

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Ware Creek School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number E. side of SR 1103, 0.3 mi. SE. of jct. with SR 1112 ^{N/A} not for publication

city or town Blounts Creek vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Beaufort code _____ zip code 27814

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crow SHPD 10/16/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Ware Creek School
Name of Property

Beaufort County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Tin

other Wood

Brick

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 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)

- Ethnic Heritage: African American
- Education
- Architecture
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1921-1946

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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:

Ware Creek School
Name of Property

Beaufort County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	118	324000	3921140
	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 Tom Hanchett/North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

organization Youngstown State University date Sept. 4, 1996

street & number One University Plaza telephone _____

city or town Youngstown state Ohio zip code 44555

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Ware Creek Community Development Program, Inc.

street & number Rt. 1, Box 195A telephone 919/946-2141

city or town Blounts Creek state NC zip code 27814

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 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 Projects (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

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The site

Ware Creek School stands in the rural district known as Blount's Creek, to the south of the Pamlico River eighteen miles southeast of the county seat of Washington in coastal Beaufort County, North Carolina. The building is part of an isolated African American hamlet on Maul's Point Road (county route 1103) just south of its intersection with Mouth of the Creek Road (county route 1112). Within sight of the school are the 1909 brick Ware Creek Missionary Baptist Church, four small one-story frame houses that appear to date from the early twentieth century, and a simple two-story concrete block structure built as a Masonic Lodge. Trees and brush dominate the landscape, whose flatness indicates its close proximity to Pamlico Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

The school property includes just over one acre of ground. The building is sited with the points of the compass as dictated by the Rosenwald Fund. The long front facade faces west, while the rear bank of classroom windows faces east. A small front yard with a dirt driveway and a small concrete block utility structure separates the school from Maul's Point Road. Behind the building is a larger yard once used for playground and ball field, but now mostly covered by overgrowth. The school property includes no significant old plantings or other landscape features.

The building

The Ware Creek School building is a rectangular one-story structure with three projecting front pavilions. The main block of the building consists of three classrooms set side-by-side, under a hipped roof. Forward from the main block, there projects a central "industrial classroom" under a gable roof, flanked by two smaller cloakroom projections. Stylistically the exterior is a functional looking symmetrical composition of clapboard with large wooden windows, exhibiting Craftsman influence that is decorated with curved decorative brackets under the front gable eave. The structure has experienced very little change over the years.

Funded in 1919 and dedicated in 1921, the building represents an interesting variation on plans subsequently published by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. It closely resembles the Fund's popular design for a "Two Teacher Community School to Face East or West" (see Exhibits A and B of this Nomination) -- except that the Ware Creek School features three, rather than two, main classrooms.

The foundation of the Ware Creek School consists of brick piers with open space between, a common building practice until recently in this part of North Carolina. The red brick piers, spaced regularly at intervals of approximately ten feet, raise the floor of the building about three feet above the ground. Set into the front of the northwest corner pier is a small marble plaque inscribed:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetWare Creek School
Beaufort County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 2WARE CREEK
ROSENWALD
School Building
1921

Above the open foundation, exterior walls are sheathed in clapboards, with simple cornerboards and similar simple window surrounds and door surrounds. The building's two front porches are inset on either side of the projecting gabled "industrial classroom," and are sheltered under the hip roof of the main block. Stairs of concrete block, not original to the building, lead up to the porches. Within the porches, building walls shift to horizontally grooved "german" siding. The southern porch has a single door at its rear, opening directly into one of the main classrooms. The northern porch has a similar rear door, plus a side door opening into the "industrial classroom," and another side door opening into one of the cloakrooms. All doors consist of five horizontal panels, and appear to be either original to the building or of like vintage.

Abundant natural light was a major concern in the design of Rosenwald schools, and the results can be seen in the big banks of 6-over-6 pane double-hung sash windows that form much of the front and rear facades of the building. The rear facade has three groups of windows -- four in row, then six in a row, then another six in a row -- corresponding to the three main classrooms inside the building. To the south of each group there was originally an exterior chimney. The two southern-most chimneys have been removed, leaving gaps in the clapboard, while the third chimney has been removed and replaced with one of concrete block. On the front facade, the "industrial classroom" features four more of the big 6-over-6 units: a group of three, then a single one. Each cloakroom has a pair of 6-pane single sash windows. In contrast to the abundant fenestration on the back and front of the building, the north and south end facades have no windows at all.

The main block of the School has a hip roof covered with standing-seam sheet metal. Eaves extend outward from the building a couple of feet on the side and rear facades and show exposed rafters. At the front of the building, a gable roof sheathed with the same metal covers the "industrial classroom." A small red brick chimney rises from the center of the roof where the hip and gable ridgelines meet. The gable's eaves project perhaps four feet forward from the wall plane and are supported by scroll-sawn wooden brackets -- a modest decorative touch on a building which otherwise strives to put function ahead of fashion.

Only minor changes have affected the exterior of the Ware Creek School. In the front, an aluminum screen door has been added to the southern entrance, and some exterior piping betrays the fact that one cloakroom has been converted to restrooms. In the rear, the three original chimney stacks have been removed. Otherwise, the building appears just as it did when it was dedicated in 1921.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetWare Creek School
Beaufort County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 3

The interior of the Ware Creek School likewise retains its original layout and nearly all of its original detailing. Rosenwald Fund administrators sought to create efficient designs that would minimize building cost and maximize natural light. The Ware Creek School has no corridors or other "wasted" space. The building's rooms are plainly finished, but quite pleasing in their thoughtful utilitarianism.

The three main classrooms sit side-by-side across the back of the building. Each is lit by a big bank of windows in the east wall, and the window height and floor area are carefully proportioned so that all parts of the room receive ample illumination. Each classroom has one blackboard on the west wall opposite the windows. Walls and ceilings are finished in horizontally grooved "german" boarding. Windows and doors have wide surrounds with a raised lip. There is no mopboard and no wainscoting, but a wainscot is demarcated in paint, likely a continuation of original practice. Floors are varnished wooden planks. Between the classrooms there are not solid walls, but rather large doorways -- a key feature of all Rosenwald Fund schools of the 1920s. Hinged banks of five-panel doors fill these openings. During classtime the doors stayed closed. For school-wide assemblies or community gatherings the doors could be opened, throwing all three classrooms together to create one large hall.

Off the southern-most and northern-most classrooms, doors lead to the two front cloakrooms. Cloakrooms were a standard feature of Rosenwald plans, intended to encourage students and teachers to stow belongings and create an orderly classroom.

Off the center classroom, two doors lead into the front "industrial classroom." This space also comprised an important part of the Rosenwald philosophy; in keeping with the teachings of noted black educator Booker T. Washington, "industrial rooms" were included in all Rosenwald plans as places for vocational training. Interviews with alumni at Ware Creek, as at other Rosenwald Schools, indicates that no such training took place since county school boards showed no interest in putting up the necessary funds. Instead, the "industrial room" became an auxiliary classroom and lunchroom. At Ware Creek, a partition divides this area into two spaces, the smaller of which likely functioned as a cloakroom.

The interior of the Ware Creek School has witnessed remarkably few changes. The southern cloakroom is said to have originally held a rudimentary indoor plumbing system; this no longer exists. The northern cloakroom has recently been fitted out as two restrooms, with minimal disturbance of the original walls or floors. In the "industrial classroom," part of the cloakroom partition has been removed and a small stove and sink have been installed. In the main classrooms, close examination of the folding doors indicates that the units have been rehung, and a raised stage has been built in the southern-most room. These minor alterations make little impact on the over-all flavor of the interior. Inside, as well as out, the Ware Creek School looks very much as its designers conceived it.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Ware Creek School is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A: Education and Black Ethnic Heritage, and Criterion C: Architecture. Funded in 1919 and dedicated in 1921, the structure served for more than thirty years as an African American elementary school and community center for a large portion of rural Beaufort County, North Carolina. The building is an exceptionally intact, well-preserved example of the Rosenwald Schools built for African American children throughout the South in the early twentieth century. Some construction money came from the county school board, but much was donated by black private citizens and by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The Fund, established by the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company to aid efforts to educate Southern black children, also provided state-of-the-art standardized plans for the structures it funded. Ware Creek School is a one story, hip- and gable-roofed frame building closely related to the design entitled "Two Teacher Community School, to Face East or West Only," published in the Fund's leaflets and pattern books beginning in 1921. Evidence suggests that the Ware Creek School may have been built as an experimental prototype during development of the Rosenwald Fund's standardized designs. Since the school closed in 1952 the facility has continued in use as a community center, operated by descendants of its original builders. The structure remains almost exactly as constructed, with only the most minor cosmetic changes.

Ware Creek School is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history in the areas of education and black ethnic heritage in Beaufort County. In operation as a public school from 1921 to 1952, Ware Creek School functioned not only as an educational hub, but also as a community center for black citizens in the Blount's Creek section of Beaufort County. It stands as a reminder of the racially segregated system of education in the South, which continued well into the 1960s. It also symbolizes local and national philanthropic efforts to improve education for black Americans under that system; funds for the structure were raised by the local black community and supplemented by Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. The period of significance begins in 1921, the year the building was formally dedicated and placed in operation, and ends in 1946, which meets the fifty year criterion.

Historical Context Statement Criterion A: African American Heritage and Education

Beaufort County is a rural county straddling the broad Pamlico River in eastern North Carolina, at the point where the river flows into the Pamlico Sound of the Atlantic Ocean. In 1990 the total county population was just 42,219 people, 13,194 of them African Americans.¹ Outside its courthouse town of Washington (1990 population 9,075) the area has experienced little urban development. For most of the past century residents have pieced together livelihoods through combinations of small farming, fishing, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetWare Creek School
Beaufort County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 2

"public work" in town. Numerous creeks and inlets divide the flat landscape into a series of rural communities, including the Blount's Creek community served by the Ware Creek School.

As elsewhere in the South, public education came slowly to Beaufort County for whites and even more slowly for blacks. The first halting step had taken place back in 1839 when the state legislature suggested that counties establish schools for white children, and set up a Literary Fund to provide small amounts of money to assist localities in the task.² For black children, however, state law specifically prohibited education during the slavery era before the Civil War. After the War, the new Republican Party made the first concerted effort to bring schooling to all North Carolinians, black and white. The Constitution of 1868 mandated free schools for all children ages six to twenty-one. But as old-line Democrats regained control of state and local government following Reconstruction, they often refused to appropriate money to obey the provisions of the Constitution.³ In Beaufort County, education reverted to private academies. During the last years of the nineteenth century, an African American teacher named Maria Williams operated one such school for black children in her home at Fourth and Respress streets in Washington, at a fee of ten cents per week for each student.⁴

A true public school system arrived in Beaufort County during the 1890s. Part of the impetus came from the nationwide "Progressive" movement. Progressive reformers recognized that America's growing industrial economy was bringing changes in all parts of society, and they urged that all citizens -- even the poorest and most rural -- should be educated in order to become efficient participants in that economy. Another important impetus for education came from within the rural South. During the 1890s, white and black farmers organized themselves into the influential, though short-lived, Populist Party. Better education for farmers became a Populist rallying cry, and it proved so popular with voters that Democrats soon took it up as well, particularly under North Carolina's celebrated "education governor" Charles B. Aycock (served 1901 - 1905).⁵ In Beaufort County, a white public school opened at Washington in 1890. In 1897, during the height of Populist influence, local black and white citizens joined hands to create a county-wide School Board, which established facilities for both races.⁶

Despite this new public commitment, schooling in rural sections of Beaufort County, as elsewhere in North Carolina, remained rudimentary. Schools were mostly one-room affairs, operating only during the weeks when children were not needed for farm chores. For black children, facilities were especially lacking. With the collapse of Populism in 1900, white Democrats had added a "disfranchisement" amendment to the state Constitution, pushing blacks off elected bodies. The white school boards of the 1900s and 1910s spent smaller and smaller percentages of their budgets on African American schools, and black children fell further and further behind.⁷

The situation in the South caught the notice of a number of important Progressive-era industrialists. Led by Standard Oil's John D. Rockefeller and the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 3

Southern Railway's William Baldwin, they expressed concern that the South's under-educated population was holding back the economic progress of the nation as a whole. The industrialists established the General Education Board, a public-private entity aimed at bolstering schooling in Dixie, and set up a series of philanthropic funds to attack various aspects of the problem.

To tackle the task of creating better schools for rural blacks, the GEB consulted with the famed African American educator, Booker T. Washington, who in turn helped recruit the financial assistance of Julius Rosenwald of Chicago. In the 1910s Julius Rosenwald ranked among America's richest men, the president of the mammoth mail-order concern Sears, Roebuck and Company. Son of a poor Jewish peddler, he made the decision to use part of his new wealth to improve the lot of other less-fortunate Americans. Rosenwald visited Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and witnessed a project the educator had developed to help local residents build rural elementary schools. In 1917 the Chicagoan incorporated the Julius Rosenwald Fund and began systematically making grants to carry the effort across the South.⁸

The school-building program that Washington and Rosenwald devised was intended to both erect schools and foster commitment to their operation. The Rosenwald Fund put up about one-fourth of the cost of each new structure, and provided state-of-the-art plans for efficient buildings. The local black community was charged with raising a matching amount -- a daunting task in an era when most blacks were sharecroppers and domestics who seldom saw much cash money. Finally, the local white community was expected to contribute toward the construction, and the white-dominated local school board had to agree to staff and operate the facility once construction was finished. The program proved extremely successful. By its close in 1932, 5,357 Rosenwald buildings stood in fifteen Southern states.

North Carolina quickly became the most active state participating in the Fund, constructing 813 schools by 1932.⁹ One force behind this achievement was the energetic commitment of N. C. Newbold, Director of Negro Education for the North Carolina Education Department. A white man trained at Trinity College (now Duke University), Nathan Carter Newbold gained his first administrative experience in Beaufort County, serving Superintendent of Schools at Washington from 1908 to 1913.¹⁰ In 1913 the GEB provided funds for North Carolina to hire an administrator to promote rural African American education; Newbold won the job and made it his life-work, serving for thirty-seven years. Newbold's "broad experience, . . . sympathetic attitude and great enthusiasm," a colleague later wrote, won the respect of state and local legislators, fellow educators, and rural blacks and whites as well.¹¹ He exhibited a commitment to black participation, routinely hiring African American administrators, and he aggressively sought fresh sources of funding. In 1915, even before formal creation of the Rosenwald Fund, Newbold established contacts with Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald and arranged for North Carolina to receive one of the program's first schools outside the Tuskegee area. Newbold's office maintained close ties with the Rosenwald Fund

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetWare Creek School
Beaufort County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 4

thereafter, and in 1929 Newbold's chief assistant William F. Creedle would become administrator of the Fund's entire school-building effort.¹²

As important as the Rosenwald Fund and N. C. Newbold were, the real drive for school construction came from the grassroots participants. Rural African Americans, many of whose parents as slaves had been denied the benefits of schooling, hungered for education. With the Rosenwald money and expertise as a catalyst, school construction became a major focus of community activity. Families in locality after locality gave freely of their meager resources and donated large amounts of labor to erect new schools. In the Blount's Creek district of Beaufort County, William David Williams, Sr. took the lead.¹³ Williams had experience as a house builder, and he also owned his own land, making him a man of status in his community (today Williams Road [county route 1113] east of the Ware Creek School runs through part of the family's long-held property). Details of how Williams made contact with the state Education Department and the Rosenwald Fund, and how he and his neighbors organized to build the school, have been lost. But Beaufort School Board minutes indicate that a group of "patrons of the Ware Creek School Colored (Chocowinity #2)" made the arduous trip to the county seat in January of 1919 to ask the county to appropriate a share of the construction cost -- only to have the request deferred to a later meeting.¹⁴ Their subsequent entreaty succeeded, and in 1921 the school opened to students.

Today alumni fondly recall the years they spent at Ware Creek School. Students started in the "primer grade" learning their A-B-Cs, then progressed upward. "One teacher would teach three or four grades" in a single room, explained 1930s student Nathan Hooker.¹⁵ "Teacher stayed busy all day long," chuckled Alice Williams, a pupil in the 1940s.¹⁶ She recalled that by that time the primer through third grades occupied the northern-most classroom, and fourth through seventh grades the center classroom, with the slightly smaller southern classroom reserved for programs. Teachers in the early grades were usually women, while a male teacher often handled the most advanced students and also doubled as principal. Teachers enforced strict discipline, Alice Williams recalled:

Oh, she'd talk to us a few times. And then if we didn't listen she would get her switch. She would punish us. Sometimes she would have us stand up in a corner on one leg, on one foot. Sometimes she would call us to the front -- like if we'd been bad doing something we shouldn't have been doing, or maybe sometime we'd have spelling and we'd miss spelling the word, didn't get the word just right -- she'd take that switch or rule or whatever and beat you in the hand. We'd call that "Knucks," back then [laughs].

For chronic misbehavior, parents would be notified. Holiday programs enlivened the routine at Halloween, Christmas and Easter, and at graduation time the whole community would be invited in to share the joy of students' success. There were also fund-raisers, both for community groups and for the school itself. "I remember they would raffle off

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetWare Creek School
Beaufort County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 5

cakes, or different things like that. And they would have you pay a little something at the door," said 1945 graduate Julius Williams; "They were well attended."¹⁷

Initially Ware Creek School offered grades one through seven. In the 1930s it also included grades eight through eleven, and students from smaller surrounding schools at Bonnerton, Maple Grove, Nevell's Creek, Saint Anna, and South Creek would walk considerable distances to Ware Creek to finish their education.¹⁸ Nettie Moore-McCullough, a 1930s pupil, recalled that white children rode school buses but black children still walked.¹⁹ Even students from the town of Aurora, seventeen miles distant, sometimes attended Ware Creek's upper grades if they could find a local family to stay with. Later, when a black high school was constructed in Aurora, that pattern reversed.

In 1952, the nationwide trend toward larger "consolidated" schools resulted in Ware Creek being closed and its students transferred to an expanded facility in Aurora. Two years later local citizens, including William David Williams, Sr., purchased the old Ware Creek building for \$800 from the School Board so that the structure might continue to function as a community center.²⁰ Today the building remains in the hands of the Ware Creek Community Development Program, Inc., directed by Alethea Williams-King, grand-daughter of William D. Williams, Sr. Area residents use it as a meeting place for community organizations, youth groups, voter registration drives, and adult education classes -- much as Julius Rosenwald and William David Williams, Sr., envisioned when they created the Ware Creek School three-quarters of a century ago.

Historical Context Statement Criterion C: Architecture

Ware Creek School embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of the Rosenwald Fund's standardized school plans of the 1920s. Functionalism was the guiding force in all aspects of Fund design. Rosenwald Schools were always to be one story tall, in order to minimize construction cost and maximize efficiency. The ground-hugging, Craftsman-inspired form came a marked contrast to the earlier Victorian-era vogue for imposing-looking multi-story educational structures. The main architectural feature of the Rosenwald Schools were large banks of windows, an important tool for maximizing natural illumination in the era before electricity reached most rural communities. Schools were carefully sited to best catch all available sunlight. Inside, the buildings featured high ceilings and the ratio of window to floor area in each classroom was meticulously specified in order to best distribute light. Rooms were carefully arranged to minimize "wasted" corridor space, cloakrooms were included adjacent to each classroom, and even in the smallest schools provisions were made to allow creation of a large meeting space for school assemblies and community gatherings. The Ware Creek Rosenwald School incorporated all these features, and today it survives almost exactly as originally constructed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetWare Creek School
Beaufort County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 6

While it is not known how many Rosenwald Schools still stand in North Carolina today, the Ware Creek School ranks among the state's best preserved examples. School boards often remodeled the structures, typically blocking in part of the window openings in order to avoid maintaining the windows and to save on heat. When the buildings ceased being used for classes, the wooden structures tended to deteriorate rapidly. A recent study showed that of twenty-five schools built with Fund aid in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, only twelve survive -- none as well-preserved as the Ware Creek School.²¹

In addition to its importance as a carefully preserved typical example, the Ware Creek School may hold wider significance in the architectural history of the Rosenwald Fund. The years around 1920 constituted a critical point in the evolution of the Fund and its approach to school design. Initially Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute had administered all school-building activities and the Tuskegee architectural department had published a slim booklet of standard plans.²² Soon, however, the program's huge popularity outstripped Tuskegee's resources, and in 1920 the Fund set up a separate full-time administrative office in Nashville under the direction of Samuel L. Smith, a white administrator who had previously been Tennessee's Director of Negro Education.²³ Smith's particular interest lay in school architecture, and he had studied under the pioneering Progressive educational architect Fletcher B. Dresslar. Smith scrapped the Tuskegee plan pamphlet and embarked upon an ambitious program to create and distribute new state-of-the-art school designs. He published the first edition in leaflet form in 1921, and in 1924 expanded it into a book entitled Community School Plans. Thereafter the patternbook went through numerous editions, and the Fund eventually spun off its planning office as the Interstate School Building Service, which remained active through the 1930s and distributed blueprints used in construction of more than 10,000 schools across the United States.²⁴ The pattern books created under Smith's guidance embodied the Progressive era's best ideas for functional, efficient school design -- and indeed the Fund's widely distributed publications did much to define American educational architecture during the first half of the twentieth century.

The Ware Creek School was erected just as S. L. Smith was formulating his plans. Money was allocated for the building in 1919 and it was dedicated in 1921; thus the structure was almost certainly conceived and constructed before the new Fund leaflets became available. Nonetheless, its architecture closely foreshadowed the design that would appear as "Two Teacher Community School, to Face East or West Only." This plan, featuring two main rear classrooms and a projecting front "industrial classroom" flanked by two cloakrooms, would be included in Smith's 1921 leaflet, shown on the cover of his 1924 Community School Plans volume, and become a mainstay of subsequent patternbooks. The Ware Creek School departed from the published design in one important respect; the Ware Creek building included three rather than two main classrooms. While the Rosenwald Fund eventually published several three-teacher designs, none employed the arrangement seen at Ware Creek. These facts, together with the close association of North Carolina administrator N. C. Newbold both with the Fund

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 7

and with Beaufort County, suggest that the Ware Creek School may have been constructed as an experimental prototype in which Fund officials tested ideas.

Endnotes

- 1 U. S. Census Bureau, City-County Data Book 1994, pp.396, 904.
- 2 Lefler and Newsom, North Carolina, pp. 368-369, 384-385, 403-404. Leloudis, Schooling the New South.
- 3 Lefler and Newsom, North Carolina, pp. 521-532, 534-537, 403-404. Leloudis, Schooling the New South.
- 4 Loy and Worthy, eds., Washington and the Pamlico, p. 478.
- 5 The push for education by the Populist Party and its predecessor the Farmers Alliance resulted in creation of North Carolina State University for white farmers and North Carolina A & T University for black ones, among other successes. Lefler and Newsom, North Carolina, p. 528.
- 6 Loy and Worthy, eds., Washington and the Pamlico, pp. 248-263.
- 7 Harlan, Separate and Unequal.
- 8 Embree and Waxman, Investment in People.
- 9 Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools and Black Education." Leloudis, Schooling the New South.
- 10 Loy and Worthy, eds., Washington and the Pamlico, p. 259. Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools and Black Education," pp. 406-407. Brown, Equality Education in North Carolina Among Negroes, pp. 93-95, 106-108.
- 11 Smith, Builders of Goodwill, pp. 12-13.
- 12 Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools and Black Education," pp. 406-409.
- 13 Brown, "School Houses History." Alethea Williams-King, interview with Tom Hanchett, July 1994.
- 14 State Education Department records showed state funds appropriated for the school (known as Chocowinity #2) in the 1918-1919 budget year. Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools and Black Education," p. 429. On January 6, 1919, the Beaufort County School

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 8

Board deferred a request from Ware Creek residents to appropriate county money toward the school's construction. The matter did not re-appear in Board minutes until June 3, 1921, when the Board released to the school cash held on its behalf in a savings account. I surmise that the Board gave approval and construction commenced sometime in 1919 or 1920, with completion accomplished by June of 1921. "Record of the Minutes, Beaufort County Board of Education Meetings, 1919-1921," Beaufort County Board of Education, Washington, North Carolina.

15 Brown, "School Houses History."

16 Julius and Alice Williams, taped interview with Alethea Williams-King, Summer 1994.

17 Julius and Alice Williams, taped interview with Alethea Williams-King, Summer 1994. William David Williams, Sr., was so taken with Julius Rosenwald's beneficence that he named a son Julius Rosenwald Williams.

18 Alethea Williams-King, letter to Thomas W. Hanchett, January 31, 1996. Matilda and Joseph Moore, taped interview with Alethea Williams-King, Summer 1994. Nathan Hooker, Earl Lee Oden and Carrie Moore, taped interview with Alethea Williams-King, Summer 1994.

19 Nettie Moore-McCullough, letter to Ware Creek Community Development Program, 1994.

20 Deed dated June 19, 1954: Beaufort County Board of Education to W. D. Williams, McAdoo Aldridge, Joseph A. Moore, Willis Smith and James A. Hill, as Trustees of the Ware Creek School Community. Beaufort County Register of Deeds Office, Washington, North Carolina.

21 Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools and Black Education."

22 Tuskegee Extension Department, The Negro Rural School.

23 Stitely, "Bridging the Gap," pp. 11-15, 24-28, 44-45, 77-80.

24 Editions of Community School Plans from 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1931 and 1944 are in the collection of Peabody College, Nashville.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 - 1935* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1988).

David E. Brown, "School Houses History," (Raleigh) *News & Observer*, February 6, 1995, p. 3A.

Hugh Victor Brown, *E-Qual-ity Education in North Carolina Among Negroes* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Irving-Swain Press, 1964).

David S. Cecelski, *Along Freedom's Road: Hyde County, North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1994).

Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949).

Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* LXV:4 (October 1988), pp. 387 - 444.

Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901 - 1915* (New York: Atheneum, 1969).

Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

Hugh Lefler and Albert Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1973).

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

Ursula Fogleman Loy and Pauline Marion Worthy, eds., *Washington and Pamlico* (Washington, N. C.: Washington - Beaufort County Bicentennial Commission, 1976).

Rosenwald Fund, *Community School Plans, Bulletin #3* (Nashville, Tennessee: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1924).

Samuel L. Smith, *Builders of Goodwill: The Story of State Agents of Negro Education in the South, 1910 to 1950* (Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee Book Company, 1950).

Thomas Beane Stitely, "Bridging the Gap: A History of the Rosenwald Fund in the Development of Rural Negro Schools in Tennessee, 1912 - 1932" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1975).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 2

Tuskegee Extension Department, The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community (Tuskegee Alabama: Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915).

U. S. Census Bureau, City-County Data Book 1994 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1994).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of Beaufort County tax parcel 2103, demarcated on the enclosed Beaufort County, NC tax map drawn to a scale of 1" = @ 100'.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated tract is the original site of the 1921 Ware Creek School building and includes approximately one acre of contiguous land transferred from the Beaufort County School Board to the Ware Creek community organization in 1954. The one-acre tract provides a historically appropriate setting for the school.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

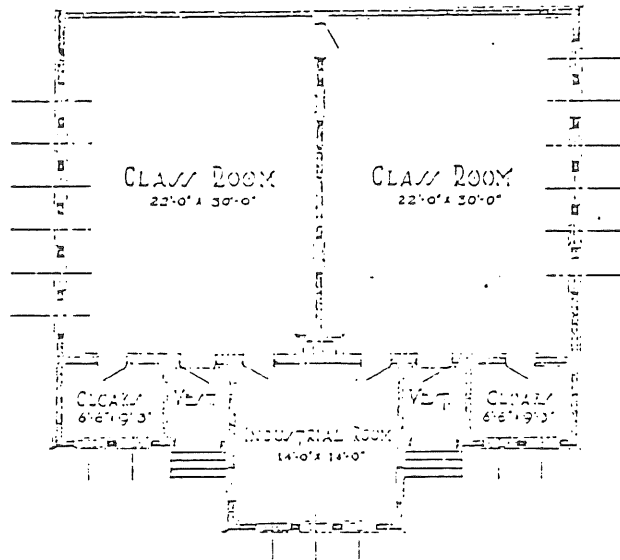
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

EXHIBIT A

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

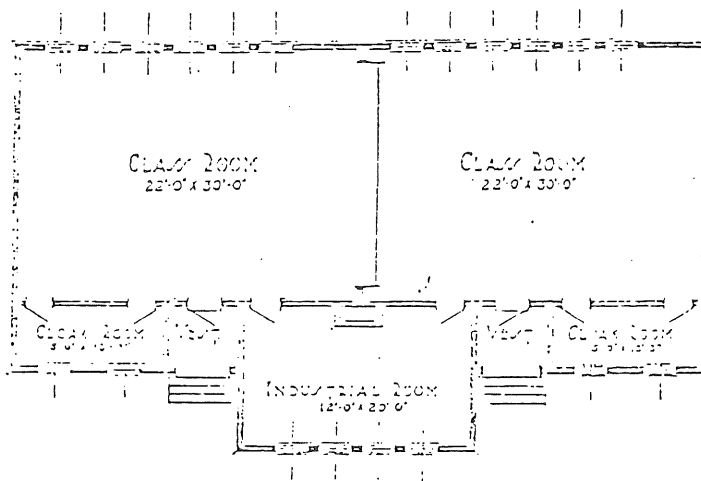
Section number _____ Page _____

79



- FLOOR PLAN -
Two-teacher School to Face North or South Only.

Issued by
THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND
Nashville, Tennessee
1921



- FLOOR PLAN -
Two-teacher School to Face East or West Only.

ISSUED BY
THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND
Nashville, Tenn.
1921

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

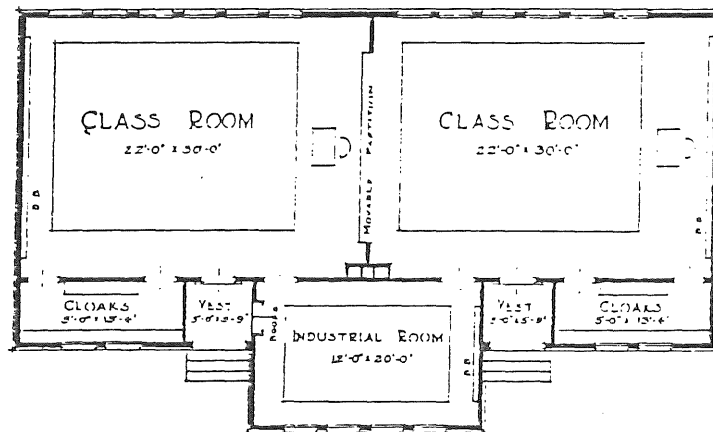
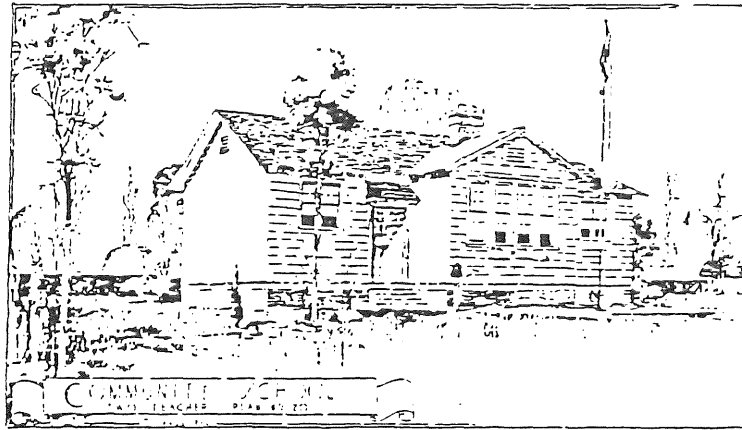
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

EXHIBIT B

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number _____ Page _____

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLANS



FLOOR PLAN No 20
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Ware Creek School
Beaufort County, North Carolina

Section number _____ Page _____

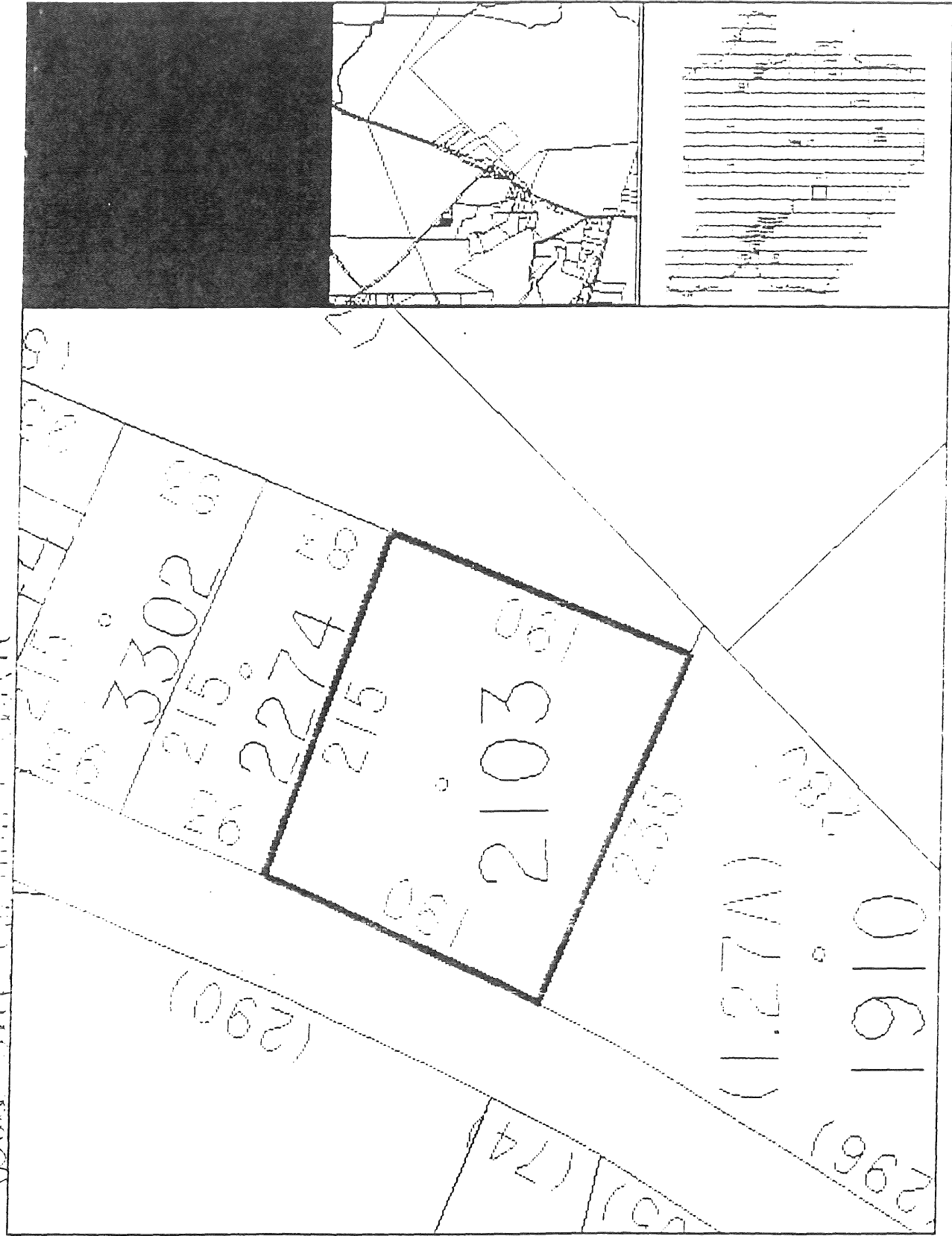
Photographs

Ware Creek School
Maul's Point Road (county route 1103)
Beaufort County
North Carolina

Photographer, Thomas W. Hanchett
Negatives on file at Survey and Planning Branch, NC Department of Cultural Resources

1. Front elevation (camera pointing east) July 1994
2. Rear elevation (camera pointing northwest) July 1994
3. Cornerstone, located at northwest front corner of building (camera pointing east) July 1994
4. Interior, showing rear window-wall of the three classrooms (camera pointing southeast) July 1994

Ware Creek Community School



BEAUFORT COUNTY TAX PARCEL MAP

Ware Creek School is parcel 2103

map printed by assessor's office, Beaufort County, NC | 1" = @ 100'

