

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR Listed 8-4-2011

# 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 Sumner Elementary School

other names/site number 103-3020-00300

## 2. Location

street & number 1501 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  not for publication

city or town Leavenworth  vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Leavenworth code 103 zip code 66048

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

\_\_\_ national  X  statewide  \_\_\_  local

SEE FILE

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		<b>Total</b>

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

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

**Historic Public Schools of Kansas**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**EDUCATION: school**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**VACANT/NOT IN USE**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:**  
**Commercial Style**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation: **Concrete**  
walls: **Brick**  
roof: **Asphalt**  
other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Description**

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

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Sumner Elementary School is centered on a half block of property on the southeast corner of Ohio and Fifth Avenue in Leavenworth, Kansas. The school is located in a traditionally African American neighborhood, surrounded by single-family residences and churches, which have historically included the Pentecostal Church of the Apostolic Faith, St. James CME Church and the Church of God. The elevated site is accessible by foot via a sidewalk that rises from Fifth Avenue to the front door and by car via a driveway that runs east from Fifth Avenue, along the south side of the building, then turns north and east to exit at the southwest corner of Ohio and Fourth Avenue. The rectangular building, which is symmetrical on an east/west axis, measures approximately 120' north to south and 95' east to west. The west half of the building is two stories in height. The east half, which includes the auditorium, is one story in height. Character-defining features include its symmetrical form, exterior brick, original windows, original interior plan, and historic wood trim. Both the exterior and interior retain a high degree of architectural integrity.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### Exterior Overall

Sumner School is a reinforced concrete structure with flat roof and brick facing. The field brick, which is rough variegated dark red and brown brick laid in regular courses, is interrupted in places with details in brown soldier brick and cast stone. A cast-stone cornice provides a continuous lintel for the upper-story windows. The building is capped with cast-stone coping. Window openings have cast-stone sills. The windows, which are mostly found in pairs, are original multi-pane double-hung wood, some 6/6, some 4/4. The building also retains its original wood doors, which have 6-pane lites. Although the majority of the original windows are extant, many of the windows, principally on the first floor, are covered with plywood.

#### West (Front) Elevation

The west elevation, which faces Fifth Avenue, is divided into three main bays, a centered bay flanked on the north and south by projecting bays. The first projecting bay on the north has no window openings. Instead, it has a frame of dark brown brick. The center bay houses the main entrance, a double door surrounded by a gabled surround with a cast-stone sign plate reading "Sumner School." The entrance is flanked on each side by three window openings. On the second floor, above the entrance, is a small window opening with a pair of 4/4 wood windows. This centered window is flanked on each side by three window openings, which match the shape and spacing of those on the first floor. The west elevation of the projecting third bay, which houses the kindergarten room on the first floor, matches that of the first bay.

#### East (Rear) Elevation

The east elevation is divided into three main bays, a one-and-a-half-story centered auditorium/gymnasium bay flanked on the north and south by projecting one-story bays on the north and south. The one-story bay on the south has four evenly spaced window openings with limestone sills and soldier-coursed lintels and a cast-stone parapet cap. The one-story bay on the north has two evenly spaced window openings with limestone sills and soldier-coursed lintels and a cast-stone parapet cap. The east elevation of the one-and-a-half-story auditorium/gymnasium historically had four window openings. Today, there is a single window (on the south end) and two double windows. A third double window opening, between the two other double windows, was expanded to create an overhead door opening, likely installed in the late 1960s or early 1970s, when the school district converted the building for use as a maintenance facility. Above the auditorium, the east wall of the two-story building, with four clerestory windows, is visible. A chimney rises from the furnace room along the south end of the east elevation of the two-story building.

#### North (Side) Elevation

The north elevation, which faces Ohio Street, is divided into two main bays, a one-story bay on the east end and the two-story original building on the west. The one-story bay has six window openings, four that light the lunch room and two that light the girls' toilet. There is an entry on the east end of the two-story bay, above which is a pair of windows that light the stair on the north end of the corridor. Three windows on each floor of the two-story bay light classrooms on the building's northwest corner.

### South (Side) Elevation

The south elevation is divided into two main bays, the two-story original building on the west end and a one-story bay on the east. There are four masonry openings on each floor of the two-story bay. The majority of these house a pair of windows with wide mullions. The second one on the second floor has a single window and a man door that opens to a steel fire escape that descends to the sidewalk below. The one-story bay has two man doors and three window openings, two singles and a double. The east door was formerly a window opening.

### Interior Overall

Like the exterior, the interior has changed little since its original construction. The first floor is divided among six former classrooms (one was converted to a lunch room) and an auditorium. There are four former classrooms (one was later converted to an office) on the second floor. Interior features include concrete floors, wood trim, wood doors, plaster walls, and chalk boards. Restrooms were updated throughout the years, with non-historic materials including wood vanities and Formica-covered countertops and partitions. Although many of the rooms throughout the building have suspended acoustical tile ceilings, the original plaster ceilings are still intact above. Other non-historic materials include wood paneling, found in the second-floor office and classroom in the southeast corner of the first floor. Lighting ranges from original flush-mounted fixtures to lay-in fluorescent fixtures. Most walls are finished with flat plaster, with some covered with non-historic wood paneling, ceramic tile and sheet vinyl. Floors are concrete, mostly covered with carpet and asbestos linoleum tile. Baseboards are stained or painted wood. Other trim includes historic chalkboards, built-in cabinets and closets, and interior window trim, much of which retains its original finish. Historic interior doors include single-panel wood doors and 6-lite wood doors.

### Basement

There are only two accessible spaces in the basement, a furnace room and coal room on the southwest corner. The stairs to the basement are accessible via a steel fire door leading from the boys' toilet in the center of the south end of the first floor. The furnace and coal rooms have not changed since the building's 1925 construction. Features include the original coal-fired furnace and exposed concrete walls.

### First Floor

The first floor is accessible via entrances in the centers of the west and north ends. The main entrance opens to an entrance vestibule/stair bay. Historically, this vestibule was open to the main north/south corridor. However, in the 1960s or 1970s, the stair tower was enclosed with a partition wall for fire protection. This enclosure projects eastward, encroaching on the north/south corridor. A door on the south end of the enclosure now provides corridor access. The north/south corridor is double loaded. On the north end is a second entrance vestibule/stair bay. Unlike the main stair, this stair is not enclosed. Doors on the west side of the north/south corridor open to four classrooms, two north of the stair and two south of the stair. East of the corridor is a girls' toilet and lunch room in the north bay, a one-and-a-half-story auditorium/gymnasium in the center, and a classroom and boys' toilet on the south. Two pairs of doors on the east corridor wall open to the auditorium/gymnasium, whose volume spans two stories. On the south end of the auditorium there is a large stage, flanked on each side by a dressing room. Stairs within the dressing room areas provide access to the stage floor, which is raised from the gymnasium floor level. The proscenium is framed with wood trim. There are two door openings on the north end of the auditorium, one on the west opens to an east/west hall off the main corridor, one on the east opens to a space historically used as the kitchen. (See also first-floor plan attached to this document.)

### Second Floor

The floor plan of the second floor is similar to that of the first floor, with four classrooms on the west side, two north of the main stair and two south of the main stair. The classroom just south of the main stair was converted to offices in the 1960s or 1970s. Partition walls divide this former classroom into three main spaces: an L-shaped space on the southeast corner and two smaller spaces in the northwest corner. Finishes in this former classroom include acoustical suspended tile ceilings and faux wood paneling. There are no usable spaces on the east side of the corridor. A door on the north end on the east side of the corridor opens to the roof of the one-story girls' toilet and lunchroom on the northeast corner of the first floor. A similar door on the north end on the east side of the corridor opens to the roof of the one-story boys' toilet and classroom on the southeast corner of the first floor. A teachers' room occupies the south end of the north/south corridor. A stair occupies the north end of the corridor. (The main stair rises from the second-floor corridor to the principal's office. See also second-floor plan attached to this document.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education \_\_\_\_\_

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1925-1954 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1925, 1954 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Blanche Ketene Bruce \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Charles A. Smith \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance for Sumner School stretches from its construction in 1925 to 1954, the year of the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. The school was built to serve the African American of South Leavenworth, replacing an earlier building constructed on the site in 1866. Until 1954, the school served children of all elementary grades. After 1954, the Leavenworth schools began a process of desegregation and resultant consolidation in which fewer grades of all races were housed in the school.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

## Statement of Significance

### Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Sumner School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Education as an example of a "City Graded School" property type under the Historic Public Schools of Kansas Multiple Property Nomination and for its association with school segregation. It is also being nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of a school building designed by prolific school architect Charles Ashley Smith. In addition, it is being nominated under Criterion B for its association with prominent Leavenworth educator Blanche Ketene Bruce, who served as the school's principal for fifty-four years. Because of the building's association with school segregation and Blanche K. Bruce, it is being nominated for statewide significance. The building retains a high degree of integrity from its period of significance and interprets its history as an institution that subscribed to the high educational standards promulgated by B. K. Bruce.

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### School Segregation in Kansas

The First Territorial Legislature of Kansas, dominated by pro-slavery delegates, voted to provide a free public education to "every class of white citizens." By 1858, when free-staters gained control of the legislature, Kansas committed to educating all children regardless of color.<sup>1</sup>

After Kansas became a state in 1861, the issue of racial equality resurfaced. In 1867, the Kansas Legislature passed a law prohibiting schools from excluding black children. Despite appeals from citizens including a state school superintendent who called integration "the only course worthy of a free people," the Kansas Legislature passed a law in 1868 giving school boards the power to "organize and maintain separate schools for the education of white and colored children."<sup>2</sup> In 1879, a new Kansas law permitted schools in cities of the first class, with populations over 15,000, to segregate black and white children.<sup>3</sup> At the time, the law applied only to three cities, Atchison, Leavenworth and Topeka. School segregation was further codified by the landmark Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which upheld the constitutionality of state segregation laws provided that separate facilities, like schools, were equal.

Efforts to end racial discrimination in schools dated back to 1849, when Benjamin F. Roberts filed suit against the Boston Public Schools (*Roberts v. Boston*) for denying his daughter admission to a neighborhood school on the basis of race. Although Roberts and his attorney Charles Sumner, after whom Leavenworth's Sumner School is named, lost the case, it was cited more than a century later in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*. Before the landmark *Brown* ruling, which confirmed the unconstitutionality of the "separate but equal" doctrine, Kansas state law made segregation legal in twelve Kansas communities. The process of desegregation continued for years following the *Brown* case.<sup>4</sup>

### Sumner School

Sumner School was one of two elementary schools built to serve Leavenworth's African American students in the nineteenth century. Lincoln School served students living in North Leavenworth; Sumner served the students living in South Leavenworth. The first Sumner School was constructed on this site in 1866 and remodeled in 1899 (see 1924 Sanborn Map attached to this document). By 1915, however, the original building was unable to meet the needs of its 185 students. According to a report by the Bureau of Educational Measurements, the 1866/1899 building was "poorly lighted," was not connected to a sewer despite its proximity to a city sewer line, and had inadequately arranged rooms. The report concluded that "in the course of a few years some plans should be decided upon which would evolve the erection of modern buildings" to take the place of Leavenworth's aging school buildings, including Sumner.<sup>5</sup> In his 1921 history of Leavenworth, Jesse Hall agreed that Sumner was one of four school buildings that needed to be replaced.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brenda Spencer R, *Historic Public Schools in Kansas*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Documentation Form (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Historical Society, 2005), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Laws of 1868, Ch. 18, article 5, Sec. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Laws of 1879, ch.81.

<sup>4</sup> See also James Carper, "The Popular Ideology of Segregated Schooling: Attitudes toward the Education of Blacks in Kansas, 1854-1900," *Kansas History* 1 (Winter 1978): 254-265.

<sup>5</sup> Walter S. Monroe, "Buildings and Material Equipment," Survey of Public Schools, Leavenworth, Kansas, (Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, Bureau of Educational Measurements/Kansas State Printer: 1915).

<sup>6</sup> Jesse Hall, *History of Leavenworth, Kansas*, (Topeka, Kansas: Historical Publishing Co., 1921), 207.

The Leavenworth Board of Education finally succumbed to public pressure and hired school architect Charles Ashley Smith (1867-1948) to design a modern building. Smith was born in Ohio in 1867. In 1874, he moved to Iowa, where he began working for Bell and Hackney Architects at the age of 16. In 1887, at the height of the building boom, Smith followed architect William Hackney to Kansas City, where he was soon became Hackney's partner. During his long tenure as an architect in Kansas City, he designed dozens of schools, including fifty schools in the Kansas City School District alone. Smith made contributions in the areas of school ventilation and sanitation.<sup>7</sup>

Work had commenced by March 1925, when the *Leavenworth Times* announced that "The work of tearing down this school to make way for a modern building is practically completed."<sup>8</sup> The building was finished in time for the fall 1925 term. Sumner School continued to serve South Leavenworth's African American community for more than three more decades, until Leavenworth schools were desegregated following the *Brown* case. In 1960, Leavenworth's Abeles and Cleveland Schools were consolidated into Sumner and Anthony Schools. Sumner then held classrooms for 3rd through 6<sup>th</sup> grades. The school district closed Sumner after the 1968-69 school year, citing an engineer's report that the building was inadequate for continued use as a school. For decades following its closure, the school district used the building as a maintenance facility. The Pentecostal Church of the Apostolic Faith purchased the building in 2000 for use as a church activity center.<sup>9</sup>

#### Blanche Ketene (Professor) Bruce (1859-1952)

The one person most closely associated with Sumner School was Blanche Ketene Bruce, the school's principal for fifty-four years. Bruce, who was born in Brunswick, Missouri in 1859, came from an extraordinary family. Professor Bruce's grandmother Polly Bruce, who lived in Leavenworth from the time of emancipation until her death in 1889, spent much of her life as a house slave on a Virginia plantation. She had ten children, five fathered by her master Lemuel Bruce, and five fathered by a second master Pettis Perkinson. Professor Bruce's oldest uncle, Sandy Bruce, was a "slave minister" and farmer. Another uncle, Henry Clay Bruce, who published a biographical account of his life as both a slave and free man in 1895, escaped slavery to Kansas during the Civil War and later served as the doorkeeper for the Kansas Senate. Bruce's most famous uncle, Blanche Kelso Bruce (1841-1898), a wealthy Mississippi landowner, became the first African American to serve a full term in the United States Senate.<sup>10</sup>

Professor Bruce's father, James Bruce, was the third child of Polly Bruce and Lemuel Bruce. In early 1844, following the untimely death of his wife, master Pettis Perkinson moved his household, including Polly Bruce and her children, to Brunswick, Missouri. For the first year, the slaves were employed in a tobacco factory. In 1845, however, Polly and her children were hired out to a brick maker in Randolph County.<sup>11</sup> When Perkinson called his slaves back to Virginia in 1847, James again entered the brick-making trade. James, his siblings and Mother returned to Brunswick, Missouri in 1850. He was living in Brunswick when Professor Bruce was born in 1859. He apparently remained there throughout the Civil War and until at least 1900. In the years after the Civil War, James used his skills to work as a brick and stone mason.<sup>12</sup> He was a community leader, serving as treasurer for a five-state region of Masonic lodges in the late 1870s. In 1885, he was appointed by his brother Senator Blanche Kelso Bruce to represent Missouri at the world's expo.

Before emancipation, Polly Bruce's family worked hard to educate themselves. Willie Perkinson, the legitimate son of master Pettis Perkinson, taught Polly Bruce's older children to read. In the words of Professor Bruce's uncle Henry Clay Bruce, "There was a trait of character running through my mother's family, a desire to learn, and every member could read very well when the war broke out and some could write."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992); Sherry Piland, "A Kansas City Architect: Charles A. Smith." *Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette* 10 (Jan./Feb. 1986): 4; "Charles A. Smith Dies." *Kansas City Times*, 12 November 1948, 9.

<sup>8</sup> "From 40 Years Ago," *Leavenworth Times*, 30 March 1965.

<sup>9</sup> Kansas Historical Society, Historic Resources Inventory, Sumner School.

<sup>10</sup> Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border: Missouri's Small Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 215; Lawrence Graham. *The Senator and the Socialite: The True Story of America's First Black Dynasty* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 10-12;

<sup>11</sup> Henry Clay Bruce, *The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man*, (York, PA: F. Anstadt and Sons, 1895), 20-21.

<sup>12</sup> 1870 Census.

<sup>13</sup> Bruce, 26, 67.

Having often been denied the right to read, freed slaves saw formal education as one of emancipation's great rewards. In December 1878, James Bruce was proud to announce to his brother Senator Blanche Bruce that his namesake (Professor Bruce) was attending school at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri.<sup>14</sup> By 1880, Professor Bruce had moved to Lawrence, Kansas, where he was boarding in the home of carpenter David Clark and attending school. He enrolled at the University of Kansas in 1881 and became the university's first African American graduate in 1885.

Although Bruce continued his formal education (he earned a graduate degree in 1891) he began his professional career in the fall of 1885, accepting a position as principal of Sumner School. His decision to work in Leavenworth was likely influenced by familial ties to the place. At that time, the family was split between Leavenworth, where Polly and two of his aunts lived, and Brunswick, where other members of his family, including his father, lived.<sup>15</sup> In 1886, Professor Bruce married teacher Mary (Mollie) E. Burns. Like many in his family, Bruce tried his hand in politics, running as the Republican candidate for Kansas State Auditor in 1892. Although he received the greatest number of votes among the Republican candidates, a Populist won the seat.

Bruce was a born educator – a skill he applied to his work at Sumner School. Bruce created a culture of high expectations for multiple generations of students. In the words of one account, "Under his direction Sumner School became an outstanding institution of learning. The high standards he set for the school were maintained for many years." As Sumner's principal, Bruce oversaw the construction of the new building in 1924 and 1925. An account of Bruce's retirement speech identified him as "one of the most famous and dedicated educators Leavenworth has ever known."

Bruce's day did not end at the sounding of the final bell. In the evening hours, he taught advanced students. Bruce developed a system for tutoring candidates for military academy entrance exams. According to one account, Bruce began this second career after winning a wager. In the late nineteenth century, one of his KU classmates approached him about tutoring his son for the West Point entrance exam. "Elsewhere in Leavenworth," according to one account, "another candidate was being prepared by the white high school principal, who had already sent several boys to the academies." "Bruce's boy passed with notable success – his lowest grade was one point higher than the highest grade of his opponent."<sup>16</sup>

Soon Bruce was tutoring the "sons of Army officers at Fort Leavenworth" as well as students from throughout the nation. During a five-month course, Bruce taught his candidates "mathematics, algebra, plane geometry, English, literature, grammar, history, Shakespeare and the Constitution." After a half century, Bruce had tutored as many as 1800 men, only three of whom failed their entrance exams. Among the decorated career military men Bruce helped shape were General Mark Wayne Clark, who commanded the Allied forces in Italy in World War II; Brigadier General William T. Sexton, who negotiated the treaty that allowed U. S. rail access in Soviet territory during World War II; West Point football stars Willard (Hunk) Holbrook and Maurice (Ozzie) Simons; Olympic Boxer Joe Cranston, Jr.<sup>17</sup>

After his wife's death in 1939, Bruce retired and moved to Baltimore, Maryland, the home of his daughter Erma Bruce Davis. He died in Baltimore on November 20, 1952. His remains were returned to Leavenworth, where he was buried at Mt. Muncie Cemetery. Mr. Bruce was remembered as a "kindly man who valued the association of others and who gave no thought to race, color or creed."<sup>18</sup> Although Bruce had not lived in Leavenworth for more than a decade, his obituary, which included a photo, was printed in the center of the front page of the *Leavenworth Times*.<sup>19</sup>

#### City Graded School Property Type

Sumner School is being nominated under Criterion C as an example of a "City Graded School" property type as identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Historic Public Schools of Kansas." City Graded Schools reached a pinnacle in the 1920s, when designs were fully informed by Progressive-Era ideals. Among the innovations of early twentieth century graded schools was the inclusion of specialized spaces. Like many graded schools of the era, Sumner School had special classroom, in the southeast corner, designed to house a kindergarten. Like many graded

<sup>14</sup> Graham, 103. Lincoln University was established in 1866 to advance the education of freed blacks.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>16</sup> "Scholarship Honors First Black Graduate: Tutor of Generals Was Leavenworthian," *Leavenworth Times*, 24 April 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "BK Bruce, Prominent Local Educator, Dies in Baltimore," *Leavenworth Times*, 20 November 1952.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

schools of the era, Sumner had a space devoted to a combination gymnasium and classroom. For context on trends in school design, see the "Historic Public Schools of Kansas" MPDF.

### Summary

With its high degree of architectural integrity, Sumner Elementary School continues to interpret its unique history. The building is significant not only for its association with school segregation, but also for its association with prominent educator Blanche K. Bruce and as an intact example of a "City Graded School" property type as identified in the "Historic Public Schools of Kansas" MPDF.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Bibliography

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Carper, James. "The Popular Ideology of Segregated Schooling: Attitudes toward the Education of Blacks in Kansas, 1854-1900." *Kansas History* 1 (Winter 1978): 254-265.

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Graham, Lawrence. *The Senator and the Socialite: the True Story of America's First Black Dynasty*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006. Print.

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Monroe, Walter S. "Buildings and Material Equipment." *Survey of Public Schools, Leavenworth, Kansas*. Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, Bureau of Educational Measurements/Kansas State Printer: 1915.

Piland, Sherry. "A Kansas City Architect: Charles A. Smith." *Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette* 10 (Jan./Feb. 1986): 4.

Sanborn Maps. 1897, 1927, 1949.

Spencer, Brenda. *Historic Public Schools in Kansas*. National Registration of Historic Places Multiple Documentation Form. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Historical Society, 2005.

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

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

Sumner Elementary School  
Name of Property

Leavenworth County, KS  
County and State

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_ Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): **103-3020-00300**

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.7 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>334700</u> Easting	<u>4351920</u> Northing	3	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing
2	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing	4	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The legal description of the parcel on which Sumner School sits is as follows: Lot: 1-8,15-17 BlockNo: 3  
SubDiv: REES DONIPHAN & THOR TRCT DESC: LTS 1-8,15-17 & VAC ALLEYS ADJ Tax Unit: 001 The parcel number is 052-101-01-0-20-05-001-00-0-01.

### Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The above is the legal description of the nominated property. In general, the parcel covers the north half of the block bounded on the north by Ohio, on the east by Fourth Avenue, on the west by Fifth Avenue, and on the south by Michigan Avenue.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy Davis  
organization Davis Preservation date 2/10/2011  
street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave, Suite 7 telephone 785-234-5053  
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612  
e-mail [cdavis@davispreservation.com](mailto:cdavis@davispreservation.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**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Floor plans.  
1924 and 1939 Sanborn Maps.

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**Photographs:**

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

**Name of Property:** Sumner Elementary School  
**City or Vicinity:** Leavenworth  
**County/State:** Leavenworth County, Kansas  
**Photographer:** Christy Davis

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- 1 of 11 Exterior, Overall view of west (front) elevation, looking northeast.
- 2 of 11 Exterior, South (side) elevation, looking northeast.
- 3 of 11 Exterior, Overall view of east (rear) and north (side) elevations, looking southwest.
- 4 of 11 Exterior, North (side) elevation, looking south.
- 5 of 11 Interior, First Floor, Stair to second floor, looking northwest.
- 6 of 11 Interior, First Floor, South wall of gymnasium/auditorium, showing proscenium arch.
- 7 of 11 Interior, First Floor, Typical classroom, showing chalkboards and wood trim.
- 8 of 11 Interior, First Floor, Modified classroom in one-story bay on southeast corner.
- 9 of 11 Interior, Second Floor, Typical second-floor windows.
- 10 of 11 Interior, Second Floor, Classroom on northwest corner, looking southwest.
- 11 of 11 Interior, Second Floor, Stair to principal's office.

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**Property Owner:**

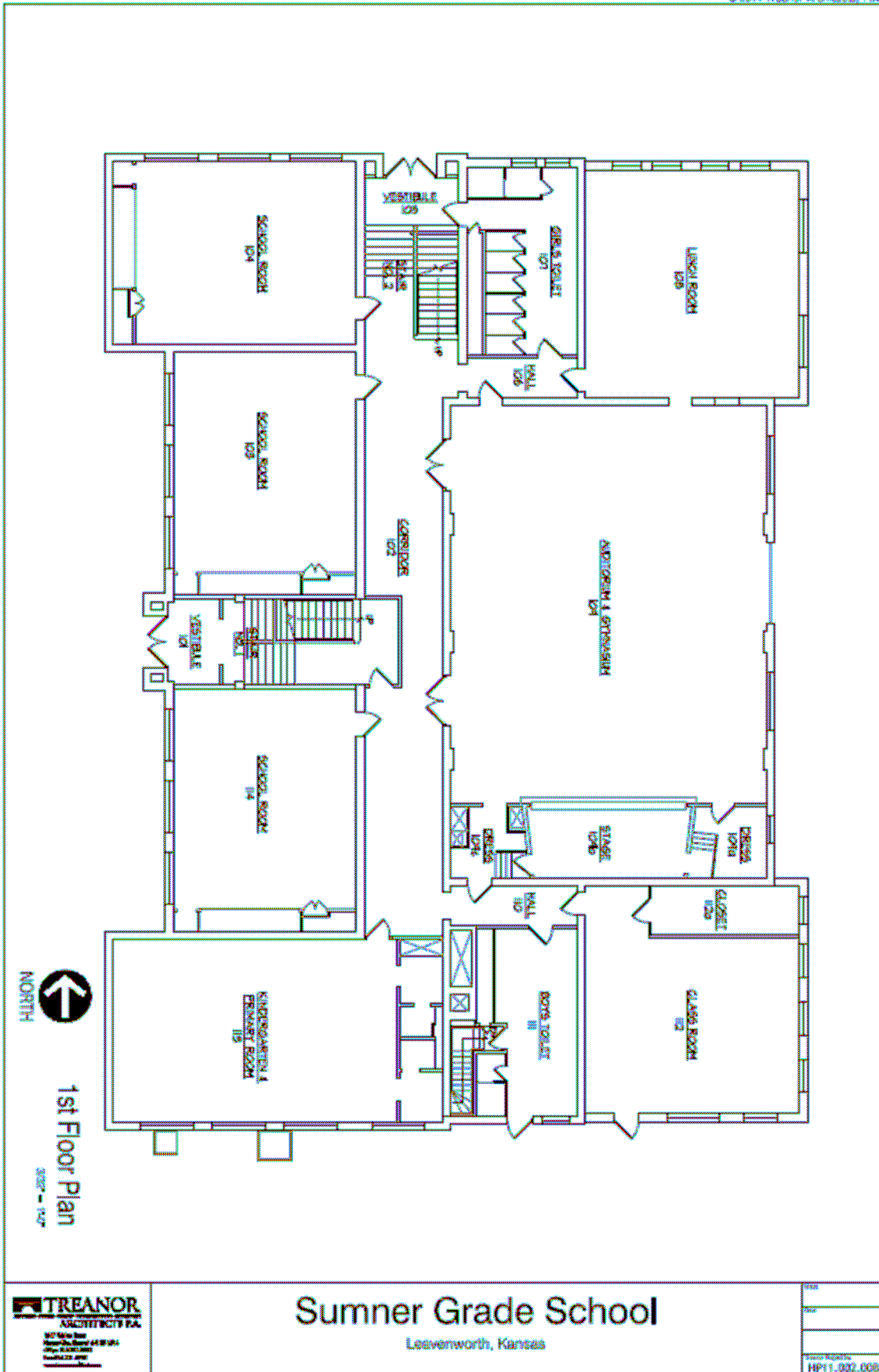
(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Pentecostal Church of Apostolic Faith, Inc. (Pastor Dr. Kenneth Neal)  
street & number 1701 S. Fifth Avenue telephone 913-682-7730  
city or town Leavenworth state Kansas zip code 66048

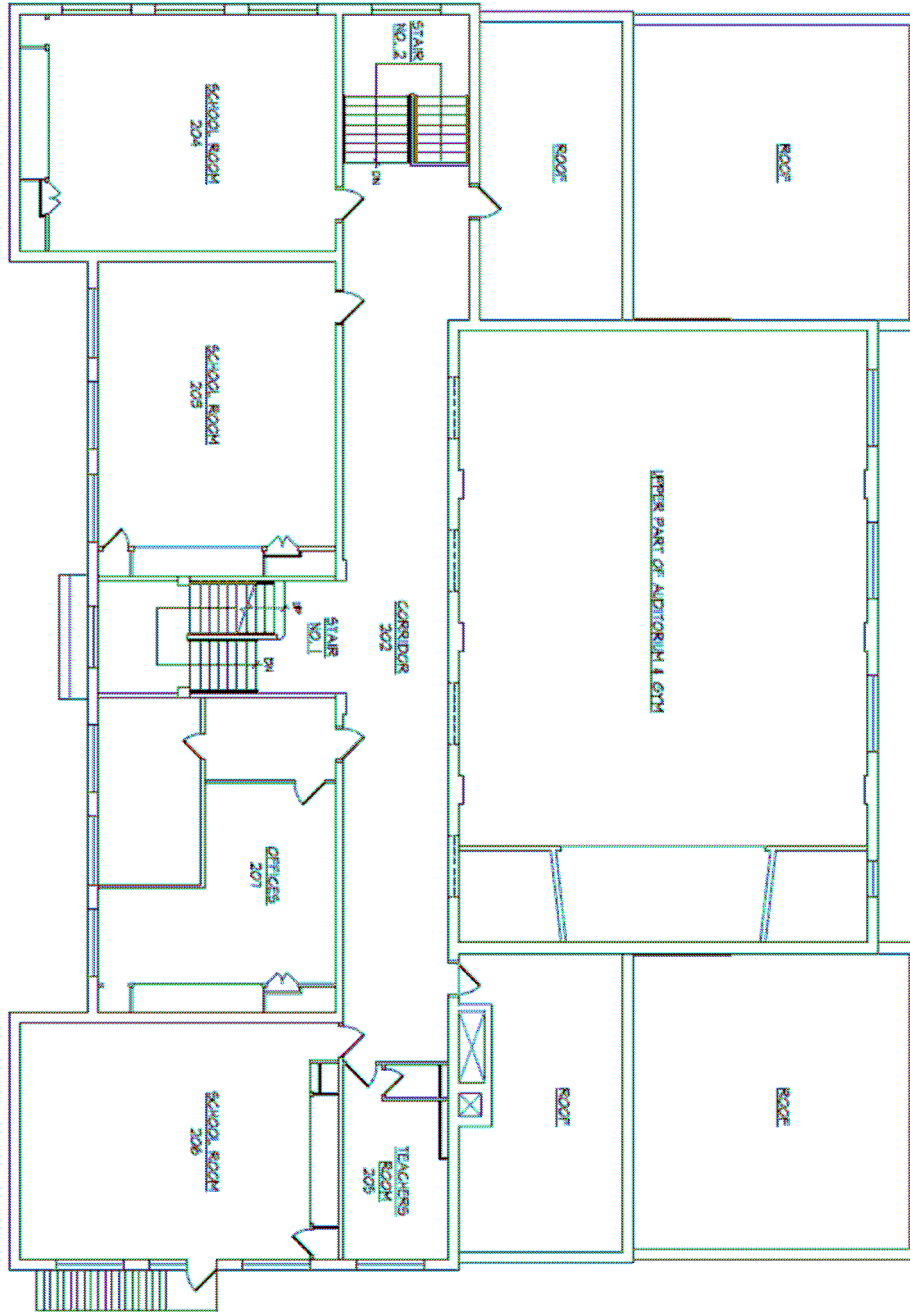
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to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

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

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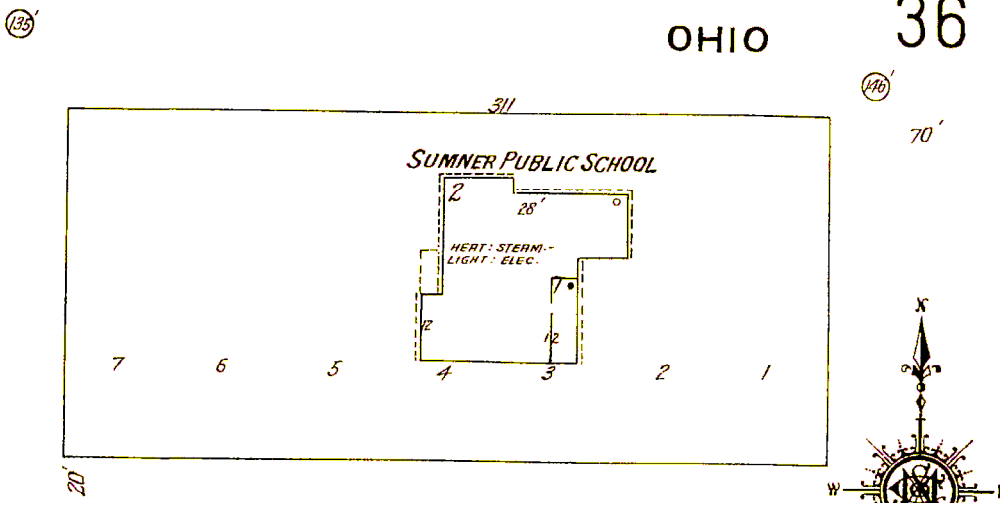
2nd Floor Plan  
8/27 - 147



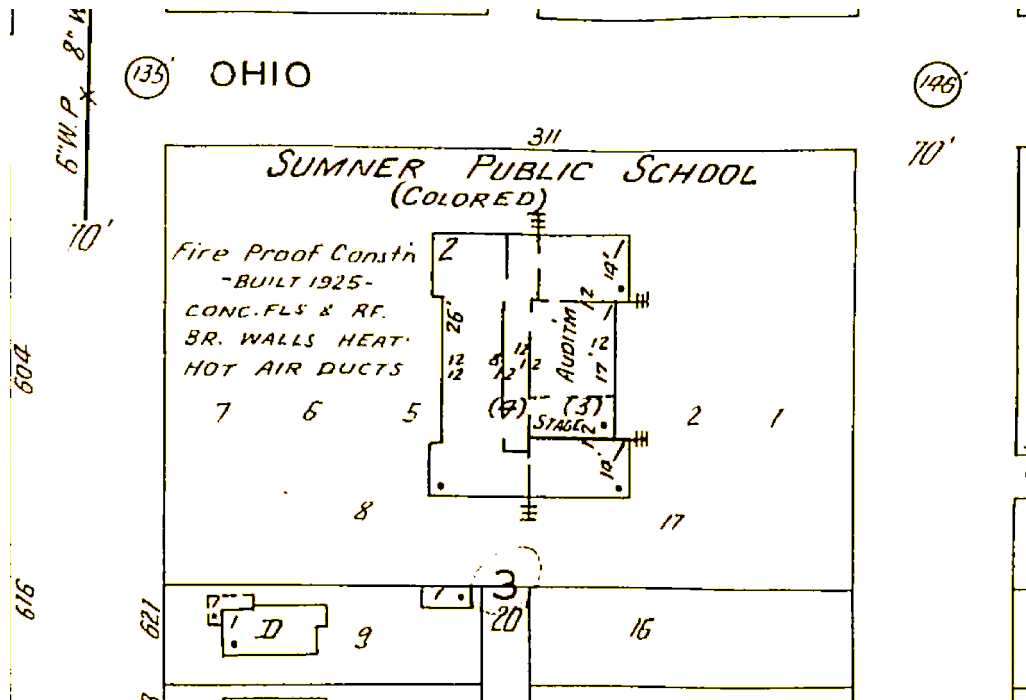
# Sumner Grade School

Leavenworth, Kansas

Date	
File	
Project	
Project No.	HP11.002.00B



1924 Sanborn Map (Showing Original Sumner School, built 1866)



1949 Sanborn Map (1925 building)