NPS Form 10-900-b
(Jan. 1987)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools

B. Associated Historic Contexts

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

C. Geographical Data

The Missouri Ozarks' spans roughly from Jefferson City, Missouri, southeast to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, south to Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and from Jefferson City southwest to Osceola, Missouri, south to Springfield, Missouri, southwest to the state boder. (See relief map enclosed)

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

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

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register — Date

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

The Development of Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools

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

The United States has not always had public education, and different regions have developed their educational systems according to their requirements of population density, geography, and philosophies of schooling. Rural one-room, one-teacher schools, however, were the first buildings constructed specifically for education in all regions of the country. In the northeastern

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

[x] See continuation sheet

states by the antebellum era, education was accepted as a public concern. Some areas of the Northeast, such as Puritan New England and Quaker Pennsylvania, had public schools in colonial times. Other states in the region began their public systems after the American Revolution as citizens linked education for the masses with protection of democracy. By 1860, most northeastern towns and cities had their own public schools. These were not only some of America's earliest schools; they also were the first schools to be modified under educational reform.[2]

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

Despite this reform in northeastern urban areas, ungraded schools remained the rule and were the primary source of formal education in rural United States throughout the first and second halves of the nineteenth century. Wherever families were sparsely settled, there one could find some form of the one- or two-room school. Even before settlers established churches, country schoolhouses appeared across the frontier. Constructed from whatever was most readily available locally, such as sod or logs, and taught by local young men and women, these schools produced a home-grown crop of students. Teachers were not difficult to come by; all one needed to teach was to be able to read, write, and cipher better than one's students. Also useful was a firm hand because frontier schools were notorious for challenging the disciplinary skills of young teachers. Some schools met for just one month a year, while others met for as many as four months.

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[2]Ibid, 36-40.

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

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

Students could hope to reap the three R's--reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic--when they were not needed at home to reap the crops.[5]

On the frontier, neighborhood families controlled schools because the schools frequently preceded organization of municipal and county governments. If parents wanted their children to learn, they had to arrange for their education. The school board, usually with three directors, hired the teacher, and he or she frequently boarded around with local families as part of the salary.

Southern schools, particularly the trans-Appalachian ones, were more similar to frontier schools than to northeastern urban schools. Even in settled areas of the South, the population was widely dispersed. Large centralized schools were not practical. In addition, Southerners believed that education was the responsibility of children's parents, and they opposed public schools. Local communities set up subscription schools, for which students paid a fee to attend. The subscription fee was used for the teacher's salary and to finance construction of a schoolhouse. The Southern system was similar to the frontier system, although the rationale behind local control was different. On the frontier, schools preceded local government in the territories, so parents had to take the initiative in providing education; in the South, parents chose private control over public schools.[6]

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

The Ozarks region, for instance, had begun to be settled by squatters around 1820, but it was decades later before extensive settlement was underway.[7] Because of the lack of interest and scattering of families, by the time of the Civil War there was still almost no public education system in Missouri. The majority

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

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

[7]Ibid, 30-53.

of schools were solitary educational institutions in districts governed by a three-director board of local parents. In the Ozarks particularly, even with both public and subscription schools counted, there were few opportunities for formal education at all before the Civil War, and generally the people considered such formal training to be of little significance.[8]

The Civil War severely arrested development in the Ozarks. Both federal and Confederate troops were stationed in the region, and they fed their armies from the local fields and tables. Ozarkians were caught in a no-win situation, because they were forced to abet both sides, and they suffered the consequences from both sides. In the aftermath of the war, the countryside lay in ruins and the population was decimated. A number of small towns and government centers , such as Eminence, the seat of Shannon County, had been destroyed. Eminence was relocated and rebuilt in a few years. More remote areas which had recently been wilderness went back to the natural state, and returning settlers and new migrants had to begin the pioneer process again.[9]

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

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

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

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

rural, primarily one-room schools in the state swelled to more than ten thousand by the turn of the century.[11]

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

The first Missouri Superintendent of Education elected under the new laws of 1874 and in office during the rapid expansion of the educational system was R.D. Shannon. Shannon put into action the reformist ideas that earlier superintendents had been unable to do. He called for reforms that would have increased the requirements for teachers, extended the school term from four to six months, and given more power over the districts to the county superintendents.[13] He achieved his reforms slowly, with the six-month term not being passed until 1887. At the same time, the starting date for school was changed from April 1 to July 1 to accommodate the longer term.[14]

The reformist urge from state officials continued through the rest of the nineteenth century, most notably under the aegis of John R. Kirk, elected State Superintendent in 1894. By the 1890s, a rural reform movement was beginning to sweep the nation. The movement was both popular and eclectic, and its effects were felt in Missouri. Kirk began his term with a recommendation for complete redesign for the rural schools. Kirk spared few details, specifying even the placement of the blackboard, stove, and windows. He called schools following his designs "Schools that breath." His suggestions for rebuilding schools were in line with

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

[12]Stevens, 99-128.

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

[14]Townsend, 28.

the current reformist trend to replace log structures with frame ones.[15] Kirk also suggested in his final report that small districts consolidate. His solution for the resultant transportation problem was that students be conveyed using covered wagons.[16] Unlike some other Missouri administrators before and after him, Kirk did not have a full understanding of the problem that the roads, river, and mountains presented in the Ozarks.

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

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

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[15]Lee, 120.

[16]Ibid, 122-123.

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

[18]Gulliford, 41.

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

probably agreed with the ideas of Foght rather than with aggressively progressive ideas presented by groups such as the NEA.

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

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

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

[21]Townsend, 29.

[22]Ibid.

the funding offered by the state to weak districts.[23]

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

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

The Depression eventually spurred some positive educational changes in rural America. In the Ozarks, the first school lunch programs were started during the thirties; students brought something from home every morning for the teacher or the older students to transform into stew.[26] The federal government had advocated hot lunches a decade earlier, but it took the widespread

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[23]Ibid.

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

[25]Rafferty, 232.

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

poverty of the Depression for schools to undertake the suggestion.[27] Traditionally poor areas, including the Ozarks, also benefitted from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's alphabet soup programs, such as receiving rehabilitation aid and Emergency Educational Program funds from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.

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

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

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

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

[29]Townsend, 32.

[30]Benton, 101.

[31]Townsend, 33.

Inside the Schools: The Operation of Ozarks Rural Schools

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

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

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

One of the most difficult problems for rural teachers to deal with was the number of students which they taught. As

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

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

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

aforementioned, a teacher might have one or two students, perhaps brother and sister, or she might have eighty, as in school districts where logging companies were working. In the case of the former, students got individualized attention, but the district probably had little funding for furnishings and textbooks and students had few children but their own family members with which to interact. In the case of the latter, a multitude of problems arose from overcrowding.

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

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

The only apparent difficulty that arose from alternating grades was that caused by frequent change of teachers. Had the state not mandated which material was to be taught which year,

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

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

students could be instructed in two years of eighth grade with no seventh grade instruction if they changed teachers between the years. A similar problem could occur if a teacher alternated one year, and the next year a new teacher did not use the alternating system. Regardless, alternating was one way for teachers to handle the many subjects which they had to teach in a day.

A typical morning schedule was as follows:

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

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

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

agriculture, and club work.[38] The only preparation time that teachers had was before or after school began if they were in one of these larger schools.

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

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

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

> Teach in terms of the child's life. Think in terms of the pupil and in the needs of the community, instead of in terms of the subject and course of study. . . .Teach in terms of action, of accomplishments, of results. The

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

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

> only real reason for growing alfalfa [in school] is to get the community to grow more and better alfalfa and to grow it more efficiently.[40]

Teachers viewed the emphasis on agriculture as a way to integrate different subjects in their curriculum. For example, this agriculture question was also a math question: " A man sows wheat with a drill eight feet wide; how many miles will he travel to sow 40 acres in the shape of a square?"[41] The school superintendent of Shannon County wrote with pride to the Missouri School Journal about a county-wide corn contest they were conducting. "The contest," he wrote, "is creating a great deal of interest and as it is being conducted under the auspices of the schools it is bringing to many a realization of the change from the old school, which taught simply the three R's, to the new which seeks to educate boys and girls in terms of their daily life and interests."[42]

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

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

[41]Windes, 18.

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

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

The Schools as Educational and Community Centers

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

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

Equally difficult for buses or large numbers of wagons to pass over were the Current, Eleven Point, and Jack's Fork rivers and their many tributaries. One Ozarks teacher in the 1950s noted the difficulties in living in mountainous river valley. To get to school each day, she had to ford the Current River three times.[45] Children under the three-director districts often already had to cross rivers and spring branches one or more times on their way to school. Under consolidated schools, their journey would have been even longer and wetter. The presence of the largely unbridged rivers also tended to nullify the argument that consolidated schools would have better attendance rates. On the contrary, in the flood-prone river areas where schools let out early for heavy rainstorms, consolidated schools might have cut enrollment because of more children having to cross the unpredictable rivers.

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

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

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

more than eight thousand of them in Missouri alone.

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

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

Other social events at the rural schools also were related to education. Students would present pageants at Christmas and on other special occasions, such as the last day of school. The United States Bureau of Education printed suitable pageants occasionally in its rural schools leaflets, recommending them as tools for teaching history and "as a form of entertainment in rural communities." "The Gift of Nations," one such pageant, traced the development of the United States and the contributions of countries from Greece to England in her development. Their contributions were used as reasons why the United States should maintain support of Europe in the aftermath of World War I. The pamphlet stated that the play could be performed by one school, by two or more schools working together, or by adults from the community. Children were to be responsible for writing specific lines in English class. Students in the upper grades also would be expected to tie their geography and history lessons with the pageant. The

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

school could present the pageant during Education Week, on a specific day slated for visitation, on a day in celebration of American citizenship or patriotism, or in connection with any other event the teacher felt appropriate.[47] Ozarks rural schools used pageants at Christmas, for pie suppers, and on other occasions. Three men who attended one Ozarks school in the nineteen twenties and thirties, for example, remembered being Indians in a school play.[48]

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

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

The social function served by rural schools is indisputable. For more than fifty years, country schools, usually one room taught by one teacher, were used to their full advantage as hubs of community activity. At night, pine torches blazed down the country roads that led to the schoolhouse, and kerosene lamps lit the rooms for dances and presentations. Social activities were so important to rural schools nationally that the federal government recommended that school districts furnish their schools with boards cut to fit the top of the desks to provide display and eating space for community events.[50]

Ozarks rural schools are significant because of their importance for education and society in their rural communities, and because they were part of a national education movement of rural schools that lasted more than two hundred fifty years. The

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

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

[49]Staples, 13.

[50]Newbury, April, 1922.

isolated mountains and river valleys of the Ozarks caused a geographic need for these schools until after the middle of the twentieth century. The schools met the need for meeting spaces and social lives for their communities as well, and the residents around them embraced them and made them a part of their culture. The handful that remain--perhaps a half-dozen within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways--are remainders of Ozark life a half-century gone.

F. Associated Property Types

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

II. Description

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

III. Significance

Ozarks rural schools, one-room or two-room, were important to Ozarks education and society because of the geographic need for them as educational centers in the pre-modern transportation era and because of their use as community social centers, through school-related and non-school related activities. These schools, built in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, were primarily of vernacular design and constructed of local materials. Therefore, relevant areas of signifcance are Education, Social History, and/or Architecture (vernacular) and applicable National Register criteria are A and/or C. The schools are significant primarily at the local and regional level--the Ozarks--but are also significant as extant examples of rural schools within the development of the national education system.

IV. Registration Requirements

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

[x] See continuation sheet

[ ] See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

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

The historic context was determined by the schools themselves. Ozarks rural schools are a very specific phenomenon which was a part of the larger national education movement. Resources on the Ozarks schools, Missouri schools, and public education nationally were important. The local records provided the best information

[x] See continuation sheet

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Dent County School Records, 1926-1960. County Clerk's Office, Salem, Missouri.

[x] See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

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

Specify repository: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

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materials, but most Ozarks and Missouri schools continued to be built by locals using local "designs." The most popular shape was a simple gabled rectangle, with walls in the proportion of four to five and windows on the long sides.

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

Since most schools were not served by a public water supply, the best toilets were well-ventilated, well-cleaned outhouses. The government made suggestions as to how healthy privies should be constructed and ventilated, but few school districts could afford or were interested to execute the government's elaborate plans. For example, one plan that was almost universally useless throughout the Ozarks placed both the boys' and girls' privies under one roof, separated by a coal shed; since Ozarks schools used

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

wood-burning stoves, they had no need to build coal sheds.[2] Reminiscences of Ozarks schools establish that two separate privies were popular there, either of the one-holer or two-holer varieties. Barring outhouses, "Girls went behind this pine tree, and boys behind that one," one former student remembered.

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

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

Less than a half-dozen Ozarks rural schools remain within the bounds of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and immediately outside its boundaries, although formerly there were hundreds of schools in the area. None of them have been nominated to the National Register. One, Story's Creek School, was located outside the park's boundaries before it was donated to the park and was moved to the Alley Mill area to be used for interpretation. The building has lost its locational integrity and is not eligible for the Register. Two similar one-room schools which are being nominated to the Register under this multiple property listing are the Buttin Rock School and Lower Parker School. Owl's Bend School another rural school, is also in the Riverways and may be nominated in the future. Two additional one-room schools, Cedar Grove School and Bluff School, are immediately outside the Ozark National Scenic Riverways boundary but may come into the possession of the Park Service in the near future. They have potential to be placed on the National Register under this multiple property listing and have distinctive features which would illustrate the diversity among Ozark vernacular schools.

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

on rural schools, while the 1976 Townsend study and the Tyack study provided the best information on rural schools in Missouri and nationally. In addition, the Gulliford study was useful.

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

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

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