

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

LISTED ON:	
VLR	12/13/2012
NRHP	02/05/2013

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 Stafford Training School
 other names/site number H.H. Poole Junior High School; H.H. Poole High School; Stafford Vocational Annex; Rowser Educational Center; Rowser Building; VDHR File No. 089-0247

2. Location

street & number 1739 Jefferson Davis Highway

N/A
N/A

 not for publication
 city or town Stafford vicinity
 state Virginia code VA county Stafford code 179 zip code 22554

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

[Signature] 12/17/12
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	4	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	4	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATIONAL: School

GOVERNMENT: Government offices

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

Colonial Revival

foundation: BRICK

walls: BRICK

roof: METAL

other: WOOD

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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

Located in Stafford County, Virginia, the Stafford Training School was built in 1939, in the Colonial Revival style by the Public Works Administration (P.W.A.) during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The school is a classic example of early twentieth-century public school architecture and retains a high level of integrity. The one-story, three bay, rectangular main block, flanked by one-story brick wings, is built of cinderblock clad in brick veneer and covered with a standing-seam metal roof. The school evolved as additions were added in 1943, 1954, 1958, and 1960. The interior is airy and well naturally lighted in keeping with P.W.A. building design. The use of interior materials and floor plan provide social and humanitarian needs as opposed to artistic treatments. The craftsmanship is of a high standard. Stafford Training School possesses an excellent association with African American history and the desegregation of Virginia's public schools in the Fredericksburg area. Its setting along U.S. Route 1 (Jefferson Davis Highway) conveys the feeling of an educational facility of the Great Depression, pre-World War II era. The site contains 8.16 acres. The school is just over one mile south of Stafford County Court House and centrally located in the county along U.S. Route 1, the main corridor through Stafford County, which parallels Interstate Route 95. More additions were added to the rear and are associated with a 2005 rehabilitation by Stafford County. Secondary contributing resources include: a baseball field (ca. 1940), a contributing site, and a diversionary drainage ditch, a contributing structure (1939). A one-story brick office building (1969), a small brick utility building (1973), and two wood-sided storage sheds (ca. 2000) are being considered as non-contributing buildings because of their construction dates. Today, the school is used by Stafford County for offices and by the Parks and Recreation Department as an educational and instructional center.

Narrative Description

Site

An original section of the Old Richmond Washington Highway still remains in front of the school. The old road borders the front of the school property and lies between it and modern day U.S. Route 1 (Jefferson Davis Highway), which opened about 1949. A Virginia State Highway Marker, "From Indian Path to Highway," is located along U.S. Route 1 and just south of the site before U.S. Route 1 crosses Accakeek Creek. The school is sited in the low-lying Accakeek floodplain and the nominated property's current setting includes commercial uses along U.S. Route 1 and the Rappahannock Regional Jail on its north corner. The school property is accessed by a driveway off U.S. Route 1. This same driveway continues and provides access to the Rappahannock Regional Jail Complex located to the immediate rear of the site. The back of the school property is naturally wooded and provides a visual buffer of the Jail Complex. The majority of the school's 8.16 acres site is open space with expanded modern parking lots, which cover the school's original parking area. The topography of the site is flat. Restrained modern landscaping exists which includes cement sidewalks, an island with flag poles, and shrubs.

School Building

Exterior:

The Stafford Training School was built in 1939 as a one-story rectangular cinderblock building with a symmetrical façade and identical one-story wings flanking a central core.¹ The façade includes a central entrance having a bay on each side with a set of three six-over-six, double-hung-sash wood windows. The central entrance contains wooden, double-leaf doors topped by a five-light transom. The double-leaf doors are replacements patterned on the design of the original doors. The flanking wings each contain a bay set with a ribbon of five six-over-six, double-hung-sash wood windows. The original wooden windows are still intact with double-hung sashes operating vertically. The wooden sill of the windows sits on top of a concrete sill. The foundation is continuous brick. The main rectangular core features Federal style influenced parapet gable ends, each with a central interior built chimney.

The Stafford Training School remains on its original site. In 1939, it was a cinderblock building painted white (See Figure 1). The central entrance is through a vestibule created by cinderblock pilasters supporting an arched pediment roof. Inside this vestibule is a large bronze plaque mounted on the right side cinderblock wall (See Figure 2) that reads as follows:

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FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION
JOHN M. CARMODY
FEDERAL WORKS ADMINISTRATOR
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
STAFFORD COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL
1939

Stafford Training School was built by the Public Works Administration.² The major elements contributing to the design of the school (site, plan, elevation, details, and historic fabric) remain in place. Stafford Training School was built to high standards of craftsmanship and retains excellent integrity of workmanship. The policies and standards of the P.W.A. brought a higher degree of quality to construction than occurred with projects that did not utilize federal monies. Noteworthy characteristics of P.W.A. projects included the careful study of line, scale, proportion, skillful and effective use of materials, economy of cost, and provisions for light. All these characteristics are found in Stafford Training School. Specifically, the use of cinderblock construction relates to the effective use of material and economy of cost. The multiple set windows address the provision for light.

In 1943, during the height of World War II, the school received an addition known as "the war room," so named because it was constructed during the war. The addition was attached on the left side of the school as a rear ell. The addition served as a classroom. In 1954, with the assistance of a grant from the State School Construction Fund and contributions from Stafford County, an addition was added on the right side of the school. The addition consisted of two classrooms, and a combination auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria. There were no locker rooms or showers.

More additions followed in 1958 and in 1960. Additions were accessed by "connecting corridors." The two-story addition built in 1960 adjoins the northeast corner of the school and the 1954 gym/auditorium addition. The 1960 addition was known as "the bus drivers' addition." The Superintendent of Stafford Public Schools stated that he had bus drivers who were skilled in the various construction trades and received permission from the state to direct the bus drivers to build the addition. Receiving no additional pay, the school's bus drivers provided the labor and worked during the time in between running their routes. This is the only known instance of a school in Stafford County with an addition built by bus drivers.

In 1960, brick veneer, in a stretcher-bond pattern, was applied over the original cinderblock (See Figure 14). This was the realization of a longtime request of Stafford Training School's PTA. The original cinderblock Colonial Revival influenced vestibule was not veneered with brick and remains a distinctive feature of the building. The original steps of the main entrance were concrete with a round metal pipe handrail. During the 1970s, the steps were replaced with brick or brick veneered. In 2005, the building was rehabilitated by Stafford County. At that time the brick front steps were replaced with modern concrete steps, a modern iron handrail, and a concrete wheelchair ramp. A modern sidewalk was included. The gable roof is covered in standing-seam metal with modern snow guards and replaced the original tin roof. The upper half of the original wood cornice was covered with a modern metal cornice and metal gutters and downspouts were installed on the building. Also during the rehabilitation, the school was upgraded to include modern lighting, while retaining the original ceiling fixtures, and new wood floors were installed. Sympathetic additions were added to the rear of the school to house offices and amenities which included a handicap accessible new entrance and lobby, fire egress corridors, a modern kitchen, and bathrooms. A trellis-covered sidewalk was added to the exterior and landscaping was completed.

Interior:

All interior spaces, rooms, corridors, and the combined auditorium and gymnasium remain intact. The original floor plan remains unchanged and the classrooms have been preserved. The interior walls of corridors and the auditorium/gym are constructed of cinderblock and are painted. The interior walls of the central core have a painted smooth surface that appears to be plaster or cement stucco over cinderblock. Some interior walls of the flanking wings contain modern sheetrock. Original wood trim remains. Original wood floors have been covered with modern oak flooring.

The original front entrance is seldom used. A new, handicapped accessible main entrance was created during the 2005 rehabilitation and is located on the building's west side with an adjacent parking lot. As one enters the new main entrance, a wall mounted bronze plaque commemorates the rehabilitation project by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors. Nearby hangs a painted portrait of Stafford's African American educator, Ella Rowser. Entering the main corridor, one may

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proceed left toward county offices or right toward the 1939 core of the building. The corridor contains framed newspaper articles and photos related to the school's history. Framed pictures of Henry H. Poole, Ella Rowser, and school classes hang on the walls of the 1939 core.

Inside the 1954 addition, the two new classrooms were used to serve the 9th and 10th grades. The combination auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria involved school staff putting up tables and chairs during the lunch period, rearranging chairs for an assembly program, and clearing it all out for physical education. The stage area is recessed and centered within a cinderblock wall that forms one side of the gym/auditorium room as opposed to being placed at one end of the room. The odd placement created an awkward seating arrangement and made it difficult for anyone seated to the side to view the stage. The placement was deliberately done to save money in construction cost by not having to extend further one end of the building.

The auditorium stage contains a distinctive character-defining feature. The corner of the cinderblock wall on each side of the stage opening is rounded. This interesting feature creates an Art-Moderne flavor. The rounded jambs are soothing to the eye in an otherwise harsh décor. A close examination of the rounded surfaces reveals a rough pitted and pocked texture, more so than the normal cinderblock surface, indicating they may have been shaped round by a hand rubbing technique and not molded as such.

From 1939 to 1954, the schoolrooms were heated with "round pot belly" wood stoves (See Figure 9). Students had to put the wood in the stoves. One student remembered, "You got burnt if you got too close and froze if you got too far away."³ In 1949, ten years after the school was built, "flush toilets" were installed using a septic and sewage disposal field. In 1954, modern restrooms and a new heating system were installed. During the school year 1955-1956, the school had eight classrooms, a principal's office, a clinic and teacher's lounge, a library, and a homemaking department. The 1958 addition provided two more classrooms and something new to the school—lockers and shower rooms. The 1960 addition (attached to the 1954 gym/auditorium) was two stories and accommodated a new cafeteria on the first level and home economic classes on the second level.

Secondary Resources

The school site is on low ground that is part of the flats and flood plain of Accakeek Creek, a tidal tributary of Potomac Creek, which in itself is a tributary of the Potomac River. Accakeek Creek is just south of the site. The flats are not a concern today with modern paving and site improvements, but would have been a problem during the time it was a black school.⁴ As of 1956, the school's playground and parking areas were not paved.

Drainage Ditch, 1939, Contributing Structure

A large diversionary ditch, which still exists, was dug to prevent or curtail flooding. This ditch is behind the school and runs south toward Accakeek Creek.⁵ Even with the ditch, the property flooded after a hard rain. With no bridge, children had to jump the "ditch" to reach the playground. After a heavy rain the ditch would be filled with water and teachers would forbid students to attempt jumping it. The "ditch" is remembered by students as having always existed.⁶ The present belief is that the diversionary ditch was dug in conjunction with the school as a project of the Public Works Administration.⁷ It is a contributing structure

Baseball Field, ca. 1940, Contributing Site

A modern baseball field sits on the site of the school's original baseball field. The baseball field remains in its historic orientation, but has been filled and graded to create a new playing surface by the Stafford County Parks and Recreation Department. The baseball field is historically related to the school and is a contributing site. During recess in the school's early years, students played softball, shot marbles, jumped rope, held foot races, and played "hopscot" [sic] and horseshoes. For ten years students had to use outdoor toilets located behind the baseball field to the rear of the school, and these are no longer present.

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The property contains four secondary non-contributing resources that postdate the period of significance.

Office Building, 1969, Non-Contributing Building

In 1969, a brick office building was built south of the main resource. It is occupied by Stafford County Parks and Recreation and known as the "Annex Building." The building stands independent of the main resource and is well maintained.

Utility Building, 1973, Non-Contributing Building

A small brick utility building is located on the east corner of the property. Built in 1973, it serves as a county north-south water booster pump station. The building stands independent of the main resource and is well maintained.

Storage Sheds (2), ca. 2000, Non-Contributing Buildings

Two wood-sided storage sheds are located in the rear of the complex and are non-contributing buildings.

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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.)

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION; ETHNIC HERITAGE: African

American

SOCIAL HISTORY: Civil Rights

Period of Significance

1939-1966

Significant Dates

1946-1960

9/1/1960, 9/5/1961, 8/26/1962, 1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Public Works Administration

John M. Carmody, Federal Works Administrator

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1939, representing the construction date of the school, and ends in 1966 with the school's closure.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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

The Stafford Training School, built in 1939, is located in Stafford County, Virginia, on approximately 8 acres of land. The one-story, three-bay, rectangular main block, flanked by one-story brick wings, is built of cinderblock clad in brick veneer and covered with a standing-seam metal roof. The school evolved as additions were added in 1943, 1954, 1958, and 1960. Stafford Training School is locally significant as the only African American high school in Stafford County operating during the Civil Rights Movement. The school meets National Register Criterion A in Education, Social History, and Ethnic Heritage as an educational facility that played a significant role in the desegregation of Virginia's public schools. Students from this school were the first to attempt an unsuccessful school integration in the Fredericksburg area, followed by the first successful school integration in the Fredericksburg area—beginning in 1960 with an unsuccessful attempt to integrate all-white Stafford High School, and two successful school integrations in 1961 and 1962 respectively. These actions were prior to the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, "Freedom of Choice," and significantly prior to *Green vs. County School Board* in 1968, followed by the era of "massive integration." These actions effectively contributed to change in public education in the State of Virginia and to social movements by expanding the Civil Rights of African Americans in the United States. It is the most significant site in Stafford County and in the Fredericksburg area to interpret the struggle for the de-segregation of Virginia's public school system. Stafford Training School also portrays the important role of education in the African American community. The land upon which the school was built was purchased with private donations from black citizens who had formed a "county league" for that purpose. The school was built during the Great Depression by the Public Works Administration under Federal Works Administrator John M. Carmody and retains a high level of integrity. The site makes an important contribution to the interpretation of the American Civil Rights Movement. The period of significance begins in 1939, representing the construction date of the school, and ends in 1966 when the school still had an enrollment of only African American students and was closed. The property's continuing association with school desegregation policies through 1966 meets Criteria Consideration G. Secondary contributing resources include the school's baseball field (ca. 1940), a contributing site, and a diversionary drainage ditch (1939), a contributing structure. A brick one-story office building, a small brick utility building, and two wood-sided storage sheds, all constructed in the late 20th century, are non-contributing resources.

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

The Stafford Training School went through the turbulent years and the extraordinary circumstances of passing from the Jim Crow era into the Civil Rights Movement. The significance of the school is presented in a three-part narrative. The first part summarizes the origins of segregated public education in Virginia. From 1876 through 1965, Virginia, like the rest of the South, went through the period known as Jim Crow. Segregation and discrimination were the standard for Virginia's public school system. Stafford Training School represents a poignant example of a black school in a southern school system. Part two presents the history of Stafford Training School as an academic institution and educational facility. The third part provides the history of the school's involvement in desegregation with significant dates.

Part One: Separate and Unequal Educational Opportunities

Prior to the Civil War, Virginia schools were either private institutions or sponsored by religious organizations and were not available to most children in Virginia, especially African-American children, whether free or enslaved.⁸ Social critics often decried the inadequate system for public education. A northern newspaper declared, "Never will Virginia's White children be generally schooled until her Black ones shall cease to be sold."⁹ In 1861, 85,000 poor white adults in Virginia could not read or write.¹⁰ In February 1863, Private William Ray of Company F, 7th Wisconsin Volunteers, was stationed as a "safeguard" at a house near the picket line assigned to his unit while in Stafford County. In his diary, Ray recorded his impressions about the family he found at the house:

Supper over, we chat with the Family awhile. They consist of the two old folks and their two grown up Girls or young ladies, more properly speaking and they all were so ignorant that one person raised in the North would know more than them all. Oh but they were worse than any Negro that had been in the North 6 months. I never had an Idea before how Ignorant a person could be. But I see where the Blight of Slavery has been. There is Ignorance to the worst degree. The poor white is Below the negro if anything.¹¹

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The observant and prolific Captain George F. Noyes expressed his opinion of the African Americans arriving in the Union camps in Stafford County:

We had quite a number of these newly-freed men about our head-quarters, in the employ of the government as teamsters, blacksmiths, etc. A patient, docile race, eminently trustworthy, with mental faculties quite undeveloped, it always seemed wonderful to me that they succeeded so well in their new experiment of freedom. It may take a generation to develop their best qualities of self-support; but even now they very readily fell into the performance of their respective duties. I have witnessed their exultation when, for the first time in their lives, they received honest pay for their honest labor, and am satisfied that this is impulse sufficient with them, as with us, to induce their best efforts. I have seen them painfully spelling out their letters—great six-foot men even, struggling over the difficulties of a child's primer, and am convinced of their capacity and desire for education.¹²

The Civil War brought about the destruction of Virginia's slavery-based economy. African Americans from Stafford County served as U.S. Colored Troops during the war. The children of Virginia's poor white population benefited from the sacrifices made by U.S. Colored Troops. Fighting for freedom enabled the white population of Virginia to receive an opportunity to be educated, which had been denied due to their lower socioeconomic status. For Virginia's African American children, such progress came much more slowly.

After the Civil War, the headquarters of the Virginia Freedmen's Bureau was located in Richmond. On June 6, 1865, Major General A.H. Terry, who commanded the Department of Virginia, issued General Order No. 77 from the former Capital of the Confederacy:

The laws of the State of Virginia...made to restrain the personal liberty of free colored persons were designed for the Government of such persons while living amid a population of colored slaves. They were enacted for the security of slave property: they were substantially parts of the Slave Code. Slavery has been abolished in Virginia and therefore upon the principle that where the reason of the law ceases, the law itself ceases. These Laws and Ordinances have become obsolete. People of color will henceforth enjoy the same personal liberty that other citizens and inhabitants enjoy.¹³

Although freedom had been achieved for Virginia's African American population, opportunities to enjoy "the same personal liberty" began to be curtailed almost immediately. The General Assembly of Virginia began to pass a series of laws that collectively comprised the "Jim Crow" era of segregation in all public facilities, including libraries, public transit systems, and government offices, as well as allowing (and even mandating) segregation in private facilities, such as restaurants, hotels, and train travel. The new Virginia constitution of 1869 provided for a universal, but segregated system of public education. In 1870, Virginia law stated, "white and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school but in separate schools..."¹⁴ However, the Commonwealth's implementation of public schools for African Americans was slow, and major inequities existed in the public funds provided for white schools versus African American schools.

For many years, it was common practice for black churches to take on the responsibility of educating their children. When insufficient public funds were appropriated to pay for schools, black parents often had to organize themselves into leagues to raise private funds to help acquire land and pay for school construction costs. In 1865, a black organization known as the Union Branch of the True Vine was formed in Stafford County. Union Branch School closed in 1938. In Virginia, as well as across the former Confederate states, private funds from outside philanthropic groups, such as the Peabody Fund, the John F. Slater Fund, the General Education Board, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and the Jeanes Fund, also provided money for African-American school construction.¹⁵

It was not until the 1930s that a new opportunity arose for public funding of school construction for African American students, this time from federal sources. As a result of the stock market crash in 1929, the United States entered a period of severe economic decline known as the "Great Depression." In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" program began to be implemented through the Public Works Administration (PWA), among other agencies. The New Deal provided federal monies through allotments appropriated by Congress to continue the construction of needed facilities. PWA construction projects also were a major focus for providing jobs for millions of unemployed Americans on projects at the local, state, and federal levels. During the period of 1933-1942, some of the buildings constructed included armories, local government buildings, jails, hospitals, waterworks, and schools. Stafford Training School was one of 1,390 schools built by the PWA in the 48 states between 1933 and 1939.¹⁶ The Jim Crow era of segregation, however, endured for more than twenty years thereafter.

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Part Two: Institutional History – Stafford Training School

By the second quarter of the 20th century, Stafford County contained many black schools.¹⁷ These were small schools that taught the first grade through the sixth or seventh grade, but there was no county black high school. Classes were attended approximately six months out of the year. The policy of having many small black schools throughout the county was intended for the children to be able to walk to school; therefore, the county did not have to provide buses. Prior to 1939, the highest level of education a black child could receive in Stafford County was the seventh grade. Black students who wanted to go to high school had to attend Fredericksburg Normal and Industrial Institute located in Mayfield and, after 1935, Walker-Grant High School in Fredericksburg. Students from outside the City of Fredericksburg were required to pay tuition to attend Fredericksburg schools. The parents of Stafford's black students paid this tuition out of their own pocket. Other black students would leave Stafford County and stay with relatives elsewhere to attend a high school. African American parents in Stafford County desired for their children to have the same educational opportunities as white children did within the county. Donations were given by black parents, who had formed a "County League" to purchase land for a "colored school." In 1938, these funds were used by the Stafford County School Board to purchase five acres. Thus, the stage was set for the first black high school in Stafford County.

In 1939, a black school was constructed by the Public Works Administration as a "four-teacher building."¹⁸ Its name was Stafford Training School.¹⁹ A training school was the term used in the South to differentiate white high schools from black high schools. At the beginning of the school day, "the whole school gathered together every morning for prayer, Bible verses, pledge allegiance to the flag and a song."²⁰ Stafford Training School became Stafford County's first black high school and the only African American school in the county to provide classes beyond the 7th grade. Black students who had completed the 7th grade in the various colored elementary schools in the county, could attend Stafford Training School and become members of the first 8th grade class that Stafford County ever had for black children.

When the school opened in August 1939, it included teaching the elementary grades first through the seventh. The newly created 8th grade was taught from 1939 to 1940, and afterward advanced to higher grades that were added consecutively, i.e., from 1940 to 1941 the students advanced to the 9th grade class, from 1941 to 1942 they continued to the 10th grade class, and from 1942 to 1943 they reached the 11th grade class. At that time in Virginia, white and black students graduated from high school upon completion of the 11th grade. The first African American students to graduate from high school in Stafford County graduated from Stafford Training School in June 1943, followed by graduating classes in 1944, 1945, and 1946.

Over the next fifteen years, the grades taught at Stafford Training School changed several times. Starting in 1946 and continuing through 1951, the 8th grade students were bused by Stafford County to Walker-Grant High School in Fredericksburg. In 1952, the class that completed the 7th grade at Stafford Training School stayed at the school until they completed the 10th grade in 1955. These students were then bused to Walker-Grant, followed by the 10th grade classes of 1956, 1957, and 1958, who went to Walker-Grant for their 11th and 12th grade years. The last Stafford students to be bused to Walker-Grant graduated in 1960.

During this time in the late 1940s and 1950s, Stafford Training School functioned as a junior high school. A single classroom addition was made in 1943. In 1954, with the assistance of a grant from the State School Construction Fund and contributions from Stafford County, an addition was added on the right side of the school. The addition consisted of two classrooms, and a combination auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria. There were no locker rooms or showers. At this time, the school was renamed the H.H. Poole Junior High School. Henry Harrison Poole (See Figure 7) was a Stafford-born African American educator and the Supervisor of Colored Schools in Stafford and King George counties from 1930 to 1953.²¹ In 1933, Poole had formed the countywide league of black PTAs to raise funds to buy land for Stafford County's first and only black high school, Stafford Training School, built six years later in 1939. The school is the one site most significant in Poole's long career in black education.²²

The H.H. Poole Junior High School students who completed the 10th grade in 1959 remained at H.H. Poole Junior High School to complete their 11th and 12th grades. Thus the school was once more a high school. In 1958 and 1960, additions were made to accommodate the 11th and 12th grades. For the 1960 addition, the Superintendent of Stafford Public Schools required bus drivers who were skilled in the various construction trades and received permission from the state to build the

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addition. They did so without receiving additional pay, performing the labor during the time in between running their routes. This is the only known instance of a school in Stafford County with an addition built by bus drivers.

The school was renamed again, this time as H.H. Poole High School. The senior class of 1961 was the first of only two 12th grade classes to graduate from H.H. Poole High School. The second class graduated in 1962. In August 1962, after the entire 11th and 12th grade classes were transferred to all-white Stafford High School, H.H. Poole High School reverted back to being a junior high school. Again it was renamed H.H. Poole Junior High School. In 1964, it became an elementary school. There was no renaming to reflect the change and the school was referred to simply as H.H. Poole School. According to a local newspaper article in 1965, "The four-room Berea school was closed last year [1964] when all Negro elementary grades were consolidated at the H.H. Poole School...."²³

In 1966, H.H. Poole School closed. Later that same year it reopened as the Stafford Vocational Annex, attended by white and black students. In 1976, another name change took place after the passing of a beloved African American educator. The school was renamed the Rowser Educational Center in honor of Mrs. Ella Rowser, who had been a popular teacher at H.H. Poole for over a decade and an African American educator for 31 years. Originally from Hampton, Virginia, Ella Rowser (See Figure 19) came to Stafford County as Miss Ella Mae Randall in 1945. In 1947, she married Wilbert J. Rowser of Falmouth. She initially taught fifth graders and sixth graders at Concord School in Stafford and also served as principal there between 1948 and 1950. Having moved to Stafford Training School in 1951, Mrs. Rowser taught history and English, and later served as a guidance counselor and principal until H.H. Poole School closed in 1966.²⁴ At the time the industrial arts were being taught at the Rowser Educational Center, six classrooms of kindergarten students were held also. In 1978 and 1979, all the kindergarteners from Stafford Elementary School were sent to the Rowser Educational Center due to overflow problems at the former school.

In 1981, vocational classes were no longer taught and the Rowser Educational Center closed. During the 1980s and 1990s, the facility was utilized for county offices, including those of the Stafford County School Board and the Superintendent of Stafford County Schools. The school auditorium served as chambers for the Stafford County Board of Supervisors. Its meetings were held there until a new government building was completed at the courthouse in 1991. During this time the facility was referred to as the Rowser Building. In 2003, the property was conveyed by Stafford County School Board to the Stafford County Board of Supervisors. Stafford County contracted with GSH Design of Ashland, Virginia, to rehabilitate the school building, which took place during 2004-2005. The facility reopened in the fall of 2005. In 2007, it was officially dedicated by Stafford County as The Rowser Building. The property is managed by the county's Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Department. The school building is utilized for county offices. Along with a senior center, Stafford County Parks and Recreation offers instructional classes to the public and the school is once more used as an educational facility. It continues to be a local landmark.

Part Three: "Raising the Bar," Path from Segregation to School Desegregation

The revised Virginia Constitution of 1902 stated that "white and colored children" must be educated in separate schools; therefore, Stafford County schools were segregated. Stafford Training School poignantly portrays the inequality of education and segregation of Virginia's schools prior to and during the Civil Rights Movement. When Stafford Training School opened in 1939, Stafford County had two state accredited white high schools. Stafford High School was built in 1921 and accredited in 1923. Falmouth High School was built in 1931 and accredited in 1932. The Stafford Training School was never accredited.²⁵ It was difficult for Stafford County's African American high school graduates to be accepted at a college due to "NON-ACCREDITED" being on their diplomas (See Figure 4). If students wanted to go to college, they would first have to attend an accredited high school in order to be accepted. A black student who desired an accredited high school education, just as they did prior to 1939, would have to leave the county to stay with relatives elsewhere or parents would have to pay the tuition. Black parents were not pleased. Fredericksburg (Walker-Grant H.S.) and the neighboring counties of Spotsylvania (John J. Wright H.S.), Caroline (Union H.S.), and King George (Ralph Bunche H.S.) all had accredited black high schools.

1946-1960

Since Stafford Training School was a "non-accredited school," in lieu of spending the necessary funds to make Stafford Training School accredited, Stafford County decided to bus black students, once they graduated from the 7th grade, to Walker-Grant High School in Fredericksburg. Starting in August 1946, Stafford Training School's 9th, 10th, and 11th grade classes were also bused to Walker-Grant High School. As stated in Stafford County School Board Minutes, "...these arrangements adequately took care of the Negro situation."²⁶ Busing to Walker-Grant was mandatory. Whether or not

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students were planning to attend college had no bearing. For a period of 14 years, from August 1946 until June 1960, Stafford County paid tuition for its black students to attend Walker-Grant High School, which was accredited.

Black students had to first arrive by bus at Stafford Training School where they changed buses to Walker-Grant. At the end of the school day, they were bused from Walker-Grant back to Stafford Training School. Students changed buses again for the ride back home. Thus, many black students would pass by accredited white Stafford High School four times a day. From 1947 to 1960, Stafford's black students graduated from Walker-Grant High School in Fredericksburg. Many of them quit school before they graduated. The percentage of blacks from Stafford County who graduated from high school was lower than the rest of the area. If 30 black students went to Walker-Grant in the 8th grade usually less than 10 graduated. Stafford County was not concerned about dropouts because less money was paid to Fredericksburg for tuition.²⁷

Stafford Training School faced U.S. Route 1, Jefferson Davis Highway, named after the Confederate president. In 1942, a local tavern and dance hall operated adjacent to the school and displayed a sign, "Whites Only".²⁸ As school buses pulled in and out four times a day, this sign was passed by and seen four times a day by the black children. Among the former alumni of Stafford Training School, everyone remembers one thing in particular, "the sign." It is to the school's credit that African American students were able to rise above this racist emblem and take pride in their school.²⁹ For example the seventh grade class of 1943 adopted as class motto, "Speak Little—Do Much."

The Commencement Exercises included "I Shall Not Be Moved" and "Whispering Hope." The old tavern building adjacent to the school has changed little. In 1979, it opened as a seafood restaurant and still operates as The Log Cabin Restaurant.³⁰ For the alumni of Stafford Training School, the Log Cabin building is a reminder of the Jim Crow era.

As a black school, Stafford Training School received "hand-me-downs" for school busses. The busses were crowded with students. One bus was called the "chicken coop."³¹ Many students never saw a typewriter. The school did not offer shop classes found in the white schools. Books were second hand. Cafeteria space was added "so there would not be a possibility of Negro Citizens taking legal action on a claim of discrimination."³² The school was situated in the flats of Accakeek Creek with an unpaved playground and parking lot that flooded after a heavy rain. The outdoor toilets were retained after indoor plumbing was installed, due to constant breakdowns and problems with the plumbing.³³ A president of the school PTA related, "One month they [county] gave us a case of toilet paper, a roll of paper towels and a package of soap that were supposed to last an entire month. We had more than 300 to 400 kids...."³⁴ Often the heating system would break down. Students were loaded on the school buses and driven around Fredericksburg ("sight seeing") in order to keep them warm. These substandard conditions remained in place until the early 1960s. Black parents were discouraged to appear before the county's school board, so they formed a committee, which at first was not allowed to meet with the county school board. The committee was finally allowed to meet with the school board, but the committee members were required to be registered voters.³⁵

The era of Virginia's "Massive Resistance" to racial desegregation began in response to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court Case *Brown vs. Board of Education*. On June 23, 1955, the following policy in part was agreed upon in Virginia: "In view of these facts and circumstances, the Governor of Virginia and the State Board of Education hereby declare and adopt as the policy of this Commonwealth that the State Board of Education will continue to administer its functions, in cooperation with the local school authorities, to the end that the public schools of Virginia open and operate through the coming school session as heretofore." On July 25, 1955, the Stafford County School Board unanimously affirmed a "Resolution" adopting the State policy.³⁶

In 1959, the Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools, T. Benton Gayle, met with a six-member committee representing the H.H. Poole High School PTA, who requested to know what plans the Stafford County School Board had for racial integration of its public schools. Gayle's response to the group was, "...the School Board has made no plans and does not believe racial integration in schools is for the best interest of either race....He stressed to them the colored race would be hampered in developing its own leadership if integration came to schools. Their children would lose the opportunity, he argued, to serve as class officers, committee chairmen or student government officers, since they would total a small minority in Stafford schools even with complete integration."³⁷

In 1960, the Stafford County School Board hired Dr. Nathaniel William Anderson, a former high school principal from Amherst County, Virginia, as the new principal of H.H. Poole High School. He stated, "The big cause of drop-outs...has been transporting Stafford's upper grade students to Fredericksburg's Walker-Grant High, where the rural children tended

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to become a minority with an inferiority complex...³⁸ The new H.H. Poole principal was well qualified and an efficient administrator in public education, bringing with him impressive credentials and past experience. However, he was the county's proxy designed to instill new pride in the school, a "psychological leap" built upon increased excellence in academics. This was to quell and deflect any further notions of integration. Stafford's black parents recognized the smoke and mirrors and disliked the new African American principal. Dr. Anderson lasted one year and resigned.³⁹

In an attempt to appease those calling for desegregation, the counties of Stafford and King George were offered jointly a new "consolidated" black high school. This had been done in other areas of Virginia; however, the black parents of both counties rejected the idea of a "consolidated" new black school. In August, 1960, a brick veneer was added to the H.H. Poole School building. New additions were added in an attempt at "equalization" of black and white schools. These included a new cafeteria and home economic classes, which along with the brick veneer were an attempt to suppress any desire to integrate white schools. Equalization efforts happened in other Virginia counties as well, as funds finally were expended to improve facilities at black schools and make them more comparable to those at white schools.

Additionally, "The Stafford Board of Supervisors, by their adoption of a month to month appropriation for public schools, have placed themselves in a position where it would be possible to close all of the schools in the county in the event of integration, which was clearly the intent of the law in making a month to month appropriation legally possible."⁴⁰ At the same time, as part of Virginia's "Massive Resistance" to school desegregation, a State Pupil Placement Board was created that took over pupil placement from local school boards. Applications for transfer received from black students would have to go through this new barrier raised against desegregation.⁴¹

September 1, 1960

The first attempt to integrate schools in the Fredericksburg region was initiated by five high school students from the renamed Stafford Training School, now H.H. Poole High School.⁴² These students left H.H. Poole on the first day of school and went to the all-white Stafford High School in an unsuccessful attempt to enroll (See Figure 15). Prior to the attempt, the five students had been advised by two civil rights attorneys to call a meeting of the black community in Stafford. Bethlehem Baptist Church hosted the meeting since "People were scared to have that meeting at their place."⁴³ One of the two attorneys met at least twice with parents and students from H.H. Poole to discuss legal ways and means to attempt to integrate the Stafford County School System.⁴⁴ This was Oliver White Hill, Sr. of the NAACP State of Virginia Legal Defense Team. Hill had been part of the legal team that won the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case in 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education*.⁴⁵

As related in the prior August minutes of the Stafford County School Board, the Superintendent of Stafford Public Schools, T. Benton Gayle, had presented to the School Board, "a total of 5 applications received from that number of students of the Poole School who are requesting admission to the Stafford High School. These five students had previously applied in person to Mr. Durham, Principal of the said S.H.S., on the 11th day of July, 1960. They were furnished with application forms as are in use by the State Pupil Placement Board, which forms they filled in and returned to Mr. Durham on the following day."⁴⁶ The applications were then delivered to Superintendent Gayle. "The superintendent stated that the applications having reached him after the July meeting of the School Board, which was held on the 5th day of July, 1960, and that he had held them for this regular meeting [August 8, 1960]."⁴⁷

The School Board continued its meeting..."The applicants may not know of the improvements being planned for the Poole School, the changes in faculty, curriculum and the broader offering as a result of the change from a Junior High to a full Four Year High and the possibility that the school may be fully accredited for the 1960-61 school year."⁴⁸ The School Board's action followed: "The Board after reviewing the above applications and in light of the various complications involved, agreed to defer any action thereon until the principal of the Poole School, Dr. Anderson, returned from his vacation. The Clerk was ordered to so advise the said applicants."⁴⁹ On September 1, 1960, the account of "5 Negroes Apply at Stafford High" was reported by the Fredericksburg *Free Lance-Star*:

Five teenage Negro students applied today for admission to Stafford High School and were referred back to the county's H.H. Poole School where they are seniors. The school desegregation move, first in the area, appeared to be virtually impossible in the coming term, however, because of Virginia's pupil placement laws....The four boys and one girl entered the all-white high school just as an 8:45 a.m. assembly began, and were ushered to principal John B. Durham's office. They left an hour later after conferring with Durham and School Supt. T. Benton Gayle. It was disclosed by Gayle, meanwhile, that the five had submitted formal applications in July for transfer to Stafford High. The superintendent said he had understood the five later withdrew the applications after he sent reply letters

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to their parents. He told the five students this morning he would now have no recourse but to refer their applications to the Virginia Pupil Placement Board for action, and advised the youths to return to the Poole School to await a future reply from the state board.

The unexpected visit, the first overt integration move in Stafford schools, appeared to stir little, if any excitement or reaction among the several hundred students gathering in the gymnasium assembly program as the five entered the school's outer lobby and were directed to the principal's office. They were closeted in the office by Durham during the 45-minute assembly program across the lobby.... "If I could make the decision," he [Gayle] told the assembly, "you would have nothing to bother about: they would stay in their own schools."⁵⁰

Superintendent Gayle admitted the five applications for transfer were originally dated July 12, and he had been holding them in his office, unsigned by himself or the School Board, thinking they were no longer valid. He said he would now sign them with his recommendation against the transfers and forward the forms without awaiting any school board action on them. Gayle reported at the next meeting of the Stafford Board of Supervisors that he was present on September 1, 1960, and, "...at that time, Mr. Durham did not know what would be the result of the applications. So far as he [Durham] knew the children would be admitted and he, with some 970 white pupils almost 100% opposed to the admission of the five Negro pupils could have a very serious problem on his hands and that he was only doing what he could, in an emergency, to have the applicants received with as little trouble as possible. He was in the position of, 'sitting on a powder keg,' and had to make pacifying statements and otherwise use his influence to quell, manage and control this largely hostile student body."⁵¹ Intended as a deterrent toward further attempts at desegregation, H.H. Poole High School was state accredited in March, 1961.

The five African American students arrived at the all-white Stafford High School by automobile, driven by one of the students, 16 year old Sherman White. "No one said much," he recalled. "I can't remember any conversation. I was nervous myself. When we arrived I was so nervous that I ran up on the curb in front of the school parking the car. A white female student spotted us and screamed 'Look, look, look! Niggers, niggers! And they're coming to our school!' All I remember thinking is that I had never seen so many white people in my life." When the five were hustled into the school office, White admitted, "I was happy to get in there." He further related that when Superintendent Gayle arrived, "He was even more nervous than we were. He had our applications and kept dropping them on the floor."⁵² Years afterward, another student, senior Gary Mercer, said, "We made the attempt, because somebody had to do it."⁵³

In June 1961, almost one year after Superintendent Gayle held student applications for transfer, 25 African American students filed applications for transfer with the Stafford County School Board. The application forms were filled in by attorney Otto L. Tucker for the students and mailed. The School Board rejected the applications on the grounds that improper forms had been used. Proper forms had to be filled in by each student personally and delivered in person. The students fulfilled this requirement before the June 30th deadline. The applications were then delivered to the Pupil Placement Board in Richmond.⁵⁴ The Stafford County School Board met in Richmond with the State's Pupil Placement Board to "hear the report on scholarship and learn of the places of abode for 25 Negro applicants....Mr. Waffle presented the results of the checks on scholarships, and from a pre-prepared map of Stafford County, the homes of the applicants were pointed out to the Board by the superintendent. The Pupil Placement Board decided that all but two of the applicants were either improperly located from the standpoint of their home locations or were below average in scholarship and denied transfer to all others, except one applicant, a beginner, who has not furnished a birth certificate as required of all beginning pupils before assignment to schools is made."⁵⁵

In the years following *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896), most southern school systems assigned pupils by zone lines around each school.⁵⁶ This would explain the "pre-prepared map of Stafford County" presented to the Pupil Placement Board. Under these attendance zones, whites in an area would attend a white school and blacks would attend a black school. It was reasoned that such a method placed children in the school nearest their home and facilitated planning for future school growth. The 1954 decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* found racially-based pupil assignment in public schools to be unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Therefore, Stafford County was noncompliant with *Brown vs. Board*.

September 5, 1961

Reverend Edward Smith, a native of Prince Edward County, Virginia, was the principal of Stafford Training School and H.H. Poole School from 1951 to 1960. He was the minister at Mt. Hope Baptist Church at Brooke in Stafford County, and Shiloh (New Site) Baptist Church in Fredericksburg. He was a well known, dynamic speaker, outstanding counselor and

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renowned civic leader, respected by parents, students and others throughout the community. Reverend Smith was the “man behind the scene” who orchestrated the desegregation movement in Stafford County. The Stafford County NAACP, the H.H. Poole High School PTA, and the Stafford County Civic League, an organization composed of the black churches in Stafford County, all played an active part in the effort to convince Stafford County to comply with *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

H.H. Poole was a combined high school and elementary school. Grades 1st through 7th continued to be taught there. In 1961, the first successful integration of a school in the Fredericksburg region occurred when two elementary school students left H.H. Poole and were enrolled in Stafford Elementary School.⁵⁷ On September 5, 1961, two young African American sisters, Doretha Montague (1st grade) and Cynthia Montague (3rd grade) entered the all-white school (See Figure 16). On that day the *Free Lance-Star* reported:

Two Negro children began classes in Stafford Elementary School this morning, marking the first desegregation of schools in the immediate Fredericksburg area. Dressed alike and accompanied by an adult, two sisters, Doretha and Cynthia Montague, entered the all-white school where they had been assigned by the State Pupil Placement Board. One other colored child assigned to the second grade at the school was enrolled, however, at the H.H. Poole School where she attended last year. School Supt. T. Benton Gayle said the mother of Margie Virginia Jackson, told his office “she just decided she would rather the child continue at Poole.” The three were among 25 who originally filed applications for transfers to white schools in June. The elder Montague child and the Jackson girl were assigned to Stafford Elementary in July when the Placement Board deferred action on Doretha Montague and rejected 22 other applications. Nineteen of the 22 later appealed their rejections and were turned down again by the Placement Board last week.⁵⁸

The deferred action on Doretha Montague concerned her birth certificate, but once the problem was resolved, her application was approved.⁵⁹ One of the Montague sisters was kept in the car while the other one was taken to class. This was planned ahead of time in a “strategy session” in case there was trouble. Then they would have only one child to protect. If no problems occurred they would go back and get the other child.⁶⁰ The newspaper further stated, “Without fanfare, the U.S. Supreme Court’s historic desegregation edict of 1954 had finally directly touched a Fredericksburg-area public school system...Eighteen other Negro pupils, refused transfers to white schools by the state board, subsequently filed a desegregation suit now pending in U. S. District Court at Alexandria.”⁶¹ The desegregation suit referred to was *William E. Braxton vs. Stafford County School Board*.

William Braxton was president of H.H. Poole High School PTA. The families involved were Braxton, Edward, Jeter, Johnson, Montague, Morton, Queen, Truslow, Tyler, and Washington. Federal Judge Oren R. Lewis of the U.S. District Court in Alexandria required the Stafford County School Board to adopt a three-step plan for integration. As late as 1965, Stafford County was dragging its heels to report on a three-step plan to integrate its elementary schools. The court refused to further delay Stafford’s reporting date, “...because he [Judge Lewis] feared the U.S. Supreme Court would overturn what then amounted to a 2-year extension of time for filing the three-step plans for elementary grades.”⁶² The suit successfully forced Stafford County to adopt a plan to integrate its public schools.

It was in Virginia that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People filed more lawsuits than in any other state. Attorney Henry L. Marsh stated, “The rest of the Southern states were sort of watching Virginia to see what would happen. We had to rise to the occasion. We had the strongest group of civil rights and NAACP fighters of any state in the union because that’s where they chose to make a stand.”⁶³ Among the strongest group of civil rights and NAACP fighters in Virginia, Stafford’s only black high school, its students, and parents were at the forefront.

On September 11, 1961, the parents of the two Montague sisters appeared before the Stafford County School Board and requested, “...that the said Negro children be allowed to ride the white school bus to the Stafford Elementary School, or that the Negro school bus, on which they are now riding be rerouted to unload in the mornings and load in the afternoons, these two children on the grounds of the said Stafford Elementary School. The Board, after hearing these requests and statements by their attorney Otto Tucker, took the position that no racial integration had been ordered on the school buses....”⁶⁴

August 26, 1962

Under pressure from the U.S. District Court, Stafford County complied with the court’s three-step-plan to integrate its public schools. On August 26, 1962, the entire 11th and 12th grade classes at H.H. Poole High School transferred to all-

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white Stafford High School.⁶⁵ This was the first successful high school integration in Stafford County (See Figure 18). The State Pupil Placement Board in Richmond approved the transfers along with a smaller number of transfers from Fredericksburg and King George County. This marked the first school integration in those two localities with Stafford County leading the way. The *Free Lance-Star* reported, "Seven Schools Enroll First Negro Students." The article continued: "The largest of them, Stafford High School, enrolled 25 Negro students in its 11th and 12th grades during a half-day session opening the school year....Eighteen of the group arrived by school bus and auto shortly before school bells signaled an opening assembly program. They were met at the front door by principal John B. Durham, who directed them to the gymnasium gathering. Seven more, all girls, arrived in a second bus shortly after the assembly opened with a student Bible reading and mass recital of the Lord's prayer. It may not be immediately known what may be the status of the other nine transfer students assigned to the high school."⁶⁶

A total of 34 African American students with approved transfers had been expected to arrive at Stafford High School.⁶⁷ The article's reference to the absence of the "other nine" may indicate the intimidation and fear associated with the day's expectations. Some parents may intentionally have kept their child at home. The article reported that the school opening "proceeded quietly....including Stafford Elementary where two Negro sisters admitted last year under a Placement Board assignment were again enrolled."⁶⁸ One of the 25 African American students recalled on that morning, "I thought there would be trouble. All you saw in the newspapers then was the violence and riots connected with integration. I was nervous. I was scared."⁶⁹ Stafford High School Principal John B. Durham made a successful collection of the knives brought to school by both black and white students. The black student who was scared continued, "No one wanted any trouble, but all expected it. That is probably why everything went so well that first day. Everybody was anticipating violence but nobody wanted to participate in it." Another black student recalled, "I didn't carry a knife, but I did wear my tennis shoes."⁷⁰

Larry Evans, a white Stafford High School student looking back ten years later wrote, "Observers close to the situation at the time seem to agree that there was something in the chemistry of the student body that made it work....Anyone claiming that the desegregation of the school went perfectly tends to forget that those first black pupils had to put up with some lingering injustices. Both the time and the place contributed to what turned out to be a smooth transition to racially mixed schools."⁷¹ The first integrated high school class to graduate in Stafford County was Stafford High School Class of 1963, composed of former students from H.H. Poole High School. During the last four years of H.H. Poole's use as a school (1962-1966), it remained an all-black school. On January 4, 1990, an article in the *Stafford Sun* titled "Stafford County—A Look Back," stated, "The Rowser Building is the last remnant of segregation in Stafford County."

Lingering Legacies

The following provides an insight as to the number of Stafford's African American students during the 1940s and 1950s who graduated from junior high school versus the number of students who first entered school. It also poignantly portrays the determination of young African Americans to achieve in the era of "separate but equal" education.

Walker-Grant High School Class of 1957 Class History

After our H.H. Poole Jr. High graduation in 1955, we were bussed out of Stafford across the Rappahannock River to Walker-Grant H.S. in Fredericksburg, VA to get our H.S. Diplomas. Given below is a portion of our history as printed in TIGER TRAILS, the Walker-Grant H.S. Class of 1957 yearbook.

In September 1945, a group of tear-stained faces entered Stafford Training School, and stared into the eyes of Mrs. Hattie Flyte, our first grade teacher. We were trying to be brave and face our new experience. Next year we were promoted and joined by a group of boys and girls from Brooke Elementary School, which increased our enrollment to about thirty (30) under the guidance of Ms Hilda Saunders. As the years passed we continued to grow in knowledge and wisdom under the guidance of many noble teachers. Our studies became more complicated as we struggled through the 5th, 6th and 7th grades.

Finally we had reached the first step of the ladder--Junior High School. Without the guidance of Rev. Edward Smith, who helped us with our many problems, that year would have been a difficult one.

In the year of 1953, our number of thirty (30) decreased to about twenty (20). We were interrupted with much noise but we did not complain because we knew what the new addition would add for us. This new section to our building added more classrooms and an auditorium.

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Vacation ended, we returned to our third and final year at H.H. Poole Jr. High. We were only eleven (11) in number but we were determined to make our last year a fruitful one. With the help of Mr. Clifton Tyler and Miss Annie M. Giles we planned our Spring Frolic and graduation exercises with much anticipation of entering Walker-Grant High School the following September.

We are the loyal sons and daughters,
brave, staunch, and true.
Our Alma matter, we will ever cherish
thoughts of you.
Through trials and efforts we have come,
through trials we'll journey on.
Forgetting never, love forever,
till our work is done.

Hail, Hail, dear school, your golden rule,
we'll carry far and near.
Tho' miles apart, within our hearts,
we'll always hold you dear.
Your guiding light made ways so bright,
and led us thus far through.
We'll love and honor, wave the banner,
Hail to H.H. Poole.⁷²

The desegregation of Stafford's schools was not only opposed by Stafford County, but by the State of Virginia. To further demonstrate one of the "roadblocks" that Virginia used in its tactics against desegregation, particularly in Stafford County, a well-stated account titled, "Lack of Academic Qualifications," is provided. It was written by a former student of H.H. Poole School and as such serves as an important statement by someone who "lived it and felt it."⁷³

On May 17th 1954, The United States Supreme Court in a decision known as "BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION" issued a ruling that the policy of separate but equal educational facilities was unconstitutional. Virginia, as well as other southern states threw up roadblocks in an attempt to circumvent this decision. The policy of Massive Resistance and the creation of the Pupil Placement Board were methods used by Virginia in this regard. The decision found Stafford County in a position of having separate and entirely unequal schools. The county did not even have a Black high school. Black kids were being bused out of the county to attend Walker-Grant High School in Fredericksburg. Some people in Stafford County felt it was time to change that situation.

As depicted in a July 12, 1961, *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star* article, integration of Stafford County Schools did not come easy. There were roadblocks and obstacles to overcome at both the county and state levels. The State's Pupil Placement guidelines seem to indicate that they were devised to hinder rather than promote the school integration process. The requirement that each application had to be filed in person suggests a form of intimidation, especially considering the racial climate in the sixties.

The Richmond Law Firm of Hill, Tucker and Marsh had advised groups throughout the state on techniques to be used in school integration attempts. Attorney Otto L. Tucker of Alexandria was the brother of Samuel W. Tucker. Samuel W. Tucker was a member of the Hill, Tucker and Marsh Richmond, VA Law Firm. Mrs. Eva Shorts of Brooke, recalls traveling to Alexandria with Rev. Edward Smith and other concerned parents to consult with Attorney Otto Tucker, for advice and guidance on how to proceed with school integration efforts. With the exception of the Montague sisters, we know that the unnamed students mentioned in the article were not successful in this attempt to integrate Stafford County Schools. Their parents received letters stating "Lack of Academic Qualifications" as the reason their children were denied admittance to white schools. This did not deter our concerned parents from continuing their efforts. Our Stafford County parents visualized better educational opportunities for their children. They were not going to give up the fight to achieve that goal no matter how many roadblocks and obstacles were thrown in their paths. They realized they had to be persistent and keep fighting to make that dream a reality. The "Lack of Academic Qualifications" letter, dated July 19, 1961, sent to Mr. Frank

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White, Sr., father of Bernard L. White, by the Pupil Placement Board was typical of letters received by parents of many H.H. Poole students whose names were submitted to integrate Stafford Schools. Letters like this did not deter those parents. In 1961, 25 Black students applied to integrate Stafford Schools. In 1962, the number had risen to 113, with 34 being assigned and 79 rejected. In June 1962, the entire junior and senior classes at H.H. Poole High School were assigned to Stafford High School. The Stafford High School graduating class of 1963 was historical due to the fact that fifteen Black students graduated with that class.

Bernard went to Stafford High School from H.H. Poole in August 1963. He graduated in June 1965. A few days after he graduated he joined the U.S. Air Force. Thirty years later, in 1995 Bernard retired from the Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant (E-9), the highest enlisted rank that can be achieved. During his military career Bernard scored in the top ten percent of all his military classes. WE KNOW THAT BERNARD WHITE WAS ONE OF THE STUDENTS, WHOSE APPLICATION TO INTEGRATE STAFFORD SCHOOLS IN 1961 WAS DENIED. WE CAN ONLY GUESS AS TO WHO THE OTHER STUDENTS WERE, WHAT CAREERS THEY PURSUED AND WHAT THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN LIFE WERE (See Figure 22).

“Raising the Bar” signifies the raising “of educational opportunities for Stafford County Black Children.” It was coined by the African American alumni to describe their school’s historic accomplishments in Civil Rights and for its students’ “courage, commitment and fortitude far beyond expectations.” In October 2011, the first Stafford Training School Reunion took place. Among the opening remarks were, “Many of you left this school and went on to successful careers in the military, federal, state and local governments. Others advanced in the field of education, religion, medicine, business, or in the private sector.”⁷⁴

From out of the “First Stafford Training School Reunion” originated a desire to have the school designated as an important African American historical site. Overcoming many obstacles, this black school led the way for school integration in the Fredericksburg area. “September 5, 1961, two little brave Black sisters, Cynthia and Doretha Montague made history as the first students to integrate schools in the Greater Fredericksburg area, as they entered the all white Stafford Elementary School and were assigned to the third and first grades. This event caused a breach in the walls of School Segregation in Stafford County. Less than one year later on August 26, 1962, twenty five young Black juniors and seniors from H.H. Poole School were admitted to the all white Stafford High School. With this event the walls of school segregation in Stafford County came tumbling down.”⁷⁵

School Desegregation Time Line:

1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* The U.S. Supreme Court found that the Constitution permitted separate facilities for blacks and whites as long as they were substantially equal. Hence: “Separate but Equal.”

1939 Stafford Training School built by Public Works Administration. The first time African American students in Stafford County could extend their education beyond the 7th grade.

1946-1960 African American students bussed from Stafford Training School to outside the county to attend Walker-Grant, an accredited black high school in Fredericksburg.

1950 Walker-Grant High School graduating class refused to hold graduating exercises in the Fredericksburg St. Charles Community Center because they were not allowed to use the front door.

1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* The U.S. Supreme Court held that the concept of “separate but equal” facilities for black and white citizens, upheld in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, was inherently unfair for blacks.

1955-1964 Senator Harry F. Byrd’s “Massive Resistance” to public school desegregation in Virginia.

1955 Governor of Virginia and State School Board adopt the policy that Virginia’s public schools will operate and open as “heretofore.”

1955 One month after the State, Stafford County School Board adopts a resolution endorsing “heretofore.”

Stafford Training School
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1960 Five African American students from Stafford Training School, renamed H.H. Poole, attempt to integrate all-white Stafford High School. This was the first attempt to integrate a school in the Fredericksburg area.

1961 NAACP attorney Otto L. Tucker submits applications of transfer for 25 African American students from H.H. Poole School. Of these 22 were denied.

1961 Two African American sisters from H.H. Poole, enter all-white Stafford Elementary School. This is the first successful integration in the Fredericksburg area.

1961 *William E. Braxton vs. Stafford County School Board*. The desegregation suit brought the rejection of 18 pupil's applications for transfer by the State Pupil Placement Board for appeal before the U.S. District Court in Alexandria. Stafford County was required to adopt a three-step plan to integrate its public schools.

1962 The first integration of high schools in the City of Fredericksburg, Stafford and King George counties took place. Stafford High School was the largest receiving 25 African American students from H.H. Poole.

1964 *Civil Rights Act of 1964* The U.S. Supreme Court outlawed major forms of discrimination including racial segregation in public schools.

1965-1970 "Freedom of Choice" Regardless of race, students given the right to choose where they would attend school. This method of desegregation largely failed.

1966 H.H. Poole School is closed.

1968 *Green vs. County School Board* The U.S. Supreme Court determined that "Freedom of Choice" did not constitute adequate compliance with the school board's responsibility to determine a system of admission to public schools on a non-racial basis. An affirmative duty was placed on school boards to integrate schools.

1968-1973 "Massive Integration" Virginia's public schools are desegregated.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Stafford Training School
Property Name

Stafford County, Virginia
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Rowser Building File, Stafford County Parks and Recreation, Stafford, VA.

"Senior Echoes." H.H. Poole High School Class of 1961 Yearbook. H.H. Poole High School, Stafford, Virginia.

Short, C.W. and R. Stanley-Brown. *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Government Bodies Between the Years 1933 and 1939 With the Assistance of the Public Works Administration*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939.

Stafford County Deed Book 40, p157-158. Stafford Court House, Stafford, Virginia.

Stafford County Deed Book 84, p 475. Stafford Court House, Stafford, Virginia.

Stafford County Deed Book PB 41, p 61. Stafford Court House, Stafford, Virginia.

Stafford County School Board Minutes July 1945-1965, Stafford County School Board, Stafford, Virginia.

"Tiger Trails." Walker-Grant High School Class of 1957 Yearbook. Walker-Grant High School, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Virginia Freedman's Bureau Record Group 393, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Stafford Training School
Property Name

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White Collection. Documents, photos, and memorabilia associated with Stafford Training School and H.H. Poole School.
Frank White, Jr., White Oak, Virginia.

White, Frank, Jr. *Stafford Training School/H.H. Poole School First Reunion*, Sponsored by Bethlehem Baptist Church, 135 Chapel Green Road, Fredericksburg, Virginia, October 28-30, 2011.

White, Frank, Jr. and Gladys White Jordon. Interview by Catherine G. OBrion, Local Records Archivist, 27 October 2010, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Interviews by preparer of the nomination:
Edward Gary Mercer, Stafford, Virginia. One of five African American students who attempted to integrate all-white Stafford High School.

Frank White, Jr., White Oak, Virginia. Former student of H.H. Poole Junior High School.

Phil Heim, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Principal of Stafford Vocational Annex.

Newspapers:
Free Lance Star, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Stafford Sun, Stafford, Virginia.

Websites:
"H.H. Poole, A Stafford institution." Fredericksburg *Free Lance Star* (February 16, 2005),
http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/Projects/2005/our_history/poole (accessed 27 March 2012).

"The Civil Rights Movement in Virginia." Virginia Historical Society (2004).
<http://www.vahistorical.org/civilrights/introduction.htm> (accessed 21 August 2012).

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Department of Historic Resources, Richmond,
Name of repository: Virginia; Stafford County Government

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File No. 089-0247

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.16 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 288605 4253495
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Stafford Training School
Property Name

Stafford County, Virginia
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Stafford Training School occupies a generally rectangular parcel containing 8.16 acres, recorded as Parcel 3894 by Stafford County (see attached tax parcel map). The southeast boundary of Parcel 38-94 is fronted by a portion of the "Old Richmond Washington Highway" and Jefferson Davis Highway, U.S. Route 1. The northeast boundary is adjacent to an entrance road leading off U.S. Route 1. On the opposite side of this entrance road is the Log Cabin Restaurant tract. Beyond the northwest boundary is the Rappahannock Regional Jail complex and Interstate 95. The southwest boundary lies in the low flats and flood plain of Accakeek Creek. The parcel contains the school, a brick office building, a small brick pump station, a paved parking lot, an athletic field, and a diversionary ditch which drains Accakeek flats. In 1938, the original parcel deeded for a "colored school" contained 5 acres. In 1954, the parcel was expanded with the addition of 3 acres. A plat exists for both the 5 acres and the 3 acres. The 8.16-acre Plat Reference is PM0300 00141, Deed Number 030019781. Records are located at Stafford County Court House.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were selected based on legally recorded boundary lines historically associated with the school property, and encompass all historic resources associated with the property as well as the historic setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Norman Schools

organization Stafford County Branch, NAACP

date August 24, 2012

street & number 305 King Street

telephone 540-368-0464

city or town Falmouth

state VA

zip code 22405

e-mail Small47@aol.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.)
-

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive 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.

The following information is common to all photographs:

Name of Property: Stafford Training School

VDHR File Number: 089-0247

City or Vicinity: Stafford

County: Stafford

State: Virginia

Photographer: David Perrussel

Date Photographed: August 18, 2012

Digital Images Stored: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Stafford Training School
Property Name

Stafford County, Virginia
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

PHOTO 1 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0001

VIEW: Southeast elevation showing the 1939 building with flanking wings.

PHOTO 2 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0002

VIEW: Southwest elevation of the 1943 addition.

PHOTO 3 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0003

VIEW: Southeast elevation of the 1954 and 1960 additions.

PHOTO 4 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0004

VIEW: Southwest elevation showing the 2005 new main entrance and modern receptionist office and lobby addition.

PHOTO 5 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0005

VIEW: Northwest elevation showing modern additions on the rear of the complex.

PHOTO 6 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0006

VIEW: Northeast elevation showing 1954, 1960, and modern additions.

PHOTO 7 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0007

VIEW: County office building built in 1969.

PHOTO 8 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0008

VIEW: County utility pump station built in 1973.

PHOTO 9 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0009

VIEW: Diversionary "ditch" in rear of the school.

PHOTO 10 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0010

VIEW: Baseball field in rear of the school.

PHOTO 11 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0011

VIEW: Interior of the central core viewing classroom space.

PHOTO 12 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0012

VIEW: Interior of the 1954 auditorium showing the rounded cinderblock corners of the stage.

PHOTO 13 of 13: VA_Stafford County_Stafford Training School_0013 Bronze plaque dated 1939 mounted to the right wall inside the vestibule of the 1939 front main entrance.

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.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The design of the school is well documented in original drawings. The drawings are labeled "Stafford Training School, Stafford County, Virginia, Division of School Buildings, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia, Plan No. 944, Oct. 1938." In 2010, Frank White, Jr., of White Oak, Virginia, obtained copies of the original drawings from the Virginia Department of Education in Richmond, Virginia.

² "Stafford Co Schools X-1297," *Alphabetical Index of Non-Federal Projects T937*, rolls 17-185, page 130, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

³ Frank White, Jr., interview by Norman Schools, July 2012, White Oak, Virginia.

⁴ Stafford County School Board Minutes, March 13, 1952, addresses drainage problems occurring at the school.

⁵ Accakeek also appears as Accokeek or Accakeet. The spelling used in the nomination was taken from Eby, Jerrilynn, *They Called Stafford Home, The Development of Stafford County, Virginia, from 1600 until 1865*, Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1997.

⁶ Frank White, Jr., interview by Norman Schools, July 2012, White Oak, Virginia.

⁷ Company No. 2363 of the Civilian Conservation Corps was camped near Berea in Stafford County. This would be the kind of project performed by the CCC. It is not known if they dug the ditch.

⁸ Bryan Clark Green, Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Documentation Form (on file at Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2004), 6.

⁹ *New York Tribune*, September 7, 1850.

¹⁰ Moncure Daniel Conway, *The Rejected Stone, or Insurrection vs. Resurrection in America*. (Boston: Walker, Wise, and Company, 1861), 99.

¹¹ William Ray, *Four Years with the Iron Brigade, The Civil War Journal of William Ray, Company F, Seventh Wisconsin Volunteers*, Edited by Lance Herdegen and Sherry Murphy, (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002), 167. See entry for February 1, 1863.

¹² George F. Noyes, Capt. U.S. Volunteers, *The Bivouac and the Battlefield; Or Campaign Sketches in Virginia And Maryland*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863), 43.

¹³ "Record Group 393, Part I, Entry 5078 General Orders Issued Vol. II, General Orders No. 77, Headquarters Dept. of Virginia (Maj. Gen. A.H. Terry), Richmond, 6-22-65," *Virginia Freedmen's Bureau Record Group 393*, National Archives, Washington, DC.

¹⁴ June Purcell Guild, L.L.M., *Black Laws of Virginia, A Summary Of The Legislative Acts Of Virginia Concerning Negroes From Earliest Times To The Recent*, (Lovettsville, Virginia: Willow Bend Books, 1996), 180. See 1870 Chapter 259 of the Criminal Code.

¹⁵ Green, Rosenwald Schools in Virginia, 11.

¹⁶ Short, C.W. and R. Stanley-Brown, *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Government Bodies Between the Years 1933 and 1939 With the Assistance of the Public Works Administration* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), 682. See Table 1, Total Buildings, New.

¹⁷ Among the black schools were Oak Grove in Widewater, Shiloh on Route 610, Brooke, Concord, Mt. Olive in Hartwood, Berea, Leeland, Union Branch near Wild Cat Corner, and Falmouth (black) Elementary School. Of these small black schools, only Berea Negro School off U.S. Route 17 and Concord Negro School on Mountain View Road still stand. All the rest were pulled down. Berea and Leeland were former white schools. When white students got a better school, the old school was given to the blacks.

¹⁸ A teacher might instruct combined grade levels in the same classroom.

¹⁹ The school's first principal was an African American named Robert E. Lee. A strict disciplinarian, sometimes Mr. Lee told students "go out and get your own switch." They had to go back if the one they brought to him was "too puny."

²⁰ At the beginning of the school year, children were given teeth and eye examinations by white workers from the State Health Department. There were no African Americans employed by the Health Department at that time. Children received their vaccinations. Nuclear bomb drills were held during the 1950s.

²¹ The name H.H. Poole had been "put forth" by the school PTA. Poole's title as Supervisor of Colored Schools is also given as Supervisor of Negro Schools. The two words were interchangeable at the time. He was also known as "Professor Poole."

²² Henry Harrison Poole, b. 1888, d. 1962. Poole was a graduate of Virginia State College. While serving as Supervisor of Colored Schools, Poole's office was at his home. Upon leaving that position, he was a principal and teacher at Berea Elementary School in Stafford. In 1942, Poole relocated from Stafford County and lived on Douglass Street in Fredericksburg. He was a member of Shiloh Old Site Baptist Church in that city. In 1996, a middle school opened in Stafford County and was named H.H. Poole Middle School.

²³ "Berea School May Reopen Under Funds of New Law," *Free Lance-Star*, April 13, 1965.

Stafford Training School
Property Name

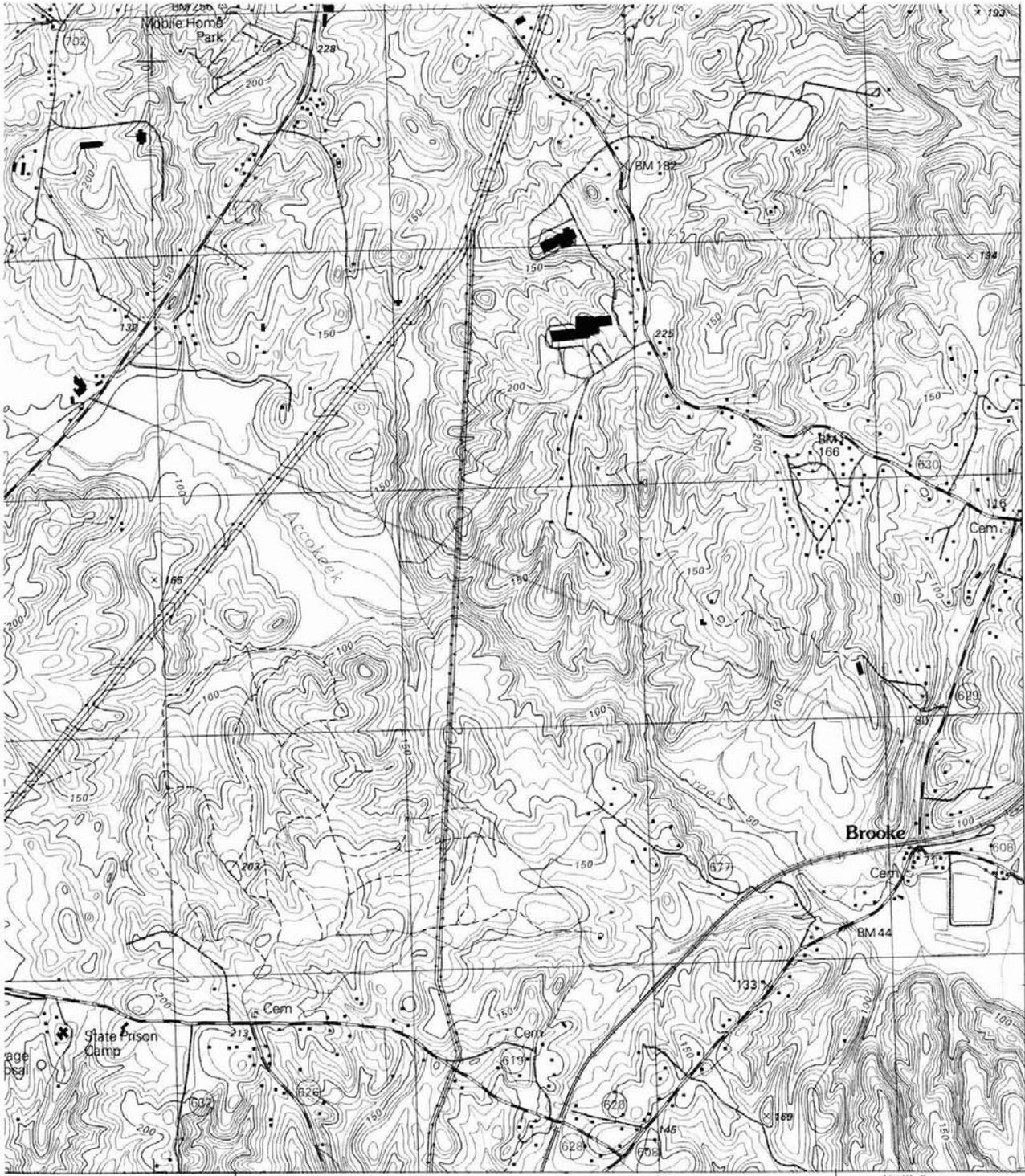
Stafford County, Virginia
County and State

- ²⁴ Ella Rowser continued to teach in Stafford County. She was at a school work-day when she felt ill and left to stop by a hospital. There she died, culminating 31 years of service.
- ²⁵ Randy Bridges, Ed. D., Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools, letter to Frank White, Jr., June 14, 2011. "As I carefully read the history of these schools in your letter, I was reminded how far we have come as African Americans and a country....It's hard to believe today that there was ever an 'unaccredited' school for black children and that practice was enforced legally."
- ²⁶ Stafford County School Board Minutes, April, 1949, No. 103.
- ²⁷ Ibid. May 6, 1946, Item 3, and June 3, 1946, Item 5. The tuition was \$50.00 annually for each Stafford pupil.
- ²⁸ The sign lasted into the 1960s. A specific date for removal of the sign is unknown.
- ²⁹ This was the Log Cabin Restaurant. Although forbidden, during recess some students would sneak over to the back door and buy candy bars. The "Whites Only" sign is remembered as being displayed into the 1960s.
- ³⁰ Stafford County School Board Minutes, May 2, 1949. "Supt. Gayle reported on the bad sanitary conditions at the Stafford Tr. School as a result of seepage from the drainage of the Log Cabin Filling Station, store and cabins."
- ³¹ "The chicken coop" was an old ambulance the county purchased from Quantico Marine Corps Base. It was converted into a bus and painted yellow. Remembered as being a 1940 or 1941 Chevy, the bus was later retired and used only as a "sub bus."
- ³² Stafford County School Board Minutes, December 5, 1949, Item 3.
- ³³ Ibid. March 1951. Superintendent Gayle reported that one outside toilet "was filthy and apparently had been left uncleaned for a long time."
- ³⁴ F. Bruce Miller, "School Turned Office Building," *Stafford Sun*, January 4, 1990.
- ³⁵ Stafford County School Board Minutes, October 7, 1946, Item 6. "A delegation of Negro citizens....requesting relief from overcrowded conditions on the busses, Janitorial service for the school, repairs to or replacement of pump, new room added to the school, additional supplies, improved heating system...."
- ³⁶ Ibid. July 25, 1955, Item 6.
- ³⁷ William Lakeman, "Negro Group Asks Stafford Plans For Integration of County Schools," *Free Lance-Star*, 1959.
- ³⁸ William Lakeman, "Bigger, Broader Role Set for Poole School," *Free Lance-Star*, August 20, 1960.
- ³⁹ Anderson's career brought him to the wrong place at the wrong time. He seems to have been a sincere individual who otherwise would have proven to be an exceptional administrator.
- ⁴⁰ Stafford County School Board Minutes, August 8, 1960, Item i, a.4. The year before, both state and federal courts ruled that cutting off state funds to schools that did not desegregate was unconstitutional.
- ⁴¹ The Pupil Placement Board was created in 1956 as part of Virginia's "massive resistance." Led by Senator Harry F. Byrd, this was a strategy of total opposition to public school desegregation.
- ⁴² The students who applied were Stevenson Tyler, Lois Vines, Gary Mercer, Rudolph Beverly, and Sherman White (names are in order as they appear in *Free Lance-Star* photo, September 1, 1960). Two of the students, Mercer and White, had previously participated in NAACP staged sit-ins at the lunch counters at the Woolworth and W.T. Grant department stores in downtown Fredericksburg. Lois Vines would later become Dr. Lois Vines Cunningham, having earned an Ed.D. from Texas Southern University.
- ⁴³ Michael Zitz, "Gathering Recalls Desegregation Time," *Free Lance-Star*, October 21, 1985.
- ⁴⁴ A member or members of the State NAACP Legal Defense Team would travel to any locality where they were invited to meet with parents and students to discuss legal ways to deal with the Virginia Pupil Placement Law in an attempt to integrate schools.
- ⁴⁵ In 1965, Hill joined Hill Tucker and Marsh.
- ⁴⁶ Stafford County School Board Minutes, August 8, 1960, Item i.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. Item i, a.3.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid. Item j.
- ⁵⁰ William Lakeman, "5 Negroes Apply at Stafford High," *Free Lance-Star*, September 1, 1960. In 1960, the *Free Lance-Star* was an evening newspaper, thus reporting the news the same day it occurred.
- ⁵¹ Stafford County School Board Minutes, September 12, 1960, I.
- ⁵² Michael Zitz, "Gathering Recalls Desegregation Time," *Free Lance-Star*, October 21, 1985.
- ⁵³ "50th Anniversary of the Attempted Integration of Stafford High School," *Free Lance-Star*, September 11, 2010.
- ⁵⁴ William Lakeman, "25 Negro Pupils Ask Stafford Entry," *Free Lance-Star*, July 12, 1961. See also, Stafford County School Board Minutes, June 21, 1961.
- ⁵⁵ Stafford County School Board Minutes, July 13, 1961.

Stafford Training School
Property Name

Stafford County, Virginia
County and State

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- ⁵⁶ Daniel J. Meador, "The Constitution and the Assignment of Pupils to Public School," 45 Va. L. Rev. 517, 1959, Kurland, Philip B. and Gerhard Casper, eds. *Landmark Briefs and Arguments of the Supreme Court of the United States: Constitutional Law*. Vol. 66, (Arlington, Virginia: University Publications of America, Inc., 1975), 81.
- ⁵⁷ Stafford Elementary School is extant and now used by Stafford School Board for its offices.
- ⁵⁸ "School in Stafford Uneventfully Marks First Desegregation, 2 Negros Take Places In Classes," *Free Lance-Star*, September 5, 1961. The State Pupil Placement Board turned down the 19 appeals after a hearing on August 29, 1961.
- ⁵⁹ Stafford County School Board Minutes, July 13, 1961.
- ⁶⁰ Eva Shorts, Brooke, Virginia, telephone conversation with Frank White Jr., White Oak, Virginia, 29 November 2012. Ms. Shorts was an "activist" who personally participated in the "strategy session." A historical photograph taken on September 5, 1961, shows only one child in the image. The photographer arrived at the school after one sister had been taken to her class. The photographer photographed the second sister who had been kept in the car as she was being taken to her classroom.
- ⁶¹ "Desegregation," *Free Lance-Star*, clipping no date, believed to be September, 1961.
- ⁶² "Integration of Elementaries Seen for Stafford in '66," *Free Lance-Star*, April 13, 1965.
- ⁶³ "The Civil Rights Movement in Virginia," Virginia Historical Society, 2004.
<http://www.vahistorical.org/civilrights/introduction.htm>
- ⁶⁴ Stafford County School Board Minutes, September 11, 1961, Item 5a. Not until 1970 or 1971 did Stafford County integrate school buses.
- ⁶⁵ Stafford High School is extant, although modified. Today it is Edward E. Drew Jr. Middle School.
- ⁶⁶ "Seven Schools Enroll First Negro Students," *Free Lance-Star*, August 26, 1962.
- ⁶⁷ Stafford County School Board had originally received "approximately 89 applications for transfer." "Resolution of the School Board of Stafford County, Virginia," June 18, 1962, p. 2.
- ⁶⁸ "First Negro Pupils Enroll At Seven Area Schools, Stafford," *Free Lance-Star*, August 26, 1962.
- ⁶⁹ Larry Evans, "Desegregation: 'I was nervous...I was scared,'" *Free Lance-Star*, September 13, 1972. The student was Robert T. Jeter.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid. The student was unidentified.
- ⁷¹ Larry Evans, "Integration seemed simpler in 1962," *Free Lance-Star*, September 15, 1972.
- ⁷² Adopted in 1956, the school song was sung to the tune Auld Lang Syne.
- ⁷³ Frank White, Jr., "Lack of Academic Qualifications," *Stafford Training School/H.H. Poole School First Reunion*, October 28-30, 2011.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.



UTM ZONE 18
 centroid of 8.16 acre parcel
 288 605/4253495

STAFFORD TRAINING SCHOOL
 1739 Jefferson Davis Highway
 Stafford, Virginia 22554

DHR # 089-0247

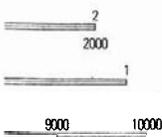
25' 89 90 91 92⁰⁰⁰⁰E 77°22'30" 38°22'30" 4251⁰⁰⁰N

INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1997

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
 Secondary highway hard surface Unimproved road

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route



1	2	3	1 Somerville
			2 Joplin
			3 Quantico
4		5	4 Storck
			5 Widewater
			6 Salem Church
6	7	8	7 Fredericksburg
			8 Passapatanzy

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

STAFFORD, VA
 1994

O 80225
 IA 22903

DMA 5560 IV NW-SERIES V834



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Stafford Training School

Stafford County, VA

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 11

Page 21

Additional Documentation

Historical Photographs

Index of Figures:

Fig. 1 Stafford Training School c. 1939 showing the building originally cinderblock painted white.

Fig. 2 Bronze plaque 1939 Public Works Administration.

Fig. 3 Elementary School graduation certificate dated 1941 from Stafford Training School, signed by Robert E. Lee

Fig. 4 High School diploma dated 1944 from Stafford Training School, "Non-Accredited."

Fig. 5 Students at front entrance, winter 1946.

Fig. 6 Students at front entrance, spring 1951.

Fig. 7 Henry Harrison Poole. In 1954, Stafford Training School was re-named H.H. Poole Junior High School for this Supervisor of Colored Schools in Stafford County.

Fig. 8 Students in class at H.H. Pool Junior High School, 8th and 9th grades, 1953-1954.

Fig. 9 Students at H.H. Poole Junior High School, 7th grade, 1953-1954. The "pot belly" stove can be partially seen at the back of the classroom.

Fig. 10 Girls gym class in front of school celebrating May Day. The May Day king and queen sit on the front steps. Photo taken between 1954 and 1960.

Fig. 11 The photograph in 1955 or 1956 shows the 1954 gym/auditorium addition.

Fig. 12 Interior view of the 1954 gym/auditorium stage.

Fig. 13 The 1960 *Free Lance-Star* photo shows the new brick addition added on the 1954 gym/auditorium.

Fig. 14 The 1961 photograph shows the new brick veneer facing added to the school in 1960.

Fig. 15 Five students from H.H. Pool High School who attempted to integrate all-white Stafford High School on September 1, 1960.

Fig. 16 The first successful integration in the Fredericksburg area. Cynthia Montague is one of the two sisters to integrate all-white Stafford Elementary School on September 5, 1961. She is accompanied by her parents Cleveland and Theresa Montague, and William Braxton, president of H.H. Poole High School PTA. The other sister (not shown) was dropped off at her class before the newspaper photographer arrived.

Fig. 17 Another view of Cynthia Montague entering all-white Stafford Elementary School, September 5, 1961.

Fig. 18 "First Negro Students Arrive to Enter Stafford High School." They are among 25 students from H. H. Poole High School to integrate Stafford High School on August 26, 1962. *Free Lance-Star* photo.

Fig. 19 Ella Mae Rowser, an African American educator for 31 years. In 1976, the school was re-named the Rowser Educational Center in her honor.

Fig. 20 "Application For Placement Of Pupil" dated 4 April 1962 to Commonwealth Of Virginia Pupil Placement Board. Courtesy LoV.

Fig. 21 Letter dated 31 May 1962. Hand written letter requesting transfer from H.H. Poole School to Stafford High School. Courtesy LoV.

Fig. 22 Letter dated 13 July 1962 from Pupil Placement Board. Request for transfer denied reason of "Lack of academic qualifications." Courtesy LoV.