

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Glencoe School**

Glencoe, Alamance County, AM1584, Listed 12/27/2010

Nomination by Heather Wagner

Photographs by Heather Wagner, March 2009



Overall view



Rear auditorium wing

**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 Glencoe School

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 2649 Union Ridge Road not for publication N/A

city or town Glencoe vicinity Burlington

state North Carolina code NC county Alamance code 001 zip code 27217

**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.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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
<u>    </u> entered in the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> See continuation sheet.		
<u>    </u> determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> See continuation sheet.		
<u>    </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u>    </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____		

Glencoe School  
Name of Property

Alamance County, North Carolina  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

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

building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

Cat: Education Sub: School

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Warehouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)  
Craftsman

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation Brick  
roof Asphalt  
walls Brick  
other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Glencoe School  
Name of Property

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

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

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1936 – 1960

**Significant Dates**

1936 – Construction Date

1951 – Cafeteria Addition

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Markley, R. R., architect

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: State Archives, Raleigh, NC

Glencoe School  
Name of Property

Alamance County, North Carolina  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 3 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 / 641800 / 4001135  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Heather M. Wagner

organization hmwPreservation date August 1, 2010

street & number 209 W. Trinity Avenue telephone 336.207.1502

city or town Durham state NC zip code 27701

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### 12. Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

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

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

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

**Property Owner**

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

name Janet Rhyne Andrews

street & number 2117 Crescent Drive telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Graham state NC zip code 27253

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

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

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Glencoe School  
Alamance County, North Carolina

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Glencoe School is located at 2649 Union Ridge Road just north of the Glencoe Mill village and approximately six miles north of Burlington, North Carolina. The school was built with Public Works Administration funds in 1936 to serve the Glencoe Mill community and nearby families, replacing an earlier frame structure. Designed by R. R. Markley and influenced by the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles, the one-story, frame school with brick veneer resembles later forms of Rosenwald schools in plan; the building has a low-pitched, hipped roof with wide overhangs and exposed rafters, decorative brick detailing, and large, multi-light windows.

Set back from Union Ridge Road about seventy feet on a slightly sloping lot, the building faces the road to the west and is roughly centered in the middle of a three-acre tract of land. Several large trees remain to the north and rear (east) of the school; the area directly in front (west) of and to the south of the school has been covered with gravel for parking, presumably when the building was converted to warehouse use. A small, one-story, front-gabled brick structure stands just south of the school. When still in use as a school, the large rear of the lot held a playground, while a ball field was located across the street to the southwest. The three-acre tract retains its rural setting with wooded land to the north and east and cleared vacant land to the south, between the school and Highway 62.

The main building, originally symmetrical in plan and elevation, is covered with brick veneer laid in a running bond. It is four bays wide with the outermost classroom bays projecting slightly and having a decorative brick panel framed by a soldier course with cement corner blocks. The two classroom bays in the center of the facade have five twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash windows, arranged in a paired-single-paired configuration. The front entrances of the building are inset into the projecting bays at either end of the facade. The recessed openings are framed by brick surrounds and have brick headers, brick walls and concrete slab floors; they are accessed by a concrete stair with pipe railings. The double-leaf metal doors have glass panes in the top half and glass-block transoms.

The twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash windows are also arranged in a paired-single-paired configuration in the classrooms on the north and south elevations of the building. An interior brick chimney rises between the two classrooms on each elevation. A pair of high, six-over-six, double-hung wood sash windows are located at the east end of the north and south elevations, marking the location of the boys and girls restrooms. On the south elevation, one of the windows in the easternmost classroom has been removed and a door with surrounding brick infill installed in its place. This metal slab door is accessed by a concrete stair. The roof overhang has been extended over the landing to shelter the door.

On the rear of the building, five double-window openings in the auditorium space have been infilled with concrete block from the exterior, though the windows remain intact and visible on the interior. An original entrance to the north hall remains on the east elevation. It contains double-leaf metal doors, without glass panes, but with a glass-block transom matching those on

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the façade of the building. The entrance is protected by a steep, shed-roofed covering and is accessed by a brick stair with concrete steps and landing and simple pipe railing.

The 1951 cafeteria addition at the south end of the rear of the building is constructed in a one-to-five common bond. It is a single bay wide and, like the main school building, is generally symmetrical in elevation. It has a smaller, six-over-six, double-hung wood sash window on the west end of the south elevation and a full-size twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash window to its right has been boarded; these windows serve the storage and kitchen areas of the addition. Opposite these windows on the north elevation is a double-leaf exterior door with glass-block transom.

The cafeteria space itself has large twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash windows arranged as single-paired-paired-paired-paired on the south elevation with the second set of paired windows removed to accommodate a loading dock when the building was converted to warehouse use. The loading dock has since been boarded over. The north elevation of the cafeteria has corresponding windows; however, one of the windows has been boarded and a chimney rises near the east end, resulting in a single, rather than paired window in the second position. A single entrance on the east wall of the cafeteria is a wooden slab door with brick header, accessed by a brick stair with concrete steps and landing.

The school's roof is an asphalt-shingled, low-pitched hipped roof with deep overhangs and exposed eaves. The end bays at the rear of the building are gabled, not hipped as they are on the front elevation. When the cafeteria was added in 1951, a parapet wall topped by a concrete cap was built up between the original building and the addition. The addition has a gable-on-hip roof that abuts the parapet and matches the slope of the main roof with a louvered vent in the gable. The overhang and eave details of the addition were carefully constructed to match the existing roof. While the initial proposal for construction called for a tin roof, it is unclear whether it was constructed with said tin roof and replaced later, or if the roof was always of shingle construction. The roof is in poor condition and portions have been replaced already.

The main block of the one-story brick structure measures approximately 70' by 150'; a 30' by 84' rear ell was added to the south end of the rear elevation in 1951 to house a kitchen and cafeteria. The main block of the school contains six classrooms, a boys' and a girls' bathroom, a series of small offices, two additional restrooms (constructed later), and a large central auditorium space. Two parallel hallways run from the entrances at the front of the school to another set of entrances at the rear. A third hallway runs perpendicular to these, connecting them to form an "H" shape. Along these three hallways are arranged the classrooms, two each on the north side, the south side, and along the front (west) elevation. The large auditorium space rests on the rear of the school, within the "H" created by the hallways. Just west of the auditorium, between the auditorium and the hallway, are a series of five small rooms, approximately 7' wide; these rooms were likely originally offices for the school, but are now storage spaces and two additional

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restrooms (added in 1962 when the auditorium was bisected into classrooms). The hallway on the south side of the school extends into the 1951 addition, past the kitchen and storage spaces, terminating in the large cafeteria space.

The interior of the structure retains its original layout and many architectural details, including maple floors and sanded plaster walls throughout. The building has approximate twelve-foot ceilings throughout with higher ceilings in the auditorium space; all ceilings have been covered with stick-on ceiling tiles over the original plaster. The building is simple in detail with two-part wood baseboards and flat wood door and window surrounds. Each classroom has a framed chalkboard with corkboard above. Interior doors are two-panel solid wood doors. Doors from the hallway to classroom spaces are nine-light-over-two- or three-panel doors with starburst-pattern pressed-glass panels and three-light transoms above. "Windows" have been added between the hallway and classrooms on the south end of the school and the wall between the two southernmost classrooms has been partially removed.

Details in the auditorium are more formal with pilasters along the east wall, as well as decorative baseboards and a small crown molding that was installed below the ceiling tiles. A wall erected down the center of the auditorium to divide it into classrooms in 1962 has been removed, but chalkboard/corkboards remain at each end of the space. A small temporary room has been created in the northwest corner of the auditorium.

The cafeteria, completed in 1951, has simpler finishes than the rest of the building. Floors in the cafeteria and kitchen spaces have vinyl tile and the ceiling tiles are failing on the south end of the cafeteria due to water damage from a leaking roof. A wood chair rail extends around the cafeteria, contiguous with the windowsills. It is applied directly over the brick, which has been painted rather than coated with plaster. Baseboards and a small crown molding are present in the cafeteria.

A small, one-story front-gabled brick building stands south of the school. This building was likely constructed as part of the 1951 improvements to the main building and probably housed mechanical equipment for the school. It is approximately six feet by ten feet and features one-to-five common bond brick and a low-gabled roof with exposed rafters. The building has a single access door on the west side.

The Glencoe School has experienced alterations since construction, but the changes have not significantly diminished the overall integrity of the structure. Exterior alterations include the infilling of the auditorium windows at the rear of the building with concrete block (though the windows remain behind the block) and the addition of a pedestrian entrance and loading dock in place of two windows on the south elevation.



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Inside, the layout of the rooms remains intact, though several “windows” have been created between the hallway and classroom spaces. Additionally, a small room has been constructed in the northwest corner of the auditorium. However, all of the alterations can be reversed and do not notably affect the overall integrity and readability of the spaces.

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Glencoe School is locally significant and meets National Register Criterion A for its role in the history of education in Alamance County and under Criterion C for its architecture. The building, erected in 1936 with Public Works Administration funds, retains a high level of architectural integrity and appears to be the only remaining rural brick school in the county. With Craftsman- and Colonial Revival-influenced details, Glencoe School illustrates a national style and architectural movement in the context of a rural community in the Depression-era twentieth century. The period of significance extends from the school's construction in 1936 to 1960. While the school remained in use until 1963, its use after 1960 is not of exceptional significance and does not meet Criterion Consideration G.

**Alamance County, the Holt Family, and Glencoe Mill**

The earliest settlers to Alamance County in the late 1600s were drawn by the fertile farmlands that existed around the Haw River. The geography had much to do with the further economic development of the county in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the rolling terrain along the Haw River and its tributaries provided ample sites for the construction of dams and saw- and grist-mills. By the mid-nineteenth century, the economy of the county had begun to shift toward the processing of cotton and the manufacture of cloth. The falls along the Haw River were still used to power these factories.

Edwin M. Holt, a pioneer of the textile industry, established his first mill on Great Alamance Creek in 1837. From there, Holt and his seven sons and fifteen grandsons established an empire centered in Alamance County. In 1880, the Holt's controlled four of the six mills in Alamance County.<sup>1</sup> The industry continued to grow and by 1890, the economies of the Carolinas were dependant on cotton and Alamance County was the leading producer of cotton in the state, with seventeen cotton mills. Edwin Holt continued to dominate the industry, due in part to innovations in weaving and dyeing; he learned dyeing techniques from a Frenchman and became the first power loom manufacturer of plaid or colored cotton fabrics in the South. By 1919, the Holt family controlled twenty-three of twenty-seven mills in Alamance County.<sup>2</sup>

Glencoe Mill was erected by the Holt family between 1880 and 1882. Soon after the construction of the Carolina Mill on the Haw River in 1869, the family began purchasing land just upriver. The Glencoe Mill complex sat on a 105-acre site on the Haw River that was originally home to a gristmill and saw mill. The new mill, operated by sons James H. and William E. Holt, was the last of the water-powered cotton mills to be constructed in the county; the Holt family proceeded to build three steam-powered plants in the next three years. Glencoe Mill produced napped cotton cloth, flannels and woven plaids. Glencoe became known for its plaids and the "Alamance Plaids" and "Alamance Gingham" were widely distributed.

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<sup>1</sup> Troxler, Carole Watterson and William Murray Vincent. Shuttle & Plow: A History of Alamance County, North Carolina. North Carolina: Alamance County Historical Association, 1999, pg. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Troxler, pg. 351.

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The early twentieth-century proved a time of growth for Glencoe Mill. In the 1930s, the mill equipment was converted to electric power. In the 1940s and early 1950s, upgrades included the re-building of the dam on the Haw River and an addition to the main mill building. However, the capital upgrades could not keep pace with equipment upgrades in other mills that were making looms more efficient and printed plaids the norm over woven plaids. Additionally, large textile companies were beginning to buy up smaller mills, creating streamlined, well-organized competition for Holt's independent mills. By 1954, the "economies of scale and the lack of ample resources to adopt new technology, such as cloth printing," drove Glencoe Mill out of business.<sup>3</sup> The mill buildings remained in use, housing storage, warehouse, and small manufacturing space throughout the twentieth century, though the demand for on-site mill workers had evaporated and the mill village was soon all but abandoned.

The Holt family was known for more than just their fabrics, they were community leaders and advocates for education. The best example of this was Thomas M. Holt, the second of Edwin M. Holt's sons, who left the fabric business to pursue a life in politics and public service. An early partner with his father, Thomas was active in the running of Trollinger Mills and Granite Mill in the 1860s and 1870s, but soon became more interested in politics and public service work.<sup>4</sup> In 1876, he was elected to the county commission and worked for agricultural reform and free public education. He was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1883, and was elected Speaker of the House in 1885.<sup>5</sup> He also served as governor of North Carolina from 1891 to 1893, continuing his support of public education, including that for the deaf, as well as for better working conditions and shortened hours for mill workers.<sup>6</sup> The continued dedication of the Holt family to education in Alamance County is evident in the naming of the E. M. Holt School District in the early 1920s and the construction of the Edwin M. Holt High School in 1927, which was erected on thirty acres of land purchased by descendants of the Holt family.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, the first Glencoe School was constructed by the Holt family to serve the children of their employees at Glencoe Mill. According to the website for the Textile Heritage Museum (located at Glencoe Mill), "James Holt required the children of the village to attend school a given number of months each year before allowing them to work in the mill. Glencoe was the first mill in North Carolina to require children to attend school."<sup>8</sup> As early as 1880, the mill provided a three-room structure at the northern end of Glencoe Street for the children to attend

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<sup>3</sup> Troxler, pg. 364.

<sup>4</sup> Knauff, Gail and Bob. Fabric of a Community: The Story of Haw River, North Carolina. Haw River Historical Association, 1996, pg. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Knauff, pg. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Knauff, pg. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Euliss, Elinor Samons (ed.). Alamance County: The Legacy of its People and Places. Greensboro, N.C.: Legacy Publications, 1984, pg. 516.

<sup>8</sup> Textile Heritage Museum website. [www.textileheritagemuseum.org/history.html](http://www.textileheritagemuseum.org/history.html). 1 July 2009.

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school from the first through eighth grades.<sup>9</sup> In 1933, the original frame Glencoe School was one of 116 white elementary schools in the county and had a staff of three teachers assigned to it.<sup>10</sup> However, what had begun as a two- or three-room school had, by 1935, outgrown its walls.

**Education and the Public Works Administration**

The 1920s and 1930s were a time of consolidation and regulation in North Carolina schools. “In 1927, the E. M. Holt School District was established by the consolidation of Friendship, Belmont, Glencoe, Shoffner, New Hope, Eldermont, Cross Roads, and part of Oakdale School.”<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the Graham, Haw River, and Mebane school districts, which operated independently until 1933, were consolidated into a single county-wide school district that year.<sup>12</sup> Glencoe School, however, remained part of a rural district with Midway School and Pleasant Grove School through the 1940s. Nevertheless, the consolidation and re-organization of schools and school districts was, no doubt, the impetus for the improvement and re-construction of a number of the rural schools in the 1930s.

The re-organization of schools as well as new legislation requiring attendance and providing supplies did much to change the educational climate in North Carolina in the 1930s. Prior to the Great Depression, schools were generally locally controlled and funded. However, the School Machinery Act of 1933 established the county as the basic governmental unit for operating public schools and provided state funds for the public schools.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, in 1933 the school year was expanded from six to eight months, and by 1935 the General Assembly supported the provision of textbooks, free of charge, to grades one through seven. School populations grew significantly in the 1930s; Principal’s Reports from Alamance County schools from 1933-34 and 1935-36 show overcrowding in the schools and shortages of teachers for nearly every school that reported.

By the mid-1930s, Roosevelt’s New Deal programs would begin to aid state and local governments in the construction of new schools. Created under the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, the Public Works Administration (PWA) was given the task of “expanding federally sponsored public works projects in order to provide employment and stimulate the economy.”<sup>14</sup> Unlike the more well-known Works Progress Administration (WPA) of 1935, the PWA focused on large-scale public works projects including dams, bridges, schools, hospitals, airports, and

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<sup>9</sup> Textile Heritage Museum.

<sup>10</sup> “County Schools Will Open Monday with 208 Teachers.” Burlington Times-News. 13 September 1933.

<sup>11</sup> Whitaker, Walter. Centennial History of Alamance County, 1849-1949. Burlington, NC: Burlington Chamber of Commerce, 1949, pg. 207.

<sup>12</sup> Whitaker, pg. 206.

<sup>13</sup> Ward, Michael E. “History of Education in North Carolina.” Raleigh: State Historic Preservation Office, pg. 7.

<sup>14</sup> McElvaine, Robert S. The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1984, pg. 152.

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warships for the Navy. The PWA functioned primarily by making loans and grants to state and other public bodies, requiring 55% contribution of the cost from state or local sponsors.<sup>15</sup> (The WPA required no matching funds.) Finally, the PWA did not hire directly from unemployment rolls, but instead contracted with private construction companies hired on the open market, making it the less controversial of the two programs with conservative voters.

The Public Works Administration was a primary weapon against the Depression and was responsible for the creation of 70% of the new educational buildings in the U.S. between 1933 and 1939.<sup>16</sup> Most of the spending came in two waves in 1933-35 and in 1938. In 1933-34 alone, the PWA appropriated \$3.3 billion for new building projects.<sup>17</sup> Schools accounted for only 14% of PWA spending, but by the programs end in 1939, 7,488 schools had been built. Harold Ickes, Director of the PWA wrote: "School buildings erected as part of the program dot the map from the small town of Whitefield in northern New Hampshire to Honolulu, Hawaii, and from far northern villages in Alaska to the tropical Canal Zone. In size they range from a tiny country school of the Prairie Creek Common School District in Van Zandt County, Texas, costing \$2,695, to the huge \$2,250,000 Bayside High School of New York City."<sup>18</sup>

Glencoe School was one of three new schools erected in Alamance County with PWA funds; fourteen additional schools would receive additions and alterations with the funds in the late 1930s. A letter from W. P. Credle, Director of Schoolhouse Planning for North Carolina, in the spring of 1936, certifies the design of Glencoe School, Mebane Colored School, and Haw River School by the state's Department of Public Instruction. According to the letter, these schools along with alterations and additions to fourteen other schools were being financed with proceeds of a loan and grant with the Public Works Administration.<sup>19</sup>

**Glencoe School History**

In December of 1935, the Alamance County Board of Education called for bids to erect a new Glencoe School to replace the earlier Glencoe School built by the Holt family. The announcement indicated that the school should be "a six-room building for white children approximately six miles north of Burlington at the site of the present Glencoe School. The building to be one-story high, brick foundation, brick veneer walls above floor joists and tin

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor, Nick. *American Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2008, pg. 173.

<sup>16</sup> McElvaine, pg. 152.

<sup>17</sup> McElvaine, pg. 152.

<sup>18</sup> Leuchtenburg, William E. *The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and His Legacy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pg. 258.

<sup>19</sup> Division of Schoolhouse Planning. *Director of Schoolhouse Planning Correspondence*. Department of Public Instruction. Raleigh: State Archives Research Room.

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roof.”<sup>20</sup> Correspondence in August of 1935 between W. P. Credle and M. E. Yount, Superintendent of Alamance County Schools, contains discussion about room sizes in architect R. R. Markley’s plan for Glencoe School and Mebane Colored School, which were to be of the same design, encouraging the classrooms to be enlarged from 21’ x 28’ to 22’ x 34’. However, by November of the same year, after receiving bids for the school construction, the projects were significantly over-budget and it was decided that the classrooms should be built to their original dimensions.<sup>21</sup> Contracts were awarded by January of 1936, with C. H. Bright of Burlington receiving the \$17, 237 contract to erect Glencoe School.<sup>22</sup>

Glencoe School was completed in 1936 and became part of the county-wide school system; it was one of six new schools that submitted Principal’s Reports for the 1936-37 school year. The others included Bethany, Eli Whitney, Eureka, Midway, and Saxapahaw schools, though none of these schools were included in the list of PWA-funded projects. Like Glencoe School, Midway School was built predominantly for the children of millworkers; the 1936-37 Principal’s Report notes that there was no active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) as so many of the parents worked in the mills.

The school opened in the fall of 1936 with 137 students in grades one through seven. While erected as a county school, Glencoe School appears to have been attended primarily by the children of mill-workers at Glencoe Mill. However, it is likely that there were students from throughout the rural area surrounding Glencoe Mill and that attendance was not limited to mill children.

While the school was built with six classrooms, only four were used the first year, with each room serving two grades (the fourth grade class was split between two rooms). Enrollments remained steady in the early years, with 114 students led by four teachers in 1940-41. By 1946, enrollment had grown to a high of 157 students with five instructors, but by 1947-48 school population had dipped to 147 students and, once again, was served by only four teachers. In 1949-50, the last year for which principal’s reports are available, the school had an enrollment of 132 students and was served by four teachers.

The curriculum at Glencoe School was regulated by the State Department of Public Instruction and extra-curricular activities were typical of rural schools. In 1940-41, courses taught included reading, language, spelling, writing, arithmetic, health, art, music, and science for all grades; grades two through seven also received instruction in history and geography. By 1947-48,

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<sup>20</sup> “Commissioners Will Receive Bids for Three Mores School Building Projects in County.” Burlington Times-News. 31 December 1935.

<sup>21</sup> Division of Schoolhouse Planning.

<sup>22</sup> “School Expansion Program in County will Provide a Total of 83 New Class Rooms.” Burlington Times-News. 15 January 1936.

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principal's reports indicate that art and music instruction were needed, a deficiency that remained through 1950. Classroom clubs were in place by 1946 and a 4-H Club and Audubon Bird Club were based at the school by 1947 and 1949, respectively.

The school facilities and programs grew throughout the 1940s and early 1950s. In 1940-41, the principal's report indicates that the grounds were being improved and library and supplementary reader numbers had increased. By 1946-47, the playground had been cleared of undesirable trees and vegetation, the grounds leveled, and a semi-circular gravel driveway constructed at the front (west) end of the building. The following year, plans were underway for securing some playground apparatus and for increasing the lunch program. The 1948-49 principal's report notes that playground equipment has been installed and a basketball court made. The lunch program continued to be expanded with new kitchen equipment provided by the PTA. By 1951, a cafeteria addition designed by R. R. Markley was added to the school that included a lunchroom, kitchen, storage room, toilet, corridor, boiler room and fuel room, as well as some unnamed alterations to the existing building.<sup>23</sup>

The number of students at Glencoe School began to decline with the closing of Glencoe Mill in 1954. By 1957, Glencoe School had two empty classrooms, but received a boost in enrollment when students from Midway School were transferred to Glencoe beginning with the 1957-58 school year. Enrollment at Midway School, an older, frame structure had dropped to a projected 46 students and two teachers for the 1957-58 school year. Thus, in August of 1957, the Alamance County School system announced that Midway School would close and students would be bussed to the larger, brick Glencoe School.<sup>24</sup>

As the population of the Glencoe Mill village declined and the county continued the process of consolidating schools, Glencoe School began to feel pressure to close. In 1962, the number of students at Glencoe School was 127 pupils in grades one through seven, lead by five teachers. At that time, the Alamance County Board of Education began to debate whether to improve or close Glencoe School, holding a series of meetings on the issue in the spring of 1962.<sup>25</sup> Residents weighed in heavily on the issue, establishing the Glencoe School Committee, which lobbied the school board for "a local committee, established school district boundaries, and a teacher for each grade."<sup>26</sup>

The school remained open for the 1962-63 school year and during that year, interior and exterior painting was done, the auditorium space was divided into two classroom spaces, and two new

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<sup>23</sup> "Notice to Contractors: Advertisement." Burlington Times-News. 7 February 1951.

<sup>24</sup> "Midway School to be Closed for Next Year." Burlington Times-News. 14 August 1957.

<sup>25</sup> "Glencoe School Move Scheduled." Burlington Times-News. 5 March 1962. [Glencoe Move]

<sup>26</sup> "School Unit Cites Stand on Issues." Burlington Times-News. 3 April 1962.

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restrooms were installed in the office spaces between the auditorium and hall.<sup>27</sup> Glencoe residents were happy with the improvements and optimistic for the future of their school. However, by May of 1963, the school board was once again debating the closure of Glencoe School. A twenty-cent tax increase that would have funded improvements to the schools failed to pass. As a result, Glencoe School, along with the Green Level and Saxapahaw schools, was slated to be closed.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the state allotment of teachers necessitated the combination of grades at Glencoe School into only four classrooms. Residents once again voiced their disapproval over closing the school, but the School Board indicated that the education of the children and the economics of the school district would be best served by the closures. Beginning with the 1963-64 school year, Glencoe students were transferred to Altamahaw-Ossipee School.

In the years after its closure, Glencoe School served as administrative offices for the County Board of Education. Though it is unclear exactly when the county moved in, by 1967, they were once again seeking new accommodations within the county. By July of 1974, the county listed the Glencoe School property for sale. After its sale, the building was home to a Flea Market and Auction House in the late 1970s and is currently used as warehouse space.

**Architectural Context**

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, rural brick schoolhouses were relatively rare in Alamance County. However, by the early 1920s school districts and county residents had begun to replace smaller frame buildings throughout the state. “The replacement of former frame one-room schoolhouses with more permanent and stylish brick school buildings denoted the increasing commitment by the county and the state to provide a quality public education.”<sup>29</sup> Brick was used in the majority of these new schools; it was regarded as a desirable building material for a number of reasons, including its low maintenance, fireproof nature, and the clay-rich soil of the Piedmont was conducive to brick-making.<sup>30</sup>

The state’s Division of Schoolhouse Planning was established in 1920 to aid local school boards in selecting sites, plans, and designs for their modern schools. Many of the school designs were born of the necessities and challenges that rural schools presented. Large windows lined the school buildings, providing much-needed light and the height of ceilings and the location and placement of blackboards, desks, and other classroom features were such to maximize the effects of daylight. The school designs provided directions indicating how the building should be sited, so that classrooms received east or west light in order to maximize this effect. Additionally,

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<sup>27</sup> “Consolidated Units Highlight County School Activity.” *Burlington Times-News*. 4 February 1963.

<sup>28</sup> “Protest is Voiced Over School Issue.” *Burlington Times-News*. 31 May 1963.

<sup>29</sup> “Bear Grass School.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2005, pg. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Sullivan, Patricia A. North Carolina Public Schools Pre-1941. Thematic National Register Nomination. 1989, pg. 1.



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seeing the need for formal places for the community to gather, the schools often included a meeting space or auditorium separate from the classrooms.<sup>31</sup>

Recommendations from the Division of Schoolhouse Planning and the publication of school plan books in the 1920s led to noticeable similarities in rural school architecture. Pulling their sparse details from the Mission and Colonial Revival styles that were dominating residential architecture at the time, the simplicity of school architecture denoted order, rationality, and functionalism. These styles were easily adaptable to the smaller-scale, one-story schools that were constructed in rural North Carolina; whereas, two-story, urban schools in the state tended to be built in the Colonial Revival style.<sup>32</sup> The hip-roofed Glencoe School, with minimal Craftsman-influenced details, features a brick veneer and wide banks of double-hung windows. Additionally, the layout of the building, with a central auditorium flanked by corridors of classrooms is strikingly similar to the five- and six-teacher Community School Plans published by the Rosenwald Fund.

Glencoe School is significant as a rare example of a rural, brick school in Alamance County. Constructed in 1936, during a period of significant growth and reorganization in the Alamance County school system, the school was part of a larger Public Works Administration building campaign. Of the three schools in Alamance County erected with PWA funds, it is the only school that remains, retaining its original U-shaped form and nearly all of its historic finishes and architectural details including a low-pitched, hipped roof with wide overhangs and exposed rafters, decorative brick detailing, and large, multi-light windows. The wide overhanging eaves helped to shade the classrooms and the large windows took advantage of natural light and cooling breezes. It has been converted to warehouse space, but the original layout and Craftsman-influenced details remain.

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<sup>31</sup> "Bear Grass School," pg. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Sullivan, pg. 2-3.

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**Section 10 – Geographic Data**

Verbal Boundary Description –

See attached tax ID map at a scale of 1" = 200' for parcel no. 8877 42 9532.

Boundary Justification –

The boundary includes the three acres that were historically associated with the Glencoe School. The site provides an appropriate historic setting for the school and utility building.

**Photographs**

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: Heather M. Wagner

Date: 2009

Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina

1. Glencoe School, exterior facing northeast
2. Glencoe School, exterior facing southeast
3. Glencoe School, exterior facing south
4. Glencoe School, exterior facing south
5. Glencoe School, exterior facing west
6. Glencoe School, exterior facing northeast
7. Glencoe School, entrance detail
8. Glencoe School, typical classroom facing southwest
9. Glencoe School, typical hallway facing north
10. Glencoe School, typical classroom facing northwest
11. Glencoe School, auditorium facing northeast
12. Glencoe School, cafeteria facing east
13. Glencoe School, mechanical building facing north