



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 054-5479

1. General Property Information

Property name: Cuckoo Colored School

Property address: 7133 Jefferson Hwy.

City or Town: Mineral

Zip code: 23117

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Louisa County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 2 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The small, one-story frame Cuckoo School sits in an open field above Route 33 on a two-acre parcel. Located in the sparsely settled rural community of Cuckoo, it is about 100' west of Philippi Christian Church which also faces Route 33. Also nearby is Gilboa Christian Church, 0.3 miles west on Route 33, and the historic Cuckoo house, another 0.3 miles past Gilboa CC. There are heavy woods surrounding the open fields on the north side of Route 33, where the schoolhouse, church and two other residences are located. Access to the school site is from a gravel road off Route 33 along the west side of Philippi CC that connects to an informal gravel parking area on the east side of the Cuckoo School parcel. The line of heavy woods begins about 50' behind the schoolhouse, to the north.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Rural vernacular frame schoolhouse

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): c.1925

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

Cuckoo School is a two-teacher one-story frame building. The 990 square feet building sits above-grade on stone piers. Two side-by-side equal sized classrooms form a 22.25' by 40.5' rectangular building block with hipped-roof, long side parallel with the road. Centered on the side facing the road is a smaller and shorter rectangular form, with hipped roof, enclosing a center vestibule and flanking cloakrooms. Modern concrete steps lead from the ground to a double-door entrance into the vestibule. Straight ahead in the vestibule are two doors, one to each classroom. At the east and west ends of the vestibule are 4' by 5' unfinished cloakrooms, originally secured with doors.

The hip roofs for both the main classroom building and shorter entry block are covered with painted standing seam sheet metal roofing. Exterior building walls are sheathed in painted clapboards. Fenestration is symmetrical with a bank of three windows centered on the east and west end walls of the classroom block, and another bank of three windows for each classroom on their south wall between the entry block and building corner. The original banks of three windows were altered (probably with the c.1970 repairs) by replacing the center windows with infilled walls (removed sashes were stored on-site). Remaining existing windows are wood double hung with 6/6 sash. The long north wall of the classroom block has no fenestration. Deep eaves are enclosed with a boxed cornice composed of a narrow fascia with crown molding, single-width soffit boards, and a broad trim board at the top of the walls with a molding at its intersection with the soffit.

In the classroom block, a brick chimney is centered on the wall separating the classrooms. A wood stove in each classroom is connected to the chimney. Interior walls and ceilings, in the vestibule and classrooms, are finished with painted T&G beaded board paneling. Corners of walls, ceilings, and floors are covered with simple wood moldings. The two cloakrooms have no interior wall and ceiling finishes, exposing the unpainted wall and ceiling structure and unpainted backsides of clapboarding and roofing boards. All floors are T&G wood boards without permanent finish.

There is evidence of a significant fire at interior wall and ceiling finishes, and in the attic. The partition separating the classrooms is modern with drywall finishes. Drywall covers about one third of the ceilings, next to the dividing partition, in both classrooms. Original beaded board wall and ceiling finishes close to the chimney also display fire damage, which has been masked with modern paint. In the attic, ceiling joists, rafters, and collar beams near the center chimney are severely charred and structurally compromised. Modern supplemental framing was installed to recover structural integrity.

Physical evidence exists indicating blackboards originally existed along the full length of the north wall in both classrooms, and on the east and west end walls between window banks and north corners. A remnant of the original wood chalk tray remains on the west wall in the west classroom.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- None

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The long connection between the Pendleton family of Cuckoo Plantation and the local African American community began with the construction of Cuckoo in about 1819 by Henry Pendleton, who left an estate of 226 acres and eighteen slaves at his death in 1822. Soon after inheriting Cuckoo, Henry's son Edmund became an early supporter of the Disciples of Christ, a newly-formed denomination introduced in the Louisa County area in 1826. In 1835, Edmund gifted land for a Disciples meeting house that became Gilboa Christian Church, constructed in 1857 in the Greek Revival style. Dr. Philip Barbour Pendleton, son of Edmund, inherited Cuckoo in 1839 where he lived until his death in 1907. Dr. P. Pendleton first became an elder of Gilboa CC and then its pastor in 1874. Oral history accounts note that African Americans attended worship services at Gilboa, where they were required to stand at the rear of the sanctuary during services.

In 1880, Dr. P. Pendleton conveyed two acres of his land, for one dollar, to the Board of School Trustees of Cuckoo District for use as a public school. The deed notes that a schoolhouse already exists on the property. Seven years later, Dr. P. Pendleton gifted one-and-a-half acre of his property, contiguous to the Cuckoo School parcel, to the Trustees of Philippi Christian Church for sole use as a church site and grounds. All the trustees listed in the deed are African American including Henry Burnley, who was formerly enslaved by the Pendleton family.

In a 2007 interview, 97-year-old Alice Coleman remembered attending school in a log building next to Philippi Church, which would likely have been in 1922 and/or 23. A 1949 thesis records the two-room Cuckoo School building as being constructed in 1925 with a present enrollment of 56 students. School board minutes note periodic payments for Cuckoo School's stove wood. Electricity for lighting was added to the school in December 1950. One of the last entries for Cuckoo School in school board minutes occurs in April 1955 with the listing of two bids for repairs to the schoolhouse due to a fire. Board members decided not to repair Cuckoo School and arranged to bus its students to other schools. No repairs were ever made by the county school system and the fire damaged building stood vacant until the early 1970's. At that time, Philippi Church made sufficient repairs to use the building for church activities. For about the last 20 years, Cuckoo School has again stood vacant. Acting upon a request by Philippi Christian Church, the Louisa County School Board conveyed, by quitclaim, the Cuckoo School property to the church "...for the purpose of renovating the old school building and establishing it as a historical site in memory of and reflecting, among other things, its prior use as the Cuckoo Colored School House..."

Six alumni of Cuckoo School shared their memories of school including valuable details of the building and site (see attached interview notes). Importantly, alumni remembered that, before the fire that closed the school in 1955, a sliding door partition separated the classrooms. The sliding doors were opened to accommodate large events. Outside, separate boys and girls wood privies were located behind (north) of the schoolhouse at the edge of the woods. (Girls had a "snake stick" to bang on the privy before entering.) There was no formal landscaping around the schoolhouse; instead, it was bare ground densely packed from kickball, hopscotch, baseball, and all the other games students played at recess.

A typical school day started with the older boys arriving early to start wood stove fires. Class began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a devotion. Fifteen-minute breaks occurred midway through the morning and afternoon school classes. Students brought lunches from home in paper bags and obtained water during the day from a container in each classroom filled from the rear yard well each morning. Lunch and recess were

combined and lasted about 30 minutes, at which time teachers would ring a handbell to return students for afternoon classes.

Of particular interest is the reputation of the Pendleton family as passed through alumni families and the local community. The Cuckoo estate continues to be the home of Pendleton family members to this day, most of whom have followed in Philip's footsteps as doctors. Generations of Pendletons are known as being kind and helpful to the local African American community. For instance, Pendleton doctors would treat local Blacks when such care was denied by other White doctors.

In summary, the small, unremarkable building standing in a field that used to be Cuckoo School is a surviving artifact of several intersecting cultural patterns of our history. These include the drive of African Americans for education, the establishment of the interracial Disciples of Christ denomination, and the rare post-emancipation support of African Americans by their previous White-owners.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

- *Cuckoo*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1994
- *Gilboa Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, Lisa Barker, The Louisa County Historical Society Magazine, Vol. 10, p. 66, Winter 1978-1979
- *Oral history Interview with Sadie Johnson*, notes by Sylvia Anderson, January 2023
- *Woman's History Month & Black History Month: JABA celebrates the life of Alice Coleman*, March 3, 2021, JABA E-Newsletter, <https://www.iabacares.org/iaba-news/2021/3/3/womans-history-month-amp-black-history-month-jaba-celebrates-the-life-of-alice-coleman>
- *A Survey of Negro Education in Louisa County*, Paul Everett Behrens, 1949. University of Virginia Special Collections (Master's Thesis)
- *Louisa County School Board Minutes (1938-57)*, Central Office Administration Building, Louisa County Public Schools
- *Alumni Group Responses to Interview Questions*, notes by Joseph Dye Lahendro, June 28, 2022
- Deeds
 - 8/18/1880 deed conveying property and existing schoolhouse by P.B. Pendleton and wife to Board of School Trustees of the Cuckoo District; Deed Book 5-321
 - 8/18/1880 deed conveying property by P.B. Pendleton and wife to Board of School Trustees of the Cuckoo District; Deed Book 5-322
 - 1/5/1887 deed conveying property by P.B. Pendleton and wife to Trustees of Philippi Christian Church; Deed Book 8-478
 - 8/6/1936 deed conveying property by Daisy Brice Cosby to Trustees for the Cuckoo Colored School; Deed Book 53-476
 - 3/1/2022 Quitclaim Deed of Gift conveying property and former schoolhouse by Louisa County School Board to Trustees of the Philippi Christian Church

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

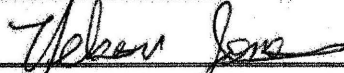
name/title: William Bates-Deacon, Rudolf Brooks-Deacon, Nelson Jones-Deacon, Dale Anderson-Trustee, Laura Payne-Trustee, Freda Jones-Trustee, Joyce Whalen-Trustee

organization: Members of the Philippi Christian Church Board of Trustees

street & number: 7133 Jefferson Hwy

city or town: Mineral state: VA zip code: 23117

e-mail: anderenterprise@gmail.com telephone: 804-229-7044

Legal Owner's Signature:  Chairman

Date: 2-12-2023

*** Signature required for processing all applications. ***

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Dale Anderson, Trustee

Daytime Telephone: 804-229-7044

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: JOBY LAHENDRO, FAIA

organization: HISTORIC PRESERVATION ARCHITECT CONSULTANT

street & number: 1041 OXFORD RD.

city or town: CHARLOTTESVILLE state: VA zip code: 22903













e-mail: JDL@HCP.VIRGINIA telephone: 434-900-2583

Date: 2-12-23 EDU

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!

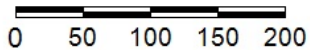


Legend

-  Architecture Resources
-  Architecture Labels
-  Individual Historic District Properties
-  Archaeological Resources
-  Archaeology Labels
-  DHR Easements
-  Roads (12,000)
-  Interstate
-  US Primary Highway
-  State Primary Highway
-  Secondary
-  County Boundaries



Feet



1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title: The Cuckoo School (054-5479), Louisa County

Date: 3/1/2023

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



**CUCKOO
COLORED
SCHOOL**
CUCKOO,
LOUISA COUNTY

CUCKOO SCHOOL &
PHILIPPI CHRISTIAN
CHURCH, FACING EAST
JAN. 2023



SOUTH & EAST
ELEVATIONS, JAN. 2023



NORTH & WEST
ELEVATIONS, JAN. 2023



CLASS PHOTOS AT CUCKOO SCHOOL, c.1947



COMMUNITY WORKDAY AT CUCKOO SCHOOL TO SECURE BUILDING, 5/7/22



VESTIBULE, FACING NORTH TOWARDS CLASSROOM DOORS



VESTIBULE, FACING WEST TOWARD CLOAKROOM



EAST CLOAKROOM, FACING EAST



WEST CLASSROOM, FACING NORTHWEST



WEST CLASSROOM, FACING SOUTHEAST



EAST CLASSROOM, FACING SOUTHWEST



ATTIC, FACING EAST



CHALK TRAY ON WEST WALL
IN WEST CLASSROOM

