

56-1666



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Sierraville School

Other names/site number: Sierraville-Randolph School; Sierraville School Community Center

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 305 South Lincoln Street

City or town: Sierraville State: California County: Sierra

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


I hereby certify that this 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 meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A ___ B C ___ D

		Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer		8/9/17	
Signature of certifying official/Title:			Date		
<u>California Office of Historic Preservation</u>					
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	

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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

9/28/2017
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal
 District

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

2

1

buildings

sites

1

structures

2

1

objects

4

3

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: None

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: School

RECREATION AND CULTURE:

Community Center

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE:

Community Center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVAL: Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Board formed concrete, stucco walls, asphalt shingle roof, steel industrial windows

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Sierraville School (APN #015-080-006-0) is located at 305 South Lincoln Street/California State Route 89 and faces southeast on an approximately 1.87-acre L-shaped lot in the unincorporated, small community of Sierraville, Sierra County, California (**Figure 1 and Figure 2**). The rectangular-shaped school is 77,536 square feet and is 124 feet 10 inches long and 64 feet 11 inches wide, and is approximately 25 feet high to its roof pitch. Architecturally, the Sierraville School, built in 1931, is in the Art Deco style, and has subtle streamline vertical details on its front elevation, exposed decorative rafter ends, and a shaped watertable around the building's perimeter. The school has a wood-framed, hipped roof with an intersecting gable on the southern end over the gymnasium that is covered with 3-ply composition asphalt shingles and has decorative rafters visible under the eaves. The school has 6-inch-thick concrete walls set on a substantial board-formed reinforce concrete foundation. The school foundation is over 10 feet below ground level, housing a partial-basement as a storeroom/workshop and a boiler room. The school retains all of its original steel industrial, multi-lite windows and single or double-leaf wood doors with sidelights and transom windows located on main and side entrances. The Sierraville School retains its original historic fabric and only little changes have affected on the school.

In addition to the historic school, the property retains a metal flagpole located in the front schoolyard, a four-way drinking fountain located on the rear, northwest side, and a multipurpose wood-framed garage located on the school's far southeast boundary—all contributing historic

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resources significant to school and retain most of their integrity. The property also retains the front and back lawn areas where children played along with over 100-year-old Lombardy poplars (*Populus nigra italica*) located at the lot's southeast corner, which are original to the site. As an active school in 2005, new playground equipment and paved basketball and tennis courts, added in 1979, a prefabricated modular building (Classroom 4), added in 1991, and a picnic shelter, added in 2010, are less than 50-years-old resources. These newer additions do not impact the overall school property.

Narrative Description

The Sierraville School (1931) is located on a 1.87-acre, L-shaped lot at 305 South Lincoln Street/California State Route 89, and is 124 feet 10 inches long and 64 feet 11 inches wide as a 1-story, board-formed concrete rectangular building. Facing southeast, the Art Deco style schoolhouse contains three classrooms, two cloakrooms, a gymnasium, a kitchen, and three bathrooms, and a full basement (**Figure 4** and **Figure 5**). The interior has lath-and-plaster walls and 11-foot high ceilings as well as all of its original steel industrial windows and many of its original wood doors.

EXTERIOR

The main front, southeast elevation has concrete steps leading up a gabled entrance that protrudes out approximately 5 feet from the front (**Photo 1**). Fluted columns decorate the entrance's front sides and an ornate cornice surrounds the entrance's opening, which is like a vestibule, and is adorned with the words, "SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL/1931" (**Photo 2**). The entrance divides the school's façade and the north side has a 10/2-lite narrow window and two bays of three 12/3-lite windows where on the south side there is a single bay of four 12/3-lite windows and a 10/2-lite narrow window. All the windows are set in the concrete opening as industrial steel windows and have a lower hopper window along the sill that pulls into the classrooms. The school's front door is a single-leaf, solid pine door with 12-lites on top of four panels. The door is set in a wooden frame with four divided side lites and five divided transom lites. The elevation has an intersecting gable on its southwest elevation that is 38 feet long and protrudes out approximately 10 feet from the southeast elevation's front. The gable end is ornamented with a wood decorative dentil detail, and the gable's edges are fluted at the corners, mimicking the school's front entrance (**Photo 3**). A plywood quilt is temporarily fastened to the gable's end as part of a program held in the school's community center. Decorative iron grilles cover the basement windows along the ground level as ventilation into the concrete foundation and crawlspace.

The southeast elevation is an end wall to the Sierraville School, and a supporting wall to the gymnasium (**Photo 4**). The elevation has four 24-lite steel windows set in the concrete openings, and each window has a central 4-lite pivoting window and a 2-lite hopper steel window located along each window's sill. Exposed rafter ends are visible under the eaves and are 20 inches on-center, and, like the southeast elevation, a prominent watertable wraparounds to the southwest. A large 4-foot diameter cylinder diesel tank is located perpendicular to the elevation, which holds 6,000 gallons of oil.

The rear, northwest elevation is asymmetrical and two entrances are set-in along a concrete pavement around the center entrance (**Photo 5**). The south gable end protrudes out and has a

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double door entrance into the gymnasium that is set in as a gabled entrance. The center has two single-leaf doors set into the elevation and both entrances go into enclosed hallway spaces that access girls and boys' bathrooms. The north end has industrial 4/2-lite steel windows with bottom hopper windows that shine in the kitchen and retain their original wire mesh screens, and a single bay of four 12/3-lite steel windows lights Classroom 2 (**Photo 6**). Located on the roof's west-facing slope is a metal flue for the boiler in the school's basement. A wood-sided bulkhead is located over a basement door that goes down to a storeroom/workshop under the classroom. A four-way drinking fountain, original to the school, is located in the paved area.

The northeast elevation is approximately 65 feet long, and has four concrete steps carved into the foundation and set in as a central entrance. Wooden 8-lite double doors highlight the opening, which is surrounded by divided side and transom lites (**Photo 7**). Three 6/2-lite steel windows with hopper lites along the sill are located on the west side, and light up a bathroom. On the northwest corner of the elevation is a set of wooden stairs that leads up to a single-leaf door through a closet in Classroom 2, which is an emergency access to the rear, lawn area.

INTERIOR

The Sierraville School has a T-shaped interior plan that can be entered from the southeast and northwest elevations, as well as from the rear northwest elevation. A central hallway connects the entrances and spaces throughout the school (see **Figure 4**). The interior walls and ceiling are covered with lath-and-plaster, attached to the concrete exterior walls that are 5-inch-wide reinforce concrete or wood-framed partition walls. The interior ceilings are 11 feet high and fiberboard or acoustic tiles are covering historic lath-and-plaster. All of the classrooms retain original chalkboards with chalk rails and simple trim boards. The interior floor materials vary, such as the hallway is polished concrete, hexagonal terracotta tiles set in the bathroom floors, and tongue-groove maple flooring located in the teacher's room and gymnasium. In each space, an ogee cornice wood molding runs the ceiling's perimeter and a modest wooden baseboard is at floor level. Pine tongue-and-groove frosted glass cabinets, shelves, and drawers are located in all of the classrooms for the teachers and students.

A basement as a substructure is located 10 feet below the school's main floor that has mid-level under the school (see **Figure 5**). A storeroom/workshop is located under one classroom (Classroom 2) that is accessible from the hall and a bulkhead located on the rear, northwest elevation. From a main hallway, a stairway leads down to an oil-fired boiler room, which is located 10 feet below the main floor and has 12-inch-thick walls. Iron Art Deco style radiators are networked throughout each of the rooms.

Central Hallway

Running through the school is a central hallway that connects all of the rooms in the building. The hallway is T-shaped and is accessed from the southeast and northeast elevations. The width of the hallway is 8 feet 10 inches wide (**Photo 8** and **Photo 9**). The floor of the hallway is polished, 12x12 inch concrete squares. Tile blocks, originally painted brown, run along the floor as a baseboard. Four concrete steps lead south towards a pair of double doors to the gymnasium from the hallway's center. A janitor's closet, approximately 6 feet wide and 2 feet deep, is adjacent to steps, and included shelves and a sink for a mop. Parallel to the steps is a reversible ADA ramp, added in 2010, made of a material similar to concrete. An approximately 6-foot long section is set into the hallway's southeast wall near Classroom 3 that accommodates a coat rack for students.

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On the northwest wall, two 3-foot high water fountains are located between two bathroom hallways, adjacent to a cabinet with a linen hose, fire extinguisher, and ax. Rectangular Art Deco radiators are located in the hallway.

Classroom 1

Classroom 1 is approximately 33 feet 2 inches long and 22 feet five inches deep, and is located south of the front, hallway entrance (**Photo 10**). Blackboards with chalk rails are located on the southwest, northwest, and northeast walls, which are covered with dry eraser boards. Four industrial steel windows are located along the southeast elevation wall, allowing morning light into the classroom. Rectangular Art Deco style radiators are located under the windows. In the northeast corner is a linoleum-lined floor space with a small 2-foot high sink and cabinet for smaller, kindergarten students. Two-foot high pine shelves are located along the northeast wall. The rest of the classroom floor is lined with carpet and has 12-foot high ceilings. The ceiling is covered with 12-inch square acoustic tiles. In the main classroom, there are pine cabinets for the teacher located on the northwest wall. Six florescent lights hangs from the ceiling.

Historically, the room was Mr. Roscoe's Classroom, and had 26 American Seating Company lift-top student maple desks.¹

Cloakroom between Classroom 1 and Theatrical Stage

Between Classroom 1 and the Theatrical Stage is a narrow, 4 feet 8 inch wide room where students hung coats on the northwest wall (**Photo 11**). Along the wall, there are 20 brass hooks on a wooden coat rack with a shelf above, which are across from two shelves with a second row of hooks on a wood shelf coat rack. Two 3-foot wide doorways are located on northwest wall. A narrow 10/2-lite steel window in wooden frame is located on the southeast wall and lights up the space. On the southwest wall of the cloakroom are pine wood cabinets and a closet with vertical slits.

Classroom 2

Classroom 2 is 23 feet 5 inches wide by 23 feet 3 inches deep room, and is located at mid-level along the rear, northwest wall of the school. The classroom is accessed by a set of steps that lead up to the room from the hallway. A wood handrail and coatrack with a shelf are located on the opposite side of the rail, adjacent to the room's door. Maple and pine wood floor is located in the entrance to the room. The interior of the room has blackboards with chalk rails located on its southeast, southwest, and northeast walls, and bays of industrial steel windows line the rear, northwest elevation. A blackboard pulls down, like a double hung window, located on metal pulleys. The ceiling height in the room is approximately 11 feet high and has an ogee crown-molding running along the acoustic tile ceiling and florescent lighting suspends from the ceiling. The flooring in the room is carpeted and a simple wood baseboard is situated along the floor. Additionally, a small crawlspace is between the basement maintenance storeroom/workshop and the room's floor that is used as a storage area for school supplies, and once housed wood folding chairs. Off the classroom is a shelf-lined closet, which is a makeshift emergency access through a window to a wood staircase on the northeast elevation. The closet space is approximately 6 feet wide and 11 feet deep with shelves on both sides. Historically, this classroom was a lunchroom,

¹ Victor E. Roth, Associates. "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra, and Plumas Counties, California." (San Francisco: Victor E. Roth Associates, December 1952), 120.

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and had 200 county-owned books, 125 library books, and a 16mm projector and 50 filmstrips as well as 66 wood folding side chairs.²

Classroom 3

Classroom 3 is 31 feet 6 inches long by 22 feet 6 inches wide, is a rectangular room located along the southeast wall, which has two bays of four industrial steel windows set in the concrete opening (**Photo 12**). Rectangular Art Deco style radiators are located under the windows. On the room's southwest wall are chalkboards and in the southwest corner is a pine cabinet for the instructor. A blackboard pulls down, like a double hung window, located on metal pulleys. The ceiling height in the room is approximately 11 feet high and has an ogee crown-molding running along the acoustic tile ceiling and florescent lighting suspends from the ceiling. The hardwood floor is covered with new carpeting and a wood baseboard like the other rooms in the school runs along the floor. Historically, the room was listed as the Primary Grade Room and had 15 American Seating Company with six lift-top maple desks and side chairs.³

Cloakroom between Hallway and Classroom 3

The Cloakroom, presently an office for the county's Resource Conservation District, is approximately 6 feet wide and 15 feet long and is south of Classroom 3 along the southeast wall, and has an 8/2-lite industrial steel window. The cloakroom has a single-leaf wood door off Classroom 3 and another single-leaf metal door off the main hallway. The cloakroom has a 4-panel closet wood pine door on the northwest wall and a 3-corner pine 2-panel cabinet in the corner that is about 3 feet high. A blackboard is located on the northeast elevation. The ceiling height in the room is approximately 11 feet high and has an ogee crown-molding running along the acoustic tile ceiling and florescent lighting suspends from the ceiling.

Gymnasium/Theatrical Stage

The Gymnasium is 51 feet long and is 40 feet wide, equaling 1,824 square feet, which is a large open space that accommodates a basketball court with two backboards and baskets (**Photo 13** and **Photo 14**). The room has an exposed wood rafter ceiling, which is about 20 feet above the lacquered wood flooring. Four industrial steel windows with 4-lite pivoting and 2-lite hopper windows are located on the southwest wall, which are screened on the inside. The room is insulated with horizontal siding halfway up the walls, above the doorway, approximately 6 feet up. Bays separate the windows visibly on the southwest wall. Florescent lights hang from the ceiling and rectangular Art Deco style radiators are located under the windows. On the northeast wall is a "Charles F. Netzow Manufacturing Company (Milwaukee)" upright mahogany piano and bench.

The Stage is open and located on the southeast elevation, is 16 feet long, and is 38 feet wide, equaling 638 square feet. Red fireproof curtains circle the stage and wood pine shelves line the walls behind the curtains, which store random theater items. Stage lighting shines up from the stage's floor and three industrial lights shine down from above the curtains. In the room's northeast corner is a set of stairs that leads into the Cloakroom, accessible from Classroom 1. Sound equipment is located in a wood cabinet that operates the stage's sound and lighting. Under the stage are over 30 wooden folding chairs that are original to the school and date to 1931.

Kitchen

² Roth, "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra and Plumas Counties, California," 122.

³ Roth, "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra and Plumas Counties, California," 123.

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The Kitchen is a rectangular space that is 13 feet 7 inches wide and 10 feet 3 inches long with four 4/2-lite industrial steel windows on its southwest walls, providing natural light into the room (**Photo 15**). Wood pine cabinets are under the kitchen's linoleum countertop on the northeast and southwest walls are solid pine with metal hinges that reflect the c.1950s on solid wood cabinets and early 1930s on plywood laminated wood cabinets. Glazed white tiles line the splashboard above the countertop. An iron Wulff industrial stove is located along the southeast wall, which is a gas stove with six burners. A modern refrigerator is located adjacent to the stove. At least two layers of wallpaper line the lath-and-plaster walls of the kitchen. The flooring in the kitchen has 12-inch square, asbestos tiles. A rectangular wood table is centered into the room for food preparation.

Teacher's Room

The Teacher's Room is approximately 10-foot square small space located on the northwest corner of the school, off the main hallway. The floor is lined with wood boards and a wood baseboard runs the room's edge. The room has both a bathroom and shelved closet along its back wall. Three 4/2 industrial steel windows light up the space from its end northeast wall, and Art Deco style radiators are located under the windows.

Bathrooms

Four bathroom spaces (Boys/Men's Bathroom, Women's Bathroom, Girls Bathroom, and a bathroom converted into a Speech Room) are located on the northwest wall of the school. In all of the bathrooms, the floors have hexagon terracotta tiles and the walls are plastered. The Boys/Men's Bathroom has a toilet and two 3-foot high urinals where the Women's Bathroom has two shower stalls. One bathroom, the Speech Room, is open with small cubbies. Historically, the room had a sink and toilet, which have been removed. Two hallway, or corridor, are parallel to the bathrooms as access, and have single-leaf doors to the main central hallway and out to the rear playground. The hallway wood doors have 6-lite windows in them that have Masonite fiberboard covers over the bottom half. Art Deco style iron radiators are located in the hallways and round mirrors are located near the rear doors.

Basement

The school's basement has two levels, which are subterranean and a total floor area of 7,800 square feet (See **Figure 5**). The first level of the basement leads to a maintenance storeroom/workshop under Classroom 2 that is also accessible on the rear, lawn area of the northwest elevation via a gable bulkhead. The area is approximately 20 feet long and 15 feet wide and has a 6-foot high ceiling. A closet is located in the room's southeast corner. The door is a wood door that is covered with sheets of zinc and a 3-lite basement window is located on the room's northwest wall. Shelves and equipment clutter the room as a working space for a janitor or maintenance worker. A long concrete hallway off the storeroom/workshop continues downward to a boiler room that is probably 10 feet long (**Photo 16**). The boiler room is about 10 feet square, and has board-formed reinforce concrete walls. At the end of the stairwell is said to have been a coal bin to the basement, although not that visible. A large metal boiler is located in the room, and is directly under the kitchen.

Setting/Landscape

The 1931 Sierraville School is believed to have been platted on the original grounds of the c.1860s and 1875 schools at Lot 43 in between the communities of Sierraville and Randolph. A concrete

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sidewalk approaches the southeast elevation's front entrance from State Route 89/South Lincoln Street and is bordered by a wood slated fence, historically in 1951 was a chain-link fence, which is adjacent to a parking area and a flagpole, contemporary to the school. The metal flagpole with a copper ball finial, significant part of the school's educational traditions, and is adjacent to the concrete sidewalk. A four-way drinking fountain is located on the rear, northwest elevation (**Photo 17**). In addition, there is a wood-framed multipurpose garage, built 1949, located on the south of the school, which is a multipurpose garage or workshop set on a concrete pier foundation that was sided with plywood with a composition shingle roof. The building has aluminum sliding glass windows and single-leaf hollow core doors, and an addition was added to its west elevation. South of the school and adjacent to the garage is a side parking lot and fenced-in tennis and basketball courts, built in 1979. A pre-fabricated low-pitched, one-story building (Classroom 4), constructed in 1991, is located north of the school (see **Photo 5**). A gabled pole-framed picnic shelter, approximately 15 feet long and 8 feet wide, was built in 2010 on the northwest border, about 250 feet from the school proper, connected to the new context as a community center.

Significant Lombardy poplars (*Populus nigra italica*) are located on the school lot's southeast and northwest boundaries, adjacent to the workshop (**Figure 8**). These poplars are approximately three feet in diameter, approximately 150 years old, and are prevalent landscape features on the lot. Two playground lawn areas are located on the northwest and southwest elevations to the school and historically were used for recess activities.

Alterations

The Sierraville School has not been significantly changed or altered since its original construction in 1931. The wood shingle roof is currently asphalt shingle within the last 10 years, and a proper material in high fire risk areas like the Sierra Valley. A few other elements, such as original wood panel doors off the hallway to classrooms, have been replaced with fireproof metal doors with a small windowpane seen in modern schools; however, most of the original wood doors are present. Other smaller alterations include carpeting over original wood floorboards and dry-eraser boards over existing chalkboards, which are all reversible. In 2010, the building was converted into a community center that included minor modifications, such as a wheelchair ramp in the central hall and wheelchair turning radii in the school's bathrooms for Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance (see **Photo 8**). The ADA ramp was set over the original wood steps and is reversible.

Besides the newer resources on the property added in 1979 and 1991, such as the landscape improvements and a modular classroom, a contributing multipurpose garage, located southwest of the school, is the only resource that has skeptical integrity. The 1949 garage, which includes a side addition and newer siding, is a utilitarian building that has been improved since its original construction and is weathered as a condition.

Historic Integrity

In order for the Sierraville School to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the property must retain its seven aspects of integrity (*location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*). The Sierraville School retains all of its integrity, and has not been significantly altered since its original construction in 1931.

The Sierraville School is situated on the original *location* of two earlier schoolhouses from the 1860s and 1875. The current 1931 Sierraville School is located on the same lot as these earlier buildings, and was used as an active school up until 2005 when it was closed.

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The Sierraville School's *setting* situated on South Lincoln Street/California State Route Highway 89 is intact, which includes the 1931 schoolhouse, along with a flagpole, drinking fountain, multipurpose garage, and two paralleling lawn areas—all of these resources are contributing to the site. The setting also includes original Lombardi poplars, which are associated with the older schoolhouses. The setting around the school has been unchanged since the Sierraville Caltrans maintenance yard and U.S. Postal Service office were built in the 1970s.⁴ Since the property was closed, only one resource, a picnic shelter, was added in 2010 and the rest of the school site is intact and unchanged.

The Sierraville School retains its *association* with the community as a primary and elementary school between the towns of Sierraville and Randolph. After the burning of the 1875 wooden school, the Sierraville School was the first concrete fireproof school in Sierra County, financed by the community. The school has been the heart of communities in Sierra County and educated more than three generations of children across the valley. In addition to being a school, the building was also a vital community center for recreational sports, special events, and community meetings where Sierra County children as well as their families met and socialized.

The Sierraville School maintains its original *design* as an Art Deco style schoolhouse, designed by Chico architect Chester Cole, AIA, who designed approximately 30 known schools across the state. As a board-formed concrete school, the building is an excellent representative of a Cole-designed school. The school maintains its original plan and massing, built as both a grammar and high school for kindergarten through twelfth grades, and only minute changes have affected its original 1931 design.

The Sierraville School retains its original *materials* and *workmanship*, which includes its subtle ornamental Art Deco style exterior details, like the fluted entrance, exposed rafters, and original industrial steel windows and panel doors. The school's interior is also intact and retains its historic chalkboards with chalk rails, pine cabinets, and heating fixtures.

The Sierraville School preserves its *feeling* as a historic 1930s school that is to this day cherished and respected by generations living in the Sierra Valley who have fond, loving memories of classes and special events that happened on its premises.

⁴ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR). "Sierraville, California," accessed February 16, 2017 at <http://www.historicaerials.com>.

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education
Social History
Architecture

Period of Significance
1931-1978

Significant Dates
1931

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Cole, Chester, AIA (Architect)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Sierraville School, built in 1931, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the area of education as an Art Deco style schoolhouse in Sierra Valley, a rural agricultural area of Sierra County. After the burning of the original c.1875 school, the Sierraville School was the first concrete-constructed fireproof school in the county. The Sierraville School also has local significance as a community center in the Sierra Valley, which offered public services and recreational facilities in the Randolph and Sierraville area, and is currently fulfilling this function to this day. In addition to Criterion A, the Sierraville School is eligible under Criterion C for architecture as a reinforced concrete school designed by Chico architect Chester Cole, AIA, who designed over 30 schools in Northern California, and is a fine example of a Cole designed school. The Sierraville School has a rich history in Sierra County as not only an educational property, but most importantly as a community center, which significantly changed with the approval of state mandate Proposition 13; therefore, the school's period of significance dates from 1931 to 1978.

Because the school's period of significance (1931-1978) falls within the past fifty years, National Register Criteria Consideration G: Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years is applied to the Sierraville School nomination. The school has achieved local significance as an educational institution, but it is its exceptional significance derives from its use as a community center. That use changed with California's Proposition 13, approved as a law in 1978. Proposition 13 significantly affected school funding and made the school a solely educational property, eliminating the community center aspects held in the school since its original construction in 1931. The lack of a community center in this rural agricultural area left the Sierra Valley fragmented and isolated without a proper place to gather and socialize, which is slowly improving with the redevelopment of the Sierraville School as a recreation center in 2006.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Education and Social History

General History of Sierra County's Sierra Valley and its Schools

The Sierra Valley is located on the east side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains range northeast of Lake Tahoe at an elevation of approximately 5,000 feet above sea level is an ancient lakebed. The valley is close to the state lines of Nevada and California on the eastern side of Sierra County and extends north into Plumas County, California. Mountain man James Beckwourth discovered the valley in 1851 and plotted a pass for immigrants in covered wagons crossing the West near present-day Chilcoot.⁵ In the southeastern section of the valley, A.P. Chapman was one of the first homesteaders in 1851 that brought more settlers. Sierra County split from Yuba County in 1852.

The communities of Sierraville and Randolph, also known as Etta, were less than a mile from each other (**Figure 2**). The community of Randolph was initially settled by W.C. and B.F. Lemmon in 1852-53, and was one of the earliest settlements in the Sierra Valley.⁶ In the mid-1850s, geothermal sulphur springs were discovered that were used for both bathing and rheumatism relief. David Fenstermaker owned the springs in 1863, and sold the property to Jack Campbell who built a fine hotel, naming it Campbell's Hot Springs as a recreational health spot.⁷ Also in the mid-1850s, William Arms built a general store, or trading post, in what would become Sierraville in 1858, and expanded his ownership in the area, developing his new settlement by establishing a hotel, blacksmith shop, public hall and post office where he was the town's first postmaster.⁸ Joseph Enscoe partnered with Arms, managing his stores and both men were instrumental in the budding town, selling hay to towns in Washoe County, as well as Carson City and Virginia City. By 1862, Randolph and Sierraville were two thriving communities, exporting hay and lumber to the then-Territory of Nevada, which was extremely profitable by 1865, providing an income to build the two towns' first school.⁹

Early schools at the time were typically held in a church or masonic lodge building, and in some cases, private teachers would come to family homes in providing children an education.¹⁰ In the early 1850s, the county began the process of filling candidates for the County Board of Education and County Superintendent of Schools, which established public schools to be built.¹¹ The first county superintendent, F.S. Seabury, was elected in 1856 to build one-room schoolhouses prominently in the communities near Loyaltown and Sierraville.

⁵ Warren A. Beck and Ynez D. Haase, *Historical Atlas of California* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 42; Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California, "An Analysis of the School Building Needs," September 1951: 3.

⁶ Arlene Amodei, "Sierraville School." In *History of the Schools of the Sierra Valley*, edited by Judy Lawrence. (Published by the Sierra County Historical Society, 2004), 93.

⁷ James J. Sinnott. *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras* (Published by the California Traveler, Inc., 1976): 254.

⁸ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 254.

⁹ Amodei, "Sierraville School," 93.

¹⁰ James J. Sinnott, "Schools and Education," In *A General History of Sierra County* (Fresno: Mid-Cal Publishers, 1978, vol. vi): 78.

¹¹ Sinnott, *A General History of Sierra County*, 78.

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In 1866, there were 19 school districts established in the county (Alleghany, Chips Flat, Downieville, Eureka, Forest City, Gibsonville, Goodyears Bar, Indian Valley, La Porte, Meredith, Morrison, Mt. Pleasant, Table Rock, Loyalton, Plum Valley, Sierraville, St. Louis, Union, and Alpine).¹² By the following year, two new districts (Antelope and Alta) were added, and increased again in 1871 to 26 school districts that included 10 grammar schools and 16 primary schools.¹³ In 1879, the California Constitution was reformed to support county schools and newer laws were passed regarding teacher preparation, student health, and scholarly subjects. High Schools were created although these institutions did not reach Sierra County until the late-19th century, and county schoolhouses instructed grades first through twelfth within the same building.

In 1880, the County Board of Education and a county superintendent of schools were overseeing 30 school districts. At the time, nine districts (Newark, Union, Butte, Washington, Rocky Point, Long Valley, Crystal Peak, Poverty Hill, Poker Flat) were added, or possibly consolidated, to the original ones in 1866.¹⁴ Because of the constantly changing student body in the county, schoolhouses, and overall districts, were casually being reformed and moved around in accommodating students in rural locations throughout the county. In 1881, the number of children in the county between 5 and 17 was recorded to be 1,172 with only 961 attending school, and \$28,787 was allocated as a school fund.¹⁵ By 1885, seven schoolhouses were located in the southern section of Sierra County's Sierra Valley, which include the Sierraville (Randolph) School (c.1866-2005), Rocky Point/Sattley School (c.1872-1937), Calpine School (1881-1943), Long Valley School (1885-1940), and Loyalton (Island) Elementary School (1873-1941).¹⁶

Funding public schools in the late 19th century was a big task for the county that included maintenance on existing schoolhouses and school supplies, as well as salaries for teachers. The county supplemented \$6,500 that year for the establishment of schools, which only covered a portion that was appropriated by bonds or local businesses.¹⁷ If schools needed books for the library or a piano, the community would take up a collection to sponsor balls and other social events. Teachers in the county were paid less than \$600 a year.¹⁸ In 1895, County Superintendent of Schools, F.H. Turner, appropriated annually \$4,565.19 to 21 school districts with an additional \$310.33 allocated to the library funds; the Sierraville School received that year \$395.20 and \$20.80 for its library as one of the largest districts in the county.¹⁹ The library fund for the school was instrumental since the library was not only for the school but also as a community free library.

In 1908, the *Mountain Messenger* reported the news of the school district's proposal to bring to a vote the establishment of a Joint Union High School comprising of five districts in both Plumas

¹² Sinnott, *A General History of Sierra County*, 87.

¹³ Sierra County Historical Society. *History of the schools of the Sierra Valley*. Edited by Judy Lawrence, 2004, ii; William G. Copren, "Formal Education and the Schools in Sierra County, 1880-1890." In *Sierra County Cultural History, a One Week Tour. San Francisco State Field Campus, Highway 49, Sierra County, California* (Printed information from William G. Copren), August 7-12, 2016, 26.

¹⁴ Sinnott, *A General History of Sierra County*, 87.

¹⁵ Sierra County Historical Society. *History of the schools of the Sierra Valley*, ii.

¹⁶ Sierra County Historical Society. *History of the schools of the Sierra Valley*, ii.

¹⁷ Copren, "Formal Education and the Schools in Sierra County, 1880-1890," 26.

¹⁸ Copren, "Formal Education and the Schools in Sierra County, 1880-1890," ii and 30.

¹⁹ Sinnott, *A General History of Sierra County*, 87-88. Note: According to www.in2013dollars.com, \$4565.19 is the equivalent of \$124,102.85 in 2017 and \$395.20 allocated to fund the Sierraville School was the equivalent of \$10,743.35.

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and Sierra Counties.²⁰ The change in the Joint Union District brought high schools to Loyalton, Antelope, Sierraville, Sattley, and Clare in Sierra County. The Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, created in 1949, the elementary schools in the county were unified by 1950. The new district was overseen by a Board of School Trustees, a seven-member committee, which oversaw the responsibilities of all of the elementary and high school affairs within the counties of Sierra and eastern Plumas. The total enrollees in nine elementary schools (Alleghany, Goodyears, Downieville, Sierra City, Sierraville, Loyalton, Chilcoot, Summit, and Beckwith) were 455 students in September 1950, and it was anticipated to increase to 562 students by 1954. Of the three high schools in the county (Alleghany, Downieville, and Loyalton), there were 122 students enrolled that month in 1950, and it was anticipated increase to 259 by the year 1958.²¹

Architecturally, the county's early schoolhouses were designed as 1 to 2 rooms deep, small buildings, approximately 30 feet by 50 feet, heated by wood stoves, and painted white with outhouse privies on the premises. Larger towns separated their student body into primary and grammar schools with one teacher per classroom. The largest school was in the county seat of Downieville, which was a two-room schoolhouse with a library. Most of the schoolhouses were much smaller than what existed in Downieville, and were moved around on skids to where a majority of the student body was located. School children in the county ranged in age from 5 to 17 and an average class size was between 40-75 students. The length of a school term was ten months, beginning in September and ending in June, which could run into July, depending on a severe winters that would shut the school down as "snow days."²² In getting to school, many students were seen on horseback in the 1880s, because it was an easy form of transportation and permitted in all weathers.

The method of education in the early days was memorization, recognition, and recitation, plus it was typical to recite homework the next day in class that was written on chalkboards. Teaching practices also used word cards arranged on a chalk rail and older students assisted the younger ones in the learning process. A student who completed both primary and grammar school in Sierra County would have received instruction in "physiology, philosophy, algebra, arithmetic, geography, spelling, word-analysis, United States history, reading, civil government, grammar, drawing, and book-keeping, which represented a practical education in living in a business-oriented world."²³ In a 1951 analysis for the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, children's needs included working together with others of their own age, playing together with others of their own age and other ages, sharing experiences, and developing leadership.²⁴ The schools also needed to have four criteria: good health conditions (lighting, ventilation, acoustics, and playground equipment), proper materials (text books, tools to work, aids to widen their experiences), good room conditions (children of the same age, grade, physical ability and interests), and good classrooms.²⁵ This method of education, and the above four criteria, is best

²⁰ Sinnott, *A General History of Sierra County*, 89.

²¹ Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California, "An Analysis of the School Building Needs," 12.

²² Copren, "Formal Education and the Schools in Sierra County, 1880-1890," 28; Amodei, *History of the Schools of the Sierra Valley*, 94.

²³ Copren, "Formal Education and the Schools in Sierra County, 1880-1890," 33.

²⁴ Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California, "An Analysis of the School Building Needs," 9-10.

²⁵ Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California, "An Analysis of the School Building Needs," 9-11.

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seen at the Sierraville School, where older and younger students worked together, educating each other, creating a rich bond within their rural community.

Sierraville School (c.1860s-2005)

The Sierraville School historically represents three distinct school buildings that date from the early 1860s to the standing school, built in 1931, all of which occupied Lot 43 on South Lincoln Street between the small towns of Sierraville and Randolph.

The first Sierraville School was built in 1865 as a 1-1/2-room, wood-framed, gable schoolhouse (**Figure 6**). In 1865, \$600 was raised by Randolph and Sierraville to build the new school, and an additional \$400 was raised in 1866 as improvements, reported by the *Mountain Messenger*.²⁶ William D. Ever was one of the first teachers at the school as early as 1869. Since its beginning, the small school building was overcrowded and the International Order of Odd-fellows building in Sierraville was used as a “high school.” It is unknown what happened to the 1860s school, and only one photo records the building. However, it can be hypothesized that it was too small to educate the number of students in the area.

On September 2, 1875, the land was deeded from E.R. Albee and his wife Jane to the Sierraville School District and the district purchased additional land from the Albees on October 9, 1876. The second Sierraville School initial construction began sometime between 1875-1876.²⁷ The new larger school was built, and like the earlier school, information on this second Sierraville School is also limited (**Figure 7** and **Figure 8**). However, it is known that in 1875 a Grand Ball was held in the winter and was the beginning of a school Christmas program in raising funds to finish the school interior as well as build a belfry.²⁸ The new school was “erected midway between central Sierraville and Randolph and was at the location of a later-built large and fine school building.”²⁹ The school was both a Primary school, also known as the Sierraville Elementary School, and a Grammar school, or the Sierraville High School for older students, and most of the teachers in the early days were male. E.L. Case was one of the first teachers of the new school in 1885.³⁰ In 1888, there were 91 students enrolled in the Sierraville School with Miss Lawry teaching.³¹ In 1896, there were recorded 53 students in the primary, and by the following year enrollees increased to 95 students.³² In 1898, there were 130 students in the school, ranging from ages 5 to 17, instructed by William J. Copren, T.H. Turner, and J.H. Simes.³³ By 1902, the school finally received a 450-pound bell for the 1875 belfry, which was donated by A.J. Quigley.

In 1908, the Sierra Valley Joint Union High School District was organized and a main campus was established in Loyalton with the Sierraville School as a supportive high school.³⁴ Before 1908, few parents kept their children in high school because they were needed to work in the fields. Loyalton,

²⁶ *Mountain Messenger*, December 17, 1866; Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 93.

²⁷ Sierraville-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Quitclaim Deed, “Docent No. 2016165998, Assessor Parcel No. 015-080-0060” (Downieville, California: Sierra County Assessor Office), November 11, 2016.

²⁸ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 93 and 102.

²⁹ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 174.

³⁰ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 178.

³¹ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 174.

³² Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 94; Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 174.

³³ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 174.

³⁴ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 95.

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the county's first high school in the Sierra Valley, was 13.4 miles northeast of Sierraville; therefore, the Sierraville School was retained as a high school in 1918.³⁵ The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company surveyed Sierraville in 1912, and the school represented a single square-shaped building with a shingle roof, front porch, and a belfry, platted on Lot 43 on South Lincoln Street, an 80 feet wide street.³⁶

In the 1920s, Paul Roscoe (1900-1964) was one of the most noted principals and teachers in Sierra County, and was instrumental to the Sierraville School, teaching all grades for 38 years (1926 to 1964).³⁷ Roscoe earned a teaching certificate from the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, and traveled west with two friends in 1924, working small jobs on the way and even earned a little cash as an extra in a movie in Los Angeles.³⁸ He heard of a need for teachers in Sierra County, and accepted a teaching position in a one-room schoolhouse in La Porte in 1924 before he settled in Sierraville, teaching all grades in one room at the Sierraville School in 1926.³⁹ Roscoe's daughter, Betty France, recalls her father taught many families in the Sierra Valley from the parents to their grandchildren, and even taught English as a second language to children of Swiss-Italian immigrants who settled in the valley.⁴⁰

On Wednesday May 29, 1929, Onita (Webber) Roscoe, wife of Mr. Roscoe, was "burning paper" in the wood stove, and embers sparked a roof fire.⁴¹ The *Mountain Messenger* newspaper detailed the school had been dismissed at noon by Mrs. June Johnson and a pupil, Miss Hazel Adams, noticed the smoke coming from of the roof.⁴² Students Georgie Small, Frank Turner, and Burlson Blatchely eating lunch on the grounds, saw the smoke too and Small ran into the building and rang the school bell to attract others. In minutes, the town was there but their efforts were futile until the Tahoe National Forest's Sierraville Ranger District, a neighbor to the school to the south, brought the agency's chemical engine to put out the fire while students pulled out materials, such as the organ, piano, desks, books, and chemicals from the high school's laboratory. Many students wanted to run in to get their books, and only a few were recovered. The grammar and high school were destroyed, and the *Messenger* reported "...Steps will be taken at once to rebuild in order to have a school building ready for the fall term by September 1929."⁴³ Between 1929-1931, the old Congregational Church and its parsonage became temporary schools (elementary and high school) as a new school was being built.⁴⁴

³⁵ Sierra County Historical Society. *History of the schools of the Sierra Valley*, ii.

³⁶ Sanborn Map Company, "Sierraville, Sierra Co., California," Sheet 1, June 1912.

³⁷ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 270.

³⁸ Betty Roscoe France, "Personal conversation with author," January 4, 2017.

³⁹ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 179; France, "Personal Interview with author," January 4, 2017.

⁴⁰ France, "Personal conversation with author," January 4, 2017; Arlene Amodei, "Personal conversation with author," December 18, 2016.

⁴¹ "Disaster Fire at Sierraville Las Wednesday—overheated stove at School House causes Roof to Catch Fire and Building is Totally Destroyed—Part of Contents Saved by Quick Work." *Mountain Messenger*. June 1, 1929. In *History of the Schools of Sierra Valley*, edited by Judy Lawrence. Published by the Sierra County Historical Society, 2004:95; France, "Personal conversation with author," January 4, 2017.

⁴² *Mountain Messenger*, June 1, 1929, In *History of the Schools of Sierra Valley*, 2004: 95.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 95.

⁴⁴ Amodei, "Sierraville School," 97.

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During a Board of Trustees meeting on June 20, 1929, a budget was proposed to immediately build a new “Sierra Valley Joint Union High and Sierraville Elementary School.”⁴⁵ The original bid was set between \$8,000-10,000, with \$4,000 coming from insurance claims. The school was scoped to cost \$23,000 for a concrete building, compared to the cost of a wood frame school (\$16,000) that was prohibited by state law for State Board of Education new school buildings.⁴⁶ School Representative Andrew Hill sent a letter to H.A. Turner on June 20, 1930, authorizing the completion of working drawings for the school, which was completed by November 1930.⁴⁷ The 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Sierraville depicts the school as concrete structure, and the footprint is unchanged (**Figure 9** and **Figure 10**).⁴⁸

The new Sierraville School was officially completed in January 1931 and consisted of an “Elementary School classroom, science room, a library and a High School classroom, a smaller room for business-type classes, a small kitchen and a ‘play room’ and stage area which were floored with maple hardwood.”⁴⁹ Chico Architect Chester Cole, AIA, and Associate Louis L. Brouchoud drafted the architectural plans for the new school and David Nordstrom of Oakland was the general contractor. The total contract for the new concrete school was \$31,014.00, which equals \$426,487.58 in 2016 dollars.⁵⁰ The Board of Trustees made the final payment of \$7,753.50 on February 19, 1931, for the school that exceeded its original budget by over 100 percent, and the community stepped up with surplus money going to the high school funds.⁵¹ The new reinforced concrete school was dedicated as the new “Sierraville Elementary and High School” on February 6th, 1931 with an event in its auditorium by its Chairman and Sierraville High School Principal, James J. Sinnott, and was celebrated by prestigious county members and school members; a formal housewarming event occurred in the school on February 14th.⁵² At that time, the Sierraville School was the “only community school that was paid for by its community.”⁵³

Since its construction, the school has been one of the top three enrolled elementary schools in the county, next to Loyaltown and Downieville.⁵⁴ Grades first through twelfth were taught in the school in various classrooms under one roof (**Figure 11**). Mr. Roscoe taught first through eighth grades in one classroom (Classroom 1). Depending on the class size, a second teacher, Mrs. Margaret Burelle Copren, would share responsibilities with Roscoe in an additional classroom (Classroom 3).⁵⁵ The high school students were taught in a second room (Classroom 2) that had a closet, which was used as a science laboratory where they learned physics and chemistry (**Figure 12**).⁵⁶

⁴⁵ “Contractor’s Payment Schedule, October 2, 1930.” Provided by Arlene Amodei, Sierra County Historical Society.

⁴⁶ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 95.

⁴⁷ Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 176.

⁴⁸ Sanborn Map Company, “Sierraville, Sierra Co., California,” September 1930.

⁴⁹ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 97.

⁵⁰ Dollartimes.com. Accessed January 18, 2017,

<http://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/inflation.php?amount=100&year=1931>.

⁵¹ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 97.

⁵² Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 176; *Mountain Messenger*, “Formal House Warming for New School,” February 14, 1931, pp.4.

⁵³ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 99.

⁵⁴ Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California, “An Analysis of the School Building Needs,” 9-12.

⁵⁵ France, “Personal conversation with author,” January 4, 2017.

⁵⁶ Copren, “Personal conversation with author,” December 18, 2016.

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On May 5, 1933, a third parcel was added to the school's overall property, purchased from the Methodist Episcopal Church, which historically has been associated with the school since the 1870s. After 1945 and the construction of the high school in Loyalton, the Sierraville School's student body changed to a first through eighth grade school. Student enrollment, however, continued to fluctuate in the county, which affected the school and overwhelmingly the grades taught within the school. A wood-constructed workshop was built on this end parcel in 1949 in training high school students on mechanics. In 1950, the Sierraville School had 52 students and estimated enrollment in 1954 to be 68 students. In 1951, the district changed its name to the "Sierra Plumas Joint Unified School District" and the Sierraville School cost the district a total of \$10,000 out of an annual budget of \$492,000.⁵⁷ The report considered the school with its hot lunch program "one of the most adequate to serve its needs of any in the district at the time."⁵⁸

In 1952, an appraisal was written on the district by Victor E. Roth Associates, which included the Sierraville School (**Figure 13** and **Figure 14**). The appraisal described the school as a "Class C reinforced concrete and wood frame schoolhouse building with 3 classrooms, 1 lunchroom, 1 kitchen, gymnasium and basement."⁵⁹ The school was described in this appraisal as having a reinforced concrete foundation with 2x4 inch wood framing on the interior with lath-and-plaster walls. The rafters are 2x6 inch boards under a wood shingled roof. During the 1951 appraisal, the playground equipment in the yard was noted as a teeter-totter set, a four seat swing set, big slide, hand over-hand parallel bars, merry-go-round, and a revolving ring set (**Figure 15** and **Figure 16**).⁶⁰ The backfield for football, also known as "longtown" baseball, and adding a volleyball and basketball court, where a parking lot currently stands, added in 1979.⁶¹ A tradition that possibly began in the late 1960s was saying the Pledge of Allegiance in front of the school's flagpole

From 1957 to 1966, seventh and eighth grades fluctuated between Sierraville School and Loyalton, Elementary School, depending on the number of the student body (**Figure 17** and **Figure 18**). By the late-1950s, Loyalton's fourth graders were attending the Sierraville School. In the early 1970s, a fire escape was added to the northwest corner of the school that included converting a window into a door.

In 1978, Proposition 13 passed as a state mandate that had ripple effects in the Sierra Valley, cutting funding in the Sierraville School in keeping the building open after school hours. With community events abruptly ending, the school lost a center to socialize. In 1979, the firm Gillette Harris Duranceau Associates was hired to improve the landscape around the school, which included adding basketball and tennis courts, paving a parking area, and replacing the outdated playground equipment.⁶² The landscape improvements were funded by a state bond proposal that had been in the making for years, and provided some outdoor recreation after the removal of the community center in 1978.

⁵⁷ Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California, "An Analysis of the School Building Needs," 9-20, 25.

⁵⁸ Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District California. "An Analysis of the School Building Needs," 25.

⁵⁹ Roth, "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra and Plumas Counties, California,"109-125.

⁶⁰ Roth, "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra and Plumas Counties, California,"124-125.

⁶¹ Mau Barum and Folsom Architects, AIA. "Sierraville Elementary School" April 29, 1970. Located at the Loyalton Elementary School, Loyalton, California; Copren, "Personal Conversation with author," December 18, 2016.

⁶² Gillette Harris Duranceau Associates, "Sierraville School," July 5, 1979. Architectural drawings located at the Loyalton Elementary School, Loyalton, California

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In 1981, the school celebrated its 50th anniversary, which brought out teachers, superintendents and parents, where stories were exchanged.⁶³ At the Sierraville School, it was the longtime tradition to have the principal greet the students every morning, which was a bonding experience by the principal who was the main instructor. From kindergarten through sixth grade, there were 80 students in the late 1980s, and the largest student population was around 95 students, so many that an extra teacher was hired.⁶⁴ It is around that time that a wall, which separated Classroom 3, which was being used as a library, was removed to accommodate the number of students.

In 1991, a prefabricated modular building was added to the Sierraville School grounds to accommodate the students, and was used in the early 2000s as the administrative offices for the District and County Offices of Education.⁶⁵ By 2000, enrollment dropped significantly and 3rd through 6th grade was shuttled from Sierraville to Loyalton, making the Sierraville School a kindergarten through second grade school. The last class was held in 2005 until was converted into a community recreation center, known as the Sierraville Recreation Center, on May 2, 2006.⁶⁶

Sierraville School as a Community Center

The communities and families in the Sierra Valley invested in the 1931 Sierraville School as an academic institution and as a local community center, a longstanding tradition in the valley with their schools. In the early years, funds for schools were “often inadequate” from paying teachers’ salaries to purchasing school supplies. According to historian and teacher James Sinnott, “subscriptions had to be taken up among the people, and entertainments and benefit performances had to be given to raise funds to permit the school to continue in session.”⁶⁷ As early as 1875, grand dances and balls were held to raise and collect additional funds to finish components of the school that were incomplete, such as the school’s belfry. In 1931, when funding was tight in finishing the new Sierraville School, family pockets were emptied out during the Great Depression to complete the school. The construction costs were 100% over budget, but thanks to the community, raised necessary funds to build the first fireproof concrete school in the county after the school’s devastating 1929 fire.

The most vital use of the school was as a local community center, connecting Sierraville to the out skirting towns of Calpine and Sattley that are geographically isolated from big city life as a rural agricultural area. Social events in the school were steady and persistent up until 1978 and the enactment of Proposition 13, a state constitutional amendment, which cut all community events held in the Sierraville School after hours in concentrating funds to the education of students.

Previously, the school hosted family events, like bridal and baby showers, funerals, talent shows, and holiday potluck dinners.⁶⁸ Historian and Sierraville School student (Class of 1961) William

⁶³ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 101.

⁶⁴ Beverley Mitchell, “Personal conversation with author,” December 7, 2016; Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 99.

⁶⁵ Thomson & Hendricks, Inc., “Sierraville Elementary School,” July 24, 1991. Architectural drawings located at the Loyalton Elementary School, Loyalton, California; Mitchell, “Personal conversation with author,” December 7, 2016; Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 100.

⁶⁶ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 100; Sierra County. “Cooperative Use Agreement for Sierraville School (Recreation).” Agreement No. 060103. May 2, 2006. Provided to author by the Sierra County Historical Society.

⁶⁷ Sinnott, *A General History of Sierra County*, 78-79.

⁶⁸ Copren, “Personal conversation with author,” December 18, 2016; Virginia Maddalena Lutes, “Personal conversation with author,” January 18, 2017.

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G. Copren remembers prior to television coming to the valley in 1960, “all kinds of events” were held in the school, such as pinochle, exercise classes, and adult volleyball and basketball team games held in the school’s gymnasium. In addition, the school was a public library to the towns in the Sierra Valley, lending books out to residents since there are no public governmental buildings in this part of the valley. The most significant event in the school was the Christmas Program, created as early as 1869 in currently the Sierraville Community Church, which was later, held as early as 1875 in the Sierraville School.⁶⁹ On the school’s stage, Santa Claus at Christmas would pass out brown bags that included “an orange, ribbon candy, and chocolate drops.”⁷⁰ Principal Paul Roscoe fortified this holiday event between the school and community by bridging families in this tradition up until his retirement in 1964, and the event lived on decades afterwards as one of the school’s last community events.

In addition to these types of events, the Sierraville School was also a meeting place for associations and gatherings. The Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) at the Sierraville School was created on November 14, 1930 by Miss Georgine Graff Copren, who was concerned about many students receiving cold lunches and had the P.T.A. make soup for them daily in the school’s kitchen, beginning as early as 1932.⁷¹ The P.T.A. additionally funded activities and many community events, like Halloween parties and Easter egg hunts, held in the school. For example, in 1952 the P.T.A. sponsored a local adult talent show in the school gymnasium/stage, which was attended by 130 people who enjoyed 2-½ hour performance and raised \$100 for school projects.⁷² During the Cold War years, the school was used as a “bomb shelter” and the school grounds had a Geiger counter set up that checked for radiation for the community.⁷³ Sometime in 1961-62, the nation rallied around polio vaccinations, also known as the “Sabin vaccine,” which inoculated hundreds of people in the Sierraville area. Previously, polio affected many of the students in the Sierra Valley, and Historian William G. Copren remembers his class having two polio-affected students. When the vaccine was offered in Sierraville, residents in the community and nearby ranches came to the Sierraville School to get their vaccine on sugar cubes.⁷⁴ In addition to vaccinations, small emergency-type events, such as a base camp by the Sierraville Ranger District for a local forest fire and emergency/first-aid training for firefighters, were held in the school, in addition to multiple political events where the school was used as a polling place for elections and town hall meetings.

After 1978, Proposition 13, a state constitutional amendment, significantly eliminated all community events, meeting uses, and sports activities held on the premises due to budget cuts in preventing the property open after-school hours, and the only expenses permitted were related to education of students. In addition, donations and volunteering in the Sierraville School, such as the P.T.A. involvement, increased in filling in the gaps in school’s budget cuts. The Christmas Program, the only social event held in the school open to the community, brought the entire town of Sierraville together under one roof post-Proposition 13. After 1980, the Christmas Program was setup as an independently financed program through sole donations from the community. The donations were used not only to put on the program’s production for the community but also to

⁶⁹ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 102; Sinnott, *Sierra Valley: Jewel of the Sierras*, 175.

⁷⁰ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 102; Lutes, “Personal conversation with author,” January 18, 2017.

⁷¹ Amodei, “Sierraville School,” 100.

⁷² *Mountain Messenger*, “Sierraville Home Talent Big Success,” May 1, 1952.

⁷³ Lutes, “Personal conversation with author,” January 18, 2017.

⁷⁴ Copren, “Personal Conversation with author,” December 18, 2016.

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buy Christmas gifts for kids in the area. Up until the school's closure in 2005, the Christmas Program was the longest running holiday program in California, and to this day, brings tears to former teachers' eyes remembering the program's deep relationship to the community.⁷⁵

Criteria Consideration G: Property That Has Achieved Significance Within The Past Fifty Years

California Proposition 13 (1978) and the Sierraville School Recreation Center

In 1978, California's Proposition 13, a state constitutional amendment, reduced the Sierraville School's funding significantly and eliminated extracurricular activities held in the school facilities. Proposition 13, also known as the "People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation," was adopted to significantly reduce property tax revenues to local governmental agency. As a result, the State of California began funding a substantial portion of school revenues according to a complex formula. Originally, counties and cities set their own property tax rates, and in some cases could be quite high because it paid for local infrastructure, like schools and libraries. For the Sierraville School, local funding allowed the property to be open after-school hours as a community center for extracurricular activities—all funded in part by property taxes. However, Proposition 13 forever changed this by limiting the property tax rate to one-percent of "base year" value across the state. For rural Sierra County, local property taxes were drastically cut from 50% to 75%, and the state began funding the local schools.⁷⁶ Lack of public funds coming in through property taxes directly affected the Sierraville School as its community center use was terminated, affecting the communities of Sierraville, Calpine, and Sattley in Sierra Valley.

For public schools, former County Assessor William G. Copren recalls, "the schools were no longer funded by local property taxes."⁷⁷ As a result of the proposition, he adds, "the school districts went through some serious budget cuts as the state government became the principal funder of statewide public schools." In addition, Proposition 13 gave a significant blow to all community events held at the Sierraville School as extracurricular programs, such as potlucks, showers, and community sports leagues held on the premises were abruptly ended because there were no funds for operating costs, insurance, and utilities. Arlene Amodei, a Sierraville School historian and teacher summed the proposition up well in the *History of the Schools of the Sierra Valley*, published in 2004: "Proposition 13 changed all that [because of] the restrictions on the use of the school facilities... Sadly [due to the proposition], the members of the community are not as close as they once were with the loss of this gathering place."⁷⁸ Amodei continues and reflects, "Hopefully this will be rectified in the near future."

After the proposition and the closing of the community center, no centers or public halls were constructed in the Sierraville area, leaving the rural town without a place to socially mix. Both Copren and Amodei recall the Sierraville Community Church hosted a few events but overall there were no replacement community centers ever constructed. It was only after the Sierraville School's closing in 2005 that the Sierra Plumas Joint Unified School District and the County of Sierra partnered into a cooperative agreement on May 2, 2006 to convert the old Sierraville School

⁷⁵ Amodei, Personal Conversation with author, December 18, 2016.

⁷⁶ Copren, Personal Conversation with author, March 31, 2017.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Amodei, "Sierraville School," 99.

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into a community center again, managed by the Sierraville Recreation Association, a newly formed non-profit.⁷⁹

Christened the “Sierraville School Community Center,” funds for improvements were allocated from California’s Proposition 40, also known as the “Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002,” which provided grants for recreational areas and their improvements. On July 17, 2007, a recreation management agreement was formed between the county, the school district, and the Sierraville Recreation Association.⁸⁰ The association became the responsible party in running recreational activities and programs in addition to collecting rental fees. In 2010, Sierra County made improvements to the property, such as the construction of a picnic shelter, and added an interior handicap ramp over existing steps in the hall, which were both assets to the community components in the school. Currently, the Sierraville Recreation Association manages and rents the center out to multiple organizations and groups from family reunions to basketball league and tai chi classes. Another great example at the new center is preparing wooden quilts as markers for historic barns as a public arts project with the Sierra County Arts Council that is visible throughout the valley. Overall, the Sierraville School is in-process restoring many of its historic social activities prior to 1978 and is slowly improving itself as a full-fledged community center to the Sierra Valley.

Criterion C: Architecture/Engineering

Architect Chester Cole (1883-1938)

After the burning of the 1870s wooden school in 1929, the Sierra Valley Joint Union High School District rebuilt the Sierraville School as a fireproof concrete building in Sierraville, the first in the county. The architect, Chester Cole, was born on July 4, 1883 in Oneida, New York, and received a degree in structural engineering and architecture from the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania, according to his American Institute of Architects (AIA) membership.⁸¹ On March 22, 1926, Cole’s AIA application accounts for him practicing architecture at 334 Harvard Avenue, Chico, California, with an associate, Louis L. Brouchoud (1883-1964). Cole had issues paying his AIA dues on June 8, 1932, and correspondence between him and the AIA Washington D.C. office. Between 1926 and 1932, these letters between Cole and AIA document over 25 school buildings across Northern California on the sides of this letterhead, although it did not include the Sierraville School. It can be speculated that Cole designed more than this number, in addition to residences and businesses throughout the state.⁸² In October 1931, B.J.S. Cahill, Architect, wrote an article on Cole and Brouchoud and how their design brings out “the picturesque feeling rather than the purity of form of any particular period,” and the article depicted some of Cole’s Chico works, such as the Oakdale Elementary School, Shasta Union School, and Linden Grammar School.⁸³

⁷⁹ Sierra County. “Cooperative Use Agreement for Sierraville School (Recreation).” May 2, 2006.

⁸⁰ Sierra County. “Recreation Management Agreement for Sierraville School.” Agreement No. 070131. July 17, 2007. Provided to author by the Sierra County Historical Society.

⁸¹ American Institute of Architects. “Application of Membership, 1926.” Accessed November 27, 2016 http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/C-E/Cole_Chester.pdf.

⁸² American Institute of Architects, “Application of Membership, 1926.”

⁸³ Cahill, B.J.S., Architect. “Some recent schools and other work by Chester Cole and L.L. Brouchoud,” *Architect and Engineer*, October 1931 vol. 107(1): 27. Accessed November 28, 2016

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Additional research is definitely needed to understand the overall number of schools Cole designed across California, and his AIA membership application provides a glimmer of his range of school projects. Research as correspondence was completed with major state libraries, although no collections on Cole appear to exist, and it is recommended that research be undertaken at archives in California's Department of Education. Some general online historical research was undertaken on a few Cole-designed schools, and is listed as citations or dates to the following list of schools below:

Butte County: Chico Unified School District Building (c.1930),⁸⁴ Shasta Union Grammar School (1922), Durham Union High School (1922), Salem Street School (c.1926),⁸⁵ California State University Chico (1927), Citrus Avenue Elementary School (1936),⁸⁶ Oakdale Elementary School, Linden Grammar School, Nelson Grammar School, Chico Parochial School, South Side Grammar School, and East Side Grammar School

San Francisco: Notre Dame High and Grammar School (1924) and Joan of Arc School (pre 1939)

Sutter County: East Nicholas School (1919),⁸⁷ Live Oak Union High School (1921-24),⁸⁸ Sutter City Grammar School (1924),⁸⁹ Winship School, Grimes,⁹⁰ Tierra Buena Grammar School, Wilson Grammar School, and Meridian Grammar School

Tehama County: Los Molinos Grammar School (1917), Red Bluff Parochial School (c.1920s), and Vina Grammar School (1924)

Yolo County: Grafton Elementary School (1919)

Yuba County: Cordua Grammar School (1919) and the Linda School

http://www.survivorlibrary.com/library/architect_and_engineer_vol_107-108_1932.pdf; Ross Maribeth and Yoshio Kusuba, "Citrus School," October 1931.

⁸⁴ Cahill, "Some recent schools and other work by Chester Cole and L.L. Brouchoud," 27; Ross and Kusuba, "Citrus School," October 1931.

⁸⁵ Taran March, "The Campus Trinity – On Trinity Hall's 75th anniversary, we look back at the history and architecture of CSU, Chico's three favorite buildings." Accessed on January 18, 2017

https://www.csuchico.edu/pub/cs/summer_08/feature_03.html

⁸⁶ Living New Deal Project, "Citrus Avenue Elementary School, Chico, CA." Accessed January 18, 2017

<https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/citrus-avenue-elementary-school-chico-ca/>.

⁸⁷ Office of Historic Preservation, "7.4 Historic Sites and Landmarks, Sutter County," updated on June 22, 2009. Accessed November 28, 2016 <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1072/files/sutter.pdf>.

⁸⁸ <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/kt8j49r15j/>, Joy Fisher, "Chapter 11 Other Towns of the County, 1924," In *History of Yuba and Sutter Counties*. Last updated on January 5, 2012. Accessed November 28, 2016

<http://files.usgarchives.net/ca/sutter/history/1924/historyo/chapter1343gms.txt>.

⁸⁹ Fisher, "Chapter 11 Other Towns of the County, 1924," 2012.

⁹⁰ Office of Historic Preservation, "7.4 Historic Sites and Landmarks, Sutter County," 2009.

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Conclusion

The Sierraville School played a significant role in educating elementary and high school students in the Sierra Valley as early as the 1860s. After the c.1875 wooden schoolhouse burned in 1929, the Sierraville School was built as the first concrete fireproof school in Sierra County in 1931, educating generations of children in the valley. The Sierraville School has a rich history on a local level to multiple communities in the county as a school and community center until the enactment of state mandate Proposition 13 in 1978, which changed all that, establishing a period of significance into the less than fifty years (1931-1978).

The Sierraville School has been a stable educational institution in the community for over seventy years prior to its closure in 2005, and is currently still held as a school property by the county where it is leased as the Sierraville School Community Center. The school operated historically as both an elementary and high school up until 1949, and continued as a multiple grade schoolhouse for decades afterwards. In addition to education, the Sierraville School functioned as an important community center in the Sierra Valley as a resource to the local public, hosting holidays and events, and was a general hub for civic activities that tied the entire community together. In 1978, Proposition 13 abruptly eliminated the school's community events and programs due to budget cuts, which had been in place for over 45 years. The Sierraville School is associated with local historical events and is locally significant as an educational institution and represents the heart of the community, serving generations of Sierra Valley residents that resonate to this day (Criterion A).

Because the building's period of significance extends into the less than fifty years, the Sierraville School has achieved exceptional importance for its social connections as a valued community center up until the approval of California's Proposition 13 in 1978. Proposition 13 sharply eliminated all public community programs and events held at the Sierraville School, and as a result, deeply affected the community in the valley. After the school's closing in 2005, the school as a recreation center is slowly returning, earning a place where residents can socialize. The Sierraville School has achieved exceptional significance within the past fifty years and sufficiently retains its importance as a vibrant community center (Criteria Consideration G).

In addition to its history connected to education and community, the Sierraville School was designed by well-known Chico architect Chester Cole, AIA, as the first concrete fireproof school in Sierra County. Cole has a significant breadth of work in Northern California having designed approximately 30 schools in the state. The Art Deco style school is a good representative example of Cole's work as a modest schoolhouse with three multi-grade classrooms with attached cloakrooms and has a gymnasium/stage and kitchen. The Sierraville School overall embodies distinctive characteristics of its architectural style as a 1930s school, and is an excellent example of Chester Cole's work, as well as retains all of its aspects of integrity (Criterion C).

In conclusion, the Sierraville School is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance to Sierra County and is designated under Criteria A and C, with Criteria Consideration G for exceptional importance within the less than fifty years period (1931-1978).

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Sierra County Historical Society; Loyalton Elementary School; Sierraville School

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.87 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39.584539°

Longitude: 120.369132°

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Sierraville School is set on a northeast-southwest axis and is parallel to California State Highway 89/Sierra-Randolph Road, which is also known as South Lincoln Street between the communities of Sierraville and Randolph, Sierra County, California. The parcel is situated on a portion of land within T20N / R14E, Section 13, Mount Diablo base and Meridian. The boundary of the Sierraville School encompasses 1.87 acres on Assessor Parcel, 015-080-0060.⁹¹ The L-shaped lot is 350 feet long and 250 feet wide on the original lot (Lot 43), and represents three parcels; Parcel One was recorded on September 2, 1875 (Book Q, Page 360), Parcel Two was recorded on October 9, 1876 (Book Q, Page 591), and Parcel Three was recorded May 5, 1933 (Book of Deeds, Vol. 33, Page 136).

Beginning at the northeast corner of the lot, the boundary travels southeast 350 feet, following the roadway, adjacent to a wooden fence line (see **Figure 1**). The southeast boundary travels southwest 190 feet to the southwest corner, and is the neighboring boundary to the Tahoe National Forest's Sierraville Ranger District. A 60x100 square foot section is eliminated from the properties southwest corner.⁹² At the lot's southwest corner, the northwest boundary is 250 feet long, and borders an irrigation ditch, connected to agricultural fields that flow into Perry Creek, a natural tributary creek. The northeast boundary is 250 feet long and is the neighboring line to the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sierraville maintenance yard.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected are based on the current Sierra County Assessor Parcel (Number, 15-080-0060, Lot 43) on 1.87 acre, which historically has been associated with Sierraville School buildings, built in 1860s and 1875, and rebuilt as the current school in 1931. The entire property boundaries of the lot have been associated with the school property since May 5, 1933.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Corri Jimenez, M.S., Architectural Historian
Organization: Independent Consultant
Street & number: P.O. Box 580
City or town: Tahoe City State: California Zip code: 96145
E-mail: corri_jimenez@yahoo.com
Telephone: (408) 710-2894 date: June 21, 2017

⁹¹ According to the Sierra County Assessor's Quitclaim deed and map, the real property legal description recording the Sierraville School property was inaccurate from its size to its acreage. Retired county assessor William G. Copren noted, "Public properties in the county have confusing titles" and there are inconsistencies although their public uses are consistent. With that said, the map and legal description do not match existing site. Mr. Copren measured the property lines of the school's lot on March 31, 2017, and the measurements are included in this verbal description. During this field survey, three c. 1930 metal-post boundary markers were located on the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners.

⁹² This square foot area has been associated with the Tahoe National Forest's ranger district for over 50 years, visible by standing structures.

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Sierraville School
City or Vicinity: Sierraville
County: Sierra **State:** California
Photographer: Corri Jimenez
Date Photographed: November 29, 2016; December 18, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_001
Exterior view, southeast elevation, looking southwest
- Photo 2 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_002
Exterior view, southeast elevation entrance, looking west
- Photo 3 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_003
Exterior view, southeast elevation gable end, looking southwest
- Photo 4 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_004
Exterior view, southwest elevation, looking northwest
- Photo 5 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_005
Exterior view, northwest elevation, looking northeast
- Photo 6 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_006
Exterior view, northwest elevation, looking southeast
- Photo 7 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_007
Exterior view, northeast elevation entrance, looking south
- Photo 8 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_008

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- Interior view, Hallway front door, looking north
- Photo 9 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_009
Interior view, Hallway, looking east
- Photo 10 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_010
Interior view, Classroom 1, looking south
- Photo 11 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_011
Interior view, Cloakroom between Classroom 1 and Stage, looking west
- Photo 12 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_012
Interior view, Classroom 3, looking south
- Photo 13 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_013
Interior view, Stage, looking east
- Photo 14 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_014
Interior view, Gymnasium wall, looking southeast
- Photo 15 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_015
Interior view, Kitchen, looking northwest
- Photo 16 of 16:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_016
Interior view, Basement boiler, looking southeast
- Photo 17 of 17:** CA_SierraCounty_SierravilleSchool_017
Interior view, Drinking fountain on northwest elevation, looking east

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 100 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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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page).

- Figure 1:** General Location Map
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Sierraville School
Name of Property

Sierra Co., California
County and State

List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page).

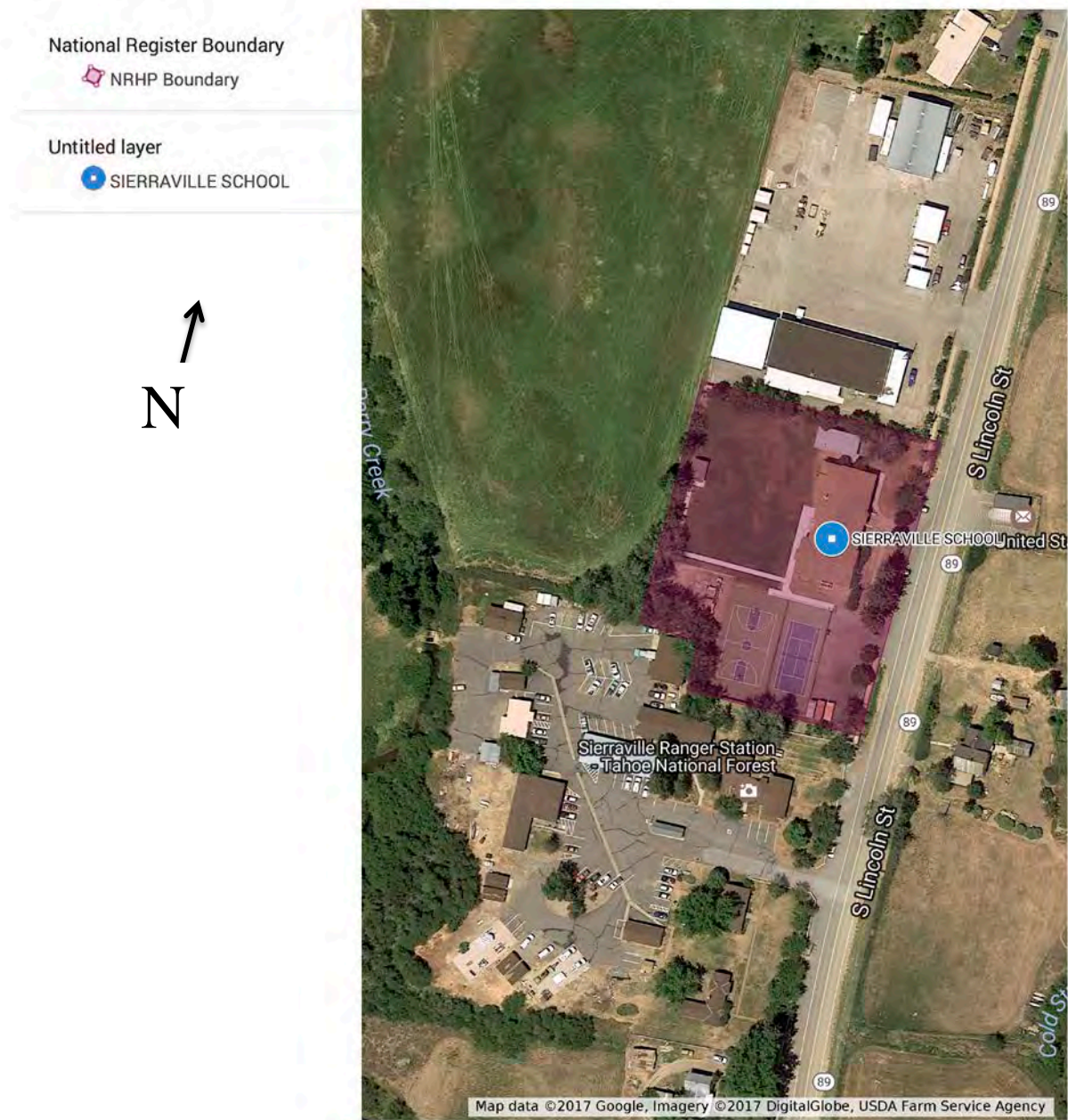
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**FIGURE 1. GENERAL LOCATION MAP
(WITH NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY)**

Sierraville School Map

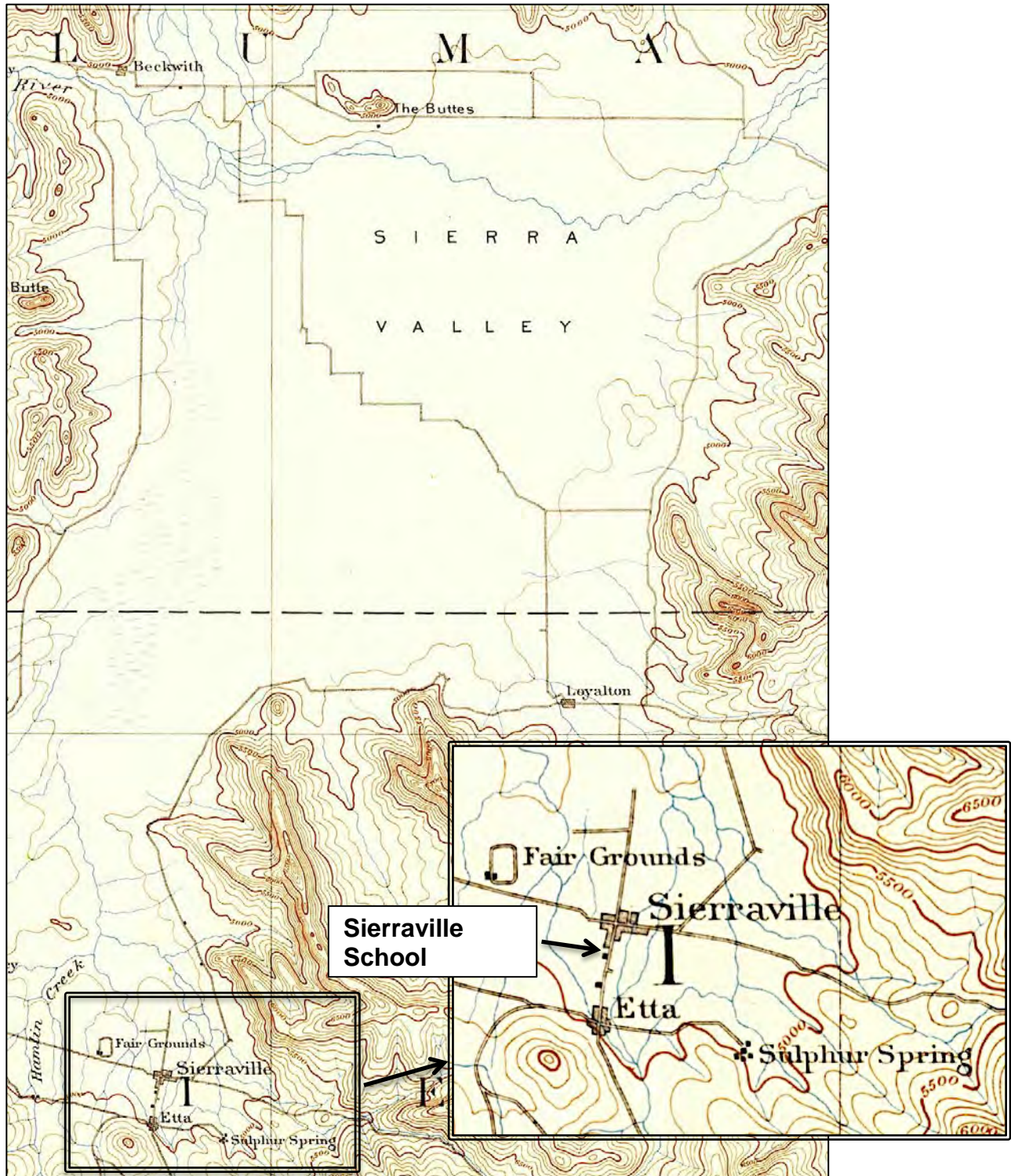


Source: Google Earth, 2017. Accessed January 23, 2017 <http://maps.google.com>.

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FIGURE 2. USGS 7.5' SIERRAVILLE QUADRANGLE MAP, 1894

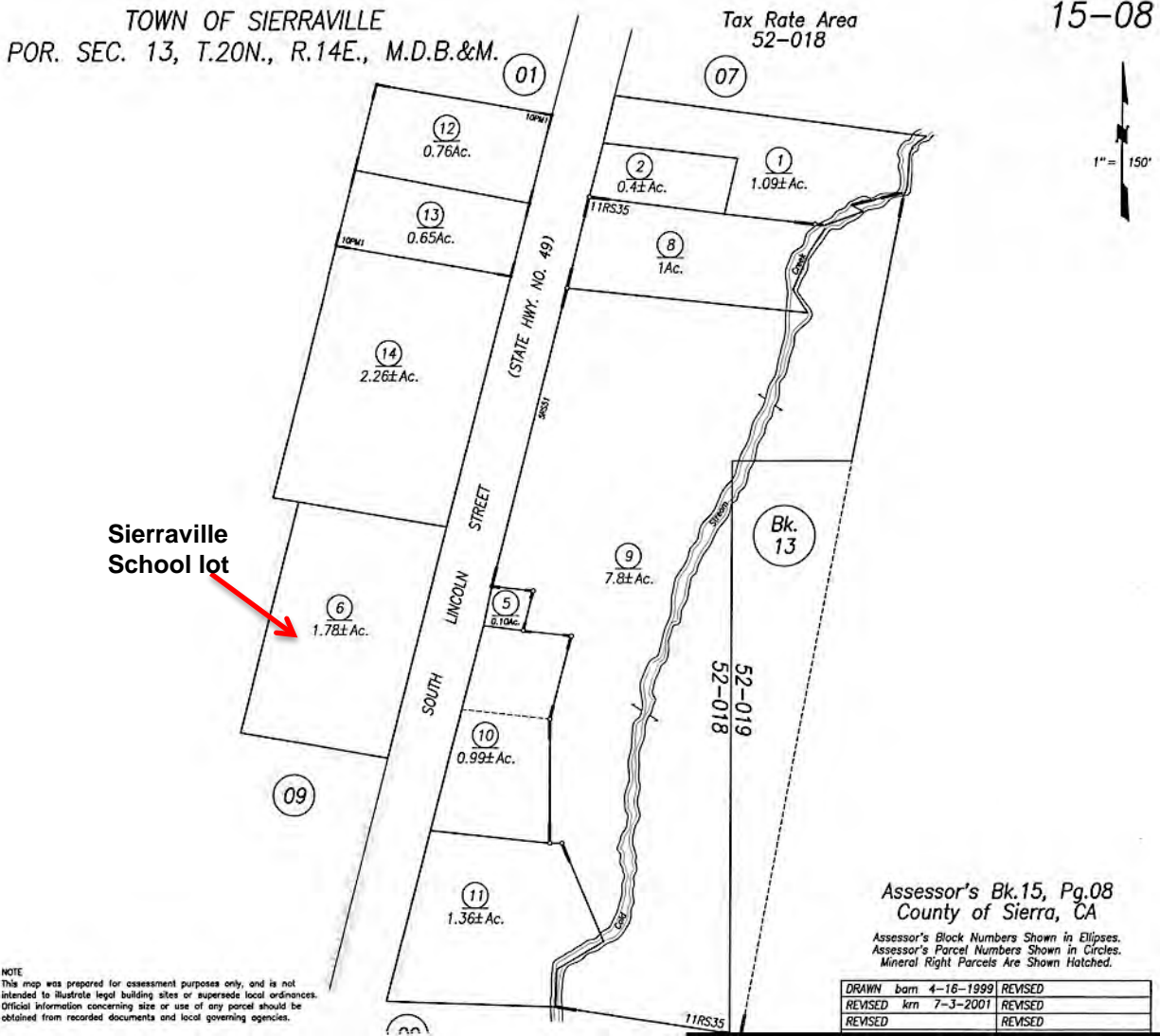


Source: Sierraville (Sierra Co.) California, 7.5 minute Quadrangle map, U.S. Geological Survey. Surveyed in 1889. September 1894.

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FIGURE 3. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, FIRST FLOOR PLAN

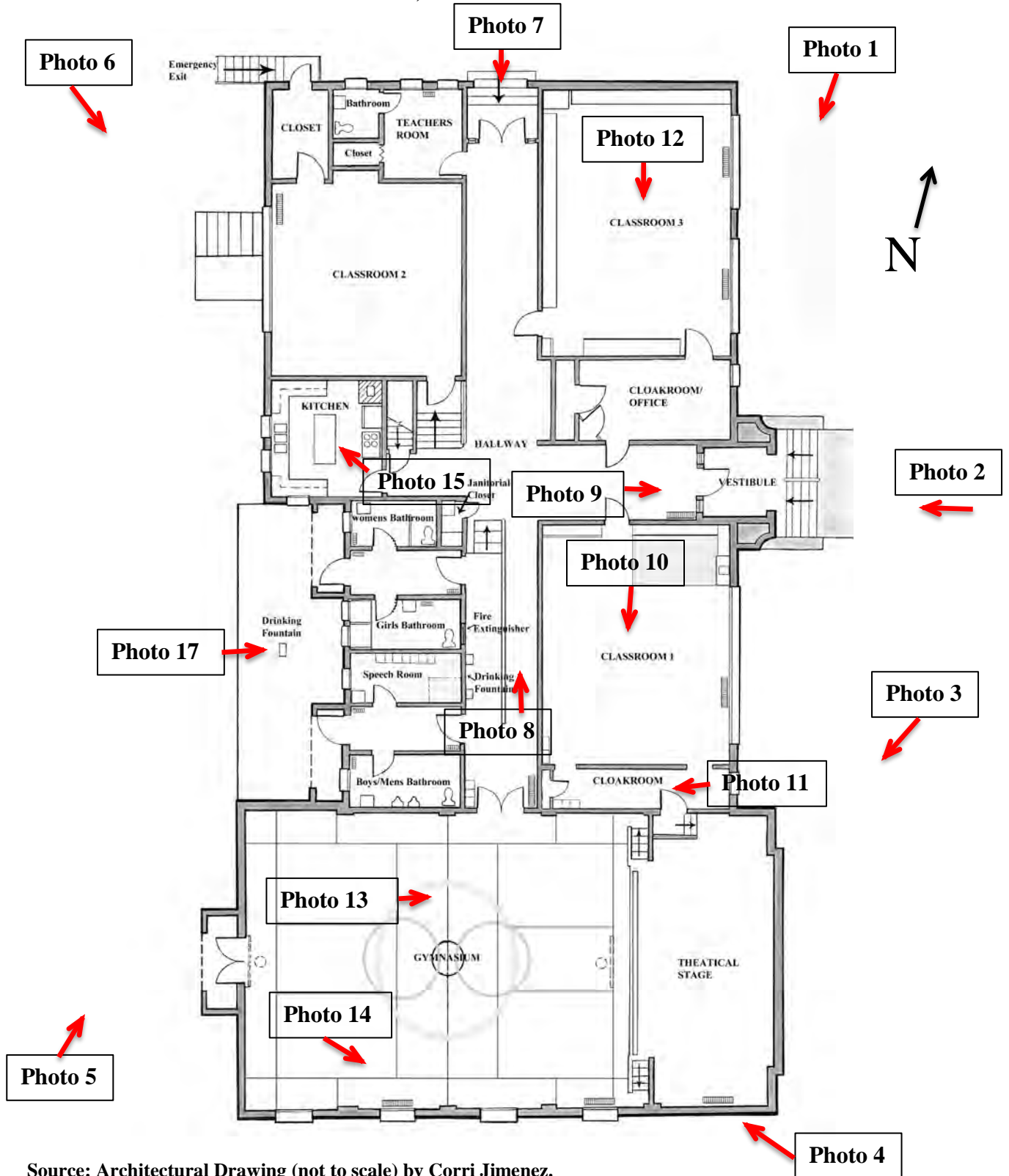


Source: Sierraville School Assessor's Parcel Map. Located at the Sierra County Assessor Office, Downieville, California.

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FIGURE 4. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, FIRST FLOOR PLAN

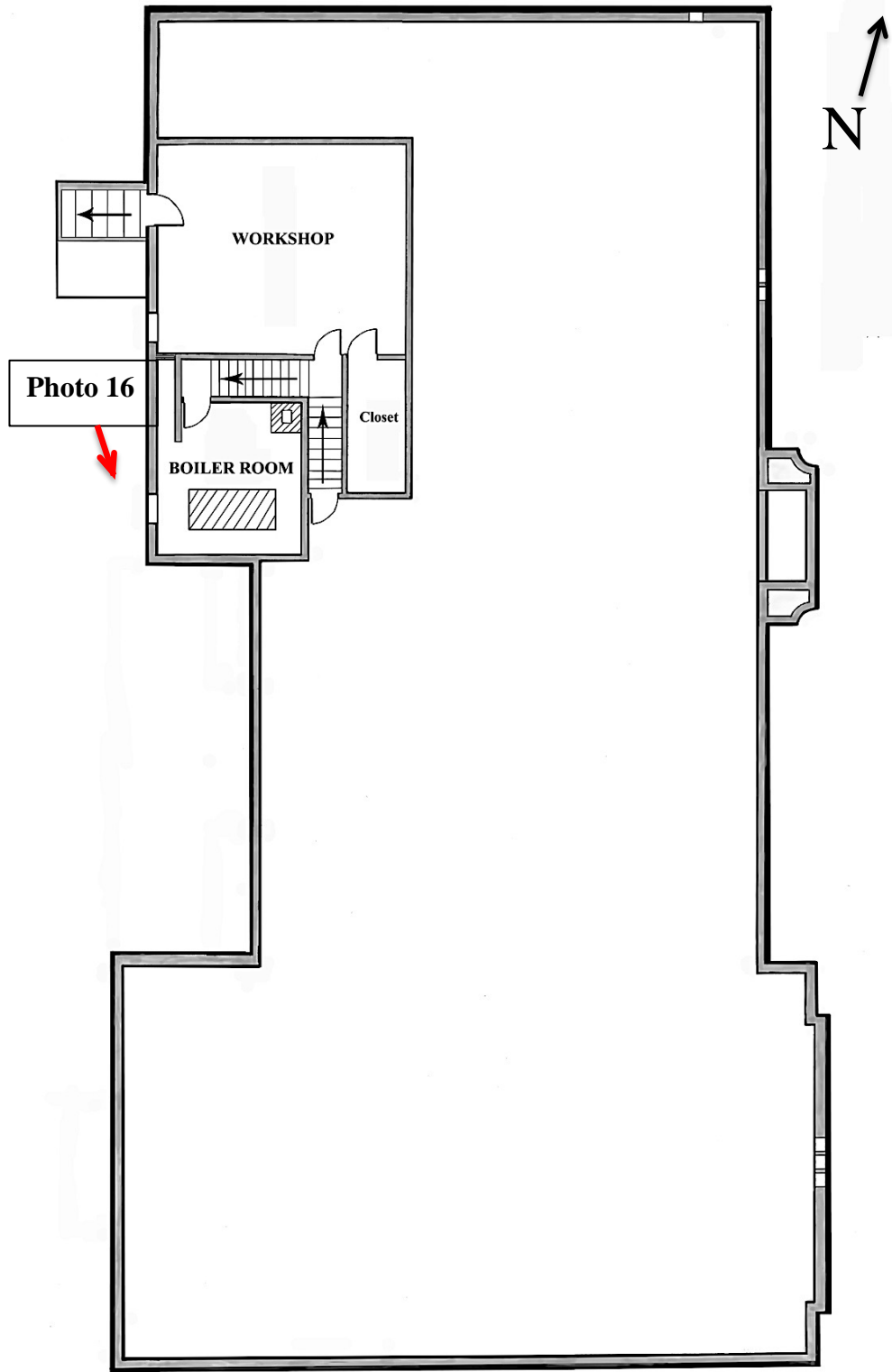


Source: Architectural Drawing (not to scale) by Corri Jimenez.

Sierraville School
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FIGURE 5. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

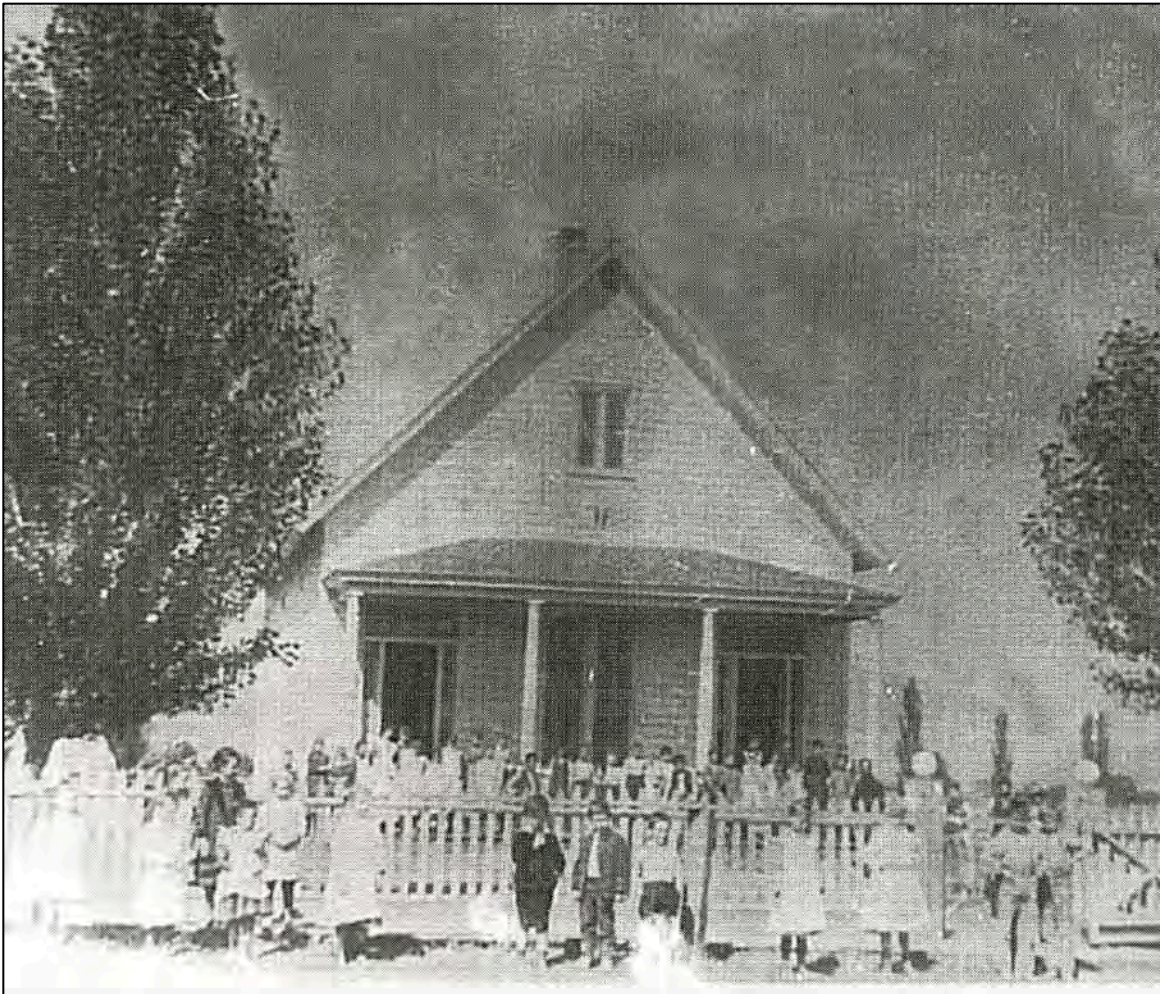


Source: Architectural Drawing (not to scale) by Corri Jimenez.

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FIGURE 6. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, 1860s

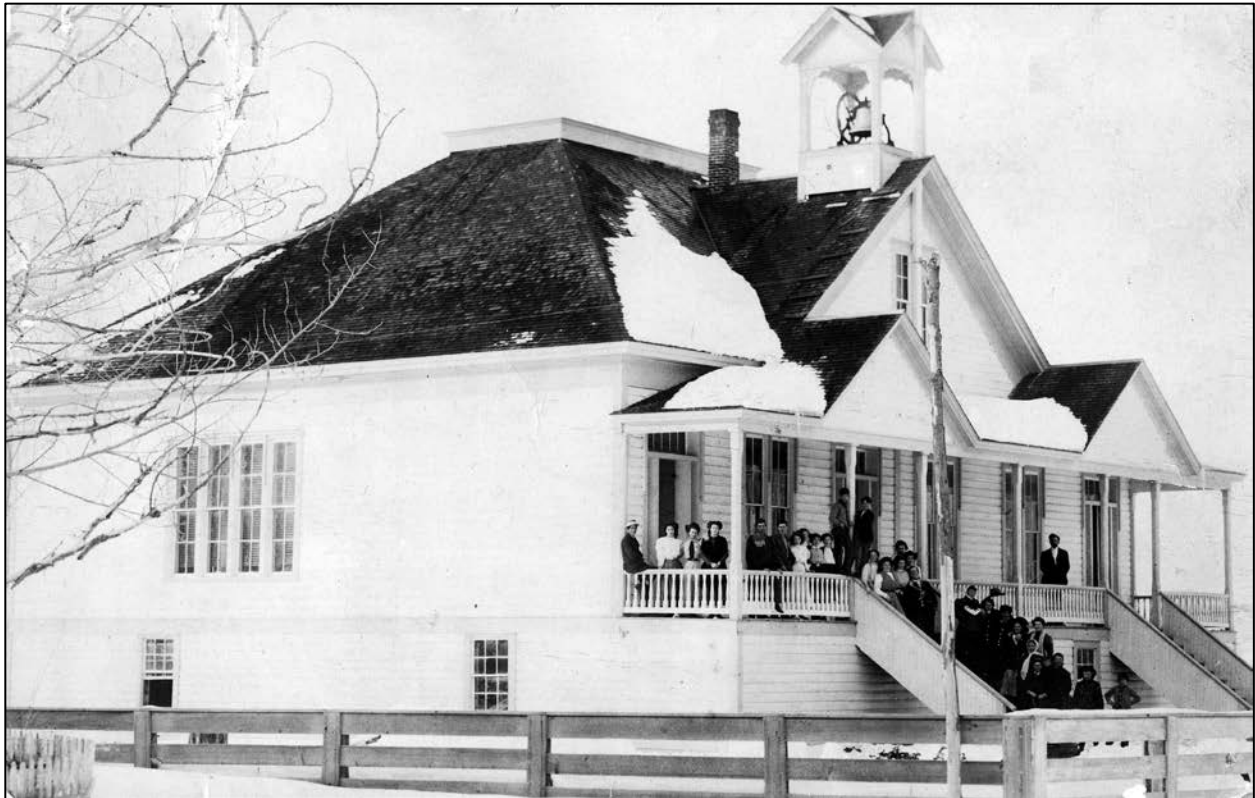


Source: Sierraville School, c. 1860s. In *History of the Schools of the Sierra Valley*, edited by Judy Lawrence. Published by the Sierra County Historical Society, 2004.

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FIGURE 7. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, c.1890



Source: Sierraville School, c.1890. Provided by David Blinman on March 4, 2014. Accessed on December 3, 2016 <http://mv.ancestry.com/viewer/30aafada-2122-49b1-aa7d-6db2b37e3641/67576527/44168878139>.

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FIGURE 8. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL WITH LOMBARDI POPLARS, 1901

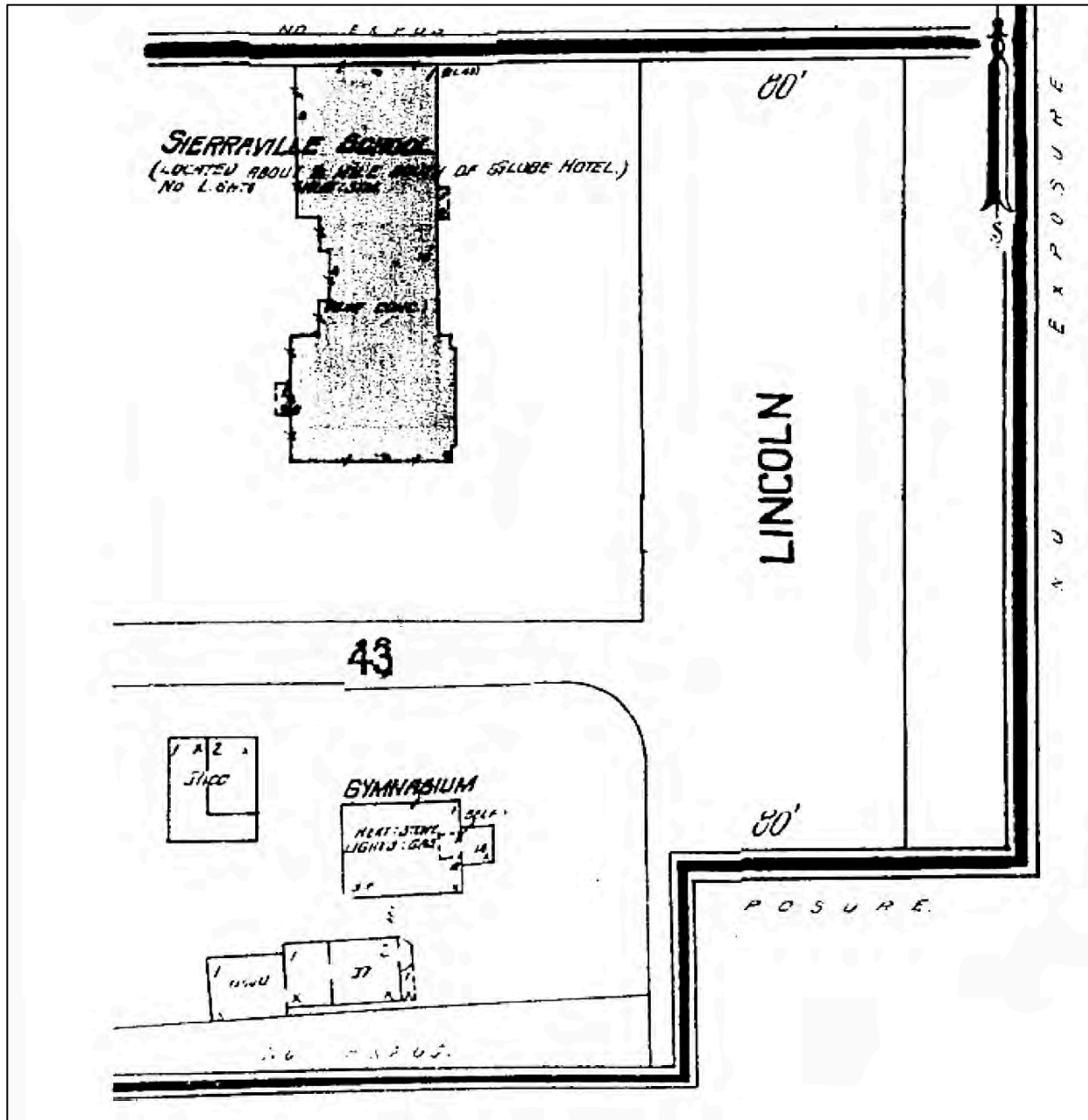


Source: Sierraville School, c.1901. Copy found in the Sierraville School files, Sierraville, Sierra County, California.

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FIGURE 9. SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP, 1930



Source: Sanborn Map Company, Sierraville, Sierra Co., California, September 1930.

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FIGURE 10. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL UNDER CONSTRUCTION (c.1931)



Source: Sierraville School, 1931. Courtesy of William G. Copren.

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FIGURE 11. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, MR. ROSCOE'S CLASS, c.1940s



Source: Sierraville School, Elementary and High School class, mid-1940s. Back row includes Teachers Paul Roscoe, Margaret Burrelle, and Clarence Bateman, as well as Custodian Fred Podesta. Courtesy of William G. Copren.

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FIGURE 12. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, c.1940s



Source: Sierraville High School students with Principal Jim Sinnott. Courtesy of William G. Copren.

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FIGURE 13. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, 1951

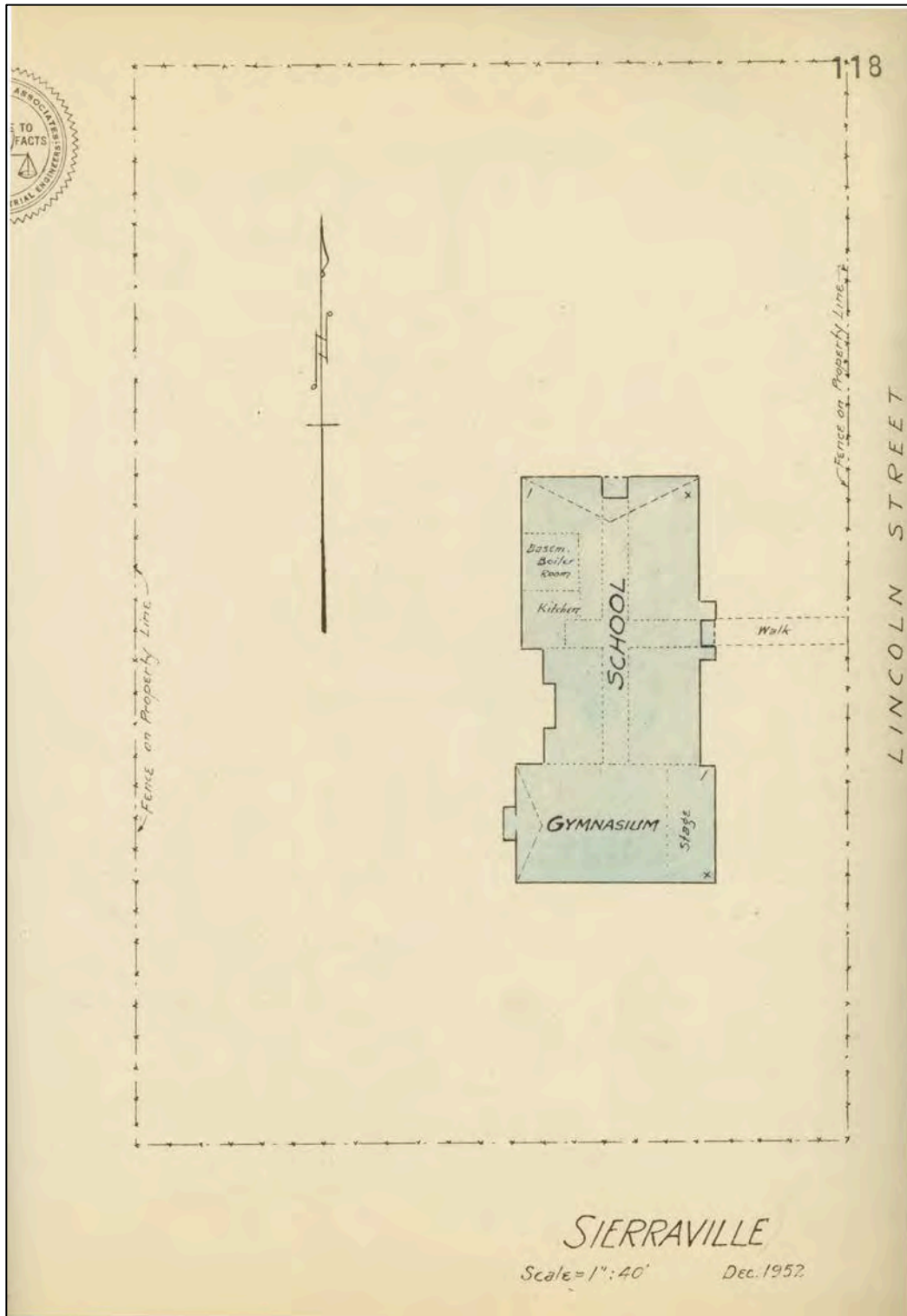


Source: Roth, Victor E. Associates. "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra and Plumas Counties, California." San Francisco, December 1952.

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FIGURE 14. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL PARCEL MAP, 1952

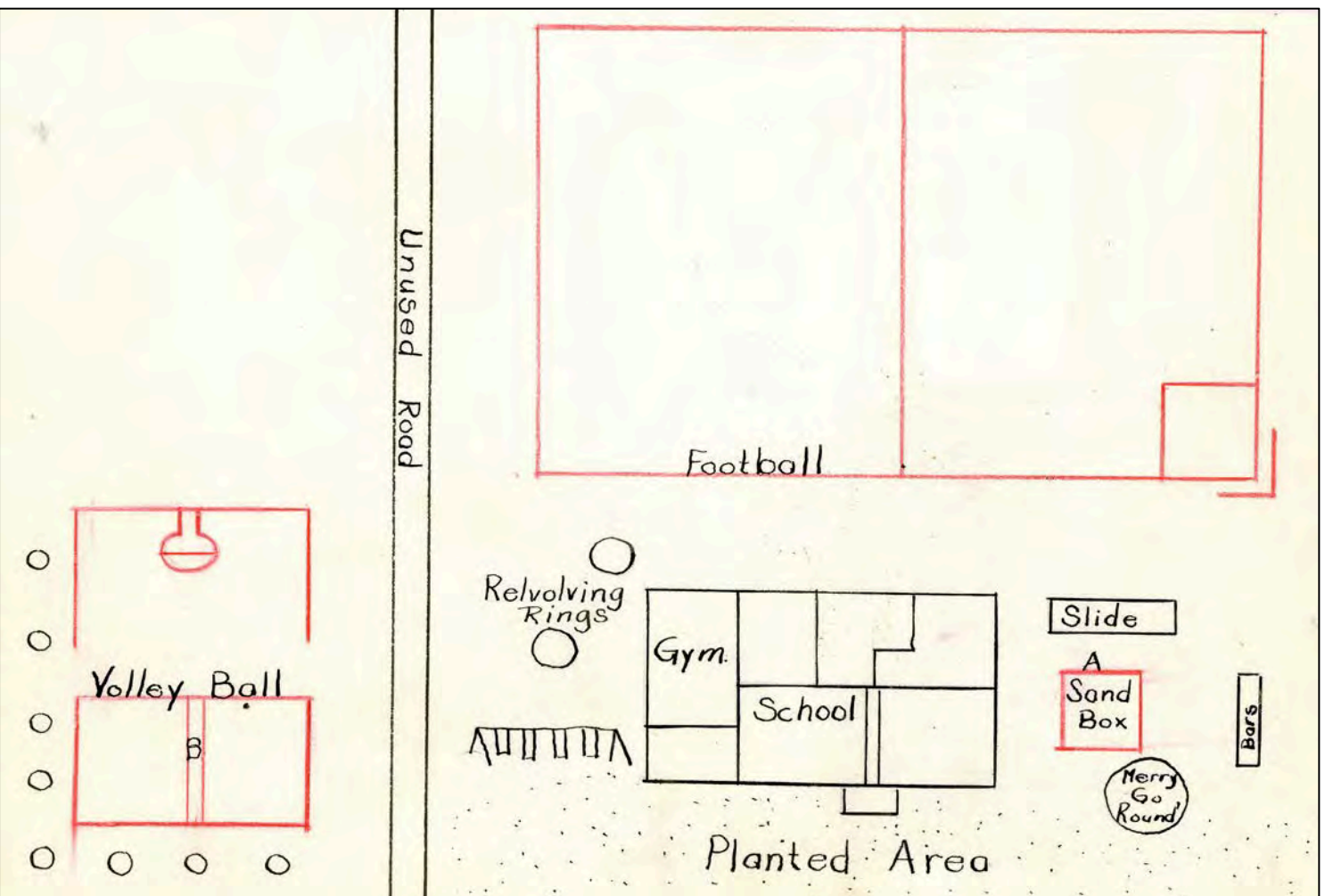


Source: Roth, Victor E. Associates. "Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, Sierra and Plumas Counties, California." San Francisco, December 1952.

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Name of Property _____

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County and State _____

FIGURE 15. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, YARD, 1953



Source: Stanley Friese. "Survey of the Physical Education Facilities of the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District." Summer Quarter, 1953. Stanford University. Located in the Sierraville School Archives, Sierraville, California.

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FIGURE 16. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, "THE BIG SLIDE," 1953



Source: Stanley Friese. "Survey of the Physical Education Facilities of the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District." Summer Quarter, 1953. Stanford University. Located in the Sierraville School Archives, Sierraville, California.

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FIGURE 17. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, MR. ROSCOE'S CLASS, GRADES 3-5, 1959-1960



Source: Sierraville School, Mr. Roscoe's class, Grades 5-6, 1959-1960. Courtesy of William G. Copren.

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FIGURE 18. SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL, MRS. BURELLE'S CLASS, GRADES 3-4, 1962-1963



Source: Sierraville Elementary School, Mrs. Burelle's class, Grades 3-4, 1962-1963. Courtesy of William G. Copren.



SIERRA VISTA SCHOOL
1931

RENDER LOADED
NETWORK
OFFICE



SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL
1931











PUSH
DOOR
SHUT!

RA
LEY
UNTRY
MARKET
SERRVILLE
SCHOOL
HOLIDAY FOOD
TODAY





EXIT











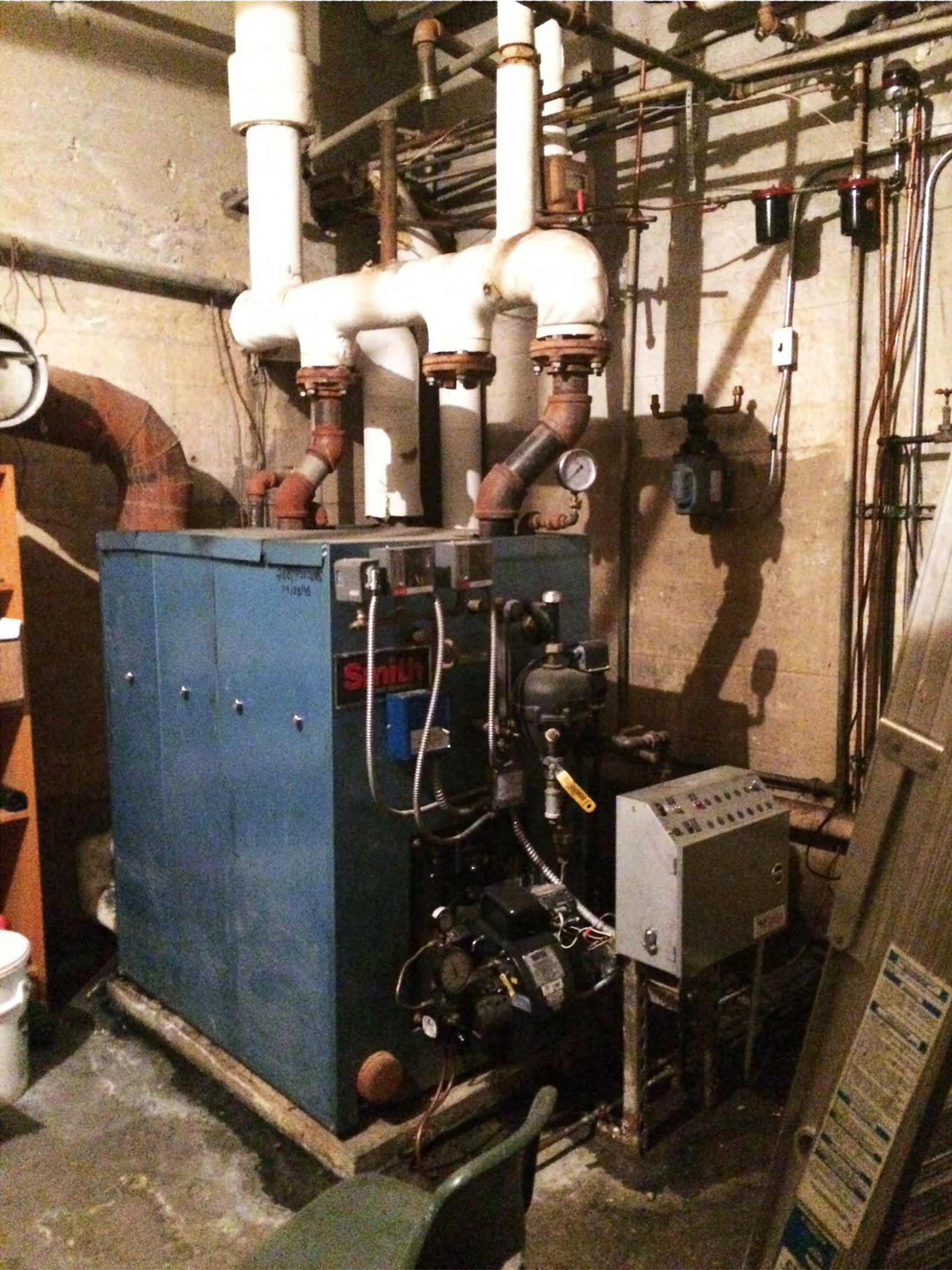


OUTDOOR
LIMITED

WASH YOUR HANDS
AFTER EACH VISIT
FOR BETTER HEALTH

PLEASE
DO NOT
SMOKE
HERE

FILM 91





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Sierraville School

Multiple Name:

State & County: CALIFORNIA, Sierra

Date Received:
8/14/2017

Date of Pending List:
9/19/2017

Date of 16th Day:
10/4/2017

Date of 45th Day:
9/28/2017

Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100001666

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Appeal

SHPO Request

Waiver

Resubmission

Other

PDIL

Landscape

National

Mobile Resource

TCP

CLG

Text/Data Issue

Photo

Map/Boundary

Period

Less than 50 years

Accept

Return

Reject

9/28/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

The Sierraville School is locally significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Education, Social History, and Architecture. Designed by prolific Northern California school architect Chester Cole, the one-story, restrained Art Deco-styled school building represents a remarkably intact example of early twentieth century rural school construction for this region. Serving grades 1-12 variously from 1931 to 2005, the building played an exceptional role in educating local students, as well as serving as an important focal point for local social, cultural and civic activities within the small agricultural community of Sierraville and the surrounding region. The property meets Criteria Consideration G with a period of significance just slightly over the 50 year mark (1931-1978), ending with a pivotal decision to halt local public/civic/non-school use of the building in 1978.

Recommendation/
Criteria Accept NR Criteria A and C

Reviewer Paul Lusignan

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229

Date 09/28/2017

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

Sierraville School
Sierra County, California
National Register of Historic Places

Sierraville School is located in the unincorporated community of Sierraville on State Route 89 in Sierra County. Built in 1931, the school was designed in the Art Deco style with Streamline Moderne elements. Walls are concrete with exterior stucco. The roof is hipped with composition shingles. Windows are narrow metal casements with multiple window lites. The building has an asymmetrical plan; on the building's southeast end is a gymnasium wing. Exposed raftertails are visible under the eaves. The interior plan is T-shaped, with entrances to the southeast, northwest, and rear northwest. A central hallway connects the entrances and spaces throughout the school. Interior walls are lath and plaster. Floor materials include polished concrete, hexagonal terracotta tiles, and tongue-in-groove maple flooring. In addition to the school, an original flagpole and four-way drinking fountain are contributing objects to the school site. A non-contributing portable building is located adjacent to the school.

The property is eligible under Criteria A and C, for its role in education and social history in rural Sierra County, and as an example of the work of master architect Chester Cole. A 1929 fire destroyed an earlier school serving Sierraville; the fireproof design of the new school was intended to prevent a reoccurrence. Originally functioning as both an elementary and high school, grades 1 through 12 were taught here. As an unincorporated rural community without civic buildings, Sierraville School served as the community center for the Sierra Valley, a tradition carried on from earlier school buildings. The school hosted family events like bridal and baby showers, funerals, talent shows, and holiday potluck dinners. Organized community events included pinochle, exercise classes, adult volleyball and basketball teams. The school's library also served as the community's public library. Community organizations used the school for meetings, and public agencies used it as a vaccination center, base camp for forest firefighters, polling place, and even a bomb shelter in case of nuclear attack. This important use ended in 1978 when Proposition 13 rolled back funding for public schools and eliminated all community events, meetings and activities at the school. 1978 marks the ending of the period of significance for the property. Because of its exceptionally significant role to the community of Sierraville, the property meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration G. Architect Chester Cole, based in Chico, California, designed several dozen school buildings in northern California, in addition to residential and commercial buildings. The school represents a site-specific, fireproof design combining Art Deco elements with architectural elements evocative of the earlier Sierraville schoolhouse. The property retains a high degree of historic integrity in all aspects.

The property is nominated on behalf of the property owner, the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District. No letters of support or objection have been received.

Staff supports the nomination as written and recommends that the State Historical Resources Commission determine the Sierraville School eligible under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1931-1978, meeting the requirements of Criteria Consideration G. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

William Burg
State Historian II
June 30, 2017

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



August 9, 2017

J. Paul Loether
Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register and National Historic Landmark Program
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: **Sierraville School
Sierra County, California
National Register of Historic Places**

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of nomination for the Sierraville School to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in the unincorporated community of Sierraville, in Sierra County, California. On July 28, 2017, the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1931-1978, meeting the requirements of Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance.

The property is nominated on behalf of the property owner, the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District. No letters of support or objection were received.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact William Burg of my staff at 916-445-7004.

Sincerely,

hp Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures