

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

APR 27 1989

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 HARMON SCHOOL

historic name HARMON SCHOOL

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number At NW corner of Kirn Rd & Harmon Rd Intersection not for publication N/A

city, town Fallon vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Churchill code 001 zip code 89406

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 | 3 | _____ 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 |
| | | _____ | _____ 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.

Ronald M. Jones, Deputy _____ Date 4/21/89

Signature of certifying official

Division of 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:)

Patrick Andrews _____ Date 5/23/89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

Social/Meeting Hall

Recreation/Music Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

Stucco

roof Wood/Shingle

other Concrete/Steps

Wood/Steps

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Harmon School is a ten acre, rural school centrally located in the Harmon District of Churchill County, Nevada. The site is located approximately six miles from the town of Fallon and is bounded to the south by Kirn Road and to the east by North Harmon Road. The area is dominated by single-family farms ranging in size from 80 to 180 acres. The nominated site incorporates a substantial, one-story, masonry schoolhouse, a modest, single story, frame teacherage and a single story, frame pumphouse. All three buildings are historically and functionally related and are considered contributing resources.

The Harmon Schoolhouse is a one-story, coursed concrete block building constructed in 1915 to serve the Harmon District of rural Nevada. The symmetrical, five-bay building is supported by a raised, concrete foundation and terminates in an intersecting gable roof with projecting eaves and exposed rafters. Two, interior, brick chimneys with straight stacks and corbelled caps punctuate the principal roof plane. The structure is oriented to the south and adopts a "T" plan formed by a center hall, flanking classrooms and a rear auditorium. A partial basement is found beneath the auditorium and houses a kitchen. The rear auditorium was extended by a two-bay frame and stucco addition in 1935.

The central, three-bay entrance to the building is found on the north elevation and is recessed beneath a projecting roof gable carrying the inscription "HARMON 1915". The entry incorporates double, single light, wooden doors flanked by paired, four-light-over-four-light, wooden sash windows enframed by simple board surrounds. The building's remaining windows are two-light-over-two-light, wooden sash enframed by similar board surrounds.

The majority of the building's original interior finishes survive and include simple, wooden woodwork, plaster walls and school fixtures such as blackboards, storage cupboards and stoves. Research indicates that a iron school bell was originally mounted atop the building. The feature has not survived. the schoolhouse is currently undergoing rehabilitation by the community based, Harmon District Association for use as a community center and polling place.

A symmetrically, three-bay, three-room, teacherage is located northeast of the schoolhouse. The frame building is supported by a concrete foundation and terminates in a gable roof punctuated by a central stove chimney. The building is oriented to the south and includes two, single-light, wooden doors on the principal elevation. This building was used to house members of the teaching staff during the school year. The interior of the building does not survive intact and has been subject to vandalism.

A single story, frame pumphouse is located between the schoolhouse and the teacherage. This building is supported by a concrete slab and terminates in a shed roof. Entry to the building is gained through the north elevation. The building originally houses the pump for the school water system.

Original landscape features include a semi-circular driveway leading to the front of the schoolhouse and several mature cottonwood trees located along the property's southern boundary. Evidence of the site's landscape design has been replaced by high desert vegetation including greasewood and salt grass.

See continuation sheet

Research indicates that the school site originally included an northern boundary, tree arbor, and a hitching rail and water trough for students' horses.

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

Period of Significance

1915-1939

Significant Dates

1915-16

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kaiser, Lon
Wildes, Mark

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

The Harmon School is significant on a state and local level for its association with the development of Nevada's public education system and as an intact example of an early twentieth century, rural school complex. Erected between 1915-16, the Harmon School served as the Elementary School for the Harmon District of Churchill County from its construction until county school consolidation in 1956. As common for the period, the school was a noted community and social center and cited as one of Nevada's "finest rural schools" in the Biennial Report of the Superintendent Public Instruction for 1915-16.¹ The Harmon School is the only intact, early twentieth century, rural school complex to be documented in the state and is one of two rural schools to survive in Churchill County.

The school was built in response to the rapid population growth in Churchill County which accompanied the Newlands Reclamation Project (1903) and the construction of Lahontan Dam on the Carson River. As a result of this first, federal reclamation project, cultivation of the desert was possible. Homesteader and ranch families soon moved to the area straining the existing school facilities.

In May, 1914, the residents of Harmon District voted to construct a larger school. A ten-acre parcel was subsequently donated to the school district by the U.S. Reclamation Service. In July 1914, the building site was leveled by volunteer labor. In that same year a \$5,000.00 bond was raised for school construction. In March, 1915, the Secretary of the Interior officially withdrew the ten acre school parcel from the government reclamation project and school construction was completed the following fall. Lon Kaiser was awarded the contract for the concrete work while Mark Wildes was the project carpenter.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Nevada's late nineteenth and early twentieth century education system was noted for its lack of standardization in facilities and instruction. Vast distances, sparse population and the boom-bust cycle associated with a mining based economy were factors influencing the state's history of education. Educational facilities were similarly affected. Fluctuating fortunes in the mining industry left some schools abandon, and others overcrowded before they opened. Wealthy communities often boasted elaborate, architect designed school buildings, such as Virginia City's Fourth Ward School (listed in the National Register, Virginia City Historic District Nominations, 1961) while schools in poorer areas were sometimes little more than shacks. Although the Nevada Constitution of 1864 provided for a uniform system of public schools, rural school, until the 1920s, tended to be modest buildings constructed for expediency. In 1876, the Superintendent of Public Instruction noted this problem in his annual report:

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. "Old Harmon School District Is Symbol of Progress In City's Growth In Education," Fallon Eagle Standard, 12/5/58, Fallon, Nevada.
2. Letter to the Secretary, Department of Interior, U.S. Reclamation Service, 3/18/15.
3. "Harmon School District," Resources of Truckee-Carson Project and Churchill County, Nevada, Churchill County Chamber of Commerce, Fallon, Nevada n.d.
4. "Harmon School, 1913-1915," Personal Report by George Luke (in personal collection of Myrl Nygren, Fallon, Nevada, n.d.)
5. "History of Harmon School" - Author Unknown, (in personal collection of Myrl Nygren, n.d.)
6. State of Nevada, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1875-1876 (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1877) p. 25.
7. State of Nevada, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Education 1891-1892, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1893)
8. John Edwards Bray, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction 1915-1916, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1917) p.54.
9. State of Nevada, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Education 1923-1924, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1925) p.80.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of property 10 acres

UTM References

A

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| 3 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Zone Easting Northing

C

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|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
|---|---|

| | | | | | |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

B

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| 3 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
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| 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
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Zone Easting Northing

D

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| | | | | | |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the NW corner of Kirn Road and Harmon Road, proceed 661.65' to the west along Kirn Road, then proceed north 661.85', then proceed east 661.92', then proceed south along the North Harmon Road 662.71' to the point of origin.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the 10 acre parcel site donated to Harmon District by the U.S. Reclamation Service that has historically been associated with Harmon School in Harmon District.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Edited and Revised by: Kathryn M. Kuranda, Historic Preservation and Archeology

name/title Myrl Nygren, Secretary/Treasurer
organization Harmon District Association date August 21, 1988
street & number 6800 Mission Road telephone (702) 423-2212
city or town Fallon state Nevada zip code 89406

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"The returns show that of the seventy-one districts in the State; twenty-four furnished less than six months of public school during the past year. These, I think, are, without exception, sparsely settled districts...this inequality arose from the pro rata plan of distribution of public school moneys...Then it is remembered that the supply of tuition to twenty children will require just as great an outlay as for forty children..."²

Declining mining activity between 1880 and 1900 resulted in a statewide economic depression which was reflected in the state's education system. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Orvis Ring noted in his report for 1882:

"Some of the districts require new school houses, but in the present condition of things people are not able to go to any great expense for these things...but when Nevada becomes again prosperous new houses will be built for the children, in which to cultivate their intellects."³

After 1900, new mining discoveries in southern Nevada, the expansion of the railroad, and the Newlands water project (first Bureau of Reclamation project) contributed to the state's economic recovery. Between 1920 and 1926, the state claimed a total of 384 schools and 331 school districts. Two-hundred-fifty-three of these schools were one-room facilities, sixteen of which were described as "unfit for use".⁴

During the first decades of the twentieth century, Nevada joined the national movement for school improvement and standardization. This movement can be traced to 1832, when William Alcott wrote his influential essay on schoolhouse design. This essay addressed such issues as standardized classroom design, light and ventilation planning and appropriate school fixtures.

The Harmon Schoolhouse design can be seen as influenced by the national movement advocating standardized educational facilities. As noted in the Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, "The building is in general modeled after the plan approved by the Russell Sage Foundation and in point of arrangement, convenience, and construction is unquestionably the finest rural school in the District".⁵ The Russell Sage Foundation is a charitable organization which was established in New York State in April, 1907 for "the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States."⁶ The Foundation's Division of Education was established in November, 1909 as a result of investigations into the factors influencing the physical and intellectual welfare of school children. Through its Division of Education, the Russell Sage Foundation published a variety of pamphlets and books on American education ranging from "The New Attitude of the School Towards the Health of the Child" to "A Comparative Study of Public School Systems in the Forty-Eight States."⁷ In incorporating the model of the Russell Sage Foundation for efficient, well-ventilated, and healthful school facilities, the Harmon School design reflects a national, social concern for improving educational environments. The incorporation of a teacherage in the school complex follows a western tradition of providing board to teachers while eliminating the need to "board around" the district with students' families.

The design of the Harmon School anticipated Nevada state legislation of 1917 which required the State Department of Education to issue guidelines for rural facilities addressing both school design and curriculum.⁸ These state education guidelines also encouraged school use as community and social centers. The residents of the Harmon District again anticipated formal state direction in adopting this secondary building use from its construction. Funds for many school improvements were raised by the Harmon Social Club, a social organization of women living in the district. Through its life, the Club provided funds for school library books, geography maps, and playground and sporting equipment. The Club was also responsible for equipping the school's basement kitchen for noon meals and community dinners.

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Nevada's educational system followed a pattern of encouraging voluntary improvement until World War II. Following World War II, a surge in population strained the state's inadequate school system. In Las Vegas, schools held double sessions and the District was unable to balance its budget. In response to the problem, the Nevada State Legislature passed a special appropriation to fund a survey of the state's educational system. Based on this study conducted by Peabody College in Nashville, the state Legislature made sweeping changes in 1956. The most important of these changes were the adoption of a state sales tax, the levying of a mandatory county tax for education and the consolidation of school districts under a wide county system.⁹ These changes restructured Nevada's educational system and resulted in the elimination of school districts, the abandonment of antiquated facilities and increased the equality of educational opportunities within the state.

County school consolidation also forced the abandonment of rural school and community centers such as the Harmon School. From its construction until its abandonment, the Harmon School served as the educational and community focus for the Harmon District of Churchill County. The school is representative of the educational concerns of early, twentieth century, rural Nevada which, despite its isolation, reflect state and national educational trends.

1. John Edwards Bray, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction 1915-1916, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1917) p. 54.
2. State of Nevada, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1875-1876, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1877) p. 25.
3. State of Nevada, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Education 1891-1892, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1893)
4. State of Nevada, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Education 1923-1924, (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1925) p. 80.
5. Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Education, 1915-1916, p. 54
6. Division of Education, Russell Sage Foundation, Leonard P. Ayres, Ph.D., Director (NYC: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1913) pp. 1-2
7. Ibid., pp. 4-7
8. Nevada Revised Statutes, Plans and Specifications for Rural Schoolhouses, enacted March 23, 1917.
9. Nevada, State Historic Preservation Plan: Education Study Unit, Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, unpublished.

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10. Nevada Revised Statutes, Plans and Specifications for Rural Schoolhouses, enacted March 23, 1917.
11. Nevada, State Historic Preservation Plan: Education Study Unit, Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, unpublished.
12. Division of Education; Russell Sage Foundation, Leonard P. Ayres, Ph.D., Director (New York City: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1913), pp. 1-2

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000055

Date Listed: 5/23/89

Harmon School
Property Name

Churchill
County

NV
State

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.

for Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

5/23/89
Date of Action

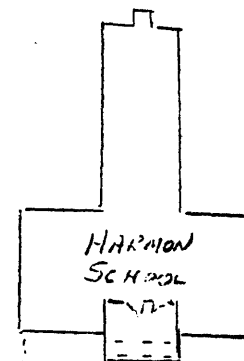
=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Criterion C is selected on the nomination form, but there is no Area of Significance indicated. Kathryn Kuranda with the NV SHPO says that this was a technical oversight. The nomination form is now officially amended to delete Criterion C

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

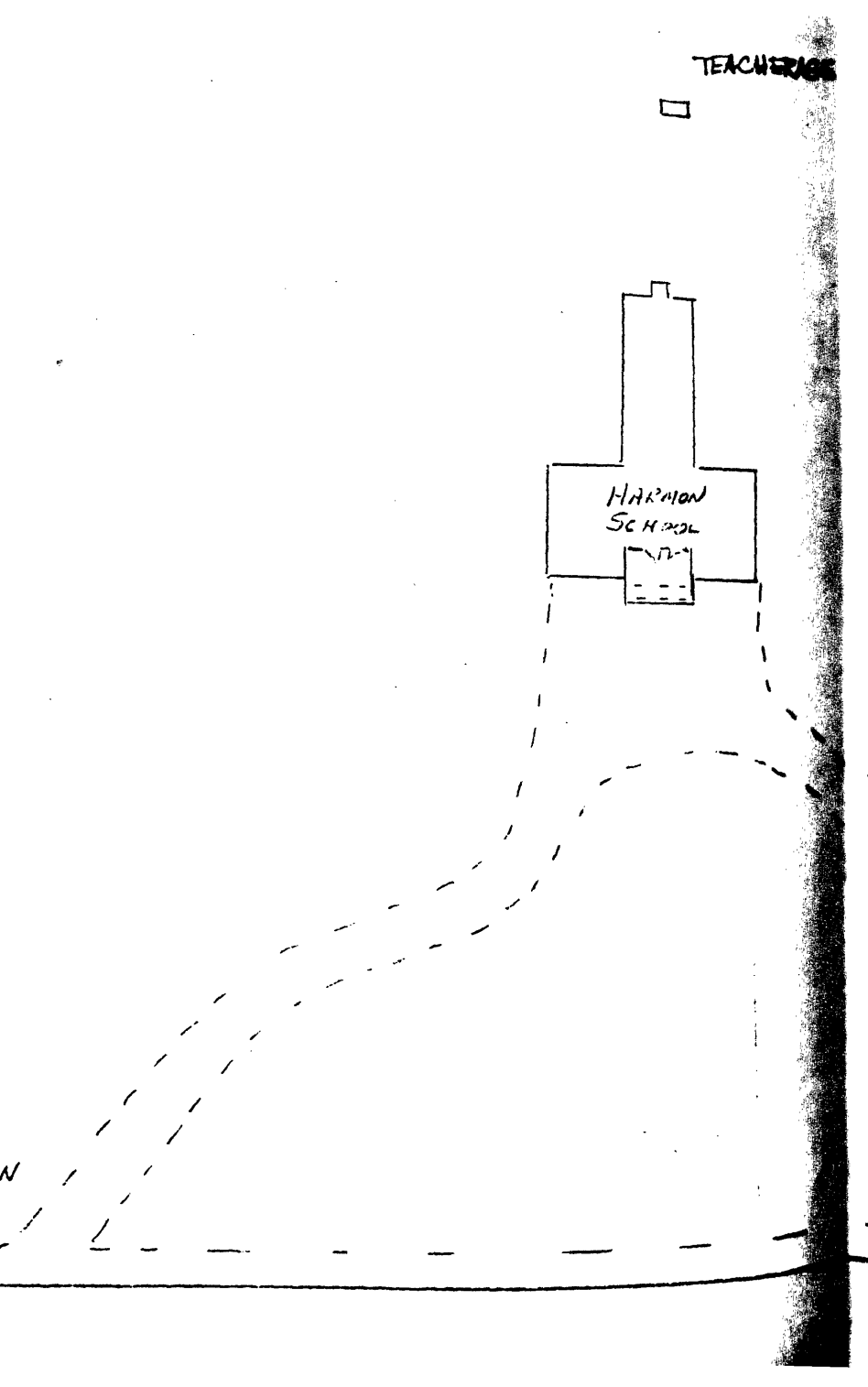
TEACHERAGE



APPROX. SCALE - 1" = 50'

HARMON SCHOOL

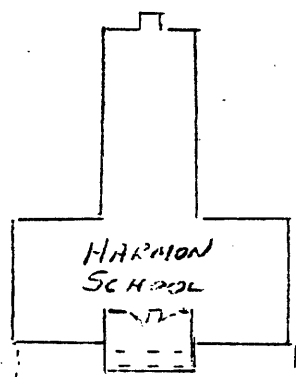
TEACHERAGE and
NORTHERN PORTION OF PROPERTY NOT SHOWN



TEACHERAGE



PUMP
House



HARMON
SCHOOL

E - 1" = 50'

DL

OF PROPERTY NOT SHOWN

