

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name Lauderdale High SchoolOther names/site number Lauderdale County Training School; Ripley Junior High SchoolName of related multiple
property listingN/A

(Remove "N/A" if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)

2. LocationStreet & Number: 185 Spring StreetCity or town: RipleyState: TNCounty: LauderdaleNot For Publication: ☐N/AVicinity: ☐N/AZip: 38063**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

☐

national

☐

statewide

☒

local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

☒

A

☐

B

☐

C

☐

D

Signature of certifying official/Title:**Date**Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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

Signature of Commenting Official:**Date****Title:****State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal
Government**

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,

Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private ☒
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,

Name of Property

Tennessee

County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, concrete, metal, glass

Narrative Description

The Lauderdale High School is located at 185 Spring Street in Ripley, the county seat of Lauderdale County, Tennessee (population 7,800 in 2020). Sitting within a 2.21-acre lot, the Lauderdale High School is an irregularly shaped, rambling building comprised of remnants of a 1912 two-story rectangular building with ca. 1950 additions on the north, east, south, and partial west sides. The building has a flat roof, brick veneer exterior, and a cast concrete foundation. The ca. 1950 additions give the building an International Style aesthetic, common for midcentury school buildings. Though vacant, the building is representative of midcentury public-school architecture and is consistent with other historic African American schools that have changed to accommodate new uses for their communities.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

Site and Setting

The site is southeast of the Downtown Ripley commercial area in a neighborhood that was historically the African American part of the city. Lauderdale High School maintains its sense of isolation from the city center. The Lauderdale High School is on a 2.21-acre lot. The High School building is sited at the west side of the property, just northeast of Spring Street. The east side of the property contains a concrete slab, which is the former location of the Gymnasium, which was recently demolished. The property is immediately surrounded by single-family dwellings, most constructed between ca. 1920 and ca. 1940, and several constructed between ca. 1940 and ca. 1970. A wooded area provides cover and natural separation on the north elevation of the property and partially on the east as well. Major roads are U.S. Highway 51 and State Route 209 to the east and curving north in a westerly direction, and State Route 19 (also known as the Tina Turner Highway) to the south. The Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge and Fort Pillow State Historical Park (NR listed April 11, 1973) are located to the northwest and southwest respectively.

Lauderdale High School (remnants of 1912 building, ca. 1950 additions, contributing building)

ARCHITECTURAL EVOLUTION

Lauderdale High School, as it stands today, is primarily comprised of ca. 1950 additions that are believed to have been built around remnants of the 1912 Lauderdale County Training School. The 1912 school was a two-story brick building sited at an angle to Spring Street (see Figures 2, 3, and 7). Though written documentation suggests an entirely new school was built c. 1950, oral history interviews from community members indicate that the c. 1950 additions were built around the 1912 school to facilitate the school's transition from the Lauderdale County Training School to the Lauderdale High School. As part of the process, the 1912 school was heavily altered, including removing the second story and altering fenestration patterns, to facilitate its new use as the auditorium for the high school. On the exterior, the remnants of the 1912 school are evident on the building's rear elevation where the exterior brick is noticeably different from the brick veneer of the 1950s additions as well as bricked-in windows that appear to match the size of windows from the original school. The 1912 building's brick exterior walls are also visible in the interior, contrasting with the concrete block that was used to build the 1950s additions. The roof system of the auditorium, as seen from aerial views, also matches the footprint of the building as shown on sanborn fire insurance maps (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

CURRENT EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The ca. 1950 additions create a rambling, single-story building with an exterior of six-course common bond brick, flat roof, and a concrete foundation. A set of four concrete steps leads from the sidewalk to a wide concrete walkway, which leads to the entrance. A course of soldier course brick is at the roofline. The façade (south elevation) has four wings. The southwest wing has two window bays with stone sills in configurations of hopper over fixed four-over-four, metal windows with the bottom two lights both opening on a hinge. The central façade is stepped back from the southwest wing and has a central recessed entrance of two pairs of double aluminum or steel doors with two horizontal or four-lights. The entrance is flanked by four- or eight-light sidelights and a six-light transom is overhead. Almost all the windows are covered by plywood. Over the recessed entrance is the text: "RIPLEY [space] HIGH SCHOOL." As this became the Ripley Junior High

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

School after 1969, the missing word is "JUNIOR." On the west side of the recessed entrance is a bay of windows with stone sills in configurations of hopper over fixed four-over-four, metal windows with the bottom two lights both opening on a hinge. Connecting the entrance wing to the rambling central east and southeast wings is a small hyphen wing with hopper over fixed four-over-four light metal windows with bottom two lights both opening on a hinge and a stone sill. An air conditioning unit has been inserted into the bottom two lights. Another window bay has a smaller three-light hopper transom fixed window with a stone sill. The central east wing has a raised concrete foundation and two window bays with stone sills in configurations of hopper over fixed four-over-four, metal windows with the bottom two lights both opening on a hinge. The southeast wing has three window bays with stone sills in configurations of hopper over fixed four-over-four, metal windows with bottom two lights both opening on a hinge.

The east elevation of the southeast wing has a raised concrete foundation and an uninterrupted six-course common bond brick exterior with a central recessed entrance with a set of double aluminum or metal and single-light doors with a two-light transom overhead. A set of three concrete step leads to the door.

The west elevation of the southwest wing has an uninterrupted six-course common bond brick exterior with a central recessed entrance with a set of double aluminum or metal and single-light doors with a two-light transom overhead.

A ca. 1950 rectangular wing with a flat roof has been added to the north elevation of the 1912 building. The exterior is brick with a window bay flanking the central entrance, but the windows have been boarded over. The central entrance has a single or set of double aluminum doors under a flat concrete awning.

INTERIOR

The interior's condition has deteriorated considerably, but the integrity and layout remain intact. The interior has concrete floors, concrete block walls, and exposed rafters in the ceilings. The interior doors are a combination of two-light and two-panel, single-light and single-panel, and two-panel wood doors. The center of the school is the 1912 building, previously used as an auditorium, and the original brick elevations are intact and visible. The lobby opens with offices on both sides and facing the auditorium. The west office has a trophy case with double fifteen-light glass and wood doors on the exterior. The hallways have two elevations, separated by three steps with metal handrails in the middle of the stairs and on each wall. The classrooms have coat racks, exposed conduits, and ca. 1950 hanging light fixtures. The classrooms have secondary entrances that connect them to the adjacent classroom. The restrooms have midcentury stalls and fixtures. The auditorium is the original 1912 building and is enclosed by the original brick elevations. The stage has fallen in, but it is flanked by retrofitted cement block wings to access each side of the stage and provide storage.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,

Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

☐

- ☒ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE-BLACK

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

c. 1950-1969

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Lauderdale High School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, at the local level of significance in the areas of Ethnic Heritage-Black, Education, and Social History. Originally constructed as a two-story brick building in 1912 for Lauderdale County's African American children, the school was heavily modified and expanded ca. 1950 and reopened as the Lauderdale High School. Lauderdale High School is representative of the equalization movement, a term used to describe southern white officials' efforts to circumvent desegregation through increased funding for African American schools and construction of modern facilities. Lauderdale High School is a significant part of local African American and community history. The period of significance is ca. 1950-1969, corresponding respectively to the building's transition to a public high school and closure fifteen years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Though the building includes portions of the 1912 school, this earlier era prior to ca. 1950 is excluded from the period of significance due to the lack of integrity to convey that early history as the 1912 school was partially demolished and extensively altered when the additions were built around it ca. 1950. Lauderdale High School meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration A as it is currently owned by a religious organization, but it is nominated for its historical significance, irrespective of its current ownership.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Like their counterparts across the country, Black Tennesseans had few educational opportunities in the one-hundred-fifty years before the Supreme Court mandated integration. As the Civil War came to an end, Tennesseans moved quickly to resume education that had been stalled for much of the war. The Senate received a resolution in April 1865 to establish a system of free "common" schools throughout the state, and after amendments and much discussion, the resolution became law in March 1867. Although free to all school-age children, schools were required to teach Black and white students separately. The law was not enacted for nearly two years due to significant opposition, with extending educational opportunities to Black children receiving the "most violent" pushback.¹ Funds for African American education were allotted at the discretion of the state government and local school boards, and the paltry capital offered reflected the fear among white populations that "an educated black populace would challenge white authority and grow discontented with work in farm labor and domestic service."²

Undeterred from such setbacks, Black educators and parents worked to create their own schools. From the Reconstruction era to the mid-twentieth century, African Americans sought various fundraising initiatives and the support of philanthropists, most notably Sears and Roebuck magnate Julius Rosenwald, to build

¹ *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present; Together With an Historical And a Biographical Sketch of Maury, Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson, Bedford And Marshall Counties* (Nashville, Tenn.: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886) 431-432. Retrieved from <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008728820/Home>

² "Preserving African American Historic Places: Suggestions and Sources," *MTSU Center for Historic Preservation*, February 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.mtsuhistpres.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Preserving-African-American-Historic-Places.pdf>

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

schools in their communities.³ Other options were the establishment of training schools, which the 1923 *A Study of Training Schools for Negroes in the South* dates to the 1911-1912 congressional session.⁴ Training schools for African Americans were initially focused on preparatory skills for keeping a home and farm, echoing Booker T. Washington's call for Black Americans to prioritize industrial skills over matters of social equality.⁵ Training schools sought to provide practical services to all members of the Black community, and many utilized mothers' clubs, school improvement clubs, and farmers' clubs to achieve this.⁶ Washington's campaign of racial uplift was integral to the schools' planning and curricula, holding that the status of Black people depended on "the highest intelligence and development of all."⁷ These principles sought to reassure white citizens that education would bring a "better class of [Black] renters to the community," rather than topple the racial hierarchy.⁸

Lauderdale County's Training School was located at 185 Spring Street in Ripley. The building's construction date varies but is most likely 1912 based on the 1942 correction to the 1927 Sanborn map.⁹ The Vocational Agricultural Department accepted the Lauderdale County Training School in 1919 after the addition of ninth and tenth grades, and in 1927 the institution became a full four-year high school.¹⁰ In the tradition of other training schools, the Lauderdale County Training School emphasized practical skills and acted as a community center for the Black residents and received tremendous support from the community. The Farmer's Conference was a community-wide event every March and featured spelling bees for students and programs for Black landowners to discuss farming improvements. The sewing machines were donated by the local P.T.A., and the school bus, built from the bed of a 1929 Chevy truck, was owned and operated by a Rev.

³ "Preserving African American Historic Places," 51.

⁴ Leo Mortimer Favrot, *A Study of County Training Schools for Negroes in the South* (Charlottesville, Va.: 1923), 8.

⁵ "Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech," *History Matters*. Retrieved from <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/>

⁶ *The Negro Rural School and its Relation to the Community*, Issued by the Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (Tuskegee, AL: 1915) 71-72. Retrieved from <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32435009114091&view=1up&seq=82&q1=raise>

⁷ "Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech," *History Matters*.

⁸ *The Negro Rural School and its Relation to the Community*, 78.

⁹ The 1912 date is corroborated in Kate Johnston Peters 1957 book *Lauderdale County from Earliest Times: An Intimate and Informal Account of the Towns and Communities, its Families and Famous Individuals, Written by Descendants of its Pioneer Citizens*, 105, 101. In the text, she relates that the Lauderdale County Training School was built after Ripley's first high school on Jefferson Street, which was constructed in 1908 or 1910 (both are stated in the book); Kate Johnston Peters, *Lauderdale County from Earliest Times: An Intimate and Informal Account of the Towns and Communities and Famous Individuals, Written by Descendants of its Pioneer Citizens* (Ripley, TN: Sugar Hill Lauderdale County Library, 1957) Hathi Trust Digital Library. Retrieved from <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/102088023>; Magnolia Murray Johnson, "Lauderdale County Training School," Lauderdale High School Alumni Association. Retrieved from <http://www.lhsripleyalumni.org/index.php/order-merchandise>; Billie Morris, *A Pictorial History of Lauderdale County* (Brookfield, MO: The Donning Company Publishers, 2020) 221.

¹⁰ Johnson, "Lauderdale County Training School," Lauderdale High School Alumni Association; Morris, *A Pictorial History of Lauderdale County*, 162, 221.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

L. Nelson. The families that relied on the bus, as well as the teachers at the Henning Palmer Turner Grammar School, supposedly paid a service fee each month to support it before the school board provided them to the county, and it was affectionately referred to as “Noah’s Ark.”¹¹

African American schools received increased funding in the years 1930 to 1950, largely due to the “Great Migration” of Black workers to the North and legal challenges to racial segregation and inequality across the South.¹² The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) brought several lawsuits disputing unequal pay for Black teachers and supported other lawsuits demanding “racial equalization in higher education facilities” in the late 1940s, causing white politicians and school officials anxiety about their resolutions. The post-World War II United States had already been shaped by court victories across the country in areas such as voting in state primaries and desegregation on interstate transportation, and maintenance of segregated schools no longer looked guaranteed.¹³

To stave off school desegregation, white politicians unveiled campaigns to invest in Black schools so that “separate but equal” was closer to reality. This campaign, coined the “equalization school movement” by historian Rebekah Dobrasko, refers to schools built or improved in the 1950s and 1960s to ensure segregation was maintained in schools.¹⁴ Historic preservationist Savannah Grandey Knies applied Dobrasko’s research in her own documentation of Tennessee equalization schools and noted that Tennessee began drawing funds for funds for equalization schools from the state’s first retail sales tax in 1947, a few years earlier than the schools discussed in Dobrasko’s work.¹⁵ In his 1949 speech to the 76th General Assembly, Governor Jim Nance McCord listed the efforts to improve Tennessee’s public school system as one of his administration’s greatest achievements, and clarifies that “[t]hese progressive changes were financed by and made possible by the retail [s]ales [t]ax.”¹⁶ As Dobrasko notes, such campaigns were often cloaked in language about improving education for all students but were essentially aimed at maintaining segregation.¹⁷ Governor McCord went on to acknowledge the controversy over the campaign’s intentions

¹¹ Johnson, “Lauderdale County Training School,” Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

¹² “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” *Race Forward*. Retrieved from <https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/historical-timeline-public-education-us>; Rebekah Dobrasko, “Architectural Survey of Charleston County’s School Equalization Program 1951-1955,” University of South Carolina Public History Program (April 2005), 8. Retrieved from <http://nationalregister.sc.gov/SurveyReports/EqualizationSchoolsCharleston.pdf>

¹³ Dobrasko, “Architectural Survey of Charleston County’s School Equalization Program 1951-1955,” 8.

¹⁴ Sophia Dembling, “Equalization Schools: A Lesson in Education and Civil Rights,” National Trust for Historic Preservation (September 3, 2015). Retrieved from https://savingplaces.org/stories/equalization-schools-a-lesson-in-education-and-civil-rights/#.YS0t_o5KiM8

¹⁵ Grandey Knies is a Historic Preservationist at Middle Tennessee State University’s renowned Center for Historic Preservation and examines Tennessee equalization schools on her website. Savannah Grandey Knies, Tennessee’s Equalization Schools. Retrieved from <https://tnequalizationschools.com/>

¹⁶ Governor Jim Nance McCord, Speech to the 76th General Assembly, Wednesday, January 5, 1949, *House Journal*, Tennessee General Assembly, 35. Retrieved from <https://www.capitol.tn.gov/Archives/House/76GA/Publications/web%20journ%201949/01051949rd3.pdf>

¹⁷ Dembling, “Equalization Schools: A Lesson in Education and Civil Rights,” National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

later in the speech, specifically regarding the support of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, stating, :This compact was not intended as a subterfuge designed to perpetuate segregation, or to avoid the civil obligations of the States in the field of education as the professional leaders of the National Association for the Advancement [for] the Colored People, most of whom reside in the North, would have you believe.”¹⁸ Governor McCord’s speech goes on to address the significance of education in states’ rights, stating:

We talk much of States rights, and too little about the responsibilities of the States. I believe in States rights, but I also believe that the best way to preserve these rights is for the States to accept and discharge their responsibilities. This is particularly true in the field of education. Here in the Southland we have many problems that are common to all the Southern States. They are regional in character. They are too large for any one State to handle by itself. Far too often in the past we have accepted the premise that a problem too large for one State could only be handled by the Federal Government. Faced with these problems we have yielded our reserve areas in exchange for Federal financial support. The field of education is the last great domain reserved to the States which, as of today, has not been surrendered to the national government. Let us protect and preserve this domain by joining with our sister States of the South in the discharge of our responsibilities to the youth of the South under this proposed compact for regional education.¹⁹

Governor McCord’s assertion that education was “the last great domain reserved to the States” is prescient as southern lawmakers repeatedly intertwined states’ rights and education. These sentiments regarding states’ rights vs. federal oversight were echoed later in 1956’s “Declaration of Constitutional Principles,” better known as the Southern Manifesto. The Manifesto, introduced by chairman of the House Rules Committee Howard Smith, accused the Supreme Court of impeding states’ rights and urged southerners to lawfully resist the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.²⁰ Though southern politicians often did as McCord and tried to mask their concerns in the language of states’ rights, in reality their grievances were about the larger fight of Civil Rights and racial integration in southern society. Their fight to keep education within the domain of ‘states rights’ was really about preserving racial segregation as the status quo. As scholars have looked back at desegregation as the greatest challenge faced by the South since the Civil War, it is impossible to divorce Governor McCord’s words from the challenges to segregated schools at the time.²¹

¹⁸ Governor Jim Nance McCord, Speech to the 76th General Assembly, Wednesday, January 5, 1949, *House Journal*, Tennessee General Assembly, 35, 37.

¹⁹ Governor Jim Nance McCord, Speech to the 76th General Assembly, Wednesday, January 5, 1949, *House Journal*, Tennessee General Assembly, 38-39.

²⁰ “The Southern Manifesto of 1956,” *History, Art & Archives, United States House of Representatives*. Retrieved from <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1951-2000/The-Southern-Manifesto-of-1956/>

²¹ “Preserving African American Historic Places: Suggestions and Sources,” *MTSU Center for Historic Preservation*, 59.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

1950 marked the final year of the Lauderdale County Training School, and the “new” Lauderdale High School was opened in 1951.²² Much like the Training School, details about the high school’s construction are muddled.²³ The community maintains that the 1912 building is extant beneath the high school, despite other sources implying that it no longer stands. Physical evidence on-site indicates the community’s assertion is accurate.²⁴ Regardless, the facilities for Black students in Ripley were greatly expanded from the original two-story school. The Lauderdale High School is a restrained International Style building, popular for public schools of the time, with single-story brick buildings with flat roofs, horizontal massing, and bands of windows along classrooms that are adjacent to long interior hallways.²⁵ Dobrasko notes that such architectural designs allowed for additions as needed, increased safety, and utilized materials and features that improved lighting and ventilation for the classrooms.²⁶

Dobrasko asserts that despite all the resources put into improving or building schools for Black students, the schools remained unequal to those for white students. Libraries, gymnasiums, and athletic fields were not provided for each school, and curricula remained outdated.²⁷ According to a 1952 inspection report of Lauderdale High School (referred to as Lauderdale County Training School despite becoming a high school the year before) by Regional Supervisor Morgan Christian, the school possessed generally satisfactory amenities. The report complimented the campus’s auditorium, lunchroom, home economics department, science laboratory, and a “splendid new physical plant,” courtesy of Superintendent Eric Owen, Lauderdale County Board of Education, and the Lauderdale County Court. It also highlighted areas for improvement, including a larger and better curated library and a better arrangement for the agriculture lecture room and shop across the street. The school’s greatest need, according to the supervisor, was a new gymnasium. The Lauderdale High School was equipped with a gymnasium constructed ca. 1940, but by the time of the inspection it was “antiquated and in a very poor condition.” The supervisor expressed his hope that this

²² Johnson, “Lauderdale County Training School,” Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

²³ As the exact dates of construction are unknown, it is possible that the additions were started in the late 1940s, after the establishment of the 1947 retail sales tax.

²⁴ Exterior photos of the property reveal sections of the building that appear much older than the rest, and aerial views show a section in the middle of the property that matches the 1912 building’s footprint on the 1927 Sanborn map. Physical details on the site, such as the 1912 school’s brick original exterior walls and bricked-in windows provides evidence to support community member’s assertion that the 1950 school was built as additions around the 1912 school, though it is evident that the 1912 school was heavily altered in the process. The maps included in this nomination note what the community considers the original 1912 building.

²⁵ Dembling, “Equalization Schools: A Lesson in Education and Civil Rights,” National Trust for Historic Preservation; Johnson, “Lauderdale County Training School,” Lauderdale High School Alumni Association; Grandey Knies, Tennessee’s Equalization Schools.

²⁶ Rebekah Dobrasko, “School Architecture,” South Carolina’s Equalization Schools 1951-1960. Retrieved from <http://www.scequalizationschools.org/school-architecture.html>

²⁷ Rebekah Dobrasko, “Upholding ‘Separate But Equal:’ South Carolina’s School Equalization Program, 1951-1955,” Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History, University of South Carolina (2005), 37. Retrieved from http://www.scequalizationschools.org/uploads/1/1/7/0/11700188/hist_799_thesis_final_draft.pdf

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

would be a top priority for the superintendent and Board of Education.²⁸ Another area the school lacked resources was in transportation, as the Board of Education did not initially provide buses for students.²⁹ Rather, a Lauderdale High School Alumni pamphlet notes that Principal Brent and William Mays, principal of the Palmer-Turner elementary school in nearby Henning, used their own buses to transport students to and from the school.³⁰

While educational status of Black students did not compare with that of their white counterparts during segregation, the significance of African American schools has been lauded by “esteemed alumni and teachers whose formative years were spent in these schools,” illustrating the significance of such spaces in the Black community.³¹ The Ministerial Alliance donated a flagpole to the school, with the names of its members engraved in stone. The school’s alumni association notes that the school song “was sung with gusto and pride” by all, and the “sting of the ‘Yellow Jackets’ was to be feared” by opposing teams. During its tenure, the high school boasted a talented girls’ basketball team, which had the distinction of winning the State Championship at the Blair T. Hunt Gymnasium in Memphis one year. Led by Coach Saul E. Moore Jr., himself a graduate of the Lauderdale County Training School, the boys’ teams won eight district and six regional championships during his twenty-five-year tenure, and the Ripley High School gym was dedicated to his memory in 2005.³² The alumni booklet notes that the popular sports teams at the school attracted both Black and white patrons, placing the high school in a long line of African American schools that used sports to negotiate the racial hierarchy.³³

The increased support of African American schools did not keep the tide from turning, and the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* ushered in the beginning of desegregation in public schools. Southern schools did not move quickly to conform to this directive, but rather sought out “legal

²⁸ Inspection Report from Morgan Christian, Regional Supervisor, to Mr. J. Clinton Brent, Lauderdale County Training School Principal, April 25, 1952, Tennessee Department of Education Records, Record Group 273, Box 63, Folder 75, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee, 1-2.

²⁹ The Lauderdale High School Alumni Association pamphlet notes that the gymnasium was “built with student labor working through the National Youth [Administration] (NYA), a government program of President Franklin Roosevelt. *A Pictorial History* indicates the gymnasium was constructed during Principal Johnson’s tenure, which would support a ca. 1940 construction date and fall within the NYA’s tenure of operation from 1935 until 1944. However, the gymnasium does not have the traditional date stone one would expect to find with such works, and efforts to substantiate this claim have been unsuccessful. Johnson, “Lauderdale County Training School,” Lauderdale High School Alumni Association; “National Youth Administration (NYA) (1935),” *The Living New Deal*. Retrieved from <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/national-youth-administration-nya-1935/>; Morris, *A Pictorial History of Lauderdale County*, 221.

³⁰ Johnson, “Lauderdale County Training School,” Lauderdale High School Alumni Association; Mary Reid Lake, “Historical Sketch,” Dedication of Palmer-Turner School, Henning, Tennessee, July 21, 1950, Tennessee Department of Education Records, Record Group 273, Box 1, Folder 28, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

³¹ “Preserving African American Historic Places,” *MTSU Center for Historic Preservation*, 51-52.

³² Morris, *A Pictorial History of Lauderdale County*, 221.

³³ “Sports: Leveling the Playing Field,” *National Museum of African American History & Culture*. Retrieved from <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/sports>

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

measures admittedly designed to circumvent the mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education*.³⁴ Tennessee's State Code was modified four times in 1955 to enforce segregation despite the *Brown v. Board* ruling a year earlier.³⁵ School districts in the Nashville metropolitan area and elsewhere redrew school districts to maintain all-white districts without explicitly barring Black students.³⁶ Others focused on admission prioritizing "scholastic aptitude," "psychological aptitude" and "free choice" rather than race, with the goal being an all-white student body.³⁷ Still others across the southern states reintroduced "one or more of the multiple variations of the pre-Civil War doctrines of interposition and nullification" to stave off integrating the schools.³⁸

School across the state stalled adherence to the decision by calling for additional instructions from the Court, and this eventually came in the follow-up ruling "Brown II." The 1955 ruling allowed school districts to determine desegregation plans locally, but the Board of Education again resisted taking formal action to ensure this was achieved.³⁹ Even after school districts promised compliance, rollout was slow. Many districts proposed desegregating a single grade at a time, beginning with first grade.⁴⁰ The result of such varied methods for compliance has "[given] every Tennessee county and its many individual schools a distinct integration history."⁴¹

Despite successful integration of some schools, parts of West Tennessee continued to resist desegregation until faced with consequences. Lauderdale County was among a handful of counties in the state "operating under school zones and plans offering a choice of schools to all students and aimed at [eliminating] segregated schools as soon as additional facilities are provided under consolidation."⁴² In 1968 the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare announced the "cutting off [of] federal school funds to Tipton and Lauderdale counties for falling below federal guidelines for racial integration."⁴³ Desegregation plans for

³⁴ Albert P. Blaustein and Clarence Clyde Ferguson, *Desegregation And the Law: the Meaning And Effect of the School Segregation Cases*, 2d ed. Rev., (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) 240. Retrieved from <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001288158/Home>

³⁵ "School Desegregation in Tennessee: 12 Districts Released from Desegregation Orders 17 Districts Remain Under Court Jurisdiction," Tennessee Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (April 2008), 2. Retrieved from <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/docs/TNDESEGFULL.pdf>

³⁶ "School Desegregation," *Tennessee4Me*. National Endowment for the Humanities. http://www.tn4me.org/article.cfm/a_id/118/minor_id/26/major_id/11/era_id/8

³⁷ Blaustein and Ferguson, *Desegregation and the Law*, 242.

³⁸ Blaustein and Ferguson, *Desegregation and the Law*, 241.

³⁹ John Egerton, "Walking into History: The Beginning of School Desegregation in Nashville," *Southern Spaces*, May 4, 2009. Retrieved from <https://southernspaces.org/2009/walking-history-beginning-school-desegregation-nashville/#:~:text=In%20September%201957%2C%20three%20years,all%20twelve%20grades%20were%20desegregated>

⁴⁰ "School Desegregation," *Tennessee4Me*.

⁴¹ Preserving African American Historic Places," *MTSU Center for Historic Preservation*, 52.

⁴² Bob Gilbert, "Warf Says Integration is Proceeding," *The Jackson Sun*, 10 Nov 1967, 3.

⁴³ "School Aid Loss Blow to Counties," *The Leaf-Chronicle*, Jan 12, 1968, 11.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Lauderdale County and other West Tennessee school systems were finally approved by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare in February of 1969.⁴⁴

The all-Black Lauderdale High School closed in 1969, fifteen years after *Brown v. Board of Education*. Like many other African American schools, Lauderdale High School's Black students were required to integrate the previously all-white Ripley High School.⁴⁵ While some treasured Black educators were given new positions at the consolidated school, many were not. This happened across the state during desegregation, but West Tennessee, particularly Fayette, Haywood, and Lauderdale counties, dismissed and demoted Black teachers at a higher rate than other areas of the state, according to the Race Relations Information Center's report "Displacement of Black Teachers in the Eleven Southern States."⁴⁶ The closure of Black schools also precipitated the loss of mascots, songs, and legacies. The alumni booklet states that the school was "a shelter for agitated emotions" during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and the student body mourned the closure of its beloved school. Years later, the Lauderdale High School Alumni Association expressed the devotion of its former students to the school's memory in the 1985 alumni booklet, noting that it "was precious as an heirloom, as big as the Houston Astrodome and busy as Disney Land."⁴⁷

The Lauderdale High School is a physical document of Lauderdale County's African American educational history and the county's resistance to complying with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. As Grandey Knies astutely recognized, African American schools that were funded in a bid to avoid desegregation are "potentially embarrassing [...] reminders of the lengths to which segregationists used public funds to defy the 1954 *Brown v. Board* ruling."⁴⁸ Although the dismantling of racially segregated spaces was a welcome victory during the Civil Rights Movement, Black Americans have since mourned the loss of spaces that were so integral to their community and history but "lost their economic rationale for existence" after Jim Crow.⁴⁹ Those that continue to exist are mostly invisible because signage and other "architecture of segregation" were dismantled, appropriately, in the Civil Rights Movement.⁵⁰ Out of an estimated ninety schools for African Americans across the state, few buildings still stand.⁵¹ Many have found new uses as community centers or offices, while others have been abandoned.⁵² The Lauderdale High School was the county's lone

⁴⁴ "HEW Puts Chester School Funds Under Knife," *The Jackson Sun*, 14 Feb 1969, 15.

⁴⁵ "Aid Loss Faced by Covington," *The Tennessean*, Feb 10, 1968, 6.

⁴⁶ Doug Hall, "Due to Desegregation, Report Says 'Rougher for Black Teachers in Weststate,'" *The Tennessean*, 22 Dec 1970, 15.

⁴⁷ Johnson, "Lauderdale County Training School," High School Alumni Association.

⁴⁸ Grandey Knies, Tennessee's Equalization Schools.

⁴⁹ Robert R. Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past," *The Public Historian* (Vol. 27, 4), 11-44, Fall 2005, 39. Retrieved from https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=hist_facpub

⁵⁰ Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation," 37-41.

⁵¹ Carey, "African-American High Schools Now Long Gone," *The Tennessee Magazine*.

⁵² Grandey Knies, Tennessee's Equalization Schools.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

high school for Black students and is a significant part of the region's African American and Civil Rights history.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

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Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

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Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

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Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Tennessee State Library and Archives	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): LA-78			

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.21 USGS Quadrangle Ripley South, 414 NE

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1. Latitude: 35.741953	Longitude: -89.524265
2. Latitude: 35.742253	Longitude: -89.523454
3. Latitude: 35.741952	Longitude: -89.522435
4. Latitude: 35.741345	Longitude: -89.522773

Verbal Boundary Description

The Lauderdale High School is at 185 Spring Street, Ripley, Lauderdale County, Tennessee on Lauderdale County Tax Parcel 095B B 024.01. The parcel is 2.21 acres. The property is bounded to the north by wooded lots, to the west by wooded lots and a single-family dwelling, to the south by Spring Street, and the east by wooded lots and a single-family dwelling. These boundaries follow the legal parcel boundaries, which are depicted on the enclosed tax map. The corners of these boundaries roughly correspond to the latitude/longitude coordinates noted above.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire nominated 2.21-acre property, which contains all of the property historically and currently associated with the Lauderdale County Training School and subsequent Lauderdale High School campus during the period of significance.

Lauderdale High School

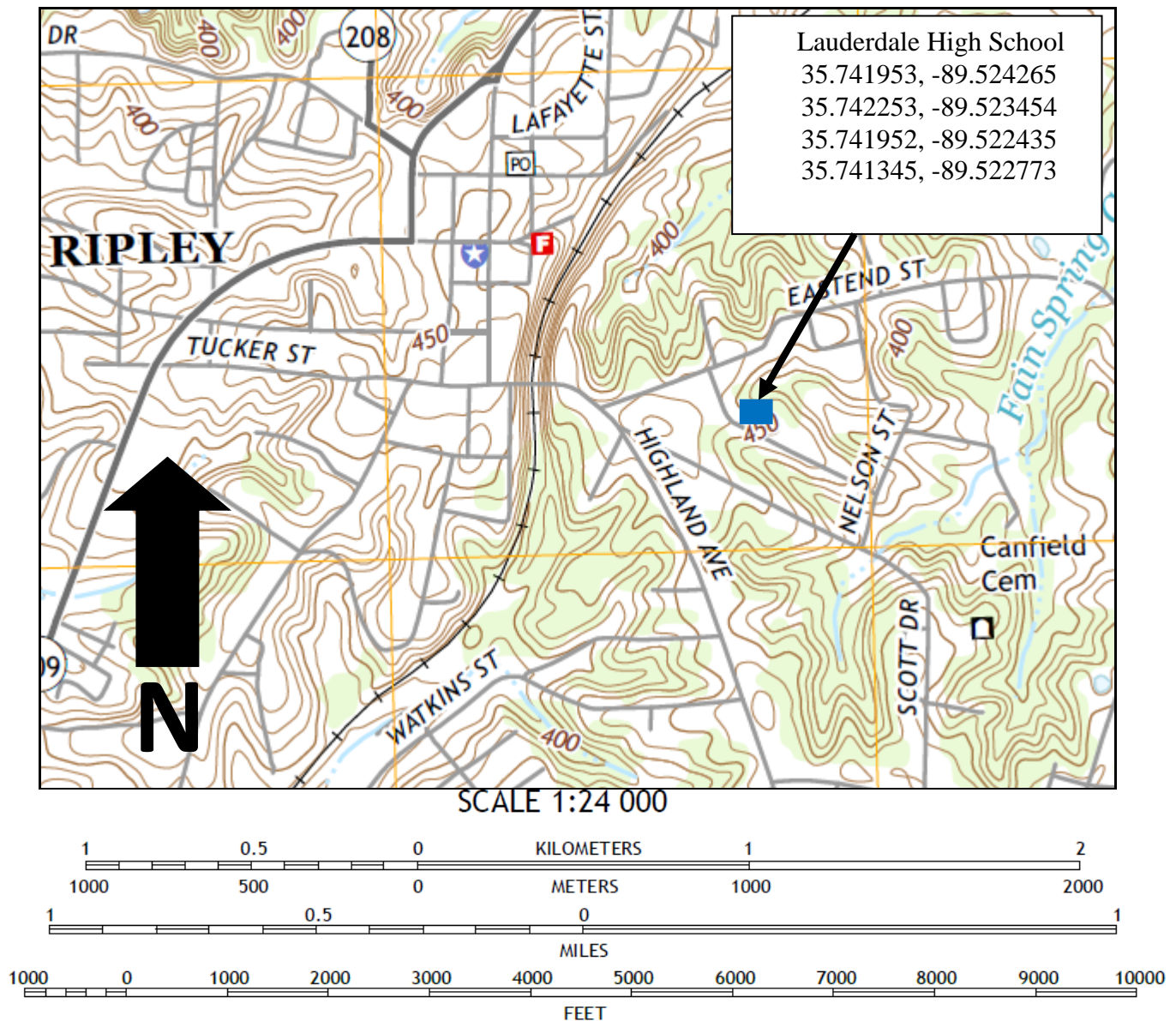
Lauderdale County,

Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

USGS Topographic Map



Ripley South Quadrangle map, 2016. The location of the Lauderdale County Training School is illustrated with a blue square.

Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,
Tennessee
County and State

Name of Property

Boundary Map/Tax Map

Lauderdale County - Parcel: 095B B 024.01



Date: September 28, 2021
County: Lauderdale
Owner: VICTORY TEMPLE
Address: SPRING ST
Parcel Number: 095B B 024.01
Deeded Acreage: 2.21
Calculated Acreage: 0
Date of Imagery: 2016

TN Comptroller - DPA
Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors
State of Tennessee, Comptroller of the Treasury, Department of Property
Assessment (DPA) - Geographic Services
TDOT

The property lines are compiled from information maintained by your local county Assessor's
office but are not to be relied upon as evidence of property ownership in any court of law.



Lauderdale High School

Lauderdale County,

Name of Property

Tennessee

County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name Kelsey Lamkin, Historic Preservation Planner

Organization Memphis Area Association of Governments

Street & Number 8289 Cordova Road, Suite 103 Date September 10, 2021

City or Town Cordova Telephone (901) 729-2871

E-mail klamkin@maagov.org State TN Zip Code 38016

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 map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School
Name of Property
Lauderdale County, Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans Page 24**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Lauderdale High School

City or Vicinity: Ripley

County: Lauderdale

State: Tennessee

Photographer: Kelsey Lamkin

Date Photographed: March 10, 2021

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

- 1 of 42. View of façade and east elevation, view to the northwest.
- 2 of 42. View of central block entrance, view to the north.
- 3 of 42. View of façade and west elevation, view to the northeast.
- 4 of 42. View of west elevation secondary entrance, view to the east.
- 5 of 42. View of west elevation and T wing, view to the southeast.
- 6 of 42. View of west elevation of T wing, view to the northeast.
- 7 of 42. View of 1912 elevation in T wing, view to the southeast.
- 8 of 42. View of rear T wing block, view to the east.
- 9 of 42. View of north elevation of T wing, view to the southeast.
- 10 of 42. View of north elevation and east elevation of T wing, view to the southwest.
- 11 of 42. View of north elevation and east elevation of T wing, view to the west.
- 12 of 42. View of north elevation and east elevation of T wing, view to the southwest.
- 13 of 42. View of east and north elevations, view to the west.
- 14 of 42. Closeup view of central block entrance, view to the northwest.
- 15 of 42. View of demolished gymnasium site, view to the north.
- 16 of 42. Interior view of trophy case outside southwestern office, view to the southwest.
- 17 of 42. Interior view into auditorium, view to the northwest.
- 18 of 42. Interior view across auditorium, view to the northwest.
- 19 of 42. Interior view across auditorium, view to the northeast.
- 20 of 42. Interior view of auditorium storage/café room, view to the north.
- 21 of 42. Interior view of 1912 building façade, view to the northwest.
- 22 of 42. Interior view of west hallway, view to the west.
- 23 of 42. Interior view across classroom 15, view to the northeast.
- 24 of 42. Interior view across classroom 14, view to the northwest.
- 25 of 42. Interior view across classroom 1, view to the southwest.
- 26 of 42. Interior view across classroom 2, view to the southwest.
- 27 of 42. Interior view into southeast office, view to the southeast.
- 28 of 42. Interior view of east hallway, view to the southeast.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans Page 25

- 29 of 42. Interior view across classroom 3, view to the northeast.
- 30 of 42. Interior view across classroom 4, view to the southeast.
- 31 of 42. Interior view across classroom 7, view to the southeast.
- 32 of 42. Interior view across classroom 10, view to the northwest.
- 33 of 42. Interior view into boys' restroom, view to the northeast.
- 34 of 42. Interior view into boys' restroom, view to the northeast.
- 35 of 42. Interior view into girls' restroom, view to the northeast.
- 36 of 42. Interior view across classroom 11, view to the southeast.
- 37 of 42. Interior view across classroom 12, view to the northwest.
- 38 of 42. Interior view across classroom 13, view to the northwest.
- 39 of 42. Interior view into north hallway, view to the south.
- 40 of 42. Interior view into backstage area, view to the west.
- 41 of 42. Interior view into restroom, view to the east.
- 42 of 42. Interior view of 1912 building elevation, view to the southwest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

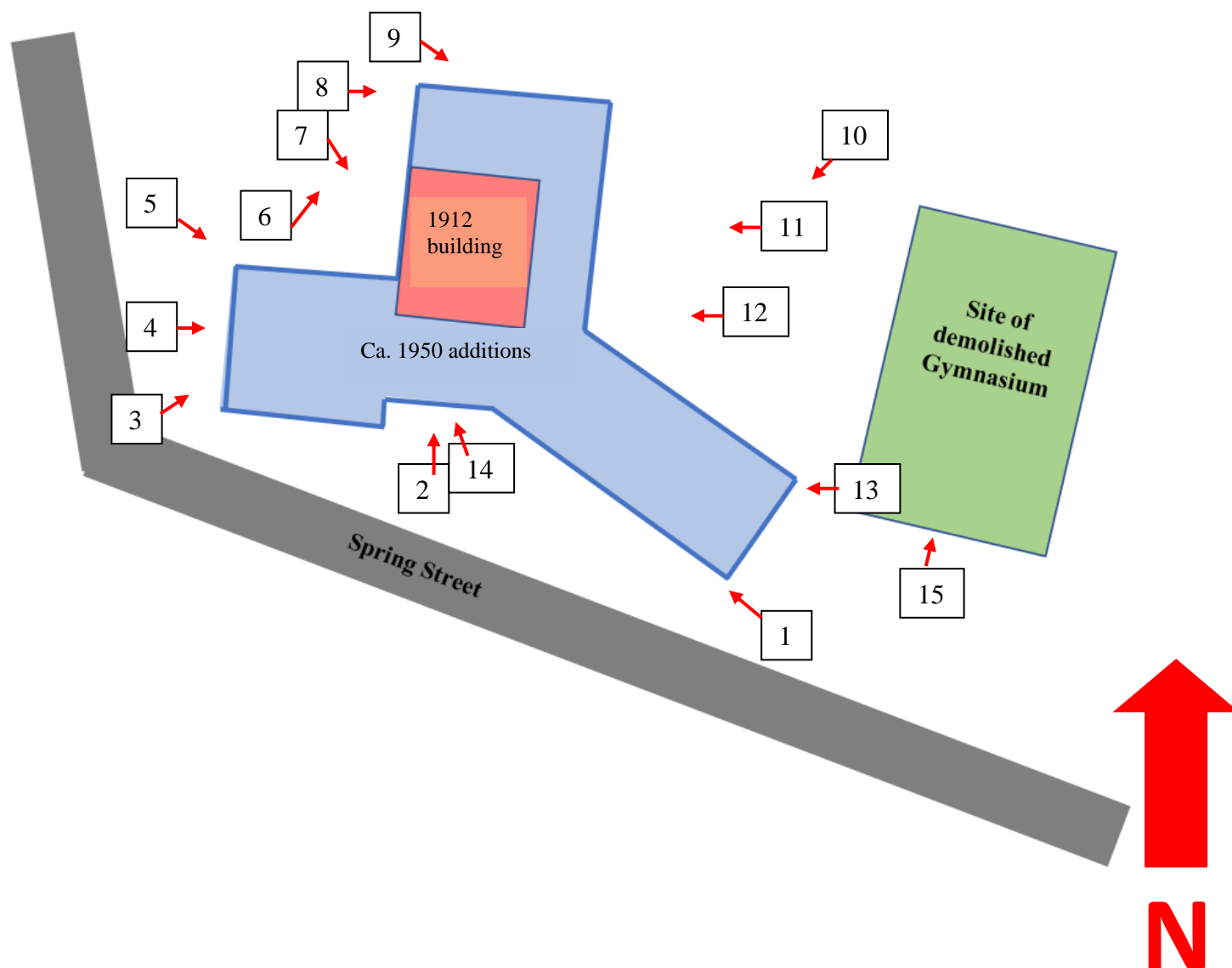
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans

Page 26

Site Plan (Not to Scale)



10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

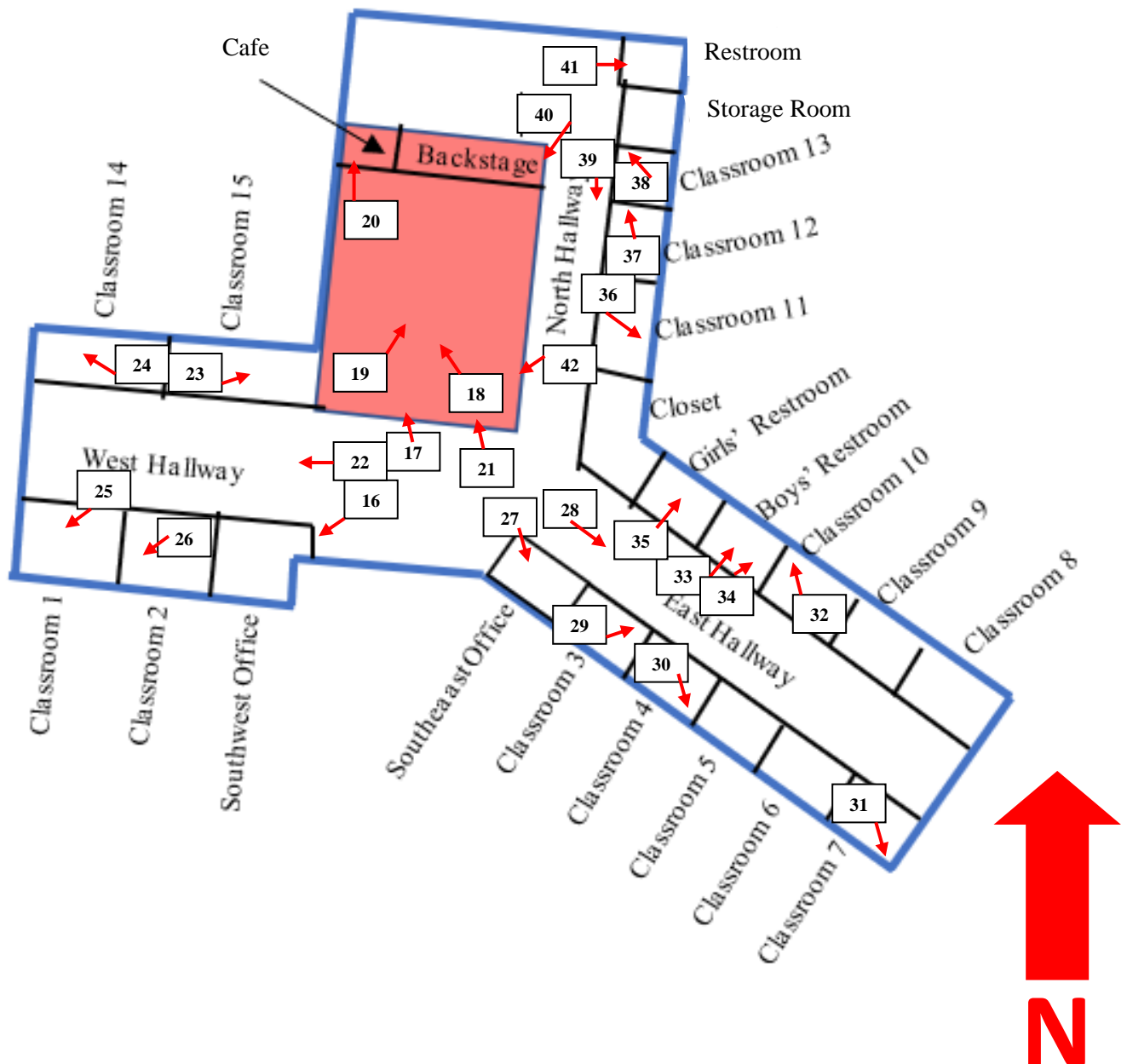
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and PlansPage 27

Floor Plan (Not to Scale)



United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
 Continuation Sheet**

Lauderdale High School
Name of Property
Lauderdale County, Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans Page 28



Figure 1. Aerial view of Lauderdale High School. The 1912 building is outlined in red.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

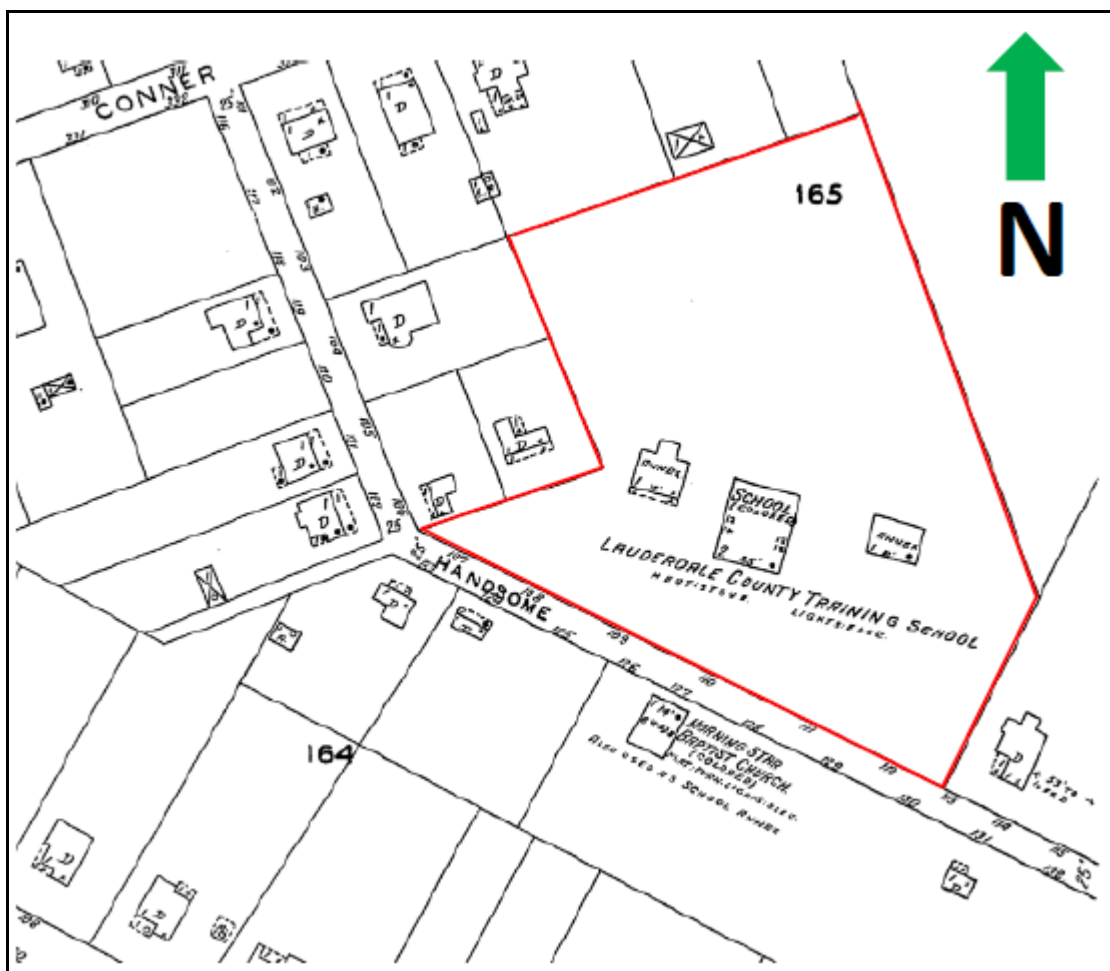
Section number Photos and PlansPage 29

Figure 2. 1927 Sanborn map showing the location of the Lauderdale County Training School, later the Lauderdale High School site, in red.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

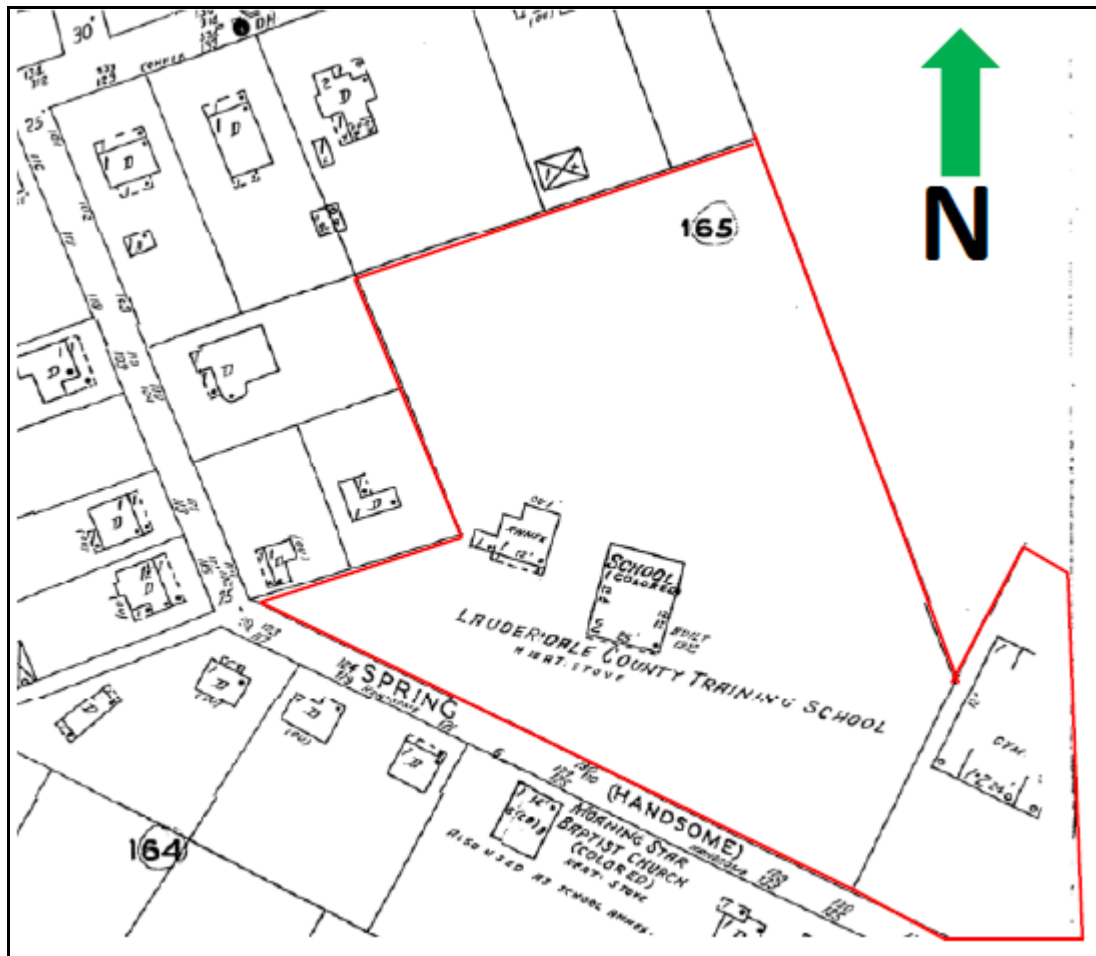
Section number Photos and PlansPage 30

Figure 3. 1942 correction of 1927 Sanborn map showing the location of the Lauderdale County Training School, later the Lauderdale High School site, in red. Sanborn map cuts off part of gymnasium.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

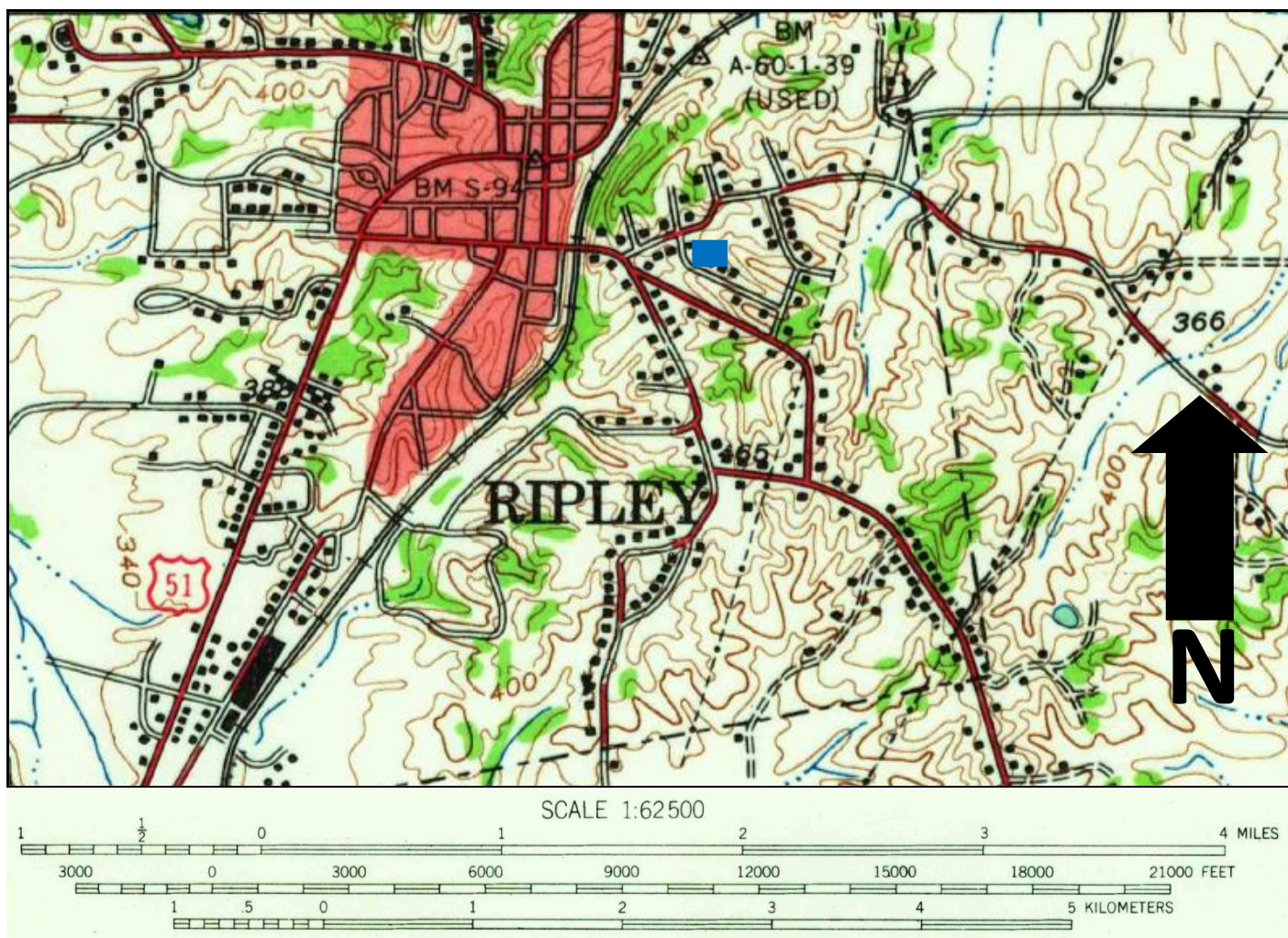
Section number Photos and PlansPage 31

Figure 4. Rialto Quadrangle map, 1961. The location of the Lauderdale High School is illustrated with a blue square.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

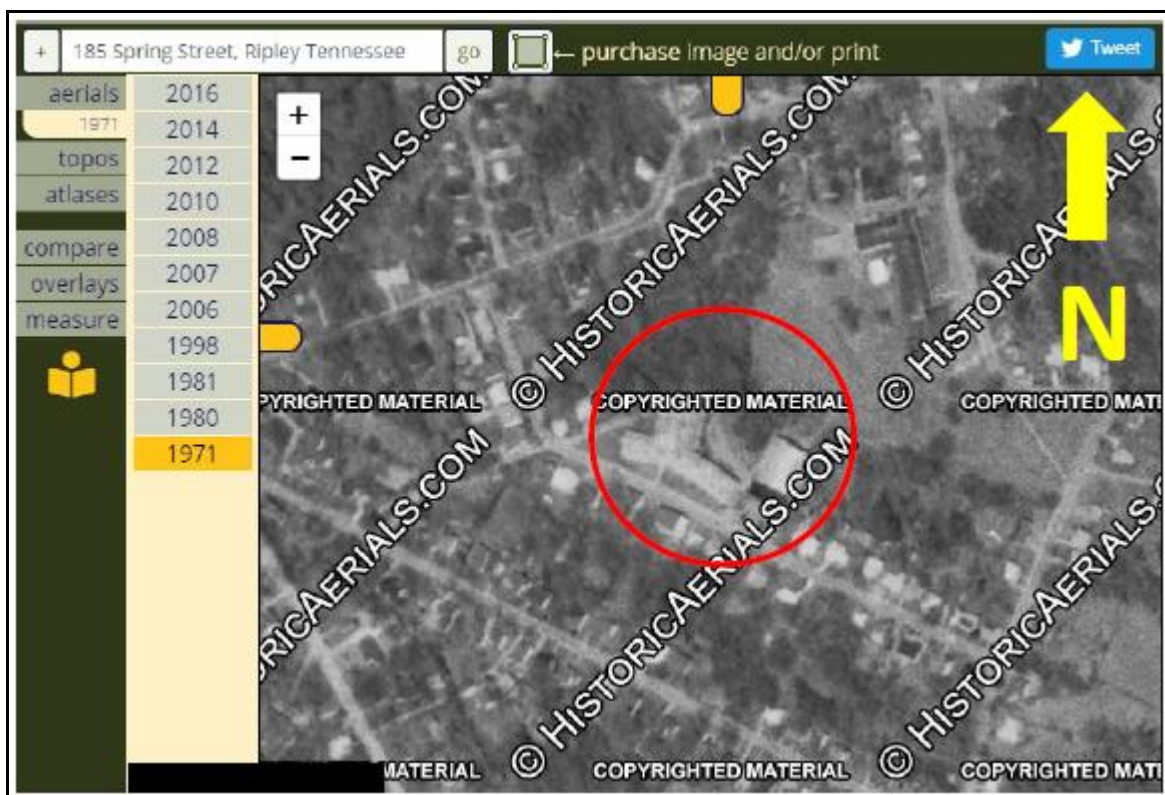
Section number Photos and PlansPage 32

Figure 5. 1971 aerial view of the Lauderdale High School, circled in red. Note how little the immediate area has changed since 1971. Courtesy of historicaerials.com

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

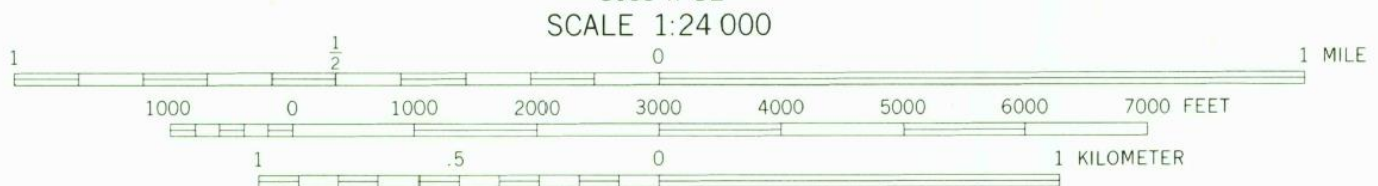
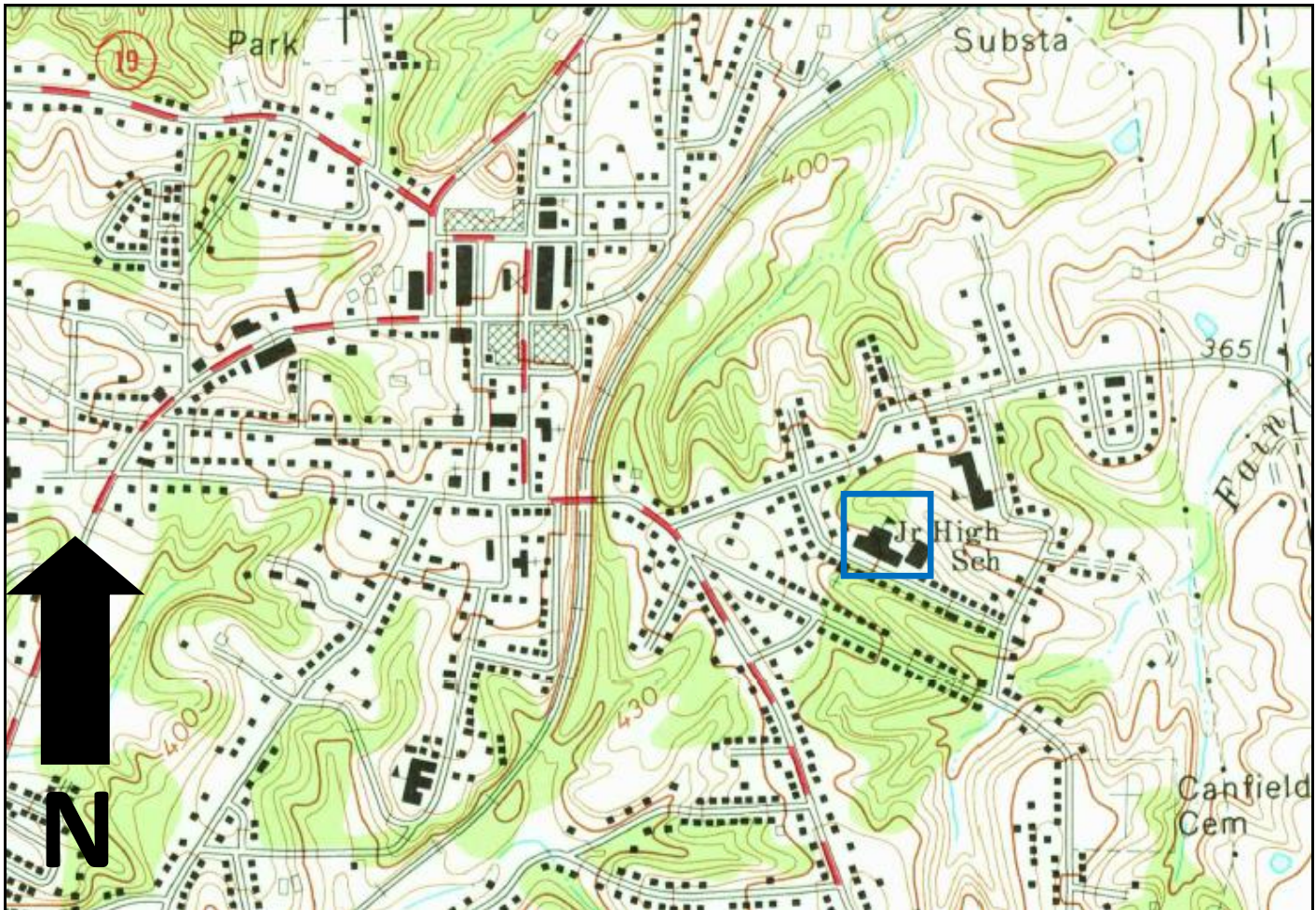
Section number Photos and PlansPage 33

Figure 6. Ripley South Quadrangle map, 1972. The location of the Lauderdale High School is outlined in blue.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans

Page 34



Figure 7. Lauderdale County Training School, ca. 1920. Courtesy of Billie Morris.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

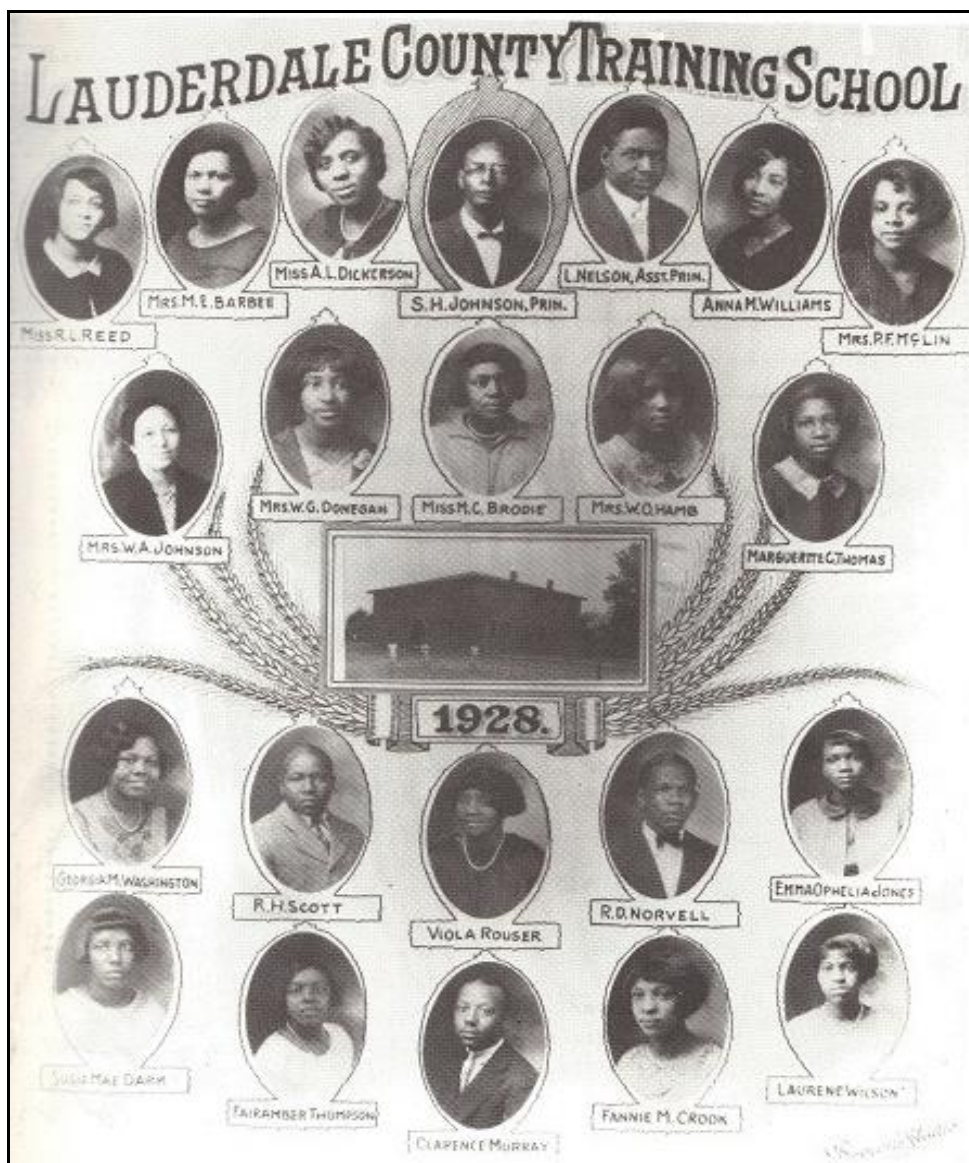
Section number Photos and PlansPage 35

Figure 8. The graduating class of 1928. This was the first graduating class after the Lauderdale County Training School became a four-year high school. Courtesy of Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Lauderdale High School
Name of Property
Lauderdale County, Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans Page 36



Figure 9. New Farmers of America agricultural training, undated. Courtesy of Billie Morris.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and PlansPage 37

Figure 10. The school bus, "Noah's Ark," converted from a 1929 Chevy truck, ca. 1940. Courtesy of Billie Morris.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

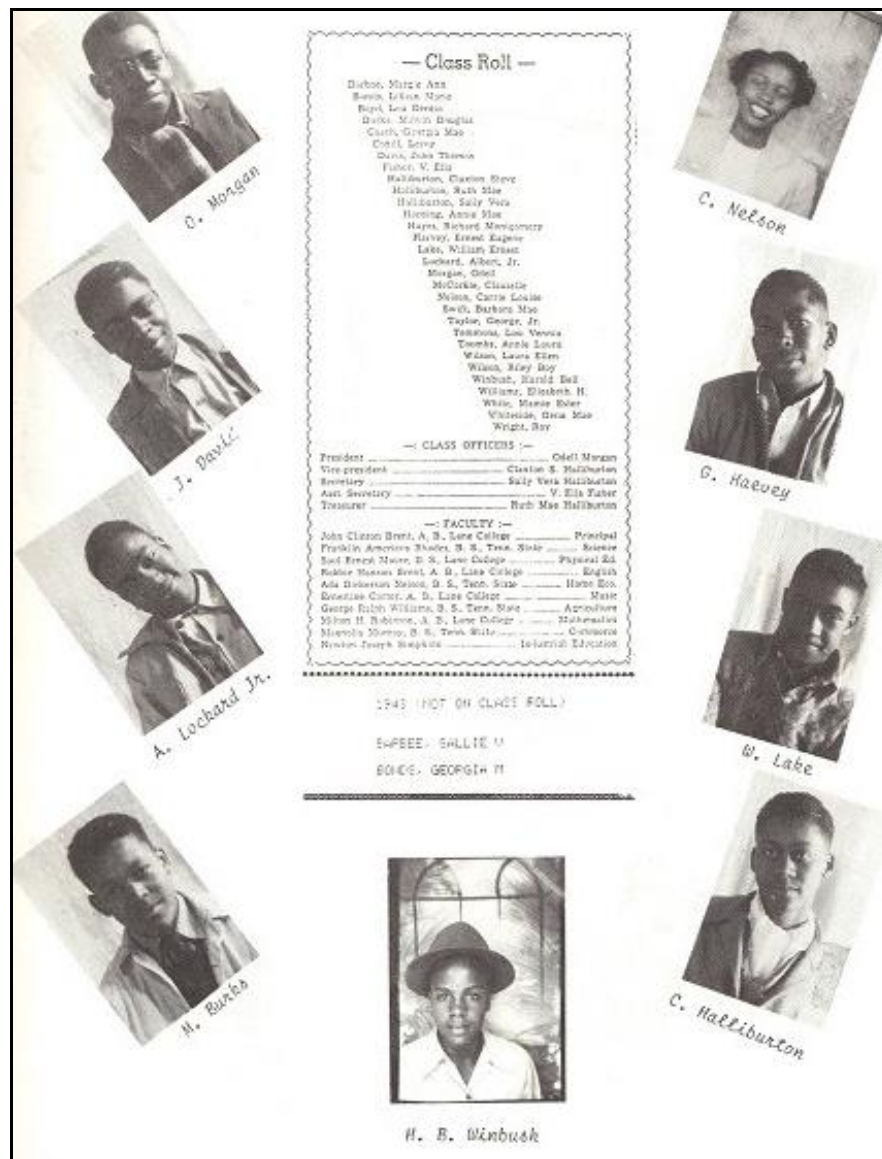
Page 38

Figure 11. Class Roll for 1948. Courtesy of Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans

Page 39



Figure 12. Students in front of the Lauderdale High School, ca. 1960. Courtesy of Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and Plans

Page 40



Figure 13. Gloria Reed, Frances Taylor, Mary Copeland, and Flossie Taylor in a classroom at Lauderdale High School, 1968.
Courtesy of Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and PlansPage 41

Figure 14. Girls basketball team with Coach Levi D. Moore, ca. 1960. Courtesy of Billie Morris.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

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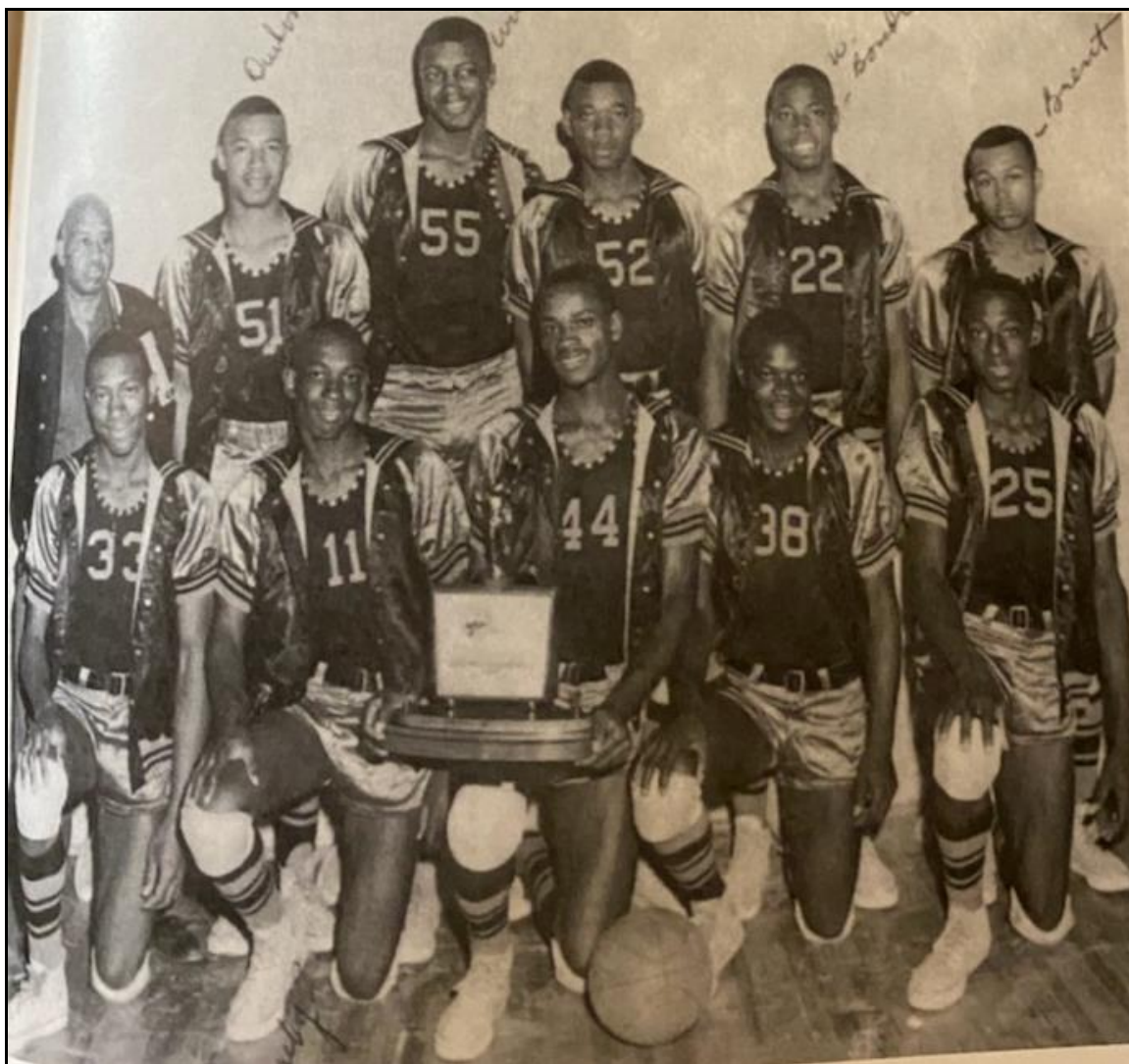
Section number Photos and PlansPage 42

Figure 15. Boys basketball team with Coach Saul Moore, ca. 1960. Courtesy of Billie Morris.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

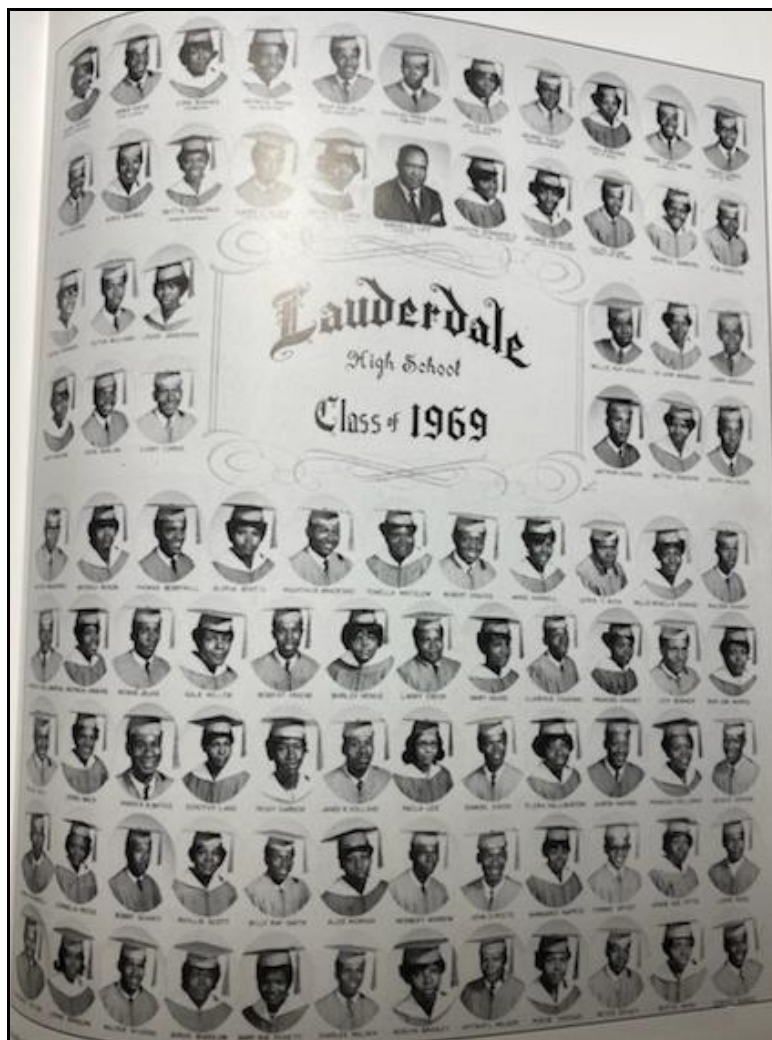
Section number Photos and PlansPage 43

Figure 16. The last graduating class of Lauderdale High School before its closure in 1969. Courtesy of Billie Morris.

10/29/2021

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lauderdale High School

Name of Property

Lauderdale County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos and PlansPage 44

Figure 17. Reunion of the Lauderdale High School Class of 1968 in the Lauderdale High School gymnasium, 1988. Courtesy of Lauderdale High School Alumni Association.

Property Owner:

(This information will not be submitted to the National Park Service, but will remain on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission)

Name	Victory Temple; c/o Stella L. Minor		
Street & Number	41 Haynes Haven Dr.	Telephone	(901) 497-6070
City or Town	Jackson	State/Zip	TN 38301



1 OF 42



2 OF 42



3 OF 42



4 OF 42



5 OF 42



6 OF 42



7 OF 42



8 OF 42



9 OF 42



10 OF 42



11 OF 42



12 OF 42



13 OF 42



14 OF 42



15 OF 42



16 OF 42



17 OF 42



18 OF 42



19 OF 42



20 OF 42



21 OF 42



22 OF 42



23 OF 42



24 OF 42



25 OF 42



26 OF 42



27 OF 42



28 OF 42



29 OF 42



30 OF 42



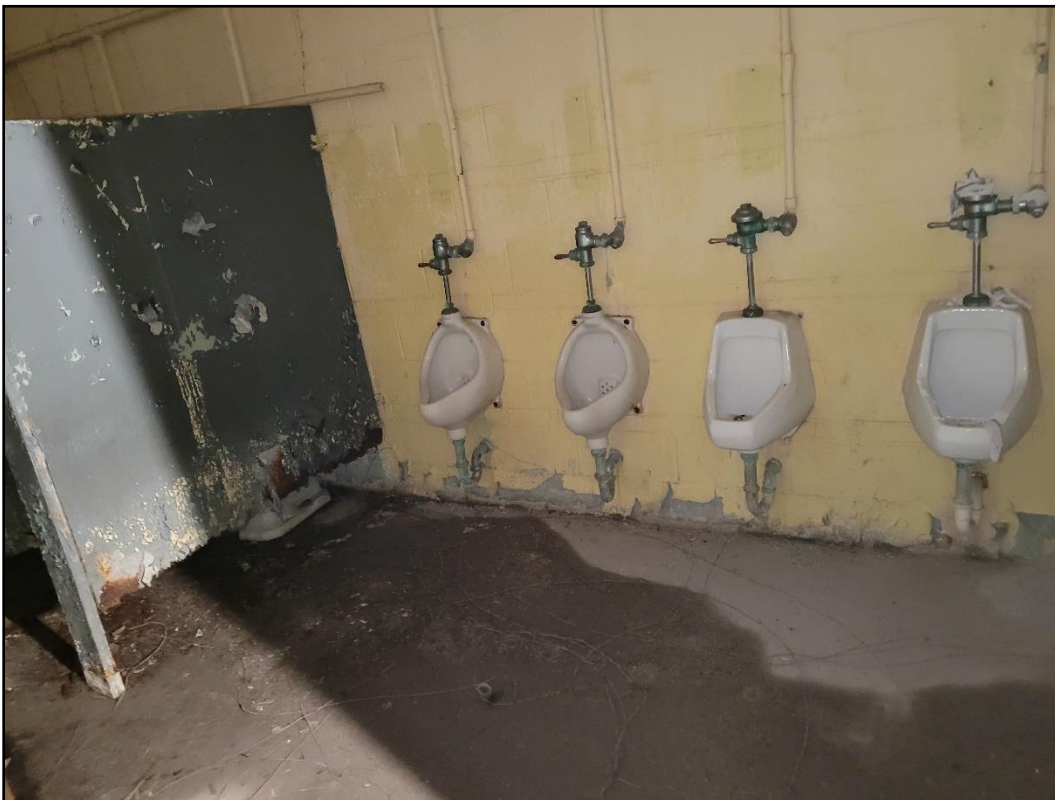
31 OF 42



32 OF 42



33 OF 42



34 OF 42



35 OF 42



36 OF 42



37 OF 42



38 OF 42



39 OF 42



40 OF 42



41 OF 42



42 OF 42