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On the cover … Schuyler

The Schuyler Community Center, located near Fantastic Caverns, preserves a former one-room school in Greene County and it also builds a sense of community in this area north of Springfield, Mo.

It is that sense of belonging to a community that is one of the main ingredients for keeping the old school house, built just after the turn-of-the-century, as a vital part of the neighborhood. The white building sits at the corner of Farm Roads 94 and 124.

Neighbors elect board members and they work tirelessly to maintain the building, organize events and raise funds to cover the basic expenses associated with insuring and keeping this school open.

BEGINNINGS

The Schuyler School building was important enough that when the Willard School District auctioned it off in 1984, it only took 30 days for people to repay the man who bought the building and agreed to sell it to the community.

Brent Agee and Russ Campbell bought the building from the school district. Agee set a deadline of Aug. 1 for the group to raise the purchase price. Several neighbors got together and drafted a set of bylaws to establish the Schuyler Community Center as a non-profit organization administered by an elected board of directors.

That group sought financial support from the community. About $3,400 of the $7,500 that was needed was collected with letter sent to interested parties. A contribution of $100 was determined to indicate charter membership in the center.

Members then conducted a phone campaign to raise the rest of the funds. Regular chili suppers, pancake breakfasts and socials raise the other money needed for repairs.

Since then, volunteers have applied new siding, painted the inside and made other repairs with money raised from autumn and spring fundraisers.

Schuyler hosts a community potluck dinner every month as well as a neighborhood Thanksgiving and Christmas party.

Five members of the group volunteer their own time, equipment and gas to mow the lawn around the building.

Each June, the group hosts an annual meeting, elects officers and board members and discuss maintenance needs.

Right now the group is focused on fixing the buildings gutters and doing some outside landscaping.

Gavin O’Connor serves as president of the Schuyler Community Center. Joan Scott is secretary and Elsie Troyer serves as vice-president of activities.

Upcoming events at Schuyler include the following:

Oct. 22 – 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., Community Breakfast and bake sale. Join us for scrambled eggs with all the trimmings. Open to the public.

Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m. – Thanksgiving Dinner. Turkey and dressing will be furnished. Bring your favorite “harvest” dishes to share.

Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. – Dinner with Santa. Ham will be provided. Please bring a dish or two to add to our holiday table.
This quarter I’m sharing some of the assorted questions I’ve been asked while in this position along with the answers.

**Q: What about accessing funds from the USDA for rural development for school buildings?**

A: I spoke with Mark Hultgren, area director for Rural Development with the USDA about using grant funds for one-room school projects, especially ones where the buildings are used as rural community centers. As with any grant programs, there are rules to be considered.

First, grants are only given to projects that have 501(c) 3 status and are governed by an open board that conducts elections.

Second, projects must exist in an area that are eligible based on income levels in the area. For example, projects near Willard, Mo. would not be eligible because Willard is no longer eligible based on media income. Other communities would be eligible by reduced rates.

Third, grants are only made when matching funds are eligible. It is also best if the grant funds are used to purchase equipment, like HVAC equipment for a building renovation.

So, there are limitations but there may be local projects where it is still worth considering and making a phone call to the USDA office. In 2011, the entire 16-county area had only $53,000 available for grants.

Mark can be contacted at the USDA office located at 688 S State Highway B, Suite 400, Springfield, MO 65802 and by telephone at 417.831.5246 Ext. 4.

**Q: Where can we find a grant writer?**

MU Extension does not retain a master list of available grant writers. However, when an Ozarks-area non-profit asked for some leads, I went looking.

Tammy Flippen, Reference Librarian & Funding Information Center Coordinator at The Library Center, Springfield-Greene County Library, (417) 616-0541, was able to provide some names.

But there are other statewide resources also according to Steve Jeanetta, a state specialist with MU Extension.

There are a couple of associations of grant writers in Missouri that have referrals.

One is the Heart of American Chapter of the American Association of Grant Writing Professionals. They can be found on the web. Also, the Association of Fundraising Professionals has an Ozark Chapter.

I don’t know if they have a referral program but they may be able to give you guidance on how to find someone. Their website is: http://afpozarksregion.affpnet.org/.

The state’s small business development centers also have grant writing references online at extension.missouri.edu.

“The challenge with hiring a grant writer is to make sure that the grant writer has a history of success with the types of grants that an organization is interested in pursuing. For example if you’re pursuing a federal grant make sure they have some success with that type of grant as the process is very different from applying for a grant from a foundation. Most grant writers should have a portfolio that a prospective client can see that will describe the kind of grants they have had success is pursuing. They also never want to hire a grant writer who works on a percentage of the grant. There are serious ethical issues with that kind of approach and most reputable grant writers do not work that way,” said Jeanetta.

**Q: I can’t attend the schools. Can I access the resources in another way?**

I’m working on putting together a packet of information from the conference.

This will include some DVDs of speakers, a few audio files of other speaker’s programs, power points and handouts. If I can pull everything together I will need to make the package available for a cost. There are still some issues to work out.

Even if we can’t make those resources available, I would recommend joining our schools organization and attending future events.
Movie Review: “A Desk for Billie”
Subject of movie attended the Historic School Summit, visited with attendees, handed out copies of her Saturday Evening Post article and got a bit of a surprise herself.


Dr. Billie Davis, one of the best-known educators in the Assemblies of God, started life in the hopyards of Oregon. She spent her childhood during the Great Depression of the 1930s traversing across America with her parents, who were migrant farm workers. They were “homeless” before the term became fashionable. They lived and traveled in a battered Model A Ford with a makeshift wooden frame constructed on the back to provide shelter. She describes herself as a child as “a small ragged hobo” who would “[sit] on the ground beside a campfire, hungrily licking the fishy oil from the lid of a sardine can” while studying her school lessons.

How was Billie Davis able to rise from her impoverished surroundings? She attributes her success to the discovery, as a young girl, of three ways to better herself: 1) Sunday school; 2) libraries; and 3) public school.

Billie Davis came to work for the Gospel Publishing House in Springfield, Missouri in 1942, serving as the first editor of the Sunday School Counselor magazine. After the Saturday Evening Post featured her story, “I was a Hobo Kid” (published December 13, 1952), Reader’s Digest picked it up. The magazine editor’s picked the title for the article.

Then, in 1956, the National Education Association produced a film about her life, “A Desk for Billie.” This film, a tribute to the value of education, was widely distributed across America and viewed by generations of teachers and schoolchildren. “A Desk for Billie” encourages viewers to appreciate Sunday school, libraries, and public schools.

Billie Davis went on to earn her Ed.D. from the University of Miami and served as a professor at Evangel University, as an Assemblies of God missionary, and in numerous leadership roles in education, church, and government.

*A Desk for Billie* is now available for purchase on DVD. Proceeds will be given to the Billie Davis scholarship at Evangel University.

**DVD, color, 57 minutes. Minimum contribution of $20, postpaid.**
**Order from: Dr. Billie Davis,**
3204 N. Wildan Ave., Springfield, MO 65803
email: sylbil@aol.com * phone: 417-833-9449

In 1952, Dr. Billie Davis (left) was the subject of a Saturday Evening Post story called, "I was a Hobo Kid." She was photographed for that story holding a bell with a teacher at Bluff School near Springfield. That teacher's daughter, Imogene Bennett (right) showed up for Dr. Davis's speech with that same school bell from 60+ years ago.
Efforts Underway to Save New Bethel School in McDonald County

The old New Bethel School, stands three miles west of Anderson off of F Hwy. on New Bethel Rd. The school closed its doors in 1945 when the rural Anderson schools consolidated. This 2-room stone structure features multiple tall windows and a double-door entryway, still in its original form. The school was divided into two large classrooms: grades 1st-4th in the south end, 5th-8th in the north end. The school was heated with two wood-burning stoves located at the back of the building, one in each classroom, with a shared chimney. A well and hand pump at the side of the school provided water; separate bathroom facilities (privies) for boys and girls were located behind. A period photo shows a school bell atop the roof.

Orpha Smythe (Spears) of Pineville, mother of Alberta Anders and Barbara Williams attended New Bethel School from 1927-1928 in the 6th and 7th grade. Ms. Loretta Thompson, taking the place of Ms. Minnie Sherman who was pregnant at the time, was Orpha’s teacher. Ms. Thompson and Ms. Sherman taught the older grades. Later, Alberta attended New Bethel School in the first grade and was taught by Ms. Edith Croddy.

Joann Nunley of New Bethel attended the school through the 4th grade. Her teacher was a Mrs. Crouse. Edith Croddy continued teaching until the school’s closing in 1945. She was Joann’s aunt.

School started at 9 a.m. and let out at 4 p.m. with an hour for lunch; many children walked home for lunch. The two classrooms were divided by moveable partitions on which hung maps and charts. Remnants of chalkboards and chalk tray remain on the walls. Children were seated in rows of desks; they dipped fountain pens in inkwells or wrote on Big Chief tablets with pencil. They read about Dick and Jane from Elson readers. Students were arranged by grade. The teacher worked with a grade at a time while the others studied their lessons.

A group is organizing in McDonald County (Missouri) to purchase the New Bethel School building and to begin restoring it. The group held its first meeting at 7 p.m. on Oct. 4.

According to the organizer, the turnout was not large but it was enough to plan and schedule a fundraiser (singing and pie supper) and elect a board of directors. The group has also completed paperwork to establish a non-profit. “We also found a local contractor who does restoration,” said Karen Almeter.

For more information on how you can help call Karen at 417-845-6855.
Letters from Readers

Iowa and Wisconsin are Good Examples
I have been pleased to read that you have been working with Missouri organizations in the preservation/interpretation of Missouri one-room schools. Iowa, as you know, has the best organization in the country with Bill Sherman’s dedication.

Here in Wisconsin we have three one-room schoolhouses within our historic sites owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Reed School is a stand-alone site that we obtained/restored in 2006-07. The building was built in 1915 (after wood schoolhouse on site burned) and operated through 1951. We were able to obtain it, restore it and add interpretation due to a various generous benefactor. Our initial interpretive program is based on 1939 - making it somewhat unusual in the field of one-room schoolhouses. Our benefactor underwrites the program so we offer absolutely FREE programming and we offer some schools a $100 stipend to help pay for school bus transportation to the site. Keep up your good work!

Dale Williams, Director
H.H.Bennett Studio & Reed School historic sites
Wisconsin Historical Society
215 Broadway - PO Box 147
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

Thanks for a great conference
Thank you and your staff for creating a wonderful conference experience. I feel like I have been through a crash course in little known Missouri history. I appreciate the unique intimacy of the meeting, unlike in the past where I was a face lost in the crowd. I look forward to next years’ meeting.

Ann Gwinn
Springfield, Mo.

Appreciate the Emailed Information
Thanks so much for sending out information on the conference. Because of budgeting constraints, our staff is not able to take advantage of these wonderful opportunities, so it’s great to stay in touch via these e-mail’s, and see what’s going on in other parts of the country with historic schoolhouses.

Carole Hopp
8 Square Schoolhouse & Youth Education Director
The History Center in Tompkins County

A Great Surprise
I really appreciate your making the photo for me to keep. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing Dr. Billie Davis because I had heard so much about her back in 1952. I wonder what the odds are for me to meet her like my mother did nearly 60 years ago.

Imogene Bennett
Springfield, Mo.

Wish I Could Have Been There
Thanks for sending me the summary from your conference. I don’t know how you do it all. I’m impressed with your conference turnout and program. For what it is worth, I think if you rotate with a one day program and some type of tour that would work well. It has for us in Iowa.

Things are starting to shape up for the June CSAA conference. We will be based on a small but nice campus with excellent facilities, technology support and meals. And we will be able to put together a god tour. Wish I had your technology capabilities. I’ll keep you in the loop and look for you to share if you can come.

William Sherman, Iowa

Historic school network a blast
Kudos on the historic schools conference. I enjoyed the presentations and being able to network with others interested in the state’s rural historic schoolhouses. I think there are two or three that are really excited about moving forward and getting their schools on the national register. It was a privilege both to attend and speak at the conference.

Tiffany Patterson
State Historic Preservation Office

Thanks for your great presentation
Our folks are still talking about your presentation on the past, present and future of one-room schools in the Ozarks. I’m so glad you allowed some time for discussion. It was so much fun to hear our members recalling their experiences. I enjoyed the historical aspect and the humor as well. Thanks again for coming and sharing with our group.

Pat Sims
Seminole Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo.
They cried when Susie sang "Silent Night"

I grew up on a little farm in an area made up mostly of Czechs, a few Germans, and I'm sure a sprinkling of this or that, but mostly Bohemians whose ancestors had immigrated from Czechoslovakia, and many still talked about their lives in "the old country."

When I turned five I started school in the fall. I was the only one in my class, never had a classmate until the 7th grade. You see, it was just a little one-room country school. I spent six years of being the class valedictorian, and then they shut our little school down!

The little one-room school sat on a hill with a woods and ravine on one side and behind it, a playground of sorts on one side, and a gravel road along the front. There was a pump for water in front and two outhouses out back, (which I thought was a bit extravagant, one school, and two outhouses). There was a steeple atop the school for the bell (gosh I loved ringing that bell), it got me in trouble a time or two, but it wasn't my fault, the bigger kids put me up to it.

There were several cement steps leading to the front door, and inside the front door was a hall with pegs to hang your coat and such. A door on both ends of the hall led to the school room. There were three large windows on each side, and in the back a single door leading outside to the two outhouses. The water fountain and the stove were in the back, off to one side. There were four or five rows of desks facing the teacher's desk, a huge blackboard and a couple of pull down maps (one of Minnesota and one world map) were, and a big old piano kind of off to the side. There were three lights hanging from the ceiling on each side and a small light above the back door.

Back then there were only two events of great importance in that little country school. One was the end of the school year when we had the school picnic with ice cream and everything. We always had a softball game with all the farmers and kids playing for hours. It wasn't until I was much older that I figured out why all the farmers limped and walked funny for a few days afterwards.

The other big event was the "Christmas program." Oh, the work and preparation that went into the Christmas program and play was amazing! In my six years we had from eight to a dozen or so kids in the entire school, and one teacher for all the grades. The teacher had to make sure everyone got a part in the school play.

Over the years I played a wiseman, a shepherd, I even got to play Joseph once. But in third grade, my big breakout year, I got a solo part. I got to play the part of a tow-headed kid in overalls with a patch on one knee, worn out shoes and a dirty face. It was just a short piece about what I thought of Christmas and what I wanted. I was a natural, didn't even need a costume. I cracked 'em up when I did the part about all I wanted for Christmas was right here in the "rears and sobuck catalog."

There was one other solo that night. Susie got to sing a solo. No way was I going to let a girl outshine me! Didn't care much for girls back then anyway. I paid close attention to Susie though when she rehearsed her solo, and it did sound pretty good, but I had a real acting part, not some old song. We rehearsed for an hour a day for weeks getting ready for the big night. Santa would show up, we'd all get a bag of nuts and candy, big minty chocolate covered drops, ribbon hard candy, and an apple.

The big night was nearing and I was ready, couldn't sleep for two days before the play, and finally it was here. The night was perfect, there was lightly falling snow, and when all was quiet you could hear it on the windows ever so softly. We did the usual Joseph and Mary thing, I was a shepherd again, then came my big chance at stardom. Oh, I was good. I had them rolling in the aisles. I just knew I was the star of the night.

Then came Susie. Mrs. Aldridge pursed her lips, blew the pitch pipe, and started playing the piano. All the lights were turned off except the little one over the back door, and there was this dim yellow glow over everyone, then Susie started to sing. The night was still and crisp and Susie sang "Silent Night" so pure and perfectly with just a softly played piano in the background that even I thought it was pretty good for a girl. Well, when she finished and the lights came back on I couldn't believe what I was seeing. All these big burly farmers were pulling their snotrags from their pockets and wiping their eyes.

I thought about that long and hard that night, and it took a while for it to sink in. I made them laugh and Susie made them cry. It was Susie who taught me a little bit about the meaning of Christmas with the purest and most perfectly sung "Silent Night" and its effect on the grown-ups in the audience that night. I still tear up at Christmas time when the lights go down and we sing "Silent Night." I've heard it sung many times by many wonderful voices, but none were ever as good as when Susie sang "Silent Night."

by Joe Vandenheuvel, Cannon Falls, Minnesota

Submissions

Want to submit a letter of memories about a one-room school for publication in this newsletter? Just send your text to David Burton via e-mail (burtond@missouri.edu) or mail it to the Greene County Extension center.
First Time Event Rated a Success by 56 Attendees

Based on evaluation feedback and face-to-face comments, the Historic School Summit was a huge success.

Fifty six people attended the Historic Schools Summit held Sept. 16-17 at the Botanical Center. The program was part of a community development project by MU Extension known as the Ozarks Country School Association.

Attendees and speakers alike had a great time. For example, speaker Helen Hunter wrote: “Thank you so much for your hospitality Saturday. You made us feel at home and made it almost comfortable to get up in front of those folks and talk. I wish we had had more time and was able to spend the rest of the day listening to other speakers. I saw topics that I know we would have benefited from. We did get some ideas just talking to some of the other guests.”

A list of possible speakers for the 2012 conference is already being put together. A tour of area school buildings may also be offered at that time.

“I owe my thanks to the Greene County Extension Center team for making this event possible,” said David Burton, civic communication specialist and organizer of the event.

On the first day, we had 26 people attend the morning session, 36 people at lunch, 22 during most of the afternoon, and then almost an entirely new set of 26 people in the evening for the movie. On Saturday, attendance peaked at 26.

Participants have traveled from Baldwin, Forsyth, Joplin, Hannibal, Lexington, Marshfield, Stoddard and places much closer to home for this unique community development program.

Saturday afternoon, Vada Wilson shared some stories about her school days at Wooley Creek School in Cape Fair, Mo. A ten-minute video of her interview is available at youtube.com/MUExtension417.

“A Legacy of the One-Room School” was presented by Virginia Snyder. This former teacher talked about her restoration of Little Moore School and sang a song entitled, “The Little One-Room Schoolhouse.” A video of the song can be found at youtube.com/MUExtension417.
Historic School Summit Review in Photos

More photos can be found online at www.flickr.com/muextension417

There was lots to see at this year’s conference. Photo #1 shows the display of one-room schools in Greene County that was set up; Photo 2: Peter Maki (center) talks with Frank and Shirley Bridges; Photo #3: Helen Hunt talks about the successful renovation of Cave Springs school; Photo #4: JoAnn Brown (owner of Old Dry Valley in Lawrence County) talks with Mary Hanlin of Hannibal, Mo.; Photo 5: Tiffany Patterson from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources gave a terrific overview of the history of education in Missouri and also explained the application process for the national historic register.
Schools Out Forever at Bethel But Lessons Are Still Being Learned

CISCO, Ill. — The one-room Bethel School, tucked away amid the splendid isolation of Friends Creek Conservation Area near Cisco, hasn't heard the patter of tiny reluctant feet since 1946, when it welcomed its last class.

But the circa 1890 clapboard building still has much to teach us about the way America used to learn how to read, write and do 'rithmetic in the era before yellow buses, teacher in-service days and homework assignments posted on the Internet.

Lesson one is the pervading sense of how one-on-one it all was: Carefully restored and maintained by the Macon County Conservation District, visitors can walk among the small cluster of desks and see how they were easily watched and patrolled by the lone teacher.

Under her watchful eye (low-paid teaching was typically a job for single women) she might have charge of anywhere from more than 20 students to less than 10. Discipline was administered through the swift application of blunt force trauma to hands and buttocks via hickory sticks and similar instruments and was not subject to judicial review.

And while it's hard to know exactly what went on at Bethel, accounts from similar one-room schoolhouses say humiliation was a favorite retribution mechanism. Kids might have to stand up against the wall with their nose not allowed to move from a circle chalked on the blackboard.

There were also dunce caps and the opportunity for erring boys to be made to sit on the girls' side of the room with a bonnet on their heads — a punishment unlikely to pass the constitutional test of cruel and unusual as seen from a 21st-century perspective.
But schools such as Bethel worked, and students learned. Now with American public education consistently dragging along the bottom percentiles of many international comparisons, there is a strong sense of nostalgia for the back-to-basics approach enshrined in the mythic memory of the one-room schoolhouse. It may be about as relevant to modern lesson plans as a hitching post in a parking lot, but the feeling that places like Bethel were on to something persists.

Mike Bricker, a site technician at Friends Creek who has been heavily involved with the preservation of Bethel, believes the fond recollection of yesteryear values is not misplaced.

"No, I think there is something to that," he said. "People like to get in touch with the past, and the value of having a place like this is that they are able to actually see what it was like. This is a hands-on experience."

Visitors with luck on their side might be fortunate enough to time their arrival to when costumed kids and adults are recreating life at the old school. In a singular twist of fate, a bunch of homeschooled students regularly put on an interactive show in which they play the part of Bethel children and are watched by visiting kids from public schools.

Ten-year-old Karis Bolin of Decatur, resplendent in long flowing blue flower print dress with matching bonnet, is a homeschooler of today who wouldn't mind riding a time warp back to the Bethel of 1890.

"Want to go back then? Of course I would. I love history, and it would be a great experience," she said.

Asked if it was easier being a kid 120 years ago, Karis prefaces her answer by saying that having to do without running water would be a trial but, having established that, she thought the Bethel classes probably had a cushier ride academically.

"They only had like four or five subjects, and now I have 10 or 12," she adds. "Yes, it would be a lot of fun to go back to Bethel."
THE QUESTION

Thank you for thinking about us. It is way too early for us to be thinking about interior furnishings, when making the building sound is our top priority. Perhaps, you might have a suggestion on my current challenge regarding our school house.

As I look at our structure, I don’t think the original concrete foundation is level any longer. Much of the perimeter lower 12 inches of the wooden frame walls are rotten and/or termite compromised as evidenced by many of the lower shiplap boards having come off revealing the studs and what might be left of the sill plate.

The entire building is raked by about 1 foot, so the top of the building protrudes beyond of the bottom by about a foot on the back side.

The brick chimney, while mostly intact, has had a few bricks come off the top and it is leaning with the building. There are numerous holes about the size of golf and tennis balls probably made by squirrels that are now used by honey bees in the back and red wasps in the front and left side.

There is also a double door cut into the left side toward the back that the former owner used to facilitate storage. This activity has caused the floor to begin collapsing in this area revealing the soil that the floor joists are now in contact with.

I sometimes think it would be easier and provide a higher quality building to simply build a new building on a new concrete foundation that is hidden inside the old concrete foundation, so the appearance remains the same. Using new wood material, of the same dimension as the old and coating with a modern paint.

I fear that trying to remove old boards for reuse will simply cause them to splinter. Replacing missing or broken panes of glass would almost have to be new material. I think that to be safe the brick chimney would almost certainly have to come down, until the wood structure was sound and plumb.

What I have thus described is more like an exact replica than a restoration, so I would like to know more about how one decides which way to go.

Wouldn’t we want to add insulation to the walls now that we know its value? If insulating the walls then does one put in insulated glass windows too?

What criteria is used to determine the viability of existing materials? At what point does a renovation become a replica – at 1%, 50% or 100%?

Any help, advice or contacts you might have in this regard would be helpful in our determination of what steps to take next.

Sincerely, Steve Yemm

AN ARCHITECT’S PERSPECTIVE

The amount of rehabilitation that would be required for the structure, in my opinion, would not make it economically feasible to renovate this building over building a new one.

It sounds like most of the major elements would need replaced: major framing members, concrete slab, not to mention the fenestration, roof, windows, doors, and interior finishes would need replaced or refurbished. If this is the case you are pretty much replacing everything so I would use all of that material and time to build it right.

On large or small buildings that we renovate their is typically a lot that can be re-used to save money over building new but the most important thing we look for is that the main structure is intact.

This does not seem to be the case with this school. The only way I would renovate a building that has this much disrepair is if it had major historical or emotional significance because the price would be more than build-

Background
Steve Yemm owns a one-room school in southeast Missouri. After learning about the Ozarks Country School Association he sought advice from David Burton, civic communication specialist with MU Extension, on what to do with his school building. The main question was whether he should replace it or restore it. You can read here Steve’s initial request for help along with advice given by other members of either the Ozarks Country School Association or the Country School Association of America. In conclusion, you can read Steve’s follow-up note with a statement regarding his future plans for this building.

Information compiled by David L. Burton
MU Extension

The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension
We got good advise from the local County Historic Preservationist for free. Maybe that person can come visit you. You must preserve the historic fabric of the building.

Do not start tearing things out. Local builders are destructive. They make their living by renovation—tear out the old put in new. The more you tear out the more you put in and the more you get paid. In other words, they typically do not believe in historic preservation. Based on my experience, they will mock you and laugh to others after you leave. Watch out.

Do not tear out anything original unless it is absolutely necessary.

Ben Joyce
Cataumet Schoolhouse Cape Cod
Ma Bourne

TOUGHER BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN DONE

What a great looking building! Straightening a building is a relatively easy process. Replacing rotted sill boards is not fun, but it is done all the time. You need to find a competent restoration contractor who will do the work or give advice to your volunteers. It is imperative that you have experienced workers involved to supervise renovations. A lot tougher buildings have been renovated.

Peter Maki
Houston, Mo.

THINK OF THE FUTURE FIRST

Is the school going to be moved? It needs to be put under an umbrella of a city or park organization that has ability to do on going maintenance and to provide security. Schools setting out in the country do not have good records for continuing maintenance or existence once the restoring group gets too old to do it. It is always better to renovate if cost is not a consideration. If you build new, grants will not be available and donations will be less.

Do you know the history of the school as to when it was built and closed? Do you know what year it is to be restored or replicated? An historical architect could do a basic evaluation of the structure and tell you if the building is past saving.

Sandy Host

A perspective of Greasy Creek (Stephens) School which stands on Steve Yemm’s property in southeast Missouri. From this perspective, the school appears to be in good condition. Photo by Steve Yemm.

AVOID REPLICA, EXPERIENCE SPEAKS

In my opinion, a replica is not the way to go. But even with a replica, you need professional advice. You probably can’t afford it. Who owns the building also make a difference. It is privately owned by you or by a group?

Jarod Michel, LEED AP
Vice President
Bates & Associates Architects
433 West Walnut, Springfield, Mo 65806
ph: 417.865.2065

Avoid replicas, experience speaks.

The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension
SEE RENOVATION PROCESS ONLINE

Sometimes you have to strip the building down to the studs, as we did at Sand Bank School. We also had to remove the whole roof and straightened the bowed walls, we tried to retain as much of the old as possible, but the old lead painted cypress siding was just to brittle. Luckily our chimney and foundation was still good after more than a hundred years. We spent $60,000 on or restoration, reconstruction project.

You can check out all we did on Facebook: Sand Bank School. It might help to see how the process went in pictures.

Dennis Patton

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT RESTORED SCHOOL FROM ANOTHER OWNER

This kind of reminds me of our Dunkle Schoolhouse which we restored almost 3 years ago. It had seen its last students in 1939, was used as rather primitive living quarters a few times, and sat empty several decades surrounded by lush vegetation and small trees which had pretty much destroyed the exterior. Mine might have stood a bit straighter!

Since I was planning to use it as a historic guest rental in our robust tourism region of southeastern Ohio, we elected to replace the rotted floor joists although it still sits on its original stones. We had a local lumbering business exactly reproduce the rotted siding, which gave us an opportunity to add insulation into the wall from the outside. The roof was totally rusted through and was replaced with a green corrugated roofing material.

The interior wall was in good condition, probably protected by the four layers of wallpaper added by several “residents.” We recreated what was the probably location of the student cloakrooms, and one is now a bathroom and the other is a kitchenette. We went as “green” as we could with plenty of insulation, our own well with UV water purifier, low-flow fixtures, and a tankless water heater. Even when there are Guests a couple of weekends a month, the electric bill is usually less than $30!

Since we are out of the village limits we needed to add a septic system which necessitated buying two acres across the road!

I keep collecting iconic “schoolhouse” décor and artifacts, nothing valuable as I like people to play with them! There is a king bed in one corner and a sitting area in another. The rest is set up like a classroom.


Sue Maxwell, innkeeper
McArthur, OH

A RESTORATION NEVER BECOMES A REPLICA UNLESS IT IS TORN DOWN SAYS SCHOOL OWNER

A building can be leveled on its current (unlevel) foundation—no problem there. You could also raise the building and build a new foundation under it. You can remove the bottom siding and “sister” treated studs to the existing studs and connect to a new treated sole plate (or beam) at the bottom.

Remove the chimney, finish the restoration and have it put back up after the building is stable. Tear out the double door, stud it up and put new matching siding on it (as well as the bottom 12-24” you took off earlier)

Insulating the attic is easy and important. Not so much the walls, caulk the inside and outside to stop air infiltration.

Try to keep the same windows, new glass is fine, not modern window sashes and frames. Have some wooden sashes made if old ones are too far gone.

In my schoolhouse restoration, I used over 30 tubes of caulk to patch cracks in the siding, sprayed 10 gals of oil-based undercoat (like spraying a sponge) and topped it with high quality rubber based paint. Now 18 years later (with one more rubber based topcoat) it is still there.

Somewhere in this country they still make your sid-
ing or you can have it manufactured. I needed 4 inch clapboards, locally they only stock 6 inch, so I ripped 2 inches off them. My siding is cypress, no longer available, so I used cedar and once painted, looks the same.

My schoolhouse was also racked, and it can be fixed.

To straighten the building rack, I used winches through (open) windows to trees, and pushed the building with a 4x4 and big truck like a battering ram. Then I put one-quarter inch steel cable and big turnbuckles from corner to corner in the attic to hold it there. If you put new nails right through the old siding, it will also help hold it square.

A restoration never becomes a replica unless it is torn down. If you only replace rotted wood (even if that is well above 50 percent) it is still the original historic structure. Historic structures usually get all sorts of exemptions from current building codes (makes friends with the building official) (ie, front door opens in instead of out, front door too small, electric socket every 11 feet on the walls, second fire exit door, etc)

I had 30 companies donate “gifts in kind” (instead of money) like glass, wood, paint, equipment rental, electric, HVAC and we got it done.

Richard Lewis
West Bay Common School Museum

RENOVATE OR REPLACE?
BOTH OPTIONS COST A TON OF MONEY

I totally renovated a one room schoolhouse at a cost of $500,000 all funds raised by our Edmond Historic Preservation Trust. We searched and found a building that was a camera shop we believed was the first schoolhouse built in Oklahoma Territory in 1889. Of course we had to save it, we had a purpose to use it for.

The 1889 Schoolhouse allows children in our area to come and learn the 1889 Landrun days lessons in a realistic school. We had to tear old walls, old windows, old cedar roof, and all the inside out, leaving a shell but under the old wall we found the remains of a 1889 schoolhouse, where the original windows had been, found 5 painted blackboards painted on the walls under the wallpaper of the house. We found in the ceiling where the old pot belly stove use to send out smoke and two holes where they used to ring the schoolbell.

(What we didn't do was to get the Okay. State Preservation Office come and give us advice so we could get it on the National Register).

We had to get rid of all the lead paint, take out all the old plate glass windows, and rebuilt new 12 payne windows, rebuilt all the under floors and sand-ed and restored all the wooden floors, all the wooden walls inside, had to go by today's ADA code with doors opening out, no screens on the windows in case of fire, ADA sidewalks, and added water, electricity, heater, and A/C to the building. Asked for help to hand sand the inside walls and repaint it, put plexi-glass over the original blackboards. We had boy scouts put skids on all the desks donated from the public, and everything inside from bell in bell tower was inspected by City Codes.

We built an outdoor two room bathroom once ment slab with storage area and had it for girls and boys. All of it was inspected over and over and when we finally finished we had restored a building that cost $35.00 in 1889 to one in year 2000 that now cost $500,000. We allow all the local schools to use the schoolhouse when studying Oklahoma History, and they pay a registered teacher and all the elementary schools, home schools, and visitors come. Keep track of all the costs, outline what you will do with the school, write the school's history and let the public...
“The main key was to get the public behind you,” according to one person giving advice to Steve. Obviously, the cut out double door has caused his building to sag in the middle, as visible in this photo.

Enjoy it. See our web site at: www.edmondhistoricpreservationtrust.com.

The main key was to get the public behind you, they came and helped, they take pride in the building and all spend time doing volunteer docent work in our school. We have won many awards and get lots of publicity. Everyone enjoys being in the school. The teacher gets paid, and students pay $3 a day for class room training, all else is free. We learned some hard lessons first time. We put the outside up with pine wood, blow in insulation, and no real insulation. When the paint all peeled off we restored the outside with cypress wood, lots of hard blown in insulation, with inside walls that drained from roof to ground if the rain got behind the cypress wood. Used special primer, and two coats of good quality paint to restore it for a total charge of $85,000 this second time in 2011. Inside was fine, we covered it all up during outside reconstruction.

Then you have to write to all organizations to get them behind you, get listed on the State Travel Bureau, get listed on the school's agenda, invite the Mayor, write up lots of grants and information about the building, until everyone thinks it is their building. Takes lots of supporters. We even raised money with a big plaque with $25 donation to nominate your favorite teacher, and people come in to point out the teacher they nominated. We have Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Downtown Business Groups all use the schoolhouse, and have a "Community" award we give away for their help.

You have to get it listed on the National Register before you start restoration, we learned that too late. We have volunteers working on Saturday to show off the building and on July 4th we have a big parade and had 586 in the schoolhouse this day. Keep track of the number of visitors you have, that is required for some of the National Historical Standards Awards you can apply for.

Decide what you will use the school house for, and using new wood or painting it like 1889 people will love it, and you can spend the money. We had lots of desks-school donated, have a garden where people bring plants, all kinds of picture taking, and passionate people help. You get those that want to tear it down to save the city money but the public loves to come and visit.

Beverly Terry
League City, Texas

School in the Ozarks Maintained but Still Requires Money and Work

Our school wasn't in that bad of a shape but it was leaning quite a bit. We put cables on the top and bottom and a come a long and pulled it up straighter. Then we took off all the bottom weather boarding and spliced the studs that were rotten and put in a complete new treated board next to the concrete foundation. It is now good for another 100 years. However we are in dire need of a new roof. We aren't having much luck trying to raise enough money for this project.

Carol Coble
Locust Prairie School
Stafford, Mo.

Get Professional Help First

A lot will depend on financial resources. In Woodstock, Connecticut two buildings were torn down and rebuild by professional restorers.

One was a four bay New England barn and the other was a one-room lawyer office.

You should at least get the opinion of professional architects experienced in old buildings.

Elaine Lachapelle
Librarian, Collections
Woodstock Historical Society, Woodstock, CT
www.woodstockhistoricalsociety.org

The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension
RESTORATION IS A BIG, REWARDING ENDEAVOR

I am chairperson for the One Room Schoolhouse Committee in Hope, Indiana. Twenty-two years ago we moved a brick one room schoolhouse to our educational complex for restoration. We moved it with a plan in mind. We intended to restore the building and use it for day-long field trips for students. At this time we have about 90 visiting classes each school year. Students come in costumes appropriate for the turn of the 20th century, carrying old fashioned lunches in baskets and pails as they role play students from a century ago for the entire day at Simmons School under the leadership of one of our trained schoolmarm's.

Was our restoration a big endeavor? Yes! Was the job one that nearly drove us insane with the details and the planning? Yes! My husband often says we should warn others who plan to restore schools to just buy a can of gas and a match! But this has been one of the most rewarding projects with which I have ever been involved.

I would encourage you to check our website at www.simmonsschool.com to get an idea of the project with which I have been involved. Then if you want to talk some more about what you should do, I will be glad to see what I can tell or whom I can put you in touch with. Don't give up just because of a few bees and wasps!

Barb Johnson

A SIMILAR RESTORATION IN 1973 WAS A SUCCESS, BUT TOOK A LOT OF WORK

Your case sounds much like ours did when we began restoring in 1973. My recommendation is to keep as much original material as possible and replace the rest with similar materials.

We tore out the rotted portions and found clapboards the same size to replace. We kept original glass and had new (unwavvy) glass installed where necessary. Our entire ceiling had to be torn out and replaced. Our chimney had also collapsed but we kept the original bricks and had the chimney rebuilt in its original position. We even were able to use it when we fired up the pot belly stove. However, our stove is now not safe to use so we don't any more, but the chimney is still good!

Our stone foundation had also collapsed after we had been open for four years. So we closed the school, removed the artifacts and had the school reinforced and raised up several feet. The old stones were taken out and new cinder block and cement foundation was built.

After the school was repositioned, we faced the cement block with field stones that were gathered by students in the school where I was teaching. I think we were lucky to have a good sound floor that helped support the building. We did not have to do any refurbishing of the floor, we just used kerosene infused sawdust to restore the oils and luster to the original boards.

It took us 7 years and several thousand dollars and lots of volunteer labor to accomplish our restoration. Our museum has been open since 1984.

Linda Prather
Eric County, PA

FIRST YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRESERVATION, RESTORATION AND RENOVATION!

First advice is to understand the difference between preservation, restoration and renovation.

Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time. The greatest amount of historic fabric has been retained. Protection and stabilization are also included in this category.

With restoration, original architectural elements are restored so the property resembles its historic appearance. Restoration depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

In rehabilitation, the property is rehabilitated to a sound and usable structure while retaining original
architectural elements. Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property’s historic character.

With reconstruction, vanished or non-surviving portions of a property have been recreated for interpretive purposes.

With infill, the design of a new residential, public, or commercial property blends with the historic neighborhood streetscape enabling the area to retain its unique "sense of place." (This is an exception to 50 year old eligibility requirements.)

Next you need to look at how you intend to use your structure. This will guide you in the above.

Elizabeth Gilliam Beckett
Clay County Historic Sites Director
Kearney, MO 64060

KEEP THINGS, MAKE DECISION CAREFULLY AND CELEBRATE WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT

The pictures are great and lucky you, you also have an original chalk board. We had ours analyzed and found it had been painted on our wall made of burnt sweet potatoes and milk. Be sure to contact your State Historical Group, so they can get photos.

The Schoolhouse in Edmond had been covered with a store front, had upstairs built on it, and foundation was all out of sand stone. Keep those windows, as they are very valuable.

Decide now what you want to use it for, you will not believe how many people want to come to visit these one room schoolhouses. We have ours in town, but have hired a teacher (schoolmarm) and we allow the 3rd and 4th grade classes of Edmond when studying the Oklahoma Land run story come and spend the day. The School system sanctioned the class work so it is counted as a day of school and not a field trip. Also many Home school classes come, have Boy Scouts that sanded the walls, built runners on the school desks, and built me 4 picnic tables in the back for children to eat on.

High School students sanded the mix of old desks that were donated to us, they built two recitation benches, and boys from Fraternity House in Edmond, came and sanded all the inside walls, removing old nails, filling nail holes and doing all the inside work with direction from our carpenter. We provided masks for them to wear when sanding. The back wall looks like it has been replaced.

You might want to build a wooden box structure around the chimney until you take it down to stop the wind and protect the chimney. We put a pot belly stove in our school with chimney going out the same original chimney hole. We also built a Bell tower, and the ropes for bell came into the school on the original bell tower holes. Inside the chimney looks good, and City health code did require we have two doors so we kept the front door and made one of the East windows become our second door.

We restored the outside with Pine and because our weather has changed from bone dry to moisture the new pine rotted and totally had to be replaced. This year we replaced it with Cypress on the outside, using some new technology to make sure the water runs off, with insulation, etc. For your second door, you could probably use the swinging door space, and fill in with structure the extra space giving you two doors.

The National Historical Society has many books on line that will help and are free. Go to www.nps.gov/history/standards/restoration very good info, some on line, some will be mailed. We have helped a couple of businesses here get the tax incentive money, but you still pay to restore and it takes a long time to get it back. Better if you can get passionate historians to help you save this school. When you have all the kids and parents come into the school wide eyed you know it is worth it.

Bev Notes
Oklahoma

The floor has rotted in Steve Yemm’s school building but that does not been it cannot be fixed. The National Historical Society has materials online that will help at http://www.nps.gov/history/howto.htm.
THERE ARE TWO TRAINS OF THOUGHT, JUST REMEMBER ONCE IT IS TORN DOWN IT IS GONE FOREVER

In my opinion there are two trains of thought on how to proceed.

1. If you renovate/preserve, there are grants, local and national historic status available. It can be costly unless you can do fund raisers and/or find contractors/engineers to donate time to assist. If you have a local historic organization to help develop a plan of action for what is needed and assist with decision making...it makes it easier to get the project off the ground.

2. Replacement. once you decide to destroy the original structure...remember...it's gone for good. All across the country, I see barns, one room schools, other historic buildings forgotten and falling down. They are gone forever! Sometimes once they are too far gone, they are dangerous and then need to come down. But if a building can be restored and then the history and stories told...the next generations can see what it was like to be in a building without insulation and single pane windows and plank floors and wood stoves...and let's not forget the outhouse.

It can be hard to make a decision on which way to go. See if you can get an engineer or construction renovator go give you an honest opinion and listen to what they might say about options would be a great place to start.

Marcia McGill
grant writer/local historian

PUBLIC DOLLARS ARE SCARCE; SUCCESS DEPENDS ON PRIVATE EFFORTS, ELBOW GREASE

There is no easy option for people who are interested in renovating historic rural schools buildings, although there are a lot of success stories in Missouri. The success stories related to restoring old school houses that I know about have been community non-profit efforts and have required lots of hard work and private dollars.

I wish there was a pot of gold, because I get calls from people who believe that just because they own something historic that there is renovation money just waiting for them.

There are a few grants that are offered through the National Trust for Historic Preservation but these are small grants usually, they are highly competitive and they are only for planning or other report-driven activities, not for bricks and mortar types of endeavors.

My own experience shows that the best way to invest time is in setting up a non-profit organization and enlisting help from other interested people. It takes a team to help solicit donations and create excitement for a multi-year project that will require both time and money to lead to a successful building renovation.

The State of Missouri has also created a list of sources for assistance and advice for grant applications. That document, titled “Missouri Catalog of State Assistance Programs” is available online at http://www.mo.gov/mo/pdf/MoCSAP.pdf.

The greatest benefit of all for renovation of historic buildings is the Historic Preservation Tax Credit. This is only for buildings that are listed either individually or as a contributing resource in a district on the National Register of Historic Places, and the owner plans to reinvest at least 50 percent of their purchase price back into renovation of the historic structure.

No doubt, it is tough work but everyone I know who has taken on a task like this, rolled up their sleeves and asked their friends for help, have ultimately had success.

David L. Burton
University of Missouri Extension
Ozarks Country School Association
http://extension.missouri.edu/greene
REPORT BACK FROM SCHOOL OWNER: PROJECT MOVING FORWARD

I want to thank you all for responding to David Burton’s efforts to help me figure out which direction to go in restoring our school house. Based on everyone’s input so far, I am leaning towards restoring the structure by keeping as much of the original materials in use as possible. This building is on our private property and our intention is to keep it private but share what we have with the community as we currently do today. I believe this will be a slow labor of love as weather, time and money permit.

I have some experience in rehab - raising up an old multi-story grist mill, restoring a 7 story brick civil war era warehouse immediately north of the St Louis arch and shoring up an old wood barn on our property.

Our first task will be to temporarily remove the brick chimney because even today, it is an extreme hazard. I’d also remove all of the windows to preserve as much of the glass as possible.

I believe the building has racked in two directions and sagged due primarily to the sill or plate resting on the concrete foundation being almost completely rotted away. I also think the foundation has sunken in places but until the wasps and bees are hibernating, confirming this will have to wait.

I fear that if I removed the interior and exterior siding in order to straighten the frame by pulling and pushing the building walls, the building could collapse, since it is primarily resting on the rotted ends of the wall studs.

What I am contemplating is taking up the floor boards and hand digging for a new concrete foundation within the original foundation, attaching new to old with anchor bolts. The new concrete would never be seen and help keep the original foundation wall from moving any further.

Then I would remove about 16” of the lower inside wall boards and moving around the perimeter, raise the building incrementally until the tops of the walls are level and parallel with the new concrete foundation. Once this is accomplished, I would remove enough of the lower boards on the inside and out to allow replacing of the sill or plate on the original concrete, making sure it is anchored with bolts and shimmed to be level with the top of the new concrete. I would then replace the bottoms of each rotten stud. At this point, with the repaired studs firmly anchored to the plate with metal brackets, I would feel confident about removing the rest of the interior and exterior siding (avoiding the black board).

Then I would pull and push the building into plumb. I would readjust any of the recently repaired studs to insure the walls were the proper height and then replace all of the siding. As one of the pictures shows we have some of the same siding salvaged from another building. I believe that I can make a tool that would allow us to remove a board without damaging it. Finally, I’d replace the floor joists as necessary and reinstall the flooring, replacing what has been compromised.

I know it is just a poor old Ozark school house but I think I can make it last for a couple more generations. I wonder if the typical Ozark method of repairing holes in the wood siding, would still be appropriate for this intended remodel – that is tacking over the hole, a thin
A special thanks to Beth for the definitions. It seems that my concept of what to do with our one room school house includes parts of the first three, Preservation, Restoration and Rehabilitation. I want the building to look like it did when it was first completed, plumb walls and no rot around the bottom. So far, this is what I plan to do –

- Grade the surrounding area so that all water runs away from the building.
- Support the existing foundation with concrete piers poured under the existing foundation.
- Retain all of the original exterior materials that are not rotten but paint them with modern paint to last longer than they would have otherwise.
- Replace any rotten framing with new of the same dimension.
- Retain the original window sash but replace broken and missing glass with old rippled glass saved from another old building.
- Remove the double door cut into the back side wall and replace it with a matching window, unless we received feedback to make it a single wide door as an emergency exit (I don’t know if there was a window or a door here).
- Retain all of the interior as is, except to wash the boards.
- While the floor is being repaired, add foam insulation under it.
- While the siding is off to straighten the building, install insulation.
- Install insulation in the attic.
- Make discrete provisions to install removable interior and exterior window sash.
- Add steps, probably trying to duplicate period stone and concrete.

This way, the building would look like it was when new but be able to be comfortable to today’s standards, when heated with a wood burning stove.

I am now using what I think is the proper name for the school, Stephens, since the land appears to have been donated or sold by a Stephens. I will cease calling it the Greasy Creek school unless I learn otherwise.

Related to the naming issue, all of the older deeds refer to the major creek in the area as Mouser Creek after a prominent family in the area. Then, in the mid 20th century, the name of this stream was changed to Greasy Creek after the algae that covers the submerged rock bottom. I used the new stream name for the school house but this seems to be incorrect.

The earliest date I have for the school so far is 1903. I have the local title company researching this for us and I will contact the local school board next. Based on other documents we have, Henry V. Call sold to Henry M. Stephens on the same day as HV Call purchased the property from BF Whitener, who was I believe a Revolutionary War veteran, receiving his land from the USA. The school location apparently was moved, perhaps 100 yds, out of a field and across the road. At the new location, I do not know yet if new materials were used or if materials were salvaged from the original location. I have found some broken window pane near where the original location may have been.

Sincerely, Stephen W Yemm
Southeastern Missouri in Madison County

Stephens School is used for storage of materials now but Steve Yemm hopes to have it structurally sound soon.
History of Stephens School
By Ruby Stephens Pope

Back in the early 1900s the Stephens School sat in Uncle Henry Stephens’s best field, on the opposite side of Greasy Creek from his home. The children had to pass through a gate which had trouble being kept shut.

Finally, Uncle Henry told the school board that if they would furnish the materials, he would build a new schoolhouse on his property but outside of the field, near the road. The idea met with approval and the new school was built. Things went along for years and years. The farm changed owners a few times. All good things must come to an end.

A new owner discovered that the schoolhouse was on his land. Being an outsider, he confronted the school board and demanded the school be moved. My brother Claud, was on the board and informed the man that they would move it but he would not like where they would put it. He demanded to know why. My brother replied, “Our school deed is a spot right down in the middle of your best field and we would have to have a lane to it for the children to use, also.” Needless to say, the school stayed put.

Over the years our little school had some exciting moments. Once during the school hours, a large black snake oozed through a knothole in the wall about 12 inches from the floor. One of the older girls, Lettie Griffon, killed it with the long iron stove poker.

Once a little girl named Nancy Griffon fell asleep with her head on the desk. The young male teacher raised her head by her ear. Nancy’s older sister jumped up, grabbing my sister Ethel’s writing slate board. She raised it back to swing at him and told him if he touched her little sister again, she would make a collar for him out of the slate’s wooden frame. He didn’t sass her back.

Once school term he had a young lady teacher who twitched or blinked one eye, she could not help doing so. My grown brother Claude winked back at her one time. She made him come up to the front of the school room and sit on a chair for punishment. Looking at him in a little while, she did the blink again and he winked right back at her. She ordered him, not too gently, back to his seat.

Jennie was a shy girl but small and pretty. She could outrun and out jump any of the other kids. The boys would get disgusted when she would fly over the pole they would put up. The boys would run off the hill to start their jump but Jennie would run side-wise to the pole and clear it.

There was a knothole in the school front door, just right for a grown-up to watch the activities on the school grounds. A snow ball fight was in progress out there and my brother, Claude, announced “watch me hit the knothole (teacher in the eye).” He let go at the knothole and hit it. The teacher had a very watery, red eye all day and for several days a black eye. But much to the student’s amusement, it was never mentioned.

A boy ran off from school. He knew that when he came back he would get a whipping. When he came back, he had on four pairs of overalls. He laughed good when he got that whipping but not when he got another one the first day he showed up with only one pair of pants on.

One little girl slipped her foot through the back part of the old school desk and her ankle would not come back through. She screamed and bellowed until a wrench could be brought to take the seat apart. She was not hurt, just scared. I know, because the little girl was me and I was a student at Stephens school.

The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension
Is the School Worth Saving?
By Bill Sherman & Richard Lewis
CSAA Board of Directors

Before restoring any historic building, in this case a schoolhouse, you should determine the condition of the building by inspecting it and determining whether it is "worth it." That is an interesting combination of words "worth it." Let us explore "value" and "worth."

If you look at the National Historic Register and/or National Trust guidelines, they concentrate on determining whether the historic character of a building is preserved during the restoration process. Not too much information is provided on determining "is it worth restoring" or the quality of the building now.

We have to think of these little school buildings as artifacts like you find in a museum or you unearth during an archeological dig. Our artifacts are just found above ground and are a little larger than most.

In the normal real estate process, they basically try to determine the "quality of a building" based on its "resale" value. Is it worth investing money in for resale? This value does not take into account its provenance and intrinsic value, just what it would "sell" for. In other words, what is the intangible value to a community and its people. Historic value is usually well above the calculated real estate value.

Whether or not a schoolhouse can be saved depends on the degree of local support that can be mustered to save it. Some school buildings in terrible condition, that are thought to be not worth saving, have been restored because local leaders determined it was important to save them and got enough people involved to make it happened.

There is no one standard to define "is it worth it?" Also, if you think about the nuts and bolts, there are no more "old growth" trees, to cut lumber from, no more real Cypress, or Redwood to build with today. Today they are "farm grown" trees with nowhere near the structural strength or bug and weather resistance of an original tree so the original structure has added value.

If you accept schoolhouses as artifacts, their historic importance, the intrinsic value of a school, the resilience of original building materials, and you can garner community support...our schoolhouses ARE worth saving....even if the restoration costs more than building it from scratch. Like any artifact, we are not restoring a schoolhouse for resale, we are restoring it to save it for future generations.

Learn more online at the website of the Country Schools Association of America.
CHECKLIST FOR ....
REHABILITATING HISTORIC STRUCTURES

This standard was adapted from a checklist developed by the National Park Service. It is intended for use in identifying some preservation factors to consider when undertaking the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Not all of the factors listed will be applicable to all structures or preservation projects. Use this in conjunction with the previous pages regarding a specific school building to develop a plan.

BUILDING NAME:

LOCATION:

1. CHECK HISTORIC DESIGNATION AND AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION
   a. Is the building a local landmark or located in a locally designated historic district?   Yes  No
   b. Is it in a historic district that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places? Does it contribute to the historic significance of that district?   Yes  No
   c. Is it individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places?   Yes  No
   d. What historical or architectural documentation is available about the building(s) or site? For example:
      • National Register nominations
      • Architectural or engineering drawings for construction of survey such as Historic American Buildings Survey/ Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER)
      • State or local historical survey or inventory Local documents, views, photographs in libraries, archives, historical societies

2. CHECK LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
   a. Are there easements or local ordinances governing alterations to property (deed records, zoning offices)?   Yes  No
   b. How do the state and local building codes apply to the historic structure?
      • What impact will they have upon the character and integrity of the building?
      • Are code variances available?   Yes  No
      • Are there code equivalency possibilities for your particular building?   Yes  No
   c. Will there be federal funds involved which will require review by State Historic Preservation Office or a Section 106 compliance consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation?   Yes  No
      • Are you familiar with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings?   Yes  No
      • Have you contacted the State Historic Preservation Officer?   Yes  No

3. EVALUATE HISTORIC CHARACTER/SIGNIFICANCE OF STRUCTURE
   a. Have you identified, listed, and prioritized the character defining aspects of the building? These may include its form, materials, workmanship, features, color, relationship of solids to voids, and interior spaces--all those physical features of the building that define its historic character.   Yes  No
   b. What have been the architectural changes over time? These may include:
      • new additions
      • changes to surfaces and finishes (slates to asphalt, polychrome to monochrome)
      • blocking of windows
      • changes to grade
      • loss of cornice
      • false fronts
      • changes to basic plan (single family to multiple family).
   c. Are any of the changes significant and worth preserving or do they detract from the building?   Yes  No
   d. Has the architectural integrity of the building and its setting been assessed? Architectural integrity means the intactness of the building as an architectural system (its plan, features, materials, finishes, structural system, and presence of architectural features).   Yes  No

4. ASSESS PHYSICAL CONDITION
   a. Are there physical problems that threaten the building's architectural and structural integrity?   Yes  No
   b. Has a structural survey been performed to determine deficiencies due to settlement, deflection of beams, seismic inadequacy, and cuts through structural members for mechanical pipes and ducts?   Yes  No

The National Historical Society has helpful materials online at http://www.nps.gov/history/howto.htm.
c. Are there inherent architectural problems, such as materials failure due to poor original design, poor original materials, severe environmental or moisture problems, neglect, improper maintenance?  Yes No

d. Is there man-inflicted damage, such as ornamentation removed, inappropriate coatings, bad repointing or cleaning, insensitive additions, or partitioning of significant interior spaces?  Yes No

e. Are historic features hidden behind later alterations? These may include ornamental ceilings or cornices hidden above dropped ceilings.  Yes No

5. DEVELOP PRESERVATION PROJECT PLANS

a. Will it be necessary to write unique specifications rather than use standard specifications to apply to work performed on a historic building?  Yes No

b. Will testing be needed to determine the performance of the materials or the systems? Note that it may be necessary to review test results with consultants or laboratories.  Yes No

c. Will the project involve hard-to-find replacement materials such as terra-cotta or ornamental metals that may require logistical planning?  Yes No

d. Will the project involve hard-to-find crafts such as stone carving or ornamental plastering, and if so, can the necessary expertise be found?  Yes No

e. Are samples or models available for use in establishing the standard of craftsmanship for the project?  Yes No

f. Will the project involve energy conservation measures?  Yes No

g. Have historic materials and finishes been retained to the maximum extent possible?  Yes No

h. Will new uses require upgrading the loading capacity of wooden floor joists? Will the preservation objectives affect the decision making? For instance, it is better to double up existing joists with a parallel member than to remove historic materials, and if an ornamental ceiling would be damaged by this approach, a structural engineer should investigate other alternatives.  Yes No

i. Has the impact of new additions and adjacent new construction been minimized by keeping the size, shape, materials, and detailing in scale with the surrounding environment?  Yes No

j. What protective measures will be taken to preserve important character-defining features and finishes during the construction work?  

k. On the exterior, will the rehabilitation work cause loss of significant historic fabric or seriously damage the historic character?  Yes No

Loss of historic fabric or change of historic character often occur when:
- storefronts and entrances are altered
- visible skylights are added to a roof
- dormers are added on prominent roofs
- new floors are added on top of an existing building
- porches are enclosed
- new window openings are created
- tinted films or reflective coatings are added to windows
- new window sash are historically inappropriate as to configuration and detailing.

l. On the interior, will the rehabilitation cause loss of significant historic fabric or seriously damage the historic character?  Yes No

Loss of fabric or change of character often occur when:
- interiors are partitioned and there is a loss of significant sequence of spaces
- interior plaster is removed to expose brickwork
- interiors are gutted, to introduce new atriums, new floor levels, or to reconfigure spaces
- significant stairs are removed or altered.

m. Will there be a professional on site during construction to ensure that work is carried out according to established preservation principles?  Yes No

n. Have construction personnel received adequate training in undertaking historic preservation work? Yes No

The Ozarks Country School Association is a program of University of Missouri Extension
Secret school: Up Club Ministries tour Verden Separate School

Jessica Lane, Staff Writer
The Chickasha Express Star
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Forget walking a mile in someone else’s shoes, try sitting in their school desk.

About 25 students from Up Club Ministries, Inc. of Lawton visited the Verden Separate School on Ada Sipuel Avenue, the only known standing separate school in the state of Oklahoma.

While the one-room school now functions as a museum rather than an educational facility, Loretta Jackson and her daughter Cynthia W. Anderson gave the visiting students a history lesson about Allen Toles, who built Verden Separate School in 1910.

Jackson said Toles had to keep the school a secret, fearing what would happen if others found out it was a school for African American children because at the time, they were not permitted to learn to read or write.

Anderson emphasized that Toles’ bravery still has a lesson to teach today. “It doesn’t matter if you’re the only one doing it … it will last through people. Toles had no idea this school would still be sitting here today,” Anderson said.

Jackson told the student visitors about the lives of the students that once attended the school.

There were chores to be done before the school day started. For example, during the winter months, the children would gather wood for the fire stove. During the summer months, there wasn’t any air conditioning, just open windows inviting insects from the fields.

The students of Verden Separate School didn’t go to school on days when it would interfere with work on the farms. Sometimes, the money earned in the fields went to school books, school supplies, school clothes and clothes for holidays.

At 12 years of age, Jackson said one of her jobs was to make sure workers in the cotton field had water to drink. They shared the same cup, the main concern being not to drink on the same side as those that chewed tobacco.

While the school has been restored, the floor and most of the ceiling are made of the original wood. While the schoolhouse was empty before it was restored, effort has been made to keep the experience authentic. School desks from the time sit in neat rows. A bucket sits on a table with a cup. Like the field workers, the students shared a cup.

In 2004, the Verden Separate School was relocated to Chickasha and in 2005, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rev. Michael Williamson, of Up Club Ministries, works with Jr. High and High School students. He added Verden Separate School to their tour as a part of the program’s focus on leadership and character.
Good Ole’ School Days

Nothing captures the character of the good ole’ school days like photos. Photo submissions are welcome (by e-mail or actual prints by mail) for scanning and publication in this newsletter. This month’s photos were submitted by Sharon Nahon of Springfield, Mo.

**Photo #1:** Hickory Barren School (near Fair Grove Mo), 1921. Hickory Barren is gone now but it stood northeast of Farm Road 181 and Hickory Barren Lane, about .3 miles south of Shelby Road. Can you spot the teacher in this photo? Here is a hint, her name was Marie Israel. See answer at the bottom of the page.

**Photo #2:** Liberty School near Fair Grove. This photo is undated but Marie Israel, who later went on to teach at Hickory Barren is in it. Marie is the first girl on the back row at the far left. There is an effort underway to save, move and preserve Liberty School.

Liberty School served the community from the mid-1800’s to the time of its consolidation with the Fair Grove school district in the fall of 1951. This community needed a school and there is verification of a school board in 1895 that accepted an acre of land deeded for the school next to the church on what is now Farm Road 66. The exact date the school was established has not been confirmed, but it is believed to be between 1879-1881.

**Photo #1 Answer:** Marie Israel, the teacher at Hickory Barren in 1921, had several girls and boys larger than she was! Marie is pictured in the middle of this photograph on the back row in the white sweater (and locket).
Written Memories
“To make a little spending money and also to buy my clothes and books, I ran traps from the time I was about eight years old. One morning I caught a skunk in a rabbit trap and it liberally sprayed my overall legs as I was trying to set it loose. As I was out in the open air, I didn’t realize how bad it was and went on to school. My desk was fairly close to the pot-bellied stove and by mid-morning, the stench was obvious, even to me. When the teacher discovered the origin of the smell, she decided to just dismiss school for the rest of the day. I imagine she spent the rest of the day trying to get the room fumigated.” — Edward Maxwell, Aurora, Missouri

The school above is in Mesa Verda and was sent to me by a friend, Greg Goodman.