1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **Robert Russa Moton High School**

Other Name/Site Number: Farmville Elementary School; VDHR File No. 144-53

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Intersection of South Main & Griffin Blvd. Not for publication___

City/Town: Farmville Vicinity___

State: Virginia County: Prince Edward Code:VA147 Zip Code: 23901

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	__	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	X	District:	__
Public-State:	__	Site:	__
Public-Federal:	__	Structure:	__
		Object:	__

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

AUG 5 1998

by the Secretary of the Interior

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. 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 Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Education	Sub:	School
Current:	Vacant	Sub:	

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival

MATERIALS:
Foundation: Brick
Walls: Brick
Roof: Metal
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Robert Russa Moton High School is a one-story brick structure located on a triangular lot at the prominent intersection of South Main Street and Griffin Boulevard in Farmville. The building is designed with a symmetrical "U" plan and subtle classical detailing. It consists of eight classrooms, an office and an auditorium. Located at the center of the front facade, the main entrance is highlighted by a fanlight. Throughout the building, the design and details are functional and typical of schools constructed during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Simple in its design and detailing, the Robert Russa Moton High School remains little altered since its construction in 1939. It is visually prominent due to its location on a triangular site located at the busy intersection of two main thoroughfares south of downtown. The one-story school is constructed of brick and has a low-pitched metal-clad hipped roof. The building is designed in the shape of a "U" with a plan that includes a central auditorium space and eight classrooms. Directly to the north of the building is a paved parking area, beyond which are athletic fields, which are included within the nominated area.

The front elevation of the school faces southwest and is symmetrical, with a central entrance and two slightly projecting end pavilions. Located between the entrance and the end pavilions are four eight-over-eight double-hung windows. The end pavilions do not have any fenestration. Four steps lead to the arched entrance with double wooden doors with nine-light upper sash and a fanlight.

The west and east elevations each have three sets of four eight-over-eight double-hung windows that illuminate classrooms. Each side elevation also possesses a small restroom window. The east elevation has an exterior access to the basement.

The "U" shape of the plan is most clearly evident on the rear elevation where two wings project from either end, creating a three-sided courtyard. A non-contributing temporary metal building is located within the space and is not attached to the main building. Entrances lead from the end of each wing to corridors of classrooms. The two interior elevations of the wings have double-hung windows consistent with those found on the front and exterior side elevations, however, the rear wall of the main block has metal double-hung windows that illuminate the auditorium.

Like the exterior, the interior retains a remarkable degree of integrity. The plan and materials are virtually unchanged. Wood floors, moldings, baseboards, doors and other woodwork are all original. In most of the classrooms, blackboards and closets are original features, though the light fixtures have been replaced.

The most prominent feature of the interior is the auditorium, which is centrally- located and into which the entrance vestibule and corridors lead. At the east end of the room is an elevated stage,

the rear portion of which has been enclosed for two offices. The ceiling of this space is detailed with beams that form a grid pattern. An office is located off of this space opposite the stage. Four classrooms are located across the front of the building, and each rear wing contains two classrooms and a restroom. It is likely that the classrooms containing shelves in the west wing originally served as the library.

Overall, the school and its site are in a remarkable state of preservation. Unlike many other schools of this period, ceilings have not been lowered, windows replaced or additions constructed. Virtually all of the original materials and finishes remain in place.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B__ C__ D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G X

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Criteria Exclusions: 8

NHL Theme(s): II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
2. reform movements

IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
1. parties, protests, and movements

Areas of Significance: Politics/Government, Social History, Law

Period(s) of Significance: 1951-1964

Significant Dates: April 23, 1951 (student strike)
May 17, 1954 (Brown decision)
May 31, 1955 ("deliberate speed" decision)
May 25, 1964 (Griffin decision)

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

NHL Comparative Categories: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
M. Civil Rights Movement

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

The Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia is nationally significant because of its association with the battle for desegregation of the nation's public schools. A 1951 student strike at the school led to a state district court case challenging desegregation in Prince Edward County's schools. On appeal, the case was combined with four other appellate school segregation cases, which were and argued before the United States Supreme Court in 1954 as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.* The Supreme Court's decision struck down the practice of maintaining "separate but equal" schools as unconstitutional and resulted in an order to the nation's schools to integrate. Prince Edward County, however, became the focus of national attention in the years following the *Brown* decision as the most extreme example of "massive resistance" to integration, closing its public schools from 1959 until 1964 to avoid integrating them.

INTRODUCTION

The Prince Edward County battle for desegregation was initiated by students at the all-black Moton High School when they decided to strike to protest inadequate facilities at the school. After approaching the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for support, they quickly became part of the organization's national effort to challenge "separate but equal" public educational systems. The strike, which began in April 1951, led to Virginia District Court case *Davis v. Prince Edward County School Board.* That legal case was, on appeal, combined with four others and argued under the title of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* before the United States Supreme Court in 1952 with final arguments in 1953. Based on evidence drawn from the five appellate cases, in May, 1954, the Supreme Court overturned the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that had permitted the segregation of public schools based on the principle of "separate but equal."

The landmark *Brown* decision did not end segregation in Prince Edward County. Instead, the state of Virginia became the leader in a southern strategy known as "massive resistance" in which the state interposed its power between the federal government and the citizens and closed schools rather than integrate them. After unsuccessfully employing several other tactics to avoid complying with the Supreme Court's order to integrate schools, Prince Edward County in 1959 became the only county in the nation to close its public schools for an extended period.[1] The county in general and its black school children in particular remained the focus of national attention until at least 1964 when another U.S. Supreme Court case, *Griffin v. Prince Edward County School Board*, forced public school integration in the county. In 1964, the schools reopened and few white students enrolled. Black students, however, welcomed the return of public schools, which were now desegregated.

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[1]Anne Hobson Freeman, *The Style of a Law Firm; Eight Gentlemen from Virginia* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1989), 166. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 778.

The Moton High School is an example of how local protest linked with a national movement that ultimately changed not only the interpretation of the United States Constitution, but also the perspective with which the people of the United States regarded the 14th Amendment as it relates to the guarantee of equal protection under the law. Based on the events which transpired between April 1951 and May 1964 relating to the integration of the county's schools, the Moton High School is eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark under Theme II: Creating Social Institutions and Movements, and Theme IV: Shaping the Political Landscape.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Public education in general was slow in becoming a solid reality in the South. Until 1870, no statewide, organized system of public education existed in Virginia, although a few localities operated their own systems. Before the Civil War, Virginia had private academies for those white parents who could pay for schooling and a few schools for "paupers." Before the Civil War, by law, neither slave nor free black children could attend school or even be privately taught to read and write. There were Sunday School teachers and others who broke this law, and some African Americans taught themselves. Still, the black population was largely illiterate when the Freedmen's Bureau opened the first free schools for blacks in Virginia near Hampton Roads in 1862. Schools opened by northern teachers under missionary auspices right after the Civil War were too closely associated with the northern interests for most whites to send the children to them. The Virginia Constitution of 1869, under Virginia's Reconstruction government, mandated a public school system, and the following year William Henry Ruffner was appointed by the General Assembly as first superintendent of public instruction.

Ruffner's first duty was to draft legislation establishing the system. The bill he submitted was based on precedents in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and called for the creation of a state department of public instruction, with the state having a share in the funding. Opposition to the plan was widespread and centered on the loss of traditional local authority represented by the new state agency and the state funding provision. There was also much concern expressed about the incorporation of education for blacks, which had been illegal before the Civil War, although there was little debate about segregation. It was understood that schools would be separate, as all other aspects of public life had become racially segregated, in a *de facto* rather than statutory manner, before the Civil War. There was also concern that parents would be deprived of complete influence in their children's upbringing.

Funding was a problem from the start, with monies initially earmarked for public education on the state level being diverted to cover Virginia's large antebellum debt. Enrollment and tax support, both viewed as referenda on the popularity of the public schools, continued for years to be a problem. Prince Edward County's first school superintendent, Benjamin Mosby Smith, once complained that even with his other income as a religious educator, it was hard to make ends meet. By the time of Ruffner's retirement in 1882, however, the public schools were firmly established and growing.[2]

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[2]William Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 17-18, 21-22, 25..

Although Ruffner had expressed certainty that qualified blacks would be chosen to serve on the local school boards, none were. White males, usually property owners, made up the membership. Black teachers were also paid less, it being asserted that they were less qualified, and school facilities for blacks tended to be less than adequate. One black teacher in Prince Edward County remarked on the large, drafty holes in the school floors. The lack of adequate heat was also a problem.[3] In 1896, the segregation of schools practiced in Prince Edward County and in the rest of Virginia and the south was given a legal sanction by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that schools could be racially "separate" if their facilities were "equal." However, before 1939 all of the secondary school education available to blacks in Prince Edward County consisted of a few extra grades in one elementary school. What was loosely referred to as "vocational training" was all that many whites thought that blacks needed. This and "on-the job training" favored in rural areas like Prince Edward County were considered sufficient, and even better suited for preparing blacks than a high school education.[4]

Under pressure from local black professional men during the 1920s, the Prince Edward County School Board reluctantly added high school grades to the all-black Mary E. Branch Elementary School in 1930, though the professionals themselves initially paid for the teachers' salaries. The blame for such slow and inadequate effort was always placed on the lack of funds. Although it was true that financing problems existed, all-white schools still tended to fare better. The financial problems faced by Southern school systems were in fact exacerbated by the policy of separating black and white students, when integrated schools would have been more cost-effective.[5]

During the 1930s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began a strategy of collecting information to prove that "separate" was not "equal." In Virginia, as elsewhere, curricula quality, bus transportation, buildings, and equipment were being challenged as inadequate. Their goal was to win cases in local level courts protesting the injustice of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and to take those cases on appeal to the nation's highest court to invalidate the ruling. Their legal strategy attacked through the courts racial discrimination in the public schools on the basis of the unequal facilities provided for black students.[6]

As a result of these challenges, a new high school for black students was built in Prince Edward County. The school was completed in 1939 and named for Robert Russa Moton, a native son who had succeeded Booker T. Washington as the president of Tuskegee Institute. At that time, only eleven other high schools for blacks existed in Virginia, and like them, the new institution proved to have inadequate facilities. Unlike its whites-only counterpart, Farmville High School, Moton High School had no gymnasium, cafeteria, lockers, or auditorium with fixed seating. Built with a capacity for 180 students, it had 167 when opened. The following year, 219 students were enrolled. By 1950, the enrollment had increased to 477.

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[3] *Ibid.*, 39, 42, 50.

[4] Bob Smith, *They Closed Their Schools* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 14; Janet Stevenson, *The School Segregation Cases (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka and others): The Supreme Court on Racially Separate Public Education* (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1973), 2.

[5] See also Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).*

[6] Kluger,214-217, 459; Mark Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 77-81.

As many as three classes were held in the auditorium simultaneously, and at least one was held on a school bus. When the county received an offer of a matching grant from the state in 1947 to build an addition, the Board of Supervisors refused to appropriate the additional local money needed. The board was influenced by W. I. Dixon, building supervisor for the state department of public instruction, who said any additional construction would be makeshift, with the implication that it therefore should not be undertaken.[7]

In response to demands for action to relieve the overcrowding at Moton High School, three temporary buildings were erected, promptly dubbed the "tar paper shacks" due to the material that covered their long, low framework. The Reverend Leslie Francis Griffin, a local black leader, minister and member of the NAACP observed that local blacks became quite upset at the inadequate gesture, while the whites did not see anything wrong with the shacks--if the whites noticed them at all. Griffin would soon figure prominently in the organized response to the continued inequity the shacks represented.[8]

When Willie Redd, a black contractor who was looked upon by the white community as the spokesman for his race, resigned from the Moton Parent-Teacher Association in 1949, Griffin was elected chairman. Griffin saw this as a sign of change from the old accomodationist approach that Redd represented, whereby blacks attempted to make progress within the system.

Griffin also organized a local chapter of the NAACP, becoming the county coordinator, thus establishing links with other black activists on the state and national level. His immediate focus, however, was on the local level, where the Moton PTA offered to assist the county school board in its ongoing search for a site for a new black high school. Although there was plenty of available land in Prince Edward County, none had been deemed suitable. The school board accepted the PTA's offer to locate a site for the new school, and Willie Redd promptly informed them when a new site was identified. Even though a good offer was available the board delayed action.[9]

Then, on April 23, 1951, a strike by the students was initiated to protest the overcrowded conditions, the shacks and the seemingly futile efforts to build a new high school. Using the ruse of a false report of truant students at the local bus station to get Principal M. Boyd Jones out of the building, several students forged written announcements of a school assembly, calling all classes to the auditorium. Teachers were then escorted from the auditorium. Instead of the principal, student Barbara Johns, a niece of Vernon Johns, native of Prince Edward County and the renowned minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, appeared on the stage and announced the strike. She asked the students to join with the organizing committee, a group of ten Moton students, in a strike to demand better facilities. The student body as a whole agreed to join them in the effort. When Principal Jones returned from his wild goose chase at about the same time, he pleaded with the students not to go through with it, but they refused and politely asked him to leave.[10]

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[7]Smith, 15.
[8]*Ibid.*, 16.
[9]*Ibid.*, 20-21
[10]Stevenson, 1-15.

Despite the deception used on him, Jones was accused by the school superintendent of participation in the conspiracy. Also implicated were Vernon Johns and Griffin. Griffin was the first person the students contacted after they had gained control of the school, asking him to settle a dispute over whether to send a delegation to the county school superintendent to present demands immediately or not. He suggested that a vote be taken, which resulted in a call to the superintendent.

After consulting with Griffin, the students wrote a letter to the Richmond office of the NAACP requesting the assistance of the NAACP's special counsel. The office put them in touch with attorney Oliver Hill, whose firm was already handling a case involving black schools in Christiansburg, Virginia. Hill advised the students to return to class, promising to come to Prince Edward immediately to talk with them. Although discouraged, the students sent a delegation to the superintendent, who initially refused to meet with it. Superintendent McIlwaine accused the students directly of being misled by an adult agitator, perhaps Griffin or Boyd, and threatened expulsion if they did not end the strike.

The next day, two hundred people, including many students, Hill, and fellow attorney Spottswood Robinson, gathered at Griffin's church, where an attempt was made by the attorneys to get the students to end their strike. The students refused and Hill and Robinson abandoned their attempt after witnessing their organization and determination. The adults present were asked for their opinions and found to be divided on whether to support the students. When presented with the idea by Hill and Robinson of going beyond pushing for better schools and calling for desegregated ones, the students responded in a strongly positive way, however most adults seemed uncomfortable with the idea, though none made any comment. The students were asked to think about the question and talk to those not present.

A mass meeting was called for the following day, at which NAACP state secretary W. Lester Banks was present. A decision was reached to sue for integration and to continue the strike until May 7, when the school year ended. On May 23, Hill and Robinson filed suit in the Federal District Court in Richmond for the immediate integration of the Prince Edward County schools.[11]

Known as *Davis v. the County School Board of Prince Edward County*, the case was decided by a lower court in favor of the county. On appeal, however, it was combined with four other appellate cases from around the country. *Briggs et al. v. Elliott et al.* (South Carolina) had been initiated on May 24, 1951, with Spottswood Robinson acting as an assistant attorney for the plaintiff and an assistant attorney general from Virginia present as an observer. *Gebhart v. Belton* (Delaware), argued in 1951, along with *Bulah v. Gebhart* (Delaware), involved a high school in Wilmington and an elementary school in Hockessin. The Delaware cases initially based on bus transportation and unequal facilities later centered the argument on integration. The two cases were combined under *Gebhart v. Belton* and argued for desegregation under Brown in 1954. *Bolling et al. v. Sharpe et al.* (District of Columbia) dealt with junior high school students who were refused entry to all-white schools. Finally, *Brown v. the Board of*

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[11] Stevenson, 1-15; Kluger, 468-469; Peter Wallenstein, " 'I Went to Law School to Fight Segregation': Oliver Hill and the Siege in Virginia against Jim Crow" (paper presented at annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Atlanta, GA November 1992), 31.

Education of Topeka, Kansas, first argued independently in 1951, gave its name to the resulting historic Supreme Court decision under which the five school segregation cases were argued. The United States Supreme Court ruled on *Brown* in 1954, striking down the legal doctrine of "separate but equal " facilities as unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[12]

Although the cases were argued under the title *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, each case contributed equally to the 1954 landmark decision. Several explanations have been given for the order in which the cases were listed. Greenberg states that Brown was listed first based on the alphabetical listing of the cases and that Briggs, which would have been listed first, was initially sent back to trial court for further hearings and later added to the school segregation cases. Kluger argues that Brown was listed first in order to highlight a non-Southern state.[13]

In 1955 the Supreme Court answered the question of the pace of integration by saying it should take place with "all deliberate speed." National, state and local factors worked together to assure that the *Brown* decision did not end segregation in Virginia. Reaction to the *Brown* decision, especially in the South, was swift and negative. Virginia was then ruled by the political machine led by U. S. Senator Harry F. Byrd who initiated a program of "massive resistance" which meant that schools would close rather than integrate. "Massive resistance", practiced between 1954 and 1959, became part of Virginia's political agenda and was the first of several strategies to maintain segregation. In the words of the 1957 state Democratic Party gubernatorial campaign platform, the state would "oppose it [integration] with every facility at our command, and with every ounce of our energy.[14]

Virginia's strategy for preventing integration changed emphasis and tactics several times between the years 1954 and 1959. A state pupil placement act, passed in 1956, took the power of assigning students to schools from the localities and invested it in a board of state appointees. In 1958, nine schools that were candidates for integration were briefly closed and tuition grants given to students[15]. In 1959 a "freedom of choice policy" of pupil placement caused three state board members to resign in protest. The "freedom of choice" rule allowed localities the option of participating in the state placement system. Opting out of the state placement program required the recommendation of the local school board and approval of the city council or county board of supervisors. Emphasis was placed on geography or residence rather than the criteria.[16]

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[12] Neil V. Sullivan, Thomas LaSalle Maynard, and Carol Lynn Yellin, *Bound for Freedom: An Educator's Adventures in Prince Edward County, Virginia* (Boston; Little, Brown, and Company, 1965), 193. Jack Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts: How a Dedicated Band of Lawyers Fought for the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 117. Kluger, 537-540.

[13] Greenberg, 117, Kluger 537-540..

[14] Marie Tyler McGraw. *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia and Its People.* (Chapel Hill:University of North Carolina Press), 285-288; Raymond Wolters, *The Burden of Brown; Thirty Years of School Desegregation* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 91

[15] Tyler-McGraw, 287.

[16] United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Civil Rights U.S.A.: Public Schools/Southern States 1962" (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1962), 165.

Virginia's efforts to maintain segregation were demonstrated nowhere as strongly as in Prince Edward County. The County became the Southern model for what would happen if integrationists pushed the local school boards, and between 1954 and 1964 the tactics initiated by the state unfolded.

The first efforts to evade integration in Prince Edward County came in 1954 with the opening of a new Moton High School building. Students were moved out of the 1939 building into a new and larger one in an attempt to prove that the state was acting in good faith to ensure the equality side of "separate but equal."[17] The 1939 Moton High School Building was converted to an all-black elementary school. The opening of the new school and the 1955 "all deliberate speed" decision provided Prince Edward County the ammunition needed to maintain segregated schools for 10 years. Wilbur Brookover details the segregation efforts in Prince Edward County following the 1955 decision:

> Shortly after the second Supreme Court decision (*Brown II*, 1955) ordering desegregation "with all deliberate speed," the county's board of supervisors voted not to appropriate any money for desegregated schools. Shortly thereafter, the actively segregationist organization known as the Defenders of Liberty initiated efforts to raise money to hire teachers for White children in the county. When the U.S. District Court ruled that Prince Edward County did not have to desegregate immediately, the pledges of money were retained for further use. A strictly segregated public school system continued until further court action in 1959. At that time, the courts ruled that the county's schools had to desegregate. The county supervisors again refused to appropriate money for desegregated public schools. Although the school board favored maintaining the public schools and obeying the court order, they were helpless to maintain the schools because the board of supervisors controlled all appropriations. As a result of the board of supervisors' actions, the public schools remained closed from fall 1959 to fall 1964. As far as this researcher has been able to determine, Prince Edward County is the only school district in the United States that closed its public schools for an extended period to avoid desegregation.
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> After the schools closed, the board of supervisors requested that the school board sell the buildings to a private White school foundation. At the initiative of its chairman, school board members resigned *en masse* rather than sell the schools. There was, therefore, no official body in place to sell the buildings. When the new school board was appointed, the effort to force the sale was not reinitiated. The White school foundation thus moved rapidly to raise money to establish the Prince Edward Academy, which used a variety of facilities for its classes beginning in fall 1959. Permanent Academy facilities for both elementary and secondary students were built soon after. Essentially all of the White children in Prince Edward County were enrolled in the Academy in the next few years. Some of the poor Whites in the county were provided scholarships to pay their children's tuition. A few White families that could not afford the tuition and did not wish to accept welfare did not send their children to school. The number of such children is not available, but only a small proportion fell in this category.[18]

Although whites established a private foundation to provide similar opportunities for black children, this was refused by many black county residents and the NAACP on the grounds that it continued essentially the same situation that the Brown decision was supposed to end. Those opposing this effort vocalized their concern by actively working to discourage black children from signing up for the private schools. In January 1960, the Southside Schools, the name given to the private schools, received an application from one black student. The schools then decided to postpone their efforts to educate black students.

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[17] Sullivan, 14; Wolters, 75..
[18] Brookover, 149-150.

There were, however, several black students that continued their education by attending schools outside the county and state. Students went as far as the high school branch of Kittrell Junior College in Henderson, North Carolina and others relocated to northern states.[19]

Prince Edward County became nationally known for is refusal to integrate. Farmville was visited by notable civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Roy Wilkins. The NAACP used Prince Edward County as an example in all of the efforts to obtain civil rights during this period. In 1960, the National Council of Negro Women held a meeting in Washington, D.C., in which representatives of 21 organizations named Griffin chair of a project to set up training centers for the black children. The centers were to focus on "morale building" rather than education. This choice was supported by many including the NAACP and community members who believed that if they began to educate on their own, the battle for integration would not only be lost in Prince Edward County but also make integration in other sections of the nation more difficult.[20]

In 1961 the state also began disbursing grants to students attending private, nonsectarian schools, or schools outside their home district. Funds were contributed from both the state and all localities. What differentiated this program from a similar, previous plan was that no reason for the alternative choice needed to be given. Many who took advantage of it attended private schools though they came from still-segregated districts. Others went from segregated to desegregated districts.

The General Assembly also enacted laws permitting local school boards to provide transportation to private schools and allow for a tax credit for those sending their children to such schools. In addition, teachers were permitted to discharge state education board scholarship obligations by teaching in private schools and to participate in the state retirement system while teaching in private schools.[21] Legislation permitting local compulsory attendance laws, while repealing the state attendance law, was also passed that year. However, local school systems were still required to excuse children whose parents objected to their being sent to a particular school.[22]

In response, the NAACP asked the State Supreme Court of Appeals to demand that the board of supervisors appropriate funds for the public schools. In March 1962 the State Supreme Court ruled that the board of supervisors could not be forced to appropriate funds for the schools.

The NAACP continued the battle in the courts and Griffin, chairman of Moton PTA at the time of the strike, continued efforts at the local level. He circulated a petition throughout the County in 1963 to request that President Kennedy sponsor a survey to study the educational problem in Prince Edward County. The President was also asked to back a program that would prepare the students for re-entering the educational system. The survey resulted in a report that stated the federal government could not operate or finance schools in Prince Edward County.

However, the report identified the needs of the black children who had been out of school for four years. The Prince Edward County Free School System was created in 1963 and intended to run for only one year when, it was hoped, the regular public schools would reopen. This federally-initiated,

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[19] Smith 195-197; Brookover 150.
[20] Smith, 195.
[21] United States Commission on Civil Rights, 166-167.
[22] Sullivan 5, 19, 61 and 113.

state-sponsored and privately-funded free school system helped to bridge the gap. The Prince Edward Free School system received support from President Kennedy, accreditation from the state department of education and utilized existing facilities (with the permission of the school board).[23] Former Governor Colgate Darden was among the trustees. There were three white children that attended the Free Association with Black children. In Farmville, the Free School System operated out of the old (1939) Moton School until the public schools were re-opened.

Because district courts were instructed to ensure compliance, the *Davis* case, the initial Prince Edward County desegregation case, continued even after the Brown decision was handed down. The litigation to end segregation in Prince Edward County began in 1951 as *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* as a result of the Moton students' strike for equal facilities. In 1959 it was argued as *Allen v. County School Board of Prince Edward County,* which resulted in the district court decision that Prince Edward County schools were to reopen in September of 1959 to all students. Later, one of Leslie F. Griffin's own children, also named Leslie Francis, became the named plaintiff in the case *Griffin v. County School Board* (Prince Edward) (1964) which came about in response to Prince Edward County's continued refusal to comply.[24] The fight for integration in Prince Edward County ended in 1964, as *Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County,* with the United States Supreme Court deciding that Prince Edward County must open the public schools.

Although the Griffin decision resulted in an order by the Supreme Court that Prince Edward County open its school, the county supervisors continued to resist integration.. The Board of Education requested, and the board appropriated only enough money to educate black students in the county, while meeting secretly to appropriate funds for grants to private school education in the county.[25] The courts had forbidden such grants after the 1960-61 school year, based on the argument that the state thus participated in an unconstitutional attempt to evade the Brown decision.

Eventually, all state and local efforts to resist integration would collapse. The Prince Edward County public school system was reopened in 1964 and the newer Moton High School (1954) was renamed Prince Edward County High School. The older, original building (1939) upon which the initial protests were based then became Farmville Elementary School.[26]

The Robert Russa Moton High School stands as a monument to the students who struck in 1951 and their contribution to the struggle for the desegregation of our nation's schools. Their strike led to the court case Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, which, combined with others, formed Brown v. Board of Education and contributed to the subsequent 1954 landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court. That decision struck down the "separate but equal" racial doctrine governing public school policy and constituted an important step down the road toward the integration of American society. It also led to the closing of Prince Edward County's public schools and Virginia's

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[23] Smith, 240, Brookover, 150-151.
[24] Sullivan 193; Wolters, 111.
[25] Sullivan, 202.
[26] Wolters, 101; Stevenson, 27-33; Brookover 153.

efforts at "massive resistance." Moton High School's importance lies in the series of events that began there in April 1951, and the dramatic and fundamental change in American society that resulted. The school is an example of the segregation that occurred in this country and the determination of African Americans to secure their rights as stated in the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register.
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
__Other State Agency
__Federal Agency
__Local Government
__University
__Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 5 acres

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
17	730660	4130150

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point where Barrow Street or Eighth Street intersects with the new right of way for Main Street or U.S. Highway No, 15, thence along Barrow Street, which is called Eighth Street, to Ely Street (now Griffin Blvd.), thence in a southerly direction along Ely street (now Griffin Blvd.) 400 feet, more or less, to U.S. Highway No. 15, thence along U.S. Highway in a northerly direction to the point of beginning at Barrow Street. Said land is known as Lots No. 270401 and 270402 on the official town map, dated June 6, 1934.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the nominated area encompass the building and grounds historically associated with the Robert Russa Moton High School.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Jarl K. Jackson and Julie L. Vosmik
Telephone: 804/786-3143
Date: December 1994

Edited by: Tara D. Morrison and Marie Tyler-McGraw, NCSHPO historians
National Park Service
1849 C Street N.W. Room NC400
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: Tara D. Morrison: 202/343-1252, Marie Tyler-McGraw: 202/343-5380