

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Cleveland School

other names/site number Cleveland Middle School

2. Location

street & number 8968 Cleveland Road not for publication N/A
city or town Clayton vicinity X
state North Carolina code NC county Johnston code 101 zip code 27520

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Brown SHPO 7/18/05
Signature of certifying official Date

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

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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	
4	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
In the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

roof METAL: Tin, SYNTHETICS: Rubber

walls BRICK

other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926-1955

Significant Dates

1926, 1932, 1938, 1955

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hook, Charles C., architect

Rogers, J. P., builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository:

Cleveland School
Name of Property

Johnston County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 17 723963 3938700
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susannah V. Franklin

organization Landmark Asset Services, Inc. date November 30, 2004

street & number 406 East Fourth Street telephone (336) 714-8917

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name (1)Cleveland School Seniors, LLC and (2) Johnston County Board of Education

street & number (1) 406 East Fourth Street (2)Highway 70E, Box 1336 telephone (336) 722-9871

city or town (1) Winston-Salem (2)Smithfield state NC zip code (1) 27101 (2) 27577

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Description

The Cleveland School is located at 8968 Cleveland Road, SR 1010, approximately 9.5 miles southwest of Clayton, NC in an area that is rural with some post- World War II residential development. Facing south on Cleveland Road, the school and three accompanying auxiliary buildings are located east of a new residential development. To the west is the Cleveland campus of the Johnston County Community College building. Directly south across Cleveland Road is a convenience store and a Presbyterian church with cemetery. They are situated at the intersection with SR 1509. The rest of the surrounding area is comprised of single-family dwellings, athletic fields and some farmland.

The school property was originally part of a 33.94-acre parcel that included a 1955 gymnasium a 1953 agricultural education building and surrounding ball fields. The fields are still owned by the Johnston County Board of Education, and some of the property has recently been sold off for re-development. The nominated property is approximately two acres and includes the main school building and three auxiliary buildings, located to the west and north of the school: the well house, gymnasium and original bathroom building. Directly adjoining the school building to the west, the original gymnasium and agricultural building are a separate tax parcel owned by the Johnston County Board of Education and are used by the local YMCA. The agricultural building was altered with a sizeable addition on the front façade with different brick and windows, and therefore it is not included in the nomination.

School Building: 1926- 27, 1932, and 1938, Contributing Building

Built in 1926-27, the Cleveland School faces Cleveland Road and is set back approximately fifty feet on a lot of sand and grass. Several medium-sized trees and larger pine trees are situated in front of the school building. Shrubbery at the height of the first-story windows lines the west elevation, and a few bushes are planted on the east elevation. A square sign featuring the school name and a flagpole are located in between small bushes in the center of the front part of the lot. There is a driveway on the east side of building with the gym and agricultural buildings directly to the east of the drive.

Designed by Charlotte architect, Charles C. Hook, this U-plan building is five bays across, two stories high and sits on a raised basement. Built in three stages, the original block dates from 1927. Two-story flanking wings, compatible in design with the original school, were added onto the north elevation of the building in 1932 (east) and 1938 (west). The east wing is six bays deep, and the west wing extends back for five bays. The school was built with load-bearing red brick

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

walls laid in a five-to-one bond; each fifth course punctuated with glazed header bricks. The school features Classical Revival elements such as the projecting center bay with recessed main entrance and end bays with blind windows. Concrete steps lead up to the double-leaf front doors, under the main entrance framed by an archway with keystone. All elevations are ornamented with a beltcourse over the basement level windows set in a staggered soldier brick pattern under a rowlock. A concrete beltcourse encircles the building above the second story windows. Concrete squares and diamonds accent the building and concrete coping accents the parapet roofline constructed in a stepped design. The roof of the central block is a side-gabled standing-seam metal roof, while those on the projecting wings are flat rubber roofs.

Groups of triple and single windows punctuate the façade in a symmetrical placement on the three center bays. Paired sets of triple windows are found along the east and west elevations, on both first and second stories. Windows in the building are now covered from the exterior with plywood, but many remain intact. They are a unique double-tilting design with the bottom sash tilting in and the top sash tilting out at the meeting rail. They have vertically oriented six-over-six sashes. Some windows in the rear of the west wing were replaced with metal sash windows after damage from hurricane Fran. In the interior courtyard walls of the original section there are rounded arch windows, four on each wing. Triple windows punctuate the north elevation of the central block, and single windows of the same design pierce the other interior courtyard elevations. Metal fire escapes, added some time after 1926, are attached to both the front and rear elevations, leading to double doors on the second floor at each end of the building.

The central block houses offices and classrooms on the ground and first floors and classrooms and a large auditorium on the second floor. A kitchen and cafeteria are housed along with the boiler room in the basement, or ground floor. Additional classrooms are housed in the wings. There were approximately twenty-six classrooms in the school after the 1932 and 1938 additions. The original stairwells are intact with brick walls and concrete floors. Double-leaf doors lead into the double-loaded corridors of the 1927 block. The corridors of the wings are single-loaded.

The interior retains many original hardwood floors, plaster walls, simple wooden baseboards, six-panel doors, and door and window surrounds. The classrooms still contain some original blackboards and coat closets. The auditorium contains an intact stage and an original beaded board gabled ceiling with metal trusses behind an acoustic tile drop ceiling. This ceiling is in good condition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Well House: c. 1927, Contributing Building

Directly behind the main school building, just past the courtyard is the well house. This is a small, square one-story well house built in the same brick pattern as the main building. It features a soldier course as water table, a segmental arch over the front double-doors and small high single windows on each side of the building. There is a low-hipped standing-seam metal roof with deep eaves and exposed rafters. Double doors open into the building on the south elevation. The interior has a concrete floor, exposed brick walls and the roof beams are exposed.

Bathroom: c. 1927, Contributing Building

This one-story building was built in 1927 at the same time as the school. It served the school as a bathroom building. It is rectangular with a rear ell. The lower half of the building is covered with brick up to a rowlock course. Stucco covers the upper half of the building that is pierced with small rectangular, tilting windows that are hinged at the bottom and secured from opening too far by small metal chains. The entrances are on the side walls of the building and led into the bathroom facilities for girls and boys. Both the east and west elevation have two single door entrances accented with rowlock bricks around the doorway. On the south elevation there is a recessed window under a brick archway with a concrete coping. The hipped roof is covered with standing-seam metal. A long handicapped ramp projects from the rear door of the central block. On the west side (girls) entrances lead into the bathroom with plaster walls and ceiling and a replacement tile floor. Stalls remain in this section. On the east side (boys) the bathroom was tiled up to approximately six-feet high. Above this are plaster and a plaster ceiling. The floors are also modern replacement tile.

Gymnasium: 1955, Contributing Building

The gymnasium is a tall, one-story, rectangular red brick building. It features a flat roof and triple ten-light windows spaced evenly on the side elevations between plain brick pilasters. The main entrance to the building is on the east elevation where double doors lead into the gym. The interior is a large open gymnasium area with wood floors, a high, open ceiling and bleachers. There are a few offices located in the front and rear of the space.

The school, bathroom and well house buildings are currently being rehabilitated for adaptive reuse in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Summary of Significance

Cleveland School is locally significant under Criterion A. Cleveland School was built in 1926 and opened in 1927, and it served to educate the local community until 1999. This building is associated with the focused improvement on public education for white students and school consolidation in Johnston County throughout the 1920's. This school has served as a cornerstone in the community's social, civic, and educational life since its construction.

Cleveland School is also architecturally significant under Criterion C because it represents a well-preserved example of a twentieth-century brick 1920's consolidation school. As the student population grew over the next decade, the school was expanded with a wing in 1932 and another wing in 1938 that are compatible in design with the original school block. The school retains a high degree of integrity and is one of very few 1920's schools remaining in Johnston County.

The period of significance for Cleveland School begins in 1927 when the building construction was completed and continues to 1955. Although the building continued to function as a school after 1955, the fifty-year cut-off date for the Criteria A and C is the end of the period of significance because the property does not meet Criterion Consideration G.

Historical Background and Education Context

Prior to the twentieth century in North Carolina, educational opportunities across the state were limited. In 1839 the North Carolina General Assembly passed the first state common school law. Based on a plan devised by North Carolina Judge Archibald D. Murphy, the law called for a system of public instruction that included primary and secondary schools that eventually led to the university level, as well as education of the deaf and dumb. The law also divided each county in the state into school districts.

Due to economic growth and prosperity from the cotton and tobacco industries, the beginning of the twentieth century saw phenomenal educational development throughout North Carolina. The development was spurred by governmental leaders who recognized such problems as the state's low school attendance and poor public school facilities. One leader in North Carolina's educational progress, Charles Brantley Aycock, the governor of North Carolina from 1901-1905, advocated extensive improvements to the state's public school

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

systems and campaigned for universal education.¹ This campaign led to the establishment of the Central Committee for the Promotion of Public Education in North Carolina. The principles of this Committee included encouraging local taxes, building better schools, lengthening school terms, consolidating school districts, and supporting better pay for teachers.

Many of these ideas were implemented across the state during the 1920's. School consolidation, particularly in rural areas, became widespread. According to a School Superintendent report in 1929, research showed that much progress had been made in consolidating smaller schools into large ones. There were significant improvements to the roads across North Carolina during the 1920's facilitating easier transport of students to consolidated schools. More pupils were being transported by bus, or "truck," to larger schools that had been built to serve a wider population. By 1928 North Carolina was ranked second among states in the number of school buses in operation.²

Johnston County, located adjacent to and southeast of Wake County, was established in 1746. Smithfield was established as the county seat in 1775, and is the oldest and largest town in the county. Cleveland township, formed in 1887, is just west of Smithfield on the western border of the county. Primarily an agricultural county, tobacco became a leading crop around the turn of the century, and was grown along with cotton, soybeans and corn. By 1922 Johnston County ranked fourth in the state production of tobacco.³ Until recent decades, the population of Cleveland Township was primarily tobacco farmers "of average economic status"⁴. Johnston County is now one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina and development is rapid. As the Raleigh area and the Research Triangle Park expand, many people and businesses are moving into Johnston County, particularly the western side where Cleveland School is located.⁵

The Johnston County School Board began to address the consolidation issue early on and operated its first school bus in 1920. Prior to that time students walked; one student recalled

¹ James L. Leloudis. *Schooling in the New South, Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996, xii.

² "State School Facts." Volume IV, no. 21. Raleigh, NC: Published by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jan. 1, 1928.

³ Sanders, W.M., Jr. and G.Y. Ragsdale. *Johnston County: Economic and Social*. Smithfield, NC, 1922.

⁴ "Cleveland School Yearbook." 1962.

⁵ Jada Edmonson. "Johnston County Now the Fastest Growing County in NC." *Go Magazine*, January-February, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

that his grandmother took a horse and buggy.⁶ Often the local families built and ran a small school for their children and local students, as did the father of William Sanders.⁷ County leaders felt that they needed to abolish the old one teacher and two teacher schools, and create educational centers of real merit with college-educated teachers. Also, there was a large discrepancy in the amount of money spent on both rural versus town enrolled children. In 1922, the investment in school property per child enrolled was \$12.70 per rural child and \$140 per town child, or eleven times as much for each town child enrolled.⁸ William Sanders, later a merchant farmer and member of the State Legislature, addressed the county's issues in a rural social science study done in 1922. He wrote, "We must vote more school taxes, build more consolidated schools, and employ better prepared teachers, or else we will continue to live in darkness."⁹ The consolidation and improvement in schools across the county was underway.

The 1920's produced a flurry of school construction, unmatched in Johnston County history. Large two or three-story, brick buildings replaced smaller wooden structures in most of Johnston's established communities. Schools were built in Smithfield, Four Oaks, Selma, Brogden, Clayton, Cleveland, Corinth-Holder, Glendale, Meadow, Micro, Princeton, Pine Level, and Wilson's Mills. By 1924, Johnston County had used \$270,000 of their building fund that was more than any other county.¹⁰ School districts were consolidated in these new buildings. Schools with one or two teachers were replaced by schools with more than five teachers. In 1902 in Johnston County there were 5,491 white schools with one teacher and by 1928 that number was reduced to 1178. The average cost of each school had correspondingly increased from \$810 in 1907 to \$23,369 by 1927. By 1928 Johnston County had fourteen consolidated schools, which bused in 2,778 students in ninety-two vehicles.¹¹

The idea of consolidation was promoted by H.B. Marrow and W. H. Hipps who were school superintendents of Johnston County. Not everyone in the county was equally enthusiastic, however. There was large resistance from many rural residents who did not want their children traveling long distances on school buses to large campuses miles away from home. In one extreme case, some local citizens set off dynamite inside the newly consolidated

⁶ Interview with Chris Johnson, February 8, 2005.

⁷ "Schools in Years of Yore." *The Smithfield Herald*. Smithfield, NC. Friday, September 8, 1967.

⁸ W. Lassiter. *Johnston County, 1746-1996*. Smithfield, NC: 1996, 140.

⁹ W.M. Sanders. *Johnston County Economic and Social*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1922, 51.

¹⁰ Beth P. Thomas. "Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School/Municipal Auditorium", National Register of Historic Places, 2001.

¹¹ "State School Facts." Volume IV, no. 21. Raleigh, NC: Published by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jan. 1, 1928.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Corinth-Holder School when it was near its completion in 1923. The explosion caused the school opening to be postponed for three weeks.¹² Despite some local resistance, the idea was continually pushed, and consolidation moved forward.

According to many other residents, and especially local teachers, the consolidation was “the greatest forward move of the schools since the turn of the century.”¹³ Mrs. Mina Higgins who taught across Johnston County, including many years at Cleveland School, declared that unless one had attended a small school, one could not fully appreciate the modernity of the new schools. She related how she had to send pupils to the woods for fire for the stove and times when the “stove pipe would fall and the entire class would be smutty.”¹⁴ Modern central heat and lighting were a huge improvement. Interestingly, Mrs. Higgins’ husband, Robert Higgins, taught and served as a principal for thirty-two years, as well.¹⁵

From 1920-1928, the school consolidation movement within the county was reviewed in “Eight Years’ of Progress” by former superintendent H.B. Marrow, and he reported on this educational progress with statistics on increased enrollment, attendance, and lengthened school terms. During this time period, school terms were extended to from six to eight months, and by 1928 more than 10,000 of Johnston County’s 13,201 school children were attending school for eight months. Furthermore, by the end of the decade Mr. Marrow had persuaded all of Johnston’s school districts to relinquish their autonomy in favor of the unified county system still in force today.¹⁶ The 1935 Department of Public Instruction Administrative Survey stated, “Consolidation of the white schools of Johnston County has reached a far degree of completion.”¹⁷ By 1936 there were eighteen schools in the county for white students, nearly all constructed of brick with furnace heat and artificial lighting. The average value of these schools was rising as well, estimated at \$41,051 in 1937.¹⁸

The Cleveland School was a part of this countywide movement to consolidate schools and greatly improve the quality of education available to its citizens. In 1925 the residents of Mt. Zion, Shiloh, and Polenta elected to consolidate their smaller school systems. The proposed consolidation was expected to greatly increase the efficiency of the schools and help with

¹² W.M. Sanders. *Johnston County 1746-1996*. Smithfield, NC, 1996, 140.

¹³ “Couple Spent 72 Years in School.” *The News & Observer*. Raleigh, NC. January 23, 1949.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Lassiter, 140.

¹⁷ “Administrative Survey: Survey of Local School Units, Henderson-Northampton, 1935-36.” Department of Public Instruction, Division of Schoolhouse Planning.

¹⁸ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

truancy.¹⁹ During the spring of 1926 land was acquired from the McLemores, Mary F. Jones, Oakland Church and the heirs of Dr. E.M. Booker for the school site.²⁰ The architect for the project was Charles C. Hook. J. P. Rogers was the Superintendent of Construction, W. D. Tomlinson completed the framing and sheeting, Cline & Short Journey completed the brickwork and J. L. Powers installed the plumbing, heating and wiring.²¹

Cleveland School was completed and opened in the fall of 1926. It was named Cleveland School because it was in the Cleveland Township. The local newspaper reporter wrote, "After years of planning and working for better roads and schools, the people... are about to see one of their dearest dreams come true. [This day] will long be remembered by them as the beginning of a new era for the township...the beautiful new consolidated school opened its doors for the first time to pupils and patrons, to be used not only as a public school but as a great community center."²² A ceremony was held and the first principal, Mr. J.O. Terrel spoke. Many attendees expressed their "joy and pride in the new school."²³ One attendee suggested purchasing a radio for the school so that "even the poorest" students in the area could hear concerts and news.²⁴

For the first few years after the opening of the school, the teachers resided in the school building. They used the council room as a living room and the cafeteria for a kitchen and dining room. The principal still lived in the school in 1931, along with his wife and son. They lived in an apartment in the basement during his tenure there. In 1931 high school grades were added and the first graduating class emerged from Cleveland School, with four girls and nine boys graduating.²⁵ Cleveland School had been growing since the previous year when students from several areas in the county, including Pleasant Grove, a small part of Smithfield, a small part of Clayton and Wilson Mills Township began attending the school.²⁶

In 1931 Cleveland School was accredited. The student body was still expanding. The high school class of 1931 was the first, and smallest graduating class in the school's history and

¹⁹ "Discuss Election Cleveland School, Mount Zion, Polenta, and Shiloh to Vote on Consolidation- Figures Speak for Themselves." *The Smithfield Herald*, February, 19, 1926.

²⁰ "Cleveland School Yearbook." 1962.

²¹ Johnston County Board of Education Minutes on Microfilm, January 5, 1926. Johnston County Room, Smithfield Library.

²² "Cleveland School Promises to be a Center For All Community Activities; Patrons Much Interested." *The Smithfield Herald*, October 22, 1926.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "First Cleveland Graduating Class of 1931 Conducts Initial Reunion." *The Smithfield Herald*, August, 3, 1951.

²⁶ "Cleveland School Yearbook." 1962.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

the class size increasing from there.²⁷ Classroom populations were growing across the county, with over 800 students enrolled in elementary schools, and 125 enrolled in high school in Johnston County in 1934-35.²⁸ The addition of wings in 1932 and 1938 accommodated the growing student population of the Cleveland School. The cost of the east wing was \$18,000 and the west wing was \$25,000.²⁹ There were no major building changes or additions to the school between 1938 and 1953. In 1938, however, new modern buses were purchased for the school. These were metal buses with wood roofs and varnished wood benches for the students to sit on. The seats were arranged from front to back, rather than from side to side in the bus. They faced each other in four rows and the middle two benches did not have backs. Mrs. Langdon, a longtime area resident and pupil at Cleveland School in 1938, says she remembers the new buses and the students sliding into one another each time the driver put on the brakes. The older students had to duck down to fit in the short bus cabin.³⁰

In 1939 the school got its second principal, Mr. Woodruff. He served in that capacity until the 1960's when Mr. Benton took over and ran the school until its closing. Only three principals served Cleveland School for the seventy years it was in use, demonstrating the longevity and dedication of the staff to the school. In 1953 the school participated in the Johnston County Science Fair. In 1953 the vocational agriculture building was built and in 1955 the gymnasium was added. In 1955 a P.T.A. was organized at the school. During the 1960's a new lunchroom, science lab and Home Economics Department were added. In 1961, paved roadways were added and the covered walkways were constructed so students did not have to walk to the bathroom in the rain. Indoor bathrooms were added to the school in the 1970's.³¹

Often communities grew up around these rural, consolidated schools, "particularly [in the case of] Cleveland, a small community... comprised of a store or two, several dwellings, and perhaps a cotton gin or feed mill."³² The community gathered at the Cleveland School for many events, particularly sports. Though the school never had a football team, they had many winning baseball and basketball teams, and many area residents attended the games. One Cleveland alumna remembers the coach driving the players to the away games in his

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Department of Public Instruction/Division of Schoolhouse Administrative Survey: Study of Local School Units, Henderson-Northampton Counties, 1935-1936.

²⁹ "Cleveland School Yearbook." 1962.

³⁰ Interview with Sonny Johnson, May 3, 2005.

³¹ Interview with Lanny Clifton, February 8, 2005.

³² Tom Butchko, "Appendix B". *The Architecture of Johnston County*, 1983, 67.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

own station wagon and since there was limited room, only those students who had behaved got to go.³³ In the 1960's the parents and community pooled together to purchase a brand new Chevrolet pick-up truck for the beloved Cleveland coach and former Cleveland student, Bruce Coats.³⁴ Many memories linger in the school's halls; as a graduate of the class of 1938 stated, "The day I graduated from Cleveland I thought life had ended.... We look back on those days with a lot of nostalgia. We loved Cleveland—really loved it."³⁵

Until the late 1960's students went through school with the same class for twelve years, and everyone knew each other very well. The lower grades were housed in the basement classrooms and students literally moved up in the school until they reached the high school grades on the top floor. Many teachers were married to other teachers and taught at Cleveland for decades. Lizzie Thompson, who was the janitor at Cleveland for many years, rang the starting bell at eight o'clock each morning and the students would run in from playing in the woods that were around the school at the time or from the smoker's corner by the bathroom.

By 1962 the Cleveland School district encompassed an area of approximately 120 to 150 square miles serving a population of around 6,000 people. Thirteen school buses transported over 550 students each day.³⁶ In 1969 the high school grades were moved to South Johnston and Cleveland served grades one through eight. In 1986, Cleveland School was serving 532 students, kindergarten through eighth grade. In the mid-1990's the school was again changed to serve only the middle school grades. A new elementary school was built for the kindergarten through fifth grade student population.

By the 1990's the jubilation that the population had felt at the opening of the Cleveland School had waned. In a letter to the editor in 1991 a mother complained about her daughter's school, "where she had to go outside to the restroom that was just one step up from a pit toilet.... And the [children are left] to suffer in that overcrowded, antiquated, firetrap."³⁷ Later that year plans were made for a new school to be built near the existing school to accommodate 750 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Several other schools across Johnston County were planned for that same time. In 1989 sixty percent of the schools in the county were over fifty years old and none were newer than thirteen years old. During the 1990's there were many schools constructed across the county and in the Cleveland area. By

³³ Interview with Lanny Clifton, February 8, 2005.

³⁴ Interview with Sonny Johnson, May 3, 2005.

³⁵ "Cleveland 1938 class holds 50th reunion." *The Benson Review*, November 2, 1988.

³⁶ "Cleveland School Yearbook." 1962.

³⁷ "A Cleveland mother goes 'school shopping'." Letter to the Editor, *The Smithfield Herald*, April 19, 1991.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

2001, only seven percent of the schools were older than fifty years and fifty-five percent were built in the preceding twelve years.³⁸ The Cleveland School continued to operate until the school board closed it in 1999. It is now owned by Cleveland School Seniors, LLC and an adaptive reuse rehabilitation to convert the school into apartments is planned.

Architectural Context

From 1880 through the 1920s, North Carolina built thousands of new schoolhouses.³⁹ The state was in a period of transition from the common school system, which “bore the stamp of rural society”⁴⁰ to a graded school system, where the classroom produced “good citizens.”⁴¹ The graded school system measured the child’s success and rewarded their scholastic achievements by promoting them to the next grade. These improvements were coordinated with efforts of consolidation of several rural schools or school districts into one more efficient and modern school. Along with better trained teachers and a longer school year, consolidation of schools led to a subsequent building period across the state and in Johnston County during the 1920’s.

The 1920’s brick school architecture reflects ideals of the time and the state and county government’s desire to consolidate school districts. The consolidated school construction incorporated new design standards intended to fireproof and upgrade sanitary conditions. The county wanted to abandon the one or two room schoolhouse and provide a multi room multi level school facility that could accommodate larger numbers of children. These schools followed a similar plan and “all were substantial two-story structures over a raised basement, built in a “U”-plan.”⁴² Most school systems hired architects to design the new imposing brick, concrete and stone facilities, often with Classical Revival or Gothic Revival elements. Floor plans allowed for wide bands of windows to illuminate classrooms, libraries, auditoriums and gymnasiums.⁴³ These consolidated designs also incorporated central heating plants, multiple bathroom and cafeteria facilities.

³⁸ *Johnston County Schools Construction News*. Published by the Johnston County Schools, 2001.

³⁹ James L. Leloudis. *Schooling the New South, Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996. xii.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 21.

⁴² Butchko, 67.

⁴³ Heather Fearnbach. “Henrietta-Caroleen High School, Rutherford County, NC” National Register draft nomination, 2003.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Cleveland School is an excellent example of this consolidated brick school construction that was a statewide trend in the 1920's. With its symmetrical façade and design, brick and concrete accents and many large windows, the Cleveland School features many of the elements that define this school building movement. The Cleveland School also boasted many of the desired design improvements that were implemented in the new consolidated schools. Large windows, an auditorium, central heating plan and artificial lights were incorporated into the Cleveland School sturdy brick building.

The Cleveland School was designed by Charlotte architect Charles Christian Hook (1893-1938). Hook produced plans for many buildings including schools, city halls, houses, theaters, railroad stations, and post offices. By 1892 he was the first full-time architect in Charlotte. He specialized in Colonial and Classical Revival styles using "classical elements, symmetry, and restrained ornamentation."⁴⁴ These principles are employed in Cleveland School's design and exemplify the pervading style and functional ideals of the time. Hook was the architect for other schools in Johnston County including the Clayton Grammar School, and schools in Pine Level, Princeton, Glendale and Benson. As none of these schools in Johnston County remain with the exceptions of Clayton Grammar School and Cleveland School, Cleveland School is a rare surviving example of a rural consolidated school in the county, and the only one designed by Charles C. Hook.

Unfortunately, most of the 1920's school buildings in Johnston County have been destroyed, many as part of a desire in the 1990's to build newer and more modernized schools. According to a Johnston County survey of school facilities, "These old facilities have long outlasted a safe and functional existence."⁴⁵ The Cleveland School is one of only four remaining white consolidated schools in the county. There are also two known 1920's African-American schools remaining in the county. The Short Journey School, a final three-teacher Rosenwald school dating from 1923-24, is still standing. The Princeton Graded School, 1925-1926, remains as well. It was a six-teacher school, distinctive for its brick veneer exterior. Students were bused to Princeton Graded School, as were white students to the white consolidated county schools.

Most of the white consolidated schools in Johnston County have been torn down, including Micro-Pine Elementary School, Selma Elementary School, Four Oaks Middle School,

⁴⁴ Beth P. Thomas. "Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School/Municipal Auditorium," National Register nomination, 2001.

⁴⁵ "Introduction." Johnston County School Facilities Survey, Conducted by School Planning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Directed by Dr. Karen Gullede, Chief Consultant, School Planning, 1994-1995, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10
School

Cleveland

Johnston County, North Carolina

Corinth-Holder Elementary, and Princeton Elementary. According to Ann Williams in the Johnston County Superintendent's office, the only remaining historic schools are the Clayton Graded School (1915) and the Clayton Grammar School (1926) listed on the National Register in 2001, which were rehabilitated; the Smithfield Elementary School (1913), which stands empty and may be renovated by the School Board to be used as offices; and Meadow Elementary School (1924) which stands empty.⁴⁶ These schools differ from the Cleveland School because they are located in more urban locations, while Cleveland School served a larger rural population. Once Meadow School is demolished, none of the rural schools in Johnston County will remain, except Cleveland School.

The Meadow School was built in 1924 at Peacock's Crossroads in Meadow Township to serve the white student population there. Built as a three-story, red brick school with concrete coping along a parapet roofline and concrete accents, it is similar to Cleveland School in symmetry, fenestration, decoration and massing. Slightly more ornate than Cleveland School, the Meadow School will be demolished to make way for a new school in 2006.

The Clayton Graded School was constructed in 1915 as a rectangular, two-story building over a raised basement. Projecting off of the rear is a one-story gymnasium building. The nine-bay façade features projecting end bays, one-over-one windows and a projecting concrete band encircling the building above the second story windows. While similar, the façade is less ornamented than that of the Cleveland School, lacking concrete decorative elements and parapet roofline. Additionally, this school was built for a town population in 1915 and therefore is not part of the rural school consolidation programs of the 1920's.

The Clayton Grammar School was built in the same year as Cleveland School. The front auditorium block of the building is oriented on an axis perpendicular to the street, and many classrooms are housed in the rear portion of the building. The three-bay façade features a limestone frontispiece with three arches, flanked by pilasters surrounding double-leaf doors under fanlights. The second level of the façade features a closed gable accent and second story windows on side elevations feature rounded heads and are crowned with segmental arches with keystones. These elements give a distinctly Classical Revival style to the school. As with the Clayton Graded School, this school served a more urban population.

⁴⁶ Telephone interview with Ann Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities, Johnston County Department of Education, February 16, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11
School

Cleveland

Johnston County, North Carolina

The Smithfield Elementary School, c. 1913, is also different from Cleveland School in construction date, style and student body. This two-story brick school has a low-hipped roof with exposed rafter tails. The center bay has a Mission-style parapet roof and unique concrete accent over the entryway. This school had a large c. 1950 addition that changed the scale of the façade, but replicated the style and features of the original school. This school is of a different era and style than Cleveland School, and is not representative of the 1920's consolidated schools program. Additionally, it is located in downtown Smithfield, the largest town in the county, and did not serve a rural population as Cleveland School did.

Cleveland School is a rare surviving monument of the 1920's countywide school construction and consolidation movement and by next year will be the sole remaining historic consolidated school in Johnston County that served a rural community. This school is an excellent and unique example of these brick schools built in Johnston County and retains a high degree of its historic integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Bibliography

“Administrative Survey: Survey of Local School Units, Henderson-Northampton, 1935-36.” Department of Public Instruction, Division of Schoolhouse Planning.

Butchko, Tom. “Appendix B.” *The Architecture of Johnston County*. 1983.

“Cleveland 1938 class holds 50th reunion.” *The Benson Review*, November 2, 1988.

“A Cleveland mother goes ‘school shopping’.” Letter to the Editor, *The Smithfield Herald*, April 19, 1991.

“Cleveland School Promises to be a Center For All Community Activities; Patrons Much Interested.” *The Smithfield Herald*, October 22, 1926.

“Cleveland School Yearbook.” 1962.

Clifton, Larry. Interview, February 8, 2005.

“Couple Spent 72 Years in School.” *The News & Observer*. Raleigh, NC. January 23, 1949.

“Discuss Election Cleveland School, Mount Zion, Polenta, and Shiloh to Vote on Consolidation- Figures Speak for Themselves.” *The Smithfield Herald*, February 19, 1926.

Fearnbach, Heather. “Henrietta-Caroleen High School, Rutherford County.” National Register draft nomination, 2003.

“First Cleveland Graduating Class of 1931 Conducts Initial Reunion.” *The Smithfield Herald*, August 3, 1951.

“Introduction.” *Johnston County School Facilities Survey*, Conducted by School Planning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Directed by Dr. Karen Gullede, Chief Consultant, School Planning, 1994-1995.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

Jada Edmonson. "Johnston County Now the Fastest Growing County in NC." *Go Magazine*, January-February, 2005.

Johnson, Chris. Interview, February 8, 2005.

Johnson, Todd and Durwood Barbour. *Images of America: Johnston County*.

Johnston County Board of Education Minutes on Microfilm in Johnston County Room.
Smithfield Library.

Johnston County Schools Construction News. Published by the Johnston County
Schools, 2001.

Lassiter, W. *Johnston County, 1746-1996*. Smithfield, NC: 1996.

Leloudis, James L. *Schooling in the New South, Pedagogy, Self and Society in North
Carolina, 1880-1920*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996, xii.

Sanders, W.M., Jr. and G.Y. Ragsdale. *Johnston County: Economic and Social*.
Smithfield, NC, 1922.

"Schools in Years of Yore." *The Smithfield Herald*. Smithfield, NC. Friday, September
8, 1967.

"State School Facts." Volume IV, no. 21. Raleigh, NC: Published by the
Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jan. 1, 1928.

Thomas, Beth P. "Clayton Graded School and Clayton Grammar School/Municipal
Auditorium", National Register of Historic Places, 2001.

Williams, Ann, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities, Johnston County Department of
Education. Telephone interview, February 16, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Cleveland School
Johnston County, North Carolina

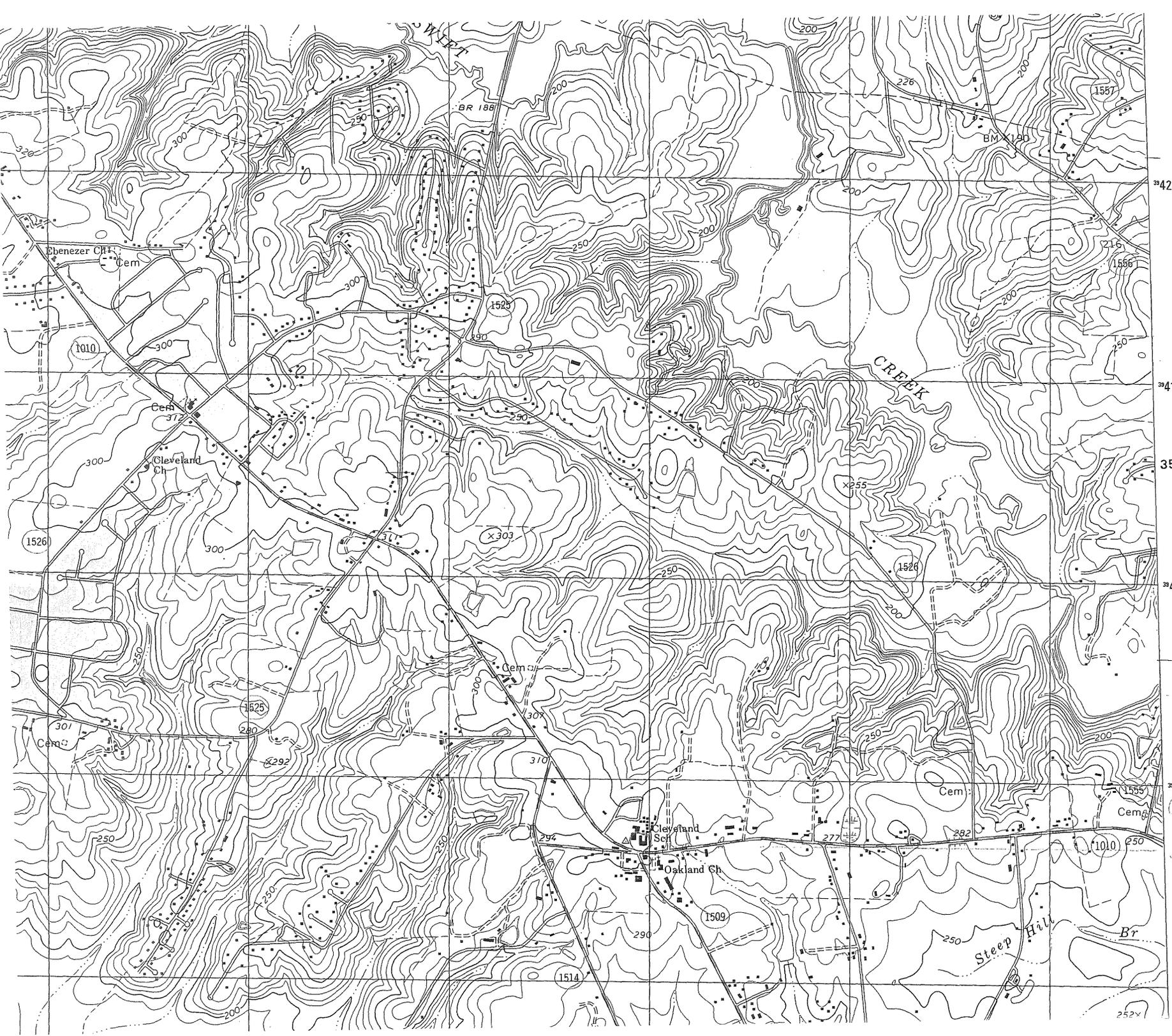
Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes approximately 2 acres identified as Johnston County tax parcel 06F04022R, and a portion of parcel 06F04012 containing the 1955 gymnasium building. The property is outlined and shown on attached tax map at a scale of one inch equals 179 feet.

Boundary Justification

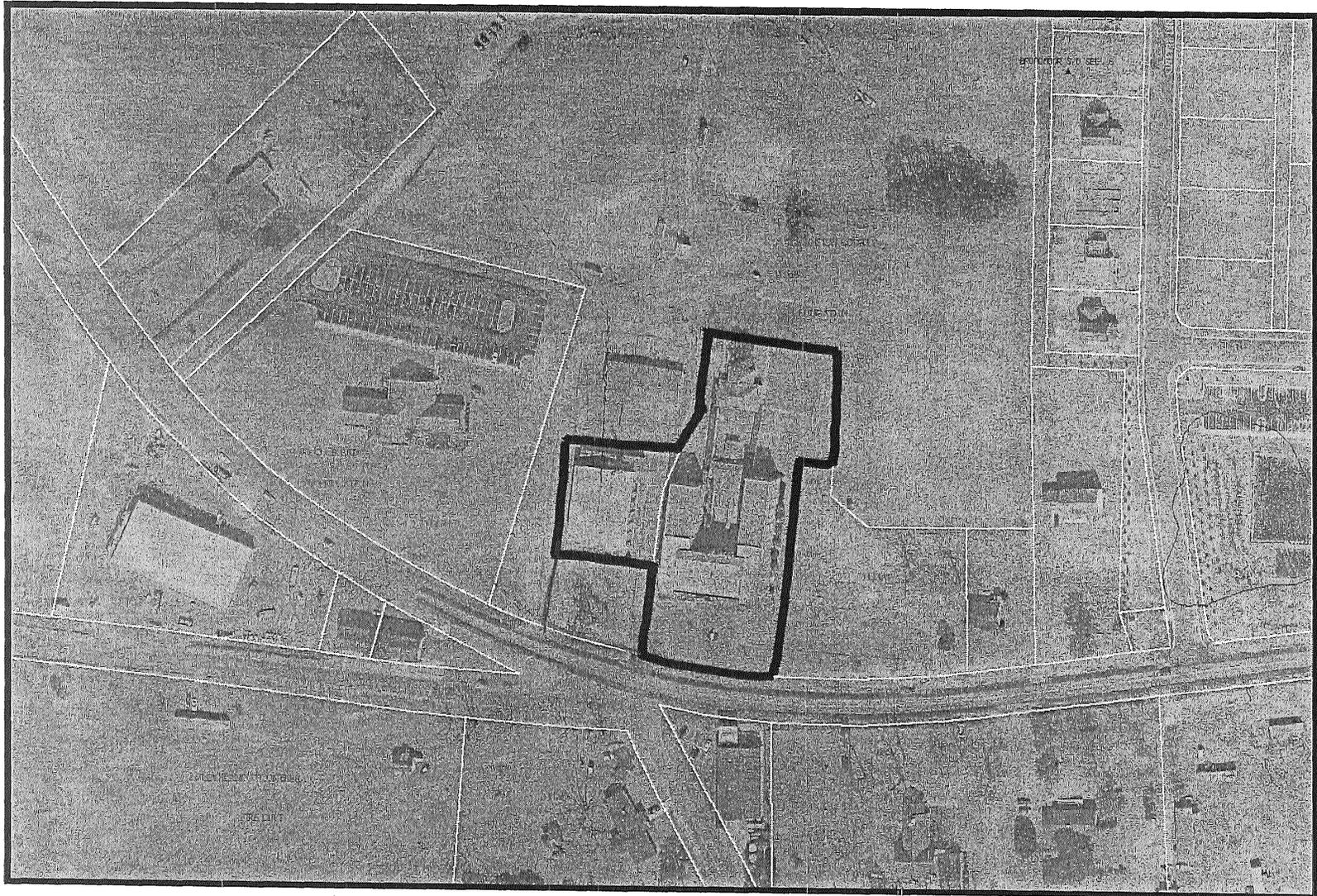
The nominated property contains the historic Cleveland School and three historic auxiliary buildings in their original setting. This includes the gymnasium, bathroom building and well house. The boundary has been drawn to exclude the 1953 agricultural building which has been significantly altered.



Cleveland
School
Johnston Co, NC
zone 17
723963E
3938700N
Edmondson Road

*** DISCLAIMER ***

Johnston County assumes no legal responsibility for the information represented here.



Scale 1 inch = 200 feet
(The scale is only accurate when printed landscape on a letter size sheet with page scaling set to none.)

Date 26-Apr-05

