

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Chamois Public School  
other names/site number American Legion Hall

2. Location

street & number 402 South Main Street [ n/a ] not for publication  
city or town Chamois [n/a] vicinity  
state Missouri code MO county Osage code 151 zip code 65024

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

*Mark A Miles*

*06/02/03*

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[ ] entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet [ ].

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet [ ].

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register

[ ] other, explain see continuation sheet [ ].

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0 building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	2 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	2 total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
 Education/school

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**Current Functions**  
 Social/meeting hall

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 Other: public school building

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see continuation sheet [ ].

**Materials**  
 foundation Stone

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walls Brick

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roof Metal

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other Wood

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see continuation sheet [ ].

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

See continuation sheet [x]

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Education

**Periods of Significance**

1876-1942

**Significant Dates**

1876

1896

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

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

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 7.36 acres

**UTM References**

A. Zone 15	Easting 607140	Northing 4281020	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title See continuation sheet  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

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

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

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

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

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name American Legion Post 506  
street & number 402 South Main St., P.O. Box 101 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Chamois state Missouri zip code 65024

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National Park Service

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Section 7 Page 1

Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

**Summary:** Constructed in its original form in 1876 and significantly expanded in 1896, Chamois Public School is located at 402 South Main Street in Chamois, Osage County. Situated on a steep bluff in the south part of town, the schoolhouse is a two-story, plus raised basement, red brick building with a three-story bell tower with a pyramidal top. The 1896 portion of the L-shaped, north-facing building rests on a coursed rubble foundation which rises several feet corresponding to the height of the basement. Four round clock faces adorn the wooden attic of the white-painted tower and a tall spire originally used as a flagpole rises from its peak. A four-sided stair turret of two stories is in the northeast corner. A slightly projecting bay in the primary elevation terminates in a brick gable which fronts a smaller dormer. The hipped, intersecting roofs are covered with silver-colored metal. The expansion more than doubled the size of the original building. The schoolhouse measures approximately 53 feet from east to west and 45 feet from north to south. The 1876 building measured approximately 26 feet from east to west and 30 feet from north to south. Overall, the exterior closely resembles its appearance after it was expanded in 1896. In the late 1940s or 1950s, several basement windows and an entrance were infilled but because the building is relatively large, the impact is negligible. Interior changes include modifications to basement restrooms and removal of a wall portion between the first floor classrooms. A preponderance of historic interior material remains including wood moldings and enframements, stairways, several blackboards, light fixtures, flooring and doors. The top floor is largely intact from when the building was last used as the Chamois schoolhouse, in 1942, and both the top and main floors retain their original tall ceilings. Portions of the building need tuckpointing and various other repairs but it appears to be structurally sound.

Fine views of Chamois and the surrounding area are available from the upper floor of the Chamois Public School. On clear days in winter, the Missouri River can be seen from the north upstairs windows. To reach their lofty classrooms, pupils climbed four flights of concrete steps which are intact on the steep, terraced front lawn of the schoolhouse. Square metal posts with round tops, some with side railings, remain. The lower flight is accessed by a walkway from South Main Street. An additional flight of steps leads to a metal deck at the main entrance in the tower. A buttressed rock and concrete retaining wall is along the west side of the property adjacent to South Main Street. A historic concrete sidewalk curves around the front and sides of the building and extends rearward toward the southwest corner of the schoolyard. Just southwest of the schoolhouse is a noncontributing barbecue pit dating from circa 1951. The collapsed concrete foundations of two old restrooms which were historically associated with the schoolhouse are in a wooded zone which slopes downward east of the schoolhouse. The foundations are not included in the resource count. An elevated water storage tank southeast of the schoolhouse, constructed on an easement in 1990, is counted as a noncontributing structure. A short, asphalt driveway leads from South Main Street to an area used for parking behind the schoolhouse. Except for the wooded area east of the building and a couple of other mature trees, the property is treeless.

**Elaboration:** Chamois, population about 400, is located in east-central Missouri on river bottomland and bluffs in an area drained by several creeks. Chamois Public School stands on a 7.37 acre tract (six lots) located between South Main Street and an undeveloped portion of South Cherry Street, bracketed by Third Street on the north and Sixth Street on the south. Fourth and Fifth Streets are undeveloped in the area of the school property.

**North Elevation:** The primary (north) facade of the Chamois Public School measures 53 feet from east to west. This elevation was constructed in 1896, across the front of the original 1876 building. From the east, the elevation begins with a two-story stair turret (two planes are visible from the front). The north plane of the turret abuts the east wall of the slightly projecting bell tower. The bottom third consists of coursed stone rubble and the remainder is of brick construction. Bricks are laid in a common bond throughout the building. A small, single unit window with a segmental arch is at the upper level of the north plane. Window arches throughout the building consist of double rows of header bricks. Lugsills appear to be concrete or dressed stone. A segmentally arched, double-hung 1/1 window is at the upper level of the northeast plane and a window in the foundation portion has been infilled with concrete blocks. These and other segmental arches throughout the 1896 addition contain white painted panels with an incised design. A small, decorative gable sits on the turret roof.

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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

The entrance in the base of the bell tower is capped with a semicircular arch containing a two-pane transom. A double row of header bricks and a slightly projecting brick eyebrow define the curve. Aligned with the transom bottom, a stone stringcourse extends across the face of the tower. In about 1990, after being damaged by vandals, old double entrance doors were replaced with a single door flanked by infill panels. Centered above the entrance is a double window with a segmental arch containing an inset panel with an incised design. The upper portion of the tower begins with an entablature, above which is the attic opening containing what appears to be the original, and still functioning, school bell (dated 1908). The attic is capped with a pyramidal top supported at the corners by elements incorporating pilasters. Two square columns with simple capitals are spaced evenly between each corner, creating three vertical openings. Gables in the four sides of the top enclose clocks with black dials. The clocks are said to have been installed in 1906.<sup>1</sup> At some point, decorative bracing (present in a circa 1900 postcard view) was removed from the clock gables. The modillion-enhanced cornice is broken into L-shaped segments. Below a flight of steel steps leading to the first floor entrance, a former entrance in the stone foundation of the raised basement has been infilled with concrete blocks. After Post 506 purchased the building in 1947, several basement windows and a door were blocked for privacy purposes. All of the foundation infill is obvious, since concrete blocks are used instead of rough-surfaced stone and the original lintels and lugsills are intact.

The roof over the 1876 portion of the building is covered with pressed metal with a decorative sawtooth pattern. The roof over the 1896 portion is sheet metal with standing seams.

Continuing west, the wall section between the bell tower and a projecting bay contains a segmentally arched, double-hung 1/1 window on the first floor and, at the second floor level, the building's only round window. The round window is divided into quarters. A flat-arched window in the raised basement has been blocked.

*Continuing west along the facade, a slightly projecting bay terminates above the roofline in a brick gable. The gable is separated from the upper story by a band of decorative brickwork. A tall, narrow window is centered in the gable and a dormer behind it provides support. The projecting bay contains three segmentally arched double-hung 1/1 windows at the first floor level and, directly above them, three double-hung 1/1 windows with semicircular arches at the second floor. Double-hung, 2/2 windows with flat arches are in the raised basement under two of the first floor windows. Between them, a circa 1920s basement entrance to what had been the boy's restroom has been blocked over. The blocked entrance (originally a window, in 1896) is obscured by a small, one-story nonhistoric brick addition used for storage. Continuing west from the projecting bay, the primary facade is windowless at all three levels.*

**West Elevation:** The part of the west elevation dating from 1896 is intact with original fenestration on all three levels. Windows are similar to those in the primary elevation. Beyond the 1896 portion of the schoolhouse, the west side of the 1876 building continues for several feet. Unlike the later portion, walls of the original building consist of courses of brick to grade (or nearly to grade) before the stone foundation begins. At the first and second floor levels, double-hung 2/2 windows with segmental arches are aligned near the juncture with the south wall of the newer portion but a window in the raised basement has been infilled. Unlike segmentally arched windows in the 1896 portion, the older upper sash are shaped to match their lintels. Consequently, panels with incised designs are not used in the original building and are found only in the addition. A metal fire escape begins at the upstairs window in the oldest part, descends to a first floor landing opposite a window in the 1896 portion and then descends to two stone steps.

**South Elevation:** The south elevation is about evenly divided between the rear of the 1896 addition and the rear of the 1876 building. Beginning with the 1896 portion, a segmentally arched window is west of center at the first

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<sup>1</sup> Everett E. Cordrey, who was graduated from the high school in 1906, said the clock was installed in that year, according to George Kishmar, *The History of Chamois, Missouri*, Jefferson City: Jeff-City Printing, Inc., 1976, p. 37.

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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

floor level, directly below an upstairs window with a semicircular arch. An entrance to the basement kitchen (originally an entrance to the girl's bathroom) is covered by a small, frame, nonhistoric gabled addition of one story. In the rear of the 1876 building, two evenly spaced 1/1 windows with segmental arches are in the basement portion, and one segmentally-arched, double-hung 2/2 window is centered in each of the floors above. Anchor plates for two tie irons are visible in this elevation, evenly spaced between the basement and first floor.

East Elevation: The east elevation consists of the east facade of the 1876 building and the stair turret portion of the 1896 addition. This elevation measures approximately 45 feet from north to south. Original fenestration is retained but a foundation window opening has been converted into an entrance into the basement dining room. A small frame structure with a shed roof abuts the schoolhouse at the basement entrance. Two double-hung windows with segmental arches serve the first and second stories. A smaller window of the same type is in the raised basement. The window openings are one above the other. The turret has a segmentally-arched window between the first and second floors. A basement window opening in the southeast plane of the turret has been blocked.

Interior: The floor plan for the two upper levels is identical, consisting of two classrooms measuring 25 feet from east to west by 30 feet from north to south, and a hall measuring approximately 23 feet from east to west by 10 feet from north to south. The southeast rooms occupy the space of the original building. The hall provides access to a wooden stairway in the northeast corner turret. The stairs serve all three levels. Each of the rooms can be entered from the hall, and the rooms themselves also communicate. Ceilings on both upper floors, covered with several layers of peeling wallpaper, are nearly 11 feet high. Windows are seven feet high. Sections of blackboard with chalk railings are intact on all three levels. On the first floor, a north-south wall between the two classrooms was partially removed after the period of significance in order to create a large assembly area for American Legion Post 506 and its Auxiliary, which acquired the property in 1946. A removable wood partition was placed across the stairway on the second floor in order to limit public access to the private meeting rooms upstairs. The railings were not disturbed.

The top floor where the high school classrooms probably were located is more intact than the main floor because the doorway in the wall between the rooms was not enlarged as it was on the floor below. A large wood cabinet next to the inside wall contains the clockworks. The intricate system of gears and pulleys is housed within a framework of varnished wood. A ladder on top of the cabinet extends through a trapdoor into the attic for access to the school bell and clock faces. The hand-wound clock system apparently was installed in 1906.<sup>2</sup>

The raised basement contained a classroom which was nearly as large as those on the floors above. It measured 24 feet by 29 feet. In the late 1940s or early 1950s, this room was converted into a dining space by the American Legion. To create a serving window, a small opening was made in the wall between the kitchen and dining area. The boy's restroom was divided, creating separate men's and women's restrooms measuring 7½ feet by 13½ feet. The former girl's restroom was converted into a kitchen measuring 14½ by 23 feet. The original restrooms had been constructed after the Chamois water and sewer systems were installed in 1923. Outdoor toilets probably were removed from their concrete foundations at about this time. The only access to the basement restrooms was from outside the building.

The ambience of Chamois Public School is that of a turn-of-the-century schoolhouse, notwithstanding the fact that a large portion of the building was constructed two decades earlier. Throughout the interior, a preponderance of historic material remains. The school seats are gone but original wood moldings and enframements, wainscoting, stairways, several blackboards with chalk trays, light fixtures, four-panel doors with transoms, and flooring are present. An old piano is in a third floor classroom but whether it once belonged to the school was undetermined.

<sup>2</sup>George Kishmar, History of Chamois, Missouri, Jefferson City, MO: Jeff-City Printing, Inc., 1976, p. 37.

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**Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri**

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Other Resources: Other resources on the property include a barbecue pit, an elevated water storage tank, foundations, a retaining wall, a propane tank, concrete steps and metal fence posts. The ca. 1951 barbecue pit consists of a rectangular structure with a gable roof, located several feet southwest of the schoolhouse. The structure is supported by six steel poles embedded in concrete. The pit, made of cinder blocks, is at the end nearest the schoolhouse. The pit is counted as noncontributing because it was constructed about nine years after the nominated building was last used as the Chamois Public School, after the period of significance.

The water tank, built in 1990 by Maguire Iron/Tank, Inc., is 90 feet high. The design resembles an upside down bicycle horn. It stands near the southeast corner of the property (on Lot 12) and is counted as noncontributing.<sup>3</sup> However, the tank's distance from the schoolhouse minimizes its impact.

The stone retaining wall (at some point buttressed with concrete), foundations, steps and fence posts are important and add to the ambience but are not counted as either contributing or noncontributing.

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<sup>3</sup>On July 20, 1989, for the purpose of building a new water tank, Post 506 granted the City of Chamois permanent easement to the east 60 feet of the south 60 feet of Lot 12, Block B of Townley and Knotts Addition, as recorded in Osage County Deed Record Book 206, Page 153.



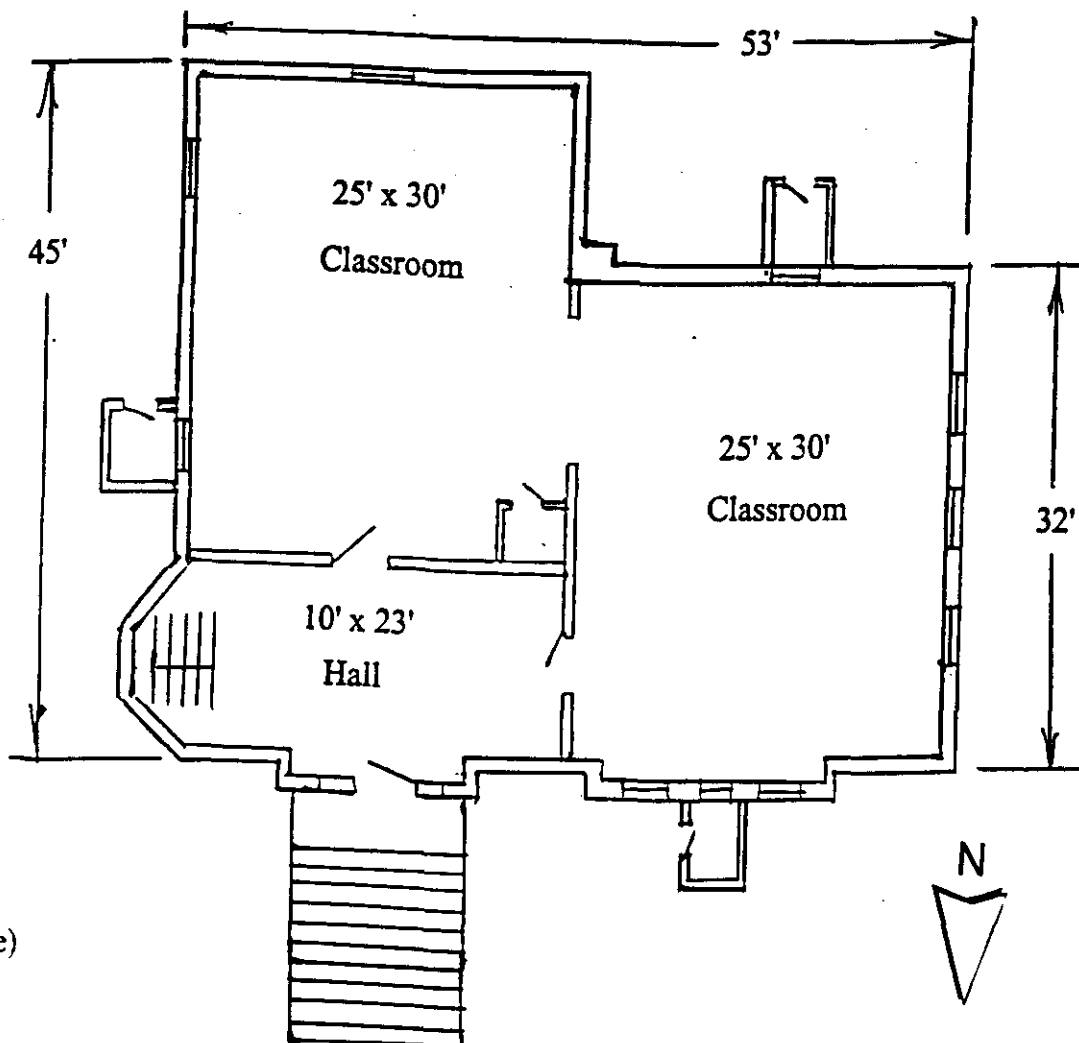
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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

First Floor Plan



(Not to Scale)

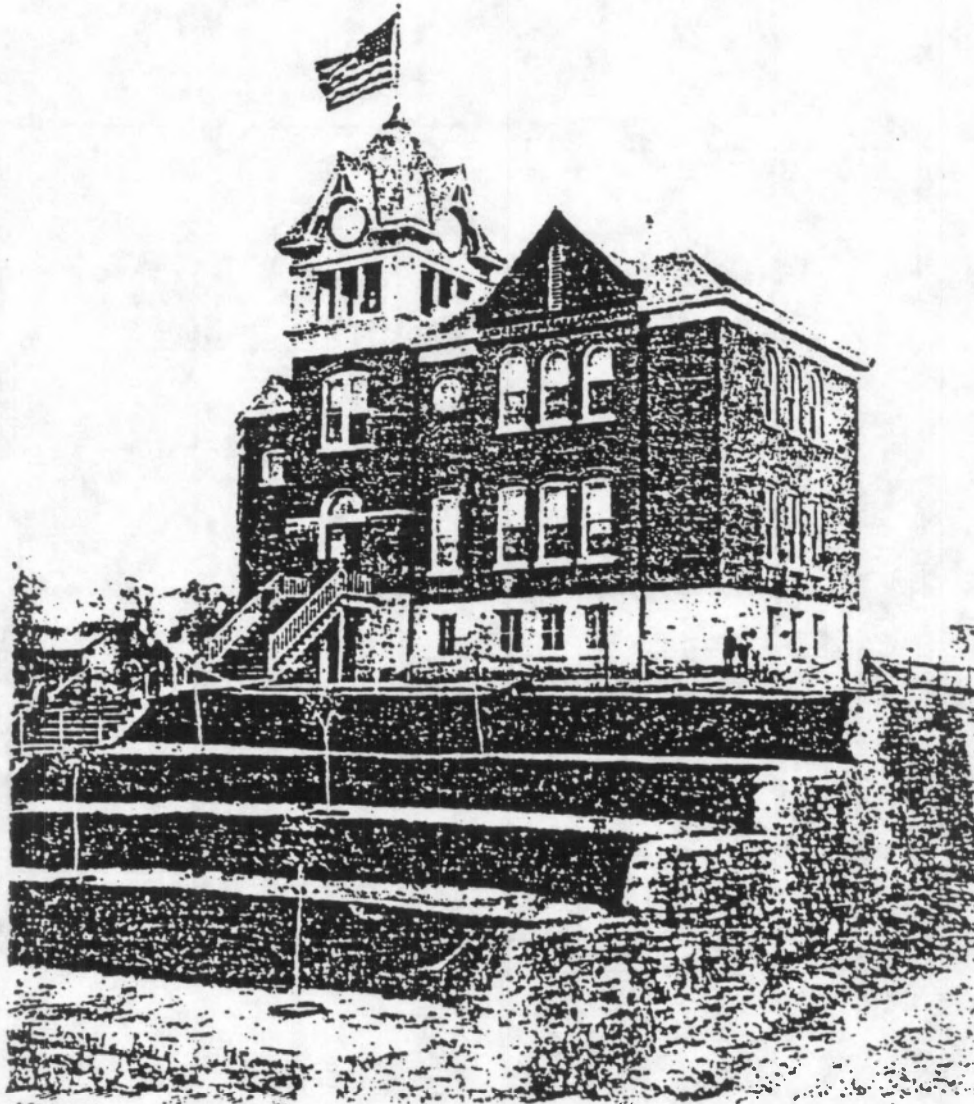
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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

Postcard view of Chamois Public School (ca. 1902)



Chamois, Mo.

Public Graded School. Built 1896

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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

**Summary:** Chamois Public School in Chamois, Osage County, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with local significance in the area of Education. Chamois Public School represents the development of high schools in rural Missouri during the late 19th and early 20th century periods of educational growth. Constructed in its original form in 1876, atop the tallest hill in town, Chamois Public School was expanded in 1896 with the addition of a bell tower and an impressive new primary facade while incorporating the original building into the plan. While Chamois Public School did not offer a high school curriculum during its early years, it was nonetheless the first public high school in Osage County prior to 1900. The old schoolhouse is an impressive artifact from the time when only a handful of small towns in Missouri's rural areas provided a public school with a high school curriculum. Today it is the only extant 19th century high school building in Osage County. A sense of the building's past is easily conveyed by the overall setting, including flights of concrete steps which are intact on the steep, terraced front lawn. The period of significance represents the building's years as a public school from the time of its completion in 1876 through the spring term of 1942, when classes were moved to a new building.

**Elaboration:** Chamois was the largest city in Osage County at the time the Chamois Public School was constructed, in its original form, in 1876. Platted in 1856 by James M. Shobe, the town owes its existence to the Missouri Pacific Railroad which stimulated construction there for several decades. In the 19th century as Chamois became a freight center with a roundhouse, repair shops, stockyards and other rail facilities, its population is believed to have reached approximately 1,000 before dwindling to less than half that number today. Linn, the county seat and Osage County's largest city today (population 1,148), was much smaller then but apparently had an earlier high school than Chamois. Linn's early high school, however, was private rather than public. Apparently, the premier high school class of Chamois Public School was the Class of 1894.<sup>4</sup> Information about high schools was not included in the annual reports of the state superintendent during the earliest years of the Chamois Public School. Chamois' first appearance on the published list of high schools was in the Forty-Ninth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri for the school year ending June 30, 1898.

Missouri has a strong background in the promotion of public education. The original 1820 state constitution called for free schools, and a 1904 history boasted that "Missouri has the largest permanent productive school fund of any state in the Union" and "school attendance for Missouri was above that for the United States at every age period."<sup>5</sup>

Little is known about public schools in Osage County (if any) prior to about 1858. The earliest schools were private and many of them were taught by ministers. In 1858 there reportedly were 48 school districts in Osage County containing 40 schoolhouses attended by 949 children.<sup>6</sup> The first public school in Chamois opened in about 1866.<sup>7</sup> That two-room school was replaced 10 years later by the original incarnation of the present building. As reported in the 1889 county history, the "white school [the Chamois Public School in its original form]...is held in a three-story (including basement) brick structure capping the southern bluffs; it was erected in 1876 at a cost of

<sup>4</sup> Forty-Ninth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Co., 1899, p.108; and "Manual of the Public Schools of Chamois, Missouri," Chamois: Chamois Enterprise Printing Co., 1902, p. 23. The "Manual" includes the names of the graduates for the classes of 1894 through 1898.

<sup>5</sup> The State of Missouri: An Autobiography, edited by Walter Williams, Columbia, Missouri: E. W. Stephens Press, 1904), p. 197.

<sup>6</sup> History of Cole, Moniteau, Morgan, Benton, Miller, Maries and Osage Counties, Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889, pp. 685-686.

<sup>7</sup> George Kishmar, History of Chamois, Missouri, Jefferson City Printing, Inc., 1975, p. 37.

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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

about \$3,500.<sup>8</sup> Chamois eventually had a total of three schools, including the black Maceo School and a Catholic school. Maceo, a one-story brick gable front building, was constructed in 1884 at the east end of town on Rose Road, a continuation of First Street. The black school had been organized six years earlier, in 1878. Maceo School closed in 1955 and the building was razed a few years ago. Pupils of the Catholic faith attended public schools in Chamois prior to 1898, and in a small frame building of their own until 1921 when a two-story brick schoolhouse was constructed just north of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Church, on Main Street between First and Second Streets. Parochial classes were discontinued in 1969, and the building was taken down a few years later.<sup>9</sup>

When the Chamois Public School was constructed in 1876, the disruptions of the Civil War had been overcome and public education in Missouri was enduring growing pains. Problems of the time included the fact that the school term varied across the state and the required length was only four months. Compounding the problems, there was a lack of information at the state level because many school districts were not submitting the required reports to State School Superintendent R. D. Shannon, according to his comments in the annual state report on public schools. To help deal with these and other education issues, Shannon urged the General Assembly to provide for "an agent in each county to have in charge the welfare of the schools of his county, and to guard the interests of the county and State." Shannon advocated a system of county superintendents who would regularly visit their school districts, examine, counsel and instruct teachers, and explain the school law to district clerks and other personnel. The county agents would assure that the districts "make the reports which the law requires, and without which it is impossible to provide for the necessities of the schools at the proper time." Instead of four months, Shannon recommended that every district be required to maintain classes for not less than six months a year. While not implemented for several years, these recommendations provide insight into the state of public education in Missouri in 1876.<sup>10</sup>

The percentage of the school age population attending public schools increased only slightly between 1860 and 1870, but jumped nearly 20 per cent between 1870 and 1880. By 1876, Missouri's school age population was reported to be 723,861. Since not all districts were providing information, however, this number must be considered on the low side. Specific information for Chamois was not located, but in Osage County, 4,301 persons were of school age (between the ages of 6 and 20) for the school year ending in 1877. Of these, 139 were African-Americans. The number actually attending the county's 58 public schoolhouses (three were black) was much lower than those of school age, however: 2,058 white and 43 black. There were 34 male and 25 female teachers in Osage County.<sup>11</sup> The first teachers at the newly constructed Chamois school reportedly were Arthur A. Blumer, who also served as principal, and Laban Hull.<sup>12</sup>

In Missouri, the high school movement began prior to the Civil War. Beginning with St. Louis, Missouri's three largest cities were the first to establish public high schools in the mid-19th century. The state's premier public high school was constructed in St. Louis in 1853, the first year that Missouri actually provided tax money to finance a public school system. Suddenly a quarter of the state's income was earmarked for education, enabling the creation of many new schools and districts. St. Joseph established a high school prior to the Civil War, closed it

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *History of Cole, Moniteau, Morgan, Benton, Miller, Maries and Osage Counties*, op cit.; *Kishmar*, op cit., p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> *Twenty-Seventh Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri*, Jefferson City: Regan & Carter, State Printers and Binders, 1876, pp. 6-12.

<sup>11</sup> *Twenty-Seventh Report*, pp. 6, 26, 38, 42, 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Kishmar*, p. 37.

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Chamois Public School  
Osage County, Missouri

during the war, and reopened it in 1864. The first high school in Kansas City followed three years later, in 1867.<sup>13</sup> By 1876, approximately 30 Missouri towns offered some part of a high school curriculum but fewer than 20 provided a full high school course.<sup>14</sup> In 1887, the state increased its support of public education by appropriating a third of its revenue for schools. By the time the Chamois Public School began offering a basic high school curriculum after its expansion in the 1890s, more than 30 high schools were offering four-year curriculums. There were also more than 100 two-year and three-year high schools in Missouri but despite the growth, the high school movement lagged in many areas and much of the state's population still did not have access to a secondary education.<sup>15</sup>

Growth continued and by 1910 there were 131 first-class high schools (those meeting the state's requirements for a four-year curriculum), 56 second-class (three-year curriculum), 74 third-class (two-year curriculum) and 290 unclassified high schools in Missouri. But of the 38 counties lacking a first-class high school, several were considered unlikely to establish one for several more years without state assistance. Ten counties lacked an approved two-year high school, and Maries County was cited by the State Superintendent of Education as an example of a county that apparently would need financial aid to establish even a minimal two-year facility.<sup>16</sup>

Eight grades were taught in the Chamois Public School before it was expanded with an addition of two rooms on the west side in 1896. In 1895-96, the year immediately preceding expansion, there were three teachers (one served as principal) and an enrollment of 208. For the 1896-97 school year, two teachers were added (for a total of five) and at least some high school classes were offered for the first time. Enrollment climbed to 229.<sup>17</sup> The Chamois Public School was not among the high schools listed in the annual state reports for 1896 and 1897. Its first appearance in an annual state report was for the school year ending June 30, 1898, when it appeared on the list of "Other High Schools." This probably meant that basic high school-level classes were being provided (with the exception of a science program), but that school officials had not applied for or completed the lengthy inspection/classification process. No science labs existed so zoology, botany, chemistry and physics (considered of special importance to mechanics and farmers) were not taught at Chamois during this period. Twenty-two students attended the high school that year and eight of them were in the senior class.<sup>18</sup> Ten graduates were in the Class of 1894, apparently the high school's first: Mary Cecelia Bautzer, Clara Boggs, Margaret May Crutsinger, Josie Albertine Ernestmeyer, Lou Maria Joachim, Mattie Rosa Joachim, Charles Frederick Kossman, William Conrad Miller, Terrance James Murphy and John Samuel Robinson. While the Chamois school district did not expand its facilities and hire additional faculty until 1896, the first graduating class probably was comprised

<sup>13</sup>Duane Meyer, The Heritage of Missouri, St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1970, pp. 491-492.

<sup>14</sup>Twenty-Ninth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Carter & Regan, School Printers and Binders, 1879, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup>Meyer, p. 492.

<sup>16</sup>Sixty-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1912, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup>Forty-Seventh Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1897, pp. xxv, xli; Forty-Eighth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1898, p. 135.

<sup>18</sup>Forty-Ninth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1899, p. 108.

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of students who were in the seventh and eighth grades at the time of expansion. From 1894 through 1899, 30 students were graduated from Chamois.<sup>19</sup>

In 1899, R. H. Bryan (chairman of the Osage County Board of Education) summarized the state of education in Osage County in the Fiftieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri (for the school year ending June 30, 1899):

With a force of seventy-two teachers, thirty of whom belong to the "Foundation" reading circle, and with three times that number of school directors, who seldom visit or quarrel with their teachers, the educational interests of Osage county are slowly but surely improving. In evidence of the above fact there may be seen on each of forty-nine hills a nice new school house. It is true that in most cases the houses are poorly ventilated, improperly lighted, equipped with some apparatus, a fairly good teacher and an increased enrollment.

About half of our schools have libraries which contain on an average, thirty-five volumes each. Through the instrumentality of the Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, whose kindness we have not as yet taken advantage of, we expect to be able soon to supply many other localities with good books. The state course of study is in the hands of every teacher in the county and is being used as completely as the conditions of the school and the ability of the teacher will permit. The outlook is hopeful. Osageans are in great majority loyal citizens and many a man among them who can neither read nor write, heartily supports the cause of education and sends his children to school.<sup>20</sup>

While not mentioned by name, the Chamois Public School probably was considered one of the "nice" new schoolhouses on hills even though it was actually an older, recently expanded building. A movement to upgrade Missouri schoolhouses had been under way for years, and placing them on reasonably high ground was a rather basic consideration, if only for protection against flooding. In 1900, plans and specifications for one, two, four and six-room schoolhouses were included in the annual state superintendent's report.<sup>21</sup> After this, plans and specifications apparently became a regular feature in the state reports. None of the examples in the 1900 report look quite like the Chamois Public School, but it clearly belonged in the same class as a "Four-Room Brick" erected at St. James in Phelps County for \$4,900. That two-story building also had a three-story bell tower, windows with round and segmental arches, a recessed entrance and decorative brickwork.

In 1901, high school development in Missouri was greatly boosted when the legislature finally authorized the consolidation of school districts. Most importantly, the consolidation legislation allowed the use of public funds to support transporting children to and from school. Before the days of all-weather roads and modern transportation, however, it was common for parents in rural areas around Chamois to board their older children in town so they could attend high school after graduating from the country schools. Osage County rural schools of the period had names like Deer Creek, Flat Rock, Hope, Oak Ridge, Potts, Flora, Byron, Cooper Hill, Cadet Creek, and "the German School."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>"Manual of the Public Schools of Chamois, Missouri," pamphlet dated 1902, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup>Fiftieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1900, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup>Fifty-First Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1901, pp. 47-57.

<sup>22</sup>Meyer, p. 492; Gary Kremer, "Osage County Survey Report," 1990, p. 39.

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Chamois Public School  
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Chairman Bryan also was quoted concerning the state of public schools in Osage County in the Fifty-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri for the school year ending June 30, 1901:

At our last institute we organized a teacher's reading circle by dividing the county into three sections and giving each member of the Board of Education charge of one division. There are monthly meetings at various places in each division, "averaging" six members in attendance. There are about twenty active members in the county. The subjects usually discussed at these meetings are "nature study," "Scott's organic education," "practical management," and "Course of study." All our teachers are supplied with courses of study and are urged regularly to plan their work by it to the end that there be more system and uniformity throughout the county. Besides the State outline, each teacher is supplied with a copy of the Illinois State Course of Study. About sixty per cent of the pupils of the county are pursuing, regularly, the course prescribed. There are two schools doing high school work, the quality of which in some subjects is not entitled to be called first class on account of lack of laboratories. Fifteen pupils are taking high school work and three possibly will be ready for college at the close of the present term. The introduction of a course of study furnishes a purpose, a plan. By increasing the number of libraries and insisting on the importance of nature study, the schools are less "hateful" to the children.<sup>23</sup>

Bryan's reference to two schools doing high school work in Osage County almost certainly refers to the school at Linn as well as the one at Chamois. Linn apparently had a private high school somewhat earlier than Chamois offered high school classes in its public school. Linn probably began providing a public high school curriculum at around the turn of the century, however, although this school was not included in the annual state reports until a few years after the first references to the high school at Chamois. The old school building at Linn is no longer standing.

After 1901, Missouri schools were consolidated for elementary as well as high school purposes but the typical consolidated school had a graded or elementary course plus a high school with a two, three or four-year curriculum. In 1902, the Chamois Public School provided a three-year high school curriculum. At Chamois during this period, a student completing the seventh grade who wished to attend high school began the next school year as a sophomore (there was no freshman class). The complete course of study at Chamois in the early 20th century covered ten years. Mathematics, history, English and Latin were general high school subjects at about this time, while grade school work was devoted to reading, writing, spelling and geography, along with language, history and arithmetic. Botany and zoology classes had been added to the high school curriculum but not physics or chemistry, due to the lack of a laboratory. The specific high school classes offered (in 1898-99) were first year Latin, English grammar, classics, rhetoric, literature, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, ancient history, medieval and modern history, American history and government, physical geography, zoology and botany. In 1902 J. K. Fletcher was principal, John Bryan taught grammar school, Lena Ernsmeier taught intermediate school and Edna Shobe handled the primary grade. The school library contained approximately 350 books, which was vastly more than the average rural school in Missouri possessed at the time.<sup>24</sup>

The number of high schools in Missouri more than tripled over the dozen or so years following expansion of the Chamois Public School. By the 1908-09 school year, 414 Missouri school districts offered some sort of advanced program. The required term was expanded to eight months that very year, but by this time more schools already had terms of nine months than the minimum of eight. The Chamois Public School had an eight month term. Despite the requirement, 22 Missouri schools still provided terms of only six or seven months. The high school at Chamois was in a group of 113 schools with eight month terms. High schools in this group offered either a two or three-year curriculum (three years in the case of Chamois) and employed only one teacher (E. E. Carey was

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<sup>23</sup> Fifty-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1902, p. 161.

<sup>24</sup> "Manual of the Public Schools of Chamois, Missouri," pp. 3-27; Fiftieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1900, p. 169.

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principal at Chamois) for the upper level classes. That year, there were a total of nine students in the three advanced grades at Chamois. Overall in 1908-09, 161 students were enrolled in the Chamois Public School. The average daily attendance was 134. The Sixty-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri indicates that by the 1910-11 school year, Linn, the county seat, also had a listed (unclassified) high school although the term was only for six months. E. E. Carey had become the principal at Linn, which paid a higher salary than Chamois, and the new principal at Chamois was B. Hertenstein.<sup>25</sup>

By the 1916-17 school year, both the Chamois and Linn school districts had approved third class high schools and by 1918-19, the Chamois school had been upgraded to second class.<sup>26</sup> By 1921-22, both Chamois and Linn had achieved first class high school status, along with more than 400 other Missouri school districts. In addition to a term of at least nine months, first class high schools were required to provide a four-year curriculum and meet various other standards. First class high schools also needed equipment costing at least \$1,000 (compared to \$650 worth of equipment for second class high schools and \$300 for third). Thus, the 1921-22 school year probably corresponds to when the Chamois Public School was first credited with offering what the state considered a good basic science curriculum to include chemistry and physics along with botany and zoology. Forty-seven students (of 189 total at the Chamois Public School) were enrolled in the four-year high school; seven were graduated that year. Five of the eight teachers held state certificates and three held normal school certificates. Within Osage County, Linn had the highest enrollment by this time but the teachers at Chamois received more money.<sup>27</sup>

The Chamois Public School was not in the first wave of public high schools in Missouri, but it was perhaps typical of many Missouri schools during the period of educational growth in the late 19th century and also constitutes a rare property type today. Once consolidation was authorized and funds were made available to support the transportation of students in 1901, it became financially easier for many areas to provide an advanced curriculum. Chamois, however, offered a three-year high school program as early as the 1890s. Clearly, interest in education was strong in Osage County in the late 19th century, and today the Chamois Public School is important as a tangible reminder of that period. It is the only extant 19th century high school building in Osage County, and a historic photo confirms that today's building retains integrity. The building's ambience is strongly evocative of the years when hundreds of children who lived in and around Chamois pursued a public education within its classrooms.

**Additional Building History:** After the Chamois Public School was abandoned in 1942, it stood idle for four years. In April 1946, it was sold to Edward Cramer and his wife Lydia for \$1,700. A year later, on April 25, 1947, American Legion Post 506 of Chamois purchased the building from the Cramers for \$2,000. The city claimed the clock, which had been purchased by the entire community, and the city maintains it today. After Post 506 took possession of the building, volunteers made various changes to make it more suitable for use by the Legion and its Auxiliary. In the mid-1950s, the building was temporarily used as a schoolhouse after fire destroyed a school building at Morrison--part of the Osage R-1 system--in adjacent Gasconade County. Since 1958, the old schoolhouse has been used primarily as a meeting hall. It was used by the Red Cross to house volunteers who came to help clean up after the disastrous flood of 1993. The owners also rent the building for reunions, meetings, wedding receptions and family gatherings.

<sup>25</sup> Sixtieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1910, pp. 90, 123; Sixty-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1912, pp. 169, 171.

<sup>26</sup> Sixty-Eighth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1918, pp. 124-125; Seventieth Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1920, pp. \_\_\_\_.

<sup>27</sup> Seventy-Second Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1922, pp. 78-82; Seventy-Third Report of the Public Schools of the State of Missouri, Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1923, pp. 327, 330, 335, 337, 341, 344.



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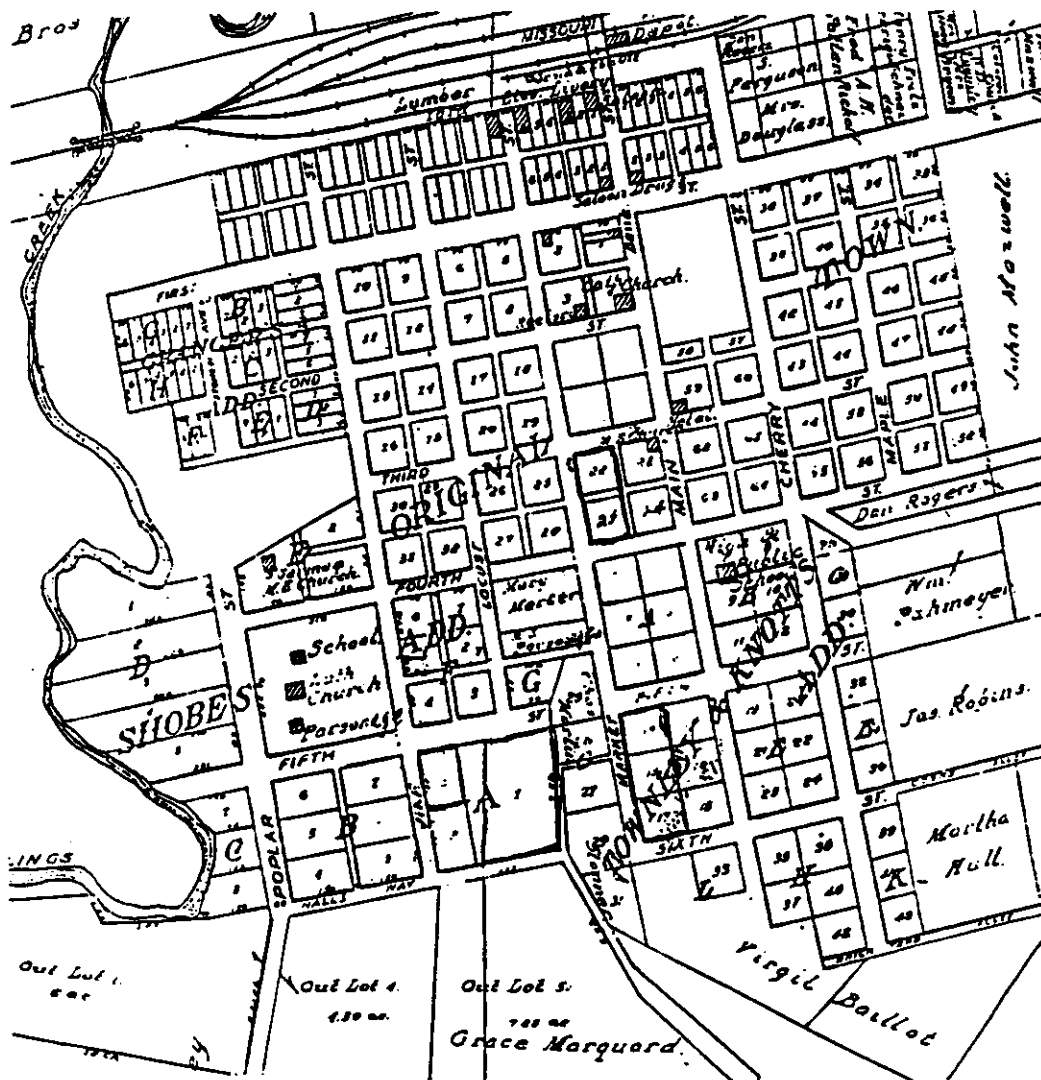
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Chamois Public School is described as all of Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 in Block B in Townley & Knott's Addition to the City of Chamois, Osage County, Missouri.



1913 Plat (Partial) of Chamois, Osage County, Missouri

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the land that was historically associated with Chamois Public School.

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December 11, 2002  
Editing, additional research and writing

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Chamois Public School  
Chamois, Osage County, Missouri  
Photographer: Roger Maserang  
Date: October 2002  
Location of Negatives: Cultural Resource Inventory  
SHPO/Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

1. Primary (north) elevation from bottom of stairs, facing south.
2. Rear (south) elevation from beginning of sidewalk, facing north.
3. Roofline detail, facing southwest.
4. East elevation, facing west.
5. South elevation, facing north.
6. Retaining wall and west and south elevations of schoolhouse, facing northeast.
7. Detail of southwest corner, with fire escape, facing northeast.
8. Detail of typical infilled window (in base of turret), facing northwest.
9. View of driveway near southwest corner of property, facing northeast.
10. Former basement classroom with original blackboard.
11. Second floor classroom facing west.
12. Detail of second floor door surround.
13. Clockwork enclosure.
14. Detail of bell and wheel.
15. View from bell tower, facing approximately north.
16. Detail of metal roofing.
17. Collapsed foundation of restroom east of schoolhouse.

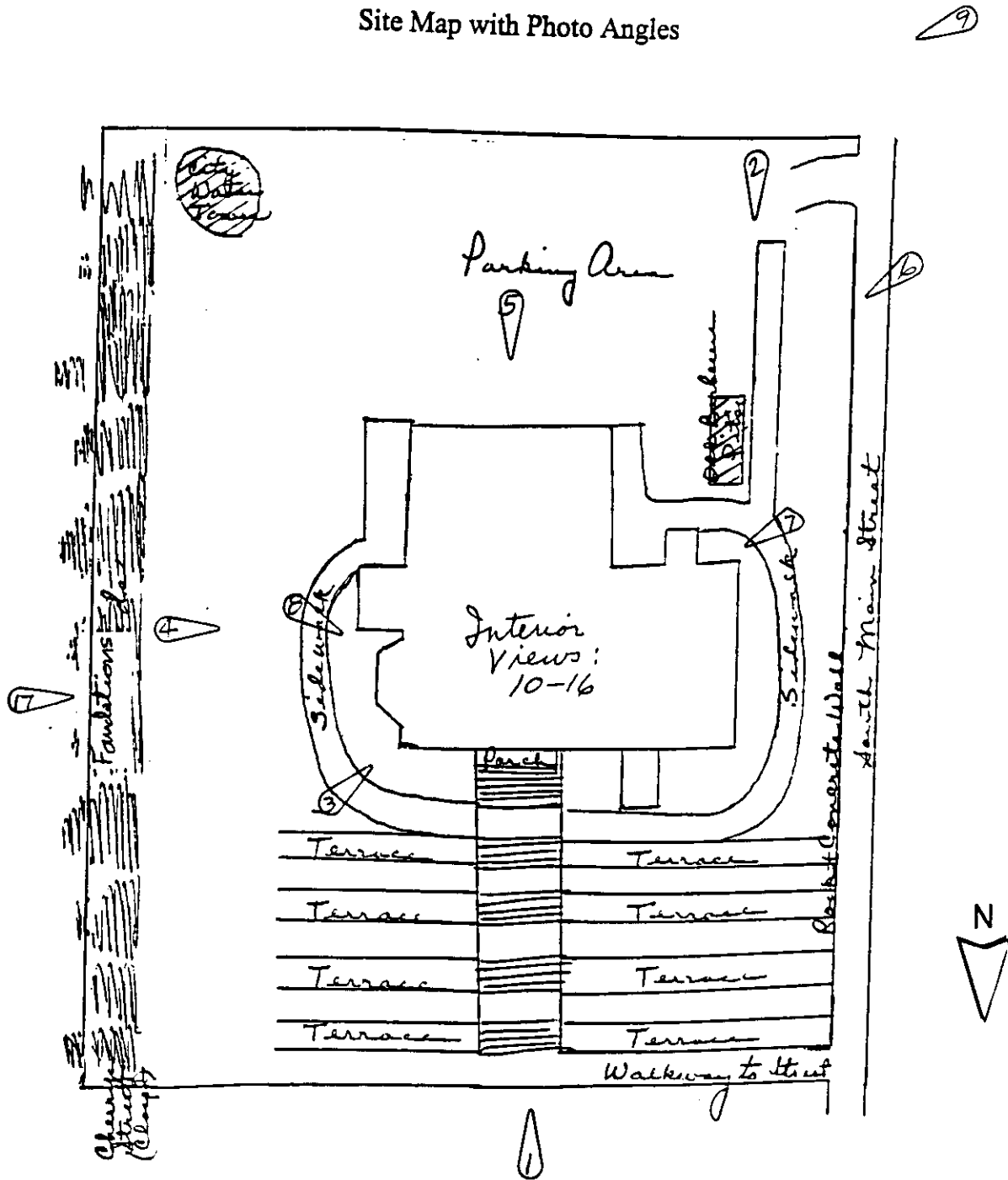
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Site Map with Photo Angles

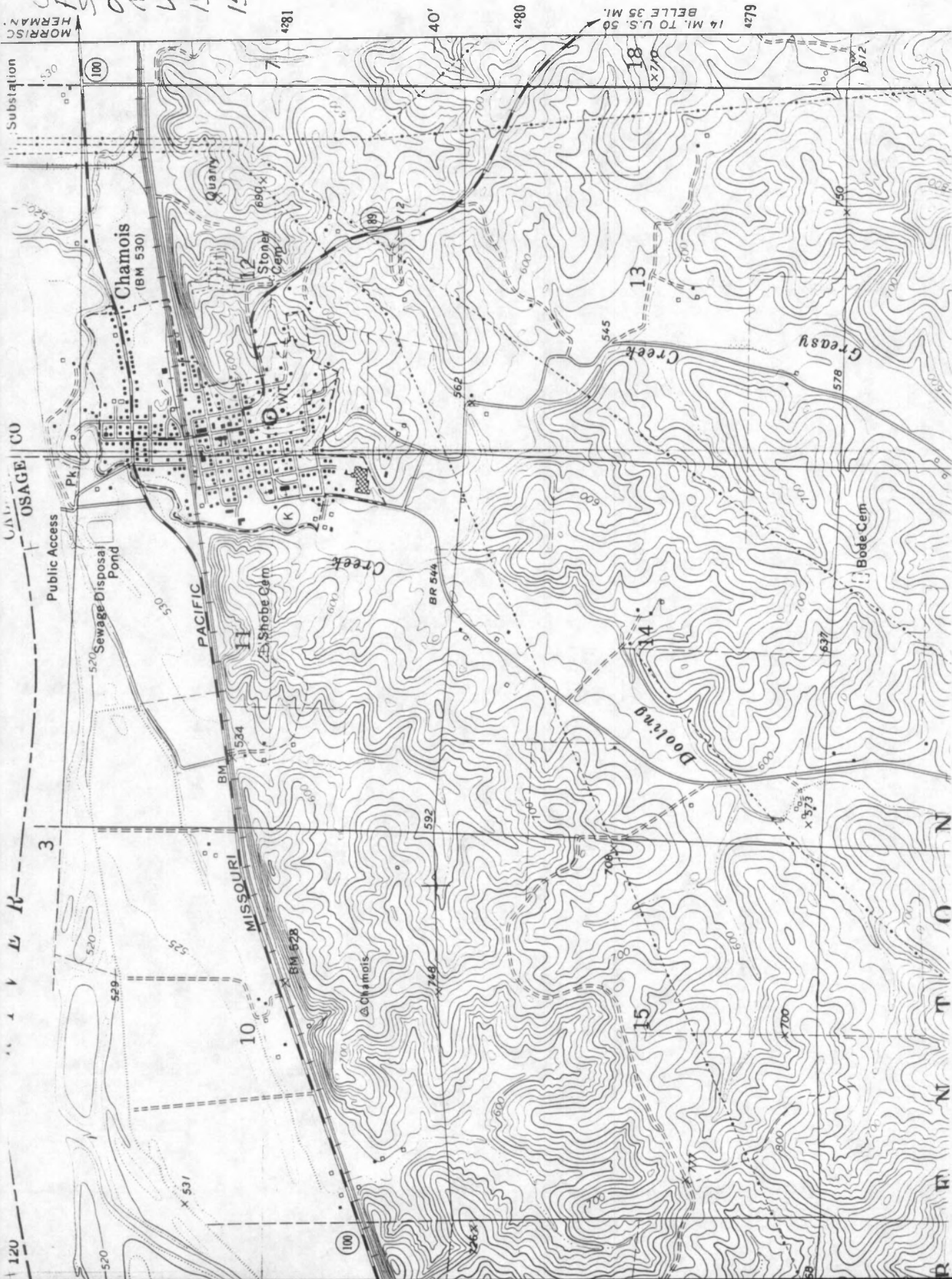


(Not to Scale)

Noncontributing:



CHAMMOID  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOL  
OSAGE COUNTY,  
MISSOURI.  
DTM REFERENCE  
15/607140 E  
15/4291020 N



MORRIS  
HERMAN

Substation

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14 MI. TO U.S. 50  
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14 MI. TO U.S. 50  
BELLE 35 MI.

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