

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04000952

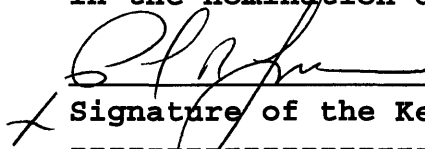
Date Listed: 9/9/2004

Five Mile Prairie School
Property Name

Spokane WA
County State

Rural Public Schools of Washington State MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

9/9/04
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Classification/Ownership:

The correct ownership category is: *Public-Local*.

Period of Significance:

The period of significance is revised to read: *1939-1945*.

[This corresponds to the end dates provided for the multiple property context and reflects the property's significant continuing association with local educational development. Despite continued educational function up to 1970, there is no justification for extending the period beyond the fifty year point or the MPS end date.]

Verbal Boundary Description:

The verbal boundary description should read as follows: *A parcel of land measuring 208' by 208'; located in the NE1/4 of SE1/4 of Section 23, Township 26 North, Range 42 East, and known as Spokane County parcel number 26234.9036, as outlined on the attached sketch map.*

The verbal boundary justification should read: *The nominated property reflects the core area historically associated with the school building.*

These clarifications were confirmed with the WA SHPO office.

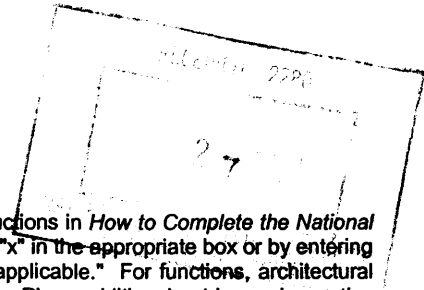
DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 8621 N. Five Mile Road not for publication _____

city or Spokane vicinity _____

town _____

State Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99208

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

7/21/04
Date

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby, certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

9/9/04
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945.

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

American Renaissance

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, STONE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD, GLASS

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION & ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1939

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wood, Charles R. (Architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
#
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record#

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
X Local government (Spokane HPO)
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid with 4 rows and 3 columns (Zone, Easting, Northing). Row 1: Zone 11, Easting 4 659 25, Northing 528 71 40. Row 2: Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 3: Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 4: Zone, Easting, Northing.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.) See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.) See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Yeomans (lkyeomans@aol.com)
organization Historic Preservation Planning & Design date 9 April 2004
street & number 501 West 27th Avenue telephone (509) 456-3828
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

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

name Mead School District 354 c/o Steven W. Enoch, School Superintendent
street & number 12828 N. Newport Highway telephone (509) 465-6014
city or town Mead state WA zip code 99021

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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Built in 1939, the Five Mile Prairie School is located in the southwest corner of the intersection of North Five Mile and West Strong Roads on Five Mile Prairie, Spokane County, Washington. The schoolhouse is surrounded by rural residential and agricultural settlement, including paved and gravel roads, open fields, farm land and pasture, and homes, barns, churches and a grange hall. Highly visible, the Five Mile Prairie School is located in the center of Five Mile Prairie and is regarded as a community focal point. The schoolhouse is a single-story brick masonry building built on a raised foundation. The school follows a T-shaped footprint, which along with an office, lavatories, multi-purpose/lunch room and storage/mechanical areas, comprises two classrooms and a gymnasium with a stage. Revealing its original design and materials, the building is embellished with multi-colored face brick, multi-paned wood sash windows, a classic architrave, symmetrical fenestration patterns, and a prominent front-facing lower cross gable that forms a formal center front entrance to the building. With few alterations, the school retains good to excellent integrity in its original site, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as an historic rural schoolhouse built on Five Mile Prairie.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

Site

Identified in Spokane County as parcel number 26234.9036, the Five Mile Prairie School is built in the extreme northeast corner of the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 23, Township 26 North, Range 42 East of the Willamette Meridian, and is owned by Mead School District #354. The parcel of land on which the schoolhouse is built slopes slightly toward Strong and Five Mile Roads and measures 208 feet wide and 208 feet deep, for a total of 43,264 square feet (a little less than one acre). The school is sited in the center of Five Mile Prairie, a flat rural area which is located on top of a high plateau, five miles north of Spokane, Washington. The property is bordered by Strong Road on the north, a single-family residence to the south, Five Mile Road to the east, and a vacant field to the west. The schoolhouse faces east along Five Mile Road and is surrounded by a grass lawn, eight 60-year-old Chinese Elm trees, and a gravel driveway that curves around the south elevation and the west elevation of the building. The driveway accesses Strong Road along the property's north border, and Five Mile Road at the east border. A flat graded, gravel parking lot is sited adjacent north of the school between the building and Strong Road. A concrete slab tennis/play court (12 feet by 25 feet) and a well house are located in the northeast corner of the school yard. The well house is a small structure made of formed concrete blocks and is clad with unfinished weathered wood boards in the gable peaks. A small door made of vertical wood boards opens on the building's south façade, and the gable-end roof is covered with corrugated metal, which was applied in the 1970s. Currently in poor condition with poor integrity, the well house was built in the 1930s to protect a freshwater well, which was filled in and capped off in the 1970s. To the right side of the main entry in the front yard of the schoolhouse is a flagpole. A vacant field, which is located adjacent west of the schoolhouse site (not part of the nomination), is recorded as Spokane County parcel number 36234.9037, and is also owned by Mead School

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Spokane County, Washington

District #354. The field contains 2.32 acres of undeveloped land, which is covered with wild grasses and brush. When the school was in operation, the undeveloped vacant land was used as a school playfield.

Schoolhouse Exterior

The school forms an irregular T-shaped footprint: On the first floor, the arm of the "T" comprises the classrooms and hall, and measures 78 feet wide and 34 feet deep. A small lower cross gable, which forms an enclosed front entrance, projects eight feet from the façade. The leg of the "T" forms a west wing, which is built on the rear elevation of the school, and houses the school's gymnasium. The attached wing measures 32 feet wide and 62 feet deep. The schoolhouse is a brick masonry building, which has exterior walls made of brick that measure about 18 inches thick. A dominant feature of the schoolhouse is multi-colored face brickwork, which is made of variegated orange, red and brown-hued bricks that are sometimes called "tapestry" bricks. The face bricks are laid in common bond and are striated raked. The schoolhouse is built on a raised concrete and basalt rock foundation. The west wing of the building has an exposed concrete foundation wall that measures four feet high. The main building (the arm of the "T") is clad in face brick that extends down to grade, almost completely covering a foundation wall made of poured concrete and basalt stone rubblemix; a molded concrete dripstone course separates the face bricks from a small exposed portion of the foundation wall. The schoolhouse has a low-pitched hip roof that is covered with composition shingles and is accentuated with decorative cut rafter tails. Symmetrical fenestration patterns help identify the building as a schoolhouse and include a center front entrance, and a combination of multi-paned fixed and multi-paned, double-hung, wood-sash windows.

Main Façade

Facing east, the main façade of the schoolhouse is distinguished by a symmetrical design and a center projecting lower cross gable. The front-facing cross gable forms the front entrance to the building. The gable peak is accentuated with classic details, including a large frieze band, modillion course, and cornice returns, which are all made of wood and painted white. Identified by a slightly protruding course of dark red bricks, a stretcher bond brick arch surrounds the front entrance of the building. The arch is embellished with face bricks laid in a basket weave pattern over the front door. A keystone highlights the arch and is made of lighter-colored blonde bricks. The front entrance of the school is a single-front half-light door, and is distinguished with multi-paned side lights and a multi-paned transom light. Adjacent to the entry door are two fixed, 4/4 multi-paned, wood-sash windows capped with dark red brick flat arches. Flanking the front entrance on each side are a row of five 12/1 multi-paned, double-hung, wood-sash windows. Three 8/1 multi-paned, double-hung, wood-sash windows are centered below the first-floor windows, illuminating the lower-level interior of the school. Each window is capped with a darker colored red brick flat arch and a dark red brick lug sill.

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North, South, and West Elevations

The north elevation of the schoolhouse is adjacent to a gravel parking lot and is dominated by the building's symmetrical fenestration patterns and tapestry brickwork. A small side entrance is located in the ell formed by the building's T-shaped footprint. The north side entrance features a paneled half light wood door, multi-paned sidelights, a small covered porch, and a wooden staircase that descends to grade at the parking lot. Covered with a shed roof, the porch is supported by square wood posts with a plain wood balustrade. Located adjacent west of the porch, a small wooden storage unit is attached to the concrete foundation wall. A small loading dock is located on the northwest corner of the north elevation of the schoolhouse. It is covered with a small shed roof.

Like the north elevation, the south elevation of the building features symmetrical fenestration patterns, multi-colored face bricks, and a south side entrance located in the ell. The side entrance is covered with a shed roof, which is clad in aluminum sheeting, and is supported by two square wood posts. Poured concrete stairs lead down to a door at the basement level, which is below grade.

The west elevation of the wing is devoid of windows and is distinguished with decorative brickwork that features a horizontal rectangular brick panel design defined by soldier courses. The panel is outlined in a soldier course of multi-hued dark red bricks. This decorative feature is repeated on the west elevations of the main building above the north and south side entrances, which are located in the ells.

Schoolhouse Interior

As noted on floor plans of the schoolhouse, the first floor of the building has 3,212 square feet of interior space, and the lower level contains 4,373 square feet.¹ The first floor of the building features a vestibule, two classrooms, two hallways, the principal's office, a private bathroom, a "health room," and an interior staircase. The front door of the school opens to a small entry vestibule and a short flight of stairs that lead to a center hall. The center hall is a focal point of the school interior and is embellished with round archways that open east to the front entrance, west to the rear hallway, and north and south to the classrooms and cloakrooms. The hall is flanked by two classrooms: one is located in the northeast corner of the building and the other is located in the southeast corner of the building. Each classroom is flooded by natural light that shines through rows of tall windows. The walls of the classrooms, central hall and the rest of the school are constructed of lathe and sand-textured plaster. First-floor ceilings are 12.8 feet high in the main building and are covered in acoustical Celotex, which was installed when the schoolhouse was built. The floors are made of vertical grain fir, and the woodwork is varnished fir. The classrooms retain chalkboards with chalk rails. Cloakrooms with coat hooks are located behind the west wall of the classrooms. Transom lights are located above wood doors that open to each classroom. The central hall of the schoolhouse leads west to the rear of

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the building where a ramp slopes down to a mid-level hall. The south wall of the mid-level hall has a stairwell with a divided staircase. The west half of the staircase rises to the principal's office (which includes a health room and private bathroom). The east half of the staircase descends to the lower level of the building.

The lower level of the schoolhouse contains a multi-purpose/lunchroom, mechanical/storage rooms, and separate restrooms for boys and girls. The lunchroom is located in the northeast corner of the building, the mechanical/storage rooms and the kitchen are located in the southeast corner, and the restrooms are located on the west wall of the lower level.

The gymnasium wing contains a wood stage and a small closet for equipment storage on the east wall. The ceiling in the gym measures more than 15 feet high, the floor is made of poured concrete, and the walls and ceilings are made of lathe and plaster construction. Symmetrical rows of windows located along the south and north walls of the gym illuminate the room with natural light.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & MODIFICATIONS

The original design of the Five Mile Prairie School is pictured in a photograph taken just after construction of the building was completed in November 1939. The photograph indicates that the exterior design of the school has not changed significantly since it was built.² One change which is pictured in the photograph involves the side entrance on the north elevation. The entrance was originally located on the northwest corner of the building where a loading dock is currently sited. The entrance was moved to the ell of the building on the north elevation sometime before the 1970s, and the loading dock was built in its place. About this same time, the original front door of the school was replaced with a wooden door.

In the mid-1970s a temporary wood stairway and wood platform were built over the school's original concrete steps, which are located at the front entrance of the building. At this time the schoolhouse was closed to the public and was used as a storage facility for Mead School District #354. Except for four windows in the gymnasium, all of the windows and the front door of the school were covered with plywood boards as a protection against the damaging effects of weather and vandalism. A south side entrance porch with a metal shed roof was attached to the building in the ell on the south elevation. The original roof of the schoolhouse was covered with wood shakes when it was built in 1939. In the 1960s-1970s, the roof was recovered with composition shingles. In 2000 the roof layers were removed and a new roof of composition shingles was installed.

In summary, the Five Mile Prairie School is in good to excellent condition and has had only minor exterior and interior changes, which have not affected the architectural integrity or architectural significance of the building. Currently the building remains in use as a storage facility for Mead School District #354.

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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Strategically centered in the heart of Five Mile Prairie, the Five Mile Prairie School was built in 1939 and is one of the oldest and best preserved two-room schoolhouses in north Spokane County, Washington. From 1939 until its closure in 1970, the Five Mile Prairie School served the residents of the area as the community's public elementary school. It not only provided a public education to children on Five Mile Prairie but also served as a community meeting place for political, religious, benevolent, athletic, and other civic and social gatherings in the area. The schoolhouse symbolizes the citizen's long-standing commitment to education and community development, and is a beloved public landmark. Associated with the evolution of public education in Spokane County and Washington State, the Five Mile Prairie School reflects early 20th-century construction practices advocated for statewide public schools, including fire-resistant building materials and preferred school design for classrooms. The schoolhouse is a product of Spokane architect Charles R. Wood, and illustrates the Federal Government's presence. This was demonstrated through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided the funding for the labor force that was responsible for the construction of the building. In Spokane County, the Five Mile Prairie School is one of the best and last surviving examples of the historic building types, "rural brick schoolhouse" and "school gymnasium," and meets the registration requirements described in the National Register Multiple Property Documentation (MPD), *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945*. Historically and architecturally significant in the areas of "education" and "architecture" during its period of significance, which is the date of its construction in 1939, the Five Mile Prairie School is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Rural Public Schools in Washington State

Permanent American settlement began in Washington State as early as the 1850s and stretched east to the Spokane area by the 1870s. After railroads were built throughout the region in the 1880s, settlement increased and people began thinking about educating their children.

The MPD, *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945*, chronicles the progression of early rural schoolhouses and public education in Washington State, and reports that "more than any other historic rural building type, the historic schoolhouse represents the cultural heritage of the surrounding community" (p. F-3). The MPD explains that:

Often the first, sometimes the only, and probably the most important public building on the rural landscape, the schoolhouse served at once as a local reflection of the evolving common school system and a center of community life. [School] districts were established shortly after initial settlement, and construction of the first and succeeding schools

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were important milestones in community history. In addition to its role as a center of education, the schoolhouse was frequently the site of public assemblies, civic celebrations, church services, and other important events. But most importantly, the schoolhouse reflected the widespread belief in the value of universal education (p. F-1).

According to the MPD, in 1877 and 1878 a territorial board of education was established along with a format for the first graded schools. A recommended course of study was outlined with division of grades into primary (grades 1 and 2), intermediate (grades 3, 4, 5), grammar (grades 6 and 7), and high school (grades 8 and 9). The system established the graded progression of academic studies, which characterizes public education today (p. E-4).

The MPD states that even with legislation and the systematic organization of school district and graded school formats, most rural schools remained un-graded in the 1870s and 1880s. However, by the time Washington was granted statehood in 1889, the condition and organization of rural schools had improved dramatically. Graded school formats with established curricula were widely implemented, and early primitively constructed schools were gradually replaced by frame construction and, increasingly in the 20th century, by brick construction to meet demands for fire retardant building materials (p. E-4).

Consolidation and union schools were two mechanisms that were created and provided by the State for the development of schools in less populated districts. The colloquial term "union schools" was used collectively to define graded schools (usually at the high school level) which were built to accommodate students from a cluster of small rural communities that served two or more districts.

Consolidation was used, especially in the 1930s, on a wider scale where many districts combined resources and became one large school district. The MPD explains that:

As the State imposed more sophisticated educational requirements, and as transportation improved, consolidation accelerated. Many small district schools were usurped by larger facilities that accommodated more students and offered more diverse programs. But, during the Great Depression, as some school districts curtailed construction of consolidated facilities, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) assisted in building a last group of distinctive rural public schools. (p. F-4).

Five Mile Prairie

As indicated by its name, Five Mile Prairie is flat prairie land sited atop a large plateau, which is located five miles north of downtown Spokane, Washington. Scientific theory suggests that the plateau was formed as the result of ancient cataclysmic events, including large lava flows that erupted from giant fissures in the

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earth, and great floods that washed through Eastern Washington. The scoured topography was left with a deep river gorge, which continues to be slowly eroded by the Spokane River, and with rugged basalt rock cliffs that are located north and south of the river. The north cliffs mark the northernmost environs of Spokane and rise sharply to a level 400 feet above their base. The crest of the cliffs forms the southern boundary of Five Mile Prairie, which is located on top of the steep rocky bluff.¹

As is characteristically common of prairie landscapes, Five Mile Prairie was flat, dry, and windswept in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, hidden beneath the abundant patches of scrubbrush and bunchgrass was rich, black soil. Deposited in layers over time by geologic processes, including wind and water, the soil on Five Mile Prairie retained a nutrient-rich chemical make-up which was similar to the fertile "loess" of the world-renowned Palouse farming country, located south of Spokane.²

According to an account written by prairie historian Cindy Johnson in the May 3, 1973 edition of the *Tri-County Tribune*, Five Mile Prairie was first home to rattlesnakes, prairie dogs, and coyotes who survived on the prairie's flora and fauna before humans settled in the area. Eventually the prairie was inhabited by Indian tribes, who named the prairie "Billymeechum" Mesa. Johnson explained the Indian name to mean "home of tall grass."

In 1864 an Act of Congress of the United States of America entitled, "An Act Granting Lands to Aid in the Construction of a Railroad and Telegraph Line from Lake Superior to Puget Sound on the Pacific Coast," was enacted.³ The federal government opened up lands in the Western United States to homesteaders and by the 1870s, pioneers were arriving in the Spokane region. J. J. Strong, a man from Illinois, climbed up to Five Mile Prairie in 1879 and embraced the area as his new-found home with exhilaration and hope. He exclaimed, "Beautiful land! Glorious in prospect! Grand in environment! Salubrious in climate! Rich in soil! Where is thy equal?"⁴ He stayed and settled on the prairie, and today Strong Road is named after him.

Other pioneers associated with Strong also settled on Five Mile Prairie. They included J.R. Depew, J. Dozier, C. Wilson, G. White, and H. Tonnet. In 1880 T. Tompkins, E. Daily, W. Stratton, and Joseph and Hiram Allen arrived to join them. The homesteaders' tasks were great: harness the land and make it produce. By 1883 the landscape on Five Mile Prairie had begun to change:

...beautiful orchards were scattered atop the once barren, snake-infested bunch grass prairie. The snakes were destroyed and the coyote retreated to the hinterland. Nearly every known variety of deciduous fruit tree was planted, grew successfully, and produced "Grade A" fruit. Vegetables of excellent quality were harvested. Berries of all kinds yielded profitable crops. Wheat, barley and oats were the principal grains grown. Enormous pride was evidenced in the [homesteaders'] displays of fruit, vegetables,

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berries and grains...at the Spokane Interstate Fair. Pictures remain to show they labeled their exhibits to read, "Grown Without Irrigation on Five Mile Prairie, Agricultural Gem of Spokane." That was their tribute to the bountiful harvest from their fertile land.⁵

The orchard business on Five Mile Prairie was successful until the destructive forces of nature quelled most orchard pursuits with the advent of a punishing deep-freeze in 1927. The freeze was devastating, killing most of the fruit trees on Five Mile Prairie. Some farmers re-planted their orchards but many others dug out their trees. In addition to threatening freezes, competition for the best fruit grown in the Spokane region intensified. Unavailable on Five Mile Prairie but readily available in the Spokane Valley, irrigation was offered, which resulted in faster-growing trees, mass production, and lower fruit prices for farmers living in the Spokane Valley than for those on Five Mile Prairie. Undaunted by their run of bad luck, Five Mile Prairie farmers turned to greenhouse horticulture, dry-land truck farming, and grain production. They sowed their fields in flowers, nursery stock, and wheat, barley, oats and other grains which all grew well in the rain-blessed, loess-rich soil. Their endeavors were successful and today Five Mile Prairie still retains some of the region's finest agricultural land.

The development of Five Mile Prairie grew as settlement increased. Roads were paved, churches were built, the Five Mile Prairie Grange was constructed, the community's first schoolhouse was erected, and by 1908 there were 87 families living on the prairie.⁶ Farmhouses, barns, and outbuildings were scattered across the prairie landscape and were intersected by grain fields and pasture land. Spurred by increased population, prairie life began to change by the 1970s and 1980s. Farms were sold and residential subdivisions with *cul-de-sacs* and newly paved streets were built on the fertile soil. Both large and small homes were constructed and erected in small residential clusters or along the crest of the prairie's high bluffs. In 1970 there were 160 landowners on the prairie, and by 1994, the figure had grown to 500 landowners.⁷ Even with the increase in population, the prairie is relatively sparsely populated when compared to dense urban settings, and is regarded today as a coveted rural residential "bedroom community" of Spokane.

Five Mile School District #50

Spokane County recorded a deed conveyance in 1881 when Five Mile Prairie pioneer Joseph S. Allen purchased the east half of Section 23 in Township 26 North, Range 42 East, for \$832 (warranty deed B-74). Ten years later on November 5, 1891, Joseph Allen and his wife Mary warranted "one acre of ground in a square form" to "the Trustees of School District No. 50" in "consideration of the sum of \$2,000" (warranty deed 44-113). The square parcel of land was located on the southwest corner of the intersection at North Five Mile Road and West Strong Road. The plat measured 208 feet wide and 208 feet deep, and for the community and their children, was advantageously situated in the very center of Five Mile Prairie.

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School District #50 was commonly known as the Five Mile School District. Sequential numbers were given to school districts as they were chronologically established in Spokane County. As districts reorganized, the numbers changed. By 1941, Spokane County school districts were identified with numbers that ranged from 1 to 411.⁸

In 1942 school districts in Spokane County consolidated under State mandate. Five Mile School District #50, Mead School District #305, and other smaller surrounding districts, which included Whitworth, Peone, Green Bluff, Buckeye, Montford, and Colbert, were consolidated into one large district. The new larger district was called Mead School District #354. A report prepared in 1969 by the League of Women Voters of the Greater Spokane Area stated that in 1968 there was a total enrollment of 3,769 students in Mead School District #354 for grades K-12 out of a total district population of about 15,000. Because the population exceeded 10,000, Mead School District #354 was rated by the State as a "First Class District."⁹ Today Mead School District #354 is responsible for the public education of 8,709 students.¹⁰

Five Mile Prairie Schools Built in 1901 and 1912

The first schoolhouse erected on Five Mile Prairie was a one-room wood frame building with a gable-end roof. It was built in 1901 on the aforementioned land purchased by the Trustees for Five Mile School District #50. Sited in the middle of the flat prairie, the school was easily accessible to parents and school children. A photograph taken in 1901 pictures the schoolhouse, teacher, and at least 14 students of varying ages.

The wood frame schoolhouse was replaced in 1912 with a three-story white building. Built of brick masonry construction and accommodating graded classrooms from the first through the tenth grades, the 1912 schoolhouse design reflected the State's commitment to fire prevention and a graded school format. By 1938 the three-story building was deemed unsafe, and men employed by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) demolished the brick schoolhouse and prepared the site for the erection of a new building.¹¹

Five Mile Prairie School Built in 1939

With fanfare and press coverage, the new Five Mile Prairie School was enthusiastically heralded by the Five Mile Prairie community. In anticipation of the new public schoolhouse, an article printed in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* on July 23, 1938 made the following announcement:

FIVE MILE PRAIRIE TO HAVE NEW SCHOOL

A fine new \$30,000 school will rise this fall on Five Mile Prairie to replace the outmoded brick building which has housed prairie pupils for 27 years, it was announced

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today by James A. Burke, county superintendent of schools.

Mr. Burke received a telegram from Senator Lewis Schwellenbach, announcing [that] President Roosevelt has approved a \$19,788 WPA project for construction of a modern, two-room school. Residents of the prosperous [Five Mile Prairie] farming community voted a \$10,000 bond issue two months ago as the first step in the project, Mr. Burke said.

The new building, modern in every respect, will be erected near the present structure, which will be used during the fall term... All new equipment will be used in furnishing the new school.

While the new school was being built, students received instruction in the old schoolhouse until it was demolished. The students then occupied a temporary classroom which was located in the Five Mile Prairie Grange, across Strong Road from the school property. As construction of the new school neared completion patient pupils, parents and prairie residents read a November 9, 1939 newspaper article that was featured in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*. The newspaper printed a photograph of the schoolhouse and a view of the stage, which was located in the gymnasium. A caption under the photograph stated that the school would officially open on November 15, 1939 and was designed with two classrooms, an auditorium that measured 30 feet wide and 60 feet deep, and a formal dining room, which was "among its modern arrangements."

The new school opened, and the following August the structure was formally dedicated by Washington State Governor Clarence D. Martin. An August 28, 1940 *Spokane Daily Chronicle* article applauded the Five Mile Prairie School as "one of the best in Spokane County" and pictured school children "preparing invitations for mailing" to dignitaries who were invited to the dedication ceremonies. The ceremonies were to be held in the school's gymnasium/auditorium.

The dedication ceremony was highlighted in a *Spokesman-Review* article which was dated August 31, 1940:

"MARTIN HEARD AT DEDICATION"

"Governor in Favorite Role Opening Five Mile Prairie Schoolhouse"

The newspaper reported that nearly 300 people attended the festivities and witnessed "Governor Clarence D. Martin...in his favorite role as the champion of education" when "he dedicated the new grade school on Five Mile Prairie."

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Built with two classrooms that were designed to accommodate the prairie's small elementary student population, the Five Mile Prairie School initially served grades one through eight. First, second, third and fourth grade students were housed in the "little kid's room" in the southeast corner of the building. Fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students were taught in the "big kid's room" which was located in the northeast corner of the schoolhouse. In 1941, the seventh and eighth grades were discontinued at the school, which then served grades one through six.

The Five Mile Prairie School was a popular focal point and community center for Five Mile Prairie, and represented the community's strong commitment to public education. A December 7, 1969 *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article written by popular columnist Dorothy Powers described the school and some of its special advantages and challenges:

At the Five Mile Elementary School on Five Mile Prairie the kids get "made-from-scratch" maple bars from the school kitchen... There are 44 pupils...26 pupils in one classroom which houses fourth, fifth, and sixth graders... Eighteen second and third graders...occupy the other classroom.

There's a "family feeling" to the little school, whose motherly cook lives only two dwellings away from school, lets the girls help her in the kitchen and occasionally slips a cookie to ravenous boys who pass the fragrant kitchen. Mrs. Owen Click, now in her seventh year as school cook, also is adviser to the 4-H Club girls' horse club, the Five Mile Prairie Petticoat Ponies.

But the fun and charm of the tiny school...do not diminish its academic advantages. Head Teacher Wittwer says seriously: "The pupils learn a great deal from each other. Even when a pupil is a fourth grader, for instance, he's hearing the work being recited in the fifth and sixth grades right in the same room. If we have fourth graders who read at a high level, we can let them read with the sixth graders, all in the same room. It can work the other way. If a sixth grader needs a brush up in some arithmetic on the fifth-grade level, he can do some work there, too. It's much more of a teaching challenge to work with three grades in one room," believes Wittwer, [but] "when you've had a boy or girl in a room three years, you get to understand that pupil really well and know his or her capabilities much more thoroughly."

The school year 1969-1970 was the last year for public classroom instruction at the Five Mile Prairie School. A bond levy for Mead School District #354 failed in 1970, and the school was closed. In 1972 a neighborhood group, which called themselves "People for the Preservation of the Five Mile Elementary

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School,” organized and leased the school building and grounds for use as a community center. The schoolhouse was home to community classes and activities such as Bible studies, sewing circles, cooking demonstrations, homemaker’s clubs, community meetings, athletic events, Grange activities, and Saturday night dances. “Ranger Rick,” a nature club for young people, the Five Mile Boxing Club, and basketball games were also held at the school.¹²

In 1973 the schoolhouse was called the Five Mile Community Recreation Center. The Spokane County Parks & Recreation Department sponsored various classes and lessons, including dance, ballet, tap, karate, judo and horse management, music lessons, arts & crafts classes, baton lessons, chess games, senior card parties, and a basketball clinic. The classes and community activities were popular but increased maintenance costs forced closure of the building as a community center.¹³ On April 5, 1976, a photograph of the schoolhouse in the *Tri-County Tribune* pictured the windows and doors covered with plywood boards. Secured against vandalism and the deleterious effects of weather, the building was secured and used as a storage facility by Mead School District #354.

Mead School District #354 records indicate that from 1985 to 2000 the school district discussed the idea of selling the Five Mile Prairie School. Five Mile Prairie residents wanted the building to function as a community center and asked district officials for a stay in selling the property. The school district obliged the community and even installed a new roof on the schoolhouse in 2000. Today the community regards the Five Mile Prairie School as one of their strongest assets, a symbol and testament of their history, heritage, and commitment to public education on Five Mile Prairie.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Five Mile Prairie School has served as a tangible demonstration of determination and widespread belief in the value of public education that was prized by the people of Five Mile Prairie. In addition to its role as a center for academic and athletic education, the schoolhouse and gymnasium are significant as a community hub for assemblies, civic celebrations, recreational and instructive classes, and other important events. The schoolhouse reflects the evolution of public education and school system formats that were adopted by Five Mile Prairie and Mead School District #354 during the school’s period of significance.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

As an example of the historic building types, “rural brick schoolhouse” and “school gymnasium,” the Five Mile Prairie School depicts early 20th-century architectural design philosophy and recommendations made by educators throughout the State. Alluding to its brick masonry construction, two classrooms, indoor plumbing, kitchen and assembly/lunchroom, and its attached gymnasium and stage, the Five Mile Prairie School was described as “one of the best in Spokane County” (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 28 Aug 1940). It

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was designed by Spokane architect Charles Wood, and was built with Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) dollars.

Charles R. Wood, Architect

In celebration of the official opening of the Five Mile Prairie School, a *Spokane Daily Chronicle* newspaper article, dated August 31, 1940, cited various dignitaries who attended the dedication of the building. Among those were "Charles Wood, school architect" (p. 8:6).

Born in Wisconsin, Wood came to Spokane at the young age of 14. While his formal training is unknown, he is first listed in Spokane city directories in the late 1890s as a carpenter. The *1904 Spokane City Directory* reported his employment as a draftsman for prominent Spokane architect Albert Held, and in 1907 as a draftsman for Cutter & Malmgren, one of the city's most celebrated architectural firms. As early as 1905, Wood listed himself in the alphabetized name and the classified business sections of city directories as an "architect." In an article printed in the *Spokesman-Review* on June 17, 1909, Wood was noted as an independent architect with offices located in downtown Spokane:

This gentleman has been identified with the building interests of Spokane for the past 15 years. For a number of years he served in the office of another firm in this city, during which time he designed and prepared the plans for some of the best buildings in the city. Two years ago Mr. Wood went into business for himself, since which time his clientage has steadily grown until he has been compelled to double his office force and move into more spacious quarters. Mr. Wood is now located at [suites] 715 and 716 [in the] Peyton Building. Among the buildings he has designed and superintended are the F. M. Gardner apartment house on Third Avenue, Maloney & Davenport's store and apartment house on Second Avenue, and the St. Charles store building on North Monroe. Mr. Wood has also built a large number of the better class residences of this city, all of which are modern and up-to-date in every particular. Mr. Wood is a strictly western man, and has acquired a ripe experience in the west which admirably equips him in meeting the ideas of his patrons.

In 1938 Charles Wood advertised himself in city directories as a professional "Architect, Experienced Home Designer, Builder of the Ambassador Club and Logan School [remodel]" with offices in the Lindelle Building, 8 N. Washington Street (p. 846). In addition to the above-cited references, documentation to date indicates that Charles Wood was also responsible for the design of the Witherspoon House (S. 2124 Rockwood Boulevard, built 1912, NRHP), the E. A. Smith House (1414 N. Summit, built in 1912, NRHP), the Albert Apartments remodel (152-162 S. Pine Street, remodeled in 1931), and the Five Mile Prairie School, built in 1939. Wood's efforts in Spokane included some outstanding designs and spanned a total of 40 years until his death in 1945.

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Federal Works Progress Administration

The Five Mile Prairie School is significant for its association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Federal government's role in the erection of public buildings during the 1930s. The MPD states that during this time "the Public Works Administration assisted in building a last group of distinctive rural public schools. These late rural schoolhouses are a significant harbinger of the role of the federal government in local education after mid-century" (p. F-4).

A July 23, 1938 article in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* reported that "President Roosevelt...approved a \$19,788 WPA project for construction of a modern, two-room school" on Five Mile Prairie. One year later a photograph of the newly completed school included a caption that stated, "The new...Five Mile Prairie School...was erected by WPA labor..." (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 9 Nov 1939).

Funded and constructed by money and labor provided by the WPA, the Five Mile Prairie School is a tangible expression of the United States Government's commitment to reverse widespread unemployment and economic crisis caused by the Great Depression in the 1930s. The WPA was the brainchild of United States President Herbert Hoover and his successor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who expanded the federal agency under his economic recovery program which he called the "New Deal." The WPA provided jobs for needy persons through government-subsidized public works projects which were undertaken throughout the country. Under the WPA, thousands of miles of roads were built, many public buildings erected, and hundreds of parks and airports were constructed or improved. The agency completed more than 34,000 public building projects, which employed hundreds of thousands of professional and working-class men and women from 1935 until World War II.¹⁴

MPD Registration Requirements

The National Register MPD, *Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945*, lists registration requirements for the historic building types "rural brick schoolhouse" and "school gymnasium." The MPD states that "a rural schoolhouse must strongly convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways, and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of rural community history" (p. F:1):

Given the simple yet distinctive form of the schoolhouse type, eligible schools must retain integrity of scale, massing, roof shape, exterior cladding and trim, and fenestration in order to convey their historic character... Additions or alterations to the schoolhouse completed during the period of significance may reflect the evolution of local education and should be evaluated within that context... Ideally, eligible schoolhouses retain interior integrity, too. Character-defining features include original floor plan, flooring and wall materials, trim, and blackboards... (p. F:1).

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Generally, gymnasiums and shelters are significant only when they are contributing elements of larger schoolhouse complexes. As such, the eligible gymnasium will be located on a property that includes a schoolhouse, school yard, and ancillary structures... Eligible gymnasiums and shelters will retain the utilitarian physical characteristics which define the type: simple massing; original roof shape, unornamented exterior of wood, stone, or brick; multi-paned windows; and an open interior with high ceiling (p. F:7).

The Five Mile Prairie School meets the MPD requirements for the property types "rural brick schoolhouse" and "school gymnasium." Built in 1939, the schoolhouse was erected during the time period designated by the MPD (1870s to 1945). The schoolhouse is well-preserved and retains a high degree of integrity of massing, roof shape, exterior cladding and trim, and fenestration that convey the building's historic character. The schoolhouse also possesses interior integrity found in character-defining features stated in the MPD:

The interiors of rural schools were simple in both plan and finish. Plaster-and-lathe walls were trimmed with wood baseboards, wainscoting, chair rails, picture rails, and window and door surrounds. Blackboards were mounted to the classroom walls. Indoor facilities sometimes included a cloakroom, storage space, and indoor plumbing... In the largest schools, second floors or basements provided extra space (p. F:3).

The interior of the Five Mile Prairie School retains character-defining features that include the original floor plan, lathe-and-plaster walls, fir floors, finished-fir woodwork, wall-mounted blackboards, first-floor classrooms with cloakrooms, a principal's office, a "health room," indoor lavatories, lunchroom and kitchen, and an attached gymnasium with a stage.

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ENDNOTES

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- ¹ Steven Meek Architects. Elevations and floor plans of Five Mile Prairie School, 2003. Drawings rendered by architect, Gary Lauerman.
- ² "Modern School Opens Wednesday on Five Mile Prairie." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 9 Nov 1939, p. 3:3.

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- ¹ Johnson, Cindy. "Greening of Five Mile Prairie." *Tri-County Tribune*, 3 May 1973.
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ Spokane County warranty deed: 4 Oct 1881, #B-74.
- ⁴ Johnson, Cindy. "Greening of Five Mile Prairie." *Tri-County Tribune*, 3 May 1973.
- ⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁶ "School Starts Second Life." *Spokesman-Review*, 16 July 1972.
- ⁷ "School Officials Struggle with Growth." *Spokesman-Review*, 22 May 1997.
- ⁸ Spokane County School Districts, Map & Index. 19 Nov 1941.
- ⁹ League of Women Voters. "A Study of the Mead School District #354." January 1969.
- ¹⁰ Mead School District #354, records, 2004.
- ¹¹ "The Raw Deal." *The Inlander*, 15 May 2003, p. 53.
- ¹² "Five Mile Recreation Slate Told" (no date) and "Five Mile's Recreation Program Set." *Spokesman-Review*, 5 Jan 1973.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Field Enterprises, Inc. *The World Book Encyclopedia*. W. F. Quarrie & Company, 1957 (reference: New Deal).

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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PHOTOGRAPHS

(photos taken by consultant Linda Yeomans in 2004)

Photo 1

Northeast corner and east façade of schoolhouse. Photographer looking southwest.

Photo 2

East façade of schoolhouse.

Photo 3

East façade of schoolhouse with front entrance detail.

Photo 4

North elevation of schoolhouse with parking lot in foreground (photographer looking southeast)

Photo 5

South elevation of schoolhouse.

Photo 6

West, rear elevation of schoolhouse showing brick detail.

Photo 7

Interior of schoolhouse, looking east at inside of front door entrance.

Photo 8

Interior of schoolhouse, looking west through main center hallway of building to rear of school.

Photo 9

Interior of schoolhouse, lower level multi-purpose room, looking northeast (notice original light fixtures, walls, and windows).

Photo 10

Wellhouse (non-contributing structure) sited on northeast corner of school property, looking northeast (intersection of Strong Road and Five Mile Road in background behind wellhouse).

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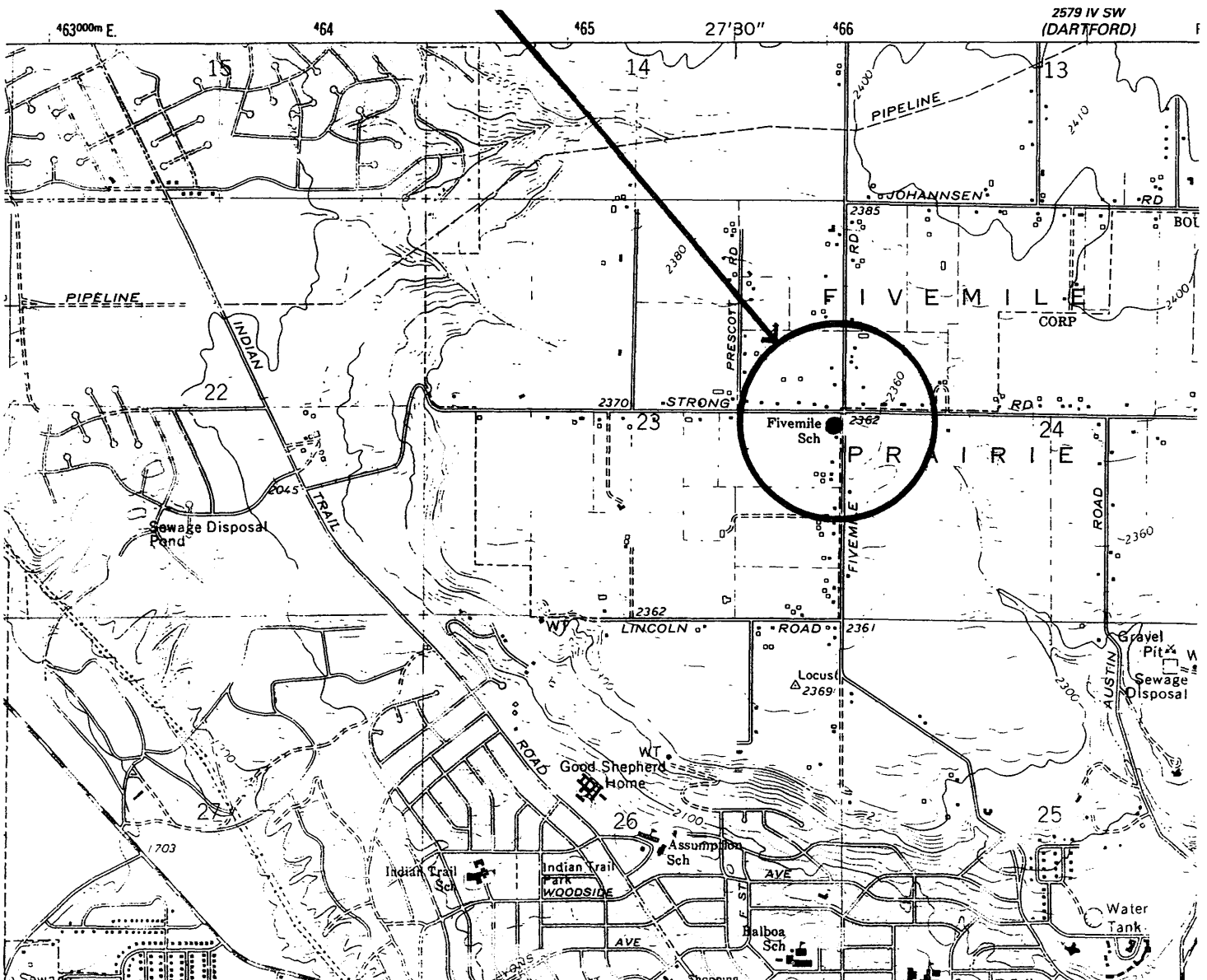
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Map

1986 U.S.G.S. map of Spokane NW, WA, NW/4 Spokane 15' quadrangle;
Location of Five Mile Prairie School indicated in circle.

UTM: zone 11, 465972 easting, ~~5287114~~ northing.
465925 E 528740 N



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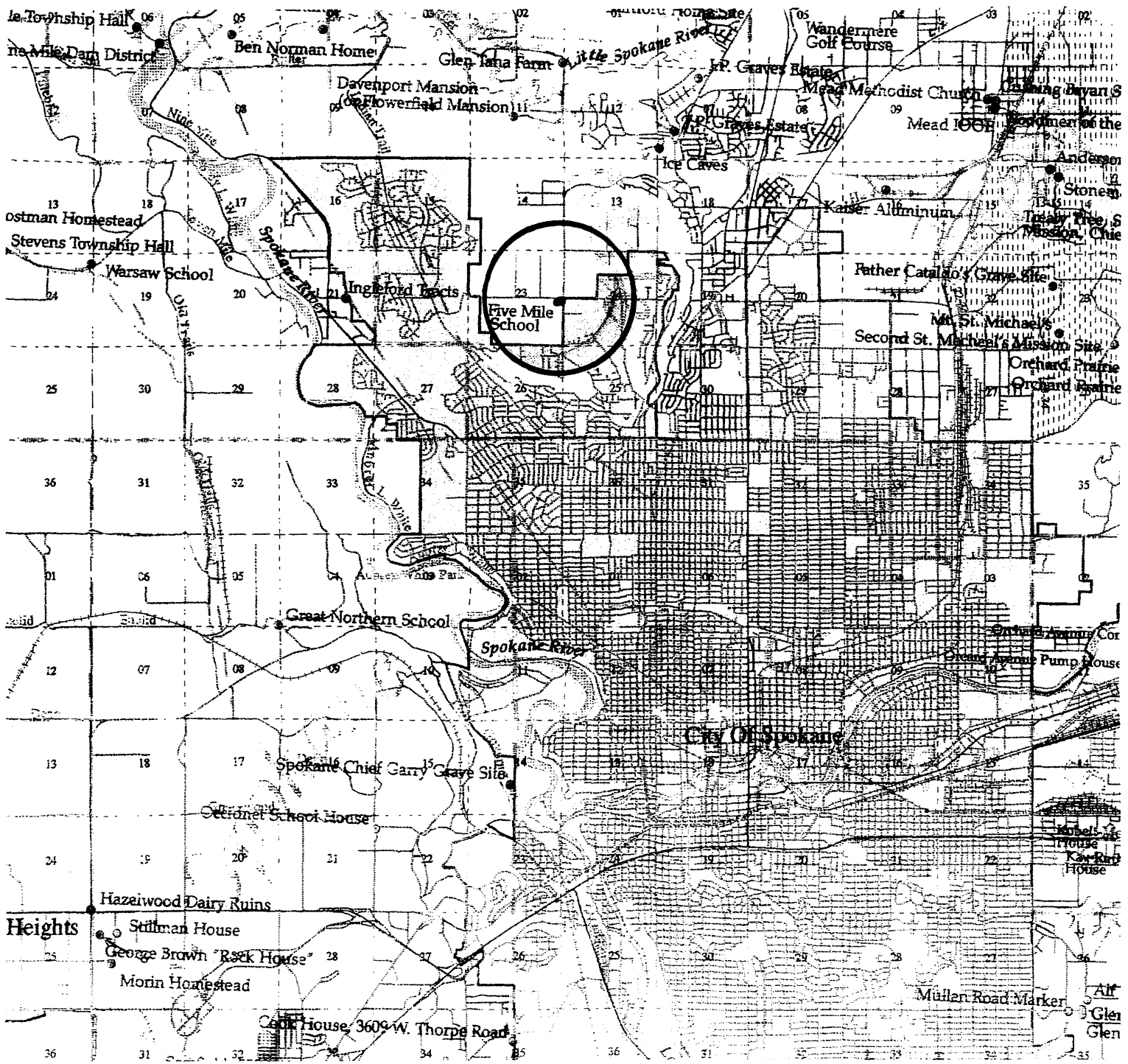
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Map 1998 Spokane County Cultural Resources & Sites; Five Mile Prairie School located in center of circle.



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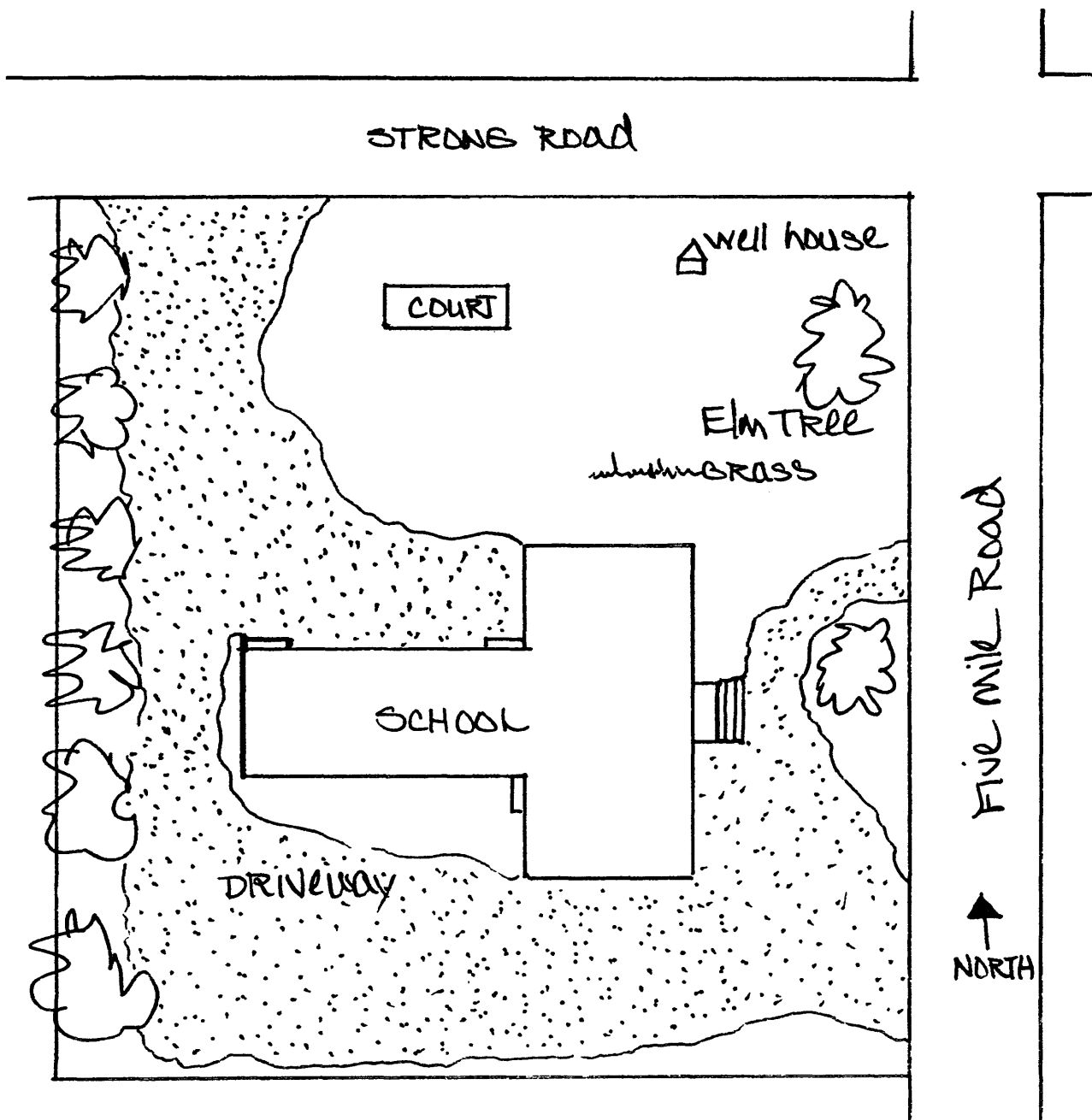
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Site Plan

2004 site plan of property (not to scale).

Source: Spokane County Assessor's records.



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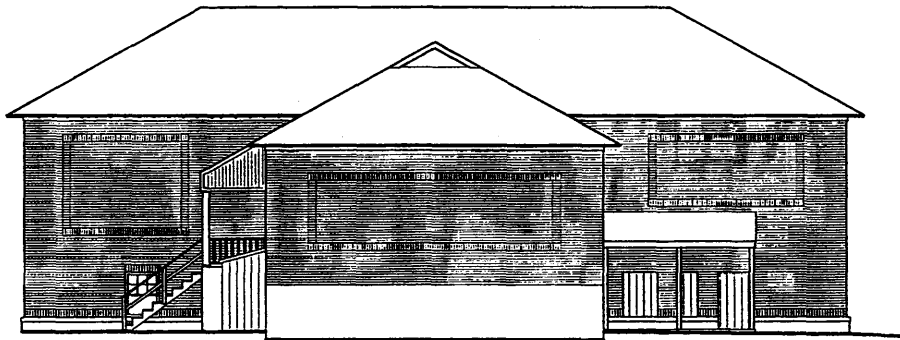
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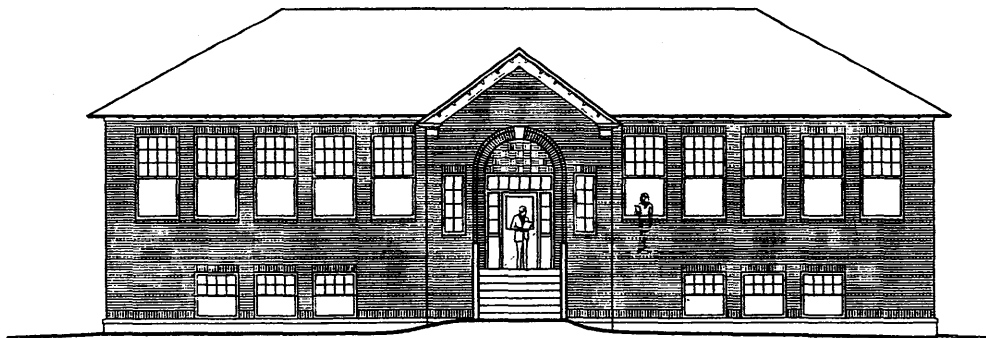
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Elevation Drawings East and west elevations of Five Mile Prairie School, 2004.



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

Scale: 3/32" = 1' - 0"



EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

Scale: 3/32" = 1' - 0"

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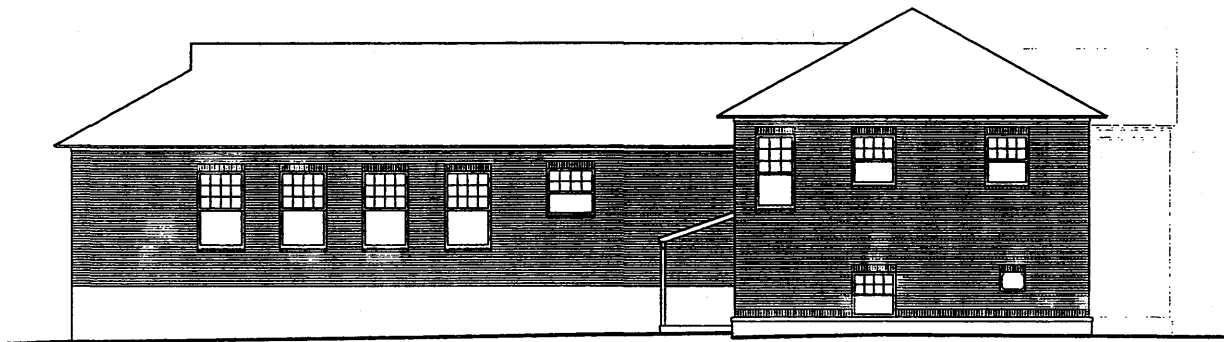
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Elevation Drawings South and north elevations of Five Mile Prairie School, 2004.



EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION

Scale: 3/32" = 1' - 0"



EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

Scale: 3/32" = 1' - 0"

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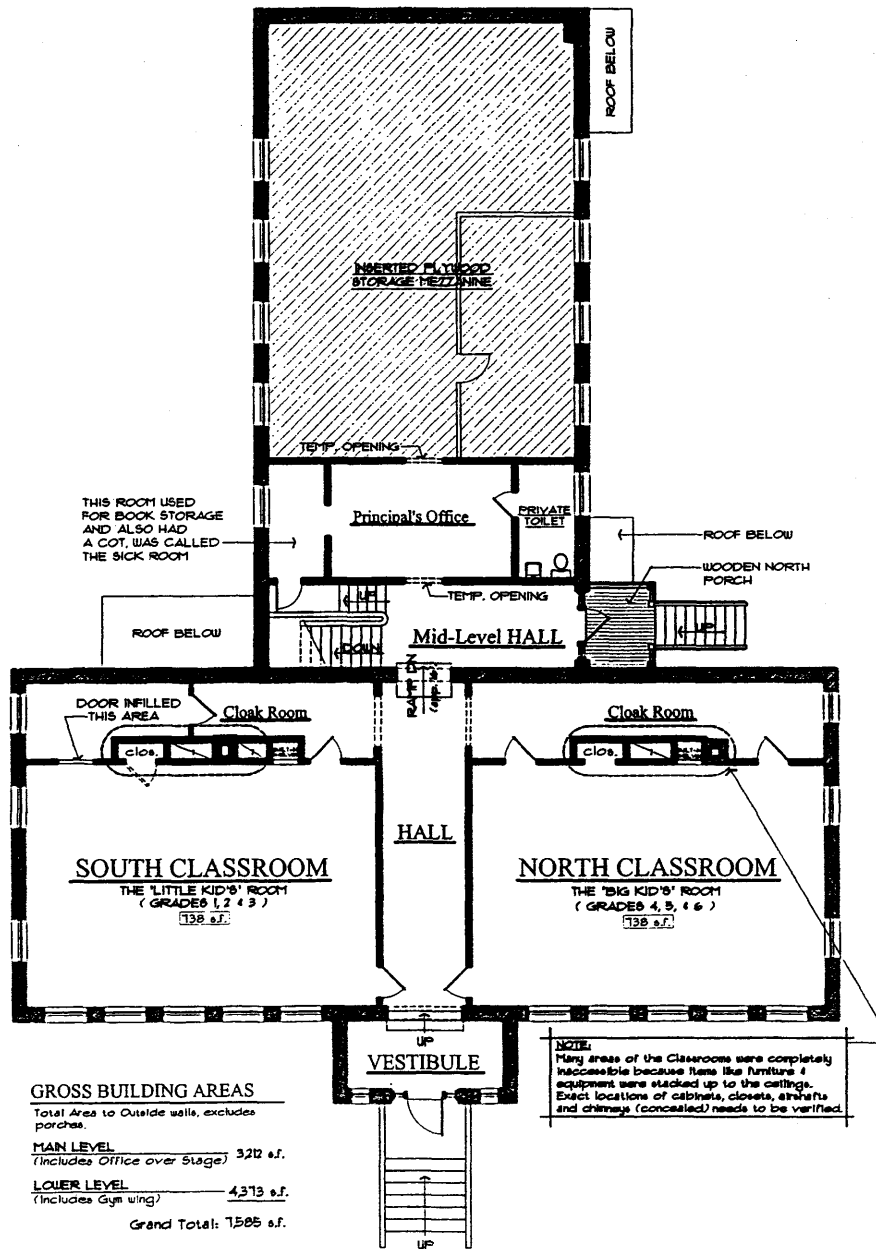
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Floor Plan

Floor plan of main level, 2004.



Ⓐ MAIN LEVEL PLAN (Existing Conditions)
Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



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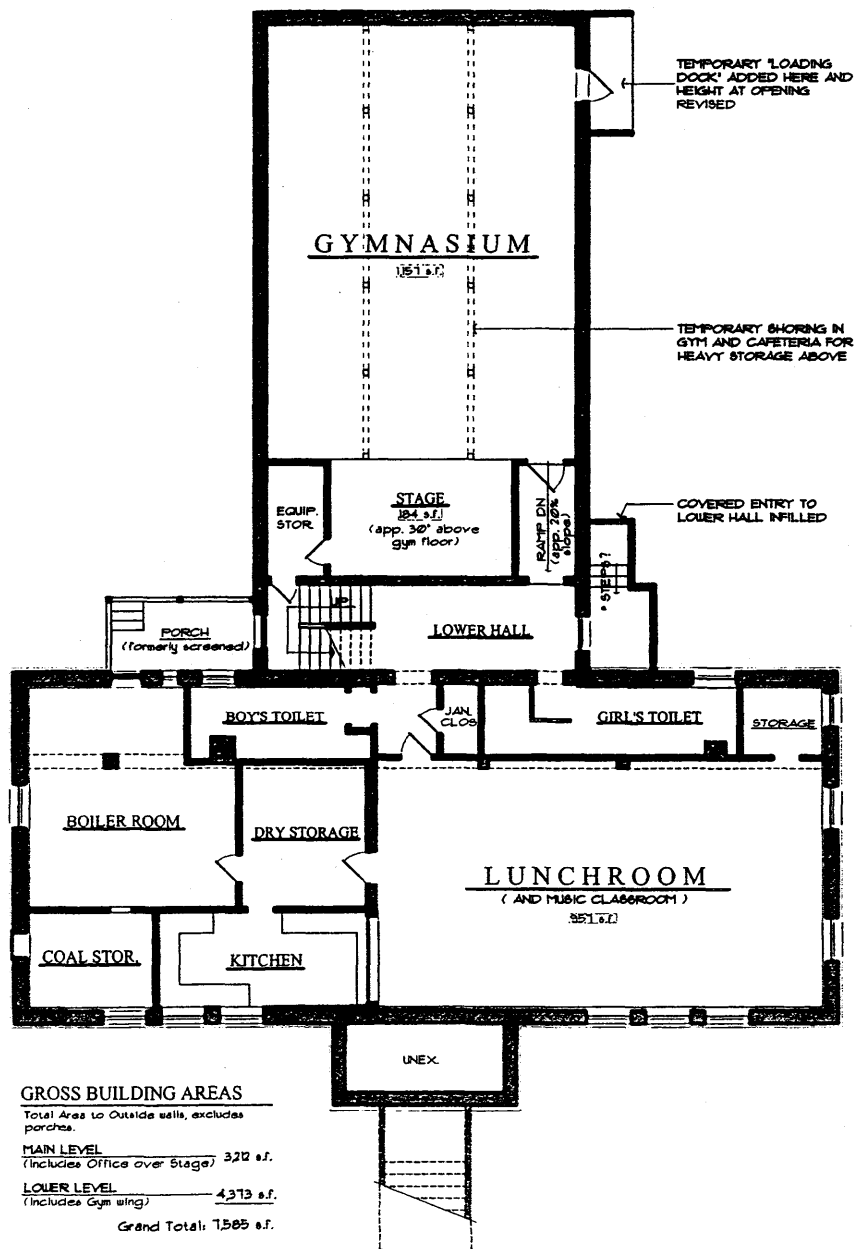
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Floor Plan

Floor plan of lower level, 2004.



B LOWER LEVEL PLAN (Existing Conditions)

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



NORTH

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**FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington**

Photo 1

Northeast corner of building (photographer facing southwest).



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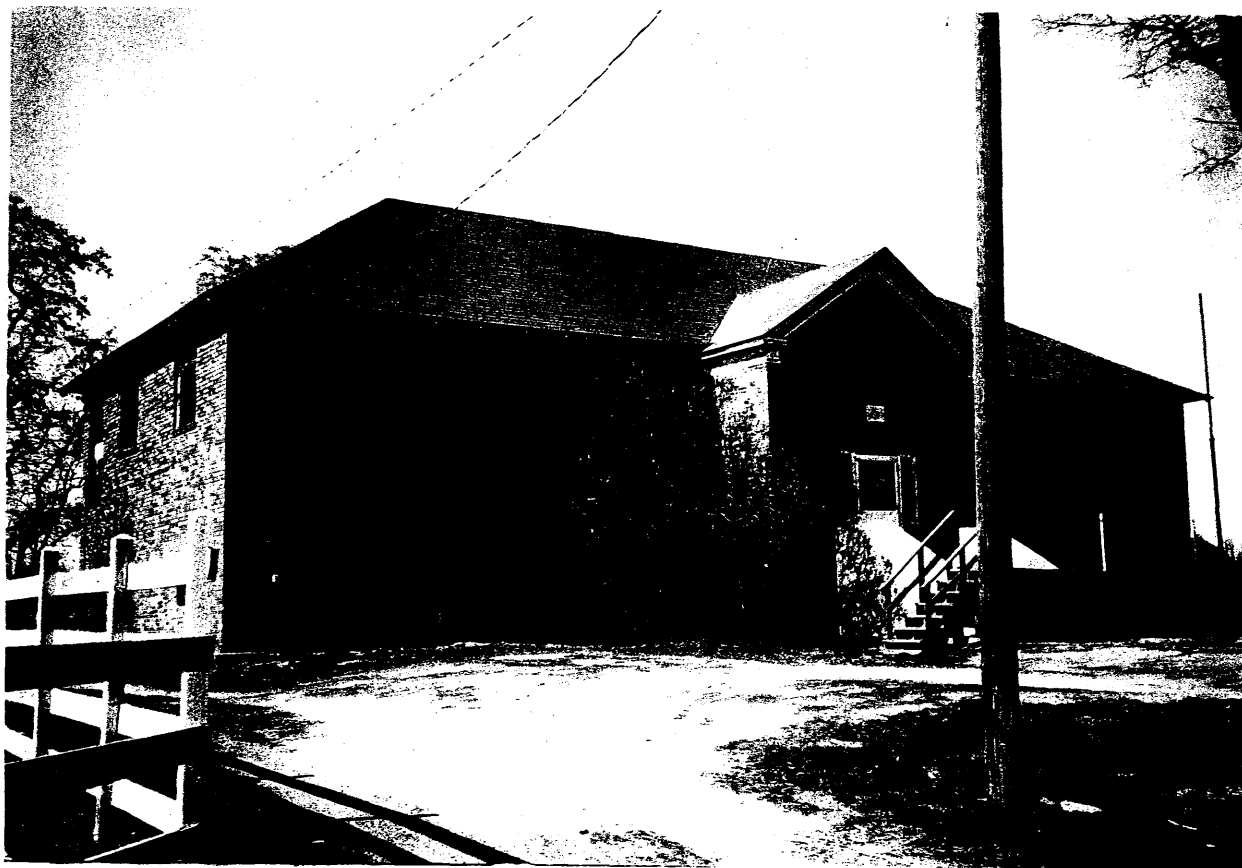
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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

Photo 2

East façade of building.



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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

Photo 3

East façade of building with detail of front entrance.



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**FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
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Photo 4

North elevation of building (photographer looking southeast).



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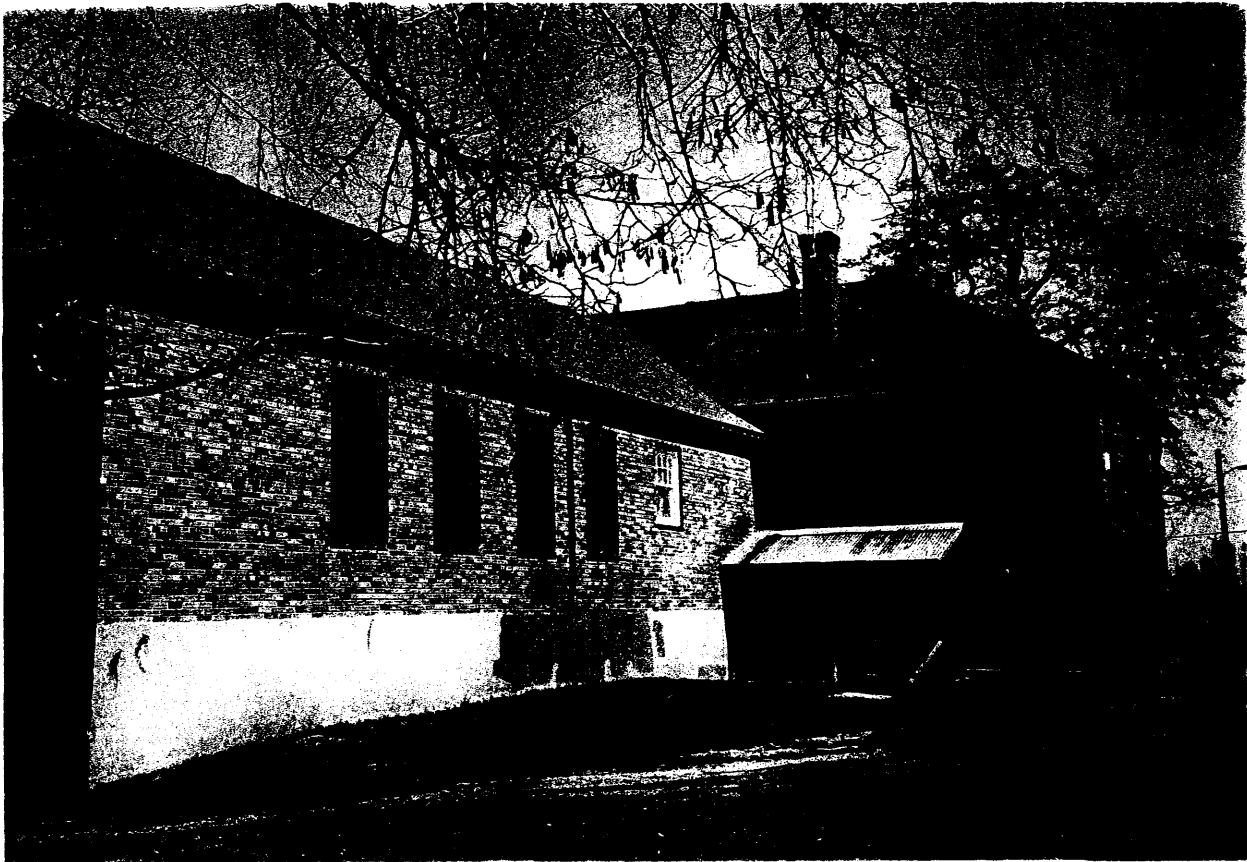
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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

Photo 5

South elevation of building.



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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

Photo 6

West elevation of building at rear.



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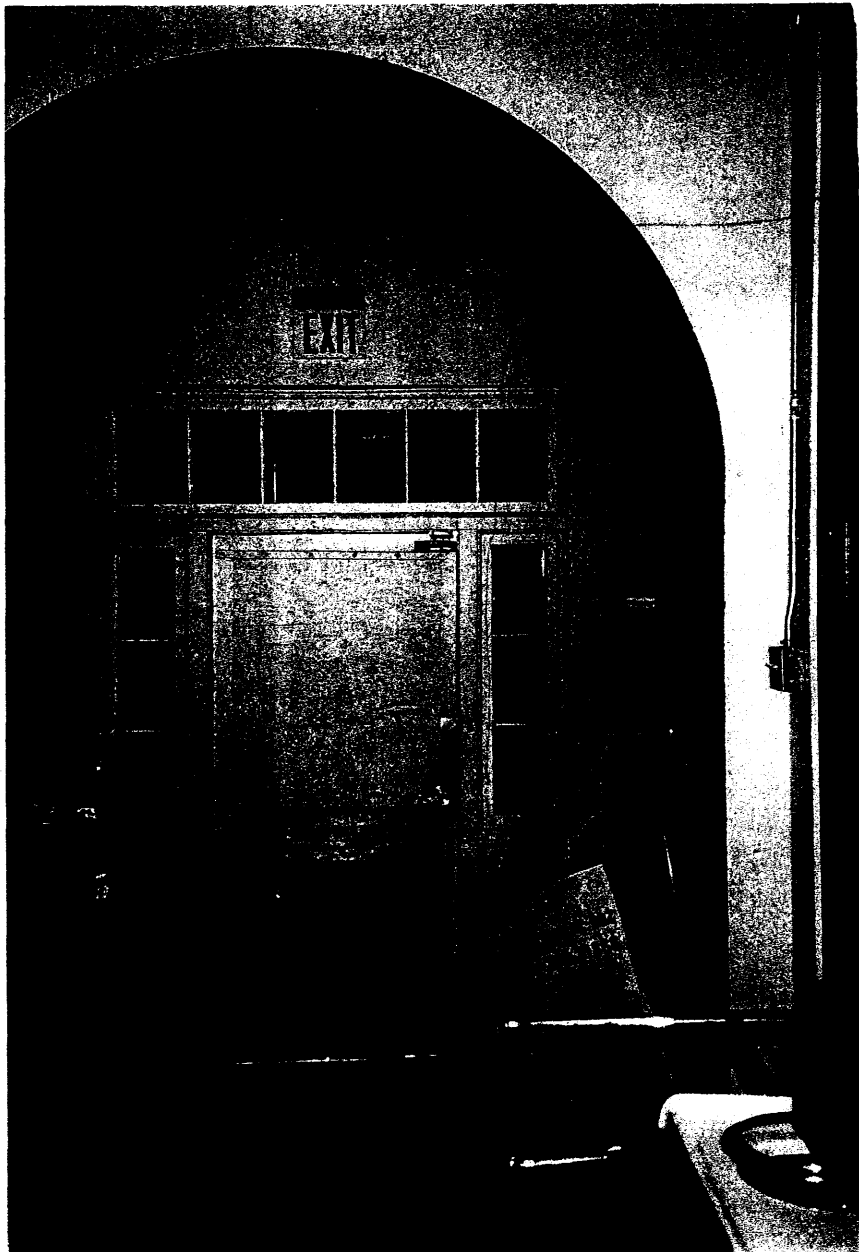
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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

Photo 7

Interior hallway, looking east at inside of front door to schoolhouse.



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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
Spokane County, Washington

Photo 8

Interior hallway, looking west from front door to rear of building.



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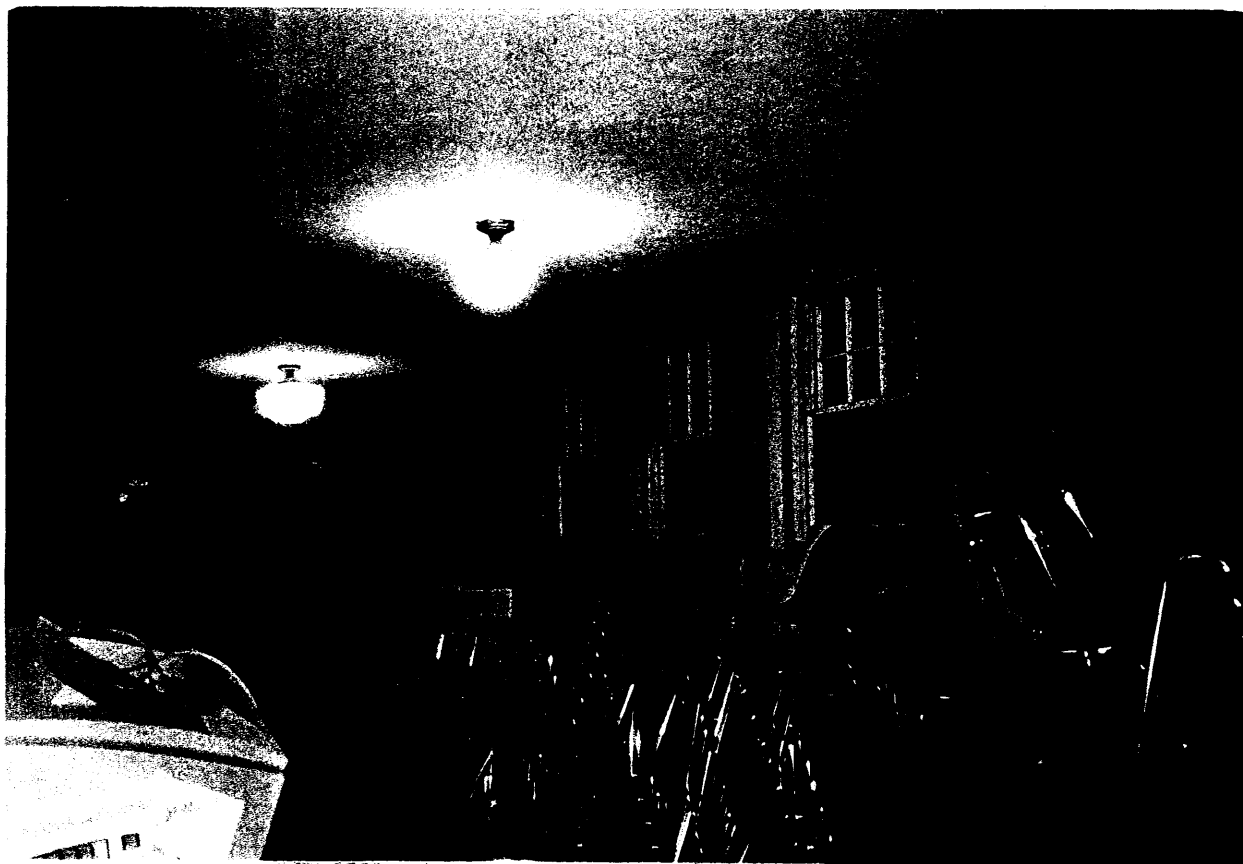
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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
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Photo 9

Interior of schoolhouse, lower level room, looking northeast.



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FIVE MILE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
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Photo 10

Wellhouse, located in northeast corner of property in front of school (looking northeast)



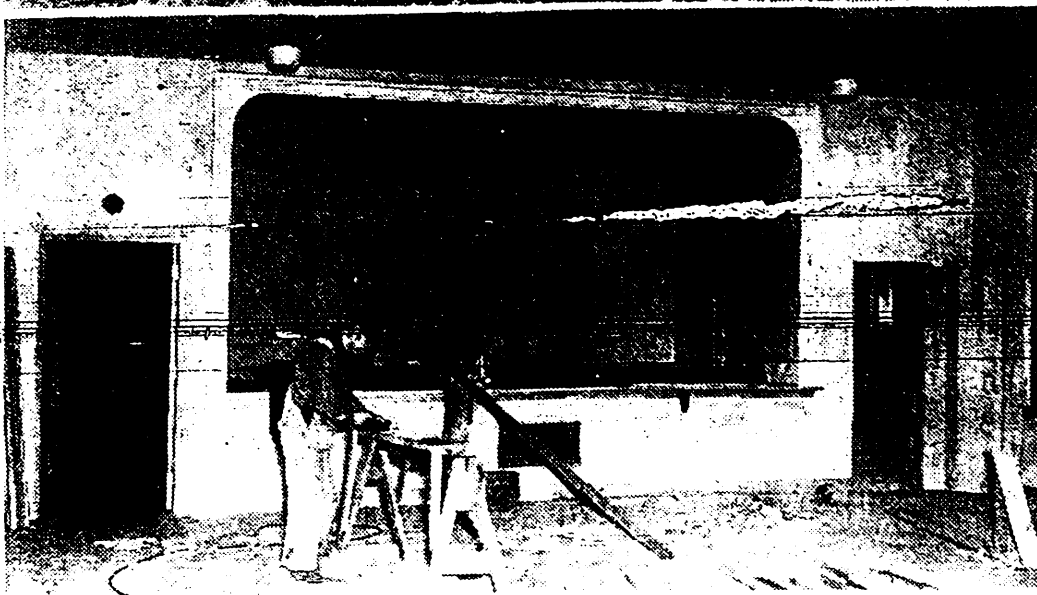
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Spokane County, Washington

Newspaper article "Modern School Opens Wednesday on Five Mile Prairie." *Spokane Daily Chronicle*,
9 Nov 1939, p. 3:3.

Modern School Opens Wednesday on Five Mile Prairie



The new \$9000 Five Mile Prairie school is scheduled to be opened Wednesday, November 15. It was erected by WPA labor on the site of an old brick building. The building has two classrooms on the first floor and an auditorium, 30x60 feet in area, on the second floor. A dining room is among its modern arrangements. The auditorium stage is seen in the lower picture.