

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Pigeon Street School**

Waynesville, Haywood County, HW0128, Listed 4/26/2021  
Nomination by Sybil Argintar, Southeastern Preservation Services  
Photographs by Sybil Argintar, March 2018



Site and building location, view southwest.



South elevation and open field to rear, view north.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Xdocumented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pigeon Street School

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 450 Pigeon Street

City or town: Waynesville State: North Carolina County: Haywood

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


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

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

    national          statewide        X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  X   A          B        X   C          D

 _____, Deputy SHPO	3/12/2021
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	
<u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: community center  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE, BRICK, ASPHALT

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Located southeast of downtown Waynesville, in Haywood County, North Carolina, the Pigeon Street School, built in 1957, is set on a 2.8-acre site, on the south side of Pigeon Street, with the school building facing northeast. The parcel is roughly bounded by Pigeon Street on the north, Oakdale Road on the east, and mid-twentieth-century and newer residential buildings on the south and west. Across the street from the school to the north and to the east is modern commercial development, and up the hillside to the north of the school lot is one of the historically African American neighborhoods in Waynesville, the Pigeon Street community. The school building is located near the northeast side of the lot, with the remaining acreage to the rear dropping in topography and containing a playground and a playing field. Concrete sidewalks are located along Pigeon Street and Oakdale Road, on the north and east sides of the lot. The solid masonry, brick-faced building with a flat roof, built in a Modern style typical of many schools of the same era, is a t-plan in form with an east-west wing containing classrooms, restrooms, and offices, and a north-south wing on the west end of the building containing the kitchen and cafeteria/gymnasium. Significant features of the building include the original multi-light, metal-frame windows, three-horizontal-light-over-metal double-leaf doors, the original floor plan, and

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interior finishes including the original linoleum tile, painted concrete block walls, built-in cabinetry, and chalkboards. The building, in good condition, is currently in use as a multicultural community center.

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## **Narrative Description**

The Pigeon Street School is set slightly below the level of the street on the north side of the lot, with a low stone retaining wall lining the north edge of the lot, and a flat grassy lawn in front of the building. A set of concrete steps leads down from the sidewalk along Pigeon Street to the front lawn, to a concrete walkway which divides the front lawn in half and leads to the main entrance into the classroom wing of the building. The entrance to the east-west wing on the east side is reached from a concrete walkway level with the street. On the west side of the building, there is a gravel parking area, with two covered entrances that lead into the north-south wing of the building.

Pigeon Street School, completed in 1957, and designed by Asheville architect Lindsey Madison Gudger, is a one-story-plus-basement, t-plan brick building with a flat roof, multi-light, metal-frame windows, three-horizontal-light-over-metal double-leaf doors, and a concrete foundation, all important elements within the modern movement in school building design of this period. The classrooms, restrooms, and offices are located within the east-west wing of the building, with the cafeteria/gymnasium and kitchen located in the north-south wing on the west side of the building. The east-west wing is approximately 5,200 square feet, and the north-south wing is approximately 3,034 square feet, for a total of approximately 8,234 square feet, plus the basement. The north elevation of the building is eight bays, including groupings of nearly full-height double or tri-partite windows, with each vertical band within the group comprised of six horizontal lights. The lower portion of the window is an operable awning style. Beginning on the east end of the elevation, there are three sets of windows, followed by a single wood door, then windows which flank the recessed main entry into the building. At the west end of this wing is one more set of windows. There is no fenestration on the north-south wing of the building on this elevation. The east elevation of the building consists of the recessed entry only. The west elevation of the building, opening into the north-south wing, consists of two entry areas, covered by flat concrete awnings, with a tri-partite window between the entries. To the south end of the elevation is a double window. There are smaller tri-partite windows above each of the doors. The south, or rear, elevation is one-story-plus basement. All that is located in the basement area is the boiler room, with an entry below the cafeteria wing. Above this, there are single and double windows, and a concrete ramp with a pipe railing and two metal doors covered by a flat-roof concrete awning that open into the kitchen. There is a brick chimney stack separating the north-south wing from the east-west wing. The east-west wing on this elevation consists of six tri-partite windows flanked by single windows on either end that illuminate the boys' and girls' restrooms.

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Throughout the interior of the building are many architectural features and details typical of the modern mid-twentieth-century school building, including original linoleum tile floors, painted concrete block walls, three-horizontal-light-over-solid wood doors, concrete ceiling with the exposed roof decking, original steam heat radiators, and bath fixtures. Floors in the kitchen area only are quarry tile, with ceramic tile in the bathrooms. Within the classrooms, roof trusses are exposed, and the original chalkboards and built-in cabinetry remains throughout.

The building retains all of its original floor plan, including, in the classroom wing, a t-shape hallway with offices located on either side of the entry hall, and classrooms double-loaded along the north and south sides of the longer hallway running in an east-west direction (see floor plan sketch included with this nomination). Upon entering the building from the main entry on the north side, there are offices located on either side of the north-south entry hallway. Along the north side of the long east-west hallway, at the east end, is one large classroom which is accessible from this hallway and housed the first and second grades. On the south side of the hallway, with doors opening into the hallway, beginning at the west end, is the girls' bathroom, followed by classrooms which housed the third and fourth grades and the fifth and sixth grades. The boys' bathroom is located at the east end. There are double doors that lead from the west end of the east-west hallway into the cafeteria/gymnasium. The former library/music room is accessible from this space, with doors opening into the space along the east wall. The kitchen is located on the south side of the large room, and there is a storage area on the north side. The stage which was originally located in front of this storage area has been removed and a solid wall built in its place. Some of the original kitchen appliances have been replaced.

#### Integrity Statement

The Pigeon Street School maintains a high degree of integrity in terms of its location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. Located in its original setting directly across Pigeon Street from one of the largest African American neighborhoods in Waynesville, the building retains its historical association within the community as the only public school built in the late 1950s for the Black residents in the town. Architecturally, the school is an excellent example of a mid-twentieth-century modern school building that retains its original construction materials and floor plan as designed by Lindsey Gudger, with one exception noted below. The building also retains interior and exterior finish materials, built-in cabinetry, chalkboards, windows, and doors. The only change to the floor plan is the removal of the stage in the cafeteria/gymnasium, replaced by a solid wall that creates a storage area on the north side of the room. Modern kitchen appliances have been added in the kitchen.

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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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education  
Architecture  
Ethnic Heritage: Black  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1957 - 1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1957  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Gudger, Lindsey Madison, architect  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Pigeon Street School in Waynesville, Haywood County, with a period of significance from 1957 through 1966 is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the areas of education and Black ethnic heritage, for its association with the educational history of the African American community in Waynesville in the years leading up to integration of the schools in 1966, and under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, as an excellent example of a mid-twentieth-century modern school building that retains a high level of architectural integrity in its historic setting, brick exterior, original windows, original floor plan, and interior finish materials including original linoleum floors, built-in cabinetry, and chalkboards. Typical of the modernist movement, the building displays horizontal massing, bands of steel-frame windows, a flat roof, and functional use of spaces, with windows placed to offer the best in ventilation and natural light. The use of solid masonry in its construction, exposed and painted concrete block interior classroom walls, and the concrete ceiling structure to allow for the large open space of the cafeteria/gymnasium, are also elements of the modernist movement evident in the building. One of only a handful of remaining schools built in the mid-twentieth-century in Haywood County, and one of only two remaining buildings exemplifying the work of Haywood County school architect Lindsey M. Gudger, the Pigeon Street School is outstanding in its architectural integrity, exemplifying the work of this notable architect.

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

#### African American Education Context

As noted in Betty Jamerson Reed's book, School Segregation in Western North Carolina, within the African American family, "[R]espect for learning was an important element taught within the family circle..."<sup>1</sup> Public schooling for "Negroes" was nearly non-existent in the United States before the Civil War. "...In the free states of the North, Negroes were sometimes permitted, but seldom encouraged, to attend the public schools...in the slave states of the South public school opportunities were universally denied to Negroes, and in some states formal teaching for negroes in school subjects was forbidden by law..."<sup>2</sup> In the years just after the Civil War, despite this family and community desire for education, the Black community struggled to obtain educational opportunities equal to the white community. Under the law, "Negroes" were granted

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<sup>1</sup>Reed, Betty Jamerson. School Segregation in Western North Carolina: A History, 1860s – 1970s.

Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Long, Hollis Moody. Public Secondary Education for Negroes in North Carolina. New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, Bureau of Publications, 1932, p.1.

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their freedom, but in reality, especially in the south, ante-bellum conditions prevailed.<sup>3</sup> There was little or no funding for the Black schools, and many schools lacked materials, with only used textbooks available, if at all. The Black community resisted the inequalities in education for its children, holding to its values that even with inferior facilities, education was key to social change.

The inequalities in schooling for African American children in North Carolina was no different than other places in the south. The first steps towards public education for African Americans in North Carolina and elsewhere throughout the country began in March 1865, with the creation of the Federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau).<sup>4</sup> With the goal to assist formerly enslaved people, dozens of small schools were built at the end of the Civil War and into Reconstruction. These schools typically were small, one-room, and in far fewer numbers than those available for whites. White Americans generally believed that schooling was not the responsibility of the Federal government but should come under the jurisdiction of states and local communities. As a result, the Freedmen's Bureau was short-lived.<sup>5</sup>

In 1869, a report by North Carolina Assistant Superintendent James Walker Hood, a Black minister, noted that other than a handful of religiously-based schools, there was not "...a single day school beyond the Blue Ridge...". From 1868 to 1871 Reverend Hood attempted to open additional schools but met with great resistance in the white community.<sup>6</sup> The 1896 Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v Ferguson* established "separate but equal" education for African Americans, but the reality was that funding and facilities were not equal, as the white community continued to resist education African American children.<sup>7</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, one in five white children, from all socio-economic classes, never learned to read, versus one in two Black children that did not know how to read.<sup>8</sup>

As far back as 1875, when the North Carolina legislature made a change to its constitution that noted there should be separate schools for the races, and with "...no discrimination or prejudice...", the Black community had to fight for its facilities and material support. There was little training available for Black teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and though dedicated, many lacked adequate schooling.<sup>9</sup> The white community resisted education for the Black children, and this was especially notable in the south, where "...mistreatment of the Black race was ingrained in the southern mind and practices..."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Long, Hollis Moody. *Public Secondary Education for Negroes in North Carolina*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Hanchett, Thomas W. "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina". *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Volume LXV, Number 4, October 1988, p. 388.

<sup>5</sup>Hanchett, p. 388.

<sup>6</sup>Reed, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup>Reed, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Hanchett, p. 391.

<sup>9</sup>Hanchett, p. 389.

<sup>10</sup>Reed, p. 11.

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The turn of the twentieth century was a time not only of educational inequalities, but other discriminatory forces that came into play for the Black community, namely in the form of disfranchisement. While very little funding for public schools, even for the white race, was available in North Carolina until 1899, it wasn't until "...1910 that public elementary schools for Negroes began to receive systematic financial aid from public funds...".<sup>11</sup> African Americans were eliminated from participating in politics, with the passing of laws that required a literacy test to vote. This, in combination with the Jim Crow laws that came into play with the Supreme Court's passing of *Plessy v Ferguson*, blocked the way for Blacks to effect changes in the educational systems. The 1896 case of *Plessy v Ferguson* held up the concept that separate but equal facilities for whites and Blacks were constitutional, serving as justification for segregation in public schools.<sup>12</sup> The disparities between the White and Black educational opportunities continued to rise, with the Conference of Education in the South and other private organizations assuring that funding for white education increased.<sup>13</sup>

Booker T. Washington, an African American educator and founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, held the philosophy that one major problem for the Black community was economics, and that industrial education was a way to learn important life skills. He did not follow the philosophy that Blacks should fight for voting rights and social equality, a way of thinking that did not agree with many in the Black community. Nevertheless, Washington was well-connected through his work at Tuskegee, and his philosophy drew the attention of white philanthropists. Private funding from these philanthropists along with many religious missionary organizations up to this point had supported the expansion of private African American colleges in North Carolina, including Barber-Scotia College in Concord, St. Augustine College in Raleigh, and Livingstone College in Salisbury.<sup>14</sup>

Washington felt strongly that more needed to be done at the elementary level of Black education. With this goal in mind, he turned, in 1905, to Anna T. Jeanes, a Quaker, to help his cause. She died soon after this, but in her will left \$1,000,000 to start a program to pay the salaries of what came to be known as Jeanes supervisors. These experienced Black educators, were to supervise novice Black teachers and also teach the community about health care, child rearing, and home economics.<sup>15</sup> This was one program Washington helped to set up, but then he turned to another individual, Julius Rosenwald, founder of Sears, Roebuck and Company, who, like Washington, had great concerns about "Negro" education in the South. Rosenwald met Booker T. Washington in 1911, and became a trustee at Tuskegee.<sup>16</sup> Washington and Rosenwald together developed a plan to fund elementary schools in the South, with the overarching philosophy of the

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<sup>11</sup>Long, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>"Plessy v Ferguson", accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/plessy-v-ferguson>.

<sup>13</sup>Hanchett, p. 392.

<sup>14</sup>Hanchett, pp. 392 and 394.

<sup>15</sup>Hanchett, p. 395.

<sup>16</sup>Hanchett, p. 395.

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program that "...school buildings embodied a community's commitment to the education of black children and a better future for all southerners...".<sup>17</sup>

In 1912, Rosenwald presented Washington with a check for \$25,000, earmarked initially for use in African American colleges, but Washington asked if part of the money could be used to build a rural school for Black children near Tuskegee. Rosenwald agreed, and the first Rosenwald school was completed in 1913 near Tuskegee. By the time Washington died in 1915, eighty Black schools in a three-state area had received funds from Rosenwald.<sup>18</sup>

The Julius Rosenwald Fund was formally established on October 30, 1917, with rural school construction as its main focus. The 1917 "Plan for the Erection of Rural School Houses" expanded the program to a much larger region, extending all across the south, north to Maryland, and west to Arkansas.<sup>19</sup> Fourteen states participated, of which North Carolina was one, building the most schools of any of the participating states, a total of 800, including the only Rosenwald school in Haywood County, the 1924 Pigeon Street School in Waynesville. Rosenwald's philosophy for this program was to stimulate public agencies to take a larger share of social responsibility, with the states also taking on larger roles.<sup>20</sup> The main stipulation of the Fund, in addition to its being a rural location, was that it be met with contributions from the local public school board, along with private donations from both the Black and white communities, creating a spirit of cooperation to bring lasting change.<sup>21</sup> The Tuskegee Institute initially managed the program, but once it expanded, a second office in Nashville was opened in 1920, with Samuel Leonard Smith hired to create standardized school plans and specifications.<sup>22</sup>

Working in tandem with the Rosenwald Fund, in 1921 the North Carolina General Assembly created the Division of Negro Education within the Department of Public Instruction.<sup>23</sup> The Division was staffed by Nathan Carter Newbold, a white man, and five administrators including three Black men and two white.<sup>24</sup> One of the main African American assistants in the program was George E. Davis, whose main job was to go to the small Black communities all over the State to help them raise the matching funds.<sup>25</sup> The Rosenwald Fund stopped building schools in 1932, with all but seven of 100 North Carolina counties having at least one school.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Hoffschwelle, Mary S. The Rosenwald Schools of the American South. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup>Hanchett, p. 396.

<sup>19</sup>Hoffschwelle, pp. 68-69.

<sup>20</sup>Hanchett, p. 398.

<sup>21</sup>Hanchett, p. 398. In reality, very little money was given from the private white community, with funding from the white-run school board being the main source of these matching funds. The Black community gave materials, labor, and money to the schools.

<sup>22</sup>Hanchett, p. 400.

<sup>23</sup>Long, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup>Hanchett, p. 408.

<sup>25</sup>Hanchett, p. 411.

<sup>26</sup>Hanchett, p. 417.

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Despite the Herculean efforts and astounding number of schools built in North Carolina, even the Rosenwald schools were inferior in many ways to the white schools. While they did provide an education for Black students through, in some cases, eighth grade, there were still very few public secondary school opportunities available for the Black community until the 1920s, when, by 1929, there were 111 secondary schools built in North Carolina. But even with the larger number of schools, there was minimal information available as to "...whether public secondary schools for Negroes are available to the greatest number of potential students, or whether the work offered is appropriate to the students enrolled...neither do numerical data show the status of teachers nor the conditions under which they work...".<sup>27</sup> While the Rosenwald Fund helped to build better facilities, it was still up to the local school board to provide maintenance and supplies to run the schools, and to make the decision whether or not to build a secondary school facility for the Black community. Inequality continued to exist in education for the African American community, and it wasn't until the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v Board of Education*, that a significant Federal law was created to provide the right to education for all races. Even so, it was not implemented in the south until at least ten years later, in Waynesville in 1966 when schools were desegregated, and in some places not until the early 1970s.<sup>28</sup> North Carolina laws after the passage of this landmark Federal legislation, worked to postpone compliance. In 1954, the North Carolina governor created a Special Advisory Committee on Education, with twelve white members and only three Black members. The North Carolina Pupil Assignment Act of 1955 made the "integration issue" a local school board matter, allowing for circumvention and delay. The Pearsall Plan, a North Carolina law adopted in 1956, allowed local communities to integrate whenever they chose.<sup>29</sup> It wasn't until 1957 that a small number of Black students began to attend white schools in some of the larger cities of Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, to keep up the "...letter of law...". Overall, the sentiment was that "...mixing the races in a school would upset the basis of southern ideals...".<sup>30</sup> It was not until 1964, when the Federal Civil Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, that North Carolina's Pearsall Plan was declared to be unconstitutional and school systems had to look seriously at how they would begin to desegregate their schools. The Civil Rights Act "...prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal...".<sup>31</sup>

### Western North Carolina African American Education Context

While the overall population of the African American communities in western North Carolina was, historically, and continues to be, small, the individuals in these places worked hard to see that their children had a place to learn and grow. Schools, along with churches, helped to create "...a strong sense of unity that empowered black citizens to confront the difficulties of living in a predominately white culture...".<sup>32</sup> While most counties in western North Carolina, including

<sup>27</sup>Long, p.4.

<sup>28</sup>Reed, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup>Reed, p.. 35.

<sup>30</sup>Reed, pp. 37 and 38.

<sup>31</sup>"Civil Rights Act (1964)", accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97>

<sup>32</sup>Reed, p. 2.

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Haywood County, had small Black populations, others had larger numbers, including Henderson County (Hendersonville), Burke (Morganton), and Rutherford (Rutherfordton).<sup>33</sup> In the 1830s, many Black residents, both free and enslaved, were brought to the mountains from surrounding states. Many enslaved Blacks came from the South Carolina low country to work in the summer homes for their owners. Others came to the area to work on the Buncombe Turnpike, often assisting other livestock drovers. Many of these families settled in Henderson County as freedmen after the Civil War and the need for facilities for educating their children grew as the population grew. The inequalities in schooling for African American children in western North Carolina after the Civil War were no different than other places in the south, often characterized by indifference from the white population, underfunding, lack of materials, and postponement of improvements or construction of new facilities.<sup>34</sup> By 1869, a graded school system, separated by races, had begun in North Carolina, but J. W. Hood, a Black minister, in his report to North Carolina Schools Superintendent S. S. Ashley, noted that there were no schools in western North Carolina for Black students.<sup>35</sup> The rules of the Jim Crow south did not bypass western North Carolina. At the end of the Civil War, while legally entitled to an education, the few Black schools that did exist for children of freed slaves were often remote and inaccessible.<sup>36</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, there was little support for public education in all of North Carolina, and even less for schools for Black students. In the western part of the state, "...although white citizens who made their homes in rural Appalachian communities were also poor, their schools received a larger portion of money [from the State] simply because of the color of their skin...".<sup>37</sup> As an example, in the mid-1870s, there were a total of 483 Black students in Henderson County, with several segregated school buildings operating in small townships. In Watauga County, in 1882, the public paid \$5/acre for a "colored school". There were never more than six schools for Black children in the county at one time, and there were only three Black teachers out of a total of eighty-one in 1900.<sup>38</sup> By 1901, in Henderson County, there were sixty school districts for white children, and five for Blacks, despite a growing Black population in the county, with 185 in Hendersonville alone.<sup>39</sup> School board minutes from 1905 to 1906 noted that \$1049 was spent on new school sites and repairs for white schools, and a total of thirty-four dollars was spent for Black schools. Hendersonville Graded School for colored students was valued at \$1000 and serviced 260 students, in comparison to the white school which was valued at \$10,000 and served 376 students.<sup>40</sup>

The Rosenwald program helped considerably in the years from 1912 – 1932, with forty-four of the 800 schools built in North Carolina being built in the western counties, often serving to replace deteriorated one-room frame buildings and sometimes being the first school for Blacks in

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<sup>33</sup>Reed, p. 73.

<sup>34</sup>Reed, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup>Reed, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup>Reed, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup>Reed, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup>Reed, p. 93.

<sup>39</sup>Reed, p. 70.

<sup>40</sup>Reed, p. 78.

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the counties.<sup>41</sup> Swain County built a Rosenwald school in western North Carolina in 1918 – 1919, consolidating four districts into one.<sup>42</sup> Transylvania County had a Rosenwald school, built 1920 - 1921 on the west side of Brevard. Buncombe County's Rosenwald school was built 1927 - 1928 in the Shiloh community of south Asheville, replacing an earlier school there built in 1909 when George Vanderbilt moved African American residents from his estate to the Shiloh area. East Flat Rock also had a Rosenwald school, a three-teacher school built in 1922 – 1923, with Black students bussed there from nearby communities. Macon County had a two-teacher school to serve its small Black population, built in 1922- 1923.<sup>43</sup> There were many other Rosenwald schools built in western North Carolina, including those in Clay, Cherokee, Ashe, Avery, Surry, Alexander, Jackson, McDowell, Polk, and Wilkes counties, but the only known extant ones that have not been considerably altered are the Bridgewater School in McDowell County, built 1921 – 1922, and Long Ridge School (originally Mars Hill Colored School), a two-teacher school in Madison County, built in 1928 – 1929. Haywood County was included in the Rosenwald building program. The current Pigeon Street School in Waynesville, the third of the schools for the Black community located in this area of town, replaced the Rosenwald school built in 1924 that was located across the street from the current school building.<sup>44</sup>

Schools for the African American populations in other western North Carolina counties through the 1950s did not fare any better than those in Henderson and other counties. Schools remained segregated and facilities were often inferior to those built for the white community. While it was easy to see the physical school buildings, the resources available for the schools were less visible. Whites continued to resist tax money going to Black schools.<sup>45</sup> In Mitchell County, in 1923, the majority of the Black population was forcibly removed from the county, with the handful that remained going to school in a church. In Brevard, in Transylvania County, a new school was built in 1950, replacing its earlier Rosenwald building that had burned. It wasn't until 1952 that a small school for Black students was built in Yancey County. There had been a poor facility before this, but it was condemned by the county and parents were asked to send their children to Buncombe County, forty miles each way. At the time the first school for Black students was condemned, the board had voted to spend \$350,000 on a new white school. Black parents in the community pooled resources and purchased a van to transport their children to Stephens-Lee in Asheville, or Long Ridge School, a Rosenwald school, in Mars Hill in Madison County. Despite these difficulties, Yancey County was one of the first western counties to integrate schools, in 1962, following a court order that Black students were not receiving an equal education.<sup>46</sup>

Buncombe County, including the city of Asheville and the town of Black Mountain, of all of the western counties with larger African American populations, was, relatively speaking, the most progressive. Isaac Dickson (1839 – 1918), a local Black man in Asheville, was appointed to

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<sup>41</sup>Reed, p. 120.

<sup>42</sup>Reed, p. 150.

<sup>43</sup>Reed, pp. 124 – 138.

<sup>44</sup>Reed, pp. 144 – 149.

<sup>45</sup>Reed, p. 73.

<sup>46</sup>Reed, pp. 82-83.



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serve on the Asheville City School Board soon after its founding, in 1887. He was charged with finding a site for a "...new colored school...". John Myra Stepp, a Black man in Black Mountain, served on the county school board for thirty years.<sup>47</sup> In Asheville, Beaumont Street School for Negroes (Catholic Hill School) opened in 1892, the first public African American school.<sup>48</sup> Hill Street School in Asheville was built in 1915, amidst great opposition from the white community, who wanted all "Negro" schools to be located on Catholic Hill and not spread throughout the city.<sup>49</sup> Several additional schools opened in Asheville in the 1920s. Stephens-Lee High School opened on Catholic Hill in 1923. Burton Street School, on the west side of Asheville, opened in 1928 as the Buffalo Street School and Livingston Street School, in the Southside neighborhood, opened in 1920. Mountain School was built in the late 1940s, on the east side of Asheville, near Catholic Hill, and was renamed Lucy Herring Elementary School in 1962. In Black Mountain, the Clearview Colored School was built in 1917, and Carver School opened there in 1951. There was no high school in the town, and those continuing to high school attended Stephens-Lee in Asheville.<sup>50</sup>

As late as 1962, Black schools in western North Carolina, according to a Quaker report, often remained in remote locations, with children having to travel long distances to get to school, often passing white schools along the way. Several counties in the west would have one teacher for a large high school group, but a larger high school for white students would be located nearby. Some counties in the west, with a total of sixteen school districts, had no high school for African Americans, and other counties had Black students but no schools for any age level.<sup>51</sup> After the passage of the Federal Civil Rights Act in 1964, western North Carolina school systems learned quickly that they would be denied Federal funds if their systems were not in compliance. But even with this knowledge, Waynesville did not desegregate schools until 1966, and Asheville did not desegregate schools until 1969.<sup>52</sup>

### Haywood County African American Education Context and Historic Background of Pigeon Street School

In Waynesville, according to local Lenoir family history, as early as the 1880s, Romeo and Jacob Lenoir, sons of Waynesville residents Romeo Lenoir (formerly enslaved by the Lenoir family) and Carolina Lenoir, bought land on Pigeon Street and built a school there for the Black community.<sup>53</sup> It is not known where this school was located or how long it was in use as a school, but it was likely a frame, one-room school house.

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<sup>47</sup>Reed, p. 75.

<sup>48</sup>Reed, p. 87.

<sup>49</sup>Reed, pp. 72 – 76; 79 – 80; 87.

<sup>50</sup>Reed, pp. 87 - 92.

<sup>51</sup>Reed, p. 25.

<sup>52</sup>Reed, pp. 42 and 45.

<sup>53</sup><http://cdm16781.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p16781coll7>; see also "Lenoir family History: slave descendants", *Waynesville Mountaineer* 30 July 2007.

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Even with there being a small school for the Black community, there was not much representation on the Haywood County school board for that community in the latter part of the nineteenth century. James Love, an African American man, represented “Colored District No. 1” (one of the county’s school districts as noted in the minutes), but Mr. Love resigned in July 1890 and was replaced by white individuals assigned to represent the “colored” district.<sup>54</sup> School Board minutes are sparse regarding the African American community in Waynesville, but there was a Black school noted as existing by 1897. It is not known if this was the same building in use as a school that had been constructed by the Lenoir Brothers. The school, in 1897, was known as the Welch School House, located in District No. 1, in Waynesville.<sup>55</sup> Many older residents in Waynesville remember this school building. Georgia Forney, born in 1930, remembers a school “...because my mother and some others went to school there...”.<sup>56</sup> Thelma Moore Gibbs, a Waynesville resident, born in 1929, notes that “...my brothers...they went there...it was a plank building, and I remember my brothers used to oil the floors with some kind of oil to preserve wood. And we had basketball; they played basketball on the inside of the building...as far as I’m concerned, it was in the same place [as the later 1924 Rosenwald School]...where the store is; where 276 is now...”.<sup>57</sup>

The 1902 School Board minutes noted that the African American community of Waynesville addressed the school board by saying that not enough was being done for the African American children of Waynesville.<sup>58</sup> This same year, a “colored district” was established in the Haywood County town of Clyde, just east of Waynesville.<sup>59</sup> However, by 1905, the district in Clyde was abolished and all African American children were ordered to attend school in the Waynesville district. On August 7, 1905, the school board allocated fifty dollars to build another room onto the “colored school house” in Waynesville.<sup>60</sup> In December of that year, J. R. Browne was paid \$41.00 for materials to repair the school house.<sup>61</sup> In November 1915, the school board approved an increase of forty dollars above what was already given in previous years for supplies and materials for the school.<sup>62</sup>

On April 4, 1922, the Haywood County School Board began discussing the construction of a new high school for white students in Waynesville, but no mention was made of a high school for the Black community. On June 5, 1922, C. P. Patton addressed the board to inquire about a “school house for the colored children of Waynesville.”<sup>63</sup> Rant Gibson, Henry McDowell, and

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<sup>54</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1881 – 1921. July 1890 minutes. The Haywood County Board of Education was not founded until 1885, so Mr. Love serviced in this capacity a maximum of five years.

<sup>55</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1881 – 1921. July 1897 minutes.

<sup>56</sup>Forney, Georgia Haley. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>57</sup>Gibbs, Thelma Moore. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>58</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1881 – 1921. July 14, 1902 minutes.

<sup>59</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1881 – 1921. July 14, 1902 minutes.

<sup>60</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1881 – 1921. August 7, 1905 minutes.

<sup>61</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1881 – 1921. July 1905, August 7, 1905, and December 1905 minutes.

<sup>62</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1921 – 1927. April 4, 1922 and June 5, 1922 minutes. November 1915 minutes.

<sup>63</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1921 – 1927, June 5, 1922 minutes.

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W. H. Whitmire also appeared at this June 5 meeting before the board, representing the “colored district of Beaverdam Township”, which was near the Haywood County town of Canton.<sup>64</sup> Very little was done by the board to address the educational needs of the Black community in the county, but they did continue to work on plans for one large high school to serve the white community. The white schools were consolidated on June 4, 1923, combining portions of District 2, 6, and 9, but no further work was noted about improving schools or building a high school for African American children.<sup>65</sup>

No additional mention is made in the School Board minutes regarding a high school or a new Black school for the younger grades until April 1924 when Phillips Construction Company was awarded a contract for the construction of the “Waynesville Colored” school plus others in the community, for a total of \$64,500.<sup>66</sup> Part of these funds was for a Rosenwald School (known by the local community as the first Pigeon Street School), with the Rosenwald fund providing \$1,100.00 and the Black and white community providing \$10,900.00.<sup>67</sup> Typically, the main source of funding for Rosenwald grant matches from the white community came from the public school board, not from white private sources, but usually no more than half of the cost came from the school board. While it is unknown from School Board minutes if this was the exact breakdown for Waynesville’s Pigeon Street School, it is likely that the African American community contributed a large portion of the community share for their school.<sup>68</sup> Most Rosenwald schools were built in the Piedmont and Coastal areas of the state, with fewer built in the mountains.<sup>69</sup> The Pigeon Street School construction cost was a large amount in comparison to other western North Carolina Rosenwald schools, and, in combination with what was likely a large contribution of private Black-community funds, is indicative of how important education was to Waynesville’s African Americans. The school was a four-room design and was built of brick.<sup>70</sup> The use of brick in the school’s construction was also rare, throughout the State, again an indicator of the importance of education for Waynesville’s Black community. Georgia Forney, a current Waynesville resident, remembers the school building,

...well, I remember when you first came in, you’d come up some steps...facing the school it would be on the left, you’d go up some steps, then there was a little porch there, one door went into Miss Howell’s room and the other went into the office through to the higher grades which was the seventh, eight, and ninth grade. And so we went in that room and then they had partitions through there where you went into the auditorium and they’d be taken down and that’s when we’d have our plays...they didn’t have the lunchroom at first, but then my Aunt May Florence and Miss Clarene Allen, cooked

<sup>64</sup>Ibid. April 4, 1922 and June 5, 1922 minutes. June 5, 1922 minutes.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid. June 4, 1923 minutes

<sup>66</sup>Ibid. April 4, 1922 and June 5, 1922 minutes. April 21, 1924 minutes.

<sup>67</sup>Woodford, p. 152.

<sup>68</sup>Hanchett, p. 414.

<sup>69</sup>Hanchett, p. 416.

<sup>70</sup>[http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set\\_v=aWQ9MjY4MA==&school\\_historic\\_name=waynesville&button=Search&o=0](http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9MjY4MA==&school_historic_name=waynesville&button=Search&o=0) “Waynesville Rosenwald School File”. Accessed April 11, 2018.

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down in the dining room; they had their old stove in there and they would fix our breakfast for us in the morning...<sup>71</sup>

May 1924 school board minutes note that the school was awarded funds for two teachers, for two months' salary, of \$456.00, fuel funds of \$50, and \$40 to pay a janitor.<sup>72</sup> George E. Davis, supervisor of the Rosenwald buildings for the North Carolina Department of Instruction, noted that Waynesville had built a "...very good four-teacher building of brick, with steam heat..."<sup>73</sup> By April of 1925 there were three schools for African American children in Haywood County: in Canton, Sunburst, and Waynesville.<sup>74</sup> The only Rosenwald school was the one in Waynesville, providing an education for students through ninth grade. None of these three schools were high schools. Haywood County School Board minutes note that in 1928, there were two remaining "Negro schools" in the county, one in Waynesville and one in Canton, with no further mention made of the school at Sunburst.<sup>75</sup> By 1931, Pigeon Street School was the only school for Black children in the county. The Canton school had burned by this time, and children attended school in a church building.<sup>76</sup>

Teachers at the Pigeon Street Rosenwald School in the early 1930s included Professor C. P. Patton, Ida V. Love, and Ola Mae Marshall.<sup>77</sup> In 1938, Thomas Kilgore Jr. of Rutherford County was offered the principal's job at the school. He also taught grades 7 to 9. Kilgore was educated at the Brevard Rosenwald school.<sup>78</sup> The school board minutes noted that teachers were to be paid \$25.00 per month.<sup>79</sup>

Many individuals still living in Waynesville remember attending the Rosenwald School. Georgia Forney, born in 1930, also noted that,

...I started to school there when I was six years old [1936] and Miss Mary [Marion] Kemp Howell was my first grade teacher...my mother and I and my grandfather we all lived on East Street and we used to come over to Pigeon Street and we walked...I love it because Miss Howell was my teacher and she was very sweet...Miss Howell was a very stern and beautiful teacher; she played the piano and she told us to look at her whenever we were talking and not to ever look down, never sign nothing unless we read it, because if you don't read you might sign your life over for nothing... Always loved for us to dance and play with each other and love each other; she called us all by our real names,

<sup>71</sup>Forney, Georgia Haley. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>72</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1921 – 1927. April 4, 1922 and June 5, 1922 minutes. May 10, 1924 minutes.

<sup>73</sup>Reed, p. 121;

<sup>74</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, Minute Book 1921 – 1927, April 11, 1925 minutes.

<sup>75</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes. 1927 – 1938 Book, April 2, 1928.

<sup>76</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes. 1927 – 1938 Book, April 6, 1931.

<sup>77</sup>Forney, pp. 14 – 17. There is only limited information available about all of the teachers at the Rosenwald school. What is known about the school administration and the daily lives of students is based upon the recollections of former students who attended school there in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>78</sup>Reed, p. 99.

<sup>79</sup>Haywood County School Board minutes, 22 August 1933.

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she didn't like nicknames...[Miss Howell] taught first, second and third grade. And then when we went in the fourth grade we went to Miss Elsie Osborne, Elsie Jane Osborne was her name, and it was the fourth, fifth and sixth grades she taught...at least maybe thirty children [in the class]...Miss Howell would take one grade at a time, she taught drama...she always had a play at the end of the year, we learned our speeches; she did not allow us to stand up with a paper so you had to know your speech...Professor Reynolds, he had the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. And then Mr. McCorkle came in from Asheville...the Canton kids, they just went to the sixth or seventh grade I think down there and they started coming up here to the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades...<sup>80</sup>

Thelma Gibbs, another long-time Waynesville resident, remembers that

...we had writing, arithmetic, the basics. We didn't have nothing like algebra, trigonometry...just the basics of school. And our books came from the other [white] schools...we had used books and sometimes there wasn't a place for us to put our names...we had a library and a cafeteria, and an auditorium because that's where we had to go every day, every morning, because one of the teachers would play the piano and she played this march music and we'd have to march into the auditorium...we'd have to pledge to the flag...Miss Howell had the first through the third, because she had like different classes...you would be promoted from the first to the second grade, not in the class but in that particular lesson...the smarter ones would have to take an extra step...Emma Dawson...she was there before Miss Osborne...<sup>81</sup>

Thelma Gibbs also remembers that there were no busses to take any of the children to the Pigeon Street School. Her family lived in the Ninevah community south of the school and they had to walk a long distance to school every day.

...when I was going to school over here, there were busses for the white students...I lived in Ninevah and we had to walk from Ninevah to Pigeon Street School. Every day, and most of us made perfect attendance. And we didn't stay out of school when it snowed and all of that. Because our father would go in front of us when we had snow and would make a path til we got to the streets...the [white] kids that were on the bus would throw stuff at us when we walked and would spit and everything, drink cans and whatever...<sup>82</sup>

According to some former students who attended the Pigeon Street Rosenwald school in the 1930s and 1940s, it had a potbellied stove for coal, with, according to School Board minutes, Hyatt and Company providing coal at \$4.77 per ton.<sup>83</sup> Children hung their coats in a closet behind the blackboard, and lunch cost between three and six cents per day with Leona McDonnell Casey being one of the local individuals who prepared meals for the school. There

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<sup>80</sup>Forney, Georgia Haley.

<sup>81</sup>Gibbs, Thelma Moore. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>82</sup>Gibbs, Thelma Moore.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

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was a primary first grade and a high first grade, with students advancing as they were able to the upper grades in different classrooms. Discipline was expected, and devotions and the pledge of allegiance were recited every day.<sup>84</sup> Other students remembered that Black children from Canton would come by bus to this school after their school had burned down, primarily to attend seventh through ninth grade classes, before Reynolds High School was built in 1948, and children from as far away as Rogers Cove in Lake Junaluska also took the bus to go to school here. Some students of this school, the Pigeon Street (Rosenwald) School, however, remember that Professor Patten would give the students eighth and ninth grade work to do.<sup>85</sup> In Haywood County, in the 1935 – 1936 school year, there were 172 children enrolled in the African American elementary schools, but it is not known how many of those were living in Waynesville.<sup>86</sup> In the 1940s, O. W. H. McCorkle was principal at the school, also teaching English, math, science, citizenship, reading, and spelling. High school level classes were taught, up to a ninth grade level. The school term was 160 days, with Welton Reynolds teaching all the high school level classes.<sup>87</sup> In the late 1940s, books were given to “...the library at the Pigeon Street Negro school” from the Board of the Haywood County library, but these were primarily older books that the library no longer wanted.<sup>88</sup> Georgia Forney remembers that

...they used to bring us books because we weren't allowed to go into the [public] library...books that came from Waynesville Township high or from somewhere...bring them to our little library. So we had books and in first grade we had a big table like you sit at and we'd sit at that table and we would draw and we would read...what we had was second-hand; we always had second-hand because we never had new books...the new books went to the white schools...<sup>89</sup>

School for Waynesville's African American families was considered to be an extension of home. Strict discipline was enforced by the teachers, and everyone was expected to learn. Parents, students, and teachers worked closely together so that all children could learn. Teachers were respected members of the community.<sup>90</sup> They lived in town, near the schools. Elsie Osborne lived across the street from the school, in a house that still exists, and Miss Howell “...lived up the road but her house is torn down now...we'd have to pass her house on the way to my house...Mr. Bryant lived...in the neighborhood...”.<sup>91</sup> In addition to the churches, the school was another gathering place for Waynesville's African American citizens. Former students recall that the school hosted frequent social events, including musical productions, cake walks,

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<sup>84</sup><http://cdm16781.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p16781coll7> “Pigeon Street School by Ernestine Upchurch”, undated, unpublished manuscript, memories of Catherine McGill Lenoir.

<sup>85</sup>Western Carolina University Special Collections, MSS 98-03.2. Interview with Evangeline Gibbs.

<sup>86</sup>Reed, p. 168.

<sup>87</sup>Reed, p. 206.

<sup>88</sup>“Library Board Elects”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 11, 1947.

<sup>89</sup>Forney, Georgia Haley. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>90</sup>Interviews with Sybil Argintar: Forney, Georgia; Forney, Lin; Gibbs, Thelma; Wheeler, Gregory Lee; Wheeler, Nancy.

<sup>91</sup>Forney, Telinda. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, January 31, 2020.

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Maypole dances, social dances, and plays.<sup>92</sup> Parents often helped with making costumes for the plays, including a particularly memorable one where dresses were made from paper. The teachers cut out the patterns, and the students' mothers assembled them.<sup>93</sup> Other community events hosted by the school included candy pulls, Fourth of July celebrations, speeches, community singing, and Bible stories.<sup>94</sup> Thelma Gibbs notes that "...when we had our own school the teachers thought more of educating us. They made sure that we got what they were trying to instill in us. They made sure we got that. If not, we didn't pass....I think that we had more attention as far as education than they are now...".<sup>95</sup>

Most children in the Black community, if they didn't have to work to help support their families, continued their education into high school. Since there was not a Black high school before 1948, this meant going to Asheville or sometimes neighboring states such as Georgia or Tennessee, where extended family lived, to continue with a high school education. Some students even went as far away as New York to complete their high school education.<sup>96</sup>

Before 1948, students from Waynesville attended either Stephens Lee, the public high school for African American children built in 1923, or the Allen School, founded in 1887, both of which were located in Asheville. Waynesville students lived with family or friends in Asheville while attending Stephens Lee, but the Allen School was a boarding school with a large dormitory. Many students from the Allen School continued to college.<sup>97</sup>

Until schools integrated in 1966, the town of Canton maintained a separate school board from the rest of the county. In April 1947, the Canton school board considered bids for building a Black high school there. No mention was made of an architect, but builders included Robinson Brothers of Asheville as general contractors, Young and Brookshire for plumbing and heating, and Haynes Electric for electrical work.<sup>98</sup> It was not until 1948 that the only high school for Black students in Haywood County was completed, named Reynolds High School, with many students from Waynesville traveling by bus to Canton each day to attend school there. The eight-room brick building on a nine-acre tract was built in an area of Canton known as Gibson Town, with five teachers when the school first opened. Facilities there included a library, workshops, a lunchroom, and a gymnasium-auditorium. In the 1950s, the high school division of Reynolds High School taught social studies, North Carolina history, French, English, shop, home economics, chemistry, art, physical education, and health. Many extracurricular activities were offered, including drama, music, band, science, home economics, horseshoes, and calisthenics clubs, and sports teams that included volleyball, softball, football, and basketball. The school

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<sup>92</sup>Interviews with Sybil Argintar: Wallace, Lee; Wallace, Jody; Bryson, Reverend Walter; Forney, Georgia; Gibbs, Phillip; Gibbs, Thelma; Wheeler, Gregory Lee; Wheeler, Nancy.

<sup>93</sup>Wheeler, Nancy and Wheeler, Gregory Lee. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, 3 March 2018.

<sup>94</sup>Western Carolina University Special Collections, MSS 98-03.2. Interview with Birdell Love Smith.

<sup>95</sup>Gibbs, Thelma Moore. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>96</sup>Western Carolina University Special Collections, MSS 98-03.2. Interview with Evangeline Gibbs. No mention was made in this interview of what schools in New York were attended.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Canton School Board Minutes, April 21, 1947.

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did not receive any extracurricular funding from the county, so students and families were responsible for raising funds to sponsor sports teams, including a boys' football team and both a boys' and girls' basketball team. Reynolds was the first African American school west of Asheville that included grades one through twelve.<sup>99</sup> Some of the faculty at Reynolds included Lydia M. Hammond (grades 1 – 3), Mrs. L. K. Holloman, Miss Lenora B. Reid (grades 4 – 6), William Eggleston, D. K. Hall (grades 7 – 8), and high school teachers Ralph H. Davis, principal and English, science, and physical education teacher, Mrs. Mills (home economics, history, geography) and William Eggleston (industrial arts, math, science).<sup>100</sup>

Despite a statewide school building program in 1949, no movement was made by the Haywood County School Board to make improvements to the 1924 Pigeon Street School or to consider building a new school. A survey of schools was conducted in Haywood County, and the report noted that \$346,000, Haywood's share of the state funds, should be used for twelve schools in the Waynesville and Bethel districts. But the report also noted that the Pigeon Street Negro Elementary school students should be "...transported to and consolidated with the Reynolds Negro High School in Canton...", with no funds being allocated at that time for a new school building.<sup>101</sup> This trend continued into 1951 when plans for new schools or renovated facilities for the white community was approved by the school board, but no mention was made about the "Negro schools".<sup>102</sup> In Canton, in 1952, some improvements to Reynolds High School were approved, to be designed by Six Associates of Asheville, but these were minimal improvements compared to the new facilities being built for the white community at the same time.<sup>103</sup>

It wasn't until October of 1953 that the Haywood County School Board finally approved a new elementary school for African American children in Waynesville, but due to budget limitations for the school when construction bids came in, it was not completed until 1957.<sup>104</sup> Lindsey Gudger was selected as the architect and asked to proceed with preliminary sketches.<sup>105</sup> In February of 1954, upon completion of plans, the Board budgeted \$55,000 for the school construction.<sup>106</sup> The project was put out for bid, with the total cost coming in at over \$100,000. On August 24, 1956, the Board voted for \$25,000 to be borrowed from the State Literary Fund, and the remainder to come from the State School Plant Construction and Improvement Fund of 1953. The teachers were to be Elsie J. Osborne, Marion Kemp Howell, and James L. Bryant.<sup>107</sup> The school was to be built from part of the county's \$216,705 share of the \$25 million state school bond for all schools.<sup>108</sup> The school board paid \$3,000 to purchase the land from W.

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<sup>99</sup>The school closed in 1966 when schools in Haywood County desegregated.

<sup>100</sup>Canton School Board Minutes. April 10, 1952 and March 18, 1953.

<sup>101</sup>"School Building Survey Completed In Haywood". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, November 14, 1949.

<sup>102</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes. 1950 - 1965 Book, August 23, 1951.

<sup>103</sup>Canton School Board Minutes from December 11, 1961 and April 9, 1962 note that an addition to Reynolds School was approved, designed by architects Foy and Lee of Waynesville.

<sup>104</sup>This school also served students through the seventh grade only.

<sup>105</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes. 1950 - 1965 Book, October 21, 1953.

<sup>106</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes. 1950 - 1965 Book, February 12, 1954.

<sup>107</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, 1950 – 1965 Book, August 24, 1956.

<sup>108</sup>"Two Haywood School Units Are Planned". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, January 3, 1956.



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Thomas Love. Additionally, land belonging to the Shelton family was condemned for the playground at the rear of the building.<sup>109</sup> Construction work began on the building in 1956.

The new school opened on September 1, 1957, with the school board leasing the other Pigeon Street School across the street to the “colored community” for \$1 per year.<sup>110</sup> Georgia Forney remembers “...at the time when they built this school the people were very excited...they went through the seventh grade and then they went to Reynolds...”.<sup>111</sup> Mrs. Elsie Osborne, who lived in a house across the street from the school was the principal and one of the teachers and was given a key to the new school. Mrs. Howell was also present to open the school.<sup>112</sup> In 1961, Mrs. Howell was named Woman of the Year by Beta Lambda Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, noting that Mrs. Howell, a Haywood County native, was a graduate of Allen High School in Asheville and of Livingstone College in Salisbury. She taught for thirty-eight years in North Carolina, including twenty-eight at the two Pigeon Street schools.<sup>113</sup> Evangeline Gibbs worked as a cook for this school for many years, later transferring to a position as cook at Central Elementary, located between Joy and Bryson Streets in Waynesville, a school for white children.<sup>114</sup> Waynesville resident Alvin Forney remembers Miss Gibbs. “...she was one of the best cooks. And we could always depend on her cornbread to be the best cornbread in the world, and we could go back and get seconds and we didn’t have to pay for lunch per se, it was there for us...”.<sup>115</sup> At Pigeon Street School, she served ninety students, providing a meat, vegetable, bread, and dessert every day.<sup>116</sup>

Two Waynesville natives recall their first years in the new school building. Alvin Forney was born in 1954 and started school in the building in 1960, just a few years after it opened.

...most of the Blacks were from here in this neighborhood; some were across town where Central Elementary [a white school] was but they would walk over. We had two teachers, at the beginning and the first three grades were Mrs. Marion Kemp Howell...Miss Howell was a disciplinarian. We learned how to sit up and pay attention to what she was teaching, but that helped us because if you were in the first grade and you heard her talking to the second and third, you could listen in on what was happening and the next year you would be ahead...they would whip you...with rulers, paddles and their hand, but that was part of school...it seems like before we got home our parents knew that we

<sup>109</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, 2 May 1956.

<sup>110</sup>Haywood County School Board Minutes, 1950 – 1965 Book, August 12, 1957.

<sup>111</sup>Forney, Georgia Haley. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>112</sup><http://cdm16781.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p16781coll7>; see also *Waynesville Mountaineer*, 1 September 1957.

<sup>113</sup>“Sorority Names Mrs. Howell Woman of Year”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 24, 1961.

<sup>114</sup>Central Elementary closed in 2011. This school, although located directly across the street from homes owned by the African American community on Bryson Street, did not allow African American students to attend. The students on Bryson Street and the adjoining African American streets, walked across town to the Pigeon Street School.

<sup>115</sup>Forney, Alvin. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>116</sup>Western Carolina University Special Collections, MSS 98-03.2 Interviews of African American citizens in western North Carolina, 1986 – 1989. Interview with Evangeline Gibbs.

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had been whipped in school. So we learned to pay attention and do our best and that taught us to learn...I felt like this was an extension of my home really because I've always been math-minded and they expounded on it for me; helped me to learn. And they didn't teach us to pass tests, they just taught us everything. So when we did have a test it wasn't hard because they taught us the procedure of how to do such-and-such things like long division or multiplication, you know, we learned that stuff and I just figured it part of my DNA to be a math nerd; but it came so easy for me. And then when I went over to integrated school we had algebra, algebra 1, algebra II, geometry, all that stuff just flowed once I got there because I had a good foundation for math...Miss Elsie Osborne taught four, five and six...Miss Osborne laughed...that's how I remember her, and then eventually we had another teacher come and broke it one-two, three-four, five and six grades. And five and six were given to the new teacher who came, and his name was James Bryant. I remember him...and after you made it to the seventh grade you were bussed to the Reynolds High School in Canton. But I never got that far because of the integration...my sister and my two brothers went to Reynolds, and they had a football team and a basketball team and we would go down and watch them play, and when they played football they played in Canton stadium, but they had to play on Thursdays, because the other team played on Fridays...my sister was in the band; she played the trumpet and I remember her practicing so much...my older brother played football...they were bussed [to Reynolds]...was probably the worst bus in the bus lot given to us, so we could take a chance to get to Canton, and of course there were Black drivers, cause they were part of the class that went down. Students actually drove the bus...I wanted to come to school. I enjoyed school. I loved coming here because I knew the teachers cared for me almost as much as my parents did. They wanted you to learn what they had to teach you and I felt good about it. I was glad they were here for that part of my life...<sup>117</sup>

Lin Forney, who began attending school in the building from 1962 through fourth grade, remembers that the school at the time went up to sixth grade. She remembers

...walking with my older brothers and my sister to school here, because of course we walked here from our home [on the hill above Pigeon Street], and I remember how the teachers would just cuddle us around them. They were strict as they could be but at the same time I always felt that I was loved and cared for...I remember Miss Howell...she is the one that also directed our plays when we had them and did the music...you didn't play around and show off...we had those plays several times a year...I also had Miss Elsie Osborne as a teacher, we always called her Miss Elsie...I didn't make his class [Mr. Bryant] because of consolidation [of the schools], but the thing I remember him being the principal, and you know when we went to school here school and home crossed over in that if you misbehave at school your parents were going to find out about it.. We learned reading, math, science and social studies, and cursive handwriting...Miss Howell's classroom was the one at the end of the hall near the boys' bathroom...Miss Elsie's

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<sup>117</sup>Forney, Alvin. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

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was...the first one coming out of the dining room, and then Mr. Bryant's was the middle...and then there was the office...and on this other side we had an office and a library in the space off of the dining room...it was a music room too...<sup>118</sup>

The students had their own desks, and hand-me-down books. Families had to provide other materials.

School integration came under consideration in Haywood County as early as 1955, soon after the Supreme Court's *Brown v Board of Education* decision, when a discussion was to be had and a committee formed between the Haywood County School Board and the Canton (town) School Board, which, up until this time, had been separate entities.<sup>119</sup> The integration committee consisted of five white men, Harry Whisenhunt, W. M. Cobb, of Waynesville; Roland Leatherwood of Clyde; and Dr. A. P. Cline and Ernest Messer of Canton; and two Black men, Homer Forney of Waynesville and Morris Lowery of Canton.<sup>120</sup> Integration met with strong resistance in Haywood County and the state generally. Governor Luther Hodges made a plea to the North Carolina General Assembly in 1956 to preserve the "...North Carolina public schools in traditional segregated patterns...", and that "...every legal means we can devise will be used to insure that effects of the Supreme Court's segregation decisions are not forced on Tar Heel schools...". At the same time, he did argue that no "...Negro parents should be willing to send their children to dilapidated and unsanitary school buildings...".<sup>121</sup>

It took many more years for schools to be desegregated in the county, essentially pushed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was not until 1966 that the Haywood Schools finally integrated and the two separate school systems combined into one. Reynolds High School in Canton and the Pigeon Street School in Waynesville closed in 1966 when schools desegregated, and all African American students in Waynesville began attending the formerly all-white Central Elementary School, Waynesville Junior High School, Waynesville Township High School and later Tuscola High School in Waynesville.

The first few years in particular, after desegregation of the schools, were difficult for the Black students. Very few of the Black teachers with whom the children were familiar were transferred to the white schools. African American residents of Waynesville remember that "...Miss Elsie Osborne went to Hazelwood...Miss Howell taught I believe in East Waynesville...It was very frightening...when my son went it was the worst time of his life because in the integrated schools it was a fear between the kids, they always had some kind of remarks about them and he thought it was the worst thing that could happen...".<sup>122</sup> There were often fights between the Black and white students, and many experienced prejudicial treatments when trying to

<sup>118</sup>Forney, Telinda. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, January 31, 2020.

<sup>119</sup>"County-Wide Integration Study Committee Will Be Named at An Early Date". *The Waynesville Mountaineer*, July 11, 1955.

<sup>120</sup>"County Boards Name 7-Man Committee On Integration". *The Waynesville Mountaineer*, August 25, 1955.

<sup>121</sup>"Hodges Gives Reasons For Preserving School Pattern". *The Waynesville Mountaineer*, July 26, 1956.

<sup>122</sup>Forney, Georgia Haley. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

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participate on sports teams. African American students, although allowed to be on teams, often were relegated to sitting on the sidelines and were not allowed to actively participate. Rather than participate in scholastic sports activities, many of Waynesville's African American students played sports informally outside of school, playing Black students from another part of town.<sup>123</sup>

Alvin Forney, beginning in 1966, went to Waynesville Junior High for seventh through ninth grades,

...It seemed to me as if the teachers weren't as interested in my learning as they were here. They would make you learn [at the Pigeon Street School], even if they had to beat it into you...It seemed...I was never put in a class that had another Black person in it. I was always in a group of whites. I think the only time we may have gotten together was in gym...it was [difficult]...I can sort of get along with anybody, up to a point, and I made friends easily, but there were still some people who would be standoffish, and I wouldn't go out of my way to be a friend...we fought, all the way through high school...things didn't change by the football players being more accepted on the team, which was what we were really wanting to do; it seemed like it just got worse. And as far as things happening in Tuscola [high school], we weren't invited to anything...<sup>124</sup>

Lin Forney remembers going to Central Elementary the year after schools desegregated in 1966. She notes that

...it was bigger but it seemed nicer. Definitely they had more things than we had here; shiny new books, and furnishings looked newer and fresher and all of that. I remember thinking when I went in there how different it was from what I left, except the atmosphere was not the same...[there was one teacher and one grade per classroom]... there was usually only one Black student in the class no matter what. You didn't get into a classroom with another Black student until I went to Tuscola. They had one teacher per grade, but sometimes they had more than one classroom per grade...it absolutely was terrifying, and you just didn't have friendly faces around you because really nobody wanted us there. And the teachers didn't embrace it so much. You couldn't feel any warmth from them, so it was very terrifying and very traumatic...but the one thing is that we were academically prepared for whatever, but we were also at the same time not given opportunity to show that...middle school...got a little better, but Tuscola got worse...we had a pretty large group of Black students, and we kind of banded together and demanded our self-respect and respect from the students and the teachers...<sup>125</sup>

When the Pigeon Street School closed in 1966, the school board converted the building to the Instructional Materials Center for the county schools. It remained in this use until 2001 when the

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<sup>123</sup>Interviews with Sybil Argintar: Wallace, Lee; Wallace, Jody; Bryson, Reverend Walter; Forney, Georgia; Gibbs, Phillip; Gibbs, Thelma; Wheeler, Gregory Lee.

<sup>124</sup>Forney, Alvin. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, November 25, 2019.

<sup>125</sup>Forney, Telinda. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, January 31, 2020.

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Pigeon Community Development Center began leasing the building. The Haywood County Consolidated School System Board of Education sold the building to Haywood County in 2002, with the county then granting easements for sidewalks, curbing, and utilities to the Town of Waynesville in 2003 and 2004.<sup>126</sup> The building was then sold in 2017 to the lessee, the Pigeon Community Development Center, a non-profit organization and the current owner, with the stipulation in the deed that the property must remain in public use or ownership would revert back to the county.<sup>127</sup> The first Pigeon Street School (Rosenwald School) was torn down in 1987 and has been replaced by a gas station and convenience store on the hill above the old school site.<sup>128</sup>

### Lindsey Madison Gudger

Lindsey Madison Gudger (1904 – 1964), architect for the Pigeon Street School, was born in Buncombe County, and received his higher education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at Georgia Institute of Technology.<sup>129</sup> He was married to Marie Tyler, and had one daughter, Marie, born in 1939.<sup>130</sup> Lindsey Gudger began his career in western North Carolina in 1929 as the manager for the Asheville office of Atwood and Nash, based Chapel Hill. The Asheville office was short-lived, opening only a few days before the stock market crash of October 22, 1929. Gudger went on at that point to open his own firm.<sup>131</sup> In 1953, he went into partnership with Jack Baber and John T. Wood. This firm evolved into Baber, Cort and Wood in 1973, after Gudger's death.

In the late 1930s through the 1940s, Gudger designed public buildings for the city of Asheville, along with the design of many residences, two schools in Buncombe County and a student union for Western Carolina University. His practice quickly evolved, however, beginning in the late 1940s, into a focus upon school architecture. He designed numerous public school buildings throughout the western North Carolina counties.

One of Gudger's earliest and best known commissions was the design for the Asheville Auditorium in 1939, followed by the designs for at least fifteen residences in Asheville through the 1940s, including his own home located at 385 Lakeshore Drive.<sup>132</sup> One of the first schools Gudger designed was for the Leicester community in west Buncombe County, in 1938.<sup>133</sup> Gudger designed the Western Carolina University Student Union in 1940. In the latter years of

<sup>126</sup>Haywood County Deed Books 529, p. 524; Deed Book 564,p. 2160; 592, p. 1219.

<sup>127</sup>Haywood County Deed Book 931, p. 854.

<sup>128</sup><http://cdm16781.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p16781coll7>; see also "Pigeon Street School by Ernestine Upchurch", *Waynesville Mountaineer*, undated article.

<sup>129</sup> "Atwood and Nash", North Carolina Architects and Builders, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000236>.

<sup>130</sup>United States Federal Census, 1940.

<sup>131</sup> "Atwood and Nash", North Carolina Architects and Builders, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000236>.

<sup>132</sup>"Architects and Their Buildings in Asheville". Compiled by Zoe Rhine, librarian. North Carolina Room Collections, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina. Section regarding Lindsey M. Gudger, p. 19.

<sup>133</sup>"\$90,000 Structure with 21 Classrooms is Planned". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, September 28, 1938.

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the Works Project Administration (WPA), in 1940, Gudger was involved in the design for a school building in the Sand Hill community of Buncombe County.<sup>134</sup> In 1953, Gudger designed the Forest Amphitheatre in south Asheville.<sup>135</sup>

In the late 1940s through the 1950s, Gudger became known for his school designs, primarily for the white communities, but also designing two schools for African American children, the Hill Street School in Asheville and the Pigeon Street School in Waynesville.<sup>136</sup> In 1947 Gudger was named as architect for a school in Rockingham County, North Carolina, northeast of Buncombe and Haywood counties, at the Virginia state line.<sup>137</sup> Not long after this, in late 1947, Gudger was chosen as architect for seven of eleven new schools or additions to schools in Buncombe County, including South Hominy, Candler, East Buncombe, Oakley, Flat Creek, Leicester, and Black Mountain, all of which were completed by the early 1950s.<sup>138</sup> Additional schools designed by Gudger in the 1950s included two schools in Burnsville, Yancey County, the Bee Log School and the South Toe River School, and several in Buncombe County, as part of the county's large school building project, including South Hominy School (1950); Candler Primary School (1953); East Buncombe High School (1953 – 1956); Enka High School (1954 – 1955); A. C. Reynolds High School (1956); and Swain County School (1956).<sup>139</sup> Additional known school work of Gudger included the Hill Street School in Asheville, an African American school, and William Randolph School in Asheville, both designed in 1952 and opened in 1953.<sup>140</sup> In Haywood County, in addition to the African American Pigeon Street School in Waynesville, Gudger also designed an addition to the Cruso School in Haywood County which included a cafeteria, kitchen, and heating plant.<sup>141</sup>

The bulk of Lindsey Gudger's school architecture took place from the late 1940s through the 1950s. The State of North Carolina passed a twenty-five-million-dollar bond in 1949 which in turn enabled counties to fund large school building programs.<sup>142</sup> While Gudger produced school designs for several western North Carolina counties, he was essentially the schools architect for Haywood County in the mid-twentieth century, as evidenced by his report to the Haywood County Board of Education in 1953. He offered a progress report to the Board on the design of Allen's Creek, Lake Junaluska, Maggie [Valley] and Rock Hill schools.<sup>143</sup> Gudger also prepared designs for Bethel and Central Elementary Schools, which were nearing completion at the end of 1953. Gudger also was assigned additional work late in 1953, including plans for the Crabtree-

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<sup>134</sup>“Discuss Proposed Building”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, November 27, 1940.

<sup>135</sup> North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://ncroom.buncombecounty.org/Presto/search/SearchResults.aspx?q=YXJjaG10ZWN0IGd1ZGdlcg%3d%3d>.

<sup>136</sup>“Architects and Their Buildings in Asheville, p. 19.

<sup>137</sup>“Gudger Named Architect for School Project”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 4, 1947.

<sup>138</sup>“County Plans 11 Buildings for Schools”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, September 21, 1947.

<sup>139</sup>“Architects and Their Buildings in Asheville, p. 19, “Plans Nearing Completion for 2 Schools”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 27, 1950, and “Working Drawings” illustration. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, October 13, 1950.

<sup>140</sup>“Inspection of 2 Schools Set Tuesday”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 30, 1952.

<sup>141</sup>“Two Haywood School Units Are Planned”. *Asheville Citizen-Times*, January 3, 1956.

<sup>142</sup> Martin, Jennifer. “Cedar Grove School”. National Register nomination, 4/23/2020, p. 8-24.

<sup>143</sup> Haywood County School Board Minutes, March 2, 1953.

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Ironduff and Fines Creek schools.<sup>144</sup> By early 1954, several schools designed by Gudger had been completed, including Lake Junaluska, Rock Hill, Maggie, and Allen's Creek.<sup>145</sup> Gudger continued working for Haywood County through the late 1950s, but by 1956, as Gudger was winding down his architectural practice, additional architects were also hired for school work, including Henry Foy of Waynesville.<sup>146</sup>

In 1961, Gudger continued his work in school architecture, and his firm, Gudger, Baber, and Wood, designed the first two buildings for the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in Asheville.<sup>147</sup>

For the most part, Gudger's school work, beginning in the late 1940s, followed a modernist approach to design. An exception to this might be the Oakley School (1947, no longer extant) in Buncombe County, which, based upon documentary photos, more closely mimicked the early twentieth-century Classical trends for school buildings. Gudger's work quickly evolved towards modernist in their design. Two schools in Yancey County, northeast of Haywood County, that he designed in the 1950s, the Bee Log School (55 Bee Log Road, Burnsville, North Carolina) and the South Toe River School (139 South Toe School Road, Burnsville, North Carolina), are clearly modernist in their approach, with flat roofs, bands of windows, horizontal massing, and the use of masonry construction. Most of Gudger's school buildings were brick, but the Bee Log School utilized stone for its exterior walls. The former Isaac Dickson Elementary School (Hill Street School, 1953), a brick building, also followed modernist trends. Gudger's design for the William Randolph School (1953, 90 Montford Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina), a tall one-story brick building with bands of windows, a flat roof, and minimal ornamentation, is also modernist in design, as were the two buildings Gudger's firm designed for Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.<sup>148</sup> Most of Gudger's school buildings are no longer extant and have been replaced by new buildings. Of those properties still in use as schools, Lake Junaluska was replaced in 1974 and Bethel School was replaced in 2006.<sup>149</sup> Central Elementary School (1954, 62 Joy Lane, Waynesville, North Carolina) is the only other known remaining school building from the mid-twentieth-century, designed by Gudger, with Pigeon Street School being the other one, that remains in Haywood County. Central Elementary School is also modernist in its design, with brick walls, horizontal massing, bands of windows, and a shallow-pitch gable roof. Triangular concrete partitions divide the bays and support overhanging roofs at the entries, the building's only ornamentation that provides a break from the single unornamented planes of the building's elevations.

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<sup>144</sup> Haywood County School Board Minutes, October 21, 1953.

<sup>145</sup> Haywood County School Board Minutes, February 12, 1954.

<sup>146</sup> Haywood County School Board Minutes, May 2, 1956.

<sup>147</sup> North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://ncroom.buncombecounty.org/Presto/search/SearchResults.aspx?q=YXJjaGl0ZWN0IGd1ZGdlcg%3d%3d>.

<sup>148</sup> North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://ncroom.buncombecounty.org/Presto/search/SearchResults.aspx?q=YXJjaGl0ZWN0IGd1ZGdlcg%3d%3d>.

<sup>149</sup> Haywood County School Board, accessed September 2, 2020, <https://www.haywood.k12.nc.us/schools/>.

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In addition to his busy architectural practice, Lindsey Gudger served as the president of the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects beginning in 1950.<sup>150</sup> In 1960, towards the end of his career, Gudger designed a National Guard Armory for Asheville.<sup>151</sup>

### Architectural Context

Modernism was a trend which began in earnest in North Carolina post World War II, with North Carolina State University's School of Design leading the way. Architects and engineers began to follow the modern trends, using "...materials such as masonry, glass, and steel to break with tradition and reflect the period's seemingly progressive post-World War II mindset...modernism's ideals of simplicity, efficiency, practicality, and use of honest materials found widespread use in educational buildings..."<sup>152</sup> Horizontal form and massing, flat roofs, minimal ornamentation, bands of steel frame windows to allow for good cross ventilation, and placement of these windows related to interior spaces rather than to symmetry were typical features of modernist school buildings. Solid masonry construction, often with exposed painted concrete block for the interiors of classroom walls, was also typical of these mid-twentieth-century buildings, along with concrete structural systems that allowed for large open expanses for cafeterias and auditoriums.<sup>153</sup>

In the context of mid-twentieth-century schools, there are only four schools remaining in Haywood County which date from this time, Reynolds High School (1948, 262 Reynolds School Road, Canton, North Carolina); Pisgah High School (1966, 1 Black Bear Drive, Canton, North Carolina); Tuscola High School (1966, 564 Tuscola School Road, Waynesville, North Carolina); and Central Elementary School (1954, 62 Joy Lane, Waynesville, North Carolina). Reynolds High School, discussed in this nomination, and the only African American high school in Haywood County until schools were desegregated in 1966, while built in 1948, displays elements of the late use of the Art Deco style in its stylized entries on all sides of the building. Other than that, the one-story brick building is modern in horizontal massing, flat roof, and bands of windows. This building is currently undergoing renovation by the RHS Community Foundation, with a playground built on what appears to have been the football field. Window openings are currently being changed from the original configuration, with the lower half infilled with block and new windows added above, detracting from the building's architectural integrity. Pisgah High School, while built in 1966, is a complex of one-story brick buildings with gable and hip roofs, dating from that time but primarily comprised of what appears to be later contemporary additions. Tuscola High School, also originally built in 1966, appears to retain some elements of its 1966 design, but also has many one- and two-story contemporary additions with gable roofs. Of all of these buildings, Central Elementary School, completed in 1954, is the most discernible as an example of a mid-1950s school building. The one-story brick building

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<sup>150</sup>"Gudger Heads N.C. Chapter of Institute". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 8, 1950.

<sup>151</sup>*Asheville Citizen-Times*, April 15, 1960.

<sup>152</sup> "Cedar Grove School". National Register nomination, 4/23/2020, p. 8-25.

<sup>153</sup> "Cedar Grove School". National Register nomination, 4/23/2020, p. 8-25.



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with a shallow gable roof retains its horizontal massing, bands of windows, and notable concrete inverted triangles demarcating classroom divisions and breaking the monotony of a continuous building plane. Windows may be contemporary replacements but are within the original openings in all cases. Entry doors are recessed within concrete walls and a front-gable roof. Changes to the building include a standing seam metal roof, possibly altered from a flat roof to allow for installation of mechanical equipment. The tall one-story gymnasium space at the rear of the building retains its original double-leaf entry door.

In contrast and comparison, Pigeon Street School, except for the removal of the stage in the cafeteria/gymnasium wing and the replacement with a solid wall, remains essentially as it was when it was built in 1957, including its brick exterior and entry doors, original floor plan, original floor and ceiling finishes, windows, built-in cabinetry, and heating system. The building is an excellent example of modernist architecture, with its horizontal massing, bands of steel frame windows, solid masonry construction, exposed concrete block interior walls, and concrete roof structure system to allow for the large expanse of the cafeteria/gymnasium. Like many of the mid-twentieth-century remaining African American schools, it is currently in use as a community center.

Pigeon Street School  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Western Office, Archives & History

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** HW0128

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2.8 acres  
Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 320052 | Northing: 3928465 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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

The boundary is shown with a dark line on the accompanying boundary and sketch map, at a scale of 1" = 100', dated November 25, 2019. The tax parcel identification number is 8615-44-3633, as indicated in Haywood County tax records.

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

The boundary includes the entire parcel historically associated with the school, including the school building, playground, and open field, but not including the sidewalks to the north and east that border the property.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Sybil H. Argintar  
organization: Southeastern Preservation Services  
street & number: 166 Pearson Drive  
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28801  
e-mail sybil.argintar@yahoo.com  
telephone: (828) 230-3773  
date: September 3, 2020

Pigeon Street School  
Name of Property

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
- **Photographs** Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Pigeon Street School

City or Vicinity: Waynesville

County: Haywood

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Sybil Argintar

Date Photographed: March 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 11. Site and building location, view southwest.
- 2 of 11. Main entry on north elevation, view south.
- 3 of 11. West elevation, view southeast.
- 4 of 11. Entry on east elevation, view west.
- 5 of 11. East and south elevation, view northwest.
- 6 of 11. South elevation and open field to rear, view north.
- 7 of 11. Main hallway, view east.
- 8 of 11. Typical classroom, view southeast.
- 9 of 11. Cafeteria/gymnasium, view northwest.
- 10 of 11. Entry hall, view north.
- 11 of 11. Entry hall, view south.

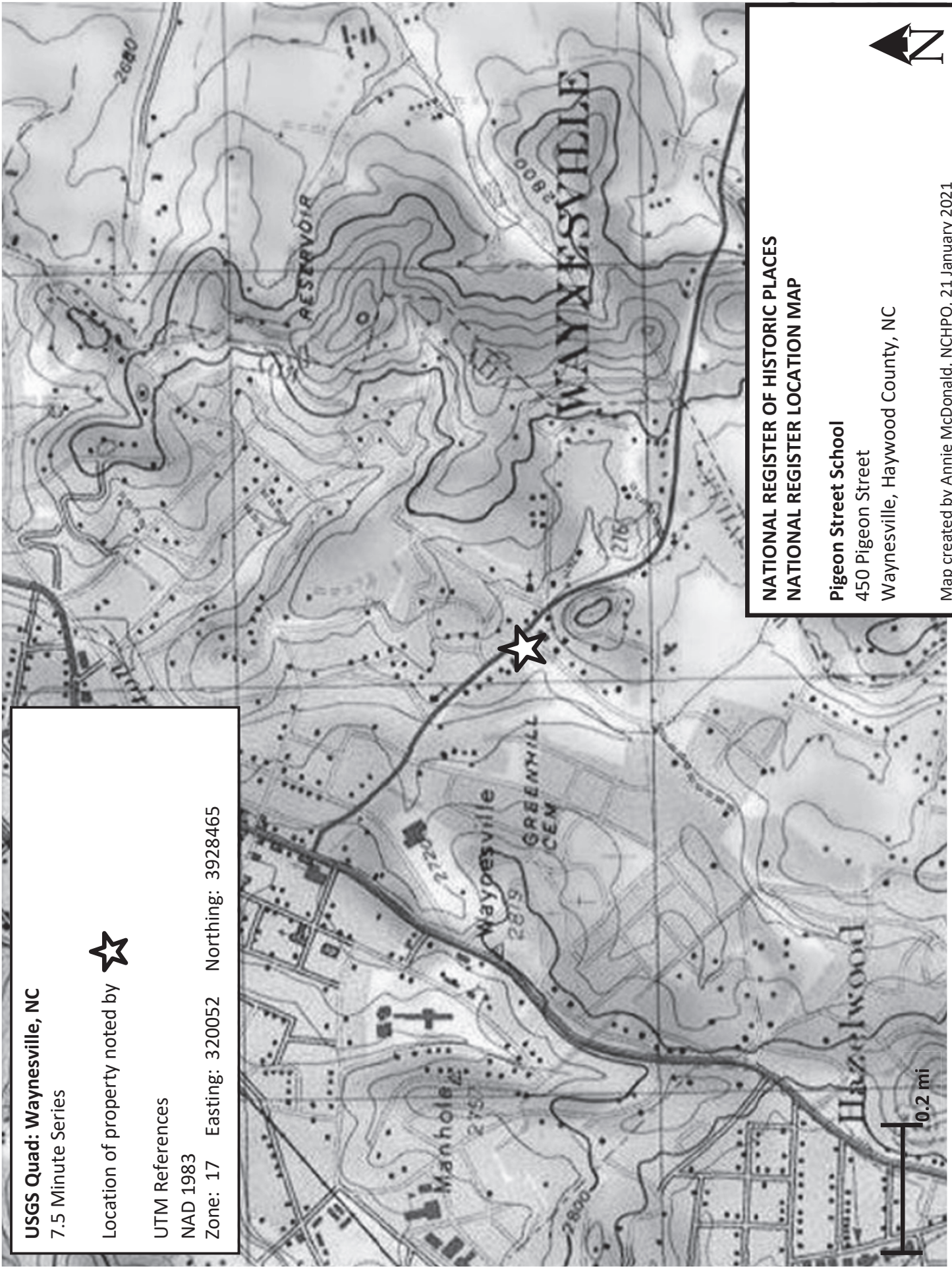
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

USGS Quad: Waynesville, NC  
7.5 Minute Series

Location of property noted by 

UTM References  
NAD 1983  
Zone: 17 Easting: 320052 Northing: 3928465



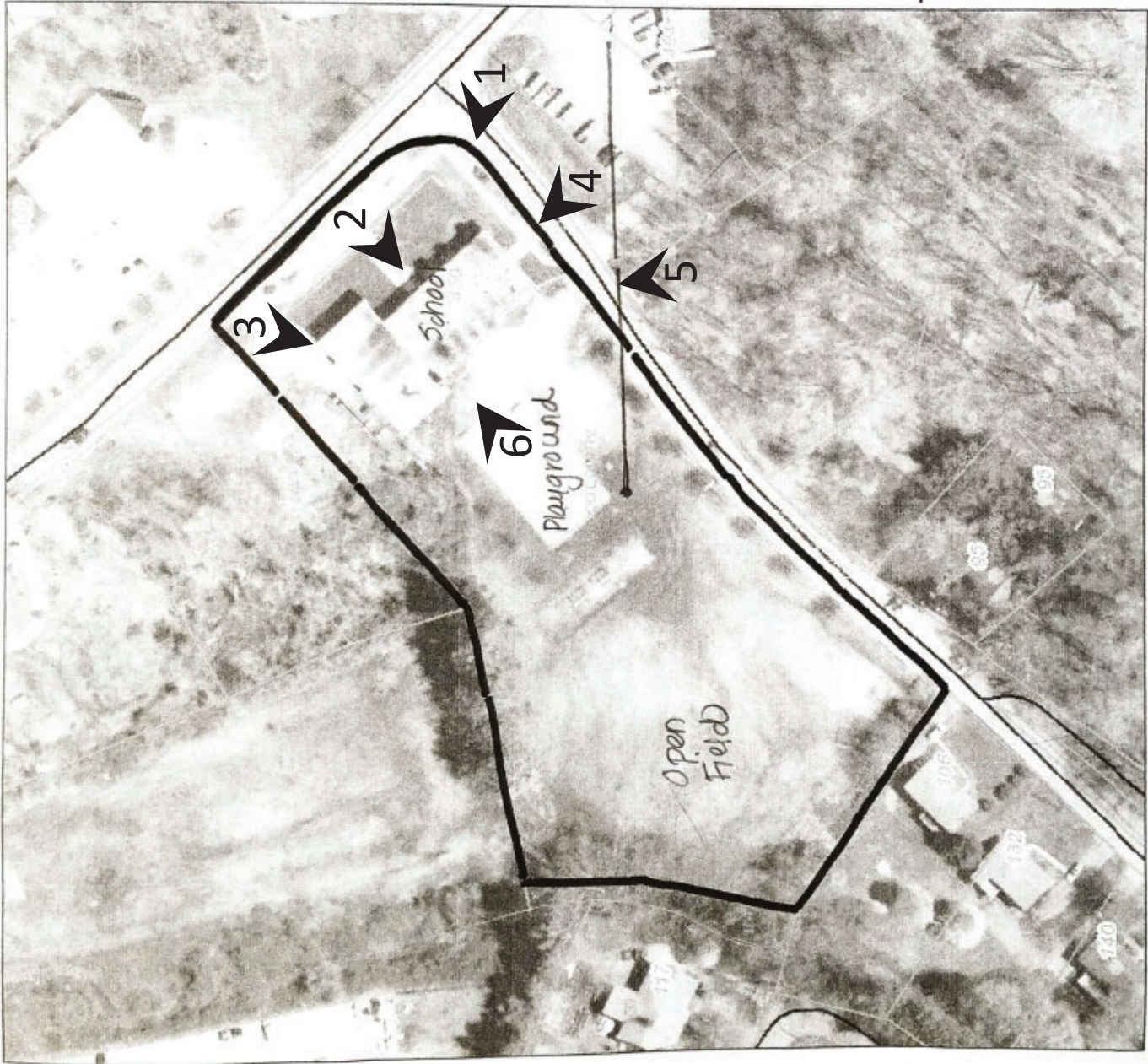
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL REGISTER LOCATION MAP**

**Pigeon Street School**  
450 Pigeon Street  
Waynesville, Haywood County, NC



Map created by Annie McDonald, NCHPO, 21 January 2021





UTMs	3928465
Northing	320052
Easting	



0' 100'



1 inch = 100 feet  
November 25, 2019

Disclaimer: The maps on this site are not surveys. They are prepared from the inventory of real property found within this jurisdiction and are compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this site are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification of any information contained on these maps. Haywood County and the website provider assume no legal responsibility for the information contained on these maps.

Pigeon Street School, 450 Pigeon Street  
Waynesville, NC  
Haywood County

Boundary and Sketch Map

— National Register Boundary

Tax Parcel # 8615-44-3633