



VIRGINIA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
SURVEY FORM

File no. 76-236
Negative no(s). 4399

Historic name	Purcell School	Common name	
County/Town/City	Prince William County		
Street address or route number	S. R. 643 cl.5 mi East of Interex w/S.R. 234 (Purcell Rd.)		
USGS Quad	Independence Hill	Date or period	cl905
Original owner	P.W. County	Architect/builder/craftsmen	
Original use	School		
Present owner	James Cornwell	Source of name	Purcell Rd. & Community
Present owner address	12111 Cornwell Drive	Source of date	Former students, teacher; arch. evidence
	Independent Hill, Va.	Stories	1-story
Present use	Not in use	Foundation and wall const'n	Stone & block foundation;
Acreage	9 acre (Now included in Cornwell's Prop.)	frame walls covered with metal.	
		Roof type	Metal-covered gable roof.

State condition of structure and environs Abandoned, vandalized but structurally probably sound.

State potential threats to structure Arson, neglect, vandalism.
Note any archaeological interest

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes ___ no x

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

The building is thought to have always been covered with the present, though weathered, brick-simulated metal siding. During the 1920s and early 1930s the interior consisted of one room covered with tongue and groove paneling and painted in two colors. There was a large stove in the middle of the classroom. The stovepipe ran along the ceiling to a flue at the back of the room. There was a raised platform for the teacher's desk, which has been removed. There were blackboards at the back of the room, and perhaps blackboards also on the side walls. Oil lamps with round reflectors hung on the side walls between the windows. Electricity did not come to this part of the county until the late 1940s. Water for drinking came from a spring and was kept in a marble-topped dispenser in the vestibule, a small, enclosed porch at the front. This vestibule also served as the coat room--hooks for hanging coats were on the right side of the entrance. There were two outhouses, one of which is still standing.

Partitions were installed in the school building when it was converted to a dwelling. Cinder blocks, also added at this time, replaced some of the deteriorating stone foundation. Some of the loose foundation stones were said to have been used in the restoration of Woodbine Baptist Church, nearby.

The school allegedly always sat quite close to Purcell Road, but recent widenings of the road have brought the building's doorstep practically to the road's edge.

Interior inspected? yes

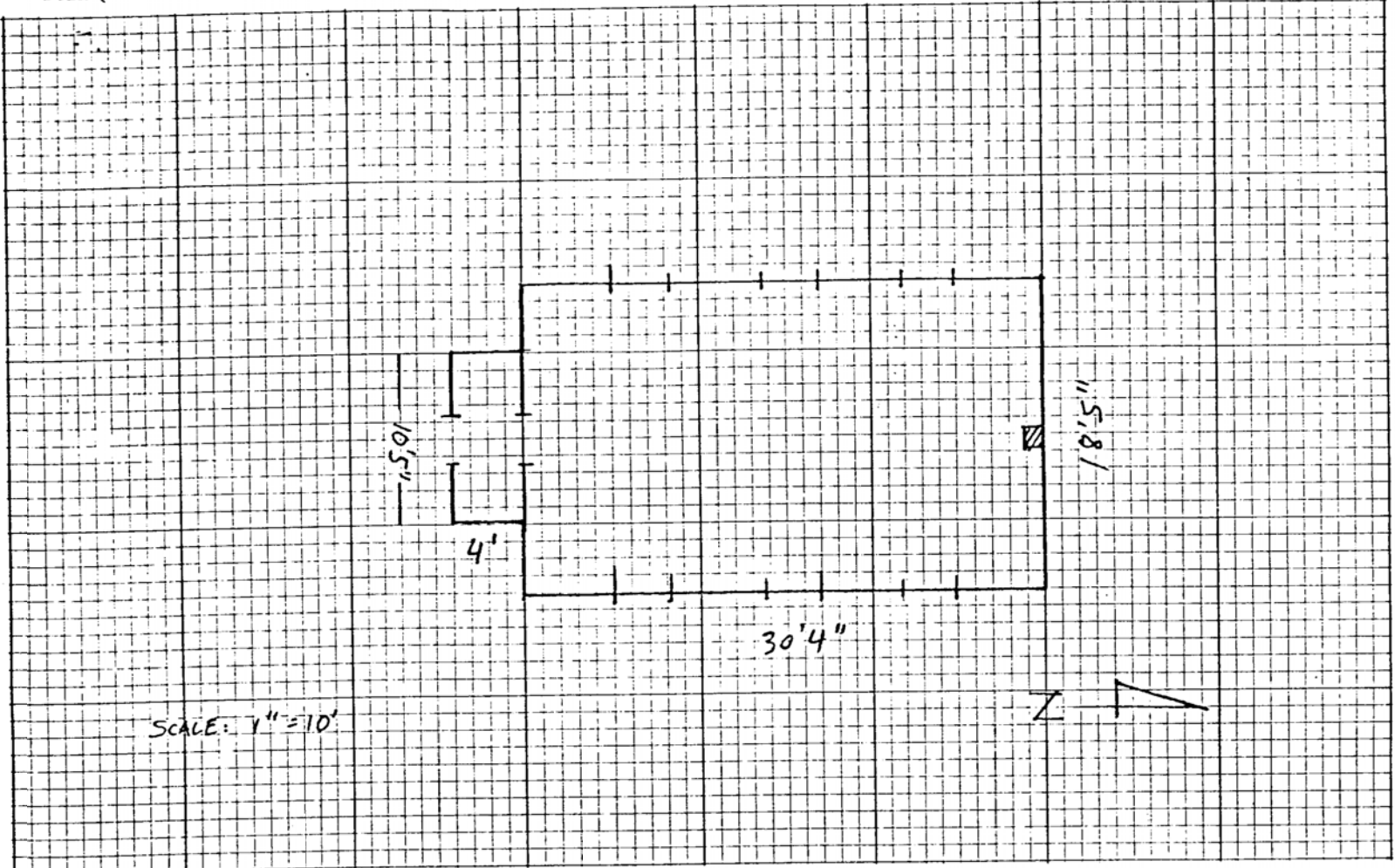
Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

Purcell School, named after Purcell Road and the small community of Purcell, was built in about 1905 on land donated or sold to the county by John Fair, who owned a substantial amount of property in the area. Prior to the erection of this one-room schoolhouse, classes for children in Purcell vicinity were held in a small frame building on Purcell Rd. about 1/4 mi. away, also on John Fair's land. This shingle-roofed building, later used as a store, still exists, though it is in poor condition.

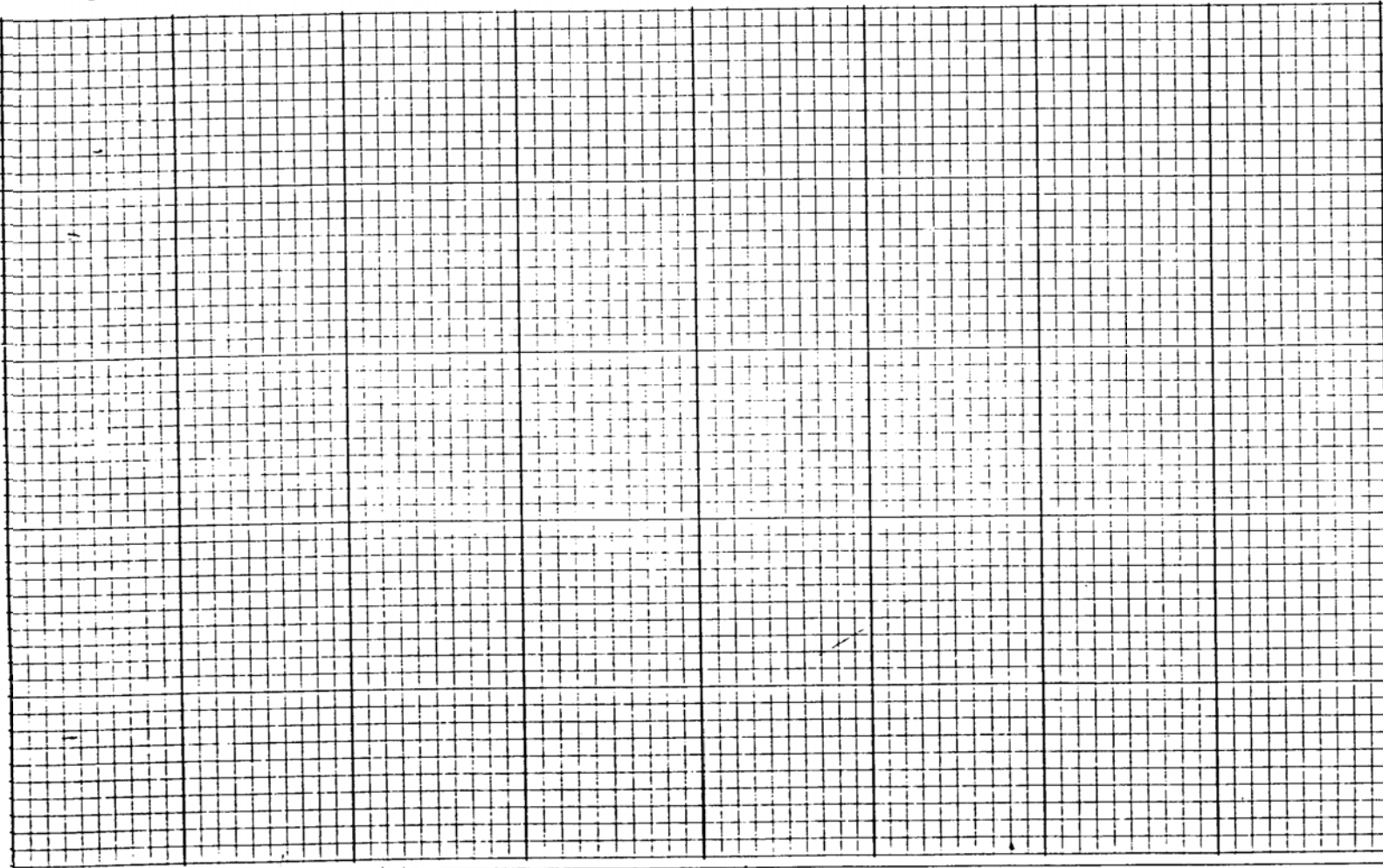
First through 7th grades were taught in this school. Equipment, supplies, and for a time hot lunches were provided by the Community League, a local parent-teacher organization. A list of Purcell's teachers during the 1920s and early '30s includes Gertrude Seaton Cornwell, Nellie Mae Pearson, Lily Wise, Susan Jeffries Lawson, Loise Atkins, Alice Breeden, Louise Schultz, Rilla Holler and Ila Breeden. The school closed in 1933 and was subsequently used as a church and then converted to a dwelling. The School Board turned the property over to Prince William County in 1977, and in 1979 Mr. Cornwell, whose land surrounds the parcel on three sides, acquired it.

Sources and bibliography
Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.)

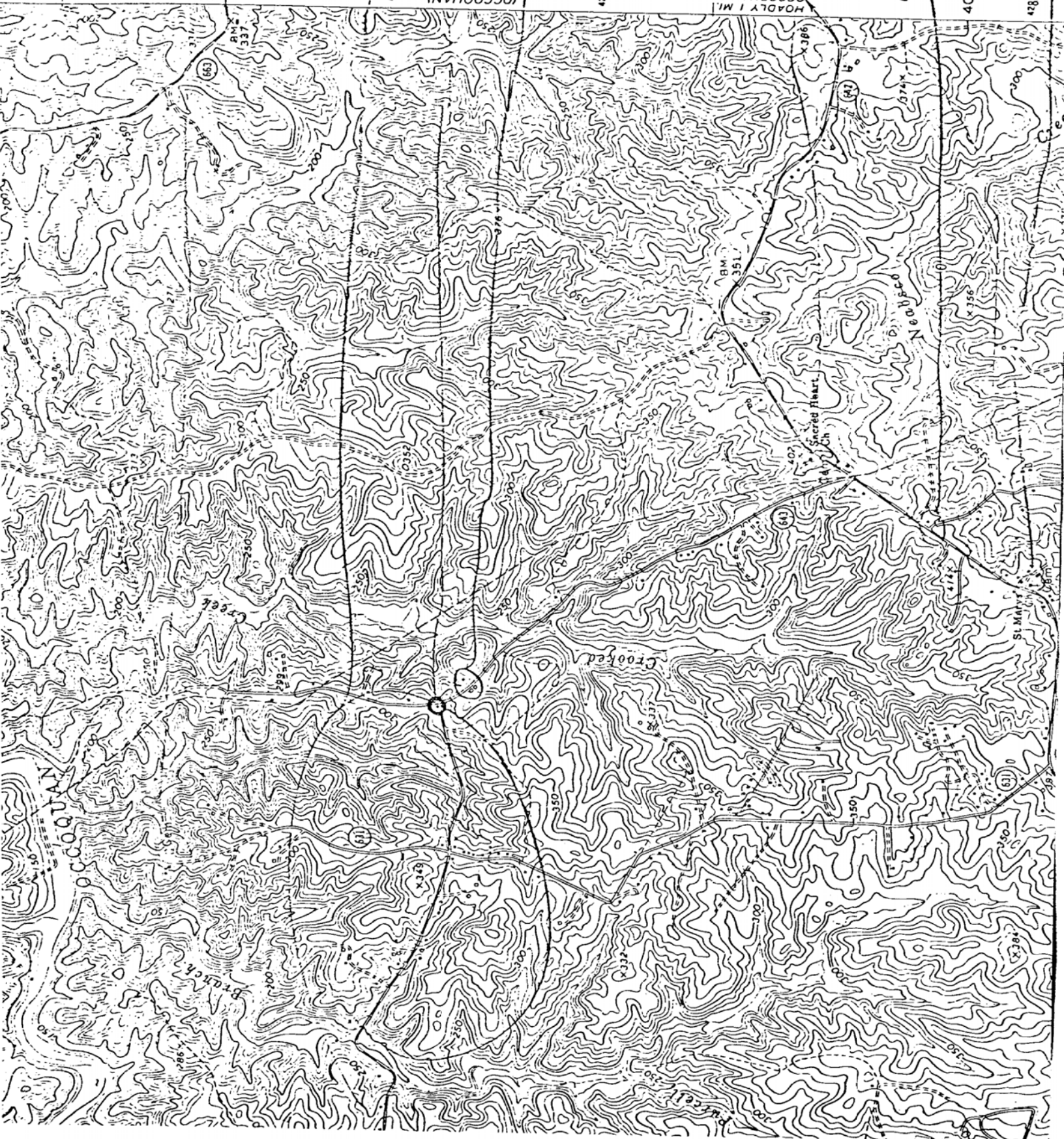
Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)
Mrs. Tiller & Mrs. Lawson have early photos of bldg. See also school board minutes. May be something about community league in county.
Names and addresses of persons interviewed Mrs. Zelda Cornwell Tiller, 12110 Cornwell Drive, Independent Hill, VA.; Mrs. Susan Jeffries Lawson, 9102 Portner Ave., Manassas; Mr. & Mrs. Scott Winfield, 12017 Dumfries Rd., Manassas, VA.
Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)



Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)



INDEPENDENT HILL
QUAD.



HOADLY 1 MI
8 MI. TO U.S.

Million 1161
Served 11-28-81

76-736

older house
collapsed 11-28-81

HOADLY 1 MI
8 MI. TO U.S.

Served 11-28-81
101-6000

1200 ft ca
5000 ft ca

4282

St. Mary