

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000244 Date Listed: 3/30/92

Potomac School
Property Name

Missoula MT
County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for *Antonietta Lee*
Signature of the Keeper

4/2/92
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Geographical Data: The Acreage of Property is amended to read: 1.9 acres.

This information was confirmed with Chere Jiusto of the Montana State historic preservation office.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

249

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

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

1. Name of Property

historic name: Potomac School

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 220 Potomac Road

not for publication: n/a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

city/town: Potomac

state: Montana code: MT county: Missoula code: 063 zip code: 59823

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public - local

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 2 </u>	<u> </u> building(s)
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> </u> Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

4. Certification

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

Manella Sheffy Signature of certifying official 2-9-92 Date

MT SHPO State or Federal agency and bureau

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

____ Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date

____ State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Antonieth Allen 3/30/92
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

h Signature of Keeper _____ Date _____

6. Function or Use

Historic: Education/school

Current: Education/school

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Craftsman
Other: Vernacular

Materials: foundation:stone
walls:brick
roof:asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Potomac School is a raised 1½-story, brick school building. Designed by the Kennedy architectural partnership of Missoula, the building combines vernacular school building traditions with Craftsman influences.

The design is symmetrical and employs a horizontal, rectangular massing. Reinforcing this horizontality are a gently-pitched hipped roof, wide eaves, multiple window groupings, and banded brick facades. A central tower with a steeple dominates the primary facade and houses the main school entrance. The walls are finished with brick: red dressed brick finishes the first story above a soldier course of darker red brick which finishes the basement level below. Fenestration is characterized by double-hung, sash windows with wooden frames; these are arranged in multiple groupings, and feature a variety of multi-light configurations. Hipped dormers project from the school's rooflines. Housing sash windows in pairs and triplets, these are clad with wood shingles.

The square, main entrance/bell tower projects frontally from the planes of the west facade. Although the doorway and windows are set at a mid-level between the basement and first story, a continuous cornice and brick banding tie the tower visually into the facade. The entrance features a pair of Craftsman-style wooden slab doors, lit by single, upper glass panels, beneath a narrow rectangular transom set with 8 vertical lights. The doorway is accented by a narrow, fixed, 8-light vertical window on either side. The doorway and windows are placed in segmentally-arched openings spanned by flat arches. The upper portion of the tower ties, dormer-like, into the roof. Trimmed with wooden shingles, this upper portion of the tower features a series of three round-headed windows. The center window is larger, and includes four inner panes, with narrow sidelights and a fanlight transom; smaller side windows have six fixed panes. The hip-roofed tower is capped by a square belfry, clad with vertically and horizontally panelled wood. The belfry sets on a prominent cornice, and is capped by a steep, pyramidal roof with a slender metal finial capped by a metal knob. The bell is housed behind round-arched vents with wooden louvers.

On the west facade, to either side of the tower, five windows are grouped on the first story, above groups of three on the basement level. The window openings form segmental arches spanned by flat arches of the darker red brick. On the first story, tall, wood-framed, double-hung sash units are arranged 2-over-2, with rectangular transoms. Sills are of the darker red brick, and a simple wooden panel fills the arch space above each transom. Basement windows house square, fixed units with a central vertical division framed with wood. Above the roofline, a hipped dormer with paired sash windows is divided 3-over-2.

The design of the east elevation echoes that of the main facade, although it lacks the tower and entrance. The windows and openings are similar, and include the groupings of five tall sash windows to the sides; on the basement level, there are five rather than three window openings to each side. And, as originally designed, the first story included an additional pair of two tall sash windows at center, above a basement entrance on the lower level. Remodeling in 1985 added a shed roof supported on iron poles. A brick chimney rises above the rear plane of the roof.

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In 1991, a small, square addition housing exit hallway and two bathrooms was made to the east facade. Highly compatible with the school's historic design, the addition employs similar brickwork including the darker brick base, and segmental openings with darker flat brick arches and sills. A simple wooden cornice marks the flat lines of the roof. A rear entrance with double, panelled metal doors is recessed under a wide segmental arch on the east wall; on the north and south, single windows, smaller but similar to the historic fenestration, illuminate the bathrooms. The north and south walls are recessed where they join the original building, imparting a sense of separation between the old and the new.

The north and south elevations are rather plain in contrast to the front and rear facades. On the north elevation, main level, an original side entrance projects at center from the building. It is covered by a hipped roof on a simple box cornice, and like the primary entrance, it features a pair of wooden doors in a segmentally-arched opening, spanned by a flat arch of darker red brick. Above this, a hipped dormer is centered, housing a group of three, 3-over-2 sash windows. A fire escape of modern vintage now accesses the upper level through the eastern-most window in the dormer. This escape is framed with wood and clad with wooden shingles to match the dormers. The steps are metal.

On the south elevation, a single tall sash window is centered on the first story. Above this, a hipped dormer is centered similar to that on the north elevation, and houses a group of three, 3-over-2 sash windows.

The school building retains a very high level of integrity, thanks to careful design of the 1991 addition. By employing the small scale, compatible materials and many elements in the original design, the new addition sensitively melds with the original building. Yet the flat rooflines, a planer emphasis and visual separation of the addition clearly demark it from the original structure, preventing confusion between original and non-original portions of the school. The addition is tied into the school's original rear wall, however, the openings were made through existing windows to impact the original design as little as possible. And because it is tucked away at the rear, the addition is not visible from primary approaches to the building, containing visual impacts to the view from the east.

There were several other non-historic alterations, however, they were minor, and their effect on integrity was most limited. They include the addition of inside plumbing and bathrooms in 1947-48. In 1960, several small projects were accomplished -- the foundation was reinforced, the porch was rebuilt, a fire escape was built and the basement stairwell was rebuilt. That same year, the original heating system, which first burned wood and later coal, was updated to oil. In 1985, the basement was remodeled; in 1989, the office was remodeled. The roof is now covered with asphalt shingles, the front steps have been replaced with poured concrete, and the lower wall below the water table is reinforced with poured concrete.

The Potomac School is the most substantial building in Potomac, and sits at the south end of this small town, overlooking Union Creek and the broad Camas Prairie which nestles at the foot of surrounding forested and mountainous terrain.

The schoolyard surrounding the Potomac School is shaded by tall, native Ponderosa pines, retained when the school was established 78 years ago. Playground equipment is located on the lawn to the north of the school building; at the rear (east) there is a basketball court. A historic photograph of the school reveals that shrubbery and a wooden flagpole were located in front of the building; two small gable-roofed wooden buildings stood to the south; the outhouses stood at the rear of the schoolyard. One of those small buildings was a single-story residence which served as a teacherage. It was moved off

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site in the early 1980s. Today, the shrubbery has been cleared away, although the other small wooden outbuilding appears to remain--a small gable-roofed, wooden shed with clapboard siding apparently dating to the early 1900s which now sits just south of the school building. The school grounds, once enclosed by wire fencing on a metal pipe frame, are presently enclosed by a chain link fence.

8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: **A, C**

Areas of Significance: **Education, Architecture**

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): **n/a**

Period(s) of Significance: **1913-1941**

Significant Person(s): **n/a**

Significant Dates: **1913**

Cultural Affiliation: **n/a**

Architect/Builder: **John Kennedy, architect
C.H. Finley, builder**

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

The Potomac School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, for its associations with the early growth and development of education in the community of Potomac, and as a well-preserved representative of schoolhouse building traditions in rural Montana communities during the early 20th century.

Potomac is located in the Camas Prairie, 23 miles northeast of present-day Missoula. The prairie is named for the rich stands of camas which were native to the area. For thousands of years, the Plateauan Indian peoples of this region made annual harvests of camas here and the nutritious root was a staple of their diet.

During the 1860s, white settlers from the eastern United States began to enter Montana in substantial numbers. By 1866, a prospector named John D. "Dick" Richards, had developed a garden on the Camas Prairie, a location close to the nearby diggings at Bear Creek. In 1878, Richards discovered a silver ledge near the crest of the ridge between present-day Clinton and Potomac, a site which was later named Wallace. That same year, white miners were drawn to the Camas area to harvest a distinctly different resource. "Considerable quartz is found in the region of Camas Prairie and it is a place that those who are out of diggings should not overlook."¹ In April 1880, Richards reported that Camas Prairie would be a good place to settle.² The following month, the Bearpaw Mining district was organized. In June, Richards and two others had staked out ranches on Camas Prairie; he observed as well that "boys who went in recently [to the nearby Bearpaw mining district] are all at work sinking on their claims."³

The town of Potomac was settled in 1880, and through 1882 Richards promoted the ranching potential of the Camas Prairie. In the spring of 1882, he stated that there was "room for 50 good ranches," and by October, that 50 settlers planned to winter on Camas Prairie.⁴ In 1884, the Potomac Post Office was established, the Camas Prairie election district was created, and the inhabitants completed the Elk Creek Road, connecting the settlement of Potomac with the Wallace Road which ran from Helena to Wallace, Idaho. Although there are no known population figures for the community at that time, 57 people voted at Camas Prairie in 1886. That number dropped to 40 in 1889, then steadily increased -- to 92 in 1890 and 114 in 1891.⁵

Logging became an important industry in southwestern Montana during the early 1880s, first to cut ties, timbers and lumber for construction of the Northern Pacific rail line, and later to provide mine timbers and fuel wood to the copper mines of Butte. The first organized logging in the Camas Prairie area occurred in 1885-1886. That year, A.B.

X See Continuation Sheet

¹Missoulian, June 7, 1878.

²Missoulian, April 2, 1880.

³Missoulian, June 6, 1880.

⁴Missoulian, May 6, 1882; October 6, 1882.

⁵Missoula County electoral records.

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Hammond relocated one of his Montana Improvement Company sawmills from Clinton to a site located a mile above the confluence of the Big Blackfoot and Clark Fork rivers. Hammond reorganized the company to form the Big Blackfoot Milling Company, and christened this new mill at Bonner the Big Blackfoot Mill.

E.R. Kilburn, an early logger in the area remembered that the Big Blackfoot Milling Company "cut road from Camas to Fish Creek that year, built our first camps and banked 7 million feet of lumber ready to float down to Bonner in spring at \$3 a thousand." This first lumber was hauled out on horse-drawn sleighs during a 6-week period that same winter.⁶

Production and expansion in the Butte copper mines boomed, and demand for timber from the Big Blackfoot drainage was unyielding. In 1898, Marcus Daly purchased the mill to guarantee a steady supply to the growing Anaconda Copper Mining Co. (ACM), setting the stage for the next phase of growth in the Potomac area.

Through the end of the 19th century, the settlement of Potomac grew slowly but steadily. Gradual upgrading of road and bridge systems improved the access to the community. In 1891, a stage route was added along the Blackfoot River corridor nearby to the north. However, roads accessing this isolated community continued to be rugged, and the town remained an outpost of mining and logging.

By the turn of the century, timber stands along the Blackfoot River were depleted, and the company pushed 15 miles up the valley into the Camas Prairie area to set up a headquarters camp at Potomac, and two others on nearby Union Creek and Arkansas Creek. At the same time, ACM moved to build a shortline railroad into this logging region. In 1904-05, ACM's Big Blackfoot Milling Company Railway built a line from McNamara's Landing to Greenough. Lumber crews hauled logs from the camps to McNamara where they were dumped into the Blackfoot River and floated down to the Bonner mill. In 1910, the Big Blackfoot Railway was incorporated by ACM, and the line was extended to Bonner.

As the loggers neared Potomac, the local economy soon became increasingly tied to the activities of the logging company. Ranches and lumber camps in the surrounding countryside formed the basic foundation to the local economy, and as timber production stepped up, the town grew. By 1912, the Polk city directories listed for Potomac: Smith's Hotel and general store, two saloons, a school, church, livery barn and half a dozen houses.

In 1913, the Big Blackfoot Railway extended to Potomac. The harvest of trees from the Potomac valley continued until 1916, at which time operations shifted to the Nine Mile Prairie region.⁷ From that time on into the latter 1900s, the population of Potomac steadily declined, dropping from 238 residents recorded by the census report for the Potomac precinct in 1920, to just 128 in 1940 and 105 in 1950.⁸

⁶Missoulian, December 19, 1926.

⁷See Bateman, Bob, Big Blackfoot Railway, and Taber, Thomas T., Shortlines of the Treasure State for discussions and photographs of this early shortline.

⁸U.S. Bureau of Census, Population Statistics 1920 - 1950.

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History of Education in Potomac

As in many communities, the growth of educational facilities in Potomac parallels the rise and decline of the town. School District No. 29, Potomac, was created on June 29, 1885 to take in the area between the Wallace Range on the south and west, the Blackfoot River on the north and the Deer Lodge county line on the east. The school census that year listed 16 children between the ages of 4 and 21, with another four children under age 4 who were rapidly approaching school age. In 1886, those numbers increased by two, and a new schoolhouse was planned at Potomac.

The schoolhouse was completed and opened in May of 1888. In 1893, when Flathead County was created, the school district was renumbered #11. As the community grew through the first decade of the 1900s, school population was on the rise. Demand for a local high school grew, and the first such program was held in a substandard frame building near the grade school. Later, older students studied in a local church.⁹ In July of 1912, trustees of the Potomac School district, which served the town and the outlying areas, voted unanimously to establish a local high school and employ three teachers. A special election was held on bonding \$10,000 to finance the construction of the new building, with 56 voting for and only four opposing.

Several special meetings followed to plan the construction of the new Potomac School. Minutes of these meetings reveal that on October 16, 1912, the trustees chose plans by an architect identified as Mr. Kennedy. Presumably they referred to John Kennedy, who practiced in nearby Missoula with his wife, Josephine. The cost exceeded their budget, however, and in February, 1913, the board awarded the building contract to Mr. Finley, at a cost of \$8,720, based upon a second set of plans drawn up by Mr. Kennedy. The building, to be finished with grounds cleaned and furniture in place, was to be a pressed-brick, veneered building of two stories in height, with a full basement.

School was held in a nearby church for the 1912-1913 school year during the construction of the new school. The Potomac School, enrolling students in grades 1-12, opened in 1913, with five teachers (two high school and three primary) and 52 students in attendance.

In a statewide context, the history of the Potomac School is reflective of the growth of Montana's educational system during the early 20th century. As Montana moved into the 20th century the pioneering legacy of school construction was gradually left behind. School populations grew and new school districts were created, while established districts expanded and improved existing school facilities. On the 1900 census, the state's educational system for the first time recorded more wood frame than log school buildings, and included 83 brick buildings in that tally. By 1914, there were 2100 school buildings in the state, and the newly completed Potomac School numbered one of 186 brick schools reported. In Missoula County, alone, Potomac School District #11 was one of 45 defined by 1900, and one of four brick school buildings completed by 1914. That year, County Superintendent of Schools, Pearl T. Marshall, noted that "Potomac will soon have a modern four-room building..." in her biennial report, describing the strides the county was making toward improving the condition of rural school districts. The following year, the number of brick school buildings jumped to 13.¹⁰

⁹Missoulian, August 11, 1963.

¹⁰State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Biennial Reports, 1900-1930.

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Architectural Significance

An elaboration on the sturdy, no-frills building forms which characterized rural schools in historic Montana, the Potomac School combines the vernacular tradition with Craftsman styling. The simple format involving brick wall construction, a highly symmetrical design, and a dominant belfry or bell tower marking the primary entry are elements which characterized late 19th and early 20th century vernacular school buildings throughout the country, and may be traced throughout the historic period in the design of Montana's rural schools.

In addition, Craftsman influences are readily apparent, and are expressed by those elements previously noted which establish the characteristic horizontal emphasis -- the long, low rectangular massing, the gently-pitched hipped rooflines and projecting eaves, the multiple window groupings, and the contrasting bandings of brick and wooden shingles. In addition, projecting roof dormers, the various multi-light windows, the simple, upper-glazed slab doors are details typical of Craftsman styling.

The school gains significance as a well-preserved example of the work of the Missoula-based, wife-and-husband architectural team of Josephine and John Kennedy. The Kennedys were active in the area by 1900, and designed buildings in the vicinity through 1918. Although they were best known for residential designs in south Missoula, they also worked on the design and construction of Missoula's Higgins Bridge. The Potomac School is the first identified example of the Kennedys' work in institutional design.

In emerging communities like Potomac, substantial buildings such as schools were often seen as a hallmark of a stable settlement. Forming a foundation to community, these buildings were both an indicator of the size and permanence of young towns, as well as a lasting statement of the community's commitment to the future.

The Potomac School has served the educational needs of the Camas Prairie community continuously for the past 78 years. Its architecture and its history mark a turning point as Potomac emerged from a small outpost of mining and ranching to an established logging and agricultural town. A substantial anchor on the south end of Potomac, the school continues to hold a substantial presence in this community, conveying a very strong sense of its associations with the history that shaped this small town.

9. References

Ainsworth, David, The Public Elementary Schools of Montana, 1860-1920, Dissertation, Doctor of Education, University of Montana, Missoula, 1971.
Barton, Emily, "Early Architects of Missoula, Montana," unpublished manuscript prepared for the Missoula Historic Preservation Office, Missoula, Montana, 1990.
Bateman, Bob, Big Blackfoot Railway, Platen Press, Deer Lodge, Montana, 1976.
Hall, Bob Chronology of Potomac Area Events, unpublished, available at Potomac Public Library.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office
 Other state agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: **Less than two acres**

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	12	303520	5195020

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Potomac School is located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 14, T13N, R16W, on the southwest end of the town of Potomac, Montana. The boundaries of the historic property being nominated are delineated by the colored line on the attached survey map labelled, "National Register Boundaries for the Potomac School."

Boundary Justification:

These boundaries encompass the property sold or donated to the school district by members of the community in 1913, and historically associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Chere Jiusto

Organization: Montana State Historic Preservation Office

Date: December 1991

Street & Number: 225 N. Roberts

Telephone: 406-444-7715

City or Town: Helena

State: Montana Zip: 59620

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Machado, Manuel, ed. and Delores Curry, interviewer, The Past Remembered: An Oral History of the Potomac Valley, unpublished, sponsored by the Potomac School District #11.

Missoula County Electoral Records, housed at the Missoula County Courthouse.

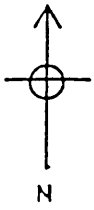
Missoulian, June 7, 1878; April 2 & June 6, 1880; May 6 & October 6, 1882; December 19, 1926; June 2, 1963; August 11, 1963.

Montana State Superintendent of Schools, Biennial Reports, 1900-1930.

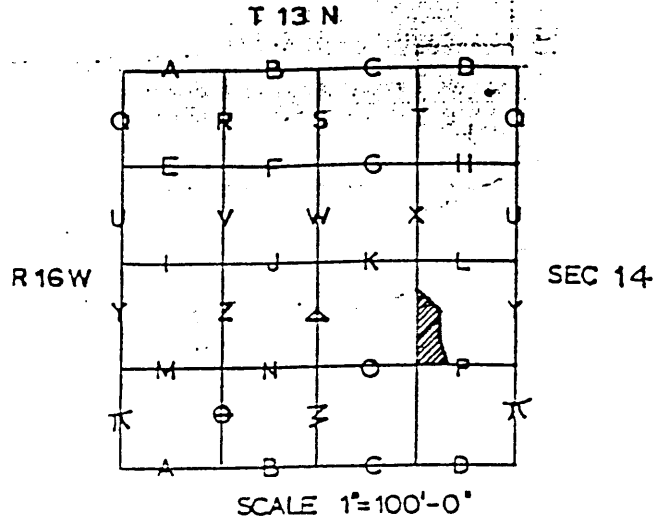
Potomac School Board Minutes of Meetings, 1885-present. Housed at Potomac School District #11 offices, Bonner, Montana.

Taber, Thomas T., "Short Lines of the Treasure State," unpublished manuscript, April 1960, available at Montana Historical Society Library, Helena, Montana.

United States Government Publishing Office, United States Bureau of the Census, Reports for 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950.



TOWN OF
POTOMAC



NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARIES
for the
POTOMAC SCHOOL

MISSOULA COUNTY
POTOMAC, MONTANA

