

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 95000383

Date Listed: 4/6/95

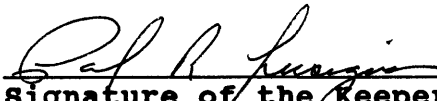
Winnett School
Property Name

Petroleum
County

MT
State

N/A
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

4/6/95
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Location:

The street location for the nominated property should read:
Junction of Moulton Avenue and Rowley Street

[This information was provided by the nomination preparer.]

This information was confirmed with Chere Jiusto of the MT SHPO.

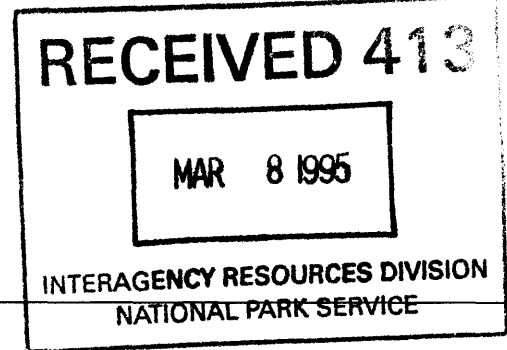
DISTRIBUTION:

**National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

383

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Winnett School

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number:

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Winnett

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Petroleum

code: 069

zip code: 59087

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maudie Shuff MT SHPO 2-17-95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

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

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:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Del R. Foy 4/6/95

X entered in the National Register
 see continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet
 removed from the National Register
 see continuation sheet
 other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

	Number of Resources within Property	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
	<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> building(s)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Education: school

Current Functions:

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
Craftsman, Mission

Materials:

foundation: concrete
walls: stucco
roof: wood shingle
other: n/a

Narrative Description

The Winnett School is a hip-roofed, one-story school building combining Craftsman and Mission style influences. As originally designed, the school was to be a structure involving three linked units: a central lobby and gymnasium/auditorium linking two identical appendages housing four classrooms each above a daylight basement.

Built in phases, the north unit was completed first. Primary entrance was initially located on the north end and framed by a projecting entry capped with a curvilinear pediment and round arched openings. Tall, multipaned windows in singles and pairs banded the east and west elevations, illuminating the four classrooms within.

In 1921, the second unit extended the building to the south, providing additional classroom space and a gymnasium. This effectively doubled the size of the building. The gently pitched hipped roof was extended to cover the addition, lending a long rectangular feeling to the building. A new entrance/lobby was constructed on the west, similar in treatment to the design of the northern entrance, and primary access into the school shifted to the west. The third unit, planned to extend to the south, from that central portion completing a symmetrical design, was never built.

The exterior design has seen few alterations since completion in 1921. These include infilling lower portions of window openings in the gymnasium east wall with cinderblocks, and the addition of a projecting small, frame mudroom from the north entrance. Currently, window openings are covered with plywood to prevent vandalism, however the original multipaned glass remains intact behind this sheathing.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Education, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1919-1944

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1919, 1921

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Otto Wasmansdorff, Lewistown (architect)
Sullivan Construction, Roundup (builders)

Narrative Statement of Significance

Serving the homestead community of Winnett since 1919, the Winnett School represents the growth of educational services during the first decade of the town's existence, and reflects the settlement and maturation of the largest town in Petroleum County. It is a vigorous school building exhibiting both Craftsman and Mission Style influences, designed by local Lewistown architect, Otto Wasmansdorff. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C.

Historical Significance

The town of Winnett, Montana lies within the Mussellshell River Basin, country that was first settled during the open range ranching era of the latter 1800s. The area was particularly conducive to sheep ranching, in 1885 there were 40,000 sheep in newly formed Fergus County; by the end of the century, those numbers reached over half a million. Large sheep and cattle operations dominated early settlement, soon followed by smaller landowners along creeks and stage routes. One of the earliest ranches established in the area, by 1885, was that of Walter J. Winnett, along McDonald Creek.

During the early 1900s, the homesteading boom brought a steady wave of settlers to Central Montana. By 1910, the Winnett post office was established serving employees of the large ranch and others in the area. When the Milwaukee Land Company charted its rail line across the Mussellshell Basin a few years later, a parcel of land was purchased from Walter Winnett, soon platted to become the townsite that would bear his name.

The town of Winnett developed in high anticipation of the completion of the Milwaukee, Chicago and St. Paul Railroad. On July 18, 1914 the Milwaukee Land Company sold the first lots in the townsite, taking in \$64,000 in one day. Just two months later, the first issue of the Winnett Times reported 32 business houses in Winnett.¹ The following year, the Milwaukee Land Company sold lots 1 - 18 of block 27 to school district #26 for one dollar.²

The Milwaukee Road reached Winnett on October 17, 1917, inaugurating rail service between Winnett and Grass Range. The town of Winnett was incorporated in 1918, and a bond issue for construction of the Winnett School was passed on April 12, 1918, four months before the town held the first meeting of its town council.

Educational history

Initial school districting in the Winnett area placed the community within district 26 which was based in Flatwillow. As their children reached school age, the Winnett family chose not to have their children travel the 13 miles to Flatwillow to attend school. Rather, they hired a teacher and converted a bedroom in their house to a schoolroom for children in the McDonald Creek vicinity. This arrangement lasted just one year, and the Winnetts moved to Lewistown the following year to have their children attend school.

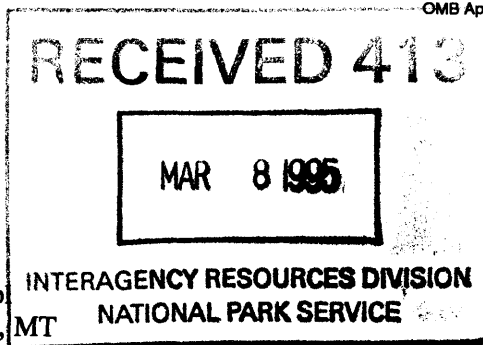
Growth in this rural area increased with homesteading settlement. To meet growing educational needs, a school was opened in 1911 in a cabin two miles west of the Winnett ranch. The following year the first public school in Winnett was built at 101 S. Broadway. This classic gable-roofed, onerom schoolhouse became known locally as the "first little white schoolhouse." Twenty five students attended classes that year.

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On the interior, the original floor plan featured a central mass housing the lobby and gymnasium, flanked by two wings of classrooms, with a central corridor plan. (Only the central mass and the north wing were ever constructed). From the primary entrance, a wide lobby opens into the gymnasium at the rear. To the north, stairs lead up to the original and 40' elementary section or down into the basement level where high school classes were held. These rooms still retain the historic interior finishings, including 12' high plaster ceilings, wooden floors, bulletin boards, chalk boards with wooden trays, beaded 28" wainscoting, metal radiators and cast iron sinks. Wooden stairways with panelled hallways grace the corridors, which are trimmed with 5' wainscoting and 5-panel doors in the doorways with overhead transoms. Multi-paned windows open hopper-style at the bottom; classrooms on the north end also include walk-in closets illuminated by small, round-arched windows facing the north.

Downstairs, the cement foundation runs up to ground level, with brick construction above. Wooden floors, exposed beams and daylight windows characterize these spaces.

Most of the interior historic fabric in the original unit remains intact, although in places it has been replaced through the years as repairs were required. A variety of newer materials were used, including beaver board, wood veneer paneling and plywood, and later fluorescent lighting.

The gymnasium is illuminated by 5 large multi-pane windows along the east wall. This large room is characteristically open, with a wood floor. Beaded wainscoting and a built-in wooden bench run the length of the west wall. The upper walls were originally plastered; fiberboard and sheetrock now cover these areas. On the south end the raised stage features a round arched opening and heavy curtain. A high flaring cornice with coved corners crowns the stage. The cornice extends around the top of the room, framing the tin ceiling which includes square panels and floral edge molding.

Integrity

The Winnett School retains a very high level of historic integrity, although it is currently in a deteriorated condition. All elements of the original design are strongly represented, both inside and out. Exterior alterations to the building have been very limited, those that have been made are readily reversible. On the interior, historic detailing, finish and furnishings combine to very strongly evoke associations with the school's history.

The greatest impact to the Winnett School has been the construction of new facilities on the adjacent lots, altering the character of the setting. However, the use remains educational, and the continued use by the newer schools has kept this historic school in service, saving it from demolition. Currently, members of the community are seeking ways to repair the historic school and continue its long record of service to the people of Winnett and Petroleum County.

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By 1914 several students had reached high school age and a second teacher was hired to teach the four high school students who enrolled that year. These upper level classes were held above the Ray Moll pool hall (which later became the Odd Fellows Hall on Main St).

On February 29, 1916, School District #159 was created taking in portions of District #26 and areas to the north and east. This new district administered schools in Winnett, Brush Creek, Elk Creek and Cat Creek. In Winnett, school enrollment swelled, reflecting homestead settlement patterns. In one year high school enrollment jumped from 4 to 25, and classes were moved to the Eager Store building.

With children travelling long distances for school, the need for supervised housing for rural students arose. As Miss Amanda Smith, the first high school teacher recalled, "Mrs. Brown of the Circle Bar neighborhood was approached for the position. We proposed to get a cabin for her, furnish it with fuel, and install her as guardian of the bachelor girls. We persuaded bachelors to donate their abandoned shacks to the cause. Others were called upon to move the buildings into the supervised areas, which they cheerily did. Thus started our first dormitory."³

By 1918, fifty-three children were enrolled across elementary and high school grades, with a superintendent and four teachers on staff. W.J. Winnett rented out the Winnett Opera House for a school dorm and an apartment for the principal and family. In April, the community passed a bond for new building construction⁴ and Otto Wassmandorff of Lewistown was hired to draw up the plans. Wassmandorff conceived a building plan in three phases.⁵ School bonds were sold during the fall of 1919, and that year the first unit of the school was built for \$9350 by Sullivan Construction.⁶

By the time the new school opened, 65 pupils were enrolled, with a total of four elementary teachers, seven high school teachers and a superintendent. The building housed four elementary classes upstairs and four high school classrooms in its daylight ground level. The wood frame school house was moved into the new school yard to serve as an assembly room for the high school, and a three bay garage was added on its west end for auto mechanic classes.

During the spring of 1920, while many homestead communities were in the throes of prolonged drought and depression, oil strikes in Cat Creek sparked the local economy. Construction of the second unit of the school proceeded, and was completed by the end of the 1921 school year, adding a large auditorium/gymnasium, two more classrooms, an office and a library.

School enrollment reached 322 in 1921, with 167 in the elementary grades, 60 in grades 6-8, and 95 in the high school.⁷ The school board built a 23-room dormitory that year, boarding students or teachers at \$20 per month.⁸

Plans for the third unit of the school were never carried out. They entailed a unit identical to the first, to be placed behind the second unit. Some improvements and additions were made over the years, which included a decorative tin ceiling added in the gym in 1922, indoor lavatories in 1934, and a shop/wood working building east of the school in the early 1940s.

During the latter 1900s, the Winnett School served a growing area, as school consolidation annexed small outlying districts to Winnett district #159. In 1950, with their high school accreditation threatened by fire code restrictions on basement classrooms, the district floated a \$90,000 bond to build a new high school next to the historic Winnett School. In 1965, the original frame schoolhouse was sold to the local Methodist parish and moved to Block 15, where it serves as a church to the present day.

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Finally, in the early 1970s, a \$498,000 bond passed to erect a new elementary building adjacent to the high school, and next door to the historic Winnett School. Designed by Page, Werner and Assoc. of Great Falls, the new school serves District #1, a single elementary and high school district created through historic district annexation.⁹ Although completion of the new building shifted the center of school activities next door, the historic Winnett School continued to house classes, basketball practice, and special events in the auditorium, which is the only public hall in the county. However, during 1994, code violations led to a curtailment of that use pending repairs and stabilization.

Architectural Significance

Built between 1919 and 1921, the Winnett School is a well preserved example of Mission Style architecture, favored by a number of Montana communities for school design during the early 20th century. The school also represents the work of Otto Wasmansdorff, who made significant contributions to the built environment of Central Montana.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Wasmansdorff came to Montana with an engineering background in 1901. During the first decade he served as county surveyor of Fergus County, and city engineer for Lewistown. Wasmansdorff worked into the field of architecture, whose known body of work begins in 1908 with the design of the Lewistown's Masonic Temple. During the decade that followed he designed a number of Lewistown buildings in partnership, Wasmansdorff and Eastman.¹⁰ Their work in Lewistown included commercial blocks, residences and the First Presbyterian Church, the Fergus County Court House, Hospital and High School Gymnasium. They also designed the First State Bank in Hilger, Fergus County High School Gymnasium, the White Sulphur Springs High School and the Catholic Church in Roundup.¹¹

The Winnett School exhibits both Mission Style and Craftsman characteristics in its functional design. The gently pitched hipped roof, bands of multi-paned windows and projecting eaves have a Craftsman root. However, the projecting, battered porticos, curvilinear pediments, and stucco exterior lend a strong Mission influence to the school.

Design of the Winnett School is also noteworthy because it featured an interesting modular approach, providing for three phases of construction. This phased plan enabled quick completion of a portion of the building, enabling fast occupancy at a time of rapid community growth. And as that growth slowed, it also allowed the community to forego the third unit, which was apparently deemed unnecessary.

Today, the Winnett School remains an outstanding building in the small town of Winnett. Having served the community and the students of Winnett for 75 years, it represents the history of educational opportunity in Winnett and Petroleum County. And it marks the dynamic early growth of this community, so strongly tied to the homesteading history of Central Montana and the Mussellshell Basin.

Winnett School
Name of Property

Petroleum County, Montana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

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 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 - Specify Repository: **Winnett School District #1**

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property: Approximately 1.5 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	701250	5208570
B	12	701290	5208570
C	12	701260	5208460
D	12	701310	5208460

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): SE ¼, NW ¼, SW ¼ Section 6, T14N, R27E.

Verbal Boundary Description

Historic boundaries for the Winnett School are delineated on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The historic property boundary encompasses the lots occupied by the Winnett School.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Chris King
organization: Winnett School Board date: October 1994
street & number: telephone: 406-429-5821
city or town: Winnett state: MT zip code: 59087

Property Owner

name/title: Winnett School District #1
street & number: telephone:
city or town: Winnett state: MT zip code: 59087

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Grassrange Review Winnett report, Fall of 1918.

Miller, Levine Architects Winnett School Plans, 1994.

Milwaukee Land Company Warranty Deed 109669 No. 2042, December 7, 1916.

Petroleum County Public Library Pages of Time, News-Argus Printing, Lewistown, 1989.

Winnett School Winnett School Annual 1925.

Winnett School District #159 Trustees Annual Reports: 1918-19, 1919-20, 1920-21, 1922-23.

Winnett Times "New School Building Bond Issue Carries", November 4, 1921.

"School Notes By Maurice", no date -- 1922.

"New Hotel, School Gym, New Garage in Planning in January of 1921", July 9, 1964.

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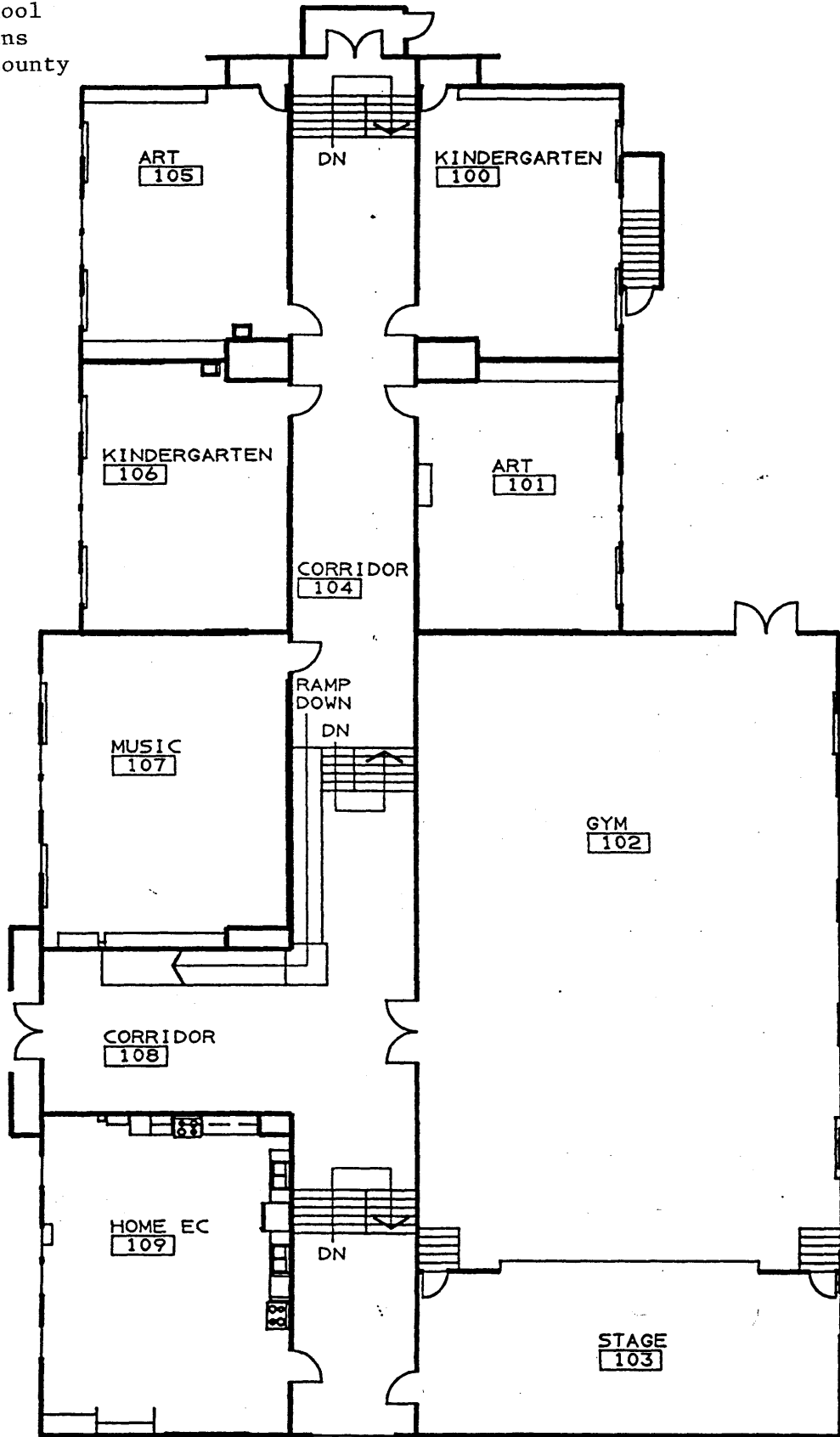
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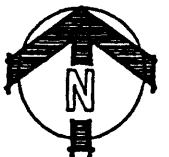
ENDNOTES

1. Pages of Time, p. 597-598.
2. Abstract of Title.
3. Pages of Time, p. 630.
4. Winnett Times, Nov. 4, 1921.
5. Ibid, p. 630.
6. Grassrange Review, Fall 1918.
7. Pages of Time, pp. 630-631.
8. Freburg, p. 14.
9. Pages of Time, pp. 597-98, 628-632.
10. Cornwall and Sievert, 1984.
11. Fergus Democrat, 1913.

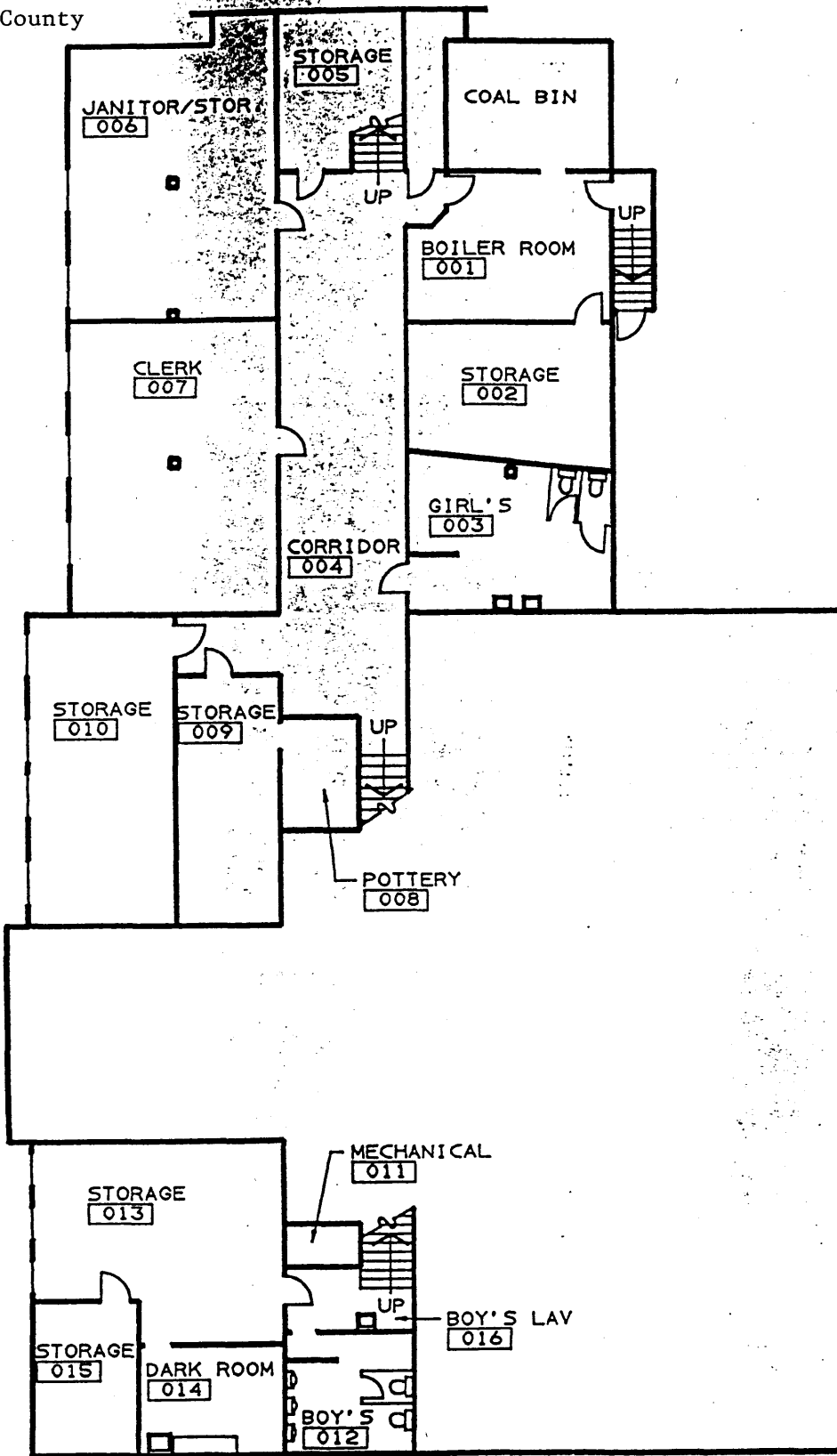
Winnett School
Floor Plans
Petroleum County
Montana



1 OLD SCHOOL FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"
347PLOT1.LST



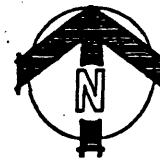
Winnett School
Floor Plans
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2

OLD SCHOOL BASEMENT PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"
347PLOT1.LST



MILLER LEVINE ARCHITECTS P.C. #9347
A-1

Winnett School
from the northwest
published in 1925 Winnett School Annual
Petroleum County
Montana

