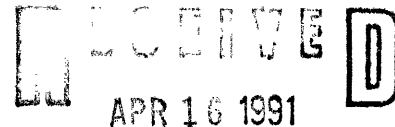


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lower Parker School  
other names/site number HS-233; District #73 School

2. Location Ozark National Scenic Riverways

street & number \_\_\_\_\_  not for publication  
city, town Salem  vicinity  
state Missouri code MO county Dent code 065 zip code 65560

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>4</u>	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Edwin C. Beans 4/10/91  
Signature of certifying official Date

Chief Historian  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Clair L. Blackwell 5 Dec. 1990  
Signature of commenting or other official Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. **Entered in the National Register** 5/31/91

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

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

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**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other/vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls weatherboard

roof tin

other

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Lower Parker School is located in section 29, Current Township, Dent County in southeast Missouri. It is a few miles down the Current River from Montauk, southwest of Jadwin, and near the old town of Cedar Grove. The school takes its name from Parker Hollow, the long valley in which it is located, and it formerly had a sister school, Upper Parker.<sup>1</sup> A country road which turns left off County YY runs past Lower Parker near the juncture of Parker Branch, the Current River, and Brushy Hollow Road, another dirt road. The schoolhouse is about 700 feet north of the river, on high, flat ground. Currently, there are no other structures within sight of the Lower Parker district.

Located in the Courtois Hills, the Current River is surrounded by one of the most rugged landscapes in the Missouri Ozarks. The river region is composed of high ridges, cut through by springs and creeks which have created deep valleys and hollows such as that in which Lower Parker is located. Schafer Spring, which is called Parker Branch as it flows into the Current, is the significant spring in the area. Several smaller springs also contribute to the Current there. Parker Hollow is one of forty similar broad valleys in Dent and Shannon Counties near Lower Parker School. The native forest was a combination of oak and hickory hardwoods, interspersed with pine.<sup>2</sup>

Lower Parker is a medium-sized, white frame schoolhouse, about 500 square feet. It was constructed in 1905 or 1906, and came into use in 1906 or by 1907 at the latest. It is a basic rectangular, front-gabled block. There is one entrance, a double door on the

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<sup>1</sup>Parker Hollow was named for an early pioneer. Lower Parker is south of Upper Parker School near the Current River. Upper Parker School is extant but has been converted into a private home.

<sup>2</sup>Milton D. Rafferty, The Ozarks Land and Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 16.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education  
Social History  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1906-1956  
1906-1956  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1906  
1906  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lower Parker School is a an excellent example of a rural Ozarks school which served a large student body. In architecture, development, and conduct, Lower Parker fits within the guidelines established for nomination under the multiple property listing "Missouri Ozarks Rural Schools."

The people of the Missouri Ozarks migrated from the southern Appalachian mountains. They were from the Kentucky and Tennessee highlands, and they were of a pioneering spirit to venture into the wild and sparsely populated territory. There were only 1.61 inhabitants per square mile in 1850 and 3.60 in 1860. Although the rest of Missouri was no longer considered frontier as of 1860, the Ozarks maintained its frontier status even after the Civil War, with only 3.76 inhabitants per square mile in 1870. The region remained frontier in character through this period as well as in definition.<sup>1</sup>

Through two acts, the Graduation Act of 1854 and the Homestead Act of 1862, the Ozarks gradually became more populated in the latter half of the nineteenth century. More important for settlement than these acts, however, was the entrance of the railroads and the lumber industry. From 1870 to 1920, these two industries purchased land, employed natives, and encouraged migration to the area. They also brought consumer goods and more cosmopolitan ideas, elements of which such as an appreciation of public education were incorporated into Ozark society.

It was during the railroad and lumbering era that the public education system was established in the Ozarks. The state of Missouri had provided nominal legislation for one school per township in the 1840s, but the legislation was inadequate to set

<sup>1</sup>Milton D. Rafferty, The Ozarks: Land and Life (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 77.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 2 acres

UTM References

A 

1	5	6	2	1	7	5	0	4	1	4	4	3	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

1	5	6	2	1	8	4	0	4	1	4	4	3	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

1	5	6	2	1	8	4	0	4	1	4	4	2	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

1	5	6	2	1	7	5	0	4	1	4	4	2	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Lower Parker School District is composed of 2 acres in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 29 of Township 32 N of Range 6 W; Dent County, Missouri.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Ozarks rural schoolhouse yards typically were 2 acres. While a deed was never given for Lower Parker School, one may safely assume that the schoolyard was about 2 acres, as had been the previous Lower Parker schoolyard. The district needs to include the two privy sites, as well as include enough land to give a sense of the children's playground.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kimberly Scott Little/Historian  
organization Midwest Region, National Park Service date August 17, 1990  
street & number 1709 Jackson Street telephone 402-221-3426  
city or town Omaha state Nebraska zip code 68102

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## LOWER PARKER SCHOOL

south end. The entrance is protected by a gabled overhang and porch, minutely off-center of the main gable. The foundation, the porch stairs, and the face of the porch are poured concrete. A layer of concrete mortar was used over the porch facing, probably in the 1920s. There are six windows, three each located on the east and west sides. The windows are four-over-four and double-hung. There is a red brick chimney supported by a frame adapted as a bookcase on the north wall, and two blackboards flank the bookcase. A pot-bellied stove formerly stood near the center of the room, and the pipe for it ran across the ceiling to the chimney. The chimney bricks probably were made locally, although they are milled. The exterior of Lower Parker is clapboard siding painted white. The interior walls are also white, although this minor change probably was made after the period of significance. The interior walls are composed of vertical boards of variable width. The floors, composed of milled boards, have never been painted but rather are oiled, and there lingers in the building the odor of this oil. The building was electrified under rural electrification during its period of significance, and it is wired for four ceiling light sockets. With the exceptions of electrification, the mortar facing on the porch, and routine maintenance, the school remains as it was built in 1906.

Across the country road from the schoolhouse and south toward the Current River are two privies, the girls' to the northwest, and the boys' toward the southeast. The girls' privy is a one-holer, with concrete foundation and shed frame construction. The structure is in poor condition with only the roof and siding on the east side still covering the frame. All that remains of the boys' privy is the concrete foundation and vault. The privies were built in the 1920s. Prior to that, Lower Parker had no toilet facilities.<sup>3</sup> Photographs from Lower Parker School from about two decades ago indicate that the privies had wooden privacy screens which were attached to each privy on either side of the doors. There is no evidence of these screens now. Despite their ruined condition, the privies are included as contributing sites because of their potential archeological value.

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<sup>3</sup>Orin Davis Interview, by the author, June 16, 1990; tape at Midwest Region, National Park Service, Omaha, Nebraska.

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## LOWER PARKER SCHOOL

up public schools among Southern-bred pioneers who believed in private control of education. Legislation passed in 1865 also failed to establish the public school system. Finally, in 1874 the laws were rewritten once more, and this time the legislation was comprehensible and sufficient to establish the state's primary education system. By 1900, there were over ten thousand rural, primarily one-room schools in Missouri, and the number continued to rise. Lower Parker School was a product of this legislation and the reforms which swept through education around the turn of the century.

As the twentieth century began, Missouri administrators became concerned about the efficiency of and education provided at the multitudes of rural schools in the state. In several pieces of legislation from 1911 to 1948, lawmakers urged one- and two-room schools to consolidate. The schools had become such an important part of the Ozarks culture by that time, though, that local residents were opposed to closing them. Dent County, for instance, did not consolidate its schools until 1955. In some rural areas of Missouri, the one-room schools did not close until mandated to do so by the state in 1972. The tenacity of rural schools through this half-century of pressure to close is a testament to the significance they had taken on within the communities which they served.

Lower Parker School is significant as a product of the Missouri Ozarks education system and as one of few extant examples of the thousands of rural schools in the Ozarks. The district of the original Lower Parker school was organized in 1874, following the Missouri education laws of the same year which in essence launched the Missouri education system. A local family donated to the district two acres in section 29, Current Township, and a log school was built. The location of the school is confirmed by three independent sources: a former resident of adjacent land who saw the deteriorating foundation, the deed giving the land to the school district, and the recollection of a former resident of the area who identified the location of the old "Schoolhouse Hollow" on a topographical map.<sup>2</sup> Around 1900 the log house ceased to be used, probably after the frame school called Upper Parker was built across the valley. As aforementioned, one rural school reform of the turn of the century was replacing log structures with new frame schoolhouses, and the Upper Parker School was probably considered superior to old Lower Parker. The distance to Upper Parker was too

<sup>2</sup>Estelle Johnson, Interview by Neil C. Mangum, June 2, 1978, 6-7, at Ozark National Scenic Riverways; Abstract book, Steelman Abstracts, Salem, MO; Virgil Schafer, interview by author, June 15, 1990, tape recordings, Midwest Region, National Park Service, Omaha, Nebraska.

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## LOWER PARKER SCHOOL

much for many students to travel, however, and in 1905 or 1906 a new frame school in lower Parker Hollow was built.<sup>3</sup> The land on which the new school was built was owned by Patrick Reilly, but there is no evidence he ever gave title to the school district or that the district ever attempted to get title.<sup>4</sup>

The current Lower Parker was in use as a school continuously from about 1906 to 1955, when the district succumbed to the state consolidation efforts. It served southwestern Current Township, with an estimated half of its students crossing the Current River or Parker Branch (Schafer Spring).<sup>5</sup> During its tenure, the school reflected the changes in the surrounding community. Lower Parker probably began as a typical rural school with twenty to thirty students attending. The oldest accounts of the school came from Orin Davis and Vernon Schafer, cousins who attended Lower Parker in the late 1910s and 20s. By their recollection, the school population in the area multiplied when the lumber industry came

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<sup>3</sup>With so many districts in Dent County already, the construction of yet another rural school was not a major event. Because Dent County records are not available before 1926, the date was estimated from state records, which listed the number of districts in the county until around 1910, when it began listing actual districts for various reports. Dent County organized its seventy-third district in 1906, and one may safely assume that this was Lower Parker.

<sup>4</sup>Reilly is listed as O'Reilly in some sources. There is little information available regarding him, except that his widow and unmarried sons sold the land in 1916 to E. M. Smith and George Purcell. Reilly is recorded in a quit-claim deed as having been deceased prior to 1908, tenants may have been on the land when the school was built. Reilly may have been from the Louisiana-Mississippi area, because Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, is listed as his home and the home of his son, DuBang. DuBang may be a creole name. See Affidavit 5390, Record of Deeds, Book 63, 189.

<sup>5</sup>See the annual reports of teachers for District 73, Lower Parker, in the Dent County Clerk's Office, and Plat Map of Dent County, circa 1917, located at Steelman Abstracts, Salem, MO; see also Denver Cook, interview by author, June 15, 1990; Virgil Schafer, interview by author, June 15, 1990; Orin Davis, interview by author, June 16, 1990. All interviews are tape recordings, Midwest Region, National Park Service, unless otherwise noted. Subsequent references to these interviews will be referred to by the surname of the interview subject only.

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through, bringing the potential number of students up to eighty.<sup>6</sup> School records for the late twenties confirm this, with almost seventy students enumerated and enrolled in some years. All under the charge of one young teacher, these students sat three to a desk and lined the walls on homemade benches. Some relief came for the overcrowded situation when a new school was built about three miles upstream at Montauk, and further relief came with the exit of the lumber industry and some farm families during the Depression. The school population returned to about thirty students. Through the 1940s and 50s Lower Parker School continued to have a declining student population, until around a dozen students were on the roll. By that time the school had served as the community center for education and social life for fifty years.<sup>7</sup>

Lower Parker School, like other Ozarks country schools, had such a long life for two primary reasons: geography and importance to community life. A small district school was needed in lower Parker Hollow, a dimple in a landscape of ridges, valleys, the Current River, its tributaries, and few graded roads. The two nearest schools were at Upper Parker and Cedar Grove, 3.25 and 1.6 miles away respectively across country.<sup>8</sup> By the limited roads available, both schools were several miles away.

Upper Parker was the more accessible of the two. To reach it, one took Brushy Hollow Road by the river or the ridge road built by the Schafer family in the nineteen teens.<sup>9</sup> Both were dirt roads, worn down to the chert gravel that underlies Ozarks topsoil. Both roads can be impassable in rainy weather, with Brushy Hollow flooding and the ridge road collapsing at the edges due to seepage of water from slightly higher elevations.

If children from lower Parker Hollow had had to attend the Cedar Grove School, many of them would have crossed the Parker Branch of Schafer Spring, and the majority of them would have

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<sup>6</sup>Virgil Schafer's family moved back to Parker Hollow during this period. His branch of the Schafer family had moved to a nearby mill town in hard times but returned to Parker Hollow when employment opportunities became available there. Schafer Interview.

<sup>7</sup>See the annual teachers' reports in the Dent County Clerk's Office from 1926 to 1956.

<sup>8</sup>Cedar Grove was known historically as either Cedar Grove or Cedargrove. Cedar Grove is used throughout to eliminate confusion, although the variant is equally correct.

<sup>9</sup>Schafer Interview.



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crossed the Current River. The cross-country distance of 1.6 miles between Lower Parker and Cedar Grove School required fording the river three times. There was no direct road connecting the schools.

Reaching Lower Parker School from homes within the district was easier than reaching the other schools in the area, but it was not without its own obstacles. For some students to reach Lower Parker, parents had to construct "foot-logs" in the Current and the spring branches to help their children get across the water. Foot-logs were made by driving flat-top posts into the water. Then, logs hewn on both sides were laid across the posts. Children crossed the river and branches on these logs. More elaborate foot-logs had railings tacked up on one or both sides of the logs. None of the structures were very sturdy, and they frequently washed away in heavy rainstorms or spring floods. Because of this, teachers were instructed to let students out early if dark rain clouds threatened, and some days students could not get to school because of high water. Students got rain days out of school much as students in other regions of the country get "snow days" today.<sup>10</sup> The presence of the rivers and the rough terrain made it a hardship for children to reach schools further away than Lower Parker, already a two-mile or more walk in both directions for some students.

Lower Parker School also was important because it served as the only public educational and social center for the surrounding farms. Lower Parker offered the equivalent of eight grades of education, although students rarely went straight through. Children started school as young as four, and they finished eighth grade--or at least ended their formal schooling--as old as sixteen, eighteen or even twenty. The average age of students throughout the history of Lower Parker was nine or ten.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Orin Davis, who did not have to cross any water and lived close to school, more often got out for "skunk days" after he had run-ins with the unpleasantly scented animals. See Davis Interview.

<sup>11</sup>Teachers' annual reports for Lower Parker, available from 1926 to 1956 and stored in the Dent County Clerk's Office, give the age and grade level of each student, as well as any promotions. The average student age each year as computed from these records and estimated from former student accounts consistently remained about nine or ten. There was an observable trend toward a younger average age, but the change was so gradual that the average age only dropped from a little more than ten to about nine over the whole period of existence of the school. There was less variation of ages in later years, however, from about six to twelve rather

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Lower Parker was typical of boom schools which expanded to accommodate children of people associated with new industry in an area. While Lower Parker was never a small school, the opening of a new mill in the area gave a significant boost to the number of students.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the 1920s, the potential number of Lower Parker students was almost eighty, and the average daily attendance at the school was over fifty. All of the students crowded into Lower Parker's single room of five hundred square feet. When most of the enrolled students went to school, smaller children sat three to a seat, and other students filled overflow benches along the side walls. One teacher was in charge of the entire school, although she probably used more advanced students to assist with younger students. The teachers during this era were Ethyl Haverstick, Opal Wrest, and Wilma Shelton. As recalled by one former student, an "old" teacher during this era at Lower Parker would have been about twenty-five, and many were ten years younger.<sup>13</sup>

The daily schedule in a one-room school the size of Lower Parker was composed of a series of brief recitations, one "class" replacing another every ten minutes or so. The state-recommended schedule in such a school included alternating grades; that is, two grades of students were combined into one class for non-cumulative studies. This meant that a student might receive eighth-grade social studies training before seventh grade training in the same subject. The state allowed no alternation for first and second grade, alternation of most courses except mathematics for third through sixth grade (in two-year segments) and alternation of all seventh and eighth grade topics. Students do not remember the system as being difficult to deal with, and it allowed classes to be twenty minutes instead of ten. A national education expert also recommended the system because it had the potential to increase class sizes and therefore promote healthy competition in smaller schools; Lower Parker, however, did not need larger classes.<sup>14</sup>

At Lower Parker, students learned the "three R's: reading,

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than four to twenty. See also Davis Interview.

<sup>12</sup>See Schafer Interview.

<sup>13</sup>ook Interview; Schafer Interview; Davis Interview; Teachers' Annual Reports, Dent County. The majority of teachers at Lower Parker were women; the author has chosen to use the feminine pronoun throughout when referring to teachers at the school.

<sup>14</sup>Edith A. Lathrop, "The Organization of a One-Teacher School," Rural School Leaflet No. 10 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, February, 1923), 5.

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'riting, and 'rithmetic," but they also studied science and literature. Perhaps the most practical class that the students of Lower Parker participated in was agricultural training. Students learned everything from the names of various corn hybrids to how to estimate the weight of a stack of hay. They used agriculture-related experiments in science, such as gauging the starch content of different corns, and their word questions in math were tied to agriculture as well. Students literally took "field trips" to see local agriculture in action. In lieu of a final exam, they could form a club for stock-raising or crop-growing, or for sewing and dairying. Their course in agriculture was designed to make better farmers of them, the assumption in rural schools such as Lower Parker being that the students would become farmers some day. Girls were full participants in the programs, just as their mothers sometimes plowed the fields and tended the crops.<sup>15</sup>

One class fondly remembered by students was spelling, which was held daily in the form of a spelling match. Every afternoon, students tried to spell their way to the head of the class. Whoever was at the head by Friday received a pencil or similar reward from the teacher. The student would receive additional praise at home for his or her spelling abilities and for saving the family the expense of purchasing a pencil.<sup>16</sup> The students enjoyed the healthy competition and the break from the class routine of recitations. The state required three daily breaks for students: two fifteen to twenty minute breaks in the morning and afternoon, and a one-hour break at noon for lunch. Students took their breaks outside, unless the weather was unusually inclement. Their lunches were cold biscuits or cornbread, with maybe jam or butter or a little meat from dinner the night before. In some families, all of the children from a family used one lunch pail, and an older sibling was responsible for seeing that everyone in the family got their share.<sup>17</sup> During the breaks the children's playground was anywhere that they could get to and back from before classes resumed. They played along the riverbanks and Parker Branch, and they ran through the ridges and valleys. A farmer's barn might

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<sup>15</sup>E.E. Windes, "Types and Courses of Study in Agriculture," Rural School Leaflet No. 26 (Washington: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, August, 1924), 13-19. See also Schafer Interview; Cook Interview.

<sup>16</sup>Schafer Interview.

<sup>17</sup>Davis Interview.

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become a hiding place during a round of "Go Sheepy Go."<sup>18</sup> Or perhaps the whole school might join in a game of "Rounders," an Ozark school version of baseball without teams and which was played with a homemade ball. Teachers were not required to supervise the breaks, although they often joined in the fun. After all, some of them were the same age as their students.

Students who attended Lower Parker were from roughly two dozen interrelated families for a large part of its history, with the Schafers supplying the most students of any single family over the fifty-year period. In addition, because young people had little opportunity for contact with people outside the hollow, most of the families there were related by marriage or blood in some distant way to every other family in the hollow.<sup>19</sup> For example, the list of enrolled students for 1926-27 included at least fourteen children who were siblings or first cousins, all descended from the same Schafer grandparents. By surname there were twelve Schafers, one Kirtman child, two Nichols, seven Derryberrys, two Pruits, four Freezes, two Rasors, two Hancocks, and two Davis children that year. Six years later, in 1932-33 when the Schafers were finishing one generation and beginning another, the family only had six students attending plus two Davis children whose mother was a Schafer. That same year, there were five Pruits, five Leonards, three Derryberrys, three Nichols, two each of Rasors, Hoodenpyles, Hancocks, and Kells (with a Nichols mother), and one Asher (a Derryberry grandchild). Almost none of these children were the same ones present six years previously; they were siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, and sons and daughters of former students. Other families which supplied Lower Parker students through the years were the Lays, Mauks, McDonalds (with a Schafer mother), Parkers, Halbrooks, Bedwells, Youngs, Vances, Rollins, Cooks, Hodges, Blevins, and Bowers. The Nichols had students in Lower Parker both the first year and the last year it was in operation. George Roy Nichols sat at a desk in Lower Parker where father and grandfather had sat before him; overhead were new electric lights, but beneath his feet were the same oiled wood

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<sup>18</sup>Mabel Cooper, 3-R's in the Ozarks (Eminence: Chilton Pioneer Printing, 1980), 108. Another popular Ozarks game was "Wolf Over the Ridge," which is mentioned in several accounts of Ozarks education and recess.

<sup>19</sup>Jacob Schafer built a mill at the headwaters of Parker Branch (Schafer Spring) sometime before the turn of the century. The mill was used as a gristmill, a saw and shingle mill, a carding machine, and a cane press. Schafer and his wife had six children, including three daughters who married a Davis, a McDonald, and a Berry (possibly Derryberry), and dozens of grandchildren.

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floors which they had traversed.<sup>20</sup> Lower Parker, like other Ozarks rural schools which served cores of families over several generations, was the source of education for those families.

Lower Parker School was the primary source of organized entertainment as well as education for Parker Hollow. In an area which did not have electricity until Rural Electrification came, having no televisions, poor radio reception, and with the closest movie theater more than twenty miles away over country roads, the social life for the community revolved around Lower Parker. When the school year began in late summer, local girls and their mothers would organize a pie supper. Families came from other school districts for miles around for the good food and fellowship which the evening provided. During the supper, pies made by the local girls and women were auctioned off. Young men tried to buy the pies that their sweethearts had made, and they were willing to pay exorbitant rates to purchase the pies and the privilege of eating it with its baker. The good-natured competition that grew out of the "prettiest girl" contests at the pie suppers could be carried on for years between the young ladies of the community, and their beaux gallantly bid up the prices of their pies in support of them. The money raised from the event was used for school supplies, such as library books and the award pencils.

Another big event at Lower Parker was the Christmas program, an afternoon event attended by all of the students and their families. In the school, a community Christmas tree glowed with candles. Children put on a pageant, and they would recite poems such as "The Night Before Christmas."<sup>21</sup> Families travelled to the yearly event by wagon, taking their time and enjoying the long afternoon together with their neighbors.

The closing picnic was another important event at Lower Parker. Families came together for a day of games, food, and recitations and other demonstrations of what the children had learned through the year. This picnic was another opportunity for a pageant. One student at Lower Parker remembered fondly a pageant in which he was an Indian. Although he could not recall the subject matter of the play, he clearly remembered his costume, which included a headdress and war paint. He suggested that the pageants at Lower Parker were the sphere of girls, but that the boys would be in one if they could have exciting parts such as

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<sup>20</sup>The enrollment lists for Lower Parker are available in the teachers' annual reports for District #73 in the County Clerk's Office in the Dent County Courthouse from 1926-1956. See also Estelle Johnson Interview.

<sup>21</sup>Cook Interview.

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Indians.<sup>22</sup>

The primary evening event at Lower Parker was singing school, which was held for two weeks at a time about twice a year. Families travelled by wagon or their own foot-power from Montauk, Cedar Grove, Upper Parker, and even farther away to participate in the "country choir" for a couple of weeks. Virgil Schafer recalled walking to the school for singing school the year that two of his neighbors got portable gasoline lanterns, which were brighter than any human-produced light that he had seen before. Schafer remembered seeing the light of their lamps coming up from the Current River, illuminating the path almost as bright as day and far outshining the twisted pine torches that other families carried. That evening, the new lamps were the focus of the singing school rather than the country choir songs.

At unspecified times of the year, Lower Parker also housed worship services and dances. Lower Parker was the only local building in which the surrounding community could draw together, and it was the site of the major social events of the neighborhood. In a community with no modern entertainments, the spelling and ciphering matches, picnics and pageants with Indians, evening singing school, and even the "Holy Roller" worship services at Lower Parker filled the social calendar of Parker Hollow residents.<sup>23</sup> Lower Parker was an important part of life in Parker Hollow for fifty years. Like other Ozarks rural schools and rural schools across the country, Lower Parker was the beginning and ending of education and formal social life and was even a religious center for the hollow community. A community school was a necessity for education in Parker Hollow, but the families there made it an essential part of all aspects of their lives over time.

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<sup>22</sup>Cook Interview; Schafer Interview.

<sup>23</sup>Davis Interview.

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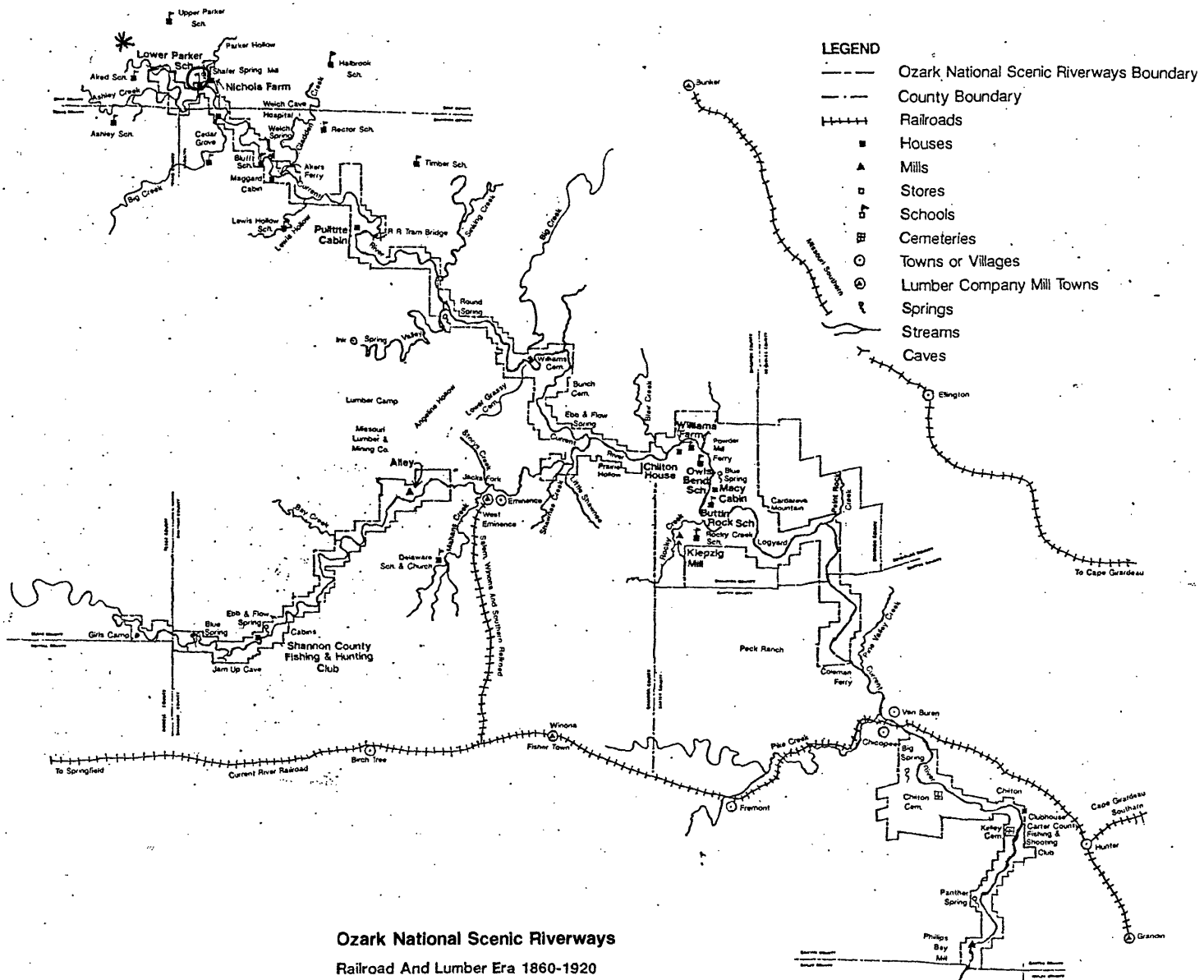
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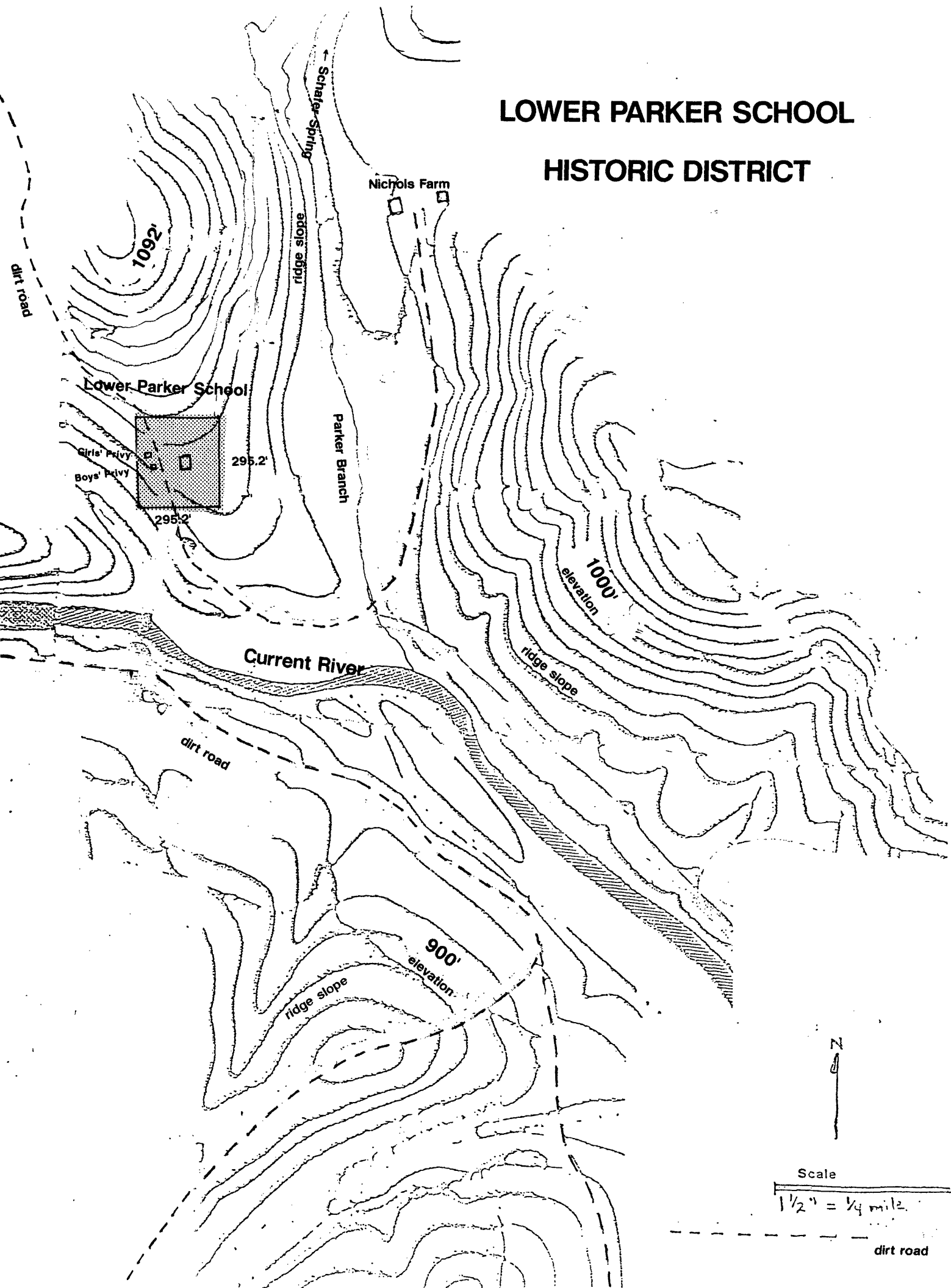


**Ozark National Scenic Riverways**  
**Railroad And Lumber Era 1860-1920**

Note: The bold print identifies historic properties extant in the park in 1990

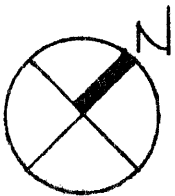
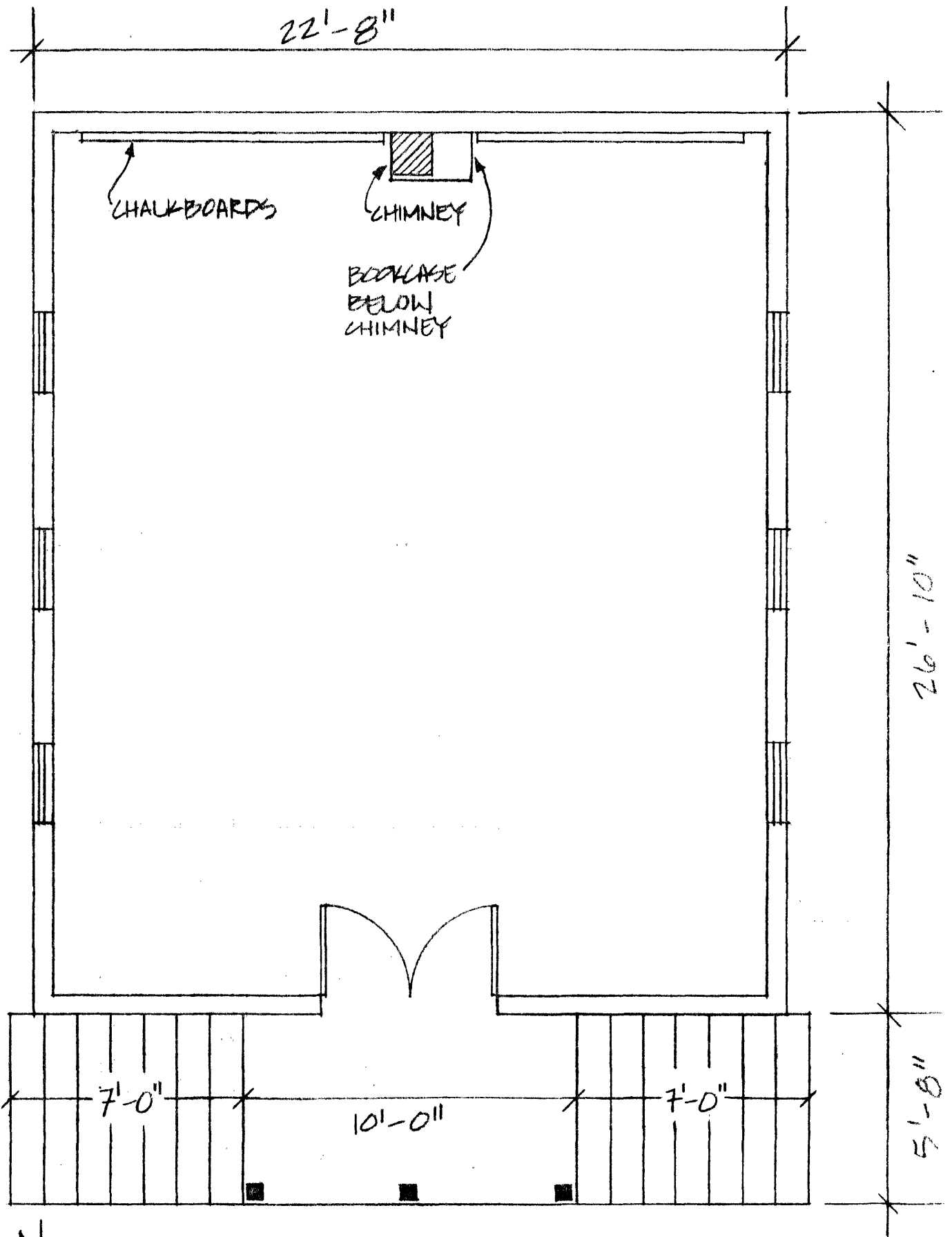


# LOWER PARKER SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT



Scale  
 $1\frac{1}{2}'' = \frac{1}{4}$  mile

dirt road



LOWER PARKER SCHOOL

SCALE:  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0''$

