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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Risley School

other names/site number Historic Risley School

2. Location

street & number 134 Cape May Avenue

	not for publication
	vicinity

city or town Estell Manor City

state New Jersey code NJ county Atlantic code 001 zip code 08319

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

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

other (explain:)

Joe Edson W. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

5-4-11
Date of Action

Risley School
 Name of Property

Atlantic County, NJ
 County and State

5. Classification

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
2	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th/early 20th century revival:

Colonial Revival

foundation: CONCRETE
 walls: WOOD, weatherboard
 roof: ASPHALT
 other: _____

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

Built in 1913, this 1-room schoolhouse stands on a 1-acre lot and faces east onto Cape May Avenue at the intersection of Cumberland Avenue in a rural part of the City of Estell Manor in Atlantic County, New Jersey. The 1-story, wood frame school building is modestly Colonial Revival in style. It has a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles and its exterior is covered with original wood clapboards that are painted white. The center entrance, comprised of modern double doors topped with an original arched transom, is sheltered by a gabled-fronted porch of which only the Doric columns are

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original. A bank of original, tall 6/6 double-hung wood windows fills the entire west (rear) wall. Other windows are original 4/4 double-hung wood sash and 2-light casement wood sash. The well-preserved interior features an entry hall, a single classroom, and two original coat rooms, most of which retain original 4' tall beaded board wainscot and original 4.5"-wide window and door moldings. Original chalk trays, a blackboard, and bulletin boards also remain. The lot, accessed by crushed gravel driveways, has a gravel parking lot and a grassy lawn dotted with mature trees and foundation plantings. Also on the lot are a 1-story wood frame pump house that is original to the school (contributing) and a modern storage shed (non-contributing).

Narrative Description (see attached continuation sheets)

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Narrative Description (continued)

Exterior Description:

Built in 1913, this frame, 1-story school house is modestly Colonial Revival in style. It has a nearly square footprint that measures approximately 36' wide by 31' deep. The building stands on a parged concrete foundation and has a hipped roof covered with modern asphalt shingles. The north (side) slope of the roof is pierced by a modern plumbing vent and the original brick chimney stack, the latter of which has been modestly parged and is topped with a modern chimney cap. The window sills and foundation are painted dark green. [photos 2 and 3]

The parged foundation walls are inscribed in several places with the date 1913 and the initials of the construction workers building the school. The eaves have a generous overhang finished with original wood fascia boards on all elevations. There are wide cornice boards (original) under the eaves and original wood corner boards at all four corners. The building is covered with original wood clapboards that are painted white. [photos 2 and 3]

The façade (east elevation) has a center entrance comprised of two modern, replacement wood doors that have a large glass pane on top of two raised panels. [photos 2, 4, and 7] The doors are surmounted by an original, rounded arch transom with original wide moldings. On each side of the door are modern black carriage lights. Sheltering the door is a gable-fronted wood portico with Doric columns that was built in the late 20th century. It is accessed by 4 steps, has exposed rafter ends, wood clapboards in the east-facing gable end, and a ceiling of exposed rafters. The Doric columns were part of the original 1913 portico, saved and reinstalled in the present portico. [see fig. 3 in the *Historic and Supplemental Images* section] To the north of the portico is a modern handicapped access ramp comprised of a simple wood railing with turned wood balusters; it wraps around the façade and north (side) elevations. An apron of modern red brick pavers surrounds the portico and creates walkways that lead to a modern metal flagpole in front of the school as well as a memorial garden and parking lot on the north side of the school.

The west (rear) elevation features a bank of tall original, 6/6 double-hung wood windows. The north and south side elevations have a single, original 4/4 double-hung wood sash window placed towards the east end of the wall. [photos 2 and 3] The front door is flanked on each side by an original rectangular 2-light wood casement window. These casement windows are topped with wide, plain cornices and brick moldings with an ogee profile. [photos 2 and 4]

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

C: Architecture

Period of Significance

1913-1954

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the year the school was erected (1913) and ends with the last year the building served as a school (1954).

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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

After the state officially changed the school administrative unit from the local neighborhood to the township in 1894, many townships began to erect 2- and 4-room schoolhouses to accommodate the increased school-age population now consolidated under their administration. In rural areas, however, consolidation often did not unite enough students to justify the building of larger grade schools, so one-room schoolhouses continued to suffice. The first Risley School (one-room), built in 1897, was determined "inadequate and unsuited" in 1913 and was replaced that year with another one-room schoolhouse which met nearly all of the requirements for modern schoolhouse architecture at the time. The new building featured 12' tall ceilings, separate coat rooms for boys and girls with their own entrances into both the entrance hall and the classroom, a bank of grouped windows along the west wall which eliminated shadows and provided daylight over the students' left shoulders, separate desks, and wood wainscot along the walls to better withstand wear and tear. The plans for the schoolhouse had been drawn and approved by the New Jersey State Board of Education. Within these contexts, the second Risley School is locally significant under Criterion C as it represents a well-preserved, late example of a one-room school building erected according to a standardized plan which met state requirements to promote the health and comfort of students in a suitable learning environment. It is one of the last one-room schoolhouses built in New Jersey and it exemplifies the last generation of one-room schools built in the early 20th century.

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (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: Estell Manor Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

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Statement of Significance (continued):

The schoolhouse stands in what was originally Weymouth Township, located in the southwest section of Atlantic County, New Jersey. The area was a forested wilderness of scrub oak and pines until real estate entrepreneur, Daniel Lake Risley (1860- ca. 1915), bought an immense 6,658-acre tract there and subdivided it into 5-acre farm lots in 1894.¹ Risley had been born in Atlantic County, but moved to Philadelphia in the late 19th century when he entered the real estate development business. He called the new community *Estelle Colony*, naming it after the Estell family from whom he had purchased the land. Risley heavily advertised the “high, dry, and fertile” 5-acre farmsteads that could be purchased for \$100, with \$3 down and \$1 a week, and promoted not only the healthfulness of the climate, but the site’s proximity to the recently-opened South Jersey Railroad that served markets throughout southern New Jersey. He claimed it the “largest agricultural village on earth” with enough land to build homes for 10,000 families.²

The southern part of the tract encompassed an area Risley called Estelle (later known as Risley, named after him), served by the Risley station of the railroad; the northern part of the tract is now known as Richland in Buena Vista Township. Estelle/Risley was originally in Weymouth Township, but today is in the City of Estell Manor which was incorporated in 1925 from portions of Weymouth Township.

In 1896, Risley claimed that over 350 families had settled in the colony and testimonials reprinted in a promotional booklet show that they came from many states, as well as from Sweden, England, and Canada. The settlers built houses on their tracts and planted fruit trees, cabbage, grapes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peas, berries, and other crops. Some also raised chickens for market.³ Census figures for 1900 show that although Risley exaggerated the number of families who settled (it was actually closer to 200), he did not lie about the various countries and states from which they came.⁴

In 1897, Risley and his wife deeded part of lot #118 (1-acre) to the trustees of the Weymouth Township School District “with a view to promote the interests of education.”⁵ [see fig. 13 in the *Historic and Supplemental Images* section] In fact, Risley’s real estate advertisements had earlier noted the Estelle Colony farmsteads were convenient to “schools, churches, railroad stations and the post

¹ Atlantic County Deeds, book 186, p. 50-58.

² *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8-27-1896, 9-27-1896, 12-20-1896, 12-22-1897; *Views of Pioneer Life, Estelle and Milmay: The Growing Colony in Southern New Jersey* (privately printed by D.L. Risley, 1896).

³ *Views of Pioneer Life*.

⁴ 1900 census, New Jersey, Atlantic County, Weymouth Township.

⁵ Atlantic County Deeds, book 215, p. 429-431.

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office,” although not all had been built yet.⁶ The schoolhouse lot was ideally sited at the corner of two well-traveled roads and was almost centrally located within Estelle.

The first building was a frame, one-room schoolhouse, gable fronted and covered with wood clapboard. It had two front windows, one on each side of a center door that was sheltered by a gable fronted portico. The interior, seen in a ca. 1906 photograph, had plaster walls, at least two black boards in the front of the classroom, and was heated by a wood or coal burning stove placed in the center of the room. Windows along the sides appear to be minimal. [fig. 1 and 2]

Risley's development scheme never realized its full potential and in 1903 he defaulted on the mortgages he took out to purchase the land. This resulted in a foreclosure on all of the lots, even those which homeowners had purchased and built upon. Those who could re-purchase their farmsteads to satisfy the mortgage lien placed against their holdings, did so, but those who couldn't lost both their 5-acre farm and any structures they had built on it.⁷

By May 1913, the Risley School building was deemed “inadequate and unsuited to the number of pupils attending or desiring to attend school.”⁸ The movement for a new schoolhouse was headed by board member Anderson Bourgeois (1859-1920), son-in-law to Rebecca Estell who with Anderson and her daughter Annie had sold the original *Estelle Colony* tract to Daniel L. Risley in 1894. An astute real estate speculator and politician, Bourgeois likely saw the need more than most on the board to provide a modern building for the area's students.

The school board decided that a new schoolhouse should be erected at Risley and that it should be furnished with school furniture and other necessary equipment for about \$1,500. Minutes published a month later (June 1913) note that the school was to “be built of lumber and to contain one room.”⁹ Later that month, the board wrote “to Trenton for a set of plans and specifications for building a schoolhouse at Risley, N.J.”¹⁰ Although the minutes do not describe the type of school furniture that was installed, they do state that the school was to be heated with a Smith ventilating stove.¹¹ This stove featured a separate pipe suspended a few inches above the floor; it tied into the stove flue and drew “foul air” from the floor to the outside.¹²

⁶ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12-20-1896, p. 16.

⁷ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2-29-1903.

⁸ Board of Education Minutes, 5-24-1913.

⁹ Board of Education Minutes, 6-16-1913.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-28-1913.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9-4-1913.

¹² For an illustration of this stove see *California School Report*, State Board of Education, 1906; accessed on Google Books on 1-29-10.

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Called the Risley School, it was erected at a cost of \$1,485 and the \$1,500 school bond that financed its construction was purchased by Rebecca Estell Bourgeois, Anderson Bourgeois' daughter. Rebecca Estell Bourgeois later founded the City of Estell Manor in 1925, was its first mayor, and was also the first woman mayor in the state of New Jersey. The old school building was sold for \$50 and moved off the lot. It is not known if it survives.¹³

Census figures for 1910 show that the Risley section of Weymouth Township, which had been enumerated separately that year, contained 54 houses and had about 45 school-age children, a number that could be accommodated by a one-room school the size of that built in 1913.¹⁴

The Risley School joined at least three other one-room frame schools in Weymouth Township: Estellville (built in 1893, not extant), Hawkinsville (built before 1910?, not extant), and Head of River (built in 1916, in the end stages of demolition by neglect, see figs. 14 and 15).

The new building was in continuous use as a schoolhouse until the new elementary school was built in 1954; until 1954, it was also used as a voting center and hosted city council meetings. After 1954, it was used for such community purposes as a place for Scout meetings. In 1976, the building was under control of the Estell Manor Volunteer Fire Company, but it proved to be too small for rehabilitating into a fire hall, so it stood unused until 1985. In July 1985 the Estell Manor Historical Society obtained a 5-year lease on the building. In 1990, the lease was extended to 25 years. Since then, the Historical Society has maintained the building, rehabilitating it in 2001 for use as a local history classroom, museum, research library, and the Society's offices.¹⁵

Risley School and its Modern Architecture

Concurrent with the establishment of New Jersey's public school system in the mid-1800s was the emergence of standardization in school architecture. The principles espoused by the New England educator Henry Barnard in his *School House Architecture* (1841) were enthusiastically adopted by New Jersey's educators and heavily influenced school architecture along the east coast through the rest of the century. Barnard advocated proper ventilation, separate entrances for boys and girls, and individual desks placed in rows with aisles. He also advocated siting the school in a wooded glen, away from noise and distractions, all of which focused on improving the physical comfort and hygienic conditions of schools in order to promote the learning process.¹⁶

¹³ Board of Education Minutes, 9-20-1913.

¹⁴ 1910 census, Weymouth Township, Atlantic County, NJ, sheets 1A through 4A.

¹⁵ interview with Tom Pogue and Diane Bassetti, members of the Estell Manor Historical Society, January 2010.

¹⁶ Roberta Marx Delson, "New Jersey Schools: Recommendations for Conservation of the Legacy," *Historic Preservation Planning in New Jersey*, Olga Chesler, ed. (Trenton, NJ: Historic Preservation Planning Office, Division of Parks and Forestry, NJDEP, 1982), p. 192.

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Barnard popularized a set of ideas that was expressed in the 1830s by William Alcott in Boston and became exemplified in plans and design guidance repeatedly issued by the New Jersey State Superintendent of Public Instruction. This guidance was, in effect, a tradition among school reformers of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

By the close of the 19th century, new architectural concepts emerged. These included coat rooms for children segregated by sex, increased natural lighting, and the construction of 2- and 4-room schools as the concept of graded classrooms was adopted by the larger school districts.

After the state officially changed the school administrative unit from the local neighborhood to the township in 1894, many townships began to erect 2- and 4-room schoolhouses to accommodate the increased school-age population now consolidated under their administration. In rural areas like Weymouth Township, however, consolidation did not unite enough students to justify the building of larger grade schools, so one-room schoolhouses continued to suffice. Because of consolidation, one-room schoolhouses became less numerous, but were still being built in the opening decades of the 20th century.

Their small size did not exempt them from meeting strict state design standards, though. In 1914, the year after the Risley School was built, an annual report of the State Board of Education noted that it expected school districts to provide 200 cubic feet of air space per pupil (usually this required a 12' or higher ceiling), offer adjustable seats, arrange chairs so that each pupil has 18 square feet of floor space, paint ceilings a light tint, furnish fresh air in class rooms at a rate of not less than 30 cubic feet per minute per pupil, and have the glass area equal 20% of the floor surface with light admitted from the left side of the pupils or from the left and rear.¹⁷

That same year (1914), the New Jersey State Department of Public Instruction published *Desirable Physical Standards of a Good School*, which reiterated these building standards and also addressed the size and layout of the grounds as well as the composition of such school equipment as furniture, supplies, blackboards, and drinking fountains. Included in the book were floor plans for one-, two-, and three-room schools.¹⁸

Accordingly, the plans obtained by the Weymouth Township Board of Education from the State Board of Education for Risley's one-room schoolhouse met nearly all of the criteria set forth in 1914. The floor plan was somewhat modified from that published in *Desirable Physical Standards*, eliminating the recessed entrance and indoor toilets while still providing segregated coat rooms with

¹⁷ *Report of the State Board of Education and of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: State Board of Education, 1913).

¹⁸ State of New Jersey, Department of Public Instruction, *Desirable Physical Standards of a Good School*, (Trenton, NJ, June 1914).

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separate entrances off the entrance hall and the classroom. [fig. 9] Also eliminated from the state floor plan for a one-room schoolhouse was a small rear ell with a room for fuel and a storage closet. Instead of the desired plaster ceilings, gypsum board ceilings were installed, probably to help reduce costs.

The school's hipped roof is an important architectural feature. It is characteristic of small schools of the period and helps to identify them. It also provides a dominant, unifying element of the design and flattens the difference between 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-room schools.

The new Risley School used a ventilating stove, as required in the state plans, and featured grouped windows along the west wall. Outouses, no longer extant, were provided instead of indoor toilets. Water was pumped by hand and brought into the classroom. The new school also met other state standards, providing unbroken blackboard space across the front (north) wall and on the right hand side (east) wall, and installing picture molding under the ceiling.¹⁹

Another example of the state-approved, one-room frame school house was the "Town Hall School" outside of Roadstown in Salem County. It was built the same year and looked remarkably similar in plan and appearance to the Risley School. [fig. 11] However, it was a more ornate interpretation of the Colonial Revival style and featured Ionic columns supporting the front porch, modillions along the cornice, and multi-light leaded glass windows and semi-circular transom. Built at a cost of \$3,600,²⁰ it no longer stands.

Built in 1906, the one-room school built in Hardington, Gloucester County appears to be the Colonial Revival style prototype for New Jersey's one-room schools in the early 20th century. [fig. 12] It, too, features a hipped roof, horizontal windows on the façade and a semi-circular transom, but instead of a front porch, it has a detailed door surround. Remarkably similar to that in Hardington is the one-room school built in the Head of the River section of the City of Estell Manor in Atlantic County. Now a pile of timbers resulting from demolition by neglect, this frame school also had a semi-circular transom and a simple door surround. [fig. 14]

According to the 1906 Annual Report of the State Board of Education, Atlantic County had 77 school buildings, of which 11 were brick and 66 were wood; these collectively contained 262 class rooms. They were not broken down by number of rooms, but it would appear safe to conclude that Atlantic City accounted for most of the brick buildings.²¹

¹⁹ *Desirable Physical Standards of a Good School*, p. 11, 21.

²⁰ "Yesterdays Learning Institutes of Lower Alloways Creek," Salem County Historical Society, *Salem Standard and Jerseyman*, 4-22-1925, as cited in "Yesterdays Learning Institutes."

²¹ *Report of the State Board of Education and of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ): State Board of Education, 1906), p. 466-467.

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Eight years later, the 1914 Annual Report noted that:

In the 472 school districts of the 21 counties of the State there are 2111 buildings, (2031 owned by the districts and 80 rented) used for public school purposes, carrying an appraised valuation of \$53,044,978.95. Of these, 869 have one class room, 300 have two class rooms, 94 have three class rooms, 170 have four class rooms, and 678 have five or more class rooms.

Eight hundred of the one-room buildings are located in either the open country or the small villages and are known as "one room rural schools." In many of these the conditions have been neither suitable nor hygienic for the large number of pupils obliged to attend them from five to six hours each school day. The heat was furnished by a stove located in the middle of the room. There was no ventilation other than that received from open windows and doors. The pupils were often obliged to sit in un-adjustable double desks, many of which were too large for the small children. The light was sometimes admitted from the front of the room as well as from the other three sides. The outhouses too often were such in name, with no provision for the protection of the morals or decency of the pupils.²²

The following year (1915), the number of one-room schools reported statewide was 848, a decrease of 21 from the previous year in what was called "a gratifying indication of the consolidation of schools."²³ Individual statistics for the type of buildings within each county were not given, however.

In 1922, the conditions of all of the state's public schools were surveyed for the first time. Of a total of 2140 schools in the state, 631 were one-room, 314 were 2-room, 68 were 3-room, 222 were 4-room, and 940 were 5- or more rooms. This represented a 25.6% reduction in the number of one-room schools in the seven years between 1915 and 1922.²⁴

Atlantic County had twenty-five one-room schools at that time, all of which were frame and most of which were located in the most rural townships. Of the 25, three—Risley, Head of River, and Estellville—were located in Weymouth Township. According to the 1922 survey, Risley School accommodated 42 grade school pupils. The building, only 9 years old, was determined subpar in a few areas, including toilet facilities (it only had outhouses), non-plaster ceilings, non-fireproof

²² *Report of the State Board of Education and of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: State Board of Education, 1914), p. 66.

²³ *Report of the State Board of Education and of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: State Board of Education, 1915), p. 26.

²⁴ *Report of the State Board of Education*, 1928, p. 80.

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construction, and floors (deficiency not specified), but rated high in light, shades, seating, ventilation, and heating system, receiving an overall score of almost 80%.²⁵

Of the other 23 one-room schools in Atlantic County that were cited in the 1922 survey, overall scores expressed as a percentage of a perfect score of 695, ran from 15.9% (school No. 2 in Buena Vista Township) to 89.2% (Union Road School in Hammonton), with the average being 67.2%. The statewide average score of 66.9% for all schools and 50% for one-room schools shows that the Risley School was considered above average in 1922.²⁶ Dollar values of one-room schoolhouses in Atlantic County in 1922 ran from \$600 to \$2950, with most—including the Risley School—valued at \$1500.²⁷

The next statewide school survey, conducted in 1928, showed that Atlantic County had two less one-room schools (losing one each in Hammonton and Egg Harbor Township), and that the statewide number of 869 one-room schools enumerated in 1914 had fallen to a total of 511. This represented a 41% drop. The 1928 survey noted that “this great decrease has been largely due to consolidation” and commented that the decrease in the number of one-room schoolhouses was a “big contributing factor” in raising the average statewide score from 66.9% in 1922 to 72.2% in 1928. The survey went on to comment that with the exception of Cape May and Hunterdon counties, every county had decreased their number of one-room schoolhouses.²⁸

In its scoring this time, Risley School continued to lose points for not being of fireproof construction and was deemed deficient in its lack of a plaster ceiling, its lack of more exit doors, and its seating (reason not specified), but it continued to be sufficient in terms of lighting, shades, ventilation, the color of its ceiling, and its coat rooms. Its overall score dropped to 70.8%, reflecting further tightening of state standards for school buildings as the century progressed. In fact, the 1928 survey noted that the statewide average score for one-room schoolhouses increased only slightly to 51.8%, a figure which illustrated “the need of improvement in the one-room school building condition.”²⁹

The 1928 statewide survey showed that of the 23 one-room schools located in Atlantic County, about half (13) had been built in the 20th century. Today, seven of the 13 are still standing. Two have been converted to residences, two have been enlarged, and the remaining three (including Risley School) are extant in their original or almost-original plan and massing. None continue to

²⁵ State Department of Public Instruction, *School Building Survey, State of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1923), p. 25.

²⁶ *Report of the State Board of Education*, 1928, p. 6.

²⁷ *School Building Survey, State of New Jersey*, 1928, p. 20-25.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80, 82.

²⁹ *Report of the State Board of Education.*, 1928, p. 82-83, 134-135.

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Atlantic County, New Jersey

serve as a school, however. The last one-room schoolhouse known to be still in use as a public school (kindergarten class) is one at Ocean Gate Borough, Ocean Co., built in 1914.³⁰

Within these contexts then, the second Risley School is locally significant under criterion C as it represents a well-preserved, late example of a one-room school building erected in the early 20th century according to a standardized plan which met state requirements to promote the health and comfort of students in a suitable learning environment. Early 20th-century schools are growing increasingly uncommon in the landscape, but one-room examples are rare. Built in 1913, the Risley School also falls within the time period of 1893-1933 cited by Roberta Delson as “the critical period” for surveying New Jersey schoolhouses; she states that “the almost complete lack of attention to this time span is certainly unwarranted, both on the basis of architectural and pedagogical merit.”³¹

³⁰ Email correspondence, Bob Craig of the State Historic Preservation Office to Joan Berkey, 2-1-2010.

³¹ Delson, p. 196.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Section number 9 Page 1

Risley School
Atlantic County, NJ

Bibliography

Books and Periodicals

Delson, Roberta Marx. "New Jersey Schools: Recommendations for Conservation of the Legacy." In *Historic Preservation Planning in New Jersey*, ed. Olga Chesler, 1800-206. Trenton, NJ: Historic Preservation Planning Office, Division of Parks and Forestry, NJDEP, 1982.

Report of the State Board of Education and of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of New Jersey. Trenton, NJ: State Board of Education, 1906, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1928.

State of New Jersey, Department of Public Instruction. *Desirable Physical Standards of a Good School.* Trenton, NJ, June 1914. [New Jersey State Library, Trenton, NJ]

State of New Jersey, Department of Public Instruction. *School Building Survey, State of New Jersey.* Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1923.

Views of Pioneer Life, Estelle and Milmay: The Growing Colony in Southern New Jersey. Privately printed by D.L. Risley, 1896. [Estell Manor Historical Society]

Newspapers

Philadelphia Inquirer, 8-27-1896, 9-27-1896, 12-20-1896, 12-22-1897, 2-29-1903

Public Documents and Archives

Weymouth Township Board of Education Minutes, 1913.

Risley School
Name of Property

Atlantic County, NJ
County and State

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 515120 4358610
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (see continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (see continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan Berkey, architectural historian

organization _____ date July 13, 2010

street & number 707 N. Delsea Drive telephone 609-861-2208

city or town Cape May Court House state NJ zip code 08210

e-mail Joan123B@aol.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.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Risley School

Atlantic County, New Jersey

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property comprises block 6, lot 21 in the City of Estell Manor as shown on the current Atlantic County, New Jersey tax map.

Verbal Boundary Justification: The boundary of the nominated property represents the lot on which the building has stood since it was built in 1913.

Risley School
Name of Property

Atlantic County, NJ
County and State

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: Risley School
City or Vicinity: Estell Manor
County: Atlantic **State:** New Jersey
Photographer: Joan Berkey
Date Photographed: December 2009 and June 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 10: streetscape and setting, view northwest
- 2 of 10: exterior: view southwest showing the façade (east elevation) and the north (side) elevation, also the pump house
- 3 of 10: exterior: rear (west) and south (side) elevations, view northeast.
- 4 of 10: exterior: façade (east elevation), close-up showing porch and front doorway
- 5 of 10: interior: classroom, view northeast
- 6 of 10: interior: classroom, view southeast
- 7 of 10: interior: entry hall and front doors, view southeast
- 8 of 10: interior: north coatroom, view north
- 9 of 10: interior: south coatroom, view northeast
- 10 of 10: non-contributing storage shed, view northeast pump house

Property Owner:

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

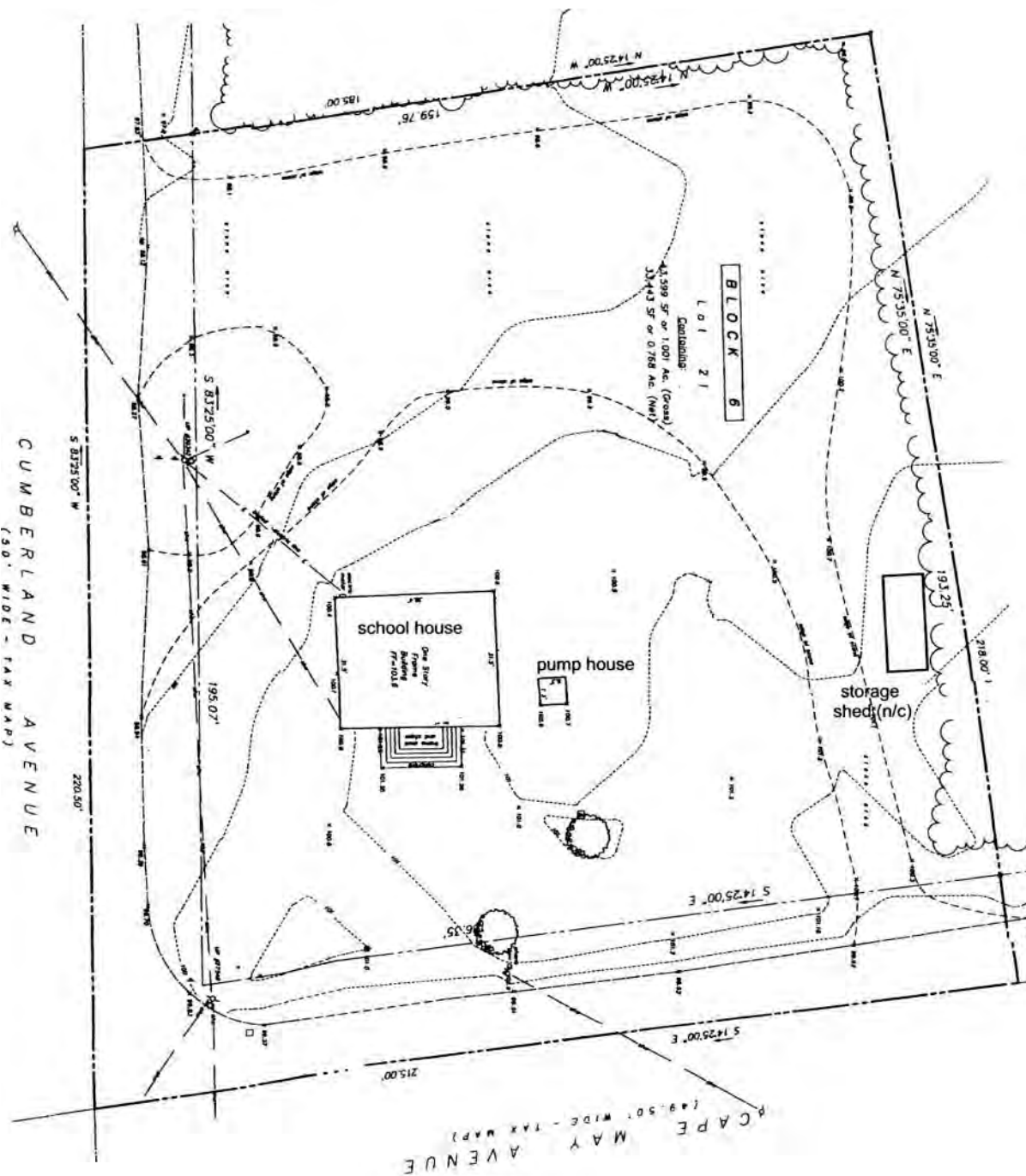
name City of Estell Manor/ Mayor Joe Venezia and council members Sheila Myers (council president)
Al Barbetto, Kathy Giercyk, Steve Teasenfitz.

street & number 148 Cumberland Avenue, PO Box 102 telephone 609-476-2692

city or town Estell Manor state NJ zip code 08319

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.

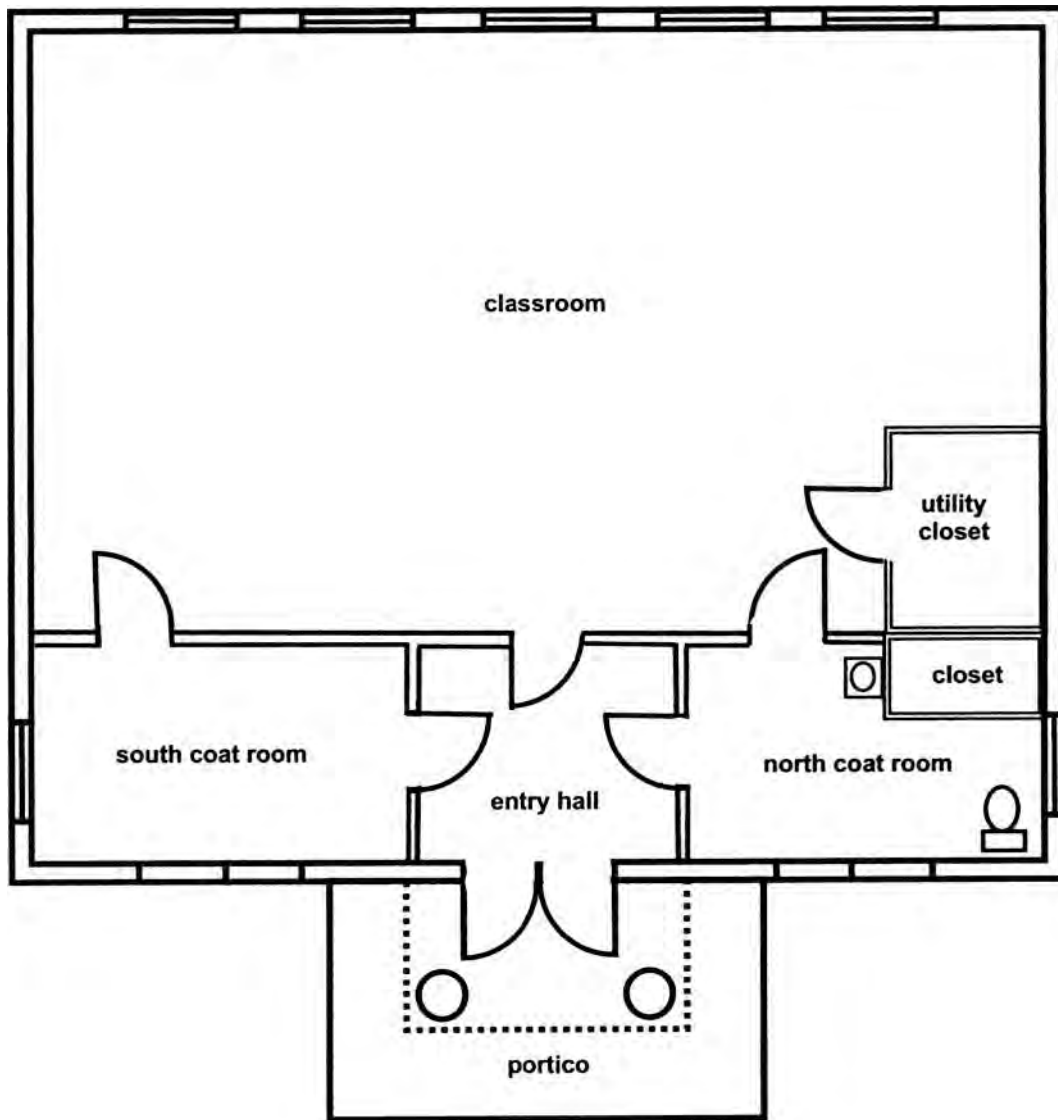
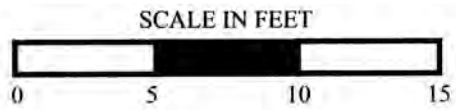
SCALE IN FEET



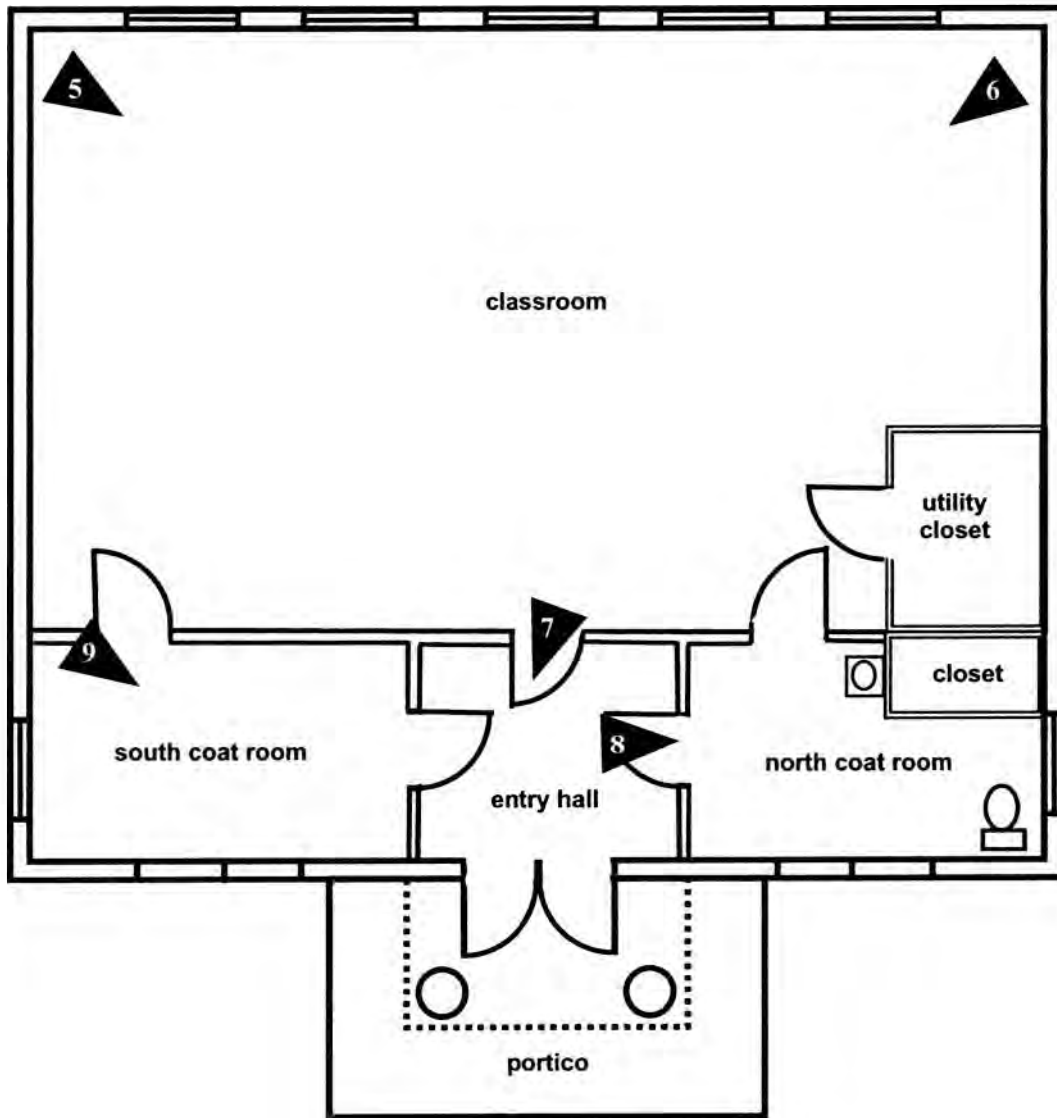
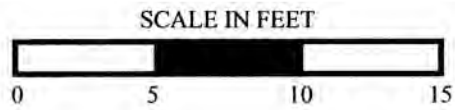
SITE PLAN
Risley School

134 Cape May Avenue
City of Estell Manor, Atlantic County, New Jersey

adapted by Joan Berkey 6-2010
from a site plan drawn by
Charles Szovati, land surveyor, 9-24-1999

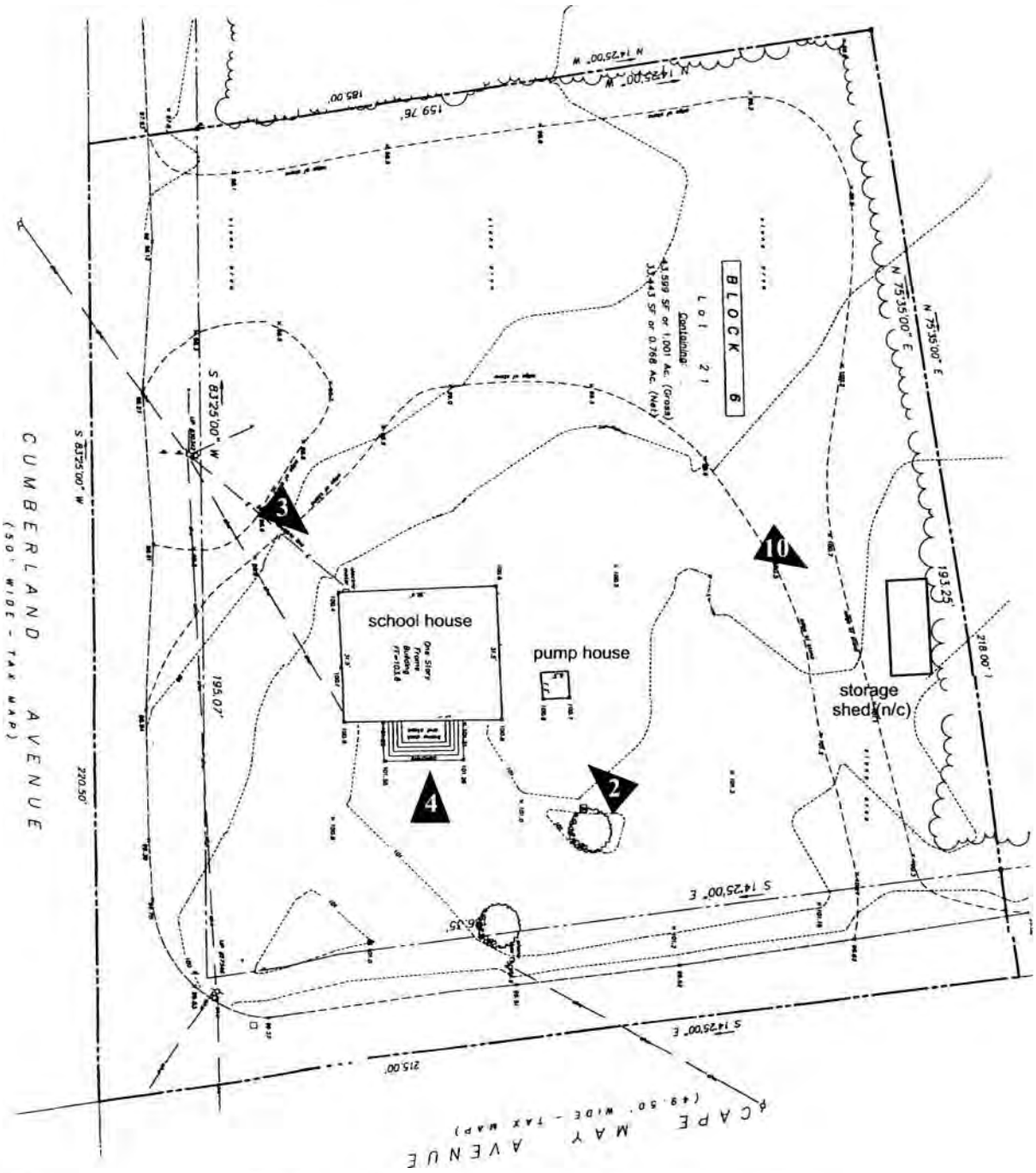


FLOOR PLAN
Risley School
134 Cape May Avenue
City of Estell Manor, Atlantic County, New Jersey



FLOOR PLAN ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS
Risley School
134 Cape May Avenue
City of Estell Manor, Atlantic County, New Jersey

SCALE IN FEET



CUMBERLAND AVENUE
(50' WIDE - TAX MAP)

CAPE MAY AVENUE
(48.50' WIDE - TAX MAP)



SITE PLAN ANNOTATED FOR PHOTOGRAPHS
Risley School
134 Cape May Avenue
City of Estell Manor, Atlantic County, New Jersey

adapted by Joan Berkey 6-2010
from a site plan drawn by
Charles Szovati, land surveyor, 9-24-1999

Risley School
Historic and Supplemental Images



Figure 1: left: the first Risley School, built in 1897; photo taken ca. 1906.

[Estell Manor Historical Society]



Figure 2, left: the interior of the first Risley School, ca. 1906.

[Estell Manor Historical Society]

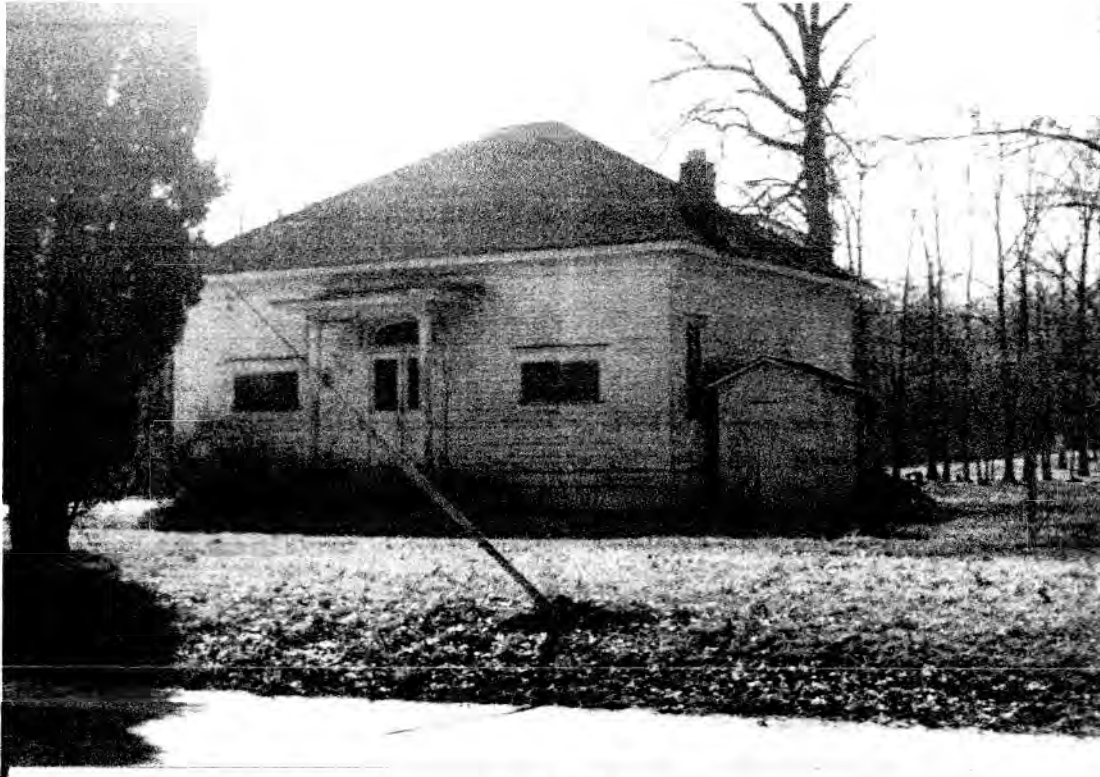


Figure 3, above: the school as it appeared ca. 1985.
[Estell Manor Historical Society]

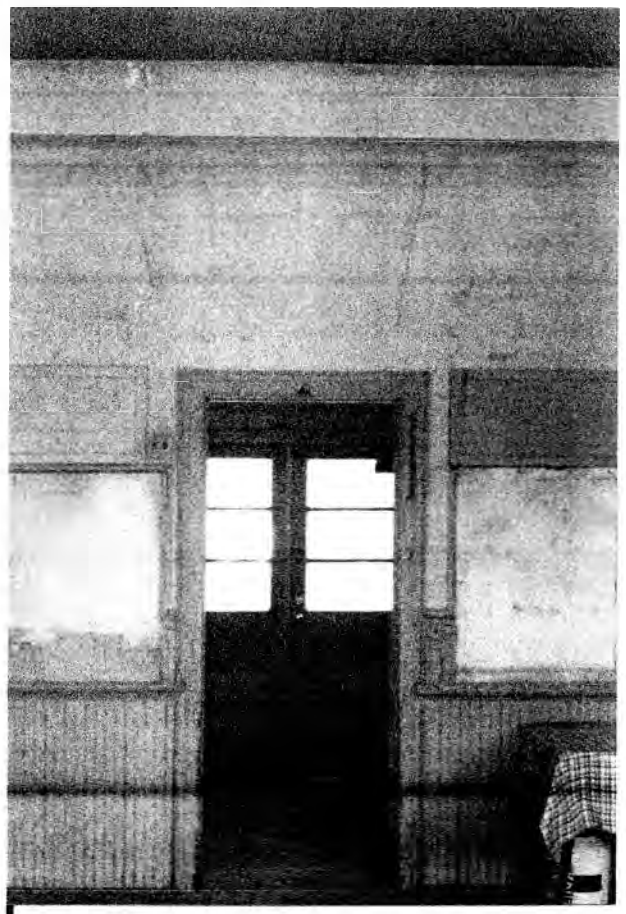
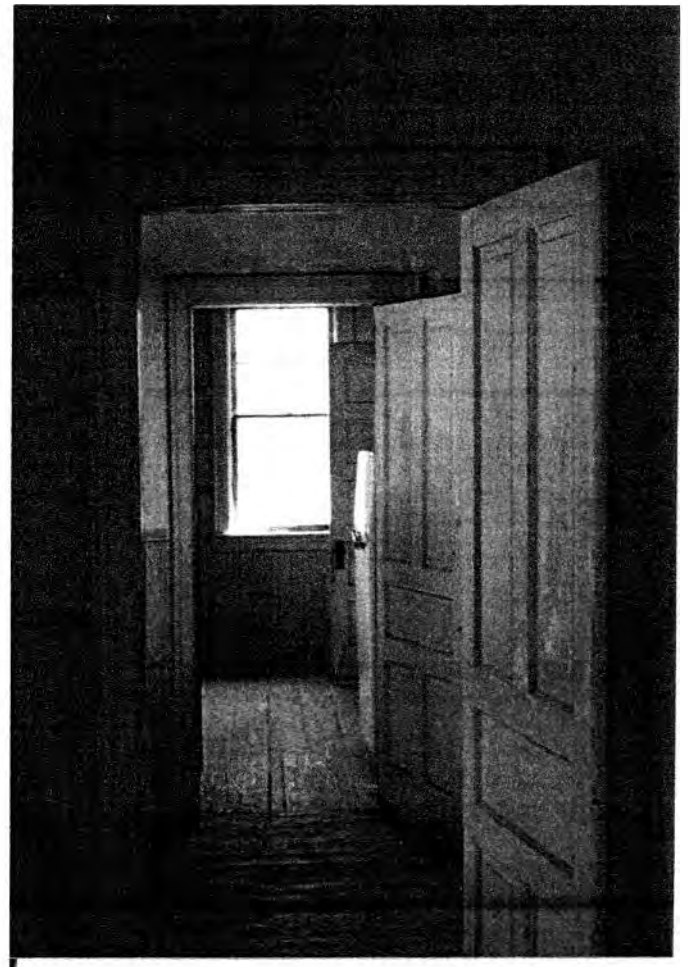


Figure 4, right: the east wall of the classroom, looking east toward the entrance hall. There were originally two blackboards here (one on each side of the door); they are presently in storage. Ca. 1985. [Estell Manor Historical Society]



Figure 5, left: the northeast corner of the classroom, looking north, ca. 1985. The heating stove seen here (no longer extant) was vented into the chimney in this corner and the stovepipe opening is visible near the ceiling. Note the water fountain nearby. This corner of the classroom is now enclosed and contains the modern HVAC equipment. [Estell Manor Historical Society]

Figure 6, below: Ca. 1985 view from the north coat room looking south through the entrance hall and into the south coat room. [Estell Manor Historical Society]



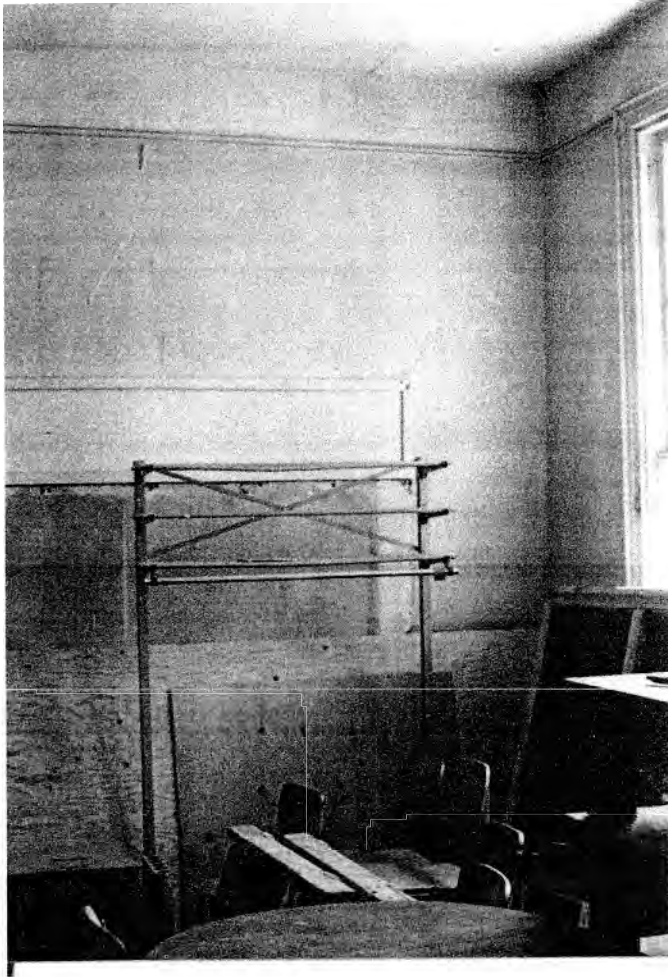
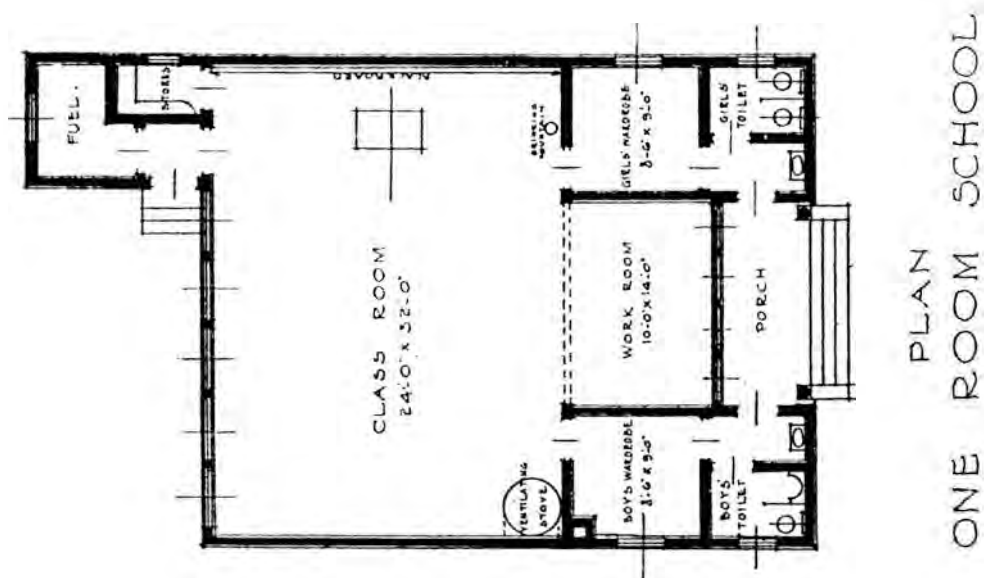
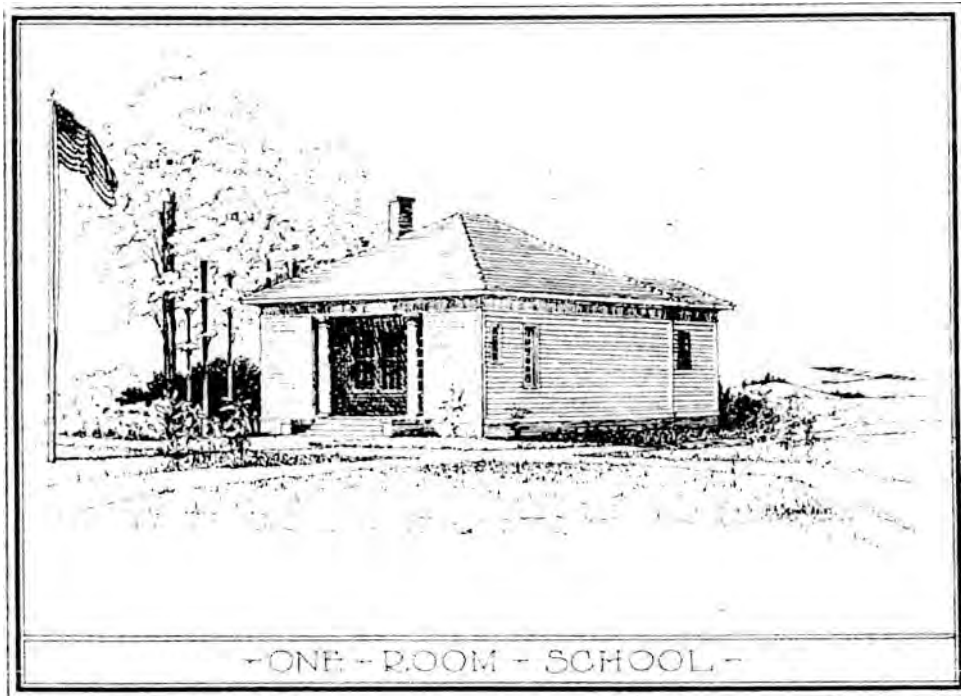


Figure 7, left: the southwest corner of the classroom, showing the original blackboard (extant, in storage) and picture rail (also extant) near the ceiling, ca. 1985. [Estell Manor Historical Society]



Figure 8, left: the rear (west) and north side elevation, ca. 1985. [Estell Manor Historical Society]



PLAN
ONE ROOM SCHOOL

Figure 9, above: New Jersey's standard plan for a one-room schoolhouse in 1914. [*Desirable Physical Standard of a Good School*, June 1914, p. 12.]



Figure 10, above: the interior of the school as it appeared in 1954, looking southeast toward the rear of the classroom. [Estell Manor Historical Society]

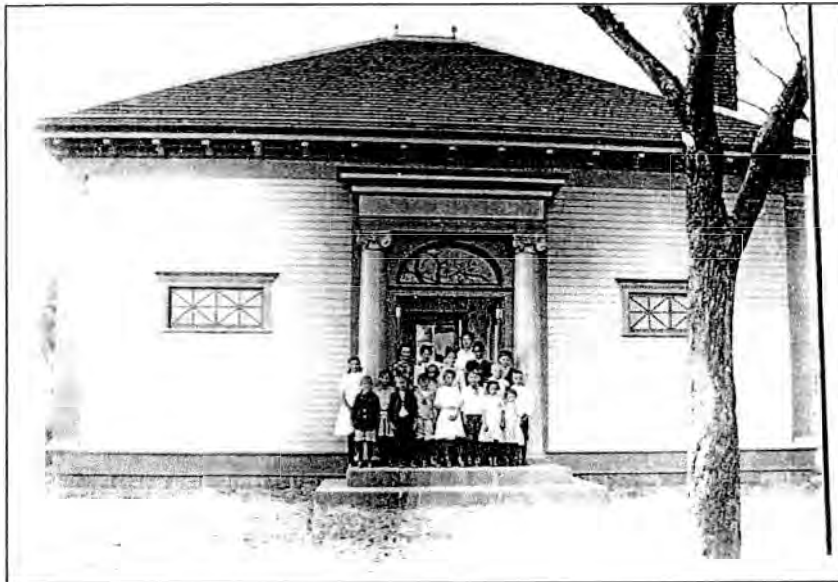


Figure 11, left: Town Hall School, built in 1913 in Lower Alloways Township, Salem County, NJ. No longer extant. [“Yesterday’s Learning Institutes of Lower Alloways Creek”]



Figure 12, left: One-room school built in Hardington, Gloucester County, NJ in 1906. Its Colonial Revival style set the precedent for similar style one-room schools like the Risley School in Atlantic County and the Town Hall School in Salem County, built 7 years later. It is no longer standing.

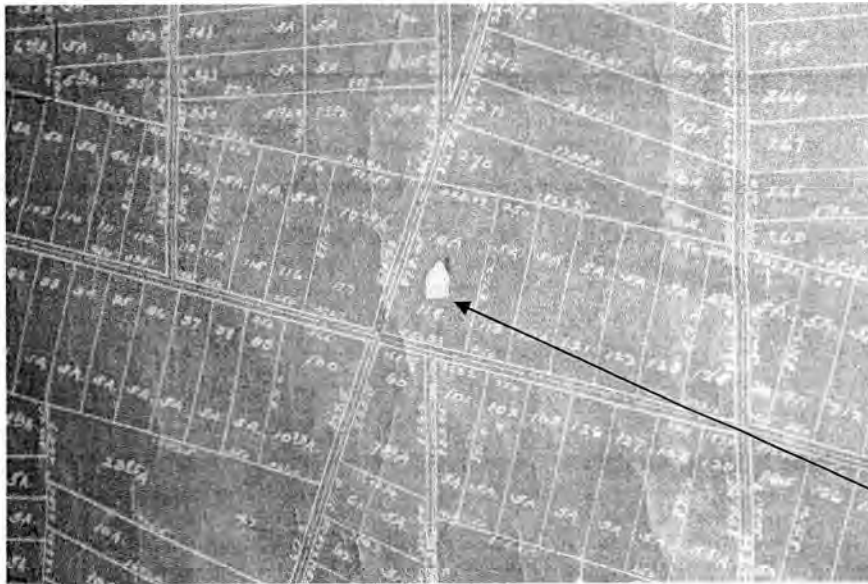


Figure 13: part of the site plan for Daniel Risley's *Estell Colony* development showing the lot on which the school is located. Its one-acre lot was subdivided from the original 10-acre lot by Risley in 1897, specifically for the use of a school.

[Estell Manor Historical Society]



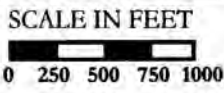
Figure 14: Head of the River School, built in 1916, also located in the City of Estell Manor. The design of this building is very similar to that seen in figure 12.

[Estell Manor Historical Society]



Figure 15: Head of River School in the end stages of demolition by neglect. May 2010.

[courtesy of Diane Bassetti]



AND BEING THE SAME AS THE RECORDS
 BOOK NUMBER 8000
 RECORDED IN A PUBLIC RECORD TO THE
 RECORDS OF COURSE 175.000 OF 180.00 AC.
 FOR THE OFFICE DIVISION OF TAXES
 BY *John J. Long* P.E. & L.S.
 DEC 16 1988

TAX MAP
CITY OF ESTELL MANOR
 ATLANTIC COUNTY, NJ
 SCALE: 1"=400' MAY 1988
 DOUGLAS R. LONG, P.E. & L.S.
 LONG ENGINEERING & SURVEYING CO.
 591 Ridge Horse Pike, Estell Manor, N.J. 08028

Risley School
 134 Cape May Avenue
 Block 6, lot 21
 City of Estell Manor, Atlantic County, New Jersey

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Risley School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Atlantic

DATE RECEIVED: 3/25/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/14/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/29/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/10/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000256

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 5-4-11 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.



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey

/



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey

2



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey

#3



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey #4



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey # 7



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey #8



Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey

#9



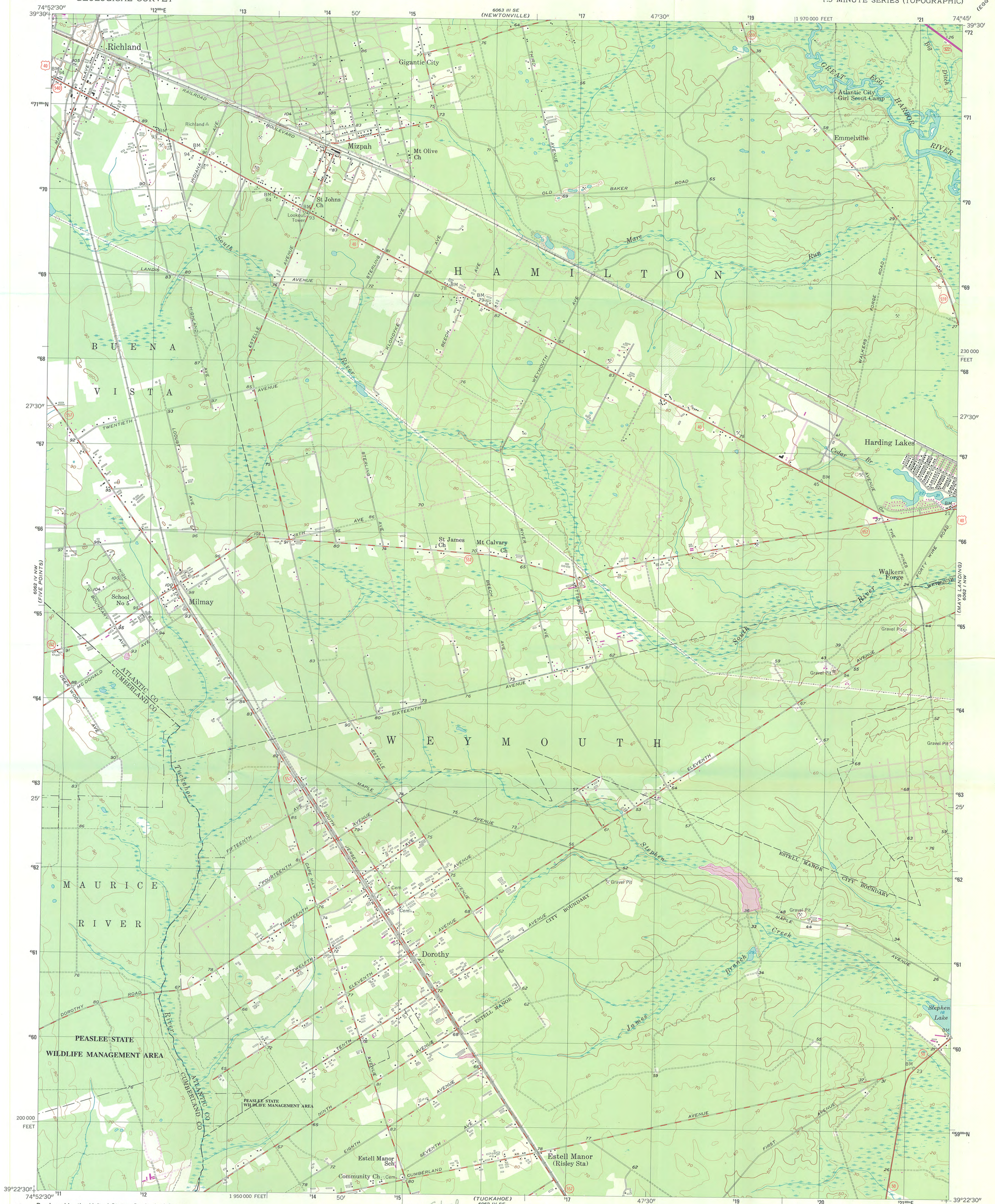
Risley School, Atlantic County, NJ

10



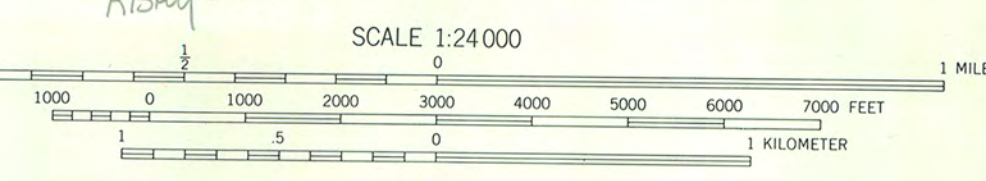
Risley School, Atlantic County, NJ

#10



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1951. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1972. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1994; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1956 Boundaries revised 1998
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: New Jersey coordinate system (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours

UTM GRID AND 1998 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET
UTM: Z=18 E=515120 N=4358210



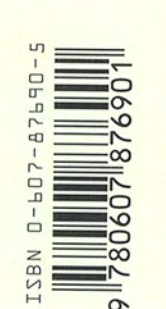
ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U.S. Route
State Route



DOROTHY, N. J.

1994

NIMA 6062 IV NE-SERIES V822

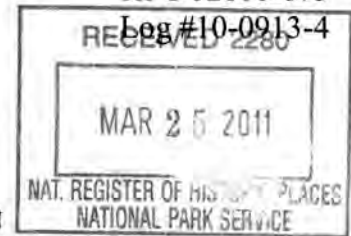




State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-03A
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
P.O. Box 420
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
TEL. (609) 292-3541 FAX (609) 984-0836

HPO J2010-075



CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

BOB MARTIN
Commissioner

Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am pleased to submit the nomination for the Risley School, Atlantic County, New Jersey, for National Register consideration.

This nomination has received majority approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Daniel D. Saunders, Acting Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail code 501-04B, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420, or call him at (609) 633-2397.

Sincerely,

Amy Cradic
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer