

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Harmon School

Laurel Springs vicinity, Wilkes County, WK0449, Listed 12/29/2020
Nomination by Eric Plaag, PhD, Carolina Historical Consulting, LLC
Photographs by Eric Plaag, March and April 2019



Northeast elevation of school, looking southwest



Interior view of school classroom, looking northwest

**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 Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Harmon School

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: Sheets Gap Road, 0.6 miles west of intersection with Buckwheat Branch RoadCity or town: Laurel Springs State: NC County: WilkesNot For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☒ XMailing address: 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

11-20-2020

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

1

Noncontributing

1

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

2

objects

1

3

Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION—School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL—Meeting Hall

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: BRICK, CONCRETE, WOOD—Log, STONE

Walls: WOOD—Weatherboard

Roof: METAL—Tin

Chimneys: BRICK

Porches: WOOD

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Harmon School sits on a heavily wooded, two-acre parcel in a sparsely developed area just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in northern Wilkes County, North Carolina. Likely completed in 1921, the Harmon School is a one-story, wood-frame building resting on a pier foundation and possesses a hipped, tin-clad roof. Reflecting the Progressive school designs of the late 1910s and early 1920s innovated by the Tuskegee Institute for the Rosenwald schools for black children in the South, the Harmon School, which was a whites-only school, features large, double-hung sash windows on all four sides of the building that dramatically addressed lighting and ventilation concerns of the students and teacher. Also of note is the deeply recessed entry porch with its two entry doors designed to facilitate division of the single

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schoolroom into a divided space by use of a folding partition between the two halves of the schoolroom. Also on the site is a wood-frame privy that is a reconstruction using some original materials of a privy that had been located at the same site. The present owners extensively rehabilitated the main school building in the 1980s.

The Harmon School displays a remarkably high degree of integrity for an educational property of this type from the period in Wilkes County. It is the only rural, one-room school built during the 1920s and incorporating early Progressive design features that is known to survive in Wilkes County.

Narrative Description

The Setting

The Harmon School is located in a very remote, mountainous, and thinly settled area of Wilkes County known as Union Township. The nearest centers of population are the unincorporated communities of Laurel Springs (Alleghany County), located eight miles to the northeast, and Glendale Springs (Ashe County), located five miles to the southwest.¹ The Harmon School sits on a two-acre, irregularly shaped parcel located on the south side of Sheets Gap Road just southeast of 8535 Sheets Gap Road and between the branches of the headwaters of Darnell Creek. Sheets Gap Road is an alternating gravel and paved road that wends its way through the mountains of northern Wilkes County, North Carolina, reflecting the continued remoteness of this part of Wilkes County. The eastern half of the parcel, including the area where the school is located, is fairly open, save for some relatively recent plantings of young dogwoods along the driveway leading from Sheets Gap Road toward the school. The western half of the parcel is heavily wooded with a mix of hardwood and coniferous trees.

The school building and a nearby, reconstructed privy sit on an irregularly shaped parcel that the trustees of the Wilkes County Board of Education acquired in August 1920 from Rufus Sheets and his wife Mary J. Sheets. This parcel was described at that time as being two acres in size with a west boundary of 420 feet, a south boundary of 225 feet, an east boundary of 330 feet, and north boundary (along Sheets Gap Road) of 276 feet, and it was consistently described this way in all subsequent deed transactions, including one completed by the present owner for estate planning purposes in 2013.² Inexplicably, county tax records currently illustrate this parcel, apparently in error, as 1.27 acres in size with a west boundary of 338 feet, a south boundary of 184 feet, an east boundary of 239 feet, and a north boundary (along Sheets Gap Road) of 219 feet. The present owner indicates he has made no reapportionments or other changes to the land to account for the discrepancy. For these reasons, the current, legally described parcel of two acres is believed to represent the original acreage of the Harmon School site and is relied upon for the purposes of this nomination. Most of the adjacent land is heavily wooded, with two parcels to the north and west owned by the Harmon School site owner and two parcels to the south and east owned by

¹ Geographically speaking, Glendale Springs is the nearest community, but this section of Sheets Gap Road is addressed to Laurel Springs.

² See Rufus and Mary J. Sheets to James Kilby, et al, County Board of Education Wilkes, August 2, 1920, Deed Book 116, Page 190, Wilkes County Register of Deeds; Board of Education of Wilkes County to Mrs. G. D. Miller, July 18, 1955, Deed Book 438, Page 232, Wilkes County Register of Deeds; Mrs. G. D. Miller to ISK Reeves, V, and Sara W. Reeves, October 15, 1984, Deed Book 627, Page 73, Wilkes County Register of Deeds; and ISK Reeves V and Sara W. Reeves to Sara W. Reeves and ISK Reeves V, Co-Trustees of the Sara W. Reeves Revocable Trust, January 10, 2013, Deed Book 1163, Page 273, Wilkes County Register of Deeds.

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another landowner. To this end, the Harmon School retains a clear sense of connection with its historic context in terms of both the feeling and character of the property.

Historic Buildings and Resources

The Harmon School property consists of one contributing building, one non-contributing building, and two non-contributing objects. The contributing building is the school itself, which is located approximately 200 feet southwest from a gated driveway entrance at Sheets Gap Road (Photo 1). The non-contributing building is a partially reconstructed privy located approximately 60 feet due west of the southwest corner of the school building. The first non-contributing object is the split-rail fencing and gate structure located along Sheets Gap Road, which is a relatively recent addition to the property and is not historically associated with the school's operation. The second non-contributing object is a wood, historical marker erected near the driveway entrance.

The Harmon School (1921)—Contributing Building

Local tradition typically reports that the Harmon School was built in 1920, but historical documentation discussed in Section 8 strongly suggests that the school was not actually completed until sometime in 1921. The school is a single-story, wood-frame, hip-roofed building set on piers of various materials. While bricks resting on flagstones, as well as a few instances of concrete blocks, make up the majority of the pier materials found around the perimeter of the building, careful examination underneath the school reveals that tree stumps were also used to support the building at its center. Some of these materials—particularly the concrete blocks—appear to be recently added materials that were used to replace failed piers, probably as part of renovations completed by the present owners following their purchase of the site in 1984.

The northeast, main elevation of the school (Photo 2) is remarkable for its deeply recessed entrance porch beneath the gabled, northeast extension to the main block of the school. As with the rest of the school building, the exterior of this northeast extension is clad in shiplap, including the area within the covered porch. This porch is reached via a set of concrete steps with brick, stepped, cheek walls, both of which may not be original but were certainly present in a circa 1960s image provided by the owner. A wood sign with the painted words "Harmon School" hangs over the porch entrance. Beadboard covers the porch ceiling, while the porch floor is composed of painted, wood planks, with wood sills at each entry door to the school. Doors are five-paneled, wood replacements added in the 1980s, with a long, vertical panel pair above a horizontal panel just below the mid-height of the door, followed by a smaller, vertical panel pair on the lower portion of the door. This design exactly duplicates the original doors seen in an early 1960s image of the school, before the original doors disappeared from the property.

Exposed rafter tails are visible under the eaves of the southeast and northwest sides of the gabled extension, while roofing on the gabled extension, as well as the main block of the school, is standing seam metal with alternating half-seams at the center of each metal sheet. A rectangular, cupola bell tower caps this gabled extension and contains a replica version of the original bell that originally occupied the tower. A pronounced, wood finial (a faithful replacement of the rotted original, which is stored in the school) extends above the bell tower's pyramidal roof, which is clad in standing seam tin. Exposed rafter tails are visible on all four sides of the bell tower eaves. Beneath the gable, a diamond-shaped vent provides circulation to the school's attic, while below this, two four-over-four, double-hung sash, wood windows with wood frames and sills flank the recessed porch entrance. It is important to note that none of the original, exterior windows or doors from the school survive. Instead, the present windows and doors are single-pane, wood replacements designed to replicate the appearance of the originals. Windows rely

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on the use of interior, snap-in muntins, producing a look that is surprisingly faithful to the appearance of the originals. The northwest and southeast sides of the gabled extension are featureless, aside from the covering shiplap.

Flanking the gabled, northeast extension are two, four-over-four, double-hung sash, wood windows with wood frames and sills. Open rafter tails are visible under the eaves of the southeast and northwest sides of the gabled extension, as well as under the entire roofline of the main block of the school. The northwest (Photos 3 and 4) and southeast (Photo 5) elevations continue these details, with each elevation featuring a pair of four-over-four, double-hung sash, wood windows with wood frames and sills. There is some indication that vertical pieces of weatherboard may have been used as a skirt to obscure the crawlspace under the building, although it's not clear if this was an original detail or something added mid-century (but before 1970). The southwest elevation (Photo 4), meanwhile, features four four-over-four, double-hung sash, wood windows with wood frames and sills. These are arranged in two symmetrical groupings, apparently to correspond to the sometimes-divided classroom space inside (two windows to each half). A brick foundation for the interior chimney flue is evident at the center point of this southwest elevation.

While originally built to contain a folding partition along the northeast-southwest axis at the center of the building's interior, the Harmon School no longer retains this partition feature, which was apparently removed shortly after the school opened.³ Nevertheless, a difference in stain color across the existing wood floor still indicates the position of this partition. Running along the northwest-southeast axis (Photos 6 and 7) at the center of the main block of the building are several posts supporting a beam composed of several sections of wood with overlapping diagonal cuts at their ends. One of these posts is a replacement, but the others are original, as is the composite beam itself. Walls are composed of milled planks that have been painted, while the ceiling is of painted beadboard. At the center of the southwest wall, a rectangular, interior chimney rises through the room and into the attic, although it does not penetrate the roof. Instead, two metal flue openings, one of which retains its stove thimble, are visible at angles (one directed to each half of the room) just below the ceiling line. No other interior opening is present in the chimney, thus suggesting that a potbelly stove was present in each half of the room and vented at ceiling height into the chimney. It's not clear why the exterior portion of the chimney is no longer extant above the roofline, although there is some evidence of patching in the metal roof where this chimney almost certainly emerged.

Also present at the southeast end of the building's interior is a raised platform with two steps descending to the overall floor level in the room (Photo 6); this feature, including the steps, occupies the full width of the southeast end of the room. The current owner speculates that the teacher's desk was likely located at this end of the room, where the light would have been better during the early part of the day, but this platform could have also served as a stage or presentation area when the partition was open and all students were being addressed. Along the northeast wall, two doorways flanking the central entrance doors lead to the cloakrooms. The east cloakroom (Photo 8) contains a cord extending down from the bell tower, allowing for the bell to be rung. Cloakroom walls are milled planks that have been stained. Historic graffiti (as well as some more recent graffiti) still adorns the walls of this cloakroom and the north cloakroom, some in chalk or pencil, while other examples are carved into the wood. Replacement, six-panel, wood doors lead into each cloakroom. The north cloakroom (Photo 9), meanwhile, has a large, wood, rough-framed staircase—a post-1984 addition—wrapping around the room and leading up to the

³ The removal of the partition is not well documented, but local tradition holds that it was not present after the first few years. This information is based on descriptions given to the present owner in the 1980s by a neighbor who had attended the school in the 1930s and had no recollection of the partition. The present owner advises that the partition was definitely not present at the time of purchase in the mid-1980s.

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bell tower. Original access consisted of a simple, wood ladder nailed directly to the southwest wall of the north cloakroom.

The owners currently have several theater seats from an old movie theater in West Jefferson, North Carolina, screwed to moveable plywood bases stored in the classroom, as well as some wood pedestals for art displays. These materials are not permanent fixtures and are present solely for ongoing community use of the space.

Privy (reconstruction of one of two 1921 privies)—Non-Contributing Building

Located approximately 60 feet to the west of the Harmon School is a small, rectangular, wood, two-seater privy with a pyramidal roof clad in raised-seam metal (Photo 10). Two such privies were extant when the school opened (one for males, one for females), but by the time the present owners acquired the property, one privy was gone and the other had largely collapsed. The current iteration is a mostly faithful reconstruction of one of these privies that was originally at the site, thus helping to communicate the integrity of the setting, even if the outbuilding lacks in some other aspects of integrity.⁴ Access is via a strap-hinged door clad in weatherboard, while the remainder of the privy is also clad in weatherboard. A four-light fan window is present along the south elevation of the privy; it's not clear whether this was a speculative feature or part of the original design. Inside, the privy box is framed out in plywood, with modern toilet seats covering the two privy holes. The privy appears to be functional, as toilet paper is present in the building.

Split-Rail Yard Fence (circa 1990)—Non-Contributing Object

Running along Sheets Gap Road, a portion of the driveway closest to the road, and the southeast and southwest boundaries is a split-rail yard fence installed by the present owners sometime after their purchase of the property in 1984 (Photo 1). The arrangement consists of doubled posts supporting the split rails between the paired posts. This feature is not considered a contributing resource.

Historical Marker (circa 1990)—Non-Contributing Object

Another non-contributing resource on the property is a small, wood sign affixed to a pair of wood posts with a flat, wood board atop the sign and between the posts as a drip edge over the signage (Photo 1). Stenciled onto the wood signboard is the following: "HISTORIC HARMON SCHOOL This two room school was built in 1920 on land donated by Rufus & Mary Jane Sheets. It closed in the 1950's and was then used for a variety of functions: community meetings and parties, family reunions and to dry herbs. The school was restored by Keith & Sara Reeves in 1985-1986 and continues to be important to the community of Sheets Gap Road. Private property posted."

Integrity

The contributing resource at the Harmon School, consisting of the main school building, is original to the property and retains a high degree of integrity. It remains in its original location and in a setting that has changed little since the Harmon School was first built in 1921. In addition, the Harmon School building

⁴ The present owner indicates that Ray Miller, who had attended the school as a child in the early part of the school's tenure, actually built the replica privy in the mid-1980s, with other neighbors who had attended the school complimenting him on the privy's startling resemblance to the original, save for the four-light fan window that was added from surplus stock in the owner's possession to provide a natural light source.

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retains all character-defining architectural features, and the present owners have replaced most of those original materials that were lost during the building's long period of abandonment and decay (1953-1984). Current windows remain wood, single-pane windows and utilize an attached, interior grid to replicate the original, four-light sash appearance. Current doors are also wood (as original) and replicate the panel pattern of the originals as seen in an early 1960s photograph. The primary exception—the folding partition—is not well documented either here or in other Wilkes County rural schoolhouses of the era, so the present owners have been reluctant to attempt a speculative feature as a replacement. Nevertheless, evidence of this partition still survives in the ghost pattern on the original flooring of the interior classroom. The non-contributing building, the privy, represents a mostly faithful reconstruction of a resource known to have existed at the property during its period of significance and is located on the original site of one of the two historic privies. In this manner, the privy actually helps to communicate the integrity of the overall setting for the property. Unfortunately, the lack of original materials and evidence of original workmanship, as well as the presence of a likely speculative feature in the four-light fan window, suggest a lack of overall integrity that makes it difficult to list the resource as a contributing building.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

The Harmon School is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological deposits, such as structural remains of the original privies, debris that accumulated on the property during operation of the school, remnant landscape features such as paths, and other remains that may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the Harmon School. Information concerning institutional culture, the spatial organization of outdoor activities, and the character of daily life at the school can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the Harmon School. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

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Period of Significance

1920-1954

Significant Dates

1920, 1921, 1953, 1954

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 Harmon School is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its role as an experiment in transition away from the poor design of most one-room, rural schools in Wilkes County during the early twentieth century. These earlier schools often lacked appropriate ventilation, light, and hygiene, even as they were improvements over the log huts and frame cabins that served as school buildings in the nineteenth century. Apparently influenced by the Progressive designs of at least four Rosenwald schools being built in 1920 for black students, the Wilkes County Board of Education, under the direction of C. C. Wright as superintendent, authorized construction of a rural white school at Harmon that incorporated many of the Progressive features lifted from the Tuskegee Institute's designs for the Rosenwald schools for black schoolchildren. While the general trend thereafter in Wilkes County was a move toward consolidation of schools, bussing of students to centrally located school buildings, and an eventual reliance on brick-built school buildings, the construction of the Harmon School allowed the Wilkes County Board of Education to experiment with Progressive design ideas as it pondered the future of white school construction in the county.

In addition, the Harmon School is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of a rural, frame, one-room schoolhouse with partition in Wilkes County built during the 1920s.

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It is the only such example known to survive in the county. The Harmon School demonstrates a high degree of integrity for its combination of original materials and largely unchanged form, in large part resulting from the meticulous restoration completed by the present owners after they purchased the property in 1984. The Harmon School also bears a striking resemblance to the Knottville School (no longer extant), a Tuskegee-era Rosenwald School once located in the county (possibly in an area to the northeast of North Wilkesboro), thus amplifying the importance of Progressive school architecture on the Harmon School's design.

The selected period of significance (1920 to 1954) corresponds to the year when the Wilkes County Board of Education authorized construction of the Harmon School and the year when the Wilkes County Board of Education authorized the sale of the Harmon School and its land as surplus property.

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

Historical Background

Three principal, geographic regions define Wilkes County, which is approximately 755 square miles in total area and located in the northwestern part of North Carolina.⁵ The southeast portion of Wilkes County lies in the North Carolina Piedmont, while the foothills and stream valleys of the Blue Ridge dominate the middle section of the county, where the county seat of Wilkesboro is located, with the Yadkin River running southwest to northeast through the center of the county. The Harmon School lies in the northwestern section of Wilkes County, which is made up predominantly of the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains running southwest to northeast through this part of the county. This rural, northwestern section has long been characterized by steep, rugged terrain, generally poor soils for agriculture, and, as a result of both factors, poorly developed roads and infrastructure for the local residents.

Prior to the tenure of Charles Calvin ("C. C.") Wright as the Wilkes County Superintendent of Schools (1899-1933), most of the rural schools in Wilkes County consisted of subscription schools that were frequently windowless huts with a single door that was usually propped open to provide some measure of light, even if this meant the heat from the fireplace would escape in winter.⁶ While a shift occurred in the late 1890s that led to the construction of a number of frame cabins for use as schools, most still lacked appropriate light, heat, and ventilation. Reporting in 1926, the *Wilkes County School News* highlighted the deplorable condition of Wilkes County schools at the turn of the century: "The school houses were rude log or frame cabins without desks or any other sort of suitable equipment. The school term was a bare two months, usually in the dead of winter. There were no school libraries."⁷

To combat the many deficiencies of the educational infrastructure in the county, Wright began enforcing the requirements of a new state school law and communicating expectations to the various school committee members throughout the county. Among his requirements, Wright insisted that new schools be built on land actually owned by the school board, and he required teachers to test students on a monthly

⁵ United States Census Bureau, "Quick Facts: Wilkes County, North Carolina," webpage, accessed August 17, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wilkescountynorthcarolina,NC/PST045219>.

⁶ Lawrence D. Washington, "Confessions of Schoolmaster," excerpt quoted in Mr. and Mrs. Gwyn Vannoy, "Education in Wilkes County, 1865-1898," Wilkes County Retired School Personnel, *Lest We Forget: Education in Wilkes, 1778-1978*, (Winston-Salem, NC: Hunter Publishing Co., 1979), 85.

⁷ F. B. Hendren, "To the Man and His Work This Number of the News is Respectfully Dedicated," *Wilkes County School News*, 3:1, November 1926, quoted in J. Jay Anderson, "Charles Calvin Wright, Wilkes County Superintendent of Schools, Public Education, 1899-1933," *Lest We Forget*, 138.

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basis, then provide those results to Wright, in order to demonstrate that students were making educational progress.⁸ Wright also began an aggressive building campaign, with the number of frame school buildings in the county growing in just six years from 68 in 1901 to 110 in 1907, even as the census of school-aged children increased by only ten percent during that same period.⁹ While many of these newer schools were an improvement over the log huts and frame cabins of the past, they still often lacked design elements that adequately addressed the needs of students and teachers as far as ventilation, light, and hygiene. Based on surviving images of many of these schools from the early part of the twentieth century, most one-room schools appear to have been little more than cavernous, wood shells that resembled simple, country church buildings. Windows were scant, so lighting and ventilation remained poor.¹⁰

Two important events occurred in 1920 that would shape the future of education along Sheets Gap Road in Wilkes County. First, construction began about that time on four schools for black students in Wilkes County that received funding and design help from the Rosenwald Fund. This construction work exposed the Wilkes County Board of Education to the Tuskegee Institute plans for the early Rosenwald schools, which emphasized Progressive design ideas that addressed concerns about lighting, ventilation, and hygiene in the physical form of the school building.¹¹ One of these schools was a Type 2 Tuskegee school built circa 1920-21 and listed in the Fisk database of Rosenwald schools as the Knottville School. The exact location of the Knottville School is not known—indeed, no school of this name was listed in the 1931-32 list of county schools—but the Fisk photograph of the Knottville School shows a building of similar form and design to the Harmon School, despite some minor differences in fenestration, suggesting that the county decided to implement a modified form of the Tuskegee school plan at the Harmon site.¹²

Second, responding to a 1919 petition from local residents, the Wilkes County Board of Education, at its June 1920 meeting, authorized J. H. Pennel to go to District 8 of Union Township "for the purpose of

⁸ C. C. Wright to "School Committeemen of Wilkes County," November 22, 1899, quoted in *Lest We Forget*, 140-42.

⁹ See "Progress in Education in Wilkes County (1901-1907)," Appendix A, *Lest We Forget*, 418.

¹⁰ While images for all of the early Wilkes County schools do not survive, a nice assortment of images of early twentieth-century schools, including several one-room schools, can be found in Wilkes County Retired School Personnel, *Lest We Forget: Education in Wilkes County, North Carolina, Volume II: 1975-2009*, (Conover, NC: Goosepen Studio and Press, 2015), 85-111. Several other examples can be found scattered throughout Fay Bird, compiler and editor, *Wilkes County—Bits and Pieces*, (Wilkesboro, NC: Division of Learning Resources, Pardue and James Larkin Pearson Libraries, Wilkes Community College, 2010).

¹¹ For a brief history of the Rosenwald program in Wilkes County, see Heather Slane and Cheri Szcudronski, *Lincoln Heights School, Wilkes County, North Carolina*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, January 2018, 19, available online at <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WK0314.pdf>. Slane and Szcudronski attribute all four schools to construction in 1920. A broader, MPDF documentation of the Rosenwald program throughout North Carolina, however, attributes the Wilkesboro (Type 4) and Yadkin Valley (Type 2) Rosenwald Schools as being built in 1915-16, with Knottville (Type 2) and Rhonda (Type 1) being built in 1920-21. If this latter source is correct, this means that Wilkes County had already enjoyed several years of opportunity to evaluate the success of the progressive Rosenwald designs. See Kyle Obenauer and Claudia Brown, *Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, July 9, 2015, 45, available online at <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/NC04.pdf>.

¹² For the Fisk listing of Knottville School, including a photograph of the building, see "Knottville School," Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, webpage, accessed August 17, 2020, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/index.php?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9MzExNg==&o=2280. Annie McDonald of the Western Office of the NC SHPO has speculated that this school may have been located approximately six miles northeast of North Wilkesboro, in the vicinity of modern Knotville Rd., just off Elkin Highway. For the 1931-32 list of schools, see "Preliminary Statistical Report of the Wilkes County Schools for the School Year 1931-1932," Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, pages 55-57.

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locating a school house site."¹³ This exercise appears to have culminated in the identification of approximately two acres of land owned by Rufus and Mary Sheets along Sheets Gap Road as an ideal school site.¹⁴ At its September 7, 1920, meeting, the board then authorized the construction of a new school house in District 8, with the contract to be issued on the first Monday in October to the lowest bidder following advertisement for bids.¹⁵ This advertisement appeared promptly in the local paper, requesting bids for a building "to be 26 X 40 feet, with two cloak rooms, each 6 X 8 feet with a hall between 8 feet wide. The building will include a belfry, stove flue, and a folding partition between the two rooms."¹⁶

Construction of the Harmon School is sometimes attributed to Dorcas Bare, always without evidence or citation.¹⁷ This appears to be an errant attribution, as no individual by that name was enumerated in the vicinity of Wilkes County in the 1920 or 1930 Federal Census. A far more likely candidate is either Jacob Bare (1881-1956), a local farmer who was listed in the 1920 Federal Census as residing at Darnell in Union Township along Sheets Gap Road, or Andrew Leandre ("Lee") Bare (1882-1952), another farmer who resided on Sheets Gap Road in 1920.¹⁸ In any case, two transactions do appear in the records of the Wilkes County Board of Education related to the construction of the Harmon School. The first is a payment of \$150 to Rufus Sheets for the "building site" on which the school was to be located.¹⁹ The second is a payment of \$500 to "Bare and Bare" for the construction of the new building.²⁰ This latter payment was not authorized until March 1921, strongly suggesting that the building was not complete until that time.

Some locals have struggled to explain the association of the Harmon name with the school. A 1918 soil map of Wilkes County appears to solve this mystery, however. As depicted on this map, directly across Sheets Gap Road from the eventual location of the school is a short path leading up the hill to a household

¹³ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Three, 1905-1920, December 1, 1919, page 532; and Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Three, 1905-1920, July 5, 1920, page 586, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

¹⁴ Rufus Sheets and Mary J. Sheets to James Kilby, Claude Faw, and James Pennell, August 2, 1920, Deed Book 116, Page 190, Wilkes County Register of Deeds.

¹⁵ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Four, 1920-1931, September 7, 1920, page 10, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; and *Carter's Weekly*, September 10, 1920: 2.

¹⁶ *Carter's Weekly*, September 17, 1920: 6. No direct evidence documenting board action to award the contract has been found.

¹⁷ For one such attribution, see Misty Bass, "West Wilkes High School District," *Wilkes County—Bits and Pieces*, Fay Byrd, Compiler and Editor, (Wilkesboro, NC: Division of Learning Resources, Pardue and James Larkin Pearson Libraries, Wilkes Community College, 2010), 329.

¹⁸ Ancestry.com. 1920 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Lee Bare later served on the Harmon School's advisory committee. See "Board Education Names Committees Schools in Wilkes for 2-Year Term," *Journal-Patriot*, April 12, 1937: 1, 8; and "School Committees Named," *Journal-Patriot*, April 13, 1939: 1, 4.

¹⁹ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Four, 1920-1931, September 7, 1920, page 11, and "Building and Incidental Fund" accounting, July 1-October 1, 1920, page 24, North Carolina Department of Archives and History. See also Rufus Sheets and Mary J. Sheets to James Kilby, Claude Faw, and James Pennell, August 2, 1920, Deed Book 116, Page 190, Wilkes County Register of Deeds. Some sources report—apparently in error—that the Sheetsses donated the land for the school.

²⁰ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Four, 1920-1931, March 7, 1921, page 58, and "Building and Incidental Fund" accounting, January 1-April 1, 1921, page 85, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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marked with the name “Harmon.”²¹ While not the formal name of the community at that time, the school’s close proximity to the Harmon residence apparently earned its association with that name. While most early formal references to the school refer to it simply as the school building in “Union District No. 8,” the colloquial association apparently caught on fairly quickly. The first newspaper reference to the Harmon School appeared in 1924.²²

Thereafter, the Wilkes County Board of Education occasionally made minor investments in the Harmon School. In 1933, for example, the board authorized an expenditure of \$257.10 for “improvements of grounds, making wall for spring, and construction school desks.”²³ At some point—probably in the late 1930s as part of rural electrification efforts—the school also received electrical wiring, although no formal documentation of this improvement has been found. The school also served during the evening and on non-school days as a meeting place for the local community. Home Demonstration agents provided community education opportunities about canning at the school during the summer of 1934.²⁴ In 1936, Republican candidates chose the school for a speaking engagement, and in 1938, the local Young Republicans organization held its meeting at the schoolhouse.²⁵

Enrollment at the whites-only Harmon School is difficult to track over the years but one snapshot from the early 1930s offers a baseline. In 1931-32, for example, the county school census indicated a total of 74 elementary school-aged children in the community, with 56 actually enrolled at the Harmon School (at this point part of Wilkes County School District 3) with an average daily enrollment of 53. Average daily attendance was 48, with just 21 of those students being promoted at the end of the year. The school year lasted 120 days.²⁶ By 1953, however, Harmon School enrollments must have plummeted. On May 4, 1953, the Wilkes County Board of Education voted to notify teachers from six different schools, including Mr. M. B. Parks of the Harmon School, that “due to the small attendance...their teaching contract was being terminated with the close of the present school term.”²⁷ Nevertheless, the school remained listed in the Wilkes County School Plan for 1954-55, and on September 7, 1954, Virginia Bare appeared before the Board of Education to request “that Harmon School be operated for the school year 1954-55, since the road from A. R. Millers to Harmon School has been improved sufficient for school transportation and has been approved by State Board of Education route representative as safe for transportation.” Despite this plea, the board determined that “since no teacher has been allot[t]ed for the school, the Board does not consider it practical to attempt to operate the school any longer.”²⁸ That effectively marked the end of the Harmon School’s run.

²¹ W. Edward Hearn, et al, *Soil Map, North Carolina, Wilkes County Sheet*, 1918, North Carolina State Archives, available online at <https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ncmaps/id/315>. The current owner of the Harmon School indicates that this home—known various as the Harmon Home or the Harmon-Sheets Home was still standing when he acquired that property, but it was beyond repair or restoration.

²² “Wilkes County School Committeemen,” *North Wilkesboro Hustler*, April 23, 1924: 5.

²³ “17 Civil Works Projects Approved,” *Journal-Patriot*, November 30, 1933: 1. The spring was located on adjacent land to the west of the school and is presently located near the Harmon School owner’s private home.

²⁴ “Home Demonstration Agent Appointments,” *Journal-Patriot*, July 23, 1934: 1.

²⁵ “Campaign Gaining in Momentum This Week; Both Active,” *Journal-Patriot*, October 22, 1936: 1; and “G. O. P. Clubs in County Are Active,” *Journal-Patriot*, July 4, 1938: 5.

²⁶ “Preliminary Statistical Report of the Wilkes County Schools for the School Year 1931-1932,” Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, pages 55-57.

²⁷ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, May 4, 1953, page 408.

²⁸ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, July 6, 1954, page 426, and September 7, 1954, page 430.

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The following month, the board ordered the sale of four school lots and buildings (as well as a fifth school lot) from schools that had been consolidated to the new Union Township School. Among these was the Harmon school and lot.²⁹ The Wilkes County Board of Education finally sold the school building and land in July 1955 to Mrs. G. D. Miller, listed as residing at nearby Laurel Springs.³⁰ Uses following the school's closure are not well documented, although local tradition holds that the school was sometimes used for church services, as a place to dry herbs, and as a community center in the 1950s and 1960s.³¹ At this point, the school remained in fairly good condition, with windows and doors intact, even if the old ball field in front of the school was by that time overgrown with weeds.³² By October 1984, however, when ISK Reeves V and Sara Reeves purchased the property, the Harmon School had endured vandalism, deterioration, and even the partial collapse of its foundation.³³ The Reeveses then completed a massive restoration of the main school building, including the replacement of missing windows and doors, as well as the reconstruction of one of the two privies that had once stood on the property.³⁴

Education Context

The Harmon School is an outstanding example of an intact, one-classroom schoolhouse with partition that was constructed during the transition away from the spare, poorly lit, church-like buildings of the rural school building program in Wilkes County from 1900 to the early 1920s. Beginning as early as 1901, Wilkes County Superintendent C. C. Wright oversaw a massive building program for new schools within the county, many of them in the rural locations far from the more settled areas of the county. Part of this building program was intended to replace older, log hut-type schools throughout the county that offered a miserable environment for learning and had long ago outlived their usefulness. In many cases, though, new schools were also built for rural, isolated communities that had never had their own school and for whom transportation to a more distant school was often difficult if not impossible. The school at Harmon was one such project, offering nearby residents their first school in the vicinity after they had

²⁹ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, October 4, 1954, page 431.

³⁰ See Board of Education of Wilkes County to Mrs. G. D. Miller, July 18, 1955, Deed Book 438, Page 232, Wilkes County Register of Deeds. The present owners of the Harmon School indicate that Mrs. Miller was selected by other residents of the community, who had pooled their funds for the purchase of the school, to stand as a single property owner in the transaction. Her husband, Dewey Miller, owned the local general store. ISK Reeves V to Eric Plaag, personal correspondence, August 5, 2019. In later years, the Millers resided in the Harmon community near the general store on Sheets Gap Road, about one mile to the northwest. Mrs. Miller's bid of \$275 beat out a bid of \$217 from L. L. Estes of Winston Salem, NC. See Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, March 7, 1955, page 435. The North Carolina Attorney General apparently objected to the advertisement of the schools and the consequent bids on procedural grounds, thus forcing the Board of Education to cancel the initial sales and re-advertise the properties. Later board records suggest that the original bids may have been challenged by subsequent upset bids. Some of the properties were re-advertised on June 7, 1955, and a bid of \$375 was accepted from Mrs. Miller on See Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Six, 1931-1963, March 17, 1955, pages 437-38; June 7, 1955, page 444; and June 30, 1955, page 447.

³¹ Bass, "West Wilkes," 329.

³² An image provided by the current owner, dated to about 1960, shows these conditions.

³³ Mrs. G. D. Miller to ISK Reeves V and Sara W. Reeves, October 15, 1984, Deed Book 627, Page 73, Wilkes County Register of Deeds. The Reeveses also have a framed photo of the school taken in 1984, which shows the deteriorated and vandalized condition of the building at the time they purchased it. ISK Reeves V is an architect with extensive experience in the historic preservation of properties and indicates that he "recognized the importance of the Harmon School to the community as well as the need to accurately restore it to the extent possible." ISK Reeves V to Eric Plaag, personal correspondence, August 5, 2019.

³⁴ ISK Reeves V and Sara Reeves, personal interview, April 10, 2019.

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petitioned for the creation of their very own school district in 1919.³⁵ At the time, Sheets Gap Road was little more than a glorified cart path, and travel to more distant schools was a burden for many local families. The Harmon School offered opportunities that had likely never previously existed for local schoolchildren.

Beyond this, the Harmon School also offers a snapshot of a fascinating cross-cultural moment in time during C. C. Wright's administration of the Wilkes County Board of Education; this intersection of national trends with an opportunity in rural Wilkes County also highlights just how unusual the Harmon School was for its time. Historic images of many of the Wilkes County frame schoolhouses of the period suggest that many of the smaller, one-room schools opened between 1900 and 1920 closely resembled small churches and typically featured a gable-fronted main elevation with a single door, a belfry, and few windows.³⁶ While an improvement over the earlier log huts and frame cabins, these early twentieth-century schoolhouses still suffered from problems with proper lighting, ventilation, and hygiene. Many did not even include a stove or fireplace for heat.

By comparison, the Harmon School stands out as unusual for its design in comparison to these earlier, rural, one-room and two-room schools in Wilkes County. There may be a good explanation for why the Harmon School featured such an unconventional design. By 1920, construction was underway on at least four Rosenwald schools in Wilkes County.³⁷ Rosenwald schools were noteworthy for their design emphasis on sanitation, natural lighting, and ventilation, and they often incorporated cloakrooms "to safeguard classroom hygiene" and folding partitions between rooms, "reflecting Progressive educators' belief that schools should serve as social centers."³⁸ Indeed, many of the defining features of the Harmon School—multiple windows on three of the four walls of the classroom; a preference for southern-exposure, natural lighting; a hipped roof with open-tailed rafters; a central, recessed entrance that provided protection from the elements; separate cloak rooms; wide, double-hung sash windows for improved ventilation; and a moveable partition to allow transition from a one-teacher to a two-teacher arrangement—seem to jump straight from the Tuskegee Institute plans prepared for the Rosenwald Foundation in 1915 and widely distributed thereafter. Such plans surely would have been in the hands of the Wilkes County Board of Education by late 1920, when the Knottville School was built and the Harmon School contract was advertised. Curiously, the only things missing from the Harmon School design were the small library room and the kitchen/work room typically associated with the more industrial focus of the Rosenwald schools under the Tuskegee-designed curriculum.³⁹ To further emphasize this apparent Rosenwald influence, of the dozens of rural, frame, one-room and two-room Wilkes County schools built during the early twentieth century and for which photos survive, none but the

³⁵ Wilkes County Board of Education, Minutes, 1885-1963, Microfilm, Volume Three, 1905-1920, December 1, 1919, page 532.

³⁶ While images for all of the Wilkes County schools do not survive, a nice assortment of images of early twentieth-century schools, including several one-room schools, can be found in Wilkes County Retired School Personnel, *Lest We Forget: Education in Wilkes County, North Carolina, Volume II: 1975-2009*, (Conover, NC: Goosepen Studio and Press, 2015), 85-111. Several other examples can be found scattered throughout Fay Bird, compiler and editor, *Wilkes County—Bits and Pieces*, (Wilkesboro, NC: Division of Learning Resources, Pardue and James Larkin Pearson Libraries, Wilkes Community College, 2010).

³⁷ For a brief history of the Rosenwald program in Wilkes County, see Heather Slane and Cheri Szcodronski, *Lincoln Heights School, Wilkes County, North Carolina*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, January 2018, 19, available online at <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WK0314.pdf>.

³⁸ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014 reprint), 56-57.

³⁹ For a full compendium of the Tuskegee Institute plans and the later Nashville plans, see "Rosenwald School Plans," *History South*, website, available at <https://www.historysouth.org/schoolplans/>.

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Knottville School bear a close resemblance to the Harmon School design. None appear to incorporate all of the numerous, "Progressive" design features enumerated above, either.

In the years that followed Harmon School's construction, Wilkes County gradually worked toward consolidation of schools, relying on bussing of students on improved roads to more centralized school locations. By 1926, for example, 510 children in the county were being transported each day to schools (up from just 15 students in 1920), and by 1930, the total number of schools in the county had fallen dramatically from 151 in 1920 to 113 in 1930.⁴⁰ With consolidation came even more progressive school designs, often relying upon sturdier brick for the construction of these significantly larger school buildings. The Harmon School's tenure was relatively short-lived, resulting in its closure in 1953 after 32 years of service, thus coinciding with the consolidation of the last of the one- and two-teacher schools in the county.⁴¹ The Harmon School nevertheless dramatically altered the course of many young people's lives in this rural corner of Wilkes County, bringing to them a quality education in an unusually sophisticated rural schoolhouse for that time in Wilkes County. Today, the Harmon School is one of the few one-room, Wilkes County schoolhouses of the early twentieth century that still survives intact (no others have been identified as extant).

In 1924, the *Winston-Salem Journal* highlighted C. C. Wright's remarkable accomplishments as the superintendent for Wilkes County's schools. In the span of 25 years under Wright's leadership, Wilkes County's schools had gone from being mocked as "chief among the pauper counties" to enrolling 91% of its school-age population, securing accreditation for most of its high schools, and encouraging perfect attendance among 943 of its students in 1924.⁴² Summing up Wright's accomplishments, the *Journal* added, "North Carolina affords no more inspiring story than the story of the progress of public education in Wilkes County. What the future holds is hard to imagine. For history reveals that Wilkes has in the last twenty years made more progress every year than it made the year before."

Many contemporaries also widely praised Wright for his emphasis on black education at a time when such notions were often unpopular amongst whites. Bessie Harris, for several years a teacher at one of the black schools in Wilkes County, noted, "He was blessed with an understanding of and concern for the problems of the Black students and teachers. At a time when it was not popular, he stressed the importance of education for Black boys and girls. He fought for equal opportunities for them and for equal pay for their teachers."⁴³ Wright also appears to have known a good idea when he saw it, privileging the value in the emphasis on lighting, hygiene, and ventilation in the Tuskegee designs for Wilkes County's Rosenwald Schools and daring to push for the integration of some of those design elements into the proposed design for the Harmon School. In this respect, the Harmon School stands as a monument to the unusual vision and spirit of commitment to improved educational opportunities for all students that C. C. Wright brought to his position as superintendent. For these reasons, the Harmon School, with a period of significance from 1920-1954, warrants listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its significance to education at the local level under Criterion A.

⁴⁰ For statistics, see Anderson, "Charles Calvin Wright," *Lest We Forget*, 151, and Etta Lee Idol, "Public Education, 1933-1966," *Lest We Forget*, 158-59.

⁴¹ Idol, "Public Education," *Lest We Forget*, 157.

⁴² For the "pauper counties" quotation, see Hendren, "To the Man," quoted in Anderson, "Charles Calvin Wright," *Lest We Forget*, 138. For statistics, see "Wilkes Wins Again," *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 24, 1924, quoted in Anderson, "Charles Calvin Wright," *Lest We Forget*, 152.

⁴³ Harris is quoted in Anderson, "Charles Calvin Wright," *Lest We Forget*, 136.

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Architecture Context

As described above, the Harmon School was built at a pivotal point of transition between the poorly designed, rural, frame schoolhouses that characterized Wilkes County educational design between 1900 and 1920 and the more Progressive school designs that would follow in the late 1920s and 1930s, emphasizing ventilation, hygiene, and proper lighting for an improved educational experience. In many respects, the Harmon School appears to have served as a small, unpublicized experiment in Progressive school design for rural white students at a time when many of those design elements were being emphasized in the Rosenwald schools being built for southern black students. While the Harmon School's unusual design appears to have drawn little public attention, it nevertheless stands out in comparison to the other rural schools of the period in Wilkes County.

The Harmon School retains a high level of integrity in both materials and form, especially for a school building of this age in Wilkes County. The present owners engaged in a meticulous restoration of the property during the 1980s and have worked diligently to maintain the property and preserve its key architectural features since that time. What consolidation and county surplus sales did not destroy of the county's rural schoolhouses by the 1950s, subsequent neglect and vandalism has surely diminished at other such school properties, if indeed any other such schoolhouses still survive in the county. Simply put, the Harmon School—an intact, hip-roofed, one-classroom schoolhouse heavily influenced by the prevailing, Progressive schoolhouse designs perfected by the Rosenwald program in the 1910s—is a highly unusual, highly significant, and remarkably well-preserved example of rural schoolhouse design in Wilkes County. The Harmon School, with a period of significance from 1920-1954, warrants listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance at the local level under Criterion C.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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---. *Lest We Forget: Education in Wilkes County, North Carolina, Volume II: 1975-2009*.
Conover, NC: Goosepen Studio and Press, 2015.

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: Reeves Archives, private collection of ISK Reeves V and Sara Reeves

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): WK0449

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 Acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

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1. Latitude: 36.363292

Longitude: -81.321701

All coordinates are estimates based on the parcel boundary description and distances as indicated on the historic parcel deeds. There is no record of any subsequent transaction reducing the boundaries of the historic parcel, and the present owner indicates that no recombination or other alteration to the parcel boundary has been completed during their ownership.

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

Following the original deed description, the National Register property boundary extends from a point at the edge of the Sheets Gap Road in a southerly direction approximately 420 feet to a point in a densely wooded area, then in an easterly direction approximately 225 to the tree line on the east edge of a cleared area, then in a northerly direction roughly following the extant fence line approximately 330 feet to a point at the edge of the Sheets Gap Road, then in a westerly direction roughly following the Sheets Gap Road approximately 276 feet to the beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property consists of approximately two acres, conforming to the dimensions of the original parcel deeded to the Wilkes County Board of Education and eventually sold to the present owners in 1984. The rationale for this boundary is that this configuration is what is historically associated with the Harmon School during its period of significance. Please note that this parcel description varies from what is currently portrayed on the Wilkes County tax card and Wilkes County GIS image, both of which appear to be in error, perhaps because of the ephemeral nature of at least three of the four original deed landmarks ("maple," "Spanish oak," "white oak," and "stake on the bank of Sheets gap road").

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Current Owners:

Name: ISK Reeves V and Sara W. Reeves
Address: 255 Sylvan Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: (407) 620-9744
Email: ISKR5@aol.com

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Eric Plaag, PhD
organization: Carolina Historical Consulting, LLC
street & number: 703 Junaluska Rd.
city or town: Boone state: NC zip code: 28607
e-mail ericplaag@gmail.com
telephone: (828) 773-6525
date: August 18, 2020

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.

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Photo Log

The following information pertains to all photographs listed below:

Name of Property: Harmon School

City or Vicinity: Glendale Springs vicinity

County: Wilkes County

State: NC

Photographer: Eric Plaa

Location of Original Digital Files: 703 Junaluska Rd., Boone, NC 28607

1. Northeast view of school and surrounding environs, looking southwest, March 20, 2019
2. Northeast elevation of school, looking southwest, March 20, 2019
3. Oblique view of northeast and northwest elevations of school, looking south, March 20, 2019
4. Oblique view of northwest and southwest elevations of school, looking east, March 20, 2019
5. Oblique view of southwest and southeast elevations of school, looking north, March 20, 2019
6. Interior view of school classroom, looking southeast, April 10, 2019
7. Interior view of school classroom, looking northwest, April 10, 2019
8. Interior view of east cloakroom, looking northeast, April 10, 2019
9. Interior view of modern stairs to bell tower in north cloakroom, April 10, 2019
10. Southeast view of privy, looking northwest, March 20, 2019

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.

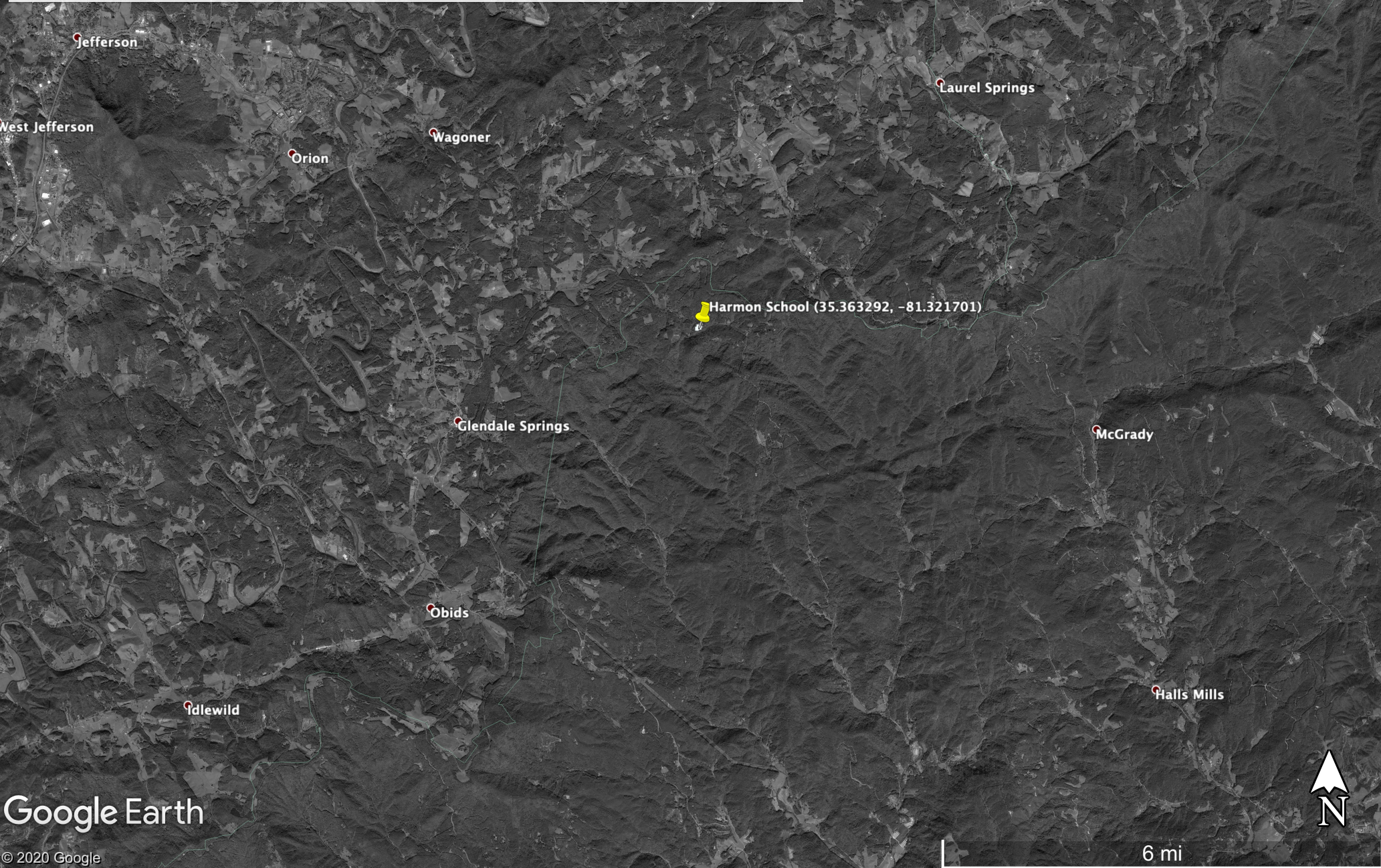
National Register of Historic Places Location Map

Harmon School
Sheets Gap Road, Laurel Springs vicinity
Wilkes County, North Carolina

Map created by Eric Plaag, August 2020

Legend

-  Harmon School (35.363292, -81.321701)
-  Harmon School Parcel



Google Earth

© 2020 Google

6 mi

National Register of Historic Places Boundary Map and Exterior Photo Key

Harmon School
Sheets Gap Road, Laurel Springs vicinity
Wilkes County, North Carolina

Map created by Eric Plaag, November 2020

Legend



Harmon School (35.363292, -81.321701)



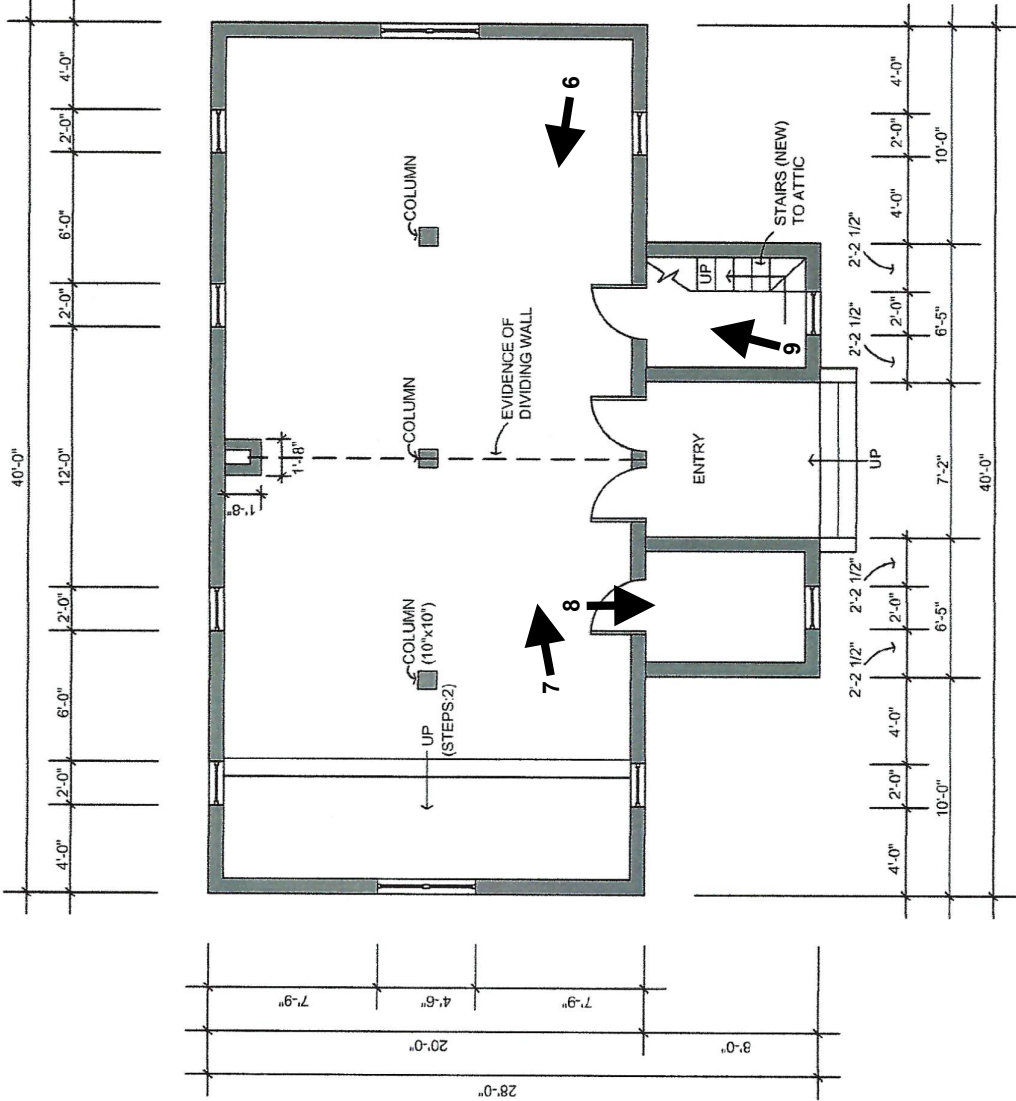
Harmon School Parcel



National Register of Historic Places Floor Plan & Interior Photo Key

Harmon School
Sheets Gap Road, Laurel Springs Vicinity
Wilkes County, North Carolina

Floor Plan modified by Eric Plaag, November 2020



LOCATION MAP
NTS

