

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Macedonia School Vocational Building
Other name/site number: Linden Colored School, Macedonia Rock School
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 207 Grubbs St.
City or town: Linden State: Texas County: Cass
Not for publication: [ ] Vicinity: [ ]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
[ ] 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 levels of significance:
[ ] national [ ] statewide [ ] local

Applicable National Register Criteria: [ ] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D

Signature of certifying official / Title: [Signature] Chief Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 11/4/2025
Texas 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 or other official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

**Category of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** Education: school

**Current Functions:** Religion: religious facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** No Style

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Stone, Concrete, Metal

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-9)

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** Criteria Consideration A (Religious Properties)

**Areas of Significance:** Education; Ethnic Heritage/Black (*both local level of significance*)

**Period of Significance:** 1942-1958

**Significant Dates:** 1942

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** NA

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-10 through 8-22)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheet 9-23 through 9-25)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Cass County Courthouse

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** approximately 1.9 acres

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 33.009476° Longitude: -94.376874°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The nominated boundary is the eastern approx. 1.9-acres of the approx. 2.6-acre property legally described as M FRAZIER ABST 354 TR 78 2.615 AC (ID #15373) by Cass County Central Appraisal District and roughly sketched on Map 5.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary is the remaining approx.. 1.9-acre portion of the original 3-acre Linden Colored School campus deeded to the Macedonia Baptist Church by the Linden Kildare Independent School District in 1960 and that retains integrity.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Conor Herterich & Sue Lazara  
Organization: Preservation Texas  
Street & number: 100 E. San Antonio Street  
City or Town: San Marcos State: TX Zip Code: 78666  
Email: conor@preservationtexas.org  
Telephone: 903-746-2757  
Date: 11/01/2024

## Additional Documentation

- Maps** (see continuation sheets MAP-26 through MAP-29)
- Additional items** (see continuation sheets FIGURE-30 through FIGURE-38)
- Photographs** (see continuation sheets PHOTO-39 through PHOTO-56)

**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.

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## Photograph Log

Name of Property: Macedonia School Vocational Building

City or Vicinity: Linden

County: Linden State: Texas Photographer: Conor Herterich

Date Photographed: 08/06/2025 (Unless otherwise specified)

*Photographs accurately depict the property's current appearance at the date of NPS submittal.*

- Photo #001 Site view, Vocational Building and Macedonia Church, camera facing south.
- Photo #002 Site view, camera facing west.
- Photo #003 Site view, camera facing southeast.
- Photo #004 Site view, camera facing northwest.
- Photo #005 Closeup of ironstone rocks used in wall construction. (05/04/2025)
- Photo #006 Photo of crawlspace. (05/04/2025)
- Photo #007 Northeast elevation.
- Photo #008 North elevation, camera facing south.
- Photo #009 West elevation, camera facing east.
- Photo #010 East elevation, camera facing west.
- Photo #011 Interior of the south wing, camera facing north.
- Photo #012 Interior of north wing showing original rock walls exposed on west elevation.
- Photo #013 Principles office, northwest corner of the building.
- Photo #014 West elevation, primary entrance. Camera facing east.
- Photo #015 South elevation, camera facing north.
- Photo #016 Southeast elevation showing east entrance, camera facing northwest.
- Photo #017 Interior of south wing, camera facing east.
- Photo #018 Kitchen area and east entrance, camera facing east.
- Photo #019 Removal of drop ceiling and wall paneling exposes original materials. Photo taken along south elevation.
- Photo #020 Infilled windows on the South elevation before restoration. (05/04/2025)
- Photo #021 Attic showing modern rafters and plywood decking. (05/04/2025)
- Photo #022 Detached metal carport. (05/04/2025)

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## Narrative Description

The 1942 Macedonia School Vocational Building is at 207 Grubbs Street on the west side of Linden, the county seat of Cass County. It is the only building remaining from the historic Linden Colored School campus which included a Rosenwald school that was located on the site from 1927 until it was relocated in 1958 (Figure 10). In 1942, with support from the National Youth Administration, the Vocational Building was built to serve as an auxiliary space to increase capacity for educational activities on the campus. The one-story, load-bearing masonry building was constructed using locally quarried ironstone in a front-facing T-plan which is functionally divided into north and south wings. Originally, the north wing had a raised floor, and the south wing was packed dirt at grade, but in 1960 a wood floor system was installed in the south wing by the Macedonia Baptist Church who had recently purchased the building from the school district. The non-historic metal roof is supported by the 12" thick stone walls, but the floor structure is supported independently from the stone exterior by pier and beam without any connections between floor and wall. The interior is primarily illuminated by eleven 9/9 wooden double-hung windows that line the west and south elevations. Although the building has undergone many alterations since it was purchased by Macedonia Baptist Church, it still retains its original form and unpainted rock walls that are its character-defining feature and namesake. In 2024-2025, a project funded by the National Parks Service Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program restored previously infilled window openings with historically accurate wooden double-hung windows and removed a portion of non-original interior wall and ceiling materials. Despite the loss of the 1927 school, and the construction of a metal carport, the Macedonia School Vocational Building retains the integrity necessary to demonstrate its historical significance.

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## Setting

Cass County comprises 937 square miles of the East Texas timberlands, an area that is heavily forested with a great variety of softwoods and hardwoods, especially pine, cypress, and oak. The terrain ranges from nearly level to hilly, with an elevation ranging from 200 to 632 feet above sea level. Several stony hills in the western part of the county rise to a height of more than 200 feet and have been protected from erosion by the ironstone material that caps them. The ironstone is used as construction material in many of the county's buildings. Located near the geographic center of the county, Linden has a population of approximately 1,800 people and is surrounded by rolling wood and pasture lands.<sup>1</sup> The Macedonia School Vocational Building is in a suburban setting southwest of the intersection of Highways 11 and 8 which effectively delineates the neighborhood from the town of Linden to the east. The building is owned by the Macedonia Baptist Church and located on church property approximately 80 feet east of the Macedonia Church (Photo 1). The area is mostly open and consists of modest homes on irregularly shaped lots with many of them vacant or undeveloped.

## Site

The site consists of approximately 1.9 acres of land that is mostly open grass. (Photo 2, Photo 4). The parcel is enclosed on the east and north sides by a chain link fence and bounded on the south by Macedonia Street which is paved but lacks road markings. A dirt driveway provides access to the property from Grubbs Street to the west and acts as an informal parking lot. A single-vehicle, metal carport stands northeast of the building facing the dirt driveway/parking lot (Photo 003). A chain link fence encloses the north and east elevations of the Vocational Building. Macedonia Baptist Church, built c. 1955, is located approximately 75' to the west of the Vocational Building and is connected to the building by a concrete walkway. Three mature deciduous trees demarcate the boundary between the church section of the property and the rest of the parcel (Photo 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Cecil Harper, Jr., "Cass County," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed July 29, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/cass-county>.

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Historically, the vocational school building was one component of the 3-acre Linden Colored School campus. Aerials show the wood framed 1927 Rosenwald school located approximately 50' north of the Vocational Building (Figure 3) and moved in 1958. Both buildings were built close to Grubbs Street (previously Boon Street according to the 1964 Linden Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Figure 5) while the remaining acreage on the east half of the campus was open. A 1955 aerial shows this area as a heavily trafficked dirt lot suggesting this space was primarily utilized for recreation such as outdoor play, athletics, and band practice—integral to school life (Photo 3, Figure 3). Today that area is open grass and not utilized for any purpose.

### Building

The Vocational Building is a one-story building constructed of load bearing stone walls. The stone used for wall construction is a type of ironstone found locally that has earthy tones which come from its high iron content. This coloration provides a rustic aesthetic that is the character-defining feature of the building (Photo 5). The building design is a simple front-facing T-plan form that lacks decorative elements and is functionally divided into north and south wings (Figure 1). Although the roof is upheld by the load-bearing stone walls resting on concrete footers, the floor is supported by an independent brick pier and wooden beam system that is unconnected to the walls (Photo 6).

### North Wing (Exterior)

During the period of significance, the north wing held the Linden Colored School's administrative office (located in the northeast corner) and one large assembly/classroom (Photo 7). On the **north elevation** is a non-historic, 6 panel single entry door covered by a shed roof portico supported by simple wood brackets (Photo 8). This is the only entry point into the north wing. There is brick infill on both sides of the door starting about 16" from the bottom of the wall which suggests that the entrance might have originally had sidelights that were later removed, although no historic photographs or building plans exist to substantiate this theory. There is a window to the east of the door with a concrete header and sill. To the west of the door is a concrete square in line with the top of the door. This may have been used as a smooth surface for a plaque or possible cornerstone, but definitive information on the function of this feature could not be found. The gable end is clad with standing seam metal with boxed eaves, but historically it was clad with a faux brick tar paper material called Insulbrick. This is true for all three of the building's gables. The **west elevation** consists of a bank of six wooden double-hung windows with a 9/9 pane configuration (Photo 9). These sizable windows provided ample light into the large classroom/assembly area and are like the banks of windows found on Rosenwald school plans. The **east elevation** has three individual windows, all with operable transoms at the top (Photo 10). The window on the northern end of the wall is larger than the other two because it provides light in the office while the other two windows were for bathrooms.

### North Wing (Interior)

This space has been heavily altered by the Macedonia Baptist Church since it became a fellowship hall beginning in 1960. The interior partitions have been rearranged including the removal of a wall that separated the north and south wings, the creation of a new room on the northwest corner, and the addition of bathrooms and a storage closet on the east wall (Photo 11). Carpet has been laid over hardwood flooring throughout the building while the original ceiling, which is constructed of 1x4 boards, has been lowered several feet by the installation of a drop ceiling system. The stone walls, which were originally exposed and painted white, were furred out with wood paneling in 1979-80 and installed throughout the wing. As part of the 2024 project to restore the windows back to their original openings, the wood paneling has been removed along the west elevation exposing the original painted rock walls. In addition, the drop ceiling panels adjacent to the wall have been removed to allow the full window height to be exposed (Photo 12).

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The wood wall paneling has been removed in the principal's office (Photo 13). During the next phase of construction, all of the wood paneling and drop ceiling will be removed to expose the rock walls and tongue & groove ceiling.

### South Wing (Exterior)

During the period of significance, the south wing was a vocational/agricultural shop with a smaller domestic arts class in the east part which later became the church kitchen. The original floor was dirt (packed clay at grade) which was inexpensive and could be swept, re-packed, and easily replaced when needed. Today, the **west elevation** of this wing is the primary entrance to the building (Photo 14). A concrete ramp and stairs provide access to a concrete and CMU block stoop that is raised about 30" above grade. A shed roof portico, supported by decorative wrought metal columns, extends from a concrete header to provide a sheltered entrance. The doorway has been infilled with two types of brick. The old brick (same as the infill around the north door) was installed when the original opening covered by a sliding barn door was reduced in width to accommodate a standard size double door. The new brick and wood paneling was installed to reduce the opening size again from a double entry to a single-entry door. Historically, the opening on this elevation was a sliding barn door at grade which was necessary to move large equipment or objects to and from the room which served as an agricultural shop (Figure 6). On the **south elevation** are six wooden double-hung windows with a 9/9 pane configuration, identical to the windows found on the west elevation (Photo 15). On the **east elevation** there is a covered entry, identical in design to the portico on the north elevation, which shelters a historic 4-panel, single entry door (Photo 16). A concrete stoop and stairs provide access to the entrance which is about 30" above grade. Historically, this door was the primary entrance into the south wing and would have been the closest access point to the adjacent Rosenwald school where most of the educational activity on the campus occurred. It has now been supplanted as the primary entrance by the door on the west side of the wing which is closer to the Macedonia Church.

### South Wing (Interior)

The south wing consists of two rooms accessed by the entry doors on the east and west elevations. The primary entrance on the west elevation opens into a large, open space usually reserved for dining (Photo 17). The door on the east elevation opens into the kitchen area with an open serving buffet (Photo 18). Although originally dirt, a raised wooden floor system was built for the south wing in the 1960s, although it is about 15" lower than the floor of the north wing. The interior of the south wing is identical to that of the north wing with carpeted floors, wood paneled walls, and drop ceiling with acoustical tile. As part of the 2024 project to restore the windows back to their original openings, the wood paneling has been removed along the south elevation exposing the original painted rock walls. In addition, an acoustic panel-width of drop ceiling has been removed adjacent to the walls so that the top 2' of the original window opening would be uncovered. This was completed as part of the project to restore the infilled windows to their original opening sizes and install historically accurate wood double-hung windows (Photo 19).

### Alterations

The Vocational Building has undergone alterations since it was purchased by the Macedonia Baptist Church. The most significant alteration was the removal of the historic wood windows and the downsizing of the openings which were infilled and replaced with aluminum windows sometime in the 1980s (Photo 20). A project funded by Preservation Texas in 2024 restored all of the windows back to their original dimensions and installed authentic wooden hung windows with pane configurations based on photographs of the originals. Another major alteration was the west entrance on the south wing which was originally a sliding barn door at grade (Figure 6). In the 1960s, a wooden floor system was built for the south wing which originally utilized packed dirt floors. This improvement required the door level to be raised; therefore, the original shop doors (now too large) were removed, and the opening was reduced to the size of a single-entry door. A shed roof portico supported by decorative metal columns was installed to cover the

**Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas**

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entryway. In the 1990s, the congregation took the opportunity to install a concrete ramp for accessibility as the west door (originally the entrance to the shop) had become the primary building entrance since it was closest to the church building.

The interior has also experienced significant changes typical of late twentieth century alterations made to historic buildings that were not climate controlled to accommodate HVAC and lighting systems, and to address energy efficiency concerns. These alterations, which were completed in 1979 or shortly thereafter, involved the installation of an HVAC system, installing dropped ceilings with acoustical tiles to hide HVAC ductwork and hang fluorescent lighting, building closets to house HVAC equipment, and covering the stone walls with wood paneling. The building's roof system was replaced with a metal panel roof in the 1990s. A view of the attic shows new rafters and plywood sheathing indicating that the entire roof system was replaced, and the gable ends and soffits were clad in metal, however, the historic roof shape was retained (Photo 21).

**Carport (non-contributing)**

An open-sided, freestanding carport is located northeast of the Vocational Building. The structure is supported by metal poles and covered by a gabled metal roof. It was built in 1999 (Photo 22).

**Integrity**

Considering its typical late-twentieth century alterations and recent work to restore authentic windows, the Macedonia School Vocational Building retains integrity of location, materials, design, and workmanship to convey its historical significance. As the last remaining building from the Linden Colored School campus, the Vocational Building is still on its original site and retains its historic roof shape, form, and fenestration. The local iron ore stone walls were the preferred building material for public improvement projects undertaken by New Deal work relief programs in Northeast Texas such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, and National Youth Administration. The unpainted rock walls are a definitive character-defining feature of the building that strongly associates its construction to the 1930s and early 1940s when these programs were active.

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### Statement of Significance

The 1942 Macedonia School Vocational Building is significant under Criterion A for Education and Ethnic Heritage/Black at the local level of significance for the period from 1942 to 1958, marking when the school closed. It is the only surviving building from Linden Colored School campus, originally established in 1927. The living community of Linden recognizes the nominated historic property as the Macedonia School Vocational Building or Macedonia Rock School. Located at 207 Grubbs Street in Linden, Cass County, Texas, the one-story, ironstone, front-facing T-plan structure was the product of a collaborative effort between the Black community, federal programs, and dedicated educators. Local residents quarried and hauled stone from their own land, young men and women from the National Youth Administration provided the labor, and vocational teacher Verbe Norman oversaw the project. Designed to expand vocational and agricultural training opportunities for Black students, the building also served as a versatile assembly space for classes, chapel, performances, and community events, reinforcing the school's role as both an educational institution and cultural hub. Since 1960, it has served as the social hall and auxiliary meeting space for Macedonia Baptist Church, established in 1894. The Vocational Building stands today as a rare and tangible testament to the resilience, cooperation, and self-determination of Linden's African American community in the pursuit of educational opportunity. It meets Criteria Consideration A (Religious Properties) because the school is significant for its role in the educational history of Linden.

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### Antebellum Cass County and the Town of Linden

Cass County was established in 1846 from the southern portion of Bowie County and named after Michigan Senator Lewis Cass, a strong advocate for Texas's annexation in 1845. In 1848, Edward W. Story offered to donate 50 acres near the geographic center of the new county for use as the county seat.<sup>2</sup> That fall, a public vote confirmed Linden, as opposed to Jefferson, as the permanent county seat of Cass County, a decision reaffirmed by another election in 1851.<sup>3</sup> Linden's public square was laid out on a hilltop described in the county court minutes as "an eligible healthy site, situated with springs of good water, surrounded by a fertile country on which good roads may be made to and from said point."<sup>4</sup> Soon, the town was platted in a gridiron of one-acre blocks and forty-foot wide streets with a courthouse square laid out in the Shelbyville pattern fronted with commercial lots.<sup>5</sup> At its founding, Linden consisted of only four families in three dwellings along with a grocery and a blacksmith shop.<sup>6</sup> Its first courthouse was constructed in 1853 and the town grew slowly around it, while the principal seat of commerce and transportation in the county, Jefferson, thrived.<sup>7</sup>

### Slavery in Cass County (1846-1865)

In 1847, 943 slaves and one free black constituted 32 percent of the total county population of 2,949. In 1859, taxes were assessed on 4,697 enslaved people valued at \$2,387,500, representing 60% of the value of all taxable property in Cass County. The 1860 census recorded a lower figure of 3,475 enslaved people and no free Blacks in Cass County –

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<sup>2</sup> Cass County Deed Records, Vol. C Pg. 69

<sup>3</sup> Sue Morris Lazara, *The Historic Cass County Courthouse*, Linden, 2012, page 14.

<sup>4</sup> Cass County Clerk's Office, Minutes of the Commissioner's Court of Cass County: Book 1, 1846-1893, June 29, 1848, Cass County Courthouse, Linden, Texas.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Veselka, *The Courthouse Square in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 32-34.

<sup>6</sup> Lazara, *The Historic Cass County Courthouse*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Jefferson became the county seat of Marion County, formed in 1860.

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suggesting that some county residents were taxed on people they enslaved in neighboring counties or other states.<sup>8</sup> In 1861, the county voted 423 to 32 to secede from the Union.<sup>9</sup> That same year, the county's name was changed to Davis County to honor Confederate President Jefferson Davis; the state legislature changed it back to Cass County in 1871.

### Post-Emancipation Turmoil in Northeast Texas

The Emancipation Proclamation took effect in Texas on June 19, 1865, ushering in a new and complicated era. A Freedmen's Bureau agent, William G. Kirkman, was stationed in Boston, Bowie County (35 miles north of Linden), in 1867. Based on Kirkman's reports, historian Barry Crouch concluded that "violence saturated Davis [Cass] County" and quoted Kirkman as saying that Freedmen could not travel freely on public roads "without suffering personal violence and danger of life."<sup>10</sup> The most violent part of the county was just northeast of Linden and prompted Kirkman to recommend the hiring of Robert Perryman to serve as a bureau agent in either Douglassville or Linden, but his recommendation was ignored.<sup>11</sup>

Without military protection, violence against Blacks in Northeast Texas led many to flee to Arkansas. The Fort Smith agent reported that "Freedmen are coming almost daily from Texas in a destitute condition and report that anarchy and despotism reign supreme... the most intelligent ... [have been] driven from their homes and families, many have been shot and hung for expressing a desire to enjoy their rights..."<sup>12</sup> Crouch concluded that during the Reconstruction era, "harmonious race relations did not characterize Bowie and Davis counties."<sup>13</sup> This pattern of violence persisted. In the 1890s, there were nine documented lynchings in Cass County, the fifth-highest total among Texas's 254 counties.<sup>14</sup>

On October 7, 1868, Bureau agent William G. Kirkman was murdered in Boston. Kirkman had been forewarned and had repeated to others that "serving as an agent in northeastern Texas constituted a dangerous occupation."<sup>15</sup> His death occurred at the hands of the notorious Cullen Baker. Baker and his associates were stirring up violence in Cass County and its immediate environs, including Arkansas, where Baker also killed an Arkansas bureau agent named Hiram F. Willis. Known as the "Swamp Fox of the Sulphur [River]," Baker and his band of fifteen to thirty men were considered a terror to Blacks, Northerners, and Union sympathizers.<sup>16</sup>

### Reconstruction Era Population Growth and Economics

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Cass County's population was relatively unchanged between 1860 (8,411) and 1870 (8,875). The number of Black residents dropped by 96 during that same period. However, the county's

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<sup>8</sup> Darlene Warren Rothwell. *A History of African-American Families and Slaveholders in Cass County, East Texas, from the Colonial Days and Slavery to the 21st Century*. Self published, 2006, page xix. On pages 119-120, Rothwell includes a list of "Cass County Slaveholders Listed on 1860 U.S. Census," noting that Reece Hughes (Hughes Springs) enslaved 156 people in 15 houses and owned real and personal property valued at \$230,540 and Willis Whittaker, Sr. enslaved 141 people in 24 houses, suggesting that large-scale plantation slavery was established despite the heavily timbered nature of Cass County land.

<sup>9</sup> Lazara, *The Historic Cass County Courthouse*, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans*, University of Texas Press, page 75.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror," Equal Justice Initiative. Archived (PDF) from the original on October 9, 2022. Retrieved October 1, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Barry A. Crouch, "To Die in Boston (Texas, That Is)," *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans*, 74.

<sup>16</sup> Crouch, 94-97.

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population would double between 1870 and 1880 from 8,875 to 16,724. As economic and social conditions stabilized, the number of Black residents increased during that time from 3,379 to 6,444.<sup>17</sup> However, as late as 1885, Linden only had a population of 300 residents.<sup>18</sup> This owed largely to the fact that Linden had been bypassed by the new Texas & Pacific Railroad line that was built about nine miles east of town. New communities along the line grew and prospered, particularly Atlanta (established in 1871). A post office was opened at the new town of Kildare, due east of Linden, in 1874.

In the Reconstruction era, numerous industries, facilitated in part by access to the new railroad, developed around the region's extensive timber resources. The area's "extensive pine and hardwood trees ... [were] in great demand for building new communities in the Red River valley and timber harvesting peaked in the 1890s.<sup>19</sup> Black labor was an essential part of the workforce in the forests, in transportation, and in the mills. Once forests were cleared, land became available for agricultural use, but local farmers rarely prospered. In 1880, cotton accounted for three-fourths of all agricultural products in Cass County, and Linden had a cotton gin that could accommodate 150 bales of cotton.<sup>20</sup> However, in the early 20th century, landlords began to evict landless farmers from their farms, and this process accelerated during the hard years of the Great Depression.

### **Black Education During the Freedmen's Bureau Era (1865-1870)**

Texas, like all other states in the Confederacy except Tennessee, had "outlawed schools for slaves and free Black people" before the Civil War.<sup>21</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the war, the U.S. Freedmen's Bureau supported schools for Blacks in the south, including Texas. The Bureau "established and maintained schools and examined and appointed teachers. It paid teachers' salaries, provided for their transportation, and paid for construction and repair of school buildings and for the rent of properties used for educational purposes."<sup>22</sup> Its work in Texas began in the fall of 1865 with the appointment of E. M. Wheelock as the Bureau's Texas superintendent of schools and the opening of the first school in Galveston.<sup>23</sup> By the summer of 1866, there were 72 schools in Texas serving 4,300 pupils (day school for children, night school for adults). Although the Bureau was not abolished until 1872, its work in Texas began to be phased out in 1868 and had functionally ended by December 1870.<sup>24</sup>

An examination of surviving records revealed that there were no schools established or supported by the Bureau in Cass County. The closest Bureau-supported schools were located in Boston (Bowie County), Jefferson (Marion

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<sup>17</sup> 1880 U.S. Census, Volume 1. Population, by Race, Sex, and Nativity. Table V, Population, by Race and Counties, 1880, 1870, 1860, Texas, page 409.

<sup>18</sup> Claudia Hazlewood, "Linden, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed August 08, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/linden-tx>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid..

<sup>20</sup> US Census Bureau, "1880 Census: Cotton Production: Texas," 1880 Census: Volumes 5-6. Report on Cotton Production, 1 Jan. 1884; Historic Resources Survey of Downtown Linden, Texas, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory Downs and Kate Masur, *The Era of Reconstruction: 1861-1900 Theme Study*, National Parks Service, page 29.

<sup>22</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, "A Descriptive Pamphlet," *Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Texas, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, page 4, Familysearch.org.

<sup>23</sup> Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African-Americans in Texas, 1528-1995* (2nd ed., 1996), page 60.

<sup>24</sup> Cecil Harper, Jr., "Freedmen's Bureau," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 20, 2025, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/freedmens-bureau>.

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County)<sup>25</sup>, Marshall (Harrison County), and Gilmer (Upshur County).<sup>26</sup> The Bureau faced many obstacles in Texas in the establishment and maintenance of schools. As noted by historian Alwyn Barr:

Most white Texans because of their racial views assumed black people could acquire only a limited 'industrial education' and feared any broader instruction especially if taught by persons with different racial attitudes. To enforce their views most white Texans refused to teach in Freedmen's Bureau schools and would not rent rooms to or associate with northern teachers or other bureau officers. Many also refused to sell or rent land or buildings for schools. Some opponents burned a few schools, and insulted, tarred, and feathered, beat, and even killed some teachers.<sup>27</sup>

Crouch noted that in northeast Texas, Black education "did not extend much beyond the environs of Boston." A school was established in Myrtle Springs in northern Bowie County, led by a Black minister, Forrest Hooks. The Myrtle Springs school included four classes with a total of forty students in a purpose-built schoolhouse. Bureau agent Kirkman reported that most whites felt that Black education should be left to themselves.<sup>28</sup> However, limited financial resources and racial hostility meant that most Black aspirations for schooling were left unrealized during this period.<sup>29</sup>

### State Educational Programs and the Community System (1870-1908)

In 1868, E. M. Wheelock became the State of Texas's superintendent of public instruction. He led efforts, endorsed by the 1868 Constitutional convention, to establish a district-based free public school system. Following the closure of the Freedmen's Bureau in Texas in 1870, the Texas state legislature passed a law providing that each county was to be a school district with the county court serving as the school board, subject to the direction of the state superintendent of education. Each school in the county would be governed by trustees "to aid [county school boards] in locating and building school-houses and in employing and settling with teachers." Schools were to be open at least four months per year and children aged 6 to 16 were expected to attend. Within this district-based free public school system, racial division hindered Black schools. As noted in a federal report in 1882:

The free school system instituted [in Texas] in 1870 under the constitution of 1868 encountered the strong prejudices then prevailing in the South... These prejudices were especially intense against including the negro population among those entitled to free schooling by the State... Hence, there were in the first years, besides the burning of the school-houses for colored people and a social ostracism of teachers, efforts to prevent by legal processes the collection of the local tax for educating either white or colored youth.<sup>30</sup>

This is supported by a report filed by Texas superintendent DeGress in his report to the U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1871 in which he noted that five school buildings in East Texas and the adjoining area had been burned.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "In 1868 Thomas E. Younger determined to open a school for Negroes in the Jefferson area. He bought his own school supplies and prepaid one month's rent on an old building which he converted into a classroom." James M. Smallwood, *Time of Hope, Time of Despair: Black Texans During Reconstruction*, page 86.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Freedmen's Bureau, Records of the Superintendent of Education and of the Division of Education, 1865-1872. FamilySearch.org.

<sup>27</sup> Barr, *Black Texans*, 61-62.

<sup>28</sup> Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau*, 83-84.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> "Texas," *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1880*, Washington (1882), page 311

<sup>31</sup> William R. Davis, [\*The Development and Present Status of Negro Education in East Texas\*](#) (1934), page 38

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In Cass County the 1874 scholastic census reported 2,408 white students and 1,341 Black students.<sup>32</sup> The following year, Cass County reported a school population of 3,749 with approximately 2,000 students attending schools. There were 55 organized schools.<sup>33</sup>

The law was amended in 1876 to eliminate county school boards, leaving schools in control of local trustees and reducing expected attendance to those aged 8 to 14.<sup>34</sup> This inaugurated what was known as the "Community School System Era," which lasted until 1905. By the 1872-73 school year, there were 129,542 students in Texas public schools of whom about 30% were Black. As a result of the establishment of Freedmen's Bureau schools and later public schools, rates of Black illiteracy fell from 95% in 1865, to 89% in 1870, to 75% in 1880.<sup>35</sup>

Cass County's school system operated under the "community" system from 1876 to 1908, when a county superintendent was appointed. During this era, segregated community schools without any defined district boundaries were organized annually and governed by the county commissioners. In Cass County, only Atlanta, Hughes Springs, and Queen City were able to organize independent city school districts during the community system era.

As early as 1883, Cass County reported maintaining 60 white and 32 Black schools. Many of these schools would have met in rented facilities or other buildings such as churches.<sup>36</sup> By 1886, the county reported the existence of 115 schools but only 75 schoolhouses.<sup>37</sup> In the school year ending August 1891, there were 54 white and 24 Black schoolhouses in Cass County; all were reported as being built of wood and in fair condition.<sup>38</sup> Atlanta reported only 200 students – all white – and one wood and one brick schoolhouse.<sup>39</sup> Queen City reported 180 white students and one wood schoolhouse.<sup>40</sup> In 1892, Cass County reported 76 white and 32 Black schoolhouses (22 in good condition and 10 fair) – none of them had desks (only six white schools had desks).<sup>41</sup> Atlanta reported a Black school built of wood in good condition.<sup>42</sup>

### **Linden's Black Schoolhouse Lot (1889)**

With 32 Black schools operating in Cass County as early as 1883, it is presumed that one of those operated in Linden, the county seat. Because a school lot was not acquired until 1889, it likely met in a church or some other modest

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<sup>32</sup> *Fourth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Texas for the Scholastic Year Ending August 31, 1874*, O. N. Hollingsworth, SPI. Houston (1874), page 85.

<sup>33</sup> *Fifth Annual Report*, page 10.

<sup>34</sup> "Texas," *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1876, Part 2*, Washington (1878), pages 385-386.

<sup>35</sup> Barr, *Black Texans*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Education for the Scholastic Years Ending August 31, 1883, and August 31, 1884*, Benjamin M. Baker, Super. of Public Instruction, Austin 1884, page 10.

<sup>37</sup> *Fifth Report*, page 127.

<sup>38</sup> *Eighth Biennial report*, page 73.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, page 126.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, page 129.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, page 432.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, page 438.

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structure made available for school purposes – but it could not have been Macedonia Baptist Church, as the latter was not organized until 1894.<sup>43</sup>

On December 14, 1889, a lot was acquired specifically for the construction of a Black school in Linden. Mrs. Eliza Ann Wood conveyed Lot 42 in the Woods Addition to Linden for \$1 to Isham [Isom] Hodge, Green Watson, and Turn Roper "for the sole purpose of a schoolhouse for the Linden Col[ored] School community."<sup>44</sup> On this same day, Hodge, Watson, and Roper, trustees of the school, conveyed this lot to Cass County Judge J. C. Henderson "for public school purposes." All three trustees signed their mark.<sup>45</sup>

### Colored Teachers Institute of Cass County (1898)

During the 1890s, Black teachers in Cass County became better organized. At the end of the school term in 1898, they established a "colored teachers institute."<sup>46</sup> Meeting in Linden on June 10, 1898, the initial program was opened by Atlanta teacher H. G. Goree,<sup>47</sup> followed by a series of talks:

- The Institute, its object, and advancement – J. W. Pruitt, J. G. Alexander, and E. H. Warren.
- Orthography, its importance and how to teach it. – J. H. Waring, C. G. Hurd and Clemmie Pruitt.
- Country Schools. – M. P. Waring, S W. Tucker, and Ella Hawkins.
- Histories, which should be taught first United States or Texas History. – W. G. Riley, Sallie Goree and Carrie Brown.
- English Grammar, when and how taught – J. E. Baptist, J. C. Turner and Mary A. Foust.<sup>48</sup>

The Institute continued to meet for many years in various locations around the county, offering programs to improve the skills of Black teachers in Cass County. In 1908, the Cass County Colored Teachers Institute met for five days in Atlanta, again presided over by H. G. Goree. Teachers representing thirteen districts and the Atlanta, Queen City, and Hughes Springs independent districts were in attendance. The teachers passed resolutions supporting the establishment of the state Textbook Board and a proposed constitutional amendment imposing "a local tax in the rural districts that the school facilities may be improved."<sup>49</sup>

### District School System Era (post-1905)

As early as 1893, there were calls to abolish the "community system." In his biennial report in 1893, Texas Superintendent Carlisle wrote about the need for permanent school districts to replace the former system. "Each county in the State should be divided into permanent school districts. The so-called community system should be abolished... The organizations are for but one year, and the whole plan is a constant inducement to petty quarrels and dissensions."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The Macedonia Baptist Church was organized in 1894 by the Rev. C. Clark and two deacons: Jerry Peters and C. H. Peters. A cemetery associated with the church operated from 1897 to 1947 adjacent to the Linden Cemetery. ([Linden Cemetery Association](#). "Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery History.")

<sup>44</sup> Cass County Deed Book M2, page 333.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., page 332.

<sup>46</sup> Cass County Sun, 31 May 1898, p2.

<sup>47</sup> Harrison G. Goree (1861-1925), was an Atlanta schoolteacher. A StoryCorps interview about Goree can be found in the [StoryCorps Archive](#).

<sup>48</sup> Cass County Sun, June 7, 1898, page 2.

<sup>49</sup> "The Cass County Colored," *The Cass County Sun*, January 7, 1908.

<sup>50</sup> *Eighth Annual Report*, pages x-xi.

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In 1904, Linden residents sought to establish an independent district, but according to the state superintendent, Linden had not yet met the minimum population threshold requiring "within the proposed bounds a town or village having a nucleus of 200 inhabitants or over. The law will not be complied with if the proposed territory simply contains 200 inhabitants."<sup>51</sup> The following year, Texas formally adopted a "district" based school system, which called for phasing out the inefficient and imbalanced community system by 1909; the Linden Independent School District had been established by the spring of 1908.<sup>52</sup>

### Outside Funding for Education in Texas and Cass County

Reports by national, state, and local officials regularly cited the poor condition of Black schools in Texas and the urgent need to improve school facilities that were generally much worse than those of poor white school districts. Cass County was no exception. Superintendent J. L. Lovelace reported in 1924 that "Pleasant Hill colored school had present 70 pupils with poor accommodations. A new building is planned for another year... Harmony colored school had seventy present with two teachers, crowded into a ramshackle building with no desks, no equipment and unhealthful conditions... Oak Ridge, col. in No. 10, a new shack, not finished, no desks, no windows, no equipment, with 18 present."<sup>53</sup>

National efforts to improve the condition of Black education in the segregated south, with the goal of reducing illiteracy and poverty, were led by generous charitable foundations. Texas took advantage of these resources, and the state superintendent of education, through the state's Colored School Division, was active in securing and directing these outside funds to Black school districts in Texas. This program of support was outlined in the October 1926 publication of *Negro Education in Texas: Special Activities and Industrial Aid*.<sup>54</sup>

- Julius Rosenwald Fund – construction of school buildings
- General Education Board – funding for supervision of Black schools, developing County Training Schools, and summer schools for Black teachers
- John F. Slater Fund – establishing and supporting County Training Schools (grades 9+)
- Anna T. Jeanes Fund – supporting county industrial education teachers<sup>55</sup>

Cass County eagerly embraced the so-called "outside funding." In the year 1924, Cass County superintendent Lovelace reported that the county had received aid amounting to \$8,330 from these sources. The impact of the Rosenwald, Slater, and Jeanes Funds in Cass County was significant, and the collective influence of these resources in supporting training schools and industrial education led to the eventual construction of Linden's 1942 vocational building. Cass County stood at the epicenter of nationally supported Black vocational education, boasting twenty-two Rosenwald schools, five Rosenwald-funded industrial buildings, and three Rosenwald-funded school buses at the Cass County Training School—at a time when only ten Black school buses existed in all of Texas. The county also had a Slater-funded County Training School and employed two Jeanes Fund instructors, double the number typically recommended.

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<sup>51</sup> "State Department of Education," *The Cass County Sun*, May 10, 1904.

<sup>52</sup> The Board of Trustees of Linden Independent District held an election on June 6, 1908 to approve school taxes, indicating that the district had been established by this time. See "Election Order," *The Cass County Sun*, May 26, 1908.

<sup>53</sup> "Educational Notes," *Cass County Sun*, 25 Nov 1924, page 1.

<sup>54</sup> S.M.N. Marrs, *Negro Education in Texas: Special Activities and Industrial Aid*, 1926.

<sup>55</sup> Marrs, *Negro Education in Texas*, page 4.

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**Julius Rosenwald Fund** – During the 1920s and early 1930s, approximately 5,000 Rosenwald schools were built across the segregated south. The Rosenwald Fund provided matching grants to fund the construction of new schools contingent on the school district meeting certain requirements. Schools participating in the Rosenwald School Building Program, such as Linden, were required to have school terms of at least five months, meet teacher pay standards, and provide adequate transportation for students. The Rosenwald Program also funded amenities such as school libraries and vocational equipment.<sup>56</sup>

Twenty-two Rosenwald schools were built in Cass County. Of these schools, only one is known to survive, the Pleasant Hill school northwest of Linden and listed on the National Register. Other schools within a short radius of Linden included a school at Lanier (five miles south) known as "Fairview" and a school at Kildare (eight miles east) known as "Perfection." The Kildare Rosenwald school was burned shortly before opening in 1927 and was rebuilt.<sup>57</sup>

In 1926, the Linden Independent School District announced its plan to "erect a Rosenwald building for the colored school."<sup>58</sup> The school cost \$2,050, with \$700 provided by the Rosenwald Fund, \$1,450 by Cass County, and the remaining \$900 by local Black citizens.<sup>59</sup> The old Linden Colored School site was sold, and the Linden Independent District acquired a three-acre lot adjacent to the Macedonia Baptist Church on January 1, 1927 for \$150 from H. C. and Bessie Grubbs.<sup>60</sup> Situated on the northern edge of this new parcel, Linden's Rosenwald school was the two-teacher type and faced west toward the road (Figure 2).

**John F. Slater Fund** – The Slater Fund supported county training schools including the Cass County Training School built near Lanier in 1930-31. Through the early twentieth century, most public schooling in Texas for Black students came to end with the 8th grade; in 1916, Texas had only 13 secondary schools for Black children.<sup>61</sup> By 1937 this number had only increased to 47, 21 of which were in East Texas – while there were 848 white high schools.<sup>62</sup> The work of the John F. Slater Fund, established in 1882, shifted in 1911 to fill this need and focus on the development of "county training schools," defined as a larger public county school for Blacks in southern states open to children from all parts of a given county.<sup>63</sup> Between 1914 and 1932, the Slater Fund had supported the development of 34 county training schools in Texas.<sup>64</sup>

**Jeanes Fund** – The Jeanes Fund was established by Anna T. Jeanes in 1908 to fund the hiring of vocational instructors on Black schools. Jeanes (1822-1907) was a Quaker philanthropist from Philadelphia, and the Fund operated until 1937. In Texas, Jeanes-funded instructors were employed for a minimum term of eight months, being paid from \$80 to \$125 per month. They were required to have a certificate in home economics. In the 1923-24 school year, Cass County had one Jeanes instructor out of fourteen in Texas; by 1928 it was one of the few counties in Texas with two. Most Rosenwald schools, including the school built in Linden, had a room for industrial education, usually home

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<sup>56</sup> Karen D. Riles, "Historic and Architectural Resources Associated with the Rosenwald School Building Program National Register of Historic Places Nomination," THC, 1998.

<sup>57</sup> *Cass County Sun*, September 6, 1927.

<sup>58</sup> May 18, 1926: "Linden Independent District is to erect a Rosenwald building for the colored school." (*Cass County Sun*, May 18, 1926).

<sup>59</sup> Fisk University database.

<sup>60</sup> Cass County Deed Book H5, page 475.

<sup>61</sup> Edward E. Redcay, *County Training Schools and Public Secondary Education for Negroes in the South* (John F. Slater Fund, Washington, D.C. 1935), page 15.

<sup>62</sup> Davis, *The Development and Present Status of Negro Education in East Texas*, page 72.

<sup>63</sup> Redcay, *County Training Schools*, page 12.

<sup>64</sup> Redcay, *County Training Schools*, page 40.

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economics. Jeanes instructors were instrumental in bringing home economics education to Cass County's Black schools and stimulating an interest in vocational education.<sup>65</sup>

### The Cass County Training School

The Slater-supported Cass County Training School was built at the site of the Lanier Rosenwald School and initially served as a three-year high school for Black students across the county. The school appears on a 1935 map of county training schools that had been supported by the Slater Fund at any time in the past, and a report of the Slater Fund noted that "a careful study has revealed that no school for Negroes in the South has been called a County Training School unless it has been aided by this fund at some time."<sup>66</sup> By the mid-1930s, the school became known as Fairview High School.

The *Rev. W. A. Preston* played a leading role in the establishment of the Cass County Training School. Preston was born in Jonesville, Harrison County, Texas and attended Bishop College, Wiley College, and Prairie View State College. He was editor of the *Texarkana Afro-American Voice* for decades as well as principal of the Bowie County Training School and pastor of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta (Cass County). He is also credited with having founded Antioch Baptist Church in Linden and Judea Baptist Church in Jefferson, as a member of the N.A.A.C.P., and a Republican, living at 1203 Buchanan Avenue, Texarkana.<sup>67</sup>

School principal *Samuel Houston "S. H." Hennington* (1903-1994) was long associated with Fairview High School. Born in Angelina County, Hennington was active in regional and state Black educational organizations. Hennington received his BA and MA degrees at Prairie View and began his teaching career at Fairview in 1930. He was principal at both Dunbar and Macedonia High Schools in Texarkana for several years before returning to Fairview to close out his career.<sup>68</sup>

Another early instructor was *Mason Jerry "M. J." Barrett* (1904-1980). Born in Marshall, he graduated from Wiley College and in 1931 became instructor, registrar, and bus driver at the Cass County Training School (later renamed Fairview) until becoming principal of Yoakum High School in 1934.<sup>69</sup> He would return to Linden in 1946 as Principal of the Macedonia School in Linden. When Linden ISD closed Macedonia Elementary in 1957 as part of consolidation, he and several Macedonia teachers were moved over to the Perfection Elementary school.<sup>70</sup> Barrett came full circle ending his teaching career in 1973 at what once was Fairview High School.

Importantly, Cass County had three school buses funded by the Rosenwald Fund to bring students to the school. In 1934, William Davis published his report on Black education in Texas, and having visited many schools noted: "of all the schools visited by the writer only one Negro school had any means for transporting students to school; the Cass County Training School..."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference on Education for Negroes in Texas* (1931), page 9.

<sup>66</sup> Redcay, *County Training Schools*, page 13.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Yenser, ed., *Who's Who in Colored America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Persons of African Descent in America*, 6th edition (Thomas Yenser Publisher, 1942), page 420.

<sup>68</sup> *Cass County Trader*, FAIRVIEW PRINCIPAL, July 16, 1981. <http://fairviewdragons.org/our-history.html>. Accessed August 8, 2025.

<sup>69</sup> "Professor Mason Jerry "M.J." Barrett," Biography of Professor Barrett, page 2. [www.arklatexhomepage.com](http://www.arklatexhomepage.com).

<sup>70</sup> *The Citizens Journal* (Atlanta, Tex.), Vol. 78, No. 34, Ed. 1 Thursday, August 21, 1958, Page 1 of 12.

<sup>71</sup> William R. Davis, *The Development and Present Status of Negro Education in East Texas*, Teachers College (Columbia University, 1934), p. 70.

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### Vocational Education and Building the Macedonia School Vocational Building

The construction of the Vocational Building in 1942 on the Linden Colored School's 1927 Rosenwald campus was the culmination of two decades of Black public-school development, particularly in the area of vocational education, nurtured by major private philanthropic investments by the Rosenwald, Slater, and Jeanes funds. That Linden's Black residents undertook the initiative to expand its campus with a one-story masonry structure to provide for agricultural and industrial education programs for its youths several years after these private funds had concluded their work represents a major commitment and belief among Cass County's Black educators that opportunities for vocational education needed to be expanded to Linden.

As a model, the Rosenwald Fund had supported the construction of five industrial education shops in Cass County out of a total of 32 in Texas and 163 in the South.<sup>72</sup> These were located at Alamo (2-room), Bethlehem (2-room), Fairview/Lanier (4-room), Floyd Valley (1-room), and Perfection/Kildare<sup>73</sup> (5-room). Linden's Black population would have been familiar with these buildings, particularly those at nearby Fairview and Perfection.

To facilitate the construction of Linden's Vocational Building in 1942, outside funding support and volunteer labor was brought to bear. Black schools in Linden and Lanier had a positive experience in 1939 with expansion projects made possible by federal support through the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A). The W.P.A. invested in a new gymnasium at Fairview High School in Lanier near Linden.<sup>74</sup> Principal Hennington then called on volunteers to "come and help cover [put a roof on] their new gymnasium."<sup>75</sup>

Linden's Colored School also benefitted from the W.P.A. Because the student population grew steadily during the 1930s, a time when families were moving to town in search of new economic opportunities, it became necessary to expand the school further. In 1939, the W.P.A. helped fund the addition of two additional classrooms, one attached at each end of the 1927 building. The pair of new wood frame classrooms were designed and aligned closely to the school's 1927 Rosenwald specifications, with the ridge line of each new classroom extending from the existing main gable. Thus, the bank of six 9:9 windows in all four classrooms faced east, and all four entrance doors faced west toward the road. Work for the W.P.A. classroom expansion began at the end of the 1939 spring term, and improvements to the school's athletic field/playground to the east of the school were also funded as part of the same W.P.A. project.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, Linden called on Black youths living at the National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.) demonstration farm just east of Linden to provide volunteer labor. The local relationship with the NYA went back to November 1939,

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<sup>72</sup> Karen D. Riles, "Historic and Architectural Resources Associated with the Rosenwald School Building Program National Register of Historic Places Nomination," THC, 1998.

<sup>73</sup> In January 1930, W. A. Barber, Superintendent, advertised for bids for the construction of a four room shop building to be submitted by January 29, 1930.

<sup>74</sup> *Marshall News Messenger* reported on a W.P.A. project at the school: "The Fairview high school (negro) is constructing a large gymnasium on the school campus four miles south of Linden." ("Linden Has Building Spurt Past Four Years," MNM, May 15, 1939, p. 3.)

<sup>75</sup> "Linden," *The Informer* (Houston), July 15, 1939, page 3. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History.

<sup>76</sup> *Marshall News Messenger News Service*, Mon., May 15, 1939, Page 3: A \$35,000 WPA project has been approved for the Linden Public Schools, with work to begin immediately; *Cass County Sun* (Linden), Thursday, June 22, 1939: The WPA project got under way Thursday of this week, including additions to high school building and negro school, reconstructing school buildings; improving adjacent grounds; including wells, walks, and athletic fields; *Cass County Sun* (Linden), Thursday, June 29, 1939: WPA SCHOOL PROJECT IN PROGRESS: Constructing an addition to the negro building.

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when Cass County Commissioners authorized the purchase of 310 acres to establish a National Youth Administration Farm. The demonstration farm, located one mile east of Linden, provided training in agriculture and related fields and served as a demonstration farm for area farmers. Plans for the farm were developed with input from the Soil Conservation Service, Texas A&M Extension Service, and the county commissioner's court.<sup>77</sup> Beginning that same year, 80 boys, white and Black, worked the farm in the mornings and attended school in the afternoons.<sup>78</sup> By 1940, the farm was home to 150 boys. By the end of 1942, preoccupation with World War II and rationing brought an end to the NYA program nationally, and the local NYA farm ceased operating.

These workers, aged 16 to 25, carried out all aspects of the Vocational School building project: quarrying, hauling, dressing the local stone, as well as performing the masonry and general construction work. As reported by the *Cass County Sun* on May 21, 1942, "The shop building is now under construction and is being built out of native rock; it will be completed by the first of September."<sup>79</sup> The project was led by *Verbe Norman* (1917–2008), the school's new vocational teacher, who recalled, "I laid the first rock." In a later interview, Norman noted that N.Y.A. workers earned less than forty cents per hour. Materials were transported using a mule and wagon owned by Austin Pruitt (1874–1975), and a truck owned by Frank Hall, which was driven by Doss Pruitt.<sup>80</sup> Norman, who was married to Austin Pruitt's daughter, had attended Center Point High School near Pittsburg and later Prairie View A&M. By 1950, he was an instructor in vocational agriculture at Ball High School in Seguin.

The new Vocational Building provided the campus with several important facilities: a large indoor vocational shop in the south wing of the building; a fifth classroom on the east side of the shop, in what is now the church kitchen; a small principal's office in the north wing, with space for school records; two small indoor storage closets, later converted into indoor restrooms so that the boys' and girls' outdoor privies could be sealed over; and a central assembly room that occupied most of the north wing, providing flexible space for choral rehearsals, meetings, typing classes, and chapel.<sup>81</sup>

Former student Vonzear Love Mitchel, who attended the school from the first through fourth grades (1947-1951), recalled:

There was chapel [service] every morning in those days. There were two buildings, a wooden building with several classrooms and the rock building, which had one classroom in the [southeast] part of the building. The [southwest] part was for the agriculture program, and its shop floor was just packed dirt at that time. The vocational space was also used for gym/basketball and community events. It's used now as the church kitchen, but it was never used as a school cafeteria. There was no food service on campus, and students brought sack lunches every day.<sup>82</sup>

By 1948, six educators worked in a total of seven separate rooms, including the vocational shop and the assembly space—which was used for chapel, chorus, and typing class. The Vocational Building's assembly area also allowed the campus to host a variety of community events. Among those publicized in the newspaper were a Red Cross war relief

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<sup>77</sup> *Cass County Sun*, "Cass County NYA Farm a Success," Aug 8, 1940.

<sup>78</sup> *Citizens Journal*, "County NYA Demonstration Farm Inspected by Cass Farmers," Nov 9, 1939.

<sup>79</sup> *Cass County Sun* "Linden School Board Elects Teachers," May 21, 1942.

<sup>80</sup> *Cass County Sun*, March 9, 1994, pages 2,3: School Days at Macedonia: Local school one of thousands funded by philanthropist. (Interview with Verbe Norman included.)

<sup>81</sup> Vonzear Mitchell (Linden Colored School student), "Interview with Vonzear Mitchell." Interview by Sue Lazara, April 20, 2016, Private collection of Sue Lazara.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

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campaign, the Colored County Bread Show, school entries in the Cass County Fair, and a dental health puppet show intended to “impress upon the children the importance of dental health and its relationship to total health and scholastic achievement.”<sup>83</sup>

Mary Shurn came to teach at the Linden Colored School in 1943, a year after the Vocational Building was completed: “The campus housed first through eighth grades, with six teachers. I taught 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades from 1943 to 1958, and most of my classes had from 20-25 students.” In the mid-1950s the school published a newsletter called the *Macedonia News Bulletin*. The mimeographed quarterly referred to the school as Macedonia Elementary School, and included reports from each grade level’s faculty, announced honor students and attendance awards, and the coming schedule of educational programs.<sup>84</sup>

### **Annexation, Consolidation, and the School’s Closure**

In the late 1940s and 1950s, the Linden Independent School District responded to demographic and social changes through annexation and consolidation. These actions would result in the closure of Linden Colored School in 1958, the transfer of its 1927 Rosenwald building to a new location, and the sale of the Vocational Building to the Macedonia Baptist Church.

Consolidation efforts began on July 5, 1949, when the Cass County Board of School Trustees ordered the annexation of Lanier Common School District No. 49 to the Linden Independent School District. The trustees of the Lanier district did not consent and unsuccessfully sued the county school board.<sup>85</sup> At the time, the only school in Lanier was the Fairview Colored High School, with a principal and eight teachers serving 201 students. The few white students in Lanier attended schools in other districts.

In 1958, the Linden and Kildare Independent School Districts consolidated. While Fairview High School remained, Macedonia Elementary School was closed and its students (and several teachers) transferred to Perfection Elementary, the Rosenwald-funded campus near Kildare. In July 1960, the former Macedonia School property (approx. 1.9 acres) was sold to the neighboring Macedonia Baptist Church and has been used as a fellowship hall and community event venue since that time.<sup>86</sup> By the time Linden-Kildare ISD fully integrated in 1969, the Linden Colored School campus had already been closed for almost ten years, and the property sold to the Macedonia Baptist Church.

### **Conclusion**

The Macedonia School Vocational Building represents the culmination of decades of determined effort by Linden’s Black community to secure quality educational opportunities despite systemic racial segregation, inadequate funding, and social hostility. From the post-Civil War struggles to obtain even rudimentary schooling, through the infusion of Rosenwald, Slater, and Jeanes Fund resources, to the locally driven initiative that produced this 1942 masonry structure, the building embodies the persistence, cooperation, and self-reliance of African Americans in Cass County. Its creation relied on the direct labor of local youth through the National Youth Administration, the leadership of

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<sup>83</sup> Cass County Sun (Linden), Thursday, February 12, 1942: RED CROSS WAR RELIEF DRIVE AMONG NEGROES NEARS GOAL; Citizens Journal (Atlanta), Thursday, July 24, 1947: COLORED COUNTY BREAD SHOW, held at Linden colored school, public invited; Citizens Journal (Atlanta), Thursday, October 21, 1948: DENTAL HEALTH PUPPET SHOW entitled “Little Jack’s Fair.”

<sup>84</sup> MACEDONIA SCHOOL BULLETIN, Vol. 1, No. 3, c.1955. Private collection of former student Mason Darrell Barrett.

<sup>85</sup> *Board of Dist. Trustees of Lanier vs. Board of County School Trustees of Cass County*, 29 June 1950.

<sup>86</sup> Vol. 395 Pg. 154, Cass County Deed Records, July 29, 1960. Linden Kildare ISD to Trustees of the Macedonia Baptist Church at Linden, conveying 1.858 ac of land in MD Frazier Survey, out of the called 3-ac Linden School tract.

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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educators such as Verbe Norman, and the material contributions of community members who quarried and hauled its native stone.

Serving first as the centerpiece for vocational and agricultural training at the Linden Colored School, and later as a flexible assembly and event space, the building played a vital role in both academic instruction and the social life of Linden's Black community. For more than fifteen years, it hosted classes, chapel services, choral rehearsals, athletic activities, and community programs, reinforcing the school's role as both an educational institution and a cultural hub. Its post-1960 use by Macedonia Baptist Church as a fellowship hall continues this legacy of service as a place of gathering, fellowship, and shared purpose.

As the only surviving building from the original Linden Colored School campus, the Macedonia School Vocational Building is a rare and tangible link to the era of segregated Black education in rural East Texas. It stands as a testament to the agency and resilience of the community that built and sustained it, and to the broader story of African American pursuit of education in the face of adversity. The building retains the materials, form, and workmanship that convey its historic character and is a prominent visual reminder of the social and educational history it represents. For these reasons, the Macedonia School Vocational Building is significant under Criterion A for Education and Ethnic Heritage/Black, at the local level of significance.

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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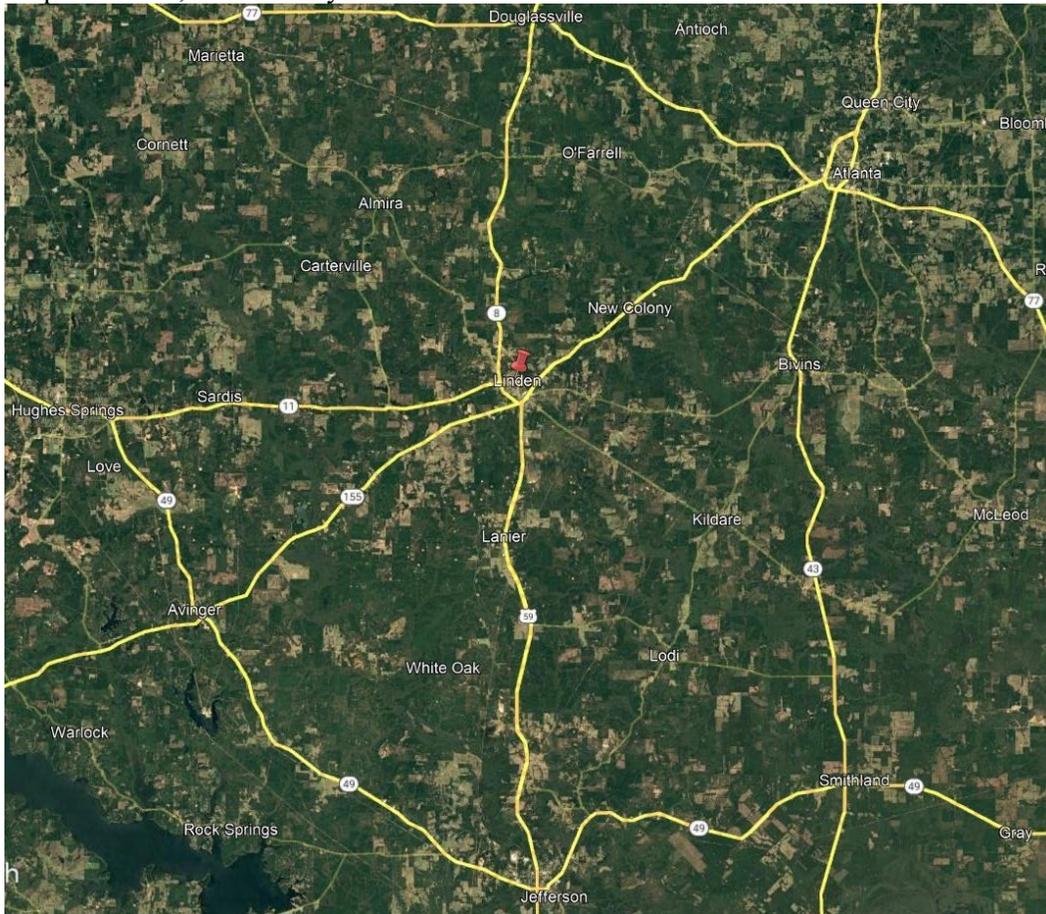
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**Maps**

Map 1: Cass County, Texas

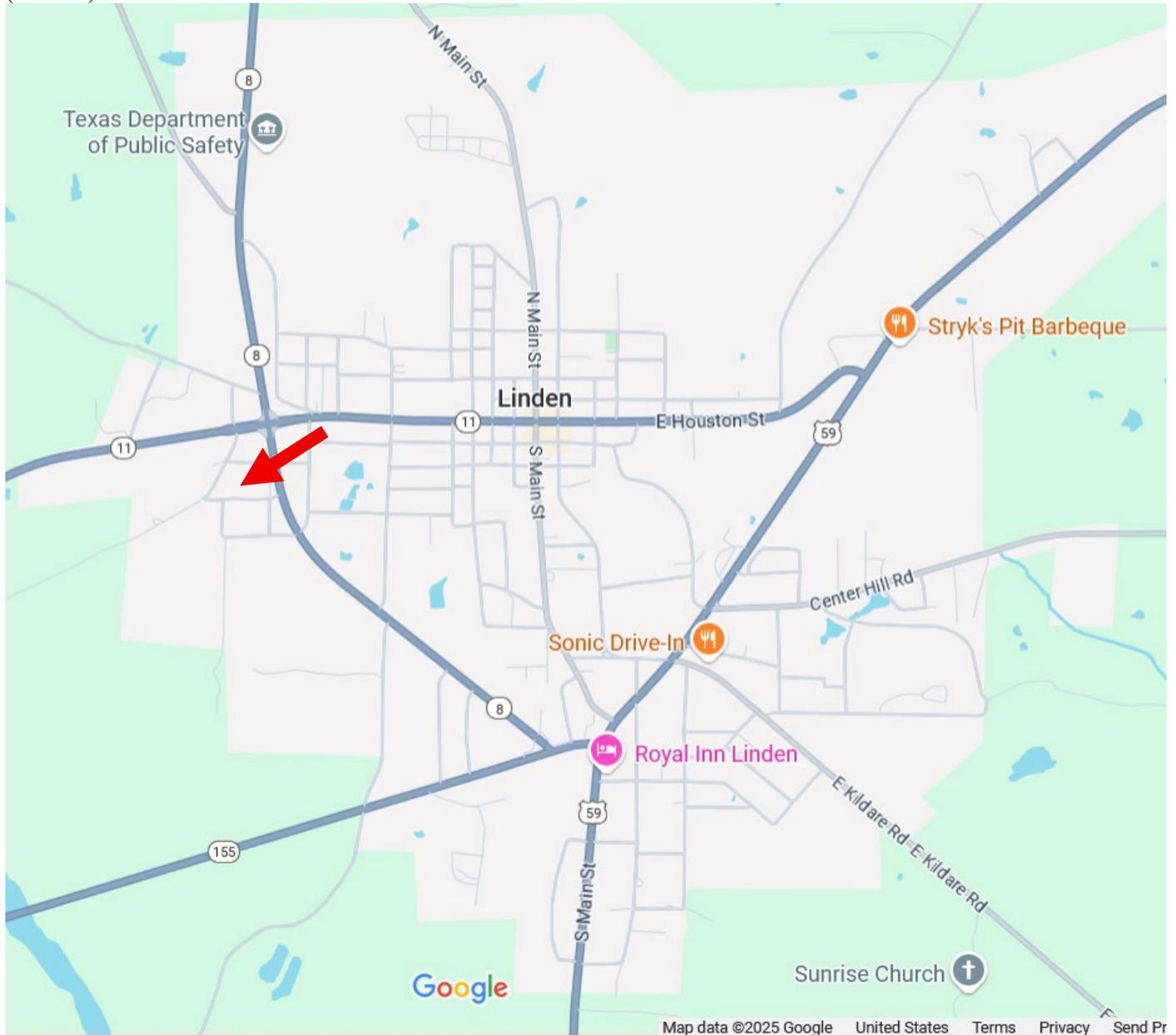


Map 2: Linden, Cass County



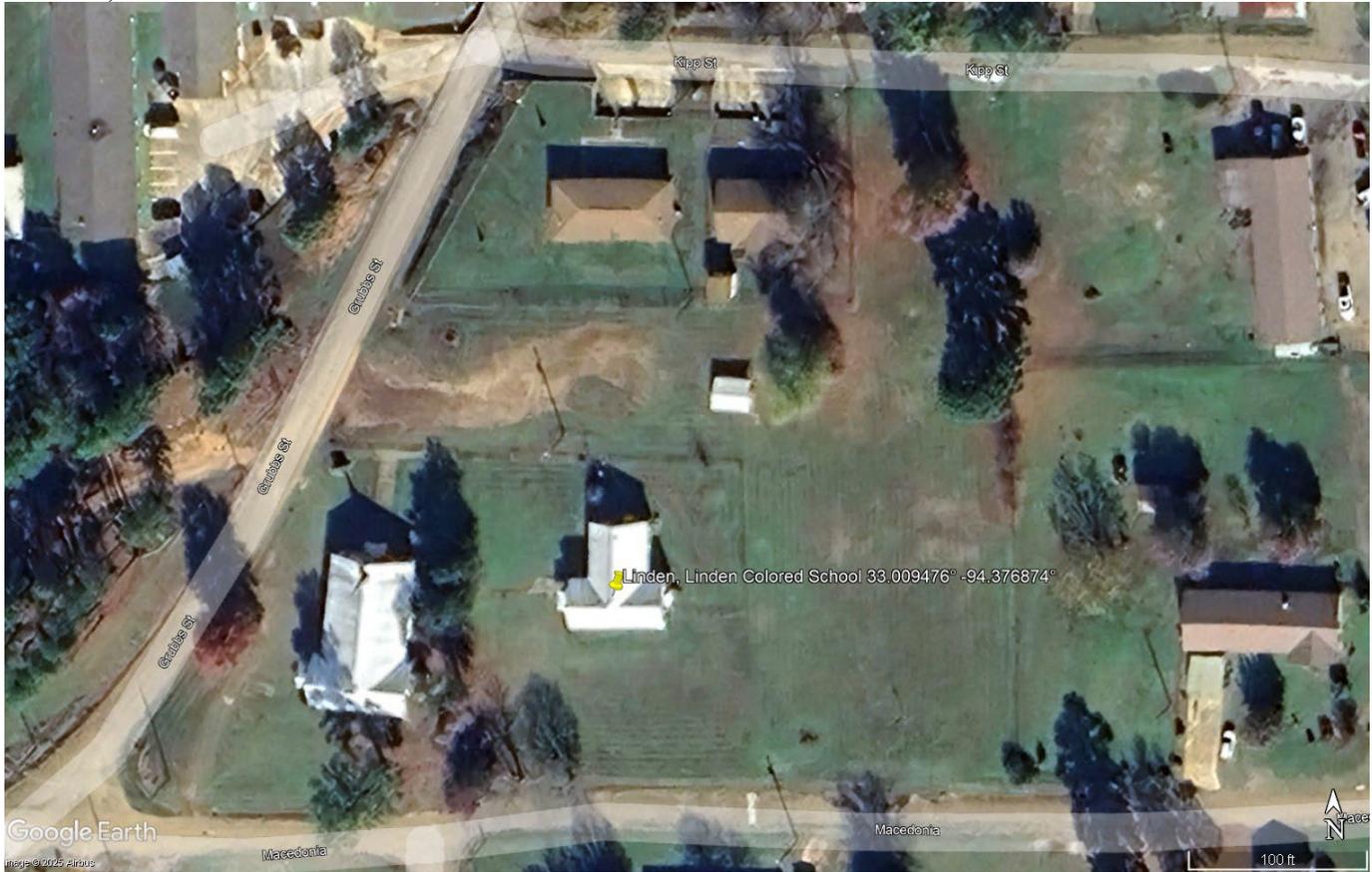
Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

Map 3: Macedonia School Vocational Building at 207 Grubbs Street. Indicated by red arrow. Source: Google Maps (7/24/25)



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

Map 4: Linden, Macedonia School Vocational Building 33.009476° -94.376874°. Source Google Earth (accessed 6/2/2025)



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

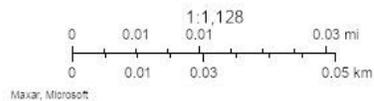
Map 5: Rough sketch of nominated boundary.

Linden, Linden Colored School Approx. Boundary



7/24/2025, 1:52:50 PM

- Parcels
- Abstracts

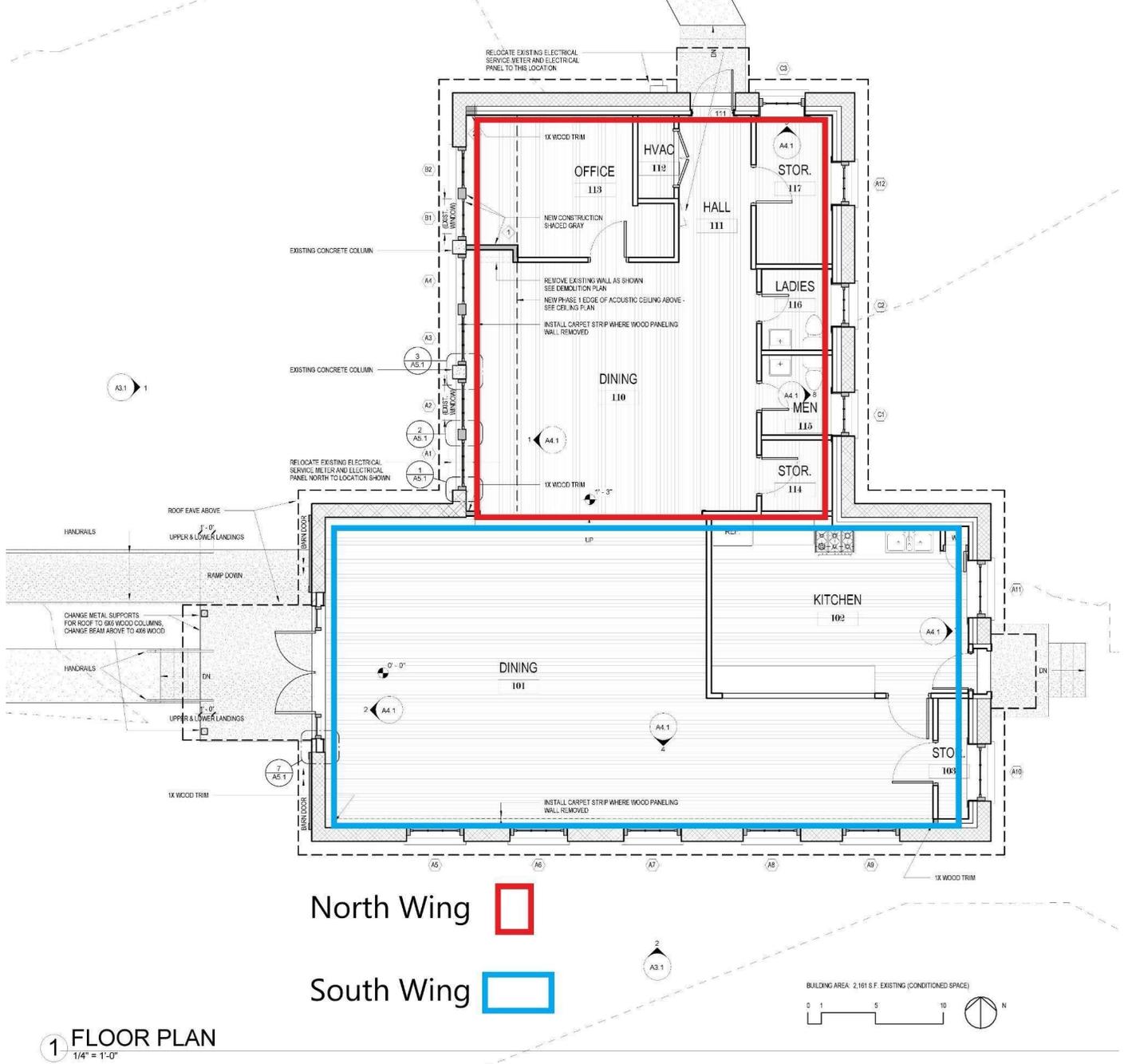


Disclaimer: This product is for informational purposes only and has not been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of boundaries.

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

Figures

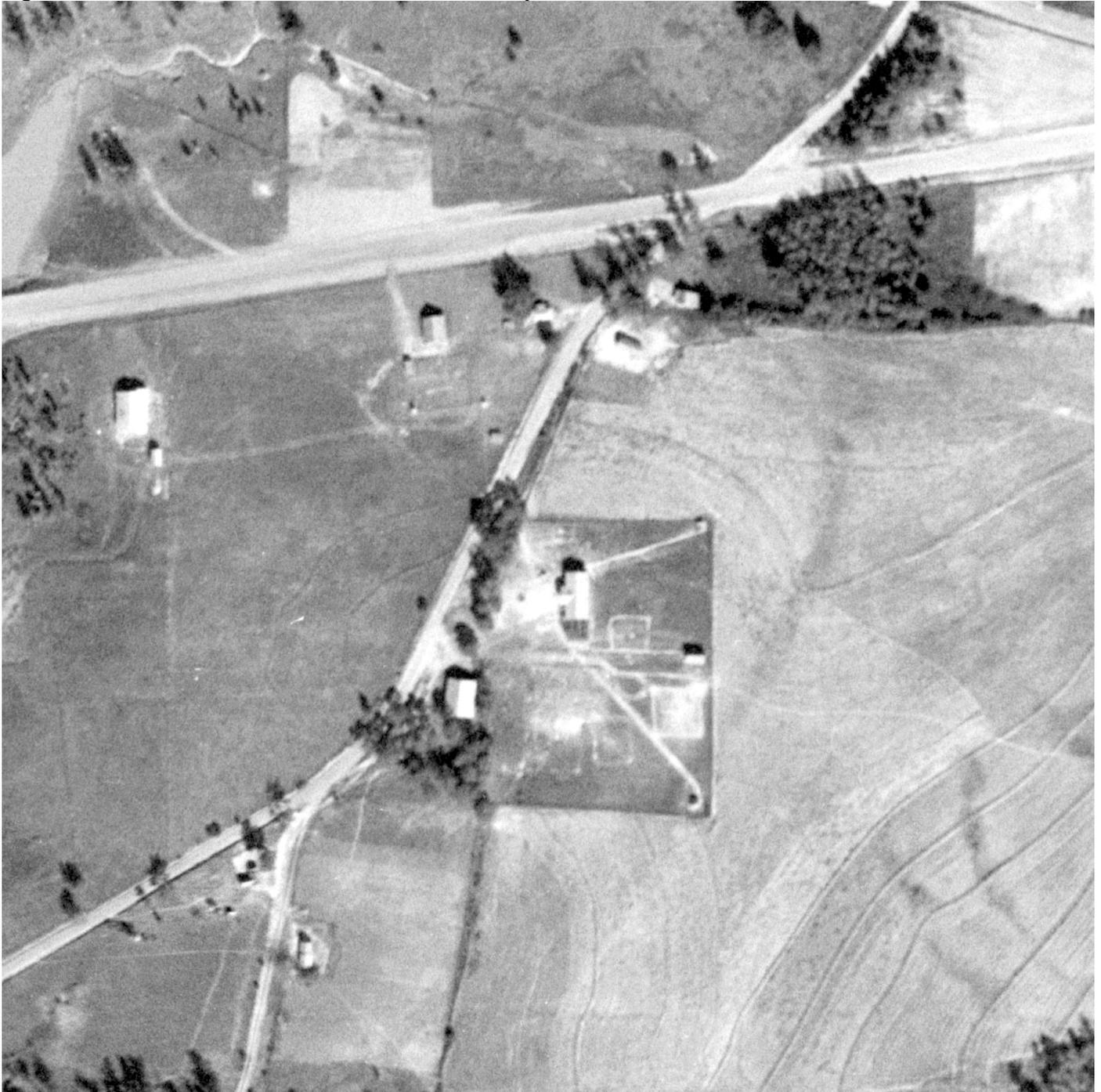
Figure 1: Floor Plan of the Vocational Building. Developed by Ed Sergeant Architecture in 2023.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Figure 2: Aerial view of the Linden Colored School Campus in 1935.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Figure 3: Aerial view of the Linden Colored School Campus in 1955.



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Figure 4: Aerial view of the Linden Colored School Campus in 1968.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

Figure 5: Sheet 2 of the 1964 City of Linden Sanborn Fire insurance map with a cutout showing the Vocational School and Macedonia Church buildings (outlined in red).



Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Figure 6: Northwest elevation of Vocational School building circa 1950.



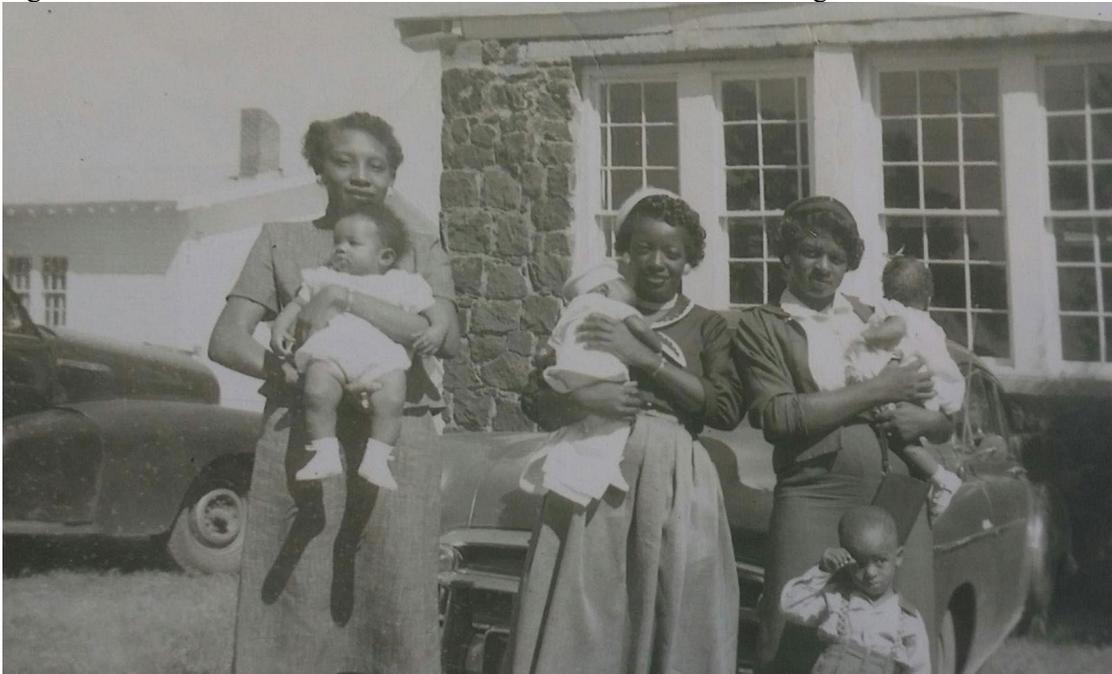
Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Figure 7: Photo on left showing west elevation of the Rosenwald school building. Photo on right showing west elevation of the Vocational School building.



Figure 8: Women stand outside of the west elevation of the north wing. Photo taken c. 1945.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Figure 9: Grade school class, circa 1950. Taken in front of the principal's office window, east elevation of the north wing.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Figure 10: Photo taken in 1927 showing the recently completed 2-teacher Rosenwald school at the Linden Colored School campus.



**Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas**

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**Photographs**

Name of Property: Macedonia School Vocational Building  
City or Vicinity: Linden  
County: Cass State: Texas Photographer: Conor Herterich  
Date Photographed: 08/06/2025 (Unless otherwise specified)

Photo #001 – Site view, Vocational Building and Macedonia Church, camera facing south.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #002 – Site view, camera facing west.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #003 - Site view, camera facing southeast.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #004 - Site view, camera facing northwest.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #005 – Closeup of ironstone rocks used in wall construction. (05/04/2025)



Photo #006 – Photo of crawlspace. (05/04/2025)



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #007 – Northeast elevation.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #008 – North elevation, camera facing south.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #009 – West elevation, camera facing east.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #010 – East elevation, camera facing west.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #011 – Interior of south wing dining room, camera facing north.



Photo #012 – Interior of north wing showing original rock walls exposed on west elevation..



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #013 – Principle's office, northwest corner of the building.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #014 – West elevation, primary entrance. Camera facing east.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #015 – South elevation, camera facing north.



Photo #016 - Southeast elevation showing east entrance, camera facing northwest.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #017 – Interior of south wing, camera facing east.



Photo #018 – Kitchen area and east entrance, camera facing east.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #019 – Removal of drop ceiling and wall paneling exposes original materials. Photo taken along south elevation.



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #020 – Infilled windows on the south elevation before restoration. (05/04/2025)



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #021 – Attic showing modern rafters and plywood decking. (05/04/2025)



Macedonia School Vocational Building, Linden, Cass County, Texas

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Photo #022 – Detached metal carport. (05/04/2025)

