

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received **MAR 15 1983**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Jicarilla Schoolhouse

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number <sup>NM</sup> State Road 349, Lincoln National Forest N/A not for publication

city, town Jicarilla N/A vicinity of

state New Mexico code 35 county Lincoln code 027

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name United States Department of Agriculture, Lincoln National Forest

street & number Federal Building, 11th and New York Streets

city, town Alamogordo N/A vicinity of state New Mexico 88310

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Lincoln County Courthouse

city, town Carrizozo state New Mexico 88301

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title State Register of Cultural Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
Site #524

date September 1977 federal  state  county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Bureau, 505 Don Gaspar,

city, town Santa Fe state New Mexico

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair  
 deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The deserted log schoolhouse of the former mining community of Jicarilla stands in a forest of pinon, juniper, Gambel oak and ponderosa pine in the Jicarilla Mountains of southern New Mexico, at the northern end of the Sacramento Mountain Range. Amid the trees and in the dry gulches surrounding the schoolhouse are the shallow pits left by historic placer mining activity. At the time that the schoolhouse was constructed in 1907, numerous mining families lived in the Jicarilla Mountains, in cabins of log, lumber, stone, or jacal (upright logs and daub), and tents and dugouts. The community also had a store, a post office, a saloon, and a cemetery which is located 100 feet south of the schoolhouse. Today, only several old structures remain in the Jicarilla Mountains, the schoolhouse being the finest example of these pioneer buildings. It was erected by the local residents of squared pine logs cut and hewn about a mile away on the side of Ancho Peak and dragged down the mountain to the village. A good example of the sturdy craftsmanship of which homesteaders in New Mexico's mountains were capable, it was the most substantial building erected in the Jicarilla Mountains and the pride of the community.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The one-room Jicarilla Schoolhouse measures about 16 feet by 30 feet. It is rectangular in plan with gabled ends. The gables have vertical mill board with batten and each contains a large window. In order to preserve the building, the original galvanized metal roof was replaced in recent years with new corrugated metal roofing.

A large, centrally placed entrance at the front originally contained a pair of panelled doors. A small entrance, now doorless also, is set to one side at the rear. On each side of the building are three large windows which originally contained double-hung sashes with two panes in each sash. The sashes are broken and the windows are now covered with pieces of rusted corrugated metal from the old roofing. The doors and windows are framed with plain milled planks. Phillip Reasoner, Sr., a member of the community and father of four children, was the carpenter.

The squared log walls have flush dovetail joints and are chinked with split log strips. The chink spaces were originally sealed with mud. The foundation consists of a few rocks upon which the sill logs rest. Removal of some of the rocks under the west sill log has caused the log to sag and shift outward slightly.

The floor joists, which rest on the sill logs, are of milled lumber, as are the floor boards. Some of the floor boards are broken. The interior walls and ceiling are covered with narrow headed tongue-and-groove boards. The wall boards are vertically placed and some have been stripped from the west wall. The ceiling is coved, adding a touch of refinement, and allowing ceiling height to be increased above the base of the rafters.

The one large room was originally painted sky-blue, with the door and window trim painted white. Near the center of the room sat a wood-burning stove; the stove pipe still projects from the roof. A cemented rock cistern is located at the northeast rear corner of the building.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1907 **Builder/Architect** Phillip Reasoner, Sr., Carpenter

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The one-room log Jicarilla Schoolhouse was probably the finest example of pioneer architecture constructed in the Jicarilla Mountains of southern New Mexico, and one of few remaining in those mountains. It was built in 1907 by community effort to serve the Jicarilla Placer Mining District, historically one of the most important placer mining regions in the state. The largest and most substantial building in the mountains, it was also used as a public meeting place, a church and dance hall on Saturday nights.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Christiansen, Paige W., The Story of Mining in New Mexico, Scenic Trips to the Geologic Past #12, New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, Socorro, 1974. See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name White Oaks North

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

### UTM References

A 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary includes the historic property and ten feet extending out on each side of the building, making a total area of 36 feet by 50 feet.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Swanson

organization New Mexico Historic Preservation Bureau date July, 1982

street & number 505 Don Gaspar telephone (505) 827-8320

city or town Santa Fe state New Mexico 87501

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 3-7-83

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the  
National Register

date 4/14/83

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

The Jicarilla Mountains were named for the Jicarilla ("Basket Maker") Apaches. With Ancho Peak the highest point at 7825 feet, the Jicarillas are a low, eroded mountain range made up of wooded hills and ravines of dry, loose, gravelly soil. Throughout the range, the granite core has been exposed by the leveling process. Despite a report published by the New Mexico Bureau of Immigration in 1896 in The Mines of New Mexico: Inexhaustible Deposits of Gold and Silver, that one "Scotty" had struck rich gold ore in Soldier Gulch in the Jicarillas and that the "treasure vaults of the Jicarillas [would soon be] unlocked," no large veins of gold have been discovered there. Some lode mining with tunnels took place but, because of the extensive disintegration of the mountains, the range was most important as a placer mining district. The weathering process that deteriorated the mountains scattered small particles of gold throughout the soils. Due to the scarcity of water, however, recovery of gold in this district has always been difficult.

The Spanish attempted to placer mine at the southern end of the Jicarillas and, before the middle of the 19th century, native Mexicans were engaged in placer mining in these mountains. The primitive mining methods employed by the Spanish and Mexicans continued to be necessitated through the years in the Jicarilla because of the lack of water.

"Placer" is a Spanish-American term meaning "sandbank" or "place where gold is obtained by washing". When water was not locally available, loads of dirt and barrels of water were carted from different directions to a central location, a "placer". The gold flakes would then be separated from the soil with the use of a wooden bowl called a batea, similar to a miner's pan.

In the Jicarillas, most mining activity took place in the winter when snow could be melted with heated rocks. Water from this source was often supplied by children. Dams built in dry gulches impounded water for use in dry periods. During the 1860's, Miguel Otero, father of the Territorial Governor of the same name, built an earth dam at the head of Ancho Gulch to impound water from summer rains for use in sluicing gravel below the dam. In one season, his work is said to have produced \$60,000. "Dry washing" techniques were also used, such as placing gravel on a blanket held by two men at the corners and tossing the gravel in the air, letting the wind carry away the lighter materials. In 1877, a group of miners from Colorado tested a machine known as Finn's Patent Dry Washer in the Jicarillas. All of these techniques were only partially successful and, although populous for many years, the Jicarilla Placer Mining District was never a notably rich producer.

American prospectors began to arrive in large numbers after 1879 when lode gold was discovered at White Oaks, at the south edge of the Jicarillas. Drawn by the rick strikes at White Oaks (a National Historic District), the prospectors explored the Jicarilla Range northward and staked their claims throughout the Mountains. Some of the major claims, existing in 1904, had names like Belle of Memphis, Ready Relief, Good Luck, Old Comrade, Eureka, Zulu, Knickerbocker, Hawkeye, Prince Albert,

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Queen Victoria and Admiral Dewey. In 1903, the American Placer Company operated a dredge in a gulch near the village of Jicarilla, but it proved to be financially unsuccessful.

Many settlers came with their families from Texas and states further east to establish homesteads and mining claims. The scant supply of water in the Jicarillas made cattle ranching, farming and the raising of families as difficult as mining. Claim owners who possessed water sources barred access to the water in order to limit the competition of other gold seekers. Many families were "starved out." Nonetheless, the mountains continued to support a sizeable community until the 1940's. It was especially during the Depression of the 1930's that numerous destitute people lived in the Jicarillas, literally "scratching a living from the soil." Much of the mountain range is now part of the Lincoln National Forest, but some placer mining continues in the Jicarillas.

Early New Mexican pioneers provided for the education of their children as their particular means allowed. Often, children were schooled in private homes. Sometimes a schoolhouse was built using readily available native materials of log, rock or adobe. The earliest rural schoolhouses shared a common plan and appearance with churches and public meeting halls, and they often shared these uses as well. Like the Jicarilla Schoolhouse, they were usually one-room, rectangular in plan and gable-ended, with a wide entrance door in the front end and three or four large windows along each side.

There were few schools in New Mexico under the Spanish and Mexican regimes. In his message to the first Legislature of New Mexico under the Military Government of the United States in 1847, Governor Donaciano Vigil stated that there was "but one public school in the Territory, and that located in the City of Santa Fe." In 1860, the first public school law was passed placing management of the public schools in the hands of the justices of the peace, under the supervision of the probate judge, in each county. The salary of the teachers was fixed at 50 cents per month for each child, and the school year was to last from November first to April first. Three years later, the law was amended to provide for a Board of Education and to establish the office of "Territorial Superintendent of Schools." Each county was to have a school superintendent. In 1884, a law created school districts and school directors within each county. Funding for the school system was to come from leasing of public lands, but sparsely populated New Mexico provided limited revenue for schools until after the turn of the century. At that time, total school enrollment in the Territory was about 40,000.

By 1886, Lincoln County had been divided into 32 school districts. There were 38 schools, of which 27 were public. Of these, 17 were school rooms in private homes or other buildings. In this year, 958 pupils were enrolled, taught by 42 teachers. By 1913, Lincoln County had 1723 children attending school in 33 buildings (of which 25 were one-room schoolhouses). Teachers were receiving an average salary of \$61 a month. Jicarilla, which was in School District No. 1, had an eight month school term. Before the log schoolhouse was built at Jicarilla in 1907, school had been held in the room of a private home.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

In 1913, the Lincoln County Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Wallace L. Gumm, reported that "the buildings of logs erected by the first hardy pioneers [are] being replaced by good modern school-houses....the uncomfortable homemade furniture is being replaced by new 'store' desks and seats...." Also remarking on the progress of education in Lincoln County, historian Ralph E. Twitchell in his Leading Facts of New Mexico History, published in 1917, stated: "The day of the log school house is past." Nonetheless, Jicarilla's log schoolhouse continued to serve the children of the remote community for decades to come.

The log schoolhouse was the pride of the mining community in the Jicarillas and the center of social activity. On Saturday nights, dances were held in the schoolhouse by the light of kerosene lanterns hung on the walls. On Sundays, church and Sunday school were held in the building. The people collected money to purchase an organ for the church services, and school also began every morning with the singing of patriotic songs and hymns. The schoolhouse also served as the location for picnics on the Fourth of July. Refreshment stands were set up under the large juniper trees in the schoolyard, meat was barbecued and speeches were given.

Since the numerous families living in the Jicarillas were widely scattered on their claims and homesteads, some children walked many miles to reach the school, carrying their lunch buckets. Others came on horseback. During the Depression of the 1930's, more than 60 children attended the one-room school.

The schoolhouse is located beside the old road that passed through the Jicarillas from Santa Fe to Fort Stanton, a military post established in the nearby Capitan Mountains in 1855. Along the same road in the vicinity of the school once stood the general store, saloon, and post office (operated 1892-1942). These buildings and the living quarters of the miners and their families were of various materials, usually crudely constructed: log, stone, mill lumber and adobe. Most lived in mere huts, tents or dugouts and suffered from the cold in winter. By comparison, special care was taken in the building of the schoolhouse. It was a community project; some donated money or materials and others labor. Some men cut and shaped the logs from ponderosa pine growing on the side of Ancho Peak, a mile away. Those who had teams hauled the logs to the building site and brought lumber from the sawmill. Phillip Reasoner, Sr., a father of four, did the carpentry work for the interior, windows and doors. With its large, squared logs and close fitting dovetail joints, the schoolhouse is an excellent example of the sound craftsmanship of the long tradition of pioneer architecture in New Mexico.

After the construction of a new schoolhouse in the late 1930's, the old log schoolhouse served for a time as a Catholic church for the Spanish-American people of the Jicarilla Mountains. Vacant for many years, it is noted as a tourist attraction in the Lincoln National Forest. Residents of the region, in cooperation with the National Forest Service, would like to plaque and protect the building.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

Jones, Fayette, Old Mines and Ghost Camps of New Mexico, reprinted from New Mexico Mines and Minerals, 1905; 1968.

Haley, John A., The Year Book of Lincoln County, New Mexico. The Carrizozo News, Carrizozo, New Mexico, 1913.

New Mexico Bureau of Immigration, The Mines of New Mexico: Inexhaustible Deposits of Gold and Silver, Santa Fe, 1896.

Peacock, Effie, letter from, to Mrs. Clara Snow, concerning the construction and history of the Jicarilla Schoolhouse as she recalls it in her childhood, October 10, 1979.

Reed, Benjamin M., A History of Education in New Mexico, Santa Fe, 1911.

"Report of the Superintendent of Lincoln County Public Schools," Alexander G. Lane, 1886, manuscript, New Mexico State Archives and Records Center, Santa Fe.

Sherman, James E. and Barbara H., Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of New Mexico, University of Oklahoma Press, 1975.

Stoneman, Mary E., Pioneering in New Mexico, Santa Fe, 1974.

Twitchell, Ralph Emerson, The Leading Facts of New Mexico History, Vol. III, Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1917.

Varney, Philip, New Mexico's Best Ghost Towns, Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona, 1981.

Interviews, May 1982:

Betty Davis, Jicarilla Route SR 2 100  
Carrizozo, N.M. 88301

C. W. Haley, P.O. Box 1104, 5th Street  
Carrizozo, N.M. 88301

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

Boundary Justification

No legal description exists for the Schoolhouse as distinguished from Forest Service lands as a whole, nor are there county records showing a specific dedicated plot for the Schoolhouse. The boundary for the nominated property has thus been drawn arbitrarily to include the building within a 10' setback.