

# Architectural And Historic Survey



408

## Identification

<b>STREET ADDRESS:</b> 200 Second Street, N.W.	<b>HISTORIC NAME:</b> McGuffey School
<b>MAP &amp; PARCEL:</b> 33-174	<b>DATE / PERIOD:</b> 1916
<b>CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK:</b>	<b>STYLE:</b> Colonial Revival
<b>PRESENT ZONING:</b> B-3	<b>HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES:</b> 2 storeys
<b>ORIGINAL OWNER:</b> School Board of City of Charlottesville	<b>DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:</b>
<b>ORIGINAL USE:</b> Elementary School	<b>CONDITION:</b> Good
<b>PRESENT USE:</b> Community Art Center	<b>SURVEYOR:</b> Bibb
<b>PRESENT OWNER:</b> School Board of City of Charlottesville	<b>DATE OF SURVEY:</b> Summer 1981
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	<b>SOURCES:</b> City Records Mrs. Ora L. Stones The Daily Progress, Ch'ville Bicentennial edition, 4/13/62

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

McGuffey School is a 2-storey, 7-bay building with slightly projecting end pavillions, set on an English basement. The first, third, fifth, and seventh bays are wider. Walls and foundation are constructed of brick laid in stretcher bond with a concrete water table. The medium-pitched hip roof is covered with slate and has projecting eaves and a nicely proportioned wooden entablature with shaped modillions. There are two central chimneys with corbeled caps and string-courses, and two massive H-shaped interior chimneys at each end of the ridge of the roof. There is a band of five double-sash, 9-over-9 light windows in each of the wider bays. They have moulded surrounds and a single concrete sill, and those at the first level have a single concrete jack arch with individual keystones. There is a stone panel enriched with a relief garland below each window. In the second and sixth bays there are two smaller single 4-over-4 light windows with individual sills and jack arches. Basement windows are single, 6-over-6 light, three in the wide bays and one in the narrow ones. A one-storey flat-roofed Tuscan portico with coupled columns and the name "MCGUFFEY SCHOOL" on the frieze covers the center bay of the facade. The paired 6-paneled entrance doors have a half-round transom with a wooden arch springing from hyphens. The portico floor and broad flight of steps are concrete and have a brick balustrade. There is a wider 12-over-12 light window with 6-light sidelights above the portico. On the rear elevation, there is a 12-over-12 light window flanked by 6-over-6 light windows at each level in the center bay. The entrances at the ends of the building have shallower porticoes at ground level and paired doors with multi-light rectangular transoms. There is a pair of 9-over-9 light windows above each entrance. Brick panels outlined by two bands of headers occupy the side bays.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The first public schools in Charlottesville, both for white and for black students, were established in 1870. The Midway School, for white students, was built in 1893 on the site of the old Midway Hotel where classes had been conducted for several years. Midway and a large annex housed both elementary and high school for 23 years. Then in 1915 the School Board purchased 3.19 acres on Beck's Hill for the construction of a separate elementary school for white students (City DB 28-102). Teachers and pupils assembled at Midway School and marched in a procession to the new school when it opened in September 1916. It was named for William Holmes McGuffey, a professor at the University of Virginia and author of the famous McGuffey Readers. Miss Carrie Burnley, for whom Burnley-Moran Elementary School was named, served as Principal from 1916 until her retirement in 1944. She was succeeded by Mrs. Ora L. Starnes, who served until c. 1963. The McGuffey building has not been used as a neighborhood school since 1965. For nearly a decade after that all Special Education classes for the city were consolidated at that location. In 1975 the building was converted into a community art center with the classrooms serving as artists' studios. The building was damaged by fire in August, 1981.

By **ROBERT BRICKHOUSE**  
of The Progress Staff

**"McGuffey is Back!!"**

That's what the green posters on the door proclaimed, and the throngs of guests who toured the McGuffey Art Center downtown Friday could not have argued with the need for the second exclamation point.

After almost four months and \$73,000 worth of renovations following a nearly disastrous fire last summer, the city-run art studios at 201 2nd St. N.W. have opened their doors again, just in time for Christmas.

With a new main gallery and shop and with gleaming wood floors and a fresh paint job, the 22-studio center used by some 40 local artists and craftsmen has taken on a cheerful holiday look.

Things looked bleaker in the weeks following the pre-dawn fire that struck the building in August. With 60 percent of the studios out of use, and water and electricity off during parts of the renovation period, "the hardest thing was to keep the artists' spirits

up and keep everybody together," said Michiel van der Sommen, a sculptor who is president of the McGuffey artists' group.

"It was a very depressing time," recalled Martha Dix, a fabric designer with a studio at the center. "Because it's such a public building, our

whole audience was gone," she said. "There really wasn't anybody to work for."

The types of artwork made and sold at the center range from weaving and woodworking to painting, pottery and jewelry. In addition to sales at

the gallery on the main floor of the former McGuffey Elementary School building, artists' work can be purchased in their studios.

The center is open to the public every day except Monday to watch

progress, and several renters of studio space offer individual and group classes in various arts, including dance.

At a reopening party Friday night, guests toured the studios, were treated to wine

music of a guitar and fiddle player. Van der Sommen presented a print entitled "The Builders," by silk-screen artist Judy McLeod, to Ed Buchanan of Forest Hill Associates, the contractor for the renova-



Progress Photo by Ken Flower

**ART CENTER PRESIDENT VAN DER SOMMEN, LEFT, PRESENTS PRINT TO ED BUCHANAN**  
Print Entitled "The Builders" by McGuffey Artist Judy McLeod, Who Looks On at Friday Night Opening

# Fire Damages McGuffey Art Center

By **BOB GIBSON**  
of The Progress Staff

An electrical fire gutted a main floor office and caused an estimated \$100,000 damage to the city's McGuffey Art Center at 201 2nd St., N.W., this morning, according to Charlottesville fire officials.

Investigators determined that the fire resulted from "an electrical failure in a wall receptacle that had a telephone answering service plugged into it," said Fire Chief Julian Taliadro.

The two-alarm blaze was spotted at 3:23 a.m. by city police officer J.R. O'Mary, who was patrolling the downtown mall area on foot.

Firefighters broke into the locked building several minutes later and contained the blaze to the office where it started, the main hallway just outside and interior walls directly above the office, said fire Lt. Grover Smiley.

Taliadro said firefighters prevented the blaze from spreading to the building's attic and causing more substantial damage. He said firefighters were able to reduce the blaze to a smoldering wall within about 20 minutes.

A 6 a.m. inspection of the building by flashlight revealed that most of the 22 studios used by about 45 local artists sustained relatively little damage despite the intense heat and smoke that had filled hallways by the time firefighters arrived. Taliadro said most of the doors to the studios had been locked.

Artists began arriving at the center shortly after 6 a.m. to inspect their studios for possible damage. Walls had been torn apart in two upstairs studios to allow firefighters to attack the blaze.

Six Charlottesville fire companies fought the blaze while volunteer units from Earlysville, East Rivanna and Stony Point were called into the city as backup units, Taliadro said.

Capt. Bernard Maupin and a state arson investigator inspected the office where the fire started and determined its cause about 9:30 a.m., Taliadro said.

City Assessor Tom Branham said the McGuffey building, which is owned by the Charlottesville school board, was assessed this year at \$523,200 and is the oldest building in the city school system.

The building opened as a primary school in September 1916 and was named after University of Virginia professor William Holmes McGuffey, the author of a series of spellers, readers and primers and a professor of moral

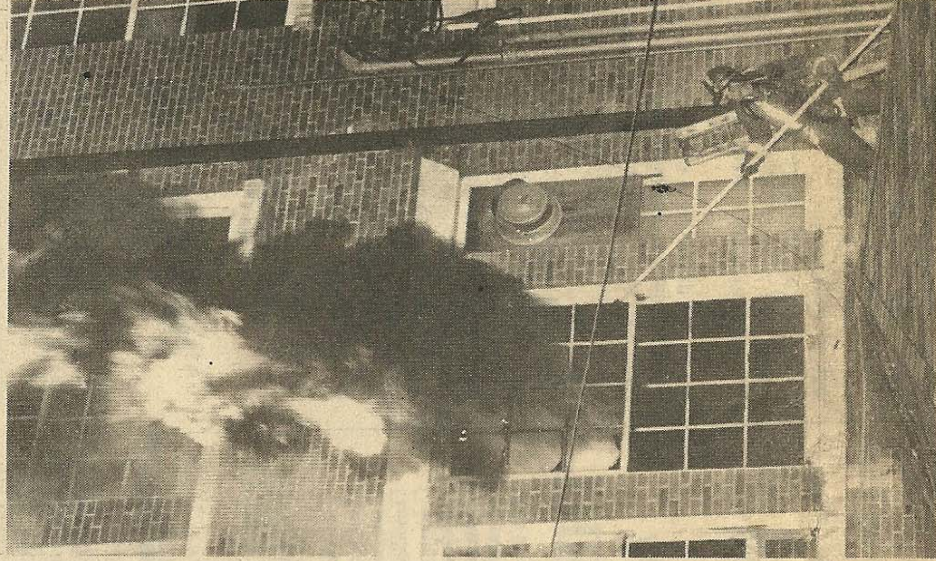
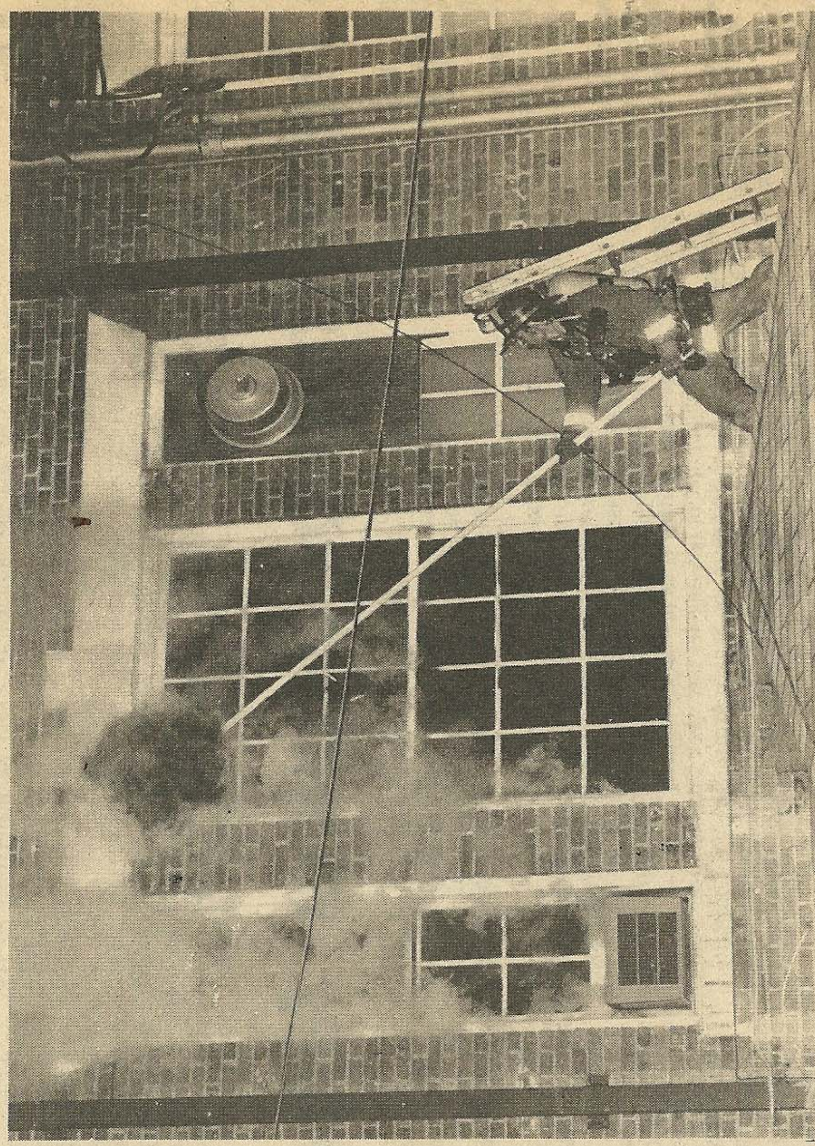


PHOTO BY JIM MCGUFFEY

PAUL STONEBURNER BURNING

Progress Photos by Jim McGuffey

VENTILATE FIRE AT MCGUFFEY CENTER