

803

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1991 APR 17 1991 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 Soap Creek School other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 37465 Soap Creek Road city, town Corvallis state Oregon code OR county Benton code 003 zip code 97330

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked), public-local, public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 4, Noncontributing 0, Total 4.

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

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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: James Hamrick, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, April 23, 1991.

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) 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 (checked), determined eligible for the National Register, determined not eligible for the National Register, removed from the National Register, other (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action: 6/19/91

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: schoolhouse

---

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: exhibit hall,  
picnic area

---

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood: weatherboard

roof wood: shingles

other

---

---

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

---

The Soap Creek schoolhouse is located about twelve miles north of Corvallis on the east side of Soap Creek Road. It is situated on a grassy knoll overlooking a farming valley, Soap Creek, and hillsides of woodlands. Surrounded by a sea of wild flowers, it has a feeling of pure pristine simplicity. (3)

This country, one-story, one-room, wooden school building of vernacular design has a gable roof with open eaves and a bell-tower. There is a <sup>semi-</sup>detached wood shed at the rear of the building and two out-houses at some distance behind it. (2)

The schoolhouse measures 28 feet 2 inches x 18 feet 1-5/8 inches, not including the porches. The exterior of the school is constructed of cedar ship-lap siding over fir studs. It was at one time painted white, but was changed to red with white trim. The roof is covered with cedar shingles. The foundation is poured concrete. The school is built on a slope so that the back porch is at ground level on the east side of the building. The back porch is an open structure and is attached to the wood shed. It has a roof of cedar shingles that is supported by three simple posts and the floor is a concrete slab. A wooden door measuring 6 feet 6 inches high and 30 inches wide with five rectangular panels, opens from the back porch into the school. The front porch is on the west side of the building facing the county road. It has a cedar floor and simple wood railings. The roof is covered with cedar shingles. The front porch stands several feet above ground level and has six steps to the ground. A wooden door measuring 6 feet 6 inches high and 30 inches wide with five rectangular panels opens from the front porch to the interior entry-way. There are five double-hung narrow windows with four over four panes and a plain trim, which cover an area 6 feet 6-3/4 inches high and 15 feet 3/8 inch wide, which includes a 4-1/2 inch wide trim board on top and sides and a 1-5/8 inch sill plus a 1-3/4 inch beveled board under the sill, on the south side of the building.

A visually prominent exterior feature is the bell-tower. It is constructed of cedar with ship-lap cedar siding. It has a pointed roof of cedar shingles and has wood louvres on all four sides. It contains a large bell with a long pull rope attached to it. The rope comes down in the front entry-way inside the school. The original bell was missing and another old bell was purchased at an auction and was installed in the bell-tower in 1978.

Exterior decorative features that are still present today include three wood brackets under the eaves on the east side, three wood brackets under the eaves on the west side, a simple porch railing on the west side and wood louvers on four sides of the bell-tower.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

---

semi-

The detached wood shed is balloon framed, constructed of heavy cedar boards, and measures 14 feet 3/4 inch x 16 feet 4 inches. The roof is of cedar shingles and is deteriorated. Metal rain spouts hang from rusty nails. Four tree stumps were used at the corners to form a foundation. The wood shed is attached to the northeast side of the school. There is an entry door on the south side and a small door high up on the north side for throwing in wood.

The interior walls and ceiling of the school are covered with wainscot. The walls are 10 feet 3 inches high. There is a one inch quarter-round at the bottom, a 6-1/2 inch flat baseboard above that, a 35-1/2 inch vertical oak wainscot with a 1-5/8 inch design and above that is a 2-1/4 inch oak molding with horizontal oak wainscot above the molding to the ceiling, with one inch quarter-round at the ceiling. The floor is of fir which is painted brown.

The entry-way is flanked by two small ante-rooms on the north and south sides of the building. Each ante-room has a small window which is double hung, four panes over four panes of clear glass. The total outside measurement of the window is 52-7/8 inches high and 29-3/8 inches wide, which includes a 4-1/2 inch wide trim board on top and sides and a 1-1/2 inch sill. The ante-room on the north side contains a sink and shelves. The one on the south side contains coat hooks and shelves. The water supply for the sink came from a spring which ran down the hill behind the school.

A red brick chimney covered with plaster is built from the ground inside the school going up through the roof. A metal stove pipe goes from the wood stove up high and into a hole in the side of the chimney.

Originally, the interior ceiling and upper walls were painted white and the lower walls were green. Today, the ceiling and upper walls are a light beige with dark beige on the lower walls. The main room measures 18 x 21 feet 5-1/2 inches. The two ante-rooms each measure 5 feet 8-1/2 inches x 5 feet 4-1/2 inches. The entry-way measures 5 feet 4-1/2 inches wide and 5 feet 9-1/2 inches long.

Important decorative elements of the school building interior include a simple molding around the windows and doorways.

The wood stove and the sink are original furnishings which remain in the school. There are also many books that were used in the school which are being preserved. At one time playground equipment included a wooden see-saw which is no longer there. Two wood posts still remain. One is in the ground outside and the other is being preserved inside the school.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   3  

---

The school building was wired for electricity in 1967 with proceeds from a box social and four light fixtures were installed in the ceiling. (9b&c) Presently, the electricity has been disconnected, but the fixtures remain.

The two out-houses are located under trees along the east fence behind the school. They are made of cedar, have a cedar shingle roof, and each one has a vent in the back side for ventilation. Inside each one is a concrete seat with a wood cover. The out-houses are in a state of decay. They have been coated with preservative, but have not been restored. Each one measures 5 feet 8-1/2 inches x 4 feet 3-5/8 inches and are 7 feet 4 inches tall.

The school is situated on one acre of ground which was originally donated for educational purposes. It faces west and across Soap Creek Road is an old barn. Soap Creek runs parallel to the road along its west side and in the distance is a view of the ridge of the west side of Soap Creek Valley. There is a driveway that winds around some oak trees into the schoolyard on the south side of the property. Early photos show no trees or landscaping around the building and the original landscape of native plants and flowers has been retained as much as possible. Several maple and oak trees have grown around the school building and have only been trimmed when they interfered with the building. Over the years, the wild flowers that have spread over the yard have presented a vast, natural assortment of many varieties, some rather rare, in an undisturbed environment. These wild flowers will continue to be an attraction at the schoolhouse as a resource for the public to see them in a natural setting.

This is a unique and beautiful old building--full of the charm of days gone by.

**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)

Architecture  
Education  
Social History

Period of Significance

1932-1941  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1932  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pete Johansen, builder (attributed)

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

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:

Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 1.0 acres Corvallis, Oregon 1:62500

UTM References

A 

1	0
---	---

4	7	7	9	2	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	9	4	5	0	2	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located in SE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 34, Township 10S, Range 6W, Willamette Meridian, in rural Benton County, Oregon. It is identified as Tax Lot 700 at said location and is more particularly described as follows:

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area consists of one acre of land which was donated for a school and includes the Soap Creek School, semi-detached wood shed and two outhouses at the back of its surrounding grounds. Each of the four buildings is counted a contributing feature.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Lorna Grabe, President, and Louise Neidig, Vice-President  
organization Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation date November 5, 1990  
street & number 37465 Soap Creek Road telephone (503) 745-5634  
city or town Corvallis state Oregon zip code 97330

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

---

The single-story, one-room schoolhouse of frame construction that served the logging and farming community of the Soap Creek Valley in rural Benton County, Oregon, was built c. 1932 and remained in service for public school use through 1946. The historic period of significance is drawn to 1941, when the high point of use was reached with 25 children in eight grades.

Soap Creek School is located approximately 12 miles north of Corvallis, the county seat. It occupies a gently-sloping parcel of one acre abutting the east side of Soap Creek Road, which borders the western edge of McDonald State Forest. The building overlooks Soap Creek bottom land and the foothills of the Coast Range in the distance to the west. According to tradition, the school was built by area resident Pete Johansen.

A neatly-crafted and notably unaltered example of its vernacular type, Soap Creek School is the third school built on the property since the land was set aside for school purposes before the turn of the century. In a number of ways, it emulated the second school of about 1900 that was moved away and converted to residential use and later torn down. The second school, too, had been a brisk rectangular volume, but rested on a post and pier foundation. It too had been clad with shiplap and trimmed with plain corner boards. But it had frieze boards, and was enclosed by a double-pitched roof with boxed cornice. The roof ridge had been surmounted at the west end by an open, pyramidal-roofed belfry, and a brick stove chimney with corbelled necking was on the east. The front gable end was penetrated only by a central entrance. Side elevations of the second schoolhouse had four regular window bays, the tall openings of which were surrounded by simple entablature frames and fitted with double-hung sash having four-over-four lights.

In 1932, following the start-up of logging in the Soap Creek drainage by the Seacord Lumber Company, a new school in the Craftsman tradition was built on the fallow site. It was raised on a concrete foundation, and the roof was a gable of medium pitch, the eaves of which were carried on knee brackets and exposed rafter ends. Cubicle cloak rooms occupied the southwest and northwest corners of the building, and windows were arranged in the south elevation as a contiguous, five-bay window bank to light the classroom. The north elevation is blind. A Craftsman-style hip-roofed porch with square posts and square-balustered railing



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

---

sheltered the front, or west entrance. The square, hip-roofed belfry was enclosed with shiplap and louvers. The brick stove chimney was a straight shaft. The new school measured 18 x 28 feet in ground plan. At the rear elevation, a hip-roofed area cover on square posts was constructed to provide sheltered work space and connection to the detached woodshed of board and batten construction that was the original school on the property. The woodshed measures 14 x 16 feet and is situated at a right angle, off the northeast corner of the school. Vertical battens that were evident in a photograph of 1900 are no longer in place today. The school interior retains its historic finish work of tongue and groove wainscot for ceiling and wall cover, and vertical oak wainscot to the chair rail. Fir flooring is intact, as are plain bases and door and window surrounds.

As a rare, intact example of its vernacular type in Benton County, the school meets National Register Criterion C. In configuration, placement and orientation, it continued the traditional form of its predecessors on the site, and, with its detached woodshed which is the original Soap Creek Schoolhouse, it illustrates the evolutionary development of the property for school use from the turn of the century onward. Based on findings of the Benton County Cultural Resource Survey, it can be shown that no more than half a dozen one-room schoolhouses of frame construction remain standing in the county. While Soap Creek School is the last-built of these, it is in the best state of preservation and it occupies its original site. It is the only one that has not been altered for a new use.

Among the separately contributing features of the property, making a total of four, are two cedar privies, 5 x 4 feet in plan, that are in deteriorated condition.

The school is locally significant also in the category of education and social history, under Criterion A, as an illustration of educational service to a rural community invigorated by logging operations in the Depression era. The property was abandoned by Benton County School District No. 32 not long after rural schools north of Corvallis were consolidated. Families moved from the area in the course of the World War when the U. S. Military acquired surrounding acreage for firing ranges associated with the Camp Adair cantonment site. For a time, the school was used intermittently as a Grange hall, and title to the property

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   3  

---

eventually was given to the North Corvallis Farmers' Union. Neighboring residents undertook a restoration effort in 1965. Since 1969, a citizens group known as Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation was incorporated to preserve the school, replete with original furnishings, and maintain it as an historic place. A school reunion picnic and open house is held on the property annually.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

---

This 1930's country, one-story, one-room wooden school building of vernacular design is located in the foothills of the Oregon Coast Range in Benton County, Oregon, about 12 miles north of Corvallis. It was in Corvallis School District No. 32 until 1947, when the district was combined with Mountain View School, and at that time classes were discontinued.

The Soap Creek schoolhouse is the only one-story, one-room school building in Benton County that is being preserved in its original state, on its original site, in its original condition in its use as a school. Although constructed at a relatively late date, it is a very intact example of the type of schoolhouse commonly built in Benton County during the early 20th century.

This charming old school was built by Pete Johansen, a bachelor, who lived in a log cabin up on what is now Belden Creek Road, according to Grace Reger, who attended school there. The exact date that the school was built is unknown and accounts vary concerning it. According to Grace Reger, it was built in 1932, when she was in the fourth grade. Another former student, Blanche Cutting, says it was built in 1933 or 1934. However, according to Benton County Assessor's records, it was built in 1929. (5) After searching old local newspapers, no news article was found to substantiate the date it was built.

The first Soap Creek School was built to serve the logging and farming families of the beautiful Soap Creek Valley. The land was deeded for a school by J. H. Moore and his wife Elizabeth, on May 9, 1900.

Early pioneer settlers began entering the Soap Creek Valley from the old Portland and Umpqua Valley wagon road which ran through the early town of Tampico. This trail went from Portland down through the Umpqua Valley, and then into California.

The first settlers arrived in the Soap Creek region in 1846. Among them were David Carson, Thomas Read, D. D. Stroud, Robert W. Russell, Smilie Carter, J. S. Halter, Green Berry Smith, Johanon Carter, and Tolbert Carter. This was in what was later known as the Tampico neighborhood. The now non-existent town of Tampico had a post

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5

office established in 1854 which lasted until 1860. Another early town called Wells, sprang up about four miles to the east of the school. Tolbert Carter's land claim was near Wells. The last remnants of this small railroad stop disappeared in 1942.

In a telephone conversation with Merle Moore on October 11, 1974, Lorna Grabe was given the information that the Moore family settled in the Soap Creek Valley in 1899 and bought a ranch. Merle said that his granddad bought a farm next to them. The school teacher stayed with Merle's family, and it was his grandfather, J. H. Moore, who deeded the land used for the school.

Two other school buildings existed previous to the present one. The first one was built near the stream just south of the present one. It was used a short time and was very, very small. By December 8, 1900, a larger school measuring 26x36 feet, with a double row of windows, was built. It had two-seater desks, a stove in the middle, and a teacher's desk on a platform in front. This school building was moved to accommodate the location of the settling families. In time it was converted to a house on the Reece Mallow place and a hired man lived in it. Eventually it was torn down.

When the Seacord Lumber Camp was built along what is now Writsman Creek which runs east and west a short distance south of the school site, and cabins were built to house the loggers and their families, a school was needed to serve these families. It was at this time that the present school was built.

Usually about 6-15 children attended this school during the year. In later years the number increased and in 1941 there were 25 children in eight grades, according to Crystal Kabler, the teacher. Sometimes a student would stay home a month or more at a time to help with the harvesting or ranching. Thus it was common to see a 14, 15, or 16 year old child attending this school.

To get to classes, children walked or rode their ponies, coming over forest paths and dirt roads from their homesteads. Lard pails, syrup pails, or tobacco boxes were frequently used to carry their lunch to school. Games at recess were ante-over-the wood shed, teeter-totter, softball, and playing in the woods.

Grades one through eight were taught in the school. Subjects taught were reading, arithmetic, language, history, health, science, geography, spelling, art, music, and penmanship.

Each year a special Christmas program was given for the parents and friends in the community. Students spoke pieces, sang songs, dressed in costumes and presented plays in the vestibule at the front. Visitors sat on hand-made wooden benches placed near the back wall. During the spring of the year a game of softball was

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 6

---

sometimes played in the schoolyard on a Friday afternoon, with students of the Soap Creek School competing with those from the Tampico School. A last-day-of-school picnic was held in May at nearby Sulphur Springs Park. Parents brought baskets of food and blankets.

No School Board meetings were held at the school as there was no electricity in the neighborhood as yet. They were held at the Elmer Govier home which had its own generator, according to Blanche Cutting, a former student.

The Soap Creek School was closed in 1943 when Camp Adair purchased all the land in the area for a troop training ground, and the area families were displaced. It re-opened for the 1945 school year, but was closed again after the end of the 1946 school year when the one-room schools were consolidated into Corvallis school districts.

The Corvallis School District held title to the property at the time that the school closed. According to C. Lloyd and Joann Andersen, who moved to Corvallis in 1945; after the Soap Creek School closed the students were sent to the Mountain View School. So the Corvallis School District no longer wanted this school in the early 50's. The North Corvallis Farmers Union, a grange group of this area, of which the Andersens were members, needed a building in which to hold meetings and to sponsor a Boy Scout Troup. They acquired title to the Soap Creek School property from the Corvallis School District for this purpose. Several North Corvallis Farmers Union meetings were held at the school at this time. A Boy Scout troupe led by Charles Hibbs, used the school for less than three months in 1959 or 1960. The scouts cut shakes to re-roof it, but the rural location of the school made it impractical for use because of vandalism, so meetings there were discontinued. According to the Andersens, the North Corvallis Farmers Union continued to hold title to the property and wouldn't dream of tearing down the building because they thought it was "a neat old school and very historic" and should be kept.

As early as January 22, 1965, neighbors and friends living near this old schoolhouse became interested in finding out what was to become of it. Window panes were missing, the roof leaked, the siding was a worn-off dingy white color, and the bell for the bell-tower was gone. Fund-raisers were held to help finance these early repair projects. (9-a,b,c) It was the dream of Mrs. Warren Bacon and Mrs. Dick Nordahl, early founders of the Schoolhouse Foundation, that the building be restored with old desks, primers, slates, and maps to furnish it as a museum for everyone to enjoy. (8)

A white elephant sale was held on August 25-27, 1967, to raise money to buy paint for the school building. Mrs. Nordahl said that during the sale there would be two large buckets, one painted red, and the other white. Contributions for paint were

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 7

---

to be dropped in either bucket and the schoolhouse exterior color would be either red or white, whichever received the most money. It was at that time that it was painted red. (9-a)

The present administration of the property is carried on by the Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation. A constitution was drawn on July 9, 1969, and the organization was named Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation. The purpose of this Foundation was to maintain and improve, as a public resource, the Soap Creek schoolhouse and its grounds, and to preserve and restore it as an historic site. (11) At the time the Foundation was formed in 1969, the property was being leased from the North Corvallis Farmers Union. On October 11, 1976, the North Corvallis Farmers Union transferred the title to the Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation for the sum of one dollar.

At present the Foundation has an 8-member Board of Trustees and 35 family memberships consisting of local Soap Creek Valley residents and former students of the school. Interest from local residents is good with volunteers helping clean, furnish refreshments, and acting as hostesses at the Open Houses. Visitors love to reminisce about memories of the past. On seeing this charming relic, one is reminded of when a single teacher, who swept the floor, started the wood stove on chilly mornings, and chased out bees, taught with sternness and love, and was expected to be an example of high moral ethics. It is a symbol of the high regard Americans placed in education and discipline in the future lives of their children. The Soap Creek schoolhouse is also an important present-day geographic landmark, as people guide their friends to local sites in the Soap Creek Valley from the little red schoolhouse.

Some educational equipment and material was found left at the school after it closed and in 1974 some cataloging of these furnishings began. Many of the textbooks were still on the shelves in the back and some were found up in the attic. A hectograph and alphabet posters were left on the cloak room shelves. An old sink is in the corner of the ante-room on the north side of the school. Water for drinking and washing came from a spring up the hill in back of the school. We think the present metal wood stove was in use before the school was closed. Two old teeter-totter posts still remain. Original metal coat hooks are in the south ante-room. The 48-star flag that was in use at the time the school closed still remains and is displayed on a stand by the teacher's desk during every Open House. A case of old maps for teaching geography, a rare treasure, was also left at the school.

Over time additional items for the school have been donated to the Foundation. They include textbooks, desks, ink bottles, bells, lunch pails, slates, and tablets. In 1980, Myra Moore Lauridsen donated a collection of glass slides of pictures taken in the Soap Creek Valley around the turn of the century. The Foundation had pictures printed from these slides which are displayed at each Open House, and the Foundation is preserving this valuable record of the past. The Foundation has also

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

---

purchased various items such as pictures of Washington and Lincoln, a teacher's desk and bell, pencil boxes, textbooks, and reference books.

The Foundation normally holds a spring and fall Open House. At these open houses there is also a special historical exhibit by various local collectors who volunteer to show their collections. There is also an annual picnic for residents of the valley and former students who spin stories about their school days. The Foundation also continues to hold fund-raising activities with a good response from valley residents. At the present time the schoolhouse is in need of having its foundation replaced and the Foundation is very close to having the necessary funds to have this work done.

Although there are other school buildings of this period in the area which still exist, they have been converted to other uses. Some have been destroyed. The Soap Creek school building is the only one-story, one-room school building in Benton County that is being preserved in its original use as a school. Schools such as Moody-Aldergrove in the King's Valley area, though intact examples of early 20th century schools, have not been maintained in a way which preserves their historic character as a school. Comparisons with the history of 13 other schools in the area are as follows:

The Moody-Aldergrove School was built circa 1915, was purchased after being closed and used by the Happy Workers Club.

The Evergreen School on Evergreen Road south of Philomath was built circa 1900 and was closed in 1948. It was sold and used as a residence, then a 4-H clubhouse, and is now a storage shed.

The Beaver Creek School was built in 1896. Its original entry door and transom have been removed and replaced with a wide garage door. The interior has been gutted and most of the original windows have been removed.

The Missouri Bend School, built circa 1910 or 1911, has had the porch removed and a door cut into the siding of the rear elevation.

The Ward School, built after the turn of the century, was used as a school until 1958. It is relatively intact, but is used as a residence.

The Richland School on Granger Road between Corvallis and Albany was built in 1897 and closed in 1946. The building has since been torn down.

The Harris School on Harris Road near Wren was built in 1910, closed in 1945, and has since been torn down.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   9  

---

The Fernridge School near Summit was built in 1910 and closed in 1930. The school was converted to a house and is now a mossy heap of boards overgrown with trees and berry bushes.

The Judd Smith School #39 on Smith Loop Road was built in 1868 and closed in 1954. It was torn down by th Smith estate.

The Summit School in the King's Valley area is not representative of a one-room schoolhouse. It was built in 1930, has three classrooms, a lunch room, and a library with 20th century colonial architecture, and is now being used as a residence.

The Irish Bend School is a good example of an early 20th century school, built circa 1914, in rural Benton County. It is the only example of a 2-story wood frame school building in the county, and is still being used as a school.

The Bellfountain School is an intact exaample of a school complex in Benton County, built circa 1908, with a gymnasium being added in 1913, and is still in use.

The Monroe Union High School which was built circa 1928, had originally 8 classrooms. It is brick construction, has had several additions, windows replaced, and is still in use.

The Soap Creek School is the most visible symbol of early 20th century life in the Soap Creek Valley. Today, no other one-story, one-room wooden school building in Benton County is comparable in terms of integrity and style.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 10

---

Additional information requested to substantiate  
Applicable National Register Criteria in categories A and C

The Soap Creek schoolhouse symbolizes a way of life in the settling of the western United States over 100 years ago. Settlers began to arrive in the Soap Creek Valley in 1846 and the first school was constructed on donated land in 1900. It remained a means of educating those who lived scattered on farms and ranches until after World War II, when it was consolidated with a larger school due to better transportation by bus.

The quality of education offered in the one-room Soap Creek school depended on the ability of the available teacher, the resources in the area, and the attitude of the students. There was a minimum of equipment beyond books and slates.

Although some of the teachers were quite young and had little or no formal training, they were able to provide a basic education and give more personal attention to each student since they were few in number. Often, close personal relationships developed between a teacher and the students, which was beneficial in encouraging the children to learn.

People in the area made every possible effort to construct a school and obtain the services of a teacher, as they felt that educating their children was most important. This attitude was reflected in the attitude of the children who were eager to learn and put forth their best effort, coming from long distances to school and persevering when duties at home interrupted their class time.

The Soap Creek school building is of vernacular design which means it was constructed of materials which were available locally and in a design which was simple and known in the mind of the builder.

The Soap Creek schoolhouse is an example of rural schools of its time and is now the only one-room wooden school building in Benton County which is being preserved intact in its use as a school.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   1  

---

District Clerk's Book of Records, District #32, Benton County, Oregon, possession of Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation, Corvallis, Oregon

State of Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties, State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon State Parks, Salem, Oregon 97310

Weber-Gallagher, Mary Kathryn, Benton County Cultural Resources Inventory, 1984-1986 published by Benton County Historical Society and Benton County Cultural Resources Survey II, 1984-1986, Benton County Museum, P. O. Box 47, 1101 Main Street, Philomath, Oregon 97370-0047.

Assessor's files, Benton County Assessor's Office, 121 NW 4th Street, Corvallis, Oregon 97330

Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation files, 37465 Soap Creek Road, Corvallis, Oregon 97330, possession of Lorna Grabe, President, 37119 Soap Creek Road, Corvallis, Oregon 97330

Newspaper articles, Corvallis Gazette-Times, August 18 and September 28, 1967, Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation files, possession of Lorna Grabe, President, 37119 Soap Creek Road, Corvallis, Oregon 97330.

Inventory of County Archives of Oregon, No. 2, Benton County, Corvallis, prepared by The Oregon Historical Records Survey, Service Division, Works Projects Administration, April 1942, Corvallis Public Library.

Census Reports, IED Building, Albany, Oregon

INTERVIEWS AS FOLLOWS:

Merle Moore, October 11, 1974, early student, deceased.

Charlie Olson, numerous from 1974 through 1990, early student

Duane Christensen, student in 1947.

C. E. Johnson, student of near-by Tampico School.

Grace Reger, spring 1990, former student.

Blanche Cutting, spring, 1990, former student.

C. Lloyd and Joan Andersen, spring 1990, members of North Corvallis Farmers Union.

Myra Moore-Lauridsen, summer, 1980, former early student.

Glee Govier, July, 1988, former student.

Crystal Kabler, spring, 1990, former teacher

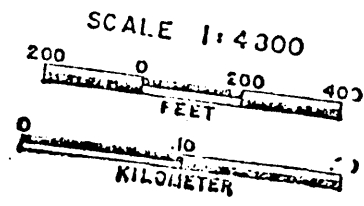
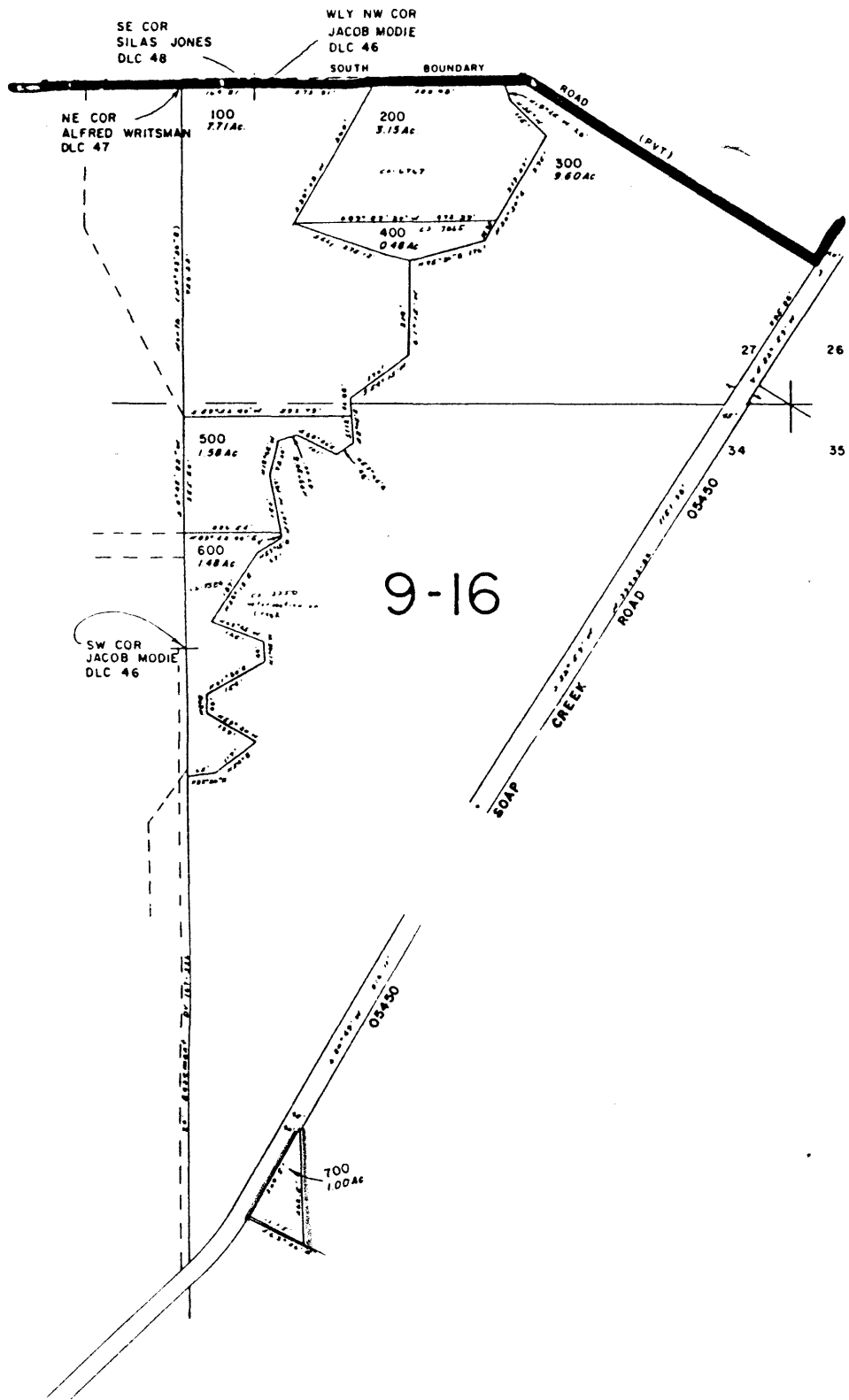
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

---

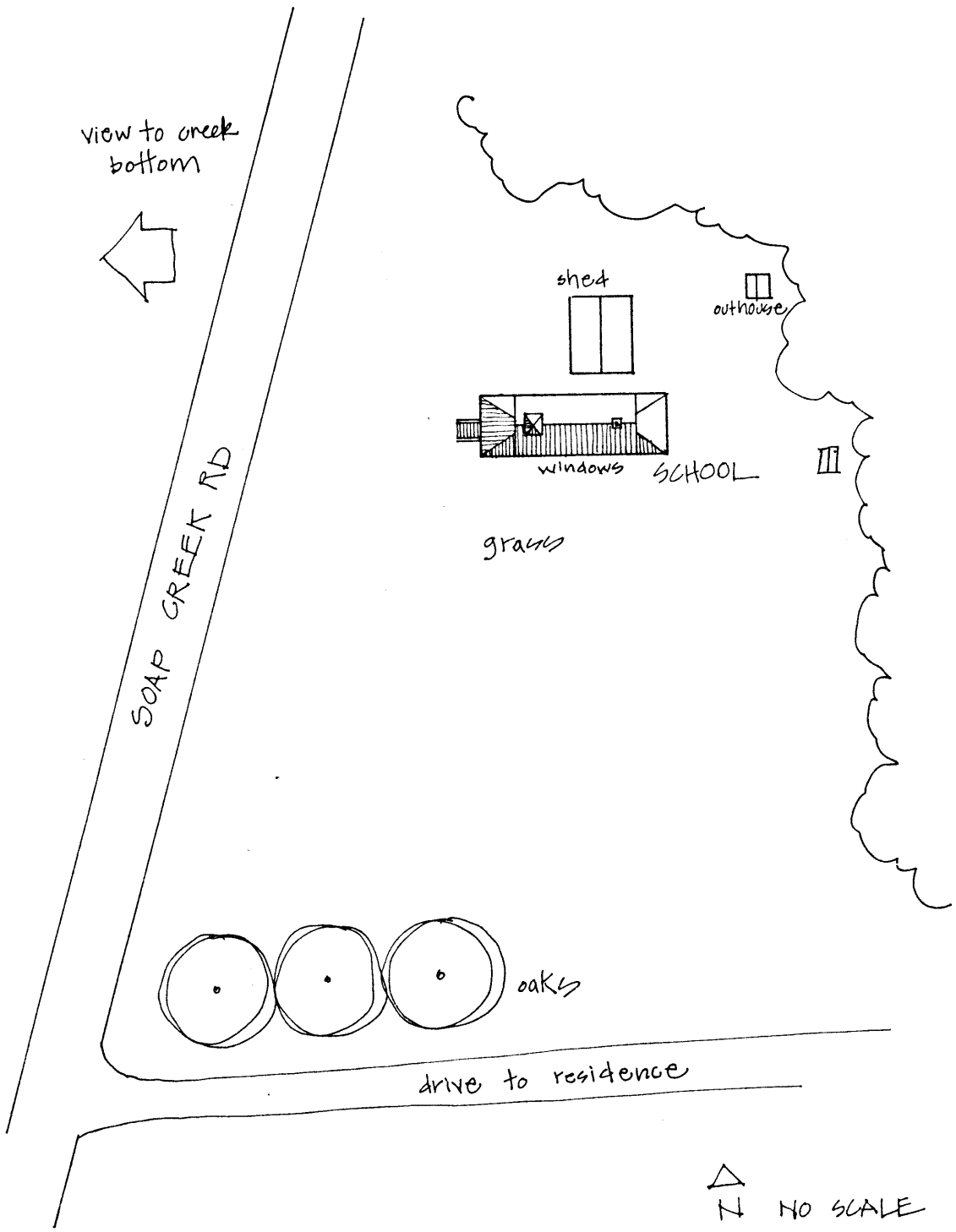
Commencing at a Yew post (49) forty-nine feet from the bridge over the creek crossing the County Road leading from Tampico to Sulphur Springs near the residence of S. H. Moore on said road, running thence in a southeasterly direction 157-1/2 feet to a Yew post, thence in a northeasterly direction 262-1/2 feet to a Yew post seventeen feet from the branch crossing the County Road, thence in a southwesterly direction along the County Road 262-1/2 feet to the place of beginning, containing one acre more or less, all situated in Section 34, Township 10 South, Range 5 West, in Benton County, State of Oregon.



Hand-drawn map showing location of property



#126



view to creek bottom



SOAP CREEK RD

shed

outhouse

windows

SCHOOL

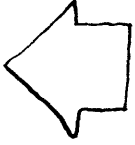
grassy

oaks

drive to residence

△  
N NO SCALE

view to creek  
bottom



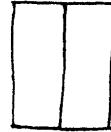
SOAP CREEK RD

W

⑥

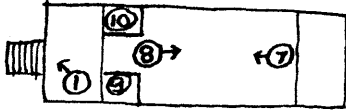
⑪

shed



⑫ → □  
outhouse

③ →



SCHOOL

← ⑤

⑮ ↗

④ ↗

□  
outhouse

⑭



② ↗

⑬

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO  
LOCATION MAP

5





BENTON COUNTY CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY II  
1984 - 1985

COUNTY AREA: Soap Creek RESOURCE #: 126

PHOTO #: H 36 A PROP. CLASS: 201  
ORIGINAL USE: Schoolhouse SIZE: 1.0 acre  
PRESENT USE: Community Activities

PROPERTY ADDRESS: Rt. 1, Corvallis, Oregon 97330  
T 10S R 5W S 34A 1/4 NE  
TAX LOT: 700

COMMON NAME: Soap Creek Schoolhouse  
HISTORIC NAME: Soap Creek School

PRESENT OWNER: Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation  
OWNER'S ADDRESS: c/o Mona Luebbert, Rt. 1, Box 303A1, Corvallis, Oregon  
97330

ORIGINAL OWNER: Benton County School District # 32

ARCHITECT:  
BUILDER: Johannson (?)

THEME: Culture: 20th Century Architecture/ Education  
PERIOD/ DATE: Mid - 20th Century/ c. 1932  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNATION/ TYPE: Vernacular Schoolhouse

\* \* \* \* \*

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Plan type/shape: Rectangular  
No. of Stories: One  
Foundation material: Cement  
Basement (y/n): No  
Roof form & materials: Medium-pitched gable roof with overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, knee braces.  
Wall construction: Wood  
Structural frame: Wood  
Primary window type: Four over four double-hung sash windows, one bay of five windows on the south elevation. No windows on the north elevation.  
Primary exterior surfacing materials: Horizontal drop siding with cornerboards  
Outstanding decorative features: Louvered bell tower with hip roof  
Exterior alterations/additions (dated): Foundation  
Condition: Good (Excellent, Good, Fair, Deteriorated, Moved-Date)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND IMMEDIATE SETTING

Situated in the Soap Creek Valley in the foothills of the Coast Range, the Soap Creek School is located on the east side of Soap Creek Road approximately two and a half miles southwest of the Tampico Road

intersection. The school is situated on a lower west-facing valley slope above Soap Creek. The school fronts west, facing the road.

#### NOTEWORTHY LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The school is sited at the edge of a Douglas Fir forest.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Although constructed at a relatively late date, c. 1932, the Soap Creek School, with its vernacular design, is a very intact example of the type of schoolhouse commonly built in rural Benton County during the early 20th Century. Only the Hoskins School, which because of its location has much less visibility, is comparable in terms of style and integrity. As in the past, today the Soap Creek School is used for community gatherings and meetings. The Soap Creek School is the most visible symbol of the Soap Creek community today.

The current school was built in c. 1932 on the site of two earlier schools. The first school on this site was built prior to the turn of the century. Shortly after the turn of the century, a second school was built on this site. The old school was moved elsewhere on the site and used as a woodshed. This second school was supposedly put on skids and moved to another site. One of the reasons for this move was the existence of a logging camp in the area which resulted in a higher population of children. In the 1930's, the Seacord Lumber Co. began operations in the vicinity of the current school. The current school was built on this land already set aside for this purpose in the 19th Century.

The Soap Creek School closed in about 1943 because many families left the Soap Creek area when Camp Adair purchased surrounding land for firing ranges.

In 1969, concerned Soap Creek residents formed the Soap Creek Schoolhouse Foundation, a private corporation. The goal of the group was to restore and preserve the schoolhouse on a public historic site. Since that time, the building has been refurbished with desks, books, and other equipment, much of which had actually been used at the school. Once a year, a picnic and open house is held on the site.

#### SOURCES CONSULTED

Grabey, Lorna, Personal Communication, 1985.

McDonald, Marlene, When School Bells Rang, Mac Publications, Philomath, Oregon, 1983.

Rankin, Virginia, "Little Red Schoolhouse to be Preserved by Corporation," Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, May 23, 1969.

Recorded by: Mary Kathryn Weber  
Kathy Schutt

Date: April 5, 1985

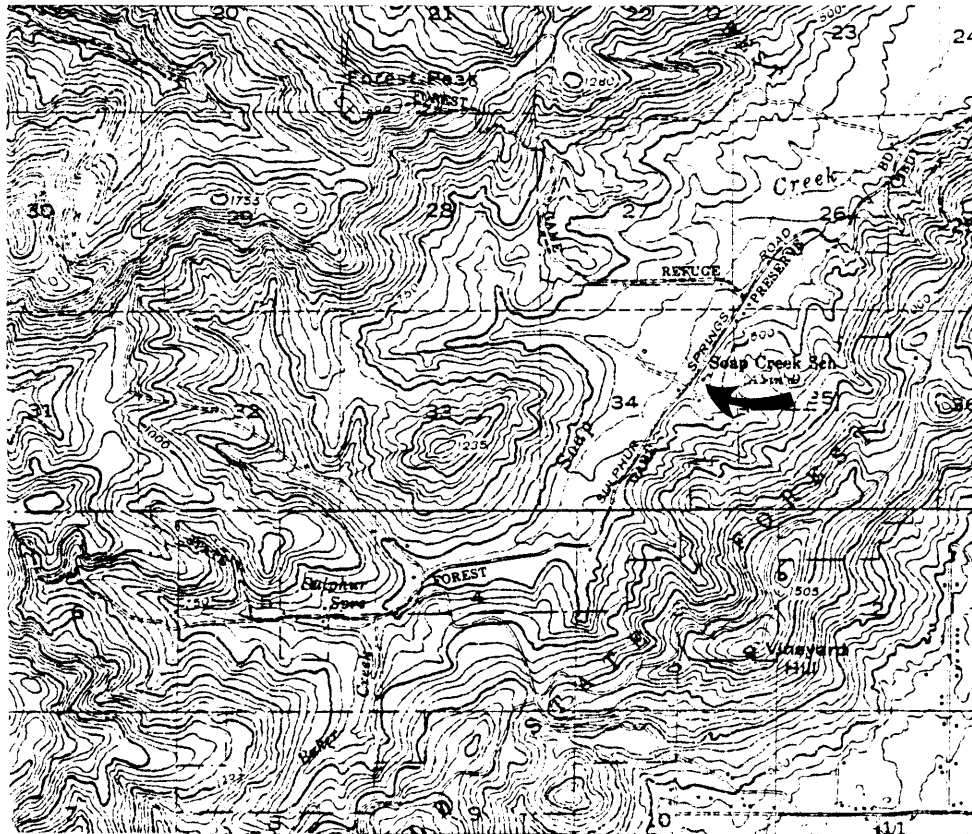
BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

\* \* \* \* \*



Photo No. H36A

View to east



CORVALLIS QUADRANGLE

T 10 R 5 S 34

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

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

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

---

Soap Creek School

Benton County, Oregon

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

*Arlene Byers 5/6/93*

4/26/93

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

---

**SOAP CREEK SCHOOL (1935)**  
37465 Soap Creek Road  
Corvallis vicinity  
Benton County, Oregon

**NRIS NO: 91000803**

Listing date: 6-19-91

The purpose of this continuation sheet is to provide evidence of the date of construction of Soap Creek School which recently came to light and to revise the period of significance and significant date accordingly.

Because references and testimony as to the date of construction ranged from 1928 to 1933 at the time the property was proposed for nomination to the National Register in 1991, the documentation gave an estimated date of circa 1932. School district records were incomplete and thus were not effective in resolving the question.

In the meantime, a reliable informant has come forward to recall the school was built in 1935. Taking the lead, proponents searched local newspapers for that year and found evidence in the form of a front page article in the **Corvallis Gazette Times** for Thursday, September 12, 1935, that Soap Creek was newly built at the opening of the school year. Following is the pertinent excerpt.

Next Monday, September 16, will find a majority of the elementary schools of Benton county opening for the 1935-1936 school year, according to the records in the office of E. H. Castle, superintendent of schools in this county. One new school in the county has a new building, Soap creek, in northwestern Benton county.

Thus, the correct period of significance is 1935-1941, and the significant date is 1935.



Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE: April 20, 1993