

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Oak Grove School

Local Historic Landmark #112

2637 Oak Grove Circle, Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1910

Landmark Designation Date: 11/19/2003

Oak Grove School was built in 1910 and is significant for its association with African-American history and education in Forsyth County. Oak Grove School served local African-American children living in the Washington Town community near Bethania from c. 1910-1950. Oral tradition suggests that Oak Grove's construction was made possible through the donation of the site by a local African-American family, the assistance from 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 20th century.

At the time of Oak Grove's construction, one-room schools were extremely common. During the 1910s, over 80% of North Carolina's African-American students attended school in one of 1,934 one-room schools. For about the first 25 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 only nine one-room schools still operating in Forsyth County. The school closed sometime in the 1950s. A grocery store opened in the building in 1953, which operated for 10-15 years.



Oak Grove School before renovation, Date Unknown
Courtesy of Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's Files



Courtesy of Heather Fearnbach

In 1998, the building began undergoing a sympathetic restoration. Today, Oak Grove School is the only known extant example of Forsyth County's once common one-room African-American schoolhouse, as well as being the sole link to the Washington Town's thriving community at the turn of the 20th century.

The one-story, weatherboarded, front-gable-roofed school features a shed-roofed front porch supported by square posts spanned by a wood railing; bands of large six-over-six sash windows on both side elevations; a brick stovepipe chimney; a rear shed addition with German siding; exposed rafter ends; and a new metal roof.

A historic marker was placed at Oak Grove School in 2004 as part of the City of Winston-Salem's Historic Marker Program.

Today Oak Grove School is a museum and community center.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Oak Grove School National Register Nomination

<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY2546.pdf>

<http://www.visitnc.com/listings/view/48493>



This information is also available
at the Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's web site:
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>