

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: Mica SchoolOther names/site number: School #4, Chickahominy School District; Mt. Zion School;DHR ID# 018-0211Name of related multiple property listing: N/A**2. Location**Street & number: 11570 Wilcox Neck RoadCity or town: Charles City State: VA County: Charles CityNot For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☒ X**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 C D

		<u>1.10.2025</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> 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	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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Vernacular

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: WOOD/Weatherboard

Roof: METAL

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

Located on a one-acre parcel near the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Charles City County, Mica School sits in a clearing on a wooded parcel surrounded by a state-managed wildlife area. The one-story frame building rests on brick piers, is clad in weatherboards and has a cross-hipped, standing seam metal roof. "L"-shaped in footprint, the building has a small inset entrance porch on the facade. Numerous six-over-six, wooden, double-hung sash windows provide light to the interior. The interior comprises two rooms and a cloak room, the latter of which is adjacent to the entrance porch. Interior and exterior trim is simple and minimal. The building has electrical service, but no plumbing. Despite some deterioration and missing interior fabric, the school retains its historic integrity. The school building is the only resource on the property.

Narrative Description

Mica School is located on the east side of Wilcox Neck Road on a roughly one-acre parcel that is surrounded on three sides by the Chickahominy State Wildlife Management Area. The parcel is approximately 500 feet from Mount Zion Baptist Church, which, along with its accompanying cemetery, is located on the west side of the road. The school parcel is largely wooded, though partially cleared to the north and west of the building. The area around the school is level and grassy. There is no paving, evident landscaping, or subsidiary resources.

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The school is a one-story frame building that is “L” shape in footprint. It is clad in wooden weatherboards with slender cornerboards and sits on brick piers that have been supplemented in some places by temporary concrete blocks. The roof is cross-hipped and clad in crimped metal. The roof is currently tarped, but a simple, wooden box cornice is partially visible.

The facade is divided into two parts, a projecting portion north of a recessed wing. The north portion contains an inset, one-bay porch with wooden decking, supported by a wooden post at its southwest corner. The bay northeast of the porch is framed-in and has most recently been used as a closet, a cloak room during its use as a school. The primary entrance is a single-leaf panel door that is boarded over. The current five-panel door is a later addition; physical evidence suggests that the door frame has been reworked with the original door having larger hinges. The exterior entrance to the cloak room, on its southern elevation adjacent to the primary entrance, is also boarded over but has a damaged five-panel door. Most recently used as firewood storage, the room has no internal connection to the rest of the building. The recessed wing at the southwest has a six-over-six, wooden, double- hung, sash window on its facade.

The southwest elevation includes the cloak room entrance described above. The southwest elevation of the projecting wing has a single six-over-six, wooden, double-hung, sash window centered on the bay.

The southeast elevation of the school has four six-over-six, wooden, double-hung, sash windows and a single-leaf door. The door is located at the southern end of the elevation with one window immediately to its north. A plywood panel covers this entrance, which has a single-leaf, five panel door. The elevation’s three remaining windows are grouped together in an evenly spaced arrangement further north along the wall.

The northeast elevation of the school has three six-over-six, wooden, double-hung, sash windows grouped together on the eastern side of the elevation, and no fenestration servicing the cloak room off the porch.

The interior is composed of the primary room to the north, one-room wing to the south, and cloak room. The building has wood flooring of consistent dimension and orientation throughout. Though the partition wall between the larger primary room and the wing have had partial removal of damaged gypsum board, the framing remains intact. Evidence clearly shows interior walls and ceilings were finished with a very early form of gypsum board, possibly “Adamant.”¹ The early use of the material is unique for any school building of this period in Virginia. A brick flue is located in the partition wall toward the eastern end of the building. Electrical service was added to the building in the mid-twentieth century and a breaker box is located on the southwest wall.

The primary room’s walls and ceiling are largely clad in modern 4’x8’ gypsum board panels. Beneath the modern gypsum board are plaster ghosts outlining the original gypsum board panels

¹ Thomas Rosell, “Quite Adamant, U.S. Gypsum. Sheetrock’s Missing Link,” *Preservation in Mississippi*, February 11, 2015, <https://misspreservation.com/2015/02/11/quite-adamant-u-s-gypsum-sheetrocks-missing-link/>.

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as installed in the south room. Note that horizontal framing exists at the 36" vertical divisions between the smaller original panels. On the southeast wall, there are some areas where the cladding is flush wooden plank siding, primarily below the windows and adjacent to the flue. Trim is minimal, consisting of narrow, plain baseboards, flat board door and window surrounds, and plain window stools and aprons.

The secondary room, housed entirely in the south wing, has similar trim, flooring, and wall and ceiling panels. The existing wall and ceilings retain the original historic gypsum board finishes which appear to have been initially clear coated, likely with shellac or linseed oil, due to graffiti below the current wallpaper. Individual boards are 32"x36" with spackled joints covered by paper strips. The room was wallpapered, and the remaining paper is failing. Adjacent to the southwest window are two boards affixed to the walls with projecting nails that may have served as hooks for hanging clothes or other items.

The cloak room has some original composite board paneling on its walls and ceiling, and some basic wooden shelving remaining.

Statement of Integrity

The Mica School remains in its original location, thus has integrity of **location**. Though there have been some alterations and deterioration of elements, the integrity of **design** is strong, as the plan and most of the features and finishes from the period of significance remain. The school sits in a wooded setting near the Mount Zion Baptist Church, as it has since its construction, therefore, has a high degree of integrity of **setting**. The surrounding wildlife area has protected the setting from modern intrusions. Much of the original fabric remains, and most alterations appear to have been made within the school's period of significance, thus it retains good integrity of **materials** and **workmanship**. The proximity to Mount Zion Baptist Church and its continued status as a community resource support a strong level of integrity of **association**. The relatively high integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship combine to contribute to the school's strong integrity of **feeling**.

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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

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

Period of Significance

1915-1951

Significant Dates

N/A

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 Mica School, constructed on land purchased by the Home Mission Society of the County of Charles City, associated with Mount Zion Baptist Church, is significant at the local level under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Education** and **Ethnic Heritage: African American**. Though the school is noted in the Rosenwald Archives at Fisk University, it is not being nominated under the “Rosenwald Schools in Virginia” Multiple Property Document as the school predates the period of significance established by the MPD. The school’s period of significance begins in 1915, the apparent date of construction, and ends in 1951, the year the school was closed. Mica School exhibits multiple characteristics of buildings constructed for African American education in Charles City County from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.

The school housed up to fifty students in the small space, and like many African American schools of the period, was overcrowded. The local African American community has been actively involved with the building throughout its history. Area residents took responsibility for managing different issues related to the school, including providing the land, constructing and repairing the building and outhouses, and raising funds for library books. Although **Criteria Consideration A** applies, as the property is owned by a religious institution, the land was purchased and the building constructed for educational purposes, not religious nor sectarian.

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

African American Education in Charles City County

There are some reports of schools for African Americans as early as the 1830s in Charles City County.² However, in the wake of the Nat Turner rebellion in 1831 in nearby Southampton County, Virginia, the Virginia General Assembly severely curtailed Black education, deeming meetings of “free people of color” for the purpose of education an “unlawful assembly” and assigning penalties for any White person attending such a meeting, being paid to teach at such a meeting, or contracting a teacher for that purpose.³

After the Civil War, a few initial short-lived efforts toward furthering African American education in the county were documented. There is thought to have been a Freedman’s school at Sherwood Forest when Brigadier General Edward Wild, an abolitionist Union General in charge of “Wild’s African Brigade,” took control of the plantation in 1864.⁴ An 1866 survey by the Freedman’s Bureau noted that pastor Samuel Brown had been teaching at Elam Church, though that effort was thought to have lasted only a year.⁵

In the Reconstruction Era, a new state constitution in Virginia mandated that the General Assembly institute a statewide system of free public schools. The constitution was ratified in 1869 and the following year, the General Assembly passed *An Act to Establish and Maintain a Uniform System of Public Free Schools* to implement the constitutional mandate. The Act required that schools be racially segregated and created an avenue for local tax revenues to be used to fund local schools. In Charles City County, the Act caused some resentment, as the tax base was largely composed of a minority White population that perceived themselves as shouldering the larger share of the economic burden of funding education for a sizable Black population in a period of post-war economic recovery.⁶

In 1885, the county’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, J. P. Stagg, provided a brief history of education in the county in the post-Civil War era, suggesting that there were no schools of note in the county between 1860 and 1870. In 1871, public schools opened under the direction of a

² D. Gardiner Tyler, *A History and Pictorial Review of Charles City County, Virginia* (Expert Graphics, 1990), 26; J. P. Stagg, “History of Education in Charles City County” in *15th Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year ending July 31st, 1885* (Richmond: Rush U. Derr, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1885), 175.

³ “Virginia General Assembly, An Act to amend the act concerning slaves, free negroes and mulattoes (April 7, 1831),” Encyclopedia Virginia, last modified December 7, 2020, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/primary-documents/an-act-to-amend-the-act-concerning-slaves-free-negroes-and-mulattoes-april-7-1831>.

⁴ John M. Coski, “The New Old Order in Charles City County: Reconstruction and Race relations 186-1900,” in *Charles City County, an Official History*, ed. John M. Coski and James P. Whittenburg. (Salme, WV: Don Mills, Inc., 1989), 77.

⁵ *ibid.*, 79.

⁶ *ibid.*

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superintendent with jurisdiction over Charles City and New Kent counties. Charles City County established its own superintendent in 1880. Stagg cited a dearth of official records, but by his accounting, from 1881 to 1885, there were eight African American schools in Charles City County.⁷ In that period, the number of Black residents in the county far outnumbered the White, but there were almost equal numbers of schools, with eight to nine schools for White children. In that five-year span, general school attendance of African American students exceeded that of White students, but the higher proportion of Black county residents should be considered when interpreting attendance records.

In his essay, Stagg described an earlier local school program where buildings were temporary and built corresponding to centers of population. William Link, in his book *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, reinforces this phenomenon, noting that Virginia's rural schools of the era were "impermanent entities that existed only by adapting to community desires."⁸ At the time of Stagg's essay, however, the system had become more permanent. He noted, "we have schoolhouses permanently and conveniently located, well built out of good timber, with large windows on both sides, with sash and blinds, seats with backs and desks, with blackboards in them all, and good stoves, making them comfortable."⁹

Through the end of the nineteenth century, the county averaged twenty-four to twenty-five school buildings total, generally split evenly between Black and White schools, though the underlying school-age population of Blacks greatly outnumbered that of Whites. Black schools also suffered from a shortage of African American teachers, as faculty was also segregated, and from the demands of an agricultural labor force.¹⁰

In her 1952 Virginia State College Master's degree thesis, Willnette Davis Carter, an African American educator in the county, noted that Black education in Charles City County was also typified by the additional contributions of the African American community as whole: "the development of education for negroes in Charles City County, Virginia is characterized by sacrifices and expenditures of money and time on the part of the negro . . . They have contributed too long from their private funds to the cost of their schools . . ." The cost of construction and operation of several Black schools in the county was augmented by African American churches and organizations. In Charles City County and throughout the Southern United States, many Black schools also relied on donations from organizations outside of the community, often from Northern charities or religious groups. Carter provided brief profiles of African American schools in the county, from the immediate post-Civil War era to the early 1950s. Common themes throughout include: the physical relocation of schools, establishment of societies and associations to fund and advocate for schools, donations of land and/or physical labor to build schools, the re-use of "White" schools by African Americans after White school populations

⁷ In 1883, there was a ninth African American school. Stagg, "History of Education in Charles City County," 176.

⁸ William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870 - 1920*, The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 46.

⁹ Stagg, "History of Education in Charles City County," 176.

¹⁰ Coski, "The New Old Order," 79.

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moved to new locations or upgraded facilities, proximity to and/or involvement of churches, and the use of borrowed spaces in buildings with other primary uses.

The active role of the African American community in securing educational opportunities for their children was emphasized by Anne W. Chapman and John M. Craig in their essay on the early twentieth century in Charles City County.

The county government was clearly unwilling or unable to provide the black community with the number of schools that the size of its population demanded. Thus, the black community itself bore much of the financial burden for school improvements. Numerous grass roots organizations sprang up to shoulder the burden. Each of the neighborhood schools, which numbered from 12 to 16, claimed communities of patrons or school leagues.¹¹

League members also actively advocated for improvements by petitioning the school board and requesting financial matches for privately raised funds.

In 1908, county residents led by Alexander Q. Franklin, William A. Wallace, and the Reverend Wesley P. Curl led a movement to educate the Black community in Charles City. To further the cause, delegates from thirteen county African American churches convened at the Parrish Hill Baptist Church to forge a path forward. The convention resulted in the formation of the “Intellectual and Industrial” organization, known as IIA, and thereafter, the organization purchased a three-acre parcel in Ruthville for the construction of a new school. By 1911, two school rooms were finished. In 1918, the IIA deeded the property to the county, but the community, led primarily by church members, worked toward improving educational facilities for Black students.¹²

During the 1920s wave of school reforms and education improvement movements, including the work of the Julius Rosenwald Fund and other philanthropic organizations, county school boards embarked on consolidation campaigns, generally of White schools, replacing multiple small schools with new and larger buildings. Consolidation was reinforced by improvements to roads and transportation. Charles City County’s first accredited high school, for White students, opened in 1924, having replaced seven neighborhood schools, some of which were then repurposed for Black students. The majority of the county’s schools for African Americans at this time were one- or two-room schools.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund began dispersing monies for the construction of schools for African Americans in Virginia in 1917. It contributed to six schools in Charles City County, of which three remain: Wayside School, Mica School, and Parrish Hill School. Kimages School, Union Baptist School, and an early Ruthville School have all been demolished. While Mica School is

¹¹ Anne W. Chapman and John M. Craig, “Hard Times and Community Solidarity: From the Turn of the Century through the Great Depression in Charles City County” in *Charles City County, an Official History*, ed. John M. Coski and James P. Whittenburg (Salme, WV: Don Mills, Inc., 1989), 89.

¹² Andre Jones, “Ruthville cornerstone dedication,” *New Kent – Charles City Chronicle*, August 29, 2014, <https://nkccnews.com/community/2014/08/29/ruthville-cornerstone-dedication/>.

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recorded as receiving Rosenwald funds, its construction is thought to predate the 1917 allocation year, but its establishment sits in a transition period from the traditional one- to two-room frame school seen throughout the county to those of intentional planning and architectural designs. Mica School was the smallest of the schools documented as receiving Rosenwald support, as it is listed as a “one-teacher” school in the Rosenwald Fund’s records.

Throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, inequities in education in the county’s “separate but equal” system included overcrowding in Black schools, which served an estimated two to three times more students in the same number of classrooms, as well as disparate spending on facilities and teacher salaries.¹³ Willnette Carter’s 1952 thesis was written to collect and aggregate data on disparities to support improved conditions at Black schools. Anticipating the movement to integrate schools, legal rulings mandated pay and facility equalization in Virginia in the 1940s.¹⁴ Charles City County began investing in non-White schools during an era of “equalization” to move toward a divided system that continued to be separate but would more closely approximate “equal.”¹⁵ Improvements were made at the Ruthville School, the county’s Black high school, but most of the other Black schools continued to be antiquated and in need of repair. The county sought funding from the state’s Literary Fund beginning in 1949, and by 1960, the last of the county’s one- and two-room schools were closed due to the consolidation of non-White schools.

The movement to integrate schools in Charles City County was complicated by the fact that there were three school systems—one for Whites, one for Blacks, and one for Virginia Indians. The Chickahominy Tribe built Samaria Elementary School, and later, in 1956, Samaria High School (prior to 1956, high school students attended boarding school in Oklahoma). The schools were strongly tied to their native identity, and it is posited that, “perhaps even more than the whites (sic), the Indians desired to retain the existing segregated system as a mean of preserving their cultural heritage.”¹⁶

Despite the U. S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, a brief campaign of “Massive Resistance” in Virginia closed school systems and underwrote tuition vouchers for White children to attend private schools. When the courts deemed Massive Resistance unconstitutional, a “Freedom of Choice” program was adopted wherein students applied for transfers to other schools.¹⁷ In 1963, Richard Bowman applied to have his Black children attend the White Charles City Courthouse School. Though he was discouraged from doing so, he persisted, and in the fall of 1963, his six children integrated the county schools. Others followed, but as was typical throughout the South, no White students attempted to attend traditionally

¹³ Chapman and Craig, “Hard Times and Community Solidarity,” 87.

¹⁴ Johanna M. Lewis, Elizabeth H. McGehee and Laura F. Parrish, “Deliberate Speed: Civil Rights and Economic Development in Modern Charles City County” in *Charles City County, an Official History*, ed. John M. Coski and James P. Whittenburg (Salme, WV: Don Mills, Inc., 1989), 106.

¹⁵ Chapman and Craig, “Hard Times and Community Solidarity,” 107.

¹⁶ Chapman and Craig, “Hard Times and Community Solidarity,” 107.

¹⁷ Lewis, McGehee, and Parrish, “Deliberate Speed: Civil Rights and Economic Development,” 106.

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Black schools. The Freedom of Choice program allowed for some mixing of race but served as a bulwark against wholesale integration through administrative bureaucracy.

Bowman participated in a lawsuit coordinated by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to challenge the Freedom of Choice program, which resulted in modifications to the program, but it was essentially upheld by the courts through the mid-1960s. A challenge to the concept reached the U. S. Supreme Court in *Green v. Board of Education of New Kent County, Virginia*. In 1968, the court decided unanimously that the Freedom of Choice plan violated the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution, where it is shown that such a plan would not likely desegregate schools. In the wake of that decision, Charles City County's program was revisited. One African American witness suggested the program achieved only a "token" integration. White testimony suggested that integration would drive White students out of the county, and Chickahominy testimony hoped that the retention of a "choice" program would allow the tribe to keep their segregated elementary school, as their high school population integrated Charles City High School after 1967.¹⁸ Given the overwhelming Black majority and a third racial category in the county, the federal court allowed the Freedom of Choice program to continue in Charles City County, the only county that kept such a plan after the *Green* decision.

The NAACP again challenged the Freedom of Choice program in 1970, citing among other issues the persistence of entirely African American schools. The contest sparked some controversy and activism in the county, though no violence. Ultimately, the county was ordered to implement full integration for the 1971-72 school year. The integration of Charles City County Schools coincided with a rise in non-White leadership at the county level, including a school board controlled by African Americans and Native Americans.¹⁹

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In 1899, Mary Brown, then a resident of Alabama, sold to Thomas Jefferson, George S. Richards, and Earnest L Selden, trustees of the Home Mission Society of the County of Charles City, a two-acre property known as "Brown's shop" for the sum of fifteen dollars.²⁰ Willnette Carter posited that the impetus for the school came from the church community, which recognized that the closest school for Black children was more than five miles away. The Home Mission Society, also referred to as the Home Mission Club, was organized by parishioners at Mount Zion Church. According to Carter, the club built the school and hired the teacher.²¹

In October 1915, Ernest Selden and Thomas Jefferson, trustees for the Home Mission Society, transferred to the Chickahominy District School Board one of the two acres of land they had purchased sixteen years prior. According to the deed, at that time, the land had a school building on it and the deed had a reversionary clause that the land would revert to the trustees or their

¹⁸ Chapman and Craig, "Hard Times and Community Solidarity," 108.

¹⁹ Chapman and Craig, "Hard Times and Community Solidarity," 109.

²⁰ Other members included Charlie Banks, William Jones, Dick Richards, Wilbur Parker, William Hansley, and the Trowers. Carter, *Development of Education for Negroes in Charles City County*, 77.

²¹ Carter, *Development of Education for Negroes in Charles City County*.

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successors when it ceased to be used for a “colored school.”²² School term reports from 1916 and 1917 reinforce that the school was constructed in 1915.²³

While there is a documented contribution from the Rosenwald Fund in the 1917-1920 allocation term, Mica School does not conform to any of the Community School Plans that began to be issued when the Rosenwald program was moved to Nashville in 1920. Before then, the program was administered by Tuskegee Institute, and the school does not follow the one-teacher plan recommended by Tuskegee in 1915.

In August 1922, the Mica School parcel and several others owned by the Chickahominy School District were transferred to the School Board of Charles City County as the school boards consolidated.²⁴ References to Mica School in the County School Board minutes are scant, and most address wood delivery for the stove. The school board paid for minor unspecified repairs at the school in April 1928.²⁵ In 1932, the toilets were repaired, as was the stove. This may have been done by the Mount Zion School League, which received payment of \$5.29 from the school board for repairs. Desks were moved from Holdcroft School, a White school being consolidated into the Charles City School, to Mica.²⁶

Though the school was operated by the county, which covered the teacher’s salary, wood for the heating stove and other incidentals, the local African American community continued to take responsibility for many of the aspects of funding and operations. In 1935, E. L. Selden, representing the Mt. Zion School League, gave the Charles City County School Board twelve dollars, requesting a match from Rosenwald funds, to buy library books for the school.²⁷ In 1937, the school board agreed to supply lumber to build toilet facilities at the school, “it being understood that the patrons would erect the building if the board would furnish the materials.”²⁸ Oral history interviews with alumnae confirm that the toilet was an outhouse. The school had no plumbing, and water was gathered each day in a bucket from a stream approximately a mile behind the school.²⁹

Local citizens continued to contribute physical labor to the building’s repair and maintenance into the 1940s. In November of 1940, L. F. Washington addressed the school board as a representative of the “school league at Mica School.” The board provided materials to repair or replace sheetrock and paint the school interior if the local patrons provided the labor.³⁰ While

²² *Charles City County Deed Book 22*, 396.

²³ School Term Reports, Chickahominy School #4, 1916-1921, in the Richard M. Bowman Center for Local History, Charles City County.

²⁴ *Charles City County Deed Book 27*, 186.

²⁵ Charles City County School Board minutes, April 1928.

²⁶ Charles City County School Board minutes, August 1932, September 1932.

²⁷ Charles City County School Board minutes, February 1935.

²⁸ Charles City County School Board minutes, March 1937.

²⁹ Richard M. Bowman Center for Local History, “Mica/Mount Zion Alumni Interview,” September 16, 1922, video.

³⁰ Charles City County School Board minutes, November 1940.

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this sort of partnership was common in rural areas in the south in the nineteenth century, into the twentieth century, it tended to be more common for African American schools.

Alumnae of the school recall that the building housed students from first to fifth grades, though some indications suggest it may have reached seventh grade. Though the school board did have complicated transit plans, all alumnae remember walking to school, sometimes being offered a ride by the teacher. It was a one-teacher school, with a single instructor teaching all grade levels. Older students were responsible for starting a fire in the stove for heating. In addition to instruction, the school day included morning religious devotionals and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The closure of the school may have been considered as early as 1943, when the school board minutes, discussing personnel issues, prefaced the discussion of a hiring decision with the words “If the Mica School is operated . . .”³¹ Mica School was closed in June of 1951.³² In the 1951-1952 school term, Black schools operating in the county included Ruthville, Barnetts, Wayside, Woodburn, Union Baptist, Parrish Hill, Kimages and Little Elam. By 1957, only Ruthville, Barnetts and Parrish Hill remained in use. After its service as a school, Mica became an informal community center to house church and social functions and community meetings. It was later leased for use as a hunting lodge.³³

In the 2020s, the Historic Mt. Zion School Foundation of Charles City was established to restore and interpret the school building. Efforts to further their mission include fundraising, recording oral histories with the Richard M. Bowman Center for Local History, sponsoring architectural recordation, and seeking historic designation.

³¹ Charles City County School Board minutes, May 1943.

³² Carter, *Development of Education for Negroes in Charles City County*, 73.

³³ Anonymous, “Micah School students congregate in effort to raise funds for schoolhouse’s restoration,” *New Kent-Charles City Chronicle*, July 20, 2021, <https://nkccnews.com/community/2021/07/20/micah-school-students-congregate-in-effort-to-raise-funds-for-schoolhouses-restoration/>.

Mica School
Name of Property

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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 # _____

Mica School
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Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond; Richard M. Bowman Center for Local History, Charles City County

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 018-0211

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

1. Latitude: 37.327564

Longitude: 76.926422

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property coincides with Charles City County Tax Parcel 57-57, as shown in the attached tax parcel map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all land historically associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mary Ruffin Hanbury
organization: Hanbury Preservation Consulting
street & number: P.O. Box 6049
city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: 27628
e-mail: maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com
telephone: 919 828 1905
date: June 15, 2024

Mica School
Name of Property

Charles City County, VA
County and State

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.)

Mica School
Name of Property

Charles City County, VA
County and State

Photo Log
Mica School
Charles City County, Virginia
Mary Ruffin Hanbury
January 25, 2024

Photo 1 of 20
Exterior, façade, view to SE

Photo 2 of 20
Exterior, façade, view to E

Photo 3 of 20
Exterior, S corner, view to N

Photo 4 of 20
Exterior, NE elevation, view to WSW

Photo 5 of 20
Exterior, NE elevation, view to SW

Photo 6 of 20
Exterior, Façade, view to S

Photo 7 of 20
Exterior, façade, view to SE

Photo 8 of 20
Exterior, porch ceiling, view to NE

Photo 9 of 20
Interior, large room, view to E

Photo 10 of 20
Interior, large room, view to SE

Photo 11 of 20
Interior, large room to small room, view to S

Photo 12 of 20
Interior, large room to small room, view to SW

Photo 13 of 20
Interior, small room, view to SW

Photo 14 of 20
Interior, small room, view to SW

Photo 15 of 20
Interior, small room, view to WSW

Photo 16 of 20
Interior, small room, view to SW

Photo 17 of 20
Exterior, seam at porch and cloak room view to NE

Photo 18 of 20
Interior, cloak room, view to ENE

Photo 19 of 20
Interior, cloak room, view to NW

Photo 20 of 20
Interior, cloak room, view to NW (ceiling)

Mica School
Name of Property

Charles City County, VA
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List of Figures

All drawings of Mica School by Josphe Dye Lahendro, April 2023

Figure 1. Floor and foundation plan

Figure 2. Roof and ceiling plan

Figure 3. Wall section

Mica School
Name of Property

Charles City County, VA
County and State

MICA
SCHOOL
11600 Willcox Neck Rd
Charles City, VA
JONAH DYELAHENKO, FALA
Historic Preservation Architect
301 Grand St., Charlottesville, VA 22908
1-800-762-2269 / jdyel@earthlink.net
April 26, 2025

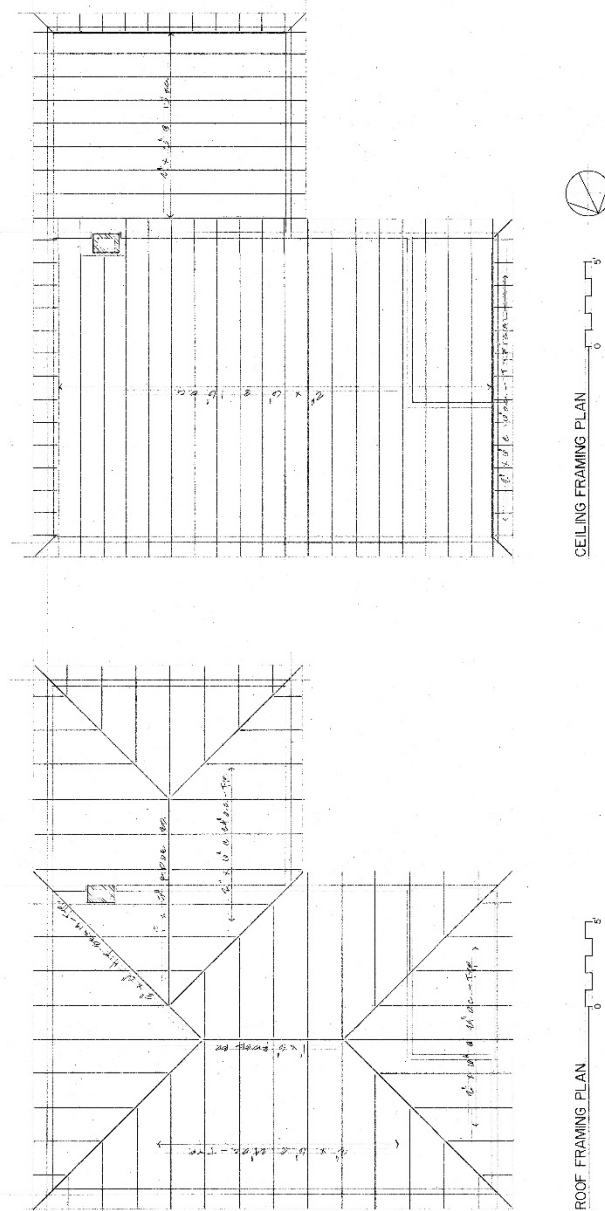


Figure 2

Mica School
Name of Property

Charles City County, VA
County and State

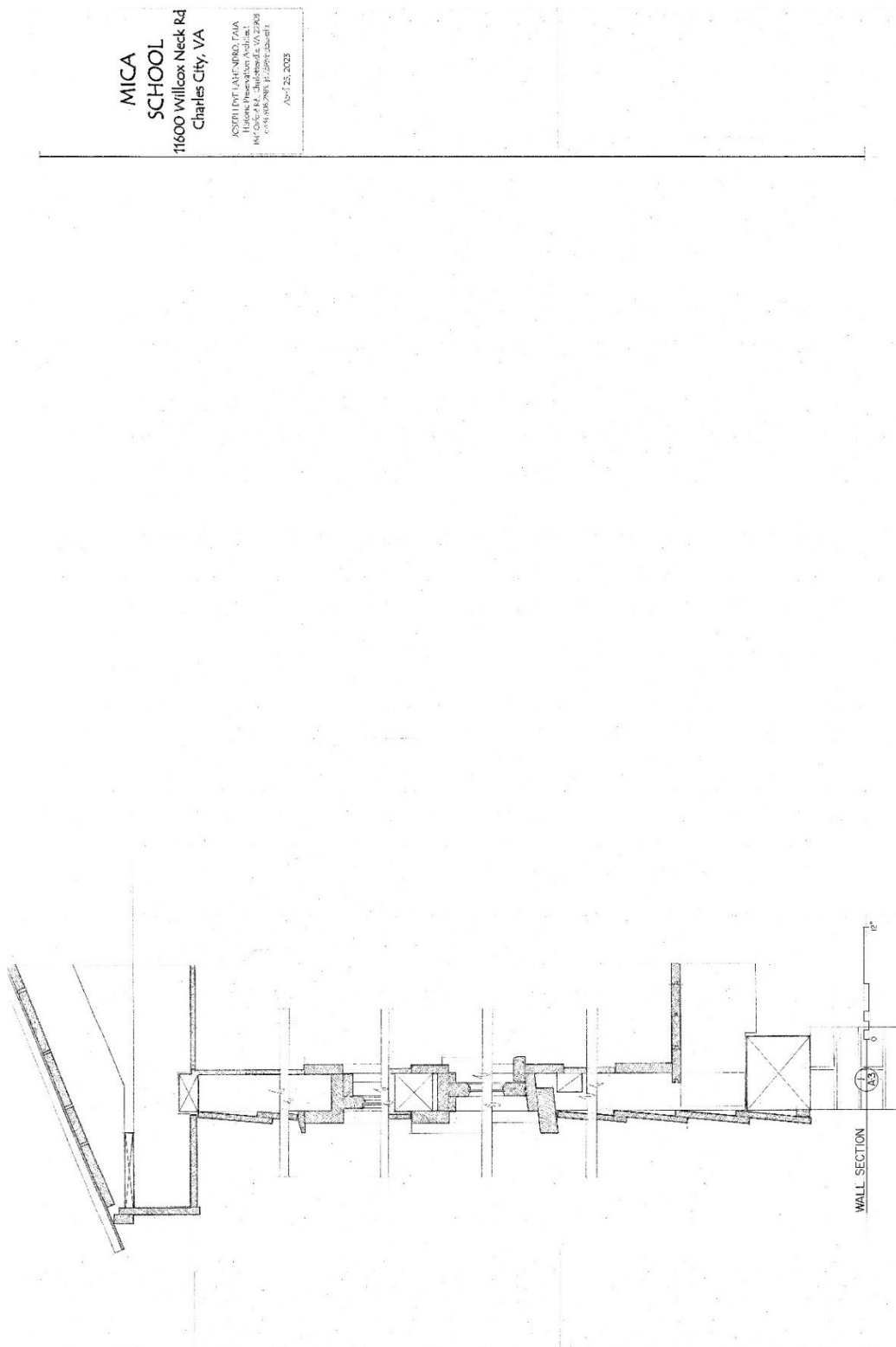


Figure 3

Mica School
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Charles City County, VA
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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

LOCATION MAP

Mica School
Charles City County, VA
DHR No. 018-0211

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 37.327564

Longitude: -76.926422

 Nominated Boundary

0 100 200 400
 Feet







STREET MAP

Mica School
11570 Wilcox Neck Road
Charles City County, VA
DHR ID# 018-0211

 Nominated Boundary

0 250 500
 Feet



National Register Photo Key

Mica School
11570 Wilcox Neck Road
Charles City County, Virginia
map created by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, June 2024

EXTERIOR



Google Earth

30 ft



INTERIOR

National Register Photo Key

Mica School
11570 Wilcox Neck Road
Charles City County, Virginia
map created by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, June 2024



30 ft