

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Barron Drive

city or town Institute

state West Virginia code WV county Kanawha code 039 zip code 25112

☐ not for publication

☐ vicinity

### 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 X statewide    local

Susan M. Pierce  
Signature of certifying official/Title

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

2/19/21  
Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

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

West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind

Kanawha Co., WV

Name of Property

County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-  
Classical Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: \_\_\_\_\_

walls: BRICK

roof: SLATE

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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County and State

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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 and setting.)

**Summary Paragraph**

See Continuation Sheets

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**Narrative Description** (Describe the details of the interior and exterior of the property. Use continuation sheet as needed.)

See Continuation Sheets

West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind  
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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: BLACK

### Period of Significance

1926-1955

### Significant Dates

1928, 1930, 1950

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Wysong & Jones

### Period of Significance (justification)

See Continuation Sheets

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind  
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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See Continuation Sheets

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**Historic Context** (Provide background history that supports the Statement of Significance. Use continuation sheet as needed)

See Continuation Sheets

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See Continuation Sheets

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☒ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): KA-7356

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 432612 4248135  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

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

See Continuation Sheets

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See Continuation Sheets

West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind  
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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Sarah Elswick, Architectural Historian, and Courtney Zimmerman, Architectural Historian  
organization Aurora Research Associates, LLC date May 22, 2019  
street & number 1436 Graham Road telephone 304-685-7410  
city or town Silver Lake state Ohio zip code 44224  
e-mail seelswick@gmail.com

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### Additional Documentation

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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.)

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### Photographs:

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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.

Name of Property: West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind

City or Vicinity: Institute

County: Kanawha State: West Virginia

Photographer: Courtney Zimmerman and Sarah Elswick

Date Photographed: October 25, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

See Continuation Sheets

West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind  
Name of Property

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**Property Owner:**

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

name West Virginia State University  
street & number PO Box 1000 telephone 304-766-3000  
city or town Institute state WV zip code 25112

**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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WV Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind
Name of Property Kanawha County, West Virginia
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind is located on Barron Drive in Institute, Kanawha County, West Virginia. Institute is approximately seven (7) miles west of Charleston, the capitol of West Virginia. It is located between Interstate 64 and the Kanawha River. The West Virginia State University is located to the northeast and a large industrial plant is located to the northwest. The south-facing building is located on a large flat river valley lot and was once part of a large complex of modern-era buildings, many of which have been demolished. The structure is a two-story brick Neoclassical institutional building with a U-shaped plan and a hipped slate roof. The symmetrical front façade is dominated by a two-story Corinthian portico.

### Setting

The original setting of the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind has been compromised by construction and additions since the 1950s. The site for West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind was selected due to its proximity to West Virginia State University, the state's land-grant Black university. At the time of its completion, it was the only building within the large open area of land to the west of campus and had a rural setting with a combination of open fields and trees. Buildings were added to the WVSCDB over the years, including an auto garage (1931) and gymnasium (1950). After the property's transition to the Rehabilitation Center in 1955, the open fields south of the original school building were filled with sprawling one-story institutional structures. Long, narrow additions extending 480' to the south and 300' to the north were added to the 24' x 50' 1931 garage (all extant). The F. Ray Power Building was constructed to the north in 1974 and served as administrative offices for the Rehabilitation Center. After WVSU acquired the property in 2013, a majority of the Rehabilitation Center buildings to the south of the WVSCDB were demolished. The F. Ray Power Building was renovated in 2019 by WVSU for classroom and office space. The 1950 gymnasium, having been extensively altered and converted to office space by the Rehabilitation Center, was demolished in 2020. The property to the west of the parcel has been an industrial /chemical manufacturing site since 1947.

**West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind      1926      1 Contributing Building**

### *Exterior:*

Constructed in 1926, this three-story, eleven-bay brick building has a hipped slate roof. The building originally consisted of the central building block with two detached two-story wings located behind and oriented perpendicular to the central structure (Photo 1). The building is a formal Neoclassical design dominated by a two-story portico across the central three bays. The ground floor forms the base of the building and is demarcated with a pronounced sandstone water table band above the ground floor windows. The main entrance and *piano nobile* are located on the first floor and are accessible via a large split staircase with cast iron railing leading to the portico. The portico consists of Corinthian

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columns: two sets of paired columns at each corner and two single columns spaced evenly across the front. The columns appear to be constructed of cast stone. There are single wood pilasters where the portico meets the wall. The wood cornice and pediment contain dentils and modillions and a semi-circular fan-shaped window within the tympanum.

The main entrance is a double door, currently covered with plywood, with a surround consisting of pilasters, entablature, broken pediment, and a 5-light transom. Windows on the ground story consist of simple rectangular openings currently covered with plywood. Windows on the first story are 12-over-1 vinyl sashes each with a brick blind arch lintel with stacked header pattern and stone keystones, springers, and sills. Windows on the second story are 12-over-1 replacement vinyl sashes beneath a brick solder course at the top of the wall. The windows in the bay to the left of the portico have been infilled with brick on all three stories. Air conditioning vents have been installed beneath most of the windows on the ground and first stories.

The central structure has two-story hipped-roof wings extending from the east and west elevations that were originally open-air covered porches. They were enclosed after 1943 and now contain paired 6-over-1 wood sash windows in the south elevation bay and paired 8-over-1 wood sash windows in each of the three bays on the east and west elevations. The ground story windows are covered with plywood. The top story of the central structure on the east and west elevations above the porch wings is three bays and contains windows similar to the front façade.

The two rear wings are each 5 bays wide and 9 bays long and have hipped asphalt shingle roofs. These were originally freestanding structures connected to the central building via covered walkways. The east and west elevations of the wings contain tall window openings with brick flat arches and stone keystones and sills. The fourth and sixth bays from the front (central structure) have larger arched window openings that have been clad with stucco. The fifth bay on the west wing contains a deeply recessed service entrance covered in white and green-flecked glazed tile. The windows on the upper story consist of 6-over-1 aluminum sashes with stone sills in each bay. There are air conditioning vents installed above the ground floor level sporadically. The rear elevation of each wing formerly contained 5 window openings with brick flat arch and stone keystone. Two windows on each rear façade have been infilled with brick and the rest are covered in plywood. Two single door openings have been added to each rear wing elevation.

The rear wings were connected to the central structure by two-story brick hyphens. Each hyphen is three bays long and contains three paired 6-over-6 aluminum sash windows. The hyphen on the east elevation has a deeply recessed ground floor with a steel column supporting the structure above and various boarded openings. The west hyphen contains two boarded window openings. A one-story flat-roof addition behind the central structure linking the two hyphens may have been constructed at the same time. Later, a one-story flat roof addition was constructed to fill the entire courtyard between the wings, and consists of a band of 12 metal frame windows currently boarded with doors on either end and a deep overhang metal fascia roof.

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*Interior:*

The main entrance hall is located on the first floor off the south portico. A single glass-paned wood door with five-light transom five-light sidelights leads into a modestly sized hall. The building has been divided into standard-sized offices on the ground and first floors and the finishes replaced throughout with drop ceilings, commercial vinyl tile flooring and drywall. The enclosed side porches on the central structure have drop ceilings, drywall and carpeted floors. Two staircases are symmetrically located on the north side of the central structure, with additional staircases at the north end of each wing. The stairs appear to have been replaced with metal commercial units in the 1950s and have simple metal bar balusters, square metal newel posts and wooden handrails. Restrooms throughout the building are commercial-style and appear to date from the 1960s.

The second floor of the central structure retains a higher level of integrity than the ground and first floors. The rooms on the third floor are surmised to originally have been dormitory rooms and retain their original footprints, in contrast to rooms on the other floors, many of which have been partitioned. These rooms retain the original plaster walls as well as some original baseboard moldings and wooden doors. The original window trim has been removed.

**Additions and Alterations**

Exact dates for the additions and alterations described could not be ascertained. Newspaper articles from 1955, when the property became a rehabilitation center, show open porches and detached rear wings. Although newspaper articles published between 1956 and the late 1960s frequently mentioned funding appropriations, planned improvements and bid results for construction at the Rehabilitation Center, minimal detail was included regarding the projects. Based on the interior finishes and alteration materials, it is surmised that the bulk of the alterations and additions to the original West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind structures were completed between 1956-1965, with the exception of the vinyl sash windows on the front façade, which were installed after the property was acquired by West Virginia State University in 2013.

**Integrity**

The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind retains exterior historic integrity as it relates to Criterion A. The location, exterior materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association are largely intact, particularly in the central structure. The Neoclassical brick façade, slate roof, original portico and most other architectural details remain. The interior of the building has been substantially altered as a result of its conversion to offices for the Rehabilitation Center. Some evidence of the original finishes remains on the second floor. Despite subsequent additions and alterations, the exterior of the property still conveys its original design and significance as the first and only educational institution for deaf and blind African American children in West Virginia.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**Summary Paragraph**

The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under *Criterion A: Education* as well as *Ethnic Heritage: Black* for its role in West Virginia's educational and black history. The Period of Significance is 1926 to 1955, beginning with the opening of the school and ending with the school's closure as a result of the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which desegregated public schools. After this decision, Black students were integrated into the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Romney.

***Black West Virginians and Education***

West Virginia had a small Black population when it became a state on June 20, 1863. At the time, approximately 21,144 Black people, including 2,773 free Black and 18,371 enslaved Black persons, lived in West Virginia.<sup>1</sup> The first state Constitution called for the gradual emancipation of slaves; however, slavery was officially abolished with the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The state saw considerable growth in the Black population during the late 1800s and early 1900s. After the Civil War, Black people migrated into West Virginia and other northern states from Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee in search of higher wages and better economic opportunities. In West Virginia, they found employment constructing the railroad lines for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, Norfolk & Western Railroad, and Virginian Railroad. Many decided to stay after the completion of the railroads to work in the southern West Virginia coalfields. As the need for more coal miners increased, coal companies sent agents to the south to recruit Black people. By 1917, one in every three miners in the Pocahontas coalfield of southern West Virginia was Black.<sup>2</sup> Between 1860 in the counties that would become the state of West Virginia and 1950, the population of Black people increased statewide from 21,144 in 1860 to 114,867 in 1950.<sup>3</sup>

Early education of Black children in the state occurred via a variety of avenues including private programs developed by both Black and white citizens, the U.S. Freedman's Bureau, missionaries and public schools. Black people took the initiative and established their own schools in many communities. In 1862, Black people living in Parkersburg founded the first Black school in what would become West Virginia. Other schools for Black students opened in Wheeling, Clarksburg, Charleston, Martinsburg,

<sup>1</sup> "West Virginia Population by Race" *West Virginia Division of Culture & History*. Web. <http://www.wvculture.org/history/teacherresources/censuspopulationrace.html> Accessed 12 February 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Nick Musgrave, "Black Coal: the African-American Miners of West Virginia Southern Coalfields." Web. 12 February 2019

<sup>3</sup> "West Virginia Population by Race" *West Virginia Division of Culture & History*. Web. <http://www.wvculture.org/history/teacherresources/censuspopulationrace.html> Accessed 12 February 2019.

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Charles Town and Malden. These schools were often private and held classes in nearby homes and churches.<sup>4</sup>

The 1872 State Constitution addressed the education of free Black children but included a provision that stated “white and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school.”<sup>5</sup> As the Black population increased so did the need for public education and teachers. Laws permitted the establishment of Black schools only wherever there were 30 Black students between the ages of 6 and 21.<sup>6</sup> This number was later reduced to 10 Black students. Once the population requirements were met, public elementary and high schools began springing up in many communities. As a result of the increase in schools, additional Black teachers were needed to teach in the new schools. Schools in West Virginia hired Black teachers from Ohio and Pennsylvania until in-state colleges could prepare Black students for the teaching profession. The first college, Storer College in Harpers Ferry, was established in 1865 and trained Black students who aspired to become teachers. In 1891, the West Virginia Colored Institute - now West Virginia State University - was founded as the first Black land grant college in the state and began training Black students for the teaching profession.<sup>7</sup>

***Establishment of the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind***

The West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Romney was established in 1870 but served only white children. Prior to 1926, West Virginia did not have a school for Black children who were deaf or blind. A small number of parents sent their children to attend the Overlea School for the Deaf and Blind in Baltimore, Maryland. Their expenses were covered by the state of West Virginia and drawn from funding given to the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Romney. Some families thought Maryland was too far to send their children and began advocating for a school in West Virginia.

In 1919, three Black state legislature delegates, T. G. Nutter of Charleston in Kanawha County, Harry J. Capehart of Keystone in McDowell County, and John V. Coleman of Fayette County sponsored legislation for a colored school for the deaf and blind. They included a provision that required the superintendent and entire staff be of the Black race. On February 8, 1919, the West Virginia legislature passed legislation establishing a state institution to be known as “the Colored Deaf and Blind Schools” for Black children between the ages of 8 and 25.<sup>8</sup> The legislation also asked the State Board of Control and a committee of three Black citizens who were appointed by the Governor to select a location for the

<sup>4</sup> Bickley, Ancella. “African-American Education.” E-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia. 5 February 2016. Web. 9 February 2019.

<sup>5</sup> “1872 Constitution of the State of West Virginia.” Web.

<http://www.wvculture.org/history/government/1872constitution.html>. Accessed 12 February 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Bickley, Ancella. “African-American Education.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ambler, Charles H. *A History of Education in West Virginia: From Early Colonial Times to 1949*. Huntington, West Virginia, Standard Printing & Publishing Company, 1952.

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school and provide building plans.<sup>9</sup> They selected a 19 ¾ acre site in Institute (Kanawha County), West Virginia near the West Virginia Colored Institute (now West Virginia State University).

Charleston-based architects Wysong & Jones were hired to design the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind. Alphonso F. Wysong (1881-1944) was born in Newport, Giles County, Virginia and established an office in Princeton, West Virginia in the early 1900s. He designed residences, schools, businesses, the Wyoming County Courthouse (1916), Gilmer County Courthouse (1924) and Charleston Municipal Auditorium (1939). After World War I, Wysong and architect Thomas P. Jones established Wysong & Jones with offices in Princeton and Charleston. West Virginia Secretary of State Records indicate that the firm of Wysong, Tufts and Jones was established in 1920; it was reorganized several times with other partners in addition to Wysong and Jones and was dissolved in 1932.<sup>10</sup> The firm designed the Physical Education buildings at Concord Normal School<sup>11</sup> (Athens) and the New River State School<sup>12</sup> (Montgomery) in 1923, a residence building at the Bluefield Colored Institute in 1924<sup>13</sup> and a junior high school at Marmet in 1930<sup>14</sup>. According to census records, Jones was born about 1887 in Pennsylvania. In 1910, he was living in Falls Creek, Pennsylvania and was listed as an architect. In 1920, he was working as a draftsman in Mercer County and by 1940, was back in Falls Creek, living with family and noted as having been unemployed for 39 weeks with a usual occupation of architect. Jones was a charter member of the West Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1922, along with Wysong and other notable local architects including Walter Martens and H. Rus Warne and a number of others.<sup>15</sup> Jones died in 1948 in Falls Creek at the age of 61<sup>16</sup>.

Construction of the main building which included administrative offices, dormitory, dining room, and classrooms began in 1925 and was completed the following year. Miller and Devine, a construction company based in Fairmont, was the contractor.<sup>17</sup> The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind opened on September 14, 1926 with 28 students. Over the years, the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind campus expanded to five buildings. In 1928, the one-story West Building was constructed behind the main building and provided space for classrooms and a braille library for the blind as well as a playroom. A matching East Building housing classrooms for deaf students soon followed in 1930. Another building constructed in 1931 housed a garage and space for a mop and broom making shop.<sup>18</sup> The 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Photo #10) depicts the campus's early layout. By 1948, the school included a main structure, two one-story brick buildings that were used for

<sup>9</sup> Barnes, Uriah. "West Virginia Code, Chapter 45, Education." Web. 1923.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112105119962;view=1up;seq=1039> 25 February 2019.

<sup>10</sup> West Virginia Secretary of State Business Organization Search.

<sup>11</sup> "Physical Education Buildings at Concord State Normal School," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, May 9, 1923, p 11.

<sup>12</sup> *Charleston Daily Mail*, August 5, 1923, p 9.

<sup>13</sup> "Residence Campus of Bluefield Colored Institute," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, April 23, 1924, p 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Charleston Gazette*, May 18, 1930, p 7.

<sup>15</sup> "Architects Plan Anniversary Fete", *Charleston Gazette*, Nov 16, 1947, p 11.

<sup>16</sup> "Thomas P. Jones Falls Creek Architect, Dies." *Dubois Courier Express*. March 4, 1948, p 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ancella Bickley, "In Spite of Obstacles...", 13.

<sup>18</sup> Bickley 20.

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classrooms and one one-story building used as a garage, storage, and student workshop. Historic photographs from a 1930 Report of the West Virginia State Board of Control indicate that the west one-story rear wing housed the school for the blind and the east wing house the school for the deaf.<sup>19</sup> The final building added to this campus was an auditorium/gymnasium designed by Charleston black architect John C. Norman in 1950.<sup>20</sup>

***School Curriculum and Operation***

The purpose of the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind was to train the students to be self-sustaining and to function in society with as little handicap as possible. Its educational curriculum consisted of learning sign language and other communication methods, subject instruction, and vocational training. Young deaf students were taught to communicate by an oral method and a manual method. The oral method consisted of making sounds, speaking, and reading lips while the manual method involved using sign language to communicate.<sup>21</sup> Teachers taught blind students the braille system of reading and how to use devices such as the talking-book machine, braille writers, and radios. In addition to learning how to communicate, students were taught subjects including reading, math, history, geography, language, government, physiology, and physics. Between 1927 and 1934, vocational programs were introduced to teach students skills such as barbering, beauty culture, shoe repairing, tailoring, cleaning and pressing, chair caning, mop and broom making, rug weaving, leather craft, and home economics.

Between 1926 and 1951, 102 deaf and 68 blind students were admitted to the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind. Approximately 35 deaf and blind students received a vocational certificate.<sup>22</sup> A total of 11 deaf and 15 blind students completed high school, 2 deaf students received a college degree, and 3 blind students received master's degrees.<sup>23</sup>

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court heard the case *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The justices ruled that separating students based on race was unconstitutional. As a result, West Virginia began the process of integrating schools and the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind was one of the institutions that closed. Black deaf and blind students were transferred to the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Romney, Hampshire County, West Virginia. In 1955, the West Virginia Legislature repealed legislation for the Schools for the Colored Blind and Deaf and the school's final commencement ceremony was held on May 26, 1955.<sup>24,25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "School for the Blind..." and "School for the Deaf...", WV History on View.

<sup>20</sup> Bickley 51.

<sup>21</sup> "Special Report, Silver Anniversary, The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind, 1926-1951."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> "Article 18. West Virginia School for the Colored Deaf and Blind." *West Virginia Code*. Web.

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<sup>25</sup> Bickley 54.

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WV Schools for the Colored Deaf and  
Blind

Name of Property

Kanawha County, West Virginia

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***Post Segregation***

The State of West Virginia saw many schools for Black students close in the years following the Supreme Court decision. With it came a loss of Black professionals, educational memorabilia, and historical perspectives. Black teachers, coaches, and principals had a difficult time finding positions in the integrated schools.

In 1955, the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind property became a rehabilitation center for the blind and severely disabled. The West Virginia Board of Education opened the Rehabilitation Center on August 1, 1955 to prepare individuals for employment.<sup>26</sup> Clients received training in auto mechanic repair, business administration, computer science, radio and TV repair, upholstery, sewing, and small appliance repair as well as rehabilitation services.

As the demand for services increased, ten new buildings including dormitories and sheltered workshops were constructed between 1955 and 1975. In 1956, a sum of \$40,000 was appropriated for “repair and remodeling necessary to adapt buildings for use as a rehabilitation center at Institute.”<sup>27</sup> In March 1956, a legal advertisement for bids for “Alterations and Addition, Rehabilitation Center, Institute” was published in newspapers and stated that contract bids were available at the offices of architect Henry Elden and Associates.<sup>28</sup> Bowers and Chilton, Inc. of South Charleston received the construction contract for the project.<sup>29</sup> A large addition designed by Elden was approved by the state in 1957<sup>30</sup>, but was ultimately rejected when construction bids exceeded the project budget.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, construction of new additions and buildings continued through the late 1950s and 1960s.<sup>32, 33</sup>

The West Virginia Rehabilitation Center continued to operate until 2007 when it ceased offering vocational and rehabilitation services; however, the Division of Rehabilitation Services continued to use the site for administrative offices until 2011. In June 2013, West Virginia State University acquired the entire West Virginia Rehabilitation property which contained 15 buildings and nearly 20 acres.<sup>34</sup> A majority of these structures have since been demolished due to poor condition and lack of function within West Virginia State University’s campus.

<sup>26</sup> “Valley Deaf and Blind Center to Be Shop For Disabled.” *Charleston Daily Mail*. 8 April 1955. P. 14.

<sup>27</sup> “State Again Ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in Rehabilitation Job,” *Charleston Gazette*, Jan 1, 1956, p 22.

<sup>28</sup> “Advertisement for Bids,” *Charleston Gazette*, Mar 28, 1956 p 22.

<sup>29</sup> Herb Little, “Board Awards Contract for Concord Work,” *Charleston Daily Mail*, April 10, 1956, p 17.

<sup>30</sup> “Board Will Study Expansion of Rehabilitation Center,” *Charleston Gazette*, June 9, 1957, p 17.

<sup>31</sup> “2 Contracts Awarded for College Projects,” *Charleston Gazette*, July 11, 1957, p 13.,

<sup>32</sup> “Rehabilitation Center at Ripley Discussed for WVU Medical Center,” *Morgantown Dominion-News*, July 29, 1959, p 3.

<sup>33</sup> “\$525,000 Given to State Center,” *Charleston Gazette*, August 21, 1963, p 13.

<sup>34</sup> “West Virginia State Acquires Former Rehabilitation Center Property.” *West Virginia State University*. Web.

<http://www.wvstateu.edu/announcement/2013/06/17/West-Virginia-State-Acquires-Former-Rehabilitation.aspx> Accessed 12 June 2019.



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Name of Property

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**Summary**

The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind property is significant at the state level and recommended eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its role in Black ethnic and educational history. The 1926 West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind educated deaf and blind Black children during segregation. In addition to the West Virginia standard school curriculum, the students were taught how to communicate using lip reading, sign language, and braille and provided with vocational training in order that each student would become a productive member of society after graduation. The design of the program was equivalent to that of the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Romney, the only comparable resource in the state. The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind property is also significant for its role in Black history. As the number of Black people in the state increased, schools and colleges for Black students were established throughout West Virginia. The West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind was the only institution in West Virginia which educated Black students who were deaf or blind. Prior to the establishment of this school, no specialized curriculum for deaf and blind Black students was available in the state so students were forced to seek an education in neighboring states.

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N/A

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The recommended National Register boundary of the West Virginia School for the Colored Deaf and Blind includes the historic school building as well as the historic roads, alleys and parking lot surrounding the structure, consisting of alleys on the east (30 feet) and west sides (20 feet) as well as Campus Drive on the south (55 feet) and a portion of the parking lot on the north (55 feet). The boundary is identified on the accompanying "Site Map and Photo Key" and includes a part of the tax parcel: district 25, map 34, parcel 39.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The National Register boundary encompasses the entire resource with historic additions (the main building and attached two wings) of the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind. This boundary does not include the entire tax parcel due to lack of historic integrity of surrounding land that was historically associated with the resource but no longer contributes to the property's historic significance. The selected boundary encompasses but does not exceed the extent of the historic resources and historically associated land area. The boundary includes those historic elements of the West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind but does not include buffer zones and/or acreage and/or peripheral areas that lack integrity or do not directly contribute to the significance of the property. The property is bounded to the south by the remnants of the former Campus Drive, to the east by the site of the former gymnasium, to the north by a parking area representing the historically open space to the rear of the building and to the west by the former auto garage/workshop which lacks historic significance and integrity.

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Kanawha County, WV

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N/A

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**PHOTO LOG**

Name of Property: West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind  
City or Vicinity: Institute  
County: Kanawha  
State: West Virginia  
Photographers: Courtney Zimmerman and Sarah Elswick  
Date of photographs: October 25, 2018  
Location of Original Digital Files: 1436 Graham Rd  
Silver Lake, OH 44224

Number of Photos: 9

Photo #1: South façade, camera facing north

Photo #2: South Façade, portico, camera facing north

Photo #3: Oblique view of the central structure, camera pointing northwest

Photo #4: Side view of the east façade and wing, camera pointing northwest

Photo #5: Oblique view of east wing, camera facing southwest

Photo #6: Rear (north) facade, camera facing south

Photo #7: View of rear courtyard infill addition (ca. 1960), camera facing south

Photo #8: Oblique view of west wing, camera facing south

Photo #9: View of the portico architectural details, camera facing north

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Photo 1: South façade, camera facing north



Photo #2: South Façade, portico, camera facing north



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Photo #3: Oblique view of the central structure, camera pointing northwest



Photo #4: Side view of the east façade and wing, camera pointing northwest



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Photo #5: Oblique view of east wing, camera facing southwest



Photo #6: Rear (north) facade, camera facing south

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N/A

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Photo #7: View of rear courtyard infill addition (ca. 1960), camera facing south



Photo #8: Oblique view of west wing, camera facing south

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Photo #9: View of the portico architectural details, camera facing north



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**LIST of FIGURES**

Name of Property: West Virginia Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind  
City or Vicinity: Institute  
County: Kanawha  
State: West Virginia

Number of Figures: 5

Figure #1: "Demolition Plan – First Floor – Electrical." Silling Associates. *West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services: West Virginia Rehabilitation Center New Fire Alarm – Building 'C'*.

Construction documents on file at West Virginia State University, Institute, WV. January 15, 2011.

Figure #2: "Demolition Plan – Second Floor – Electrical." Silling Associates. *West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services: West Virginia Rehabilitation Center New Fire Alarm – Building 'C'*.

Construction documents on file at West Virginia State University, Institute, WV. January 15, 2011.

Figure #3: "Demolition Plan – Third Floor – Electrical." Silling Associates. *West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services: West Virginia Rehabilitation Center New Fire Alarm – Building 'C'*.

Construction documents on file at West Virginia State University, Institute, WV. January 15, 2011.

Figure #4: Excerpt, 1933 Dunbar, WV Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

Figure #5: Aerial View of Wertz Field, 1937 (Source: Abandoned and Little-Known Airfields, [www.airfields-freeman.com/WV/Airfields\\_WV\\_SW.htm#wertz](http://www.airfields-freeman.com/WV/Airfields_WV_SW.htm#wertz), Paul Freeman/Rick Harshbarger).

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## WV Schools for the Colored Deaf and Blind

Name of Property

Kanawha County, WV

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N/A

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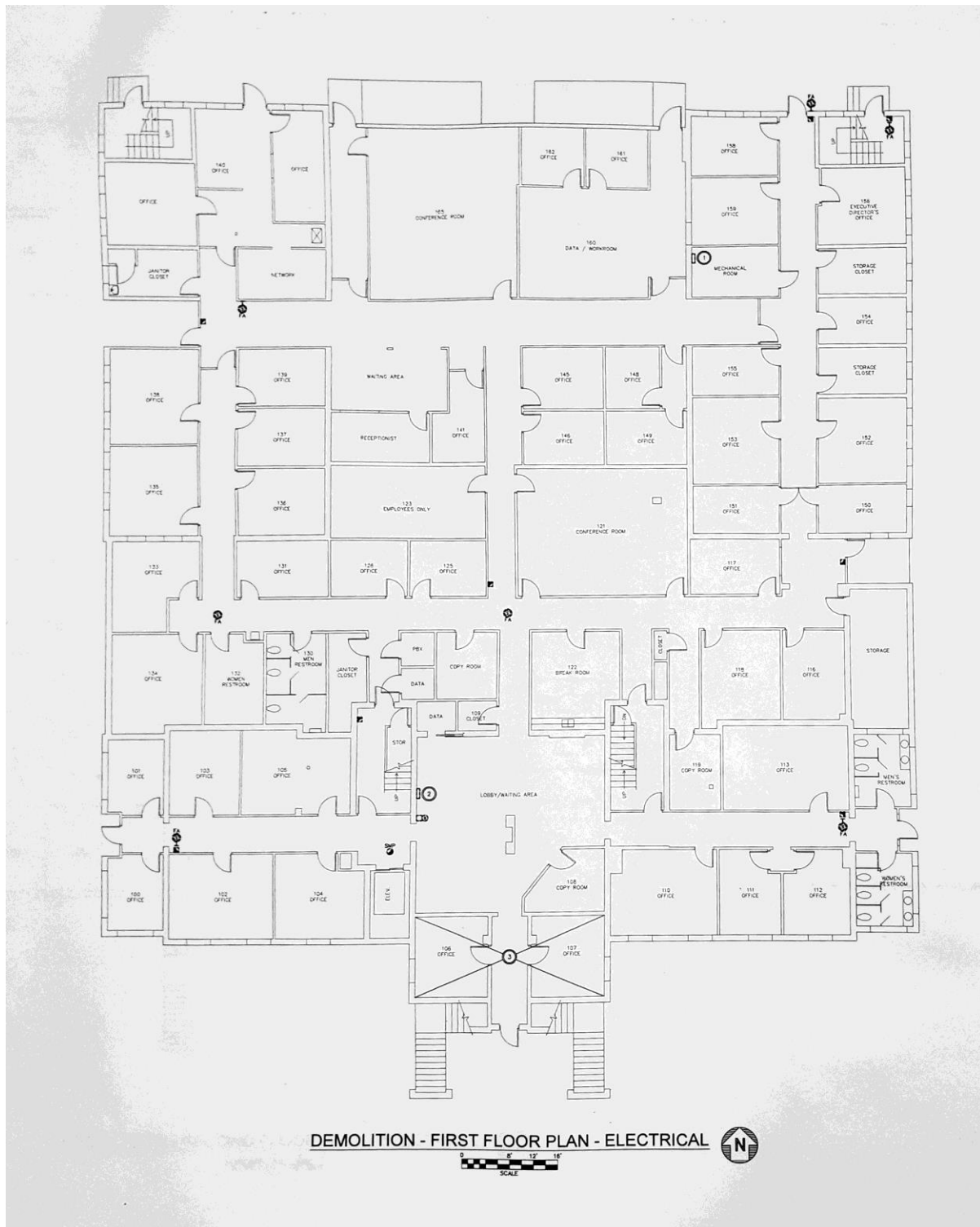


Figure 1. First Floor Plan

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

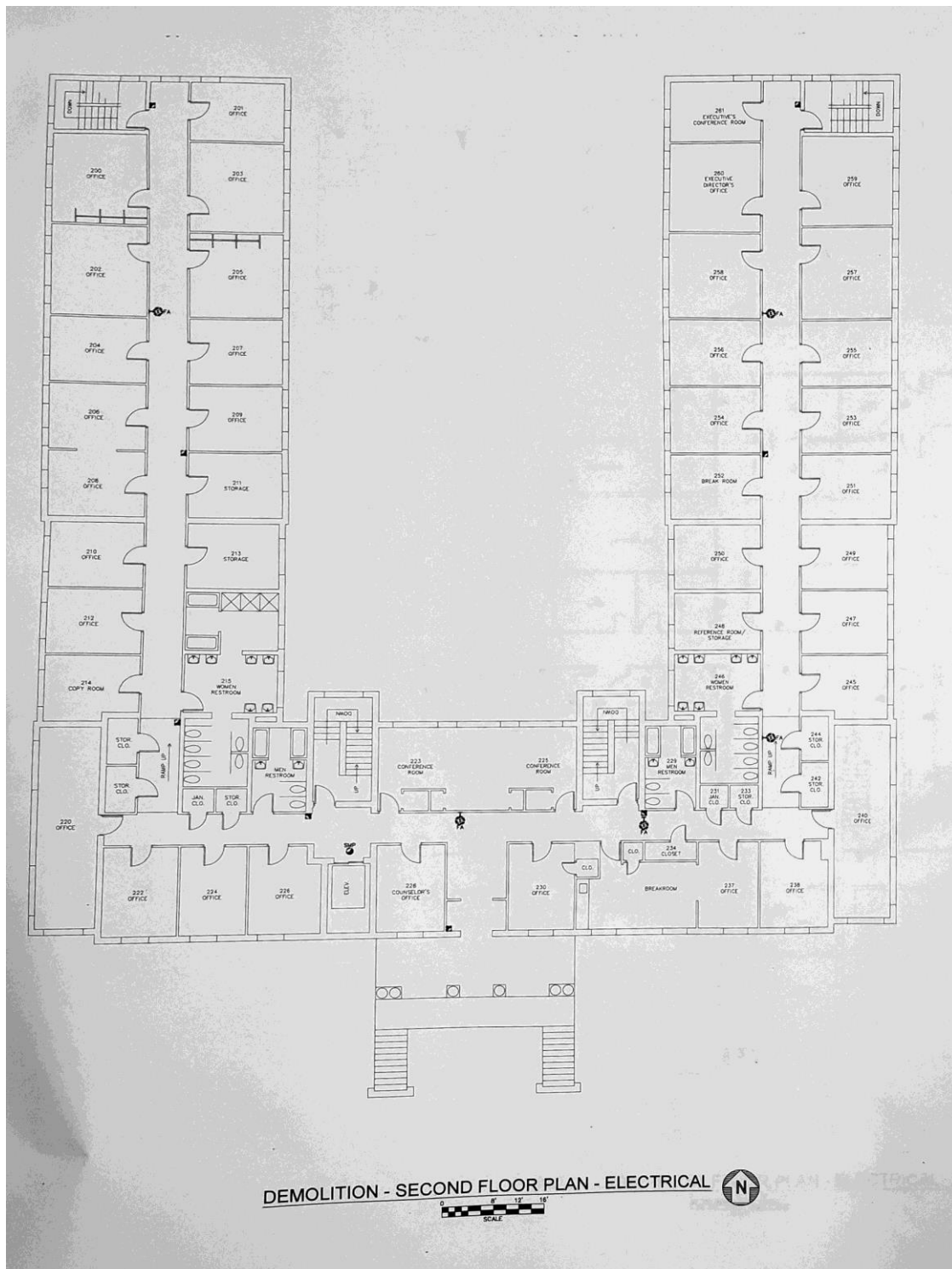


Figure 2. Second Floor Plan

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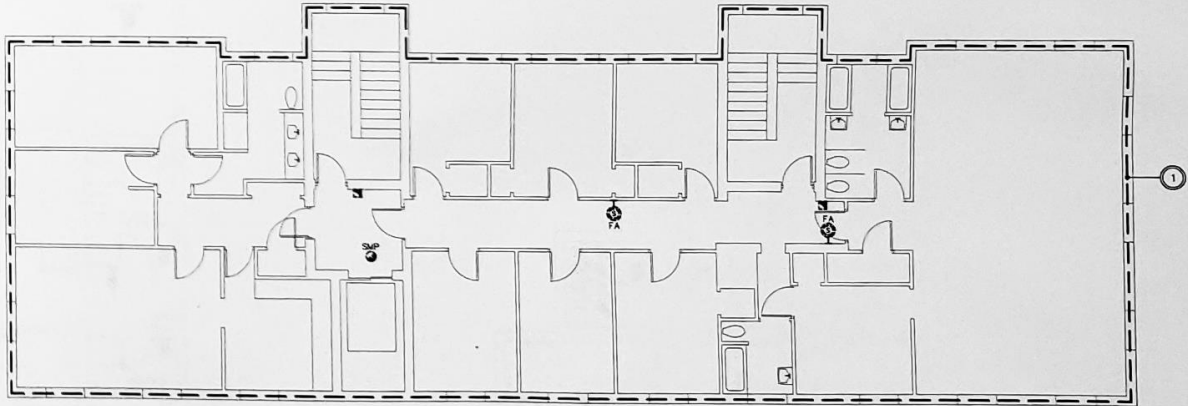
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DEMOLITION - THIRD FLOOR PLAN - ELECTRICAL

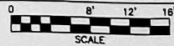


Figure 3. Third Floor Plan

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

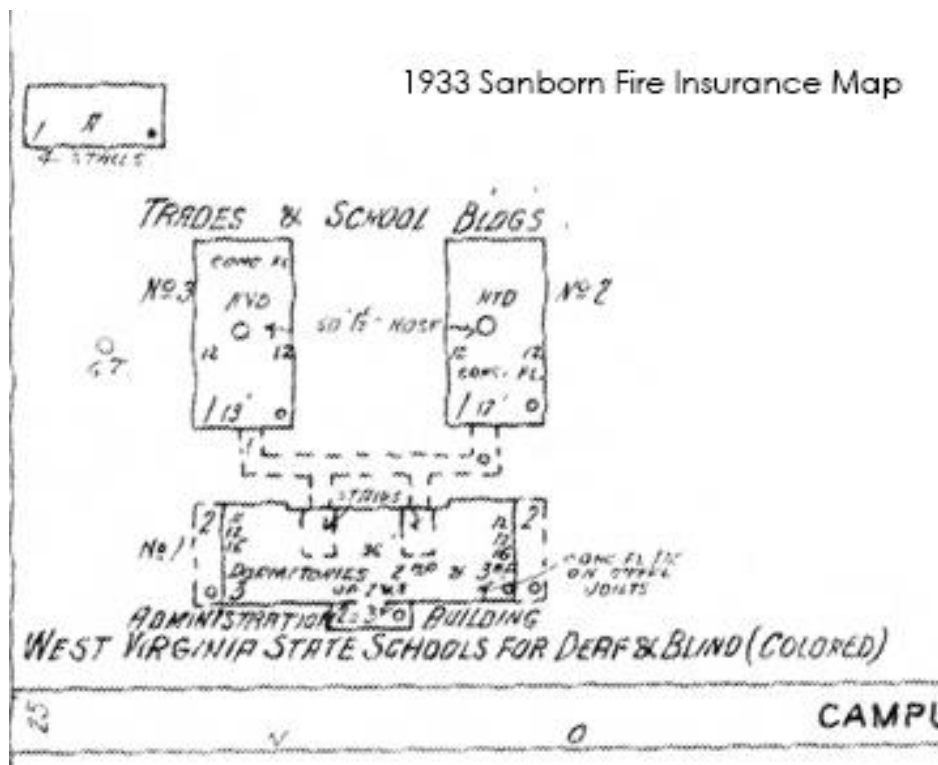


Figure 4. Excerpt, 1933 Dunbar, WV Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  
Building and wings prior to infill additions



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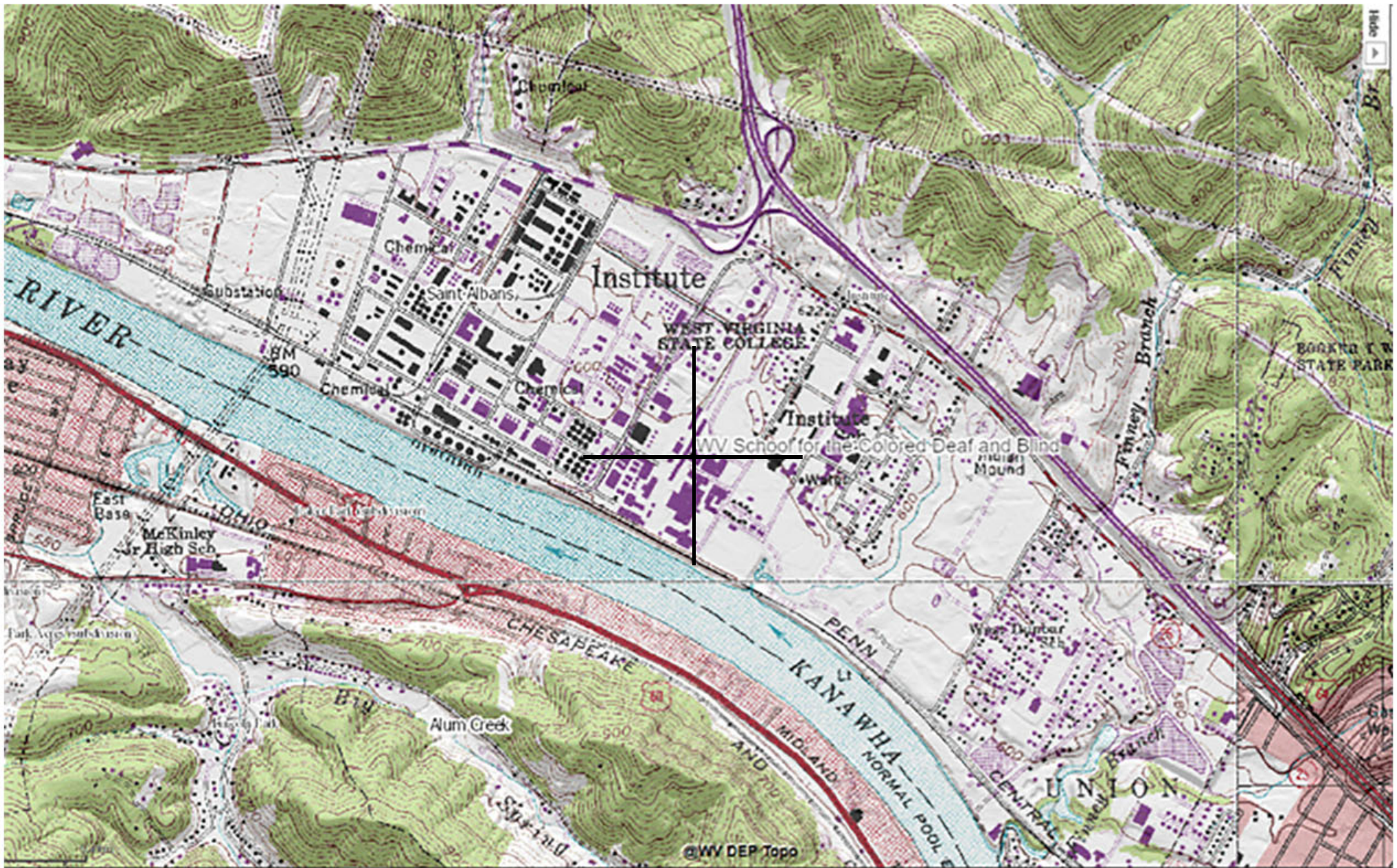
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Figure 5. Aerial View of Wertz Field, 1937  
Building and wings prior to infill additions





WV School for the Colored Deaf and Blind National Register Nomination  
Institute, Kanawha County, WV  
UTM Coordinates: Easting 432612, Northing 4248135

USGS Topo Map  
St. Albans Quad  
Zone 17N 1983



