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Ozarks Country School Association

A program of University of Missouri Extension
Founded 2010
On the cover ...

In 2005, students at Missouri State University constructed a 1905-era one-room school on its campus, immediately west of the Greenwood Laboratory School. The building contains donated materials from former schools that help to recreate the one-room school experience. The building is available for public use and meetings, like the Ozarks Country School Association. For more information on the building, visit http://education.missouristate.edu/OneRoomSchoolhouse.htm. The cover photo, entitled “Teacher’s Desk” was taken inside the 1905 One-room Schoolhouse by David L. Burton, civic communication specialist with MU Extension. Below is an exterior photo of the school, which stands immediately west of Greenwood Lab School. We hope to have at least one special event in this building during 2011.
Grandfather’s Story Inspires Interest in One-Room Schools

I remember the stories my grandfather (Orlis Farmer) told me about his adventures at Coleman School near Ash Grove.

Specifically, I remember being at an auction in the 1980’s when three old lunch pails went up for sale and that led to a story from my grandpa.

"Those remind me of lunches at Coleman school," said grandpa. "You know where Coleman is at don't ya? Over there by Richter's farm -- about a mile north."

"Ever have any fights during lunch," I asked with youthful curiosity.

"I didn't, but I remember the best one I ever saw. I was in first grade and our teacher got in a fight with one of the older students."

This I couldn't believe. I remember thinking, maybe I should keep these stories for a book.

"Our teacher wasn't too old, maybe 16, and there were some boys in the school older than him. I was in first grade. It was about the scariest thing I had ever seen. The fight lasted longer than our entire lunch hour. I can still see them rolling around in the snow hitting each other. Our teacher won, he whipped the oldest Ritcher boy. Course, the Ritchers got mad and took their kids out of school. It wasn't a big deal since they did that every year anyway."

In the background I could hear the auctioneer moving on to the next item.

"We still walked to school with the Ritcher boys everyday. No matter what," said grandpa.

"Yes I know. Through four feet of snow, carrying your sisters above your head with a load of rocks on your back," I quipped.

"You said that, I didn't," chuckled my grandfather.

FIRST OZARKS COUNTRY SCHOOL CONFERENCE BEING PLANNED

Go ahead and mark your 2011 calendar for the 1st Annual Ozarks Country School Association Conference.

The conference is already being talked about nationally and will be held Friday, Sept. 16, 2011, and Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011.

The event will be held at the Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, 2400 S. Scenic Ave., Springfield, Mo., inside Nathanael Greene and Close Parks (the same park that also houses the Gray-Campbell Farmstead).

The event will be held on a theme around historic rural schools in the Ozarks. Possible program topics include: photographing schools, moving or restoring a school, writing for grants, how to do a countywide research project, as well as local success stories, regional case studies and opportunities to network.

The 1850’s Lifestyle Event at Gray-Campbell Farmstead will be taking place at the same time, in the same park. One of our goals is to move an historic school to that collection of historic buildings. This event will blend nicely with what is going on at the Gray-Campbell Farmstead lifestyle event and I hope the two events will compliment each other and help draw people from the region.

PLENTY OF BENEFITS

The Ozarks Country School Association is growing and it is not too late to become a member or get a friend or family member to join. The more members we have the more we can accomplish.

Be watching your e-mail and newsletter for other programs this year that OCSA members can receive discounts to attend.

The Ozarks Country School Association and the Country Schools Association of America are working together to research the possibility of developing a group insurance package for coverage on one-room school buildings.

Liability insurance is often one of the biggest expenses on an historic school and if we could develop something that would save members money we believe that would be a great step.

If you own an historic school or work with a group that owns one, please take 5-10 minutes to answer this survey. www.surveymonkey.com/s/CSAA-InsuranceSurvey

Responses will be collected this spring and reported on this summer at the national conference of the Country Schools Association of America.
My Grandmother Ethel Webb, born June 4, 1896, or Mammaw as I called her, was 2nd daughter of Joseph ‘Harvey’ and Lucinda (Jones) Webb. She began School at Pleasant Valley, then the boundaries changed and the Webb children went to Plummer School. The sisters and brothers walked from their home near the Southwest corner of Mill and Gault Roads (now FR.132 & 205) to school.

In 1915, Ethel married Wm Bryan Wilkerson and they had seven children: Mary Evelyn (my Mom), Weldon, Darrell, Bill, Sue, Ann, and Faith, who all attended Plummer at one time or another.

The Wilkersons were living east of Plummer School, South of Mill Street Rd. One snowy morning as Mary Evelyn and her brothers walked to school, they thought they saw a Black Bear down at the bottom of the hill and were afraid to go any farther.

Turning back to find someone to help, as their dad would be at work, they found a neighbor who went with them. When they got close, they found it was a big burnt log that was in the road, so on to school they went.

The family moved into Springfield for a few years, and then later moved to the ‘Jack Gray’ place, on Mill St. Rd. about a half mile east of Gault Rd. This is where they were living, and where I stayed part-time, to attend Plummer with them.

Mom, Mary Evelyn, started school at Plummer, and Arthur Galbraith was her first teacher. While living in Springfield she graduated from Springfield High School in 1934. In 1935, she married Glenn Adams; by November 1936, I was born.

In January 1942, we moved to the country, on East Cherry Road. I went to Plummer School, finishing my first grade and staying with Mammaw and Pappaw, so I could walk with my aunts to school. Mrs. Dolby was my teacher.

I really don’t remember much from that time, except going to Doling Park at the end of the school year. I remember riding the little train with Mammaw and watching the kids roller skate.

The second grade began with me going to Pleasant Valley School for just a couple of weeks. I walked with neighbor children and we went through a corn field. They would hide from me and I was afraid, so I changed to Strafford School.

I had to ride a bus, and I just knew I would never get on the correct one. So my dear Aunt Sue either stayed with me or I stayed with her, so she could make sure I was okay. That summer we moved north of Springfield on a farm. In the spring of the third grade, Dad was drafted into the Army during WWII, and Mom and I moved in with Mammaw and Pappaw Wilkerson, and I went back to Plummer School, until the last half of the fifth grade, when Dad came home.

Walking to school with my Aunt Faith and meeting up with the other kids going down the road was a fun time, even if the ‘big kids’ told us there was an old man that lived under the little bridge. One day Faith was sick and I had to walk by myself. I was late in leaving so had no one to walk with. When I got to that place in the road ‘where the old man lived’, I started singing all the songs I had learned at church, and that kept me safe.

Mrs. Goodson was my teacher,
and the lessons in Astronomy and Geography, and studying the wild flowers were my favorites. Mrs. Goodson was really smart and I wanted to be just like her, down to her ‘Sugar Diabetes’, so I carried a small jar of sugar to eat all the time. (silly me)

I was a very small person, so did not get picked for the ‘Red Rover’ games until the end, but did like some of the games.

When the bell rang after lunch, we had five minutes to get in our seats. One day as I was running to the ‘outhouse’ a second grade girl, although bigger than me, pushed me down. I hit the gravel and tore up my knee. I tried to stop the bleeding with some leaves and finally went on into school and tried to slip in but was caught. Mrs. Goodson saw the blood, so she sat me up on a table in the back of the room and got soap and water to clean the gravel out. It really hurt, but I could not cry, as all the kids were watching me. I still carry the scars.

Mammaw always made us good lunches. Sometimes she would kill a chicken to fry and make sugar cookies before we left for school. The boy behind me would say ‘that smells so good’, so sometimes I would trade for his jelly sandwich, but would keep my cookie.

Halloween was a fun time. We dressed up and they sold pies and all of the families would come. One time some of the kids pasted newspapers on the windows of the cars. Pappaw was anxious to get home and check on the ‘outhouse’, big kids would tip them over you know.

One Christmas we had a program and my Aunt Faith sang ‘Dear Ole Saint Nicholas’ and I was dressed like an angel for the nativity.

I love thinking back to those days. The walk seemed far, but really wasn’t, and if the weather was too bad, we got to stay home. One winter was bad enough that we had makeup days on Saturdays. We all drank out of the same dipper in the water bucket. Maybe that was where I got strep throat which turned into scarlet fever.

I am thankful that I have aunts and a cousin that I shared time with, in that one room school house called Plummer.

Submitted by
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Submissions welcomed: Want to submit a letter of memories about an Ozarks 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.
1910 Graduates of Pleasant Valley School #92 near Turners

A member submitting this information (that appeared in an updated copy of the Springfield News-Leader) on graduates of the school thinking the names might be useful to researchers. The school stood at the corner of Farm Road 142 and Farm Road 199. It was actually moved three times due to the construction of roads. It presently stands on the west side of Farm Road 199 just north of Sunshine (1425 S. Farm Road 199). Reorganized as Hickory Hills R-IX in 1950 and then as part of Springfield R-XII in 1951.

Honoring two cousins who are back visiting in the Springfield vicinity for the first time in 27 years, Mrs. Louis Parsley West of Long Beach and Mrs. Hallie Parsley Kelly of Alhambra, Cal., about 30 school mates who attended school at old Pleasant Valley school number 92, east of Springfield near Turner station, about 35 years ago, will meet for luncheon together at the YWCA at 11:30 o’clock Saturday morning.
These women and former classmates will be at the reunion:

Mesdames

Irene Galbraith Lewers
Ethel Webb Wilkerson
Flora Graves McKinney
Nola Johnson Graves
Margaret Miller Wortman
Josie Miller Dillard
Lochie Fielder Goss
Amanda Slack Mauch
Florence Robinson Jones
Ollie Gault Bowers
Opal Campbell Webb
Winifred Pursley Turner
Olive Webb Gibson
Emma Galbraith
Allene Allen

Ruth Becker Barnett
Sudie Webb West
Emma Graves Webb
Harriett Miller Webb
Laura Miller Becker
Nora McFarland Pursley
Ruth Slack Whitehead
Blanche Galbraith Campbell
Nina Gault Collison
Alice Webb Graves
Edna Pursley Messick
Olive Pursley Gault
Mary Webb Dennis

Misses

Emma Galbraith
Maude Gault
Pearl Webb
One-room schools still exist in America. They are a legacy of a less mobile, more rural time in American history. Mostly serving isolated communities, the remaining schools require one teacher to educate children of varying ages at the same time in a single classroom.

In 1919 there were 190,000 one-room schools scattered all around the American countryside. Now there are fewer than 400 left.

Most of the remaining one-room schools are concentrated in a few states in the western part of the United States. Montana has the most — between 85 and 100. Nebraska is number two, with roughly 75 one-room schools.

In most one-room schools, there are few students. The result is a good student-teacher ratio. At Lennep Elementary in Meagher County, Mont., for example, four students, from kindergarten through fifth grade study at their own speed. All of them, the teacher says, are advancing at a rapid pace.

It's also not unusual for students to have the same teacher for many years in a row, a concept referred to as "looping" when it's used in larger schools. In one-room schools, the older students often help the younger ones.

These qualities make one-room schools unique centers of learning, worth a second look from a world that has passed them by. But the schools are often more than a place to get an education. They are also important centers of community activity for the rural areas where they still exist.

Their days, however, appear numbered. De-population is forcing the closure of some one-room schools. Others are being lost as states and localities consolidate one-room schools into larger facilities in an effort to save money through "economies of scale."

Croydon Village School in Croydon, N.H., is one of only three one-room schools left in the state.

Lennep Elementary in Meagher County, Mont., has four students, ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade.
“Learn to Sell on eBay” Class in Springfield Feb. 25

Back by popular demand, Nellie Lamers, a University of Missouri Extension specialist, will be teaching the popular MU Extension training program entitled, “Learn to Sell on eBay.”

Two identical classes will be held from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 25 at the Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, 2400 S. Scenic Ave., Springfield, Mo. 65807.

Class size is limited to 10 and registration can be made by calling (417) 881-8909 (with a discount for registrations before Feb. 21). A registration flyer is also available online at http://extension.missouri.edu/greene.

This class offers the opportunity to have a professional teach class attendees the right way to sell on eBay without trying to sell extra services or products. Participants will also have plenty of time to ask specific questions.

Lamers was trained at eBay University and will be using the most up-to-date training and learning materials available only to certified eBay trainers. Attendees will receive a helpful eBay manual as part of the class instruction.

“This class will help you avoid many of the costly mistakes that new eBay sellers often make,” said Lamers. “The eBay classes we did in Springfield during 2010 (April and September) filled quickly, which is why this second class is being offered.”

Students at Fairview School (Greene County) 1894.

Your Photo Submissions are Welcome!

Thanks to David J. Eslick of Springfield, Mo. for submitting this historical school photo. Submissions are welcomed and printed photos will be returned. Please submit digital photos by e-mail to burtond@missouri.edu or mail the photo to David Burton at the Greene County Extension Center. Provide as much information about the photo, and identification of who is in the photo, as possible. Printed photos will be returned by mail.
Researching Historic Schools Can be Fun Community Project

Researching the locations of historic rural schools in a county can lead to preservation efforts, heritage tourism and successful new non-profit groups according to David Burton, a civic communication specialist with University of Missouri Extension and author of “A History of the Rural Schools of Greene County, Mo.”

The best place to start a community research project is with the things a person already knows.

“My grandparents attended one-room schools so I went with them (in 1999) to visit the schools they attended along with the others they knew about,” said Burton.

The second step was to do research at the local library and county archives. Both locations had resources about other schools in the county. Records like school board minutes, county inspections, newspapers, grade cards and information about consolidation votes were all helpful.

Burton says two other resources proved to be the most valuable: county maps showing the location of rural schools in 1905 and 1910 and genealogical websites or groups.

“I took copies of the historic maps and determined the location of current roads. Then, by putting several hundred miles on my car I was able to locate a majority of these rural schools. Many times, a visual was the only way to get information on these structures,” said Burton.

Discussions with landowners often led to additional contacts with former students and teachers.

After the initial research is done, the natural progression is toward media coverage in order to find former teachers and students to interview about former school buildings.

Once the research is done, Burton recommends doing the paperwork to add the better buildings discovered to a county, city or national historic register.

“If you have the interest and the time, going on a hunt for surviving one-room schools can be a fun and exciting project. But if you are going to make the effort, be sure to share your findings with the public in at least an online format. By doing so you would be adding your research to the wealth of information that exists online now,” said Burton.

The best place to start a community research project is with the things a person already knows.

Pleasant Hill School

After 106 years, the identities of the Pleasant Hill School students and teachers in this Nov. 11, 1904 photograph have been lost. Do you recognize any of these faces from a family photo? If so, please contact the History Museum for Springfield-Greene County at (417) 864-1976.
Older people often own items that trigger special memories among family members.

It may be a yellow pie plate that grandma cooked with, an antique piano sitting in a corner, an old clock on the mantel or even a collection of family photos.

“These are pieces of living history and special memories,” says Dr. Jim Wirth, human development specialist, University of Missouri Extension. “These are also the things most likely to divide families when it is time to distribute estate assets.”

The battle comes from the fact that money can be divided evenly among heirs, but special items that have sentimental value can’t be cut in half. That is why Wirth teaches a program about passing on non-titled property.

Over the years, Wirth has heard many stories of family members stealing items or getting into nasty arguments over “stuff.” But, according to Wirth, if family members would just communicate, many of these hard feelings could be avoided.

“There are no magic formulas but there are six key elements to keep in mind when distributing non-titled property.”

Dr. Jim Wirth
Human Development
MU Extension

“That old table may be junk to you but another family member may consider it priceless because of some special memories associated with it. Objects carry emotional value and that can make the transfer of non-titled property a big challenge,” said Wirth.

Second, determine what you, as owner of the property want to accomplish when distributing it.

“Is the goal to preserve memories or is it to improve family relationships, maintain privacy, be fair to everyone in the family, or contribute to society by donating things?” said Wirth.

The third key element is to determine, as a family, what does “fair” mean?

“Is the emphasis placed on treating everyone the same by considering the value of each item, or is the goal to be equitable, taking into account differences? For examples, does one family member have more monetary needs than another,” said Wirth.

Fourth, take time to identify the meaning of the objects.

“Inheritance issues can be sensitive and it can be hard to find out who has special feelings for something. For example, research shows younger people have more fear of death, so as a general rule, they won’t bring up issues or mention things they would really like to have,” said Wirth.

Fifth, Wirth says it is important to recognize distribution options and the consequences.

“You may want to do some preplanning by asking family members what they want, putting labels on items as to who gets what, making and copying a list of who gets what,” said Wirth.

“Or you may just want to provide guidelines about how you want it done after you die, like have items sold at an auction instead.”

And finally, agree to manage conflicts if they arise.

“Discuss and clarify the problem, work out a solution to the problem, be sure personal needs are stated and then consider alternatives to what caused the conflict to arise,” said Wirth.

Although Wirth’s program is not a legal presentation, the transfer of personal property has caused many legal issues in families. In Missouri, attorneys recommend attaching a list (signed and dated) to a will and making and sharing multiple copies of the list.

“You don’t want just one list because at the time of someone’s death, that list could get ‘lost’ or changed. If there are multiple lists, then you are assured that the people you want to get the items are able to,” said Wirth.

Groups interested in having Wirth present a program may contact him at (417) 881-8909.
Old Schoolhouses in Iowa Find New Lives

By Judy Keen, USA TODAY

HAYESVILLE, Iowa — West Lancaster School #9 has been part of this town since the late 1890s. Next year, it will be gone.

Generations of youngsters attended the two-story, two-room country school. In the 1920's, the mayor's court decided legal issues here. In the 1940's, people gathered on the lawn on summer evenings to watch movies projected on the school's west wall.

The school district abandoned the building in the 1960's amid a wave of consolidations, leaving behind two pianos, a battered globe, wooden desks and piles of books. The foundation on the north side has crumbled. The green paint on classroom walls is lead-based. The roof is ruined.

No one stepped up to raise money to preserve and move the school — which could cost $250,000 — so the City Council voted unanimously to demolish it. "It's sad to see it go, but it is a liability for the town," says Sherrie Casper, city clerk in Hayesville.

It's a tragic fate for a vital part of local history, says Rod Scott, president of the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance. "These old buildings tell a story," he says. "It's a huge part of who we are and where we've come from."

Nostalgia for country schools is spurring efforts to save them, especially in the Midwest, says Lucy Townsend, a Northern Illinois University education professor and executive director of the Country School Association of America. The group, formed in 2006, and has members in 24 states.

By the 1900s, there were more than 200,000 country schools across the USA, Townsend says. Often, there were scores of schools in a county so students had to walk only a mile or so to attend. Many consisted of just one room where a single teacher taught several grades.

By the 1960's, most of the tiny schools were phased out. "No one knows how many still stand" said Townsend.

"In 1901, Iowa had 12,623 operating schoolhouses," says Bill Sherman, who coordinates an annual Iowa conference on country schools and edited a 1998 book on the state's surviving examples. About 3,000 were still around then according to Sherman.

Some old Iowa schools have been turned into museums; others were moved to fairgrounds or other public sites, Sherman says. The Iowa Legislature voted in 1999 to set aside $25,000 a year for grants to help save them.

Barb MacDougall decided to rescue Cole School near Boone, Iowa, after driving past it every day on the way to her teaching job. The brick one-room school was built in 1888 and its last class graduated in 1933.

"I just love it," MacDougall says. Because the tiny schools were once so plentiful, she says, "People didn't think they were treasures, but they really are."

She made the school's preservation a project for her Daughters of the American Revolution chapter, applied for grants and organized fundraisers. So far, $50,000 has been spent. The next step, a new roof, will cost $10,000.

Eventually, MacDougall hopes to make Cole School a field-trip destination for students.

When West Lancaster School #9 in Hayesville is torn down, the cupola and bell will become a monument on the site, Casper says. The floors and bead board ceiling will be installed in Iowa homes and businesses damaged by flooding in 2008.

"This school lives on," he says.
Restoration of Wooley Creek School a Team Effort

By Glenda Chamberlin

For many years the little one room Wooley Creek School — located 3 miles west of Cape Fair, Mo. — has been sitting empty and mostly ignored by folks in that area.

Stories of the old school days and community gatherings like student programs, pie suppers, kangaroo courts and church gatherings are seldom told these days.

All of that is now changing. In the spring of 2005 a small group of people gathered at the old school to discuss the possibility of beginning a restoration project.

It was their desire to see the Wooley Creek School listed on the National Historic Register and to become a living legacy for the students and teachers who were such an important part of the school’s history.

The growing group of folks who started the restoration project that summer hoped the school would become a living history center and give today’s teachers and youth a glimpse of the past while also experiencing a bit of the hardship and joy of being educated in a one room school.

A group of retired teachers, spearheaded by retired Reeds Spring teacher Glenda Chamberlin, joined other interested folks and were busy all summer cleaning and making repairs. All but a few have no past ties to the school but they all believe in preserving the past so that future generations can learn from it.

The Wooley Creek School Restoration Committee has three goals: To restore and preserve the Wooley Creek School building making it clean and safe so the community can use it once again; make application for the school to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Stone County; and to see Wooley Creek School become a living history center so that future generations can learn the history of the little school that once educated the children of that area.

HISTORY OF WOOLEY CREEK SCHOOL

The Wooley Creek School derives its name from the nearby Wooley Creek that was named for the Wooley family. It is believed that the family settled in this area in the early to mid 1800’s.

Land for the school was deeded to District No. 4, Township 23, Range 24 in Stone County, Missouri by Anthony M. and Nancy Myers April 7, 1903 and acknowledged by Ira J. Foster. The one acre given for the
CONTINUED / Wooley Creek

school was part of a parcel deeded to Anthony M. Myers from President Theodore Roosevelt on Oct. 23, 1901.

The exact date that the Wooley Creek School was built is unknown, but it is a possibility that a building existed and classes were held there before the land was actually deeded over by Anthony Myers in 1903.

The school was originally a wood frame building. Rock was added in later years and three windows moved from the east side were added to the three windows on the west making a total of six.

Information regarding teachers who taught in the Wooley Creek School and the students who attended there is still being sought; and new facts are being revealed as the research continues.

Classes were held in the Wooley Creek School until the spring of 1952 when it was consolidated with the Reeds Spring Reorganized School District #4.

A Quit-Claim Deed for the land was signed back to the Wooley Creek Trustees and their successors on the 12th day of August, 1953. The Wooley Creek School Trustees at that time were: Ira J. Foster (President), Walter E. Calhoun (Vice President) and Ernest Stone (Secretary-Treasurer). The Deed was signed by R.C. Emerson,

President, and Guy Wampler, Secretary, of the Reeds Spring School Board. The Deed was filed at the Stone County Courthouse on the 30th day of December, 1953.

TODAY AND BEYOND

Wooley Creek now hosts a summer bluegrass festival as its main fundraiser. The group has also received a grant from the Table Rock Foundation.

Mike Collins, the current secretary/treasurer of the Wooley Creek School committee, says the group is looking at holding various classes and programs for the community throughout the year.

For more information, Collins can be reached at 32452 W. State Hwy. 7, Cape Fair, Mo 65624 or by telephone at 417-574-6021.
Historic Schools Receive Grants from Lowe’s Charitable Foundation

Since 2006, Lowe’s has donated $5 million to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to preserve significant historic properties across the country. In 2010, grants were awarded to aid the rehabilitation of 10 historic schools. This brings Lowe’s support to more than 50 historic schools and their communities in 19 states, from Alaska to South Carolina.

The schools funded in 2010 are:

Historic Anchorage Pioneer Schoolhouse (Anchorage, AK). Approaching its 100th birthday, the schoolhouse is almost as old as the city of Anchorage. Once a schoolhouse on the edge of the wilderness, the building will be used for community events and as home to the Anchorage Women’s Club.

Central School (Bisbee, AZ). Built in 1905, this school stood as a symbol of the bustling mining town’s commitment to its bright future. As Bisbee has transformed into an artistic hub in the Southwest, the school, serving as a visual arts center, remains an emblem of its community’s future.

Dorchester Academy (Midway, GA). Founded as a school for freed slaves, Dorchester Academy went on to play a pivotal role in the civil rights movement. The Birmingham march in 1963 was planned at the school. The former school will serve as a museum and community center.

Lincoln Creek Day School (Fort Hall, ID). Set in the most remote district of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, Lincoln Creek Day School was built in 1937 as part of a “New Deal” for Native Americans. Designed to respect and foster native cultures, the school again will serve its original purpose as a community center.

Wheatley Public School building (Poplar Bluff, MO). Wheatley Public School stands at the center of Poplar Bluff’s African-American community. The school will expand its service to the community as a hub of multicultural, social and educational activities.

Historic Target Range School (Missoula, MT). The Target Range School served the Missoula community for more than a century, but it has been abandoned for many years as a storage house. A Boy Scout troop and a group of committed volunteers are determined to restore the building to its place as a cornerstone of the community.

Booker T. Washington High School (Rocky Mount, NC). Rocky Mount’s only African-American high school for more than 40 years. Today, the school serves as a community center, offering job training, primary health care and more to a large African-American community.

Stevens-Buswell School (Bedford, NH). Built in 1921, the Stevens-Buswell School has served its community as a school, a police department and even a museum for the inventor who brought radio to the world. The school will serve as a much-needed community center.

Franklin Street School (Cape May, NJ). The Franklin Street School stands as one of the few buildings left to tell the story of African-Americans' contribution to the development of Cape May. It will be the only community center on the island, offering vibrant arts, cultural and educational opportunities to underserved citizens.

Park Addition School (Chaplin School) (Cheyenne, WY). Built in the 1930s, Park Addition has served its community as both a school and a day-care facility. The school will become the home of Safehouse Sexual Assault Services, offering support services and shelter to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.
Why Should We Preserve a Country School?

by Lucy F. Townsend, Ph.D., Executive Director
Country School Association of America

Saving a country school and programming it for the public can be both expensive and labor-intensive. Take, for example, the reconstruction of the Milan Township District #83 country school on the campus of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. Most of the $125,000 needed to complete the project came from cash and in-kind donations, but the work was only beginning when the school opened in 1999.

We quickly learned that we needed a curriculum that met Illinois learning standards for public school students, volunteers or staff to serve as docents, and more funds for the upkeep of the building.

Was the Project Worth It?
After more than a decade since the school opened its doors, it is time for reflection. Was the project worth the investment of so much money and time?

As the curator of the school, I would say emphatically, yes! The country school has contributed significantly to the learning experiences of thousands of public and private schoolchildren, college and university students, as well as members of local clubs, families, and church groups. I believe it is a valuable asset to our community. Following are three of the most obvious benefits.

Learning Through Historical Investigation

Students who visit a one-room school are often motivated to begin their own study of the educational experiences of their families and friends. Typically, these students raise a number of questions about life in a country school.

Teachers can use such questions to help students learn how to explore the schooling experiences of earlier generations and express new knowledge in creative forms, for example, stories, poetry, songs, and plays.

They can also use the knowledge to make presentations. Such activities can be used to meet a number of learning standards: to ask meaningful questions, collect information, organize it, communicate it in writing and present it orally to groups.

What distinguishes such learning activities from many others is their relevance to the students’ personal lives. Students of all ages engaged in discovering new knowledge about the education of family members or friends from earlier generations often comment that these tasks are both meaningful and rewarding.

Continued on page 18
National Historic Schools, Museums & Organizations Online

**Belleview Schoolhouse**, Caldwell, Kansas
www.belleviewschoolhouse.org

**Dewey School Museum**, Waterloo Area Historical Society, Grass Lake, Michigan
www.waterloofarmuseum.org/dewey-school

**District #1 Schoolhouse**, Nashua, New Hampshire
http://nashuaschoolhouse.com

**Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools**, Fredericksburg, Texas
www.historicschools.org

**Hay Lake School Museum**, Washington County Historical Society, Scandia, Minnesota
www.wchsmn.org/museums/scandia

**Hazel Dell Schoolhouse**, Livingston, Wisconsin
http://www.igs.k12.wi.us/hazel_dell.cfm

**Historic Oxford Schoolhouse**, Leawood, Kansas
www.leawood.org/parks/oxfordschool.aspx

**Hoosier Grove**, Streamwood, Illinois
www.hoosiergroveuseum.com

**Indian Rock Schoolhouse**, Amenia, New York
www.indianrockschoolhouse.org

**Jasper County Missouri Schools**
www.jaspercountyschools.org

**Lanesfield School Historic Site**, Johnson County Museums, Kansas www.jomuseum.org

**Little Red Schoolhouse**, Santa Clara Elementary School, Santa Clara, California
www.scesd.k12.ca.us

**Marine School**, Log Cabin Village, Ft. Worth, Texas
www.logcabinvillage.org/tour-marineschool.html

**Midway School #178**, The Lewes Historical Society, Lewes, Delaware
www.historiclewes.org/museums/mws.html

**Nathan Hale Schoolhouse (East Hampton)**, CSSAR
www.connecticutsar.org/sites/eh-schoolhouse.htm

**Nathan Hale Schoolhouse (New London)**, CSSAR
www.connecticutsar.org/sites/nl-schoolhouse.htm

**North Grove School**, Sycamore, Illinois
www.northgroveschool.org

**Peter Parley School House**, Ridgefield, Connecticut
www.PeterParleySchoolHouse.com

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**Historic Oxford School, Leawood Kansas.**

www.avonhistoricalsociety.org/Pine%20Grove.htm

**Pioneer Sholes School**, St. Charles, Illinois
www.pioneersholesschool.org

**Reed School**, Wisconsin Historical Society, Neillsville, Wisconsin
http://reedschool.wisconsinhistory.org

**Strawberry Schoolhouse**, Pine-Strawberry Arch & Historical Soc, Strawberry, Arizona
http://pinestrawhs.org/schoolhouse.html

**Salzer Valley Schoolhouse**, Centralia, Washington
http://home.comcast.net/~salzerschool/index.html

**Simmons School**, One Room Schoolhouse Committee, Hope, Indiana
www.simmonsschool.com

**Taylor #4 Country School**, Historical Society of Marshall County, Iowa
www.marshallhistory.org/taylor.html

**Thames Valley Museum School**, Burgessville, Ontario, Canada
www.museschool.ca

**The Old Schoolhouse**, Mt Holly, New Jersey
www.colonialdamesnj.org/properties

**The Schoolhouse Museum**, Ridgewood Historical Society, Ridgewood, New Jersey
www.ridgewoodhistoricalsociety.org

**Verden Separate One Room Schoolhouse**, Loretta
Jackson School House B&B, Lyons, New York
www.peppermintcottage.com/jackson_school_b&b.htm

Jefferson School House, Park City, Utah
www.agpts.com/properties/property.aspx?id=21

Night With A Native B&B, Chester, Vermont
www.theinnkeeper.com/bnb/11281

Old Allardt School House, Allardt, Tennessee
www.jamestownguesthouse.com/allardtschoolhouse.htm

Old Bethlehem School Cottage, Metropolis, Illinois
www.bethlehmsgschool.com

Old Point Reyes Schoolhouse, Point Reyes, California
www.pointreyesschoolhouse.com/vacation.html

Orphan Annie's Schoolhouse Inn, Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin
www.orphananne.com

Prosperity School Bed & Breakfast, Jasper County, Missouri. www.prosperitybandb.com

Riverside School House B&B, Prairie City, Oregon www.riversideschoolhouse.com

School House B&B, Rocheport, Missouri www.schoolhousebb.com/inn/history.html

School House Inn, Bisbee, Arizona
www.virtualcities.com/ons/az/b/azb4501.htm


Schoolhouse Inn, Milton, Florida
www.visitpensacola.com/listings/443/

Schoolhouse Suite, Lexington, Missouri www.rylandhouse.net/schoolhouse.html

The School House at Whittestone Inn, Kingston, Tennessee www.whittestoneinn.com/rooms-schoolhouse.html

Torrey Schoolhouse B&B, Torrey, Utah www.torreyschoolhouse.com

Walnut Center Inn, Casey, Iowa www.wedemeyerllc.com/walnutCenterInn.html

Washington School Inn, Park City, Utah www.washingtonschoolinn.com

Wilson Schoolhouse Inn, La Crosse, Wisconsin www.wilsonschoolhouseinn.com

Prosperity School in Jasper County, Missouri has been turned into a Bed and Breakfast.
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Education in a Democracy

A second reason is that country school visits can be used to help students understand why they go to school. Few of today’s children realize that America has led the world in attempting to provide public education for all its children.

Many American children take schooling for granted. They are amazed to learn that millions of children have no access to schooling. According to UNESCO, 1 billion (26%) of the world’s adult population is illiterate.

For most of our nation’s history, American children received 8 years of schooling in simple structures built and managed by elected adults from the community. Over 200,000 of these schools once provided millions of American children with the opportunity to acquire the basic skills for employment and the knowledge to participate in a democratic form of government.

Commitment to Free Public Education

It is important to discuss with each generation of children our nation’s commitment to universal education. It is a more powerful learning experience for them to enter a country school building and sit in the seats once occupied by children from an earlier generation.

Visitors who role play life in a country school are stimulated by the schoolhouse itself to ask questions about the school’s purposes, the ages of the children who attended, the kinds of activities they were likely to have, and what we might have learned from their experiences.

Students who compare and contrast a country school with their own schools are encouraged to think more deeply about what and why they are going to school, what they may gain from what they are learning there, and whether current local schools are effective sites for learning.

Sharing Experiences Across the Generations

Third, country schools can foster meaningful dialogue across the generations. A criticism often lodged against today’s public schools is that they are so large and diverse that they lack shared commitments and ties to the community. Participation in a local country school can be used to foster dialogue among people in families and others in the school’s community.

Community members who attended a country school can be invited to share their experiences, and students can be encouraged to research the educational activities of their parents, grandparents, and/or neighbors.

A Sound Investment for Today’s Children!

Is a public school district’s investment in the reconstruction of a country school worth the time and money? I believe it can be. The reconstructed Milan Township District #83 school has contributed to the education of thousands of students in the public schools of northern Illinois, as well as numerous university students taking classes in educational history, museum education, outdoor education, and theatre arts.

Our country school is a symbol of NIU’s commitment to the history of the local community and its early schools. It has contributed to meeting state standards, has fostered meaningful dialogue about the purposes of American schools, and has contributed to cross-generational understanding.

Team Up to Save a Schoolhouse

Yet a public school district that is struggling to keep all its programs in operation due to declines in local and state funding may wonder if it has the necessary resources to preserve a country school. If so, it is suggested that the district form partnerships with local historical societies and park districts.

One institution may lack the resources to carry the burden, but two or more may manage the challenge very well. Working together, they can broaden and deepen the educational experience for all children.
Liberty School Reunion Focuses on Funds to Move Building

Former students at Liberty School (located near Fellows Lake north of Springfield, Mo.) gathered for a reunion during Lifestyles Days held at the Gray-Campbell Farmstead (located in Nathanael Greene Park). Norma Tolbert (1) and Vera Chandler (2) continue their work to raise funds for moving the school to the farmstead, along with funds for the restoration of the school. The goal is to use the building during school field trips to the farmstead and on the weekends with the farmstead open to the public. If you would like to support the effort to move Liberty School to the Gray/Campbell Farmstead, download a brochure from http://extension.missouri.edu/greene or contact Norma Tolbert at norma_l_tolbert@yahoo.com at (417) 833-2352.
“Sunrise at Bellview Schoolhouse” was taken of Sunrise School near Caldwell, Kansas, prior to its move and restoration. If you have photos, letters or information you would like to see published in this newsletter please send it to David Burton at the Greene County Extension Center.

Photo by Valerie Brunhoeber