

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Reid's Grove School

Gatesville vicinity, Gates County, GA, Listed 8/30/2011

Nomination by Penne Sandbeck

Photographs by Penne Sandbeck, May 2011



Façade view



Rear view

(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 Reid's Grove School
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 931 Main Street (NC 37) N/A [] not for publication
city or town Gatesville [x] vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Gates code 073 zip code 27938

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for 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/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

Reid's Grove School
Name of Property

Gates County, NC
County and State

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 count.)

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.)

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

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: Government Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rosenwald School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK/CONCRETE
walls SYNTHETICS: vinyl siding

roof asphalt
other _____

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 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)

Black Ethnic Heritage
Education

Period of Significance

1927-1951

Significant Dates

1927

1951

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stallings, S. D., builder

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:

State Library of North Carolina

Reid's Grove School
Name of Property

Gates County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Two acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 342360 4031560
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 Penne Sandbeck
organization _____ date February 17, 2011
street & number P. O. Box 297 telephone 919-621-5500
city or town New Bern state NC zip code 28563

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 Gates County EIC (attn: Reba Green-Holley, County Extension Director)
street & number P. O. Box 46 telephone 252-357-1400
city or town Gatesville state NC zip code 27938

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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Reid's Grove School

Gates County, North Carolina

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
N/A

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Location and Physical Description

Reid's Grove School stands on the east side of US 158 Business (formerly known as NC 37) about eight-tenths of a mile north of Gates County's principal town of Gatesville. Known historically as the "Somerton Road," the former NC 37 was a regional thoroughfare on which farmers in this backwater section of the Albemarle drove livestock, primarily hogs, north to the markets in Virginia. In spite of its proximity to town, the school and its surroundings maintain a rural identity with its surrounding flat terrain, farm buildings, and cultivated fields. Facing west, Reid's Grove School is sited on its original location, approximately 150 feet east of the road.

The school, whose cornerstone is inscribed "November 5, 1927," rests on its original brick pier foundation (the cinder block infill between the piers is later, probably dating from the 1960s) with no period landscaping, outbuildings, structures, or objects other than the concrete walkway along the front of the school thought to have been created in the 1940s. Former students, however, revealed that the school's setting included shrubbery, a large oak tree on the front lawn and, situated below the oak tree, the water pump. Behind the building, there was a baseball field, a basketball goal (according to the students, this was a later feature), a small pond, and two buildings—a woodshed and a frame gabled shed with boys and girls' bathrooms. These features vanished between 1951, the school's last operating year, and the 1980s.¹

The building itself is a one-story, side-gable frame school with a prominent projecting single-bay gabled wing. The school building's exterior is nearly identical to the Rosenwald Fund's 1920s "Floor Plan No. 20" for a two-teacher community school, oriented to face either east or west. Plan No. 20 measures sixty by thirty feet with the twenty-foot-wide gable projecting approximately eight feet; however, in the case of Reid's Grove School, the dimensions are slightly larger, approximately sixty-four by thirty feet. The gable, measuring 21 feet and 6 inches by ten feet, is larger as well.²

The façade retains its original glazed paneled doors and fenestration pattern—the smaller, single, paired windows to either side of the center projecting gable and its four windows—although all original nine-over-nine, double-hung sash windows in the center gable and the paired six-over-six sash windows at either side of the projecting center gable were replaced with similar vinyl windows in 2006. The original weatherboarding was also then covered by vinyl siding. The roof eaves and exposed rafter tails are, however, intact and not covered, as are the original shed hoods that shelter the two flanking entrances. A small window was cut into the originally blind south elevation circa 1970, but the rear elevation retains its

¹ Reid's Grove School Alumni Meeting and Interview, Gatesville, NC. Reba Green Holley and Penne Sandbeck, interviewers, 16 March 2011.

² Reid Thomas, Restoration Branch, NC Historic Preservation Eastern Office (NC-HPO). Floor plan of Reid's Grove School, ca. 2007.

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Gates County, North Carolina

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N/A

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two bands of six windows, also replaced with similar vinyl windows in 2006. Brick chimney flues were removed in the 1980s.

Inside, a narrow transverse corridor runs nearly the full length of the front, now connecting all rooms. This corridor, as with the classrooms and offices, has an acoustic tile ceiling. The bead-board walls are present, revealed in certain places such as the surviving sliding partition wall behind the present drywall sheathing. Otherwise, much interior finish remains and includes tongue-and-groove pine flooring, horizontal five-panel doors, plain surrounds and baseboards, three-light transoms over the doors, and a few circa-1930 suspended light fixtures. The south classroom's elevated stage floor has also been retained. The most remarkable survival is the paneled sliding partition, although the drywall may hide other original elements, such as chalkboards.

The original floor plan of the school is still evident, from compiling the known history of the building's construction with recollections from former students. The two sole entrances open into the building's corridor where, to the right (or south), were the school cloakrooms in a narrow space approximately five-by-thirteen feet; this was, more or less, faithful to Rosenwald Plan No. 20 for the two-teacher community school. However, to the left, a transomed entrance opens into a small classroom, approximately ten-by-fifteen feet. This room conforms to the Industrial Room plan configuration in the Rosenwald Plan No. 3 for a three-teacher community school, rather than Rosenwald Plan No. 20. Furthermore, besides this Industrial Room space Reid's Grove School's projecting front gable conforms to the Industrial Room configuration of Rosenwald Plan 20, although according to former students, neither was used as such. All students remembered the gable room having always had its partition wall and small horizontal paneled door; one office was for the principal, the other was the teachers' lounge.³

The smaller classroom at the northwest corner of the building meant that the middle classroom, to the northeast, was irregular in shape. It is not known if there was a cloakroom in this space, unlike the small cloakroom in the building's southwest corner. More changes came with indoor plumbing; in the early 1950s, just before the school closed, the south cloakrooms were refashioned into two small, single-seat bathrooms and, by the 1970s, the south classroom's stage area had a small kitchenette complete with a small window over a sink. After the school closed, it reopened first as a 4-H office, then as the county's African American library and the larger classroom spaces were partitioned for storage and other offices. These partitions and additions can be easily removed.

³ Reid's Grove School Alumni Meeting and Interview, Gatesville, NC. Reba Green Holley and Penne Sandbeck, interviewers, 16 March 2011. The students could not remember which office was the principal's, suggesting that the offices may have been switched during respective principal tenures. There were three principals cited during Reid's Grove School's twenty-four year history—Eliza Satterfield, "Mr. Purnell," and "Mr. Woodlief."

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N/A

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Statement of Significance

Reid's Grove School meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register, significant for its association with African American education in Gates County from 1927 until 1951. This school was one of seven schools in the county financed and constructed with the assistance of the Rosenwald Fund and, as such, is significant for its African American heritage. This school stands as testimony to a rare bright moment in the Jim Crow era, when philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and educator Booker T. Washington formed the basic partnership that led to the establishment of these schools throughout the American South. Interoffice documentation from North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction, furthermore, vividly illustrates the human side of building these schools in the 1920s—the constrictions African Americans found themselves in, and the consequent efforts of North Carolina's Rosenwald agents, W. F. Credle and G. E. Davis, to build the best schools possible. It is also an example of how Rosenwald Fund plans were occasionally altered by local contractors to suit their own needs. Reid's Grove School served all African American students within the greater Gatesville area. The period of significance begins in 1927, the year Reid's Grove School was built, and ends in 1951 when the building ceased its function as a school, and Gates County acquired the property from the County Board of Education.

Historic Context: Education and African American Heritage

Located in the northeast region of the state known as the Albemarle (taking its name from the eponymous sound, as well as being part of the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Albemarle Precinct), Gates County was, and has remained, a quiet rural backwater in the shadow of Elizabeth City to its east and the Norfolk-Hampton Roads metropolis to its north and northeast. The largest towns, Gatesville and Sunbury, were little more than villages into the late twentieth century. Both the county's whites and African Americans shared a rural lifestyle with few comforts, and county official Mills Eure's 1870s statement that "The poor condition of the people, making it necessary for the children to work in the crops, prevents as full a [school] attendance as we otherwise would have," could have applied to either group.¹ Lacking local public education support, African Americans turned to their own institutions after the Civil War to bring education to their children. Black churches were instrumental in founding small schools by the turn of the twentieth century, one example being Middle Swamp School in north Gates County's Haslett Township. Another was Rooks School to the west in Reynoldson Township.²

¹ Thomas R. Butchko, *Forgotten Gates: The Historical Architecture of a Rural North Carolina County* (Gatesville: The Gates County Historical Society, 1991), 41.

² Butchko 41. Rooks is still said to be standing, as is Middle Swamp School.

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N/A

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However, one local African American school was apparently built ten to twenty years before Rooks or Middle Swamp. On October 5, 1882, Wilson Hudgins and his wife Mariah deeded a quarter-acre tract of their land on the Somerton Road to the three-man committee of the "Gatesville School District." Of these three men—R. B. G. Cowper, W. P. Harrell, and Asbury Reid—the latter was an African American farmer, the son of free black landowner Micajah Reid. Given the proximity of their farm and that this was likely a black school, it may explain why, by the 1920s, the school building on the premises was referred to as "Reid's Grove."³ W. P. Harrell, another farmer, was white, and R. B. G. Cowper was the county's probate judge.⁴

The 1880s Reid's Grove School was likely one of the first public schools built for African American children in Gates County. In 1897, the county was cited as having thirty schools for white children and twenty-nine schools for blacks; one local school during this period that survived into the 1980s was New Middle Swamp School in Haslett Township and, as with many of these pre-1950s schools, it was closely affiliated with the neighboring New Middle Swamp Baptist Church.⁵ In the case of the first Reid's Grove School, there were no churches known to have ever been by or near its site.⁶

Within thirty years of Reid's Grove School's 1880s construction, a new school building program for African American children was spreading across the southeast United States. The Rosenwald Fund was a philanthropic effort on the part of Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), who was president of Sears, Roebuck and Company by 1909. After a congenial meeting of the minds, Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee University, formed a partnership in 1912 to build rural black schools in Alabama; by 1917, this venture had evolved into the Julius Rosenwald Fund, initially based in Chicago until 1920, when Rosenwald opened a schoolhouse planning and design office in Nashville, Tennessee.⁷ Rosenwald, inspired by Andrew Carnegie's work in getting communities invested in his public library campaign, made state, county, and local involvement a condition of his school funding; as stated by one of his followers, "The program was projected not merely as a series of schoolhouses, but as a community

³ Butchko 98-99; Gates County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 33:80.

⁴ U. S. Federal Census, 1880 Population Schedule for Gates County, Gatesville Township. In 1880, Reid had twelve children at home, one of which, William, would become a physician by 1900.

⁵ Butchko, p. 41.

⁶ United States Postal Map, "Rural Delivery Routes, Gates County, N. C." Washington, D. C.: USPO, 1910. Also, Jesse T. Matthews, Fannie Matthews Spivey, Jacqueline Bonner Sears, and Frances Knight Riddick, Gatesville, N. C., 16 March 2011 Reid's Grove School group interview. Mr. Matthews, Mrs. Spivey, Mrs. Sears, and Mrs. Riddick, all in their seventies, stated that neither they nor their parents had seen a church at this site.

⁷ Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 65:4 (October 1988), 395-398, 400.

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enterprise in cooperation between citizens and officials, white and colored.”⁸ After Booker T. Washington’s death in 1915, Rosenwald disassociated the venture from Tuskegee, to the consternation of Washington’s family but the new Rosenwald center in Nashville, Tennessee, aided by the managerial and drafting skills of school designer and Tennessee native Samuel Leonard Smith, became more efficient in terms of planning and building schoolhouses.⁹

Nathan Carter Newbold, who started as a state rural school agent in 1913, became North Carolina’s newly-founded Director of Negro Education in 1921, by which time he had helped implement several Rosenwald Schools in the state. He hired William Frontis Credle (1890?-1950) and George Edward Davis (1862-1959) as his principal Rosenwald liaisons; the two men worked well with the public and one another. W. F. Credle, a native of Hyde County, was white; G. E. Davis, who came from a middle-class family in Wilmington, was African American.¹⁰ Correspondence between the two men showed mutual respect, an important factor in North Carolina’s efficient and prolific Rosenwald School building campaign.¹¹

Gates County’s earliest Rosenwald Schools were in Buckland (north central Gates County), built in 1919-1920, followed by Reynoldson (north Gates County), Hobbsville (southeast), and Roduco (central), all built in 1920-1921.¹² In March 1926, the county approached North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction concerning using the Rosenwald Fund’s Plan No. 18 for the proposed Gates County Training School, but plans for the school remained inconclusive.¹³ In May 1926, W. F. Credle, then the supervisor of the state’s Rosenwald Fund, responded to Gates County School Superintendent J. M. Glenn with what may be the earliest reference to the future Reid’s Grove School: “A member of the committee in Gatesville Township district No. 1 has written a letter of inquiry relative to some aid from the Rosenwald Fund. I am writing to say that we would be very happy to aid you on any school building that you might be able to build for your colored people.”¹⁴

⁸ Hanchett, *NCHR*, 398.

⁹ James Leloudis, *Schooling the New South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 220-221.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 407-411.

¹¹ Leloudis, 222-223. This is further borne out in the selected quotes between Credle and Davis that follow.

¹² *Ibid*, 433.

¹³ J. M. Glenn, Superintendent, Gates County Public Schools, Gatesville, N.C. 31 March 1926 letter to W. F. Credle. Rosenwald Fund Archives, Department of Negro Education (DNE), N.C. Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Division of Archives and History (DOAH), Raleigh, N. C..

¹⁴ W. F. Credle, Raleigh, N. C. 11 May 1926 letter to J. M. Glenn. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

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N/A

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The following April, shortly before he left his post as county superintendent, J. M. Glenn contacted Credle again: "Two of our colored district are ABOUT to get ready to build schoolhouses this summer. Each is a two-teacher district, and your Plan 20 will likely be used in each case."¹⁵

Gates County's Board of Education records indicates that one of the schools was definitely Reid's Grove School (built in the 1927-1928 fiscal year); the other one was Corapeake in northeast Gates County, built the following year and, like Reid's Grove School (and contrary to Glenn's statement), a three-teacher school.¹⁶ Credle forwarded blueprints to J. M. Glenn at the end of April, with a note saying, "I think that you will be able to get this house put up for around \$2250.00. The cost varies all the way from \$2000.00 to \$3000.00."¹⁷

In July 1927, problems emerged for Reid's Grove School in a letter from former Gates County Superintendent J. M. Glenn, who was assisting the new superintendent on school matters: "As you know, the funds here are, and always have been, rather short. You mentioned that you might be able to get the **three-room** appropriation on such a building. And, since the appropriations have been reduced somewhat anyway, we would be mighty glad to get this additional amount, if possible."¹⁸

Given that previous correspondence had cited a "two-room" rather than a "three-room" plan, there was some consternation on the parts of Credle and Davis. Davis went to the site to investigate, finding the school building well under way, with the foundation done and sleepers in, as well as more land acquired for the school property. He learned as well that the Gates County Board of Education had met with the Reid's Grove School committee in May, the result being that "Three or four men (colored) of the settlement went on a note for one thousand dollars, and they are expecting 700 from us."¹⁹ More galling to Davis was that he felt the Board of Education had taken advantage of both the Reid's Grove School committee and the Department:

....it does not seem fair and just for them to give the Negroes, a most deserving and industrious, and law-abiding group, only **One thousand dollars** and they take \$350 of

¹⁵ J. M. Glenn, Gatesville, N. C. 25 April 1927 letter to W. F. Credle. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

¹⁶ Gates County Board of Education, 1909-1927 Meeting Minutes (Volume not numbered), 2 May 1927, p. 549. Microfilm, DOAH, Raleigh, N. C. Also, Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools"
<http://www.rosenwaldplans.org/NCSchools.html>

¹⁷ W. F. Credle, Raleigh, N. C. 28 April 1927 letter to J. M. Glenn. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

¹⁸ J. M. Glenn, Gatesville, N. C., 8 July 1927 letter to W. F. Credle. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

¹⁹ G. E. Davis, Superintendent of NC DPI, Charlotte, N. C. 16 September 1927 letter to W. F. Credle. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NCDPI. Gates County Board of Education, 2 May 1927 minutes (p. 549), DOAH. Also, Gates County Register of Deeds, Book 77:554 (July 1927, Malinda Jenkins> Gates County Board of Education)

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N/A

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this to buy the land, grant \$50.00 to some local white man to **inspect** the building. This leaves only \$600 of the grant to build then, a three-teacher building, so much needed.

In addition before this was given they required individual leaders **to agree** to furnish the building **themselves** with this pitiable sum....There are only six land owners in the group.²⁰

Davis also noted the more positive aspects of the situation, citing the "excellent" work of the builders and S. D. Stallings, a "competent practical carpenter" from Hertford who was overseeing the project. He furthermore felt J. S. Moore, the new Superintendent, was a good man and that the machinations that had occurred were the fault of the Board, not Moore. Pragmatically, Davis concluded, "I want to hold the good will of the whites there until we get all we can in the way of concessions from them."²¹

Regarding the interior plan, Davis noted that the school was "really going to be a three teacher building though as you are aware, an enlargement of the two-teacher building facing East or West. What was the domestic science room has been enlarged to a standard size classroom and in addition one of the cloakrooms in the end away from where platforms is [sic.] to be namely the rear east side, and end will be enlarged for a domestic science room." Davis added that he and Stallings had ordered the paint, "a Sherwin-Williams product," and that "I selected the colors myself for outside and inside."²²

On September 26, J. M. Glenn wrote Credle that "the district will likely receive only \$500.00 from the Rosenwald Fund," which Credle already knew, having pressed his case for more money with S. L. Smith, North Carolina's Rosenwald Fund liaison. Glenn continued, "We ask that you take into consideration the fact that the front room has been enlarged six feet and an additional industrial room is being arranged by enlarging one of the cloak rooms, and see if you can't get the three-room appropriation for us."²³

G. E. Davis went back to Gatesville for more information but found increasingly vague answers from Moore and Stallings, both of whom stated that Credle had approved of the project as a three-

²⁰ G. E. Davis, 16 September 1927 letter to W. F. Credle. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI. Also, Leloudis 218, where Davis and Credle's superior, N. C. Newbold, faced comparable situations with county officers.

²¹ Davis 16 September 1927 letter.

²² Ibid.

²³ J. M. Glenn, Gatesville, N.C. 19 September 1927 Letter to W. F. Credle, Raleigh, N.C. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI. Also, W. F. Credle, Raleigh, N. C., 19 September 1927 letter to G. E. Davis. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

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N/A

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teacher school, some two years prior.²⁴ Davis saw the school, which was further along, and “told [Stallings] that it was unfortunate that this plan—a two-teacher building—was being used; that it would have been just about as cheap for them to have used the regular three-teacher plans as I have enlarged the room and add [the] industrial room...However I told him I could guarantee nothing, but since they had gotten so far along with the building, if they would provide an industrial room, I would take the matter up with you and explain that they were led to believe that you would approve it before they began—and I would do all I could to explain it as a three-teacher building”²⁵

Davis was consequently indignant for the Reid's Grove School committee “upon whom a burden, **unjust** in my Judgment, has fallen.” But, as he evaluated the scenario, he was also indignant on another level:

They ought to be granted \$700.00. They had to agree to finish it with the pittance doled out to them by the board. I mean these little letters to signify the size of the gift, in comparisons to cost. I understand they signed something to that effect—this from Stallings...I think it rather presumes upon our liberality for a superintendent to begin building before they have signed up. In this case I don't believe the superintendent ever signed upon under our terms. Did he?²⁶

But Davis concluded, “Certainly if there has ever been a case deserving our sympathy and help—Gatesville is,” and agreed to contact S. L. Smith at the Rosenwald Fund to press the case for a \$700.00, not \$500.00 allotment.²⁷ Davis successfully presented the issue to Smith, who consented to approve Reid's Grove School's application as a three-teacher school.²⁸ The school opened on November 5, 1927, and Gates County received \$700.00 for “Application No. 16-G” the following month.²⁹

²⁴ G. E. Davis, 28 September 1927 letter to W. F. Credle, Raleigh, N.C. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI. The 1926 communication between Glenn and Credle discusses a two-room plan school, and was only in the initial stages of planning.

²⁵ G. E. Davis, 28 September 1927 letter to W. F. Credle.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ S. L. Smith, The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Nashville, TN. 10 October 1927 letter to W. F. Credle, Raleigh, N. C. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

²⁹ Clerk for Rosenwald Fund (no letterhead, but assume this is out of NC DPI and that funds were released to them from Tennessee), 23 December 1927 letter to J. S. Moore, Superintendent, Gatesville, N.C. Rosenwald Archives, DNE, NC DPI.

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Surviving Reid's Grove School students, their ages ranging from late sixties to early eighties, recalled their old school fondly in early 2011. However, the intervening sixty to seventy years have not dimmed memories of long, often cold, walks to school through forest, fields, and muddy dirt roads; the students, whose parents were all farmers, lived within a five-to-ten mile radius of the school, and other students who arrived in the 1940s from closed schools such as Ballards Grove, lived farther away still. One former student described arriving at Reid's Grove School on a winter's morning to see bonfires blazing to warm the children.³⁰ Another remembered Mrs. Anna Jones Burke, a Hertford County native and Reid's Grove School's primary grades schoolteacher, who sat with the smallest children and massaged their frozen hands before class began.³¹

The students remembered three rooms serving as classrooms with the smallest room, located at the building's northwest corner, assigned to grades one through three under Miss Burke's care from the 1940s until the end of the school in 1951.³² The middle room included fourth and fifth grades, and sometimes other third graders; one student recalled the teacher being Thelma Johnson, and another recalled that Virginia Dotson Woods had also taught those upper elementary grades.³³ Eighth grade students were in a separate space, likely the south room was their classroom.³⁴ One student recalled that there were approximately ten children to each grade.³⁵ The offices—two rooms comprising a principal's office, and a teacher's lounge—were in the projecting front-gable extension, which would have otherwise been used as an Industrial Room.³⁶ The cloakroom was in the southwest corner of the building, but was later converted to single-seat bathrooms at the south end, boys and girls' rooms back-to-back.³⁷ Before the bathrooms appeared, apparently in the late 1940s-early 1950s, there was a frame privy for girls and boys "behind the woodshed" behind the school.³⁸

³⁰ Mr. Jesse T. Matthews, Jr., Gatesville, NC. Interview with Penne Sandbeck and Reba Green Holley, 16 March 2011.

³¹ Mrs. Jacqueline Bonner Sears, Gatesville, NC. Interview with Penne Sandbeck and Reba Green Holley, 16 March 2011. Mrs. Frances Knight Riddick and Mrs. Sears shared warm memories of Mrs. Burke, who called the younger children her "little folk"; Mr. Matthews and Mr. Ralph Roscoe's memories of Mrs. Burke were somewhat cooler, as was Mrs. Frances Hall Goodman's recollection of, "She was rough, she was tough." No census or educational records have emerged for Mrs. Burke as of the time this nomination was completed, yet she is one of the teachers most vividly remembered.

³² Mrs. Frances Knight Riddick, Mrs. Sears, Mrs. Fannie Matthews Spivey, and Mr. Ralph Roscoe, Gatesville, NC. Interview with Penne Sandbeck and Reba Green Holley, 16 March 2011

³³ Mr. Matthews. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Mrs. Sears. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

³⁶ Mr. Matthews. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

³⁷ Mr. Roscoe, Mrs. Frances Goodman. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

³⁸ Mrs. Spivey, Mr. Matthews, Mrs. Beulah Riddick Forney. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

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Of the twelve people interviewed, all remembered Reid's Grove School's curriculum consisting of reading, writing, and arithmetic with some elocution. History and drawing classes were taught by one of the principals, Eliza Satterfield, who hailed from Edenton.³⁹ Other instructors included Mr. Purnell, who also served a period of time as principal. According to the students, Purnell was from Plymouth in Washington County, as was Addie Hall James, who was superintendent of the county's African American schools during the later 1940s; students remembered her annual examination visits.⁴⁰

Reid's Grove School offered no shop classes, nor were there science classes.⁴¹ However, plays were a frequent entertainment for students, teachers, and family; it was the only time former pupils could remember the giant sliding partition door between the upper elementary and middle school grades ever being opened. Once opened, the middle room became part of an assembly/auditorium space with the higher section of the south room forming a stage.⁴² There were also intramural competitions with the other African American schools, such as Corapeake and Buckland; at that time, Reid's Grove School had a baseball field behind the school.⁴³

As might be expected, Reid's Grove School students remembered special occasions and recesses at the school fairly vividly—May Day was a major event, with a maypole and sack races. Easter and Christmas were also celebrated; one student recalled when he was asked to select a tree from the nearby woods and, after cutting it down and hauling it back to school, it was decorated and placed upon the south room stage platform.⁴⁴

School days were often broken up by the harvest and planting seasons. All of the students remembered being taken out of school or being kept home to help their parents, which could include chopping wood, plowing, and helping with the peanut or cotton crops. Still, nearly all of these students finished their time at Reid's Grove School. Once they passed eighth grade, students initially went to T. S. Cooper Training School in Sunbury and, later, after T. S. Cooper School burned in the 1940s, Butler High School, which

³⁹ Mrs. Goodman, Mr. Matthews. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011. In the Elizabeth City State Normal School's 1925 annual, *The Normal Light*, there is a senior photograph of Eliza Satterfield, who was noted as being an impressive singer (Elizabeth City State University Yearbook archives, online http://library.digitalnc.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/yearbooks&CISOPTR=597&CISOBOX=1&REC=1).

⁴⁰ Reid Grove alumni. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

⁴¹ Mr. Matthews, Mrs. Spivey. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ Mrs. Sears. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

⁴⁴ Mrs. Sears, Mrs. Spivey, and Mr. Matthews. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

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was closer to Gatesville.⁴⁵ These were all African American schools, as integration did not happen in Gates County until well into the 1960s.

Reid's Grove School remained in operation between the winter of 1927 and the spring of 1951.⁴⁶ In 1951, stating the school had closed, Gates County acquired the property from the Board of Education.⁴⁷ During county ownership, the former school housed Gates County's 4-H Club and then became a library for African American citizens before integration in the 1960s. The school was renamed the Mitchell Building in honor of Howard Mitchell, North Carolina's first African American N. C. Cooperative Extension Service agent; the African American county extension agent's office was here as well. After the Cooperative Extension Service was integrated and moved to offices in Gatesville, the building housed other uses from driver's license examiner offices to meeting space for the local Red Cross and Inter-Faith Disaster Relief chapters.⁴⁸ Since 1999, it has been owned by the Economic Improvement Council (EIC), which uses it for office space, a local food bank, and storage for election voting machines. It is the goal of the EIC and the local Cooperative Extension Service, however, for this property to be restored and used as a community center and local museum centered upon African American regional history and the educational reforms realized by the Rosenwald Fund.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Mr. Matthews, Mrs. Sears, Mrs. Riddick, Mr. Roscoe, Mr. Richard Goodman. Sandbeck-Holley interview, 16 March 2011.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Gates County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 93:385.

⁴⁸ Reba Green-Holley, N. C. Cooperative Extension Service, Gatesville, N. C. Conversation with Penne Sandbeck, January 30, 2011.

⁴⁹ Holley conversation, January 30, 2011.

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U. S. Federal Census, 1870-1880 Population Schedules for Gates County, Gatesville Township,
North Carolina.

United States Postal Map, "Rural Delivery Routes, Gates County, N. C." Washington,
D. C.: USPO, 1919.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated two-acre parcel exists within the boundaries of Parcel Identification Number 0100277, as shown by a heavy line on the accompanying Reid's Grove School Tax Map, at a scale of 1 inch = 202 feet.

Boundary Justification

This parcel comprises the boundaries and land historically associated with Reid's Grove School, and provides an appropriate setting.