

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Pantego School No.2

Pantego, Beaufort County, BF1076, Listed 02/24/2026

Nomination by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, Hanbury Preservation Consulting

Photographs by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, June and December 2024



Façade, view to NW.



NE Corner, view to SW.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pantego School No. 2

Other names/site number: Beaufort County Elementary School, Beaufort County High School

Name of related multiple property listing:
Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina

2. Location

Street & number: 150 Swamp Road

City or town: Pantego State: NC County: Beaufort

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B x C ___ D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER</u>	<u>2/9/26</u> Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Rosenwald School

Materials:

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: BRICK

Roof: METAL

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Located on the north side of Swamp Road in Beaufort County, Pantego School No. 2 sits on a flat, cleared lot. Adjacent lots to the east and north contain later school buildings and playground equipment.¹ A semicircular paved drive encompasses the building, with two outlets on Swamp Road, east and west of the building respectively. A concrete path extends south from the building to the road. A small, brick, gabled outbuilding is northwest of the school. The brick schoolhouse conforms to the Rosenwald Community School Plan Number Seven. It has a side-gabled section with a double-loaded corridor that stretches east/west at the south, and a cross-gabled wing at the north containing an auditorium. The cross-gabled entrance is flanked by shed dormers. The building's banks of large multi-pane sash windows are hallmarks of a Rosenwald school.

Narrative Description

Site

The property is a 1.58-acre parcel on the north side of Swamp Road between US Highway 264 and Topping Loop Road, southwest of Pantego Creek and the core of the hamlet of Pantego. The nominated property is on a flat, cleared parcel with wooded areas to the west and north. A semicircular gravel drive wraps around the school building though only the western portion of the drive is within the nominated property. Northwest of the school and the gravel drive is a small, gable-fronted, brick outbuilding beyond which are a series of what may have been piers for a temporary building. Outside of the nominated parcel to the northwest is a concrete pad that may have supported a temporary building, playing fields to the north, and to the east, two midcentury brick school buildings under separate ownership, currently used as a church and a restaurant, respectively.

¹ Under separate ownership, not part of this nomination.

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School, 1926, contributing building

Pantego School No. 2 is a Rosenwald standard plan: Community School Plan Number Seven, a seven-teacher school to face east or west, with an auditorium.² Overall, the building is largely symmetrical.

Exterior

The one-story, brick, side-gabled school has a cross-gabled auditorium wing that extends to the north. One-story, flat-roofed restroom additions were built on the east and west gable ends in 1955.³ The gabled roof and shed dormers are clad in standing seam metal. The walls of the original portion of the building are laid in five-course American bond. The restroom additions are in a variant of five-course American bond where the header course is replaced with a course of Flemish bond.

The facade has a central, cross-gabled portico that houses the main entrance to the school. Flanking the portico at both the east and west are eleven large, double-hung replacement sash windows with simulated divided lights in a nine-over-nine pattern. The windows are grouped in banks of six (at the far east and west) and five. The masonry openings for the windows have rowlock sills. Also flanking the central portico are two shed dormers, each housing a ten-light window, each set above the banks of five windows. The dormers are frame and clad in what appears to be aluminum siding in a weatherboard pattern.

The central portico is supported by two pairs of square posts, each pair resting on a low brick wall. The posts and walls flank masonry steps that ascend to the north to a recessed entrance with beadboard wainscoting and ceiling, and replacement double, hollow-core doors, topped by a three-light transom. Flanking the recessed entrance and within the portico are six-over-six sash windows.

The east and west gable ends have low additions that are set back to the north, leaving exposed small, six-over-six sash windows at the south side of the gable end walls. Each gable end also has a rectangular louvered vent in the attic. Each addition has a one-over-one window on its south elevation, double-leaf doors and a one-over-one window on its east or west elevations respectively, and a one-over-one window on its north elevations. Each addition has a small canopy supported by metal pipes sheltering the entrance. The east wing has an additional wooden ramp to the entrance level, a portion of which is covered by an extension of its canopy.

The north elevation of the southern section of the building is symmetrical on either side of the rear auditorium wing. There are five large, nine-over-nine windows in banks at the far east and west, respectively; and banks of three nine-over-nine windows at the interior, adjacent to the north wing. The north elevation of the auditorium wing has a rectangular louvered vent in the

² Julius Rosenwald Fund, *Community School Plans* (1924), 18.

³ Beaufort County School Board Minutes, August 6, 1955.

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attic gable and a single-leaf door above grade at the west side of the gable end, currently without any stair access from the exterior. The east and west elevations of the auditorium wing were once symmetrical. The west elevation has a bank of six nine-over-nine windows at the south, the masonry opening for one of which has been filled with an air handling unit. The north end of this elevation has a smaller six-over-six window. The east elevation of the auditorium wing has a smaller, six-over-six window at its north end. The east elevation originally had a bank of five nine-over-nine windows, and three remain at the south side, one obscured by an air handling unit. Double doors with concrete steps extending to grade have been installed where the remaining two windows had been. The masonry patch at this area matches the bond pattern of the restroom additions.

Interior

The interior of the original section of the building is organized along a double-loaded corridor that runs east to west, from which the large auditorium extends north at the center of the hallway. At the eastern and western ends of this hall within the original section of the building are cased openings with three-light transoms leading to small flights of steps to the masonry openings that were the original exterior exits.

In the original section of the building, floors are generally wooden. Some sheet vinyl or linoleum has been added in the auditorium. Ceilings throughout the school are wooden. Walls are generally some form of drywall. The original hallways and auditorium have beadboard wainscoting. All interior doors in the original portion of the building have transoms, most of which have been boarded, save for the doors to the closet east of the primary entrance hall. The eight rooms off the main hall (excluding the auditorium) each have a window to the hall, now boarded, that appear to have been vertical pivot windows. The former office and industrial room (on the north side of the hall, flanking the north wing) each have two pivot windows to the auditorium space.

At the main entrance is a small entrance hall with beadboard wainscoting that extends north to the main east/west hallway. On the east wall of this short entrance hall is a single-leaf door to a narrow closet that extends to the depth of the adjacent classroom and that engages the window immediately east of the principal entrance. The transverse/entrance hall is slightly wider at its center, extending north at the width of the auditorium. Floor plans for the standard design suggest that the auditorium may have been divided from the hall by a partition wall with windows. Currently there is a substantial cased opening where a wall may have been. The auditorium has a raised proscenium stage with a shallow, rounded thrust. The thrust has beadboard wainscoting. Flanking the stage are single-leaf doors that lead to narrow flights of steps to access backstage. On the east and west walls of the auditorium are single-leaf doors to small adjacent rooms, each of which has two cased openings, currently boarded, for interior windows into the auditorium. The east room was designed to be an office/library, and the west an industrial room.

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The original industrial room has been adapted for use as a kitchen with a central serving counter, and large appliances along the west and south walls. The wooden floors remain exposed. Some sort of reinforcing drywall, applied in sheets, has been added to the west wall. The north wall has three large windows. The office/library has wooden floors and ceilings. Its north wall has three large windows.

On the north side of the primary hallway, east and west of the industrial room and office/library, respectively, are single classrooms accessed by single-leaf doors. Though the original Rosenwald designs included narrow cloakrooms at the gable end walls, they were either not built or have been removed. Both these classrooms have wooden floors and ceilings, chalkboards on their south walls, and five windows on their north walls.

On the south side of the transverse hallway are four classrooms, two at the east and two at the west. The eastern two have been combined by removal of the partition wall between them. Ghost marks of this wall remain. All four classrooms were originally designed with cloakrooms, though none of these remain. The enclosed closet noted above is at the opposite side of the room where the cloakroom would have been.

The large, combined classroom at the southeast has wooden floors and ceilings. Its west wall has beadboard wainscoting with paneling above. This wall also has a single-leaf door to the cloakroom/closet, and a chalkboard. A small stage has been erected along the east wall. The north wall has two doors with transoms and two pivoting windows set high in the wall plane.

The southwest rooms are divided by a partition wall with a large cased opening. Their ceilings and floors are wooden. A chalkboard remains on the north wall of the western room. The eastern room has a small bar and sink installed on its north wall.

The eastern and western bathroom wings are mirror images of each other. They have vinyl tile floors in the hallways, and the floors of the restrooms themselves are terracotta tile. They have short halls to double-leaf exit doors at the east and west respectively. At their north sides are janitor's closets and restrooms.

Outbuilding, ca. 1950, Noncontributing building

This is a small, gable-fronted brick building of indeterminate use and age. Its southern section is laid largely in running bond with wire cut brick. The building has been expanded to the north with a flat textured brick. The southern section has a masonry opening with a rowlock sill on its east elevation. It is possible that this served as a bathroom prior to the addition of bathrooms to the main building, though that has not been confirmed. The interior was not accessed.

Integrity

Pantego School No. 2 has not been moved, thus retains integrity of location. Its design has been mildly altered with the removal of cloakrooms, one partition wall between classrooms, and a

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partition wall between the hallway and the auditorium. The school's overall form, shape, scale, massing, and plan remain largely intact. Replacement windows mimic the originals. Most transoms and interior pivot windows remain. Bathroom additions are small and relatively unobtrusive; thus, the school retains integrity of design. Along Swamp Road are a number of small residences and a church. The density of development continues to be that of a small, rural township. The area immediately adjacent to the school includes athletic fields and subsidiary buildings. Though they are under separate ownership and not being nominated, their continued existence bolsters the school's integrity of setting. Subsidiary buildings, namely the lunchroom and industrial building relocated to the site during the period of significance, have subsequently been demolished sometime between 1962 and 1993 per aerial photos, however their absence only moderately impacts the integrity of setting. The setting of the school retains integrity. The school has a limited addition of aluminum siding in the dormers and the porch pediment, and replacement windows. However, it retains a standing seam metal roof, original exterior brickwork, beadboard wainscoting and ceilings, and wooden floors, giving it strong integrity of materials and workmanship. The school communicates a very strong historic and aesthetic sense of an early twentieth century school, which gives it high integrity of feeling. The Pantego School No. 2 housed classrooms and educational facilities for African Americans in the early 20th century and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer, thus retains a strong integrity of association.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

The Rosenwald-funded school building was completed in 1926 and remained operational (as an integrated school after 1968) until it closed in the spring of 2001. Pantego School No. 2 is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological remains, such as debris accumulated during the operation of the school, remnant landscape features such as planting beds and paths, and infrastructural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of Pantego School No. 2. Information concerning institutional culture and African American identity, as well as the spatial organization of outdoor activities and the character of daily life at the school, can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the school. At this time, no investigation has been designed to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist and should be considered in any development of the property.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

- 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

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926

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Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rosenwald Community School Plan

Gurganus, G.O.

McMinn Norfleet and Wicker

Coble, H. L.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Pantego School No. 2 is significant at the local level in the areas of Education, Architecture, and Ethnic History: Black. The second Rosenwald School in Pantego Township, this seven-teacher school built to Rosenwald plans replaced an earlier frame Rosenwald-funded school for African Americans, which burned. The school is significant as one of 817 educational buildings funded by the Rosenwald program in 93 of the 100 counties in North Carolina, and one of six in Beaufort County. The school was an integral part of the African American community in Pantego Township and was supported by strong advocates for its improvement and retention throughout the course of its active use as a school. Architecturally, the school retains the hallmarks of a Rosenwald school, namely banks of large windows to aid in circulation and lighting, and adherence to standard plans that marked a vast improvement over typical schools for African Americans of the period. It is being nominated under the Multiple Property Document form *Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina*. The period of significance begins with 1926, the date of construction, and ends in 1968 when the Beaufort County schools were integrated.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Of the 817 educational buildings constructed with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund in North Carolina, six schools were built in Beaufort County between 1915 and 1927. They are Pantego School (first school in Pantego, frame four-teacher school built 1915-1916, burned 1921), Chocowinity School (three-teacher school, also known as Ware Creek School, built 1920-1921, National Register listed); River Road School (two-teacher school, built 1920-1921 under Tuskegee Program); Leechville School (two-teacher school, built 1922-1923, BF1598); Bayside

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School (four-teacher school, built between 1924-1925); and Pantego School No. 2 (eight-teacher school, brick, built 1926-1927).

Pantego School No. 2 was the second school for African Americans in this part of Beaufort County to be supported by Rosenwald Funds. Local school board minutes from 1914 record that plans for a school for African American children in Pantego's district #6 were approved and permission granted to build the school as soon as possible.⁴ In early 1915, W.G. Privette, the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Beaufort County, wrote to N.C. Newbold, then the state agent for rural schools, seeking Rosenwald funding. He wrote, "I wish to apply for whatever amount you can give us for a building which has recently been erected at Pantego. This is a four-room building, one story, with lighting and ventilation according to the state plans. For lack of funds this building has not been completed, but has been in use this year."⁵ Privette noted that the African American community had not yet been able to contribute half the funds for the building as expected, which had resulted in a reduced school term. Later that year, Privette responded to questions from Newbold. In a letter on April 5, he noted that the building and furnishings would cost about \$2,200, and that the building was currently missing partitions and ceilings. The county had expended \$500 to date from its building fund, \$600 had come from local taxes, and \$600 from private donations. Privette continued that there had been some departures from the standard state building plans but that the essential aspects of light, ventilation, and heating had been preserved. He continued that this school had fine domestic and vocational training departments and they hoped to be able to add an additional room for them at some point. Privette noted that the Township had only two small additional schools for African Americans at that point, and that the Pantego school employed six teachers. According to Rosenwald records at Tuskegee, the school was provided funding to defray construction costs.⁶ The county school board continued modest investments, such as funding for a chalkboard in 1918.⁷

This frame school building was destroyed by fire in 1921. While little documentation of the event survives, it appears to have been an act of arson. The school board minutes of November 1921 express a desire to identify and prosecute the arsonist.⁸ A paid advertisement in the *Washington Daily News* signed by twenty-nine people, including Chief of Police R. J. Quittley, defended Ernest Clark, an apparent suspect. The signatories stated they did not believe he was involved in the arson: "[H]aving known him for some time, we do not believe he would either aid or abet or in any way help in the destruction of public property. It is an undeniable fact that he is above the average of his race. His character is above reproach."⁹ Apparently no one was arrested for the destruction of the school. The school board minutes do not reflect an immediate

⁴ Beaufort County School Board minutes, November 2, 1914.

⁵ W. G. Privette, letter to N. C. Newbold, February 15, 1916, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

⁶ Kyle Obenauer and Claudia Brown, Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2015

⁷ Beaufort County School Board minutes, February 4, 1918.

⁸ Beaufort County School Board minutes, November 14, 1921.

⁹ "To Whom it May Concern (advertisement)," *Washington Daily News*, November 25, 1921.

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plan to replace the school or state where Black Pantego-area students attended school in the wake of the fire.

In the spring of 1922, the school board directed the superintendent to inquire if Rosenwald funds could be used in Pantego and Bayside.¹⁰ In December 1922, a school board committee was appointed “to see the negroes at Pantego and find out what they would do toward a building at Pantego.”¹¹ There is no mention of a replacement school for African Americans in the Pantego area in the school board minutes again until April 1924, when the superintendent reported that he had been able to “make very little progress in the matter of the building for the colored race at Pantego.”¹² However, by the following month, he “was instructed to secure plans for a modern school building for the colored race at Pantego. The cost of same not to exceed \$8000 by any means.”¹³ The same month W. F. Credle, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund in North Carolina, reported that he had met with County School Superintendent McLean and school board member John Sparrow to devise a plan to accommodate Black students in Pantego within a limited budget. In his report, Credle noted that “a year or so ago a good school at Pantego burned down. Since that time makeshifts have been used for school purposes. Colored schools in Beaufort County are quite generally poor, and the workings of the official school minds are puzzles which I have not yet been able to solve.”¹⁴

On November 1, 1925, a group of local citizens organized the “Willing Workers” in order to advocate for a new school for the community. They raised funds, and some mortgaged their properties to provide school funding.¹⁵

Apparently debt financing was considered, as the school board minutes from February 1926 reference a loan from the State of North Carolina intended for this school and the desire to use some of the funding to repair other schools.¹⁶ N. C. Newbold attended the county school board meeting the following month, when the board approved an \$8,000 state loan and directed the superintendent to procure plans for the building.¹⁷ In April, the board chose school plan #7 in brick and gave the authority to seek construction bids.¹⁸ Six contractors provided bids; four of them also provided an alternate bid for a frame building. G.O. Gurganus of Washington was selected with a bid of \$14,995.¹⁹ A second bidder, R. W. Lucas of Belhaven, was hired at \$200 to

¹⁰ Beaufort County School Board minutes, May 1, 1922.

¹¹ Beaufort County School Board minutes, December 4, 1922.

¹² Beaufort County School Board minutes, April 5, 1924.

¹³ Beaufort County School Board minutes, May 5, 1924.

¹⁴ W. F. Credle, *Report of W.F. Credle, Supervisor of Rosenwald Funds*, May 1924, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

¹⁵ Beaufort County Alumni Association Homecoming Bulletin, May 2023; members included J. Raymond Credle, Lee Whitley, William Twine, Julius Smith, Georgia Twine, Lovie Whitley, Effie Barnes, Mary Peartree, Verge Savage, and Retha Whitley.

¹⁶ Beaufort County School Board minutes, February 16, 1926.

¹⁷ Beaufort County School Board minutes, March 1, 1926.

¹⁸ Beaufort County School Board minutes, April 5, 1926.

¹⁹ Reported school costs are not entirely consistent in various reports.

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supervise the construction.²⁰ Superintendent McLean wrote to N. C. Newbold to advise that the contract had been let using \$12,000 from the state and \$1,500 of insurance monies. McLean's letter hoped Newbold could assist with funding for furniture estimated at \$3,485.²¹

In May 1926, W.F. Credle wrote S.L. Smith of the Rosenwald Foundation asking if the fund had a definitive policy for funding schools on sites where a previous school had been. Credle noted that in some specific cases it might be acceptable, though it might raise a question of geographical equity. He does not mention Pantego specifically, but it appears he is laying the groundwork for a solicitation.²²

In July 1926, the school board clarified expectations for school construction. The school's foundation, they stated, "shall be of solid brick double course 26 inches wide then step up in sets of 23 inches, 17 inches and 13 inches. That the window sills shall be of all hard brick instead of concrete slabs, that the wainscoating (sic) shall be according to the specifications and that the walls be treated with 2 coats of waterproof paint as called for in the specifications."²³ They also provided clarification about the dimension of pillars and the grade of wood to be used for window frames.²⁴

In the fall of that year, N. C. Newbold, then the Director of the Division Negro Education, wrote to S.L. Smith about Mr. Credle's recent visit to Pantego. He noted the previous Pantego School had cost an estimated \$1,800 and continued,

As you probably know, we are now building there a splendid brick building, using plan No. 7. The building and its equipment will cost, Mr. Credle thinks, a little in excess of \$18,000.00. They recovered \$1500.00 from insurance on the old building which was burned. Mr. Credle and I are very anxious, if possible, that the Rosenwald appropriation on this building be \$1700.00. There are, as you know, seven large class-rooms, one small class-room intended for an industrial room, a large auditorium, and I believe an office and library. If you could understand the whole situation there I believe you would be willing to recommend \$1700.00 on this project.²⁵

W.F. Credle followed up with Mr. Smith the next month to press the argument for funding: "The old building was a very poor one, on which the Fund gave only \$200. The present building will cost over \$20,000 by the time it is finished and equipped."²⁶ S. L. Smith responded shortly

²⁰ Beaufort County School Board minutes, April 21, 1926.

²¹ H. H. McLean letter to N. C. Newbold, April 27, 1926, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

²² W. F. Credle, letter to S. L. Smith, May 5, 1926, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

²³ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 5, 1926.

²⁴ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 13 and August 2, 1926.

²⁵ N.C. Newbold letter to S.L. Smith, October 12, 1926, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁶ W. F. Credle letter to S. L. Smith, November 15, 1926, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

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thereafter committing \$1,600, which was \$1,700 less the school board's \$100 insurance claim on the earlier building.²⁷ Credle continued to advocate for funding. In December, he wrote to S.L. Smith hoping to have him tour the building. It was, he wrote, "the best building—white or colored—in the county."²⁸ Credle provided a cost breakdown (\$1,300 for the site, \$15,000 for the building and \$1,500 in furnishings) and noted that the furnishing costs reflected a higher quality in anticipation of more Rosenwald funding. The official application (#53-F) and inspection report were submitted in mid-December 1926. W.F. Credle wrote to Superintendent McLean twice in December to inform him that N.C. Newbold anticipated funding from the General Education Board for furnishings, and that he had secured \$1,800 for the schools (\$1,900 less \$100 of insurance proceeds) by categorizing the school as an eight-teacher school.²⁹ The building housed elementary (grades 1-6) and secondary school (grades 7-12) classes. Wooden outhouses were located behind the school.³⁰ According to the Fisk University Library Rosenwald Collection, the school was on a four-acre lot and cost \$17,600. The African American community contributed \$1,600, whites contributed \$700, the public contributed \$13,500, and the Rosenwald Fund \$1,800.³¹

From Pantego School to Beaufort County High School to Beaufort County Elementary School

In 1946, federal loans were explored to expand the school, along with others in the district.³⁵ Also in that year, there was a movement to build a new high school for African Americans to be located in either Belhaven or Pantego. Geography and demographics favored Belhaven.³⁶ In July, it was decided to move the Black high school to Belhaven and consolidate three schools for lower grades at the Pantego site.³⁷ Later that month (July 29), there was a called board meeting with public participation. Several speakers advocated for the retention of a high school for African Americans at Pantego. Lee Whitley spoke and reminded the board that the "Willing Worker Club" had helped organize the high school at Pantego and had raised \$1,300 toward its construction/operation. The discussion bordered on acrimonious. School board minutes recorded arguments on both sides of the issue, but Pantego advocates were particularly passionate. The minutes record:

²⁷ S. L. Smith, letter to W. F. Credle, November 24, 1926, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁸ W. F. Credle, letter to S. L. Smith, December 1, 1926, Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

²⁹ W. F. Credle, letter to H. H. McLean, December 1, 1926; W. F. Credle, letter to H. H. McLean, December 22, 1926; Records of the Division of Negro Education, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives of North Carolina.

³⁰ "Criminal Court Term Adjourned," *Washington Daily News*, March 19, 1943.

³¹ Aletha King, *Pantego School #2 N.C. Rosenwald School Search Form*, November 2003, NC Historic Preservation Office Survey Files.

³⁵ Beaufort County School Board minutes, March 6, 1946.

³⁶ Beaufort County School Board minutes, May 6, 1946.

³⁷ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 1, 1946.

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Gertrude Godley pointed out that the Pantego people are home people; people who go to college. She stated that the Belhaven people were transients. . . . Harvey Boone stated that he was 60 years old, had lived in Pantego 40 years and he insisted that he had known the time when Belhaven would not provide for education. . . . George Barnes stated that he was a graduate of Pantego school, a veteran of World War II. Stated that the youth of Belhaven would not compare favorably with those of Pantego. He asked why had Belhaven not gone after the school when the Pantego school burned . . . Preacher _____, (sic) of Pantego, stated it was a question of democracy — one people taking what another had.³⁸

Faced with controversy, the school board withdrew its previous action and ultimately supported high schools for African Americans at both Pantego and Belhaven.³⁹

The African American school in Yeatesville was consolidated into the Pantego School in 1947.⁴⁰ The Rodman Quarter school was closed in 1949, with students sent to Pantego School No. 2 or Bayside School.⁴¹ It was about this time that the school began to be referred to as Beaufort County High School and not Pantego Colored School. Pantego High School, within walking distance of Beaufort County High School, was the local high school for white students.

In January 1949, the school board conducted a study looking at population trends and facility capacity throughout the county school system. The facilities for African Americans at that point included five schools: Chocowinity and Bayside, with six grades; Aurora and Belhaven, with twelve grades; and Pantego with nine grades. The school board proposed sending 10th, 11th, and 12th graders to Belhaven. In July of that year, the school board, based on an earlier study, outlined more specific plans for each of the district's schools. They recommended expanded classrooms, modernization, and a science lab and home economics room if a high school was to remain at the Pantego school.⁴⁵

The school board floated a bond referendum that passed in February 1950.⁴⁶ In March 1950, the school system contracted with the firm of McMinn and Norfleet to plan and design improvements throughout the system.⁴⁷

In 1952, the school board authorized architects McMinn and Norfleet to draw up plans for improvements at the school "to consist of the construction of four new classrooms and

³⁸ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 29, 1946.

³⁹ Beaufort County School Board minutes, August 23, 1946.

⁴⁰ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 28, 1947.

⁴¹ Beaufort County School Board minutes, May 2, 1949.

⁴⁵ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 5, 1949.

⁴⁶ "Beaufort Voters Approve \$800,000 School Bond Issue By Big Majority," *The Hyde County Herald*, February 16, 1950.

⁴⁷ Beaufort County School Board minutes, March 27, 1950; "Architect Resigns Beaufort County Job," *The Belhaven Post*, January 12, 1950.

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modernization of the existing brick building.”⁵¹ Plans and specifications were delivered in February 1952 and bids were opened in May and the work was completed in February 1953.^{52,53}

A local review of facilities conducted in 1954 noted inadequacies. It read:

Clean, well kept. Badly overcrowded, insufficient classroom space — example: 345 students in 6 small classrooms. Building appears unsafe for use, dangerous Fire (sic) hazard, outside toilet facilities filthy, heating dangerous and totally inadequate, underpinning in bad condition. After having been on probation for five years the school last year lost its standing as an accredited North Carolina High school (sic) due to lack of space, equipment and facilities.⁵⁶

. Needed improvements to Pantego School No. 2 were delayed by the continued discussion of a Black high school merger. Nevertheless, the local community purchased additional land at the Pantego school, paying \$500. In April 1954, they petitioned the school board to pay the remainder of the \$1,750 purchase price, which they did.⁵⁷ Later that year, the board authorized the modernization of the Rosenwald building with State Capital Outlay Funds at an estimated cost of \$26,683.⁵⁸ Designs were drawn up by McMinn Norfleet and Wicker that included new flooring at the recently constructed classroom building and restrooms in the Rosenwald building.⁵⁹ The work was completed, inspected, and accepted in August 1955.⁶⁰

The May 17, 1954, U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v Board of Education*, and the ruling in what is known as *Brown II* the following year, overturned “separate but equal” facilities and resources in public education, and directed that schools desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” These decisions did not have an immediate impact on Beaufort County Schools.

A Pantego Negro School Advisory Committee⁶¹ continued to interface with the school board to advocate for the retention and improvement of the school. In October 1954, the committee addressed the school board, requesting improved facilities; the board responded that in light of legislative uncertainty, they could not make any specific commitments.⁶² Two years later, the same committee advocated more specifically for more classrooms, a home economics laboratory,

⁵¹ Beaufort County School Board minutes, January 4, 1952.

⁵² Beaufort County School Board minutes, February 17, 1952.

⁵³ Beaufort County School Board minutes, February 27, 1952; Beaufort County School Board minutes, May 21, 1952.

⁵⁶ “Criminal Term of Court Adjourns Here Following Only Two Days of Hearings,” *Washington Daily News*, January 13, 1954.

⁵⁷ Beaufort County School Board minutes, April 4, 1954.

⁵⁸ “County School Needs Put at Almost \$2 Million,” *Washington Daily News*, April 15, 1954.

⁵⁹ Contractors were H.L. Coble, general construction; J.T. Pearson and Company, plumbing and heating; and Dick’s Electric Company, electrical. Beaufort County School Board minutes, November 2, 1954; “School Projects Given Green Light,” *Washington Daily News*, December 3, 1954.⁶⁰ Beaufort County School Board minutes, August 6, 1955.

⁶⁰ Beaufort County School Board minutes, August 6, 1955.

⁶¹ Milbert Whitley, John T Slade, Samuel Waters, Perley Moore, Professor R.S. Cooper.

⁶² Beaufort County School Board minutes, October 19, 1954.

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a science laboratory, a clinic, an auditorium, and a gymnasium, noting that the school's accreditation had been removed for lack of adequate facilities.⁶³ The need for classroom space was acute, as the Bayside Elementary School for African Americans had recently been closed, with students transferred to Pantego and Belhaven schools. A second auxiliary building was designed by McMinn and put out for bids in June of 1956. The work was completed in summer of 1957.⁶⁶

Into the early 1960s, the school board continued to wrestle with merger and consolidation of segregated high schools. Slowly and eventually new legislation, funding, and lawsuits moved the school system forward. The school system and the State Board of Education were compelled by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to develop a compliance plan for the integration of schools at the risk of losing federal funding. In response, the county school board created three geographical school districts and developed a Freedom of Choice plan, which was advertised in the local newspapers.⁶⁸ At that time, the schools were still strictly segregated, and Pantego School No. 2 and adjacent school buildings housed 642 students in grades 1-12 with 27 staff members.

In January 1966, the school board hosted a public meeting announcing plans for a consolidated, integrated high school to be supported by bonds approved in a referendum the previous fall. The meeting was well attended. Many people objected to the deviation from the advertised formula that provided funding for the two extant Black high schools in the district and for a consolidated White high school. Shortly thereafter, the Board of Education was sued in both state and federal courts.

Dilday v. Beaufort County Board of Education concerned the process of allocating construction funding. The issue appeared to have been settled in 1967 when the Board of Commissioners voted to affirm the Board of Education's choice to divert capital funding from the Black high schools to an integrated, consolidated high school, particularly with a commitment to retain Pantego School No. 2 in some capacity.⁶⁹ However, while some process issues had been addressed, a restraining order against the transfer of funds remained and was upheld by North Carolina Supreme Court twice.⁷⁰

Simultaneously, the school board was challenged in federal court. *Boomer v. Beaufort County Board of Education* was filed in February 1966 with the North Carolina Teachers Association⁷¹ joining the plaintiffs the following year, "seeking an order permanently enjoining further racially discriminatory practices."⁷² That summer, the board acknowledged its dependence on state and

⁶³ Beaufort County School Board minutes, January 6, 1956.

⁶⁶ This is the second "new" brick building now re-purposed on an adjacent parcel.

⁶⁸ Beaufort County School Board minutes, March 9, 1965; May 12, 1965.

⁶⁹ "Central School Approved," *Washington Daily News*, March 7, 1967.

⁷⁰ Beaufort County School Board minutes, August 15, 1967; *Dilday v. Board of Education*, 273 N.C. 679, 161 S.E.2d 108 (N.C. 1968).

⁷¹ An association of African American Educators established in 1882, which merged in 1970 with the White North Carolina Education Association to create the North Carolina Association of Educators.

⁷² *Boomer v. Beaufort County Board of Education*, E.D.N.C. 294 F. Supp. 179 (1968).

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federal funds to operate the school system.⁷³ Local efforts to further integrate schools were deemed insufficient and in August 1968, a federal court order by Judge Larkin demanded integration in the 1968-1969 school year. For the Pantego district, grades 1-7 would attend school in the Pantego School No. 2 complex and grades 8-12 would attend Pantego High School.⁷⁴ The school board considered an appeal; U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black ordered that Judge Larkin's plan be instituted pending appeal. Despite media reports to the contrary, there is no record the appeal was ultimately filed.

Given the disposition of the two cases, a new high school that would accommodate the population of three schools was approved, and the Pantego School No. 2 transitioned from Beaufort County High School to Beaufort County Elementary School. It operated in that capacity as an integrated school until it closed in the spring of 2001. In February 2002, the Town of Pantego purchased two adjacent parcels from the Beaufort County Board of Education. In May, the smaller 1.58-acre parcel containing the historic Rosenwald School was purchased by the Beaufort County High School Alumni Corporation.⁷⁵ The Alumni Association has members throughout the United States. Several of them were interviewed for this nomination and all attested to the quality of the teachers at the school as well as to the commitment of their parents to ensure their children received a good education.

Pantego School No. 2 is being nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form *Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina* under Criterion A for Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black and Criterion C for Architecture. It is categorized as a school, Subtype II, and meets the registration requirements as described below:

To be eligible, a Rosenwald school in North Carolina must have been built between 1915 and 1932 utilizing funds provided by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The extant schools will also meet registration requirements because of their intact design, floor plans, workmanship, and materials. Stylistic details are minimal, although some schools display Craftsman or Colonial Revival influences. In general, to qualify for registration, the schools should retain their original location in a rural setting, or in an urban setting if they were built in a town, and the design, floor plans, workmanship and materials that evoke their period of construction. They should retain good architectural integrity.

Exterior materials should be original or replaced in kind; later covering of asbestos shingles, aluminum, or vinyl are acceptable provided other character-defining features remain intact. Usually, fenestration should be intact and contain original windows or windows similar to the original; loss of fenestration might be mitigated by a remarkable degree of integrity of other aspects of the building, particularly its interior. The integrity of their association and feeling is greatly bolstered by the integrity of their setting. Nevertheless, Rosenwald schools nominated solely under Criterion A for education and ethnic heritage do not have to possess

⁷³ Beaufort County School Board minutes, July 20, 1966.

⁷⁴ "Complete Mixing Scheduled Under Federal Decision," *Washington Daily News*, August 5, 1968.

⁷⁵ Beaufort County Deed Books 1244, 321; 1272, 140.

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as high a degree of integrity as those school buildings which are nominated under Criterion C for architecture.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Kyle Obenauer and Claudia Brown Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2015, p. 56

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Pantego School No.2

Beaufort, North Carolina

Name of Property

County and State

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.58

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1. Latitude: 35.585813 Longitude: -76.667373

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is all of that parcel GPIN # 6697-36-4320 in the Beaufort County, North Carolina GIS and land tax records, as shown in the map entitled National Register Boundary Map Pantego School No.2.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the property owned by the Beaufort County Alumni Association and includes the 1926 school and a circa 1950 outbuilding. An adjacent parcel contains two other buildings associated with the school. That parcel is privately and separately owned.

11. Form Prepared By

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Photo Log

Pantego School No. 2

Pantego

Beaufort County, North Carolina

Photographer- Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Date Photographed: June 2024
Façade, view to NW
1 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, Auditorium, view to SSW
9 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
Façade, view to ENE
2 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, Office/Library, view to NW
10 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
West Gable End, view to ENE
3 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, NW Classroom, view to NE
11 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
West Elevation, view to ESE
4 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, West Restroom, View to NNE
12 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
North Elevation, view to SW
5 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, NE Classroom, View to NE
13 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
NE Corner, view to SW
6 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, NE Classroom, View to SW
14 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
Outbuilding, view to N
7 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, SE Classrooms, View to W
15 of 16

Date Photographed: June 2024
Interior, Auditorium, view to N
8 of 16

Date Photographed: December 2024
Interior, SW Classrooms, View to NE
16 of 16

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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

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