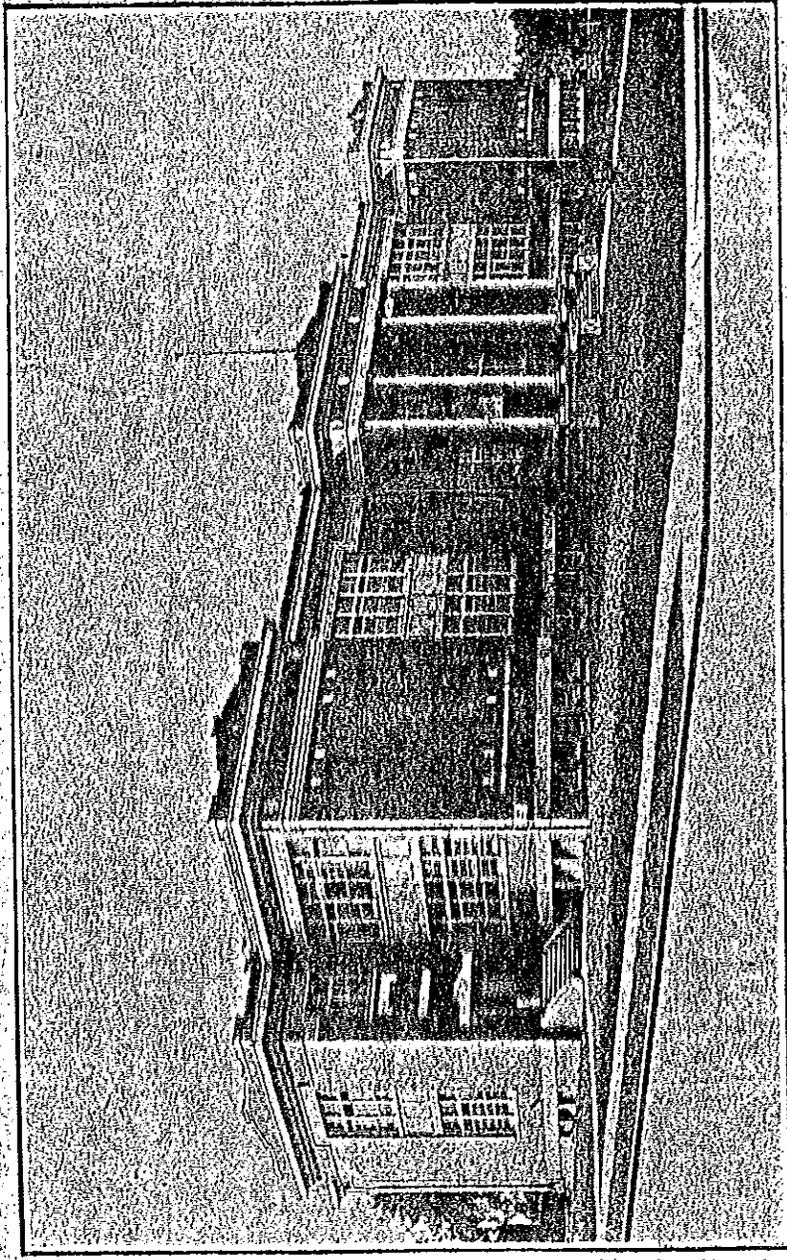


PROPOSAL OF  
THE 1915 GASTONIA CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TO THE GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
REGISTER  
June, 1993



GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION

Mrs. Richard Penegar, Chrmn.  
Mr. Robert C. Carpenter  
Mrs. William N. Craig  
Mrs. Richard Rhyne  
Mrs. William B. Shannon  
Mrs. J.Y. Todd  
Mrs. H.O. Williams



CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDING

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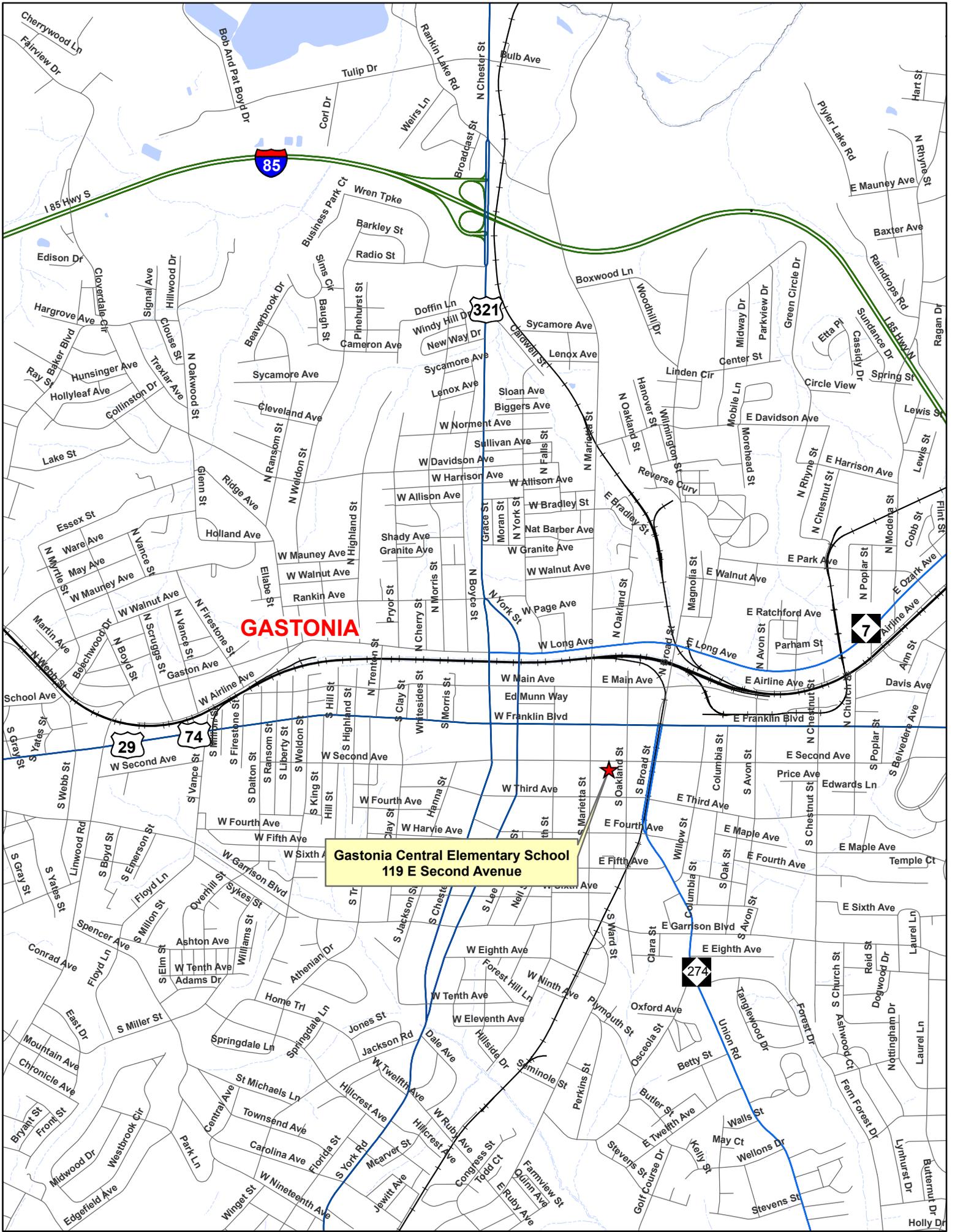
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# CENTRAL SCHOOL



Central Elementary School on Second Avenue has served Gastonia and its residents for 75 years.

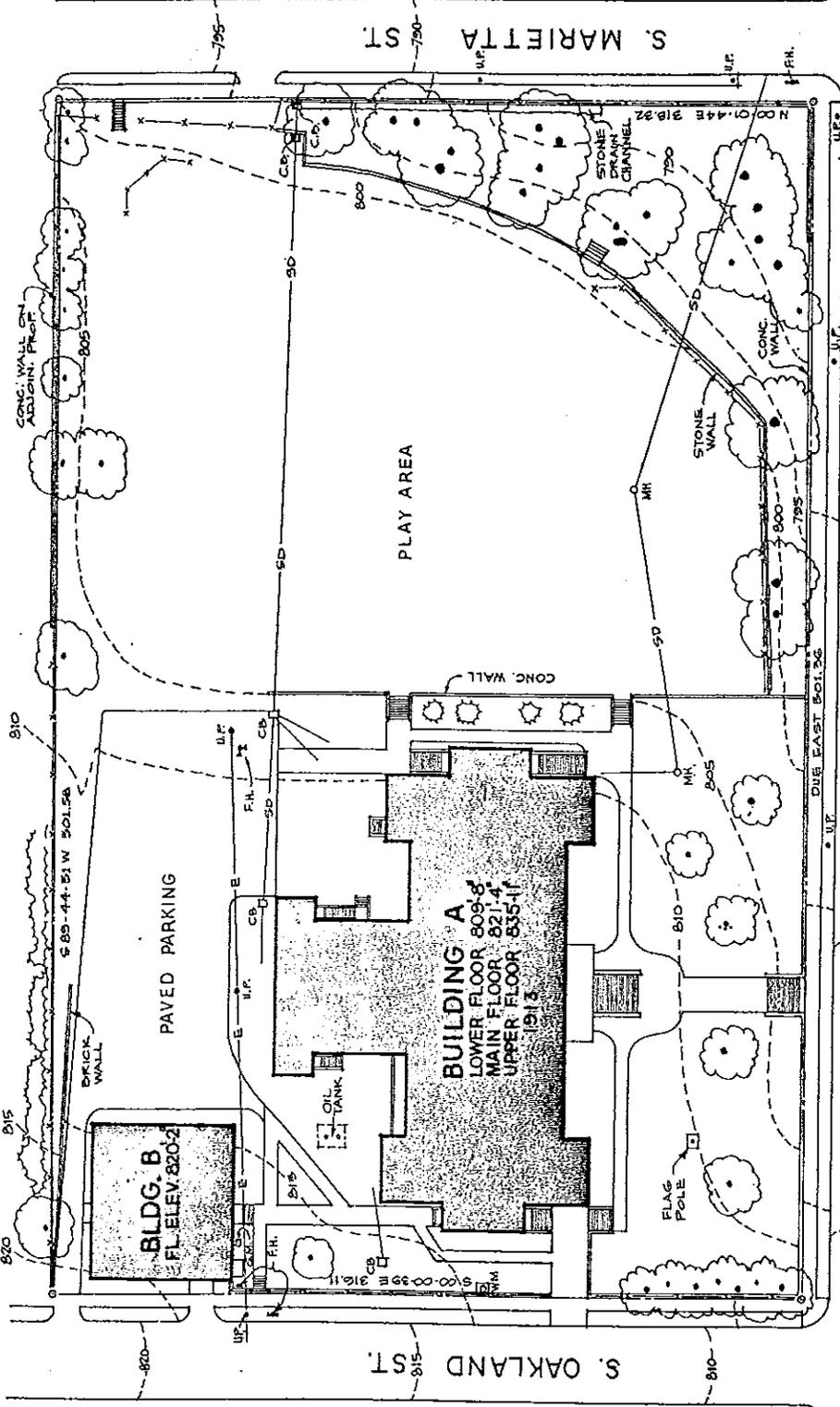
Kermit Hull/The Gazette



**GASTONIA**

**Gastonia Central Elementary School  
119 E Second Avenue**





**SITE PLAN**

0 50 100 FT.

- LEGEND**
- FENCE
  - FENCE ON WALL
  - SD --- STORM DRAIN
  - E --- ELECTRICAL LINE
  - WM --- WATER METER
  - GM --- GAS METER
  - MH --- MAN HOLE
  - FH --- FIRE HYDRANT
  - CB --- CATCH BASIN
  - U.P. --- UTILITY POLE

<b>Gaston County Schools</b>	DSP Property No: 360-1905	Acreeage of Site: 3.65	Water: CITY OF GASTONIA	Building Architect: A - WM. J. G. LEWIS	Date: SEPT. 1983
	Unit & School No: 360-395	Acreeage This Sheet 3.65	Sewer: CITY OF GASTONIA	C D	Revision Date:
Kind of School ELEMENTARY	Total Building Area 51,261 sq ft		Electrical: CITY OF GASTONIA	E	Page 1 of 5

## CHAIN OF TITLE

1. On July 6, 1896, O. W. Davis and L. C. Davis, his wife, conveyed a parcel of land containing an estimated 125,000 square feet, fronting on Elm Street and lying between Oakland Avenue and S. Marietta Street, to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South at Gastonia Station. The purchase price was ten hundred dollars. Gaston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 30, page 169.
  2. On July 15, 1901, Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church conveyed a parcel of land, fronting 500 feet on the south side of Elm Street (now known as West Second Street) lying between Oakland Avenue and South Marietta Street, to the City of Gastonia for the sum of \$4000.00. Gaston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 47, page 403.
  3. On February 25, 1958, the City of Gastonia conveyed the same parcel of land in consideration of the sum of \$1.00 to the Gastonia City Board of Education. Gaston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 714, page 46.
  4. On September 5, 1958, John C. Quickel and Wife Alyce M. Quickel conveyed to the Gastonia City Board of Education a tract of land adjoining the Central Elementary School property on the south side and measuring 501.31 feet x 75 feet. No part of the original school structure is located on this tract. Gaston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 728, page 70.
5.  
6. On June 2, 1980, the Gastonia City Board of Education conveyed the above two parcels of land to the Gaston County Board of Education ". . . in order to carry out the mandate of the electors of Gaston County and the General Assembly of N. C. and in consideration of the purposes to be effectuated by school consolidation and the sum of \$1.00. . ." Gaston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 1340, page 831. These two parcels are the current (1992) site of Gastonia Central Elementary School.

## 6. Gastonia Central School Historical Sketch

Educational opportunity in Gaston County traces historically from the colonial period. For over two centuries, there has been private or public education in the county.

Very little is known of the early schools in Gaston County except that each community had a school that operated a few months of the year, after harvest until spring planting began. The first schools usually consisted of one teacher who taught in one room at some home in the community. The most commonly used books were the Blue Back Speller and Fowler's Arithmetic.<sup>1</sup>

One of the earliest schools in the county was started in 1780 during the Revolutionary War by Robert Beatty. It was set up in one room of his log home at Tuckaseegee Ford between present day Belmont and Mount Holly. Beatty was killed helping defend the area against the British.<sup>2</sup>

"The period from 1776 to about the outbreak of the Civil War is usually considered, in North Carolina, as the age of the academies and private schools.<sup>3</sup> Children of privileged background had always received instruction from either private tutor or their parents. In 1839 the State Legislature passed the first public school law allowing counties to operate public schools. Lincoln County, of which this area now Gaston County was a part, voted against providing public schools. In a second vote Lincoln County approved public schools, and the public school began operating in 1845-1846. These first "subscription schools" relied upon community support. <sup>4</sup>

Following the Civil War small communities continued to establish subscription schools or "pay schools". The community would locate a

2

building and contact a number of farmers who were willing to contribute toward the expense of the building and the instructor.

New school legislation in 1869 prescribed three things (1) a school term of at least 4 months, (2) education of the negro, and (3) a general school tax. Another act was passed in 1869 providing a plan for the training of teachers. In 1875 an act was passed providing for separate schools for the two races.<sup>5</sup>

Beginning July 28, 1875 a teachers' institute was held at the courthouse. For a number of years this school was the only one in the county offering more advanced subjects.<sup>6</sup>

Two very early schools in Gastonia include one in East Gastonia near old Shiloh Camp Grounds taught by Miss Sallie Chalk, and one about one half mile northeast of the Gastonia Bonded Warehouse called Bradley School. The first approach to a high school in Gastonia came in 1881 with Professor J. B. Blanton. Blanton later merged his school with Professor J. P. Reid's Gaston Academy near the O. F. Mason residence. <sup>7</sup>

In 1896 Oakland High School was organized. Mr. O. W. Davis had sold a piece of property to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Textile magnate George Gray was Oakland's greatest benefactor. Oakland High School was owned and operated by the Methodist Episcopal Church for five years.<sup>8</sup> Professor Benjamin E. Atkins served as principal for two years and was succeeded by Joseph H. Separk, who remained for three years.

In ~~September~~ 1901 two important things happened for the promotion of education. On July 15, 1901, the Methodist Episcopal Church officially deeded the Oakland High School property to the City of Gastonia.<sup>9</sup> Also in September a special election was held and the

citizens approved an annual tax of thirty cents per \$100. worth of property and ninety cents per poll for the establishment and maintenance of a public graded school system.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Joe Wray of Shelby was elected superintendent of the graded schools of Gastonia at a salary of \$85. per month. Mr. J. F. Bradley was appointed principal of Central School, the same building and property that had previously been Oakland High School.<sup>11</sup> Tuition rates were to be paid by pupils living outside the city limits who were not covered by city taxes.

Central School has the longest history of any of the schools in the Gastonia system. In 1910 the first football team was organized with the players purchasing their own uniforms and digging a shower room in the basement of the school. Former All-American football player Harry Rutter, head of the town's power and water department, offered to install the pipe for the breath-takingly cold showers.<sup>12</sup> The school originally consisted of ten grades. The eleventh grade was added in 1911. In 1912 five girls and two boys graduated from the high school and a ninth month was added to the school year. It was also in this year that Miss Minnie Lee Peeden and Miss Margaret Tiddy came to Gastonia to teach at Central. In 1916, Miss Peeden became primary supervisor and Miss Tiddy became elementary supervisor. Miss Tiddy later became principal of Central School.<sup>13</sup>

During the early 1900's Central School was the center of social activities in town. Many spelling bees, declamation contests and band concerts were held there.<sup>14</sup> The Gastonia Woman's club held their first meeting there also.

In the spring of 1914 the Central School building burned. Fortunately, school had dismissed for the year. Only the brick walls

4

were left standing. It was said that a good part of Gastonia's 6000 citizens watched the blaze. It was a \$40,000. loss with only 417,000. worth of insurance coverage.<sup>15</sup> All records were lost in the fire. Years later in a Gastonia Gazette article about the school's burning, Mrs. Helen Torrence Durham was quoted, "We had to go to school all over town that next year while the new school was being built. some of the stores made room, cleared out their upstairs."<sup>16</sup>

A Gastonia Gazette article of June 9, 1914 reported on the mass meeting considering the rebuilding of Central School at a cost of \$50,000. The meeting was called primarily for the purpose of considering and discussing the plans as submitted by Mr. L. D. Proffit, "a prominent and promising young architect of Spartanburg, S. C.", including equipment and a modern heating plant. Many influential citizens spoke passionately for bigger and better school facilities for Gastonia. Local speakers included Mr. Andrew E. Moore, Mr. O. F. Mason, Mr. W. T. Rankin, Revs. J. H. Henderlite and W. C. Barrett. Mr. L. A. Williams of the State University said that these were "the best plans he knew of in the state".<sup>17</sup> He added that Gastonia was the first city system in the state to call upon the University for help in its school system.

A description of the new school in a later Gazette article explained that it is constructed of Kingsport tapestry brick laid in Flemish bond. It says the building is divided by fire walls into four sections, the stairs being in fire-proof halls at each end of the building. It further describes the different rooms and their uses from the basement up. On the ground floor were two playrooms 40 x 60', one for boys and one for girls. Also on this level was the Domestic Science room and the Manual Training Room as well as

the toilets. Above the basement were 17 rooms 25' x 32' x 13' with elaborate heat and ventilation systems and green hydroplate boards. A detailed description of the entrance with superintendent's office, library, and 800 seat auditorium is included.

The article ends with the statement that the building is complete in every way and that the contractor, C. L. Grigg had given his untiring attention to every detail and that "the superintendent and building committee went to work to get the latest and best for Gastonia."<sup>18</sup> Even the National Bureau of Education was consulted.

In 1915 this present three story, red brick building with large white columns was built and opened. Between 1914 and 1918, 26 boys and 86 girls graduated.<sup>19</sup> In 1918 Mr. Wray left to fight in World War I and Mr. W. P. Grier became acting superintendent.<sup>20</sup>

The city of Gastonia was growing by leaps and bounds, and the construction of a separate high school building became essential. In 1924, Gastonia High School was opened on York Street and Central School was changed to Central Elementary, consisting of grades one to seven. Mr. Carl McCartha was principal during this period. In 1928 the first PTA in Gastonia was organized at Central Elementary.<sup>21</sup> By 1930 Central had an average daily attendance of 722 students and a faculty of 22. The opening of Wray Junior High in 1939 took away the seventh grade.

In the 1940's the school was renovated with public bond money. During Mr. Harold Miller's tenure as principal, 1954-1961, the cafeteria was moved from the basement to the newly constructed addition located behind the main building.

During the tenure of Mr. Bill Brown as principal, 1965-1968, both integration and consolidation took place. Central became known as

Gastonia Central Elementary because of other schools in the system named "Central". Ms. Sara Funderburke became Gastonia Central's first black teacher. Geraldine Jenkins Dye became the second in 1967 and continues to teach there in 1992. Also, in this period, Central's first class for exceptional children was established.<sup>22</sup>

Mr. Ralph Gingles, Sr., principal of Pleasant Ridge Elementary, came to Gastonia Central in 1968 as the first black principal of the integrated school. He served until his retirement in 1976. During his tenure Central added kindergarten.<sup>23</sup>

Central was well known for its fine faculty holding A grade certificates from leading colleges and universities. Among them were Miss Pearl Gallant, Miss Lela Durham, Mrs. Bob Adams, and Miss Bess Shannon, to name a few.<sup>24</sup> It excelled through the years with the leadership of the following principals:

- |                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| J. F. Bradley    | R. M. Howard '48-'54       |
| W. P. Grier      | G. Harold Miller '54-'61   |
| G. P. Heilig     | R. M. Howard '61-'65       |
| Ray Armstrong    | Glenn Rowland, interim '65 |
| J. E. Cassells   | William L. Brown '65-'68   |
| G. L. Ives       | Ralph C. Gingles           |
| G. L. Sawyer     | Myra Jenkins               |
| Hollis M. Long   | June Abernathy             |
| Carl W. McCarthe | George H. Jagers           |
| Margaret Tiddy   | Jane Sumner <sup>25</sup>  |

Many changes took place over the years at Central. By the 1986-1987 accreditation report, Central had an enrollment of 325 with a 34 member staff. This number included a principal, a secretary, a resource teacher, a media coordinator, reading teacher, speech

therapist, guidance counselor, itinerant teachers for music, physical education and the academically gifted, eight early childhood aides, two part-time reading aides, and fourteen teachers.<sup>26</sup>

Recent renovations to building and grounds has resulted in Gastonia Central being the recipient of numerous awards from the Gastonia Clean City Committee. Gastonia Central was "adopted" by the Southern College of Technology who provided computer lab time for the fifth and sixth grade classes, incentive awards, clerical assistance, and help for families at Christmas. In addition, the Friends of Central support group was formed to boost economic and moral support for the school.<sup>27</sup>

The Friends group, staff, parents, and students helped plan the Seventy-fifth Anniversary Celebration, held on Saturday, March 31, 1990, in conjunction with The Gazette York-Chester road Race. Many former alumni were present to enjoy the memorabilia room stocked with old yearbooks, programs from school functions, letters, photographs, class pictures, scrapbooks, etc. As part of a fund-raising project, brass plaques were sold which are displayed in the front hall.<sup>28</sup>

Gastonia Central provides a clear insight into the educational and social history of Gastonia. Established originally as a parochial school with private funding, it catered to the exclusive down-town community. converted to a public school, it became a graded 1-11 school. When the grand Gastonia High School was constructed, it became the elementary school of the Gastonia upper class.

As Gastonia changed, Central changed. During the 1970's and 1980's population shifts left the school with the remnants of a community, much of which had become commercial, and also other neighborhoods with a lower socio-economic base. The downtown business

district has lost many patrons to the increasing number of shopping centers in the county. The majority of buildings in the downtown area are occupied by city and county governmental agencies and legal practices. The county and city governments are looking for ways to expand office space with the least amount of expenditure.

In addition, the recent School Facilities Task Force has recommended to the School Board the closing of Gastonia Central and disbursing its students to nearby schools. This puts Central School in a precarious position. It would be quite a loss if the structure were no longer there.

Gastonia Central School building is an important reminder of our area's history. As presently used in 1992, it is a reminder of our past, a vital contributor to the present, and a builder of the future. The building should be allowed to continue to serve.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Separk, Joseph, Gastonia and Gaston County, North Carolina, 1846-1949, p. 62 (Hereinafter cited Separk, Gastonia and Gaston County).
2. Gaston County's Educational Heritage 1857-1957 (by Gaston County NCEA) unpagged, 5-6. (Hereinafter cited Gaston Co. Ed. Heritage).
3. Kiser, Oscar Lee, The Growth and Development of Education in Gaston County, (Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1928), p.20 (Hereinafter cited Kiser, Growth and Development).
4. Adams, Amy and Robert Carpenter, "The History of Tryon School and Community", written 1979 and published in Gaston County (N.C.) Historical Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 1, The Year 1985, p. 4 and in Vol. 31, No. 1, The Year 1986, p.4.
5. Kiser, Growth and Development, pp. 29-30.
6. Ibid, p. 32.
7. Separk, Gastonia and Gaston County, p. 63.
8. Ibid., p. 43.
9. Gaston County Deed Book 47, p. 403, July 15, 1901.
10. Cope, Robert and Manly Wellman, The County of Gaston, Two Centuries of a North Carolina Region, (Gastonia: Gaston County Historical Society, p. 67, (Hereinafter cited Cope & Wellman, County of Gaston).
11. Gaston County Ed. Heritage, unpagged, 43.
12. Morgan, Riddle, Gold, "Gastonia Central School History", (School History, March 1, 1992), p. 1 (Hereinafter cited Morgan, Riddle, Gold, "History").
13. Gaston Co. Ed. Heritage, unpagged, 43.
14. Ibid., unpagged, 43.
15. "Central Graded School Destroyed By Fire", May 22, 1914, in newspaper Gastonia Gazette.
16. Bell, Augusta, "The Night Central Burned ", undated, in newspaper Gastonia Gazette.
17. "Citizens in Favor of Adequate New Buildings", June 9, 1914, in newspaper Gastonia Gazette.
18. "Gastonia's New \$65,000. Central School Public School", Jan. 14, 1916, in newspaper Gastonia Gazette.

19. Gaston Co. Ed. Heritage, unpagged, 43.
20. Ibid., unpagged, 43.
21. Morgan, Riddle, Gold, "History", p. 2.
22. Ibid., p.2.
23. Ibid., p.2.
24. Gaston Co. Ed. Heritage, unpagged, 42.
25. Ibid., unpagged, 42-43; and Morgan, Riddle, Gold, "History", pp. 2-3.
26. "History of Gastonia Central School" from "A Self-Study for Continuing Accreditation of Gastonia Central School 1986-1987", p. 9.
27. Morgan, Riddle, Gold, "History", p.3.
28. Ibid., p. 3.

by few citizens of the  
aroused by the fire  
became known over the  
Central school was rap-  
and a large crowd  
ed to watch the work  
and to witness what  
the most spectacular

tion of separating the high school  
department from the primary grades,  
which has been under consideration  
for some time, will in all probability  
be very seriously considered at this  
time.

She was accompanied by  
Mr. E. C. Oliver, who returned  
yesterday.

—Dr. W. J. Martin, presi-  
Davidson College was elected  
derator of the General Asse-  
the Southern Presbyte n  
which is meeting this year in  
sas City.



The above cut shows a portion of the Central graded school building which was almost totally destroyed by fire early this morning. The large addition, which housed the auditorium and a number of class rooms, was at the rear of the part shown above and constituted nearly one-half the entire structure. All that is left of the building are the bare walls, some of which are cracked and leaning. The entire building, including furniture, cost approximately \$40,000, with \$17,000 insurance.

## 7. Architectural Description of Gastonia Central

Gastonia Central School is located in the 100 block of East Second Avenue in the central, downtown area of Gastonia. The 3.65 acre site encompasses the northern half of a city block. It is bounded on the north by Second Avenue, on the east by Oakland Street, on the west by Marietta Street, and fenced on the south from neighboring properties. The grounds include a paved parking area, two buildings, a temporary mobile classroom, the well maintained main campus, and a playground area which is situated on the west end of the site. A concrete wall bounds the site on three sides, separating school property from the city sidewalk. Mature trees, shrubs, and several flower beds landscape the entire grounds.

Documentation reveals that this school was built in 1914 under the direction of architect, Luther D. Proffitt of Spartanburg, South Carolina. This is the second school built at this site, replacing the original Central School (1901) which was destroyed by fire in 1913. The structure housed the entire academic instruction for Gastonia schools until the Gastonia High School was built in 1922. Central has since served as an elementary institution.

Central School is a handsome and imposing piece of school architecture that typifies much of what was built in early twentieth century America. Its Colonial Revivalist design has been seen in similar buildings across the nation; brick construction, symmetrical plan, accented with porticoes, pilasters, and entablature.

The main building for the school is the original structure

built in 1913. It's two full stories are masonry construction with brick laid in Flemish Bond. They rest on an English basement with ashlar design scribed into stucco which is separated from the brickwork above by a string course of limestone. The main (north) facade has five bays in a pattern of A-B-C-B-A.

The central portico is the facade's primary design element. The portico includes four, massive, Doric columns which support a full entablature. Molded cornices, dentil molding, and a brick frieze band encircle the entire building. Stone medallions accent the frieze band at the projecting bays of the portico and the side wings. Topping the building's entablature is a brick parapet capped with limestone. Modified battlements with centered medallions over the portico and the projecting wings serve as a unifying design element.

The central exterior staircase of stone steps is flanked by basement story doors which lead under the porch to the lower level. The porch reached by the stairs is stone and contains the Doric columns and two pilasters at the edges of the bay. Two pairs of windows are found on either side of the central door. These windows, like most in the building, are twelve-over-twelve sash type with a transom of eight lights (four-over-four).

The main doorway is set into a simple surround with minimal molding around two glass panel doors. Stronger design elements are seen above the door. A fanlight is set within a wide limestone arch which has an oversized keystone. This rests on a modified rendition of the battlement seen at the roof line directly above. The parapet-like shelf with a centered medallion rests on two brackets over the lintel of the front door.

Second floor treatment of this bay includes a set of six adjoining windows of twelve-over-twelve sash with four-over-four transom windows. Treated as one unit these six windows rest on a stone sill with stone bracket accents.

The other bays mirror each other. The east and west projecting side wings have windows only on the basement level, where there are five, twelve-over-twelve sash type. A two story, recessed panel is created by the use of a stone course as a porch element upon which rests double pilasters of brick with stone blocks indicating capitals and bases. This motif is created again, but in a narrower manner, on the inside wall of the wings where a two pilaster design is seen.

The hyphens which connect the wings to the portico bay continue this motif with a variation. The basement level has six windows set in the ashlar treatment of the facade, like those in the wings. Above, the area is designed to have a panel treatment that carries over the two upper floors. This is done by a series of six windows with transoms on each floor which are separated from those on the other floor by smaller panels set between them. Where the hyphen meets the portico bay, a set of two narrow windows is found on the two upper floors. These are nine-over-nine sash type with a six light transom found only on the lower windows.

The East and West facades are primarily focused on the end stair halls which allow access to the building from the outside as well as access between floors. The exterior doorways are reached by flights of stone steps climbing to a small landing.

The doors are double, three-paneled doors protected with a small roof that replicates the treatment of the main door but on a smaller scale. The modified battlement design with medallion is supported by a pair of brackets. The effect of a panel is continued here with a stone lintel and shelf design which appear to support a pair of casement windows with transoms. The casements each have eight lights per side. The transoms are treated with a slight variation in the muntins. Diamond panes are created instead of the usual square panes found elsewhere in the school.

The panel effect seen on the facade of the hyphens is continued on the north and south ends of the east and west facades. A series of five adjoining windows on the first and second floors are linked vertically by square panels. Smaller and fewer windows are found in the basement level of this facade due to the exterior stair cases. Windows in the end walls of the stair towers continue this but with a triple window design.

The south facade essentially mimics the front with the projecting wings having panels of brick pilasters and the hyphens containing the window panel treatment. Differences on this side are primarily found in the basement level. Due to grade differences, basement windows are smaller or non-existent. The one major change seen on the south side of Central School is the projecting auditorium wing which is centrally placed, like the portico on the front.

The auditorium wing maintains the basic design elements of the school's architecture. Windows on the east and west sides of this wing are twelve-over-twelve with eight light transoms. They are grouped in two sets of four on each wall. The back (south)

wall of the auditorium includes two pairs of windows flanking a central panel design of recessed brick and stone blocks which ties into the projecting wings. The entablature of the auditorium is much simpler. Double bands of molding with a plain brick frieze are found on all three sides. The roof line is finished with a battlement of brick capped with limestone, slightly different than that found elsewhere in the building.

### The Interior

Entering the building from the main porch, one finds the entry with broad steps leading up to a simple archway defining the main corridor. The masonry walls are given a wainscot-like treatment with a shoulder-high, molded course that runs continuously along all walls, giving the effect of replicating the entablature found on the exterior. The substantial baseboard is simple in design with molded cap and a simple quarter round shoe mold.

On the east side is the original main office area now used as guidance office and testing area. A custodial room and the school vault are also found here. The original principal's office has an exterior window and is separated from the interior office by a wall of windows made of medallioned glass. The paneled doors include wood panels below a large glass window. Door surrounds here, as throughout the building, are extremely simple with little or no molding. The ceiling here as elsewhere has recently been changed to a dropped, acoustical tile ceiling. The course banding creating a wainscot effect found in the hall is seen in the office, too.

On the west side of the entry is the teachers' lounge and toilet. The door from the entry hall into the Teachers' Lounge is a six panel, wooden door, typical of the construction time period with its glass transom. The lounge is indicative of the recent renovations to the school. These include the dropped ceilings of acoustical tiles and fluorescent lighting fixtures which are found throughout the entire building. Contemporary sheet paneling has been used to some degree. The masonry flooring has been covered with carpet.

Facing the entry and significant of its importance in scale is the auditorium which has two doorways with triple panel doors. The sloping floor has two main aisles which divide the wooden seats into three seating areas. The walls of the auditorium have a wainscot treatment of simple molding like that in the main hall but at a lower height. Simple molding is seen again in entablature indicated above the side windows and carried around to the wings of the stage. The stage itself is set off with a molded arch that ends in modified column bases.

The wings provide access to the stage and dressing areas with stairs from the front of the auditorium. Access from the outside is made possible by stairs which lead into a small hallway on each side. Both sides of the stage also include a single toilet and two rooms for storage and dressing.

The auditorium contains a balcony which can be reached from the second floor hall as well as from stairs near the first floor between the two doorways. The stairway is simple wooden construction with a square newel and square stick balusters. The

wainscot rail follows the stairs to the balcony level. From the second floor corridor a single doorway with triple panel, double doors provides access to the balcony which has two sloped, seating areas with wooden seats. Worth noting is a tiny access stair at the back of the east side to provide access to a side aisle along the east wall.

The interior arrangement of classrooms is essentially the same on the two upper floors. On the second floor there are nine classrooms. Two each are in the projecting wings on either side of the corridor. In the central block there are three classrooms and a lounge with toilet on the north side of the corridor. Two classrooms and the auditorium balcony are to the south side.

On the first floor this arrangement is duplicated with minor changes. The entry way and original office area take the space below the central classroom upstairs. Additionally, the classroom originally placed in the east end of the hyphen and adjacent to the original office has since been partitioned into modern office spaces for the administrative staff. This construction has been done with minimal change to the original fabric of the building. Sheet rock walls, contemporary moldings, baseboards, and doors were used to modernize the office space.

With few exceptions, all classrooms are treated in the same manner throughout Central School. Six paneled doors with transoms lead into large rooms approximately thirty-five by twenty-five feet. A partition wall separates the class from a cloak room with storage closet and sink. The storage closets are in two sections, upper and lower. A pair of double paneled doors below a pair of single paneled doors continues the three panel

door motif found elsewhere in the school. The wainscot rail in the corridor carries into the classrooms and serves as the top framing member of the blackboards and bulletin boards that ring the rooms. A picture molding is located above this and continues around the room.

The stair halls located at each end of the school are the only means of access between all floors. The stairs themselves are of steel construction with two runs and a landing between floors. The steel newels are square, slightly molded with a base and decorated with a medallion design placed below the newel cap. Small projectiles on the handrails give a sense of crenelation to the stair rail and at first glance present the balusters as piercing spikes, though closer inspection shows them to not be in exact alignment. The second floor landings have been reduced in size from their original spaciousness with the addition of small, modern toilets. Cinder block walls and modern doors have been used to modify these spaces.

The floor plan in the basement level is modification of the upper floors. The side projecting wings at this level contain only one classroom each as well as storage or janitor rooms and original toilet rooms which are decorated in ceramic tile on the floor and half way up the walls. Some of the fixtures date from the early twentieth century while others have been replaced.

Space in the central block include the media center which makes use of two classroom areas and three other classrooms. A missing ceiling tile in the media center revealed the original masonry ceiling found in this area. Floors in the basement were covered with combinations of carpet, asbestos tile, and ceramic

tile.

Under the auditorium is a series of storage rooms, halls, boiler room, old coal room, and crawl spaces. Beneath the main entry hall is a cross corridor which leads through storage rooms, under the front porch and to the outside via doors found on either side of the main entrance stairs. Passage through this space reveals a portion of original wooden ceiling. Beneath the porch one finds evidence of now hidden glass block construction which provided additional light to the storage room beneath the porch.

Flanking this cross corridor are two storage rooms currently listed as audio-visual storage sites. An interesting architectural detail on the western room is a small opening with ledge, indicating this room may have been previously a school store or supply room.

### The Cafeteria

An additional structure was added to Central School's physical plant as a cafeteria approximately thirty five years ago. It typifies the type of kitchen/dining facility built during the late 1950's and early 1960's as hot lunch programs became common in America.

This building contains 3,936 square feet and is connected by a covered walkway to the main building. The cafeteria is of brick veneer and block construction with metal frame windows comprising most of the west wall. Although the brick is laid primarily in common bond, there is a slight tie to the Flemish bond of the 1913 building. Every fifth course is laid header-

stretcher-header as a subtle design element.

The interior of the cafeteria shows block walls partially covered with ceramic tiles. Asbestos tiles are found on the dining room floor. Ceramic tile is used on the floor of the small hand washing room and the kitchen area. The kitchen includes a can washing room, pantry storage, compressor room, and two staff toilets. Steam radiator heat and window unit air conditioners are found in this building as they are in the primary building. A large storage freezer is situated on the north wall of the dining room due to space needs.