



Forsyth County Joint Historic Properties Commission

**APPLICATION**  
**LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION**

1. Name of Property Oak Grove School
2. Owner's Name & Address ~~Preservation North Carolina~~  
~~of~~ Rural Initiative Project, Inc.  
1001 South Marshall Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101
3. Property Location 2637 Oak Grove Circle  
North side of Oak Grove Circle  
.3 mile east of junction with Bethabara Road
4. Amount of Land To Be Designated (acreage) .49 acres
5. Interior To Be Designated x Yes          No
6. Tax Block(s) 3490 Tax Lot (s) 109B

*Please complete the following information on continuation sheets*

7. When was the structure erected? For Whom? (If you don't know the exact date, please give a general time frame.) Have there been additions or modifications? If so, describe and give dates.
8. Do you know the names of any of the craftsmen who worked on the structure? (i.e., architects, carpenters, contractors, landscape designers, etc.) Do any architect's plans or building accounts exist? Where?
9. Do you have any old photographs of the structure? If so, do you know the dates of the photographs?
10. How has the building been passed down through the years, from whom to whom? (i.e., a quick chain of title)

11. What was the structure's original use, if different from today? Has the building ever been moved? List the sources of your information.
12. What is the significance of this property? (Please be specific and to the point.) Include a list of sources for your information.
13. Describe the architecture and present condition of the structure, also including any outbuildings or other appurtenant features to be included in the designation. If the property has been restored, what were the dates of restoration? Was the restoration done under the supervision of any historic preservation organization? If the property has not been restored, is any restoration planned for the property?
14. Is the property listed in any existing architectural or historical survey (i.e., the National Register of Historic Places)? If so, please give the title and date of the listing.

***In addition to the written application, the following materials must be submitted simultaneously:***

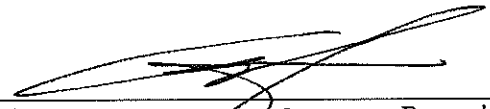
- a black and white 8" x 10" overall photograph clearly depicting the property being designated
- color slides showing all sides of the main structure and any outbuildings (may include architectural details, interior and exterior, which add to the property's significance)
- a tax map showing the location of the property, including any outbuildings and appurtenant features

*(Please label the above materials with the name of the property owner)*

**APPLICATION FEE \$50.00 (Check payable to Forsyth County)**

The following information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

08/23/02  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner President  
Angelo Franceschina

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: Rural Initiative Project Inc.  
Hewitt Business Center Box 143  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1001 South Marshall Street  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:  


7. Oak Grove School was constructed for the school children of the Washington Town community after 1907 and before 1912, thus, a date of circa 1910 is used.
8. No craftsmen or architects are known. It does not appear that the school was constructed using Rosenwald plans. Most likely, the carpenters were some of the people living in the community, whose children would attend the school.
9. One historic photograph of a class standing against one side of the building is known to exist.
10. The property on which the school stands was most likely donated by the Miller family. Eventually, the Forsyth County School Board took over ownership. In 1952, they sold it to a Mr. Brown who then sold it to Ira Miller in 1953. Mr. Miller's widow sold the building to Preservation North Carolina and the Washington Town Community Association in 1998.
11. The building was originally a school. Mr. Miller operated a store here in the mid-twentieth century. The building will be used as a community center upon completion of the restoration.
12. Oak Grove School (ca. 1910) is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of education and black ethnic heritage for its association with education in Forsyth County, North Carolina. Oak Grove School served the African American children living near Bethania in northwest Forsyth County from circa 1910 to circa 1950. Oral tradition suggests Oak Grove's construction was made possible through the donation of the site by a local African American family, the assistance of a local church, contributions in money and labor of the population the school would serve, and some assistance from the county. This combination of support is consistent with the pattern of grassroots funding necessary for African American school construction across the South in the early twentieth century. Oak Grove's period of significance comprises the forty years the school operated, from circa 1910 to circa 1950. At the time of Oak Grove's construction, one-room schools were extremely common: during the 1910s, over eighty percent of North Carolina's African American students attended school in one of 1,934 one-room schools. For about the first twenty-five years, one teacher instructed six and later seven grades in Oak Grove's single room. As more schools were consolidated, only one or two grades were taught at the school in its last fifteen years of operation. By 1947, Oak Grove School was one of nine one-room schools still operating in the county. Oak Grove closed about 1950 and shortly thereafter, windows were removed, a second front door was added, and the interior was divided into two rooms for use as a store. Today, the school has undergone a sympathetic restoration based on physical and photographic evidence that retained as much original material as possible. The restoration has not diminished the school's integrity and today, it is the only known example of the county's once

common, one-room, African American schoolhouse as well as being the sole link to Washington Town's thriving community at the turn of the twentieth century.

13. Oak Grove School stands in a residential enclave known as Washington Town, just inside Winston-Salem's northwest city limit. The community, with the school at its heart, stands on high ground nearly surrounded by streams and branches that eventually feed into Muddy Creek. The city of Winston-Salem lies to the southeast while the town of Bethania, a Moravian settlement dating from the mid-eighteenth century, lies to the northwest. Washington Town is situated near the northwest corner of the intersection of Shattalon Drive and Bethabra Road, a road with mid-eighteenth century origins that connected Bethania with the earlier Moravian settlement of Bethabra.

The one-room school faces south-southeast. The frame, one-story, gable-front building is clad in weatherboards and features a full-width, shed-roof porch with square posts. A diamond-shaped attic vent and exposed purlins punctuate the south elevation. Two shed rooms, added in the early 1950s to create storage space and a bathroom, are attached to the north elevation. A brick flue breaks through the metal roof's ridgeline near the rear of the building. Oak Grove School stands on a brick foundation. A bank of six windows with six-over-six sash pierce the east elevation while three six-over-six sash windows pierce the west elevation. One six-over-six sash window occupies the north elevation.

Inside Oak Grove's one original room, beaded board sheathes the walls and ceilings. Doors to the shed rooms flank the brick flue that stands in the center of the north wall. Simple boards, four inches in width, frame the doors and windows. Quarter-round molding trims the juncture between walls, the walls and the ceiling, and the walls and the wooden floor.

In the 1950s, the building was used as a store. During this period, the blackboards were removed, shed rooms were added to the back and a partition wall was installed to divide the school's one room into two long spaces. Accordingly, a second door was added to the front elevation. The owner at the time also removed the windows and re-sided the east and west elevations.

In a restoration that began in 1998, a new floor and schoolhouse-style pendant light fixtures with frosted globes were installed. (The original floor material was wood, but had deteriorated badly; no raised platform for the teacher is known to have existed.) On the east and west elevations, reproduction wooden windows with true divided-light sash based on photographic evidence were installed in original locations as indicated by the framing and photos. Much of the wooden siding on the east and west elevations was replaced. The school's central door was restored, the partition was removed, and the rear shed rooms were renovated to house a modern bathroom and small kitchen. A wooden wheelchair ramp and landing were added to the east elevation and the brick foundation was repaired,

repointed, and vented. The interior retains original beaded board sheathing, window and door trim while the exterior retains most of its original decorative features, such as exposed purlins and raftertails, the shed-roof porch with square posts, and a diamond-shaped attic vent. All of these changes were undertaken under the guidance of Winston-Salem restoration architect, Charles Phillips, in a sympathetic manner and were based on photographic or physical evidence when it was available. Historic fabric was repaired rather than replaced when possible and new materials were selected based on similarities to the original material. Because such care was taken, changes to the building have not affected its integrity.

14. The property has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The listing should be completed in 2002.

## Bibliography

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- Crews, C. Daniel. *Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church that Endures*. Winston-Salem, N. C.: Moravian Archives, 1998.
- Crow, Jeffrey J., Paul D. Escott, Flora J. Hatley. *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1992.
- Ferguson, G.H. "Some Facts About the Education of Negroes in North Carolina, 1921-1960." Raleigh: State Department of Public Instruction, 1962.
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- King, Emma. "Some Aspects of the Work of the Society of Friends For Negro Education in North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* (October 1924): 403 – 411.
- Kuykendall, R. L. "The History of Education in Forsyth County." *North Carolina Education* (February 1945): 291 – 294, 312 – 324.
- Lash, Jacob Loftin. "History of the A.M.E. Zion Church of Bethania, North Carolina." Bethania, N. C.: Bethania A.M.E. Zion Church, 1934, with later revisions.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage, ed. *North Carolina History Told by Contemporaries*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1948.

Opperman, Langdon Edmunds. "(former) Atkins High School, Forsyth County, North Carolina." National Register Nomination, 1999.

Powell, William S. *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Sigmon, Charles Victor. "A Survey of the Forsyth County Schools." Masters thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1947.

Speas, W. B. *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Forsyth County, North Carolina, 1912-1913*. Winston-Salem: Barber Printing, 1913.

**Unpublished Materials from the North Carolina Department of Archives and History**

Distribution of One-Teacher Schools According to Average Daily Attendance. Division of Negro Education, State Superintendent of Elementary Education, Box 1.

Education of Negroes in North Carolina. Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 4.

Information Concerning Negro Schools in North Carolina. Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 4.

Jeanes Fund Supervisors Reports, various years. Division of Negro Education.

North Carolina Public Schools. Report in the Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 4.

One and Two Teacher Schools in North Carolina. Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 4.

Report from the Conference of Superintendents, Cullowee, N. C., August 7, 1947. Department of Public Instruction. Records of the Superintendent.

T. H. Cash letter to L. H. Jobe, August 18, 1930. Department of Public Instruction. Publications Division.

Table Showing Distribution of Philanthropic Funds for Negro Public Education in North Carolina. Division of Negro Education, Special Subject File, Box 8

**Interviews with Author**

Ervin, Jakay W., Sr. August 12, 1997.  
Lash, Julia Washington. April 7, 2002.  
Yarborough, Dick. April 24, 2002

**Maps**

Map of Bethania, 1822 with later revisions, as copied by W. S. Pfohl, 1918.  
Map of Forsyth County, 1907, C. M. Miller, C. E.  
Map of Forsyth County, 1927, C. M. Miller, C. E.



