

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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

1. Name of Property

historic name RAINIER SCHOOL

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number SW CORNER OF ALGYERS STREET AND CENTRE STREET S not for publication

city or town RAINIER vicinity _____

state WASHINGTON code WA county THURSTON code 34

zip code 98576

67

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official

Date

1/27/04

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of 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): _____

Signature of Keeper:

Date of Action:

Edson H. Beal 3/10/04

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Rural Public School Buildings in Washington from Early Settlement to Present

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education
Sub: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant/Not in Use
Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American
Movements: Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof asphalt
walls wood/clapboard
other _____

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

See Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

- 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
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1915-1936

Significant Dates

1915, 1921, 1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

(Unknown)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

See Continuation Sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 one acre _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>10</u>	<u>523837</u>	<u>5192608</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Portion of Section 9, Township 16 North Range 1 East included in tax parcel # 21609310200. Beginning at the northernmost corner as shown on accompanying map, 46° 53' 12"N, 122° 41' 10"W, thence 94.8 feet southeast to the eastern most corner, thence 88.9 feet southwest to the southern most corner, thence 92.9 feet northwest to the western most corner, thence 90 feet northeast to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

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

The nominated property includes the school proper and approximately five feet outside the footprint building on the sides and rear and includes the front schoolyard of the site facing the road.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shanna Stevenson, Senior Planner

organization Thurston County Historic Commission date 6/03

street & number 2404 Heritage Court #B telephone 360-786-5480

city or town Olympia state WA zip code 98502-6031

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 Rainier School District (Bob Golphene, Superintendent) _____

street & number PO Box 98 telephone 360-446-2207

city or town Rainier state WA zip code 98576

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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RAINIER SCHOOL
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Description:

Summary Statement:

Originally built in 1915, modified in 1921 and 1936, the Rainier School is located in Rainier, Washington, a small town (population 1,490) in southeast Thurston County, Washington. The town was historically a timber processing center and is now primarily a service area for the surrounding rural community with a small residential population. The school house was built as a result of the consolidation of the rural schools in the area. The T-shaped, one story wooden building has hip and gable rooflines with a projecting entry vestibule. The Rainier School is in fair condition and retains a high level of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Current Appearance and Condition:

Site:

The school is located at the SW corner Algyers Street and Centre Street S. three blocks east of Binghampton Street (SR 507), the town of Rainier's main street. The school house faces northeast. It is located on the northeast side of a large flat area of land within a complex which includes the contemporary high school, grade school, school offices and athletic fields. The residential section of the town is north and west of the school.

School House Exterior:

The Rainier School is a T-shaped, one-story, wood frame structure set on a raised basement, with a poured concrete foundation. The balloon-frame building has a hip roof on its elongated front wing and a taller, gable-roof wing extending to the rear with a gable roof. The rear gable protrudes slightly above the front wing. The roof is covered with composition shingles and has wide eaves with exposed rafter tails. The original center, capped chimney shown in historic photos of the building is no longer extant.

Walls are clad with two-inch clapboards. There are shingles in the gable ends. There is a wooden, water table band at the main story floor line. A gable-roof extension at the center of the front (northeast) façade has a square recessed opening to shelter main entry which has paired replacement, wooden doors which have small windows near their center opening. The doors are flanked by wooden pilasters and are surmounted by clerestory transom windows (currently boarded over). The original entry doors had upper multi-pane windows and paneled lower sections (from historic photographs).

The entry is approached by a low flight of concrete steps with a low concrete rail on either side of the steps. Above the squared porch archway, a wooden plaque has been incorporated into the façade, with raised letters reading, "Rainier Grade School." The bargeboards have a design of small oblong wooden sandwiched between long trim elements.

The entry is flanked on each side of the front façade by rows of five tall windows sharing common sills. The windows have a center-pivoting upper section of twelve oblong panes and a lower hopper section of four vertical panes. These windows were flipped some time between 1954 and 1963 (historic photographs). There are three, smaller, fixed windows with nine large panes next to the front section on either side of the rear wing. These were in the historic cloak rooms and bathrooms.

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The full height raised basement has five pairs of four-pane windows on the front façade. Fenestration of the rear wing remains intact and consists of rows of five, tall multi-paned windows with a lower hinged section and six basement windows similar to those on the front façade on either side of the rear wing. The back of the front wing has four similarly designed basement windows on either end. All of the windows are currently boarded over. There are stairs leading from the outside to the basement from just behind either side of the front wing. A small shed adjoining the south side of the front window at the basement level shelters the stairway. These are covered by simple shed roofs. Additionally there are paired stairs leading from either side of the rear of the building to the basement. A small enclosed hip-roofed structure at the back of the rear wing, which appears in the 1936 photograph, shelters the stairs. There is a non-historic, free standing play shed (not part of nomination) extending almost to the school building from newer structures on southwest side of the school. A metal stove pipe rises on the northwest rear corner of the rear wing.

School House Interior:

The interior of the building retains its 1930s configuration of large, front entry vestibule with stairs leading to a foyer. Off the foyer on the main floor are four school rooms, two off the front wing and two in the rear section. The original wooden entry doors to the classrooms have ½ light, six-pane, upper sections and three paneled lower sections. They are topped by six-light, glass transoms. The doors have wide surrounds with decorative cornices. Entry doors to the restrooms, cloak rooms and storage areas which are all accessed from the central foyer are similarly detailed. The school rooms retain their blackboards, lath and plaster walls and wainscotting. The cloak rooms and restrooms which are on either side of the foyer retain their bead board interior finish. The full height basement has a concrete floor and walls and some minimal partitions. The building is currently vacant.

Condition and Integrity:

The roof of the school is in need of repair, some siding needs repair and the exterior paint is in poor condition. The boarded over windows, in place to protect the structure, belie the school's integrity because windows are all still extant. The overall building integrity is very good.

The school is still part of its original school yard and is adjacent to the large complex which accommodates the contemporary high school, grade school, playfields and school offices for the town. The historic ancillary buildings—gymnasium, bus building and teacher's cottage have been either moved or no longer extant.

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RAINIER SCHOOL
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Narrative Statement of Significance:

Summary Statement

The Rainier School is significant under Criteria A and C in the context of the "Rural Public School Buildings in Washington from Early Settlement to Present MPD" as a good example of the schools built in rural Thurston County during the early part of the century. Its change to a two-story building in the 1920s during a consolidation period reflects a trend described in the MPD and its restoration to a one story school during the WPA era is also illustrative of the evolution of schools detailed in the MPD document. The changes and adaptations to the school represent the educational needs of the small town of Rainier and illustrate how small towns in Thurston County strived to provide educational facilities over a long period of time. The longevity of its usefulness for the educational needs of the small town of Rainier reinforces its significance. The school is the only example of an original four-room school built in the early 20th century extant in Thurston County and is a good example of the type of wood frame, T-shaped school buildings as noted in the MPD.

Additionally, the school is one of only a handful of extant public buildings constructed in the town of Rainier during the late 19th and early 20th century. The dearth of these buildings is because of repeated fires in the early part of the 20th century in Rainier related to the timber processing industry in the community. The school is the most important public, historic building remaining from the early 20th century in the town. A historic church in the community dates from 1896 and is the other major extant historic public building in the town. The gymnasium, built in 1920 adjacent to the school, has been moved and is significantly altered.

Historic Context

Rural Public Schools in Washington State

The area of Rainer was first permanently settled by Euro-Americans during the 1840s and the organization of early schools followed a common pattern as described in the MPD:

A group of settlers interested in the education of their children would call a meeting of the heads of the families in the neighborhoods, elect directors, secure a place for holding a school, raise money by taxation or voluntary contribution for support of the school, employ a teacher and open a school...land was often donated by a settler and the first schoolhouse was built through community labor...evidence suggests that the earliest public schools were located along well-traveled roads in rural regions or in towns (pg. E:2).

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

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Even with legislation and the systematic organization of school districts and graded school formats, most rural schools remained ungraded in the 1870s and 1880s. However, by the time Washington was granted statehood in 1889, the condition and organization of rural schools had improved dramatically. Graded school formats with established curricula were implemented and early, primitively constructed schools were gradually replaced by frame construction and, increasingly in the 20th century, by brick construction to meet demands for fire resistant building materials. Two mechanisms were created and provided by the State for the development of high schools in less populated districts. These mechanisms were union schools and consolidation. The MPD explained that the colloquial term "union schools" was used collectively to define graded schools, which were built to accommodate students from a cluster of small rural communities that served two or more districts. Later, beginning in the 1930s, consolidation was used on a larger scale where many districts combined resources resulting in the construction of much larger schools (pg. E:5).

As one of the first areas in the state to be settled, Thurston County, was formed in 1852 while the region was still part of the Oregon Territory. The county was also one of the first counties in Washington to establish a system of public schools. In fact, Olympia, the Territorial Capital was the site of the first public schoolhouse in the future state built in 1852. (pg. E:1)

The first permanent American settlers to Thurston County and Puget Sound were led by M. T. Simmons and George Bush in 1845. They located at the falls of the Deschutes River in Tumwater in northern Thurston County. Later settlers selected land along Puget Sound, rivers, Indian trails and in the open prairies which were kept clear by Native American burning. Settlement was widely dispersed in part because of the Donation Land Claim Law which granted applicants and their wives each 320 acres of free land.

The large number and wide geographic distribution of early schools in the Thurston County reflects the settlement patterns of the county and the overriding concern of parents to educate their children. Schools were found in Olympia and at Bush Prairie near Tumwater by 1852. Others were located at Ruddell's farm near Lacey, in the Packwood House at Nisqually, the Freedom School on Yelm Prairie and on the Black River.

Some of the earliest schools were subscription schools paid for by parents for their children. In the rate bill schools, the teacher was employed by the county which in turn collected a rate per pupil, per day from parents to pay the teacher. The schools were sometimes conducted in homes, churches and even granaries until permanent structures could be built. The earliest schools were log or simple frame construction with relatively large windows. They were usually built with volunteer labor often on donated property. However frame schools quickly replaced log structures because of the availability of dimensional lumber from the many mills located throughout the county.

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**RAINIER SCHOOL
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Thurston County was unusual in that as early as 1854 a county school superintendent was appointed. (Bowden, pg. 512) Under the direction of longtime County Superintendent, D. R. Bigelow, a Harvard Law School graduate and prominent early jurist and educator, Olympia hosted statewide educational and teacher conferences aimed at upgrading education and teachers' training.

In the first statistical report of territorial schools made in 1872, only Clarke [Clark] and Walla Walla counties had larger educational programs than Thurston County. (Rafter, pg. 9)

Things quickly changed however when settlement in Thurston County began to grow exponentially. By the 1880's logging, lumbering and other industry had increased throughout the county. By 1889, 40 logging camps were operating around Thurston County. New mill towns were fed by the logging and milling businesses which employed many men and created the need for services. New communities sprung up along branch lines of the railroads. Other major county industries were shellfish harvesting, coal mining and stone quarrying. The creation of school districts reflected the growing population. An 1881 report listed 34 districts and by 1893, 58 school districts, all of which were one-school districts with the exception of Olympia. (Bowden, pg. 510) In total over the years nearly 80 school districts have been organized in the county. (ESD 113 Records, State Archives)

By 1910 seven high schools were operating in the county and over 3,900 students attended schools nine months a year. Teacher's cottages were built near nine county schools during the 1920's and 1930's. In 1922, Rainier was one of three Union High Schools in the county with 53 students. (Rafter, pg. 16).

School buildings after the turn of the century generally were of frame construction often with gabled roofs topped by belfries and characterized by simple ornamentation. Rainier School is typical of the type of building commonly found in state during the period. This type of school was often built for consolidated districts replacing smaller, more primitive structures. Some of the schools were enlarged or upgraded through Works Progress Administration efforts in the 1930's. Rainier School was one of those schools which were renovated during that period.

With the depletion of first growth timber in the early 1940's and the effects of the Depression, many smaller districts closed. Children were transferred to larger, often brick school buildings in small towns such as Rainier, Rochester, and Yelm. One-room schools progressively disappeared during the 1940s as districts consolidated, dwindling to just eight in the county by the 1960's. No longer needed for educational needs, smaller schools were abandoned, torn down, or remodeled for residences. Others were sold to community groups. The Rainier School however found new life after it was renovated in 1936 and remained a part of the elementary school inventory of the district until 1974 when a new elementary school was built.

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The Rainier prairie area was known as "Tenalquot" meaning "the best yet" by Salish Indian people. During the 1840s the Puget Sound Agricultural Company established a farming station near Rainier called Tenalquot Farms which was abandoned in 1851. (Crooks, pg. 93.)

When the Northern Pacific Railroad completed its line from Tenino to Tacoma in 1874, the area was named by the Northern Pacific Railroad for its view of Mt. Rainer. (Hitchman, page 247, History of the Prairie Line Website) In 1914, the line was improved and straightened and became known as "The Prairie Line." (History of the Prairie Line Website, Hannum, pg. 11.) In 1908 the Milwaukee Railroad, Pacific Division began construction of its subsidiary railroad, the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railroad through Thurston County and routed it through Rainier. (Hannum pg. 1) This railroad access made Rainier attractive for both settlers reaching the area and lumber mills which were built to take advantage of the mainline of the railroad. Spurs were built to reach the mainline from the logging areas.

The first permanent American settlers to the Rainier area were Albert and Maria Gehrke and their family. They were German immigrants who came to Rainier in 1890 and bought a pre-empted homestead claim of 170 acres, including much of present-day Rainier. (Paine Manuscript). Gehrke, a farmer and former cabinet maker, was joined in Rainier by his two brothers. They established a large dairy farm in the area.

The next year in 1891, George Ellsbury of Binghamton, New York platted the townsite of Rainier and brought a group of "colonists" to the town. (The Olympian, May 22, 1891.) Their goal was to establish businesses and fruit orchards. Despite construction of a saloon, store and other structures in the town of Rainier, the project fizzled. However street names such as "Binghamton," which still exist in Rainier, recall a New York connection.

After the turn of the century, a lumber mill was started in Rainier by the Koeppen family. In 1907 it was purchased by Robert Pettit, Frank Hale and Henry White, and called "Bob White Lumber Company." The mill was later purchased and became the Lindstrom and Hanford Mill, owned by C. W. Lindstrom and Thomas J. Hanford of Tacoma (Hannum, pg. 111). The plant employed about 50 men in Rainier and about 50 more working in the woods. The mill was adjacent to the Prairie Line of the Northern Pacific. The town prospered with the development of the mill in this period. This mill burned in a large fire in September 1915 when the mills and lumber shed burned along with five million feet of lumber, three loaded railroads and a logging engine. (Washington Standard, September 24, 1915, pg. 1) The mill was rebuilt by Lindstrom and Hanford but burned again in 1929.

Other mill companies in and around Rainer that stimulated the economy included the Gruber-Docherty Lumber Company, who operated in the Rainier area from 1917 to 1927 when it burned, and the Fir Tree Lumber Company near Rainier operated from 1914 to 1924. (Hannum, pgs. 79, 89)

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The first school in Rainier was established in 1896 in what is now the Zion Lutheran Church (listed on the Washington State Register.) One account cites an early 1880s school in the area but it is otherwise undocumented. Also in 1896, three other School Districts were organized in the Rainier area--Mountain View, Hubbard, and East Union Districts. (ESD 113 Consolidation History Records, State Archives.)

In 1902 and 1909, schools were built near the nominated school site. Both burned to the ground. (The Coast, pg. 169) The nominated Rainier School was built in 1915 as a one story, four-room school. The Morning Olympian, April 14, 1915, pg 1 stated:

At the election held in the Rainier school district the voters decided to issue bonds for the erection of a four-room school house to replace the structure which was destroyed by fire some time ago. The new building will be up-to-date in every respect, with a fine large basement. The voters at the polls also decided to acquire additional grounds adjoining the present site, making about three acres altogether. The new school will be similar it is stated to the new Lacey School. . . plans are being made for the early completion of the building.

In 1915 Union High School District No. 201 was organized in Rainier. The school had a principal and one teacher. There was an average of 12 to 15 students attending the school. Then in 1919, the Rainier, Oakgrove (formerly Hubbard) Mountain View and East Union School Districts were consolidated to form District No. 307. With this consolidation, a second floor was added to the nominated school (1921) and an adjacent gymnasium was constructed in 1920. (The Mountaineer Yearbook, 1938; Washington State Archives ESD 113 Records.)

Then in 1933 a new brick school was built just northwest of the nominated school to accommodate both the elementary and high school students. The large one-story brick building represented the trend county-wide toward modern, brick schools to accommodate consolidated districts. With a newly constructed school, it was deemed that the old 1915 school was not needed. As a result, the second floor of the nominated building was removed and it was returned to a one-story structure as part of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in 1936.

The WPA project was to "Tear off top story and rebuilt new roof, repair and paint old school building," with the rationale "Present school is not large enough to take care of the enrollment. It is necessary to get additional space. This can be accomplished by rebuilding and repairing the old school building." (National Archives, Record Group 69.) As part of the WPA work, the gym was refurbished, play fields were rebuilt, a teacher's cottage constructed and the bus barn reconstructed. The project reportedly was started in January 1936 and was completed by May 1937. (National Archives, Record Group 69.) From photographic evidence, it appears the remodel of the school was completed by December 1936. (Northwestern Mutual Fire Association Record, December 1936) It is believed that the building was returned to its 1915 appearance.

Upon the completion of the work, the five lower grades of elementary school were returned to the newly remodeled building. (Mountaineer, 1938) The facility continued to be used for elementary school use until 1975.

In 1960-61, the Rainier School District built the multi-purpose room and classroom which are currently adjacent to the school building to the north and west to accommodate an additional enrollment population. It is believed that the play shed immediately to the west of the nominated school was built during this time as part of the enlarged elementary school facility.

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In 1974 another fire destroyed the 1933 brick high school, taking with it most of the school district records. Although a new elementary and a new high school were built in the location of the 1933 school in 1975, the nominated building was used for school purposes until the 1980s. Since that time, the school building has been used for storage. In the mid 1980s the original gymnasium was moved from its location adjacent to the school to a site on Michigan Street about a half-mile from the school yard. It was altered with new siding, windows and interior partitions for use as a senior center.

Currently, a group in the community, the Rainier Historical Society, are working toward its renovation of the nominated school as a community center, city hall and library. They received a \$1500 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2002 for emergency roof repair work and have received a \$20,000 Capital Heritage Grant from the Washington State Historical Society for full rehabilitation of the roof structure from the 2003 Washington State Legislature.

Historical Significance

MPD Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, under the Rural Public Schools in Washington from Early Settlement to 1945 MPD the document states that “a rural schoolhouse must strongly convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of rural community history” (pg. F.1).

The Rainier School meets the MPD requirements for the property type “school house”. Built in 1915 and rebuilt in 1936, the schoolhouse was constructed during the time period (1870s to 1945) designated by the MPD.

Criterion A:

The MPD States:

The schoolhouse is closely associated with all aspects ‘of public education in rural Washington. Often the first, sometimes the only, and probably the most important public building on the rural landscape, the schoolhouse served at once as a local reflection of the evolving common school system and a center of community life. Districts were established shortly after initial settlement and construction of the first and succeeding schools were important milestones in community history. In addition to its role as a center of education, the schoolhouse was frequently the site of public assemblies, civic celebrations, church services, and other important events. But most importantly, the schoolhouse reflected the widespread belief in the value of universal education. (pg. F. 1)

After statehood, rural schools increasingly adopted graded curricula, standardized programs, and consolidated facilities (particularly to accommodate high school classes). The evolution of graded curricula led to the construction of larger, hip roof structures with multiple classrooms. In the early 20th century as population increased, progressive legislators, state school superintendents, and normal school officials aggressively advocated standardized school design, better classroom facilities, fireproof construction, and facilities for physical education and teacher housing . But, during the depression, as some school districts curtailed construction of consolidated facilities, the WPA assisted in building a last group of distinctive rural public schools. These late rural schoolhouses are a significant harbinger of the role of the federal government in local education after mid- century. (pg. F. 4)

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RAINIER SCHOOL
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The Rainier School is and was an important public structure in the town and represents the changing economic and population of the town as it developed as a wood processing center, suffering setbacks from fires. The school changed in size as the population and education standards evolved in the town. It remained in use through the 1980s meeting the changing education needs of the district and is now slated for another community use.

Because of the ravages of fire through the town, little of the late 19th and early 20th century building fabric remains in Rainier. This school building is important because its history and appearance reflects the economic periods of the town of Rainier and educational practices statewide and locally through the 20th century. The school meets Criterion A in that it is associated with the broad pattern of events that have made a significant contribution to the development of the Town of Rainier. It meets the registration requirement in the MPD in that it has demonstrated historical significance within the context of Rainier history.

Criterion C

The MPD states:

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

In 1877, the territorial board of education established a format for graded schools and, by the turn of the century, the first multi-classroom schools were constructed in rural districts. These larger schools were hipped roof structures with rectangular or square plans and bands of large multi-paned windows. The front entry was often flanked by windows, adding a symmetrical formality to the school's appearance.

After 1900, the availability of pattern books and the recommendations of educators made the hipped roof schoolhouse the prevalent model in the state. A variation on the basic hipped roof building featured a cross gable element at the front entry. In some cases, as schools grew, a wing was added to the original block, forming an L or T shaped structure. Frequently a pedimented porch sheltered the entry.

Rural schools in Washington State were typically built of frame construction and clad in a variety of horizontal beveled and drop sidings. School buildings were roofed with cedar shingles (often replaced in later years with composition shingles). Early schools had wood post and pier or stone foundations; some later schools rested on concrete foundations. Trim included simple door and window frames, window sills and hoods, and sometimes a plain cornice, almost always executed in wood.

Rural schools were invariably built on a small scale, comparable in size to the other pivotal structures of rural community life--the church, grange hall, and general store. Although most schools were one story, some later schools were two stories and some had basements. The one room schoolhouse of the 19th century often gave way to the two or four room school at the turn of the century reflecting the expansion of graded curricula and the development of high schools in rural districts by 1910. (Schools, pg. F 2)

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The interiors of rural schools were simple in both plan and finish. Plaster and lath walls were trimmed with wood baseboards, wainscoting, chair rails, picture rails, and window and door surrounds. Blackboards were mounted to the classroom walls. Indoor facilities sometimes included a cloakroom, storage space, and (in larger schools) indoor plumbing. Schools with more than one classroom had a central corridor with one or two rooms to either side. In the largest schools, second floors or basement levels provided extra space. (Pg. F. 3)

The Rainier School is a good example of architectural style outlined in the MPD and so meets Criterion C. It is a hipped-roof structure with a cross gable with a vestibule porch at the front entry. Built of wood frame construction with a projecting porch it features a concrete foundation with bands of windows with common sills. The schoolhouse retains a high degree of integrity of massing, roof shape, exterior cladding and trim, and fenestration that convey the building's historic character from the 1936 period.

The interior retains the finishes identified in the MPD of wainscoting, window and door surrounds, blackboards and bead board. The interior arrangement of the school typifies that described in the MPD.

Significance

The school building meets the Criteria A and C for registration in the MPD "Rural Public School Buildings in Washington from Early Settlement to Present," as a building that conveys its historic character in both physical and associative ways. The building has demonstrated significance in the context of Rainier history. The school retains its integrity of scale, massing, roof shape, exterior cladding, finish work, trim and fenestration. The character defining elements of the windows, roof shapes and entry are intact. The building retains its interior integrity of floor plan, flooring, wall materials trim and blackboards. It remains its original location, although newer play sheds and school facilities have been built up around the structure.

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Personal interviews with members of the Rainier Historical Society.

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RAINIER SCHOOL
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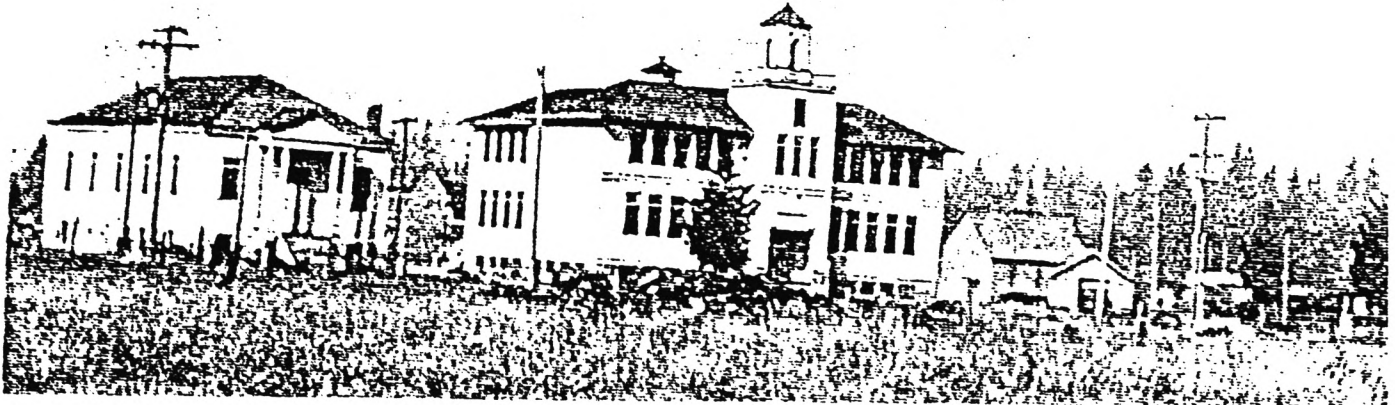
PHOTOGRAPHS

Exterior photographs taken by Rainier Historical Society, April 2003

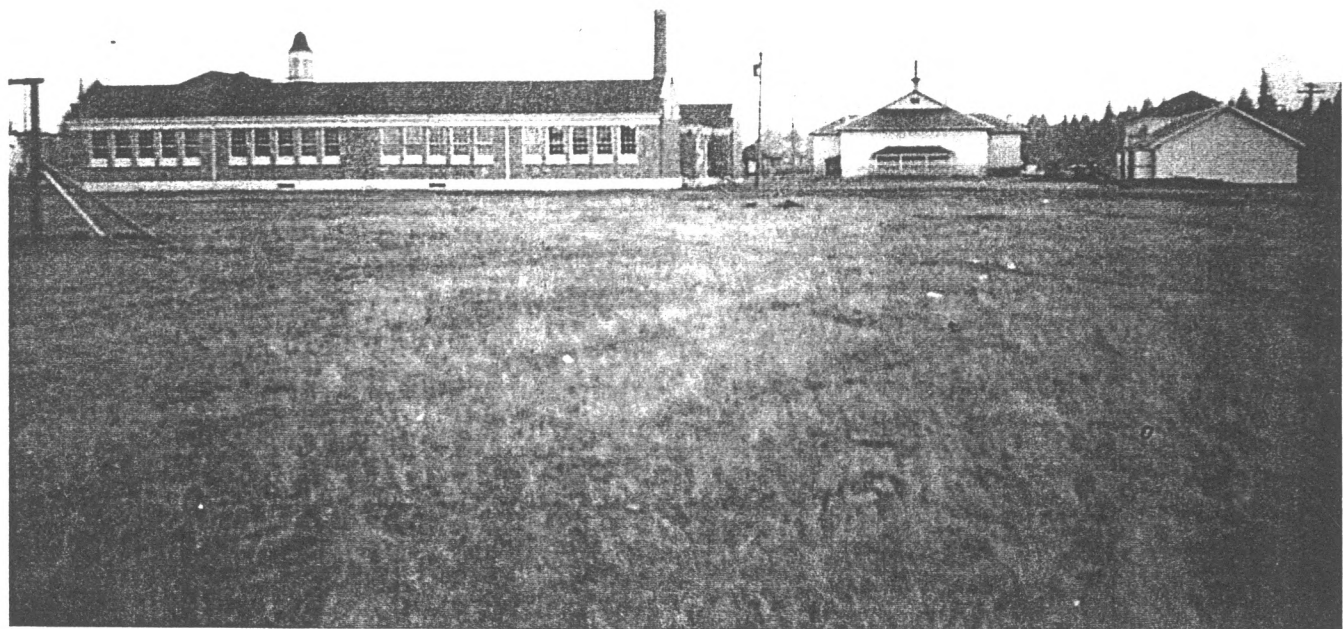
- Photo 1 of 8 Rainier School—Main Façade, NE
- Photo 2 of 8 Rainier School—SE Façade
- Photo 3 of 8 Rainier School—NW Façade
- Photo 4 of 8 Rainier School—Rear Façade
- Photo 5 of 8 Rainier School—NW Façade, front wing
- Photo 6 of 8 Rainier School—Interior woodwork
- Photo 7 of 8 Rainier School—Interior windows
- Photo 8 of 8 Rainier School—Interior finishes

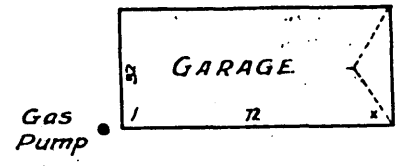
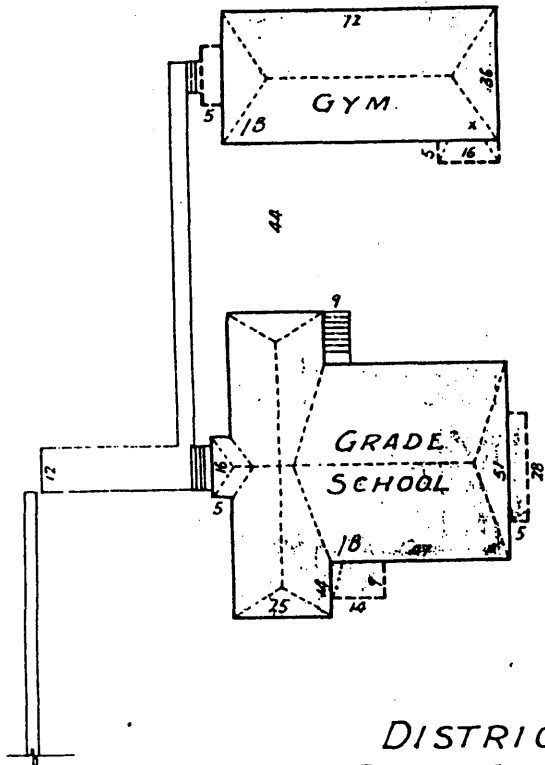
Additional Information

- Copy 1 of 10 View of Two Story Rainier School (center) gymnasium at left. ca. 1935 Rainier Historical Society.
- Copy 2 of 10 Rainier School band in front of school, 1920s. Rainier Historical Society.
- Copy 3 of 10 Rear View of nominated school with newer brick school at left and gym at right. December 1936 from Northwestern Mutual Fire Association, Seattle, WA, "School District #307 – Thurston Co. Washington. Rainier School." (Assessment of Thurston County Schools including site plans, photographs and statistical information.)
- Copy 4 of 10 Site plan of Rainier Schoolyard, December 1936. from Northwestern Mutual Fire Association, Seattle, WA, "School District #307 – Thurston Co. Washington. Rainier School." (Assessment of Thurston County Schools including site plans, photographs and statistical information.)
- Copy 5 of 10 Aerial view of Rainier, showing school yard at upper left, Rainier High School Year Book. 1952
- Copy 6 of 10 Rainier School front façade, Rainier High School Year Book, 1954.
- Copy 7 of 10 Rainier School (at left) and High School, Rainier High School Year Book, 1955
- Copy 8 of 10 Rainier Schools, 1963. Top: brick high school; Center: New classroom additions adjacent to nominated school; Bottom: Rainier School. Rainier High School Year Book, 1963.
- Copy 9 and 10 of 10 Upper and lower floor plans of Rainier School, drawn by Al Johnson. (Planned future uses identified)

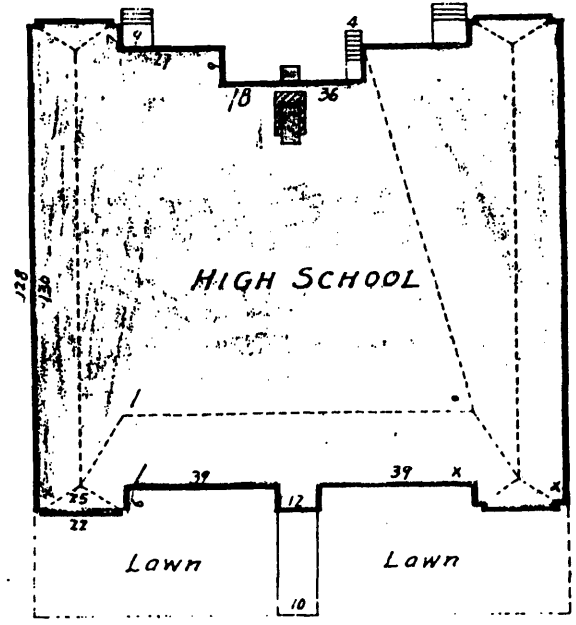


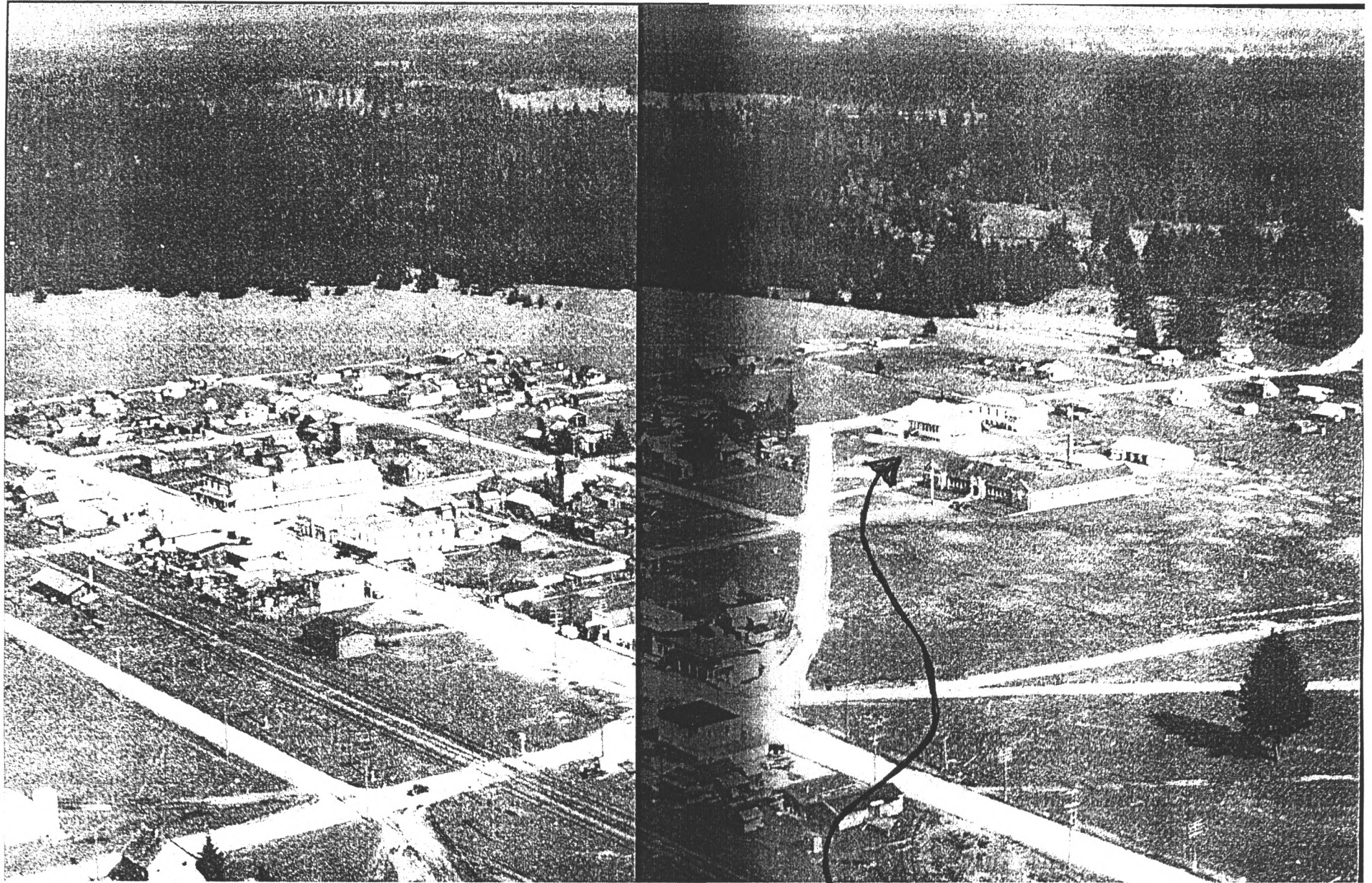




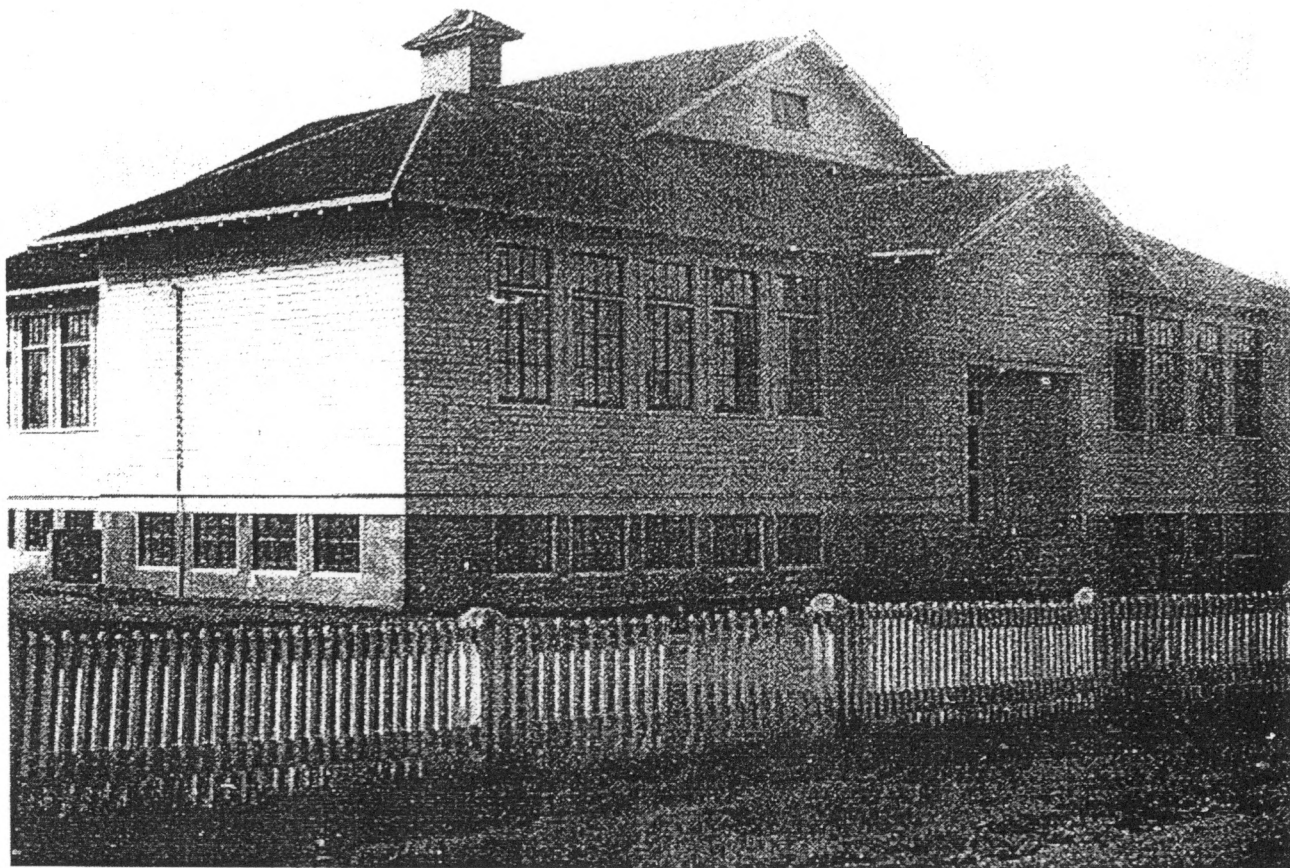


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 RAINIER SCHOOLS
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 HAROLD L. BEAN
 SEATTLE APPRAISER





RAINIER SCHOOL

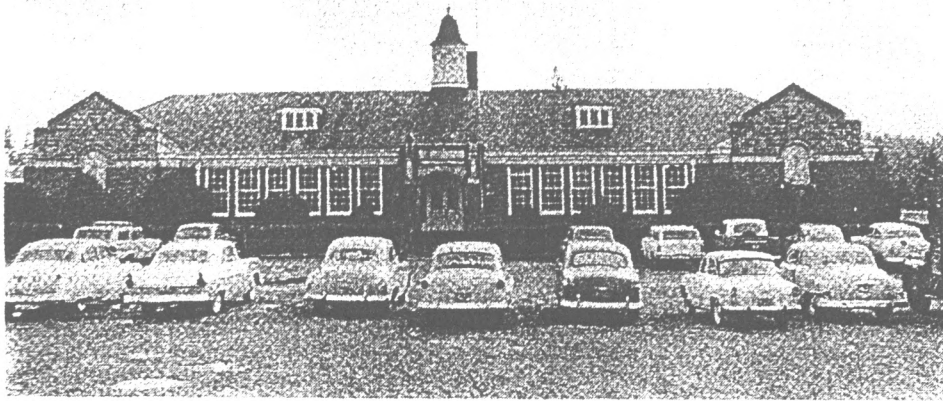


Rainier Grade School - Rainier 1954 annual

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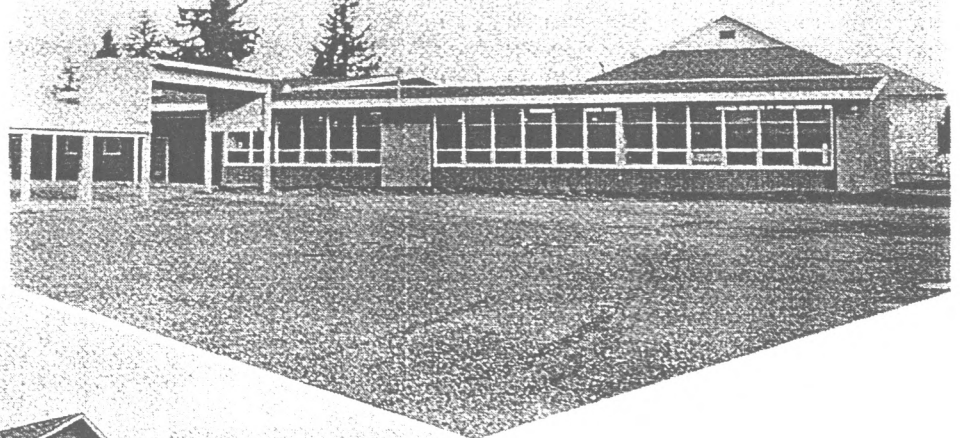


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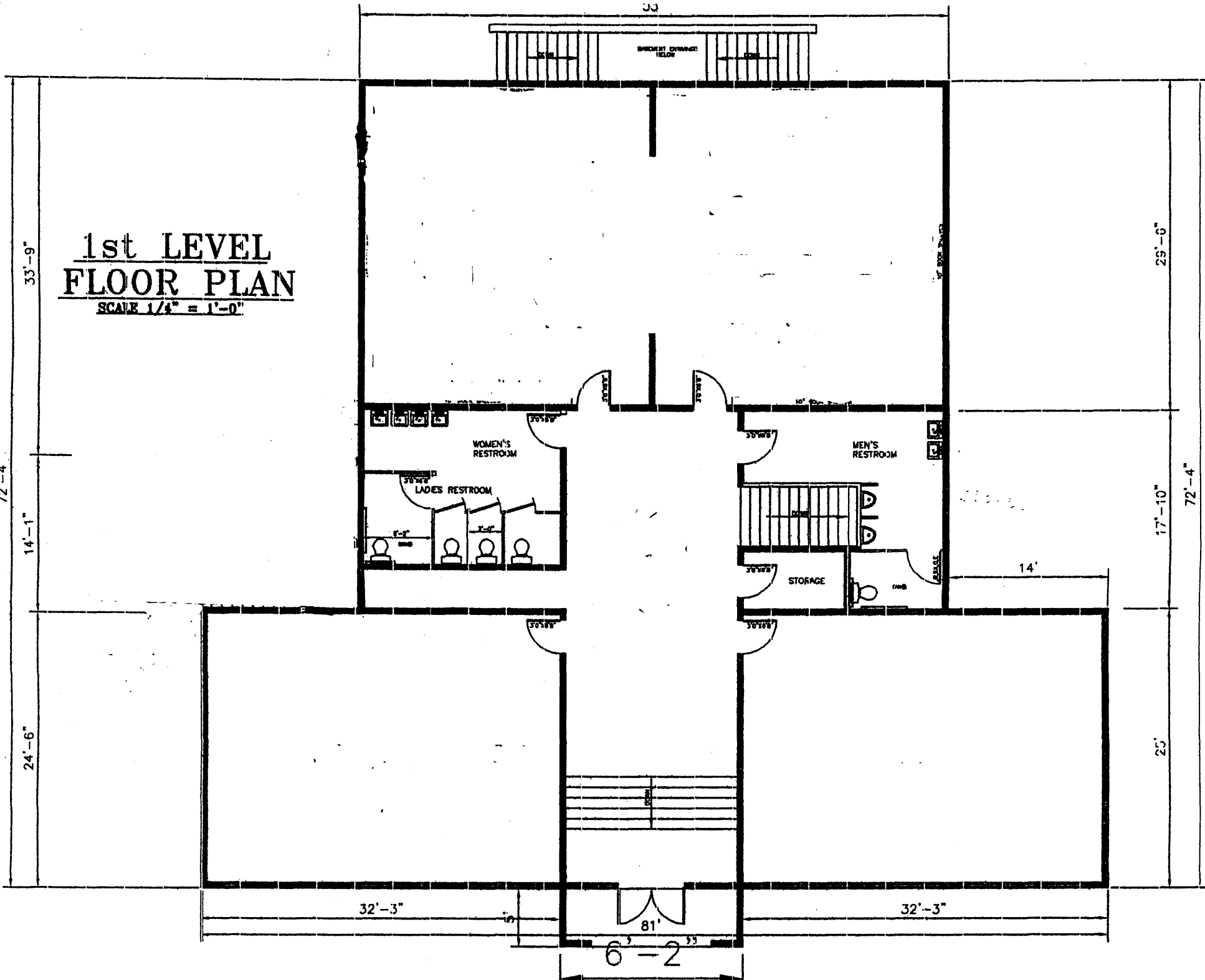


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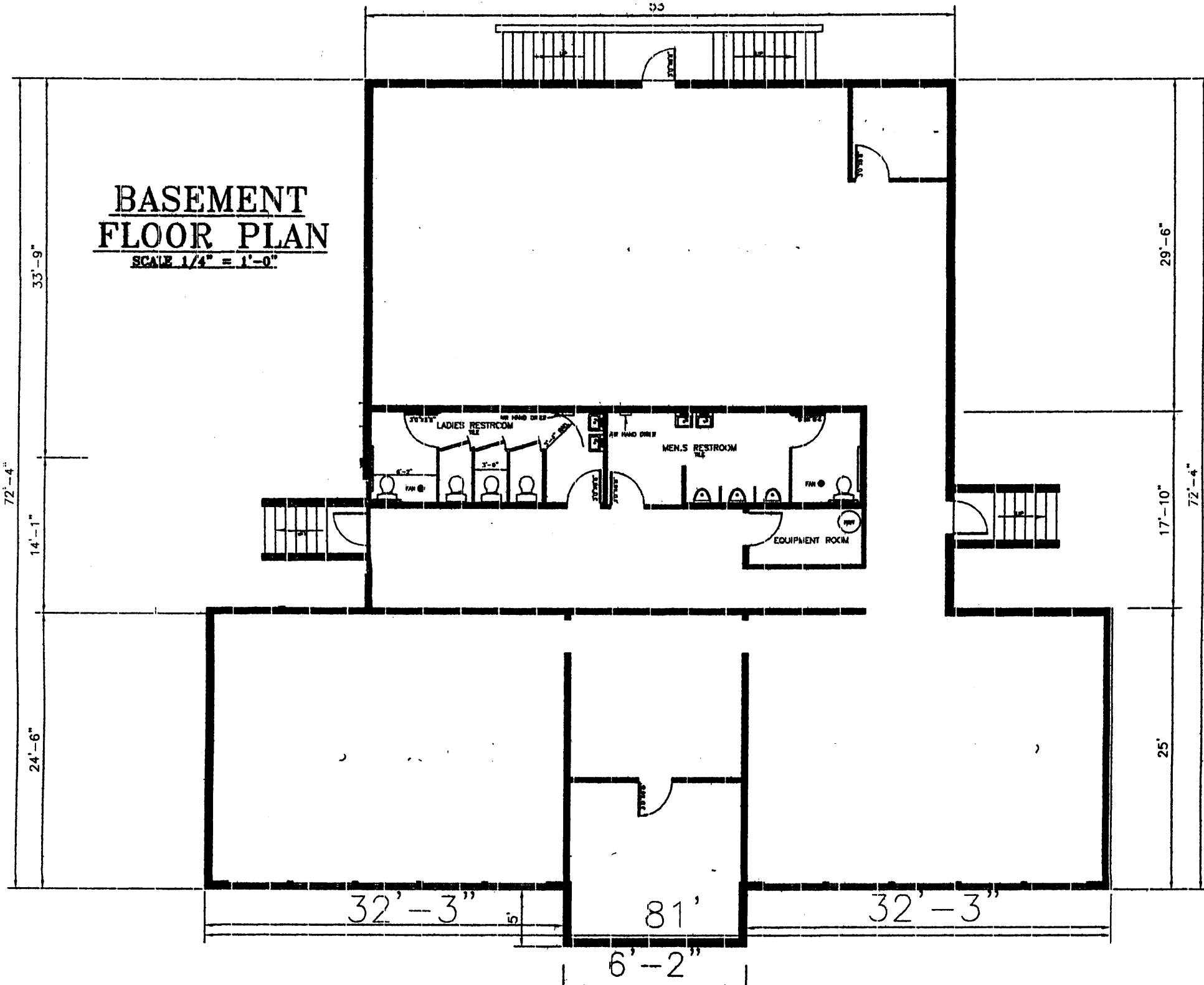


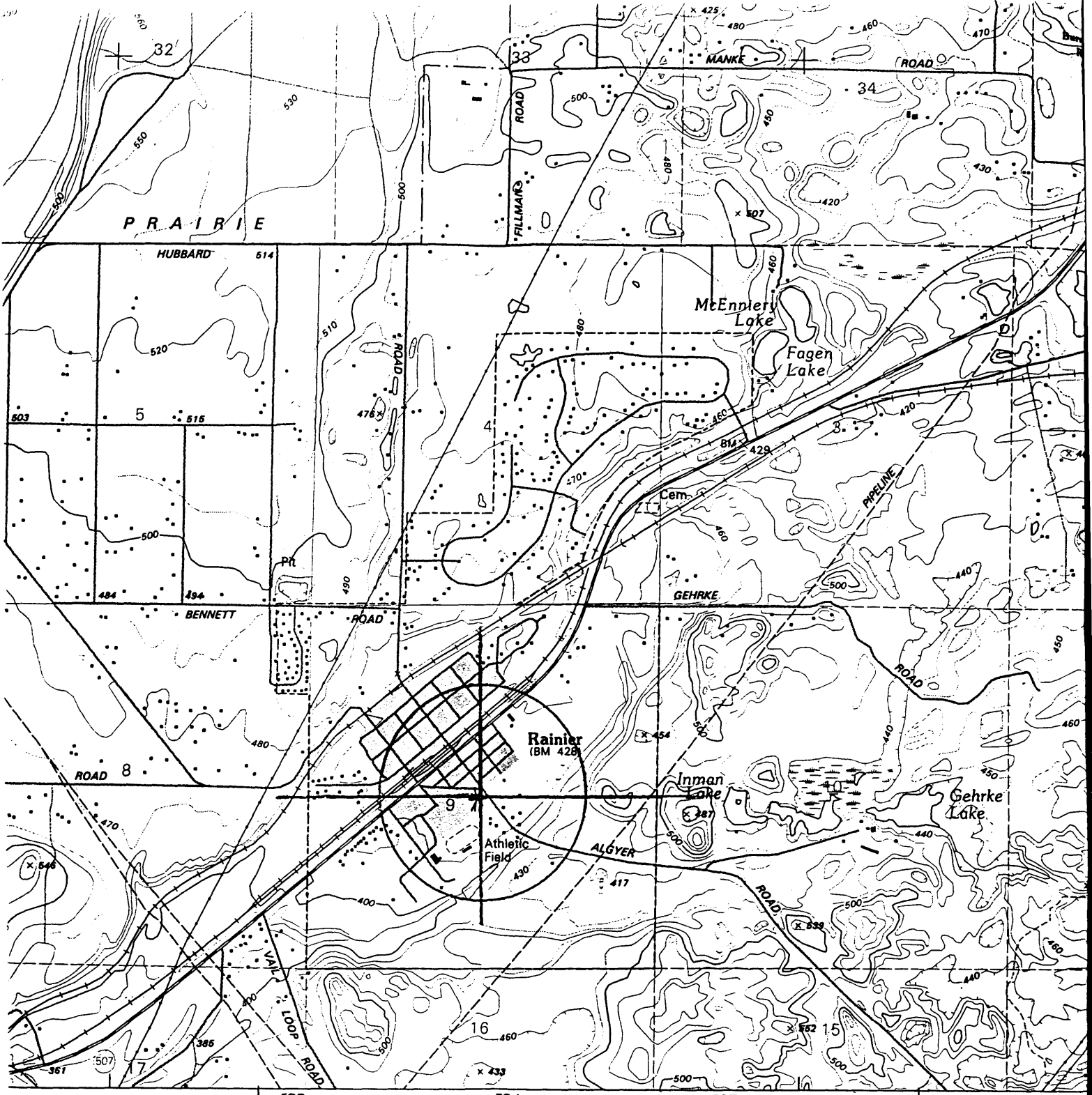
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BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

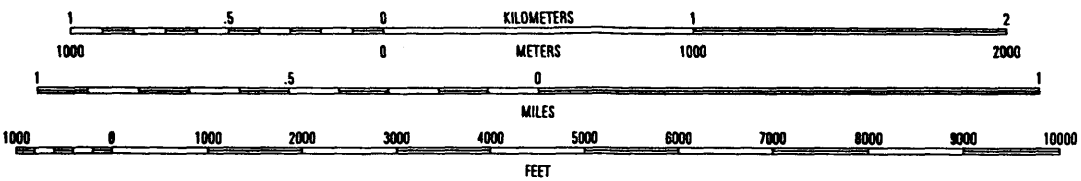
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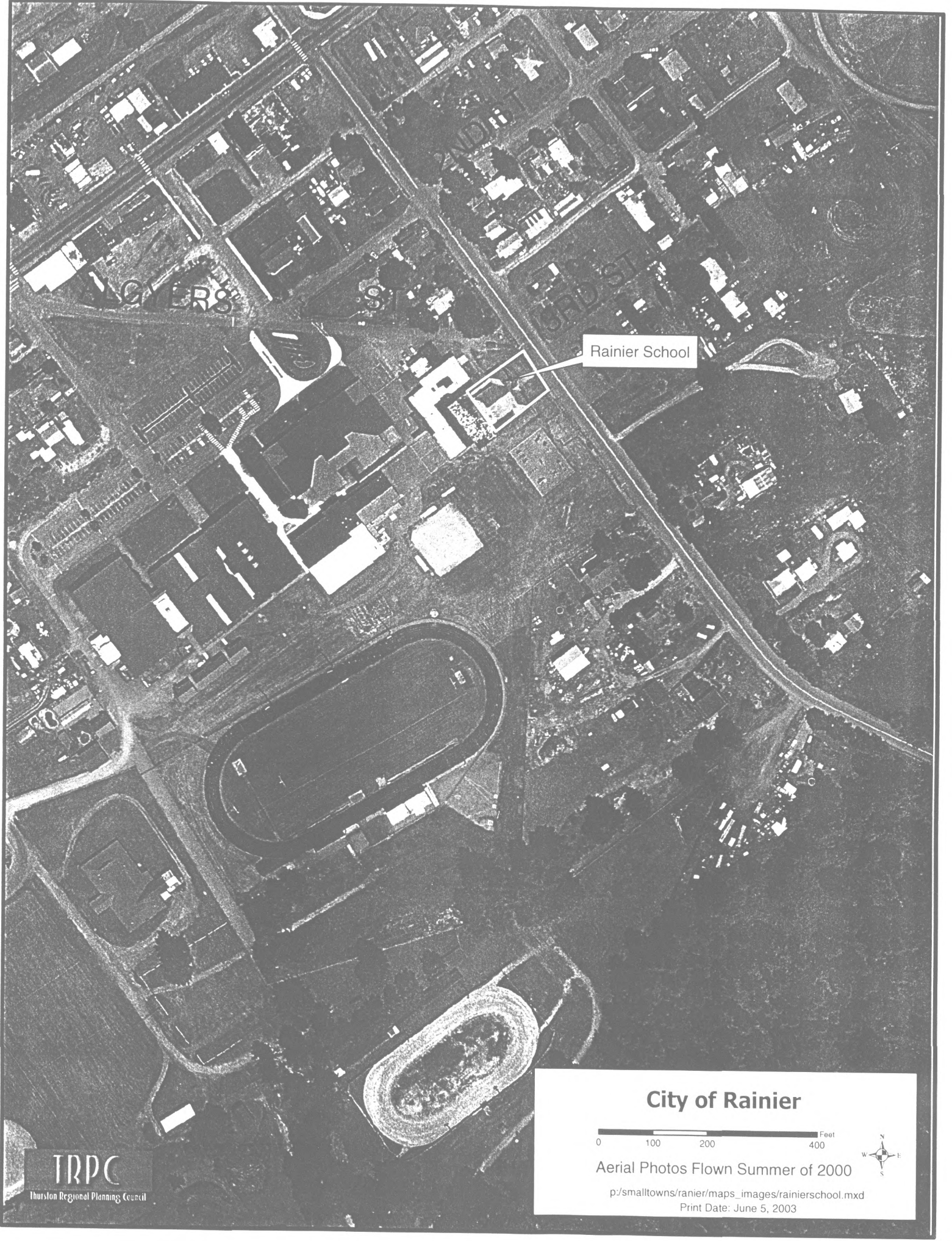
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Rainier School

City of Rainier

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Aerial Photos Flown Summer of 2000

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