

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



005

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Buffalo School

other names/site number LU-154

2. Location

street & number	50 School Loop	not for publication	N/A	vicinity	N/A
city or town	Buffalo	State	Kentucky	code	KY
county	LaRue	code	123	zip code	42713

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

*Mark Dennen* 12/23/08

Signature of certifying official Mark Dennen, SPHO Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
X entered in the National Register *J. J. [Signature]* 2/5/2009  
   See continuation sheet.  
   determined eligible for the National Register  
   See continuation sheet.  
   determined not eligible for the National Register  
   removed from the National Register

other (explain):

*J. J. [Signature]* 2/5/2009  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	X building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
X public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  
N/A

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

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions: Cat: EDUCATION

Sub: school

Current Functions: Cat: Vacant/Not in Use

Sub: Vacant/Not in Use

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof OTHER

walls masonry and concrete block CONCRETE; BRICK

other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (See continuation sheets.)

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**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

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## **Narrative Description**

Buffalo School (LU-154) in Buffalo, Kentucky is a one-story schoolhouse originally constructed in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. Buffalo is a small community about 6 miles southeast of Hodgenville, seat of LaRue County, in which the school is located. The site has been used for educational purposes since the 1870s, with two previous school operations, each with a different physical plant. The strong presence of the 1936 school has led this nomination to regard the property's primary identity as beginning that year; however, the school building is the third educational facility on the site. While those earlier identities have been greatly changed or eradicated, they are described below because they persist within the local memory, and have some presence on the site. The school held its last classes in 2007, 70 years after its first class, and today remains vacant but in average-to-good condition, considering its age. Buffalo School stands as the last existing monument to the long-held, high estimation of education within this "School Town." The area proposed for listing contains 3.5 acres, two contributing buildings, and two non-contributing subsidiary buildings.

## **Character of the Site Today**

The schoolhouse sits on a loop, School Road, right off of College Street in the heart of Buffalo. On the three-and-a-half-acre lot, a gymnasium which was built in 1879, shed, and two modular classrooms lie south and east of the school. An expanse of lawn behind and to the sides of the main schoolhouse is bordered by a natural boundary of trees. Inside the School Road loop is a fenced-in recreation area with playground equipment.

The topography of the land is predominantly flat, with minor sloping changes in elevation toward the east of the lot. The land is cleared except for shade trees and natural vegetation at the property's perimeter. Several large plants line the entryway to the main building. Paved parking lots have been established on the side and to the rear of the main building, but an expanse of land remains cleared and not built upon beyond the parking areas.

## **History of the Site Ownership and Use**

The first use of this site for educational purposes came about through the establishment of East Lynn College, founded in 1874 and chartered to confer degrees in 1879 (Elliott, 1970: 68). East Lynn College is first mentioned in LaRue County Deed Books in 1895, so the initial purchase date of the land and its exact acreage are unknown. The site initially included the school building, but by the 1890s, many students were boarding at the newly completed dormitory. By 1896, for instance, 200 students had already enrolled and another 100 were expected (Wimp: 172, *Larue County Herald* 1/23/1896)—a good number of which were not commuting.



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Reference to the Buffalo Public School appears in local newspaper (Wimp, 21; *LaRue County Herald*, 5/23/1895) as early as 1892. By 1895, the School system condemned that school building (Wimp, 143; *LaRue County Herald*, 5/23/1895). In 1895, a prominent Buffalo family, the Brownfields, conveyed a half-acre of land to the Trustees of Common School District No. 30 for \$25.00 (Deed book 23 page 255). The Brownfield family had purchased this land from East Lynn College, and a building from the East Lynn College on this land was converted to Buffalo Grade and High School in the early 1900s. For a time, it appears that East Lynn College and Buffalo School co-existed, side-by-side. The college is mentioned as late as 1909 (Patterson, 295); its final year of operation has not been learned. Eventually the college closed. Its main building was relocated and used for years, on its second floor for meetings of the Masonic Lodge. Its first floor housed the Buffalo School's lunchroom. The building no longer stands, having been demolished in the late 1950s (John T. Meers interview).

East Lynn College stamped the property into the local consciousness as an educational area, even having the road to it named "College Street." The proximity of the site to the Brownfield's property was also a convenience, as that family ran the main stagecoach stop next to the property for many years. The land was also centrally located within Buffalo, right off of a cobblestone street that has since been paved and is now part of Highway 61/Greensburg Road, the main thoroughfare to Hodgenville. The area was far enough away from the main road, however, to protect the safety of children in attendance to both campuses.

The new Buffalo School seems to have survived well until the 1930s, appearing in various school censuses taken over the years, including 1914, 1915, 1916, 1918, 1920, and 1930 (LaRue County Genealogical Society, n.p.).

The Brownfield family sold another three acres to the trustees of Buffalo School in June 1935, bringing the total acreage of Buffalo School to 3.5 acres, as it remains today (Deed book 50 page 327). In October 1935, Buffalo Independent School District deeded the land to LaRue County for \$1 in order to finance the building of the new school (Deed book 50, page 434). A few weeks later, LaRue County leased the land and future building to the Board of Education of Buffalo Independent School District so that Buffalo could "obtain adequate school facilities for the purposes of maintaining the common school system for the Independent School District of Buffalo" (Deed book 50 page 462). The lease contract required that LaRue County construct the new school and lease the building to Buffalo "for an extended period of years for a rental payable from year to year amounting to a sum sufficient to amortize the cost of constructing said building, together with the cost of maintaining and insuring said building" (Deed book 50 page 462). A pay schedule for the next twenty years was agreed upon, with Buffalo Independent School District paying LaRue County approximately \$1500 yearly for twenty years in order to pay off the cost of the new building and its use. After this period of twenty years, the property deeded to LaRue County reverted back to Buffalo Independent School District (Deed book 50 page 464). Buffalo also had the option of paying off the debt earlier if they wished. With this arrangement solidified, the new building was erected in 1936, at a total cost of \$30,909.00 (Deed book 50 page 462). As agreed, LaRue County paid for the school, its property, and its operations, in part, through the issuance of bonds and a grant from the Works Progress Association. The County school system rented the property to the Independent School District of Buffalo until the Buffalo School District was absorbed into the LaRue County School system in July 1938.

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### **Main Schoolhouse Exterior**

The schoolhouse building was typical of its time, with a shingle-covered hip roof, rectangular floor plan, brick walls, and poured concrete foundation with a crawl space. Since 1936, additions have been built to meet community needs for increased student enrollment. These three additions to the original building have been of both brick and concrete block materials with poured concrete foundations. The flooring reflects changes in construction materials over time with hardwood, concrete, and vinyl composite tiles (VCT) in various sections of the building.

The front exterior of the main schoolhouse, the building's most defining architectural feature, boasts the same ornamental details from its original construction and still proves a definitive entry marker. A tasteful white fence encloses the school's front lawn and the established shade trees that dot this grassy area. The walk up to the building, once bare except for some nascent saplings as evidenced in the attached photo from 1939, today is enclosed on both sides by mature shrubs that grow along the white wood fence, providing a lush and natural corridor that leads to the building's facade and main entrance. A rounded arch with a brick archivolt, which adds dimension to the facade, delineates the exterior entrance. Besides providing a beautifully structured focal point and entry into the building, masonry arches, such as this one, are fireproof, require little maintenance, and have a high tolerance for settlement.

As a testament to the original building's adherence to symmetrical architecture, two white fluted pilasters on either side of the arch's span sharply contrast with the red brick. The juxtaposition of the color, as well as the contrast of the horizontal brick pattern to the vertical pilasters, provides decorative elements that clearly mark the school's entrance. A fanlight spans the arch above double glass doors. Windows with a six-over-six fenestration pattern flank the archway on either side, and a limestone block above the arch bears the engraved name of the school: Buffalo School. With its rectangular floor plan, the original building had one long hallway that was capped at both ends with similar rounded arches that provided secondary entry and exit ways for the building.

A cupola rests upon the shingled hip roof. The cupola once served as the school's belfry, although the bell has since been removed and donated to a local church, Parkway Baptist. However, the octagonal cupola still remains and marks the center point of the original symmetrical 1936 construction.

The bricks repeat in a running bond (or stretcher bond) pattern. A water table runs along the original brickwork at a height level with the windowsills. A projecting cornice protects the exterior walls from water runoff in the original sections of the school. A gutter system runs around the perimeter of the building and down the brick walls to further aid in water runoff.

The windows along the front of the building are in a 12-over-12 fenestration pattern, double-hung sashes grouped in sets of three. The original windows have all been replaced but the replacements all have the same fenestration pattern as the originals. Along the back of the original building, the windows are double-hung sashes with 16-over-16 lights, and those in the most central rear part are in sets of four with transoms above.

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The growing needs of the community and shifts in public education—namely the closure of small locally-operated schools and transporting students larger schools in centralized locations—led to an expansion of the original 1936 construction. In 1945, a room on the northwest side of the school was extended and the hallway elongated to make additional room. Architect Thomas J. Nolan Jr. designed the 1945 addition to the school and Jenkins-Exxes, a local contractor, performed the work. The brickwork on this section follows the pattern of the original, but the brick itself proves slightly different in color upon close inspection. The water table is not continuous in this section.

In 1950, the LaRue County Board of Education voted to enlarge the school by two rooms, so that Buffalo School could absorb numerous small sub-district schools that were eliminated by the Board in an effort to further centralize schools and their administration, and to eradicate small rural schools with less than 50 pupils. Classrooms were added to the southeast end of the original building. These additions were modeled on the design of the original building as well, with similar colored brick in the same running bond pattern used on the exterior. However, the window style varied to reflect the contemporary style of the 1950s, with aluminum windows in sashes with 4-over-4 lights topped with a transom. Also, this section, like the other addition, did not make use of a water table masonry course. The hipped roof was later modified to incorporate the 1945 addition.

In 1959, three classrooms and an all-purpose room were added to the school. The construction materials of this addition, like the ones before, made use of more contemporary materials, as was the style at the time. These sections of the building were constructed of concrete block that were then painted white. This addition used the same windows as the expansion of 1950—4-over-4 light double-hung sash windows with a transom—as well as some five-pane aluminum windows. Starting with the 1950 addition and continuing for subsequent additions, the roof style changed to a flat roof that is now covered with sprayed-in place polyurethane foam.

In 1970, the Board of Education renovated many of its older school buildings, including Buffalo School. Much of this renovation resulted in interior changes only.

### **Main Building Interior**

After walking through the metal double doors, the intrados of the entry arch draws the eye up to a high curved extension of the exterior facade. A dropped ceiling, part of the interior renovations of the 1970s, covers some of the masonry work of this area, but the largely uncovered portion of the foyer continues the semicircular feature established on the exterior and indicates what lies behind the dropped panel ceiling. The three-paned, windowed doors, while not original to the building, are similar to the windowed doors of the original building, as seen in the aforementioned photograph (see Photo 1). The doors and the four-paneled fanlight cast natural light through this short corridor.

This hall, like the others in the building, has been covered with a vinyl composite tile (VCT). The original building's interior boasted visible wood floors, which today are covered with a glued carpet within the rooms and the VCT in the halls. The additions do not have such wood floors.



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The wall material used in the school varies with the construction materials typical of the time of the construction. The walls in the original portion of the building are a combination of brick and concrete walls covered in plaster. Originally, when the school housed all grades, the classrooms along the front of the school were ordered started with the first grade at the end of the hall and then proceeded until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. High school classrooms were along the back of the school, with rooms devoted to home economics, study hall, and agriculture. When the school's needs changed, the interior changed as well. Some of the interior walls between classrooms added during the 1970s renovation are wood paneling. Cinder block was used for the walls of some of the additions.

Other features of the hallways include some fanlights over interior fire doors and a Concord handicap chair lift that allows for access to the 1959 addition. This area, being further northeast on the property, is affected by the property's slight negative slope. Four steps and the chair lift allow access to this area of the school. Large cast iron radiators heat the building through convection. The radiators are dispersed throughout the classrooms for more equal distribution of heat.

The 1959 renovation added some much needed features to the building's interior. In addition to the all-purpose room that was largely used as a cafeteria, a large kitchen and pantry were added so that the school could provide meals to students. The pantry contains wooden shelving structures and non-permanent walk-in freezers. Prior to this addition, students brought their own lunches and ate outside or on the first floor of what used to be the front portion of East Lynn College.

Other alterations to the interior occurred in 1970 during a major renovation project. These changes included an updated electrical system and the wood paneled room divisions for the classrooms, glued carpet, and dropped ceilings previously discussed.

The interior and exterior of building are in very sound condition. In fact, according to Superintendent Sam Sanders, had it not been for the large financial incentive the state provided to construct a new school for consolidation of county students (Category Five school funds of \$6.5 million), Buffalo School would likely still be serving yet another generation of Buffalo children.

**Gymnasium            Contributing building**

The gymnasium predates the 1936 schoolhouse construction and its history is a great focus of pride and lore in the community. The half-acre acquired from the Brownfield family in 1895 included a structure used to house East Lynn College (see Photo 2). Built in 1879, the building on this land was converted to Buffalo Grade and High School in the early 1900s. The old school building was still in good shape in the 1930s. It was bisected, with its back sliced off, and moved to its new location to become the gymnasium. John T. Meers, the second-oldest resident of Buffalo, witnessed this event. Meers was in the first class to attend Buffalo School and he vividly recalls how workmen placed the rear of the building on steel bars and slowly moved it with a small tractor and snatch block. The students were released from classes to watch the moving of the building down the slight slope of the schoolyard. The gym was moved again in 1952, although this relocation was of a much less distance.

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While the exterior of the gym has been altered to preserve the building (aluminum siding was placed over the original wood siding and a foyer and area for concessions were added), the interior of the building reflects a gymnasium of a by-gone era. Walking into the gymnasium, one cannot help being overwhelmed by the craftsmanship of the all-wood interior and the rareness of such a well-preserved example of an early American gym. Indeed, the gym was a great source of pride for the community because not every school had a gymnasium in the 1930s. And the gym continues to garner community respect; in the mid 1990s, the community gathered to invest hundreds of volunteer hours in maintaining and updating the gym. Local craftsmen and tradesmen updated lighting, electrical panels, siding, and addressed structural issues.

The continued upkeep of the gym has not changed the interior but rather kept the original state of the gym in good condition. The most striking feature of the gym is its use of wood. The entry doors, floor, walls, beams/posts, stage, steps, bleachers, and even ceiling are made from wood. The walls of thin tongue and groove vertical boards are painted white, as are the ceiling and the tops of the support posts. The wood bleachers are painted a royal blue, as are the bottom of the posts. The floor and stage, however, have a dark stain and a protective gloss finish. Lines of a basketball court mark the gymnasium floor in white and blue paint that matches the walls, ceiling, posts, and bleachers. Goals hang at either end and an electronic scoreboard hangs near the entrance. Rows of bleachers boarder the out-of-bounds lines and rise steeply to meet the side of the walls. A second higher row of balcony bleachers previously was erected above this base row, but they have since been removed for precautionary safety reasons.

Large and high double-hung, eight-over-eight light windows provide natural light to filter onto the gym's floor. The windows' position, size, and type appear to be the same as they were prior to the building's severance and relocation. The gym's structure is a post and beam frame. Sloping knee braces at the top of the posts provide extra support to the vertical and horizontal timbers. When the gym was relocated, it came to rest on a concrete block foundation. Because of the slight change in elevation on this part of the property, the rear of the building under the stage has a larger crawl space. This area was converted to two classrooms when space was limited; this area later came to be used for storage.

In addition to the gym floor, a raised stage with curtain and wings is at one end of the floor and a small is located at the other end. A small wood framed addition has been added beyond the office, and this area houses the concession stand and foyer. This area, too, has vinyl siding on the exterior. A two pot bellied stove originally heated the gym. While some modifications have been made to the gym, its condition, character, and architectural integrity are remarkable for a structure of this age.

**Shed Non-contributing building**

A large, non-contributing aluminum-sided storage shed is located at the edge of the paved parking area behind the school. The shed has a concrete foundation and aluminum roof with numerous doors for access. Before being added to this site, the building was serving some other property.

**Mobile Classroom Non-contributing building**

A non-contributing doublewide mobile trailer that holds two classrooms is located next to the gymnasium. Before being added to this site, the building was serving some other property.



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### 8. Statement of Significance

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#### Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

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

Areas of Significance: SOCIAL HISTORY  
Period of Significance 1936-1959  
Significant Dates 1936, 1952  
Significant Person N/A  
Cultural Affiliation N/A  
Architect/Builder Nolan, Thomas J. (architect for 1945 addition)  
Jenkins-Exxes (builder of 1945 addition)

Narrative Statement of Significance (See Continuation sheets.)

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

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### Statement of Significance

Buffalo School (LU-154) meets National Register Criterion A. It is an educational structure whose value to its community is interpreted within the historic context "Community Development in Buffalo, Kentucky, 1848-1958." With 2312 people in 2007, Buffalo is the second largest town in the county, after county seat Hodgenville, (<http://www.city-data.com/city/Buffalo-Kentucky.html>). Yet neither town offers many of the retail stores or amenities found in Elizabethtown, 25 miles northwest. The few business places, churches, and schools that have populated Buffalo take on a greater status than simply the function that the place performs. This school and the others that have served Buffalo over the years touched nearly all of the lives of the living community of people, yet here are evaluated within the Area of Significance "Social History." By emphasizing the role of Buffalo School in the town's social history, this nomination gives less information about the educational performance and significance of Buffalo School; thus, "Education," is not selected as a second Area of Significance.

The social value of Buffalo School, and the earlier schools that served the community, does come from their educational function. From its opening for the 1936-37 school year. Buffalo School educated multiple generations of local families in its classrooms. This school, and its predecessors, demonstrate the community's long-held high estimation of education. Founded in 1848, Buffalo quickly became known as a "School Town" ("Buffalo Early Called a 'School Town'"). Buffalo School rests on the site of the former East Lynn College (established 1874) and Buffalo Grade School (1890s) and High School (circa 1908), all of which exemplified the town's commitment to education as an integral part of the area's development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Buffalo School continued in this tradition of academic valuation and civic pride. The choice of the site for Buffalo School, and even the incorporation of one of the college's former buildings into a gymnasium use on that site, indicates a strong local association in the 1930s between the existing landscape and the continuing need for a school. Continuing that activity at the site in the 1930s school building for over 70 years strengthened the association between the site and local education. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the county school board decided the school could no longer survive economically against the perceived savings brought about by consolidating the county's school educational plants.

For many locals, the closing of the school and subsequent consolidation of its students to a school in another nearby town, signals not only the end of Buffalo's tradition of education, but also indicates a loss of a vital social institution from this community. Many residents describe that loss as one in where the heart of the community has been removed. Plans are underway to rehabilitate the school to a new use, and part of those plans call for the exercise of tax credits, which brings this nomination form into being.

### **Historic Context: Community Development in Buffalo, Kentucky, 1848-1958.**

The story of the earliest activity in what becomes Buffalo is typical of many small communities in Kentucky. A house is erected in the place which later becomes the village, and at nearly the same time, a mill arose, where the natural landscape of falling water provided a power source for local commerce. James Creal built his house in 1848, the mill was built in 1854, and John Duncan and W.L. Creal built a general merchandise store. The mill and store became two places where early area residents brought their grains, engaged in trading and commerce, and took time to socialize with others (<http://www.laruecounty.org/communities.shtml>). By 1887, Buffalo boasted 200 residents and attracted many more customers and visitors from neighboring areas.

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**LaRue County, KY**

One historian expresses the social value of schools to Buffalo and neighboring areas of LaRue County: these schools put their community above the influence of the usual “riff-raff and wandering adventurers” who are usually the first settlers in a town (Smith, 62). Historian Bessie Miller Elliot notes that East Lynn and other “little colleges went on with their good work of turning out good citizens” (1970, p. 69). That phrasing emphasizes the value of schools in stabilizing community over any academic achievement they might have offered to the individual.

Smith sees these early LaRue County residents demonstrating their high regard for this aspect of their community, in that they “sacrificed...their living funds to provide more extensive learning for their young people.” By the late-nineteenth century, LaRue County boasted a seminary and three colleges. When one of these operations burned down, students were hopeful for an extended break. However, Smith relates that locals make sure the pupils “were all sent right on to school” in makeshift arrangements until replacement schools could be built (p. 62).

East Lynn College, formerly occupying part of the area proposed for listing, was one of LaRue County’s colleges in the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Founded in 1874 and chartered and incorporated in 1879-1880, East Lynn College quickly became “the educational and social center of the community” (*Images of America: Hardin and LaRue Counties*). East Lynn provided an education that reflected the shifts in gender expectations during its existence. The college progressed from a charm-school-like curriculum for only women to a co-ed institute that conferred Bachelors degrees based on more academic courses.

East Lynn survived upon tuition, and area residents paid \$2-\$8 for a 10 week term, depending on the curriculum. Boarding for the commuting students, which constituted about half of the college’s enrollment, was \$2 per week in a dorm building separate from the classrooms. An ad for the school from 1885 assured parents that “whiskey can not be sold in or near the town” and that “pupils will be expected to attend church and Sabbath school each Sunday” and would be “under the constant watch care of the Principal’s wife” while boarding (Wimp). The college was quite successful in drawing pupils; in fact, the town was called upon to help board students once the dorm was full. It was reported that “every home that would board the pupils was filled” (“Buffalo early called a school town”).

While East Lynn College made the community a destination, Buffalo still was little more than a modestly-sized town. It consisted of two churches—a Methodist and a Baptist—both of which are active today. Local businesses thrived in Buffalo, including most notably E.S. Ferrill & Sons. Although this business peaked during late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, the store’s owners were instrumental in beginning Buffalo’s local Savings and Loan (“Buffalo Early Called a ‘School Town’”). These local institutions, and their longevity, have become other sources of local pride and demonstrate commitment to the people’s desire to provide for the community’s needs.

School activity at the site of the East Lynn College began to expand and involve public and private interests. The Brownfield family ran the stagecoach stop for Buffalo on land adjacent to East Lynn College, which they had purchased from the school. This proved a great convenience for the school and its commuting students. In 1895, the Brownfields conveyed a half-acre of the land to the Trustees of Common School District No. 30 (one of whom was Mr. Brownfield) for \$25.00 (Deed book 23 page 255).



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**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

Before 1895, there was a Buffalo Public School. Reference to it can be found as early as 1892 (Wimp, 21, citing September 8, 1892 article in *LaRue County Herald*). That school building was condemned in 1895 (Wimp, 143). The Trustees' purchase of the land in 1895 was for construction of a new school, near to the college. Thus, in the mid-1890s, the public school in Buffalo began to take shape on the property proposed for listing. This combined private college and public school complex continued operating into the early twentieth century in this location.

National educational and state policy affected the Buffalo School. As post-primary education became more standardized, and more families could afford to send their children to post-secondary school, many small rural colleges, which had previously served in this capacity, were replaced with a system of public elementary and high schools. It's not clear when East Lynn College ceased to exist. It appears within *Patterson's College and School Directory*, a 1909 publication, but it is also thought that the college is absorbed and transformed into Buffalo Grade and High School. Buffalo's new school operation made use of East Lynn's building (see Photo 1) and property. This change would have occurred just a year after the state's major overhaul of its public school law that created higher standards for schools and educational content in 1908.

With a new name, Buffalo continued to hold community-based education in high esteem. As the Buffalo Graded School Annual Catalogue for the 1917-1918 school year attests, "Buffalo is an old school town, possessing the refined and moral virtues of country life." The catalogue enumerated some of the reasons for the town's allegiance to education: "Prepared men and women are in demand. Prepare your boy for a man's job. Increase his learning capacity and the salary will take care of itself." The pamphlet linked the role of education in a community even more clearly when it states "Every home in this Grand Old Commonwealth, is constantly enjoying privileges, honor and advantages that come from the school system." For these reasons, Buffalo residents willingly paid \$2 per student per month ("Buffalo Graded School and LaRue Co. High School, 1917-1918").

Independent school districts faced many challenges in governing individual schools and many smaller autonomous boards of education began to make use of larger education systems. In 1931, LaRue County Schools took over Buffalo Graded School's operation and stewardship from Buffalo's Board. As part of its oversight and planning, LaRue County Schools prepared for a new school to be built in 1932. The LaRue County Board of Education faced financial hardships in the early 1930s, as indicated by the steep reduction in salaries of teachers (10%) and Board members (20%), but community support for education did not wane. Even during the Great Depression, LaRue County residents pledged significant funds for their schools. To cut costs during these times, the Board offered to supply materials if the community performed the work to patch school roof buildings, repair pumps, build fences, and paint schoolhouses; Buffalo citizens would carry this tradition of citizenship and participation into the 1990s when they volunteered to revitalize the gymnasium. However, in the mid-1930s, Buffalo's school went unbuilt until funds could be secured.

In 1935, J.C. and Mattie Brownfield deeded three additional acres of land to the trustees of Buffalo Graded and Common School for \$150.00 (Deed book 50 page 427). The Independent School District of Buffalo now owned 3.5 acres of land. Later, in October 1935, the entire lot of land—3.5 acres—was sold by the Independent School District of Buffalo to LaRue County for \$1.00 (Dee book 50 page 434) and a lease agreement was arranged. This 3.5 acres is the area proposed for listing.

United States Department of the Interior  
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section 8 Page 4

**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

With a grant provided by the newly authorized federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), the new school was constructed and opened its doors in 1936. The building cost \$30,909 (Deed book 50 page 462). LaRue County Board of Education paid for the school, its property, and its operations in part through the issuance of bonds, and rented the property to the Independent School District of Buffalo. As was typical throughout Kentucky, Buffalo School was consolidated into the LaRue County school system in 1938.

While the County School Superintendent made decisions for the school after 1938, within the minds of community members the school building continued as a Buffalo institution by serving community interests. Home economics and agriculture classes were added to the curriculum in 1938 to allow for more vocational training of its pupils. In the agriculture class, the students made troughs, coups, and other necessities for their family farms (Ann Flanders interview). Buffalo School responded directly to the needs and interests of the population it served.

For instance, Buffalo School served the community as a makeshift health clinic. The local health nurse would come to the school yearly to provide students with their shots. As one resident described it, every year the young students would be locked into room 102 and not released until all students received their booster shots (Ann Flanders interview).

School consolidation in LaRue County continued well beyond the 1930s. Of the 54 schools that existed in LaRue County in 1895, six remained in 1953 ("A Brief History of LaRue County Schools: 1914-1974). Consolidations throughout the County between 1936-1960 required building additions to the Buffalo School in 1945, 1950, and 1959.

Racial segregation influenced social life and interactions between blacks and whites in Kentucky after the Civil War, and schools were places where this division was highly maintained until almost the close of the historic period. Until 1953, Buffalo had operated a separate school for African-American students. Wimp's compilation of articles from the *LaRue County Herald* shows that in 1893 the county contained 5 black school districts which instructed 336 students (p. 62). The LaRue County Genealogical Society published in 2004 compilations of the county school census from various years, and Buffalo Colored School is enumerated in 1914, 1915, 1920, 1922, 1928, and 1930 (source not paginated). After the Supreme Court's *Oliver L. Brown et. al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS) et. al.* ruling, the Buffalo Colored School was closed and African-American students were bused to another school approximately six miles away. Buffalo School saw a few African-American students after 1953, but the complete integration of LaRue County Schools did not occur until 1967.

LaRue County schools, including Buffalo School, participated in other national interests during this time. For example, LaRue County schools were invited to serve as one of seven pilot schools for President Kennedy's Council on Physical Fitness in 1962.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section 8 Page 5

**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

Most recently, the Buffalo School was impacted by another shift in the educational system. Despite the fact that the interior and exterior of the Buffalo School are in good condition, the Kentucky Department of Education's overall goal is efficient use of funds. This often includes consolidation of small school populations and building new schools. Evaluation of existing conditions resulted in a \$6.5 million incentive for LaRue County to consolidate two elementary schools into a new building closer to Hodgenville. While a terrific modern school—Lincoln Elementary—now serves children of Buffalo and Magnolia; the new construction means that Buffalo now, for the first time since almost its establishment, is without a hometown school. The impact has not gone unnoticed by Buffalo residents.

J.T. Meers, a retired former Buffalo businessman, is the second oldest resident of Buffalo. His house is adorned with various Buffalo themed items: a buffalo wind chime, a buffalo welcome mat—a display emblematic of the pride residents have for their town. Meers ran numerous local businesses, including Meers service station which operated for decades. Meers recalls serving many of his former Buffalo School classmates there since he “[does] not know any of them that ever left here.” Meers, a typical Buffalo resident in terms of his industriousness, built the service station from scratch, and the building now houses the local water company.

Meers is hardly alone in having numerous connections to the Buffalo School property. Meers's mother and mother-in-law attended East Lynn and boarded there. Meers himself was in the first class to attend school in the new building in 1936 and he even watched the rear portion of the East Lynn building being relocated as the school's gym. His children attended Buffalo School, as did his grandchildren. As J.T. explains, “The school's just always been a part of my life here. We raised our kids here and they went there, and our kids did the same and their kids, too. It's generations.”

Ann Flanders, like many Buffalo residents, also has many ties to the school. She first met her husband at Buffalo School as a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, and now the two of them live less than a mile from the school. Ann taught at Buffalo School for 42 years and has seen three generations in her classes. She even volunteered at Buffalo School after her retirement, giving spelling tests on Fridays and subbing two days a week. She explained her allegiance to the school as an allegiance to the town and its people. For her, these loyalties are synonymous. She recounts the school's closing solemnly, saying that everyone was practically in tears when the school closed: “Everyone wanted a good new school for the kids but it (the closing) really took away from the community” because there is no longer a school in Buffalo and the community is not as active in the new school in another town. Of the institutions that once bound Buffalo residents together, only the post office exists; however, there has been talk of closing the branch.

The school was the one common thread in Buffalo. While townspeople attend different churches or live on either side of the town, the school was the unifying element. As Flanders explained, “Our school was the main event of the community.”



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section 8 Page 6

**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

And the community honored this “main event” with not only its dedication, but also its money and physical labor. In the mid-1990s, concerns about the gym’s safety brought a structural engineer from Lexington to investigate the soundness of the building. Per the engineer’s instructions, the gym was closed until necessary repairs could be made. The required funds to save the gym were not likely to be provided from the School Board. The Board offered money for paint and some supplies, but otherwise Buffalo citizens provided the funding and donated their labor for the necessary electrical and structural updates to the gym. As Superintendent Sanders noted, Buffalo residents “went above and beyond,” laboring for almost a year to repair the space that held so many of their community gatherings.

Mr. Meers, whose son worked on the gym rehabilitation, noted the changes to the town’s sense of community since the school’s closing: “There’s no more traffic—people don’t come in to get kids or come to their plays or anything.” The reduced traffic means residents of Buffalo do not see each other like they used to. The school closing exacerbated townspeople’s concerns about their community’s survival: “Our little town is drying up and going away...other towns are ‘used to be’ and before long that’s the way Buffalo will be—it’ll be a used to be when you drive by” remarks JenRose, John T. Meers’s wife. The school meant so much that the town started a petition drive to save the school and keep it in Buffalo, but the effort failed and the movement ceased when residents learned of the attached state funds for the school.

Many Buffalo residents echo this fear now that the school is closed. They worry that their town is “drying up” and that nothing will be left as a record of those who lived here and their values. The school symbolizes this community, and honoring it means preserving a link to the past: to the fall festivals that attracted all of Buffalo’s residents and caused a traffic jam in this small town; to the spring flings where “you couldn’t get another car on that hill because everyone came out for our plays”; to the school bell that the principal rung by hand at the end of the day and was heard by everyone in Buffalo; to the graduations that became standing-room only because people attended whether they had a child graduating or not; to the cafeteria, which served the same lunch whether student, teacher, principal, or superintendent; to the sold out Thanksgiving dinners and chili suppers that brought all of the town together to break bread. Perhaps more importantly, adding Buffalo to the registry also means remembering the people who were its history: JT Meers, the honorary Buffalo historian; Ann Flanders, who cannot go anywhere in town without running in to a former pupil, unless they are one of her former Buffalo School classmates; and all of the other Buffalo residents with numerous ties to the school.

The current superintendent of LaRue County Schools, Sam Sanders sees any historical recognition of the school as a testament to the community, to a town that has honored this school with its patronage in so many ways. As Sanders states, Buffalo has dwindled to “a couple of churches, a couple of minute marts, but that’s it.” Whether attending the school, collecting its memorabilia for posterity, or toiling for months on the all-volunteer maintenance effort on the gym, this town and its people have grown up with—and have grown because of—Buffalo School. The school building provided the place where the people of the town came together to learn how to become a community, generation after generation.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET  
Section 9 Page 1

**Buffalo School**  
**LaRue County, KY**

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Deed Book 50, pages 327, 434, and 462-465

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Meers, John T. and JenRose, July 30, 2008.

Sanders, Sam, July 31, 2008.

Wimp, Carolyn, compiler

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 3.5 acres

#### UTM References

##### Hodgenville Quad

Zone Easting Northing

16 615 110 4151 930

Verbal Boundary Description (See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (See Continuation sheet.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	<b>Ms. Erin Riney</b>		
organization	<b>AU Associates, Inc.</b>	date	<b>September 15, 2008</b>
street & number	<b>159 Old Georgetown Street</b>	telephone	<b>859-233-2009</b>
city or town	<b>Lexington</b>	state	<b>KY</b>
		zip code	<b>40508</b>

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#### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

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### Property Owner

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name LaRue County Board of Education  
street & number 208 College Street telephone 270-357-4111  
city or town Hodgenville state KY zip code 42748

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 17

Buffalo School

LaRue County, KY

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property proposed for listing corresponds to a 3.5-acre tract defined by the LaRue County Kentucky Property Valuation Administrator by account number 042-00-06-082. As deeded in 1935 (Book 50 page 434), the boundaries of the property are as follows:

Boundary 1: Beginning at a stone in W.T. Parish line; thence with write fence N. 61 E. 20 poles to a stone in L.M. Willian line; thence N. 29 W. 24 poles to L.M. Willian line and corner to W.T. parish; then S. 61 W 20 poles to a stone in R.H. Middleton's line; thence with R.H. Middleton and W.T. Parish line S. 29 E 24 poles to the place of beginning, containing three (3) acres.

Boundary 2: Beginning at the N.W. corner of East Lynn College lot; thence with East side of said lot S. 21.5 E. 4 chains and 4 links to S.E. corner of said College lot; thence N. 61.5 E 1 chain and 26 links to a stone; thence N. 21.5 W 4 chains and 4 links to a stone in line of R. W. Creal's line; thence with said Creal's line S. 61.5 W. 1 chain and 26 links to the beginning, containing one-half (1/2) acre.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary for the school was established in 1935, when construction of the site's primary feature, the school house, began. Until 2007, this boundary served as the school's boundary, and so, is the appropriate area for encompassing the building because it was the acreage closely associated with the school function during the Period of Significance.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Buffalo School  
LaRue County, KY

Section: Photo Identification Page: 1

**Same information for all Photographs:**

Name of Resource: Buffalo School

Location: Buffalo, LaRue County, Kentucky

Date of Photograph: August 4, 2008

Photographer: Johan Graham

Location of digital media: Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort KY

**Information specific to particular photographs:**

Photo # Subject

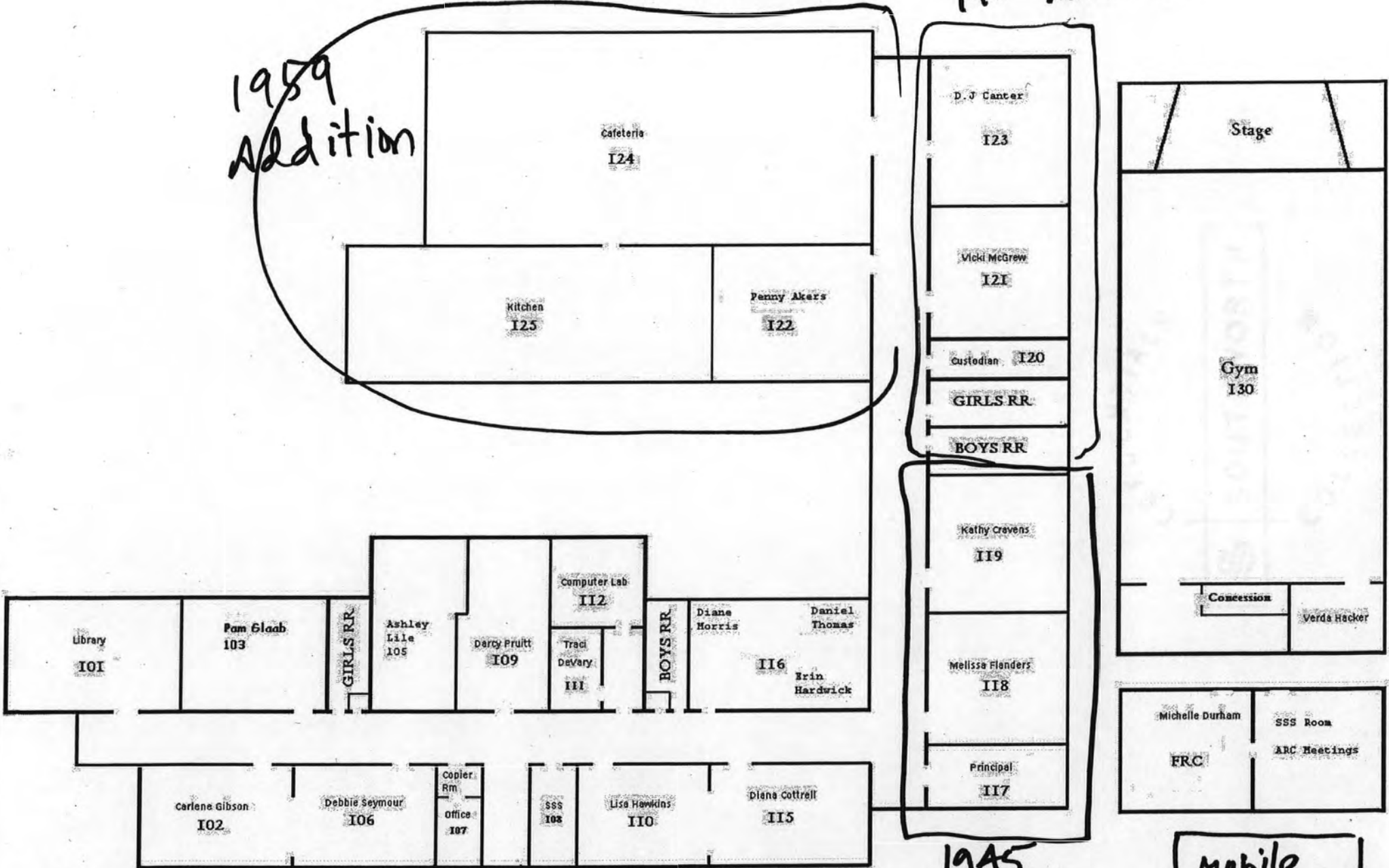
1. View looking East at the front façade of the 1936 Buffalo School;
2. View looking East; Gymnasium on right in photo; 1936 Buffalo School and addition on left in photo;
3. View looking west from the rear of the school; Pictured is the cafeteria/multi-purpose room addition;
4. View looking south at the interior courtyard of the school. Original building on right in photo; addition on left
5. View looking west at rear façade of the 1936 Buffalo School ;
6. View looking east at the front façade (left of center) of the 1936 Buffalo School;
7. Interior view of pre-1900 gymnasium adjacent to Buffalo School;
8. View looking south at the non-conforming modular classroom on the site;
9. View looking southeast at the non-conforming storage shed at the rear of the site;

SHED

# Buffalo Elementary

1950 Addition

1959 Addition



1936 School

1945 Addition

mobile





High School, Buffalo, Ky.





SHED

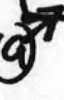
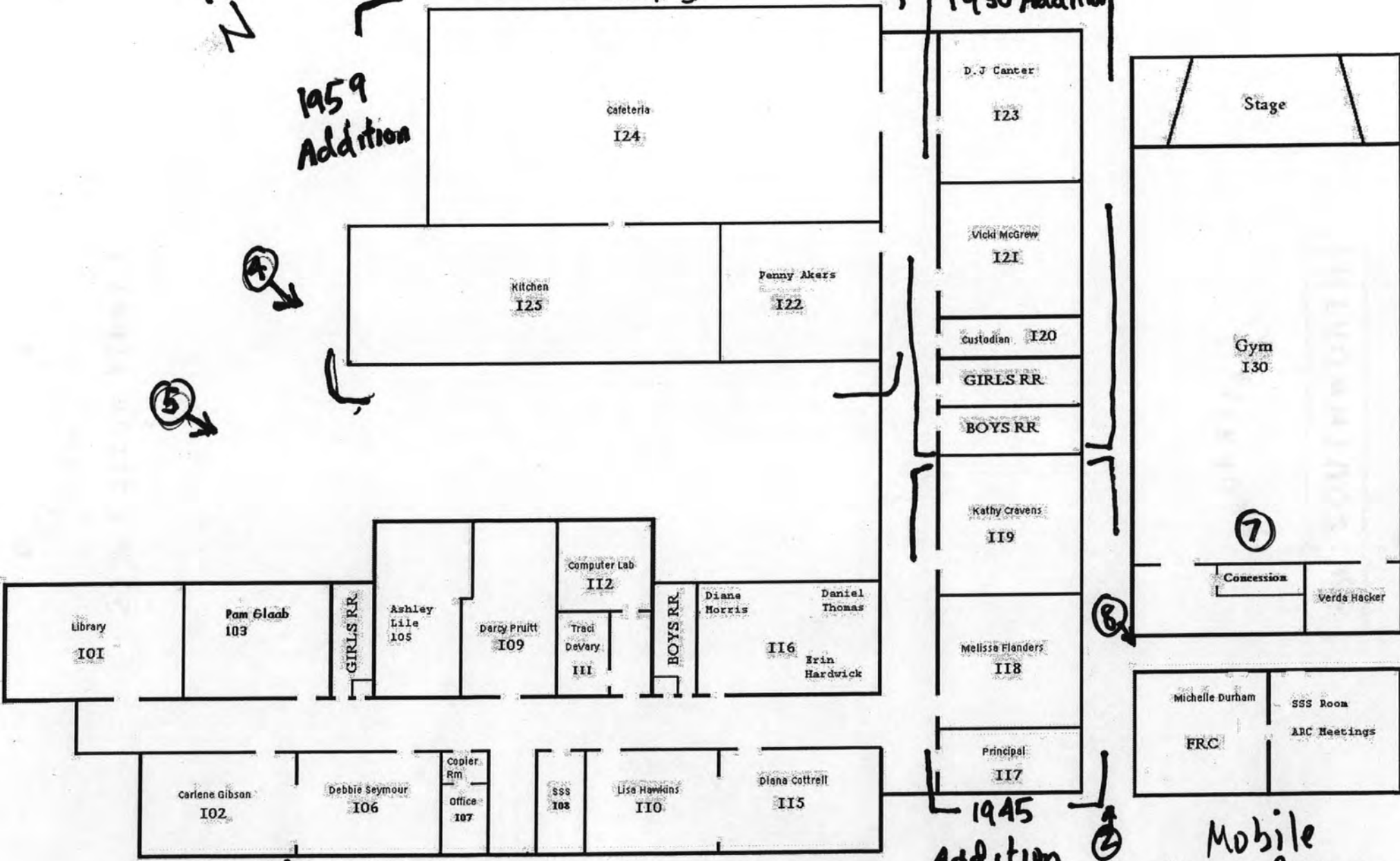
# Buffalo Elementary

LaRue County, Ky



1959 Addition

1950 Addition



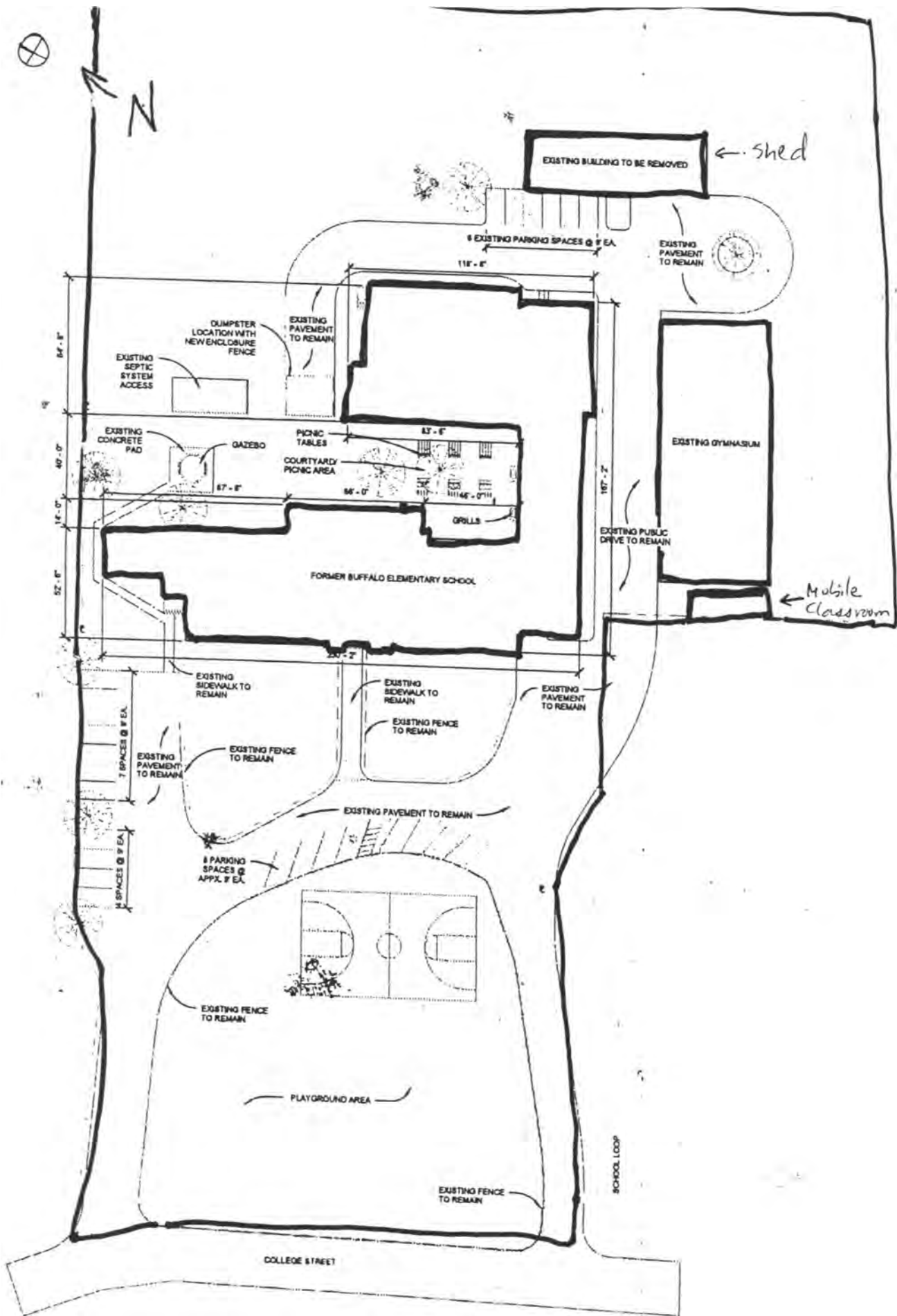
1945 Addition



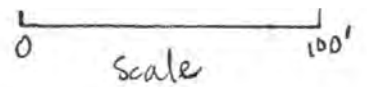
Mobile Class Room







Buffalo School  
 LaRue County, KY  
 site plan



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Buffalo School

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: KENTUCKY, Larue

DATE RECEIVED: 12/31/08      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/09  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/09      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/13/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000005

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: Y    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    2/5/2009    DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Locally significant school plant - school plays central role in social/educational fabric of community.  
nomination has numerous spelling/usage errors.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Crit A

REVIEWER J. Crabb      DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/ see attached SLR Y/

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



BUFFALO  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

















RICHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Below criticism above praise



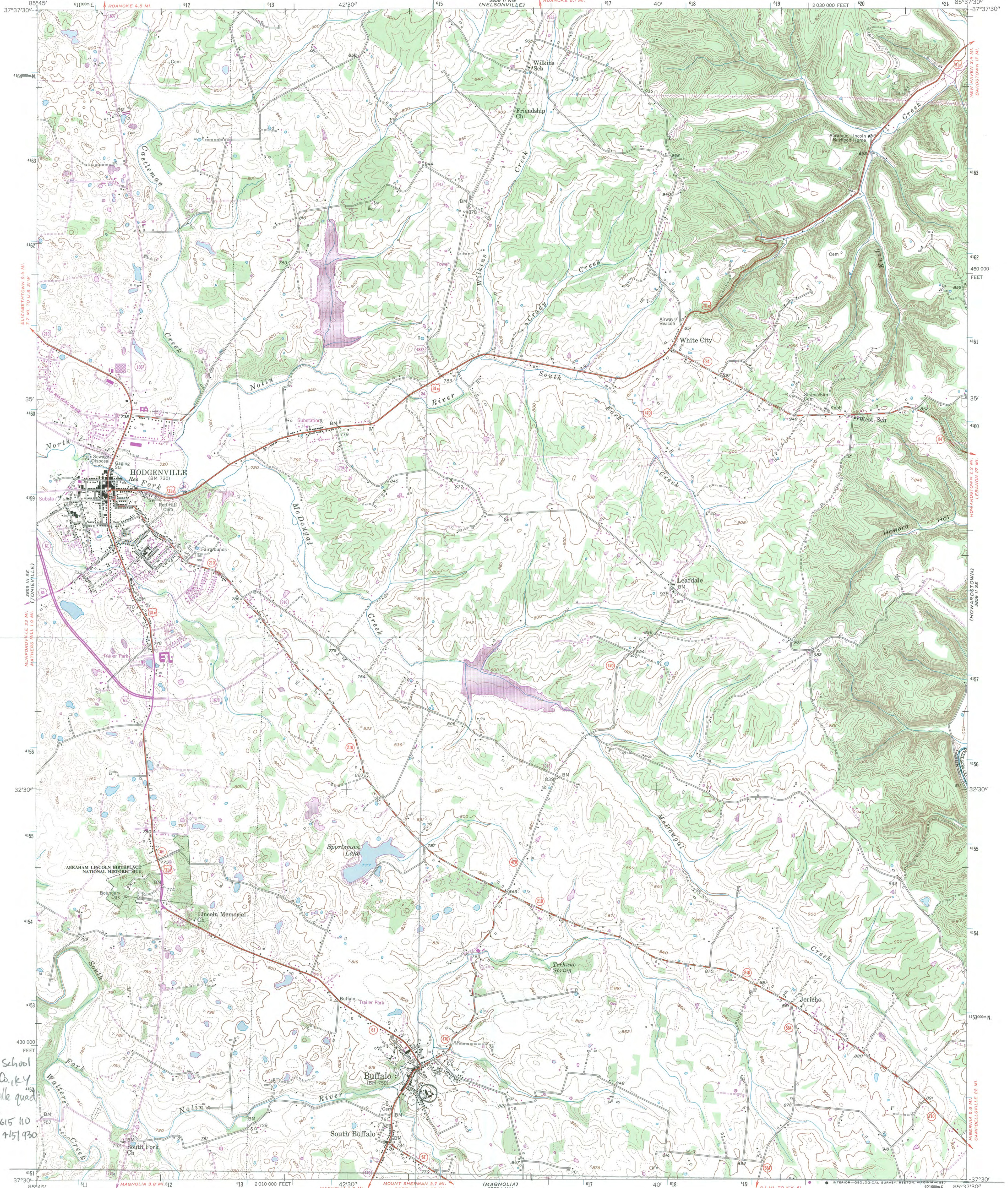


GF Capital  
Make Space  
800 527 7928



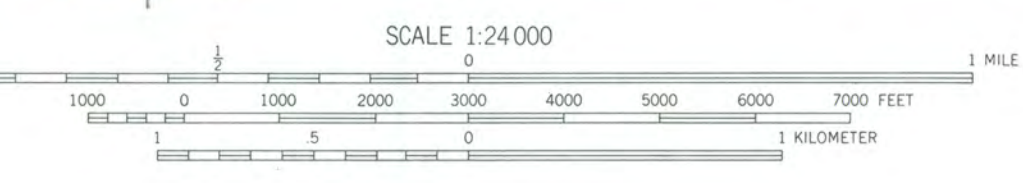






Buffalo School  
La Rue Co, KY  
Hodgenville quad  
Zone 16  
Basting 615 110  
Nothing 4151930

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography from aerial photographs by stereophotogrammetric methods. Aerial photographs taken 1951. Field check 1953  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Kentucky coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 4 meters south and 3 meters west 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  
Unlabeled wells are oil wells



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
DASHED LINES REPRESENT HALF-INTERVAL CONTOURS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
KENTUCKY GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40506,  
AND KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	4 LANE, 6 LANE	Light-duty
Medium-duty	4 LANE, 6 LANE	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route		State Route

HODGENVILLE, KY.  
SW/4 HODGENVILLE 15' QUADRANGLE  
37085-66-TF-024

1953  
PHOTOREVISED 1987  
DMA 3859 II SW - SERIES V853

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with State of Kentucky agencies from aerial photographs taken 1984 and other sources. Contours adjusted adjacent to certain photorevised hydrographic features. This information not field checked. Map edited 1987





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KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL

Steven L. Beshear  
Governor

The State Historic Preservation Office  
300 Washington Street  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
Phone (502) 564-7005  
Fax (502) 564-5820  
www.kentucky.gov  
December 23, 2008

Marcheta Sparrow  
Secretary

Jan Snyder Matthews, Ph.D., Keeper  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

Enclosed are nominations approved at the December 9, 2008 Review Board meeting, submitted for listing:

- James E. Pepper Distillery, Fayette County
- Buffalo School, LaRue County
- Kenmil Place, McCracken County

This form, approved by the Board on August 27, 2008, required additional work, and is submitted for listing:

- Black Bottom Historic District, Logan County

The following nomination was returned, and has been revised according to comments provided by the National Register staff reviewer. We resubmit it for reconsideration and listing:

- Cherokee State Park, Marshall County NR ID: 08001120

The following nomination has a bit more complicated history of processing. It is a property that involves land in both Kentucky and Tennessee. The property was initially submitted for review in 2006, with Kentucky SHPO signing the form and the Tennessee SHPO disputing eligibility and submitting comments; the Register returned the form to the Kentucky SHPO on 12/29/06. The Kentucky SHPO revised the nomination as per return comments, reducing the boundary and strengthening the integrity evaluation, and resubmitted the form to the Register in May of 2008. Learning that the Tennessee SHPO had not reviewed the revised form, the Register returned the form, instructing the Kentucky SHPO to send the form to the Tennessee SHPO for comment. The Tennessee SHPO has reviewed the revised version, maintains their position of non-eligibility, and has enclosed comments. This property resubmitted for reconsideration and listing is:

- Jesse Whitesell Farm, Fulton County, KY and Obion County, TN; NR ID: 06001200 and 06001199

We appreciate your consideration of these nominations.

Sincerely,  
  
Mark Dennen, Acting Executive Director  
Kentucky Heritage Council and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

