

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pleasant Ridge School

and or common

2. Location

street & number R.F.D. #4

not for publication

city, town St. Joseph

vicinity of

state Missouri

code 029

county Buchanan

code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name William D. Carter

street & number R.F.D. #4

city, town St. Joseph

vicinity of

state Missouri 64507

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Registrar of Deeds, Buchanan County Courthouse

street & number 5th and Jule Streets

city, town St. Joseph

state Missouri 64501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Historic Inventory of Buchanan Co. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program

city, town P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City

state Missouri 65102

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Pleasant Ridge School is a two-story building of brick construction, on a stone foundation, with a rectangular plan, a low-pitched hip roof, and a small pediment-type dormer just above the eave line in the center of the primary (west) facade. Exposed rafters at the cornices suggest a craftsman-type roof of later date (1910's-1940's) than the original structure, which was completed in 1883.

Major stylistic elements, including the low-pitched roof and the arched door opening on the main facade, are Italianate. Exposed rafters at the cornices suggest brackets. However, these exposed rafters, as well as the flat lintels, peculiar dormer, and general simplicity of the structure, mark this building as belonging to the vernacular, rather than any high-style, tradition.

The main entrance on the west facade is a double-leaf fifteen-pane door, which is a replacement, but very similar to the earlier doors of the structure. There is an arched transom above the door. The brick segmental arch surrounding the doorway has a smooth stone keystone. A secondary door on the south side is plain with a lintel that matches those of the window openings.

All the windows are seven feet seven inches in height, and all have stone lugsills. The symmetrical side windows are three feet by six inches wide and are divided by 9/9 pane double sashes. On the west facade there are five windows that are exactly three feet wide and two narrow windows, two-feet two inches in width, flanking the door. Three of the four windows on the east (rear) wall have been enclosed. The fourth is a single four-paned window opening with a single leaf door beneath it.

The floorplan is a standard one for nineteenth-century country schools. A prototype may be found in Henry Barnard's antebellum design for a schoolhouse in Washington District, Hartford, Connecticut (See Barnard, School Architecture, 1848 edition). The original plan for Pleasant Ridge School called for a central hallway with a stairwell and cloak room on either side of the hall at both the first and second floor levels, providing separate cloak rooms for boys and girls. The rest of the structure was one large open room which was identical in size on the first and second floor levels. The large undivided room on the first floor measures thirty-six feet eight inches by twelve feet five inches, dimensions very similar to those of the classrooms in Barnard's Washington District schoolhouse, which was also a two-story school building.

The cloak rooms, identical in size, measure fifteen feet two inches in length and five feet six inches in width. The rooms on the first floor still contain the cast iron coat and hat racks. On the second floor the southwest cloak room has been remodeled into a kitchen and the northwest cloak room has been remodeled into a bathroom.

The central hallway measures thirteen feet by fifteen feet two inches. There is a chair rail that measures thirty-seven inches in height from the floor. The staircase is filled in with wainscoting and a simple newel post is used at each level or division of the staircase.

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The ceilings are twelve feet from the floor on both levels. The exterior walls are fourteen inches thick.

The basement is only under the west one-half of the building and has been enlarged in recent years. The foundation material is native limestone laid in the rubble pattern.

The second floor has been remodeled as a residence, although it retains substantially the original floor plan, with the cloak rooms serving as a bathroom and a kitchen and the old schoolroom serving as a living/sleeping area. The present owner lives on the second floor and uses the first floor as a work area for an interior design and upholstery shop. This use preserves the essential character of the original exterior design.

The environment of the structure is in a rural setting with a plank sided outhouse on the property. In general, the building is well constructed in a simple style that shows careful workmanship and high quality material.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	1883	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Pleasant Ridge School is significant according to National Register Criteria under definitions A and C, to wit: it is an unusually large and handsome rural school building that is associated with significant efforts to expand and improve Missouri's public school system following the disintegration that resulted from the Civil War; it is an outstanding example of the type of vernacular red brick schoolhouse that has come to symbolize American education in the nineteenth century.

Education

Newton Edwards and Herman G. Richey have stated in their important work, The School in the American Social Order, that social changes resulting from industrialization and urbanization in the latter half of the nineteenth century had a profound effect on education. The Civil War retarded educational development. The final decades of the nineteenth century, however, "witnessed the beginnings of an educational expansion that was truly phenomenal."¹ In many cases, unfortunately, this educational expansion failed to penetrate to the rural areas of the nation. As Edwards and Richey have stated: "It was a significant, even a tragic, fact that for one generation after another the tides of progress swept over and around the rural school leaving it almost unaffected. The little red school house was made of tough stuff; it yielded little to the forces that were transforming the conditions of American life."²

According to Andrew Gulliford, author of America's Country Schools (Washington, D.C., 1984), up to the middle of the twentieth century, rural schools were predominately one-room schools. "The buildings were seldom larger than one room because they served an exclusive clientele, the children of families who lived in the immediate vicinity of the schoolhouse."³ It was not until the twentieth century that the school consolidation movement brought an end to the rural school designed to serve the people of a single village or township, so that by 1938 approximately 19,000 one-room schools had been abandoned near urban areas and throughout the Midwest.⁴

Missouri's first rural school buildings were constructed of logs. Tiny (10' x 12') log schoolhouses persisted long after the Civil War, despite great efforts to secure better buildings.⁵ During the Civil War, many schools closed. The Missouri Constitution of 1875 provided for state-supported free public schools, supervised by the state board of education, but retaining a large degree of local autonomy.⁶ Improvement of school facilities in rural areas was a painfully slow process. In western Missouri during the 1880's, many school classes continued to meet in churches, stores, or people's homes⁷, for lack of any school building at all.

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Pleasant Ridge School was constructed in Center Township, Buchanan County, Missouri, in 1883. According to the History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph (1915), Center Township was "at one time the most promising township in the county."⁸ The town of Sparta, located two miles from the site of the school, vanished after being superseded in the 1840's by St. Joseph as the county seat. However, Center Township continued to prosper throughout most of the nineteenth century as nearby St. Joseph served as one of the main departure points for westward expansion. John C. Register sold the property on which the school is located to the directors of the district on June 19, 1882, for the sum of \$1.00, good will and affection. The large two-story brick schoolhouse that was completed the following year testifies to the prosperity of the township.

Among the rural schools of Buchanan County, Pleasant Ridge School, was typical in some respects and exceptional in others. A product of the decentralized system established by the Constitution of 1875, Pleasant Ridge School was typical in that it served a single township. Its two-story plan distinguished it, however, from the standard one-room school of the period. Even as late as 1932, the predominant type of rural school in Buchanan County was the one-room school. Of sixty-one rural schools in the county at that time, only eighteen were larger than one room. Brick construction also distinguished Pleasant Ridge from other rural schools of the county. In 1932, sixty-six percent of the country schools in the county were of wood construction.¹⁰

During the 1930's, the state board of education proposed a plan for consolidation of rural schools into larger and more efficient district units. Pleasant Ridge School continued to serve as the elementary school for Center Township until 1956, when consolidation with the Faucett School District was completed.

Architecture

Imposingly sited at the summit of a hill in the rolling countryside south of St. Joseph, Missouri, Pleasant Ridge School embodies the ideals of nineteenth-century rural school architecture expressed by Henry Barnard in an important essay and manual, widely disseminated throughout the eastern and midwestern portions of the nation. On the subject of location, Barnard stated: "If possible, it should overlook a delightful country, present a choice of sunshine and shade, of trees and flowers, and be sheltered from the prevailing winds of winter by a hilltop, or a barrier of evergreens."¹¹ Pleasant Ridge School enjoys a sweeping view of the countryside, possesses tall windows admitting the sunlight on the north and south sides, and is shaded by many large trees, which were more numerous in the heyday of the school, but

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which still provide protection from the weather and add beauty to the view. "The style of the exterior," wrote Barnard, "Should exhibit good, architectural proportion, and be calculated to inspire children and the community generally with respect for the object to which it is devoted."¹² Pleasant Ridge School is a modest two-story edifice, which appears more grand because of its hilltop location, its tall symmetrically-placed windows, and the arched doorway that graces the primary facade. The interior features a central hallway with a handsome staircase, a peculiar embellishment for a nineteenth-century rural school in Buchanan County, where the majority of such schools were one-story one-room buildings of exceedingly plain construction. Pleasant Ridge School clearly demonstrates a striving among the residents of Center Township for higher quality education and a brighter future for their children in the years before the turn of the century. "The school-house", wrote Barnard, "should be constructed throughout in a workmanlike manner."¹³ This precept is eloquently expressed in the exterior masonry and interior details, such as the staircase, newel posts and wainscoting in the central hallway, the chair rails in the school rooms, and the cast iron coat and hat racks that remain in the first-floor cloak rooms of Pleasant Ridge School. In summary, Pleasant Ridge School is an extraordinarily fine and well-preserved example of the best of nineteenth-century America's red-brick country schools.

Footnotes

1. Newton Edwards and Herman G. Richey, THE SCHOOL IN THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1947), p. 667.
2. Ibid., p. 689.
3. Andrew Gulliford, AMERICA'S COUNTRY SCHOOLS (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1984), p. 36.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
5. Claude A. Phillips, A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MISSOURI (Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1911), p. 48.
6. Ibid., p. 26.
7. Claude A. Phillips, FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHING (Columbia, Missouri: Missouri State Teachers Association, 1948), p. 4.
8. HISTORY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY AND ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI (1916), p. 58.

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9. EIGHTY-THIRD REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI, June 30, 1932, p. 162.
10. Ibid, p. 171.
11. Henry Barnard, HENRY BARNARD'S SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970, reprint of the 1848 edition), p. 54.
12. Ibid., p. 55.
13. Ibid., p. 55.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet,

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name "St. Joseph South, Mo."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 15 343020 4139139110
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Commencing at a point twenty-seven (27) rods east of the center section No. nine (9) in Township no. Fifty-six (56) of range no. thirty-five (35) running south ten (10) rods thence east sixteen (16) rods, north ten (10) rods, thence west sixteen (16) rods to place of beginning, all being situated in the south east quarter

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Thomas W. Carneal, Associate Professor

organization Northeast Missouri State University date December, 1980

street & number Colden Hall 306 telephone (816) 582-7141 ext. 1289

city or town Maryville state Missouri 64468

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

John Karel
Director, & Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
title Division of Parks and Historic Preservation

date 2/21/85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Abstract to the property in possession of the owner.

Barnard, Henry. HENRY BARNARD'S SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE, edited and with an introduction and notes*by Jean and Robert McClintock. Classics in Education No. 42. New York: Teachers College Press, 1970. Reprint of the 1848 edition.

BUCHANAN COUNTY, MISSOURI, ATLAS AND OWNERSHIP INDEX. Independence, Mo.: Murphy Map Co., 1963.

Edwards, Newton, and Herman G. Richey. THE SCHOOL IN THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1947.

EIGHTY-THIRD REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI, June 30, 1932.

Gulliford, Andrew. AMERICA'S COUNTRY SCHOOLS. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1984.

HISTORY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY. St. Joseph, Mo.: Union Historical Co., 1881.

HISTORY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY AND ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI. Independence, Mo.: Midland Printing Co., 1916.

ILLUSTRATED HISTORICAL ATLAS MAP OF BUCHANAN COUNTY, MISSOURI. Philadelphia: Brink, McDonough and Company, 1877.

Phillips, Claude A. FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHING. Columbia, Mo.: Missouri State Teachers Association, 1948.

_____. A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MISSOURI. Jefferson City, Mo.: Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1911.

PLAT BOOK OF BUCHANAN COUNTY, MISSOURI. Rockford, Illinois: W.W. Hixson and Co., 1925.

PORTRAIT AND HISTORICAL RECORD, BUCHANAN AND CLINTON COUNTIES. Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1893.

Rutt, Christian Ludwig, ed. DAILY NEWS HISTORY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY AND ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI. St. Joseph, Mo.: St. Joseph Publishing Co., 1898.

_____. HISTORY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY AND THE CITY OF ST. JOSEPH AND REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS, 1826 to 1904. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904.

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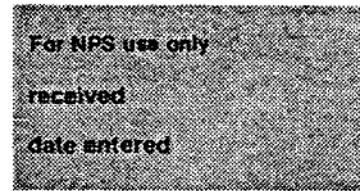
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of section nine (9) Township fifty-six (56) range thirty-five (35) subject to public roads and highways.

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2. Bonnie Wright
Cultural Resource Preservationist I
Division of Parks and Historic Preservation
Department of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101
Date: February 15, 1985
Phone: (314) 751-4096

U.S.G.S. 7.5'
"St. Joseph South, Mo."
Scale: 1:24,000

Quadrangle
(1971-rev.
1978)

PLEASANT RIDGE SCHOOL
Buchanan County, Missouri

UTM REFERENCE:
15/343020/4393910

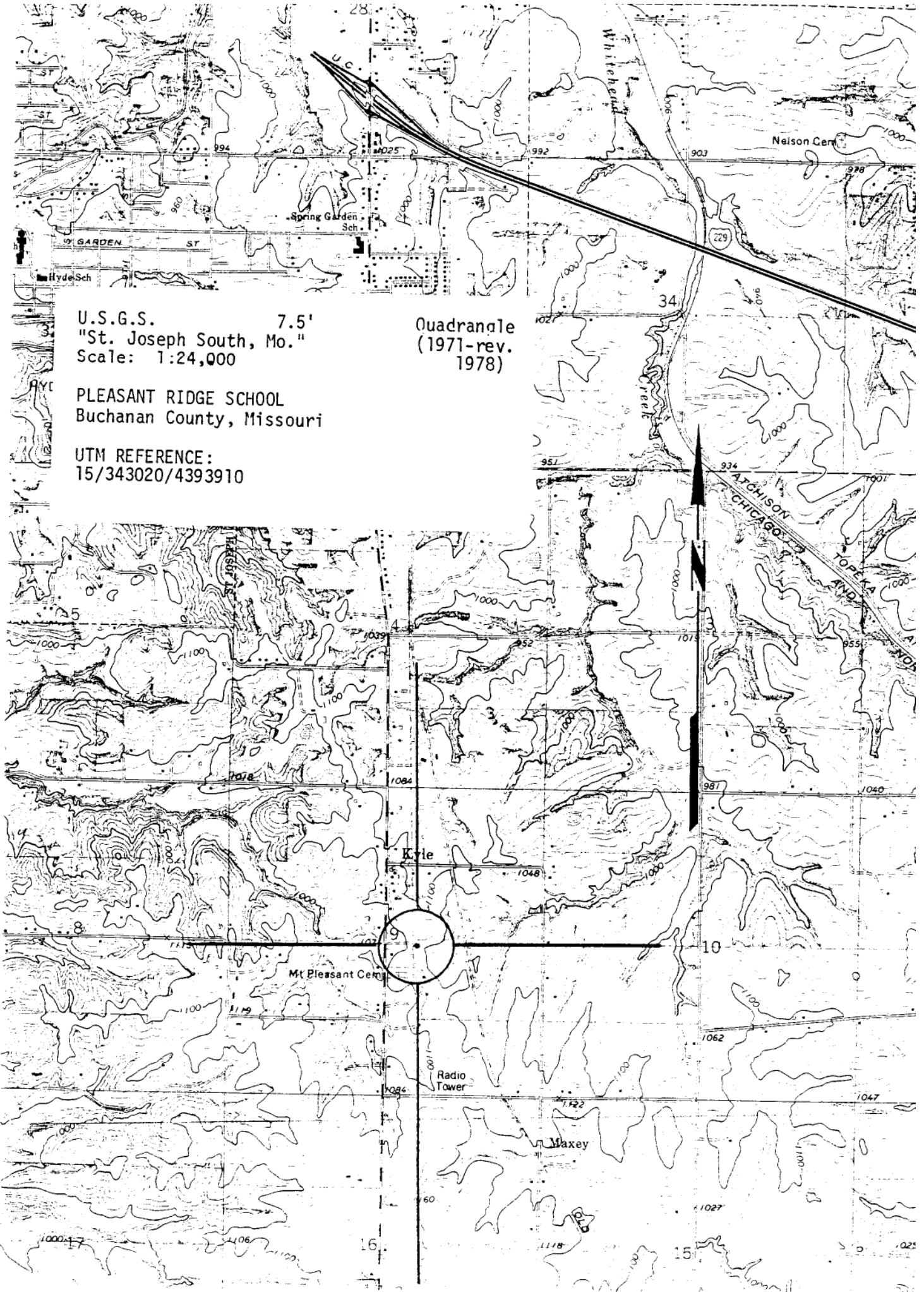


Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Pleasant Ridge School**

City or Vicinity: **St. Joseph vicinity**

County: **Buchanan County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Bonnie Wright**

Date

Photographed: **Feb. 1985**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 5. View of primary (W) façade and N side, looking SE.
- 2 of 5. View of central hallway and staircase, 1st FL, looking NE.
- 3 of 5. View of narrow window on S side of door on primary (W) façade, looking W.
- 4 of 5. View of old cloakroom, looking N. Note cast iron coat hooks.
- 5 of 5. View of living quarters of present owner, 2nd FL, looking E.









