

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Boswell School

other name/site number: Boswell Baptist Church

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2. Location

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street & number: End of County Road 196

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Boswell

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Izard code: AR 065 zip code: 72516

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920-1940

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asphalt  
walls Stone other \_\_\_\_\_  
Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1934

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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#### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A Byrd  
Signature of certifying official

7-16-92  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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#### 5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

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#### 6. Function or Use

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Historic: Education

Sub: School

Current : Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>585120</u>	<u>3988640</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point approximately 20 feet southwest of the southwest corner of the school, proceed east to a point approximately 20 feet southeast of the southeast corner of the school. Then proceed north to a point approximately 20 feet northeast of the northeast corner of the school. Then proceed west to a point due north of the point of beginning. Then proceed south to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Barbara Lindsey-Allen, Survey Coordinator

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 07/29/92

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

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**Summary**

The Boswell School is a single story, fieldstone masonry classroom structure designed in classical WPA Plain Traditional style. It is rectangular in plan with a large gable roof, central front porch on the western facade. The main gable roof is covered with slate, the walls are constructed of fieldstone detailed with grapevine mortar and a continuous stone foundation supports the structure.

**Elaboration**

The Boswell School is a single story, fieldstone masonry classroom structure designed in classic WPA Plain/Traditional style. It is rectangular in plan with a large, central gable roof front porch on the western facade. The main gable roof is covered with slate, the walls are constructed of fieldstone detailed with grapevine mortar and a continuous stone foundation supports the structure. The building stands on a hilltop overlooking the little town of Boswell. A view from the building displays the White River Valley, composed of Izard and Stone counties, and features steep mountains with limestone bluffs, river bottom fields, and the Union Pacific Railroad track.

The western or front elevation features a large projecting gable roof entry porch ornamented with columns on piers. The gable end of the roof is stuccoed and detailed with wide board banding and a wooden louver vent. There are two entry doors with transom windows located to the sides of the porch. Symmetrically placed, double-hung, nine-over-nine pane windows and two stationary six pane windows complete the fenestration.

The eastern elevation is divided into two large window bays. One bay features six nine-over-nine, double-hung windows. The other bay features five nine-over-nine, double-hung windows. The extreme south end of the elevation features two six-over-six, double-hung windows which provide light to the stage area.

The southern and northern elevations are without detail.

The only interior changes of the structure were made in 1950 after the Boswell School District No. 66 was consolidated with the Calico Rock School District No. 50. The students from the Boswell area were bused to the Calico Rock campus for grades 1 - 12, and the Boswell building became a church facility. The red cloth curtains across the stage were removed and replaced with a partition of paneling to form a classroom. Another partition was fashioned across the opposite end of the sanctuary to create a classroom/fellowship hall. The ceiling in the sanctuary was covered with sheetrock and painted when the original plaster walls were repainted. A raised, six inch platform of pine was constructed in the front of the

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sanctuary to provide a pulpit/choir loft area. The school cloakroom was remodeled to be a small kitchen by the addition of a cabinet. The original "blackboard" remains in the classroom. The original pine ceilings remain in four rooms, and the original pine flooring remains also. Electricity was installed in the building in the early 1950's.

No out buildings exist today.

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**Summary**

The Boswell School is nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best surviving example in both the community of Boswell and Izard County of a school building constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the fieldstone-faced, Plain Traditional style that became the signature style for buildings erected by this organization throughout the Ozark Mountain region in Arkansas.

**Elaboration**

The small town of Boswell, Arkansas is located on the western line of Izard County near the Missouri Pacific Railroad and on the north side of the White River. In its history, it has had three names: Wideman, Cook, and Boswell. The very first settlement known as Wideman was located on Wideman Creek about four miles from the present town of Boswell. The Wideman school, which pioneer settlers erected early, served a large area as both an educational and social center. This settlement spread quickly, however, all the way down the creek to White River as other people came to live in the territory.

Approval was made in the year of 1905 for a United States Post Office for the little village, but since there was already an existing post office named Wideman in Izard County, the name Cook was selected as there were numerous residents in the area having that name. After the railroad was built and a depot station established, the trainmen and railroad officials referred to the station as Wideman. Later the station was referred to as Boswell since the station agent's name was Robert Boswell. Shipments of freight were tagged for Boswell, but it was necessary that all statements and bills be addressed to the post office of Cook, which resulted in much confusion. Thus, in 1927, the name of the post office was officially changed to Boswell.

Many changes for Boswell came with the building of the railroad during the years of 1901 -1906. Firstly, it provided employment for the natives which helped them pay for homestead lands, build better homes and purchase food for families and livestock. Secondly, the railroad was a source of transportation, not only for people but also for freight and livestock. Better roads were built leading to Melbourne as merchants received much of their freight via railway at Boswell and hauled it by wagon to Melbourne. By the 1930's, the economy of the area was based upon farming, livestock production, and the railroad industry.

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the subsequent advent of such federal public works programs as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) brought a new school to the Boswell area in 1934. The WPA -- an organization



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that hired unemployed adult men and women to work on a variety of public projects throughout the nation -- was established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration as part of the federal response to the dire economic circumstances brought upon the American people by the Great Depression. The WPA was but one of many such public works organizations instituted by the Roosevelt Administration and managed under the aegis of the umbrella agency in charge of all such public works efforts, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA); others included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the short-lived Public Works and Civilian Works Administrations (PWA and CWA), and such regional projects as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Rural Colonization Projects in Arkansas established at such places as Dyess, Clover Bend and Plum Bayou. Among its various other projects, the WPA constructed or repaired a number of rural school buildings throughout the state, and the Boswell School was erected as part of this statewide effort.

When the Boswell School District consolidated in the 1950's, area students were transported into the Calico Rock School District (today the Boswell School building is owned and used by the Boswell Baptist Church). Railroad passenger service was discontinued in 1960, though there is still a small post office in service. Boswell, like many Izard County towns, experienced growth and now, sadly, decline; the population has dwindled to a very small number.

The Boswell School stands as an excellent example of the low, fieldstone-faced school building that has become directly associated with the Works Progress Administration and its construction projects in the Ozark Mountain region of the state.

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### Bibliography

Shannon, Karr, *History of Izard County*, (Melbourne, Arkansas; 1927).

*Independence County Chronicle*, July, 1970.

Interview with Mrs. Lora Cooper Ross; July, 1991.



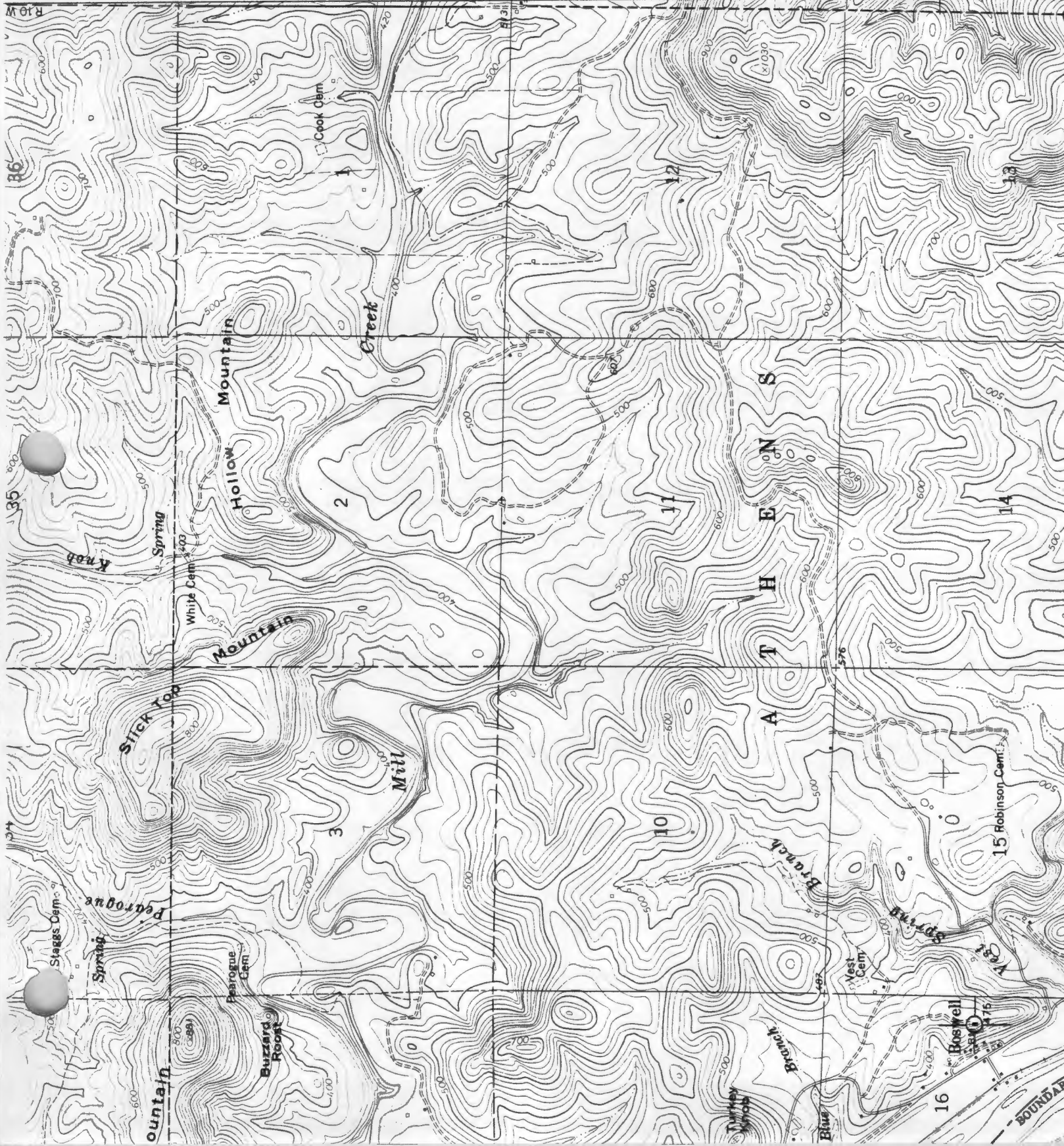
Boswell School  
Izard Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Todd Ferguson  
July 1991  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the west



Bessie's School  
Izard Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Todd Ferguson  
July 1991  
Negative on file at AHP  
View from the east



Boswell School  
Boswell, Arkansas  
UTM:  
T. 17 N. 15/585120/  
3988640



5 MI. TO MELBOURNE (MELBOURNE 1:62 500)  
7656 III

3989  
2'30"