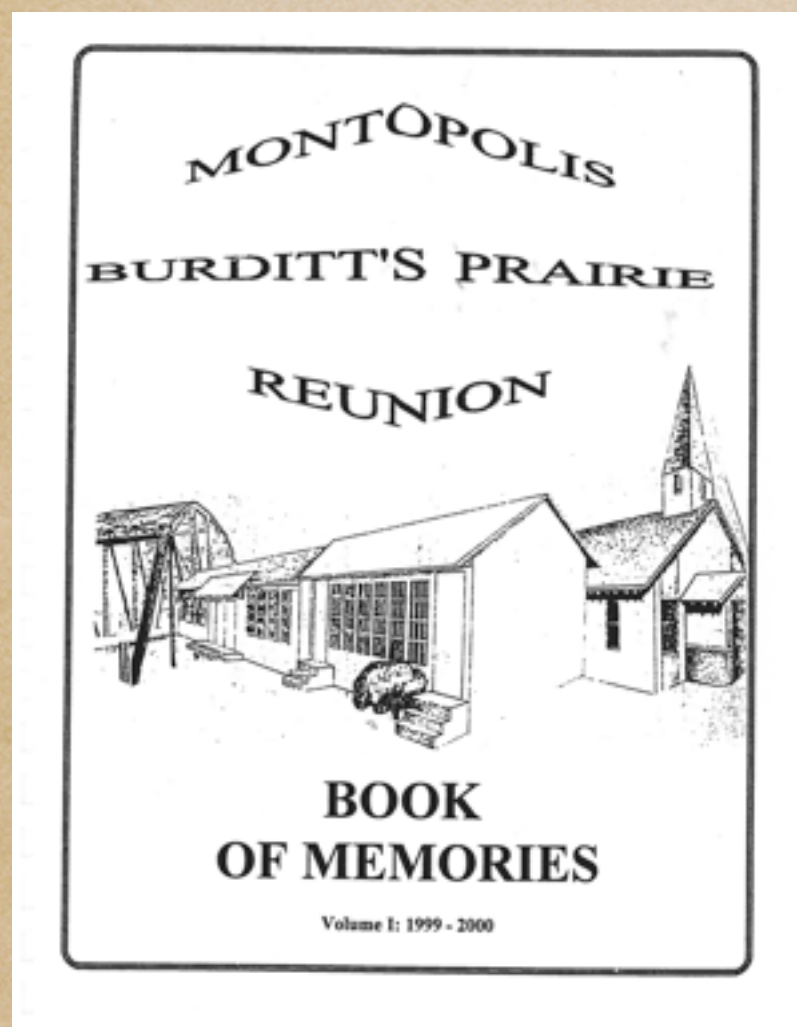


Montopolis Negro School Montopolis Church of Christ

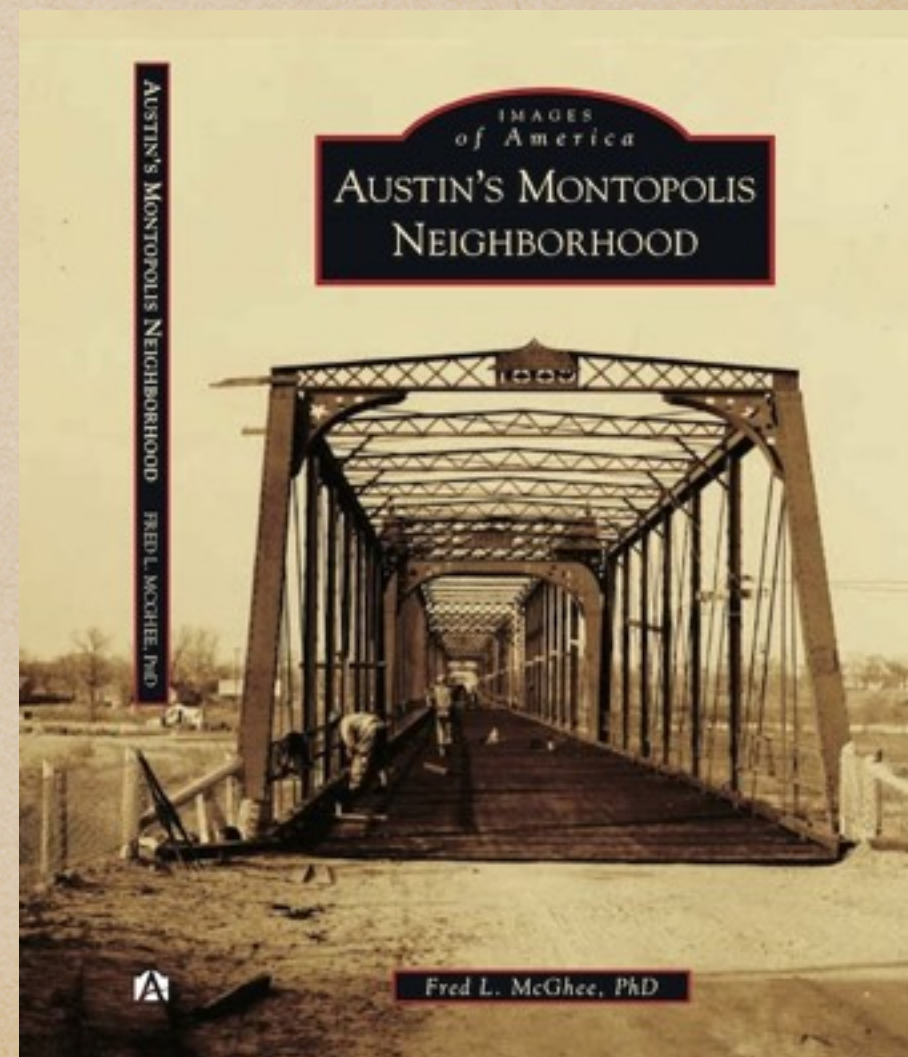
Austin Historic Landmark Commission, 21 November 2016



Fred L. McGhee, Ph.D.

Author, "Austin's
Montopolis
Neighborhood"

Founding President,
Montopolis
Neighborhood
Association



School/Church Timeline

Year	Milestone	Source
circa 1891	School is established as Colorado School No. 34	Montopolis School Reunion Book, 1999
1903	St. Edwards Baptist Church moves to donated land at what was 408 Montopolis Drive	Montopolis School Reunion Book
ca 1891-1935	As with most black schools it serves as more than just a school. The school and its pastoral surroundings also serve as an important community center and are used for civic functions such as annual Juneteenth celebrations, baseball games and BBQ's.	Travis County Historical Society, 2014
1935	The original one room school building is destroyed by a storm. St. Edward's Baptist Church donates 1.82 acres of land at the school's present location on Montopolis Drive. An old Army barracks building from Camp Swift is procured to serve as a replacement school.	Montopolis School Reunion Book, 1999, Travis County Deed Records Vol. 520, p. 280
1952	City of Austin begins annexing Montopolis	<i>Austin's Montopolis Neighborhood</i> , p. 7-8
November 1952	Colorado School District No. 36 transfers the school to the Austin Free Public Schools	Travis County Deed Records Vol. 1297, p. 401
1952-1955	The school building is renovated and supplied with new equipment and a new room is added to the building that serves as a classroom and lunchroom. The new room also has toilets and showers obviating the need for an outhouse.	Montopolis School Reunion Book, 1999
1955	The Austin Free Public Schools open Allison Elementary School	<i>Austin's Montopolis Neighborhood</i> , p. 48
March 1962	Austin ISD officially ceases operating the Montopolis School	Montopolis School Reunion Book, 1999
1963-1964	Austin ISD places the Montopolis School up for auction and starts receiving bids	May 11, 1964 Austin ISD minutes
August 1967	Austin ISD accepts the bid of O.A. Willhoite for the school property. The winning bid was \$5,102.	July 26, 1967 Austin ISD minutes
December 1968	David Willhoite deeds the property to the Montopolis Church of Christ with Ross and David Willhoite as Trustees	Travis County Deed Records Vol. 3604, p. 1244
November 1970	The City of Austin secures road easements through the property	Travis County Deed Records Vol. 3953, p. 725
August 1987	Ross and David Willhoite deed .740 acres of the original 1.82 acre tract to the City of Austin	Travis County Deed Records Vol. 10395, p. 414
1990	City of Austin condemns part of the church property for a new road. The church moves to its present location at 702 Montopolis Drive. The property, addressed as 400 Montopolis is now owned by David Willhoite with portions owned by Marion Sanchez.	Montopolis School Reunion Book, Travis County Deed Records
March 2015	David Willhoite sells the property to the KEEP Investment Group, Austin Stovell, President	Travis County Deed Records 2015037818

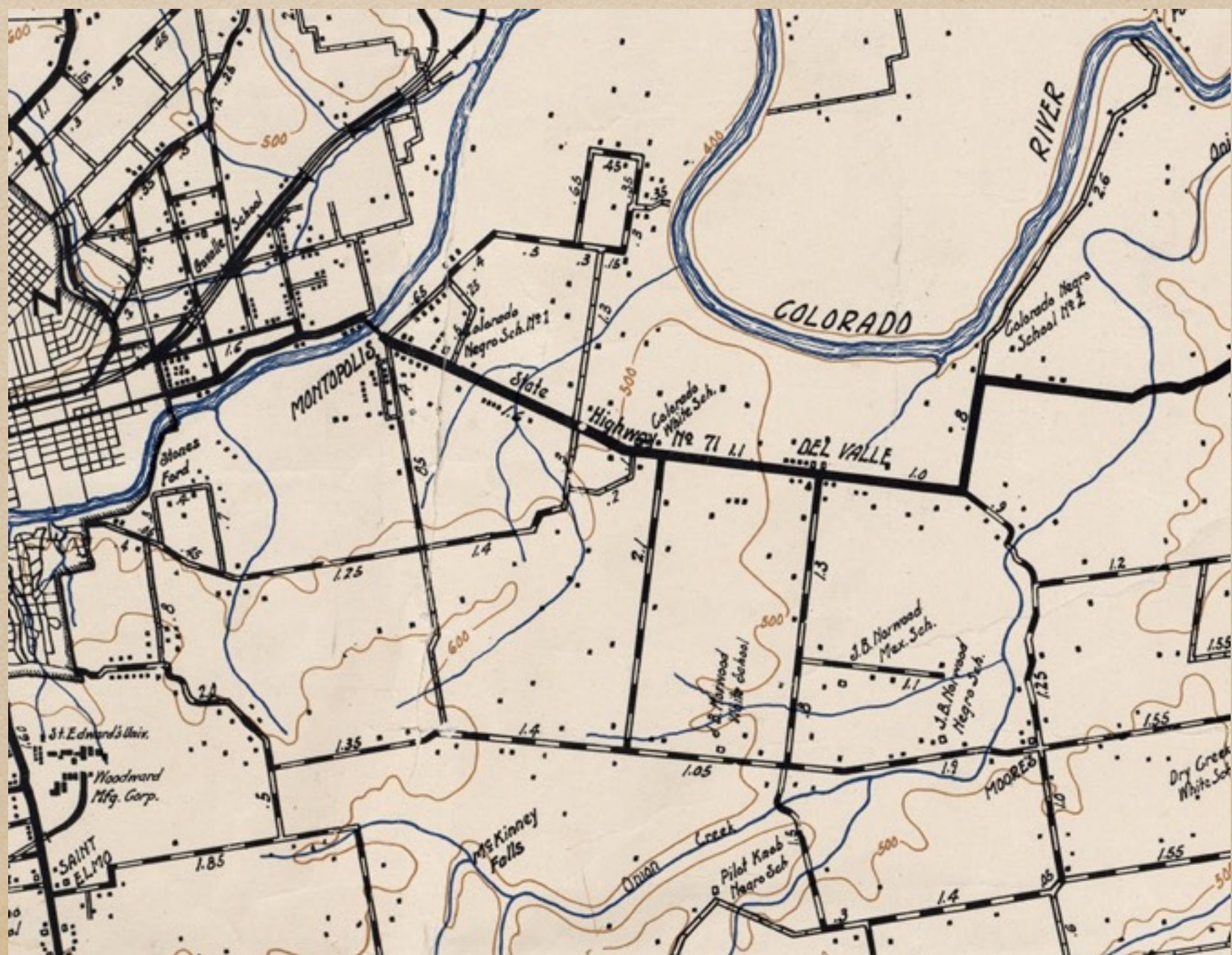
Cartographic History of the School

First Map Appearance of a school in Montopolis: 1898 Map of Austin (White School)



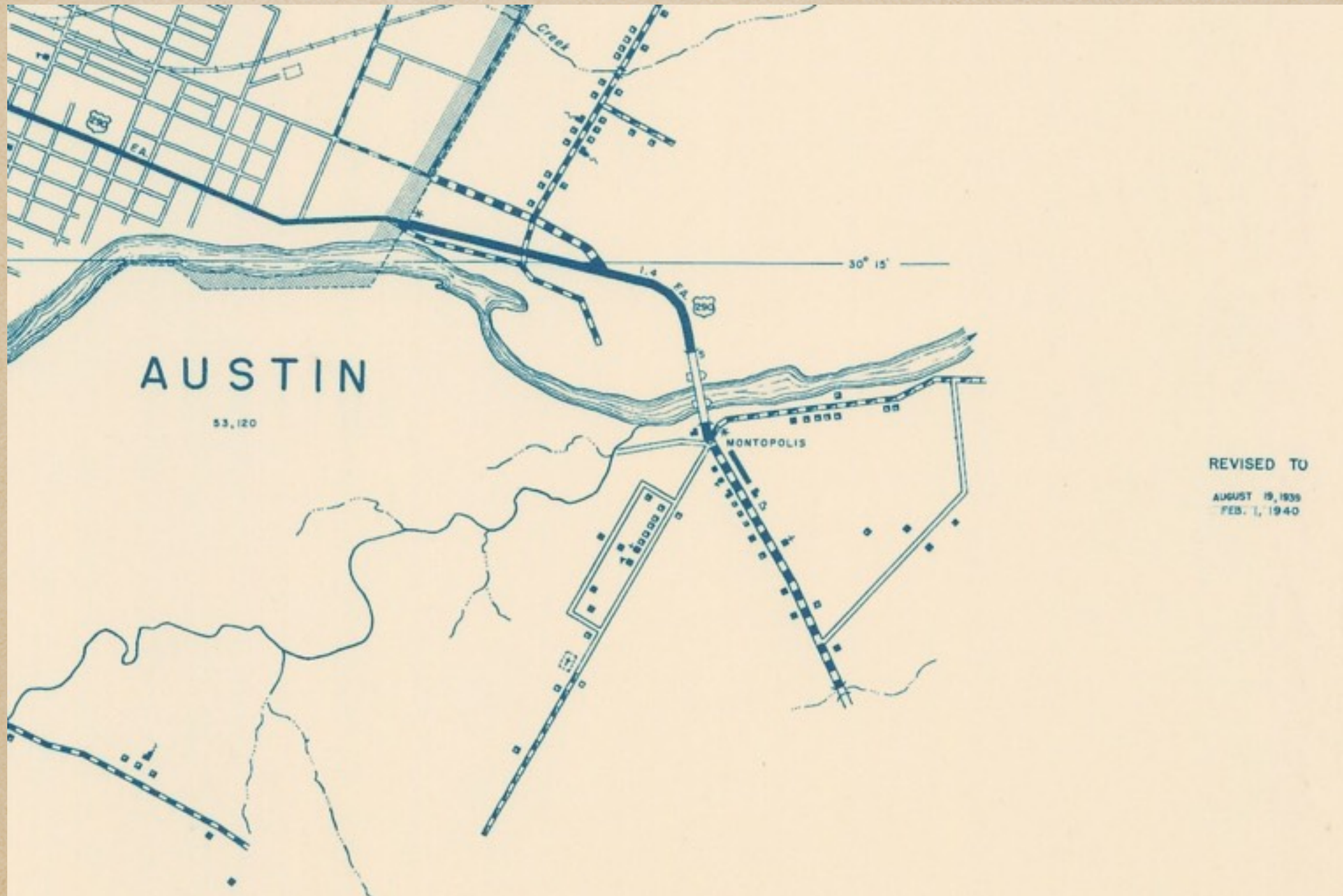
Cartographic History of the School

Best Historical Snapshot: 1932 Map of Travis County



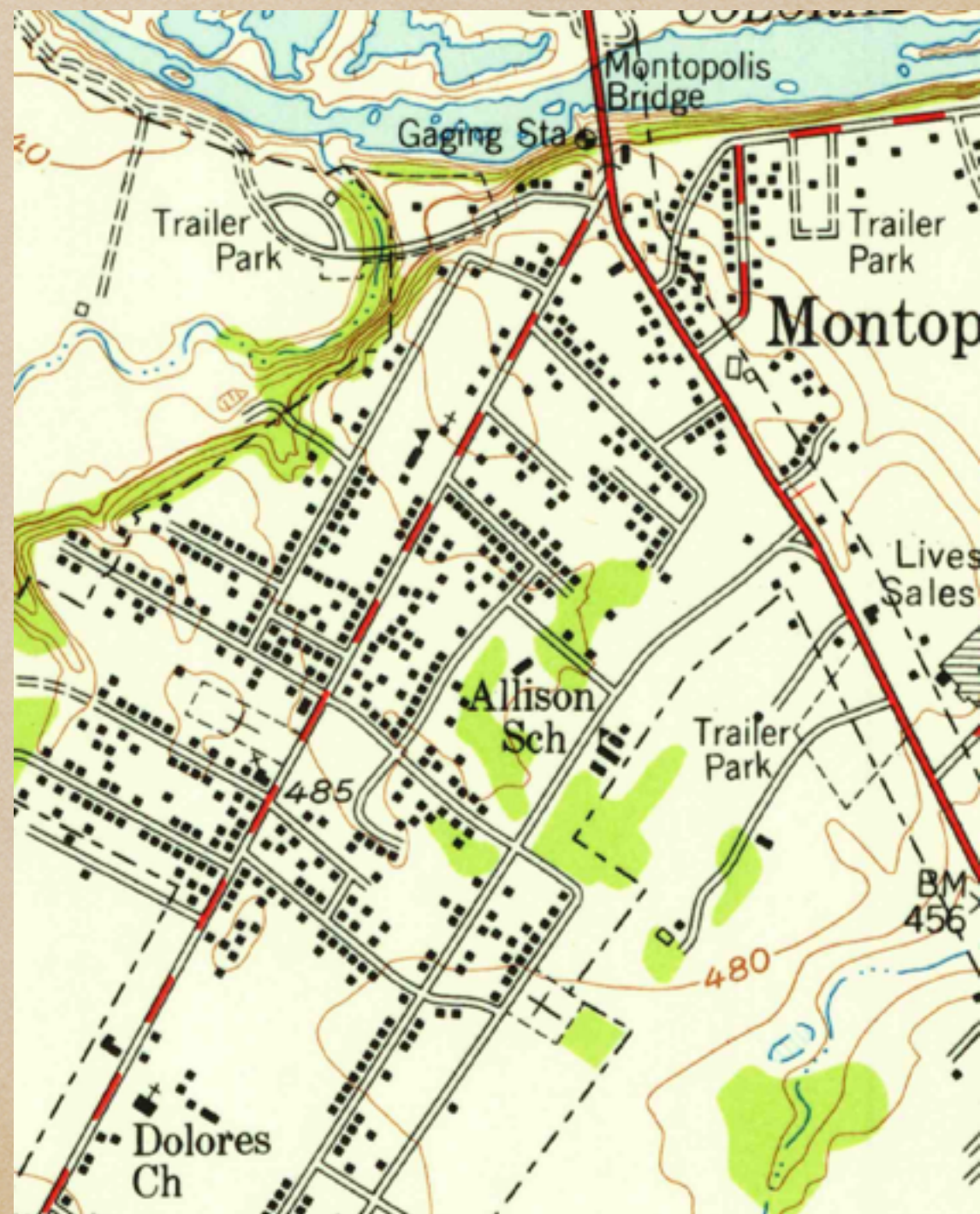
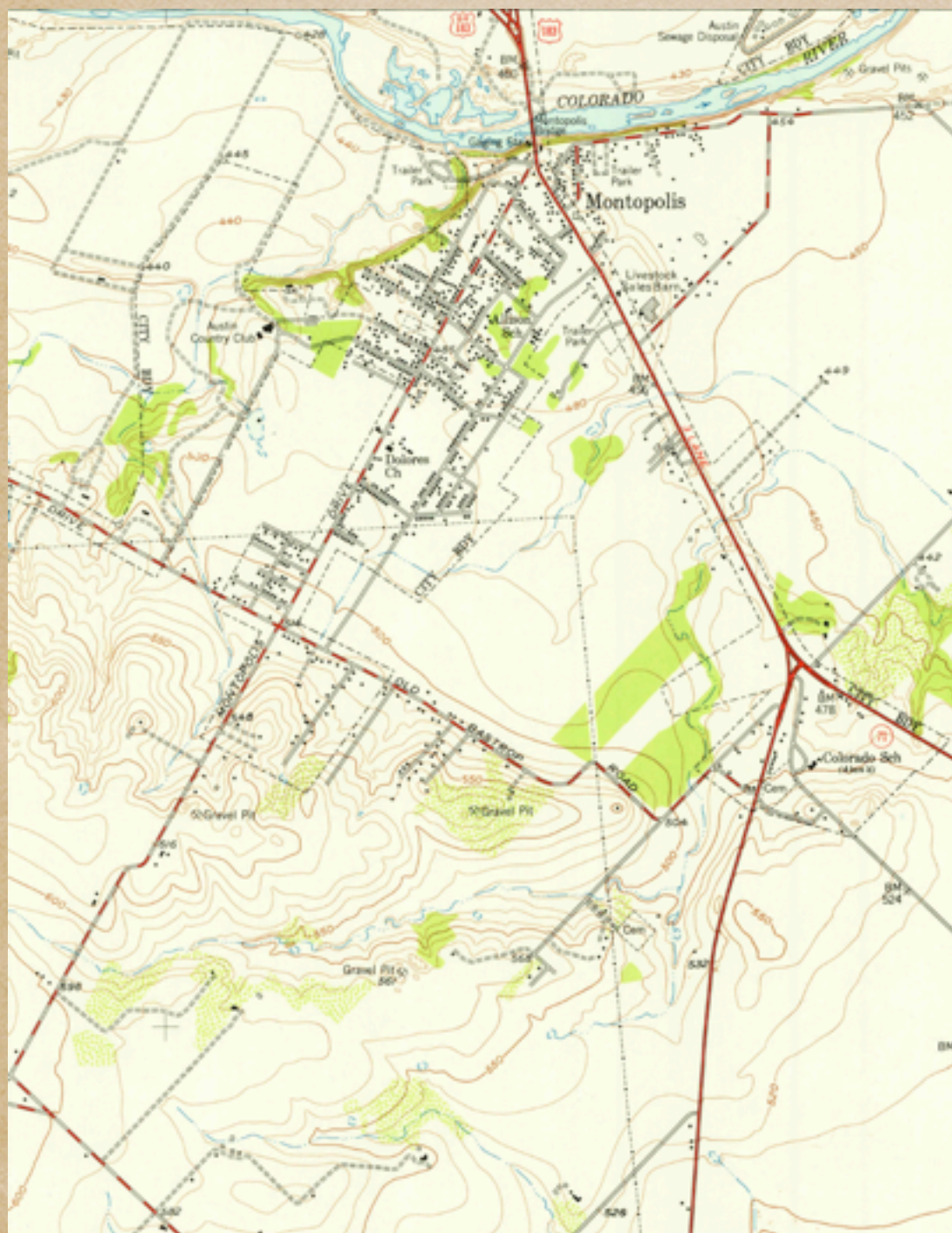
Cartographic History of the School

Prelude to annexation: 1940 Map of Austin



Cartographic History of the School

1955 USGS Topographic Map-Montopolis Quadrangle



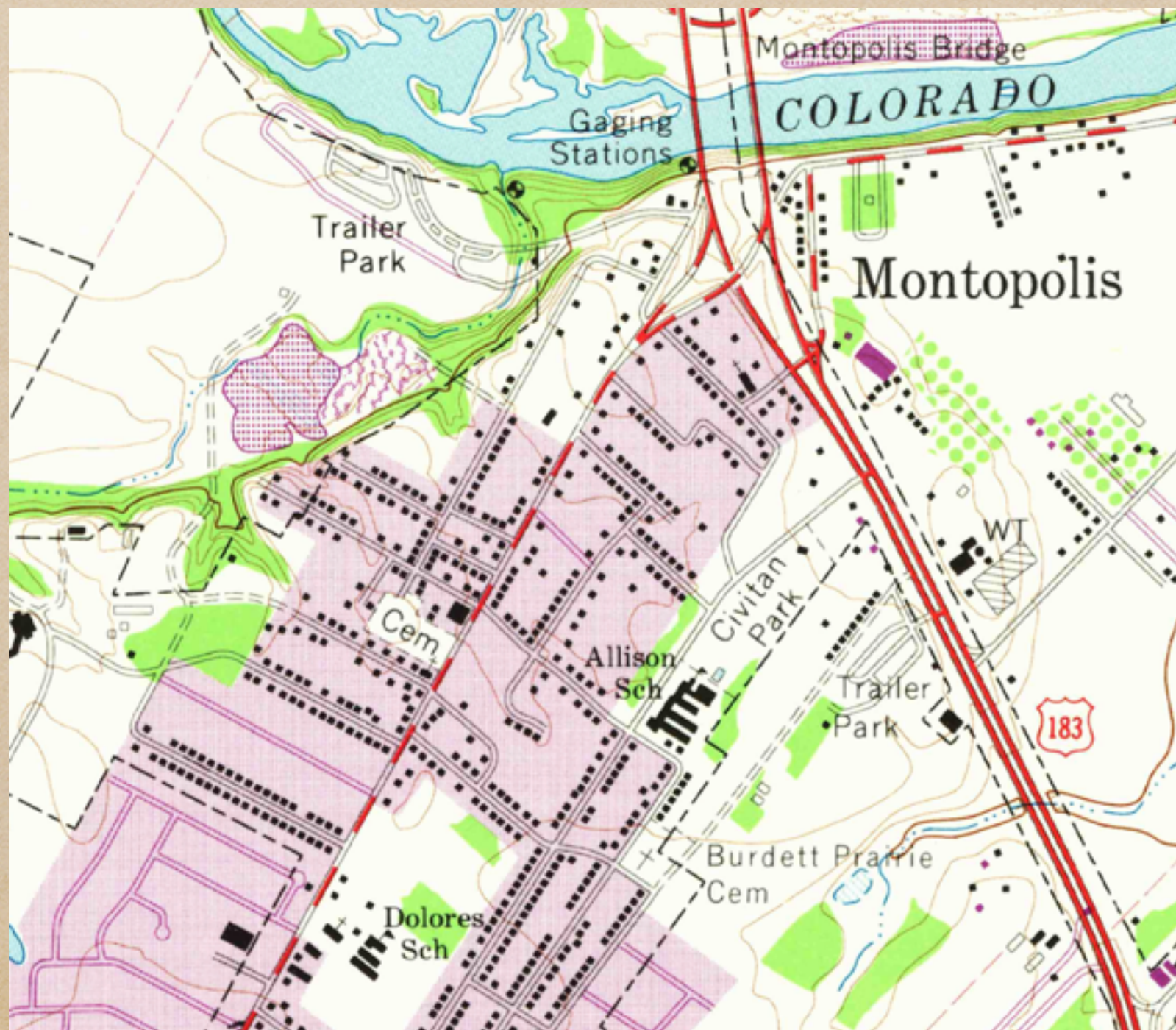
Aerial Imagery

1966 Aerial Photograph of Montopolis



Cartographic History of the School

1973 USGS Topographic Map-Montopolis Quadrangle



Why Can't the Building Just be Moved?

Because it is a Cultural Landscape

- ◆ Focusing on buildings to the exclusion of other items of cultural heritage is bad heritage management. It is also a violation of basic professional practice. The National Register isn't just about buildings. It is also about archaeological sites, Traditional Cultural Properties, and other heritage. All of these things should be properly evaluated by qualified professionals.
- ◆ A cultural landscape is defined as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.
- ◆ The Montopolis Negro School is a TCP that is both a historic vernacular landscape as well as an ethnographic landscape. In my professional judgment it easily meets the requirements for National Register eligibility.
- ◆ The desires of the present owner of the property are not germane to the question. This is a question of cultural preservation.

36 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

Protecting Cultural Landscapes:
Planning, Treatment and Management of
Historic Landscapes

Charles A. Birnbaum, ASLA



U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
Preservation Assistance



Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural tracts of land to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. Like historic buildings and districts, these special places reveal aspects of our country's origins and development through their form and features and the ways they were used. Cultural landscapes also reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world.

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historic vernacular landscapes, and *ethnographic landscapes*. These are defined on the Table on page 2.¹

Historic landscapes include residential gardens and community parks, scenic highways, rural communities, institutional grounds, cemeteries, battlefields and zoological gardens. They are composed of a number of character-defining features which individually or collectively contribute to the landscape's physical appearance as they have evolved over time. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings, including fences, benches, lights and sculptural objects.



Figure 1: The New York Peace Monument atop Lookout Mountain in the 8,100 acre Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Chattanooga, Tennessee, commemorates the reconciliation of the Civil War between the North and South. The strategic high point provides panoramic views to the City of Chattanooga and the Moccasin Bend. Today, it is recognized for its cultural and natural resource value. The memorial, which was added in 1910 is part of this landscape's historic continuum. (courtesy Sam Abell and National Geographic).

Historical Taking of African-American Church Property

Appraisal Roll of Subject/Adjacent Property

TCAD Number	Owner	2016 Appraised Value
285062	Keep Investment Group, LLC	\$292,761
777286	Marion Sanchez	\$31,875
777827	Marion Sanchez	\$34,000
285060	David Willhoite	\$100,000

- ◆ What do advocates want?
- ◆ The city and county have a moral obligation to right a historical wrong.
- ◆ City and/or county funds should be utilized to historically preserve this cultural landscape as a park and museum.



Thank You

Georgia Steen,
Montopolis Negro
School Student,
1954-55

