

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

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Mountain School  
other names/site number Mountain Union Free High School and State Graded School

**2. Location**

street & number	14330 Highway W West	N/A	not for publication						
city or town	Town of Mountain	N/A	vicinity						
state	Wisconsin	code	WI	county	Oconto	code	083	zip code	54149

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

*Alicia L. Cook*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

*October 16, 2000*  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Mountain School  
Name of Property

Oconto  
County and State

Wisconsin

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register.  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ removed from the National Register.  
\_\_\_ other, (explain:)

*Edouard H. Beal*

11/22/00

*Edouard H. Beal*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

\_\_\_ private  
 public-local  
\_\_\_ public-State  
\_\_\_ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

building(s)  
\_\_\_ district  
\_\_\_ structure  
\_\_\_ site  
\_\_\_ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Number of Resources within Property	
contributing	noncontributing
1	2
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	2
	total

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

**Number of contributing resources is 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)  
EDUCATION/school

#### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Foundation Stone  
walls Brick

roof Synthetics  
other Wood

#### Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Mountain School was constructed in three phases between 1905 and 1961 (see diagram 1). The first section was constructed the spring and summer of 1905 following a fire that destroyed the first building situated at this site. The second section was constructed in 1914 soon after the voters voted to create a Union Free High School for their children. The third and final section was built in 1961. The original building and the 1914 addition have basement walls of uncoursed fieldstone and upper walls of light brown brick. The 1960's addition is constructed of brick of similar size and color.<sup>1</sup> Also located on the property are a manufactured classroom, placed on the school site in the 1970s, and a small garden shed. These buildings are non-contributing and are not related to the three phases being discussed.

## **DESCRIPTION**

The Mountain School (photo 1) resides on a quiet hilltop setting of residential homes, fields and forests, one block from downtown Mountain. The school site is just west of County Highway W. The school is located in a pastoral setting on a parcel that slopes gently from west to east. Surrounding the school and adjacent to County W the site is paved with asphalt. The western part of the site, which is behind the school buildings, is seeded in grass. The paved playground and a parking area are adjacent to the building and on its south side (photo 2). There is a chain link fence surrounding most of the school setting. The fencing between County W and the school contains a concrete stair (see photo 3).

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<sup>1</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 4.

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The Mountain School is a two story brick building on a full height basement (diagram 1). It was built in three phases (diagram 1). The first phase was built in 1905 after a fire had destroyed the first building at this site on November 10, 1904. The new building was constructed with wood framed roof and flooring systems which are supported by exposed, un-reinforced brick masonry bearing walls and columns. The exterior walls are set on exposed uncoursed fieldstone foundations.<sup>2</sup> The 1905 building originally had a gabled projecting front bay. Multiple hipped roofs topped the remainder of the building. A bell tower was centered over the entrance pavilion (photo 4).

The second phase took place in 1914; there were two wings constructed to match the original building, one to the north, and one to the south of the original building. They duplicate each other and their appearance and construction closely resemble the original building. Taken as a unit the 1914 addition and the original building are approximately 14,500 square feet<sup>3</sup> (photo 3).

The front of the building (east façade—photo 1) is organized into three parts. The center entrance projects outward and was part of the 1905 phase of construction. It was originally a full-height entry with a pediment (photo 4). Above this entrance were two sets of paired double windows set at one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half story heights. Flanking this entry projection and symmetrical to the north and south of it, on the first and second floor heights, is one double hung window per floor.

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<sup>2</sup>Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 4.

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Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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The central front door has a segmental brick arch, which still retains some of the original woodwork, which contains seven graduated fixed overhead lights following the brick arch. Below these windows the original two doors have been replaced with modern doors, and the original sidelights that framed each edge of these doors adjacent to the brick opening have been replaced with plywood.

The 1914 phase of construction added two symmetrical wings north and south of the 1905 original building and part of this addition projected east an almost equal distance to the 1905 center entrance (photo 3). This addition added four double hung windows per floor to the first and second floors. Each double hung window is aligned with the corresponding window at the next floor level, with the basement having four light fixed windows set in the uncoursed fieldstone wall in a like configuration. This gives the east façade a symmetrical design.

The two phases of construction are tied together with a parapet wall that completely surrounds the 1905 and 1914 phases of construction. The parapet has a capstone and sill of unreinforced concrete. Directly below the capstone the bricks are laid as headers and where the parapet becomes a stepped parapet the bricks are laid as soldiers (photo 7). At a distance one half the height of the parapet wall horizontal to the capstone and sill, aligned directly above the windows is a recessed rectangular section of unreinforced concrete. Above this decorative concrete the brick are laid as headers. Below the sill of the parapet wall, and continuing around the entire 1905 and 1914 phases of construction, the first row of bricks are laid as rowlock and the second row as soldiers. At each corner of the building in these two phases of construction, within the row of soldier brick, an

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even corner square of concrete has been added that is equal in height to the bricks laid as soldiers. All of the windows in the 1905 and the 1914 phases of construction have concrete lintels and sills that have not been reinforced.

The south façade of the 1914 addition has two sets of paired double hung windows on the second floor, and three sets of paired double hung windows on the first floor and three four light windows on the basement level. The south façade of the 1905 addition contains three sets of paired double hung windows on both the first and the second floor and three four light fixed windows on the basement level (photo 2).

The roof of the original building was hipped and sloped to drain storm water off the edge of the roof. This design was modified during construction of the addition to divert storm water to roof drains and internal rain leaders. Parapet flashings on the original building and the addition consist of asphalt cement, felt roofing and elastomeric roof membrane (photo 14).<sup>4</sup>

The third phase was started in 1961. It is of one level, flat roofed, and built of brick similar to the type used in the 1905 and 1914 phases. It is attached to the 1905 addition on its west wall. This creates a T-shaped configuration for the three phases of construction (diagram 1—photo 5). The south façade of the 1961 addition contains six long awning casement windows, a double exit door, one fixed window, and one louver. The addition consists of an all-purpose room, restrooms, and furnace room, which were attached to the west side of the main building (photo 5). “The 1960’s addition has a

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<sup>4</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 6.

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roofing system of steel decking supported by exposed open web steel joists that bear on reinforced concrete masonry unit walls.”<sup>5</sup> The south and west building elevations have concrete masonry unit walls faced with durable brick masonry. The north elevation has exposed concrete masonry. “The floor, foundation, and footings are constructed of reinforced concrete”.<sup>6</sup> This third phase is about 2,900 square feet in area.<sup>7</sup> Because of its construction date, this addition is considered non-contributing. Because of its location at the back of the building, it does not detract from the architectural integrity of the school.

The west façade of the Mountain School’s T-shaped construction pattern contains a view of all three phases of construction (photo 5). The west façades of the 1914 wings each have three double hung windows on the second floor and one four light fixed basement window. Each 1914 wing has a ground level concrete block, single story projection covering the basement fire exits, at the far north and far south corners of their west façade. The fire escapes for the 1905 and 1914 phases are metal stairs starting at the second floor west façade of the 1914 phase and exiting on ground level. The stairs are adjacent to where the 1914 and the 1905 phases join each other on the west façade. The west façade of the 1905 phase contains three sets of paired double hung windows and one double hung window on the second floor of this phase. There is a circular metal chimney rising from the 1961 addition along the exterior wall of the 1905 phase. The west façade of the 1961 phase contains three long awning casement windows.

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<sup>5</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 4.

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The north façade of the 1961 phase is concrete block and contains two sets of two exit doors. One pair of these exit doors is at the west of the north façade and one pair at the east of the north façade. The north façade of the 1905 building (photo 8) has three paired double hung windows on the first floor and three openings for fixed windows at the basement level. (Two of these openings are cemented closed and one contains a two light, fixed window.) The north façade of 1914 phase is identical to the south façade of this phase.

The three phases of the building were constructed with a brick masonry exterior. The first two phases, the original 1905 building and the wings added in 1914, are constructed of a soft, light brown brick with uncoursed fieldstone providing the exterior finish of the basement walls. The phase started in 1961 is of a more durable brick similar in size and shape to the first two phases.

The windows in the first two phases are the original windows, (photo 13) they are “wood frame double hung windows with ¼” single pane glazing”.<sup>8</sup> All windows in the first two phases, except for the basement windows, have aluminum storm windows. The windows in the third phase are also original, but are wood frame fixed or awning casement windows with 1” insulated glazing.<sup>9</sup> In most instances the original windows, door, and hardware are still in existence (photos 11, 12, & 13).

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<sup>8</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 5.

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Unusual items of metal found in the building include the original school bell still sitting on the school roof, and the original cast iron furnace doors and plaques still exist on the walls of the present school kitchen (photos 9 & 10). This was the unit used to cause heat to rise in a special chimney causing a draft; this draft then exhausted the smoke caused when the wastes in the indoor toilets were burned.<sup>10</sup> The fire escapes are metal stairs starting at the second level of the original building and exiting at ground level. The roof of the phase started in 1961 is “framed with open web steel joists supporting a steel roof deck”.<sup>11</sup>

In the original building and the ... addition, wood framing was throughout the roof framing, room partitions, and for major horizontal structural elements. Wood structural elements were always protected against fire by a thick 1” coat of plaster attached to the framing with expanded metal lath. There is no wood framing in the 1960s addition.<sup>12</sup>

**Interior:**

The first two phase’s interior finishes show floors of varnished tongue and groove hardwood (photo 15). Some of these floors have been covered with tile, linoleum, or carpeting. “The stairs have hardwood treads and the doors, trim, cabinets, and handrails

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<sup>10</sup> William Lazansky, Mountain Union Free High School Janitor, 1953-1983.

<sup>11</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 5.

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are constructed of wood.”<sup>13</sup> “The hardwood floors, wood stair treads, wood base moldings, and the handrails, are all in good to excellent condition.”<sup>14</sup> The stair treads, baseboards and the other wood trim are original (photos 16, 17, & 18).

Most of the walls are painted plaster (photo 19). Except for in a few rooms (closets, and a classroom that has changed from one to two classrooms a number of times) ceilings are decorative pressed metal mounted over plaster. “There are decorative sheet metal cornice pieces in the classrooms, some of which represent the American eagle.”<sup>15</sup> “The painted decorative sheet metal ceilings possess a surprising amount of integrity. They are in good to excellent shape.”<sup>16</sup>(Photos 20-29)

In the third phase of construction, the 1960’s addition:

The floors are either sealed concrete or vinyl tiles over concrete. The wall finishes in the 1960s addition are either painted or unpainted concrete masonry units. The ceilings vary between exposed painted steel deck in the physical activity room, painted gypsum board in the rest rooms, unpainted concrete at the basement exit stairs, and unpainted gypsum

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<sup>13</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 11.

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board in the mechanical room. Ceramic tile finishes are used on floors and walls in restrooms and locker rooms.<sup>17</sup>

The walls of the entrance foyer are plastered and a stairway leads to the basement and another stairway leads to the first floor. The stair treads to the basement are covered with rubber, edged with metal. The corners of all wood stair treads throughout the entire building contain the original metal corner pieces used to round the corners. Florescent fixtures attached to the decorative sheet metal ceilings supply the lighting.

The configuration of the full basement area of the 1905 building and its 1914 addition closely resemble floors one and two in these phases with a few structural differences (diagram 3). The parts of the basement that existed prior to the 1914 addition are elevated approximately one foot above those of the addition. This means that the room at the north end of the corridor and the room at the south end of the corridor, and approximately fifteen feet of each end of the corridor, are sunken from all other basement areas. All floors in the basement are painted concrete.

The north room is a janitor's room and a classroom, separated from each other by a moveable partition. Three sides of this room contain four-light fixed windows. Three walls are painted uncoursed fieldstone and the south wall is brick. The ceiling is decorative sheet metal as is the corridor. The far northwest corner contains a fire exit installed in the 1970s. The lighting is two runs of florescent lights attached to the ceiling. The room at the extreme south end of the corridor is a lunchroom. Physically this room

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<sup>17</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 6.

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is of similar construction to the north room except for the built-in closet in its northeast corner, the fire exit in the extreme southwest corner and plastered ceiling.

The girls' bathroom is directly north of the central descending stairs to the basement and on the east side of the corridor. One half of the girls' bathroom contains the decorative sheet metal ceiling and the remainder is plastered, as is the entire ceiling in the boys' bathroom. The boys' bathroom is directly south of the central descending stairs and on the east side of the corridor.

The west side of the corridor has rooms that contain all of the original furnace doors, ventilation, furnace fireboxes, etc. The rest of the 1905 basement area is the kitchen. This area contains one wall of four light fixed windows, two walls of uncoursed fieldstone and two walls of brick. The unusual cast iron pieces on these walls are a number of plaques referring to the furnace, two cast iron ventilating doors and a brick furnace with cast iron doors and drafts. (This furnace was used to create the draft needed to cause the smoke caused by burning of the wastes in the boys' bathroom to exit the special chimney. These indoor bathrooms were installed before 1920 and not altered until the late 1950s.) The ceiling is plaster and two runs of florescent fixtures attached to the ceiling furnish lighting. Suspended along the west wall and part of the north wall is a large rectangular heat run.

On the west wall of the kitchen, south corner, is the only entrance to the 1961 addition from the 1905 and 1914 phases of construction. The hallway sides leading to the 1961 ground level addition are painted concrete block and the floor and stairs are painted concrete. The right side of this corridor contains doors leading to a mechanical room and

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Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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bathroom, and the left side of the corridor contains first a single pane fixed window, then a louver, and then double doors leading to the playground and parking area.

As you enter this all-purpose room (not high enough or large enough to be called a gymnasium), its south and west painted concrete block walls contain long awning casement windows and each end of the north wall contains a set of two exit doors. The east wall contains doors leading to a storage area and a bathroom. All walls are painted concrete block, the floor is tile, and the ceiling is painted open web steel joists supporting a painted steel roof. Five runs of suspended florescent fixtures running north and south light the room.

Because the original 1905 building with its 1914 addition to the Mountain School was built to accommodate grades 1-8 on the first floor and grades 9-12 on the second floor the original configuration of the rooms emphasized the facilities needed for these grades (diagram 2). Classrooms now have different functions, but the floor plan has not been significantly changed.

The first floor of the Mountain School has a long corridor with one large classroom on the north end of the hall and one large classroom on the south end of the hall. Two large classrooms are on the west side of the corridor. The east center of the corridor contains two flights of stairs one to descend to ground level and one to ascend to the second floor of the building. As you move north or south down the hallway from the central stairway on the east side of the corridor you have first a work room then a coatroom. The layout of the floor plan is the same configuration as you go either north or south. The hall and stairway ceilings are the same painted decorative sheet metal. The lighting in the hall and

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stairway is furnished by ceiling mounted florescent fixtures. The floor of the hall is linoleum covering tongue and groove hardwood flooring. The stair treads to the ground level are wood covered with rubber, edged with metal. The stair treads to the second floor are wood with a metal stripped edge. The corners of all stair treads contain the original metal corner pieces to round the corner. There are wood handrails on the stairways and wood baseboards both in the corridor and the stairway. There is an automatic fire door installed in the 1960s that separates the first floor hall into two zones. Fire exit doors are on the north and south ends of the corridor prior to the end rooms and exit to the west.

The four classrooms on the first level have plaster walls, original wood baseboards, cast iron wall registers, tongue and groove hardwood floors covered by tile, rows of hanging florescent lights, and painted decorative sheet metal cornices and ceilings. Each classroom contains a wall of blackboards (probably original). Surrounding the blackboards is a wood molding with a wood chalk tray running below the boards. The second and third walls contain the original wood framed double hung windows. The fourth wall contains a wood framed bulletin board.

The second floor plan is similar to the first floor but a few changes have been made to the original layout. The corridor floor is varnished tongue and groove hardwood. The ceilings of the corridor are very high and contain a number of rectangular pipes approximately two feet by one foot suspended from the ceiling that are part of the heating system. On the west side of the corridor, the original plans contained the high school auditorium and study room. This area is directly above the two west grade school rooms that are on floor one. The entrance doors to this second floor area are the original double

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swinging doors with double transoms. The stage was on the north wall of this room, with storage rooms on each side of it. Presently a partition has been put across the stage area creating a third storage room. There is a large beam running east to west separating this huge classroom. The decorative sheet metal cornices and ceilings around the edges of the room and around the center beam are all of similar design. The floor is tile. The rest of the finishes follow as in the first floor classrooms.

Exiting off the east side of the second floor corridor starting at the central stairway and moving in a northerly direction is first a stairway with wood stair treads, wood handrails and wood baseboards leading to the 2½ stories above ground level storeroom. This room contains bookshelves and the access to the roof. Continuing along this corridor, in the same direction, the next exit is for a workroom and then a coatroom. If you move south from the central stairway the east side of the corridor contains entrances to first an office and then a coatroom. Except where noted, the rest of the second floor corridor follows the design of the first floor corridor.

In the original design the classrooms on the north and south ends of the corridor were two rooms occupying the area of one room on the first floor. The typing and English rooms on the north end of the hall are now one room. The floor is varnished tongue and groove hardwood. The ceiling contains two different patterns of the painted decorative sheet metal. There are three walls of wood framed double hung windows. There is a picture frame molding around the room above the windows. The door is original and contains a transom. The rest of the finishes follow those of the first floor.

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The south end of the corridor on the second floor contains two rooms. The east room was the original high school library and the west room was the original high school science room. These rooms are now separated by a gypsum board partition. The original decorative sheet metal cornices and ceilings elsewhere in the building are absent. (Only these two rooms and a few closets are missing this ceiling covering.) The rest of the rooms are plastered, the floor tongue and groove hardwood, with the floor of one of the rooms covered with carpeting. The transoms for both doors still exist, but one is blocked by plywood. The door below the transom filled with plywood is a modern door covered on one side with carpeting to provide soundproofing. This room is used as a music room.

The major concern of the architectural firm that did the latest building survey on the Mountain School was the condition of its roof. The firm's feeling was that the poor condition of the roof could cause problems with other parts of the building. "The roof membrane, roof insulation, and flashing failed many years ago. The roof framing must be assumed to be in poor condition."<sup>18</sup> The architectural firm feels that continual application of tar will not be enough to keep the roof in repair. The Mountain School's appearance of excellent condition, despite the small amount of money expended on its maintenance, is due to the local janitorial staff's vigilant maintenance over its many years of existence. The alterations and 1961 addition to the school do not affect the historic integrity of the building.

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<sup>18</sup> Somerville Architects, Engineers, Construction Services, Green Bay, Mountain Elementary School Building Survey, Project No. 4553, April 8, 1999, p. 10.

Mountain School  
Name of Property

Oconto  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

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**Period of Significance**

1905-1948

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**Significant Dates**

1905  
1914

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**Significant Person**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

unknown

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY**

The Mountain School is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of education. Built in 1905 with additions in 1914 and 1961, the main portion of the school survives with few changes to either its exterior or interior from when it was constructed.

The school is an intact example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century school architecture built during the profitable lumber era in northeastern Wisconsin. The school reflects the socio-economic development and then decline of a community that depended only on virgin timber for its economy. The history of the Mountain School tells the history of public education in the community. The Mountain School also served as a community meeting place. Activities conducted there formed the nucleus of the community's social and cultural life.

The Mountain School's development parallels and reflects the developmental patterns of rural education in the early 1900s, not only in Mountain, but also through the State of Wisconsin, as it became a first class state graded school and a union free high school.

Not only is the Mountain School an educational and social landmark in the community, but also it remains the only building still standing in the center of town that maintains its architectural integrity.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The virgin white pine of northeastern Wisconsin was the attraction that brought the early settlers to northern Oconto County to what is now the Mountain area. A demanding

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market for lumber to build the cities of the East opened the possibility of harvesting the virgin timber found along the upper Oconto River. Sawmills were built along the southern Oconto River and at the mouth of the Oconto on the bay of Green Bay. Schooner and steamboat traffic through Lake Michigan could send on the sawed lumber to Chicago and other markets. Uri Balcom, Anson and Elisha Eldred, and DeVillo Holt were among the lumber barons that were involved in extracting timber from the upper Oconto.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the wilderness and few roads, the river was the route by which timber was floated to the mills. Only pine timber was cut, as the hardwood timber would not float. The Oconto was too small a stream to drive logs without flooding dams, so dams had to be built where the water could be stopped until a pond was full. In the spring the gates were raised and the logs sluiced through the dam and driven to the mill.<sup>2</sup> A dam about four miles south of Mountain (Chute Dam) was constructed by Eldred and Balcom in the winter of 1856 and 1857 opening up the Mountain area for lumbering. Crews were sent in each winter to cut the timber. The pines were cut by ax and handsaws, loaded on sledges, and hauled by oxen or horses to the banks of the Oconto River. Logs were piled up on the bank to wait for the spring thaw. Then the logs were rolled into the holding ponds on the river, the temporary dams were removed and the timber was driven to the mills.<sup>3</sup> The first permanent settler of record in the Mountain area was Thomas McAllen

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<sup>1</sup> William Arthur Holt, , A Wisconsin Lumberman Looks Backward. Published by the Holt Family, 1948 p.23-29, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Holt, A Wisconsin Lumberman Looks Backward. Published by the Holt Family, 1948 p.23-29.

<sup>3</sup> Holt, A Wisconsin Lumberman Looks Backward. Published by the Holt Family, 1948, p.26.

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who settled in 1877.<sup>4</sup> In 1889 the post office of Mountain was established. In 1891 the town separated from the Town of How to become the Town of Armstrong.<sup>5</sup> In 1998 the Township of Armstrong changed its name to the Township of Mountain.

The settlers in the Mountain area depended upon the lumber industry for their livelihoods. They worked in the camps in the winter and then returned to their families by spring to clear the lands and plant the crops that would provide them with the year's harvest. In this way the farms grew up and the town grew from supplying the necessities to a growing population.<sup>6</sup>

When the Chicago NorthWestern Railway was extended north from Gillett in 1898, Mountain was a prosperous logging center. The 1895 census showed a population of 159. This rose to 482 in 1900, 614 in 1905, and 623 in 1910.<sup>7</sup>

These were booming years for the entire town. Men found work in the lumbering camps, businesses were built and settlers continued arriving. Attracted by the forestry jobs, a large contingency of Swedish settlers arrived between 1900 and 1905. During the early

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<sup>4</sup> Erhardt Olsen, , Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p.29.

<sup>7</sup> Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923).

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1900s there were three hotels, three saloons, two stores, two garages, a blacksmith shop, a barbershop, and two churches.<sup>8</sup>

With the coming of the railroad and the railroad spurs built to reach off the main line, lumbering resumed with the cutting of the hardwoods.<sup>9</sup> The timber was transported to landing areas close to the depot and the trains ran year around to bring the timber to the sawmills. Lumbering remained as the main source of income in the Mountain area until 1936 when the forests were depleted. The railroad spurs were removed and lumber camps torn down.<sup>10</sup>

As the lumber industry moved farther away, Mountain was a community of small dairy farms with many of the men finding work in lumber camps (further north) for the winter. The rocky, sandy soil and the northern climate proved too hard to make a living for many settlers. In the 1920s and the 1930s other businesses were established. Potatoes were grown and three potato warehouses were established. As many as 90 carloads of potatoes were shipped from the depot by growers in the 1920s. A cheese factory was built in 1925. Beans and cucumbers were grown and sent to packing plants. Strawberry farms were started. A broom factory was built and eventually abandoned.<sup>11</sup> "Starting in 1931 Mountain was hit with a triple whammy. The Great Depression had commenced its awful reign, the lumber companies had completed their total destruction of these virgin

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<sup>8</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p.p.67-68.

<sup>9</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Holt, A Wisconsin Lumberman Looks Backward, Published by the Holt Family, 1948, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p. p. 86, 72, 73, 74.

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forests and the drought of the thirties was now in the full process of development.”<sup>12</sup> The marginal farms were abandoned. The cutover, burned over wasteland reverted to the county thus reducing the tax base for the town. On November 13, 1933, the Nicolet National Forest was established, and over 50% of the township is now owned by the federal government as national forest lands.

In 1933 temporary employment was found for some local people with the arrival of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camps (CCC Camps). On June 13, 1933, five or six coaches of CCC men arrived at the train station and occupied the three CCC camps in the Mountain area. The men set about reforestation, they built roads, fire towers, and dams, and created parks and other public works projects. The camps were abandoned in 1942 after the start of World War II.<sup>13</sup> With the decline of the lumbering industry and the failure of the farms and businesses, the population also declined. The 1930<sup>14</sup> census listed a population of 546, with 490 in 1950, and the low of 373 in 1960.<sup>15</sup>

Logging of the second growth timber, the development of the recreational potential of the national forests, lakes and snowmobile/ATV trails has brought an increase in population to the area. The 1990 census listed a population of 730.<sup>16</sup> Large proportions of the

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<sup>12</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Olson, Mountain Memories, Mountain Centennial Book, 1889-1989, p. 89.

<sup>14</sup> Wisconsin Blue Book: 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission, Overall Economic Plan for Oconto County, January 1977, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Wisconsin Blue Book: 1997-1998 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1997-1998).

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population are retirees, who have come to the area for its natural beauty, settling around the lakes, not in the town center. The school enrollment has continued to decline, as have the businesses in the center of Mountain. A fire on September 15, 1999 destroyed two 100-year-old stores (vacant buildings). The center of town is reduced to only 2 active businesses. These two business buildings--a tavern (originally a store built about 1903), and the Blue Mountain Hotel--and the Mountain School are all that is left of the once thriving town of Mountain. The Mountain School is the only one of these three buildings maintaining its architectural integrity.

## **EDUCATIONAL HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The Mountain School is located in the Town of Mountain (formerly the Town of Armstrong), that until 1891 was part of the Town of How.<sup>17</sup> Thomas McAllen settled in the area with his wife and children. Shortly thereafter other families arrived and this made school a necessity. The first school in Mountain was started in 1885 with Miss Ella Mentor as teacher receiving a salary of \$30 per month.<sup>18</sup>

The first school was held in an abandoned log camp, commonly known as the old Bartz place. It consisted of two rooms, one of which was used for the school, and the other for family living quarters. The seats and benches were crudely constructed, ran the entire length of the room, which was

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<sup>17</sup> Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 1, p. 3.

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heated by a big box-stove. Water was furnished to the children by the well-known pail and dipper. The girls sat on one side of the room, and the boys on the other.<sup>19</sup>

Nine students attended this school, four girls and five boys, though there was room for around twenty students.<sup>20</sup> Since there were no compulsory attendance laws, many of the boys quit school as soon as they were able to find work in the nearby logging camps as cooks and chore-boys. Girls usually attended a number of years longer.<sup>21</sup>

The boys came to school in their woolen shirts, woolen pants, and big boots. The girls wore long sleeved dresses, which reached nearly to their ankles. For outerwear they had jackets or capes, homemade, of course, and hoods, some of which were knitted and some crocheted. They wore long underwear, tucked into long home knit stockings, and high shoes, with buttons.<sup>22</sup>

The year 1886 saw the reorganization of the school district, and a new school being built on the first town site.<sup>23</sup> This school was constructed of logs, but was much larger than

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<sup>18</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>19</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>21</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>22</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>23</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

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the first and was the proud possessor of a cupola with a big bell.<sup>24</sup> The Modern Woodmen later bought this building using it as a hall to hold their meetings.<sup>25</sup> Tabor Lutheran Church's parsonage presently occupies this site.

Mountain was a fast growing community necessitating the building of a new 40-foot by 70-foot building at the school's present location in 1898.<sup>26</sup> The town paid Sever and Jennie Anderson \$100 for the parcel of land where the brick building with stone foundation was built.<sup>27</sup> The township system of school government existed in the Town of Armstrong at this time, and the Township of Armstrong voted unanimously to borrow \$1000 from the State to aid in building the new school.<sup>28</sup> Under the township system of school government "... the whole town was a school district and each locality supporting a school was a subdistrict."<sup>29</sup> The new school building was occupied during the fall of 1898<sup>30</sup> and under the direction of two teachers by September of 1899.<sup>31</sup> Night school

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<sup>24</sup>Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>25</sup>Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, June 2, 1899.

<sup>26</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, August 19, 1898.

<sup>27</sup>Deed Recorded Oconto County Court House, May 28, 1998, Volume 68 Deeds, p. 375.

<sup>28</sup> Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 1, p. 162

<sup>29</sup> William T Anderson, "The Development of the Common School", Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 112.

<sup>30</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, November 18, 1898.

<sup>31</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, October 20, 1899.

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was being conducted on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings by April of 1904.<sup>32</sup> November 10, 1904, shortly after a new furnace was installed, the building burned.<sup>33</sup> The newspaper reported:

The graded school building at Mountain burned down on Thursday Morning, 10<sup>th</sup> instant. The fire was first noticed at about three o'clock and at four, the building was completely gutted and rendered an utter ruin. The structure was of brick and was considered the best of its kind in the county. It was heated by furnace that was completed about six weeks ago, was nicely furnished and well equipped. The schoolwork, so suddenly and rudely interrupted, was being carried on successfully and to the apparent satisfaction of all. A flourishing Sunday school was held in the building and Christian Endeavor work had been begun both of which must now be postponed indefinitely. The loss is estimated at between four and five thousand dollars, which was only partly covered by insurance. Origin of the fire is unknown.<sup>34</sup>

After the fire, the teachers Miss Irma Plant and Miss Sadie Fulton nobly rose to the occasion and taught their school lessons with half of the students in the old log school, and half of them next door in the old Harry Baldwin store.<sup>35</sup> There were 112 students

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<sup>32</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, April 22, 1904.

<sup>33</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, November 18, 1904.

<sup>34</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, November 18, 1904.

<sup>35</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

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between 4 and 20, with average daily attendance of 46 at the Mountain School during the school year of the fire.<sup>36</sup>

Immediately work was started on a new building. A contract for \$6,100 was awarded for a new, brick, four-roomed school before June 30, 1905.<sup>37</sup> The Town Board of Armstrong voted \$2,000 towards this endeavor.<sup>38</sup> Miss Kathryn Mackie of Oshkosh and Miss Sadie Fulton<sup>39</sup> of Oconto were teaching in the building during the fall of 1905,<sup>40</sup> and were visited by County Superintendent Taylor.<sup>41</sup>

This four-roomed school forms the central part of the present school building in Mountain.<sup>42</sup> The 1909<sup>43</sup> and 1910<sup>44</sup> Superintendent's reports show that the number of

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<sup>36</sup>Annual Report of the Town Clerk of the Town of Armstrong to the County Superintendent, of the County of Oconto State of Wisconsin, for the school year ending June 30, 1905.

<sup>37</sup>Annual Report of the Town Clerk of the Town of Armstrong to the County Superintendent, of the County of Oconto State of Wisconsin, for the school year ending June 30, 1905.

<sup>38</sup>Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 1, p. 305.

<sup>39</sup>Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, January 7, 1905.

<sup>40</sup>Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, September 21, 1905.

<sup>41</sup>Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, November 30, 1905.

<sup>42</sup>Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>43</sup>Oconto County Superintendent's Report to the State Superintendent of Schools for the State of Wisconsin for the year of 1909.

<sup>44</sup>Annual Report of the Town Clerk of the Town of Armstrong to the County Superintendent of the County of Oconto State of Wisconsin for the year ending June 1910.

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teachers in the building had grown from two to three. The state-graded school was established in 1901.<sup>45</sup> A school of three or more departments was called a first class graded school, which Mountain School became in 1909. Special state aid was granted to these schools when the annual inspection showed that legally qualified teachers were employed who were doing good work, when all needed apparatus was furnished, and when the school was free from unsanitary features.<sup>46</sup> The County Superintendent's reports to the State Superintendent in 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1914 mention that the Mountain School is a first class State Graded School<sup>47</sup> with four teachers or departments.<sup>48</sup> When Mountain School, in years 1911 and 1913, grew to have four departments, it changed its structure from offering one year of high school to two years of high school in 1913.<sup>49</sup>

In April of 1912, the town board of the Town of Armstrong ordered the president of the school board to post notice according to Chapter 388 of the Wisconsin State Statutes of 1911 to hold the first annual meeting of the new school district on July 7, 1912.<sup>50</sup> This

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<sup>45</sup> Anderson, "The Development of the Common School", Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 114.

<sup>46</sup> Anderson, "The Development of the Common School", Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 114.

<sup>47</sup> Oconto County Superintendent's Report to the State Superintendent of Schools for the State of Wisconsin for the years 1911-1914.

<sup>48</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Department of County Schools, September, 25, 1913.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson, "Development of the Common School," Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 113.

<sup>50</sup> Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 1, p. 421

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was being done pursuant to instructions laid out in Statute 388 Laws of the State of Wisconsin of 1911.

Whenever the township system shall be abolished in any town, the town board of supervisors of said town shall meet for the purpose of creating and forming suitable independent districts. Such meeting shall be held between the first day of March and first day of June, 1912....The Supervisors shall grant a public hearing and when the hearing is closed they shall at once proceed to create one or more suitable independent districts making the order to take effect on Saturday, June 22, 1912, and the date for the first district meeting shall be the first Monday in July at seven o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>51</sup>

The Town of Armstrong minutes shows that the Town of Armstrong passed from the township system of school government to the district system during the 1913 school year. The entire township was reorganized into individual districts.<sup>52</sup> The Mountain School became known as School District Number 1, Town of Armstrong, Oconto County. During the year of 1913 the new school district built a cement sidewalk and hired the first janitor in addition to their four teachers.<sup>53</sup>

Pursuant to a petition presented to the Town Board of Armstrong, March 9, 1914, the board resolved to have a special election held in the Town of Armstrong March 23,

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<sup>51</sup> Wisconsin Session Laws, 1911, Chapter 388 of Wisconsin State Statues, Section 516, Approved June 16, 1911.

<sup>52</sup> Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 1, p. 427

<sup>53</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

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1914.<sup>54</sup> At this special meeting there were 64 votes cast, 59 for a Union Free High School and 5 against. Notice of the above election and its results were sent to the State School Board March 28, 1914.<sup>55</sup>

On April 15, 1914, at a special meeting, it was decided to build a high school that was to be connected to the present building. Two wings, two stories high, were added to the existing building along with indoor toilets.<sup>56</sup> Students and teachers occupied the new building by the end of October 1914.<sup>57</sup> This was the first Union Free High School in Oconto County.<sup>58</sup> This high school was formed according to Chapter 493 of the Wisconsin Statutes approved June 16, 1909.

The statute providing for union free high school went into effect in 1909. It differs somewhat in the form of government from the plan adopted for town free high schools and permits any territory containing thirty-six square miles, whether all in one town or not, to be organized as a union free high school district. The amount of state aid to the schools of the latter class is one-half of the amount expended for instruction. Limited, however, to the sum of \$900 in cases where there are two teachers in the

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<sup>54</sup> Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 2, p.33.

<sup>55</sup> Town of Armstrong, Minutes of Town Board Meetings, Volume 2, p. 34.

<sup>56</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>57</sup> Oconto County Reporter, Superintendent's Report, November 5, 1914.

<sup>58</sup> Oconto County Board Minutes November 9, 1915.

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high school. \$1200 where there are three employed and not to exceed \$1500 in any year.<sup>59</sup>

A deed dated May 20, 1915 conveys for \$1.00 and other valuable consideration about one acre of land to the Union Free High School, School District Number One of Town of Armstrong.<sup>60</sup> Following a countywide sectional meeting held January 22 and 23 in 1915 the following was reported in the Oconto Falls paper:

Mountain has a new and beautiful building, housing a Union Free High School and a State Graded School. They employ six teachers in the building and have a janitor with an assistant. The building is supplied with every modern convenience and well equipped. It has a beautiful auditorium which serves as a high school study room and as a meeting place for community gatherings.<sup>61</sup>

During the summer of 1917, a well was dug behind the school building and bubblers installed.<sup>62</sup> There was a hand pump behind the school and the water was carried by pail into the building and placed in earthenware bubblers inside the school.<sup>63</sup> The school was

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<sup>59</sup> "District Free High Schools", Wisconsin Blue Book: 1911 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1911).

<sup>60</sup> Deed Recorded Oconto County Court House, May 20, 1915, Volume 114, p. 393.

<sup>61</sup> Union Farmer-Herald, Oconto Falls, Teachers' Meeting at Mountain, January 29, 1915.

<sup>62</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>63</sup> Rudolph Saffran, 1929 Graduate of the Mountain Union Free High School.

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closed for five weeks and two days during the Flu Epidemic of 1918. A water system was installed in the summer of 1931.<sup>64</sup>

The treasurer's report for the Mountain School did not show any electric bills paid in 1932, but as of the fall of 1933 the payment of these bills was noted.<sup>65</sup> A 1929 graduate of the Mountain Union Free High School stated that until that time the electricity was supplied by a generator run by gas that was in the basement of the school building.<sup>66</sup> This generator not only supplied electricity, it also provided entertainment to the students who played in the exhaust as it exited one of the basement windows.

A Hot Lunch Project was started in 1941 under the Works Progress Administration. All who wanted to eat ate in one basement room fed by one cook.<sup>67</sup> Prior to this time the students brought their lunches from home and could obtain a hot drink or a cup of soup if they paid one cent.<sup>68</sup> In 1954 the number eating had grown to 100 eating in two rooms with two cooks.<sup>69</sup>

The Parent Teachers Association, later called the Community Club, sponsored many projects to better the lot of the school and the students attending the school. By the 1950s

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<sup>64</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>65</sup> Mountain Schools Treasurers Reports 1931-1946.

<sup>66</sup> Rudolph Saffran 1929 Graduate of the Mountain Union Free High School.

<sup>67</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

<sup>68</sup> Rudolph Saffren, 1929 Graduate of the Mountain Union Free High School.

<sup>69</sup> Oconto Falls Times Herald, History of Mountain School Tells History of Community, June 3, 1954.

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the name of the club had changed to the Homemakers Club.<sup>70</sup> The minutes of these organizations attest to the fact that the activities conducted at the Mountain School formed the nucleus of the community's social and cultural life.<sup>71</sup> Two illustrations of the proceeding statement comes from meeting minutes of programs presented for the membership's information and enjoyment:

**October 14, 1922:**

1. Selections by Orchestra
2. Recitation "Columbus" George Gibson
3. Paper—Positive and Negative Methods in Child Training Pt. I-- Miss Weikel
4. Selections by Orchestra
5. Paper—Pt. II Miss Hammill
6. Business Meeting

**September 14, 1941:**

A card and bunco party was held. Prizes were awarded. The business meeting was called to order...

The auditorium was used as a local community theater. "Community Players" performed plays and at other times everyone attended "motion picture" shows. Many performances

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<sup>70</sup> Minutes Parent Teachers Association and Community Club, 1922-1950.

<sup>71</sup> Minutes Mountain Community Club, 1922-1949.

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were followed by a "social hour" in the kitchen with a "pot luck" meal.<sup>72</sup> Thanksgiving festivities included an annual community-wide feast.<sup>73</sup>

The maintenance of the Mountain Union Free High School started to be more than the community could afford and each year the school board borrowed money until they were reimbursed by the tax receipts.<sup>74</sup> The building did not contain a gymnasium and the students had to go to the town hall to play basketball. There was no program that allowed students to play football, and a number of the young men attended schools in the surrounding area to insure they could play that game. No music, industrial education, or physical education programs were provided and the public had begun to expect these courses.<sup>75</sup> The Mountain Union Free High School was discontinued in the fall of 1948, and the students were transported to Suring High School while the first eight years of school continued to be taught at Mountain. The cost of tuition and transportation for the students attending high school at the Suring School was 120% more than the cost of operating the Mountain School in 1952.<sup>76</sup> In the fall of 1960, Mountain School District Number one consolidated with the Suring School District.

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<sup>72</sup>Minutes Mountain Community Club, 1922-1949.

<sup>73</sup>Union Farmer-Herald, Oconto Falls, Superintendent's Report, March 14, 1916.

<sup>74</sup>Treasurers Report of the Mountain School Board, 1932-1946.

<sup>75</sup>Barbara Wyatt, editor, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Vol. III, p. 3-5.

<sup>76</sup>Town of Armstrong Tax Receipt, 1952.

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The fall of 1961 saw the start of building an all-purpose room on the back (west side) of the Mountain School building. This is the first and only addition added to the Mountain School since the two wings were added in the summer of 1914. The first of the much talk of eliminating the Mountain School building started about this time and they are still circulating today. However, the Mountain School building still stands and contains classrooms for grades 1-5. There are special rooms for specialties like art, music, speech, and Chapter I reading.

**EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY**

Mountain School is significant at the local level since it follows the rise of quality public rural education in Wisconsin. When the 1905 building was built it housed two teachers though it had room for four classrooms.<sup>77</sup> By 1909<sup>78</sup> the Mountain School had three teachers or departments making it a first class state graded school receiving special state aid since it employed teachers of exemplary qualifications and provided the latest in modern school apparatus and building facilities.<sup>79</sup> The school was monitored by visits from the County Superintendent of Schools, as well as by the State Superintendent of Schools, to insure it maintained this exemplary rating required in this type of school, which was established by the State of Wisconsin in 1901. In 1911 when the Mountain School grew to have four departments it offered two years of high school instead of only

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<sup>77</sup>Oconto County Reporter, Mountain, January 7, 1905.

<sup>78</sup>Oconto County Superintendent's Report to the State Superintendent of Schools for the State of Wisconsin for the year of 1909.

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one.<sup>80</sup> Abolishing the township form of school funding<sup>81</sup> and control in 1913 to create the district form of school funding and government continued the evolution of the Mountain School following specific State guidelines implemented to improve the quality of public rural education in Wisconsin.<sup>82</sup>

In 1914 when the voters of the township petitioned for and obtained permission to establish the Mountain Union Free High School, the school district was only following the special provisions being advocated by State Legislation as it worked to improve free education for all students in the State of Wisconsin.<sup>83</sup> During the summer and fall of 1914 when the two wings were added to the Mountain School the County Superintendent of Schools stated that Mountain had a new building supplied with every modern convenience. This well equipped building housed a Union Free High School and a State Graded School. There were six teachers teaching in the Mountain School building in the fall of 1914.<sup>84</sup> It contained a modern furnace, indoor toilets, and a generator to provide electricity. The State of Wisconsin encouraged the building of high schools by making special payments for their establishment and requiring the district to pay the tuition of

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<sup>79</sup>Anderson, "The Development of the Common School", Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 114.

<sup>80</sup>Anderson, "The Development of the Common School," Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 113.

<sup>81</sup>Anderson, "The Development of the Common School," Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1923), p. 106.

<sup>82</sup>Wisconsin Session Laws, 1911, Chapter 388 of Wisconsin State Statues, Section 516, Approved June 16, 1911.

<sup>83</sup>"District Free High Schools," Wisconsin Blue Book: 1911 (Madison: State Printing Board, 1911).

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Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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students who attended high school outside of the school district. Transportation money was provided for students living a great distance from school.

The Mountain Union Free High School offered a chance for students in Mountain to obtain a high school education in specialized subject areas with special rooms where these subjects were taught. The building contained a science room, English room, typing room, auditorium, and library. Special funds were offered by the State for libraries and special accounting procedures followed to insure correct use of these funds. Mountain Union Free High School flourished during the 1920s and 1930s, but by the 1940s it started to lose its aura of being a "modern" high school. The population of Mountain had started to decline and this caused the student enrollment to decline. The school's facilities no longer met the community's needs for the specialized school subjects offered by the larger school districts.<sup>85</sup> The school board had difficulty raising money to fund the expense of a high school. In 1948 the Mountain school board decided to pay the tuition to send high school students to a neighboring school. This transition marks the end of the period of significance for this building.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were many political, industrial, and social pressures placed upon the local communities to meet the local educational needs. Many first generation citizens had immigrated to Mountain lured by the money paid to harvest the

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<sup>84</sup>Union Farmer-Herald, Oconto Falls, Teachers' Meeting at Mountain, January 29, 1915.

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Section 8 Page 21

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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virgin timber. The increase in the number of students caused the construction of these “modern” buildings that established how schools should look and work and these buildings prevailed for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>86</sup> The Mountain School building was one of these buildings. The Mountain School is an educational landmark in the community; it has been in continual use as an educational facility since 1905.

The Mountain School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A. Built in 1905 with its 1914 additions, it supplied every modern convenience when the building was used as a place to educate Mountain’s children and as a meeting place for the Mountain community. Mountain School’s decline parallels the demise of the rural school in Wisconsin as the rural districts consolidated with neighboring larger districts. The Mountain School building still maintains its architectural integrity as an intact example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century school architecture.

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<sup>85</sup>Wyatt, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Vol. III, p. 3-5.

<sup>86</sup>Wyatt, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Vol. III, p. 3-5.



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Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 4

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

SE ¼, NE ¼ Town 31, Range 16 E, Section 10. The east boundary of the Mountain School corresponds to the edge of pavement of Highway W. The north, south and east boundaries correspond to the fence that surrounds the schoolyard.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The boundary encloses all of the historic resources associated with Mountain School. It includes the land containing the school building and its addition, as well as the fenced playground. The nominated acreage excludes a parcel of land legally belonging to the school, but located across the highway.

Mountain School  
Name of Property

Oconto  
County and State

Wisconsin

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

<b>name/title</b>	Suring School District	<b>date</b>	10/99
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	920-842-2178
<b>street&amp;number</b>	PO Box 158	<b>zip code</b>	54174
<b>city or town</b>	Suring	<b>state</b>	WI

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

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

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Section Photos Page 1

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Photo 1 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of East & South Facing Facades Looking Northwest

Photo 2 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of South & East Facing Facades Looking Northwest

Photo 3 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of East Facing Façade Looking West

Photo 4 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo of Old Picture Courtesy of Emily Dunlap's Family (Photo by Paramount Photo, September 1999)  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of South and East Facing Facades of Original 1905 Building Looking Northwest

Photo 5 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of West & South Facing Facades Looking Northeast

Photo 6 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of East & North Facing Facades Looking Southwest

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Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Photo 7 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of upper windows North 1/3 of East Facing Façade Looking West

Photo 8 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of West and North Facing Facades Looking Southeast

Photo 9 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Cast Iron Furnace Doors (furnace used to dispose of wastes from indoor toilets)

Photo 10 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Cast Iron Furnace Plaque

Photo 11 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Original Door Hardware

Photo 12 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Original Hardware

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Section Photos Page 3

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Photo 13 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Original Windows & Woodwork

Photo 14 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Roof (roof drain & internal rain leaders) Looking Southwest

Photo 15 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Varnished Tongue and Groove Hardwood Floors

Photo 16 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Original Wood Stair Treads, Wood Baseboards, & Wood Handrails

Photo 17 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Original Door with Transom & Original Woodwork

Photo 18 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Original Sink

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Section Photos Page 4

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Photo 19 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of Classroom in 1914 Addition

Photo 20 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Cornice

Photo 21 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Cornice

Photo 22 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Cornice

Photo 23 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Cornice

Photo 24 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Cornice

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Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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Photo 25 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Cornice

Photo 26 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Ceiling

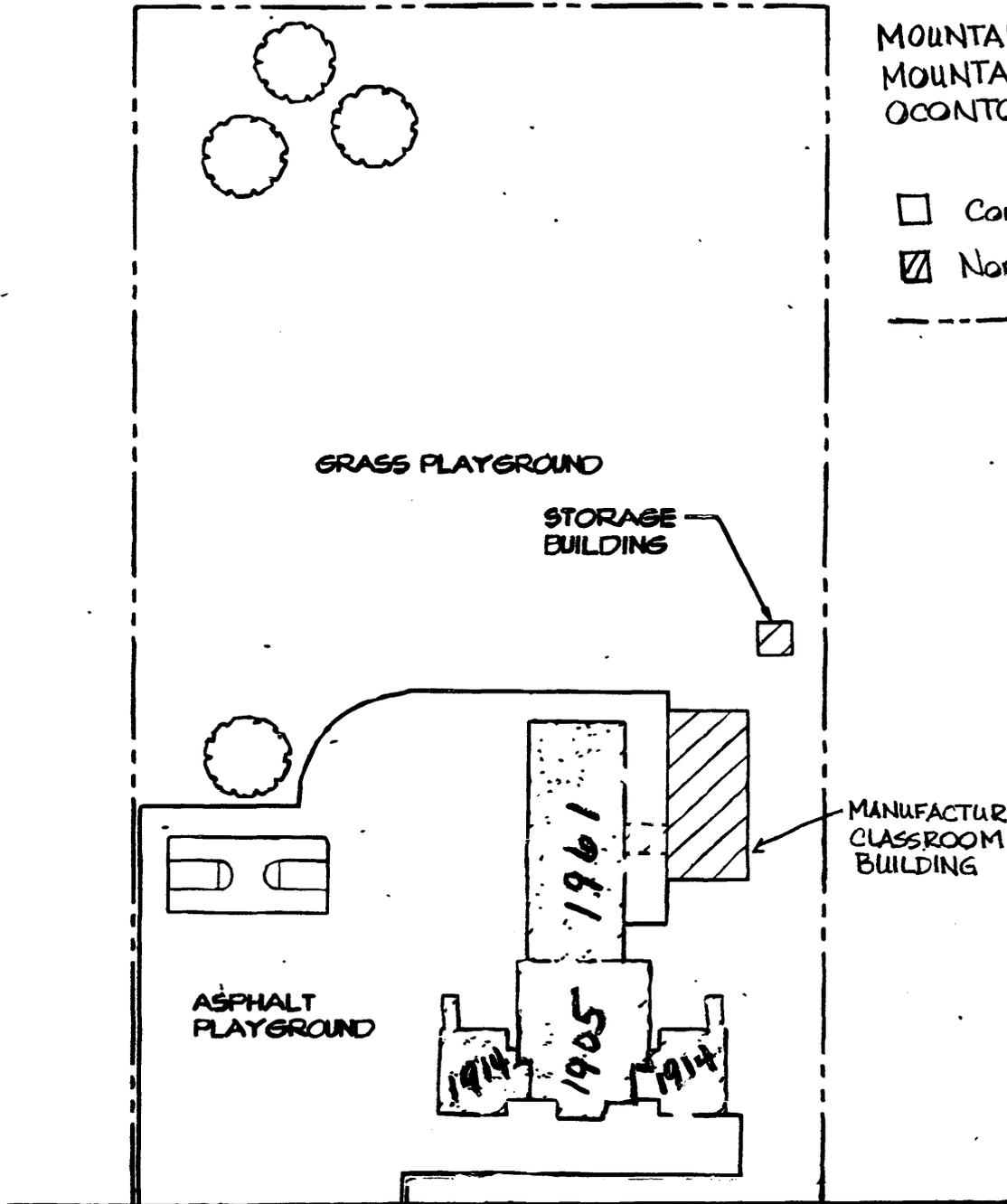
Photo 27 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Ceiling

Photo 28 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Ceiling

Photo 29 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Gloria Case, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up of Painted Decorative Sheet Metal Ceiling

Photo 30 of 30  
Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Ned O. Lundquist, September 1999  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Close-up Basement Area 1914 Addition—Painted Stonewalls & Concrete Floors

# Diagram 1

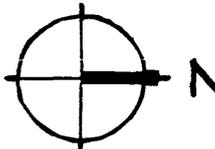


MOUNTAIN SCHOOL  
MOUNTAIN  
OCONTO CO., WI

- Contributing
- Non-Contributing
- Boundary



**SITE PLAN**  
NO SCALE



**BUILDING SURVEY FOR  
MOUNTAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
MOUNTAIN, WISCONSIN

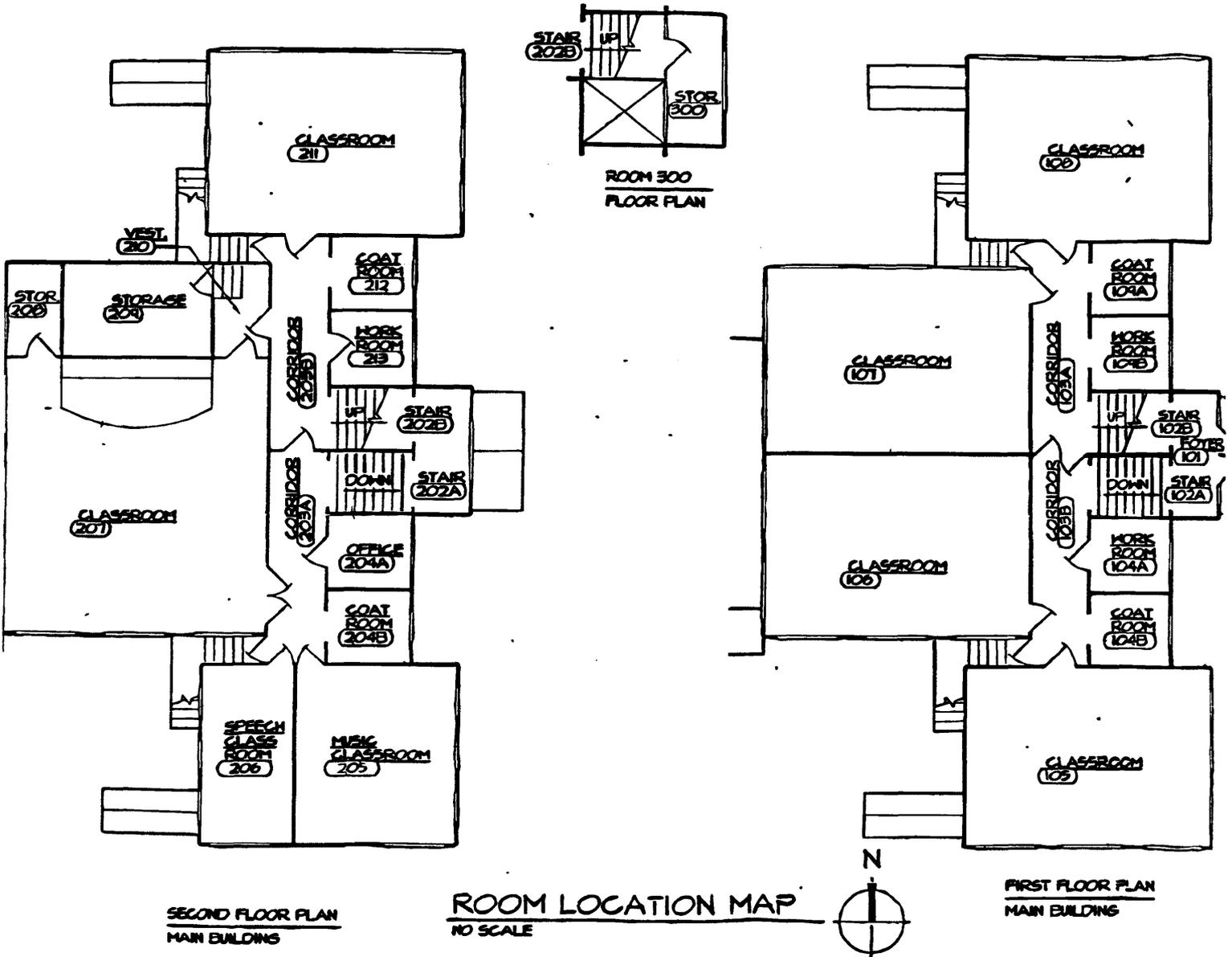
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# Diagram 2

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto Co., WI



# Diagram 3

Mountain School  
Mountain, Oconto Co., WI

