

The Trout-Good Pine School was built in 1938 to replace a school destroyed by fire the previous year. The wood frame building, mainly of one story, is located on the edge of the tiny rural hamlet of Good Pine. Although the school is not intensively styled, it features fairly pronounced Colonial Revival motifs at its two front entrances. Alterations have been relatively minimal.

The Trout-Good Pine School is a long building with an asymmetrical design. The gymnasium anchoring one end is a two story space with a main gable and secondary entrance gable facing the street. Extending from the gym, with its roof ridge running perpendicular, is a long one story classroom section. Toward the end of this range (opposite the gym) is a small gabled entrance porch with tripled posts at each corner. Its pediment features an oculus ornamented with keystones.

The school's most striking exterior element is the gym/auditorium. Pronounced end returns reinforce the main gable, the gable of the one bay deep vestibule, and a rear gabled section. The front door features a fairly elaborate Colonial Revival surround capped by a broken pediment with an urn. Above is an oculus with keystones. Windows on the facade of the gym are nine-over-six and six-over-six. The tall openings along the side elevations feature multi-pane windows (9/9/9) set in pairs.

Windows on the classroom wing are six-over-six and appear in bands. The entire building is sheathed in narrow gauge boards.

The school is virtually unchanged on the interior. The floorplan of the main range consists of a long hallway with rooms along each side (eleven large classrooms, two bathrooms, a cafeteria/kitchen, and an office). The hallway retains its original wood floors, medium gauge beaded board walls, wainscot, and ceiling formed of rectangular sheets of bagasse board. Doors leading into the classrooms feature six panes of glass and a movable two-over-two transom. Each classroom also has a high transom-like window opening into the hallway for ventilation purposes. Classrooms have the same wall and ceiling treatment as the hallway but without a wainscot. They retain the original wooden framework for chalkboards (including a bracketed lower section), but the chalkboards themselves have been removed. Some of the classrooms have been carpeted while others retain their wooden floors.

The combination gym/auditorium has the same bagasse ceiling and beaded board walls as the classroom section but features a wainscot almost the height of its doors. At the opposite end from the entrance vestibule is a simple stage. Along the side walls are low two-tier bleachers. The wooden floor, presumably original, is painted for basketball use. (A basketball hoop now hangs from the stage.) A door is located to each side of the stage, providing access to dressing rooms. The gym's present light fixtures are modern.

With the exception of handicapped access ramps and a covered walkway, the exterior of the Trout-Good Pine School is well preserved. The ramp on the facade of the gym is fairly unobtrusive. The one accessing the classroom wing is outlined in latticework and does not blend in as well. Also, the classroom wing entrance porch is obscured by a gabled addition which extends from the center to cover part of the handicap ramp and then extends several yards further, in a lower section, to cover the sidewalk.

Assessment of Integrity

Although the main entrance ramp and breezeway detract from the building, they are the only notable alterations in an otherwise very well preserved school. It is particularly unusual to find a historic school in Louisiana with its original interiors. In short, there is no question that someone from the historic period would recognize this distinctively articulated school.

Significant Date: 1938
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Gremillion Brothers, Alexandria, LA
Criterion: A

The Trout-Good Pine School's local educational significance is two-fold: When the school opened in the fall of 1938, it filled a definite need caused by the loss of its predecessor by fire the previous June. Secondly, historic school buildings are oftentimes an endangered species, and it is particularly heartening to see a well-preserved example -- and one still in use as a school. In fact, the Trout-Good Pine School is the only remaining historic school building in its parish (LaSalle).

The local weekly paper, *The Jena Times*, reported in its July 1, 1937 issue the loss of the present building's predecessor on Sunday, June 27 from a fire caused by lightning. There is some discrepancy in the primary documentation about the number of buildings on the campus. In two instances the newspaper refers to a building; in another it refers to two buildings. A photo survives of one building -- a medium size two story frame school (c.1910) with perhaps eight classrooms. As was typical of the time, the facility was called a "high school," although it housed elementary and secondary grades (usually up to grades 10 or 11). One suspects that there were indeed two buildings because the paper reported that in the last session the school had 134 pupils in the high school department and 286 in the grammar grades. These students would have lived principally in Good Pine, Trout and Tall Timber. These communities were bustling sawmill towns in the early twentieth century, but would have been in economic decline by the onset of the Great Depression.

Until a new bond election could be called and a replacement school built, officials were faced with 300+ students who needed to be educated for the 1937-38 year. In the September 2, 1937 issue of *The Jena Times*, a bond election was set for September 28 and makeshift plans announced for the school year. Classes were to be held (divided by grades) in various buildings in the three communities, including church facilities. In fact, in its April 4, 1938 meeting the LaSalle School Board appropriated \$50 "to be used in assisting Trout Methodist Church in repairing said church so that the school year may be completed." (High school classes had been assigned to the Trout Methodist Church and the Trout Hall.)

Bids were opened on the present school building in February 1938, and in August of that year *The Jena Times* announced that the new Trout-Good Pine school "has been completed and is ready for the opening of schools on September 1." The paper noted that the school "is modern in every respect and considered by all who has [sic] inspected it as being one of the best wooden structures in the state." The expected enrollment was given as around 150 in the high school department and some 250 in the lower grades.

It is interesting to note that the 1938 Trout-Good Pine school hearkens back to an earlier generation of wooden schools. A definite chapter in the history of Louisiana public education is the systematic replacement, largely in the teens and twenties, of earlier wood frame schools with "modern brick schools," as they were hailed at the time. It is indeed quite surprising to find a wooden school being built as late as 1938. Today it is the only historic school building to survive in the parish, which is no small accomplishment.

The school had been vacant for several years and hence was itself endangered when the LaSalle Community Action Agency in the mid-1990s leased it from the school board for Head-Start classes. It remains in this use today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Jena Times, July 1, 1937; August 26, 1937; September 2, 1937; April 7, 1938; August 25, 1938. Copies in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. (These issues contain articles as well as pertinent school board proceedings.)

Photo of school which burned in 1937. Copy in Register file.