

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Pleasant View School

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 674 SW 131 Highway [n/a] not for publication

city or town Medford [X] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Johnson code 101 zip code 64040

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date 29 June 1999

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date
[] entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
[] determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
[] removed from the National Register	_____	_____
[] other, explain See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	2	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	1	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0
		4	0

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

Education/school

Domestic/secondary structure

Current Functions

Other: polling place

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: one-room schoolhouse

Materials

foundation concrete

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Education

Architecture

Periods of Significance

circa 1915-1949

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown/Layton, J.W.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	412480	4280525			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger Maserang/Historian

organization DNR/Historic Preservation Program date April 19, 1999

street & number P.O. Box 176 telephone 573/751-0504

city or town Jefferson City state Missouri zip code 65102

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name Barbara Snyder

street & number 654 SW 131 Highway telephone 816/850-4711

city or town Holden state MO zip code 64040

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Summary: Constructed in 1915, Pleasant View School is a frame one-room schoolhouse located approximately one and a quarter mile north of Medford in Johnson County, Missouri. The side-gabled, bungalow building occupies its original tract of nearly one acre adjacent to Missouri Highway 131. Architecturally, Pleasant View School is a plan book building, one of four rural schoolhouse categories suggested by Schroeder.¹ Nearby are a school privy (counted as a contributing building), the foundation of a coal storage building (counted as a contributing site), and a well with a hand pump (counted as a contributing structure). The schoolhouse roof has a prolonged front slope with a recessed, double-leaf entrance centered below a projecting gable. On both side elevations, the lower portion of the front roof flows into small, secondary gables which define a front tier of small rooms. Primary lighting is from a group of five double-hung windows in the north elevation but all facades are windowed. The original interior layout with a vestibule, classroom, cloakroom, library and kitchen/storage area is unchanged. Most of the building's original material is present throughout and there have been no additions or major alterations since the period of significance, 1915-1949. The blackboard, desks, book cases, a water cooler and an oil stove are intact from when the building was last used as a schoolhouse in 1957. Except for water damage in the south rooms and a broken window or two, the building is basically sound (it is still used as a rural polling place). Because its significant character and fabric are essentially unchanged, Pleasant View School easily retains integrity of location, design, materials, craftsmanship, and setting.

Narrative: Pleasant View School, with walls of white clapboard siding and a roof of green asphalt shingles, rests on its original foundation of poured concrete. The building's footprint is essentially rectangular with the longest dimension from front to back. The environment consists primarily of open, gently rolling agricultural land used for pasture and crops. Cows often graze just outside the 130' x 265' schoolhouse tract which is defined by a woven wire fence on three sides. The schoolhouse is still used for voting in the Rose Hill precinct but in recent years has been deserted between elections. One of the original privies, for girls, is near the northwest corner of the tract; an identical privy for boys stood in the southwest corner. The concrete foundation of a coal storage building is several feet west of the schoolhouse. An overgrown driveway curves in from adjacent Highway 131, a two-lane blacktop. Holden, population 2,389, is about two miles to the north. (See Site Plan, Figure One.)

The three-bay south elevation of the schoolhouse is approximately 32 feet wide. Centered in the symmetrical facade, the projecting front gable is supported by wooden posts resting on concrete piers. Behind the posts are short, angular extensions of the front wall which translate into narrow storage closets inside the building. Painted black letters in a panel above the entrance proclaim PLEASANT VIEW/DIST. NO. 96/1915. Boxed eaves wrap into the front gable where they are elaborated with decorative, curvilinear insets which are also boxed. An interior brick chimney penetrates the ridge on the west.

The double-leaf main entrance is recessed in the middle bay. Four wide concrete steps with an iron pipe handrailing lead to the tongue-and-groove porch. Panel outer doors with glazing are flanked by narrow sidelights set in truncated corners. Porch walls are plastered and painted above wainscoting. A pair of one-over-one double-hung sash windows is in each of the flanking bays. Cornerboards, instead of simply overlapping at the wall junctures, have joints filled with quarter-round moldings. Supports for the front gable use vertical boards with quarter-round moldings in a similar manner.

¹Fred E. H. Schroeder's categorizations are discussed by Andrew Gulliford in America's Country Schools (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984), pp.164-171.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

On the east and west side elevations, approximately 34 feet deep, small gabled projections extend from the prolonged front slope of the main roof. These tiny wings define the space occupied by the vestibule and a tier of small rooms which are south of the large classroom. On the east elevation parallel to and facing Highway 131, the projection contains a pair of one-over-one double-hung sash windows similar to those in the primary facade. The remainder of the east facade (where the blackboard is located) is unwindowed. Decorative, boxed curvilinear insets wrap into gables underlined with wide trim boards.

On the west elevation, the gabled projection is unwindowed but the upper portion of the primary wall has two square single-sash windows, one of which is covered with a plywood panel. A side entrance with a nonoriginal steel door is immediately north of the projection. Near the main roof ridge, a small opening with a hinged door provides access to the attic. Window and door openings in this facade have decorative crown moldings. Curvilinear, boxed insets are in the lower corners of the gables. An opening in the concrete foundation reveals floor joists of dimension lumber. A handicapped access ramp to the side entrance was constructed about six years ago in connection with the building's use as a rural polling place. However, the original concrete steps are intact beneath the ramp. The ramp, made of wood, is not attached to the schoolhouse.

The north (rear) elevation is approximately 30 feet wide. Fenestration is limited to a bank of five one-over-one double-hung windows. These large windows, which are centered in the facade, have decorative crown moldings similar to those in the west elevation.

A wooden outhouse near the northwest corner of the tract is a typical single privy with a roof that slopes from front to back. Walls of the 4' x 4-1/2' building are vertical boards. The roof is corrugated metal. The strap-hinged door faces south. A similar outhouse was near the southwest corner at the opposite end of the schoolyard. The waist high, 12' x 10' concrete foundation of the former coal shed has a concrete floor. The missing upper portion was frame. The well is about 20 feet southwest of the schoolhouse. The iron pump was manufactured by the A. Y. McDonald Co., of Dubuque, Iowa.

Unlike the vernacular one-room American rural schoolhouse where the front door opens directly into the classroom, Pleasant View School has a 6' x 8' vestibule that serves as a sort of buffer zone. The classroom is entered through a second set of panel doors with beveled glazing at the north end of the vestibule. The library room in the southeast corner is accessible from an entrance in the east vestibule wall, as well as from the classroom. (See Floor Plan, Figure Two.)

Tongue and groove wainscoting protects interior walls throughout the building. Above the wainscoting, the plaster walls are covered with fiberboard painted pale green. All interior woodwork is darkly varnished. Flooring consists of plain tongue and groove boards. The high ceilings, painted white, are covered with embossed metal panels. Interior cornices are also ornate metal.

The 29' x 23' classroom was oriented from east to west, with the teacher's desk facing west from its position in front of the windowless east wall. The blackboard extends across the entire east wall and wraps for a few feet into the north wall. Most natural illumination is from the north where five large windows are centered in the facade. This arrangement conforms to the theory expounded by education experts in the 1890s that light should fall over the left shoulder of pupils and come from one primary

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

source, preferably the north, to prevent eye strain from cross-lighting.² Electric lights with large white globes are suspended from the tin ceiling on chains. Electricity was not available in the Pleasant View area until after World War Two although the building had been wired years earlier.³

An interior brick chimney is in the west wall, with a propane gas heating unit. The original coal stove has been removed but the fuel oil stove that replaced it is in the northwest corner. A portrait of George Washington, a Western mountains-and-lake scene, and a Breton print of a peasant girl titled Song of the Lark are displayed on the south classroom wall. Fifteen school desks with lacy iron side panels, manufactured by New Peabody, are in the building. Most have been relocated along the north wall to provide floor space for the building's ongoing function as one of Johnson County's twenty polling places. The old teacher's desk is also present, along with various other tables, chairs, and voting paraphernalia. A piano in the northeast corner was not part of the original classroom but probably was used by the local 4-H club, the Pleasant View Busy Beavers, which met in the building after its formation in the 1940s.

Three small auxiliary rooms accessible from the classroom were used as a library, cloakroom, and kitchen/storage area. Entrances to these rooms have latticed transoms. The 12' x 8' library is the largest auxiliary room. Window pairs are in the two outer walls. Two wooden bookcases and a storage cabinet, plus a few books and wall maps remain in the library. In the library and cloakroom (west of the vestibule), narrow storage closets with shelves are built into the projecting wall forms that flank the recessed main entrance. The 7-1/2' x 8' cloakroom has rows of coathooks on the east and west walls. The cloakroom shares half of a window pair in the south wall with the adjacent 4-1/2' x 8' kitchen/storage room. This narrow room contains a canister water container (a "Sanitary Angle Stream Drinking Fountain") with a porcelain basin.

Despite some deterioration, Pleasant View School is one of the best preserved rural schoolhouses in Johnson County. Water has ruined portions of the "tin" ceiling in some auxiliary rooms but the rafters and flooring still appear to be solid. Original window openings are intact although some sash and glazing should be repaired or replaced. A new roof with at least some new sheathing is clearly the most immediate need. Some flooring in the recessed entrance is damaged but could easily be replaced. The interior mainly needs cleaning and detailing. The remaining members of the Pleasant View Community Club, a neighborhood group that would like to preserve this old one-roomer, are seeking National Register recognition as a first step toward eventual renovation.

²Gulliford, *op cit.*, pp. 192-193.

³Elizabeth Snyder Bryant student at Pleasant View School from 1918 through 1927, interviewed by Roger Maserang, April 5, 1999.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

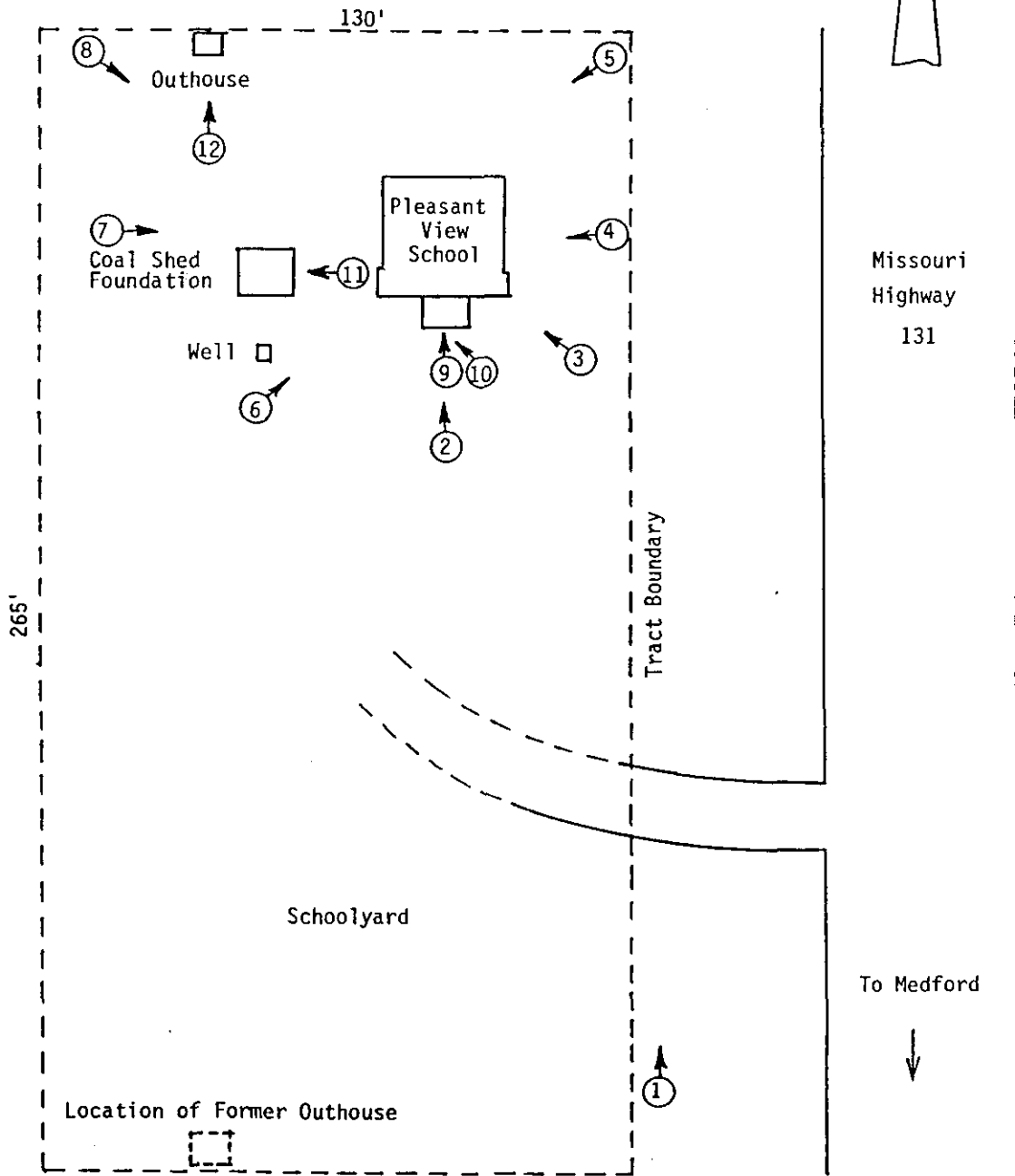
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Figure One
PLEASANT VIEW SCHOOL
Medford vicinity, Johnson County, Missouri

Site Plan



○ → Camera Angle

Scale Approximate

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

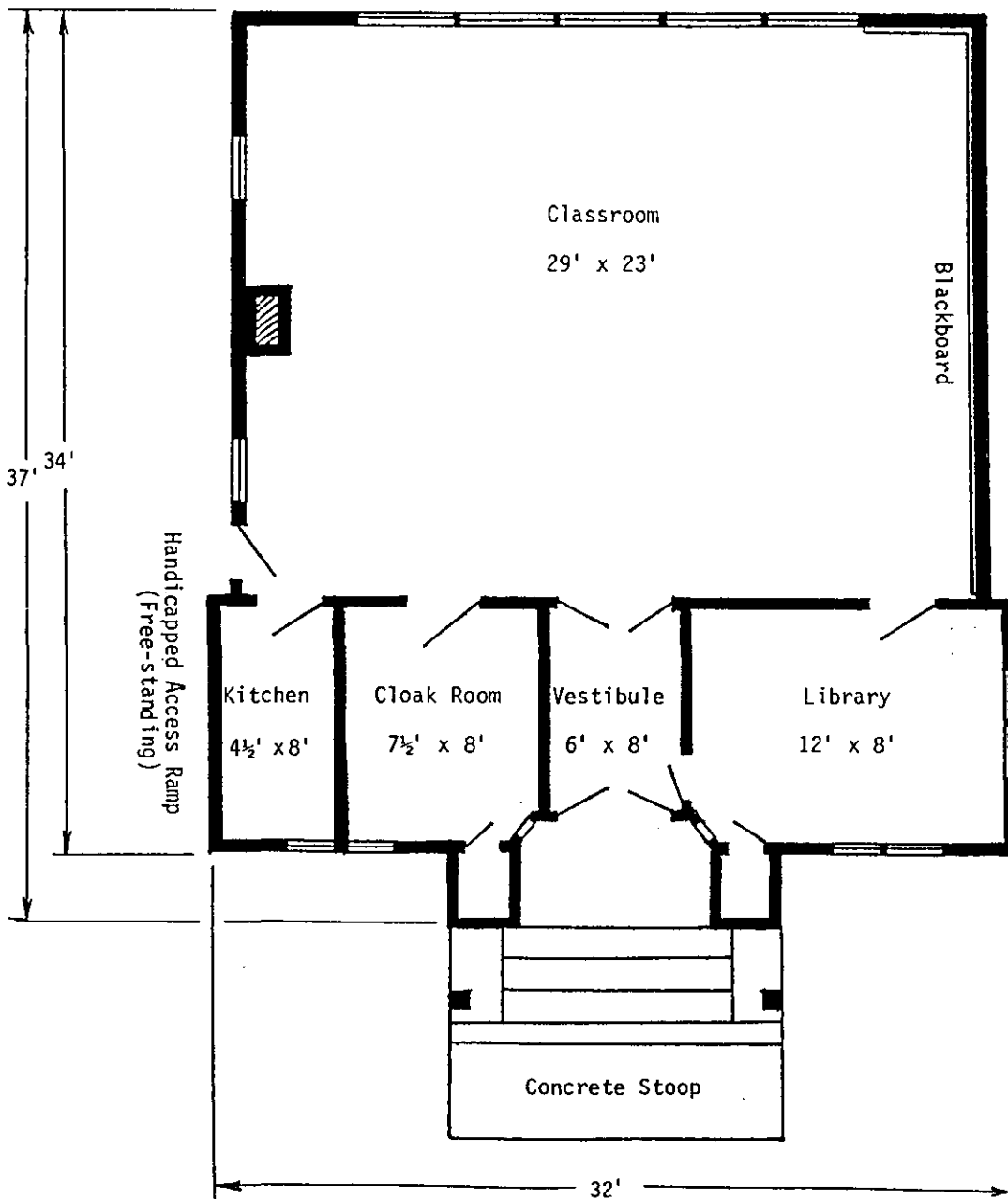
Section 7 Page 5

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Figure Two

PLEASANT VIEW SCHOOL
Medford vicinity, Johnson County, MO

Floor Plan



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Summary: Pleasant View School, located north of Medford in Johnson County, is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of EDUCATION and ARCHITECTURE. Constructed in 1915, Pleasant View School exemplifies an early twentieth century one-room schoolhouse in Johnson County, and its plan book design is unusual in the Show-Me Region.¹ For 42 years prior to consolidation, Pleasant View School was the building where children who lived in southwestern Johnson County's School District No. 96 came in pursuit of public education. Like other one-room schoolhouses, Pleasant View School was central to community life in the rural area that it served and the building remains a polling place today. As an architect-designed building, Pleasant View represented an attempt to transform the look of rural schoolhouses while making them more conducive to learning. Presumably, the plan--based on a design recommended by the Illinois State Board of Education--was tailored somewhat according to the particular needs and finances of School District No. 96, as was commonly done.² The schoolhouse retains its original layout of rooms and is relatively unaltered inside as well as out. A sense of the building's past is easily conveyed by the setting within an agricultural landscape and the presence of an original privy, a coal shed foundation, and a well with a hand pump in the schoolyard. The period of significance is from the time of construction in 1915 through 1949, the arbitrary cut-off date for National Register properties.

Schoolhouse History: The original schoolhouse on the site of Pleasant View School is believed to have been constructed a few years after the Civil War: "The present building is an old timer and has done service for nearly fifty years," reported Warrensburg's Weekly Standard-Herald in 1915 after voters of Cass School District No. 96 approved bonds to erect a new schoolhouse. The old building, known as Cass School, was removed that summer by William Armbruster who apparently planned to remodel it as a private residence on his nearby farm. The amount approved for construction purposes was \$1,200.³

By mid-June of 1915, directors of the Cass school district had "made a tour of inspection to examine the latest models of new school buildings and expect to incorporate the new ideas...in their structure."⁴ They selected a design recommended by the Illinois State Board of Education, and The Holden Progress soon reported that "work is now being pushed on the new structure, which is to be ready for use when school opens next September." In addition to the classroom or "work room," the new building was to include a vestibule, two cloakrooms, a toilet room and a library. Also, modern heating and ventilating systems were to be installed, the paper said.⁵ (The "toilet room" is something of a mystery since there was no inside plumbing and two privies were constructed in the schoolyard. However, a chemical toilet may have been contemplated. Instead of two cloakrooms, the building was constructed with one cloakroom plus a narrow room that was used as a sort of kitchen and storage area.)⁶

¹The Show-Me Region is a politically-defined area in west-central Missouri consisting of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties.

²"Another Modern School House," The Holden Progress, July 1, 1915.

³Warrensburg Weekly Standard-Herald, May 21 and June 11, 1915.

⁴Warrensburg Weekly Standard-Herald, June 18, 1915.

⁵"Another Modern School House," The Holden Progress, July 1, 1915.

⁶Elizabeth Snyder Bryant.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Construction was a community project. School directors, primarily building committee chairman W. W. Goodwin, supervised the work. To save money for the district, local farmers provided teams for hauling lumber and other building materials. "The community spirit prevails in that district and the farmers are hauling out the material free and assisting the directors in other ways to keep down the expenses," said the Standard-Herald. A. Hughes, of Clinton, constructed the foundation of poured concrete and J. W. Layton was the primary carpenter. On August 20, 1915, the new schoolhouse was declared ready for use: "It is a model building and a credit to the progressiveness of the district."⁷

Although the new schoolhouse was referred to as the Cass School before and during construction, at least in the press, it shortly became known as the Pleasant View School. With Cass County only a few miles to the east, some confusion must have resulted from the old name and the erection of a new building probably seemed like a logical time to make a change. The rural community that was served by School District No. 96 had no such name in 1915, but considering the picturesque agricultural landscape around the schoolhouse, "Pleasant View" was a good descriptive choice. There were around 115 relatively independent school districts in Johnson County at the time, and the fact that School District No. 136 in the north half of the county already called itself Pleasant View was apparently either shrugged off or overlooked.

"Pleasant" something or other was an especially common name for one-room schools,⁸ and Johnson County was unusually well-represented with Pleasant Greene, Pleasant Grove, Pleasant Point, Pleasant Prairie, and Pleasant Shade as well as the two Pleasant Views. Probably, it had little if anything to do with the fact that one of the earliest settlers of Johnson County, if not the earliest, was named Pleasant Rice. One-room schools often were named after communities, features of the landscape, settlers who donated land, and any number of things. Other Johnson County rural schools (this is only a partial listing) had names like Green Door, Lone Walnut, Science Hill, Locust Grove, Hazel Mound, Elm, Liberty, Masonic Hall, Cross Roads, County Line, Brushy, Brush Hill, Sunny Side, Cana, Houx, Rocky Point, Barthick, Crab Orchard, Eldorado, Scaly Bark, Mt. Xenia, Quick City, Eureka, Hepsidam, Prairie Home, Diamond Point, Flardonina, Preuss, Orr, Magnolia, etc. Black schools in rural areas were named Lynn, Murray, and Foster.⁹

Pleasant View School opened on Tuesday, September 14, 1915. Miss Ruth Cheek, newly graduated from the Normal School at Warrensburg, was the first teacher. Twenty-seven pupils were enrolled. The following spring, 1916, Raymond Whittenberg became the new school's first graduate. Altogether, 112 pupils completed the eighth grade that year in rural Johnson County schools, an average of about one per district. Some rural schools had no graduating students in a given year, while a class of five or six would have been considered large. The next year, 1917, five were graduated from Pleasant View. Cheek

⁷Warrensburg Standard-Herald, July 2, July 23, and August 20, 1915.

⁸Andrew Gulliford, America's Country Schools (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984) , p. 35.

⁹Ewing Cockrell, ed. History of Johnson County, Missouri (Topeka and Cleveland: Historical Publishing Co., 1918), pp. 136-140.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

completed her second year of teaching at Pleasant View, then either found a more desirable position or, perhaps, got married.¹⁰

The rate of teacher turnover was high in rural schools and Pleasant View was no exception. The job was often very challenging and the pay was relatively low. In 1933, for example, the average salary for a rural teacher in Johnson County was only \$418 a year.¹¹ Barely six, Elizabeth Snyder Bryant entered the first grade at Pleasant View in 1918. She experienced seven different teachers by the time she was graduated in 1927. Many teachers left after only a year or so, perhaps driven away by youngsters they could not control, but some remained for several years. In addition to Cheek, other teachers at Pleasant View School through the mid-1930s included Clarice Whittenberg, Elsie Wilkenson, Mary Hodges, Lavina Engles, Catherine Kelly, Mary Lane, Lelah Hammontree, Effie Hunzinger, Mabel Young, Lela Harris and Helen Chamberlin.¹²

Pleasant View School continued as a one-room schoolhouse until May 1957, when it became another casualty of the nationwide consolidation movement. However, School District No. 96 had become part of the Holden R-III School District a few years earlier, with seventh and eighth graders transported to Holden and the younger students continuing at Pleasant View until a new elementary school was opened in Holden for the 1957-58 school year. The last transaction entered by Pleasant View Clerk C. S. Davis in the District Clerk's Financial Record for District No. 96 was dated November 26, 1951. Pleasant View School had 18 elementary students at the start of its final year, 1956-57, down from 28 the previous year but probably close to its average enrollment. The last one-roomer in Johnson County was Valley Grove School District No. 1. Valley Grove closed in 1963, becoming part of the Windsor school district in Henry County.¹³

Most of Johnson County's old rural schoolhouses are either gone or have been converted into homes, hay barns, corn cribs, storage buildings, etc. Many simply stood empty until they collapsed. Some schools, such as Lowland and Pleasant View (School District No. 96), were granted a new lease on life as community centers. Round Grove School, a building very similar to Pleasant View, is used as a workshop and storage building. Doak School became a residence. Crossroads School became a shelter for hogs. Elm School was moved several miles to Warrensburg and rebuilt as a project of the Johnson County Historical Society. In 1985-87, 15 one-room schoolhouses were inventoried in Johnson County by Show-Me Regional Planning Commission in connection with a countywide architectural survey. Most were traditional gable front buildings in relatively unaltered but fragile condition. The number of extant one-room schoolhouses in Johnson County today is unknown.

Education: The Jeffersonian concept of a free public education was not realized in most parts of America until the mid-nineteenth century. In Missouri, which was typical, implementation of public education was slow in coming although the Constitution of 1820 declared that "the children of the poor shall be taught

¹⁰The Holden Progress, September 16, 1915, May 18, 1916, and "The Last Day of School," April 26, 1917.

¹¹Warrensburg Star-Journal, October 17, 1933.

¹²Elizabeth Snyder Bryant.

¹³The Holden Progress, August 28, 1952, September 6, 1956 and September 12, 1957.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

free." In 1839, the Geyer Act was a serious early attempt to incorporate Jefferson's ideas on state-supported education in Missouri. Geyer was largely ineffective, but in 1853 the General Assembly passed a new education act that, finally, created a workable framework for public education in Missouri. By 1860, despite a slow start in the battle against illiteracy, approximately one of every five Missourians was attending school. After the Civil War, public education was greatly expanded in Missouri as elsewhere. The concept of free schools, once resisted as a form of charity, was clearly gaining support.¹⁴

Before the widespread consolidation of school districts, before the busing of rural students to centralized schools in the larger towns became standard procedure in the 1950s and 1960s, large numbers of one-room country schools were distributed across the American rural landscape. Thousands of small rural schools, each serving only a handful of students from the immediate vicinity, made sense in the years before paved roads and automobiles when most students had to walk or ride horseback to school. In Missouri, these relatively independent rural school districts were established wherever there was a need. State law required only that there be twenty students living in the district and that the school board meet annually to set the tax levy and school term for the following year. By 1913, there were approximately 212,000 one-room schools in the United States and half of all the schoolchildren in the nation attended them.¹⁵

Mainly, rural schoolhouses were small and relatively simple buildings because while enrollments varied from year to year and school to school, they usually averaged no more than twenty or thirty students in most districts. Also budgets were limited and, in any case, extra classrooms would have complicated the teacher's already difficult job of maintaining order. Even if a rural school had a cloakroom or vestibule as a buffer against the cold, virtually all formal instruction occurred in one classroom.¹⁶ Pleasant View School was of typical size and enrollment, opening in 1915 with 27 students and closing in 1957 with 18. The district probably never had many more than 30 students enrolled, if it had that many. Although the Pleasant View design called for tiny auxiliary rooms, their simple arrangement made it easy for teachers to monitor them.

The earliest schools in Johnson County were private, supported by subscriptions and conducted at the residences of various settlers before buildings were specifically constructed as schoolhouses. Or "an old log cabin would answer the purpose of school room, and very often this was a dirt or puncheon floor, and without windows, except the chink holes." The reputed first school was taught by Z. T. Davis at the home of Robert Craig near Columbus in 1833, a year before Johnson County was organized. In an 1860 election, Davis became the county's first school commissioner.¹⁷

¹⁴Claude A. Phillips, *Fifty Years of Public School Teaching* (Columbia, Mo.: Missouri State Teachers Association, Inc., 1948), pp. 1-2; and Duane Meyer, *The Heritage of Missouri: A History* (St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 287-292.

¹⁵Gulliford, p. 35.

¹⁶Gulliford, p. 36.

¹⁷*The History of Johnson County, Missouri* (1881), pp. 280, 671.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

At first there was little uniformity in terms of curriculum or quality of instruction, no state or county requirements as to a course of study for elementary schools. In 1849, Murray School south of Columbus was taught by Alfred Hocker whose salary was paid in part by public funds (\$53.60) and in part by private subscriptions (\$121.40). Subjects or "branches" taught by Hocker included English grammar, natural philosophy, astronomy, arithmetic, orthography, reading and writing. Depending on the teacher's knowledge, other early courses were likely to include such things as history, penmanship, algebra, geography, singing, etc. Hocker taught 35 children and the school term was six months.¹⁸ Pleasant View had a school term of eight months, September through April, but some other rural schools in Johnson County had terms of seven months and one had only six. Town schools had nine month terms.¹⁹

Schoolhouses such as Pleasant View were central to the communities they served. Where there was no specific governmental area smaller than a county, one-room schoolhouses filled an important need by providing an identity, a focus and a source of pride. As pointed out in America's Country Schools, people came from miles around to attend school programs for the various holidays as well as special presentations and graduations.²⁰ The first such event at Pleasant View was a Halloween "entertainment," written up as a social item in the Holden newspaper in November 1915: "About 40 patrons and friends responded to the invitations sent out by the schoolchildren and teacher, Miss Cheek.....The exercises were well rendered and showed efficient and careful training on the part of their teacher. The Goblin Man by the primary, and The Flight of the Birds, deserve special mention, as also did the old witch fortune teller. After the entertainment all enjoyed a social visit and viewed the new school building, which to the mind of Sup't [R. H.] Boston, who was a recent visitor, is one of the best to be found in this part of the state."²¹

Pleasant View School, like other one-roomers, often doubled as a community center and meeting place for special groups. The Pleasant View Community Club, established in 1928, met monthly at the schoolhouse for the purposes of "education, socialization and community development."²² The Pleasant View Busy Beavers 4-H Club (with the fourfold aim of improving the head, heart, hands, and health) also used the schoolhouse for its meetings and annual achievement night displays.²³ Pleasant View School has long served as the polling place for the Rose Hill Township precinct.

The daily educational routine at Pleasant View School was typical. Formal activity started at 9 a.m. with a song, Bible verses (no one complained), and the pledge of allegiance. Then students at the first, second, and third grade levels performed reading exercises while older classmates worked on their own lessons.

¹⁸Cockrell, pp. 128-132.

¹⁹R. H. Boston, in The History of Johnson County (Kansas City, Mo.: Kansas City Historical Company, 1881), pp. 135-136.

²⁰Gulliford, pp. 79-81.

²¹The Holden Progress, November 4, 1915.

²²Handbook for Community Organizers and County Social Workers in Johnson County (Columbia: n.p., 1934), p. 75.

²³The Holden Progress, August 4, 1955.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

The scholastic routine for the remainder of the day varied, but somehow the teacher got around to everyone and covered the various subjects as required by state law: reading, arithmetic, geography, history, language, nature study, agriculture and civil government. Sometimes the grade levels were combined for instruction in similar topics.²⁴ There was no escape from reading and arithmetic every year. Upon reaching the third grade, geography, history, language and nature study kicked in. Agriculture and civics were reserved for seventh and eighth graders.²⁵

The teacher's desk was in the middle of the east end where the blackboard was located. The students sat at traditional school desks which were arranged in about five rows. The desks were in various sizes but all had folding seats, tops with a pencil groove and a hole for an ink well, and a book storage shelf with ornate iron sides. Rather than bolted to the floor, they were attached to wooden runners so they could be easily rearranged. On heavily overcast days when natural illumination was insufficient for study, the teacher lit the school's kerosene lamps.²⁶ While teachers were responsible for the daily upkeep and operation of the building, an older boy usually filled the coal bucket and kept the fire going during Missouri winters.²⁷

For their noon meal, the students brought food from home in lunch buckets. Elizabeth Snyder Bryant recalled cooking beans for lunch on an oil stove in a tiny auxiliary room used as a kitchen. "We had one hot meal a day my last four years of grade school (1924-27)," she said. In addition to the lunch hour, which usually consisted of several minutes of rapid eating followed by an outside play period until the teacher rang her bell promptly at 1 p.m., there were traditional morning and afternoon recesses of fifteen minutes. The students were dismissed at 4 p.m.

Mrs. Bryant's association with Pleasant View School began in 1918, when she enrolled as a first grader. The Snyder family lived in Medford, approximately a mile and a quarter south of the schoolhouse. At first Elizabeth rode to school on horseback with an older sister, Helen, who was one of the original pupils when Pleasant View opened three years earlier. Later when Helen drove a horse and buggy to school in Holden, two miles north of Pleasant View, she dropped Elizabeth off and picked her up each day on the way back to Medford. As an eighth grader in 1927, Elizabeth rode to school on a Shetland pony that would not tolerate a bridle or halter and "was as ornery and stubborn as could be." That September when she started high school in Holden, Elizabeth drove the family's Model T Ford. Later, intent on becoming a teacher herself, she attended the Normal School at Warrensburg, graduating in 1937. She became a home economics teacher at a junior high school in Hannibal and later taught grades at Holden, Knob Noster, Kingsville and finally Pleasant Hill (in Cass County) where she retired in 1978. Her own children also attended Pleasant View School. Mrs. Bryant, now 86, returns there herself on a regular basis--to vote.

²⁴Elizabeth Snyder Bryant.

²⁵Boston, op cit.

²⁶The schoolhouse was eventually wired for electricity and power was turned on for the first time shortly after World War Two.

²⁷Elizabeth Snyder Bryant.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

The learning process is always affected by the student mix and the teacher's ability to cope with problems, and this was particularly true in one-room schools where a teacher had no support group. Mrs. Bryant recalled two "largely wasted" years at Pleasant View in the 1920s: "Two of the teachers in there were young, and there were boys going to school that were sixteen and seventeen years old because they'd take time out to work on the farm and then come back. Those older boys just practically ran those two women out of school. They couldn't keep order or anything. I might as well have stayed at home those two years. And then they got Catherine Kelly to come in. She was an older woman who had taught before and she straightened the school out. I think by that time the older bunch had quit coming anyway."

Probably the most scandalous behavior that Mrs. Bryant engaged in at Pleasant View involved a temporary loss of hearing that afflicted herself and other older students one afternoon while skating on a frozen farm pond southwest of the schoolyard. "When Miss [Lelah] Hammontree rang her bell at the end of lunch hour," she recalled with a chuckle, "we all just looked the other direction and pretended that we couldn't hear. That was a trick we played on her. Finally she sent one of the little kids out to get us." The delinquents escaped punishment, probably because Miss Hammontree never figured out how far the sound of her bell actually traveled on a wintry day. "Or if she did, she just took it in stride," Mrs. Bryant said.

For better or worse, Missouri was at the forefront of the consolidation movement. As early as 1901, the General Assembly authorized the development of consolidated school districts in Missouri. The main theory behind consolidation--which resulted in the closing of Pleasant View in 1957--was that children in rural areas would be better off in larger districts where they could be more completely separated according to grade level. Consolidation, which was inseparable from the development of high schools, became increasingly feasible as transportation advances made it unnecessary for schools to be within walking distance of their students. When it became obvious that many newly created high schools were struggling because of low enrollments, financial incentives offered by the state quickened the pace of consolidation.

By 1923, despite numerous consolidations, there were still 9,242 school districts in Missouri--certainly many more than the state wanted to deal with. By 1931, before implementation of a new state school bill greatly stimulated the consolidation movement, one in four Missouri high schools was struggling because attendance was too low for an efficient operation. Meanwhile three thousand of Missouri's rural schools had an average daily attendance of fewer than fifteen, while 1,200 had fewer than ten, according to State Superintendent of Education Charles A. Lee. But the 1931 education bill provided, among other things, free high school tuition for rural children and reimbursement to school districts for busing them. Under the bill, even rural districts were eligible for increased state funding if they had an average daily attendance of at least fifteen students.²⁸ During the 1930s, Missouri's support of public education was greatly extended with revenue generated by the new state sales tax.²⁹

The growth of consolidation in Missouri is reflected in the dramatic increase in the number of school children who were bused to school between 1930 and 1962. In 1930-31, 8,200 students were bused to

²⁸"Consolidation Aids School Work," in Warrensburg Weekly Standard-Herald, June 6, 1924, and "The New School Law," in The Holden Progress, August 27, 1931.

²⁹Meyer, p. 643.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

school. By 1945-46, the number had grown to 93,400. By 1962, 375,000 children were bused to school in Missouri.³⁰

Although nearly six thousand one-room schools were still in use in Missouri as late as 1946, most were considered liabilities by educators of the time and their end was near.³¹ The last year for one-room schools in Missouri was 1973, when the final 25 were closed.³² Valley Grove School, the last one-room school in Johnson County, was closed ten years earlier.

Mrs. Bryant took issue with the pro-consolidation argument that students who attended one-room schools received an inferior education: "I don't think we were cheated; I never felt cheated," she said emphatically. "I was just a medium student...but I think we got as good of an education at Pleasant View as the kids in town schools. Mary Lane and Lelah Hammontree (her teachers for grades six, seven and eight) were outstanding teachers." If she regretted anything about her nine years at Pleasant View, other than the inability of two teachers to maintain order, it was the limited library. "We didn't have many books. I read some of them three or four times," she said. In 1916-17, the Pleasant View library consisted of 150 books. Actually, most one-roomers in Johnson County had even fewer books that year.³³

Apparently, the importance of rural schools to the fabric of rural community life and what their loss would mean was seldom if ever considered by the advocates of consolidation. Somewhat ironically, now that consolidation has been completed, one-room schools like Pleasant View seem to have returned in another form. "Out of necessity," Gulliford points out in America's Country Schools, "country schools [had] been practicing for more than a century what the most sophisticated education systems now encourage--smaller classrooms, programs that allow students to progress at their own rate and students who help each other learn. We seem to have come full circle in our appreciation of the community values inherent in the one-room school, where the teacher taught students of various ages and abilities in a familylike atmosphere. Small private, parochial and alternative schools based on the one-room school model have begun to flourish."³⁴

The teacher was the key, but even if the large, consolidated school districts functioned as well in fact as in theory, the one-room school concept had unique advantages which are still being realized wherever such schools survive.

Architecture: Architect Louis H. Sullivan's suggestion that form follows function was particularly valid for country schoolhouses. Despite the fact that schools were constructed in several climates using a wide

³⁰Administrative Committee of the Cooperative Study of Rural Education and Rural Life, Missouri Looks at Her Rural Schools (December 1946), p. 7, and Meyer, p. 728.

³¹Missouri Looks at Her Rural Schools, p. 4.

³²Leslie C. Swanson, Rural One-Room Schools of Mid-America (Moline, IL: Leslie Swanson, 1984), pp. 30-31.

³³Cockrell, p. 139. The number of volumes is attributed to Cass School which was actually Pleasant View.

³⁴Gulliford, p. 45.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

range of materials in various ways, the schoolhouse building type is nonetheless distinctive on the landscape:

The form of country schools followed their function, relying on small utilitarian designs built with inexpensive, generally unprepossessing materials to shelter isolated, small groups of children brought together to get an education. A distinguishing mark of a building type is that its function has come to be readily recognizable by its form. Although a few country schools might be mistaken for rural churches or farm outbuildings, most can be quickly identified for what they are, or once were.³⁵

This factor of recognizability is clearly exemplified by Pleasant View School. Despite its rather nontraditional form, it is unlikely that Pleasant View School could be mistaken for anything other than what it is, an old schoolhouse.

Country school historian Fred E. H. Schroeder categorized rural schoolhouse architecture into four general categories which could also be considered as two types with subtypes. Schroeder's two broad categories divided country schools into vernacular buildings and architect-designed buildings. Each of these categories was further refined. Vernacular included both folk vernacular buildings constructed of local materials by local builders, and mass vernacular buildings utilizing dimension lumber and other mass-produced construction materials. Regardless of whether the materials were homemade or commercially produced, the design of vernacular buildings was always traditional. Architect-designed schoolhouses included buildings designed by an architect commissioned for the project (the least common type) and those based on designs selected from architectural plan books, such as Pleasant View.³⁶

The first schoolhouses in Johnson County were folk vernacular log buildings, closely followed by timber frame buildings. Cass School, the original building on the site where Pleasant View School was constructed in 1915, probably had a timber frame. Later, mass vernacular and architect-designed buildings based on plan books probably were produced more or less simultaneously. By the third generation of school construction, most school districts selected designs from architectural plan books "to reform the places in which education was to take place or to adopt the style of the times, or both." But in the more rural areas, the size of plan book schoolhouses was typically scaled down and the styling was simplified to conform to budgetary and other restraints. In the end, practical concerns usually dictated schoolhouse form.³⁷

During the period of design reform, while an educator/architect such as Henry Barnard might design Greek Revival schoolhouses because he believed that an impressive building would inspire pupils to

³⁵Gulliford, pp. 171-172.

³⁶Fred E. H. Schroeder's architectural categories for country schools are cited by Gulliford(pp. 164-171). Schroeder described four categories: vernacular, mass vernacular, architect designs based on plan books (such as Pleasant View School), and architect-commissioned.

³⁷Gulliford, pp. 166-168.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

excel, most school districts opted for simpler buildings that were within their financial means.³⁸ The main external differences between designed and vernacular schoolhouses were in roof type and applied decorative features. Hipped roofs were popular for designed buildings but uncommon on traditional schoolhouses, which nearly always had gable ends. Floorplans of designed buildings tended to include auxiliary rooms and other amenities but the teaching space remained one room, just as in vernacular schoolhouses.³⁹

Pleasant View School exemplifies an architect-designed plan book schoolhouse, but the extent to which the published design was actually carried out has not been determined. In selecting a plan for Pleasant View, school officials are said to have made an inspection tour of new buildings before ultimately choosing a design recommended by the Illinois State Board of Education. Perhaps the Pleasant View directors actually traveled as far as Illinois to view late model schoolhouses, but this seems unlikely. Probably, they simply obtained a set of plans published by the Illinois board and found one to their liking. By the time Pleasant View was constructed in 1915, collections of schoolhouse designs were readily available from various governmental agencies, both state and federal.⁴⁰

While Pleasant View is a good local example of a plan book design schoolhouse in Johnson County, it is not altogether unique. School District No. 79's Round Grove School, approximately seven miles to the northeast, appears to have been based on the same architect-designed plan as Pleasant View. Comparison of the buildings (Pleasant View is several years older, slightly smaller and more finely articulated) suggests that the two school districts had somewhat different requirements in a schoolhouse. While the buildings share such distinctive architectural features as small side gables flowing from a prolonged front slope, recessed entrances flanked by sidelights set in truncated corners, short angular extensions of the front wall below centered gables, etc., their differences illustrate how a specific plan could be adapted to meet local needs and budgetary constraints.

In 1931, Round Grove needed a new schoolhouse to replace one that had been destroyed by fire.⁴¹ The Round Grove directors were sufficiently impressed with the overall design of Pleasant View School to construct a generally similar but more austere building, eliminating certain niceties but incorporating a feature rarely seen in a one-room schoolhouse: Round Grove School has a basement. Excavated by men of the district and with walls of poured concrete, the basement probably was intended for community use and as shelter from storms. Whether the Round Grove pupils were actually warmer in winter than those attending Pleasant View is unknown, but a basement coal furnace (assuming this was the type of heating plant selected) should have provided more even heating than a round-bellied wood or coal stove

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 193-195.

⁴⁰Warrensburg Weekly Standard-Herald, June 18, 1915, and "Another Modern Schoolhouse," in The Holden Progress, July 1, 1915.

⁴¹"Round Grove School Building," The Holden Progress, June 4, 1931.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

on the classroom floor. At Pleasant View when north winds howled and pupils seated near the windows became cold, they simply moved to a warm bench near the stove.⁴²

Both schoolhouses are significant today although the Pleasant View building is more aesthetically pleasing. It has some nice touches lacking in the Round Grove building--boxed eaves with curvilinear constructions in the gables, quarter-round moldings in the joints of corner boards and porch supports, three auxiliary rooms instead of two, an embossed metal ceiling throughout, etc. Round Grove School, constructed by W. W. Collier of LaTour, is four feet wider, has exposed rafters, lacks cornerboards, and has a fiberboard ceiling.⁴³ Pleasant View has an interior chimney; Round Grove has an exterior chimney. Pleasant View has a side entrance; Round Grove lacks a side entrance but has an entrance in the rear elevation. Pleasant View is essentially complete with the exception of a nonoriginal door, while porch supports are missing from the Round Grove building and two north window openings apparently have been removed. Pleasant View remains a community building and polling place on its original site with other school-associated structures nearby, while Round Grove School is a workshop and storage building for lumber and various farm-related items with an earth-contact home in the background.

Missouri has many small country schools scattered about the rural landscape but only a handful have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Pleasant View School, constructed from a plan book design in 1915, stands as a good and relatively intact local example of this diminishing type of resource.

⁴²Elizabeth Snyder Bryant.

⁴³The Holden Progress, June 4, 1931.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Schools
County-1

#88 Pleasant View, District No. 96, 1937



Teacher-	Effie Huntzinger
Back row-	Don Snyder, Donald Gann, Mildred Sack, Mary Gann, Jessie Warren, Edith Warren, Bessie Warren
Second row-	Calvin Wright, James Gann, Pauline Wright, Dorothy Sack, John Yoder, Dorothy Wainwright
Third row-	Louis Sack, Leo Sack, Alpha Lee Hancock, Sarah Ruth Warren, Leroy Wright
Front row-	Doris Jean Hancock, Shirley Warren

Board of Directors

R. L. Morrison, Holden, Missouri, President
 L. T. Gann, Holden, Missouri, Clerk
 C. G. Yoder, Holden, Missouri, Member

Enumeration	40	Enrollment	20
Assessed Valuation	157,330	Rate of Taxation	.40

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 18

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

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Interviews:

Elizabeth Snyder Bryant, student at Pleasant View School from 1918 through 1927, interviewed by Roger Maserang, April 5, 1999.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10. Photographs Page 19

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a rectangular parcel measuring 130 by 265 feet. Beginning at a point on the property line 25 feet east of the northeast corner of the schoolhouse, proceed south 233 feet along the right-of-way of Missouri Highway 131; then proceed west 130 feet; then proceed north 265 feet; then proceed east 130 feet; then proceed south 32 feet along the right-of-way of Missouri Highway 131 to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The nearly one acre plot (34,450 square feet) represents all of the land historically associated with Pleasant View School.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Pleasant View School
Medford vicinity
Johnson County, Missouri
Photographer: Roger Maserang
Negative source: Roger Maserang

List of Photographs

1. View from southeast corner of schoolyard, March 1999.
2. Front (south) elevation, April 1999.
3. Front and east corner view, March 1999.
4. East elevation, March 1999.
5. East and rear elevations, March 1999.
6. West and front elevations, March 1999.
7. West elevation, March 1999.
8. View from northwest corner of schoolyard, March 1999.
9. Detail of front gable, March 1999.
10. Detail of eaves, April 1999.

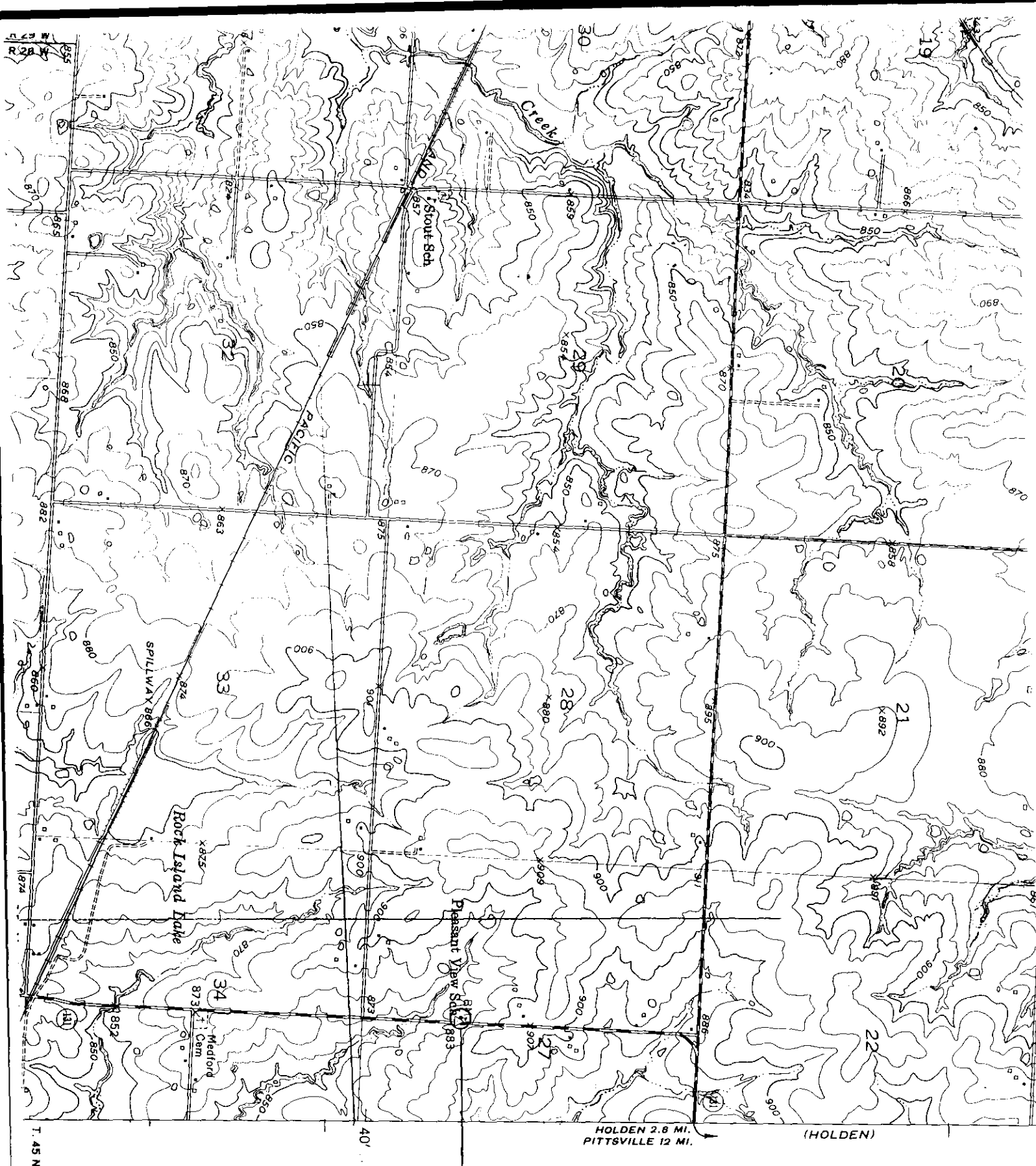
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

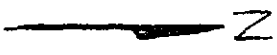
Section Photographs Page 20

Pleasant View School
Johnson County, Missouri

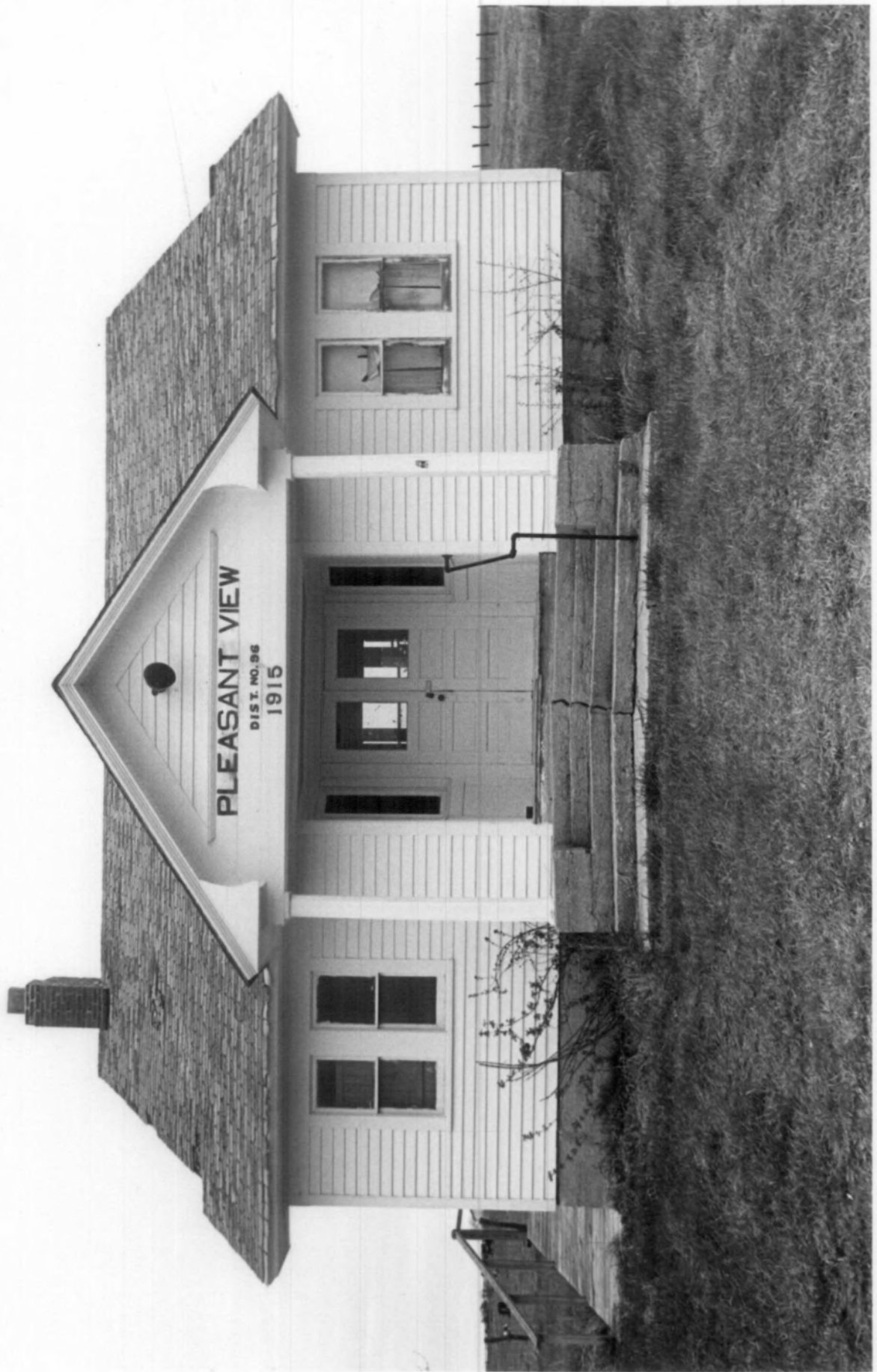
11. Foundation of coal shed facing west, March 1999.
12. Outhouse, March 1999.
13. Vestibule facing north, April 1999.
14. Classroom facing south, April 1999.
15. Classroom facing east wall with blackboard, April 1999.
16. Classroom, northeast corner, April 1999.
17. Classroom facing west, April 1999.
18. Cloakroom facing south, April 1999.
19. Detail of artifacts, April 1999.



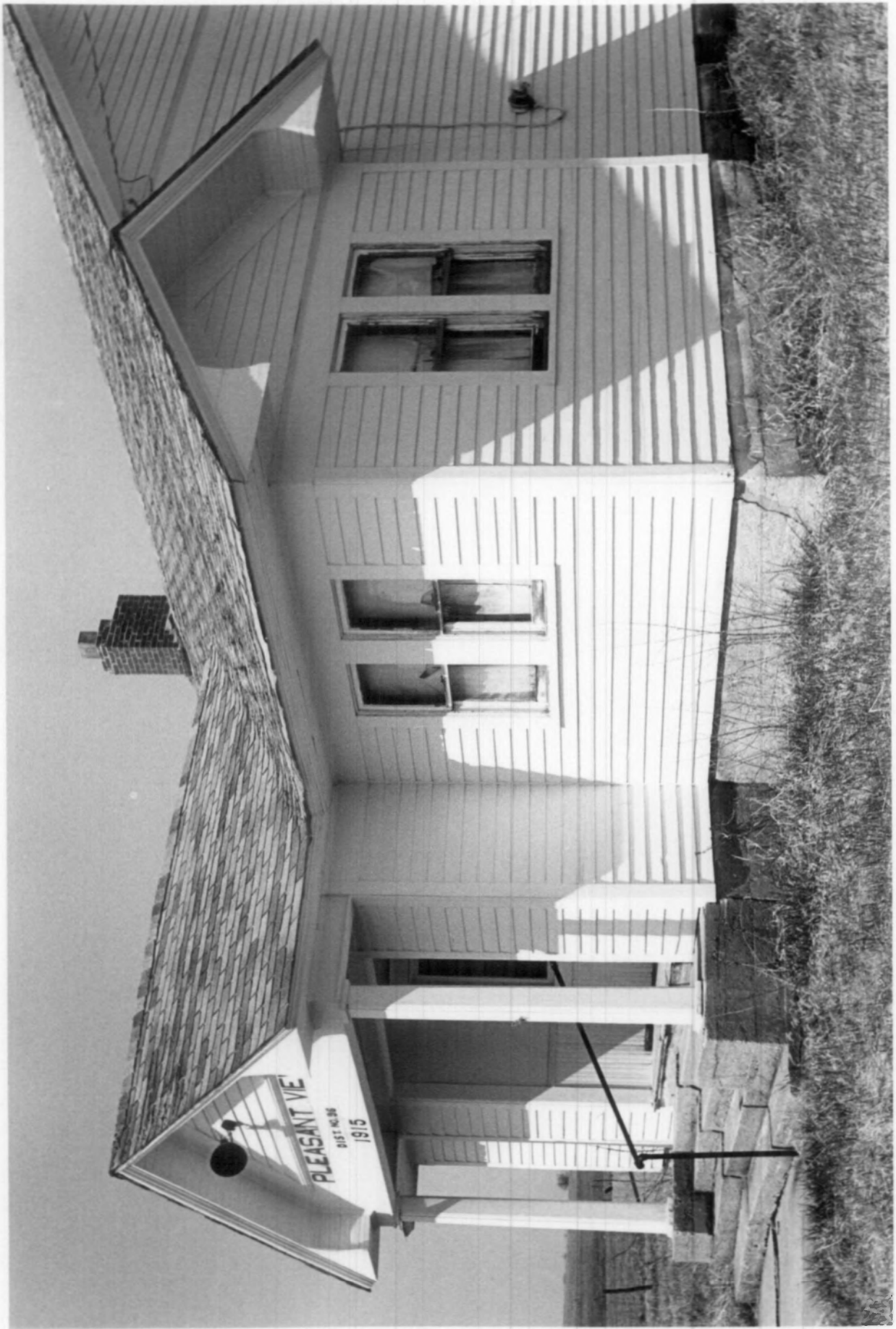
PLEASANT VIEW SCHOOL
JOHNSON COUNTY, MO
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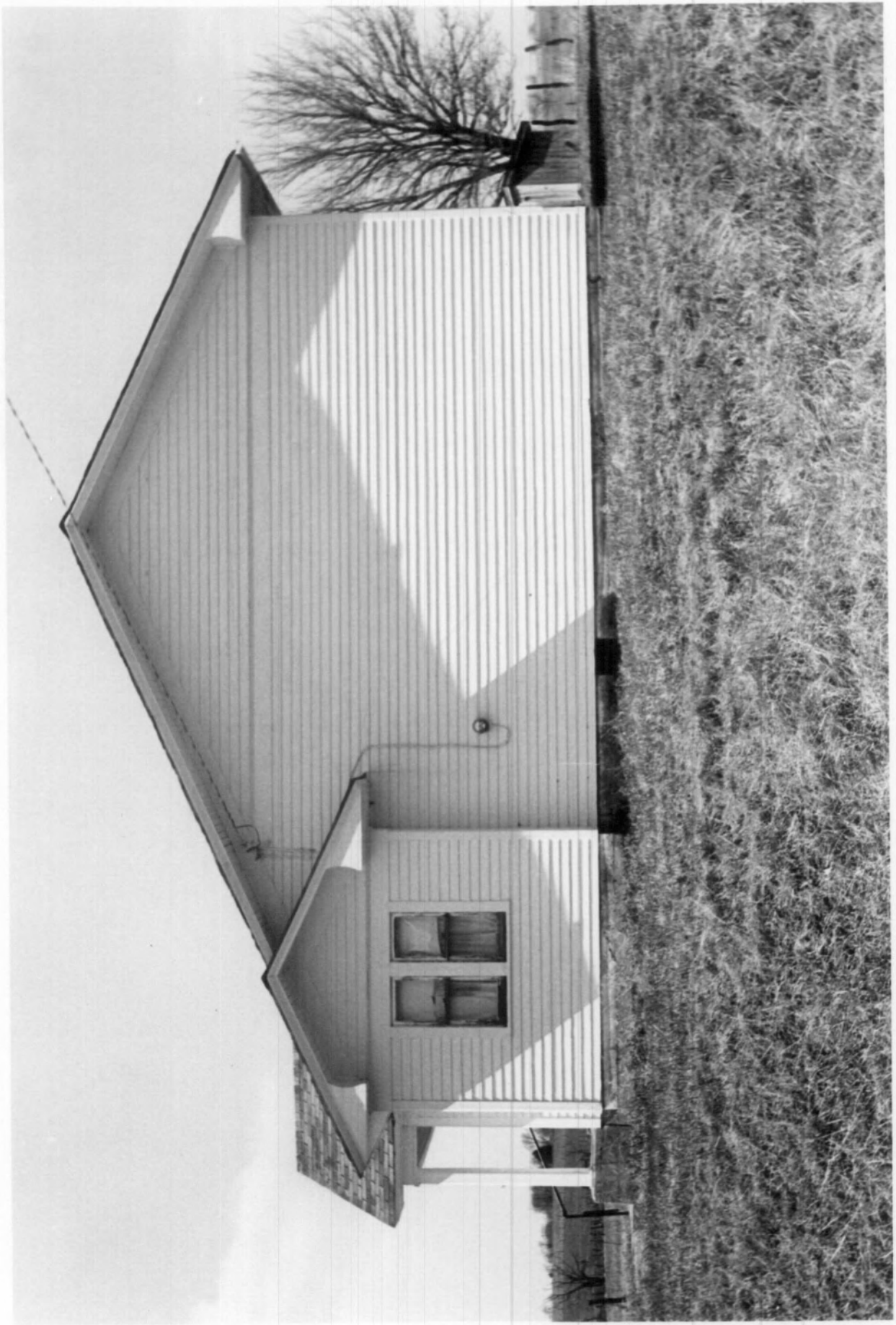




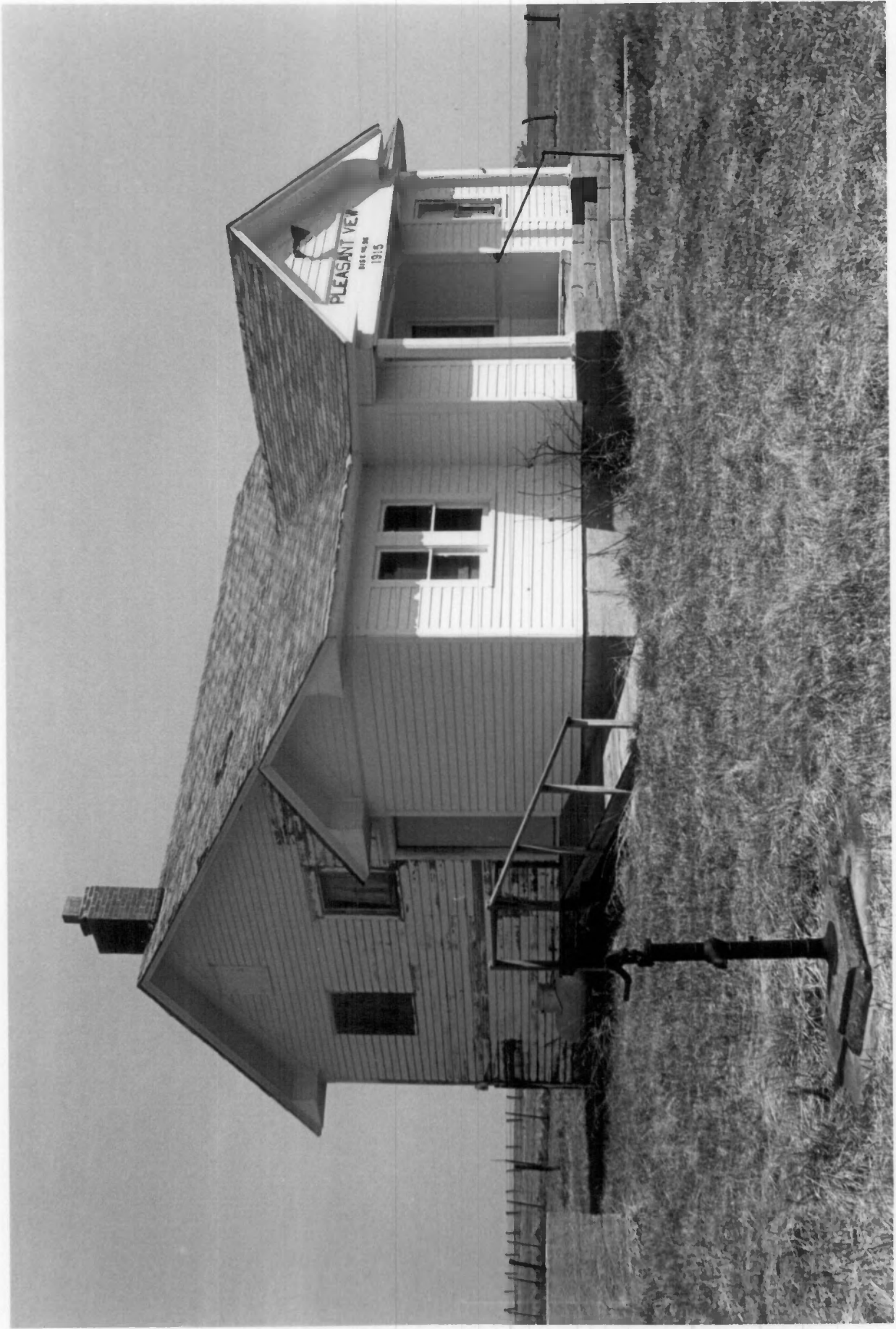


PLEASANT VIEW
DIST. NO. 96
1915















PLEASANT VIEW

DIST. NO. 96

1915





















Present View
Lit. No. 96

EXTRA
PHOTOS

