



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Highlandville School

other names/site number Highlandville Village School

2. Location

street & number 3499 Highlandville Road

N/A	not for publication
X	vicinity

city or town Decorah

state Iowa code IA county Winneshiek code 191 zip code 52101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Dennis U. Bennett DSHPO 12/18/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Joe Eason M. Beall 2.5.14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Highlandville School
Name of Property

Winneshiek, Iowa
County and State

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	
1		buildings
		sites
2		structures
		objects
3		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education: school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture: music facility
Social: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Movements

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone: Limestone
walls: Wood: Weatherboard
roof: Asphalt
other: Brick

Highlandville School
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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Highlandville School is located adjacent to South Bear Creek on the north side of the unincorporated village of Highlandville. This school is situated in a picturesque setting removed from most development within Highlandville. Constructed in 1911 to replace a 1904 school that burned at this location, the school footprint occupies approximately 1,645 square feet on a .7 acre schoolyard. The school has a broad T-plan form with a rectangular main hip-with-ridge roof forming the top of the T and a central projecting gable-front forming the T's upright. A belfry is positioned on the projecting gable-front. The building has three rooms (two classrooms and one mudroom/coatroom), a basement, and an attic. The property also contains two privies. The school building retains most of its original elements, including the floor, plaster walls, construction materials, built-in furniture, bell, siding, limestone foundation, and chalkboard trays, just to name a few. Alterations have occurred including the removal of entrance stairs, the construction of a ramp, conversion to asphalt shingles, concrete repair to the basement walls, heating changes, and electrical upgrades. Alterations to the privies include reframing, siding repairs, and roof repairs. Overall, this property has not undergone significant alterations that detract from its location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, or association.

Narrative Description

See continuation sheets Section 7, pages 1-4.

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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.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1911-1964

Significant Dates

1911

1960

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The construction of the existing school (1911) through its use for education (1964) marks the period of significance. The period that this school operated is significant because for much of its history, it remained unconsolidated and because it served to educate a rural segment of the population at this time. The property reflects the period of significance because few alterations have occurred since its construction.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Highlandville School

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Highlandville School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria A and C for its local significance. The Highlandville School is associated with educational pursuits at the National and State levels (through legislative efforts) and at the local level as a way to educate rural Highland Township youth. Constructed in 1911, the building is a well intact example of how rural residents provided educational opportunities to students in an area of low population. The school stands as a reminder of Iowa's drive to promote knowledge, particularly in rural areas. The school operated independently until 1960 and finally closed its doors in 1964, avoiding most pushes for rural school consolidation in Iowa. This school is also eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C as a well-preserved and unusual example of rural schoolhouse architecture specifically designed for the needs of the village of Highlandville. Most of the schoolhouses that dotted the Iowa landscape (and Winneshiek County specifically) were small, rectangular one-room buildings with gable roofs. The Highlandville School is a larger than usual, two-room village school that is rare in Winneshiek County. Constructed in 1911, this school has a hip-with-ridge roof, a form that did not become popular for county schoolhouses until the 1920s. Belfries are also rare for schoolhouses in Winneshiek County with few examples preserved. This is the only single-story, two-room schoolhouse with a belfry in the county.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheets Section 8, page 5.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See continuation sheets Section 8, pages 5-15.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See continuation sheets Section 9, pages 16 and 17.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.7
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>607,620</u>	<u>4,810,785</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is located at Lot 1, NW¼, NW¼, NW¼, Section 34 and continues approximately 34 ft to the west into the NE¼, NE¼, NE¼, Section 33, T100N, R7W, Highland Township, Winneshiek County, Iowa. South Bear Creek bounds the property to the south. The western boundary is approximately 16 ft west of the school where the property abuts lands owned by the State of Iowa. The northern boundary is an access road that was functional during the period of significance and remains functional. The property line marked by overgrown trees sets the eastern boundary. Beginning at the northwest corner of the property (Zone 15; Easting: 607,608; Northing: 4,810,809), the boundary proceeds east-northeast for 202 ft, proceeds south to the stream bank 150 ft, proceeds west along the stream bank following an irregular course for 205 ft, and proceeds north 143 ft to the beginning point.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The basis for the boundaries is from historic aerial photographs and the property lines given by the Winneshiek County Assessor. The southern boundary is the current position of Bear Creek. The boundaries include the schoolhouse, privies, and historic schoolyard.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Branden K. Scott and Mark D. Irish
organization Bear Creek Archeology, Inc. date August 1, 2013
street & number P.O. Box 347 telephone (563) 547-4545
city or town Cresco state IA zip code 52136
e-mail Branden@bearcreekarcheology.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional Items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See Continuation Sheets Section Photo Log, pages 31–33.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

Highlandville School
Name of Property

Winneshiek, Iowa
County and State

Property Owner:

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

name Highland Township Trustees (c/o Dennis Karlsbroten)
street & number 3871 Locust Road telephone (563) 735-5765
city or town Decorah state IA zip code 52101

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Materials Continued;

Foundation: Concrete

Narrative Description

The Highlandville School appears much as it did when erected in 1911. This two-room schoolhouse retains all aspects of its integrity and has features that make it uncharacteristic of rural schoolhouses in Winneshiek County.

The Highlandville School property occupies .7 acres on the north bank of South Bear Creek, a small stream that cuts through the small unincorporated village of Highlandville (Figures 1 and 2). The school sits on a terrace overlooking this stream (Photo 1). A well-manicured lawn covers the schoolhouse property. This terrace area represents the schoolyard—the location for recess, teaching physical fitness, charitable events, and other functions that served to raise money for schoolhouse maintenance. The terrace gives way to steep, rugged, tree-covered karst uplands to the north. Also north of the school, a road used to access the schoolhouse and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) South Bear Creek Wildlife management area is present. A group of mobile homes is located east of the school. A narrow strip of trees separates the residential property from the school, masking the mobile homes throughout most of the year. Vegetation often camouflages South Bear Creek and a campground on the stream's south bank. West of the school is the unit headquarters of the IDNR South Bear Creek Wildlife Management Area. This headquarters consists of a small ranch house and a few accessory structures that are clearly visible from the school throughout the year. A gravel parking lot immediately west of the schoolhouse serves the IDNR management area. Overall, the Highlandville School resides in a relatively isolated context.

The property contains the schoolhouse and two privies (Figure 2). Based on historic aerial photographs an oval driveway appears between 1940 and 1952 (Figures 3 and 4). The two privies consist of poured concrete containment basins topped with small single-gabled wood structures (Photo 2). The structures have balloon framing covered with wood weatherboard. Asphalt shingles cover the side-gable roofs of each of these structures. The privy structures are 10' in height, 6' 4" long (east to west), and 5' 4" wide (north to south). The concrete retention basins measure 6' 4" wide (north to south) and 7' long (east to west). Due to continued usage, the depth of the privies remains unknown. Single incandescent light bulbs illuminate these structures. The privies were undergoing renovations at the time of documentation. Based on a 1940 historic aerial photograph (Figure 3), the active privy location matches the historic location. The continued use of these privies is the result of access panels on the backs of the structures (west side) that allow cleaning of the basins. It is unclear how much of the building materials associated with these privies are original. These privies are contributing resources because the locations of the structures have not changed since at least 1940.

The design of the Highlandville School reflects a desire for simplicity and for organizing/separating younger and older students. The school has a hip-with-ridge roof, open floor plan, built-in bookshelves, and utilitarian design (Figures 5 and 6). Wood weatherboard siding covers the exterior. Johnson (1986a) notes that most of the schoolhouses in Winneshiek County (and nearly all of Iowa) are of a bungalow type. The two-room village schools of the county differ in this regard in that they are either two-story or have a T-plan form. The Highlandville School has a broad T-Plan form, with a main hip-with-ridge roof section and a central projecting gable-front, similar to only the Burr Oak School in Winneshiek County. This design is nearly identical to the schoolhouse that burned at this location in 1910 (Figure 7). The belfry shape has elements consistent with rural church designs (trading steeple for belfry; Deiber and Beedle 2002, 8; Photo 5) as does the small round window at the gabled end of the building.

The building has a mostly laid-up limestone and mortar foundation, presumably the foundation of an earlier 1904 school that stood on this site (Johnson 1998, 250). The belfry occurs on the east façade supported by a front-gable roof, while the main part of the building has a hip-with-ridge roof. The chimney is set west of the belfry and

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exits the building on the front-gable. Asphalt shingles cover the roof. On the north façade there are four 1/1 double hung windows and a former coal chute in the foundation. White-painted plywood covers the chute and a Ford truck running board acts as flashing on the upper part of the opening. Concrete patches the north foundation around the coal chute and at a couple of other places. The schoolhouse entrance door is present on the north side and it retains the original hardware. A staircase and ramp leading to the school entrance are present on the building's north and east sides. The east façade has four windows. Near the northeast corner, a single, double hung window with 4/1 lighting occurs. In the center of the east side, two double hung windows with 1/1 lightings are present (Photo 4). Positioned above the larger windows is a small circular window. The window positioned near the southeast corner of the building is double hung with 4/1 lightings. Painted plywood covers an opening for a window on the foundation. The belfry has a steeply pitched, flared, four-sided tower roof covered with asphalt shingles (Photo 5). The belfry has four arched openings and it appears that the original bell remains in the tower. The east façade also includes an attached plaque documenting the construction date of the building as 1911. The south side of the building has four double hung 1/1 windows (Photo 6). The foundation walls have two operating 1/1 windows (Hopper style), the sills of which are deteriorating due to the closeness of the windows to the ground surface. An entrance door is located on the southeast side. This door retains the original hardware but there is no longer a staircase leading to this entrance. The west façade is similar to the other sides of the building (Photo 7). The foundation has two small 1/1 windows (Hopper style) in similar states of decay as those found on the south side. There are six 1/1 double hung windows on this side of the building, with three windows lighting each of the classrooms.

The building has balloon framing covered with plaster and lath. Cream-colored lead paint occurs throughout. Windows and incandescent, hanging lights provide illumination to the rooms. The electrical lighting reflects original installation. The mudroom/coatroom is the first room encountered when entering the school from the north door (Figures 8 and 9; Photo 8). Linoleum covers the floor. An attic access is present and the bell-pull dangles from the ceiling of this room. The access to the basement is located in the northeast corner. The room includes the original coat hook racks. On the west wall, two pine or fir doors, retaining their original hardware, enter the north and south classrooms. Transom windows present above the classroom doors also retain their original hardware including levers to open and close the windows. This room has an area of 244.0 square feet.

A 13' 10" set of pocket doors separate the north and south classrooms (Figures 8 and 9; Photo 9). The doors were swelled open at the time of documentation. Both classrooms have pine or fir floors. The north classroom has an area of 712.1 square feet. There are floor repairs for a hole created with the removal of a vent. In the northern part of the classroom, one of these floor vents is still present. The southeast corner of the room has a vent associated with an oil heater. Built-in bookcases are present in the southwest and northwest corners. These custom bookcases were part of the initial school construction, evidenced by the fact that the baseboard trim is unvarnished under/behind the bookcases. Original wooden chair rails surround the room and they support additional coat hooks and chalk trays. The baseboard trim (cut from pine) has a simple design with stacked moldings. This type of baseboard profile occurs throughout the school.

The south classroom essentially mirrors the north classroom in most notable aspects (Figures 8 and 9; Photo 10). The built-in bookcases reside in the southeast and northwest corners. The south classroom is slightly larger than the north classroom with an area of 795.4 square feet. There is an area of floor repair, presumably the location of another former vent, and a wood chair rail with a built-in chalk tray surrounds the room. A large gas heater occupies the ceiling of this room near the door into the mudroom/coatroom. Present in the northeast corner of the room is a vent that mirrors the vent found in the north room.

A wooden staircase leads from the mudroom/coatroom to the basement (Figures 10 and 11; Photo 11). Based on the exposed wall studs along the basement staircase, the studs are 1⁵/₈" x 3³/₄" pine, or the measurements of a typical 2" x 4" today, set 16" on center. The basement floor is concrete covered with silt deposits. 4" x 4" posts

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and a series of 6" x 8" posts set in concrete hold the floor. The floor joists are 2" x 8" boards set 16" on center. Reinforced floor joists are present. It is probable that the reinforcement happened in 1973. The subfloor consists of plank boards. A circuit breaker occupies the south wall. The brick chimney has rounded corners and it measures 1' 9" x 3' 6". Based on the coal chute on the north wall, it is clear that a coal furnace initially heated this structure. An oil-burning furnace (based on a few pieces of copper piping and venting system in the basement) replaced the coal furnace. Based on the identification on a motor, Auburn Burner Company of Auburn, Illinois constructed the furnace. The furnace was Model Z237, Serial #815. The building currently has propane/LP heat. There is no evidence that this building ever had running water. The west basement wall leaks, causing some puddles/wetness in the southwest corner. The basement has an area of 1,828.3 square feet.

A scuttle hole in the ceiling of the mudroom/coatroom allows access to the attic (Figure 12; Photo 12). The common rafters of the roof set 25" on center (unusual, but consistently measured in multiple locations). The rafters attach to the ceiling joists using 1" x 4" purlin bracing. The roof has no collar ties or strongbacks for support. Both the gabled roof and the hip-with-ridge roof have a 12" rise and a 12" run. The height of the hip-with-ridge roof is 19' 7" while the height of the gabled roof is 9' 2". Observable from the attic are cedar shingles covering the rafter/plank board system. The lapped ceiling joists are set 16" on center and vermiculite insulation fills the voids. There are no center joists.

Alterations

There have been few alterations to this building. The original 1911 design of the school remains intact and the building has no enclosed additions. The stairs leading to the south entrance are no longer present. Reinforcement of the floor occurred in 1973 to allow for local dances (La Crosse Tribune 1986). In 1989, local residents painted the interior and exterior of the school (Decorah Public Opinion 1989a). Following the school painting, the U.S. Army Reserves constructed a ramp and a staircase on the north and east sides (Decorah Public Opinion 1994). The ramp and staircase are not overly distracting and they reflect continued maintenance of the building instead of a significant structural change. Concrete reinforces the north foundation wall, plywood covers some basement windows, and the original limestone foundation has been tuck-pointed. Additionally, the running board of a Ford truck became flashing above the coal chute. Reroofing of the building occurred in the recent past, but the form of the roof remains unchanged and it appears the original cedar shingles are present underneath the asphalt shingles. On the interior of the school, the major changes have been associated with heating the building and providing electricity. These changes reflect the continued use of the building and many of these changes occurred during the period of significance (e.g. the change from coal to oil burning heat and the introduction of electricity). Because of continued usage as a community center, the school is in good condition. Renovations to the privies included shoring up the internal framing, replacing the exterior siding, and roof repairs.

Integrity

The location of this school has not changed since 1911. This school retains its location integrity.

There are minimal alterations to the property. These alterations have not disrupted the original design of the structure and the school retains its design integrity.

This property still appears as it did when it operated as a school, that is, there have been no significant landscape changes. Furthermore, the area around the school and the village of Highlandville has changed little since the property's use as a school. This property retains its setting integrity.

Although there have been a few repairs made at this school, these repairs have been relatively minor and the property retains most of the original materials. This property retains its materials integrity.

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Because of few alterations, the property exhibits the same workmanship as when the school was constructed. The few alterations do not overtly distract from the original workmanship. This property maintains its workmanship integrity.

Without question, this property feels like a village school property. One can clearly imagine a school day at this property between 1911 and 1964. This property retains its feeling integrity.

Based on the historic context in Section 8, this property retains its association with early rural education in Iowa and Winneshiek County because the residents of Highlandville have worked diligently to preserve this building (as originally designed) as an important aspect of their community.

Future Considerations and Plans

At present, there are no known plans to alter this property. It remains in the care of the Highland Township Trustees and there are no plans to sell the property. The property is likely to continue as a community center and a location for musical events and dancing.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

The Highlandville School property is eligible under Criterion A because of its relationship with rural school education in Iowa generally and Winneshiek County specifically (local significance). The first two-room schoolhouse was placed at this location in 1904 and it succumbed to fire in 1910, (Decorah Public Opinion 1905; Decorah Republican 1910). Constructed in 1911, the current Highlandville School matches the design of the original two-room schoolhouse that resided on this property (Figure 7). The building is a strong example of how rural residents met the need to provide public education to a dispersed population. Rural schools were the primary system of education in Iowa for over a century, educating more than a million young children. It is because of Iowa's rural school system that the State was able to boast the highest literacy rate in the United States by 1890 (Dreier 1998, 7). These schools are anchor institutions and keys to understanding the history and development of Iowa. These properties also served as community social and cultural centers (Gulliford 1984, 79; Host 2011, 10). The Highlandville School stands as an example of Iowa's early education system that was intent on providing knowledge to rural citizens of the State and it serves as a significant location of community (public and private) involvement in rural education in Winneshiek County. The property ties to legislative efforts providing education for Iowa's youth, it served as a location for local educational meetings, it was one of the last operating independent rural schools in Winneshiek County, and it signifies the focus rural Iowan's placed on educating the population. While most schools in rural Winneshiek County were one-room schoolhouses with mixed grades, the Highlandville School was one of the few schools that had graded classrooms. The school closed in 1964 due to school consolidation.

The Highlandville School is locally eligible for the National Register under Criterion C because it serves as an exceptional example of rural schoolhouse architecture, particularly two-room schoolhouses, which are noticeably less common than one-room schools in Winneshiek County. The building's broad T-plan form with a main hip-with-ridge section and a central projecting gable-front is one of two examples of a two-room, single-story school with this form, and the only example of this form with a belfry in Winneshiek County. Most of the schoolhouses in Winneshiek County (64%) are one-room schoolhouses, rectangular in layout, with gable roofs built from a wood frame (Johnson 1986a, 11). Based on Johnson's (1986a) research, hip and hip-with-ridge type schools did not appear until the 1920s in Winneshiek County. Deiber and Beedle (2002, 10-11) also state that hipped roof designs became popular in the 1920s due to influences of the Arts and Crafts and Bungalow Styles. The Arts and Crafts and Bungalow Styles seem to be defined by the previous researchers as a school with a relatively square footprint, hip roof, and porches (inset or projecting) supported by columns that resemble Arts and Crafts and Bungalow Style homes. As a result, the Highlandville School is an unusual architectural form in the county because it is a rural two-room schoolhouse constructed with a hip-with-ridge roof in 1911, earlier than this form occurred in one-room schoolhouses. As the current 1911 Highlandville School is a replica of the 1904 structure, this architectural type might be slightly earlier. As such, the Highlandville School might be the first school in Winneshiek County known to have these architectural elements (based on Johnson's [1986a] extensive survey). Most Winneshiek County rural schools do not have a belfry or two-door entries (Johnson 1986a, 13). The Highlandville School has both of these features, making it an oddity among Winneshiek County schools. With nearly all of the original architectural elements remaining, this building can certainly offer important information concerning rural schoolhouse design.

This nomination included no archeological survey. This property might yield as of yet unidentified archeological sites or features that could contribute to the significance of the property, particularly given its proximity to South Bear Creek. Furthermore, archeological remains of a log schoolhouse and associated privies that might have resided at this location could occur within the property boundary.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information

An understanding of the Highlandville School, and the importance that schools like it had to their communities, must begin with a foray into how rural and village schools were operated, how they differed from graded city schools, and how they were centers of social interaction. From there, a historical sketch of the evolving ideas and legislation relating to public education in America will show how such schools came to be and why they were crucial institutions cherished by the community. Such an understanding must also take into consideration the unique history and circumstances of Iowa's public educational system, the opinions that citizens held regarding their local schools and the challenges and solutions that arose after the inception of the rural schoolhouse era.

For the purpose of this document, the terms "rural school" and "country school" will be viewed as synonymous, defined as one or two-room schoolhouses which often were found at the center of four township sections. There also existed city schools, such as the schools in the city of Decorah, which served far more pupils than rural schools, had graded levels, and which had dozens of students at a time. Somewhere in between these two were the village schools, which were often their own district even before the era of independent districting. These schools, including the Highlandville School, may have taught around 20 students sometimes graded into two classes: younger students and older students.

To say that these rural schools were important institutions to the fabric of the Iowa community would be an understatement. They were the primary system of schools for Iowa's children for over a century, operating from 1830 until mid 1969 and educating over a million schoolchildren in that time. These schools fulfilled Thomas Jefferson's dream for an education system that could enlighten the common citizen and help democracy thrive (Dreier 1998, 7). Students at these schools learned civic responsibility, moral values, as well as how to read and write, reducing Iowa's illiteracy rate to the lowest in the Nation by 1890 (Dreier 1998, 7). They were so important that they form anchor institutions, similar to the Spanish missions of California, which are key to understanding the history and future development of either state, as both were the social and cultural center of a community (Host 2011, 10). Schools fulfilled not just the need for a formal education, but they were also the voting center, a place of entertainment, a place where people could obtain the latest news, and also a place where neighbors could gather and socialize (Deiber and Beedle 2002; Gulliford 1984).

As William H. Dreier (1998, 3) notes, "The most common picture of the Iowa country school is a white wood-frame building sitting alone on about one acre of land, beside a dirt road, surrounded by a fence with fields or timberland beyond." Unlike some stereotypes, this one rings true, as residents constructed most rural schools from wood, painted them the quintessential white color, and placed them on an acre of land donated by a local farm family. The idea behind the location of these schools was that they occupy areas near the center of four township sections, which were each one square mile. This way, no student was required to walk more than a few miles to school, important in an age before mechanized transport. Around 1900, a section of land often had five families farming on it, meaning a school could serve up to 20 families, each of which would often have several children that needed to be educated (Dreier 1998, 5).

Many histories of rural schoolhouses exist and they contain great information about the day-to-day life of rural schoolteachers and students. However, a better source of information is the teachers themselves, who have had their stories recorded by avid chroniclers. Researcher Steve Johnson, as part of his 1986 survey of rural schoolhouses, interviewed 18 teachers who taught in Winneshiek County, many of whom attended the schools that they later served. Their recollections give important and vivid first-hand information regarding what daily schedules and lives were like for both students and teachers.

At rural schools, the day often began at 9:00 am, with students entering the building after milling about outside if the weather was favorable. Dorothy Gertrude Emmons notes "Coats and caps were hung on hooks in the large

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entry except in cold weather when we hung them on hooks at the back of the room. Lunches were carried from home in syrup or tobacco pails" (Johnson 1986b, 11). After entering the school, many teachers recount that students began the day's education saying the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the National Anthem (Johnson 1986b, 5).

Because many of these rural schools taught students from the ages of seven to 21, there were often many variously skilled students educated in the same room. Ruth Allen notes that preparation for the day's lessons "usually included more lengthy assignment for upper grade students to work on while they waited their turn for class. Lower grade classes were held first; then they would be given assignments to work on" (Johnson 1986b, 5). Emmons adds, "Classes were from 10–15 minutes. Often there would be only 1 person in a class" (Johnson 1986b, 14). Nora Aslaksen Gossman relates that these classes included "reading, arithmetic and spelling every day...there were workbooks for geography, languages and maybe history" (Johnson 1986b, 34). She also notes that on Friday afternoons there would be art and music class, and once a month there would be a spelling bee or geography match, with similar experiences shared by many other teachers. Of course, no school day is complete without every student's favorite subject, recess. Teacher Lorraine Houck recounts "There was a morning and afternoon recess each day for at least fifteen minutes and a half hour at noon" (Johnson 1986b, 51). This recess took the place of a formal physical education class and schoolchildren often played a variety of games, including softball, pom-pom-pull-away, prisoner's base, anti-I-over, or tag. For ball games, Emmons notes, "the ball was often a homemade one made with a pebble in the middle wrapped tightly with rags wound around it and sewed tightly. For a bat, a board or a large tree branch was used" (Johnson 1986b, 12). This serves to highlight the financial situation of these rural schools; they had no playground equipment or large library. Instead, the schools relied on whatever the parents or teacher could provide for the students and frequently held fundraisers. Ellen Thompson notes that her school relied on the Winneshiek County library because of their very small school library (Johnson 1986b, 70). Many teachers note that school often ended at 3:30, but in cases of a longer recess, dismissal would push to 4:00 p.m.

These schoolhouses were more than just educational buildings occupied for seven hours a day. They were keystones for the community, and many local activities occurred at the neighborhood rural school. School programs happened once a year, usually around Christmas, with a stage installed in the front of the classroom. Houck notes, "The programs were always well attended. We made money at these socials by selling chances on blankets...by auctioning off baskets of food, and also with an admittance price at the door. The proceeds were used to purchase school supplies" (Johnson 1986b, 49). These included playground balls and bats, a water cooler, some flashcards, and storybooks (Johnson 1986b, 54). The schools also held other events. There was an end of the year picnic or potluck at the schoolhouse, with all of the families attending to celebrate another successful school year. It is quite amazing how many of the rural teachers make note of these two events, no matter how short their other recollections might be, and they were clearly important parts of what it meant to attend a rural school.

All of the teachers interviewed by Johnson (1986b) conclude their stories with notes of pride in the rural school system, remarking how it brought communities together and how the teachers knew each student personally. To this day, Iowans take pride in their long tradition of education, with its roots securely grounded in the rural school system. When tasked with coming up with a design for the 50 State Quarters Program, they chose "Foundation in Education" as the inscription on the reverse, which also features a Grant Wood painting of a one-room schoolhouse and a teacher and students planting a tree.

Iowa's rural education system is rooted in Colonial and territorial laws that provided public assistance to educational pursuits. The first law enacted pertaining to public education funding was the Old Deluder Satan Law of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1647 (Johnson 1986a, 1). In this law, each township having greater than 50 householders was to appoint someone within the town to teach children reading and writing. In 1776, Thomas

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Jefferson introduced legislation to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia entitled the Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge (Dreier 1998, 3). The acquisition of knowledge was at the forefront of this bill, allowing all people, regardless of economic standing, the ability to receive some form of education partially at public expense (Bremner 1970, 214). Furthermore, this bill required three aldermen from each county to make county divisions creating schools. The Continental Congress' Land Ordinance of 1785 implemented this bill, which not only organized lands west of the 13 original colonies, but also set aside Section 16 of every township for the maintenance of public schools (Alexander and Alexander 2011, 77). The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 further documented the importance of public education, stating, "...schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" (Alexander and Alexander 2011, 77). These acts of legislation set the groundwork for the widespread adoption of public education in America. As Dreier (1998, 3) notes, "These principles were extended to the Louisiana Purchase territory from which Iowa became a state in 1846."

Other acts of legislation across the fledgling Nation had an important impact on the development of schools in Iowa. The Territory of Michigan, to which Iowa was attached in 1833, passed laws between 1827 and 1833 that "provided for the organization of school districts, the employment of teachers, the levy of taxes for the erection of school buildings, and for school trustees to take care of school lands" (Swisher 1939, 282). It would appear that these laws remained in effect even after the Territory of Iowa was established, and would be important guides for education after statehood. Massachusetts continued to be a driving force in public education policy, when in 1837 it was the first state to create a State Board of Education. Its first secretary, Horace Mann, a man who would later be called by some the "Father of the Common School Movement," pushed for "centralized school systems, establishment of high schools, increase in teachers' salaries and formation of our Nation's first state schools for teachers" (Johnson 1986a, 1). In 1852, Massachusetts was again a vanguard in education policy, becoming the Nation's first state to require compulsory attendance. It stipulated that students attend school for at least twelve weeks a year, with at least six of them consecutively.

In the post-Civil War era, the urban centers of America experienced rapid growth, compelling educators to devote most of their time and effort to the needs of city schools. However, by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, they were becoming acutely aware of the shortcomings of rural schools (May 1956, 1). As May (1956, 4) notes, "by the early 1900's, however, rural isolation was being reduced by a vast railroad network, better roads, the telephone, and rural mail delivery...Distances had shrunk, and institutions once prized now seemed inadequate." The justifications for the consolidation of rural schools were numerous and echoed across the county. For one, the consolidation of several small rural schools into one larger school allowed for a wide area to pool its resources instead of spreading them out over several smaller schools. Because of this larger resource pool, as well as the increased enrollment at a centralized school, the consolidated schools could opt for graded levels instead of placing students 14 years apart in the same classroom. It also allowed for a wider range of taught subjects. Consolidated districts hired instructors to teach specific subjects instead of forcing teachers to be a jack-of-all-trades. Consolidated schools also allowed for the creation of high schools, which expanded the educational horizons of students who otherwise would be limited to an eighth grade education. Consolidated country schools also permitted for improved salaries and conditions for teachers, allowing rural schools to compete with city schools for talented teachers.

Consolidation in the United States first became a possibility in 1869, after Massachusetts authorized the use of public funds to transport students to school (May 1956, 11). It was six years later, in 1875, when consolidation was first attempted, "when three rural schools near Montague, Massachusetts were closed and students transported to a centrally located building" (May 1956, 11). Consolidation later spread to the Midwest in 1889, when Indiana followed Massachusetts' lead and allowed for the transportation of students at public expense. By 1914, Indiana had 655 consolidated schools, while Ohio had 539 consolidated schools by 1916. By 1920, an estimated 65,000 districts across the country had closed their doors because of consolidation (May 1956, 11). Consolidation would continue into the 1960's, eventually spelling the demise of the rural school system. Iowa's

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schools were not immune to this consolidation, and the rural school system would eventually fall by the wayside.

The humble country schools of Iowa came from equally humble beginnings. The first school in Iowa was located near the confluence of the Mississippi and Des Moines Rivers, in what is now Lee County. It was there in 1830 that Dr. Isaac Galland, a merchant, postmaster, land speculator, and doctor, founded a settlement, and established a private country school where parents paid the tuition (Dreier 1998, 3). Dr. Galland hired a teacher from Kentucky, Mr. Berryman Jennings, who taught students in the one-room log cabin that served as their school. This type of setup was common for the schools that sprang up in Iowa over the next few years, where professional teachers would open schools supported by tuition, often in the residence of the teacher or in a rented room. In rural settings, the community often provided a schoolhouse; commonly made out of logs and equipped with only the most basic furniture (Swisher 1939, 283). The year 1836 saw the establishment of several more schools, at which time Robert Lucas, first governor of the Iowa Territory, arrived. Upon his arrival, the Governor was dismayed at the dearth of public schools in the territory (Wall 1978, 185), a problem he would try to remedy.

For several years after the Governor's arrival, erection of schools in Iowa continued at the initiative of each community without government assistance. Many poorer areas offered no educational opportunity to their children. Taxation did not support schools and school enrollment did not include all children. In 1838, heeding the wishes of Governor Lucas, the first Territorial Assembly established a system of common schools. It was approved by the Governor on New Year's Day, 1839, and it declared that there should be a common school established in each county which should "be open and free for every white citizens between the ages of four and twenty-one years" (Swisher 1939, 285). The legislation called for the election of three trustees, a clerk, a treasurer, an assessor, and a collector who would be responsible for building a schoolhouse and levying a school tax.

Initially, few communities took advantage of the new ability to create public schools. Swisher notes that "Action forming public school districts was probably retarded because the counties had not yet been subdivided into civil townships" (Swisher 1939, 287). This first attempt to create a robust system of public schools had little effect on the expansion of such institutions. It seems that legislators were skeptical of the bill as well, as two days after approval, they authorized appointment of a special committee to study school legislation (Swisher 1939, 287). After Governor Lucas, a member of the committee, studied the issue at length, he suggested the adoption of the school laws of Michigan, and the legislature approved the motion. Perhaps the most lasting effect of the law was that it laid the responsibility of creating school districts on townships, instead of counties, and provided for the election of three school inspectors from each township. The district voters met at an annual meeting and decided important policies such as the location of the schools and the authorization of taxes to pay for them. Swisher (1939, 291) notes, "As soon as civil townships were organized school inspectors were duly elected. The development of public education thus depended upon the local demand for township government."

In 1858, tuition schools (which constituted the majority of establishments in the State) converted into free schools on the recommendation of Horace Mann. In 1856, Mann headed a commission "to study and report on Iowa's educational needs" (Dreier 1998, 4; May 1956, 4). Many of his suggestions found their way into Iowa's second constitution, such as the concept of using property tax to fund schools. This system of locally funded and locally controlled school districts would "remain the basis of Iowa's educational system for nearly a century" (Dreier 1998, 4). The floodgates of rural school creation opened. The districts created from all of this legislation were either town independent districts or township districts. Townships could now create sub-districts, usually nine, and each with its own school. These sub-districts elected a director who had supervision over his school, and made up the township school board with the other directors (May 1956, 4).

Growing demand by rural citizens for total local control in school affairs and the desire to have independent rural districts identical to township districts would soon turn the system of school management upside-down. In 1872,

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the 14th General Assembly passed a measure allowing sub-districts, by majority vote of the township, to form independent districts. A three-member board, a secretary, and a treasurer now served districts previously served by one director (Dreier 1998, 4). This new system only served to increase inefficiency and create waste. Township school officers could total 36 to 45, up from at most nine in the previous system (May 1956, 5). Henry Sabin, Iowa's Superintendent of Public Instruction, noted "one man out of every three you meet is a school officer, acting as such in some capacity, and the other two only waiting until the next election" (May 1956, 5). This ability to go from sub-district to independent district was limited after a few years, but not before an explosion in the number of independent districts. The number of independent districts rose from 400 to 2,026 between 1872 and 1874. By 1900, it had risen to 3,686 (May 1956, 5). Although it provided greater self-control of school issues, the tiny rural independent district received hardly any benefit. Additionally all local problems did not meet immediate resolution, as issues such as schoolhouse location continued to be a point of contention. School placement conventionally occurred at the center of the four sections in the district, but the wishes of a dominant family might lead to the relocation of a school. This might anger the parents of other students and cause rifts in the small rural districts.

The year 1901 might be the peak of the rural school system in Iowa. It was then that Iowa obtained the maximum number of one-room schools at 12,623, which was also the most nationally at that time (Dreier 1998, 5). However, as farm machinery improved, farms got larger and the size of each family reduced. Continuing the trend since the Civil War, many families moved from their rural lifestyle to an urban surrounding, depopulating the countryside, and beginning the age of consolidation that was to be a defining era in the history of country schools.

The consolidation movement in Iowa began in 1897, when the new school code granted directors to arrange for the transport for students between schools in cases where it would save on expenses to the district (May 1956). The first school consolidation took place that same year in Buffalo Center. Having created a township independent district two years prior, the town decided to close some of its rural schools and bring pupils to a new central school after the new code permitted transportation (May 1956, 18). The consolidation question was certainly at the forefront of the minds of educators in Iowa, as by 1901, the State Superintendent was devoting 70 pages of his annual report to the issue of school consolidation. Consolidation continued to be controversial, with many early successes by its proponents equaled by defeats. Many townships voted against consolidation. In other areas, a few central schools attempted transportation for a few years before deciding to return to the previous system (May 1956, 26). Early consolidations happened slowly, and by 1910, consolidated schools accounted for 108 schools, with 12,503 rural schools still in existence. As May (1956, 27) notes, "...it was plain that consolidation was not solving the rural school problem."

Legislation passed in 1913 dramatically increased the rate of consolidation through financial incentives. This legislation allowed that consolidated schools offering vocational and industrial courses could receive aid from the State, which was enough to stimulate interest in consolidation in locales that had previously resisted the move. By the fall of 1921, 439 consolidated districts had been established (May 1956, 30). Word of mouth was also assisting rural school consolidation. Once these central schools had demonstrated their value, others in the vicinity were convinced that consolidation was the right move. Evidence for this occurs in the clumping of consolidated districts, such as the 28 consolidated districts, comprised of 700 square miles, centered on Marathon Consolidated School (May 1956, 30). All the while, state superintendents continued to be proponents of consolidation, often traveling great distances to try to drum up support.

As might be expected, many rural Iowans who enjoyed control over their school were often strong opponents of consolidation, especially at areas that before had voted to form independent districts. For the most part, farmers often resented those who were working to alter the traditional system of rural education, especially since people often perceived educators as being preoccupied with the city and ignoring the successes of the country schools. Votes on the consolidation of schools were often very close, and legal battles frequently raged after tallying the

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final vote. At times, consolidation votes were attempted two or three times, with removal of areas with the strongest opposition from the proposed new district in subsequent votes (May 1956, 43). Over time, the successes of consolidated schools were their own greatest proponent. It is noted that "no district that erected a consolidated school ever voted to return to the one-room schools" (May 1956, 45).

While the consolidation movement in 1920 appeared to be a stone that would keep rolling, it came to an abrupt halt in late 1921. The best explanation of the sudden halt is the agricultural depression, which caused produce prices to drop sharply, which in turn caused land values to plummet (Dreier 1998, 5). The tax burden of district schools became heavy for farmers. Dreier (1998, 5) also proposed that consolidations might have halted regardless of the price crash, as farmers had decided that the financial burden of support for consolidated schools in an urban setting fell too heavily on the rural residents. It was far cheaper in this climate to maintain the system of country schools than to raise property taxes and build new schools. The status quo was maintained for quite some time, with the number of organized districts remaining static between 1922 and 1953, dropping only slightly from 4,639 to 4,558 (Dreier 1998, 6).

However, the squeeze on farmers was not to last, and better fortunes in agriculture revived the school consolidation movement. After World War II, land prices were increasing, the number of farmers was decreasing, and many roads became paved allowing for cheaper and more efficient transportation of students. Across the State, country school numbers began to diminish, and one-room schools became a major political and educational issue (Dreier 1998, 6). Pressure began to mount, and there were fewer and fewer farmers and rural students to fight it. By 1953, Iowa school law required that each non-high school district had to join a district with a high school by 1962. Two years later, legislation passed that dictated the closure of all country schools by June 1, 1966. However, this did not solve all problems, as the depopulation of rural areas continued to be a strain on even consolidated schools.

Nonetheless, some resistance remained, and in 1962, the General Assembly had to pass legislation "to allow the state to assign any unattached district to a high school district not done voluntarily by 1967" (Drier 1998, 7). By the deadline, only 19 districts remained unassigned. Not all schools closed, as the Iowa Code provided exemptions for schools operated by religious groups, most notably the Old Order Amish, who in 1998 still operated 28 rural schools, while other groups, including the Beechy Amish, New Order Amish, Mennonites, and others operated another 12 schools (Ericksen 1998, 24).

Charles H. Sparks' (1877) history of Winneshiek County relates the story of the establishment of its first school. Sparks, under the employ of the Decorah Republican, collected his historical information in the form of documents and first-hand accounts as he traveled across the county. He writes, "As early as 1835, Rev. D. Lowery, the man who afterwards established the Old Mission, conducted a school of like nature near the mouth of the Yellow River...In 1842 Mr. Lowery...received instructions from the Government to form a Mission and farm on the reservation, for the education of the Indians in husbandry and the English language, in hopes of civilizing and morally benefitting them" (Sparks 1877, 3). Since the mouth of the Yellow River is outside the boundaries of Winneshiek County, the 1842 school stands as the earliest established in the county. According to Alexander (1882), construction of the first public school occurred only a few years later. He writes, "It is worthy of note that the first public school building was built at the corners of the following townships, Decorah, Springfield, Glenwood, and Frankville, in the center of a Norwegian settlement...In 1852, principally through their efforts, a small, unpretentious log-school house was built at the corners" (Alexander 1882, 125). These log structures are reminiscent of Iowa's first school constructed by Dr. Isaac Galland and it has been noted "pioneer schoolhouses were usually constructed of logs and equipped with only the rudest kind of furniture" (Swisher 1939, 283).

From there it is uncertain when construction of many of the county's rural schools occurred because the records from the county superintendent are often fragmentary and incomplete. It does appear that construction of schools

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happened rapidly throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and early parts of the twentieth century. Statistics published in the Decorah Public Opinion indicate that there were 129 schools in 1933 (including the Highlandville School; Decorah Public Opinion 1933). The last rural schools constructed in Winneshiek County were Canoe #3, Canoe #5, and Pleasant #1 between 1946 and 1947 (Johnson 1986a, 12). At the peak, there appears to have been between 145 and 160 schools operating in Winneshiek County.

Strong opinions concerning school construction and operation signify the importance of schools for nineteenth and early twentieth century Winneshiek County residents, as evidenced by editorials submitted to local newspapers. One editorial published in August of 1865, praises Decorah, the county seat, for its beautiful scenery and robust industry. However, the author notes, "there is one thing...which the residents never mention to strangers—namely the school house" (Decorah Republican 1865). The author goes on to posit that it is no wonder children hate going to school, which is such a disagreeable place, and he pitied the teachers for laboring in such gloom. Clearly, the school was something that members of the community took seriously, and the shame incurred by such a poor schoolhouse was a subject and position that the author knew others would support. Apparently, fortunes later turned for the schools of Winneshiek County, as on October 4, 1894, the Decorah Republican ran a story about a new schoolhouse built in West Decorah. The opening line praises it as "the finest and most economically built schoolhouse in Winneshiek County...school rooms are thoroughly well-lighted, there are capacious halls and cloak rooms...and perfect heating" (Decorah Republican 1894).

These Decorah schools were city schools, and the facilities in the countryside appear to have been the recipient of less shine and veneer, reflecting their utilitarian roots in the farm community. An article run in the Decorah Public Opinion (1912) comments on the quality of these rural schools, noting "Seventy-five per cent of the rural school houses of Iowa are totally unfit for use...This is the startling statement made by the state factory inspection bureau, following an extensive investigation of school house conditions in Iowa." Though no mention is made of Winneshiek County in particular, it is likely that many rural schools in the county had similar ailments. Teacher interviews often mention the lack of funds for rural schools, but do not mention poor quality schoolhouses.

There are perhaps no better examples of the important role that country schools played in Iowa communities than by controversies surrounding the schools of Winneshiek County. Many interesting records exist which tell a story of intense community involvement and investment in their schools. Some of the most interesting documents are letters sent to the county superintendent's office petitioning that a schoolhouse be at a location different from one chosen by the school board of directors. One such example is a letter sent in 1877 by the parents of students at Highland #4, also known as Exey School. In the letter, the parents decry that the schoolhouse has been placed in a location removed from the center of the sub district, at a place removed from water, difficult to access with teams, no place for a playground, and "inconvenient in every respect" (Winneshiek County Historical Society Archives, Decorah, Iowa. 1887: File 4, Box 11, #31). Letters dealing with this issue have also survived from the parents in Lincoln #1 and Pleasant #8 (Winneshiek County Historical Society Archives, Decorah, Iowa. 1887: File 4, Box 11, #33 and 36) illustrating strong community involvement and interest in local schools.

As with most places in Iowa, consolidation was a major question in Winneshiek County. As early as 1897, the first year of consolidation in the State, members of the community were writing the local newspaper to advocate for consolidation. Among them was Professor J. Breckenridge, who asked the question in a Decorah Public Opinion (1897a) article "Which of our Winneshiek schools will be the first to increase its usefulness?" The editor of the paper agreed, and said that it is only a matter of time before the schools of Winneshiek County consolidated to graded schools. Other residents of the county apparently held similar opinions, as more letters soon followed which praised the original author for such a great idea, including F. C. Clark, who wrote, "I think no one will deny that a good graded school, employing several competent teachers, can do a great deal more for its pupils than the average district school. Not only do I believe that better training can be given, but that it would be economy to consolidate our county schools. It is no uncommon thing to hear of county schools with only four or

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five pupils...Then let us consolidate and grade our country schools" (Decorah Public Opinion 1897b). Of course, opponents of the consolidation movement also wrote into these papers in an effort to get their opinions heard. The argument of one opponent notes that building a new consolidated school and transporting students would be incredibly costly, that students who had to travel great distances would have a hard time attending school, that rural students get a better education, and that the dispersed student population would prevent the spread of contagious disease (Decorah Public Opinion 1903).

While the proponents of consolidation would eventually prevail, Winneshiek County was actually one of the last counties in Iowa to begin consolidation. By 1921, it appears that Winneshiek County was one of only four counties to lack a consolidated district (May 1956, 34). Recollections of schoolteachers who worked in many of the rural schools throughout the mid twentieth century seem to indicate that the schools stayed independent much longer than in other counties. Johnson (1998a, 250) notes that reorganization in the county occurred in the late 1950's with the last year for rural districts in 1959–1960, and only 24 rural schoolhouses were in operation during the last school year. Rural teacher Nora Aslaksen Gossman notes, "With the closing of the rural schools the neighbors lost contact with each other—the schools held the neighborhoods together" (Johnson 1986b, 34). Lorrain Houck echoes a similar sentiment, saying, "Rural schools kept the communities closely knit. Everyone worked to keep the school district going. We seemed closer to the people in our neighborhood than of our society today" (Johnson 1986b, 51).

Winneshiek County's resistance to consolidation was likely a factor in its ability to retain so many of its rural schoolhouses. While one-room schoolhouses were once common in the county, there are few village schools. At the time of this writing, only four village schools occur in the county. In 1997, Winneshiek County retained 80 of its original country schools (one-room and village), with 55 schoolhouses found on their original sites (Johnson 1998, 250). Of these, Johnson (1998, 250) notes, "20 are vacant, 16 are residences, six serve as township halls, ten are farm outbuildings, two are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and one serves as a church" (Johnson 1998, 250). Of the 20 townships in the county, 17 of them contained a rural schoolhouse (Johnson 1998, 250).

Johnson's (1986a) survey focused on one-room schoolhouses and at the time of his writing, seventy-two buildings had frame construction, seven were constructed from brick, five were coated with stucco (masking the structure underneath), and three were made from concrete block. Johnson (1986a, 11) notes that the most common roof form is the gable roof ($n = 68$). The appearance of clipped gable roofs appears between 1900 and 1920 (four examples in Winneshiek County) and the hip and hip-with-ridge type roofs appear around the 1920s (14 examples of one-room schoolhouses in Winneshiek County). By the mid 1920s, the gable roof was replaced with the hip-with-ridge form so that the rectangular layout of the one-room schools could remain intact (Johnson 1986a, 11–12). The early one-room schools had two to four sets of windows on opposing walls for cross lighting, a trend that fell out of favor in the early 1920s due to effects of lighting on student eyes (Johnson 1986a, 12). What Johnson (1986a, 12) refers to as "Bungalow Style" schools was introduced in the 1920s, and these schools generally had hip and hip-with-ridge roofs and column supports for the porch/attic overhang. The term Bungalow Style appears to have been used by Johnson (1986a) because the combination of hip roofs, nearly square footprints, and porch projections supported by columns mimic characteristics of bungalow homes. The last three rural schools constructed in Winneshiek County were cube-like structures with flat roofs that Johnson (1986a) attributed to the International Style. These schools (Canoe No. 3, Canoe No. 5, and Pleasant No. 1) did not have applied surface decorations and there was an emphasis on space enclosed by thin planes and surfaces. These schools had concrete block walls, poured concrete basements, and modern utilities (Johnson 1986a, 12). Johnson (1986a, 13) notes that only ten schools of the ninety schools surveyed had a bell tower. Construction dates could not be obtained for 64 of the schoolhouses documented by Johnson (1986a). Of those with notable construction dates, three were built in the 1850s, six were built in the 1870s, five were built in the 1900s–1910s, and eight were built in the 1920s–1940s. Two-room schoolhouses were not investigated in detail by Johnson

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(1986a).

In 2012, Shay Gooder completed another survey of Winneshiek County schoolhouses and he visited 225 former school locations. During his investigation, only 31 of the rural public schoolhouses stood on their original properties in varying states of structural stability (Gooder 2012). The reduction in schoolhouses at their original locations is striking and these resources are rapidly disappearing. The 2012 investigation revealed only six schoolhouses in the county retaining a belfry (including the Highlandville School). The National Register already lists two of these schools (Locust and Frankville schools). The occurrence of a bell tower/belfry is sometimes associated with the social and economic status of a community (Deiber and Beedle 2002, 11; Gulliford 1984, 174), but these reasons for the construction of a belfry at the Highlandville School are difficult to link to local perceptions of status. Seven of the rural schoolhouses have a hip-with-ridge roof. Only the Highlandville School has both architectural characteristics. The Burr Oak village school has a similar design (T-plan form with mixed hip-with-ridge and projecting gable-front) but lacks a belfry. The Burr Oak village school underwent renovations and is now a house.

Based on previous survey data (Johnson 1986a; tabulated from 86 recorded schools), 63.9% of the schools were single-story, clapboard buildings with a gable roof; the quintessential one-room schoolhouse. Thirteen of the schools were constructed with clapboard but had other roof types (clipped gable [$n = 3$], hip [$n = 4$], and hip-with-ridge [$n = 6$]; comprising 15.1% of the sample). Based on these data, stone, brick, and concrete one-room schools are rare ($n = 7, 8,$ and $3,$ respectively). Gooder (2012) identified five two-room schoolhouses in Winneshiek County (5% of rural schools in the county), with only three of these remaining extant (Frankville, Burr Oak, and Highlandville Schools). Of the original five schools, three were two-story structures (Spillville Village School, Frankville School, and Hesper School). Only the Burr Oak and Highlandville Schools represent two-room, single-story schoolhouses. Based on previous survey work, the prominent schoolhouse construction form was a single-story, clapboard school with a gable roof. Few examples of deviations are available for research. Two-room schools were rare, and in most instances were two-story structures with a gable roof. Based on previous surveys, the Burr Oak and Highlandville Schools are the only schoolhouses built with a T-plan form. The Highlandville School is the sole example of this type of two-room schoolhouse with a belfry in Winneshiek County.

Nestled in the northeast corner of Winneshiek County and settled in 1851, Highland Township was at one point the westernmost frontier of the United States (Alexander 1882, 241). Alexander (1882, 304) records that in 1856, before the first Lutheran congregation was even established, a school district was organized consisting of almost the entire township. He also notes that "In the spring of 1857, a small log school house was erected, which has long since given place to a large and commodious frame building, with all the modern improvements" (Alexander 1882, 304).

As was typical in Iowa, a township number and community-derived name identified each rural school. At the peak, there were five rural schools in Highland Township, which were Highland #1 known as Roosevelt or Bakken, Highland #2 known as Rock Springs or Kjome, Highland #3 known as Grindeland, Highland #4 known as Exe or Exey, and Highland #5 known as Sacquitne. Outside of this numbering system were the village and city schools, which were often independent districts even before legislation in 1872.

The historical record is missing as to when any one individual school in the township was constructed. Nonetheless, teacher lists from the township indicate that all of the schools were in operation by 1910. It is also unclear when each school became consolidated or closed. Again, teacher records might be the greatest resource at present. Highland #4, the Exey School, has its last teacher recorded in 1942. Highland #1, Roosevelt, has its last recorded teacher in 1949, with Highland #3, Grindeland, having its last teacher recorded just one year later. Highland #2 and Highland #5 both have their last teacher recorded in 1960. This meshes with research conducted by Steve Johnson (1986a, 8), which notes that the last year for rural districts was 1959—

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1960, only a few short years before the Highlandville School closed in 1964.

Highlandville School served the village whose name it bears as well as the surrounding community. As with the other schools in the township, it is unclear when the original school at Highlandville was established. What is known is that the original school, which was situated on the same site as the present school, had one room, and was removed in the 1890s to allow for construction of a two-classroom building in 1904. Local builders often constructed rural schools throughout Iowa and local residents helped with construction to reduce cost (Deiber and Beedle 2002, 10). This school is referenced in a newspaper notice from 1905, which notes that an educational meeting will be held in "a new two-room school building in which will be ample room to accommodate a large attendance" (Decorah Public Opinion 1905). County Superintendent Ellis J. Hook called the meeting, and it appears to have been a meeting of all teachers in Highland Township as well as teachers from the north part of Pleasant Township. There is strong indication, from the fact that teachers taught multiple rooms at the school, that Highlandville graded its classrooms at this time, an advantage offered by the growing population of the town and surrounding locality. Much later, teacher Ruth Allen noted, "This was a two-room village school, and I taught the lower grades, one to four" (Johnson 1986b, 3), a setup that may have been around since the building of the first two-room school in the village. On November 14, 1910, this second school burned to the ground on the first day of winter classes. Newspaper reports indicate that the culprit was a recently cleaned and repaired, defective flue (Decorah Republican 1910). The present school, following the same design as the second iteration of the school (seemingly with updated heating equipment), was built on the site in 1911 likely using the 1904 foundation (Johnson 1998, 250).

The Highlandville School remained independent until 1960 when it consolidated with the North Winneshiek School District. The Highlandville School last operated in 1964, after which local schools reorganized. This, however, was not the end of the building as a keystone for the community. After it was decommissioned, the Township Board purchased the school for one dollar from the North Winneshiek Community School District (Decorah Public Opinion 1989a). Since that time, the community has continued to maintain and utilize the building for a variety of purposes. The maintenance is ongoing, and a so-called "paint party" occurred in 1989, when the building, now known as the Highlandville Community Center, was painted with the classic white paint (Decorah Public Opinion 1989a). Fundraisers are also a frequent community activity at this school (Decorah Public Opinion 1989b, 1999; Meyer 2011). Since 1974, a group called Foot Notes has used the schoolhouse to hold Saturday night dances, which commonly feature live traditional Norwegian-American music for waltzes, polkas, and schottisches (Decorah Public Opinion 1999). These dances harken back to an age gone by and bring out many of the older members of the community. Many under-30 members of the community frequent the dances and consider the get-togethers as part of their cultural heritage, truly bringing the entire community together (Monson 1986). The building is such a prominent element of the village of Highlandville (and Iowa) that it was featured on the 1999 Iowa Trout Stamp (Decorah Journal 1998).

Determining what occurred at the school between 1911 and 1964 is difficult. After school consolidation, the school records transferred to the township trustees who stored them at the Highlandville store. These records are no longer available because of a robbery at the Highlandville store. There is minimal mention of this school in county newspapers because the focus of the papers was on happenings in Decorah and Ossian, not outlying areas. Oral histories offer the best chance of collecting information on this school, but these histories are not yet available.

The local community continues to honor the Highlandville School. In 2011, the schoolhouse celebrated its 100th anniversary with a reunion of former students to try to raise money to preserve the building (Meyer 2011). Clearly the Highlandville School is an important landmark not just for its historical significance as a school that avoided destruction or movement after its heyday had passed, but also for its importance to the entire community as a place worth treasuring and preserving for generations to come.

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Embedded Images: List of Figures

- Figure 1. Topographic map detailing the Highlandville School property.
- Figure 2. Scale map detailing the Highlandville School property.
- Figure 3. 1940 aerial photograph of the Highlandville School property.
- Figure 4. 1952 aerial photograph of the Highlandville School property.
- Figure 5. Diagram of the Highlandville School exterior, northeast aspect.
- Figure 6. Diagram of the Highlandville School exterior, northwest aspect.
- Figure 7. Undated historic photograph of the 1904 Highlandville School.
- Figure 8. Diagram of the first floor of the Highlandville School, northeast aspect.
- Figure 9. Floor plan of the first floor of the Highlandville School.
- Figure 10. Diagram of the basement in the Highlandville School, northeast aspect.
- Figure 11. Floor plan of the basement in the Highlandville School.
- Figure 12. Floor plan of the attic in the Highlandville School.

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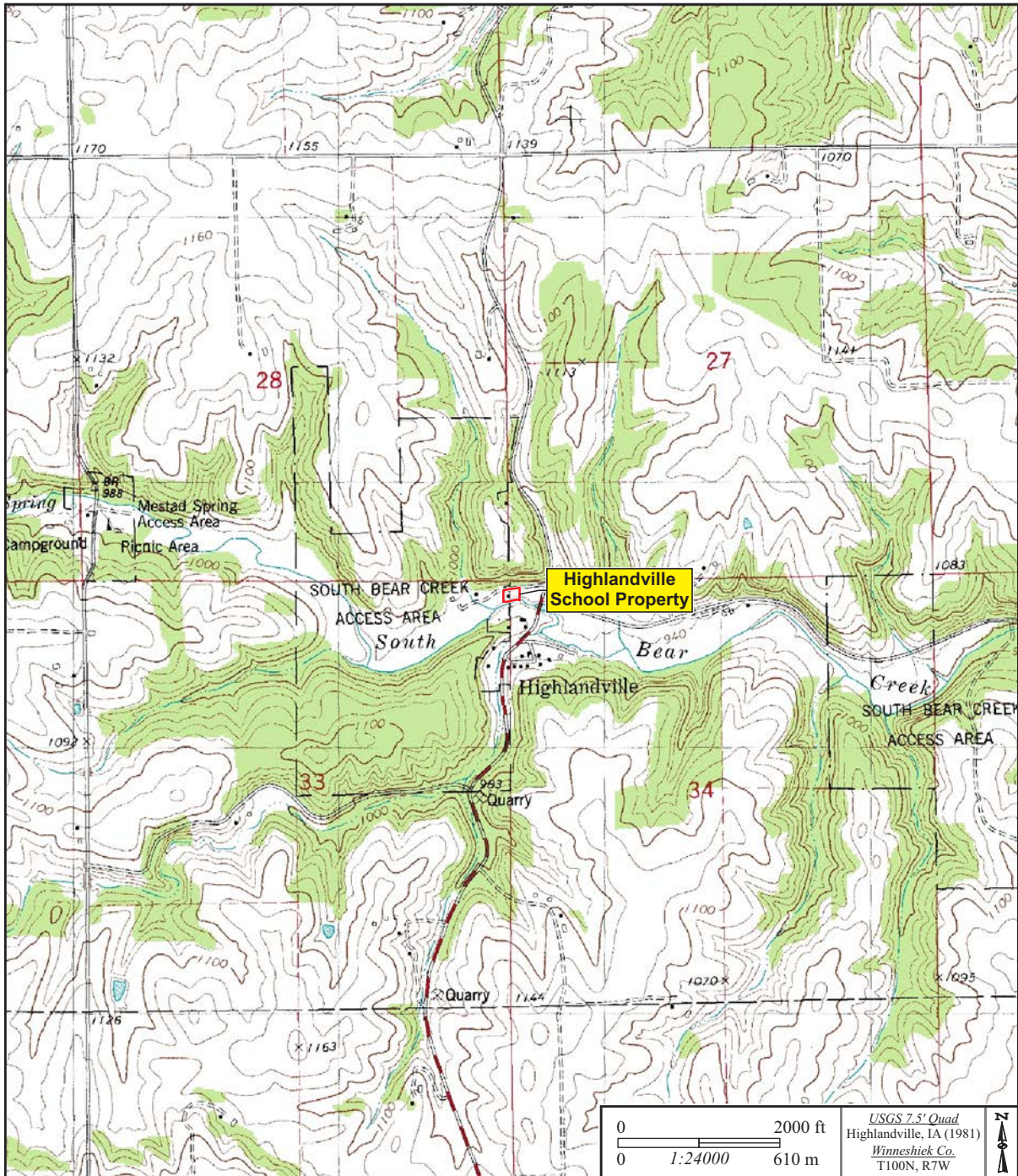


Figure 1. Topographic map detailing the Highlandville School property.

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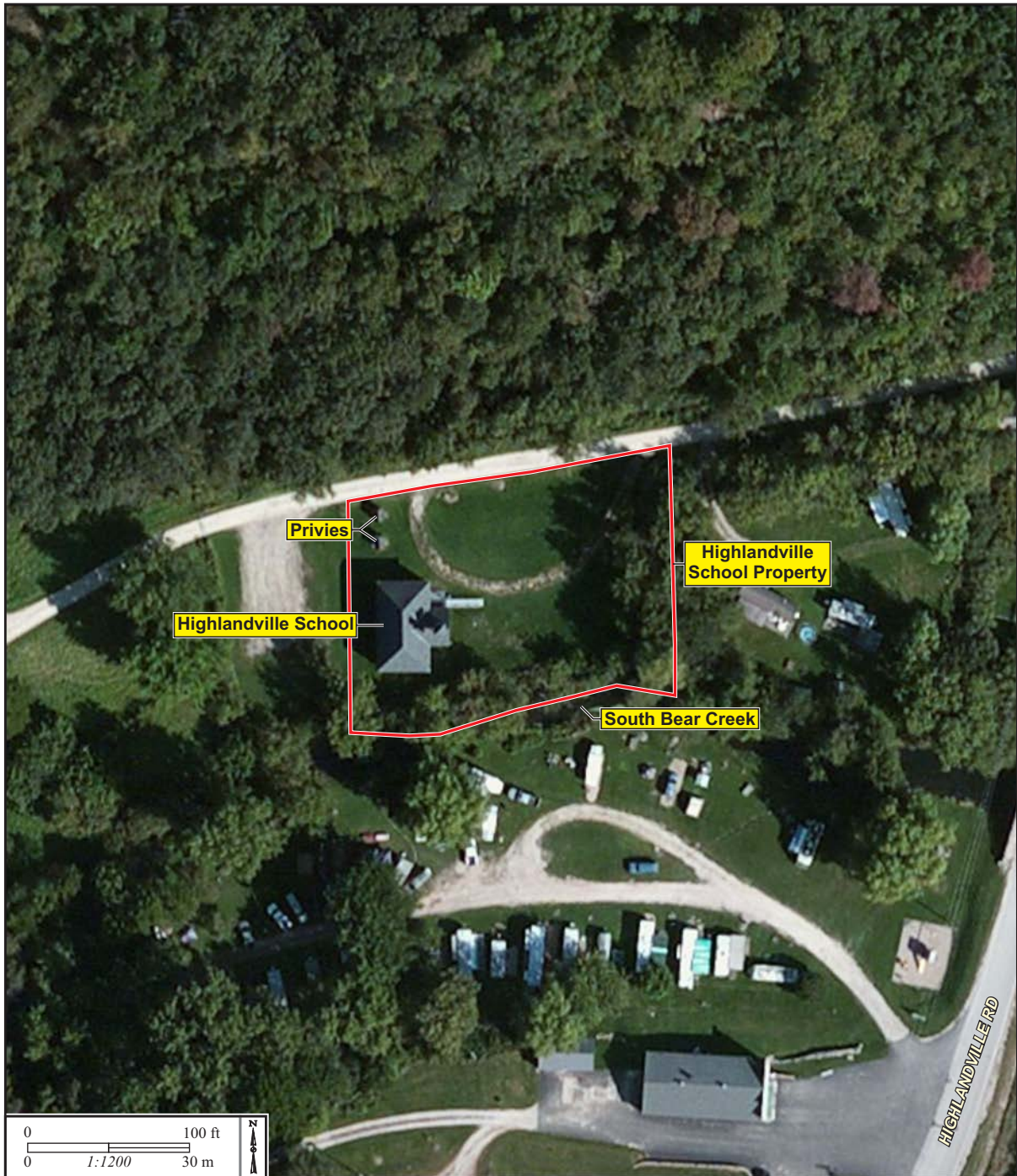


Figure 2. Scale map detailing the Highlandville School property.

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Figure 3. 1940 aerial photograph of the Highlandville School property.

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Figure 4. 1952 aerial photograph of the Highlandville School property.

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Figure 5. Diagram of the Highlandville School exterior, northeast aspect (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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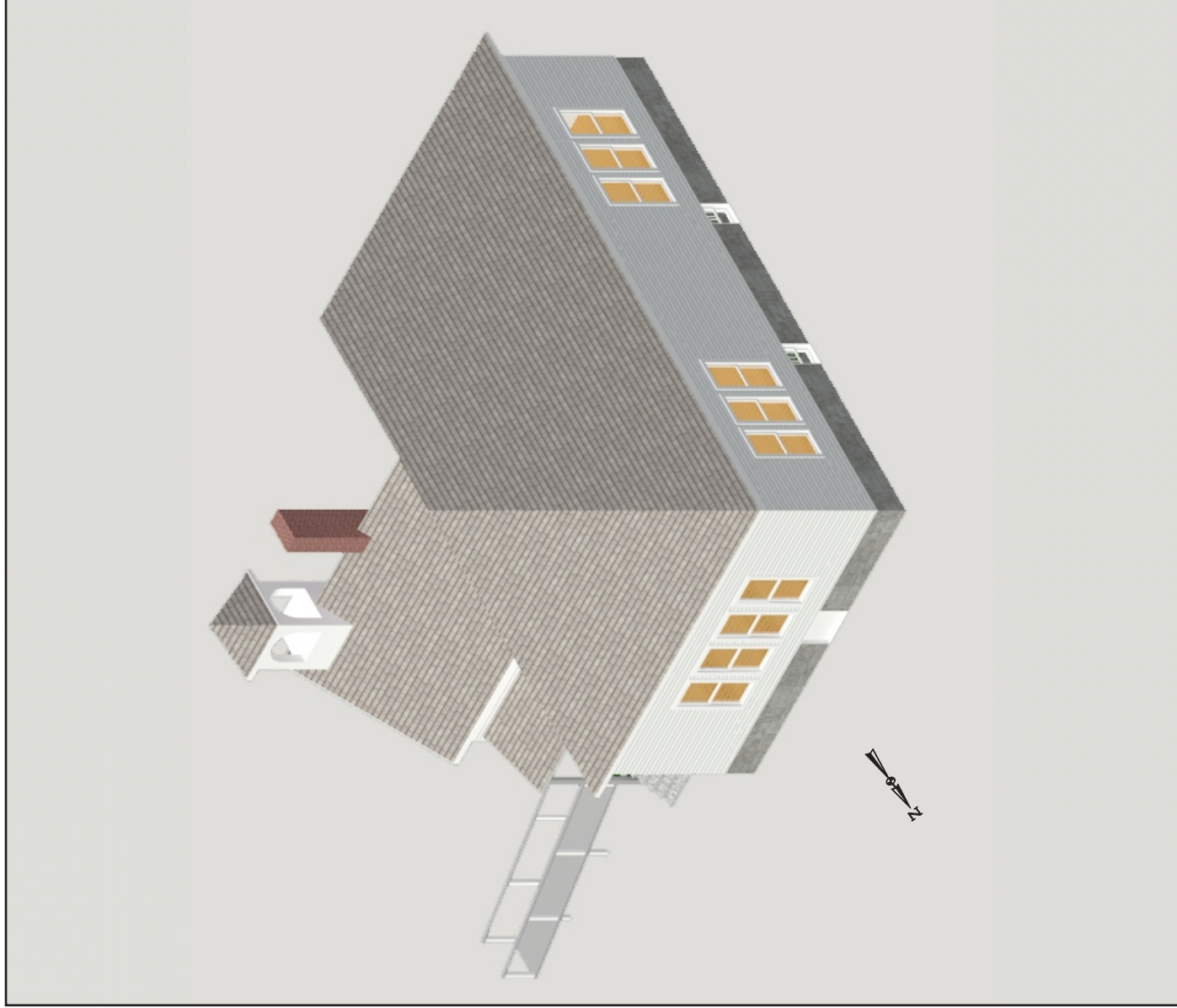


Figure 6. Diagram of the Highlandville School exterior, northwest aspect (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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Figure 7. Undated historic photograph of the 1904 Highlandville School (on file Winneshiek County Historic Preservation Commission).

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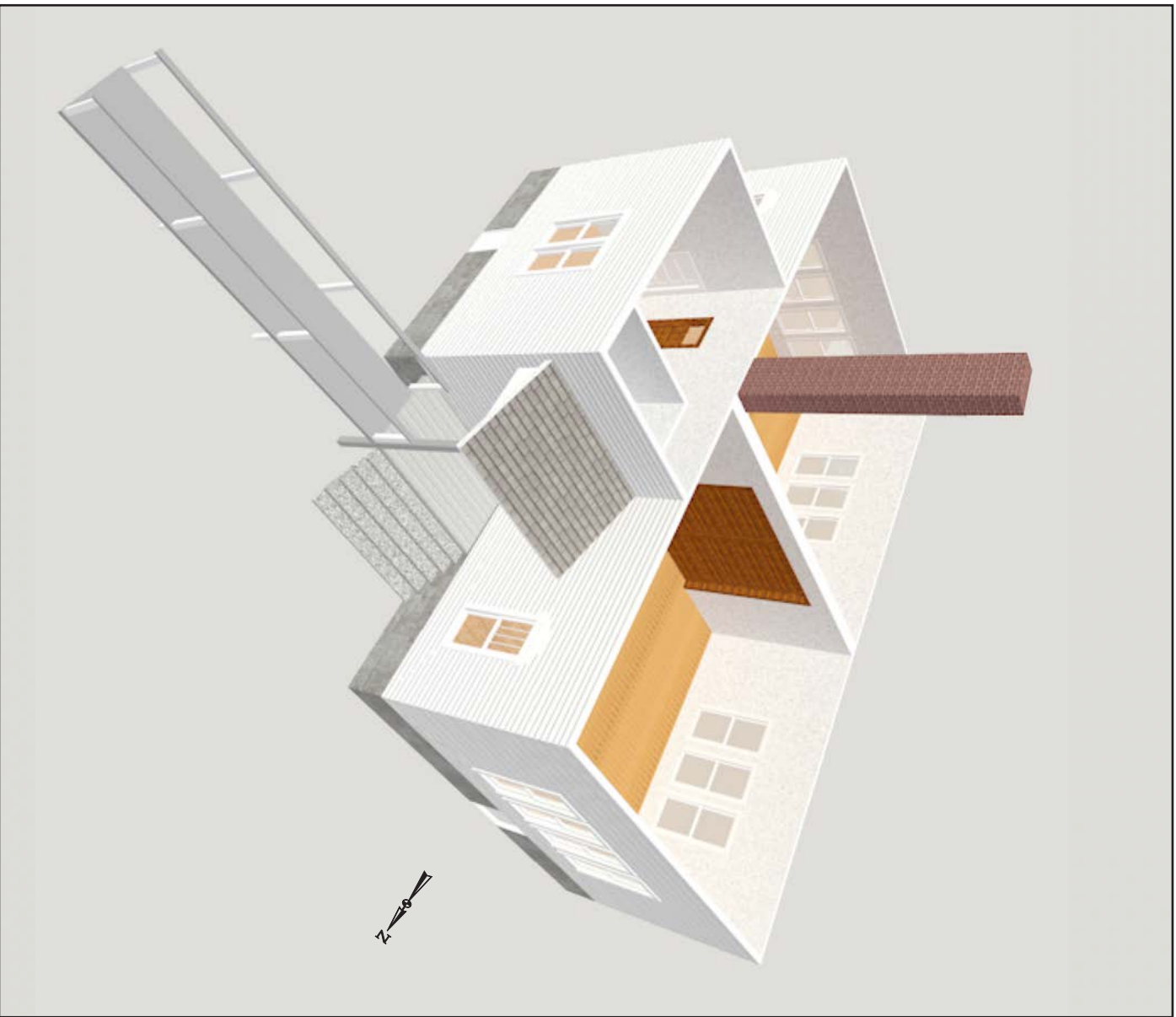


Figure 8. Diagram of the first floor of the Highlandville School, northeast aspect (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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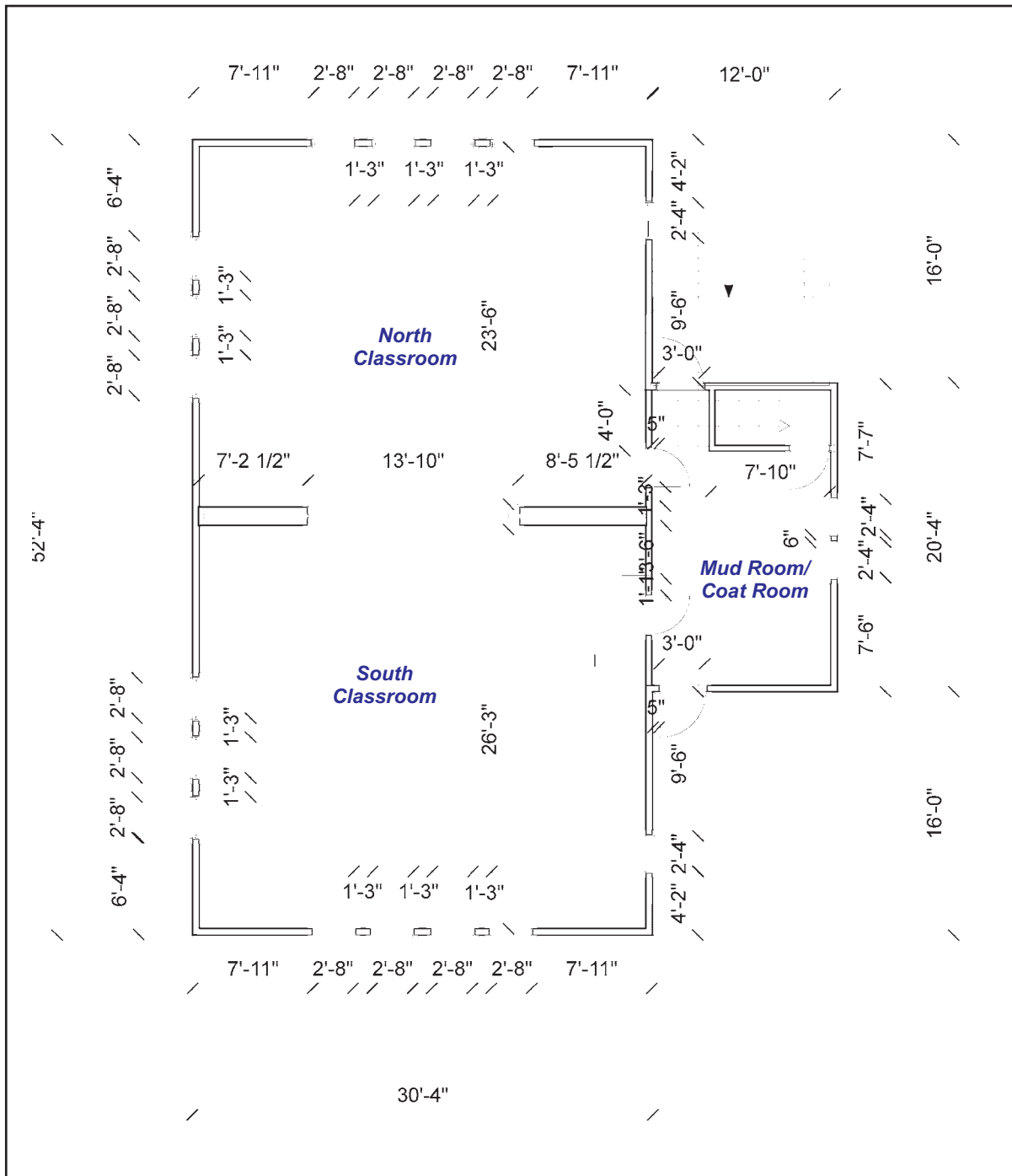


Figure 9. Floor plan of the first floor of the Highlandville School (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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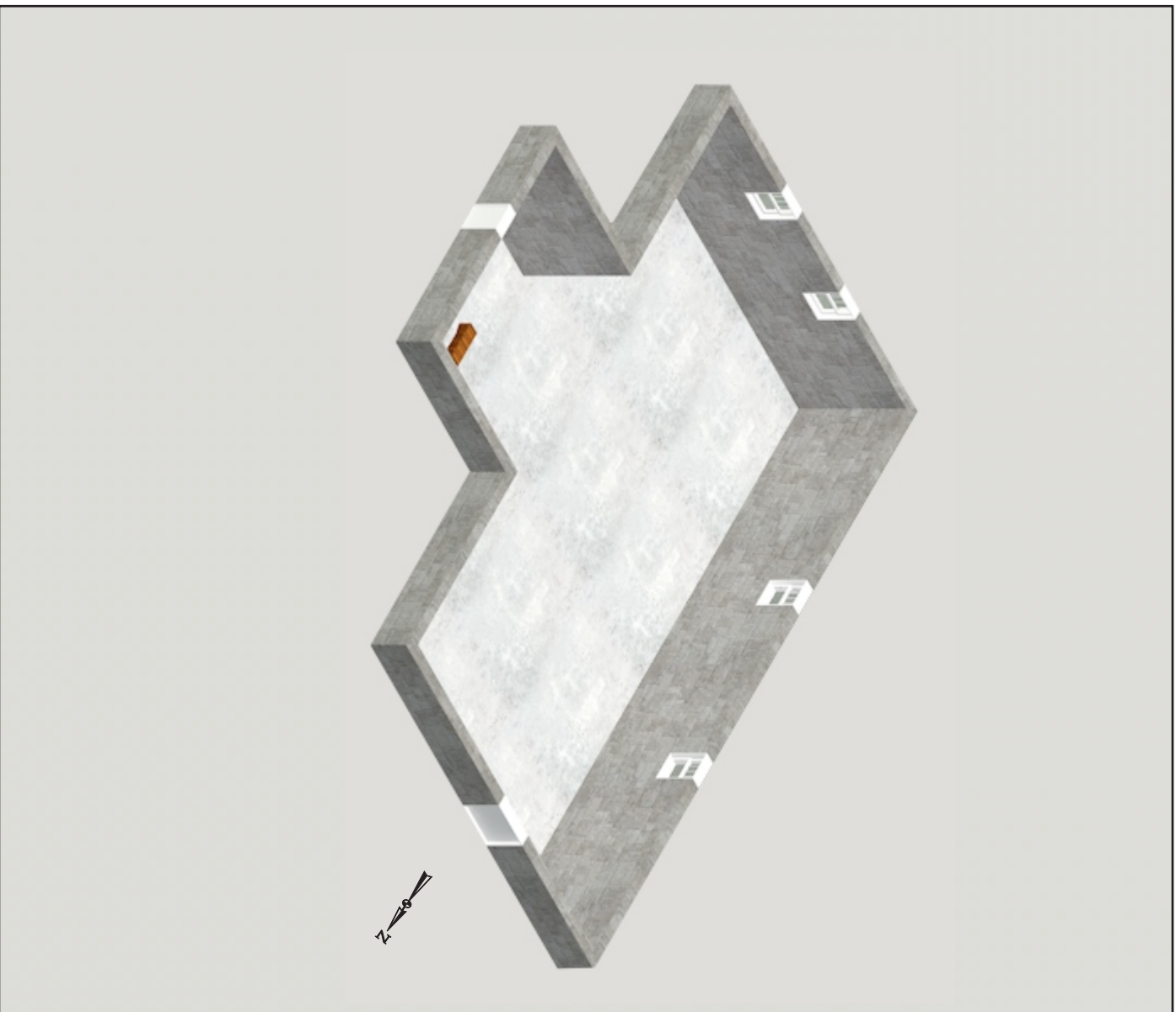


Figure 10. Diagram of the basement in the Highlandville School, northeast aspect (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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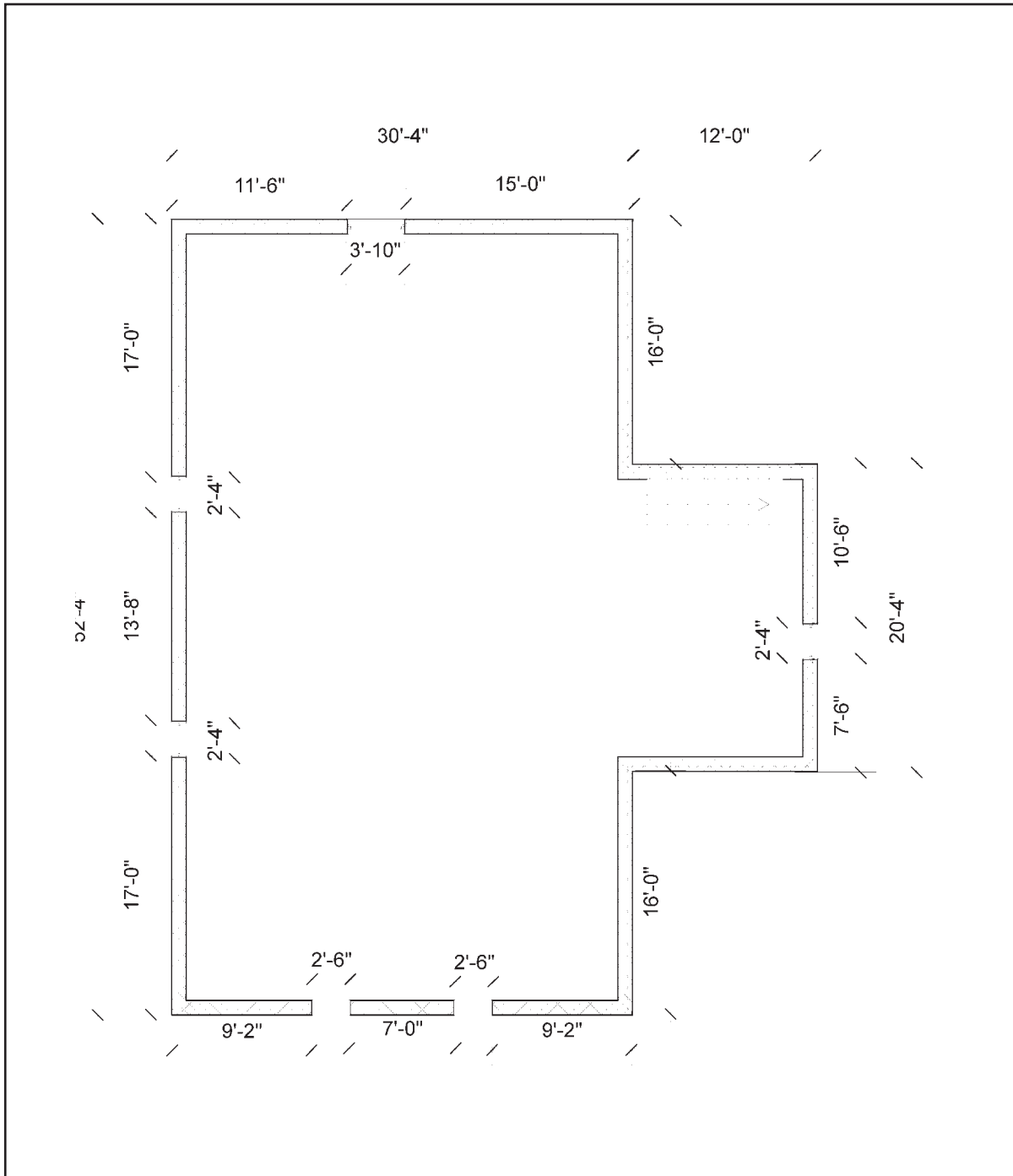


Figure 11. Floor plan of the basement in the Highlandville School (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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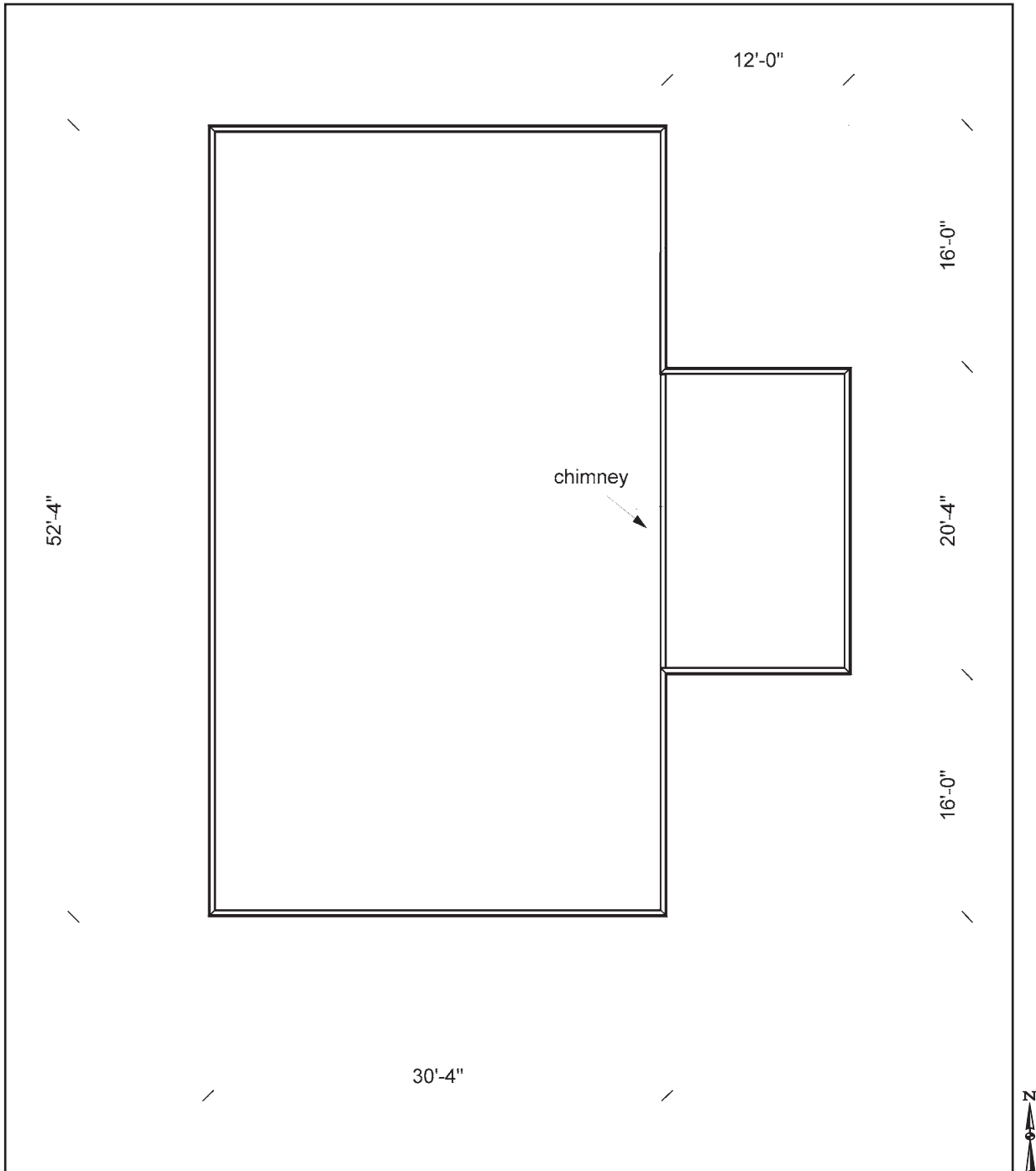


Figure 12. Floor plan of the attic in the Highlandville School (Courtesy of Lloyd Bolz, November 8, 2012).

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Photo Log

All photographs were printed using a Konica Minolta C450. All original digital files are available at Bear Creek Archeology, P.O. Box 347, Cresco, IA 52136.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North façade of the Highlandville School, view to the south (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0001)

1 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: East façade of the Highlandville School, view to the west (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0002)

2 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: South façade of the Highlandville School, view to the north (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0003)

3 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West façade of the Highlandville School, view to the east (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0004)

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Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: August 29, 2012

Location of Original Digital Files: Bear Creek Archeology, Inc., P.O. Box 347, Cresco, IA 52136

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Belfry at the Highlandville School, view to the east (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0005)

5 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Mudroom/coatroom in the Highlandville School, view to the south (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0006)

6 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North classroom of the Highlandville School, view to the north (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0007)

7 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: South classroom of the Highlandville School, view to the south (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0008)

8 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School

City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)

County: Winneshiek

State: Iowa

Photographer: Branden K. Scott

Date Photographed: April 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Basement of the Highlandville School, view to the south (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0009)

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Name of Property: Highlandville School
 City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)
 County: Winneshiek State: Iowa
 Photographer: Branden K. Scott
 Date Photographed: August 29, 2012
 Description of Photograph(s) and number: Attic of the Highlandville School, view to the west
 (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0010)
 10 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School
 City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)
 County: Winneshiek State: Iowa
 Photographer: Branden K. Scott
 Date Photographed: April 11, 2012
 Description of Photograph(s) and number: Schoolyard at the Highlandville School, view to the west
 (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0011)
 11 of 12.

Name of Property: Highlandville School
 City or Vicinity: Decorah (vicinity)
 County: Winneshiek State: Iowa
 Photographer: Branden K. Scott
 Date Photographed: April 11, 2012
 Description of Photograph(s) and number: North privy at the Highlandville School, view to the north
 (IA_WinneshiekCounty_HighlandvilleSchool_0012)
 12 of 12.



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #1



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #2



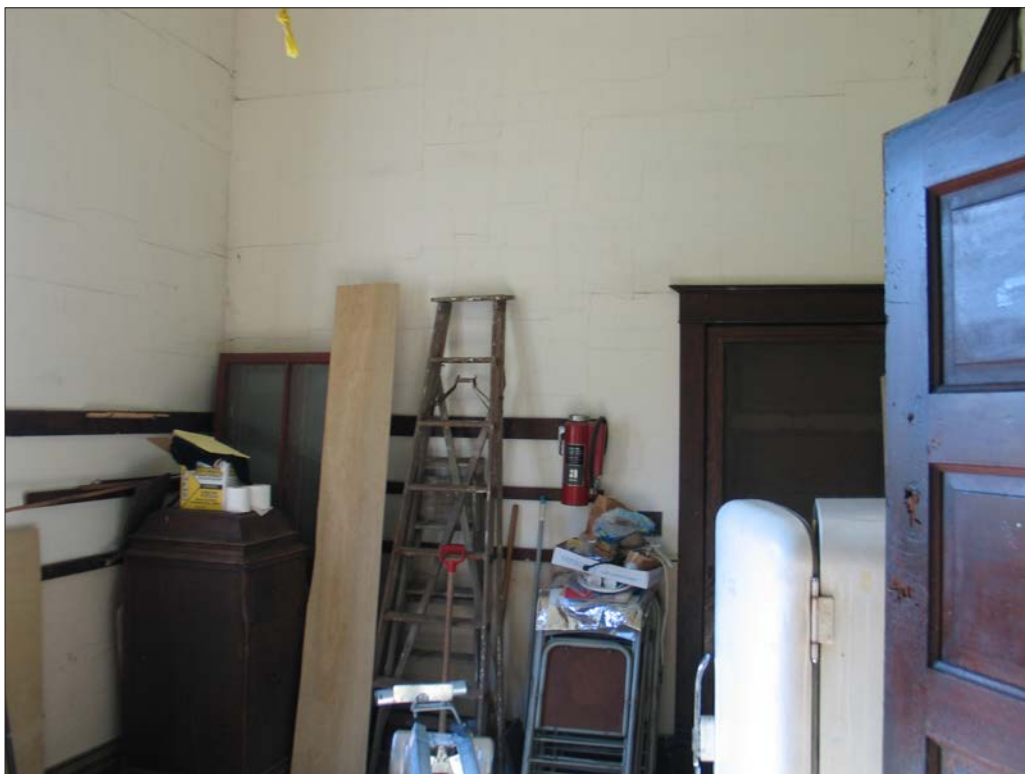
Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #3



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #4



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #5



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #6



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #7



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #8



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #9



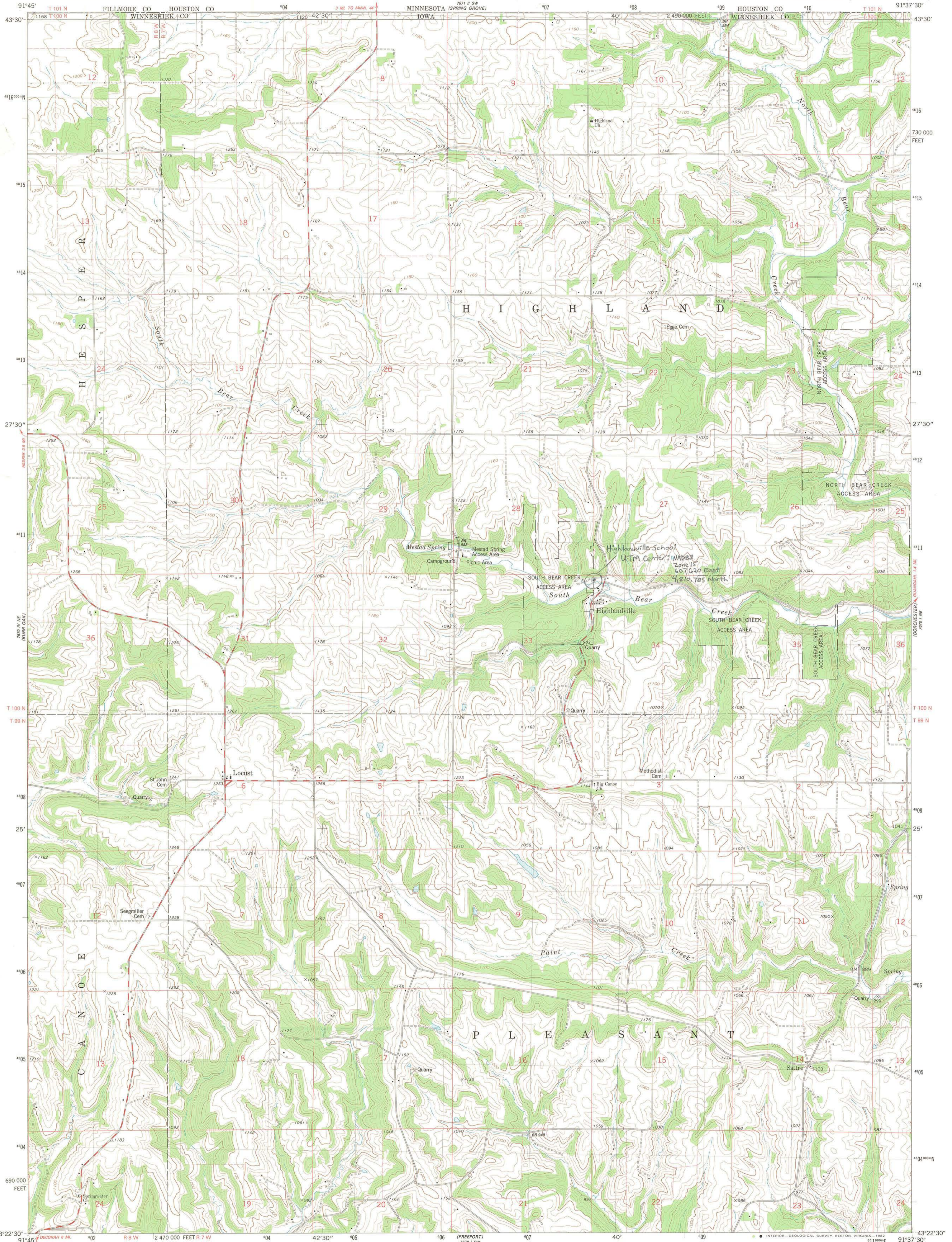
Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #10



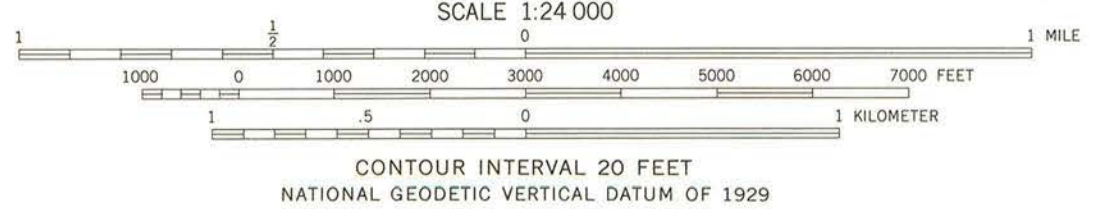
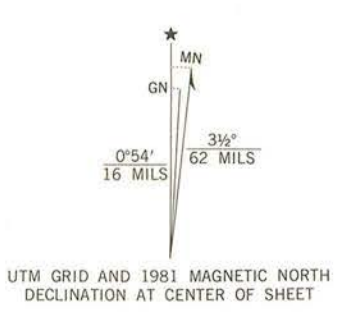
Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #11



Highlandville School
Winneshiek County, IA
Photo #12



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1975. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1981
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Iowa coordinate
system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 6 meters north and
13 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

HIGHLANDVILLE, IOWA
N4322.5-W9137.5
1981
DMA 7670 1 NW-SERIES V876





1911





















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Highlandville School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Winneshiek

DATE RECEIVED: 12/20/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/05/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001141

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 2.5.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

CLG NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG Name Winneshiek County Date of Public Meeting

Property Name Highlandville School, 3499 Highlandville Road, Decorah vicinity, Winneshiek County

1. For Historic Preservation Commission:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature Steven L. Johnson 9-21-13 Date

Print Name Steven L. Johnson

Title Winneshiek County Historic Preservation Commission Chair

Reason(s) for recommendation:

An exceptional example of a two-room village schoolhouse. The building is a great fit in the national register criteria of A and C.

2. For Chief Elected Local Official:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature John Logsdon 9/23/13 Date

Print Name John Logsdon

Title Chairman - Board of Supervisors

Reason(s) for recommendation:

3. Professional Evaluation:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature Lovell Bl. Kre 9-19-13 Date

Print Name Lovell Bl. Kre

Title Principal Investigator Bear Creek Archeology

Reason(s) for recommendation:

Property is a rare, well-preserved example of a north east Iowa Schoolhouse, Eligible under multiple criteria.

RETURN TO: State Historical Society of Iowa, ATTN: National Register Coordinator, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines, IA 50319

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



SUSAN KLOEWER
ADMINISTRATOR



MATTHEW HARRIS
ADMINISTRATOR

December 18, 2013

Carol Shull, Chief
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, N.W.-- 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

The following National Register nomination(s) are enclosed for your review and listed if acceptable.

- Highlandville School, 3499 Highlandville Road, Decorah, Winneshiek County
- Shelby Consolidated School, 304 Western Avenue, Shelby, Shelby County
- Scotch Grove Historic District, Intersections of State Highway 38; 11th Avenue and County Road E17, Monticello vicinity, Jones County
- Modale School and Masonic Hall, 107 S. Main Street, Modale, Harrison County

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Foster Hill".

Elizabeth Foster Hill, Manager
National Register and Tax Incentive Programs

STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING
600 EAST LOCUST
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

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F. (515) 242-6498

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