

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 classifications, 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 Spencer High School and Auditorium

other names/site number Spencer Middle School and Auditorium

2. Location

street & number 104 East 4th Street N/A not for publication

city or town Spencer N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Clay code 041 zip code 51301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Barbara A. Mitchell
Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO

December 15 2009
Date

Iowa State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
Action

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper
Date of 2.12.10

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Name of Property

Clay County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - state
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

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

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

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

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

RECREATION & CULTURE/Theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/ Art Deco

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

Stone

roof: Asphalt

Other: _____

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

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

NARRATIVE

"Our new building is 'sure' a great source of attraction."

— Birdie Stone of Dickens, as quoted in the *Spencer Reporter*, October 1, 1913

The 1914 Spencer High School is located in Clay County, Iowa, within the city of Spencer, one block east of Grand Avenue in the center of town at 104 East Fourth Street. The school is situated one block to the east of the Grand Avenue Historic Commercial District. The immediate neighborhood is made up of mixed uses. The building is sited within the original plat of Spencer in Block C, Lots 4–15. It has an open landscape to the east of the 1937 auditorium addition. The school is surrounded primarily by single-family dwellings to the south, north, and east; there are a few apartment buildings and multifamily complexes. The school is bordered on three sides (the north, west, and south) by two-way city streets. The south portion of the lot is a paved playground and parking lot. The Masonic Lodge, built in 1915, is across the street to the north. The city library is across the street to the west from the southwest corner of the school.

Each entrance of the school is located about ten yards from the sidewalk and is reached by a paved walkway perpendicular to the façade. There are a few deciduous trees and bushes as well as coniferous trees on the north façade. The south side is primarily a parking lot with a few trees on the far south part of the lot.

Exterior Description

School

The 1914 Spencer High School is a three-story building with a flat roof. The school portion itself is symmetrical; however, with the addition of the 1937 auditorium the building became asymmetrical. The foundation is concrete, the walls are brick, and the current roof is asphalt. The 1967 gymnasium addition is also brick with a flat roof. It does not have any windows; however, there are two doors on the west side and one on the east. The majority of the windows on the school building are not original; the replacement windows are double-hung or multipane hopper windows. Other windows are a combination of double-hung and multipane casement windows. The window openings on the school building have been reduced in size.

On the north façade, there is a center section that juts slightly north from the two entrance wings. There are two entrances on the north side of the building. There are nine bays of windows on the north façade. The windows vary in size, but all are single paned. From the exterior on the north side of the building the first floor brick is a deep

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purple color. There is a stone belt course that runs directly under the first-floor windows, approximately three feet from the base of the building. From the exterior, another stone belt course separates the first and second floors. This stone belt course also runs directly under the second-story windows, accentuating the separation between the brick used for the first floor and that used in the second and third floors. The exterior brick on the north façade used for the second and third floors is various shades of brown with darker purple bricks spaced irregularly. Approximately twelve inches from the top of the third-floor windows in the center section is a stone belt course that defines the center section as well as the sign that reads "High School." A final stone belt course runs the entire length of the school. These top two belt courses are equidistant from the top and bottom of the "High School" sign. The center section on the north side has a parapet wall that rises slightly above that of the east and west sections.

The belt courses continue onto the west and south façades, as do the two-tone bricks. There is an ADA entrance on the west façade. The south façade has two entrances. There is one entrance that goes directly to the basement and another that goes to the first floor. There is also a loading dock on the south side of the school building.

From the exterior, the Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Revival defining features are clearly evident in the large window openings and simple design, the flat roof, and the symmetrical plan.

Auditorium

The auditorium was built in the Art Deco architectural style. The auditorium is a three-story building with a partial basement. It is approximately 111 feet x 92 feet in plan. This addition included additional classrooms as well as the auditorium. It was designed by Keffer & Jones. The auditorium is significant as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project. The gymnasium addition (c. 1960s) is approximately 7,800 square feet and includes locker rooms, seating, and the gym.

In plan and elevation, the auditorium is an asymmetrical building. It is a combination of stone and brick construction. The brick is light brown in color. Similar to the school design, the center section/entrance is brought slightly forward with the use of stone, while to the east and west brick was used. Two horizontal stone belt courses, similar to those on the school, continue on the auditorium addition. There are three sets of doors on the north side. They are reached by means of a paved walkway perpendicular to the

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front and three steps that rise from the walkway to the front doors. The original doors have been replaced. Between the sets of doors are Art Deco light fixtures; above each of the light fixtures is a stone shield ornaments. The Art Deco ornamentation continues on the north façade with simple horizontal and vertical details. A panel of brick similar to the brick sections to the west and east separates the second and third floors on the exterior, which creates a visual separation on the exterior and marks the separation of the use of space on the interior. On each side, near the top of the brick sections, is a stone swag ornament. At the top of the building are the words "High School Auditorium," with a circular ornament on either side.

Most of the windows on the north façade have been altered, and the four pairs of tall windows on the east side of the auditorium have been covered (c. 2005); however, of the forty-one windows on the auditorium only twenty have been altered. At least eight of these will be rehabilitated.

Interior Description

School

The interior of the school has seen the greatest amount of change since 1914. Much of the change is a result of evolving educational needs and requirements, as well as the transition of the school from a high school to a middle school. The first major change occurred in 1937, when the Art Deco Auditorium was added to the east of the school.

Many of the interior features were changed during the 1960s renovations. Recessed lockers were installed in the hallways; acoustic tile was used to drop the ceiling height in virtually all the rooms; doors were changed; and windows were partially in-filled with brick. During the 1960s, what had been two separate spaces (the gymnasium, in the basement and first floor, and the assembly hall, on the second and third floors) became four separate spaces. The new spaces were used as wood shop and industrial arts (basement); lunchroom and additional offices (first floor); library (second floor); and chemistry and other classrooms (third floor).

The first major interior characteristics still intact are the terrazzo floors in the hallways and terrazzo steps. The majority of floors in the classrooms are either tile or carpet, while the original gymnasium wood floor is intact in the basement. The main features that still remain are the locations and sizes of the hallways and stairways. The majority of doors and door locations have changed.

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Clay County, Iowa

Auditorium

The main entrance into the auditorium is on the north side of the building, which leads into a ticket lobby and vestibule. The ticket lobby/vestibule leads into the main lobby or corridor and then into the auditorium itself. The seats on the first floor are c. 1965; however, the seats in both balconies are original 1937 Art Deco seats.

The auditorium has experienced very few changes. The spaces that are part of the auditorium addition are still intact; however, a few windows have been partially in-filled with brick. The ticket booth/vestibule and main lobby/corridor are the same as they would have been originally. The men's and women's restrooms have been updated but the sizes remain unchanged.

As in the school, the majority of the auditorium floors are terrazzo. This includes the floors in the ticket lobby/vestibule, main lobby/corridor, hallways, restrooms, and steps. The classrooms in the auditorium addition have a combination of carpet and tile floors. Changes were made to interior features during the 1960s renovations. Recessed lockers were added in the hallways, acoustic tile was used to drop the ceiling height in virtually all the classrooms, and a few of the doors were changed. Interior alterations in the auditorium include the addition of new seats on the main level in the late 1960s and the covering of the windows on the east façade in 2005. In comparison to the classroom building, the auditorium has seen far fewer changes.

Gymnasium

Finally, in 1967 a gymnasium was added to the south of the 1937 auditorium addition. The exterior of the gymnasium is brick with a flat roof. The gymnasium is rectangular in shape. There are only three bleachers running the length of the north wall of the gymnasium. The floor is a nonskid surface. There are two doors on the west to access the gym space and one door on the east. There are no windows in this addition.

Building Alterations

Many alterations were made in the 1960s as a result of the high school becoming a middle school. The rooms in the high school included the following: ground floor had the offices, sewing/cooking room, lunchroom, mechanical drawing room, and the upper part of the gymnasium; second floor had the assembly hall, recitation rooms, girls and boys wardrobes, and principal's office; and third floor contained the upper part of the assembly hall, music and drawing rooms, biology and physics and chemistry

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rooms, and other rooms that were used for various purposes.¹ The assembly hall and gymnasium together occupied the full three stories in height, plus the basement. Some of these spaces are still intact, while others were reconfigured to accommodate changes in education and the needs of a middle school.

It was also in the 1960s that the original gymnasium (basement and first floor) and assembly hall (second and third floor) were changed into four separate spaces. This was the greatest change in room configuration. Originally there were three middle windows on the north side of the building, which ran the full height of what are now the second and third floors. The basement had windows at ground-floor level to allow natural light into the original gymnasium. However, with the changes that were made in the 1960s, many of the window openings were in-filled with brick. This decrease was in both height and width. Some of the windows are still original.

Future Plans

In 2005, the Spencer Community School District discontinued use of the Middle School. During the fall of 2007, a rehabilitation plan from Community Housing Initiatives was accepted by the school board. Community Housing Initiatives will rehabilitate the top two floors of the school building into sixteen one- and two-bedroom affordable apartment units. The main floor and basement will be used for commercial space.

With the interior rehabilitation, windows that have been changed will have the brick infill removed and will be reversed to the original opening size and shape; new historically appropriate windows will occupy the window openings.

The Spencer Community School District will maintain ownership and operation of the auditorium for use by the district. The auditorium is the largest gathering and performance space for the students, parents, staff, and faculty of the district. A partnership with the Friends of the Old Spencer High School Auditorium, a local nonprofit organization, will assist the district in the preservation of the auditorium and adjacent classroom spaces. A predesign study is underway to determine the potential costs associated with the rehabilitation of the auditorium.

¹ *Purple and Old Gold 1915* (Spencer High School yearbook), Vol. I (Spencer, IA: Randall, McKee & Company, 1915), Introduction. Also, 1914 architectural plans, Courtesy of Cannon, Moss, Brygger & Associates.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

Integrity

The Spencer High School and Auditorium possesses integrity of:

Location: The school and auditorium are in their original locations within Spencer, Iowa. The building maintains its full integrity of location.

Design: The original designs of John D. Chubb and Keffer and Jones are still evident in the school and auditorium. The spatial organization of the site remains intact except for the addition of the gymnasium on the south façade. The framework and intent of the original design scheme is evident regardless of this alteration. Finally, the gymnasium is also primarily brick with simple stone accents. The integrity of design is met at a lesser degree because of the alterations to the windows.

Setting: The landscape surrounding the school and auditorium remains virtually intact and appears much as it did during the significant period. The surrounding neighborhood has become more developed with single-family dwellings to the east and south. The residential and light commercial development of the area has not negatively affected the building's integrity of setting.

Materials: The original materials from the period of significance are still in place. These materials reflect John D. Chubb's understanding of quality materials as well as those that were readily available for the area and that were being used for school construction at the time. Keffer and Jones also understood the necessity to continue the use of brick as the main material for the auditorium addition. They did, however, set it apart with a slight change in the brick color and the use of stone on the north façade.

Workmanship: The Spencer High School is a good example of Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Revival/Classical Revival and the auditorium is an excellent example of Art Deco architecture that came about during the modern movement. John D. Chubb's understanding of school architecture during the early 1900s is reflected in the simple façade design and use of brick. The added details on the north façade of the auditorium are evidence that Keffer and Jones understood Art Deco architecture, but were also able to tie the auditorium's style into that of Chubb's design for the school. Two examples of Keffer and Jones's understanding of the workmanship required for the Art Deco auditorium include the stonework and light fixtures, which set the auditorium apart from the school. However, they continued Chubb's use of a stone belt course to tie the school and auditorium together as one fluid building.

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Feeling: The Spencer High School exemplifies the classical revival style of the early 1910s. The auditorium possesses a distinct character, evoking a sense of an earlier era in which great care was taken to design and develop a building that would blend in with other buildings in the vicinity, in this case the Art Deco architecture of downtown after the 1931 fire. Both the school and auditorium harmonized with the surrounding environment, then and now.

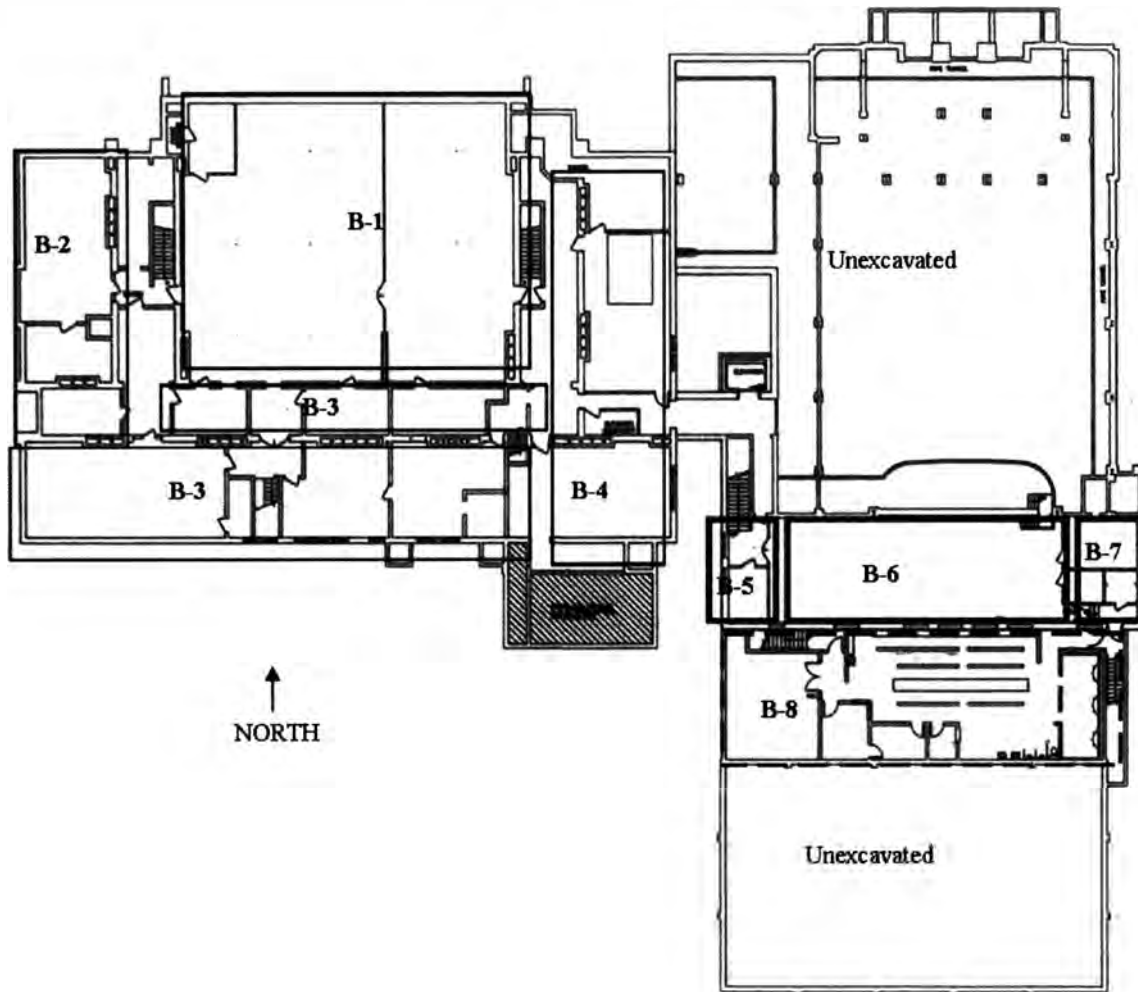
Association: The school is important because of the affect that it had upon the education of youth in 1914 and as the first vocational-education facilities in Spencer.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
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"B" BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN: Current basement floor plan of the 1914 Spencer High School, 1937 Auditorium, and 1967 Gymnasium. Courtesy of Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA. Scale is not exact on this document as the floor plan needed to be scaled down to fit; however, scale on the original was $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$.

TABLES: Shows the use(s) of space over time for the basement rooms courtesy of 1914, 1937, 1967, and 2004 architectural plans held by Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

School-Basement	B-1	B-2	B-3	B-4	Auditorium-Basement	B-5	B-6	B-7
1914	Lower part of Gymnasium	No Use Identified	Boys' & Girls' Locker Rooms/Corridor	Boiler Room/Heating, Ventilation System	1937	Office	Band Room	Practice & Store Room
1967	Wood Crafts & Metal-Electricity	Student Project storage	Drafting Room & Wood Working/Material Storage	Boiler Room/Equipment/Custodian	1967	Practice Room	Band Room	Office/Practice Room/Uniforms
2004	Wood Crafts & Metal-Electricity	Student Project Storage	Drafting Room & Wood Working/Material Storage	Boiler Room/Equipment/Custodian	2004	Practice Room	Band Room	Office/Practice Room/Uniforms
2009	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration				2009	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration		

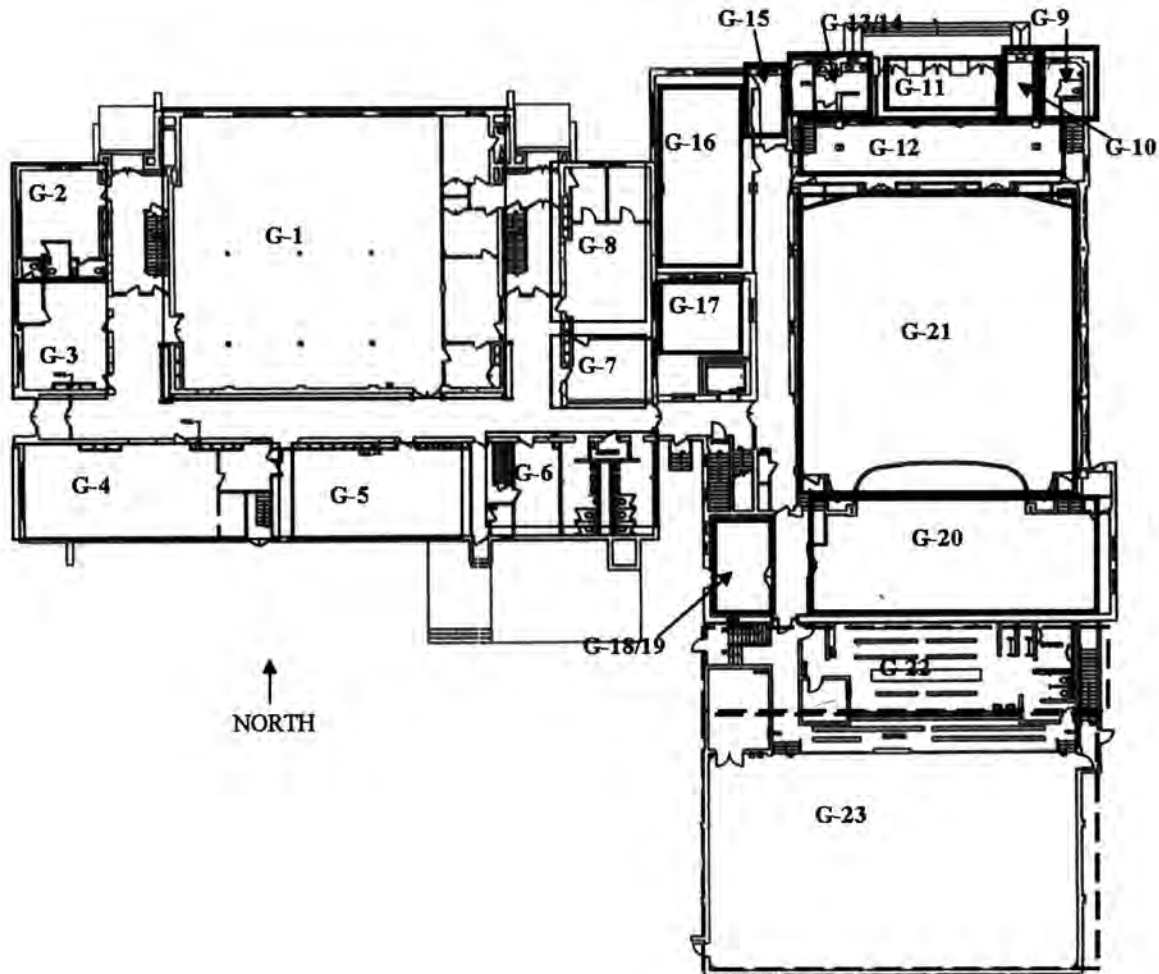
Gymnasium-Basement	B-8
1967	Boys' Locker Room
2004	Boys' Locker Room
2009	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



"G" GROUND FLOOR PLAN: Current ground floor plan of the 1914 Spencer High School, 1937 Auditorium, and 1967 Gymnasium. Courtesy of Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA. Scale is not exact on this document as the floor plan needed to be scaled down to fit; however, scale on the original was $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$.

TABLES: Shows the use(s) of space over time for the ground floor rooms courtesy of 1914, 1937, 1967, and 2004 architectural plans held by Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

School-Ground	G-1	G-2	G-3	G-4	G-5	G-6	G-7	G-8
1914	Upper part of Gymnasium	Superintendent's Office	General Office/ Supply Room	Sewing/ Cooking	Lunchroom	Lathe & Forge Room	Bench Room	Mechanical Drawing Room
1967	Lunch Room, Study Hall, Offices	Teachers' Lounge	Kitchen	Home Economics Sewing	Home Economics Cooking	Storage/Boys' & Girls' Restrooms	Work Room	Classroom
2004	Lunch Room, Study Hall, Offices	Teachers' Lounge	Kitchen	Home Economics Sewing	Home Economics Cooking	Storage/Boys' & Girls' Restrooms	Work Room	Classroom
2009	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration							

Auditorium-Ground	G-9	G-10	G-11	G-12	G-13	G-14	G-15	G-16	G-17	G-18	G-19	G-20	G-21
1937	Men's Restroom	Office	Tickets/Vestibule	Corridor	Women's Restroom	Storage	Serving Room	Lunch Room	Open Court	Dressing Room	Storage	Stage	Auditorium/Orchestra Pit
1967	Men's Restroom	Office	Tickets/Vestibule	Corridor	Women's Restroom	Storage	Classroom		Open Court	Stage Storage		Stage	Auditorium/Orchestra Pit
2004	Men's Restroom	Office	Tickets/Vestibule	Corridor	Women's Restroom	Storage	Classroom		Open Court	Stage Storage		Stage	Auditorium/Orchestra Pit
2009	Men's Restroom	Office	Tickets/Vestibule	Corridor	Women's Restroom	Storage	Undetermined—room still exists in the 2004 configuration		Open Court	Stage Storage		Stage	Auditorium/Orchestra Pit

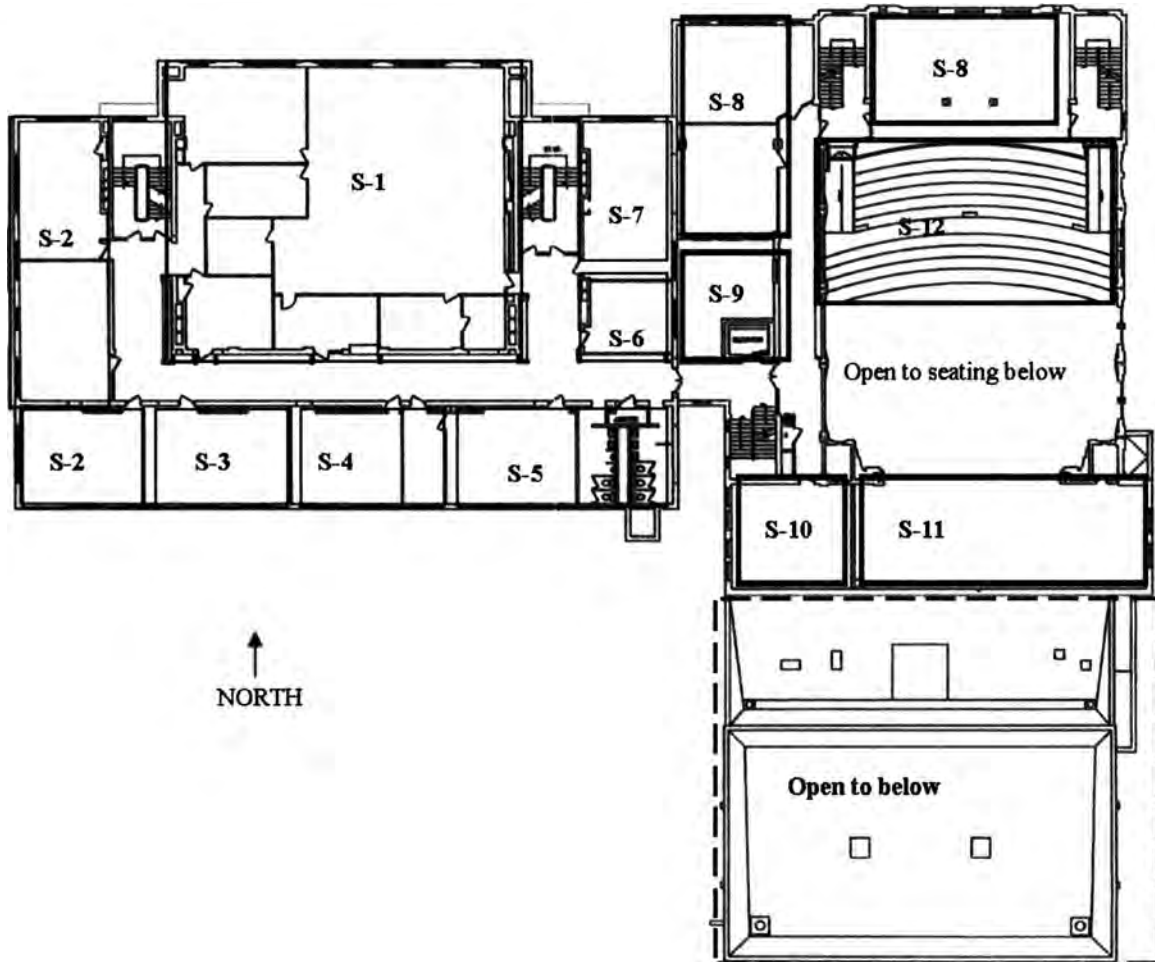
Gymnasium-Ground	G-22	G-23
1967	Girls Locker Room	Gymnasium, Seating, Storage
2004	Girls Locker Room	Gymnasium, Seating, Storage
2009	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration	

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
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"S" SECOND FLOOR PLAN: Current second floor plan of the 1914 Spencer High School, 1937 Auditorium, and 1967 Gymnasium. Courtesy of Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA. Scale is not exact on this document as the floor plan needed to be scaled down to fit; however, scale on the original was $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$.

TABLES: Shows the use(s) of space over time for the second floor rooms courtesy of 1914, 1937, 1967, and 2004 architectural plans held by Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
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School-Second	S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7
1914	Study/Assembly Hall	Recitation Rooms	Girls' Wardrobe & Toilet	Recitation Rooms	Boys' Wardrobe	Principal's Office	Recitation Rooms
1967	Library, Library Classroom, English Dept. Office	English	Special Instruction	Language	Boys' & Girls' Restrooms	Social Studies/Social Studies Dept. Office	
2004	Library, Library Classroom, English Dept. Office	Classrooms			Boys' & Girls' Restrooms	Classrooms	
2009	Units 213 & 218, Computer Learning, Community Room, Kitchenette	Units 205-209			Unit 220		

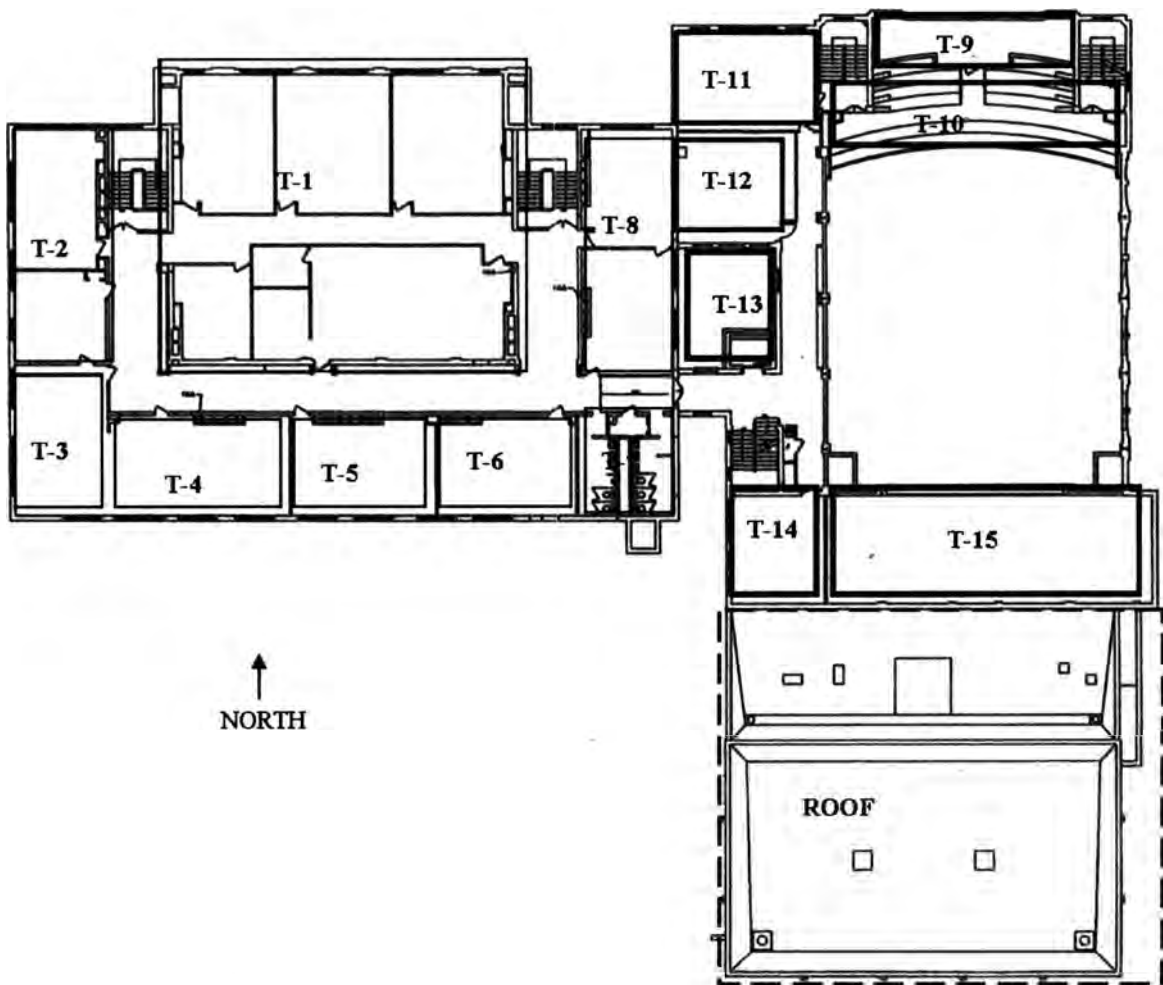
Auditorium-Second	S-8	S-9	S-10	S-11	S-12
1937	Classrooms	Open Court	Classroom	Upper Part of Stage	Balcony
1967	Vocal Music/Social Studies	Open Court	Social Studies	Upper Part of Stage	Balcony
2004	Classrooms	Open Court	Classroom	Upper Part of Stage	Balcony
2009	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration			Upper Part of Stage	Balcony

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
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"T" THIRD FLOOR PLAN: Current third floor plan of the 1914 Spencer High School, 1937 Auditorium, and 1967 Gymnasium. Courtesy of Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA. Scale is not exact on this document as the floor plan needed to be scaled down to fit; however, scale on the original was $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$.

TABLES: Information for third floor rooms courtesy of 1914, 1937, 1967 and 2004 architectural plans held by Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
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School-Third	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	T-5	T-6	T-7	T-8
1914	Upper Part of Study/Assembly Hall	Music and Drawing Room	Recitation Room	Biology Lab	Unassigned Space	Physical Lab	Lecture Room	Chemical Lab
1967	Math/Science Lab	Classroom	Art Department		Classroom	Science	Boys'/Girls' Restrooms	Science Room/Offices
2004	Classrooms		Art Department		Classroom		Boys'/Girls' Restrooms	Classrooms
2009	Apartments 314 & 315/Storage/Fitness Room/Janitor		Apartments 306-310					Unit 317

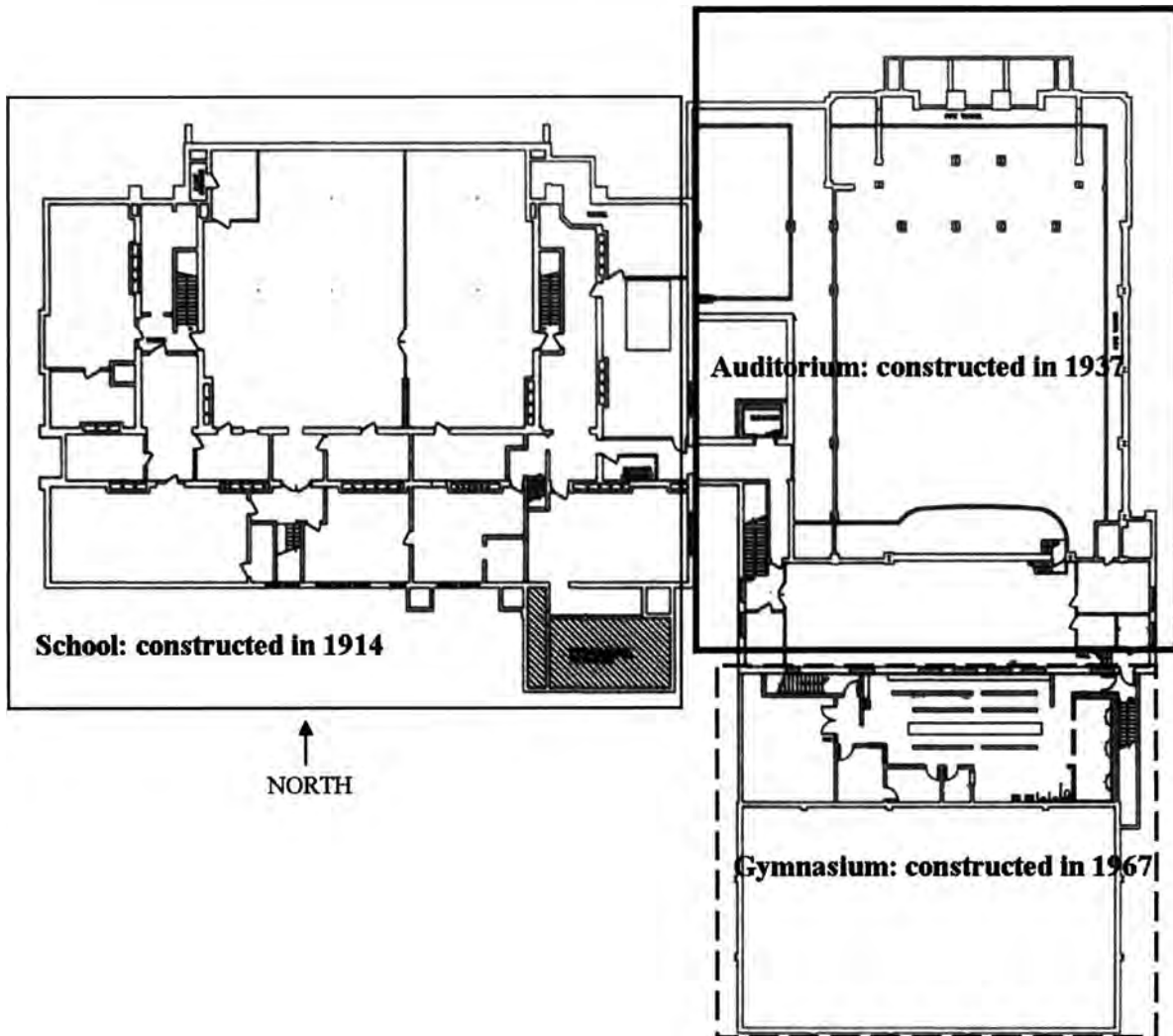
Auditorium-Third	T-9	T-10	T-11	T-12	T-13	T-14	T-15
1937	Storage	Gallery (Balcony)	Classroom	Lecture Room	Light Court	Store Room	Upper Stage
1967	Storage	Gallery (Balcony)	Science		Light Court	Science	Upper Stage
2004	Storage	Gallery (Balcony)	Classroom		Light Court	Classroom	Upper Stage
2009	Undetermined—room still exists in 2004 configuration	Gallery (Balcony)	Undetermined—rooms still exist in their 2004 configuration				Upper Stage

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
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FLOOR PLAN WITH DATES OF CONSTRUCTION: Current site plan of the 1914 Spencer High School, 1937 Auditorium, and 1967 Gymnasium. Courtesy of Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates, Spencer, IA. Scale is not exact on this document as the floor plan needed to be scaled down to fit; however, scale on the original was $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$.

8. Statement of Significance

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- EDUCATION
- SOCIAL HISTORY
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

- 1914
- 1937
- _____

Significant Dates

- 1914
- 1937
- _____

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

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Avery, Amplias Hale (A. H.)

Cultural Affiliation

- _____
- _____

Architect/Builder

Chubb, John D.
Keffer & Jones
Wierschke, C. E.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Spencer Community School

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1914 Spencer High School is locally significant for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its role in the development of education in Spencer in 1914. It is also significant under Criterion A due to the role that Spencer women held in passing the bond issue for this new school, as their votes increased the percentage of "yes" votes.

In addition, the 1914 Spencer High School is locally significant for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B, for the influence that Amplias Hale (A. H.) Avery had in the construction of the first high school building in Spencer and for the vocational-specific rooms that were part of the design for a five-year high school curriculum.

The 1937 Auditorium addition, while an addition, is also significant under Criteria A and C as an example of Public Works Administration work in the Art Deco architectural style that reflected the designs of the downtown building after the 1931 fire. The period of significance for the Spencer High School is 1914 and for the auditorium is 1937.

Many new building projects, both historically and today, are undertaken for expansion purposes. The 1914 Spencer High School was one such project: the population attending high school in Spencer had increased sufficiently to warrant a new and separate high school. At the time there were about 800 students enrolled in the Spencer school system; about 300 of those students were enrolled in the high school.

The property for the Spencer High School was purchased in April of 1912. The Mel Green Lots on East Fourth Street were chosen as the place to build a new high school building. The original site was 176 x 132 feet.

The site is an excellent one for many reasons. It is central in location, and easy of access from all parts of the city. It is so situated that the best possible position of auditorium and study rooms can be secured; it is such that the building will be in a prominent place . . .²

Constructed in 1914, the Spencer High School was a state-of-the-art building at the time of its construction. It was designed by John D. Chubb and built in the Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Revival style with Classical Revival details. John D. Chubb was a Chicago architect. The contractor was C. E. Wierschke.

² "Site for New High School," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (April 3, 1912).

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John D. Chubb

John D. Chubb was born in Plymouth, England, in 1869. He came to Marquette, Michigan, as a child, but returned to England for training. In the late 1880s, he apprenticed with architects H. Gregory and J. B. Sweatt. He started his own firm in Chicago in the late 1890s, and for a time, had a branch office in Marquette, Michigan. Chubb specialized in public buildings, especially schools, completing projects in the states of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.³ John D. Chubb was commissioned in 1912 to design the Spencer High School. During this time, his office was in the Chicago Opera House. It is known that in 1914-15 he had an office in downtown Chicago on Dearborn Street.⁴ He designed numerous (at least fifty) private residences in the Chicago area. Those that are accounted for were done between the dates of June 1898 and April 1909.⁵

Chubb also designed a number of schools as well as private residences. Two of his buildings are known to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Some of Chubb's buildings still in existence include the following:

- Single Family Residence (Queen Anne Style), Chicago, IL 5850 W Race Ave, 1901. National Register Listed for significant architectural or historical features.⁶
- Civic Center Historic District, Kenosha, WI, date, 1910-1938. National Register listed for significance in community planning and development; politics/government; education; and architecture (Classical Revival).⁷
- Graveraet High School, Marquette MI, 1915.⁸
- Old Kenosha High School, Kenosha, WI, 1924.⁹
- Painesdale High School (Jeffers High School), Painesdale, MI. Built 1909, Addition: 1933-34.¹⁰

³ A. J. Hoagland, "Copper County Architects: John D. Chubb," Michigan Tech, www.social.mtu.edu/CopperCountryArchitects/cj.htm (accessed October 22, 2009).

⁴ "Chicago Landmarks, Historic Resources Survey," <http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Landmarks/CHRS.html> (accessed February 10, 2009).

⁵ Chicago Historical Society, American Contractor's Chicago Building Permits, 1898-1912. www.chsmedia.org/househistory/1898-1912permits/search.asp (accessed February 10, 2009).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ National Park Service, National Register Information System (searched for "Chubb") www.nr.nps.gov (accessed February 12, 2009).

⁸ "Kaufman Auditorium" (Graveraet High School, Marquette, MI), www.kaufmanauditorium.org (accessed January 9, 2009).

⁹ "Historic Kenosha: Civic Center Historic District," www.kenoshacvb.com/pdf/KenoshaCivicCenter.pdf (accessed October 16, 2008).

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The Spencer High School has some characteristics of Chubb's 1924 Neoclassical high school in Kenosha, Wisconsin. They both have slightly projecting bays and prominent belt courses that run across the entire building. The Old Kenosha High School has many more prominent Neoclassical elements than the Spencer High School.

Development of Education throughout Iowa and the United States

As settlement of communities increased, homes were built first, and churches and schools followed. Between the early 1860s and the 1870s, a number of little schoolhouses were built in Clay and surrounding counties. They were constructed of sod.¹¹ In 1893, the first Spencer school building was constructed. The first floor was used as the high school and the upper floors were for the grades.¹² The citizens of Spencer were proud of their cloakrooms, the assembly room, the steam plant and coal bins. It seemed they had space to spare.

During the early 1900s, larger schools were being designed to fit needs that went beyond the basic education offered in country schools. These schools responded to new demands for workforce training in commercial/industrial trades. Specialty schools developed to provide unique solutions for students who had special. While these trends affected the layout and design of the buildings, schools were often built in the predominant architectural styles of their day and represented the ever-changing architectural tastes of the previous century and a half.¹³

By 1911, it was evident that a separate high school building was needed in Spencer and that the educational demands of the curriculum should dictate the design. At the same time, in the twentieth century, rural schools were falling into disuse as Iowa's consolidation movement took hold: several rural school districts were consolidated into one with a centrally located school.¹⁴

¹⁰ A. J. Hoagland, "Copper County Architects: John D. Chubb: Buildings," Michigan Tech, http://www.social.mtu.edu/CopperCountryArchitects/cj_build.htm (accessed January 9, 2009).

¹¹ "Writer Recalls Spencer's 'Dad' Avery, Early Schools," *Sunday Times* [Spencer, IA] (April 12, 1959), 3.

¹² *Centennial: Spencer, Iowa 1871-1971*, (Spencer, IA: Standard Printing, 1971), 38-39.

¹³ State Historical Society of Iowa, "Iowa's Historic Schools," http://www.iowahistory.org/preservation/historic_schools/introduction.html (accessed June 9, 2008). (The URL has changed to the following: <http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/statewide-inventory-and-collections/schools/>.)

¹⁴ State Historical Society of Iowa.

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Education changed greatly in the early twentieth century. These changes were clearly evident in Spencer during this time. The changes were brought about by developments that included increased population, demand for vocational education (which eventually culminated in the Smith-Hughes Act), the progressive philosophy of John Dewey, the arrival of A. H. Avery, and the women's suffrage movement. All of these elements greatly affected the construction of the 1914 Spencer High School.

On January 10, 1912, the school board placed a notice in the three Spencer newspapers announcing that a mass meeting of the electors of the school district would be held at the courthouse on Friday evening, January 19, 1912. This meeting was to consider the matter of holding an election to issue bonds for improved school facilities. Later in the month, the school board discussed the feasibility of adding onto the West (later referred to as Lincoln) School or to build the first building in Spencer to hold only the high school academics. At that meeting, A. H. Avery spoke, "favoring a central high school is in line with the needs of the students and as [*sic*] not materially increasing expenses."¹⁵ Discussion continued among board members, who decided that the advantages would more than offset the difference in cost. The board voted unanimously to ask the citizens to vote on a bond not to exceed \$75,000.00 to build and equip a new central high school for Spencer. The voters went to the polls on February 29, 1912.¹⁶

In 1914, the schools in Clay County included: Spencer, Greenville, Langdon, Lake Center, Peterson, Everly, Fostoria, Gillett Grove, Dickens, Royal, and Webb. The Spencer schools served Spencer students and offered a larger variety of courses than the other schools. While students from outside Spencer could attend school "in town," most of the students were residents of Spencer.

The design of the school was directly affected by the curriculum, which was innovative at the time. It was designed for a five-year high school program, which included specially designed vocational-specific rooms. The only other schools in the state with similar programs were in the larger cities. Rooms in the 1914 high school included: gymnasium, assembly hall, and rooms for domestic science, manual training, agriculture, chemistry, mechanical drawing, and sewing.¹⁷

¹⁵ Spencer School District Minutes Book, 1912-1935 (January 19, 1912).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Purple and Old Gold 1915* (Spencer High School yearbook), Vol. I, (Spencer, IA: Randall, McKee & Company, 1915).

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The Spencer High School took on more and more of the activities and characteristics of bigger schools. Specific courses, including manual training classes, began during the Avery administration. Since no manual training teacher was available and little was known about the subject, the school purchased a \$100 course of instruction that told in detail just how to proceed with each lesson. Mr. Avery studied each lesson assiduously and then taught the boys the mysteries of wood working.¹⁸

The domestic science department of the Spencer High School would hold exhibits. These exhibits would show beyond a doubt that the department was a success. The exhibits would cover all sorts of fancy and basic needlework.¹⁹ Additionally, by 1915 the industrial department had three classes, all full to capacity, which was evidence of the success of the programming of the new school.²⁰ The assembly hall was used for graduation, plays, and musicals.

The Role of Women

The early twentieth century presented many obstacles for men and women alike, but women were especially hindered by inequality. It was in 1903 that the National Women's Trade Union League was established to advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women. Still, women were without the right to vote except on issues that affected land and buildings, such as school and library buildings. In some states women could vote if they owned property. In 1913, the Congressional Union was formed to work toward the passage of a constitutional amendment to give women the right to vote. The group was later renamed the National Women's Party. Members picketed the White House and practiced various forms of civil disobedience.

In 1915, Iowa suffragists realized the enormity of the task ahead of them. They decided to double up their efforts and "carry the gospel of suffrage into every community in the state." No suffragist belittled the struggle that was ahead for the women of Iowa if they were to win the vote.²¹

Through their work for civic, educational, and cultural betterment of Iowa, Iowa women had for years been demonstrating for their right to vote. The Iowa woman was

¹⁸ "Writer Recalls Spencer's 'Dad' Avery, Early Schools," *Sunday Times* [Spencer, IA] (April 12, 1959), 3.

¹⁹ "Domestic Science Exhibit," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (December 22, 1915).

²⁰ "Spencer High School," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (September 15, 1915).

²¹ "Iowa Suffragists Awake to Their Big Task," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (November 24, 1915).

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a vital force in the building of schools and, with few exceptions, the women of the state who voted on school questions could be counted on to align themselves on the side of progress.²²

Some who campaigned for women's suffrage felt that women were naturally kinder, gentler, and more concerned about weaker members of society, especially children. It was often assumed that women voters would have a civilizing effect on politics and would tend to support controls on alcohol, for example. They believed that, although a woman's place was in the home, she should be able to influence laws that affected the home. Other campaigners felt that men and women should be equal in every way and that there was no such thing as a woman's "natural role."²³

Results of municipal elections in Iowa in which women had taken part during the early 1910s were especially interesting. In most of these elections, the majority of women voted in favor of public improvements.

At the time, there was no other issue in Spencer that had aroused so much interest as the decision to build a new school. Perhaps it was the good weather that brought out so many voters, or perhaps it was the excitement throughout the community about the need for a new high school.²⁴ The women's votes pushed the bond to pass; without their votes the bond might not have passed, as a percentage of yes votes was required. This was not only a victory for the women, as they did not have the right to vote, but also for the school district.

The *Spencer Daily Reporter* reported that, "School House Bonds Carry: Good Weather Brings Out an Exceptionally Heavy Vote." A total of 1,195 people voted, and men spoiled more ballots than women. There were seventy-six votes to spare, with the "yeas" carrying the school election—630 for and 554 against.

The total men vote was 668 and the women 516 a total of 1184, not including the 11 made worthless.

The male voters gave a majority of 30 while their wives and sisters raised the total majority 46.

²² "Iowa Suffragists Awake to Their Big Task."

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "School House Bonds Carry," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (March 16, 1912).

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The total vote of the women was 281 for and 235 against while the men's was 349 for compared to 319 against.²⁵

Finally, in 1919 the Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment, originally written by Susan B. Anthony and introduced in Congress in 1878 (forty-one years earlier), was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. It was then sent to the states for ratification. It was not until August 26, 1920, that women were granted the full right to vote, regardless of land ownership, through the Nineteenth Amendment, which states that the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied because of sex.²⁶

The passage of the bond can be attributed to the persistence of the women voters, as well as to the determination of A. H. Avery, who worked diligently to have a separate specially designed high school built.

Amplias Hale (A.H.) Avery

Amplias Hale Avery was born in a one-room log house on a farm near Excelsior, Richland County, Wisconsin, on May 20, 1870. After completing studies in the rural schools of his home county, he moved to Osage, Iowa, where he attended Cedar Valley Seminary for several years. In 1889, he moved to South Dakota, where he taught in the rural schools and in the town schools of Ashton and Woonsocket. In 1901, A. H. Avery came to Spencer from Woonsocket, South Dakota, to be principal of the high school. The following year he was made superintendent, and remained there through the year 1914-1915. In 1915, he resigned to go into the life insurance business. Avery was mayor of Spencer during 1926-1927 and State Representative from 1931 to 1951. He was a member of the Forty-Fourth General Assembly, and was elected on September 26, 1933, to fill a vacancy in the Forty-Fifth General Assembly caused by the appointment of Frank E. Wenig as labor commissioner.

His first marriage was to Grace Cornwall. To this union one child, Theta, was born. His second marriage was to Grace Dunham. To this union three children were born: Margaret, Alden D., and Barbara.

Several things transpired during Avery's administration that proved that he was a real leader on new things that would make the schools better. A. H. Avery had general

²⁵ "School House Bonds Carry."

²⁶ "Carrie Lane Chapman Catt," Iowa State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, <http://www.las.iastate.edu/CattCenter/ccs.shtml> (accessed September 26, 2007).

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supervision over four schools in the city. During his incumbency as superintendent, he introduced many substantial improvements in the methods of teaching, as well as in the branches taught.²⁷

Avery inaugurated the five-year high school, as he knew that many of the boys and girls could not go on to college, but if they did, the extra year would help them.²⁸ He also was responsible for getting the first high school building in Spencer constructed through a bond issue.

Avery's early introduction of the five-year high school and hands-on classes are evidence of the progressive educational style. This is the only high school that was constructed during A. H. Avery's tenure as superintendent and the only example where the course work was expanded to ensure a thorough educational experience to all students, regardless of economic background and the likelihood that they would continue their education at college.

At the time, many of the larger Iowa cities were heading in the direction of a five-year high school, including Des Moines and Iowa City. Just as these towns were growing into cities, Spencer saw the potential for growth and decided to be prepared.²⁹ For example, Davenport had a five-year high school; however, it was understood that the fifth year was a training course for those who wished to become teachers. The fifth year was an elective, whereas in Spencer "no one was permitted to graduate without the full five years of instruction."³⁰

The Spencer school district was a pioneer in education during this time. It was even ahead of any state or federal mandates such as the Smith-Hughes Act.

The Smith-Hughes Act

The Spencer School District was ahead of the times: it was not until 1917 that a state board of vocational education (associated with the office of the superintendent of public

²⁷ *History of Clay County Iowa 1909* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1909), 491.

²⁸ "Writer Recalls Spencer's 'Dad' Avery, Early Schools," *Sunday Times* [Spencer, IA] (April 12, 1959), 3.

²⁹ Spencer was experiencing both increased population in town and outside of town. Also those who already lived outside of town were beginning to move into Spencer. This increase in population necessitated a high school building.

³⁰ Clarence R. Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, Vol. 3 (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1915), 369.

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instruction) was established to meet the requirements set down by the federal government in the Smith-Hughes Act. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 provided federal funds to support the teaching of agriculture. This act stated that the purpose of vocational agriculture was to train people who have entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm and provided federal funds for this purpose.³¹

The Board of Vocational Education was responsible for overseeing agricultural, trade and industrial, and homemaking education for high school students, part-time high school students, and adults.³² For this reason, rooms were created in the 1914 Spencer High School to accommodate vocational education. They included the following rooms: agriculture, chemistry, domestic science, manual training, mechanical drawing, and sewing. The construction of a new high school brought great changes in the way people viewed the value and role of public education.

Beyond the importance that the site and architecture held for the community, the building itself held even greater educational importance. In the early to mid 1910s high school teaching placed an emphasis on vocational education. Girls and boys were taught sewing, manual training, and trades.

During the five years from 1909 through 1913, 100 students graduated from the old high school building, an average of twenty per year. During 1914 and 1915, 101 students graduated, an average of 50.5 per year. Thus, a sharp increase in the number of students graduating occurred immediately after the new school was built. Many of these graduates went on to pursue various fields of studies, and the number of colleges attended increased between 1909–1913 and 1914–1915.

In 1914, forty students graduated – twenty-five women and fifteen men. These graduates went on to work in similar fields: clerk (four), teacher (three), newspaper office (one), farmer (two), stenographer (one), and aluminum agent (one). Others went on for further education: Iowa State Teachers College (two), State University of Iowa (three), Iowa State College (two), Grinnell College (three), Carleton College (one),

³¹ "Smith-Hughes Act," www.archive.org (accessed December 2, 2009).

³² Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Iowa, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007), 109. Reprint of *Iowa: A Guide to the Hawkeye State* (New York: Viking Press, 1938).

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Morningside College (two), Rockford (one), and Minneapolis (one). Thirteen graduates remained in the Spencer and Iowa Great Lakes region.³³

In 1915, sixty-one students graduated – thirty-four women and twenty-seven men. These graduates went on to work in similar fields: clerk (eleven), teacher (fifteen), insurance agent (one), and farmer (one). Others went on for further education: Oberlin College (one), Northwestern University (one), Iowa State Teachers College (one), State University of Iowa (five), Iowa State College (two), Grinnell College (one), Carleton College (one), Morningside College (one), Drake University (one), Buena Vista College (one), Coe College (one), Mankato (one), and Minneapolis (two).³⁴ Two students went on to pursue postgraduate degrees. Eleven graduates remained in the Spencer and Iowa Great Lakes region and one went to Des Moines.³⁵

In these early years of the first Spencer High School building, the number of women in high school outnumbered men. It is important to remember that there was a steady increase in students attending high school.

The 1914 Spencer High School remained a high school until the 1960s, when a new high school was completed. The high school was relocated to the new building and the 1914 high school interior was altered to accommodate the middle school academics.

Auditorium Addition, 1937

In 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt initiated the Public Works Administration (PWA) to increase employment and to fund public works projects throughout the United States. This program helped states and communities construct much-needed infrastructure and put skilled and unskilled laborers back to work.

Every dollar spent conferred and received maximum benefit. The PWA projects brought "to thousands of engineers, landscape architects, artists, scientists, and students their first employment since the beginning of the depression."³⁶ The PWA allotments

³³ *Purple and Old Gold 1915* (Spencer High School yearbook), Vol. I (Spencer, IA: Randall, McKee and Co.), 64.

³⁴ *Purple and Old Gold 1916* (Spencer High School Yearbook), Vol. II (Spencer, IA: Bowman Printing Co.), 91-92.

³⁵ *Purple and Old Gold 1915*, 64.

³⁶ "Impact of the New Deal on the National Park Service," *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s: Administrative History*, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi3d.htm (accessed September 14, 2007).

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and labor "made possible work long desired and outlined"³⁷ that would have had to be postponed for many years had they not been incorporated in the national economic recovery program.

In 1937, an Art Deco auditorium addition, which included a few classrooms, was added to the 1914 school building. It was a project of the Public Works Administration. The architects were Keffer & Jones of Des Moines. The Spencer High School Auditorium was constructed with a total of 1,122 seats at a time when the population of Spencer was just over 5,000; class sizes at the time hovered just below 100. The size of the auditorium is proof that the building was intended to be a community auditorium as well as serve the needs of the school. Walter Thomas, a Spencer citizen, was influential in getting PWA funds to Spencer for the auditorium.

The project employed twenty-seven laborers. They included masons, carpenters, plumbers/steam fitters, steel erectors, electricians, plasterers, and a painter. The "independent school district of Spencer" was given a grant in the amount of \$57,150. The total cost of work was estimated at \$127,000; the remaining \$69,850 was to come from nonfederal sources.³⁸

The auditorium was used by the school and the community. The only other large gathering spaces in Spencer had been the Opera House and the high school assembly hall. In 1931, however, the Opera House was destroyed by the fire that burned much of downtown Spencer. After that, the assembly hall remained the only large space for the community until the auditorium was built in 1937.

The auditorium was used by the community on countless occasions over the past seventy-two years. Throughout its existence, community concerts have been presented at the auditorium. The Clay County Concert League was formed in 1938 to provide programming in the new high school auditorium.³⁹ The first concert was a performance by the Vienna Boys Choir on November 2, 1938.⁴⁰ The Concert League's successor, the

³⁷ "Impact of the New Deal on the National Park Service."

³⁸ Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. Spencer High School Auditorium Project # 1131, 1934-1937, National Archives, College Park, MD.

³⁹ "Member Drive for Concerts Starts Mon.," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (October 6, 1938).

⁴⁰ "Music League Launches Drive," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (October 13, 1938).

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Spencer Area Concert Association, is still in existence, and the Vienna Boys Choir's return to the auditorium in 2009 was covered by Iowa Public Television.⁴¹

Between 1938 and the present, community concert series, the local arts council, and programs such as the Hancher Auditorium SPOT program have brought rising young performers as well as established acts to the auditorium stage. The Spencer Rotary's travelogue series was held in the auditorium during the 1960s and 1970s. The travelogue series engaged speakers who recently had traveled out of the country or somewhere in the United States. The speakers would generally share slides and talk about their travels. In the 1980s, the Spencer City Council held public hearings in the auditorium when large crowds were expected.

Both the Republican and Democratic parties have held county and district conventions in the auditorium. In addition, various political speeches were held in the auditorium over the years.⁴² Most recently, Barack Obama made an appearance in the auditorium in December 2007 during his presidential election campaign.⁴³

The 1937 auditorium also serves as an excellent example of Art Deco architecture design. The strong geometric character of Art Deco architecture is exhibited on the north façade between the second- and third-floor windows and above the main entrance doors. The interior light fixtures, details above the ticket booth, and details on both the walls and the original seats also exhibit the strong linear forms of the Art Deco style.

The auditorium is an example of Art Deco architecture that was designed by the firm of Keffer & Jones. According to John W. Brooks, Keffer was likely the designer, as he was responsible for the artistic side of the partnership, whereas Jones saw to the practical needs of the firm.⁴⁴ According to Wesley Shank, the firm of Keffer and Jones was "one of the important Des Moines firms of the first half of the twentieth century."⁴⁵ The

⁴¹ "Out and About Iowa – Culture Counts – Spencer," *The Iowa Journal*, Iowa Public Television, http://www.iptv.org/video/detail.cfm/3624/tij_20090416_223_clip_2_3 (accessed April 16, 2009).

⁴² Murray Underwood (former Judge), interview with Sheriffa Jones and Julie Schmidt (Spencer, IA, December 6, 2007).

⁴³ "Obama touts farm plans in Spencer," *Daily Reporter* [Spencer, IA] (December 18, 2007), 1.

⁴⁴ Wesley I. Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999) 88.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

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construction company for the auditorium was Sondergaard Construction, which later became Spencer Construction.⁴⁶

Earl E. Jones

Architect Earl Jones was born on a farm near Carleton, Nebraska, and raised in Indianola. His father, S. Walter Jones, was born in Ohio and worked as a contractor. His mother, Emma J. Ray, was born in Iowa.⁴⁷

Jones attended Simpson College and then proceeded to take courses at Washington University during 1906 and 1907. He worked for numerous architects throughout the Midwest, specifically in Chicago, Omaha, and Des Moines. He was employed at Smith, Wetherell & Gage in Des Moines from 1907 to 1909. He attended Columbia University during 1911-1912. In 1912 he married Florence Piffer of Indianola. From 1915 to 1916 Jones worked for Smith & [Karl Kay] Keffer.⁴⁸

During World War I Jones was area engineer for the Navajo Ordnance Depot in Flagstaff, Arizona. In 1916 he and Karl K. Keffer formed a partnership, Keffer & Jones. Reportedly, Jones and Keffer knew each other while at Columbia University. Sometime in 1928, Oren Thomas joined the partnership, which was then known as Keffer, Jones & Thomas; however, this partnership only lasted through 1929. After Thomas left the firm, it operated as Keffer & Jones once again. This partnership lasted until Jones's death in 1950.⁴⁹

Karl Kay Keffer

Architect Karl Keffer was both a talented designer and as an entrepreneur. Keffer was born in Des Moines in February 1883. He took classes in architecture and engineering from 1905 to 1912 at Iowa State College and Columbia University. Keffer was employed by several architects in New York City and Des Moines, including the Des Moines firm of Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen from 1905 to 1906.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Allen (Al) Coughenour (Spencer High School graduate), interview with Sheriffa Jones and Julie Schmidt (Spencer, IA, December 6, 2007).

⁴⁷ Wesley I. Shank, 88.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

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In 1912, Keffer started his own practice. However, he left for a year to practice in Los Angeles. Following his return to Des Moines in 1914, he worked in the firm of Smith & Keffer. Oliver Smith died in 1916, and shortly thereafter Keffer and Earl Jones joined to form their own firm.

The firm worked on several buildings at the Iowa State Fairgrounds and several large school projects. Rudolph Weitz remembers Keffer as "a delicate man who conducted a practice highly acceptable to his school board clients."⁵¹ While Keffer and Jones had projects all over the State of Iowa, very few examples of their work are known to have been built in northwest Iowa. The closest known was the O'Brien County Courthouse. It is unknown how many PWA or closely associated projects the firm may have designed and, for that matter, how many auditoriums they designed. They were known throughout the state for their school designs, but there has been little research on the number of auditorium designs the firm completed.

Summary

In addition to a shared history, historic schools have given many Iowans and particularly Spencer citizens a shared understanding through both the architecture of the buildings themselves and the sense of community fostered inside their walls. Larger schools, such as the 1914 Spencer High School, were often the most prominent buildings in their communities. Designed in the highest styles by local, regional, or national architects, schools epitomized the importance society placed on educating children and became an important symbol of the community as a whole.

The 1914 Spencer High School has aided in the community identity that many Spencer students, including recent graduates and those who are now parents and grandparents, experience when they think of the school and have the opportunity to roam the hallways.

The 1914 Spencer High School is an important piece of history and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B. It was the first separate high school building built for the Spencer School District. In addition, the role played by women voters in passing the bond is a notable historical marker for Spencer and for the women's suffrage movement. It was after these major milestones were met that local and federal changes in education came about, heightening the significance of the 1914 Spencer High School.

⁵¹ Wesley I. Shank, 93-94.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 31

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

Locally, the insights of A. H. Avery gave all high school students the opportunity to prepare themselves for life beyond high school by implementing the five-year high school. He had a clear understanding of how the high school should be designed with specialized rooms and how to shift teaching to enable an emphasis on vocational training. Anticipation of changes that were taking place at the federal level with the Smith-Hughes Act guided the design of the 1914 Spencer High School, making it the best facility for its students. These milestones are a tribute to the quality of local education and educators. The architect, school board, and community designed a building that rivaled high schools in larger Iowa cities.

In the 1930s and 1940s, an untold number of Iowa's schools were renovated, added to, or constructed using Public Works Administration funding or Works Progress Administration (WPA) labor. Today, this building provides a tangible link to the history of the New Deal programs put in place during the Great Depression in Spencer.⁵²

This school represents key educational movements or theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history and design embodied in the remaining examples of buildings built during these movements provide insights into how they affected the way Iowans were taught, as well as how Iowans continue to be taught.⁵³

⁵² "Iowa's Historic Schools."

http://www.iowahistory.org/preservation/historic_schools/introduction.html (accessed June 9, 2008).
Website changed to: <http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/statewide-inventory-and-collections/schools/index.html>.

⁵³ Ibid.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 32

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

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Section number 9 Page 35

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

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Spencer High School and Auditorium

Name of Property

Clay County, Iowa

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 1.5**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>325741</u>	<u>4778696</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Sheriffa M. Jones, Architectural Historian sjones@iowalakesrcd.orgorganization Rural Preservation Partners date October 30, 2009street & number 203 10th Street SW, PO BOX 265 telephone (712) 262-2083city or town Spencer state Iowa zip code 51301**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 Ownername Sam Erickson, Old Spencer School LLLP and Spencer Community School Districtstreet & number 14 W 21st Street 23 East 7th Street (712) 262-8950 telephone (712) 262-5640city or town Spencer state IA zip code 51301

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The 1914 Spencer High School is located in the middle of Spencer, Iowa, in Clay County. It is bounded by Fourth Street East on the north; Third Street East on the south; and First Avenue East on the west. It is located in the original plat of Spencer in Block C, Lots 4-15.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries conform to the historic boundaries associated with this property during the period of significance.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

MAPS



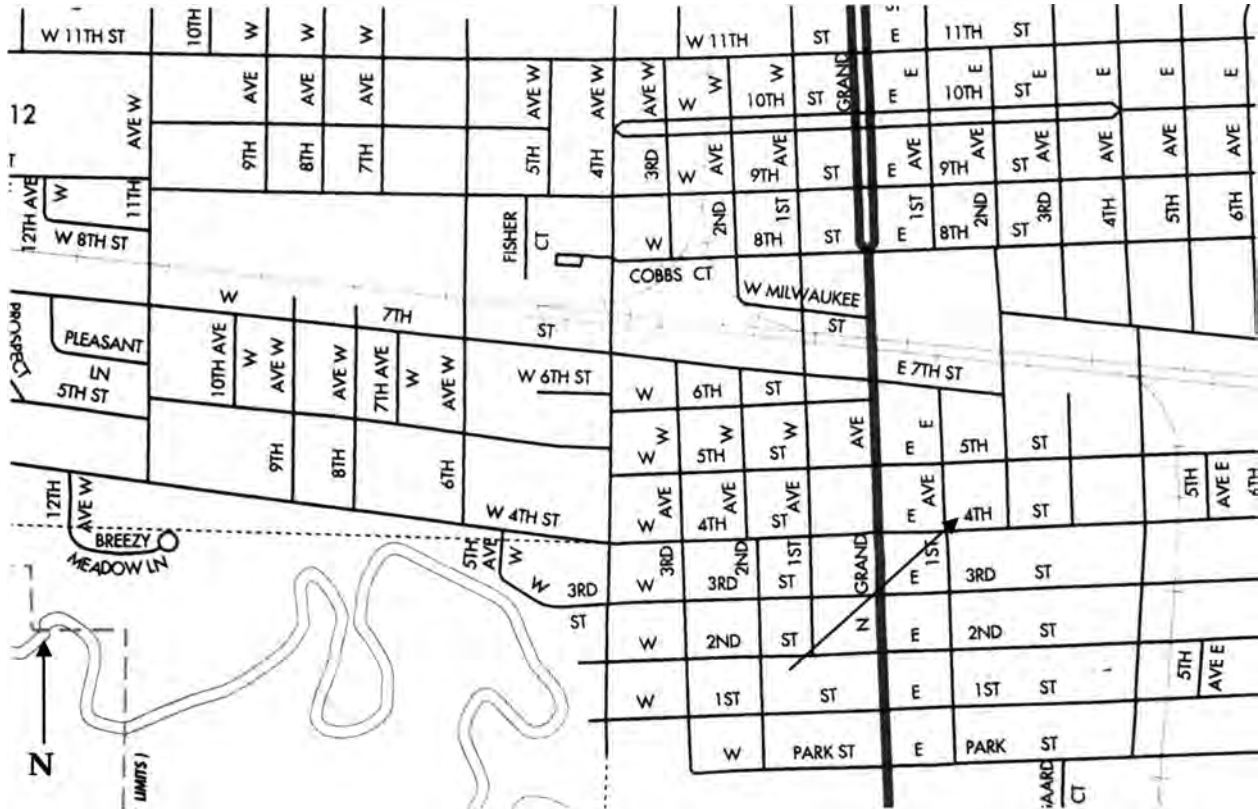
MAP 1: Iowa DOT Highway and Street Map, 2007. www.iowadotmaps.com (accessed October 14, 2009), Spencer, IA. Location of 1914 Spencer High School and 1937 Auditorium noted with an arrow. Scale is not exact on this document as the map needed to be scaled down to fit.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Page 38

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



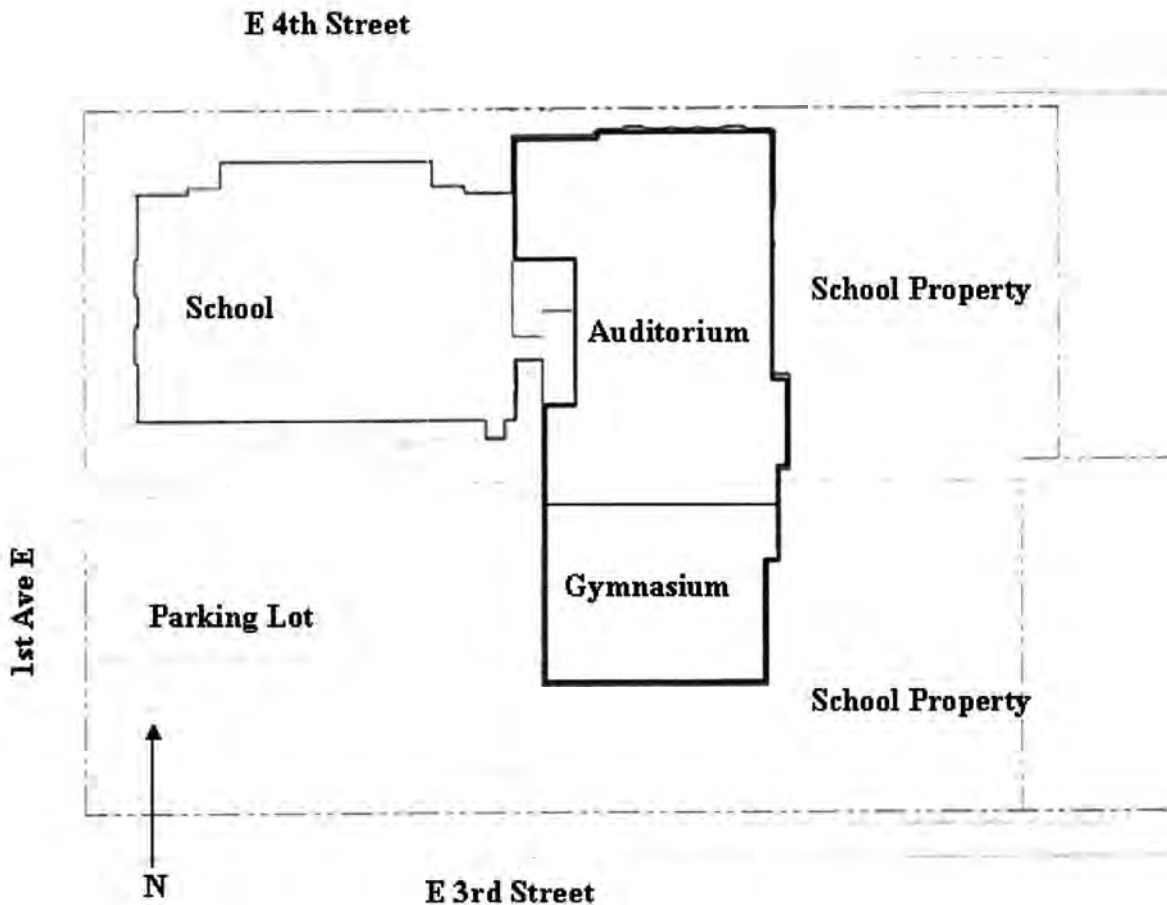
MAP 2: Iowa DOT Highway and Street Map, 2007. www.iowadotmaps.com (accessed October 14, 2009), Spencer, Iowa. Location of 1914 Spencer High School and 1937 Auditorium noted with an arrow. Scale is not exact on this document as the map size/scale changed in order to fit on the page; however, twelve city blocks is about one mile.

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Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



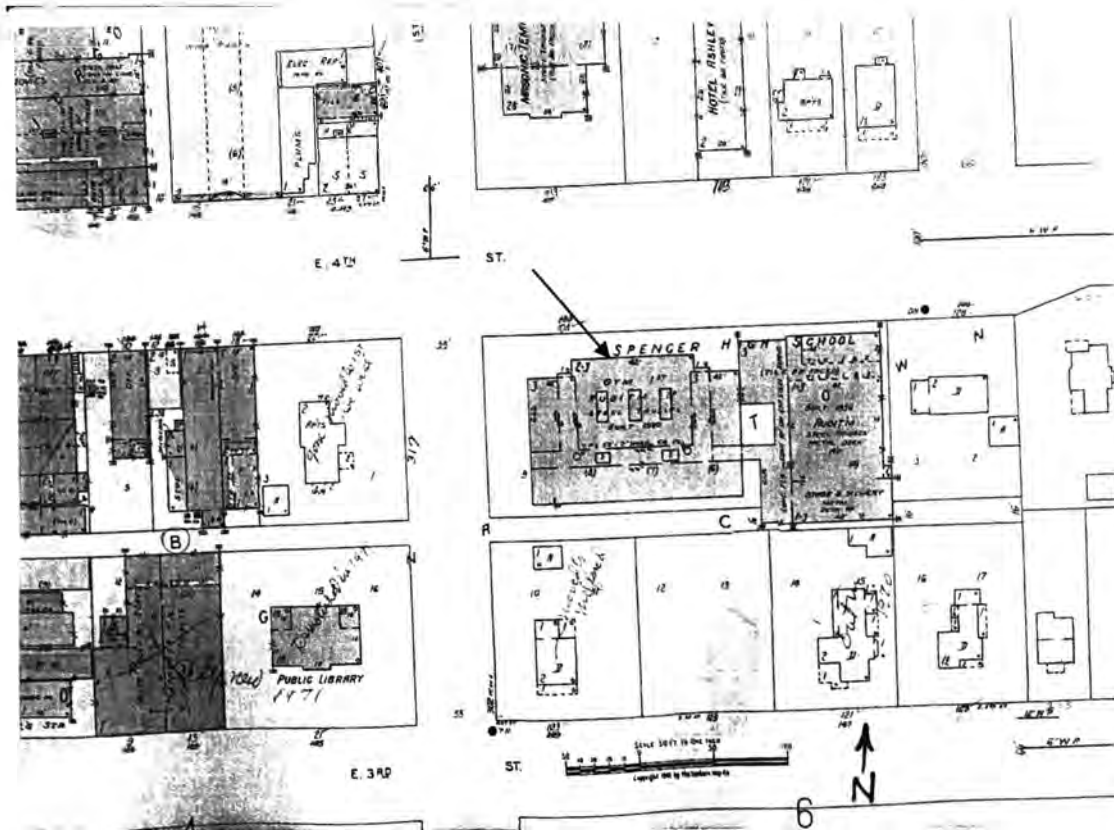
SITE PLAN: Site plan of the 1914 Spencer High School, 1937 Auditorium, and 1967 Gymnasium. Courtesy of Cannon Moss Brygger & Associates. Scale is not exact on this document as the site plan needed to be increased in scale; however, it is approximately one city block from north to south and one and half city blocks from east to west.

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Section number Additional Page 40

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



MAP 3: City of Spencer, Sanborn Map 1941, Revised 1951. Courtesy of the State Library of Iowa Digital Sanborn Maps. <http://www.statelibraryofiaowa.org/services/resources/sanborn-login?searchterm=digital+sanb> (accessed September 17, 2007).

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Section number Additional Page 41

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sheriffa Jones was the photographer for all the black and white photos. All negatives for the black and white photos are held at the Iowa Lakes RC&D office, 203 Tenth Street Southwest, Spencer, Iowa 51301. The black and white photos date from March 2008 and February 2009 and depict the 1914 Spencer High School and 1937 Auditorium addition, Spencer, Iowa (Clay County).

- #1 Looking southwest toward the north and east façades of the 1937 auditorium.
- #2 Looking northwest to the east and south façades.
- #3 Looking northeast to the west and south façades.
- #4 Looking southeast to the north and west façades of the 1914 school.
- #5 North façade at the auditorium entrance, detail of exterior light fixture.
- #6 Vestibule and ticket booth inside the north entrance of the auditorium.
- #7 Lobby inside the north entrance of the auditorium.
- #8 Looking east, vestibule inside the north entrance of the auditorium. Notice the original terrazzo, doors and light fixture.
- #9 Detail of ticket window/booth.
- #10 Detail of light fixture in vestibule and corridor of the 1937 auditorium.
- #11 Looking east, corridor between the vestibule and auditorium entrance. Notice the original terrazzo and light fixtures.
- #12 Detail of another style of light fixture in the 1937 auditorium. This fixture is in the auditorium under the first balcony.
- #13 Looking north/northeast, view of the auditorium and seating from the stage.
- #14 Looking south/southeast, view of the auditorium and stage from the second balcony.
- #15 Looking south, view of the auditorium and stage from the first balcony.
- #16 Detail of one style of light fixture in the main part of the 1937 auditorium. Also notice the Art Deco details in the coffers.
- #17 Detail of original seat in first balcony.
- #18 Detail of stair railing going from first to second floor.
- #19 Stairway going up.
- #20 View of typical hallway with lockers.
- #21 Looking south, view of typical classroom.
- #22 Looking north, additional view of typical classroom.
- #23 Looking east, view of gymnasium seating.
- #24 Looking southeast, view of gymnasium.
- #25 Looking west, view of the north façade of the auditorium and school.
- #26 Looking south, view of the north façade of the auditorium.
- #27 Detail of the north façade of the auditorium.
- #28 Detail of the north façade (swag) on the auditorium.

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Section number Additional Page 42

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



Spencer High School, c. 1914, north and west façades, looking southeast.
Photographer unknown. Source: *Purple and Old Gold* 1915.

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Section number Additional Page 43

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



Spencer High School, c. 1915, general office. Source: *Purple and Old Gold* 1915.

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Section number Additional Page 44

Spencer High School and Auditorium
Clay County, Iowa



Spencer High School, c. 1915, manual training room. Source: *Purple and Old Gold 1915*.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Spencer High School and Auditorium

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Clay

DATE RECEIVED: 12/30/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/20/10
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/04/10 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/13/10
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000002

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 2-12-10 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

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

CLG NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG Name Spencer Date of Public MeetingProperty Name Spencer High School and Auditorium, 104 E. 4th Street, Spencer, Clay County

1. For Historic Preservation Commission:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
 Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature Jim Morony Date 5/26/09Print Name Jim MoronyTitle Spencer Historic Preservation Commission Vice chair

Reason(s) for recommendation:

This building holds so much importance for the community, especially individuals like myself. We need to preserve it to tell the story of the past to future generations.

2. For Chief Elected Local Official:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
 Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature [Signature] Date May 26, 2009Print Name MAYOR REYNOLD PETERSONTitle MAYOR

Reason(s) for recommendation:

The 1914 Spencer High School is National Register eligible for its role in the development of education in Spencer and the role that Spencer women held in passing the bond issue for the new school. It is also significant for the unique design and construction of the vocational specific rooms.

3. Professional Evaluation:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
 Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature [Signature] Date 6/6/09Print Name Paula MohrTitle Architectural Historian

Reason(s) for recommendation:



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#1



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND AUDITORIUM
SPENCER, IOWA

#2



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#3



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#4



OLD SPENCER HIGH
SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#5



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#6



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#7



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

8



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#9



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

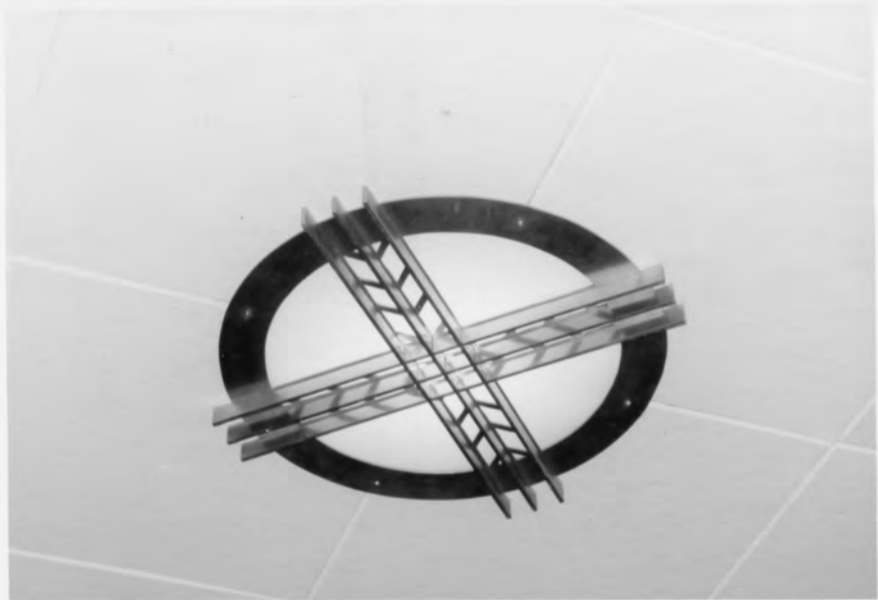
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OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

11



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#12



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#13



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#14



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

15



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

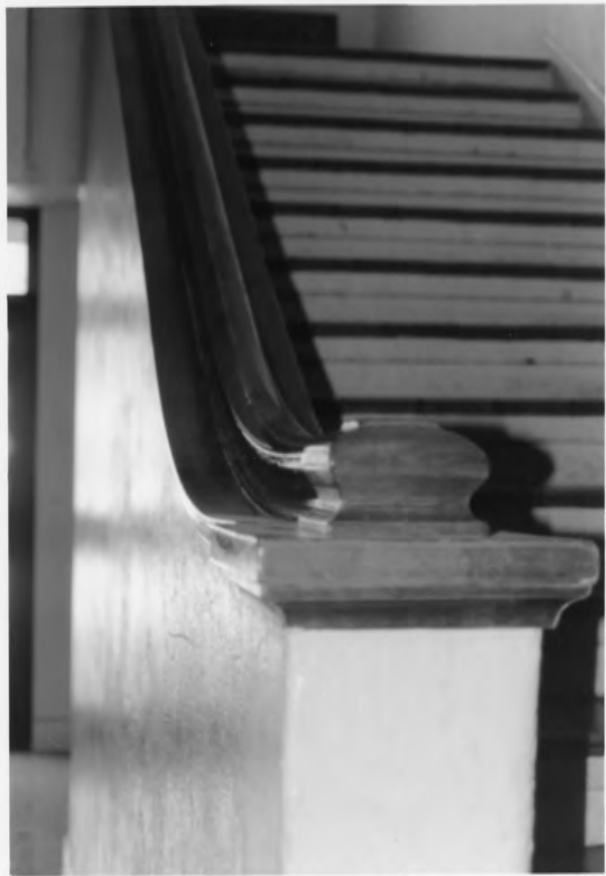
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OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

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OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#18



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

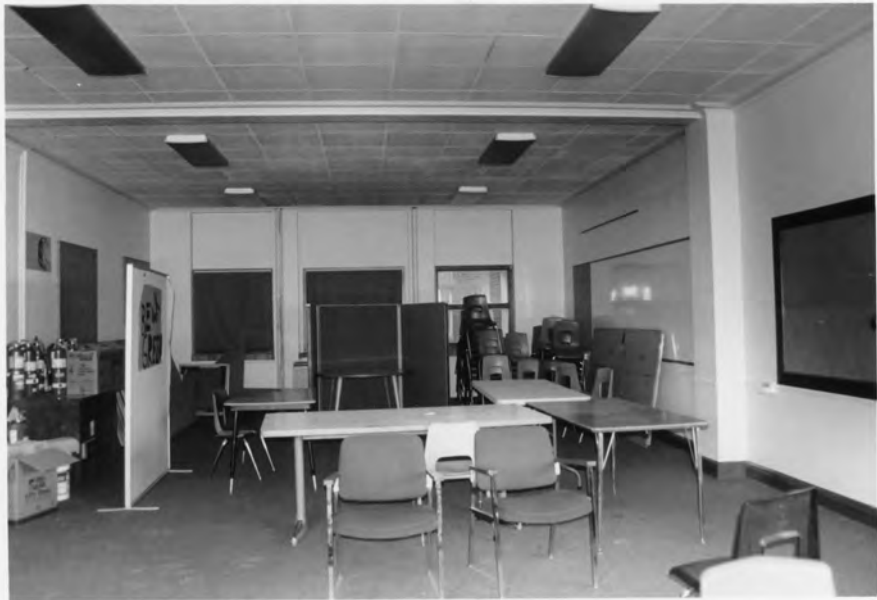
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OLD SPENCER HIGH
SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#20



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#21



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#22



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL
AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#23



OLD SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#24



OLD SPENCER HIGH
SCHOOL AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IA

#25

HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM



OLD SPENCER HIGH
SCHOOL AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IA

26



OLD SPENCER HIGH
SCHOOL AND
AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

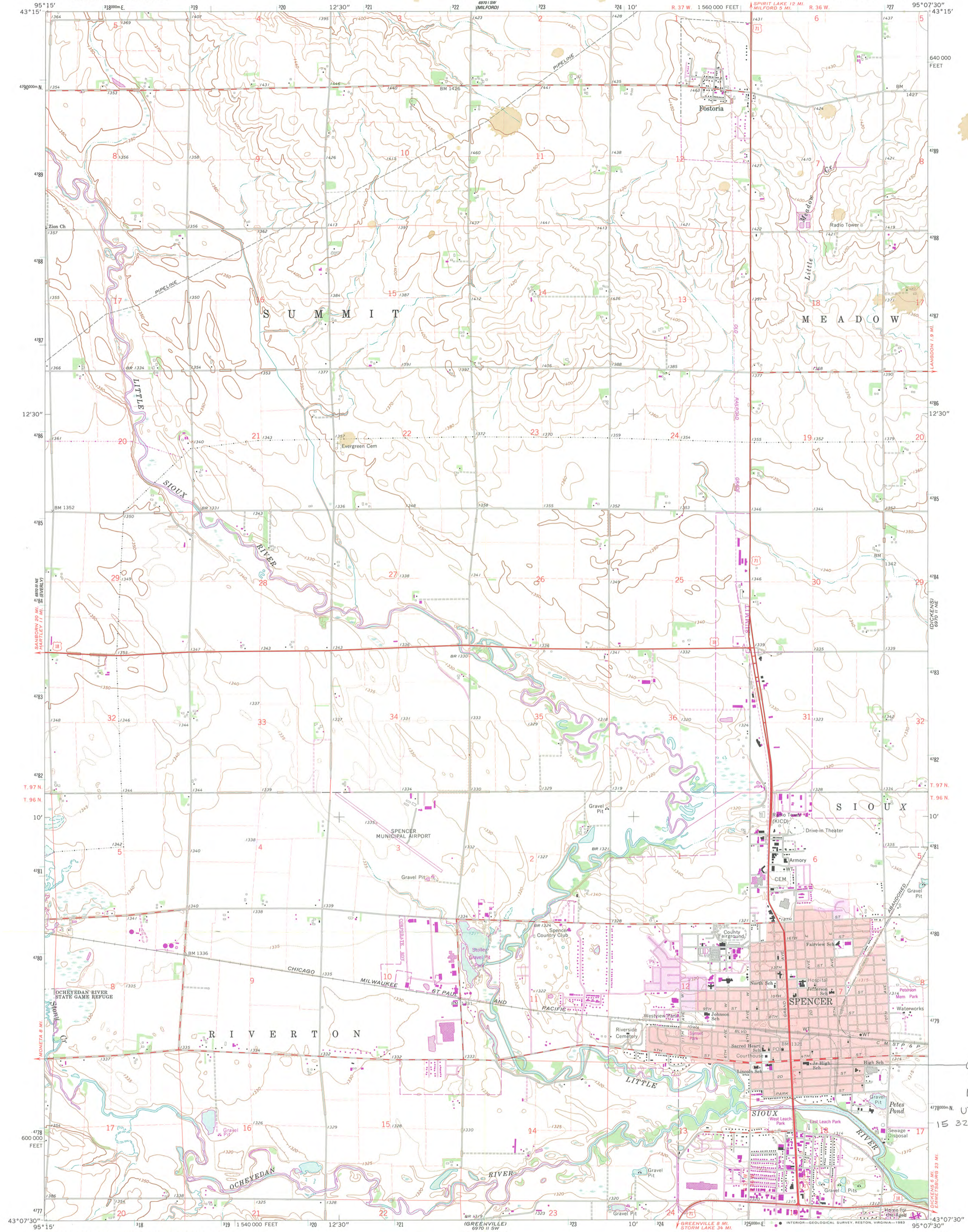
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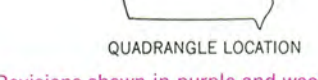
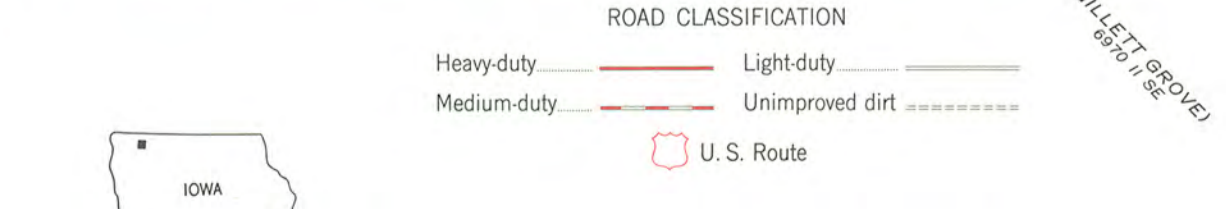
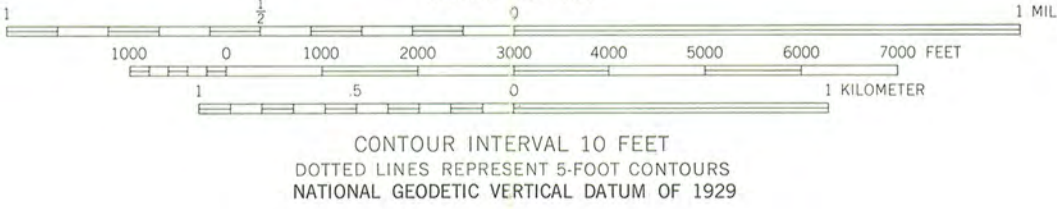
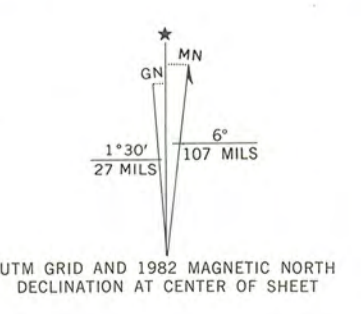
OLD SPENCER HIGH
SCHOOL AND AUDITORIUM

SPENCER, IOWA

#28



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1966
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Iowa coordinate
system, north zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid
ticks, zone 15, shown in blue.
1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted
North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters north
and 22 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries
of the National or State reservations shown on this map



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80226, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from
aerial photographs taken 1980 and other sources
This information not field checked. Map edited 1982
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

SPENCER, IOWA
43095-B2-TF-024
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1982
DMA 6970 II NW—SERIES V876

Old Spencer
High School
104 East 4th St.
UTM
15 325739 4778729

November 19, 2009

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



Dear Mr. Loether:

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

- Spencer High School and Auditorium, 104 E. 4th Street, Spencer, Clay County

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster Hill

Elizabeth Foster Hill
Tax Incentive Programs Manager/
National Register Coordinator