

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 (Former) Mount Olive High School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 100 Wooten Street n/a not for publication

city or town Mount Olive n/a vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Wayne code 191 zip code 28365

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Sherry J. Crow SHDO 9/9/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain.) _____	_____	_____

(Former) Mount Olive High School
Name of Property

Wayne Co., 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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof standing seam tin

other terra cotta

cast stone

Narrative Description

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

(Former) Mount Olive High School
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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.)

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance

1925-1948

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Gullett, John David (architect)

Lucas, B.R. (builder)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

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National Park Service

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Wayne County, N.C.

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Physical Description

The former Mount Olive High School, a three-story brick, Classical Revival-style building designed by Goldsboro architect John David Gullett in 1924, was built in 1925 and first occupied by students and faculty on September 7, 1925. This school building is T-shaped, consisting of a three-story rectangular classroom wing to which a parapeted gable-front auditorium is appended at its north end, forming the top of the "T." The former school is located on a roughly two-acre parcel at the southeast corner of a complex totalling 15.5 acres, which also comprises the 1953 Mount Olive School and Gymnasium designed by Wilmington architect Leslie Boney, as well as a paved basketball court, an athletic field, and a concrete block 1950s shop building. The former high school building is positioned on Wooten Street so that the auditorium, the most imposing aspect of the long main facade, looms over the termination of tree-lined, residential West James Street. Little of the (Former) Mount Olive High School building's earlier landscaping, which included mature oak trees and shrubbery, has remained in place; yet the school's early twentieth-century character is intact, with paved walkways at its front, north, west, and south elevations. From the West James streetscape, the former school is framed by cedars and small flowering trees.

Between 1945 and 1946, (Former) Mount Olive High School received its only exterior addition, an unobtrusive two-room brick cafeteria built directly behind the auditorium building. There have been no other notable additions or alterations to the building's exterior.

Exterior

The Classical Revival-style (Former) Mount Olive High School features an exterior of multicolored tapestry brick, the walls in one-to-five common bond and the parapets in English bond. Terra cotta and cast stone exterior details, in addition to decorative brickwork surrounds at the arched doorways and windows, enliven all four elevations of the school. The classroom building's sloping parapet roof was originally covered with tar and gravel; the auditorium has a parapet gable-front roof covered by standing seam tin.

The former Mount Olive High School's front (east) elevation is most extensively decorated at the auditorium. A wide flight of concrete steps leads to a wider terrace at the auditorium's second floor entrance. Arched transoms and decorative brick surrounds surmount the three double-door entrances to the auditorium's anteroom. A flat aluminum canopy on posts, said to have been erected in the 1960s, shelters these entrances. At the third story, five six-over-six double-hung sash windows are evenly spaced across the auditorium facade. Above, a course of header brick and a thin molded limestone cornice, that continues around the entire building, defines the base of the gabled parapet. Immediately above the cornice,

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header brick courses frame the terra cotta signage panel bearing "Mount Olive High School" in easily-read letters. Centered under the gable's apex, a brick-outlined oculus has a terra cotta relief panel of an open book with indiscernable lines of text. The gable terminates in limestone coping.

Joining the auditorium's south wall is the former high school's other primary component, the three-story classroom wing. The basic organization of its main facade is four bays, with open stairwell pavilions projecting several feet at the north and south bays. The two middle bays consist of bands of six-over-six double-hung sash windows (now boarded) in a tripartite arrangement of single windows flanking a triple window. A concrete water table encircles the entire building, serving as sills for the first floor windows. Second- and third-story windows have cast stone sills. At ground level, the projecting stairwells have arched entrances with small, narrow openings at either side. In the second and third stories, brick piers create three symmetrical openings of uniform height resembling windows. As with the auditorium, English bond coursework and terra cotta coping appear in the parapet, which in the classroom wing is flat.

The former Mount Olive High School's north elevation is the auditorium's north wall, a symmetrical arrangement of seven bays at the first story (here serving as a raised basement) and five bays above. Six double six-over-six double-hung sash windows light the auditorium's ground floor. The seventh, central bay contains double metal and glass doors that replaced a double window. The north elevation's second and third floors, comprising the auditorium's main floor and balcony, are lit by five large windows spanning both levels. At either end of the north facade, a smaller six-over-six double-hung sash window with a six-pane transom light, respectively, the auditorium stairwell and dressing room. In the facade's center, three large round arched openings line up with the three central first-floor bays. They contain triple-hung sashes, nine panes each, with a single rank of multipaned sidelights and a full-width sunburst transom above. The arches are outlined in a soldier course, with a cast stone keystone and blocks at the base. Soldier courses and cast stone corner blocks create rectangular panels linking the bottom of the arched windows with the top of the first story windows.

Except for the one-story cafeteria addition at its north end and boards over the windows, (Former) Mount Olive High School's west elevation has changed little from 1925. The back of the auditorium facade is almost all brick, with a large decorative panel outlined with stretcher bond bricks and cast stone corner blocks flanked by single six-over-six double-hung sash windows at the second story. At the center of the auditorium's parapet gable there is a plain brick oculus panel.

Fenestration at the west elevation of the classroom section is less symmetrical than at the front or side elevations. The ground floor has, at

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its end bays, transomed door openings with flanking small windows.

According to the 1924 blueprints of the school, these two entrances, each with two-pane transoms and a six-pane sash window, marked the boys' and girls' bathrooms. Single double-hung sash windows identify bathrooms at the second and third stories. Between the old bathrooms at the ground floor level is one band of windows identical to those on the front. The Boiler Room and Fuel Room, located between the Agricultural Classroom and the south bathroom, are lit by four windows. There is a transomed entrance to the Boiler Room and the original coal chutes are in place on either side of the Fuel Room's one window. Two bays of banded tripartite windows also appear at the second and third stories, where a few single windows lit the superintendent's office and a lounge. Between these bays, a short chimney for the boiler room rises above the parapet.

The south elevation is the least elaborate of the four elevations. On each floor paired window openings at the facade's center, now boarded, were six-over-six double-hung sash windows lighting the corridors. At the south elevation's east end, there is an opening at each floor for lighting the stairwell. A transomed door at the ground floor that once opened into the stairwell is boarded.

The brick cafeteria at the north elevation's west end is a one-story, five-bay brick-veneered structure with a sloping parapet roof, paired six-over-six double-hung sash windows, and a center entrance sheltered by a front-gable frame door hood. According to school records, the cafeteria was built between 1945 and 1946; in more recent years, the cafeteria was converted to classroom and laboratory space. There are no windows or doors at the cafeteria building's west elevation, and only two paired double-hung sash windows on either side of a door at its south elevation. At the roofline, the three original round metal ventilators are still in place.

Alterations to the high school's exterior consist of metal awnings placed over the auditorium's main entrances, in addition to the auditorium's center metal stair rail and the north elevation's fire escape metal stairwell. At this fire escape, directly above the north elevation's second floor, a double metal door was cut into one of the auditorium's large round-arched windows. Walkway shelters, located at the cafeteria's south elevation and at the auditorium's north elevation, link the high school building to the Mount Olive Elementary School complex. The addition of covered walkways, entrance shelters, stair rails, and fire escapes appear to have taken place in the early 1960s.

Interior

(Former) Mount Olive High School's interior plan is simple. Each floor of the classroom wing follows a corridor plan with bathrooms for boys and

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girls stationed at either end of the eight-foot-wide corridor. On each floor, two six-over-six double-hung sash windows at the corridor's south wall provided light and ventilation. A few of the cabinets positioned along the corridor walls are still in place.

Unlike most other schools of the period, there is no principal entrance or lobby in the classroom building; at (Former) Mount Olive High School, the superintendent's office, usually adjacent to a school's entrance and lobby, was located on the second floor. There were nine classrooms in this section of the school; two were on the ground floor, three on the second, and four on the third. The average dimension of these rooms is thirty-four feet, six inches, by twenty-two feet, four inches. Other rooms in the classroom section included a small library, storage closets, and a third-floor room directly over the superintendent's office that appears to have been a teachers' lounge.

The classroom section's interior finish is equally simple. At the classroom section's ground, or first, floor, the flooring in the corridor and boiler room is concrete and the bathroom flooring is composition tile. The second and third floors have narrow tongue-and-groove pine flooring in the corridors and classrooms. Corridors and classrooms are sheathed with sheetrock while the auditorium walls are plastered. Classrooms have picture molding, small chair rail molding beneath the slate blackboards, paneled wooden doors, and freestanding screen partitions behind which were shelves and coat hooks.²

The auditorium's ground floor was utilized for a number of functions, even down to the space below the outside stairs, which still has a storage unit and a small shower stall. A transomed double door in the passageway beneath the stairs opens into the auditorium's ground floor "T-plan" corridor. At this level, the floors are cement with remnants of linoleum tile flooring. Rooms include a chemistry laboratory and laboratory storage room, a bicycle room, and the janitor's office. At the second floor, the lobby entrance, flanked by balcony stairs, opens into the auditorium. The bilevel auditorium, its upper balcony mostly intact, is approximately sixty feet deep, fifty feet wide, and twenty-eight feet high; a dropped acoustical tile ceiling, which partially covers the stage's entablature, has altered the original height of the room. Within this space, seating at the main floor is in six sections, separated by transverse aisles. Most of the original metal and wood seats, including the small brass plates indicating seat numbers, remain in place. The balcony, which extends the full length of the north, west, and south, has all its original seating in place, as well as the original enclosed projection booth and protective railing. The stage, raised three-and-a-half feet above the auditorium floor, is accessible by a small flight of steps on either side. The stage is framed by Corinthian wooden pilasters which support a frieze ornamented with raised composition garlands and scrolling foliate decoration on either side of the center's Rococo-style cartouche. A green velvet curtain bears

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the "MOHS" appliqued in gold thread.

Both the classroom and auditorium sections have been affected by roof leaks over the past twenty years. However, the roof has remained in reasonable condition at the auditorium section. Until the fall of 1997, classes were still held on the auditorium's ground floor. These rooms have dropped tile ceilings and some added storage closets. The Mount Olive Elementary School band used one of these rooms for practice, as well.

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Summary Statement of Significance

The former Mount Olive High School, commissioned by the Mount Olive Chartered City Schools and designed by John David Gullett in 1924, was completed in September 1925. It is a three-story brick Classical Revival-style edifice located at the western edge of a historic neighborhood in central Mount Olive. This neighborhood, which partly grew around the high school and the circa 1905 Mount Olive Graded School (formerly located three blocks east, destroyed 1995), continues to be a vital one. This neighborhood forms an important context for the high school's immediate surroundings and character, as it has changed little over the past seventy years. (Former) Mount Olive High School, equally intact, served as the town's public high school from 1925 until 1965 when it became Mount Olive Junior High School. Until Spring 1997, the ground floor of the high school building's auditorium continued to be used by the Mount Olive Elementary School, which occupied the remainder of the expanded campus.³

As part of the 1920s statewide consolidation of public schools, the former Mount Olive High School's significance begins with its part in North Carolina's educational history. Its association with the progressive early twentieth-century movement that took North Carolina children out of crowded rural schoolhouses and put them in larger and more efficient local schools makes the former Mount Olive High School applicable for Criterion A. (Former) Mount Olive High School is significant as one of Wayne County's best examples of a Classical Revival-style public school. In its exterior decoration and substantial size, it is comparable to only one of the seven 1920s consolidated schools still standing in the county, the 1923 Fremont School. It is also quite similar to Goldsboro's Dillard High School, a school for African Americans built in 1922. (Former) Mount Olive High School's exterior design was a cut above the more standard and comparatively plain exteriors of Rosewood School, Seven Springs School (demolished), Pikeville School, Eureka School, Brogden School, Grantham School (1920s building demolished), and Nahunta School. As such, the former Mount Olive High School satisfies the requirements of Criterion C. The high school is furthermore significant as being, with the 1995 demolition of the 1905 Mount Olive Graded School, the oldest surviving educational structure in Mount Olive.

(Former) Mount Olive High School is also representative of the work of Goldsboro architect John David Gullett. Gullett, who practiced in North Carolina from 1920 until his death in 1935, is chiefly remembered for the Colonial- and Classical Revival-style dwellings he designed in Goldsboro. He is associated with two other schools still standing in the county, but the former Mount Olive High School was the most ambitious undertaking and of the three remains Gullett's largest and best-designed Wayne County public school.⁴

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Historical Background and Education Context

The town of Mount Olive began when land near Calf Pasture Branch was sold to the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad Company by a free black farmer, Adam Winn, in 1839.⁵ Two years before, white merchants William F. Pollock and Benjamin Oliver had built a small store near the future railroad tracks.⁶ In 1853, this small settlement received a depot and post office.⁷ According to local history, Benjamin Oliver decided naming the depot "Mount Olive" was more appropriate than naming it "Oliver's Station."⁸ In the following year, streets and town lots are said to have been first laid out.⁹ The town was incorporated in 1870 and, seven years later, had a small carriage manufactory, a turpentine mill, four doctors, one church, and six general stores.¹⁰

Mount Olive transformed from a small railroad village to a thriving regional market with the initiation of truck farming. James A. Westbrook, a nurseryman who moved to Mount Olive in 1880 and acquired a sixty-two acre farm, is credited as the founder of Mount Olive's vigorous late nineteenth-century truck farming industry.¹¹ Westbrook, who exported strawberries via the railroad to other parts of North Carolina and the eastern seaboard, also cultivated other profitable cash crops such as melons and potatoes.¹² His impressive two-story Italianate style house, built in the 1890s, still stands along the railroad avenue of North Center Street; the Mount Olive Pickle Company, on the western side of the railroad tracks, was Westbrook's former farm. Westbrook's enterprise paved the way for a successful produce brokerage business in Mount Olive. Other prominent late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century produce brokers in Mount Olive were W. F. English, DuBrutz English, H.D. Andrews, Rodney Knowles, and S.L. Warren.¹³ With prosperity came a bustling commercial center and stately avenues lined with elegant Queen Anne style dwellings.

As more people settled in Mount Olive, the town's schools became larger and more permanent buildings. The first known school in Mount Olive was established in 1870 by Jesse Albritton and is known through oral history as the "School in the Pines." In 1884, James Westbrook and other prominent merchants and farmers such as Robert J. Southerland, J.F. Oliver, Robert Williams, and former state senator David J. Aaron, bought a one-and-a-half acre parcel of land from Oliver Summerlin on which to build a high school. This school, located near the junction of North Church Street and East College Street, was a two-story, front-gable frame building.¹⁴ In 1892 this school was abandoned for a newer, one-story frame building on what is now North Breazeale Avenue.¹⁵ By 1902, the new school was filled beyond capacity as the overall number of elementary and high school students was 250.¹⁶ The replacement two-story brick building built on the same site between 1904 and 1905 was a Classical Revival style school with a full-height Neoclassical Revival style center portico. The new Mount Olive Graded School, which cost the townspeople \$15,000, was lauded as "a modern

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===== structure, equipped with the most comfortable and improved educational facilities."¹⁷ By 1920, the Graded School had expanded with a two-story brick auditorium at the school's south elevation.¹⁸

The Mount Olive Schools, along with Goldsboro and Fremont's schools, were Special Chartered Schools. Judging from period deeds and the Wayne County Board of Education's 1920s minutes, these chartered schools were principally funded by their respective towns and local taxes rather than by the Wayne County Board of Education or the state.¹⁹ They could contract with architects, contractors, banks, and accountants independently to fund and improve their schools.²⁰ Prominent Mount Olive businessmen who were on the Special Chartered Schools' board included James A. Westbrook and J. Edward Kelly, a developer who began his career as a telegraph operator in the 1880s and was President of Mount Olive's Citizens Bank by 1910.²¹ As early as 1921, the Special Chartered Schools and the Board of Education both agreed that separate high schools should be established in all Wayne County townships; a high school textbook depository was subsequently established at M.W. Pope's Mount Olive Store.²² With the rise throughout the state of school consolidation, whereby small rural schools were abandoned in favor of larger township schools, revenue for Mount Olive's Chartered Schools increased slightly, but the schools' physical capacities, by housing more students, were taxed. In 1921 the number of students in Mount Olive's schools further increased when two rural schools, Kornegay and Salem, closed and their pupils were rerouted to the Mount Olive Graded School.²³ Both of these schools were two-room schools, and probably had over forty students each.²⁴

In 1924 the Mount Olive Tribune reported a marked increase in student enrollment in Mount Olive's school for white students from 501 to 570 pupils.²⁵ One hundred and sixty students were in the high school department, then located at the Graded School; this was an increase of twenty-one students from the previous school year.²⁶ Distribution of students was most crowded in the seventh grade, which had forty-seven pupils, and the tenth grade, which had thirty-three; to compound the situation, no additional staff had been hired for the high school grades.²⁷ Unbeknownst to the public, Mount Olive's school board had already approached the Wayne County Board of Education for a \$50,000 loan via the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Special Building Fund.²⁸

Acquisition of land for the future Mount Olive High School took place between November and December 1924. Mount Olive residents D.S. and Rebecca Martin, S.A. and Annie Southerland Wooten, and J.K. and Catherine Wells deeded land at the west end of town, roughly between James and Main Streets, to the "Mount Olive Graded School District," a term that was apparently interchangeable with Mount Olive Special Chartered Schools.²⁹ In the fall of 1924, Goldsboro architect John David Gullett was hired to design the Mount Olive High School; his preliminary blueprints, dated

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December 1924, show the school almost exactly as it exists today.

On February 13, 1925, the Mount Olive Tribune announced the awarding of contracts totalling \$92,860 having been awarded to build the high school. The building contractor was B.R. Lucas and Company of Raeford, North Carolina; W.O. Mitcham and Company of Goldsboro was contracted to install heating and plumbing; and the Kinston Electric Company was hired to install the electrical wiring.³⁰ These contracts also covered construction of Carver School, then known as the "Negro School."³¹ Classroom furniture and Gullett's fees were not included in the contracts.³² The future high school was described as a "plain brick structure ... three stories high" to be located at the west end of James Street. Except for a few very minor discrepancies, plans for the high school, as described in the Mount Olive Tribune, were identical to Gullett's 1924 blueprints, from the janitor's office, showers, and chemistry laboratory located on the auditorium's ground floor to the superintendent's office located in the classroom wing's second floor.³³

Mount Olive High School opened its doors on Monday, September 7, 1925, under the leadership of Superintendent J.O. Bowman, despite the fact that it was incomplete; not all of the desks had arrived and the slate blackboards were not installed.³⁴ However, workers, faculty, and students pulled together to ensure a successful opening of the school. Eight teachers had been hired to teach at the new high school; the eighth grade instructor was Miss Louise Watkins of Windsor, Virginia, who taught mathematics at Mount Olive High School into the mid-1960s.³⁵ The other teachers were the seventh grade's Bertha Isley and Madge Blackley, the ninth grade's Elizabeth Allen and Ellen Uzzle, Mary Underwood and Principal L.J. Perry, who taught the tenth grade, and eleventh grade teacher Irene Goff.³⁶ The women teachers, all of whom were single, are said to have boarded in a house on West James Street. One month after opening, the new high school appealed to the community for donations; among the items needed were more first aid equipment, curtains and a piano for the auditorium, school lunches, and "beautifying the school campus."³⁷

It was at this time, in 1925, that plans were proposed to start a pickle company in Mount Olive.³⁸ What additional revenue the new pickle company brought to the town was offset by the beginning of the Great Depression. Even before October 1929, Mount Olive's Chartered Schools were in financial difficulties; their petition to surrender the charter to the Wayne County Board of Education was accepted in August 1929 but the transfer did not become official until 1932.³⁹ In spite of the Depression, Mount Olive High School continued as a stable educational enterprise. C.H. Pinner, who replaced J.O. Bowman as school superintendent in 1929, retired in Spring 1936 and was briefly replaced by R.L. Pugh of New Bern.⁴⁰

It is possible that R.L. Pugh was influential in Bayard Wootten's visiting

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Mount Olive and taking a series of photographs of the town in the mid-1930s.⁴¹ One of Wootten's photographs, used as a postcard by Roses' 5-and-10 Cent Store and, later, the Graycraft Card Company of Danville, Virginia, was of the Mount Olive High School. This photograph of the school's front and north elevation, taken by 1938, shows the building nearly identical to its present appearance; at that time, the metal stair case at the auditorium's north elevation had not been attached and landscaping consisted of some shrubbery and mature oak trees at the school's front and south elevations.⁴²

Mount Olive High School's 1937 teachers were Claude Hepler, who replaced former coach Max B. Cook; Miss Lois Huff, who taught seventh grade; Mr. Dale Keller, who taught science; Misses Marion Watson and Mary Secrest, who taught English and history; Miss Louise Watson, who had been teaching at the high school since its opening; Miss Texys Morris, who taught French and mathematics; Mrs. Kathleen Snyder, of Warsaw, North Carolina, who was the home economics instructor; and Miss Dorothy Barnes, who taught music.⁴³ When Superintendent R.L. Pugh was offered the job of Craven County Schools Superintendent in 1937, J.C. Stabler of Lucama, North Carolina, became the new Mount Olive High School Superintendent.⁴⁴

Apparently a gymnasium was never built for the high school; according to interviews with longtime Mount Olive residents, the high school used the nearby Mount Olive Graded School's auditorium for this purpose until 1955, when the Henderson Gym was built on the high school grounds for the new Mount Olive Elementary School.

The only surviving addition to the Mount Olive High School is the one-story, two-room brick cafeteria rear extension completed between 1945 and 1946 at the approximate cost of \$9,000 with funds obtained from the War Production Board.⁴⁵

Between 1950 and 1955, Mount Olive High School's immediate surroundings were altered by the construction of the Mount Olive Elementary School; the Graded School at North Breazeale Avenue, no longer able to accommodate the growing number of pupils, was closed and students began attending the new elementary school, immediately north of the Mount Olive High School, in 1953.⁴⁶ In 1955, a brick gymnasium named for the late Dr. C.C. Henderson, prominent citizen and advocate for public education, was built between the elementary and high school buildings.⁴⁷

With the 1960s re-consolidation of public schools throughout North Carolina, many of the 1920s and 1930s brick public schools were abandoned or assigned new educational uses. In 1965, when Mount Olive High School's students were shifted to the new Southern Wayne High School between Dudley and Mount Olive, the old high school became Mount Olive Junior High.⁴⁸ The Junior High, which used the first and second floors of the old high school, continued at the school until 1979. In recent years, the Mount

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Olive Elementary School has used the ground floor of the high school for classrooms and band practice and, to a lesser extent, the auditorium for local events and plays.⁴⁹

Efforts of townspeople have rescued the former Mount Olive High School.⁵⁰ When demolition plans were announced in November 1997, the Mount Olive Area Historical Society, after conferring with Preservation North Carolina and the State Historic Preservation Office, requested that the Wayne County Board of Education defer demolition for ninety days during which time the Historical Society would research alternative options for the school building.⁵¹ In January 1998, the Wayne County Board of Education transferred a two-acre parcel of land containing the former school and immediate grounds to the Town of Mount Olive and requests to rezone the school as residential property were granted that same month.⁵² The former Mount Olive High School's eventual restoration and rehabilitation will preserve the "grand old lady," publicly celebrated as "a fixture, a landmark, a symbol, a memorial, a friend," for another lifetime of use.⁵³

Architectural Context

The former Mount Olive High School is one of seven surviving brick public schools outside of Goldsboro that were built in Wayne County between 1921 and 1929. Constructed during the period that rural schoolhouses were vacated for larger brick schools across the state, (Former) Mount Olive High School is one of Wayne County's most intact and well-styled early twentieth-century public schools.

In 1918, there were sixty-five white schools in Wayne County. Nearly all of these were one-teacher schools, except for the larger schools in Pikeville, Fremont, Goldsboro, and Mount Olive.⁵⁴ In the 1920s these small rural schools, accommodating children of all ages, were gradually disbanded throughout the county, as well as throughout the state, in favor of larger schools with teachers for each grade. The Wayne County Board of Education called a special session on June 23, 1921, to discuss redistricting the county schools and deciding which communities would be best for future school consolidation. In that meeting, the Board of Education decided future consolidated schools would be built in Eureka, northeast of Goldsboro, and in Pikeville.⁵⁵

By 1924, there were eighteen projected white county schools planned, some of which would incorporate the remaining thirty rural schoolhouses; in the end, seven of these schools were never built.⁵⁶ During this time, J.M. Kennedy, an architect based in Raleigh, North Carolina, designed schools in Eureka, Pikeville, Grantham (1920s building demolished), and Brogden.⁵⁷ Nahunta School, designed by John David Gullett, was built in 1928.⁵⁸ The Wayne County Board of Education also commissioned G. Lloyd Preacher and Company to design the Rosewood and Seven Springs (demolished) public schools.⁵⁹ After these larger schools were constructed, the Wayne County

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Wayne County, N.C.

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Board of Education sold the then-unoccupied rural schools and their
property sites.⁶⁰

Wayne County public schools, as judged by the schools designed by J.M. Kennedy, G. Lloyd Preacher, and John David Gullett's Nahunta School, are conventional examples of early twentieth-century Classical Revival academic design. The schools at Eureka, Pikeville, Brogden, Rosewood, and Nahunta are all two-story, C-shaped brick buildings with little exterior decoration beyond cast stone cartouches over the center bays' second floor window, and brick or cast stone stringcourses along the school buildings' parapeted cornices. Unlike the former Mount Olive High School, these buildings have no tapestry ribbon brick facades, and no terra cotta exterior embellishments. These schools were also altered on the inside and outside, and only Brogden and Rosewood, which have replacement and some enclosed windows, are still in use. The now-unoccupied schools are, with the exception of Nahunta School, in ruinous condition.

Fremont School, built in 1922 from Benton and Benton's design, is similar in form to the Wayne County schools designed by Preacher and Kennedy; however, Fremont School's exterior decoration is more extensive, with stone details on the parapeted cornice and the central projecting entrance bay. It is a two-story tapestry ribbon brick C-shaped building connected to one-story brick annexes built in the early 1950s, the 1960s, and one 1990 extension. The annexes do not compromise the main building's early twentieth-century character. Like the former Mount Olive High School, Fremont School is sited within a historic early twentieth-century neighborhood. Unlike Mount Olive High School, Fremont School's auditorium, instead of being prominently sited at its front elevation, is located within its main building.

(Former) Mount Olive High School was designed in 1924 by John David Gullett, who had been successfully practicing architecture in Goldsboro, North Carolina, for nearly five years when he was commissioned by the Mount Olive Graded School District to design the high school. Gullett, chiefly remembered for his 1920s and 1930s brick Colonial Revival-style dwellings in Goldsboro and New Bern, North Carolina, was the probable architect for Goldsboro's African American Dillard High School, built in 1922. (Former) Mount Olive High School, a larger and more elaborate version of Dillard High School, remains Gullett's finest North Carolina academic building.

Little is known about John David Gullett, who was born either in 1875 or 1880 in Amite City, Louisiana.⁶¹ Gullett's 1935 obituary stated that he trained as an architect in Mississippi but where he trained is not presently known. By 1908 John David Gullett was an architect in Birmingham, Alabama, the partner of Daniel Helmich.⁶² Helmich (1854-1917), an older architect, designed the 1901 Birmingham City Hall and the 1905 Barker School before retiring from architecture in 1913.⁶³ In 1910 Gullett, who was still living with Daniel Helmich and Helmich's wife at

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1300 North 24th Street, had a private office in the Brown-Marx Building.⁶⁴ Two years later Gullett, who had married in the interim, had left his practice at the Brown-Marx Building and had become a draftsman for H.B. Wheelock, one of Birmingham's most prolific early twentieth-century architects.⁶⁵ Wheelock, the son of late nineteenth-century Birmingham architect Charles Wheelock, became a partner in his father's firm in 1888 and practiced architecture until his death in 1940.⁶⁶ Early-to-mid-twentieth-century Birmingham architects who began their careers with Wheelock included Brooks Burnham, Scott Joy, Hugh Martin, and Jack B. Smith.⁶⁷ Wheelock commissions between 1910 and 1915 included Birmingham's Dian Apartments and the Molton Hotel, in addition to Matsuyama, a country estate in nearby Chalkville that later became the Girl's Industrial School.⁶⁸ One example of the firm's buildings is the Wheelock Building, a four-story brick Classical Revival-style commercial building at 2201 Second Avenue North; its exterior, enlivened by decorative limestone paneling and tiles, has similarities to Gullett's known non-residential commissions in North Carolina during the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁹ Gullett did not stay with Wheelock, and was again practicing architecture on his own in 1917.⁷⁰

Why John David Gullett decided to leave Birmingham for Goldsboro, North Carolina, is not known. What is documented of his Birmingham years suggests that Gullett, in competing against longtime Birmingham architects, was not getting the number or type of commissions he needed to successfully establish himself.⁷¹ On February 19, 1920, Gullett, listing himself as a resident of Goldsboro, North Carolina, passed the North Carolina Board of Architecture's written exam and was granted license number 108.⁷² Gullett's earliest known North Carolina commissions are the Lee-Gaylor House of Goldsboro, North Carolina, and the John R. Taylor House of New Bern, North Carolina, both of which were designed and built by 1922. The Lee-Gaylor House and the John R. Taylor House, both striking examples of Colonial Revival style, are, like Gullett's other known commissions, constructed of brick.⁷³ One pre-1925 commission of Gullett's may be Dillard High School, located at 431 West Elm Street in 1922. Constructed for Goldsboro's African American students, Dillard High School's exterior details, especially its tapestry brick facade and front-gable auditorium, whose terra cotta signage panel is positioned directly above an elegant Palladian-inspired window, are similar to those of the 1925 Mount Olive High School.

(Former) Mount Olive High School remains a strong example of John David Gullett's designs for school buildings, in this case an unusual example, in Wayne County, of utilitarian Classical Revival style. Although the school's interior finish and plan, for the most part, differ little from other 1920s North Carolina consolidated public schools, the former Mount Olive High School's impressive auditorium entrance and classically-inspired exterior decoration differs from the standard brick public schools Raleigh architect J.M. Kennedy designed for the Wayne County townships of Brogden, Eureka, and Pikeville during the 1920s.

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After designing Mount Olive High School, John David Gullett's commissions obtained through the Wayne County Board of Education included Nahunta School (1928), Eureka Teacherage (1928), and New Hope School, located outside of Goldsboro (1935), which Gullett was designing at the time of his death.⁷⁴ Gullett continued to design brick Colonial Revival residences in Goldsboro and New Bern, North Carolina, such as New Bern's Jesse S. Claypoole House (1925) and Goldsboro's Faison Thomson House (1929) and Herman Weil House (1935).⁷⁵ After John David Gullett died of a heart attack on October 19, 1935, his body was taken to Birmingham, Alabama; he was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery next to his mother's grave.⁷⁶ Allen J. Maxwell, Jr., who is thought to have been Gullett's protege, took over Gullett's unfinished commissions.⁷⁷

John David Gullett's thirteen known commissions to survive the twentieth century were built between 1922 and 1935. Of these, the former Mount Olive High School remains one of his most significant designs in its utilitarian yet refined treatment of Classical Revival decoration and form.

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1. Nelson Bland, Mount Olive, North Carolina. Interview with Penne Smith, March 13, 1998.
2. Penne Smith, the preparer of this nomination, had a Mount Olive High School site visit on November 25, 1997. During the site visit, Ms. Smith had the opportunity to see accessible areas within the school, which included the auditorium, the cafeteria building, most of the ground floor, and the second and third stories of the classroom building. The ground floor classroom next to the boiler room was not accessible, nor were the ground floor bathrooms. Because of minimal light conditions due to boarded windows, and because there was a great deal of storage material in the classrooms, Ms. Smith was not able to take a photograph of any of the classrooms.
3. Goldsboro (NC) News-Argus, December 9, 1997, page 2A.
4. Wayne County Board of Education, Board Minutes from May 22, 1928, and March 11, 1935; in these minutes, the Board indicates having hired Gullett to design, first, Nahunta School and then New Hope School. Given the strong similarities to Dillard High School and Mount Olive High School in terms of exterior decoration and plan, it is probable that Gullett designed this school as well.
5. Official Program of the Mount Olive Centennial Commission (Mount Olive, NC, 1970), p. 3.
6. John Baxton Flowers, "History of Mount Olive" in Wayne County Heritage (Winston-Salem, NC: Hunter Publishing Company and the Wayne County Historical Association, 1982), p. 40.
7. Official Program of the Mount Olive Centennial Commission, p.4.
8. ibid.
9. Flowers, Wayne County Heritage, pp. 40-41.
10. Flowers, Wayne County Heritage, pp. 42-43. Also Levi Branson, 1877 North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh, NC).
11. Mount Olive Tribune (NC) Industrial Issue, 1907, pp. 24-25.
12. Mount Olive Industrial Issue, p. 25.
13. Official Program of the Mount Olive Centennial Commission, p. 9.

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14. Sarah Manning Pope, Mount Olive, NC. Conversation with Penne Smith, March 13, 1998. Also, Wayne County Register of Deeds, Book 53, Page 436 [Oliver Summerlin et ux.> Robert Williams, James A. Westbrook, et alia: Deed, August 4, 1884].

15. Mount Olive Centennial, p. 14.

16. ibid.

17. Mount Olive Industrial Issue, p. 25.

18. 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Mount Olive, NC, p. 2.

19. Wayne County Board of Education, Meeting Minutes April 6, 1921. Also Mount Olive (NC) Tribune, September 4, 1925, p. 4, and Wayne County Register of Deeds, Book 213, pages 86-87.

20. Fremont (NC) Graded School Minutes, 1919-1931. The Fremont Graded School Records, now the property of the Wayne County Board of Education, began in the 1880s and ended in the early 1960s. In its years as a Special Chartered School, the Fremont Graded School, while receiving some funding from the Wayne County Board of Education, was almost completely self-sufficient. Of its own accord Fremont Graded School contracted Benton and Benton to design their 1923 school; the school also issued school bonds, and handled school business with little outside interference. These records are especially useful for understanding Wayne's Special Chartered School system because the Mount Olive Graded School Minutes from the 1920s and 1930s have not been located.

21. Mount Olive Tribune 1907 Industrial Issue, pp. 33-34. Also, Wayne County Heritage, p. 308.

22. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, July 5, 1921.

23. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, June 23, 1921.

24. The Goldsboro News, May 18, 1924, no page given. North Carolina Collection Clipping File, Item No. 574, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, NC.

25. Mount Olive Tribune, October 10, 1924.

26. ibid.

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27. ibid.

28. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, January 7, 1924.

29. Wayne County Register of Deeds, Book 174, Page 270 [D.S. and Rebecca Martin>Mount Olive Graded School District, Deed, November 1, 1924]; Book 165, Page 286 [S.A. and Annie S. Wooten>Mount Olive Graded School District, Deed, November 26, 1924]; Book 165, Page 285 [J.K. and Catherine Wells>Mount Olive Graded School District, Deed, December 1, 1924]. A boundary dispute between the Mount Olive Graded School District and neighboring landowners including George E. and Nora Cheney Lewis was settled in 1925, but the exact citation has not been presently found. Also not currently established is the exact total acreage of these transactions, which is less than the 15.5 acres comprising the former Mount Olive High School and the Mount Olive Elementary School.

30. Mount Olive Tribune, February 13, 1925, p. 1.

31. ibid.

32. ibid.

33. ibid.

34. Mount Olive Tribune, September 4, 1925, p. 2; also, Mount Olive Tribune, September 11, 1925, p. 2.

35. Mount Olive Tribune, September 11, 1925, p. 2, and August 6, 1937, p. 5; also Nelson Bland, Mount Olive, NC, interview with Penne Smith, March 13, 1998.

36. Mount Olive Tribune, September 11, 1925, p. 2.

37. Mount Olive Tribune, October 6, 1925, p. 3.

38. Mount Olive Tribune, December 4, 1925, p. 1, and March 23, 1926, p. 1.

39. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, August 5, 1929. Also, Wayne County Register of Deeds, Book 214, Pages 86-89 [Mount Olive Graded School District>Wayne County Board of Education, Deed, January 6, 1932].

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40. Mount Olive Tribune, May 7, 1936, p. 1.
 41. Sarah Manning Pope, Mount Olive, North Carolina. Interview with Penne Smith March 13, 1998. Mrs. Pope, who published Wayne County Postcards with Emily Newman Weil in 1995, collects period postcards of North Carolina towns and the photography of Bayard Wootten, whose early twentieth-century studio was in New Bern, North Carolina.
 42. Sarah Manning Pope, March 13, 1998. Mrs. Pope's earliest Wootten Mount Olive High School postcard has a 1938 postmark.
 43. Mount Olive Tribune, April 20, 1937, p. 2, and August 6, 1937, p. 5.
 44. Mount Olive Tribune, August 21, 1937, p. 1.
 45. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, January 1, 1945, April 2, 1945, and October 7, 1946.
 46. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, May 3, 1948, and January 2, 1950. Also Mount Olive Centennial Commission, p. 14.
 47. Mount Olive Centennial Commission, p. 14.
 48. Mount Olive Tribune, November 18, 1997, p. 3.
 49. ibid.
 50. Goldsboro (NC) News-Argus, December 9, 1997, p. 1A.
 51. Mount Olive Tribune, November 25, 1997, p. 1.
 52. Mount Olive Tribune, January 9, 1998, p. 2. Also Mount Olive Planning Board Minutes, January 20, 1998, pp. 1-13.
 53. Mount Olive Tribune, November 18, 1997, p. 3.
 54. The Goldsboro News, May 18, 1924, page not numbered (North Carolina Clipping Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, NC).
 55. Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes, June 23, 1923.

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56. The Goldsboro News, May 18, 1924. The projected consolidated schools never built were in the following areas of Wayne County. North: Aycock (incorporated into Fremont School and Nahunta School). East: Saulston and Hood Swamp (incorporated into Belfast School and New Hope School). South: Indian Springs (incorporated into Seven Springs School) and Smith Chapel (incorporated into Mount Olive Schools). West: Beaverdam (incorporated into Grantham School).

57. Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes, August 24, 1923, and May 12, 1924.

58. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, May 22 and June 4, 1928.

59. Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes, May 6, 1922.

60. Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes, April 7, 1924, and November 6, 1933 (these are two examples of former schools and former school property being sold).

61. This discrepancy is due to conflicting information in the 1920 U.S. Census Population Schedule for Goldsboro, North Carolina, where Gullett is listed as being 40 years old, and his 1935 obituary and death certificate which lists him, fifteen years later, as being 60 years old.

62. Polk's 1908 Birmingham Directory, p. 328.

63. "Daniel Andrew Helmich," private manuscript, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham (AL) Public Library.

64. ibid. also Polk's 1910 Birmingham City Directory, p. 602.

65. Polk's 1912 Birmingham Directory, p. 621.

66. The Birmingham News and Post-Herald, July 27, 1991 (no page number given). Also, "Charles R. and Harry Wheelock, Architects", private manuscript, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham (AL) Public Library.

67. "Charles R. and Harry Wheelock, Architects," p. 2.

68. ibid.

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69. Birmingham News and Post-Herald, July 27, 1991.

70. Polk's 1917 Birmingham Directory, p. 738.

71. The Wayne County Register of Deeds has deed transactions for a Claude Gullett in the 1920s (Deeds 162:493 and 179:136) but a connection between the two has not been established. Another hypothesis is that Gullett came to Goldsboro at the bequest of either Borden Brothers or the Dewey Brothers' foundry.

72. North Carolina Board of Architecture, List of Architects Licensed to Practice in North Carolina, 1914-1967 (microfilm, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, State Library, Raleigh, NC).

73. Barbara Hammond, An Architectural Inventory of Goldsboro, North Carolina (City of Goldsboro, 1987), p. 48, and Peter B. Sandbeck, The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina (New Bern, NC: Tryon Palace Commission, 1988), p. 239. Also Charles Gaylor, Goldsboro, North Carolina, telephone conversation with Penne Smith, March 5, 1998.

74. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, May 22, June 4, and July 10, 1928; March 11 and November 4, 1935.

75. Hammond, pp. 18 and 79. Also, Sandbeck, pp. 302 and 353. According to a conversation with Peter Sandbeck on March 15, 1998, the Eby-Maxwell House, originally thought to have been designed by Atlanta architect Leila Ross Wilburn at press time for The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina, has since been linked to John David Gullett.

76. Goldsboro News-Argus, October 19, 1935, pp. 1 and 6.

77. Wayne County Board of Education Minutes, June 13, 1936. Also Gary Partin, Goldsboro, North Carolina, telephone conversation with Penne Smith, March 10, 1998.

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Goldsboro (NC) News-Argus, 1935 - 1997.

Mount Olive (NC) Tribune, 1924 - 1998.

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U.S. Census, 1880 Agricultural Schedule for Tangipahoa Parish, Third Ward, Louisiana.

_____, 1880 Manufacturing Schedule for Tangipahoa Parish, Third Ward, Louisiana.

_____, 1870 Population Schedule for Amite City, Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana.

_____, 1920 Population Schedule for Goldsboro Township, Wayne County, North Carolina.

Wayne County Board of Education, Goldsboro, North Carolina. Board Minutes 1922-1948.

Wayne County Register of Deeds, Goldsboro, North Carolina, 1884 - 1932.

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Nelson Bland, Mount Olive, North Carolina. Interview with Penne Smith, March 13, 1998.

Charles Gaylor, Goldsboro, North Carolina. Telephone Interview with Penne Smith, March 5, 1998.

Sarah Manning Pope, Mount Olive, North Carolina. Interview with Penne Smith, March 13, 1998.

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Peter Sandbeck, New Bern, North Carolina. Conversation with Penne Smith, March 15, 1998.

Maps and Blueprints

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1920 Mount Olive Map, p. 2.

John David Gullett, Blueprints for Mount Olive High School, Mount Olive, North Carolina, December 1924. Originals in possession of Wayne County Board of Education. [Copy of blueprints is in attachments for National Register Nomination Draft].

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Additional Documentation

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Photography

Each submitted 8"x10" photograph has the following information:

1. Name of Property: Mount Olive High School
2. Location: 100 Wooten Street, Mount Olive, NC
3. Photographer: Penne Smith
4. Date of Photographs: March 13, 1998 (exteriors)
November 1997 (interiors)

Location of original negatives: North Carolina Division of Archives and
History/SHPO

109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807

Description of Views:

- A. Front elevation,
- B. Detail of front elevation
- C. North elevation
- D. North and West elevation, from NW angle
- E. West and South elevation, from SW angle

Maps and Blueprints (in cardboard tube)

1. U.S.G.S. Topographical Map, Mount Olive, NC, quad. UTM notations on map.
2. John David Gullett, Blueprints for Mount Olive High School, December 1924 (photocopy).
3. Tax Map of Mount Olive High School (former), April 1998.
4. Survey Map of Mount Olive High School, Tise-Kiester Architects, Raleigh, NC, January 1998.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary description of the nominated property, comprising just over two acres, is shown on the enclosed survey plat created by Tise-Kiester Architects, Raleigh, North Carolina, on January 6, 1998. According to Larry Tise, Architect, the scale for this 8 1/2 by 14 inch map is fifty feet per one inch. Beginning at the corner of Main and Wooten Streets, the southernmost boundary line runs approximately 172 feet to the west then turns north for 300 feet. The boundary turns west for approximately forty feet and then north for approximately 200 feet to encompass a 1945-1946 rear addition, and then runs to the east for 212 feet. The boundary line then runs south along Wooten Street for 500 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The property included in this nomination comprises the site of the Mount Olive High School, constructed in 1925, as deeded to the Town of Mount Olive by the Wayne County Board of Education in January 1998, with the exception that it extends forty feet to the west to encompass the 1945-46 rear addition. The boundary includes an appropriate setting for the historic building and omits the adjoining campus, which is comprised of less-than-fifty-year-old structures.

Thorow

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3902

3901

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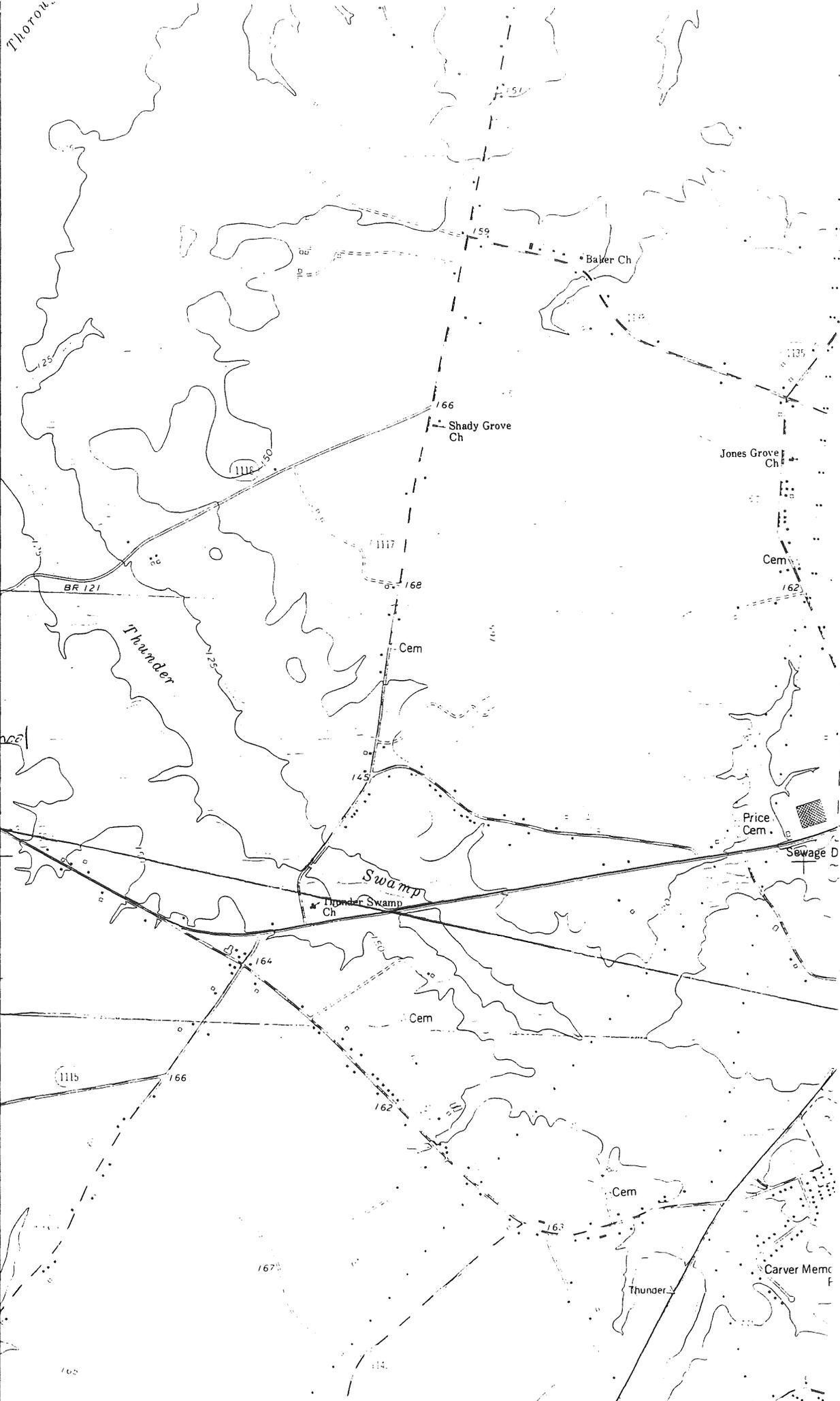
3998

5354 II NW

(DOBBERVILLE)

MOUNT OLIVE QVAD
(Former) Mt. Olive High School
Wayne City., NC

ZONE 17
UTM
Coord. ...
766000



5354 II NW
(DOBBERVILLE)

