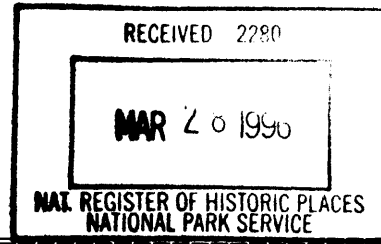


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name Sumner School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2 mi N of US 64 on County Road N3300 not for publication N/A
 city or town Morrison vicinity X
 state Oklahoma code OK county Noble code 103
 zip code 73061

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade
Signature of certifying official

February 29, 1996
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
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 commenting or other official

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): _____

Edson R. Beall 4-26-96

Entered in the
National Register

for
Signature of Keeper

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>EDUCATION</u>	Sub:	<u>School</u>
	<u>RECREATION AND CULTURE</u>		<u>Sports Facility</u>
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub:	<u>Single Dwelling</u>
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial
OTHER: Works Progress Administration

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
STONE: Sandstone
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK
STONE: Sandstone
other _____

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

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

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

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1921-1946

Significant Dates 1921
1940-41

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

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

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>668540</u>	<u>4020680</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

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

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

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Dr. Mary Jane Warde
organization _____ date November 7, 1995
street & number 3523 Willow Park Circle telephone (405) 377-0412
city or town Stillwater state OK zip code 74074

=====
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 David B. Dolezal

street & number R.R. 3 Box 80 telephone (405) 336-5494

city or town Perry state OK zip code 73077
=====

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Sumner School
name of property
Noble County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====

SUMMARY:

Sumner School, located in rural Noble County, Oklahoma, is a generally L-shaped, one story building with a partial basement. It is comprised of four sections: The first, a brick Commercial style classroom and auditorium building, was built in 1920-1921. A sandstone gymnasium was added by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1940-1941. Utilitarian brick and concrete block sections were added about 1945 and 1954, respectively. Sumner School is located on a broad ridge west of the junction of Mule and Black Bear creeks in southeastern Noble County, Oklahoma. It faces north and stands about five hundred feet west of the junction of two graveled section line roads, N3300 and E0480. East of the school are perhaps a dozen houses and buildings, the remnants of the town of Sumner, Oklahoma. An excellent example of both the Commercial style adapted to a school building and WPA architecture in Oklahoma, Sumner School reflects changing architectural styles as well as the needs of the rural community during its seven decades of operation as an educational facility.

DESCRIPTION:

Sumner School is located on a broad ridge west of the junction of Mule and Black Bear creeks in southeastern Noble County, Oklahoma. It faces north and stands about five hundred feet west of the junction of two graveled section line roads, N3300 and E0480. East of the school are perhaps a dozen houses and buildings, the remnants of the town of Sumner, Oklahoma. About .3 of a mile south is a functioning church. The Burlington Northern (originally the St. Louis and San Francisco) railroad lies to the north. Two miles south is U.S. Highway 64; three miles east is U.S. Highway 177. The surrounding area is primarily pasture and wheat fields with a scattering of residences. The nearest town is Morrison, Oklahoma, six miles east.

A generally L-shaped, one story building with a partial basement, Sumner School is composed of four sections built between 1920 and about 1954. The original red brick building faces north and is located at the north end of the east-facing L. It is approximately 75 feet by 75 feet, built in the Commercial style adapted for a school building. It consists of a gable-roofed center on a north-south axis, flanked by two flat-roofed sections. The height of each side is augmented through the use of parapets. Within the first few years a basement was partially excavated to accommodate a boiler and rooms for shop classes. A chimney and shed-roofed coal chute were added on the northeast corner of the building, while an exterior stairway and covered drive-in ramp to the basement were built on the east side. In 1940-1941 the WPA built a gymnasium, 93 feet by 72 feet, with a hipped barrel roof. It stood alone southeast of the original building and at right angles to it. About 1945 the two buildings were connected by a functional brick shed-roofed and gable-roofed

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Sumner School
name of property
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DESCRIPTION (continued):

extension. About 1954 the last addition, a small L-shaped, shed-roofed concrete block extension, approximately 25 feet by 40 feet, was built southwest of the 1945 addition. This strictly utilitarian section contained space for restrooms.

The construction of Sumner School over a twenty-five year period accounts for a variety of construction materials. All sections of the building have asphalt roofs. The walls of the 1920-21 and 1945 sections are red brick topped by a concrete cap. The 1954 section is concrete block. Priming the local economy and employing unskilled labor were priorities during the Great Depression. Consequently, the hipped, barrel-roofed WPA gymnasium was built of locally-quarried, rusticated native buff sandstone laid in a random coursed ashlar pattern according to a standard but slightly variable plan. Unlike some such sandstone buildings associated with the WPA in Oklahoma, the high quality of craftsmanship was evident in the well cut and evenly laid stone of Sumner School's gymnasium.

Likewise the styles of the various sections vary. The original building, in the Commercial style adapted for a school building, is by far the most elaborate. A complex pedimented roofline suggests Mission influence. The style of the WPA gymnasium, perhaps the work of Oklahoma WPA projects architect Fred Dugan, is typical of the WPA in Oklahoma and was replicated in nearby Morrison. Both the 1945 and 1954 additions are strictly functional, but the 1945 addition followed the rooflines and materials of the 1920-21 section.

The north elevation of the 1920-21 section of Sumner School, facing north to County Road N3300, is the main entrance. The gable roofline on this elevation allows use of a large centered pediment flanked by shorter piers. On either side of the piers, are recessed double entrances set into slightly recessed walls. Above each entrance is a smaller pediment between abbreviated piers. Centered above the gable is a flag pole. In the gable beneath the large pediment are concrete plaques. The upper reads "1920." The lower reads "Consolidated School Dist. 1." Beneath the lower plaque is small boarded-over opening above a concrete sill. There is a band of six six-over-six windows centered in the gable section. These have original wood frames and concrete sills and lintels but are covered by wire mesh. The entrance on the right has been boarded over. The entrance on the left retains it original double glazed wood doors and six-light transoms in wood frames. Original decorative features on this elevation include brick soldier courses and inlaid white concrete squares, which contrast with the brick walls. Above each entrance is a concrete belt course and a concrete inlay in the shape of an inverted T. On the left side of this elevation is evidence of early modification. There are a tall brick chimney with metal bracing and a shed roofed concrete block coal

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Sumner School
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DESCRIPTION (continued):

chute left of the left entrance. In the exposed concrete foundation is a blocked basement window. On the extreme right of this elevation is a wood sign which reads "Door for Furniture." To the right of the left entrance is a wood sign which reads "Healing Water Church Sun. 7PM."

The other major section with a visible north elevation is the WPA gymnasium. Originally there were three groups of four windows on the north and south elevations of the gymnasium. The right group on the north elevation was boarded over and partially covered by the 1945 addition. The remaining two groups consist of a pair of six-over-three awning windows between nine-light fixed windows. All frames are metal and are set over concrete sills immediately below the wood fascia. There are equally-spaced downspouts from the gutters. Each corner of the gymnasium is clipped. Each resulting angle features a high fixed nine-light window in a metal frame above a concrete sill. On the extreme left end of this elevation, also set into the angle, is the entrance. Facing north is a single new wood panel door. A series of concrete-topped piers stepped down to a concrete canopy provides a decorative element between the door and window.

The east elevation of Sumner School demonstrates the complex nature of the building. On the right is the gable and flat roof of the 1920-21 section. In the center, the gable roof and flat roof of the 1945 addition repeats the pattern of the original building. On the left is the hipped barrel roof of the WPA gymnasium. In the 1920-21 section there are two groups of five windows. The original openings have been partially blocked and replaced with one-over-one windows in metal frames above concrete sills. Below the right group is a stairway and door to the basement. It is covered by a concrete canopy resting on round concrete pillars and a low concrete wall. At the basement level are three blocked windows and a new wood single door. Below the left group of windows are two original metal-framed, fixed three-light basement windows. Over these basement windows is a concrete canopy resting on round concrete pillars. At the extreme left end of the 1920-21 section is a bow-roofed covered ramp to the basement. Built of wood and covered in tar-paper siding, it has a wood overhead door. The east elevation of the 1945 addition on this side is flat roofed. It contains two groups of three eight-over-eight windows. The wood frames are original. At ground level is an air conditioner unit. The concrete foundation is exposed. The east elevation of the WPA gymnasium has no openings except for a decorative half-arch and concrete sill in the lowest stepped pier. Also visible on this elevation of the gymnasium are two downspouts and a line of mortar repairing the stone work.

The south elevation of the Sumner School gymnasium is original. At the extreme right and left ends are the clipped corners, set off on this elevation by

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DESCRIPTION (continued):

single tall concrete-topped piers. There are three groups of four windows repeating the pattern established on the north elevation. In each group the first and fourth have nine fixed lights; the second and third are six-over-three awning windows. All have metal frames set over concrete sills immediately below the wood fascia. There are four equally spaced down spouts from the gutters. The 1954 shed-roofed addition is L-shaped, with the longer arm lying along the west wall of the gymnasium and the shorter arm extending westward from the northwest corner of the gymnasium. On the south elevation of this addition are a pair of one-over-one wood frame windows. At ground level is a small concrete enclosure. The south elevation of the west extension has no openings. The south elevation of the 1945 addition, narrower than the 1920-21 building, is partially visible. Its stepped parapet with a concrete cap follows the line of its gable roof. Above it rises the taller roofline of the 1920-21 section, which repeats the large pediment flanked by piers established on the north elevation. On the right of the 1945 addition, window openings have been blocked. On the left are three one-over-one windows in new metal frames above original concrete sills. Only the left end of the south elevation of the 1920-21 building remains visible. At the extreme right is a recessed double entrance reached by a short flight of steps. The original wood doors remain, but they and the transom have been boarded over. Decorative concrete inlays accentuate the corners of the recessed entrance.

The west elevation of Sumner School includes, from the right, the gymnasium then 1954 addition, the 1945 addition, and the original building. This elevation of the gymnasium has no openings except the windows set high in the clipped corners. The west elevation of the 1954 addition is in two sections. On the right, in the long arm of the L, is a single new metal door beneath a small shed-roofed porch. Left of the door are two pairs of one-over-one windows in original wood frames. The window nearest the door has been blocked to accommodate an air conditioner unit. In the short arm are two two-light hopper windows with metal frames. These windows have been painted. In the recessed area between the 1954 and 1945 additions is a single glazed metal door. On the left end of the 1945 addition is a pair of one-over-one windows in new metal frames over concrete sills. The west elevation of the 1920-21 section is original and includes, on the extreme southwest corner of the roof, the school bell. This elevation has two groups of five six-over-six windows with wood frames and concrete sills. Some lights have been broken out, and others are blocked. All are covered by wire mesh.

Also located within the boundaries of the nominated resource is a low stone wall along the east edge of the property (see Photo #4). Although the exact date of construction is not known it is thought that it was built contemporaneous with the gymnasium and is therefore considered to be a

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Sumner School
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contributing structure.

ALTERATIONS:

During its seventy years service as an educational facility, Sumner School has undergone periodic modification: chronologically, the partial excavation of the basement to provide space for heating equipment and shop classes, the construction of a separate gymnasium in 1940-1941, an addition about 1945 connecting the gymnasium, and an addition about 1954 for restrooms. Only the last occurred outside the period of eligibility required for the National Register. Moreover, the 1954 addition is relatively small and cannot be seen from either of the primary elevations, the north and east. Otherwise, visible alterations include the blocking or replacement of some doors and windows. The most obvious are the windows on the east elevation of the 1920-21 section. None of these modifications have impaired the integrity of the building as a whole.

Sumner School exemplifies the twentieth-century rural school, reflecting the changing architectural styles and needs of the community during its seven decades of service. Not only is the original 1920-21 section a fine example of the Commercial style applied to a school building, the WPA gymnasium demonstrates the best the WPA had to offer rural Oklahoma in the high quality of its stonework. The Sumner School continues to retain its integrity of design, workmanship, materials, setting, and location, and conveys the feeling of its past environment.

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SUMMARY:

Sumner School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A because of its importance as a public school in the community of Sumner, operating from 1921 to 1991. It was one of the first consolidated schools in Oklahoma and the first consolidated school in Noble County. It was the primary component of the town of Sumner and remained the focal point of the rural community long after the town ceased to exist. The original brick Sumner School building was constructed in 1920-21 in the Commercial style adapted for a school building. In 1940-1941 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) added a native sandstone gymnasium to the facility. Sumner School is also eligible under Criterion C because it is an excellent example of two early twentieth century American architectural styles.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Although the 1893 land run opened the Cherokee Outlet for non-Indian settlement, conditions remained fluid for several years. Homesteaders and town builders struggled to prove up claims, organize community institutions, and lure the transportation facilities that could make or break fledgling towns. Such was the case with Sumner, a town founded in present southeastern Noble County, Oklahoma. Perhaps two hundred settlers were drawn to the new town on the day of the run, but within a week's time more than half had moved on. However, Sumner, situated near pleasant camping grounds on Mule Creek, soon had a post office, opened May 23, 1894, a blacksmith shop, a store, and several scattered residences. Subsequently, Sumner became a stop on the Star Route, a main east-west mail delivery line, and on the stage route from Pawnee to Perry. The construction of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad through a location one and one-half miles north of Sumner might have curtailed the town's future, but in 1906 a promoter named Wolf platted a quarter section plus forty acres along the tracks. He dug a public well and induced Sumner residents to move to his townsite by offering lots free to businessmen. Other lots sold for \$10 each. Sumner Postmaster Frank Jones soon moved the post office to the new site and his neighbors followed. A lumber yard and two cotton gins opened. Baptist and Christian churches were founded. In this manner Sumner survived, assuming in its permanent location as Oklahoma achieved statehood in 1907.¹

Among the first priorities of the settlers was the establishment of schools. Within months of the 1893 land run, homesteaders had organized a school in the northeast quarter of Section 8, T21N, R2E, near the site of present Sumner School. In 1901 stock dealer William B. Poole donated an acre of his homestead in the adjacent section for a school. Other settlers contributed money to build the frame building and employ a teacher. First called "Poole," it was relocated in Sumner not long afterward.²

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

From statehood to 1920 Sumner thrived as a service center for surrounding agricultural lands. The town had two general stores, a drug store, the Sumner State Bank, two elevators, a lumber yard, a garage, a filling station, a hotel, a lodge hall, and an American Legion post. Four passenger trains a day passed through Sumner as did the main east-west highway in that part of Oklahoma. A major complaint, however, was that area young people were unable to attend high school in Sumner. Most took the train to Morrison six miles east or Perry ten miles west to attend high school, returning home only on the weekends. To remedy this problem, in June 1920 residents of school districts 42, 43, and 69 voted two to one to create the first consolidated school in Noble County. Henry Smoot, J. C. Neilson, and Lester Crampton, representing the three former districts, served as the first Board of Education. They oversaw the process by which bonds were issued, funds secured, and construction begun for the new Sumner School, designated Consolidated School District 1.³

The building was not completed by the fall of 1920, so on September 1 Sumner School, with 160 students in first through twelfth grade, convened in the Christian Church two blocks east of the building site. Mrs. Lulu A. Burke presided as the first principal. Three new Ford Speedwagons transported rural students to and from school over rough unpaved roads. In the first month school colors were chosen, a school yell was adopted, and athletic teams and an orchestra were organized. Early in October the entire student body and their teachers marched to the building site for a ground-breaking ceremony. Students from each department took a turn with the spades. The performances of songs by the various grades and short encouraging speeches from the teachers demonstrated their enthusiasm for their new alma mater. By Christmas the brick work had been nearly completed, but it was spring before the Sumner School building was finished. On Sunday, March 31, 1921, more than six hundred people shared a bountiful noon meal before attending dedication ceremonies in the new school auditorium. Speakers included Dr. I. N. McCash, President of Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, and future Oklahoma Governor Henry S. Johnston. It was, declared the editor of the Perry (Oklahoma) Republican, the "foundation for a new order of community life."⁴

Sumner School, built at a cost of about \$30,000, was the most significant building in the town of Sumner. Situated on a broad ridge just east of town, the red brick Commercial-style building was a source of pride to the close-knit rural community. Classrooms were lighted by new Aladdin lamps, while coal or wood stoves provided heat. A well supplied water, but a system of gutters on the roof collected rainfall, which was filtered through charcoal and sand and stored in a cistern. Two four-seat outhouses served as restrooms, "cold as the North Pole in the winter and hot as the equator in the summer," according to a former student. Some time later a partial basement was excavated, and a boiler

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

was installed.⁵

Basketball was an important link between Sumner School and the surrounding rural community. Local residents joked that when a baby was born in Sumner, they offered it a basketball. If the baby took the ball, they let it live. Both boys and girls fielded teams, and, although they practiced and played on an outdoor gravel court, the Sumner Independents competed successfully on the county and regional level. In 1940 Sumner School had the highest enrollment of any dependent school in the county with fifty-four high school students and seventy-six elementary students. It was the only dependent school with a high school. Perhaps its size and that community obsession with basketball was the reason Sumner School was chosen to receive a gymnasium as a WPA project.⁶

The WPA, a New Deal program formed in 1935 to combat the effects of the Great Depression, set up public works projects to alleviate unemployment by hiring workers from county relief rolls. It aimed to pump money into the local economy through payrolls and the purchase of building materials. Individual projects were required to be useful, permanent additions to the community, which must demonstrate its support by providing land, labor, or in-kind contributions. Noble County, with an economy based on hard-hit agriculture and oil production, was in considerable distress into the late 1930s. Other relief programs operated in the county, but from 1932 to 1938 the number of jobless people rose by 236 percent. In summer 1940 Noble County schools were the beneficiaries of several new WPA projects, including the construction of gymnasiums at Morrison and Sumner, under the direction of WPA projects engineer George G. Nichols and projects architect Fred Dugan. Twenty men were assigned to quarry, cut, and lay the native buff sandstone, which was probably Sumner's contribution to the project. Construction of the gymnasium, set at right angles southeast of the 1920-21 building, began in the fall. By Christmas 1940 workmen were laying the asphalt squares in the gymnasium floor, but the building was not finished until the spring of 1941. A student recalled that it was "a great day for Sumner School" when the gymnasium, lit by the new rural electrification program, was finished.⁷

Sumner School continued to flourish for several more years as a primary factor in community life. About 1945 a red brick addition connected the 1920-21 building and the gymnasium. It served as a lunchroom, allowing students to buy a half-pint of soup for a dime. About 1954 a second, concrete block addition on the southwest corner provided restrooms. The high school continued to operate until 1964. Even after it was discontinued, the school functioned as an elementary school, with a kindergarten added in 1976.⁸

While Sumner School was enlarged and improved, the town of Sumner declined as

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Sumner School
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

better transportation and changes in agriculture eroded the need for such small service centers. Both U.S. 64 and 177 bypassed the town. In 1928 the only bank closed permanently; in 1957 the post office was also discontinued. By the beginning of the 1980s, Sumner, Oklahoma had dwindled so much that one geographer classified it as a "ghost town." But Sumner School students questioned that designation, noting that there were still thirty-seven residents of Sumner, not counting themselves. Furthermore, the school was still a source of pride to the rural community, continuing its basketball tradition into the third generation. The Sumner School Band was organized as a community project in the 1980s under the leadership of veteran music teacher Ashley Alexander. Once a month performers from all over Oklahoma came to Sumner School to entertain, while the band, supported by the Sumner Band Boosters, toured neighboring states, giving concerts in nursing homes. The upper-grade students also published an eight-page newspaper once a year, highlighting the activities of the school and recalling the history of the community.⁹

Unfortunately, none of these activities was enough to save Sumner School from extinction as demographic changes and ease of transportation severely reduced the need for the school. There were only fifty-eight students in five semi-combined grades in 1982. Sumner community leaders sadly foresaw the likely results of a declining student population and the school cut-backs necessitated by a weak economy. Community leader Henry Rieman commented, "I've fought all my days trying to keep the school going."¹⁰ But following passage of sweeping state school reform bill 1017, voters on June 11, 1991 approved closure of Sumner School, with its students transferring to other districts. The building was sold to private citizens. After a brief stint as a church, it is currently a private residence undergoing renovation and stabilization.¹¹

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Sumner School reflects the architectural trends, historic events, and practical demands of its seventy years' service as an educational institution. The original 1920-21 Sumner School was a rectangular red brick building in the Commercial style common to Oklahoma at the time. The architect adapted the style to a school building through the use of double doors at each entrance and multiple windows for adequate lighting in a building erected before electricity was common in rural areas. The complex pediment on the primary elevation suggests the influence of the Mission style also popular in Oklahoma at the time. The use of geometric white concrete inserts, contrasting with the red brick, shows an attempt to make the building visually appealing as well as functional.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

The gymnasium, built in 1940-1941 as a separate building, is a particularly good example of the WPA's contribution to rural Oklahoma. It may have been a standard plan designed by Oklahoma WPA projects architect Fred Dugan, as it bears a strong resemblance to the gymnasium built in nearby Morrison, Oklahoma at the same time. Because the WPA needed to keep construction costs down and use materials easily worked by unskilled labor, locally quarried sandstone block construction was a hallmark of WPA structures in much of Oklahoma. This labor-intensive construction technique also allowed maximum employment of workmen drawn from county relief rolls. Sumner School, built of buff sandstone, is typical of WPA style and workmanship but demonstrates a higher level of skill in the cutting and laying of rusticated blocks in the random coursed ashlar pattern. The stepped piers and half-arch near the northeast entrance are also typical of the WPA goal of individualizing each building while demonstrating the program's commitment to artistry and craftsmanship.

The two subsequent additions to Sumner School about 1945 and 1954 show less attention to style and more response to student needs. The 1945 addition between the 1920-21 building and the gymnasium connects two visually and structurally disparate buildings. The use of red brick and repetition of the original building's rooflines makes the best of the situation, although it somewhat impairs the individual integrity of the gymnasium. The concrete block restroom addition, built about 1954 and generally hidden by the older sections, adheres to no particular style and is strictly functional.

Sumner School is important as a symbol of community life in and around Sumner. It has always been the largest, most visible, and most historic building in town, serving as a gathering place for educational, recreational, and cultural activities. Sumner School is architecturally significant in that it exemplifies two early twentieth century architectural styles adapted and modified to fit community needs during its seventy year's service as an educational facility.

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NOTES

¹John W. Morris, Ghost Towns of Oklahoma (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 190; The Noble County Genealogy Society, History of Noble County, Oklahoma (Norman, Okla.: Type Territorial, 1987), 110; Allen D. Fitchett, "History of Noble County, Oklahoma," master's thesis, Colorado State College of Education, 1938, 110; "Sumner," Vertical File, Cherokee Strip Museum, Perry, Oklahoma.

²The Noble County Genealogy Society, History of Noble County, 45.

³Morris, Ghost Towns, 190; "Sumner," 110; Fitchett, "History of Noble County," 110; The Ghost Town Gazette (Sumner School, Sumner, Oklahoma), 1982, Vertical File, Cherokee Strip Museum, Perry, Oklahoma; The Perry (Oklahoma) Republican, July 1, 1920.

⁴The Perry (Oklahoma) Republican, October 7, November 4, December 20, 1920, April 4, 1921; The Ghost Town Gazette (Sumner School, Sumner, Oklahoma), 1982.

⁵The Ghost Town Gazette (Sumner School, Sumner, Oklahoma), 1982.

⁶Ibid.; Charles Chessmore, interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, October 24, 1995; The Perry (Oklahoma) Daily Journal, August 22, September 5, 9, 1940.

⁷Dianna Everett and Mary Jane Warde, "Final Report: WPA Armories, Camp Gruber, Whitaker School, and Davis Air Field," State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1993, 3; Fitchett, "The History of Noble County," 254; The Perry (Oklahoma) Daily Journal, September 5, November 28, December 26, 1940; The Ghost Town Gazette (Sumner School, Sumner, Oklahoma), 1982.

⁸The Ghost Town Gazette (Sumner School, Sumner, Oklahoma), 1982.

⁹Morris, Ghost Towns, 190; The Ghost Town Gazette (Sumner School, Sumner, Oklahoma), 1982, 1984.

¹⁰Ibid., 1982.

¹¹David B. Dolezal, interview, Perry, Oklahoma, October 13, 1995; "Order Declaring Annexation," County Superintendent of Schools of Noble County, Perry, Oklahoma and "Official School Ballot," Special School Annexation Election, June 11, 1991, Sumner Dependent School No. D-7 of Noble County, Oklahoma, provided by David B. Dolezal, Perry, Oklahoma.

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Morris, John W. Ghost Towns of Oklahoma. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977.

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"Official School Ballot." Special School Annexation Election, June 11, 1991. Sumner Dependent School No. D-7 of Noble County, Oklahoma. Provided by David B. Dolezal. Perry, Oklahoma.

"Order Declaring Annexation." County Superintendent of Schools of Noble County, Perry, Oklahoma. Provided by David B. Dolezal. Perry, Oklahoma.

The Perry (Oklahoma) Daily Journal. 1940-1941.

The Perry (Oklahoma) Republican. 1920-1921.

"Sumner." Vertical File. Cherokee Strip Museum. Perry, Oklahoma.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

A piece, parcel and tract of land situated in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (NE/4 NE/4) of Section Seven (7), Township Twenty-one North (21N), Range Two East (2E), of the Indian Meridian, Noble County, State of Oklahoma, described by metes and bounds as follows: Beginning at the Northeast corner of the said Northeast Quarter of Northeast Quarter of Section 7, Township 21 North, Range 2 East of the Indian Meridian, Noble County, State of Oklahoma; thence West along the North boundary line of the said NE/4 of NE/4 of Section 7-T21N-R2EIM, a distance of 600 feet; thence South a distance of 435.6 feet; thence East a distance of 600 feet to a point on the East boundary line of said NE/4 of NE/4 of Section 7, T21N, R2EIM; Thence North, along the said East boundary line of the said NE/4 of NE/4 of Section 7-T21N-R2EIM, a distance of 435.6 feet to the point of beginning, and containing six (6) acres, more or less.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the boundaries recorded in the Assessor's Office, Noble County Courthouse, Perry, Oklahoma and contain the nominated resources.