NPS Form 10-900

VLR Listed: 9/18/2025
NRHP Listed: 1/2/2026

OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2026

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: Rocky Branch School
Other names/site number: DHR #026-5114
Name of related multiple property listing: African American Schools in Virginia
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 6009 Rocky Branch Road
City or town: Sutherland State: VA County: Dinwiddie
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 ___B _X_ C ___D

Julie D. Langan 11-17-25

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	1	objects
2	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
EDUCATION/ School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
WORK IN PROGRESS
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum
SOCIAL: Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Rural Schoolhouse

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD; GLASS; BRICK; STONE

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing 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.)

Summary Paragraph

Rocky Branch School occupies a one-acre lot in rural Dinwiddie County, Virginia, near the unincorporated community of Sutherland. Between 1913 and 1963, the property served as a public schoolhouse for African American children during Virginia's segregation era. The building is an example of a Privately-/Publicly-Built School, c. 1902-c. 1931, a property type identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form entitled "African American Schools in Virginia."[1] The one-story, frame building consists of two sections. The south section was erected c. 1913 on the current site near Rocky Branch Baptist Church and served as a one-room schoolhouse for Black children. Two cloakrooms and a center porch for the entrance were placed on the west side of the single classroom. In 1928, Rocky Branch Church patrons obtained one section of the former Sutherland School, previously located near Ocran Methodist Church approximately 1.5 miles northeast, from the Dinwiddie County School Board. This L-plan, two-classroom building had been erected for White children at an unknown date prior to 1900. As required by the school board, patrons moved the single Sutherland School classroom to the current site on Rocky Branch Road and appended it to the c. 1913 Rocky Branch schoolhouse, creating an L-plan, two-classroom building. The door to the north cloakroom on the existing Rocky Branch building was relocated to connect with the added north classroom. Both sections of the building have a pier foundation composed of a mix of fieldstones, granite blocks, brick, and modern concrete blocks. The walls are clad with weatherboard siding, and each gable roof is covered with modern metal panels laid on top of the original standing-seam metal roofing. Original windows with six-over-six wood sash are symmetrically spaced along all elevations. Each entry has a single-leaf, wood door. A short, brick, interior chimney stack formally rose from the ridgeline of each section's roof. Interior finishes consist of narrow-gauge,

[1] Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Schools in Virginia," Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

hardwood flooring, tongue-and-groove wood beadboard on the walls and ceilings, and plain window and door casing. A pair of pocket doors occupies the partition between the two sections of the building. The interior has wood, stacked-panel doors at each cloakroom. A 1960s, partial-height partition within the 1913 section postdates the building's use as a public school and is composed of wood studs sheathed with painted plywood. With the exception of this alteration, the building has remained unchanged since its closure in 1963. In addition to the schoolhouse, the property has a capped well that dates to the property's period of significance and is a contributing structure. Alongside it is a trail marker for the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, which is a noncontributing object. The property's overall location and setting continue to be rural. During the mid-2000s, an asphalt parking lot was installed that surrounds the schoolhouse; the lot is associated with Rocky Branch Baptist Church. The former schoolhouse has high integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Work to stabilize the schoolhouse is currently in progress.

Narrative Description

Setting

Rocky Branch School is located in northern Dinwiddie County, Virginia. U.S. Route 460/ Cox Road, the nearest major highway, is approximately .27 mile north of the property and extends in a roughly east-west direction. From the southern edge of U.S. Route 460, Rocky Branch Road runs directly south to reach Rocky Branch School and the adjacent Rocky Branch Church. Historically, Rocky Branch Road continued south a short distance before ending. Separating the parcel occupied by the school from the church's parcel, a branch road turned east and historically connected to State Route 631/ Claiborne Road, a north-south road that leads south from the village of Sutherland (Figure 1).

Rocky Branch School is approximately ten miles west of the City of Petersburg. The local setting continues to be predominantly rural in character, with expanses of cultivated farmland interspersed with wooded tracts. The village of Sutherland is situated south of railroad tracks built during the mid-19th century by the South Side Railroad. The tracks were later owned by the Norfolk & Western Railway, which merged into the Norfolk Southern Corporation in 1998. U.S. Route 460/ Cox Road forms the spine of the village, with a small number of commercial properties widely dispersed alongside the highway. Low-density residential development is located along the secondary roads that branch off of U.S. Route 460.

State Route 636/ Rocky Branch Road is lined with a few dwellings and a two-story building that was built by the local Masons chapter as a Masonic Temple. Large, wooded tracts surround the house lots. Rocky Branch School stands east of the road. The road that once connected Rocky Branch Road to Claiborne Road is now part of Rocky Branch Baptist Church's asphalt parking lot. The current sanctuary was completed in 2012 and has a deep setback from Rocky Branch. The previous sanctuary stood closer to the road's edge, and its site is beneath the asphalt parking lot. The paving extends north to encircle Rocky Branch School as well. A short distance northwest of the schoolhouse, a small, square, grassy area that includes a capped well and an interpretive marker is also surrounded by the pavement.

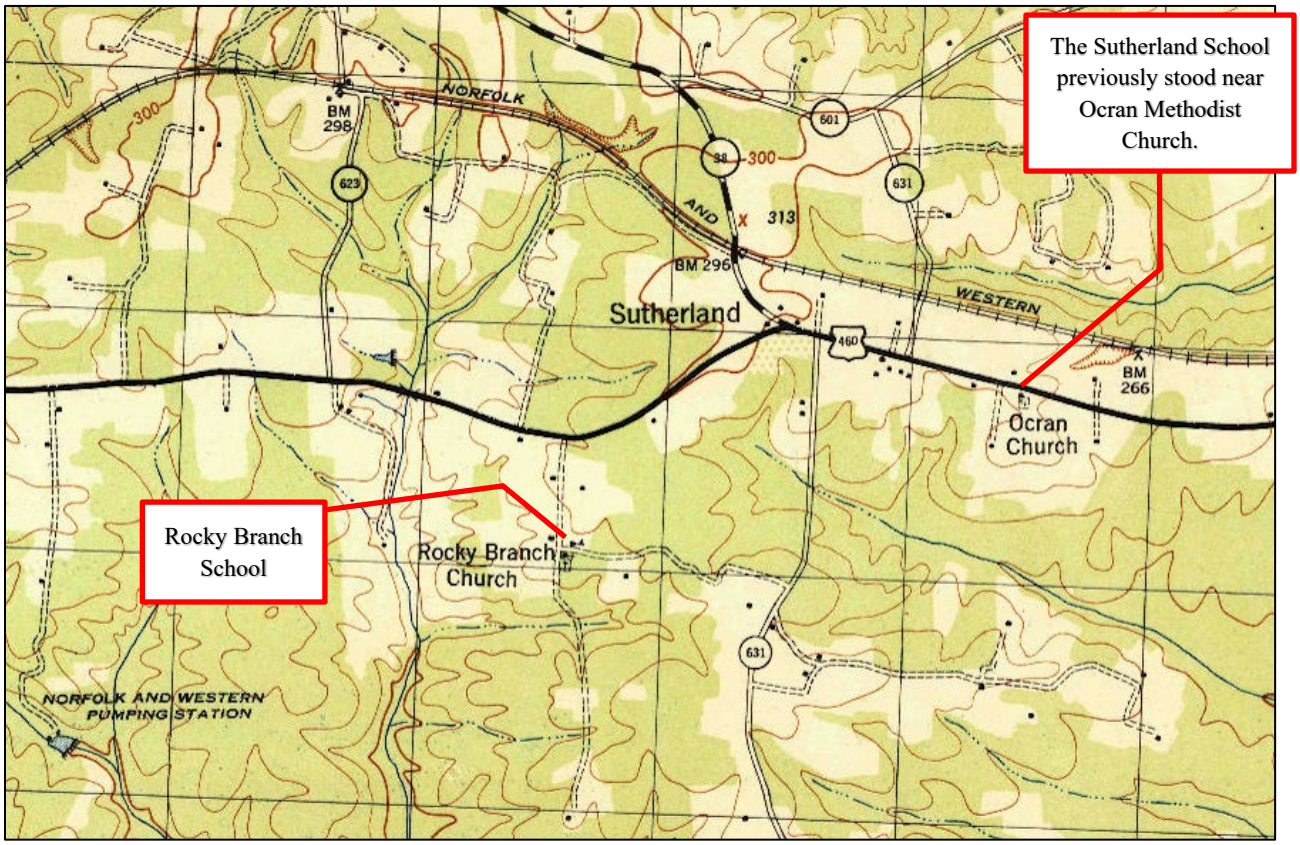

Figure 1. Detail of 1944 edition of Sutherland USGS topographic quadrangle, showing Rocky Branch School, Rocky Branch Church, and the former location of the Sutherland School within the unincorporated community of Sutherland (Image Source: USGS topoView, https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#15/37.1852/-77.5814.)

Inventory

Rocky Branch School – c. 1913, c. 1928, contributing building
Well, c. 1913, contributing structure
Trail marker, c. 2005, noncontributing object

Detailed Description

Rocky Branch School – c. 1913, c. 1928, contributing building

Exterior

Rocky Branch School is an example of a Privately-/Publicly-Built School, c. 1902-c. 1931, a property type identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form entitled "African American Schools in Virginia."[2] The L-plan building is composed of two sections. The south section was constructed c. 1913 on the current site as a schoolhouse for Black children. According to the 1928 minutes of the Dinwiddie

[2] Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Schools in Virginia," Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

County School Board, the north section formerly was the Sutherland School, an L-plan, two-room schoolhouse that served White children.[3] Just one section of the two-room school was moved to Rocky Branch School; the fate of the second section is not known. From 1928 to 1963, Rocky Branch School functioned as a two-room school that served African American children.

Figure 2. Early 1930s photo of Rocky Branch School (Image Source: Virginia State University Special Collections and Archives, Archie G. Richardson Collection, Ettrick, Virginia).

The schoolhouse's original c. 1913 south section occupies a one-acre parcel located directly north of Rocky Branch Baptist Church. The one-classroom, side gable building has a pier foundation and faces west toward Rocky Branch Road. Most of the perimeter piers are composed of stacked fieldstones. Brick piers support the center, north-south girder. Stabilization of the piers is underway. The frame building's walls are clad with weatherboard siding, and the roof is covered with modern metal panels on top of original standing-seam metal roofing that extends over the exposed rafter tails. Careful inspection of the rafter tails determined that triangular pieces were added to the c. 1913 section's tails to make them match the shape of the north section's rafter tails. It appears that the c. 1913 section originally had a box cornice that was removed, possibly at the same time the rafter tails were modified. An interior brick flue is located right-of-center and rises from the ridgeline. Above the roof's edge, the bricks have been removed due to failing mortar joints and will be reinstalled as part of upcoming stabilization work.

An entry porch and two cloakrooms were added to the façade at an unknown date, likely before c. 1928 (Figure 2). The porch has a pier foundation; some piers are composed of stacked fieldstones, and at least two have replacement modern concrete block piers that were added at an unknown date. Originally, the porch was approached via full-width wood steps; these were replaced at an unknown date with concrete steps flanked by metal pipe railings. The porch's skirt and framing are wood construction, while the

[3] Dinwiddie County School Board, Meeting Minutes, June 5, 1928, on file at the Dinwiddie County School Board, Dinwiddie, Virginia, p. 174. Sutherland School was the first public school to be erected in the village of Sutherland after the Civil War. Specific construction dates have been lost. It is known, however, that the earliest schoolhouse was a log building located on River Road. This schoolhouse was replaced at an unknown date by a building located on Hart Road near the railroad tracks. Sometime between 1890-1905, a two-room, frame schoolhouse was constructed along Cox Road (present U.S. Route 460), across the road from Ocran Methodist Church. Sutherland School closed in 1926. See Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Waynesville, N.C.: County Heritage Inc., 2007), p. 284, for the Sutherland School's history.

decking is covered with sheets of plywood. The porch's railing is composed of 2" x 4" top and bottom rails and single balusters. Sheltered by the porch, the entry has a wood-frame screen door and a stacked-panel door with a round metal knob, beneath which is a keyhole. A deadbolt lock is above the knob. The entry is framed with plain, 2" x 4" boards. On the north and south sides of the porch are small frame extensions that house cloakrooms. A shed roof covered with modern corrugated metal extends across both cloakrooms and the porch. A square window with a fixed four-pane sash is centered on the south cloakroom's south (side) wall and on the north cloakroom's west (front) wall.

The south gable end of the c. 1913 section has two tall, rectangular windows, each of which has a six-over-six, double-hung, wood-frame sash. A peaked vent with wood louvers is centered at the top of the wall. Visual inspection of the vent's interior indicates that the peak was a later modification, perhaps to match the gable vent on the north section. The east (rear) elevation features a centered, paired window flanked by two single windows. Each window has a six-over-six, double-hung, wood frame sash. [4] The windows have plain wood frames and sills.

Some sections of the c. 1913 section's weatherboard siding have been removed during stabilization work. Several of the 4" x 6" and 6" x 8" girders have been damaged by termites and are slated for replacement with new, pressure-treated lumber of the same dimensions. The wall studs are 2" x 4" nominal lumber, as are the diagonal corner braces.

The north section of the building was appended to the original Rocky Branch School in 1928. Its west wall extends beyond the plane of the c. 1913 section's façade, while the east (rear) wall is flush with the c. 1913 section's rear elevation. This section of the building rests on a pier foundation; some piers are composed of stacked, cut granite blocks, others are stacked fieldstones, and the pier alongside the entry steps includes several concrete blocks along with fieldstones. The entry is located at the west corner of the south wall. Concrete steps flanked by metal pipe railings lead up to the entry, which has a single-leaf, four-panel, wood door and plain wood frame. Both the door and frame are severely deteriorated. The frame belfry that once rose from the west end of the north section's roof was removed at an unknown date (Figure 2); on the interior, holes for the pull rope remain in the beadboard ceiling and roofing board.

The north section's west façade has two windows that are the same size as those in the c. 1913 section. The windows have six-over-six, double-hung, wood-frame sash. The north (side) elevation has smaller, single-hung, six-over-six wood sash. The east (rear) elevation has rectangular windows with six-over-six, double-hung, wood-frame sash that match those of the c. 1913 section.[5] All of the windows have plain wood casing.

On the north section's west (front) wall, two windows flank what may have once been a window opening or an entry (Figure 3). At the bottom of the wall, the removal of several pieces of weatherboard siding revealed that the interior flooring is cut flush with the floor joist. Beneath the two extant windows, the flooring extends about two inches beyond the joist (Photo 6). Reused, salvaged 2" x 4" lumber was inserted in the former door opening for fastening finishes when this area was converted to a

[4] All six sash have been removed temporarily for repairs and will be reinstalled as stabilization work proceeds.
[5] All of the sash have been removed temporarily for repairs and will be reinstalled as stabilization work proceeds.

solid wall. Consequently, it is considered probable that a door once existed here. The alteration to the fenestration is thought to have occurred after the north section was appended to the c. 1913 section.

Figure 3. At left, framing beneath exterior siding indicates former door location; at right, beadboard wall covering indicates former door opening (Image Source: Joseph D. Lahendro, historic architect, 2025).

Interior

The interior floor plan consists of two large classrooms, one in each section of the building, with a cloak room adjoining each classroom (Figure 4). The interior of both sections has similar finishes that include hardwood, narrow-gauge, tongue-and-groove flooring, tongue-and-grove, beadboard wall and ceiling cladding, and square-edged baseboards. The window and door openings all have plain square casing with butt joints. Four hanging light fixtures with white globes are symmetrically spaced across the ceiling of each classroom. A rectangular opening with two pocket doors was created by cutting through the c. 1913 section's north wall and the north section's south wall. The opening is framed with plain wood casing with butt joints. Overall, the interior is in good condition, but for some portions of the ceiling that bear water damage due to past roof leaks.

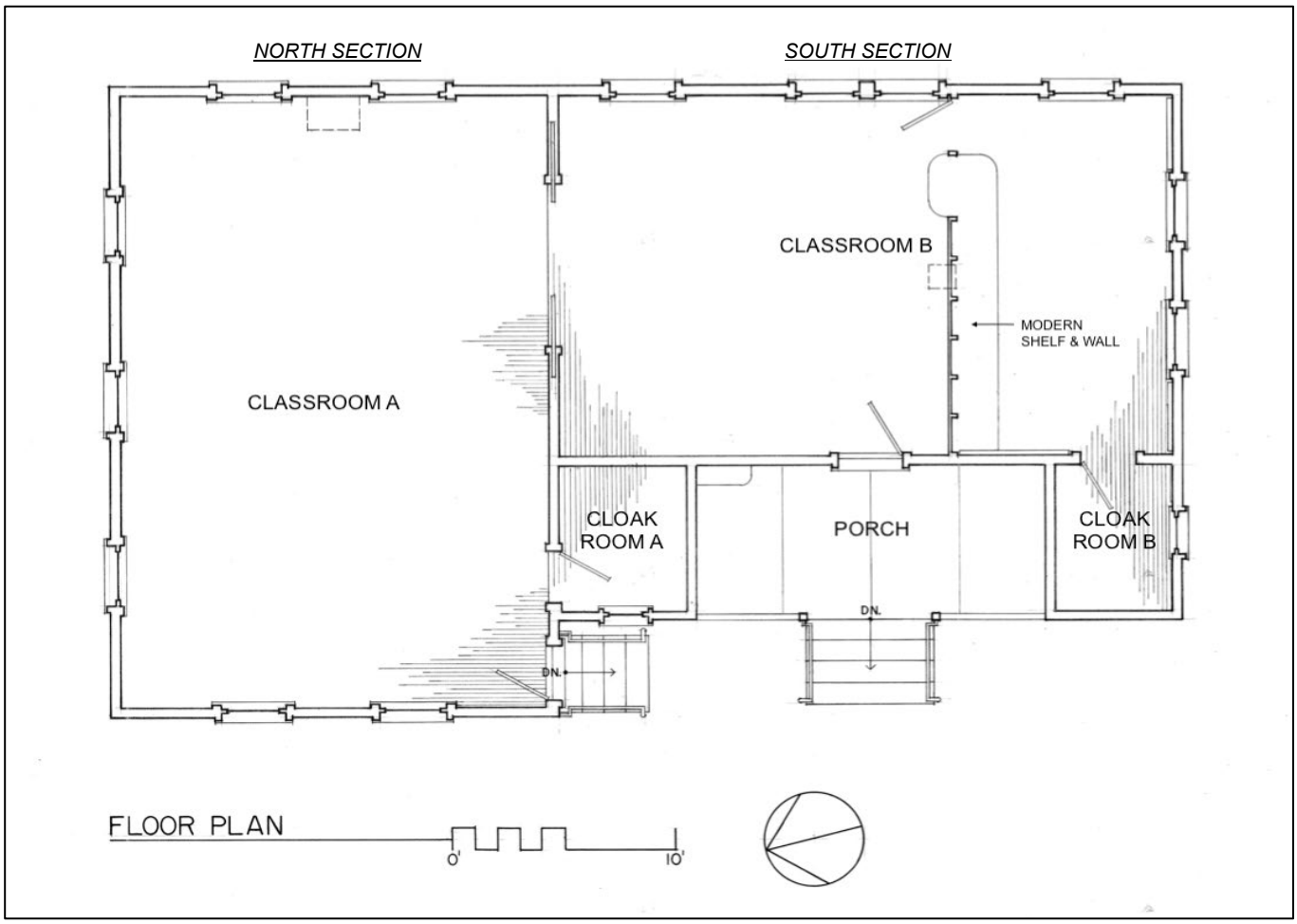

Figure 4. Floor plan of Rocky Branch School (Image Source: Joseph D. Lahendro, historic architect, May 2025).

The classroom in the c. 1913 section is lit by a total of five window openings, with the paired sash centered on the east (rear) side of the room occupying the largest window. Each window has plain wood casing, stools, and aprons. Slightly off-centered in the ceiling is a square opening for the flue of a wood-burning stove. The flue connected to a hung chimney composed of coursed brick with mortar joints. A hung chimney is one that is located within a building's attic with a brick stack supported by wrought iron hangers between ceiling joists that extends vertically above the roofline (Figure 5). In this fashion, the fire safety of brick construction was maintained, while connecting the hung chimney with a metal flue pipe to a woodstove located at the most effective place in a classroom. Hung chimneys also were less expensive in terms of materials and labor. During the building's use as a public school, the woodstove served as the only source of heating for the classroom. The south and west walls of the classrooms retain their original blackboards and chalk trays. The blackboards are composed of quarter-inch-thick compressed fiberboard that originally were painted black; currently, the blackboards are painted white. A rectangular, wood-framed, surface-mounted display case with a swinging glass cover is mounted on the classroom's north wall, adjacent to the left (west) side of the pocket doors.

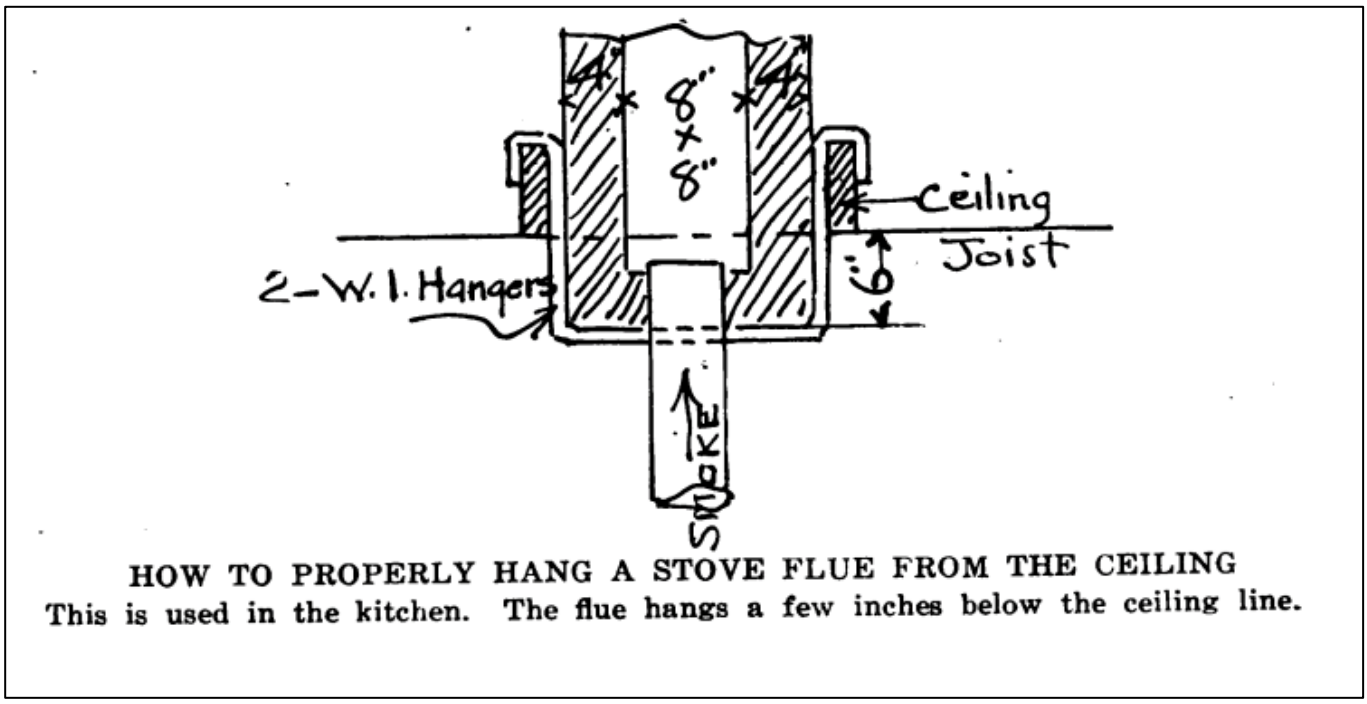

Figure 5. Detail of hung chimney design (Image Source: The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community [Tuskegee, Alabama: The Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915], p. 23.)

The entry to the south cloakroom is located at the c. 1913 section's southwest corner. The entry has a stacked panel, wood door with plain trim that matches doors throughout the building. The cloakroom is finished with the same hardwood flooring and beadboard wall and ceiling finishes as the classroom. A wood shelf extends along the west wall at the same height as the top of the square window that lights the space. Sun-faded blue paint covers the lower part of the walls. The north cloakroom also originally had a door from the c.1913 classroom, but this door was infilled when the 1928 classroom was added and connected to this cloakroom with a new door.

After the school closed, a partial-height partition was erected in the c. 1913 section to create a storage space. The wall is built of 2" x 4" studs with painted plywood sheathing its north side. The wall's south side has three built-in shelves. A cutout window served as a customer service counter and an adjacent entry has a stacked panel, wood door. The partial height partition dates to the building's use as a clothes closet to provide free clothing to needy individuals in the community, operated by Rocky Branch Baptist Church for an unknown span of years.

The north section also consists of a single classroom. Its tongue-and-groove wood flooring runs east-west, perpendicular to the flooring in the c. 1913 section. A very different type of hung brick chimney is centered on the east (rear) wall between the two windows. This hung chimney extends several feet below the ceiling, is entirely supported by wood framing, and has a side-mounted thimble for connecting with the metal stove pipe from the cast iron wood stove.[6] A surface-mounted shelf with a clothes hanging rod

[6] The cast iron stove, no longer functional, is stored in the north section's cloakroom.

extends along the south wall between the pocket doors and the cloakroom entry; this element dates to the property's use as a clothes closet.

The north classroom's cloakroom entry has a stacked-panel door and casing that matches the other entries in the schoolhouse. The cloakroom's walls and ceiling are clad with beadboard. A plain wood board extends along the south wall and still has many long nails in it; these may have served as hooks for students' coats and jackets. Blue paint covers the lower half of the walls. As this space receives less direct sunlight than the south cloakroom, the paint is not faded.

As noted above, the three windows on the classroom's north wall are shorter and wider than the building's other windows. These three windows have single-hung wood sash, as opposed to the double-hung sash found in the other windows. It is believed that this type of window was typical for all windows in this earlier classroom but, when moved in 1928, the east and west elevation windows were replaced to match those in the c.1913 classroom.

Figure 6. Bracket for historic-period fire extinguisher in the north section of Rocky Branch School (Image Source: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2025).

An interesting historic element that is partially intact is the fire extinguisher bracket on the east side of the pocket doors' trim (Figures 6-7). The metal bracket bears the name "Red Comet Automatic" above the larger ring and "Littleton Colorado" below this ring. According to the Littleton Museum, "Red Comet made several kinds of fire extinguishers for homes and offices as well as automobiles. The extinguishers were produced in sizes ranging from 2.5 pounds to 100 pounds."[7] The device included a glass "grenade" filled with liquid carbon tetrachloride that was held in place by the two rings on the wall-mounted bracket. The grenade included a heat-sensitive spring system at the base of the extinguisher that would strike and break the glass to release the liquid in a water sprinkler effect. Red Comet continued to manufacture fire extinguishers into the 2010s.[8]

[7] "Red Comet Manufacturing Company," Littleton Museum, April 2021, https://www.museum.littletonco.gov/Research/Littleton-History/Other-Topics/Red-Comet-Manufacturing-Company.
[8] "Red Comet Manufacturing Company," Littleton Museum, April 2021, https://www.museum.littletonco.gov/Research/Littleton-History/Other-Topics/Red-Comet-Manufacturing-Company; Kathleen Obrer, "Red Comet Fire Extinguishers," The Wolfsonian, Florida International University, November 18, 2021, https://wolfsonian.org/blog/2021/31/.

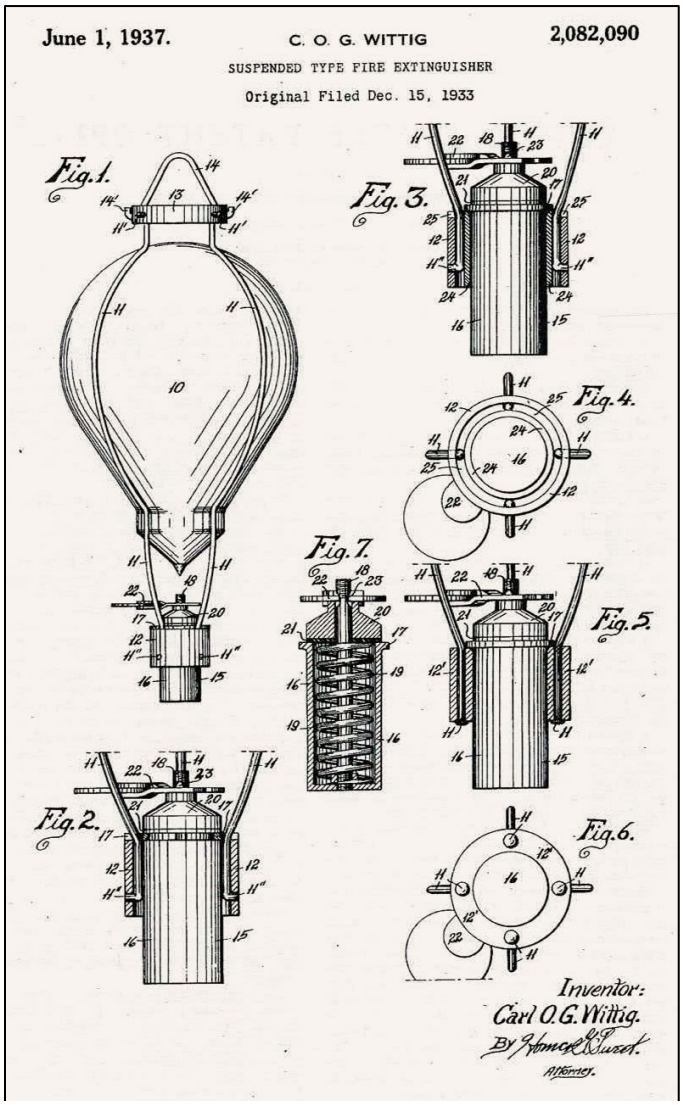

Figure 7. 1933 patent drawing for a grenade-type fire extinguisher (Image Source: Kathleen Obrer, "Red Comet Fire Extinguishers," The Wolfsonian, Florida International University, November 18, 2021, https://wolfsonian.org/blog/2021/31/.

A "Federal" brand, small electrical circuit box with four breakers is surface-mounted on the south section's west wall. The box dates to the installation of electrical wiring in the building after the Rocky Branch School closed. Next to the entry of each classroom are two light switches. There are no electrical outlets in the building. Plumbing and heating and air conditioning systems have never been installed in the building.

Secondary Resources

Well, c. 1913, contributing structure

The capped well is located a short distance northwest of the schoolhouse. It is situated within a small, rectangular, grassy area surrounded by the asphalt parking lot. The above-grade portion of the well consists of smooth concrete. Rocky Branch School alumni recall that the well provided drinking water for students and teachers throughout the school's history, making it a contributing resource.

Trail marker, c. 2005, noncontributing object

Near the well, the trail marker is composed of two metal posts that support an angled metal frame enclosing a full-color interpretive marker associated with the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail.[9] The marker includes two photos of the school, a map of the school's location along the trail route, and text that summarizes the school's history and importance. The resource is noncontributing because it postdates the property's period of significance.

[9] "The trail was established in 2004 and is owned and managed by Virginia's Crossroads, a tourism marketing consortium" that includes twelve central and southern Virginia localities as well as Virginia State Parks and Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. See Virginia Crossroads, Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, https://www.vacrossroads.com/virginiacptcats/history/?id=94&custom_term=Civil%20Rights%20in%20Education%20Trail.

Integrity Analysis

Rocky Branch School has high integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The north section of the building was moved to the current location during the property's period of significance and is directly associated with the schoolhouse's historical significance. The integrity of design, materials, and workmanship has been retained on the exterior and interior. Although some materials have begun to fail due to age and weathering, the vast majority of the historic fabric remains intact. Numerous character-defining physical features are extant, including the building's form and massing, front porch, fenestration, and entries. On the interior, the only major alteration is the partial height partition, which is easily reversible. The pocket doors between the two classrooms are a feature found in two-room and larger rural African American schools during the segregation era. A movable partition such as this allowed for two teachers to hold classes simultaneously, while also accommodating school and community needs that required a single, larger space. The interior materials of hardwood flooring and beadboard cladding on the walls and ceilings are found in rural schools constructed from the 1870s through the 1920s; such finishes are resilient, a necessity for schools from any period. Cloakrooms were commonly included in rural schools as well. These rooms provided storage space for supplies and a place for students to store their coats and jackets.

The integrity of setting has been affected by the encirclement of the school building with an asphalt parking lot. The loss of the historic-period Rocky Branch Baptist Church sanctuary also has changed the character of the property's setting. Two privies historically were located behind the school; their sites are presently not known. Despite these alterations, the physical and historical relationship between Rocky Branch School and Rocky Branch Baptist Church is readily apparent. The congregation's growth during the late 20th century necessitated construction of a larger sanctuary, which indicates that the church continues to be a nexus of community involvement for local residents.

Because the school building has high integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship, the property's integrity of feeling has been retained despite changes to its setting. Many of the church's current members are alumni of Rocky Branch School or are descendants of alumni. Rich oral history preserves these historical associations. The property's association with the segregation era of public education in Virginia also is preserved in historic records, photographs, and local history books. Rocky Branch School is among the schools documented by Archie G. Richardson, Associate Director of the Division of Secondary Education, State Department of Education, starting in 1936; he retired in 1969. The Archie G. Richardson collection is housed at the Virginia State University Library Special Collections and Archives in Ettrick, Virginia.[10]

[10] The Special Collections and Archives at Virginia State University was closed for renovations at the time this nomination as prepared. The documentation of Rocky Branch School, however, in the Archie G. Richardson Collection, was verified in the library's online catalog.

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.)

- [X] 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.
- [X] 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.)

- [X] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [X] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
EDUCATION
ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
c. 1913-1963

Significant Dates
1928

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

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.)

Rocky Branch School functioned as a public school for African American children from c. 1913-1963 in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. The property is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black. Built c. 1913, the school originally had a single classroom with students from all elementary grades instructed by a single teacher. In 1928, a second classroom was added after the school patrons and congregation of Rocky Branch Baptist Church obtained one section of the former two-classroom Sutherland School. Thereafter, the c. 1913 section of the building housed students in grades one through three while the north section was for students in grades four through seven, with two full-time teachers now at the school. Rocky Branch continued as a public school with virtually no alterations or renovations until its closure in 1963, when its students were reassigned to a newly constructed, segregated elementary school. Under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, the building retains character-defining features of an early 20th century, rural school for African American students in Virginia. These elements include the schoolhouse's evolved form and massing, front porch, fenestration with original wood sash and a single, exterior entry to each classroom, interior finishes, pocket doors, and blackboards. Vernacular materials and workmanship are retained throughout the building as well and add to the property's study value. The former school's period of significance is c. 1913-1963, beginning with the construction of the original one-classroom building on its current parcel alongside Rocky Branch Baptist Church and ending with the property's closure as a public school. The year 1928 is included as a significant date, which marks the year that the school's north section was added to the property.

Rocky Branch School is being nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD) entitled "African American Schools in Virginia." The school is an example of a Privately-/ Publicly-Built School, c. 1902-c. 1931, Subtype A. This subtype includes schools built primarily with donated funds, materials, and labor, and the buildings were designed by local builders and craftsmen without reliance on a specific standardized plan. An explanation of how Rocky Branch School meets the MPD's registration requirements is included herein.

Rocky Branch School meets Criteria Consideration A for properties owned by religious institutions because its significance is based on its use as a public school for African American children during the period that Virginia's public schools were racially segregated.[11] The property meets Criteria Consideration B for relocated properties because the schoolhouse's north section was moved in 1928, during the period of significance, and allowed for expansion of the school's teaching staff and improved student-to-teacher ratio.

[11] Racial segregation in Virginia's public schools existed between 1870 and1969. Although racial segregation in public schools was found unconstitutional in 1954 and prohibited by federal law during the mid-1960s, many Virginia localities, including Dinwiddie County, did not complete school desegregation until 1970. Detailed discussion of the statewide desegregation process is at Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Schools in Virginia," Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

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

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Criterion A – Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black

Rocky Branch School is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black with a period of significance of c. 1913-1963. Rocky Branch was an elementary school throughout its history, serving students in grades one through seven. The history of public education in Virginia is described in detail in the MPD "African American Schools in Virginia" and is incorporated herein by reference.[12]

In April 2025, the school's significance under Criterion A was described by alumni in a two-hour conversation together at Rocky Branch Baptist Church. Participants were Auther Dean, Sharlene Anderson Wrenn, Janet Anderson Edwards, Clarence Williams, Elois Fitzgerald Evans, Hattie Fitzgerald Wilkins, and Patricia Brown Christian. The group agreed that the school is a memorial that illustrates where they started and that their teachers saw their potential and gave them the confidence to do difficult things. With the care of their teachers, they felt they could accomplish whatever they set their minds to. One alumnus described teacher Margaret Thompson as "my idol" and another said Thompson and fellow teacher Dora Goodwin were "classy ladies." They would not allow their students to make excuses because of their life circumstances, instead holding all of them to high standards of achievement. Rather than viewing the inclusion of multiple grades in the same room as a negative, one alumnus thought that being able to hear what students in higher grades were being taught gave them a head start on more advanced lessons. Similarly, assisting younger students with material they struggled with gave older students opportunities to reinforce their own lessons, teach their peers, and learn to be patient and compassionate toward one another.

Their families' multigenerational connections to Rocky Branch School also were significant. Alumni Patricia Brown Christian said, "What is closest to my heart is my mother went to that school." Parents of the alumni were born between the 1910s and1930s, and, therefore, their and

[12] See Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Schools in Virginia," Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

their parents' experiences encompassed most of Rocky Branch's history. Several alumni had parents whose formal education was cut short due to the necessity to take on paid work to help support their families. This necessity, however, sharpened their determination to assure that their own children would receive as much schooling as possible. Although the Rocky Branch community often contended with financial limitations, by the 1950s, they found ways to support extracurricular activities, such as field trips to Washington, D.C., Monticello, Mount Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Luray Cavern, and Fort Lee (also more recently known as Fort Gregg-Adams). Students were provided opportunities to understand the wider world and to see firsthand the range of possibilities available to them.

The alumni also recalled dozens of community events that were held at Rocky Branch School, including parent-teacher association (PTA) fundraisers, dances, talent shows, and annual graduations for students who had completed seventh grade. The Rocky Branch alumni recalled that dance competitions and talent shows were part of the festivities. At such times, parents and church congregation members provided food, drinks, and candy to be purchased as a means of fundraising. The adults participated in the events, too, with one man recalled for his performance of "16 Tons," complete with a costume and a shovel. The Dean family's three daughters performed a rendition of "Please Mr. Postman," for which Russell Ellis was playing the postman. The Fitzgeralds' father loaded a #3 tub with ice to keep drinks cold. The Andersons' father told jokes to entertain the crowd. May Day celebrations occurred every year as well, typically with students from several schools convening at a single location to participate. After Southside High School opened in 1954, May Day celebrations took place there. Activities with Rocky Branch Baptist Church were common occurrences. Some of the fondest memories included recreational trips with Sunday school students to Prince Edward State Park, Buckroe Beach, and Pocahontas State Park.[13] Alumni said that Rocky Branch was "the church's school."

Finally, the alumni remembered their own relationships with one another. All students played together at recess regardless of differences in gender, ages, or abilities. Outdoor games included "pine tag houses," where rooms were outlined on the ground with rows of pine tags and a girl would furnish and take care of her own room; baseball (using sticks and rubber balls); dodgeball; hide-and-go seek; jacks; hopscotch; tug-of-war; jump rope; hula hoop; red light/green light; and crack-the-whip. Their playground also had a slide and swing set. Although the school alumni took different paths through high school and went on to college, military service, and jobs in various places, many of them returned to Dinwiddie County and Rocky Branch Baptist Church. They have maintained lifelong friendships based on their formative experiences at Rocky Branch School.

The living memory of the Rocky Branch School's alumni, and the stories they share with their children and grandchildren, preserve the school's significance to the community. For future generations, preservation of the school building will demonstrate where their community has

[13] Prince Edward State Park was originally built solely for African Americans, who were barred access to almost all other state and national parks in Virginia. Pocahontas State Park had a camping area with a two-acre lake at the south end of the park that was accessible to African American visitors. Buckroe Beach originally was a Whites-only beach in coastal Virginia. All of these places desegregated due to various civil rights lawsuits filed during the 1950s to early 1960s.

been and all that was accomplished within its walls. These are the epitome of a property's local significance in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black and Education.

Public Schools in Dinwiddie County, 1870s-1930s

Dinwiddie County, like most localities in Virginia, established its public school system during the 1870s. The school system was racially segregated, with White, African American, and Virginia Indian children attending separate schools. Due to poorly conceived funding strategies, tax revenue to build, operate, and maintain public schools were far from adequate. Despite this challenge, the number of public schools in the county increased gradually over the next three decades. Between 1871 and1905, the number of teachers in Dinwiddie County increased from thirty to seventy-nine, while the number of students grew from 1,316 to 2,491.[14]

The inequities intrinsic to Virginia's racially segregated school system were already apparent in early statistics about student enrollments. Although African Americans comprised a majority of the county's population, the number of one-room schools serving them rose from fourteen to just twenty-nine classrooms over thirty-four years. For White students, the number increased from eighteen to fifty-eight classrooms (most of which were housed in one- and two-room school buildings). The majority of public funding was spent on educating White children. African Americans received one-third or less of public money and a far smaller fraction went to Virginia Indian children.[15]

Lacking sufficient authorization to levy taxes for public schools, most of Virginia's localities struggled to build their school systems between 1871 and 1905. Ratification of Virginia's 1902 constitution improved circumstances by modifying the formulas used to raise taxpayer dollars for educational expenditures.[16] An assortment of private educational philanthropic organizations were also active in Virginia by the turn of the 20th century. These groups offered much-needed financial aid to schools for White and Black students from the elementary through postsecondary level, but even their combined efforts could not pay for all of the unmet needs across the Commonwealth. In 1906, the state legislature's passage of the Mann High School Act authorized the creation of public high schools and provided greater impetus to build more elementary schools. These reforms, however, were not implemented equally across Virginia. The vast majority of public high schools built between 1905 and1945 served only White students. In Dinwiddie County, high school classes began to be offered in 1906 to White students, while

[14] The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 190.
[15] The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 190.
[16] The 1902 constitution also enshrined the doctrine of "separate but equal" in Virginia law, formally marking the beginning of the Jim Crow era of segregation. "Jim Crow" is a reference to the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively, in southern and border states, between 1877 and the mid-1960s. Its name is derived from an 1820s White minstrel show performer named Thomas "Daddy" Rice, who performed a racist comedy act while in blackface. Beginning in the 1880s, the term "Jim Crow" began to be used as shorthand for practices that required physical separation of Black people from White people. The framework of laws that supported legally-mandated segregation are called Jim Crow laws.

taxpayer support of high school classes at a private school for Black students began in 1931.[17] During the first two decades of the 20th century, the infusion of more taxpayer dollars into public schools also allowed localities to begin replacing outdated one- and two-room frame schoolhouses and to construct larger, consolidated, masonry elementary schools that included modern features and equipment. Again, however, most of this effort was directed to White students. Unlike the vernacular schoolhouses of previous decades, the consolidated schools were designed by architects who often specialized in educational facilities.[18]

In 1922, newly passed state legislation reorganized school districts by establishing local school boards at the county or city level, rather than at the district level. This reform greatly reduced both the number of school boards throughout Virginia and the resultant bureaucratic redundancy. The improved efficiencies facilitated another wave of school consolidation. Statistics again demonstrate the inequities of the consolidation efforts. In Dinwiddie County, by 1940, just seven schools operated for White students because new, consolidated school facilities had been erected for White children. At the same time, thirty-six schools operated for Black students, who continued to be taught in the one- and two-room schoolhouses of the late 19th to early-20th century.[19]

Community Schools in African American Neighborhoods

Faced with systemic discrimination, African American communities took matters into their own hands to provide modern educational opportunities for their children. In the MPD, "African American Schools in Virginia," the first two generations of rural school types that served Black students are classified as Community-Built Schools, c. 1870-c. 1902 and Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools, c. 1902-c.1931. Community-Built Schools operated through a combination of private community support and limited taxpayer funding, including those facilities funded by the Freedmen's Bureau during the early Reconstruction Era.[20] Privately-/Publicly-Built Schools were a continuation of the necessity of private support for public schools due to systemic discrimination against African American students in allocation of public funds for education. The funding reforms made by state legislators during the early 1900s, coupled with the continued steering of the vast majority of public revenues to schools for White students meant that private support increasingly focused on schools for Black students. Purpose-built schoolhouses erected between c. 1870-c. 1902 were, for the most part, vernacular buildings that were not built to

[17] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 275, 282.
[18] Foney G. Mullins, A History of the Literary Fund as Funding Source for Free Public Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia, E.D. dissertation, April 18, 2001, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., p. 51-53l The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 190-191. In cities with large, more prosperous African American populations, consolidation of schools for Black children occurred at least to some degree during the first three decades of the 20th century.
[19] The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 191.
[20] The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, colloquially known as the Freedmen's Bureau, existed between 1865-1872.

standardized plans nor designed by architects. Instead, the buildings are examples of vernacular construction methods and materials. Schools for African Americans students that were erected between c. 1902-c. 1931 include a mix of vernacular schoolhouses and those that followed a standardized plan, many examples of which became widely available during the 1910s. The range of published standardized plans include those created by the Tuskegee Institute and, later, the fund's Nashville office for the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and by architects employed by the Virginia Board of Education.

African American communities used a combination of diplomacy, tact, determination, and confidence to extract from White public school officials as much public funding as possible to support schools for their children. They also sought assistance from the private organizations that aided construction and operation of public schools for African Americans in Virginia during the early 20th century. These groups included the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, Phelps-Stokes Fund, General Education Board, Julius Rosenwald Fund in partnership with the Tuskegee Institute, Peabody Fund, George Slater Fund, and Southern Foundation Inc. Always interested in minimizing their own costs, local school boards often cooperated with private donors on school projects, but, in general, only due to considerable prodding by African American residents. Black communities also had to demonstrate their commitment to their schools by holding fundraisers with churches, fraternal organizations, business owners, landowners, and other local residents to pay for construction materials, routine operating costs, supplies and furnishings, and teacher salaries.

According to researcher Luscious Edwards, archivist of special collections at Virginia State University from 1977 to 2013, five schools in Dinwiddie County were erected under the auspices of the Rosenwald Fund. Another eight elementary schools, primarily funded by church congregations, were built, including Rocky Branch, Cutter Store, Center Star, Old Olive Branch, New Olive Branch, West Petersburg, White Oak Road, and Number 20 schools. Schools built through use of church contributions often were named after the church in question; for example, Rocky Branch School is named after Rocky Branch Baptist Church and Center Star School was named after Center Star Baptist Church.[21] In addition to church contributions, Center Star School was built through the Julius Rosenwald Foundation's matching grant program. Erected c. 1927, Center Star School stands along the southwest side of Wilkinson Road (Route 611), approximately 400 feet south of the intersection with Wheelers Pond Road (Route 645). The Center Star Baptist Church and two cemeteries are also located at this intersection. According to the property's VCRIS record, the building is an example of a one-story, frame, rectangular, two-teacher Rosenwald school design. Rising from a brick pier foundation, the walls have wood siding and the hipped roof is clad with standing-seam metal.

Between 1917 and 1929, four additional schools, County Training School, Gruby Road, Mason #17 (aka Masontown), and McKenney also were built in Dinwiddie County through the Julius Rosenwald Foundation's matching grant program.[22] According to the property's VCRIS record,

[21] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 120, 275.
[22] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 275.

Gruby Road School (026-5268), erected in 1915, stands along the west side of White Oak Church Road (Route 620), approximately 0.75 mile north of the intersection with Gruby Road (Route 642). The building is set back approximately 80 feet and is connected on the north elevation to the Broomfield Baptist Church. To the north of the Church is a cemetery. The one-story building has wood framing with a brick veneer that matches the adjacent church; it is not known if the veneer was original or installed at a later time. The rectangular schoolhouse is three bays wide and two bays deep and has an asphalt-shingle, side gable roof.[23] Mason #17 , or Masontown, School (026-5175) stands alongside McKenney Highway in the south-central part of the county. A late example of a Rosenwald school, the two-room building dates to 1932 and remained a public school until 1965, since which time it has housed Ananias Jones's Grocery. The schoolhouse has "weatherboard siding, five-part twelve-over-twelve sash windows, a brick pier foundation, and a gabled, standing-seam metal roof with exposed rafter ends. Each classroom is entered by a doorway, sheltered by a bracketed hood, located in the outer bays of the building. A third classroom was added at the west end of the rear elevation soon after the school was built."[24] Important to note, however, is that Rosenwald Schools have a somewhat different historic context than privately built schools such as Rocky Branch. A separate MPD for Virginia's Rosenwald Schools also exists.[25]

Two other rural former schoolhouses are extant in Dinwiddie County, based on survey records at the Department of Historic Resources (DHR). Star of Hope Bibleway Church (026-5156) occupies a 1.53-acre parcel and is within a c. 1930 schoolhouse located at 27604 Perkins Road in Dinwiddie County.[26] Further information about the property, including its historic name, is not recorded at DHR. At 15601 Hardaway's Mill Road (026-5136), another former schoolhouse has been substantially altered to serve as a dwelling, but it appears to have the hipped roof and two entries, one at each end of the façade, that are characteristic of many two-room Rosenwald schools.[27] Information about the property's historic function as a school, including its name, is not recorded at DHR.

Black parents, teachers, community leaders, and students took great pride in their schools as places that imbued students with the life skills needed to navigate Jim Crow society. Black youth also received formal, academic education that would enhance their abilities to be successful adults capable of seizing opportunities to improve life for themselves and their communities. During the early 20th century, agricultural, home economics, and vocational education became more widely available in public schools. Funding for such training programs came to Black

[23] Preservation Virginia Staff, Gruby Road School, VCRIS record 026-5268, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.
[24] 3north Architects, *A Survey of Historic Architecture in Dinwiddie County, Virginia,* 2009-2010, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Dinwiddie County Planning Department, p. 111.
[25] Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/.
[26] Kelli Gibson, Star of Hope Bibleway Church, VCRIS record 026-5156, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.
[27] Gibson Worsham, 15601 Hardaway's Mill Road, VCRIS record 026-5126, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

schools through the private Anna T. Jeanes Fund, which paid salaries for Jeanes Teachers. Dinwiddie County accepted its first Jeanes Teacher in 1915 and, the following year, appropriated $100 per year toward the Jeanes Teacher's salary.[28] White school officials intended this type of training to funnel African Americans into low-paying, menial jobs. Black teachers, however, instilled valued skills that their students were free to deploy as they saw fit, to become entrepreneurs, and to seek better job opportunities within and beyond Virginia.

Rocky Branch Community

The history of Rocky Branch School is emblematic of Publicly-/Privately-Built Schools as defined in the "African American Schools in Virginia" MPD. The school is located in the Rocky Branch neighborhood, which was centered around Rocky Branch Baptist Church. The church dates to the Reconstruction Era, when Emancipated people organized the congregation in 1873. Landowner John Walker donated two acres of land for a sanctuary in 1880. Worship services originally were held in a brush arbor. Congregation members built a log sanctuary from trees they felled themselves. Archie Valentine, a freedman, was among the men who erected the building during the 1870s or 1880s. A frame, Gothic Revival building with lancet-arched windows was constructed during the 1890s. This building stood for more than a century, with various updates and alterations, including a large, attached fellowship hall, that were made over the years as the congregation grew. Archie Valentine's daughter, Mary Catherine (Nannie) Valentine married Branch Johnson and the couple raised nine children in their house on Rocky Branch Road, near the church and the parcel where the school stands. According to the family's history, on Sundays, congregation members who had walked some distance to attend services would stop at the Johnson house to change their shoes before continuing to the church; the family's two-story frame I-house remains extant today.[29]

The Norfolk & Western Railway, which operated a depot in nearby Sutherland, provided employment opportunities to African Americans, including Branch Johnson, whose family lived along Rocky Branch Road. Railroad jobs offered an appealing alternative to agricultural work, with semiskilled positions such as trainman, fireman, and brakeman offering higher rates of pay. Discriminatory employment practices, however, often limited promotion opportunities for Black men and many labor unions that represented railroad workers generally refused membership to Black workers. Due to the county economy's continued reliance on agriculture, gristmills for processing locally produced grains still contributed local job opportunities. The arrival of commercial timbering in Dinwiddie County led to creation of sawmills, another industry that employed African American men. A new source of local employment came during the 1920s as U.S. Route 1 was being constructed by the Virginia Department of Highways. Passage of the

[28] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1916-17* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1918), p. 74. The report states that the County "hesitatingly" accepted the Jeanes Teacher, but does not specify the reason for the hesitation. The name of the first Jeanes Teacher is not known at this time.

[29] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 119-120; "Our History," Rocky Branch Baptist Church, c. 2023, http://rockybranchbaptist.org/img/history.pdf. The 1890s sanctuary was replaced by the current edifice, completed in 2012.

Byrd Road Act in 1932 provided funding for numerous additional road projects. In addition to being a railroader, Branch Johnson worked as part of a crew of African American men who laid gravel for the roadbed prior to the installation of pavement. Transportation improvements such as paved roads allowed Rocky Branch's residents to seek job opportunities farther afield. The neighborhood's relatively short distance from the City of Petersburg made it possible for local residents to commute to jobs at Central State Hospital, which was established in 1882 on a Dinwiddie County farm adjacent to Petersburg and served exclusively African American patients. Petersburg's many tobacco-related enterprises in the city during the early to mid-20th century, as well as textile mills and domestic service, were additional employment sectors, with the latter primarily occupations of African American women. Importantly, the presence of Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University) in Petersburg made it feasible for African Americans in Dinwiddie County to obtain college degrees as well as training and certification in skilled trades. Virginia State employed African Americans with advanced degrees and offered individuals entry to a wide assortment of other fields, including facilities management and maintenance, housekeeping, and administrative functions.[30]

Dinwiddie County was swept into international events upon the entry of the United States into World War I in 1917. Approximately 324 local African American men served in the Army and twenty-six in the Navy during the war years. Ten men were killed during the war, and one individual was reported wounded.[31] East of Petersburg in Prince George County, the establishment of Camp Lee (more recently also known as Fort Gregg-Adams) in 1917 had secondary effects in Dinwiddie County due to the sudden, rapid increase in area population. Upwards of 63,000 troops and civilian workers occupied Camp Lee by the time the war ended on November 11, 1918.[32]

The 1910s saw the expansion of adult education opportunities in Virginia through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's farm demonstration program. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) supervised the program in the Commonwealth. In keeping with state and local laws, the program was racially segregated. Most localities, including Dinwiddie County, hired an African American agent to work with Black farmers. The demonstration agents provided training in the newest applications of scientific research to improve crop and livestock yields, fertilizers, new mechanized equipment, and overall farm management. A companion program was home demonstration, which aimed to provide housewives with guidance on family

[30] Jose Beduya, "Exhibit sheds light on railway's discriminatory history," February 12, 2020, https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2020/02/exhibit-sheds-light-railways-discriminatory-history; Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 120, 188. 3north Architects, *A Survey of Historic Architecture in Dinwiddie County, Virginia,* 2009-2010, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Dinwiddie County Planning Department, p. 88, 91, 95.

[31] The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 276-279.

[32] 3north Architects, *A Survey of Historic Architecture in Dinwiddie County, Virginia,* 2009-2010, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Dinwiddie County Planning Department, p. 94. Camp Lee later became Fort Lee. Following a lengthy study with public input, the installation's name was changed to Fort Gregg-Adams in 2022. The executive branch of the federal government renamed the installation Fort Lee in 2025 without seeking public input.

nutrition, healthcare, food preservation and preparation, and other tasks to improve family health. Home demonstration agents also operated on a segregated basis. Children were provided their own opportunities to learn these skills, with boys participating in farm clubs and girls in home economics.[33]

A countywide architectural survey of Dinwiddie County, conducted in 2009-2010, ascertained that rural African American communities such as Rocky Branch evolved to reflect the changing local economic circumstances. "As non-agricultural work increased, people built increasing numbers of modest houses along the county's secondary and main roads, joining those of small farmers, both black and white. Houses and stores were constructed along the new highways. Black communities grew along secondary roads throughout the county with corresponding schools, stores, and churches."[34] Such communities are still present today.

Rocky Branch School Established

In 1913, John Walker conveyed a one-acre parcel north of Rocky Branch Baptist Church to the Namozine School District of Dinwiddie County for use by an unspecified "Col" School. The earliest part of the Rocky Branch School was built on this land as a one-classroom building. The Sutherland School, in contrast, was a two-room, frame schoolhouse for White children erected at an unknown date prior to 1900.[35]

Rocky Branch School's students attended classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with lessons about grammar, history, geography, and science often incorporated by teachers who found creative ways to make the most of their limited resources. The following individuals taught at Rocky Branch School over the fifty years of its operation: Luciel Brown, Grazell Coleman, Elvira Edmonds, Elmer Edwards, Mary H. Farrar, Dora Goodwin, Sarah Johnson, Emily Major, Mamie McGhee, Corinne (also seen spelled as Coreen) Mitchell, Scott Mitchell, Rebecca Scott-Edwards, Dora S. Thompson, Margaret J. Thompson, Harry Washington, Gracie Williams-Taylor, and Fannie Wynn. According to County School Board meeting minutes, Mary Farrar was hired to teach at Rocky Branch in 1924. Her salary of $50 per year was twenty-five to fifty percent lower than her White counterparts, whose salaries ranged from $75 to $100 per year. Unequal pay for Black teachers compared to that of White teachers was another example of chronic inequity in Virginia's public schools.[36]

[33] The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 214-216.
[34] 3north Architects, *A Survey of Historic Architecture in Dinwiddie County, Virginia,* 2009-2010, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Dinwiddie County Planning Department, p. 98.
[35] Dinwiddie County Deed Book, attached to Deed #3893, August 30, 1963, on file at the Dinwiddie County Courthouse, Dinwiddie, Virginia. In County records, the abbreviation "Col" is for "colored," the term then in use for any person perceived not to be of exclusively northern European lineage. During the earliest decades of statewide public schools in Virginia, localities often used numerical designations for schools instead of names, with "Col" used to indicate those that served students who were not classified as White.
[36] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 282-283; Dinwiddie County School Board, Meeting Minutes, September

As of 1918, Dinwiddie County's public schools received a total of $54,028.92 in state, district, and local tax receipts. At this time, seventy-one percent of the local school-age population was enrolled in school, comprising a total of 4,974 students. White teachers at consolidated schools received an annual salary of $404 while those in one- and two-room schools received $322. The school term for White schools was 154 days, while for Black schools, the term was 113 days, a difference of about six weeks of classroom time. Shorter terms for African American schools were one of many methods that school officials used to minimize public expenditures on educating Black students. Three high schools offering grades eight through eleven had been established by 1918, along with two three-year high schools with grades eight through ten, and two consolidated elementary schools, all of which served only White students. The County also operated fifteen two-room and forty-seven one-room schools.[37]

In 1927, the Rocky Branch Baptist Church asked the County School Board for one of the classrooms at the former Sutherland School to be added to Rocky Branch School.[38] As is recorded in the Board's June 5, 1928, meeting minutes, the Board "ordered that the school building known as the Sutherland School be purchased from Mr. John Thomas for the sum of $250.00 to be used as a colored school, when moved by the patrons of the Rocky Branch School and made a part of that school, the $250.00 to be considered a rebate to Mr. Thomas on his original bid of $300.00 for property."[39] The assignment of responsibility for privately moving and attaching the schoolroom to African American communities was typical of the period. Abjuring such duties was another method that public school officials commonly deployed to minimize their expenditures for the education of Black students.

The Rocky Branch community followed through on their commitment. A one-classroom section of the Sutherland School was moved to the Rocky Branch School parcel in 1928. The section was attached to the north gable end of the c. 1913 schoolhouse that, by this time, included two cloak rooms and a central porch, all under a shed roof along the east elevation. A set of wood steps spanned the porch and accessed the addition's entry. To create an interior connection between the two classrooms, a portion of the c. 1913 building's north wall was removed, as was a portion of the addition's longitudinal wall. A pair of pocket doors was installed in the new opening, which allowed the school to have two separate classrooms while maintaining flexibility to use the entire interior as a single space for special events. Finally, the access to the north cloakroom was relocated from the c. 1913 classroom to the north addition's classroom. The updated building allowed students at Rocky Branch School to be separated into two groups. The

9, 1924, p. 28, 86; "Dinwiddie Schools," *Courier Record*, August 31, 1951, p. 11; "Dinwiddie Teacher List Includes 20 New Names," *The Progress-Index*, August 25, 1961, p. 10.

[37] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1916-17* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1918), p. 73-74. For unknown reasons, the superintendent's report includes data that either is specific only to White schools or to the total student population without differentiation. Data specific to Black students and schools are not in the report.

[38] Sutherland School and Trinity School were consolidated in 1911 to create Midway Elementary School, which was expanded to include a high school in 1915. Information about the school's history is at https://mes.dinwiddie.k12.va.us/about-us/history/.

[39] Dinwiddie County School Board, Meeting Minutes, June 5, 1928, on file at the Dinwiddie County School Board, Dinwiddie, Virginia, p. 174; Joseph D. Lahendro, personal communication to Lena McDonald, April 8, 2025.

c. 1913 section housed students in grades one through three, while the north section was for students in grades four through seven, with two full-time teachers now at the school. With these improvements, the Rocky Branch community had secured significant improvements to the education being provided to their children.

Great Depression and World War II

The Great Depression began during the second half of 1929 with a series of events that caused economic activity to plummet in the U.S. Economic conditions worsened during 1930 to1931 as a series of regional "panics" caused numerous banks to fail. Elected to the U.S. presidency in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt had campaigned on the promise to end the Great Depression by offering a "New Deal" to Americans. The Roosevelt administration spearheaded massive public works programs designed to put people back to work and to invest in infrastructure projects throughout the country. African American workers participated in these programs and, where segregation was the law of the land, they worked in segregated units. In Dinwiddie County, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) offered much-needed employment to young men. Enlistees were paid $30 per month, of which $25 was sent home to their families. The CCC focused on projects to improve soil health, reduce erosion, mitigate wildfires, and build new public parks. The Swift Creek Recreation Demonstration Area in neighboring Chesterfield County was a major CCC project that became the core of today's Pocahontas State Park.[40]

In 1942, the U.S. ramped up its military preparedness by reactivating World War I-era installations such as Camp Lee and establishing new bases. Camp Pickett (more recently known as Fort Barfoot) in neighboring Prince George County brought another major military installation to immediate vicinity of Dinwiddie County. The Army post was established here due to the extensive railroad network that allowed transportation of troops and supplies across Virginia. "By the end of 1942, Camp Pickett was home to eight combat divisions, and there were 1,000 barracks for enlisted troops, seventy officer's quarters and another 400 various buildings including twelve chapels, a post hospital, six firehouses, warehouses, headquarters and administrative facilities."[41] Approximately 53,260 people lived at Camp Pickett at this time. "Forty-eight thousand acres in the counties of Nottoway, Lunenburg, Brunswick, and Dinwiddie were purchased by the [federal] Government at an average cost of $25.50 per acre." Numerous African Americans from Rocky Branch, Dewitt, McKenney, and other Black communities in Dinwiddie County served in the military during World War II, including African American women who joined the Women's Army Corps in segregated units.[42] The Army post also provided civilian employment opportunities. Through the resultant increased cash circulation in

[40] Jennifer Catherine Ruel et al., "Virginia State Parks Built by New Deal Programs, including CCC and WPA," Multiple Property Documentation Form, July 2012, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/134-5088/, p. 11, 37; Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 157.
[41] "Fort Pickett celebrates 75th birthday," Virginia National Guard News Archive, July 50, 2017, https://va.ng.mil/News/Article/2902750/fort-pickett-celebrates-75th-birthday/.
[42] *A Short History of Camp Pickett*, compiled by the Post Public Information Office, April, 1951, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA317720.pdf, p. iv, 2, 4, 26.

the local economy, the installation became a major source of revenue for Dinwiddie County.[43] Desegregation of all branches in the U.S. military, starting in 1948, created unprecedented opportunities for career advancement, and Dinwiddie County's African American men and women made significant contributions and achievements through their service.[44]

Equalizing Educational Opportunities in Dinwiddie County

At the beginning of the 1930s, African Americans across Virginia organized campaigns to improve educational funding and opportunities in the segregated public school system. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) coordinated with the Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA) to litigate for equalization of salaries paid to Black and White teachers. Charles Hamilton Houston, general counsel for the NAACP, conceived a strategy to argue that unequal conditions in public schools violated the due process clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Building on this success, local NAACP branches throughout Virginia launched campaigns to equalize school funding and educational opportunities. Through these efforts, campaigns to equalize salaries paid to Black and White teachers accomplished positive results in multiple localities by the mid-1940s, and many local school boards opted to equalize salaries to head off expensive lawsuits. [45]

Dinwiddie County's civil rights activists included James Jordan, born in 1881, who was a founding member of the county's local NAACP branch. As a child, he had learned to read and write through private tutoring lessons due to the scarcity of public schools. He devoted his adult life to community service, including serving as a deacon at Shiloh Baptist Church and as superintendent of its Sunday school. He also was a respected community member to whom local police turned for assistance due to his peacemaking skills. During the 1930s, Jordan participated in a fundraising campaign to raise money for purchasing a school bus to transport African American students to John A. Dix School, Dinwiddie County's only high school that served Black youth. Another NAACP member, Ruth Johnson Walker, was described as "one of the first women of color to vote" in the county and assisted her neighbors with voting as well. She graduated from John A. Dix School and attended Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University). Along with a lifetime of volunteer service at Central State Hospital and the Red Cross, she worked as a substitute teacher in county schools and taught adult education classes.[46]

Among the many concerns Black communities in Virginia sought to address was provision of high school education for all African American students. Although high schools were

[43] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 157, 194; *Data Summary: Dinwiddie County Petersburg City* (Richmond, Va.: Division of State Planning and Community Affairs, November 1972), p. 4-5.
[44] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 121, 132, 189, 193-194.
[45] Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Schools in Virginia," Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.p. 115-119.
[46] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 125, 210.

commonplace for White students by the 1920s, most localities denied African American students access to public high schools on the basis that these students' education should be limited only to elementary grades and manual trades. To fill the gap, privately funded high schools were established by various entities, including nonprofit, philanthropic, and religious organizations. The privately-funded John A. Dix School near the Town of Dinwiddie began offering high school classes to Black students in Dinwiddie County starting in 1900. William A. Lathrop of Brooklyn, New York, donated a 114-acre tract to the school in December 1899. Funded in part by the Van Renesselear family and the Board of Education of the African Methodist Zion Church, which acquired ownership in 1908, and by tuition fees, the Dix School also served as an orphanage for students from other states. [47]

The Dix School continued as the only high school available to local African Americans until 1931, when Dinwiddie County began to provide some public funding; at that time, the school's name was changed to Dinwiddie Normal Institute. The inclusion of "normal" in the school's name indicated that training for would-be teachers was part of the curriculum. "Institute" was used to indicate that manual training for menial agricultural and industrial work was provided to male students. Within a few years, the school's name changed again, to Dinwiddie Training School. In 1938, Dinwiddie County assumed responsibility for operating a public high school to replace the church-owned training school; the Dix School was demolished at a later date. Located in the Town of Dinwiddie and completed in 1939, the new Dinwiddie Training School housed classrooms for academic courses, while the former normal institute's schoolhouse continued in use for agricultural, industrial arts, and home economics departments.[48]

Dinwiddie County's African American students had opportunities to show off their school projects from their vocational courses through special events at the end of the school year. A 1934 newspaper article in the *New Journal and Guide* described an "annual exhibit" that was held at the McKenney Training School.[49] Students at the training school, Dewitt School, and Rocky Branch School were among the schools that participated in the event and the three "took

[47] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 275, 279-280, 283; "Historic Southside High School Educational Center: History," Dinwiddie County Public Schools, no date, https://www.dinwiddie.k12.va.us/schools/historic-southside-high-school-education-center/; 3north Architects, *A Survey of Historic Architecture in Dinwiddie County, Virginia,* 2009-2010, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Dinwiddie County Planning Department, p. 94, 109.

[48] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 275, 279-280, 283; "Historic Southside High School Educational Center: History," Dinwiddie County Public Schools, no date, https://www.dinwiddie.k12.va.us/schools/historic-southside-high-school-education-center/; 3north Architects, *A Survey of Historic Architecture in Dinwiddie County, Virginia,* 2009-2010, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Dinwiddie County Planning Department, p. 94, 109. Following the desegregation of local schools, the high school became Dinwiddie Junior High (later Dinwiddie Middle School) and housed an adult education program. The school closed in 2012 and the property was repurposed as the Historic Southside High School Education Center.

[49] Very little information about the McKenney Training School has been identified to date. A school of this name, but no additional data, is included in "Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041)," Multiple Property Documentation Form, June 30, 2004, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/012-5041/.

the lead in prizes."[50] Such exhibits provided opportunities for students to show the best of the projects they had completed during agricultural, vocational, and home economics classes. At the 1934 exhibit, for example, the award-winning projects included aprons, slips, dresses, sewing bags, and household items such as magazine racks and foot stools. The sewing projects typically were made by home economics students while household items were the result of shop classes in basic woodworking.

As of 1940, African Americans comprised sixty-two percent of Dinwiddie County's public school students. High school education remained the exception rather than the norm. Just eleven percent of eligible Black youths were enrolled in high school, compared to 33.8 percent of White high school-age residents. Although schools for both groups now had a term of nine months, the county's expenditure on students per capita was grossly unequal. For elementary students, Dinwiddie County spent $42.07 for White children and just $15.53 for African American children, a difference of more than sixty percent. At the high school level, the County spent $65.29 per White student and $26.67 per Black student, a difference of just under sixty percent. When taken into consideration with the fact that White students comprised thirty-eight percent of the total student body, the disparities in funding were far from the "separate but equal" doctrine that was used to justify racially segregated schools. Most of the county's African American elementary students continued to convene in one- and two-room frame schoolhouses, while Black high school students had the option of attending the Dinwiddie Training School and the McKenney Training School. As noted above, in 1940, Dinwiddie County still operated a total of thirty-six schools for Black children, while there were just seven schools for White students. The increased reliance on school buses reflected the extent of consolidation, as the county utilized thirty-five school buses to take White students an average of thirty-seven miles round-trip to attend school. Just one school bus transported African American students to Dinwiddie Training School, and it was purchased by Black communities through private fundraisers. Elementary-age Black children walked up to five miles per day to attend school.[51] Such inequities existed in all racially segregated public school systems in Virginia.

By this time, the salary equalization movement that Virginia teachers began a decade earlier had gained momentum. Writing in 1947, Ada F. Coleman reported:

> At the Conference of the Virginia Teachers' Association in 1940 a three-day clinic was held in which the N.A.A.C.P. attorneys … discussed methods of making [salary equalization] decisions in these cases applicable in every community in Virginia. Nearly every teacher present consulted the attorneys, presenting not only her salary problem but problems of buildings, appropriations, equipment, and bus transportation. As a result of this clinic broader programs of legal attack were planned.[52]

[50] "Dinwiddie, VA," *New Journal and Guide,* May 12, 1934, p. A15.
[51] The Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: "The Countrey of the Apamatica*, Sponsored by the Dinwiddie County School Board (Richmond, Va.: 1942), p. 192.
[52] Ada F. Coleman, "The Salary Equalization Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education,* Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1947), p. 238.

A key victory came with the 1940 *Alston v. Board of Education of the City of Norfolk* lawsuit, which resulted in a court order to equalize teacher salaries in the city's public school system. Even before the case had been decided, "many other cities and counties voluntarily entered into agreements for salary equalization."[53] Between 1947 and1949, equalization lawsuits managed by NAACP attorneys expanded to the school buildings themselves and the curricula offered at schools for White versus Black students. Dinwiddie County was among the localities that were sued. Between the 1940-1941 and the 1947-1948 school years, the County School Board reportedly made substantial increases in funding for African American schools.[54]

By the late 1940s, the annual reports filed by the Supervisor of Public Instruction did not break down expenditures on schools according to race. The lack of specific data makes it difficult to measure how Dinwiddie County's increases in funding for Black students and schoolhouses compared to other localities. Teachers, however, continued to be tabulated by race. The County had a total of sixty-nine full-time African American teachers during the 1948-1949 school year and fifty-three White teachers, fifty-one of whom were full-time. Vocational classes were taught by two Black agricultural instructors, three home economics teachers, and one industrial arts instructor. White vocational instructors consisted of three for agriculture, three in home economics, two for industrial arts, and two in commercial classes.[55] Progress toward equalizing teacher salaries had been made, with the average salary for Black elementary teachers now at $1,667 annually and for White supervisors at $1,864; all of the elementary teachers were recorded as female. Among high school teachers, African American men were paid $2,008 annually and women received $1,826, while their White counterparts were paid $2,234 and $2,044, respectively.[56] The total student enrollment in Dinwiddie County public schools included 2,676 African American youth and 1,362 White youth.[57]

Although the county school system included more African American than White teachers, this was an indication that most of the schools for Black youth had yet to be consolidated. The valuation of school buildings and sites in 1948-1949 offers a stark comparison, with African American schools appraised at $212,755 while White schools had a valuation of $807,857. School buses for Black students were valued at $21,946 and for White students at $50,175. Furniture and equipment in African American schools was estimated to be worth $31,086, and for White schools stood at

[53] Ada F. Coleman, "The Salary Equalization Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education,* Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1947), p. 239.
[54] Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to "Integration," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 23-24.
[55] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1948-49* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1949), p. 246. "Commercial" vocational training was intended to prepare students for work in modern businesses, with an emphasis on retail enterprises. African American students were not provided this opportunity.
[56] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1948-49* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1949), p. 280. Gender-based discrimination in teacher compensation remained a perennial problem at most public school systems throughout the 20th century.
[57] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1948-49* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1949), p. 293.

$45,850.[58] Considering that African American children continued to comprise more than sixty-five percent of the total student enrollment, the inequities were profound.[59]

Recognizing the intrinsic injustice of the "separate but equal doctrine," Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton Houston crafted a legal strategy to dismantle segregation in public schools altogether.[60] State and local elected officials became increasingly concerned about this possibility and, during Governor John S. Battle's administration between 1950 and1954, the General Assembly appropriated the first-ever state grants to localities for school construction. In Dinwiddie County, the construction of Southside High School was the direct result of equalization efforts. Doxey A. Wilkerson wrote:

> Dinwiddie County got $500,000 from the "Battle Fund"; and $400,000 of it went into the very fine [Southside High School] built in 1953-54 at a cost of $805,000. Telling the story of long and futile efforts to get such a school, a civic leader there remarked: "Before the Prince Edward case, nothing happened in Dinwiddie County."[61]

Despite the many inequities that existed in Dinwiddie County's public schools at the mid-20th century mark, the high caliber of African American teachers was apparent in a list of 1950-1951 teacher assignments published in the *Courier Record*. Lilliam M. Watson, a graduate of Virginia State College, became head teacher at Mason Town Elementary School, and Ruth Wyatt, a graduate of Virginia Union University in Richmond, became head teacher at Wyatt School. Corinne Mitchell, a graduate of Virginia State College with previous teaching experience in Dinwiddie County, was appointed head teacher at Rocky Branch School. Bettye M. Merrick, a graduate of Virginia State College, became head teacher at Hebron School. Mildred B. Williams served as the county's Supervisor of Instruction for African American schools. Through a G.I. Bill program, Walter T. Walden provided educational training to military veterans at Dinwiddie Training School while James Allen Holmes taught agricultural training to veterans at McKenney Training School. Oscar W. Epps supervised the veterans programs in Dinwiddie and several neighboring counties.[62] The newspaper also reported that William E. Edmondson, a graduate of Hampton Institute, joined the faculty at Dinwiddie Training School to teach physical and health education for boys. Provision of such classes represented the expanding curriculum that began to be offered at the county's African American schools after World War II. In the book *Dinwiddie*

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[58] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1948-49* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1949), p. 367.
[59] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents School Year 1948-49* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1949), p. 363.
[60] Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to "Integration," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 25.
[61] Doxey A. Wilkerson, "The Negro School Movement in Virginia: From 'Equalization' to "Integration," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1960), p. 27. The "Prince Edward case" was a reference to the student-led walkout at Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville, Prince Edward County, Virginia, in 1951. The students walked out to protest overcrowded and poor physical conditions at the school and the overall inequity of public education for African American students in the county. The student strike is widely considered to be a major event in the history of the Civil Rights Movement and, consequently, the school was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998.
[62] "Dinwiddie Schools," *Courier Record*, August 31, 1951, p. 11.

County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006, William H. Morgan, a Hampton Institute graduate, is listed as the first physical education instructor, coach, and athletic director at Dinwiddie Training School. It is possible that the newspaper reported an erroneous name or that William Edmondson and William Morgan held different positions at the high school. Morgan was drafted into the U.S. military in 1951 upon the outbreak of the Korean War. Following a three-year period of service, he returned to Dinwiddie County and remained with the county school system as a teacher and administrator for forty-one years. County native Geraldine Edmonds Spicely, who graduated from Dinwiddie Training School in 1945 and from Virginia State College in 1949, taught at the training school and then at its replacement, Southside High School.[63]

Southside High School, for which approximately half of the construction costs were paid through a state equalization grant and a local bond referendum paid the remainder, opened in time for the 1954-1955 school year. The school was expanded in 1956 with a wing that included four science classrooms, two science labs, and a French learning laboratory. This expansion indicates continued expansion of the school's academic curricula to make it comparable to coursework offered at White schools.

The same year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision represented a watershed in the movement to eliminate Jim Crow segregation in the U.S. In Virginia, as in all other southern states, most White local and state officials resolved not to comply with court orders to desegregate. In 1956, the General Assembly crafted a legislative package, commonly known as Massive Resistance, to provide legal cover for local school systems to avoid desegregation. Despite numerous lawsuits and piecemeal desegregation in some Virginia localities, Massive Resistance kept the vast majority of local school systems segregated well into the 1960s.[64] Dinwiddie County was among the localities that refused to desegregate its public schools. Most of the county's African American elementary students continued to be taught in rural one- and two-room schoolhouses that lacked electricity, indoor plumbing, and/or central heating and ventilation systems. The physical quality of their environs, however, was not reflected in the formal education that Black students received from their dedicated teachers with the support of their families, church congregations, and communities.

Rocky Branch School During the 1950s-1960s

In 2022, the following alumni of Rocky Branch School participated in oral history interviews with Joseph D. Lahendro, historic architect: Sharlene Anderson Wrenn, Janet Anderson Edwards, Obena Wyatt Anderson, Garfield Jones, Jean Brown Griffin, Patricia Brown Christian, Charlie Brown, Jr., Ełois Fitzgerald Evans, Hattie Fitzgerald Wilkins, Barbara Fitzgerald Mills, Clarence Williams, Auther Dean, Morris Dean, John Dean, Gwendolyn Roberts Williams, Alfonso Roberts, Horace Walker, Jr., and Gloria Perry Goings. Raymond Wrenn, who grew up

[63] Dinwiddie County Heritage Book Committee, *Dinwiddie County Virginia – Heritage 1752-2006* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2007), p. 146, 188.
[64] For detailed discussion of Massive Resistance in Virginia, see Lena McDonald, Ashlen Stump, and Marcus Pollard, "African American Schools in Virginia," Multiple Property Documentation Form, approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and State Review Board, June 12, 2025.

in Southampton County, now attends Rocky Branch Baptist Church and is assisting with the stabilization project taking place at the school. As noted above, many of these individuals also conversed about their experiences in April 2025. They attended Rocky Branch School between 1951 and1963.

The alumni recall the following physical characteristics about Rocky Branch School. In the c. 1913 (lower grades) classroom, they remember blackboards were on the south wall. In the north (upper grades) classroom, which was added in 1928, blackboards were on the north wall. Both sets of blackboards are extant today. The north classroom had pull-down maps above the blackboards; these would be lowered on test days to hide exam questions written on the blackboards. The students in the lower grades sat at tables and chairs, while the upper grades student had individual desks. In both spaces, the students were grouped together by grade. The school's library occupied a cabinet in the c. 1913 classroom that stood near the teacher's desk in the northeast corner.

The grounds surrounding the schoolhouse were not landscaped. Much of it was bare earth as vegetation had been worn away by generations of school children playing during recess. The playground equipment was installed toward the end of Rocky Branch's use as a public school. The equipment stood in the front yard, which was where children had always played. Recesses were brief, typically about fifteen minutes, occurring once in the morning and again in the afternoon.

Drinking water was supplied by a well in front of the schoolhouse. It was equipped with a hand pump. Students knew how to make paper cups for themselves or sometimes used a dipper or their hands to catch water. Behind the school, at the edge of the woods, a wood frame building had a center room used for storing stove wood and coal, and a privy at each end, with one designated for girls and the other for boys. The wood was used in each classroom's cast iron stove to start a fire on cold mornings. After the fire was established, coal would be added for a longer and hotter fire. For many years, a rear window on the schoolhouse was left unlocked. The older boys were tasked with starting the morning fires. Clarence Williams, who started attending Rocky Branch in 1951, explained that the boys, arriving earlier than other students and the teachers, would collect wood from the shed, then climb into the building through the unlocked window to load the stoves. During the late 1950s, the school's parent-teacher association (PTA) paid a caretaker, Mr. Johnson, to start lighting the stove fires. Students took responsibility for other aspects of the school's maintenance, such as regularly cleaning out each cloak room.

Corinne Mitchell, a graduate of Virginia State College (today's Virginia State University), was appointed "head teacher" at Rocky Branch School in 1951.[65] Dora Goodwin and Margaret J. Thompson taught at Rocky Branch School during the early 1960s and were fondly remembered by the school's alumni at their meeting in April 2025. A typical school day at Rocky Branch began with devotions, the pledge of allegiance, the Lord's Prayer, reciting bible verses, and singing the "Good Morning" song. With regard to their school's furniture and textbooks, Rocky Branch students understood at the time that they received castoffs from Dinwiddie County's all-

[65] "Dinwiddie Schools," *Courier Record*, August 31, 1951, p. 11.

White schools. The outdated textbooks had torn pages and included derogatory comments written by White students, and Rocky Branch parents still were required to rent or buy the books. The students also knew that their curriculum was not equal to that at White schools.

As explained above, during the 1950s, Dinwiddie County accessed the equalization grants that became available during Governor John Battle's administration. Construction of Southside High School represented a significant step forward in the quality of public education provided to the county's African American high school students. The County also adhered to the Massive Resistance tactics that the General Assembly authorized in 1956. Among these was a token desegregation plan that authorized the creation of a State Pupil Placement Board that reviewed applications for students to be assigned to a school other than the one selected by their local school board. Virtually all of the applications that Black parents submitted to assign their children to White schools were rejected. After parts of the Massive Resistance legislative package were struck down by state and federal courts in 1958-1959, then-Governor J. Lindsay Almond appointed a legislative commission to come up with a new version of pupil placement that would satisfy judicial requirements while still avoiding full desegregation of public schools. Known as Freedom of Choice, the program operated in a similar manner to its predecessor, but with school assignment decisions made by the local school board. Through this process, a very gradual process of desegregation began at some Dinwiddie County schools, such as Dinwiddie High School.

For elementary students, however, Dinwiddie County officials opted to build new, consolidated schools for African Americans during the mid-1950s to early 1960s. These were the Northside, Eastside, and Southside elementary schools. Although the consolidation process was slow, by August 1962, the county's 2,620 Black students were attending just fifteen schools. The enrollment at the consolidated schools were as follows: Southside High School, 712 students; Southside Elementary, 606 students; McKenney Elementary, 349 students; West Petersburg Elementary, 186 students; Dewitt Elementary, 158 students; and Mount Level Elementary, 150 students. The small, rural schools still in use were Maston Town Elementary, with fifty-eight students; Rocky Branch, seventy-one students, Center Star, sixty-one students; Gruby Road, eighty students; White Oak, fifty-four students; Evans, twenty-six students; Marmora, twenty-six students; and Ford, forty students. The completion of Northside Elementary in 1963 prompted the closure of Rocky Branch School after sixty-two years of operation.[66]

[66] "4,445 Pupils Will Enroll in Dinwiddie," *The Progress-Index,* August 15, 1962, p. 15.

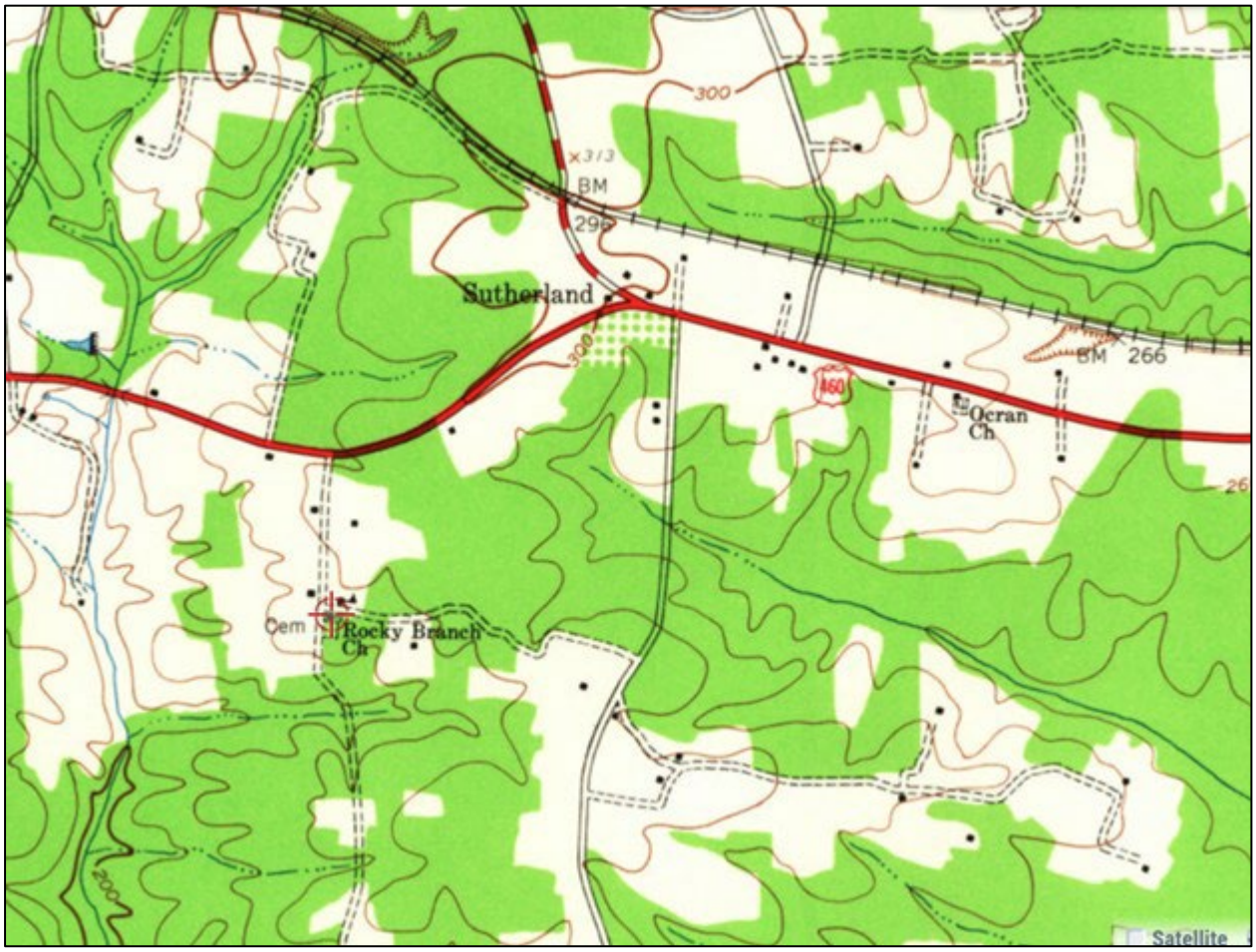

Figure 8. Detail of 1961 USGS Sutherland topographic quadrangle shows the location of Rocky Branch School[at red crosshairs symbol] (Image Source: USGS and ESRI, Historical Topo Map Explorer, https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/topomapexplorer).

Closure of Rocky Branch School

Depending on where they lived, most Rocky Branch students transferred to Northside Elementary and a few went to Eastside. The Rocky Branch alumni who went to these schools recalled how different the newly built, modern, masonry buildings were in comparison to Rocky Branch School. The large libraries, in particular, delighted many of the students. Teachers previously assigned to the rural one- and two-room schools, such as Rocky Branch, were transferred to the new schools. Through the "Freedom of Choice" plan that ostensibly was designed to begin desegregating public schools, parents of several Rocky Branch students applied for them to be admitted to the formerly all-White Midway Elementary School. After the nurturing environment they had experienced at Rocky Branch, the transition to Midway Elementary was particularly difficult as the students experienced racial harassment at every turn. Despite their mistreatment, these students persevered and remained in school; their courage paved the way for the eventual desegregation of Dinwiddie County's public schools.

The Dinwiddie County School Board took immediate action to sell the surplused one- and two-room schoolhouses. On August 14, 1963, the land and buildings at Rocky Branch, Gruby Road, Ford, Evans, Marmora, and Butterwood schools were sold at public auction; of these, Rocky Branch and Gruby Road are still extant. Rocky Branch Baptist Church purchased the neighboring school property for $1,925, decades after originally sponsoring the c. 1913 school's construction and its 1928 addition.[67]

From 1963 to1968, Dinwiddie County made only token progress toward desegregation through its "Freedom of Choice" plan. The U.S. Supreme Court's *Green v. New Kent County School Board* found such plans to be unconstitutional and required Virginia schools to complete desegregation without further delays. Dinwiddie's schools achieved complete desegregation at the beginning of the 1970-1971 school year.

Criterion C: Architecture

Rocky Branch School is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The building retains character-defining features of an early 20th century, rural school for African American students in Virginia during the era of Jim Crow segregation. These elements include the schoolhouse's evolved form and massing, front porch, fenestration with original wood sash and a single, exterior entry to each classroom, interior finishes, pocket doors, and blackboards. Vernacular materials and workmanship are retained throughout the building as well and add to the property's study value.

The African American Schools in Virginia MPD explains that the architectural design of African Americans schools erected between c. 1902-c. 1931 is significant for embodying numerous aspects of the period's public education architectural trends. Vernacular construction methods, materials, and design were utilized to build public schoolhouses for African American students, particularly in rural areas. Although standardized plans by professional architects became widely available during the 1910s, a substantial number of Virginia's rural schoolhouses did not follow a standardized plan. Rocky Branch School is one such example. The original Rocky Branch School, consisting of a single classroom with two cloakrooms, dates to c. 1913. The north section that originally was part of the Sutherland School likely dates to the late 19th century. Although a standardized plan was not followed, Rocky Branch School has character-defining features common to rural African American schools between c. 1902-c. 1931. Most notably, the building's large windows were a crucial feature as the main source of interior light. The inclusion of pocket doors between the classrooms made the interior flexible and allowed for use as a community events venue. The two chimneys were designed to accommodate woodstoves for heating. The interior finishes of hardwood flooring and beadboard wall and ceiling cladding are typical materials found in 1910s and 1920s African American schools. Cloakrooms and separate entries to each classroom also are commonly found features at schools built during this period. The building's high integrity of design enhances its study potential for comparative analyses

[67] "Dinwiddie School Sale Brings $9,900," *The Progress-Index*, August 15, 1963, p. 15.

with other early-20th-century African American schoolhouses in Dinwiddie County, as well as the larger Southside region of Viginia.

Sawmills and planning mills operated locally in Dinwiddie County from the 19th to early 20th century as the area's extensive woodlands were gradually cleared. Standardized dimensions for lumber began to be adopted during the mid-19th century, but local variations remained common through the turn of the 20th century. Both sections of Rocky Branch School, therefore, likely have framing members, siding, and interior finishes that do not quite match modern standardized dimensions. The building's retention of its original exterior and interior materials imbues it with high integrity of vernacular materials and workmanship.

Rocky Branch School has no overt architectural stylistic influences. Its form, massing, interior plan, and specific features, such as large windows, classrooms separated by pocket doors, and cloakrooms, are entirely representative of rural school buildings for African American children during the first three decades of the 20th century. The original exterior weatherboard siding and the interior tongue-and-groove hardwood flooring, tongue-and-groove painted wall and ceiling finishes, and plain baseboards, window trim, and door casing are intact. The front porch and exterior entrance to the c.1913 classroom were added between 1913 and 1928, and the 1928 classroom entrance installed in 1928. The building's architectural significance is rooted in its retention of original materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association and make apparent its association with the Publicly-/Privately-Built School type identified in the African American Schools in Virginia MPD.

Registration Requirements

Rocky Branch School meets the registration requirements of Property Type 2: Privately/ Publicly-Built Schools, c. 1902-c. 1931, as developed in the African American Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document (MPD). Within this category, the purpose-built Rocky Branch School is classified as Subtype A, as the building's design did not follow a standardized plan. As with many schools in this group, Rocky Branch is a rural school featuring a modest two-room layout and frame construction. Ubiquitous with nearly all of these schools were large windows for light, a chimney for a heating stove and a prominent main entry. Electricity in rural Black schools during this period was rare, and Rocky Branch School only received rudimentary electrical wiring for overhead lights towards the end of its use as a school. Another common element of the daily experience at these schools, and at Rocky Branch as well, was the use of privies and the lack of indoor plumbing. The property's second classroom is more common in this period than at rural African American schools during the late-nineteenth century, as is the presence of cloakrooms, both of which were added to Rocky Branch's original one-room schoolhouse between 1913 and 1928. Common interior finishes were tongue-and-groove wood flooring, double-hung wood sash windows with plain casing, and beadboard wall coverings with plain baseboards, all seen in Rocky Branch School. The side gable roof with exposed rafter tails and standing seam metal cladding (extant beneath the modern sheet metal panels currently in place), also were typical features.

Rocky Branch School retains most of the elements which identify it as a Privately-/Publicly-Built Black School, c. 1902-c. 1931. The schoolhouse retains high architectural integrity of design, workmanship, and materials, with the partial height partition in the c. 1913 classroom the only alteration made since the property's period of significance ended in 1963. The school building remains at the location it occupied throughout its period of significance, with the north classroom moved in 1928 for the purpose of expanding Rocky Branch School's capacity. The completion of the current Rocky Branch Baptist Church's sanctuary in 2012 altered the immediate setting, but the school's physical relationship to the church that sponsored its establishment is intact. The larger rural setting is relatively unchanged. The building's façade with its entry porch, flanked by the cloakrooms, is intact. None of the alumni who were interviewed recall the wood steps shown in a 1930s photo of the building; all recall that the extant concrete steps were in place while they attended school here. On the interior, the classrooms and cloakrooms retain their original finishes, window sash and doors, and blackboards with chalk trays. With its intact representative features, Rocky Branch School meets the registration requirements of the MPD under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Education and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

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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:

_X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR No. 026-5114

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 37.189669 Longitude: -77.573522

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

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 nominated boundary is coterminous with the lot lines described in Deed #3833, page 2, on file at the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court, Dinwiddie County, Virginia. The legal description is as follows: All of that certain lot or parcel of land lying, being, and situate in Namozine District, Dinwiddie County, Virginia, containing one (1) acre, as shown by that certain plat made by W. C. Rives, County Surveyor and a made a part of and filed with the hereinafter referred to deed in which property is described as follows: Commencing at a stake in the Church Road 4.71 chains N. 7½° E. of a stone at a peach tree, thence N.7 ½° E. 2.10 chains along said road to a corner stake, thence S. 71° E. 4.75 chains to a corner stake, thence S. 7½° W. 2.10 chains to a corner stake, thence N. 71° W. 4.75 chains to point of beginning, it being the same land conveyed to the School Board of Namozine District, Number One, by deed from John Walker & wife, dated September 3, 1913 and recorded February 25, 1914 in

D.B. 34, at page 455, in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Dinwiddie County, Virginia. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Sketch Map, which has a scale of 1"=800'.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The nominated boundary encompasses the full extent of the parcel associated with Rocky Branch School since 1913, when the land was acquired by the Namozine District School District Number One for use as a public school, until the property ceased functioning as a public school in 1963. The property's historic setting and all known associated resources are within the boundary.

---

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lena McDonald and Ashlen Stump
organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group
street & number: 536 W. 35th Street
city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508
e-mail: admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com
telephone: 757-923-1900
date: June 20, 2025

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: Rocky Branch School
City or Vicinity: Sutherland vicinity
County: Dinwiddie County State: Virginia
Photographer: Lena S. McDonald
Date Photographed: April 8, 2025

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

Photo Number of 23	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
1	Setting of Rocky Branch School (at left) and Rocky Branch Baptist Church (at right). The Sutherland section of the building is at left and the c. 1913 section is at right.	SE	4/8/2025	LSM
2	Civil Rights in Education Trail marker and capped well (foreground) and Rocky Branch School (background)	E	4/8/2025	LSM
3	Rocky Branch School, west façade and south (side) elevation	NE	4/8/2025	LSM
4	Rocky Branch School, south (side) and east (rear) elevations	NW	4/8/2025	LSM
5	Rocky Branch School, west (rear) elevation. C. 1913 section is at left and Sutherland section is at right.	W	4/8/2025	LSM
6	Rocky Branch School, detail of framing on Sutherland section showing likely location of original entry.	E	4/8/2025	LSM
7	Rocky Branch School, north (side) elevation	S	4/8/2025	LSM
8	Rocky Branch School, detail of entry to Sutherland section on south (side) wall	NE	4/8/2025	LSM
9	Rocky Branch School, west façade. Sutherland section is at left and c. 1913 section is at right.	E	4/8/2025	LSM
10	Rocky Branch School, detail of front porch and rebuilt piers on c. 1913 section	SE	4/8/2025	LSM
11	Rocky Branch School, seam at Sutherland section's south wall (at left) and 1913 section's façade (at right)	NE	4/8/2025	LSM

Photo Number of 23	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
12	Rocky Branch School, classroom in c. 1913 section, looking toward main entry	SE	4/8/2025	LSM
13	Rocky Branch School, 1960s partition within c. 1913 section	NW	4/8/2025	LSM
14	Rocky Branch School, c. 1913 section, cloak room	SW	4/8/2025	LSM
15	Rocky Branch School, c. 1913 section ceiling and opening for woodstove flue	S/SE	4/8/2025	LSM
16	Rocky Branch School, c. 1913 section classroom, looking toward partition, pocket doors, and Sutherland section	NE	4/8/2025	LSM
17	Rocky Branch School, partition wall and pocket doors, looking toward c. 1913 section from Sutherland section	SE	4/8/2025	LSM
18	Rocky Branch School, original flooring in c. 1913 section (top) and historic replacement flooring in Sutherland section (bottom). The track for the pocket door divides the two sections.	n/a	4/8/2025	LSM
19	Rocky Branch School, detail of pocket door framing and historic fire extinguisher	SW	4/8/2025	LSM
20	Rocky Branch School, detail of hanging chimney and window openings in Sutherland section	NE	4/8/2025	LSM
21	Rocky Branch School, classroom in Sutherland section	W	4/8/2025	LSM
22	Rocky Branch School, detail of cloakroom and entry in Sutherland section	SW	4/8/2025	LSM
23	Rocky Branch School, detail of wall finish in Sutherland section	N/NW	4/8/2025	LSM

Embedded Images Log

Figure No.	Caption
1	Detail of 1944 edition of Sutherland USGS topographic quadrangle, showing Rocky Branch School, Rocky Branch Church, and the unincorporated

Figure No.	Caption
	community of Sutherland (Image Source: USGS topoView, https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#15/37.1852/-77.5814.)
2	Early 1930s photo of Rocky Branch School (Image Source: Virginia State University Special Collections and Archives, Archie G. Richardson Collection, Ettrick, Virginia).
3	At left, framing beneath exterior siding indicates former door location; at right, beadboard wall covering indicates former door opening (Image Source: Joseph D. Lahendro, historic architect, 2025).
4	Floor plan of Rocky Branch School (Image Source: Joseph D. Lahendro, historic architect, May 2025.
5	Detail of hung chimney design (Image Source: The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community [Tuskegee, Alabama: The Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915], p. 23.)
6	Bracket for historic-period fire extinguisher in the north section of Rocky Branch School (Image Source: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2025).
7	1933 patent drawing for a grenade-type fire extinguisher (Image Source: Kathleen Obrer, "Red Comet Fire Extinguishers," The Wolfsonian, Florida International University, November 18, 2021, https://wolfsonian.org/blog/2021/31/.
8	Detail of 1961 USGS Sutherland topographic quadrangle shows the location of Rocky Branch School[at red crosshairs symbol] (Image Source: USGS and ESRI, Historical Topo Map Explorer, https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/topomapexplorer).

Rocky Branch School (DHR ID# 026-5114) | Location Map

3/3/2025, 12:42:42 PM

Parcels

Waterbodies

Rocky Branch School NRN Boundary

Rocky Branch School
6009 Rocky Branch Road
Sutherland, Dinwiddie County, Virginia
DHR ID# 026-5114

1:5,048

0 250 500 1,000 ft

0 75 150 300 m

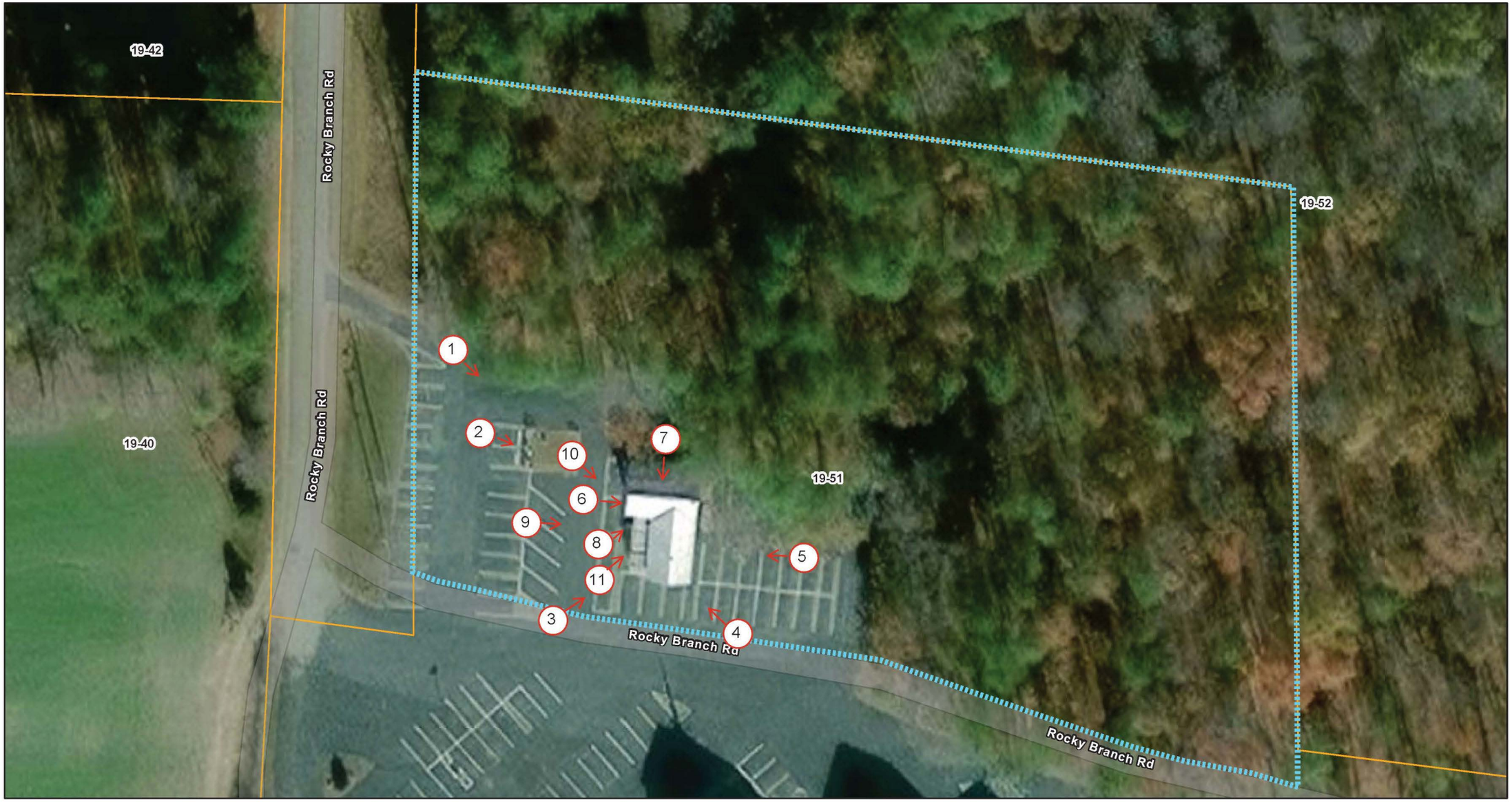
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Maxar

Location Coordinates:
1) Latitude: 37.189669 Longitude: -77.573522

Parcel ID: 19-51

Dinwiddie County, VA
Dinwiddie GIS

Rocky Branch School (DHR ID# 026-5114) | Photo Key



4/16/2025, 4:04:03 PM

Parcels

Rocky Branch School NRN Boundary

Photo Location & Direction

Rocky Branch School
6009 Rocky Branch Road
Sutherland, Dinwiddie County, Virginia
DHR ID# 026-5114

1:650

0 0.01 0.01 0.02 mi
0 0.01 0.02 0.04 km

Commonwealth of Virginia, Maxar, Microsoft, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Dinwiddie County
Dinwiddie County GIS

Rocky Branch School (DHR ID# 026-5114) | Sketch Map

4/16/2025, 4:15:14 PM

Parcels

Rocky Branch School NRN Boundary

C = Contributing
NC = Noncontributing

Parcel ID: 19-51

Rocky Branch School
6009 Rocky Branch Road
Sutherland, Dinwiddie County, Virginia
DHR ID# 026-5114

1:800

0 40 80 160 ft
0 12.5 25 50 m

https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/dd2408c619134f2dba1cd7a98c292381/#data_s=id%3AdataSource_8-188da1ad046-layer-18%3A1429

Dinwiddie County
Dinwiddie County GIS