

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Laurel Hill District School  
other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 33 West and County Route 5/9 ☐ not for publication  
city or town Spencer ☒ vicinity  
state West Virginia code WV county Roane code 087 zip code 25276

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide x local

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

August 29, 2019  
Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register

   determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register

   removed from the National Register

   other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Laurel Hill District School

Name of Property

Roane County, West Virginia

County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/NO STYLE

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE/Sandstone & CONCRETE

walls: WOOD/Weatherboard

roof: METAL/Aluminum

other: ASPHALT (Porch roof)

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Roane County, West Virginia

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

Located at the intersection of U.S. Route 33 and Field Hollow Road, County route 5/9, the Laurel Hill District School sits on bottom land on the headwaters of Laurel Run of the Left-Hand Fork of Reedy Creek. The deeded parcel to the school district was 1.11 acres (see Figure 1); however, in 2009, a 0.21-acre parcel was negotiated in order to adjoin the property with secondary route 5/9, Field Hollow Road. Laurel Run is divided into two branches on the property: to the south, it gradually ascends adjacent to Field Hollow Road (CR 5/9) to the top of the watershed dividing ridge it shares with Lick Fork; and, to the east, it ascends steeply from this bottomland point of its confluence up to the top of the ridge at county road 5/10, Lion Fork, a watershed dividing ridge road. This steep hill just to the east of the school is deeply shaded and still has a few remnants of laurel shrubbery, hence its name-Laurel Hill District School.<sup>1</sup>

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### Narrative Description

See continuation sheets

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<sup>1</sup> James Paxton, an elderly man and former student who attended Laurel Hill School in the 1940s, remembers thicker growth of laurel on this hill. This information was obtained during a 2016 oral interview conducted by the author of James Paxton.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

### Period of Significance

1898-1967

### Significant Dates

1898

1927

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Board of Education of Curtis District

### Period of Significance (justification)

See continuation sheets

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Laurel Hill District School was moved ca. 1927 during the property's Period of Significance. Knowing this, the property must meet Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties. The property is significant under

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National Register Criterion A: Education as the sole surviving district school on a main corridor in Roane County. The building's 'new' location (since 1927) has a setting and general environment that is compatible with its historic (1898-1927) location and is located less than 400' away from its original location. Despite its move, the school building seamlessly functioned as an educational facility during the entire Period of Significance. For more than half a century, the Laurel Hill District School operated in the same manner: offering a free education, and more, to local children; thus, the building is locally significant under Criterion A: Education and meets Criteria Consideration B.

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

A venerable one-room schoolhouse built in the peak era of the one-room sub-district schoolhouses, the Laurel Hill District School remained a viable educational edifice and adapted to both the age of utility services and the mandate for hot lunches well into the paradigmatic shift of public education to the consolidated school model. Laurel Hill retains its most original elements of form and material integrity, unfolding this story within its architecture well into the twenty-first century as the lone remaining sub-district school on a main corridor in the county. The Laurel Hill District School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under *Criterion A: Education*. The period of significance is 1898 – 1967 which represents the school's period of operation.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheets

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

See continuation sheets

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheets

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other

Name of repository: Roane County Historical Society Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): RO-0411

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.11 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17N 462817E 4292748N  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheets

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheets

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Frank Unger, Vice President

organization Past Respects, LLC

date November 2018

street & number 412 Church Street

telephone 304-927-1717

city or town Spencer

state WV

zip code 25276

e-mail frank@pastrespects.com

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### Photographs:

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

See continuation sheets

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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**Narrative Description (continued)**

*Exterior Description*

The original Laurel Hill District School, a twenty-two-foot-wide by thirty-foot-deep wood frame single room structure, was placed in service as a school in 1898. Language in a Roane County Deed of sale (recorded in Deed Book 103 page 482) places the general timeline of the construction between 1887-1897. The same deed, along with a map (see Figure 2), validates the removal of the school building, from its original location, which was in the center of the current US 33 highway. The upgraded highway right-of-way made it necessary to relocate the school to its current location, ostensibly around 1927. The new site was a slight down slope in elevation from the original site.<sup>2</sup>

The single-story, front-gable frame building is clad in weatherboard and sits on piers made of sandstone (original) on the girder beam and concrete (new) on the perimeter (Photo 9). A twelve-foot-deep addition was added to the front of the small wood frame 1898 building, providing service bays for the students - a cloak room on the left side (East) of the front entry foyer and a kitchen on the right (West) - both with entry doors from the foyer passage.

The four-bay west elevation of the former schoolhouse has three large six-over-six single hung windows spaced equally along the wall, along with a one-over-one single hung window in the center of the front addition wall (Photo 3). The west and south elevations both provide ample banks of natural light into the former school, although the south elevation features only two of the same large six-over-six single hung windows. The east elevation had no windows, as this was reserved for the blackboard, which extended the entire length of the wall. The blackboard was replaced by two modern windows in a later renovation. The north elevation (façade) contained a simple stoop over a centered door with a transom window. A shed roof porch was added when it was converted to a residence in the 1960s. On the north gable is the original placard dating the school to 1898. All overhangs on the school are 12" with full poplar soffits.

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<sup>2</sup> Although moved during the Period of Significance (1898-1967), the building remains eligible for the National Register as it meets Criteria Consideration B. The school is the sole surviving district school in Roane county on a main corridor. In addition, the new setting is compatible in character with the original setting, approximately 400' away (see Figures 5 & 6).



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Typical on one elevation of these one-room schoolhouses is a continuous bank of windows, which floods the school room with sunlight. Thusly, the natural light determines the optimal student seating orientation. This west and south elevation window placement of the Laurel Hill District School is not ideal; it is conjectural whether Laurel Hill's builders considered these principles of natural light design and placement. Also, the school was moved and could have been reoriented. One author prescribes that certain builders followed this ill-advised west and south elevation placement of windows: "A.....flawed design was one in which they placed windows just on the south and west sides of the buildings. They believed that with north-side windows, light would double-shadow the students' work area. As a photographer, I find this idea inconceivable, because north light is so soft that it only acts as a fill to the contrasting light that comes from south-side windows. [Too], school sessions took place during the months of a low sun, so having just south and west windows only worsened the contrasting lighting situation."<sup>3</sup> This design element was usually prioritized in these early one-room schoolhouses that were built before electric lighting. So, the lighting within the schoolhouse was less than satisfactory; a lighting upgrade was a needed improvement as soon as electricity became available. In addition, the site is restricting to the east where Laurel Hill and its mature stand of trees blocks much of the morning sun, so the orientation of the site is not ideally gifted with a continuous bathing of the solar path. The three-window fenestration of the west elevation was correct as to desk orientation and the preference for light streaming over the non-writing shoulders of the dominant right-handed scholars. According to the existing evidence and an interview with three siblings who attended the school, the seats faced northerly, towards the front of the school room.<sup>4</sup> The east elevation (or blackboard wall) has two modern window units, probably placed into the wall in 1967, when the school was renovated and converted into a residence.

*Interior Description*

The walls, ceilings, and floors are all original tongue and groove three-quarter inch planking. At the center of the large room ceiling is a uniquely supported stone chimney, which would have originally been the flue for a stovepipe. The bottom stone, the bearing ceiling thimble, is a unique T-shape hand cut piece. The usual bearing seat for the ceiling thimble stone (Photo 12a) is compression and relies on short cross-section header joists installed at an inward angle to allow for full wedge support (see Photo 12b). The fourteen by fourteen by eight-inch high hewn flue stones have a six-inch diameter port. The chimney capstone is served by a smaller port on each gable end, which ports connect to the center port (see Photo 13).

A full width single bay ten-foot deep addition was added to the front of the schoolhouse circa 1927. A four-fuse panel box and electrical service was installed on the front wall in the cloak room. The kitchen, also located in this front addition, was also plumbed at this time and was located along the west elevation opposite the cloak room. The evidence suggests that the addition and these utilities were added during the major improvements initiated in 1927. At this time a well was drilled in the front west corner of the

<sup>3</sup> Paul Rocheleau, *The One-Room Schoolhouse*, New York: Universe Publishing, 2003, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Frank D. Unger, Oral interview with three Paxton siblings (followed by years of attendance): Alice (1933-1941), Gladis (1940-1947), and James (1943-1951), 2016.

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schoolhouse (see Figure 3) to provide water for the new kitchen (it was covered over later and is no longer in existence).

Logic dictates, too, that this major upgrade, the addition and introduction of utilities, would be done after securing the deed. The two windows placed in the addition, one each in the cloak room and kitchen, are also different in style and composition than those original wood sash in the west and south elevations. They are one-over-one single hung units; several of the panes in the six-over-six windows in the main/original school room are wavy float glass, supporting a pre-1910s construction. Too, the understructure joists in the classroom run typically crosswise to the length of the original schoolhouse, while the joists in the front addition run parallel to the length of the original school.

*Alterations*

In 1967, the building ceased to operate as a school, and the deed reverted to the property heirs. The school was then converted to a residence. At that time a front porch was added (to the c.1927 addition), and the interior space of the main room was subdivided into a living area, two bedrooms, and a bath for its use as a single-family dwelling. The kitchen remained in use as such and the cloak room was converted to a utility room. All the interior walls and ceilings were covered with paneling and panel boards. Upon selective demolition of the original joining wall between the main classroom and the kitchen in the winter of 2009, an inspection certificate slipped in a plastic sleeve, issued by the State School Superintendent, was discovered still hanging on the tongue and groove wall sheeting. It indicated that the school was inspected in 1965 and it was judged to be in good standing for three more years. The interior has been untouched since that time.

*Statement of Integrity*

Although renovated into a single-family home shortly after it ceased to function as a school in 1967, the renovation materials were attached to and/or covered over the original interior walls, floors, and ceiling- all tongue and groove three-quarter of an inch planking. The original trim and openings were used in the new layout, as were the five panel door slabs and stamped metal New York style hardware, all of which will be reused in existing original openings. The hand cut stone chimney pieces were all in place. A new cap was hand crafted to match the badly deteriorated one. The ceiling thimble was simply "capped" at the ceiling with a suitable size steel can stuffed into the six-inch flue. The six-over-six single hung wood sash were original and were shop rehabilitated using existing wavy pane glass. They are awaiting installation into the restored existing frames. Eighty percent of the wood clapboard siding and soffit, as well as window/door frames and trim are in place and will be rehabilitated. The roof is a 2012 installation of 5-V groove metal to replace the badly worn metal roof. The entire structure was lifted ten inches and leveled to facilitate the installation and maintenance of modern crawl space mechanical systems. New perimeter foundation piers of same size as the badly deteriorated 1927 installed/poured concrete piers were replaced in exact locations. The original girder beam piers are sandstone and still in place.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

*Educational History in Roane County and Spencer, West Virginia*

"...in the month of July 1863, the county was divided into seven townships (changed to district by Constitution, 1872) [Curtis was one of the districts] ...each of these had its own Board of Education, consisting of three residents of the district, elected by the voters of the district. The Board of Education by the law divided its district into units, numbering them for identification and calling them sub-districts, and provided a teacher for each sub-district."<sup>5</sup> Independent free schools were slow getting started in these districts until Legislative Delegate H.T. Hughes introduced and secured passage of a bill in 1873 to create an Independent School District carved from 1,000 acres lying in and adjacent to the Town of Spencer. This legislation was the motivation for other districts to activate their own boards and to finally provide locally accessible free public education.

The elected Boards of Education of these districts were also authorized through the Legislature to hold bond issue elections to make improvements and build new facilities.<sup>6</sup> These "schools came to be established in [sub-] districts small enough that every child could walk to school. Members of local school boards were elected [and even held elections] to pass [bond levies]. They discussed and decided the school's location at a country cross-roads or on an acre of land donated by a local farmer, usually in the center of the [sub-] district. Most of these schools [pre-1910s, before standardized plans] were wood frame buildings of a vernacular type."<sup>7</sup> Unknowing of these retrospective standards, the newly formed Board of Education for the Laurel Hill sub-district of the Curtis District chose a one-acre plat of bottomland from the H.H. Robey farm centrally located within its sub-district to build its vernacular inspired wood frame school house.

A new school was built in Spencer (county seat for Roane County) in 1896; it was expanded in 1898 and again in 1902. One of the two rooms in the 1902 addition was "fitted and furnished for the high school department in 1905. A high school course of two years was prepared by W.S. Morris, and the same was adopted by the Board of Education August 20, 1906."<sup>8</sup> Laurel Hill District School, built just ahead of the high school department, would continue to serve as a feeder school for the new high school, scarcely five miles to the east, for the next sixty years. The decision to add on to the Laurel Hill school in 1927 also rested with the Board of Education of the Curtis District, for just a few years later "the County Unit Bill became a law on May 22, 1933. [This law] abolished 398 districts and their governing boards, 54 of which were independent, and substituted in their stead 55 county districts and as many five-member boards of education."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> William H. Bishop, *History of Roane County West Virginia-From Settlement until 1927 A.D., Spencer: West Virginia Historical Society, 1927, p.123.*

<sup>6</sup> State Superintendents Report, "The History of Education in West Virginia", Charleston Tribune Printing Co., 1907, p. 231.

<sup>7</sup> Raymond Bial, *One-Room School*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999, pp. 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> State Superintendents Report, 1907, p. 232.

<sup>9</sup> Ambler, Charles. H., *A History of Education in West Virginia*, Huntington, WV: Standard Publishing Company, 1951, p.

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A ca. 1956 article from the Roane County Reporter indicated that during the 1925-26 school year, [William] Bishop listed 155 [school] houses and lots on which they stand, with 6,311 pupils and each school having a term of nine months. For the then current year, 1955-56, there were two (2) high schools, seven (7) consolidated (grade) schools, one (1) two-room school, and seventy (70) one-room schools. At the beginning of the term (1955-56) there were 71 one-room schools, but the Ryan School was closed at the end of the sixth month. Curiously, a consolidated K-8 school was built in Spencer in 1949. Reason would dictate that this ultra-modern post-war educational edifice, representing the new paradigm in public education, would have supplanted the Laurel Hill School, especially in the face of thirty-four years of this new centralized decision making; yet, Laurel Hill survived as a public school.

*History of Laurel Hill District School*

As the only surviving wood frame schoolhouse on a major corridor in Roane County, the Laurel Hill District School spanned the entire "golden age" of the development and evolution of free, accessible public education in Roane County.<sup>10</sup> Laurel Hill District School was constructed by a nascent District Board of Education empowered by the West Virginia Legislature authorizing both its creation and ability to electioneer levies at the ballot boxes. "The first report of the first county superintendent, Thomas Boggess, covering the term ending in 1866, gives the number of schools as 17. By 1927, there were 155 schools and lots on which they stood that belonged to several district boards of education."<sup>11</sup> The Curtis District Board of Education wasn't content with the one room school house model of the time, for it was expanded by two service rooms in 1927 and continued on through this period of local operation and control well into the era of the county-wide central school board model. Despite the paradigmatic shifts in education, such as utilities to the outlying rural regions (1920s and 1930s), hot lunch program (National School Lunch Act of 1946), and the post war transportation enhancements and its concomitant, consolidation, it continued to thrive as a public school from 1898 until its closure in 1967.

With its addition, the schoolhouse quickly responded to the utilities of a secure, safe water supply and electricity; the kitchen serving hot meals was ahead of the 1946 National School Lunch Act.<sup>12</sup> Laurel Hill was built in the midst of the grand era of the one-room district schoolhouse, and that it continued its vitality as a venerable stalwart and credible school well into a new era in such close proximity to the grand capital educational outlays in the Spencer District is highly improbable.

The original Laurel Hill sub-District School, approximately twenty-two-foot-wide by thirty-foot deep frame structure, was constructed ca. 1898. Deed book 103 page 482 places a general timeline of the construction of the schoolhouse between 1887-1897. However, the following firsthand account came from an interview

<sup>10</sup> See section titled "Developmental history" at conclusion of Section 8.

<sup>11</sup> Jack Nida, *Images of America: Roane County (WV)*, Mt. Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Unger, oral interview, 2016.

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the author had with the eighty-five-year-old neighbor up Field Hollow from the school, Mr. Bales, on December 19, 2014:

Mr. Bales began, "The schoolhouse was built in 1898, for the dummies who painted the school last, in the seventies, against Mrs. [Francis Robey] Sutton's<sup>13</sup> advice, painted over the wording on the sign. It reads *Founded in 1898*, I remember." Mr. Bales continued with more enthusiasm, "there was a well here somewhere," while looking around and under the schoolhouse. Then I followed him inside as he continued his story. "Mrs. Sutton told me when they put the kitchen in way back when they plumbed it in." Mr. Bales asked, "Was there a sink there?" to which the author replied, "Yes." "Was there a pump under the sink?" Mr. Bales asked, to which the author again responded, "yes, a shallow well pump", but reasoning there was a cistern that collected roof water, the author offered "and see the depression over there?", pointing to the depression just along the structure. Mr. Bales corrected, "No. That was the septic system installed later when the school was remodeled into a house", he retorted "Now go find your well".

We both looked under that area of the school and found a three-quarter polybutylene line snipped just above grade. In a sense of finality, he enthused, "I'll bet that is it, now go follow it young man. You'll find the well". I have yet to trace the well; yet, the old school plaque is still painted over and mounted on the top of the front gable.

The school functioned in this above expanded fashion for the next forty years, from 1927 through 1967, when its use was discontinued and a reconveyance clause returned the land and improvements back to the H.H. Robey heirs. The Robey heirs renovated the school to a single-family residence, which it remained as such for some twenty-five years, into the early 1990s, when it was abandoned. The heirs sold the property in 2010 to Past Respects, LLC, an historic preservation company, who then entered into a sales agreement and construction contract with a local oil and gas company. This rehabilitation will return the venerable schoolhouse once again to an educational facility, as it will serve as a corporate training center for its new owner.

*Developmental history/additional historic context information*

In order to substantiate the claim that the Laurel Hill District School is the only remaining schoolhouse along a major transportation corridor/thoroughfare in Roane County, the WV SHPO's historic property inventory was consulted (examining previously identified and documented properties in Roane County), focusing on the results of a county-wide (unincorporated areas only) survey conducted in 2011 by Skelly & Loy. The survey studied historic properties along routes 36, 27, 60, 58, 56, 119, and 19 in the southern part of the county and 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, and US Route 33 (which roughly follows the former Gilmer,

<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Frances Robey Sutton is the daughter of H.H. Robey, now deceased. She leased the Robey farm long-term to Mr. Bales and also rented the school out for a residence from 1967 into the 1980s.

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Ripley and Ohio Turnpike) in the northern part of the county. The survey identified 295 resources: 230 dwellings, 36 churches, and the remaining documented buildings were schoolhouses and/or commercial buildings.

Due to the somewhat dated nature of the Skelly & Loy report and to determine both the locations and integrity of the extant schoolhouses, the nomination preparer, Past Respects, LLC, conducted a follow-up windshield study in October 2018. Roane County has four main highways that intersect in the town of Spencer. US 33 dissects the town east and west. US 119 comes into Spencer from the south and follows US 33 east out of the county. State Route 14 (Parkersburg Road) comes into Spencer from the North. The October 2018 driving tour focused on these primary routes and concluded that no other schoolhouses existed on these main routes except for the Laurel Hill schoolhouse.

There is a District school that has been relocated and used as a museum. In 1986, the Newburne School, was relocated from the Smithfield district near Looneyville, to Heritage Park in the city limits of Spencer, less than four miles to the east of Laurel Hill school. It is open to the public only during special events to demonstrate a typical District schoolhouse. It has been restored and is furnished with period specific desks and books.

In October 2018, copies were obtained of the Grantee record for Roane County Board of Education (BOE) from 1866-1972 showing Grantors from which property was purchased. Each of the first six pages of the nine-page list (legal size) spans approximately 10 years per page, evident of the volume of purchasing schoolhouse property until 1929. As evidenced by the list, each entry cannot be counted as one school. The Board of Education sometimes needed more land than was available from one owner so they would purchase adjoining parcels of land from separate owners for the same schoolhouse property. Duplicate entries were noted from the same owner where separate adjoining tracts of land were purchased. Laurel Hill School is one of these with two entries from the same owner.

Copies were also obtained of the Grantor record for Roane County Board of Education from 1866-1976 showing Grantees to which property was sold. Quite a number of these sales were Right of Way easements for utility companies. The deeds included a Reversion Clause, whereby the property would revert back to the owner, or their successor, upon the school ceasing operation. Included in many, but not all, deeds was a statement similar to "building to be removed within 6 months" or "school to be torn down" or "building has been dismantled." Beginning in 1955, the number of properties sold increased substantially. Interestingly, the first three pages span almost 100 years (1866-1957) while the last three pages span almost 20 years (1957-1976). This demonstrates that the BOE would no longer possess property every two or three miles, as consolidation was well underway, and the era of the district schoolhouses was drawing to a close.

One school from this era is the Billings school on Reedyville Road (Rt 10) off State Route 14. It is privately owned and has been published in the local paper for its preservation activity. Another school still standing is on Big Creek Road (Rt 15/4) off River Road (Rt 34) in Walton, 14 miles south of Spencer on Rt. 119. It has been converted to a house. A few have been turned into camps. The greatest majority are either abandoned

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and in poor condition or already demolished. Without a comprehensive field study that is specific to district schoolhouses, a definite number cannot be determined. Although, in comparison to the original 150 plus, there is a small number of schoolhouses remaining at all.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated boundary of Laurel Hill School is shown on the accompanying survey map. The nominated boundary includes the original 1.11-acre tract known as "FIRST TRACT" as described in Deed Book 471, page numbers 137-141, Roane County Courthouse.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The recommended National Register boundary follows that property described as the 1.11-acre tract in Deed Book 471, page 141, Roane County Courthouse. The land was associated with the Laurel Hill District School from 1898 through 1967, the period of significance.

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**PHOTO LOG**

Name of Property:      Laurel Hill District School  
Address:      U.S. Route 33 and County Route 5/9  
City or Vicinity:      Spencer  
County:      Roane  
State:      West Virginia  
Photographer:      Frank D. Unger, Past Respects, LLC  
Date Photographed:      August 16, 2019

Photo 1:      North Elevation  
Photo 2:      South Elevation  
Photo 3:      West Elevation  
Photo 4:      East Elevation  
Photo 5:      Cloakroom facing south elevation  
Photo 6:      Classroom facing south elevation  
Photo 7:      Original bead board/trim, corner at classroom/kitchen wall, facing north  
Photo 8:      Kitchen facing southwest  
Photo 9:      Pier detail south elevation, west elevation corner  
Photo 10:      6 over 6 single hung window facing west elevation  
Photo 11:      Foyer, front entry facing south elevation  
Photo 12a:      Chimney thimble in ceiling  
Photo 12b:      Chimney thimble in attic  
Photo 13:      Chimney cap, facing west  
Photo 14:      Restored sash in shop  
Photo 15:      Landscape of parcel facing north  
Photo 16:      Doors from kitchen, cloakroom and foyer in shop

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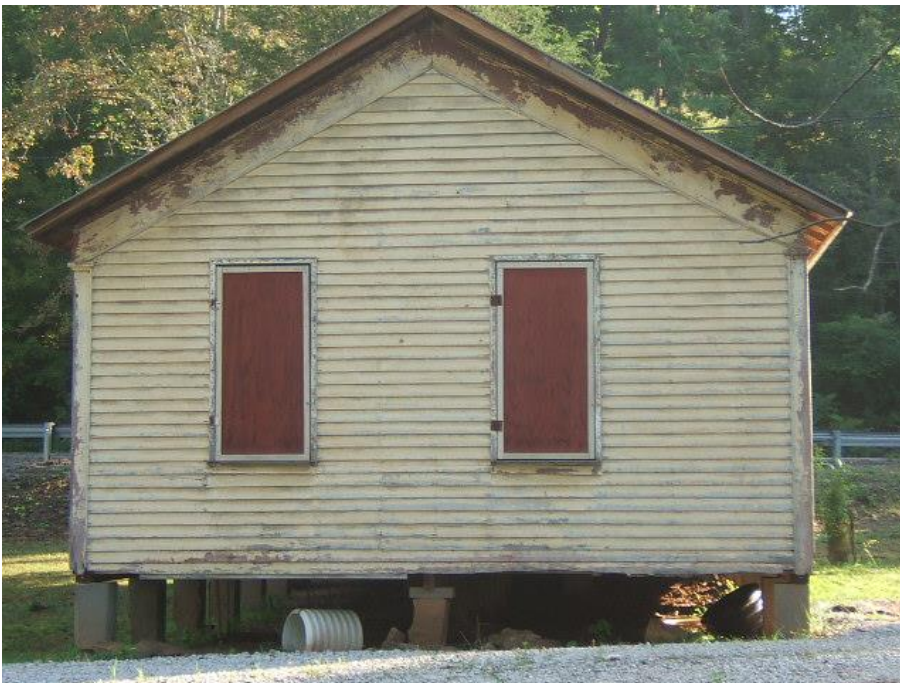
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**Photo 1: North Elevation**



**Photo 2: South Elevation**



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**Photo 3: West Elevation**



**Photo 4: East Elevation**

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**Photo 5: Cloakroom facing south elevation**



**Photo 6: Classroom facing south elevation**



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**Photo 7: Original bead board/trim, corner at classroom/kitchen wall facing north**



**Photo 8: Kitchen facing southwest**

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**Photo 9: Pier detail south elevation, west elevation corner**



**Photo 10: 6 over 6 single hung window facing west elevation**

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**Photo 11: Foyer, front entry facing south elevation**



**Photo 12a: Chimney thimble in ceiling**



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**Photo 12b: Chimney thimble in attic**



**Photo 13: Chimney cap facing west**

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**Photo 14: Restored sash in shop**



**Photo 15: Landscape of parcel facing north**

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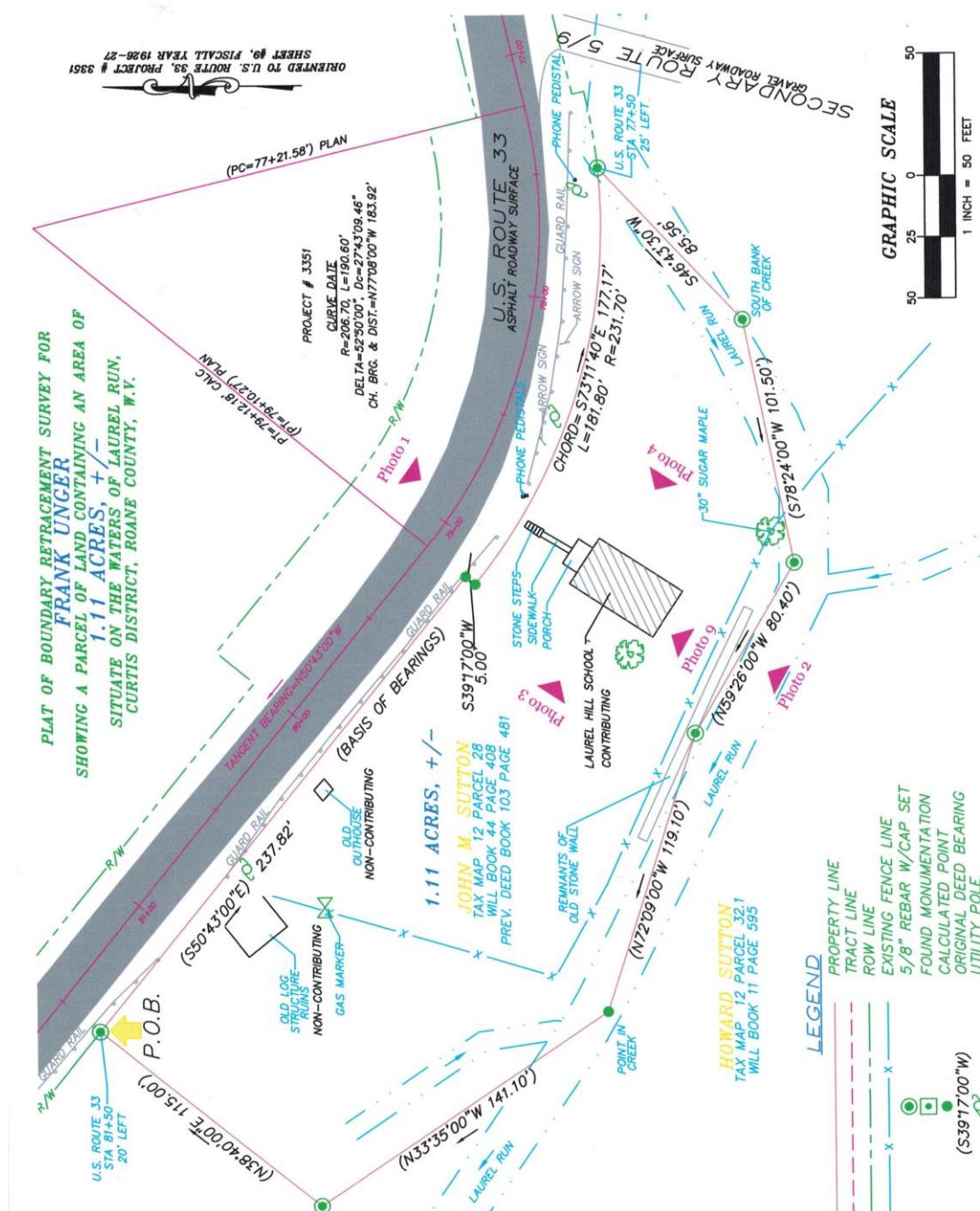
**Photo 16: Doors from kitchen, cloakroom and foyer in shop**



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**Figure 1: Laurel Hill District School, Plat Map**

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Original  
Location

New location  
as of 1927

Figure 2: Pre-1927 map obtained at the Roane County Courthouse, Flag indicates original schoolhouse location

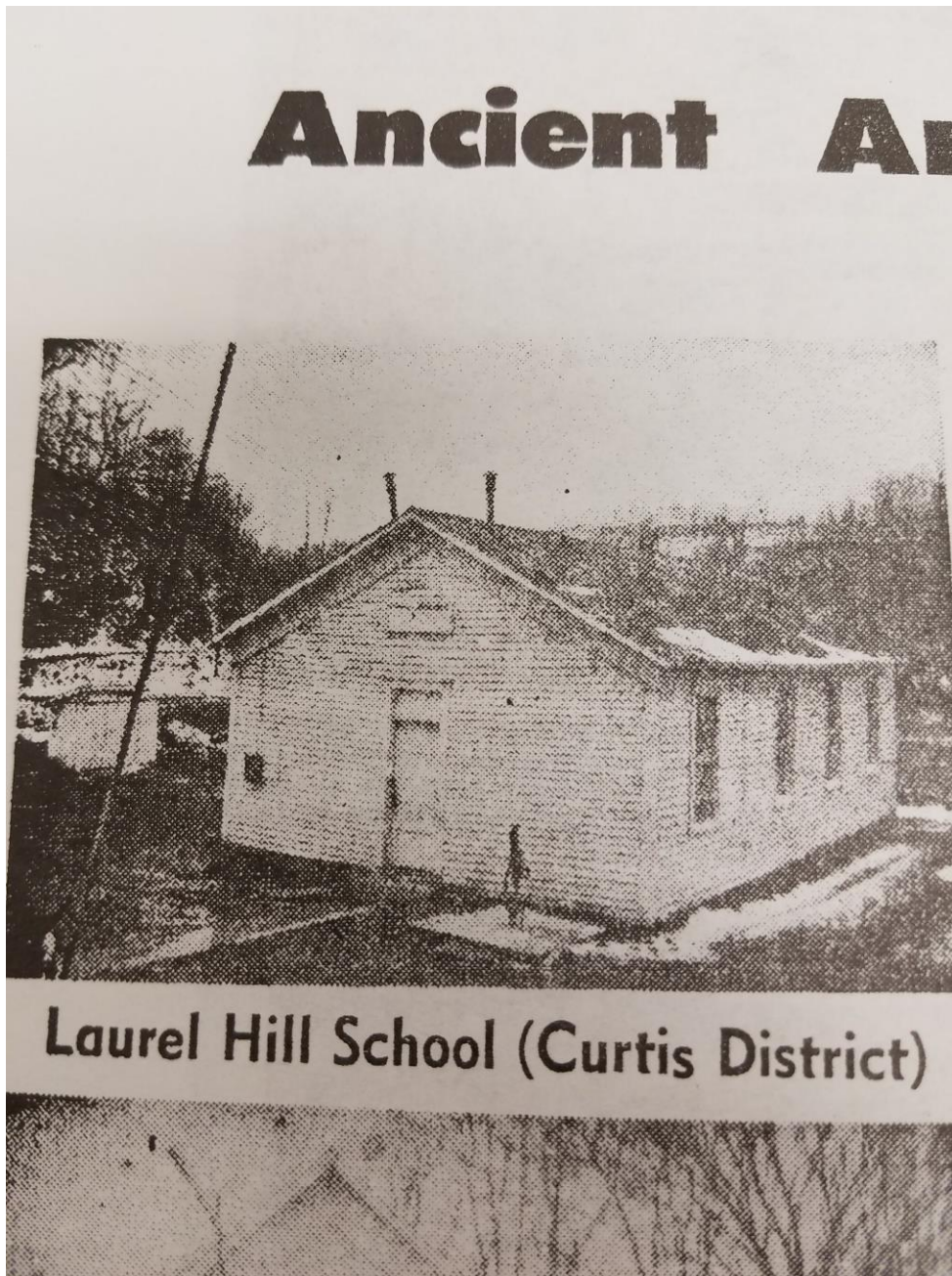
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**Figure 3: Historic photo dated ca. 1927. Courtesy Roane County Historic Society.**



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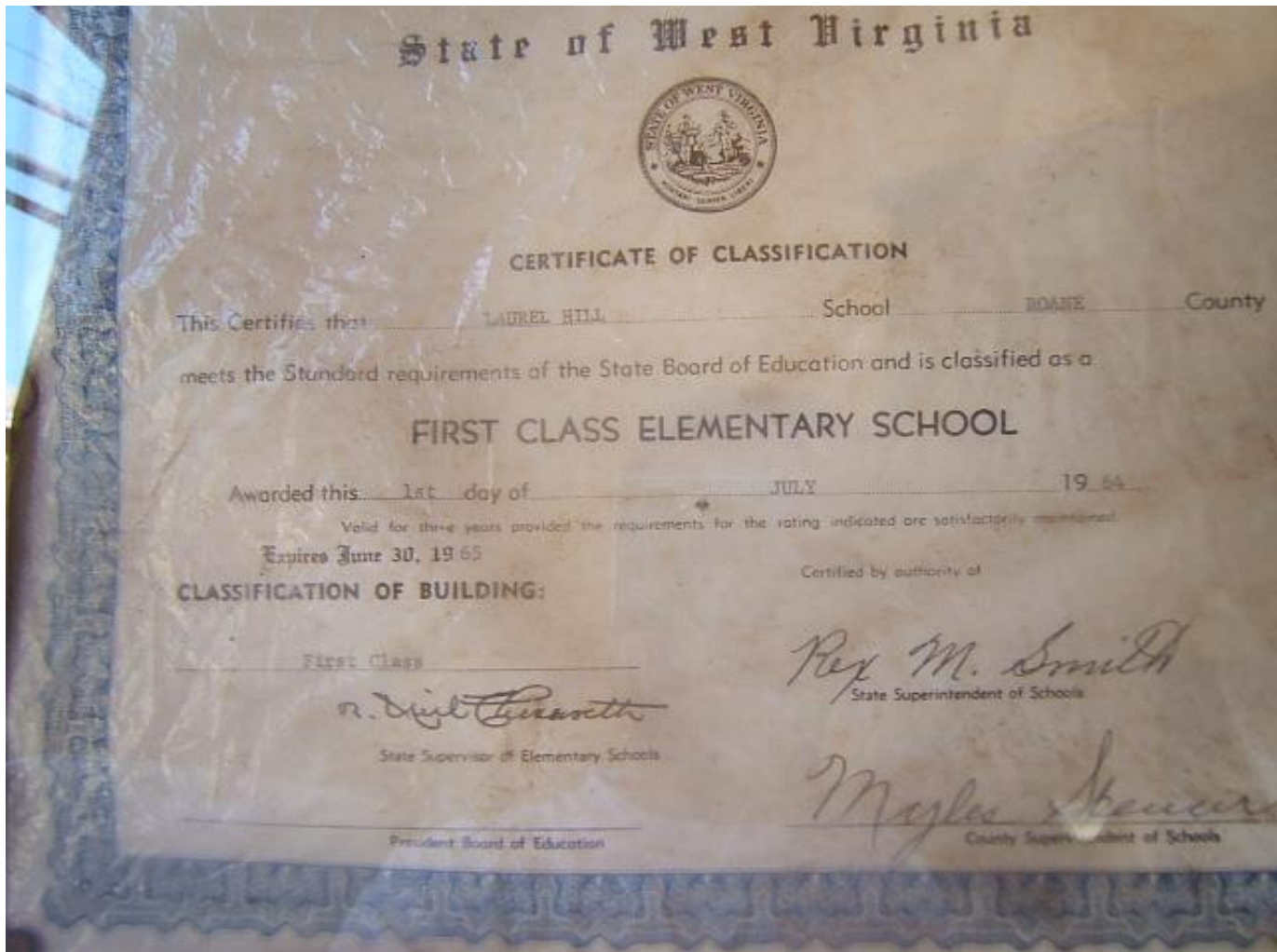


Figure 4: Certificate of Classification found in the Laurel Hill District School. Courtesy of Frank D. Unger.



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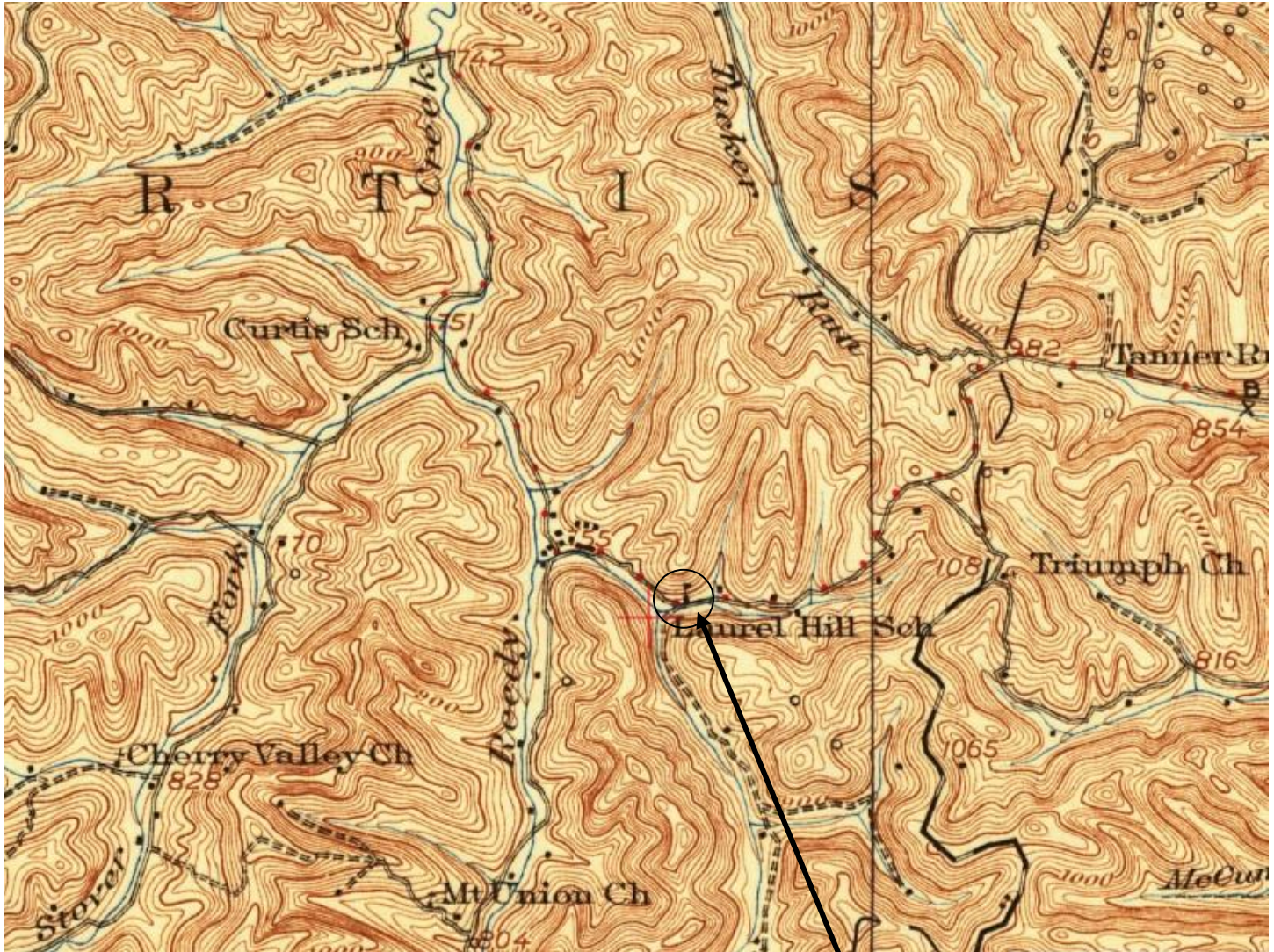


Figure 5: USGS Topo Map, 1928 Spencer Quad, showing original school location



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Figure 6: USGS Topo Map, 1957 Penial Quad, showing location following ca. 1927 move

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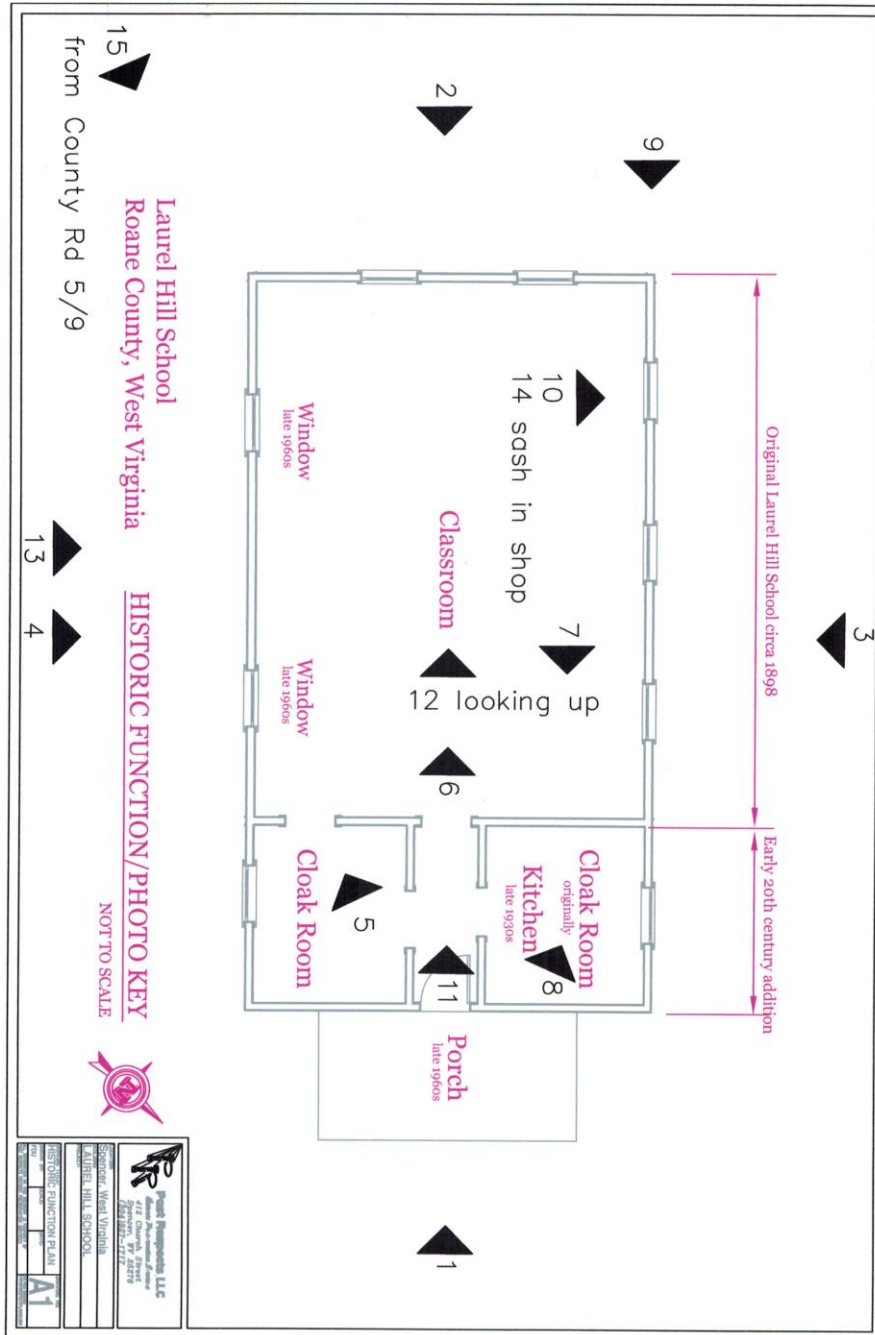
Roane County, West Virginia

County and State

N/A

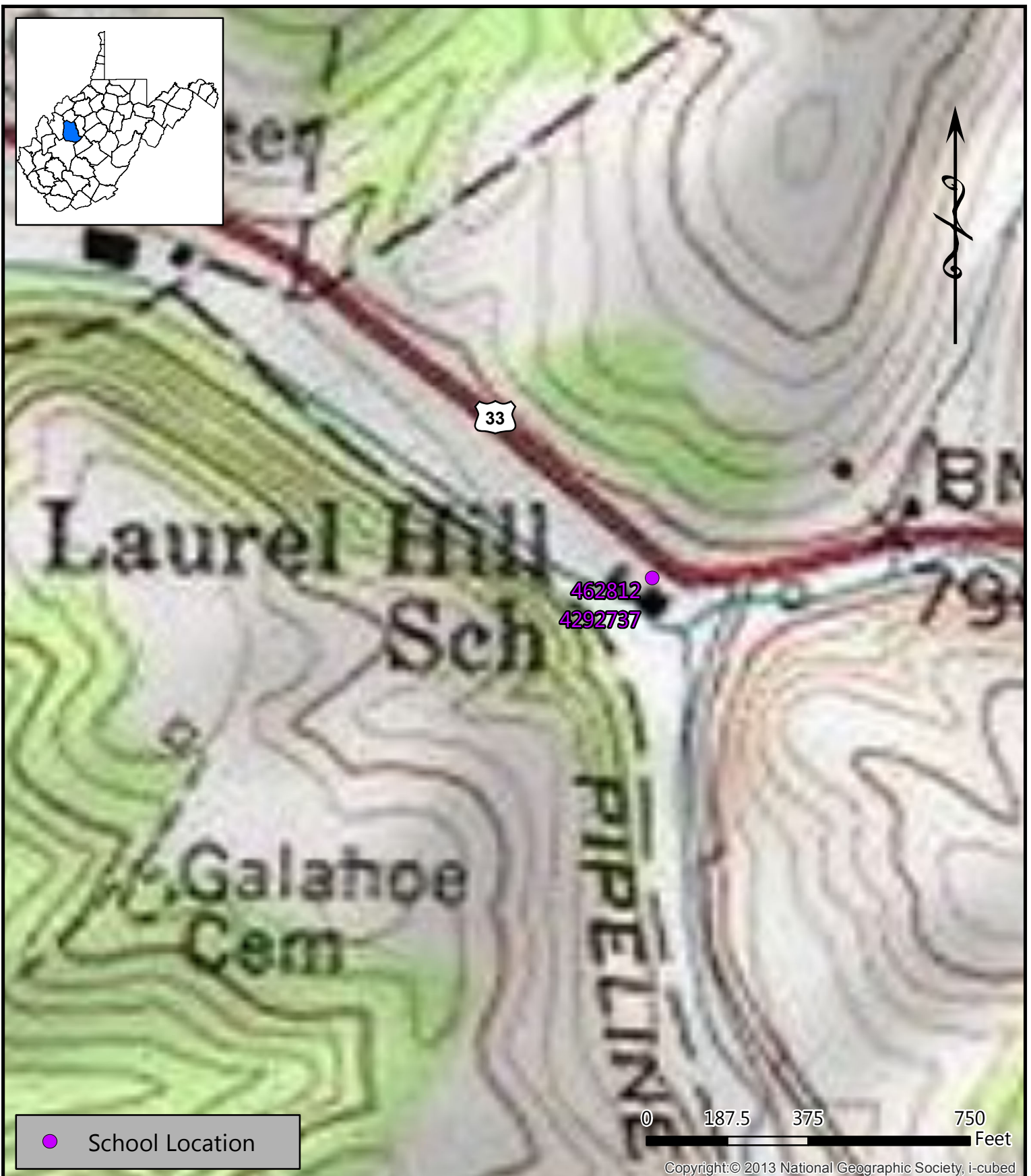
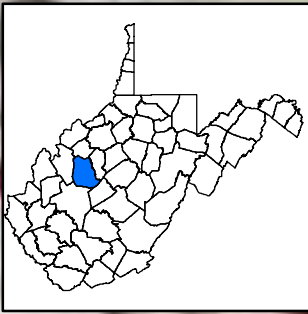
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**Figure 7: Photo log and floor plan**



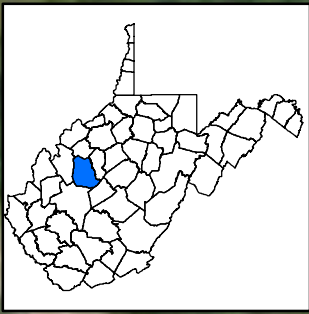


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Date: 5/21/2019

Laurel Hill District School  
Roane County - West Virginia





33

462812  
4292737

0 62.5 125 250  
Feet

● School Location

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Quad: Peniel  
Date: 5/21/2019

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