

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Lenoir Grammar School**

Lenoir, Caldwell County, CW0171, Listed 4/19/2006  
Nomination by Susannah V. Franklin  
Photographs by Susannah V. Franklin, June 2005

See photo at the end of the nomination

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 Lenoir Grammar School

other names/site number East Harper School

#### 2. Location

street & number 506 Harper Street not for publication N/A

city or town Lenoir vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Caldwell code 027 zip code 28645

#### 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

     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): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Lenoir Grammar School  
Name of Property

Caldwell 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>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>  1  </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)

EDUCATION/School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Work in Progress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
roof Rubber  
walls Brick  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

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

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

Property is:

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

**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): N/A**

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

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Education**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**  
Ca. 1927-1956  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**  
Ca. 1927, 1951-2  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**  
Asbury, Louis, architect  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lenoir Grammar School  
Name of Property

Caldwell County, North Carolina  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acree of Property** 5.63 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 17 451660 3974600  
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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Susannah V. Franklin

organization Landmark Asset Services, Inc. date March 31, 2005

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

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

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**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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name East Harper Street Apartments, LLC

street & number 406 East Fourth Street telephone (336) 722-9871

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

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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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Lenoir Grammar School  
Caldwell County, NC

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Lenoir Grammar School, constructed in 1927, is located in the city of Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina, close to downtown. The city has a population of approximately 18,000. The school faces southwest on Harper Avenue on a parcel measuring 5.63 acres. The school is situated approximately fifty feet back from the road on a flat lot. A concrete sidewalk leads to the main front entrance and circles around to the back of the building. A fenced playground is behind the building. To the west of the building is an entry and driveway leading to parking in the back and along Todd Street, which borders the parcel on the east. The surrounding properties are a mix of commercial and residential.

The original block of the school, built in 1927, runs parallel to Harper Street and is a two-story rectangular building with a five-bay façade. The projecting bay at the east end of the building houses the auditorium. A brick addition was constructed onto the north side of the school in 1951-52 adding four classrooms, a cafeteria and administrative offices. This addition was enlarged in 1958 to house a new library. This addition is perpendicular to the original building and gives the school an L-configuration.

On the original 1927 block, the brick is laid in a running bond with a soldier row at the water table and over window openings. A corbelled rowlock band encircles the cornice of the building under a band originally of corbelled molded wood. The parapet roofline has concrete coping. The belt course was replaced with painted flat wooden boards. The windows along the original section on both the façade and north elevation were nine-over-nine in groups of triple windows bordered on each side by a single nine-over-nine window. Narrow, rectangular single windows are located between the banks of multiple windows, and serve to divide the bays of the building. On the 1927 block, the nine-over-nine triple windows, small narrow windows and three second-story windows on the auditorium bay have been covered with vinyl siding. Window frames and muntins remain behind the vinyl covering, though some sashes and panes have been removed. The single windows in the 1927 block have been replaced with new one-over-one vinyl windows. The window remains over the double-leaf door entry beside the auditorium on the south elevation that enters into the corridor for apartments converted out of former classrooms. Building is now under renovation to create apartment units.

The auditorium section of the building had three double-leaf entries with rounded-arch transoms. Within the past twenty years, the doors have been removed and replaced with

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vinyl on the exterior and sheetrock on the interior. Arched windows over the auditorium entrances have been covered as well. Single doorways were installed on the outer two doors, while the center door is completely covered with vinyl. Above the doors are brick arches accented with concrete keystones. Three small windows punctuate the second story of the front elevation of the auditorium façade. These have been covered with vinyl but remain visible from the interior. The large arched windows on the east elevation of the auditorium remain but have been covered as well. Wide concrete steps lead up to the three entries. The parapet roofline is slightly gabled over the projecting center of the auditorium bay. The east side of the building features large windows with rounded-arch transoms. There is a single door side entry through a former window opening on the east elevation of the auditorium, which is accessed by a brick stairway.

A floor plan shows twelve apartments that were the former classroom spaces. These have had non-historic partition walls added to form the apartment units. The original double-loaded corridors remain, as do the stairwells. The corridors retain plaster walls, ceilings and wood floors. The stairwells are concrete construction. The auditorium area remains intact and retains the windows, hardwood floors, balcony, stage and foyer area. Two original staircases mirror each other on the east and west sides of the auditorium entrance.

The 1951-1952 section of the building is one story over a raised basement. It extends north horizontally from the east end of the original school block along Todd Street. This section is laid in a running bond and extends back five bays. It features hopper windows on the both stories that are spaced symmetrically in single, double and triple windows. These reach the eave and are atop concrete sills. There are overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. A set of solid, double metal doors leads into the building at the basement level on the east side of the school and on the first floor at the rear of the building on the north elevation. A single door entrance on the west elevation is now missing. The classrooms were damaged in the fire and ceilings are missing along with some floors. Walls remain in original location but plaster is somewhat damaged. The layout of the first floor remains unchanged, however. Some features, such as coat closets and some flooring and walls remain intact. The basement interior has asbestos tile flooring in the former library along with concrete block walls and acoustic tile ceiling. The former cafeteria has a concrete floor and tile and plaster walls. This area has sustained some water damage.

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The school was closed after a fire in 1987 that occurred in the back of the 1950s addition, damaging the structure. The School Board moved the students to the Davenport School and sold the building that same year. The county leased the school for a daycare, and it was during this time the present alterations, including the vinyl windows and window coverings, vinyl over door openings in auditorium, to the building were made. Later in the 1990s, the school was sold again and classrooms in the original block of the building were converted into apartments.

The school retains many original features including corridor and classroom configuration, entrances, stairwells, and the entire 1950's wing is essentially unaltered. The site is relatively unchanged as well. The Lenoir Grammar School will be rehabilitated for adaptive reuse as affordable housing. The rehabilitation will be conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards.



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**Summary Statement**

The Lenoir Grammar School is located on Harper Street near the downtown of Lenoir, North Carolina. It is a two-story brick consolidated school built c. 1927, and it was the first public elementary school in Lenoir. It is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Education. The period of significance for the school begins with its opening in 1927 and continues to 1956. Although the building continued to function as a school until 1987, 1956 is the end of the period of significance since the property is not of exceptional significance.

**Historical Background and Educational Context for Public Schools in Caldwell County, 1927-1956**

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

The beginning of the twentieth century saw phenomenal educational development throughout North Carolina. The development was spurred by governmental leaders who recognized problems such as the state's low school attendance and poor public school facilities. In 1900 only approximately two-thirds of the 660,000 school-age children were enrolled in state schools. Of these only about half attended regularly.<sup>1</sup> One leader in North Carolina's educational progress, Charles Brantley Aycock, the governor of North Carolina from 1901-1905, advocated extensive improvements to the state's public school systems and campaigned for universal education.<sup>2</sup> Aycock believed that an educated work force was more valuable to society and would positively impact local economies.<sup>3</sup> His campaign led to the establishment of the Central Committee for the Promotion of Public Education in North Carolina. The principles of this committee

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<sup>1</sup> William S. Powell. *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 445.

<sup>2</sup> James L. Leloudis. *Schooling in the New South, Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996) xii.

<sup>3</sup> Powell, 446.

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included encouraging local taxes, building better schools, lengthening school terms, consolidating school districts, and supporting better pay and certifications for teachers.

The town of Lenoir was incorporated in 1841 as the county seat of the newly formed Caldwell County. Caldwell County, named for Joseph Caldwell, the first president of the University of North Carolina, was carved from Burke and Wilkes Counties. Growth in the county and in Lenoir was slow until the 1880's and the arrival of the Chester & Lenoir Railroad in 1884. The railroad bolstered trade and commercial development, particularly in furniture manufacturing, which continues to be a leading industry in Caldwell County. Over the next few decades, prosperity continued and many public improvements were made. These included an increase in construction projects and the growth of suburbs.

Gas and oil streetlights were installed in downtown Lenoir by the turn of the century. The first sidewalk was paved in 1891, and plank roads were built. The city limits of the town were expanded in 1907 to accommodate new suburbs. A new suburb named "Valmead" was built that year with lots selling for between \$48.00 and \$50.00.<sup>4</sup> By 1910 the furniture industry continued to flourish, there were two banks in the town of Lenoir and the automobile had arrived. The tourist industry was growing as well, attracting people to the town who came to visit the nearby mineral springs.

Education in Caldwell County was meager up until the twentieth century. The first school in the county, constructed c. 1829, was "under a large beech tree about five miles north of Lenoir" and taught children of three nearby families.<sup>5</sup> A student described an early school, c. 1830, as having a five-foot wide fireplace and light came into the structure between the logs. Desks were pine planks driven into the opening between logs of the building. Few books were available to the students.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning in 1885, records were kept of county education. There were one-room schools around the county and the county spent only \$4,137.27 for the 1885 term.<sup>7</sup> The school term was then four months. Until 1900, churches, pastors and other private academies provided most of the education available in Lenoir. At this time there were one hundred

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<sup>4</sup> Nancy Alexander. *Here Will I Dwell: The Story of Caldwell County* (Salisbury, N.C.: Rowan Print Co., 1956) 213.

<sup>5</sup> John O. Hawkins. *The Most American Thing: A History of Education in Caldwell County, North Carolina*. (Lenoir, N.C.: 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Hawkins, 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Caldwell County Schools Facts and Information* (Lenoir, N.C.: Caldwell County Schools, 1986) 2.

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one-room schoolhouses scattered across the county.<sup>8</sup> Primarily young, single men taught in these one-room schools. They lived in a nearby home and attended church in the community.<sup>9</sup> Male teachers were allowed to “court” once a week, twice if they attended church.<sup>10</sup> Many of these schools were open solely during the winter because students were needed to work on the family farms during warm weather.<sup>11</sup>

In 1901 Y.D. Moore was elected county superintendent of the schools, and he guided the course of education in Caldwell County for the next twenty-four years. The first graded school in Lenoir was built in 1904 and provided education for all of the white students in the town. The site was purchased for \$1,100 and plans for the building were drawn. The Lenoir Graded School was located on Main Street at the location of the current First Baptist Church. The school opened on January 8, 1904, employing five teachers and serving 270 students. This school operated for twenty years.<sup>12</sup> Around that time teachers were paid a salary not to exceed \$20.00 per month. The Principal of the school was paid \$40.00 per month.<sup>13</sup> The Lenoir Graded School is no longer standing and was replaced by the Lenoir High School (NR 1990), built in 1924.

Prompted by improved transportation and education laws passed by the General Assembly, in the 1920s and 30s there was a surge of interest in improving education in Caldwell County. During this time, larger brick schools were built and school systems consolidated. In 1920, a group requested of the Board of Education that the county schools be consolidated and the motion was passed that same year due to improved transportation. Students could now be bussed successfully to make such consolidation possible. New school buildings were also needed to accommodate growing student population and serve populations helped by the school consolidation policies. The Board of Education noted in 1921 that, “This is a notable day in the history of Caldwell. Lenoir carried by an immense majority an election for a bond issue of \$150,000 for a new building and equipment for Lenoir schools.”<sup>14</sup> This funded construction of the Lenoir High School in 1924. It served all grades, 1-11. It employed modern amenities such as a central heating system. Local men organized a football team for the school, known as the

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<sup>8</sup> Nell Greene. “Early schools sprung from very large families.” *Lenoir News*. Saturday, February 23, 1991, 11C.

<sup>9</sup> Greene, 11C.

<sup>10</sup> Betty Dishman. “Education has seen many changes in 150 years.” *Lenoir News*. Saturday, February 23, 1991, 6C.

<sup>11</sup> Dishman, 6C.

<sup>12</sup> *Caldwell County Schools Facts and Information*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Hawkins, 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Caldwell County Schools Facts and Information*, 3.

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“Bearcats.” The team was named for the popular car the Stutz Bearcat. There was much support for the team, with schoolmates leading torchlight parades with the band and holding pep rallies with bonfires on the nights before the games.<sup>15</sup> By 1925 the school system employed thirty-five teachers and the value of school property was \$181,000.00. C.S. Warren became the new superintendent that year.<sup>16</sup>

The Lenoir High School, built in 1924, housing grades one through eleven, served the entire student population of the town for a couple of years, until growing needs prompted discussion about a new school. In 1926 the Board of Education in Lenoir held a vote on a \$100,000 bond for funds. This money would fund the construction of the Lenoir Grammar School, West Lenoir School, later West Harper School, and two black schools, the Freedman School and the West End School. The bond was passed and a site for Lenoir Grammar School was purchased for \$7,500.<sup>17</sup> The school was to serve grades one through six. With the construction of the Lenoir Grammar School, the high school was renamed Central High School, and students attended this school after leaving Lenoir Grammar.<sup>18</sup>

Louis H. Asbury, an architect from Charlotte, presented plans to the county for the Lenoir Grammar School. Asbury received his professional training at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and in 1908, he established an architectural practice in Charlotte. He became the first North Carolina member of the American Institute of Architects. Mr. Asbury designed churches and other public buildings including the chapel for the Stonewall Jackson Training School in 1913. He also designed commercial and residential buildings in and around the Charlotte area.<sup>19</sup>

The general contract at total bid of \$39,940 was awarded to Robert M. Perry in September. Lenoir Grammar was the first elementary school in Lenoir. The Lenoir Grammar School, opened its doors in September of 1927. The school housed twelve classrooms and an auditorium. Eleven teachers were employed and taught 396 students.<sup>20</sup> In 1927 the Lenoir Women’s Club donated an electric range to the school and a school secretary was hired. James C. Harper was appointed Principal and Band

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<sup>15</sup> Nancy Alexander. “City public school began in mid-1800’s.” *Lenoir News*, August 21, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Hawkins, 56.

<sup>17</sup> “East Harper Construction Financed by Bond Issue.” *The Communicator of the Caldwell County Schools*, June 1975, Volume 1, no. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Hawkins, 57.

<sup>19</sup> <http://cmhpf.org/survey&rwburns.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> *The Communicator*.

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Director of the school in 1928. D.L. Hodges, who began in the 1928 school year, was the school's coach. References to football and basketball as part of regular school activities appear in 1930s records. Rules for teachers were strict in the first years at Lenoir Grammar. They were forbidden to attend public dances and if they chose to do so would be dismissed.<sup>21</sup> In 1929 female teachers who married were not allowed to teach for two years. In that same year, the interscholastic girls basketball games were minimized, began to require parental permission and were required to be "well chaperoned."<sup>22</sup> The enrollment for Lenoir Grammar School in 1938 was 454 students, the largest student population in the city. The total white enrollment for the county that year was 1,553 and the African American student enrollment was 410, putting enrollment at an all time high. The total city teaching force numbered sixty-six teachers.<sup>23</sup>

By 1930 there were fifty-six schools in the county, and the first school for African American children was built in 1932.<sup>24</sup> The total enrollment in the schools across Caldwell County in 1939 was 3,817, most of whom were transported by one of thirty-seven buses.<sup>25</sup> An article in 1938 lauded the quality of the Caldwell County bussing system, "Ten years ago Caldwell County had only eighteen trucks transporting pupils to only eight schools. Today there is a fleet of thirty-seven buses carrying children to fourteen large consolidated schools . . . The trucks are serviced by a county garage with two full-time mechanics . . . [and] Caldwell County has never had a serious accident."<sup>26</sup> Throughout the 1930s the School Board approved other contracts for new, expanded and improved schools as well as money for better roads to make schools more accessible to rural students.

Caldwell County experienced an increase in growth and development again in the 1950s. The furniture industry brought the city of Lenoir an increase in population.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the furniture industry aided the development of other industries. The lumber industry remained growing at the same rate as the furniture business. Caldwell County produced its own lumber, which was enough "to supply the factories and the demand for shipping."<sup>28</sup> The Kohler and Campbell Piano Company was Caldwell County's newest

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<sup>21</sup> Hawkins, 57.

<sup>22</sup> Hawkins, 57.

<sup>23</sup> Hawkins, 59.

<sup>24</sup> Vickie Mason, *Historical and Architectural Development of Caldwell County* (June 1987).

<sup>25</sup> "Caldwell County Schools." *The Plato News*. April 27, 1939.

<sup>26</sup> Hawkins, 158.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander, 200.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander, 202.

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industry at the time. The company was the largest manufacturer of pianos in the world for many years.<sup>29</sup> Originally, the company was based out of New York; however, the management felt that the move to Caldwell County would “be instrumental in helping the company regain its first place rating.”<sup>30</sup> It brought three hundred new jobs to the area. The growth and expansion in the various industries allowed Caldwell County’s population to increase dramatically. Due to the growing city, the enrollment in the schools increased, as did the need for additional space in existing schools and school buildings.

Based on the expanding population and growing need for quality education in Lenoir, two additions were made to the Lenoir Grammar School in the 1950s. In 1951-1952 four additional classrooms, a modern cafeteria and new offices were added. This addition cost in excess of \$100,000. In 1958 a library was added in the first floor of the 1951-52 wing.<sup>31</sup>

In 1962 it was decided that the Lenoir city limits would comprise the school district excluding the rest of the county. The schools of Lenoir were desegregated based on a plan approved by the School Board on April 20, 1965. For the following 1965-1966 school year students had access to schools without regard to “race, color, or national origin.”<sup>32</sup> Two formerly black schools were closed and students integrated into other schools. The Lenoir city school system was integrated in 1965 and in 1974 the county schools and the city of Lenoir schools were combined to form the Caldwell County School System.<sup>33</sup>

In 1969 the school became an educational demonstration area for schools across North Carolina.<sup>34</sup> This program at Lenoir Grammar School (now known as East Harper School) featured an “organization and characteristics that were still new to many other schools, such as multi-age grouping, teachers who direct learning activities rather than dispense knowledge, daily achievement and success for each learner and the absence of desks,

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<sup>29</sup> Alexander, 203.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander, 203.

<sup>31</sup> Carl E. Anderson, Jr., ed. *The Heritage of Caldwell County North Carolina. Vol. 1.* (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1983) 193.

<sup>32</sup> Hawkins, 62.

<sup>33</sup> Dishman, 6C.

<sup>34</sup> Hawkins. 200.

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grades and report cards.”<sup>35</sup> Another important component of Open Education was a strong involvement of the children's parents in planning and organization. A sense of community in the school was very important. The program wanted to foster an atmosphere where children, staff, parents, and community members interacted supportively.<sup>36</sup>

During the 1970s student population was growing and Lenoir Grammar School (now East Harper) was designated to serve only grades Kindergarten through third, while grades four through six were sent to the nearby Davenport School. After the fire in 1987, East Harper School was never repaired, and the School Board closed the doors permanently in 1989. The students were moved to the newly expanded Davenport School and grades Kindergarten through sixth were consolidated there.

Across Caldwell County many of the 1920s consolidated schools have been replaced in the past couple of decades. The only remaining schools in the county are Happy Valley School, Oak Hill School, and Whitnel Elementary School. These schools are located in primarily rural locations.<sup>37</sup>

Built as part of the 1920s educational improvements made across Caldwell County, the Lenoir Grammar School served the educational needs of the population of Lenoir for sixty years. The first elementary school in the town, it represents the expanding educational needs of the community and the improvements made during the 1920s in Lenoir County, as across the state. The school provided a quality and modern education for the growing population of the town and served also as a community center for the students and residents of east Lenoir for generations.

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<sup>35</sup> *The Communicator*.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.churchillnews.ca/staticpages/index.php>.

<sup>37</sup> Hawkins, 141.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property includes approximately 5.63 acres in Lenoir, North Carolina, as indicated on the enclosed Caldwell County tax map.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated tract contains the historic school building and play areas behind the school. This provides a historically appropriate setting for the school.

