

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Golconda School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Morrison Avenue

not for publication

city, town Golconda

vicinity

state Nevada code NV

county Humboldt County code 013

zip code 89414

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: _____

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.

Ronald M. Jones
Signature of certifying official

9/26/91
Date

Historic Preservation and Archeology
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. 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:) _____

Rosemarie Lee

11/14/91

for Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/
Second Empire

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Not visible

walls wood siding

roof wood shingles

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets.

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, Architecture

Period of Significance

1888, 1929

Significant Dates

1888
1929

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

J. L. Donnel/ C. A. LaGrave

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

See continuation sheets.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

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

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	1
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4	5	8	8	9	0
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4	5	3	3	4	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	1
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4	5	8	9	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	3	3	3	7	0
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B

1	1
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4	5	8	9	4	0
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4	5	3	3	4	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

D

1	1
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4	5	8	8	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	3	3	3	7	0
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is on a parcel of land 200 feet square bounded by Fourth Street to the north, Richie Street to the east, Crocker Street to the south, and Morrison Street to the west.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Goldenberg

organization _____ date June 19, 1991

street & number 32 Terra Vista, #4 telephone (415) 567-9258

city or town San Francisco, state CA zip code 94115

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

The Golconda School, built in 1888, is a one-story wood frame structure, designed by architect J.L. Donnel in a vernacular style. The building sits on a one and one-half acre, fenced but otherwise undeveloped site. There are seven historic trees standing north of the structure, and one non-contributing building in the southeast corner of the site. Originally built as a school, the building is now used as a community center. The structure is in excellent condition, and has a very high degree of integrity.

The present town of Golconda is a community of fewer than 200 people, lying between interstate 80 and the Southern Pacific Railway tracks, 15 miles east of Winnemucca. It is a sparse settlement consisting of widely separated trailers and small one-story structures, interspersed occasionally with penned horses and other livestock. Commercial uses are located primarily along the highway. The Golconda School, with its high gable roofs and belfry, is the tallest structure in the community. It sits on a 200' by 200' fenced lot on the western edge of the town. The site is bounded by Fourth, Richie, Crocker and Morrison Streets. The school is oriented north-south, with its entrance at the north end of the structure. There are seven large, deciduous trees, of the same approximate age as the school building, at the north end of the site. There is no other landscaping. A concrete block, gable-roofed structure, roughly 30' square, is at the southeast end of the site.

The Golconda School, symmetrical about its north-south axis, is organized into three distinct masses. At the front of the building is a square entry porch flanked on either side with a shed-roofed addition. The porch block has an intermediate hipped roof with flared eaves, which serves as a transition for the stepped-back belfry tower. The tower is surmounted by a hipped roof and pole.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The central mass of the building forms the remainder of the original school building, and is still its largest volume. This block, roughly square in plan, has a parallel double gable roof which articulates its two room floor plan. The two masses are joined by a linking cross gable. To the rear, a lower, gable-roofed rectangular addition completes the structure. Two brick chimneys penetrate the roofs, one in the center of the central, square mass and the other at the end of the rear addition.

The building is clad with bevel-board siding. It has two-over-two double hung windows and a wood shingle roof. While most of the building is very simply detailed, the belfry has been given a more elaborate treatment. The front, north face of the tower contains a joined pair of two-over-two double hung windows, framed with a plain, flat wood trim. The head trim is curved, and continues across the belfry's north face. There is narrow, horizontal board siding below this band, and fish-scale shingles above. The sides of the belfry are clad with fish-scale shingles, and each have a segmentally arched, infilled opening.

On the interior, the building has a simple floor plan. Two large, high-ceilinged classrooms open from the entry foyer. The western room, originally the smaller, has a platform at its south end. Two square interior windows, turned at 45 degrees, penetrate the central wall of the mass. The eastern room, originally one large space, is now subdivided into two smaller spaces. The rear addition is linear in plan, reached by continuing through the eastern rooms. Now consisting of three rooms, the wing originally consisted of one large room with a small teacher's apartment at the end. The interior is clad with narrow, beaded wood wainscot on walls and ceilings. The floor is of narrow wood boards, running diagonally through the foyer and original section of the building, and north-south through the rear addition.

The Golconda School was built in 1888, on a site donated by Louis Lay & Co.¹ J.L. Donnel was the building's architect, and C.A. LaGrave was its builder. Daniel Harkins, Ed Rinkle, J.A. Hill and William Wear worked on the school's construction.² When constructed, the building consisted of two rooms with entry porch, surmounted by a belfry. The lot was enclosed by a board fence, and was to be planted the following spring with trees and grass. These

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

are probably the mature trees that now stand on the north side of the site.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction's Biennial Reports document maintenance and construction occurring in 1911, 1915 and 1929.³ The 1911-12 report states that the school building "has been thoroughly cleaned and rearranged and it is now pleasant quarters for a two-room school."⁴ The 1915-16 report states that the "commodious schoolhouse (has been) thoroughly renovated." The building was again painted and sanitation improved.⁵

Major changes to the building were made in 1929. At this time, the rear wing was added to accommodate a district high school. The shed additions at either side of the foyer were also added to house girls' and boys' restrooms (outdoor privies were in use until this time). New lighting was installed, and library shelves added to the foyer. Later remodeling, probably in the early 1950s, included the addition of two walls, one bisecting the "big room," or eastern portion of the original two-room school, and another dividing the large classroom in the rear addition.⁶

The building remained in use as a school until 1966. It was then turned over to the Golconda Fire District (then called the Gold Run Fire District), which remains responsible for the property. It is now used for community functions, such as Bible Study, dances and voting. Two small restrooms were added to the western shed addition (off of the foyer), in 1976. At this time the western wall of the foyer was clad with simulated wood panelling. The concrete block building was constructed on the southeast corner of the lot in the 1960s, and is used for fire equipment storage.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

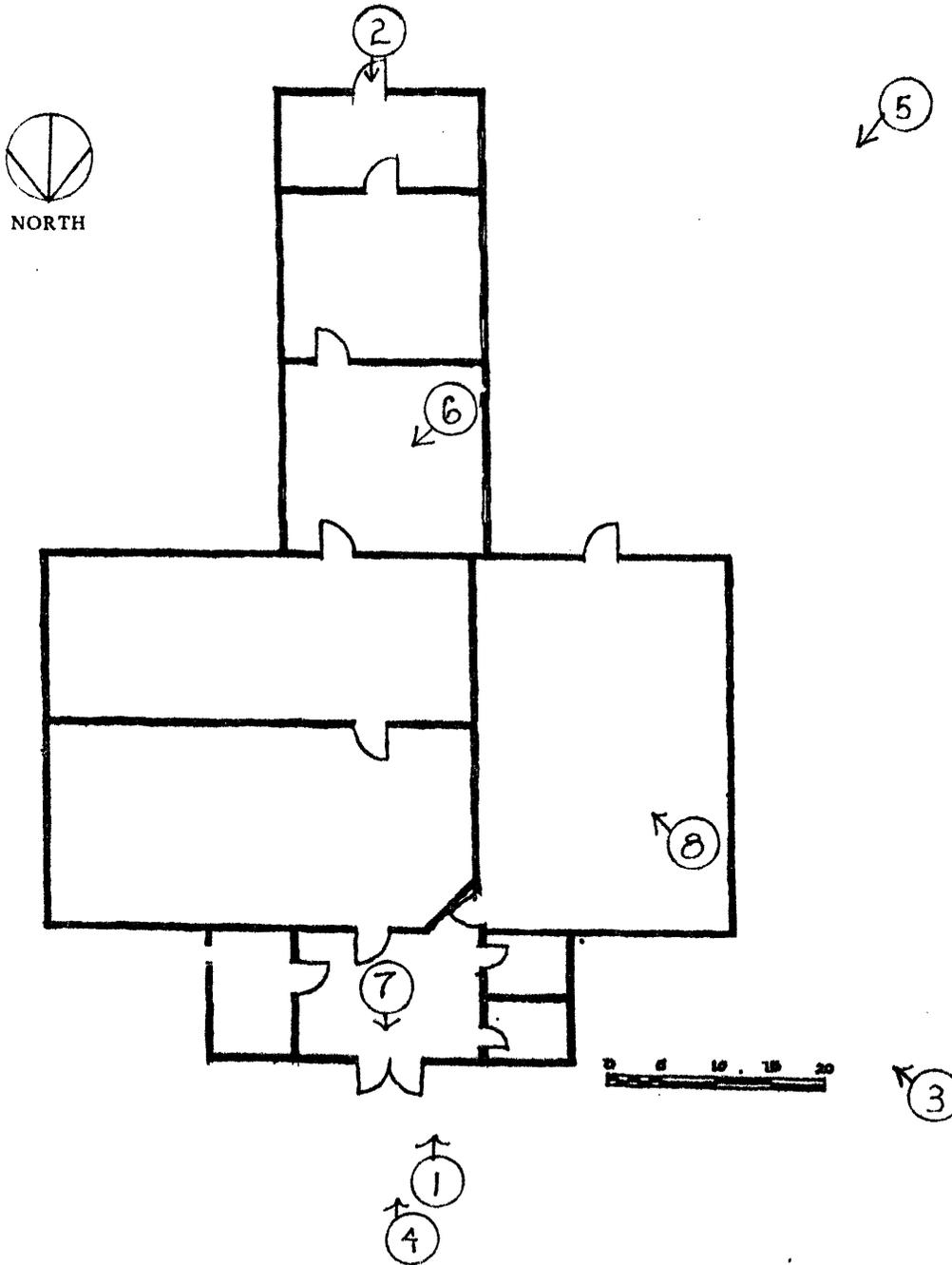
Section number 7 Page 4

1. The Silver State, November 5, 1988. Louis Lay and his brother Theophile were early homesteaders in Golconda and important in the development of the Humboldt Canal, one of the first irrigation projects in the state. Lee Berk, "Humboldt's Big Ditch," North Central Nevada Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. 11, issue 4, 1979.
2. The Silver State, October 17, 1988.
3. Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Reports.
4. Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1911-1912, p. 42.
5. Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1915-1916, pp. 53-54.
6. Oral Interviews: Grace Duvivier and Fern Lowry Elgis, March 14, 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5



GOLCONDA SCHOOL

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

The Golconda School is significant under Criteria A as it relates to the economic development of Golconda. It is also significant in documenting the history of education in Nevada. Under Criteria C, Architecture, the structure is significant as an unusually well-preserved 19th century wood-frame vernacular school. The periods of significance are 1888, when the main structure was built, and 1929, when the high school addition was built.

Under Criteria A, the Golconda School will be discussed as a survival of a time when Golconda was a thriving mining town and resort community. The large, airy, two-room schoolhouse represented a significant investment in the community's future, and far surpassed the often crude, one-room structures generally found in rural areas and smaller towns. The building will also be discussed in the context of the development of education. The first theme discussed will be the development of Golconda.

Although the population of Golconda today stands at fewer than 200, Golconda was once a bustling center for mining and agriculture, as well as a popular health resort. Mining commenced in the mineral belt surrounding Golconda in the 1860s. Prior to the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1868, a mill was running about three miles south of Golconda. Ores were being treated here and shipped by ox teams from Golconda to Sacramento.¹

The development of Golconda as an agricultural center dates from 1862, when the Lay brothers (Louis and Theophile) began to develop the Humboldt Canal. The canal was to irrigate lands below it and run mills on ores from Unionville and other places along the canal route. Although it was never finished, enough was completed to irrigate lands in the vicinity of Golconda. As a result, sheep and cattle businesses steadily developed.²

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

Even before Golconda's mines were discovered, its hot springs were a popular stopping place for travelers. Pioneers on their way to the California gold rush would camp at Golconda long enough to bathe in its waters which were purportedly known for their curative properties from the Missouri to the western slopes of the Sierras. In 1911 the town had four hotels, including one with one hundred rooms.³

By 1888, when the Golconda School was constructed, Golconda was thriving. A newspaper account from that time relates the following:

The whole village of Golconda has a prosperous appearance. The freight house is filled with supplies for stockmen and farmers from the surrounding country, and piles of copper bars, and baled wool are on the platform awaiting shipment. A new school house is to be built this fall, a cemetery has been fenced in and planted with trees, Shallenberger's Store is filled with all kinds of merchandise, and Governor Gintz' new mansion has been fenced and surrounded with trees and is one of the most comfortable quarters in the country. The meadows on the Lay ranch along the river are being dotted with hay stacks, and general prosperity is apparent everywhere in the village.⁴

The Golconda School clearly comes out of a period of local growth and prosperity. The building of schools also relates to larger social patterns within the state, in particular to the history and development of public education. The second theme that will be developed under Criteria A, therefore, is the history of education in Nevada and particularly in Humboldt County.

Organized public education in Humboldt County dates from 1861, when territorial Governor James W. Nye appointed E.A. Scott its first Superintendent of Schools. Scott's appointment marked Humboldt County as one of the first in the territory to attempt to establish public schools before Nevada's statehood was established in 1864. The first school in Humboldt County was probably an adobe cabin in Unionville, the early county seat. This multi-functional public building served as school, church and public meeting hall.⁵

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

The building of the 1888 Golconda school corresponds with a statewide school building boom. The Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report for 1889-90 reports 18 new school houses built since 1886, "some quite costly considering the prevailing hard times."⁶ These "hard times" were a statewide depression in the last two decades of the century that saw Nevada's population decline, mining claims stop production, and many mining towns disappear. Golconda, like its neighboring Winnemucca, continued to prosper, perhaps because of its fairly diversified economy.

The 1929 rear addition to the Golconda School, constructed to accommodate High School courses, links the structure with the development of the High School. The institution of High School was slow to develop in Nevada, and its introduction in Humboldt County closely parallels High School development in the state as a whole. The first legislature meeting in 1865 gave school trustees of each district the power to divide public schools into primary, grammar and high school departments.⁷ It was not until 1874, however, that the first High School departments were organized at Virginia City and Gold Hill.⁸ By 1896, there were still only nine high school departments in the state. This slow rate of High School development was in part due to a slow population growth and the impermanence of the mining communities. Also, the value of High School was not apparent to people who viewed it only as preparation for college.⁹ Until 1895, all of these early High Schools were District schools. An 1895 law designated the School District as the chief unit of school administration.¹⁰

The District High School and High School Department was eventually superseded by the County High School. In 1895, the Nevada legislature enacted a law providing for the establishment of County High Schools. This allowed for a county wide tax levy to support larger, centralized schools. It was designed to relieve the tax burden of local districts.¹¹

The first County High School, built in 1895-96, was in Elko. For 12 years this remained Nevada's only County High School, but by 1907, interest in the County High School picked up, and by 1910, nine of these institutions had been established statewide.¹² In a 1908 general election, voters of Humboldt County voted to

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

establish a County High School. The Winnemucca High School, demolished in 1990, dates from this period.¹³

Inadequate transportation made the centralized County High school inconvenient or impossible for many. To relieve this problem, the Branch County High School was established in 1915, for communities with at least 20 qualified students.¹⁴ District High Schools were also still in operation in smaller communities. The high school wing added to the Golconda School in 1929 operated as a District School.¹⁵

We have thus far examined the Golconda School's historical and social context. The building is also notable artistically. The building will be examined architecturally in its functional context, in terms of other school buildings, and in its stylistic context. Stylistically, the building is vernacular with Second Empire influences.

The architecture of American schools has been categorized into four groups: 1) Folk Vernacular, defined as "traditional and native down to the very materials, such as sod, logs, hand-hewn planks, adobe or fieldstone"; 2) Mass Vernacular, defined by "the use of commercial machine-made materials such as dimension lumber, standard-size brick, concrete blocks, asphalt shingles and commercial siding"; 3) Plan Book Schoolhouses, deriving from the application of design principles or the application of state mandated design standards; and 4) Custom Architecturally Designed, which integrates stylistic and functional criteria into a unified whole.¹⁶ Although attributed to an architect, the scale, materials and overall design of the Golconda School places it in the Mass Vernacular category.

A further distinction can be made between urban and rural schools. Urban schools are more likely to be architect-designed, constructed of a permanent material such as brick or stone, and are more likely to be designed in a formal architectural style. Rural schools, on the other hand, are smaller, less likely to be architect-designed, and are generally built in a simpler vernacular style. The Golconda School begins to approach this urban model--it is architect-designed and relatively large. However, it still fits more readily into the rural definition. It is wood-frame and, except for the belfry, nearly devoid of ornamentation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

Stylistically, the Golconda School can be seen as a simplified, vernacular variant of the Second Empire style, especially in its projecting entry and bell tower. The roof of the porch is a flared-eave mansard. The steeple incorporates round-arched windows and imbrication. The Winnemucca School of 1889 was a more developed, masonry example of this style,¹⁷ while the Fourth Ward School in Virginia City, 1878, was a high-style version in wood.

The elaboration of the bell tower was typical of 19th century school architecture, and also, along with the plan, linked these buildings with churches. In plan, as Fletcher B. Dressler suggests in his American Schoolhouses (1910), the buildings with their long rectangular floor plans, windows on two sides and entrance at one end, derive from village churches in New England.¹⁸ On the subject of the belfry-church connection, S.A. Challmon wrote in The Rural School Plant (1917):

The belfry is a relic of the time when the school and the church were closely associated in men's minds. It served a useful purpose when reliable watches and clocks were uncommon, and telephones and gongs were unknown.¹⁹

In the 19th century, the belfry, generally placed above the entrance, was a status symbol for many school districts. In some communities, special subscriptions were taken for a bell tower. Like church bells, these school bells served a variety of functions. Besides calling children to school, the bells were sounded in times of danger, such as mining accidents; and joy, such as at Christmas. Flagpoles often topped the belfry, and the pole atop the Golconda School steeple may have been used for this purpose.²⁰

The belfry, while a source of pride in the 19th century, went out of fashion in the 20th and was not used after WWI. S.A. Challman was particularly scathing on the subject:

From an architectural point of view the belfry seldom adds anything to the attractiveness of a building, but more often becomes a grotesque excrescence on an otherwise pleasing exterior.²¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

The Golconda School is significant architecturally as an intact example of a 19th century Mass Vernacular school with Second Empire Influences. Typical of rural 19th century schoolhouses, the building is similar in plan to a village church and, also like a church, has a prominent belfry.

1. J. R. Langweth, "Golconda Ranks Well with Progressive Towns of the State," The Humboldt Star, August 25, 1911.
2. The Humboldt Star, August 25, 1911.
3. The Humboldt Star, August 25, 1911.
4. The Silver State, November 5, 1888.
5. Margaret Butts, "Our Country Schools," The Humboldt Historian, Winter 1983, p. 3.
6. Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1889-90, p. 49.
7. Proctor Hug, The Development of the High School in Nevada, pp 8-9, University of Nevada Thesis, 1944.
8. Hug, p. 12.
9. Hug, p. 15.
10. Hug, pp. 21-22.
11. Hug, p. 23.
12. Hug, pp. 25-26.
13. Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1907-08, p. 25.
14. Hug, p. 30.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

15. Hug, pp. 36-37.

16. Janus Associates, p. 27, from E. H. Schroeder, "Educational Legacy: Rural One-Room Schoolhouses", Historic Preservation, July-September 1977.

17. Butts, p. 9.

18. Fletcher B. Dressler, American Schoolhouses (1910), as quoted in Guilford, American Country Schools, p. 169.

19. S. A. Challman, The Rural School Plant (1917), quoted in Guilford, American Country Schools, p. 169.

20. Guilford, p. 174.

21. Guilford, p. 174.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Biennial Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1875-1956. (Carson City: State Printing Office.)

Brown, Harold Nicholas. History of Public Elementary Education in Nevada, 1861-1934. (Berkeley: University of California, 1935) (Unpublished Ed. E. Dissertation.)

Butts, Margaret. "Our Country Schools," The Humboldt Historian. Winter, 1983.

Country School Legacy: Humanities on the Frontier. (Silt, Colorado: County School Legacy Project, 1981).

Gulliford, Andrew. America's Country Schools. (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1981).

Hug, Procter R. The Development of the High School in Nevada. (Reno, University of Nevada, 1944) (Unpublished master's thesis).

The Humboldt Star

The Silver State

Wright, Dorothy and Bernstein, Richard. "Education in Nevada," Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan.

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: 91001651 Date Listed: 11/14/91

Golconda School
Property Name

Humboldt NV
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.

Antoinette Rice

Signature of the Keeper

11/26/91

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: The Period of Significance reads:
1881-1941.

This information was confirmed with Michelle McFadden of the Nevada State historic preservation office.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)