

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 Neosho Colored School

Other names/site number Colored School; 1872 Neosho Colored School

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 639 Young Street n/a not for publication

City or town Neosho n/a vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Newton Code 145 Zip code 64850

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Toni M. Prawl **FEB 28 2017**
Signature of certifying official/Title Toni Prawl Ph.D., Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
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

Neosho Colored School
Name of Property

Newton County, Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education/ School

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/ Hall & Parlor

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Wood

roof: Asphalt

other: Metal

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Neosho Colored School
Name of Property

Newton County, Missouri
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

- 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.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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: George Washington Carver National Monument

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Areas of Significance

Education

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1872-1891

Significant Dates

1876-1878

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Carver, George Washington

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Builder: Vawter, James M.

Neosho Colored School
Name of Property

Newton County, Missouri
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 36.876449° -94.373894° 3 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 _____ 4 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

1 _____ 3 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 _____ 4 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Sheals and Jason Gart, History Associates, Inc.
organization Historic Preservation Consulting date October 31, 2016
street & number 29 South Ninth St. #210 telephone 573-874-3779
city or town Columbia state MO zip code 65201
e-mail debsheals@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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.).

Neosho Colored School
Name of Property

Newton County, Missouri
County and State

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.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Neosho Colored School

City or Vicinity: Neosho

County: Newton State: Missouri

Photographer: Debbie Sheals

Date

Photographed: Photo #12: January 14, 2012. All others: October 20, 2016.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 17: Façade, west wall.
- 2 of 17: South side wall.
- 3 of 17: Detail of original weatherboards, south side wall
- 4 of 17: Southeast corner.
- 5 of 17: East (back) wall.
- 6 of 17: Northeast corner.
- 7 of 17: Northwest corner.
- 8 of 17: Detail, front wall.
- 9 of 17: Room 101, looking west.
- 10 of 17: Room 101, looking south.
- 11 of 17: Room 101, east wall, looking south at wainscoting.
- 12 of 17: Room 101, interior framing of the east wall. (Photo taken in 2012, before the rear additions were removed.)
- 13 of 17: Room 101, looking east.
- 14 of 17: Room 101, looking south from Room 102.
- 15 of 17: Room 102, looking north from Room 101.
- 16 of 17: Room 102, looking west.
- 17 of 17: Room 201, looking south, (second floor).

Neosho Colored School

Newton County, Missouri

Name of Property

County and State

Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with a scale bar. (Screenshot) Accessed October 24, 2016
2. Aerial photo map of the area, from Google Earth with Coordinates. (Placemark) Accessed October 24, 2016
3. Sketch of the School and the Watkins House. Drawn by George Washington Carver and his assistant, Austin Curtis, ca. 1939. (George Washington Carver National Monument Files.)
4. 1926 Sanborn Map, showing current property boundaries. The original section of the house is shaded.
5. Photo of the building taken by historian Robert Fuller in 1956, camera looking northeast. (George Washington Carver National Monument Files.)
6. Existing First Floor Plan, (Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, 2012.)
7. Existing Second Floor Plan, (Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, 2012.)
8. Typical Section Through the West Attic Wall to Show Changes Made After the Period of Significance. (Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, 2012.)
9. Card from Stephen Frost to George Washington Carver, December 1876. (George Washington Carver National Monument Files.)
10. Photo of the Dedication Ceremony for Wayside Exhibits at the Neosho School, November, 2016. (Photo by Todd Higdon, *Neosho Daily News*, courtesy of Lana Henry, Management Assistant, George Washington Carver National Monument.)

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary:

The Neosho Colored School is located in a residential neighborhood at 639 Young Street, in Neosho, Newton County, Missouri. It was built ca. 1871 to serve as a residence, and in 1872 it became the first school for African Americans in the town of Neosho, a function it retained until 1891. It is a modest one and one-half story frame building with a low stone foundation and a side-facing gable roof. It faces west to Young Street and it is the only resource on the level lot. The front slope of the roof has asphalt shingles, and the back is covered with modern metal roofing. The exterior walls are clad with painted narrow wood weatherboards. The majority of the weatherboards are early or original, especially on the front and side walls. The building utilizes the common vernacular form of a hall-and-parlor house, with a rectangular plan that is two rooms wide and one room deep. It has a symmetrical façade, and a central front doorway that is flanked by large single window openings. Each end wall has one centered window, and the back wall contains a single central doorway. Although no original doors or window sashes have survived, the frames and openings are intact, and much of the original interior and exterior trim is intact and in fair condition.¹ The interior of the building is highly intact. Both ground floor rooms have wood flooring, wood plank wainscoting, and plastered walls and ceilings. All of those finishes date to the period of significance, which corresponds to the building's tenure as a school--1872-1891. The front door opens to the south room, which is the larger of the two. The north room contains a small enclosed winding staircase which leads to a single upper floor room. The staircase and the finishes of the upper floor were all added in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, after the building was returned to use as a house in the 1890s.² Recent work on the building included removal of finishes and exterior additions that were installed after the end of the period of significance.³ That work was guided by a Historic Structure Report that was completed in 2012. As a result, the building is in fair condition and it looks very much as it did when it was used as a school. A drawing of the school made by its most famous early student, George Washington Carver, shows that the building today looks very much as it did when Carver was a student there. (See Figure 3.)

Elaboration

Summary of Functions and Alterations

The building was built to serve as a house ca. 1871. It is believed to have been constructed by the first owner of the property, James M. Vawter, who purchased the lot on December 16,

¹ Most trim is still in place around the openings; some has been removed and is stored in the building.

² *Historic Structure Report, 1872 Neosho Colored School, 639 Young Street, Neosho, Missouri*, (Kansas City, Missouri: Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, Inc. July 17, 2012), 1-3, 85, 109.

³ The work was conducted by HistoriCorps volunteers in the summer of 2016.

National Register of Historic Places
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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1870.⁴ In 1872, the house and lot were purchased by the Neosho School Board and the house became a school for African American students.⁵ It retained that function until 1891, and in 1893 it was sold and returned to residential use. During its second tenure as a residence, it received a new front porch and several rear additions, as well as new exterior siding and interior finishes. (Figure 5.) It served as a residence until 2004, when the vacant building was donated to the Carver Birthplace Association. The Association teamed with the National Park Service to document the building and confirm its history as George Washington Carver's first school. It was assessed by the National Park Service in 2004, and a complete Historic Structure Report was completed in 2012. Finally, in the summer of 2016, HistoriCorps volunteers removed layers of modern accretions to reveal the original core of the school, and conducted basic repairs and restoration of the exterior walls.⁶

Site and Surroundings

The building occupies a modest rectangular lot in the north part of the town of Neosho. It is approximately a mile from the Neosho public square, in Henning's Addition to the City of Neosho, which was platted in 1870.⁷ The lot is 50 feet wide and 131.5 feet deep. The property is bounded on the west by Young Street, and on the other three sides by residential properties. (Figures 1, 2, 4.) There are no curbs or sidewalks along Young Street, which is paved and lined with modest residences.

The lot is relatively level; it slopes gently down from Young Street. There is a large walnut tree a few yards east of the back wall of the house. Smaller shrubs and trees run along the back edge of the property, which is marked by a low chain-link fence. (Photo 1.) The building sits close to the street, near the northwest corner of the lot. (Figure 4.) There are no outbuildings or any other resources on the property.

⁴ *Historic Structure Report*, 52.

⁵ *Historic Structure Report*, 55.

⁶ The work of the HistoriCorps volunteers was guided by the Historic Structure Report, and supervised by architect Angie Geist Gaebler, the lead architect of that study.

⁷ Newton County Deed Records, Book N, 280-281. It was platted Aug. 12, 1870 by Richard A. Henning, Lewis B. Hutchinson and H. W. Goodykuntz.

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Exterior

The modest building has a rectangular footprint that measures approximately 16 feet by 24 feet. It is one room deep and two rooms wide. (Figure 6.) It sits on a low dry-stacked limestone foundation and there is a very shallow crawlspace under the house. (Photo 2.) The front slope of the steeply pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and there is a small galvanized metal roof vent near the front wall. (Photo 1.) The back slope of the roof is covered with ribbed metal sheathing that was installed in 2016. (Photo 4.) The roofline follows its original configuration. (See Figure 8.) The only original roof feature that is missing is a small square brick chimney, which was removed sometime after 1956. (See Figure 5.)

The building faces west to Young Street and is set with the widest part of the building parallel to the street. The exterior walls are clad with narrow wood weatherboards that are painted brown. The corners of the building are marked with flat vertical trim boards and the eaves are all accented with wider eave boards, all of which appear to be original. (Photos 1-4.) Removal of modern siding in 2016 revealed that a large percentage of the original narrow wood weatherboards were still in place, and that most were in fair condition. Intact original boards were retained and repainted (Photo 3), and those that were missing or badly rotted were replaced with new wood boards that match in size and profiles.

Today, well over half of the exterior weatherboards on the building are original. (Photos 1-8.) The sheathing on the front wall of the building is particularly intact; only three courses of weatherboards near the ground and a few scattered boards on other parts of the wall are modern replacements. The lower side walls also retain a good deal of original siding, with new boards located primarily at the lower edges of the walls. The gable ends of the side walls are filled with new weatherboards, which were installed to cover window openings that had been added after the period of significance. (Photos 2 and 6.) The back wall, which was altered via rear additions many times over the years, has the largest percentage of newer sheathing. Original sheathing on that wall includes the cornice board at the eaves and several courses of weatherboards in the upper north part of the wall. (Photos 4-6.)

The front (west) wall has a symmetrical pattern of fenestration, with a centered door flanked by large single window openings. The central doorway location is probably original although architectural historians have speculated that it may have been widened and the height increased during a subsequent construction episode. The front door is a modern wood replacement.⁸ (Photos 1, 8, 9.) The front doorway is trimmed inside and out with simple flat painted casing that is in fair condition. The front window openings and frames are original or early. The window sashes have been missing since before 2012, and the window openings are currently covered with painted plywood. (Photos 8 and 9.) The front window openings have flat painted wood trim that appears to be original. Photos of the house taken in the 1950s show that

⁸ *Historic Structure Report*, 53, 73, 93.

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the tops of the windows originally had small projecting trim that has since been removed, probably to make way for modern siding. (See Figure 5.)

Interior

The original interior rooms on the ground floor are of unequal size and the front door opens onto the larger (south) room. (Figure 6.) Both rooms have wood flooring, plastered ceilings, and wood and plaster walls. The original partition wall, which may have been built of planks, has been removed and a modern 2x4 frame partition wall is now located atop a shadow in the original wood floor.⁹ (Photos 14 and 15.) That dividing wall now consists of only studs; it was originally sheathed with gypboard. The two rooms most recently functioned as a bedroom (north room) and living room (south room).

The south room was most likely the classroom when the building served as a school. In addition to the front door, it contains the back door, which is directly opposite the front entrance, as well as one window opening on the front wall and one on the south side wall. (Photos 9-14.) That room has two layers of wood flooring and an early plaster ceiling. The bottom layer of flooring, which runs north and south, is early or original. The ceiling is currently partly covered with modern 2x4 studs and painted gypboard. (Photo 9.) The walls of the former classroom are finished with painted plaster and wide horizontal wood plank wainscoting. Photographs of the interior structure of the wall that were taken when the building was studied in 2012 indicate that those finishes are original. (Photo 12.) The wainscoting is topped with the remnant of a projecting chair rail, fastened with square cut nails. (Photo 11.) The railing was probably cut off to make way for later wall coverings that have since been removed.

The smaller ground floor north room has a front window plus one on the north side wall. (Photos 15-16.) It has a plaster ceiling that is covered with a layer of modern gypboard, and plaster and plank walls that match those in the larger room. It has early wood flooring that includes a pair of cutouts near the center of the wall that are believed to have supported a small bracketed brick stove chimney when the building was new.¹⁰ Photos of the building taken in the 1950s show a small brick chimney at that location, and there are holes in attic flooring that show where it extended to the roof. Since archeological investigations done in 2005 revealed no sign of fireplace footings, it is likely that that the brick chimney served a stove rather than a fireplace.¹¹

The north room also has a small enclosed winding staircase that leads to a single second floor room that is tucked into the slope of the roof. (Figure 7, and Photos 15 and 17.) That room has

⁹ *Historic Structure Report*, 92. Marks in the original wall plaster show that the original dividing wall was approximately just two inches wide.

¹⁰ *Historic Structure Report*, 94-96.

¹¹ Midwest Archeological Center, *Archeological Inventory and Site Condition Assessment*, 2005, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2.

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Neosho Colored School
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N/A
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wood flooring and a beadboard-sheathed ceiling and walls. Construction details unearthed during recent studies show that the staircase and second floor finishes were added after the period of significance. The staircase and second floor finishes all utilize wire nails, which came into use after 1895.¹² As the historic structure report noted, “the stair and entire second floor date to this later period, after the school board had sold the house.”¹³

That same study also revealed that although the house was built with its current one and one-half story form and roofline, the second floor was not originally finished. (See Figure 8 for a cross section view of the attic framing.) The original ceiling joists for the ground floor rooms, which include the original lath and plaster ceiling finishes, measure just 2” by 4”, too small to support a second floor structure. A second set of larger joists was later installed above the original ceiling structure, using wire nails.¹⁴ The existing second floor walls and floor boards are all installed atop the later joists, offering clear evidence that the finishes took place after the building was returned to service as a residence in the 1890s. That remodeling project also appears to have include the addition of windows in the gable ends of the side walls. Those windows were still in place in 2012; the openings were covered with the replacement weatherboards in the summer of 2016 to return the building to its earlier appearance.

Alterations: 1893-2016.

The building has undergone several alterations and additions since the end of the period of significance. During its use as an African American school, from 1872 through 1893, it retained its original two-room, hall-and-parlor form. It was sold to James B. and Thursey Lillian Robinson in 1893, and they probably constructed the first of several rear additions, to serve as a kitchen. The property was owned by Mannie and Maria Phelps from 1900 to 1938. It is likely that the Phelps family added the stairs and second floor finishes, as well as more rear additions, and a new front porch. Sanborn maps show that the porch and rear additions were completed by 1926. (Figure 4.) A November 1957 oral history, conducted by the National Park Service with Mrs. H. C. Bacon, a long-time resident of the neighborhood, noted that “the front porch and a room at the rear were added in 1925.”¹⁵ The early brick chimney was removed, and the original weatherboards were covered with wide lap fiberboard siding sometime after 1956. (The 1956 photo in Figure 5 shows that the chimney was still in place and that weatherboards were still exposed at that time and in good condition.) In the 1980s or 1990s, a new layer of rigid insulation and metal siding was installed over the fiberboard siding.

Integrity

¹² Hugh Howard, *How Old is this House?: A Skeleton Key to Dating, Identifying, and Understanding Three Centuries of the American House*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989) 54-55.

¹³ *Historic Structure Report*, 108.

¹⁴ *Historic Structure Report*, 108-113.

¹⁵ Robert P. Fuller and Merrill J. Mattes, “The Early Life of George Washington Carver,” November 26, 1957, 46, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, MO.

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
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N/A
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A reversal of those later alterations began in 2004, when the Arvest Bank donated the then-vacant property to the Carver Birthplace Association. Some finishes were removed by volunteers prior to a 2004 evaluation by the National Park Service, and more were removed to facilitate the Historic Structure Report in 2012. The bulk of the restoration work took place in 2016, and the building today exhibits integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The building retains its original location and has not been moved. The lack of defined curbing in front of the building, the overall orientation in regards to the other modest residential homes on the block, and the surrounding trees and canopy, are all suggestive of its historic character, that is, a small house in an outlying residential district in a small Midwestern town. Furthermore, the building maintains its overwhelmingly residential appearance and feeling—as it should, since the historical record confirms that the house was not built as a school but was rather repurposed for classroom use. This follows Gary R. Kremer’s and Brett Rogers’s observation that “[a] significant number of the buildings where African Americans attended school, especially in the late nineteenth century, were not originally designed as schools at all. Many of the first schools established for blacks during Reconstruction were private residences.”¹⁶

The building maintains significant character-defining features and both its material integrity and workmanship are evident. The overall form and patterns of fenestration are intact. Original interior features from the period of significance include structural members, lath and plaster walls and ceilings, wood wainscoting and chair rail, early wood flooring, and wood interior trim.¹⁷ The lath and plaster and wainscoting, in particular, are important representations of the building’s use during the period of significance, and the first floor rooms look much as they did when the building served as a school.

Investigations conducted in 2004 by Al O’Bright, a historical architect with the National Park Service, determined that “approximately 75% of the original structure remains intact including most of the stone foundation, framing, siding, first floor finishes, door and window frames, and roof system.”¹⁸ Subsequent architectural investigations in 2012 determined that “excluding the rear additions and modern siding, it appears approximately 70-80 percent of the original historic fabric of the house remains.”¹⁹ Indeed, the drawing of the building by George Washington Carver prepared circa 1939, albeit sixty-five years after he attended the school, provides a vital reference point for interpreting the school’s integrity. (See Figure 3.)

¹⁶ Gary R. Kremer and Brett Rogers, “African American Schools in Rural and Small Town Missouri: The Missouri River Valley,” June 30, 1999, 5, African American Schools Phase 1, Final Report, Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

¹⁷ *Historic Structure Report*, 115.

¹⁸ Al O’Bright to Scott Bentley, November 23, 2004, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, MO.

¹⁹ *Historic Structure Report*, 71.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

In summary, the Neosho Colored School meets the seven characteristics of historic integrity under the National Register criteria as follows:

- **Location:** The location of the school has remained consistent since its construction.
- **Design:** The original residential hall-and-parlor form is clearly evident. The building saw no notable changes to form or patterns of fenestration when it was converted to a school, and its residential appearance is a defining characteristic of the design.
- **Setting:** The relationship to the sidewalks and road, the orientation in regard to the other homes, and the surrounding trees are all suggestive of the building's historic character as a small house in a residential district in a small Midwestern town. The city lot retains its original size and configuration.
- **Materials:** An estimated 75 percent of the original house remains intact. Original features from the period of significance include weatherboards and exterior trim, structural members, lath and plaster walls and ceilings, wood wainscoting and chair rail, early wood tongue and groove flooring, and wood interior trim.
- **Workmanship:** The weatherboards, trim, lath and plaster and wainscoting are original and indicative of the building's historical use during the period of significance. Other original interior features include structural members and early wood tongue and groove flooring.
- **Feeling:** The building, which the historical record confirms was built as a residence and repurposed as a school, retains its overall historic character and its residential appearance and feeling. More importantly, the building is still recognizable as the same one in Carver's circa 1937 sketch of the school.
- **Association:** The school retains its historical significance as a Reconstruction-era African American school and as the first public documented educational institution of learning attended at any length by George Washington Carver.

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary:

The Neosho Colored School, located at 639 Young Street, Neosho, Newton County, Missouri, is significant for its association with famed scientist George Washington Carver, as well as for its important early role in African American education in Neosho. It is eligible for inclusion in the National Register for local significance under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black, and with statewide significance under Criterion B for its association with Carver. The building became a black public school in 1872, just six years after the Neosho Board of Education was established, and it continued in that role for the next two decades. It was the first dedicated schoolhouse for African American students in Neosho. It was often the only African American school in the community during the period of significance, which runs from 1872 to 1891, when it ceased to be used as a school.

The best-known student of the school was George Washington Carver. After being turned away from a white school near his home, Carver moved alone to Neosho at the approximate age of 10 specifically to attend this school. He arrived in 1876, and attended school in this building until 1878.²⁰ That experience started a quest for education that took him to ten cities in three states, and culminated with a Master of Agriculture degree from Iowa State College in 1896. He then accepted a position at the Tuskegee Institute, where he spent the next forty-seven years in scientific pursuits. His time at the Neosho school marked not only his first extended time in a classroom setting, but also his first major experience as part of an African American community. George Washington Carver became one of the world's best known living scientists. Well-known for his work with the peanut, he developed new uses for a variety of plants and natural products. He received numerous accolades during his career, including honorary Doctor of Science degrees and the Roosevelt Medal for Outstanding Contribution to Southern Agriculture. A museum in his honor was established at Tuskegee in 1938, and in 1943 the United States Congress created the George Washington Carver National Monument at Diamond, Missouri.²¹ The Monument was the first unit of the National Park Service established to honor an African American, as well as the first to honor an educator and a scientist. Although the National Monument is located at the site of Carver's childhood home, there are no longer any buildings on the property that were in use when Carver lived there. The school building in Neosho is the single most intact link to Carver's childhood in Missouri, and an important reminder of his long and successful quest for an education.

²⁰ Historic Structure Report, 39.

²¹ Gary R. Kremer, ed., *George Washington Carver in His Own Words* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), xiii-xiv.

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Elaboration:

Early African American Education in Neosho²²

Neosho has had a school system almost as long as it has been in existence. The town was founded in 1839, to serve as the county seat of the newly formed Newton County, and the first public school in the new town opened in 1842.²³ Classes were first held in a Masonic Hall located on the courthouse square at the corner of Spring and Washington Streets. In the 1850s, a new school known as Miss Savage's Academy opened in a brick building a few blocks to the southwest, at Hickory and College Streets.

The Academy, which may have been a private school, was operated by Union sympathizers who moved away in 1862, when it became clear that their politics were, as one historical account put it "not welcome in this area."²⁴ It is not known if the Academy was limited to white students; their pro-Union stand may have included welcoming African American students as well. The school in the Masonic Hall was for whites only. The other school was also apparently closed during the war, as were most schools in the county. One historical account of the Neosho public schools noted that, "little was left of education in Newton County by 1865."²⁵ A report filed by the Newton County Superintendent of Schools for the 1867-68 school year lamented that most schools in the county were being held in "deserted farmhouses," with no "apparatus" and little furniture of note.²⁶

This was not an unusual situation; the Civil War had a devastating effect on schools throughout Missouri. The Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools for the school year ending in 1865 proclaimed that the "school houses [of the state] are almost universally in a bad condition...the common schools have suffered much during the bloody strife which has shaken our country...But now that peace—white winged messenger—has proclaimed her glad tidings...it is to be hoped that the discordant condition of our schools may be removed..."²⁷

The town of Neosho apparently shared that hopeful sentiment. The community began developing a new public school system very soon after the end of the war. In the fall of 1866 the town's first board of education was organized, and a month later school patrons voted to purchase the former Academy (by that time known as "Old Brick") to be refitted for use as a

²² Note: Most of the text in this section was written by Debbie Sheals as part of the historic context section of the 2012 Historic Structure Report.

²³ Larry A. James, comp. *"Here's to the Black and Gold" A Wildcat History*, (Neosho, MO: Newton County Historical Society, 2004), 5.

²⁴ James, *"Here's to the Black and Gold" A Wildcat History*, 6.

²⁵ James, *"Here's to the Black and Gold" A Wildcat History*, 6.

²⁶ James H. Robinson, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools* (Jefferson City: Ellwood Kirby, Public Printer, 1866), 111-112.

²⁷ Robinson, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools*, 111-112.

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public school.²⁸ The board also made arrangements to do some work on the Masonic Hall so that it could be used for a three month term of school, presumably to fill in while the work was being done on “Old Brick”. A report made for the 1866-67 school year shows that the Neosho school was one of only nine public schools in the entire county for the 1866-67 school year.²⁹

Although the first schools in the county that opened after the war were for white students, a new state law also required school districts to provide for the education of black students. In 1865 the State of Missouri enacted legislation that required school districts to provide educational facilities for all children, regardless of color, but included a provision for separate schools. The law also specifically required schools for black students to be established wherever there were more than 20 students of school age, and black children had to be included in school district enumerations even if there were fewer than the requisite number for a school. Those regulations were later amended to make it easier to get black schools up and running. The minimum number of black children was dropped to 15 in 1868, and a year later the law was changed so that two districts that separately had fewer than the requisite number could band together to establish a “union” school between the districts.³⁰

African Americans in Missouri had already shown a strong interest in education, and some had even taken steps to begin the process on their own. The Missouri State Superintendent of Schools noted in 1865 that “Whilst there have been no appropriations of the public funds for the education of colored children, it is astonishing to see such prosperous private schools, supported by the colored people, in many portions of our country. Ere the State is ready to contribute the means to educate the colored man, many of them will be prepared to take places as teachers to assist in elevating that standard of his race.”³¹

Unfortunately, that statement proved to be overly optimistic. Efforts to establish black schools across the state were often hampered by a lack of teachers that were willing or competent to teach in African American schools, as well as local resistance to the entire concept of providing public education for African Americans. In spite of the work of the state superintendent of schools and organizations such as the American Missionary Association and the Freedman’s Bureau (Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands) to promote the creation of public schools for African Americans, compliance with the new laws was spotty. J. Milton Turner, a black man hired by the Freedman’s Bureau to investigate the condition of black schools across the state in the late 1860s, found a range of conditions and attitudes toward public education for black children. Many local school board members opposed the concept and

²⁸ *Goodspeed’s History of Newton County* (1888; reprint, Hearthstone Publications E-book Edition, 2003), 155-56.

²⁹ *Goodspeed’s History of Newton County*, 104.

³⁰ Stacy Alvarez, “Special History Study: Significance of the 1872 Neosho “Colored School” Neosho, Missouri,” 2005, 6-7. George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, MO.

³¹ Robinson, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools*, 111-112.

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did all they could to avoid having to set up black schools, while others were willing, but lacked money, qualified teachers, or both.³²

Finding qualified teachers for the new black schools proved to be particularly challenging. There was a general shortage of teachers for any schools at the time, black or white. The Newton County Superintendent of Schools reported in 1867 that qualified teachers were hard to find and that he sometimes had to grant teaching “certificates more on the necessities of the schools for teachers than on the merits of the teachers.”³³ Qualified black teachers were particularly scarce, since African Americans had not previously been allowed an education, and it was often difficult to find white teachers for black schools. Some of the white teachers did not want to teach in black schools and many school boards would not allow it even if the teachers were willing. Turner was clearly more interested in the quality of education offered to black students than the race of their teacher. He wrote of the Tipton, Missouri school district that the board was willing to open a school, but were “quite anxious to employ an incompetent and very ignorant negro man as teacher. I protested... After some trouble the Bd. of Ed. consented to employ Mr. Thorn, a very good teacher and a white man.”³⁴

Annual reports filed by the Newton County superintendents of schools during this time period indicate that the county was relatively liberal when it came to education for black students. Black schools were not given the same level of attention or funding as white schools, but there is little evidence of any significant resistance to the concept of setting up “colored schools.” Newton County School Superintendent J. G. Grigg wrote of the 1867-68 school year that: “There seems to be considerable interest manifested by our citizens in the education of the colored people of this county. Newtonia being the only place in the county where a sufficient number of them are located to entitle them to a separate school, they are here furnished with a comfortable house and a number one teacher.”³⁵

The number of black schools in the area fluctuated over the next decade, as did the number of white schools. By the 1869-70 school year, there were three black schools in the county, with two schoolhouses and two teachers. The different numbers for schoolhouses and schools indicates that some of those early schools operated in rented quarters. The enumeration showed 149 black school age children, 108 of whom were pupils, and an average 3 month-school term. (Many schools had two terms--fall and winter.) The report showed that one of those black schools was in Neosho, marking the first time Neosho is known to have offered

³² Lawrence J. Christensen, “Schools for Blacks: J. Milton Turner in Reconstruction Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review* 76 (1982): 121-135.

³³ J. G. Grigg, in T. A. Parker, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools* (Jefferson City: Ellwood Kirby Public Printer, 1869) 117.

³⁴ Christensen, “Schools for Blacks: J. Milton Turner in Reconstruction Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review* 125.

³⁵ J. G. Grigg, in Parker, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools*, 118.

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public school for African American children.³⁶ That school probably served black students from the entire township; census records show only eight African American families living in the city in 1870, and the state report noted that the school had 23 students--10 boys and 13 girls.

That first black school in Neosho was probably held in rented quarters. Possible locations include the old Masonic Hall, which had served as a temporary school for white students a few years earlier, or the local Baptist Church building. The Baptist congregation operated a "colored Sabbath school" that same year, and also had a connection to the board of education. The church established white and black "Sabbath Schools" in 1870, both of which were supervised by J. H. Price, who was also a member of the Neosho School Board.³⁷ The Baptist Church was definitely used for school purposes later; the school board rented it and the Masonic Hall to use while a new white school was being built in 1883.³⁸

That first black school may have operated intermittently for the next couple of years. It is not mentioned in notices of the new school terms in the fall or winter, but does seem to have been in operation in February of 1872, when a Mrs. M. J. Scoles was named as teacher of the "colored school."³⁹ The school system appears to have been in a state of flux in this period, with frequent staff changes. The announcement for the start of the winter term that ran in December 1871, for example, noted that Mr. D. G. Walker and wife, "late of Chicago schools" were to "take charge of the public school," and that teachers were still being selected.⁴⁰ The use of "school" in the singular there could indicate that only the white school was open at that time, or the paper may simply not have considered the black school worthy of notice at the time. Superintendent Walker resigned just a few months later, in March of 1872, and the white and black schools were closed for a few months.⁴¹ That closing must have been short-lived, as Mrs. Scoles was again listed as the teacher of the black school in July 1872, possibly in reference to the upcoming fall term.

Operation of the Neosho Colored School

In the fall of 1872, the school board took action to secure a permanent location for a black public school. *Goodspeed's History of Newton County* noted in 1888 that, "In September (1872) a committee of the (school) board reported that they could purchase a lot and building suitable for a colored school, at \$200 (Lot 6 Block 16)."⁴² On September 16, 1872, the Neosho School board bought a small house on Lot 6, Block 16 of Henning's Addition to Neosho, from James

³⁶ T.A. Parker, *Fifth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools* (Jefferson City: Horace Wilcox, Public Printer, 1871), 397.

³⁷ *Goodspeed's History of Newton County*, 97, and *The Neosho Times*, April 28, 1870, 4.

³⁸ *Goodspeed's History of Newton County*, 157.

³⁹ *Goodspeed's History of Newton County*, 158.

⁴⁰ *The Neosho Times*, Dec. 28, 1871, 3.

⁴¹ *Goodspeed's History of Newton County*, 145.

⁴² The authors of that book appear to have had access to school board records, which were not found in recent searches.

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Vawter.⁴³ That property now has the street address of 639 Young Street. The modest two-room house was new; Vawter bought the lot in late 1870 and probably completed construction of the house a few months later.⁴⁴

The neighborhood chosen for the new black school was situated between the original town of Neosho and Neosho City, which was newly incorporated. Neosho City, also known as Newtown or Martling, was established just over a mile north of the original town square when the new Pacific and Atlantic Railroad built tracks through the county in 1870.⁴⁵ Henning's Addition to Neosho was platted between the two towns in 1870, and in 1871, a new woolen mill opened in the same area, just south of Henning's Addition at the present intersection of Young and Grant Streets.⁴⁶ (That part of Young Street was called North Place in the nineteenth century.)

The neighborhood also had a concentration of African American residents in the late nineteenth century, as well as at least two churches that had black congregations.⁴⁷ It is not clear if the area became popular with black families in part because the school was there, or if the school was located there because there were already black families living in the area. It may have been a bit of both. A few years after the school opened on Young Street, two local black churches were established in the neighborhood. The Second Methodist Episcopal Church congregation, organized in January, 1876. They may have originally met in Neosho City; the 1902 Sanborn map shows a "Colored M. E. Church" building at Washington and Commercial Streets in Neosho City.⁴⁸

Also in 1876, the newly incorporated Second Baptist Church built a new wood frame church near the woolen mill south of the Young Street school. The Second Baptist Church building served as a social center for the African American community, hosting community events as well as religious activities over the years. It was there that the first graduating class of African American students held their graduation ceremony in the 1890s. The wood frame Baptist Church building was replaced with a substantial brick building in 1896. Carver spoke in the new brick building during a visit to Neosho in 1908. The Neosho *Daily Searchlight* promised readers that "Professor Carver, a Neosho boy who has striven to the top" would "give an analytical and spectacular demonstration on the effects of narcotics upon the human body at the colored

⁴³ Newton County Deed Records, Book Q, 68.

⁴⁴ See the Building Chronologies at the end of this chapter for more information about Vawter and the building.

⁴⁵ Goodspeed's History of Newton County, 136. Neosho City was incorporated in Feb. 1871.

⁴⁶ Goodspeed's History of Newton County, 145. The mill was opened by Thomas Hainsworth and operated at that site into the early twentieth century.

⁴⁷ Historic Structure Report, 18, and *Edwards' Historical Atlas of Newton County*, (Philadelphia: Edwards Bros of Missouri, 1882) 9.

⁴⁸ Sanborn Map of Neosho, 1902, 7. That was the first year the Sanborn Company included anything in Neosho City.

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Baptist Church.”⁴⁹ That building, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1995, is still in use.⁵⁰

The house on Young Street appears to have been converted to a school almost immediately after the school board purchased it in 1872. Three days after the sale, the local paper again named Mrs. Scoles as the teacher of the “colored school,” which is assumed to have opened in the building on Young Street. Mrs. Scoles was probably Marian J. Scholes, who is listed in the 1880 census as a white schoolteacher living in Cherokee Township in Kansas. (She was not found in the 1870 census). Marian Scoles would have been 28 when the school on Young Street was put into service. Both she and her husband, white physician J. P. Scoles, were natives of Ohio. As northerners, they may have had more liberal attitudes about educating African Americans and therefore been less likely to object to her teaching at an African American school. She apparently enjoyed teaching, as she continued in that occupation after the family moved to Kansas in the mid to late 1870s. Census records show that they were still living in Kansas in 1900, but she was no longer listed as a teacher.

Neither Mrs. Scoles nor her immediate successors stayed at the Young Street school for very long. Scoles was succeeded by a Mrs. Danforth and Mrs. M. C. Fry, who each taught just one term, and then she came back to teach one more term. (See Appendix I.) Mrs. Fry was probably Florence Fry, who was named as a public school teacher in a later county history.⁵¹ Calvin Jefferson, who attended classes at the Young Street school, later remembered both Scoles (as “Miss Sholes”) and Mrs. Fry as early teachers there, but did not mention Mrs. Danforth. This tendency for teachers to move on was noted by the Newton County superintendent of schools, who wrote in 1874 of all of the county schools that “only a few schools employ the same teacher for two or more years.”⁵²

In early 1875, teaching duties at the new school were taken on by Stephen S. Frost. Unlike his predecessors, Frost stayed on the job for years. He taught nearly every term at the school on Young Street for the next decade, and was active in public education in Newton County for the rest of the century. After a hiatus that included terms at schools in the county and a few years as the pastor of the Washington Avenue Baptist Church in Springfield, he returned to teach the

⁴⁹ *Daily Searchlight*. August 11, 1908. Transcript of a newspaper article on file at the George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

⁵⁰ Mary Jean Barker, “Second Baptist Church,” Neosho, MO. 1996, National Register of Historic Places Collection, National Park Service, accessed Oct 15, 2016, <http://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp/AssetDetail?assetID=371f7ecd-c33c-4895-8be5-352066570925>.

⁵¹ Sybil Shipley Jobe, *A History of Newton County as Portrayed in the Courthouse Mural* (Neosho, MO: Newton County Historical Society, 1998), 86. Fry was not found in U. S. Census records or other sources.

⁵² John Monteith, *Eighth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools* (Jefferson City: Regan and Carter State Printers, 1874), 297.

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final years of the Young Street school. He also served as the first principal for the newly completed Lincoln School in 1891, and was teaching in a rural Newton County school in 1900.⁵³

Frost was born in Tennessee around 1850, and moved to Missouri before 1870, when the Census records him as a resident of nearby Springfield, Missouri. Frost was remembered more for his dedication to his students than his educational prowess. His former student, Calvin Jefferson, later wrote: "He did not have much educational preparation, but he was an ideal teacher with the power to influence, inspire and impart knowledge and wisdom on what he knew in the minds of his pupils."⁵⁴ The 1870 census record shows just how little educational background he had when he began teaching—he is described there as being unable to read or write. That was just four years before he began teaching in Neosho, but also just five years after it became legal to educate black people in Missouri. He may have been in the process of gaining an education when that record was made. He was living with the family of a white lawyer, William Baker, whose daughter Emma was a 22 year old school teacher. It is possible that he was a student in Ms. Baker's school, or she may have been tutoring him in her spare time. He is recorded as being literate in the 1880 census, and no doubt taught himself more as he taught the hundreds of children that passed through his classroom over the years.

Lack of education notwithstanding, Frost was a respected member of the community and an effective teacher. He provided stability and respect to the students and helped keep the new school in operation during a period of transition. Jefferson recalled that he "was held in high regard and esteem by all of the parents and citizens, both white and black in the city of Neosho and a fine upstanding Christian man...about 95% of the students who completed work under him made good; that is they first had their education and became practical men and women."⁵⁵ Young George Washington Carver was among the ranks of students that were introduced to education by Stephen Frost.

George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver was born enslaved during the Civil War, a few miles from Neosho. Although the exact date of his birth has been debated, it is most likely that he was born in 1864 or 1865.⁵⁶ He grew up on the farm of Moses and Susan Carver, white farmers who had purchased his mother Mary as a slave in 1855. George Washington Carver's father is believed to have been a man enslaved on a neighboring farm who died shortly after George was born. He lost his mother after they were both kidnapped during the Civil War. George was found and returned to the Carver farm, but Mary was not heard from again. Moses and Susan Carver

⁵³ Neosho Superintendent of Schools, *Course of Study: Neosho Public Schools* (1893), 24; and Jobe, *A History of Newton County as Portrayed in the Courthouse Mural*, 87.

⁵⁴ Calvin Jefferson, Letter to Austin Curtis, 6 April 1939.

⁵⁵ Jefferson, Letter to Austin Curtis.

⁵⁶ Fuller and Mattes, "The Early Life of George Washington Carver," 24.

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moved George and his brother Jim into their home after that episode, and by many accounts “treated them as blood kin.”⁵⁷

Although Neosho and other towns in the county generally had enough black students by the time Carver reached school age to trigger the requirement that schools be established for them, many of the rural school districts did not. That included the one closest to the Carver farm, served by Locust Grove School. Small school districts often didn’t have the resources to set up separate schools, even if they so desired. A review of early school reports shows that some of the early Missouri state superintendents recognized the practical burden segregation put on those districts at an early date. T. A. Parker wrote in 1868:

*I call your attention to the case of colored children, where there are so few, that it is impracticable to maintain a separate school for them.... We ought to provide the means of education to every child in this state. To accomplish this object in the simplest manner, it is suggested that in any town where, for any reason, a separate school for colored children is not established and maintained, that the principle of admission to any public school be recognized according to the first article of the Constitution, and leave the adjustment of the principle to the majority of the people.*⁵⁸

Five years later, State Superintendent John Montieth wrote “The colored people themselves are forcing a question upon us which sooner or later must be faced: that is whether the two or three little dark faces isolated in any subdistrict may slip into some corner of the white school.” While he stopped short of advocating for such a practice, he did note that “whether colored children shall be admitted to white schools is a question which confronts prejudice, and appeals to benevolence more than to law. I commend this subject to the calm and reflective sense of the people.”⁵⁹

Those comments could have been written specifically about the Marion Township district served by Locust Grove School. The school was established at Locust Grove in the late 1860s or early 1870s, and students met in a building that doubled as a church on Sundays.⁶⁰ The school was located less than a mile from Moses Carver’s farm, and George Washington Carver and his brother Jim reportedly attended Sunday school and church services there as children.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Linda O. McMurry, *George Washington Carver: Scientist & Symbol*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 13.

⁵⁸ Parker, *Fifth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools*, 37.

⁵⁹ John Monteith, *Seventh Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools* (Jefferson City: James Regan and John Edwards, Public Printers, 1873), 45.

⁶⁰ *Goodspeed’s History of Newton County*, 200; and Larry James and Sybil Jobe, *From Buzzard Glory to Seed Tick: A History of the Schools in Newton County, Missouri*, 63.

⁶¹ Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 25; and Fuller and Mattes, *The Early Life of George Washington Carver*, 26-29, and George Washington Carver to Isabelle Coleman, July 24, 1931. GWC Papers, Roll 12, frames 1264-1265. Although Carver later wrote that he was not allowed entrance to white church or Sunday School as a child, several white area residents remembered attending church or ‘Sabbath School’ with him at Locust Grove

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It was at Locust Grove that Carver encountered his first obstacle to receiving an education. Around 1875, George and Jim attempted to join their white neighbors at the school in Locust Grove.⁶² By most accounts, they were welcome on Sundays, but not during the week. Interviews with early residents of the area that were held in the 1950s revealed that the boys were refused entrance to the school because they were black.

Mr. George Jackson (born ca. 1859) recalled in 1953 that his wife knew George Washington Carver. "She went to school with him for three days at Locust Grove. A complaint was made to the school board about George being in attendance there."⁶³ One woman that was interviewed thought they were allowed to stay as long as a year, but most others recalled that they were turned away almost immediately. Mr. Forbes Brown told interviewers in 1952 that his brother Will was a fellow student of George's in "Mrs. Abbott's Sunday School class. This was not long after the close of the Civil War and the resentment towards the Negro was such as to prevent George attending the day school."⁶⁴ Mrs. Mary Lou Hardin thought they had attended a white "subscription school" in Diamond but said "people cut up about the boys (darkies) being in school with the whites so they had to go to school in Neosho."⁶⁵

The disappointment of being turned away from the same building where they were welcome to attend church services may have been tempered somewhat by the new white teacher of the Locust Grove School, Stephen Slane. Slane began teaching at Locust Grove School in 1875 or 1876 and spent the next three decades teaching in Newton County Schools.⁶⁶ He is believed to have tutored George in his spare time, providing the young man with his first schooling, as well as a strong desire to learn more.⁶⁷

Around 1876, young George Washington Carver decided it was worth leaving his home to find a school that would accept him as a student. He had surely heard of the school in Neosho that welcomed black children and was even run by a black teacher. He later wrote that "...at the age of 10 years, I left for Neosho, a little town just 8 miles from our farm, where I could go to school.

⁶² "The Early Life of George Washington Carver," 29, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri. The exact date is unknown but they were definitely there before January of 1876, according to an interview in list source.

⁶³ Fuller, *Interview with George Jackson*, Oct. 4, 1953, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

⁶⁴ Fuller and Mattes, *The Early Life of George Washington Carver*, 26.

⁶⁵ Tuskegee Field Notes, *Interview with Mrs. Mary Lou Ella Hardin* 5-26-48.

⁶⁶ "Stephen Larne Slane," *The Neosho Times*, March 21, 1907; and James, *From Buzzard Glory to Seed Tick*, 64. A biography that appears to have been written by Slane puts his arrival in the county 1875, but he may not have started teaching at Locust Grove until 1876.

⁶⁷ Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 15 and 26.

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Mr. and Mrs. Carver were perfectly willing for us to go to school where we could be educated the same as white children."⁶⁸

Carver's move to Neosho yielded a new foster family as well as a new school. According to biographer Gary Kremer, "Carver arrived in Neosho too late to find lodging with a friendly family so he found a comfortable spot in a barn and settled in for the night. His choice of a sleeping spot was fortuitous; first the barn was practically next door to the school; second it belonged to Andrew and Mariah Watkins, a childless black couple who took in the young waif and treated him as their own."⁶⁹ (Figure 3.) Another historian noted that "when Carver arrived in Neosho, he entered a predominantly black environment for the first time and acquired his first set of black 'parents.' Mariah and Andrew Watkins allowed him to live with them in their modest three room frame house in return for helping with the chores."⁷⁰ Carver himself wrote in 1927: "indeed Mr. and Mrs. Watkins took me in just as one of the family."⁷¹

Mariah Scales and Andrew Watkins were married in St. Louis in 1873, and moved to Neosho soon after. In April, 1874, they bought a small three room house on a corner lot next to the newly opened black school on Young Street, (Lot 8, Block 16 of Henning's Addition).⁷² The deed recording that sale is unusual in that it lists only Mariah Watkins as the grantee. It was also unusual for African Americans to own property at the time. According to the census, only one black family in Neosho Township owned real estate in 1870. Both Mariah and Andrew Watkins were listed on the mortgage that funded the purchase, which they paid off early just a few months later. The house had likely been built by or for William Smith, who bought the lot it occupied shortly after Henning's Addition was platted.⁷³

Although there was a lot between the school and the Watkins house (Lot 7), deed records indicate that it was not developed until after the mid-1880s, which means the Watkins' new house was directly adjacent to the school property. The empty lot may have served as a play space for students at the school. Calvin Jefferson remembered that the Watkins' "yard joined the school grounds....when the bell rang for classes George would hop over the fence and return to his classes."⁷⁴

⁶⁸ A 1922 Biographical sketch, quoted in Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, 23. Assuming Carver was born ca. 1864 or 65, he would have been 11 or 12 in 1876.

⁶⁹ Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, 4.

⁷⁰ McMurry, *George Washington Carver: Scientist & Symbol*, 20.

⁷¹ George Washington Carver, Questionnaire completed for a biographer, July 1927,1, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

⁷² Book 3, p 439, Newton County Deed Records, On File with the Newton County Recorder, Neosho, MO.

⁷³ Mr. Smith was probably white. There are at least 7 William Smiths listed in 1870 census records for this area, and all were white. (Ancestry.com, accessed December 10, 2016.)

⁷⁴ Jefferson, Letter to Austin Curtis, April 6, 1939.

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Mariah Watkins, known widely as “Aunt Mariah,” was one of the best known African Americans in Neosho during that time period. Trained as mid-wife and renowned for medical skills learned while enslaved in North Carolina, she delivered children throughout the region, for white families as well as black ones. One newspaper article estimated she delivered as many as 500 children during her long career.⁷⁵ One of the most famous of “her babies” was Thomas Hart Benton, a native of Neosho who later wrote, “I remember Aunt Mariah (Watkins) quite well. She delivered my brother and two sisters as well as me and was about our house in Neosho as a kind of over all boss of things until 1896...It was said she delivered practically every child in Neosho.”⁷⁶ Watkins was known as a no-nonsense nurse who often stayed with the new mothers for a time after the delivery, but made it clear she was there as a nurse and not to do housework or other chores.⁷⁷ Andrew, sometimes called “Uncle Andy” was reportedly a bit more easy going, and a special favorite of area children, who would clamber all over his wagon as he drove it down the street.⁷⁸

The house the Watkins’ were living in when Carver moved to Neosho has not survived to modern times. They sold it in 1882, and moved to a farm just west of Neosho City, on Baxter Road. They sold that land in 1894 and moved back into town to the house on Sherman Avenue in Neosho City.⁷⁹ Their former house on Lot 8 on Young Street was probably torn down to make way for the one that is currently at that location. The current house appears to have been built ca. 1890 or a little later.⁸⁰

Although exact dates have been difficult to ascertain, it appears that Carver moved in with the Watkins’ in 1876, and may have stayed until early to mid-1878. Cal Jefferson remembered him living there “several years,” but another fellow student, as well as Carver himself, recalled that he was only there for about nine months. Although Carver was somewhat behind in his education compared to the other students when he arrived in Neosho, he soon made up for lost time. Notes from an interview with Calvin Jefferson state that when George “came to school he was in a class by himself because he was behind in his classes. Other children were advanced.”⁸¹

Carver apparently soon caught up to the others, as another classmate. Mrs. Amelia Richardson, later recalled that “he was very smart and seemed really to know more than the teacher.”⁸² Mrs.

⁷⁵ “‘Aunt Mariah’ Watkins a Part of Neosho Story,” *Neosho Daily News*, July 2, 1958.

⁷⁶ Vesta-Nadine Robertson, “Midwife to Greatness,” *Ozark Mountaineer*, Dec. 1975, 20-21.

⁷⁷ Kidder, ‘Aunt Mariah’ Items Presented at Monument, B1.

⁷⁸ Robertson, *Midwife to Greatness*, 21.

⁷⁹ Deed records on file at George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

⁸⁰ Al O’Bright, “Investigation Report: Mariah Watkins House” (National Park Service, September 7, 1999) 1. There is a very slim chance that the current house was built around that older one, but it is highly unlikely.

⁸¹ Tuskegee Field Notes, *Interview with Cal Jefferson* 5-28-1948.

⁸² Fuller, *Interview with Mrs. Amelia Richardson*, 7-27-1956. This interview was conducted by M.W. Dial.

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Richardson, then 87, was interviewed in July and August 1956 and told the following story about an arithmetic problem George was asked to do in class.

Well he'd worked er... Oh! It was a big problem on the board. We had blackboards then, and he worked it and the teacher said it wasn't right. He rubbed it out, and then he worked it again, and said "Professor, I can't bring it out no way but this way. It seems to come out this way everytime". He said, taint right. You have to work your brains. So Aunt Mariah told him that night to carry this problem to a high school teacher that she'd known, that she'd worked for... doctored on... she was a doctor, and he did, and he gave her the problem, and she worked it out just like he did, and she wrote her name on there, his problem, and said "correct." He brought it to the teacher the next day.⁸³

Frost apparently had no hard feelings about the incident and in December of 1876, he presented Carver with a "Reward of Merit for Perfect Studies and Good Conduct." (Figure 9.) Carver was remembered as a serious student who often used recess time to work or study. Another early classmate, Mrs. Amelia Richardson, later recalled that he "would embroider at recess after his lessons was up, and the girls would go there to him, young women like we were, and look at his work."⁸⁴ Calvin Jefferson also noted that Carver sometimes used recess for both work and study. "At recess, Aunt Mariah had him to come home and help wash the clothes and at the same time he kept the book before him and studied his lessons."⁸⁵

Mariah Watkins was known for a "stern insistence that time should not be wasted."⁸⁶ A few people who knew her recalled that she liked to say "Toot-toot honey, you haven't time for that" when children wanted to play.⁸⁷ Although some also thought she was such a hard taskmaster that Carver left Neosho to get away from her, the fact that she and Carver remained close after he left Neosho calls that into question. She was devoutly religious, and had a strong influence on his religious life. She and George both attended the African Methodist Church together, and she gave him a Bible when he lived with her that he carried for the rest of his life.⁸⁸

Carver lived with the Watkins' and attended the school next door until sometime in 1878, when he seized upon an opportunity to further his education in another town. Carver left Neosho because he got a chance to join a family headed to Fort Scott, Kansas. He told a later biographer that he had not been planning to go to Fort Scott, but seized the chance because "I

⁸³ M. W. Dial, Interview with Mrs. Amelia Richardson, 7-27-1956, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

⁸⁴ Fuller, *Interview with Mrs. Amelia Richardson, 7-27-1956*. (This interview was conducted by M.W. Dial.)

⁸⁵ Jefferson, letter to Austin Curtis.

⁸⁶ McMurry, *George Washington Carver: Scientist & Symbol*, 20.

⁸⁷ Tuskegee Field Notes, *Interview with Mr. Charles Powell, 5-27-1848*.

⁸⁸ Robertson, *Midwife to Greatness*, 20-21.

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was anxious to go anywhere that I could get better school facilities.”⁸⁹ Carver later wrote that his time at the black school in Neosho had “simply sharpened my appetite for more knowledge. I managed to secure all of my meager wardrobe from home, and when they heard from me I was cooking for a wealthy family in Fort Scott, Kans. for my board clothes and school privileges.”⁹⁰

Carver’s time at the Neosho school marked the beginning of a twenty-year quest for education that culminated with a Master of Agriculture degree from Iowa State College in 1896.⁹¹ Biographer Gary Kremer wrote that Carver’s “longing for a formal education led him on an odyssey through three states,” and noted that while he often received help along the way from well-wishers, he had “an overpowering sense of modesty that precluded him from ever asking directly for help.”⁹² Carver himself later wrote that “Every year I went to school, supporting myself by cooking and doing all kinds of work in private families...I would never allow anyone to give me money, no difference how badly I needed it.”⁹³

His travels took him to several different towns in Kansas, and when he finally completed high school courses in 1885, he applied by mail to Highland College in Kansas and was accepted. However, when he arrived to enroll in classes and school officials learned that he was African American, that acceptance was withdrawn.⁹⁴ After that setback, he spent a short time homesteading in western Kansas, but resumed his pursuit of education in 1889, when he moved to Winterset, Iowa to attend Simpson College.⁹⁵ A year later, he transferred to the State Agricultural College at Ames, Iowa. He received a Bachelor of Agriculture from that school in 1894, and immediately joined the faculty there. He continued his studies, and received a Masters of Agriculture from the same school in 1896, a full twenty years after his move to Neosho.

He soon after accepted a position at the Tuskegee Institute, where he enjoyed a successful career in science that spanned forty-seven years. At a time when many African Americans struggled for access to education and equal rights, Carver became one of the world’s best known living scientists of any race. One article about his life that was published in Joplin, Missouri in 1941 credited the “noted negro scientist” with developing some 300 products from peanuts alone, as well as “fertilizers from the muck of swamps...and paint from cow dung.”⁹⁶ He spent his career promoting small scale agriculture and working to improve the lives of poor

⁸⁹ George Washington Carver, Questionnaire completed for a biographer, July 1927,1, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

⁹⁰ Carver, quoted in Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, 21.

⁹¹ Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, xiii.

⁹² Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, 22.

⁹³ Carver, quoted in Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, 23-24.

⁹⁴ Kremer, *George Washington Carver: A Biography*, 20-21.

⁹⁵ Kremer, *George Washington Carver: A Biography*, 25.

⁹⁶ Walker, Don, and Ray S. Cochran, “Discovery of New Drug by Dr. Carver, Noted Negro Scientist, Recalls Fact That He Was Born a Slave on Farm Near Diamond,” *Joplin Globe* 27 Apr. 1941: 8A.

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southern farmers, with a particular focus on health and nutrition. Through Tuskegee's extension service, he is recognized to have supplied advice to "thousands and improved the diets of untold numbers of farmers in the south."⁹⁷

His accomplishments were recognized throughout his career. In 1916 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, in London, England, and in the 1920s he gained fame for his work with the peanut and was awarded honorary degrees, as well as the Spingarn Medal for Distinguished Service to Science. The George Washington Carver Museum was approved by the Board of Trustees at Tuskegee in 1938, and Henry Ford spoke when that museum was dedicated in 1941. Soon after that museum opened, efforts were launched to declare his birthplace in Missouri as a historic site.⁹⁸ The effort met success just a few weeks after his death in 1943, when a bill was passed to establish the George Washington Carver National Monument at Diamond, Missouri. As biographer Gary Kremer wrote, "It was as if Americans could not wait to celebrate Carver and the meaning of his life."⁹⁹

Continued African American Education in Neosho

Carver's former school in Neosho continued to serve African American students in the community until 1891. It was often, but not always, the only school for African Americans in the area. Historical sources show that a second black school sometimes operated in Neosho City in the late nineteenth century. One early resident of Neosho remembered the school board using another house for an African American school in the 1880s. Mrs. A. A. Gowen, who moved to Neosho as a girl around 1880, recalled that "at that time there was a colored school located just across the street from the St. James Hotel... The school used by the colored people was a dwelling rented for school purposes."¹⁰⁰ A list of teachers and schools published in the 1888 Goodspeed county history also shows the presence of another school. That listing showed that Neosho had an African American school with a seven month term, taught by J. W. Harlow, while W. R. McLane was in charge of the African American school in Neosho City, which had a five month term.¹⁰¹ The Neosho City school building does not appear to have survived.

The school on Young Street closed in 1891, when students moved into a new building that was constructed specifically to be used as a black school. That school, which was named Lincoln School, was a great improvement over the tiny frame house on Young Street. It was built of brick, with two classrooms, and much more space.¹⁰² The building on Young Street probably sat

⁹⁷ McMurry, *George Washington Carver: Scientist & Symbol*, 144.

⁹⁸ Kremer, *George Washington Carver in His Own Words*, xiii-xiv.

⁹⁹ Kremer, *George Washington Carver: A Biography*, 183-184.

¹⁰⁰ Fuller, *Interview with Mrs. A. A. Gowen*, 2-13-1956, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, Missouri.

¹⁰¹ *Goodspeed's History of Newton County*, 107.

¹⁰² Neosho Superintendent of Schools, *Course of Study: Neosho Public Schools*, 24.

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empty or was used for storage until 1893, when the school board sold the property and it returned to residential use.

In 1941, the original Lincoln School was replaced with a new stone building which was built just a few yards from the back wall of the brick schoolhouse.¹⁰³ The older Lincoln School building was being used for storage in 1947, and at some point was remodeled into a duplex apartment building to serve as teacher housing. Both of those Lincoln Schools have survived; and both are now used as residences. They are located on the northwest side of Neosho, just northeast of the intersection of Washington and Hickory Streets. For a while in the early twentieth century, Lincoln School housed grades 1-8, and black high school students were bussed to Joplin.¹⁰⁴ The buildings are reasonably intact and future research may reveal that they are eligible for inclusion in the National Register for their roles in local African American education. Finally, nearly a century after African Americans were given the legal right to an education, the schools of Neosho were desegregated.

Over the years, the history of the Neosho Colored School on Young Street was largely forgotten save for a few grassroots supporters. National Park Service historian Robert P. Fuller photographed the site in 1956, and in 1975, National Park Service historian David Whitman researched the building and concluded that it was the probable location of the 1872 Neosho Colored School. His report recommended that a historical architect assess the structure. The George Washington Carver Birthplace Association placed a stone marker on the site in 1979 commemorating the structure as the first public school attended by George Washington Carver.¹⁰⁵

Despite those moments of recognition, the building was believed to have been destroyed by the 1990s when a comprehensive inventory was conducted of architectural and historic resources in Neosho. Indeed, it was not until 2004, shortly in advance of a planned demolition, that the building was “rediscovered” by the National Park Service and determined to be historically significant.¹⁰⁶ In 2004, Arvest Bank donated the property to the George Washington Carver Birthplace Association, and NPS historical architect Al O’Bright conducted a site investigation. That work was followed by the National Park Service-sponsored Historic Structure Report that was completed in 2012. In late 2016, the National Park Service placed new interpretive signage at the site, to provide additional education about the important historic role of what looks like a

¹⁰³ Sanborn Map of Neosho 1947, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Jobe, *A History of Newton County Missouri as Portrayed in the Courthouse Mural*, 87.

¹⁰⁵ That marker has since been removed.

¹⁰⁶ David L. Whitman, “Research Report,” September 18, 1975, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, MO; and Thomason and Associates, “Survey Report, Architectural and Historical Survey, Neosho, Missouri,” January 31, 1991, 15-16, Final Report, Newton 145-A, State Historic Preservation Office, Missouri Department of Natural Resources; and Al O’Bright, Memorandum, September 15, 2004, George Washington Carver National Monument, Diamond, MO.

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simple small frame house. That event was celebrated by members of the public, including local officials and area school children. (See Figure 10.)

In many ways, the nearly-lost history of the school speaks to the challenges of preserving the African American built environment. Everett L. Fry, for example, has spoken elegantly about the paucity of information on buildings noting that “[d]ocumentation for African American buildings and places is scattered, fragmented, obscured, and in many cases nonexistent.”¹⁰⁷ Most discouraging, the building remained invisible even as statewide preservation efforts focused on identifying buildings associated with African American history and culture.¹⁰⁸

Thanks to the concerted recent efforts of local supporters, the former Neosho Colored School building and knowledge of its important historical associations have not been lost. It retains its significance as a repurposed school and provides a unique window into the history of George Washington Carver and African American education in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

The school in Neosho represents a highly significant link to African American education in Neosho, and especially to the education of George Washington Carver. It is locally significant for its early and extended association with African American education. It was the first building in Neosho specifically designated as a “colored school” and it served in that capacity for nearly two decades, providing hundreds of students with what was often their only education. For much of that time period, it was the only school in Neosho for African American students, and it is the oldest such facility in the community today.

The school is also significant at the state level for its association with George Washington Carver. It was there that Carver first attended classes with any regularity, and his time at the school helped to launch a career that would span decades and help thousands of people. This is the only school that he attended in Missouri, and the only building in the state associated with Carver’s notably strong drive to educate himself. As he wrote in 1922, “When just a mere tot in short dresses my very soul thirsted for an education.”¹⁰⁹ The Neosho Colored School was the first public school to encourage that interest. The fact that the experience was teamed with an introduction to a supportive African American community no doubt bolstered his confidence and encouraged him to continue what would become a successful twenty year course of study.

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.preservationnation.org/forum/african-american-historic-places/profiles/everett-l-fly.html>

¹⁰⁸ Steven E. Mitchell, “Invisible History: Preserving the African-American Past in Missouri,” Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks, Summer 1997, 2; and Steve Mitchell, “Updates: The Visible History of a Race” *Preservation Issues* 5, no. 1 (January/February 1995): 2.

¹⁰⁹ Kremer, *In His Own Words*, 23.

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Appendix I: Teachers and Class sizes for Black Schools in Neosho, 1866-1892. Chart by Deb Sheals.

School Year	Number of Black Students in the Neosho School(s)	Teacher	No. of Black Schools in Neosho, if known	Total No. of Black Schools in County, if known	Source	Notes
1866-67	51 black children counted in the entire county				Goodspeed, p. 104	County Supt report noted only 9 schools in entire county. There were 2,618 white and 51 black children of school age.
1867-68				1, located in Newtonia with "a comfortable house and a number one teacher."	<i>Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Schools.</i> - pub. 1869. (1867-68 Statistics)	First year a public school for black students is known to have operated in Newton County.
1868-69				2 (total of 80 students)	4 th Annual State Report-pub 1870	
1869-70 May be first black school in Neosho.	23		1	2 or 3 (total of 108 students)	5 th Annual State Report -pub 1871 (Includes city statistics.)	Typescript at park with this date has 108 students in 2 school houses. Also says there are three schools, one apparently private.
1870-71				1	6 th Annual Report - pub 1872	
1871-72		Mrs. Marian J. Scoles, Feb and July, 1872.	1	5	7 th Annual Report - pub 1873; Goodspeed, p. 158.	Four black schools added this year. One of the black schools in the county also had a black teacher.
1872-73		Mrs. Scoles fall term, Mrs. Danforth, Jan. 1873 term.	1		8 th Annual Report - pub 1874; <i>The Neosho Times</i>	Young St. house purchased Sept. 1872.
1873-74	30 (April 1874)	Mrs. M. C. (Florence) Fry fall 1873, S. S. Frost Jan. 1874	1		<i>The Neosho Times.</i> Goodspeed. P. 159; Neosho Times.	Goodspeed says white and black schools discontinued for a time, probably late 1873.
1874-75		Mrs. Marian J. Scoles fall term, Stephen Frost, Jan 1875 term.	1	2 (total of 84 students)	<i>The Neosho Times,</i> Annual Report - pub 1876	Note in Neosho paper says school district was reduced by the elimination of the area

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						north of Neosho—this could mean Neosho City. Also describes the kids as being “black, spotted and saddle colored.”
1875-76		Stephen Frost	1	2	<i>The Neosho Times</i> , James Buzzard Glory, 5.	Note: Fuller and Mattes 1957 report says successive issues of <i>The Neosho Times</i> indicate he taught until 1884. p. 42.
1876-77	75, est.	Stephen Frost			Card to GWC, dated Dec. 22 nd , 1876. Cal Jefferson [letter 4-6-1939]	Card on file at monument has Frost’s signature. Number of students is from Jefferson, may be high.
1877-78	23, approx.	Stephen Frost		5 (total of 115 students)	Fuller and Mattes, p 42.	Number of students based on an average of county totals.
1878-79		Stephen Frost			Fuller and Mattes, p 42.	Carver was in Fort Scott this year.
1879-80	42	Stephen Frost			<i>Neosho Miner and Mechanic</i> , per Larry James.	The paper said Frost had that many students. It has been assumed he was teaching on Young St.
1880-81		Stephen Frost			Fuller and Mattes, p 42.	Frost to a state teachers conf this year, per Jobe.
1881-82		Stephen Frost	1 in Neosho, 1 in Neosho City		A. A. Gowne, 2/13/1956 Oral History, park files.	A black school was supposed to be in operation across from St. James Hotel, ca. 1881.
1882-83		Stephen Frost			Goodspeed, p. 159	Interview with former student Lena King, 3-9-1955, park files said she had Frost as a teacher around this time.
1883-84		J. W. Williams, replaced by J. W. Harlow			Goodspeed, p. 159.	
1885-86		J. W. Harlow	1		State Supt report.; Goodspeed	Stephen Frost began a term as pastor for the Washington Ave Baptist Church in Springfield this year.
1886-87	28	Mrs. E. Boyd	1		1892 Neosho Supt. Report.	284 black students in entire county, per Goodspeed p. 105.
1887-88	22	J. W. Harlow	1		1892 Neosho Supt. Report.	
1888-89	23	J. W. Harlow	1	1 in Neosho City, per Goodspeed	1892 Neosho Supt. Report.; Goodspeed	W. R. McLane teacher in Neosho City

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1889-90	21	Stephen Frost	1		1892 Neosho Supt. Report.	
1890-91	25	Stephen Frost	1		1892 Neosho Supt. Report.	
1891-92	91	Stephen Frost, principal; Miss Tennie Young	1		1892 Neosho Supt. Report.	New Lincoln School, two teachers, two classrooms.

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lot 6, Block 16, Henning's Addition to the City of Neosho.

Boundary Justification

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the building.

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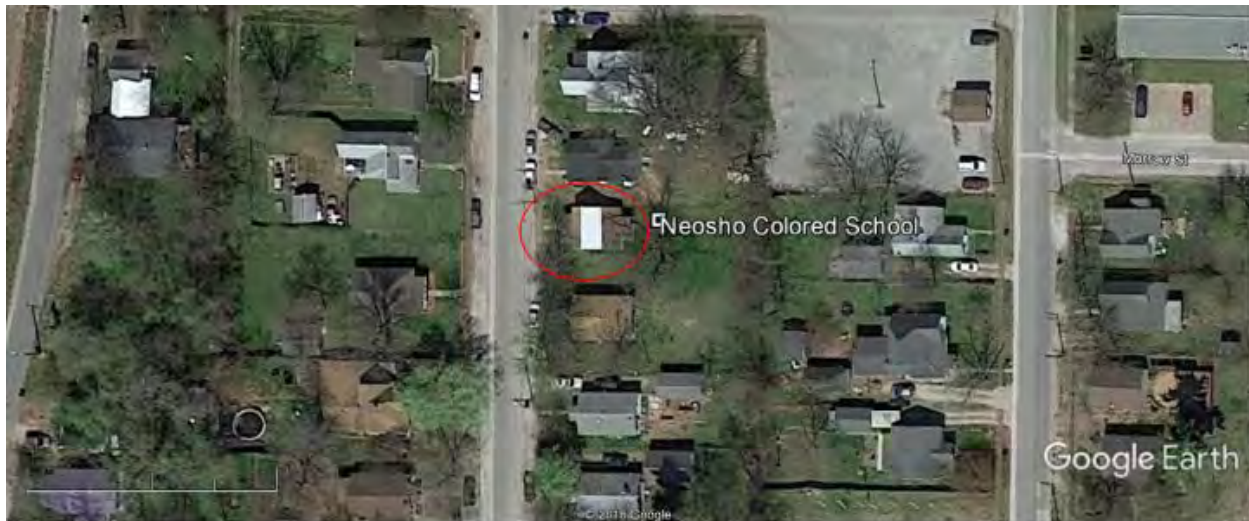
Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Coordinates. (Placemark, Accessed Oct. 2016. This photo was taken before the modern additions were removed.)



Neosho Colored School
639 Young Street Neosho, MO 64850 Latitude: 36.876449° Longitude: -94.373894°

Figure 2. Aerial photo map of the area, from Google Earth. (Screenshot, Accessed Oct. 2016.)



Google Earth feet 5000
km 1

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Neosho Colored School

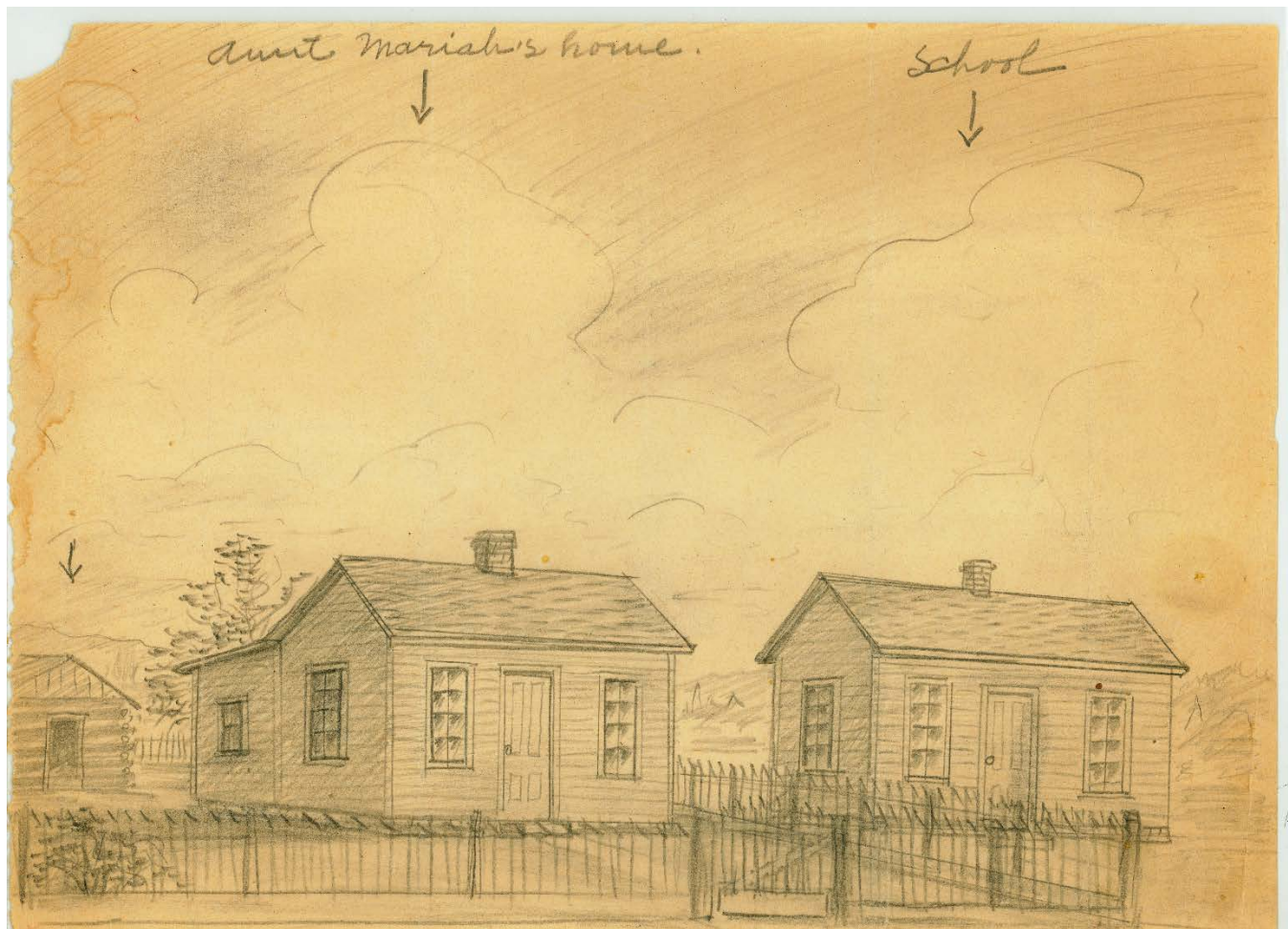
Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 3. Sketch of the School and the Watkins House. Drawn by George Washington Carver and his assistant, Austin Curtis, ca. 1939. (George Washington Carver National Monument Files.)

Note the arrow over the barn behind the Watkins house, which is believed to be an indication of where Carver slept the first night he came to Neosho.



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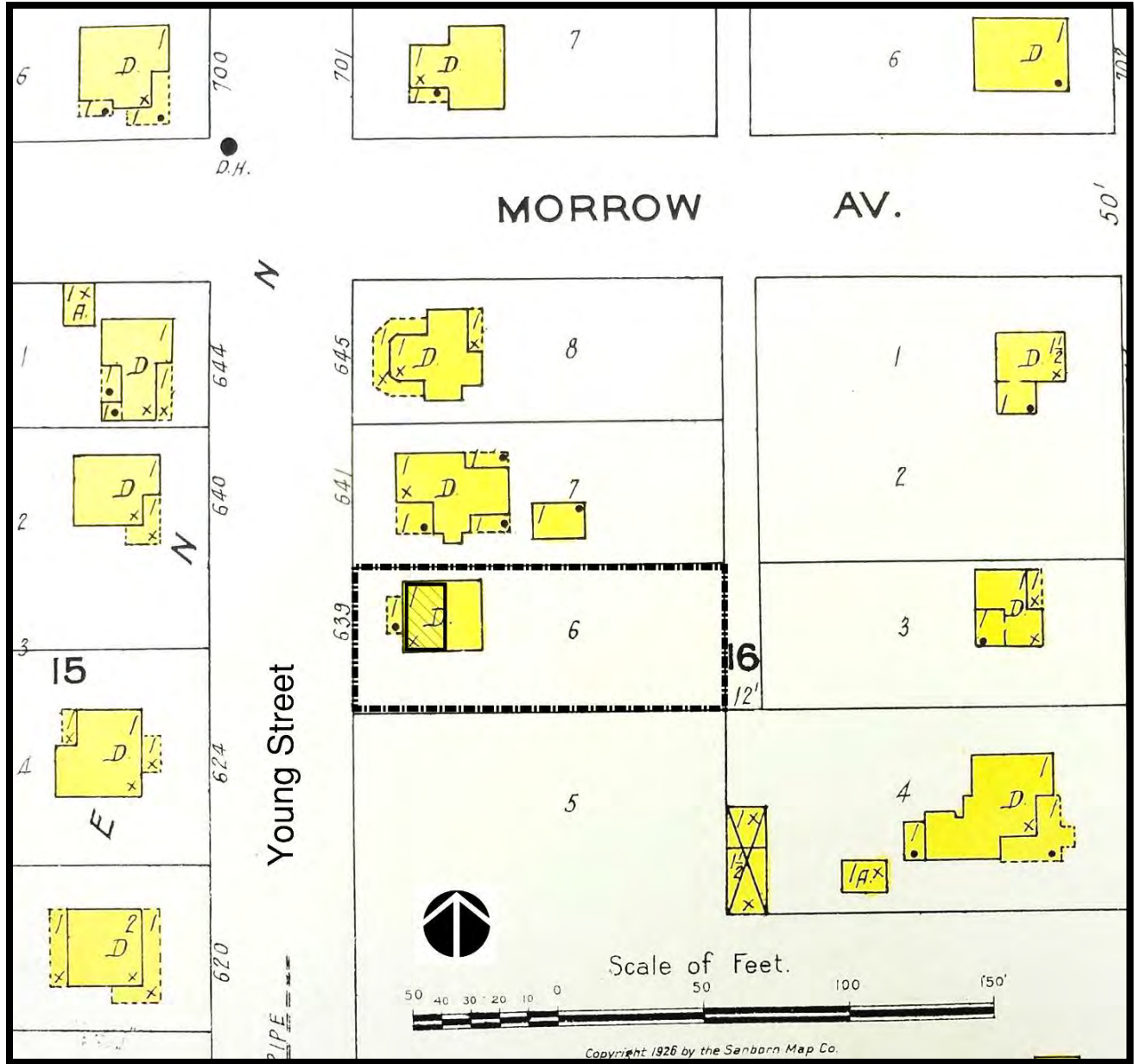
Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 4. 1926 Sanborn Map, showing current property boundaries. The original section of the house is shaded. Most of the surrounding houses shown here are still in existence.



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 5. Photo of the building taken by historian Robert Fuller in 1956, camera looking northeast. (George Washington Carver National Monument Files.)

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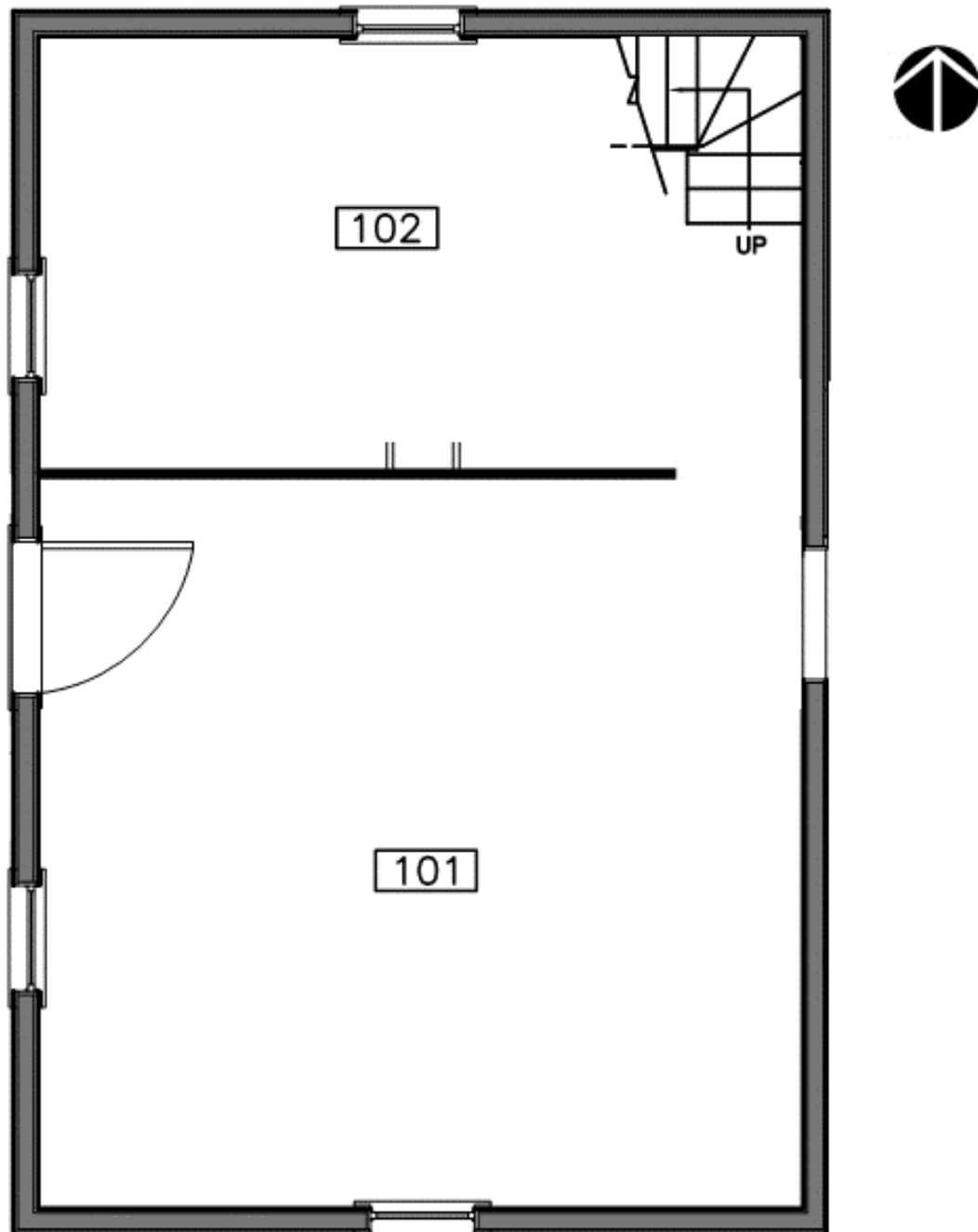
Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 6. Existing First Floor Plan. (Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, 2012, with edits by Deb Sheals 2016.)



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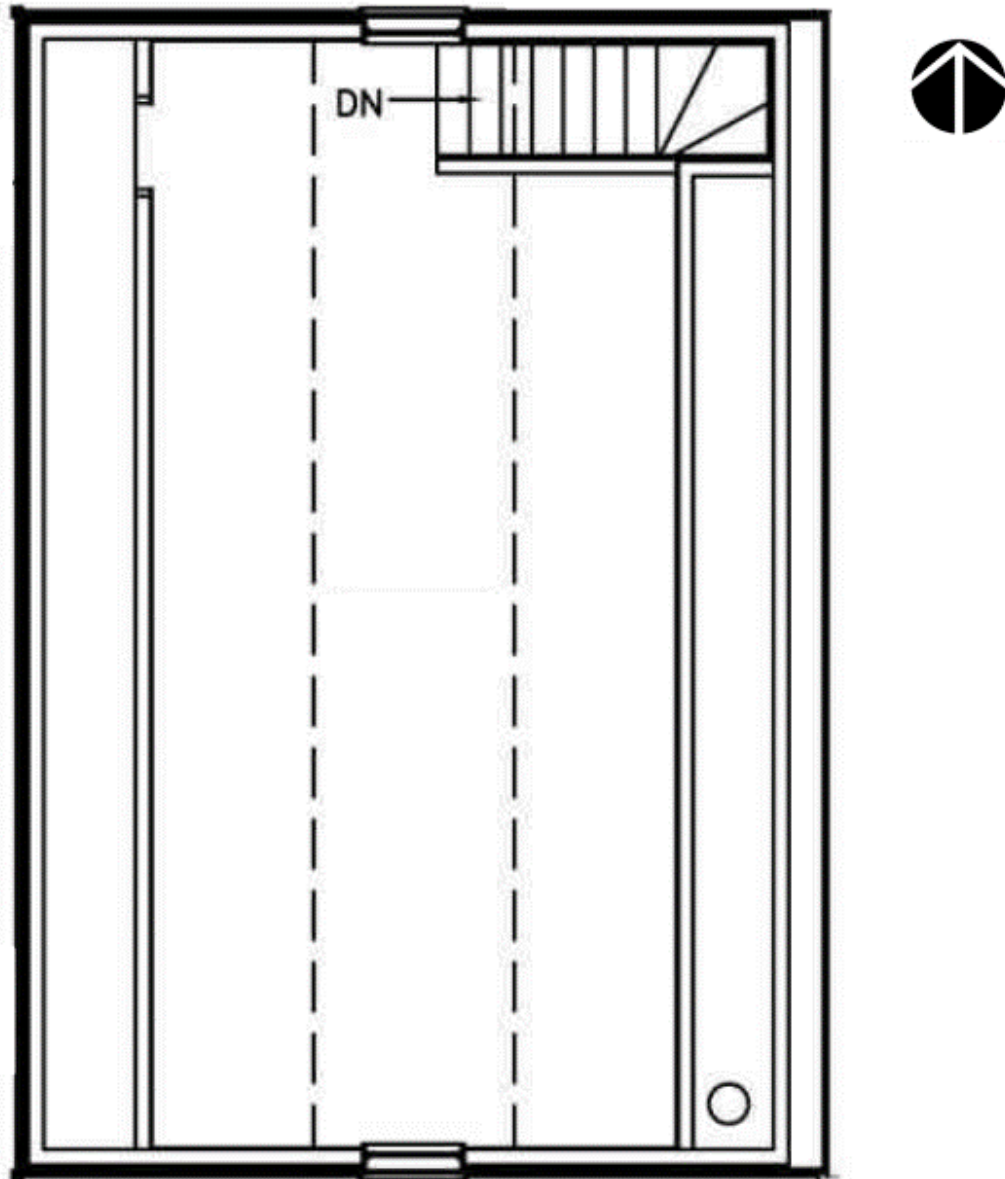
Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 7. Existing Second Floor Plan, (Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, 2012.)

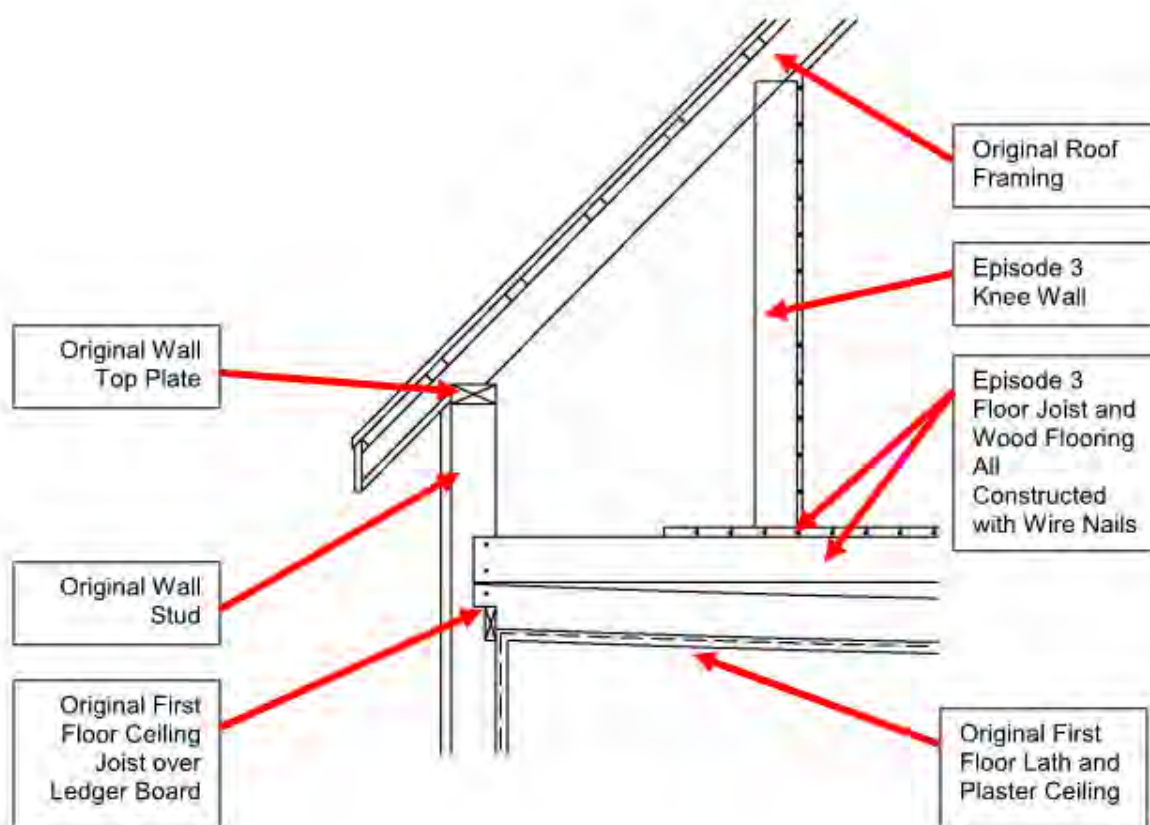


National Register of Historic Places
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Neosho Colored School
Name of Property
Newton County, MO
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 8. Typical Section Through the West Attic Wall to Show Changes Made After the Period of Significance. (Susan Richards Johnson and Associates, 2012.)



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 9. Card from Stephen Frost to George Washington Carver, December 1876.
(George Washington Carver National Monument Files.)



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Continuation Sheet

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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 10. Dedication Ceremony for Wayside Exhibits at the Neosho School, November, 2016. (Photo by Todd Higdon, *Neosho Daily News*, courtesy of Lana Henry, Management Assistant, George Washington Carver National Monument.)



National Register of Historic Places
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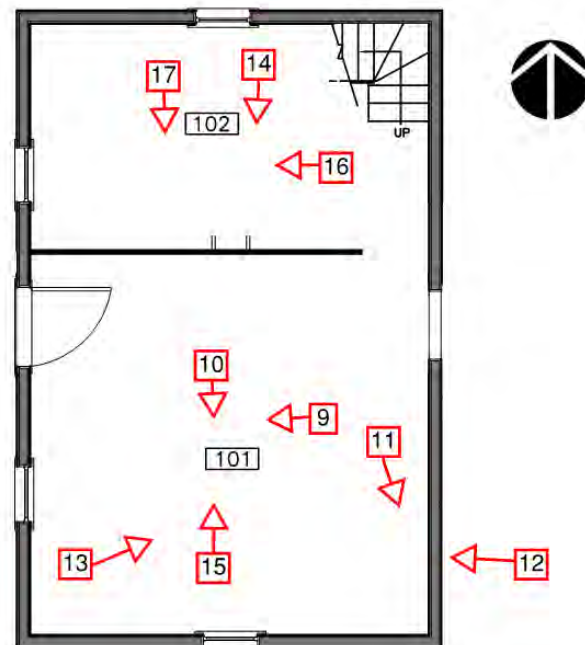
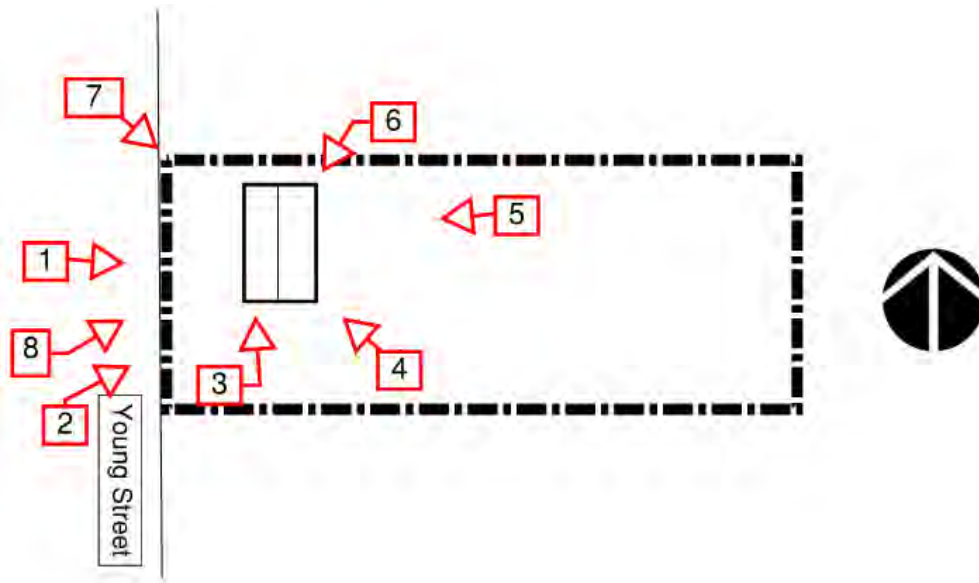
Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Photo Key. Top: Exterior views. Bottom: Interior views



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1 of 17: Façade, west wall.



2 of 17: South side wall.



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

3 of 17: Detail of original weatherboards, south side wall



4 of 17: Southeast corner.



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

5 of 17: East (back) wall.



6 of 17: Northeast corner.



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

7 of 17: Northwest corner.



8 of 17: Detail, front wall.



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

9 of 17: Room 101, looking west.



10 of 17: Room 101, looking south.



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

11 of 17: Room 101, east wall, looking south at wainscoting.



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Section number Photos Page 48

Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

12 of 17: Room 101, interior framing of the east wall. (Photo taken in 2012, before the rear additions were removed.)



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

13 of 17: Room 101, looking east.



14 of 17: Room 101, looking south from Room 102.



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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

15 of 17: Room 102, looking north from Room 101.



16 of 17: Room 102, looking west.



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Neosho Colored School

Name of Property
Newton County, MO

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

17 of 17: Room 201, looking south, (second floor).



































