2000

Reed School - Dist. #55

Country School Legacy: Humanities on the Frontier

Follow this and additional works at: https://openspaces.unk.edu/schoolbuildings

Part of the American Art and Architecture Commons, Education Commons, and the United States History Commons
HISTORIC SITE FORM

State Nebraska County Dawson

Location (in miles & direction from nearest town)

Is this the original location? No, this building is situated on the grounds

of the Dawson County Historical Society

in Lexington, Nebr. Built in 1888, it was dist. 55, the Reed School, in

Name of building & origin of name Dawson County. It is completely

equipped but in fairly modern

furniture. See photographs.

Name & number of the district

Date built Years in use

Who built it? A contractor or the community?

Does it look like it came from a plan book or was it designed by

the community?

Names of former teachers:

Names of former students (family names only):

Name & address of person in charge of building:

Who is the owner?

SPONSORED BY THE MOUNTAIN PLAINS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY HISTORIC SITE FORM

Architectural Features:

Size of building

Number of Windows (four pane, six pane, etc.)

Number of doors (entrances)

Number of classrooms

Bell tower or cupola

Materials used (wood, brick, stone, etc.)

Type of roof

Outhouses

Playground Equipment

Color of building & trim

Coal shed or stable

Teacherage

Flagpole

Other architectural features:

Anything left inside?

Narrative Information: Did any special events happen at the school? What stories do people remember?

Current condition & use:

District records available: yes __ no ___ where stored ________

Black & white photo taken: yes __ no ___

Old photos available: yes __ no ___

Does the building have any state or national historic designation?

Name & address of surveyor ___________________________ date ________
A Brief History

Increasing concern for the preservation of the history of this portion of the Platte Valley prompted Mr. and Mrs. Roy Batie to invite a group of 18 interested persons to their home on Aug. 19, 1958, to discuss the situation.

Two months later, representatives from all over the county met at the Cornland Hotel in Lexington to formulate plans for a Dawson County Historical Society, elect officers and appoint committees. Mrs. Batie was the first president.

Membership grew rapidly. Interest was heightened by the quarterly bulletin to members telling of new plans and acquisitions. A museum building was still a “dream” so activities of the society included such things as marking historical sites, trail tours, preservation of records, and programs of interest.

In 1959, the Reed family presented to the Historical Society, the one-room school from rural District 55, a building which was on the Reed farm and no longer in use. This was placed in Memorial Park which adjoins the museum grounds on the north, and moved in 1972 for permanent display between the museum and depot.

In 1961, six rooms in the Rosenberg building at 619 North Washington Street were donated for the housing and display of the hundreds of items which were being given to the society. These were carefully catalogued, and displayed upon request.

During a Plum Creek Days celebration on June 18, 1964, a nine-acre plot was presented to the society for a building site. Donors were the Harley Kirkpatrick family, represented by Mrs. Harley Kirkpatrick and son, Harold Kirkpatrick and family. Funds for a building were acquired through memorial gifts and donations. Ground was broken on Oct. 14, 1967, and open house was held Apr. 17, 1969.

It was another year before the building was completed and materials were moved, sorted, and placed on exhibit so that regular hours for visitors were established in May, 1970. The museum is open 2:00-5:00 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and closed on Mondays during the summer months. Special tours may be arranged by contacting officers of the society.

The Union Pacific Depot at Willow Island was acquired in 1968 and moved to its location north of the museum in 1969. It is being renovated and will contain furnishings commonly seen in depots during the railroad era.

Two additions have been made to the museum since the original structure was completed. The first addition was constructed in 1972 and the second was placed into service in 1975, providing special areas for the display of large pieces of machinery and automobiles.

A patio type roof on the grounds, also completed in 1972, provides a cover for one of Lexington's first fire trucks, donated to the society. In 1974, a windmill was installed on the grounds between the school and depot. The 24-foot tower and 10-foot wooden wheel also were donated to the society.

Besides the donations of historical articles and money, many hundreds of hours of labor have been given in moving of the buildings, preparing the grounds, cleaning the lagoons, painting, cleaning, sorting and planning.

These devoted people merit the thanks of everyone in Dawson County and surrounding area for their part in making possible this fine museum which will preserve our heritage for future generations.

Mrs Jackie O'Donnell

Dawson County Historical Museum

805 N. Taft St.
Lexington, Nebr.