

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Wagner Creek School

other names/site number South Wagner Creek School, District 56

### 2. Location

street & number 8448 Wagner Creek Road  not for publication

city or town Talent  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Jackson code 029 zip code 97540

### 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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hamrick 8/31/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper <u>Helene Byer</u>	Entered in the National Register <u>10/8/92</u>	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____	_____	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	3	Total

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: Schoolhouse

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Recreation & Culture: dance hall

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:

Colonial

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls concrete, stucco

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roof concrete tile

other wood, glass

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Wagner Creek School

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Wagner Creek School, built of concrete, is a single story hipped-roof structure with a full daylight basement. Located in rural Jackson County, south of the City of Talent, the Colonial Revival style building was completed in 1929 from plans drawn by noted school architect C. N. Freeman of Portland. McCall, Lyons and Kulp, of Vancouver, Washington were the contractors. Now a private residence, the structure retains substantial integrity in both its interior and exterior appearance. The Wagner Creek School demonstrates high integrity to its historic appearance, workmanship, use of materials, and setting.

**SITE:**

Wagner Creek School is located at 8448 Wagner Creek Road in the NW ¼ of Section 2, Township 39 South, Range 1 W.M. The site is designated as Tax lot 2700 by the Jackson County Assessor. Wagner Creek Road winds its way south from the contemporary residential development of the City of Talent through long-established orchard lands consistent with this portion of Jackson County's historic agricultural uses. Newer residential developments share the landscape with late 19th century farms and outbuildings. South of the intersection of Yank Gulch Road, the pavement narrows and the road begins its ascent into the foothills rising toward Wagner Gap and Wagner Butte. Beyond the school site, Wagner Creek Road continues past scattered rural residential development further into the narrowing canyon. A few miles south of the subject property, the road turns to dirt, its name changing to Wagner Gap Road, and winds its way toward Wagner Butte and the Siskiyou Mountains

The Wagner Creek School is sited at the front edge of the subject parcel. To the rear is a large flat grassy area, originally the playground. Established conifers dot the property, shading the rear of the structure. Three small outbuildings, all non-historic, are present on the site, all located to the SW of the school building. [See Siteplan] At the extreme NW corner, the lot drops severely to an adjacent

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parcel [used as a garden space]. Beyond, Wagner Creek snakes through the area, winding its way toward the valley floor.

**CONSTRUCTION: Exterior**

Wagner Creek School is a rectangular hipped-roof volume with a footprint approximately 90 feet long and 26 feet wide. Roofing is a dark, non-original, concrete shingle, installed in 1981, that is compatible to the original "Pabco" shingles called for in the original blueprints.<sup>1</sup> Two gable-roofed porches to the front and rear along with non-historic addition at the NE corner augment the main single-story volume. A full-height basement with a band of daylight windows virtually doubles the useable space of the structure to a total of just under 5,000 square feet.

Above the concrete slab foundation and perimeter footings, the walls of the Wagner Creek School are of cast concrete, 6" thick and reinforced with ½" steel rods, 24" o.c. Exterior finish is a rough stucco. Exterior details include four corner pilasters of concrete finish with simple capitals and plinths. Matching pilasters trim the outer edges of the window bands and, set in pairs, are present on either side of the front, arched-top entry portal. The front entry itself is at the top of wide flight of concrete steps with simple detailing. The entryway is accented by a raised trim band with flanking pilasters supporting a small arch and keystone detail. The recessed stoop presents twin wooden doors, one entering into each of the original classroom spaces. The original lead gutter system was replaced with modern eave troughs in 1981.

The front porch is below a gable roof with plain concrete freeze at cornice level. Matching raking cornices surround the undecorated gable end and tie the design together to create a modest temple front appearance. The plain frieze

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information regarding the original design of the Wagner Creek School is taken from the seven sheet set of blueprints of the project that remain in the possession of the current owner.

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continues onto the main volume and rises to the roof edge in a series of concave wooden mouldings. Other exterior surface decoration includes rectilinear concrete panels, recessed slightly from the main wall plane, below each of the five windows of the major classroom spaces.

Rising 10' feet from the center of the main roof volume, in line with the ridge of the gabled porches, is the original six-sided belfry. Framed in wood, arch-topped screened louvers with small keystones (matching the entry portal) enclose the sides below a steeply pitched lead-clad roof. A five-foot tall ball and spire detail top the design. The original 18" diameter school bell, cast by the American Bell and Foundry Company (Model No. 20) survives and is operated by a rope and pulley system which descends through a opening into the south classroom. [See Main Floorplan]

The twin classroom spaces of the Wagner Creek School have matching window bands along the east (front) elevation, each consisting of a 4/4 wood sash double hung window set below a matching transom above. At the two outer edges of the west facade, twin 8-light casement windows remain, lighting the stage area and the original library respectively. Two matching casements windows originally lit the north elevation; one of these survives, the other has been replaced with two single lights. No windows light the main floor on the south elevation [at the rear of the stage area]. Windows on the rear elevation, as result of additions and enclosure of the rear porch are more modified. Except as detailed, all other windows of the main floor are original. No original exterior doors remain as is discussed below under alterations.

**CONSTRUCTION: Interior, Main Floor**

As built, the main floor area of the Wagner Creek School was divided into five basic spaces. The twin classrooms were separated by a folding partition wall to enable large audiences for school activities. On the extreme south, the raised stage area extends the south classroom space. Three small rooms, used as a teacher's lounge, a storage facility and the school library, lined the north elevation. Original

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2-½" wide fir tongue and groove flooring survives throughout as does the three-part fir baseboard. Ceiling height, approximately 12 feet, is original in all main floor spaces. Lath and plaster surfaces survive on the north although at some point non-historic 4" wide boards have been added for support. The south classroom ceiling has been covered by 4x8 sheets with narrow battens at the seams.

Interior wall finish throughout the first floor is original lath and plaster. The west wall of both main floor classroom spaces contain a bank of built-in wardrobes set in opposition to the window bands of the facade. Counter-balanced fir chalkboards rise into the attic to reveal additional storage, coat racks and shelving. Additional built-ins include a 8-light display cabinet with twin casement doors that match the exterior casement windows. Chalkboards and chalktrays survive in both rooms although the former are in all but one instance covered from view.<sup>2</sup> Wardrobe and other door and window trim in the north classroom is a dark fir, stained and washed with a milky white pigmented finish typical this period.<sup>3</sup> In the south classroom space the original finish has been painted a deep brown. Trim in the remaining rooms of the first floor has been painted off-white.

At the extreme southern end of the main floor a raised stage area opens onto the south classroom space. Floored in tongue and groove fir, the stage has a slight bow front that juts into the classroom space proper. The 8' high stage opening is framed by a rectangular casing, built-up with a four-part profile, that is stepped out at the upper corners. All original trim and detail survive.

Original 5-panel fir doors and trim survive throughout the main floor. Vertical 4" beadboard wainscot is present below the east window bank and along the north wall of the north classroom. Here a modern wood stove and hearth, with wall

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<sup>2</sup> The boards of the north classroom are clad with a c.1960s decoupage, those of the south are covered with orange burlap, likely of a similar period.

<sup>3</sup> See Kramer, NR Nomination, Ashland Women's Civic Improvement Club, 1989.

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mounted brick veneer, presents the single largest variation in the historic configuration of the classroom areas.

The original folding partition that divides the two classroom spaces survives although it is no longer operable. The six folding doors, each divided horizontally into five panels, begins from a half-width fixed panel at the west. A standard sized entry door permits access between the spaces without the need to completely open the rooms. Likely originally stained to match the interior trim, this feature has since been painted.

The three minor spaces of the main floor along the north elevation were altered following conversion of the structure to residential use. In the 1970s under the present ownership a earlier remodel of this area into kitchen facilities was redone, creating the present room configuration and uses. In general, the original "library" survives [now the dining room] while the teacher's room and storage space have been combined to create the present kitchen area. On the south half of the building a small space that originally served as the stage access, opening off the middle landing of the basement stairwell, has been remodeled to creates a half bath.

The rear central porch of the Wagner Creek School was enclosed and weatherized to create a "mud room" entry by previous owners, c. 1976. An inappropriate redwood porch and deck was added to this entry at the same time. At the north rear is the sole addition to the original footprint, a small glassed-in room and outside sauna area that are accessed via the kitchen.

The central rear porch opens onto a vestibule which provides access to each of the two classroom spaces as well as twin flanking stairwells that descend to the basement level. An additional outside entry is provided by an exterior concrete flight at the extreme southern rear which opens mid-flight onto the previously mentioned stairwell. Continuing the bi-laterally symmetry of the design, a matching door is present on the north although the exterior stairs have been enclosed as a result of the addition mentioned above.

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**CONSTRUCTION: Interior, Basement**

Accessed via the twin rear stairwells, the basement level of the Wagner Creek School was historically the site of matching L-shaped boy's and girl's playrooms with twin toilet facilities. The extreme NE corner was used as a kitchen area, with a wood-burning stove and counter space. Counter-balanced doors opened onto the north play area, which reportedly doubled as the cafeteria. Remaining spaces on the basement level include the centrally located furnace and equipment room, below the rear porch, and a storage room beneath the front entry.

Original interior finishes in the basement were apparently spartan; painted concrete walls for the playrooms and toilet areas with lath and plaster ceilings. Original interior partitions were also lath and plaster. The baluster and railing of the north stairwell, which survives, evidences a plain functional design with simple square rails and newel post. The south railing, not original, essentially mimics this pattern. The original sliding door to the furnace room, made of 4" wide beadboard, remains.

Little of the original use of the basement is evident. The furnace area remains unchanged, the large over-sized wood heater now converted to oil.<sup>4</sup> In the mid-1950s, following the end of school function, the area of the two playrooms was divided to create the required bedroom spaces for residential use. Modern bathroom areas, including the shower and tub facilities lacking from the school period, have been installed in the historic bathroom locations.<sup>5</sup> The original kitchen essentially survives, its sliding doors and serving counters visible from the interior but sealed shut for privacy in the adjacent bedroom. All basement level surfaces are modern with

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<sup>4</sup> The original metal clad wood chute and cover survive and are visible on the north of the rear central porch.

<sup>5</sup> The original residential modifications were of substandard quality and subsequent remodeling undertaken by the present owner was done in the late 1970s to upgrade the basement level to its present appearance.



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carpet installed over the concrete slab and gypsum board used on the new partitions and ceilings. Some original 5-panel doors survive in various locations, other doors are a mix of salvaged period styles and modern.

**ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS:**

No record survives of any alteration from the original Freeman design during the years the Wagner Creek School was operated by District 56 (1929-1951). Obviously, significant interior alteration, particularly on the basement level, dates from the conversion of the building to residential usage and has been detailed above. The c. 1970s enclosure of the rear porch and the 1983 addition of the glass room and sauna at the NW corner<sup>6</sup> represent the largest variance from the original design. Other exterior alterations are primarily in response to deterioration or were undertaken to improve the thermal efficiency of the structure.

The twin rear exterior doors (opening onto the basement stair at mid-flight) were replaced with Stanley-type steel clad doors in 1990. Pre-existing doors were apparently not original, clad in a plywood veneer, and had substantially deteriorated, creating both thermal and security breaches. Various windows on the rear and side elevations have been replaced with single pane or covered with surface mount storm windows. Basement level windows of the first floor also have storm windows and may have been replaced with single panes as opposed to the multi-light called for in the original plans.<sup>7</sup>

Central front entry doors are matching single panel solid oak and appear consistent with the building design. The plans called for 5-panel doors, matching the interior although there

<sup>6</sup> Contractor for this latter addition was Don Sever, of Medford, assisted by James Beveridge.

<sup>7</sup> Single pane windows at the basement level, although varying from the blueprints, seem to be original construction. This may well simply represent a deviation in the actual construction from the original design.

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is no documentation that the current are not original. The small hand-rung bell on the front porch is not original to the structure.

**SUMMARY:**

Built in 1929 and long ago altered from its original education purpose, the Wagner Creek School nevertheless retains an amazing consistency with its historic design in the appearance of the both its exterior and major interior spaces. The twin classrooms and stage of the main level remain virtually as built, with most original trim, surface finishes and specialized education related details intact. The essential character of the building exterior also continues to relate its historic school period, retaining characteristic window detailing, belfry and centralized porches. Minor additions to the rear elevation and other exterior alterations do seriously detract from the original character.

Despite conversion to residential use, the Wagner Creek School remains an exceptional example of rural schoolhouse architecture in Jackson County, Oregon. In setting, site, appearance, workmanship, use of materials, and detail, the Wagner Creek School continues to evoke its historic appearance and successfully conveys the associations for which it is significant.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Development  
Education

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**Period of Significance**

1929-1942

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**Significant Dates**

1929

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**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Freeman, Claud N., architect  
McCall, Lyons and Kulp, builders

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Wagner Creek School  
Name of Property

Jackson, Oregon  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property c. 1 acre Talent, Oregon 1:24000

**UTM References**  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 0	5 1 7 2 7 0	4 6 7 3 1 7 0	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title George Kramer, Historic Preservation consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date March 1, 1992

street & number 386 North Laurel telephone (503) 482-9504

city or town Ashland state Oregon zip code 97520

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Rose Mary (Poppie) Beveridge

street & number 8448 Wagner Creek Road telephone (503) 535-1393

city or town Talent state Oregon zip code 97540

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SHPO SUMMARY

The former Wagner Creek School, a single story, stuccoed concrete building of traditional design that was completed and opened for use in 1929, stands in the upper valley of Wagner Creek, a tributary of Bear Creek in the Rogue River basin. In its historic period of use, the school served children of ranchers, miners, loggers and others who settled in the stream valleys of the foothills of the Siskiyou south of the community of Talent. The school was vacated by Wagner Creek District 56 in 1951 when the local district was consolidated with the Phoenix school system.

Standing as a rectangular, hip-roofed volume measuring 26 x 90 feet in ground plan and organized symmetrically with classroom space on either side of a central pedimented portico, the school displays its basis in standardized, formulaic public school design of the day. Classrooms were well lighted by generously proportioned banks of multi-paned windows in the east-facing facade. The crossing of the portico gable and main roof ridge is surmounted by a louvered octagonal belfry with bellcast spire that was a convention of the Colonial idiom favored for schoolhouses of the period (1926 marked the sesquicentennial of the Declaration of Independence and a surge of popularity for things Colonial). The design was provided by Claud N. Freeman, a Willamette Valley architect trained at Oregon Agricultural college who, with various partners, specialized in public school work. Freeman designed several other schools in Jackson County in the years 1926-1929.

The building exhibited a stylistic sophistication that raised it above all others in the tiny rural community. Most notable are the detailing of the classical arch order of the enclosed portico and the pleasing inset spandrel panels beneath the window banks. The school rests on a full basement which, owing to the sloping site, is daylighted on the front elevation.

Modifications that are the result of the school's adaptation for residential use in the 1980s include, most notably, replacement of original roof cover with concrete shingles that nonetheless sort well with the "Pabco" shingles specified in the plans, and construction of a small additional room at the northwest, rear corner. Sheltered decks with steps providing transition to the back lawn area have been extended from the corner addition and from the rear exit area centered on the west face. Interior alterations

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to convert the classroom spaces to living and studio areas have not effaced all educational accessories, such as chalkboards, nor the standard finish work of tongue and groove wainscoting and picture molding. In short, the building still conveys clearly its original function despite its adaptive use.

The building meets National Register Criterion A as more than the best designed and most prominent building associated with the community of Wagner Creek. As was commonplace in rural districts, the schoolhouse was a community focal point that fulfilled a variety of social needs. This, the second school at Wagner Creek, represents the culmination of a movement for self determination and separate identity that had been sustained since 1888. Gaining a modern facility for educational and social purposes was the high point in community action. The historic period of significance continued through the Great Depression to the time of the Second World War.

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Built in 1929, the Wagner Creek School is an important rural educational structure in Jackson County, Oregon and is the best local example of the work of prolific school architect Claud N. Freeman. As the best surviving building associated with the once active community centered around Wagner Creek, the school is significant under Criterion A for its ability to relate the history and development of that area. Wagner Creek School demonstrates high integrity to its historic appearance, setting, use of materials, and workmanship. The structure admirably conveys its period of significance and clearly expresses the associations for which it is important.

**CONTEXT:**

The Wagner Creek area is located approximately three miles south of the city of Talent, in Jackson County, Oregon. Settlers first ventured into this area in the early 1850s. As miners scoured the hills in search of gold deposits following strikes at nearby Jacksonville, claims were staked throughout the Wagner Creek area. Many proved productive;

Early in February of 1860 rich diggings were discovered on Wagoner [sic] Creek, which was rapidly claimed for nine miles by about 400 miners...<sup>1</sup>

One of the first settlers in the area was Jacob Wagner. Drawn to the region by its agricultural potential rather than gold, Wagner filed a Donation Land Claim in the foothills along the creek that would soon bear his name. "On this tract of land, lying about five miles north of Ashland, near the present village of Talent, he was successfully engaged in farming and stock-raising for ten years."<sup>2</sup> Wagner [1820-1900] played an important role in the settlement of southern Oregon and

<sup>1</sup> Jessie Lee Gilmore, A History of the Rogue River Valley Pioneer Period, 1850-1862. (Unpublished Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1952), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Chapman, Portrait and Biographical Record of Western Oregon. (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1904), p. 617.

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numerous geographical features are testament to his prominence.<sup>3</sup> In 1862 Wagner moved to Ashland where he owned the Ashland Flour Mill and later invested in the Ashland Woolen Mill. Both were important early industries in southern Oregon. Wagner served two terms as an Oregon State Senator, was a Jackson County Commissioner, and remained a prominent local business leader and philanthropist until his death.

Following Wagner's lead, additional settlers located along the creek and carved homesteads further and further into the hillsides establishing farms and ranches to supply miners and the developing towns of the area. Soon loggers and others were drawn to the area as the need for lumber on the valley floor spurred the beginnings of the area's still prominent timber industry. As early as 1854 three sawmills were already in operation.

I have always been of the impression that *the sawmill on Wagner Creek* built by Granville Naylor and Lockwood Little and a Doctor [not decipherable] was the first and that of Milton Little at Gasburg [now Phoenix] second, but some say that the sawmill built by the Emory brothers at Ashland was first.<sup>4</sup>  
[emphasis added]

By the late 1880s, the rugged area along upper Wagner Creek was overshadowed by the village of Talent. Located on the valley floor, and more importantly along the new Southern Pacific line that connected Jackson County to the north,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In addition to Wagner Creek and the road along it, area features include Wagner Butte and Wagner Gap.

<sup>4</sup> Orson Avery Stearns, Reminiscences of Pioneer Days, reprinted in The Table Rock Sentinel, October 1987, p. 5. Stearns was an early pioneer in the Talent/Phoenix area and in the 1910s recorded his memories of the settlement period. Naylor's sawmill on Wagner Creek was likely located either on or very near the nominated parcel, originally a part of the Naylor claim.

<sup>5</sup> Rails across the rugged Siskiyou Mountains would not connect Jackson County to California and the south until 17 December 1887. Prior to this goods were off-loaded at



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Talent had been platted by Aaron P. Talent in 1880. Originally to be called "Wagner," postal officials instead named the community after its founder and first postmaster.<sup>6</sup> As the railhead, Talent quickly developed into the service center for the surrounding rural area. By 1883 the small town was described as "...the modern name of the locality formerly called Wagner Creek. It is now a thriving and busy locality."<sup>7</sup>

The name "Wagner Creek" now came to refer to the community within the foothills south of Talent, centered along that stream. Modest services and industries continued to meet the needs and provide employment for Wagner Creek residents. William Abbott ran two water-powered sawmills along Wagner Creek, one of which was still in operation as late as 1894.<sup>8</sup> At the intersection of Wagner Creek and Anderson Creek Roads stood a large meeting hall, "the Universal Men of Liberty" or UML Hall. Apparently this was a rather liberal organization, consistent with the long-standing reputation of many of the residents of the Wagner Creek area.<sup>9</sup> The only rule of the UML was "...that when a visitor was done talking, the audience had the right to ask questions."<sup>10</sup>

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Ashland and packed over the mountains by wagon train to be reloaded at Hilt, California.

- <sup>6</sup> Lewis A. McArthur, Oregon Geographic Names, 5th ed., Revised and Enlarged by Lewis L. McArthur. (Portland: Western Imprints/OHS, 1982), p. 717.
- <sup>7</sup> A.G. Walling, History of Southern Oregon, (Portland: A.G. Walling, 1883), p. 380.
- <sup>8</sup> Carol J. Malcolm, Early Business and Industries of Talent, Oregon. (SOSC, Unpublished research paper, 1975), p. 2.
- <sup>9</sup> Early settlers in the area were known for their liberal views and many were accused of being atheists. Most notable was John Beeson whose compassionate writings in favor of ethical treatment of the local native peoples eventually forced him to flee Jackson County in the face of threats of physical harm.
- <sup>10</sup> Kay Atwood, Jackson County Conversations. (Medford: Jackson County ESD, 1975), p. 111.

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Gold mining along Wagner Creek continued well into the 1930s. "There were tunnels and shafts all over there. They had a water-powered stamp mill... that they converted to electricity in 1936 but it didn't make any money [so] they shut it down."<sup>11</sup> For many years Andrew Briner operated a blacksmith shop about one mile south of the school site and in the 1930s the McGrew-Glimes Mill operated on Wagner Creek, running five large trucks a day down into Medford filled with lumber.<sup>12</sup>

**WAGNER CREEK DISTRICT #56:**

Many of the miners and loggers who worked along Wagner Creek brought families and children with them creating a need for a school. "Although there is no evidence of it in county records, it is said that early Wagner Creek schools appeared in 1856... we do know that on December 9, 1862, Wagner Creek District #22 was created."<sup>13</sup> In 1888, District 22 was split in two, creating the Talent District (which retained the original district number) and Wagner Creek, designated as District 56.<sup>14</sup> Given the transitory nature of mining and logging, school enrollment fluctuated widely with seasonal change and schools were often open only a short time. The more established farming and ranching interests, tied to the land for the long haul, fought hard to improve the quality of education.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Decker, personal communication with the author, 5-February-1992.

<sup>12</sup> Elroy McGrew, personal communication with the author, 5-February-1992.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Nesheim, One Hundred Twenty-Three Year's Search for Community: The Unwearied Effort for Public Education in Jackson County, Oregon 1854-1976. (Medford: Gandee Printing Center, 1976), p. 64.

<sup>14</sup> Previous histories have erroneously given District 56 the name "South Wagner Creek" for unknown reasons. This has resulted in the subject property occasionally being referred to as "South Wagner Creek School." Neither term is correct; the District and the school building were both historically known simply as "Wagner Creek".

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Like many areas in Oregon, Jackson County in the latter years of the 19th Century underwent an explosion in school districts as small outlying areas experienced increases in settlement and the need for education they created. Some communities such as Wagner Creek struggled to retain their individual identity in the face of larger settlements nearby. Prior to efficient transportation and communication networks, rural areas each financed and operated their own school, often a huge burden on small sparsely populated areas. School loyalty was fierce and many districts comprised only a single schoolhouse. The drive for local schools was so broad that at its peak there were 103 individual districts located in Jackson County, each serving a relatively small geographic area.<sup>15</sup>

For many rural areas, the schoolhouse, often the only public building for miles around, served as the community hall; a place to gather, meet with neighbors and friends. At the schoolhouse lectures and dances were held, community matters debated and other social functions served.

When rural people thought about gathering with friends and neighbors, airing complaints about crops and the weather, trading recipes and dress patterns and arguing about politics, they thought about the school... The school cemented a sense of place for students and parents, bachelors and widows, and anyone else within walking or riding distance.<sup>16</sup>

In the area along Wagner Creek, District 56 fostered the common bonds of community and provided a large centrally located building for gatherings. The decision to split Wagner Creek away from Talent, the rapidly growing community to the north, can at least in part be seen as an attempt by the more rural area to maintain its identity as a separate entity, with its own concerns and needs, distinct from its "urban" neighbor.

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<sup>15</sup> Nesheim, p. x.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Guilliford, America's County Schools. (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984), p. 79.

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Following the 1888 schism and the creation District 56, the fathers of Wagner Creek built a small one-room schoolhouse for the new district. Reportedly this was located north of the present school site, in a field donated by the Beeson family.<sup>17</sup> Teaching conditions were somewhat primitive but likely typical of other similar rural districts. In its first year, Wagner Creek operated a three-month term, April through June, and served twenty-two scholars. In the first District 56 report filed with the County Superintendent of Instruction, teacher Estelle Wells, in answering a questionnaire on "General Statistics" responded, in part, as follows:

Q: Has your School sufficient grounds?  
A: It has not.

Q: Are the grounds suitably improved?  
A: They are not

Q: Is your School supplied with an Unabridged Dictionary?  
A: It is not.

Q: Is your School sufficiently supplied with brooms, water-pails, cups, chalk, blackboards, a teacher's table and other indispensable furniture?  
A: It is not.<sup>18</sup>

The following year the school term had been increased to four months. Enrollment remained at twenty-two. In 1891 Zella Cheney, the new teacher, was more enthusiastic about the school grounds, responding to the question on whether or not they were sufficient, "Yes, a whole mountain." Miss Cheney was also likely pleased to report that District 56 now boasted a

<sup>17</sup> Atwood, Jackson County Conversations, p. 110.

<sup>18</sup> Summary for the School Term of District 56, Jackson County, Oregon, April 1, 1889 to June 21, 1889. [Prepared by H.H. Goodard, District Clerk], Collection of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Manuscript 285.

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Webster's Unabridged Dictionary even though "brooms... and other indispensable furniture" were still lacking.<sup>19</sup>

In early 1900 District 56 built a new frame schoolhouse further south into the Wagner Creek area on land that originally had been claimed by Granville Naylor. In January of that year Chas. S. Phelps, Geo. Low and P.N. Hogue, Directors of School District #56, purchased the subject parcel from Clara E. and Harry Lynch.<sup>20</sup>

...At first it [the school] was just [a] one room, wooden building, but then as the community grew they built another room, added... onto that old wooden building.<sup>21</sup>

With the addition of the second room, completed around 1910, District 56 had one of the nicest rural school buildings in Jackson County. One student remembers these rooms as being designated "the big room" and "the little room" referring not to size (since the latter, the addition, was actually larger than the former) but to the division of students into younger and older grades. Children in District 56 attended grades 1 through 8. High school aged children went on to either Talent or Ashland. In 1917 E.R. Peterson, the Rural School Supervisor for Jackson County reported on District 56 as follows:

Old two-room building in fairly good repair, quite good equipment. Waterbury systems; manual training and domestic science in another building; good play equipment, grounds fenced,. Considerable community

<sup>19</sup> Summary for the School Term of District 56, Jackson County, Oregon, March 23, 1891 to July 10, 1891. [Prepared by H.H. Goodard, District Clerk], Collection of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Manuscript 285.

<sup>20</sup> Jackson County Deed, 37:419, 16-January-1900.

<sup>21</sup> Ora "Polly" Francis Smith Boyd, Oral History Interview #186, Southern Oregon Historical Society, p. 14.

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pride---some dissension. A very businesslike school board. A very good rural school.<sup>22</sup>

By the mid-1920s, pressure on rural school districts to modernize and provide full services had increased. The days of the small rural schoolhouse were closing in Jackson County and some smaller districts joined with larger neighboring schools to better provide for the educational needs of their children.<sup>23</sup> Fighting this trend, other rural communities sought to improve their locally controlled school districts and retain a direct role in the school services they offered. Rural areas were often passionate to retain their community identity and schools [along with post offices] were seen as a major element toward that goal.

**A NEW BUILDING**

Determined to keep the Wagner Creek community intact, the District 56 School Board decided to improve their school building, to provide a modern facility on a par with the best that a larger district could offer. Beginning in the early 19th Century, much research had gone into the design of educational facilities. "By the 1920s the days of the vernacular schoolhouse were almost over, and contractors worked from architects designs in plan books.... Windows were on one side of the room, close together to produce the effect of one large window, based on the common presumption that nerve disorders were traceable directly to eyestrain."<sup>24</sup> In Oregon, many architects began to specialize in school design developing specialized practices that were active over large geographic regions. One architect responsible for a number of

<sup>22</sup> E.R. Peterson, The Journal of E.R. Peterson, Rural School Supervisor, Jackson County Schools, 1917, reprint ed. (Medford, Jackson County ESD, January 1983), p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Between 1910 and 1930 twenty-eight Jackson County school districts were either merged with, absorbed by, or consolidated into larger neighbors.

<sup>24</sup> Guilliford, p. 194.

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educational facilities in Jackson County during the second decade of the 20th century was C. N. Freeman.

Claud N. Freeman was born near Tacoma, Washington in 1886. With his family, he moved to Ashland, Oregon around 1900 and attended Ashland High School. After graduation he enrolled in the engineering department at Oregon Agricultural College (now OSU) and in 1918 he established an architectural practice.<sup>25</sup> By 1920 Freeman, now licensed to practice architecture by the newly established State Board of Architect Examiners, had an office in Silverton, Oregon, outside of Salem. In the early 1920s, Freeman entered into a partnership with another OAC graduate, Frank H. Struble. Together, Freeman and Struble were responsible for a number of commercial and residential buildings in the Salem vicinity, but Freeman soon developed a regional practice that specialized almost exclusively in the design school buildings. Sometime in late 1928 or early 1929, the firm dissolved and Freeman moved his practice to Portland. From that time, both on his own and with later partners, Freeman apparently did little besides school architecture, designing hundreds of schools throughout the Pacific Northwest.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the subject building, Freeman is known to have done at least three other school buildings in Jackson County, all during the 1920s.<sup>27</sup>

After World War II, Freeman headed the architectural firm of Freeman, Hayslip, and Tufts. Sometime after 1952 the firm evolved into Freeman, Hayslip, Hewlett, and Jamison. Reportedly Freeman's firms were large ones and were well known as "major school designers" throughout the Pacific Northwest.<sup>28</sup> Freeman retired in 1958 after forty years of architectural

<sup>25</sup> Mrs. A. Bert [Marie] Freeman, personal communication with the author, 17-February-1992. Mrs. Freeman, who married Claud's youngest brother Bert, lives in Ashland.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Wayne Struble, personal communication with the author, 6-February-1992. Mr. Struble, himself an architect with extensive school design experience, is the son of the late Frank Struble, Freeman's one-time partner.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

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practice in Oregon. He died at the age of 78 on 11-March-1964.<sup>29</sup>

**CONSTRUCTION:**

It is likely as a result of Oak Grove School, one of Freeman's other Jackson County projects, that the leaders of District 56 became familiar with his work. In late 1928 or early 1929, Freeman drew up the plans for Wagner Creek's new schoolhouse<sup>30</sup> and in February area residents held a special election to decide upon the issue of funding for the new building.

The Wagner Creek voters met at the school house Saturday, the 9th, and cast their votes in favor of a new, modern, two-room schoolhouse. The building is to be of concrete construction. The two rooms will be separated by folding doors which may be opened for entertainments. There will also be a stage and large basement for playrooms.<sup>31</sup>

By mid-March, building plans had been finalized and approved<sup>32</sup> and the school board advertised for construction bids. On 5 April it was announced that the contract had been let to

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<sup>29</sup> Claud N. Freeman, [Obituary] Oregonian, 15-March-1964, 48:4.

<sup>30</sup> Wagner Creek School has previously and incorrectly been identified as the work of Medford architect Frank Chamberlain Clark. [See comments on surveys under related resources]

<sup>31</sup> "Wagner Creek to Have New School", Medford Mail Tribune, 23-February-1929, 3:4.

<sup>32</sup> A handwritten note on the surviving blueprints notes "Approved by Mrs. Susanne Homes Carter, Co. School Superintendent, Jackson County, Oregon, March 4, 1929." Mrs. Carter, Superintendent from 1920 to 1932, was recognized statewide as a superior educator.



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 McCall, Lyons and Kulp, of Vancouver, Washington.<sup>33</sup>  
 Construction began within a few weeks;

Work on the new Wagner Creek school housing being built by McCall, Lyons and Kulp... is progressing nicely. The basement excavation is completed and they are now ready to begin building forms. They specialize in the erection of modern and up-to-date school buildings and expect to have this one completed by July 1.<sup>34</sup>

The small district had likely mortgaged itself substantially to build the new building and local concern ran high that the structure be build properly.

... my dad was on the school board and it was his responsibility to go down every day and see that they were building correctly and putting in the right kinds of materials and everything.<sup>35</sup>

Little information is known about the contractors although C.F. McCall, the partner in charge of the Wagner Creek project, had apparently married an area girl. McCall brought his family with him during construction and local society columns include numerous references of Mrs. McCall and the children visiting this or that relative.

Construction proceeded rapidly and the Wagner Creek correspondent to the Ashland Daily Tidings reported regularly on the project;

The new schoolhouse is progressing nicely. They have started pouring concrete today.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "Contract is Let for New School in Wagner Creek," Medford Mail Tribune, 5-April-1929, Second Section, 2:1.

<sup>34</sup> "School House at Wagner Creek is Ready for Form," Medford Mail Tribune, 19-April-1929, Second Section, 2:4.

<sup>35</sup> Ora Polly Francis Smith Boyd, op cit., p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Ashland Daily Tidings, 3-May-1929, 4:5

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Workman on the Wagner Creek Schoolhouse have finished pouring the concrete for the basement walls and are now building forms for the main building.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the speedy pace and obvious community interest, the walls of the second floor were not poured until early June and the project dragged on past the anticipated July completion date. Finally, in August, the paper reported;

... the inside work is almost finished and the yard is being graded<sup>38</sup>...[Contractors] expect to complete the job in one more week.<sup>39</sup>

With little time to spare the new Wagner Creek School was readied just as the classes of the 1929-1930 school term were set to begin.

**COMMUNITY CENTER:**

Like the small wooden building before it, the new Wagner Creek School quickly became the focal point of the surrounding community. The impressive architecture and substantial construction of the new school was no doubt a great boost to the residents of Wagner Creek. "We were very proud of that new building, [it] was about all we had!"<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ashland Daily Tidings, 10-May-1929, 2:5.

<sup>38</sup> "New School Nearly Done," Ashland Daily Tidings, 10-August-1929, 3:3.

<sup>39</sup> Ashland Daily Tidings, 16-August-1929, 3:5.

<sup>40</sup> Eva Kerby Taylor, personal communication with the author, 5-February-1992. Mrs. Taylor has lived on Wagner Creek Road for most of her 82 years. She attended the earlier wooden Wagner Creek school and later graduated from Talent High. The oldest of her own three children enrolled in the subject building in 1932 and Mrs. Taylor herself was an active member of the PTA.

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Enrollment in the new building varied between 35 and 40 children. In 1933-34 the average enrollment was 37.8 students.<sup>41</sup> Naturally the school hosted such traditional events as the Christmas pageant and the big picnic held on the last day of school but it also served a variety of other purposes. During elections Wagner Creek School was the local polling place. Community groups used the building too and social highlights included the annual Lincoln's birthday program and the "Box Social" fund-raisers put on by the District 56 Parent Teacher Association. "Each women would take a box and decorate it up all nice and make a lunch. The men would bid on the boxes and then you would eat together. The boxes of the younger girls were really popular."<sup>42</sup> Other PTA fund-raisers included pie socials, plays, and skits.

The women of the District 56 PTA were the nucleus of the Wagner Creek community, uniting to provide various services for the children. Since the school could not afford a paid cook, area women would rotate the responsibility of providing lunches to the children on a two-week cycle. The District would provide food and menus and each women would cook a hot dish in her own kitchen, transport it to the school on the appropriate morning, and it would be served to the children for lunch. During harvest season local farms would donate fruit or tomatoes to the PTA and the mothers would unite for a "canning bee" at the school to provision the district for the remainder of the year.<sup>43</sup>

In these years before paved roads were commonplace Wagner Creek, like other outlying areas, was fairly isolated from its neighbors. The people of the area were tight-knit, often inter-related, and the school provided a focal point for the community. It was a quiet, slow-paced and friendly kind of a

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<sup>41</sup> C.R. Bowman, "School Officers and Teachers of Jackson County, Oregon, 1933-34." [Collection of Kathryn Stancliffe]

<sup>42</sup> Taylor, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

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life and for many the years are recalled with a fond nostalgia. "Everybody knew everybody, not like now."<sup>44</sup> But the days of District 56 and the community it engendered were numbered. State government was continually increasing educational standards and the financial pressure on rural districts with limited tax bases grew more and more severe as the costs of salaries, textbooks, and supplies rose. Improved roads and better transportation allowed rural district children to be more easily educated in nearby cities and the need for widely scattered rural schools was substantially diminished.

In 1950 the State passed legislation that allowed for non-contiguous districts to consolidate, removing a major stumbling block for Wagner Creek. For some years much of the drive keeping District 56 going was a stubborn local refusal to merge with adjacent Talent. In 1951, a proposal was made to join with District 4 in Phoenix, making Wagner Creek the first District to take advantage of the new law. Following a bitter election that divided the small community, a vote was held and Wagner Creek residents approved consolidation with Phoenix by a vote of 34 to 14.<sup>45</sup> Even today some residents regret that decision, however inevitable it may have been.

We had a good school---it seemed like the end of something when they closed it [and] it hasn't been the same [here] since.<sup>46</sup>

District 56 was dissolved, its teachers and students transferred to Phoenix. The Phoenix School Board decided it was more efficient to transport students into town and the Wagner Creek School was closed, ending over a half a century of education at the site. The impressive concrete school, the pride of the Wagner Creek community, had been in use for only twenty-two years.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> "Wagner Creek and Phoenix OK Consolidation," Medford Mail Tribune, 29-April-1929, 1:6.

<sup>46</sup> Taylor, op. cit.

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Wagner Creek was not alone in battling consolidation and annexation nor was it unique in eventually joining with a larger district. By 1959 Jackson County's original 103 districts through merger and consolidation had been reduced to just ten. Recent legislative action heralds even further consolidation that may eliminate yet another two Jackson County districts before the end of the century.

**POST SCHOOL USE:**

Although classes ended at Wagner Creek School with the 1951-52 school year, the building continued to serve the community. "... The building has been used for a meeting place of the Phoenix-Talent Women's Club, the Grange and an archery club."<sup>47</sup> In 1954 the school district finally sold the property and it transferred to private ownership. A number of families made their homes in the old school during the 1950s and 1960s, remodeling the basement into bedrooms as described in Section 7. One long-term use included "Schoolhouse Creations," a retail yarn shop and craft school.

The present owner purchased the Wagner Creek School in 1969. The residential areas were remodeled and upgraded. The north classroom space became an oversize living area. The south classroom, along with its stage, returned to an educational role as the site of a children's dance studio, a use which continues at this writing.

The full-size stage in the old schoolhouse auditorium offers a delightful opportunity for students to do impromptu presentations of their work during class time and also is a perfect setting for recitals.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bonnie Delsman, "Country School Days Recalled In Wagner Creek District 56", Medford Mail Tribune, 24-February-1969.

<sup>48</sup> "The Old Schoolhouse Gets a New Slant on Subject Material," Medford Mail Tribune, 19-April-1981 B:5.

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**RELATED RESOURCES:**

**Wagner Creek Resources:**

The subject property is the only public or commercial building relating to the Wagner Creek community that has been identified. The UML Hall has disappeared and little remains of the various mills, mines, and other developments that were centered around Wagner Creek. Several early dwellings and agriculture-related outbuildings, some with association to early pioneer families, remain within the area. The Jackson County inventory includes five structures and one site in the vicinity of Wagner Creek and only one, Stearns Cemetery, located on Anderson Creek Road, can be considered as relevant to the Wagner Creek community as a whole.<sup>49</sup>

**Freeman Designed Schools:**

Claud N. Freeman, the architect of Wagner Creek School, was responsible for at least three other school buildings in Jackson County. These are;

Oak Grove School:

2838 Jacksonville Hwy, Medford, (1926)

Like the subject property, Oak Grove has been long attributed to local architect Frank Clark but should henceforth be credited to Freeman.<sup>50</sup> Built of concrete and similar in design to Wagner Creek, Oak Grove School was described as a "fine new rural building" following its construction and was later

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<sup>49</sup> Clay/Atwood, Jackson County Cultural and Historical Resource Survey, 1979/1991, Form Nos. 323-325 and 327-329.

<sup>50</sup> Wayne Struble, op. cit. Design similarities between Oak Grove and other documented Freeman buildings clearly support Mr. Struble's recollection of Freeman, then in partnership with Struble's father, as being Oak Grove's designer.

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described as being "a near mirror image" of the subject property.<sup>51</sup> In 1959 Oak Grove District #69 merged with Medford and the structure continues to serve as an elementary school. Additions to the original Freeman volume have substantially encumbered the design and diminished its integrity.

Central Point High School:

NW Corner of Bush and South 4th Streets, (1926)

This large two-story concrete structure is detailed in a more academic fashion than Freeman's other Jackson County structures. The two-story front porch is highlighted by twin Ionic columns and a prominent projecting cornice rims the three original elevations. To the rear, Freeman designed a major addition that was added in the early 1950s.<sup>52</sup> Now the site of Central Point Elementary School, this building remains a significant resource.

Bellview School:

1070 Tolman Creek Road, (1929)

Freeman likely received this commission at least in part as the result of his work at Wagner Creek. Bellview, located south of Ashland was similar in many ways to District 56, fighting for its own identity against larger Ashland. Freeman made regular trips to discuss the project with the Bellview School board, probably concurrent with site visits at Wagner Creek. Construction of the concrete building began in July 1929. Sig Ash, of Glendale, was the general contractor.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Mary Carlon, A Brief History of Oak Grove School, (Medford: Oak Grove School, 1966), p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Freeman, Hayslip and Tufts: Associated Architects, 1-May-1952. Blueprints for this addition are on file in the Central Point District #6 Administration Office.

<sup>53</sup> Ashland Daily Tidings, 3-July-1929, 1:7.

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Despite its new building, Bellview District #73 was unable to hold out against consolidation and joined with Ashland in April 1948, three years prior to Wagner Creek's joining with Phoenix. Still in use by the Ashland School District as Bellview Elementary, the original Bellview volume has been added to numerous times since consolidation and only the facade of Freeman's design retains any integrity.

Only two other projects in Jackson County can definitely be identified with Freeman. He designed a period-style cottage residence for his brother A. Bert Freeman that still stands at 112 Nutley in Ashland. Freeman was also responsible for the upgrading of the ventilation system at the Ashland Elk's Temple in Fall 1929, likely a result of his work at Bellview School. Although currently undocumented, it is probable that additional school buildings in Jackson County, both demolished and extant, are the work of Claud N. Freeman.

**Other Rural Schools:**

Jackson County's massive school consolidation resulted in numerous rural schools being closed, their original purpose over. "There are eighteen school structures remaining in Jackson County's rural environs of approximately 100 constructed between 1854 and 1930."<sup>54</sup> Many of these are in poor condition and others have been substantially modified to suit their new roles and uses. Most, such as the schools at Table Rock, Derby, and Willow Springs, are small wood frame buildings. Wagner Creek, a larger more substantial concrete structure, dates from a later period of school construction, reflecting rural district attempts at maintaining school quality and thereby staving off consolidation and the loss of local district control. As such, Wagner Creek School evidences a more sophisticated design and use of materials than virtually all other remaining rural schools within the Jackson County context.

<sup>54</sup> Scott Clay, Statement of Significance, 91-8-CPA. (Jackson County Planning Department Staff Report, 31-January-1992), p. 5.



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**Representation in Other Surveys:**

Based on the recollection of a former partner, the Wagner Creek School was incorrectly included in the preliminary inventory of the designs of Frank Chamberlain Clark in 1983. Within that study, Wagner Creek School was rated as primary in recognition of its integrity to its original design.<sup>55</sup>

Wagner Creek School has also been included in the Jackson County Cultural and Historical Resources Inventory. In February 1990 the Wagner Creek School was evaluated by the Jackson County Historic Advisory body for local landmark status.<sup>56</sup> That body unanimously nominated the property for inclusion in the Jackson County Register of Historic Landmarks "as a distinct high-style rural school, [that] is historically significant to Jackson County."<sup>57</sup>

**SUMMARY:**

Completed in 1929, the Wagner Creek School is significant both as an example of the work of architect Claud N. Freeman in Jackson County and as the single best remnant of the once bustling community that was centered around upper Wagner Creek. Wagner Creek School remains an impressive representative of the efforts of small rural communities to maintain their individual identities in the face of larger adjacent development, and effort that spurred a boom in rural school construction in Jackson County during the 1920s.

Although no longer serving its original educational function, Wagner Creek School retains substantial integrity to its original design in setting, workmanship and use of materials.

<sup>55</sup> Kay Atwood and Gail Evans, Frank Chamberlain Inventory, (SOHS/SHPO Project, 1983), Form # 227.

<sup>56</sup> Clay/Atwood, op cit., "South Wagner Creek School," Form 380. As first surveyed the property was ranked "secondary" as were all other Wagner Creek area resources.

<sup>57</sup> Clay, op. cit.

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Wagner Creek School

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The structure admirably communicates its original purpose and continues to visually convey its essential role in the history of Wagner Creek and the pattern of consolidation of rural districts in the Jackson County area. Wagner Creek School successfully relates the associations for which it is significant and merits inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "A" for its role in the Wagner Creek area.

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WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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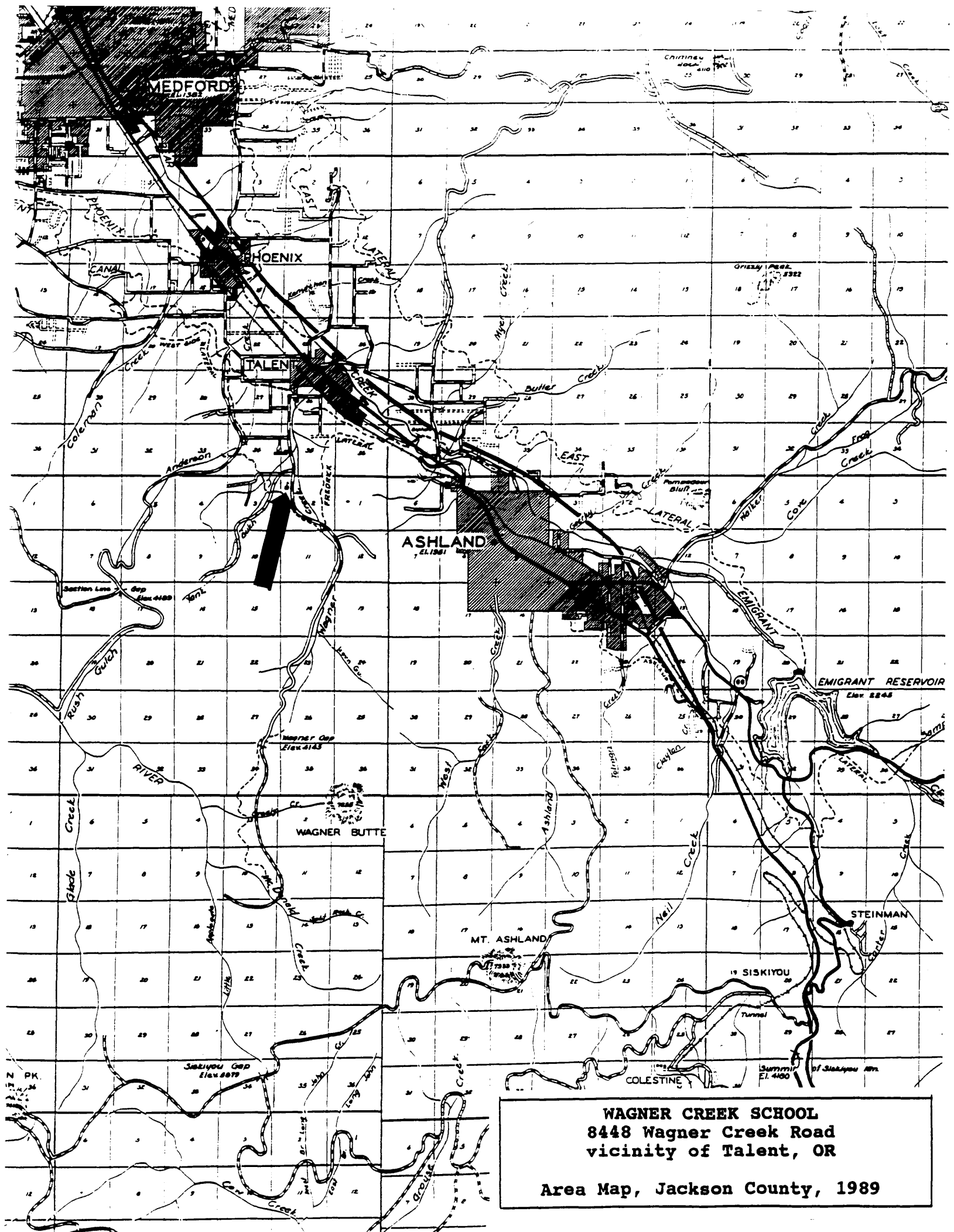
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is located in NW 1/4 Section 2, Township 39S, Range 1W, Willamette Meridian, in rural Jackson County, Oregon. It is an irregularly shaped parcel approximately 153 feet on the south side, 237 feet on the west, 232 feet on the north and fronting Wagner Creek Road along the eastern boundary. The site is identified as Tax Lot 2700 on Jackson County Assessors Plat 39S-1W-2.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

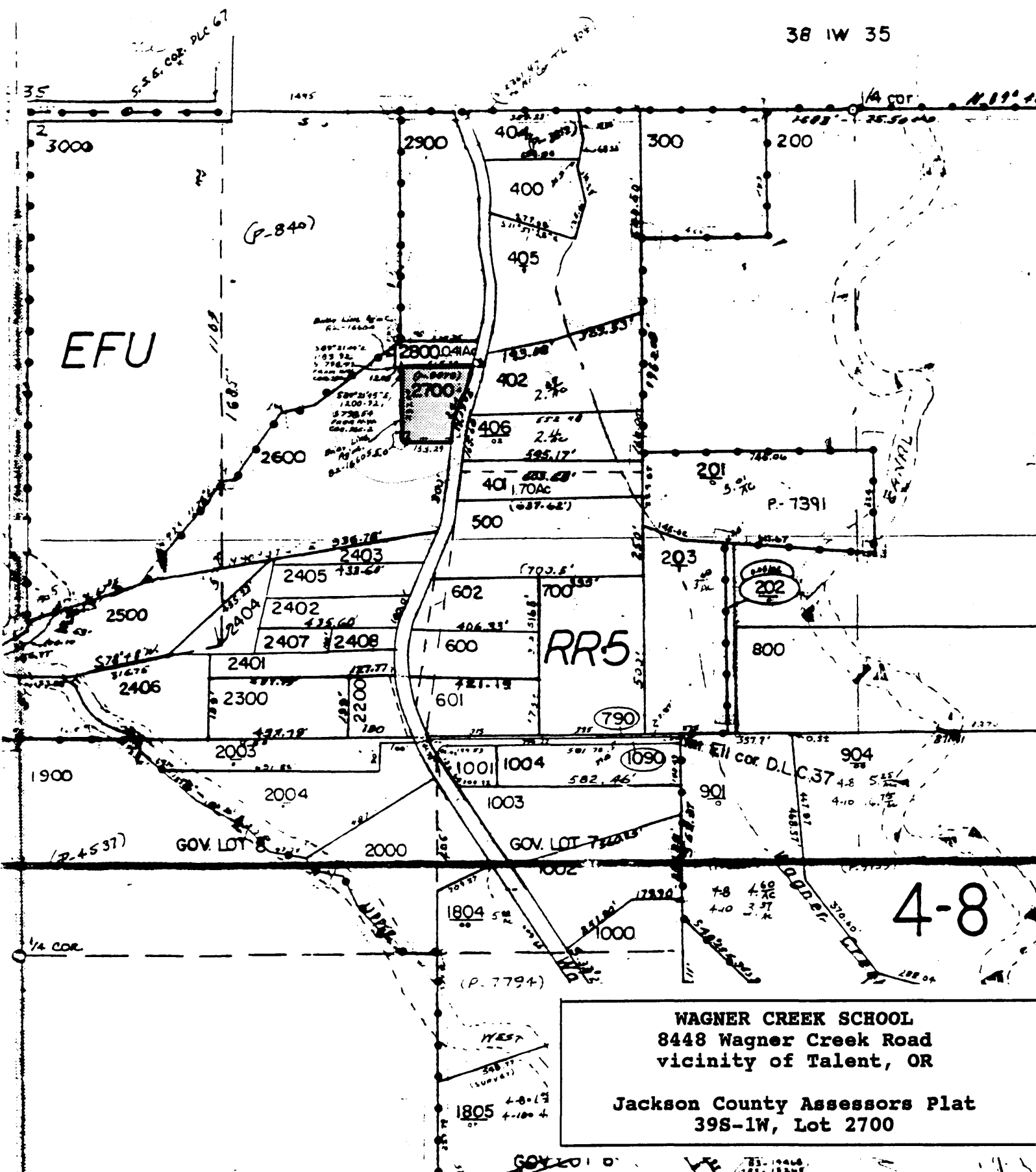
The nominated parcel includes the entire lot purchased by School District 56 in 1900 and, except as modified by a minor boundary line agreement (OR 82-16605) contains the entire area historically associated with the Wagner Creek School. Two sheds and a pumphouse located on the back slope of the property are not associated with the historic use of the school and are counted non-contributing features.



**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**  
 8448 Wagner Creek Road  
 vicinity of Talent, OR  
 Area Map, Jackson County, 1989

SECTION 2 TWP. 39 S R. 1 W.

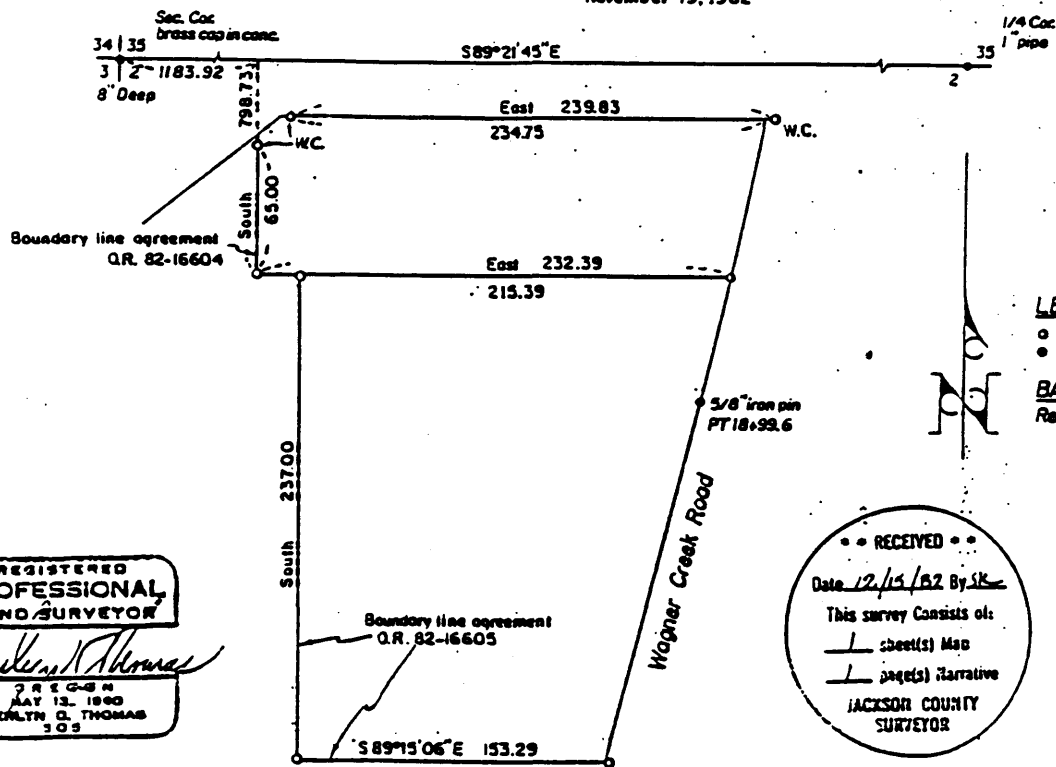
Scale: 1" = 400'



**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**  
8448 Wagner Creek Road  
vicinity of Talent, OR

**Jackson County Assessors Plat**  
39S-1W, Lot 2700

**Survey for James Beveridge**  
 Located in the NW 1/4 Sec. 2, T.39S, R.1W, WM, Jackson County, Oregon  
 November 19, 1982



**LEGEND**  
 ○ Set 5/8" x 24" iron pin  
 ● Monument of record  
**BASIS OF BEARINGS**  
 Recorded Survey No. 840

REGISTERED  
**PROFESSIONAL  
 LAND SURVEYOR**

*Verlyn D. Thomas*

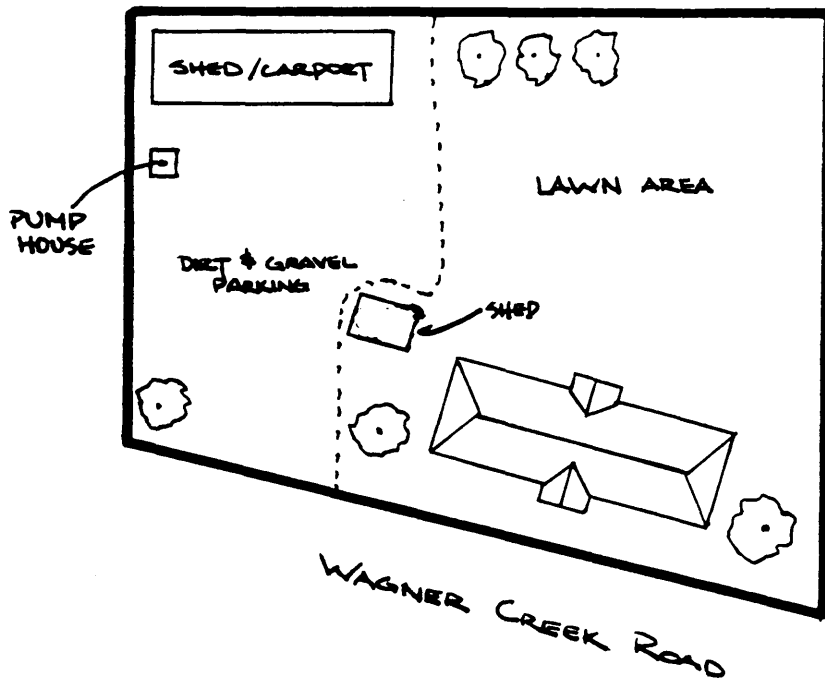
OREGON  
 MAY 13, 1980  
 VERLYN D. THOMAS  
 503

• • RECEIVED • •  
 Date 12/15/82 By JK  
 This survey consists of:  
 — sheet(s) Map  
 — page(s) Narrative  
**JACKSON COUNTY  
 SURVEYOR**

Survey by Verlyn Thomas, Professional Land Surveyor, Medford, Oregon

**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**  
 8448 Wagner Creek Road  
 vicinity of Talent, OR

Lot Survey  
 Verlyn D. Thomas, Surveyor, 1982

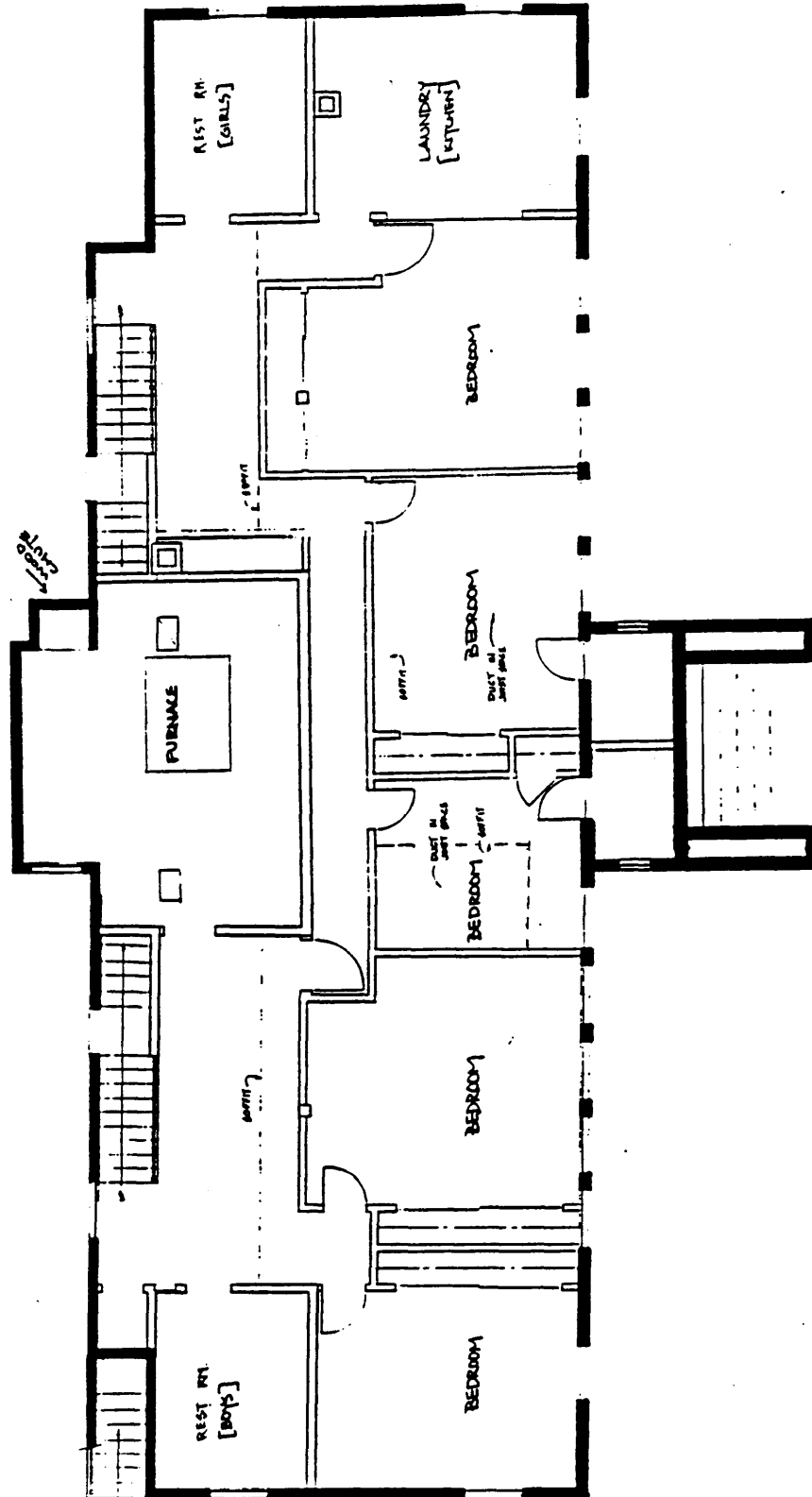


**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**  
**8448 Wagner Creek Road**  
**vicinity of Talent, OR**

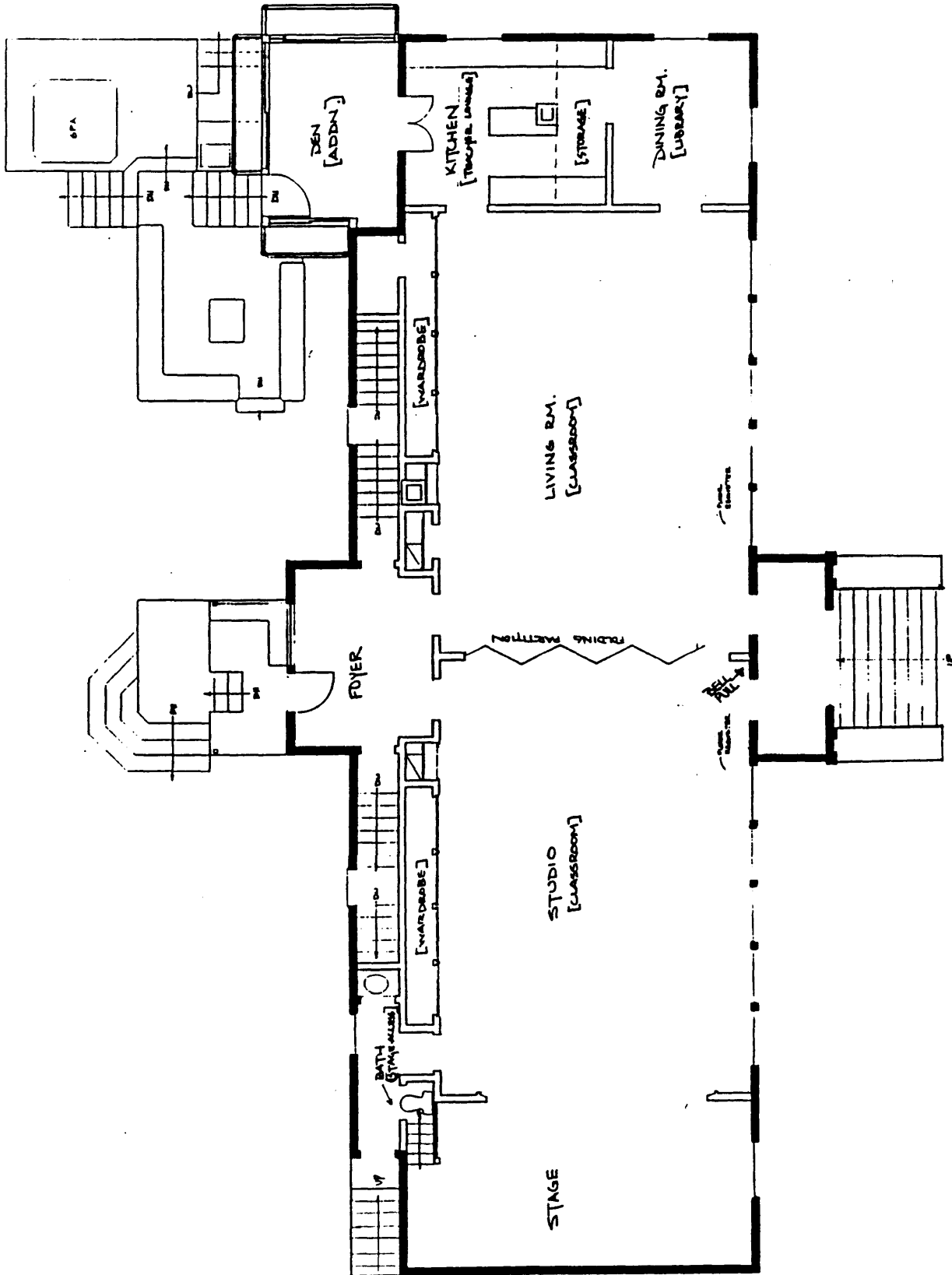
**Site Plan, 1992**

**NOT TO SCALE**





**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**  
 8448 Wagner Creek Road  
 vicinity of Talent, OR  
 Existing Basement Floorplan  
 [Historic uses in brackets]  
 after D. Straus, 11/91



**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**  
**8448 Wagner Creek Road**  
**vicinity of Talent, OR**  
  
**Existing Main Level Floorplan**  
**[Historic uses in brackets]**  
  
**after D. Straus, 11/1991**

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**WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL**

**Talent vicinity, Jackson County, Oregon, 97501**

1. Historic View: East [Front] Elevation, looking west  
 Photographer: Unknown  
 Date of Photograph: c. 1970  
 Negative: Southern Oregon Historical Society,  
 Neg. # 1082
2. Exterior View: East [Front] Elevation, looking SW  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
3. Exterior View: South and East Elevations, looking N  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
4. Exterior View: West [Rear] Elevation, looking NE  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
5. Exterior Detail: North Elevation, looking S  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
6. Exterior Detail: East [Main] Entry, looking W  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer

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- 7. Exterior Detail: Belfry, looking SW  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
  
- 8. Interior View: Dance Studio [South Classroom  
 and Stage], looking S.  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
  
- 9. Interior View: Living Room [North Classroom],  
 looking SW toward partition door  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer
  
- 10. Interior Detail: North Classroom, Door, Trim and  
 wainscot, surviving Chalktray, looking W  
 Photographer: G. Kramer  
 Date of Photograph: February 1992  
 Negative: Collection of the Photographer