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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

OCT 14 1992

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Groom Creek School

other names/site number AR-03-09-03-282

2. Location

street & number USDA, Prescott National Forest, Bradshaw Ranger Dist. not for publication

city, town Senator Highway, Prescott vicinity

state Arizona code AZ county Yavapai code 025 zip code 86303

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: None

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: Susan J. DeLoach, Date: 10/1/92, State or Federal agency and bureau: Historic Preservation Officer, Forest Service-USDA

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official: Theresa Berner, Date: 1/8/92, State or Federal agency and bureau: State Historic Preservation Officer

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper: Autumnella Lee, Date of Action: 11/18/92

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education; Grammar School

Recreation & Culture: auditorium

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: auditorium

Outdoor Recreation (site): picnic area,  
hiking trails

Commemorative Marker

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Nineteenth & Early Twentieth Century

Movements: Vernacular National Park Service

Rustic Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Native Granite, concrete  
walls Stone: Native Granite

roof Metal: Steel with wood shingles under-  
other neath

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### SUMMARY:

The Groom Creek School is a one classroom rural school constructed in 1936/37 of uncoursed native granite fieldstone collected from the immediate area. This structure is constructed in a vernacular style reflective of the National Park Service Rustic style. It is an end-gable structure, rectangular in plan and symmetrical in massing, 26 feet by 54 feet. There is a cross-gable entry, seven by ten feet, supported by native granite pillars which are set on rectangular stone bases and are tapered from bottom to top, each being three feet square at the base and two feet square at the top. The entry is on the front (south side) of the building and is offset from center. The building faces south and slightly east. The integrity and condition are excellent and there are no additions.

The roof of the Groom Creek School is corrugated steel laid over what appears to be the original wood shingle roof. There is very little overhang and rafter tails are exposed. The roof is supported by 2 x 12 built-up girders set in pairs and running the length of the building. Windows in the classroom areas of the building are four-over-four, single-hung sash three feet wide by six feet high, set in pairs. These windows provide one wall of light on the southern exposure of the building in the main classroom and one wall of light on the western exposure of the building in the auditorium area of the building. Other windows are one-over-one single-hung sash in the kitchen and rest room areas. There is a single stone chimney at the rear of the building which served two wood-burning stoves for heat, one in the main classroom and one in the auditorium area.

The interior of the building is divided into six spaces, including an entry vestibule which opens to the left into a small auditorium area with a kitchen opening off the auditorium area. The vestibule opens to the right into a large classroom with two restrooms at the opposite end of the classroom. The classroom and auditorium area are divided by two pairs of bi-fold doors, which when opened allow the classroom and the auditorium area to be used as a single large space. (See plan, Exhibit A). Floors in the vestibule and classroom are oak hardwood. Floors in the remainder of the building are asphalt tile. Interior walls are plaster over lath. Interior doors are paneled and appear to be original. Entry doors are a pair of hollow core doors set in a five-foot wide opening, hinged on the outside and opening out onto the entry porch. They are not original. There are two paneled exterior entry/exit doors leading to and from the restrooms on the east end of the building.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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A flag pole set on an uncoursed native granite base consisting of two stacked circular forms six and three feet in diameter respectively, stands in front of the school building approximately 50 feet due south of the entry to the school. This structure was constructed at the same time as the school building. The integrity of the flagpole base is excellent.

A number of stone retaining walls, also constructed of uncoursed native granite, were constructed in the vicinity of the school playground to the east and north of the school. These walls vary in height from several inches to approximately two feet and appear to have been constructed at approximately the same time as the school. At one time, a garage and coal bin were located east of the school abutting the existing retaining wall. These structures have not been extant for more than twenty years.

There is currently a slump-block structure approximately ten feet square which was constructed within the last twenty years which contains public restrooms. This building is located south of the school approximately 60 feet and serves park, hiking and picnic patrons. It is a non-contributing structure.

The Groom Creek School is located on the Senator Highway (#72), 6.3 miles south of the intersection of East Gurley Street and South Mount Vernon Street in the City of Prescott, Arizona, on property formerly leased to the Groom Creek School District #39 by the USDA, Prescott National Forest. There is a sign directing the public to the Groom Creek School, which is located about 300 feet east of the Senator Highway. The site is situated in a setting of high desert ponderosa/juniper forest at the eastern base of Spruce Mountain (elevation, 7,693) at an elevation of approximately 7,000 feet. Native Granite outcroppings are common in the area, and in fact a large, flat outcropping of rock historically provided a popular play area on the playground of the school. A flat area of approximately 100 by 200 feet has been cleared behind (north) and west of the school for a play area. There is also a smaller flat, cleared area in front (south and slightly west) of the school for assembly around the flag and for play. Part of this area is now the site of the public restrooms.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

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The setting of the Groom Creek School is original and, with the exception of the addition of modern rest rooms and improved (some asphalt) hiking trails (The Lions Club Handicapped Hiking Trail), picnic tables, fences (split rail type) and parking area, is essentially unchanged. The landscaping, though maintained to some degree in the summer months by Forest Service personnel, is native and natural. Native plants include ponderosa pine, which is the predominate tree at this elevation, Utah Juniper and Gambel Oak, mountain mahogany, several types of scrub live oak, including Emory Oak, and New Mexican locust. There is a canopy of tall ponderosa pine, with a lower story of low trees (Gambel Oak and Utah Juniper) and a medium cover of low shrubs and wildflowers. At an elevation of 7,000 feet, the climate is four-season, with harsh winters and substantial snow cover in the winter months. Winter lows may occasionally go below -20\* F. and summer highs occasionally break 80\* F. in July. Rain averages approximately 20 inches per year.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Entertainment; Recreation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1937-1952

1937-1952

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1937-1952

1937-1952

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**SUMMARY:**

The Groom Creek School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "A". A one room school, the Groom Creek School is located in a rural area approximately 6 miles south of Prescott, Yavapai County, Arizona. The community of Groom Creek has traditionally been isolated due to its location and elevation of 7,000 feet. The schoolhouse in a rural community, particularly an isolated one, has traditionally been the location of many social and community business events. A country school is a symbol of both cultural continuity and of opportunities to be gained by education. The Groom Creek School served as the location where the children of the Groom Creek area were educated from grades one through eight, of recitals, dances, concerts and plays, community meetings, picnics, as a base of operation for fighting fires in the area, and a gathering spot for families living in the area. Today, it serves similar purposes. The school, now owned by the USDA, Prescott National Forest, is still used for the purposes of education, as a training and meeting facility by the Forest Service, and as a recreational facility, with picnic grounds and park and hiking trails.

Individual miners and families living in the Groom Creek area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were scattered on various mining claims and were necessarily somewhat independent, though they were also dependent upon each other for any activity which required more than a few hands. Tight-knit in times of trouble due to necessity, families, especially wives and mothers living on isolated mining claims, would gather together whenever the opportunity arose. Interested in educating their children, the community established a school and hired a teacher for the 1895 school year. The location of the school varied considerably over the years, as there was little money and, at times, no or few students. If the teacher lived in Groom Creek, he or she may have taught the students in his or her own home. School was held in various buildings, some donated for the use of the school district, until 1903, when a new school, 24 by 30

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

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feet, was built specifically for that purpose. By 1933, this school building required repairs. In 1935, Groom Creek School District #39 applied for a lease with the USDA, Forest Service for 2.0 acres for the purposes of a school. This school was constructed during the 1935/36/37 school years and was completed and open for the 1937 school year commencing in September.

The community of Groom Creek originated around 1864 as a settlement for miners, who were mining the placer gold in the area along Groom and Link (later, Lynx) creeks. It was named for Colonel Bob Groom (b. Kentucky, August 24, 1824; d. January 21, 1899) who came to Arizona in 1862 and was one of the earliest anglo settlers in the Prescott area. Though he lived primarily by mining and prospecting, he was also a surveyor and surveyed the townsite of Prescott. He was also a member of the Territorial Legislature.

Though the summer population of the Groom Creek area was increasing in the late nineteenth century, few stayed year around due to the severity of the winters and the difficulty of obtaining supplies. The Groom Creek School District Number 39 was apparently formally organized July 16, 1894 and was first listed in the Yavapai County Schools census in 1895. The teacher was Mrs. Alice B. Elliott. The school was usually closed during the winter months when families relocated to milder climates (usually Prescott, six miles away and at an elevation of 5,300 feet).

By 1901 there were enough full-time residents in Groom Creek to justify a post office. Established July 1, 1901, the name selected was Oakdale, due to the location in the community of a large grove of oaks. However, this name lasted only approximately six weeks, and the name was changed officially to Groom Creek on August 19, 1901. Though never incorporated, the Townsite for Groom Creek City was recorded in Yavapai County records in 1903. The post office was discontinued January 31, 1942.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

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The written history of the Groom Creek School is sketchy, at best, and is contained primarily in the various reports and documents of the Yavapai County Superintendent of Schools and in records of the Arizona Department of Education in the form of the "Arizona Educational Directory", which is available for the years 1918 through 1965. These records do reflect that the Groom Creek School District #39 survived through the closing and consolidation of many Yavapai County rural schools, though in May 1920 it did close early due to bad weather and various epidemics. That year, there were 14 students but no graduates at Groom Creek School. The teacher was paid \$90 per month. School budgets for one-room schools in Yavapai County in 1920 varied from \$3,200 to \$10,900 per year. All teachers in County schools except two were college graduates. In 1925 and 1926, there was no school held at Groom Creek, and in 1926-27, the school was not listed in the directory. In the 1928-29, Groom Creek School was designated as an "accommodation school", meaning that the teacher was required to have only a high school education and enrollment was at a minimum, with the students being encouraged, if at all possible, to attend a larger school. By the school year of 1929-30, Groom Creek School was back to normal, with Alma S. Beatty teaching grades one through eight during a nine month school year.

Progressivism in American education took hold in the 1890s, but did not begin to effect rural schools until after the turn of the century. Educators were seeking to standardize textbooks and learning skills. Country schools, however isolated, felt pressure to reform as states began to pass legislation requiring all lessons be taught in English and County Superintendents began to use standardized tests for eighth-grade graduates. Most educators sought to eliminate country schools rather than improve them and to assimilate the student into more progressive consolidated schools. Paved roads and automobile and school bus travel partially eliminated the need for country schools. Rural schools in Yavapai County were obviously influenced by these trends, however, the philosophy seems to have been to take the best progressivism had to offer and to make those elements, such as expanded curriculum and standardized texts and testing and implement them in the rural schools. In September, 1931, Dick Piela, writing for Yavapai magazine, reported in an article entitled "Rural Schools Rank High

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

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in Yavapai County" that "... rural schools of the County have been keeping pace with more progressive schools in the country. Through the science of curriculum building, the schools have been enriching the content and expanding the variety of their offerings". Piela further reported that the rural schools of Yavapai County were "... performing their educational duty with remarkable success", and, emphasizing the importance of the rural educational system, that "... the success of rural life is essential to the success of America, and that when we are considering the problem of the rural child we are playing with the elements of of national destiny and survival".

Many of these trends, such as the movement to consolidate several rural schools into one facility, to transport rural students to larger schools with more classrooms and teachers, and the standardization of school facilities failed to have any noticeable impact on the Groom Creek School until the building of the current school in 1935/36. State school superintendents had begun to provide model architectural plans for rural schools, and one of the major components of the model plans was the lighting. The model plans specified a wall of light on only one side of the classroom, so that the students would not be effected by cross-lighting. The Groom Creek School may have been constructed according to a model plan, as it clearly reflects this principle, not only in the classroom, but also in the auditorium, which is lighted by a wall of windows on the west side of the building. Unfortunately, any records which may have existed regarding the plan for the school are apparently no longer in existence.

A personal interview with Mr. Donald Wellman (see Bibliography), Groom Creek School Class of 1942 (there were eight students, and he was the only graduate that year), reveals that the present Groom Creek school building was begun in 1935. Construction was stopped during the winter due to weather (the winter of 1935-36 was one of the worst on record, with 17 feet of snow on the ground) and a lack of funds. While construction was stopped, the students and their parents hauled rock to the site so that



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

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building could continue as quickly as possible in the Spring. The school was finished and opened for the September, 1937 school year. The teacher was Mrs. Gertrude Day, who came from Prescott to teach. There were a maximum of ten to twelve students, and not always were all grades included in the student body. Don Wellman and his two older brothers (classes of 1938 and 1939) were hired by the school district as custodians. They walked the 2.9 miles from their father's mining claim to the school to arrive one and one-half hours early. They swept the floor, cleaned the blackboards, collected trash, and, most importantly in the winter months, brought in coal and got the fire going in the coal stove. In 1940, the school converted to coal oil heat. They were paid \$5 a month.

In order to raise funds for the school district, the students put on plays and recitals in the auditorium area of the school. The doors dividing the classroom from the auditorium, where the piano was located, were opened up, and the desks turned toward the stage. A fee was charged, as it also was for the use of the school for community dances. Most of the families in the Groom Creek area, especially those who had children in school, would come, often with a picnic planned after the entertainment.

During World War II, from 1944 through 1947, there was no listing in the Arizona Educational Directory for Groom Creek School. However, in 1947-48, Miss Saima Winslow was teaching there (she had also taught there in 1920). By the end of the 1940s, there was a cafeteria supervisor and hot lunches were served to the students. Previously, they had been required to bring food for lunch from home. The 1951-52 school year appears to have been the last for Groom Creek School. In the fall of 1952, students were being transported into Prescott to Washington School for elementary school. In 1971, Groom Creek School District #39 was annexed into the Prescott School District #1 and the school board was disbanded.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

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Groom Creek community remains to this day a small, tight-knit community consisting of both year-around and summer residents. A popular recreation area with Goldwater Lake nearby and many hiking trails, it has never-the-less remained a rural community. Population figures for the area are not available, and though growth has occurred considerably in the last twenty years, scarcity of private land and the harsh winters has resulted in a much slower growth pattern than nearby Prescott, which increased in population from 5,000 in 1970 to 24,000 in 1990. Though Groom Creek children now attend school in Prescott, they remain, in many ways, a cohesive community within the Prescott school system as they all ride the bus together every day and still live in an area which has, though easily accessible by car on a paved road, maintained its rural character and location. There is still only one store in Groom Creek, which has been there for more than fifty years, and no other commercial development. Homes are scattered among the hills and gullies, roads are unpaved except for the Senator Highway and the atmosphere and attitude of the community are, as in the past, traditionally rural. The Groom Creek School played a major role in this community, regardless of its location, from its inception in 1895 until 1971. The current Groom Creek School has been a significant part of the social, educational and recreational fabric of the community since construction began in 1935 and its subsequent opening in 1937. For these reasons, the period of significance relates to the construction of the Groom Creek School up to 1952, the last year school was actually held in this building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Arizona Daily Miner, July 3, 1902.

Arizona Educational Directory, Arizona Department of Education, 1918/19 through 1965/66.

Arizona Highways, "Learnin' In One Room," December, 1935.

Barnes, Will C., Arizona Place Names, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1965.

X\_\_ See continuation sheet.

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 hist. preservation office
- Other State agency
- X\_\_ Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

USDA, Prescott National Forest  
344 S. Cortez St. Prescott, AZ 86303

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.0

UTM References

A 1|2| 3|6|8|3|0|0| 3|8|1|5|1|0|0|  
 Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 Zone Easting Northing

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 Zone Easting Northing

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Groom Creek School property are shown on the attached map entitled "Sketch Map."

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The "Special Use Record" of the USDA, Prescott National Forest, reflects a condensed history of the lease of the PNF property to Groom Creek School District #39. The application was approved on October 3, 1936 and specifies the location only as 2.0 acres .142 miles in length located in the SW quarter

X\_\_ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy L. Burgess

organization Preservation Consultant date September 6, 1991

street & number P.O. Box 42 telephone (602) 445-8765

city or town Prescott state AZ zip code 86302

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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- Blumenson, John G., Identifying American Architecture - A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945, American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, Tennessee, 1977.
- Carter, Thomas and Goss, Peter, Utah's Historic Architecture, 1847-1940, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988.
- Cremin, Lawrence A., American Education, The Metropolitan Experience, Harper and Row, New York, 1988.
- Dahlin, Katherine Grant, telephone interview, July 2, 1991, Walker, Arizona.
- Elmore, Francis H., Shrubs and Trees of the Southwest Uplands, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, Tucson, Arizona 1976.
- Good, Albert H., Park and Recreation Structures, Graybooks, Boulder, Colorado, 1990.
- Granger, Byrd Howell, Arizona's Names (X Marks the Place), The Falconer Publishing Company, Tucson, Arizona, 1983.
- Gulliford, Andrew, America's Country Schools, Preservation Press, Washington, D.C., 1991.
- Henson, Pauline, Founding A Wilderness Capital: Prescott, A.T. 1864, Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona 1965.
- Nelson, Kitty Jo Parker and Gardner, Gail I., Prescott's First Century, 1864-1964, Arizoniana: the Journal of Arizona History, Vol. 4 No. 4, Winter, 1963.
- Nilson, Aileen Pace and Ferry, Margaret and Evans, L. J., Dust in Our Desks, Territorial Days to the Present in Arizona Schools, Arizona Board of Regents, 1985.
- Prescott Journal Miner, May 5, 1920.
- Sharlot Hall Museum and Archives, Prescott, Arizona, clipping files.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   3  

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USDA, Prescott National Forest, Bradshaw Ranger District, files (Special Use Record).

Walker, Henry P. and Bufkin, Don, Historical Atlas of Arizona, Second Edition, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1986.

Wellman, Donald, personal interview July 7, 1991, Prescott, Arizona.

Yavapai County Superintendent of Schools, Prescott, Arizona, files.

Yavapai, Prescott Chamber of Commerce, September, 1931.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

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Sec. 26, T13N, R2W, G&SRB&M. Since there are no parcel designations, no fences or markers to delineate the 2.0 acres stated above, the boundaries for the purposes of this Nomination have been designated as 2.0 acres forming a rectangle 200 feet in width and 400 feet in length, commencing approximately 150 feet from Senator Highway beyond the signed entrance to Groom Creek School, from the center of the "Y", 100 feet to the south, 100 feet to the north and 400 feet to the east. This area encompasses the path from the parking area to the school building, the flagpole, restrooms (non-contributing structure), the playground, site of coal bin and barn, and the stone retaining walls referred to in the text of this Nomination (see Sketch Map).

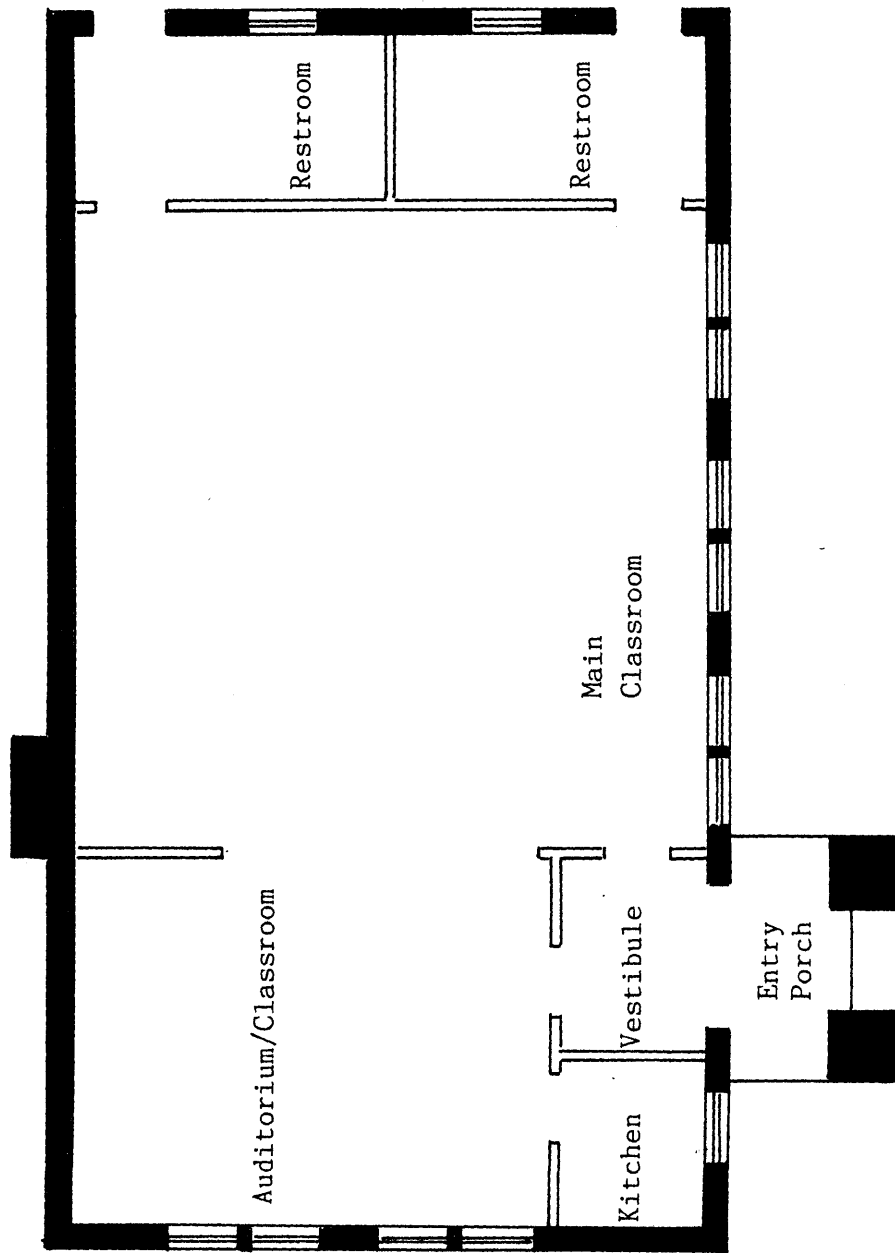
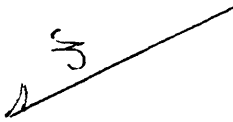



EXHIBIT A

SKETCH MAP

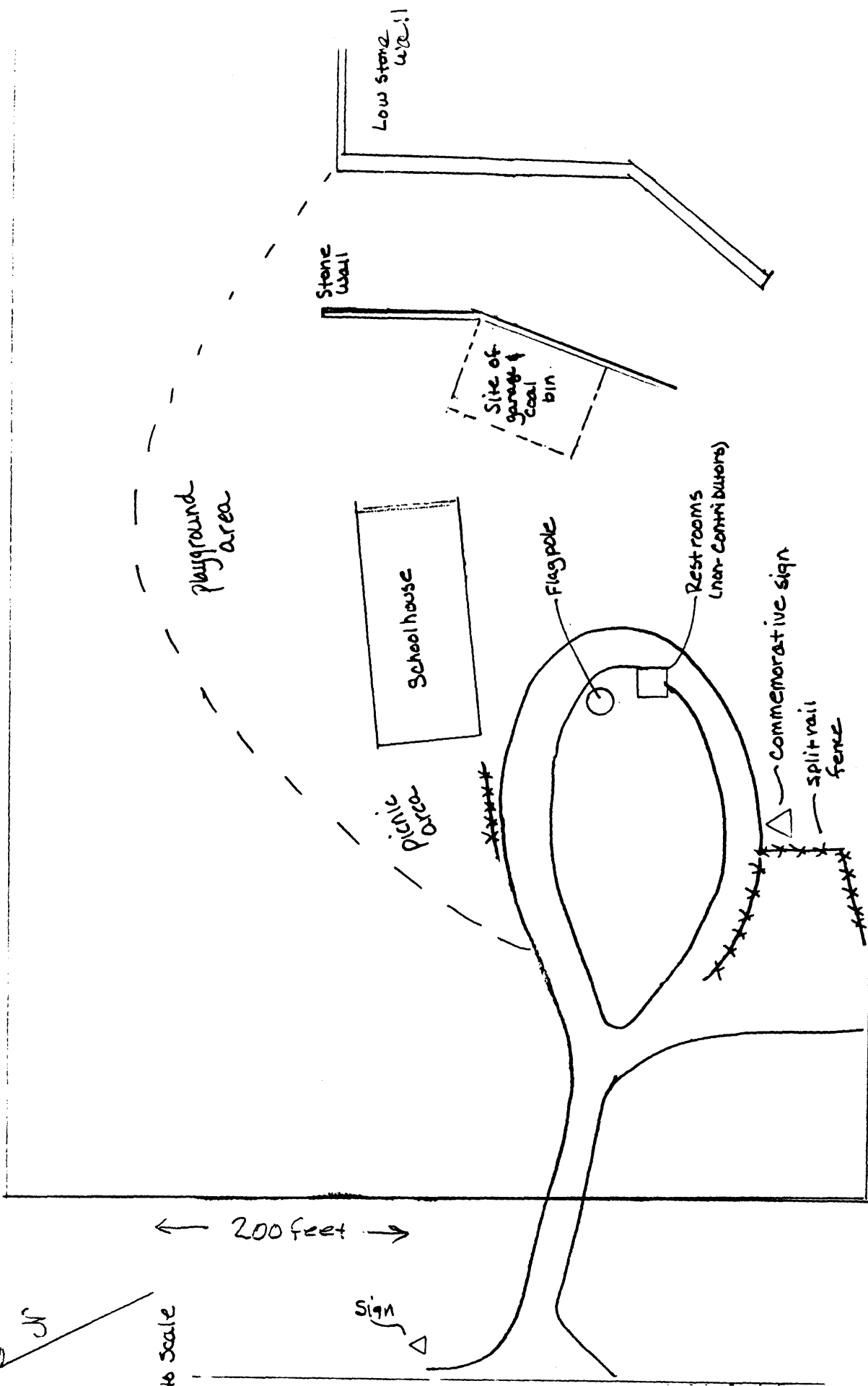


NOT TO SCALE

← 200 feet →

Sign 

Senator Highway



← 400 feet →



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

P H O T O S

Section number   x   Page   x  

A. Groom Creek School

Prescott, Arizona

Nancy L. Burgess

07-21-91

USDA Prescott National Forest, 344 S. Cortez St., Prescott, AZ 86303

Front of School, facing NNW

# 1

Groom Creek School

Prescott, Arizona

Nancy L. Burgess

07-21-91

USDA Prescott National Forest, 344 S. Cortez St., Prescott, AZ 86303

Front entry, facing NNW

# 2

Groom Creek School

Prescott, Arizona

Nancy L. Burgess

07-21-91

USDA Prescott National Forest, 344 S. Cortez St., Prescott, AZ 86303

Interior of classroom, facing WSW

# 3

Groom Creek School

Prescott, Arizona

Unknown

08-69

USDA Prescott National Forest, 344 S. Cortez St., Prescott, AZ 86303

Front of school, facing NNW

(Collection of Don Wellman)

# 4

Groom Creek School

Prescott, Arizona

Unknown

05-40

USDA Prescott National Forest, 344 S. Cortez St., Prescott, AZ 86303

Front of school; class of 1940, facing NNW

(Collection of Don Wellman)

# 5

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001568 Date Listed: 11/18/92

Groom Creek School  
Property Name

Yavapai                      AZ  
County                              State

N/A  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*fn* Antonine Alce  
Signature of the Keeper

11/19/92  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

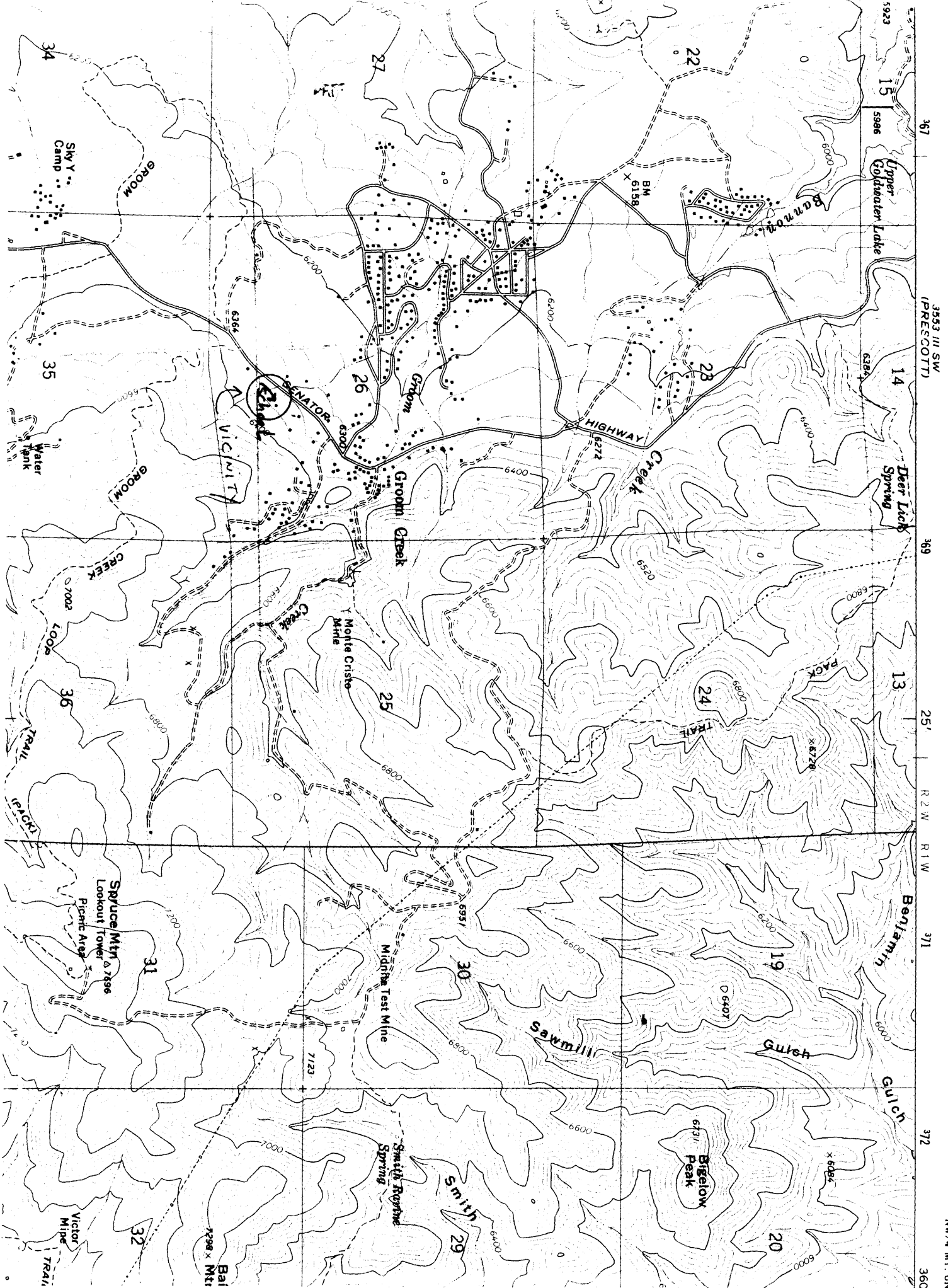
Statement of Significance: The Period of Significance is amended to read: 1937-1942.

This information was confirmed by Evan DeBlois of the USDA Forest Service.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

# Green Creek School



3553 III SW  
(PRESCOTT)

ARIZONA  
7.5 MINUTE SET  
NW/4 MT. UN