



south dakota  
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



19 December 2022

Keeper of National Register  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington DC 20240

To Whom It May Concern:

The attached submitted file contains the true and correct copy of the following amendment to National Register of Historic Places with embedded maps and images.

Galena Creek Schoolhouse

Please feel free to contact me at 605-773-3458 or [chrisb.nelson@state.sd.us](mailto:chrisb.nelson@state.sd.us) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Chris Nelson  
Historic Preservation Specialist

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

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Galena Creek Schoolhouse

Other names/site number: Hargens Cabin

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Schools in South Dakota Multiple Property Listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 25151 Badger Clark Road

City or town: Custer State: SD County: Custer

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☒

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this   x   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 x meets        does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

       national                             statewide                             x        local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  x   A                   B              x   C                   D

Bed: 150 SHPO 12-21-20m

**Signature of certifying official/Title:**

**Date**

**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

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**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Galena Creek SchoolhouseOther names/site number: Hargens CabinName of related multiple property listing:  
Schools in South Dakota Multiple Property Listing

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Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A      B x C      D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title :

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☒

Public – Federal

☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐☐

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Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education: School

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Work In Progress

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Log Cabin

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Walls: Wood/log; Roof: Metal/tin; Foundation:  
Stone,Concrete

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Galena Creek Schoolhouse (c.1877) is comprised of two volumes: a hand-hewn, one-room log building and a wood-frame addition (c.1950) with lap and halved-log siding. The volumes form an uneven "T" shape with the log volume oriented southwest to northeast. Both volumes have gable roofs clad with corrugated tin. The log volume has a stone/concrete foundation and the addition has a concrete foundation. A retaining wall comprised of granite stones stacked approximately twenty inches high fronts the building.

The schoolhouse sits in a grassy valley surrounded by Ponderosa Pine trees, deciduous trees and bushes. A steep granite outcrop is located directly east of the building and Badger Clark Road runs to the west. The schoolhouse sits approximately 250 meters southeast of Legion Lake within the boundary of Custer State Park.

A rectangular depression is located fifty feet southeast from the schoolhouse. It is strewn with concrete masonry unit blocks and was the site of a garage (built c.1950 removed c.1990). Two hundred feet northeast from the schoolhouse are two small gabled buildings: a potting shed and water reservoir shed, both constructed in the 1950s. Other features on the property include a

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trash pit, cistern ruin, metal pump, and a metal-clad privy. All of the structures and features described above postdate the period of significance (c.1877-1882) and are not included within the boundary.

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## Narrative Description

### **Log Schoolhouse (c.1877) With Wood Frame Addition (c.1950)**

The log volume measures approximately 18' x 20'. It is constructed of hewn logs joined with square notching. Tool markings from broad ax/adze use can be seen on the logs. Interstices are daubed with Portland cement; daubing has weathered out of some interstices exposing a variety of historic chinking materials including wood slats and soil/clay. The foundation is a combination of stone and concrete patches. The gable roof is wood-framed with corrugated tin attached to eight-inch boards. The southeast gable end has wood shingles, three-quarters of which are covered in green asphalt shingles. The northwest gable is attached to the wood-frame volume.

Two four-over-four double-hung wood windows are placed on the northwest and southeast elevations. They have wood sills and simple board surrounds. The entrance is centered on the southwest elevation. The door has a single pane of large glass above a wood panel and simple board surrounds.

The interior is clad in drywall, some of which has collapsed exposing the log ceiling, which is flat at the center and angled to the top of the walls. The interior was originally clad with boards and battens but was changed to drywall in c. 1950. The floor is rough sawn boards covered with plywood.

### *Wood-Frame Addition*

The addition contains the kitchen and bedrooms. Its southeast, northeast, and northwest elevations are clad in halved-log siding; the southwest elevation has wood lap siding. There are entrances on the southwest and southeast elevations. The door on the southwest elevation has a large window with one wood panel above and three below. It is trimmed with wood surrounds. The entrance on the southeast elevation is a wood door with a three-pane window; a wood screen door is also present. A small, shed roof porch supported by log poles covers the entrance; a balustrade of log poles is also present. The porch roof is comprised of log poles, rough-sawn lumber, and corrugated tin. Windows on the addition are four-pane wood casements, often paired. The southwest and northeast elevations have metal gutters.

The interior is clad in drywall with pine wainscoting in the dining room, kitchen, and hallway. The floor is a combination of carpet, carpet padding where carpet has been removed, and linoleum. Bedroom doors are wood two-panel with plain trim.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Education

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**Period of Significance**

c.1877-1882

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**Significant Dates**

c.1877

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

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**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

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**Architect/Builder**

n/a

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Galena Creek Schoolhouse is eligible for the National Register under **Criteria A** and **C**. Its level of significance is **local**. Its **Period of Significance** (POS) is c.1877 to 1882. The POS begins with the schoolhouse's construction and terminates with its estimated cessation as a school. The c.1950 domestic addition helped preserve the log schoolhouse but does not contribute to its significance, nor does the building's occasional use as a vacation cabin from 1892 to 1950. Therefore, these dates are not reflected in the period of significance.

The schoolhouse is eligible under **Criterion A** for **Education**. It is being nominated under the *Schools in South Dakota Multiple Property Listing* (MPL) for its contribution to rural school development in South Dakota.<sup>1</sup> It falls under *Educational Development and Rural School Establishment in South Dakota, 1860-1900*, within the MPL's thematic framework.

It is also eligible under **Criterion C** for **Architecture**. It is a significant example of log building traditions that occurred during the Euro-American settlement of South Dakota. The log structure demonstrates once common but now rare construction techniques. Even with the wood frame addition to the rear, the schoolhouse still reads as a one-room log cabin. The Galena Creek Schoolhouse is a significant log building extant from the early years of Black Hills settlement.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **History of the Galena Creek Schoolhouse (c.1877)**

The Black Hills are a small, isolated mountain range in western South Dakota and eastern Wyoming. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 established the Black Hills as American Indian land. However, Lt. Colonel George Custer's 1874 expedition confirmed the existence of gold, which set off an invasion of prospectors. The first strike was in the southern Hills, but gold seekers soon moved north establishing themselves on valuable claims in Deadwood, Lead, and surrounding areas of the northern Hills. Soon, the entire Black Hills were teeming with fortune seekers illegally trespassing on American Indian land.

The U.S. military was unable and unwilling to stop the miners, which prompted the federal government to find another solution. That answer came in the Sioux Agreement of 1876, which removed the Black Hills from the Sioux Reservation.<sup>2</sup> It was a heavy-handed agreement, though, in which the Lakota were all but forced to sign or face starvation as the government was

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<sup>1</sup> *Schools in South Dakota National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*, (NRIS#64500587), E-F, 14.

<sup>2</sup> This agreement is also referred to as the "Agreement of 1877." Negotiations for the agreement concluded on 27 October 1876. Congress ratified the agreement in 1877. Either usage is correct; 1876 is used in this document.

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prepared to withhold annuities promised under the 1868 treaty. Enough Lakota signed the agreement to satisfy the government and Congress ratified it in 1877.<sup>3</sup>

The Galena Creek Schoolhouse was built in c.1877. Few schools existed in the Black Hills at this time. Early Black Hills pioneer and chronicler Annie Tallent detailed in *The Black Hills Or Last Hunting Grounds of the Dakotahs* that Miss Carrie Scott taught the first school in 1876 at Custer City.<sup>4</sup> A second school, also in Custer City (approximately five miles west of the Galena Creek Schoolhouse), was James E. Carpenter's private tuition school opened during the winter of 1876-77.<sup>5</sup> The first known schoolhouse built solely as a school in Custer County was the Glen Erin School in 1882, which the Custer County Historical Society restored in recent years.<sup>6</sup> The Glen Erin School is approximately three miles west of the Galena Creek Schoolhouse. Over the next decade, a number of private and public schools, almost exclusively of the one-room variety, were built throughout the mining camps, timber camps, and small agricultural settlements in the Black Hills. However, very few from this era survive.

Little is known about the Galena Creek Schoolhouse. In *Pioneers and Custer State Park (1994)*, local historian Jesse Sundstrom recorded "(Dr. Charles W. Hargens) purchased an old schoolhouse near Legion Lake and used it for a summer cabin for many years."<sup>7</sup> Hargens was a popular physician from Hot Springs who practiced in the surrounding area. He was an avid hunter and according to his grandson, Kenneth Hargens, used the log building as a hunting cabin beginning in 1892 and later purchased it in 1904 for \$125 from Tim Downen. Kenneth Hargens retains a handwritten bill of sale that states:

"On this Saturday of September 3 1904 I sold to Doctor Hargens the Old Galena Creek school house and the teacher room with the little stable. The piece of ground inside the horse fence goes with this agreement and the price is \$125."

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<sup>3</sup> The legality of the Sioux Agreement of 1877 was questioned for years. In 1980, in the United States Supreme Court Case *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians* acknowledged that the Black Hills had never been paid for and awarded the Sioux Nation plaintiffs \$106,000,000. The tribes have not accepted this money. It sits in a bank account accruing interest while they continue to demand the return of the Black Hills.

<sup>4</sup> Annie D. Tallent, *The Black Hills Or The Last Hunting Grounds of the Dakotahs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Sioux Falls, SD: Brevit Press, 1974), 303.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>6</sup> Note: Jesse Sundstrom states on page 94 in *Pioneers and Custer State Park* that it was 1880; the Custer County Historical Society marker on site says 1882.

<sup>7</sup> Jesse Sundstrom, *Pioneers and Custer State Park*, (self-published, 1994), 48.

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Tim Downen and C.W. Hargens both signed this document.<sup>8</sup> It was not recorded with the Custer County Register of Deeds until April 2022.<sup>9</sup> Ownership of this parcel of land could not be traced any further back at the Custer County Register of Deeds.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Hargens was born in 1886 in Wheatland, Iowa to German immigrants. He graduated from Northwestern Medical School in Chicago in 1891. He married Lillian Gamet in 1888 and moved to Hot Springs in 1892 after three years of apprenticeship in surgery. That same year, he was appointed district surgeon for the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Railroad, a position he held for fifty years. He operated a private hospital for fourteen years in Hot Springs before taking over the Lutheran Hospital. His practice later became part of the Hot Springs Clinic, but Dr. Hargens also performed surgeries at the Lutheran and Our Lady of Lourdes hospitals. Additionally, he served a ten-year stint as mayor. He and Lillian had two sons, Charles W. and Holland. Dr. Hargens and Lillian later divorced, and he married Pearl Carly Hunt. Dr. Hargens died in 1957 in Hot Springs.<sup>11</sup>

What is known about the Galena Creek Schoolhouse comes primarily from Hargens' family history. Besides Sundstrom's account in *Pioneers and Custer State Park*, no other information on the school could be located. Hargens' biography, *Black Hills Doc: 1892-1945*, recalls many hunting trips in the Black Hills and foothills region of South Dakota and Nebraska, but place specifics are vague. Most stories revolve around the people he was with and their interactions. *Black Hills Doc: 1892-1945* does not mention the log cabin on Galena Creek.

Family history says the school was operated on the conscription method amongst local families with children assessed a teacher's fee. It also states that local families erected the log cabin as a schoolhouse.<sup>12</sup> This history is plausible and similar to the tuition school Tallent mentioned in Custer City in 1876-77 and the private schools in rural Lawrence County that Irma Klock documented in *Silent School Bells: Lawrence County Rural Schools and Histories of Lead, Deadwood, and Spearfish Schools*.<sup>13</sup> However, specifics of the Galena Creek Schoolhouse's construction and organization are unknown.

Kenneth Hargens, Dr. Hargens' grandson, recalled that in 1953 a woman stopped by the schoolhouse, which by that time was being used as his family's residence. She said she was 93 years old and had once taught at the school. Kenneth believes she was related to the Hesnard family. The Hesnards were a ranching family in eastern Custer County. According to Doane

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<sup>8</sup> Photograph taken in 2021 of the bill of sale. In the Galena Creek Schoolhouse research file, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office. Also on file at Custer County Register of Deeds.

<sup>9</sup> Document #85472, Book 47 MISC 658, Custer County Register of Deeds.

<sup>10</sup> Personal Correspondence, Theodore Spencer, 12 October 2022.

<sup>11</sup> C.W. Hargens, *Black Hills Doc: 1892-1945*, (Rapid City, SD: Grellind Printing Center, 1990), 144-147.

<sup>12</sup> Personal Correspondence, Kenneth Hargens, 26 March 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Irma H. Klock, *Silent School Bells: Lawrence County Rural Schools and Histories of Lead, Deadwood and Spearfish Schools*, (Stickney, SD: Argus Printers, 1988), 4.

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Robinson's *History of South Dakota*, the Hesnards came to Custer County in 1881.<sup>14</sup> Kenneth also recalls that a Mrs. Spargur told him that her grandfather attended school in the building. Mrs. Spargur was around 80 years old when she relayed this to Kenneth in 1987.<sup>15</sup> Kenneth believes that the Downen and Vallenthine families may have also had members who attended the school due to its proximity to their homesteads, but he has not been able to confirm as of 2022.<sup>16</sup> A search of General Land Office records for homestead claims in the vicinity of the schoolhouse produced the surnames Downen, Vallenthine, McClelland, Wickett, Benedict, Foree, Fay, Clason, and Whitehead. Some of these families are mentioned in *Pioneers and Custer State Park* and *Our Yesterdays*, historical books that detail the area's settlement. However, no mention of the school was found in any of their biographical accounts.

It is not known when the building ceased its use as a school. A circa date of 1882 has been chosen to close the period of significance. This date coincides with the opening of the nearby Glen Erin School and is also plausible with Kenneth Hargens' oral history. In towns and rural areas, private schools typically closed once public schools opened. The formation of school districts came soon after settlement as homesteaders recreated the societal norms from their previous lives. Irma Klock noted in *Silent School Bells: Lawrence County Rural Schools and Histories of Lead, Deadwood and Spearfish Schools*, her study of rural schools in Lawrence County in the northern Black Hills, that by 1879 fourteen districts had already been organized and by the early 1880s the number of private schools was dwindling.<sup>17</sup> No systematic study of rural schools has been undertaken for Custer County in the southern Black Hills, but trends likely mirror that of Lawrence County given their proximity and shared cultural development.

From about 1892 until 1950, Dr. Hargens and his family used the cabin occasionally for hunting, fishing, and vacation purposes. Around 1950, Kenneth Hargens' family built the addition and lived their fulltime. According to Hargens, by the late 1940s or early 1950s the state considered it a vacation home and required a lease fee to Custer State Park. No one has lived in the cabin full time since 1986.<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Hargens' plan is to restore the property.

### **Early Schools in South Dakota**

The Galena Creek Schoolhouse was constructed approximately twenty years after the first school was established in what would become South Dakota. The first, in the Euro-American model, was at Fort Randall near the Missouri River in the southcentral part of the state.<sup>19</sup> It convened in 1857 and is thought to have existed a short duration and was not associated with a dedicated schoolhouse building.<sup>20</sup> The first public schoolhouse building in what would become Dakota

<sup>14</sup> Doane Robinson. *History of South Dakota*, Volume 2. (Logansport, IN: B.F. Bowen and Co., 1904), 1553.

<sup>15</sup> Personal Correspondence, Kenneth Hargens, 26 March 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Irma H. Klock, *Silent School Bells: Lawrence County Rural Schools and Histories of Lead, Deadwood and Spearfish Schools*, (Stickney, SD: Argus Printers, 1988), 4.

<sup>18</sup> Personal Correspondence, Kenneth Hargens, 26 March 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, Norma C. and Charles Woodard, ed., *One-Room Country Schools*. (Brookings, SD: South Dakota Humanities Foundation, 1998), xiii.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, xiii.

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Territory was established in Bon Homme County (southeastern South Dakota) in 1860.<sup>21</sup> It was a log structure that served nine or ten students.<sup>22</sup>

In 1861, Dakota Territory was organized out of parts of the old Minnesota Territory and Nebraska Territory. In 1864, the first schoolhouse in the newly-formed territory was built at Vermillion near the foot of Ravine Hill.<sup>23</sup> Men of the Dakota Cavalry constructed this log building and Amos Shaw, a soldier, taught the first classes.<sup>24</sup> The schoolhouses in Bon Homme County (1860) and Vermillion (1864) are likely the earliest erected in the geography that would become South Dakota.

Religious groups established some of the earliest schools in South Dakota. Episcopalian, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Congregational missionaries placed an emphasis on education paired with indoctrination. South Dakota's first resident missionary, Reverend John P. Williamson, built a log house near the Yankton Agency at Greenwood in 1869. This building served as a residence, church, and school.<sup>25</sup> Mission schools were established amongst the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota (groups of the *Oceti Sakowin*, or Sioux) beginning in the 1860s, but no early school buildings from the 1860s and 1870s are known to survive.

The 1880s saw an increase in schoolhouse construction throughout much of Dakota Territory. The trend is attributable to the population increase that occurred during the Great Dakota Boom of 1878-1886, a period of intense American and European-immigrant homesteading. While most schoolhouses constructed during the Boom were in the more heavily-settled eastern half of the Territory, many one-room schools were also built in the Black Hills where mining, logging, and agriculture attracted settlers.

### **Brief History of Rural Education and One-Room Schools in South Dakota**

Publicly-funded education advanced in theory and action throughout the nineteenth century as society acknowledged that the universal right for all children to attend school benefitted everyone.<sup>26</sup> Slowly, the movement evolved to provide expanded opportunities across the country including the frontier. The settlers of Custer County, many of whom came from Eastern states already familiar with educational reforms, established schools as soon as enough children were around to support them.

The initial construction of schoolhouses in Custer County was impromptu. As the county became settled, residents banded together to form school districts. The Dakota Territorial legislature had passed laws in 1862 creating the "district" as a unit of school control along with

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, xiii.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, xiii; U.S. Bureau of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ending June 30, 1904*, v.1, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1906), 942.

<sup>23</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ending June 30, 1904*, v.1, 942; Woodard, xiii.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson and Woodard, xiii.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, xiv.

<sup>26</sup> *Schools in South Dakota National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*, (NRIS#64500587), E-1.

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provisions for levying taxes on properties to support school districts. Provisions for a per capita tax and general county tax were added in 1866 and 1869 respectively.<sup>27</sup> In 1883, the “township” system of control was also introduced. Though public school origination laws existed at the time the Galena Creek Schoolhouse was constructed in c.1877, there are no records showing that the settlers in its vicinity used them.

One-room schools, like the Galena Creek Schoolhouse, were the most common educational buildings erected throughout Dakota Territory from 1862 until statehood in 1889. In 1883, there were 385 schools in the Territory and almost all of them were one-room country schools with an average enrollment of fifteen students.<sup>28</sup> By 1889, when South Dakota became a state, the number of schools had grown to 2,978. Once again, the majority of these were one-room schools.<sup>29</sup>

However, the one-room schoolhouse became endangered during the early twentieth century as educational reformers found rural education lacking compared to its urban counterpart. Among the problems identified with one-room schools were inequitable funding, inadequate teacher qualifications, and limited opportunities for socialization.<sup>30</sup> The “socialization” problem was the belief that geographic isolation prevented pupils from developing socially and caused a lack of opportunity for developing friendships.<sup>31</sup> The isolation and monotony of the rural school was thought to have detrimental effects on the individual as it rendered the rural community prone to “intellectual and social stagnation.”<sup>32</sup> According to reformers, rural communities needed the same intellectual stimuli present in larger towns and cities.

Importance was placed on exposing pupils of the rural school to modern ideas as a way of introducing modern concepts to rural areas. It was thought that the pupil would introduce these new concepts at home, and therefore increase standards of living.<sup>33</sup> As a result, progressive curriculum reforms were implemented at the state level, which subsequently shaped the school building itself. This led to the “school standardization” of the early twentieth century which was designed to elevate school standards across the state.<sup>34</sup>

The number of one-room schools in South Dakota peaked in 1916 at 5,011.<sup>35</sup> The 1920s and 1930s ushered in fundamental changes that impacted the one-room school. First, automobiles increased students’ ability to travel further away from home, allowing the consolidated school to become more practical. Second, demographic shifts from rural to urban areas, which was exacerbated during the 1930s, reduced the number of students in rural districts. Finally, federal

<sup>27</sup> William W. Ludeman, “Studies in the History of Public Education in South Dakota.” Thesis, University of South Dakota, (May 1923), 382 & 423.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson and Woodward, xiv.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, xv.

<sup>30</sup> *Schools in South Dakota National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*, (NRIS#64500587), 8.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson and Woodward, xv.

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and state monetary incentives provided to modernize and consolidate smaller schools were effective.

In 1944, 3,599 one-room schools remained in South Dakota.<sup>36</sup> The postwar-era accelerated trends that had begun in the 1920s as the number of one-room schools in South Dakota plummeted. In 1983, there were 104 one-room schools remaining and by 2010 there were only 24 one- and two-teacher schools in the state.<sup>37</sup>

### One-Room Schoolhouse Buildings Today

Fates of one-room schoolhouses have varied. Many were sold, moved, and repurposed. Others were abandoned and left to deteriorate. Once the physical condition of the schoolhouse reached a certain point, the building was often demolished. In the eastern part of the state, schoolhouses were often removed in order to cultivate more land in the postwar era. Overall, one-room school buildings that retain architectural integrity are rare statewide.

The number of extant one-room schools in South Dakota is unknown. County surveys conducted over the last ten years have not located many eligible one-room schoolhouses, typically four or less per county with several surveys identifying one or zero.<sup>38</sup>

Historian Irma Klock studied the history of seventy-seven districts in the northern Black Hills in her monograph *Silent School Bells: Lawrence County Rural Schools and Histories of Lead, Deadwood and Spearfish Schools*. She noted that many former one-room schoolhouses were converted to shops, storage, summer vacation homes, and hunting cabins.<sup>39</sup> She also noted that many were relocated to farms and ranches.<sup>40</sup> Klock's 1988 book also detailed what many surveys elsewhere in the state have since confirmed - that many one-room schoolhouses "were on their last legs."<sup>41</sup>

No comprehensive school histories for the southern Black Hills exist. Additionally, many school records from Custer County's early period did not survive.<sup>42</sup> However, it is reasonable to assume that schools in the southern Black Hills underwent the same changes as those in the northern Black Hills, as Klock's research details. Sharing a similar history of settlement, geography, and economy, along with proximity, makes it probable that what holds true for northern Black Hills schoolhouses is true for those in the southern Black Hills.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, xv.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, xv; "24 Country Schools Still Operating in SD" Mitchell Republic, 15 April 2011. <https://www.mitchellrepublic.com/news/1533905-24-country-schools-still-operating-sd>

<sup>38</sup> South Dakota State Preservation Office files.

<sup>39</sup> Klock, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Personal Correspondence, Virginia Hanson, South Dakota State Archives, 10 May 2019.



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### Log Architecture and the Galena Creek Schoolhouse

The terminology used to describe log dwellings for human occupation, though not comprehensive, typically uses two terms: log cabins and log houses. Size, rather than architectural features, distinguishes between the two, with log cabins usually describing a one-room structure and log houses describing a structure with multiple rooms or stories.<sup>43</sup> It is believed this distinction came from the pioneers themselves, many of whom noted in their contemporary correspondences the differences between smaller, cruder log “cabins” built upon the initial occupation of the land and the larger, finer log “houses” erected in later years.<sup>44</sup>

Log schools, churches, community halls, and other public buildings often resemble the definition of a log house. Pioneers often constructed these buildings the same way they built a domestic log dwelling. The Euro-American settlers who erected the Galena Creek Schoolhouse designed it within the image of what they thought a school should look like. This image included a rectangular-shaped single room, central door at the gable end, and evenly-spaced windows on the “long” sides of the building. One-room log schoolhouses, as well as churches and community halls, often took this form.

The Galena Creek Schoolhouse is built with Ponderosa Pine logs. Ponderosa Pine was often used for construction in western forests because it was long, straight, rot resistant, and available.<sup>45</sup> The cabin’s walls are hewn, meaning the sides have been flattened with a sharp instrument into a roughly square shape. Hewing logs typically required one to three tools. A felling ax was used to cut down a tree and score the log. Scoring entailed chopping notches into the log’s bark which facilitated the process of stripping it from the log. Once the log was scored, a broadax was used to chop off the bark and flatten the sides of the log. An adze could be used to finely finish hewing but was not necessary.

Hewing required skill, strength, and a good eye.<sup>46</sup> It was a technique reserved for craftsman and those familiar with log construction. In *Finnish Log Homestead Buildings in Long Valley*, Finnish-American born author Alice Koskela noted some recollections of Henry Koski, a second-generation Finn whose family settled in northern Idaho. Koski recalled the hewing abilities of an old-timer Finn named Kaarlo Keisala, saying, “Watching Keisala work was something to see. His ability was far superior to anyone else and he could swing that big old broadax and take shavings paper thin where needed.”<sup>47</sup> Hewing, which entailed standing on top

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<sup>43</sup> C.A. Weslager. *The Log Cabin In America*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 57.

<sup>44</sup> William J. MacIntire. *The Pioneer Log House in Kentucky*. (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1998), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Dovetails and Broadaxes: Hands-On Log Cabin Preservation”  
<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf15232802/Part04-Pages-59-76.pdf>  
Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Allan B. Mackie. *Working with Logs*. (Prince George, BC: self-published, 1972), 12.

<sup>47</sup> Alice Koskela. “Finnish Log Homestead Buildings in Long Valley” in *Idaho Folklife - Homesteads to Headstones*. (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1985), 30.

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of the log and chopping downward, was also dangerous. Jerome Harvey, who homesteaded near Lead, South Dakota and worked for the Homestake Mine's main timber supplier, the McLaughlin Tie and Timber Company, fashioned metal stovepipes to fit his legs to prevent injuries while hewing.<sup>48</sup>

Due to the hewing, log walls required less maintenance. The flat surfaces of the logs allowed them to fit together closely, reducing the interstices.<sup>49</sup> The interstices – or spaces between the logs – were reduced but often required some chinking and daubing. Interstices could be chinked with a variety of materials including wood, stone, oakum, moss, clay, dung, or several other materials available to the builder.<sup>50</sup> Once chinked, daubing – the exterior layer which seals the interstices, was applied. Daubing consisted of a variety of materials including mud and clay, as well as binders that included a mixture of materials such as sand, clay, lime, hair, sawdust, ashes, shredded newspaper, and straw.<sup>51</sup> After 1900, Portland cement was also used.<sup>52</sup>

The builders of the Galena Creek Schoolhouse used a square notch to join the logs at the corners. This is a relatively easy joint to construct and was often fortified with pegs or spikes.<sup>53</sup> Square notching required more craftsmanship than a simple saddle notch but was less complicated than the dovetail or double vertical notch that Finnish and Scandinavian immigrants often used.

### Survey of Significant Log Buildings in South Dakota

Most log buildings remaining in South Dakota are log cabins and log houses. Log barns, outbuildings, and saunas (in the case of Finns) are also found on farms and ranches. Landmark examples of Rustic style buildings, such as Valhalla in Custer State Park and the Grace Coolidge Memorial Building in Custer, exist along with other significant log structures the Civilian Conservation Corps and other New Deal programs built during the Great Depression. Rarer than any of the above buildings are log schools and churches from the settlement period.

<sup>48</sup> *Jerome and Jonetta Harvey Homestead Cabin*. National Register of Historic Places Nomination. (NR#08000885, 2008), 8-3.

<sup>49</sup> Macintire, 16.

<sup>50</sup> *Dovetails and Broadaxes: Hands-On Log Cabin Preservation*

<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf15232802/Part04-Pages-59-76.pdf>

Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>51</sup> "The Care and Preservation of Log Buildings"

<https://www.thehenryford.org/docs/default-source/caring-for-your-artifacts/the-henry-ford-historic-log-buildings-conservation.pdf/?sfvrsn=2>  
Accessed 12 July 2018; *Dovetails and Broadaxes: Hands-On Log Cabin*

*Preservation*" <https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf15232802/Part04-Pages-59-76.pdf>

Accessed 13 July 2018.

<sup>52</sup> *Dovetails and Broadaxes: Hands-On Log Cabin Preservation*

<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf15232802/Part04-Pages-59-76.pdf>

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<sup>53</sup> Bruce Bomberger, *Preservation Brief #26: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings*, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 5.

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Rural log schools and churches share similarities in design, function, and purpose. Most were small, one-room buildings that housed public activities in a main interior room. Often, church and school were held in the same building.

In South Dakota, only two log schools are listed in the National Register. The Tabor School (1883) is located in Tabor's City Park in Bon Homme County. It was moved and then relocated back to its original location before listing in 1983. It also has a frame addition from its use as a residence. The Cold Springs Schoolhouse (1887) is located in rural Custer County. Larger than the Galena Creek and Tabor Schoolhouses, it is one of the finest log buildings in the state.



Cold Springs Schoolhouse in 2019. (South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office)

The Glen Erin School (1882) is also located in Custer County. It is one of the earlier log schoolhouses in the Black Hills. A 1992 photograph in the *Watson Parker Ghost Town Notebooks Collection* at the Black Hills State University digital archives shows the building with a collapsed roof.<sup>54</sup> The Custer County Historical Society restored the building sometime after the photo. Despite a new roof clad with seam metal, the Glen Erin School is eligible for the National Register.

<sup>54</sup><https://explore.digitalsd.org/digital/collection/WPGhosttown/search/order/tile/ad/asc/page/301> Accessed 4 June 2019.



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Glen Erin School in 2015. (South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office)

The *Watson Parker Ghost Town Notebooks Collection* includes photographs of several historic one-room schools in the Black Hills. Watson Parker was a well-published Black Hills historian who documented many historic structures. The majority of one-room schoolhouses recorded by Watson are wood frame buildings. The Benchmark and Box Elder schools are log but were near ruins when documented. No standing log schools were found in Parker's collection.

A few log churches are extant and in use in the Black Hills, but they were constructed in the twentieth century. The Nemo Community Church (1921), McCahan Memorial Chapel (1930) in Mystic, and Rochford Chapel (1966) are good examples of log construction in the Black Hills, but they are not from the settlement period. The best example of an early log church in South Dakota is the Brown Earth Presbyterian Church (1877) located near Milbank. It is a log, hand-hewn National Register-listed church.

Additionally, a few nineteenth-century log cabins and houses in the Black Hills are listed in the National Register. They include the Pearson Cabin (c.1876, Deadwood vic.), Golden Summit Mine Foreman's House (c.1883, Keystone vic.), and Harvey Homestead House (1899, Lead vic.). The Pap Madison Cabin (1876, Rapid City) is listed in the State Register due to its relocation to the Journey Museum grounds.

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Comparable log cabins and houses in eastern South Dakota include the Cuthbert "Old Papineau" DuCharme's House (1857) located in the Geddes Historic District in Charles Mix County. The log house, purported to be one of the oldest structures in South Dakota, was moved to Geddes from its original location along the Missouri River. It has been partially covered in wood siding. The Herman Luce Cabin (1871) near Madison, Lake County, is also a hand-hewn log cabin listed in the National Register, as is the Mortimer Cabin (1869) at Oakwood Lakes in Brookings County.

### Summary of Log Construction History in South Dakota

French, British, and Spanish fur traders built the first log buildings in the area that became South Dakota. Jean Baptiste Trudeau built a post in 1794 to overwinter in what would become Charles Mix County.<sup>55</sup> Registre Loisel's post built in 1796 near the big bend in the Missouri River consisted of a large timber house with four rooms.<sup>56</sup> Joseph LaFramboise built his post, which was a cabin of dead trees pulled from the Missouri River, in 1817, establishing the Fort Pierre plain as the longest continually occupied place of white settlement in the state.<sup>57</sup> French American/French Canadian builders often employed *piece sur piece* construction on the American and Canadian frontiers, which used corner and intermediate posts into which tapered log ends were slotted or tenoned in place.<sup>58</sup>

As the fur trade era ended in South Dakota during the 1850s and 1860s, Euro-American settlement began. Both settlers and the United States Army built log buildings when timber was available. The rivers, streams, and lakes of the eastern part of the state offered settlers native trees, though many species, such as cottonwood, would prove unsuitable for long term stability. Ponderosa Pine predominated in the Black Hills and was a popular construction choice.<sup>59</sup>

Log buildings were primarily built through the settlement period in South Dakota, which ended circa 1910. Though some log structures were built later, particularly in the Black Hills, the proliferation of sawmills, housing pre-fabrication, and the extension of railroads fundamentally changed the state's building stock. Dimensional lumber and balloon-framing techniques made log construction obsolete, both functionally and economically.

There were exceptions to log construction's demise in South Dakota. Log cabins and log houses were built and occupied on American Indian reservations well into the twentieth century. A 1956 housing survey indicated that between 60-62% of all houses on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, and Standing Rock reservations were log.<sup>60</sup> While this is atypical

<sup>55</sup> C.B. Nelson. *Notes on the Fur Trade*. (Unpublished manuscript, 2010), 138.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>58</sup> Fred Kniffen. "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, v.55, No.4, (December 1965), 562.

<sup>59</sup> David Erpestad and David Wood. *Building South Dakota: A Historical Survey of the State's Architecture to 1945*. (Pierre, SD, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997), 20.

<sup>60</sup> Anthony Godfrey. *Indian Housing in South Dakota*. (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, 2000, 44-69.

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compared to the rest of South Dakota, it demonstrates the different social, economic, and political conditions on the reservations during this period. These were some of the last true log cabins built in South Dakota and are worthy of their own study.

Another exception was the revival of log construction in Rustic style architecture. Rustic style was an early American architectural movement. It was primarily used in rural environments and was a picturesque, romantic architecture that referenced pioneer America. It was developed and used extensively in national parks, national forests, and state parks, as the style did not compete with other natural or scenic attractions. During the 1930s, many New Deal programs, particularly the Civilian Conservation Corp, used the style extensively when constructing log buildings. Rustic style also diffused into commercial architecture, such as tourist cabin camps, during the 1920s and 1930s. The style declined in popularity in the early 1940s.

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Accessed 22 June 2022.



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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 13	Easting: 141053.22	Northing: 4854759.82
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is a rectangle including only the building. (see sketch map below).

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes only the building. This is the only feature with integrity from the period of significance. Additionally, the building is privately owned while the surrounding land is publicly owned (Custer State Park).

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: CB Nelson  
organization: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 900 Governors Drive  
city or town: Pierre state: SD zip code: 57501  
e-mail chrisb.nelson@state.sd.us  
telephone: 605-773-3458  
date: 10 June 2021

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Galena Creek School

City or Vicinity: Custer vicinity

County: Custer

State: SD

Photographer: Liz Almlie

Date Photographed: January 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 15.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse. Z=13, E=141053.22, N=4854759.82. NE1/4, SE1/4, T3S, R6E, S30. Produced in ArcMap 2022.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse. Z=13, E=141053.22, N=4854759.82. NE1/4, SE1/4, T3S, R6E, S30. Produced in ArcMap 2022.



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Boundary Sketch Map

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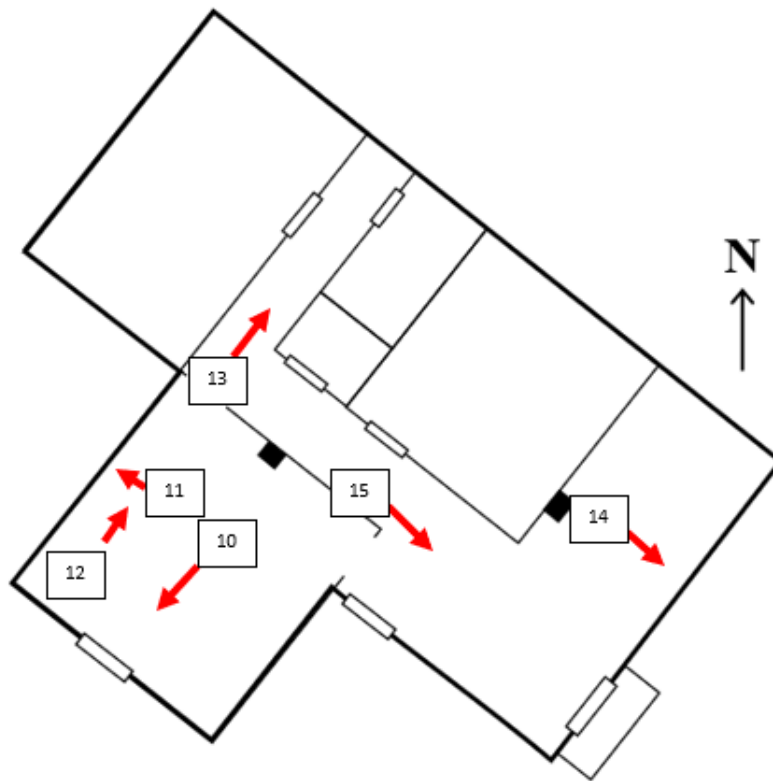


Exterior Photo Key



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Interior Photo Key

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0001. Front of log volume, addition on left.  
Looking NE.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0002. Looking SE at log volume and addition.



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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0003. Looking SE from Highway 14A.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0004. Looking E from Highway 14A.



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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0005. Looking NW at entrance to addition volume.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0006. Looking N at window on log volume.



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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0007. Looking NE at  
gable of log volume.



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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0008. Looking at NW corner of log volume.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0009. Looking E at the SW corner of the log volume.



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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0010. Looking at front door of the log volume.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0011. Looking at the NW wall of the log volume.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0012. Looking E from inside the log volume where it connects with the addition.



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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0013. Hallway in the addition.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0014. Kitchen in the addition looking SE.

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SD\_CusterCounty\_GalenaCreekSchoolhouse\_0015. Looking SE in the addition.