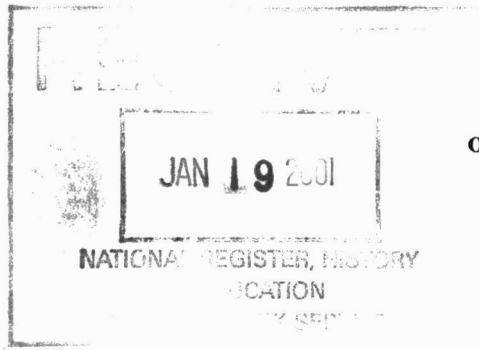


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



OMB No. 1024-0018

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Eckington School
other names/site number Poplar Ridge School DHR File No. 23-5041

2. Location

street & number Intersection of VA Routes 658 and 661 not for publication
city or town Culpeper vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Culpeper code 047 Zip 22701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

H. Alexander Wierp 12/29/00
Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Edson H. Beall 2/16/01
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Eckington School name of property
Culpeper County, Virginia location

Eckington School

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 1 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: School

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT Sub: not in use

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Eckington School
Culpeper County, Virginia
name of property
location

Significant Dates 1895
1941

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.628 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	18/244640/4254450	2	_____
3	_____	4	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section 7 Page 1

7. Summary Description:

Summary Introduction

The Eckington School, located in south-central Culpeper County, is a late nineteenth century frame one-room school. This simple, vernacular one story building was constructed in 1895 as a segregated school to serve the local black population. It was used for classes until 1941. Subsequently the building was used as a church hall for the adjoining Free Union Baptist Church. With the exception of a rear shed room added in the mid-twentieth century, it remains little changed from its original appearance.

Architectural Description

The original school building is the 20 foot by 26 foot weatherboarded frame structure that now forms the east (front) section of the building. The old school building is supported on low stone piers; its gable roof is covered with standing seam metal. Wall framing measures 2 inches by 6 inches; roof and ceiling framing is 2 inches by 4 inches; all lumber is circular sawn. The school is built on a gable-entry plan. A doorway in the center of the east gable end provides access to the schoolroom. The north and south sides each have two 6-over-6 double-sash windows. An interior stove chimney, built of cinderblock with a brick stem, is located on the center of the west (rear) gable wall of the original structure; it now serves to vent an oil heater.

There have been only minor changes to the original building from its 1895 appearance. Examination of the roof structure reveals no evidence of a shingle roof or a previous metal roof, indicating that the present roof is original. Weatherboard and interior and exterior trim, all fastened with cut nails, appear to be original as well. The exterior door and window trim, which is mitered and beaded, is one of the few decorative elements of the structure. A 1930s photograph shows the building with its present standing seam metal roof and weatherboard in place, as well as its original board-and-batten door, board-and-batten shutters, and the original central chimney. This door was replaced by the present six-paneled door shortly before the school's closing in 1941; at approximately the same time the chimney was moved to its present location. When used as a school, the building was unpainted both on the exterior and interior. The exterior of the building is now painted white. The interior has also been painted several times.

In the Eckington School, as in many area vernacular structures built before the mid-twentieth century, the windows have no springs or sash weights. Typically, in most local dwellings using this sort of construction, the top sash is fixed, while the bottom sash lifts up and has to be propped open to allow ventilation. The windows in the Eckington school building differ in that both the top and bottom sash can be opened. In addition to the conventional bottom sash, each top sash is held closed by a wooden turn button which fits into a groove at the top of the window, and the window stops are cut 5 inches deeper than usual to allow the top sash to slide downwards. Possibly this feature was intended to permit ventilation without allowing students to hear or speak to those outside. Various other late nineteenth and early twentieth century one-room school buildings in central Virginia also exhibited this sort of window construction, including the old Proffit School in Albemarle County and at least one school in Orange County.¹

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section 7 Page 2

The interior of the schoolroom still retains its original, simple treatment. The walls and ceiling are covered with tongue-and-groove beaded pine boards. The floor is covered with 2¼-inch tongue and groove oak floorboards. The window and door trim, as well as the baseboard, consist of plain 1-inch by 4-inch boards; no cornice is present. A ceiling hatch marks the location of the original chimney. As in many schools (and other utilitarian structures) built in central Virginia during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the base of the stove chimney was supported on the ceiling joists, allowing the stovepipe and stove below to be removed in warm weather to provide additional space in the schoolroom.

In the mid-twentieth century, a 10 foot by 20 foot addition was made to the west (rear) gable end of the building to facilitate the use of the old school as a church hall. Like the original portion, this section is built of frame and weatherboarded. This addition, used as a kitchen for the church hall, has a low hipped roof; like the roof of the original section, it is covered with standing seam metal. A cinderblock wall at the rear of this addition screens the fuel tank that now supplies heating oil for the building. To the northeast of the school building is a simple cinderblock wellhouse, a non-contributing structure dating from the third quarter of the twentieth century.

NOTES

1. For the Proffit School, see K. Edward Lay, *The Architecture of Jefferson Country* (Charlottesville, 2000), p.249. The unidentified schoolhouse in Orange County is pictured in William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place* (Chapel Hill and London, 1986), p.47.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 3

8. Statement of Significance

Located 3 miles north of the Rapidan River in south-central Culpeper County, the Eckington School is the only one-room public school for black students in Culpeper County still standing in its original location and preserving its original appearance. This vernacular frame structure was built in 1895 as a segregated school for pupils in the nearby communities of Eckington and Poplar Ridge. In form and finish, the building is typical of the ungraded schools of the nineteenth century, which had all grades housed together in the same room. Such schools were a once-common form of rural school in the era before Virginia adopted standard plans for school buildings beginning in the early twentieth century. The Eckington School continued in operation until 1941, when Culpeper County consolidated its public school system. This humble little structure stands both as a rare example of a nearly-vanished schoolhouse type, and as a monument to the importance of education among the rural black community in the decades after the Civil War. It is eligible for listing in the National Register for its associations both with this significant aspect of black history and with the history of education in Virginia.

Historical Background

The lot upon which the Eckington School stands was conveyed to the Trustees of Culpeper County's Cedar Mountain School District by Patrick and Margaret Maloney in 1892. The school building was completed and opened in 1895 as a segregated public school for black children in the neighborhood. As with numerous other rural Virginia schools, the Eckington School was located near an established neighborhood landmark—in this case, the Free Union Baptist Church.¹

The school takes its name from the nearby Eckington Post Office. The post office, which was attached to general store and blacksmith shop, first opened February 1, 1892, and closed September 1906. The post office reopened a mile north of its first location on December 22, 1914, and closed permanently on January 31, 1941. Like the first post office, it was attached to a general store, which also closed shortly afterwards. The school was alternately known as the Poplar Ridge School after the Poplar Ridge community west of Eckington. (The Free Union Baptist Church was originally organized in 1879 as Poplar Ridge Church, changing to the present name several years afterward.)²

The 1869 Underwood Constitution mandated the establishment of free public schools in Virginia beginning in 1870. In the first school year (1870-71), Culpeper County reported a total of 30 public schoolhouses (22 for whites and 8 for blacks). By the 1893-94 school year, Culpeper had a total of 71 public schoolhouses: one of brick, 67 of frame, and three of log construction. Of these, 41 had outhouses, 67 had "suitable" grounds, 40 were equipped with "good furniture" and 10 with "patent desks." The 71 schools contained a total of 84 rooms, indicating that most of these structures only had one room. The next school year, 1894-95, the county reported a decrease in the total to 67 schools (one brick, 63 frame, three log) with a total of 80 rooms. This included the two schools that were constructed that year, one of which was the Eckington School. Of these 67 schools, 40 were for white students, 27 for black students. For the following school year, 1895-96, the county reported a total of 71 schools (two brick, 68 frame, one log) with a total of 82 rooms, and noted that three schools had been built that year; 46 of the county's schools were for white students, 25 for black students. The Culpeper County school system reported 2978 students (849 white males, 684 white females, 745 black males, and 701 black females in 1893-94. In 1894-95 the total was 2999 (822 white males, 690 white females, 751 black males, and 736 black females). In 1895-96, the expanded information in that year's school report noted a total county

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 4

school age population (ages 5 to 21) of 2639 white students and 3203 black students was noted; of these, only 1549 whites and 1231 blacks are listed as actually attending school, while seating capacity was given at a total of 1380 for white students and 750 for black students.³

The Eckington School was representative of several important trends of its era. As a segregated school, it was part of the system of that separated school children by race, as was required by law. Numerous small local schools such as Eckington were a necessity for another reason, filling the need for education in sometimes-isolated rural communities in an era before effective all-weather transportation and roads. In addition, frame schoolhouses such as the Eckington School were part of a statewide push to upgrade school buildings and equipment; particularly targeted for elimination were the cheap but crude log buildings that had previously marked many country schools. In the reports for the school years 1895-96 and 1896-97, the Superintendent of Public Instruction noted that the “. . . consolidation of schools is not practiced in many areas unless means of transporting students can be found.” Additionally, he stated “During the past few years there has been decided improvement in schoolhouses and equipment, but the log schoolhouse has not entirely disappeared. I recommend that the Board of Education be authorized to furnish the counties suitable designs and specifications for schoolhouses.”⁴

Despite such recommendations, standard plans for schools only appeared in Virginia after the passage of the Williams Building Act in 1906. This legislation, along with the subsequent Strode Act of 1908, and a later act in 1916, appropriated loan funds for enlargement or repair of old schools and construction of new ones. The State Board of Education made available 16 different schoolhouse plans and specifications free of charge. These included two, three, four, six and eight room plans.⁵

In contrast to these twentieth century standard plans, the Eckington School belongs to an earlier era before standardization. Its one-room plan is typical of the ungraded schools of the nineteenth century, with all grades housed in a single room. No builder has been identified for the Eckington School. As was typical in many parts of Virginia, it is possible that the school district hired a local builder to construct the building; it is also possible that members of the community contributed labor and materials.

In 1941, Culpeper County consolidated its public school system, and the Eckington School was closed. The elementary school students were sent to school at Brandy, some six miles north of the Eckington School; older students (up to the 9th grade) were sent to the Culpeper Training Center near the town of Culpeper (later expanded into the George Washington Carver Training Center). This consolidation necessitated busing the students to their new schools. While the Eckington School had been in operation, it had only served the immediate neighborhood; all its students had walked to school, with no buses deemed necessary. Interestingly, after the outbreak of the war a few months later, consolidation of rural schools, which were usually attended by the need to bus the students to the new location, was being discouraged as an inefficient use of resources, especially fuel.⁶

The old Eckington School building subsequently was used as a church hall by the neighboring Free Union Baptist Church. The small shed room was added ca. 1950 to house kitchen facilities. Since a larger church hall was added to Free Union Church in 1987, the old school building has been used for storage. The Eckington School remained in the ownership of the Culpeper County School Board until 1990, when old school building and lot were formally deeded to the trustees of the Free Union Baptist Church.⁷ The congregation is currently planning to stabilize and restore the old school building as a site for historical exhibits on the school and community.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section 8, 9 Page 5

NOTES

1. Culpeper County Deed Book 25, p.393; Culpeper County Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Culpeper, Virginia.
2. Eugene Scheel, *Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920* (Orange, Va., 1982), p.255.
3. *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Richmond, 1871), p.160; *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia: School Years 1893-94 and 1894-95* (Richmond, 1895) pp. 4, 42, 230; *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia: School Years 1895-96 and 1896-97* (Richmond, 1897) pp. 4, 22.
4. *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia: School Years 1895-96 and 1896-97* (Richmond, 1897) pp. xxv, lxxiv.
5. National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form (Thematic Nomination): Public Schools in Augusta County, Virginia 1870-1940.
6. Laura Leftwich, *An Oral History of Free Union Baptist Church* (currently in progress); *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia: School Year 1942-43* (Richmond, 1943), p.167.
7. Culpeper County Deed Book 438, p.277; Culpeper County Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Culpeper, Virginia.

9. Bibliography

Culpeper County Deed Books, Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Culpeper, Virginia

Leftwich, Laura, *An Oral History of Free Union Baptist Church* (currently in progress)

National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form (Thematic Nomination): Public Schools in Augusta County, Virginia 1870-1940

Scheel, Eugene, *Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920* (Orange, Va., 1982)

First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Richmond, 1871)

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia: School Years 1893-94 and 1894-95 (Richmond, 1895)

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia: School Years 1895-96 and 1896-97 (Richmond, 1897)

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section 10 Page 6

10. Geographical Data (continued)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated 0.628 acres are identical to those recorded on the plat of the property cited in Culpeper County Deed Book 438 p. 277, and filed in Culpeper County Plat Cabinet 2, slide 172.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

These boundaries are identical to the original 1892 boundaries of the school lot as described in Culpeper County Deed Book 25, p.393.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ann L. Miller

Organization: Consultant date August 30 2000

street & number: P.O. Box 29 telephone 540-923-5079

city or town Somerset state VA zip code 22972

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Free Union Baptist Church

street & number 21649 Mt. Pony Road telephone 540-825-7489

city or town Culpeper state VA zip code 22701

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. 470 et seq.).

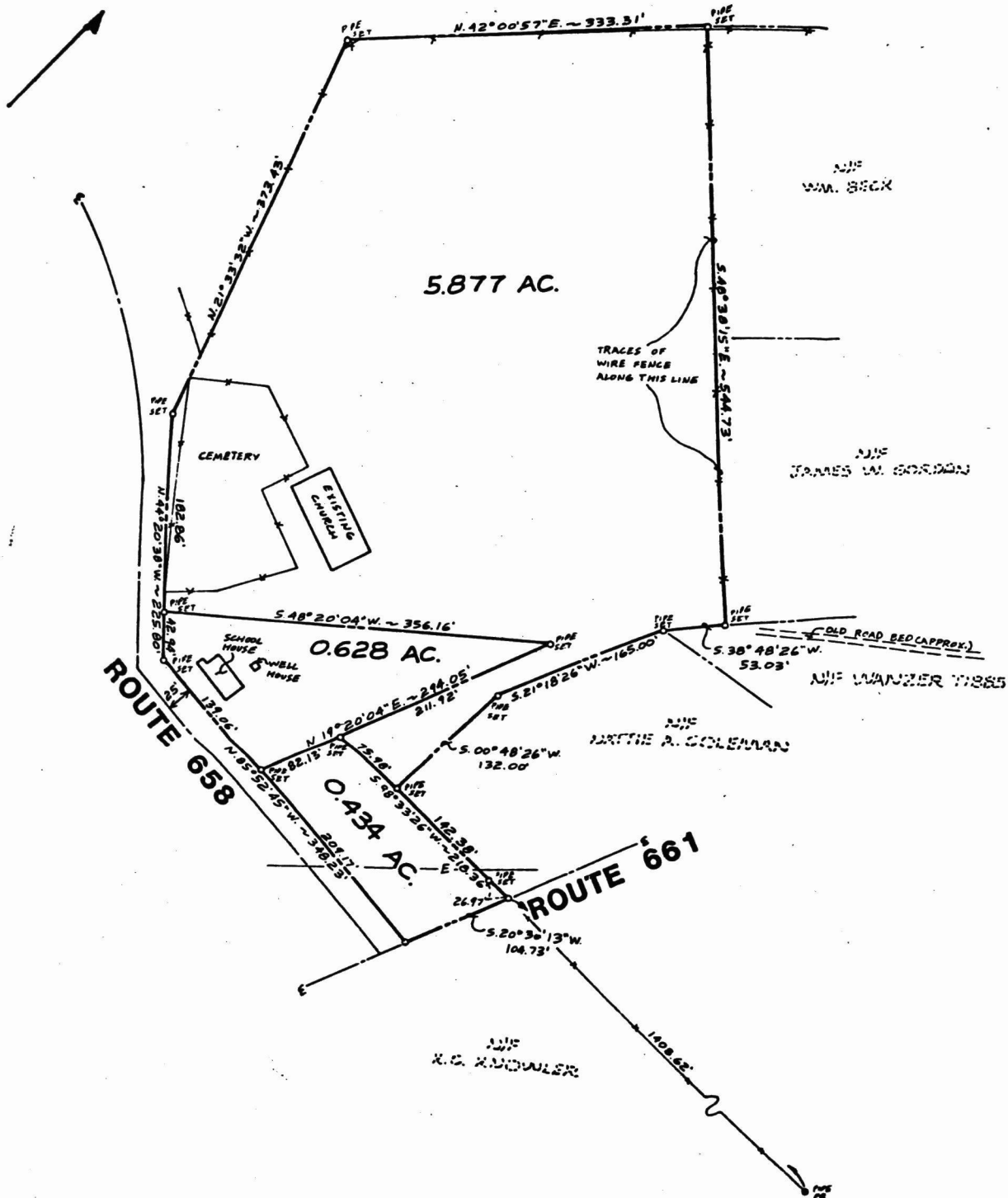
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section Site Plan Page 8

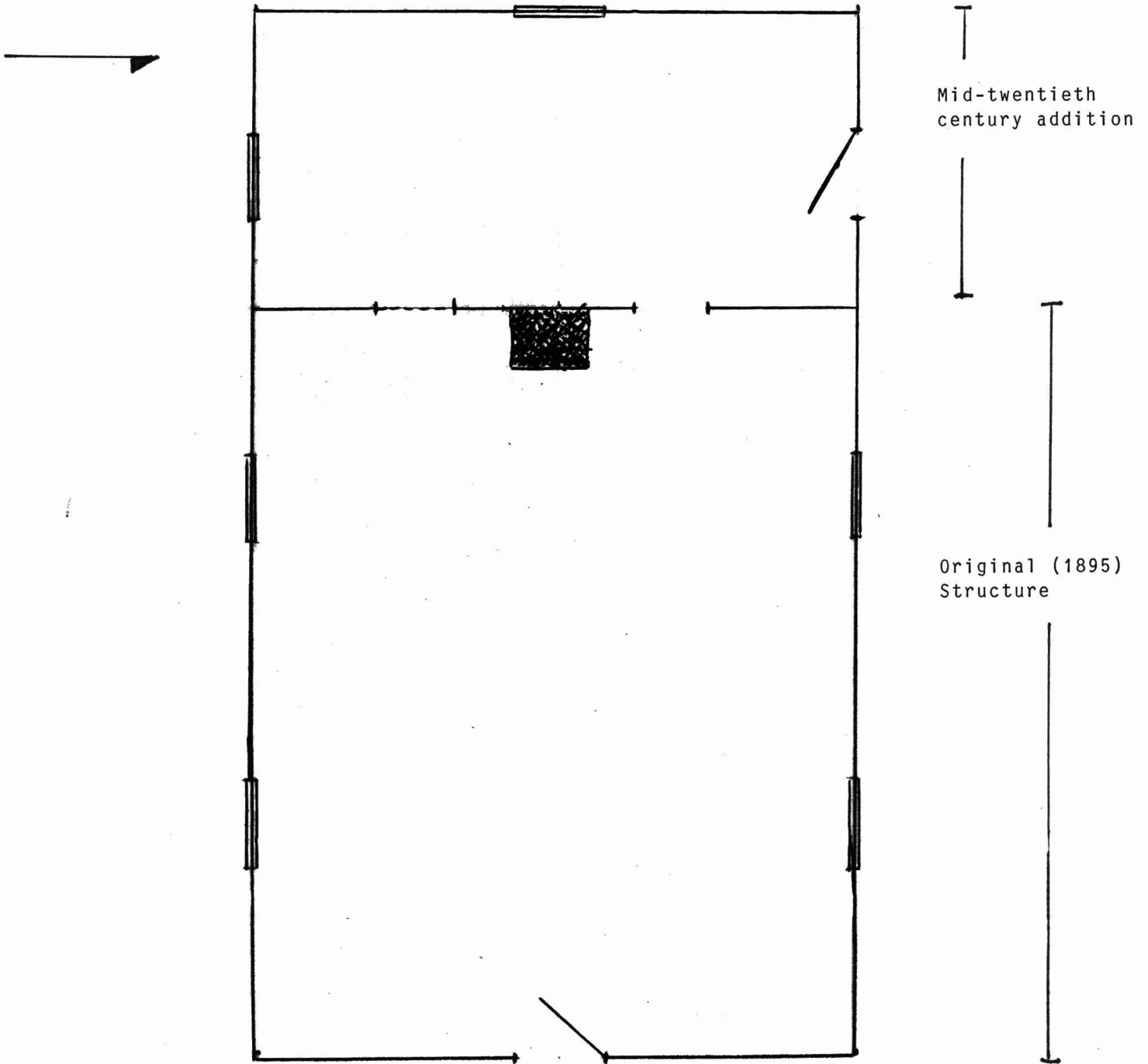


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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School (Name of Property)
Culpeper County, Virginia (location)

Section Floor Plan Page 9



**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Eckington School
Culpeper County, Virginia

**(Name of Property)
(location)**

Section Photo Page 7

Note: The following information is common to all photographs

NAME OF PROPERTY: Eckington School

LOCATION: Culpeper County, Virginia

NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Ronald Holmes

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

DATE: March 2000

NEGATIVE NO. 18330

1. View of school building: front (east) and side (south) elevations, looking northwest. Photo 1 of 6.
2. View of school building: front (east) and side (south) elevations, looking north. Photo 2 of 6.
3. View of school building: side (south) elevation, looking northeast. Photo 3 of 6.
4. View of school building: side (north) elevation, looking south. Photo 4 of 6.
5. View of interior of school building: old school room, looking west. Photo 5 of 6.
6. View of interior of school building: ca. 1950 shed room addition, looking north. Photo 6 of 6.

