

Pike Township

Adams School (Pike No. 1)

Adams School was first school in Pike Township and was established in 1850. Classes were taught by David Purington in a room set apart from his brother Jesse's log house (*Muscatine Journal & News Tribune*, 23 Nov 1929). In 1851, a schoolhouse was built, with this school replaced in 1929. Adams School was located near the intersection of Highways 22 and 70, just north of 180th Street, in the southwest corner of Section 7, T77N-R3W. It was shown at this location on the 1874-1930 plat maps just south of the railroad line. The 1929 schoolhouse was the only building on the site visible in the 1930s-1950s aerials. After it closed, the schoolhouse was moved to the farm of Don and Marilyn Meyers (1702 IA 70, Nichols, Iowa) where they converted it into a residence. This converted schoolhouse is still standing. The location is one mile north of the original school site on the east side of the road. This schoolhouse was square in plan, with a hipped roof and frame in construction (Figure 235). The 1929 schoolhouse was described as a "model country school," and was built the same year that a new schoolhouse replaced the old Lacey School. In addition, township officials made extensive repairs to the Wild Rose and Willow Grove schools, "which have amounted practically to the rebuilding of both structures" (*Muscatine Journal*, 28 Oct 1929). The 1929 Adams Schoolhouse featured a centered entrance with a low-pitched pediment above the entrance and breaking the line of the roof eave, with a short bell tower atop the pediment and having an open belfry and a low-pitched pyramidal hipped roof. The building was raised on top of a rusticated concrete block basement that had windows to either side of the wide concrete steps leading up to the single entrance door. The door had a three-light transom and was flanked by vertical three over vertical two light sash windows (see Figure 235). The walls were covered with narrow-reveal wood lap siding. It appears that at least for a time, the original Adams School, which was a front-gabled frame building was still standing and in use next to the new school (see Figure 235).





Figure 235. The new Adams Schoolhouse built in 1929 (top photos) and 6th Grade Girls in 1929 (bottom) in front of the new Adams School (background center) and the original Adams School (background left). Sources: *Muscatine Journal*, 22 Nov 1928; Felicitas Mills, teacher, submitted by her daughter Shirley Braun Plumb, July 7, 2020.

By 1947, the voters of Pike Township were called on to decide whether to sell any or all of their seven rural school buildings (*Muscatine Journal and New Tribune*, 30 July 1947). It was noted that the Wild Rose, Buffalo Bluff, Poole, and Willow Grove schools had been closed in 1946, with Pike and Lacey added to the list of idle buildings in 1947. It was further noted that the improvements to the township's road system by the 1940s had facilitated school consolidation in Nichols (*Muscatine Journal and New Tribune*, 30 July 1947). By 1953, there was discussion of moving the Adams Schoolhouse into Nichols to serve as a lunch room or extra classroom, the school having been the last school to remain open in the township (*Lone Tree Reporter*, 7 May 1953). However, by December of 1953, the Nichols Independent school district and the Pike Township school district merged, resulting in the closing of the Adams School (*Muscatine Journal*, 30 Dec 1953). As noted above, instead of being moved into Nichols, the schoolhouse was moved onto the Meyers farmstead. It was sold at public auction January 11, 1958, with the purchaser charged with not only removing the building within 90 days of the auction but also with filling the existing basement with a satisfactory fill (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Dec 1957). Some of the teachers at Adams School through the years included: Miss DuPrez, Fern Morrison, Edna Hummel, Felicitas Mills Braun, Maude Smith, Freeman Reid. Families whose children attended Adams included Stalkfleet, Mills, Grimm, Schmitt, Kruse, Meyers, Bixby, and Christofferson, Schaapveld.

Figure 236 is the original location of the Adams School in Section 7 near the intersection of Highways 22 and 70, with Figure 237 being the extant Adams Schoolhouse after it was moved and remodeled into a residence at 1702 Hwy 70. The site location is now in grass and may have some potential for intact archaeological evidence. This location is recommended for future archaeological testing. The extant schoolhouse, on the other hand, has been too extensively remodeled. This, coupled with the move of the building, has made it ineligible for inclusion in the NRHP for lack of historic integrity.



Figure 236. Original site of Adams School looking NE. Taken October 2020.



Figure 237. Former Adams Schoolhouse remodeled into a residence at 1702 Highway 70 looking NW. Taken October 2020.

Athens (Mudhole) School No. 7

The Mudhole/Athens School was built in 1877 and closed in May 1944, It was located north and west of Nichols on the corner of an intersection. It was originally located in Wapsinonoc Township but when the Nichols School district consolidated, the boundary line was drawn to include it in the Nichols district (Bekker 1984:66-69). The school was shown in the southeast corner of Section 31, T78N-R4W, Wapsinonoc Township on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was also shown at this location on the late 1930s and 1950s aerials but had been removed from the site by the 1960s. After it closed, it was moved a short distance to the northwest to the farmstead at 1079 160th Street near Nichols. This was the H.L. Brugman farm where it is used as a garage. It appears that the schoolhouse is non-extant having been replaced with a garage built in 1999. A newspaper item was calling it the Mudhole school in 1897, but an 1899 item referred to it by its official name of Athens (*Muscatine Journal*, 18 Feb 1897 and 27 Jan 1899). Teachers at the Athens School included: Elsie Swanson, Hazel Meyers, Amanda Mumm, Geneva Lorber Salemink, Edna Rummells TeStrake, Evelyn James, Marie Milder Kaalberg, and Alberta Wieskamp Bekker, and Violet Conklin. Families attending Athens were the Bekkers, Brugmans, Kaalbergs, Kaspers, Kirchners, Christoffersons, Wieskamp, Hazens, Pike, Ogren, Babbits, and Crawfordds (Bekker 1984:66-69). The former school site is now cultivated field; however, the intersection at this location has also been reworked and widened, likely impacting at least of portion of the former school site (Figure 238). The field is recommended for future archaeological survey to determine if the site has been destroyed.



Figure 238. Former Athens/Mudhole School site at 160th St and Bancroft, NW corner of intersection. Photo taken October 7, 2020.

Buffalo Bluff School (Pike No. 5)

The Buffalo Bluff School was not shown on the 1874 plat map and was in the SE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 18 on the east side of what is now Bancroft Avenue on the 1884 and 1899 plat maps. However, from 1916-1930, the school was located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Bancroft Avenue and 190th Street in NW1/4, NE1/4 of Section 19. The schoolhouse remained standing at the 1916-1930 location on the late 1930s-1950s aerials but had been removed by the 1960s. It was located west and south of Nichols and was converted into a residence after it closed in the mid-1940s. It later burned down (Bekker 1984:66-69). The original schoolhouse had been replaced in 1913, when the new schoolhouse was built across the road from the old school site (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Apr 1913 and 12 Dec 1913). The location shifted because the ground was low and wet at the original site. The old schoolhouse was offered for sale but its fate is uncertain (*Muscatine Journal* 12 Dec 1913). The new school was closed twice in the 1930s due to an outbreak of smallpox (1930) and then measles and chicken pox (1935) (*Muscatine Journal*, 1 Apr 1930 and 31 Mar 1935). In 1947 it was noted that Buffalo Bluff was among the rural township schools that was closed in 1946 (*Muscatine Journal*, 30 July 1947). The schoolhouse was sold in 1948 and was purchased by Robert Kirkpatrick, who also purchased a pony shed at the school site (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 30 Sept 1948). It was converted into a rental or tenant house but burned down in March 1954 (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 3 Mar 1954). Teachers at the Buffalo Bluff School included: Lillian Fox Earl, Lenora Fox, Lola Hummel, Clifford Hesser, Laura Nash Loeb, Maude Smith Mills, Julia Gabel, Mike Nugent, Gladys Hedemann, Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, and Dorothy Flater Carey. Families whose children attended included: Braun, Johnston, Brenneman, Kirkpatrick, Hahn, and Ryan (Bekker 1984:66-69).

Figure 239 shows two 1940s photographs of the 1913 Buffalo Bluff School. The 1948 photograph was taken when it was up for auction. These show the frame building as a hip-roofed squarish building with a centered front door with transom flanked by 2/2 windows and a short bell tower above the entrance. A broad gabled wall dormer dominated the façade, with the belfry on top of its roof. Figure 240 is a current photograph of the original site at the corner of Bancroft Ave and 190th Street in Section 18 of Pike Township, with Figure 241 a photograph of the second location in Section 19. Both the original and later locations of this former schoolhouse may have some potential for archaeological evidence and are recommended for future survey.

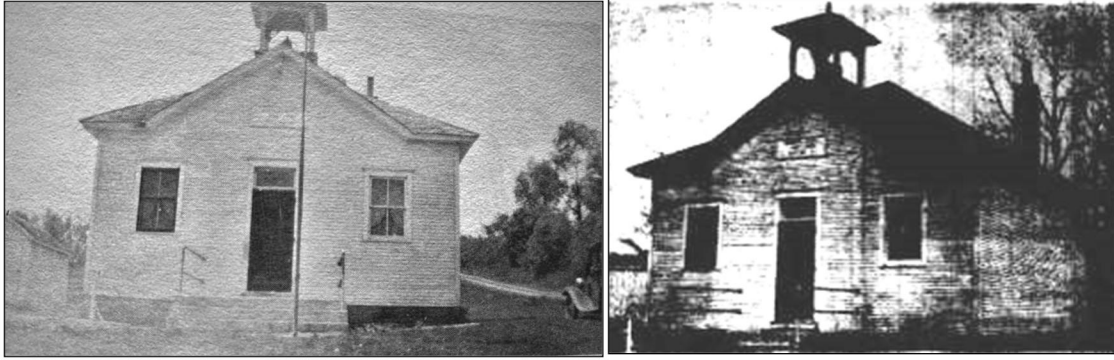


Figure 239. circa 1945-46 (left) and 1948 (right) photographs of Buffalo Bluff Schoolhouse.
Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 30 Dec 1948, and photograph provided by Lynn Pruitt.



Figure 240. Current view of the original site of Buffalo Bluff School in Section 18 at the corner of Bancroft Ave and 190th St looking east. Taken October 2020.



Figure 241. Current view of the second location of the Buffalo Bluff School in Section 19 looking NW.
Taken October 2020.

Lacey School (Pike No. 3)

The Lacey School (aka Hubbard School in its early years) was located east and south of Nichols (Figure 239). In the 1860s, the early services of what became the Nichols Christian Church were held in the Hubbard Schoolhouse (*Muscatine Journal*, 27 Oct 1967). The school was later called Lacey School and was also used as the Pike Grange Hall for many years. News items in the *Muscatine Journal* indicate the school was in operation at least by 1888 (7 Apr 1888); however, “School No. 3” is shown in the northeast corner of the NW1/4 of Section 23 on the 1874 map. The extant schoolhouse is just to the north in the southeast corner of the SW1/4 of Section 14, with a historical photograph confirming that the original school was just southwest of the later schoolhouse, which was built in 1929. Although the 1884 and 1899 maps both show the Lacey Schoolhouse in the southeast corner of the SW1/4 of Section 14 just over the quarter-section line. Technically, the extant 1929 schoolhouse sits on the quarter section line, with the

older school site having to have been just to the south in Section 23 conforming to the 1874 map location and the 1920s photograph of the two buildings still standing.

In 1929, bids were being taken to remodel two rural school buildings - Lacey and Wild Rose. Entryways and cloak rooms were to be added. The remodeling was completed at the Lacey School that same year, when it was described as a “model one-room country school” (Muscatine Journal & New Tribune, 31 Oct 1929). However, that same article included a photograph of the “new and old Lacey School,” with the new hip-roofed school sitting next to the older front-gabled, frame building (Figures 242-243). Therefore, instead of remodeling, the Lacey School appears to have been replaced with a brand new school in 1929. The design of the 1929 Lacey School appears to be identical to the design of the 1929 Adams School (see Figure 243). However, as with the other Pike Township schools, voters were voting on whether this school and six other rural schoolhouses were to be sold as they are no longer in use. The Lacey School had closed in 1946 (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 30 July 1947). In 1948, it was noted that the Pike Grange was meeting at the Lacey School, but by 1951, the Lacey Schoolhouse was sold at public auction in 1951 along with the Pike Schoolhouse (*Lone Tree Reporter* 18 Oct 1951; *Muscatine Journal* 2 Dec 1948). It continued to be used as the Pike Grange Hall into the 1980s.

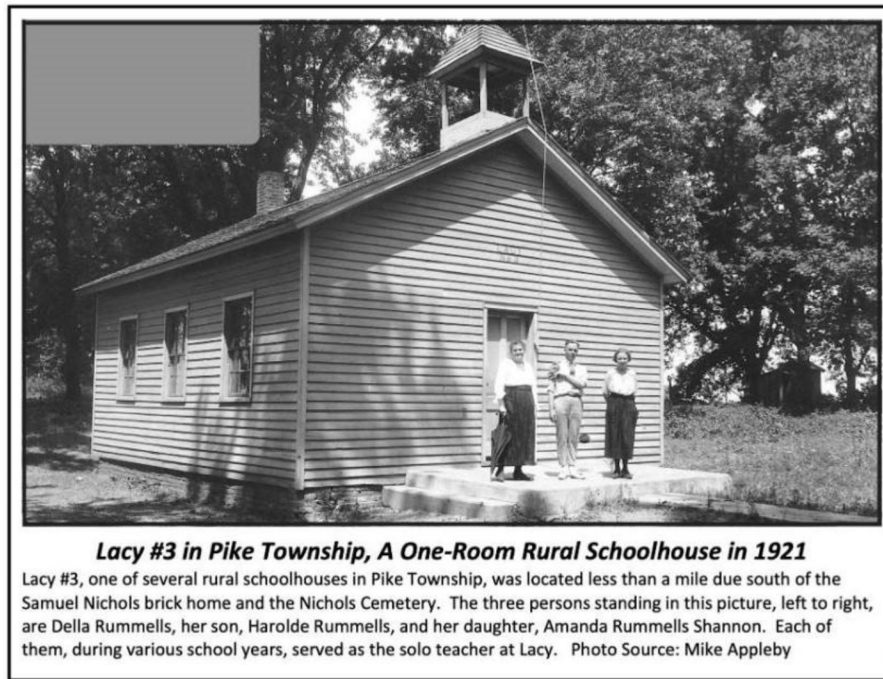


Figure 242. 1921 photograph of the Lacey Schoolhouse. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.

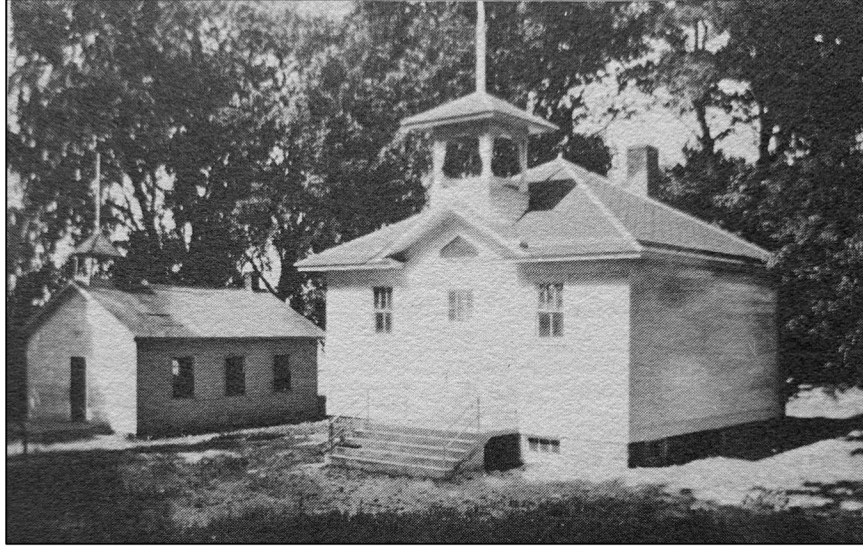


Figure 243. 1929 photograph of the new (right) and old (left) Lacey Schoolhouses.
Source: *Muscatine Journal and News-Tribune*, 13 Oct 1929.

Figure 244 is a current photograph of the former 1929 schoolhouse extant at its original site at what is now 1900 Elder Avenue. The building today is vacant and deteriorated. It does retain the original narrow-reveal clapboard siding, the original wood-sash windows (although much of the glass is broken out and some windows are boarded over), the pediment with cornice returns, and the rusticated concrete block foundation (see Figure 241). The major exterior changes have been the removal of the belfry from the roof, the replacement of the front door, and the loss of some windows. The state of the interior is unknown. This building has potential to be NRHP eligible given that it is located on its original site and retains fair to good historic integrity despite its deteriorated state. The site surrounding the schoolhouse also has the potential for archaeological evidence of the original school since it was located next to the 1929 schoolhouse on its southwest side. The extant school is being inventoried by the current study as 70-01780, with the schoolyard, encompassing both the extant 1929 school and the location of the original 1870s schoolhouse, recorded as archaeological site 13MC381 and is recommended for future archaeological investigation.

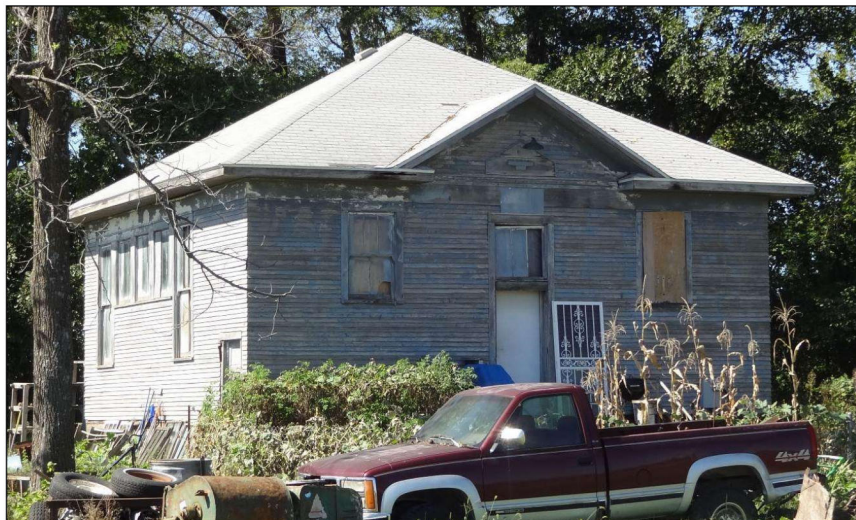


Figure 244. Former Lacey Schoolhouse, now vacant, at 1900 Elder Avenue. Note that the belfry was removed; otherwise, the building retains good historic integrity. Taken October 2020.

Among those who taught at Lacey were: Jessie Mills Lenz, Aleta Singleton Rummells, Bernice Nash Hadley, Frances Smith, Teresa Ryan Longstreth, Jessie Christofferson Ulch, Hazel Thompson, Mildred Hummel, Alexander Coyner, Della Mae Coyner Rummells, and Amanda, Harolde J., and Howard Rummells, and Helen Rummells Borchardt. Families whose children attended included: Thompson, Stephens, Lord, Wilkerson, Reiland, Oostendorp, Fred Mills, Porter, Stolley, Ulch, VanDe Maat, Hadley, Ritter, Yedlik, Bonebrake, Carter, Beverlin, Sissel, and Fox (Bekker 1984:66-69).

Poole School (No. 7) (aka Wagner School)

The Poole School was reportedly located one mile east and three miles north of Nichols; however, the Wagner School No. 7 was shown 1.5 miles east and 1.75 miles north of Nichols in the NE1/4, NW1/4 of Section 2 in Pike Township on the 1884-1916 plat maps. It was not shown at this location on the 1874 or the 1930 plat maps. The aerial photographs show the schoolhouse at this location in the late 1930s but it appears to have been removed by the 1950s aerial. In fact, the schoolhouse was moved in late 1947 or early 1948 to the Anton Ogren farm (later the Christofferson farm) where it was made into a garage. However, the garage got into poor repair and was torn down circa 2017 (Jo Ann Christofferson, personal communication Sept. 2020).

In 1910, Lucile Eves signed a contract to teach at the Poole School. This school closed in 1946, with it among the schoolhouses voted to sell in 1947 (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 30 July 1947). By November of 1947, the Poole School was ready for sale, with Anton Ogren of Nichols the winning bidder and also the owner of the land on which this school had been located. It was noted that the building was 22x30 feet and of frame construction and had a comparatively new yellow pine floor (Hixon, ed. 1984:71; *Muscatine Journal* 27 Nov 1947 and 1 Dec 1947). A photograph that accompanied the 1947 *Muscatine Journal* article about the upcoming auction showed two photographs of the Poole School taken 40 years apart, but only the older photograph is legible and shows a front-gabled frame building with three windows on the side and a brick chimney at the rear gable end (Figure 245). It is unclear whether the 1947 photograph is this same building or a later hip-roofed squarish school building.



Figure 245. Early 1900s photograph of the Poole Schoolhouse.
Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 27 Nov 1947.

Teachers at Poole included: Jeanette James, Mina Hargis, Alberta Bekker, Edna Hummel, and Ruth Phillips. Children from the families of Park, Harder, Chelf, Collison, Wolford, Zinkula, Gregg, Oxley, Reynolds, and McMahon families attended (Bekker 1984:66-69).

The current location of the original school site is a cultivated field on Elder Avenue south of 160th Street. The location is in cultivation but the road also has a wide road ditch that may have impacted the site location. However, the field area is recommended for future archaeological survey to confirm if any evidence remains intact at this location. No photograph was taken of this location during the current survey. The location is north of the farmstead at 1628 Elder Avenue and across the road to the west of 1627 Elder Avenue.

Wild Rose School (No. 4)

The Wild Rose School was located west and north of Nichols in the northwest corner of Pike Township. It was shown in the SW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 5 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was identified as School No. 5 on the 1874 map but was noted as School No. 4 on the 1899 at the same location. It was still standing at this location on the late 1930s aerial but had been removed by the 1950s aerial. The original schoolhouse was destroyed by fire in February 1908 (*Muscatine Journal*, 7 Feb 1908). The school was rebuilt, with the school board moving to condemnation proceedings in 1929 to acquire a piece of ground for an adequate playground for the school (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 21 Feb 1929). That same year, improvements were made to the Wild Rose School with entryways and cloak rooms added. In the process, the schoolhouse was also moved and turned part way around so the new addition would face the road on the south. A basement and heating plant were also added to the building (*Muscatine Journal*, 20 May 1929 and 20 Aug 1929). In 1946, Wild Rose School was closed, with the schoolhouse sold in 1948. It was noted that it was a frame building and was sold along with two other schoolhouses in the township (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 16 Sept 1948). The buyer of the Wild Rose School was the Rev. Noble A. Bolinger. This schoolhouse was moved to 612 Nichols Avenue in Nichols where it was converted into a duplex. This moved and remodeled building is still standing but does not retain sufficient historic integrity to qualify for NRHP eligibility. Figure 246 is a photograph of the Wild Rose School in 1948 prior to auction, with Figure 247 being the school moved into Nichols where it is now a house. The 1948 photograph is not very clear but shows a front-gabled frame building with a belfry above the centered entry door and a side-gabled addition with a brick chimney to one side (see Figure 246). That is likely the addition that was made in 1929. Modern aerial photographs indicate that while the road was cut back for a new intersection in the modern era, the schoolhouse site does not appear to have been impacted by the construction. The location of the school site is in the higher cultivated field to the northeast of this intersection (Figure 248). This site is recommended for future archaeological survey.



Figure 246. 1948 photograph of the Wild Rose Schoolhouse. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 30 Dec 1948.



Figure 247. Current location of former Wild Rose School now a house at 612 Nichols Street in Nichols. Note the rows of windows on the sides and the two 1/1 windows with a row of square windows on the gable end that were part of the original school. Taken October 2020.



Figure 248. Original site of Wild Rose School is to the far right in the higher cornfield overlooking this intersection. The view is looking SE. Photo taken October 2020.

Teachers at Wild Rose included: Frances Wieskamp Lindle, Margaret Lorber Kaalberg, Nell Kelsey Schmitt, Bernice McMahan Schmitt, Bertha Enderle Milder, Catherine Meade, and Evelyn Schaapveld. Children attending were from the families of Hahn, Schmitt, Schaapveld, O'Toole, Milder, Salemink, McMichael, Ruess, Reynolds, Hanks, and Perkins (Bekker 1984;66-69).

Willow Grove School No. 8

The Willow Grove School was located south of Nichols in the NE1/4, NE1/4, NE1/4 of Section 31 on the 1899-1930 plat maps. It was not depicted on the 1874-1884 plat maps. In 1929, the front-gabled frame schoolhouse was remodeled with a new addition for entryways and cloak rooms; however, this school did not receive a basement like the Wild Rose Schoolhouse (*Muscatine Journal*, 20 May 1929). The school closed in 1946, with the schoolhouse auctioned for sale in 1948 (*Muscatine Journal*, 30 July 1947 and 16 Sept 1948). The school was noted to be the same size as the Wild Rose School, which was 24 by 23 feet with a 12 by 20 foot addition, except that the Willow Grove School's addition measured 10 by 20 feet (*Muscatine Journal* 16 Sept 1948) (Figure 249). Omer Jones of Muscatine was the high bidder for the Willow Grove School. It was later moved to a farm south of town and converted into a residence to replace a dwelling that had recently burned down at 2114 Hwy 70 south of Nichols (Lori Leggins, West Liberty, personal communication, Oct. 26, 2020; Vic Mills, Nichols, personal communication, Oct. 27, 2020) (Figure 250). Teachers at the Willow Grove School included: Miss O'Toole, Elsie Stolley Swanson, Frances Elder Billick, Doris Green Heath, Margaret Schlichting, DeEtta Abbott Hankins, Mary

Kirk, and Mary Peterson. Children who attended there were from the families of Hanft, Lowe, Vetter, Rathjen, and Dean (Bekker 1984:66-69). The original school site is now an agricultural field (Figure 251). This location may have some potential for intact archaeological evidence of the former school and is recommended for future archaeological survey. The former schoolhouse has been impacted by the move and the conversion into a dwelling and is recommended not eligible in its current state.



Figure 249. 1948 photograph of the Willow Grove Schoolhouse.
Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 30 Dec 1948.



Figure 250. Current location of former Willow Grove Schoolhouse, now a dwelling at 2114 Hwy 70 looking SW. Taken October 2020.



Figure 251. Original site of Willow Grove Schoolhouse on 230th St in Section 31 looking south in 2020.

Pike School (No. 2)

This schoolhouse was located three miles south of Nichols in the southeast corner of Section 28. It was shown at this location on the 1874-1930 plat maps and was still at this location on the 1930s-1950s aerials but had been removed by the 1960s aerial. For a time, the school was also used for Sunday School (*Muscatine Journal*, 8 Nov 1901). In October 1950, it was moved into Nichols to a location next to the Christian Church where it was remodeled for Sunday School classes (*Muscatine Journal*, 7 Jun 1952).

This building is still in use as the Sunday School addition to the church and sits on a full basement and is connected to the historic church building. Figure 252 is a photograph of the Pike School still up on the moving trailer being delivered to the Nichols Christian Church. This was a frame, squarish pyramidal hip-roofed building. The hipped porch on the front of this building in the 1950 photograph is unusual for a school and suggests that it might have had a brief life as a dwelling before it was moved to the church in 1950 (see Figure 252). The move and the remodeling of the Pike School have impacted the historic integrity of this former schoolhouse (Figure 253). As a result is it not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP as a schoolhouse building. The original site of Pike School has some potential for intact archaeological evidence of the former school being lined with trees and still a grassy, fenced parcel (Figure 254). This is located at the northwest corner of 210th Street and Davis Avenue and is recommended for future archaeological survey.

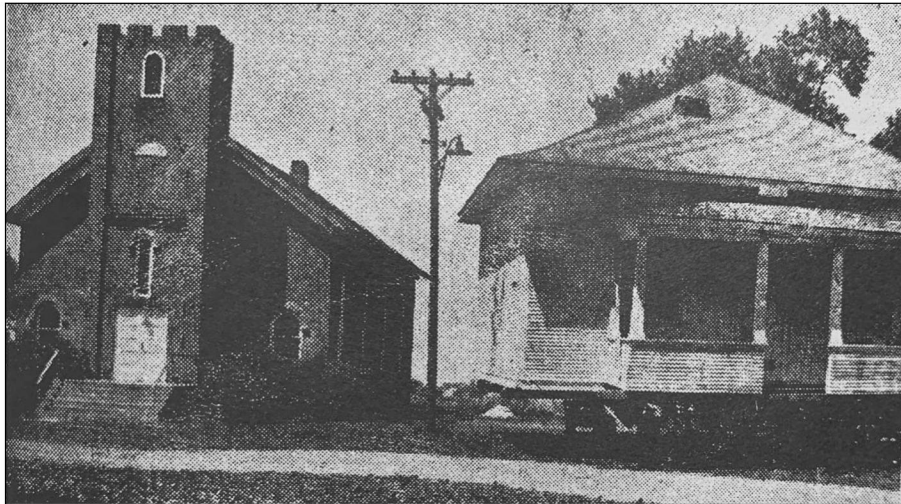


Figure 252. 1950 photograph showing the Pike Schoolhouse (right) after it was moved onto the lot of the Christian Church (left) but prior to its remodel. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 7 Jun 1952.



Figure 253. Two views of the former Pike School in its moved location next to the Nichols Christian Church (brick building in background on right). The hip-roofed portion of the former school is most recognizable at the rear of the building and now has the community hall addition on its front.

Photos taken October 7, 2020.



Figure 254. Original location of Pike School at 210th St and Davis Avenue.
Photo taken October 7, 2020

Nichols High School (70-00639) and Nichols Public School (non-extant)

The extant Nichols High School building was built on the east side of town on Ijem Avenue. This three-story brick building was completed in 1915, with a new gymnasium-auditorium addition made in 1934 (Figures 255-256). In 1953, new restrooms and shower rooms were added, with the shower rooms added to the east side of the building where the original 1915 school is connected to the 1934 gymnasium. Five grade school classrooms were added to the west side of the 1915 school building in 1955 (Figure 257). This new addition had “bilateral lighting” where daylight could reach the inside of each classroom on either side of the building. Acoustical ceilings helped reduce noise, with heating and ventilation controlled for each room. The kindergarten room was a “self-contained teaching unit,” with a restroom, separate entrance to the playground, and other amenities scaled to the smaller size of the students. The high school closed in 1961, with the grade school closed in 1987. The Nichols School District merged with West Liberty in 1968, with the West Liberty School Board closing the Nichols School and moving all the elementary classes to West Liberty in 1987 (Hixon, ed. 1984:50-51; *Muscatine Journal*, 30 Dec 1953 and 23 Jan 1988; Smith n.d.)

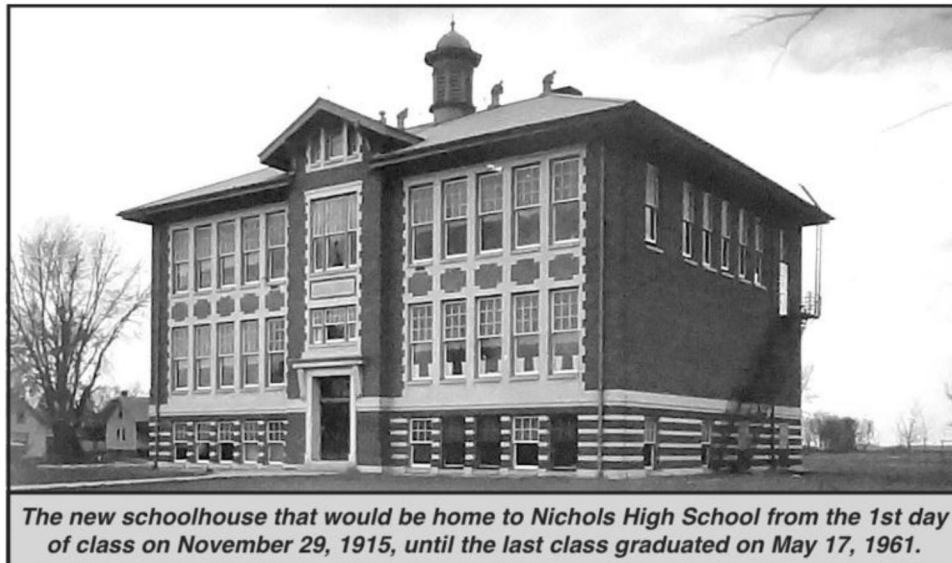


Figure 255. Photograph of the 1915 Nichols High School taken before 1934.
Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.

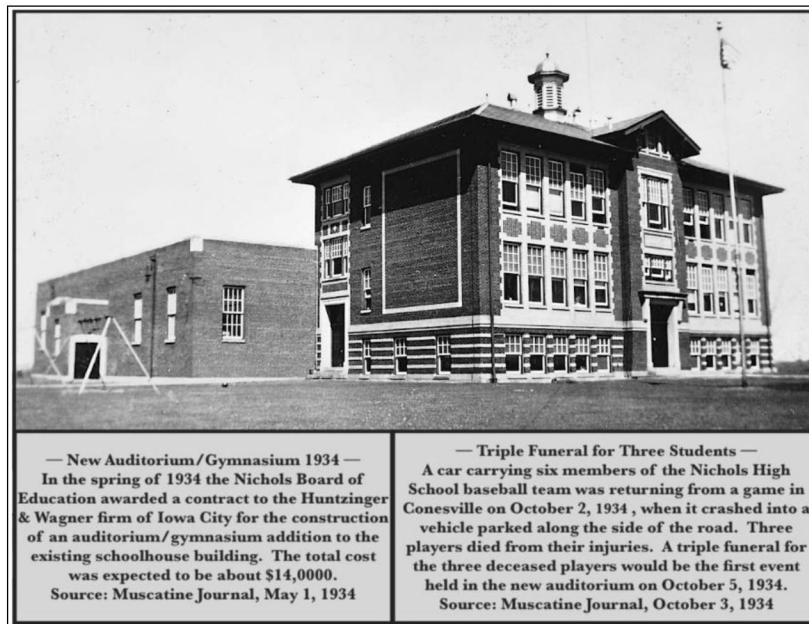


Figure 256. Circa 1934 photograph of the Nichols High School with the new gymnasium addition. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.

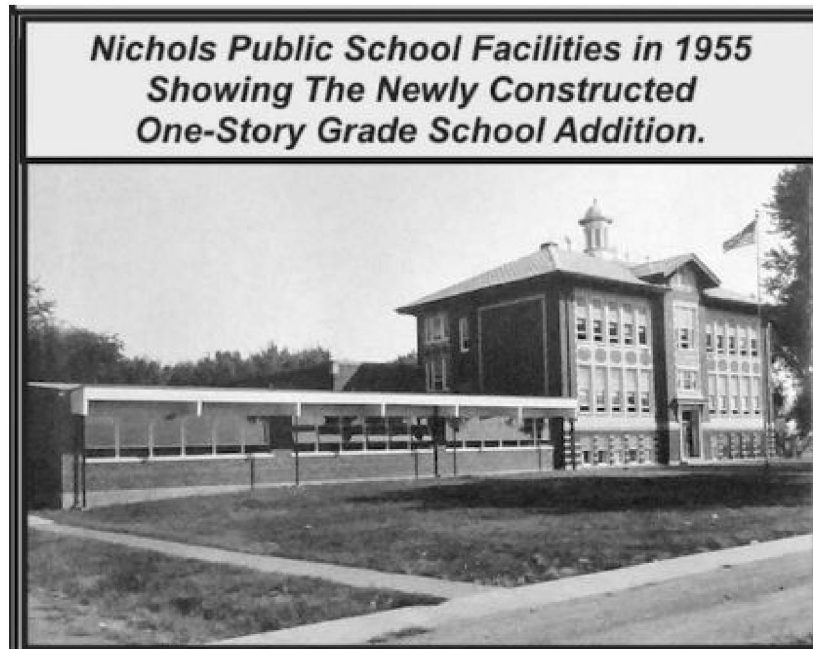


Figure 257. Circa 1955 photograph of the new grade school addition to the Nichols Public School. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.

Prior to the extant school, the first school in Nichols was held in a log cabin, with a school built of brick on Main Street after the town had been laid out. That school was destroyed by fire, with a new two-story frame building erected in the north end of town, just east of the Christian Church in 1872 (Figure 258). That school also burned down in February 1914. The former site location is now partially built over by the additions to the east side of the Christian Church, which likely impacted the public school site. However, future archaeological survey of the former public school location is recommended.

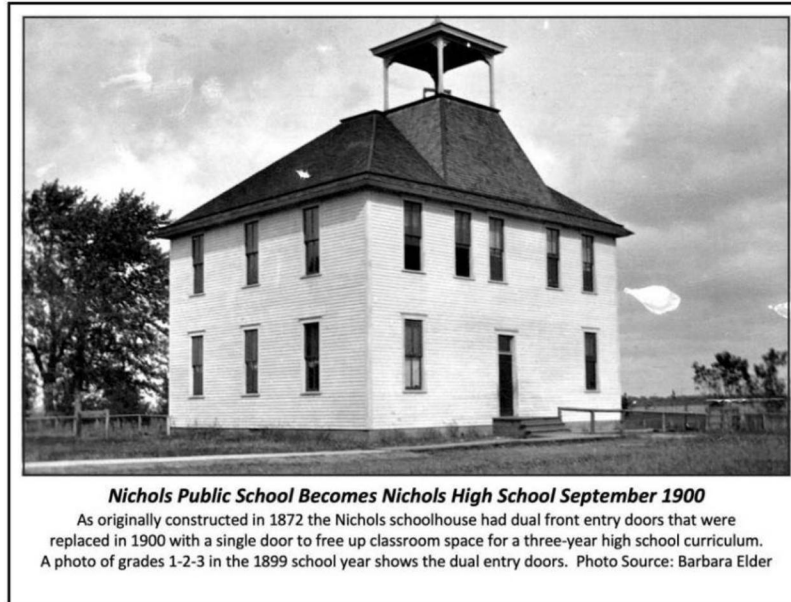


Figure 258. Photograph of the non-extant 1872 Nichols Public School taken circa 1900. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.

While a new school was being built by a Cedar Rapids company, classes were held in the opera house and churches in Nichols. It was replaced with the extant school the following year (Hixon, ed. 1984:50-51). It is noted that the three-year high school curriculum had been added to the Nichols Public School in September 1900, with the first high school graduate in 1903. The high school program was expanded to four years in 1925. Today, the Nichols School building including the elementary school and gymnasium additions are still standing but are now used for housing (Figure 259). While this property was previously evaluated (70-00639) and recommended not eligible; it is recommended for interior inspection to assess historic interior integrity and re-evaluation in light of it now being a rare survivor of a 1910s consolidated high school building in Muscatine County, with a 1934 gym and 1955 elementary wing since others in the county have now been demolished. As such, it may now be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and should be re-evaluated.



Figure 259. Nichols School including 1915 high school, 1934 gymnasium and 1955 elementary wing in 2020.

Nichols St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (70-01765)

The Nichols Catholic Church, which is St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, was built in 1874 but was later replaced by a new church in 1904, with the 1874 church dismantled (Figure 260). That church was largely destroyed by a fire in 1920, with the church was then rebuilt using the remaining masonry walls (Figures 260-261). The first priest was Rev. Father Nicholas Dugan of Wilton from 1874 to 1877. He was followed by Rev. Father William Purcelle.

In the early 1870s, the predominantly Dutch, German, and Irish Catholics in and around the new town of Nichols Station began a serious effort to build a church. Up to that time, Catholic families living in the Nichols area had to travel to Iowa City, Muscatine, Davenport, and later Wilton to attend services. Once they had their own church, until 1877, the 1874 church served Nichols' St. Mary's parish for the next 30 years. By 1903, the congregation was outgrowing its little church, and a new brick church building was planned. Led by then pastor Rev. M.F. Nolan, a building committee of four was selected. In April 1904, the first church was dismantled. Johnson & Stephenson of Chariton, Iowa, won the contract to build the new brick church for \$11,000. The cornerstone of the new St. Mary's Catholic church at Nichols was placed on June 5, 1904, with The Right Rev. Bishop Cosgrove of the Davenport diocese officiating (*Muscatine Journal*, January 27, 1956 from Price 2020).

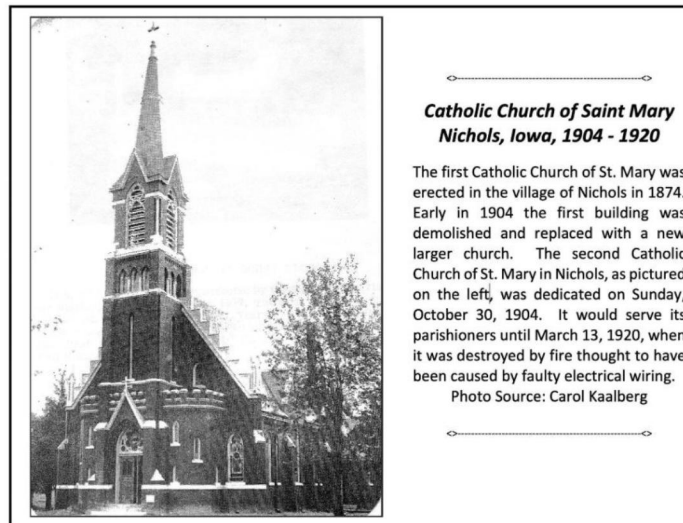


Figure 260. Early 20th century photograph of St. Mary's Catholic Church built in 1904 in Nichols. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.



Figure 261. St. Mary's Catholic Church after the fire in 1920. Source: *Iowa City Press Citizen*, 02 May 2017.

The extant church is located near the southeast corner of Grand Avenue and McKinley Street in the south part of Nichols (Figure 262). The 1892 rectory was removed sometime in the mid-20th century leaving a large open lot on the west side of the church. The current rectory is a Foursquare house located across the street northwest of the church (Figure 263). This had been the former dwelling of John and Agnes O'Brien Foley, who left their house to the church. The house is now covered with vinyl siding. Southwest of the church is the Parish Hall, which is a concrete block building with a stepped gable façade (Figure 264). The hall, built in 1956, faces McKinley Street (Price 2020). The separate parish hall was needed because the poor water drainage on the church site made a basement under the church inadvisable (Hixon ed. 1984:16-21). The extant church is a center-steeple church built of brick with stone trim in the Late Gothic Revival style. It was built in the same design as the 1904 church. In 2017, the church received a new standing-seam metal roof and a new cross on its steeple (Price 2020). The original roof had been slate shingles. The previous inventory and evaluation of this property resulted in a recommendation of eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP (70-01765).



Figure 262. St. Mary's Catholic Church on October 7, 2020 showing the front and back of the church.



Figure 263. Current rectory across the street from the church. Photo taken October 7, 2020.



Figure 264. Concrete block Parish Hall built in 1956. Photo taken October 7, 2020.

Nichols Christian Church (previously inventoried as 70-01221)

The Christian Church was organized in Nichols in the fall and winter of 1873-74 but the congregation had been worshipping prior to that in schoolhouses such as the above-noted Hubbard School. In the summer and fall of 1874, a church building was built of brick fired across the highway from the school on Ijem Avenue in Nichol. At the time, it was built next to the 1872 Nichols Public School (Figure 265). That schoolhouse was later removed. The church is one of two Protestant churches in Nichols, the other being the Methodist Church. The church building was remodeled and rededicated in October 1934 (*Muscatine Journal*, 27 Octo 1967) (Figure 266). In 1952, it was noted that the Nichols Christian Church had purchased the old Pike schoolhouse from Art Grim and moved it from its location then south of town to a place next to the church (Figure 267). It was remodeled and used for Sunday School rooms. At the same time, plans were made to put a full basement under the former school for kitchen facilities, meetings, and other purposes (*Lone Tree Reporter*, 21 Feb 1952). The two buildings were connected, with a door cut into the old church for this connection (Hixon ed. 1984:16-21).

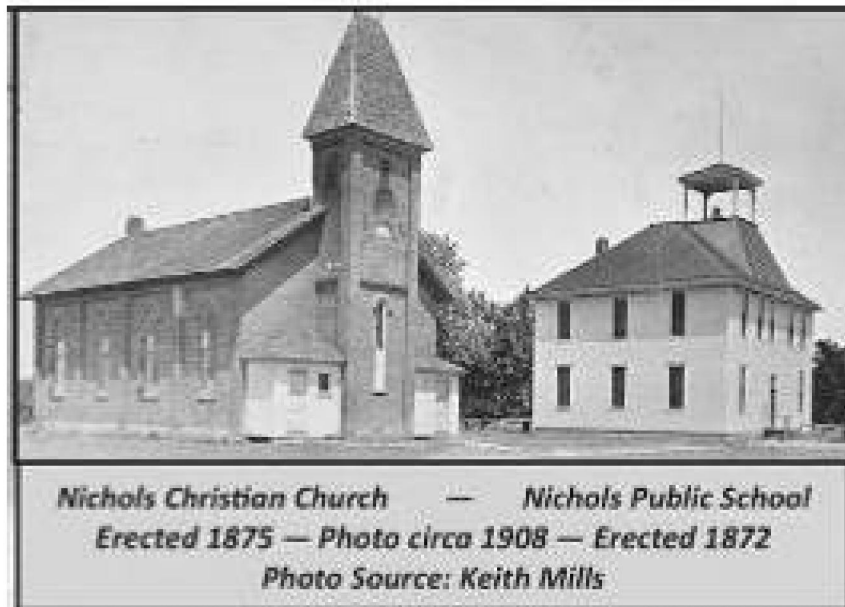


Figure 265. Circa 1908 photograph of the Nichols Christian Church next to the 1872 Nichols Public School. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.



Nichols Christian Church 1929

This image was scanned from a print glued to the 1930 calendar published by the Nichols Christian Church. The church was erected on this site in 1875. The Nichols Public School was located to the right of the church from 1872 until it was destroyed by fire on 27 January 1915.

Figure 266. 1929 photograph of the Nichols Christian Church. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.



Nichols Christian Church, Nichols, Iowa, 21 August 2020

The red brick sanctuary, constructed and dedicated in 1875, is still serving an active congregation 145 years later. It is today the oldest surviving historic structure in the Town of Nichols. The white wood frame structure on the east side of the sanctuary was added in 1951 to provide space for Sunday School classrooms and a church library. Photo source: Editor, NHS Digital Archives

Figure 267. 2020 photograph of the Nichols Christian Church with the remodeled Pike Schoolhouse addition on its right side. Photograph obtained from Smith 2020.

The 1934 remodeling of the original church included removal of the two vestibules, with a single front door centered on the façade. Steps and a porch were built, with the shutters removed from the windows and stained glass installed. The wood bell tower on the steeple was in disrepair and was removed. Inside

the church, the pews were reversed, and what had originally been the back of the church was now the front. A low platform was built across the front for the pulpit, piano and organ, and seating for the choir. Central heating was installed and new carpet was laid (Hixon ed. 1984:16-21). While the historic brick church has seen some modifications, notably the lowering of the tower, the changing of the front entrances, and the replacement of the windows, it still retains the brick corbel details of the pilasters along each side, the round-arched drip molds on the windows, the corbeling under the eaves. The previous inventory of this property (ISIF 70-01221) resulted in a recommendation of eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP under Criteria A and C and meeting Criteria Consideration A.

Nichols German Lutheran Church

This early church was built in 1875 by the German Lutherans as a front-gabled, frame building with round-arched windows on the sides. It had a centered door on the front gable end that was later enclosed in a vestibule (Figure 268). The church was purchased by the Methodists in 1890, with the building moved to the current Methodist Church location in Nichols. The original site is now built over by a modern modular house and garage at the southeast corner of Main Street and Grant Avenue (see Figure 268). It appears to have a low potential for substantial or significant intact archaeology related to the original church use of this property. It is recommended for no further investigation.

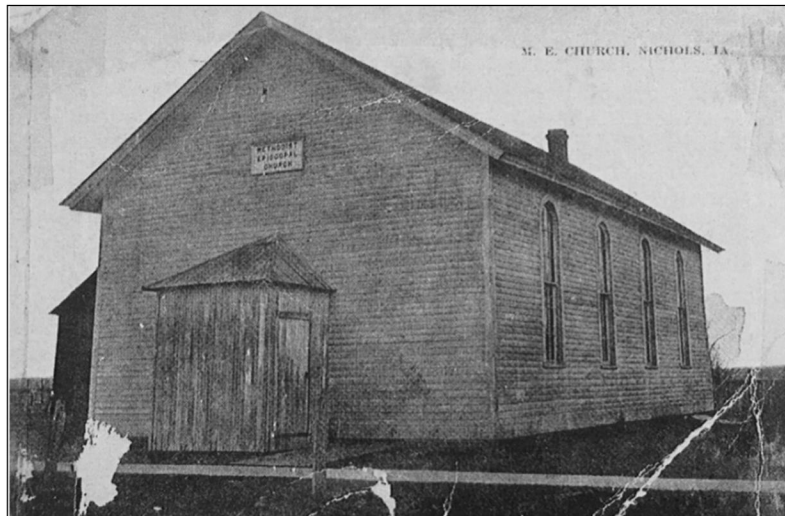


Figure 268. Original German Lutheran Church built in 1875 at north end of Nichols (top) and its original location today at 612 Main Street (bottom).

Source: Hixon 1984 (top) and photograph taken October 7, 2020 (bottom).

Nichols M.E. Church (70-01745)

This church is located on the west side of Main Street in the south part of Nichols. The original church was built in 1875 by the German Lutherans and was purchased by the Methodist Episcopal congregation in 1890 and moved to its current location in 1909. A new addition with basement and a steeple was built in 1910, with a concrete block Sunday School addition was made to the rear in 1956 (Figure 269).

Methodism came to Pike Township as early as 1840 with the first settlers in area, including the Olds, Rock, Watkins, and Stretch families. Services first took place in private homes and after 1851, every two weeks in the township's first log cabin school, where the first Sabbath school was organized. After the town of Nichols was platted, services were moved to the second floor of the new brick school house. After a revival in 1875, the Christian Church separated from the Methodists and built their own church. The Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Methodists united under the direction of William Vantuyl, and together they built a brick church. (It is unclear where this first brick Methodist church was located.) (Hixon, ed. 1984:28; Huebinger 1899). This unity, however, was short-lived. Although the Protestant Methodists were unable to hire a preacher of their own, they were "opposed to having a Methodist Episcopal minister occupy the pulpit." As a result, the Methodist Episcopal people formed a committee to secure a place for their own services, and they succeeded in arranging for the use of the German Lutheran Church (built 1875) just south of the Christian Church at the north end of Nichols. In 1890, Methodist Episcopal trustees John Nicola, A.T. Elder, and J.W. Rummells purchased the German Lutheran church for \$600 (Hixon, ed. 1984:29). "It was in such a condition that it was necessary to remodel it. After it was remodeled the Methodist Episcopalians used it until the spring of 1909" (*Muscatine News-Tribune*, May 8, 1910). Just two years after the Nichols Methodist Episcopalians secured their own church, in 1892, the Nichols Charge was organized with F.W. Maxwell as the first pastor in charge. The three churches in his charge were the Nichols M.E. Church, the Conesville M.E. Church, and the Cedar Valley M.E. Church, which together formed the Nichols Circuit. The three churches shared one pastor, who would travel between the church communities to preach Sunday services (from Price 2020).

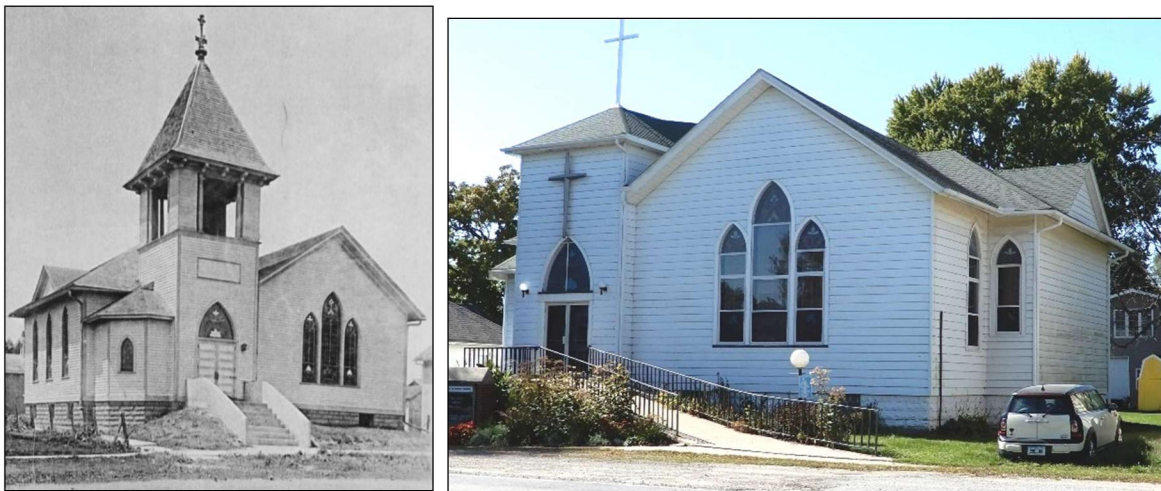


Figure 269. Circa 1910 photograph of the Nichols Methodist Church shortly after the basement was added (left) and church in 2020 (right). Historical photograph obtained from Lynn Pruitt, Nichols, Iowa; current photo taken October 7, 2020.

When the church was moved in 1909 to its current location it was set on a full concrete block raised basement. After the move, the sanctuary was remodeled.

In 1939, the three branches of Methodism united to become the Methodist Church, and the church in Nichols became the Nichols Methodist Church (Hixon, ed. 1984:29). In 1948, the old coal furnace was replaced with an oil furnace, a new hardwood floor was laid in the sanctuary, and new carpet in the rostrum and aisles was installed (Hixon, ed. 1984:29) (from Price 2020).

In 1954, Iowa City architect, Henry L. Fisk was hired to design the new classroom addition. Sometime between 1956 and 1984, the belfry of the steeple was removed and a pyramidal roof built in its place (Price 2020) (see Figure 266). The Methodist Church was previously inventoried and evaluated (70-01745) and recommended as not eligible for lack of historic integrity.

Orono Township

Brockway School

The Brockway School had been built by 1859 when it was noted that a political meeting would be held at that schoolhouse (Muscatine Journal, 7 Oct 1859). The school building was also being used for Sunday school and for church services in the late 19th century (Muscatine Journal, 2 Oct 1885). The school was shown in the SW1/4, SE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 5 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was still standing at this location on the late 1930s aerial but appears to have been removed by the 1950s, with the site put into cultivation by the 1960s aerial. The Brockway School remained open until 1941 when the Port Allen and Brockway schools were consolidated with the Conesville School and the rural schools were closed (Muscatine Journal, 24 June 1958). In 1946, it was noted that the Port Allen and Brockway schools had “set vacant for several years,” with the children bussed to Conesville School, and the two rural school buildings were to be sold (Muscatine Journal, 12 Mar 1946). School teachers at the Brockway School included: Miss Slack, Lizzie Miller, Mrs. Satterthwaite, Ada Reiley, Millie Blokert, Anna Ellecker, May Brockway, Mr. Felix Doran, Edna Cone, Daisy Kemp, Ellen Norris, and Ruth Walker.

The original site of the Brockway School is now a cultivated field (Figure 270). This location may have some potential for archaeological remains particularly since the road ditch is rather shallow here. This location is recommended for future archaeological survey. It is recorded by the current study as 13MC382, with the boundaries based on the 1930s aerial showing the school parcel lined with trees.



Figure 270. Original site of Brockway School on 230th Street in Section 5 in the field to the right in this view. Photograph taken October 2020.

Port Allen School

The Port Allen School was established after 1871 as that was the year this small railroad stop settlement was platted (Western Historical 1879:588). The school was certainly in operation by 1886, when it began to be mentioned in small news items in the Muscatine newspapers. The school operated until 1941 when the school was closed along with the Brockway School and the pupils now bussed into Conesville. In 1946, the Port Allen and Brockway schoolhouses were sold (Muscatine Journal 2 Sept 1941, 12 Mar 1946, 24 June 1958). There are questions as to the exact location of this school since it was not shown on any of the historical plat maps or the two town plats of Port Allen. If it had still be standing at the suspected location in the SE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 31, it should have been represented on the township maps. Furthermore, there were no buildings on this site on the late 1930s aerial when the schoolhouse should have been still standing on this site. There was also the Maxwell School, which was located one mile north of Port Allen. That school was represented on the 1874-1930 plat maps. Perhaps the Maxwell and Port Allen schools were one and the same. The postulated location in the southeast quarter of Section 31 is currently in mown grass with a large machine shed on Highway 70 just north of the Louisa County line (Figure 271). There may be some potential for archaeological evidence of this school, although the widening of the highway and the ditches in the modern era may have impacted the site. The location in grass is recommended for future archaeological survey. The school is also recommended for further research to determine where exactly it was located and whether it is the same school also known as the Maxwell School, which was still in operation into the 1930s.



Figure 271. Current view of possible location of Port Allen School. Taken October 7, 2020.

Maxwell School

This school was shown in the southeast corner of Section 30 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. The schoolhouse was still standing on the late 1930s-1950s aerials and possibly into the early 1990s. This school was noted in 1892 when mention was made that Miss Maud Jones had just completed her teaching term at the Maxwell School, “two miles below Cone” (*Muscatine Semi-Weekly News Tribune*, 22 June 1892). It was also mentioned in 1922 in notices of a farm to rent “near Maxwell School in Orono Township” and a family reunion held at the school “near Conesville” (*Muscatine Journal*, 22 Apr and 6 July 1922). It was noted again as being near a farm for rent in 1927 (*Muscatine Journal*, 20 Apr 1927). The current location of the former school is a grassy lawn associated with a modern modular house built in 1997 at 1095 270th Street (Figure 272). This location may have some potential for intact archaeological evidence of this former school site and is recommended for archaeological testing in the future.



Figure 272. Former site of Maxwell School at 1095 270th St. Photo taken October 7, 2020.

Conesville School

The first Conesville school was known as the “little brown schoolhouse,” was located in the eastern part of town. The 1874 plat map of Conesville shows this school was located at the southwest corner of 2nd and Burlington streets. This location is grassy city park (Figure 270). It was used as a school but also as a church for the Methodists until their church was built in 1901. The schoolhouse was then moved across the street when a second school building was erected and was later moved to the Kate Cone farm (later C.M. Else and the Gerald Allen family) north of town. That schoolhouse was finally torn down in the 1920s (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 June 1958). The original site has some potential for intact archaeology of this early schoolhouse and is recommended for future archaeological survey (Figure 273).



Figure 273. Location of first Conesville School, now grassy park area, looking WSW.
Photo obtained from Google Instant Street View taken September 2013.

The second Conesville School was built circa 1880-81 across the street from the moved location of the first schoolhouse and east of the alley from the 1901 Methodist Church (Figure 274). This was a two-room school, with two more rooms added on the west side about 1899. This building was torn down in August 1937 (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 June 1958). The location is now built over by a modern house, which may have impacted the site (Figure 275). No further investigation is recommended.



Figure 274. Conesville School (second building) circa 1902 with the Methodist Church in the background to right. View is looking SW. Source: Musser Public Library Photograph Collections, Muscatine, Iowa.



Figure 275. Current view of the location of the second Conesville School. View is looking SW.
Taken October 2020.

In 1934, the furniture and equipment from the second school building and domestic science cottage were moved to the new, third schoolhouse, which was erected in 1934 as one of a number of Public Works Administration (PWA) projects in Muscatine County as part of the federal response to the Great Depression in the 1930s (*Muscatine Journal and News Tribune*, 23 Aug 1934). The new building had grounds ample for a playground in addition to a baseball diamond and athletic field and a gymnasium (Figure 276). The 1934 building was built to house grade and high school classes, with four large rooms on the first floor along with a gym and stage across the back of the building. Two class rooms, an assembly room, and a home economics room/lunch room were upstairs. In the fall of 1941, the Brockway and Port Allen rural schools were consolidated with the Conesville School and the rural schools were closed. In 1958, the Conesville High and Grade School officially became part of the Columbus Junction school district, although the Conesville school continued as the grade school with some students now bussed in from Columbus Junction (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 June 1958). In 1982, the Columbus Community School Board voted to close the Conesville School because of declining enrollment. The school building was given to the City of Conesville (*Muscatine Journal*, 30 Jan 1982). The 1934 school building is still standing at 612 Burlington Street in Conesville on the east side of the street. It is now being used by a private company (Figure 277). The integrity of this building has likely been compromised by the many modern additions and the loss of most of the historic windows. In its current state it appears unlikely to be NRHP eligible individually under any criteria. This school building is being inventoried by the current study as 70-01781.

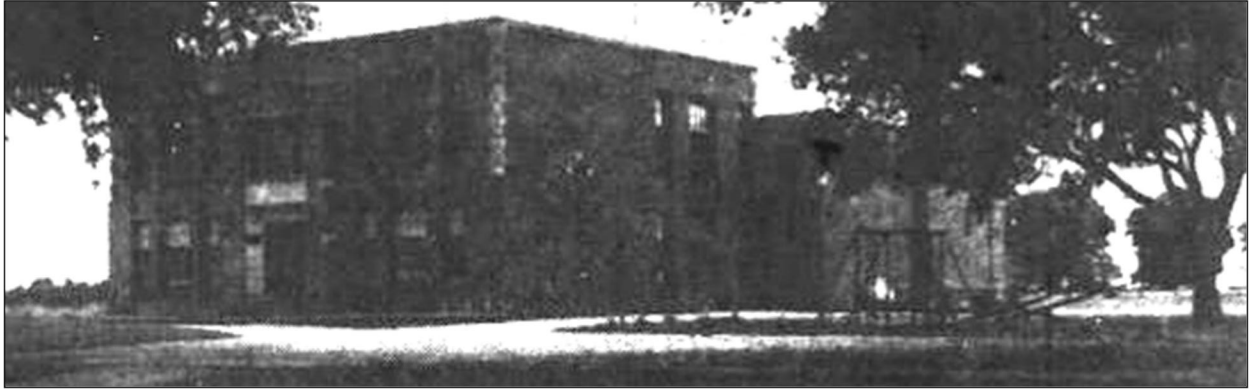


Figure 276. 1958 Photograph of the Conesville High and Grade School built in 1934. The gymnasium is visible in this view looking NE as the stepped down and out building on the rear of the school. The playground is in the foreground. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 24, June 1958.



Figure 277. 2020 Photograph of the Conesville High and Grade School built in 1934. View is looking ESE. Photograph taken October 7, 2020.

Conesville German Reform Church (Grace United Church of Christ)

This church began as the German Reform Church built in 1872 on the west side of Conesville. Prior to the building of that church, the congregation met in the schoolhouse. The church building was open to all denominations but the Reformists were in control of its use. Every other Sunday, it was used by the Methodists (Western Historical 1879:584-588). The original church building burned in 1883, and for a time services were held in a schoolhouse, with a new church built in 1891 (*Muscatine Journal*, 30 Oct 1934). In 1938, special meetings were held between the Grace Evangelical and the Reformed Church (*Muscatine Journal*, 16 May 1938). Eventually, the two merged to become the Grace United Church of Christ, which it remains to the present day. The extant church is located at 303 N. Washington Street in Conesville (Figure 278). The church today is a frame, front-gabled building with a corner tower entrance reached by curving concrete stairs. The spire on the tower is four sided and flares at the eaves. There is a metal cross at the top of the spire. The front entry doors have a segmental-arched transom above double wood-paneled doors. There is a basement-level entrance to the side of the tower entry and a second entrance to the rear of the side of the church. The basement was likely an early-to-mid-20th century addition to this church. The roof is a modern standing seam metal roof on both the building and the spire. This building had been modified to the point on the exterior that it is probably not eligible individually under Criterion C for its architecture; however, it may have some potential for eligibility under Criterion A for its historical association with the German immigrant religious community in Conesville. An interior inspection would answer the question about eligibility under C.



Figure 278. Conesville Grace United Church of Christ in October 2020.

Conesville Methodist Church

The Methodist congregation in Conesville held services every other Sunday in the German Reformed Church building that was erected in 1872 (Western Historical 1879). In 1879, the Methodists began holding their services at the Conesville School and then briefly used a building constructed on land donated by H. Ricketts for use by all denominations until it burned down in 1883. The congregation then purchased the Conesville School when the township built a new school and worshipped in the old schoolhouse until 1902. In that year, the congregation built the extant church building at 112 Burlington Street (Figure 279). It is notable that from 1958-1961, the first female, fully-ordained minister by the Methodist Church in Iowa, Nancy Nichols, served as the pastor at the Conesville Church.



Figure 279. Conesville Methodist Church built in 1902.

The second Conesville School built circa 1880-81 is in the background to the left in this view.

Source: Musser Public Library Photograph Collections, Muscatine, Iowa.

In 2014, the Conesville Methodist Church closed its doors because the congregation had dwindled to the point that many had decided to attend the Nichols church. A bat infestation in the church had also become a problem they could not solve. The contents of the church were sold but there were no bidders in 2014 on the church building (Cochran 2014). The building was eventually sold and today is being used for storage or housing. Figure 280 is a current photograph of this former church. The building now has vinyl siding, the tower was lowered to remove the open portion of the belfry, and a concrete accessible ramp was added in the modern era. It does retain the round-arched stained glass window above the entry doors and the marbled glass in the 4/1 windows. This church retains sufficient integrity to be considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under Criterion A for its historical significance in the religious development of Conesville. It may also be eligible under Criterion C but that would depend on its interior integrity.



Figure 280. Conesville Methodist Church at 112 Burlington Street in October 2020.

Port Allen M.E. Church

There was a Methodist Episcopal Church built in 1872 in the settlement of Port Allen in the southern part of Orono Township along the BCR&N Railroad line. The 1874 plat map showed the church location in the NE1/4, SE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 31 at the southwest corner of the intersection of 277th Street and Highway 70. The town had been platted just the year before in 1871. The town included a depot, store and post office (Western Historical 1879:588). This location is now partly in grass along the highway right of way and partly in row crops (Figure 281). It may have some potential for archaeological evidence of the former church and is recommended for future survey.



Figure 281. Location of former Port Allen Methodist Church looking South. Photo taken October 7, 2020.

Unknown Church - Section 18

One of the historical plat maps shows a church (no identification of denomination) in the northeast corner of Section 18 a half-mile north of Conesville. It was shown at this location on the 1884 plat map just south of a house currently at 2396 Highway 70 (Figure 282). No other information has been found concerning the history or association of this church. The location is now in cultivation and has some potential for archaeological evidence of this short-lived church site (see Figure 282). Location is recommended for future archaeological survey and further historical research.



Figure 282. Location of unknown church that was shown on the 1884 plat map. The location is now just south of 2396 Hwy 70 in a cultivated field on the west side of Hwy 70. Photo obtained from Google Instant Street View taken September 2013.

Cedar Township

The first school in the township was a log school built in 1841 on the K.L. McColm farm. It was followed by the Sand Prairie School and a school held in the basement of the Old Brick Church built in 1858. In 1865, the “Little Brick” school was built on the O’Toole farm, with Cedar Center built a half-mile west and a half-mile north of Cranston on William Idle’s farm. In 1911, the new school in Cranston resulted in the closure of Cedar Center and Little Brick (*Muscatine Journal*, 21 Aug 1931). The location of the “Little Brick” school remains uncertain and is recommended for further research.

Sand Prairie School (aka Scrub School)

This school was built after 1841 and before 1858 (*Muscatine Journal*, 21 Aug 1931). The schoolhouse was being used for church services in 1879 in addition to being a school (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 Dec 1879). The 1874-1899 plat maps depict this school in the NW1/4, NE1/4, NW1/4 of Section 12; however, the 1916 and 1930 plat maps place the school in the NE1/4, NW1/4, NW1/4 of Section 12 to the west of the earlier plat map location. It may be that the schoolhouse was moved across Cranston Road when intersection improvements were made with 231st Street. However, the late 1930s aerial shows no buildings at the western location but does show a single rectangular building at the location indicated by the 1874-1899 plat maps. It may be that the 1916 and 1930 maps made a slight error in the placement of this schoolhouse. In May 1931, there was discussion of possible standardization of the facilities at Sand Prairie School (*Muscatine Journal*, 19, May 1931). However, in 1946, the Sand Prairie School became part of the Letts Consolidated School District but it was noted that the students were already attending the Letts School (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 Aug 1946). In 1949, the vacant Sand Prairie Schoolhouse was being auctioned off and was noted to have been unused for seven years indicating that it closed around 1942

(*Muscatine Journal*, 05 Dec 1949). The schoolhouse was sold to Everett Chapman, who operated a farm nearby, under the provision that it be moved or torn down (*Muscatine Journal*, 9 Dec 1949). The December 5, 1949 news article mentioned that the Strawberry Hill School, which was being auctioned at the same time “dates back nearly a hundred years and Sand Prairie almost as long;” however, the same article noted that the land on which Strawberry Hill was located was deeded to Cedar Township circa 1864-65, so the construction dates for both of these schools remains uncertain (*Muscatine Journal*, 05 Dec 1949). Figure 283 is a photograph of the Sand Prairie Schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was moved to a location nearby to a pasture but is now non-extant. The former school site has been partially built over by a modern house and may also have been impacted to some extent by modern road widening (Figure 284). The location is recommended for future archaeological survey to determine if intact evidence of this former school remains.



Figure 283. Early 20th century photograph of Sand Prairie School.
Source: Photograph on display at Melpine School, Wildcat Den State Park.

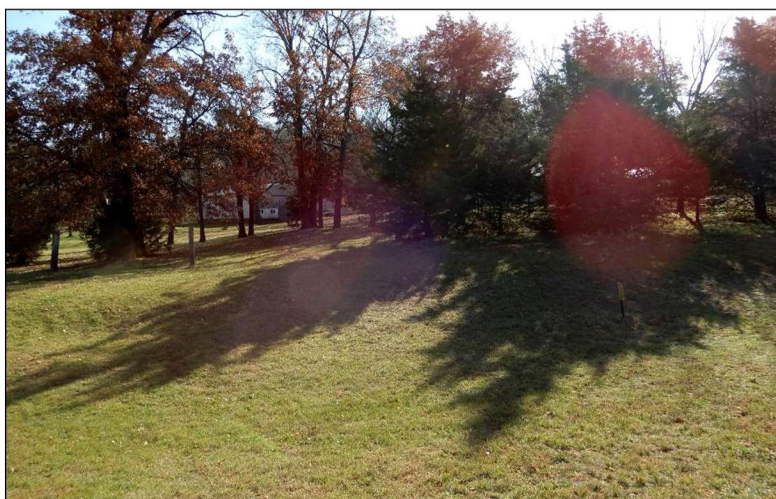


Figure 284. Site of former Sand Prairie Schoolhouse partially built over by a modern house.
Photo taken November 6, 2020.

Strawberry Hill School

The Strawberry Hill School was built circa 1865 based on the deeding of the land to Cedar Township circa 1864-65 (*Muscatine Journal*, 05 Dec 1949). The schoolhouse was located in the SE1/4, SW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 26 on the 1874-1930 plat maps and was still standing at this location on the late 1930s aerial. It was mentioned in 1873 has having had a musical convention and was being used for the Union

Sunday School in 1891 in addition to its normal school use (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Feb 1873 and 17 Feb 1891). In 1949, the vacant Strawberry Hill Schoolhouse was being auctioned off (*Muscatine Journal*, 05 Dec 1949). The students had already been attending the Letts School probably closing around 1942 (*Muscatine Journal*, 05 Dec 1949). A December 9, 1949 article in the *Muscatine Journal*, stated that “it is reported that the Strawberry Hill school building dates back nearly a hundred years,” indicating a circa 1849 date of construction; however, as noted above, the December 5, 1949 article indicated that the land on which the Strawberry Hill School sat was deeded to the township circa 1864-65 suggesting a construction date around that time. The Strawberry Hill Schoolhouse was purchased at auction by Arthur Black, who operated a farm nearby. The schoolhouse had to be removed from the property following the auction (*Muscatine Journal*, 09 Dec 1949). It was moved to 1629 275th Street where it became the center portion of a house and has been greatly modified in the process (Figure 285). The former school site is now an agricultural field that may have some potential for archaeological evidence but the road ditch is also now wider than it would have been when the school was here (Figure 286). The location in the field, however, is recommended for future survey.



Figure 285. House at 1629 275th Street contains the former Strawberry Hill Schoolhouse as the center section (side-gabled section). Photo taken November 6, 2020.



Figure 286. Former Strawberry Hill School site looking NW.
Photo taken November 6, 2020.

Cedar Center School

This rural schoolhouse was built in 1865 and operated until 1910 when a new Cranston School was built in 1911 (*Muscatine Journal*, 17 Aug 1911, 18 August 1928, and 16 Aug 1930). The Cedar Center School is still standing but was moved from its original site on the north side of Oak Grove Road (Figure 287) to the south side where it has been used as a shop building (Figure 288). The original site is now a cultivated field but the road ditch is now much wider than it would have been when the school was here. However,

the field is still recommended for future archaeological survey to determine if there is intact evidence of the school use of that property in the late 19th to early 20th centuries.



Figure 287. Original site of Cedar Center School on north side of Oak Grove Road.
Photo taken November 6, 2020.



Figure 288. Former Cedar Center Schoolhouse at its moved location.
Photo taken November 6, 2020

It should be noted that there are some discrepancies in the historical map locations for the Cedar Center School original site. The 1874 map depicts its location in the SE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 14, Cedar Township, while the 1884 map depicts its location more towards the SW1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of the same section but the 1899 and 1916 maps depict the location halfway between the 1874 and 1884 mapped locations where the suspected archaeological site is located (see Figure 287). All of the maps show the school within the NE1/4 of the SE1/4 of Section 14 on the north side of what is now Oak Grove Road and only archaeological survey can answer the question as to the actual original school site location. The schoolhouse had been moved by the time of the late 1930s aerial, which showed the area on the north side of the road under cultivation, which it remains to the present day (see Figure 287).

The extant building now sits on a concrete foundation banked into a slight slope (see Figure 286). The building is a frame, low-pitched front-gabled schoolhouse that retains the original clapboard siding fastened with square nails and some of the original 6/6 windows that are distinctive for having a three-light transom window at the top. The interior retains the beadboard ceiling, floor boards, and the chalk boards that wrap around two walls of the interior. Modifications have included the moving of the building, the addition of a wide entry door on the façade with a sliding door and a shed addition to one side. The building is in an advanced state of deterioration and may be demolished soon. As an 1865 schoolhouse it is a rare survivor, but the move and the modifications have impacted its historic integrity. It is being inventoried by the current survey as 70-01782 to document this building before it is demolished but it is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in its current state.

Cranston School

This school was the second Cranston School built in 1911 (*Muscatine Journal*, 19 Dec 1911). This was a hip-roofed, two-room frame building that had a projecting front-gabled vestibule with a door on either side and an open belfry on the front-gabled roof (Figure 289). The front gable end had cornice returns. The building was also used as a grange hall. The school operated until 1943. It was later converted into a residence. In 1949, it was noted that the Cranston School was still being maintained “only as a standby since all 77 students in Cedar Township go to Letts School” (*Muscatine Journal*, 5 Dec 1949). Figure 290 is a current view of the former school building now a residence at what is now 2483 Freedom Circle. It has been greatly modified with vertical siding, a large garage addition to one side, and replacement doors and windows. The belfry was also removed. In its current state, the building is not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP for lack of historic integrity.



Figure 289. Cranston Schoolhouse in 1914. Photograph provided by Dana Pittman.



Figure 290. Former Cranston School now a residence at 2483 Freedom Circle. Left photo taken November 6, 2020; right photo taken by Muscatine County Assessor.

Cranston Evangelical United Brethren Church

The EUB church was built in 1904 and dedicated in 1905. It was an active church until 1971-72 when it closed its doors (*Muscatine Journal*, 10 May 1972). The building was described in 1905 as 32 x 44 feet with a basement and furnace, an arched ceiling, recessed pulpit with choir loft, a vestibule, tower and bell. The windows “are Gothic with cathedral glass” (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Jan 1905). The church is non-extant, with the location now a grassy lawn (Figure 291). The windows and bell were salvaged from the church and are now in a church south of Wilton (Dana Pittman, personal communication, November 2020). The parsonage, a Queen Anne cottage, is still standing at 2486 Freedom Circle south of where the church site is located (Figure 292). The church site does have some potential for intact archaeology and is recommended for future survey.



Figure 291. Cranston EUB Church site; grass covered. Photo taken November 6, 2020



Figure 292. Cranston EUB Parsonage at 2484 Freedom Circle. Photo taken November 6, 2020.

Oak Grove Christian Church

The Oak Grove Christian Church is located northwest of Cranston and was built in 1896 on one-acre of land (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Jan 1896 and 15 Jan 1896). It was located in the NW1/4, SE1/4, NW1/4 of

Section 14. It was shown at this location on the 1899-1930 plat maps across the road from the Oak Grove Cemetery (extant and still in use). The property was fenced in 1898 (*Muscatine Journal*, 20 Apr 1898). In May 1963, it was noted that the church had burned down and was then 67 years old and had been most recently the United Church of Christ, although it had not had a pastor for several years and was used only on occasion for summer services (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 May 1963). The fire was accidental. It was noted that the church had a finished basement, with kitchen, and while insurance covered the loss, the church was not rebuilt. The 1963 article also identified the original congregation as the Christian Congregational Church. The church site is now a grassy level area used for parking for people attending burials at the cemetery (Figure 293). The church privy is still standing at the edge of the woods surrounding the former church site (Figure 294). Given that the church burned down in 1963, there is potential for archaeological evidence of this former church at this location. The parcel is recommended for future archaeological survey and is recorded by the current survey as 13MC383.



Figure 293. Location of former Oak Grove Christian Church, which burned down in 1963.
Photo taken November 6, 2020.



Figure 294. Church privy still standing in woods next to church site.
Photo taken November 6, 2020.

Seventy Six Township

Black Oak School (# 7)

The Black Oak School may also have known as the “Little Brick School,” although there may have been another rural school that was referred to by this name as well. That school was west of Letts, with the Black Oak School being north of Letts. However, a 1908 news items referred to the Black Oak School as “better known as Little Brick School” (*Muscatine Journal*, 4 Sep 1908). There were mentions of the Black Oak School as far back as the 1880 *Muscatine Journal*. An item in the 1905 *Muscatine Journal* noted that people were claiming that the “little old brick” schoolhouse was unsafe and were agitating for a new schoolhouse (24 Mar 1905). It was noted that the school “is claimed to be over 50 years old” in 1905, which would suggest a build date circa 1855. It would appear that the calls for a new school in 1905 had gone unanswered by 1908 when a news item noted that “the Black Oak School, better known as ‘Little Brick,’” had opened for the fall term, and again in 1910 when the new teacher (Miss Helen Howe) was introduced as the winter term teacher for the “Little Brick” school. (*Muscatine Journal*, 4 Sept 1908 and 01 Nov 1910). The school was shown in the NE1/4, NW1/4, NE1/4 of Section 19 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was still standing at this intersection on the late 1930s aerial and possibly the 1950s aerial but had been removed by the 1960s. This schoolhouse is non-extant, with the site area in timber at the SW corner of the intersection of 250th St and Hampton (Figure 295); however, this intersection has been widened and reworked through the years and the site location may now be destroyed. The timbered location at this intersection is recommended for future archaeological testing to determine if the school site has been destroyed.

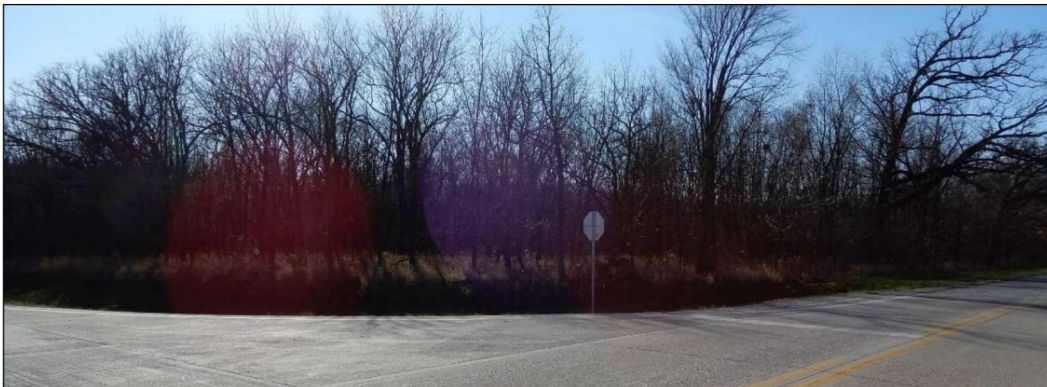


Figure 295. Black Oak School site at the intersection of 250th St and Hampton on SW corner. Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Burr Oak School (#8)

This school was shown in the NW1/4, NW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 2 on the 1874-1930 plat maps and appears to be still standing at this location on the late 1930s aerial but appears to be gone by the 1950s aerial. It was mentioned in the 1876 *Muscatine Journal*, which noted a meeting was to be held at the Burr Oak School (4 Nov 1876). The school operated until 1950, with the building approved for sale in early 1953. It was noted that this school was “90 years old” in 1953 and had been closed for “3 years due to small enrollment” (*Muscatine Journal*, 10 Mar 1953). The 90-year-old date in 1953 would translate to a build year of 1863; however, a Sept 29, 1953 news item claimed that “the building is thought to be about 75 years old,” which would translate to circa 1878 (*Muscatine Journal*, 29 Sept 1953). It is assumed that this was a front-gabled frame school. It was noted to have been “in relatively good shape” in 1953 and was 20 x 30 feet in size. The 1953 article also noted that High Prairie #2, Walnut #1, and Central #4 schools were still operating in Seventy Six Township and that Green Valley was closed but might reopen

(*Muscatine Journal*, 29 Sept 1953). The Burr Oak Schoolhouse was sold to Gale Jarvis and was to be removed from the site (*Muscatine Journal*, 01 Oct 1953). The October 1953 article again claimed that the building was 75 years old. Figure 296 is a current view of the former school site. This is now an agricultural field, with a large oak tree still remaining on site next to the road ditch (see Figure 296). This location has some potential for intact archaeological evidence of the former school and is recommended for future survey.



Figure 296. Site of the former Burr Oak School (#8) on 231st Street. The oak tree to the right is the one tree still standing from when the school was at this location. Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Central School (#4)

The Central School was shown in the SW1/4, SE1/4, NE1/4 of Section 16 on the 1874-1930 plat maps and was still standing at the time of the late 1930s to 1960s aerials but had been removed by the 1970s. It still in operation in 1953 when others in the township were being closed, with one news item noting a school program at this school in 1959 and again during annual school elections in 1963 (*Muscatine Journal*, 21 Nov 1959 and 24 Aug 1963). This school closed in January 1964 as part of the Area Six consolidation (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Jan 1964). News items about the Central School date back to at least 1904 (*Muscatine Journal*, 15 Sept 1904). Figure 297 is an undated but early-to-mid-20th century photograph of the Central Schoolhouse. The building was one-story, rectangular frame schoolhouse. The front gable end had only a centered entry door with transom window and plaque with the school's name above it. There were rows of windows on the side and at least one side entrance. The building had a low foundation and no basement. A brick chimney rose from the roof slope. The schoolhouse was later moved and attached to the rear of a house in Cedar Township (Figure 298). The site location now is near the entrance into an agricultural field, with the school site in timber much as it was historically (Figure 299). There is potential for intact archaeology at this location, with a recommendation for future survey.



Figure 297. Undated photograph of the Central Schoolhouse.
Source: Photograph display at Melpine School, Wildcat Den State Park.



Figure 298. Site of former Central School #4 on the north side of 150th St on the edge of the timber in this view. Photo taken November 13, 2020.



Figure 299. Rear section of this house at 2469 Cranston Road in Cedar Township is the former Central #4 Schoolhouse. Photo taken November 6, 2020.

Green Valley School (#5)

This school was shown in the SW1/4, NW1/4, SE1/4 of Section 27 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was still standing at the time of the late 1930s-1950s aerials but may have been removed by the 1960s. This school was noted in the 1899 *Muscatine Journal* concerning a program that had been held at the schoolhouse (09 Feb 1899). In 1946, part of the Green Valley School District consolidated with the Letts School District, and in 1953, it was noted that Green Valley School had been closed “but may reopen soon” (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 Aug 1946 and 29 Sept 1953). The school appears to have been reopened as a 1958 news items noted a program that had been put on by students of Green Valley School (*Muscatine Journal*, 21 Feb 1958). Later that year, voters decided on consolidation of seven rural school districts into one new district along the Muscatine/Louisa County line including the Green Valley School in Seventy Six Township (*Muscatine Journal*, 29 Nov 1958). In August 1960, it was noted that the Green Valley School building was moved “to the L&M School grounds where it is located east of the main building and will be used as a music room” (*Muscatine Journal*, 17 Aug 1960). Figure 300 is circa 1936 photograph of the Green Valley Schoolhouse showing it was a one-story, frame, front-gabled building with a centered door on the gable end and a short bell tower above on the roof ridge. There were rows of windows on the side. Three outbuildings are visible including the two privies behind the school and a shed to one side of the school.



Figure 300. Circa 1936 photograph of the Green Valley Schoolhouse and its outbuildings.
Source: Notebook at Melpine Schoolhouse, Wildcat Den State Park.

Figure 301 is the former school site today, which is a level, grass-covered parcel at 2690 Burlington Road. There is now a wide ditch between the road and the former school site that may have impacted the front of the school yard. However, the rest of the parcel appears to have been little impacted and has the potential for intact archaeological evidence of the former schoolhouse and its outbuildings, which included two privies and a shed (see Figure 300).



Figure 301. Site of former Green Valley School at 2690 Burlington Rd. Photo taken November 13, 2020.

High Prairie School (#2)

The earliest mention of the High Prairie School was in 1860 when a political meeting was to be held at the school (*Muscatine Journal*, 19 Oct 1860). The school was shown in the SE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 5 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was north of the St. John U.B. Church on the 1899-1930 plat maps. The schoolhouse was still standing at the time of the late 1930s aerial but the church had been removed in 1929. The school appears to have remained standing at this location through the 1960s. The Grange was meeting here in 1872 when it was noted that a fight broke out (*Muscatine Journal*, 28 June 1872). A Sunday school was organized at the school in 1881, with services being held in 1886 (*Muscatine Journal*, 8 May 1881 and 2 July 1886). It was noted in 1926, that this school was located nine miles west of Muscatine and seven miles north of Letts (*Muscatine Journal*, 25 Feb 1926). In September 1953, it was noted that the High Prairie School was one of three still in operation, while others had closed in the township (*Muscatine Journal*, 29 Sept 1953). The school remained open until January 1964 when Area Six consolidated (*Muscatine Journal*, 10 Aug 1960, 23 Jan 1964). Figure 302 presents historical photographs of the school. This schoolhouse is non-extant at its original location (Figure 303). However, there is still a well from that school extant on site, which is a grassy area next to some agricultural fields. St. John United Brethren Church was located south of the schoolhouse on this parcel. Given the presence of an intact well and the fact that the site is not being actively row-cropped suggests some potential for intact archaeology of the school and/or the church. This parcel is recommended for future archaeological survey.



Figure 302. Photographs of High Prairie School. Photo on right was taken in 1964.
Source: Notebook at Melpine Schoolhouse, Wildcat Den State Park.



Figure 303. Location of High Prairie School site and the St John U.B. Church from the 1890s to 1929.
The church sat to the left of the school in this view. There is an intact well at the former school site.
Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Maple Grove School (#7)

This school was shown on the 1874-1930 plat maps in the northeast corner of Section 31 on the west side of what is now Hampton Avenue. However, the schoolhouse was no longer standing by the time of the late 1930s aerial photograph. It was mentioned in 1902, with residents of seventy-six township voting to consolidate Maple Grove School and Oak Grove (#6) with the Letts town school in 1917 (*Muscatine Journal*, 16 Dec 1902 and 16 Apr 1917). By August of 1917, it was noted that six new wagons had been purchased to transport the rural students to the new Letts school, which would be the earliest form of busing students (*Muscatine Journal*, 28 Aug 1917). The Maple Grove Schoolhouse was among the early closures in the county. The building is non-extant. The original site is now an agricultural field with a wide ditch now between the road and the field (Figure 304). There is some potential for archaeological evidence of this school at this location, and the location is recommended for future survey.



Figure 304. Site of former Maple Grove School #7 on west side of Hampton Avenue.
Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Oak Grove School (#6)

This school was shown in the NW1/4, NE1/4 of Section 33 on the 1874-1930 plat maps. It was mentioned in 1879 in the *Muscatine Journal* (07 Mar 1879). A possible consolidation with the Letts town school was being discussed in 1917 (*Muscatine Journal*, 16 Apr 1917). Reportedly, the Oak Grove School remained open through at least 1946; however, it appears to have been removed from its original location by the time of the late 1930s aerial (Iowa Geographic Map Server 2020; *Muscatine Journal*, 03 Dec 1946). There was a notice in 1966 of the Muscatine School Board starting legal action to sell Oak Grove School; although this was probably the Oak Grove School in Bloomington Township (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Oct 1966). Tom Furlong stated that this school, like Maple Grove, closed in 1917, which appears to correspond to the schoolhouse being gone by the late 1930s. The original site of the Oak Grove School is now an agricultural field (Figure 305). There is a wide ditch now between the road and the field, which may have impacted some of the former school site. The agricultural field has some potential to contain archaeological evidence of this school and is recommended for future survey.



Figure 305. Site of the former Oak Grove School #6, on east side of Jasper Avenue.
Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Walnut School (#1)

The Walnut School was located on the hillside at what is now 2288 Burlington Road. It was shown at this location on the 1899-1930 plat maps in the SW1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 1. The school was noted as a meeting place in 1902, with the school still open in 1953. It had been vandalized in 1956 but was still in use in 1963 when a burglary was reported over the Thanksgiving holiday (*Muscatine Journal*, 29 Oct 1902, 29 Sept 1953, 15 Nov 1956, 18 Apr 1962, and 30 Nov 1963). In 1963, it was noted as the only school out of ten in Area Six that had modern plumbing (Figure 306). However, the school closed for good in January 1964 during the Area Six consolidation (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Jan 1964). This school was a frame, front-gabled building with small open belfry on the roof ridge above the centered front door. It was raised on a basement by the early 20th century, with concrete steps up to a large concrete stoop at the front entry (see Figure 306). When it closed, the schoolhouse was moved across the road and used as a corn crib and later burned down (Tom Furlong, personal communication November 2020). The original site is now built over by a modern house and has a low potential for intact archaeological evidence of the former school (Figure 307). It likely warrants no further investigation.

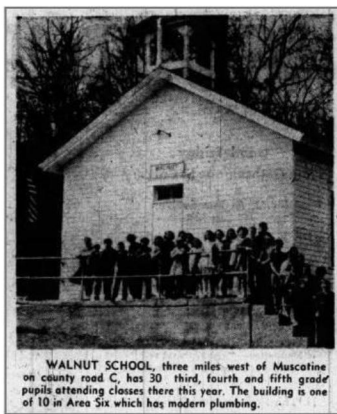


Figure 306. Walnut Grove School in 1963 (left) and undated photograph of Walnut Grove School (right).
Sources: *Muscatine Journal*, 18 Apr 1963; and display at Melpine School at Wildcat Den State Park.



Figure 307. Site of former Walnut Grove School at 2288 Burlington Rd; modern house now built on site. Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Franklin School

This school was shown on the 1874 plat map on the south side of what is now Burlington Road to the east of the later Walnut School. The location in 1874 was in the SE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 1. It was situated at the southwest corner of what is now the intersection of Burlington and Melon Avenue. The location is now an agricultural field; however, the roads have been built up in this location in the modern era to the point that the school location was likely impacted or destroyed in the process (Figure 308). The field at this intersection is recommended for future archaeological survey to confirm if any archaeological evidence of this early schoolhouse remains intact. It should be noted that the 1884 map shows an unnamed school on the same side of the road but farther to the west of the Franklin School's 1874 location. It may be that the 1884 map is an incorrect location for the Franklin School. Both locations are recommended for archaeological survey to clarify if there were two school sites or only one.



Figure 308. Franklin School site on 1874 map at intersection of Burlington Rd and Melon Ave. looking west. Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Ottenbein United Brethren Church

The Ottenbein United Brethren Church was built in the early 1850s and was active until 1904. The church was shown in what is now the east half of the Cranston Cemetery on the 1874-1916 plat maps. This location is in the SW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 18. Reportedly, the first school in the area was held in the basement of this brick church in 1866. It was noted in the newspaper that a new bridge had been

authorized near the church, which may be the bridge represented on the 1884 to the east of the church on what is now 250th Street (*Muscatine Journal*, 20 Nov 1868). In 1880, it was noted that the Township Sabbath School Convention had been held at this church (*Muscatine Journal*, 26 Mar 1880). This non-extant church was located in the east half of the Cranston Cemetery, which is still in use (Figure 309). A memorial to the church in the cemetery states that the church dated from 1850 to 1904, although its actual construction date may have been 1854. The sign is perhaps referring to the original organization of the congregation. While there may be potential for archaeological evidence of this church in the east half of the cemetery, the cemetery now has graves in that portion and archaeological testing would not be permitted or recommended. Tom Furlong has a photograph of this church.



Figure 309. Location of former Ottenbien U.B. Church in the east half of the extant Cranston Cemetery. Photo taken November 13, 2020.

The 1874 plat map shows the U.B. Church on the east side of the cemetery, with a parsonage a short distance to the east of the church. The parsonage would have been outside of the current cemetery boundary. However, a road alignment change in later years would have been built right through the parsonage site, which likely destroyed that site in the process. No further investigation appears warranted of either the church or the parsonage sites.

St. John United Brethren Church

This church was shown in the SE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 5 on the 1899-1930 plat maps. It standing by at least 1893 when it was noted that the interior had been handsomely decorated (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Aug 1893). Mentions of the church continued through at least 1924 (*Muscatine Journal*, 08 Nov 1924). The church was still standing until 1929 but appears to be gone by the time of the late 1930s aerial photograph, although you can still discern where the church once stood by a disturbed area. It was located on the same parcel of ground as the High Prairie School, with the church to the south of the schoolhouse. The school was still standing into at least the 1960s but was gone by the 1980s.. A well is still intact on this parcel, which is agricultural land but is not being row-cropped (see Figure 303 for current view of this site). There does appear to be some potential for intact archaeology of both the church and the school, with this parcel recommended for future archaeological testing.

St. Malachy's Catholic Church

The first St. Malachy's Catholic Church was built in 1856, with a new church built in 1902 (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Nov 1979). The 1874 plat map showed the Catholic Church in the northwest corner of Section 16 but then in 1884 it was depicted across the road to the west in the northeast corner of Section

17. However by 1899, the church was again depicted at the 1874 map location in Section 16. The 1884 map location was on property owned by the church as shown on the 1874 map; however, it seems unlikely that the building would have been moved only to go back to its original location. It may be that the 1884 map is in error but further historical research is recommended to resolve the 1884 map discrepancy. The church was shown at the 1874 map location in the northwest corner of Section 16 from the late 1930s until circa 1990 when it was no longer shown as at this location. The aerial images show what appears to be a front-gabled building with a rear gabled ell, with the church facing west. By the 1960s, the township hall had been moved to a location just southeast of the church, with the township hall still standing. That building is a historic railroad depot that was moved to this location to serve as the township hall.

In 1979, the remains of the original brick church was noted to be along County Road X-43 nine miles southwest of Muscatine, one mile southwest of Ardon, and seven miles northeast of Letts. It was described in 1979 as “an old, crumbling brick building,” from which “all the glass has been broken from the windows. Bricks have worn completely away from a portion of one side of the building leaving a huge, gaping hole” (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Nov 1979). At the time the interior was stacked with bales of straw.

This church had been founded by Irish Catholics who had settled in this area in the late 1840s and early 1850s having fled the potato famine in Ireland. The first church was built from bricks fired in a kiln “one-fourth mile north of the church” (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Nov 1979). The church was still standing on the east side of what is now Independence Avenue until circa 1990 when it was demolished. The site location, now in grass, shows evidence of the foundation of this church being just under the surface sod (Figure 310). As such, this site appears to have the potential for intact foundations, features, and deposits related to this early Irish Catholic church and is recommended for future archaeological survey. This site is being recorded herein as 13MC384.



Figure 310. Original location of 1856 brick church looking at the location where the former foundation appears to be just underneath the sod. Note the brown lines where the grass does not grow as well as the surrounding grass (yellow arrows point to these lines). Photo taken November 13, 2020

As their congregation grew, a new St. Malachy’s Catholic Church was erected in 1902 one mile west of Ardon next to the Milwaukee Railroad tracks. This church is still standing at 2429 Jasper Avenue. Figure

311 is a photograph of the 1902 church taken in 1979. Figure 313 is a photograph of the church today. This building retains good to excellent historic integrity having its original clapboard siding, brick foundation, Gothic-arched windows, and cornice returns. The building has a centered entry vestibule/bell tower that also retains many of its original components except for the lowering of the top of the tower ten feet in order to remove the center open section that was there originally. The stained glass windows are also now covered with Plexiglas on the exterior to protect the historic windows. The pipe railings on the concrete steps were replaced with wood railings. The parcel around the church is also still intact.

The 1902 St. Malachy's Catholic Church is recommended eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under Criterion C (it will need an interior inspection before a final determination under C can be made) but also under Criterion A for the historical significance of its association with the Irish Catholic settlement of this township. The significant date is the year it was built (1902). The end date for the period of significance is suggested to be 1971, which is the current 50-year cut-off for basic NRHP eligibility. However, it is likely that further historical research will refine the end date to reflect its historical association in the community and may be an earlier date, such as when the congregation was at its peak. This church is being inventoried as 70-01783 by the current study.



Figure 311. St. Malachy's Catholic Church in 1979.
Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 23 Nov 1979.



Figure 312. St. Malachy's Catholic Church in 2020 at 2429 Jasper Avenue.
Photo taken November 13, 2020.

Fruitland Township

Corwin School

The Corwin School was standing by at least 1877 when it was noted as the site for a political meeting (*Muscatine Journal*, 06 Oct 1877). The school operated until 1959 when the schoolhouse was moved to Grandview where it was used as a band room. It was noted at the time that the older residents believed the schoolhouse was about 100 years old, which suggests a circa 1860 date of construction (*Muscatine Journal*, 01 Sept 1959). The school appears to have still been in use in the winter term of 1959 when the newspaper noted that there had been an open house in February for the students to display their work at the Corwin School (*Muscatine Journal*, 26 Feb 1959). Figure 313 are photographs of the Corwin Schoolhouse circa 1900 and from September 1959 as it was being moved to Grandview. The older photograph shows the front-gabled, frame building had a centered front door with transom and a small open belfry on the roof ridge above the entry (see Figure 313). The rows of windows on one side had shutters, with a brick chimney rising from the rear of the building. This building is now non-extant. The original school site was shown on the 1899-1930 plat maps to be within a triangular parcel formed by the Y-intersection of two roads, one of which is now Stewart Road and the other a road that was removed by the modern era. This location is in the NE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 29. The schoolhouse was still standing at the time of the 1930s-1950s aerials but had been removed by the 1960s. This site is now

within a grassy strip next to a cultivated field (Figure 314). This location has some potential for intact archaeology of the Corwin Schoolhouse occupation and is recommended for future archaeological survey.

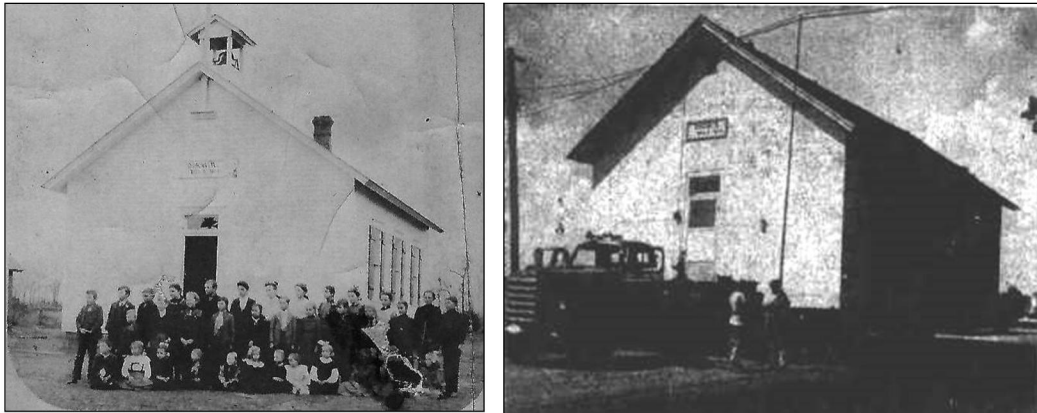


Figure 313. Corwin Schoolhouse circa 1900 (left) and being moved to Grandview in 1959 (right).

Sources: Janina Hawley contributed the circa 1900 photo, with 1959 photo from the *Muscatine Journal*, 01 Sept 1959.

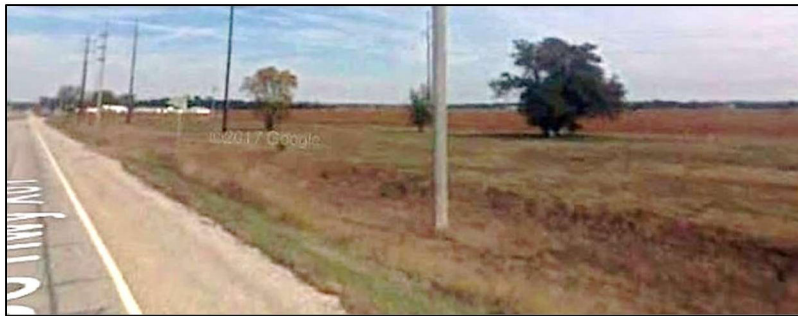


Figure 314. Corwin School second site in vicinity of trees on the east side of Stewart Road. Photo obtained from Google Instant Street View taken October 2009.

There was no school depicted at this location on either the 1874 or 1884 plat maps, which is in conflict the 1877 news article, unless this was the second location for this school. In fact, both the 1874 and 1884 maps shows a school in the SE1/4, NE1/4, NW1/4 of Section 32, just to the southwest of the later Corwin School site but on the west side of what is now Stewart Road. This may have been the original site for the Corwin School and would be consistent with the 1877 news item and suggests at least a circa 1874 date of construction. This location now appears to be within the south end of an occupied farmstead at 2722 Stewart Road. The buildings on this farmstead are modern in construction according to the Muscatine County Assessor (Figure 315). The location appears to have a low potential for intact archaeology of this comparatively short-lived school site and is recommended for no further investigation.



Figure 315. Location of original Corwin School site at 2722 Stewart Road. Photograph obtained from Google Instant Street View taken October 2009.

Fruitland School

The Fruitland School was built in 1886, when the newspaper noted that W.G. Rowland, the architect for the West Muscatine School was starting to build the Fruitland School, which was described as a 24 by 34 foot frame schoolhouse 12 feet in height (*Muscatine Journal*, 12 Nov 1886). This date is consistent with the lack of a school at this location in the SE1/4, SW1/4, NW1/4 of Section 30 on the 1874 and 1884 plat maps but the school was depicted here on the 1899-1930 plat maps, although some of the maps placed it just slightly east in the southwest corner of the SE1/4, NW1/4. However, the late 1930s-1950s aerials shows the standing schoolhouse in the SE1/4, SW1/4, NW1/4. The Fruitland Schoolhouse operated until 1959 when was moved in September of that year to the Grandview School where it was to be used for a school shop (*Muscatine Journal*, 01 Sept 1959). The 1960s aerial confirms that the schoolhouse was no longer on its original site. It was further noted that the school's students were attending the new Louisa-Muscatine district schools that same year (*Muscatine Journal*, 01 Sept 1959). It should be noted that this school was built the same year that Fruitland Township was created out of the south half of Bloomington Township (*Muscatine Journal*, 12 Nov 1886). The location of the former school site is now at the west edge of Fruitland and is discernible by the rows of mature trees that line the west and north sides of this square parcel on the north side of North Street (Figure 316). Today, there is a modern house (114 North Street) built on the site, which impacted the former schoolhouse location because it is sited next to where the school building stood on this parcel. As such, the modern construction has diminished the archaeological potential of this parcel. Given that the property is now the yard of an occupied house, archaeological survey is not recommended unless there is a future threat to this parcel that might warrant subsurface testing. However, the potential for an intact site of significance at this location appears to be low.



Figure 316. Former Fruitland School site, surrounded by large pines; modern house here now at 114 North St. Photo taken October 31, 2020.

Mittman School

This school was in operation by at least 1902 when it was noted in the *Muscatine Journal* (19 Oct 1902). However, historical maps dating from as early as 1874 show a schoolhouse at this location in the NW1/4, NW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 9, with the later maps labeling it as the Mittman School. It operated until the 1960s when in 1966, the school had closed and the Muscatine School Board was making plans to sell the schoolhouse along with three others -- Lone Tree, Olive Branch and Oak Grove (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Oct 1966). The schoolhouse remained on site but was remodeled into a dwelling that now carries the address of 2393 Mittman Road (Figure 317). The circa 1874-1966 front-gabled schoolhouse is still somewhat recognizable in the extant dwelling; however, the historic integrity has been impacted by modern siding, window replacements and modifications, and at least two additions. As such, the historic schoolhouse does not retain historic integrity and is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. This former schoolhouse is being inventoried as 70-01784 by the current study.



Figure 317. Mittman School at 2393 Mittman Rd where it was remodeled into a residence.
Photo taken October 31, 2020

Lone Tree School

The Lone Street School had been built by at least 1875 when there was notice of a meeting to be held at the Lone Tree School (*Muscatine Journal*, 17 Dec 1875). However, it was noted in an 1880 news item that the Lone Tree Schoolhouse had been in place since 1855 because the teacher hired in the spring term in 1880 was the daughter of a woman who had taught at the same school “25 years ago” (*Muscatine Journal*, 16 Apr 1880). In addition, the school is shown on the 1874 plat at this location, which is in the NW1/4, NE1/4 of Section 21 at the southeast corner of Stewart Road and 41st Street. The school continued to operate through at least 1960 when it was noted that the school was handling the 5th-8th grade students for the Fruitland District (*Muscatine Journal*, 8 Sept 1960). That news item noted that Lone Tree School was located on Stewart Road. By 1966, the school had closed and the Muscatine School Board was making plans to sell the schoolhouse (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Oct 1966). The Lone Tree Schoolhouse was among three others that were being sold including the Olive Branch School, Mittman School, and the Oak Grove School (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Oct 1966). However, the schoolhouse was not moved off site and remained standing until 2013 when aerial photographs document its demolition. The aerials indicate this was a front-gabled building, likely of frame construction. This location is now part of a graveled parking area for a recreational trail head at the old sand quarry pits (Ray’s Pond) at the southeast corner of Stewart Road and 41st Street South (Figure 318). The location may have some potential for intact archaeology pertaining to this schoolhouse; however, the surface has been impacted by the modern activity. This location will need to be subsurface tested to determine the depth of impact and how much of the original surface has been impacted. The Lone Tree School site is being recorded herein as site 13MC385.



Figure 318. Lone Tree School site (13MC385) today. Gravel drive is a parking area for recreation area.
Photo taken October 31, 2020

Olive Branch School

This school had been established by at least 1873 when it was noted that the Island farmers were meeting at the Olive Branch School (*Muscatine Journal*, 28 Mar 1873). It was shown on the 1874 plat map in the northwest corner of Section 20, which is about a half-mile northwest of its reported original site (see below) indicating that it had already been moved by 1874. In 1880, there was mention in the *Muscatine Weekly Journal* (26 Mar 1880) of the Olive Branch School in Sub-District No. 10, Bloomington Township, which is now in Fruitland Township. It was still operating in 1960 when plans were made to revamp the school to accommodate an influx of students. However, by 1966, the school had closed and the Muscatine School Board was making plans to sell the schoolhouse along with three others -- Lone Tree, Mittman, and Oak Grove (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Oct 1966). It was noted in 1968, that the former Olive Branch School was for rent (*Muscatine Journal*, 23 Mar 1968). In fact, the former Olive Branch Schoolhouse is still extant at its second location at the southwest corner of 41st Street and Grandview Avenue (old Hwy 61) confirming that it was converted into a residence following its closure. The building is still recognizable as a front-gabled frame schoolhouse and retains its front-gabled vestibule entry. This was a two-room school in its later years and had a playground in front, the area of which is still a grassy yard. The extant building has modern siding and replaced and/or boarded-over windows (Figure 319). The former schoolhouse in its current state lacks historic integrity and would not qualify for individual NRHP eligibility. The yard area may have some potential for intact archaeology of the school occupation of this site and is recommended for future survey.



Figure 319. Former Olive Branch School at its second location at 415th St and Old Hwy 61. It was converted into a residence after the school closed. Photo taken October 31, 2020.

The original location of the Olive Branch School is now an industrial park (Progress Park) at the southwest corner of 55th Avenue and 49th Street in the NE1/4, NW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 20. The school was not shown at this location on the 1874 map, which showed the school at the second location of Olive Branch where it remains standing today (see above). Therefore, the first location for this school would have dated from before 1874. This location has little or no potential for intact archaeology. In fact, the former site appears to have been built over by Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks (Figure 320).



Figure 320. First location of Olive Branch School, SW corner of 55th Ave and 49th St, in the Progress Industrial Park. Photo taken October 31, 2020.

Unknown School - Section 16

The 1874 plat map showed an unidentified school in the southeast corner of the SE1/4, NE1/4 of Section 16 on the north side of what is now 33rd Street South just west of the intersection with Stewart Road. None of the other plat maps to 1930 showed a school at this location. This possible school site is recommended for further historical research. The location is now a cultivated field, which is also recommended for future archaeological survey.

Island Methodist Church

In 1861, services were being held by the Methodist congregation in schoolhouses in the area. In 1868, a church board was organized for the purposes of choosing a site for the church and raising funds for its construction. Land was purchased from Edward and Maria Stewart in what would later become Fruitland Township and was then part of Bloomington Township. In 1868, the church was planned to be 36 x 56 feet with 18-foot ceilings (Figure 321). The church was erected in that year, with shelters for horses and buggies added in 1869. A ten-acre parcel for a cemetery was then deeded to the church. This became the Island Cemetery southwest of the church. The building was remodeled in 1968 to have restrooms and kitchen facilities between the church and the community hall, which had been added in 1936-37 (Figure 322). The front entrance was also remodeled with a porch flanked by planters added. In 1988, an educational wing was added to the church with subsequent updates to the interior of the church, the educational wing, and the fellowship hall. In 2000, vinyl siding was installed on the church and fellowship hall. In 1968, the Methodist Church joined with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to become the United Methodist Church (History of the Island Methodist Church by Janina Hawley, March 2018; Muscatine Journal, 30 Sept 1936).



Figure 321. Island Methodist Church circa 1890 (left) and in 1968 (right) showing the fellowship hall at the rear of the church. Source: History of the Island Methodist Church, 2018, by Janina Hawley.



Figure 322. Island Methodist Church, 2593 Stewart Rd. Photo taken October 31, 2020.

This church is still recognizable as the historic church building retaining the front-gabled orientation with cornice returns in the gable end. The entrance is still centered but now has a modern door and a front-gabled porch that shelters the entry. The building is covered with vinyl siding, and the spire appears to be a newer replacement of the historic bell tower. The church would not be eligible under Criterion C in its modern state but there is some potential for eligibility under Criterion A for possible historical significance that is recommended for further research.

Fruitland Baptist Church

The Fruitland Baptist Church was among the more recent churches organized in the township. The congregation organized a Sunday School in 1957 in a sweet potato barn in Fruitland. A concrete block church building erected in 1961 near the potato barn, with an addition added to that church the same year (*Muscatine Journal*, 19 Nov 1964). The new addition was to be used for Christian education, a nursery, and Sunday school classes. For a time, the potato barn was still used for Sunday school classes (Figure 323). In 1967, a 24 x 24 feet frame building was built, with a parsonage added in 1969 (*Muscatine Journal*, 11 Nov 1969 and 30 Dec 1969). In 1970, a new “auditorium” was built on the property and the potato barn was torn down. The auditorium became the new church and is a brick veneer building with a front-gabled orientation (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 May 2013). It is raised on a basement. The front entry in the gable end is reached by a tall set of stairs. A modern spire rises above the entry on the main roof ridge. A pediment supported by two round columns shelters the front entry. The 1970 church is still standing and in use (Figure 324). This church is now 51 years of age and does qualify for NRHP consideration; however, this building is minimal in its architectural design and styling and does not currently qualify for eligibility under Criterion C (architectural significance).

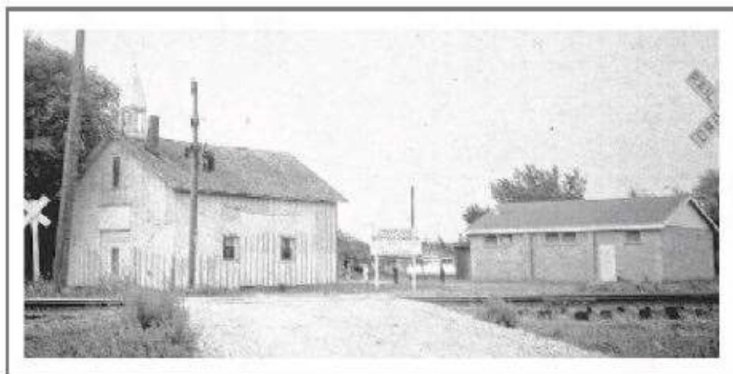


Figure 323. Original sweet potato barn (left) used by the Fruitland Baptist Church and the concrete block church (right) built in 1961. Source: *Muscatine Journal*, 24 May 2013.



Figure 324. Fruitland Baptist Church (5712 67th Ave W) built in 1970. Photo taken October 31, 2020

Fruitland Community Church

This church appears to have begun in the 1950s. It was noted in 1953 that a missionary was speaking at this church, with evangelistic services advertised that same year (*Muscatine Journal*, 24 Apr 1953 and 12 Jun 1953). There was another notice of missionary speakers in 1956 at this church but no mentions after the 1950s (*Muscatine Journal*, 16 Mar 1956). The location of this community church is currently unknown. The 1965 USGS topographic map shows a representation for a church on the southeast side of the intersection of Fitzsimmons Street and Moore Street, but there is no church currently extant at this location. It is suspected that this was the former Community Church.