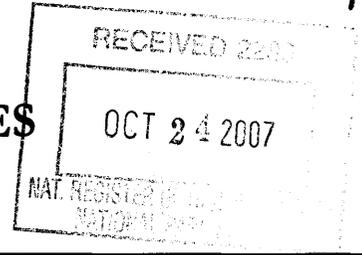


1243

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Roundup Central School
other name/site number: Roundup Central Elementary School

2. Location

street & number: 600 First Street West not for publication: n/a
city/town: Roundup vicinity: n/a
state: Montana code: MT county: Musselshell code: 065 zip code: 59072

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide locally.
Mark F. Gaumer / SHPO OCTOBER 22, 2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper
[Signature]

Date of Action
12/6/2007

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public - local

Number of Resources within Property

Category of Property: Building

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:
EDUCATION/school

Current Functions:
EDUCATION/school

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

MIXED: LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Romanesque, Mission Revival, Neo-Georgian; LATE 19TH & EARLY 20 CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Prairie School; LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

Materials:

foundation: STONE/sandstone; CONCRETE
walls: STONE/sandstone; BRICK; METAL
roof: ASPHALT/tile; ASPHALT/rolled; STONE/gravel
other: CONCRETE; BRICK

Narrative Description

Roundup is a bustling town of just under 2,000 people, located along the banks of the Musselshell River in east-central Montana. The town's Main Street runs north-south through the heart of the community, and the Roundup Central School occupies a full city block just to the west, on tree-lined First Street West, within a residential neighborhood. Surrounded by asphalt playgrounds, the 1911-1913 Central School is a massive, rectangular, two-story sandstone building. A multi-use one-story brick addition was constructed in 1962, and is located at the northwest corner of the property. It connects to the main building via a breezeway. In 1974, the school board authorized the construction of another four-classroom annex, which extends from the north side of the 1962 addition's east wall.

Building description:

The 1911-1913 school was constructed in two phases. In 1911, the rectangular, hipped-roof "west wing" was constructed. Its nine rooms soon proved inadequate to house the increasing student population, and two years later, the "east wing" was finished. A central hallway and staircases connect the wings. A tall corbelled brick chimney pierces the north (rear) slope west of center. A wood-frame bell tower, topped with a Queen Anne style flared pyramidal roof, protrudes from the south slope of the roof, above the main, centered entry. The building sports Neo-Georgian windows and Mission-style parapet walls above the north and south entries. The massive, quarry-faced, cut stones reflect Neo-Romanesque trends in architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The wide eaves and low-slung hipped roof, however, acknowledge the popularity of Prairie elements as well. Originally, windows throughout the building were wood-framed one-over-one light double-hungs. They were replaced with fixed, metal-framed, three-light windows during the late twentieth century.

In 1962, the school board approved construction of an irregularly-shaped brick addition to the west side of the building. The addition features a concrete foundation and flat roof covered with asphalt. The smaller, south bay, contains a hallway, two restrooms, and the cafeteria's kitchen. Attached to its north wall, is the longer, larger north bay that contains the lunchroom, a small storage area, and a small stage. The "annex," constructed in 1974, connects to the 1962 addition at its northeast side, and runs parallel to the north elevation of the original building. The annex is a long, narrow, rectangular building with a concrete foundation and shallow-pitched side-gable roof covered with asphalt and gravel.

1911-1913 building

South elevation:

The south elevation includes the main entrance to the building. The centered, two-story, recessed entry features non-historic, metal double-doors at the ground level. A metal canopy protects the doorway. Above, a large arched window opening provides light to the interior stairwells. It consists of three, one-over-one-light windows below three vertically-divided lights, capped with four lights within the arch. Above the arched window two-light windows fill a ribbon of three openings. At both the second and first story, single, three-light windows flank the doors and arched window. A parapet tops this central bay. The west wing (1911) of the south elevation features seven evenly-spaced three-light windows at both the first and second story. At both levels, the east wing (1913) has three evenly-spaced single three-light windows flanked by tripled three-light windows. The east wing and entry also feature one-light, fixed rectangular windows at ground level that provide light to the basement, five spaced across the east wing and one on either side of the entry.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria:** A**Areas of Significance:** EDUCATION; COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):** n/a**Period(s) of Significance:** 1911-1959**Significant Person(s):** n/a**Significant Dates:** 1911, 1913, 1919, 1926**Cultural Affiliation:** n/a**Architect/Builder:** W.E. Wynne, contractor**Narrative Statement of Significance****Statement of Significance Summary**

The Roundup Central Elementary School's significance lies in its purpose. The community strived to build the school through bonds so they could provide their children with a proper education; standards in the school remain high to date because the teachers and parents in the community push their children to succeed. The building provides a place for children of the community to grow and learn which creates a promising future for the years to come.

Constructed in 1911, during a period of optimism and community growth, the Roundup Central School is significant for its associations with the history of education and community development in Roundup. Its expansion in 1913 is testament to the economic boom of the 1910s, as mining, agriculture, and the expansion of the railroad combined to lead Roundup from a gathering of a few businesses to a permanent and enduring city in need of adequate schooling facilities and substantial buildings. Located north and west of the city center at the time of its construction, the town's residential development spread to surround the school by the late 1910s and through the 1930s. Roundup's population increased only slightly through the 1920s and 1930s, but the school filled with students who lived outside the city limits, as rural school districts consolidated. Through the twentieth century, Roundup Central School has been an education nexus for the region. For these reasons, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. Its period of significance begins in 1911 and runs through the mid-twentieth century school consolidations, ending with the absorption of the Klein School District in 1959.

The Musselshell Valley

Text taken directly from William A. Babcock and Elizabeth Wood's Historical Resources Survey: City of Roundup, Montana prepared for the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, November 1983.

About 50 miles north of Billings in east-central Montana, the city of Roundup lies in the broad Musselshell Valley. The Musselshell River flows from the Little Belt, Castle, and Crazy Mountains, through Roundup and Melstone where it turns abruptly north, passing through Mosby before flowing into the Fort Peck Reservoir on the Missouri River. The Bull Mountains border the Musselshell Valley on the south, and attain a maximum elevation of 4,700 feet.

Lewis and Clark reached the mouth of the Musselshell River on the Missouri River May 4, 1805. Subsequent fur trading expeditions, like that of the Missouri Fur Company under William H. Ashley and Andrew Henry in 1822-23, wintered at the mouth of the Musselshell, but trappers seldom ventured up the river. The Blackfoot Indians were a constant threat to interlopers and, with their allies the Gros Ventres, fought against the Crow Indians over territory between the strongholds of the Blackfoot along the upper Missouri and of the Crow south of the Yellowstone River. Early trappers also were discouraged from traveling up the Musselshell because it was not navigable and frequently dried up entirely during the summer. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 placed the Musselshell Valley within areas established for the Blackfeet, Assiniboine, and Crow tribes. Despite these obstacles, non-Indians reached the Upper Valley. In 1853, Lieutenant John Mullan, described the Musselshell as a "beautiful valley" covered with "excellent grass."¹

The Upper Musselshell Valley in the Roundup area became an area of major contention between non-Indians and Indians in the mid 1870s, as upper river ranchers moved down the valley and as the Northern Pacific Railroad moved westward. In 1873 the Yellowstone expedition led by Colonel D.S. Stanley, to protect the engineering surveyors of the Northern Pacific Railroad, marched from Glendive Creek along the Yellowstone River to Pompey's Pillar and then north to the Musselshell River (probably close to present-day Roundup), which it reached in August 1873. Stanley noted that the Musselshell country had potential for grazing, but that their march "had been preceded by thousands of buffaloes and the grass was completely exhausted."²

See continuation sheet

¹ Quoted in Harold Joseph Stearns, *A History of the Upper Musselshell Valley of Montana*, (Harlowtown and Ryegate, Montana: Times-Clarion Publishers, 1966), pp. 6-7.

² U. S. War Department, *Report on the Yellowstone Expedition of 1873* by D.S. Stanley (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1874), pp. 7, 12.

Roundup Central School

Musselshell County, Montana

Name of Property

County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

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: Montana Historical Society, Helena

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1

UTM References: **Zone** **Easting** **Northing**
 12 688676 5146466 (NAD 27)

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section): NE¼ NW¼ SW¼ Section 13, Township 8 North, Range 25 East, Montana Prime Meridian

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1-12, Block 6, Roundup First Addition.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn, according to legally recorded lines, to include the property historically associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stephanie Shipp
 organization: Roundup High School date: September 2006
 street & number: 67 GrubStake telephone: (406) 323-2552
 city or town: Roundup state: MT zip code: 59072

Property Owner

name/title: School District 55
 street & number: 700 Third St W telephone:
 city or town: Roundup state: MT zip code: 59072

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West elevation:

At the west elevation, the original school (1911) rises above the 1962 school addition. At its first story, it features three, single, evenly-spaced, three-light windows on either side of the centered entry. The entry consists of a pair of metal double doors. The fenestration at the second story displays a similar pattern, where three single three-light windows flank two pair of three-light windows.

North elevation:

The north elevation includes a back entrance to the building. Like the south elevation entry, the north entry is located within a centered, recessed, two-story bay, and features non-historic, metal double-doors. A metal canopy protects the doorway. Above, a large arched window opening provides light to the interior stairwells. It consists of three, one-over-one-light windows below three vertically-divided lights, capped with four lights within the arch. Above the arched window two-light windows fill a ribbon of three openings. At both the second and first story, single, three-light windows flank the doors and arched window. A parapet tops this central bay. The west wing (1911) features seven evenly-spaced, three-light windows at both the first and second story levels. At ground level, a concrete and metal coal chute leads into the coal bin in the basement. The doors to the coal chute are made of metal and located just west of the entry. The east wing (1913) features three evenly-spaced single three-light windows flanked by tripled three-light windows on both the first and second floor. The east wing and entry also feature one-light, fixed rectangular windows at ground level that provide light to the basement, five spaced across the east wing and one on either side of the entry.

East elevation:

The east elevation includes a side entrance to the 1913 building. There are three, three-light windows on either side of the centered entry at the first floor, and a similar fenestration pattern is featured at the second story, where the single windows flank a centered pair of three-light windows. One-light, fixed, small rectangular windows, in line with the windows on the first and second stories, provide light to basement at ground level. Non-historic, metal double-doors provide access through a centered recessed entry. Six concrete steps lead to the doors. A metal canopy, supported by metal poles, protects the doorway. Above, a fire escape descends from the centered pair of second floor windows to the ground, landing north of the entry.

1962 Addition:

South elevation:

The one-story, brick, flat-roofed, 1962 addition connects to the original school via a one-story wood-frame breezeway at the original, centered, west entrance. The breezeway features five bays across its north and south elevations divided by dimensional lumber framing members. The central bay at the south elevation contains a pair of metal double doors. Concrete steps with metal handrails lead from the south playground to these doors. The three horizontally-divided, fixed lights above a single wood panel fill the bays on either side of the door. The north side of the breezeway features the same fenestration pattern, including its central bay. The breezeway ends at its west end at the one-story, brick addition. The addition's south elevation has no openings, and silver-colored metal signage reads: CENTRAL SCHOOL.

West elevation:

A concrete ramp leads from the sidewalk at the west edge of the property to wooden double doors within a deeply recessed entry at the south side of the 1962 addition's south bay. North of the entry, centered at the north side of the south bay beneath a wide eave, are two, small, two-light, metal-framed windows. The north bay features another pair of wood double doors, located immediately south of a small extension that protrudes from the north end.

North elevation:

The north elevation of the 1962 addition contains three window openings: single, four-light metal-framed windows at both the west and east side, and a triple set of four-light metal-framed windows off-center to the east. Between the tripled and western most windows, a large, square, brick chimney protrudes from the wall and rises high above the roofline.

East elevation

The small visible portion of the 1962 addition's east elevation has no features.

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Annex:

South elevation:

The one-story annex (1974) attaches to the 1962 addition at its northeast corner, and runs parallel, but is not connected to the original school. Tar and gravel cover the very shallow pitch of the side-gable roof. The annex's brick-faced south elevation contains a pair of metal entry doors off-center to the east. One, two-light, metal framed window is located west of the entry, and two more are located to the east.

North elevation:

A recessed, single, metal entry door provides entry from the north side of the addition-annex junction. Access through the annex's north elevation is gained also via a centered, recessed metal door. Three, two-light, metal-framed windows are spaced across the north elevation on either side of these doors. Battened metal panels cover the north elevation, except at the west and east ends, which are brick.

East elevation:

The annex's east elevation contains a centered pair of doors, separated by a narrow concrete member that rises from the entry level to the roof ridgeline. A long, concrete ramp provides access from the elevation's north side.

Description of interior

The interior of the 1911-1913 school building retains many of its original finishes. Carpet covers the hardwood floors, the central stairwells are concrete and painted gray. The plaster walls feature original wood trim. There are metal support beams going through the 1911 addition of the building and the bars run next to the ceiling and through some walls from one end to the other. The light fixtures are updated to energy efficient fluorescent fixtures, and some blackboards are original while others have been replaced with whiteboards.

The interior of the 1964 addition has exposed brick walls and a tile floors. The 1972 addition has wood panel walls with some drywall walls and the floors are carpeted.

Integrity

Roundup Central School retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. Its integrity of design, workmanship and materials has been compromised by the introduction of replacement windows throughout the building and additions to the west (side) and north (rear) of the building. The additions, though substantial, do not overwhelm the overall design of the 1911-1913 school. The school displays sufficient integrity to convey its important historic associations.

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Early Ranching on the Musselshell

At the close of the Great Sioux Wars in the late 1870s, with the buffalo populations depleted, the cattle industry grew in the Judith and Musselshell Valleys. At about the same time, Fred Lawrence drove sheep into the Flatwillow country, north of the Musselshell Valley in the area of Roundup. With the rapid influx of stock into central and east-central Montana, "roundup associations" were established to form a cooperative system of grazing cattle on the open range.

The "Maginnis Roundup" constituted one of the largest roundup associations in the Montana Territory, and included the area east of the Judith River to the Musselshell and the Missouri River. This naturally defined unit encompassed the Musselshell Valley, extending 150 miles long and 70 miles wide, from the upper valley to the bend where the river turns north. About 100 men, 85 riders, and 1,000 saddle horses were needed to cover this territory. In 1880, the U.S. Army established Fort Maginnis about 20 miles northeast of Lewistown to protect ranchers in the Judith and Musselshell Valleys from tribal members who continued to resist the intrusion of whites in the area by stealing their stock.

The earliest ranchers in the area drove their stock to Bismarck, North Dakota, about 500 miles away, until the Northern Pacific Railroad completed their line to Fort Keogh (Miles City) in 1881 and to Billings in 1882. These milestones encouraged ranching in the Lower Musselshell Valley near Roundup. Bill Berigan and John Branigan arrived in the Roundup area, settling on the south side of the river opposite Willow Creek in the fall of 1880. In 1881, J.H. Hightower and G.M. Hill drove 1,200 head of cattle and 60 head of saddle horses from the Missouri River, just east of Helena, south through Northern Wyoming, then north to the lower Musselshell and the mouth of Willow Creek, across from Berrigan and Branigan. Several other smaller outfits came through the area in 1882, but many moved on because the country "was no good for anything but grazing."³

A trapper and hunter named James McMillan made a ranch claim near Roundup in 1882, and during that year, several other men settled in the area and built log shacks on McMillan's claim. These buildings were the nucleus of what is now known as Old Roundup. A post office followed within a year. The area continued to grow, and communications between the community and the rest of the state improved further in 1883 when T. C. Power established a stage line to carry mail from Fort Benton to Billings. A branch of that stage line ran east to Old Roundup. Over the next decade, more commercial developments sprouted, including a roadhouse, saloon, and store, and the nascent town became the center of social activity in the valley.

"New" Roundup Established

The Milwaukee Road's westward expansion precipitated the relocation of Roundup. The railroad needed coal to fuel its locomotives. The opening of coal mines at Roundup in 1907 and the arrival of the railroad – formally the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul – in Roundup in 1908 attracted hundreds of miners and thousands of homesteaders eager to farm the benchlands of the Musselshell Valley. The town supported a vital business community, in turn sustained by coal mines, by farming and ranching, and toward the end of the 1910s by the emerging automobile and oil industries.

The new settlement was located two miles northeast of Old Roundup on land granted by the US government to the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1895 and in turn purchased by the Milwaukee Road. By Spring 1908 the new settlement had eclipsed the old one and a new post office was established there. To avoid confusion, the town was called East Roundup, but the "Old" Roundup post office was discontinued soon thereafter, leaving Roundup with its name. This new town of Roundup developed rapidly, and its layout was determined by the location of the railroad, the location of the No. 1 Mine of the Republic Coal Company across the Musselshell River on its south bank, and by the presence of a cliff beginning just west of Main Street and Railroad Avenue and running northwesterly through what became the town's west side residential section. The railroad ran in an east-west direction along the north bank of the Musselshell.

The stimulus provided by the construction of Mine No. 1 (quickly followed by Mine No. 2, Mine No. 3, and the Davis Mine/Mine No. 4), the promotional efforts of the Milwaukee Railroad to encourage settlement along their line, and the subsequent influx of merchants and tradesmen resulted in a remarkable building boom in Roundup in 1908. As commercial development occurred along Main Street and First Street West, at first residential development occurred fairly evenly between the east and west sides of town, separated by the commercial and light industrial district. Residential construction on the west side of Main Street generally comprised of homes for

³ "The NF Ranch and James Harrington Hightower's Letters," in *Roundup on the Musselshell: Places of the Past*, by Musselshell Valley Historical Museum (Billings: Reporter Printing and Supply, 1974), pp. 4-5.

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middle and upper class citizens. These were constructed north of the cliff that runs in a northwesterly direction through this west-of-Main area, and south of Fifth Avenue, and included the architect-designed residences of John H. Grant, the understated houses of builder William R. Evans, and the compact intersecting gable roof residences of local contractor W.E. Wynne. As families began to populate the community, and particularly the west side, the need for a school became apparent.

More than Stone and Mortar: A History of the Roundup Central School, by Stephanie Shipp

After I conducted almost a year of scholastic research on Central School in Roundup, Montana, I began to understand what Central School really meant to the community. People built a school in Roundup to provide a place to educate their children. Nowadays, because Roundup has a place to educate their children, people stay in the area.

In 1908, the Milwaukee Land Company, a subsidiary of the Milwaukee Railroad, platted the town site of Roundup. At first, most of the businesses, including stores, salons, restaurants and hotels were built along Railway Avenue and Second Street East. Within a year or two, businesses began to move up the hill to the present Main Street and beyond. The town's officials and the land company, understanding the limited expansion possibilities to the south and east of city center reserved a platted block of land for a community school west of Main Street, and several blocks north of the commercial area along Railway Avenue.

This block is the site of the present Central School on First Street West. At that time it was just an empty sage brush flat, way off on the edge of town. There were a few scattered houses in the vicinity but no well-defined streets, no sidewalks and no trees. In fact, there wasn't a single tree on the entire town site of Roundup. The first school building was not, however, located on this selected block, but was in a two room building several blocks south on the northeast corner of Second Street West and Second Avenue and constructed in 1907. The school housed children from first to twelfth grade, and was immediately crowded, so in 1908 the first Central School on the reserved school block was built. This building consisted of four rooms: two rooms on the top floor and two on the bottom. It cost \$1,960 to build the school and employed three teachers, Misses Emma Jensvold, Maude Griffen, and Minnie Furguson and one principal, Mr. C. H. Howell. At this time only females who were single were allowed to teach, and no males taught in Roundup Central School.

Again, the school grew too crowded, so the second and present Central School was built within the same block in 1911. This building was the talk of the town. W. E. Wynne secured the construction contract for the native sandstone school. Using sandstone quarried from the Steen Quarry just outside of town, Wynne likely sub-contracted to five Welsh stonemasons, brought in to complete the masonry. The building was to be 50x74 feet in size and have nine rooms on a budget of \$14,350. There were to be four classrooms on each of the two stories, and no basement, no inside toilets and no central heating system. Coal burning stoves in each room provided warmth. Upon completion of the new building, Wynne put up a flagpole to let the American flag fly in the breeze above the new Central School, on March 5, 1911.

In 1910, during construction of the current Central School, school instruction continued in the four-room building. The school board kept busy ensuring the financial needs were in order. The school board organized a vote for bonds to pay for the land and the school building.⁴ The bonds were sold for \$4,150 and votes were cast on February 21, 1910. The unanimous vote tallied twenty-three in favor of the school bonds and none against. The polls for the voting were open for four hours on a work day from 2:00 p.m. to 6 p.m. and in a snow storm so it was no surprise that in a town of 1,513 people only 23 of them came out to vote.

The school, constructed during the Progressive Era, fit the mantra of that political movement, which strove for "Better schools, better churches, better public buildings, better playgrounds, better public service, better support of disinterested public officials, unsightly billboards abolished, cleaner streets and alleys; a better enforcement of all laws and city ordinances."⁵ Its construction also corresponded to a substantial building boom and marked civic improvements in the city. Electric power and light was available on July 15, 1909, and that same year Roundup Water Company provided a water system. Town leaders saw Main Street paved and cement sidewalks installed by 1913, as brick commercial storefronts replaced the wooden buildings. In addition, the Roundup Coal Company's Mine No.3 improved its capacity in 1909, and continued to prosper through the 1910s and 1920s. Because the mine was

4 In Montana since 1889, women were able to vote in the school related elections, though full women's suffrage in the state was not realized until 1914. The women who voted had to meet all legal requirements of the other voters in 1910; they had to be 21 years of age and residents of the district. The Nineteenth Amendment, which was ratified August 18, 1920, allowed women throughout the United States the right to vote.

5 Randall J. Condon, Helena Civic Club, as quoted in Malone, Roeder, and Lang, p. 255.

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located one mile west of Roundup, and the space was limited east of Main Street to the Musselshell River, the residential area in the school's vicinity began to fill in. This is evidenced further by the establishment of several new plat additions to the townsite between 1909 and 1912: Roundup First and Second Additions, Nelson First and Second Additions, Northwest Townsite Additions, and the Park-Steen Additions, all located north and west of Railroad and Main Streets. This trend of residential development to the north and west continued through the late 1910s.

It did not take long before the Central School became overcrowded again, a situation aggravated by restricting the second story to high school classrooms. Wynne constructed an addition of equal size in 1913, and this east wing cost \$14,823.⁶ The inclusion of a basement, indoor plumbing, and drinking fountains, none of which were included in the 1911 side of the building, is indicative of the progress and development of Roundup over two short years. Also in 1913, the school board paid the Milwaukee Land Co. \$600 for the school property.

The same sources of economic stimulus that initiated and shaped the growth of Roundup from 1907 to 1912 – the railroad, mining, ranching, farming – continued to be major forces of development after 1912. From 1912 to 1920, two other commercial developments – the emergence of the automobile and the discovery of oil north of Roundup – engendered further growth in both the commercial and residential areas of town, and kept the new school full. For several years the building housed the entire Roundup School system, including the high school taught in the four rooms at the west wing's second story. It graduated its first high school class consisting of three girls in 1914. Every foot of the building was occupied, even the attic, which held two classrooms and the chemistry laboratory. The first break to relieve enrollment pressure came in 1916 when the four-room Lincoln grade school was constructed at Camp No. 3, the mining camp associated with Mine No.3 west of the city. The second student enrollment relief came in 1918 when a new high school was constructed on Third Street West. This permitted use by the grade school of rooms formerly occupied by the high school.

As early as 1917, though, the farming industry began to suffer as the dry-land farming techniques proved insufficient to combat the drought that year. In 1919, the drought was even worse. For the city of Roundup, these hardships were somewhat offset by the economic benefits brought about by the emergence of the automobile. County roads had been improved through the 1910s, and Roundup secured its position as a regional a trade center – a place where farmers and ranchers could drive to easily and conduct their commercial business. The fuel needed to power those automobiles – oil – had been discovered in different parts of Montana as early as 1892, but the search for productive oil fields intensified in Musselshell County in 1915, and culminated with a strike about 18 miles northwest of Roundup in 1919. These discoveries staved off some of the severe depression felt throughout the state, but Roundup eventually succumbed to the economic downturn.

The city of Roundup and the surrounding area achieved their developmental peak by about 1918. Then – with the end of the First World War, the failure of dry-land farming, and later, the collapse of the oil boom – began a period in which Roundup experienced an economic decline. Its population remained about the same during the 1920s and 1930s (2,434 in 1920 and 2,573 in 1930) but this was because many miners moved from nearby mining camps into town, often bringing their hip-roofed frame houses with them to the west side residential area near the school. Still Roundup remained the business center of the region and the center of a significant coal mining area.

Though the city's population did not increase substantially during the 1920s and 1930s, Roundup Central School's student enrollment remained high, as it served as an educational center for the region. By doubling the number of Montana schoolchildren, the great homestead boom of 1909-18 placed enormous strains on the state's educational system. Numerous school districts were established to bring farm children within reasonable traveling distance of a schoolhouse. In Musselshell County alone, the number of school districts jumped from 21 in 1911 to over 100 schools in 88 districts in 1919.⁷ But when the bottom fell out of the farming industry, hundreds of these rural districts lost their tax bases. As roads improved and reliable buses became available, rural residents faced school district consolidation. Architectural Historian Andrew Gulliford explained: "the rectangular frame schools...gave way to yellow school buses...that transported more and more rural children to town."⁸ By 1922, the number of districts in the County dropped to 55, and

⁶ Roundup became county seat of newly-formed Musselshell County in 1910, and after completion of the 1913 Central School, city officials moved the four-room wood-frame school another block nearby and used it as the first courthouse. The current courthouse replaced the frame school building in 1940, and the old school was converted to apartments.

⁷ "Statistical Report of School Districts in Musselshell County, Montana," Department of Public Instruction Records, 1899-1959, RS-109, Box 13 folders 6-7, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT.

⁸ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools*, (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984), p. 195.

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most of the 74 remaining schools had dwindling enrollment. The school at Roundup, however, kept a steady rate of enrollment, catering to 390-400 students, more than a third of the school age children in the county.⁹ In 1926, in order to relieve the strain of so many students under one roof, the school board permitted the construction of a junior high school attached to the 1919 high school. In 1929, there were still twenty-five hundred one-and two-room schoolhouses in Montana. By 1950, only 1,321 of them remained.

These consolidations followed national trends in the history of education.

As early as the mid 1800's, consolidation of schools was thought to provide students a more thorough education by eliminating small schools in favor of large ones. Legislation providing free public transportation was passed by the state of Massachusetts in 1869, paving the way for consolidation of rural schools. The invention of the automobile and paving of roads allowed students to travel longer distances in shorter amounts of time, decreasing the need for the many one-room schools built by early settlers.

The rise of industry in urban areas in the late nineteenth century contributed to the school consolidation movement. The prevailing belief during the industrial revolution was that education could contribute to an optimal social order using organizational techniques adapted from industry. Early school reformers and policy makers felt that an industrialized society required all schools to look alike, and began to advocate more of an urban, centralized model of education. Larger schools were seen as more economical and efficient, which was defined in terms of economy of scale. As a result of this thinking, urban and larger schools were adopted as the "one best model," and from this context rural schools were judged deficient.¹⁰

By 1939, consolidation reduced the number of Musselshell County school districts to 23. Roundup School District boasted the most elementary school students in the county by far – with an average daily attendance of 379 attendees at Central School. The next largest school district was Klein, just southeast of Roundup, with an average of 144 students per day. The next two largest districts, Musselshell, Melstone, only averaged 52 and 49 students per day, respectively. The other nineteen districts counted less than twelve students each per day.¹¹

World War II sparked renewed interest in Roundup' coal fields, and production increased to satisfy the demand. Though the coal boom brought on by the war ended as quickly as it came, agriculture recovered during World War II through the mid century. By the early 1940s, the tide began to turn in favor of Montana's farmers and ranchers. Crop productions and prices were relatively high, thanks to the end of the drought and completion of Deadman's Irrigation Project, constructed with Works Progress Administration support, in 1941. In addition, oil discoveries and production in the area began again by 1944, helping to stabilize the local economy. Despite the economic relief felt by Roundup and surrounding communities, consolidation continued to influence school board policy. Consolidation trends continued through the 1940s, when, by 1949, there were only fifteen districts in the county.¹²

In addition to efficiency and economics, by the mid-twentieth century theories regarding the best methods to prepare children for college included school size evaluations. During the 1950s, researchers such as James Bryan Conant, author of *American High Schools Today*, argued that in order to be successful, a high school needed at least 100 students to stimulate the learning environment and offer comprehensive curriculums. Conant and his colleagues were especially concerned about the threat of Soviet superiority in the space and arms races, and the perceived need to improve the quality of education so that American students could compete and win the Cold War.¹³

9 "Statistical Report of School Districts in Musselshell County, Montana," Department of Public Instruction Records, 1899-1959, RS-109, Box 13 folder 8, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT. A few of the school districts were removed from Musselshell County in 1920, when Golden Valley County was formed from the western part of Musselshell and the northeastern part of Sweetgrass County. The records show a dramatic drop in the number of students attending the smaller rural schools.

10 Joe Bard, Clark Gardner, and Regi Weiland, "National Rural Education Association Report: Rural School Consolidation: History, Research Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations," *The Rural Educator*, Winter 2006, p. 1. Available online at: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4126/is_200601/ai_n16410266/pg_1.

11 "Statistical Report of School Districts in Musselshell County, Montana," RS-109, Box 13 folder 10.

12 Ibid., Box 13, folder 11.

13 Bard, Gardner, and Weiland, p. 1.

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Pressures toward school consolidation did not come from politicians and educators alone; businesses also saw the advantage. For example, "International Harvester Company, a major promoter of school consolidation in the 1930s, produced a catalog with several pages devoted to its promotion of newly manufactured International Harvester school buses."¹⁴

At the end of the 1958-59 school year, the Roundup School District was by far the largest of the eleven remaining districts in Musselshell County in terms of school population, boasting more than twice the number of students than the ten others combined.¹⁵ Over the past century, Roundup School District #55 has absorbed almost ninety rural school districts, in reaction to economic, efficiency, and scholastic concerns. For example, the Lincoln School at Camp No. 3 closed in 1932, when production slowed and many miners left the camp for the more comfortable, clean town of Roundup. Many districts like the Lincoln School were subsumed directly by the Roundup district. Others came under Roundup's jurisdiction as a result of multiple district merges. In 1931, Pleasant Grove School District #76 connected and became a part of School District #40, so the students that attended Pleasant Grove began going to Pine Echo. Pine Echo's School District eventually combined into the #12 Klein School District, which eventually was attached to the Roundup School District in 1959. By consolidating with Klein, the second-largest school district in the county, Roundup secured its place as the dominant educational resource in the area.

After 1959, The Roundup School District #55 continued to grow in geographic size. As of 2007, there are only two school districts in Musselshell County: Roundup and Melstone. The Roundup Central School caters to 294 elementary students, nearly nine times the 34 students at the other school, Melrose Elementary.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, coal lost its place as a primary fuel for many industrial activities and Roundup's coal mines lost prominence. All underground operations finally ceased and only small surface mines survived. Oil activity also began a steady decline during the latter part of the 70's and early 80's. The same period saw reductions in Milwaukee railroad activity and that line was eventually abandoned. The past decade has also witnessed periods of severe drought, falling agricultural prices and heavy pressure on the agricultural economy. Despite these economic downturns, Roundup remains an important commercial and educational center in the region, and many residents hold out hope for renewed interest in coal production.

Conclusion

For nearly a century, Roundup's Central School has remained an important part of this optimistic community. Constructed in phases between 1911 and 1913, with additions in 1962 and 1974, the school serves as an important educational center for the region. The school's student population remained high through the twentieth century populated both by residents of Roundup and rural children bussed in from rural communities whose local schools were closed due to drops in population, lack of funding, and twentieth-century consolidation policies. The school gains additional significance as an anchor building in the west side residential neighborhood in Roundup. City platters reserved its location for a school as early as 1908, understanding that geographic concerns, as well as the draw of school proximity for families, would serve as motivators for residential development west of Main Street. Residences were first constructed south of the school near the city center, but spread north and west as early additions were platted closer to the school grounds. A second wave of residential development around the school occurred in the 1930s, as agriculturalists and miners arrived in reaction to the Dust Bowl and Depression in search of the civic improvements and relative prosperity. Through the 1940s and 1950s, the school served as the educational nexus of the region, as consolidation policies in the county culminated in 1959. Roundup Central School continues to convey these important trends in the history of education and community development.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Statistical Report of School Districts in Musselshell County, Montana," RS-109, Box 13 folder 11.

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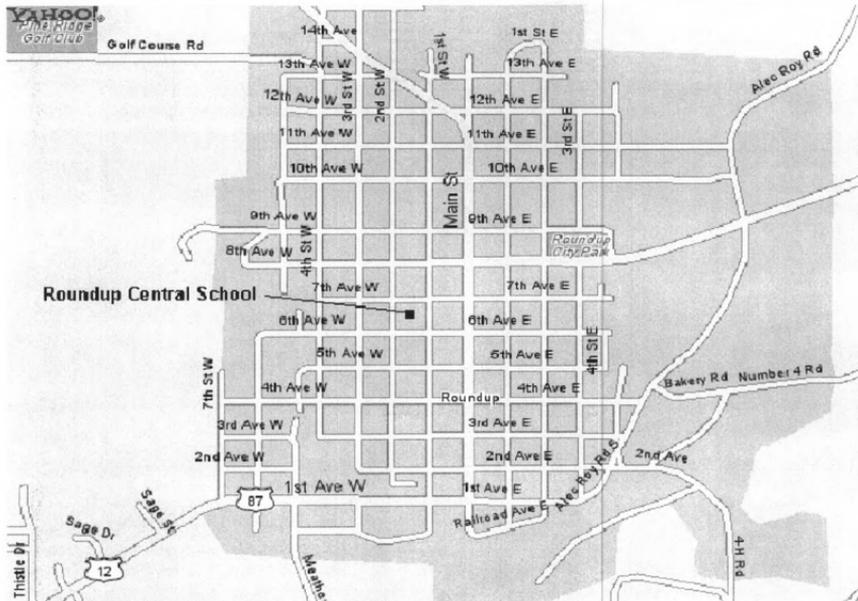
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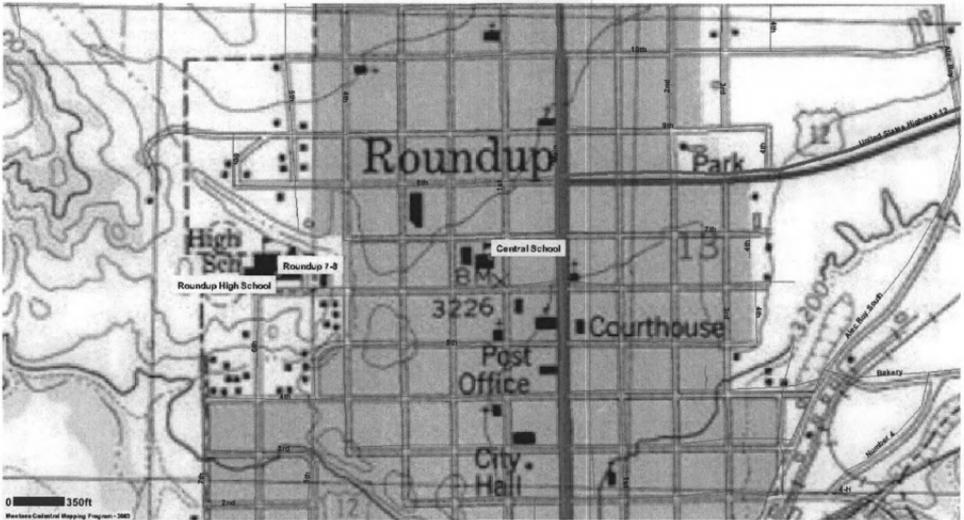
Street Map of Roundup, showing location of Roundup Central School.

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Roundup 7.5 minute quadrangle detail, showing location of Roundup Central School.

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2005 aerial photo of Roundup, showing location of Roundup Central School.

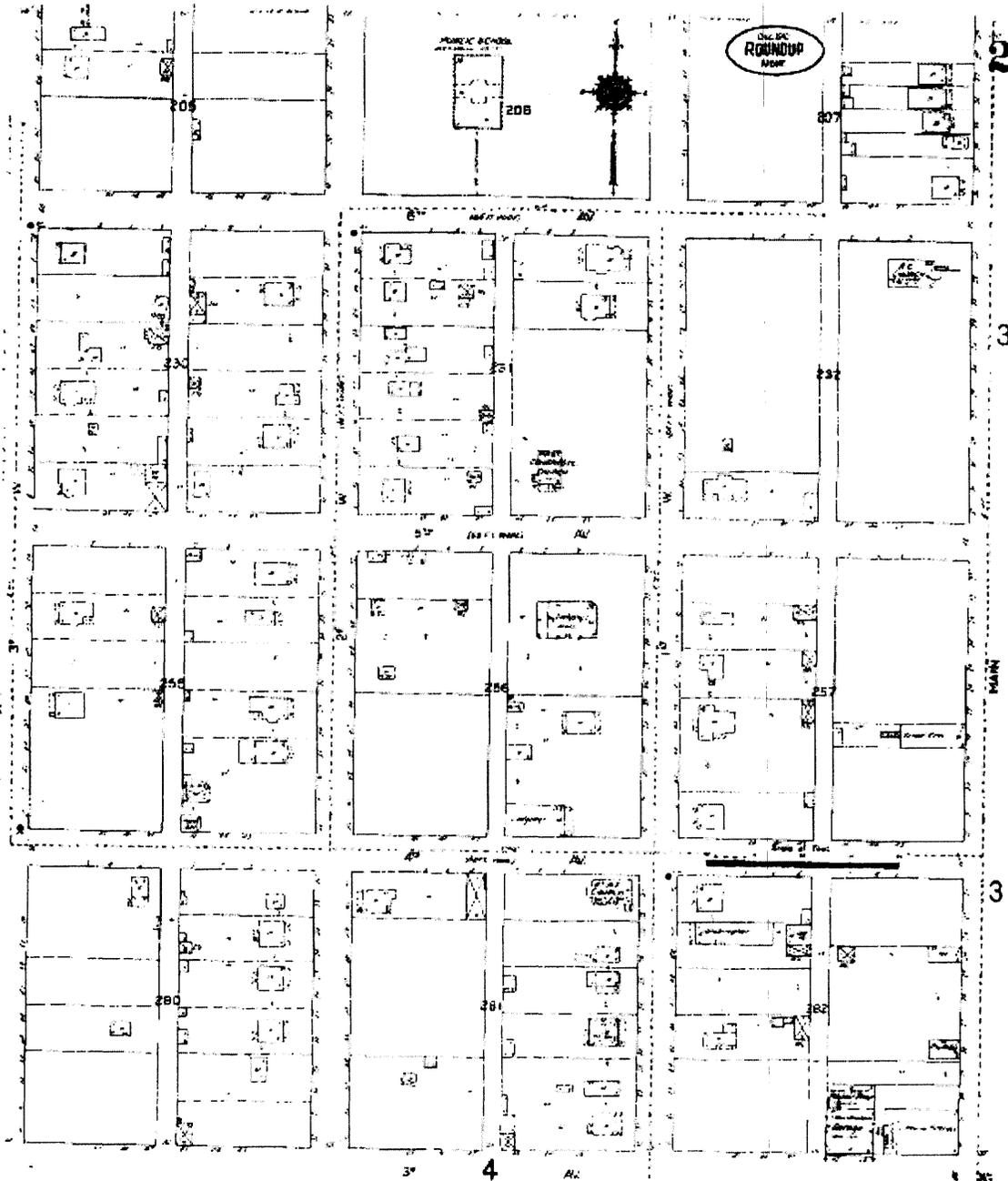
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1912 Sanborn Map of Roundup's west side neighborhood, sheet 2. Roundup Central School is located at the north (top) end of the map. Note the beginnings of residential infill in the neighborhood. Construction north of the school was too sparse in 1912 to warrant mapping by the Sanborn Company.

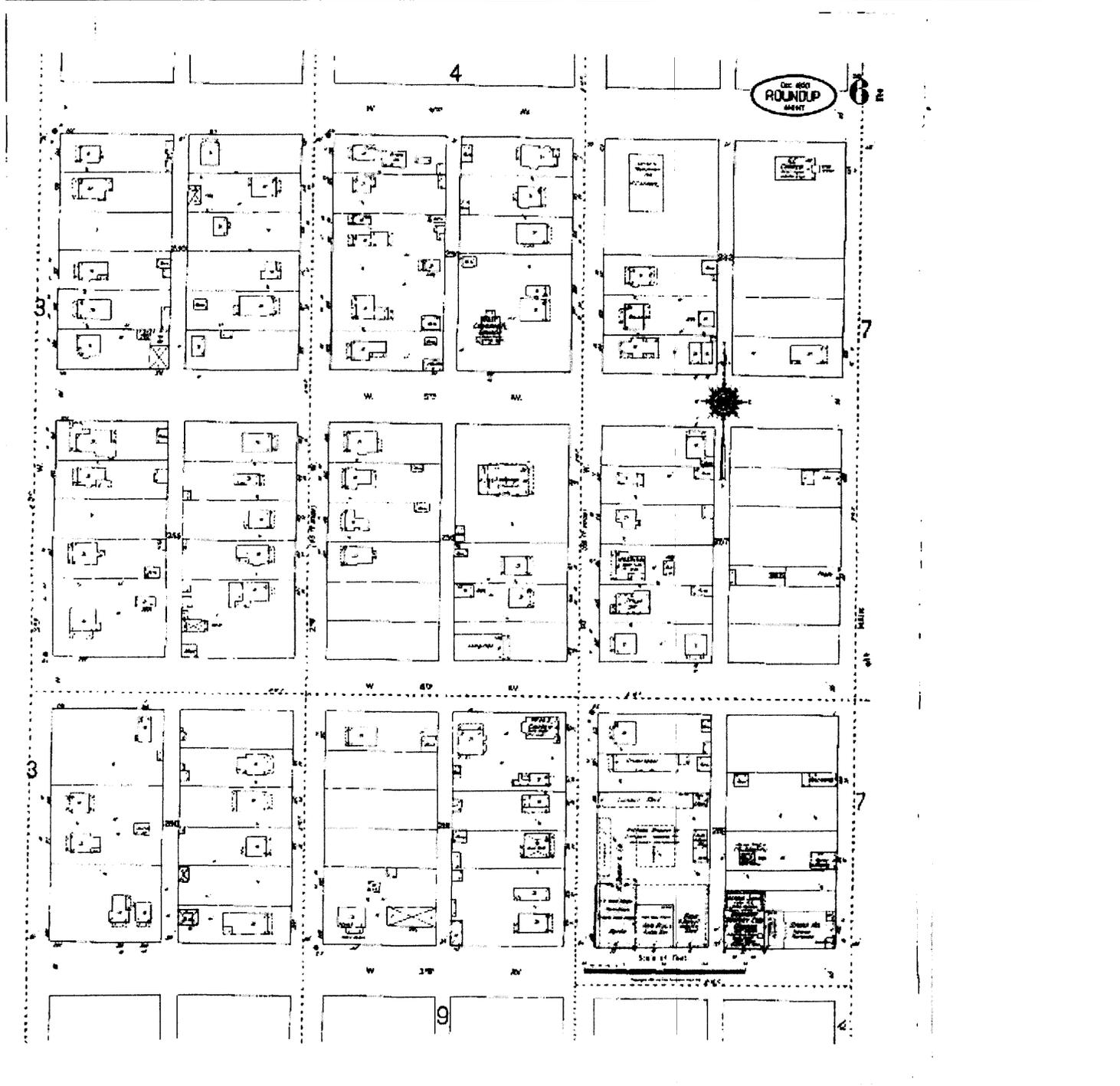
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Sanborn Map of the West Side Neighborhood immediately south of Roundup Central School, 1920, sheet 6. The school is located just off the map to the north (top) where the numeral "4" is printed. Note residential infill in comparison to the 1912 map. Sheet 4 (next page) maps the school and blocks surrounding it to the north.

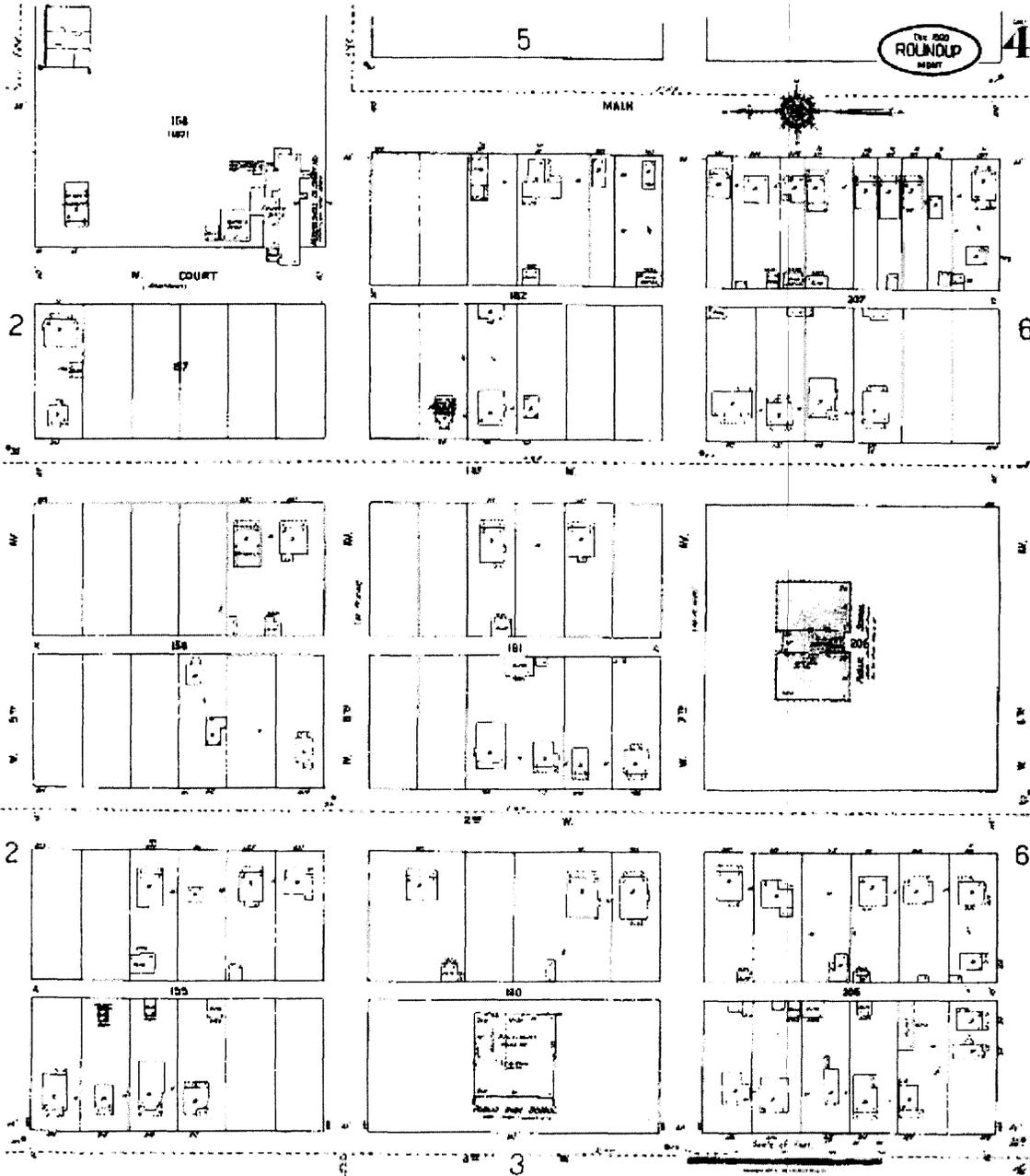
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1920 Roundup Sanborn Map, sheet 4. This sheet shows the school to the south (right) end of the sheet, and the 1919 high school to the west (bottom) end of the sheet. Residences begin to fill the blocks adjacent to the schools.

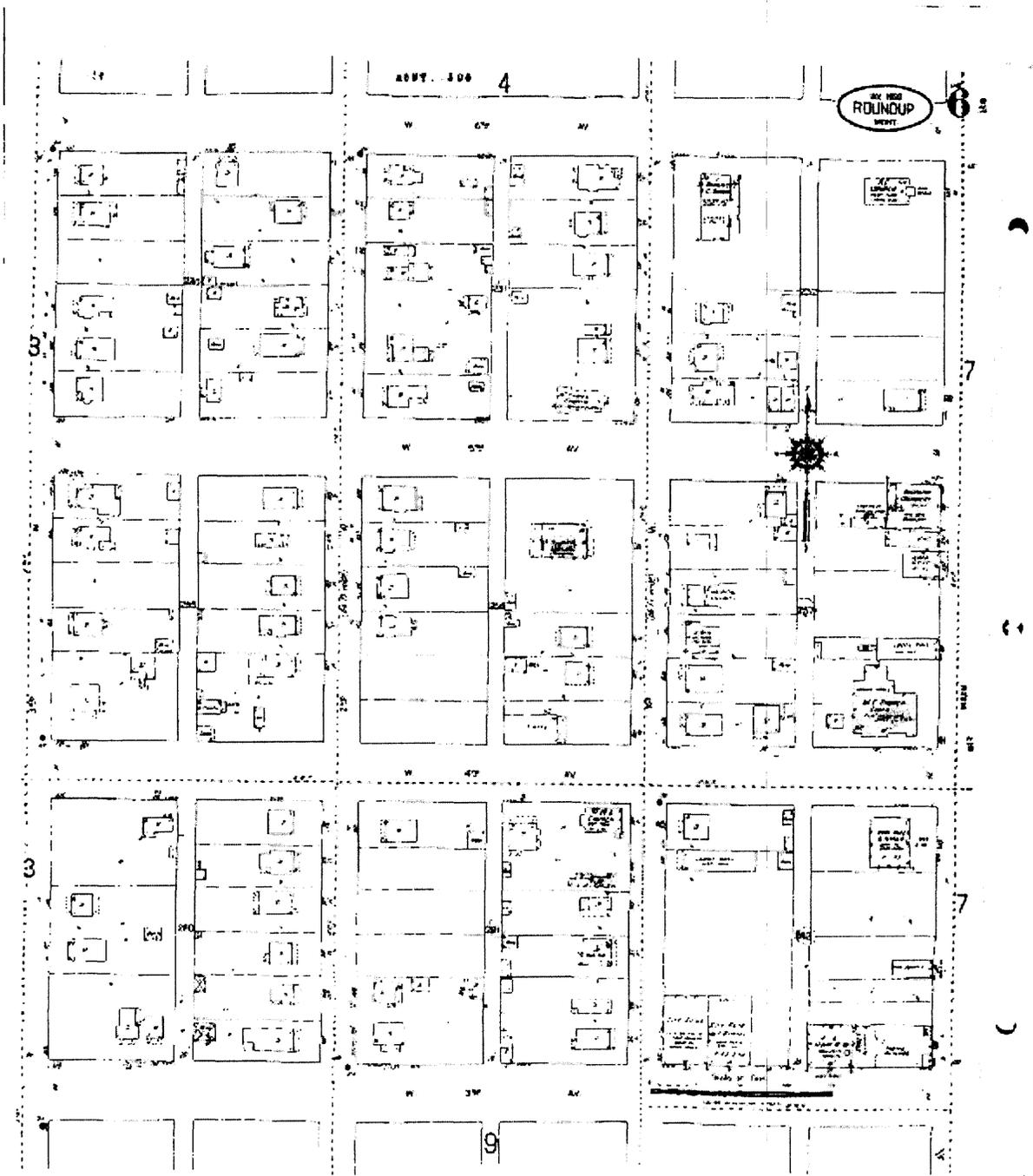
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1944 Sanborn Map of Roundup's west side neighborhood, sheet 6. Like the 1920 map, the school is located just off the sheet to the north (top), where the numeral 4 is printed. Note the residential infill in comparison to the 1920 map.

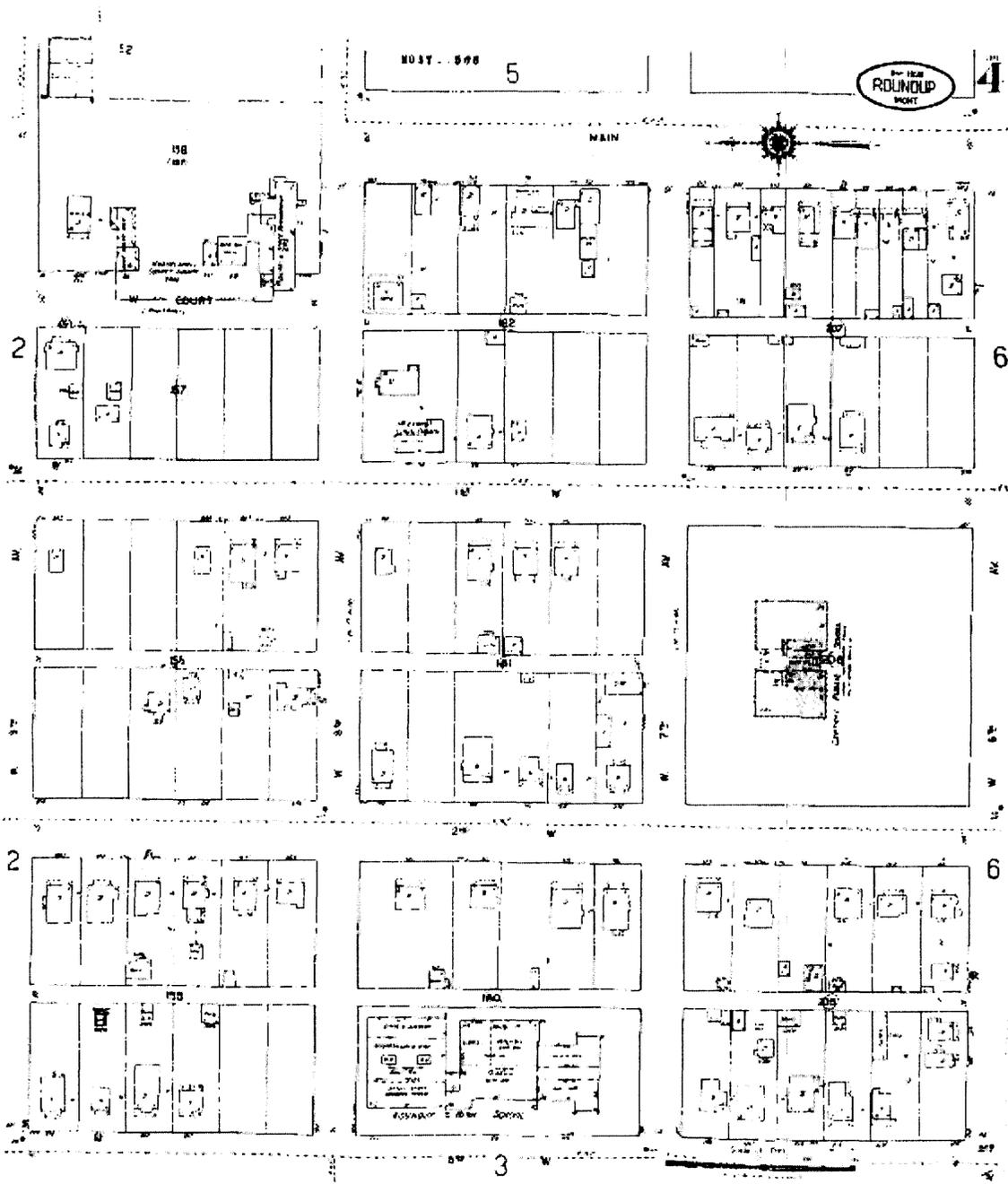
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1944 Roundup Sanborn Map, sheet 4. This map shows Roundup Central School at the south (right) end of the sheet, and the high school with its 1926 junior high addition to the west (bottom) end of the sheet. Note additional residences in blocks adjacent to the schools in comparison to the 1920 map.

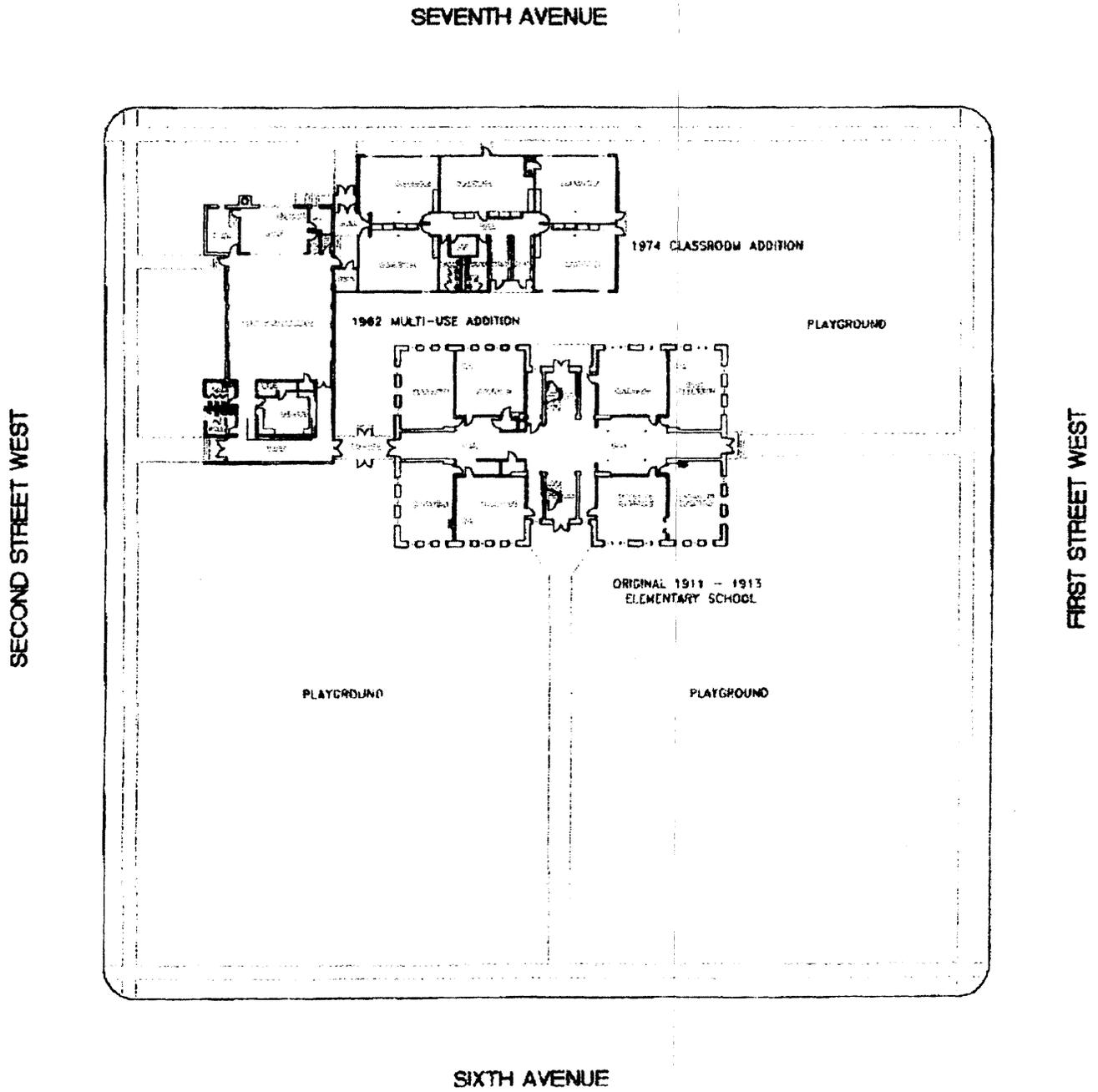
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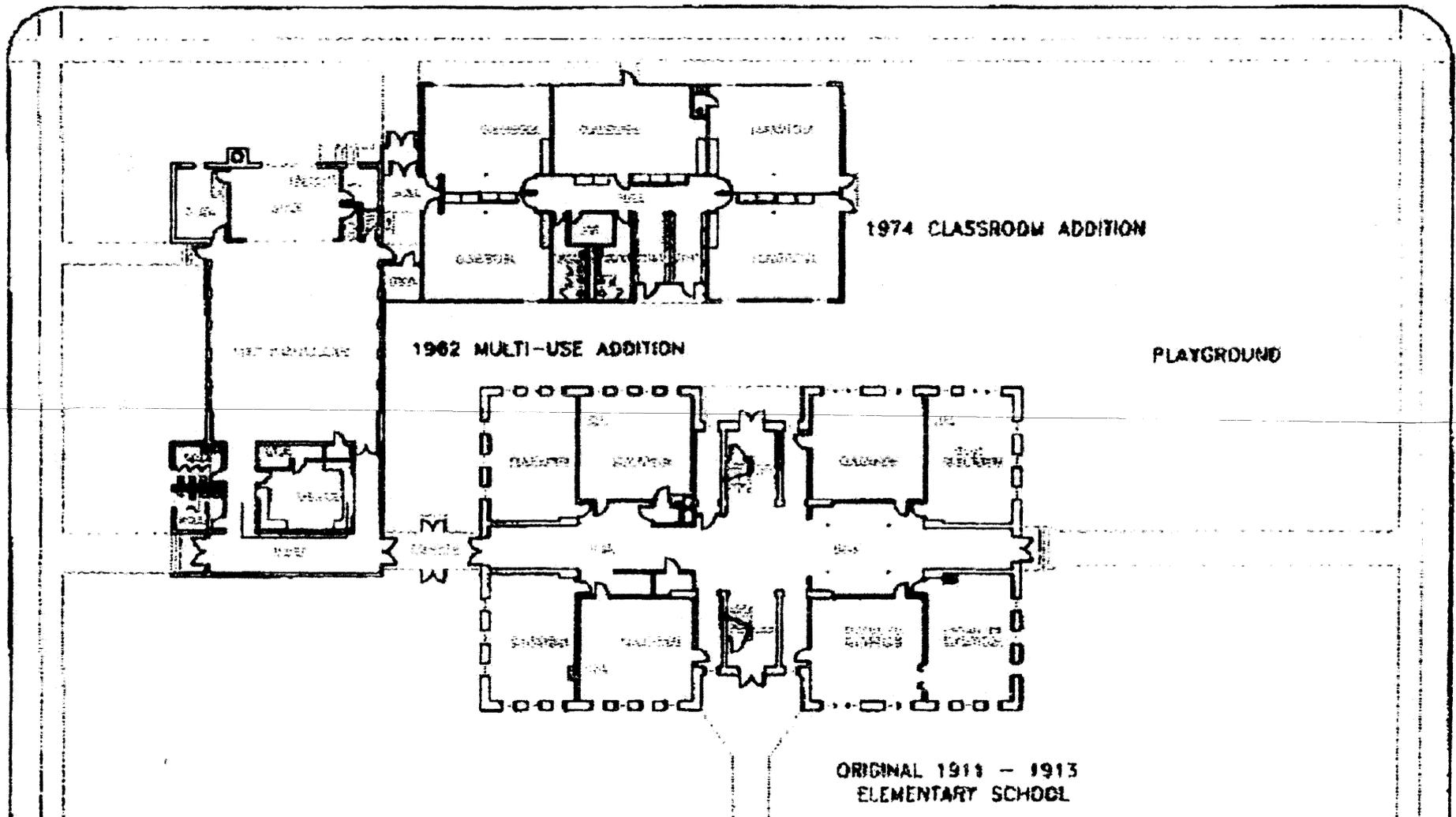
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Floorplan detail

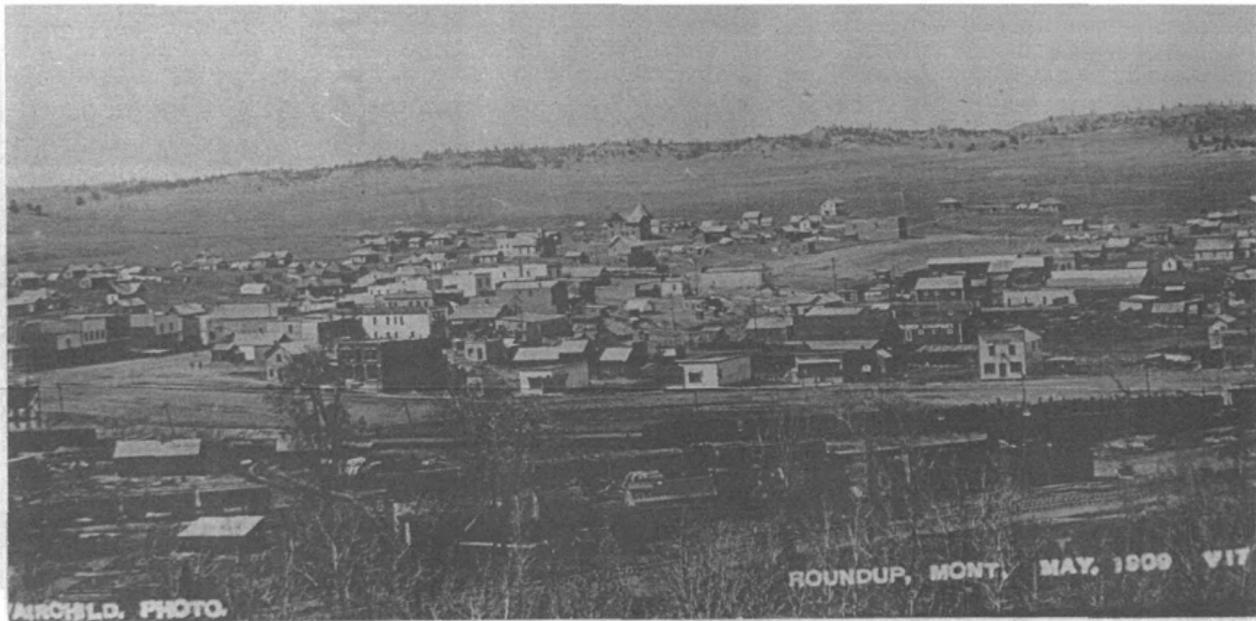
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Roundup, 1909, from bluff across the river south of town, view to the northwest. This photo shows the increased concentration of structures, the smattering of buildings in the west side residential area north of Sixth Avenue, and the appearance of brick structures on Railroad Avenue. The railroad depot is out of the picture to the right. Roundup Central School would be built two years later.

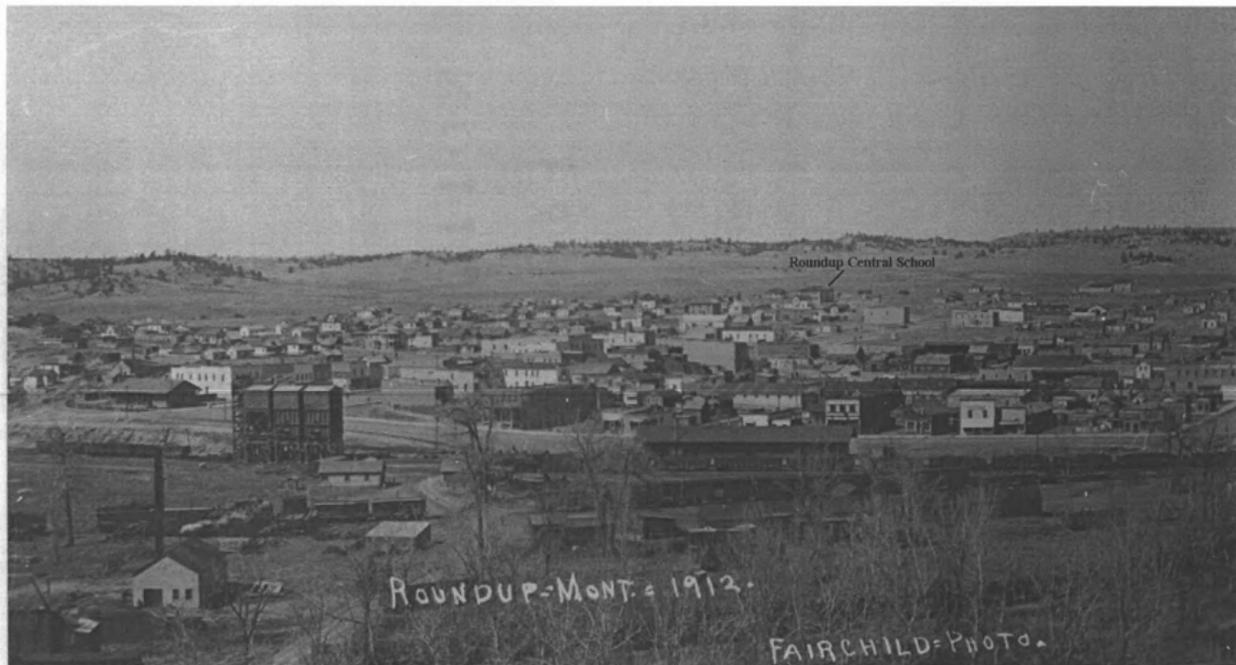
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Roundup, 1912. Taken from south end of town, looking northwest. The continued concentration and expansion of buildings is evident, particularly on the west side of town. Note the 1911 wing of Roundup Central School, located off-center to the right at the north edge of town.

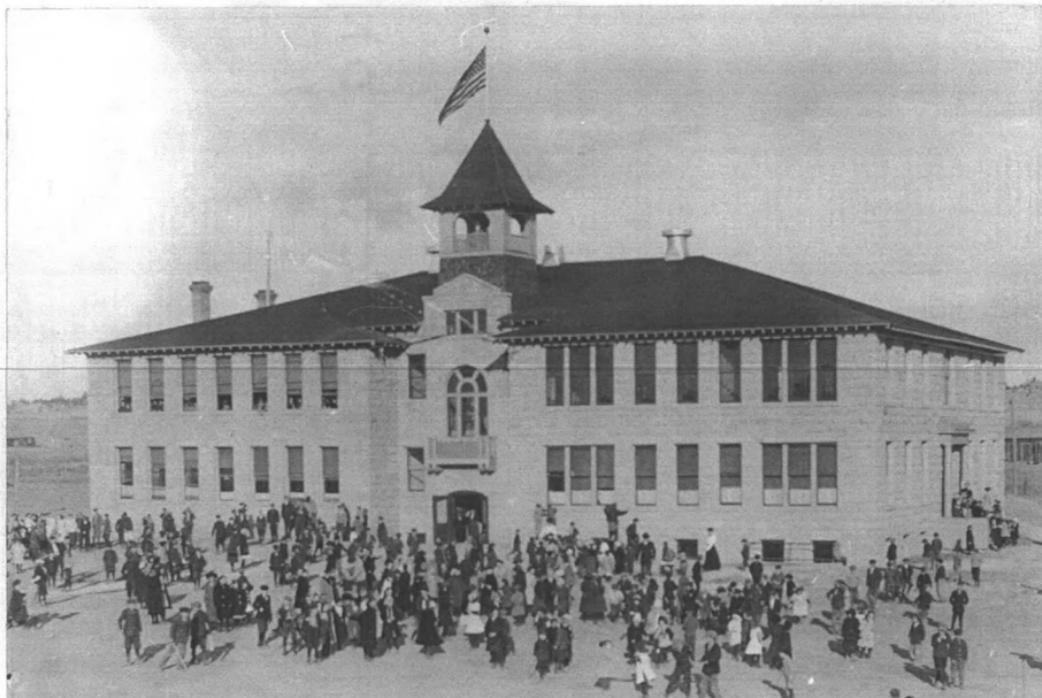
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Roundup Central School, 1913.

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Roundup 1918. A rare historical photograph of Roundup's residential areas. Taken looking south-southeast between Second and Third Streets West. Seventh Avenue is in the foreground. Central School is the two-story stone building located slightly left of center. (Courtesy: Musselshell Valley Historical Museum)



Roundup Central School, 1921. View to the northwest. Note the additional residences on adjacent blocks as compared to earlier historic photos.