

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name District No. 44 School

other names/site number Taylor Township Hall

### 2. Location

street & number Off U.S. Highway 75  N/A not for publication

city or town Taylor Township Tintah  vicinity

state Minnesota code MN county Traverse code 155 zip code 56583

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Britta L. Bloomberg 6/2/11  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Minnesota Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Joy Edson H. Beall 7-20-11  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

District No. 44 School  
Name of Property

Traverse Co., MN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	1	<b>Total</b>

**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

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: town hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD

roof: ASPHALT

other:

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**Narrative Description**

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

**Summary Paragraph**

This nominated property consists of one contributing resource, a school building, and one non-contributing resource, a privy. The two buildings are located immediately east of United States Highway 75 in Traverse County, Minnesota, one-and-a-half miles south of the Traverse County-Wilkin County border. The small, wood-framed school building is generally rectangular. The schoolhouse was constructed in 1891 to serve the educational needs of schoolchildren in and around Taylor Township.

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**Narrative Description**

(see continuation sheets)

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N/A
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### Narrative Description

Constructed in 1891, District No. 44 School is located immediately east of United States Highway 75 in Traverse County in west-central Minnesota. It punctuates a one acre parcel in the southwesternmost corner of the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 8, Taylor Township, roughly 13 miles north of Wheaton. The clearing holding the school and a nearby privy is surrounded mostly by level agricultural fields and a small number of deciduous trees (Photo No. 1).<sup>1</sup>

District No. 44 School is a generally rectangular building that consists of three parts: a vestibule, schoolroom, and coal shed. The vestibule is roughly six feet long and twelve feet wide, while the schoolroom is about twenty-six feet long and eighteen feet wide. The coal shed marking the rear of the building is around eight feet long and twelve feet wide. Resting upon a non-original concrete block foundation, the single-story, wood-framed building features a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. A simple bell tower with bell marks the roof ridge at the south front of the building, while a concrete block chimney pierces the roof ridge at the north rear. The building is dressed mostly in wood clapboards that have been painted white.

The south front of the building is marked by the small, gable-roofed vestibule (Photo No. 1). A single, narrow, wood-framed window is located on either sidewall of the vestibule, while a paneled, wood door covers the entryway at its south front. This entryway serves as the school building's main entrance. The door is covered by a wood-framed screen door. A poured concrete landing is located immediately in front of the entry door. A small sign that reads "District 44" is mounted just above the door. A lamp is located a short distance above the sign.

The east and west sides of the schoolhouse are almost identical, with each carrying three wood-sash, two-over-two, double-hung windows (Photo No. 2 and No. 3). These windows are protected by wood, two-over-two fixed-sash storm windows painted black. A ventilator pierces the west wall at its north end near the concrete foundation. A shed-roofed addition is found at the north rear of the schoolhouse (Photo No. 4). Sheathed in wood shiplap siding, it was constructed in 1914 and served as the schoolhouse's coal shed. Like the main part of the schoolhouse, the coal shed rests upon a concrete block foundation and its roof is protected by asphalt shingles. A small wood door is located at its east side.

The interior of the vestibule is modest (Photo No. 7). The lower part of the walls are sheathed in original wood wainscoting incised with vertical lines, while the upper wall sections are covered in acoustical material that appears to be made of wood fibers and dates to about the middle of the twentieth century. The wainscoting is painted beige and the upper wall sections are white in color. The ceiling appears to be composed of cementitious asbestos boarding. It is thin, perhaps a half-inch thick and was installed in the 1920s. The olive green-colored ceiling is accented with dark brown-colored wood slats. The vestibule's wood floor is original to the building. The wood framing around the narrow window at either

<sup>1</sup> This description is based on a site visit by the author on November 15, 2010, as well as several conversations with Dawayne Novak, a former student at the school.



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side of the vestibule is painted in the same beige as the wainscoting, as is the four-panel, wood door that leads from the vestibule into the main part of the school building.

A few shelves are located on the walls at the west side of the vestibule, a place where children set their lunch buckets before moving into the main part of the schoolhouse. A series of coat hooks are also available at this side of the vestibule. The east side features a small wood table supporting a water basin. A hook situated just above the water basin holds a ladle. This side of the vestibule also contains a water cooler supported upon a metal stanchion. All of these items, including a small mirror hanging on the wall, appear to date at least to the mid-part of the twentieth century and may in fact be older.

The paneled door of the vestibule opens into a single room. Although considerably larger than the vestibule, the room is only about the size of a very small classroom in a modern-day school building. This room represents the bulk of the schoolhouse, and it is in this room where children at several grade levels were given their public school education (Photo No. 5 and No. 6). The materials that comprise the walls, floor, and ceiling match that of the vestibule. The ceiling supports four hanging light fixtures. Chalkboards are mounted on sections of each wall. All of these chalkboards date to the original construction of the schoolhouse. In fact, the chalkboard on the south wall dates to 1871, twenty years before District No. 44 School was completed. It likely was acquired from another schoolhouse when District No. 44 School was built.

Much of the schoolroom is filled by a number of metal and wood children's desks that were in place at least by the mid-twentieth century and may have been in the schoolroom by the early part of the century. Narrow, wood benches line both the east and west walls. The front of the classroom near the north end of the building holds a wood table and wood chairs. A teacher's desk is situated to the west of this, near the west wall (Photo No. 5). The teacher's desk is an antique that was purchased a few years ago and is similar to the school's original teacher's desk. A heating stove is adjacent the desk. The tank for the fuel-oil-fired stove is housed in the coal shed. The original stove was coal-fired and explains the need for the coal shed.

The west end of the north wall features a wood map case that dates to around the original construction of the schoolhouse. In fact, when the map case was discovered in the building's attic a few years ago, it contained maps dating to 1892. The east end of the north wall holds a familiar print of our first president and leader of the Continental Army, George Washington. The print dates to the early 1900s and was originally part of a rural school in North Dakota. A four-panel, wood door is located between the map case and the print. The door leads into the coal shed at the rear of the building. A narrow, wood cabinet is located immediately west of the access to the coal shed and is covered by a very narrow door. This cabinet traditionally housed art supplies. A card catalogue is just west of the cabinet. The catalogue is not original to the building but was donated by the Breckenridge Public School system a few years ago.

The back of the classroom at the south end of the building, adjacent the vestibule, is marked by the main entryway, 1871 chalkboard, a modest-sized wood cabinet, a small and thin wood cabinet, and a globe

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(Photo No. 6). The modest-sized wood cabinet is in the southeast corner of the schoolroom and houses the school's library, while the globe is located in the southwest corner. The cabinet became part of the school early in the twentieth century, perhaps the 1920s, while the globe was added to the school in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Country names are absent from the globe. Instead, geography classes required that students approach the globe and write the names of countries on it in chalk. The globe could then be erased and reused. The small and thin wood cabinet is located above the globe on the west wall. This cabinet traditionally held teacher's supplies and was acquired soon after the schoolhouse was constructed.

The ceiling at the south rear of the classroom is punctured by a square-shaped attic access. The pull rope for the bell in the bell tower descends from a tiny opening adjacent to the attic access.

District No. 44 School does not have a basement. A wood-framed privy is located about thirty feet east of the schoolhouse. The tiny structure has a shed roof and is covered in corrugated metal (sides and roof). A narrow entry door marks its south side. Although the grounds of District No. 44 School originally held two outdoor privies, neither remains. The current privy is a non-contributing element of the school.

### *Historic Integrity*

The schoolhouse retains integrity of design, setting, materials, feeling, and association, although integrity of location and workmanship are less apparent. Integrity of workmanship seems to imply the efforts of a craftsman or artisan, such as those skilled individuals who shaped the stones of the arches for the Stone Arch Bridge in Minneapolis. It seems unlikely that a modest wood-framed schoolhouse would demand a similar effort. Additionally, in the mid-1940s, District No. 44 School was shifted about fifty feet to the east to allow for widening of the north-south roadway immediately to the west. Upon studying the property site, this seems almost a minor happening, for a different orientation for the schoolhouse appears a somewhat subtle change to a level clearing that is embraced by farm fields and the occasional tree. Nevertheless, the building was moved a short distance and turned on its axis, so claiming integrity of location would not be precisely correct.

However, a property need not retain all seven aspects of integrity; a property needs to retain most aspects of integrity. Indeed, it is extremely unlikely the vast majority of properties in the National Register of Historic Places meet all seven aspects of integrity. Integrity of setting and feeling are clearly evident with District No. 44 School, for it is largely the prairie schoolhouse of imagination, with its small form marking a clearing serving as a schoolyard, a trimmed plot that is but a fraction of the wide open space characteristic of western Minnesota. Moreover, it retains integrity of design and materials. It continues as a rectangular, wood-framed, one-room schoolhouse dressed in wood clapboards and featuring a gable roof. Its original wood-sash windows and storm windows also remain. Finally, the schoolhouse retains integrity of association, for the building marking the prairie today is virtually the same building that housed Taylor Township schoolchildren decade after decade. All of these elements help define the historic character of the building, which, clearly, has not substantially changed in over a century.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

**Period of Significance**

1891-1954

**Significant Dates**

1891

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance reflects the year District No. 44 School was constructed, 1891, and continues through 1954, at which time the district consolidated, a common happening among school districts of the period, but an event that brought an end to the significant era of rural public education in School District No. 44.

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Because District No. 44 School has been moved from its original location it is necessary that it meet Criteria Consideration B, which addresses moved properties. Although the school was moved in the 1940s, the move was modest, as it was shifted roughly fifty feet to the east and turned on its axis. This was necessary because the roadway just to the west of the school was widened. If the school had not been shifted slightly to the east, its front would have virtually opened onto the roadway. Despite the move, the setting of the school remains the same. It continues to occupy its historic plot, which is, and always has been, a flat grassy square punctuated by a handful of deciduous trees and surrounded by level agricultural fields and the nearby roadway. From a National Register perspective, District No. 44 School meets the Criteria Consideration B requirement for listing in the historic inventory because it represents, as noted in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, the only "surviving property most importantly associated" with the educational activities of District No. 44 School.

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

District No. 44 School in Section 8 of Taylor Township in Traverse County is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) for its local significance in the area of Education. The schoolhouse relates to the Minnesota statewide context "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940." Constructed in 1891, District No. 44 School was managed by a single teacher charged with educating Traverse County's Taylor Township youth in grades one through eight. Today, this type of public education is extremely unusual, but in the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century this approach to public education was common in rural Traverse County and in other rural parts of Minnesota. As a one-room country school with good historic integrity and a period of significance of 1891-1954, District No. 44 School is representative of the one-room schoolhouses that once dominated the landscape of Traverse County.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(see continuation sheets)



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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### *Traverse County and Taylor Township*

Traverse County is located in west-central Minnesota, adjacent to the extreme southeastern corner of North Dakota and the extreme northeastern corner of South Dakota. It was founded in 1862, although it was not formally organized until 1881. It is named for Lake Traverse, a long and somewhat narrow lake draining to the north into the Bois de Sioux River, which empties into the Red River of the North, the natural geographical boundary between North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. The lake receives its moniker because its southwest-northeast axis is nearly the “traverse” of Big Stone Lake and Lac qui Parle Lake, both located to the southeast and each lending its appellation to its respective county.<sup>2</sup>

The nutrient-rich soil of Traverse County determined its economic direction. The relatively flat landscape eventually became covered mostly by agricultural fields occasionally interrupted by rural roadways, farmhouses and outbuildings, and clusters of deciduous trees. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway, which built north-northwest through the county, and the Great Northern Railway, which passed through the extreme southwest corner of the county, provided a direct link to markets to the east for Traverse County’s agricultural largesse. While the county never evolved into a highly-populated county, Traverse County came to host a few modest-sized towns, such as Wheaton, the county seat, which is situated in the west-central part of the county. About eight miles north of Wheaton is Taylor Township, a roughly fifty-one square-mile area that appears to have been largely neglected by local histories. The township was one of the first townships created in the county. Coming into existence in 1881, the same year the county was formally organized, it was christened for an early settler named J. J. Taylor. Ten years later District No. 44 School was established less than two miles south of the northern boundary of the township, a boundary shared with Wilkin County.<sup>3</sup>

#### *State Oversight of Education*

Minnesota’s public school educational system officially came into being in 1849, a time when Minnesota was but a territory. It was during that year that the first territorial legislature passed an act to create a common school system. Local taxes were levied on persons within the various townships to pay for the salaries of teachers and to fund the erection of school buildings.<sup>4</sup>

A state superintendent of public instruction was established when Minnesota became a state in 1858. Three years later the state legislature made every township a school district. The legislature rethought this, however, and the following year stipulated a “neighborhood” school district plan. This informal descriptor seems a bit odd since those living outside of towns, in rural areas like most of Traverse County, rarely lived in neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the language implies smaller and more manageable school districts. For nineteenth-century settlers to Minnesota smaller was better, for they steered wagons

<sup>2</sup> Warren Upham, *Minnesota Place Names: A Geographical Encyclopedia* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 55, 304, 596.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Schmitz, *Traverse County: Telling it the Way Things Were* (Wheaton, Minn.: n.p., 1983), 4; *Ibid.*, 597-598.

<sup>4</sup> Lois M. Fawcett, “Frontier Education,” *Minnesota History* 14 (June 1933): 143-144.

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not autos. In truth, even wagon rides to class were likely a rarity, as most children probably trod to school. Interestingly, the state would ultimately conclude that embracing smaller districts was a mistake.<sup>5</sup>

By the late 1860s the expansion of public education in the state was quickening. The governor at this time, William R. Marshall, proclaimed that Minnesota had more schools than almost any other state of comparable population. With the exception of the newly-formed University of Minnesota (opened in 1867), these schools were almost entirely common schools, or schools dedicated to teaching those in the lower grades (grades 1 through 8), while private schools dominated the higher grades. Many recognized the need for public high schools, but it would be another decade before a high school program was initiated via an act of the state legislature. The 1878 legislation provided for \$400 of annual funding to each high school maintaining an approved course of study.<sup>6</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century the Minnesota State Legislature strengthened truancy laws, encouraging school boards, cities, and large villages to hire truant officers with authority to arrest truants, take them to school, or file complaints against parents. This did not mean much in rural areas where most of the state's children resided, however, because the law did not specifically address them. It was about this time that the state elevated standards for teachers. In years prior, many teachers in public schools had almost no formal education, but the state legislature altered that in 1899, requiring prospective teachers to pass an examination administered by the public instruction office. Although both of these acts by the legislature may seem modest by today's standards, each was evidence that government was gaining more authority over the education of the state's children.<sup>7</sup>

Curiously, even as the state intensified its oversight of public education at the beginning of the new century, there still was no single board of education to manage the state's education strategy. Instead, education oversight in Minnesota consisted of a convoluted amalgam of several offices and groups, including the Office of Public Instruction, the State Library Commission, the High School Board, the Normal School Board, the Board of Special Schools, the offices of the various county superintendents, and the local school districts. In 1901, Minnesota's chief executive, Governor Van Zant, proposed the creation of a state board of education to manage the cumbersome state school system. Eighteen years later lawmakers finally acceded to the governor's wishes. In 1919, with a five-member panel, the Minnesota State Board of Education came into being. The board was empowered to elect a commissioner of education, a chief executive charged with administering the Minnesota Department of Education. The board has developed broad powers through the years, with authority to regulate all plans of public education, while providing state financial assistance to the schools through the state education department.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Minnesota Department of Education, *A History of the State Department of Education in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Education, 1968), 5, 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

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### *Financing Public Schools*

Prior to founding the board of education the state of Minnesota was funding public schools.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps this seems commonsensical, but in the early years of Minnesota's existence as a state it had little money to offer public education. In fact, it was not until 1878 when the state legislature approved the act to create high schools that state assistance was offered for education. It would be another two decades before regular financial assistance was provided to schools other than the high schools. Money for the schools came from the "permanent fund." The permanent fund was born out of legislation enacted by the federal government. In 1785, the federal government enacted the Land Ordinance, a law that created the township method of parceling land in areas of the continent yet to become part of the United States. The law also stated that proceeds gained from selling section 16 in each township would be dedicated for school purposes. In 1848, monies acquired from sale of section 36 were also included in the permanent fund. Later, the permanent fund was augmented with proceeds derived from the sale of swamp lands.<sup>10</sup>

The permanent fund had grown to about \$3.4 million when the legislature authorized the creation of high schools, and it had reached \$14 million by 1905. Regrettably, only a very small percentage of money from the fund went to rural schools like District No. 44 School. Even though roughly two thirds of the state's population resided in rural areas in the early 1900s, the high schools were located in cities and villages. This was a practical problem for those living in rural areas, for they lacked easy access to high schools. Moreover, many students completing their course of study at common schools were obligated to continue working family farmsteads. Consequently, only a modest percentage of rural youth could attend high school. In any event, it was the public educational institutions in the cities and villages that chiefly benefited from the permanent fund.<sup>11</sup>

Although the state provided some financial support, the vast majority of funds for schools came from local sources.<sup>12</sup> For instance, during the 1915-1916 school session, the state contributed \$4.3 million to public schools. Local contributions came to almost \$17.5 million. The counties raised most of this money by levying taxes on property. The total value of all taxable property varied from county to county, however. As a result, some counties had more to expend on public education than other counties. Sparsely populated areas like Traverse County did not have the resources of highly populated areas like Hennepin County. Indeed, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the value of all taxable land in

<sup>9</sup> During the 1915 legislative year a public school was defined as the following: "All schools supported in whole or in part by state school funds shall be styled *public schools*, and admission to and tuition therein shall be free to all persons between the ages of five and twenty-one years, in the district in which such pupil resides. . . ." This quote can be found in Frances Elizabeth Kelley, *A History of Public School Support in Minnesota, 1858 to 1917* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1920), 10.

<sup>10</sup> David C. Anderson, "District No. 48 School," April 26, 1996, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), St. Paul, 8.4-8.5; Minnesota Department of Education, 7; Kelley, 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, Kay Grossman, and Sue Dieter, "Morris High School," September 15, 2003, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at SHPO, MHS, St. Paul, 8.7; Minnesota Department of Education, 7; Kelley, 3; Anderson, 8.5.

<sup>12</sup> "Local support may be defined as consisting of all moneys kept by or returned to the district where they originate, even though they are raised under a compulsory state law." This definition can be found in Kelley, 12.



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Hennepin County amounted to over \$220 million, while the value of taxable property in Traverse County came to roughly \$6.6 million. In truth, the valuation of property in Traverse County in the early decades of the twentieth century was less than that of two-thirds of the state's counties. Additional money for schools was acquired through special taxes levied by the districts and by bond issues.<sup>13</sup> Fundraisers of one kind or another were also employed, such as "basket socials."<sup>14</sup>

### *One-Room Schoolhouses*

In his book *America's Country Schools*, historian Andrew Gulliford observes that for nearly 250 years country schools, like District No. 44 School, proved the "backbone of American education." As Gulliford notes, these country schools were predominately one-room schoolhouses. There was a practical reason for this—the rural school generally served the small number of families living in the immediate area. Simply stated, there usually was no need for a larger school building. Should the population increase, necessitating a larger school building, two one-room school buildings could be placed adjacent one another. If the population decreased, one of the buildings could be removed. Or, if the population decreased to a point where a school building was not at all required, the rather small structure could be transported to an entirely different location where it was needed.<sup>15</sup>

Frequently, one-room schoolhouses were wood-framed rectangles dressed in wood siding and sporting a gable roof. Gulliford's book is illustrated with many such examples of one-room schoolhouses, including Mustang School in Huerfano County, Colorado; Willows School in Custer County, Colorado; Unionville School in Unionville, Nevada; Evans School in Gloucester, Rhode Island; and Republican School in Ripon, Wisconsin (the school's name apparently results from the belief that the Republican Party was organized in this tiny building in 1854). In Minnesota, examples of such schools are District No. 133 School in Hunter Township, Jackson County, and District No. 27 School in Terrace Township, Pope County (1900). District No. 48 School in Franklin Township, near Delano (1871); District No. 1 School in Spencer Brook Township, Isanti County (1874); and District No. 74 School in Danforth Township, Pine County (1899, 1909), are also Minnesota examples, but these three schoolhouses are in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>16</sup>

Like District No. 44 School in Traverse County, many one-room schools in the Midwest punctuated a plot that was decorated with a small number of trees, yet remained mostly open. The schoolhouse

<sup>13</sup> Kelley, 3-7, 12, 29; Anderson, 8.5.

<sup>14</sup> In the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form "District No. 48 School," architectural historian David C. Anderson defined "basket social." "The basket social was an event that students from in and out of the district could attend and where the boys would offer cash bids on lunch baskets prepared by the girls. The successful bidder would get to share lunch with its maker and perhaps also be permitted to walk her home after the event." Anderson received this information from Ralph Peterson, a former student at District No. 48 School.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools* (Niwot, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 1996), 35-36.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 199, 204-205, 207-208; Doug Ohman and Jim Heynen, *Schoolhouses of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006), 26-27; John J. Hackett, "District No. 48 School," April 1978, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at SHPO, MHS, St. Paul; Britta Bloomberg, "District No. 1 School," December 1979, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at SHPO, MHS, St. Paul; David C. Anderson, "District No. 74 School," October 14, 1991, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at SHPO, MHS, St. Paul.



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commonly surveyed farmland, crops that edged the small, trimmed schoolhouse plot that also hosted a privy for girls and one for boys. Swing sets or merry-go-rounds or some other form of playground equipment often marked the clearing as well.<sup>17</sup> For many graduates of these institutions—indeed, for many Americans—the setting was pastoral and idyllic, representative of a simpler, perhaps more genuine, time. Regrettably, only a tiny percentage of one-room schoolhouses now remain, but the image of the country school continues, in Gulliford's words, as a "powerful cultural symbol to many Americans." This was not so for many progressive educationists in the last century, however, as they took aim at country schools.

History is sprinkled with periods when new ideas on public education were advocated, and in America one era of educational progressivism began about the first half of the twentieth century and continued into the second half. Many books were penned offering the latest thinking on how public education in this country should proceed. These works frequently included narrative on school buildings, how they should be designed and constructed to meet changing educational programs and goals. "Form follows function" became a popular adage of this time. The axiom's principal is that a building's design should largely be an outgrowth of its purpose. Not surprisingly, many school buildings constructed before this principal became prominent were disparaged, especially the one-room, wood-framed rural schools. For some progressives, the humble appearance of the rural schoolhouse hinted at a poor education to be found within its walls. As example, there is this from a book on school architecture that is simply titled *Schools*: "The job of the school building has changed. . . . Where formally the school building was accepted if it kept out the rain and cold while the inmates were being injected with the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, such minimum evasions of mass illiteracy are not acceptable anymore." The authors continued: "The educational plant . . . provides a facility which should be planned, designed, constructed, and used so that it makes possible better living in the community in which it is located." The authors were implying that one-room schoolhouses fell well short of this standard. While discussing early schoolhouses and the teaching to be found there, the authors of *The Cost of a Schoolhouse* offered these comments: "The teacher worked with students one by one and was chiefly engaged in hearing recitations, testing memory, and keeping order. Class lectures or discussion were virtually unknown. . . . Such regular schoolhouses as did exist were dirty, noisy, and ill-suited to school purposes." The authors did confess, however, that although one-room schoolhouses were not pleasant to learn in, occasionally they were pleasant to look at.<sup>18</sup>

As evidenced from the previous comments, the education on education served by progressives often came with a side of snootiness. Certainly, legitimate points were made by these scholars, and their ideas went a long way in altering the educational landscape in America, but many attendees of rural schoolhouses likely would dispute the notion that these unassuming places of learning deprived them of a worthy education. Dawayne Novak, who attended the one-room District No. 44 School in Traverse County, certainly disagrees with such thinking:

<sup>17</sup> Gulliford, 198.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence B. Perkins and Walter D. Cocking, *Schools* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Company, 1949), 37-38; Educational Facilities Laboratory, *The Cost of a Schoolhouse* (n.p., 1960), 18, 28; Granger et al., 8.5-8.6.

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The education I received at Dist. # 44 School was excellent. And it helped, too, that we had an excellent teacher. She had a lot to handle, with 8 grades and ages ranging from 5 years to 13 or 14 years old. One of the distinct advantages of rural schools is simply this: We were exposed to all levels of learning. Older students received a "refresher" course in English, math and so on while she taught the younger students and it worked the same for the younger students. We picked up on advanced knowledge while she taught the older students. This was very evident when rural schools consolidated with the city schools. We were almost always ahead of the city school students in all areas. Our teacher taught at our school for 3 years and was the last teacher in the district. Out of her 16 students, 3 of them went on to be valedictorians of their class in the city school. And one went on to Harvard and one to Hamline University where she graduated with honors. I think those facts speak well of the quality of rural education at Dist. # 44.<sup>19</sup>

Novak is hardly the first former pupil of a one-room school to champion its virtues. In 1909, poet Edwin Sabin waxed about the country school. "The Country Schoolhouse" was an overtly florid piece, but it implied that Sabin was disenchanted with attacks on country schoolhouses, a notion promulgated by historian Wayne E. Fuller in his book *One-Room Schools of the Middle West*.<sup>20</sup> Fuller observes: "Sabin's poem . . . could well have been his way of defending the one-room school from the harsh attacks being made on it in the early 1900s."<sup>21</sup>

Despite the haughtiness of some educational reformers in the first half of the twentieth century, it seems excessive to imply that rural schoolhouses were the place where young minds went to dull. In fact, Gulliford remarks that a major myth about country schools is that they "are the poor stepchildren of American education—primitive buildings where, under intolerable conditions, young, inexperienced teachers try to instill in their students a modicum of knowledge." Some country schools may have been unable to match the public education provided in urban areas, certainly, but, as evident from Novak's words, the opposite seems true as well, with urban education unable to equal the learning found in some rural schools.<sup>22</sup>

#### *District No. 44 School*

Located in Section 8 of Taylor Township, Traverse County's District No. 44 School is a simple wood-framed rectangle with a gable roof crowned with a modest bell tower. Clad in wood siding, the small and unadorned single-story building has a projecting gable-roofed vestibule at its south front and a small shed-roofed section at its north rear. It is a fine example of a one-room prairie schoolhouse. While the schoolhouse resembles to a degree the Minnesota one-room schoolhouses mentioned earlier, its design is even more closely related to other Minnesota schoolhouses, largely because of its gable-roofed vestibule. These schoolhouses include District No. 106 School (Maple Leaf School) in Dexter Township, Mower

<sup>19</sup> Dawayne Novak, letter to the author, January 19, 2011, in possession of the author.

<sup>20</sup> Sabin's entire poem is available in Wayne E. Fuller, *One-Room Schools of the Middle West: An Illustrated History* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1994), xi-xii.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

<sup>22</sup> Gulliford, 35.

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County, which was constructed the same year as District No. 44 School; District No. 35 School in Lemond Township, Steele County (ca. 1880s); District No. 18 School in Montgomery Township, Le Sueur County (1900); District No. 5 School in Beaver Falls Township, Renville County (1871); and District No. 22 School (Larson School) in Tegner Township, Kittson County. Sadly, almost all of these schools are in pitiable condition, some clearly abandoned, and one, District No. 22 School in Kittson County, inexorably working its way toward the earth.<sup>23</sup>

The design similarity between all of these Minnesota schoolhouses is expected, as state educational authorities developed many standard plans for school buildings. Although it is unclear precisely when the state began drawing standard plans, it appears that the process started rather early. The Minnesota Historical Society has a collection of standard plans dating between 1912 and 1945. The standard plan employed for District No. 44 School is not among them, however. In 1910, the superintendent of public instruction, C. G. Schultz, commissioned Minneapolis architect F. E. Halden to create a handful of standard plans for one- and two-room school buildings. The architect's designs portray handsome schoolhouses, but none resemble District No. 44 School. Two years later, Halden produced *Rural and Consolidated School Buildings of Minnesota*. Halden's "Design No. 1," although not identical to District No. 44 School, is somewhat similar. But the most compelling evidence that District No. 44 School is a standard design results from the fact that other school buildings in Traverse County were erected employing a virtually identical plan. District No. 29 School, which was located roughly two miles to the west of District No. 44 School, and District No. 48 School, which was situated about a dozen miles to the southeast, strongly approximate the look of District No. 44 School. It seems probable that other early schoolhouses in Traverse County resembled these three. And there were many rural schoolhouses in the county. For those unfamiliar with the overwhelming rural character of Traverse County, it is enough to note that of the sixty school districts in the county, fifty-seven of them hosted rural schoolhouses.<sup>24</sup>

Regrettably, little information was located regarding the motivation for building District No. 44 School. There must have been sufficient families with school-aged children in the vicinity of the school site to warrant the erection of the school, for the county's population was clearly growing at this time. For instance, in 1870, eleven years before Traverse County was formally organized, the population in the area totaled thirteen individuals. A decade later the population was about 1,500 people. Ten years after that, and one year before Taylor Township's District No. 44 School was established, the population in the county was 4,516 people. The population in Taylor Township at this time totaled 263 individuals, a

<sup>23</sup> Ohman and Heynen, 89, 97.

<sup>24</sup> Marieta Maudal, a longtime teacher in Traverse County, and a former instructor at District No. 44 School, has collected considerable information on schooling in Traverse County. Within her collection are several photographs, including images of District No. 29 School and District No. 48 School. Both buildings are clearly similar to District No. 44 School. For other sources see F. E. Halden, *Rural and Consolidated School Buildings in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Department of Public Instruction, 1912), 5-8; F. E. Halden, *New School Buildings: Plans of One-Room and Two-Room School Buildings in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Department of Public Instruction, 1910).



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number comparable to many of the county's other townships. The population trend in the county was clear and the need for civic institutions, including schools, was required.<sup>25</sup>

Interestingly, District No. 44 School in Section 8 of Taylor Township was not the first District No. 44 School in Traverse County. Unfortunately, the location of the original District No. 44 School and the exact year it closed is not clear. It was no longer operating at least by 1888; the annual reports of the county superintendent of schools that were submitted to the state superintendent of public instruction for school years 1889 and 1890 make obvious that the school district was not open. Although the annual report for 1891 is missing from the historical record, the report for 1892 shows that the new District No. 44 School, the school in Section 8 of Taylor Township, was in service. Perhaps the original District No. 44 School was closed due to low enrollment and a new District No. 44 School was opened in an area where higher enrollment was expected. This is not an unreasonable notion. The cost for construction of the new District No. 44 School was \$424.36.<sup>26</sup>

It appears that the school may have gotten a late start. By the middle of November of 1891 the materials for the school were at the school site, but no construction work had yet begun. The county superintendent of schools, W. T. Williams, who penned a weekly column in the *Wheaton Gazette Reporter*, wrote:

Dist. No. 44, one of the two districts created by an act of legislature, is still out in the cold as far as their schoolhouse is concerned. It has been impossible for them to secure carpenters to build. They have the lumber on the ground and the furniture stored away. The first teacher is to be Mr. Sansburn, an able and experienced teacher. This Dist. starts out right, and we hope to see all schools in the county moving forward.<sup>27</sup>

Work on the schoolhouse probably started soon after the superintendent's column was published, for at the beginning of April 1892, just after the winter term had ended, the superintendent gushed over how well things were going at the school:

A visit to the new district, which takes the no. 44 after the district which became extinct, found a new schoolhouse, furnished with a bell and all the improved furnishings, and a first class teacher in the person of Mr. Sansburn, a veteran in the pedagogical army. The pupils have made a splendid showing. I found it the most advanced district school in the county, there were classes in algebra and geometry.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> United States Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1883), 67, 231; United States Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1892), 237.

<sup>26</sup> "Annual Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Minnesota, by the Superintendent of Schools for the County of Traverse for the Year Ending July 31, 1892," September 1889, 1890, and 1892, available at MHS Library, St. Paul.

<sup>27</sup> *Wheaton Gazette Reporter*, November 13, 1891.

<sup>28</sup> *Wheaton Gazette Reporter*, April 1, 1892.



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District No. 44 School began its first year with a total of eighteen students. This was comparable to many other rural schoolhouses in the county. For instance, District No. 16 School had fifteen students for the 1891-1892 academic calendar, while District No. 23 School had sixteen pupils. District No. 39 School had nineteen students and District No. 28 School had seventeen. District No. 48 School housed 22 pupils, and nearby District No. 29 School was occupied by 26 students. With the exception of the schools in population centers like Wheaton and Browns Valley, the schools in Traverse County typically held between five and forty students, with most hosting totals in the teens and twenties. For much of its operating period, District No. 44 School would have an annual enrollment mostly in the teens, with student ages ranging from five years old to twenty-one years old. The vast majority of students were between eight and sixteen years old, however.<sup>29</sup>

Not long ago a number of former pupils at District No. 44 School recalled attending the tiny schoolhouse. Their memories probably explain best what it was like to be educated in this rural setting. Here is former student Pat Jacklitch:

One [memory] is the longer than normal recesses for the little first graders whose academic prowess at this stage was quite limited. . . . It was impossible to keep the first graders occupied all the time since we were hardly ready for academic challenges like Shakespeare and advanced algebra.<sup>30</sup>

Jacquelyn Beyer Johns recalled:

I remember the singing that we all did together, [spending] recess drowning out the gophers, and building an igloo in winter. . . . I am sure that all of us remember learning "Hiawatha" and I bet that we all can still recite the first few lines. . . . I remember sitting in that desk by the window dreading that I needed to use the outhouse in the winter.<sup>31</sup>

Bob Beyer recalled that he was the only boy in the first grade at District No. 44 School. Because he was the youngest boy in the school, the older girls looked after him. He also remembered how the children took turns bringing water to the school, for there was no well on the property. One of his most prominent memories was of the county superintendent who visited the school twice a year. She always frightened the first grader, but this was because he was so small and she seemed so big and unfamiliar. The superintendent would inspect almost every aspect of the school, starting with the privies. Other former students expressed fond memories of their teacher, even though occasionally a student was punished for misbehaving during lessons and was expected to remain after school was dismissed and clean the blackboards. Marieta Maudal, the last teacher to serve at the school, appears to have been a favorite of

<sup>29</sup> "Teacher's Term Report for District No. 44 School to the County Superintendent," various years, copies in possession of Dawayne Novak, former pupil at District No. 44 School.

<sup>30</sup> The comments from former students of District No. 44 School are in the historical collection of former student Dawayne Novak.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

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many of the students. Maudal also articulated her feelings of her time at District No. 44 School. She vividly recalled the days when a few new books would arrive at the schoolhouse and the excitement this roused in the students; although the library at the school was modest, it was prized. Students would gather in small groups and read aloud. Fridays also were a strong memory for the former teacher. The last period of each Friday was dedicated to industrial arts, with each student working on a different project. One student would be sawing, another sanding or painting, yet others embroidering or weaving or making booklets and posters. Oftentimes completed projects were entered for prizes in the Traverse County Fair.<sup>32</sup>

As these experiences make evident, District No. 44 School was not only a place of learning but also a place of social development. Additionally, the schoolhouse served as a gathering venue for many in and around Taylor Township. The schoolhouse and site hosted school plays, picnics, political meetings, and more, events that brought together the area's citizens.

District No. 44 School experienced some physical change over the decades. In 1914, a small shed-roofed coal shed was added to the rear of the building. The plaster ceiling was shielded by thin concrete boarding in the 1920s, and the plaster walls were covered with acoustical material around the mid-1900s. None of these alterations dramatically alter the original look of the schoolhouse. Moreover, some physical change must be expected of any property over a period of 120 years. The most significant change to the schoolhouse came in the mid-1940s, when the north-south roadway immediately to the west was widened. Since the schoolhouse would be much too close to the roadway, the building was shifted about fifty feet to the east and turned on its axis. The schoolhouse was set on railroad ties until a new concrete foundation could be built the following spring. Students spent the winter elevating their feet because the floor was so cold.<sup>33</sup>

#### *School Consolidation*

District No. 44 School ceased as a public educational institution in 1954. That year the district, like many before it, bowed to consolidation. It was inevitable, really, for momentum for consolidation had been building for decades. In fact, at least by the late 1800s, the state realized that the numerous school districts that had been formed created a practical problem; it was nearly impossible for staff at the office of public instruction to stay in regular contact with the districts. Moreover, the state increasingly believed that rural school districts were substandard. A 1960s history written and published by the Minnesota Department of Education observed that "establishment of the so-called 'neighborhood common school' brought on a proliferation of school districts, most of which were inefficient, inadequate to the educational task, and financially unable to support education."<sup>34</sup> That is a debatable

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "Annual Report of the Clerk of Common District No. 44 School to the County Superintendent of Schools," July 31, 1914, copies in possession of former student Dawayne Novak; Dawayne Novak, letter to the author, January 29, 2011, in possession of the author.

<sup>34</sup> Minnesota Department of Education, 9-10.

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subject for many reared in rural school districts.<sup>35</sup> In any event, momentum for school consolidation continued to build until finally, inevitably, the state made it mandatory.

School consolidation in Minnesota began about 1911, at least according to Theodore C. Blegen, a former dean of the University of Minnesota Graduate School and one of Minnesota's preeminent historians.<sup>36</sup> However, laws to encourage school consolidation were enacted by the state legislature even before then, in 1901, 1903, and 1905, although these acts were modest pieces of legislation that did almost nothing. Of the roughly 8,000 school districts that existed at the beginning of the twentieth century, about 7,900 were extant as the first decade of the new century drew to a close. In 1911, Minnesota's governor at the time, Adolph O. Eberhart, challenged the state legislature to pass a law that would more quickly consolidate school districts. Eberhart argued that there were more than 2,000 one-room schoolhouses with less than twenty-one students, and another 300 with less than eleven pupils. For the governor, this was unfortunate, for he believed that the outcome of consolidation was a better education for the state's children. Convinced by the governor's contention, and supported by the public instruction office, the state legislature enacted a law that provided financial incentives for school districts to consolidate. Consolidated districts were granted additional state financial assistance totaling up to \$1,500 per year, and they also were given roughly one-quarter the cost of erecting new school buildings. Within five years of the legislation, 170 districts had consolidated.<sup>37</sup> According to Blegen, the law "ushered in a revolution in public education. School planners, architects, and citizens collaborated on buildings, facilities, and modern means of transportation to enable cooperating communities to keep in step with American education in an era of progress. The 'little red schoolhouse,' cherished in American folklore, became obsolete. It could not meet the demands of the modern era."<sup>38</sup>

Blegen was too optimistic. While the 1911 legislation was an important step toward consolidation, it was many more years before the vast majority of Minnesota school districts merged. Nationally, there were about 127,000 school districts by the middle of the 1920s. This number had been reduced to roughly 114,000 by 1940. About the early 1960s, there were around 40,000. The number of school districts in Minnesota was substantial as late as the 1940s; in 1947, there were still over 7,600 districts, although by this time only forty-two of Traverse County's sixty school districts had a regularly operating school. The other eighteen districts had closed their schools and were busing students into other districts. It was during this period that Traverse County formed the Traverse County School District Committee to study the organization of the county's school system. The report issued by the committee was staunchly in favor of consolidation, arguing that most of the school districts in the county rated either "fair" or "poor." Needless to say, the rural schools dotting this chiefly rural county received these designations. For the committee, consolidation provided more educational opportunities for the sparsely-populated county's youth. The report made clear what the committee expected from consolidation:

<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, perusing current headlines on public education seems to suggest that the argument tendered by the Minnesota Department of Education in its 1960s history may apply to many of today's school districts.

<sup>36</sup> Granger et al., 8.6.

<sup>37</sup> Minnesota Department of Education, 9-10.

<sup>38</sup> Blegen's comments are available in Granger et al., 8.6.



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- More equal educational opportunity for all youth in the county
- Better opportunities for high school education of all youth
- More equitably distributed school costs
- More diversified education
- Improved library, health, and other related facilities
- Improved administration and supervision
- Better trained teachers
- Decreased duplication of facilities
- Increased permanency in larger units

The trend in Traverse County and the rest of the state was in the direction of consolidation, and in 1954 District No. 44 School closed. While it may be tempting to believe that perhaps decreased population in the area brought an end to the school, census data does not bear this out; the population of Taylor Township remained steady throughout the first half of the twentieth century. One year after the school closed it was purchased by the township for \$400. The township continues to use it for meetings. In 1963, Minnesota demanded consolidation via an act of the state legislature. By 1965, there were less than 1,800 school districts in Minnesota. That number had dropped to less than 500 by the early 1980s.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Historic Significance of District No. 44 School*

District No. 44 School reflects the broad pattern of public educational development in rural Traverse County. In fact, it reflects a broad historical pattern evident across much of Minnesota. Managed by a single teacher, and with a curriculum designed to educate grades one through eight, District No. 44 School, a one-room schoolhouse, represents what was once the most common form of public education in Traverse County and other rural parts of the state. Operating between 1891 and 1954, this significant and tangible component of Traverse County's past retains very good integrity; the schoolhouse's exterior and interior largely reflect their historic appearance.

Over its more than sixty years of operation, the schoolhouse was venue to many inquisitive minds seeking understanding of a vast and complex world mostly different from the one in which they lived. Despite the sometimes patronizing views of educational reformers, generations of local students at the tiny one-room schoolhouse studied a variety of subjects, everything from geometry to geography. Moreover, the schoolhouse was the meeting place and cultural center in the area; a humble cultural center, certainly, but a cultural center nonetheless. Farm families from the area regularly attended Christmas pageants, Easter gatherings, Halloween events, picnics and the like at the schoolhouse, even if

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 8.21; Minnesota Department of Education, 10; Traverse County School District Survey Committee, "A Study of School District Organization in Traverse County, Minnesota," ca. 1948, study available at MHS Library, St. Paul; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: State Compendium, Minnesota* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1924), 27; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1930), 28; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States: Census Population, 1950* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1952), 24.



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they had no children attending the school. Additionally, the schoolhouse was the site for political meetings, voting, and special elections.<sup>40</sup>

Although this tiny white structure easily blends into the whiteness of a plains winter, it nevertheless is a county landmark. In fact, of the fifty-seven rural schools that once marked the Traverse County landscape, only three remain. Two are replacement schools—that is, they are small schools that were built in the 1920s or 1930s as replacements to their predecessors. The third, District No. 44 School, is the only remaining original rural schoolhouse in Traverse County.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, Minnesota features a handful of one-room schoolhouses that are honored with a National Register of Historic Places listing. District No. 44 School compares favorably with all of them.

### *Conclusion*

Until recently District No. 44 School was showing its age. Even though the building continued in use by the township, its declining physical condition clearly detracted from its historic nature. Thankfully, a handful of individuals with deep roots in the area came together and rehabilitated the building. These individuals were careful not to alter those elements that contribute to the schoolhouse's historic character.

District No. 44 School is now novel, a quality its builders probably never imagined would apply to the humble structure they raised 120 years ago. This uniqueness is recognized by many in and around Traverse County, including children in the region attending public school today. Each year volunteers deliver many of these young minds to this petite prairie schoolhouse dotting a small clearing near the northern edge of Taylor Township. They spend the afternoon learning and experiencing what it was like to attend a school that is substantially different from the one they currently attend. By all accounts the children thoroughly enjoy it, for the mature building opens a window into an intriguing past largely foreign to them.

It seems appropriate to end with words from Dawayne Novak, who not only attended the school but labored with others to preserve it:

One of the reasons why I wanted to save the school is simply this: I have great memories of my time spent there. I have always considered my rural education at Dist. 44 to be some of the best that I received during my school years. I believe that my time spent there helped shape who I am today. It is very rewarding to share the school with Wheaton and Campbell/Tintah students each year, and to see their excitement about what it was like to attend a rural school.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Dawayne Novak, letter to the author, January 29, 2011, in possession of the author.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Dawayne Novak, letter to the author, January 19, 2011, in possession of the author.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

(see continuation sheets)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): TR-TAY-001

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United States Department of the Interior, Census Office. *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1892.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1883.

Upham, Warren. *Minnesota Place Names: A Geographical Encyclopedia*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001.

*Wheaton Gazette Reporter*, November 13, 1891.

*Wheaton Gazette Reporter*, April 1, 1892.

*Unpublished*

Anderson, David C. "District No. 48 School." April 26, 1996. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Available at State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

\_\_\_\_\_. Anderson, David C. "School District No. 74." October 14, 1991. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Available at State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

"Annual Report of the Clerk of Common District No. 44 School to the County Superintendent of Schools." July 31, 1914. Copies in possession of former District No. 44 School student Dawayne Novak.

"Annual Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Minnesota, by the Superintendent of Schools for the County of Traverse for the Year Ending July 31, 1889." September 1889. Available at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

"Annual Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Minnesota, by the Superintendent of Schools for the County of Traverse for the Year Ending July 31, 1890." September 1890. Available at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

"Annual Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Minnesota, by the Superintendent of Schools for the County of Traverse for the Year Ending July 31, 1892." September 1892. Available at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   3  

District No. 44 School
Name of Property
Traverse Co., MN
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Bloomberg, Britta. "School District No. 1." December 1979. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Available at State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Granger, Susan, et al. "Morris High School." September 15, 2003. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Available at State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Hackett, John J. "School District No. 48." April 1978. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Available at State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

"Teacher's Term Report for District No. 44 School to the County Superintendent." Various years. Copies in possession of Dawayne Novak, former pupil at District No. 44 School.

Traverse County School District Survey Committee. "A Study of School District Organization in Traverse County, Minnesota." Ca. 1948. Study available at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

*Other*

Novak, Dawayne. Letter to the author, January 19, 2011, in possession of the author.

\_\_\_\_\_. Letter to the author, January 29, 2011, in possession of the author.

District No. 44 School  
Name of Property

Traverse Co., MN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** One acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	14	694140	5096930	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

The nominated property occupies the southwesternmost one square acre in the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 8, Township 129 North, Range 46 West.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the acreage historically associated with the property.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Denis P. Gardner  
organization N/A date March 2011  
street & number 12583 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE telephone 218-246-2958  
city or town Deer River state MN zip code 56636  
e-mail denispgardner@yahoo.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

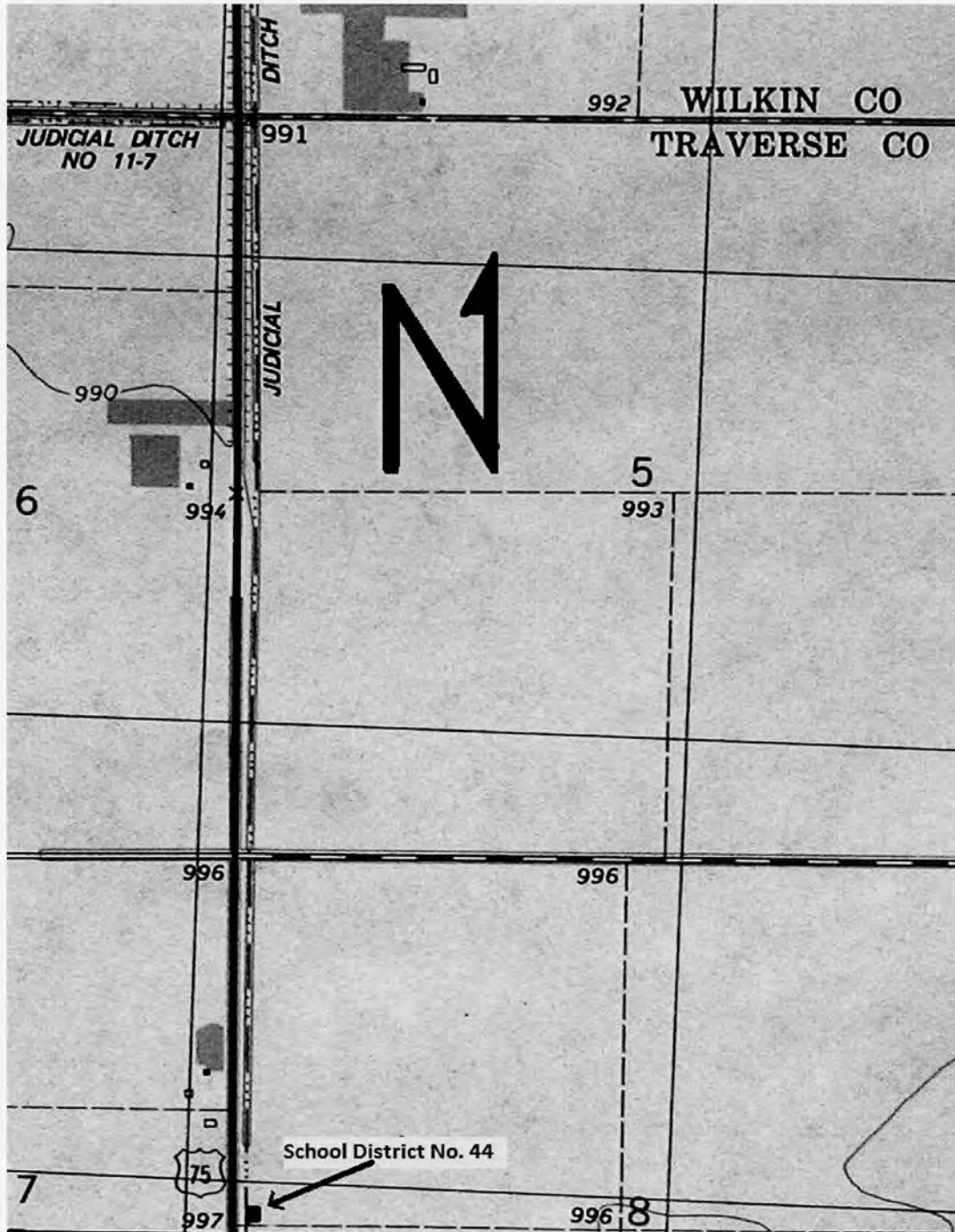
**Photographs:**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

District No. 44 School
Name of Property
Traverse Co., MN
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Figure 1:** Site map showing rural location of District No. 44 School in the SW corner of the NW quarter of Section 8 of Taylor Township (adapted from USGS map "Campbell, Minnesota, Quadrangle," 1981).



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number 10 Page 2

District No. 44 School

Name of Property

Traverse Co., MN

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Figure 2:** District No. 44 School, ca. 1940s. Photograph in the historical collection of Dawayne Novak, a former student at District No. 44 School.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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District No. 44 School

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Traverse Co., MN

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Figure 3:** The merry-go-round was popular during recess. Undated photograph in the historical collection of Dawayne Novak, a former student at District No. 44 School.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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District No. 44 School
Name of Property
Traverse Co., MN
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Figure 4:** Open the books, because its time for learning, ca. 1950. Teacher Marieta Maudal stands at the back of the classroom. Photograph in the historical collection of Dawayne Novak, a former student at District No. 44 School.



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National Park Service

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District No. 44 School

Name of Property

Traverse Co., MN

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



**Figure 5:** Today a new generation of students experiences what it was like to attend a rural one-room schoolhouse. Photograph in the historical collection of Dawayne Novak, a former student at District No. 44 School.

District No. 44 School  
Name of Property

Traverse Co., MN  
County and State

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

**Name of Property:** District No. 44 School  
**City or Vicinity:** Tintah  
**County:** Traverse **State:** Minnesota  
**Photographer:** Denis P. Gardner  
**Date Photographed:** November 15, 2010  
**Location of Original Digital Files:** The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and the author each have copies of the digital photograph files

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

**Photo #1** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0001)  
School No. 44 site, view to north

**Photo #2** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0002)  
South facade and west side, view to northeast

**Photo #3** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0003)  
South facade and east side, view to northwest

**Photo #4** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0004)  
East side and north rear, view to southwest

**Photo #5** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0005)  
Inside classroom, view to north

**Photo #6** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0006)  
Inside classroom, view to south

**Photo #7** (MN\_Traverse County\_District No. 44 School\_0007)  
Inside vestibule, view to east

**Property Owner:**

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

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY District No. 44 School  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Traverse

DATE RECEIVED: 6/10/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/29/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/14/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/26/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000470

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 7-20-11 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.





MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0001



MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0002



MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0003





*MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0004*



MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0005

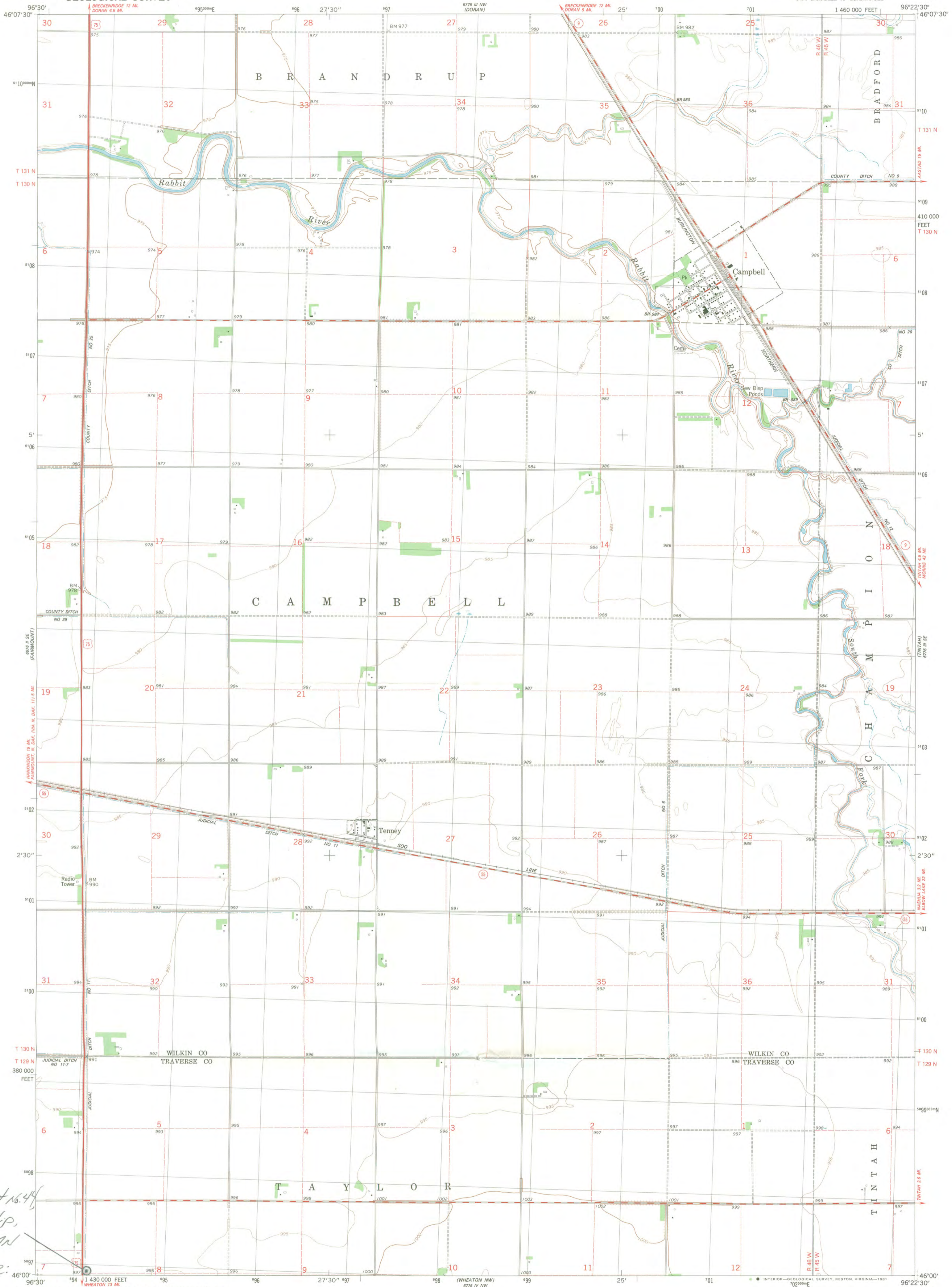


MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0006



MN - Traverse County - School District No. 44 - 0007

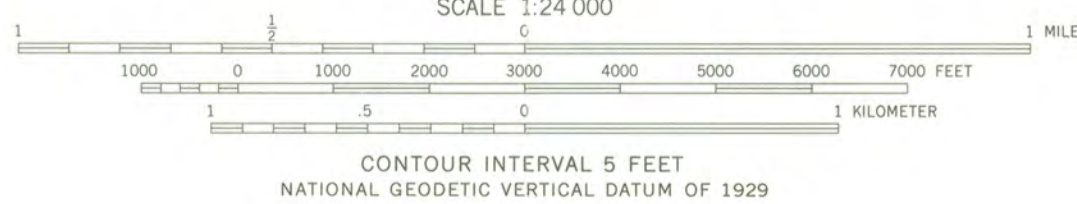
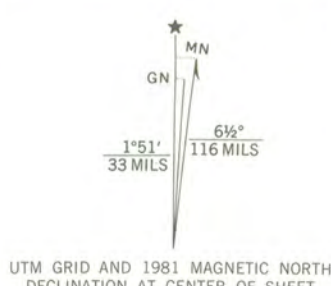




School District No. 44  
Taylor Township,  
Traverse Co., MN  
UTM Reference:

ZONE 14  
EASTING: 694140  
NORTHING: 5094930

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1977. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1981  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Minnesota coordinate  
system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 14  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 7 meters north and  
27 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines  
where generally visible on aerial photographs  
This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

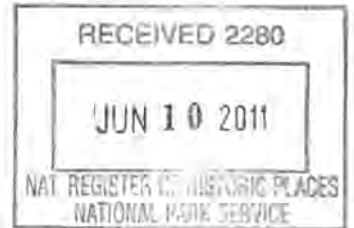
CAMPBELL, MINN.  
SW/4 CAMPBELL 15' QUADRANGLE  
N4600-W9622.5/7.5

1981  
DMA 6776 III SW-SERIES V872

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



Minnesota Historical Society  
State Historic Preservation Office  
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102  
651/259-3451



**TO:** Carol Shull, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

**FROM:** Susan Roth, National Register Historian

**DATE:** June 3, 2011

**NAME OF PROPERTY:** District No. 44 School

**COUNTY AND STATE:** Traverse County, MN

**SUBJECT:** National Register:

- Nomination
- Multiple Property Documentation Form
- Request for determination of eligibility
- Request for removal (Reference No.     )
- Nomination resubmission
- Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.     )
- Additional documentation (Reference No.     )

**DOCUMENTATION:**

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
  - Multiple Property Documentation Form
  - Continuation Sheets
  - Removal Documentation
  - Photographs
  - CD w/ image files
  - Original USGS Map
  - Sketch map(s)
  - Correspondence
    - Owner Objection
- The enclosed owner objections  
Do  Do not  constitute a majority of property owners

**STAFF COMMENTS:**