

(Oct. 1990)

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 an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oak Grove School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number _____ n/a not for publication
North side of Oak Grove Circle, .3 mile east of junction with Bethabara Road
city or town Winston-Salem vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Forsyth code 067 zip code 27106

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crow SHDO 10/31/02
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, explain:)

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Oak Grove School
Name of Property

Forsyth County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

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

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof METAL/tin

other

Narrative Description

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

Oak Grove School
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County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE/black

Period of Significance

Ca. 1910 – ca. 1950

Significant Dates

Ca. 1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1/2 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 561060 4003060
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Woodard
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date August 5, 2002
street & number 5400 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 412 telephone 919/785-9702
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27612

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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7. Description

Located in Forsyth County in the northwest Piedmont region of North Carolina, Oak Grove School stands in a residential enclave known as Washington Town, just inside Winston-Salem's northwest city limit. The community, with the school at its heart, stands on high ground nearly surrounded by streams and branches that eventually feed into Muddy Creek. The city of Winston-Salem lies to the southeast while the town of Bethania, a Moravian settlement dating from the mid-eighteenth century, lies to the northwest. Washington Town is situated near the northwest corner of the intersection of Shattalon Drive and Bethabra Road, a road with mid-eighteenth century origins that connected Bethania with the earlier Moravian settlement of Bethabra.

Dating from around 1910, the one-room school faces south-southeast. The frame, one-story, gable-front building is clad in weatherboards and features a full-width, shed-roof porch with square posts. A diamond-shaped attic vent and exposed purlins punctuate the south elevation. Two shed rooms, added in the early 1950s to create storage space and a bathroom, are attached to the north elevation. A brick flue breaks through the metal roof's ridgeline near the rear of the building. Oak Grove School stands on a brick foundation. A bank of six windows with six-over-six sash pierce the east elevation while three six-over-six sash windows pierce the west elevation. One six-over-six sash window occupies the north elevation.

Inside Oak Grove's one original room, beaded board sheathes the walls and ceilings. Doors to the shed rooms flank the brick flue that stands in the center of the north wall. Simple boards, four inches in width, frame the doors and windows. Quarter-round molding trims the juncture between walls, the walls and the ceiling, and the walls and the wooden floor.

In the 1950s, the building was used as a store. During this period, the blackboards were removed, shed rooms were added to the back and a partition wall was installed to divide the school's one room into two long spaces. Accordingly, a second door was added to the front elevation. The owner at the time also removed the windows and re-sided the east and west elevations.

In a restoration that began in 1998, a new floor and schoolhouse-style pendant light fixtures with frosted globes were installed. (The original floor material was wood, but had deteriorated badly; no raised platform for the teacher is known to have existed.) On the east and west elevations, reproduction wooden windows with true divided-light sash based on photographic evidence were installed in original locations as indicated by the framing and photos. Much of the wooden siding on the east and west elevations was

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replaced. The school's central door was restored, the partition was removed, and the rear shed rooms were renovated to house a modern bathroom and small kitchen. A wooden wheelchair ramp and landing were added to the east elevation and the brick foundation was repaired, repointed, and vented. The interior retains original beaded board sheathing, window and door trim while the exterior retains most of its original decorative features, such as exposed purlins and raftertails, the shed-roof porch with square posts, and a diamond-shaped attic vent. All of these changes were undertaken under the guidance of Winston-Salem restoration architect, Charles Phillips, in a sympathetic manner and were based on photographic or physical evidence when it was available. Historic fabric was repaired rather than replaced when possible and new materials were selected based on similarities to the original material. Because such care was taken, changes to the building have not affected its integrity.

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Summary Paragraph

Oak Grove School (ca. 1910) is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of education and black ethnic heritage for its association with education in Forsyth County, North Carolina. Oak Grove School served the African American children living near Bethania in northwest Forsyth County from circa 1910 to circa 1950. Oral tradition suggests Oak Grove's construction was made possible through the donation of the site by a local African American family, the assistance of a local church, contributions in money and labor of the population the school would serve, and some assistance from the county. This combination of support is consistent with the pattern of grassroots funding necessary for African American school construction across the South in the early twentieth century. Oak Grove's period of significance comprises the forty years the school operated, from circa 1910 to circa 1950. At the time of Oak Grove's construction, one-room schools were extremely common: during the 1910s, over eighty percent of North Carolina's African American students attended school in one of 1,934 one-room schools. For about the first twenty-five years, one teacher instructed six and later seven grades in Oak Grove's single room. As more schools were consolidated, only one or two grades were taught at the school in its last fifteen years of operation. By 1947, Oak Grove School was one of nine one-room schools still operating in the county. Oak Grove closed about 1950 and shortly thereafter, windows were removed, a second front door was added, and the interior was divided into two rooms for use as a store. Today, based on physical and photographic evidence, the school has undergone a sympathetic restoration that has retained as much original material as possible. The restoration has not diminished the school's integrity and today, it is the only known example of the county's once common, one-room, African American schoolhouse.

Education and Ethnic Context: African American Education in North Carolina and Forsyth County

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, education in Stokes County (of which the southern half would become Forsyth County) like education across the state, was available to white males and some white females who were afforded access to private tutors or academies. With the exception of 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, opportunities for non-whites and females were few and far between.

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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 their schools (particularly to the girls' school in Salem) were being accepted.¹ African American children also had a few educational opportunities through the Moravian and Quaker churches.²

Throughout the early 1800s, segregation in the Moravian church increased and white Moravians with growing flagrancy skirted and broke Church regulations limiting slave ownership. Missionary zeal, however, drove white Moravians to provide religious and educational opportunities for their slaves and the local free African Americans. In 1827, an African American Sunday school was organized at which "the younger folks who attend have been given instruction in spelling and reading." By 1829, Salem's *Weekly Gleaner* was able to report that "some coloured persons are now employed to assist in teaching" the forty students.³

In 1839, 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. By 1849, when Forsyth County was formed from Stokes, the local public school system was operating smoothly. In 1851, the county's thirty-six schoolhouses accommodated 1,901 children.⁴ 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."⁵

While white schools flourished, educational opportunities for African Americans declined. In 1829, David Walker, an African American from North Carolina, published his *Appeal in Four Articles* calling for abolition and slave uprisings. As a result, laws governing slaves and African Americans were tightened across the south and on January 1, 1831, it became illegal to teach reading and writing to any African American in North Carolina. The white minister at Salem's African American church told the congregation that arithmetic classes could continue and suggested that those who had attended all three years of the Sunday school could continue to advance their own skills.⁶ Despite various

¹ Adelaide Fries, Stuart Thurman Wright, and J. Edwin Hendricks, eds. *Forsyth: The History of a County on the March* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 70-71.

² C. Daniel Crews, *Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church That Endures* (Winston-Salem: Moravian Archives, 1998), 2-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁴ Fries et al., 76-78.

⁵ Calvin Wiley in *North Carolina Journal of Education*, 1860, quoted in Fries, 79.

⁶ Crews, 17.

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Moravian gestures of goodwill towards slaves and African Americans, slaves were still treated as such and rumors of slave revolts following Nat Turner's 1831 insurrection caused Bethania's whites to take up arms, and forbid the town's blacks "on pain of death to leave their lots."⁷

Despite a fear of African American gatherings, a Moravian African American congregation was formed in Bethania in the 1840s. Francis Florentine Hagen, the minister for Bethania's white congregants, also served this group and in 1847, apparently disregarding state laws, he began the "instruction of negro children. The Single Sisters and older girls . . . took charge of it. The intention is, if the Saviour wills, to continue with it every two weeks. Today there were 26 present."⁸

Following the Civil War, education in Forsyth County, as in the rest of the South, was in a ruinous condition. The common schools had all closed, not to reopen until 1869. Private academies, of which there were only four in Forsyth 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. North Carolina's 1868 State Constitution required the creation of 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." 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, an effective system of public schooling remained elusive, weighed down by controversy and post-war economic hardships.⁹

Forsyth County's 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, but he functioned more as a superintendent, managing and overseeing all aspects of the schools. In 1885, the county commissioners created the Board of Education of Forsyth County and asked Butner to head it. Butner oversaw the

⁷ Bethania Diary cited in Crews, 18.

⁸ Bethania Diary cited in Crews, 23.

⁹ Fries, 146 and William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 419-420.

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maintenance and construction of schools in West Salem, East Salem, Kernersville, Centerville, and Bethania.¹⁰

By 1875, Forsyth County's whites 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. At the same time, seventy-four percent of the county's African American children were taking advantage of the new schools.¹¹ Meanwhile, Sunday schools for both races continued to supplement public education.

After 1868, financial support for public schools came from taxes. Although African Americans paid the same taxes in support of public schools as did whites, few "public" African American schools were built entirely with public funds. Instead, tax dollars went into white schools while African Americans built schools with their own donations of land, materials, labor, and money, in addition to the taxes they already paid. In 1909, "counting indirect taxes, more money was collected from blacks than was appropriated to their schools."¹² While African American communities also solicited assistance from philanthropic organizations, local churches were particularly instrumental in organizing projects and spearheading fundraising efforts. Forsyth County's 1907 and 1927 township maps vividly illustrate this pattern: African American schools are inevitably located next to or across the road from churches, usually African American ones. One Quaker activist noted accurately that many financial sources were necessary to build an African American school: "It is proper to state that in very few instances, even from the beginning, has the entire expense of supporting any school been borne by the Association. The Freedmen's Bureau, the Peabody Fund, local taxation, the colored people themselves and many of the white people, have all aided in this work."¹³

Quakers, both from Northern states and from local meetings, as well as other missionary and church societies based in the North were particularly active in aiding African Americans in the late nineteenth century. The area's whites, however, did not always welcome the assistance. In Forsyth County, the editor of the Salem *People's Press* wrote that "We are satisfied that if the Negroes were let alone, entirely free from

¹⁰ R. L. Kuykendall, "The History of Education in Forsyth County," *North Carolina Education*, February 1945, 317.

¹¹ Fries et al., 149.

¹² James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 154.

¹³ Emma King, "Some Aspects of the Work of the Society of Friends for Negro Education in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 4, October 1924, 407.

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the influences of the would-be philanthropists of the North, who know little or nothing of their habits or capacities, there would be a better feeling throughout the South.”¹⁴ Philanthropies and aid societies did make some inroads. In 1869, 11,826 African American pupils were enrolled in North Carolina’s northern-financed schools. At that time, there were 430 African American schools in North Carolina: 250 were operated by the Freedman’s Bureau and 150 by Northern societies. Thirty were graded schools, meaning each grade was separated from the other rather than having several grades taught in one room by one teacher.¹⁵

Congress established the Freedmen’s Bureau on March 3, 1865, and it operated in North Carolina from July 15, 1865 until January 1, 1869. In that time, the Bureau donated \$1.5 million worth of food and established hospitals in Wilmington, Raleigh, Beaufort, New Bern, Roanoke Island, Salisbury, Greensboro, and Morganton.¹⁶ Education, however, was one of the Bureau’s main contributions to the newly freed slaves. Remarkably, despite much “opposition to negro education on the part of the native whites,” the Bureau organized 431 schools, employed 439 teachers and instructed over 20,000 pupils.¹⁷

As early as 1866, the Quakers, who had operated schools for slaves and free blacks in the 1810s and 1820s “no matter what laws were passed,” were organizing schools all over North Carolina. One observer noted, “They (North Carolina Friends) have charge of, or assist in teaching twenty First Day schools for colored persons, with 1165 pupils. This *does not* include schools under the care of Freedmen’s Associations.”¹⁸ The height of the Quakers’ work in North Carolina came in 1869 when the Friends operated twenty-nine schools employing forty teachers.¹⁹ That same year, the Friends Association for the Relief of Colored Freedmen established Sunday schools and a free school for Salem’s African Americans and on this occasion, the *People’s Press* was more tolerant, “We think it of great importance that the Freedmen should be educated to the

¹⁴ The *People’s Press* (Salem, N.C.), June 15, 1866.

¹⁵ H.C. Vogell, “Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 8th Semi-annual Report, July 1, 1869,” in Hugh Talmage Lefler, ed. *North Carolina History Told by Contemporaries* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1948), 330.

¹⁶ Lefler, 328 and J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, “The Freedmen’s Bureau in North Carolina,” [part 1] *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. VIII, no. 1, January 1909, 59.

¹⁷ J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, “Freedmen’s Bureau in North Carolina,” [part 2] *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. VIII, no. 2, April 1909, 155-156.

¹⁸ King, 405.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.

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position they are expected to occupy.” The editor went on to “call upon any Northern friends . . . Come over, then ye men of the North and help us.”²⁰

In the late 1800s, Winston’s white citizens, and to a lesser degree, her African American citizens, were beginning to enjoy an unprecedented economic boom that would last well into the 1930s. Accordingly, the *New England Journal of Education* wrote in 1885,

The new city of Winston, N.C., has done the most notable work among Southern towns of its size in the establishment of a system of graded schools. . . . Only four months from its organization, the West End Graded School, with all the disadvantages of the mixed population of a new manufacturing community, is a model and is thronged with visitors from all over the Southern country. . . . An excellent beginning has been made with the colored schools and a handsome lot awaits the next effort for a commodious schoolhouse.²¹

The Depot Street Graded School for Negroes was built on that handsome lot in 1887. Like almost all African American schools, local citizens and benevolent groups provided the financing. The Depot Street School became the state’s largest and most important public school for African Americans and was expanded in 1894 to become Winston’s first African American high school.²²

The wealth of North Carolina’s growing cities, however, did not spread to rural areas. By 1880, the state’s illiteracy rate was the nation’s seventh highest. By 1900, one in two African Americans in North Carolina was illiterate, compared to one in five whites. The inequities of the early twentieth century between blacks and whites and rural and urban spurred Booker T. Washington to lobby organizations such as the George Peabody Fund and John F. Slater Fund, known for assisting African American colleges, to support rural grade schools and high schools. By 1900, these philanthropic charities generally replaced religious aid societies as the source of funding and support for rural, African American schools.²³

²⁰ *People’s Press*, 1869, quoted in Fries et al., 148.

²¹ Dr. A. D. Mayo, *New England Journal of Education*, January 1885 quoted in Fries et al., 151.

²² Langdon Edmunds Opperman, “(former) Atkins High School,” National Register Nomination, 1999, section 8, page 6.

²³ Thomas W. Hanchett, “The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. LXV, no. 4, October 1998, 394-395 and King, 407.

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Booker T. Washington convinced Anne T. Jeanes, a Philadelphia Quaker to create the Jeanes Fund with a donation of one million dollars at her death. In 1908, the Jeanes Fund began paying for teachers to supervise and instruct rural teachers at black schools across the South. Jeanes teachers taught industrial arts, emphasized sanitation, raised funds locally for school improvements and visited individual homes instructing parents in household industries and modern sanitation.²⁴ The Slater Fund also began to give more money for industrial education at public universities and high schools. The Julius Rosenwald Fund, however, was the most prominent philanthropy geared toward black public education. This program supported African American education by offering matching grants aimed at building schools in the rural South.²⁵ Help from these and other charities came in the form of building plans, teachers, teacher training, and up-to-date information on hygiene, sanitation, and modern teaching methods.

As a result of North Carolina's 1900 constitutional amendment that created a literacy requirement intended to disenfranchise African Americans, 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 both education and white supremacy. Despite his racist rhetoric, his positive impact on North Carolina's schools cannot be denied. Under his leadership, 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 white schools and often increased the disparity between black and white schools, but slowly this renewed interest in education trickled down to the African American population.

In 1921, the state legislature created the Division of Negro Education within the State Department of Public Instruction. At the time, less than one-half of school age African Americans were enrolled and less than one-half of those students attended on an average day. School administrators and principals were themselves poorly educated and many rural elementary school teachers had not finished elementary school. With N.C. Newbold as the agency's first director, the division set about the task of changing these statistics by educating teachers, building schools, and administering elementary and high schools across the state.²⁶

²⁴ James Hardy Dillard, "School Houses in the Open Country," reprinted from *Opportunity*, vol. 1, no. 3, March 1923.

²⁵ Hanchett, 394-395.

²⁶ G. H. Ferguson "Some Facts About the Education of Negroes in North Carolina, 1921-1960." (Raleigh: State Department of Public Instruction, 1962) 4-5.

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Although changes were afoot statewide under Charles Aycock and in the twenty years following his administration, few changes came to Forsyth County's school system in the early twentieth century. Even schools for white students were built haphazardly. "If a community saw fit to promulgate a building for themselves the County Board of Education gave them aid in putting up the building. Many one and two teacher schools were built on that plan."²⁷ During the 1914-1915 school year, over eighty-two percent of Forsyth County's African American schools, like most of those for white students, were one-room and eighty percent of the state's two thousand African American students went to a one-room school during the 1913-1915 school year.²⁸

African Americans continued to be "double taxed" by paying public taxes and then contributing to charities and local efforts to furnish their children with educational opportunities.²⁹ Between September and December 1927, Forsyth County's African Americans gave \$183.50 to the Jeanes Fund.³⁰ The Rosenwald Fund had contributed to the construction of five Forsyth County schools by 1932 when the fund ceased giving money for building. Among these schools was Atkins High School (NR, 1999), the country's first example of Rosenwald monies applied to a high school.³¹ The total amount of funds from philanthropies used to support African American schools in Forsyth County was \$3,683 by the late 1920s.³²

According to Forsyth County's 1919-1920 school budget, the county spent just under 10¢ on every white child enrolled in a county school. For each of the county's black students, nearly 7¢ was invested. However, in the city of Winston-Salem, 22¢ was spent per white child while only 8¢ was spent on each urban African American. The average monthly salary for rural white teachers was \$63.67. Rural African American instructors received an average of \$47.81 per month.³³ At the state level in the mid-1920s, North Carolina spent \$28.20 on each white child, but only \$11.90 on each African American child. This, among other observations, led one graduate student to conclude

²⁷ Kuykendall, 317.

²⁸ State Department of Public Instruction, "Education of Negroes in North Carolina: 1914-1925-1939," and "Information Concerning Negro Schools in North Carolina, 1914-1915." Reports in the Division of Negro Education Special Subject File, Box 4, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh (NCDAH).

²⁹ Chapter 5 of Anderson discusses at length the issue of double taxation.

³⁰ Summary Reports of Jeanes Fund Supervisors in North Carolina, 1927. NCDAH.

³¹ Opperman, section 8, page 4.

³² "Table Showing Distribution of Philanthropic Funds for Negro Public Education in North Carolina," report in the Division of Negro Education Special Subject File, Box 8, no date (before 1930), NCDAH.

³³ 1919-1920 Forsyth County School Budget, NCDAH.

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that North Carolina's "Negro educational system is about one decade behind that of the white."³⁴

When school consolidation began in Forsyth County in 1923 the county had twenty-five one-room schools for whites and twenty-six with only two classrooms. By 1926, the seventy-school white system had been reduced to fifteen schools (all with cafeterias) in which white students attended classes in buildings with several classrooms that separated the children by grade.³⁵ The benefits of consolidation, however, were slow to affect African American schools. One reason was a lack of public transportation. Prior to the mid-1930s, all the county's "trucks" were operated for white students. Wrote county superintendent T. H. Cash in 1930, "We operate no buses for them [African Americans] but we allow them \$3.00 per month for transporting themselves in anyway they are able to make the trip. It would cost us too much to gather these scattered children up and since every negro has an old run-down Ford [it] is not a hard proposition to get them to pick up two or three scattered families and make \$25.00 or \$20.00 per month."³⁶

By the 1935-1936 school year, five Forsyth County buses carried 207 African American pupils to class. With transportation in place, the county could provide African Americans with a graded system. While a graded system for whites signaled the end of the one-room school and the construction of large brick buildings, Forsyth County officials reorganized the African American schools to house only one or two grades in each small school building:

The scattered population of the Negroes in Forsyth County has made consolidation an arduous and expensive task. While we have done little in the building line, a plan has been worked out that has the hearty approval of State Director Newbold and of A. E. Manely, Supervisor of Negro High Schools. Pupils are transported to the different schools so as to get graded service to them. . . . Thus they have the advantage of a graded system without the large unit building which the present administration has in mind to build when conditions permit.³⁷

³⁴ H. H. Huff, "Negro Education in North Carolina," masters thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1925, 131 – 132.

³⁵ Kuykendall, 318.

³⁶ Letter from T. H. Cash, Forsyth County Schools Superintendent to L. H. Jobe, director of the Divisions of Publications, Department of Public Instruction, August 18, 1930, NCDAH.

³⁷ Kuykendall, 322.

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Such was the case at Oak Grove School, which went from housing seven grades in the 1910s and 1920s to housing only one or two in the late 1930s.

Throughout this period, however, the one-room schoolhouse began to fade from the African American educational landscape. In the late 1930s, ten one-room schoolhouses were serving Forsyth's African American population.³⁸ By the 1938-1939 school year, the statewide percentage of African American students attending class in a one-room school was down to 30.6% from over 80% twenty years earlier. While that was a considerable drop, its significance pales when it is noted that only 11.9% of the state's total school population attended one-room schools that year³⁹

A 1941 report entitled "North Carolina Public Schools," found that "the most belated item in the entire Negro Public School Program in North Carolina is the large number of small units which should be eliminated in favor of consolidation and transportation." The report found sixteen hundred "small, out-dated, out-moded" schools with fewer than three teachers still operating. Several hundred were found to be "very dilapidated, uncomfortable, [and] poorly furnished."⁴⁰ Around 1945, another report found "the weakest spot in North Carolina's program of public education for Negroes from the first grade through University training is the small school unit." This report found 619 one-room schools in the state and 502 schools with only two teachers. This meant that more than half the state's African American schools were one or two rooms.⁴¹

Conditions had not improved a few years later when a publication resulting from a 1947 conference of superintendents in Cullowee observed, "It is true also that hundreds of other Negro schools, mainly elementary schools are housed in buildings described in some quarters as 'utterly unfit for human habitation, and they are a menace to life and limb.'"⁴² Despite these observations, African American schoolchildren in North Carolina

³⁸ "Distribution of One-Teacher Schools According to Average Daily Attendance," undated report (between 1936 and 1939), Division of Negro Education, State Superintendent of Elementary Education, Box 1, NCDAH.

³⁹ State Department of Public Instruction, "Education of Negroes in North Carolina: 1914-1925-1939." Report in the Division of Negro Education Special Subject File, Box 4, NCDAH.

⁴⁰ "North Carolina Public Schools," 1940-1941 report, Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 4, NCDAH.

⁴¹ "One and Two Teacher Negro Schools in North Carolina," ca. 1945, Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 4, NCDAH.

⁴² "Conference of Superintendents, Cullowee, N. C., August 7, 1947," NCDAH.

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continued to be educated in nearly three hundred one-room schools.⁴³ As of 1947, nine of these small schools stood in Forsyth County.⁴⁴

Washington Town and Oak Grove School

Moravians established the town of Bethania around 1759. A 1993 archaeological survey of the Bethania Town Lot (the large tract the Moravians laid out to provide the townspeople with farmland) revealed three African American enclaves around Bethania, all of which appear to date from the late nineteenth century when freed slaves began to establish their own neighborhoods. One lies along North Carolina Highway 65 on the west side of Bethania. Another is just northeast of Bethania and is centered around the Bethania A.M.E. Zion Church, formerly the African American Moravian Church, and the Cedar Grove School which no longer stands. The third enclave is Washington Town, centered near the intersection of Shattalon Drive and Bethabara Road, southeast of Bethania.⁴⁵

Washington Town probably evolved in the 1870s on and around land purchased by members of the Washington family. George Washington, the family's patriarch, was formerly enslaved on Solomon Transou's Bethania-area plantation. After the Civil War, George Washington and his wife Lydia purchased two parcels to the southeast of Bethania: one lot was five-and-a-half acres, the other just over seven-and-a-quarter acres. His sons, Turner, William, and John Washington also purchased lots of about five or six acres each. To the northeast of George Washington's lots were numerous small lots and one large tract belonging to the Millers, also long-time African American residents of the area. Other adjacent parcels also may be the holdings of African Americans based on their small size and proximity to the Miller and Washington lots.⁴⁶

⁴³ G. H. Ferguson, "Some Facts About the Education of Negroes in North Carolina, 1921-1960," Division of Negro Education, 1962, State Superintendent of Elementary Education, Box 1, NCDAH.

⁴⁴ Charles Victor Sigmon, "A Survey of the Forsyth County Schools," masters thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1947, 41.

⁴⁵ Michael O. Hartley, "The Bethania Town Lot Archaeological Survey," Old Salem, Inc., 1993, 36.

⁴⁶ Map of Bethania, 1822 with revisions and updates, copied in 1918 by W. S. Pfohl; and Washington family genealogy compiled by Mel White, Old Salem, Inc., Winston-Salem, N. C. A note about the 1822 Map of Bethania: Pfohl copied the map in 1918 as if all the lines on the original dated from 1822, leading to the assumption that the Millers and Washingtons on the map were landowners in the early 1820s. Although there were free African Americans living in Forsyth County at the time, Washingtons are not found in the census record until the late 1800s. In addition, an examination of Bethania town lot maps from the early 1800s reveals that lot lines and owners were added and subtracted as ownerships changed over the years. Genealogical research by Mel White of Old Salem, Inc. indicates that George Washington was born

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Originally, Bethabara Road passed through Washington Town before crossing a creek to connect the enclave to Bethania. The bridge, however, was torn down in the mid-twentieth century and was not replaced, thus disconnecting Washington Town and Bethania. Although still populated by African Americans, only a small fraction of the community's roughly fifty structures are over fifty years in age. These consist of bungalows and ranch houses dating from the 1920s through the early 1950s. The community's oldest surviving building is its school, Oak Grove.

Details of African American education in Bethania are scant. Jacob Loften Lash, an African American who had moved to the Bethania area from nearby Old Town as a small child with his parents, began school at the age of six in 1873. He attended "public school here in the little log church under the direction of the deceased Prof. A. I. Butner of Bethania, who was then Superintendent of Public Instruction of Forsyth County." Thus, at least as early as 1873, Bethania's black population had access to elementary education.⁴⁷

Based on a 1907 map of Forsyth County's townships, a school for African American children had been constructed near Bethania A.M.E. Zion Church just to the northeast of Bethania and to the northwest of Washington Town.⁴⁸ Known as Bethania School, Bethania Community School, and Cedar Grove School, this one-room building housed seven grades and, according to local tradition, was built in the late 1800s.⁴⁹ In 1912, although census figures indicate that sixty-two children between six and twenty-one years of age lived within the district Cedar Grove served, only thirty-eight were enrolled. On average, nineteen children were in class each day.⁵⁰ By 1919, J. Loften

around 1813, and thus could not have been a landowner in 1822. Furthermore, he was enslaved by Solomon Transou while Lydia, his wife, was enslaved by Simon Stoltz. George Washington died on January 6, 1879. The names and birth dates of George's wife and sons lead to the conclusion that this George Washington is the one on the 1822 map, as revised prior to 1918, and that he was added to the map when he purchased land following the Civil War.

⁴⁷ Jacob Loften Lash, "History of the A.M.E. Zion Church of Bethania, North Carolina," 1934 with later revisions, chapter 2, page 2. Published in various church publications including anniversary celebrations and church directories. The "little log church" was the 1850 building constructed to house the African American Moravian congregation. In 1875, this church became the Bethania A. M. E. Zion Church.

⁴⁸ Map of Forsyth County drawn by C.M. Miller, C.E., 1907.

⁴⁹ Based on newspaper articles and interviews, it appears that most African Americans refer to this school as Bethania School or Bethania Community School. Cedar Grove seems to be a name given by the public school system. Future references to this school will use Cedar Grove because most information concerning this school was derived from public school records and documents.

⁵⁰ W. B. Speas, *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Forsyth County, North Carolina, 1912-1913* (Winston-Salem: Barber Printing, 1913), 13. School names are not given in this report. Schools are

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Lash, former student at the “little log church,” was teaching at Cedar Grove. The average daily attendance had increased to thirty of the forty-eight school-aged children in the district. Lash was teaching grades one through six and his monthly income had increased from forty-five dollars the previous year to sixty dollars.⁵¹

Oak Grove School, another school for Bethania’s black children, was probably built around 1910. It is not illustrated on the 1907 township map, but the county’s *Annual Report* lists the school in 1912. As often occurred, land for the school was donated, probably by the Miller family.⁵² Local tradition holds that the county may have provided some public funds, while another source holds that members of the nearby white congregation at New Hope Methodist Church assisted with the school’s construction.⁵³ Most likely, the county, the church, and residents of Washington Town all provided labor and money for the project.

The school age population of the district served by Oak Grove was sixty-one. Of those, 48 were enrolled and an average of 33 students (54% of the eligible population) attended daily.⁵⁴ By the 1919-1920 school year 62% of the eligible population was enrolled at Oak Grove, but only 44% attended school regularly.⁵⁵ Average daily attendance declined in the first few years of the 1920s, but after 1922, figures generally increased. By 1945, average daily attendance at Oak Grove was 37.⁵⁶

In its early years, six grades were taught in Oak Grove’s one room. A seventh grade was introduced in the late 1920s.⁵⁷ By 1938 or 1939, according to Jakay W. Ervin, Sr., a former student, Bethania’s African American children attended first and second grades at Cedar Grove before going to Oak Grove for third grade. For education beyond third grade, students traveled about three and a half miles to Pine Grove School (also

identified by district within each township. When school names are added to the documentation in the county’s 1919-1920 budget report, Bethania Township, School District 1 was served by Cedar Grove. District numbers remain consistent from 1919 through the 1940s, so it is assumed that the district numbers remained consistent with the schools between 1912 and 1919. Therefore, 1912’s Bethania Township, School District 1 is assumed to be the same as 1919’s District 1, which was served by Cedar Grove.

⁵¹ 1919-1920 Forsyth County School Budget. NCDAH.

⁵² Julia Washington Lash, interview by author, April 7, 2002.

⁵³ Lash interview and New Hope Methodist Church minister, interview by author, April 22, 2002.

⁵⁴ Speas, 13. As with Cedar Grove, Oak Grove is the school serving Old Town Township, School District 3 in 1919. Thus, it is assumed that the Old Town Township, District 3 referenced in 1912 was Oak Grove’s district.

⁵⁵ 1919-1920 Forsyth County School Budget. NCDAH.

⁵⁶ 1919-1945 Forsyth County School Budgets. NCDAH.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

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know as Piney Grove School), a one-room school that stood near Piney Grove Church on Indiana Avenue.⁵⁸ Students desiring education beyond that offered in the one-room schoolhouses could attend Carver School (later known as Carver High School) after 1937 when grades seven through twelve were added.⁵⁹

Gertrude Penn is the earliest identified teacher at Oak Grove having taught there in the 1919-1920 school year. A succession of teachers, including Russie Speas, George Pettie, and J. Lofton Lash, a locally prominent schoolteacher and minister, instructed Oak Grove children in the early 1920s. Georgie Marshall and Annie Riveria were other teachers in the 1920s. Carrie Riekert taught there from the early 1930s through the late 1940s and is remembered as a well-respected, well-liked, and caring teacher. J. M. Saunders was one of the school's last teachers, having been the teacher and principal during the 1947-1948 school year.⁶⁰

In the early 1940s, Cedar Grove School ceased operations. By the 1944-1945 school year, children attended Oak Grove for grades first and second before going to Pine Grove and then on to Carver High School.⁶¹ In 1947, a graduate student described the county's one-room African American schools, Brookstown, Brushy Fork, Clemmons, Dreamland, Pine(y) Grove, Old Richmond, Reynolda, and Walkertown, in his thesis:

All of the buildings are wooden structures and are badly in need of repairs and paint. They all have electric service except Oak Grove. Pine Grove and Dreamland cook with electric stoves and the other schools cook with coal stoves. Water is supplied by hand pump at all the schools except two. At Oak Grove the students carry the water from a neighbor's well, and at Old Richmond the water is drawn from the school well. The common drinking dipper is used by the students at these schools.

He also noted that at least fifty percent of the desks were the "old fashioned double desks." The schools had ample blackboard space, but the walls were black with coal smoke. Each school was served with "outdoor pit toilets" and only Pine Grove had a smooth, graded playground. He reached the conclusion that "the general size, condition

⁵⁸ Ervin, Jakay W. Sr., interview with author, August 12, 1997.

⁵⁹ http://mts.admin.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Carver/carver_history.htm accessed April 24, 2002.

⁶⁰ 1919-1945 Forsyth County School Budgets, NCDAAH, and information from the Washington Town Community Association.

⁶¹ 1944-1945 Forsyth County School Budget. NCDAAH.

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and upkeep of all the buildings and grounds for Negroes indicate that they should be abandoned as soon as possible.”⁶²

By the late 1940s, school systems across the state were finally closing their one-room African American schools. Sometime between 1949 and 1952, Oak Grove School closed. In 1952, the Forsyth County School Board sold the “abandoned Oak Grove School Property” to J. W. Brown, who sold it to Ira Miller the following year.⁶³ Mr. Miller altered the building somewhat to accommodate his business. After Mr. Miller’s death in the 1970s, his wife retained ownership. In the late 1990s, a movement to save and restore the school was initiated and in 1998, Preservation North Carolina acquired the building on behalf of the Rural Initiative Project, Inc. and the Washington Town Community Association, the financial supporters and organizers of the restoration.

Today, the school is Winston-Salem and Forsyth County’s only known extant African American elementary school from the early twentieth century and is one of the only one-room schools for whites or African Americans that has not been demolished or altered beyond recognition. Carver High School, now within Winston-Salem’s city limits remains in use as a high school and the former Atkins High School now operates as Atkins Middle School. Although these larger schools, and many others throughout the county functioned also as community centers where plays and recitals were hosted, home economic and agricultural extension agents gave demonstrations, and where local citizens held meetings and gatherings, Oak Grove’s use as such is not clear. However, with the competition of the restoration, the school will once again be the center of Washington Town as the headquarters for the Washington Town Community Association.

⁶² Sigmon, 41.

⁶³ Forsyth County Deed Book 657, page 17 and Book 665, page 365.

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10. Boundary Description and Justification

The Oak Grove School property is a ½ acre lot located on the north side of Oak Grove Circle. It is lot 109B in Block 3490 on the accompanying Forsyth County Tax Map.

The boundary of the Oak Grove School property consists of the school and a surrounding quarter acre that comprised the lot historically associated with the school and that was sold by the Forsyth County Board of Education to J. W. Brown in 1952.

OK GRUVE
SCHOOL
ZONE 17
E: 561 060
N: 4003 060
Forsyth Co
NC
Winston-Salem
vicinity
Rural Hall Quad

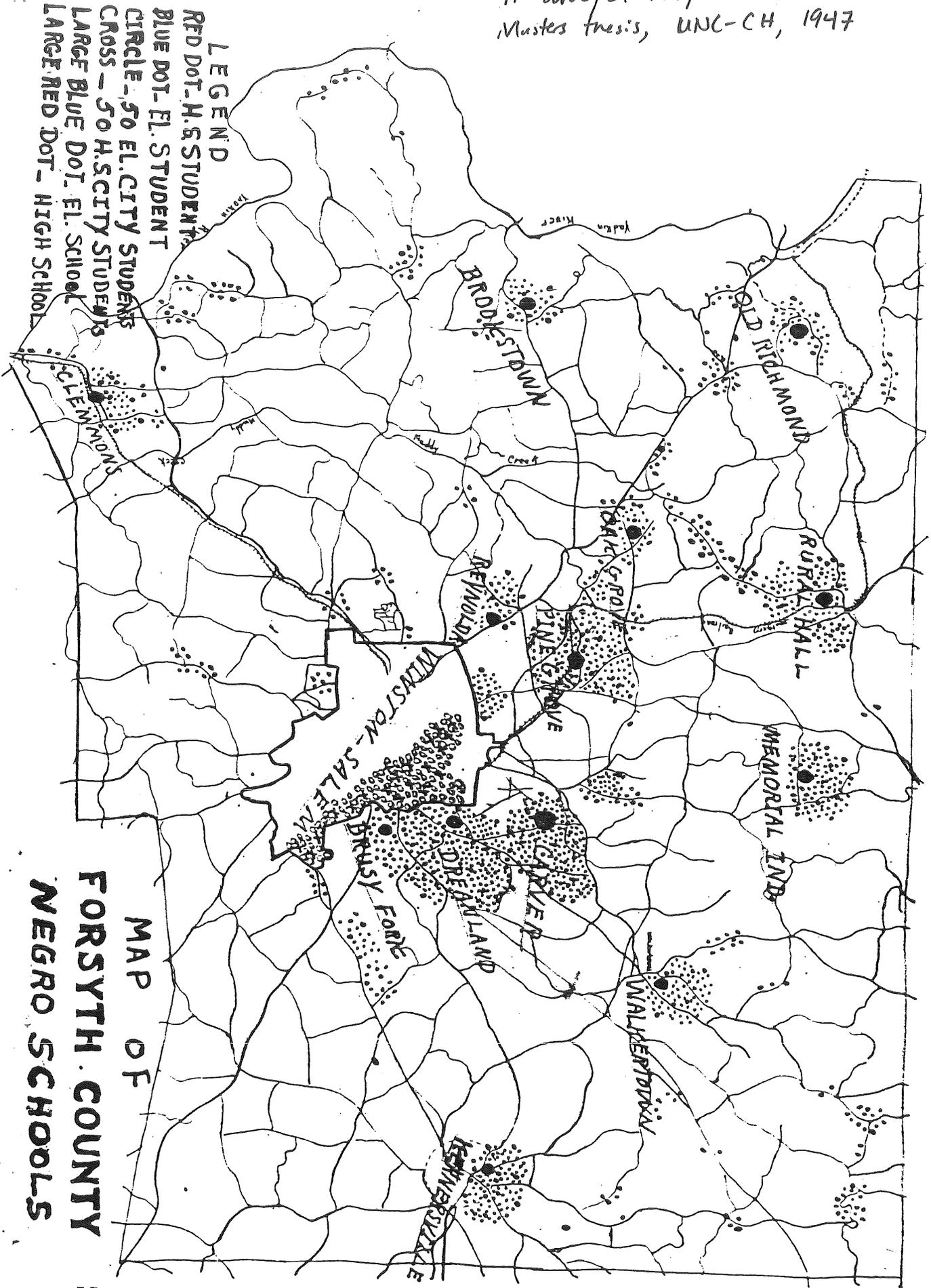


From Charles Victor Sijmon
 "A Survey of Forsyth Co. Schools"
 Masters Thesis, UNC-CH, 1947

Oak Grove School, Forsyth Co., N.C.

Figure 2

FY 2546





1910