

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

LISTED ON:	
VLR	09/30/2010
NRHP	12/27/2010

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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Jefferson School
other names/site number VDHR# 105-0171, East Elementary, Clifton Forge Elementary East

2. Location

street & number A Street N/A not for publication
city or town Clifton Forge vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Alleghany code 005 zip code 24422

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this 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 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 local

Signature of certifying official *[Signature]* Date 11/1/2010
 Title Deputy Director State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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 _____

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 _____

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

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
- building(s)
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	8	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	buildings
1	8	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK

roof: ASPHALT
other: Chimney: BRICK

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph**See Continuation Sheets**

Narrative Description**See Continuation Sheets**

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Ethnic Heritage

Period of Significance

1926-1960

Significant Dates

1926 (original construction)

1952/1953 (addition)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

1926 Building: School Building Service of the State

Department of Education (VA), architect

J. R. Campbell, contractor/builder

1952 Addition: Fleming R. Hurt and Charlie D.

Hurt, Jr. Architects

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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.

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance extends from the date of construction in 1926, through its expansion in 1952, and terminates in 1960.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See Continuation Sheets

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

See Continuation Sheets

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See 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: VA Department of Historic Resources

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR file number 105-0171

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.2 acres
 (Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>603932</u>	<u>4186025</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary for the nominated parcel corresponds to the Alleghany County, Virginia Tax Map Parcel 12400-01-004-0070.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The tax map parcel includes five and a half lots in Block 4 of the old town section of Clifton Forge, which is the entire remaining school parcel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Scripps, Research Historian
 organization Frazier Associates date May 26, 2010
 street & number 213 N. Augusta telephone 540-886-6230
 city or town Staunton state VA zip code 24401
 e-mail bscripps@frazierassociates.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Jefferson School
City or Vicinity: Clifton Forge
County: Alleghany County **State:** VA
Photographer: Frazier Associates (William T. Frazier, AICP, Kathleen O. Frazier, AIA, Annie Mathot, LEED AP, Beth Scripps)
Date Photographed: January & May 2010
All Images Stored at: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo: 1 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0001
View: Looking north on Church street showing the first Jefferson School and its relationship to the 1926 school (in background).

Photo: 2 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0002
View: Looking west on A Street showing facades of 1926 building and addition and Main Street Baptist Church at end of block.

Photo: 3 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0003
View: Façade of 1926 school looking west.

Photo: 4 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0004
View: Façade of 1926 school and 1952 addition.

Photo: 5 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0005
View: Façade of 1926 school

Photo: 6 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0006
View: West and south elevations of 1952 addition.

Photo: 7 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0007
View: East elevation of 1952 addition

Photo: 8 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0008
View: North and east elevations of 1926 school.

Photo: 9 of 16
File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0009

Jefferson School

Alleghany County, Virginia

View: Entrance hall finishes at door to northeastern classroom of 1926 building.

Photo: 10 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0010

View: Main stair and hall of 1926 building

Photo: 11 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0011

View: Typical 1926 classroom finishes

Photo: 12 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0012

View: Typical 1926 classroom finishes.

Photo: 13 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0013

View: Typical 1926 classroom finishes.

Photo: 14 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0014

View: Typical 1952 classroom finishes.

Photo: 15 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0015

View: Typical 1952 classroom finishes.

Photo: 16 of 16

File: VA_Alleghany County_Jefferson School _0016

View: 1952 Gymnasium interior.

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 18 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.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 7

Page 1

Summary Description

The Jefferson School faces east onto A Street in the Town of Clifton Forge, Virginia. Streets bound the school property on three sides and there are paved areas in the southwest corner of the property and to the north of the addition. There is a shallow front yard with grass and plantings facing A Street.

Built in 1926, the original rectangular two-story building is clad in running-bond brick and sits on a raised concrete foundation. The Classical Revival design of the building is expressed through a symmetrical facade dominated by ribbons of small-paned double-hung windows organized around an arched recess containing the front entrance. Two-story pilasters divide the facade into three bays and terminate at a corbelled brick cornice above the second floor windows. A two-story rectangular addition built in 1952, attached to the south elevation of the original school, is recessed from that building's facade and extends west. To the north of the addition are eight modular units that were placed on-site during the 1970s, which do not detract from the school's setting. They are slated to be removed as part of an upcoming rehabilitation of the property.

The interior preserves its basic plan of classrooms. Original trim, doors and transoms, tin ceilings, chalkboards, built-in cabinetry, and beaded-board wainscoting are typical in the 1926 building. In the addition, the Colonial Revival style established in the 1926 structure continues with small-paned windows in doors and cabinets and transoms over classroom doorways.

Narrative Description

The Jefferson School (contributing) was built in two sections. The first section was built in 1926 and faces east onto A Street and the annex or addition was built in 1952 and extends to the south and east of the original building between Church Street and an unnamed alley, ending near the parcel boundary at B Street. The exterior components of both sections of the school have survived in remarkably original condition. Eight temporary modular instructional trailers currently occupy the open, former playground space to the west (rear) of the 1926 school. These trailers date from the use of the school as East Elementary in the 1970s and 1980s and are non-contributing resources.ⁱ

Site/Landscape Features

The Jefferson School site is comprised of five and a half lots in Block 4 of the old town section of Clifton Forge. The school property is bounded to the east by A Street, to the north by Church Street, to the west by B Street and to the south by an unnamed right-of-way (alley). The half lot in the southwest corner of the parcel is paved for use as a parking lot. Public sidewalks are located on the A Street and Church Street boundaries and there is a shallow front yard with grass and plantings facing A Street. The site slopes gently downward from the corner of A and Church streets to the southwest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 7

Page 2

To the west of the 1926 building and the north of the 1952 addition is the former playground for the school. Eight modular instructional trailers (non-contributing) have occupied this asphalt-covered area since the early 1970s. These rectangular structures are set on raised concrete foundation, are clad in horizontal board siding, and have low-pitched corrugated metal roofs.

Main School Building

The Colonial Revival style, brick, 1926 school is rectangular in form. The two-story building sits on a raised concrete foundation that provides a complete additional level. A concrete stair with a simple pipe handrail on either side leads to the front doorway. This main entrance is composed of a twelve-light transom over paired partially glazed, paneled wooden doors.

The façade (east elevation) is divided into three bays by concrete and brick pilasters that rise from the ground level to the corbelled brick cornice located above the second floor and below a parapet wall. The pilasters are located at each corner of the building and on either side of the arched opening that contains the recessed front (main) entrance to the building.

Ribbons of grouped nine-over-nine light, wooden, double-hung sash windows dominate the façade on the first and second floors and extend from pilaster to pilaster in each bay. Due to the oversized nature of these windows and the need for adequate ventilation, the lowest panes of the lower sash also operate via a hopper mechanism.

The west elevation repeats the organization of the façade, with ribbons of windows in the two north and south bays and smaller windows in the central bay above the rear entrance located on the basement level. The north elevation of the 1926 school consists of an unadorned brick wall above the raised concrete foundation. The only opening on this elevation is a fire escape with a six-paneled wood door to which it connects in the northwest corner of the third floor. The south elevation is the point of attachment for the 1952 addition at the first and second floor levels. Above the addition, the wall is devoid of openings.

The original plan of the 1926 building interior consists of a central east-west hallway with the entrance at the east end and a stair at the west end. Four classrooms are located off of this hallway on the second and third level, each occupying a corner of the building. An additional stair is located between the southern classrooms on the second floor and connects the 1926 building to the addition at the first floor level. The first floor contained an assembly room, boys' and girls' toilet rooms, the boiler room and a playroom according to the original plans. Modifications to the original plan have been made through the years. On the first floor, the assembly room has been partitioned into three rooms and the playroom split in half. The second floor plan remains intact. On the third floor, the two southern classrooms also have been partitioned and a toilet room added to the former southwestern classroom.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 7

Page 3

As mentioned above, many of the original interior features and finishes remain in this building. The Colonial Revival vocabulary is established in the central hall by the use of beaded-board wainscoting below plastered walls, simple wide-board trim surrounding five-panel classroom doors with transoms, deep crown molding, and a pressed-tin ceiling within a plaster border. The stair at the rear of the hall is a dominant feature of this space and features simple square balusters and newel posts in the Colonial Revival style.

Classroom finishes continue the feeling established by the central hall. Features such as door trim, wainscoting, crown molding and pressed tin ceilings are typical in these spaces. One wall of each classroom is dominated by a chalkboard placed above the wainscot.

Modern changes to the interior are few and include florescent light fixtures and carpet or vinyl tile over the original wooden floors in some spaces. These changes have little effect on the overall integrity of these spaces.

1952 Addition

The two-story 1952 addition was built of brick in a restrained adaptation of the Art Deco style that repeats the pilasters and corbelled brickwork of the original building. The façade of the addition is set back from the 1926 building and also faces east. It is divided into northern and southern halves. The northern half is composed of three bays separated by two-story brick piers. Each bay contains two openings with the entrance at grade in the central bay on the first floor. The windows are fixed four-light metal on the first floor and paired six-light casement above. Standing-seam metal fixed awnings shade the upper windows. The southern half of the façade is an unadorned brick wall except for aluminum lettering "Clifton Forge Elementary East."

The organization of the north and south elevations is defined by the use of the interior of the addition. The eastern half of the addition provided more classroom space and, therefore, the facade of the first and second levels in this section are dominated by groupings of large metal casement windows separated by narrow brick piers. On the north elevation, first floor, two sets of double doors that open to the playground area, replace the casement windows and a large opening filled with glass block provides light to a stairwell to the west of this entrance.

The western section of the addition contains the two-story gymnasium with stage. In this section there are seven windows on each elevation. The bays for the windows on each elevation are slightly recessed, framed by brick piers, and capped by a corbelled cornice. The west (rear) elevation is of a utilitarian design with metal casement windows on the first and second floors, a set of wooden partially glazed double-doors that appear to have served as a loading dock, and a rear entrance with a metal door sheltered by a canopy. The plan for the eastern half of the addition locates three classrooms on the first floor and four classrooms on the second floor. A center hall bisects this section of the addition and separates the northern and southern classrooms. The

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 7

Page 4

northeast portion of this section connects to the 1926 building and is used for corridor and stair space. An additional stair is located on the wall shared with the gymnasium portion of the addition. There is a student toilet room on each level located between the stair and the classrooms.

The western half of the 1952 addition is the school's gymnasium and auditorium. At the western end of the gymnasium there is an elevated stage with locker rooms and storage space located below.

Finishes that date to the period of construction are typical in the 1952 addition and include painted cement block walls and vinyl tile floors. Trim details are minimal and woodwork is often unpainted. An effort was made, however, to continue the Colonial Revival style established in the 1926 structure with small-paned windows in doors and cabinets and transoms over classroom doorways. As in the 1926 building, chalkboards are a dominant feature in these classrooms.

The gymnasium interior retains its original features as well. The walls are painted brick to the height of the bottom of the windows and painted concrete block above. The floors are stained, narrow, tongue-and-groove maple with painted basketball court markings. Backboards and baskets with nets hang from the ribbed ceiling surface spanned by metal trusses. At the west end of the space an elevated stage floor projects into the gymnasium. The curtained stage opening is trimmed with simple, wide, wooden molding. Doors connect to the exterior and to the area behind and below the stage.

Integrity Statement

The Jefferson School possesses excellent integrity. The exteriors of both the original 1926 building and the 1952 addition are little changed from their historic appearance. The interior is not without modification, but these changes are either reversible or have occurred in secondary spaces that lack the features that define the character of the building. The original plan has been little changed over time and the circulation and classroom spaces retain a high level of original features and finishes. The surrounding neighborhood, with residences that were built in the first half of the twentieth century, also retains a high level of integrity with a lack of modern intrusions.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 5

Statement of Significance and Justification of Criteria

Summary

Completed in 1926 and expanded in 1952, the Jefferson School provided primary and secondary school education for African-American students in the Clifton Forge community from 1926 until 1965. As the fourth school constructed to serve these students, it stands as a testament to the community's continued commitment to quality education for all of its citizens regardless of color, against the backdrop of the town's growth, due to the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad's demand for labor. An active alumni association continues to keep the memories made at the school alive.

Applicable Criteria

The Jefferson School is eligible at the local level of significance and meets Criterion A in the areas of Education and Black Ethnic Heritage for its close association with the history of Clifton Forge and its African-American community for almost forty years. The period of significance is from the school's completion date in 1926 to desegregation in 1965.

Acknowledgements/Sources Consulted

Several individuals contributed their time, research, memories, and memorabilia in assistance of the preparation of this submission. Chief among those is Paul Linkenhofer, former superintendent of Alleghany County schools and former principal of the Jefferson School, whose dissertation "A History of Schooling in Alleghany County, Clifton Forge, and Covington, Virginia," supplied valuable primary resource documentation of school board minutes and other contemporaneous sources. Former student Wanda Simpson served as a local contact and representative of the alumni and provided valuable images and objects. Mrs. Gretl Anderson, who graduated from the Jefferson School in 1937 and returned to teach there from 1942 until 1965, also provided a wealth of information.

Images of many schools constructed during this period can be found in the Jackson Davis Collection of African-American Educational Photographs at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. Unfortunately, the search for images of the Jefferson School in Clifton Forge within that collection as well as the collections of the Virginia Historical Society and the Library of Virginia did not produce any images.

Historical Background/Context

Philanthropic interests such as the Peabody Fund, the John F. Slater Fund, the General Education Board, the Julius Rosenwald Foundation and the Jeanes Fund were all active during this period in Virginia. There is no record that any of these organizations directly provided funds for the construction of the Jefferson School or its

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 6

predecessors. It is, however, possible that teachers for the Jefferson School and its predecessors were trained at the Peabody Normal Institute in Staunton.

Community of Clifton Forge

Located on the Jackson River in Alleghany County, the area now known as Clifton Forge was part of a 1770 land grant from Lord Botetourt, Governor of Virginia to Robert Gallaspy.ⁱⁱ Although the area was settled by the mid-eighteenth century,ⁱⁱⁱ it was the 1826 completion of the road that is now U.S. Route 60 that led to early growth of the iron industry in the county and increased settlement in the area. The settlement was established as a town in 1861 and incorporated as Clifton Forge in 1884.^{iv} The town was named for James Clifton who established an iron furnace in the area by 1828.^v

The Virginia Central Railroad arrived in Clifton Forge (then known as Williamson's Station) in 1856-57.^{vi} During the second half of the nineteenth century, as the railroad network expanded throughout Virginia, it enabled the shipment of coal from Western Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky to Newport News where it could then be transported to the northeast to help fuel that area's industrial expansion.^{vii}

Following the Civil War, the Virginia Central merged with the Covington and Ohio to become the Chesapeake and Ohio.^{viii} Clifton Forge played a major role in this expansion, as a terminus with workshops and yards for the railroad located there, from this point until the 1980s.

In addition to coal, the railroad provided a cost-effective means of transportation for the local iron ore industry in Alleghany County.^{ix} The brown hematite ore at Clifton Forge was noted by the Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture to be one of the most remarkable and most productive sites in Virginia.^x

During the early 1900s the iron industry began to decline and paper mills became the economic engine of Alleghany County.^{xi}

Virginia Public Schools

Schooling in colonial Virginia was thought of as a commodity to be purchased rather than a government-provided service; therefore, only those families that could afford the services of a private tutor formally educated their children. Since there is no public record of early schooling in the Commonwealth, research turns to private records to document early education pursuits in western Virginia. Such records are sparse but do show that a teacher was hired for a school east of Alleghany County on the Calfpasture River in either Augusta or Rockbridge County by 1760.^{xii}

Throughout the closing decades of the eighteenth century, Thomas Jefferson and others in the General Assembly proposed several bills to institute a locally controlled public school system. However, due to the fear

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 7

of higher taxes and bigger government these efforts did not result in the adoption of a system of public education. In 1810, Governor Tyler and the General Assembly established the Literary Fund for the encouragement of primary education. Funded by government penalties and forfeitures, and in 1816, by repayment of a loan to the Federal government for the War of 1812, it provided the first Virginia appropriation for public education.^{xiii} A revision of the Literary Fund language in 1819, however, created an act funding the University of Virginia and allocating \$45,000 per year to the education of the poor.^{xiv} Funds were distributed to each county and commissioners appointed to oversee the disbursement of funds.

In Alleghany County, commissioners received \$16 in Literary Fund disbursements to spend in their district according to an 1824 report. In the following year, although there were six schools in the county and thirty poor children, only six had been educated as a result of the allocated funds. Lack of participation in the program came from the unwillingness of families to accept charity, indifference to education, and the rural nature of the county often making school attendance difficult due to the distance to schools and family work responsibilities. By the early 1840s, however, participation in the program was at its peak with over 60 percent of eligible children receiving a state-funded education.^{xv}

At the same time as the Literary Fund was helping to educate the state's poor white children, the right to an education was being removed from the enslaved population. Laws passed in 1805, 1831, and 1848 prevented the education of African-Americans due to fears of uprisings connected to the abolitionist movement.^{xvi}

Despite efforts to establish a mandatory statewide, state-funded public school system throughout the middle decades of the nineteenth century, it was 1870 before the enabling legislation for a public school system was drafted by William Henry Ruffner and adopted by the General Assembly. This legislation was mandated by the Virginia Constitution of 1869 (Underwood Constitution) which fulfilled the Radical Reconstruction requirements of the U. S. Congress that southern states create state-funded public schools for all children in order to be fully accepted back into the union. Although the legislation assumed responsibility for the education of blacks, segregation was mandatory.

Late that year, William Henry Ruffner was appointed the first State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Census records at the time indicate that half of all white and virtually all black Virginians were illiterate.

A number of groups, such as the Conference for Education in the South, the Southern Education Board and the Virginia Education Commission, were active between the 1890s and the 1930s. One of the main focuses of these organizations was what they saw as the moral obligation to provide a primary and industrial education for blacks, therefore, easing racial tensions and providing an educated work force.^{xvii} An economic argument was made as well. Dr. Ruffner reasoned that even with just a primary education, the earning power of the average African-American male could be increased by twenty-five percent and, therefore, increase the wealth of the

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 8

state and by doing so, cover the costs of that education.^{xviii} Together, public and private efforts were successful, and literacy rates in the black population rose to 42.8% by 1890 and 80.8% by 1930.^{xix} State-supported education came at an advantageous time for Alleghany County's three school districts: Boiling Spring, Covington, and Clifton Forge. The growth of the railroad and iron industries led to population growth of 50 percent between 1870 and 1880.^{xx} A similar growth rate continued into the next decade with the number of school age children almost doubling between 1882 and 1883.^{xxi} This rate of growth may have encouraged the establishment of two private female seminaries (white) in Clifton Forge; the Clifton Forge Seminary in 1890 and the Alleghany Institute in 1892.^{xxii}

Although education was mandated for all children, the length of the school year and level of education varied greatly between urban and rural areas. In Alleghany County there were a number of black rural schools where warranted by population. These schools began as early as 1879 and the last one closed in 1950.^{xxiii} Standards for education were not fully defined until the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1901-1902. The outcome of the convention provided for the modernization of schools through expanded powers given to the Board of Education, compulsory attendance, and the creation of libraries.^{xxiv}

Education in Clifton Forge and the Jefferson School

In the late 1880s there was a significant rise in the number of African-American families in the community of Clifton Forge due to the extension of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad through the town. The first recorded public school for African-American children in Clifton Forge was a one-room schoolhouse located on Verge Street (1880s). As the black population continued to grow, a second, two-room, school was constructed on Church Street (1898). The students were split geographically between these two schools. The Verge Street school was run by Mrs. Mary Saunders and Miss Mildred Perkins, the daughters of Rev. Caesar Perkins, pastor of the Main Street Baptist Church. The Church Street school was run by Mrs. C. G. Sellers "an outstanding disciplinarian... [with] high Christian ideals and lofty moral standards."^{xxv} By 1898, the two schools had been consolidated under one principal, Rev. I. A. Reid, the assistant pastor of the First Baptist Church.

A five-room school building replaced the two-room school in 1902. Constructed of brick it is located on Church Street, east of A Street, and was the first school in Clifton Forge to bear the name Jefferson. It was also the first time the school received a two-year high school accreditation.

According to the periods of development of Negro education in Virginia, established by Fred M. Alexander in Education for the Needs of the Negro in Virginia (1943), the first three African-American schools in Clifton Forge were built during the first era referred to as "The Initiation and Awakening: 1870-1906." This period is characterized as a time of establishment of a system of primary education and training for teachers.^{xxvi} This included the founding of the first state-funded, accredited, four-year institution for African-American teacher

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 9

training in the United States by a \$100,000 appropriation from the General Assembly. In 1882, the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute for Colored Persons at Petersburg was established. It is now known as Virginia State University (VSU). Graduates of the Jefferson School would attend both VSU and Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and return to Clifton Forge to teach at their alma mater. Many would also go on to professional careers as doctors, lawyers, ministers, and architects.^{xxvii}

The progression of African American schools in Clifton Forge appears to follow the trends for school buildings throughout Virginia as described by John Kern in his "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia." The first one-room school on Verge Street was constructed in the late 1880s to fulfill the requirements of the Virginia Constitution of 1869 that all children have a school to which they can walk. The second school built in 1898, followed the practice begun a decade earlier, of two-room graded schools that allowed students to be taught by class and age. It is likely that the third school began to fulfill some of the educational reforms enacted by the Virginia Constitution of 1902. By the time of construction of the 1926 portion of the current Jefferson School, schools were being consolidated and the plans standardized by the state to heed Progressive Era concerns and ensure a certain level of educational reform.

The present 1926 structure was constructed during Alexander's second identified period, "Development and Accomplishment 1906-1939." The goals of this era included more funding for schools, better teacher training, high schools for all jurisdictions, and the availability of industrial training for students.^{xxviii}

It is interesting to note that many of these school plans, especially for a school the size of the Jefferson, called for the classrooms to be organized around a central gymnasium or auditorium.^{xxix} This was not the case with the design for the Jefferson School. In fact, it was the community of parents and teachers that insisted on modification to a lower level assembly room to provide a space similar to other new schools with which they were familiar.^{xxx} The original plans also call for a small library on the third floor, a requirement of the 1902 Constitution reforms.

On March 5, 1925, the Clifton Forge School Board voted to recommend that "two lots, three if possible, be purchased at the corner of A and Church streets, to be used as a building site," and that the new school should be designed "consisting of seven rooms and an auditorium." W. D. Scott sold lot #8 for \$2,500 and E. F. Scott refused to sell lot #7, therefore, his lot was taken by eminent domain.^{xxxi}

As construction of the school progressed, the Teachers and Citizens League of the Jefferson School appealed to the School Board for a number of design changes. Among these were additional ceiling height and width of the first floor assembly room to allow room for indoor sports "as are commonly found in up-to-date public school houses in Virginia." Although this change required approval from the State Board of Education and City Council as well as additional funds, the School Board voted to move forward with the request.^{xxxii}

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 10

J. R. Campbell was awarded \$29,500 for the construction of the new school. The school opened in October 1927 and received accreditation as a four-year standard high school, thanks to the efforts of the PTA.^{xxxiii}

Interestingly, plans were being developed for a new white high school in Clifton Forge at the same time as the Jefferson School. In fact, five new schools were built in Alleghany County between 1926 and 1930 in a consolidation effort made practical by increased access to modern transportation including automobiles and buses. The 1928 Clifton Forge High School (white) was located adjacent to the city playground and had twenty-four classrooms. Amenities included in the Clifton Forge High School, but not found in the plans for the Jefferson School, included a cafeteria, teacher offices, and both an auditorium and a gymnasium.^{xxxiv}

The Jefferson School Grows

Not long after completion of the school, it appears that expansion was again contemplated. In May 1935, a lot adjacent to the Jefferson School was purchased from Charles Pendleton for \$400; the residence located on the lot was moved and rehabilitated for use by the school janitor. Another lot was purchased in May 1945 from Peter Jackson for \$1,075. Quonset huts were purchased to provide temporary classroom space while a study for the expansion of the school was conducted. In 1948, an additional lot was purchased from Mrs. Fox for \$1,300. This 50' by 150' lot was located at 905 Church Street and became the new playground.^{xxxv}

The long-awaited addition was designed by Fleming R. Hurt and Charlie D. Hurt, Jr., Architects of Waynesboro, Virginia, with Robert L. Brown and Associates, Engineers and Architects of Roanoke, Virginia listed as associate engineers for heating, plumbing and electrical work. The addition was completed in 1952 at a cost of \$170,000. It included seven elementary classrooms, a gymnasium/auditorium, an industrial arts shop and the principal's office. After many years of alternating between Main Street Baptist and First Baptist for graduation exercises, the 1953 graduating class was the first to hold the ceremony in the auditorium.

Several changes were made to the 1926 building at the same time as the new construction. Since the old building would become the high school, plans called for classrooms on the third floor to be converted to a larger library and a home economics room; and on the second floor, a classroom was converted into a science laboratory. On the first floor, plans called for the assembly room to be converted to a cafeteria and kitchen, since the addition included a gymnasium. By the 1940s, the dressing rooms under the gymnasium stage in the addition had been converted into an industrial arts shop.

Jefferson School Life

During the 1920 and 1930s, the curriculum at the Jefferson School was expanded to include dramatics, music, and French. Hi-Y clubs were established, as was a girls' basketball team, and the Dragons football team, which

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8

Page 11

was supported throughout Clifton Forge's African-American community. In 1937, improvements including projectors, a public address system, water fountains, a cafeteria and a library were added to the school. The Home Economics and Industrial Arts departments were added in 1942. For a number of years they were located in an adjacent building on Main Street where the cemetery is located now, due to space constraints in the school itself. Home Economics courses included home nursing care, sewing, and cooking.^{xxxvi}

As the school expanded, so did the staff, and the extracurricular activities. The Jefferson School had chapters of the National Honor Society, New Homemakers of America, a band and chorus, cheerleaders to support the football and basketball teams, and an active dramatics program.

A friendly rivalry called the "Mountain City Classic" developed between the football teams of the African-American Watson High School that served Covington, Alleghany County, and Bath County. Fundraising events were held in conjunction with the games and helped to offset the costs of these extracurricular activities.^{xxxvii}

In 1965, the school system was integrated. All former Jefferson High School students were assigned to Clifton Forge High School and the Jefferson School became Clifton Forge Elementary East.

In the early 1970s, modular instructional trailers were placed in the former playground space at the rear of the 1926 school. They were a temporary solution when plans to build a new elementary school failed, an aging school was condemned, and all elementary students attended East Elementary (the name adopted for the Jefferson School post-1965) in shifts. By 1975, the Moody school was renovated as West Elementary and Kindergarten through second grade students were moved there. East Elementary, which prior to this reorganization had housed the sixth and seventh grades, now needed classroom space for grades three through seven. Therefore, the trailers remained until the school was closed in 2001.

The Jefferson School Enters the Twenty-First Century

Clifton Forge East Elementary closed in 2001 as all Alleghany County schools were consolidated at Low Moor.^{xxxviii} The school is now vacant although it is being well looked after by the Town. Exploratory efforts are underway to convert the school into apartments, preserving the layout of classroom and circulation spaces and returning the school to an active role in the community.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 9

Page 12

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 9

Page 13

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Lylburn Downing School, Lexington, VA: VDHR #117-5002
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Jefferson School, Charlottesville, VA: VDHR #104-5087
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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number Endnotes Page 14

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ⁱⁱ Town of Clifton Forge website (www.cliftonforge.org/aboutus.htm)

ⁱⁱⁱ Linkenhoker, Paul Douglas. "A History of Schooling in Alleghany County, Clifton Forge, and Covington, Virginia" April 1993. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, 10.

^{iv} Ibid.

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^{vi} Salmon, Emily J. and Campbell D.C., Jr., ed. *The Hornbook of Virginia History: A Ready-Reference Guide to the Old Dominion's People, Places, and Past*. Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1994, 190.

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^{viii} Linkenhoker, 17.

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^{xi} Linkenhoker, 18.

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^{xiv} Ibid, 28.

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^{xvii} "Third Capon Springs Conference for Education in the South" proceedings. Raleigh, NC: St. Augustine's School Printing Office, 1900, 6

^{xviii} Alexander, 108

^{xix} Linkenhoker, 321

^{xx} Ibid, 124

^{xxi} Ibid, 117

^{xxii} Ibid, 121-22

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^{xxiv} Ibid, 135

^{xxv} "The History of Jefferson School, Clifton Forge, VA,"

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^{xxxvii} Linkenhoker, 332

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

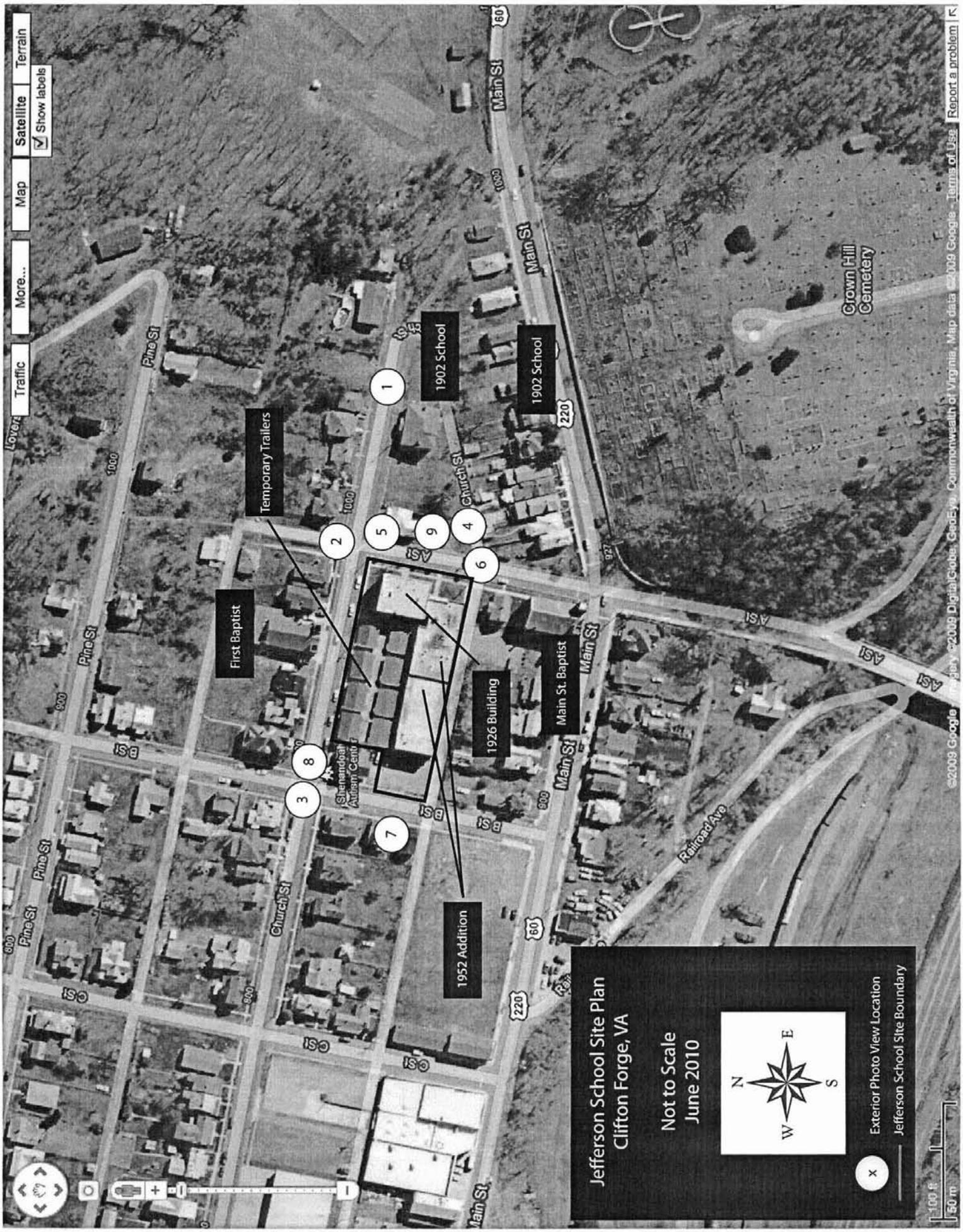
Name of Property Jefferson School

County and State Alleghany County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number Endnotes Page 15

^{xxxviii} Phone interview, Alleghany County School Board, May 26, 2010



More... Map Satellite Terrain

Traffic Show labels

Map

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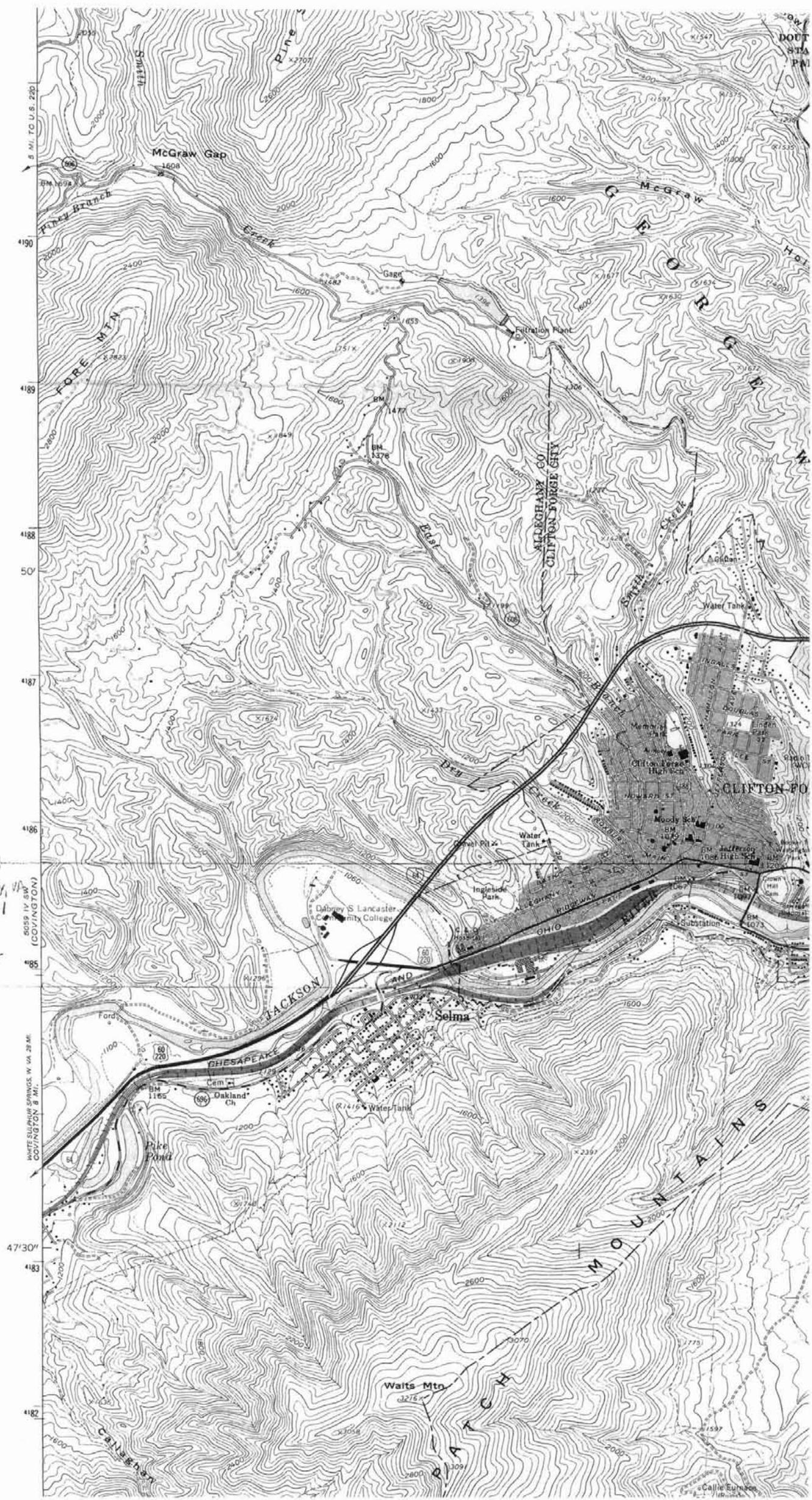
Jefferson School Site Plan Clifton Forge, VA

Not to Scale
June 2010



Exterior Photo View Location
Jefferson School Site Boundary

100 ft
50 m



Jefferson School
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