

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Coinjock Colored School**

Coinjock vicinity, Currituck County, CK0165, Listed 1/9/2013

Nomination by Meg Malvasi

Photographs by Meg Malvasi, July and August 2012



Façade view



Rear view

Coinjock Colored School  
Name of Property

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County and State

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Coinjock Colored School

other names/site number Coinjock Rosenwald School, Crawford Colored School #7

## 2. Location

street & number 4358 Caratoke Highway not for publication

city or town Coinjock vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Currituck code 053 zip code 27923

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register  
 other (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Action

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private  
 public - Local  
 public - State  
 public - Federal

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings    |
| 0            | 0               | sites        |
| 0            | 0               | structures   |
| 0            | 0               | objects      |
| 1            | 0               | <b>Total</b> |

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Education/School  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Vacant/Not in Use  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Bungalow/Craftsman  

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### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick  
walls: Wood/Weatherboard  

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roof: Asphalt  
other: Brick  

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

Located at 4358 Caratoke Highway, on a small quarter-acre lot, facing the east towards Currituck Sound on US 168/NC Highway 158 is the one-story, frame building known as the Coinjock Colored School. The building was one of three Rosenwald-funded schools built in Currituck County during the period 1921 to 1927. The school's exterior plan is very similar to a standardized school plan, North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Public Schoolhouse Floor Plan No. 2-A which emphasized an east-west orientation; the plan was designed by Raleigh architect Frank K. Thomson. Certain design elements such as proper lighting and room paint and stain colors that helped to create a suitable learning environment for African American students are still evident in the interior of the school and reflect elements of the Rosenwald Fund school design philosophy. Although the school has been vacant for many years, it still retains integrity on the exterior. The interior of the school has been greatly modified on the south end when the original classroom was remodeled into a four-room and bath living area. The north end classrooms still retain much of their original character. The school is noteworthy as well as being the only surviving Rosenwald School in the county that still retains a good deal of its original architectural styling and plan.

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### Narrative Description

Located on the west side approximately ten feet from Currituck County's main road, US 168/NC Highway 158, (now Caratoke Highway), and approximately a half-mile north of Coinjock village, stands the Coinjock Colored School, also described in Currituck County Board of Education documents dating from 1919 to 1949 as Crawford Colored School #7. The building is sited on a small quarter-acre parcel that is partially overgrown with small trees, bushes and grass. The land surrounding the school is largely rural with sparse residential development. Directly to the south of the school is the Center Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church. Over the years as the highway was widened from a small two-lane road to a more modern four-lane highway, the school's distance from the road decreased. Based on existing records and the school's location, it appears that the school had no other outbuildings, nor was it adorned with any landscape decoration. The picture that

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emerges is of a solitary rural school building sitting on a once well-maintained lot that provided easy access to and from the school for students and visitors traveling the county's main road.

The one-story frame, side-gable-roof building is marked by a slightly projecting gable-front roof block on the east facade. The building rests on its original brick piers, though portions of the foundation level have been covered with pressed-tin sheathing that mimics rock-faced concrete block. The building measures approximately sixty feet by thirty feet with a slightly projecting front-gable block measuring twelve feet by twenty feet. A projecting gable-front block whose eaves extend to cover the entrance porches flanks either side of the block.

The exterior of the school is still sheathed in its original weatherboard; the elevations of the building are further accentuated by cornerboards. The side-gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has overhanging eaves with boxed rafters and beaded board soffit. Rectangular louvered vents are located in each gable end. Two brick flues pierce the roof; one is located near the south end roof ridge and the other is located on the rear west slope of the north end. The gable-front roof covering the projecting block on the façade is distinctive for its Craftsman-styled curved and boxed brackets. In addition, triple six-light windows mark the center of the projecting gable end on the facade, a similar feature seen on the North Carolina plan. The roof's wide overhangs provide shelter for the small one-bay entrance porches, each with a single wood post and simple wood balustrade.

Although deteriorated and in some cases broken, a portion of the building's original fenestration is intact. The rear west of the wall of the north classroom has a bank of four large six over six light windows that was one of the signature elements of the Rosenwald plans. The architects, realizing that many of the rural schools would be without electricity, made sure that the students would have plenty of natural light in order to study. Evidence of what appears to be a "breeze" window, which were openings placed either near the eaves or on an interior wall, is also seen in the northwest corner of the north classroom's west wall that was later filled in by a beaded board panel.

The entrance porches flanking the center gable block each have single-leaf paneled door entrances to each classroom. A three-light transom that has been boarded-up tops each entrance. Located on the rear west of the building is a series of wood steps and a small landing that leads to the rear single-leaf five-paneled entrance door that led to the main classroom. An opening above the door that may have served as a transom has been boarded over.

The floor plan of the school consisted of two large classroom areas, each measuring approximately thirty feet by thirty feet; evidence of flues show that each room had its own wood stove. Dividing the two rooms was a movable partition that is no longer extant and was removed. The projecting center block located on the façade housed what was shown on the Rosenwald school plan as an "industrial room," measuring approximately twelve feet by twenty feet in size. This room had two entrances to provide access from each classroom. In the North Carolina Plan No. 2-A, this space was designated to be two separate coatrooms, one for each classroom. However, given that this space contained a single room and based on a report published by Superintendent for Schools in Currituck County, it appears that at the Coinjock Colored School this space, instead of storing coats, or using the room as an industrial arts area, was adapted as a student lunch room.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Superintendent for Schools, Currituck County NC, *Handbook for Parents 1941-1942* 1942, p. 12.

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The interiors of the rooms at the Coinjock Colored School were sheathed with tongue-and-groove beaded board as were the twelve-foot high ceilings; the floors were laid with sturdy heart pine. The interior also bears witness to the careful attention to detail of the school's design from its overall floor plan to the exact paint colors that the schoolrooms were to be painted. Portions of the north classroom's east wall still retain the rich buff color as suggested by the Rosenwald Fund architects as well as an earth red color that may have been used in place of the suggested walnut color on the wainscoting. A piece of molding on the east wall of the north classroom also marks the location of a probable chalkboard, now gone.

In addition to the two main classrooms is a third, smaller room located at the far north end of the school that was incorporated into the school's design. On the exterior, the north wall has an opening for a single window with a window surround, but no sash. A single-leaf paneled door with a three-light transom marks the entrance on the east wall of the block. The room's interior is sheathed with the same tongue and groove beaded board; on the west wall is a bank of three large wood six over six light windows. This room served a dual capacity with the space being used as both as an additional classroom and as a stage. Separating the room addition from the adjoining north classroom are two wide risers that lead to the elevated floor of the addition and four six-paneled folding doors.

In 1954, Judge Chester Morris sold the property to the Barrington family who then undertook extensive renovations to what was the south end classroom. This included breaking the large space into living quarters that consisted of four small rooms and a bathroom. The folding partition wall between the two large classrooms was removed, and the opening framed and covered with drywall. To create the smaller rooms and bath also meant new framing and drywall. The ceiling throughout the south end of the building was also dropped. The lunch room was converted into a kitchen. The fenestration of the south block was also modified with a range of different types of replacement windows including Craftsman-styled three over one wood sash windows along the west wall and in the gable of the lunch room/kitchen area. A tripartite window consisting of Craftsman-styled three over one wood sash windows flanking a fixed one light window is located on the south end of the east façade. Two, two over two wood sash windows are located on the building's south wall, with a small rectangular louvered vent at the peak of the gable. All of the window openings are currently boarded over.

Ceiling and wall damage to the rear southwest area shows portions of the original framing of the building, as well as the framing for the large bank of windows and beaded board siding that were part of the original south classroom. Over the course of the last few years, portions of the building's roof, notably in the rear northwest area of the north classroom and rear southwest area of the south classroom have deteriorated. Both areas have large holes caused by decaying roof decking which has led to water damage.

With regard to assessing the Coinjock Colored School's overall integrity, the building retains its integrity in terms of location. The overall feeling of the building and its grounds has been slightly diminished with the widening of Caratoke Highway that places the building much closer to the road than originally. The building's integrity in terms of materials, workmanship, and design remains fair to good on the exterior; several windows require repair and a new roof is also needed. It is the interior of the building that has been impacted the most, first by the alterations to the south end interior and second, to the overall neglect and decay seen throughout the entire interior of the school. In terms of the remodeling of what was once the south classroom, the partitions can be removed and the building's original floor plan restored.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education

Ethnic Heritage, Black

#### Period of Significance

1920-1950

#### Significant Dates

1950

#### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

African American

#### Architect/Builder

Simmons, Foreman, carpenter

#### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance coincides with the years the school was built and in operation.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Coinjock Colored School meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register for its significance to the history of African American education in Currituck County from 1920 to 1950. The period of significance for the Coinjock Colored School begins in 1920, the year the building opened and ends in 1950 when the building and land was sold.<sup>2</sup> The school was one of three Rosenwald schools built in Currituck County, and was the only African American school in that area of the county to serve students living in and around the central region of the county. This included the villages of Coinjock, Currituck, Barco and Maple. The Rosenwald Schools were the result of a remarkable partnership between philanthropist and businessman Julius Rosenwald and African American educator and spokesman Booker T. Washington. Together the two created a program, funded by Rosenwald to build schools for African American students throughout the rural South. The interior and exterior design of the Coinjock Colored School also reflects some of the guiding principles of progressive education reform including the implementation of standardized architectural school plans. The Coinjock Colored School is significant too in that it is the only surviving Rosenwald School that still exhibits a good deal of architectural integrity on the exterior and interior; the Rosenwald School in Gregory (built in 1922), was demolished and the Moyock School (built in 1929), was converted into apartments. The school is also one of four historic surviving African American school buildings in Currituck County. The other three are the Jarvisburg Colored School (NR, 2009, built 1911) in Jarvisburg, the County Training School (established in 1931) located in the Sligo community, and the former Currituck Union School (now in operation as Central Elementary School), built in 1950 and located in Barco . The school also appears to be based in part on two standardized school building plans: the Two Teacher Community School Nashville Plan, one of the many standardized plans designed and implemented by S. L. Smith for the Rosenwald schools built after 1919; and "Floor Plan No. 2-A," as provided for North Carolina schools by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and designed by Raleigh architect Frank K. Thomson.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Narrative, Education and Ethnic Heritage Context

One of the provisions of the North Carolina Constitution of 1868 was to rebuild, out of the ashes of war and financial devastation, its public school system. In doing so, the state became one of the first in the nation to mandate public education for its children. Certainly one of the greatest challenges facing the North Carolina government was how to provide schooling not only for white residents, but its African American population, described by one Southern academic as, "paupers recently made citizens."<sup>3</sup> The solution was to provide a free public education for all children in the state, aged six to twenty-one. However, education facilities were to be separated by race.

For newly freed African Americans it was as if a door had been kicked wide open. Prior to North Carolina's new constitution, blacks had little opportunity to pursue an education of any kind. Many grew up in the shadow of slavery where learning to read and write was grounds for stiff and harsh punishment as many southern whites feared an educated black populace. However with the arrival of teachers from the North

<sup>2</sup> At this time too, the County Board of Education decided to build a new school, also to be located in Barco that would consolidate all the African American schools in the area.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Lee Smith, *History of Education in North Carolina*, Washington D.C.: GPO, 1888, p. 171.

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during Reconstruction, freedmen, women and children eagerly flooded makeshift classrooms throughout the South.

However well-meaning the state constitution read though, the reality of educational opportunities in North Carolina for African Americans were neither equal nor always welcomed. African American communities struggled to provide schools for their children. Even with the help, however grudgingly of white school boards, black schools were often undermanned and underfunded. Still, these challenges did not stop North Carolina's African Americans from pursuing an education, which for many held the key to even greater freedom and wondrous opportunities.

For Currituck County, the new educational provisions meant little. The county, located in the far northeast corner of the state, is a peninsula that included not only mainland Currituck County in the north, but a number of islands and the Outer Banks. It is a largely rural area with no organized towns and cities. The county's population by 1885 consisted of approximately 7000 residents with whites making up approximately sixty per cent of the total population and African Americans forty percent, with the main occupations of its residents tied to farming the land or fishing the waters. With the exception of the north end of the county that had a single road running from north to south, there were no other roads, leaving the small villages and hamlets scattered throughout Currituck County isolated not only from each other, but also from the rest of the state.

Although the area had a few private academies for white students, the idea of public education did not firmly take root until 1885 with the creation of twenty-eight school districts for white students that included twenty-one schools and fourteen school districts with eleven schools for African American children. In all, a total of 1457 white children and 763 African American children were enrolled in county schools.<sup>4</sup>

However, the reality of the county's education system told a completely different story: although eighty-two percent of the county's white students and seventy-six percent of its black students were enrolled, the actual attendance rate in county schools was much lower, with little more than half, or fifty-six percent of black children attending school and approximately seventy-six percent of white children showing up for classes. Further compounding the problem was the fact that many white students were actually in school for less than ten weeks, while African American students attended for less than twelve weeks. In both cases, the attendance records were woefully short of the required four months mandated by the state constitution.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the challenges faced by county residents, both black and white, the schools continued to function as best they could. According to the Board of Education minutes from December 1887, the County Superintendent reported, "Both races are repairing, building and bettering the condition of their (school) houses every year."<sup>6</sup> By 1895, the minutes stated that the assessed value of "Colored School property" for the county totaled \$23,095.00. Later that year, the county board of education created five school districts: Moyock Township, Crawford Township, Fruitville Township, Poplar Branch and Atlantic. By 1911, the five districts were further broken down into smaller school districts. District #2, known as Crawford Township

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Cowley Jones, "The Introduction of Modern Education Into Currituck County, North Carolina," *The Journal of Currituck County Historical Society*, Vol.1 No. 2, Currituck County Historical Society, 1974, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Currituck County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1, December 5, 1887, p. 8.

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included the villages of Coinjock, Indiantown (Shawboro), East Ridge, Snowden, Tulls, Currituck and Griggs. Still, when all was said and done, African Americans had little voice in creating education policy or decision-making when it came to their schools.<sup>7</sup>

Compounding the problem for African Americans not only in Currituck County, but throughout the state, was the gradual erosion of their hard-won civil rights. By 1896, with the landmark Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the door opened for the systematic implementation of legalized segregation. The idea of “separate but equal”, which on paper guaranteed African Americans access to the same institutions and rights was in fact, the springboard for policies that stripped African Americans of many of their rights, reducing their status to second-class citizens. This also extended to financial considerations when it came to education. Although the state constitution guaranteed the right of its citizens to universal public education, it stopped short of telling counties how to spend their money for education. This often meant great disparity in spending for white and African American students. For instance in North Carolina, the average amount spent on white children was \$7.40 a student, while African American children were allotted a mere \$2.30 for their education.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Rosenwald Fund

A beacon of hope for Southern blacks came in what appeared to be a most unlikely partnership between a Jewish philanthropist and businessman, Julius Rosenwald, and one of the nation’s leading African American educators, Booker T. Washington. A meeting between the two men in May 1911, at a luncheon held in Chicago led to further discussions on the state of education for African Americans in the South. Both men believed in the importance of providing assistance through education to help people who wanted to better themselves. Rosenwald also empathized with the prejudice and discrimination faced by African Americans; as a Jew, Rosenwald was well acquainted with the demeaning effects of racial and ethnic prejudice.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in 1917, Rosenwald, the-then president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, established the Julius Rosenwald Fund, whose specific goal was to improve African American education in the rural South. Supplemented by local taxes and private gifts, the Rosenwald Fund would eventually help pay for the construction of more than 5000 schools in the rural South. Of that number, more than 800 Rosenwald schools would be built in North Carolina, more than any other state.

Rosenwald’s philanthropy unfolded against the larger backdrop of a sweeping reform movement taking place across the nation known as Progressivism. In the South, Progressivism and its supporters held as their mantra that to pull the region out of its poverty and underdevelopment, change was desperately and vitally needed. This meant that state governments needed to play a more active role in the live of its citizens, especially in education. This was no mean feat, for Southern Progressives needed to overcome the strongly ingrained hostility of citizens against any perceived government interference, especially in local affairs and most especially when it came to education and the funds needed to pay for it.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Currituck County Board of Education Minutes Book 1, July 1, 1895, p. 53, July 5, 1897, p. 62, July 3, 1911, p. 371.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hanchett, “Saving the South’s Rosenwald Schools,” History South, located at:

<http://www.historysouth.org/schoolhistory.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006, pp. 26-40.

<sup>10</sup> William A. Link, *Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992, p. 203.

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In North Carolina, as reformers pressed to improve the conditions of white schools, a number of new ideas came into play. With increased state involvement in the education of its citizens, came more funding to help improve schools. Guidelines were put into place on how schools were to be built. This included creating standardized plans for schools that stipulated everything from classroom size to layout, to the height for drinking fountains to playground design. Curriculum standards were reviewed and changed and new standards were put into place to create a new kind of professional educator at both the classroom and administrative levels. But reformers also knew that if white schools were lacking in many essentials, then African American schools were far worse. The State of North Carolina relied on rural school agents, who, acting on behalf of education officials, traveled throughout the state evaluating and recommending changes for black schools. The agents helped pave the way for programs like the Rosenwald schools to be even more effective.<sup>11</sup>

The Rosenwald Fund incorporated very specific guidelines in order for its monies to be allocated. Among the stipulations were:

1. Funds for the construction of the schools were to be provided by Mr. Rosenwald, after which the site and building(s) then became the property of the school district.
2. Monies were also to be used to encourage school officials and teachers to provide the best possible schoolhouses, school equipment as well as the best education for African American students. Rosenwald funds could also be used to help with monies, materials and labor that was provided by the community.
3. Funds were to be used to build schools in rural school districts with an emphasis on one and two-teacher schools. To be eligible for Rosenwald funds, school districts were to secure money from their own public school funds or raise the money themselves. The amount also had to be equivalent to, or larger than the monies provided by the Rosenwald Fund. In no case was the sum of money provided by the Fund to exceed \$400 for a one-teacher, and \$500 for a two-teacher school.
4. Each Rosenwald school was to be equipped with the following: two sanitary toilets, desks, blackboards, and heaters. In addition, the school was to be sited on land that would include enough space for playgrounds. For a one-teacher school it was recommended a minimum of two acres be appropriated.
5. Money from the Rosenwald Fund would not be given until the appropriate funds were raised by the community and that those funds, along with the money from the Rosenwald Fund, there would be enough to insure that the building project would be completed.<sup>12</sup>

Under Rosenwald's plan, there was also a provision that the director of the Rosenwald Fund Building Program, Samuel L. Smith, would make sure that African American State Building Agents were hired with half

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Alicestyne Thurley-Adams, *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932*. Frankfort: The Kentucky Heritage Council and the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission, 1997, pp. 18-21.

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of the agents' salaries paid by the Fund and half by the states who wanted schools. It would be the job of the agents to inspect and oversee the construction of the schools in each state.<sup>13</sup>

Rosenwald Schools also had very specific design guidelines that were to be followed to the absolute letter if school districts were to receive Rosenwald funds. The first set of Rosenwald School plans were created in 1914 through the efforts of two African American architects, Robert R. Taylor and W. A. Hazel of the Tuskegee Institute. The plans ranged from small one-teacher units to larger seven-teacher buildings. Although the majority of schools were frame, by the mid-1920s, larger brick Rosenwald Schools began appearing. By 1920, the Tuskegee Plans, as they were known, soon gave way to a series of new designs implemented by new Rosenwald Fund Building Program director Samuel L. Smith. These designs, known as the Nashville Community School plans, built on earlier design elements from the Tuskegee Institute as well as creating new architectural plans for schools. Under Smith's direction, Community School Plans pattern books soon made their way to thousands of rural communities throughout the South.<sup>14</sup>

Of all the Rosenwald designs, it is the Community School plans that are the most easily identified today. Simple in their overall design with minimal decoration, the designs called to mind elements of the-then popular Craftsman or Colonial Revival styles found throughout the United States during this period. The Community Plan schools also emerged as one of the most successful implementations of Progressive educational reform in which order and function were melded with affordability and a modern appearance. And to a smaller degree, the Community Plan schools also helped level the playing field of providing affordable schools for African Americans that although modest, were similar in style and design to rural white schools.<sup>15</sup>

When news of the Rosenwald School fund reached North Carolina's African Americans, there was great excitement. State Agent Nathan Carter Newbold reported that "School Superintendents, Jeanes teachers, County Training School principals all seized upon the Rosenwald [plan] as . . . the 'missing link' . . . needed to round out a complete program for Negro [education]." In spite of the fact that African American families were having to dig into their pockets twice, once to pay taxes to support existing schools and again to help raise money for a new Rosenwald School, made little difference. The promise of a new school symbolized for many rural African American parents and children, the "dawn of a new day."<sup>16</sup> The Coinjock Colored School

### The Coinjock Colored School

For African Americans living in the Crawford District, the Rosenwald Fund provided the incentive to finally build a new school for the area. In December 1882, land had been purchased near the county's main road

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<sup>13</sup> Samuel L. Smith was an administrator and architect who had worked early on as a school agent for Rosenwald in Tennessee. Smith later headed up the Building Program for the Rosenwald Fund.

<sup>14</sup> "Community School Plans 1920-1928," National Trust for Historic Preservation, located at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/rosenwald-schools/development-of-rosenwald-plans/community-school-plans.html>

<sup>15</sup> Hoffschwelle, pp. 88-99, "Community School Plans 1920-1928," National Trust for Historic Preservation, located at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/rosenwald-schools/development-of-rosenwald-plans/community-school-plans.html>

<sup>16</sup> James A. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina 1880-1920*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p. 215.

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(now SR 158), with the small quarter-acre parcel deeded by H. S. Simmons and Hetty Ann Simmons to the (Colored) School Committee of the Coinjock District No. 12. However, there is nothing stated in the Board of Education that refers to a school being built on that parcel at that time.<sup>17</sup>

However, beginning in September 1918, there appear the first references to the school building that would be known as the Crawford Colored School #7, built with the help of monies from the Rosenwald Fund. The minutes noted that plans had been approved for the construction of a “two room school house in accordance with the State Plan Book for the building for school houses.” By February 1919, the building committee for Crawford #7 as the school was called then, reported to the school board that 12, 360 feet of lumber had been placed on the selected site for the school in “accordance with Plan 2A of State Plan Book for Schoolhouses, with the addition of a room 16 x 18 as suggested by N. C. Newbold.” Newbold was a State Agent for Rural Schools who would handle the monies from the Rosenwald Fund.<sup>18</sup>

According to the April 1919 Board of Education minutes, three building fund vouchers were paid for the construction of a new school: J. B. Flora received \$2.91 for cement in April 1919. On April 17, the sum of \$30.00 was paid to Foreman Simmons, an African American who resided in Poplar Branch, for carpentry work done on the school. (Simmons is also credited with building the African American church, the Center Chapel A.M.E. Zion, directly south of the Coinjock Colored School.) One final payment to Simmons for the year 1919 is documented on June 7 for the sum of \$60.00. The School Board then voted in August to consolidate Crawford Schools #6 and #7 in order that those students be allowed to attend the “new Rosenwald School,” which marks the first mention of the school as a Rosenwald school. The school would offer instruction for Grades 1 through 6 with one classroom holding students in Grades 1 through 3 and the other for students in grades 4 through 6.<sup>19</sup>

Based on the school district records, construction of the school continued into 1920. On October 4, 1920, the minutes noted a series of payments for various work done on the school. These included three payments of unknown amounts to Foreman Simmons for carpentry work, a payment to D. W. Etheridge for the construction of two toilets, and a \$10.50 payment to William Warren for painting the school. The final accounting for the school’s construction amounted to \$800 from the Rosenwald Fund, \$1000.00 raised by African Americans, \$200.00 raised by white residents, with the county donating \$2000.00 for the construction of the school. Finally on October 14, 1920, it was noted that the Coinjock Colored School building had been completed and a dedication ceremony was held.<sup>20</sup>

Lorraine Perry was six years old and a resident of Coinjock when she first began attending the Rosenwald school in 1927. She recalls making the half-mile walk to the school which was then sited near a narrow, unpaved road that later became NC Highway 158. Students sat at wood desks and studied from second-hand books that came from the white schools. Wood stoves provided heat on cold days. However, school officials also paid heed to the needs of the farmers. In 1932, the School Board minutes noted the decision to “close

<sup>17</sup> Currituck County Deed Book 36, p. 521.

<sup>18</sup> Currituck County Board of Education Minutes, Book 2, September 2, 1918, p. 113, February 3, 1919, p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> Currituck County Board of Education Minutes, Book 2, June 30, 1919, pp. 135, 141, August 4, p. 143 .

<sup>20</sup> Currituck County Board of Education Minutes, Book 2, October 4, 1920, pp. 186, October 14, 187-188, “Coinjock School,” Rosenwald Card File, located at: <http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/>

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the Colored schools for a period of three weeks” in order for the students to help pick cotton. This was further amended in 1936 adding two more weeks in September so that “the children could pick cotton.”<sup>21</sup>

During the school year 1941 to 1942, the Coinjock Colored School had an enrollment of eighty-one students with an average daily attendance of sixty-five students. The principal, Mrs. Alice B. Brown who also taught first, second and third grade, oversaw the school’s daily activities. According to a report provided to parents by the County School Superintendent, the Coinjock School served 7703 school lunches, of which 7456 were provided free and the remaining number sold to children for five cents. The report also noted that even though food prices had risen, that the school would have a good supply of canned vegetables courtesy of the W.P.A. garden.<sup>22</sup>

The Coinjock Colored School continued to serve African Americans in the Coinjock area for more than twenty-five years. In 1947, the Currituck Board of Education having heard reports of the deplorable condition of its black schools, decided it would be financially more feasible to build “one central Negro school building to house all colored children than it would be to place the five Negro schools in proper sanitary condition.” In April 1949, the board began making plans to build a central school for its African American students. By 1950, according to Board of Education minutes, the Currituck County Board of Education “authorized the sale of all Negro school buildings and property “as is” and “where is.”<sup>23</sup>

On February 5, 1951, the Board of Education accepted a \$600 bid from a local resident, Judge Chester Morris for the Coinjock Colored School property. By 1954, the land and building was conveyed by Morris to the Barrington family, who upon buying the property agreed to use the premise “for residential purposes only and that at no time shall they be used for any commercial purpose or for a place of public gathering other than they may be used for religious purposes.”<sup>24</sup>

### The Coinjock Colored School Building Design

In evaluating the Coinjock Colored School, the building appears to be an interesting meld of two standardized plans: the Nashville Two Teacher Plan No. 20 from the Rosenwald Fund Plans for Community Schools and North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Public Schoolhouse Floor Plan No. 2-A, one of several designs done by Frank K. Thomson, a Raleigh architect. Both plans are illustrative of the efforts of Progressive education reformers to “standardize” not only classroom buildings, but equipment and teacher training. It also shows the practical application of building design by keeping in mind the students and teachers who would be using the building in a mostly poor, rural area.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jeff Hampton, “Historic N.C. school gets 2<sup>nd</sup> chance at life, new use,” *The Virginian Pilot*, October 11, 2011, located at: <http://hamptonroads.com/2011/10/historic-nc-school-gets-2nd-chance-life-new-use>, Currituck County School Board Minutes, Book 3, October 3, 1932, p. 24, September 7, 1936, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Superintendent for Schools, Currituck NC, *Handbook for Parents 1941-1942* 1942, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Currituck County School Board Minutes, Book 3, November 24, 1947, p. 221, April 4, 1949, p. 246, May 1, 1950, p. 281

<sup>24</sup> Currituck County School Board Minutes, Book 3, February 5, 1951, n.p., Currituck County Deed Book 84, pp. 409.

<sup>25</sup> “Community School Plans 1920-1928,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, located at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/rosenwald-schools/development-of-rosenwald-plans/community-school-plans.html>, North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Plans for Public Schoolhouses, Third Edition (Raleigh, NC: 1914) p. 37.

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In looking at the exterior, evidence suggests that the Coinjock Colored School is more closely modeled on the North Carolina Plan No. 2-A , particularly when the school is compared with other surviving school buildings in nearby counties. For instance, the African American Warren Grove School (CO 63) in nearby Chowan County, is a circa 1915 schoolhouse that is notable for its projecting front-gable block and adjoining porches which mark the entrances to the school. The Coinjock Colored School bears a striking resemblance to Warren Grove.<sup>26</sup>

If the school's exterior was modeled after a North Carolina plan, the interior of the school is more in keeping with a Rosenwald school. Looking at the interior of the Coinjock Colored School is a visual catalogue of the key design elements emphasized by Smith and the Community School Plans. For instance, the school's intact north classrooms still retain the large banks of windows, one of the Community Plans great innovations. This simple, but powerfully effective design made use of natural light and harnessed it in a way to shine on the student's left shoulders, the optimum placement for reading and studying without causing eyestrain. In addition, the window designs made use of narrow window framing in the sashes while accentuating the height. The end result was windows that spanned from the wainscot cap up to the ceiling. Another innovation concerned fresh air circulation. So-called "breeze" windows were placed either under the eaves or on interior walls that helped pull fresh air into the classrooms. A filled in breeze window is located in the northwest corner of the north classroom.<sup>27</sup>

Rosenwald Community School designs also had very specific requirements for how the interiors of the school were to look, both on the exterior and the interior. Paint colors reflected the muted earth tones popular during the period. Exterior paint colors ran to "nut brown" or a "bungalow stain" with white trim. Schools could also be painted white with gray trim or light gray with white trim. Interior colors tended to come from the same palette; however the rooms were covered with "bands of color" which ran from walnut or oak-stain for the wainscoting and gray or buff color for the walls. Light cream and ivory were also acceptable choices. The color choices were chosen not just for aesthetic purposes but also because the lighter colors intensified the light coming from the windows, while the darker colors cut down on glare.<sup>28</sup>

The plans also incorporated one of Booker T. Washington's concerns in making sure that the school also served community needs. Hence the implementation of removable partitions or folding doors that could create a large meeting room or even provide the African American community with a small stage for presentations and speakers, though there is little surviving evidence to show how this space was used for the Coinjock school.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Courtney Foley, "Historic Architectural Resources Report: Mid-Currituck Bridge Project, TIP NO. R-2576, Currituck and Dare Counties, North Carolina, WBS NO. 34470.1.TA1", North Carolina Department of Transportation, April 2008, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> "Community School Plans 1920-1928," National Trust for Historic Preservation, located at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/rosenwald-schools/development-of-rosenwald-plans/community-school-plans.html>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

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Today, the Coinjock Colored School is a reminder of changes and reforms that swept through Currituck County during the first decades of the twentieth century. Rosenwald Schools were more than rural schoolhouses; they also helped foster community cooperation between blacks and whites as well as helping forge stronger bonds between rural neighbors in the county's African American community. For its students, the Rosenwald schools marked the beginning of a hopeful journey towards a life with better opportunities. For parents, it stood as another strong step away from enslavement and towards new roles as citizens. But most of all, the Rosenwald School in Coinjock represented a time when a small rural school house emphasized a "community enterprise in cooperation between citizens and officials, white and colored."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Laura Wolf Scanlon, "Schools for the South," *Humanities*, November/December 2010, Volume 31, Number 6, located at: <http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2010/novemberdecember/statement/schools-the-south>

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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\_\_\_\_\_. "The Rosenwald School in the Landscape," located at: <http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/rosenwald-schools/development-of-rosenwald-plans/the-rosenwald-school-in-the.html>

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Scanlon, Laura Wolf, "Schools for the South," *Humanities*, November/December 2010, Volume 31, Number 6, located at: <http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2010/novemberdecember/statement/schools-the-south>

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Plans for Public Schoolhouses and School Grounds: Suggestions for the Improvement of School Property*, Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1914.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): CK0165

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .25 acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

|   |                           |                              |                               |   |                           |                              |                               |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | <u>18</u><br>Zone         | <u>413200</u><br>Easting     | <u>4024390</u><br>Northing    | 3 | <u>          </u><br>Zone | <u>          </u><br>Easting | <u>          </u><br>Northing |
| 2 | <u>          </u><br>Zone | <u>          </u><br>Easting | <u>          </u><br>Northing | 4 | <u>          </u><br>Zone | <u>          </u><br>Easting | <u>          </u><br>Northing |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The legal boundaries of the Coinjock Colored School are as follows: "Beginning at the Public Road in Bridget McHorney's line; thence with said public road, a Northerly course about 40 yards to a ditch; thence a Westerly course with said ditch, the distance of 80 yards to a post; thence a Southerly course with a line parallel with the said public road to the said Bridget McHorney line to a post 30 yards from the public road, thence with the said McHorney as Easterly course to the beginning." (Book 84, p. 409, Currituck County Records) See attached tax map at 1 inch equals fifty feet scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These are the original boundaries as deeded to William Barrington and wife Jessie Barrington on January 4, 1954 and includes the building historically associated with the school, known as the Coinjock Colored School property.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Meg Greene Malvasi, consultant, and Barbara Snowden  
organization Currituck County Historical Society date 25 August 2012  
street & number P.O. Box 144 telephone 252.619.6991  
city or town Currituck state NC zip code 27929  
e-mail [littledogslaughed@gmail.com](mailto:littledogslaughed@gmail.com) or [barbarabsnowden@embarqmail.com](mailto:barbarabsnowden@embarqmail.com)

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
  - **Continuation Sheets**
  - **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)
- 

### Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

|                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Name of Property:                   | Coinjock Colored School |
| City or Vicinity:                   | Coinjock vicinity       |
| County:                             | Currituck               |
| State:                              | North Carolina          |
| Photographer:                       | Meg Greene Malvasi      |
| Date Photographed:                  | 11-13 July 2012         |
| Location of Original Digital Files: | North Carolina HPO      |
| Number of Photographs:              | 15                      |

Photo #1  
East Façade, camera facing west

Photo #2  
East façade, north addition, camera facing west

Photo #3  
South elevation, camera facing north

Photo #4  
East façade (left), east facing entrance door, camera facing west

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Photo #5

East façade (right), east facing entrance door detail, camera facing west

Photo #6

East façade, central gable-front block, gable end detail, camera facing west

Photo #7

Interior windows, north classroom, west wall, camera facing west

Photo #8

Interior, north classroom, stage area, camera facing north

Photo #9

Interior windows, north addition room, west- wall, camera facing west

Photo #10

Detail, north classroom, east wall, original paint colors, beaded board siding, camera facing east

Photo #11

North Classroom, SW corner, camera facing south

Photo #12

Detail, roof damage, north classroom, NW corner, camera facing north

Photo #13

North classroom, west wall, outline of breeze window, camera facing west

Photo #14

North addition room, east wall, camera facing north

Photo #15

Remodeled south classroom area, NW corner, camera facing west

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**Property Owner:**

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

name Walter M. Barrington Heirs c/o Audrey Barrington

street & number P.O. Box 8313 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Norfolk state VA zip code 23503

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.