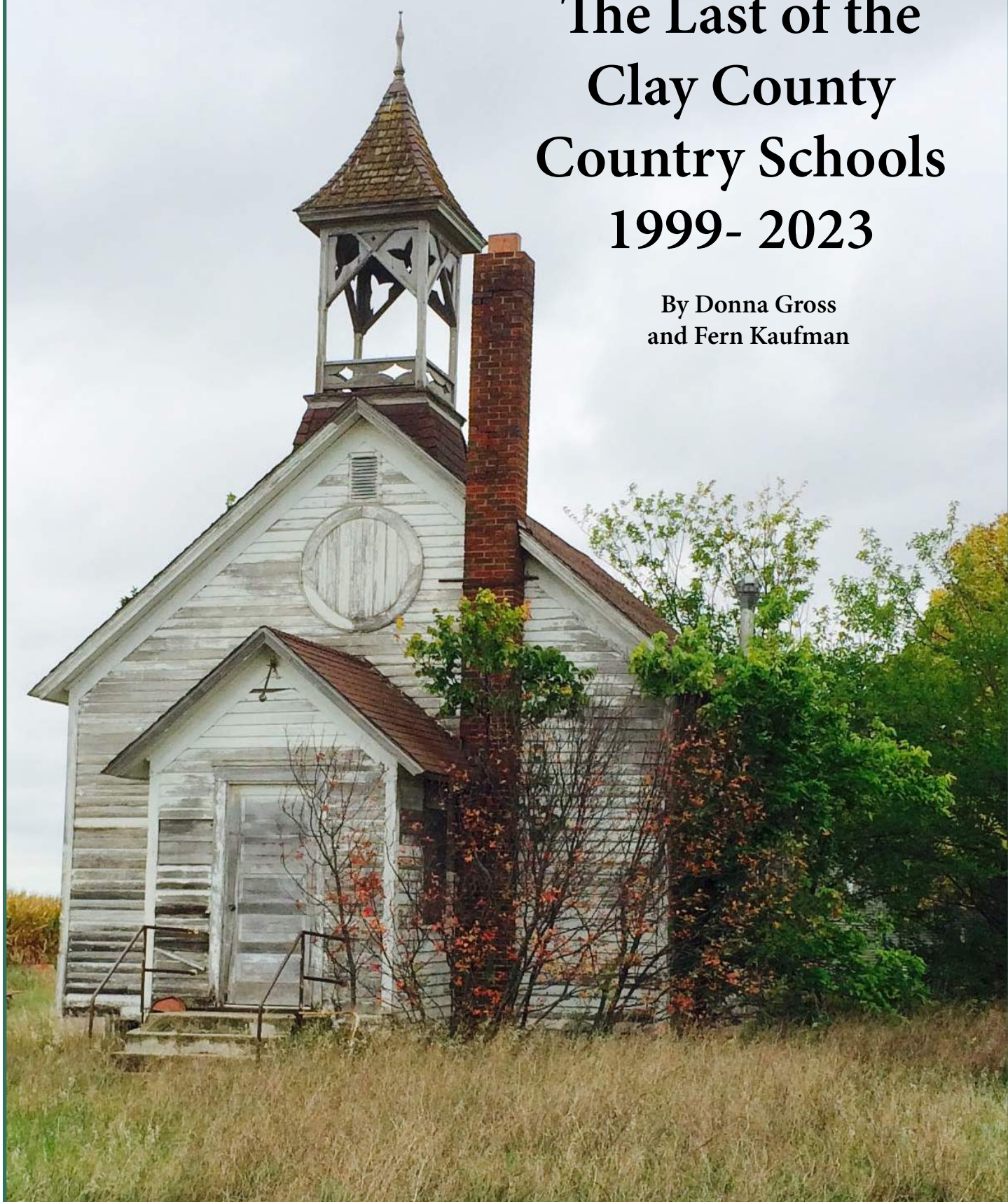


UPDATED
SECOND EDITION

The Last of the Clay County Country Schools 1999- 2023

By Donna Gross
and Fern Kaufman



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Cover Photo - Star Prairie School
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Introduction

Clay County, one of the earliest and also one of the smallest of South Dakota's sixty-seven counties, hosted South Dakota's first school: a small log cabin built in 1864 at the bottom of Ravine Hill, Vermillion. Thus began the rich history of early education in Clay County. Over time and until 1970, seventy-seven country schools were built and maintained within its borders. By state law in 1969, all country schools began the process of consolidation with a larger school offering K-12 education. Clay County would now close the last of its country schools.

The Clay County Country School Project, begun in 1999 by Fern Kaufman and Donna Gross, provides a pictorial history of sixteen of the county's remaining country school buildings. The intent of the project was to provide photographs and information of Clay County Schools while some of the buildings still remained. Although students and teachers fondly provide stories and school experiences of early country school education, the school buildings themselves also have stories to tell: their location, their architectural style, their present condition, their present use. All these elements speak or "talk" just as their human occupants have done. Sadly, many of Clay County's early schools have been destroyed or are in poor condition; however, a few have new modern uses. The goal of our project was to capture the existence of the remaining schools through photography, research, and partnerships.

Logging many miles on the county's country roads, we found remaining school structures and took preliminary photographs of them. Hours spent in Clay County Courthouse records, as well as researching old school records found in boxes at the Austin Whittemore House revealed rich details: school openings and closings, names of schools, natural disasters and rebuilding, lists of students and teachers, minutes of YCL (Young Citizens League) meetings. At this early point in the project, the idea of partnering with Vermillion High School students emerged. English teacher Sharon Ross and librarian Shari Kolbeck liked the idea. They helped us to find students and work

space for the project. Ultimately six students from Ross' American Heritage class volunteered. Working with us, each student selected one of the schools to research and document history. Their projects culminated in presentations to their class and to community organizations, thus fulfilling a class assignment as well as providing additional and valuable information of their schools.

As the project drew to a close in November 2004, professional photographs provided a visual history supported by research data of the remaining school structures in Clay County. These black and white photographs now in large format, matted and framed, were displayed on the walls of the Vermillion High School Library where they were exhibited for seven years. Finally, believing that the high school exhibit had come to its natural end, we sought a more permanent venue. In 2011, the W. H. Over Museum accepted the photographic exhibit with its accompanying research material into its collection. With this permanent housing for all the materials, we felt the project to be completed.

However, a nagging but unfulfilled goal kept bubbling to the surface. Would a book be a fitting addition to the project? In 2014 the question was answered, and the project took on new life with a new partner joining us: the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission.

The Commission endorsed the idea of a book, agreeing to fund its printing. Thus, began another phase of research. We revisited all fifteen of the original sites to take current pictures and collect additional data; and we discovered one more site, bringing the total to sixteen. Finding interesting and often significant changes to the buildings since our initial visits in 1999, we have sought to record them with new pictures and information. We believe the changes hint at the future of these remaining Clay County Country Schools.

Donna Gross and Fern Kaufman
September, 2015

The Authors



First Edition Notes

Fern Kaufman and Donna Gross have lived in rural South Dakota for most of their lives. Donna attended a small town public school, and Fern attended a country school for eight years. They began their long friendship while working on their masters degrees at USD. Retiring the same year, Donna from teaching and school administration, and Fern from business ownership, and serving on the Vermillion School board, they began looking for a meaningful project to share. Interested in education, they became aware of both the changes and the loss of country school buildings in Clay County where over time there had existed 77 schools. Gross and Kaufman decided to investigate the condition of the Clay County schools and do an inventory. Their efforts led to a fifteen year project and this publication.

Introduction to the Second Edition

There continues to be strong local and regional interest in the history of the Clay County country schools, showing a need to produce more copies of this publication. Consequently, Donna Gross approached the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission with the idea of republishing the book. New information was required to release funding for the republication. A re-survey of all the sites was begun in 2021 by this member of the Commission, and during that study an additional school building was located. It was also discovered that two of the standing schools recorded in 2015 had since been demolished. This second edition is the result of the 2021 survey.

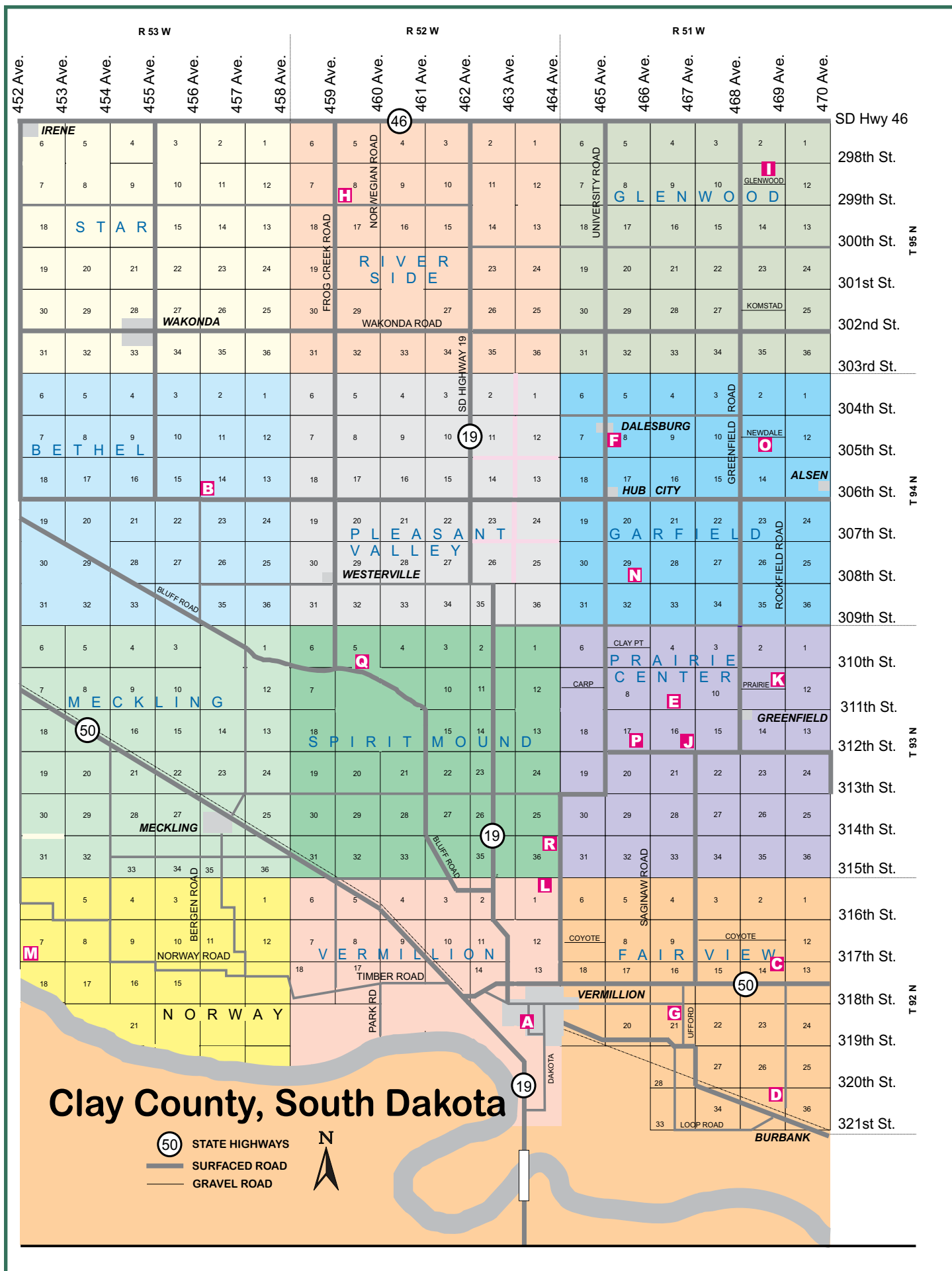
William Ranney
Clay County Historic
Preservation Commission

January, 2023

School Sites and Map

- A Log Cabin School
- B Bethel School #38
- C Bruyer School #8
- D Burbank School #10
- E Clay Point School #31
- F Dalesburg School #35
- G Fairview School #6
- H Frog Creek School #34
- I Glenwood School #50
- J Greenfield School #18 (1st and 2nd buildings)
- K Greenfield School #18 (3rd and 4th buildings)
- L Independence School #1
- M Lincoln School #12
- N Marshalltown School #30
- O Newdale School #43
- P Saginaw School #25
- Q Spring Hill School #2
- R Star Prairie School #14

*Research may be inaccurate due to duplication and name changes of individual schools. Examples:
Frog Creek School has also been known as Look-Out Mountain School, as well as Look-Out Mound.
Some schools were named after families: O'Connor School was also known as Valley School
and Shaw School was also known as Box Elder School.*



General Historical Facts

South Dakota settlers placed a high priority on their children's education. As Dr. Herbert Schell noted in his *History of South Dakota*, they quickly located teachers and started schools in homes, sod buildings or log structures. During the winter of 1864-65, the first permanent school house was built in Vermillion. The log school house, built at the bottom of Ravine Hill, became a focal point for this small community's children as well as serving as a city hall, general meeting place, and church. Technically not a country school, this publication includes the log cabin school because of its historical importance to Clay County.

As more settlers arrived and school populations grew, the rural school buildings evolved from log cabins to frame structures. Without the aid of architectural plans and costing very little, many of these early schools were built by hatchet and saw carpenters who donated labor and supplies. Generally, the rural schools built in the 1880's consisted of one rectangular room with a number of large windows on the east or south side to provide sufficient natural light. The exteriors of the school buildings from the 1800s were usually plain with gabled roofs; however, some Clay County schools showed a flair for creativity with ornamental cupolas or bell towers. Often, a covered porch preceded the entrance which was usually located in the gabled end.

These earliest schools had few comforts, but the necessary facilities were not neglected. Within the one room, often about 18'x 28', a cloak room or pegs on the wall held students' warm clothes. Close by, a water container, a single dipper, and a wash basin provided water for drinking or washing. Wood and coal burning stoves, along with sunlight, provided heat. An outhouse was situated close to the main building. Many schools had small barns or sheds to house the horses ridden by some of the students and teachers.

Big changes came to South Dakota country schools in the early part of the 20th century. These changes in structure and facilities evolved gradually, often encouraged by state support. After 1900, rectangular school houses were not as commonly built but were replaced by square buildings. These schools, built from standard plans, had hipped roofs and often basements. Now students and teachers could enjoy modern conveniences. Gravity furnaces and chemical toilets were often put in around the 1920's. A basement furnace spread heat more evenly throughout the buildings, adding to the comfort of both the students and teachers. These basements could become gymnasiums in cold weather. Merry-go-rounds and swing sets had previously made it to the play grounds of many schools.

Dr. Schell recorded in the *History of South Dakota* that in 1918 the South Dakota legislature offered financial support for schools that met certain standards. Between 1920 and 1945, nine hundred primary and secondary schools were constructed in the state, seventy-five percent of them small rural schools that cost less than eight thousand dollars. Architect F. C. W. Kuehn was responsible for about forty percent of them as South Dakota used his standard plans for small rural schools of frame or brick built between 1923 and 1929. Other schools were built using standard plans provided in many instances by the Smith Heating Company of Minneapolis, which sold heating systems, drinking fountains, and chemical toilets to hundreds of rural schools in SD, MN, and other nearby states. The more modern country school was arriving often with blackboards, wainscoting on the lower walls, topped by plaster or molded tin on the ceiling. Finally, book cases held books, and teachers and students had individual desks.

Shared Features

Although the earliest 20th century country schools had unique evolving details, they shared many similarities:

- All schools had bells, either hand-bells or pull bells on top of the building.
- All schools had flag-poles with students helping to raise and lower the flag.
- All schools had pegs or cloak rooms in order to hang outer clothing.
- All schools provided some type of water containers for drinking and hand washing.
- Most schools had bench-seating for students before desks became common.
- Most schools had a small, simple teacher's desk.
- Many schools had a recitation bench.
- Most schools had slate black boards.

- Most schools had large pictures of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln on the walls.
- Playground equipment was featured at many schools, i.e. swings, merry-go-rounds, teeter-totters.
- Custodial duties were the responsibility of teachers and students.

Although built for the education of children, rural schools served many other functions:

- Many doubled as community meeting places and/or township halls.
- Some hosted church services before church buildings were erected.
- Most were used for community and school programs.
- Some became voting precincts.

Note to Readers

- First data collection, site visits, and photography occurred from 1999 to 2002 by Donna Gross and Fern Kaufman.
- Each school description is accompanied by dates recording the district's beginning and closure. Some districts may have been formed prior to construction of a building.
- Second data collection, site visits, and photography occurred from 2014 to 2015 by Donna Gross and Fern Kaufman. New data for each school is indicated by bold-faced italics.
- All photos are identified by the year taken.
- Third data collection occurred between 2020 and 2022 by William Ranney. It resulted in the discovery of the Saginaw School as well as the demolition of two schools.

Student Tribute

“These buildings are filled with a presence, a presence of something great. The aura remains of children who played on swings, ran around the schoolyard playing tag, or even those with the desire to learn. We hope to keep that presence alive in the minds of all those who remember the stories, the memories, and the history of the school and to awaken a certain nostalgia in all of our hearts.”

American Heritage Class
Presentation by Vermillion High School Juniors
Spring Semester - 2000

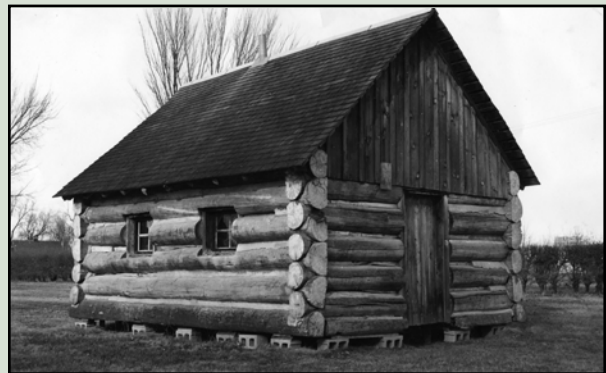
A

The Vermillion Log Cabin School



Original School located below the ravine

- Captain Nelson Miner's troop (Dakota Cavalry) constructed the first permanent school in Dakota Territory in 1864-65 at the bottom of Ravine Hill, using building materials of logs and sod, measuring about 15 x 20 feet. Technically not a Clay County Country School, the authors include it because it was the first permanent school house in Dakota Territory.
- A 1939 replica stood on the USD campus.
- In 1964 the replica was returned to the original Ravine Hill site.
- In 1978 it was moved to Captain Miner Lane near the Senior Citizen Center.



Replica that stood on USD Campus at Pine and Cherry





New replica by Austin Whittemore House - 2015

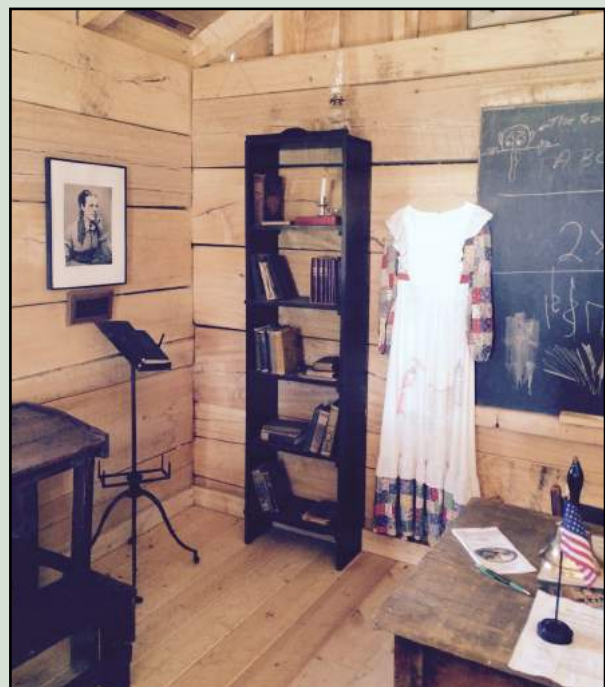


Replica that stood behind Senior Citizens Center



View of desk inside log cabin school replica - 2015

In 2014 a new log cabin replica was built, using some salvageable pieces and placing it at a new site on 15 Austin Street next to the historic Austin Whittemore House. The interior contains appropriate furnishings and memorabilia, providing a glimpse into the educational lives of Dakota Territory students and teachers of the mid-nineteenth century.



Interior view of new log cabin school replica - 2015

B

Bethel School #38



East side - 1999

- 1875 - 1952
- SW ¼, Section 14, Bethel Township
- The school was also known as Bervin School.
- The school building still stands on the original site.



Cupola - 2014



Southwest view of new metal roof - 2014





Southeast view, east windows replaced with white metal siding - 2014



South side - 2015

December 2014: The site revisit revealed restoration of the building with red metal roofing on the cupola and roof and new white siding on the east side of the building. A follow-up visit in July, 2015, shows more work having been done with metal siding on all sides of the building.



Northeast side - 2015

C

Bruyer School #8



Front, east side - 1999

- 1869 - 1962
- NE ¼, Section 14, Fairview Township
- The school was named for John Bruyer, Sr., a French immigrant who homesteaded on the land upon which the school was built.
- It was sometimes referred to as the Brady School in honor of a nearby homesteader named Brady.
- The school building is still located on the original site.
- Various owners used it for storage; and in 1978 it was remodeled and used as an art studio.





North side - 1999



Exterior view, north side- 2015

July, 2015: The site revisit revealed the original school structure incorporated into the north end of a long building which is apparently used as single or multiple living quarters. A few windows from the 1978 remodel remain on the north end along with the original roof-line minus its cupola.



Exterior view, east side- 2015



Used as an art studio - 1999

D

Burbank School #10

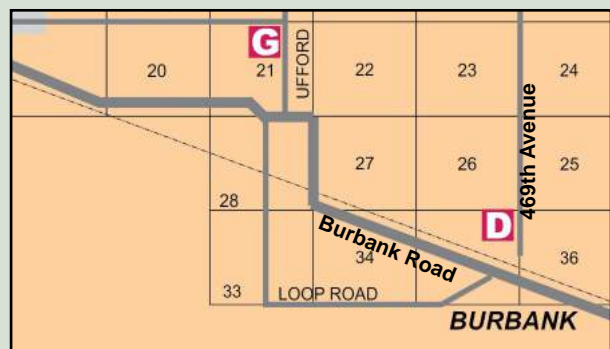


Front entrance east side - 2001

- 1874 - 1972
- NE ¼, Section 35, Fairview Township
- It was located on the original site in the town of Burbank, Fairview Township, on about three and a half acres of land.
- The first structure, built in 1882, was moved and used for various purposes.
- The present structure built in 1910, contained at least two classrooms with hardwood floors and a basement.
- The school consolidated with Vermillion School District in 1972.
- The Burbank Association was established to preserve the school which is presently used as a Community Center.
- An active historical society has maintained and improved the structure as money permitted. The stage with its original curtain is in good condition, and new windows have been installed along with a new roof.



Original school bell - 2001





Front entrance - 2015



Window above entrance doors - 2015



Playground equipment - 2015



Wood floor and pine wainscoting - 2015

The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 (See Guide to National Register of Historic Places in Clay County, South Dakota, Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, 2011, p. 30). This guide provides additional school details.

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals the building in good condition with original flooring, plaster and lathe walls. Ceiling, pine wainscoting, chalk boards, and built-in bookcases are still in place.



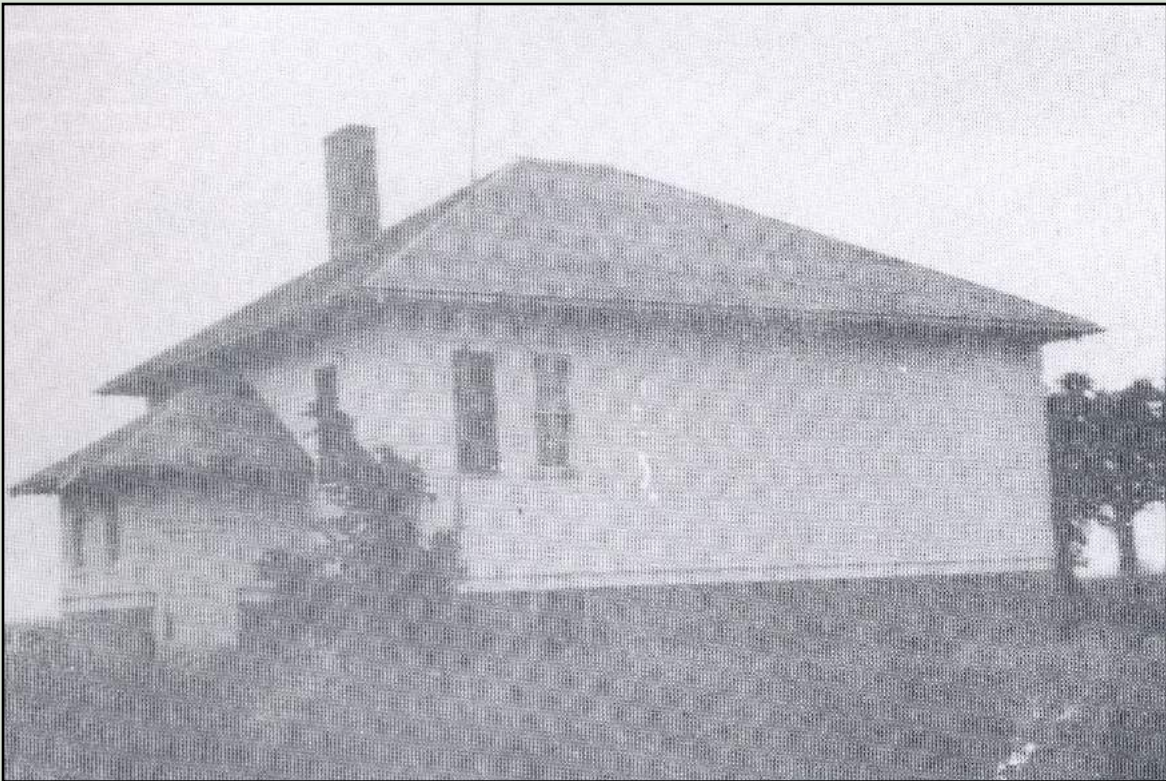
Steps and door to the stage - 2015



Storage cupboards - 2015

E

Clay Point School #31



*Photo of original school, taken from newspaper clippings
Courtesy of Marion Kryger.*

- 1871 - 1943
- The school's early location was at SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 8, Prairie Center Township.
- The school was named for the Clay Point Community.
- Later, the school's location was near the center of Section 5, Prairie Center Township.
- The present location is at the southern $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 9, Prairie Center Township.

July, 2015: A rare find, thanks to Arlene DeVany, was Clay Point School #31. Her childhood country school had been moved several times and had not been found by the researchers during their first school searches in 2000.





East side original windows and roof - 2015



Original water cooler - 2015

This school building, in poor repair and sitting as one of the out-buildings on a vacant farm, appears to have been used as a garage; however, the roof-line and windows still clearly mark it as a country school. Arlene DeVany has memorabilia from the school.



Original door fixtures - 2015

F

Dalesburg School #35



Front entrance, south side - 2001

- 1872 - 1974
- SW ¼, Section 8, Garfield Township
- The school building was destroyed by fire in January, 1926.
- The rebuilt, two-classroom brick building, was constructed in 1926, and stands on the original site.
- A formal dedication, attended by many state notables, commemorated the new school. State Superintendent St. John declared the building to be the finest of its class in the state.
- In 1969 the school district was divided between Centerville and Beresford with classes being held in the building until 1974.
- The school is currently remodeled and used as a home.
- Many of the school's original doors, windows, and wooden floors remain in the home. The fireplace in the remodeled house is faced with ceiling wood from the original outhouses.

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals the school to be in excellent condition and still used as a home.



West side - 2001





Front entrance, south side - 2015



Oak entrance and steps - 2015



*Original doors and windows
stored in the basement - 2015*



*The fire place faced with
original ceiling wood from the outhouse - 2015*



Original door in basement - 2015

Fairview School #6



Front entrance, north side - 2002

- 1869 - 1969
- NE ¼, Section 21, in Fairview Township
- The school was originally located in a field across the road from its present site on land owned and donated by Franklin Taylor, who laid out the plan for all the school districts in Clay County.
- A number of families took refuge in this school during the flood of 1881.
- The school was rebuilt in 1903 on its current site.
- It is presently occupied as a home.
- This was the only Clay County rural school district that operated continuously for 100 years.



Cupola - 2015



Original ceiling fixtures on tin ceiling - 2015





Front view - 2015



New main floor kitchen with original brick chimney - 2015



New basement kitchen - 2015

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals the school continues to serve as a home and is owned by the Ufford family. The building still has original wood floors; the ornate metal ceiling has recently been sand-blasted and repainted; and some original light-fixtures are still in use. The main floor has been divided into several rooms, including a new modern kitchen. Large original, oak doors have been used as dividers in a great room area. The basement also has several rooms with a new kitchen and tiled floors. The interior restoration continues.



Original ceiling tile in entrance - 2015

H

Frog Creek School # 34



View from Frog Creek Road - 2000

- 1871 - 1964
- SW ¼, Section 8, Riverside Township
- Prior to the early 1900's the school was sometimes referred to as Lookout Mountain School and/or Lookout Mound School, possibly due to sharp rise of land west of the site.
- The school building is located on its original site and cared for by local residents.



School entrance - 2000



The sign shows Frog Creek designated as a standard school - 2000

7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25

FROG CREEK ROAD (vertical, left of column 1)
 NORWEGIAN R (vertical, between columns 1 and 2)
 299th Street (horizontal, between rows 1 and 2)
 RIVER SIDE (large blue letters, centered between rows 2 and 3)



Front entrance - 2012

Photo courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. William Knutson



School and playground equipment - 2000

December, 2014: In May of 2012, the owner of the land on which the school sat was Rodney Knutson. With the help and support of surrounding neighbors, the school was razed and buried in four holes. Attempts were made to rescue various school objects, including an old flag found behind a second story dormer. William Knutson tried to save the piano which fell from a tractor bucket. William and Judy Knutson found and use cups from the school.



Working on school house - 2012

Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. William Knutson



Original cups found in the school - 2012

Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. William Knutson

Glenwood School #50



School entrance - 2001

- 1875 - 1942
- NW ¼, Section 11, Glenwood Township
- It was named for the Glenwood Post Office.
- The building is in poor condition and still stands on the original site.



Photo shows Venetian blinds on the interior of windows - 2001

November, 2014 and July, 2015: No remaining evidence of the school was found after several searches.

Local residents confirm that the school had been demolished, burned and buried sometime after 2001.

6	5	4	3	2	1
UNIVERSITY ROAD	299th Street				
	8	9	10	GLENWOOD	12
	G L E N W O O D				
	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	468th Avenue	24
				23	



East side view - 2001



Second entrance missing steps - 2001



Flag pole and swings - 2001

Greenfield School #18



2nd building - 2000

- 1870 - 1968
- 1st School Building, 1870 - 1880, located in NW ¼, Section 11, Prairie Center Township. It was sold for use as a granary (no photo available).
- The 2nd school building, 1881-1928, SE ¼ Section 16, Prairie Center Township was abandoned as a school house in 1928.
- It is currently used as the Prairie Center Township Hall.



Mainroom, original floor with raised level and blackboard, 2015



Stove - 2015

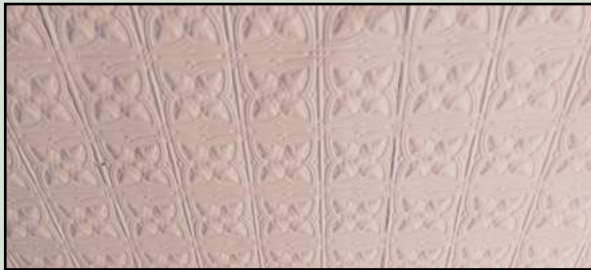
6	CLAY PT	4	3	2	1
	PRAIRIE				
CARP	CENTER			PRAIRIE K	12
	8	E	10		
18	17	16	15		
	312th Street	J			
19	20	21	22	23	24

Greenfield Road

GREENFIELD



New verticle siding - 2015



Original tin ceiling - 2015

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals the school continues to be in good condition and is still used as a township hall. New metal siding has been added, and the interior has been freshly painted. The small entry room contains shelving. The blackboards still hang in the front of the main room; and the hardwood flooring, though painted, appears to be original as does the metal ceiling.



Original window with new metal siding - 2015



Interior door - 2015

Greenfield School #18



4th building, east windows of main floor and basement - 1999

- 1870 - 1968
- The 3rd school building, 1929-1935, was destroyed by fire (no photo available).
- The 4th school building, 1936-1968, was located at NW 1/4, Section 11, Prairie Center Township.
- It is standing, although in poor condition.



Side door - 2014

October, 2014: *The site revisit revealed the 4th building to be off its foundation with the walls, windows, and flooring almost totally deteriorated; and in hazardous condition. The building is not safe for entry.*



School falling into basement - 2014

6	CLAY PT	4	3	2	1
	PRAIRIE				
CARP	8	E	10	PRAIRIE K	12
18	17	16 J	15	GREENFIELD	14
				312th Street	13

Greenfield Road

469th Avenue

May, 2021: After further collapse of the structure, the landowner gave his tenant permission to demolish the building in 2016.



School deterioration- 2014



East side - 2014



*Interior view shows bookcase - 2000
Photo courtesy of student project*



West side - 2014

L

Independence School #1



Southeast side - 1999

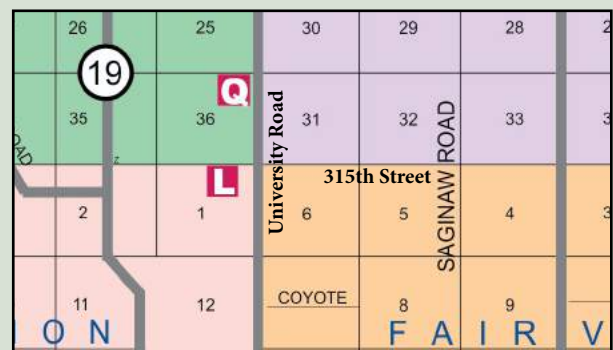
- 1866 - 1969
- The school, originally located in Vermillion Township close to the north side of town, was also known as Independent School.
- It was later moved to its current location adjacent to University Road, one mile north of town and one block west in a grove of trees near the Vermillion River: NE ¼, Section 1, Vermillion township.
- It was the first rural school district in Clay County.



East side - 2014



Unusual bell tower on south side - 2014





Southeast side - 2014



Outhouse - 2014

November, 2014: The site revisit reveals significant deterioration with broken windows and rubbish-filled interior; however, the building still sits on the foundation, and the unusual bell-tower on the south side is in remarkably good condition.



Rubble filled interior - 2014

M

Lincoln School #12



Front entrance, south and east sides - 2000

- 1870 - 1969
- The school was originally located in SE ¼, Section 8, Norway Township.
- The building was sold and moved two miles NW of the original site.
- The school was first named Western. It was later named for President Lincoln.
- It is currently restored and used as a guest house.



Main floor furnished as an area for guests - 2000



Main floor furnished as a classroom - 2000





South and east sides with prairie landscaping - 2015



Main floor furnished as a classroom with teacher and student desks on the main floor - 2015



Replica of original staircase to basement - 2015

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals many significant and historically accurate changes have occurred since the 2000 visit. Ron Lindahl, the present owner, has revitalized this country school and its contents, featuring historically accurate memorabilia. The windows are new but with historically accurate replacements. The flooring on the main floor is original down to the scorch marks from the potbellied stove and the ink spills. The chalkboards and main room doors are also original. The basement staircase, doors, and trim are historically accurate with the staircase being an exact duplicate of the original. The basement has been remodeled into pleasant guest quarters, featuring many country school items. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. (See Guide to National Register of Historic Places in Clay County, South Dakota, Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, 2011, p. 29). This guide provides additional school details.

N

Marshalltown School #30



Old roof with two chimneys - 2000

- 1874 - 1969
- SE ¼, Section 29, Garfield Township
- The school was named for the Marshalltown post office.
- The original schoolhouse was moved to the village of Dalesburg.
- The present school building was built on the original site.



Entrance and dual stair steps - 2015



Original interior windows - 2015

18	17 HUB	16 CITY	15 GREEN	14 ALSEN	
19	20	21	22	23	24
30 University Road	29 N	28	27	26	25
	32	33	34	35	36
		308th Street		ROCKFIELD ROAD	



New metal roof with one chimney - 2015



Vaulted ceiling entrance - 2015



Upper story rooms of Legion Hall - 2015

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals a new metal roof, changing the original roof line and structure, which is now identified as the Westlund Peterson American Legion Post 44. The school retains its original flooring and wood work. The building is actively used and cared for by the veterans belonging to Post 44.



Sign on interior entrance - 2015

O

Newdale School #43



Front entrance - 2002

- 1870 - 1969
- Center of Section 11, Garfield Township
- It was organized by the Swedish community in 1870.
- It became part of the Beresford School District in 1969.
- The school still stands on its original site.



Side view - 2002



Front entrance with remaining bell tower base - 2002

6	5	4	3	ROAD	2	1
7	F	DALESBURG	9	10	NEWDALE	12
		305th Street				
18	17	16	15	GREENFIELD ROAD	14	ALSEN
	HUB CITY					
19	20	21	22		23	24



Side view - 2015



Side view - 2015

July, 2015: The site revisit reveals the building still sitting solidly on its foundation; however, significant deterioration has occurred with several holes in the roof, broken basement windows, and one entrance door open to vandals and/or wildlife; main floor windows have been boarded, and the front entrance is obscured by encroaching bushes and trees.

October, 2021: Since publication of the first edition, the building was demolished by the landowner.



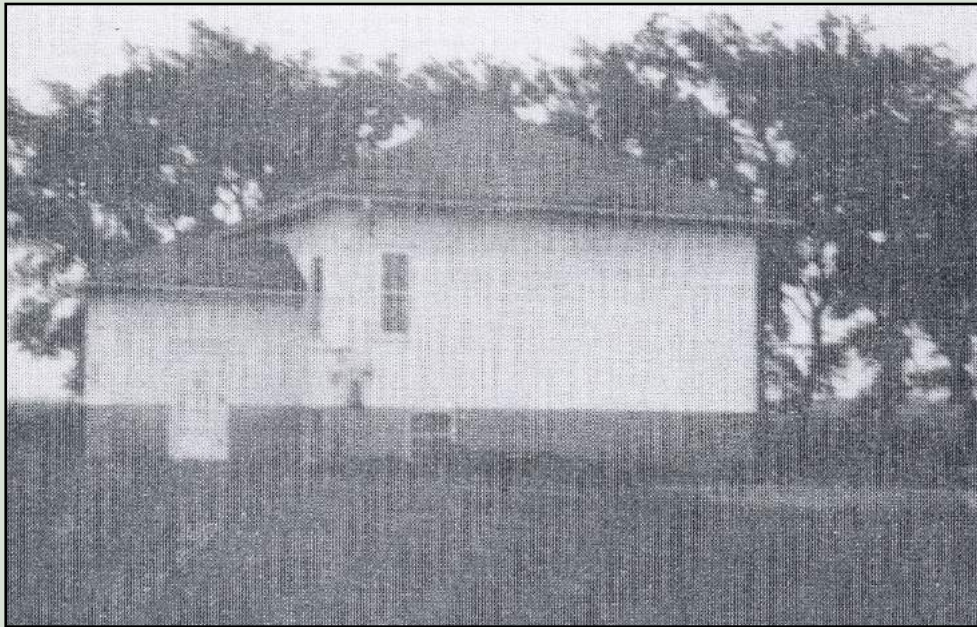
Basement entrance - 2015



Basement stairs - 2015

P

Saginaw School #25



*Original structure
Photo courtesy of Marion Kryger*

- 1873 - 1965
- SE ¼, Section 33, Prairie Center Township
- It was named for a town in Michigan.
- It was moved to the site of Prairie Center School #27, which had been struck by lightning in 1965.
- The school was sold and moved to the Alton Larson farm in 1969 and was used as a garage.
- The building was moved from the farm yard in 2016 and renovated into a wood-working shop at the SE ¼, Section 17, Prairie Center Township.



Entrance, west side - 2021

6	CLAY PT	4	3	2	1
	P	R	A	I	E
CARP	C	E	N	T	R
	8	E	10	PRAIRIE	K
					12
18	17	16	15	GREENFIELD	
	P	J		14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24



Southeast side - 2021



Original door and transom - 2021

May, 2021: The school building now houses Dawne Olson's Four Winds Boat Shop and Woodcraft. The structure is still adjacent to the Alton Larson farmstead where it previously stood after being converted to a garage. The original woodwork and trim have been refinished. The old floor has been replaced with wood flooring from a school gymnasium in Brookings and the cast iron wood stove is from Miller, South Dakota. The tin ceiling is reproduction.



Original refinished trim and doors - 2021



Interior of boat shop/classroom - 2021

Q

Spring Hill School #2



Original structure - 2001

- 1873 - 1957
- NW ¼, Section 8, Spirit Mound Township
- It was named for a nearby fresh-water spring.
- The school is located on the original site in Spirit Mound Township.
- It became the second district established in Clay County.



South side - 2001



Entrance door and stairs - 2001

31	32	33	34	35	36
6	5	4	3	2	1
7	Bluff Road		10	11	12
18	S P I R I T M O U N D		15	14	13



School as a family home - 2014



Original light fixture - 2014

November, 2014: The site revisit reveals a lovely and unique family home.

Restoration started in 2004 by owners Brian and Jill McBride who kept the original wood floor, most of the original window placement, one original ceiling light, the main entrance, and the bell tower with its functioning bell rope which can be pulled from inside.

1880 cornerstone for this building was found during restoration.



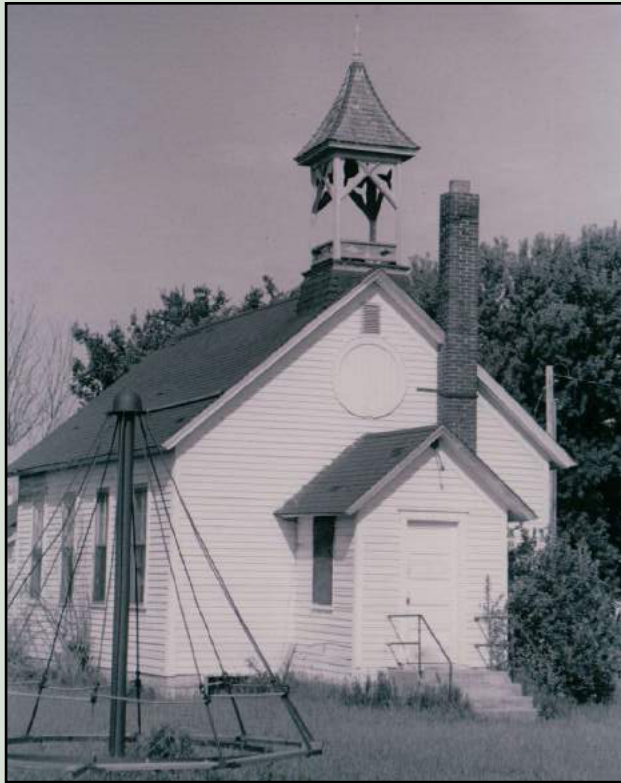
Main floor; furnished great room - 2014



Great room with stairs to bedrooms - 2014

R

Star Prairie School #14

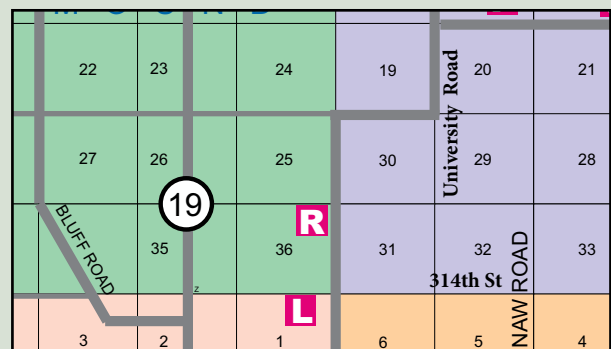


Front entrance with merry-go-round - 1999



East and north side - 1999

- 1870 - 1968
- NE ¼, Section 36, Spirit Mound Township
- It was named by the community at a meeting on a bright starry night.
- The building still stands on the original site.





Unique cupola - 2014



School at sundown - 2014



East side - 2014

September, 2014: The site revisit reveals continued building deterioration although the merry-go-round and swing set are still in place.



Merry-go-round remains - 2014

People Involved in the Project

Project directors, researchers, writers and photographers:

Donna Gross and Fern Kaufman

Photographer of the original black and white photographic exhibit:

Beth Kerr

Printing, mounting, and framing
of the original black and white photographic exhibit:

Sarah Hanson

Researcher and photographer for the second edition:

William Ranney

Three Project Partnerships:

Vermillion High School (1999 - 2011)

American Heritage Class, Instructor – *Sharon Ross*

High School Librarian – *Shari Kolbeck*

Students – *Shane Manning, Tabitha Hubert, Natalie Tuetken,*
Don O'Connor, Sarah Mollet, Tim Brodersen

W. H. Over Museum

Photographic exhibit and all research materials
accepted into the permanent collection (2011)

Clay County Historic Preservation Commission

Sponsor of the first and second printed publications
(2015 and 2023)

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including minutes of YCL meetings

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Further project information:

Vermillion Plain Talk, Friday, June 14, 2000

Vermillion Plain Talk, Friday, November 26, 2004

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