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Preserving Rural African American Heritage in Hawkins County, Tennessee:  
A History and Restoration Proposal for Saunders School, Chapel, and Cemetery

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Business Technology  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Masters of Science in Technology

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by  
Sharon Edwina Becker  
May 2005

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Dr. Nancy Nehring, Chair  
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Keywords: Saunders; Saunders Chapel; Saunders School;  
Hawkins County, Tennessee; African American Education

## ABSTRACT

Preserving Rural African American Heritage in Hawkins County, Tennessee:  
A History and Restoration Proposal for Saunders School, Chapel, and Cemetery

by

Sharon Edwina Becker

As generations segment and separate by distance and relationships, the chapel, school, and cemetery in what was known as the Saunders Chapel Community in Hawkins County, Tennessee, becomes a unifying bond to its descendents. This study records Saunders School history as an established central archive and uses the history for a restoration proposal.

Saunders history, like all social and cultural history, exists as coalesced fragments. In the hope of deriving proof of the past, each entity and event is brought together so they might illuminate another.

The story of Saunders Chapel will continue to grow and live on through the decedents, the site, and their history. The lives and faith that created the community has been brought to present light to insure the descendents of Saunders Chapel a place to keep coming home to.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A History and Restoration Proposal

A dilapidated building stands on a hill in rural Hawkins County. Like other forgotten structures, its once white washed, lapped siding is grayed with age, its windows broken. Passersby do not often notice; much less ponder its past use.

Located outside of Rogersville in the now extended community of Strahl, just off of old Route 70, this particular building has great historical significance to the heritage of this rural community. The building was once known as Saunders Chapel School. The structure, along with the adjoining church and cemetery, constitute not only standing remnants of the early 1900s, but also hearken to origins of an African American community established after the Civil War. To establish proximity to Rogersville, Refer to Appendix A, figure A3.

The structures and the site on which they stand were the metaphoric center of the community known as Saunders Chapel Community. In its hey-day all community functions radiated from it and to it. The physical locations of the structures were on a hill up from the extended community of Needmore. In order to receive the shining light of hope, they had to walk up the hill to "Zion". These institutions represented hope, community, and a promise for a brighter future. The descendents of Saunders represent hope fulfilled. A future without these structures would terminate a vital tie to those who gave all they had so that their children could have so much more.

Perpetuation of Saunders Chapel through a written history and preservation of the physical structures is important because the descendants rely on these buildings as a tie to their past. They celebrate this tie with their yearly Homecoming. Most are saddened by the present state of the school, but also are elated at the fact it is still standing. For myself, after years of wondering about the building and the people who used it, knowing the history and making steps toward preserving it is gratifying.

The humbly sheathed structure stands as a testament to strength, unity, and self-reliance. However, "the strength of any single place cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of its historical and cultural context" (Savage & Shull, 1996, p. 11). The purpose and intent of this research was first to gather pertinent historical information in order to compose a written history of Saunders School. As remnants of the past were revealed, a broader historical scope developed. To retell the past without recognizing the people who influenced it, seemed amiss. Therefore, in order to tell the history of Saunders Chapel School, the families composing the school, church, and community are included as well.

The second intent is to use the history to add merit to the effort of obtaining recognition on the National Register of historic landmarks. Thus, the question explored within the thesis is, "Will the history of Saunders School, Chapel, Cemetery, and Community be sufficient to receive recognition from the National Park Service?"

Three explorations of thought are used to support the merit of Saunders history. Firstly, the relevance of Saunders history in Hawkins County is paralleled to the significance and development of African American social and cultural history. Secondly,

local and national case studies are exemplified. Thirdly, the evaluation criterion for the National Register for Historic Landmarks (NHL), designated by the National Park Service (NPS), is presented and Saunders historic research is compared to the criteria in the discussion section.

Saunders will achieve recognition based on the following local preliminary case study and literature review. The success of Price Public Community Center in Rogersville strengthens the probability of recognition for Saunders. The history of Saunders Chapel School parallels that of Price Public School in Rogersville. Price Public, is the only "extant black school [building] in the city of Rogersville" (Frost, 2004). Saunders Chapel is the only other extant black school building in the county. Price Public was built in early 1920 (Frost). Prior research placed the construction date for Saunders in the early 1920s, research to date based on an 1895 land survey for the church property places the speculative date for a school structure prior to 1895. Refer to the section under "Deed Research" labeled, "The school and the Church Property" found in "Findings". Research for an exact date of construction for the existing structure is still ongoing. The earlier date and one-room wood construction compared to Price's 1920s brick structure and larger size sets Saunders apart.

Based on historical research, the first recorded mention of a school in operation in that locale is made in a journal written by Will A. Sheffey, Superintendent of Schools in Hawkins County. In the September 26, 1883, journal entry, Sheffey is traveling the 15<sup>th</sup> district assessing schoolteachers. He gives accounts of visiting the white schools at Enterprise and Dodson Creek. He then mentions at the end of the day visiting "...two

colored schools in the 15<sup>th</sup> district..." (Sheffey, 1883, p. 71). The second school mentioned is "near Strahl" and is taught "by O.C. Hamblen" (p. 71). Sheffey writes, "...the number enrolled at both places is between sixty and seventy" (p. 71). A map of the 15<sup>th</sup> district is unavailable at this time. In the 1895 church deed, the land is situated in the 15<sup>th</sup> district. Based on location, Sheffey would have visited the school 'near Strahl' between his visits to Enterprise and Dodson Creek. See Appendix A, figure A1, "Surrounding Areas of Strahl". The location of the other mentioned school has not been explored at this time due to the unknown boundaries of the 15<sup>th</sup> district.

Evaluating social and cultural literature in American history enforces Saunders history. The civil rights era turned common people into national historic figures transforming the field of archival studies from a traditional to a social history perspective. The way we remember and perceive history experienced a paradigm shift from impersonal national events to making history in the headlines with personal local events.

Prior to 1960, traditional history focused on "almost all male, white, well-educated northerners" (Horton, 1996, p. 16). During the civil rights movement, social historians recognized the enormous impact of ordinary people in the formation of history. "By the late 1960s social history was taking a turn toward a broader vision of the American past, asking if those regional, economic, gender, and racial groups so obviously involved in the national life of contemporary society could be discovered as actors in earlier periods" (p.16). Since 1960, social historians have endeavored to re-write American history with a culturally diverse perspective.

The social history of Saunders Chapel School is a continuance of this move toward experiencing history on a very personal level “of family and community” (p.16).

Saunders written history embodies more than the school, it also encompasses the ordinary people who made extraordinary effort to better their community, their lives, and their future.

The establishment of a written history and restoration will benefit the descendents, the local community, and the region. Rogersville is one of the few towns with a thriving core still intact. The town history also embodies a rich African American Educational heritage with Swift College and Price Public built in 1860 (Bobo, 2004). Embracing its past in the present, the spirit of revitalization never left the town. Saunders restoration will be embraced and seen as a complement to Stella Gudger’s efforts at Price Public School. A.M.E. Zion Church archives, ETSU Archives of Appalachia, and the H.B. Stamps Library in Rogersville will also benefit in the continuance of maintaining written Appalachian heritage.

Due to parametric constraints of obtainable site history and time frame in which to conduct the research, the results are limited in scope from the initial established goals. The prior goals are re-established in the conclusion section.

As generations segment and separate by distance and relationships, the school, cemetery, and church become a unifying bond to the past. Steps must be taken now in order to preserve what is left of this rural heritage. The descendents of Saunders Chapel must be insured they have a place to keep coming home to.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Saunders History Paralleled to African American Social History

One would question the significance of documenting the history of an old farm storage building. "The significance of any single place cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of its historical and cultural context" (Savage & Shull, 1996, p. 11). Therefore, to enforce the importance of the factual listing of dates and people associated with Saunders history, the evolution of social, economic, and cultural factors on a local level is paralleled to the national level. Topics addressed include the need for an integrated American History and an exploration of precedent contributions and current practice in creating African American archives.

#### The Need For an Integrated American History

The 1960s brought about not only social change but also a difference in the way we looked at traditional history. Traditional history is the portrayal of historical events through a narrow focus of predominantly white "powerful politicians, dashing military commanders, and brilliant philosophers" (Horton, 1996, p. 15). "They marked the path and formed the substance of the things, the events, and the people worth studying, and they even defined the terms of the historical debate" (p. 15).

Traditional history represented a glossed-over version of historical events that negated contributions of other races to our national archive and identity. The new way

of perceiving, called by some historians “history from the bottom up” or social history, brought “ordinary people out of historical obscurity” and made “ordinary not only consequential but central to our understanding of our past and present society and culture” (p.15).

Significant events in traditional history existed on an impersonal, untouchable realm of national experience creating a disconnect to individuals at a personal level (Horton, 1996, p. 16). In contrast, social history is experienced on “very personal levels of family and community” (Horton, p. 16).

The following three factors were socially accepted reasons for excluding African Americans from archival records: social negation, inequality, and segregation. Firstly, slavery negated more than freedom. Slavery also negated African American oral and ritual history. The period of time from the arrival of the first slaves on American soil to emancipation created an immense generational archival cavern. The practice of oral and ritual traditions and the right speak in their native tongue was discouraged. New generations were forced to redefine their lives according to socially accepted white culture. Social and physical prodding, over time, systematically eroded almost all ties to African heritage. Rudiment and unnoticed customs such as food preparation, construction, pottery methods, and song survived as cultural remnants.

Secondly, blacks simulation of whites was the expected way of life. Simulation was guised as improvement, but it was also used to hinder rebellion. Adherence standards included speaking, learning, dressing, and worshipping as whites. Equality for blacks in white culture, however, was not achieved through simulation. Whites superiority

complex encouraged injustice to their brother. As whites were teaching blacks to be whites, whites were teaching their generations to be erroneously superior. Social inequality, however, was conflicting to the conscious of both blacks and whites in a nation established under God. Inequality could not be maintained under a national ideal where all men are created equal.

Thirdly, segregation amplified the problems of poverty and proximity in rural areas. Lack of funding for black schools decreased number, thereby increasing travel distance. Most rural black families did not own a car and needed their children to help on the farm. Segregation deprived rural children of an education. Most rural adult African Americans were also illiterate. Thus, segregation became a factor for the lack of African American archives.

A final reason for the lack of archival history is due to mass migration after the Civil War. "For much of the past two centuries, migration has symbolized to African Americans both the promise and the limitations of American opportunity" (Grossman, 1996, p. 25). Migration prior to the Civil War was to escape slavery. The reasons for migration after the war were poverty and persecution. Blacks were either forced to migrate or voluntarily migrated. The voluntary choice was made in hope of bettering their condition "through industrial work, rather than landownership...[and also] to enjoy the prerogatives of American citizenship" (Grossman, p. 31). Whatever the reason for migration, it represented constant undocumented movement. This in mass movement became the reason for dwindling and dieing African American Communities. In an effort to make a living, there wasn't an opportunity to reflect on history preservation.

With the civil rights movement, social negation, inequality, and separation were tolerated no more. Migration was still a way of life but now only because of choice for a better living. The civil rights movement enacted social change and demanded the inclusion of African Americans in archival records. Only then was the enormity of forgotten information revealed.

### Precedent Contributions and Current Practice in African American Archives

Social History prior to 1960 was unimportant at the national level existing as “pots and pans” history without major contributors or a spokesperson (Horton, 1996, p. 16). Widespread civil unrest in the 1960s changed the idea of historical contributors when ordinary people such as “...maids, gas station attendants, sharecroppers, and housewives linked arms with ministers, teachers, and students...” and were “...eventually joined by doctors, lawyers, and even politicians, all unquestionably forcing a change in national policy, all making history in the streets” (Horton, p. 16). This great impact of ordinary people on social history sparked a quest for a “broader vision of the American past, asking if those regional, economic, gender, and racial groups so obviously involved in the national life of contemporary society could be discovered as actors in earlier periods” (p. 16).

Groups of people long ignored and misrepresented were given a voice in a 1968 “anthology edited by Barton J. Bernstein under the title *Toward a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*” (p. 16). Black Americans, being the center of the civil

rights movement, came to the forefront followed by “women's history, the history of Native Americans and of American ethnic groups” (p. 16).

Black Americans in particular “...were highly critical of the fact that they were excluded from American history except as minor supporting...[,] ...racially stereotyped characters...” (p. 16). Because of this exclusion, an extraordinary effort in social, economic, and cultural advancement took place in African American communities in the nineteenth century.

Education, church, and social organizations became the vehicle to a life of equality and promise. “Education was perhaps the most important component of the African American community's racial uplift program in the antebellum period. Black women were able fully to participate in these educational efforts as teachers in the African Free schools located in all the major northern urban centers, as well as in Sunday schools affiliated with churches of different denominations” (Peterson, 1996, p. 42). “During and after the Civil War, the development of black educational institutions in the South became a major concern of all African Americans. In the 1860s, and even well into the 20th century, their efforts were supported by federal, state, and private white philanthropy” (p. 43).

African American women, with the church behind them, became strong proponents and instruments in educational advancement. In an 1895 essay entitled “The Responsibility of Women as Teachers”, Mrs. Mary Rice Phelps speaks of the important role women played in education. The influence of the church is seen as a clear contributor to her thoughts on the advancement of African American education.

The first and most important question with every woman should be: "What did God mean for me to do? Am I preparing myself to meet the demands of my people? Am I equipping myself with the elements that make a true woman?" She who seeks to make herself what God intends her to be is sure of success.

Woman's responsibility as teacher is great, grand[,] and awful. Great and grand because of the material used; the thoughtfulness and discretion with which she must labor to make a success. The combined influences, the steadfast purposes, patience[,] and several dispositions that constitute the true man and woman must be so simplified and so developed as to appear so desirable that they will in time become a part of those taught. The responsibility is awful because of the results that will follow. Have you ever thought what a fearful thing it is to shape a character for future usefulness, and instill right principles in an immortal soul? (Phelps, 1895)

The 1970s and early 1980s produced sporadic efforts to fill in historical gaps "and to improve the quality of community life" (Lyon & Williamson, 1996, p. 68). The spurring influence being the national Bicentennial, "the NPS [National Parks System] contracted with an African American consulting group to identify potential National Historic Landmarks associated with black history" (p. 68).

"Recent endeavors include cultural resource surveys, National Register nominations, contextual and planning studies, building rehabilitation projects, and community development projects" (p. 68). Social historians find that the "1950s and 1960s are so worked over" and are turning from the civil rights era to the Victorian era for research

material (Bryant, 2005, ¶ 5). Resources for the Victorian Era are limited and “[a] growing number of researcher[s], [university students seeking topics for master's theses and doctoral dissertations], are turning to...” newspaper clippings in scrapbooks for their research (¶ 4 & ¶ 6).

In Dallas, Texas, “[t]he Dallas Public Library recently purchased roughly 58,000 photo negatives taken by...” black photographer, Marion Butts (Young, 2005, ¶ 10). Mr. Butts was a photographer for the *Dallas Express*, an African American newspaper, during the 1950s and 1960s (¶ 1). With the actual newspapers now gone, the black and white photographs chronicle without words “the final days of racial segregation” (¶ 1). The photographs exist as a small testament to both historic events and “community photography” seen in the once “...117 African-American newspapers that operated in Texas between the mid-19th century and the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup>” (¶ 12).

“Museums seem to have been the first response to the impetus to make America's black heritage visible” and continue to be a strong result of preservation effort (Lyon & Williamson, 1996, p. 68). In February 2005, the Cultural Center at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston, West Virginia, exhibited and lectured on an assortment of African American movies, poetry, and storytelling as a part of the festivities for Black History Month (Broadwater, 2005, ¶ 1). Exhibit items were produced from state archive boxes and included state artifacts such as declaration letters of freedom, pictures, “two-inch thick leather slave collars and whips[,] and the service Booker T. Washington ate off of while visiting a famous Charlestonian in Berlin” (¶ 10). Exhibits such as this are revolving or travel to other “black heritage museums across the country [displaying]

the full panorama of this history, from the 1619 landing of 20 Africans in Virginia as indentured servants to the civil rights movement in Montgomery, Birmingham, and elsewhere" (Lyon & Williamson, p. 68).

### National Register Evaluation Criteria

"Anyone can prepare a nomination to the National Register, working with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer.... Their offices are partners of the National Park Service and are responsible for surveying and evaluating properties in their jurisdictions, determining which of the properties are eligible for listing, working with individuals to prepare nomination to the National Register, and officially nominating properties to the National Register" ("National Register," p. 14).

The Tennessee Historical Commission is the State agency working in conjunction with the National Parks Service. Before formal review from the Tennessee Historical Commission, the property must go through a pre-review application process. Currently, this form is available only in hard copy from the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Through a formal review process, the Tennessee Historical Commission nominates properties to the national register. The formal review of applications takes place three times per year with the next review period in June 2005. "The State review board, composed of professionals in the fields of American history, architectural history, architecture, pre-contact and post contact archeology, and other related disciplines – and sometimes citizen members – reviews the nomination. [The] review board makes a recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer either to approve each

nomination, if in the board's opinion it meets the National Register criteria, or to disapprove the nomination if it does not" ("National Register," p. 15). For further information about the nomination process, a pamphlet named "The National Register of Historic Places" is accessible on the Web at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/brochure>.

Standard registration applications for the formal review process are available from state and federal agencies. "Form 10-900" the "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" can also be downloaded from the Web at [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/forms.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/forms.htm). The National Parks Service provides specific instructions for completing the registration form in a pamphlet called "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form" available by contacting the state or federal agency or via the Web at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/index.htm>.

The National Parks service sets forth criteria with which to evaluate the property's historical significance. "When evaluating a property against National Register criteria, significance is defined as the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, a State, or the nation" ("National Bulletin," p. 2). Following is the list of Criterion:

- Criterion A: History ("TN Pre-Review")
  - "Association with historic events or activities" ("National Register," p. 20)
- Criterion B: Person ("TN Pre-Review")
  - Association with lives of important persons ("National Register," p. 20)
- Criterion C: Architecture ("TN Pre-Review")

Distinctive design or physical characteristics (“National Register,” p. 20)  
“Characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction” (Savage & Shull, 1996, pp. 12 & 13)

- Criterion D: Archaeology (“TN Pre-Review”)

Potential to provide important information about prehistory or history  
 (“National Register,” p. 20)

In order to achieve nomination for the National Register, the criteria above must be supported by historic context. “Historic context... [is] ...information about the period, the place, and the events that created, influenced, or formed the backdrop to the historic resources. The discussion of historic context should describe the history of the community where the property is located as it relates to the history of the property” (“National Register,” p. 2).

The property is also evaluated for association, period of significance, and its integrity (p. 2).

Association refers to the direct connection between the property and the area of significance for which it is nominated. For a property to be significant under historic events (Criterion A)[,] the physical structure must have been there to “witness” the event or series of events; they must have actually occurred on the nominated property. For a property to be significant for an association with an individual (Criterion B), the individual should have lived, worked, or been on the premises

during the period in which the person accomplished the activities for which the individual is considered significant. Period of significance refers to the span of time during which significant events and activities occurred. Events and associations with historic properties are finite; most properties have a clearly definable period of significance. (p. 2)

“Lastly, a property is evaluated for its integrity: the authenticity of physical characteristics from which properties obtain their significance” (p. 2). To qualify, the property must have retained, in the larger part, its original form and materials.

“Changes are allowed, but not radical changes that dramatically alter the associative perception of [the] ...events, people, and designs...” [of the properties origin] (p. 2).

“Historic integrity is the composite of seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association” (p. 2).

The National Register clearly defines acceptable and unacceptable properties for nomination as follows:

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- A building or structure removed from its original location but that is primarily significant for architectural value or that is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life; or
- A cemetery that derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan and when no other building or structure within the same association has survived; or
- A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- A property achieving significance within the last 50 years if it has exceptional importance. (Savage & Shull, 1996, p. 12)

Once accepted as a National Historic Property, the owner can apply for federal preservation grants through the state agency. Funds are budgeted each year by Congress; therefore, the yearly funding amount is tentative. After review, applications are rated and ranked. Decisions on those to be funded are made when the exact

amount of the allocation is known (Tennessee Historical Commission). Timeliness of the state budget decision is dependent upon Congressional approval (Tennessee Historical Commission).

### Local and National African American Case Studies

In Jonesborough, the restoration of a church and schoolhouse was undertaken by the Jonesborough Heritage Alliance. The building was completely disassembled, reassembled, and restored to a location beside the Jonesborough Visitors Center. In a phone interview in October of 2005 with Debra Montanti of the Jonesborough Heritage Alliance, great interest and offer of help were expressed for the thesis. In a later conversation in November of 2005 with historic preservationist Jenny Parker, it was of great interest to find out that she as well is currently working on a cemetery restoration. Working with the Jonesborough Heritage Alliance will afford an opportunity for the sharing of information and instruction on procedure of grant procurement.

In Johnson City, students of Science Hill's Alternative Learning Center, summer session 2004, made history come to life. Students were tasked to research the occupants of Oak Hill Cemetery adjoining downtown Johnson City. The research was in preparation to film a documentary based on the "lives of the famous – and not so famous – people buried in" the cemetery (Green, 2004). Student researchers were also enactors taking on the attributes of the person they researched for documentary. The teacher in charge of the project "wanted the students to learn appreciation for the cemetery and local history" (Green). This project helped students understand the

dynamics of research. The project made history in action more interesting and memorable than an impersonal dormant timeline. Most Rogersville community members represent East Tennessee regional descendents. Rogersville student participation in Saunders restoration will enlighten themselves about their ancestors.

Price Public Community Center in Rogersville represents a historic preservation housing a museum for Swift College and the former Price Public Elementary School. "The built environment is offering an ever expanding view of the life of African Americans, with such buildings as the Prudence Crandall House, New England's first female black academy, in Canterbury, Connecticut; the Madame C. J. Walker Building in Indianapolis, Indiana, the site of a successful hair products company. Several are in historic churches, like the African meetinghouses in Boston and Nantucket and the South Dakota Black History Museum in an early African Methodist Episcopal church" (Lyon & Williamson, 1996, p. 71).

"Recent examples that seek to display history and culture and interpret historic buildings include the Beach Institute African American Cultural Center in a 1869 missionary school building in Savannah, Georgia, and the Delta Cultural Center in the restored 1915 Missouri Pacific depot in Helena, Arkansas, where the culture of the Delta region, including blues music, agriculture, the Civil War experience, and the African American experience, is exhibited" (p. 71).

This sampling is an edited version of the vast activity in the "growing awareness throughout the country of the buildings and sites of African American history that had

for so long gone unnoticed" (p. 71). Saunders Chapel is one of these unnoticed sites that will be lost if effort is not taken to preserve it.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Information acquired for Saunders history was predominately obtained in Hawkins County from the *Rogersville Review*, years 1932-1956, the Hawkins County Board of Education, years 1907-1954, Hawkins County deeds, H.B. Stamps Public Library, Price Public Community School president, Stella Gudger, and personal interviews with Hawkins County residents and former church members Charles Arnett, David Gudger, and Harrison Spears Jr. David Gudger and Harrison Spears are also former students. Information was sought from the A.M.E. Zion Church, but the organization did not have records for Saunders Chapel. Most of the information in the ETSU Archives of Appalachia was duplicated at the H.B. Stamps Library.

September 1932 is the earliest obtainable record from the *Rogersville Review* office due to prior archives being destroyed by a flood. Saunders Chapel School is mentioned in yearly listings of teachers for the upcoming school term, attendance records, or special events in conjunction with or sponsored by the Price Public Elementary or Swift College.

In this writings first correspondence with the Board of Education, employees said the Board of Education did not possess adequate archive information useful to this research. Upon viewing their archived meeting minutes, the information therein proved to be very valuable pertaining to the years 1907 thru 1932 and beyond. Due to the late timing of this discovery, the journals could not be completely reviewed.

Guidance on the Saunders Chapel School restoration proposal came from Stella Gudger, President of Price Public Community Center, Jenny Parker, historic preservationist for Jonesborough Heritage Alliance, The Rogersville Heritage Association, Claudette Stager of the Tennessee Historical Commission, and local architect Robert Allen, AIA.

Due to the large scope of work, Jenny Parker, suggested limiting the thesis to obtaining a history for the site and a proposal for the school to include an existing and proposed site plan, a preliminary cost estimate, and proposed uses for the site.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

Based on similar case studies and consultation with Jenny Parker, the existing Saunders Chapel School history has merit to achieve recognition with the Tennessee Historical Commission on its own. From discussions with David Gudger, Harrison Spears, and Charles Arnett prior to the beginning of the research, records on the site and history were unheard of. But the fragments of discovered information gave evidence of not only a post Civil War African American school and church but also a thriving pre Civil War community.

Based on the referenced timeframe, the community has three interchangeable names; Strahl as it exists in this writing, Needmore, and Saunders Chapel. For the purpose of this paper, the community is referred to as Saunders Chapel Community. For more details on the community names and boundaries, refer to, "The Community" under "Findings".

In the quest to establish a school history, a broader scope developed. Researches yielded the families of the community were an integral part of the school and church and deserved merit through historical commemoration as well. The findings of Saunders Chapel School, Church, and community are as follows.

## Deed Research

In 1796 the Samuel Spears family moved from Halifax Co. North Carolina and bought land in the 15th civil district of Hawkins County Tennessee. (Spears, 2002, p. 7). This land is "in the vicinity of present-day Strahl[,] Tennessee." (p. 7). Samuel Spears had two sons by his first marriage, Jesse, born 1789 in North Carolina, and Lazarus Spears. In 1816, two years after Jesse's marriage to Ferruby Haynes of Webster Valley, father Samuel Spears deeded Jesse Spears 50 acres (p.7). Jesse Spears continued to purchase land in the 15<sup>th</sup> district throughout his life and had acquired 804 acres by 1862, his 74<sup>th</sup> year (p. 7).

Jesse and Ferruby Spears had a total of 14 children, three of which are important in the land history. In July 1863, Jesse deeded "390 acres of land on Dodson Creek on which he lived to his daughter Eliza Carter and her husband Robert C. Carter" (p. 9). "However there was trouble over the transaction, and Robert C. Carter is said to have cheated the Spears family out of their lands" (pp. 9 & 10). On July 22, 1865, Eliza's brothers, Samuel K. Spears and James Spears, entered a lawsuit for recovery of the land (p. 7). "The matter was settled upon the sale of the land" to the brothers, in 1870" (p.7).

A present to past chronological search for the properties where the school, cemetery, and church resides proved to be difficult due to multiple divisions and trading of the properties. In Hawkins County Deeds, Conveyance book One, Jesse Spears is shown as purchasing land from George Kite in 1839. In the same book, in 1869, Jesse Spears is recorded as purchasing land from 'Thomas Lee and Wife'. The names Lee

and Kite are used in reference to a 1901 deed involving adjoining land to the church and school purchased by George Becker in 1982. Also, at some time zoning districts were consolidated from approximately 18 to 9 current districts. Past district maps were not available at the Hawkins County Court House. The following information has been retrieved to date.

### The School and Cemetery Property

George E. Becker acquired the school and cemetery property in 1995 and is the current owner. The current deed found in Hawkins County Deed Book 348, page 251, gives the following details on the property. An exemption grants right away for ingress and egress to the cemetery and premises. The prior owner of both the school and cemetery was realtor Harold B. Johnson. Deed Book 348 then references to Deed Book 208, page 193, where Johnson obtained the land in 1995 from Octavia Crider, daughter of Bessie Smith. A reference to Deed Book 220, page 240, lists Octavia as buyer of the cemetery tract from Nessie Hoard, wife of Nelson Hoard in 1973. Mrs. Hoard offered the land to George Becker prior to 1995, but he declined. Mrs. Hoard then sold it in 1995 to Harold B. Johnson. In Deed Book 94, page 434, the school and cemetery site came into Nessie Hoard and her husband Nelson's possession in 1944 when Nelson's father Fred Hoard willed it to his children; W.S. Hoard, Harry Hoard, Otella Hoard Ray, and, Bessie Hoard Smith. In 1940, Nelson Hoard built a new home across from the church for his bride Nessie. To see a picture of the Nelson and Nessie Hoards home, refer to Appendix E, Figure E2.

Fred Hoard and his first wife Katie bought the land where the cemetery sits together in 1933 from Clara Everhart, wife of Hugh Everhart. The two paid off the 130 acres in June of 1939, and in Hawkins County Deed Book 82, page 543, is the following: "Clara Everhart does hereby acknowledge that she is the lawful holder of a promissory note for the sum of \$200.00 secured by a trust deed bearing the date of June 12, 1933".

According to personal interviews, the school property must have not been a part of this purchase in 1933.

Clara Everhart was listed as the conveyor to Fred Hoard. In the older books, when a married couple is conveyor, only the husbands name is listed; for example, 'Hugh Everhart and wife'. The Hoard and Everhart transaction is not listed in the record of conveyance for the year 1933. Therefore, the search was concluded.

### The School and the Church Property

In Hawkins County deed book 40, page 482, the church property is conveyed by "Jerry Sanders to A.M.E. Zion Church in America" on June 12, 1895. The deed book reads as follows: "...[A] bargain for this land between Jerry Sanders of Hawkins County and Fred Hoard, Joseph Charles, William Arnott, Russell Waterson, Phillip Arnott, Phillip Releford, and Jerry Sanders, Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of 'Sanders' [Saunders] Chapel near Strahl."

The land was located in the 15<sup>th</sup> Civil District of Hawkins County. Usually the survey and dimensions for the lot are intelligible but the 1895 Saunders survey found in Hawkins County Deed Book 40, page 482, proved very enlightening:

Dimensions a lot of ground continuing over half an acre more or less and to wit beginning on a white oak west side of Dodson Creek in front of the schoolhouse as it now stands, thence, wit the road leading from Rogersville to Greenville North 112 feet to a front oak, thence, an Eastward course 49 feet to a road which is inside of said Jerry Sanders field, thence a southeast course 112 feet to a rock at the rear of the schoolhouse, thence a straight line 85 feet to the beginning corner. ("Jerry Sanders", 1895, p. 482)

Currently, the owner is listed as Saunders Chapel Church, 110 E. Main Street, Room 201, Rogersville, TN 37857. In a personal interview with Charles Arnett in October 2, 2004, he attributes himself as one of the remaining active original church members involved with the monthly commemorative service and the yearly Homecoming. He is unsure who holds the church deed at this time. According to Arnett, the church is no longer a member of A.M.E. Zion.

As seen above, there is a discrepancy in the spelling. There is no available source for the discrepancy of the site spelling. In many of the research sources, the name is often interchanged. All interviews and *Rogersville Review* sources confirm the listing of 'Sanders' and 'Saunders' to be one in the same.

The school more than likely reverted to the former estate, Fred Hoard, and current property owner, Nelson and Nessie Hoard. The hope is that the church will revert in the same manner.

The plausible explanation for Nelson and Nessie Hoard owning the land would have been by will. Katie Hoard's, Nelson mother, maiden name was Sanders. At this time,

information is not available to establish the relationship between Terry Sanders and Katie Hoard.

#### History of Saunders Chapel Elementary School, 1883 to 1956

The earliest recorded year of operation for the school is 1883 with classes ending in 1954. However, the earliest date for an established school building is validated in the 1895 church deed. During the 110 plus year time period, the school operated continually, while others were forced to close due to fluctuating attendance. The exact date for the first established African American school at Strahl is still unknown. Saunders was one of the "First District" schools ("Teachers," 1940, p. 1). The building has since been used as storage by the church and landowners and currently houses broken pews, homecoming tables, windows and doors, folding chairs, hay, parts of broken school desks, and the original blackboard.

#### History of the School Building

According to Arnett, the first school and church was in a log cabin located closer to the creek. The first recorded mention of a school in the vicinity of the community is made in a journal written by Will A. Sheffey, Superintendent of Schools in Hawkins County. The journal is entitled; *Hawkins County Free Schools: Who Has Charge of Them and How They Are Progressing* dated September 26, 1883 (Sheffey, 1883, p. 71).

In the journal, Sheffey is traveling Hawkins County in order to assess current schoolteachers. He gives account of visits to the white schools at Enterprise and

Dodson Creek. He then mentions at the end of the day visiting "...two colored schools in the 15th district..." (p. 71). The second school mentioned is "near Strahl" and is taught "by O.C. Hamblen" (p.71). Sheffey writes, "...the number enrolled at both places is between sixty and seventy" (p.71). The number of students equally divided between the schools would have been thirty constituting a large class of students. The land Jesse Spears owned was in the 15th district as well. Sheffey would have visited the school 'near Strahl' between his visits to Enterprise and Dodson Creek. A loose, hand-written page in the Hawkins County Board of Education minutes listed Sheffey as Superintendent from 1883-1885.

Evidence for the location, date, and existence of the log cabin structure has yet to be revealed, but the 1895 church deed date corresponds with Charles Arnett's early 1900s speculated date when the log cabin church burned. No name for the former log cabin school and church is available at this time.

According to Charles Arnett, the church was built prior to the school and the church served as the school building until the school was constructed. The church deed, however, proves the existence of a school prior to the construction of the church. Refer to the Deed Search section labeled "The School and Church Property" under "Findings" for the surveyed boundaries of the church.

The reason for a separate school building is not known. Speculative reasoning could be for dedication of classrooms without disruption of putting away school materials and reduced heating cost of a smaller building. For further discussion of the church, refer

to "Findings", "History of Saunders Chapel". To view photographs of the school see Appendix B, Figures B1 – B11.

School Site Description. The location of the site is the county of Hawkins, Civil District One, Community of Strahl, outside of the town of Rogersville, Tennessee. The site consists of approximately one half an acre. The George Becker farm, Saunders Chapel, and Locke Road border the property. Refer to Appendix A, Figure A2, Landmark Locations in Strahl.

School Structure Description. The school is a one-room building measuring 21 feet by 26 feet and 4 inches. Speculated age of structure is 110 years. The wood balloon framed structure has no insulation, a horizontal wood sided exterior with corner boards, and a rusted tin clad, steep hip roof with wood fascia and soffit. Both sidewalls have three partially boarded double hung windows; a total of six, measuring 77 inches high by 35 inches wide. Only the weathered window frames remain. Mounted above the entrance is a weathered board suggesting the name of the school once adorned it. The sagging floor joists rest on stacked sandstone rocks at the corners and midpoints of the floor system. The rocks were more than likely gathered from the adjoining field.

The building interior has horizontally hung tongue and groove boards for the walls and ceilings and wood plank flooring. Brown paint creates a wainscot with white paint above on the walls. In the back of the room, a platform transverses the length of the

room designating the teacher's area. The blackboard remains on the back wall. The front wall has a shelf where the students hung their coats and stored their lunch pails. A coal-burning stove was located in the center of the room; testament to this is the steel plate remaining on the floor, a hole in the ceiling for the stovepipe, and fragments of coal on the ground surrounding the structure.

The school was never wired for electricity despite use until 1954. There are no visible signs of wall-mounted oil burning lamps. The church added bathrooms, but the date of construction was unknown. The restroom for the school is presumed to have been an outhouse until the school closed. Refer to Appendix B, Figures B1 – B11 for exterior and interior photographs of the school.

### The Teachers

The teachers with the most years of service were Maggie Brice with eight years and Otella Hoard with seven. Otella was the daughter of Fred Hoard, former property owner. For a complete listing of Saunders teachers and their salaries, refer to Appendix B, Figure B12, "List of Teachers 1907-1954".

The teacher who made the most evidenced impact is Ella Reeves. Mrs. Reeves was a proponent for furthering the school and the community. She was known to extend her personal responsibilities as a teacher for the furtherance of her pupils. She used her automobile to transport students to school, her home in Rogersville to house those attending Swift High School, her salary to buy supplies for the children, and of course her time for extra curricular activities.

Mrs. Reeves did not live in Saunders Chapel Community, but her dedication to her students and the community members made her a contributor to its success. Her dedication to the advancement of the school and community can be seen in various news articles. "Saunders Chapel Colored School Past – Present – Future", chronicles the 1945–46 school year. The article, as the title reflects, speaks of the past, current, and future activities geared toward positive promotion and enrichment of the school. Her last sentence speaks for her character, integrity, and her commitment to the advancement of the school; "The present is being filled with the efforts of growing a school garden, and the future is holding wonderful plans for the coming school year for a bigger and better Saunders Chapel School" ("News," 1946). For the full article, refer to Appendix B, Figure B13.

### The Students

Students lived in the community of Needmore, but also Rogersville, Surgoinsville, and Greenville. The reason for this was to keep enrollment at the School Board mandated minimum of 15. Names of students and their information are limited at this time. Information obtained has been scattered amongst news articles. A more complete list will be sought at a later date. The following compiled names are those found listed in various *Rogersville Review* articles: David Gudger (1941-1946), Manuel Kite, Harrison Spears Jr., Eloise Charles, and Mary E. Charles. The last four students years of attendance are unknown.

## A Day at Saunders School

An account of a day at Saunders School during the years of 1941-46 came from memories of former student David Gudger in a personal interview on February 8, 2005. Mrs. Reeves would make her rounds in Rogersville picking up students and then head toward the Holston River on the 'Old Lonesome Pine Highway' with kids in the trundle seat, regardless of weather. Before she crossed the river she would pick up willow switches for the day. Occasionally... she would have to use them. David Gudger would walk to school, as would all students in Needmore. He lived at the bottom of the hill from the school on what is now Locke Road. Mary Charles would have walked the farthest with her house located at the mouth of Tarpine Valley.

The morning would begin at 8 o'clock with prayer and allegiance to the flag. The first subjects of the day were arithmetic, then reading. A morning recess was at 10 o'clock. Lunchtime was at 12 o'clock. Saunders Chapel School, however, was not part of the county school lunch program and students' families were left to fend for themselves. Refer to the following section on the "Lunch Program".

Spelling was one of the afternoon subjects. Afternoon recess was at 1:30. The kids would chase each other, play stickball with a stuffed sock, or slip down to Nelson Hoard's apple orchard for a snack. "After all," according to David Gudger, "picked up apples are not as good as apples picked."

To cover the multiple ages for subjects, the students were rotated to the front of the room according to grade for each subject. From front-right on the platform, Ella Reeves would instruct the younger children first, then send them to the back of the

room with an assignment to complete. She would then have the next grade rotate to the front, teaching the same subject, but in incremental grade level aptitude.

School supplies were second-hand from the white schools. Used textbooks were very worn as were the desks but there were enough for all the students. The desk surfaces were covered with carving and writing. David Gudger remembers dipping Mary Charles braids in the ink well.

The School Board had lesson plans for students as far back as 1907 recorded in the meeting minutes ("Board 1907," 1907-1954). The lesson plans were very detailed including books and page numbers for all subjects. Subjects such as David Gudger mentioned were taught along with history and science. Saunders more than likely followed older lesson plans because they did not possess newer textbooks in order to teach newer curriculum.

Certificates made by Mrs. Reeves were given to award achievement. She would have the student come to the front, announce the achievement, and give the student his award.

A white school was located at Enterprise and the children would cross each other's path in route to school and home. David Gudger and Harrison Spears Jr., or 'June', remember quite vividly the fights that would transpire at the waterfall below the home of Gudger's grandmother, Mary Rutherford. In attempt to avoid fights the teachers of Saunders and Enterprise would sometimes let the kids out at alternating times.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

The church sanctuary was used as an auditorium. During the 1945-46 school year, three plays were performed for fund raising with the public invited to attend ("News," 1946, p. 4). The names of the plays were: *When the Roll Is Called in Heaven*, *The Devils Funeral*, and *The Walking Ghost Sings* (p. 4). For the full article, refer to Appendix B, Figure B13.

Prior to the start of school from July 22-25, of 1940, Swift College sponsored a "Negro 4-H camp" for East Tennessee. Children participated in various arts and crafts and received awards for their efforts. Eloise Charles of Saunders Chapel received an award for the "Best Christmas Card" ("4-H," 1940, p. 7). Eloise was the daughter of Hun Charles. At the 4-H "annual spring nutrition and dress contest" held at Price Public in May of 1942, Eloise Charles once again is mentioned as a contest winner ("4-H," 1942, p. 4).

### Community Involvement

In March of 1951, Saunders Chapel School was named in a list of county school contributors to the March of Dimes in the amount of \$7.45 ("County," 1951, p. 5). Mrs. Reeves and 10 students are also listed as participants in one year of the community improvement project and were at the presentation ceremonies for the annual Negro Farmers Convention in Knoxville ("Community," 1951, p. 3). Listed improvements in the school included, "adding a radio, a set of childcraft, and a junior view master

project with 30 movies" (p. 3). For more details on community improvement, refer to Appendix B, Figure B13 and Appendix E, Figure E11.

### Board of Education Policy, Procedure, and Programs

#### Social Equality and Segregation in the School System

Student and teacher segregation went further than physical division in the classroom; it also extended to the headlines and community functions of the day. This is evidenced in a September 22, 1932 *Rogersville Review* article entitled, "Teachers Meet Saturday". In the article, the Hawkins County Teachers Association met Saturday morning at 10 o'clock in the courthouse. The following program was given:

"Devotional: Ms. Jessie Mae Levingston; Vocal Solo: Ms. Josephine Miller; Address: The Good School; Dr. D.G. Stout, professor of education at East Tennessee State Teachers College" ("Teachers," 1932, p. 1). The meeting for the "colored school" teachers, however, was held separately without pomp and circumstance at 2 o'clock ("Teachers," 1932, p. 1).

Even though all the children were part of the same school system they were accounted for separately. A 1939 *Rogersville Review* headline proclaimed, "475 are Enrolled at City Grade School" ("475," 1939, p.1). The article continues in the body to state there were "...475 in the white school and 53 in the colored school. School and community events such as the "County-wide Educational Rally..." and the herald of the playground opening made headlines but did not specifically mention who fell into the

"County-wide" category ("Countywide," 1932, p. 1). In later years summer playground activities are mentioned at Price Public Elementary playground.

### Teacher's Salaries

In the August 1917 Board of Education meeting, a certification record was listed. Certification equated to teaching experience based on the number of years a teacher had taught, not college certificates. Certificates were purchased from the Board of Education annually. The equality of pay for black teachers as compared to white teachers was disproportionate. In 1917, Maggie Brice and Jennie D. Fain had taught for five years and made \$35. The majority of white teachers making \$35 had only two years of experience.

In 1934, teachers began to be classified for pay according to their college degree ("Pay," 1934, p. 1). No mention is made of pay rank amounts in this article. For the school years 1932 - 1935, teachers were not paid regularly, if at all ("Pay," 1932 - 1935). The lack of funds for salaries affected school opening for both 1935 and 1936. The school system was subsidized with government funding to pay teachers in 1935 ("Pay," 1934, p. 1 & 1935, p. 1). A pay raise for all grade school teachers in the amount of "\$15 a month was voted by the court in January of 1947 ("Pay," 1947, p. 1)

No information was available during the research time frame to determine the education level of teachers for Saunders Chapel. However, in the summer of 1952, Miss Jennie D. Fain, former teacher for Saunders, earned her Bachelors from A & I State University entitling her to an increase in pay ("News," 1952, p. 12). "The

increases to be made on a state wide basis from state funds will range from \$390/ yr for no training[,] to \$683/ yr Masters Degree. Counties and municipalities may increase these salaries. Rural teachers will be guaranteed a minimum credit for education and experience" ("Pay," 1947, p. 6). A pay raise in 1954 reflected the incremental scale based on degree as follows: " \$25 for masters, \$20 for Bachelors, \$10 for 2 yrs of college, \$5 for permits" ("Pay," 1954, p. 1).

### Enrollment

"School Days are here, send your children to school and keep them there" was the September 3, 1936, proclamation from the "News of the Colored" ("News," 1936, p. 2). School enrollment was just as big of an issue then, as it is now. Enrollment recorded for Saunders in September of 1933 was 15 ("Enrollment," 1933, pp. 1 & 6). In later years, schools received statewide recognition via a letter grade ranking for attendance ("Teachers," 1939, p. 1). Attendance of "97 percent or above" within individual county schools was recognized (p. 1). Honorable mentions for the "colored schools" were; Saunders as the highest attendance overall with 99.1%, "Moorestown, 97%," and "Guntown, 97%" (p. 1). Saunders recorded attendance was also higher than the largest white school, Rogersville City (p. 1).

Saunders achieved its minimum enrollment by bringing students in from Greene County, Surgoinville, and Rogersville. It has been found in personal interviews that students would board with Needmore community members, or families would move to the community to facilitate continuance of the school. The community was desirable to

families because of the school, but also because of the benefits of an established church and community.

In September of 1946, initiatives to improve enrollment by “Prof. A.B. Wallen school superintendent of city schools said that all children between the ages of 6 and 16 years should enroll at once or they would be rounded up as delinquents by the police department” (“Enrollment,” 1946, p. 1). The article went on to give reasons “Why Children Don’t Go To School: Lack of interest on part of children and parents; poor teaching facilities, poor teaching; too many outside attractions; Lack of stimulus – compulsory attendance not enforced; No check on children by working parents; pupil transportation not available; Poverty – lack of clothing, shoes, books, lunch money; Children have to work to help support family; Others in ‘gang’ don’t go; Selfishness – parents keep children out to work on farm or in factory; and Lethargy – many people do nothing to improve the situation even when they are aware of existing problems” (p. 1).

### Healthcare

Initiatives for immunization of Hawkins County school children began in 1939. On December 12, of 1940, at 8:30 a.m. the Health Department immunized Saunders children for typhoid and smallpox (School Examinations, 1940, p. 1).

Dental Demonstrations were conducted for various county schools by the Hawkins County Health Department in 1946 (“Dental,” 1946, p. 2). Personal dental care was

taught through a movie instructing "how to guard against decay and infection" (p.2). It is not known if Saunders children benefited from the demonstration.

### Transportation

Harrison Spears remembers watching the school bus filled with white children go by. Long after bus service began, the Needmore children still walked to school. Harrison Spears Sr., father to Harrison Spears Jr., was paid \$3.00 per child per month in 1950 to pick up Greeneville children attending the school. As mentioned prior, Ella Vaughn Reeves would bring the Rogersville children.

### Lunch Program

First initiated in 1930, hot lunches for students was a new and novel approach to heighten learning ("Lunch," 1940, p. 2). Food for the program was obtained by donation from local gardens and canned by volunteers. Mrs. Britton was the executor of the Rogersville City lunch program ("Lunch Praised," 1940, p. 4). Her commentary on its importance is as follows: "It seems to me," said Mrs. Britton, "that it would be a tragedy if we did not have the hot lunch program in our schools." "It not only provides a hot, well-cooked meal for the underprivileged children but emphasizes the fact that a hot meal at noon each day is not only helpful, but essential to education." (p. 4)

Saunders children did not receive lunch program funding. Mrs. Reeves and families of the children and community would provide the food. Mrs. Reeves would cook or re-heat food on a coal burning stove located left and front on the teachers platform.

Lunch would consist of seasonal and canned vegetables such as beans, rice, green beans, apples picked up from the ground from Nelson's Hoards orchard, and sometimes prunes

### Consolidation and Desegregation

In 1941, talks of school consolidation began as an alternative to funding additions and improvements to the many county schools. "Legislation would consolidate every public school in Hawkins County through a \$955,000 program of constructing and equipping new schools, [and] enlarging and repairing existing buildings" ("School," 1941, pp. 1 & 8). Additions and improvements to eight Negro schools determined by a five-man committee and the school board totaled to \$15,000 of the \$955,000 (pp. 1 & 8). In May of 1947, a vote to approve a now larger bond issue at the sum of \$980,000 did not pass on April 26 "by a 139 vote majority" ("Bond," 1947, p. 1 & "Bond Defeated," 1947, p. 1). The School Board took the matter to court and in October of 1948, and the Hawkins County Court gave the School Board permission to start construction ("Court," 1948, p. 1).

In August of the 1946 school year a list of initiatives to better schools with a proposed solution were outlined by the school superintendent. The "Better Schools" initiatives were as follows: "Overcrowded conditions in some schools, Teach children how to get along with people at end of the war, Teach children tools of learning 3 R's: To read, to write, talk and do arithmetic, Help children become good citizens, Build good character, Become healthy, Give religious instruction to live by the Golden Rule,

Help children learn to earn a living through vocational training, Make them brave, teach them to control themselves by using discipline, and Teach them to appreciate music and art" ("School," 1946, p. 1 & 8) This form of rhetoric began in order to prepare and give reason for school consolidation and closings. According to the school superintendent, "[t]o do these things, they need more qualified teachers and fewer schools throughout the county" (p. 1 & 8). "In Tennessee, 1 in 5 people over the age of 19 [were] illiterate according to army standards – they have a 4th grade education" (p. 1 & 8).

From *Rogersville Review* articles, Saunders was in operation for the 1950-51 school year. In the years after the 1951-52 school year, however, classes in Saunders Chapel School would soon cease to exist. In the April 1951 issue of the *Rogersville Review* the list of schools and assigned teachers did not include Saunders; however, the school continued for this year. ("Teachers," 1951, p1 & 8). The August issue stated "21 one-room schools will be cut this year in the county" ("All," 1951, p. 1).

According to school board minutes the school was closed in 1954. Jennie Fain was transferred to Petersburg and Margaret Carr to Rotherwood ("Board 1907," 1907-1954). The decision to move the eight children at Saunders to Petersburg was made on September 4, 1954 ("Board 1907"). If desegregation was one of the reasons for closing Saunders it was never given as one.

## History of Saunders Chapel

Research for the history of Saunders Chapel is fragmented and incomplete at this time. The existence of documented church records is still unknown. Through email correspondence on February 14, 2005, with A.M.E. Historiographer, Dr. Dennis Dickerson, in the Department of Research and Scholarship for the A.M.E. Church record research revealed the only existing minutes from East Tennessee are from 1907, and unfortunately there was no mention of Saunders Chapel or Rogersville.

The pastor position was on a rotating basis. Current pastors would live with the preachers' steward, Fred Hoard. Hopefully a descendent of Fred Hoard will have records pertaining to the various pastors.

Reason for Saunders Chapel association with the Methodist church is the result of former landowner Jesse Spears and the African Americans he brought to Tennessee. Slaves were required to adapt the religion of their master. However, slaves were not allowed to worship with whites. Therefore, the black community church would have been associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1870, one acre of Jesse Spears land was donated to the white Methodist Episcopal Church South in Strahl. The church was built in 1872 and is still standing. Refer to Appendix E, Figure E1, for pictures of the building. Further correlations between the white and black Methodist churches in Strahl will be sought.

The national African Methodist Episcopal Church, "also known as the A.M.E. Church for short, ...split from the main branch of the Methodist Church..." not as a "...result of doctrinal differences but rather the result of a time period that was marked by man's

intolerance of his fellow man, based on the color of his skin" ("A.M.E. Electronic"). "It was a time of slavery, oppression[,] and the dehumanization of people of African descent and many of these un-Christian practices were brought into the church, forcing...a group of fellow worshippers of color to form a splinter denomination of the Methodist Church" ("A.M.E. Electronic").

The early Saunders Chapel structure consists of one room with approximately 1000 square feet. Subsequent renovations added restrooms and a steeple to the front of the building. The original restrooms for both the schoolhouse and the church were outhouses. The former outhouse location is unknown. The exterior and interior materials are similar to the schoolhouse.

The church no longer holds weekly services, as there are few original members. Commemoration services are held once a month on Sunday morning at 11:00. A yearly Homecoming and dinner on the grounds is celebrated every August. Descendents of original church members come to view the church, school, and cemetery. Refer to Appendix C, Figures C1- C3, for exterior photographs of the church.

### The Community

The community has three interchangeable names. For the purpose of this paper, the community is referred to in most part as the Saunders Chapel Community. The current church and school are located in the extended community of Stahl. The majority of community members lived in an area called Needmore its boundaries being the area between Heck Hollow Road and Tarpine Valley Road. Because of the location

and establishment of buildings at the edge of Strahl and added attention drawn to the site, community members redesignated the area around the institution as Saunders Chapel Community. Depending on acreage owned by Jerry Sanders in Strahl, the Saunders Chapel Community would have been defined as the area between Locke Road and Heck Hollow. Refer to Appendix A, Figure A4, for the “Saunders and Needmore Community Definitions” map for an understanding of area definitions. Refer to Appendix E, Figures E1 – E8 for community photographs.

The church and school was the nucleus of the community, but the majority of the community homes extended from Heck Hollow Road to just short of Tarpine Valley Road. This strip of route 70 was called Needmore. When asked the origins of the name, David Gudger had always supposed, “We needed more!” The last lifetime community member and landowner of Needmore is Harrison Spears. He moved to Rogersville around 2000 and sold his property.

The community combined efforts by sharing food from family gardens. Saunders Community was also unified in improvement. A series of news articles from 1950 to 1953 evidence the involvement of families in an annual community improvement contest (“Community,” 1950, 1951, 1952, & 1953). The community won 2<sup>nd</sup> place every year (“Community,” 1950, 1951, 1952, & 1953). Refer to Appendix E, Figures E9 – E14, for the complete articles and families who participated.

Origins of the Saunders Chapel Community are based on the records of Jesse Spears, former landowner and cemetery occupant. In an 1860 census, Spears is recorded as having 12 slaves (Spears, 2002). This recorded slave population

constitutes the basis for the beginning of an African American community established after the Civil War. A history of descendents of these 12 is incomplete at this time. Mary Spears, grandmother to Harrison Spears Jr., will be the origin point for further research.

### Saunders Chapel Cemetery

The cemetery sits on a hill bordered by old and new Route 70 and Dodson creek approximately one half mile from the existing church and school. For landmark locations refer to Appendix A. The short path to the gate winds up the hill through a cow pasture. For many years the only barrier to keep cattle from lumbering onto the grounds was a single strand of barbed wire. The church has since replaced the barbed wire with a chain link fence. Trees and brush create a natural barrier around the rectangular plot of land and the grounds within are scattered with withered graveyard trees.

The number of graves is approximately 132. The largest majority of the plots are marked, but many are unmarked. Marked graves have simple inexpensive headstones; unmarked graves either have a footstone, a field rock, or sunken earth. Former markers are stacked against trees. The earliest birth date found is 1789, which is also the earliest recorded death, 1873 for Jessie Spears. The grounds are still used for burials with the most recent in 1997. Refer to Appendix D, Figures D1 – D4 for cemetery photographs, Figure D5 for a 1984 list of graves, Figure D6 for a 2004 listing of graves, and Figure D7 for a Cemetery Plot Survey.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

#### National Register Criteria and Case Study Approval

From the National Register evaluation criterion, Saunders meets the following:

- Criterion A (history): Association with historic events or activities.
- Criterion C (architecture): Distinctive design or physical characteristics.

Support for the above criterion is as follows:

1. Fifty years minimum for properties without a significant person association (“National How”).
2. Areas of Significance: education, ethnic heritage – black, architecture, and social history (“National Form”).
3. Period of Significance: 1883-1954. (Supported by Significant dates and Narrative Statement of Significance (section 8 of National Registration Form))
4. Historic Integrity:
  - Most architecturally significant for the community
  - No radical changes to the structure
  - 1895 – tentative date for existing Structure, meets 50 yr criterion
5. Historic Content:
  - Reformation
  - Education, local, state, & national historic context
  - Segregation

- Separate but Equal, Teachers Pay, School Supplies
- One-room schoolhouses – 1949, 45 (1) rm., 41 (2) rm. & 12 (3+)
- TVA, rural electrification

#### Proposed Site Use

Following are proposed uses for the renovated school:

- Promotion of education via special events and field trips for area students.
- Available to the Public for special events: Weddings, parties, and homecomings.
- Available to area school boards and businesses for meetings and functions.
- A museum for collected mementoes related to site and agricultural history.

#### Restoration Proposal: Scope of Work for Saunders Site

The restoration project will be broken down into three separate projects. Historic preservationist, Jenny Parker, suggested separate grant funding and planning efforts for each project due to the enormity of work and the possibility that the Historical Commission would reject the project as a whole because it encompasses religious property and burial sites without a significant person contributing to the site significance. Fund raising efforts for the site will be conducted and administered under the formation of a not-for-profit foundation. If the project is designated as "Historic" it will be applicable for grant funding. Federal grants provided by the Tennessee Historical Commission "will pay for up to 60% of the costs of approved project work"

when the remaining 40%” is “ provided by the grantee as matching funds” (Tennessee Historical Commission).

#### Scope of Work for Saunders School

During Phase One, legal access to the site from the adjoining church will be requested for right of way and school bus parking and applicable permits will be obtained. The site will be graded and graveled for temporary site access. New electrical service via riser pole and meter will be installed. The panel box location to be determined at a later date.

Prior to construction, the building will be cleaned, with trash and debris hauled or burned on site. Once the building is cleared, further damage assessment will be performed and the estimate revised. Any observed roof leaks will be temporarily fixed at this time. The blackboard and the stove metal plate will be removed and stored in the job trailer. Remaining window frames will be removed. The floor system will be stabilized and leveled to minimize future damage by elevating sagging corners with jacks and temporary supports. The windows will be boarded and the door will be secured until construction commences. A permanent storage building for job tools will be purchased and later used as a landscaping shed.

During Phase Two construction, an existing trailer on the site will function as the job trailer. The trailer is currently equipped with Rogersville City water, septic tank, and electrical hook-ups. The school building will be elevated from its existing foundation with jacks and temporarily supported. The interior plank floor will be removed and

retained exposing and facilitating repairs on damaged floor joists and sill plates. The footing shall be hand trenched with earth forms for the placed concrete. The foundation shall be concrete masonry block accommodating a 30" crawl space from top of grade per code. Termite treatment and a polyethylene lining will be spread. The building will then be lowered onto the new sill plate and tied into the new foundation wall. Stairs and an accessible ramp with railings will be built.

In Phase Three, The exterior materials will be removed to reveal the building frame. The tin on the hip roof shall be removed exposing and repairing any damaged batten strips, ceiling joists, and rafters. Blown insulation, 30 lb asphaltic base felt, and a standing seam metal roof will be installed over repaired batten strips. A stove flue with a rain bonnet at a minimum height of 36" will penetrate the roof structure and be properly flashed.

The exterior lapped wood siding will be demolished and any framing damage will be repaired. Electrical outlets, switches, and j-boxes will be roughed-in. The building will then be insulated, sheathed, and a fireproof prefinished cementitious plank siding will be re-installed. The concrete masonry block foundation will be finished with a faux stone resembling the existing field rock corner supports. The exterior window casing shall be prefinished cementitious plank as above mentioned. Operable, double hung, wood frame windows with insulated glass and insect screens and a new door will be installed. The floor will be re-installed, with boards turned to the unworn face, repaired, and refinished over a plywood board sub floor. The metal plate for the wood

stove shall be reinstalled at the original location. A temporary wood or coal-burning stove will be acquired until a period replica can be found.

Phase Four will initiate the interior restoration. A wallboard will be pulled in order to reveal the prior 'blue' and cream colors mentioned by former student David Gudger. The building will be restored to the original color scheme. Period wall sconces, the blackboard, and a fire extinguisher shall be installed.

In Phase Five as the interior finish application in the school nears completion, the job trailer will be converted into an activity/meeting trailer and accessible toilet facilities with a front wood deck and an accessible ramp with railings. The exterior of the trailer will be clad with weathered barn boards to mimic an old farm building and the roof will gain the same standing seam metal as the school building. The extent of interior renovations to the trailer will be the addition of one accessible restroom, door hardware upgrades, and a fire extinguisher.

In Phase Six, the site road, bus/church parking lot, a minimum nine-space school parking lot, and one accessible space will be graded with a minimum 6" base layer of stone with 2" asphalt binder and a 1 ½" asphalt wearing surface. Parking lines will be painted. Finally the site landscaping will then take place.

Refer to Appendix B, figures B14 and B15, for existing and proposed site plans.

#### Scope of Work for Saunders Cemetery

The scope of work for the cemetery includes cleaning and repair of headstones, rodent extermination, identification of unmarked graves via a metal probe, temporary

marking of settled graves, repairing rodent holes and settled graves, and clearing of dead trees.

In consultation with Jenny Parker of the Jonesborough Heritage Alliance, the majority of cemetery work is done by hand. Many websites have been established to give instruction on proper grave restoration, grave marking, and hand tamping of settled areas. The restoration can be conducted without consultants and the difficulty of the task is minimal. Civic organizations such as children's clubs and church groups will be sought in its restoration.

#### Scope of Work for Saunders Chapel

The future acquisition of the church will initiate the last project in the Saunders Chapel Restoration. Question of future acquisition is undetermined due to not knowing who will become the church 'owner' after the last original church member dies.

#### Preliminary Rough Estimate, Labor, and Project Consultants

At this time, due to the following reasons a detailed quantity take-off will not be performed: highly fluctuating construction cost, extent of damage to school building unknown, attainment of a project consultant to assist in structure analysis, and limited time to perform thesis tasks. A rough preliminary estimate with contingency based on 'new' construction is \$200 per square foot. The total square feet for the school building is 559 square feet. The approximate total is \$111,800. This number includes labor and

consultants that in the most part will be sought on a volunteer basis from organizations like the ETSU construction club.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Saunders Chapel community indeed held their hand out. But this extended hand was an act of giving and helping, not receiving. The history of Saunders exemplifies an extraordinary pride of community. This pride is evidenced in the efforts to publicly promote and to continually improve.

The history of Saunders Chapel parallels national African American history in the evolution of social, economic, and cultural factors. Migration proved to be a factor in the decline of the community, but the final collapse was due to the school closing.

The 1941 school consolidation and closing talks prompted an extreme increase in improvements during the 10 years following. Public exposure increased through the efforts of Mrs. Reeves and Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Hoard. In Mrs. Reeves 1946 letter, she instills stability for her students in the face of a definite end of Saunders Chapel School. She shows care and hope by ceaselessly planning for the future of her students and their families.

Most other school articles in the *Rogersville Review* dealt with general information for the purpose of public interest announcements of school openings, attendance, honor roll, and educational rallies for the white schools. What the articles for the white schools did not address was a personal level of recognition and aptitude that Mrs. Reeves portrays in her article. Saunders is the only school during the history between

1933 and 1951 that reveals the hard work and the subsequent reward for the students' personal struggles.

Mrs. Reeves acts as a voice for the school and the community. Through her article she makes known their worthiness as individuals and non-ceasing adherence to setting and achieving personal high standards within their own social structure. Because of their commitment to uprightness and social improvement beginning with the individual, their efforts were recognized, commemorated, and rewarded with praise and occasional monetary assistance by both black and white community members. Their efforts were initiated out of concern for the welfare of the individual. Welfare for individuals in Saunders Chapel community began with a pride in oneself. This pride was instilled in order to improve oneself and to help and teach others how to improve their lives as well.

The community quietly fought a public battle to keep its school through interest articles and continued investment. These efforts are exemplified in the 1946 letter Mrs. Reeves published in the *Rogersville Review*. The letter was written in order for the people of Hawkins County and the school board to recognize the worthiness and independence of the school. The community wanted to show the school board they did not require supplements to maintain their school. In an effort to stay open, they raised money, public awareness, built a playground, and pronounced a bigger and brighter future for their school. The only known expense to the School Board to operate the Saunders Chapel School was the teacher's salary.

In the May 1952 community improvement article, "Nelson Hoard, president of the club, stated he was interested in improvement of farm, homes and communities of the county as a whole as well as his own community" ("Community," 1952, p. 1). Hoard expressed, "[i]f his community did not improve along with the other communities of the county there would be a gap left that would hurt first of all the people of his community as well as being a liability to the county as a whole" (p. 1).

"Hoard also stated that the progress made in Saunders Chapel Community is due largely to the interest of the families of the community and also the cooperation and interest shown by a large group of white families of Hawkins County who are interested in the welfare of the families of Saunders Chapel Community Improvement Club" (p. 1).

The efforts, unfortunately, were not enough. The end of the school, along with migration to northern states for better jobs, became contributing factors to the decline of the community. The end came at a time when the families did not have automobiles or enough money to haul all eight of the children to the Petersburg school. The county school buses still only picked up white children. Some families moved closer to town in order to stay together and for their children to attend school.

Saunders Chapel represented the only Hawkins community, black or white, that sought and achieved recognition for their hard work and effort. The same work and effort now deserves to be recompensed to the descendants of Saunders through a restoration of the landmarks and commemoration of its site.

The written history and restoration proposals will be submitted as part of grant proposals to gain funding for the project and recognition on the National Historic

Register. To make the history more accessible, a website will be created giving a written and pictorial history of the church, schoolhouse, and cemetery. The thesis will also be made available to the ETSU Archives of Appalachia, A.M.E. Zion Church, the H.B. Stamps Library of Rogersville, and the Hawkins County Genealogical & Historical Societies publication called Distant Crossroads.

The community stepped forth in faith not knowing where their foot would fall but knowing the ground was already prepared with the promise of a future. That spirit of faith lives on through the descendents of Saunders and the promise of a future through the restoration of Saunders Chapel School, Cemetery, and Chapel.

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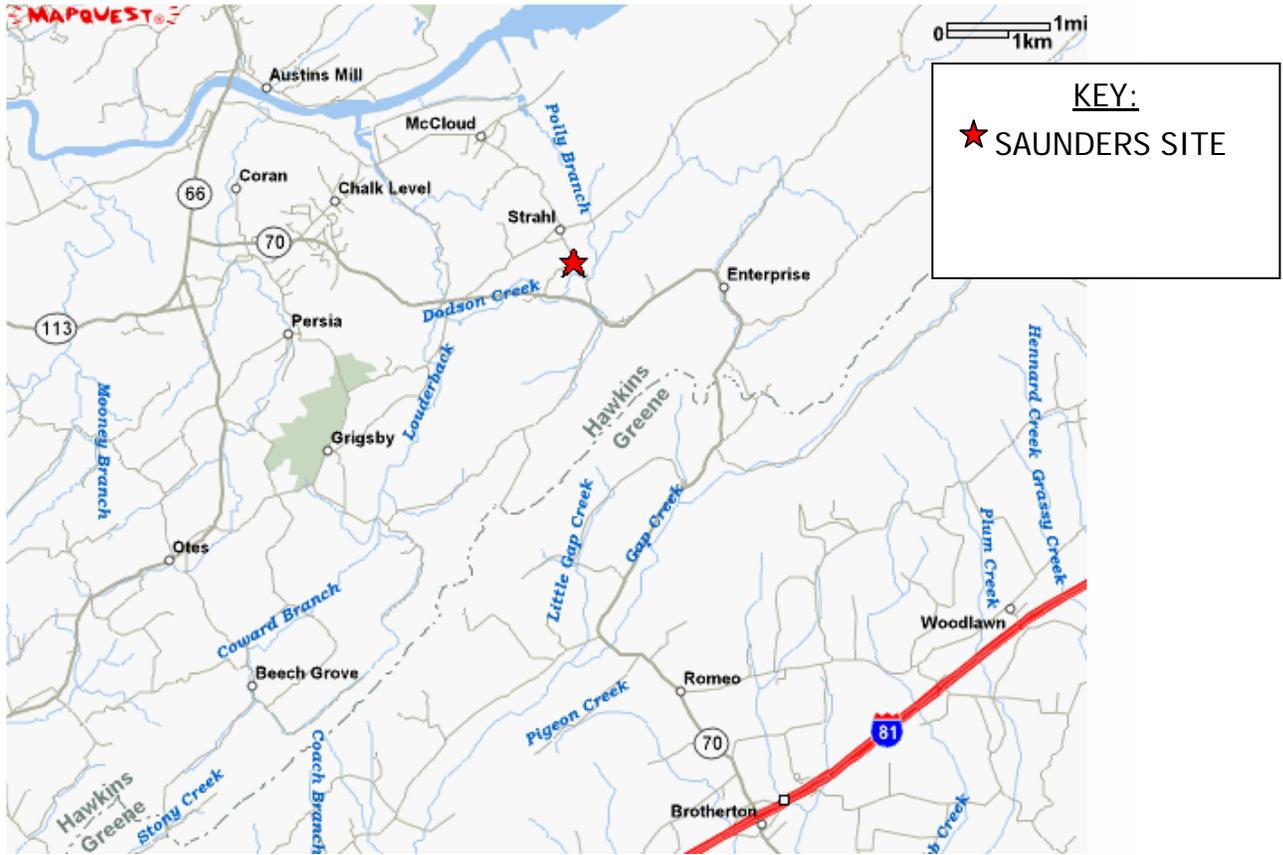
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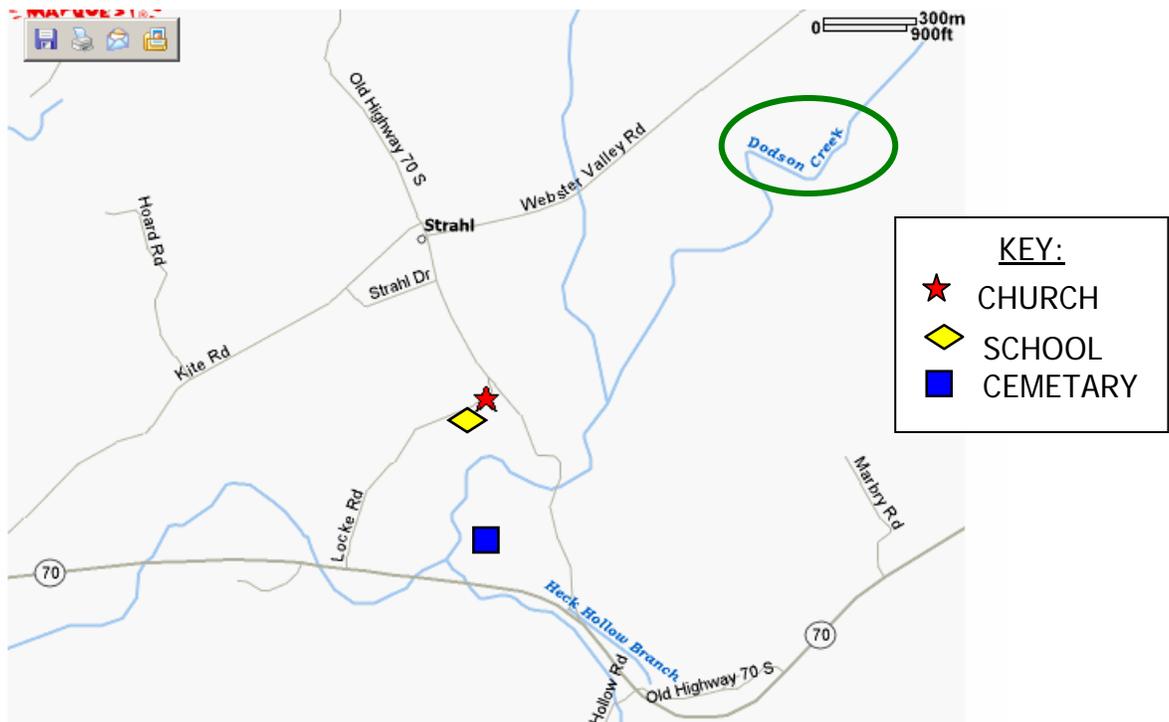
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Landmark Location Maps

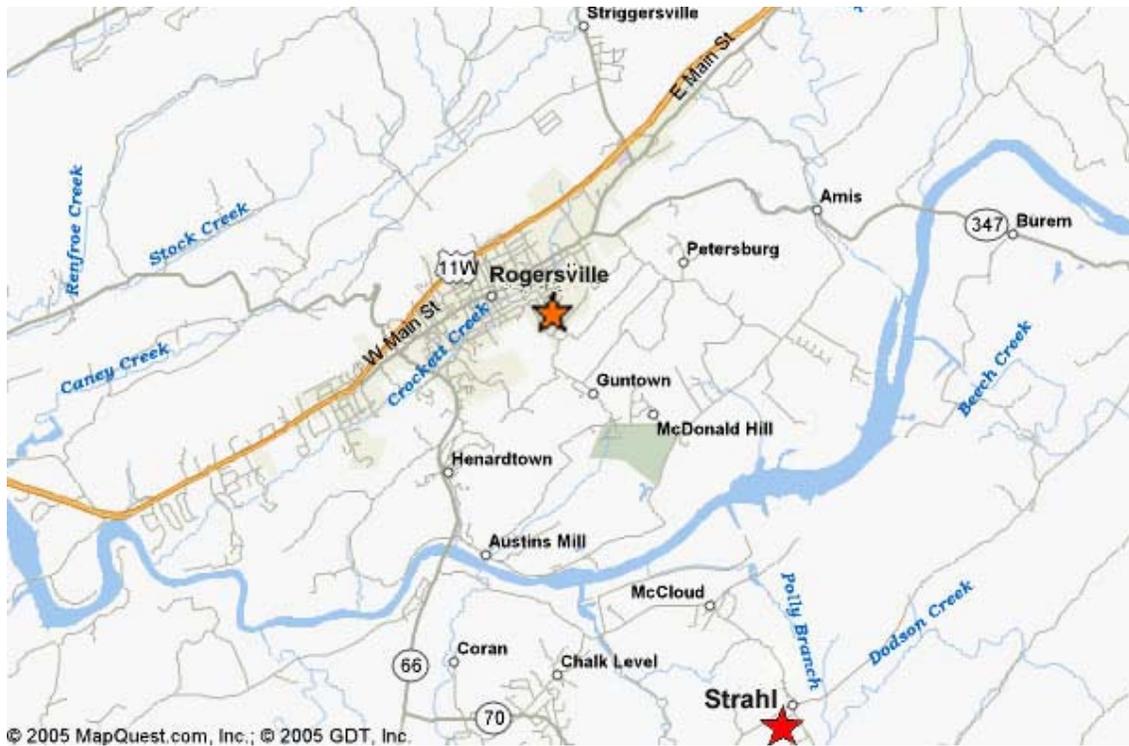


A1. Surrounding Areas of Strahl

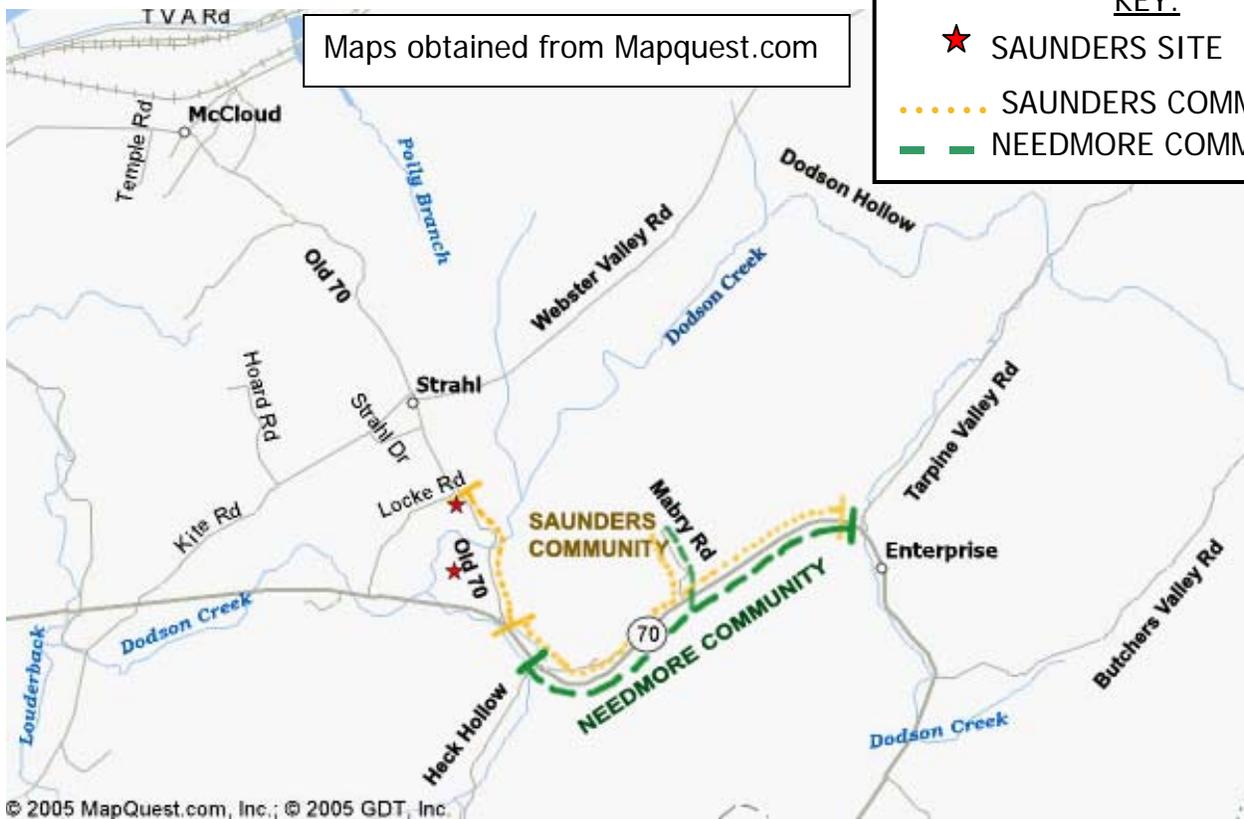


A2. Landmark Locations in Strahl

Maps obtained from Mapquest.com



A3. Proximity from Rogersville to Strahl



A4. Saunders and Needmore Community Definitions

Appendix B

Saunders Chapel Elementary School



B1. Saunders Chapel School (Front Façade)



B2. Saunders Chapel School (Side Façade)



B3. Saunders Chapel School (Side Façade)



B4. Saunders Chapel School (Back Façade)



B5. Structural Damage to Floor System



B6. Existing Construction & Condition of Floor System



B7. Existing Construction & Condition of Floor System



B8. Conditions at Interior, Floor System



B9. Saunders Chapel School, Interior (Shelf for Children's belongings)



B10. Saunders Chapel School, Interior: Blackboard, Platform, And Current State of Disrepair



B11. Saunders Chapel School, Interior: Remaining Desks

<b>Figure B12 - Saunders Chapel List of Teachers 1907 – 1954</b> (Years 1907-32 obtained from Board of Education Minutes, (Board); 1933-52 obtained from the Rogersville Review (Review), unless otherwise noted)	
1907-08	Saunders Chapel (col.): J.F. Gillenwaters, pay \$25 for year, July 30 1907
1908-09	Bessie Netherland, pay \$30, June 30, 1908
1909-10	Bessie Netherland, pay \$30, July 3, 1909
1910-11	Bessie Netherland, pay \$30, July 2, 1910
1911-12	Maggie Brice, pay \$30, July 8, 1911
1912-13	Maggie Brice, pay \$30, July 17, 1912
1913-14	Ludie Cockreham, pay \$30, July 3, 1913
1914-15	Dora Cockreham, pay \$32, August 10 & 11 1914
1915-16	Maggie Brice, pay \$32, July 28, 1915
1916-17	Maggie Brice, pay \$32, July 17, 18, 19 1916
1917-18	Maggie Brice, pay \$35, August 1 & 2 1917
1918-19	Not listed, June 8, 1918
1919-20	Maggie Brice, pay \$47, August 14 & 15, 1919
1920-21	Maggie Brice, pay \$60, July 1, 2, & 3 1920
1921-22	Laura Armstrong, pay \$50, July 15, 1921 Gertrude Kite, pay \$50, Dec. 17, 1921
1922-23	Naomi Banks, pay \$50, July 14, 1922
1923-24	Ada B. Pearson, pay \$55, July 9, 1923
1924-25	Daisy Bradley Titus, pay not listed, July 7, 1925
1925-26	Jennie Fain, pay not listed, July 19, 1926
1926-27	Lillie Netherland Looney, pay \$60, July 3 1927
1927-28	Lillie Looney, pay \$60, Sep 13, 1928
1928-29	Not listed, July 11, 1929
1929-30	Daisy B. Titus, pay \$60, September 11, 1930
1930-31	Not listed, July 11, 1929
1931-32	Otella Hoard, pay not listed, Aug. 9, 1932
1932-33	Otella Hoard Ray
1933-34	
1934-35	
1935-36	
1936-37	Naomi Banks
1937-38	
1938-39	Otella Hoard Ray
1939-40	
1940-41	Ella N. Vaughn
1941-42	Jennie Fain (Board).
1942-43	
1943-44	
1944-45	Maggie Brice (Board).

<b>Figure B12 - Saunders Chapel List of Teachers 1907 – 1954 (Continued)</b>	
1945-46	Not known
1946-47 1947-48 1948-49	Ella N. Vaughn Reeves
1949-50	Coredia Fugate (Board).
1950-51	Ella N. Vaughn Reeves (Board).
1954-55	Mrs. Margaret Carr transferred from Rotherwood to Saunders for 54-55 school year. August 13, 1954 (Board).
1954-55	Transfer Jennie Fain to Petersburg, close Saunders and transfer Margaret Carr to Rotherwood. The eight children at Saunders are to be transported to Petersburg. September 4, 1954 (Board)

### Figure B13

**“News” News of Colored Group; Saunders Chapel Colored School Past – Present - Future. (1946, May 30). *Rogersville Review*, p. 4.**

The Saunders Chapel Colored School opened August 21, 1945, with an enrollment of fourteen. This group of students under the guidance of their teacher Mrs. Ella V. Reeves completed a successful years work on My 8, 1946. Only two of the fourteen were retained, these being beginners. Two were graduated form the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, namely Mary E. [Charles] and David Gudger. The school gave many interesting plays during the school year. Three of the most outstanding plays of the season were: When the Roll Is Called in Heaven, The Devils Funeral, and the Walking Ghost Sings. These three plays drew a packed house of people from both races who enjoyed the occasions together. There was a small fee of five and ten cents admission at the door. There was also a variety of refreshments served. The school sponsored and paid for the bus each time making it possible for Rogersvillians to ride free to the school programs which were about seven miles out from Rogersville. These trips were enjoyed immensely as shown by the crowded bus, and expressions from the many individuals. We are very happy over this fact, as it was our desire for others to share the pleasure of our entertainments. The proceeds from each play ran into the forties. However, there was an equal division with community church. We left \$50.00 with the church on a new floor of which they are looking forward to. The portion of the proceeds reserved was put in the school bank. Yes, I know your will be interested to know that each of the students of Saunders Chapel School had a bank account from August 21, 1945 – May 8, 1946. On this particular day the school bank was robbed for a wonderful trip. This trip had been planned for eight months as the climax of the school year.

On May 8, 1946, at 3:00 a.m. the Saunders Chapel School, their teacher, patrons, and interested friends from Rogersville motored to Lookout Mountain, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Justice Bus chartered by the school was driven by the regular driver on the Rogersville, Greeneville run was appreciated. The driver was very kind, considerate, and helpful, never rushing for a minute. Therefore, it was 3:00 a.m. Thursday morning when we returned from this wonderful trip. While on the trip we visited beautiful Rock City Gardens atop Lookout Mountain, Ruby Falls, and Fort Oglethorpe Ga. With this trip we close the past. The present is being filled with the efforts of growing a school garden, and the future is holding wonderful plans for the coming school year for a bigger and better Saunders Chapel School.

Thanks to all who helped us to succeed.

Saunders Chapel Colored School  
Mrs. Ella V. Reeves, Teacher

Figure B14

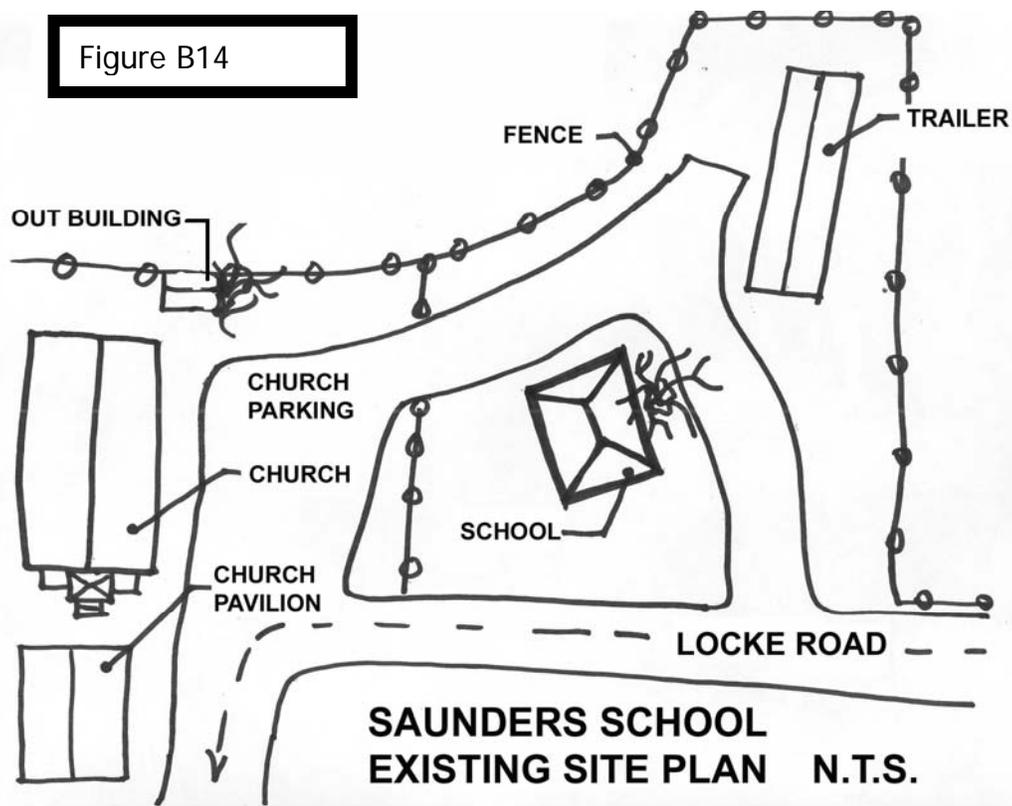
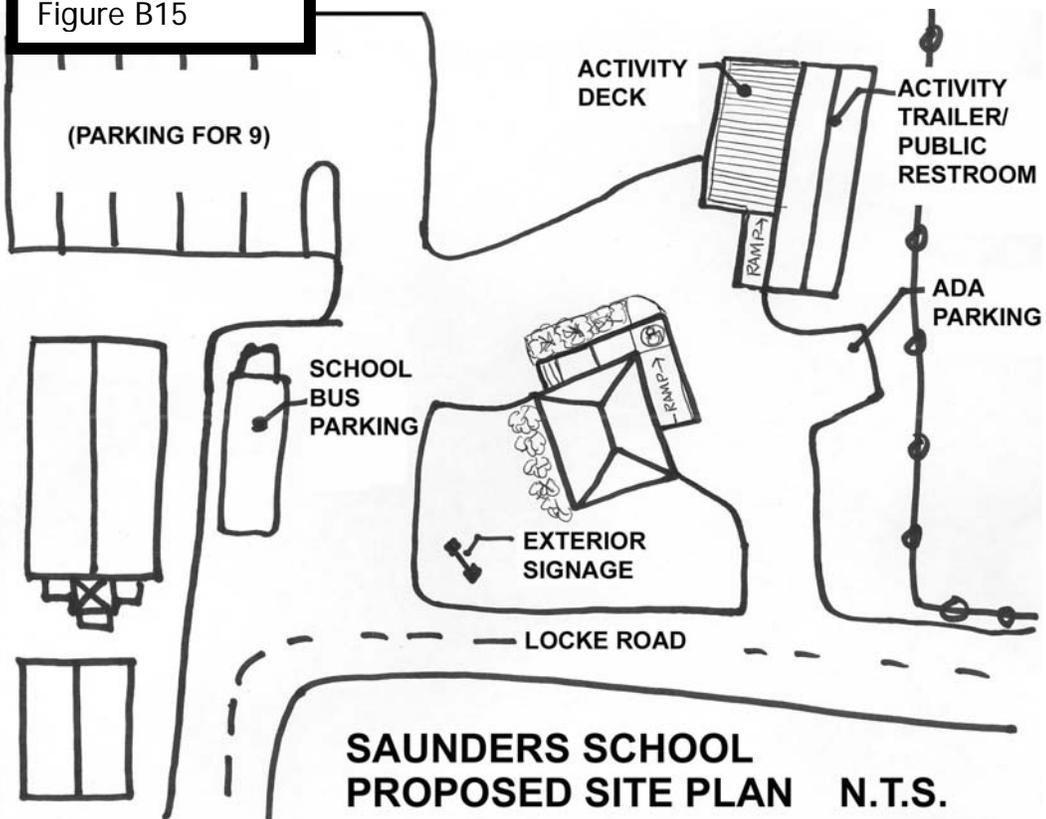


Figure B15



Appendix C  
Saunders Chapel



C1. Saunders Chapel (Front Façade)



C2. Saunders Chapel (Side Façade)



C3. Saunders Chapel (Side Façade)

Appendix D

Saunders Chapel Cemetery



Figure D1. Grave Marker of Jessie Spears, original land owner: B. Aug. 23, 1789; D. Nov. 30, 1873; Oldest Marker in Cemetery



Figure D2. Grave Marker of Hester & Ezra Charles: B. Oct. 4, 1884; D. July 7, 1919



Figure D3. Detail of Grave Marker for Hester & Ezra Charles



Figure D4. Misplaced Grave Markers

**Figure D5**

**Cemetery List of Graves (1984)**

Reference: "Cemetery", Hawkins County Genealogical Society. (1985). *Cemeteries of Hawkins County, Tennessee Volume 1 Civil Districts 1,2, & 8.* pp. 128-132.

"Saunders Chapel Cemetery #305

Location: Cemetery is located 4 miles south of Hwy. 66 intersection on Hwy 70. On the right side of the road.

Name	Birth	Death
Hoard, Etta Octawa	b. 3 May 1904	d. 4 Mar. 1932
Hoard, Fred R. Wife	b. 29 Feb. 1868	d. 2 Sep. 1946
Hoard, Katie Sanders FHM unable to read	b. 27 Nov. 1863	d. 4 June 1920
Hoard, J. Nelson Wife	b. 25 Jan. 1892	d. 10 May 1957
Hoard, Nessie Manisb.	28 July 1898	
Mabry, Harry H.	b. 1907	d. 1973
Mabry, Nannie Mae FHM unable to read	b. 1881	d. 1969
Ganaway, Bettie Sanders	b. 20 May 1866	d. 4 Oct. 1927
McNeil, George E. Wife	b. 26 Feb. 1892	d. 6 Nov. 1959
McNeil, Willie Ganaway	b. 8 Feb. 1893	d. 14 Nov 1959
Manuel, Cecil	b. 10 May 1914	d. 17 Nov. 1973
Reynolds, Isabell		d. 1973
Kyte, William E.	b. 14 Nov. 1898	d. 17 Oct 1937
Six unmarked graves		
Smith, Hurd	b. 25 Dec. 1879	d. 24 Dec. 1966
Two unmarked graves		
Arnott, William K. Wife	b. 1904	d. 1979
Arnott, Annie B.	b. 1904	d. 1967
Johnson, Will	b. 1880	d. 1964
Three unmarked graves		
Gibbons, Harry Miller Son of F.G. & M.J. Gibbons	b. 30 June 1896	d. 12 Apr. 1897
Gibbons, Frank J.		d. 1908
Gibbons, Mary J. Sanders	b. 1858	d. 1938
Gibbons, Henry F.	b. 1896	d. 1936

## Figure D5 Continued

### Cemetery List of Graves (1984) con't

FHM- unable to read  
 Two unmarked graves  
 FHM- unable to read

Charles, Kattie L.	b. 23 Sep. 1888	d. 5 Feb 1962
Spears, James	b. 1938	d. 1969
Spears, David	b. 1935	d. 1953
Spears, Ross Lee	b. 17 Aug. 1929	d. 28 June 1953
Tennessee PFC 802 O.M. Service Co.		
Spears, Harrison	b. 1900	d. 1974
Carter, Arche	b. 1840	d. 1896
age 56		
One unmarked grave		
Carter, Mary	b. 1844	d. 1922
age 78yrs		
Reynolds, Nola	b. 20 Mar. 1870	d. 8 Jan. 1945
Wife of Manuel Reynolds		
Five unmarked graves		
Cha-----, Ezra Z.		d. 1971
Vaughn, William R.		d. 1945
Hoard, Mary R.	b. 1884	d. 1959
FHM- unable to read		
Rutherford, Mary B.	b. 14 Aug. 1907	d. 1 Nov. 1907
dau. of P.M. & M.F. Rutherford		
Three unmarked graves		
Releford, Clyde Richard	d. 1 June 198-	d.
age 54 yrs		
Releford, Stella R.	b. 1903	d. 1972
FHM- unable to read		
Whiteside, J.J.	b. 1909	d. 1941
Charles, Mary M.	b. 20 Mar. 1908	d. 29 June 1908
Dau of Fred & Mary Charles		
Whiteside, Bruce	b. 18 July 1862	d. 19 June 1924
Whiteside, Sarah J.	b. 15 Feb 1866	d. 29 Apr 1924
McClure, Leonard	b. 1920	d. 1938
Releford, Bobby		d. 18 May 1948
Spears, Marion		d. 1 July 1946
Releford, Mae		d. 7 Apr. 1945
age 44yrs		
FHM- unable to read		
Spears, Will	b. 1890	d. 1975
Gudger, Danny	b. 1945	d. 1945

**Figure D5 Continued**

**Cemetery List of Graves (1984) con't**

Gudge, Mary E.	b. 1927	d. 1968
Six unmarked graves		
-----	b. 1877	d. 1962
FHM-	b. 1959	Stewart Funeral Home Marker
Two FHM- no names		
Foster, Lillie Manis	b. 1 June 1902	d. 27 Jan 1962
Spears, Jessie	b. 23 Aug. 1789	d. 30 Nov. 1873
Wife		
Spears, Faribee Hayes		
age 86 yrs		
Spears, Joe Clarence	b. 1 Aug. 1890	d. 13 Dec. 1954
Tennessee PVT 13 Co. 159 Depot Brig. World War I		
Manis, Cad V.	b. 1893	d. 1954
Wife		
Manis, Mary V. Spears	b. 1889	d. 1967
Spears, Carl	b. 1876	d. 1951
Whiteside, Aline	b. 2 Mar. 1920	d. 2 Dec. 1921
age 1 yr 9 mos		
Whiteside, Alice	b. 24 Jan. 1922	d. 27 Feb. 1922
Age 1 mo		
Whiteside, Mollie	b. 15 Nov. 1913	d. 12 Sept. 1933
Age 19 yrs 9 mos		
Whiteside, Florence	b. 1893	d. 1957
Whiteside, William R.		d. 7 Aug 1942
Age 65 years		
Two unmarked graves		
FHM- unable to read		
Whiteside, -----	b. 1959	d. 1959
Blythe, Katherine	b. 1906	d. 1965
Charles, Sam	b. 1875	d. 1950
Five unmarked graves		
Gillenwaters, Robert		d. 29 Mar. 1941
30 yrs 1 mo 22days		
FHM- unable to read		d. 13 Mar. 1941
Age 19yrs		
Charles, Hester	b. 4 Oct. 1884	d. 7 July 1919
Wife of Gale Charles		
One unmarked grave		
Gudge, Roy B.	b. 1906	d. 1971

## Figure D5 Continued

### Cemetery List of Graves (1984) con't

Rutherford, James E.	b. 1900	d. 1949
Rutherford, E. Mae	b. 1907	
Rutherford, Edie		d. 5 Dec. 1982
Releford, David D.	b. 21 Aug. 1947	d. Feb. 1965
McMiller, Donnie Lee	b. 27 May 1959	d. 21 Dec. 1959
Releford, J. L.	b. 1922	d. 1973
Blue, Stanley		d. 1953
Scruggs, Ruth R.		d. 1952
Jones, Lillie R.	b. 1897	d. 1964

Persons reported to be buried in Saunders Chapel Cemetery in unmarked graves:

Spears, Frank	d. 13 Nov. 1937
Wife	
Spears, Mrs. Frank	
McClure, Frank	
McClure, John	
McClure, Dorothy	
Vaughn, Julia	
Vaughn, Patton	
Vaughn, McKinley	

Compiled – 1984"

Saunders Chapel Cemetery: Compiled 2004, Sharon E. Becker & Donna Becker					p. 1 of 6
LOCATION	No./Row	NAME/ INSCRIPTION	BIRTH	DEATH	COMMENT
A, 75	22	Scruggs, Ruth R		1952	
A, 1.25	21	Blue, Stanley		1953	
A, 1.5	20	Dukes, Myrtle	01 Jan. 1940	20 June. 2001	
A, 2	19	Agnes EllaMae Releford	9 June. 1920	31 Jan. 1999	1 shared headstone-wife
A, 2.5	18	James Lawrence Releford	15 Jan. 1921	18 Feb. 1973	1 shared headstone-Husband
A, 3	17	Horton, Gloria J.	2 June. 1942	6 May. 2001	
A, 3.5	16	Unknown -			Lamb on stone above, child
A, 3.75	15	McMiller, Donnie Lee	27 May. 1959	21 Dec. 1959	
A, 4	14	Unknown -			Lamb on stone below, child
A, 4.5	13	Releford, David D	21 Aug. 1947	7 Feb. 1965	
A, 5	12	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
A, 5.5	11	Payne, Bernice	20 Aug. 1928	11 June. 2001	
A, 5.75	10	Rutherford, E. Mae	1907	1982	Jarnigan & Son Funeral Home Tag
A, 6	9	Rutherford, James E.	1900	1949	1 shared headstone-Husband
A, 6.5	8	Gudger, Roy B.	1906	1971	Colbach-Price Funeral Home,
A, 7	7	Gudger, Mary E.	1927	1968	Colbach-Price Funeral Home
A, 7.5	6	Gudger, Danny N.	1945	1945	Colbach-Price Funeral Home
A, 8.5	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
A, 9	4	McClure, Marion	1927	1988	Broom Funeral Home
A, 9.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
A, 9.75	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
A, 11.25	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
B, .25	10	Jones, Billie R.	1897	1964	Rec. As Lillie on 1984 Survey
B, 5	9	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
B, 5.5	8	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
B, 5.75	7	Whiteside, J.J.	1909	1941	
B, 8.5	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
B, 9.25	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
B, 9.75	4	Releford, Bobby	18 May. 1948		Holding Funeral Home
		Age 4 yrs			Big Stone Gap, VA

**Figure D6**  
**For Grave Locations Refer to Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**

Saunders Chapel Cemetery: Compiled 2004, Sharon E. Becker & Donna Becker					p. 2 of 6
LOCATION	No./Row	NAME/ INSCRIPTION	BIRTH	DEATH	COMMENT
B, 10.5	3	Whiteside, Sarah J. Mother	15 Jan. 1866	29 Apr. 1935	
B, 11	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
B, 11.5	1	Whiteside, Bruce Father	18 Aug. 1862	19 July. 1924	
C, 7.5	6	Charles, Mary M. Budded on Earth to Bloom in Heaven Daughter of Fred & Mary Charles	20 Mar. 1908	29 June. 1908	unknown "etching"
C, 8	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
C, 8.75	4	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
C, 9.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
C, 10.5	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
C, 11	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
D, 2.75	8	Unknown -			Flat rock on sunken spot
D, 4.25	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
D, 5.25	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
D, 8.75	5	Rutherford, Mary B. Mary B. Daug. of P.M. & M.F. Rutherford	14 Aug. 1907	1 Nov. 1907	Floral etching on stone
D, 9.25	4	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
D, 9.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
D, 10.75	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
D, 11	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 3.5	13	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 4.25	12	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 5.5	11	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 6.25	10	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 6.5	9	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 7	8	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave

**Figure D6**  
**For Grave Locations Refer to Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**

Saunders Chapel Cemetery: Compiled 2004, Sharon E. Becker & Donna Becker					p. 3 of 6
LOCATION	No./Row	NAME/ INSCRIPTION	BIRTH	DEATH	COMMENT
E, 7	Note:	Bush w/ flat rocks & broken marker marker inscrip.: ARC- 1840			Possibly Arche Carter b1840, d 1896
E, 7.5	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 8.25	Note:	1 flat rock, 2 mtl grave markers in pile			
E, 8.75	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 9.25	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, rock at head
E, 9.5	4	Charles, Ida Fred	1892	1936	Foot stone, Mom, crooked grave, shared head
E, 10	3	Charles, Ezra	1886	1971	Foot stone, Dad, crooked grave, shared head
E, 10.5	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
E, 11.75	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 2.75	16	Unknown -			Bush & rock @ head
F, 3	15	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 3.5	14	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 3.75	13	A#N##, Maggie Jo	9 Aug. 18#4	17 Apr. 19##	Taylor Funeral Home, Rogersville Palm bush w/ rock & Funeral marker
F, 4.25	12	Reynolds, Nola	3 Mar. 1870	8 Jan. 1945	
F, 4.5	11	Carter, Mary Mother, Age 78	1844	1922	
F, 4.75	10	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 5.5	9	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 6	Note:	Cedar with rocks stacked			
F, 6.75	8	Unknown -			Sunken area, with rock
F, 8	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, with palm bush
F, 8.75	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 9.25	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, with rock & palm bush
F, 9.5	4	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 10.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
F, 11	2	Charles, Hester wife of Gale Charles	10 Oct. 1884	7 July. 1919	Stone with porcelain picture
F, 11.75	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave

**Figure D6**  
**For Grave Locations Refer to Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**

Saunders Chapel Cemetery: Compiled 2004, Sharon E. Becker & Donna Becker					p. 4 of 6
LOCATION	No./Row	NAME/ INSCRIPTION	BIRTH	DEATH	COMMENT
G, 3.75	8	Unknown -			Sunken area, Colboch-Price empty tag
G, 4.25	7	Unknown -			
G, 6.25	6	Unknown -			
G, 7.25	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, with rock
G, 9	4	Unknown -			
G, 9.5	3	Unknown -			
G, 11	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, with rock
G, 11.75	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, with rock
H, 7.5	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
H, 8	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
H, 9	4	Unknown -			Rock
H, 9.5	3	Unknown -			Rusty marker @ rose bush
H, 10.5	2	Unknown -			Rock @ tree
H, 11.75	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
I, 2.5	9	Unknown -			Rock
I, 3	8	Unknown -			Lillies
I, 3.5	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
I, 4	6	Whiteside, Mollie	15 Nov. 1913	12 Sep. 1933	
I, 4.5	5	Whiteside, Alice	24 Jan. 1922	27 Feb. 1922	
I, 4.75	4	Whiteside, Alline	2 Mar. 1920	2 Dec. 1921	
I, 6.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
I, 7	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
I, 8.5	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
J, 4.25	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
J, 5	6	Unknown -			Rock
J, 6.25	5	Unknown -			Rusty marker
J, 7	4	Unknown -			Rock @ bush
J, 8.5	3	Unknown -			Broken headstone @ tree
J, 10	2	Unknown -			Rock

**Figure D6**  
**For Grave Locations Refer to Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**

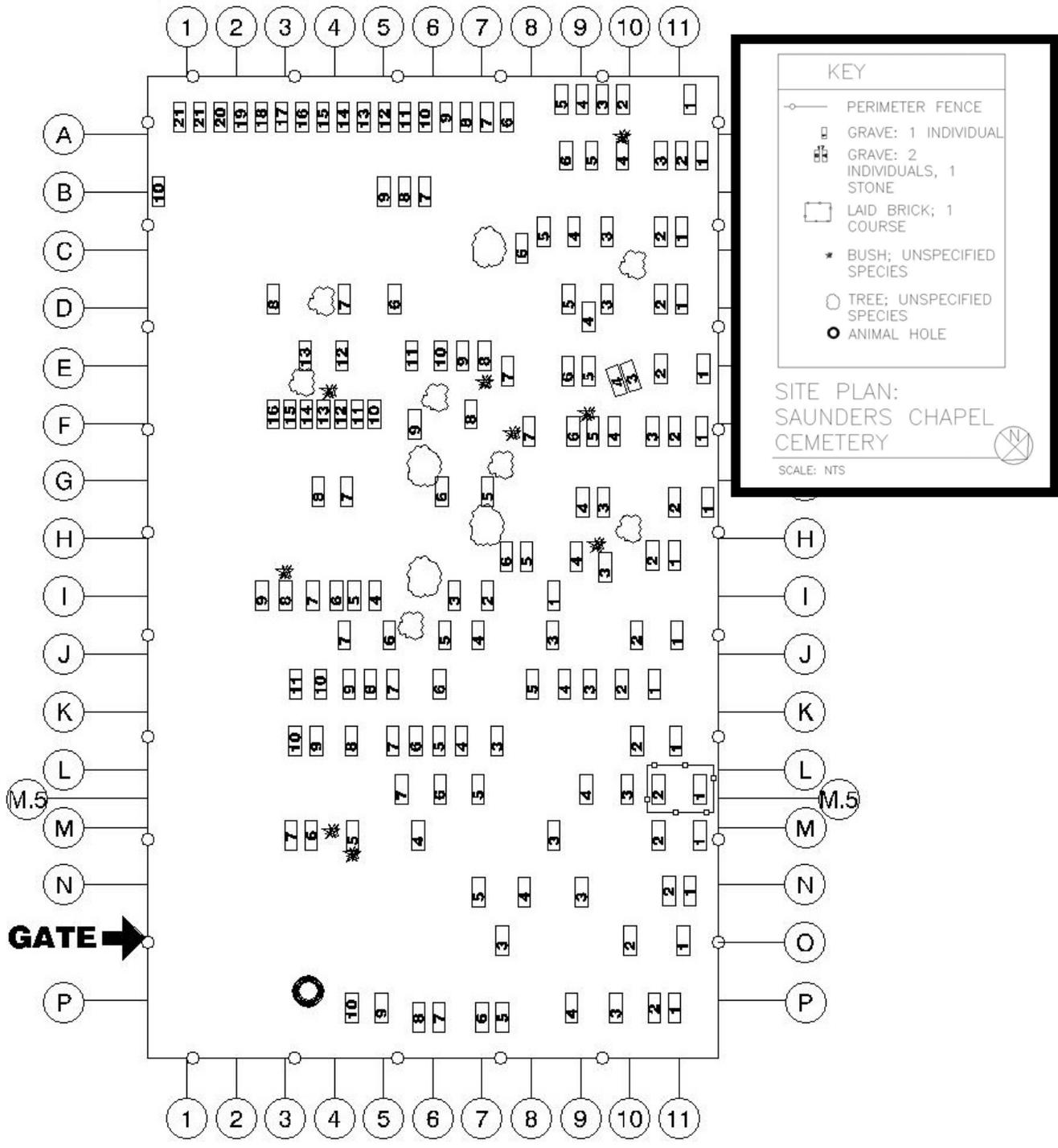
Saunders Chapel Cemetery: Compiled 2004, Sharon E. Becker & Donna Becker					p. 5 of 6
LOCATION	No./Row	NAME/ INSCRIPTION	BIRTH	DEATH	COMMENT
J, 11	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 3.25	11	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 3.75	10	Foster, Lillie	1 June. 1902	27 Jan. 1962	
K, 4.25	9	Spears, Jesse	23 Aug. 1789	30 Nov. 1873	
K, 4.75	8	Spears, Ferruby	none	none	
K, 5.25	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 6	6	Mabry, Agnes Spears	1896	1997	101 yrs old
K, 8	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 8.75	4	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 9.25	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 10	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
K, 10.5	1	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 3.25	10	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 3.5	9	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 4	8	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 5.25	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 5.5	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 6	5	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 6.5	4	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 6.25	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
L, 10	2	Spears, Joe Clarence	1 Aug. 1890	13 Dec. 1954	
		Tenn. Pvt. 13 Co. 159 Depot Brig WWI			
L, 11	1	Manis, Mary	1889	1967	
	8	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
M.5, 3	7	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
M.5, 3.5	6	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
M.5, 4.75	5	Spears, Irene R.	20 Dec. 1901	23 Dec. 1998	
M.5, 5.75	4	Spears, Harrison, Sr.	1900	1974	
M.5, 8.5	3	Spears, Ross Lee	17 Aug.	28 June.	ripped off year - re-survey
		Tenn PFC 802 QM Service Co.			

**Figure D6**  
**For Grave Locations Refer to Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**

Saunders Chapel Cemetery: Compiled 2004, Sharon E. Becker & Donna Becker					p. 6 of 6
LOCATION	No./Row	NAME/ INSCRIPTION	BIRTH	DEATH	COMMENT
M, 10.5	2	Spears, David	1935	1953	Enclosed in brick surrounding
M, 11.5	1	Unknown -			Enclosed in brick surrounding
M, 3.25	7	Gibbons, Henry F.	1896	1936	3 under 1 shared stone
M, 3.5	6	Gibbons, Mary J.	1858	1938	3 under 1 shared headstone-wife
M, 4.25	5	Gibbons, Frank J.		1908	3 under 1 shared headstone-husband
M, 5.75	4	Gibbons, Harry Miller	30 June. 18xx	12 Apr. 18xx	
		Son of F.J. & M.J Gibbons			
M, 8.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
M, 10.5	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
M, 11.5	1	Charles, Kattie L.	23 Sep. 1888	5 Feb. 1962	
N, 7	5	Smith, Hurd	25 Dec. 1879	24 Dec. 1966	
N, 8	4	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
N, 9	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
N, 10.75	2	Arnott, Annie B.	1904	1967	Shared headstone
N, 11.25	1	Arnott, William K.	1904	none	Shared headstone
O, 7.5	3	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
O, 10	2	Unknown -			Sunken area, possible grave
O, 11	1	Manuel, Cecil	10 May. 1914	17 Nov. 1973	
P, 4.5	10	Manis, Pearl	1904	1988	
P, 5	9	Hoard, Etta Octavia	3 May. 1904	4 Mar. 1932	
P, 5.75	8	Hoard, Katie S.	27 Nov. 1863	4 June. 1920	1 shared headstone-wife
P, 6.25	7	Hoard, Fred R.	29 Feb. 1868	2 Sep. 1946	1 shared headstone-husband
P, 7	6	Hoard, B.J. Nelson	25 Jan. 1892	10 May. 1957	1 shared headstone-husband
P, 7.5	5	Hoard, Nessie Manis	28 July. 1898		1 shared headstone-wife
P, 8.75	4	Brice, Frances Louise	11 Sep. 1910	12 July. 1994	
P, 9.75	3	Ganaway, Bettie	20 May. 1866	4 Oct. 1927	
P, 10.5	2	McNeil, George E.	26 Feb. 1893	6 Nov. 1959	1 shared headstone-husband
P, 11	1	McNeil, Willie Ganaway	8 Feb. 1893	14 Nov. 1959	1 shared headstone-wife

**Figure D6**  
**For Grave Locations Refer to Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**

**Figure D7**  
**Cemetery Plot Survey (2004)**  
 Created by Sharon E. Becker



Appendix E

Saunders Chapel Community



**Figure E1. Former Methodist Episcopal Church South, Strahl Community  
Land Donated by Jesse Spears, 1870.**



**Figure E2. Nelson & Nessie Hoard House, Saunders Community**



**Figure E3. Roy B. Gudger House Site, Saunders Community**



**Figure E4. Fred and Katie Hoard Home Site, Saunders Community**



**Figure E5. Mary Rutherford Home before she married Fred Hoard, Needmore**



**Figure E6. Site of Former Kate Charles Cabin, Remains of Sam Smith Home**



**Figure E7. Shed at End of Mabry Road, Possibly Mary Spears Property**



**Figure E8. "Hun", Ezra Charles Barn & Property**

## Figure E9

Reference: "Community", Big Improvement In Negro Contest As Saunders Wins. (1950, June 1). *Rogersville Review*, p. 2.

The improvements in Saunders Chapel Community which won second place in the East Tennessee Negro Community Contest, held in Knoxville May 12, were many and varied.

Noted improvement was made in the church which also serves as the community school. The church was underpinned, floors were finished inside, and concrete entrance steps were built. Trees on the premises were trimmed and whitewashed, shrubs were set out, and swings for the children were erected.

Mr. and Mrs. E.Z. Charles seeded one acre alfalfa, cleaned up land, put lights in barn, remodeled house, papered 3 rooms, built fruit room outside, and purchased warm morning heater, and refrigerator.

Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Spears papered their house and enlarged the barn. Mrs. Spears crocheted centerpieces and made a blouse.

Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Arnott painted 2 rooms, built linen closet, and concreted steps, white washed trees and erected fence post.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Mabry papered 3 rooms and built a porch on their house. They used cedar post, peeled and shellacked them, built in cabinets, whitewashed trees and posts, and set out flowers and shade trees.

Mr. and Mrs. Cad Manis papered a bedroom, cleaned honeysuckle from bank and widened drive, cleared 3 or more acres land by pasture field, and she made a luncheon cloth.

Mrs. May Rutherford papered 3 rooms, painted banisters, purchased electric stove and refrigerator, linoleum rug, made chair cover, pillowcases, quilts, and a dresser scarf.

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Hoard subsoiled and seeded 6 acres winter pasture, 2 acres alfalfa and orchard grass, filled in old road, widened drive, painted mail box, installed electric pump, cold and hot water, concreted basement floor, ceiled up stairs, remodeled kitchen window, painted house outside, painted 3 rooms, and restained floors. They have 2 insemination heifer calves.

Mrs. Isobel Reynolds papered 2 rooms, purchased refrigerator and seeded one acre red clover and grass.

Nelson Hoard, chairman of the Saunders Chapel Community Club, states that the community was given helpful hints by Raymond Cobble, farm agent, and Miss Helen Baker, home agent. He said Miss Ruth Edmondson, assistant home agent in Negro work, also played a great part in the improvement of that community.

## Figure E10

"Community", Colored Improvement Contest Judged. (1951, April 12). *Rogersville Review*, p. 1.

Petersburg and Saunders Chapel are the two communities entering the colored community improvement contest this year. District judging will be on Wednesday Apr. 18. The State Winner will be announced at Farmers Convention for colored people which will be held in the latter part of May.

### **Figure E11**

**“Community”, Sanders Chapel Wins Second in Home Improvement Contest. (1951, May 31). *Rogersville Review*, p. 3.**

Sanders Chapel, colored community of Hawkins County, placed second in the Knoxville News Sentinel and WNOX sponsored community improvement contest held recently. High Point Community in Knox County placed first.

A cash prize of \$35 was awarded to the community by the co-sponsors, and another \$15 prize will be presented to the community by the Rogersville Inter-Church Council.

Announcement of the winners was made at the annual Negro Farmers Convention held at the U.T. Farm May 18. Twenty-one East Tennessee counties participated in the contest. Approximately 20 farmers and their families from the Sanders Chapel community attended the convention. The Sanders Chapel Community Club also sponsored a trip to Knoxville for ten colored children. They were chaperoned on the trip by their schoolteacher, Mrs. Ella Reeves.

In a report of that community it was shown that a number of improvements had been made on the farms within the past year. The report stated that 8 acres in the community are in permanent pasture, 3 in winter cover crop, 8 in moving pasture, and 4.7 acres are in tobacco. The average yield of corn was 255 bushels on 10 acres.

Source of income was stated as dairy products, tobacco, poultry and livestock. Homes had also been remodeled with a number of electric household appliances bought. The school, too, came in for its share of improvement by adding a radio, a set of childcraft, and a junior view master project with 30 movies.

### **Figure E12**

**“Community”, Saunders Chapel Wins Second in East Tennessee. (1952, May 29). *Rogersville Review*, p. 1.**

Eight families of the Saunders Chapel Community Improvement Club of Hawkins County won second place in the East Tennessee Negro Community Improvement Contest.

Nelson Hoard, president of the club, stated he was interested in improvement of farm, homes and communities of the county as a whole as well as his own community. If his community did not improve along with the other communities of the county there would be a gap left that would hurt first of all the people of his community as well as being a liability to the county as a whole, he said.

Hoard also stated that the progress made in Saunders Chapel Community is due largely to the interest of the families of the community and also the cooperation and interest shown by a large group of white families of Hawkins County who are interested in the welfare of the families of Saunders Chapel Community Improvement Club.

Some of the improvements made on the farms, homes and community which enabled Saunders Chapel to win second place are as follows: Farm Improvements included running water in barn, seeding improved pasture, alfalfa, increased yields of tobacco, corn and hay. Livestock improvements include participation in Artificial Breeders Association which is paving the way to higher producing cows. The increased acreage of improved pastures and high quality hay is resulting in increased mil production per cow at lower cost and greater profits.

Home improvements include running water in home additional new electric stoves, refrigerators and furniture. Three living rooms were improved, closets and stairways built. Practically all of the houses were either papered or painted during the past year.

Improvements at the church by Community Club, home demonstration club, and 4-H Club boys and girls included – painting the exterior, installing a new coal heater, addition of new lighting fixtures, the addition of a runner for the aisle and across the front of the church. A new parking area was graded out and rocked, outside steps were built, the lawn was seeded, base shrubbery was set out around the church.

The award of \$35.00 was made by sponsors of East Tennessee Negro Community Improvement Contest to the leaders of Saunders Chapel at the Negro East Tennessee Negro Farmers Convention on May 17.

The Hawkins County Civic Club Council will also award Saunders Chapel \$15 for being first place Negro Community of Hawkins County.

### **Figure E13**

**“Community”, Colored Farms, Homes To Be Judged Friday. (1953, April 9).  
*Rogersville Review*, p. 8.**

With the past 3 years of prior success for Saunders Chapel Community in the Negro Community Improvement Contest, the “Review” announced the day of the judging event in the April 9 1953 issue. The article is as follows:

“Friday, April 10, colored farms and homes entered in the community home and farm improvement contest will be judged by the following committee: Mrs. Bessie Walton, State Colored Home Demonstration Agent, Dr. Brooks Drain, horticulturist, Frank DeFrise, farm management specialist, and Nancy Hampton, local colored home demonstration agent. The judging will begin at 10 o'clock” (“Community”, 1953, p. 8).

### **Figure E14**

**“Community”, Saunders Wins 2nd Place In East Tenn. Negro Community Improvement Contest. (1953, May 21). *Rogersville Review*, p. 6.**

The Saunders Chapel Community of eight families in Hawkins County, located south of Rogersville on the Lonesome Pine Highway, was awarded second place a \$35.00 award in the East Tennessee Negro Community Improvement Contest. This award was made at the East Tennessee Negro Farmers Convention.

Officers of Saunders Chapel are, Nelson Hard, president; and Mrs. Nelson Hoard, secretary.

Hoard reports the following improvements were made in his Community:

## **Figure E14 - Continued**

### **Community Improvements:**

Setting shrubs, reseeding lawn and rocking parking area around Saunders Chapel Church.

### **Farm Improvements:**

Improvement on farms included increase acreage of improved permanent pasture, alfalfa and small grain.

There were more dairy cows bred artificially this year and also a small increase of number of dairy cows.

There were a greater variety and better quality of vegetables grown in gardens of families of the community.

Approximately eighty percent of the families produce adequate milk, eggs, meat and vegetables for home use.

Soil testing is given special emphasis and as a result there is an increase in the number of soil tests made.

### **Home Improvements:**

The major home improvements include, finishing floors, refinished walls of rooms, improving porches, purchase of piano, planting flowers, improving lawns, addition of new furniture, papering and painting interior of homes and general clean-up and fix-up around the homes of the community.

Hoard states that this is the fourth time that Saunders Chapel has won second place. He still hopes that his community will win first place and they plan to work for first place next year.

## VITA

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