

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Marshall High School**

Marshall, Madison County, MD0062, Listed 8/13/2008  
Nomination by Sybil Argintar  
Photographs by Sybil Argintar, September 2006



Overall front view



Overall rear view



Entrance



Exterior stair

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of property**

historic name Marshall High School

other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

street & number Blannahassett Island, W side Bridge Street (SR 1001) not for publication N/A

city or town Marshall vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Madison code 115 zip code 28753

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 forth 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.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_

determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Marshall High School  
Name of Property

Madison County, North Carolina  
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 the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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)  
Cat: Education Sub: School

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Cat: Work in Progress Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)  
Colonial Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation brick  
roof asphalt  
walls brick  
other concrete  
wood

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

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1926 - 1957

**Significant Dates**

1926

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Simpson, Frank B., architect

Sprinkle, Mack, 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: Western Office, Archives and History

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreeage of Property** 2.28 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 347560 3962390  
2         

Zone Easting Northing  
3        
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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Sybil Hedy Argintar, Preservation Planning Consultant

organization Southeastern Preservation Services date March 3, 2008

street & number 166 Pearson Drive telephone (828) 230-3773

city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28801

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### 12. Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

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

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

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

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### Property Owner

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

name Robert S. Pulleyn, Blannahassett, LLC

street & number 200 Craine Road telephone (828) 649-0177

city or town Marshall state NC zip code 28753

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

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

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**Summary**

Marshall High School, completed in 1926 as part of the consolidation effort of Madison County schools, is located on 2.28 acres on the south side of Blannahassett Island, in Marshall, North Carolina, Madison County.<sup>1</sup> The 12.5-acre island is situated south of Main Street, downtown Marshall, and is reached by way of a recently replaced bridge which leads from the center of downtown Marshall and spans the French Broad River. The unique topography of the town of Marshall, with the river to the south and steep hillsides to the north, made large portions of available land hard to come by at the time the school was constructed in 1926. The school building, athletic field, and ca. 1956 gymnasium, all located on the island, occupy one of the few level pieces of land in the town aside from Main Street. Tree-lined river banks are located to the north and south of the school building, with the gymnasium and part of the athletic field located across the courtyard from the main building, to the west. East of the school building is the bridge and approach road, with parking located in front of the building, in the former location of a ca. 1952 elementary school building which was demolished after the flood of 2004. The athletic field wraps around the building on the north and east. The building is a good example of an early twentieth-century school building in the Colonial Revival style.

**Marshall High School. Contributing. 1926.**

Marshall High School is a symmetrical, two-story-plus-basement, U-shaped brick building with a low hip roof with exposed rafter ends and covered by asphalt shingles. The building as originally designed was to be a seventeen-room building with offices, two large library and reading rooms, a large basement, and an auditorium, all of which was to be of "...brick construction and modern in all details".<sup>2</sup> The gymnasium was located in the basement, complete with locker rooms, but was later housed in the ca. 1956 gymnasium building, still located to the west of the building but not part of this nomination. The façade of Marshall High School, facing southeast, features two projecting bays with gabled parapets. Each projecting bay has two sets of double-leaf doors with multi-light transoms and concrete steps leading up to the raised entries. The doors themselves appear to be later additions, but the openings are all original. To the north and south of the main entry area are blind end bays with concrete squares forming the corners of a decorative brick square. It does not appear that there were ever windows in the openings above the main doorways, with the area behind the doorways serving as open stairwells between the floors of the building. The north elevation consists of two floors plus the basement, with a brick chimney at the northwest corner. The building on the west elevation forms a U-shaped courtyard, with iron fire escapes on the two projecting wings. The south elevation does not have an above-ground basement, and, like the north side, is relatively plain except for the window fenestration. Windows on the façade (east) and north and south elevations are triple six-over-six double-hung sash flanked by single six-over-six sash, with double four-over-four, double eight-over-eight, and single six-over-six windows on the west courtyard elevation. Doorways and the triple six-over-six windows on the façade and side elevations have concrete keystones, and all windows have concrete sills and flat brick arches.

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<sup>1</sup> In some sources, this island is spelled Blennerhassett. However, the spelling used here appears to be the most commonly used, in newspaper articles and by local citizens.

<sup>2</sup> "County Superintendent Column". The News-Record. 5 March 1926.



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Inside the main door are circulation vestibules with one set of multi-light-over-panel double-leaf doors with large ten-light transoms leading into each of the side hallways. The stair halls consist of simple enclosed staircases with solid bead board balustrades and bead board runs beneath the staircase and simple square newel posts. The U-shaped first-floor hallway configuration has ten classrooms (recitation rooms) located around the perimeter of the building, with the grand two-story auditorium space located in the center (see Exhibit A, floor plans).<sup>3</sup> The auditorium is a large open space with a deteriorated wood floor which resulted from water damage during a 2004 flood. The stage is located at the northwest side of the room and there is a circulation catwalk which runs the length of the auditorium on three sides which connects the two classroom corridors on the second floor. The catwalks converge on the southeast side of the auditorium, where there is a large room which has been enclosed and appears to have originally opened onto the auditorium space like a balcony. An elementary library was on the first floor, and was likely positioned near the auditorium stage. It is not clear where the school office was located, but it was probably in one of the classroom spaces near the entrance to the building, at the southeast corner. It also does not appear that there was a cafeteria in the building as there is no evidence of a kitchen or a large space which would have been suitable for this use.

On the second floor, the classroom configuration is the same as on the first floor, with ten classrooms (recitation rooms) and with the library being located behind the upper level of the stage. Walls throughout the building are plaster, with a flat chair rail along all corridors, and ceilings are homasote, a "repulped newsprint" product available since the first decade of the twentieth century, that was typically used as a substitute for plaster and lath.<sup>4</sup> Typical doors into the classrooms are six-light-over-panel with six-light transoms. Classrooms are plain with storage closets with panel doors on one end and chalkboards on the other. Floors on the second floor were not damaged in the flood, but there is still a large amount of peeling paint and some deteriorated plaster. Bathrooms are located at the end of each long hallway, on both floors, on the north side of the building.

Concrete stairs lead to the basement of the building, which is approximately forty feet by one hundred feet. The basement has a concrete slab floor, brick and hollow tile walls, exposed ceiling structure, and small square windows, in single and triple configurations, set high on the walls. There is evidence that some of these windows may have been larger at some point, as they have been filled in with concrete block. The original piping for the showers and bathrooms remains along one side. Some remnants of the original homasote ceiling as on the upper floors remains, but most was removed after flood damage. The

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<sup>3</sup> "Marshall Has Fine School Building". *The News-Record*. 31 December 1926. The classrooms were noted as "recitation rooms" in this article.

<sup>4</sup> Jester's *20th Century Building Materials*. Various kinds of "wall board" products have been available as a substitute for plaster & lathe since the first decade of the 20th century. Homasote was first manufactured by the Agasote Millboard Company of Trenton, NJ in 1916, made of repulped newsprint. The book describes a number of other products with various trade names, made out of grass, reed, straw, paper, hulls, hops, and wood pulp.



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large open space that once served as the gymnasium for the school was divided, likely in the late 1950s after the new gymnasium was completed, into two smaller classrooms, with concrete block partition walls added at this time. Also located in the basement is the original boiler room.

The building is currently undergoing renovation, following the Secretary of Interior's Standards, for use as artist studios. The building was severely damaged in the 2004 flood and considerable community effort took place to save it. The current owner, a private developer, began renovation of the building in February 2007. In the renovation, the hallway and classroom configurations will remain intact and the auditorium will remain as one large space. Due to flood regulations and the fact that the floor of the auditorium was originally built below flood stage, the sloping floor will be leveled and new wood flooring installed. Damaged wood floors on the first floor will be replaced in-kind or with tile for some of the studios. All wood flooring on the second floor will be retained and refinished. Plaster walls, chair rail, and homasote ceilings will be retained. Some original classroom doors on the first floor were taken from the building before renovation work began, and these will be replaced with compatible new doors. Most of the original classroom doors remain on the second floor. All bathrooms will remain in their original locations, with new fixtures added. New exterior doors at the entrance to the hallways from the vestibules on the first floor will be added to meet fire regulation code. On the exterior, all original windows will be repaired and retained, and the entry areas will be brought back to their original design, with the modern exterior doors removed, the interior doors retained, and the entry vestibules restored. All brick detailing and decorative elements will be retained, and a new wood deck and steel fire escape stairs will be added in the central courtyard at the rear of the building.

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**Summary**

Marshall High School, located in Marshall, North Carolina, the county seat of Madison County, with a population of 840, has a period of significance from 1926-1957. It is architecturally significant as an example of the use of the Colonial Revival style for a public school building located in a prominent spot in the town. Designed by Raleigh architect Frank B. Simpson and built by Marshall contractor Mack Sprinkle, the building is also significant for its association with the educational history of Madison County. The building meets the requirements for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C.

**Historic Background and Educational Context**

Madison County was formed relatively late in the history of western North Carolina, founded in 1851 from a portion of Buncombe County, which had been established in 1791. Early settlement in the county often followed the French Broad River and the numerous creek and river valleys.<sup>5</sup> As noted in A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina, Madison County has often been known as "...the 'Kingdom of Madison' for its isolation and the independence of its people", creating a "dual heritage that encompasses rural mountain culture and a once-great mineral springs resort at Hot Springs. Bisecting the steep terrain, the French Broad River courses through its narrow gorge from Asheville to Paint Rock at the Tennessee state line. The southeast part of the county, including Marshall, traded with Asheville, while the north and west sections were oriented to Greeneville, Tennessee. Along the ledge on the right bank of the river, early road builders hacked the route of the Buncombe Turnpike in the 1820s. Drovers herding livestock down the turnpike from Tennessee to the coastal lowlands created a market for local farmers' corn and other feed crops, and the low-country elite came in their carriages up the turnpike for summer stays at the famous springs..."<sup>6</sup>

Marshall, the county seat of Madison County, was founded in 1855, and was named for Chief Justice John Marshall. Marshall's Main Street was originally the route of the old drover's road that connected Greeneville, Tennessee with Greenville, South Carolina. The drover's road became the Buncombe Turnpike in 1828, and served as a main commercial corridor connecting all the towns along the way. It served as a route for getting livestock and other goods to market, closely following the French Broad River and making these areas more easily accessible for farmers and merchants. It was not until the coming of the railroad and the beginnings of the tourism industry that the town of Marshall began to flourish. In 1882, the Western North Carolina Railroad was completed from Asheville, through Marshall, to Paint Rock at the Tennessee line. In 1903, several local businessmen, including W. J. McLendon,

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<sup>5</sup> Griffith, Clay. "Mars Hill High School". National Register Nomination. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. 2005, p. 8-5.

<sup>6</sup> Bishir, Catherine W., Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, p. 247.

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Charles B. Mashburn, and J. R. Swann, established a cotton textile mill, the Capitola Manufacturing Company, on the French Broad River, which provided work for many of the townspeople.<sup>7</sup>

In the years before the flood of 1916, commercial enterprises continued to grow, as several additional businesses opened along Main Street, including furniture stores, barber shops, hotels and boarding houses, hardware stores, general stores, restaurants, doctors' offices, hotels and banks.<sup>8</sup> The 1916 Sanborn map indicates there were many commercial buildings along the south side of Main Street such as a movie house, a barber, the telephone exchange, and a grocery, while only a handful of commercial buildings and primarily churches and residences were located on the north side. Due to the greater accessibility of Marshall after the arrival of the train, there were two hotels located on Main Street by 1916, the Montezuma and the Rector.

The flood of 1916 had a devastating impact on Marshall, and it had to rebuild many of its buildings damaged by the rising floodwaters of the French Broad River. As the area became more accessible with improved roads, tourism began to play a major role in the development of downtown and the town's growth. In the 1920s, Marshall's population had reached 1,800.<sup>9</sup>

Development of public schools in Madison County followed a pattern typical of many other western North Carolina counties. The difficult terrain of the county limited how and where buildings could be constructed and level land was at a premium. A system of unimproved roads added to the complexity of the lack of a cohesive, centrally managed school system. In the early nineteenth century, many schools were "subscription schools", taught in private homes or in small log schoolhouses for three or four months at a time.<sup>10</sup> The earliest public schools were not in existence until the 1830s, established through the State Literary Fund, and were still small log buildings within each small enclave or community in the county. In the late nineteenth century, churches began to be affiliated with the schools, often sponsoring their construction and providing teachers. The Baptists supported the development of Mars Hill College, located to the northeast of Marshall, and the Presbyterians supported the Dorland-Bell School in Hot Springs, located to the northwest.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the county Board of Education began to have a more direct hand in the administration of the multitude of small schools scattered throughout the county. In 1900, Madison County owned fifty-seven school buildings, down from a total of seventy-nine in 1890, resulting from an early, informal consolidation of some of the schools.<sup>11</sup> These fifty-seven schools included "...one

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<sup>7</sup> Mattson, Alexander & Associates, Inc. "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replace Bridge No. 328 on SR 1001 Over French Broad River, Marshall, Madison County", North Carolina Department of Transportation report. 1 August 1999, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> The North Carolina Yearbook. 1903-1915.

<sup>9</sup> "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report", p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> "Mars Hill High School". p. 8-5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

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brick, eleven log, and forty-five frame buildings...”<sup>12</sup> During the early part of the twentieth century, the Board began consolidating these schools into the present eight schools in the system. Consolidation became a necessity not only in Madison County, but nationally, so that funding could be more evenly divided and schools could begin to serve a larger area with more qualified teachers.<sup>13</sup> As roads were improved and school buses could more easily transport students, consolidation also became more of a realistic goal, especially in the mountains of western North Carolina

In the 1920s, the county Board of Education began planning for new high schools to accommodate the growing youth population, encouraging parents to have their children complete high school. New high schools were planned for Mars Hill, Marshall, Beech Glen, Spring Creek, Walnut, Hot Springs, and Laurel. However, despite the planning efforts of the county, many schools were not built until the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s provided funding and building assistance. There were eight schools built through this program, including Mars Hill High School (NR 2005) and schools in Ebbs Chapel, Beech Glen, Hot Springs, Laurel, Marshall, and Spring Creek. Mars Hill High School was designed by the Asheville architectural firm of S. Grant Alexander & Associates in 1938 and in the 1940s and 1950s students from the southeastern and eastern parts of the county attended the school. This school, along with Marshall and Hot Springs, served as one of three county high schools until they were all consolidated in 1973 into the present modern building located on the bypass east of Marshall.<sup>14</sup>

In 1923, the Board of Education met to lay out Marshall High School, with the intent being to serve grades one through twelve. When the level Blannahassett Island in the French Broad became available, the county Board of Education quickly seized the opportunity to use it for new school construction. In May of 1924, after much debate, the island was chosen under the recommendation of John H. Bonitz, assistant director of the Division of School House Planning, and architect G. Will Armfield of Greensboro, as the site for the new school.<sup>15</sup>

In February of 1926, the owner of Blannahassett Island sold the island to Madison County for \$2000, with deed restrictions being that the development had to be for public use. The county soon after sold Blannahassett Island to the Town of Marshall for \$3200, who in turn donated the site for the school to the county Board of Education. The State Board of Education approved the project cost of \$65,000, making the total building budget close to \$85,000. In addition to the school, the auditorium to be designed as a main feature of the building would also serve the greater community.<sup>16</sup> On March 5, 1926, the Madison County Board of Education announced that March 22 would be the day for the bid opening for the new Marshall High School. The building, designed by Frank B. Simpson of Raleigh, was to be a seventeen-

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 8-7.

<sup>15</sup> Marshall High School study list application. September 2005.

<sup>16</sup> “Marshall School to Be Located on the Island”. The News-Record. 5 February 1926.

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room building with offices, two large library and reading rooms, a large basement, and an auditorium, all of which was to be of "...brick construction and modern in all details". The scheduled completion date was September 1, 1926.<sup>17</sup> On March 26, 1926, the Board of Education announced that Mack Sprinkle of Marshall had been awarded the contract as general contractor for the school, to be built at a cost of \$56,800.<sup>18</sup> Additional contracts were let for steam heat to McDermot & Company of Durham for \$6,135 and for plumbing to Powers Plumbing Company of Hendersonville for \$2,665. In addition, due to the location of the school on the island, a stone wall, approximately twelve feet high, to protect the building from flooding was to be built. The contract for this was let to W. H. Morrow, at a cost of \$10,000.<sup>19</sup>

While the building construction was underway, there was a court case taking place between N. B. McDevitt, a member of the Board of Education, and the School Board. McDevitt was questioning the proper expenditure of funds by the Board for the new school and whether or not Madison County residents would end up having to cover some of the bill. This court case was written up in the local paper for several weeks, with Superintendent of County Schools O. S. Dillard responding back and forth to articles written by McDevitt. While this put somewhat of a damper on the school construction, it did not manage to stop construction, McDevitt apparently dropped the issue, and work on the school proceeded all through the summer of 1926. Even though the building was scheduled to be completed by September 1, it apparently did not open until December. Several articles during the summer of 1926 note that the building was partially in use for cultural events, but not fully open. On July 4, 1926 a singing convention was held in the high school building. A temporary roof covering was built, and people from all over the county came to hear the singers and see the progress of the new school construction. In August, just before the opening of the new school year, Superintendent Dillard announced that "...it is hoped that the Marshall building will be ready for occupancy about the middle of October. The work on this has been delayed on account of materials being slow in coming, but all material is now on hand and the weather permitting, the work can be finished in about 45 more days...". Apparently work was further delayed beyond the October time frame, with the opening moved to the beginning of November.<sup>20</sup>

Even with the projected November opening, the school did not officially open until December. On December 21, 1926, the Parent-Teacher Association for the school sponsored a benefit, where Harris Brothers, local fiddlers, played in the new auditorium. Adults were charged fifty cents and children thirty-five cents.<sup>21</sup> This served as a chance for the community to see the new school. On December 31,

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<sup>17</sup> "County Superintendent Column". The News-Record. 5 March 1926.

<sup>18</sup> It is not known what other buildings were constructed by Mack Sprinkle.

<sup>19</sup> The wall was to be six feet above the base, two feet below ground, tapering to fourteen feet and being eighteen inches thick on the top. This would make the full height of the wall at twelve feet above what was then the present high water level. It is not known if this wall was ever built, but it appears it was designed to be separate from the foundation wall and may have been washed away in floods.

<sup>20</sup> "Singing Convention to Be On Island in New School Building"; "School News". The News-Record. 25 June 1926; 27 August 1926; and 15 October 1926.

<sup>21</sup> "Old-Time Fiddlers Convention to Be Held in Marshall December 21". The News-Record. 10 December 1926.

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1926 an article was written for the newspaper describing the brand new school. It was noted that it was "...protected from flood...was a beautiful place, visible to all...on a flat area, with a baseball field, playground and tennis courts, and also a park for the community...Marshall's school has natural advantages of which few if any in the State can boast, and the building completed is even greater than one could have hoped for after seeing it in the making..." The article notes that the basement included a gymnasium and shower rooms for boys and girls, with "recitation" rooms (classrooms) and an elementary level library on the first floor and additional classrooms, a home economics room and upper level library on the second. The auditorium could seat almost 1000 people.<sup>22</sup> The first commencement was held in the new building on April 25, 1927, with D. Hiden Ramsey of Asheville as the keynote speaker.<sup>23</sup>

School board minutes for the time period 1924 through the middle of 1939 unfortunately are not available. However, minutes from July 1939 through June 1959 do reveal some additional information about the school. It should be noted that throughout its period of significance, Marshall High School served grades one through twelve. However, by February 3, 1941, the need for an additional classroom building and a separate gymnasium was already being felt, as noted in school board minutes indicating an "...urgent school need at Marshall, Hot Springs, White Rock, Mars Hill, and Beech Glen...".<sup>24</sup> On March 3, 1941, the school board asked the county for new building construction appropriations, with the county share to be \$51, 818. As of the minutes from September 1, 1941, no funds had yet been made available for four more classrooms and a gymnasium at Marshall.<sup>25</sup>

The need for additional buildings at Marshall High School continued for several more years. In order to begin raising funds for the new construction, on December 4, 1944, the school board authorized the sale of the old Marshall School building and lot, to go up for bid on February 26, 1945.<sup>26</sup> The building did go up for public auction, but the bid amounts were not satisfactory to the Board, and on March 5, 1945, the board passed a motion to again advertise the sale. This continued for several months, with the bids continuing to be lower than what the Board had anticipated. On June 4, 1945 the sale of the old school was again advertised, but bids still remained low.<sup>27</sup> By August 6, 1945, the board was still not satisfied with the auction bids, and decided to offer the property for private sale. On September 3, 1945, the former Marshall School property was sold for \$3400.00 to Weldon Ramsey, with the proceeds to be

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<sup>22</sup> "Marshall Has Fine School Building". The News-Record. 31 December 1926.

<sup>23</sup> "Commencement Exercises Well Attended at Marshall". The News-Record. 29 April 1927.

<sup>24</sup> Madison County School Board Minutes. February 3, 1941.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that throughout the minutes of the 1939 – 1959 time period, the school board was in a constant struggle with the county for appropriations, and even money designated for schools often was not supplied due to property taxes not being collected. The school board often had to move funds around and go to the State for appropriations needed for daily operations as well as new construction.

<sup>26</sup> School Board Minutes. December 4, 1944. The old school had previously been granted to the Board of Education by the Board of Home Missions of Presbyterian Church on July 29, 1908.

<sup>27</sup> School Board Minutes. March 5, 1945; May 7, 1945; and June 4, 1945.

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designated to the Marshall School Capital Outlay Fund.<sup>28</sup> On April 1, 1946 a tentative design was presented to the school board for a primary school and gymnasium addition to the newer Marshall High School by architect Lindsey M. Gudger, with a contract for full architectural plans approved by the board at their June 3, 1946 meeting.

Meanwhile, the need for additional classroom space continued to be a pressing issue at Marshall High School. By the late 1940s two additional schools, Long Branch School and Lower Little Pine, had consolidated with Marshall High School.<sup>29</sup> Even with plans ready, the availability of money for building the needed additions continued to plague the school board. On March 1, 1948 the Madison County Commissioners were given a full list of projects and costs for all county schools. In 1949 the State Legislature required that all teachers be given a twenty percent salary increase, an additional drain on the small budget of Madison County schools. But, relief was in sight, as noted in the school board minutes dated July 5, 1949, that a \$388,223.00 grant had been awarded to the county by the State Board of Education, earmarked for school construction.<sup>30</sup> At last work could begin on the classroom building at Marshall High School.

In January 1950 a deed for an additional tract of land joining the Marshall School building was granted to the school board from the Town of Marshall. Lindsey Gudger, the architect for the additions, in order to keep plans more in budget, re-drew the plans for the school with the assistance of the State architect, with all plans approved in October 1950. The only stipulation was that the classrooms must be built before the gymnasium.<sup>31</sup> The primary building at Marshall High School would house eight classrooms and a cafeteria, to be built at a cost of \$125,413.00. This could not happen soon enough, because smaller county schools continued to merge with Marshall High School, with Upper Little Pine and Walnut Creek School both consolidating with the bigger school by May of 1951.<sup>32</sup> At the school board meeting on December 3, 1951, Lindsey Gudger and his assistant Jack Baber reported that Marshall Primary would be ready for occupancy on January 3, 1952, after several construction delays.<sup>33</sup>

The need for a larger gymnasium was not forgotten, however, and on February 1, 1954, a petition from Marshall citizens was presented to the school board that \$50,000.00 be requested from the State Board of Education to build a gymnasium, with another \$50,000.00 to be matched through a bond issue. The school board agreed to this, but it was more than a year, at their February 21, 1955 meeting, that they asked the County Commissioners to call an election for a bond issue, creating at the same time a Marshall School District which would serve as a special tax district to pay the bond.<sup>34</sup> Lindsey Gudger was present

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, September 3, 1945 and November 5, 1945.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, August 6, 1945 and August 6, 1946.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, March 1, 1948; April 4, 1949; and July 5, 1949.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, January 9, 1950; May 1, 1950; and October 2, 1950.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, February 8, 1951; April 23, 1951; and May 7, 1951.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, December 3, 1951.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, February 1, 1954 and February 21, 1955.



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at the school board meeting of May 26, 1955 to open sealed bids for the gymnasium. Bids came in at \$173,000.00, way over the allotted budget of \$100,000.00. The project was re-designed, and bids were finally accepted at the school board meeting in July 1955. The builders selected for the gymnasium construction included Z. B. Robinson Construction Corporation, general contractor; Dover Plumbing and Heating for plumbing and heating; and Burnsville Electric Shop for all electrical work.<sup>35</sup> No further mention was made of the construction project until June 1956 when a request was made by the school board for an additional \$8,449.00 from the Capital Outlay Fund for the gymnasium project. It is assumed that construction of the gym was completed by 1956.<sup>36</sup>

The 1957 "Islander", the school yearbook, notes that classes taught included English, business, band, French, math, history, science, drama, home economics, agriculture, and piano. Sports included men's and women's basketball, and football. Some of the popular clubs included the Monogram Club, Future Farmers of America, 4-H, Future Homemakers of America, the Glee Club, the Business Club, the Beta Club, Student Council, and French Club. Marshall High School continued to serve the community until a new high school was built in 1973, consolidating Marshall High School with other county high schools.<sup>37</sup> While the original school building continued in use as a high school serving grades one through twelve past the 1957 cut-off date, the use does not have exceptional significance under Criterion G to warrant an extension of the period of significance beyond 1957.

### **Architectural Context**

Little is known about the architect for Marshall High School, Frank B. Simpson, other than what is located in biographical files on him in the Special Collections Department of North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. In these files, reference is made to him in the "National Census of Engineering and Architectural Personnel", a National Defense document prepared in 1940, which notes that Simpson began work as an architect in 1903. According to this same document, as of July 23, 1940 he lived in Raleigh, North Carolina. Commissions noted on this document state that he designed the U.C.C. Office Building in Raleigh, and the Science Building and Boys' Dormitory at the State Normal School in Fayetteville.<sup>38</sup> Additional notations on Simpson in these files note that in 1907 "...Frank Simpson, the architect, has gone to Fayetteville to look after some matters preliminary to the awarding of the contract for the buildings on the new site for the State Normal for negroes there... Captain John Duckett, superintendent of the State Colored Normal schools went with Frank Simpson, architect, to

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, May 26, 1955 and July 5, 1955.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, June 7, 1956. In the 1957 "Islander" yearbook for the school, the gymnasium is pictured, so it was complete by the late 1950s.

<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, earlier school yearbooks are not available. It should also be noted that the gymnasium building, while remaining on the property, is under separate ownership from the main school building, so is not included as part of this nomination. It is included in photographs of the site only.

<sup>38</sup> North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, Special Collections. Biographical files on Frank B. Simpson. It is not known what U.C.C. is.

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Fayetteville today to open bids for the erection of the new school buildings there..." The Raleigh Times, in an article dated March 22, 1913 notes that Simpson designed the Vance Apartments at the corner of N. Washington and E. Edenton Streets in Raleigh, along with Frank Upman. Notations from the Raleigh News and Observer in 1915 and 1930, respectively, note that in 1913 Simpson was associated with architect P. Thornton and had completed designs for the State Administration Building and the Wake County Courthouse. In 1930, Simpson designed the Capital Club Building in Raleigh.<sup>39</sup> According to architectural plans in the collections at North Carolina State University, Simpson designed at least one other school in North Carolina, Kingswood Elementary School in Cary. This school, designed for the African-American community, was built in 1953, with additions of a gymnasium, classroom, and cafeteria made in 1958 and 1959.<sup>40</sup>

The Colonial Revival style as used on the Marshall High School is an architectural style used for many different types of prominent community buildings, including courthouses, banks, schools, and post offices. Typical features of these buildings include monumental entrances, use of Classical elements such as symmetry, keystones, pedimented doorways, and architrave trim around doors and windows. While the Marshall High School building is a much simpler interpretation of the style, it does exhibit some of these features including prominent projecting parapet entrances with a Tudor Revival influence, symmetry, and simple, unornamented interior design. Due to its prominent location on the island, visible from every direction in the town of Marshall, it was logical to use a style that would stand out and be noticed. It was an important building for the town, symbolizing the growing youth population and the importance of education to the community.

Marshall High School, one of three schools in existence in the county until consolidation led to the building of the present high school in 1973, was different in its design than the later high schools in the county, in Mars Hill and Hot Springs. These two buildings, of which the Hot Springs school is no longer extant, were designed under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), utilizing native stone as their building materials. The Mars Hill High School is the only extant example of the WPA high schools in the county. Detailing of the building includes the contrast of a formal projecting entrance pavilion and stepped and peaked parapet walls with the use of the rustic stone material.<sup>41</sup> The WPA buildings in many towns in western North Carolina were a distinct style of buildings unto themselves, being more Rustic Revival in their detailing and purposeful use of native materials, especially stone. While several commercial buildings in Marshall also exemplify the use of this style, this was not the popular style in the late 1920s when the high school was built.

By far, most of the consolidated high schools built in western North Carolina were built under the Works Progress Administration, often of stone, and in vernacular or Rustic Revival styles. There are a few

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Notations in files from newspaper articles. Raleigh Times, 22 March 1913; Raleigh News and Observer, 12 October, 1915 and 14 November 1930.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/findings/mc00063/>. Accessed 29 February 2008.

<sup>41</sup> "Mars Hill High School". National Register Nomination, p. 8-10.

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notable ones, however, which, like Marshall High School, utilized the Colonial Revival style and were constructed of brick with many classical elements. One of these buildings is Lenoir High School (1922) in Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina, designed by Benton and Benton architects. This two-story brick school is noted as being typical of the "...consolidated high schools that were the pride of their communities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century public education campaign."<sup>42</sup> This building's façade is broken by projecting pavilions, similar to Marshall High School and cast stone detailing which contrasts with the red brick walls.<sup>43</sup> Another example is Rutherfordton-Spindale Central High School (1924-25) in Rutherfordton, Rutherford County, North Carolina, designed by Gastonia architect Hugh White. This building is noted for its "...formal composition in red brick with simple classical detail, with wings angling back from an entrance pavilion".<sup>44</sup> Finally, the Cranberry School (1923) in Cranberry, Avery County, North Carolina, is another example of a large two-story red brick school building with Colonial Revival detailing in the central entrance portico supported by Tuscan columns.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Bisher, Catherine W., Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, p. 142.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 229.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is shown on the accompanying survey at a scale of 1" = 50'.

**Boundary Justification**

The property that is currently associated with the school is a portion of the property historically associated with the school and provides an appropriate setting for school building. The ca. 1955 gymnasium still stands to the west of the high school building, and is currently vacant. It is owned by Madison County and is not part of the nominated area due to the separate ownership and unknown plans for the building. The ca. 1952 separate classroom building was in severely deteriorated condition after the 2004 flood and was torn down by the county when the property ownership was divided into the main school building and the gymnasium.

**Photographs**

The following information applies to all photographs, except where noted.

Name of property: Marshall High School  
Marshall  
Madison County  
North Carolina  
Photographer: Sybil H. Argintar  
Date of photos: November 2007

1. front and north elevation, view southwest
2. entry, view west
3. north elevation, view southwest
4. window details
5. rear, view southeast
6. first floor, auditorium, view north
7. first floor, hallway, view east
8. typical classroom, view northwest  
February 2008
9. basement, view northwest