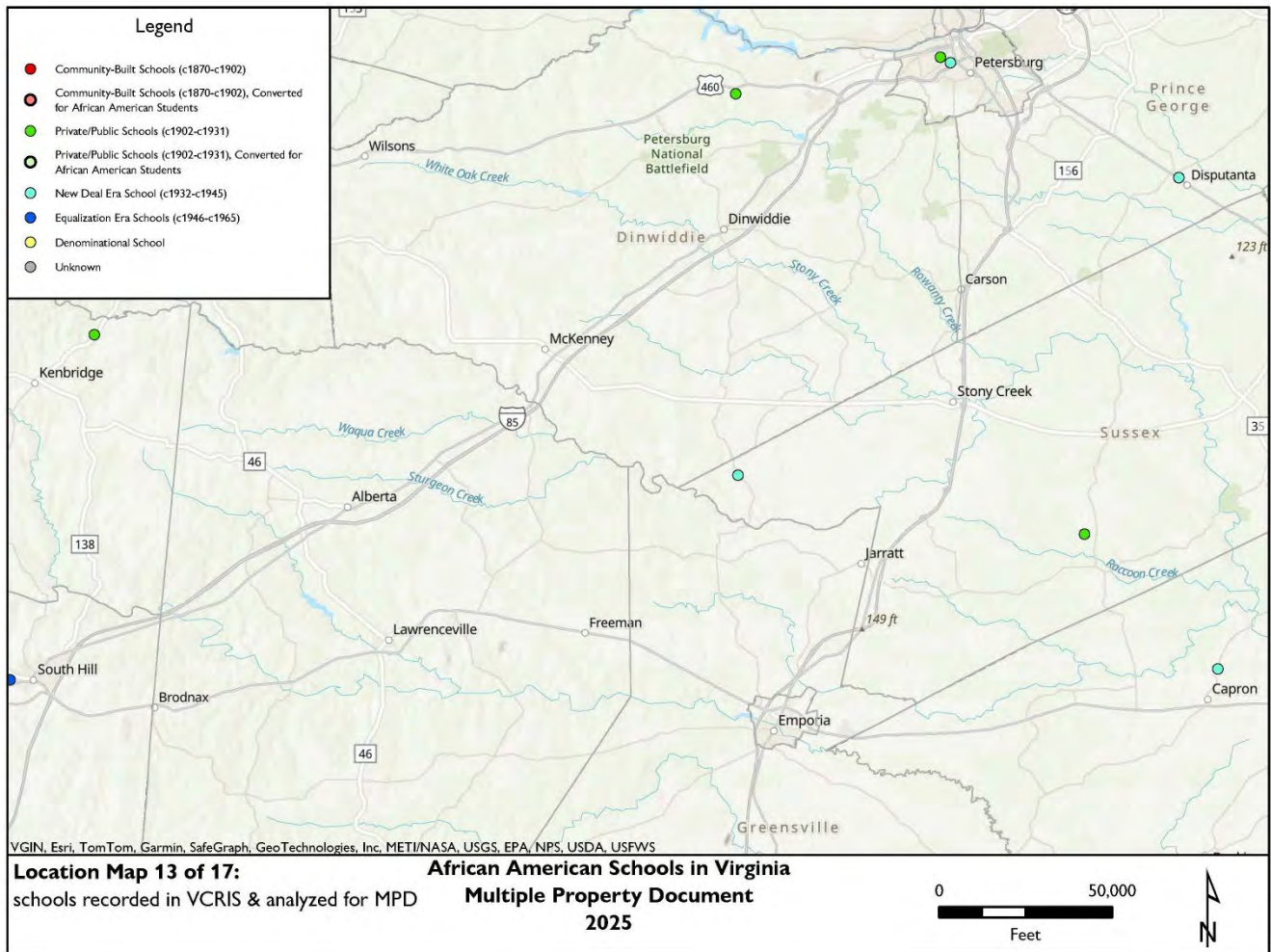
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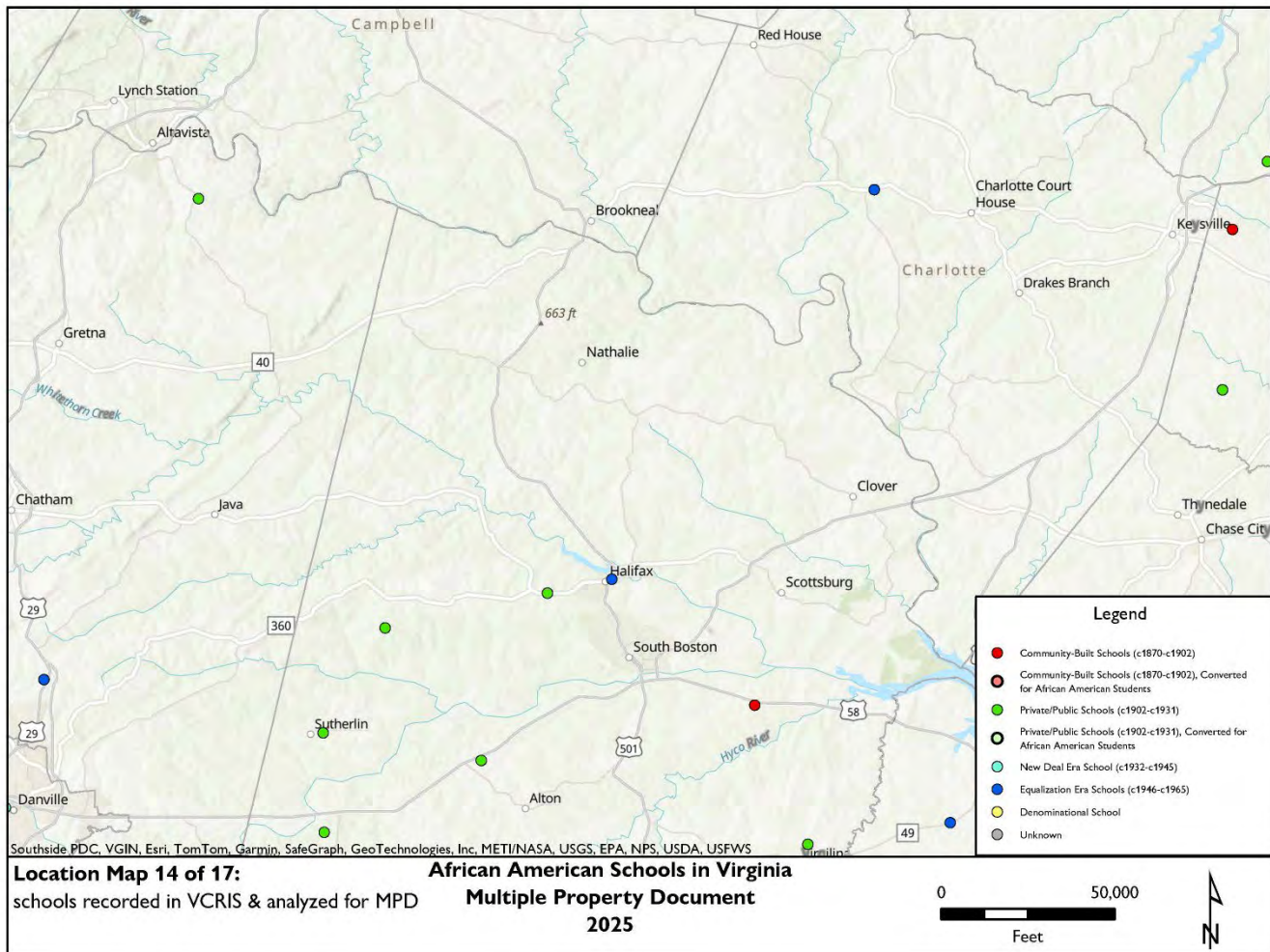
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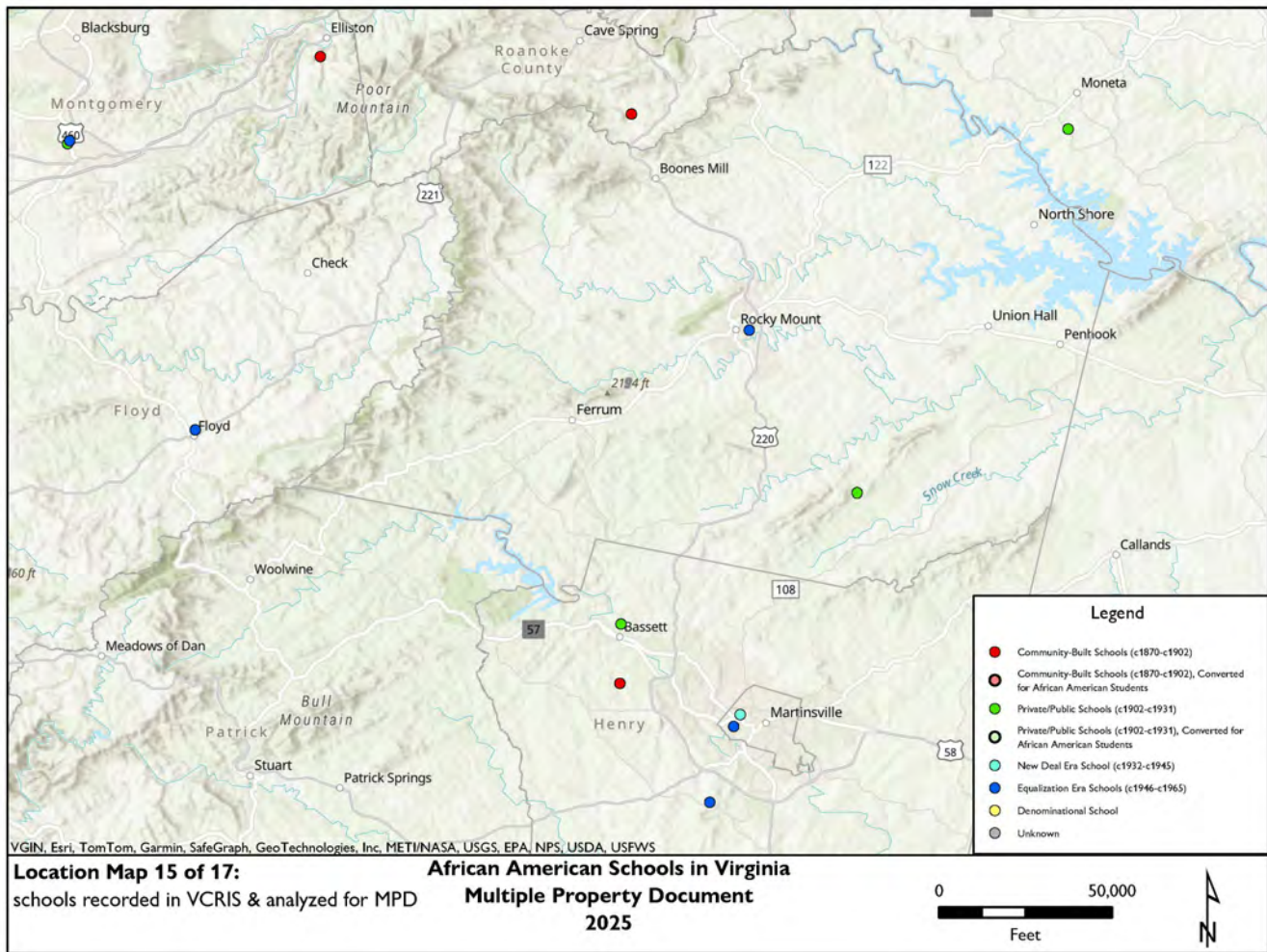
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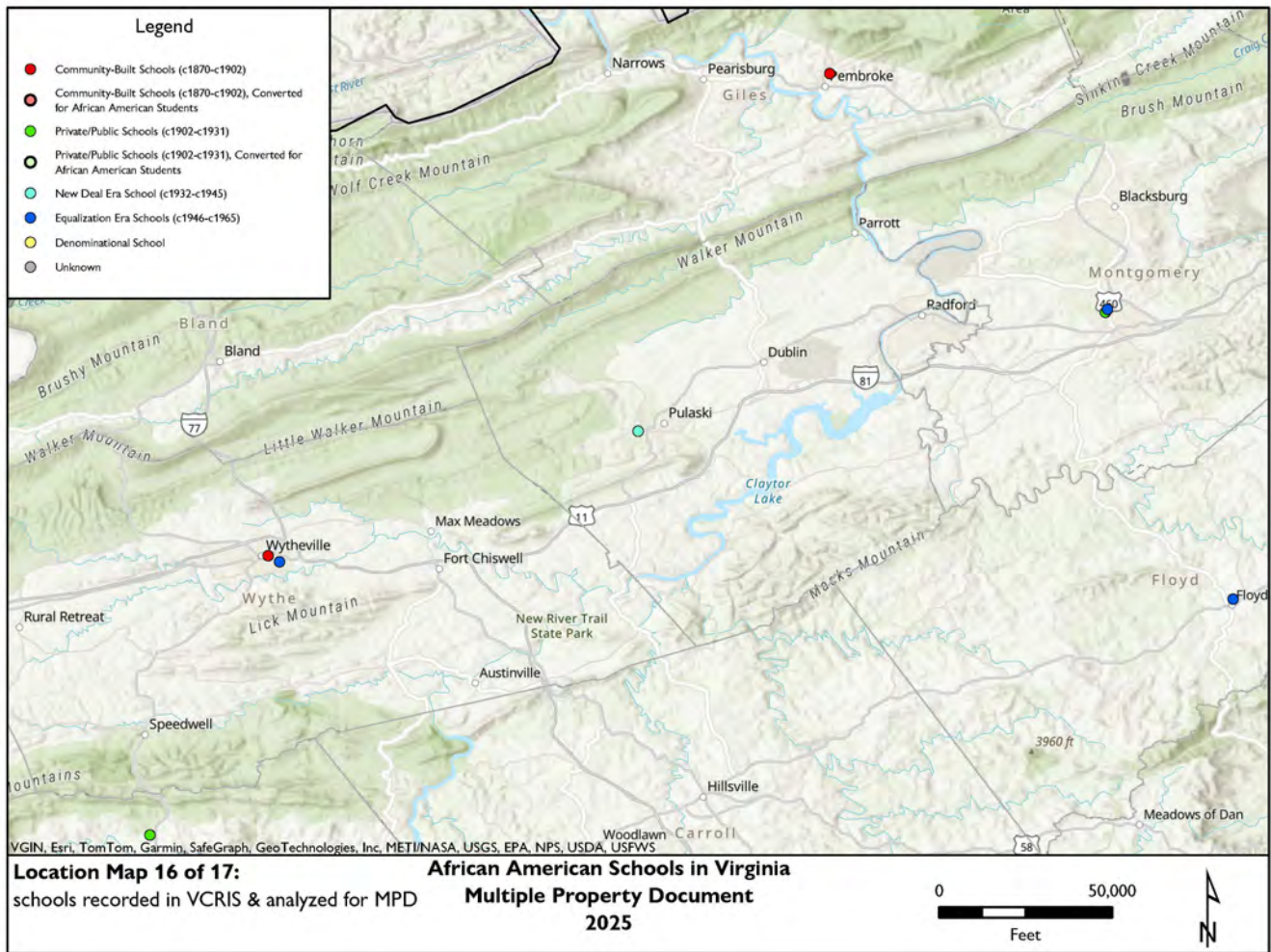
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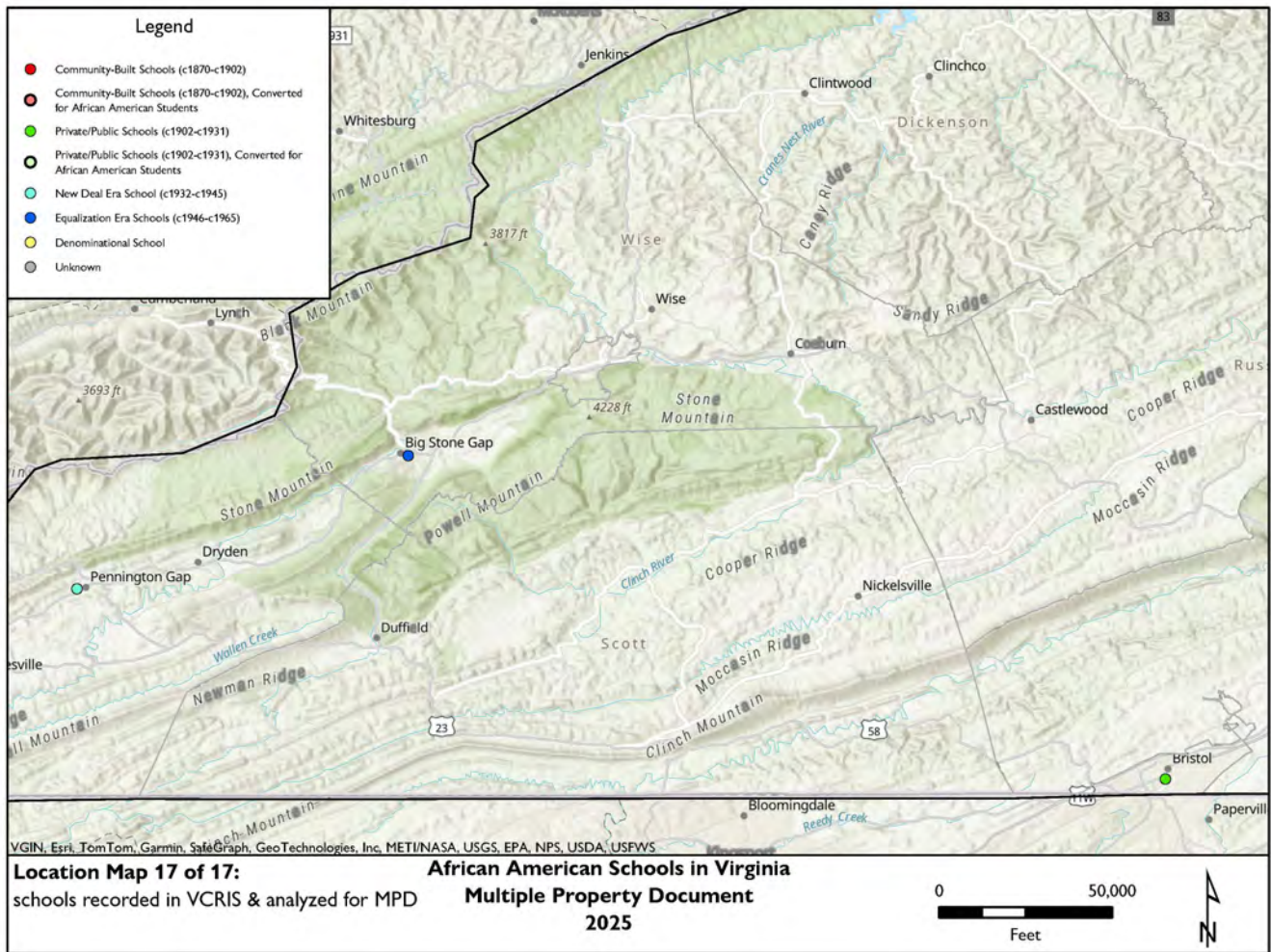
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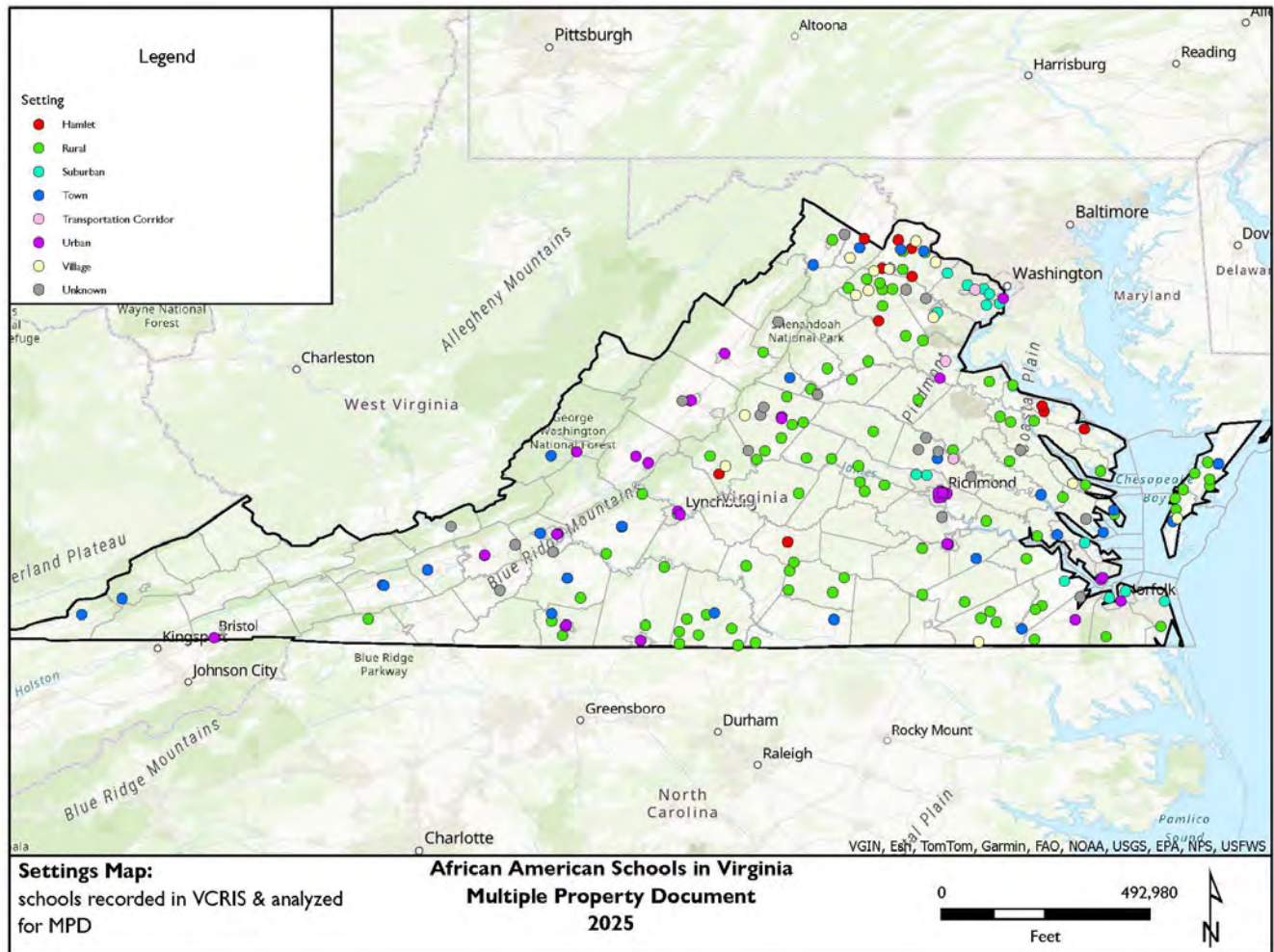
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## H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This document was prepared by Commonwealth Preservation Group (CPG) for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The material herein concerns public schools throughout Virginia that served African American students and were in use during the period c.1870-c.1965, when all public schools were racially segregated. Future updates to this MPD may add further historic contexts and resource types beyond those described herein.

### Research & Evaluation Methods

Research for this MPD included a large geographic area across the Commonwealth of Virginia. A variety of primary and secondary resources concerning the historic themes described herein were collected and used to prepare this context document. Numerous secondary resources, National Register nominations for a variety of properties that have served as segregated schools for Black students, and digitized primary and secondary resources were utilized. Dissertations and theses prepared by advanced graduate students provided much of the information specific to individual localities discussed herein. Research also included reviewing available online sources such as photograph collections, newspaper databases, maps, Ancestry.com, museum and library websites, newspaper articles, obituaries, and similar websites.

With regard to information sources used for the preparation of this MPD, online collections comprised the majority of the primary and secondary sources that were utilized. This research model was used to demonstrate the easily accessible websites that all researchers and preservationists of Virginia's historic schools may access for their needs. Considerable debt is owed, in particular, to the Library of Virginia and its extensive collections of digitized primary sources, biographical data about important educators, online exhibits, and archival collections held at its downtown Richmond facility. The Library's "Changemakers" series proved to be particularly helpful for identifying educators from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century who had an impact on African Americans' educational opportunities. The Library's joint project with Virginia Humanities, *Encyclopedia Virginia*, also was widely referenced throughout the historic context and proved to be particularly helpful for biographical information about historic educators and education trends described herein. The Internet Archive features an immense collection of freely available, digitized historical documents as well as born-digital content from the 1990s-2010s that might otherwise be lost. Online collections maintained by the Library of Congress, the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, private hosts such as ProQuest, Project Muse, Hathi Trust, and Google Books, Virginia's public and private universities, and local museums and libraries also provided an immense assortment of records for researching specific places and individuals across Virginia. All of the masters' theses and doctoral dissertations cited herein were obtained through online websites that host digitized collections, including those offered by universities within and beyond Virginia as well as privately-operated sites. Links to all of the online sources are included in their citations throughout this document and in the MPD bibliography.

Researchers are cautioned, however, that many records are not yet digitized and are often housed at local museums, libraries, historical societies, school boards, and other organizations. Important records about specific schools that may be nominated under this MPD are likely only available in physical form held by local repositories and the Library of Virginia in Richmond.

DHR provided CPG with survey data concerning all of the educational facilities associated with education for Black students between c.1870-c.1965; this survey data did not differentiate between public and private educational facilities. The survey data is maintained by DHR as part of its Virginia Cultural Resources



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Information System, an online database that includes options for public access. The survey data was current as of November 6, 2024.

DHR's survey data provides the basis for the following list of sites in Virginia that have been identified as having, or possibly having, an association with public education of African American students during the segregation era. Future research and survey investigations likely will identify additional historic places not included in the list below and this MPD can be updated accordingly. Property names and addresses listed below, as well as information on potential associations with African American schools, are based on existing information recorded in V-CRIS; additional research was not completed on each recorded resource.

**Table 8: Identified Sites Associated with African American Schools in Virginia, c. 1870-c. 1968**

DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
001-5172	Burton's Colored School (Historic), School, 21441 Burtons Church Road (Function/Location)	21441 Burtons Church Road	Accomack (County)
001-5265	House, 32496 Bradfords Neck Road (Function/Location), Trower School (Historic)	32496 Bradfords Neck Road - Alt Route 605	Accomack (County)
001-5385	Church, 16075 Omega Road (Function/Location), Mount Nebo Baptist Church, School, and Cemetery (Current Name)	16063 Omega Road, 16075 Omega Road	Accomack (County)
001-5405	Craddockville School (Current Name), School, Craddockville Road (Function/Location)	Craddockville Road, Indian Trail Road	Accomack (County)
001-5452	Bayside Elementary School (Historic), School, Bayside Road (Function/Location)	Bayside Road	Accomack (County)
002-0873	Rose Hill School (Historic/Current)	Rose Hill Church Lane - Alt Route 762	Albemarle (County)
002-0965	Keswick Colored School (Historic), Keswick School (Historic/Current)	Route 616	Albemarle (County)
002-1143	Hillsboro Community Center (Current Name), Hillsboro School (Historic)	595 Half Mile Branch Road - Alt Route 684	Albemarle (County)
002-1161	Blenheim School (Historic), Church, 4735 Presidents Road (Function/Location), Middle Oak Baptist Church (Historic/Current)	4735 Presidents Road - Alt Route 795	Albemarle (County)
002-1198	Terry School (Historic)	Route 208	Albemarle (County)
002-1288	Mount Alto School (Historic/Current), School, 4223 Mount Alto Road (Function/Location)	4223 Mount Alto Road - Alt Route 735	Albemarle (County)
002-1358	Advance Mills Colored School (Descriptive), Advance Mills School (Historic), Colored School No. 7 (Historic)	Advance Mills Road - Alt Route 664	Albemarle (County)
002-1518	Decca School Site (Historic/Current)	Route 614, Off Of	Albemarle (County)
002-1535	Schuyler School (Historic/Current)	Route 6	Albemarle (County)
002-5045-0810	Benjamin Franklin Yancey Elementary School (Current), School, 7625 Porters Road (Function/Location)	7625 Porters Road - Alt Route 627	Albemarle (County)
007-0755	Augusta County Training School (Historic), Cedar Green School (Historic)	Route 693	Augusta (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
009-5133	Sharon Baptist Church (Historic), Sharon Baptist Church and Sharon (public) School (Current Name), Sharon School (Historic)	16242 Big Island Highway - Alt Route 122	Bedford (County)
009-5406	Promised Land School (Current Name), Promised Land School (Historic)	Hendricks Store Road - Alt Route 655	Bedford (County)
014-5006	Cedar School (colored) (Historic)	Route 650	Buckingham (County)
014-5016	St. Joy School (Historic)	Route 712	Buckingham (County)
016-5201	Old Dawn School (Current Name), School No. 4 (Historic)	Baylor Road - Alt Route 651	Caroline (County)
018-5208	Barnetts Colored School (Historic), Barnetts Elementary School (Historic), Barnetts School (Current Name), Charles City West Elementary School (Historic)	9100 Barnetts Road - Alt Route 609	Charles City (County)
019-5278	James Murray Jeffress Elementary School (Current Name), Jeffress Elementary School (Historic)	5015 Patrick Henry Highway - Alt Route 40	Charlotte (County)
020-0058	Kingsland School (Historic/Current)	Route 1, Off Of	Chesterfield (County)
021-0192-0008	Millwood Recreation Center (Current), Schoolhouse, 1610 Millwood Road (Function/Location), Schoolhouse, Route 723 lot #8 (Historic)	1610 Millwood Road - Alt Route 723	Clarke (County)
021-0307	Lewisville School (Descriptive)	Route 641	Clarke (County)
023-5041	Eckington School (NRHP Listing), Poplar Ridge School (Historic/Current)	21649 Mount Pony Road	Culpeper (County)
026-5114	Rocky Branch School (Historic)	6009 Rocky Branch Road	Dinwiddie (County)
028-0414	Champlain "Colored" School (Historic)	491 Lloyds Road, 491 Route 631	Essex (County)
028-0429	John Moncure School (Historic/Current)	Route 684	Essex (County)
028-5225	School, 2952 Rose Mount Road (Function/Location)	2952 Rose Mount Road	Essex (County)
029-0361	Bushrod House, 6840 Beulah Street (Historic/Location), Laurel Grove School (Historic/Current)	6840 Beulah Street	Fairfax (County)
029-5318	Luther P. Jackson High School (Historic), Luther P. Jackson Middle School (Current)	3020 Gallows Road	Fairfax (County)
029-6030	Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road (Function/Location), James E. Lee Negro Elementary School (Historic), James Lee Community Center (Current Name)	2855 Annandale Road - Alt Route 649	Fairfax (County)
029-6908	Quander Road School (Current Name)	6400 Quander Road	Fairfax (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
029-6910	Lillian Carey Elementary School (Historic)	5920 Summers Lane	Fairfax (County)
029-6933	Oak Grove School (Historic)	1479 Sterling Road	Fairfax (County), Loudoun (County)
030-0135	Former School, 7592 E. Main Street (Function/Location), Public School #18 (Historic/Current)	7592 Main Street East, Route 55, Off Of	Fauquier (County)
030-5158-0006	Schools, 12071-12073 Hume Road (Function/Location)	12071-12073 Hume Road - Alt Route 635	Fauquier (County)
030-5174	Cromwell School (Historic)	12084 Brentown Road	Fauquier (County)
030-5275	Bethel School (Historic), Zion School (Historic)	7638 Cannonball Gate Road	Fauquier (County)
030-5323-0002	Ashville School (Historic), School, Ashville Road (Function/Location)	000 Ashville Road - Alt Route 731	Fauquier (County)
030-5341	Former School, 4055 Halfway Road (Function/Location), Foster Hill School (Historic)	4055 Halfway Road	Fauquier (County)
030-5361	Delaplane School (colored) (Historic), Former School, 2425 Winchester Road (Function/Location)	2425 Winchester Road, Route 17	Fauquier (County)
030-5427-0190	No. 16 School (Historic), School, 8329 Turnbull Road (Function/Location), Turnbull School (Historic)	8329 Turnbull Road - Alt Route 683	Fauquier (County)
030-5434-0137	Claude Thompson Elementary School (Current), Northwestern Elementary School (Historic)	3284 Rectortown Road, Route 710	Fauquier (County)
030-5447	Farrall House (Historic), House, 1176 Delaplane Grade Road (Function/Location), No. 11 School (Historic)	1176 Delaplane Grade Road - Alt Route 712, John S. Mosby Highway - Alt Route 50	Fauquier (County)
030-5535	House, 4523 Midland Rd (Rt 610) (Function/Location), Schoolhouse, Midland Road (Historic/Location)	4523 Midland Road - Alt Route 610	Fauquier (County)
030-5890	Cherry Hill School (Historic)	3692 Cherry Hill Road - Alt Route 638	Fauquier (County)
032-0293	Fluvanna County Negro High School (Historic), New Fork School (Historic/Current), Shores School (Historic)	2221 Mountain Hill Road, Route 710	Fluvanna (County)
032-0390	School, Route 659 (Function/Location)	Route 659	Fluvanna (County)
033-0422	Goode School (Historic)	Route 3	Franklin (County)
034-1163	Leetown Colored School (Historic), Leetown School (Current)	Route 761	Frederick (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
036-5043	Gloucester Intermediate School (Historic), Gloucester Middle School (Historic), Gloucester Training School (Historic), Rosenwald School, 6099 T.C. Walker Road (Function/Location), Thomas Calhoun Walker Elementary School (Current), Thomas Calhoun Walker School (Historic)	6099 T.C. Walker Road	Gloucester (County)
037-5056	Chapel Colored School (Historic)	2247 Chapel Hill Road	Goochland (County)
038-5196	Elk Creek Colored School (Historic)	East side Victory Lane (Rt. 791)	Grayson (County)
041-5080	Wilson, Thomas L., Farm (Historic/Current)	1056 Virgie Cole Road	Halifax (County)
041-5124	L. E. Coleman Museum (Current), Mountain Road Black School No. 1 (Historic), Project Hope Building (Historic)	3011 Route 360	Halifax (County)
041-5192	Oak Level School (African-American) (Descriptive), Wesley Chapel School (Historic)	2242 Oak Level Road	Halifax (County)
041-5282	Old Piney Grove School (Current Name), Piney Grove School (Historic)	5191 Bethel Road - Alt Route 360	Halifax (County)
041-5292	Hyco Black School (Historic), School, Route 744 (Function/Location)	Shady Grove Church Road	Halifax (County)
041-5299	Flint Rock School (Historic), School, 1085 Flint Rock Road (Function/Location)	1085 Flint Rock Road	Halifax (County)
041-5301	Brandon Chapel Black School (Historic), School, 1144 Brandon Chapel Road (Function/Location)	1144 Brandon Chapel Road	Halifax (County)
041-5304	School, 2169 Mercy Seat Road (Function/Location), White Oak School (Historic)	2169 Mercy Seat Road	Halifax (County)
041-5310	School, 7052 Red Bank Road (Current), Virgilina Black School (Historic)	7052 Red Bank Road	Halifax (County)
042-0266	Linney Corners School (Historic/Current)	Rt. 606 Near Linney Corners	Hanover (County)
042-0291	Calvary Episcopal Church & School (Historic), Calvary Episcopal Mission School (Historic)	13311 Hanover Courthouse Road	Hanover (County)
042-0395	School at Gum Tree (Historic/Current)	Route 738, East Of Route 1	Hanover (County)
042-0439	Ebenezer School (Historic/Current)	Route 671 & Route 685	Hanover (County)
042-0460	Mount Hewlett School (Historic/Current)	Rt. 684	Hanover (County)
043-5168	Coal Pit Learning Center (Current), Coal Pit School (Historic/Current)	5101 Francistown Road	Henrico (County)
043-6012	School, 4747 Pouncey Tract Road (Function/Location), Springfield School (Historic)	4747 Pouncey Tract Road	Henrico (County)
044-5171	Rock Run School (Historic/Current)	532 John Baker Road	Henry (County)
044-5268	Carver Lane School (Historic), Oak Level School (Alleged)	633 Carson Drive	Henry (County)
044-5575	Richard H. Clarke Elementary School (Current Name)	2145 Chestnut Knob Road - Alt Route 781	Henry (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
046-5029	Faulk House (Current), Gay School (Historic), House, 7443 West Blackwater Road (Function/Location)	7443 Blackwater Road West - Alt Route 603	Isle Of Wight (County)
047-5246	Brick Bat School (Historic), Church/School, 3743 Brick Bat Road (Function/Location), Jerusalem Baptist Church (Historic), Pinewoods (Historic)	3743 Brick Bat Road - Alt Route 613	James City (County)
048-5007	Ralph Bunche School (Current)	10139 James Madison Parkway	King George (County)
049-5042	New Mount Zion Church (Current Name)	3110 Rose Mount Road - Alt Route 633	King & Queen (County)
051-5042	Lancaster County School Board Office (Current), Mount Jean School (Historic)	2330 Irvington Road - Alt Route 200	Lancaster (County)
053-0605-0003	Bull Run School (former) (Historic), House, 24015 New Mountain Road (Function/Location)	24015 New Mountain Road - Alt Route 631	Loudoun (County)
053-0845	Holmes Tenant House, 37706 Cooksville Rd (Descriptive), Lincoln "Colored" School (Historic)	37706 Cooksville Road	Loudoun (County)
053-0897	Ashburn African American School (Current Name), Ashburn Colored School (Historic), Ashburn Schoolhouse (Historic)	20635 Ashburn Road - Alt Route 641	Loudoun (County)
053-5086	New Zion Baptist Church (Current), Second Marble Quarry School (former) (Historic)	22282 Sam Fred Road	Loudoun (County)
053-5099-0006	Hamlin, Addie, House (Historic), St. Louis School (Historic)	35430 Hamlin School Lane	Loudoun (County)
053-5099-0010	Banneker School (Historic/Current), School, 35231 Snake Hill Road (Function/Location)	35231 Snake Hill Road	Loudoun (County)
053-5116-0014	Schoolhouse, 33910 Welbourne Road (Function/Location), Willisville School (Historic)	33910 Welbourne Road	Loudoun (County)
053-5176-0002	Brownsville School (Historic), Hamilton Colored School (Historic), House, 39306 East Colonial Highway (Function/Location)	39306 East Colonial Highway	Loudoun (County)
053-5206	Hillsboro "Colored" School House (Historic)	15425 Ashbury Church Road - Alt Route 718	Loudoun (County)
054-5479	Cuckoo Colored School (Historic), Cuckoo School (Current Name)	7133 Jefferson Highway - Alt Route 33	Louisa (County)
055-5056	Gill Hill School (Historic)	1603 County Line Road	Lunenburg (County)
055-5099	Plantersville School (Historic)	off Plantersville Road	Lunenburg (County)
055-5105	Unity School (Historic)	Craig Mill Road - Alt Route 637	Lunenburg (County)
055-5147	Oak Grove School, 127 Oak Grove Rd (Historic/Location)	127 Oak Grove Road	Lunenburg (County)
056-5062	Oak Park Colored School (Current Name)	3494 Elly Road	Madison (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
057-5564	Wayland Baptist Church (Current Name), Wharf Lane School (Historic)	215 Ridgefield Road - Alt Route 614	Mathews (County)
057-5567	Thomas Hunter Agricultural Training School (Historic), Thomas Hunter Middle School (Current Name)	347 Church Street - Alt Route 611	Mathews (County)
058-5127	Averett Graded School (Historic), Averett School and Wharton Memorial Baptist Church and Cemetery (NRHP Listing), Craddock Memorial Hall (Historic), Wharton Memorial Baptist Church and Cemetery (Current Name)	57 White House Road - Alt Route 735	Mecklenburg (County)
059-0051	Rappahannock High School (Historic), School, General Puller Highway (Function/Location)	General Puller Highway - Alt Route 33	Middlesex (County)
059-5124-0003	Antioch Baptist Church and Cemetery (Current Name), Antioch Elementary School (Historic), Church and Cemetery, 159 Oakes Landing Road (Function/Location), Saluda Graded School (Historic)	159 Oakes Landing Road - Alt Route 618	Middlesex (County)
060-0436	Elliston School (Historic)	Route 631	Montgomery (County)
062-0482	Arrington School (Historic)	28 Old Schoolhouse Lane, Phoenix Road - Alt Route 661	Nelson (County)
062-5034	Morris Farm, John (Historic), Wright Farm (Current)	2491 East Branch Loop	Nelson (County)
062-5230	Ryan Hall (Historic), Ryan Hall Elementary School (NRHP Listing), Ryan School (Current Name), Shipman Colored School (Historic), Sunshine School (Historic)	71-75 Braddock Lane - Alt Route 713	Nelson (County)
065-0426	Bridgetown Colored School (Historic)	Route 622	Northampton (County)
065-0440	Reedtown Colored School (Historic)	Bell Lane	Northampton (County)
065-5034	Abandoned School Building, 5013 Salt Works Road (Function/Location), Jamesville School (Current Name)	5013 Salt Works Road - Alt Route 615	Northampton (County)
066-0112	Holley Graded School (Historic)	U.S. Route 360	Northumberland (County)
068-0388	Hopewell Baptist Church (Current)	8560 Clifton Road - Alt Route 628	Orange (County)
068-0836	High Point School (Historic), Saint Marys Church (Current), Saint Marys School (Historic)	Route 644	Orange (County)
068-1017	Colored School No. 7 (Historic/Current), School, Tibbstown (Current)	Route 20	Orange (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
069-0194	Hamburg Colored School (Historic), Hamburg Regular School (Current Name), Old Hamburg Colored School (Historic)	Route 652	Page (County)
069-5036	Naked Creek School (Historic/Current)	2860 Fleeburg Road - Alt Route 603, Good Lane Road - Alt Route 609	Page (County)
071-5187	Hill Grove School (Historic/Current)	3580 Wards Road	Pittsylvania (County)
071-5820	Blairs Community Center (Current Name), Blairs Junior High School (Historic), Blairs Middle School (Historic), Southside High School (NRHP Listing)	200 Blairs Middle School Circle	Pittsylvania (County)
072-0157	Pocahontas High School (Historic), Pocahontas Landmark Center (Current Name), Pocahontas Middle School (Historic), Pocahontas School (Descriptive), Powhatan Colored High School (Historic)	4290 Anderson Highway - Alt Route 60	Powhatan (County)
072-0181	St. Francis de Sales (Current), St. Francis de Sales High School for Colored Girls (Historic)	3500 St. Emma Drive	Powhatan (County)
072-0277	Fine Creek Mills School (Historic)	2430 Robert E. Lee	Powhatan (County)
073-5063	Old Virso School (Historic), School, Virso Road (Function/Location)	Virso Road	Prince Edward (County)
073-5064	Worsham Elementary and High School (Historic), Worsham Elementary School (Historic), Worsham High School (NRHP Listing), Worsham School (Historic)	8832 Abilene Road	Prince Edward (County)
074-5077	Aalpha Forming Systems (Current), Disputanta Training School (Historic)	10200 County Drive - Alt Route 460	Prince George (County)
076-0021	4th Prince William County Courthouse (Historic), Brentsville Courthouse and Jail (NRHP Listing), Brentsville Courthouse Complex (Descriptive), Prince William County Courthouse, Brentsville (Historic)	12239 Bristow Road - Alt Route 619	Prince William (County)
076-0129	Waterfall (Historic)	16503 Jackson Highway Road	Prince William (County)
076-0141	Groveton School (Historic)	6706 Groveton Road	Prince William (County)
076-5175	Lucasville School (Historic/Current)	10516 Godwin Drive	Prince William (County)
079-5141	Havelock School (Historic), Stonewall School (Historic)	5374 Newland Road - Alt Route 624	Richmond (County)
080-0343	Dangerfield School (Historic)	8207 Starlight Lane	Roanoke (County)



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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
087-5320	Boykins School (Historic/Current), Rosenwald School at Boykins, Route 186 (Function/Location)	Route 186	Southampton (County)
087-5374	School, 18056 River Road (Function/Location), Sebrell School (African-American) (Historic), Sebrell Training School (Historic)	18056 River Road - Alt Route 647	Southampton (County)
087-5382	Mt. Olive School (Mars Hill) (Historic)	21126 Cary's Bridge Road	Southampton (County)
087-5393	Southampton Black School (Historic)	23116 Meherrin Road At Riverview High School	Southampton (County)
088-0242	John J. Wright Middle School (Historic/Current)	7565 Courthouse Road	Spotsylvania (County)
089-0247	H.H. Poole High School (Historic), H.H. Poole Junior High School (Historic), Stafford Training School (NRHP Listing), Stafford Vocational Annex (Historic), The Rowser Building (Education Center) (Current)	1739 Jefferson Davis Highway	Stafford (County)
090-5142	New Design School (Current Name), School, Hollybush Road (Function/Location)	Hollybush Road - Alt Route 618	Surry (County)
091-5027	Concord School (Historic/Current)	State Route 619	Sussex (County)
091-5223	Yale School (Current Name)	19225 Gilliam Road	Sussex (County)
096-0113	A.T. Johnson High School (Historic/Current), Armstead T. Johnson High School (NRHP Listing), Armstead Tasker Johnson Museum (Current)	18849 Kings Highway - Alt Route 3	Westmoreland (County)
096-5040	Monroe Hall School No. 6 (Historic)	Rte 205, James Monroe Highway	Westmoreland (County)
096-5048	Zacata School # 4 (Historic)	Zacata Road, Route 645	Westmoreland (County)
099-5264	James Weldon Johnson School (Historic), Yorktown Middle School (Current)	11201 George Washington Memorial Highway	York (County)
100-0133-0303	School, 721 Columbus Street North (Function/Location), St. Joseph's School (Current)	721 Columbus Street North	Alexandria (Ind. City)
101-5013	Bland High School (Historic), Town of Big Stone Gap Administrative Offices (Current Name)	505 5th Street East	Wise (County)
102-5021	Douglass School (Historic/Current)	711 Oakview Avenue	Bristol (Ind. City)
103-5053	Buena Vista Colored School (Historic/Current)	Aspen Avenue	Buena Vista (Ind. City)
104-5087	Carver Recreation Center (Historic), Jefferson High School (Historic/Current), Jefferson School African American Heritage Center (Current Name), Jefferson School and Carver Recreation Center (NRHP Listing)	201 Fourth Street NW	Charlottesville (Ind. City)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
104-5276-0064	Burley School (Historic), Jackson P. Burley High School (NRHP Listing), Jackson P. Burley Middle School (Current Name)	901 Rose Hill Drive	Charlottesville (Ind. City)
105-0170	African American School, 1011 Church Street (Historic/Location)	1011 Church Street	Alleghany (County)
105-0171	Clifton Forge Elementary East (Current), East Elementary (Historic), Jefferson School (NRHP Listing)	319 A Street	Alleghany (County)
107-5172-0016	Jeter-Watson Center, Covington Parks & Recreation (Current Name), Jeter-Watson School (Historic), Recreation Center (former school), 515 E. Pine St. (Function/Location), Watson School (Historic)	515 Pine Street East	Covington (Ind. City)
108-0180-0001	John M. Langston High School (Historic), Westmoreland High School (Historic), Westmoreland Middle School (Current)	540 Gay Street	Danville (Ind. City)
108-0180-0118	Westmoreland Elementary School (Historic)	540 Holbrook Street	Danville (Ind. City)
111-0009-0691	Walker-Grant School (Historic/Current)	201 Gunnery Road	Fredericksburg (Ind. City)
111-5006	Fredericksburg Colored School (Historic), Original Walker-Grant School (Historic), School, 200 Gunnery Road (Function/Location), Walker-Grant Cultural and Educational Center (Current)	601 Gunnery Road	Fredericksburg (Ind. City)
114-5298	Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled (Historic/Current), Virginia State School Historic District (Descriptive)	700 Shell Road	Hampton (Ind. City)
115-5035	Lucy F. Simms School (Historic/Current)	620 Simms Avenue	Harrisonburg (Ind. City)
117-5064	Lylburn Downing High School (Historic), Lylburn Downing Middle School (Current Name)	302 Diamond Street	Lexington (Ind. City)
118-0151	Dunbar High School (Historic), Dunbar Middle School (Current)	1200 Polk Street	Lynchburg (Ind. City)
118-5320	Armstrong Elementary School (Historic/Current)	1724 Monsview Place	Lynchburg (Ind. City)
118-5675	Dearington Elementary School for Innovation (Current Name), School, 1740 Caroline Street (Function/Location)	1740 Caroline Street	Lynchburg (Ind. City)
120-5003-0136	Albert Harris High School (Historic), Albert Harris Intermediate School (Current), School, 710 Smith Street (Function/Location)	710 Smith Street	Martinsville (Ind. City)
120-5092	Albert Harris Elementary School (Historic), Albert Harris School (Historic), Martinsville Redevelopment & Housing Authority (Current Name), West End School (Historic)	605 Fourth Street	Martinsville (Ind. City)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
121-5067	Central Grammar School (Historic), Walter Reed School (Historic/Current)	2410 Wickham Avenue, 24th Street	Newport News (Ind. City)
121-5622	Huntington High School (Historic), Huntington Middle School (Current Name)	3401 Orcutt Avenue	Newport News (Ind. City)
122-0024	Basilica of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception (Historic/Current), St. Mary's Catholic Church (Historic/Current), St. Mary's Church (NRHP Listing)	232 Chapel Street	Norfolk (Ind. City)
122-5818	Oakwood Elementary School (Historic), Oakwood School (Historic)	900 Asbury Drive	Norfolk (Ind. City)
123-5019	Peabody Building of the Peabody-Williams School (Historic)	Jones Street	Petersburg (Ind. City)
123-5476	Virginia Avenue School (Current Name)	1000 Diamond Street	Petersburg (Ind. City)
124-5173	Gas Station, 4408 West Norfolk Road (Function/Location), School, 4408 West Norfolk Road (Historic/Location)	4408 West Norfolk Road	Portsmouth (Ind. City)
125-0034	Calfee Community & Cultural Center (Current Name), Calfee Training School (NRHP Listing)	1 Corbin-Harmon Drive, 1 Magnox Drive, Main Street West	Pulaski (County)
127-0308	Fairmount House (Historic/Current), Fairmount School (NRHP Listing), School, 1501 North 21st Street (Function/Location)	1501 21st Street North	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0414	Governor's School (Current), Maggie L. Walker High School (NRHP Listing), Maggie Walker High School (Historic/Current)	1000 Lombardy Street North	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0424	Armstrong High School (Historic), Benjamin A. Graves Middle School (Historic), Booker T. Washington Elementary School (Historic), Leigh School, 21 East Leigh Street (Historic/Location), Richmond Trade Training Center School (Historic)	21 Leigh Street, East	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0427	Armstrong High School (Historic), Benjamin A. Graves Junior High School (Historic), Booker T. Washington Elementary School (Historic), Leigh School (Historic)	110 Leigh Street, West	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0428	Carver School (Historic), George Washington Carver Elementary School (Current Name), Moore School (Historic)	1110 Leigh Street West	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0433	Franklin (Swansboro) School (Historic/Current)	Midlothian Turnpike	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0439	Matthew Fontaine Maury School (Historic/Current)	1411 Bainbridge Street	Richmond (Ind. City)
127-0824	John B. Cary School (NRHP Listing), West End School (Historic), Winthrop Hall (Current Name)	2100 Idlewood Avenue	Richmond (Ind. City)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
127-0877	Baker Elementary School (Historic), Baker Public School (NRHP Listing), Katherine L. Johnson Building (Current Name), School, 100 West Baker Street (Function/Location)	100 Baker Street West	Richmond (Ind. City)
128-0043	Harrison Museum of African American Culture (Historic/Current), Harrison School (NRHP Listing)	523 Harrison Avenue	Roanoke (Ind. City)
128-6480	Booker T. Washington High School (Historic), Roanoke City Public Schools Administration (Current Name)	40 Douglass Avenue NW	Roanoke (Ind. City)
129-5172	G. W. Carver Elementary School (Current Name), George Washington Carver School (Historic), Roanoke County Consolidated High School for Negroes (Historic)	6 4th Street East - Alt Route 11 Alternate	Salem (Ind. City)
131-0111	Benefit School (Historic/Current), Cornland School (NRHP Listing), Pleasant Grove District School #4 (Historic)	2309 Benefit Road - Alt Route 8656, 5221 Glencoe Street	Chesapeake (Ind. City)
132-0024-0077	"Colored School" (Historic)	32 North Central Avenue	Staunton (Ind. City)
132-5011	Booker T. Washington Community Center (Current), Booker T. Washington High School For Coloreds (NRHP Listing), Booker T. Washington School High School for Coloreds (Historic)	1114 Johnson Street West	Staunton (Ind. City)
133-0154	Diamond Grove Baptist Church Fellowship Hall (Current), Sandy Bottom Elementary School (Historic)	6820 Crittenden Road	Suffolk (Ind. City)
133-5230	Hosanna Christian Church (Current), School and Dwelling, 179 Tynes Street (Historic/Location)	179 Tynes Street	Suffolk (Ind. City)
134-0399	Asbury United Methodist Church (Historic), Pleasant Ridge Elementary School (Historic), Pleasant Ridge School (Current Name), Pleasant Ridge School for Blacks (Historic/Current)	1392 Princess Anne Road	Virginia Beach (Ind. City)
134-5566	School, 411 Integrity Way (Function/Location), Seatack Elementary School (Historic), Virginia Beach Police Department's Training Academy (Current Name)	411 Integrity Way	Virginia Beach (Ind. City)
137-0075	Bruton Heights School (Historic/Current)	301 First Street	Williamsburg (Ind. City)
138-5002	Douglas Community Learning Center (Current Name), Douglas High School (Historic), Douglas School (NRHP Listing), Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart Elementary School (Historic), Winchester Intermediate School (Historic)	598 Kent Street North	Winchester (Ind. City)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
139-0025	Wytheville Training School (Historic/Current)	208 5th Street South	Wythe (County)
139-5218	School, 950 South 7th Street (Function/Location), Scott Memorial High School (Historic), Scott Memorial Middle School (Current Name)	950 7th Street South	Wythe (County)
141-5017	Bedford County Alternative Education Center (Descriptive), Bedford Educational Center (Historic), Bedford Science and Technology Center (Current Name), Susie G. Gibson High School (NRHP Listing), Susie G. Gibson Science and Technology Center (Historic)	600 Edmund Street	Bedford (County)
141-5019	Bedford County School Board Offices (Current Name), Bedford Training School (NRHP Listing), Bridge Street Elementary School (Historic), Bridge Street School (Historic)	310 Bridge Street South	Bedford (County)
144-0053	Farmville Elementary School (Historic/Current), Moton Museum (Current Name), Robert Russa Moton High School (NRHP Listing)	900 Griffin Boulevard, Main Street South	Prince Edward (County)
145-5012	Hayden High School (NRHP Listing), Hayden Junior High School (Historic)	610 Oak Street	Franklin (Ind. City)
153-5021	Louise Archer School (Current Name)	324 Nutley Street NW	Fairfax (County)
154-5008	Christiansburg Industrial Institute (Historic/Current), Edgar A. Long Building (Current Name), Edgar A. Long Building (NRHP Listing)	140 Scattergood Drive NW	Montgomery (County)
154-5035	Friends' Elementary School (Historic), MCPS Technology Center (Current Name)	1180 Franklin Street North - Alt Route 460	Montgomery (County)
157-5062	Franklin County Training School (Historic), Lee M. Waid School (Historic), School, 540 East Court Street (Function/Location)	540 East Court Street	Franklin (County)
160-5004	Mary Nottingham Smith Center for Cultural Enrichment (Current Name), Mary Nottingham Smith High School (Historic), Mary Nottingham Smith Middle School (Historic), School, 24577 Mary N. Smith Road (Function/Location)	24577 Mary N. Smith Road	Accomack (County)
166-5073-0024	Hanover County School Board, 200 Berkley Street (Function/Location), John M. Gandy High School (Historic)	200 Berkley Street	Hanover (County)
168-5026	Johnson-Williams Annex (Current)	305 Josephine Street	Clarke (County)
168-5027	Education Building, 303 Josephine Street (Function/Location), Johnson-Williams School (Current), Josephine City School (NRHP Listing)	303 Josephine Street	Clarke (County)

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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
214-0040-0040	Eastville Elementary School (Historic), School, 15500 block (even) James Circle (Function/Location)	15500 James Circle	Northampton (County)
219-0015-0150	Harris Hart School (Historic)	220 Newtown Road	Floyd (County)
230-5001-0148	Halifax Training School (Historic), Mary Bethune High School (Historic)	1050 Mary Bethune Street	Halifax (County)
253-0070	Douglass Community School (Current), Douglass High School (NRHP Listing), Frederick Douglass High School (Historic)	408 East Market Street	Loudoun (County)
253-5117	Douglass Elementary School (Historic), Leesburg Training School (Historic), Loudoun Colored Public School (Historic), Loudoun County Public Schools Instructional Materials Center (Historic), School, 20 Union Street, NW (Function/Location), Union Street School (NRHP Listing)	20 Union Street NW	Loudoun (County)
260-0128	House, 7883 Senseney Avenue (Function/Location), Senseney-Middletown Colored Elementary School (Historic)	7883 Senseney Avenue - Alt Route 1101	Frederick (County)
280-0002	Pembroke Black School (Current)	Cascade Drive	Giles (County)
281-0028	Appalachian African-American Cultural Center (Current Name), Pennington Gap Black School (Historic/Current)	265 Leona Street - Alt Route T-1102	Lee (County)
286-5003	Lyles Funeral Service (Current), Purcellville "Colored" School (Historic), Willing Workers Hall (Historic)	530 S. 20th Street	Loudoun (County)
286-5009	Carver School #3 (Historic), George Washington Carver School (Historic)	200 Willie Palmer Way East, 700 15th Street South	Loudoun (County)
300-5040	Isle of Wight County Training School (Historic), Smithfield Middle School (Historic), Westside Elementary School (Current), Westside High School (Historic)	800 Main Street	Isle of Wight (County)
301-5063	John Groom School (NRHP Listing), South Hill Negro Elementary School (Historic), South Hill Primary School (Historic)	1050 Plank Road	Mecklenburg (County)
302-0012-0117	Dunn family cemetery (Function/Location), Monument to Euell's Dead (Historic/Current), R. Pritcheltt grave (Function/Location), Shiloh Baptist Church (Historic/Current), Stanardsville Training Center (Historic/Location)	71 Shiloh Road	Greene (County)



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DHR ID	Property Name(s)	Address	Jurisdiction
325-0002-0293	Beverly Allen School (Historic), Colored Public School of West Point (Historic), School, 223 13th Street (Function/Location), West Point and Vicinity Cultural Center (Historic)	221 13th Street, 223 13th Street - Alt Route 1102	King William (County)
401-0032	African Church and School, 15611 Second Street (Historic/Location), Colored School House (Current), Second Street School (Historic/Current), The School Building (Historic)	15611 Second Street - Alt Route 662	Loudoun (County)

### Project Parameters and Limitations

This Multiple Property Document (MPD) and its associated survey data analysis focused on the Commonwealth of Virginia, as defined in Section G above. The primary objective of this MPD is to provide a historic context for evaluating sites within Virginia, and was accompanied by an analysis of the available survey data for African American public schools documented in VCRIS. Due to the large number of schools documented in VCRIS with an association with African American education, survey and research to identify additional associated resources was not undertaken as part of this project. Survey data analysis was limited to sites already recorded in VCRIS that were noted in some way as having an association, or possible association, with African American education in Virginia between c. 1870-c.1968. Once the list of sites with a noted association was pulled from VCRIS by DHR staff, resources on the list were reviewed to confirm their association, or possible association, with African American education during segregation. Resources that were constructed with Rosenwald Foundation funding, resources marked as demolished in VCRIS, resources that provided education for African American students only after c. 1968, or resources whose associations were unable to be determined based on the available information were removed from the list. Determinations of association were limited by the information available in VCRIS as of November 6, 2024, and many older VCRIS records did not include sufficient information to confirm or deny an association. Therefore, it is possible that resources that were removed from the list because their association was unable to be determined may be found in the future to have a confirmed association and may be eligible for listing under this MPD.

Research for the development of this historic context relied heavily on available online resources. However, future researchers should be cautioned that many records are not yet digitized and are often housed in local museums, libraries, historical societies, school boards, and other organizations. Important records about specific schools that may be nominated under this MPD are likely only available in physical form held by local repositories and the Library of Virginia in Richmond.

### Acknowledgements

In addition to the team of consultants listed as preparers of this form, the development of this MPD would not have been possible without the contributions of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and individual local historians Corazon Sandoval Foley (Pearson Colored School, Fairfax County), Katie Gibson (Beverly Allen Schools, King William County), Lewis Longenecker (Cumberland Middle School's African American School Buildings of Cumberland County Story Map), John Reynolds (Indian Knob School, Patrick County), and Tom Roberts (City of Buena Vista).

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## List of Abbreviations

CCC – Civilian Conservation Corps

DHR – Department of Historic Resources

HBCUs – Historically Black Colleges and Universities

MPD – Multiple Property Documentation Form

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

PWA – Public Works Administration

VSTA – Virginia State Teachers Association

VTa – Virginia Teachers Association

WPA – Works Progress Administration