

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: 89000011

Date Listed: 2 / 17 / 89

Buckingham School
Property Name

Lee
County

FL
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.

Carol Shue

Signature of the Keeper

2-17-89

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination documents the significance of this property in educational and military history and therefore, these two areas should be added to the list. In addition, the area of significance, architecture, should be added to correlate with Criterion C.

Also Criterion Consideration G should be checked for Exceptional
Discussed and concurred in by the Florida SHPO. *Significance.*

DISTRIBUTION:

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

0011

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 09 1989

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 Buckingham School
other names/site number Twelve Mile Stream, Orange Creek, Orange River School

2. Location

street & number Intersection of Buckingham Rd. & Cemetery Rd. N/A not for publication
city, town N/A N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Lee code 071 zip code 33905

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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] 12/29/88
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Florida Department of State
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Cecilia D. Skell 2-17-89
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

Social/Meeting Hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Frame vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood/weatherboard

roof Metal/aluminum

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary:

The Buckingham School is a one story, frame vernacular schoolhouse, built in 1895 and enlarged in 1911, located on a one acre parcel in Buckingham, a rural community in the northeast quadrant of Lee County, Florida. The building, with a metal, hipped roof and gabled wing, has an irregular plan, consisting of a square main block with a rectangular wing extending from the north elevation. The wing has a small shed addition. The exterior is clad with drop siding; there are corner boards at all exterior corners, and battens wherever walls on the same plane are joined. The interior is intact, including a stage, original wainscoting, and beaded pine ceilings. Windows are wood sash, six over six. The grounds of the property are intact.

Setting:

The Buckingham School site consists of one acre of land fronting Buckingham Road at the intersection of Buckingham Road and Cemetery Road, rural roads in a sparsely populated area. The Orange River flows to the west of the property and joins the Caloosahatchee River about twelve miles to the north. Rural homesteads, citrus groves, and an old cemetery are found in the vicinity of the school. Foundations of buildings from the Buckingham Army Air Base of 1942 to 1946 are all that remain of that major occupation of the community.

The school's site is grassy and open for the most part. Several century-old live oaks cover part of the property. A thin concrete curb is found in the southeast portion of the property, possibly the remains of a parking or play area demarcation. A concrete block rest room building is located in the northwestern quarter of the property, and is largely obscured by the schoolhouse. Presumably original facilities were removed many years ago.

 See continuation sheet

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Present Physical Appearance:

The schoolhouse, built in 1895 and added onto in 1911, has a balloon framing system and a foundation of poured concrete block. The exterior is covered with horizontal drop siding. The roof is 5 v-crimp galvanized aluminum. The belfry has wood siding and a metal roof similar to the main roof.

The main roof form is a steeply pitched hip with a square belfry. There is no bell at present, and the location of the original bell is unknown. The extension wing has a steep gable, and the kitchen addition has a shed roof. The east porch, also having a shed roof, is supported by chamfered porch posts.

The front (east elevation) is set back from Buckingham Road approximately fifty feet. The hipped, main block has a symmetrical facade consisting of a double door flanked by two six over six sash windows. The doors have fifteen lights each and a glazed, undecorated transom with two lights above. Screened doors with a single mid-height cross bar open onto the porch. The porch is a simple wood plank deck, with chamfered columns supporting a metal clad shed roof. There is no balustrade or rail. A handicapped access ramp runs parallel to the building in front of the kitchen addition. The kitchen has three two over two, wood sash windows.

The south elevation facing the playground has no doors. Windows appear in a group of three, a pair of two, and two individually. They are six over six wood sash. The facade is simple, and a good exposure of the hip roof and belfry is found from this elevation.

The west elevation is comprised of three sections. The southern portion, under the hip roof, has one set of five six over six wood sash windows. A fifteen-light door and set of steps are located at the southern end of the west elevation.

In the center of the west elevation there are two individual windows typical of the building. The gabled wing has four windows, currently boarded up, and one twelve-light

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door at the north end. A vertical wood batten conceals the seams between the stage and the north bay of the west elevation.

The north elevation abuts the north property line. The gable end of the wing is most prominent. A door and one twelve-light sash window are present on the kitchen bay.

The interior of the schoolhouse is notable for its integrity and simplicity. It is divided into three areas: the main block, which includes the public area and stage; a storage area; and a shed addition with institutional kitchen. The main hall beneath the hipped roof is open, with no partitions. Floors are wood and abut an eight-inch wooden band of molding. Vertical beaded wooden wainscoting encircles the room. Above the wainscoting is a horizontal board finish. The ceiling is of painted, beaded pine, tongue and groove sheathing. In the northwest corner of the main public room is a stage, defined by a simple classical proscenium arch. The room is lighted by bulbs suspended from the ceiling. Original fixtures, if any, are unknown. The storage room in the gabled extension has unfinished walls and ceiling, leaving the gable open to the rafters. The kitchen under the shed roof reflects the simplicity of design and materials typical of the building.

Alterations:

All windows, except three in the east wall of the kitchen, were replaced several years ago with the current wooden, six over six, double hung sash. These replacements were salvaged from an old building by the community to replace the very deteriorated original windows. The effect of the replacement windows is not detrimental to the appearance of the building, and unless advised of it, the alteration would be difficult to detect.

The building has been maintained over the years with painting and roof repairs. Some deterioration is present, and plans are underway for painting and the replacement of rotted wood.

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)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1895-1946

Significant Dates

1895
1911

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

T.M. Park/M.S. Gonzalez

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

SUMMARY

The Buckingham School was built in 1895 to provide for the educational needs of the residents of the Buckingham community in east Lee County, Florida. The building is the oldest known schoolhouse in Lee County, and represents the overall development pattern of the county, and the community efforts of many of its founding fathers. The building demonstrates vernacular schoolhouse architecture in style, function, and details.

CONTEXT

Settlement Context:

Buckingham, also known as Orange River or Twelve Mile Creek, was settled by people of British ancestry who referred to their community, possibly tongue in cheek, as Buckingham, after Buckingham Castle in England. The homesteaders cultivated fruit primarily, but also practiced truck farming and cattle ranching. Buckingham was one of several rural communities in Lee County. While most settlements, such as Pine Island, occurred on the coast, the riverine communities of Alva, Idalia, Olga, and Buckingham were central places of settlement.

The population of Buckingham and the Caloosahatchee River Valley began to increase dramatically during the late 1890s, partly as a result of the Great Freeze of 1895. Citrus groves had been decimated throughout Florida, but the fruit of Lee County was untouched by the freeze, a fact that attracted many growers of large and small operations. Buckingham, an established citrus community, hence the name of "Orange River", became an even more important center for

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property One acre

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	2	7	1	2	0
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2	9	5	0	1	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Parcel in the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 5, Township 44 South, Range 26 East.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire land parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gladys Cook/Barbara E. Mattick, Historic Sites Specialist
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 12-27-88
street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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citrus cultivation after the freezes. Fruit was boated down the Orange River to the Caloosahatchee, and then to Fort Myers to be shipped to northern destinations. Several packinghouses were in the area, as well as at nearby Alva, another important river based citrus community.

The history of the community of Buckingham is much like that of the other "villages" of Lee County, except for one period of major transition, World War II. Thousands of military personnel came to Florida for training during the war. Because of Florida's excellent weather for flying and great expanses of flat, unoccupied land, numerous flying schools and pilot training bases were established across the state. At the beginning of the war, there were six bases; by 1945, there were forty.

The Army Air Corps established a Flexible Gunnery School in Buckingham in 1942. Arrangements were made with the Lee County Commission and the Mayor of Ft. Myers to make 75,000 acres available in Buckingham for the gunnery school. The first personnel were installed at the new Buckingham Army Air Base in March 1942, and the base was fully activated in July. In addition to the military training facilities, a 160-unit housing project was built for the civilian workers attached to the base. In its following four years of existence, approximately 16,000 men were trained at the base. Base children attended classes in the Buckingham schoolhouse.

After the war, all buildings and structures, except the air strip and two base buildings, were completely removed. Today, only foundations hidden by dense vegetation give a clue to the intensive activity that took place there. Because the tenure of the Buckingham School was uninterrupted and without notable points of transition, and because of the important role the school played in life on the military base, the period of significance is from 1895 to 1946, when the school closed after World War II.

Educational Context:

The first school in Buckingham was private, and may actually have been a corn crib on the property of Frank J. Wilson, who also boarded visiting teachers. Documentation of this school was not found during research.

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The first officially recorded schoolhouse was a log building constructed around 1883. Its first resident teacher was Dan C. Kantz who had come to Fort Myers in 1882 from Snider County, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Dutchman and his family opened the Keystone, a hotel on the Caloosahatchee River. It was later renamed the Caloosa Hotel. Kantz, however, was more involved in education in Lee County than in innkeeping. He was the first of Lee County's elected Superintendents of Schools, serving in this capacity from 1887 to 1895. He also served on the Fort Myers Town Council in 1893.

Lee County's origin is historically linked to education. In 1887, Lee County was carved from Monroe County because many citizens found the extreme distance to the county seat of Key West too great to answer the needs of the growing communities of the Caloosahatchee River Valley. One event that encouraged the split was the destruction of the Fort Myers Academy in 1886. The building was destroyed by fire, perhaps set by boys who did not wish to go to school. Local representatives, including the teacher, Dan C. Kantz, travelled to Key West to petition for the building of a new school. The Monroe County Commissioners were hardly sympathetic, and refused any support whatever, claiming that the Fort Myers citizens were not responsible enough to have a school, given the loss of a \$1,000 building.

This rejection, along with other complaints, spurred the wealthy cattlemen of the area to pressure the State Legislature to create a new county, and, in May of 1887, Lee County was created. It was much larger than today's Lee County, encompassing, in addition to its present boundaries, what are now Collier and Hendry Counties.

Public sentiment toward the funding of schools, even by the newly created Lee County Board of Public Instruction, though, remained negative. A letter to the November 21, 1888 Fort Myers News Press, signed by "The Educator", complained about the funding of a new school at Buckingham:

The school on Twelve Mile Creek was organized in 1883 after a five year effort. The first year the the Teachers Fund was \$150.00 and the buncombe

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schoolhouse was allowed \$500.00. The next year the Teachers Fund was allowed \$60.00 and nothing for the third year. The second year the building fund was dropped to \$200.00; the same as for New Prospect and Alva. Allowing only \$60.00 for teaching 20 pupils is out of reason, and what "boshy" pretension it is for a state that boasts one of the finest endowments for schools in the Union to offer so little. The so-called building fund is a "humbug" as it will cost at least \$1,200.00 to build a good respectable schoolhouse with proper furniture.

The name "Buckingham" was first applied to the local log school, which had been known variously as the Twelve Mile Creek or Orange River School, in the minutes of the Lee County Board of Public Instruction. It was recorded that on April 27, 1895, the Board ordered the selling of the "Buckingham" schoolhouse to the highest bidder as it stood, and it was to be removed by June 1.

At this same meeting, John Powell and Taylor Frierson were appointed as a building committee to supervise the selling of the Buckingham schoolhouse and the building of new schoolhouses for the county. Powell had settled in Fort Myers in 1882. He collected seeds from abandoned orange trees of the old Seminole War fort, and established the seedlings at a place on the north shore of the Caloosahatchee River where "New Prospect" and "Powell's Creek" would soon come to be. That was the beginning of the citrus industry in Lee County. Powell served as a Commissioner on the first Lee County Board of County Commissioners. Frierson ran Frierson House on the river, said to be the area's finest hotel. In 1887, he gave up the hotel business and became a cattleman. He also had a grove in Buckingham. Frierson served on the Lee County Board of County Commissioners in 1887.

Frank J. Wilson, who supposedly had had the area's first school in his corn crib, continued to play an important role in Buckingham's educational history. On September 28, 1895, it was reported that Frierson had sold the log school to F.J. Wilson, the highest bidder at \$10. Wilson later relocated it, as stipulated. Furthermore, the land on which the new Buckingham School would be built had

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originally been deeded to the Monroe County Board of Public Instruction in September of 1886 by Wilson and wife. He had come to Fort Myers in the 1870's, and after a period in the village, pioneered at Twelve Mile Creek. He was a cattleman, and also served the Orange River district as Commissioner on the first Lee County Board of County Commissioners. Wilson continued his political career as a State Legislator after the turn of the century.

SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Significance:

The Fort Myers News reported on August 15, 1895 that Manual Gonzalez was at work on the Orange River School with three helpers. It was finished and examined by the School Board by September 28, 1895, and found to be according to plans and specifications. Gonzalez was ordered to be paid for his work. Also on that date, the original deed was changed from Monroe County to Lee County. The deed maintained that should the use of the property cease to be for school or community purposes, the land would revert to the Wilson family heirs. The property was recorded as "one acre 215 feet on a side and located in the southeast corner of the northeast corner of the northwest quarter and the northeast quarter of Section 5, Township 44, Range 26." The first teacher in the new building was G.W. Gant, who had taught the past year in the old schoolhouse. He taught until 1897.

Soon after the Buckingham School building was completed, the voters of Orange Creek (Buckingham) school district petitioned the School Board to hold an election to decide whether the district should be made a sub-district. As such, three Trustees could be selected to determine a millage, and taxes could be collected annually for the local school. The Board proceeded as petitioned, and found the organization of a sub-district to be favored by a vote of sixteen to one. F.J. Wilson, Henry Cason, and J.C. Anderson were elected as Trustees, and a three mill tax was voted upon. The School Board voted \$900.00 for the Buckingham School.

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The school quickly came into use as a community center also. The News reported on March 29, 1896 that a group of Buckingham citizens had met at the school and organized a Literary Society. A recreational debate was held several days following its organization. The building was also used for religious purposes. On Sundays, church services led by W. W. Bostick were held in the building. (Bostick, also spelled "Bostwick", served as the second Superintendent of Schools for Lee County from 1897 to 1900.) The News reported on April 2, 1896 that arrangements had been made for the Baptists and Methodists to use the schoolhouse on alternating Sundays.

Non-school uses of the building soon became controversial, and came under consideration on July 8, 1896 at a special meeting called to discuss and prepare plans for the new schoolhouse. The School Board appeared willing to grant use of the building to the community, but a news item reported that "the teacher" had refused the Literary Society permission to use the schoolhouse. A petition by the society to the School Board was courteously accepted, though, and permission to use the schoolhouse was granted. The Literary Society publicly thanked the School Board and the citizens of Buckingham for the privilege of using the schoolhouse. Their gratitude was short-lived, however, for at its November 28, 1896 meeting, the School Board rescinded the resolution which had granted the Orange River Debating and Literacy Society use of the building. No further mention of the issue appeared in the minutes or the press.

In 1899, school spirit was high, as an item in the November 2 News declared, "Our public school is second to none in the state under the efficient management of D.C. Kantz." Two years later, Joseph F. Shands, the Lee County Superintendent of Schools from 1901 to 1907, reported that Buckingham was one of the best schools in the county. Writing of one of the new schoolmasters, he wrote, "Among the extensive groves, Professor McCall is sustaining character as a first class institution." Again in 1902, the school was reported favorably, "The Buckingham School under the efficient management of Professor McCall is progressing beyond our most sanguine expectation."

One year later, though, controversy again arose surrounding the use of the schoolhouse. The same Professor

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McCall had been devoting school hours to holding prayer meetings. A trustee, A.W. Savage, tendered his resignation because he could not sanction the school's being turned into a prayer meeting hall, saying that, in his opinion, the school was being injured by the religious excitement at Orange River. He said, "I do not object to religious beliefs of the Holiness Band, but do not feel that the regular school work should be interfered with." As Professor McCall had left the employ of the school by that time, anyway, little resulted from the secular versus religious controversy.

During the early 1900s, the enrollment at the Buckingham School rose and fell, falling so low in 1909 that the discharge of the assistant teacher was imminent. By 1911, however, enrollment had increased to the point that the addition of a gabled wing to the schoolhouse was approved by the School Board. M.S. Gonzalez, the builder of the 1895 building, was again contracted for the work.

The school continued to grow. By 1917, students could matriculate through the eighth grade; for further schooling they were bussed to Gwynne High School in Fort Myers. The Buckingham School was a rural educational center for the lower grades, however, serving students from the nearby community of Homestead beginning in the 1920s. The school continued to meet the normal educational needs of the surrounding area throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

The character of the rural community of Buckingham was dramatically changed in 1942 with the construction of the 75,000 acre Buckingham Army Air Base. Hangars, barracks, shops, and runways were rushed to completion. The Buckingham School was used to its maximum capacity, serving the military children. The number of students each year from 1940 to 1946 shows the impact that World War II had on the school. In 1940 there were 18 students. This number increased to 28 in 1941, to 46 in 1942, to 73 in 1943, and reached a peak of 88 in 1944. There were 45 in 1945, and 21 in 1946, approximately the same number that had been enrolled before the war. A teacher who taught at the school for three years during that period recalled:

There were planes flying in and out of here all the time. The children would be outside

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and see planes flying overhead and say, "I'll bet that's my daddy now." Then some of the fliers would be reported missing, and those children would be shipped out in a day or two. It was sad. But I never taught with finer people than I did in Buckingham.

With the closing of the base in 1946, the Buckingham School also closed. In 1950, the Lee County Board of Public Instruction leased the building to the county for \$1.00 annually for use as a community center. Today the building is used primarily by the Cattlemen's Association and for the annual community barbecue. Plans are underway to continue the maintenance of the building through painting and the repair of rotted wood.

Architectural Significance:

The Buckingham School, the oldest known schoolhouse in Lee County, is an excellent example of frame vernacular schoolhouse architecture, demonstrating the construction skills and knowledge available in Lee County at that time. The county was still a frontier area in 1895, and, given the time and place, the school's architectural features were fairly elaborate. Examples of its finer detailing include the belfry, wainscoting, and stage with proscenium arch. These original features remain virtually unchanged. The 1911 storage and kitchen additions reflect early twentieth century rural frame vernacular construction, and also remain intact.

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Photographs 1

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1. Buckingham School
2. Lee County, Florida
3. Gladys Cook
4. November 18, 1987
5. Lee County Planning Division
6. East elevation, camera facing west
7. #1 of 13

The information for items 1-5 is the same for the following photographs:

6. South elevation, camera facing north
7. #2 of 13

6. Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest
7. #3 of 13

6. Detail of northeast elevation, camera facing southwest
7. #4 of 13

6. North end of west elevation, camera facing northeast
7. #5 of 13

6. West elevation, camera facing southeast
7. #6 of 13

6. Bell tower, south elevation, camera facing north
7. #7 of 13

6. Detail of east door, camera facing southwest
7. #8 of 13

6. Detail of east door, camera facing west
7. #9 of 13

6. Detail of windows on west interior wall, camera facing west
7. #10 of 13

6. Detail of east interior wall, camera facing east
7. #11 of 13

6. Detail of stage, camera facing northwest
7. #12 of 13

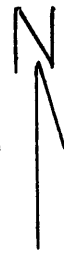
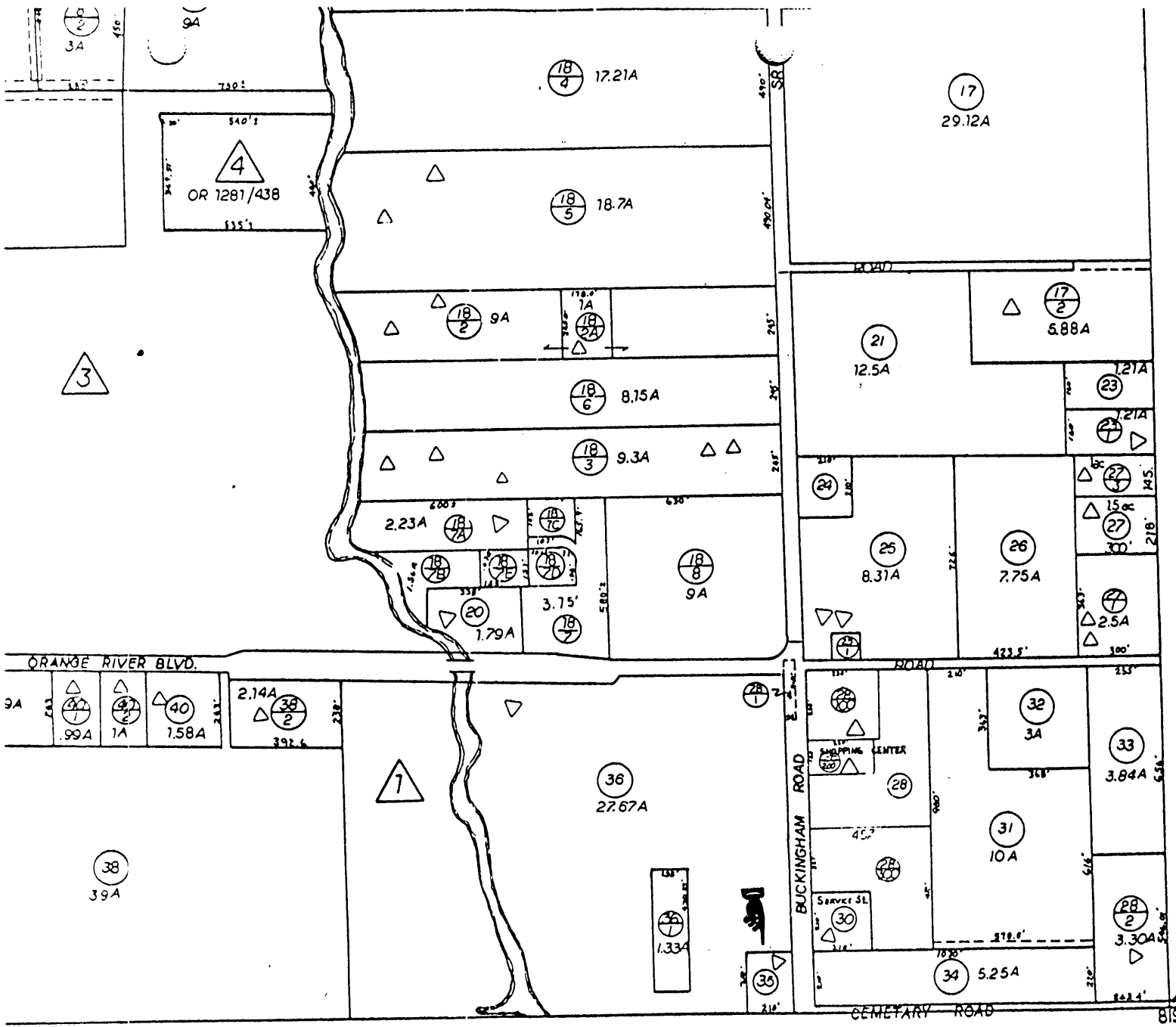
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Photographs 2

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6. West interior wall, camera facing southwest
7. #13 of 13



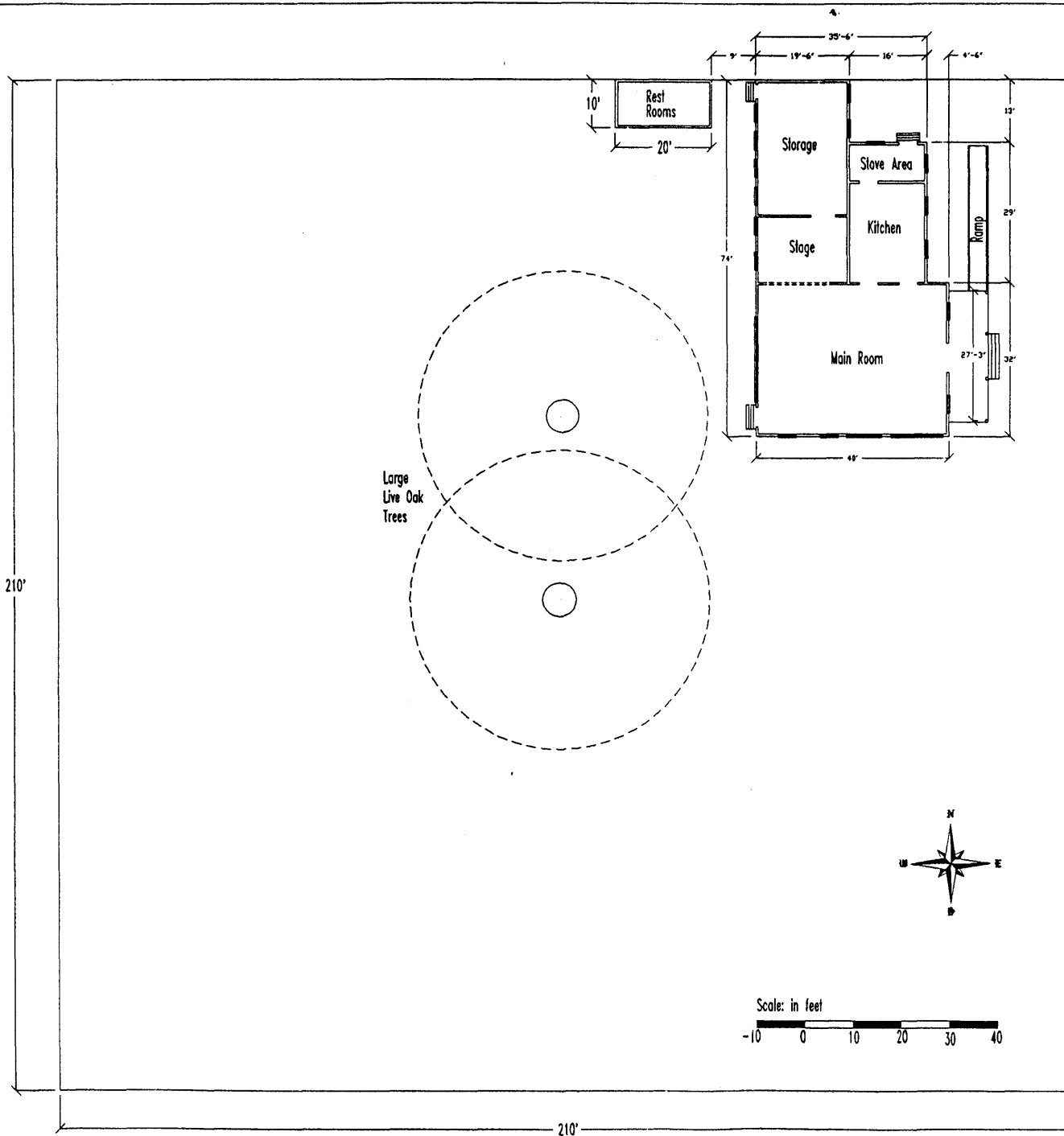
Strap #
05-41-26-00-00035.

05-44-26-00

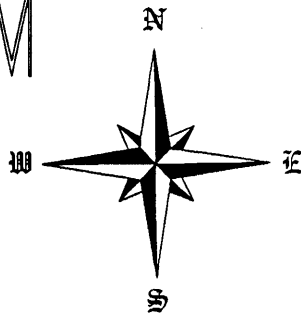
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BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL SITE PLAN

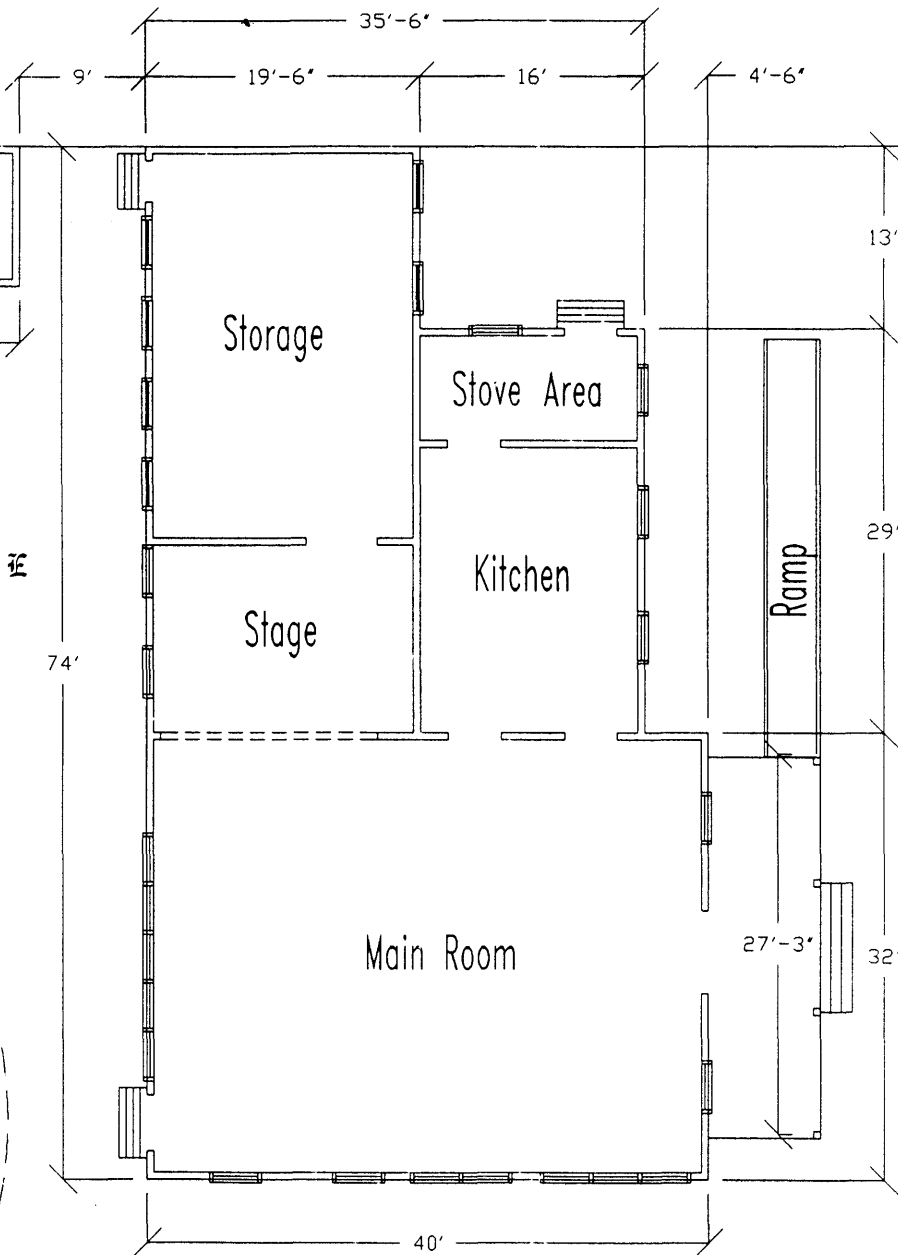
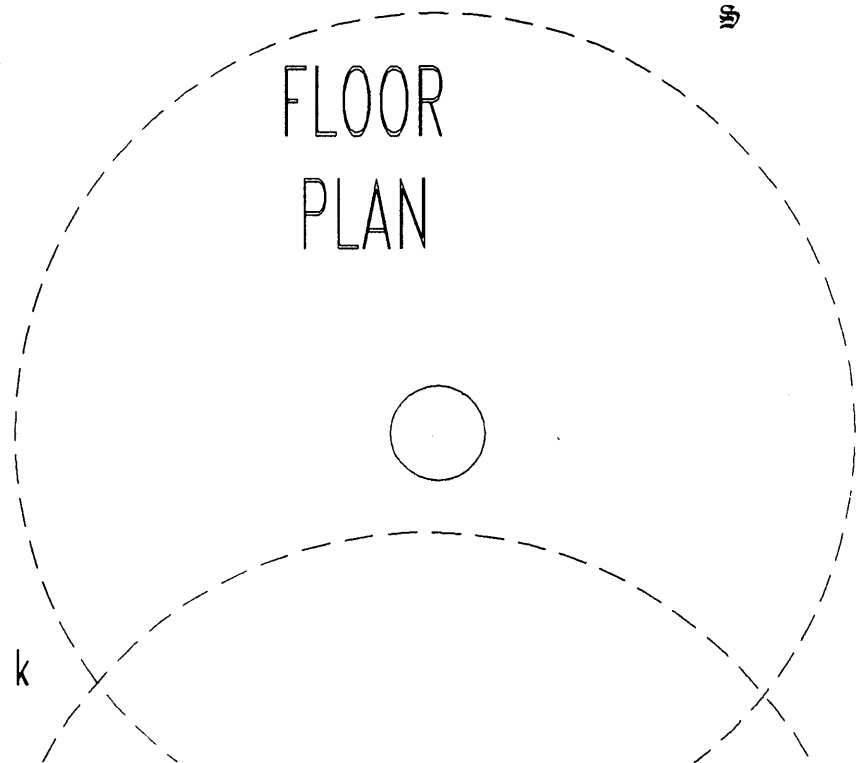
BUCKINGHAM ROAD



BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL



FLOOR PLAN



Scale: in feet

