NPS Form 10-900
OMB No. 1024-0018

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lower Parker School
other names/site number MS-233; District #73 School

2. Location

Ozark National Scenic Riverways
street & number ☐ not for publication
city, town Salem ☒ vicinity
state Missouri code MO county Dent code 065 zip code 65560

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☐ private	☐ building(s)	1	____ buildings
☐ public-local	☒ district	3	____ sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	____	____ structures
☒ public-Federal	☐ structure	____	____ objects
	☐ object	4	____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Clint L. Blackwell — 5 Dec. 1990

Signature of commenting or other official Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Education/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)
Other/vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation concrete
walls weatherboard
roof tin
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Lower Parker School is located in section 29, Current Township, Dent County in southeast Missouri. It is a few miles down the Current River from Montauk, southwest of Jadwin, and near the old town of Cedar Grove. The school takes its name from Parker Hollow, the long valley in which it is located, and it formerly had a sister school, Upper Parker.[1] A country road which turns left off County YY runs past Lower Parker near the juncture of Parker Branch, the Current River, and Brushy Hollow Road, another dirt road. The schoolhouse is about 700 feet north of the river, on high, flat ground. Currently, there are no other structures within sight of the Lower Parker district.

Located in the Courtois Hills, the Current River is surrounded by one of the most rugged landscapes in the Missouri Ozarks. The river region is composed of high ridges, cut through by springs and creeks which have created deep valleys and hollows such as that in which Lower Parker is located. Schafer Spring, which is called Parker Branch as it flows into the Current, is the significant spring in the area. Several smaller springs also contribute to the Current there. Parker Hollow is one of forty similar broad valleys in Dent and Shannon Counties near Lower Parker School. The native forest was a combination of oak and hickory hardwoods, interspersed with pine.[2]

Lower Parker is a medium-sized, white frame schoolhouse, about 500 square feet. It was constructed in 1905 or 1906, and came into use in 1906 or by 1907 at the latest. It is a basic rectangular, front-gabled block. There is one entrance, a double door on the

[1]Parker Hollow was named for an early pioneer. Lower Parker is south of Upper Parker School near the Current River. Upper Parker School is extant but has been converted into a private home.

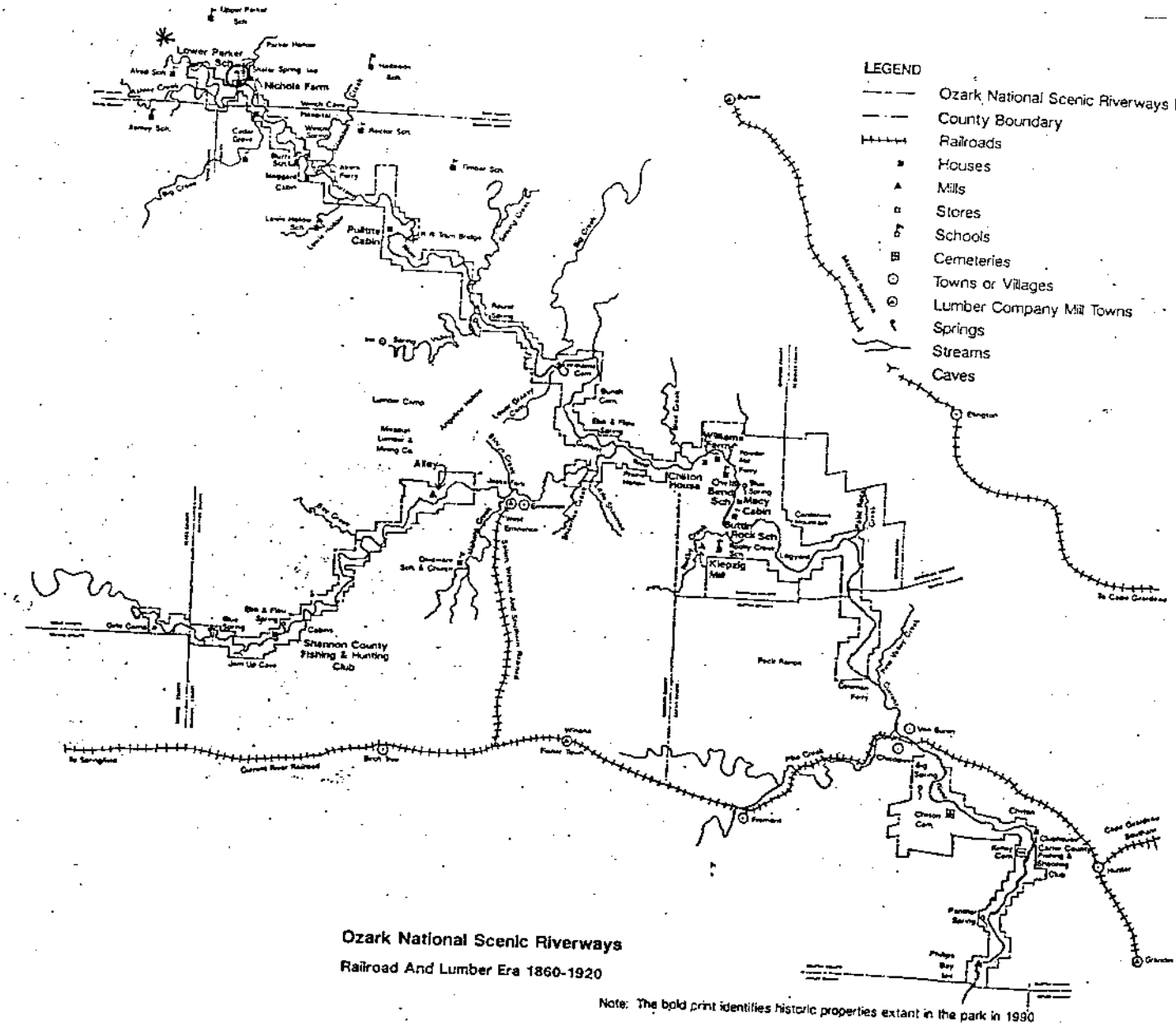
[2]Milton D. Rafferty, The Ozarks Land and Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 16.

[x] See continuation sheet

south end. The entrance is protected by a gabled overhang and porch, minutely off-center of the main gable. The foundation, the porch stairs, and the face of the porch are poured concrete. A layer of concrete mortar was used over the porch facing, probably in the 1920s. There are six windows, three each located on the east and west sides. The windows are four-over-four and double-hung. There is a red brick chimney supported by a frame adapted as a bookcase on the north wall, and two blackboards flank the bookcase. A pot-bellied stove formerly stood near the center of the room, and the pipe for it ran across the ceiling to the chimney. The chimney bricks probably were made locally, although they are milled. The exterior of Lower Parker is clapboard siding painted white. The interior walls are also white, although this minor change probably was made after the period of significance. The interior walls are composed of vertical boards of variable width. The floors, composed of milled boards, have never been painted but rather are oiled, and there lingers in the building the odor of this oil. The building was electrified under rural electrification during its period of significance, and it is wired for four ceiling light sockets. With the exceptions of electrification, the mortar facing on the porch, and routine maintenance, the school remains as it was built in 1906.

Across the country road from the schoolhouse and south toward the Current River are two privies, the girls' to the northwest, and the boys' toward the southeast. The girls' privy is a one-holer, with concrete foundation and shed frame construction. The structure is in poor condition with only the roof and siding on the east side still covering the frame. All that remains of the boys' privy is the concrete foundation and vault. The privies were built in the 1920s. Prior to that, Lower Parker had no toilet facilities.[3] Photographs from Lower Parker School from about two decades ago indicate that the privies had wooden privacy screens which were attached to each privy on either side of the doors. There is no evidence of these screens now. Despite their ruined condition, the privies are included as contributing sites because of their potential archeological value.

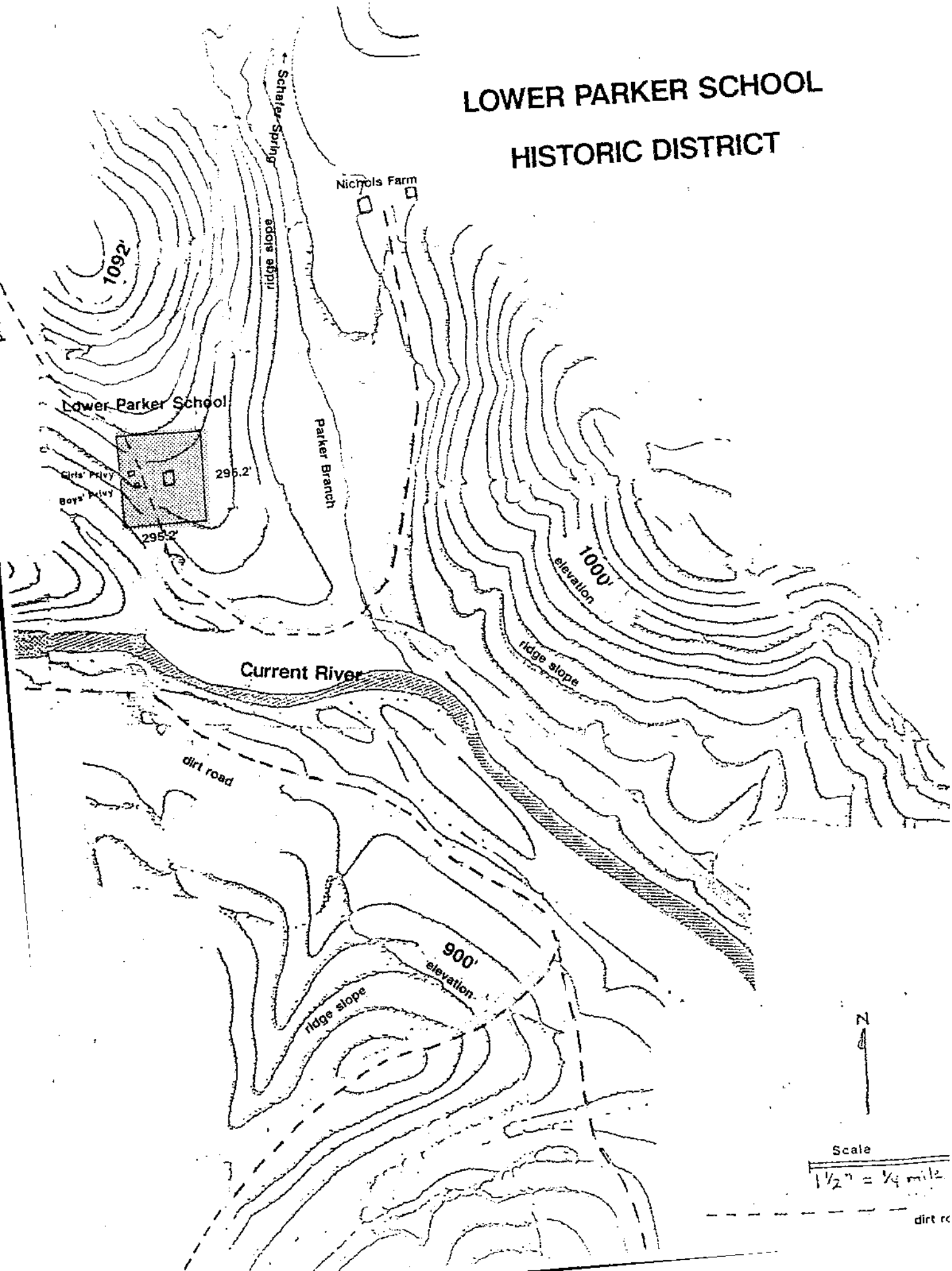
[3]Orin Davis Interview, by the author, June 16, 1990; tape at Midwest Region, National Park Service, Omaha, Nebraska.

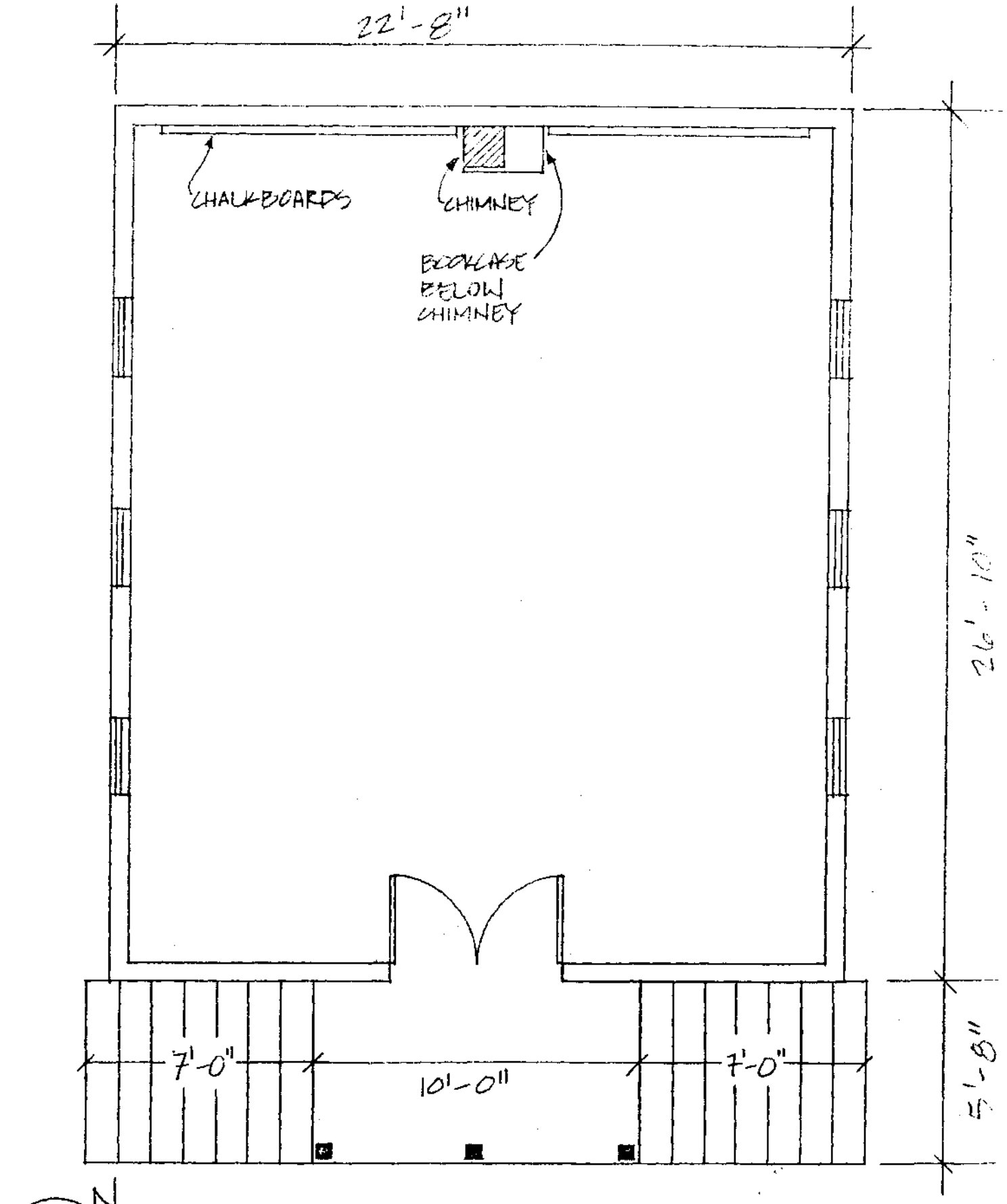


Ozark National Scenic Riverways

Railroad And Lumber Era 1860-1920

Note: The bold print identifies historic properties extant in the park in 1990


LOWER PARKER SCHOOL
HISTORIC DISTRICT
Schafer Spring
Nichols Farm
1092'
ridge slope
Lower Parker School
Girls' Privy
Boys' Privy
295.2'
295.2'
Parker Branch
1000'
elevation
ridge slope
Current River
dirt road
900'
elevation
ridge slope
N
Scale
1½" = ¼ mile
dirt rd



LOWER PARKER SCHOOL

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

0 1 5

2 10

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Education	1906-1956	1906
Social History	1906-1956	1906

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lower Parker School is a an excellent example of a rural Ozarks school which served a large student body. In architecture, development, and conduct, Lower Parker fits within the guidelines established for nomination under the multiple property listing "Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools."

The people of the Missouri Ozarks migrated from the southern Appalachian mountains. They were from the Kentucky and Tennessee highlands, and they were of a pioneering spirit to venture into the wild and sparsely populated territory. There were only 1.61 inhabitants per square mile in 1850 and 3.60 in 1860. Although the rest of Missouri was no longer considered frontier as of 1860, the Ozarks maintained its frontier status even after the Civil War, with only 3.76 inhabitants per square mile in 1870. The region remained frontier in character through this period as well as in definition.[1]

Through two acts, the Graduation Act of 1854 and the Homestead Act of 1862, the Ozarks gradually became more populated in the latter half of the nineteenth century. More important for settlement than these acts, however, was the entrance of the railroads and the lumber industry. From 1870 to 1920, these two industries purchased land, employed natives, and encouraged migration to the area. They also brought consumer goods and more cosmopolitan ideas, elements of which such as an appreciation of public education were incorporated into Ozark society.

It was during the railroad and lumbering era that the public education system was established in the Ozarks. The state of Missouri had provided nominal legislation for one school per township in the 1840s, but the legislation was inadequate to set

[1]Milton D. Rafferty, The Ozarks: Land and Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 77.

☒ See continuation sheet

up public schools among Southern-bred pioneers who believed in private control of education. Legislation passed in 1865 also failed to establish the public school system. Finally, in 1874 the laws were rewritten once more, and this time the legislation was comprehendible and sufficient to establish the state's primary education system. By 1900, there were over ten thousand rural, primarily one-room schools in Missouri, and the number continued to rise. Lower Parker School was a product of this legislation and the reforms which swept through education around the turn of the century.

As the twentieth century began, Missouri administrators became concerned about the efficiency of and education provided at the multitudes of rural schools in the state. In several pieces of legislation from 1911 to 1948, lawmakers urged one- and two-room schools to consolidate. The schools had become such an important part of the Ozarks culture by that time, though, that local residents were opposed to closing them. Dent County, for instance, did not consolidate its schools until 1955. In some rural areas of Missouri, the one-room schools did not close until mandated to do so by the state in 1972. The tenacity of rural schools through this half-century of pressure to close is a testament to the significance they had taken on within the communities which they served.

Lower Parker School is significant as a product of the Missouri Ozarks education system and as one of few extant examples of the thousands of rural schools in the Ozarks. The district of the original Lower Parker school was organized in 1874, following the Missouri education laws of the same year which in essence launched the Missouri education system. A local family donated to the district two acres in section 29, Current Township, and a log school was built. The location of the school is confirmed by three independent sources: a former resident of adjacent land who saw the deteriorating foundation, the deed giving the land to the school district, and the recollection of a former resident of the area who identified the location of the old "Schoolhouse Hollow" on a topographical map.[2] Around 1900 the log house ceased to be used, probably after the frame school called Upper Parker was built across the valley. As aforementioned, one rural school reform of the turn of the century was replacing log structures with new frame schoolhouses, and the Upper Parker School was probably considered superior to old Lower Parker. The distance to Upper Parker was too

[2]Estelle Johnson, Interview by Neil C. Mangum, June 2, 1978, 6-7, at Ozark National Scenic Riverways; Abstract book, Steelman Abstracts, Salem, MO; Virgil Schafer, interview by author, June 15, 1990, tape recordings, Midwest Region, National Park Service, Omaha, Nebraska.

much for many students to travel, however, and in 1905 or 1906 a new frame school in lower Parker Hollow was built.[3] The land on which the new school was built was owned by Patrick Reilly, but there is no evidence he ever gave title to the school district or that the district ever attempted to get title.[4]

The current Lower Parker was in use as a school continuously from about 1906 to 1955, when the district succumbed to the state consolidation efforts. It served southwestern Current Township, with an estimated half of its students crossing the Current River or Parker Branch (Schafer Spring).[5] During its tenure, the school reflected the changes in the surrounding community. Lower Parker probably began as a typical rural school with twenty to thirty students attending. The oldest accounts of the school came from Orin Davis and Vernon Schafer, cousins who attended Lower Parker in the late 1910s and 20s. By their recollection, the school population in the area multiplied when the lumber industry came

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[3]With so many districts in Dent County already, the construction of yet another rural school was not a major event. Because Dent County records are not available before 1926, the date was estimated from state records, which listed the number of districts in the county until around 1910, when it began listing actual districts for various reports. Dent County organized its seventy-third district in 1906, and one may safely assume that this was Lower Parker.

[4]Reilly is listed as O'Reilly in some sources. There is little information available regarding him, except that his widow and unmarried sons sold the land in 1916 to E. M. Smith and George Purcell. Reilly is recorded in a quit-claim deed as having been deceased prior to 1908, tenants may have been on the land when the school was built. Reilly may have been from the Louisiana-Mississippi area, because Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, is listed as his home and the home of his son, DuBang. DuBang may be a creole name. See Affidavit 5390, Record of Deeds, Book 63, 189.

[5]See the annual reports of teachers for District 73, Lower Parker, in the Dent County Clerk's Office, and Plat Map of Dent County, circa 1917, located at Steelman Abstracts, Salem, MO; see also Denver Cook, interview by author, June 15, 1990; Virgil Schafer, interview by author, June 15, 1990; Orin Davis, interview by author, June 16, 1990. All interviews are tape recordings, Midwest Region, National Park Service, unless otherwise noted. Subsequent references to these interviews will be referred to by the surname of the interview subject only.

through, bringing the potential number of students up to eighty.[6] School records for the late twenties confirm this, with almost seventy students enumerated and enrolled in some years. All under the charge of one young teacher, these students sat three to a desk and lined the walls on homemade benches. Some relief came for the overcrowded situation when a new school was built about three miles upstream at Montauk, and further relief came with the exit of the lumber industry and some farm families during the Depression. The school population returned to about thirty students. Through the 1940s and 50s Lower Parker School continued to have a declining student population, until around a dozen students were on the roll. By that time the school had served as the community center for education and social life for fifty years.[7]

Lower Parker School, like other Ozarks country schools, had such a long life for two primary reasons: geography and importance to community life. A small district school was needed in lower Parker Hollow, a dimple in a landscape of ridges, valleys, the Current River, its tributaries, and few graded roads. The two nearest schools were at Upper Parker and Cedar Grove, 3.25 and 1.6 miles away respectively across country.[8] By the limited roads available, both schools were several miles away.

Upper Parker was the more accessible of the two. To reach it, one took Brushy Hollow Road by the river or the ridge road built by the Schafer family in the nineteen teens.[9] Both were dirt roads, worn down to the chert gravel that underlies Ozarks topsoil. Both roads can be impassable in rainy weather, with Brushy Hollow flooding and the ridge road collapsing at the edges due to seepage of water from slightly higher elevations.

If children from lower Parker Hollow had had to attend the Cedar Grove School, many of them would have crossed the Parker Branch of Schafer Spring, and the majority of them would have

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[6]Virgil Schafer's family moved back to Parker Hollow during this period. His branch of the Schafer family had moved to a nearby mill town in hard times but returned to Parker Hollow when employment opportunities became available there. Schafer Interview.

[7]See the annual teachers' reports in the Dent County Clerk's Office from 1926 to 1956.

[8]Cedar Grove was known historically as either Cedar Grove or Cedargrove. Cedar Grove is used throughout to eliminate confusion, although the variant is equally correct.

[9]Schafer Interview.

crossed the Current River. The cross-country distance of 1.6 miles between Lower Parker and Cedar Grove School required fording the river three times. There was no direct road connecting the schools.

Reaching Lower Parker School from homes within the district was easier than reaching the other schools in the area, but it was not without its own obstacles. For some students to reach Lower Parker, parents had to construct "foot-logs" in the Current and the spring branches to help their children get across the water. Foot-logs were made by driving flat-top posts into the water. Then, logs hewn on both sides were laid across the posts. Children crossed the river and branches on these logs. More elaborate foot-logs had railings tacked up on one or both sides of the logs. None of the structures were very sturdy, and they frequently washed away in heavy rainstorms or spring floods. Because of this, teachers were instructed to let students out early if dark rain clouds threatened, and some days students could not get to school because of high water. Students got rain days out of school much as students in other regions of the country get "snow days" today.[10] The presence of the rivers and the rough terrain made it a hardship for children to reach schools further away than Lower Parker, already a two-mile or more walk in both directions for some students.

Lower Parker School also was important because it served as the only public educational and social center for the surrounding farms. Lower Parker offered the equivalent of eight grades of education, although students rarely went straight through. Children started school as young as four, and they finished eighth grade--or at least ended their formal schooling--as old as sixteen, eighteen or even twenty. The average age of students throughout the history of Lower Parker was nine or ten.[11]

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[10]Orin Davis, who did not have to cross any water and lived close to school, more often got out for "skunk days" after he had run-ins with the unpleasantly scented animals. See Davis Interview.

[11]Teachers' annual reports for Lower Parker, available from 1926 to 1956 and stored in the Dent County Clerk's Office, give the age and grade level of each student, as well as any promotions. The average student age each year as computed from these records and estimated from former student accounts consistently remained about nine or ten. There was an observable trend toward a younger average age, but the change was so gradual that the average age only dropped from a little more than ten to about nine over the whole period of existence of the school. There was less variation of ages in later years, however, from about six to twelve rather

Lower Parker was typical of boom schools which expanded to accommodate children of people associated with new industry in an area. While Lower Parker was never a small school, the opening of a new mill in the area gave a significant boost to the number of students.[12] Throughout the 1920s, the potential number of Lower Parker students was almost eighty, and the average daily attendance at the school was over fifty. All of the students crowded into Lower Parker's single room of five hundred square feet. When most of the enrolled students went to school, smaller children sat three to a seat, and other students filled overflow benches along the side walls. One teacher was in charge of the entire school, although she probably used more advanced students to assist with younger students. The teachers during this era were Ethyl Haverstick, Opal Wrest, and Wilma Shelton. As recalled by one former student, an "old" teacher during this era at Lower Parker would have been about twenty-five, and many were ten years younger.[13]

The daily schedule in a one-room school the size of Lower Parker was composed of a series of brief recitations, one "class" replacing another every ten minutes or so. The state-recommended schedule in such a school included alternating grades; that is, two grades of students were combined into one class for non-cumulative studies. This meant that a student might receive eighth-grade social studies training before seventh grade training in the same subject. The state allowed no alternation for first and second grade, alternation of most courses except mathematics for third through sixth grade (in two-year segments) and alternation of all seventh and eighth grade topics. Students do not remember the system as being difficult to deal with, and it allowed classes to be twenty minutes instead of ten. A national education expert also recommended the system because it had the potential to increase class sizes and therefore promote healthy competition in smaller schools; Lower Parker, however, did not need larger classes.[14]

At Lower Parker, students learned the "three R's: reading,

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than four to twenty. See also Davis Interview.

[12]See Schafer Interview.

[13] ook Interview; Schafer Interview; Davis Interview; Teachers' Annual Reports, Dent County. The majority of teachers at Lower Parker were women; the author has chosen to use the feminine pronoun throughout when referring to teachers at the school.

[14]Edith A. Lathrop, "The Organization of a One-Teacher School," Rural School Leaflet No. 10 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, February, 1923), 5.

'riting, and 'rithmetic," but they also studied science and literature. Perhaps the most practical class that the students of Lower Parker participated in was agricultural training. Students learned everything from the names of various corn hybrids to how to estimate the weight of a stack of hay. They used agriculture-related experiments in science, such as gauging the starch content of different corns, and their word questions in math were tied to agriculture as well. Students literally took "field trips" to see local agriculture in action. In lieu of a final exam, they could form a club for stock-raising or crop-growing, or for sewing and dairying. Their course in agriculture was designed to make better farmers of them, the assumption in rural schools such as Lower Parker being that the students would become farmers some day. Girls were full participants in the programs, just as their mothers sometimes plowed the fields and tended the crops.[15]

One class fondly remembered by students was spelling, which was held daily in the form of a spelling match. Every afternoon, students tried to spell their way to the head of the class. Whoever was at the head by Friday received a pencil or similar reward from the teacher. The student would receive additional praise at home for his or her spelling abilities and for saving the family the expense of purchasing a pencil.[16] The students enjoyed the healthy competition and the break from the class routine of recitations. The state required three daily breaks for students: two fifteen to twenty minute breaks in the morning and afternoon, and a one-hour break at noon for lunch. Students took their breaks outside, unless the weather was unusually inclement. Their lunches were cold biscuits or cornbread, with maybe jam or butter or a little meat from dinner the night before. In some families, all of the children from a family used one lunch pail, and an older sibling was responsible for seeing that everyone in the family got their share.[17] During the breaks the children's playground was anywhere that they could get to and back from before classes resumed. They played along the riverbanks and Parker Branch, and they ran through the ridges and valleys. A farmer's barn might

[15]E.E. Windes, "Types and Courses of Study in Agriculture," Rural School Leaflet No. 26 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, August, 1924), 13-19. See also Schafer Interview; Cook Interview.

[16]Schafer Interview.

[17]Davis Interview.

become a hiding place during a round of "Go Sheepy Go."[18] Or perhaps the whole school might join in a game of "Rounders," an Ozark school version of baseball without teams and which was played with a homemade ball. Teachers were not required to supervise the breaks, although they often joined in the fun. After all, some of them were the same age as their students.

Students who attended Lower Parker were from roughly two dozen interrelated families for a large part of its history, with the Schafers supplying the most students of any single family over the fifty-year period. In addition, because young people had little opportunity for contact with people outside the hollow, most of the families there were related by marriage or blood in some distant way to every other family in the hollow.[19] For example, the list of enrolled students for 1926-27 included at least fourteen children who were siblings or first cousins, all descended from the same Schafer grandparents. By surname there were twelve Schafers, one Kirtman child, two Nichols, seven Derryberrys, two Pruits, four Freezes, two Rasors, two Hancocks, and two Davis children that year. Six years later, in 1932-33 when the Schafers were finishing one generation and beginning another, the family only had six students attending plus two Davis children whose mother was a Schafer. That same year, there were five Pruits, five Leonards, three Derryberrys, three Nichols, two each of Rasors, Hoodenpyles, Hancocks, and Kells (with a Nichols mother), and one Asher (a Derryberry grandchild). Almost none of these children were the same ones present six years previously; they were siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, and sons and daughters of former students. Other families which supplied Lower Parker students through the years were the Lays, Mauks, McDonalds (with a Schafer mother), Parkers, Halbrooks, Bedwells, Youngs, Vances, Rollins, Cooks, Hodges, Blevins, and Bowers. The Nichols had students in Lower Parker both the first year and the last year it was in operation. George Roy Nichols sat at a desk in Lower Parker where father and grandfather had sat before him; overhead were new electric lights, but beneath his feet were the same oiled wood

[18]Mabel Cooper, 3-R's in the Ozarks (Eminence: Chilton Pioneer Printing, 1980), 108. Another popular Ozarks game was "Wolf Over the Ridge," which is mentioned in several accounts of Ozarks education and recess.

[19]Jacob Schafer built a mill at the headwaters of Parker Branch (Schafer Spring) sometime before the turn of the century. The mill was used as a gristmill, a saw and shingle mill, a carding machine, and a cane press. Schafer and his wife had six children, including three daughters who married a Davis, a McDonald, and a Berry (possibly Derryberry), and dozens of grandchildren.

floors which they had traversed.[20] Lower Parker, like other Ozarks rural schools which served cores of families over several generations, was the source of education for those families.

Lower Parker School was the primary source of organized entertainment as well as education for Parker Hollow. In an area which did not have electricity until Rural Electrification came, having no televisions, poor radio reception, and with the closest movie theater more than twenty miles away over country roads, the social life for the community revolved around Lower Parker. When the school year began in late summer, local girls and their mothers would organize a pie supper. Families came from other school districts for miles around for the good food and fellowship which the evening provided. During the supper, pies made by the local girls and women were auctioned off. Young men tried to buy the pies that their sweethearts had made, and they were willing to pay exorbitant rates to purchase the pies and the privilege of eating it with its baker. The good-natured competition that grew out of the "prettiest girl" contests at the pie suppers could be carried on for years between the young ladies of the community, and their beaus gallantly bid up the prices of their pies in support of them. The money raised from the event was used for school supplies, such as library books and the award pencils.

Another big event at Lower Parker was the Christmas program, an afternoon event attended by all of the students and their families. In the school, a community Christmas tree glowed with candles. Children put on a pageant, and they would recite poems such as "The Night Before Christmas."[21] Families travelled to the yearly event by wagon, taking their time and enjoying the long afternoon together with their neighbors.

The closing picnic was another important event at Lower Parker. Families came together for a day of games, food, and recitations and other demonstrations of what the children had learned through the year. This picnic was another opportunity for a pageant. One student at Lower Parker remembered fondly a pageant in which he was an Indian. Although he could not recall the subject matter of the play, he clearly remembered his costume, which included a headdress and war paint. He suggested that the pageants at Lower Parker were the sphere of girls, but that the boys would be in one if they could have exciting parts such as

[20]The enrollment lists for Lower Parker are available in the teachers' annual reports for District #73 in the County Clerk's Office in the Dent County Courthouse from 1926-1956. See also Estelle Johnson Interview.

[21]Cook Interview.

Indians.[22]

The primary evening event at Lower Parker was singing school, which was held for two weeks at a time about twice a year. Families travelled by wagon or their own foot-power from Montauk, Cedar Grove, Upper Parker, and even farther away to participate in the "country choir" for a couple of weeks. Virgil Schafer recalled walking to the school for singing school the year that two of his neighbors got portable gasoline latterns, which were brighter than any human-produced light that he had seen before. Schafer remembered seeing the light of their lamps coming up from the Current River, illuminating the path almost as bright as day and far outshining the twisted pine torches that other families carried. That evening, the new lamps were the focus of the singing school rather than the country choir songs.

At unspecified times of the year, Lower Parker also housed worship services and dances. Lower Parker was the only local building in which the surrounding community could draw together, and it was the site of the major social events of the neighborhood. In a community with no modern entertainments, the spelling and ciphering matches, picnics and pageants with Indians, evening singing school, and even the "Holy Roller" worship services at Lower Parker filled the social calendar of Parker Hollow residents.[23] Lower Parker was an important part of life in Parker Hollow for fifty years. Like other Ozarks rural schools and rural schools across the country, Lower Parker was the beginning and ending of education and formal social life and was even a religous center for the hollow community. A community school was a necessity for education in Parker Hollow, but the families there made it an essential part of all aspects of their lives over time.

[22]Cook Interview; Schafer Interview.

[23]Davis Interview.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

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 Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:
Ozark National Scenic Riverways

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	621 750	4144 3500
B	15	621 840	4144 3500
C	15	621 840	4144 2500
D	15	621 750	4144 2500

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Lower Parker School District is composed of 2 acres in the SW¼ of the SW¼ of Section 29 of Township 32 N of Range 6 W; Dent County, Missouri.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

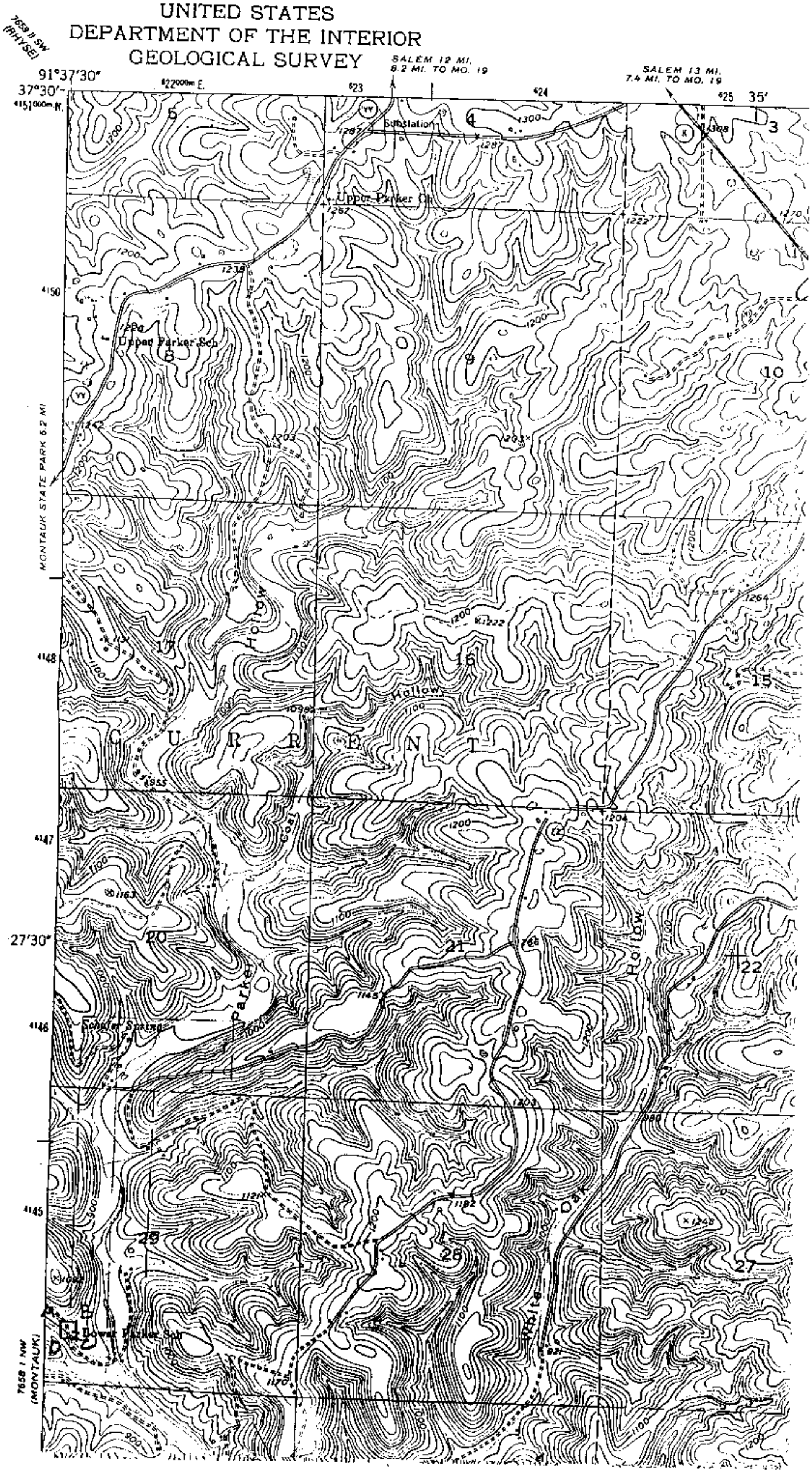
Ozarks rural schoolhouse yards typically were 2 acres. While a deed was never given for Lower Parker School, one may safely assume that the schoolyard was about 2 acres, as had been the previous Lower Parker schoolyard. The district needs to include the two privy sites, as well as include enough land to give a sense of the children's playground.

☐ See continuation sheet

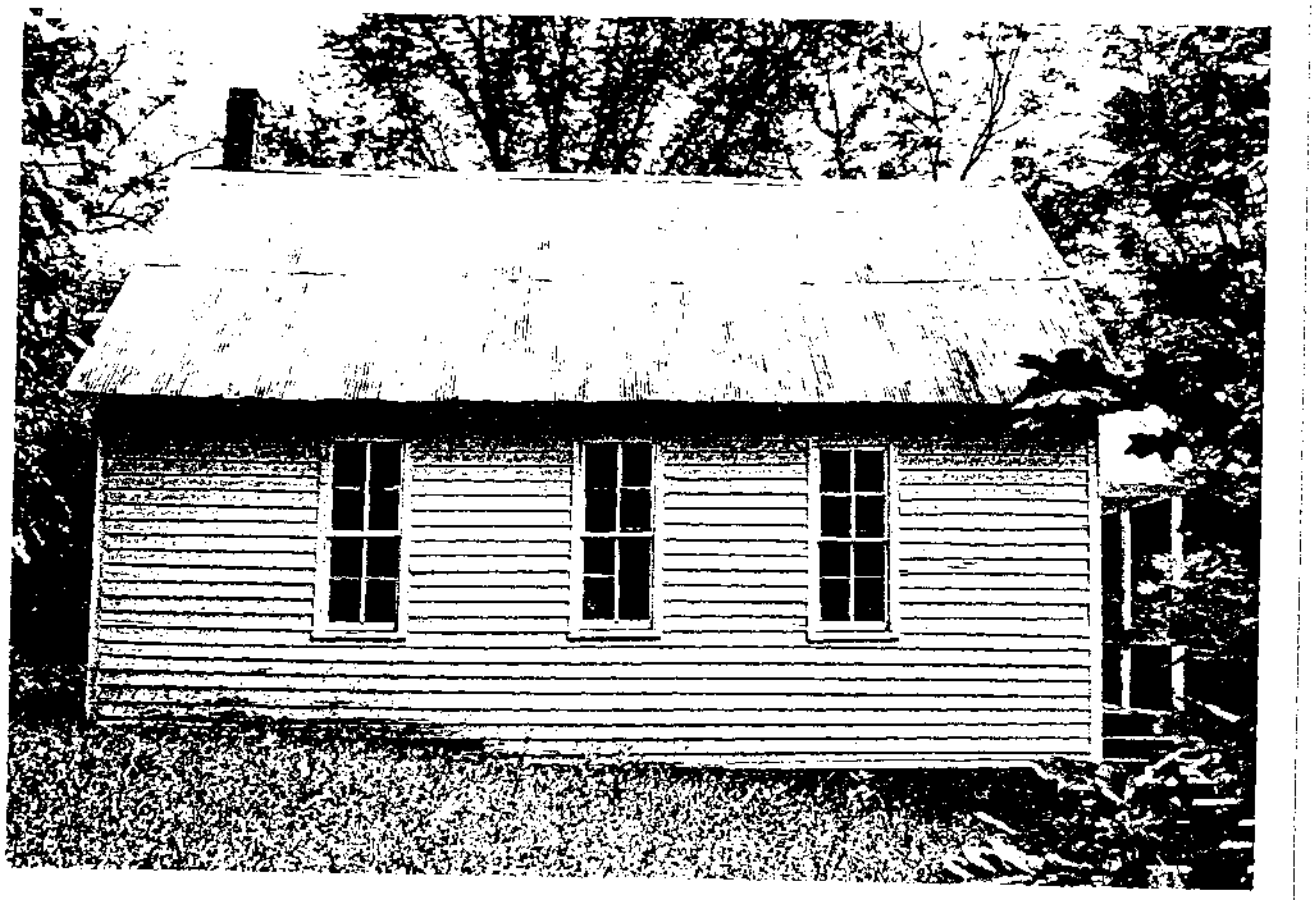
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimberley Scott Little / Historian
organization Midwest Region, National Park Service date August 17, 1990
street & number 1709 Jackson St. telephone 402-221-3426
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68102

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



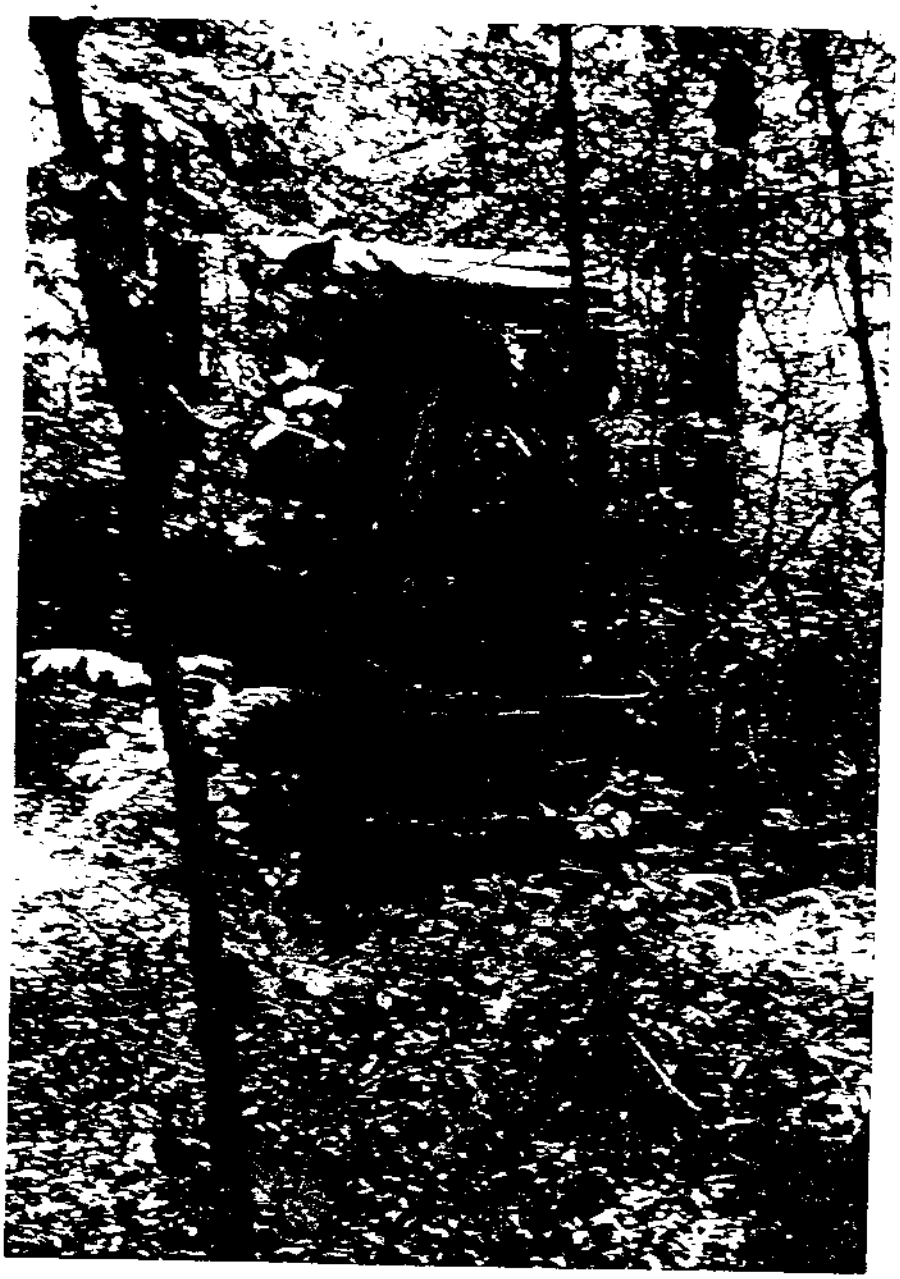
Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverway
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service
Front end of school, facing northwest



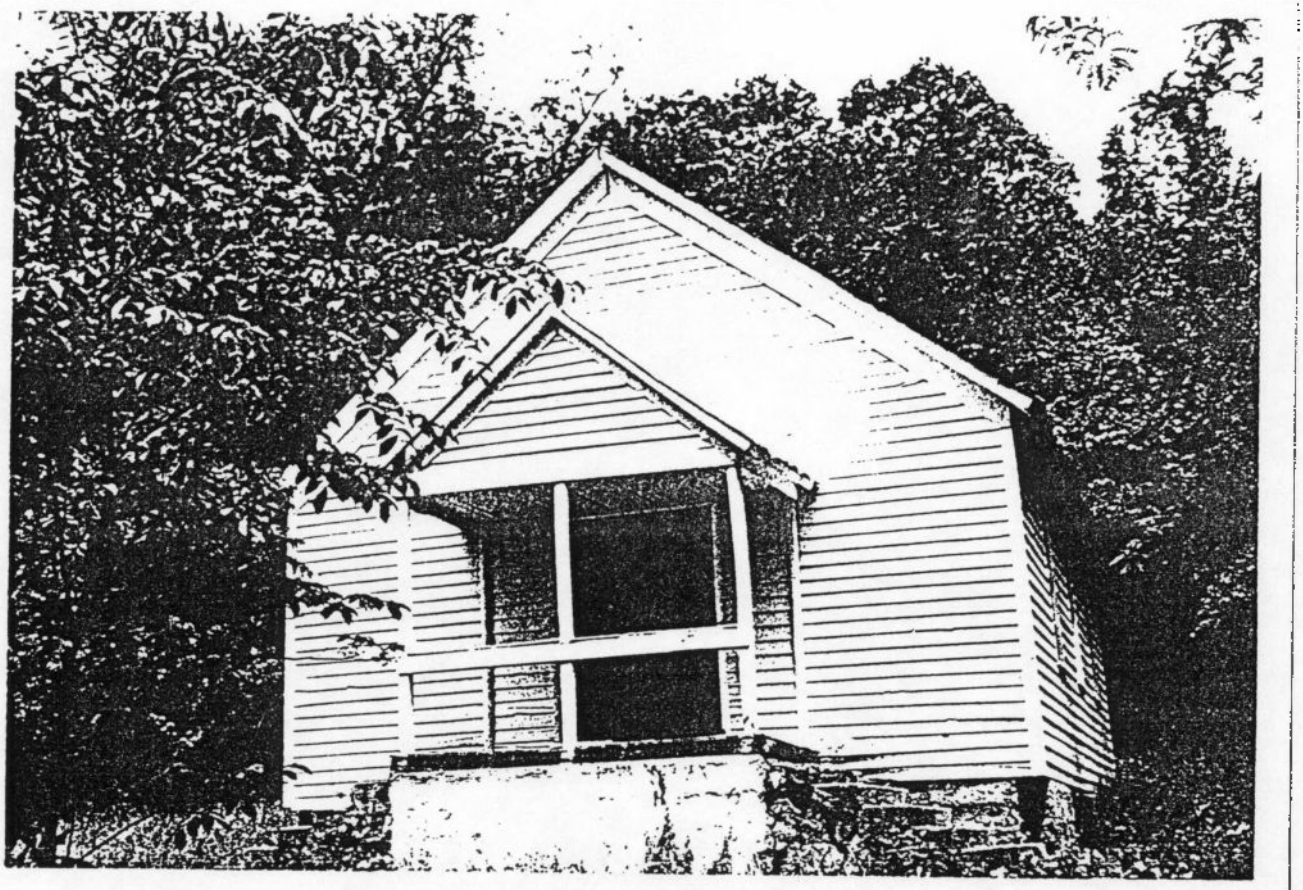
Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service
West side of school, facing east northeast

Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service
Interior of school, facing west side

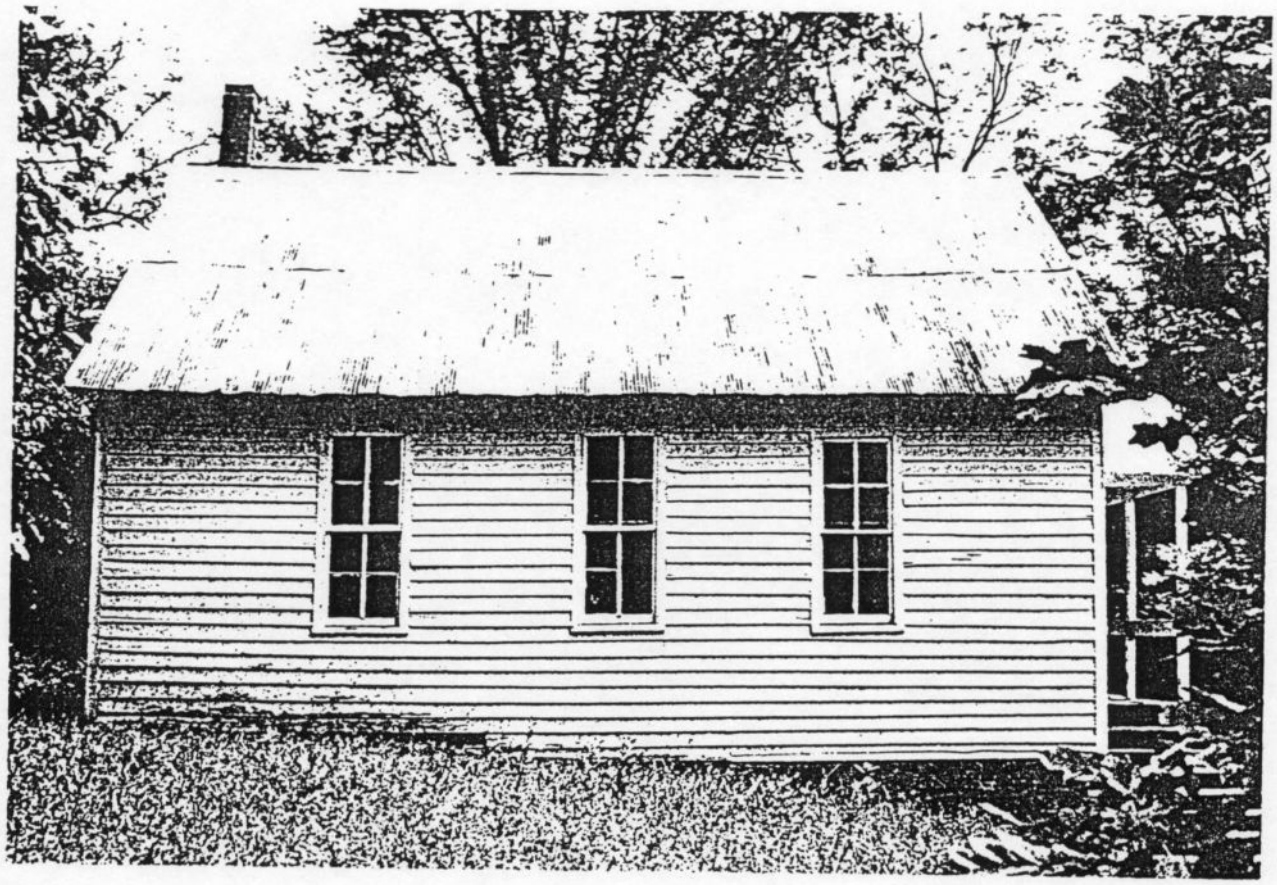
Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Culutural Resources Management, National Park Service
Steps and foundation front porch of school



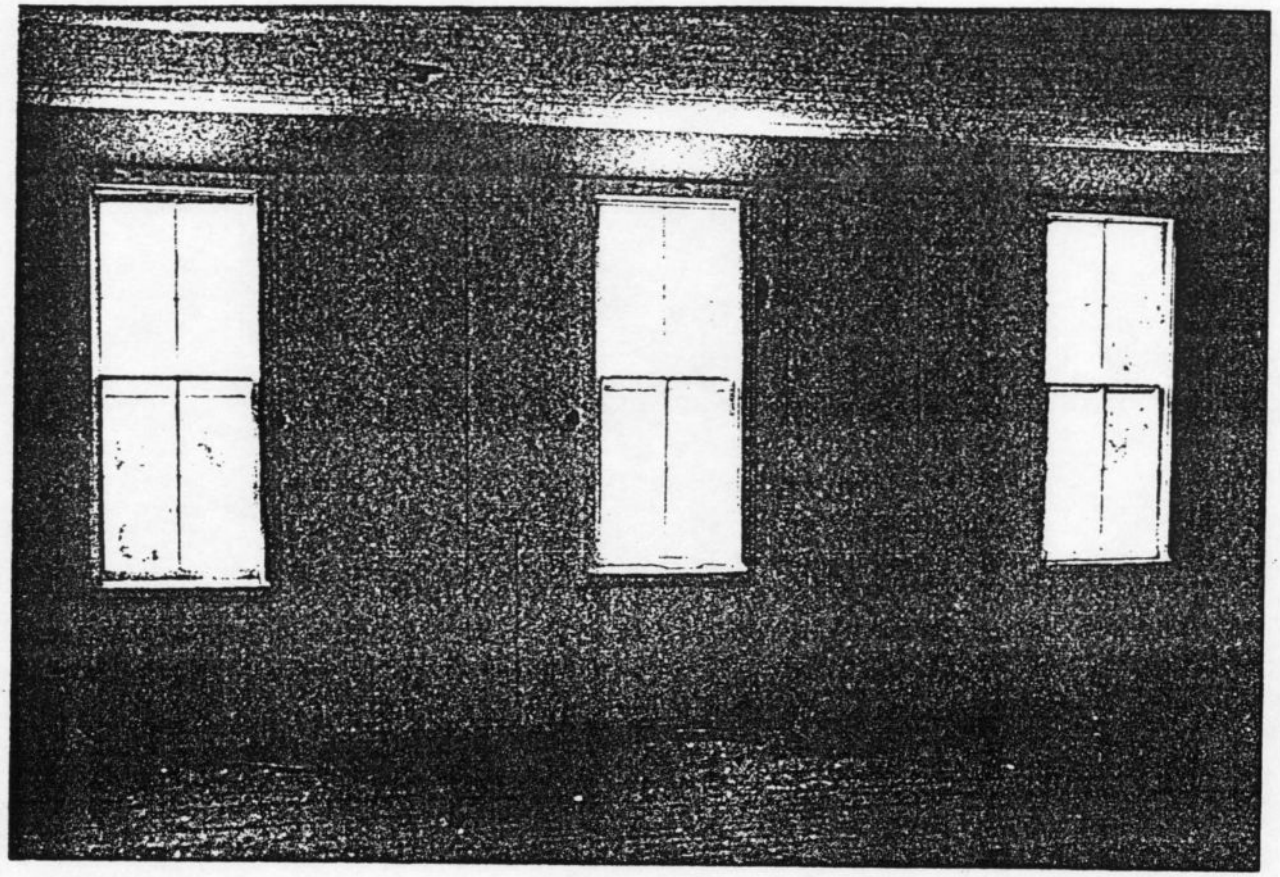
Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Girls privy, facing south



Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverway
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service
Front end of school, facing northwest



Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service
West side of school, facing east northeast.



Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
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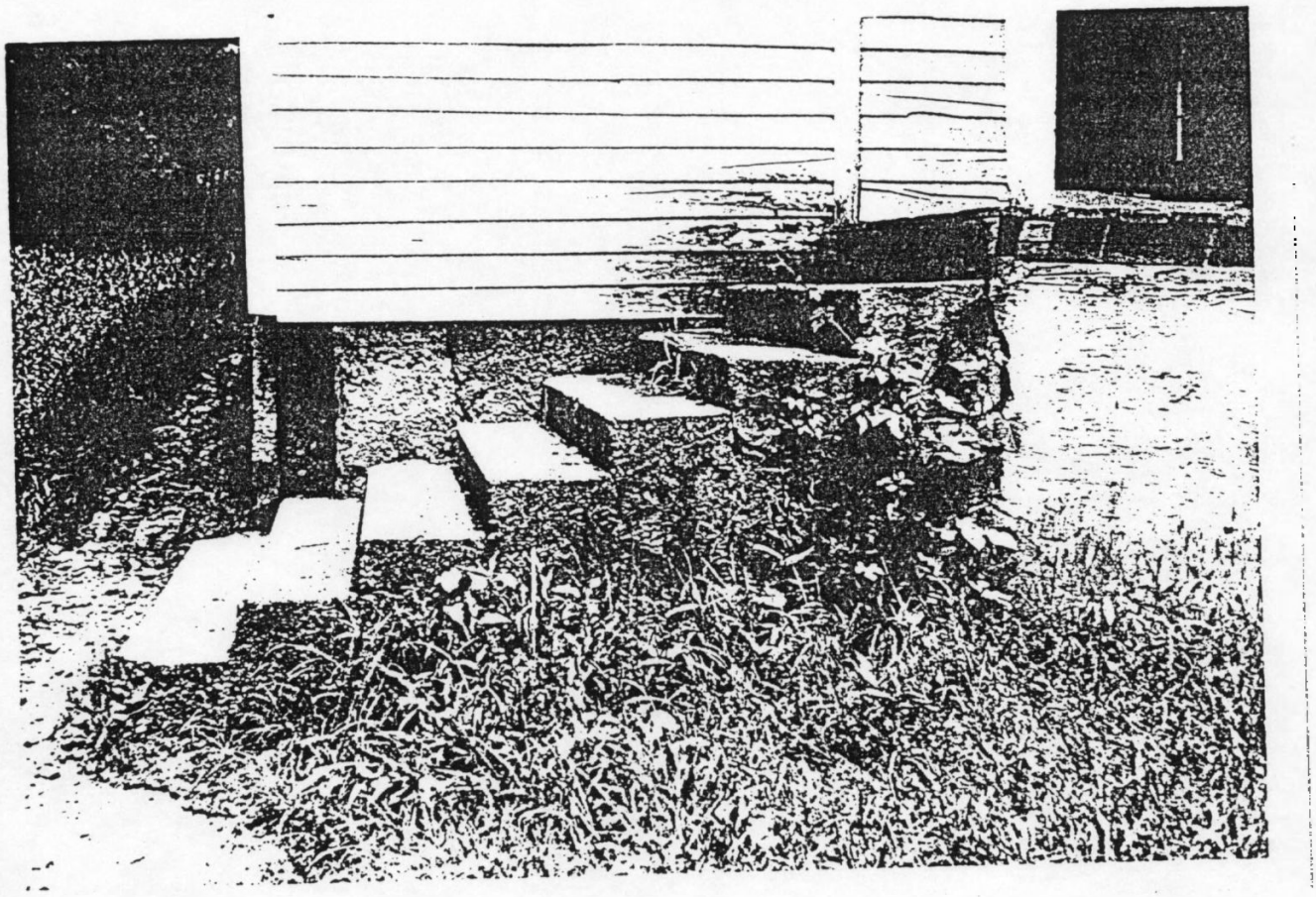
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service
Interior of school, facing west side



Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
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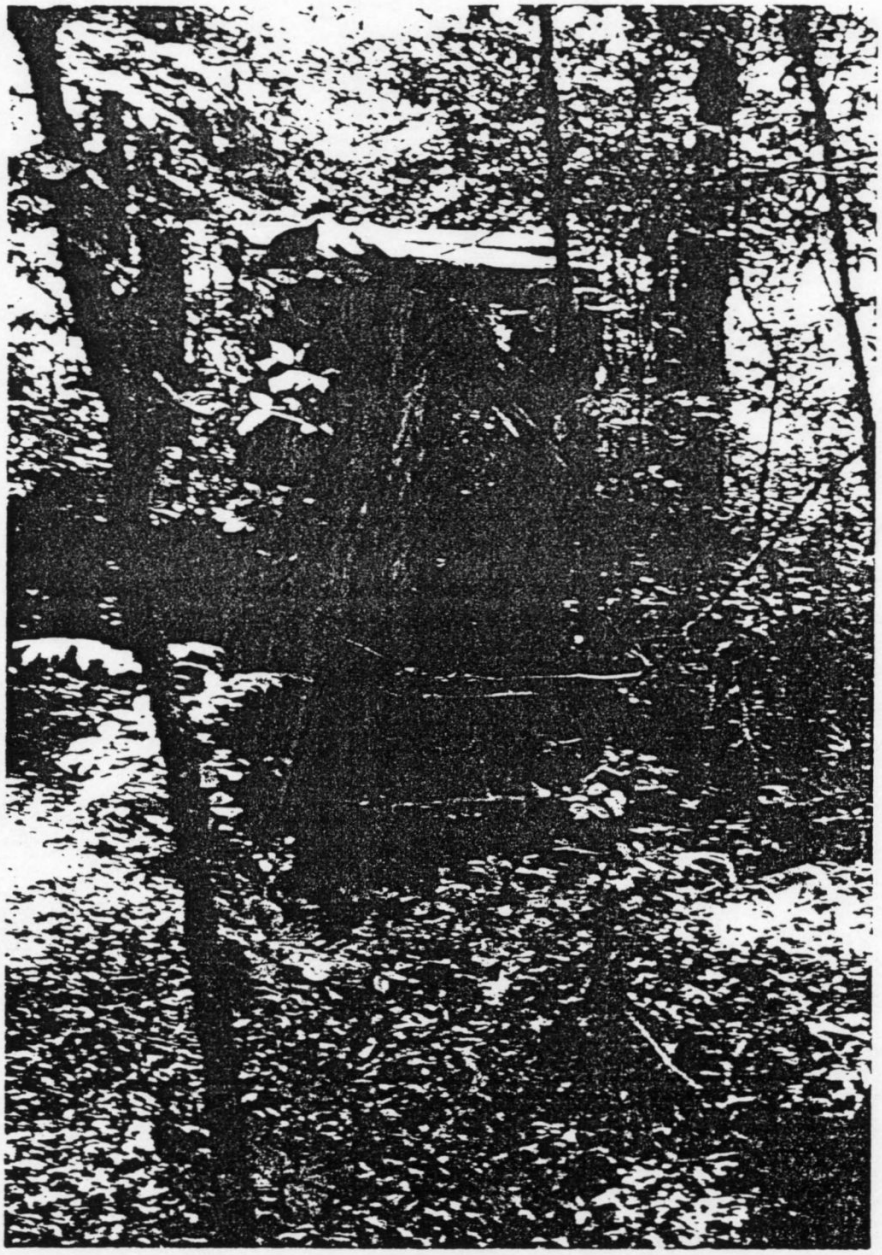
June 5, 1990
Midwest Region, Culutural Resources Management, National Park Service
Steps and foundation front porch of school



Lower Parker School, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Dent County, Missouri
Donald L. Stevens, Jr.
June 5, 1990
Girls privy, facing south

NPS Form 10-900-b
(Jan 1987)

OMB No 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Rural Public Education and Society in the Missouri Ozarks, 1874-1960

C. Geographical Data

The Missouri Ozarks have been determined to be a triangular area, running roughly from Jefferson City, Missouri, to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to the southwest corner of the state.

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register — Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Ozarks rural schools are significant because of their long-term importance as educational and social centers for the isolated communities that they served. They also are an important part of the development of education in the United States, with every region in the nation and every time period in our history having had rural schools similar to the Ozarks schools. At the beginning of World War I in 1914, half of American children were being educated in the country's more than two hundred thousand rural, one-room schools, and in the Ozarks and elsewhere still more were under construction.[1] Coming relatively late in the country's educational development, the Ozarks schools were the scenes of educational progress as well as remnants of the national past, taking on in their single rooms programs such as vocational training and hot lunches. The ability of these schools to adapt to modernity and survive in a world that was increasingly unsuited for them reveals how important they were to the people who maintained them. To some Ozarkians, the schools were the beginning and end of education, they were the social centers where spouses met, and they were the churches where they married. They represented the strong hand with which parents guided their children's education and the independence of people who rarely left their own backyards. With each year, fewer and fewer of these once ubiquitous rural schools stand, and with the demolition or deterioration of each building the visible reminders of how Ozark children and children across the America were educated for three centuries fades.

The Development of Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools

The educational system of Missouri has been an American phenomenon, sometimes mirroring and sometimes mentoring the national education movements. It developed as a frontier system with Southern roots, but it was constantly affected in the latter half of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries by Ozarks traditional culture and reforms from urban schools. The interaction of forces from the local people and the nation have shaped its development and curriculum. The history of Missouri Ozarks rural schools is one of folk tradition clashing with state and federal reform movements that were constantly trying to change the educational system. Rural schools developed slowly in the Ozarks, but once they were in place the need for them and their importance to local society sustained them through a half-century of pressure from government officials for them to close.

The United States has not always had public education, and different regions have developed their educational systems according to their requirements of population density, geography, and philosophies of schooling. Rural one-room, one-teacher schools, however, were the first buildings constructed specifically for education in all regions of the country. In the northeastern states by the antebellum era, education was accepted as a public concern. Some areas of the Northeast, such as Puritan New England and Quaker Pennsylvania, had public schools in colonial times. Other states in the region began their public systems after the American Revolution as citizens linked education for the masses with protection of democracy. By 1860, most northeastern towns and cities had their own public schools. These were not only some of America's earliest schools; they also were the first schools to

[1] Andrew Gulliford, America's Country Schools (Washington: The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1984), 35.

[x] See continuation sheet

be modified under educational reform.[2]

The first American schools--and most American schools into the early twentieth century--were "ungraded"; that is, students of all grade levels worked together in one room for the most part at their own paces.[3] Around 1840, educator Henry Barnard and other northeastern reformers called for students to be separated according to age and educational advancement. For the next twenty years, Barnard agitated for graded schools. Barnard argued that students would learn more and teachers would be able to teach better if students were assigned grade levels--first, second, third, etc., as our education system operates today. Gradually, educators and administrators made this the system in northeastern urban schools, where there were enough students to separate them into classes according to grades with teachers specializing in certain areas or grades.[4]

Despite this reform in northeastern urban areas, ungraded schools remained the rule and were the primary source of formal education in rural United States throughout the first and second halves of the nineteenth century. Wherever families were sparsely settled, there one could find some form of the one- or two-room school. Even before settlers established churches, country schoolhouses appeared across the frontier. Constructed from whatever was most readily available locally, such as sod or logs, and taught by local young men and women, these schools produced a home-grown crop of students. Teachers were not difficult to come by; all one needed to teach was to be able to read, write, and cipher better than one's students. Also useful was a firm hand because frontier schools were notorious for challenging the disciplinary skills of young teachers. Some schools met for just one month a year, while others met for as many as four months. Students could hope to reap the three R's--reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic--when they were not needed at home to reap the crops.[5] One the frontier, neighborhood families controlled schools because the schools frequently preceded organization of municipal and county governments. If parents wanted their children to learn, they had to arrange for their education. The school board, usually with three directors, hired the teacher, and he or she frequently boarded around with local families as part of the salary.

Southern schools, particularly the transappalachian ones, were more similar to frontier schools than to northeastern urban schools. Even in settled areas of the South, the population was widely dispersed. Large centralized schools were not practical. In addition, Southerners believed

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[2] Ibid, 36-40.

[3] The term "ungraded" refers to a lack of classification according to advancement and age (first grade, second grade, etc.).

[4] David B. Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 44-46.

[5] Ibid, 15-21, passim; Gulliford, 35-76.

that education was the responsibility of children's parents, and they opposed public schools. Local communities set up subscription schools, for which students paid a fee to attend. The subscription fee was used for the teacher's salary and to finance construction of a schoolhouse. The Southern system was similar to the frontier system, although the rationale behind local control was different. On the frontier, schools preceded local government in the territories, so parents had to take the initiative in providing education; in the South, parents chose private control over public schools.[6]

The first schools in Missouri--a frontier state on the border between North and South--were subscription schools established in the antebellum period. A large portion of Missourians at the time were transplanted Southerners who believed that parents should be responsible for their children's educations. In the Southern tradition, parents set up their own subscription schools with their neighbors. The state began limited funding of at least one public school per township in 1846, but residents did not take advantage of these free schools. Many of them associated a degree of shame with public education, and they were hesitant to relinquish educational control over their offspring. In addition, settlement was too scattered for most children to reach these schools even if they had been established.

The Ozarks region, for instance, had begun to be settled by squatters around 1820, but it was decades later before extensive settlement was underway.[7] Because of the lack of interest and scattering of families, by the time of the Civil War there was still almost no public education system in Missouri. The majority of schools were solitary educational institutions in districts governed by a three-director board of local parents. In the Ozarks particularly, even with both public and subscription schools counted, there were few opportunities fpr formal education at all before the Civil War, and generally the people considered such formal training to be of little significance.[8]

The Civil War severely arrested development in the Ozarks. Both federal and Confederate troops were stationed in the region, and they fed their armies from the local fields and tables. Ozarkians were caught in a no-win situation, because they were forced to abet both sides, and they suffered the

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[6] James Lee Murphy, A History of the Southeastern Ozark Region of Missouri (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1982), 81-82.

[7] Ibid, 30-53.

[8] Donald L. Stevens, Jr., The Current and Jacks' Fork Riverways: A Homeland and a Hinterland, (Historic Resource Study of Ozark National Scenic Riverways, draft ms. at Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, Department of the Interior), 144. See also Christabel Lacy and Bob White, "Rural Schools and Communities in Cape Girardeau County" (Cape Girardeau: The Center for Regional History and Cultural Heritage, Southeast Missouri State University, 1985).

consequences from both sides. In the aftermath of the war, the countryside lay in ruins and the population was decimated. A number of small towns and government centers , such as Eminence, the seat of Shannon County, had been destroyed. Eminence was relocated and rebuilt in a few years. More remote areas which had recently been wilderness went back to the natural state, and returning settlers and new migrants had to begin the pioneer process again.[9]

Following the Civil War, the State Superintendent of Schools rewrote the Missouri education laws in an attempt to bring public schools to all Missouri children. The legislation was confusing, however, and the Ozarks were in too much disarray to implement the programs even if they had been comprehendible. Proponents of public education had to wait nine more years, until 1874, for laws which gave serious support to Missouri education. The 1874 laws gave control of individual schools to the three-director districts which had traditionally governed them. Governance by townships was abolished, and county superintendents were given nominal power over all of the schools in the county.[10] Under these laws and with the additional effects of the lumber industry entrance, the number of rural, primarily one-room schools in the state swelled to more than ten thousand by the turn of the century.[11]

By the 1870s, most of the Ozarks were still heavily wooded. As the forests of Pennsylvania and the Old Northwest were depleted, logging magnates turned to the Ozark pines for their next lumber venture. For a period of about fifty years, the logging companies moved from township to township, exploiting the timberland and bringing to the Ozark people jobs and to many their first major cash crop, lumber. The logging companies left as soon as they had appropriated the pines, and then smaller companies moved in and cut the hardwoods. The population boomed around the lumber companies, and a diverse group of migrants moved into the Ozarks in search of employment. The increased population and the ideas which they brought regarding education contributed to the growth of the number of Ozarks students enrolled in school.[12]

The first Missouri Superintendent of Education elected under the new laws of 1874 and in office during the rapid expansion of the educational system was R.D. Shannon. Shannon put into action the reformist ideas that earlier superintendents had been unable to do. He called for reforms that would have increased the requirements for teachers, extended the school term

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[9] Ibid, 79-98; Murphy, 92-112; Milton D. Rafferty, The Ozarks, Land and Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 84-91.

[10] Robert S. Townsend, ed. Education in Missouri: An Informal History (Jefferson City: Public Information Section, Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1976), p. 27.

[11] By 1900, there were 10,499 three-director schools in Missouri. See Townsend, 29.

[12] Stevens, 99-128.

from four to six months, and given more power over the districts to the county superintendents.[13] He achieved his reforms slowly, with the six-month term not being passed until 1887. At the same time, the starting date for school was changed from April 1 to July 1 to accommodate the longer term.[14]

The reformist urge from state officials continued through the rest of the nineteenth century, most notably under the aegis of John R. Kirk, elected State Superintendent in 1894. By the 1890s, a rural reform movement was beginning to sweep the nation. The movement was both popular and eclectic, and its effects were felt in Missouri. Kirk began his term with a recommendation for complete redesign for the rural schools. Kirk spared few details, specifying even the placement of the blackboard, stove, and windows. He called schools following his designs "Schools that breath." His suggestions for rebuilding schools were in line with the current reformist trend to replace log structures with frame ones.[15] Kirk also suggested in his final report that small districts consolidate. His solution for the resultant transportation problem was that students be conveyed using covered wagons.[16] Unlike some other Missouri administrators before and after him, Kirk did not have a full understanding of the problem that the roads, river, and mountains presented in the Ozarks.

Kirk had a better sense of the national scene, however, for it was during his tenure that numerous reports came out from organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA) recommending reforms along the lines with what Kirk proposed. The NEA and similar groups proposed consolidation of rural school districts in reports such as "Committee of Twelve Report" on rural education. At the same time in some local areas, Populist reformers incorporated improved education in their platform.[17] President Theodore Roosevelt made education a major focus of his National Commission on Country Life in 1908, and shortly thereafter the federal government began issuing regular bulletins for rural school teachers and administrators.[18]

One Missourian with an understanding of the problems the Ozarks posed

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[13] Arthur Eugene Lee, "Public Education in Post-Bellum Missouri," Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 1976, 72-73.

[14] Townsend, 28.

[15] Lee, 120.

[16] Ibid, 122-123.

[17] Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools, National Education Association, "Report" in Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1896-97 (Washington: GPO, 1898) in Tyack, 23; See Grant McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953) for the inter-relationship between rural reform and education.

[18] Gulliford, 41.

to educational reform, H. W. Foght, became involved in the national consolidation movement in the 1910s. In a Bureau of Education bulletin, Foght stated the problems with rural schools and discussed the consolidation efforts of nineteen states. He also made clear, though, the position of states such as his native Missouri in the consolidation movement: "In broken mountain districts or in sections of the country cut by streams and ragged coastlines, or in sparsely settled regions, . . . reorganization is seldom feasible and should not be urged."[19] Ozarks people in the remote areas that would have been affected by consolidation probably agreed with the ideas of Foght rather than with aggressively progressive ideas presented by groups such as the NEA.

In the three decades of educational reform activity before 1920, the number of children in one-room rural schools in the United States grew. By 1910, there were more than two hundred thousand one-room schools in the nation, and more than half the children in the country attended rural schools. A 1919 report from the federal Bureau of Education indicated no decline in the number of rural schools.[20] In Missouri, the number of schools continued to increase during the same period. As of 1900 there were 10,499 separate rural school districts, and shifting concentrations of population in areas such as the Ozarks resulted in the formation of additional schools in the next fifteen years. Missouri officials were concerned about the lack of control they had over these thousands of tiny districts, about the education available there, and about financial support of the schools.[21] In the next twenty-five years, the Missouri legislature responded with laws that were aimed at consolidating some districts and improving those which were resistant to consolidation. In 1905 a "compulsory" attendance law was enacted, "requiring all children between the ages of eight and fourteen years to attend school not less than three-fourths of the school term unless their services were necessary for the support of the family, or they were of unsound mind, or lived two and one-half miles from the schoolhouse."[22] The law also restricted children from working during school hours. The goals of the legislature were probably two-fold: to increase attendance, but also to enact protective child-labor laws similar to those which were appearing across the country at the time. The legislation probably had little impact in rural areas such as the Ozarks because parents almost always could have

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[19] H.W. Foght, "Rural Education," Bulletin No. 7, Bureau of Education, U.S. Department of the Interior (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919) quoted in Gulliford, 43-44.

[20] Fred E. H. Schroeder, "Educational Legacy: Rural One-Room Schoolhouses," Historic Preservation, 29:3 (July-September, 1977) 6; Gulliford, 43-44.

[21] Townsend, 29.

[22] Ibid.

justified keeping children at home to work on the farm, and few county superintendents would have been able to enforce the law.

The compulsory attendance law was followed by several education laws passed from 1909-1913. A 1909 law was more effective in increasing the average yearly attendance; the law simply extended the school term to eight months. The legislation included incentive funding for "weak" districts which could not support the extra two months on their own. Many Ozarks schools adapted their schedule to the eight-month term, and some received the funding offered by the state to weak districts.[23]

In 1911 the legislature indicated their ambivalence about how to provide the children of the state with the best possible education. They passed conflicting legislation composed of one law which required schools to provide transportation for children who lived more than two miles from a schoolhouse and another law which encouraged consolidation. In rural areas such as the Ozarks, the former legislation prompted the construction of additional schools, so counties could avoid paying for children's transportation. The legislature had to pass an additional consolidation law in 1913 to provide incentives that would outweigh the costs of transporting students across consolidated districts. In the intervening year--1912--the legislature passed a free textbook law for levels one through eight and appropriated one-third of the state's general revenues for education.[24]

The 1920s and 30s were educational doldrums in Missouri, especially in the Ozarks. During the Depression, some Ozarks schools lost ground in length of school terms. Ten Ozarks schools provided less than four months of elementary education per year. Ninety-five schools there provided only six to less than eight months. The Ozarks, while covering roughly half the state of Missouri, had 86 percent of the schools that offered less than the standard eight-month term overall. The Ozarks was typical of similar impoverished regions across the South, although the Ozarks were worse than areas that had more passable roads.[25] Dent County in 1931 had one five-month school, two six-month schools, seventeen seven-month schools, and two seven-and-a-half-month schools. The remaining fifty rural schools had eight-month terms, including Lower Parker.

The Depression eventually spurred some positive educational changes in rural America. In the Ozarks, the first school lunch programs were started during the thirties; students brought something from home every morning for

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid . The 1913 legislation, called the Buford-Colley Consolidation Law, was modified in 1917 and 1925 to provide yet additional incentives. By 1920, only 156 consolidated districts had been created.

[25] Rafferty, 232.

the teacher or the older students to transform into stew.[26] The federal government had advocated hot lunches a decade earlier, but it took the widespread poverty of the Depression for schools to undertake the suggestion.[27] Traditionally poor areas, including the Ozarks, also benefitted from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's alphabet soup programs, such as receiving rehabilitation aid and Emergency Educational Program funds from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.

By 1944, Missouri ranked fifteenth in the nation in percentage of literacy, thirty-third in percentage of school-age children enrolled in school, and thirty-ninth in percentage of income spent for public schools. The state ranked third in the nation in number of one-room schools in operation, and this meant that a large proportion of school funds went for the salaries of one-room teachers with extremely large or small classes. The system was inefficient according to administrators.[28] Legislation enacted in 1948 in Missouri sought to make schools more efficient by consolidating them. The legislature drew up laws which required counties to formulate and submit to the state plans for consolidation. Under these laws, the number of districts in the state dropped from more than 8000 to 4500 by 1952 and to 2600 by 1958.[29] The Ozarks districts were reluctant to consolidate, however. From 1947 to 1954 some Ozarks counties did not consolidate any districts. Dent County finally drew its seventy-seven districts into three elementary schools and a high school in 1956.[30] In 1969, the Missouri legislature passed the final consolidation law, requiring all three-director rural schools to combine with other districts by 1972.[31] Thus ended the rise and fall of the one-room school in Missouri.

Like Morte d'Arthur, the twentieth century history of Missouri rural schools was one of impending death, their end ever-present in the minds of administrators as they thought about the schools. The story of the long lives of these schools, even under the constant pressure from the state and federal government to close, is more remarkable than the history of the legislation that opposed them.

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[26] Edna Staples. Interview by Neil Mangum, 30 June 1978, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, 12-13.

[27] Maud C, Newbury, "Modern Equipment for One-Teacher Schools," Rural School Leaflet No. 3 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, April, 1922) 3.

[28] Edwin J. Benton, "A History of Public Education in Missouri, 1760-1964" (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1965) 98.

[29] Townsend, 32.

[30] Benton, 101.

[31] Townsend, 33.

Inside the Schools: The Operation of Ozarks Rural Schools

Ozarks rural schools and rural schools across the rest of the country served a purpose and provided at least minimal education to isolated populations before improved transportation made them obsolete. Because Ozarks schools shared the same roots, they exhibited uniformity in basic building shape, schedule, recreation, and teachers' qualifications. Their differences revealed the variations of the environments in which they grew.

Rural schools had enrollments of as few as one or two students and as many as eighty or more, all studying in one room. Students took classes in grades one through eight, and sometimes children as young as four years old would come for a "primer class" if the teacher allowed them. The average age of students was about ten throughout the history of rural schools in the Ozarks. Because of sporadic attendance, however, some students were as old as sixteen or twenty before they completed the eighth grade.[32]

Teachers were not much older than their students, and sometimes they were younger. According to one former Ozarks student, a twenty-five-year-old teacher was considered old.[33] Around the turn of the century, the only requirement for getting a third-grade teaching certificate, the lowest grade with which you could teach, was to pass the teacher's exam with a score of seventy. Teachers were expected to have completed eighth grade, although there were no requirements that they had to have gained their eighth-grade education through formal schooling. Second and first grade certificates required better scores on the teachers exam and teaching experience.[34] State laws gradually required more and more education for teachers, beginning with a tenth-grade education, a high school degree, and finally some college courses. To get a higher-grade certificate one had to continue taking classes in summer school at one of the state normal schools or through extension classes from the University of Missouri.

One of the most difficult problems for rural teachers to deal with was the number of students which they taught. As aforementioned, a teacher might have one or two students, perhaps brother and sister, or she might have eighty, as in school districts where logging companies were working. In the

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[32] The average age may be computed from Teachers' Annual Reports to the county superintendents, held in the Clerk's Office of each county. I used the records in Dent and Shannon Counties.

[33] Orin Davis. Interview by author, June 16, 1990. Tape recording, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service.

[34] Staples, 15-16. See "Questions for Teachers' Examinations, March 7 and 8, 1913," Missouri School Journal, XXX, 4 (April, 1913), 177-184, for a sample test. This particular examination had about 200 questions on a variety of subjects.

case of the former, students got individualized attention, but the district probably had little funding for furnishings and textbooks and students had few children but their own family members with which to interact. In the case of the latter, a multitude of problems arose from overcrowding.

One school, a single-room frame building about 25 feet by 30 feet, housed up to seventy students. According to one of those students, benches were lined up along the walls for overflow seating, and some students had to sit on the floor.[35] In these surroundings, there was no such thing as a quiet classroom, with recitations in one corner and scratching pencils throughout. Occasionally, more advanced students eased the teacher's load by hearing elementary students' recitations.

Most rural schools paid more attention to classes--A,B,C, or D--rather than grades. The A class was the seventh and eighth grade students, the B class the fifth and sixth, and so on. Because one teacher had to teach all classes and grades, leaving about fifteen minutes per class, the state recommended an alternating grade system, where the material for some grades was taught in alternate years. For example, students in the A class would do seventh grade material in 1921-22, and eighth grade material in 1922-23. Grades one and two did not alternate at all, while third through sixth could alternate almost all classes except mathematics, and seventh and eighth grade could alternate everything. Edith A. Lathrop, a national expert on rural education, believed that there were several benefits to alternating grades in subject areas which did not require cumulative knowledge. First, the system gave teachers more time for individual courses, reducing somewhat the number of ten-minute recitations that each course would have been allotted had schools been organized along the grade system. She also believed that the larger class sizes that were created by combining grades were more effective for instruction. "Larger classes make it possible to arouse interest and to stimulate effort because of competition," she commented.[36]

The only apparent difficulty that arose from alternating grades was that caused by frequent change of teachers. Had the state not mandated which material was to be taught which year, students could be instructed in two years of eighth grade with no seventh grade instruction if they changed teachers between the years. A similar problem could occur if a teacher alternated one year, and the next year a new teacher did not use the alternating system. Regardless, alternating was one way for teachers to handle the many subjects which they had to teach in a day.

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[35] Denver Cook. Interview by author, June 15, 1990. Tape recording, Midwest Region, National Park Service.

[36] Edith A. Lathrop, "The Organization of a One-Teacher School," Rural School Leaflet No. 10 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, February, 1923) 5.

A typical morning schedule was as follows:

Time	Class, Subject, and [Grade]	Length of Recitation
8:55	A Arithmetic [7 and 8]	20 minutes
9:15	B Arithmetic [5]	15 minutes
9:30	B Arithmetic [6]	15 minutes
9:45	C Arithmetic [3]	13 minutes
9:58	C Arithmetic [4]	12 minutes
10:10	D Reading [1]	10 minutes
10:20	D Reading [2]	10 minutes
	RECESS	
10:40	A Geography [7 and 8]	15 minutes
10:55	B Geography [5 and 6]	10 minutes
11:05	C Reading [3 and 4]	10 minutes
11:15	Physiology [5-8]	10 minutes
11:25	Physiology [1-4]	15 minutes
11:40	D Phonics [1]	10 minutes
11:50	D Phonics [2]	10 Minutes
	NOON -- LUNCH	

Where two recitations for one class is scheduled, the schedule reflects grade differences that could not be alternated. For example, in the case of "D Phonics" from 11:40 to noon, the first class was for first grade students, and the second class was for second grade students.[37] In the afternoon, students had classes in history, grammar, language, spelling, reading, geography, and numbers, once again in segments of ten to fifteen minutes in length. The usual school day began at 9:00 a.m. and concluded at 4:00 p.m. The state-recommended schedule in the 1920s added to the above routine music, penmanship, science, hygiene, art education, agriculture, and club work.[38] The only preparation time that teachers had was before or after school began if they were in one of these larger schools.

Teachers had the additional burden of serving as janitor or of overseeing a student janitor. Teachers were responsible for cleaning the classroom before the term began, and they kept the classroom clean throughout the year. On winter mornings, they or one of the older students would arrive at school early to start the fire in the stove, and every afternoon the teacher would sweep or would oversee the sweeping of the school floor. Some schoolhouses had unpainted floors, and these schools oiled their floors instead of sweeping them. Students were delegated to fetch fresh water from

[37] "Daily Program of Recitations," Teacher's Annual Report, District 85, 1913-14, in Shannon County Clerk's Office. The grades printed in brackets did not appear on the original schedule, and the teacher probably would not have thought in terms of grades.

[38] "A Suggestive Program for a One-Teacher Rural School," found in Teachers' Annual Report binder, Shannon County Clerk's Office.

the river, spring branch or well nearby, and it was a special treat to be the water-carrier.

Some teachers used their meager salaries to provide students with school supplies as a reward for good marks. These rewards served to encourage students, but they encouraged parents to help their children as well. They did not have to buy school supplies for a student with consistently good marks. Helping their students with supplies like this earned kudos for teachers from the grateful parents. For rural populations, particularly the poor Ozarkian ones, these rewards were an essential part of the educational system.[39]

Rural schools differed from their urban counterparts with respect to subjects taught, particularly after the turn of the century. Agriculture became part of their curriculum then as educators sought to combat the "rural problem." Students studied corn and wheat varieties, and they learned the names and uses of common farm implements. Teachers took their students on field trips to visit local farmers' fields to see plants growing, and contests spurred students to do some farming on their own. As a part of the agriculture courses, students were encouraged to set up their own vocational clubs, such as gardening, sewing, canning, grain and soil judging, and stock raising clubs. The Missouri course recommended practical study:

> Teach in terms of the child's life. Think in terms of the pupil and in the needs of the community, instead of in terms of the subject and course of study. . . .Teach in terms of action, of accomplishments, of results. The only real reason for growing alfalfa [in school] is to get the community to grow more and better alfalfa and to grow it more efficiently.[40]

Teachers viewed the emphasis on agriculture as a way to integrate different subjects in their curriculum. For example, this agriculture question was also a math question: " A man sows wheat with a drill eight feet wide; how many miles will he travel to sow 40 acres in the shape of a square?"[41] The school superintendent of Shannon County wrote with pride to the Missouri School Journal about a county-wide corn contest they were conducting. "The contest," he wrote, "is creating a great deal of interest and as it is being conducted under the auspices of the schools it is bringing to many a realization of the change from the old school, which taught simply the three R's, to the new which seeks to educate boys and girls in terms of their daily

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[39] Mabel Cooper. Interview by Don Stevens and the author, June 7, 1990. Tape recording, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service.

[40] E.E. Windes, "Types of Courses of Study in Agriculture," Rural School Leaflet No. 26 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, August, 1924), 15.

[41] Windes, 18.

life and interests."[42]

Students worked quietly at their desks when their classes were not meeting, but at recesses and lunch they sprang to life. Students had breaks of fifteen to twenty minutes in the morning and afternoon and an hour break for lunch.[43] Students ate their lunches outside a large part of the year, and the rest of their break they played games such as Wolf Over the Ridge, Snap-the-Whip, and an Ozarks form of baseball. Lunches consisted of biscuits or cornbread carried to school in lard pails with tight-fitting lids. Families usually packed the lunches of all of their children in one pail, and an older child was responsible for seeing that all siblings got their lunches. The children's playground was the immediate schoolyard, but their play extended to nearby farms during lunch. Teachers were not expected to supervise their recesses until well into the twentieth century, although sometimes the young teachers would join in the games.

The Schools as Educational and Community Centers

Despite the color and creativity of Ozarks rural schools, they were far below twentieth-century educational standards in the United States. Ozarks people appreciated the local control behind the schools and sustained them for that reason, but geographic necessity and the schools' use as social centers were equally important to their long survival.

The geography and terrain of the Ozarks region was unsuitable for rural school consolidation around 1900 because consolidated schools required most children to be transported by means other than their own foot-power. Roads through the Ozarks were inadequate to allow frequent travel by the children and were particular unsuitable for the school "buses" being produced for city transportation.[44] Most roads were created by use over years in dried-up creek beds or along the ridges of mountains. Few were graded and capable of accommodating the fancy city horse-drawn buses.

Equally difficult for buses or large numbers of wagons to pass over were the Current, Eleven Point, and Jack's Fork rivers and their many tributaries. One Ozarks teacher in the 1950s noted the difficulties in living in mountainous river valley. To get to school each day, she had to ford the

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[42] Walter Webb, in "Some Interesting Letters," Missouri School Journal, Vol. 30, No. 4 (April, 1913), 187.

[43] Sometimes in the winter the hour break was shortened to a half-hour so that students could get home before dark.

[44] See Sixty-Sixth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri (Jefferson City: State Superintendent of Schools, 1915) for illustrations of early school wagons.

Current River three times.[45] Children under the three-director districts often already had to cross rivers and spring branches one or more times on their way to school. Under consolidated schools, their journey would have been even longer and wetter. The presence of the largely unbridged rivers also tended to nullify the argument that consolidated schools would have better attendance rates. On the contrary, in the flood-prone river areas where schools let out early for heavy rainstorms, consolidated schools might have cut enrollment because of more children having to cross the unpredictable rivers.

Also raised by parents and local leaders as justification for small, rural schools was the fact that children were needed at home immediately before and after school to help around the farm. For these reasons of geographic obstacles and the need to be close to home, rural schools were maintained so that by 1946-47 when the school laws were revised to force consolidation, there were still more than eight thousand of them in Missouri alone.

Rural schools offered children who could not travel great distances the opportunity to achieve at least an eighth-grade education, and, in some cases, teachers tried to provide instruction in algebra and other high-school level courses. With no bus service to high schools, students from rural areas who wanted to attend had to board in the town to continue their education through high school. Often, though, rural students concluded their education in eighth grade. The importance of their being able to attend through eighth grade near their home was of even greater importance because of the likelihood that this would be their only formal schooling. Parents and students took pride in their local schools and supported them for the educational meccas that they were.

The rural schools were social centers for their neighborhoods as well as educational centers. School-related events such as pie suppers drew residents of the surrounding countryside on weekends. Pie suppers were announced in the county newspapers, and different schools would have their pie suppers on different weekends so that anyone who was able from the county could attend. The suppers were picnics, concluded by an auction of pies made by the young women of the community. Often young men wooed their sweethearts by bidding extravagantly on the ladies' pies. Money collected from the sale of the pies was used to buy equipment and books for the schools. One former student of the Ozarks schools remembered that her teacher was able to purchase a phonograph and six records for her classroom with money raised at a pie supper. Thus, pie suppers provided revenue for the local school as well as being entertaining affairs.[46]

Other social events at the rural schools also were related to education. Students would present pageants at Christmas and on other special

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[45] Dorothy Ennis. Interview by Don Stevens and author, June 7, 1990. Tape recording, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service.

[46] Staples, 13, 29; Rafferty, 235.

occasions, such as the last day of school. The United States Bureau of Education printed suitable pageants occasionally in its rural schools leaflets, recommending them as tools for teaching history and "as a form of entertainment in rural communities." "The Gift of Nations," one such pageant, traced the development of the United States and the contributions of countries from Greece to England in her development. Their contributions were used as reasons why the United States should maintain support of Europe in the aftermath of World War I. The pamphlet stated that the play could be performed by one school, by two or more schools working together, or by adults from the community. Children were to be responsible for writing specific lines in English class. Students in the upper grades also would be expected to tie their geography and history lessons with the pageant. The school could present the pageant during Education Week, on a specific day slated for visitation, on a day in celebration of American citizenship or patriotism, or in connection with any other event the teacher felt appropriate.[47] Ozarks rural schools used pageants at Christmas, for pie suppers, and on other occasions. Three men who attended one Ozarks school in the nineteen twenties and thirties, for example, remembered being Indians in a school play.[48]

Schools also held spelling and ciphering matches, some of which involved interscholastic competition between districts. Just as students compete in athletic competitions today, some rural schools engaged in intellectual competitions in the first half of the twentieth century. Schools also supported home economics and agricultural clubs which sponsored competition. These competitions supplied entertainment to rural people in areas with no radio, television, and theaters.

Rural schools were used on weekends as well as weekdays, for Sunday schools and church services. Schools and churches shared the buildings, with schools benefitting from supplies that belonged to the resident church, such as the use of a small pump organ. In exchange, churches got use of the building.[49]

The social function served by rural schools is indisputable. For more than fifty years, country schools, usually one room taught by one teacher, were used to their full advantage as hubs of community activity. At night, pine torches blazed down the country roads that led to the schoolhouse, and kerosene lamps lit the rooms for dances and presentations. Social activities were so important to rural schools nationally that the federal government recommended that school districts furnish their schools with boards cut to

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[47] Maud C. Newbury, "A Gift of Nations: A Pageant for Rural Schools," Rural School Leaflet No. 20 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, September, 1923).

[48] Cook; Davis; Virgil Schafer, Interview by author, June 15, 1990. Tape recording, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service.

[49] Staples, 13.

fit the top of the desks to provide display and eating space for community events.[50]

Ozarks rural schools are significant because of their importance for education and society in their rural communities, and because they were part of a national education movement of rural schools that lasted more than two hundred fifty years. The isolated mountains and river valleys of the Ozarks caused a geographic need for these schools until after the middle of the twentieth century. The schools met the need for meeting spaces and social lives for their communities as well, and the residents around them embraced them and made them a part of their culture. The handful that remain--perhaps a half-dozen within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways--are remainders of Ozark life a half-century gone.

[50] Newbury, April, 1922.

F. Associated Property Types

I. **Name of Property Type** Rural Schoolhouses in the Missouri Ozarks

II. **Description**

The little red schoolhouse did not exist in Missouri, as best as can be determined. Most rural schools in Missouri were of local materials, such as stone or simple wood frame, and the wooden ones were almost invariably painted white. The earliest Missouri schools were log structures, having one door and few windows. These began to be replaced by frame and stone buildings or, less commonly, brick, in the 1890s. The new buildings were almost identical to the old except for being made of finished wood instead of logs. State superintendents suggested building designs and materials, but most Ozarks and Missouri schools continued to be built by locals using local

III. **Significance**

Ozarks rural schools, one-room or two-room, were important to Ozarks education and society because of the geographic need for them as educational centers in the pre-modern transportation era and because of their use as community social centers, through school-related and non-school related activities. These schools, built in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, were primarily of vernacular design and constructed of local materials. They are significant primarily at the local level--the Ozarks--but are also significant as extant examples of rural schools within the development of the national education system.

Less than a half-dozen Ozarks rural schools remain within the bounds of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and immediately outside its boundaries, although formerly there were hundreds of schools in the area. None of them have been nominated to the National Register. One, Story's Creek School, was

IV. **Registration Requirements**

Districts or buildings nominated under this multiple property listing must be Ozarks rural schools, within the described boundaries of the Ozarks mountains. The schools must be one- or two-room structures of vernacular design but may reflect some state or national recommendations from the era. They must have been constructed between 1874 and 1940. They must have served a rural population for educational purposes and should also have been used as a social center for their communities. They may reflect changes within the community, such as electrification, as long as the adaptations were made during the period of significance. They may have been relocated, as long as their period of significance continued after the relocation. They should retain a large portion of original building materials, although routine maintenance is allowable, such as painting and roofing, as long as similar materials are used. Stabilization that does not affect the appearance of the schools is allowable.

☒ See continuation sheet

☐ See continuation sheet for additional property types

"designs." The most popular shape was a simple gabled rectangle, with walls in the proportion of four to five and windows on the long sides.

A glimpse into Missouri's country schools would have revealed a regularity of furnishings, the arrangements of desks and shelves and stove within the little schoolhouses being similar for practical reasons rather than because of the manipulation of some overarching administration. The usual arrangement was for the blackboard to be on the opposite wall from the entrance door. The teacher's desk stood in front of the blackboards. While some teachers' desks were store-bought, others were homemade. A pot-bellied stove stood in the middle of the room, and students' desks were arranged around it, facing the blackboard. Store-bought student desks came into use in the last half of the nineteenth century, and most rural Ozarks schools made use of them. The desks were of the type that had the seat attached to the front of the writing surface, so that they had to be placed close together in straight rows. The desks accommodated one or two students, and in schools with high enrollments, a double desk could be made to accommodate three small children. Overcrowded schools might add benches along the long walls as well. In the wintertime, all of the desks would be moved closer to the stove if the weather was cold. Schools generally kept their "library" in a bookcase in one corner or in a built-in bookcase under the chimney flue. Some schools had shelves on which students could store their lunches, and most schools had pegs or nails on which students could hang their coats. The federal government published a list of "modern equipment" that the rural school needed, such as a piano, library chairs and table, a kindergarten table, a globe, and other marvels such as a jacketed coal-burning heater.[1] More often than not, however, schools had the very basics, and not anything else.

Since most schools were not served by a public water supply, the best toilets were well-ventilated, well-cleaned outhouses. The government made suggestions as to how healthy privies should be constructed and ventilated, but few school districts could afford or were interested to execute the government's elaborate plans. For example, one plan that was almost universally useless throughout the Ozarks placed both the boys' and girls' privies under one roof, separated by a coal shed; since Ozarks schools used wood-burning stoves, they had no need to build coal sheds.[2] Reminiscences of Ozarks schools establish that two separate privies were popular there, either of the one-holer or two-holer varieties. Barring outhouses, "Girls went

[1] Maud Newbury, "Modern Equipment for One-Teacher Schools," Rural School Leaflet No. 3 (Washington: Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, September, 1923), 5.

[2] Andrew Gulliford, America's Country Schools (Washington: the Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1984), 221.

behind this pine tree, and boys behind that one," one former student remembered.

For schools to be eligible under this multiple property designation, they should be small--one or two rooms--and must have been taught by one or two teachers. The schools should be without central plumbing but may be electrified if this happened during the period of significance. The structures should maintain locational integrity, except in cases where the school was moved during its period of significance and continued to serve as a school after it was moved. The schools must have a large percentage of original structural material, although routine maintenance such as re-roofing and painting is allowable.

moved to the Alley Mill area to be used for interpretation. The building has lost its locational integrity and is not eligible for the Register. Two similar one-room schools which are being nominated to the Register under this multiple property listing are the Buttin Rock School and Lower Parker School. Owl's Bend School another rural school, is also in the Riverways and may be nominated in the future. Two additional one-room schools, Cedar Grove School and Bluff School, are immediately outside the Ozark National Scenic Riverways boundary but may come into the possession of the Park Service in the near future. They have potential to be placed on the National Register under this multiple property listing and have distinctive features which would illustrate the diversity among Ozark vernacular schools.

Ozarks rural schools grew out of the Missouri public school system, initiated under the education laws of 1874 and the State Superintendency of R. D. Shannon. Ozarks schools began construction in the 1870s and 80s and continued through the late 1930s. They remained in operation until around 1960, following application of the Missouri consolidation laws of 1948. The survival of the schools through a half-century of governmental pressure to close demonstrates their incorporation into Ozarks society and their importance to their local communities.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The survey material for Ozarks rural schools was provided by several studies of historic structures completed by the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, including Lessig and Dostch. More recent field work was conducted by the author, accompanied by Alex Outlaw, Chief of Interpretation, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, and Donald L. Stevens, Historian, Midwest Region. Archival informtion was available in the Shannon and Dent County Courthouses, such as data on specific schools and abstracts of land. Additional information on Ozarks country schools was available in the Missouri State Archives, in the records of the State Superintendent of Schools. Interviews used were from the Ozark National Scenic Riverways Oral History Project; additional interviews were conducted by the author and Historian Stevens in accordance with standards set by the Ozark project.

The historic context was determined by the schools themselves. Ozarks rural schools are a very specific phenomenon which was a part of the larger national education movement. Resources on the Ozarks schools, Missouri schools, and public education nationally were important. The local records provided the best information on rural schools, while the 1976 Townsend study and the Tyack study provided the best information on rural schools in Missouri and nationally. In addition, the Gulliford study was useful.

[X] See continuation sheet

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[X] See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- [ ] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [X] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

I. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimberly Scott Little/Historian

organization Midwest Region, National Park Service date August 17, 1990

street & number 1709 Jackson Street telephone 402-221-3426

city or town Omaha state Nebraska zip code 68102

Ozarks schools were of vernacular design; therefore the regularity of them and typology is rooted in their function rather than a specific architectural design. Because they were built over several decades, their temporal range is wide. Most important was their use as educational and social centers of their rural communities.

The integrity of the schools was established from knowledge of properties available. Special consideration was given to the natural mobility of frame schools. With this exception, routine maintenance, and electrification during the period of significance, Ozarks rural schools should be primarily of original materials and design.

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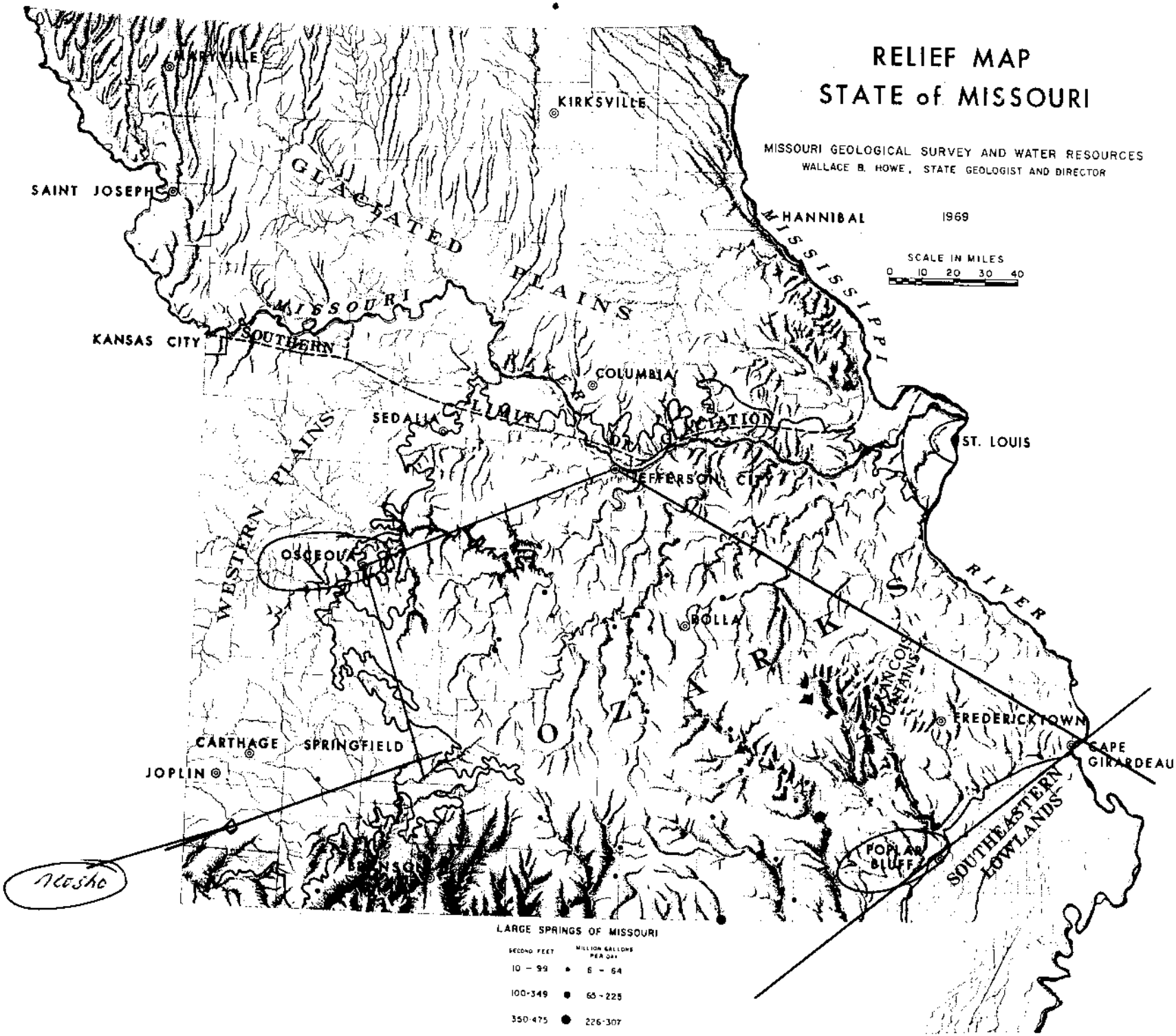
RELIEF MAP
STATE of MISSOURI
MISSOURI GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATER RESOURCES
WALLACE B. HOWE, STATE GEOLOGIST AND DIRECTOR
1969
SCALE IN MILES
0 10 20 30 40
MARYVILLE
KIRKSVILLE
SAINT JOSEPH
HANNIBAL
GLACIATED PLAINS
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
MISSOURI RIVER
KANSAS CITY
SOUTHERN IOWA DRIFT PLAIN
COLUMBIA
SEDALIA
ST. LOUIS
JEFFERSON CITY
WESTERN PLAINS
OSCEOLA
OZARK PLATEAUS
BOLLA
OUACHITA MOUNTAINS
FREDERICKTOWN
CAPE GIRARDEAU
CARTHAGE
SPRINGFIELD
JOPLIN
POPLAR BLUFF
SOUTHEASTERN LOWLANDS
Neosho
LARGE SPRINGS OF MISSOURI
SECOND FEET
MILLION GALLONS PER DAY
10 - 99 6 - 64
100-349 65 - 225
350-475 226-307

PHOTO
UNAVAILABLE