

**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 10-900a). Type all entries.

X  New Submission          Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

One-Teacher Public Schools of Missouri, c. 1774 to c. 1973

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying them, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- I. Education in Settlement and Early Statehood Period Missouri, c. 1774 to c. 1865
- II. Growth of Public Education, c. 1865 to c. 1900
- III. Rural Schools and the Rural Renaissance, c. 1900 to c. 1929
- IV. Rural Education during the Depression and World War II c.1929 to c. 1948
- V. End of an Era: Post WWII School Consolidation and the Closing of One-Teacher schools, c. 1948 to c. 1973
- VI. Architecture of Missouri's One-Teacher Schools, c. 1774 to c. 1973

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**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.

   See continuation sheet

  Mark A. Miles    
Signature of certifying official Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

  Dec 12, 2011    
Date

  Missouri Department of Natural Resources    
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

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Date

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

### Education in Settlement and Early Statehood Period Missouri, c. 1774 to c. 1865

Missouri's earliest period of educational development is one of seemingly odd contrasts. On one hand, state and county histories abound with accounts of early teachers and schools indicating wide support of education in newly settled lands. In contrast, this first 100 years or so of Missouri's history is also marked by lack of support and even resistance to the idea of publically funded education. Missouri's first schools and other educational opportunities were privately funded and fell into three general categories: academies, parochial schools, and subscription schools.

Academies, according to historian Claude Phillips, were the earliest school type to be established in Missouri. Academies might be the business enterprise of a single educator, or chartered schools under the administration of a board of trustees. Generally thought of as providing more advanced (secondary) coursework, many academies also had a "junior branch" providing instruction in the basics such as reading, writing and arithmetic.<sup>1</sup> Jean Baptiste Truteau (sometimes spelled Tribeau or Trudeau) is credited with opening the first school in the Missouri Territory. The school opened in 1774 in St. Louis and operated for nearly 40 years, providing elementary education and possibly some introduction to Latin and Greek, to the sons of the leading families of St. Louis.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest legislation relating to schools in the Missouri Territory involved an academy. On June 21, 1808, the Territorial Legislature of Louisiana incorporated the Ste. Genevieve Academy. The act provided for a twenty-one member board of trustees to accept donations and endowments to support the school. Instruction was to be provided in English and French and the charter included provisions for free instruction to Indian children and children of the poor.<sup>3</sup> Construction on the school began in 1808 and Daniel Berry taught the first classes in 1810. Subjects included several languages (French, Latin, Greek, English), mathematics, surveying, metaphysics, natural and moral philosophy, among others. The academy was short lived, closing in 1814. The school reopened in 1819 under the Christian Brothers, but closed again after about three years of operation.<sup>4</sup> The substantial stone building, however, is still extant and is a contributing resource in the Ste. Genevieve National Landmark Historic District and the National Register of Historic Places-listed historic district.

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<sup>1</sup> Claude A. Phillips. *A History of Education in Missouri*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1911, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri 1764 to 1890*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas McVarish, "Ste. Genevieve Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, National Park Service, 2001, Section 7, p. 69.

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Missouri's earliest schools and academies provided education for boys and generally were conducted in French. In 1797, about twenty years after Truteau opened his school in St. Louis, Governor Carondelet encouraged Madame Marie Joseph Pinconneau *dit* Rigauche to open a girls school in the city.<sup>5</sup> Outside of major population centers, such as St. Louis, providing separate educational facilities for women was often beyond the means of citizens, so in some areas of the state schools were coeducational even prior to statehood.<sup>6</sup>

Parochial schools were also early parts of Missouri's educational landscape. Most early examples, however, took the form of academies or colleges, providing more advanced educational opportunities. In 1818, Bishop Louis William DuBourg established the St. Louis Academy to provide secondary education to boys in the city and training for young seminarians. However, due to the general lack of opportunities for elementary education, the initial admission requirements were set low, stipulating that "none will be received before he can read at least tolerably well." Two years later the St. Mary's of the Barrens Seminary was chartered in Perryville. This school became the primary training ground for seminarians entering service in the western territories.<sup>7</sup> St. Mary's grew to be a substantial institution and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district, consisting primarily of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings and structures. One building, constructed 1825, remains from the original cluster of log buildings that made up the site.<sup>8</sup>

Neither the Catholic Church nor Protestant congregations neglected elementary education, though basics such as reading and writing were often taught in a less formal setting. Many Missourians benefitted from the Sunday School movement that began in Britain in the 1780s and spread into present day Missouri in the early 1800s. Mrs. Sarah Murphy is credited with organizing the first Sunday School in the Missouri territory in c. 1807 near present-day Farmington.<sup>9</sup> Religious education was at the core of the Sunday School curriculum, but such schools also acted as literary schools teaching reading and writing with the Bible as the textbook.

More common than academies and parochial schools, notably in rural areas of the early statehood period, were subscription schools. These schools were organized by groups of families who subscribed (i.e. paid tuition) for each child to attend school. A group of trustees used subscriptions to build or rent schoolrooms and hire a teacher. Terms generally lasted three to four months over the winter.<sup>10</sup> The account of Morgan County's first school seems typical of subscription schools across Missouri:

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<sup>5</sup> William E. Foley, *A History of Missouri, Volume 1: 1673 to 1820*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999, p.56.

<sup>6</sup> Foley, p.188.

<sup>7</sup> Primm, pp. 90-91. Foley, p.185.

<sup>8</sup> Carlene M. Rauh. "St. Mary's of the Barrens Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Louis Houck. *A History of Missouri, Vol. 1*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908, p. 375.

<sup>10</sup> Phillips, pp. 3-4.

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One of the very early schools in the county was at the place now Hopewell Church. This is the oldest settled neighborhood in the county, and the neighbors met and by their labor put up a log building for school and church purposes. Here the primitive subscription school was taught for many winters. Three months' school then during the year was the limit that many good people supposed would never be surpassed. Their first school term was taught in the winter of 1832-33.<sup>11</sup>

These early schools had no governmental oversight and no standards for education, other than those set by the subscribing families or their designated trustees. Certainly the quality of education provided varied, and depended greatly on the knowledge and discipline of the teacher. Overall, historians have been critical of these schools and the education they provided, even in early accounts. For example, the 1876 *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri* had this to say about early subscription schools:

Now and then some pretentious pedagogue, with the title of professor, and pretending to be able to impart a knowledge of most of the languages and all the sciences, would straggle into a community and teach a three or four months' subscription school, in some disused cabin, hastily furnished as a school house, with split log benches and puncheon writing desks. To this "academy" the youth of the community would be sent, to study a little, and play a great deal more, while the teacher slept away the effects of too free an intercourse with his whiskey bottle—for they nearly all drank freely.<sup>12</sup>

Though possibly true for some schools, this overview of pioneer education and teachers overall may be unduly harsh in light of the number of subscription schools that were organized and maintained for several years in the territorial and early statehood period of Missouri history. Some of the harshest critiques of early education in Missouri, like that above, may have been influenced by progressive era educators seeking to encourage public funding and public control over schools and education.

Organization of Missouri into a special territory, and in 1821 a state, had little influence on the type of education available to its citizens. Long before the Louisiana Purchase, the United States sought a means of supporting education in its new territories and states. The Land Ordinance of 1785, established a means of surveying and dividing the Northwest Territories (lands extending west to the Mississippi River) into standard units for sale. The ordinance, which divided new territories into townships, ranges and sections also set aside Section 16 in

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<sup>11</sup> *History of Cole, Moniteau, Morgan, Benton, Miller, Maries and Osage Counties, Missouri*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co, 1889, p. 437.

<sup>12</sup> William S. Bryan & Robert Rose. *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri*. St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1876, p. 74.

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each township, “for the maintenance of public schools, within the said township.”<sup>13</sup> This land survey system was adopted for use in the new Louisiana Territory, and was confirmed when in 1812 the United States Congress established Missouri as a special territory and provided public land to support education.<sup>14</sup> The state’s first constitution (1820) pledged to properly manage school land so that “Schools, and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged in this state.”<sup>15</sup> The constitution also required that at least one school be established in each township “as soon as practicable and necessary, where the poor shall be taught gratis.”<sup>16</sup> Despite the constitutional requirement, historian William Foley noted that

Territorial residents looked upon education as a private matter. Except for a tacit agreement that some provision should be made for the education of indigent children, they expected parents to assume full financial responsibility for the instruction of their offspring.<sup>17</sup>

The requirements of the constitution were never fully implemented and were essentially unenforceable. Most newly organized schools in the state followed the pattern set by territorial schools. They were private academies or subscription schools supported by parents or a church.

Three, at times conflicting, educational precedents influenced the development of education and school systems in early-statehood Missouri. As noted, many of the state’s citizens were originally from the South where education was viewed as a private matter and private schools and tutors were preferred. Organizationally, the preference was for local control of education with responsibility for administering school lands and schools based at the township level. Township-level administration had roots in the school systems of New England but was more directly influenced by the states of the Northwest Territory with similar land divisions and school land grants. Ohio, for example, adopted township-level school administration as early as 1806. This set a precedent used by Henry Geyer and Rufus Pettibone when they wrote the Missouri School Code in 1825.<sup>18</sup>

The third influence on public school development was the Jefferson System for education. Though his home state of Virginia never adopted his plan for education, Thomas Jefferson was a proponent of public education and proposed a three level system including free elementary schools, more advanced training (college preparatory) work for promising scholars, and finally college education—with scholarships for talented students who could not afford tuition. This

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<sup>13</sup> Library of Congress, “A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 – 1875, [Journals of the Continental Congress](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=028/lljc028.db&recNum=386), Volume 28, “ Published online at: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=028/lljc028.db&recNum=386>.

<sup>14</sup> Phillips, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> As quoted in Perry McCandless. *A History of Missouri, Volume II: 1820 to 1860*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000, p. 190

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Foley, p. 186.

<sup>18</sup> David L. Colton. “Lawyers, Legislation and Educational Localism: The Missouri School Code of 1825.” *Missouri Historical Review*, vol. LXIX, No. 2, January 1975, p. 136.

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general system was embraced and expanded upon by proponents of public education across the country. In Missouri the three-layered school system was codified by the Geyer Act of 1839, the state's first attempt to create a system of public schools.<sup>19</sup> The act had a variety of provisions including the creation of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, a system for distributing school funds, and provisions establishing permanent school funds. Many of the provisions of the act were never implemented and were eventually repealed.<sup>20</sup> The enduring legacy of the act, however, was the creation of the state's first public university, now the University of Missouri—Columbia.

Missouri had no lack of school legislation in the years prior to the Civil War. Its school system, however, was plagued by lack of implementation of school laws and limited funding. Limited implementation of school laws may have had its roots in the very legislation that established the state's educational system. The State's earliest school laws established the congressional township as the governing body for schools (1825) with the responsibility of managing school lands and revenues. It was not until 1835 that Missouri established a state board of education (originally known as the Board of Commissioners for Literary Purposes) in an attempt to develop some state-level oversight and standardization of the educational system. The same act that established the state's board of education, however, also reaffirmed local control of schools with the authority to employ teachers and otherwise manage district schools.<sup>21</sup> These laws established a disconnect between the state level and local level administration of schools and provided little authority to the State board of education nor the office of the Superintendent of Common (later Public) Schools.

The state made some strides in developing school funding sources during this period. The primary source of funding for public schools was local revenues from the rent, lease, or sale of Section 16 in each congressional township. Township school trustees were entrusted with the management of these lands (over 1,200,000 acres statewide), though the Geyer Act of 1839 provided some stipulations for establishing permanent township and county school funds. State legislation in 1835 allowed for the collection of local property taxes to support schools but this met with resistance and was repealed in 1839.<sup>22</sup> Even had the property tax for schools not been repealed, Missouri in the 1830s and 1840s was still largely frontier with few residents and little tax base.

At the state level, legislative acts in 1837 and 1853 provided permanent state school funding sources. The Saline Act of 1837 directed that revenues from the Saline Land Fund, U.S. Revenue Fund, and Missouri Bank Stock would be held for distribution to public schools. The law did not allow the apportionment of monies until the fund reached \$500,000. The first allotment was made in 1842.<sup>23</sup> The Kelly Act of 1853 made additional funding available to public schools, setting aside 25% of state revenue and dividends from the Bank of Missouri for

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<sup>19</sup> Phillips, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; McCandless, p. 191.

<sup>21</sup> Phillips, p. 9; McCandless, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup> McCandless, p. 192.

<sup>23</sup> Phillips, p. 9.

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common schools. This act provided a significant increase in the state allotments to public schools. In 1842, the first distribution of funds generated from the Saline Act totaled \$2,000. By 1850, allotments from this fund totaled only \$27,751. By 1860, after the passage of the Kelly Act, the state was able to distribute over \$262,000. However, the increasing population of school-aged children in the state lessened the impact of the comparative windfall of school funding.<sup>24</sup>

Public schools made some small strides in the first decades of statehood. Successive school laws established permanent public funding for schools at a local and state level, and by 1853 the state claimed approximately 2,500 school districts. It should be noted that this number is less than one-third of the approximately 10,000 Missouri school districts that would develop by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also, in 1853 less than half (fewer than 125,000) of the state's 300,000 school aged children were attending public schools. By 1860 public school attendance was gaining, with 175,800 students enrolled.<sup>25</sup> However, the state suspended the apportioning of public school funding at the beginning of the Civil War and abolished the State Superintendent of Common School position and those of the county school commissioners (except in St. Louis County).<sup>26</sup> St. Louis and some of Missouri's other established towns and cities succeeded in sustaining public schools throughout the war, though most rural and small town public schools closed by 1862.

### **Growth of Public Education, c. 1865 to c. 1900**

Immediately following the Civil War, Radical Republicans controlled the state's highest offices and the General Assembly. The party pushed through a new constitution that included a progressive framework for a new school system. The document required the state to provide free schools for all children between the ages of five and twenty-one. Leading the charge to organize the new system and encourage its implementation was Thomas A. Parker, an "ardent Radical" elected to the office of State Superintendent of Public Schools in 1866.<sup>27</sup>

Parker's ideas and plans may have been too progressive for a state still reeling from the social and economic effects of the Civil War. During his term, the General Assembly passed several "very important School Laws, which were never carried out and were really destined to a short life."<sup>28</sup> The state's new school laws, referred to as "Parker Laws," established an elaborate educational system. Township administration remained at the core of the system, with each congressional township's board of school trustees given the authority to provide primary schools and possibly a central high school. The township districts were supervised by a County Superintendent of Schools, given some authority over the county school funds and the certification of teachers. All teachers were to be certified through examination in several

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<sup>24</sup> McCandless, p. 193-193.

<sup>25</sup> William E. Parrish. *A History of Missouri Volume III: 1860 to 1875*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Parrish, pp. 141, 164.

<sup>28</sup> Phillips, p. 17.



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subjects. To fund the school system, the laws enabled the assessment of property taxes. Parker noted that the benefit of the tax was that it “equalizes the burden of this admirable system by a rate of taxation upon all persons and property.”<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the General Assembly reinstated the old state school fund and previous sources of revenue (funds from saline lands, stock of the Bank of Missouri, and a percentage of the state’s general revenue).

New and reinstated provisions for school taxes and revenues did not immediately revive the state’s public school system. Many township school trustees and county superintendents, all of which were elected offices, were reluctant to assess school taxes. Even if officials were willing to assess taxes, some counties in the state had too little population or too low a tax base to adequately support schools. The Civil War, too, had a significant impact on local school funds. Pre-war school laws had outlined proper management of township and county school funds, but in the turmoil of war these funds were often mismanaged, lost, or used for the war effort. State Superintendent Parker called for an accounting of local school funds prior to his annual report of 1870, asking the amount of school funds lost and how funds were lost. Common responses included<sup>30</sup>:

- Adair and Dade counties responded that monies had been lost due to “Burning of the courthouse.”
- Benton County noted “much loss” in the school fund as the money was “Supposed to have been paid to Gov. Jackson in 1861.”
- Several counties, including Hickory and Howard, lost funds “By parties absconding” and “By robbery” respectively.
- McDonald County did not report a loss, but noted that “Two townships have no funds, being too disloyal to organize.”

A few counties reported no loss of school funds, and the Ralls County report noted that “all school funds are jealously guarded.”

Despite funding problems, some townships made progress in improving school buildings if not the quality of education provided. The Parker School Law’s local tax levy provisions allowed school trustees to assess taxes to construct schools without submitting the tax to popular vote. In 1867 alone, the Superintendent of Public Schools reported the construction of 1,905 new school buildings. One educator reminisced later that “frame schoolhouses sprang up like mushrooms in the night.”<sup>31</sup> The quality of these new school buildings varied, prompting Superintendent Parker to report, in 1870, on the need for review of school plans. Parker wrote, “There has been marvelous energy displayed in building school-houses in this State. *Thousands* have been built during the last three years.” Parker praised the zeal of local boards but also noted that they “pushed forward the work in hand with great zeal, but not always with

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<sup>29</sup> From Parker’s 1867 annual report as quoted in Phillips, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> *Fourth Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Horace Wilcox, printer, 1870, pp. 29-33.

<sup>31</sup> Parrish, 172.

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wisdom.<sup>32</sup> Parker acknowledged a desire to improve the quality of school buildings, but made no suggestions on how to do so.

Lack of funding, apathy and downright evasion by local officials affected the implementation of school laws, especially those requiring free schools for the state's African-American residents. The school laws of 1866 required that all township and town/city school boards provide one or more separate schools when the school age enumeration of blacks was 20 or greater. These schools could be suspended, however, if average monthly attendance dropped below twelve. In 1867 Superintendent Parker found 57 schools for blacks in 30 counties; however, many of these were private schools with public schools found only in larger towns and cities. Both private and public schools received some outside assistance from agencies such as the Freedman's Bureau or philanthropic organizations like the American Missionary Association.<sup>33</sup> Efforts to establish schools for blacks was also met with outright resistance in some areas with reports of the burning of schools in Fulton (Callaway County), Carondelet (now part of St. Louis City), and in Roanoke (Howard County), among others.<sup>34</sup> Even when schools were provided, the quality of the buildings varied widely. Reporting of Missouri's schools for blacks in 1870, the Freedman's Bureau noted that many attended classes in schools "with walls admirably adapted for ventilation and for admission of copious shower baths of rain."<sup>35</sup>

To further encourage the development of schools for African-American children, the state in 1868 amended the school law. The amended law reduced the school enumeration requirements from 20 to 15 African-American school aged children, and the minimum attendance requirement to a monthly average of 10. Additionally, the General Assembly gave the Superintendent of Public Schools the power to establish and maintain schools for blacks when local boards failed to do so. The more stringent laws also included a penalty for local officials found guilty of neglecting their duties.<sup>36</sup> In 1872, State Superintendent of Public Schools John Montieth reported opening between 50 and 60 schools for blacks statewide with little resistance from local school boards.<sup>37</sup> Montieth also expressed concern about providing schooling where the population was insufficient to support a separate school. He wrote that several families had approached him requesting that their children be allowed to "slip into some corner of the white school." Unable to adequately address the question, Montieth wrote that:

My official judgment is that it is very difficult to answer their argument. The official opinion I have given is, that the law contemplates separate schools, and whether colored children shall be admitted to white schools is a question which confronts prejudice, and appeals to benevolence more than to law.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Fourth Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>33</sup> Parrish, pp. 161-162.

<sup>34</sup> Parrish, pp. 162-164.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-164.

<sup>37</sup> *Seventh Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Regan & Carter, State Printers, 1873, p. 44.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

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Superintendent Montieth served his term during a period of political change and growing resistance to the Radical Republican control of Missouri government. His predecessor, Thomas Parker, pushed through several progressive school laws with strong support from the Radicals. Superintendent Montieth also had strong political support but faced growing resistance from conservative local leaders. At the heart of the resistance was the levying of taxes, which made the school law seem oppressive to many landowners, and was unevenly implemented across the state and even within the boundaries of a single county. Barry County's school superintendent wrote the following report to State Superintendent Montieth in 1873:

Nearly all opposition to public schools has ceased, though there is much opposition to the manner of levying the tax for support of schools. A large portion of our territory is broken and mountainous, and sparsely settled. The school tax is very burdensome to this part of the county—the tax in many instances being two or three per cent to sustain a three months' school, while in other portions of the county it is only one-half of one percent.

Our people are unanimously in favor of a uniform school tax to be levied by the State . . .<sup>39</sup>

The sentiment in Berry County's report was echoed by other counties that reported of a "deeper interest generally . . . in public schools by the mass of people,"<sup>40</sup> but grave concerns about the onerous tax burden in some districts for school construction and maintenance.

The decade immediately following the Civil War saw significant changes in the state's public school system. The lasting legacies of this period may be found in the increased acceptance of free public schools, evidenced by the significant increase in the number of school districts and the percentage of school aged children attending school. Increased attention to teacher training also had its roots in this period. Successful ideas from the era include the implementation of teacher certification requirements, county-wide teacher institutes organized for training teachers, and the creation of the state's first publically funded Normal (teacher training) schools in Kirksville (Adair County) and Warrensburg (Johnson County) in 1870. For many, though, the school laws of the 1860s and early 1870s were too theoretical, too burdensome tax-wise, and gave the state too much power to control local school districts.

Shifting political interests in the mid-1870s ushered in a conservative government, new school laws (1874) and a new state constitution (1875). The 1874 school laws decentralized the state's educational system, returning the power to establish, maintain, and direct schools to the hands of locally elected school directors (three for each school).<sup>41</sup> The new state constitution contained six general provisions for public schools. The document reaffirmed the necessity of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p 235.

<sup>40</sup> From St. Clair County Superintendent of Public Schools, Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence O. Christensen and Gary R. Kremer. *A History of Missouri Volume IV: 1875 to 1919*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997, pp. 53-54.

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education requiring that the General assembly establish and maintain free public schools for all people of Missouri between the ages of six and twenty. The constitution also set minimum school terms of three months to qualify for state educational funding, codified separate schools for African-American children, reestablished the State Board of Education, and disallowed the use of school funding for sectarian purposes.<sup>42</sup>

When new State Superintendent of Public Schools Dr. Richard D. Shannon stepped into office in January 1875, his ability to make effective and progressive changes were hampered by the decentralization of the school system. His comment after reviewing the law and schools of Missouri was that it was only “by courtesy called a system.”<sup>43</sup> Shannon and his immediate successors were unable to push through any major changes to the 1874 state school laws, but did preside over a period in which the number of local school districts increased at a rapid rate. By 1879, the state boasted approximately 10,000 districts, only about 300 of which were “graded” schools. The State Superintendent had some powers to supervise graded schools, but wrote that the laws “leave the district or elementary schools, which should be the objects of first consideration by the State, and which are of the first importance, to run themselves.”<sup>44</sup>

The issue of supervision of small district schools, specifically as it pertained to the office of the County Superintendent or Commissioner of Public Schools, was a constant bone of contention in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The General Assembly proposed or enacted a series of revisions to the 1865-66 and 1874 school laws relating to the office, providing additional powers and subsequently taking them away. Throughout the period, though, the office of County Superintendent remained, “advisory, perfunctory and clerical” with little authority.<sup>45</sup>

Likewise, the issue of standardized school texts was debated throughout the period. In the decade following the passage of the 1874 school law, the selection of standardized text was decided at the county level. During W. E. Coleman’s term as State Superintendent of Public Schools (1882-1889), the law allowing for county-wide standardization was repealed, leaving the selection of texts in the hands of individual school districts. Coleman’s successor, L.E. Wolfe and fellow educators successfully lobbied for statewide standardization of texts and established a commission to review texts and make selections.<sup>46</sup> A later law (c. 1906), returned the selection of text to the hands of the county.

While the administration and organization of the Missouri school system changed little in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the state’s educators did make progress in increasing length of school terms and improving the quality of teachers. In the mid-1880s, the minimum school term increased from four to six months if the local tax rate combined with available public funds was sufficient to pay

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<sup>42</sup> Phillips, pp. 26-27.

<sup>43</sup> Phillips, p. 27.

<sup>44</sup> *Twenty-Ninth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri*. Jefferson City: Carter & Regan, State Printers, 1879, p. 12-13.

<sup>45</sup> State Superintendent of Public Schools. *Sixtieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri*. Jefferson City, MO: Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1909, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Phillips, pp. 29-30.

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the teacher and keep the school open.<sup>47</sup> Teacher education and certification became widely accepted and encouraged, notably during the 1880s and 1890s. State Superintendent Shannon (1875-1881) encouraged the movement by supporting and attending voluntary teacher institutes across the state. The number and duration of these institutes, which included lectures on pedagogy and other education-related issues, increased as teachers and local school officials sought ways to improve the quality of education in schools. The General Assembly soon recognized importance of these institutes in improving the quality of teaching, and in the early 1890s passed a compulsory institute law that required teachers to attend institutes to secure a teaching certificate.<sup>48</sup> The types of teaching certificates, and the requirements for each, also changed and three grades of certificates were established. The grade of certificate limited where and how many students a teacher could teach. The higher the grade, the more opportunities the teacher had for employment and increased salary.

John R. Kirk (1894-1898) and W. T. Carrington (1899-1906) were the last two State Superintendents to serve Missouri in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was during their terms that the roots of what would be the “rural renaissance” for country society and schools formed in Missouri. The announcement by the director of the U.S. Census that the United States no longer had a frontier line was a wake-up call for many. Added to this were the panic of 1893 and subsequent agricultural depression, and the growing shift of Missouri and other Midwestern states from a predominantly rural population to an increasingly urban one. Concerned for rural schools and society, Kirk and Carrington supported programs to reinvigorate rural education. Kirk was a supporter of agricultural education and nature study, especially in the elementary (rural) schools of the state. In hand with agricultural education, Kirk also pushed for manual training classes in rural and urban school districts to provide skilled workmen for the farm and state’s industrial concerns. During his tenure, Kirk also indorsed a plan allowing the consolidation of rural school districts to jointly support central high schools.<sup>49</sup> The General Assembly passed a law enabling this action during Carrington’s term in office.

### **Rural Schools and the Rural Renaissance, c. 1900 to c. 1929**

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of growing support of public education and development of small school districts. Between 1853 and 1901 the number of total school districts grew from 2,500 to about 10,000. During the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interest in rural schools and rural life blossomed and the work of improving the education provided by rural districts and the school buildings that began under State Superintendent Kirk flowered under Carrington and his successor, Howard Gass. Their work was aided by general social, governmental and technological improvements across the country. The new century brought some recovery from the panic of 1893 and general improvements to farm prices and the economy. The improved economy may have encouraged rural Missourians to invest in their

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<sup>47</sup> Phillips, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup> Phillips, p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> Phillips, pp. 30-31.

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public schools, but it was larger movements and trends that helped break the isolation of rural residents and reinvigorate rural life and rural schools.<sup>50</sup>

Technology had a major impact on rural life in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though improvements at times came from unexpected sources. The agricultural depression of the 1890s caused a political change among rural dwellers of the Midwest and Great Plains. Many joined the Populist Party and organized into granges that agitated for improved government and other services for rural areas. The National Grange, for example, pushed for improved rural mail service such as free delivery—a service already provided in many of the nation's towns and cities. The Grange won a significant victory when the U.S. Postal Service started experimental rural free delivery (RFD) routes in rural areas in the East, South and Midwest. By 1902, support for rural delivery was so great that it became a permanent part of the postal system. The success of RFD, however, was hampered by poor roads. Local postmasters could refuse delivery to residents living on impassable roads.<sup>51</sup> Creation of rural delivery routes, then, spurred interest in road improvement, spawning a good roads movement across Missouri and the country.

Better roads, rural free delivery, and rural telephone service helped bring the world to rural America, but did not significantly stem the tide of rural residents moving to towns and cities. To many Americans brought up to believe that “rural America and its people were the most virtuous part of the state and cities were the sinkholes of immorality, corruption, crime, and decadence,” urbanization meant oncoming disaster.<sup>52</sup> President Theodore Roosevelt took his concern for rural America to the people, appointing the Country Life Commission in 1908 to study why farmers were leaving and what could be done to stem rural population loss. After hosting hearings nationwide and compiling answers from thousands of questionnaires, the commission issued its report in 1909. According to the report, the principal reason why farmers were leaving for the city was the country school. The solution, according to the commission, was to create a curriculum for country schools that related to country life.<sup>53</sup>

Not surprisingly, the findings in the 1909 Country Life Commission report were echoed by the *Sixtieth Missouri Report of Public Schools*, also published in 1909. In its overview of rural schools and agricultural education, the report stated:

Heretofore, the tendency has been to educate the boys and girls away from the farm, to teach that life in town is easier than farm life. Such teaching is a great mistake. Work on the farm is just as honorable as work in town, and the teaching of agriculture will have a tendency to impress this fact.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Wayne E. Fuller. *One-Room Schools of the Middle West*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994, p. 81.

<sup>51</sup> National Postal Museum. “RFD: To the Country,” 1996. Accessed 7/27/2011, [postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2b2\\_reaching.htm](http://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2b2_reaching.htm).

<sup>52</sup> Fuller, 82.

<sup>53</sup> Fuller, 83.

<sup>54</sup> From 1909 School Report, p. 34:

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Quoting a “farmer in a north Missouri county,” the report stated “There is something radically wrong with a system which educates our boys and girls away from the farm.”<sup>55</sup>

Agricultural and nature study was not a new idea in Missouri, and had been promoted by State Superintendent Kirk in the 1890s. Possibly prompted by the work of the Country Life Commission, however, the State Superintendent of Public Schools and the General Assembly took a more proactive role in promoting country curricula for country schools. State Superintendent Howard Gass made agriculture an official part of the state’s course of study and required that all students graduating from common schools pass an agriculture exam. The Forty-fifth General Assembly also took a stand in 1909 by requiring that agriculture be included in the curricula and examinations for all grades of teaching certificates.<sup>56</sup>

Implementation of agricultural coursework in Missouri’s rural schools was not consistent, and depended largely on the interest of the individual teacher or promotion by the county superintendent of schools. Agricultural education did have its proponents, and at least one of Missouri’s rural schools became a national model of agricultural education and the larger Rural Renaissance movement. In 1912, Porter School (Dist. 3) in Adair County sat forlorn and, while in use, in disrepair. The condition was so bad that some locals in the district would not allow their children to attend, instead sending them to Kirksville (about three miles to the south). That year, Marie Turner Harvey, teacher at the Kirksville State Normal School’s (now Truman University) model country school left her job to take on the revitalization of Porter and its community.<sup>57</sup>

Harvey left what may have been the most well-appointed one-teacher school in the state. Designed to be a model for rural schools, the Kirksville Normal School’s one teacher schoolhouse had all the conveniences of city schools. The builders equipped the building with indoor plumbing (including showerbaths); a full basement to house mechanical systems, a darkroom, and bulb storage space; and a manual training/domestic science room in the attic. A large classroom and community library “emphasizing the purpose of the rural school as a community center” occupied the main floor.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, Porter school had no visible foundation, falling plaster and windows without shades or coverings. Turner approached her new position with purpose, wanting to demonstrate how rural schools could be the key to a rural revival. Within months of taking on Porter the community had raised the school constructing a new basement housing heating and water systems under the school, renovated the classroom, and had landscaped the schoolyard.<sup>59</sup> In addition to standard coursework, the school hosted adult classes, and the district’s adults and children worked together on the school’s

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Harvey left the Normal School after a scandalous, and rather public divorce from her husband. Though asked to resign by the Normal School, the school’s president hardily recommended her for the post at Porter.

<sup>58</sup> “City Convenience in a Country School,” *School Science and Mathematics*, vol. XIII, no. 7, October 1913, p. 619. Published online at books.google.com. Accessed 7/27/2011.

<sup>59</sup> Fuller, 93.

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demonstration garden and test plots.<sup>60</sup> The school became world-renowned and visitors from around the world came to observe the techniques and programs practiced there. Though a nationally significant example of the Rural Renaissance, the Porter Schoolhouse is no longer extant.

Coursework related to rural life was central to the revival of rural schools in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but this went hand in hand with improvement to the schoolhouse and grounds. Missouri's State Superintendents had, for half a century, bemoaned the condition of some rural schools and advocated for improvements in schoolhouse design, furnishing, heating and sanitation. It was not until c. 1900 that the state made a concerted effort to educate county and local school officials on good rural school design. One step toward modeling good rural school planning was the construction of a model school building at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. The fair's model school building may have been the impetus behind the construction of a model rural school building at the Kirksville Normal School, plans for which began in 1905. Plans for these buildings and others prepared by Missouri architects such as J. H. Felt of Kansas City were widely distributed in the annual *Missouri Report of Public Schools*. The State Superintendent of Public Schools also published brochures addressing good school design including *School Buildings: Plans, Specifications and Suggestions for School Buildings for Rural and Village Districts* (c. 1909), and *Plans for School Improvement in Rural and Village Communities, Missouri* (1914). (See *Architecture of Missouri's One-Teacher Schools, c. 1774 to c. 1973* for additional discussion of rural school architecture.)

The marriage of curriculum and school design came when State Superintendent Howard Gass established an "approved country school" program. The approval criteria included points for well maintained school buildings with appropriate lighting, heat and ventilation systems. The quality and type of educational apparatus and equipment in the school could bolster the score, as could well-maintained grounds with "strongly built, properly situated, nicely painted, and well kept" outbuildings. Fifty of the total 100 points in the rating system depended on the conformity of the course of study to the state's regulations, management and attendance, and the education and dedication of the teacher. To be an "approved" school, a district needed to earn at least 80 of 100 points. As a reward the State Superintendent issued a certificate "sufficiently handsome to justify the school board to teacher in having it framed and hung upon the walls of the schoolroom."<sup>61</sup> The approval system was surprisingly successful and had profound effects on Missouri's rural school districts. In 1911 Camden County's superintendent of schools acknowledged that condition of county schools was "far below what it should be" but:

The buildings are being improved to a great extent. A few buildings have been constructed in part along sanitary lines. The grounds are being fenced and enlarged. We have one approved school in the county, and there are four others

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<sup>60</sup> A collection of photographs of the transformation of the Porter School and the numerous activities for adults and children can be found at Missouri Digital Heritage: <http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/>. Accessed July 28, 2011.

<sup>61</sup> *Sixtieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Printing, 1909, pp. 22-23.



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now that have complied with the requirements for approval this year, 1911.  
*Approval is proving one of the best incentives for betterment of schools in this county.* [Emphasis added.]<sup>62</sup>

By January 1918, approximately 96 of the state's 114 counties had at least one approved rural school, and some counties, such as Nodaway, were approaching 60 approved schools.<sup>63</sup>

The rural school approval and rating system begun in 1909 continued throughout the 1910s and 1920s, though the requirements for approval became more stringent. In 1920, the State superintendent added another level to the approval system and rural schools could get a "standard" or "superior" rating. To be deemed a "superior school" a rural district had to meet the requirements of a standard rating *and* have a 200 volume library, and hold at least four community meetings during the school year. The teacher had to have at least four years of high school work, hold a first grade or higher teaching certificate, and be paid a monthly salary of at least \$85. A "superior" rating was beyond the means of most rural school districts, but each year the list of "standard" approved schools grew. The rating system, however, was somewhat subjective as the scoring was left in the hands of the county superintendent. Some superintendents were lax in their inspection, while others set the bar high. The *Seventy-Third Missouri Report of the Public Schools* (1922) included a report from the Nodaway County superintendent of schools on his assessment of schools. He included an illustration of a sanitary Pitt Toilet that was fly-proof and odorless, adding that no school in Nodaway County would be approved without a toilet of the type.

The rural school approval system was just one in a series of attempts to raise the educational standards of rural schools. State educators felt that to serve the rural community, school houses and grounds had to be well maintained and the school term needed to be at least as long as town schools. The benchmark for the state was at least an eight month term. Some school districts in the state, however, barely managed a four month term. Short terms and poorly maintained school buildings in some districts were due to attitude rather than adequate resources. Other districts were making valiant efforts to comply with state standards but falling short of the mark due to lack of funding. Recognizing that some districts had a total valuation for levying taxes of less than \$10,000, the state passed legislation in 1909 allowing for additional financial assistance for "weak districts." To qualify for assistance a district had to be at least nine square miles in area, have an assessed valuation of less than \$40,000, at least 25 children of school age, and a school property tax levy of \$0.65/\$100. The requirements of this law were amended several times with slight adjustments in 1911, 1913, and 1915. By 1915, the amount of aid was no more than \$200 per month and required schools to be open at least eight months with an average daily attendance of at least fifteen.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Sixty-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1911, p. 231.

<sup>63</sup> *Sixty-Eighth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Hugh Stephens Co. Printers, 1918, pp. 158-172.

<sup>64</sup> *Sixty-Sixth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1915, p. 15.

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Assistance to public schools and promotion of school standards seemed to have an effect on rural school districts across the state. Rural districts also seemed to be responding to new trends in education, such as the teaching of music and supervised physical activity. In the early 1920s, the State Superintendent of Public Schools in cooperation with the state normal schools began a series of annual demonstration classes. Well qualified teachers would travel to rural districts to teach students using the “most modern methods,” observed by area teachers, school officials and parents. While overall results varied, Superintendent Charles Lee reported in 1923 that in the first four months of the school year, based on reports from rural schools in 71 counties: 111 new buildings had been constructed, 159 reseated, 493 districts had secured at least two pieces of playground equipment, 239 purchased musical instruments (many Victrolas), 935 had oiled their floors for the first time, 3,065 districts made marked additions to libraries, 701 installed standard heating systems, 757 made provisions for better drinking water and 354 built new sanitary toilets.<sup>65</sup> Despite continued reports of progress in rural school districts, state educators were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with rural schools and the district system of management.

The 1920 United States Census seemed to mark a change in attitude toward rural schools and their management. This census showed a continuation of the trend toward urbanization and loss of rural population first seen in the 1900 and 1910 census. Citing the 1920 census, State Superintendent Sam A. Baker wrote that rural communities had seen marked progress in transportation (autos overtaking buggies), communication (rural telephone lines), and in farming (tractors over mules), but the “rural schools have not kept up with the wave of progress.”<sup>66</sup> He also said that the “best way to check the people from leaving the farm is to make educational facilities in the country equal to those in town.” Seemingly, based on the opinion of Baker and other educators, the way to do this was to combine rural districts to support larger schools and, preferably, high schools.

A major problem, according to educators, was the relatively small school aged population in many districts. Statistics cited in 1923 showed 1,193 districts with an enrollment of under 15 students. This number increased in 1926 to 2,652 districts with 15 or fewer enrolled. That year, 6,000 of Missouri’s school districts had enrollments of less than 25 students.<sup>67</sup> This drop in enrollment was in spite of the compulsory education law passed in 1919 requiring all children between the age of 7 and 14 to attend school regularly for the entire school term, and teens aged 14 to 16 to attend unless engaged at least six hours a day in lawful and useful work.<sup>68</sup> The increasingly small enrollment was just another symptom of populations shifting from rural to urban areas. Decreasing school populations and costly and inefficient rural school districts formed the basis for a major push for consolidation.

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<sup>65</sup> *Seventy-Fourth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: n.p., 1923, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> *Seventy-First Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1920, p. 49.

<sup>67</sup> *Seventy-Fifth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1924, p. 20a; *Seventy-Seventh Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1926.

<sup>68</sup> *Seventieth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1919.

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The idea of consolidation was not new in the country or in Missouri in the mid-1920s. The first enabling legislation to allow for consolidation to support high schools was passed by the Missouri General Assembly in the 1890s, when the possibilities of consolidation were spreading across the Midwest. Indiana and Ohio, for example, began consolidating schools and transporting students the extra distance via wagon in the 1890s.<sup>69</sup> High school education was a significant impetus behind the rural consolidation movement in Missouri. Cities such as St. Louis and St. Joseph were providing some opportunities for high school education by the late 1860s and the movement had spread to larger towns and cities across the state by the 1910s. In 1913 the Missouri General Assembly passed the Buford-Colley Act that both allowed rural districts to consolidate to support a high school and provided state funds for the construction of rural high school buildings. Consolidated districts could qualify for \$2000 to construct a high school facility and an additional \$300 per year to help maintain it. As an added incentive to some high schools, the state provided funding for high school level teacher training courses.<sup>70</sup>

Considering that in 1912 there were 9,967 total school districts in Missouri and still 9,184 in 1924, the Buford-Colley Act had little impact on school consolidation or rural school closure in the state.<sup>71</sup> What little consolidation did occur was, according to a report on consolidation published in 1952, largely due to favorable financial incentives.<sup>72</sup> It is also difficult to assess, at least until the mid-1920s, how many rural school districts operated one-teacher schools. Some of the clearest statistics come in 1927 when the annual report of public schools reported 8005 rural school districts (excluding towns and cities) of which 7,532 maintained one-teacher schools, the rest had two or more teachers.<sup>73</sup> Two years later, county superintendents enumerated 7,841 rural schools, 7,393 being one-teacher schools. These later statistics were accompanied by the fact that 53 districts had terms of less than four months, and 4,656 rural districts had an average daily attendance of less than 20 students.<sup>74</sup>

Missouri educators used statistics like the above and outright propaganda to encourage rural school consolidation. In 1919, International Harvester Company produced *Better Schools for Missouri*. Including an introduction from State Superintendent Uel Lamkin, the report used rural school statistics and passionate rhetoric to show that rural schools were the source of the "rural problem" and not giving Missouri's rural boys and girls a "square deal." This brochure even played on people's prejudices by depicting African-American children attending a shiny new school in the city and the state's white rural youth trudging to a derelict frame schoolhouse. Publications such as this may have won some to the cause of school consolidation, but it was not until 1929 when Columbia University produced "A Preliminary Report of the Survey of Public

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<sup>69</sup> Fuller, 96.

<sup>70</sup> Walter Stephens. *Missouri: The Center State, 1821 to 1915*, vol. II. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1915, p. 759.

<sup>71</sup> *Seventy-Fifth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1924, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> *Better Public Schools for Missouri Children*. Missouri Citizen's Commission for the Study of Education, December 1952.

<sup>73</sup> *Seventy-Eighth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1927, p. 9

<sup>74</sup> *Eightieth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Botz-Hugh Stephens Press, 1929, p. 121.

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Schools and Higher Institutions of the State of Missouri” that the real break with the small district school came. Summarizing the rural school “situation,” the report stated:

There are too many districts; the length of terms is too uncertain; there is too great a variation in taxing ability among the districts; and the low average daily attendance in the schools of these districts reveals their failure, for some cause or causes, to function properly.<sup>75</sup>

### Rural Education during the Depression and World War II c.1929 to c. 1948

The findings and recommendations of “A Preliminary Report of the Survey of Public Schools and Higher Institutions of the State of Missouri” pushed the Missouri General Assembly to pass a new school law in 1931 to more aggressively encourage consolidation. The law required that by September of 1932, the directors and clerks in each county meet to elect a six-member, county-wide redistricting board. The board’s duty was to study the county and propose enlarged districts.

Much of the work of the county redistricting boards was done for them under the auspices of the State Board of Education. In 1931, working with the University of Missouri and other institutions, the board of education produced administrative surveys of schools in 107 of Missouri’s 114 counties. The surveys included local school statistics, assessment of population trends, and local resources—financial, transportation, etc. The surveys also provided suggestions on boundaries for new, larger districts and financial analysis of the costs of maintaining the larger districts. These surveyors acknowledged that the recommendations were sweeping and not meant to be implemented immediately stating, “We make these recommendations in the way we think the system ultimately should be, but we do not think they can be carried out immediately in full. It is an ultimate program that the people may work toward.”<sup>76</sup>

Despite the new laws and recommendations in the various county school surveys, State educators were working against over 100 years of precedent for township and small district schools. Boone County was an excellent example of resistance to school closure. In 1931 approximately 60% of school children attended school in Columbia. Columbia maintained seven public school buildings ranging in size from two to ten rooms with an estimated value of \$950,000. Yet outside of Columbia were 84 additional school districts, 74 of which were rural three-director schools (independent, unconsolidated). The county had seen some consolidation supporting three consolidated six-director schools and eight high school districts (districts with elementary, middle, and high school facilities), yet the vast majority of districts still supported small, rural, one-teacher schools.

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<sup>75</sup> The Preliminary Report was published in the *Eightieth Missouri Report of Public Schools*.

<sup>76</sup> Harry A. Little, ed. *An Administrative Survey of the Schools of Boone County, Missouri*. University of Missouri, July 1931.

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County studies and near-universal support from prominent state educators had little impact on rural school consolidation during the 1930s and 1940s. Redistricting and consolidation almost universally required the construction of new schools and the transportation of students by bus. Rural school districts, plagued by farm foreclosures and subsequent declines in tax revenue during the Great Depression, could not justify the expense of consolidation. Many even struggled to keep their doors open and pay teachers. By 1934, many schools were deeply in debt and months behind in paying teachers. In June of 1934, it was reported that Missouri was one of five states with districts in arrears for teachers' salaries, totaling approximately \$250,000. This was the lowest figure of the five states and was but a pittance compared to Illinois whose districts were about \$28 million in arrears.<sup>77</sup> Federal "New Deal" programs provided some assistance for rural schools. In 1933-1934, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) operated a rural school continuation program that helped pay salaries and keep rural public schools open. During that school year, FERA funding helped pay 3,650 Missouri teachers and kept 1,414 schools open.<sup>78</sup>

Missouri's schools, both urban and public, also benefited from other New Deal work relief and construction programs. Hundreds of schools across the state were constructed with funding from the Civil Works Administration (CWA), Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress (later Projects) Administration (WPA). Between November 15, 1933 and March 31, 1934, well over five million man hours were spent improving Missouri schools and school grounds under the auspices of the CWA. This included building repair, landscaping and grading school yards, "and in the rural schools, sanitary conditions were improved."<sup>79</sup> The CWA also constructed at least seven rural school buildings.<sup>80</sup> Rural schools also benefited from the WPA programs, primarily in school improvement and construction. Though the total number of schools constructed by the WPA for rural districts is unknown at this time, at least five WPA funded schools are in the sampling and references to numerous others—notably in Missouri Ozarks counties—have been found in newspaper articles and other sources.

Other than federal relief work related improvements to rural school buildings and grounds, the depression and war years saw little change to how rural school districts were managed or maintained. In an overview of the period, a report published in 1945 noted that the "period following 1931 has actually seen the cessation of the consolidation movement in the state."<sup>81</sup> An ironic statement since the 1931 school law was specifically a consolidation law. Consolidation may not have progressed during the period, but rural schools did close. Between 1931 and 1944, approximately 1,400 rural schools closed their doors and began transporting students to other districts.<sup>82</sup> These closures were a result both of consolidation and shifting

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<sup>77</sup> Fuller, p. 109.

<sup>78</sup> Theodore E. Whiting, ed. *Final Statistical Report of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942, p. 112.

<sup>79</sup> William Gammon, ed. *Civil Works Administration of Missouri: A Review*, Second Edition. Missouri Relief and Reconstruction Commission, 1934, p. 53.

<sup>80</sup> *Eighty-Fifth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Midland Printing, 1934, p. 161.

<sup>81</sup> *Rural Education and Rural Life in Missouri*. Jefferson City: Mid-State Printing Co., 1945, p. 35.

<sup>82</sup> *Ninety-Fifth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Mid-State Printing Co., 1944, p. 19.

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populations. During the Great Depression, farm foreclosures caused a significant shift of population in districts with many losing school-aged population. Increased factory production that drew families into urban areas during WWII also significantly reduced school-aged population in rural areas. In 1941 the Superintendent of Public Schools reported that 12 schools closed during the school year because there were no pupils.<sup>83</sup> Three years later, in 1944, there were still 6,670 rural school districts in operation in the state but 5,184 of them had an average daily attendance of less than 15 students.<sup>84</sup> Dropping rural school enrollments coupled with rising costs to keep rural schools open, became the selling point for closing rural schools and consolidating districts. However, continued focus on economic recovery and the war delayed rural school consolidation for several more years.

As the war in Europe drew to a close in the spring of 1945 and in the Pacific later that summer, Americans increasingly turned an eye toward home-grown concerns. In Missouri, this meant another attempt at addressing the “rural school problem.” Published in 1945 the report *Rural Education and Rural Life in Missouri* one again looked at the rural school district, its costs, and its role in rural life. Like previous studies of Missouri’s rural schools, this report rehashed concerns about the inadequacy of training for rural school teachers, deteriorating and substandard school buildings, and the lack of educational opportunities for rural youths—both generally and vocationally. Added to these standard arguments were significantly declining rural school enrollment figures (a drop of about 10,000 students each year during the late 1930s and early 1940s) and increasing costs. On average, rural schools with average daily attendances of less than 15 spent \$86 per student annually to pay the teacher, maintain the school and pay incidental costs during the 1942-43 school year. In contrast, the average costs for schools with more than 15 students were \$51 annually, a significant cost difference for small rural school districts.<sup>85</sup>

By the mid-1940s, Missourians were also losing one of their primary excuses for maintaining small school units—transportation. State laws demanding that all school-aged children be provided public education opportunities combined with poor roads required that students have schools within walking distance of their homes for much of Missouri’s history. Federal aid and work relief programs that addressed farm-to-market road conditions, and more reliable automobiles and busses negated the “child-walking-distance-per-hour” standard for setting school district size. Many rural school districts in the state may have avoided consolidation, but they did turn to transporting students to neighboring schools with increasing frequency in the 1940s. In 1942-43, 1,123 rural school districts transported students to other districts. Just two years later (1944-45), that number increased to 1,662.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Ninety-Second Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Mid-State Printing Co., 1941, p. 85.

<sup>84</sup> *Ninety-Fifth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Mid-State Printing Co., 1944, p. 19.

<sup>85</sup> *Rural Education and Rural Life in Missouri*, p. 152.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

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### **End of an Era: Post WWII School Consolidation and the Closing of One-Teacher schools, c. 1948 to c. 1973**

The 1945 report on rural education and life in Missouri swayed legislators to pass yet another consolidation law in 1948. In some respects, the provisions of the law were similar to those in the 1931 law. Counties were required to study their needs, develop a plan for increasing the size of school districts, and present those plans for approval by the state and by county voters. Increasing education costs, decreasing population and better transportation, however, made this law much more effective. Between 1948 and 1952, the number of school districts in the state dropped by 45%.<sup>87</sup> In 1949 there were 5,550 common (generally one-teacher) schools operating in the state. By April 1952, the number had dropped to 2,781.<sup>88</sup>

The number of rural school districts continued to dwindle throughout the 1950s and 1960s as counties reexamined school district boundaries. The final blow to one-room teacher schools in the state came in 1968. That year the General Assembly passed a law requiring the consolidation of all three director (independent, generally one-room) rural schools with larger districts by January 1973. In response to the law, the Missouri Department of Education sponsored the Spainhower Study. As part of the study, educators visited all counties with small districts, discussing local preferences for redistricting and transporting students to new schools.<sup>89</sup> By 1971, less than 20 one-teacher public schools were still operating in Missouri, with the last few—most located in the Missouri Ozark counties—closing after the 1972-1973 school year.

### **Architecture of Missouri's One-Teacher Schools, c. 1774 to c. 1973**

Noted historian of rural schools and rural schoolhouse architecture, Fred E. H. Schroeder, wrote that nostalgic interpretation of one-room schoolhouses leads to generalities rather than a deeper understanding of schools and how their design was affected by local traditions and larger movements. To interpret schools, one should first look at the schoolhouse type and Schroeder provided a general description of four types: folk vernacular, mass vernacular, architect designed/plan book, and architect designed/commissioned.<sup>90</sup> Missouri has examples of all four types of rural schools, though extant examples of folk vernacular are now rare and architect commissioned one-teacher schools were never common. The characteristics of each type can be easily classified, though period of use is more difficult to identify notably for folk vernacular and mass vernacular types. Schroeder's types are useful and form the basis of this context and the property types in Section F. However, he warns that "specific features of a

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<sup>87</sup> *Better Public Schools For Missouri Children*. Missouri Citizens Commission for the Study of Education, December 1952, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>89</sup> "Spainhower Study: Missouri School District Reorganization Project Files, 1968." Unpublished records on file at the Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

<sup>90</sup> Fred E. H. Schroeder. "School House Reading: What You Can Learn from Your Rural School." *History News*, April 1981, p. 15-16.

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given building will overlap [type] in a way that is certain to frustrate purists.”<sup>91</sup> This is certainly true of Missouri’s historic one-teacher schools.

Folk vernacular school buildings use “traditional designs and construction methods.” In Missouri, this almost always means log construction though the quality of construction varied from saddle-notched rounded log buildings meant as temporary housing to more finely constructed hewn log buildings with well-executed joinery. Purpose-built schools in frontier Missouri had little to distinguish them on the exterior from other buildings and resembled the houses, farm buildings and church buildings that also dotted the rural landscape. The following description of an early Howard County school seems typical of much of the state:

[The schoolhouse] was erected by the people of the neighborhood; was built of round logs, the space between them chinked and then daubed with mud. About five feet from the west wall, on the inside, and about five feet high, another log was placed, running clear across the building. Puncheons were fixed on this log and in the west wall on which the chimney was built. Fuel could then be used of any length not greater than the width of the building, and when it was burned through the middle, the ends were crowded together; in this manner was avoided the necessity of so much wood chopping. There was no danger of burning the floor, as it was made of dirt. The seats were made of stools or benches, constructed by splitting a log, and hewing off the splinters from the flat side then putting four pegs into it from the round side, for legs.<sup>92</sup>

Examples such as the one described above are rare survivors (none known in Missouri) and were constructed as temporary buildings, soon replaced as more time, funding and better materials allowed.<sup>93</sup>

More refined examples of log schoolhouses, those constructed of hewn logs with wood floors and other amenities, can still be found in the state. These folk vernacular buildings had a surprisingly long period of use and construction. Early extant examples may date from the late territorial and early statehood period. Though originally constructed as a church in 1815, the McKendree Chapel in Jackson County (NR listed 1987) is known to have been used as a school as early as 1831 and typified more permanent log school construction in the state. The hewn log building has a gabled roof and large stone fireplace opposite the entrance. Each long wall has two multi-light, double hung windows, and interior walls and ceilings are white-washed.

Hewn log schools continued to be built at least through the 1890s, as evidenced by the construction of a log school in Barry County in c. 1894.<sup>94</sup> Later examples replaced fireplaces with wood stoves and rough hewn seats with chairs and desks ordered from school supply

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> *History of Howard and Chariton County, Missouri*. St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1883, p. 1883.

<sup>93</sup> Schroeder, p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> Fuller, p. 10.



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houses. Log buildings continued to be used in some districts throughout the historic period. *Rural Education and Rural Life in Missouri*, for example includes a photograph of an unidentified school in Missouri still in use in 1945.<sup>95</sup> It is likely that the photographed school, and the handful of others still in use at the time, continued to function as schools until consolidation closed most public one-teacher schools in the 1950s and 1960s. Log buildings still in use as schools in the 20<sup>th</sup> century may have been difficult to distinguish from their frame counterparts, as many were sided in wood clapboards or other siding as local funding for school improvements allowed.

As the state became more settled and townships began to establish new school districts, “mass vernacular” school buildings became more common. Mass vernacular schools fit the nostalgic image of the “little red schoolhouse.” While in reality most frame schools were painted white in Missouri and the Midwest, the other typical features generally apply: rectangular footprint, gable-front roof with centered entrance, and two to three windows on each long side. Where the earliest log schools resembled primitive dwellings or agricultural buildings, mass vernacular schools were built to resemble other rural and small town civic buildings. They often resembled nearby gable front church buildings in size, material and architectural features. They are distinguished from folk vernacular buildings

by the use of commercial machine-made materials such as dimension lumber, standard-size bricks, concrete blocks, asphalt shingle and commercial siding; prefabricated millwork such as barn sashes, standard doors, and casings; and manufactured hardware and fittings such as doorknobs, hinges, ventilating louvers, and bells.<sup>96</sup>

The earliest extant example of mass vernacular school buildings in Missouri date from the 1850s, though examples of this age are very rare. Most schools of the type were constructed between c. 1870 and c. 1900 when the number of rural school districts in Missouri grew to nearly 10,000. (See historic context, “Growth of Public Education, c. 1865-c. 1900.”) The sampling of Missouri’s one-teacher schools reviewed for the preparation of this report included more than 650 (out of 924 in the total sampling) mass-vernacular schools. The majority were of frame construction with gabled roofs and one or two entrances on the front (generally short side) elevation. Brick construction was common, but not typical. A few schools were constructed of cut limestone or granite blocks and some later examples (post c. 1890) were constructed of rusticated concrete blocks.

Mass vernacular school buildings were not static designs. Schroeder notes that these buildings were not built using blueprints, but a template in the mind of the builder of what a schoolhouse should “look like.”<sup>97</sup> Over time this mental image of a school changed, influenced by the construction of schools in neighboring districts, recommendations from state and county school superintendents, changes in technology and more widespread understanding of sanitation. As

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<sup>95</sup> State Superintendent of Public Schools. *Rural Education and Rural Life in Missouri*. Jefferson City: Mid-State Printing, 1945, p. 26.

<sup>96</sup> Schroeder, p. 15.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

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the image of the school changed and funding allowed, districts remodeled schools or constructed new mass vernacular buildings with more complex interiors, improved lighting, and upgraded heating plants. The most obvious changes in mass vernacular design influenced by outside sources were increased complexity of floor plans and the use of bands of grouped windows on one side of the school.

While the term “one-room schoolhouse” is appropriate for many historic rural schools, it does not readily fit schools remodeled or constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Increasingly common by this time were rural schools with entrance foyers, cloak rooms, and occasionally kitchens or workrooms. From the exterior of some schools, it is at times difficult to understand interior complexity. Many schools retained their basic rectangular footprint, hiding that on the inside were divided spaces—often with separate cloakrooms for boys and girls and/or small library spaces. At times, two entrances on the front may indicate entrances for boys and girls into separate cloakrooms, but this is not fail-proof. Some schools, like some churches, were simply built with two entrance doors providing access to a single open space. More telling are schools with recessed entrances, or those with projecting foyers constructed either originally or as additions.

Without extensive research into individual school records, it is difficult to assess the number of mass vernacular plan schools remodeled on the interior or with additions to add cloakrooms and other separate spaces. In c. 1911, Missouri State Superintendent of Public Schools Howard Gass issued a bulletin of school plans and suggestions for rural and village schools. Among the drawings of model one-room school buildings was a schematic drawing and series of suggestions for, “How to transform the antiquated, unhygienic, uncomfortable, inconvenient schoolhouse into one that is healthful, comfortable and convenient,” “transformed at small expense.”<sup>98</sup> The transformation involved constructing a partition near the entrance to create a common hall to house fuel, water buckets, and to hang coats (See Figure 1). The classroom was transformed by replacing the old central stove with a new “jacketed” stove at one corner of the room. Windows were removed from one side of the room and desks rearranged so that light fell over the students’ shoulders rather than from both sides. This rearrangement of windows from two sides to one was a common part of remodeling older school buildings to fit new ideas and technology and was a typical feature of new school buildings. This one-sided light was a near imperative, notably in the construction of new buildings. According to a 1914 Missouri publication on improving rural schools, “In constructing new buildings only unilateral or one-side lighting should exist. Scientific and practical demonstrations prove that cross light or that obtained by having windows on opposite sides of the room is injurious to the eyes and should be avoided.”<sup>99</sup>

Remodeling of older schools and construction of new mass vernacular school buildings incorporating suggestions from the State Superintendent of Public School and other sources

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<sup>98</sup> Howard Gass, ed. *School Buildings: Plans, Specifications and Suggestions for School Buildings for Rural and Village Districts*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, [c. 1911], pp. 13-15.

<sup>99</sup> George W. Reavis, Missouri State Department of Education. *Plans for School Improvement in Rural and Village Communities*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1914, p. 48.

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came at the same time as a major push for constructing model schools based on architect-designed plans. This effort was supported by the Superintendent's criteria for "approved rural schools" issued in 1909. Mass vernacular school types far outnumbered architect designed schools in Missouri, but one or two (sometimes several) were built in most Missouri counties. In only extremely rare instances did Missouri school districts retain an architect to design their buildings; instead most architect influenced designs in Missouri and across the Midwest were plan book designs. These designs were geared toward reforming and improving school buildings and education and, to the extent possible, incorporated technological advances in sanitation, lighting, heating, and ventilation.

Reform to school building design was not a new idea in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when plan book designs became common in Missouri's rural districts. Historians mark 1832, with the publication of William Alcott's *Essay on the Construction of School-Houses* as an important benchmark in school design. The suggestions in the essay had little impact on the exterior of the building, but the proposed arrangement of desks in rows to allow for circulation of the teacher and students and other suggestions had a significant and long-term impact on school interiors.<sup>100</sup> Alcott's essay was followed by Henry Banard's *School Architecture* (1838) and George Emerson's *The School and Schoolmaster* (1842), among others. The number and variety increased in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century as educators, architects, and even heating and school supply companies issued plans both to improve school buildings and to market their products and services.

The two earliest plan book-influenced designs in Missouri may be the state's most unusual one-teacher schoolhouses. Franklin Academy in Clay County (1856) and Round Top School in Dekalb County (1878) are two of the known octagonal school buildings constructed in Missouri. Franklin Academy, a brick octagonal school with Italianate architectural details is now part of the Watkins Mill State Historic Site. Round Top, a frame example, was still extant in c. 1978 when Tom Carneal conducted the historical and architectural survey of DeKalb County. The building, it is thought, has since been lost. Octagonal buildings and schools were uncommon, but more plentiful in the Mid-Atlantic States. Between 1775 and 1833, for example, ten octagonal schools were constructed in Buck County, Pennsylvania. Missouri's octagonal schools may have been more readily influenced by phrenologist Orson Squire Fowler whose book *A Home for All* (1848) caused a small boom in octagonal building construction nation-wide. Plans for octagonal schoolhouses were also published in Barnard's *School Architecture* and other school-related publications.<sup>101</sup>

Franklin Academy and Round Top are architectural oddities among Missouri's rural schools. The state's rural plan-book schools tend to be less exotic, most having roughly rectangular or square footprints and hipped or gabled roofs. In some cases, schools classified as "mass vernacular" in the sampling may actually be plan book schools. For example, in c.1874 J. A. Bancroft & Co. issued a publication of school plans designed by A. N. Dabb. Distributed widely

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<sup>100</sup> Andrew Gulliford. *America's Country Schools*. Washington, D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1984, p. 167.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

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as a marketing tool for the company's educational publications and school furnishings, the booklet included several one-teacher school plans. Plans for "Design A" and "Design 1," other than having more exterior embellishments, were similar to hundreds of schools constructed across Missouri. These plans were for frame, gable front buildings with three windows on each long side. The interiors included large open classrooms with small cloakrooms partitioned off by the entrance.<sup>102</sup> (See figures 2 and 3) It is difficult to know if these schools were designed to conform to the average school commissioner's idea of what a school should "look like" or if this and similar publications influenced the "mental template" of local school builders.

Distinguishing between simple plan book designs and the mass vernacular school type can be, as Schroeder noted, a headache for the purist. However, many of Missouri's plan book schools are easy to identify as they are nearly identical to examples published in the State's annual reports of public schools and in publications issued by the State Superintendent of Public Schools such as *School Buildings: Plans, Specifications and Suggestions for School Buildings for Rural and Village Districts* (c. 1911) and *Plans for School Improvement in Rural and Village Communities* (1914). Missouri educators began developing and issuing architect-designed plans for rural schools about 1900. One of the first manifestations of this was the model rural school constructed as part of the exhibit for the St. Louis World's Fair (see Figure 4). The Missouri State Commission planned and constructed the school and issued pamphlets of plans and specifications for the building.<sup>103</sup> The influence of this school design is hard to assess, since no examples of rural schools built on the plan were identified in the sampling used to develop this context. About two years later, the Kirksville Normal School (now Truman State University) constructed a model school building and, while located in town, used it as a model both of rural school buildings and of how to teach in rural one-teacher schools. Advertised as a practical plan that could be adopted by most districts, the school as built was beyond the means of most rural school districts. The plan included a full basement equipped with modern heating plant, laundry facility, gymnasium and darkroom. The ground floor contained classrooms, indoor plumbing (including showers) and a small library. An agricultural laboratory and vocational education space was located in the attic. Like the World's Fair model school, no other example of the Kirkwood Normal School's plan has been identified.

Most of the state's known plan book schools are linked to a handful of plans, all of which were repeatedly published in reports and brochures compiled by or for the State Superintendent of Public Schools. Based on the sampling of rural schools, the most common plan utilized was one designed by J. H. Felt, a Kansas City architect. (See figures 5 and 6) The school had a truncated T-shaped footprint. The side gabled classroom with nearly a full wall of windows was fronted by a cross gable projection containing the entrance, cloakroom/washrooms (some examples had indoor plumbing), and other storage/service spaces. The school could be heated by a jacketed stove, or from a heating plant located in the basement. At least ten of the buildings in the sampling were nearly identical in architectural features as Felt's design and

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<sup>102</sup> A. N. Dabb. *Practical Plans for District School Houses*. Philadelphia: J. A. Bancroft & Co., [1874], pp. 5-7.

<sup>103</sup> St. Louis Public Library, "Celebrating the Louisiana Purchase," <http://exhibits.slpl.org/lpe/about.asp>. Accessed August 5, 2011. These plans were reissued by Superintendent Gass in c. 1911.

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several others were slight modifications of the plan. Examples were built in frame (clapboard sided and stucco clad) and brick.

Plan book schools shared certain characteristics that complied with contemporary thoughts on education, sanitation, lighting and other factors. Most plan book schools, by the early 1900s, were lighted from one side of the classroom by banks of windows. Most plans could be adapted to include basements with heating plants or for jacketed stoves. In either case, the plans included fresh air returns and methods for ventilating "bad air." Separate cloakrooms for boys and girls were included in plans and restrooms could be added if the school district could afford to install septic systems and indoor water supplies or crematory type toilets. As agricultural and vocational education in rural schools, with its attendant demand for "hands on" activities became an imperative, school plans also included multi-purpose work rooms. These rooms could be used for home economics classes such as cooking, sewing or canning and for testing the quality of seeds, wood shops or other activities.

The arrangement of these rooms and other characteristics varied, allowing for some creative exterior footprints and exterior designs. Some plan book schools, such as Felt's T-shaped design, were very "school like." Few would confuse it with anything but a school or public building. Other examples had a very residential character, one difficult to distinguish from the small clapboard farmhouses also dotting the landscape. The Granville District School in Monroe County (1909) looked very much like a house with its cross gable roof, classical porch columns, and turned balustrade. The windows (at least on the sides visible in the photograph) were also residential in scale with widely spaced 1/1 sash on the main floor and smaller 1/1, double-hung windows centered in the peak of the gable. Missouri also has several pyramidal roof schools with square footprints, some likely based on the Waterbury School Design No. 3 (see figure 7), published by Waterman-Waterbury Co. as a marketing tool for their jacketed stoves and other heating equipment. These plans were widely circulated by the Waterman-Waterbury Co. and often reprinted by state school officials. Three of the company's designs, for example, were published in *School Improvement in Rural and Village Communities* issued by the Missouri State Superintendent of Public Schools.

To date, only one architect commissioned school has been identified in Missouri—Maplewood School in Pettis County, designed by Thomas W. Bast in c. 1910 (see figures 8 and 9). Bast was a well-known architect working out of Sedalia, though his name is usually linked with larger projects such as the layout and design of several large buildings on the Missouri State Fairgrounds. Not surprisingly, Bast's plan soon went from a "commissioned" design for the Maplewood school district to a plan book design utilized by several other districts in Pettis and neighboring counties. Bast's plan was also widely distributed in publications such as the *Sixty-Third Missouri Report of Public Schools* (1912) and *School Improvement in Rural and Village Communities* (1914). There may be other commissioned architect-designed schools in the state, notably in districts near larger towns or cities that supported one or more architects. However, only Bast's design was identified in the sampling used for this study.

Later recommendations and school plans issued by the Missouri Department of Education contained fewer floor plans, but more written recommendations. Published in 1920, *Plans for*

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*Buildings and Equipment in Missouri*, contained three plans for one-room schools. Like early plans, these buildings had the typical single classroom with multiple cloak, storage and workrooms, bands of windows, and simple decoration. The publication also contained a series of specifications and general recommendations, such as classroom size (no more than 32 feet and no less than 28 feet long), ceiling height (12 to 13 feet) and window to floor space ratios. The 1933 publication *Schoolhouse Planning and Construction* provided more extensive recommendations for the "rural school unit" including size, interior room arrangement, wall finishes, heating plants, features of cloakrooms and entrance halls, the number and placement of blackboards and a myriad of other comments.

Be they mass vernacular, plan book, or a commissioned design, architectural embellishment was secondary to form and function. Most rural school buildings were very plain with clapboard siding, simple door and window surrounds, and unadorned gables. School builders, however, were not immune to nationally popular architectural styles. As relatively inexpensive, mass-produced wood products such as imbricated shingles and scroll-cut brackets became readily available, they also began to be seen on schoolhouses. The most common embellishment seen in the sampling were imbricated shingles applied to school gables. Turned posts or classical columns on school porches were also seen on at least a few examples of schools in each county. Rarer, though not uncommon, were fanciful vergeboards or belfries. As the Craftsman style came into vogue in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, schools began to take on a more "bungalow" look with knee brackets and shingled "skirts" on the lower portion of the wall. Locally traditional building materials and techniques were also applied to schoolhouses, even those of plan book design. Ozark rock construction techniques (generally native stone slabs applied over frame walls, with beaded mortar joints) were commonly applied to schools, notably in the counties of the Missouri Ozarks in south central and southwest Missouri.

Construction of rural school buildings slowed considerably in the 1930s as the post WWI agricultural depression was compounded by the effects of the Great Depression. Most of the schools constructed in rural districts between c. 1934 and c. 1941 were the result of New Deal work relief and construction programs. The earliest New Deal funded rural schools were constructed using funding and labor from the Civil Works Administration (CWA), a program that operated over the winter of 1933-34. Most federally funded depression era rural schools in the state were constructed with funding from the Works Progress (later Projects) Administration (WPA) beginning in 1935.

Known examples of WPA schools displayed a variety of architectural features and styles. The WPA left aesthetics, largely, in the hands of the project sponsors. All WPA projects, however, were required to be reviewed by state or federal WPA engineers and architects. The agency, in its review of projects and plans "followed the newer tendencies toward simplification in architectural style." This simplification may have been partially a result of popular national trends in architecture, but "simplicity of design" according to the WPA final report was also "best suited to the limited skills usually available for WPA work." This was noted because the majority of workers on WPA construction projects were drawn from local relief roles and many had

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limited building experience. The WPA urged sponsors to eliminate ornate architectural features and suggested designs that would “not require highly skilled and specialized workers.”<sup>104</sup>

Those in charge of reviewing plans for WPA funded rural schools may have consulted with the newly formed “Building Division” within the Missouri Department of Education. The Department established the Building Division in response to the recommendations of the 1929 “A Preliminary Report of the Survey of Public Schools and Higher Institutions of the State of Missouri” and 1931 school law. The division, organized in c. 1933, furnished school plans and specifications to school districts constructing one, two, and three room school buildings. This section also worked with larger town and city districts providing guidance on hiring an architect, constructing and equipping schools, and on insurance-related issues. In their first few months of operation, approximately 100 small rural schools (one, two, and three room) were built.<sup>105</sup> The side gable school building, the plan of which was published in *Schoolhouse Planning and Construction* in 1933, may have been one of the division’s standard designs. However, the division’s school plan files are either not in the Missouri State Archives or are not accessioned for easy identification. Considering the requirements of the federal New Deal programs and the newly organized Building Division, it is very likely that most one-room schoolhouses constructed in the 1930s and early 1940s were plan book or influenced by an architect or engineer.

Significantly reduced rural population by the end of the 1940s nearly ended construction of one-teacher schools in the state. In 1946 the Missouri Department of Education issued *Schoolhouse Planning and Construction*. The publication focused on meeting the demands of construction for large districts, but included some recommendations and three floor plans for one-teacher schools. Unlike many of the examples published in the 1910s, none of the new examples were generated by Missouri architects. Two examples were from Wisconsin and the third, a very modern design complete with kitchen and large patio-like spaces, was for a school in California. It is unknown if any of these designs were used to construct one-teacher schools in Missouri.

Little is known about one-teacher school construction between c. 1950 and the close of the last one-teacher schools in Missouri in 1973. Considering the drastic reduction in the number of rural school districts in the state in the 1950s, constructing new one-teacher schools was not a high priority. Only one schoolhouse in the sampling was constructed after 1950, the High Hill School in Jasper County. The school that had served the district for several years burned in 1951, but the school district was quick to respond. Classes were temporarily taught in a nearby three-car garage building, while the local board campaigned for a bond to construct a new building. Completed in November 1951, the new High Hill school cost \$9,000. The concrete block building had a side gable roof and an off-center entrance under a gabled porch. The school shared many characteristics with mass vernacular schools of the past—roof shape, rectangular footprint, etc. The new school, however, was equipped with the most modern conveniences. The classroom had a platform at one end for “entertainments,” a flexible arrangement of chairs and tables, and shelves to hold approximately 1,000 books. Off the

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<sup>104</sup> *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-1943*, p. 52.

<sup>105</sup> *Eighty-Fifth Missouri Report of Public Schools*, p. 159.

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classroom was a well-equipped kitchen, utility room with butane furnace, and separate restrooms for boys and girls.<sup>106</sup> The school was likely one of the last one-teacher school buildings to be constructed in the state.

### *School grounds and outbuildings:*

Like the schoolhouse, the school grounds also evolved over time in most districts. Early examples often fit our mental image of the solitary schoolhouse sitting alone amongst the fields and forests of rural Missouri. Most of these early schools lacked even a privy for the children, and fewer had sources of water. Even as late as 1919, at the height of the movement to improve rural schools, Missouri had 9,000 rural schools, 1,000 of which had no toilet facilities and 1,800 without a source of water on the grounds. The vast majority of schools did provide privies and water (generally wells or cisterns), but even these were often considered unclean or unsafe. A survey in 1919 found that roughly 6,000 privies were considered “unclean” as were 6,300 wells, 1,600 of which had impure water.<sup>107</sup>

The statistics paint a dire picture of what were essentially “your childrens homes for 6 hrs a day 8 mo’s a year for 10 years [sic].”<sup>108</sup> Despite this, most school districts at least attempted to provide adequate facilities for their children especially as they constructed new school buildings. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most rural schoolhouses were centers of small school complexes. School grounds typically had at least one privy, a well or cistern with water pump, and a fuel storage shed. Less common were small sheds or barns for horses. Very well supplied schools might even have a small cottage for the teacher, though this is thought to be very rare. To date, only two “teacherages” are known to have been built for one-teacher schools—one for the Porter School in Adair County (post 1912) and one for Bothwell School in Pettis County (1916).

Improvements to schoolyards seems to have lagged behind other improvements such as those provided for sanitation and potable water. One of the earliest effective programs to improve school grounds, according to historian Wayne Fuller, was Arbor Day, a “wonderful innovation” and the primary “impetus for the [school yard] beautification program” among the Midwest’s rural schools.<sup>109</sup> Arbor Day was the brain-child of Nebraska politician Julius Sterling Morton, who introduced the idea in 1872. Nebraska established Arbor Day as a state holiday in 1885 and the tree-planting movement soon spread to neighboring states.<sup>110</sup> In Missouri, State Superintendent of Public Schools W. E. Coleman became an early supporter of the Arbor Day movement. Coleman established Arbor Day in Missouri schools in 1887 and encouraged students and teachers to celebrate by planting trees and holding literary programs.<sup>111</sup> In 1912,

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<sup>106</sup> “New Building Completed for High Hill School.” *The Carthage Press*, n.d. Published online at: <http://www.jaspercountyschools.org/h/id8.htm>, accessed August 19, 2011.

<sup>107</sup> *Better Schools for Missouri*. Chicago: International Harvester Company, 1919, p. 18.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Wayne E. Fuller. *One-Room Schools of the Middle West*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994.

<sup>110</sup> The Arbor Day Foundation. “The History of Arbor Day.” <http://www.arborday.org/arborday/history.cfm>. Accessed July 27, 2011.

<sup>111</sup> Phillips, p. 29.



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Superintendent William Evans reported that “reports show that the observance of this occasion [Arbor Day] as becoming much more general, and the influence of the county superintendent in promoting civic pride and the decoration of school grounds is rapidly advancing.”<sup>112</sup> The previous year (1911) Evans reported that 7,487 trees were planted by Missouri’s school children, primarily on school grounds.<sup>113</sup>

Arbor Day is also cited as the “first instance of a definite movement toward agriculture in Missouri’s public schools.”<sup>114</sup> Introduction of agricultural education in rural schools, especially the compulsory teaching of the subject by the early 1900s, impacted education, schoolhouses and school yards. However, the extent of this impact is difficult to assess. The State Superintendent of Public Schools, county superintendents, and some teachers embraced agricultural education, but there was ever the debate between “text book” agriculture and “vitalized” or hands-on agriculture. Teachers successfully working hands-on with students and the community often instigated a transformation in the school yard. Fencing, planting of trees shrubs and flowers, and the growing of school gardens and field-crop test plots were implemented as part of rural agricultural programs in school yards. It is difficult to assess the number of schools embracing vitalized agriculture and the transformation of the school yard in Missouri as few photographs of school yards are easily accessible. Most rural school photographs are either tight shots of school classes or slightly wider angles showing the school building, so analysis of the use of the larger school grounds is difficult at this time.

Based on state reports and requirements for “approved” rural schools, Missouri’s tended to focus on school ground improvements that would improve sanitation and provide better water supplies. For example the rating system for approved schools allowed a total of 13 out of 100 points for “grounds and outbuildings.” To receive top points, the grounds were to be “well shaded, drained, fenced and good size, neatly kept” (4 points). The cistern (or well) was to have “good walls and top, with pump and conveniently situated” (5 points) and outbuildings (privies, fuel buildings, etc.) that were “strongly built, property situated, nicely painted and well kept” (4 points).<sup>115</sup> Improvements such as gardens, walkways and playground equipment were not even mentioned in early approval scoring sheets.

By the mid 1920s, the Missouri superintendent of public schools and other educators were beginning to place more emphasis on supervised play and providing playground equipment for rural schools. Commenting on rural school improvements Superintendent Charles Lee noted that school children needed better conditions “in order to do effective work.” In addition to properly seated, lighted and heated schools, Lee recommended that school grounds contain several types of playground equipment as well as better sanitation.<sup>116</sup> Two years later, the Missouri Department of Education published *The Socialized School: School Grounds and Their*

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<sup>112</sup> 1912 School report, p. 44.

<sup>113</sup> 1911 School report, p. 120.

<sup>114</sup> Rufus Stimson and Frank Lathrop. *History of Agricultural Education of Less than College Grade in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1954, p. 254.

<sup>115</sup> 1909 School report, p. 23.

<sup>116</sup> *Seventy-Fourth Missouri Report of Public Schools*, p. 12.

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*Equipment* with recommendations in improving and leveling school grounds, landscaping, and planning school playgrounds. The minimum “desirable” playground equipment for rural school grounds was six swings, two to four seesaws, a slide and a giant stride swing.<sup>117</sup>

Compliance with these recommendations is difficult to assess. Annual public school reports indicate some compliance with school yard improvements. Also, reports of federal New Deal work programs indicate much improvement to school grounds in rural and urban areas. Between November 15, 1933 and March 31, 1934, CWA workers in Missouri spent nearly 3.5 million man hours grading, landscaping and otherwise improving school grounds.<sup>118</sup> School grounds were also improved under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Works Progress Administration and National Youth Administration, though exact information regarding work projects undertaken by these agencies in Missouri is not easily compiled. Some of these New Deal work relief measures may have assisted rural schools to meet the increasing number of requirements to be an approved school in the state. In 1935, the “rural school score card” used to evaluate and “approve” rural schools included criteria for grounds to be one to two well-maintained acres with “artistically arranged” trees and plants. School grounds were to be planned and equipped with supervised play in mind, containing playground equipment, cement or gravel walks, well-maintained outbuildings, and a good cistern or well.<sup>119</sup>

By the late 1940s, wells and cisterns, cleared and level spaces for baseball or other games, and playground equipment were likely common sites on rural school grounds, though readily available photographic images of grounds are limited. In c. 1950 Wallace Pearson, a state representative from Adair County, published *Schools in Adair County* a small booklet containing photos of 64 of the county’s one-teacher schoolhouses. Though many of the photos are cropped shots of school buildings, the booklet provides some information about the grounds and the equipment thereon. Playground equipment can be seen in 23 of the 64 photographs of rural schools. The most common equipment appears to be swings and teeter totters, though several school yards also contained slides and at least one had a merry-go-round. Because the economy of Missouri counties and school districts varied widely, Adair County cannot be considered as representative of the state. However, playground equipment and the larger school yard were key parts of the rural school experience and significant features of Missouri’s rural one-teacher schools.

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<sup>117</sup> *The Socialized School: School Grounds and Their Equipment*. [Missouri] State Department of Education, 1925, p. 22.

<sup>118</sup> William Gammon, ed. *Civil Works Administration of Missouri: A Review*, Second Edition. Missouri Relief and Reconstruction Commission, 1934

<sup>119</sup> *Eighty-Sixth Missouri Report of Public Schools*. Jefferson City: Midland Printing, 1935, p. 10.

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## F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

### One-Teacher School Property Types and Registration Requirements

Fred E. H. Schroeder, historian of rural schools and rural school architecture, identified two categories of rural schools—vernacular and architect designed. He further broke these down into subcategories: folk vernacular, mass vernacular, architect/plan book, and architect/commissioned. Schroeder's classification method forms the foundation of the property types outlined below. Because architect/commissioned schools were a rarity in Missouri (based on research to date), architect/plan book and architect/commissioned schools are grouped into one broad property type (Architect Designed/Plan Book Schools).

The three property types form a basis for understanding the evolution of one-teacher schools as educators, school districts, and state-level agencies attempted to improve both the education provided in rural schools and to make the school buildings more conducive to learning. These broad categories, however, do not tell the full story of the one-teacher school and its architectural development.

One-teacher schools, especially in rural areas were often centers of small complexes. Most rural schoolyards also included at least one (usually two) privies, and a fuel storage box or shed. Less common were small sheds or barns for horses and teacher cottages. In many extant examples of one-teacher schools, these outbuildings have been lost, but examples (especially privies) still remain. Also, as schoolhouses were improved, many districts and educators spent time improving the school yard. Just as outbuildings are increasingly rare parts of the school yard, so too are associated landscaping features. Features such as wells and cisterns with associated pumps, bells, flagpoles, fences, and playground equipment help tell the story of the school, its community, and the daily lives of the students and teachers. Though not called out as separate property types in this document, these are important and characteristic features of most one-teacher schoolhouses. These resources should be discussed and when extant (and retaining integrity) should be described in National Register nominations for schoolhouses.

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## I. Folk Vernacular One-Teacher Schools

### Description:

Folk vernacular schoolhouses in Missouri are characterized by horizontal log construction, front or side gable roofs (low to medium pitched), and symmetrical fenestration. Most examples in the sampling are front gable with a centered entrance. One or two wood sash windows are generally located in the long sides of the building. Some early examples may retain fireplaces with (usually stone) chimneys. Examples used over a long period of time may have been modified by removing the fireplace to accommodate wood-burning stoves. Later examples were constructed initially with woodstoves.

Folk vernacular schoolhouses are characteristically small buildings, their size limited by the material and by what men with limited equipment for moving and hoisting logs could handle. Measurements for these schools are difficult to derive from photographs, and architectural surveys rarely provide footprints. However, based on known log houses, churches and other log buildings in Missouri, most log schoolhouses will measure from approximately 16 to 20 feet in width and 18 to 30 feet in length. Just as native materials were used for the walls, so too was native material used for the roof covering and foundations. Foundations for these buildings were most likely wood or native stone piers, or possibly full stone foundations. Original roofing material was generally wood shingles or shakes. A few examples may have been constructed with a porch over the entrance, though historic photographs of log schools generally do not depict porches.

Little photo documentation of folk vernacular schools was found during the development of this document. Early examples likely had exposed log walls, painted or whitewashed to reflect light. Walls may have had pegs to hang cloaks and lighting. Improvements to log school interiors may have included lining the walls with milled or hewn planks, bead board or, in later examples, plaster. Historic descriptions of early log schools reference the use of puncheon desks and roughly hewn log seating—usually backless. Later examples may have had more skillfully crafted hand-made desks and chairs, or manufactured equipment from school supply companies. Blackboards would also have been typical, especially in modified schools or those constructed in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Log buildings used over a long period of time were often modified as funds allowed for improvements. Common modifications included new roofing materials (new wood shingles, metal, asphalt shingles), addition of clapboard or vertical wood siding, and updates to heating systems (fireplace to wood stove to jacketed stove). Chinking and daubing materials, notably in examples with exposed log walls, were commonly replaced and repaired with stone or wood chinking and mud or plaster daubing. Preserved examples of log schools may have cement daubing materials. Photos of folk vernacular schools still in use in the 1940s often show front additions to accommodate common halls

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or cloakrooms. Full or partial width porches over the entrances were also common additions, notably in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Significance:

Folk vernacular schools were constructed and in use throughout the period covered by this document, though their initial construction is most closely associated with the first two historic contexts: Education in Settlement and Early Statehood Period Missouri, c. 1774 to c. 1865, and Growth of Public Education, c. 1865-c. 1900. Examples of this type may be eligible under Criterion A for their association with important events, and/or under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Areas of significance for Criteria A vary widely, and depend on the history and use of the particular building. Most examples will be significant in the area of Education. These buildings represent a local desire to secure basic education for residents. Early examples used for conscription schools are examples of early community building, as settlers organized and acted cooperatively to build school buildings, hire teachers and educate their children. Later examples and improvements to extant folk vernacular buildings may indicate efforts to comply with state school laws, changing technology, and efforts to better ventilation and sanitation in schools.

Research into the specific history of a nominated school may indicate additional areas of significance. Very early examples, those dating to the settlement period of a state or county, may have significance in the area of Exploration/Settlement as early examples of community building and local government development in the state. Rural schools have also historically been used for social and governmental functions beyond their educational function. They have been used as polling places, entertainment venues, grange halls, and at times doubled as the local church. Schoolhouses with well documented histories as social venues for the community may also be eligible in the area of Social History.

After the Civil War, the Missouri Constitution and school laws required that districts meeting certain criteria provide separate schools for African-Americans. Schools for blacks were often housed in rented rooms, formerly white schools, and repurposed homes. A few, often sponsored by agencies such as the Freedmans' Bureau or the local African-American population, were purpose built log buildings. Folk vernacular buildings historically used as black schools may also be significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black.

Folk vernacular schoolhouses may also be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Schroeder describes folk vernacular schools as "traditional and native down to the very materials used, such as sod, logs, hand-hewn planks, adobe or fieldstone."<sup>120</sup> These buildings are closely tied to the location and the skill or workmanship of the people in the school district. Folk vernacular buildings were constructed of native materials, usually with volunteer labor from residents of the district. They reflected the building

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<sup>120</sup> Schroeder, p. 15.

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traditions of the residents and were often very similar to the homes, farm buildings, and churches scattered across the district.

Early settlers in most areas of Missouri found wood to be plentiful and traditionally used log construction for all manner of buildings: homes, farm buildings, churches, and schools. Log construction falls into two general categories: the temporary log "cabin" hastily constructed of unhewn logs, and more permanent buildings of hewn logs and more sophisticated joinery. Many of Missouri's first rural schoolhouses may have been temporary log buildings, as described in the Howard County history (see Architecture of Missouri's One-Teacher Schools, c. 1774 to c. 1973). These schools may have been repurposed early residential buildings or hastily constructed buildings purpose built for schools. To date, none of these hastily built pioneer schools have been identified as extant.

More permanent log buildings with stone piers or foundations, hewn logs, and sophisticated corner joints (V-notch, dovetail, half-dovetail, etc.) may still be found in some areas of Missouri. These buildings had a surprisingly long period of construction in the state, and an even longer period of use. Some extant log school buildings may date from Missouri's territorial period and early statehood. Though not known to have been used as a school until 1831, the McKendree Chapel in Cape Girardeau County was constructed in 1815. Based on county histories c. 1825 to c. 1865 was an especially fertile period of log building construction, representing the earliest period of public school construction in Missouri.

By the 1870s, most existing school districts were replacing their log schools. Newly formed districts in many regions were building in frame, skipping log construction altogether. However, log construction still appealed to many financially strapped school districts. The material for these buildings was readily available and often free. Adding to this local know-how and donated labor, log may have been the only option for schools with little funding but a desire (or school law-induced requirement) to construct a school building. Log school buildings continued to be constructed in Missouri at least through the mid-1890s, and a few log buildings were still in use when consolidation closed most one-teacher schools in the 1950s and 1960s.

The level of significance for the majority of folk vernacular schools will be local. They were governed at the district or township level by residents of the district. They were centers of the community, socially and educationally, but in most cases the "community" was limited to a congressional township or small (four or five square mile) area. Some schools may have state-level significance, if important events occurring in the building had a regional (multi-county) or statewide impact.

The period of significance for a folk vernacular schoolhouse will be the period of its use as a public educational facility. The period will, in most cases, begin with the date of

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construction of the property and end when the building was either replaced by a newer building or the district was consolidated and students transported to a new site.

### Registration Requirements:

Folk vernacular schoolhouses nominated under either Criterion A or C will be fairly pristine examples of the type. These schools must retain characteristic features including log construction and gable roofs (the pitch of which must be unchanged since the period of significance). Retention of original or early windows is essential, as is original siding material if the school was sided originally or early in its period of use as a schoolhouse.

The location of the schoolhouse is also important. These schools were built for specific districts by the people of the district to educate the children of the district, so significance is closely tied to place. However, there is some evidence that schoolhouses were physically moved to better accommodate the population of the district. If there is evidence that the school was moved to a new location and subsequently continued its educational function, then the school may still be eligible for listing in the National Register. As new rural district schools were built or districts consolidated and schools closed, folk vernacular schools were moved and repurposed. Based on research to date, purpose-built log schoolhouses are a rarity in Missouri. Due to the rarity of extant examples, moved examples of log schoolhouses may be eligible for listing in the National Register. Preferably, nominated buildings would be within the boundaries of the school district it served. However, moved examples of the type may also be eligible if they remain within the county of their origin, or in an adjacent county. Moved log schools must retain other character-defining features outlined in these registration requirements and their historic association with education must be well documented.

Preferably log schools will retain their original piers or foundation. However, as schools were updated, originally open foundations may have been enclosed with stone, brick or concrete, or deteriorated foundations replaced. Basements would have been rare features of folk vernacular school buildings. There is historical evidence of basements being constructed for mass vernacular school types, both as an original feature and a later update. So, it is possible that a school district may have constructed a basement under an existing log building as heating and ventilation systems were changed or added. If the foundations or basements were constructed during the use of the building as a historic school, then these changes will not impact the integrity of the building as they are indications of investment and improvement to schools in response to changes in educational policies. Alterations made after the period of significance do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the property type.

In many districts these schools were replaced by more modern mass vernacular or plan book designs. Some districts, however, responded to the call for improved school buildings by modifying existing log buildings. Common changes include the addition of

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horizontal or vertical siding, porch additions, and the addition of full or partial width front foyers. These front additions were usually constructed as common halls containing cloakrooms and fuel storage areas. Alterations made during the period of use as a school do not impact the integrity of the property type; instead these changes should be seen as important aspects of the evolution of these buildings in response to changing requirements for education and educational buildings.

Additions to these buildings made after the period of significance, however, may significantly alter the historic character of the building. Schools adapted for farm, residential or church use may have experienced foyer additions, large additions to the side and rear and alterations to exterior materials and window openings. Schoolhouses with additions to the front elevation dating after the period of significance will not be eligible for listing in the National Register. Because fenestration on the sides of these buildings for light and ventilation is a character-defining feature, side additions built after the period of significance that obscure these features are also unacceptable. Additions to the side and rear may be acceptable if they are set back from the front façade, and do not obscure a character-defining building feature (such as original fenestration). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for schools with additions should demonstrate that the building is otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

Folk vernacular schoolhouses, though characteristically small buildings, were constructed as gathering places for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of folk vernacular schoolhouse design. To qualify for National Register listing, examples of these school types should retain their open classrooms. Also, original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the school during its period of significance should be evident. The retention of the open classroom space is of utmost importance. Retention of original furnishings such as blackboards and school desks is helpful but not essential.

One-teacher schoolhouses, notably those in rural locations, were historically centers of small school complexes. These school complexes often had associated privies, fuel storage buildings, and wells/cisterns with pumps. A few examples also had associated small barns or sheds for horses and a teacherage (house for the teacher or administrator). Common landscape features include fences, flag poles, trees planted in Arbor Day celebration, and school garden. When extant or evident, these resources should be considered significant and contributing if they retain integrity to the period of significance. Ruins, such as foundations for privies or other outbuildings, should also be contributing features as they tell a story about the evolution and use of the school yard during the period of significance.



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## II. Mass Vernacular One-Teacher Schools

### Description:

According to Schroeder, mass vernacular schoolhouses are characterized

by the use of commercial machine-made materials such as dimension lumber, standard-size bricks, concrete blocks, asphalt shingles, and commercial siding; prefabricated millwork such as barn sashes, standard doors, and casings; and manufactured hardware and fittings such as doorknobs, hinges, ventilating louvers and bells.<sup>121</sup>

In Missouri, examples of the type generally have a rectangular footprint with gable roofs, though hipped roof examples are found throughout the state. Hipped roof examples generally were built after c. 1890. Mass vernacular school buildings commonly have centered entrances located in the short wall. However numerous schools of this type were constructed with two front entrances. A handful of examples with off center entrances (near one corner) were identified in the sampling, also. Less common were side-gable or hipped examples with the entrance located in the long wall.

Window patterns in mass vernacular school buildings changed over time. Typically, notably in the early period of development for these school types, window openings containing double-hung wood sash windows were located on the two long walls of the school. Three evenly spaced windows per long wall was the most common fenestration pattern, though examples with two or four windows per wall also existed. Examples that have a short section of blank wall with windows offset to the rear of the building may have interior divisions, such as cloakrooms flanking the entrance. Windows on the back wall of the school were uncommon, though there are numerous examples of schools with windows on the front wall—either flanking the entrance or to one side.

Changing technology and ideas about the best lighting for schoolrooms affected fenestration patterns in some mass vernacular school buildings. By c. 1910, educators were pushing for one-sided lighting (preferably over the left shoulder of students) in classrooms. Lighting a room from one side was thought to ease eye strain, lessen glare, and be more conducive to study and writing. Recommendations published in annual reports of the state superintendent of public schools affected local school builders, and many examples of this property type constructed after c. 1910 included banks of windows on one side of the classroom. Additionally, numerous one-room mass vernacular schools were “relighted” as part of remodeling projects in the 1910s and 1920s.

By and large, Missouri examples of this property type are of frame construction with clapboard siding. Some districts did construct school buildings of brick or cut stone. This

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<sup>121</sup> Schroeder, p. 15.

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may reflect the relative prosperity of the district or a cultural preference. For example, the rural survey of Gasconade County identified a number of brick and cut stone school buildings. The county was heavily settled by Germans who demonstrated a cultural preference for constructing in brick and stone, as evidenced by the numerous brick and stone residences, farm buildings and churches in Gasconade, Franklin and other counties that historically had large German settlements. As concrete became more accepted as a building material, some districts chose to use the material as foundations for schools or in the form of concrete blocks (usually rusticated or rock-faced) for wall construction. Rusticated concrete block schools are more closely associated with plan book designs, but the material was also utilized in mass vernacular buildings.

In their most basic form, mass vernacular schools were one-room buildings. Just as changing technology and desire for improved “environments” for school children impacted fenestration patterns, they also impacted the footprint of the building. The State Superintendent of Public Schools and other educators recommended a wide variety of school improvements that impacted the design of rural mass-vernacular school buildings. School districts addressed recommendations in a number of ways. Common alterations to these buildings include additions (usually on the front) to house cloakrooms, storage or work rooms. Some schools were rearranged on the interior to accommodate these rooms without an addition. Later examples were constructed initially to include cloakrooms, washrooms or other multi-room arrangements.

Whether one room or multiple rooms, mass vernacular buildings are characteristically small. In the case of these school buildings, however, size was not limited by material but by the distance that a voice carries and the number of students a single teacher could control. Like the exterior, interior finishes in mass vernacular schools reflected the use of commercial and man-made materials. Walls and ceilings were commonly plastered, and many historic photos of interiors show wood (often beadboard) wainscoting. Blackboards on one or more interior walls was typical.

Depending on the wherewithal of the district, interior decoration and furnishing varied. Some districts could manage to build schools, but struggled to furnish them. Homemade desks and chairs were not unheard of in these buildings, notably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By c. 1900, most were equipped with manufactured desks and chairs—usually affixed to the floor and often built for two students. Desks (notably prior to c. 1910) were generally arranged around a central wood stove, with a long stove pipe hanging over the heads of students and teachers. As heating technology changed, so did room arrangement in many schools. Later in the period, schools were built or remodeled to accommodate “jacketed” stoves that provided more even heat and better ventilation, or in some cases furnace plants in the basement—removing heating equipment from the schoolroom altogether. Other common interior furnishings and finishes included window shades, wall paper, globes, and book cases. Schoolrooms also often had water buckets with a shared or multiple cups (one per child). Later remodeling or updating campaigns might have also included installation of water fountains (refillable, not hooked to a water supply). In many

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extant examples of the type, interior furnishings have been removed though wall and ceiling finishes remain.

### Significance:

Known mass vernacular school types were constructed as early as the 1850s and were in use throughout the period covered by this document. The numbers of this property type, however, swelled in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and their construction is closely tied to the historic context "Growth of Public Education, c. 1865-c. 1900." These building types were easily adapted to new technologies and ideas about rural school design, and many were built in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also. Examples of this type may be eligible under Criterion A for their association with important events, and/or under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Areas of significance for Criterion A vary widely, and depend on the history and use of the particular building. Most examples will be significant in the area of Education. These buildings represent a local desire to secure basic education for residents. This school type may have replaced an earlier school building or have been the first school constructed in a newly established district. Later examples, and examples that were modified in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century may also indicate efforts to adapt the traditional mental image of what a school should "look like" to new technologies and educational techniques.

Rural schools have also historically been used for social and governmental functions beyond their educational function. They have been used as polling places, entertainment venues, grange halls, and at times doubled as the local church. Schoolhouses with well documented histories as social venues for the community may also be eligible in the area of Social History.

After the Civil War, the Missouri Constitution and school laws required that districts meeting certain criteria provide separate schools for African Americans. Initially schools for blacks were often housed in rented rooms, former white schools, and repurposed homes. A few, often sponsored by agencies such as the Freedmans' Bureau or the local African-American population, were purpose built. State laws enacted to overcome local resistance to constructing schools for blacks, and supplemental state funding for black schools at times allowed for the construction of mass vernacular school buildings. School buildings historically used as segregated schools for African Americans may also be significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black.

Mass vernacular schools may also be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as important local examples of rural school types. Schroeder notes that mass vernacular school buildings "'look more like a schoolhouse' than a farm-building or home" and often looked like other rural civil buildings such as the nearby church.<sup>122</sup> They generally utilized

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<sup>122</sup> Schroeder, p. 15.

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machine made materials such as dimensional lumber, milled siding, and prefabricated doors and windows. Examples of mass vernacular schools constructed of locally fired brick or quarried stone exist, but these too generally used machine produced windows and doors or interior woodwork.

Many examples of mass vernacular schools in Missouri are very plain, with no architectural ornamentation other than simple window and door trim or a transom-topped entrance. The ready availability of mass-produced architectural ornamentation, notably after railroads extended to many areas of the state, did have an impact on vernacular school design. Depending on funding and the creativity of the builder, many examples of this property type sported applied architectural ornamentation reflecting popular architectural styles in residential and institutional architecture. The most common ornamentation was imbricated shingles in the gable ends of buildings, and Eastlake style or scrollwork vergeboards. Many mass vernacular schools also had belfries, some quite plain, and others more fanciful with domed roofs, louvers and brackets. Though not an essential character defining feature of the property type, the use of applied ornamentation may indicate the prosperity of the district or a sense of community pride.

Mass vernacular designs are not based on architectural plans and specifications, but were affected by changes in technology and ideas about sanitation and lighting. As heating stoves and systems improved, and the educators and state school officials provided recommendations for new school buildings, mass vernacular building also changed. Changes in technology and recommendations from school officials did not require a total overhaul of school design. Mass vernacular schools continued to be built from a basic form: rectangular footprint and gable (sometimes hipped) roof. Instead new features were adopted into new schools or older buildings were retrofitted. Common features included multi-room interiors consisting of a large classroom with smaller cloakrooms/washrooms or workrooms. These features could be found either in the main block of the building or in projecting additions from the front of the building. The addition or inclusion of a basement was also increasingly common in buildings of this type after c. 1900. Basements allowed for the removal of the heating system from the classroom and often accommodated workroom space. Another common alteration or feature was in fenestration pattern on the long sides of the building. Traditionally built with two to three widely spaced windows on both sides of the classroom, later examples of mass vernacular schools (or schools modified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) often had banks of closely-spaced windows on one side of the classroom.

The level of significance for the majority of mass vernacular schools will be local. They were governed at the district or township level by residents of the district. They were centers of the community, socially and educationally, but in most cases the "community" was limited to a congressional township or small (four or five square mile) area. Some schools may have state-level significance, if important events occurring in the building had a regional (multi-county) or statewide impact. An example is Newcomer School in Chariton County. In 1914, a group of local farmers organized a farm club that evolved into

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MFA (originally Missouri Farmers Association), Incorporated, a cooperative and agribusiness company of statewide significance.

The period of significance for a nominated mass vernacular schoolhouse will be the period of its use as a public educational facility. The period will, in most cases, begin with the date of construction of the property and end when the building was either replaced by a newer building or the district was consolidated and students transported to a new site.

### Registration Requirements:

Mass vernacular schoolhouses nominated under either Criterion A or C will be fairly pristine examples of the type. These schools must retain characteristic features including original construction method and exterior building materials, original roof form (the pitch of which must be unchanged since the period of significance). Retention of original or early windows is essential.

The location of the schoolhouse is also important. These schools were built for specific districts by the people of the district to educate the children of the district, so significance is closely tied to place. However, there is some evidence that schoolhouses were physically moved to better accommodate the population of the district. If there is evidence that the school was moved to a new location and subsequently continued its educational function, then the school may still be eligible for listing in the National Register. As new rural district schools were built or districts consolidated and schools closed, mass vernacular schools were occasionally moved and repurposed. Because this was historically a very common property type and numerous examples are still extant, buildings moved after the period of significance will generally not be considered eligible for listing in the National Register. Moved buildings may be eligible for listing if they are still located in the boundaries of the district that they served and if reconnaissance survey of other school sites in the county indicate that it is a rare surviving, and highly intact, example of the type.

Preferably mass vernacular schools will retain their original piers or foundation. However, as schools were updated, originally open foundations may have been enclosed with stone, brick or concrete, or deteriorated foundations replaced. There is historical evidence of basements being constructed for mass vernacular school types, both as an original feature and a later update. These basements usually accommodated updated heating plants, workrooms and storage spaces. If the foundations or basements were constructed during the building's period of significance, these changes will not impact the integrity of the building as they are indications of investment and improvement to schools in response to changes in educational policies. Alterations made after the period of significance do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant local example of the property type.

In many districts early examples of mass vernacular schools were replaced or modified. In addition to basements discussed above, school districts often chose to construct additions

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such as porches and full or partial width foyers. Some districts also changed or added siding material and examples of the type clad in roll siding (often with brick or stone patterns), stucco, or native stone (i.e. Ozark Rock) were found in the sampling. Alterations made during the period of use as a school do not impact the integrity of the property type; instead these changes should be seen as important aspects of the evolution of these buildings in response to changing requirements for education and educational buildings.

Additions to these buildings made after the period of significance, however, may significantly alter the historic character of the building. Schools adapted for farm, residential or church use may have experienced foyer additions, large additions to the side and rear and alterations to exterior materials and window openings. Schoolhouses with additions to the front elevation dating after the period of significance will not be eligible for listing in the National Register. Because fenestration on the sides of these buildings for light and ventilation is a character-defining feature, side additions built after the period of significance that obscure these features are also unacceptable as are significant modifications to window and door openings. Additions to the side and rear may be acceptable if they are set back from the front façade, and do not obscure a character-defining building feature (such as original fenestration). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for schools with additions should demonstrate that the building is otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

Mass vernacular schoolhouses, though characteristically small buildings, were constructed as gathering places for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of the property type. To qualify for National Register listing, examples of these school types should retain their open classrooms. Also, original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the school during its period of significance should be evident. The retention of the open classroom space is of utmost importance. Retention of original furnishings such as blackboards and school desks is helpful but not essential.

One-teacher schoolhouses, notably those in rural locations, were historically centers of small school complexes. These school complexes often had associated privies, fuel storage buildings and wells/cisterns with pumps. A few examples also had associated small barns or sheds for horses and/or a teacherage. Common landscape features include fences, flag poles, trees planted during Arbor Day celebrations, and school gardens. When extant or evident, these resources should be considered significant and contributing if they retain integrity to the period of significance. Ruins, such as foundations for privies or other outbuildings should also be contributing features as they tell a story about the evolution and use of the schoolyard during the period of significance.

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## III. Architect Designed/Plan Book One-Teacher Schools

### Description:

Architect designed schools in Missouri tend to be “plan book” buildings based on designs published in annual reports of the Superintendent of Public Schools or other readily available publications. Some of these publications were produced by state educators, others by companies providing plans as advertisement for their heating systems or school furnishings and supplies. Missouri may have plan book-influenced schools dating to the 1850s, but this type is primarily a product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To be considered a “plan book” school type a building’s design must be directly linked to a published plan book design. Some of the more common plan book designs used in Missouri are illustrated in the attached figure pages. These are by no means the only planbook designs used in the state, they are simply some of the ones most commonly seen in the sampling used to develop the property types.

Missouri’s known examples of plan book schools show a wide variety of building footprints, and appear to utilize the widest range of building materials. The most common plan book design used in Missouri, designed by J. H. Felt of Kansas City, utilized a truncated T-shaped plan with a side gable classroom and large projecting front-gable foyer (see Figures 5 and 6). Less common, was a reverse T-shape with a wide side-gable foyer backed by a longer, slightly narrower classroom like that constructed for the Pleasant View school district in Johnson County (built 1915, NR listed 8/5/1999). An early plan published by the state superintendent of public schools was for a cross gable building with roughly L-shaped footprint (see Figures 9 and 10). At the intersection of the two gables was an entrance porch. To keep the building from looking too residential, the plan was topped by a belfry and flag pole. Several examples of this type are known to have been constructed, including the “McNutt” school in St. Clair County. More modest in scale and design, and possibly easier to construct, were smaller gable front or pyramidal (roughly square) plan book schools (see Figure 7). The arrangement of rooms in these buildings is more difficult to discern from the exterior, but most had multi-room interiors with cloak/storage rooms and possibly workrooms or libraries.

Like their mass vernacular counterparts, the majority of Missouri’s examples are of frame construction with stone or concrete foundations. Felt’s T-shape design is known to have been constructed in wood, brick, concrete block and with stucco cladding. The cross-gable plan book schools, at least those known, were primarily frame. However, a variation of the plan including Gothic openings over the porch was constructed for the Bonnieview School in Lawrence County, of granite blocks. Pyramidal and gable-roof examples were constructed in frame, brick, concrete block and stone (usually with cobble or slab—“Ozark Rock”—cladding).

Plan book schools came in a variety of materials, shapes, and configurations, but most known examples in Missouri had similar characteristics. All known examples have multi-

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room arrangements. At minimum, these schools had a large classroom and a common entrance hall. Most, however, had separate cloakrooms/washrooms for boys and girls in addition to the classroom. Several examples also had a separate workroom that could be used for manual training, a small kitchen, or library. Basements were also common features of plan book schools. When constructed, basements were generally used to house the schools heating plant, but the space also doubled in many cases as a workroom, indoor play area, and/or kitchen.

Plan book schools tended to incorporate the latest recommendations from scientists and educators for lighting, heating, and sanitation—or at least be easily adaptable to these recommendations if the local school district could afford to implement them. For example, most one-teacher school plans published by Missouri's superintendent of public schools included a band of windows on one side of the classroom to conform to the preference for one-sided lighting. Specifications accompanying plans often included adaptations for different types of heating systems, including furnaces in basements or jacketed stoves located in the corner of a classroom. In either case, adequate air returns and ventilation were key components to plan book designs. For sanitation, cloakrooms for boys and girls could easily be adapted for indoor toilets either hooked to a septic tank or crematory/composting systems.

The interiors of these schools tended to be well appointed. Dark wallpaper seen in many mass vernacular schools was replaced by light (often off white or light beige) walls with decorative trim and/or wall paper borders. Stained or painted woodwork around doors and windows was common, as was wainscoting. Large blackboards were a nearly universal feature and built in book cases were common. Increasingly common were individual seats and desks, initially bolted to the floor but later movable to allow for a greater amount of flexibility in the classroom space. Also more common in these schools were specialized school equipment such as closets and storage spaces hidden behind blackboards and stand-alone drinking fountains.

### Significance:

Plan books for one-teacher schools have been published since the 1830s and it is possible that some plan book one-teacher schools were constructed in Missouri during the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, known examples are primarily a product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and were built as a response to demands for improved rural education. To foster education and revive interest in rural life and culture, school buildings had to provide a clean and safe environment for students. This meant good lighting, adequate heating, clean air, and sanitary classrooms and toilets.

Plan book schools in rural districts represent the zenith of the Rural Renaissance in Missouri's country schools. Their construction went a long way toward meeting the requirements of becoming an "approved" rural school, as their designs met the demands for good lighting and proper heating and ventilation. While improvements to the physical



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plant of the school was only one component of the “approved” rural school criteria, the construction of these buildings might also indicate that the school district could meet other requirements such as minimum pay standards for well-trained teachers and well-equipped schoolrooms with adequate libraries and other educational tools (globes, maps, etc.). Districts that could afford plan book schools could also, very likely, afford to meet these other standards.

In addition to incorporating, to the extent possible in rural locations, the latest advances in lighting and heating, architects designing these buildings also incorporated stylistic features. Though generally simply designed and lacking ornate details, plan book designs generally show the influence of popular architectural styles. Examples from the early period show some Late Victorian influence, such as the complex cross gable roofline, turned porch posts, and imbricated shingles. Craftsman details such as exposed rafter tails, knee braces along the eaves, and tapered porch posts were also common features. In some cases, floor plans from early examples were unaltered while sample elevation drawings were updated to reflect the latest architectural trends. While these schools often shared architectural embellishments with contemporary houses, most plan book schools were distinctly institutional, blending the desire for a school to be a “home away from home” with the image of “what a schoolhouse should look like.”

Improvements in rural schoolhouses and rural education went hand in hand with the desire to promote rural life and culture. Plan book schools were designed and promoted not only to be the local seat of education, but to accommodate the community at large. These schools were meant to be community facilities, with the flexibility to house children during the day, farm grange meetings at night as well as weekend canning demonstrations, monthly reading circles, and local elections. Like their mass vernacular counterparts, these buildings became important social centers and often the seat of the state’s smallest governmental unit—the rural school district.

The level of significance for the majority of mass vernacular schools will be local. They were governed at the district or township level by residents of the district. They were centers of the community, socially and educationally, but in most cases the “community” was limited to a congressional township or small (four or five square mile) area. Some schools may have state-level significance, if important events occurring in the building had a regional (multi-county) or statewide impact. Examples might also be of statewide significance architecturally if they are a very rare form, such as the octagonal brick school on the Watkins Mill State Historic Site in Clay County.

The period of significance for a nominated plan book schoolhouse will be the period of its use as a public educational facility. The period will, in most cases, begin with the date of construction of the property and end when the building was either replaced by a newer building or the district was consolidated and students transported to a new site.

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### Registration Requirements:

Architect Designed/Plan Book Schools nominated under either Criterion A or C will be fairly pristine examples of the type. These schools must retain characteristic features including original construction method and exterior building materials, original roof form (the pitch of which must be unchanged since the period of significance). Retention of original or early windows is essential.

The location of the schoolhouse is also important. These schools were built for specific districts by the people of the district to educate their children, so significance is closely tied to place. However, there is some evidence that schoolhouses were physically moved to better accommodate the population of the district though this was more common among mass vernacular examples. If there is evidence that the school was moved to a new location and subsequently continued its educational function, then the school may still be eligible for listing in the National Register. Because this was historically a very common property type and numerous examples are still extant, buildings moved after the period of significance will generally not be considered eligible for listing in the National Register. These building types characteristically had basements (or at least closed foundations), so moving them would mean a significant loss of historic educational space and material. In rare cases, moved buildings may be eligible for listing if they are still located in the boundaries of the district that they served and if reconnaissance survey of other school sites in the county indicate that it is a rare surviving, and highly intact, example of the type.

Plan book schools were often the last school type constructed by a local district and generally served students until the district consolidated. These schools were constructed to meet high standards set by the State Superintendent of Public Schools. Updates such as electricity, plumbing, improved heating plants, and changes in furnishing was not uncommon. However, large additions, alterations to interior room arrangements, and changes to exterior material were rare. Alterations made during the period of use as a school do not impact the integrity of the property type; instead these changes should be seen as important aspects of the evolution of these buildings in response to changing requirements for education and educational buildings.

Additions to these buildings made after the period of significance, however, may significantly alter the historic character of the building. Schools adapted for farm, residential or church use may have experienced large additions as well as alterations to exterior materials and window openings. Schoolhouses with additions to the front elevation dating after the period of significance will not be eligible for listing in the National Register. Because fenestration on the sides of these buildings for light and ventilation is a character-defining feature, side additions built after the period of significance that obscure these features are also unacceptable as are significant modifications to window and door openings. Additions to the side and rear may be acceptable if they are set back from the front façade, and do not obscure a character-defining building feature (such as original fenestration). Additions should also be of smaller scale than the original building.

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Nominations for schools with additions should demonstrate that the building is otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

Plan book schoolhouses, though characteristically small buildings, were constructed as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of the property type. To qualify for National Register listing, examples of these school types should retain their open classrooms. Also, original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the school during its period of significance should be evident. The retention of the open classroom space is of upmost importance. Retention of original furnishings such as blackboards and school desks is helpful but not essential.

One-teacher schoolhouses, notably those in rural locations, were historically centers of small school complexes. These school complexes often had associated privies, fuel storage buildings, and wells/cisterns with pumps. A few examples also had associated small barns or sheds for horses and/or a teacherage. Common landscape features include fences, flagpoles, trees planted during Arbor Day celebrations, and school gardens. When extant or evident, these resources should be considered significant and contributing if they retain integrity to the period of significance. Ruins, such as foundations for privies or other outbuildings, should also be contributing features as they tell a story about the evolution and use of the schoolyard during the period of significance.

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## **G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

The majority of one-teacher schools were located in rural areas of the state—outside the political boundaries of towns and cities. They existed in every county and serviced rural townships and small villages. Some examples of public one-teacher schools did exist in larger communities. Often, examples located in towns and small cities were constructed to serve as segregated schools for small African-American populations. Because of the widespread occurrence of these building types, the geographical boundaries for this document are the political and geographic boundaries of the State of Missouri.

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## H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The identification and evaluation of one-teacher school types was based on existing data from several sources: architectural and historic surveys of Missouri towns and counties, published county rural school histories, websites of county historical and genealogical societies, and National Register of Historic Places nominations for one-teacher schools. The Historic American Building Survey photographs of schools in Missouri were also reviewed.

To date, five thematic school related surveys have been conducted in the state. Three of the surveys have specifically addressed large urban schools in Kansas City and St. Louis. These were not consulted because of the size and urban location. In 2000-2002, Gary Kremer and Brett Rogers conducted a survey of African-American schools in several counties in central and western Missouri. The majority of schools surveyed were rural, one-teacher schools and are included in the evaluation though some had been too altered or deteriorated for easy classification into type. Only one county-wide survey has specifically addressed rural schools, that conducted by David Burton in Greene County in 2000. More helpful were county-wide surveys conducted between c. 1970 and the present, when available. Missouri has not been comprehensively surveyed, and many of the existing surveys focus on populated rather than rural areas. However, a review of architectural and historic survey forms did yield several hundred survey forms and photographs for rural schools.

Most helpful were books, websites and other publications containing historic photographs of rural schools across Missouri. Several counties including Adair, Lafayette, Pettis, Stoddard, and Pike have publications devoted to the history of their rural schools. These publications generally contain historic or more recent photographs of rural schools and brief school histories. While many of the schools identified in these publications are no longer extant, the photographs were useful in identifying school building forms and types and how school buildings evolved over time.

Increasingly genealogical and historical societies and other groups are providing online access to photographs and other archival materials. Several historical societies devote a portion of their websites to rural schools, notably to historic photographs of those schools. Though apparently unaffiliated with a historical society, the website "Jasper County, Missouri Schools" ([www.jaspercountyschools.org/](http://www.jaspercountyschools.org/)) contained numerous rural school photos. This and similar sites were a great boon to this project as no survey of Jasper County has been conducted outside the towns of Carthage, Joplin and Webb City.

To compile and define property types and registration requirements, approximately 924 survey forms and historic photographs of Missouri's one-teacher schools were reviewed. This number included examples from 76 of the state's 114 counties. It is unknown how many of these buildings are extant, or how many extant examples were not included in the sampling. At its peak in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Missouri supported over 9,000 one-teacher schools. Many of the schools that were extant at the time were second or third generation buildings and

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many of these were later replaced or modified—some as late as the early 1950s. While the sampling is but a percentage of the total number of historic school buildings that once existed in the state, the date of construction for the sampling range from the mid-1800s through the 1950s, covering the major period of rural school development. Also included in the sampling are examples from all geographic regions of the state, so regional variations could be assessed. While some variation of one-teacher school design may be present in counties not represented in the sampling, based on general characteristics of the population, dates of settlement and school development, it can be surmised that rural schools in these areas would be similar in type to those identified in the sampling. As additional survey is completed, however, this document should be reevaluated and the property type descriptions amended and added as necessary.

To date (2011), at least 14 one-teacher public schools in Missouri have been listed in the National Register either individually (12) or as part of larger farm complexes (2). One of the oldest, White Hall School on “Greenwood” in Howard County, dates from 1860 with additions in c. 1920. The listed schools include several examples of mass vernacular (generally frame, gable front buildings) school types dating from c. 1875 to c. 1913 and at least one plan book school (Hicklin School in Saline County). Pleasant View School in Johnson County is very likely a plan book school or architect designed due to the refinement of its room arrangement and architectural features, and its similarity to one-teacher schools identified in other counties. All of these schools were listed for their educational and/or architectural significance.

Two of the listed school buildings are associated with a Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools.” This historic context was prepared for the National Park Service Ozark Scenic Riverway in 1991. The document specifically addresses context for rural one and two-teacher schools in the Missouri Ozarks (roughly south of the Missouri River in central and south central Missouri). Only two properties currently managed by the National Park Service (Lower Parker School, Dent County and Buttin Rock School, Shannon County) are listed in association with the context. While a helpful and important source for understanding rural education in the Ozarks, it leaves much of the state’s rural schools unaccounted for. Additionally, the document does not examine the evolution of rural school building design in response to changes in sanitation and education.

The historic context was developed using a wide variety of resources including histories of education in Missouri, annual reports of the Missouri State Superintendent of Public Schools, county histories and general histories on schools in the Midwest. Articles from the *Missouri Historical Review* and other sources addressing specific aspects of school development in the state were also consulted. The context provides a general overview of the growth and development of rural public schools in Missouri. The context, however, is not meant to provide a comprehensive history of Missouri school laws or rural schools in the state. Nor does the document provide a county-by-county or township-by-township history. Because of the long-term local control of rural school districts, any school nomination prepared in association with this Multiple Property Documentation Form should examine rural school development within the county and township in which the school is located.

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Furthermore, this document focuses primarily on broad educational and architectural significance of the state's one-teacher schools. School buildings may be significant under additional areas of significance, and their significance may reach beyond the bounds of the township or county. An example of this is the Newcomber School in Chariton County, the birthplace of the Missouri Farmer's Association, a cooperative organization formed by and to assist Missouri farmers that has become a significant leader in agribusiness in Missouri and the Midwest. This school may have statewide significance in the area of agriculture or social history. Were it still extant, Porter School (see "Rural Schools and the Rural Renaissance") in Adair County might have had national significance in Education as a shining example of the Rural Renaissance with additional local significance in Social History for its role in transforming and revitalizing the farm community that it served.

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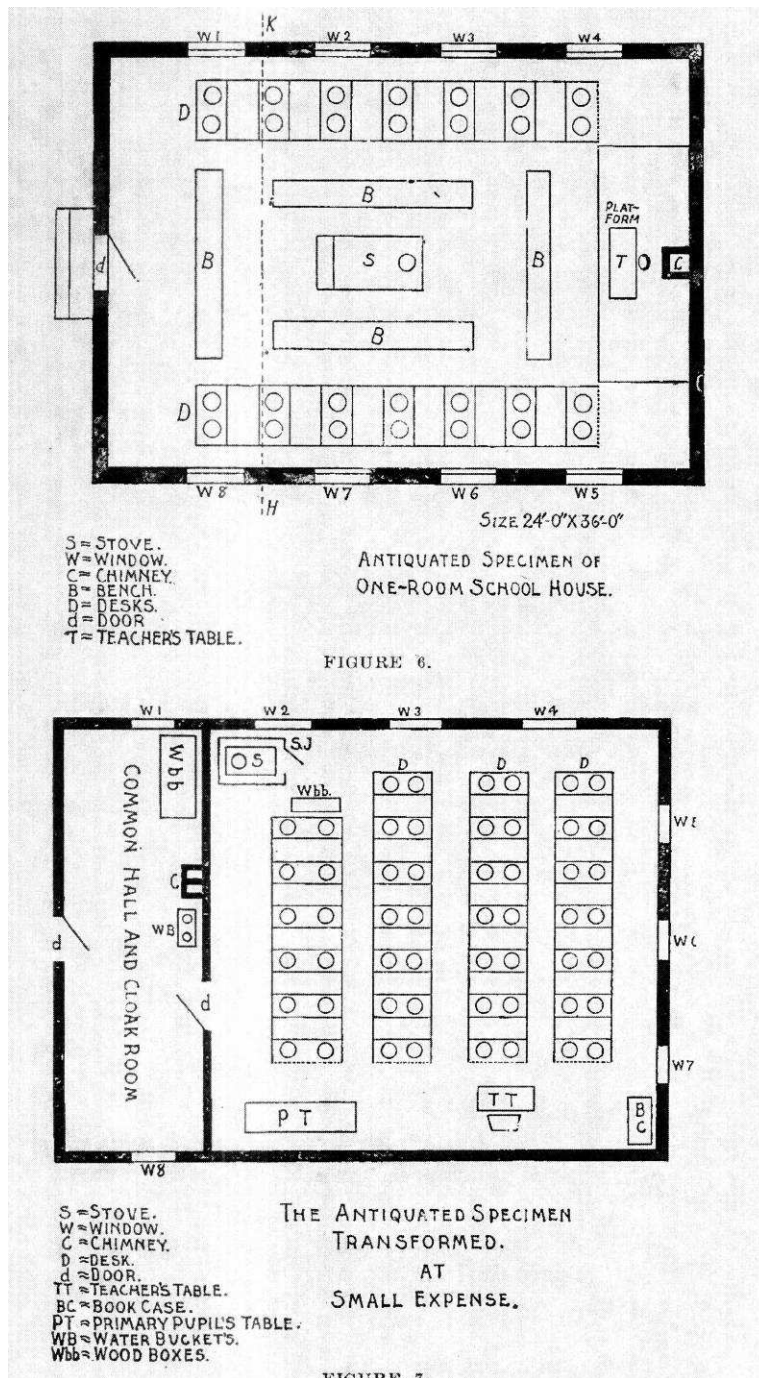
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**Figure 1:** Example floor plans showing suggestions for modernizing existing one-teacher schools from *School Buildings: Plans, Specifications and Suggestions for School Buildings for Rural and Village Districts*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, [c. 1911].

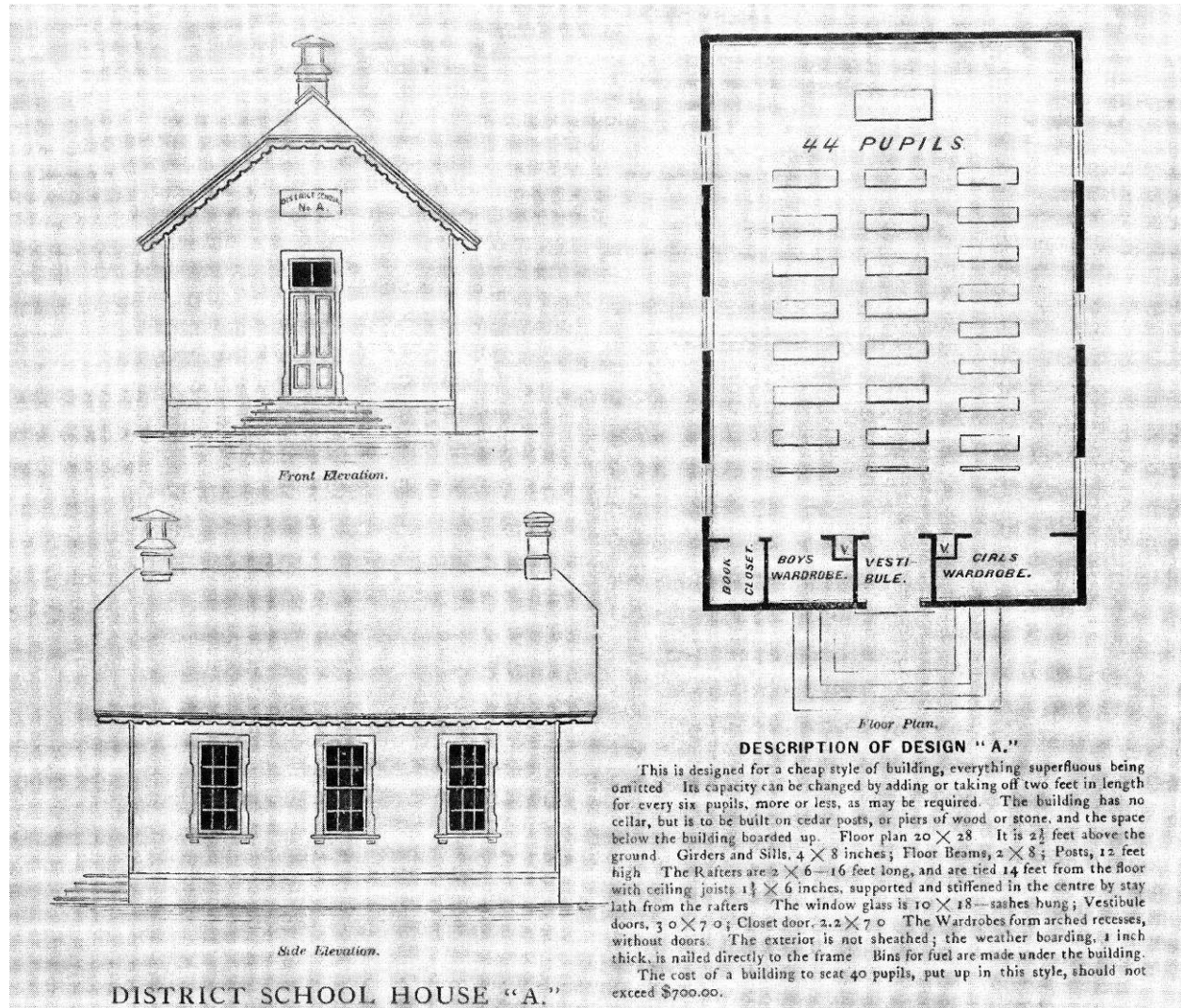


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**Figure 2:** Example gable front school plan from *Practical Plans for District School Houses*. Philadelphia: J. A. Bancroft & Co., [1874].

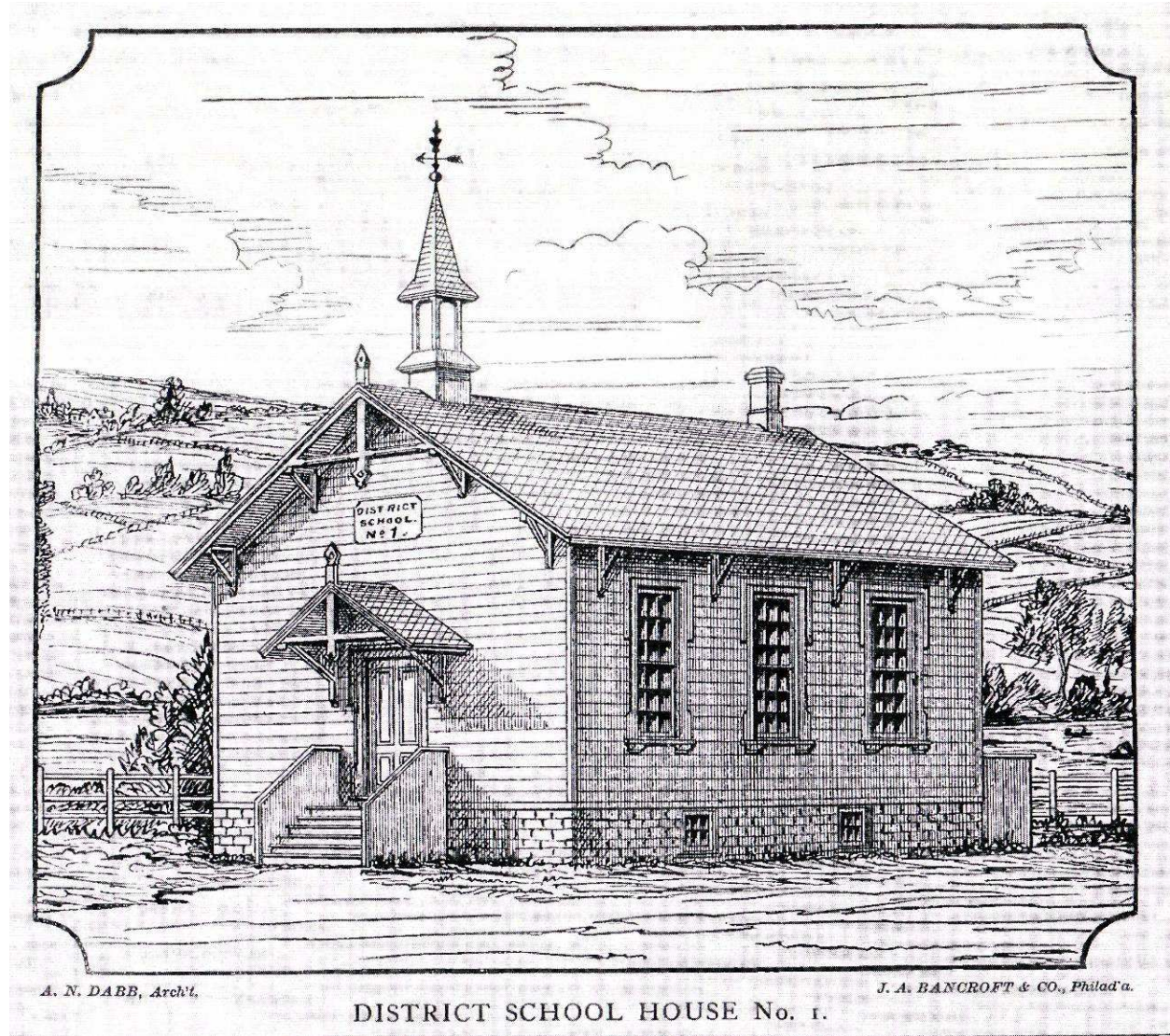


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**Figure 3:** Example gable front school plan from *Practical Plans for District School Houses*. Philadelphia: J. A. Bancroft & Co., [1874].



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**Figure 4:** Photo of Model Rural School designed by the Missouri State Commission and constructed for the St. Louis World's Fair. From St. Louis Public Library, "Celebrating the Louisiana Purchase," <http://exhibits.slpl.org/lpe/about.asp>.





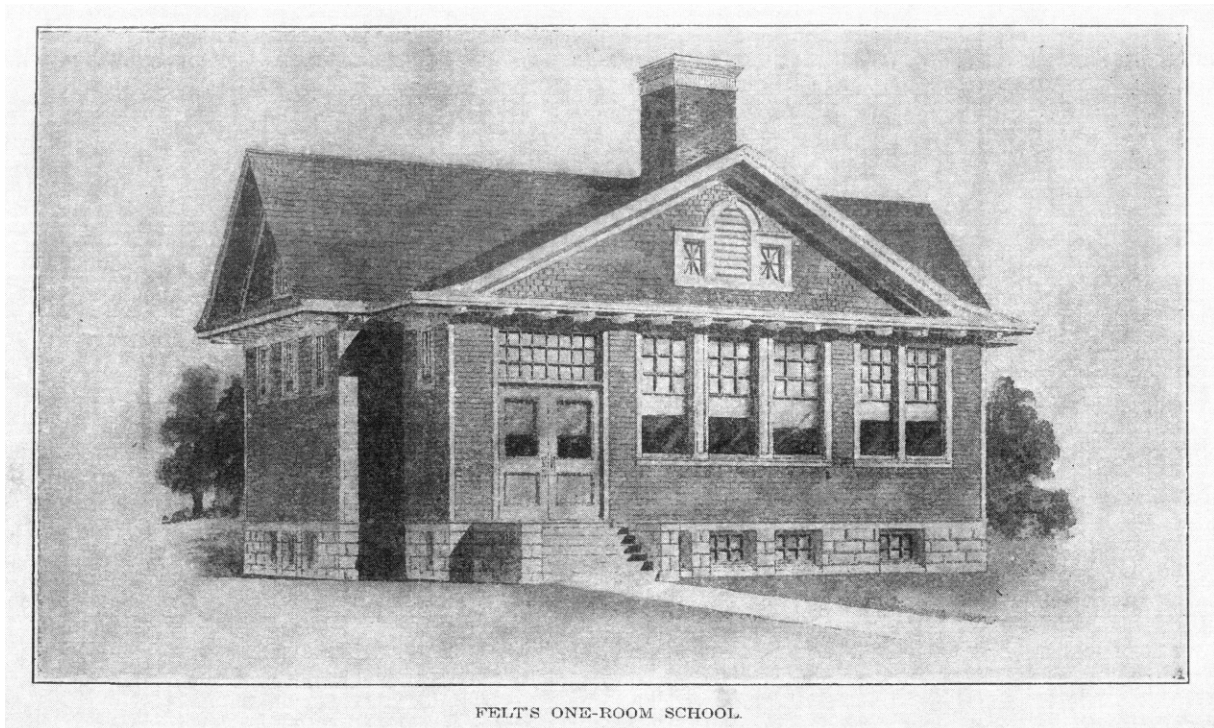
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**Figure 5:** Felt's one-room school elevation drawing. This is one of the most commonly used planbook designs in Missouri.

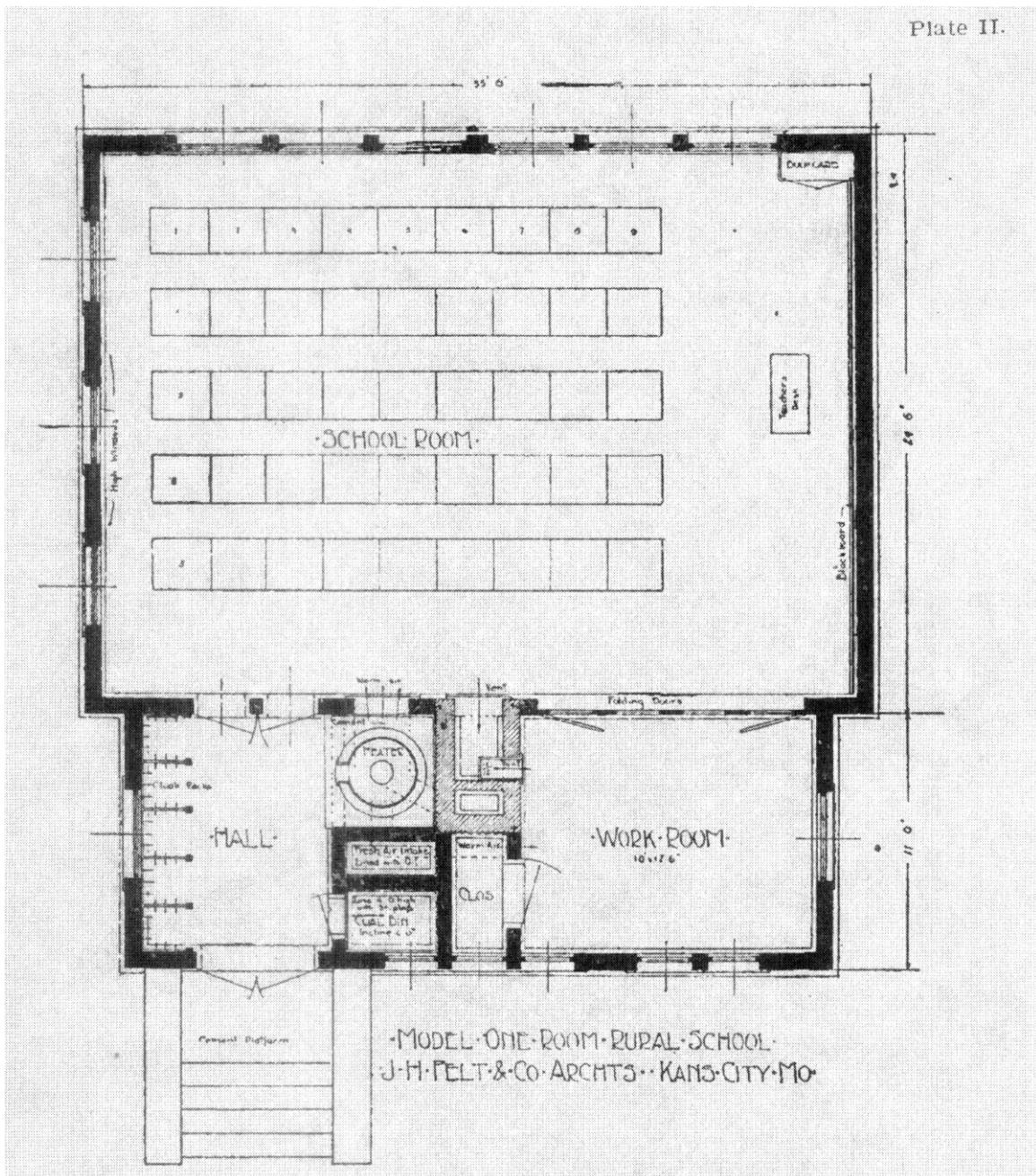


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**Figure 6:** Felt's one-room school floor plan. This is one of the most commonly used planbook designs in Missouri.

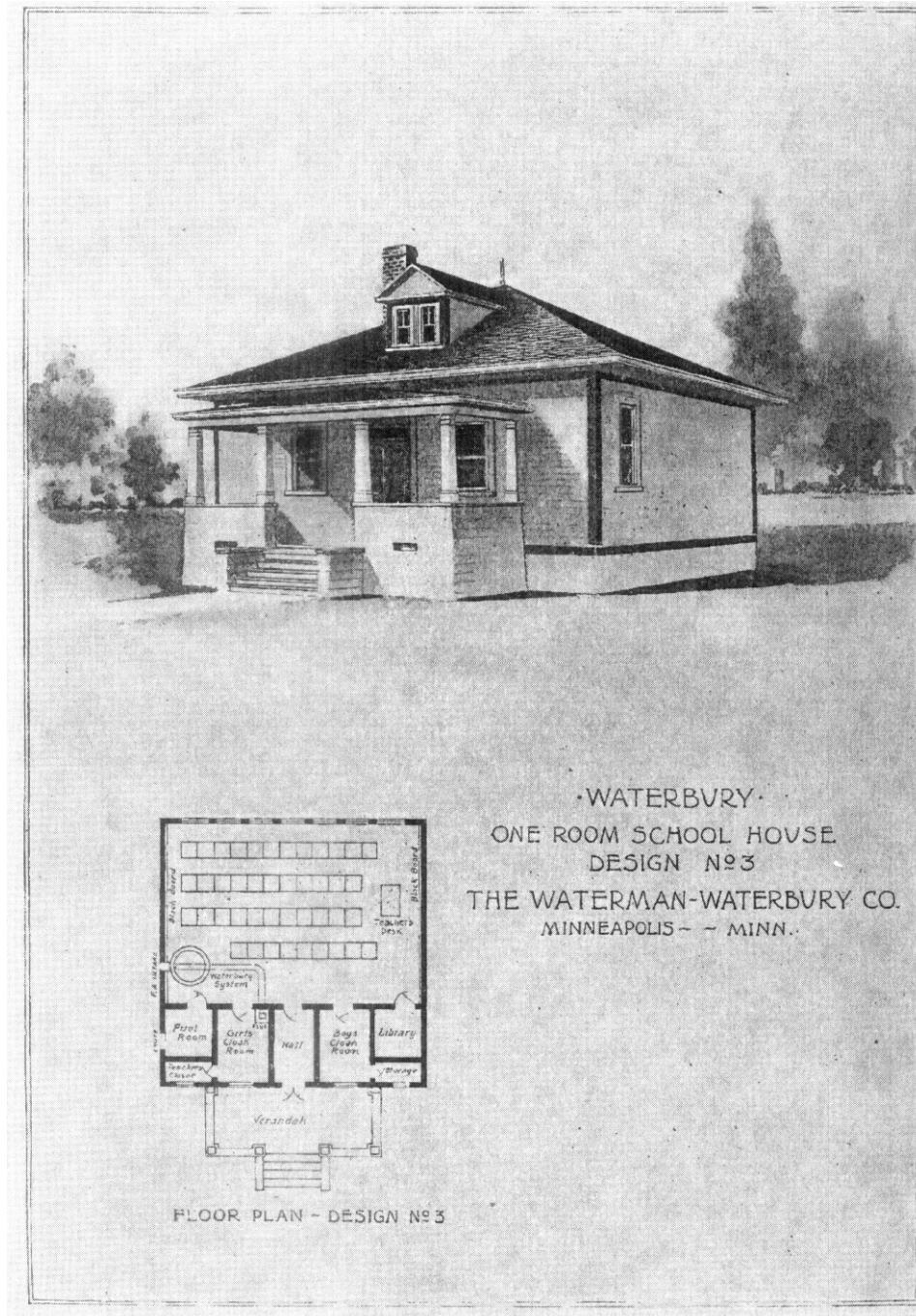


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**Figure 7:** Waterbury one room schoolhouse, design No. 3. Published in *Plans for School Improvement in Rural and Village Communities*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1914.

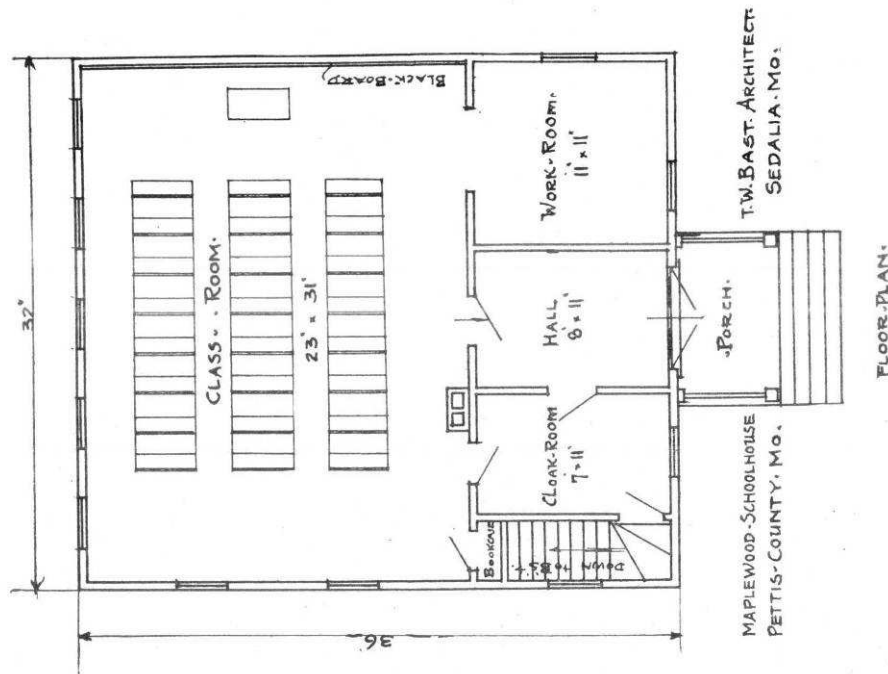


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**Figure 8:** Maplewood School, Pettis County, photograph and floor plan. Building designed by architect T. W. Bast of Sedalia.

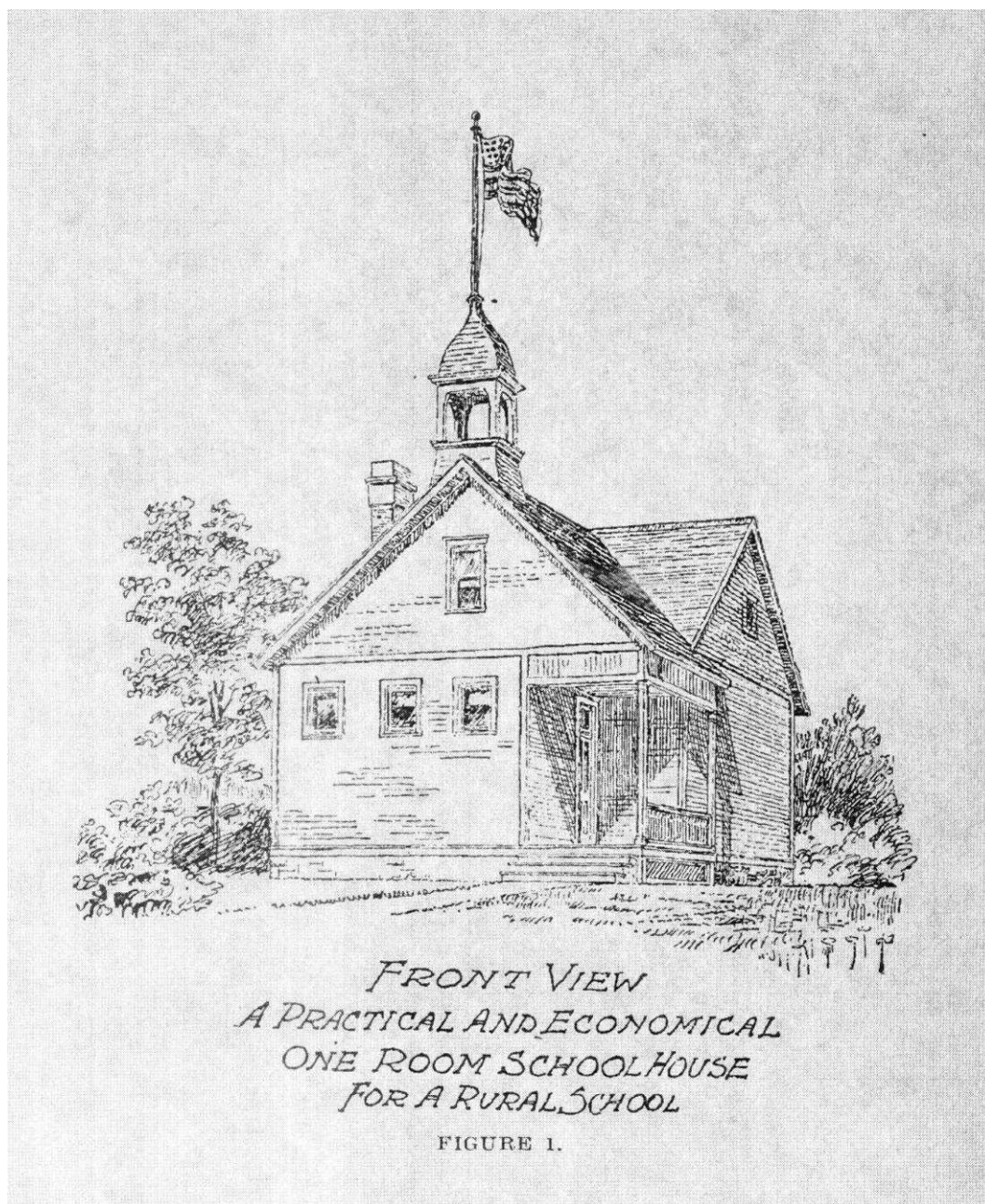


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**Figure 9:** Front view of a Practical and Economical One Room Schoolhouse, published in *School Buildings: Plans, Specifications and Suggestions for School Buildings for Rural and Village Districts*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, [c. 1911].



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**Figure 10:** Floor plan of a Practical and Economical One Room Schoolhouse, published in *School Buildings: Plans, Specifications and Suggestions for School Buildings for Rural and Village Districts*. Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, [c. 1911].

