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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.

RECEIVED 2280
JAN 14 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Robert Smalls School
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing:
_____
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 316 Front Street
City or town: Cheraw State: SC County: Chesterfield
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___national ___statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___B x C ___D

Elizabeth M. Johnson 1/9/2014

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Robert Smalls School
Name of Property

Chesterfield County, SC
County and State

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:) _____

Jon Edson N. Beall 3.4.14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	

Robert Smalls School
Name of Property

Chesterfield County, SC
County and State

Structure ☐

Object ☐

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Education/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Social/civic
Social/meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Brick, Walls: Brick; Roof: Asphalt; Other: Wood

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Robert Smalls School is a brick-veneered, one-story Colonial Revival building with an asphalt-shingled, pedimented, lateral gabled roof that features a boxed cornice and frieze. The visual focus of the central section is a portico with four large square wooden pillars and corresponding pilasters at the outer edges of the portico. The double-leaf wooden front doors feature a double-X traceried transom, a brick jack arch with cast stone key, and are flanked by two twelve-over-twelve light windows with jack arches and keystones on each side – one within the portico and one outside. The wings on each side each have three sets of paired twelve-over-twelve light double-hung sash windows, and the front slope of the gabled roof of the wings has a lower profile than that of the main building. The main block is connected with a hyphen to a rear wing with twelve paired windows on each side. The school is located at 316 Front Street in the northern Pee Dee town of Cheraw, South Carolina, in a mixed area of residential and commercial properties. The school is set slightly above street level with a concrete walk to the front entrance and a brick fence across the front of the main section. The rest of the property is surrounded by a chain link fence. While visibly in need of a new roof, the structure is in basically good state of preservation with few alterations to the original design.

Narrative Description

Robert Smalls School is located on a slight rise on the northeast side of Front Street in Cheraw, South Carolina. Front Street is near the center of Cheraw and has a mixture of small commercial properties and modest residential buildings. A cement-paved sidewalk parallels the street in front of the school. This section of Front Street has been historically an African American neighborhood.

The cement walkway leading to the building from the street is raised two steps from the sidewalk. The walkway is the same width as the brick steps to the front entry portico. Four square wooden pillars with paneled wooden bases and Doric order-inspired capitals support the portico along with two corresponding pilasters at the outer edges of the portico along the plain of the front wall of the building. The porch floor is concrete with brick edges. A lunette with twelve lights in a radiating arrangement is centered in the flushboard-sided tympanum of the portico. The name "Robert Smalls" is centered on the frieze of the portico's entablature. The wood-paneled double doors have a transom divided into seven lights by double-X muntins that creates a running horizontal diamond pane configuration. The front door has two twelve-over-twelve light double-hung windows on either side – the nearer two being sheltered by the portico. The two windows on the south side have been partially enclosed with plywood to support window air-conditioning units. The main block windows have louvered dark green shutters. The front door and the windows in the central main block have brick flat or jackarch lintels with concrete keystones. A simple boxed cornice surrounds the main block and its gable ends.

The brick is laid in a running bond pattern. The front slope of the roof on the wings are slightly lower than that of the main central block, and the wings are set back from the facade of the main building. Both wings feature three twelve-over-twelve double-hung windows on the facade. These windows are located just under the eaves and have no lintel other than the fascia or frieze. A sidewalk runs in front of the south wing and a large tree is located in front of the north wing. A flat metal roofed colonnade that leads to the street from the north side was added later. There are double-leaf wood-paneled doors at each gable end capped by transoms with horizontal six-over-six lights.

A hyphen connects the front block to a long rear section. The hyphen has a paneled door with nine lights and double windows of six-over-six lights on each side. The rear section has twelve windows on each side similar to the ones on the wings of the main block. Several of these windows on both sides of the building have been modified to house air-conditioning units. A double door at the end of this section leads to a metal covered walkway. A concrete sidewalk is located along the north side of the building and a school yard of mixed grass and sand features trees, picnic tables, and wooden and plastic playground equipment of more recent vintage. There are paved parking areas at the rear and on the south side of the building. All of the gable ends have white, louvered wood vents at their peaks. The rear section features a tall brick chimney on the north side near the end of the building that once serviced the boiler for the steam-generated heating system in the building.

On the interior, the main block houses administrative offices, a wide double-loaded corridor, and support rooms. The rear wing consists of eight classrooms to either side of a wide double-loaded corridor, typical of most school interiors of the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Classrooms are accessed through single-leaf wooden doors with nine light panels of opaque glass on the upper half and a large single wood panel on the lower half, and what appears to be original hardware. All the interior walls are of painted brick and the corridors feature large bulletin boards. Each classroom features a single large square transom window along the double loaded corridors, originally designed for air circulation, but which now appear to have been fitted with a fixed glass panel. The classrooms have either chalk boards or erasable marker boards. At least one classroom still features a lavatory just outside separate restrooms. The main hall restrooms still feature what appears to be original high ceramic tile wainscoting, lavatories, and red tile floors. Toilet stalls may have been modified or modernized at a later date. Ceilings throughout the building are a dropped acoustical tile with fluorescent lighting that appears to be a later modification.

At the rear of the building, a metal-canopied concrete walk leads to a building added to the campus in 1963. This long low building had large banks of windows which have been enclosed. This building features a flat roof, was designed with a modern aesthetic and style, is under separate ownership, and is not included in this nomination.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[x] 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.

[x] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

[ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

[ ] B. Removed from its original location

[ ] C. A birthplace or grave

[ ] D. A cemetery

[ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F. A commemorative property

[ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Education
Architecture

Period of Significance
1953

Significant Dates
1953

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Hopkins, Baker & Gill, Architectures, Florence, S.C.
Brabham, Lyn, Contractor, Florence, S.C.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Robert Smalls School in Cheraw, completed in 1953, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with the South Carolina "Equalization School" building program, a state initiative in the early 1950s to make schools for black children "separate but equal" to their white counterparts and in support of the practice of segregation. It served as an African-American school until it was desegregated in 1971. Robert Smalls School is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of the architectural vision of Cheraw, Incorporated, a group of local leaders who sought to maintain Cheraw's historic architecture and ensure that new designs were compatible, in the "colonial" or "ante-bellum" style, and according to plans prepared by the Florence, South Carolina, architectural firm of Hopkins, Baker & Gill. The period of significance (1953) is the year the building was completed and is inclusive of its association with the school equalization program and its association with the architecture of Cheraw, Incorporated.

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

Education

Robert Smalls School was one of the buildings constructed in the early 1950s to make schools for African American children "equal" to their white counterparts. In May 1950, *Briggs v. Elliott* was filed by the NAACP demanding that the Clarendon County school district in South Carolina provide black children with facilities and equipment equal to those provided to white students. South Carolina Gov. James F. Byrnes pushed the General Assembly to fund a "school equalization" program in hopes of preempting possible Supreme Court action to integrate South Carolina's schools. He proposed a seventy five million dollar bond issue to finance an extensive building program to improve school facilities and bring black schools up to the level of the white schools. The General Assembly passed Byrnes's program in 1951. It was administered by the State Educational Finance Commission.[1]

In the 1951-1952 school year, Chesterfield County School District 2 (including Cheraw) had separate facilities for white and black children. Seven elementary schools (grades 1-7) and Cheraw High School served 1,168 white students, while eleven elementary schools and Coulter High School educated the area's 1,614 African-American students. At the time, the original Robert Smalls School (built 1920) was the largest black elementary school in Chesterfield County, with 443 students in grades one to six with a faculty of twelve teachers. The existing two-story brick school was built in 1920 and with a new lunchroom added in 1949 and a central heating system. A 1952 State Education Finance Commission survey found the ten smaller

[1] Rebekah Dobrasko, "Upholding "Separate but Equal:South Carolina's School Equalization Program, 1951-1955." M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 2005, pp.5-11.

schools to be inadequate and the 1924 Coulter High School (originally a church-supported school for blacks called Coulter Memorial Academy that was later absorbed into the public school system) to be outdated for a modern high school. The survey team recommended the consolidation of the smaller schools and construction of new, larger schools for both black and whites students under a modernization and equalization plan for the district.[2]

As early as May 1951, the Cheraw School Board approved the long range plans and sketches for the new Robert Smalls School, designed to accommodate about a thousand students and to replace the existing 1920 Robert Smalls Elementary School.[3] Completed in October 1953, the school served the approximately six hundred students formerly attending Robert Smalls, Orange Hill, and Pee Dee schools. Although it did not include all the amenities recommended in the state survey for both white and black schools, Robert Smalls was lauded soon after its opening as modern and "evidence of the strides made in Cheraw to equalize school facilities for Negro and white students."[4] The new black high school, costing an estimated $500,000, was to be completed by the next year.[5] Robert Smalls School was therefore an early example of the equalization school movement in Cheraw and the continued segregation of South Carolina education.

Architecture

Most equalization school buildings in South Carolina reflected a mid-century modern design aesthetic.[6] Cheraw's Robert Smalls School was different. Under the influence of a local organization known as Cheraw, Incorporated, the school's design prompted a comment in a 1953 *News & Courier [Charleston, SC]* article that "[a]nother major feather in Cheraw's colonial cap will be the appearance of the new Negro school, now under construction according to a plan which provides for a colonial façade and roof-line."[7] *The [Columbia, SC] State* newspaper reported at the time that "[t]hrough the efforts of Cheraw, Incorporated several buildings in keeping with eighteenth century architecture are in the process of construction by various individuals and organizations in Cheraw", including the Robert Smalls School.[8] *The Cheraw Chronicle* noted that "[p]lans previously shown in *The Chronicle* of the Robert Small [*sic*] school are a hint of the fact that new construction in the Cheraw public schools will be influenced by the many people who are interested in maintaining the style of architecture prevailing in so many of the public buildings and homes that make Cheraw beloved by its sons and daughters and attractive to visitors."[9]

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[2] "Suggest Vast School Changes,"*The Cheraw Chronicle*, 2 October 1952.
[3] "Front Elevation of the Proposed New Robert Smalls School," *The Cheraw Chronicle*, 17 May 1951.
[4] "Suggest Vast School Changes,"*The Cheraw Chronicle*, 2 October, 1952.; "Something Old and Something New," *The Cheraw Chronicle,* 19 November 1953.
[5] "Something Old and Something New," *The Cheraw Chronicle,* 19 November 1953.
[6] Dobrasko, "Upholding "Separate but Equal," pp.23-9
[7] "Cheraw is Being Made Over in Ante Bellum S. C. Image," T*he News and Courier*, Charleston, SC 6 July, 1953: 14.
[8] "18th Century Architecture Returning to Shady Cheraw," *The State,* Columbia, SC 10 Sept.,1951:9-A.
[9] "Cheraw Incorporated is Enthused Over Response to Colonial Conformity," *The Cheraw Chronicle*, 6 Sept., 1951: 1.

Robert Smalls School was one in a series of buildings in Cheraw where the design was influenced by the goals of Cheraw, Incorporated. Cheraw, Incorporated was granted a charter in 1951 for the purpose of "promoting and aiding in the preservation of existing buildings of architectural and or historical value and to guide and aid in the design of new buildings." They wished to "pattern new building exteriors along the lines of colonial Cheraw."[10] According to a contemporary local publication, "the purpose of Cheraw, Incorporated, an eleemosynary corporation, [was] to promote and aid in the preservation of existing buildings of architectural and historical value; to restore and promote restoration of buildings of architectural and historic value; to guide and aid in the design of new buildings; and to carry on and promote works of civic interest as determined by the officers and directors of said organization." The same source described Cheraw in the early 1950s and offered Cheraw, Incorporated's view of its preservationist and caretaker role, when it said, "within the town limits of Cheraw there are at least fifty-five buildings built over 100 years ago. Nine public and semi-public buildings, one industrial, and forty-five residences. A few of these were built in the 18th century- some brick, some frame and many of fine architectural design. These buildings, their gardens, and the town appeal to tourists and attract annual pilgrimages of visitors. Cheraw, Incorporated, feels that it has a moral duty to preserve and make use of that which has been handed down from past generations and an obligation to leave a beautiful town and community for future generations."[11]

Among the founders and most active members of Cheraw, Incorporated, were Frances M. Tillman, V.H. Kendall, Jr. (who prepared most of the drawings), and landscape architect Harold Weldon. Frances Tillman (1917-2004), born in Cheraw, was a graduate of Oglethorpe University in Savannah, Georgia, and was an owner of Dan L. Tillman and Sons, Insurance and Real Estate. He was active in a number preservation and beautification efforts over his lifetime.[12] V.H. Kendall, Jr. (1910-1997), also born in Cheraw, was a co-founder of Cheraw, Incorporated and a past chairman of the Cheraw School Board. He was a part owner and operator of The Cheraw Sash, Door and Lumber Company.[13] Harold Charles Weldon (1911-2001), born in Oswego, New York, relocated from his hometown of Smithville, New York, to Cheraw in the 1930s to work on Cheraw State Park, South Carolina's first state park constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). He earned a degree in landscape architecture from Syracuse University in 1933 and practiced for many years in Cheraw and the surrounding areas.[14]

Influenced by the philosophy of Cheraw, Incorporated, the Robert Smalls School was designed by the Florence, South Carolina, architectural firm of Hopkins, Baker and Gill, an office well known for its design of schools, college and university buildings, courthouses and other public buildings, state office buildings, and churches. The firm began operations in 1932 when Frank Vincent Hopkins (1902-1956), associated since 1924 with prominent late nineteenth and early twentieth century Florence, South Carolina architect William J. Wilkins, established his own

[10] "Notice of Incorporation,"*The Cheraw Chronicle*, 2 Aug,, 1951.
[11] "The Entry of Cheraw, South Carolina in the Carolina Power and Light Company," undated pamplet [likely 1951], Papers of Cheraw, Incorporated, History Room, Matheson Library, Cheraw, SC.
[12] "Francis Marion Tillman," *The Cheraw Chronicle,* 18 March,2004:13A.
[13] "V.H. Kendall," *The Cheraw Chronicle*, 20 Nov., 1997: 7B.
[14] "Harold Charles Weldon," *The Cheraw Chronicle*, 10 July, 2001.

practice by taking in as a partner his draftsman and designer William Wallace Baker (1908-1968) in 1933. Hopkins & Baker operated as a firm until 1946, when Wendell Ross Gill (1915-1978) became a partner in the firm of Hopkins, Baker & Gill. After Hopkins' death in 1956, the firm functioned as Baker & Gill, AIA, Architects, and ultimately as Gill, Wilkins & Wood. Some of the firm's better known commissions include alterations and additions to the Florence County Courthouse (1935); Hamilton College and Naval ROTC Armory at the University of South Carolina (1942); a number of primary and secondary school buildings in and near Florence, South Carolina (1942-1957); First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach (1948); three buildings on the campus of Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina (ca. 1949 and 1958); the Horry County Memorial Library, Conway, South Carolina (1949); St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Florence, South Carolina (1949-1950); an expansion of the Barnwell County Court House and adjoining office building (1950- 1951); a Chemistry Building (ca. 1950) and the Physics and Research Building (1961) on the campus of Clemson University; the Coca-Cola Bottling Company Building, Marion, South Carolina (ca. 1951); the South Carolina State Highway Department Headquarters at 1100 Senate Street (corner of Assembly), Columbia (1953, remodeled 1979 as Rembert C. Dennis State Office Building in State House complex); the Medical College of South Carolina Hospital (1955) and Cancer Research Laboratory of South Carolina (1956), Medical University of South Carolina [MUSC], Charleston (1955); additions at the U.S. Naval Minecraft Base, Charleston (1958); an ambitious proposal for alterations and additions [Senate and House wings and larger dome] to the South Carolina State House, Columbia (1960, never built); and the headquarters building at 2300 Bull Street for the South Carolina Department of Environmental Control [DHEC], Columbia (1965).[15]

Although some of the larger buildings were influenced by Cheraw, Incorporated, but designed by local or regional architects, many were actually designed by the members of Cheraw, Incorporated. Ranging from an A&P grocery store and a health department building to homes and a utility building, twenty eight buildings designed or "designed in co-operation with Cheraw Incorporated" had been completed by 1961. These buildings influenced architecture significantly in Cheraw. While a few buildings have been lost, many of these structures remain in Cheraw. Cheraw, Incorporated kept records, drawings and photographs of their projects making their work remarkably well-documented. These files are now housed in the History Room at the Matheson Library in Cheraw, SC, and copies are on file at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.[16]

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[15] John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The South Carolina Architects, 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 74-75; Walter F. Petty, *Architectural Practice in South Carolina, 1913-1963: A Semi-Centennial History of the South Carolina Chapter, The American Institute of Architects* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Chapter, American Institute of Architects, 1963), pp. 141-143, 147-148; R.R. Bowker, *American Architects Directory (Second Edition)* (Washington, DC: American Institute of Architects, 1962), p. 30; Clemson University (Agricultural College), *The Clemson Agricultural College Directory of Graduates, 1896-1940 (Clemson Agricltural College Record Series, Volume 15)* (Clemson, SC: Clemson Agricultural College, 1940), p. 74; Russell Maxey, *South Carolina's Historic Columbia: Yesterday and Today in Photographs* (Columbia, SC: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1980), pp. 83 and 92; gravestones, Mt. Hope Cemetery, Florence, SC.

[16] "Cheraw Incorporated," file, History Room, Matheson Library, Cheraw, SC. Also on file at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Robert Smalls School was one of their early projects. When it was constructed of locally-made "Palmetto Brick," it housed grades one through six. Robert Smalls School was used as a school until new elementary and primary schools were constructed in the 1990s.

In 2012, the Chesterfield County School District deeded the building to Pathfinders United which operates its community programs in the building. Robert Smalls School houses a number of community organizations, and is the meeting place of the Cheraw chapter of the NAACP. Pathfinders United conducts an after-school program in the building for at-risk youth, and the local Lions Club houses its food pantry there.[17]

Robert Smalls School is significant as an early "Equalization School." It is in fact, the only remaining example of the "separate but equal" schools in the Cheraw area, and indeed the only school building that predates 1965 remaining in the town of Cheraw. Robert Smalls is also a prime and relatively unchanged example of the work of Cheraw, Incorporated. Cheraw has a significant heritage of colonial and antebellum buildings and the core of town was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Cheraw Historic District on November 20, 1974. Cheraw, Incorporated had a profound effect on this historic Pee Dee town and its work has helped preserve one of South Carolina's true gems. The work of Cheraw, Incorporated, was one of the earliest attempts in inland South Carolina to preserve "a sense of place" in a historic community.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The town of Cheraw, South Carolina, inclusive of its street system and town green, was laid out in the 1760s by merchants Joseph and Eli Kershaw, who called the town Chatham. Known and called interchangeably as Cheraw, Cheraw Hill, and Chatham, the town's official name did not become Cheraw until its incorporation in 1820. Located at the head of navigation of the Great Pee Dee River, the area of the present town was inhabited and maintained before European settlement by the Cheraws, a tribe of Native Americans of Siouan stock who reached their zenith of power in the mid-seventeenth century, only to be decimated by smallpox in the 1730s. Those who remained abandoned the area after this, leaving only their name at the small trading post that would later become the town of Cheraw. Mostly English settled the area beginning in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, but there was also a mix of Irish, Scots, and French Protestants (Huguenots).[18]

Cheraw enjoyed a strategic position on the Great Pee Dee that made it an important market town from its early days. Agricultural commodities such as corn, tobacco, indigo, and rice were

[17] Interview with John Melton, Pathfinders United, August, 2011.
[18] Walter Edgar, ed., *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 160-161 [Note: This section on the developmental history of Cheraw, added here to the text by the SHPO staff, is taken heavily from Sarah C. Spruill's sketch on Cheraw in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*.]; Will Goins, *SC Native Pathways: A Visitor's and Resource Guide to American Indian Heritage and Historic Sites in South Carolina* (Clemson, SC: South Carolina American Indian Heritage Tourism Committee, 2008), p. 49; Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 14-15.

grown with success in the lower, more fertile regions nearby, while naval stores, cattle raising, tanning, and curing brought significant incomes for all involved in those industries. St. David's Parish, among the last of the Anglican Church's jurisdictions to be established in colonial South Carolina, was created in 1768. St. David's Church was built by 1774 in the town of Cheraw, added to significantly in the early 1800s, and was listed in the National Register on September 22, 1971. The town suffered the devastating effects of civil war during the American Revolution, and did not recover until the advent of the steamboat on the Pee Dee River in 1819. Rapid growth followed this and other improvements such as the construction of a bridge across the river in 1823, and many homes and public buildings were built over the next decade. By 1825 Cheraw was one of the state's leading market towns, boasting 150 houses and some 1,200-1,300 residents. Fires devastated the business district of the town in 1835 and again in March 1865 from an accidental explosion during the town's occupation by Union soldiers under the command of General William Tecumseh Sherman, but no public buildings or residences were lost.[19]

Cheraw was destitute after the Civil War and did not recover until the turn of the twentieth century when timber became a profitable commodity and the expansion of railroads in and around Chesterfield County spurred the local economy. The town claimed a population of 4,000 by 1922, as well as two railroad lines, a cotton gin, a knitting mill, oil and lumber mills, machine shops, and brickworks. Many of the town's leading businessmen (i.e. bankers and cotton brokers) constructed impressive colonial revival residences in the town, and new public schools were built for both black and white children before the advent of the boll weevil, the subsequent sudden drop in cotton prices, the ensuing cotton agricultural depression of the 1920s, and worldwide economic depression of the 1930s slowed the town's prosperity. Only the construction of U.S. Highway 1 through the town in 1931 and the New Deal projects that created Cheraw State Park and Sand Hills State Forest helped to offset the blow to the local economy by this series of unfortunate events.[20]

In the post-World War II era of prosperity, Cheraw undertook serious efforts in 1950 to recruit industry to the town and area. By the time Cheraw, Incorporated was established and the state sales tax for the "Equalization School" program was passed into law in 1951, and the Robert Smalls School was completed in 1953, a number of manufacturing plants had relocated to the area, thus launching an extended period of economic growth for the town of Cheraw.[21]

The town of Cheraw has taken pride in its historic architecture, trees, landscapes, and streetscapes through the years. In addition to St. David's Parish Church's listing in the National Register, the Cheraw Historic District, a large area that encompasses much of the town's central business and residential communities, was listed in the National Register on November 20,

[19] Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, pp. 160-161.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*

1974.[22] The Robert Smalls School falls just outside the boundaries of the Cheraw Historic District, as do many of the town's African American historic resources.

[22] *Ibid.*; National Register Files, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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"The Entry of Cheraw, South Carolina, in the Carolina Power and Light Company." Papers of Cheraw, Incorporated. Matheson Library, Cheraw, SC.

"V. H. Kendall [Obituary]." *The Cheraw (S.C.) Chronicle.* 20 Nov. 1997, 7B.

Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. *The South Carolina Architects, 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary.* Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government

Robert Smalls School
Name of Property

Chesterfield County, SC
County and State

____ University
_x__ Other
Name of repository: _Matheson Library, Cheraw, SC_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _less than one acre_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.701824 Longitude: -79.883575
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the heavy black line marked on the accompanying copy of the Chesterfield County tax map (Tax Map # 271-009-010-009) originally created at a scale of 1"=100'.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property includes the Robert Smalls School building only and excludes all other non-historic buildings and structures on the parcel.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sarah C. Spruill, with assistance from the SHPO staff
organization: Historic Cheraw
street & number: 230 Third St.
city or town: Cheraw state: SC zip code: 29520
e-mail sspruill@roadrunner.com
telephone: (843) 537-3387
date: November 21, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Robert Smalls School

City or Vicinity: Cheraw

County: Chesterfield State: South Carolina

Photographer: David Sides

Date Photographed: October 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 18: Southwest (principal) elevation, oblique view
2 of 18: Southwest elevation at entrance
3 of 18: View from porch at entrance, looking southwest towards Front Street
4 **of 18:** Northwest elevation, rear wing
5 of 18: Southeast elevation, rear wing
6 of 18: Northeast (rear) elevation of rear wing
7 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space

Robert Smalls School
Name of Property

Chesterfield County, SC
County and State

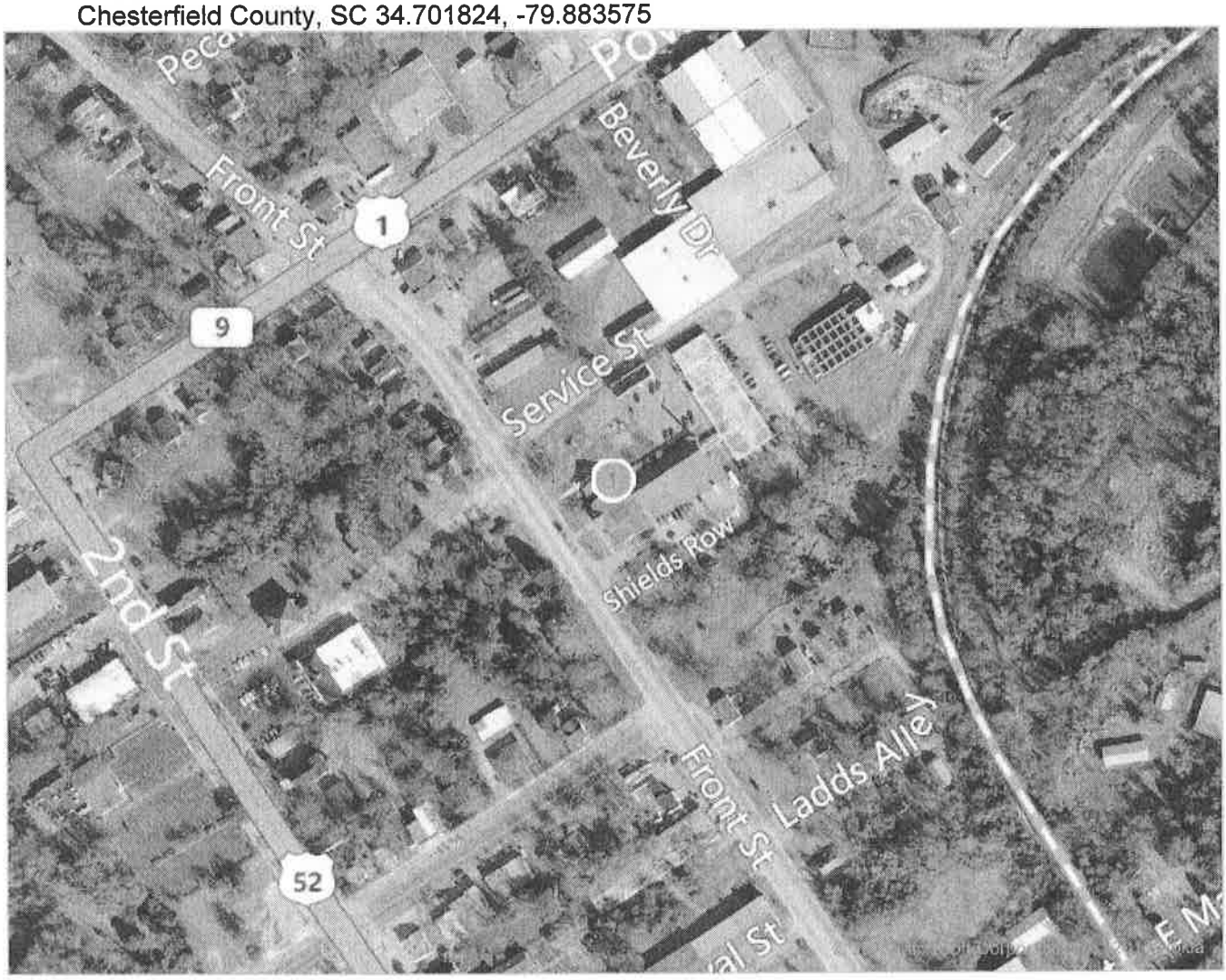
8 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space
9 of 18: Interior hallway
10 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space
11 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space
12 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space
13 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space
14 of 18: Interior view of typical classroom space
15 of 18: Interior view of typical office space
16 of 18: Interior view of typical office space
17 of 18: Interior view of typical office space
18 of 18: Interior view of restroom

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

bing Maps

Unsaved places

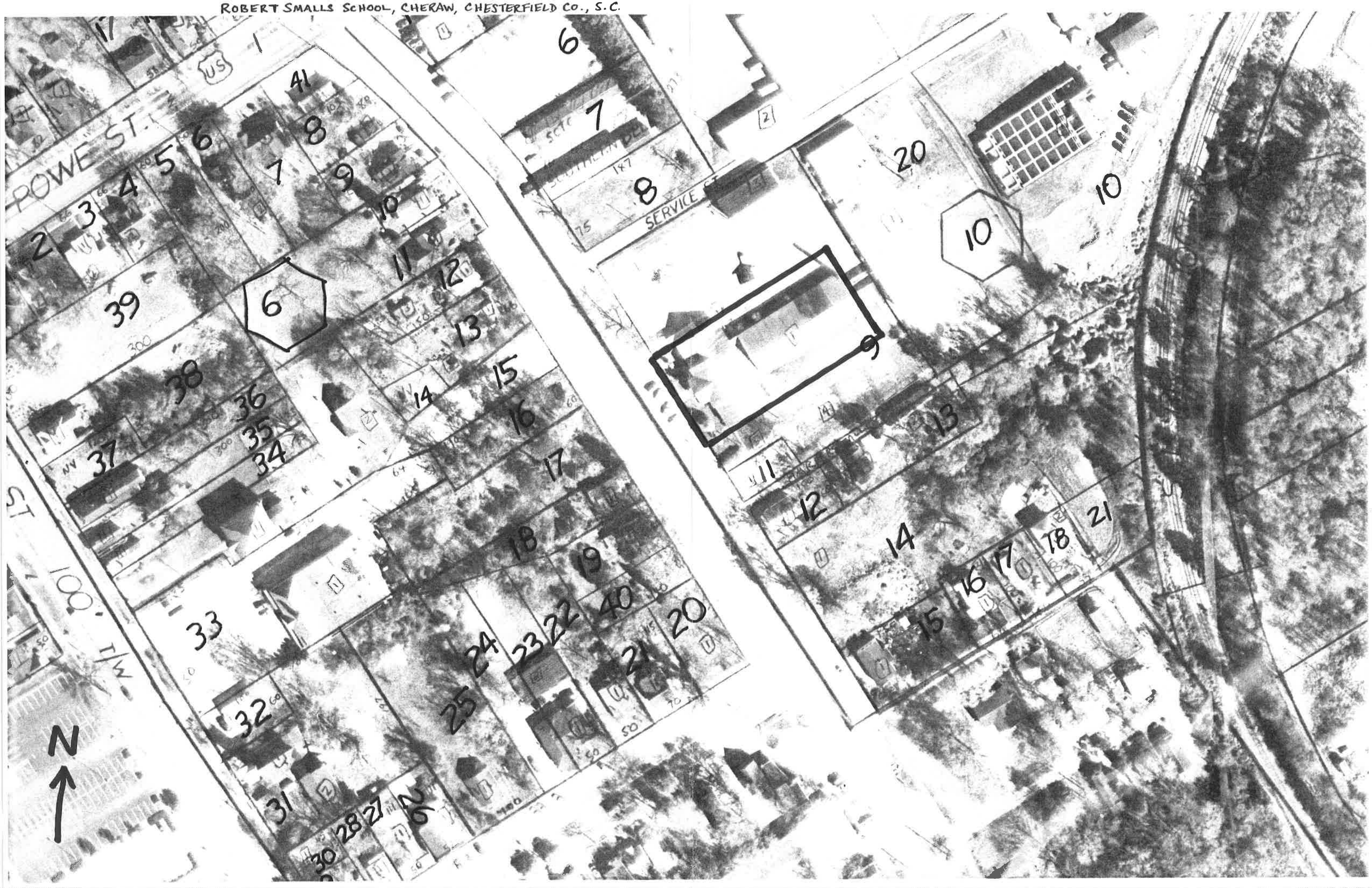
1. **Robert Smalls School, Cheraw**
   Chesterfield County, SC 34.701824, -79.883575



N

Bird's eye view maps can't be printed, so another map view has been substituted.

ROBERT SMALLS SCHOOL, CHERAW, CHESTERFIELD CO., S.C.



ROBERT SMALLS
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Pathfinder's United
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Teen After School Center

ROBERT SMALLS

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2) Homework Completed
3) Complete Tutoring
4) Tutor helper
5) Interim Reports
1) Malachi McManus
2) Jesse Boar
3) Myron Wilson
4) Khalil Cinder
5) Gera Johnson
6) Kaleb Carpenter
7) Gwaniaya Mellon
8) Charles Wilson
9) Jalyn Mellon
10) Alex Baylor
11) Josh Sellers
12) Naseon Harrington
13) K.C. Duncan
14) Tristen Moore
15) Dashawn
16) Bryson Carpenter
1) Map test line
2) Pass writing
3) Map test - All test
4) Pass test Maps May 7-10, 2013
5) Pass workshop April 16 @ 6:00pm Intermediate
Tdap vaccine shot Amust
August 2013
greater
less
SIDEWALK CARE

SPORTS
HISTORY
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EXIT
A MAN
STRENGTH.

DIRECTOR OF ADULT
EDUCATION/FAMILY LITERACY