

NR Listed: 5-16-02

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Caddo Valley Academy Complex  
other names/site number Norman High School Complex

2. Location

street & number 234 Hettie Street  not for publication  
city or town Norman  vicinity  
state Arkansas code AR county Montgomery code 097 zip code 71960

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

I, the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination   
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic  
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets   
does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
 nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional  
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register.
- removed from the National  
Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
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3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman  
Plain/Traditional

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls Sandstone  
Weatherboard  
CONCRETE  
ASBESTOS  
roof ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
(See continuation sheet.)

8. Statement of Significance

Eligible National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1924-1952

Significant Dates

1924, 1937, 1947, 1951

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Mr. Witt, Texarkana, AR

Builder: Mr. Swift, Texarkana, AR

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Caddo Valley Academy Complex  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Arkansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Age of Property 3 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>437620</u>	<u>3812710</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Three acres (18 1/2 lots) of Section 28, Township 3 S, Range 25 W in the Town of Norman

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses all building historically associated with the school.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Shirley Ann Shewmake Manning (edited by Zac Cothren)  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 2/8/02  
street & number 1500 Tower Bldg. 323 Center St. telephone (501) 324-9789  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Norman Historic Preservation Program, Inc. (Shirley Manning, President)  
street & number P.O. Box 226 telephone (870)326-5535  
city or town Norman state AR zip code 71960

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The approximately 3 acre campus of the Caddo Valley Academy, also known as Norman High School Complex is located at the intersection of Arkansas Highway 8 and 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Norman, Arkansas. The campus is partially flat with a steadily inclining topography. The Caddo Valley Academy (CVA) Historic District is made up of three contributing buildings and one contributing structure. Across the highway is the Norman Town Square that occupies four blocks, and is home to the unique Norman Library, which is only fourteen by twenty-two feet and is possibly the smallest library in the United States. This was the first library in the county and is listed on the National Register in conjunction with the Town Square.

The centerpiece of the district is the original Caddo Valley Academy building. Built in 1924, the building housed the first accredited high school in Montgomery County, Arkansas. The architect was a Mr. Witt of Texarkana, and the stonemason was a Mr. Swift, also of Texarkana. Other contributing buildings include the 1937 home economics building and the 1951 gymnasium. There was also an agricultural building associated with the school, however it was destroyed by fire in the 1990s. The name of the town was changed from Womble to Norman in 1925; however, the school retained its name until 1930, when it took the name of Norman High School. The Caddo Valley Academy school complex served the community's educational needs from 1924 until it closed in 1971.

#### **Caddo Valley Academy/Administration Building (contributing)**

Constructed in 1924, the Caddo Valley Academy was the first building constructed on the site. The Craftsman style building is constructed of fieldstone and topped with a hipped roof that is in need of repair. The dimensions of the building are eighty feet by eighty-eight feet, containing ten rooms and three hallways, including a large auditorium with inclined floor, complete with stage, dressing rooms, foot lights and seats. Basically a T-shaped building, the school is two-story in front and one-story in back. The windows and doors openings are outlined with red soldier bricks accentuating them against the fieldstone walls. Many of the building's original windows have been removed, however the openings have not been permanently infilled. Replacement windows have been placed over the openings to reduce water damage until the original windows can be restored. A walkway with names of past graduates inscribed in concrete is located in the middle of the campus leading up to the building and is a contributing structure.

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### Facade (West Elevation)

The façade faces West toward Arkansas Highway 8. The front of the building is symmetrical with a centrally located recessed entryway. The recessed, double-leaf entry doors are missing several lights, but otherwise are intact; and are crowned with a transom. Fenestration is identical to both the north and south sides of the entryway. The entry is flanked by small four-over-four double-hung windows. A ribbon of four double-hung windows follows this fenestration. The ribbon located on the north has had the original windows removed. Combinations of plywood and incorrect sized windows have been temporarily placed over the openings to keep out the elements. The ribbon of windows located to the south of the door still has original six-over-six double-hung windows. The second-story is fenestrated by a central ribbon of three windows that is flanked on each side by individual windows. On both the north and south extremes of the second story there is a ribbon of four windows. All original second-story windows have been removed and non-fitted windows cover the openings.

### South Elevation

The south elevation consists of the two-story section of the building in the front and the single-story auditorium in the back. The west portion of the elevation projects forward from the auditorium and has a single entryway that leads into the first-story. The second-story is fenestrated by a ribbon of four windows. The building then steps back to the single-story auditorium. The auditorium is fenestrated by two ribbons each consisting of two windows. Original window frames have been removed, but the openings have not been fitted with replacement windows. The last fenestration on the elevation is a single door entryway crowned with a one-light transom.

### East Elevation

The back of the building faces east and is void of any fenestration.

### North Elevation

The north elevation, like the south elevation, is made up of the auditorium and the two-story section of the building. The auditorium is fenestrated by a single window and two ribbons of two windows. The two-story section projects out from the auditorium. It is fenestrated on the first story by a single window and by a ribbon of four windows on the second-story.

### Home Economics Building (contributing)

The Home Economics Building faces south toward High Street, and is located in the extreme north central section of the campus. The Craftsman style building was

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constructed in 1937, and features Craftsman details in the form of knee braces and exposed rafter tails. The single-story wood frame building is sheathed in weatherboard siding. The building rests atop a concrete foundation and is sheltered by a gable roof.

### **Façade (South Elevation)**

The front of the building is fenestrated by a series of four ribbons of two six-over-six double-hung windows. Entry to the building is through a single-leaf door flanked on each side by three sidelights. A small gable-roof porch, supported by square columns, shelters the entryway.

### **East Elevation**

The east elevation is fenestrated by two six-over-six double-hung windows. Moving north, a brick exterior chimney rises up above the roof. The final fenestration on the east side is a six-over-six double-hung window.

### **North Elevation**

The back of the building faces north and is fenestrated by a ribbon of two double-hung six-over-six windows. Moving along the elevation, the building is fenestrated by two individual six-over-six windows. The final fenestration on the elevation is a door that is sheltered by a shed-roof awning.

### **West Elevation**

A six-over-six window and two ribbons of two six-over-six windows fenestrate the elevation.

### **Gymnasium (contributing)**

The Gymnasium is located at the extreme south-central section of the campus and faces north. Built in 1951, the building is constructed of concrete block and is sheltered by a gable roof.

### **Façade (North Elevation)**

The front of the building is fenestrated by two doors. The east door is flanked by a six-light casement window. The west door is sheltered by a shed awning and is flanked by a six-light casement window.

### **East & West Elevation**

The east and west sides are identical. Each is fenestrated near the roof overhang by eight six-light casement windows. Each side also has an entryway near the back of the building. Shed awnings shelter each door.

Caddo Valley Academy  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Arkansas  
County and State

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## South Elevation

The back of the building faces south and is void of fenestration.



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The Caddo Valley Academy/Norman High School Complex contains three contributing buildings and one contributing structure, all on approximately 3 acres of land in Norman, Arkansas. The Norman Historic Preservation Program, Inc, a non-profit corporation, now owns the main school building and the other two buildings are privately owned. The Caddo Valley Academy building, a Craftsman style building constructed in 1924, is an excellent example of a rural school building and exemplifies outstanding use of fieldstone masonry. The 1937 home economics building is a virtually unaltered Craftsman style structure that along with the 1951 gym complete the collection of buildings that convey the feeling of a historic school complex. The contributing concrete walkway features the names of all students that have graduated from the school and adds an even more personal connection with the community. The complex reflects the development of the community and the importance placed on educational and cultural activities by its residents. The Caddo Valley Academy/Norman High School Complex is the best example of a historic school complex not only in Norman, but also in surrounding communities. It is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** for its varied styles of architecture, and under **Criterion A** for its association with education in Norman. It is being nominated with **local significance** as the most extant historic school complex in Norman, Arkansas.

### ELABORATION

A revolutionary event in the economic and social life of the farm families of western Montgomery County occurred in 1907. The Gurdon-Fort Smith Railroad, purchased by the Iron Mountain Railroad in January 1910, and later, the Missouri Pacific Railroad, was approaching Montgomery County on its southern boarder, with plans to continue through the county on its journey north to Fort Smith--the intended terminus. Situated approximately midway between Gurdon and Fort Smith was the existing town of Black Springs. It was the intention of developers to place a depot at Black Springs, and to use that as a major transportation point for shipping the soon to be harvested virgin pine timber from the area. However, due to a land dispute between the railroad representative, Col. Grayson, and a Mr. Robbins, the line was stopped two miles east of Black Springs. With nothing but a sage grass field in the immediate area, the Womble family, including Mrs. C.E. Womble and her sons Walter E., Theodore A., and Oscar O., all of Black Springs, saw the opportunity and sized it, by immediately laying claim to the land and filing for ownership through a U.S. Government Patent. Walter E. and brother, Oscar O., and a Mr. E.M. Short immediately formed the Womble Land and Timber Company, as well. Walter E. Womble filed with the U.S. Government and was granted the right to open a post office under the name of Womble on July 17, 1907, and he served as the first postmaster until March 1, 1922. The town of Womble was incorporated in 1910 and was renamed Norman after a petition was circulated and filed with the Montgomery County Court. The name Norman was officially instituted on March 17, 1925. The post office name was officially changed from Womble to Norman on June 1, 1925.

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It is unclear as to why the change took place, but speculation has it that the town's people were not happy with Walter E. Womble. Mr. Womble had angered townspeople over several issues, not the least of which was his bringing suit against the Womble School board, and the County Board of Education, on which Dr. John T Barr then served and continued to serve for over 20 years, (The board was formed by order of the state in 1920 and members were elected by their districts). He alleged that funds had been misused by allowing Caddo Valley Academy the use of the Public School building and its contents. He further alleged that Caddo Valley Academy was nothing more than a "mountain mission school," and that the election held in May 1922, had been mishandled in numerous ways. The charges were investigated by Mr. J.R. Long, the County Board of Education's attorney, and found to be either non-specific or did not apply to the jurisdiction of the board, all were dismissed. Womble took the matter to the Montgomery County Circuit Court, but naught was to come of the issue.

In the meantime, Mr. Womble himself was charged with perjury, false pretense, embezzlement, and along with both his brothers, assault and battery upon the person of Mr. George Sherman. The three of them had set up a corporation to build a road through Womble and Walter E. Womble had been appointed overseer and manager. He was charged with misusing money from the county road fund. Again, it is unclear as to the final outcome. Documents found in the Montgomery County court records show the cases were noll prossessed; however, many court documents have mysteriously disappeared from the vault. It appears that there might have been a deal--leave town and the charges will be dropped, stay and you will be prosecuted. This is conjecture on the part of this author, based on records and oral interviews and the family genealogy. The circumstance surrounding the Womble family and the reaction of the town's people by standing by Caddo Valley Academy and Dr. John T. Barr, provides a clear picture of the importance the town placed on education and Caddo Valley Academy, and the part the Presbyterian Church played in its history.

At the time of the town's inauguration the community was primarily a sparsely inhabited farming community with farmers having to make week-long trips to Hot Springs or Fort Smith to sell their goods and purchase necessary items they couldn't raise on the family farm. One bale of cotton often offered the family the necessities, such as shoes and clothing, for an entire year. The railroad and the construction of the Black Springs Lumber Company, not in the intended town of Black Springs, but in Womble, offered new job opportunities heretofore unknown in Montgomery County. The railroad became the "spine" of the timber and agriculture industry. The first passenger train came to Womble on January 1, 1908, and the last on December 6, 1962. Farmers sold their family farms, or left them in the hands of wives and children, while they joined the fast growing timber industry. The men worked either as a sawyer in the timber woods, a tie er for the railroad, or as a mill worker at the Black Springs Lumber Company or on one of the smaller sawmill sets. Small sawmills sprang up all over the mountains as virgin timber was cut and shipped by rail to larger towns. Spur lines were laid into the forest and as one section was cut out the lines were taken up and moved to a new location. In this way the timber was harvested and shipped via the railroad at Womble. At last, western Montgomery County was connected to the outside world.

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The town grew quickly and what was just a short time ago a sage grass field became a community of over 900 persons, making it the largest settlement in Montgomery County. A company store offered credit, and farm families experienced a variety of goods previously only known to "city" people. As the town increased so did the number of children and the need for better and larger schools and higher education. Children of farm families were needed at home to work the fields, but children of loggers, sawmill workers, etc. had more time and interest in education. Parents saw this as opportunities for their children to take advantage of an education and opportunities that were unobtainable in their own youth. They fully supported improving education and education facilities for their children. Another important circumstance of the timber industry that affected the school was money. There was turnback funds from timber companies, money earmarked for education. A school district that was hardly able to support a three-month school term suddenly had an abundance of income. An example of this was given in the *Womble News* of January 28, 1910, where it was stated that even with the building of the new Public School, taxes had not been raised, they were seven mills in 1909, and remained seven mills in 1910. A much later example is given in the non-published autobiography of W. Harvey New, superintendent of Norman High School from 1943-52. Mr. New stated that he left \$10,886 in the operating fund and \$1,600 in the athletic fund when he resigned.

In 1911, the Presbyterian Synod of Arkansas sent a young man to the newly settled area to act as minister for its Home Mission work. The Womble Land and Timber Company sold them land for a new Presbyterian Church building, and an association with the town, which began as a temporary assignment for Dr. John Tilman Barr, Jr, became a lifetime passion. Before Dr. Barr came there had been two grade schools in the vicinity, Cedar Bluff and Yellowjacket. Both were closed and a new school was built atop a hill near the downtown area. The new school was referred to only as the Public School. Having been built in 1908, burned in 1909, and rebuilt in 1910, it offered the latest in modern education.

A report of the town and school was given in *The Montgomery County Democrat* on November 16, 1916, which in part read:

*Full of thrifty commercial life, with a score or more of business houses...a fine \$12,000 school building, four churches and claiming a population of 800 souls it not surprising that this mountain metropolis should "feel her oats" as the stockmen put it.... With a strong popular banking house, the Caddo Valley Bank, a good, live, all home print newspaper, four excellent hotels and several good boarding houses, three physicians and a like number of lawyers. A city-like and attractive drugstore--with a score or more of other stores, which might be mentioned--with all this and these it is not surprising that Womble would put on a few airs and begin to emerge from the village class into the grown young city category.*

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Dr. Barr, having been a sickly child and forced to quit school while still in grade school, had to fight his health as he made his way through his studies at Arkansas College at Batesville, and Presbyterian Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. His mother, a scholar herself, wouldn't give up on his education and saw to it that he was given every opportunity. The Barrs, from Hope, Arkansas, had a long association with the Presbyterian Church and were well acquainted with Arkansas College at Batesville. This would later play an even larger role in his life and in the education of Womble students as Dr. Barr managed to obtain many scholarships for local students to attend the college free of charge. Dr. Barr realized that if the community of Womble was to grow and prosper--to pull itself out of poverty--it would have to invest in a substantial higher education facility. It was to this end that he convinced the Presbyterian Synod of Arkansas and the local citizens of Womble to open and support Caddo Valley Academy, the first accredited high school in Montgomery County. On October 31, 1929, *The Norman Sentinel* reported that L.J. Witherspoon, manager of the Black Springs Lumber Company, was honored by the Presbyterian Synod, and that an anonymous gift of \$50,000 had been made to the Presbyterian college. At the same time Mr. Witherspoon was also made an Elder of the Synod. Mr. Witherspoon was one of the most influential men in the town, and was a member of the Presbyterian Church. He also succeeded Dr. Barr on the Montgomery County Board of Education.

In 1921, the old Hillside Hotel was obtained and used for a dormitory in order for students outside the city to have a chance to attend a center of higher education. Many used the railroad as transportation for weekend visits home. Many of the other students boarded in private homes with families in the community. In fact, the ninth grade graduating class of 1925 had students from seven Arkansas towns, as well as one from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Word of Dr. Barr's Caddo Valley Academy spread quickly and there was no lack of students. The first three years all grades were taught and the Public School was utilized as the academic building, while the dormitory served as living and study quarters. The 1929 school year opened on September 12, with 18 seniors. Mr. Edwin Uriah Aston was principal and also taught mathematics. The school also offered Latin, English, Bible and education. Other subjects included history, science, home economics, piano, voice, violin, expression and public speaking, shorthand and typewriting.

The first graduating class of 1922 had two graduates, with 1923 having three. The first graduating class from the new rock building had six graduates. The largest graduating class was in 1941 with 25 graduates, and the last in 1971, had 18 graduates. In all there were 743 graduates in the fifty-year active history of the school. However, this does not truly reflect the number of students who attended the school. One major factor in the number of students was the CVA Children's Home run by Dr. Barr and the Presbyterian Church. Over 600 children came through this home and all attended the Norman public schools. However, due to various circumstances, only a small number of them actually graduated from Norman High School. In addition, after the timber was cutover in the area many families followed the timber bosses and companies to Oregon, Washington, California and New Mexico to continue in a business they had come to understand and depend upon for survival. An example of that is the sawmill town of Mauldin, located eight miles north of Norman. The town, including equipment, houses, and animals, was loaded onto railroad cars in Norman and shipped

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to Oregon! Also, many boys left Norman to enter the various branches of service and fight in wars that took place during this fifty-year span. Therefore, it is safe to say that hundreds more would have graduated from Norman High School, had they remained in the school system. With the timber gone an era had passed, but education had taken a foothold in the mountains of western Montgomery County. Parents and leaders alike continued to support the best possible education for their town.

In 1923 land was purchased by the Presbyterian Synod's Home Mission Committee on which to construct a new administration building, construction began in May 1924. In the Caddo Valley Academy Announcement and Catalogue for 1925-26, is a short history of the school that gives these particulars:

*The Caddo Valley Academy was established in 1921. It is owned and controlled by the Synod of Arkansas, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., acting through its Home Mission Committee, of which Rev. J.C. Williams, D.D., of Prescott, is Chairman. During the first three years of its history the Academy used the public school building at Womble. Last year a handsome new Administration Building was erected. The Academy is not now connected with the Public School in any way. For these first three years all twelve grades were taught, but now only students who are ready for the seventh grade are admitted. It has been found advisable to add a year of post-graduate work for the coming year, and this will contribute greatly to the opportunities for service.*

*The accomplishments of the past four years have been most encouraging, and the need of such an institution has been amply shown. The curriculum has been raised each year, and the number of teachers has been increased. Three classes have been graduated. The good will and co-operation of the community have been earned, and an increasingly large constituency has been built up. The prospects for the future are very bright indeed.*

*On the first day of June, 1925, the name of the post office at this place was changed from Womble to Norman, which may be confusing at first to some of the friends of the school. However, we shall soon become accustomed to the change.*

*The school was established that an opportunity might be given to as many as possible to obtain a Christian education. The Presbyterian Church is broad in its sympathies, and recognizes all evangelical denominations as branches of the church and all regenerated persons as members of the spiritual body of Christ. No denominationalism or sectarianism will be taught or tolerated in the school. Prominence will be given the Bible as a text book, but the study will be confined to the historical sections, and discussion of matters about which Christians differ will not be allowed. Every effort has been made to secure competent teachers, and it is believed that this has been done. Thoroughness in*

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*all branches of school work will be required of students, and the graduate of this Academy will be prepared to enter the Freshman class at college....*

*The Administration Building is two-storied in front, and one story behind. Its extreme dimensions are eighty feet by eighty-eight feet. It contains ten rooms and three hallways. It is built of native stone and is extremely ornamental as well as thoroughly substantial.*

*There is a large auditorium, with inclined floor, which is used as a study hall. The auditorium is complete with stage, dressing rooms, foot lights and seats enough to accommodate the school.*

*A laboratory sufficient for the teaching of two sciences has been provided, and students have the opportunity of doing their own experimental work. This is of inestimable value and adds to the interest and profit of the work in the physical sciences.*

*The library consists of some twelve hundred volumes. Among these are a large number of encyclopedia, classics and other reference works. This is one of the largest high school libraries in the state, and offers diligent students every opportunity for doing research work. There are a number of choice volumes of fiction which the students are allowed to read at times when it will not interfere with their school work.*

Tuition fees were charged and ranged from one dollar per month for literary tuition, to five dollars per session for laboratory fees. The Academy was the only four-year accredited high school in Montgomery County. Entrance exams were given to Junior High students, whose course of study consisted of English, mathematics, social science, health, music, and the domestic arts, and for the ninth grade Latin and Bible were added to the curriculum. In the upper grades Latin and music were required and typing was offered as an elective. Although, it is not mentioned in the school catalogue, Spanish was also an elective. Bible continued to be a requirement for CVA Dormitory students, but an elective for local town's students. Elocution was a favorite subject of Dr. Barr's and he made sure students were offered the opportunity to practice. In 1924 he made a motion, which passed, to the Board of Education that plaques, certificates, and awards be purchased and county-wide contest held in elocution, music, and sports. In the days before CVA dormitory became a children's home tuition was charged to board there; however, no student was ever turned away for lack of ability to pay. Dr. Barr always took care of "his" kids, sometimes at the expense of his own family.

Dr. Barr believed that social graces were as much a part of a student's training as were academic and Biblical instruction. It was to this end that a music teacher was retained and literary societies and musical groups were formed in the school and town. Athletics were also introduced in the form of football, basketball,

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baseball, track, and other sports. The "Caddo Valley Academy Cup" was created as a trophy for any school in the county with the highest number of points at an annual tournament. The cup, a quadruple plated, silver cup, gold-lined, 10 1/2 inches in height, was competitively sought by all the county schools, however, Caddo Valley Academy had the first, and for a while the only, football team in the county.

The town of Womble/Norman held many county first: first accredited high school, first football team, first electric lights, first library, first large employment establishment, first and only railroad as well as depot, first car sales agency, and the first "A" rated school. It became the most progressive community in the county and soon the majority of merchants in Black Springs relocated to Womble, including the Caddo Valley Bank. The town continued along this growth path until October 1929, when the infamous "Bank Crash" occurred. The Great Depression and the Dust Bowl followed shortly thereafter. The town of Womble, by this time known as Norman, as well as Caddo Valley Academy felt the pain of financial loss. The Academy, which until this time had been supported solely by the church and local citizens, was having trouble staying solvent. However, by this time the Norman School District had gained a foothold and was in a position to assume some of the responsibility. The name of the Academy was officially changed to Norman High School with the ending of the 1930 school year. Although local citizens have always "known" that the District took over the school in 1931, county court records indicate that the school was not actually leased to the district until May 1940. The lease price was one dollar for the entire term of forty-nine years, or until there was no longer a school on the property. The lease did not state anything concerning Bible being taught at the school as a condition of the sale. However, local people as well as the Bible teacher, who is still living and related the terms of the lease in an interview, knew that it was a term, at least orally. In fact, the 1951 school annual states, "In the year 1930 it was decided to have a consolidated high school in Norman. The Norman District leased the high school building from the Synod of Arkansas, with the understanding that Bible was to be taught in the school." Bible was continued as an elective to all students except those who were residents of the Caddo Valley Presbyterian Children's Home that Dr. Barr had founded and located in the old Hillside Hotel/Dormitory, until its closure in 1963. The remaining children were sent to the Vera Lloyd Home in Monticello, Arkansas.

The Norman School District was approached by the Synod in 1961 and told that there were plans to close CVA (children's home), and that they planned to sell the buildings and land. It was this fact that caused the school district to purchase the property on September 22, 1961, even though there was still time left on the lease. The Norman High School continued its role in the community until the end of the 1971 school year, at which time all rural schools in Arkansas were facing the final stages of consolidation. It was apparent that Norman would probably be consolidated with Mount Ida, nine miles to the north, while Caddo Gap, five miles to the southeast would likely be consolidated with Glenwood. Neither Norman or Caddo Gap wanted this solution, so the two school boards worked together to rally their constituents and hold a special school election in which the public voted a 59 mill tax to build and fund a new school and merge the two student bodies. The new school building was completed in time for the 1972 school year and the superintendents

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from the two schools shared the responsibility of the superintendent's job at Caddo Hills School. The new school was given Norman's old District Number 28. The student body selected the Caddo Hills name and the Indian mascot for the new school. Once again, it was demonstrated that education was at the forefront of priorities in Norman.

Superintendents of Caddo Valley Academy and Norman High School, 1921-1971:

G.G. Murphy Principal CVA 1921-22

F.C. Purviance Principal CVA 1922-26

E.U. Aston Principal CVA 1927-30

E.O. Bennett Superintendent CVA/Norman High School 1930-37

Weldon Tarver Superintendent Norman High School 1937-42

Wode Maddox Superintendent Norman High School 1942-43 (Served 37 years as a Arkansas State Representative)

Harvey New Superintendent Norman High School 1943-52 (1926 CVA graduate)

Fay Bohannon Superintendent Norman High School 1952-63 (Served on the State Board of Education)

Doyle Wilson Superintendent Norman High School 1963-67 (1934 Norman Graduate)

Bernard Venable Superintendent Norman High School 1967-69

David Scott Superintendent Norman High School 1970-71 Caddo Hills 1972

### Statement of Significance

The Caddo Valley Academy/Norman High School Complex contains three contributing buildings and one non-contributing building, all on approximately 3 acres of land in Norman, Arkansas. The Norman Historic Preservation Program, Inc, a non-profit corporation, now owns the main school building and the other three buildings are privately owned. The Caddo Valley Academy building, a Craftsman style building constructed in 1924, is an excellent example of a rural school building and exemplifies outstanding use of fieldstone masonry. The 1937 home economics building is a virtually unaltered Craftsman style structure that along with the 1951 gym complete the collection of buildings that convey the feeling of a historic school complex. The complex reflects the development of the community and the importance placed on educational and cultural activities by its residents. The Caddo Valley Academy/Norman High School Complex is the best example of a historic school complex not only in Norman, but also in surrounding communities. It is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** for its varied styles of architecture, and under **Criterion A** for its association with education in Norman. It is being nominated with **local significance** as the most extant historic school complex in Norman, Arkansas.



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Caddo Valley Academy Complex  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Arkansas  
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