

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
**Office of Archives and History**  
**Department of Cultural Resources**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Old Richmond Schoolhouse and Gymnasium**

Tobaccoville, Forsyth County, FY0058, Listed 1/21/2009

Nomination by Susannah V. Franklin

Photographs by Susannah V. Franklin, June 2007



Old Richmond Schoolhouse



Gymnasium

**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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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**1. Name of Property**

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historic name Old Richmond Schoolhouse and Gymnasium  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Location**

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street & number 6315 Tobaccoville Road not for publication N/A  
city or town Tobaccoville vicinity X  
state North Carolina code NC county Forsyth code 067 zip code 27050

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date  
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

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I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
_____ entered in the National Register	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
_____ determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
_____ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
_____ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
_____ other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
In the National Register

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

roof METAL: Tin, ASPHALT

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

other N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**EDUCATION**

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**Period of Significance**

1914-1958

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**Significant Dates**

1914, 1940

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**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

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**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

NC State Archives

Old Richmond Schoolhouse and Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Forsyth County, North Carolina  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** approximately 1.7 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>554909E</u>	<u>4006691N</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
					<u>See continuation sheet</u>		

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Susannah V. Franklin  
organization N/A date March 6, 2007  
street & number 406 East Fourth Street telephone (336) 714-8917  
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools  
street & number 1605 Miller Street telephone (336) 727-2816  
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27103

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Setting

Old Richmond Schoolhouse and Gymnasium are located at 6315 Tobaccoville Road, near the intersection of Tobaccoville and Bethania-Tobaccoville Road, less than two miles from Highway 52 in Tobaccoville, North Carolina. Tobaccoville is a village in Forsyth County, approximately fifteen miles north of Winston-Salem. The surrounding area is not densely populated. Residential homes, widely spaced, line Tobaccoville Road, the main road of the area. Behind the school property is a wooded area that transitions into a residential neighborhood. The area around the school is rural with few commercial or industrial properties.

The original school building and gymnasium are located at the rear of the property more than fifty feet from Tobaccoville Road, behind the current non-contributing school building, which was constructed in 1978. The original school building was moved in 1922, approximately twenty feet west, to its current location, to facilitate the construction of the second Old Richmond School. It is still oriented east toward Tobaccoville Road. The schoolhouse and gymnasium facades are oriented to the northeast but will be described as having east orientations in this nomination. The gymnasium is in its original location, also facing Tobaccoville Road. There is parking on the south, north, and front (east) sides of the newest school building. Track and tennis courts are located on the school parcel, but are not included in the nominated area. A play area is located behind the new school building in between the original school and the gymnasium. Five newer, non-contributing school buildings are also located on the school parcel.

Old Richmond Schoolhouse, c. 1914, contributing

The Old Richmond Schoolhouse, is a one-story, three bay, rectangular building with a projecting center bay. It has a brick pier foundation and is situated on a slope, and a daylight basement accessed from a small door on the north side. The pier foundation has been in filled with modern brick and weatherboards to form the basement walls. The frame building is clad in wood weatherboarding with corner boards painted white. The side-gabled roof is sheathed in standing seam metal, as is the front-gabled vestibule center bay on the façade. Exposed rafter tails project above a wide, flat fascia board.

The front elevation has single, wooden, double-hung, six-over-six windows on each side bay. The projecting center bay has wooden, double-hung, four-over-four single windows

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flanking a recessed entryway, with a rectangular vent in the gable above. The square opening of the recessed entry provides shelter and access to the two, single, five-panel, wood doors with brass hardware, which lead into the school. Each door enters into one of the two classrooms. The recessed entry is clad with bead board siding on the walls and ceiling.

The south elevation has only two, high, eight-light, horizontal, levered windows. The north elevation has the same windows, as well as a small door providing access to the basement on the northeast corner of the building. Two square openings in the foundation are now covered with plywood. Matching eight-light windows punctuate the elevation near the roof gable.

The rear (west) of the building is nine-bays and sits over the raised basement. There are seven, four-over-four, wooden, double-hung windows spaced along the first-story wall. A square, twelve-light, casement window looks into the basement on the north side of the rear elevation. There is a centered porch with a standing seam metal shed roof with two, single, two-panel and six-light doors flanking a center brick chimney, which lead into the classrooms. A set of wooden stairs, with simple horizontal railings, accesses the porch from both the north and south sides. Under the porch are four, later, square, twelve-light windows and two similar windows to the sides. One side window has a latch and swings open, but does not lead into the basement, which is only accessible from the side door on the north elevation.

The interior of the school building is divided by a partial partition wall into two classrooms of equal size. There is bead board covering the ceilings of both rooms, as well as the walls of the eastern classroom, and four inch boards, covering the walls in the western classroom. The entire building has wood floors. Each classroom has a coatroom, located within the projecting front bay, with hooks under a simple wood shelf. The doors to the coatrooms are five-panel, wood doors. There is a replacement slate blackboard on each end wall. A 1980 rehabilitation brought the building's interior closer to its original appearance, with the addition of replacement school desks and a small, iron wood stove, as well as the removal of later electrical and heating upgrades. Some later mechanical systems are housed in the dirt-floored basement.

As noted by John Wood, former principal and resident of the schoolhouse noted, some changes were made to the house during his residency (1948 to 1976). The porch on the rear was partially enclosed and the two large classrooms were subdivided to make

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smaller living areas. Following the 1980 restoration of the schoolhouse, these changes can no longer be seen, as the school was restored to its original configuration.

Gymnasium, c. 1940, Contributing

The gymnasium is a tall one-story building on a raised basement. It has a shingled front-gabled roof, is clad in wood weatherboards, and has a brick foundation. The front elevation faces east, towards the road. The facade has no window openings and only an octagonal vent in the gable. A one-story central vestibule is attached to the front and provides entry to the gym through a central, modern metal double-door. It has an asphalt-shingled shed roof with small exposed rafter tails and two symmetrically placed window openings that are now filled with plywood. The foundation of the vestibule is concrete block. The interior ceiling of this part of the building shows it likely was a porch that was expanded and enclosed when the principal of the school, John Wood took up residence there around 1948. The porch was re-opened when the school was restored in the 1980's during the restoration.

The south elevation has a raised brick foundation with window openings, now covered with plywood, and two access doors, the rear door leading to the locker rooms housed in the basement, and the other under the brick stoop with metal handrails leading to the main level, metal doors added later. This elevation is six-bays with large twelve-over-twelve wooden, double-hung windows. There is an exterior, narrow, brick chimneystack placed toward the back half of this elevation.

The rear elevation is one-story over raised basement. The brick foundation wall is punctuated with six, double-hung, wooden, six-over-six windows. There are two, twelve-over-twelve windows on the main level and a central, double-leaf, wooden panel door that is no longer used, but used to provide access into the rear of the gym from a stoop on the main level.

On the north elevation there is also a raised brick foundation with four windows, a door at the rear of the building leading to the locker rooms, and a former opening now boarded with plywood. Like the south elevation, it is six-bays with a brick chimneystack, large twelve-over-twelve, and a double-leaf metal door on the main level that provide access to the gymnasium. A stoop with metal handrails is also found on this elevation.



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The interior has a wood strip gymnasium floor and open truss ceiling. The walls are clad in wood boards. Two sets of stairs at the rear of the gym lead to small sections of raised box seats. Stairs lead down to locker rooms at the rear of the building below these seats. A former door opening on the west elevation has been enclosed. The vestibule has wood walls, carpet, and the ceiling shows earlier bead board and the later extension. On the basement level there are concrete floors, exposed brick, concrete block and other partition walls, wood support posts and exposed joists. The former locker room space retains shower spaces and exposed brick walls.

Despite the fact that the school was moved back on the lot, the nominated parcel, containing the original Old Richmond Schoolhouse and the gymnasium provide an appropriate setting while excluding non-contributing buildings. The schoolhouse and gymnasium also retain a high degree of historic integrity. The gymnasium has remained in place and has been used continuously since its construction. The original schoolhouse was moved a small distance, approximately twenty feet to the rear (west) of the site, but has remained in use by the school and has been well maintained, even after the 1920s consolidated school was torn down.

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Summary

Old Richmond Schoolhouse, built circa 1914, and Gymnasium, built circa 1940, are locally significant under Criterion A in the area of education for their important association with rural education in Tobaccolville, Forsyth County, North Carolina. The two-room frame school was the first of three Old Richmond schools at this location, and served the white children living in Tobaccolville and northwestern Forsyth County from circa 1914 to circa 1922. The gymnasium was built with Works Project Administration funds and local school patrons' donations of funds, materials and labor. The Old Richmond Schoolhouse and Gymnasium's period of significance begins in 1914, the date of construction of the original schoolhouse, and continues to 1958. Though the gymnasium and schoolhouse have been in continuous use by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school system until the present day, the post-1958 use of the property does not meet Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance.

Criteria Consideration B for a building removed from its original location, is also claimed since the original Old Richmond Schoolhouse was moved approximately twenty feet to make way for the construction of the second school on the property, the larger 1922 consolidated Old Richmond School. This masonry structure was later razed and replaced in 1978 with a one-story brick school that serves as the local elementary school today. Although no longer used as a classroom after 1922, the frame schoolhouse served as housing for school teachers and the principal from 1924 to 1976, and it retains sufficient integrity from the historic time period.

**Educational Context**

Forsyth County was established in 1849. Its first European community was a Moravian settlement formed in 1753, when Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg acquired a hundred-thousand acre tract of land from Lord Granville, one of the Lord Proprietors of North Carolina. The Moravians called their land Wachovia after the Austrian estate of Count Nicholas Lewis von Zinzendorf, an early protector of the Moravian church. The two settlements of Bethabara and Bethania were established in 1753 and 1759, respectively. The town of Salem was begun in 1766 as the central town in Wachovia. Salem grew rapidly, both as a religious center, and as a center for crafts and trades. Forsyth County was named in honor of Colonel Benjamin Forsyth, a respected landowner in nearby Stokes County.

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In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for the most part, education in the area was limited to white males, and some white females, who could afford access to private tutors or academies. The exceptions were the endeavors of the Quakers and the Moravians who offered instruction to males and females and, on a limited basis, to slaves and free African Americans. The Moravians established the first school in what would become Forsyth County, at Bethania in 1761. By the late 1790s, requests by non-Moravians for admission to Moravian schools (particularly to the girls' school in Salem) were being accepted.

In 1825, the North Carolina General Assembly established the Literary Fund, with the goal of providing free education for all white males between the ages of five and twenty-one. In 1839, the first common school law passed, creating combined state and local funding for public schools and school districts. By 1849, when Forsyth County was formed from Stokes County, the local public school system was operating smoothly. In 1851, the county's thirty-six schoolhouses accommodated 1,901 children. On the eve of the Civil War, Calvin H. Wiley, the state's superintendent of common schools, praised Forsyth County's educators by writing, "We commend their example to the teachers of other counties".<sup>1</sup>

When the American Civil War broke out, North Carolina was among the more progressive Southern states in regards to popular education. But a major setback came at the end of the war when all public offices, including The Board of Literature (re-established 1855), were abolished.<sup>2</sup> As a result, post-Civil War education in Forsyth County, as in the rest of the South, was in a horrible state. The 1866-1867 North Carolina General Assembly allowed towns to establish tax supported public school systems, since poor financial conditions had closed all common schools. Schools were able to re-open by 1869. Private academies, of which there were only four in Forsyth County after the war, and more affordable Sunday schools initially filled the void. These Sunday schools were organized under the Forsyth County Sunday School Union, governed by a board that included a member from each church that operated a school.<sup>3</sup> Forsyth Sunday School Union was an offshoot of the Sunday and Adult School Union, founded in 1817, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1824, the name was changed to American Sunday School Union (ASSU) which had various city and county branches throughout the United

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<sup>1</sup> Wood, John. Principal of Old Richmond School and Member of the Board of Education. *A Short History of the Forsyth County Schools*. May 1980, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Owen, Jackie. "Public Education: Log Cabin to Air-Conditioning." *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel*. April 10, 1966, p. G18.

<sup>3</sup> Owen, p. G18.

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States.<sup>4</sup> “Without question the most important function of the Sunday school was in filling the educational void created by the war and the subsequent Reconstruction period.”<sup>5</sup>

North Carolina's 1868 State Constitution created the first State Board of Education and required a "general and uniform system of public schools, wherein tuition shall be free of charge to all of the children of the State between the ages of six and twenty-one years," established a minimum four-month school year, and created the first State Board of Education.<sup>6</sup> State leaders quickly agreed that the races should not attend the same schools, and in 1875, voters amended the 1868 constitution, dividing the school system into three separate but supposedly equal systems serving white, African American, and American Indian students. Despite the constitutional mandate, problems with the educational system continued, especially in rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

In Forsyth County, the County Commissioners did make some attempts at organizing free schools in the post-war years. Professor A. I. Butner, a native of Bethania, was appointed to license and examine teachers, though he functioned more as a superintendent, serving from 1885 until 1896, overseeing all aspects of the schools. By 1875, white residents of Forsyth County still found public schools inadequate. Only twenty-nine percent of the county's white students attended public schools, while forty percent attended private academies, and thirty-one percent attended no school at all. Meanwhile, Sunday Schools for both races continued to supplement public education. After 1868, financial support for public schools came from taxes. In 1885, the County Commissioners created the Board of Education of Forsyth County and asked Butner to be its head. Amid his contributions, Butner oversaw the maintenance and construction of five schools for white students in West Salem, East Salem, Kernersville, Centerville, and Bethania.<sup>8</sup> He also mandated that teachers attend a two-week seminar during the summer, so that they could refresh their knowledge and interact with other teachers.<sup>9</sup>

However, educational opportunities in North Carolina continued to be concentrated primarily in more urban areas. While the wealth of North Carolina's growing cities

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<sup>4</sup> Wheaton College, Billy Graham Center Archives website, <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/168.htm#3>, June 2007

<sup>5</sup> Fries, Adelaide. *Forsyth: The History of County on the March*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of Chapel Hill Press, 1976, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> Woodard, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Woodard, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Woodard, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Wood, p. 2.

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increased dramatically between the 1880s and 1930s, this prosperity did not necessarily spread to rural areas. More money in an area meant more teachers and more schools. By 1880, the state's illiteracy rate was the nation's seventh highest. By 1900, one in five whites in North Carolina was illiterate.<sup>10</sup>

As a result of North Carolina's 1900 constitutional amendment that created a literacy requirement for voters, teaching white North Carolinians to read and write gained a new importance. In 1900, Charles B. Aycock won the gubernatorial race on a platform that espoused education. His positive impact on North Carolina's schools cannot be denied. Under his leadership as governor (1901-1905), school consolidation began and the General Assembly passed its first direct appropriation of tax funds for public schools. Aycock's emphasis on education vastly improved schools for white students statewide during his tenure and in the twenty years following his administration. "His ability to inspire people to support education locally stimulated the construction of approximately eleven hundred schools in North Carolina--one for every day he was in office. By the end of his term, enrollment had increased, school districts consolidated, and teacher training improved."<sup>11</sup>

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, many schools across the state and in Forsyth County were one-room schools, with fewer two-room schools. During this time community involvement in school construction and maintenance, including the contributions of materials such as lumber, as well as hands-on labor, was common. Counties often supplemented costs or paid teachers' salaries. In a one-room schoolhouse the teacher served as janitor, principal, teacher and superintendent. In a two-room school, usually the teacher who had been there the longest became known as the principal teacher, and was in charge of the administration of the school to the extent that there was administration.<sup>12</sup>

In 1907, the General Assembly authorized the establishment of rural high schools. In 1913, the first Compulsory Attendance Act was passed, which required all children between the ages of eight and twelve to attend school at least four months per year. Federal legislation, in particular the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, provided some federal funds for vocational education, allowing agricultural science and home economics to become parts of the curriculum in North Carolina public

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<sup>10</sup>Woodard, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> North Carolina Historic Sites, Aycock Birthplace website,  
<http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/aycock/AYCOCK.HTM>, November 1, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Wood, p. 2.

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schools. Legislation was passed to allow counties to issue bonds to build schools. These bond funds, together with the Rosenwald Fund, which was used primarily for building schools for rural black students, brought about a major increase in construction and renovation of school buildings. In 1919, the State Constitution was amended to increase the mandated school term from four months to six months. At about the same time, a State Board of Examiners was established as an agent of the State Board of Education to be responsible for the certification of all teachers, resulting in more consistency in teachers.

In Forsyth County rural areas were still lagging behind urban areas, and rural school construction continued to be haphazard during the early decades of the twentieth century, as was noted in a 1905 report by the Forsyth County superintendent, Wesley B. Speas. This gap between rural and urban schools continued and was again noted in 1924. Rural schools, paying only \$557 per year to teachers, in contrast to city schools, paying \$1346; were considered “woefully weak.”<sup>13</sup> It was urged in this report that the condition of Forsyth County rural schools be improved and raised to the level of city schools and that consolidation of smaller schools and districts be continued to “create a more wholesome social life among young people...”<sup>14</sup>

In 1905, there were seventy-nine rural schools for white children and twenty for black children. Of these, seventy-six were one-teacher schools, twenty were two-teacher schools, and three had three or more teachers. The number of teachers generally corresponded to the number of classrooms per school. Speas, who served for twenty years, was the county’s fourth superintendent, after Mr. Butner, 1885 to 1896; Dr. A.P. Davis, 1896 to 1900; and Mr. W.O. Cox, 1900 to 1903. He saw the need for consolidating many smaller schools into fewer and larger ones. He began school consolidation in Forsyth County in 1923, the last year of his administration, working in the Old Richmond, Vienna, and Sedge Garden school districts.<sup>15</sup> He purchased the first school buses, was superintendent during the construction of Lewisville High School, the second school at Old Richmond, Old Town School, Reynolds in Winston-Salem, and high schools in Walkertown and Clemmons.<sup>16</sup> These consolidation efforts were continued by the superintendents that followed Speas: Mr. Thomas H. Cash (1923 to 1947); Dr. Ralph F.W. Brimley (1948 to 1956); and T. Ray Gibbs (1957 to 1964) under

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<sup>13</sup> Siewers, Charles N. “Forsyth County: Economic and Social, A Laboratory Study at the University of North Carolina, Department of Rural Social Economics.” 1924, 66.

<sup>14</sup> Siewers, 65.

<sup>15</sup> Owen, p. G18.

<sup>16</sup> Wood, pp. 2-3.

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whom the county and city merged. There was a continuous demand for a more efficient school system and a more effective educational model that many felt could only be met by school district consolidation.

The consolidation plan was designed to lead to more workable school system and a more efficient and effective educational program. Continued improvements in roads and transportation facilitated these efforts, with some children being bussed to schools rather than walking. When consolidation began in earnest in 1923, Forsyth County had twenty-five one-room schools for whites and twenty-six with two classrooms, including Old Richmond Schoolhouse. The old one- and two-room log and frame buildings had become outdated. They could no longer accommodate all the students, and the construction of larger schools to serve a wider geographic area eliminated the one- and two- room schoolhouses which served white students. Brick became the material of choice for almost all school exteriors by the 1920's.

A graded system also signaled the end of the one-room and two-room school. Rather than having students of many ages and education levels in classes together, the graded system separated students by age and ability into grades and classrooms. By 1926, there were fifteen consolidated, brick schools (all with cafeterias) in which white students attended classes in buildings with several classrooms that separated the children by grade. Construction of large brick buildings became common, causing many smaller schools to be sold, abandoned or refurbished for new uses. As of 1947, nine of these small schools stood in Forsyth County.<sup>17</sup>

### **Tobaccoville and Old Richmond School**

In an area originally settled by the Moravians around the middle of the eighteenth-century, Tobaccoville is a rural village in the northwest section of Forsyth County known as Old Richmond Township, but is now part of the northeast Winston-Salem metropolitan area. In the 1870s, a United States Post Office was established here at the General Store and plug tobacco factory, which required the hamlet to choose an official name. The General Store and Tobacco Factory sat on the stage route, and later the railroad line, between Winston-Salem and Mount Airy, North Carolina.<sup>18</sup> John B. Vest, who managed the store for the owner, Mr. C. R. Orrender, suggested the name of

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<sup>17</sup> Sigmon, Charles V. "A Survey of Forsyth County Schools." Masters Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1947, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Strupe, J. "The Real Story of Naming Tobaccoville." The Independent. November 9, 1978.

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Tobaccolville, in light of the tobacco factory and the endless acres of tobacco farms that were the principal landmarks in the village.

The Old Richmond School was typical of those around the county, particularly in rural areas. Its construction c. 1914 fits the pattern countywide for a sharp increase of school building in rural areas in the first quarter of the twentieth century, likely connected with the efforts of Governor Aycock to improve education. During the first decade of the twentieth century there were almost 3000 schoolhouses built. Following the 1913 law enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly that all children between eight and twelve must attend school four months out of the year, even more frame schoolhouses were constructed.<sup>19</sup>

The Old Richmond Schoolhouse sits at the main crossroads of the Tobaccolville village, at Tobaccolville and Bethania-Tobaccolville Roads. The school complex evolved from 1914 to 1978, and continues to serve the student population of Tobaccolville. The original two-room building was built c. 1914 and functioned as a school until 1922.<sup>20</sup> Children attended the school for grades one through seven. Smaller children attended class in the "little" room and the larger children in the "big" room. The rooms have the same dimensions but received these names from the size of the children. Cloakrooms are on each side of the front doors. Like all one- and two-room schools, Old Richmond Schoolhouse did not have a cafeteria, and children brought their lunches from home. At the time of the schoolhouse's construction, one-room schools were more common than two-room schoolhouses in the area. Frame schoolhouses in Forsyth County varied from simple gable-front, one-room structures to gabled-end buildings with projecting entrance bays and an occasional bell tower.

The Department of Public Instruction's 1919 to 1920 budget listed Old Richmond Township with nine, rural, white elementary teachers receiving monthly salaries ranging between \$45.00 and \$110.00. Within Forsyth County, records showed 144 white, rural, elementary teachers with an average yearly salary of \$430.00, below the state average yearly salary of \$460.00.<sup>21</sup> The two-room Old Richmond Schoolhouse had two

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<sup>19</sup> Taylor, Gwynne Stephens. *From Frontier to Factory: An Architectural History of Forsyth County*. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Historic Properties Commission and City-County Planning Board of Forsyth County and Winston-Salem, 1981, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> "'Old' Old Richmond School Dedicated." *The Independent (Rural Hall)*. May 22, 1980, p. 1, and "Standard Elementary Schools Principal's Annual Report, Forsyth County." Raleigh, NC: Department of Public Instruction 1922-1923. North Carolina State Archives.

<sup>21</sup> "Operating Budgets, Average Salaries, Forsyth County." Department of Public Instruction, 1919-1920.



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elementary teachers with a total school enrollment of fifty-nine students. Ms. Minnie Long taught grades first through third, earning a monthly salary of \$45.00. Ms. Louisa Doub, taught grades fourth through seventh and earned a greater income of \$65.00 per month.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps demonstrating the poor quality of rural education in the county, the curriculum at Old Richmond was likely similar to that in other one- and two-room schoolhouses, such as one near Pfafftown that taught spelling from books that often had to be shared for lack of supplies.<sup>23</sup> Miller School, c. 1917, another similar school near Clemmons, taught spelling, reading, geography, and civil government.<sup>24</sup>

During the 1921-1922 school year, as part of school consolidations in Forsyth County and to accommodate a growing population in the Tobaccoville area, a new Old Richmond School was built at the location of the original two-room school house, which was moved further back on the property. The second Old Richmond School was a two-story brick building, which featured a large central auditorium, classrooms built on open halls running the length of the building, and two separate front entrances with the principal's office located between the front entrances. It was designed by W.C. Northup, of Northup and O'Brien whose firm designed most of the consolidated schools in the county from this time. Its two-story brick design with many windows was typical of larger rural consolidated schools built in Forsyth County at the time.

The second school served students in the elementary and high school grades from 1922 until 1955, and was an integral part of the community. Many parents and citizens donated the furniture for the school and held fundraisers to help outfit the building.<sup>25</sup> Principal Rossie Shore saw the transition from the two-room school to the consolidated school, serving as the Old Richmond principal from 1921 to 1925. He recalled teaching in the smaller schoolhouse with "the old wood stoves."<sup>26</sup> The first Old Richmond class graduated in 1923 and had twelve students. A stone arch, donated by these students, still stands on the grounds at the front of the school complex.

By 1929, the Old Richmond School facilities and student enrollment expanded as a result of consolidation. The two-story, twelve-classroom, brick schoolhouse had a total enrollment of 405 students, 78 high school and 327 elementary students. The school's

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<sup>22</sup> "Operating Budgets, Forsyth County." Department of Public Instruction, Division of Professional Services, 1919-1920.

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, 67.

<sup>24</sup> Nell Candle. "Miller's School: Teacher Recalls First Class." From county survey files 2/13/79.

<sup>25</sup> "Alumnae News and History of Old Richmond School, 1923-1953." Published by Alumnae Association of Old Richmond School, 1953, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, Charles. "Old Richmond Still 'Good Place'." Winston-Salem Sentinel, c. 1980.

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four high school and nine elementary teachers were led by Principal J.F. Scott.<sup>27</sup> There was an auditorium, electric lighting, steam heat and a library. The school had five buses at this time. The curriculum had grown during this time as well, as biology, algebra, French and geography were added. There was a part-time nurse and a school newspaper as well.<sup>28</sup>

Four years later, Old Richmond School experienced a decline in total enrollment to 353 students, fifty high school and 303 elementary students. Despite the decline in student enrollment, the school retained thirteen teachers, led by Principal W. S. Horton.<sup>29</sup> Still under the leadership of Principal Horton, in 1936 there were 309 pupils and 9 teachers. The class size varied from thirty students to forty-seven students. By the 1941 school year there are eighteen classrooms and more subjects, such as American history, typewriting, civics, North Carolina history and bookkeeping, had been added to the curriculum.<sup>30</sup> In keeping with county and state trends, Old Richmond grew in population as its curriculum evolved to incorporate such “modern” subjects as science and vocational skills in addition to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Old Richmond produced many excellent athletic teams and individuals. In the 1937 class, two of Old Richmond’s female athletes were regarded as the best girl’s basketball players in the area.<sup>31</sup> Basketball became such a popular sport that the school authorities and community lobbied the county for funds to build a gymnasium. Because county funding was very limited during the Depression years, being limited to only \$50,000 per year, building during this time was difficult. Since funding was not available for the proposed gymnasium, the community took matters into their own hands. The gymnasium, built with local and Works Progress Administration funds, was opened in 1940.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was very instrumental in the construction of the gymnasium at Old Richmond School. It was developed as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal to help rescue America’s economy from the Great Depression. Created in 1933 by the passage of the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA), the WPA oversaw millions of dollars of grant-in-aid to state and local agencies

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<sup>27</sup> “County Building Reports, Forsyth County.” Department of Public Instruction, Division of Schoolhouse Planning, 1929-30.

<sup>28</sup> “High School Principal’s Annual Report.” State Department of Public Instruction, Forsyth County.

<sup>29</sup> “Standard Elementary Schools.” Department of Public Instruction, 1933-1934.

<sup>30</sup> “High School Principal’s Annual Report”. State Department of Public Instruction, Forsyth County.

<sup>31</sup> Poindexter, Jesse. “Old School Remembered for its Great Spirit”. Winston-Salem Sentinel.

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that provided direct relief to individuals and public organizations devastated by the economic depression. WPA projects were prevalent in many North Carolina counties, especially helping to build many school-related buildings, such as Old Richmond's gymnasium.

Men in town who owned standing timber donated logs, those with sawmills converted the logs to lumber, and many others gave time and effort to construct the building. This combination of local and county support is consistent with the pattern of grassroots funding that was necessary for school construction across North Carolina in the early twentieth century. The gymnasium served as the site for many basketball games, physical education training, and dances. The building still stands a short distance north of the original Old Richmond Schoolhouse and northwest of the modern Old Richmond Elementary School. The gymnasium has been in continuous use since 1940, serving the children of Old Richmond School and Old Richmond Elementary School.

John Wood, a former principal at the school, said of the 1922 building, "We had the best heat in the system, when the administration wanted to get warm on a cold day, they came to Old Richmond."<sup>32</sup> In 1947, under leadership of a new superintendent, Ralph Brimley, further consolidation of county schools was proposed. The move to further consolidate the county schools of Old Richmond with Rural Hall and Old Town was met with much resistance by parents and students of Old Richmond School. Despite bitter sentiments and dedicated community efforts, the close-knit citizens of Tobaccoville were not successful in stopping the closing of the 1922 Old Richmond School, but were successful in moving the proposed consolidated school closer to Tobaccoville.

In 1977, the 1922 building was demolished to make way for the current elementary school, built c. 1978. At the time of its demolition, it had coal heat, pine floors, a tin roof and was the only school in the county with a bell tower.<sup>33</sup>

The original two-room school was remodeled into two apartments used for teacher housing from 1924 until 1948.<sup>34</sup> In 1948, the principal at Old Richmond, John Wood,

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<sup>32</sup> Wilson, Dee. "The School is a Classic: And the bell in the tower at Old Richmond still rings." Winston-Salem Sentinel. January 24, 1977, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

NOTE: Some discrepancy was noted in the records about the 1914 school. It does not appear on a sketch found in the Operations Report of 1940. It is possible that for a time it was not used by the school, as Wood does not reside in the building until 1948. It is noted as a teacherage prior to that, however, in Dee Wilson's 1977 article in the Winston-Salem Sentinel, and was perhaps omitted from the 1940 report. There

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moved into the two-room schoolhouse. He lived there with his family for twenty-eight years, until 1976. This arrangement was suggested during the 1940s by Superintendent Ralph Brimley who wanted to start a new plan of having principals live on the school grounds.<sup>35</sup> Principal Woods explained, "They built several houses at county schools at that time. I was the only principal living in a house that had formerly been a school building."<sup>36</sup>

The original Old Richmond Schoolhouse was altered in order to accommodate John Woods's family. He remembers, "They took an open porch that ran the full length of the front of the school house and converted it into two kitchens and two small bathrooms.<sup>37</sup> I screened in what was left of the porch to make two smaller porches on either end. They also partitioned off the two large classrooms to make two smaller living areas. Each area had two bedrooms and a living room. Those living rooms were huge, with twelve-foot high ceilings. The schoolhouse was originally heated by wood burning, pot-bellied stoves."<sup>38</sup> After Wood moved in, a hot air coal furnace was installed.

The original two-room Old Richmond Schoolhouse was restored in 1980 for use as a museum. The renovation was undertaken "so that children of today and tomorrow can get an idea of what schools were like in the past," said the then acting principal, Kay Gambrell.<sup>39</sup> Renovations included painting, refinishing the floors, patching holes and removing all traces of electricity and modern heating. Once the renovation was completed, "school equipment dating from the 1920s was installed - including old-fashioned 1920s era desks, a pot-bellied stove, and slate boards taken from some recently demolished schools."<sup>40</sup> The two privies originally located out back were not rebuilt. The renovation took about two years. The opening of the renovated schoolhouse was met with much fanfare in town and great satisfaction on the part of many who had attended school in either the original or the 1922 Old Richmond schools.

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are other discrepancies such as the acreage of the school property noted as 12 acres in the 1938-39 Principal's Report, but on the sketch from 1940 the acreage is noted as 3.75 acres. Sketch from the Operations of Plant and Sanitary Survey of North Carolina Public Schools, 1940. State School Commission and State Board of Health, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> NOTE: Porch referred to as "front" in quote is the large porch on the rear of the building.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> Multer, Andrew. "School Now a Museum." *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 17, 1980.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

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The most recent Old Richmond School, c. 1978, is still in operation as an elementary school, serving grades one to six. The building has twenty-four classrooms, a media center, cafeteria, offices, teacher preparation rooms, restrooms, conference rooms and a first aid room. The original 1940 gymnasium still stands in situ and continues to be an integral part in the physical education program for the elementary school students.<sup>41</sup> The original two-room schoolhouse will be used as an educational center to demonstrate the history of the school and how students learned in the early twentieth century. Today, the oldest, and the newest, Old Richmond Schools sit approximately two-tenths of a mile apart on the eight-acre Old Richmond Elementary School property.

Though this school served the white rural population of the Tobaccolville area, it is interesting to note the similarity between the design of this school and that of a Rosenwald School plan, specifically, Community School Plan No. 20, as shown in Samuel L. Smith's set of plans for Rosenwald Schools 1928 edition.<sup>42</sup> The first school plans for Rosenwald schools were developed in the 1910s, and Smith's first edition bulletin was published in 1921. These plans would enable Rosenwald Schools to be built without the cost of an architect, as the plans were available to communities through the state education office. The designs were considered modern designs, making the most use of natural light, as electricity was not available in most rural areas. Considerations of temperature and seating arrangements were also considered.<sup>43</sup> These same considerations would have been important in designing Old Richmond Schoolhouse.

There are a few remaining African-American schools in Forsyth County, such as Oak Grove School, near Winston-Salem, c. 1910. From the original Forsyth County survey conducted by Gwynne Taylor in 1981, few small white rural schools are noted. Old Valley School, near Kernersville appears to have had two rooms and a layout similar to that of Old Richmond Schoolhouse. It had weatherboard siding, a hipped roof, and cross-center gable over an open, recessed entrance. Small windows were on the front elevation and high windows on the side elevations. It is no longer extant. Rock Hill was located near Belews Creek and had one room with a cross-gabled front and bell tower. It is no longer extant. White Rock School, near Winston-Salem is standing, but has been heavily altered for new use as a community center.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Old Richmond History*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006, p. 95.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, pp. 400-401.

<sup>44</sup> Forsyth County Survey Update files, Heather Fearnbach, 2007. Survey site numbers FY509 and FY415.

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The original Old Richmond Schoolhouse is one of only two known, remaining, two-room schoolhouses in Forsyth County. According to survey records of Forsyth County from 2007, the other two-room schoolhouse is located on Red Bank Road near Germanton. With weatherboard siding and beadboard interior, it is in a ruinous state in a wooded area.<sup>45</sup> Many of the one- and two-room schoolhouses were likely demolished in the 1920's to make way for the new consolidated, brick schools. The remaining twelve were recorded in the 1981 Forsyth County survey.<sup>46</sup> Of those, only Old Richmond and the dilapidated school in Germanton remain extant.<sup>47</sup>

The original two-room Old Richmond Schoolhouse and original gymnasium remain on the site of the current school and though the location of the schoolhouse has changed over time, these buildings are a testament to the history and evolution of the Old Richmond School. From a two-room schoolhouse built to consolidate a small, local area; to a larger brick consolidated school, which is now gone, the Old Richmond Schoolhouse grew and changed with the population and county trends in education. With the increase in athletics at the school, and as a result of available WPA funding and local support, the gymnasium was constructed and is still used in its original capacity today. Though the 1922 consolidated incarnation of the Old Richmond School is gone and has been replaced with a 1978 school building, that change also demonstrates the county's continued efforts to consolidate and, later, to build "modern" school buildings. The 1978 Old Richmond School serves the area as its elementary school and the original two-room schoolhouse will remain as a learning tool and example of early education, not only in Tobacoville, but in Forsyth County in general, as one of two remaining two-room schools in the county today.

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<sup>45</sup> Forsyth County Survey Update files, Heather Fearnbach, 2007. Survey site number FY00532.

<sup>46</sup> Taylor, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Forsyth County Survey Update files, Heather Fearnbach, 2007.

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**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated parcel is shown on the accompanying parcel map at a 1 inch = 200 feet scale.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property contains a portion of the current Old Richmond Elementary School parcel, which includes the original, c. 1914 Old Richmond Schoolhouse in its new location and the 1940 gymnasium. It excludes five modern school buildings and features located on the parcel. The nomination boundary passes to the east of the c. 1914 school building and west of the modern school, shifting west to exclude modern intrusions then east to include the gymnasium. The nominated area is roughly v-shaped and contains enough acreage to provide an appropriate setting with minimal modern intrusions.