

VLR Listed: 3/21/2024

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Clare Walker School District

Other names/site number: 059-5478

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

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## 2. Location

Street & number: 2836, 2911, 2889 General Puller Highway (SR 33)

City or town: Stormont State: VA County: Middlesex

Not For Publication:  N/A  Vicinity:  X

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## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A X B    C    D

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Signature of certifying official/Title:             | Date |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |      |

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In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

**Signature of commenting official:**

**Date**

**Title :**

**State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

#### **4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### **5. Classification**

##### **Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

##### **Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

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Object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 7            | 1               | buildings  |
| 8            | 4               | sites      |
| 1            | 3               | structures |
| 4            | 9               | objects    |
| 20           | 17              | Total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school  
EDUCATION: education-related  
  

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#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school  
GOVERNMENT: government office  
RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation  
TRANSPORTATION: road-related

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL REVIVAL: Georgian Revival

BUNGALOW/CRAFTSMAN: Craftsman

INTERNATIONAL

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD: weatherboard; BRICK; CONCRETE;  
OTHER: Dryvit

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and non-contributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

St. Clare Walker School Complex includes two historic Black school campuses along General Puller Highway (SR 33), east of Cooks Corner in Middlesex County. The northern campus, St. Clare Walker High School, and district namesake, served as a high school from 1939 through 1969 and a middle school through 1994, at which point the new St. Clare Walker Middle School in Locust Hill opened. The northern campus has subsequently served as offices and classrooms for the Middlesex County Department of Social Services. The building also houses the Middlesex County School Board offices, and the gymnasium serves as a recreational center for the county's youth. The northern campus includes a c. 1939 one-story, brick Colonial Revival main building with c. 1953 additions, along with a c. 1941 frame agricultural shop/cafeteria building, c. 1968 cinderblock bus maintenance shop, and a c. 1959 prefabricated metal classroom building. Additional resources on the 22.58-acre parcels that comprise the historic boundaries of the campus include multiple secondary objects and sites. Of the 19 resources in the north campus, ten are contributing and nine are non-contributing, as they postdate the period of significance.

The southern campus, formerly Rappahannock Central Elementary School, was active from 1962 through 2002. The one extant historic building has since stood vacant, the contributing c. 1962 "Cafetorium." Three of the original flat-roofed, brick-and-concrete modernist buildings and connecting breezeways were razed in 2012. In addition to the Cafetorium, only the non-contributing c. 1988 Katherine Kidd Building remains on site. The Cafetorium is a large, one-story modernist brick building of a concrete-encased steel frame with brick and cut stone veneer panels, large plate glass windows, and projecting eaves featuring pronounced concrete rafter

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ends. The interior includes a large kitchen, cafeteria, storage, bathroom, and scullery in the east and an open auditorium/dining hall in the west. A curved proscenium separates the spaces. The building is currently vacant. On the 9.923-acre site that comprised the historic school site, there are 18 resources in the southern campus, ten of which are contributing and eight that are non-contributing, as they postdate the period of significance or are lacking historic integrity.

The historic integrity of the combined sites ranges from fair to high. Of the buildings that remain, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship remains high. The main school building on the St. Clare Walker High School campus has had the most significant change to its exterior with the installation of Dryvit panels to most of its windows and primary entrance bay. The feeling of the north campus remains fairly high with its circulation patterns and most of its buildings intact; however, the south campus has lost most of its historic surrounding buildings and circulation patterns due to widespread demolition in 2012; however, the remaining Cafetorium building retains a high level of integrity related to its design, workmanship, materials, association, and location of the building itself. The location of the buildings has not changed.

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### **Narrative Description**

The historic St. Clare Walker School school complex comprises the northern campus, the St. Clare Walker High School, and southern campus, the Rappahanock Central Elementary School. The five parcel complex is located in Middlesex County, three miles south of the Town of Urbanna, three miles east of county seat, Saluda, and just northeast of Stormont. Both campuses were closely tied to the community of Cook's Corner to the west and residential areas along General Puller Highway to the east. Additionally, remnants of several mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century Black communities lie in forested tracts to the southeast, some of which include the post-Emancipation communities of Doolittle, King's Neck, and Lady's Bridge. These areas are just east of Cook's Corner, the center of Black commercial life in Middlesex County during the mid-20th century.

The 32.5-acre district includes the north and south campuses. The 22.58-acre North Campus parcels comprise 19 total resources including ten contributing resources and nine non-contributing resources. The 9.923-acre South Campus parcels comprise 18 total resources including ten contributing resources and eight non-contributing resources.

In addition to encompassing buildings, structures, and objects, the campuses contain multiple sites, including former farmstead sites. The St. Clare Walker High School's west gravel lot covers the site of one farm dwelling and on the Rappahanock Central Elementary School grounds, a second house site is projected between the Cafetorium and the Middlesex County Animal Shelter dog kennels. Artifacts from this occupation are mingled with remains of the Rappahannock Central Elementary buildings, demolished in 2012. Both are included in archaeological site 44MX0092.

### **St. Clare Walker High School**

In 1939, St. Clare Walker High School replaced a c. 1921 central-type, frame Rosenwald school (Langston Training School, later known as Middlesex Training School) built in the Syringa

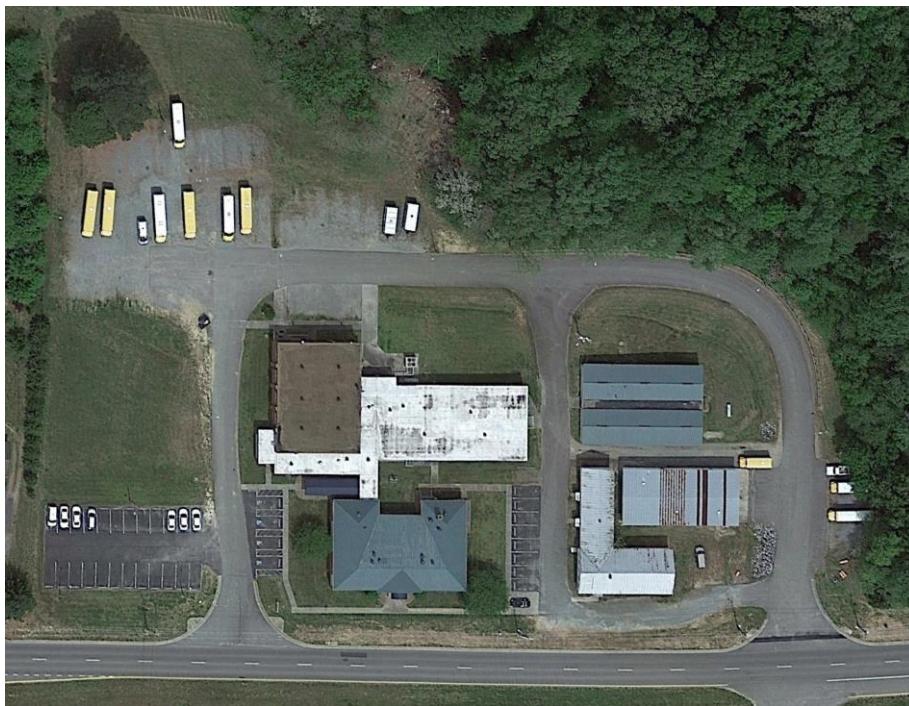
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vicinity. The c. 1939 school served African American students of Middlesex and surrounding Virginia counties from its opening until integration in 1969. Five historic campus buildings and thirteen secondary resources stand in a compact formation on the north side of SR 33, approximately one-third of a mile east of the intersection of SR 227, SR 641, and SR 33. This intersection is Cook's Corner. Asphalt driveways surround the campus, dividing it into thirds. There are three entrances off SR 33, with the driveway ends forming a loop across the rear (see Figure 1).



*Fig. 1. Aerial view of St. Clare Walker School landscape. NW at the top of the image.*

The westernmost third of the site includes a two-row, 60'x120' asphalt parking lot in the southwest with a lawn to the north. A gravel bus lot (the former basketball court) and an open field (the former baseball field) sit north of the parking lot. Large pine trees mark the baseball field entrance. The middle section includes the c. 1939 Colonial Revival brick school building to the south with the c. 1953 gymnasium and classroom additions to the north. In the eastern third, the c. 1941 industrial frame Agricultural Shop Building faces SR 33 to the south. The c. 1968 cinderblock Bus Shop stands north of the Agricultural Shop, in the ell formed by the latter's c. 1949 cafeteria addition. Immediately across a gravel alley to the north is the prefabricated c. 1959 classroom/cafeteria known as "the tin building." East of the easternmost entrance, a small park serves as trailhead of the c. 2022 Heritage Trail, which loops one half of a mile through the woods to the north, crossing small wooden bridges and passing old well pipes, the footing of a small pump house, and a dump of cafeteria-related cans and bottles.

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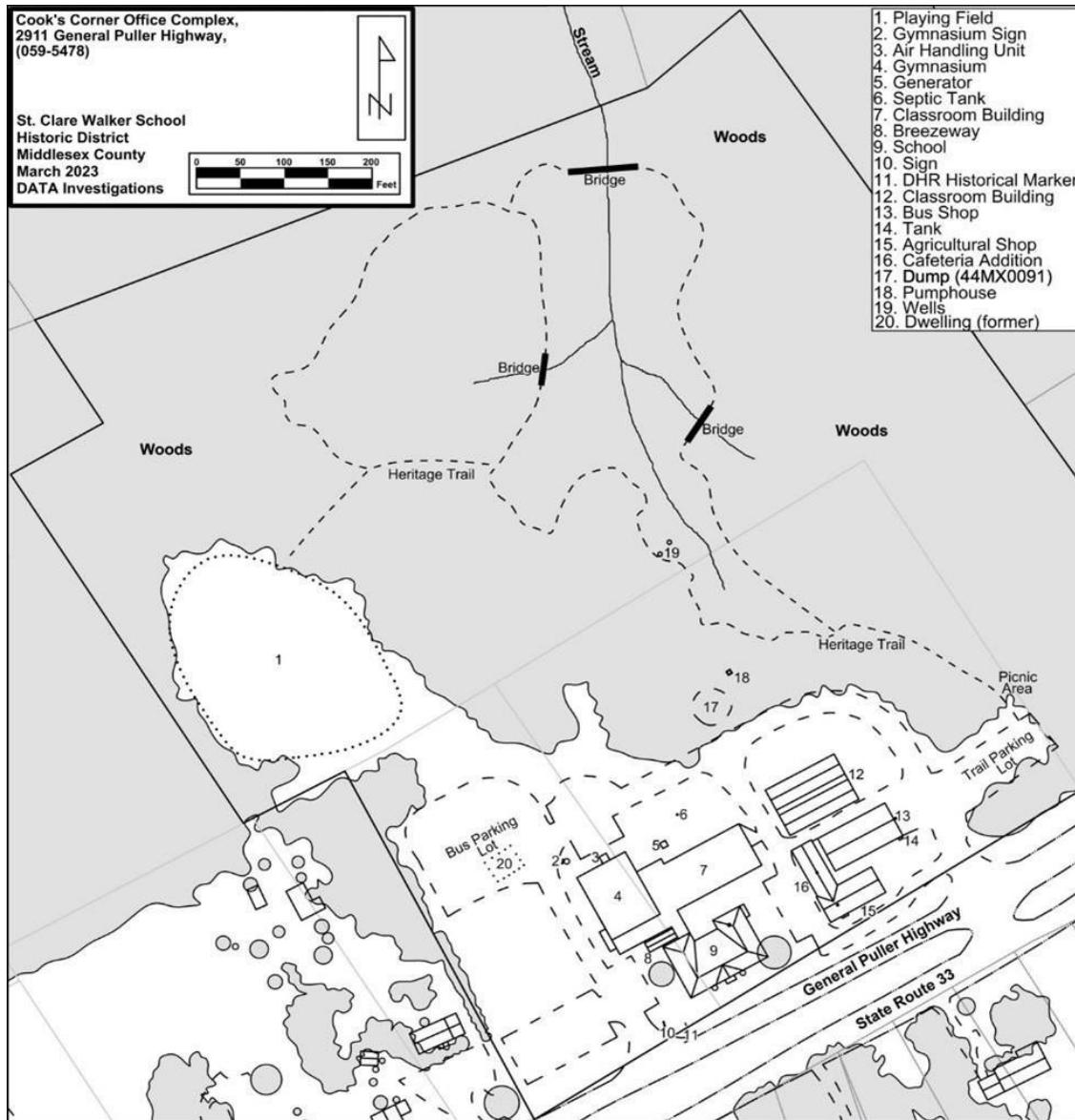


Fig. 2: St. Clare Walker School Site Plan (see plan for location numbers).

**Components of the St. Clare Walker School campus, as shown in Figure 2:**  
*Primary School Building, c. 1938-39 (Contributing)*

The one-story, U-shaped, hip-roofed Colonial Revival style building is constructed of brick laid in a modified common bond of two courses separated by a course of Flemish bond, accented by glazed headers. It rests on a continuous brick foundation of the same bond pattern, with a soldier brick belt course. All wall corners are accented by brick quoins extending to the base of the belt course. The roof is of green standing seam metal with a plain box cornice and fascia interrupted by aluminum gutters. A stretcher bond brick chimney rises from the inner slope of the northeast wing.

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A projecting front entrance bay features an open pediment, three-part box cornice with crown molding at the partial returns, central double-door entrance with covered stoop, and walls covered by thin Dryvit paneling. A Colonial Revival style door surround with a simple frieze and pediment can be seen in historic photos, but it now appears to be covered by Dryvit and a simple awning supported by metal rods. The Colonial Revival style is reflected in the symmetrical façade with its projecting central entrance flanked by wide banks of 6/6 wood sash windows and singular 6/6 wood sash windows now covered by Dryvit panels. The sections of banked windows on either side of the entrance bay are covered by plain, stucco-effect Dryvit panels. Paneling covers the original entrance and sashes topped by soldier bricks and keystones, which are in unknown condition.

The southwest and northeast elevations have the same exterior treatment as the façade with the belt course, brick bond pattern, plain box cornice, and corner quoins. The two sides are identical in layout and fenestration with banks of five 6/6 and paired 3/1 windows encased in Dryvit with the exception of a ground level utility room extending from the northeast elevation. The utility room bears its own Dryvit panel, hiding a window of unknown size and form. A steel door fills most of its northwest end. Crawlspace vents on the northeast have been bricked in, while the southeast and southwest vents remain open, one under each of the banked sash windows.

The 1939 core forms a U, with the central bay section facing northwest into a courtyard flanked by the classroom wings. The northeast arm of the U-shaped layout bears an entrance with double-leaf, single-light steel doors reached via a flight of five brick-and-concrete steps and a concrete porch, flanked by tubular steel railings. The central bay retains its windows in a single, triple, single arrangement but the sashes have been replaced by plate glass. The northwest arm has been incorporated into the enclosed breezeway leading to the gymnasium to the northeast and connected classroom addition to the north. The double door now leads down an interior ramp.

The interior details of St. Clare Walker School's primary building are obscured by renovations including drop ceilings, partitions and drywall. From the main entrance, the vestibule is flanked by administrative offices with a room and secretary's office/counter on the right and facing an inset flat arch that may be a sealed side entrance to the auditorium beyond. Halls right and left of the arch follow the bends of the U, serving offices and classrooms, leading on the left to the current auditorium entrance. The auditorium southwest wall has been pushed back, taking in about half of what had been a common area. From here, former exterior doors lead down a ramp through the breezeway. The breezeway turns left to the gymnasium and right into a central hall serving the large addition's classrooms. There is little notable interior trim, but renovations may have covered many surviving details. The dozens of large windows are hidden behind drywall.

**Breezeway, Gymnasium, and Classroom Additions, c. 1952-1953 (Contributing)**

The flat-roofed, enclosed breezeway extends from the northwest wing of the main school building to reach the gymnasium and classroom additions. The one-story connector is laid in

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stretcher bond. On the northwest elevation, the walls are covered in Dryvit and many of its original 3/1 metal awning windows covered in Dryvit panels. The windows are arranged in two pairs of paired and four single four-light horizontal casements with lower awning windows. The northeast elevation retains its brick wall veneer with one bank of windows covered by Dryvit and a pair of plate glass replacement windows. The north end of the breezeway projects between the classroom building and gymnasium, with an exit door between the generator on the northwest and the side-entrance of the gym. An open arm of the breezeway on the northwest elevation projects toward the parking area and is roofed with asphalt shingles. It leads into the southwest entrance between the 1939 school and 1953 Gymnasium.

The c. 1953 additions to the St. Clare Walker School consist of a single-story, rectangular brick classroom wing, oriented east-to-west, and a two-story rectangular rear gymnasium, oriented north-to-south, attached to the west wing of the main block via the short breezeway. The additions exhibit a pared down Modernist style with minimal exterior ornamentation commonly employed in educational and institutional architecture of the period. Brickwork is stretcher bond, except for two-course common bond along the bottom of the classroom wing. Flat asphalt roofs cover both the classroom wing and gymnasium.

The gymnasium includes five pairs of evenly spaced four light awning casement windows on the second story of the north and south elevations and no windows on the northwest and northeast elevations. There is a brick, one-story bathroom addition off the south end of the southwest with two casement windows, now hidden by a Dryvit panel. The northwest exterior entrance to the gym is via single-light double-leaf metal doors and a low cement ramp flanked by tubular steel railings. The entrance is protected by a nearly flat metal shed roof. As on the rear of the main school and Agricultural Shop buildings, triangular wooden brackets support the roof over the entrance doors.

The interior of the gymnasium reaches two full stories in height with exposed, painted steel framing interlaced with recent duct work and lights. Opposing bands of clerestory windows light the tiled floor and a bank of original wooden folding bleachers that line the southwest wall. The basketball backboard is original, mounted on a frame of welded steel pipe.

The classroom addition included classrooms, a library, science room, office, music room, and connected the gymnasium to the 1939 core. The large, one-story, flat-roofed, brick classroom building is laid in stretcher bond. Its original four-light metal casement windows are enclosed behind Dryvit panels. Based on a 1968 bird's eye aerial (Fig. 3), the southeast elevation appears to have had an original fenestration pattern of alternating paired and triple banked window groups with six sets. The panel widths on the northwest elevation suggest a pattern of two sets of paired windows followed by four banks of triple windows.

The interior of the 1953 classroom addition is arranged along a southwest-to-northeast hallway. The rooms branch off in pairs from the hallway, each pair with their own small hallway and doors. Original finishes and architectural details are believed to be preserved behind 1990s-2000s renovations.

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Fig. 3. 1968 aerial photo shows St. Clare Walker School looking north. From left to right: the 1953 Gymnasium, 1939 School with 1953 classroom addition behind, 1959 prefabricated classrooms/cafeteria, 1949 frame Cafeteria/classroom addition, and 1941 frame Agricultural Shop.

#### Agricultural/Shop Building, c. 1941 (Contributing)

The St. Clare Walker School's Agricultural Shop building was in use from 1941 to 1994, with later classroom use through at least May 2007, as suggested by a test schedule on one wall. The frame, weatherboard, one-story classroom building rests on a brick foundation of a header row separating two stretcher rows, over a poured concrete base. The building measures six bays in width. Exterior details include quarter-round molded corner boards and rounded, exposed rafter tails. The classroom building is topped by a side-gabled, standing-seam metal roof with a small gable overhang marking the entrance. The overhang is supported by triangular, Craftsman style brackets akin to those employed on many vernacular and Rosenwald schools.

The main entrance is composed of a single wood panel door with a simple frame. The entry is reached via two concrete steps with a board railing. The façade is relatively unadorned with slightly projecting eaves clad underneath in bead board and 9/6 and 12/8 double-hung wood sash windows that have been boarded over. The asymmetrical fenestration includes a single and two pairs of 9/6 wood sash windows east of the entrance, the latter two pair are the large 12/8 windows of the shop room that have been boarded over. At the corner beyond the last of these, is a paneled wood door with cement stoop. A single, corbeled, interior slope brick chimney rises from the south near the ridge, east of the entrance. The weatherboarded west elevation includes

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an evenly spaced set of five 9/6 sash wood windows with a louvered wooden breeze vent in the gable. The east elevation features fenestration of three pairs of three 12/6 wood sash windows flanking a large garage bay with a paneled wood overhead door with a single 12/6 wood sash window on either side of the garage door. The north elevation is lit by 12/8 and 9/6 sash wood windows in an arrangement of two sets of paired 12/8 wood sash windows followed by a single 9/6 wood sash window, all with the lower sash boarded up. The first two sets are windows into the large shop room, the last is in a small workroom.

A c. 1949 one-story frame classroom/cafeteria addition extends from the rear of the school, with its west elevation in line with that of the shop building. The addition displays weatherboard cladding and a gabled, standing-seam metal roof. It is set on a stretcher bond brick foundation and features two side entrance doors. Other details include a central interior corbeled brick chimney, overhanging eaves, rounded, exposed rafter tails, and boarded up 9/6 wood sash windows in a triple block arrangement interspersed by two entrances. The entrances contain doors of five horizontal panels with original hardware set in simple frames. They are topped by shed overhangs of standing seam metal supported by triangular wooden brackets in the Craftsman style. They are accessed by concrete steps, three for the northwestern door to the cafeteria, two for the middle classroom. The east elevation of the rear ell abuts a narrow alley at the rear of the cinder block shop. It features evenly spaced 9/6 wood sash windows in a triple block configuration. The block nearest the 1941 core has been boarded up. The narrow alley between the Agricultural Shop building and the 1968 Shop Building is shaded and has drip lines filled with rubble including molded “Oxford” bricks. The alley preserves access for maintenance and serves as a lightwell. The addition’s north elevation is windowless, being the wall of the cafeteria’s wash closet and pantry. There is a small crawl space access panel in the right end of the foundation.

The c. 1941 building was constructed by students under the direction of skilled craftsmen. The building resembles a two-room Rosenwald school design. January of 1945, the school board was requested to wire the building. The eastern room was converted to house shop classes by 1968 school year.



*Figs. 4, 5, 6. Stick brackets on the front stoop of the c. 1941 Agricultural Shop and c. 1953 Gymnasium.*

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The Agricultural Shop is divided into two formal classrooms, two offices, a cafeteria, a large vocational workshop, a pantry, and numerous closets. The original layout is unclear but appears to have had classrooms arranged east to west. The southern classroom has had its south corner partitioned into a low office with drop ceiling. The wall between this classroom and the shop includes, from northwest to southeast, two closets, a period built-in bookcase, and the public entrance to the maintenance shop office and bathroom. The closet interiors are largely bare frame, open to the attic. The northeastern two-thirds of the original shop building were converted very early after construction into a vocational training space, with the wall paneling and wood floor eliminated, bringing the floor in this section down several feet to a concrete slab. The western corner of the shop includes a small workroom with sink and storage. The south corner contains the office of the later bus maintenance shop and bathroom. They are reached via wooden steps from the shop or through a door off the Agricultural classroom.

The agricultural (southern) classroom, like the northern classroom and cafeteria, features vertical beaded wainscoting and chair rail, with plasterboard upper walls, sash windows, and the outline of a long blackboard along the northwest wall. The northeast, 1940s-era wall includes the same wide tongue-and-groove wainscoting as located in the bathroom. Several doors access unfinished closets. Between them is a built-in bookshelf with a cupboard below. The cupboard doors appear reused and may date to the late-19th-early-20th century. Together, the closets and bookshelf enclose the original brick chimney stack. The core classroom includes pendant "schoolhouse" milk glass lights on chains. The northern addition dates to the late-1940s and began as one long room with a central brick stove flue but was later partitioned at the chimney. As a result, construction details are mirrored on either side of the partition, including Streamline Moderne fluorescent light fixtures hung from plaster boarded ceilings.

The door from the agricultural classroom was a later addition, cut through the ghost lines of two blackboards, one on each side of the wall. Likewise, there was no access to the cafeteria from this room after the partition was created, although someone has since created a hole in the wall to the left of the chimney. The northern room of the addition wing, the cafeteria, includes a compact kitchen space with a small washroom/utility closet beyond. The long, shallow closet bears beaded wainscoting and chair rail, and includes a water heater on the southwest wall, a deep porcelain sink along the northwest wall, and plank shelving on the northeast walls. Beyond the closet, the beaded wainscoting to the right of the closet's paneled wooden door bears the outline of an absent serving counter. The larger end of the L-shaped pantry projects into the room from the northeast. Its pine shelves retain labels for canned and dry goods, including those for "pudding", "tomatoes", and "beans". The ca.10-x-10-foot kitchen/serving area is demarcated by the edges of historic linoleum rugs, several layers thick. Beneath tile and floral patterns, original red and black Art Deco linoleum remains in place. A triple sink with backsplash and pipe legs is centered under the trio of large windows on the southwest wall. A gas valve indicates that a stove/oven once stood between the sink and closet.

The attic space is original, retaining its open balloon framing. Prominent bracing makes it of limited use for storage. A section of the 1941 northwest roof slope remains, enclosed by the

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cafeteria addition. The attic space opens onto the shop area to the northeast. School bus seats and other materials are stored in the rafters over the office and workroom. The office exterior is paneled in full-height vertical beadboard sheathing and the interior with 1970s-80s pressed board paneling. The bathroom is wainscoted in 3-inch tongue-and-groove boards with plaster above. The shop workroom is paneled in full-height vertical beadboard sheathing on the exterior with horizontal beadboard and shiplap, wide below, narrow above, inside. Exposed framing in the large shop reveals the back of diagonal sub-cladding that underlies the exterior weatherboard. The shop space features hand-painted signage for outlet voltages, room usage, including the "office", and tool boards with hand-painted silhouettes on the north and south walls. Similar painted panels are (re)used in the closet behind the office. There is also a scattering of period graffiti, notably in the closets. Green enamel industrial pendant lights hang from the tall open rafters.

**"Tin Building," c. 1959 (Contributing)**

The two front-gable, metal shed buildings north of the Bus Shop were erected at St. Clare Walker School in 1959 to serve as temporary classrooms. They were joined side-to-side by a flat-roofed hall, rendering a single structure with an M-shaped roof. It held approximately six classrooms for 5th, 6th, and 7th grade African American students of the county. The prefabricated halves are steel-framed, and aluminum clad with roofs of standing seam metal. The combined building rests on continuous cinderblock foundations. Three 24-light casement windows line the south elevation, two on the north, and three single-hung aluminum windows on the west of the linked building and three long, low vents pierce each roof ridge. A low cement ramp leads to the inset entrance in the west end of the hall.

Metal cladding in the central hallway is untreated, and simple metal doors provide entry to the rooms on either side of the hall. The condition of the rooms varies, with those on the southeast retaining tile floors, painted walls, and drop ceilings, with representative examples of Modernist light fixtures, likely original. Rooms on the northwest have no ceilings, with prefabricated metal framing visible. An unfinished partition between two rooms has been infilled with simple wood framing, though it may have once had an operable accordion wall. A relatively intact restroom also remains. The building is currently used largely for county office storage space, making access difficult.

**"Shop Building" or "Bus Shop," c. 1968 (Contributing)**

Plans for the building were submitted in 1967 and it was under construction by students in 1968. The one-story, flat front-gable, cinderblock bus maintenance shop building is roofed with metal panels. There is a broad concrete ramp to two large roll-up garage doors in the east. Each door has a rudimentary 'window' of small rectangular cutouts. The doors are separated by an offset cinderblock stove chimney. There are two steel access doors in the otherwise solid north wall. The south elevation is lit by three ten-light metal casement windows with brick header sills. A fuel oil tank rests on mortared block piers against the east end of the southeast wall. The interior was not accessed during the visit.

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## Sites

### House site [projected], c. 19<sup>th</sup> century, destroyed 1937-1947 (Contributing)

The southwest third of the St. Clare Walker School campus was formerly the site of a farmhouse and a deep, narrow field. The field was partly repurposed as the school's baseball field, the balance left to grow into woods. The house appears in the 1917 and 1937 aerials, occupying a .6-acre square of mature trees. The site boundary is equated by the current gravel bus lot. In 1947's aerial, the lot was overgrown, and the house was gone. The projected house site has not been confirmed. No related artifacts were noted during the architectural survey visit. The only confirmed site north of the highway is the school dumping ground (44MX0091).

### Playing Field/ Baseball Field, c. 1940s-1960s+ [Site] (Contributing)

The baseball field, northwest of the St. Clare Walker High School, historically lacked amenities such as bleachers, concessions, and dugouts. The field was likely in use from the late 1940s to 1969 and then again in the 1990s to as late as 1994. Prior to the construction of the school, this site was part of an existing agricultural field associated with the farmhouse that stood on the site of the present bus lot. The house parcel and field appear overgrown in the 1947 aerial photograph; thus, activities were likely confined to the immediate school yard in the first decade of the school's existence.

### Dump, c. 1960s (Contributing)

An approximately 200-square-foot dump lies at the edge of the woods, 140 feet NNW of the northeast corner of the 1953 addition. Most of the material appears to date to the 1960s and 1970s and includes coffee and food tins and colorless jugs and jars. The earliest pieces seen in a cursory examination are an embossed (pre-1958) Coca-Cola bottle and a metal heater or small furnace cabinet.

### Foundation, mid-late-20<sup>th</sup> century (Non-contributing)

A 5-x-4.5-foot, 4.5-inch-thick poured concrete foundation lies 120 feet NNW of the northeast corner of the 1953 addition. The foundation could be the base of a pump house reported by Wayne Jessie, Sr., Middlesex County Board of Supervisors Chairman.<sup>1</sup> It lies 120 feet NNW of the northeast corner of the 1953 addition.

## Objects

### Tank, ca. 1968 (Contributing)

An oil tank sits on mortared brick piers south of the western corner of the Bus Shop.

### Well, mid-late-20th century (Non-contributing)

One of two defunct late-20th-century wells situated ca. 500 feet north of St. Clare Walker School. It is marked by a concrete culvert section measuring 3.5 feet in diameter. The uncapped culvert stands east of the Heritage Trail above the unnamed creek, 256 feet NNW of the northeast corner of the classroom building/ "tin building". It bears a thick, cast concrete cap with two iron loops.

<sup>1</sup> Add source of the BOS member's recollection

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Well, mid-late-20th century (Non-contributing)

The second of two wells is situated ca. 500 feet north of St. Clare Walker School. It is marked by a concrete culvert section measuring 3.5 feet in diameter and is on the base of the northeast slope leading down a ravine. It has no cap but is filled in.

Generator, pre-1994 (Non-contributing)

The 8-x-8-foot backup generator stands northeast of the utility rooms at the rear of the 1953 classroom addition, near the gym. Enclosed by a 12-x-25-foot chain link fence, it is mounted on a cement pad. A shed or other structure covered this area until at least 1994. It measured approximately 25-x-30-feet and bore a gable roof.

Gymnasium Sign, c. 2002 (Non-contributing)

The gymnasium sign stands northwest of the northwest corner of the gym by the main entrance. It stands on two square posts in a triangle of grass between sidewalks and the curve of the driveway. The Tom Parker Memorial Gymnasium name dates to the Middlesex Department of Social Services (1994-present).

Sign, ca. 2002 (Non-contributing)

This wooden sign is mounted between two square posts northwest of the historical marker north of the entrance. The sign is carved in router-carved lettering and painted. Announcing the school's current role, it reads: "Cook's Corner/Office Complex/Middlesex County."

DHR Historical Marker OC-46, 2018 (Non-contributing)

A Department of Historic Resources Historic Highway Marker stands north of the west-bound school entrance from General Puller Highway. It stands 20 feet south of the southwest corner of the 1939 building. It was dedicated on April 24, 2018, and reads as follows:

"OC 46/ST. CLARE WALKER/HIGH SCHOOL/African American residents of Middlesex County established the Langston Training School (later the Middlesex Training School) in 1917 to serve elementary and high school students. The Rosenwald Fund supported construction of a new building ca. 1921. John Henry St. Clare Walker, principal for two decades, expanded the high school curriculum from two to four years despite inadequate funding. The high school moved here in 1939. Later renamed in Walker's honor, it was among the first rural high schools for black students to be accredited by the Virginia Department of Education. Students garnered awards for academics, athletics, and the arts. The county's school system was desegregated in 1969."

Air Handling Unit HVAC, post-2021 (Non-contributing)

Northeast of the main/bus lot entrance to the gym, a large HVAC tower rises two stories, feeding into the recently installed gym ductwork. Around the corner on the northeast side is a secondary entrance, likewise equipped with doors, awning, steps, and railings.

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Septic Tank, unknown date (Non-contributing)

This septic cover is in the grass about 30 feet northeast of the generator, north of the 1953 addition.

**Rappahannock Central Elementary School**

The campus of Rappahannock Central Elementary School, initially named the St. Clare Walker Elementary School, is situated on the south side of SR 33, southwest of the St. Clare Walker High School campus. Rappahannock Central Elementary School's campus spreads out south of General Puller Highway (SR 33), built on a lower grade than the road. Only one building, the "Cafetorium," remains from the 1962-1969 period of significance (construction through Integration). A few mature trees partially screen the Cafetorium building from the road, with another group shading the lawn to its south. Other than these, the parcel is clear, with grass covering the sites of the three large classroom and office buildings and four smaller structures that were demolished in 2012. The 1988 Katherine F. Kidd Building stands 145 feet southeast and the 2005 County Animal Shelter 245 feet beyond. 225 feet to the south, a skate park utilizes the concrete slab of the school's former basketball court. A wooded area forms the eastern border.

The 1962 Modernist Cafetorium retains its reinforced concrete pier and stretcher bond brick panel construction. Bands of windows, a flat roof with pronounced overhanging eaves and breezeways all emphasize horizontality. South of the Cafetorium is a hydropneumatic tank and attached pump structure and beyond, sits the one-story, brick, H-form, double-front-gable Katherine Kidd building, c. 1988. Individual objects, including a flagpole and water fountain, also date to the 1962 construction of the school. There are eighteen resources on the property, including two buildings, four structures, four objects, and eight sites, of which eleven are considered "contributing" and seven are "non-contributing."

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Fig. 7. Aerial image of the Rappahannock Central Elementary campus. NW at top. Google, May 2021.



Fig. 8. 1997 aerial photograph showing the playground behind the Kidd Building, the dirt "track" in the rear field, as well as the trailers and black top on the right. (vintageaerial.com).

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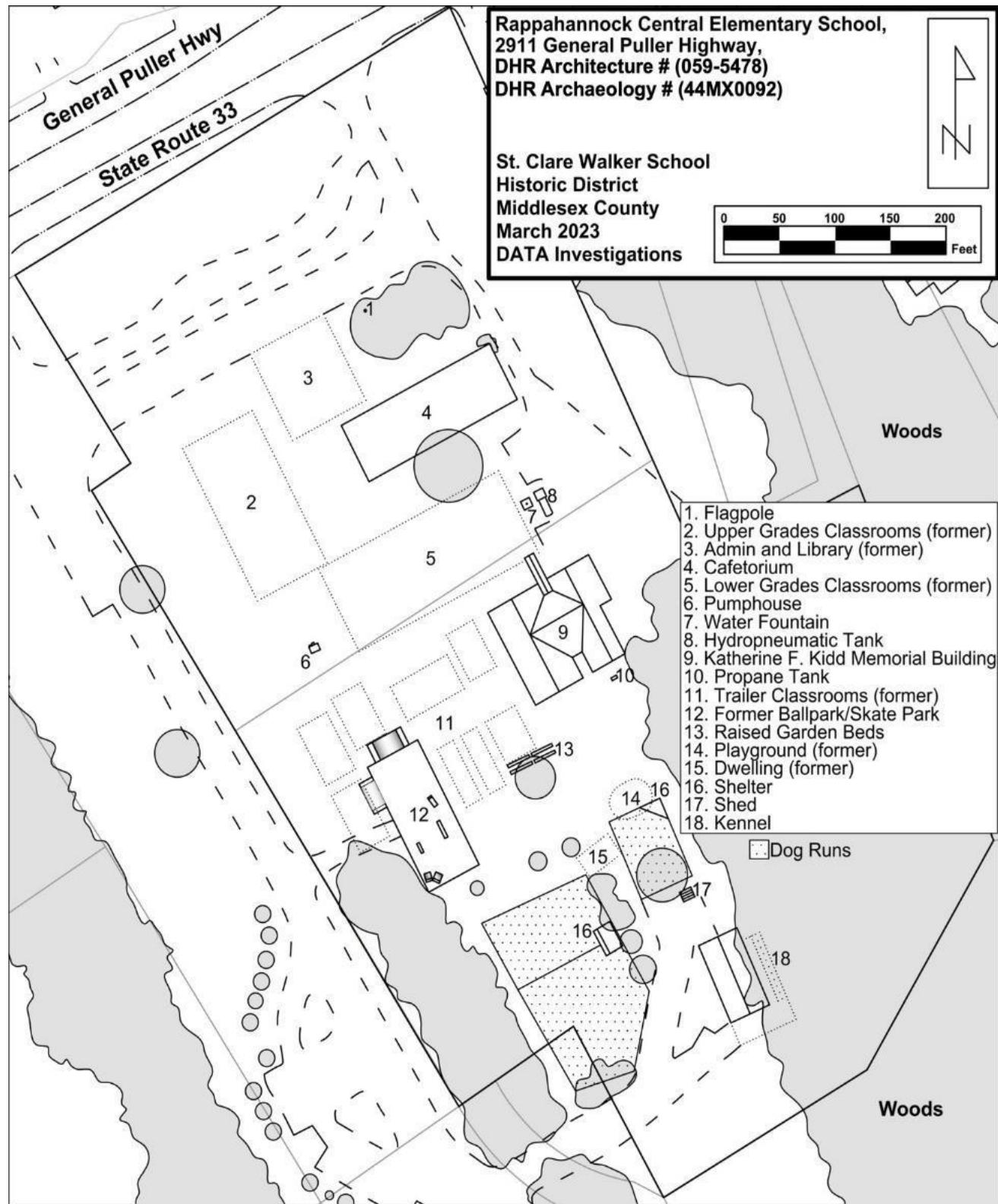


Fig. 9. 2023 map showing building names and locations. DATA Investigations.

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**Components of the Rappahannock Central Elementary Campus, as shown in Figure 8:**  
*Cafetorium, 1962 (Contributing)*

Rappahannock Central Elementary School's "Cafetorium" was built as a combined cafeteria-auditorium building. This one-story, flat-roofed, modernist concrete-and-brick school building is framed in concrete-cased beams, interspersed by stretcher bond brick, and roofed with asphalt. The projecting boxed eaves are disintegrating in the east, strands of the fiberglass soffit material trailing down. The roof has failed in several places, causing significant damage primarily over the past 10-15 years. The windows are plate glass and the doors steel.

The interior is divided into a common room (cafeteria and auditorium) in the west and kitchen in the east. Four small rooms line the west end - from south to north, a girls' bathroom, storage room, utility room, and boys' bathroom. The girls' room, in pink tile, includes a sink and one enclosed stall; the boys', in blue tile, includes a sink and partitioned stall. Each bathroom includes an Oasis water fountain near the door. To the east, the northeast corner is a large pantry, entered from a short hall. The storage room is lined with open shelving. The utility room includes a wash stall, water heater, and stacked washer/dryer. Rooms southeast of the hall include a utility room and washroom, accessible from the exterior, and a bathroom with an anteroom. Two additional rooms line the southeast side of the large kitchen space: a storage room and a dish-washing room. These retain open wooden shelving and stainless counters with an industrial Hobart dishwasher, respectively.

The kitchen has a prominent overhead vent hood and marks on the floor identify the ordering line and food counters running along the southeast wall of the kitchen. Two paired doors link the kitchen and common room, with the curved auditorium stage forming a narrow hall in the east of the former.

*Katherine F. Kidd Building, 1988 (Non-contributing)*

The large brick building was completed in 1988 and dedicated on May 28, 1993 to 27-year Rappahannock Central Elementary School secretary Katherine F. Kidd. It housed a multipurpose room for Physical Education/music, library, smaller classrooms, and bathrooms. The library was moved here from the administration building.

The one-story, double front-gable, H-form building is laid in stretcher-bond brick and roofed in asphalt shingles. The entrance is in the narrow cross of the H, from the northwest. The approach walkway is covered by a gabled breezeway. The windows are 1/1 aluminum fixed casement with rusticated concrete bricks below, mirroring the under-window treatment in the Cafetorium. The form of the building mirrors that of the Tin Building on the St. Clare Walker campus to the north, providing a subtle visual link.

**Structures**

*Pumphouse, ca. 1962 (Contributing)*

The 5-x-8-foot rectangular, cinder block pumphouse with flat concrete roof and square concrete access cap sits 150 feet southwest of the Cafetorium. The Pumphouse served upper and lower grade classroom buildings.

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*Kennel, ca. 2005 (Non-contributing)*

The 36-x-72-foot gable-roof kennel is roofed with asphalt shingles and stands 250 feet southeast of the Katherine F. Kidd building. It was constructed between 2003 and 2005, based on Google Earth aerials.

*Shelters, ca. 2015, 2020 (Non-contributing)*

One 18-x-24-foot, saltbox-roof shelter is covered in metal panels. It stands on the eastern side of two paddocks/dog runs of .14 and .2 acres respectively, 60 feet west of the Kennel (18). A second, shed-roofed shelter stands 100 feet northeast, at the northeast corner of another fenced enclosure. The shelters date to 2015 and 2020, based on Google Earth aerials.

*Shed, ca. 2020 (Non-contributing)*

The approximately 10-x-12-foot frame shed stands 40 feet northwest of the Kennel (18). It postdates 2020.<sup>2</sup>

## Objects

*Water Fountain, ca./pre-1962 (Contributing)*

The cast-iron water fountain with tapered, octagonal base stands immediately southwest of the hydropneumatic tank. The painted base is topped by an octagonal aluminum bowl. The casting is marked on the foot pedal “Made by The Murdock Mfg. & Supply Co. Cincinnati, O.”<sup>3</sup> The Murdock M-1776 fountain was designed in the early 1930s, much used in federal works projects of the New Deal Era and is still in production today.

*Flagpole, ca. 1962 (Contributing)*

The steel flagpole is topped with a horizontal disc and large ball form. It stands 80 feet northwest of the center of the northwest wall of the Cafetorium. It is currently unused.

*Hydropneumatic Tank, ca. 1962 (Contributing)*

The 7-x-12-foot cinderblock water pressurization building bears a flat roof and draws on a 15-foot long, 6-foot diameter steel water tank attached at the south. It stands 80 feet south of the eastern corner of the Cafetorium.

*Propane Tank, post-2020 (Non-contributing)*

The propane tank stands southeast of the Katherine F. Kidd Building. The tank is not present in the 2020 Google Earth aerial image.

## Sites

*Dwelling [site], 19<sup>th</sup> Century-1940s (Contributing)*

<sup>2</sup> Based on Google Earth aerials

<sup>3</sup> The 1930s-designed water fountain is still in production as “Murdock Model M-30.” Murdock states on their website that the company was involved in many TVA, CCC, and WPA projects during the Great Depression. The fountain was possibly moved from St. Clare Walker High School, a WPA-supported project. (<https://www.murdockmfg.com/anti-freezing-drinking-fountain-m-30>).

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On the site, the 1917 and 1937 aerial photographs show a frame, side-gable dwelling with narrow, central rear/southeast addition. It stood at the northwest corner of a one-acre square parcel with mature trees. The house lot was surrounded by fields and reached via a 600-foot driveway from SR 33. By the 1947 aerial photo, the house was gone, but trees remained, as well as possibly a barn and other outbuildings. The farmstead is included as a component in the larger archaeological site, including the Rappahannock Central Elementary campus, and its administration and classroom buildings.

*Classroom Building [site], 1962, demolished 2012 (Contributing)*

The classroom building stood between the Cafetorium and Katherine F. Kidd Building.

*Classroom Building [site] 1962, demolished 2012 (Contributing)*

The northwest-southeast classroom building stood west of the Cafetorium (4) and was the westernmost campus building.

*Administration and Library Building [site] 1962, demolished 2012 (Contributing)*

The building stood northwest of the Flagpole and Cafetorium and contained one classroom, teachers' lounge, library, principal's office, and a workroom.

*Former Ball Court/Skate Park [site], 1962/2021 (Contributing)*

The 50-x-120-foot asphalt basketball court served students as a general recreation court. It lies 225 feet south of the southwest corner of the Cafetorium and 115 feet southwest of the Katherine F. Kidd Building. The pavement now serves as a county skate park with ramps northeast and northwest. The ramps were added between 2020 and 2021, based on Google Earth aerials.

*Modular Buildings [site], 1970s/1990s (Contributing)*

Eight modular classroom trailers or offices clustered around the north, east and west sides of the Basketball Court (now Skate Park). The buildings were composed of short units attached side to side or free-standing. They were likely wood framed with aluminum sheathing and had low gable roofs. The northeast and southwest classrooms were added between 1994 and 2004.<sup>4</sup> All were demolished, along with the other larger campus buildings, in 2012.

*Playground [Site] ca. 2005 (Non-contributing)*

The school playground lay some 60 feet southeast of the Katherine F. Kidd Building. It included metal swings and a slide in the east, with wooden climbing platforms in the west. It is absent from Google Earth aerials after 2005.

*Raised Garden Beds, ca. 2021 (Non-contributing)*

The garden beds lie 36 feet south of the Katherine F. Kidd Building. There are four 3-x-20-foot beds in two rows angled southwest to northeast. They were added between 2020 and 2021.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on aerial maps

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### **Integrity Analysis**

Integrity varies between the campuses. Together, they form a historic core of Black education in Middlesex County. The former St. Clare Walker High School campus, and specifically its Rosenwald-inspired Agricultural Shop building, retains a high degree of architectural integrity in design, layout, workmanship, and materials, including intact fenestration and modest Craftsman-style detailing. Additionally, the school buildings remain on their original parcels. The St. Clare Walker School campus is largely intact, with buildings and a wealth of viewsheds, spaces, and small details that resonate with those who attended school there.

The St. Clare Walker High School campus exhibits high integrity in design, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its setting and viewsheds reflect the natural evolution of a successful African American school as it expanded during the mid-20th century. The exterior of the 1939 brick school is minimally altered, with the exception of the replacement of some original window sash with plate glass and Dryvit paneling covering the majority of its large original windows and entrance bay. Intact, the Dryvit paneling impacts the feeling and material integrity of the building, but removing the panels would reveal the original fenestration. The 1939 St. Clare Walker High School is, recent reversible alterations aside, a good example of Colonial Revival academic architecture and a testament to the drive of the local community to provide the best possible environment for the education for its children.

The 1941 Agriculture Shop building is highly intact, including trim and fixtures that illustrate vernacular design and construction methods popularized by Rosenwald Fund architectural designs. The frame, 1941 Agricultural Building with its 1949 Cafeteria/Classroom ell preserves many elements characteristic of typical school construction of the period. Interior details are untouched and diverse. Electrical illumination includes “schoolhouse” lights, streamlined modern fluorescent fixtures and green enamel shop lights. The closets and pantry retain original shelving, all hand-built by students and community members with various notations for the storage of foodstuffs, tools, and equipment. Silhouette-painted tool boards are evocative of the Vocational courses that continued the tradition of “complete” education. Likewise, the cafeteria is a wonderfully preserved space with definable, linoleum-floored kitchen and serving area, surviving institutional triple sink, storage/washroom with original sink, and beaded-board pantry closet. Later interior changes, notably an office partition in the main Agricultural Classroom, a partition splitting the cafeteria room, and a paneled office leading into the Vocational/Maintenance Shop are superficial and reversible. Some may have been introduced during the period of significance and could be retained to illustrate the changing needs of the school. The Agricultural Shop is virtually intact in its final, 1949 form, and remains on its original site on the east side of the historic St. Clare Walker High School campus.

The St. Clare Walker Agricultural Shop building has suffered deterioration over a period of ca. 15 years. Boarded and sometimes shattered windows, broken plasterboard and dirt are the most apparent issues. The interior has been kept dry and the woodwork and flooring is sound. The wiring and plumbing do not appear to have any significant updates.

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The Rappahannock Central Elementary campus retains a degree of the seven aspects of integrity, however, the campus was much diminished by the destruction of most of its historic campus buildings in 2012. Considering the campus, the feeling, association, setting, and design have been compromised since only one historic building remains; however, nearby historic objects and structures such as an original water fountain, flagpole, ball court and pumphouse preserve elements of the immediate historic landscape. The Cafetorium, however, retains interior and exterior material and design integrity and workmanship, and remains a good example of the Modernist style. It retains its original windows, exposed and unaltered. Bathrooms are intact with pink and blue tile and stalls and other fittings that reflect infrastructure based on gender norms of the time. Original equipment like Oasis water fountains, Hobart dishwasher, extensive hand-built shelving and the minimalist stage remain intact.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery

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E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

F. A commemorative property

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

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**Period of Significance**

1938-1969

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**Significant Dates**

1969

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Walker, John Henry St. Clare

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**Cultural Affiliation**

African American

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**Architect/Builder**

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The St. Clare Walker School Complex consists of an assemblage of resources associated with the history of the St. Clare Walker School as well as the broader history and development of African American education in Middlesex County from the first half of the 20th century through desegregation and the integration of public schools in 1969. During its first three decades, the high school's vocational and agricultural programs helped shape the campus landscape, often at the hands of students and staff who were directly involved in its construction. This pre-segregation curriculum followed the pattern set by Historic Black Colleges as developed by leaders, including Booker T. Washington, and later expanded across the southern states through the sustained efforts of the Black community, Black national organizations, and the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Construction of the St. Clare Walker High School began just after the end of the Rosenwald funding-era. This endeavor proved the value of earlier grass roots movements, as Middlesex County's Black community created a modern high school that would set hundreds of local children on paths to success. The complex was later adapted to add an elementary school campus to the south. Between 1962, when Rappahannock Central Elementary opened its doors, and 1969, when desegregation brought the closure of the St. Clare Walker High School, much changed; African American secondary education in Virginia faced nationwide shifts catalyzed by the Civil Rights Movement.

Collectively, the resources within the district trace a narrative from one of the earliest African American schools in the county – the Rosenwald-funded Middlesex Training School at Syringa – to an African American high school built largely through determined community activism and named for one of the community's most prominent educators, culminating with the integration of public education in Middlesex. The St. Clare Walker School Historic District is being considered at the local level of significance under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Education** and **Ethnic Heritage: African-American** with a period of significance of 1938 to 1969, beginning with the construction of the St. Clare Walker High School building and ending with the integration of public schools in Middlesex County, which led to the high school's closing. The complex is also significant under **Criterion B** for its association with prominent local educator and advocate **John Henry St. Clare Walker**, who spent most of his life dedicated to educating both African American and White students in Middlesex County.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources database, VCRIS, includes records for eleven historic Middlesex County buildings associated with education. Of these, only a few are small frame schools similar to the Agricultural Shop at St. Clare Walker School. These include one post-Emancipation one-room school for Black students, Antioch Elementary School, associated with Antioch Baptist, and one Rosenwald school, Shiloh Elementary School, associated with Union Shiloh Church. The addition of the St. Clare Walker School District will illustrate the 20th-century evolution of Black education in the county.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The St. Clare Walker School Complex, including the St. Clare Walker High School campus and the Rappahannock Central Elementary School campus, served the African American community in Middlesex County from 1938 through 1962. The c. 1938 St. Clare Walker High School stands as a result of a community effort to create better educational opportunities for local children during the Jim Crow era. The founding and operation of the school exemplify the local adaptation of successful cost and labor-sharing models. The implementation of these practices and management of the school was shepherded by John Henry St. Clare Walker. These buildings and landscapes were invested with all the resources the local community could muster in the effort to provide a brighter future for the next generation. The students who benefitted from the deep educational traditions reaching back through John Henry St. Clare Walker to the staff of Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Hampton University and Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee would go on to build America's Black middle class, providing role models for generations to come. These campuses preserve the formative landscape of new visions for African American education in Virginia.

Rappahannock Central Elementary, built in the modernist style in 1962, exemplifies the continued passion of the local Black community for education. Rappahannock Central Elementary's surviving Cafetorium, just southeast of St. Clare Walker School, contributes an important community space to the district. The building was the heart of the c. 1962 campus and bookends the period of segregated education for students in Middlesex County. The remainder of this campus reminds generations of African American students of the evolution of formal and equal education and the evolved buildings in which such teaching and learning took place.

**Criterion A: Education; Ethnic Heritage: African American - The Establishment of Public Education in Virginia**

The complex is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Education** and **Ethnic Heritage: African American** for its vital role in the advancement of the Black students of Middlesex County, Virginia. Through a rigorous program of academic and vocational training from 1939 to 1969, students at St. Clare Walker High School were prepared for careers in an evolving state and country. Elementary school students at both St. Clare Walker School (and later, high school) and Rappahannock Central Elementary School received a valuable foundation in an educational system unique to Middlesex County's African American community.

Black Virginians historically had an arduous path to publicly funded schooling and secondary education. Public education for White Virginians resulted from the establishment of the Literary Fund of 1810 and the Public School Act of 1829. It took an additional three decades, the Civil War, and Reconstruction for the consideration of education for African Americans. Prior to the Civil War, Virginia law ruled the education of enslaved and free Black persons illegal. While the Virginia Constitution of 1870 promised schooling regardless of race, gender, or income, and proposed future compulsory attendance, the lack of equal access stunted the progress of African

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American students for generations. Segregation based on “discouraging tension” and/or appeasement was in effect from the start, even under radical Republican leadership. Universal segregation of educational, institutional, and public spaces was legally sanctioned in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 under the banner of “separate but equal.” Black schools were routinely shorted on supplies and aid, hampered by a bureaucracy invested in keeping Black students from maturing to careers on par with those offered to White students. Black Virginians redoubled their efforts to create the best educational opportunities possible in the face of white privilege.

The situation was made clear with the ratification of the Virginia Constitution of 1902, which introduced measures focused on eliminating the Black vote.<sup>5</sup> In addition to introducing the poll tax to disenfranchise Black voters, the new constitution established legal segregation. In particular, Section 140 of the Constitution of 1902 stated that “White and colored children shall not be taught in the same school.”<sup>6</sup>

The stigma of institutionalized racism and systematic deprivation clung to Black Virginians throughout their lives. If they could not eliminate the stigma, Black educators were adamant that they would prepare their charges to fight it. Students were trained to excel beyond the handful of occupations in agriculture, menial labor, and the domestic service deemed acceptable by state and local school boards. Black leaders combined progressive models taught at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, like Hampton Institute, with programs such as the Rosenwald Fund and later, the Works Progress Administration, with passionate grassroots campaigns.<sup>7</sup> Public secondary education in Middlesex County became available for African Americans in September of 1916 with the opening of Langston Training School in Syringa. The evolution of that school led to the creation of the two schools in the St. Clare Walker School District. Although built later, they were the result of community partnership and grass roots efforts.

#### Antecedents: Langston Training School (Middlesex Training School) 1916

In 1920-21, the Rosenwald Fund supported the construction of an addition to the 1916 Langston Training School building. Five years later, the Fund helped finance a dedicated “Vocational Agriculture” building. These spaces formed the template for the later St. Clare Walker district school.

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<sup>5</sup> “Discrimination! Why that is exactly what we propose—to discriminate to the very extremity of permissible action under the limitations of the Federal Constitution with the view to the elimination of every Negro who can be gotten rid of, legally, without materially impairing the strength of the white electorate” -delegate and future senator Carter Glass

<sup>6</sup> (Calfee Training School nomination. OMB No. 10240018, Pulaski County, VA County and State)

<sup>7</sup> (Virginia Historical Society, Salvatore 2000:27)

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*Figs. 10 and 11. These are loosely as positioned at Syringa, VA. Undated. Fisk University, Rosenwald Collection.*  
Left: 1916 Langston/Middlesex Training/High School, predecessor of St. Clare Walker School (burned 1936);  
Right: 1925/26 Syringa Rosenwald Vocational Agriculture Building. Syringa Graded School from 1936 (burned 1962). Predecessor of Rappahannock Central Elementary.

Originally named Langston Training School for its first principal and Grafton Baptist Church Reverend Robert J. Langston, the Syringa school bore several names. Langston was a major proponent for the founding of his namesake school but left in the Spring of 1917 for another position. The name then changed to Middlesex High School/Middlesex Training School. There was a time in the early 1920s when all three were used interchangeably. The school also absorbed the students of the “old district school” that was at or near the site of the new high school building built c. 1916-1917.<sup>8</sup> Initially, the school only offered two years of high school curriculum, but later expanded to four years of high school courses with accreditation. Middlesex Training School offered a comprehensive academic and vocational education in the spirit of influential Black institutions and educators like Hampton University and George Washington Carver. The name Training School bore a stigma as Middlesex’s Black community was not allowed to use the words “Middlesex High School”. Through the efforts of its principal and his team of educators, the school joined the ranks of four-year secondary schools and earned full accreditation in 1932.<sup>9</sup> The name “Middlesex High School” was briefly current, ca. 1935, but eventually refused by the White school board.

The main school building burned in January of 1936. The Vocational Agriculture building escaped the fire and continued to operate with the elementary grades under the name of Syringa Graded School. After the 1936 fire, the high school relocated to the former Rappahannock High School building in Locust Hill. It is unknown if the Locust Hill building stood unused at the time. High school courses were offered in this building from the last half of the 1935-36 session through the end of the 1937-38 session. During this time, the need for a more permanent and up-to-date building was identified and lobbied for by the local African American population.

### **Middlesex Training School, 1939 (Future St. Clare Walker High School)**

A steering committee was formed and charged with the effort to purchase the land and plan for a new Middlesex Training School building. The Middlesex County Steering Committee consisted of John Henry St. Clare Walker, William Edward Robinson, Dr. Marcellus E. Toney, J. T.

<sup>8</sup> Middlesex County Deed Book 44:240

<sup>9</sup> Daily Press, Newport News, VA Wed. 27 Jan. 1960, p.8, col.3

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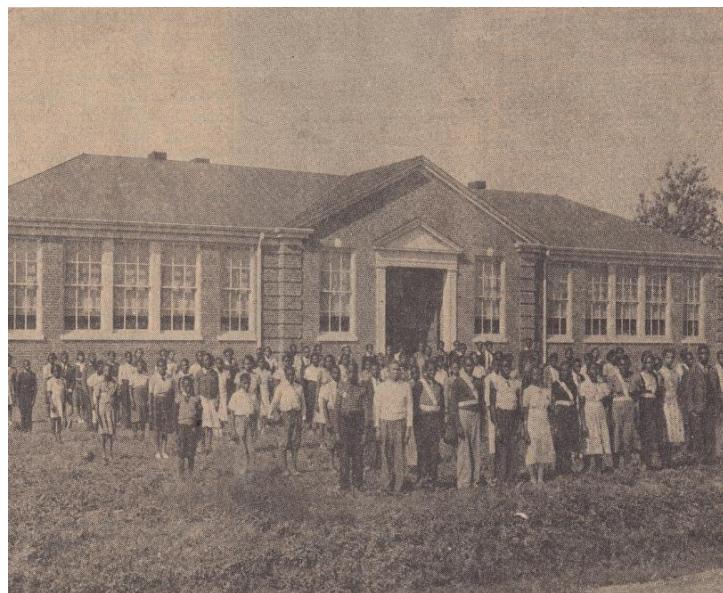
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Wood, J. A. Jones, W. H. Johnson, J. B. Johnson, James Spencer Taylor, Nestor Leetodd Holmes, Rev. James Edward Wright, Rev. Benjamin Harrison Gayles, and W. T. Thornton. The steering committee purchased land from the Rawley family in Cook's Corner, and for the sum of \$1250 conveyed to the Middlesex School Board "five or eight acres" of this property as the site for the new school in 1938.

That October, J. Eddie Callis of Mathews was awarded the contract of \$24,173 for a brick building including five classrooms and an auditorium.<sup>10</sup> The African American community was expected to contribute \$4,000, Middlesex County to contribute \$2,500, the Slater Fund of the Southern Federation for Negroes to contribute \$4,000, and the New Deal's Public Works Administration (PWA) to contribute 45% of the total cost.<sup>11</sup> Construction began soon thereafter and was finished in the summer of 1939. The school building opened for classes that September. St. Clare Walker High School bore the name "Middlesex Training School" for the first decade of its existence, a misleading appellation carried on from its predecessor in nearby Syringa, Virginia. True training schools were devoted to instruction in manual trades such as farming, domestic work, plumbing, carpentry, and masonry. They typically stopped short of the 12<sup>th</sup> year, thereby diminishing the currency of the diploma. The leaders of the original Middlesex Training School sought to create a veritable high school with a breadth of study that would meet or exceed that of the Whites-only schools that garnered the school board's attention.



*Fig. 12. Photo of the student body from the Southside Sentinel. May 1, 1969. This photo is in the tradition of similar photos begun by Booker T. Washington at his first pilot schools and served as an affirmation to the community in their efforts to create the best educational opportunity possible for their children.*

<sup>10</sup> Callis was contracted to build a model home economics shop and general shop instruction building at Mathews in January, 1939, *Portsmouth Star*, Jan. 20, 1939, p.13; *Daily Press*, Jan. 19, 1939, p.9.

<sup>11</sup> *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 27, 1939, p.4; *Free Lance Star*, September 15, 1939, p.2; "School Budget includes Addition to Middlesex negro high school," *Richmond News Leader*, Apr. 1, 1949, p.6.

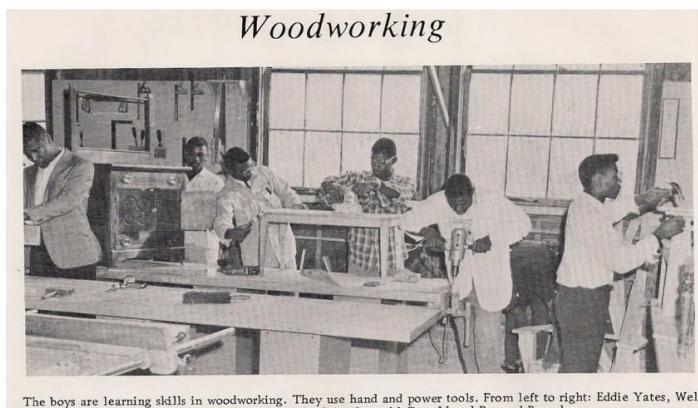
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By opening day, plans already existed for a frame building to supplement the main structure. Initially designed as a space for Home Economics, the second building's role quickly expanded to accommodate Home Economics and the Vocational Agriculture program. Fundraising continued into 1940 and by the spring of 1941, the building neared completion. All construction work was completed by the school's male students under the direction of skilled craftsmen. The campus remained at this size until an addition was built onto the rear of the frame building, c.1949-50.



Fig. 13. Agricultural Shop Building of 1941 with 1949 Cafeteria addition visible at left. Mid-1950s.



The boys are learning skills in woodworking. They use hand and power tools. From left to right: Eddie Yates, Wel-  
don Dandridge, Lewis Dandridge, Melvin Chamberlain, Larry McDonald and Bernard Beverley.



Figs 14 and 15. Image of woodworking students in Agricultural Shop and tool boards in place.

After ten years, the campus shed its inherited Middlesex Training School moniker and was renamed St. Clare Walker High School. Long-term educator and principal, John Henry St. Clare Walker had been instrumental in promoting Middlesex education and gaining the accreditation that signaled full high school status.<sup>12</sup> The school prided itself on universal training that would

<sup>12</sup> December 1949 Meeting Minutes, Middlesex County School Board

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open professional opportunities in a broad variety of disciplines and trades. Coursework included academic subjects such as literature, math, biology, chemistry, geography, civics, history, and art. Home economics and vocational training were diverse and could range from dressmaking to masonry to engine repair. Extracurricular activities including debate clubs and academic contests fostered a competitive spirit.

Campus life extended beyond the buildings. The school property hosted games and races; the field northwest of the school saw decades of baseball without bleachers or concession stands on site. The basketball court between the gravel bus lot and paved parking lot is known now only from the background of an old photo. The maypole, which figured prominently in the dance and pageantry of May Days of the 1940s and 50s, was never a permanent feature and its location can no longer be identified. The wooded areas and ravines throughout both campuses held networks of trails and paths, linking the school to neighborhood businesses and residences.

The campus expanded again during late 1952 and early 1953 with the construction of a gym and classroom wing. The new space was a “\$135,000 project built onto a \$30,000 building 14 years old” with “two more classrooms, a library, science room, office, music room and a gymnasium.” The contractor for the project was Edward Banks of Williamsburg. The article described the older, 1939 brick school as containing “four classrooms, a small library and auditorium” and noted “[a]lso on the grounds is a frame building which houses the cafeteria and an agriculture department.” The school’s water supply now came via a 700-foot artesian well; it was formerly pumped from a spring in the woods (potentially the surviving cement pumphouse foundation).<sup>13</sup>

#### Legal educational implications beyond 1950

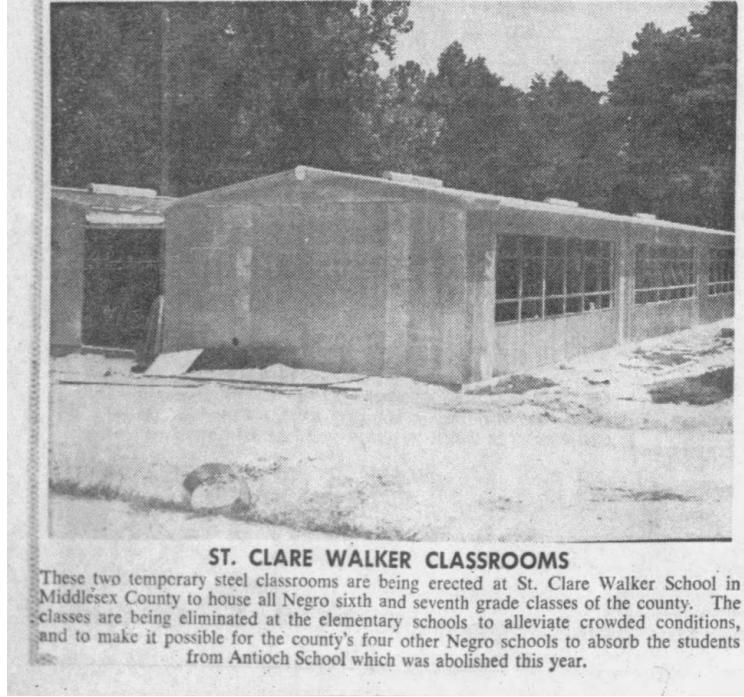
The landmark 1954 Brown vs. Education decision bore no immediate fruit in Middlesex County. Finding segregation in violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment, the court encouraged states to formulate a plan to integrate posthaste. With no further guidance or federal pressure, Virginia’s school districts entered the period of Massive Resistance. By 1959, consolidation of countywide elementary schools resulted in the building of a “temporary” prefabricated steel building to accommodate 5th, 6th, and 7th grade students. Such prefabricated structures answered the needs of schools across the country as they faced the postwar “Baby Boom”. Known familiarly as the “tin building” or the “chicken coop,” it served elementary students until the neighboring Rappahannock Central Elementary School opened in September of 1962. At that time, the building was available for use by the high school classes.

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<sup>13</sup> “Middlesex Accepts New High School,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, May 13, 1953, p.7.

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**ST. CLARE WALKER CLASSROOMS**

These two temporary steel classrooms are being erected at St. Clare Walker School in Middlesex County to house all Negro sixth and seventh grade classes of the county. The classes are being eliminated at the elementary schools to alleviate crowded conditions, and to make it possible for the county's four other Negro schools to absorb the students from Antioch School which was abolished this year.

Fig. 17. St. Clare Walker School, 1959 Classroom Building, view NE.

In 1963, the US District Court in Richmond ordered a period of "freedom of choice," during which parents could apply to send their children to White schools. The "Freedom of Choice" era began in the fall 1963 school term. In September, a small group of thirteen children boarded a bus at St. Clare Walker High School and rode to Middlesex High School, where they were met with a police line at the door, ostensibly due to bomb threats. The first day went smoothly, to believe Dr. Harold Felton of the school board.

Faye Lewis Beverly recalled her parents and those of the others not being allowed near the school and being told that if she stayed at Middlesex County High School, the students remaining at St. Clare Walker would consider her and the other twelve pupils to be "traitors." "I said we were not there to be liked; we were there to be educated." The advantages she looked forward to at the White school were supplies and more funding, as she stated: "there were no electric typewriters or electric sewing machines at St. Clare Walker. I just felt I'd get a better education." Meanwhile, the thirteen Black students were not allowed to ride the White bus, and were instead ferried from St. Clare Walker High School daily. Students were also barred from extracurricular activities for the first year of their enrollment. Beverly recalled "there were teachers who were very supportive of us at Middlesex, while there were others who were not that supportive. No one ever tried to seriously harm me. I never feared for my life. But some students bumped us, tried to trip us up, put tacks in our seats and called us niggers a lot. There were just as many that treated us nice. It was a difficult time for all of us, white and black. We knew the 13 of us could not take on all of you, so we were careful," the last statement was said with a laugh.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> (speaking to reporter Larry S. Chowning, *Southside Sentinel*, Volume 94, Number 12:2, 23 March 1989).

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The number of transfer students gradually increased, though at great cost. Parents lost money in legal fees, and many lost their jobs when employers found out that their children attended White schools.<sup>15</sup> Seymour Scott, father of Sandra Scott, one of the original thirteen to transfer schools, was interviewed by Patricia Satterfield for the *Southside Sentinel*. In Satterfield's article, "almost everyone interviewed in this story agreed with Scott. There was more pain over integration in the community than in the schools themselves."<sup>16</sup> Juanita Johnson Tabb, leader of the local integration movement and the first parent to enroll her two children at Middlesex High School in 1963, recounted how a car pulled up to her house as she was waiting for her boys to come home one afternoon in the mid-1960s, and the passengers threw something at the house: "we were scared to death because what we found outside was a bottle filled up with gasoline and a rag that was partially burned. Thank God that homemade bomb didn't work but that was the meanest thing anyone ever did to us."<sup>17</sup> Other instances of less overt threatening behavior and name calling were also recalled.<sup>18</sup>

In 1967, school board members began to investigate the possibility of erecting a new addition at St. Clare Walker High School as part of a building trades class offered under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The building was built by students and finished in the summer of 1968.<sup>19</sup> Reported as "recently completed" in October of 1968. The building was used for classes on brick masonry, electrical wiring, woodworking, and sheet metal fabrication. Architecturally, it is a straightforward, cinder block, Commercial-style structure, open in plan and with large windows and garage bay utilizing durable, economical materials. There is no overt ornament and the building is shielded from the road from the more traditional facade of the weatherboarded Agricultural Shop. It is a typical example of a small commercial garage of the mid-late 20th century. Students took an active role in the creation of their campus environment, outfitting spaces and even constructing an entire building under guidance, the "Shop Building", later Bus Maintenance Shop Building. Vocational education associated with the 1967-1968 cinderblock Shop Building's construction included electrical wiring, woodworking, and sheet metal fabrication. Once complete, its large, open interior provided space for students to hone further skills. Historic photos show students at work, laying rows of individual chimney stacks (Fig.17). By providing exposure to and training in wide range of disciplines and trades, the school provided a solid footing for students' professional opportunities.

In 1969, fifteen years after *Brown v. Board of Education* and 106 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, integration took full effect in Middlesex County and St. Clare Walker High School closed. The students moved to the former Whites-only Middlesex High School and the campus at Cooks Corner went on to serve as the middle school for another twenty-five years. After Desegregation and the loss of the high school grades, part of the vibrancy that characterized the St. Clare Walker High School campus was lost. Eventually, the vocational training spaces were

<sup>15</sup> (Patricia Satterfield, TMP interview, April 20, 2023; Seymour Scott, father of original 13's Sandra Scott, *Southside Sentinel*, Volume 94, Number 12:2, 23 March 1989).

<sup>16</sup> (ibid. 12:14).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Carstella West, 19 April 2023, p. 19

<sup>18</sup> (ibid., p. 19).

<sup>19</sup> Daily Press 11 Feb. 1968, p.54 "Building Trades Students Learn While Erecting Shop"; 10 Oct. 1968 p.49

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used for garage and workshop space to maintain the county's fleet of school buses. Those areas of campus previously accessible to at least the male students were now off limits. The school's conversion to house the offices of the Middlesex County Department of Social Services spelled the end of the traditions begun under John Henry St. Clare Walker.

## BRICK MASONS



This year the brick masons are proud of a new shop building constructed by them during last summer. Many of the brick masons have gained enough experience to go out on their own and work for a salary.

Pictured here are: Bernard South, Arthur Smith, Robert Jorden, Franklin Lockley, Reuben Amy, and James Ack-  
ies. Instructor: Mr. John Chandler.

*Fig. 18. Students in their brick masonry course, 1968. The Wolverine Yearbook, 1968, p.43.*

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## SKILLS IN WOODWORKING, SHEETMETAL AND PAINTING



Pictured are: William Baul, repainting a toy vehicle; Robert Sutherlin, working with wood; and Rodney Williams in sheetmetal.

Fig. 19. Woodworking, Metalwork, and Painting class in the new cinderblock shop, 1968. *Wolverine* 1968, p.44

## ELECTRICAL WIRING CLASS



The Electrical Wiring class is a part of our Industrial Program at St. Clare Walker. Under the supervision of Mr. Edward Smith, the class has grown in number and experience.

Fig 20. Electrical wiring class in the new cinderblock shop, 1968. *Wolverine* 1968, p.44.

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The high school closed in June of 1969 due to the full integration of Middlesex County Public Schools. At the same site, St. Clare Walker Middle School was opened that September and operated as such until June of 1994. Both the brick 1939 school and 1941 Agricultural Shop were used for classes. The Agricultural Shop saw more limited use into the early 2000s. The intermittent use ensured at least basic maintenance for both structures until relatively recently.

### **Rappahannock Central Elementary 1962**

Rappahannock Central Elementary School was built in 1962 as part of a consolidation effort in Middlesex County to provide state of the art elementary education. The elementary school located at Cook's Corner was built to accommodate African American students within the county's segregated school system. The school sought to provide spaces and amenities equal to those provided to the county's white elementary students in keeping with the equalization policy promoted a decade earlier by the NAACP. The campus included four classroom buildings with a total of eighteen classrooms, a combination cafeteria and auditorium or "Cafetorium", and an administrative suite with library.

The development of the campus architecture at St. Clare Walker School and neighboring Rappahannock Central Elementary is remarkable for its swiftness and adaptability. In the space of thirteen years, construction shifted from substantial brick Colonial Revival to a rural Rosenwald school form, to Modernist brick construction with references to the International style. It was further refined in Rappahannock Central Elementary a decade later. The style became one of the most recognizable aesthetics for public education in the second half of the twentieth century. The modern designs drew on International Style architecture that joined the mainstream in the post-World War II-era after decades of development in the hands of architects like Philip Johnson, Mies van der Rohe, le Corbusier, and Richrd Neutra.

For the Middlesex County community to make such a rapid turn away from traditional architecture suggests a diversity of influences. It is tempting to view this evolution in the context of St. Clare Walker and his training in the Hampton-Tuskegee tradition of Booker T. Washington and Samuel Armstrong. The pre-1953 campus of the Middlesex Training School/St. Clare Walker High School includes both a formal brick structure with classical symmetry and order and what is essentially a two-teacher Rosenwald-type school building built to house vocational and manual arts training in the Hampton-Tuskegee tradition.

The brick school, like other Colonial Revival buildings, drew on architecture that developed in the plantation economy and landscapes of control. It provided a feeling of permanence and stability with a promise of the power of effective leadership. At the same time, its adherence to architectural tradition insulated the staff and students from local Whites wary of Black education efforts in any form. The addition of the somewhat anachronistic Agricultural Shop building combined the flexibility of traditional wood-framed architecture with an emphasis on manual training in the Hampton-Tuskegee tradition. The smaller wooden building visibly tied the school's mission to the familiar Rosenwald system and emphasized the difference between a life in the manual arts and a life in leadership. That one must first work with the hands to understand how to lead effectively was a theme shared with many educational and social philosophies in the

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19th-and-early-20th centuries. Some, like the Arts & Crafts movement, used the strategy to reform or escape industrialization. By the early 1900s, the Hampton-Tuskegee system was coming under attack from many in the urban Black community for overemphasizing vocational training. This division continued through the Rosenwald era of World War II. The St. Clare Walker School revealed the shift in the educational tradition exemplified by John Henry St. Clare Walker. While vocational training remained part of the program, the heart of the school curriculum was increasingly academic. The introduction of modern architecture of the International School further broke with the old tradition. The new gym and classrooms of 1953 became the stars of the campus while the Agricultural Shop was limited to basic maintenance. When the new shop building was constructed in 1968, it was tucked away behind the wooden building.

The construction of the fully modern Rappahannock Central Elementary across the highway in 1962 represented a campus purpose-built for academic classes alone. Its design brought the experience of Black Middlesex County students ever closer in line with their White counterparts amid the expanding Civil Rights era. Like St. Clare Walker High School and the previous Middlesex Training Academy, Rappahannock Central Elementary represented a significant leap from a traditional frame school, in this case Syringa Graded School, to a wholly different architectural style and concept. Unlike the old, frame 'central' school model, Rappahannock Central Elementary's landscape and viewsheds emphasized the linear and horizontal, leading the viewer outward. In this sense it was similar to many new office parks and factories of the era and followed in the spirit of American suburban expansion of the 1950s and 60s as communities dispersed. The students benefited from better supplies, with more, larger, and well-lit rooms, the graded blocks linked by breezeways providing shade and fresh air, and ample space for outdoor sports in the fields to the south. Rappahannock Central Elementary's outdoor environment was, by comparison, very structured, with a formal playground, track, basketball courts, and sports fields south of the school buildings. It reflected attempts to put the Black elementary school experience on par with its white counterparts.

The Rappahannock Central "Cafetorium" is the last remnant of this modern, forward-looking campus. Given its proximity and relationship to the St. Clare Walker High School, as well as its historic connection to the student body of the Syringa Graded School, which it absorbed, and by extension, the Middlesex Training School, the Rappahannock Central Elementary's Cafetorium is an important contributor to the architectural landmarks of African American public education in Middlesex County.

Middlesex County Public Schools fully integrated at the start of the 1969-1970 school year. The desegregation plan offered grades 1-5 at Rappahannock Central Elementary, grades 6-7 at St. Clare Walker Middle, and grades 8-12 at Middlesex High School. Trailers were added throughout the 1970's to provide more classroom space. The school continued to grow in the 1980s with a new mixed-use building. The Katherine F. Kidd Memorial Building (non-contributing) was built on campus c. 1988-89 and housed a multipurpose room for physical education/music, library, smaller classrooms, and bathrooms. Rappahannock Central Elementary School closed in June 2002 as the county completed a new consolidated elementary school in Locust Hill. Most of the RCE campus was demolished in 2012 as roof repairs and other

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maintenance became financially prohibitive. Today, only the “Cafetorium”, pumphouse and water tank, water fountain, basketball court, and flagpole remain from the original campus

The St. Clare Walker School District displays multiple generations of Black educational architecture. The phases represent three different approaches to teaching, but, like the buildings, which upon closer inspection share small details, the tradition of education at the two campuses emphasizes that it is inextricably linked to the community at-large.



*Fig. 21. Interior of the 1962 Cafetorium during a presentation, view east. The cafeteria kitchen, storerooms and washroom lie behind the stage.*

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**Criterion B, Association with a Significant Person: John Henry St. Clare Walker**

The district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion B** for its association with local educator **John Henry St. Clare Walker**. Walker was instrumental in the development of Black education in Middlesex County through his work at the Langston Training School and as supporter and first principal of Middlesex Training School, which would later bear his name. The St. Clare Walker High School is the site most associated with John Henry St. Clare Walker and his extensive career as an educator, advocate, and administrator in Middlesex County from c. 1920 through his retirement in 1959. St. Clare Walker's persistence led to the development of a competitive, accredited curriculum in rural Middlesex County during the Jim Crow era, a legacy that continued through 1969 with the construction of the Rappahannock Central Elementary School.

Born near Locust Hill, Middlesex County, Virginia (elsewhere identified as “near the mill pond at Haleys”) in 1884, John Henry St. Clare was one of fifteen children of William and Jane Walker. At the time, there were no schools for Black children, but he learned to read at the home of a local White family who identified his desire for learning early on.<sup>20</sup> His academic capabilities were highlighted when he was chosen to give an impromptu speech at his one-room schoolhouse.<sup>21</sup> In 1903, he enlisted in the army, fought in the Spanish-American War, and was discharged as a sergeant in 1907. He attended both Howard University and Hampton Institute, studying and completing coursework throughout his professional career. St. Clare Walker then briefly taught at a one-room school on Maryland’s Eastern Shore before being called back to Virginia to teach in a one-room school in Merry Point, Lancaster County. After serving one term in Lancaster County, he then traveled south in 1918, across the Rappahannock River to Middlesex County to help found and teach in a school on the land of the First Baptist Church at Amburg, a hamlet in the Deltaville vicinity. He and community members helped build the four-room Dunbar Graded School, where he would teach Black students by day and traveled to teach White students in their homes by night. St. Clare Walker became a fixture in the county, continuing to tutor at Dunbar for twenty years. The Dunbar school no longer stands; however, it marked the beginning of recognized education for Black children in Middlesex County.<sup>22</sup>

In 1920, St. Clare Walker began his tenure at Middlesex Training School, teaching science and mathematics.<sup>23</sup> During this time, he applied to public and private funds to supplement his pay when the school’s budget ran short. Despite a full-time career in Middlesex County, St. Clare Walker rode the bus every Saturday to Hampton Institute to complete his education, earning a B.A. in 1935 and an M.A. in 1950, both in Education.<sup>24</sup> St. Clare Walker turned to Hampton Institute throughout his career, often turning to the school for books and other learning materials in his mission to educate Black community members in Middlesex County.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <https://scw.mcps.k12.va.us/page/about-scw/>

<sup>21</sup> Holmes in Bogger 1994:244; Hamilton Crockford, “African Tribal Chief’s Descendant is Honored,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 21, 1953.

<sup>22</sup> <https://scw.mcps.k12.va.us/page/about-scw/>

<sup>23</sup> Obituary, newspapers.com – link provided in comments

<sup>24</sup> Crockford, “African Tribal Chief’s Descendant is Honored.”

<sup>25</sup> <https://scw.mcps.k12.va.us/page/about-scw/>

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In 1921, the Middlesex Training School (constructed in 1917 and previously known as the Langston Training School) expanded with aid from the Rosenwald Fund. That same year, St. Clare Walker was appointed principal of the school, and the improvements he fostered brought in children from surrounding counties including Mathews, Gloucester, and King and Queen. Walker expanded the curriculum from two to four years, seeking and winning accreditation in Virginia in 1931 through the efforts of a carefully chosen staff of teachers.<sup>26</sup> Preparing students for college was St. Clare Walker's primary drive, though Middlesex Training School also offered accredited four-year courses in Vocational Agriculture. Many Middlesex Training School instructors were trained at Hampton Institute, and St. Clare Walker donated half of his salary to supplement their incomes in order to retain qualified instructors and raise the school's standards.<sup>27</sup> The school became a de-facto satellite campus of Hampton Institute, with the library developed with the former university collections and Walker teaching the students the university's songs. "Whenever he was able, he carried his students to Hampton to concerts, field trips, trade exhibitions, lectures and athletic games."<sup>28</sup> St. Clare Walker encouraged an active school event schedule, which included traveling speakers, formal band and academic competitions, May Day and holiday festivals, and Friday oratory and debate clubs.<sup>29</sup> Primarily due to St. Clare Walker's initiatives, the Middlesex Training School was accredited in 1932 – at that time, only the second rural Black school to become accredited by the Virginia Department of Education.<sup>30</sup>

After the original Middlesex Training School burned in 1938 and the new Middlesex Training School near Cooks Corner opened in 1939, St. Clare Walker carried his passion with him as its first principal. The teachers he hired, programs he sponsored, and educational ethic he fostered carried the new school onward. Simultaneously, he continued to tutor students at Dunbar Graded School. He tutored White students at his home, but the new school at Cooks Corner was Professor Walker's domain and the frame Agricultural Building his classroom.<sup>31</sup> In 1949, Middlesex Training School (or Academy) was renamed St. Clare Walker High School in his honor. St. Clare Walker retired in 1959, after teaching in the county for 41 years.<sup>32</sup>

John Henry St. Clare Walker left a profound legacy in the minds he shaped and the values he fostered in Middlesex County's Black community. He was intimately involved in the establishment of formal secondary education for Black students and lobbied for, as well as constructed, the physical buildings and structures that witnessed such growth in Middlesex County.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> (Bogger 59-60).

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.newspapers.com/article/daily-press/44675928/>

<sup>28</sup> (Holmes in Bogger 1994:245).

<sup>29</sup> Wolverine yearbook, various, interviews with former students

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.newspapers.com/article/daily-press/44675928/>

<sup>31</sup> (TMP Holmes interview, 19 April 2023, p.2)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.newspapers.com/article/daily-press/44675928/>

<sup>33</sup> Rivahguide.com 2021, VDHR Historic Marker OC46, Easter Holmes in Bogger 1994:244-245

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St. Clare Walker High School Senior Class

1969      Wolverine. St. Clare Walker High School Senior Class.

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Virginia Historical Society

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 32.5

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.605145  | Longitude: 76.564465 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.605304  | Longitude: 76.564096 |
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| 17. Latitude: 37.600590 | Longitude: 76.561509 |
| 18. Latitude: 37.600408 | Longitude: 76.561871 |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The district includes those five parcels historically associated with the St. Clare Walker/Middlesex Training School and Rappahannock County Elementary School campuses. The parcels of the former lie northwest of General Puller Highway. The northern half is dominated by a wooded area with a clearing in the northwest. Fields mark the eastern boundary. The southwestern boundary abuts the historic but relocated Springdale Academy.

The Rappahannock Central Elementary campus is bounded on the southwest by the Three Rivers Health District, on the southeast by the Middlesex County Animal Shelter, and on the northeast by a residence, 2888 General Puller Highway, and woods. The lands to the southeast included several historic Black Communities dating to the mid-to-late 1800s.

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Middlesex County, Virginia  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was chosen to reflect the historic campuses of the two schools. There are several additional properties related to the history of the district, such as teacherages and local businesses that served teachers and students; however, they are largely not contiguous but would contribute to a larger Cook's Corner historic district. They have not been included in the present boundaries.<sup>34</sup>

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dr. David Brown, Nathaniel Glasgow, Oliver Mueller-Heubach, Tyler Radabaugh

organization: DATA Investigations, LLC

street & number: 6783 Main Street

city or town: Gloucester state: VA zip code: 23061

e-mail fairfield@fairfieldfoundation.org

telephone: (804) 815-4467

date: June 13, 2023

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## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Clare Walker School Historic District

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<sup>34</sup> Bogger 61

St. Clare Walker School District  
Name of Property

Middlesex County, Virginia  
County and State

City or Vicinity: Stormont

County: Middlesex

State: Virginia

Photographer: Oliver Mueller-Heubach, Nathaniel Glasgow, Tyler Radabaugh

Date Photographed: March 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

1 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0001.jpg

Rappahanock Central Elementary, Cafetorium kitchen. Camera pointed south to the scullery and back of the stage.

2 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0002.jpg

Rappahanock Central Elementary, Cafetorium stage. Camera pointed east.

3 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0003.jpg

Rappahanock Central Elementary, north façade. Camera pointed south.

4 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0004.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, Bus Shop and Agriculture Shop. Camera pointed east.

5 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0005.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, Bus Shop and Agriculture Shop. Camera pointing southwest.

6 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0006.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, Agricultural Shop. Camera pointing south.

7 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0007.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, attic over the agriculture classroom. Camera pointed southwest.

8 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0008.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, kitchen and classroom addition. Camera pointed northwest.

9 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0009.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, southeast elevation. Camera pointed northwest.

10 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0010.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, south elevation. Camera pointed south.

11 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0011.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, southeast brick bond. Camera pointed northwest.

12 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0012.jpg

St. Clare Walker School, auditorium stage. Camera pointed northeast.

St. Clare Walker School District  
Name of Property

Middlesex County, Virginia  
County and State

13 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0013.jpg.  
St. Clare Walker School, baseball field entrance. Camera pointed north.

14 of 16 VA\_MiddlesexCounty\_StClareWalkerSchoolHistoricDistrict\_0014.jpg  
St. Clare Walker School, tin building. Camera pointed south.

### **Embedded and Historic Image Log**

Figure 1. Aerial view of St. Clare Walker School landscape. NW at top. Google, 2023.

Figure 2. St. Clare Walker School Site Plan- (see plan for numbers). DATA Investigations, 2023.

Figure 3. 1968 aerial photo shows St. Clare Walker School looking north. From left to right: the 1953 Gymnasium, 1939 School with 1953 classroom addition behind, 1959 prefabricated classrooms/cafeteria, 1949 frame Cafeteria/classroom addition, and 1941 frame Agricultural Shop.

Figure 4. Stick brackets on front stoop of 1941 Agricultural Shop.

Figure 5. Stick brackets on the front stoop of c. 1941 Agricultural Shop. DATA Investigations, 2023.

Figure 6. Stick brackets on the stoop of the 1953 Gymnasium. DATA Investigations, 2023.

Figure 7. Aerial image of the Rappahannock Central Elementary campus. Google, May 2021.

Figure 8. 1997 aerial photograph showing the playground behind the Kidd Building, the dirt “track” in the rear field, as well as the trailers and black top on the right. Vintage Aerial, 2024.

Figure 9. Map with building names and locations. DATA Investigations, 2023.

Figure 10. These are loosely as positioned at Syringa, VA. Fisk University, 2021. Left: c.1916 Langston/Middlesex Training/High School,

Figure 11. These are loosely positioned at Syringa, VA. Fisk University, 2021. Right: 1925/26 Syringa Rosenwald Vocational Agriculture Building.

Figure 12. Photo of the student body. Southside Sentinel, May 1, 1969.

Figure 13. Agricultural Shop Building, c.1941, with 1949 Cafeteria addition visible at left. Mid-1950s.

Figure 14. Image of woodworking students in Agricultural Shop. *The Wolverine Yearbook*, 1948.

Figure 15. Tool boards in place. DATA Investigations, March 2023.

Figure 16. St. Clare Walker School, 1959 Classroom Building, view NE. The Daily Press, August 23, 1959.

Figure 17. St. Clare Walker School, 1959 Classroom Building, view NE.

Figure 18. Students in their brick masonry course, 1968. *The Wolverine Yearbook*, 1968, p.43.

Figure 19. Electrical wiring class in the new cinderblock shop, 1968. *The Wolverine Yearbook*, 1968, p.44.

Figure 20. Woodworking, Metalwork, and Painting class in the new cinderblock shop, 1968. *The Wolverine Yearbook*, 1968, p.44.

Figure 21. Interior of the 1962 Cafetorium during a presentation, view east. The cafeteria kitchen, storerooms and washroom lie behind the stage.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

St. Clare Walker School District

Name of Property

Middlesex County, Virginia

County and State

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

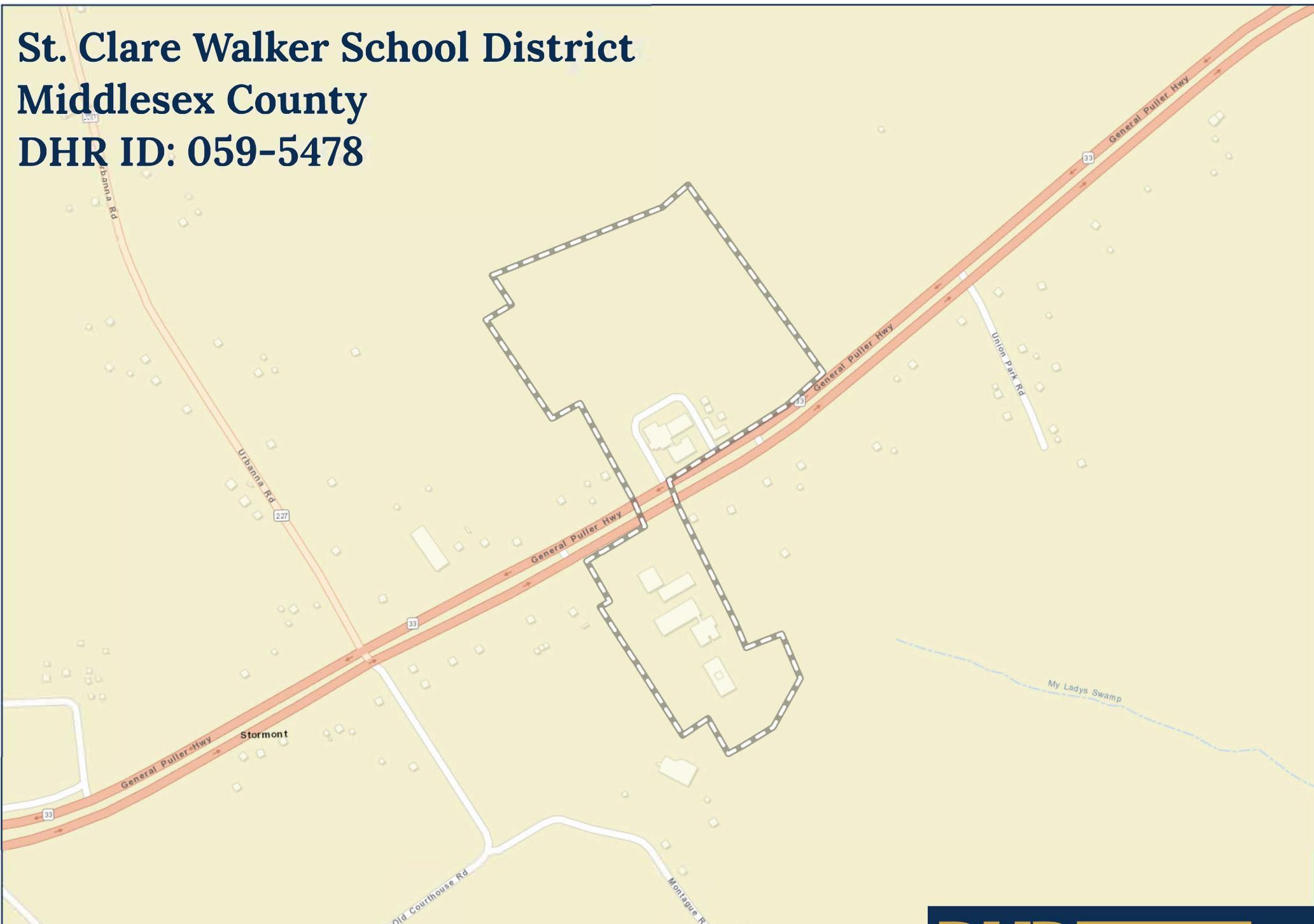
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

# St. Clare Walker School District

## Middlesex County

### DHR ID: 059-5478



Sources: VDHR 2024, VGIN 2024, ESRI 2024

Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses.



0 460 920 1,380 1,840  
Feet

**DHR**

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

St. Clare Walker School Complex  
Middlesex County  
DHR ID: 059-0078

