
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
2020



Bear Valley School
Pinnacles National Park



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Interior Regions 8, 9,
10, and 12

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CULTURAL LANDSCAPES
2020 Condition Assessments for:

Pinnacles National Park

Regional staff assessed two cultural landscapes in 2020. Please refer to the last page of the summary report for a list of management category and condition definitions.

2020 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE SUMMARY REPORT: MANAGEMENT CATEGORY AND
ASSESSED CONDITION

	Cultural Landscape Name	Resource ID	Previous Condition	Latest Condition	Latest Year Assessed	Management Category
1	Pinnacles East Entrance District	700017	Fair	Fair	2020	May Be Preserved Or Maintained
2	Bear Valley School	976137	New	Fair	2020	Should be Preserved and Maintained

Park Comments:

Superintendent Concurrence:

I concur with the cultural landscape condition updates identified in this Summary Report, including the cultural landscape conditions and management categories, as entered in the Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) (subject to any comments above).

CURT DIMMICK Digitally signed by CURT
DIMMICK
Date: 2020.11.12 19:04:25 -08'00' Acting for/

Superintendent, Pinnacles National Park

Date

Please return this form to:
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Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information:

Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is an evaluated inventory of all significant landscapes in units of the national park system in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire any enforceable legal interest. Landscapes documented through the CLI are those that individually meet criteria set forth in the National Register of Historic Places such as historic sites, historic designed landscapes, and historic vernacular landscapes or those that are contributing elements of properties that meet the criteria. In addition, landscapes that are managed as cultural resources because of law, policy, or decisions reached through the park planning process even though they do not meet the National Register criteria, are also included in the CLI.

The CLI serves three major purposes. First, it provides the means to describe cultural landscapes on an individual or collective basis at the park, regional, or service-wide level. Secondly, it provides a platform to share information about cultural landscapes across programmatic areas and concerns and to integrate related data about these resources into park management. Thirdly, it provides an analytical tool to judge accomplishment and accountability.

The legislative, regulatory, and policy direction for conducting the CLI include:

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)). Each Federal agency shall establish...a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places...of historic properties...

Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(a)...Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties required by section 110(a)(2) of the NHPA...No later than September 30, 2004, each covered agency shall complete a report of the assessment and make it available to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior... (c) Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall, by September 30, 2005, and every third year thereafter, prepare a report on its progress in identifying... historic properties in its ownership and make the report available to the Council and the Secretary...

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Standard 2: An agency provides for the timely identification and evaluation of historic properties under agency jurisdiction or control and/or subject to effect by agency actions (Sec. 110 (a)(2)(A) *Management Policies 2006*. 5.1.3.1 Inventories: The Park Service will (1) maintain and expand the following inventories...about cultural resources in units of the national park system... Cultural Landscape Inventory of historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes,... and historic sites...

Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22 issued pursuant to Director's Order #28. As cultural resources are identified and evaluated, they should also be listed in the appropriate Service-wide inventories of cultural resources.

Responding to the Call to Action:

The year 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. A five-year action plan entitled, *"A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement"* charts a path toward that second century vision by asking Service employees and partners to commit to concrete actions that advance the agency's mission. The heart of the plan includes four broad themes supported by specific goals and measurable actions. These themes are: Connecting People to Parks, Advancing the NPS Education Mission, Preserving America's Special Places, and Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence. The Cultural Landscape Inventory relates to three of these themes:

Connect People to Parks. Help communities protect what is special to them, highlight their history, and retain or rebuild their economic and environmental sustainability.

Advance the Education Mission. Strengthen the National Park Service's role as an educational force based on core American values, historical and scientific scholarship, and unbiased translation of the complexities of the American experience.

Preserve America's Special Places. Be a leader in extending the benefits of conservation across physical, social, political, and international boundaries in partnership with others.

The national CLI effort directly relates to #3, Preserve America's Special Places, and specifically to Action #28, "Park Pulse." Each CLI documents the existing condition of park resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to improve condition. This information can be used to improve park priority setting and communicate complex park condition information to the public.

Responding to the Cultural Resources Challenge:

The Cultural Resources Challenge (CRC) is a NPS strategic plan that identifies our most critical priorities. The primary objective is to *"Achieve a standard of excellence for the stewardship of the resources that form the historical and cultural foundations of the nation, commit at all levels to a common set of goals, and articulate a common vision for the next century."* The CLI contributes to the fulfillment of all five goals of the CRC:

- 1) *Provide leadership support, and advocacy for the stewardship, protection, interpretation, and management of the nation's heritage through scholarly research, science and effective management;*
- 2) *Recommit to the spirit and letter of the landmark legislation underpinning the NPS;*
- 3) *Connect all Americans to their heritage resources in a manner that resonates with their lives, legacies, and dreams, and tells the stories that make up America's diverse national identity;*
- 4) *Integrate the values of heritage stewardship into major initiatives and issues such as renewable energy, climate change, community assistance and revitalization, and sustainability, while cultivating excellence in science and technical preservation as a foundation for resource protection, management, and rehabilitation; and*

5) Attract, support, and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce, and support the development of leadership and expertise within the National Park Service.

Scope of the CLI

CLI data is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries, archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance. The baseline information describes the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in the context of the landscape's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit and generates spatial data for Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The CLI also identifies stabilization needs to prevent further deterioration of the landscape and provides data for the Facility Management Software System.

Inventory Unit Description:

The Bear Valley School Historic District is a 1.5-acre site located approximately 1.25 miles northwest of the Pinnacles National Park east entrance, along California State Highway 25. The Bear Valley School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 (ref. #14000267) as significant at the local level under Criterion A, in the area of Education. For more than half a century, this was the only public, or common, school serving the small agricultural, homestead community. Most of the original homesteading families sent their children here. The period of significance for the Bear Valley School extends from 1902 to 1950, beginning with the year construction began on the present schoolhouse—the second to exist on this site—and ending with the last year classes were held.

The Bear Valley School site is characterized by a small, westwardly situated schoolhouse set within a small grove of valley oaks with an expansive school yard in its foreground. The parcel is located on the relatively level, grassy bottomlands of Bear Valley and is bounded by State Highway 25 to its west and Bear Creek to its east. The gentle terrain characteristic of the bottomlands afforded an ideal school yard of open grassland and Bear Creek that flowed to the rear of the schoolhouse served as the primary source of water for the school during the historic period. In addition to the primary development, the schoolhouse, the Bear Valley School site includes a perimeter fence constructed in 1895, a heating oil platform, a well, an electric pump, and a pumphouse. A wooden enclosure also protects a commemorative tree.

The unit retains its historic integrity and conveys its historic significance as a school that served the homesteading community of Bear Valley and San Benito County. The environmental setting has changed little since the school was established, the major change being the improvement of the county road into California State Highway 25. The natural systems and features of the school site, including topography, hydrology, and vegetation remain consistent with the historic setting, although native vegetation in the riparian corridor east of the schoolhouse has grown denser. The spatial organization has been retained with the schoolhouse situated within a small oak grove with a riparian corridor to its rear and the open grassland in front. The historic character of Bear Valley School is reflected in the following landscape characteristics: natural systems and features, spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, and buildings and structures. Together, the landscape characteristics and contributing features help to convey the historic character of the cultural landscape of Bear Valley School. The cultural landscape is in fair condition.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Bear Valley School
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	976137

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Pinnacles National Park PINN
Park Organization Code:	8450

CLI Hierarchy Description

Bear Valley School is a cultural landscape with no component landscapes.

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Incomplete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

The Bear Valley School CLI is based on the information in the Bear Valley School National Register of Historic Places nomination, prepared by Timothy Babalis (PINN) and listed on June 2, 2014 (NRIS #14000267), and the existing Ben Bacon Ranch CLI, certified in 2009. The statement of significance, physical history, and site description are adapted from the National Register nomination; the general environmental context from the Ben Bacon Ranch CLI. The information was compiled by Sang Bae (Regional Cultural Resources Specialist). The existing conditions of the Bear Valley School site was documented and assessed by Sang Bae and Erika Schroeder (Regional Historical Landscape Architect Intern) in March 2020. The CLI will be complete when it receives superintendent concurrence.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	TBD
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	TBD
National Register Concurrence:	Keeper – Documented
Date of Concurrence Determination:	06/02/2014

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

The Bear Valley School unit is a 1.5-acre site located toward the southern end of Bear Valley in southern San Benito County, California.

That portion of said land situated in the unincorporated area of the County of San Benito, State of California, and described as follows:

Bounded and located near the southwest corner and on the west side of the southwest lot (or 4) of Section 18, Township 16 South, Range 8 East, Mount Diablo Meridian, being the lot or parcel of land now occupied by the Bear Valley Public School District House lying between the Bear Valley Creek on the east and the hill on the west and as it is now fenced or partly fenced being about one and a half (1 1/2) acres of land, as described in and conveyed by deed to Bear Valley Public School District from Dr. A.W. Powers, dated June 9, 1885 and recorded October 9, 1886, in Vol. 8 of Deeds, at Page 509, San Benito County Records.

Excepting therefrom that portion of said land as conveyed to David Del Daniel and Bonnie Lynn Daniel by Grant Deed recorded April 30, 1986 Series #86-02779 of San Benito County Records.

Also excepting therefrom that portion of said land if any that may or may not lie within Parcel 1 as described in that certain Lot Line Adjustment recorded October 27, 2005, Series #0019337 of San Benito County Records.

Inventory Unit Boundary Justification:

The CLI boundary reflects the original 1.5-acre lot historically deeded to the Bear Valley School District in 1885 for use by the Bear Valley School and the area to the north of the deeded grounds, as listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

State and County:

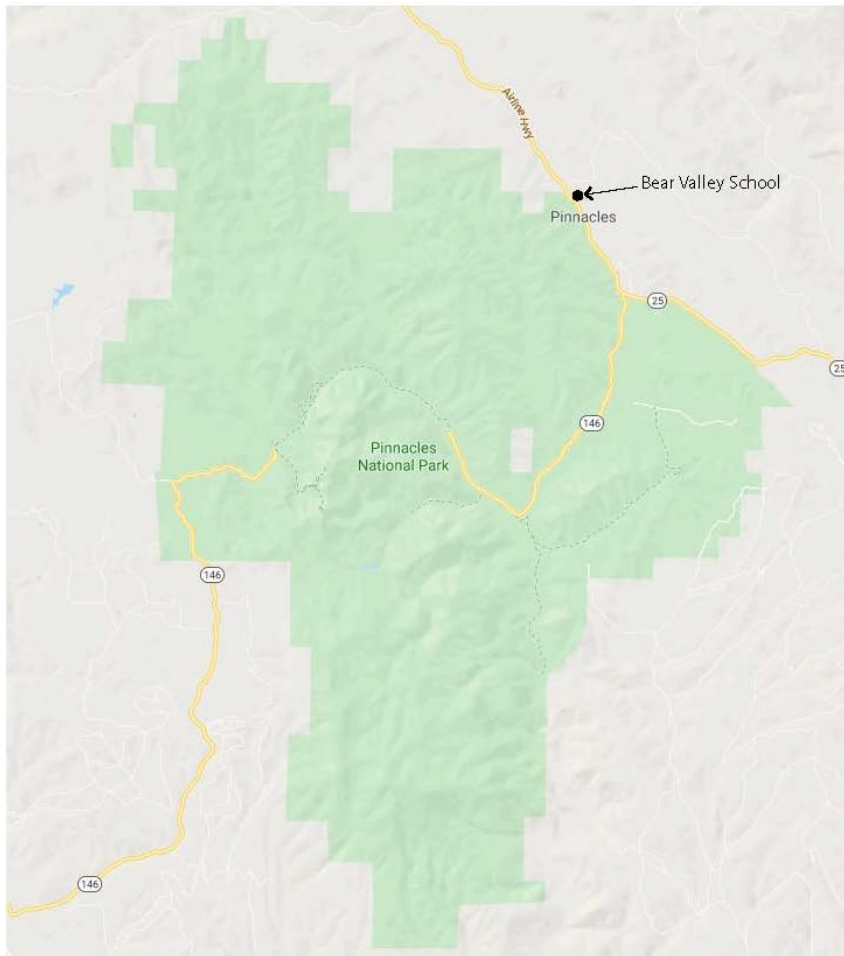
State: California
County: San Benito

Size (Acres): 1.5 acres

Boundary Coordinates:

Source	Type of Point	Datum	Longitude	Latitude	Point
<i>Other</i>	<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>WGS 1984</i>	<i>121°8'53.18761"W</i>	<i>36°32'2.53622"N</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>WGS 1984</i>	<i>121°8'49.47972"W</i>	<i>36°32'3.94052"N</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>WGS 1984</i>	<i>121°8'48.07961"W</i>	<i>36°32'1.72157"N</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>Reference Point</i>	<i>WGS 1984</i>	<i>121°8'49.88527"W</i>	<i>36°32'0.99226"N</i>	<i>D</i>

Location Map:



The Bear Valley School is located along California State Highway 25 approximately one and a quarter mile northwest of the east entrance.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: B: Should be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 12/03/2019

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Bear Valley School meets National Register Criterion A, "is compatible with the park's legislated significance, and has a continuing purpose that is appropriate to its traditional use or function." Therefore, the proposed Bear Valley School cultural landscape falls under Management Category B: Should be Preserved and Maintained.

NPS Legal Interest

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Public Access

Type of Access: With Permission

Public Access Explanatory Narrative:

The public has access to the inventory unit with permission of the NPS.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Description:

The Bear Valley School property historically used by the school comprises about three acres and is enclosed by a perimeter fence constructed in 1895. Within the north-northwestern half of the schoolyard, outside the present historic district boundary, is a remnant road which, according to historic photographs, formed a crescent path from the northwest corner of the yard to the southwest with its apex at the schoolhouse and granted access to the schoolhouse from both directions. A partial remnant of this road is visible from the northwest corner. NPS owns the entire three-acre parcel as of 2014.

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Keeper – Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

The Bear Valley School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 2, 2014 (Ref. #14000267).

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence: 06/02/2014

Contributing/Individual: Individual

National Register Classification: District

Significance Level: Local

Significance Criteria: A – Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Period of Significance: 1902-1950

Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values

Subtheme: Education

Facet: Elementary, Intermediate, and Secondary Education

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category Education

NRIS Information:

Alpha Code/NRIS Name (Number) PINN Bear Valley School (14000267)

Primary Certification Date 06/02/2014

Statement of Significance

Summary

The period of significance for the Bear Valley School extends from 1902 to 1950, beginning with the year construction began on the present schoolhouse—the second to exist on this site—and ending with the last year classes were held. Although the Bear Valley School District was established in 1874 and the first schoolhouse constructed a few months earlier at the end of 1873, only the schoolyard and a few associated features (such as a perimeter fence) remain from that time. Since these remaining features are not sufficient to convey the significance of this earlier period, the proposed period of significance does not include it. However, the history of the earlier period is discussed at length in the following narrative in order to provide sufficient context to understand the significance of the present schoolhouse. The proposed end-date of 1950 reflects the closure of the school and the conclusion of its primary significance in the area of education. Although the building continued to function after this date as a community hall and remained significant to the local community, this activity did not represent a new use or contribute further to the history of the property. Moreover, the property's local significance in this area was already well-established from its prior use as a community hall during all or most of the period when it remained an active school.

Criterion A

The Bear Valley School is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Education. For more than half a century, this was the only public, or common, school serving Bear Valley, a small agricultural community located in the remote mountains of southern San Benito County. Most of the original homesteading families sent their children here. As a common school, attendance was not limited by income or social status, since the school was supported by state and county tax contributions and was open to everyone. The educational curriculum emphasized fundamental skills in such essential subjects as reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography. The children were taught by a single teacher in one room, where everybody was required to cooperate regardless of grade level, age, or intellectual ability. The equalizing effect of this unique pedagogical environment, as well as the school's open admission and lack of fees, were all characteristics of the common school movement which had originated in the American Northeast during the period of the Early Republic, with older precedents in colonial New England. The one-room schoolhouse itself, situated within a small and geographically-limited school district, was a further adaptation of the common school tradition to the rural, sparsely-populated conditions of the American West. Although Bear Valley School was only one of many one-room schools that were established throughout the United States from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth, it is an excellent example of this historically-significant tradition within the local context, where it had a profound and lasting effect on the formation of the Bear Valley community by providing a common school education for three generations of residents.

Although not formally significant under National Register criteria, the Bear Valley School has also played an important role in the lives of local residents as a community hall. Like many rural one-room schoolhouses, the Bear Valley School stood at the physical center of the community and provided one of the few meeting spaces suitable for public events. It was used for a variety of non-scholastic purposes in the evenings after class was over and on weekends. These ranged from meetings of organizations such as the Farm Bureau and Home Department (the women's branch of the Farm Bureau) to evening dances and card parties. At least once a year, the community also gathered on a volunteer basis to clean up the school yard and maintain the building. All of these uses and events contributed to the value of the school for local residents. Combined with its significance in education, this additional role as a community center

would reinforce the overall value of the Bear Valley School as a symbol of the community itself. Even after classes ceased to be held here in 1950, the building was still frequently used for meetings and entertainment events, so that it continued to have an important place in the life of the Bear Valley community almost to the present day. The strong interest in preserving the building among local residents (and the children of past residents) of Bear Valley is an expression of this enduring value.¹

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic Landmark Status: No

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site Status: No

¹ The period and statement of significance were adopted from the Bear Valley School National Register of Historic Places nomination, certified June 2, 2014, by Timothy Babalis.

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Vernacular Landscape

Current and Historic Use/Function

Primary Historic Function—Major Category: Education
Primary Historic Function—Category: School

Primary Current Function—Major Category: Vacant (Not in Use)
Primary Current Function—Category: Vacant/Maintained

Other Current and Historic Uses/Functions:

Other Historic Function or Current Use—Major Category: Social
Other Historic Function or Current Use—Category: Meeting Hall
Other Historic Function or Current Use—Type: Historic

Current and Historic Names

Current and Historic Name	Type of Name
Bear Valley School	Current
Bear Valley School	Historic

Chronology

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1873	Built	The original Bear Valley School House was constructed, approximately in the same location as the present building.
CE 1874	Established	On May 6, a newly-established board of supervisors created the Bear Valley School District from a portion of the existing Jefferson School District of the township of San Benito.
CE 1885	Purchased/Sold	On June 9, Dr. Americus Powers sold the land on which the school house stood to the Bear Valley School District for nominal price of one dollar.
CE 1894	Built	New outdoor vault toilets, "county privy," were constructed for the Bear Valley School during the winter.
CE 1895	Built	A perimeter fence, valued at \$188.15, was constructed around Bear Valley School. This fence did not correspond to the legal boundaries of the parcel and enclosed an area nearly twice as large. In the same year, a well, a pump, and a wash house were also constructed. The pump was hand-operated and the wash house was a simple shelter surrounding or adjacent to the hand-pump where the children could wash themselves before entering school.
CE 1895	Built	A road was established within the Bear Valley School parcel and provided circulation through the yard, entering at the southwest corner, where the present gate is located, and exited at the northwest.
CE 1902	Built	A new well was bored at the Bear Valley School property in November just prior to the beginning of the construction of a new schoolhouse.
CE 1902-1903	Built	A professional carpenter by the name of Edward Somers was hired in December 1902 to build the new Bear Valley schoolhouse. It was completed in February of 1903.
CE 1903	Built	A chimney was constructed on the east wall of the Bear Valley schoolhouse during the summer of 1903. The remaining bricks were possibly used to line the underground cistern associated with the new well. A windmill which appears in later documentation was likely erected at this time as well.
CE 1903	Established	The new schoolhouse was in use by fall of 1903.
CE 1903	Purchased/Sold	The old Bear Valley schoolhouse was sold at an auction in November for \$70.00 to local ranchers Axel Bourghman and Arthur Hain.
CE 1903- Undetermined	Removed	The old Bear Valley schoolhouse was torn down after supposedly being used for several years as a meeting place for Sunday School.

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CE 1903- Undetermined	Built	The lumber from the old Bear Valley schoolhouse was salvaged and used to build a small storage behind the new schoolhouse. The shed was divided into two bays, with cut firewood stored in one side and school supplies in the other.
CE 1905	Altered	A newly purchased bell was installed in the belfry at the west end of the roof of the schoolhouse. A cord from this bell passed through the ceiling over the teacher's desk, allowing the teacher to summon the children from where she or he sat inside. A small, decorative metal plate is still extant reinforcing the hole in the ceiling through which the cord passed.
CE 1905-1931	Built	Two separate buildings with flushable toilets were built to the rear of the schoolhouse, just north of the shed. Each of these redwood structures was approximately seven feet wide by five feet deep and contained a single flushable toilet. The girls' toilet stood to the south and the boys' to the north. A wooden, lattice-type fence was erected in front of these buildings as a screen to shelter the entrances.
CE 1914	Removed/Vandalized	The Bear Valley School bell was stolen.
CE 1916	Built	During the winter of 1916, a new set of toilets were constructed at the Bear Valley School. Records describe them as "waterless closet[s]" which suggests new vault-style outhouses to replace the existing ones; however, it is also possible that flush toilets were installed at this time.
CE 1922	Altered	The rear porch cement slab at the Bear Valley schoolhouse was poured shortly following the purchase of cement on 10 January.
CE 1923	Planted	A public tree-planting took place to honor Horace Bacon for his long service as an educator at the Bear Valley School. This was held in the school yard just north of the schoolhouse, where a valley oak sapling was planted. A small wood rail and wire enclosure was constructed to keep deer from destroying the young tree. Both the tree and enclosure are still present.
CE 1928	Altered	The schoolhouse porch was extended a few feet to either side to provide closets, "anterooms," for the children to hang their coats, one for boys and one for girls. Carpenter James Giacomazzi was tasked with this construction in September.
CE 1928	Graded	The front grounds of the schoolhouse were regraded, probably at the same time as the porch modifications, in order to bring the grade elevation up to nearly flush with the porch deck. Previously, the deck was elevated roughly two feet above ground, leaving an open space beneath the structure and necessitating three wood steps up to the porch.

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CE Post-1948	Altered	Electricity became publically available in the Bear Valley area in 1948. The six electric light fixtures hanging from the ceiling of the schoolhouse, in glazed glass globes suspended on pendant rods, may have been installed sometime after the accessibility of electricity to the area.
CE 1950	Abandoned	Bear Valley School was closed in 1950 after seventy-six years of operation, within five years after the war's end, due to declining attendance.
ca. CE 1950	Altered	An oil-burning heater was installed to replace the original wood-burning pot-bellied stove. Because of its overheating fans and venting pipe, the flue was redirected straight up through the ceiling and out the roof rather than back to the chimney by means of an elbow. The metal pipe associated with the new flue required a new hole in the roof a few feet away from its original chimney. The exterior masonry of the original chimney was removed and the passage blocked off at either end.
CE 1951	Established	The Bear Valley School District was absorbed into the Jefferson School District further south and children from Bear Valley travelled to Jefferson School in the old township of San Benito.
CE 1956	Altered	Local residents Jef Schmidt, Walter Melendy, and Horace Bacon (grandson of the teacher Horace Bacon) installed flush toilets in the porch anterooms of the Bear Valley schoolhouse in March. Metal louvers were also attached over the two porch windows.
ca. CE 1956	Removed	The existing two outhouses with flushable toilets to the rear of the schoolhouse were likely removed at, or close to, this time.
CE early-1960s	Established	Organizations regularly met at the Bear Valley School, such as 4-H.
CE 1966	Altered	Due to constant break-ins, local residents Jef Schmidt, Walter Melendy, and Horace Bacon enclosed the entire front porch of the Bear Valley schoolhouse in wire screen mounted on reinforced wood framing. They also installed a heavier gate on the entrance lane.
CE late 1960s-early 1970s	Demolished	The shed to the rear of the schoolhouse was demolished by volunteers during a community clean-up day.
CE 2002	Abandoned	The Jefferson School District, still in ownership of the Bear Valley School, shuttered the building as an insurance liability. The building ceased to be used for any other purpose except storage.
CE 2010	Established	A minor boundary adjustment was made to the Bear Valley School parcel.
CE 2011	Purchased/Sold	On 17 November, the National Park Trust, Inc. purchased the Bear Valley School for \$150,000.

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CE 2011	Land Transfer	As of 21 November, the Bear Valley School and lands representing the original school parcel of 1.5 acres became part of Pinnacles National Monument (now Pinnacles National Park).
CE 2014	Land Transfer	The remaining 1.5 acres comprising the original school yard (plus additional adjacent lands) became part of Pinnacles National Park. NPS now owns the entire 3 acres utilized by the school during the period of significance.

Physical History²

The Bear Valley School, already a listed property on the National Register of Historic Places, is a contributing element to this district and an integral part of its history. This school was the only public, or common, school serving Bear Valley during the first half-century of this small agricultural community's existence. Most of the original homesteading families sent their children here, where they were taught fundamental skills in such essential subjects as reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography. The Bear Valley School was closely associated with the Bacon family through its most respected and longest-serving teacher, Horace Bacon, Ben Bacon's brother. Horace Bacon taught at the school for twenty years until his retirement in 1916 and remained active in the county board of education until his death more than a decade later. The Bear Valley School was more than just a place for education. Like many rural one-room schoolhouses, it stood at the physical center of the community and provided one of the few meeting spaces suitable for public events. The schoolhouse was used for a variety of non-school purposes in the evenings after class was over and on weekends. These ranged from meetings of organizations such as Farm Bureau and Home Department (the women's branch of the Farm Bureau) to evening dances and card parties.

Early Settlement of Bear Valley

Bear Valley lies within the traditional territory of the Chalon Indians, a sub-group or tribelet of the Penutian-speaking Ohloneans. These people first migrated into California's central coastal region from the interior at least 4,000 years ago. At the time Spanish missionaries established nearby Missions Soledad and San Juan Bautista during the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Chalon numbered about 900 individuals. Their territory straddled the Gabilan Mountains in the vicinity of Pinnacles National Monument and included portions of both the upper Salinas Valley and the Upper San Benito River Valley, with Bear Valley nearly at the center. Although the Chalon did not practice such intensive activities as agriculture, they did significantly modify their environment. Both archeological evidence and early historical accounts testify to a variety of techniques they used to manage the natural resources on which they depended. The most influential management technique was fire. Like Indians throughout pre-contact California, the Chalon used fire to increase the abundance of seed-producing grasses and forbs, to improve the quality of fiber sources like deergrass, and to prevent valuable grassland from type-converting to less-valuable scrub. But the Chalon also manipulated their environment in less dramatic, if not less significant, ways through hunting of game animals, harvesting of plants, and through the physical manipulation of certain plants to improve desirable qualities (for example, by hand-tilling the soil to straighten and increase the length of sedge rhizomes used in woven basketry).

In all likelihood, these activities shaped the landscape of Bear Valley in profound and lasting ways. But by the time Anglo-American settlers arrived in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Chalon and their traditional lifeways had largely disappeared. Between 1791 and about 1810 most, if not all, of the Chalon were reduced into Spanish missions or had died of European diseases.

Between 1810, when the last of the Chalon are believed to have disappeared from Bear Valley, and 1865, when Anglo-American settlers first arrived, this landscape was largely abandoned to wilderness, probably for the first time in millennia. The Hispanic settlement of California, which dated from 1769 to the American conquest of 1846-48, had little direct impact on Bear Valley and its

² The following history has been adapted from the Bear Valley School National Register of Historic Places nomination by Timothy Babalis, listed on June 2, 2014, and the Ben Bacon Ranch CLI, certified in 2009.

surrounding region, since no missions or ranchos were established here (the greatest environmental impact resulted from the removal of the Chalon and the resultant cessation of their land management activities).

Anglo-American Settlement of Bear Valley

When the first Anglo-American settlers came to Bear Valley in 1865, they were drawn by a variety of reasons. Although Bear Valley had many obvious natural advantages, including rich grasslands, an abundance of artesian springs, and a relatively high water table, the area was settled later than most nearby public lands because of confusion over whether the land was truly unencumbered, given its proximity to an active Mexican-era rancho (the Rancho San Lorenzo). This was a leading problem in California at that time. In 1865, the U.S. Land Commission had not yet finished its task of determining the legitimacy, and the legitimate boundaries, of the numerous land grants which the United States had been compelled to recognize under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which had concluded the war with Mexico. The Rancho San Lorenzo, better known as the Topo Ranch, would not be patented for another five years, with its boundaries determined to lie several miles south of Bear Valley.

Doctor Americus Powers was the first Anglo-American to settle in Bear Valley. Evicted from his small farm as a result of the U.S Land Commission ruling, Doctor Powers established his new homestead in 1865 in the very center of the valley alongside Bear Creek. In total, he claimed 160 acres and made minor improvements throughout. The Bear Valley Schoolhouse was later built on a portion of this land, which Powers donated for the purpose.

Doctor Powers was soon followed by several relatives and old acquaintances, who quickly established a small community of homesteaders in the valley. Among the new settlers were Elizabeth and Myron Bacon and their six—soon to be seven—children, and John Shell, Elizabeth's oldest son from her first marriage, and his family. The Bacons and Shells settled on Sandy Creek at the very south end of Bear Valley. Others soon followed.

First Bear Valley Schoolhouse

Those who were successful at homesteading in Bear Valley eventually built a community, and one of the most visible and significant expressions of this accomplishment was the establishment of a common school district and the building of a schoolhouse.

As early as 1873, only eight years after the initial settlement of the region, the homesteaders of Bear Valley petitioned the county to establish their own school district. Long before they heard a response from their county representatives, however, they began constructing a schoolhouse, which was completed before the end of that year. Regular classes began in the spring of 1874. That year the region became part of a new county—San Benito—which was carved from the original Monterey County. The creation of the Bear Valley School District was one of the first acts of the new board of supervisors.

The first Bear Valley Schoolhouse was a simple structure. It was built in a hurry owing to the need to have a serviceable structure available as quickly as possible. One of the few surviving photographs from this era shows a simple, wood-frame, end-gable structure, with two entrances on the west side (one for boys, and one for girls), but no porch. The building has been painted, which indicates at least some interest in protecting the structure and providing for adornment. The Bear Valley School was located

toward the southwest end of the valley on one and a half acres belonging to pioneer homesteader Dr. Americus Powers. It stood approximately in the same location as the present building. In 1885 Dr. Powers sold the land to the school district for the nominal sum of one dollar.

Growth of the Bear Valley School 1880s

The development of the Bear Valley School paralleled the maturation of the homesteads in the region. As the homesteads became better established, the region grew in population and the school experienced a noticeable increase in the number of children. Student attendance regularly exceeded 30 after 1885. Attendance reached its peak in 1890 with 38 students. One local resident recalled that “when the school bell would ring the hills seemed to come alive as children on foot and horseback came hurrying to school.” This growing population of school-age children was not limited to Bear Valley. By 1890, the number of established school districts within the county increased from only 12 when Bear Valley School was created to 51.

Also reflective of increased attendance was the school’s generous investment in books and teaching aids such as maps, musical instruments, and even a tellurian in 1882. The school library had 241 volumes that year and grew to nearly 300 by the end of the decade. The combined value of school books and learning apparatus ultimately exceeded that of the schoolhouse itself, which was valued at a modest \$477.55 in 1890. By this time, the Bear Valley School had become a significant part of the local community.

In addition to books and learning aids, the school invested in new facilities. The first substantial improvement was the construction of outdoor vault toilets in the winter of 1894. These new toilets, recorded by the district as a “county privy,” were likely installed at the instigation of the county superintendent. During the following spring of 1895, the construction of a perimeter fence was also undertaken. It consisted of thin redwood pales or stakes, oriented vertically and held by double strands of smooth (unbarbed) wire. (See Physical History #1) The fence was valued at \$188.15 and still stands today. Later that year, a well, a pump, and a wash house were also constructed, costing an additional \$100.



Physical History #1 View of the school yard in February 1942. Note the perimeter fence in the background. This photo shows students Martha Bacon and Charlotte Schmidt planting a victory garden during World War II. [Bernice D'Arcy Album, PINN Cultural Resources Div.]

The New Bear Valley Schoolhouse (1903)

By the turn of the century, the Bear Valley School had grown in significance to become a “symbol of pride for the local community” under the stewardship of teacher Horace Bacon. Horace Bacon, one of Elizabeth and Myron Bacon's four children, was the only member of the family to receive an advanced education. He enrolled in the California State Normal School at San Jose, where he received a teaching certificate in 1885. After teaching at rural common schools in other parts of California, he eventually returned to Bear Valley and began teaching at the Bear Valley School in 1896. He would stay here for the next twenty years—the remainder of his teaching career—becoming one of the most revered teachers in the school's history. In part, this was due to the extraordinary length of his tenure, but it was also because of the respect and admiration the community held for him. Grace Butterfield Bacon Robinson, who was a student in Horace Bacon's classroom during the last six years of his career (1910-1916), remembered that “he was strict, patient, helpful, loving and kind; one of the finest men I ever knew.” (Horace would later become Grace's father-in-law, after she married his son Clarence in 1921. This would unite the Butterfield and Bacon families, who had long been neighbors at the lower end of Bear Valley.) While many other teachers were associated with Bear Valley School over the years, and nearly all of them made important contributions in the lives of local residents, Horace Bacon remains the district's most memorable.

Years later, Horace Bacon was honored by the residents of Bear Valley for his long service with a public tree-planting in 1923. This was held in the school yard just north of the schoolhouse, where a valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) sapling was planted. (See Physical History #2) A small wood rail and wire enclosure was later constructed to keep deer from destroying the young tree. (Both tree and enclosure are still present.) A second public tree-planting took place in 1935, several years after Horace Bacon's death in

1929. On this occasion, three redwoods were planted in lower McCabe Canyon on land that had formerly belonged to Horace Bacon's brother, Oliver Bacon. This property had passed to Horace Bacon following Oliver's death in 1926. It remained with Horace Bacon's heirs until sold to the National Park Service in 2006 for inclusion in Pinnacles National Monument, now Pinnacles National Park. Two of these trees are still extant. Other members of Horace Bacon's family would later teach at the Bear Valley School as well, though none for as long as Horace. His daughter, Edith Bacon Schmidt, was employed here during the 1930s, and his granddaughter, Nadine Schmidt, would teach from 1946 to 1948, shortly before the school closed.

In 1902, at Horace Bacon's urging, the community recognized the need for a larger schoolhouse to accommodate its growing population. Construction on a new building began in December of 1902, under the direction of professional carpenter Edward Somers. Funds for this undertaking came entirely from the local community through subscriptions raised by members of the Bear Valley School District. This was a testament to the community's commitment and enthusiasm for their school. The building was completed early the following year (1903).

As it was originally constructed, the 1903 schoolhouse was substantially the same as its present form. The architecture was simplified Greek-revival, with a moderately-pitched front gable roof, wide bands of unadorned trim, and simple drop siding. The one-room, single-story structure measured just over 24 by 43 feet in dimension with a full-width front porch extending an additional seven feet from the west end (giving the building an overall depth of just over 51 feet). The porch was an open structure, enclosed only by balustrades capped with shaped handrails. Simple, squared columns supported a shallowly-pitched shed roof with no hiping. The deck of the porch was elevated above grade and reached by three steps centered along its front (long) end. Within the porch, two doors placed symmetrically in the front wall of the building provided separate entrances for boys and girls. This was a common feature of many western schoolhouses and was borrowed from vernacular church architecture. The long walls on the north and south sides of the building each had three double-hung, wood sash windows, evenly-spaced in a symmetrical pattern. These windows reached more than half the height of the walls from floor to ceiling and were designed to let as much natural light into the classroom as possible. The rear wall on the west end of the building had one door offset toward the north side, providing egress out the back. The wood-burning stove that provided heat for the classroom on cold mornings vented through a flue in this wall to a brick chimney on the roof, which was offset a few feet south of the roof peak. The roof itself was wood shingle. An open bell cupola with gable roof was centered on the roof of the schoolhouse just a few feet short of the front (west) end. The building was painted white with dark green trim. (See Physical History #3 and 4)

The yard surrounding the schoolhouse was a well-defined space, though it was never a designed landscape in any formal sense. Its most prominent features were already present when the new schoolhouse was built in 1903 or were introduced at that time. Among these was the perimeter fence, which had been constructed in 1895 and is described above. This enclosed the entire yard and defined its boundaries. Oddly, however, the fence does not correspond with the legal boundaries of the parcel actually owned by the school district (and now owned by the National Park Service) but encloses an area nearly twice as large, or approximately three acres. The bulk of this additional land consists of an open field to the north of the schoolhouse. Here the fence runs approximately 225 feet north of the legal boundary and at a slightly oblique angle to it. Bear Creek defines the eastern boundary of the schoolyard, with the fence following the western bank of the drainage. Along the south side of the yard, the fence more-or-less follows the parcel boundary, and on the west side both legal boundary and fenceline follow the county road (Highway 25). The alignment of this road appears to have remained unchanged since it was first improved in 1890, as indicated by the 1895 fenceline that parallels it. Circulation through the

yard was along a crescent-shaped track that entered at the southwest corner, where the present gate is located, and exited at the northwest, with the apex of the crescent in front of the schoolhouse itself. (This simple pattern was clearly-established by 1939, when it can be seen in the earliest aerial photographs available, and probably dates back to 1895 or earlier.) At least one other circulation pattern is suggested by the presence of a stile built into the northeast side of the perimeter fence along Bear Creek. It shows where pedestrian traffic regularly entered the schoolyard from the east. Although the stile is constructed of relatively modern lumber, it may reflect a much older point-of-crossing, since the road which once led from Bear Valley to the town of San Benito lay in this direction.

Other features which would have contributed to the setting of the Bear Valley School in 1903 included outhouses, a storage shed to the rear of the schoolhouse, and the well with associated structures. The outhouses were simple wooden structures with gabled roofs which enclosed a vault (open pit) toilet. There would have been two of these structures located in the field north of the schoolhouse. (One of them can be seen in the background of a photograph from about 1910.) (See Physical History #5) The storage shed stood several feet behind the schoolhouse off its southeast corner. It comprised two bays, with separate doors on its west side, and was used for storing cordwood and school supplies. The well was newly-improved in 1903 and now probably included a windmill. A hand pump allowed water to be drawn from a pipe for washing, and a tin cup was kept nearby for drinking. Former student Grace Robinson remembered this arrangement from about a decade later, describing in her family album "...the old hand pump with a pipe going out to where the cold water flowed out, where you put your head down and drank as someone pumped for you or you used the tin cup hanging there and washed your hands and face if need be." Some sort of structure may also have existed to shelter the wash area, though this is mentioned only once in a record from 1895 and never repeated, so it may have been ephemeral. Of all these structures, only the well remains, though an electric pump has replaced the windmill and hand lever from 1903.

Natural features were probably the most important character-defining elements of this setting in 1903 (and remain so today). These included the open fields to the north and south of the schoolhouse, the large valley oaks which shade the building, and Bear Creek which runs behind it. Most of these elements have remained largely unchanged over the years, although the vegetation along Bear Creek has grown denser and taller. Photographs from the early twentieth century show that it was possible to see the hills bordering Bear Valley to the east from the schoolyard, a sightline which has been obscured by coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) that have grown up subsequently along the creek channel.

With the new schoolhouse completed, the old schoolhouse was now surplus to the district. The trustees accordingly sold the structure at auction in November 1903 for \$70.00 to local ranchers Axel Bourghman and Arthur Hain (Schuyler Hain's brother). It is uncertain exactly what happened to this building after the change in ownership. Grace Robinson believed that it was used for several years longer as a meeting place for Sunday school, presumably on-site, before it was torn down. She also recalls that the lumber from the old schoolhouse was bought back by the district and used to construct the storage shed behind the new schoolhouse (described above). This building is no longer extant.

Ironically, by the time the new schoolhouse was completed in 1903, the local community had ceased growing. While large, successful ranches like that of Ben Bacon were continuing to grow, many small farmers were leaving the area by the latter half of the 1890s as worsening economic conditions made it difficult for them to survive on the limited resources of Bear Valley. A drought of at least two years duration exacerbated the problem, contributing to the exodus out of the region. The county superintendent of schools noted in his annual report for 1899, "We have had two dry years over a large portion of San Benito County, which have reduced our census over 300; several of our small districts

have lapsed, and the attendance in others has been correspondingly reduced.” This pattern of decline continued into the early twentieth century, and the Bear Valley School had its smallest class ever in the fall of 1903, the year the new schoolhouse opened, with only eleven students attending.

Consistent with the community’s declining population, there was little need for significant changes to the Bear Valley School during the latter half of Horace Bacon’s twenty year tenure (1896-1916). The only substantial alteration recorded in this period occurred during the winter of 1916 with the installation of a “waterless closet.” This probably refers to the construction of new toilets. If these were truly waterless, they may simply have been vault-style outhouses to replace the existing ones from 1894. It is also possible that flush toilets were installed at this time, as they were present fifteen years later.

Soon after Horace Bacon's retirement in 1916, however, the interior plan of the classroom was modified to accommodate high school students in addition to the usual grade-schoolers. Grace Robinson, who attended two years of high school at Bear Valley following her graduation from the eighth grade in 1918, remembered that the original one-room classroom was partitioned down the middle, with the grade-schoolers occupying one side and the high-schoolers the other. Another teacher with the appropriate certification was brought in to instruct the high school students. Grace Robinson never gave a detailed description of this partition, but it was unlikely to have been a permanent structure and may have consisted only of a nominal separation between the two groups of students.

Other more substantial changes were necessitated by this division of classroom functions. A separate blackboard had to be installed for the high school students. This was placed on the north wall toward the front of the building (the west end). In order to accommodate this large structure—which actually consisted of two blackboards mounted end-to-end—two of the three large double-hung windows on the north wall were removed and all but a small space at the top of each window cavity filled in. These two windows were then moved to the south wall and installed in the space between the three existing windows there. The south wall now had its present configuration of five double-hung windows, while the north wall had only one (at the east end), though two awning-style windows were installed in the small spaces which remained at the top of the original window cavities, admitting some light above the new blackboard. Grace Robinson recalled that the grade school section of the classroom was well-lit, being near the wall with the windows. This would have placed the grade-schoolers on the south side of the room. The high school section, on the other hand, was dark since it was located on the north side of the room where few windows now remained.

A photograph taken in 1915 which shows the original window configuration confirms that these modifications were made sometime after that year. The new configuration would likely have been in place by the time Grace Robinson attended high school at Bear Valley, which was sometime after her graduation from grammar school in 1918, though before her marriage to Clarence Bacon (Horace Bacon's son) in December 1921. However, county financial records indicate that a professional carpenter (W.S. Wier) was hired to do work on the Bear Valley Schoolhouse in the fall of 1921. (Wier was paid on 17 October.) Local resident Viggo Petersen was also hired at that time to do labor. This suggests that the work may actually have been done during Grace Robinson's final term in high school just before she left school. (See Physical History #6)

Another important change was made to the schoolhouse toward the end of the 1920s when the front porch was substantially rebuilt. This work was done in order to construct two coat rooms—known to the students as anterooms—one for boys and one for girls. These were used to store the children’s outdoor apparel while they were in class. Each anteroom was entered through a door leading into it from the porch and had a single, small window on the exterior wall opposite the entrance to provide light and

ventilation. The rest of the porch was open, but the original balustrades were replaced with a solid half-wall that was sheathed in wood siding similar to the exterior siding used on the rest of the building. Simple four-by-four posts, rather than the original boxed pillars, supported the porch roof, which was now hipped at the north and south ends. (The original roof had had a simple shed configuration, sloping down toward the front.) The new configuration was introduced because the anterooms extended beyond the existing footprint of the porch and required widening it by an additional two feet on either end. Since the porch was now larger than the main building, the outermost rafters of the porch roof had to be anchored to the front wall of the schoolhouse at an oblique angle, and the two ends of the new roof were hipped at these rafters. The result was a more complex and visually elegant structure, but the underlying reasons for this change were utilitarian.

The extent of this reconstruction suggests that nearly all of the porch was replaced, though some of the original material may have been retained or was salvaged and reused. The only part of the original porch which appears to have remained unaffected was the deck. Although extensions were added to either end in order to support the new anterooms, no further modifications were made to the structure itself. Once the new porch was completed, however, the deck would appear only slightly elevated above grade (approximately one foot—the height of a single riser—instead of approximately three feet as before). This eliminated the need for all but one step at the front entrance and resulted in closure of the crawl space which had previously been accessible beneath the porch. Since there is no evidence that the deck has been lowered relative to the rest of the building, this apparent change in elevation must have been produced by raising the surrounding grade with dirt infill. Landscaping features which appear in later photographs, including decorative boulders and foundation plantings, support this interpretation. (See Physical History # 7 and 8)

The most likely date for the construction of these anterooms is September 1928, when district financial records indicate a payment made to James Giacomazzi for carpentry work. Lumber for the project had been purchased a few months earlier in June. (Shades were installed at the same time on the large schoolhouse windows.) This date is supported by other contextual evidence. A photo dating from 1923 shows that the anterooms had not yet been constructed, while local resident Stan Schmidt, who began attending school in 1931, remembers them being present by that time. Stan Schmidt also remembers that there were toilets with running water in 1931 which were located in separate buildings to the rear of the schoolhouse, just north of the shed. Each of these structures was approximately seven feet wide by five feet deep and contained a single flushable toilet. The girls toilet stood to the south, while the boys was to the north. A wooden, lattice-type fence was erected in front of these buildings and acted as a buffer separating their entrances. An inspector who visited the Bear Valley School in 1949 also observed these toilets, which he described as, "two old redwood outhouses standing side by side at the back of the school ... separated and screened by lattice work." Exactly when these flush toilets were installed is not known for certain, but it was after 1910, when one of the older vault toilet outhouses can still be seen in the background of one photograph.



Physical History #2 Tree planting ceremony in honor of former Bear Valley School teacher Horace Bacon, standing at right with shovel, 1923. This ceremony occurred on the Bear Valley School grounds. ["Aunt Grace Album," p.64]



Physical History #3 View from southwest distance, ca. 1905 ["Aunt Grace Album," in Deborah Melendy Norman, ed., "South County Pioneers: Version 3.0," December 2008, p. 57]. Note the open porch. Separate outhouses were located in the field to the north of the schoolhouse. Note also that there were only three double-hung, four-over-four windows on the south wall. A similar pattern existed on north wall. The storage shed visible at the southeast corner was constructed of redwood lumber salvaged from the original 1873 schoolhouse.



Physical History #4 View from west showing detail of front porch, ca. 1905. [Private collection of Jane Lausten.] Note open railing and square pillars. Horace G. Bacon is the older man standing at the far right.



Physical History #5 View from southwest, ca. 1910. [Private collection of Nancy Lausten.] Note the gable roof of one of the vault toilets in the background, photo left.



Physical History #6 Photo at left shows north wall of schoolhouse viewed from northwest corner, ca. 1915. Photo at right shows same wall, ca. 1960. Note that two of three original double-hung, four-over-four window have been shortened to accommodate blackboard inside. [Both photos from private collection of Jane Lausten.]



Physical History #7 View from northwest showing detail of front porch, 1942. Note that porch has been modified sometime between 1923 and this date. It is now lower, with only a single step, and has enclosed toilets on either side. The open railing has been replaced with a solid half-wall, and the boxed pillars with an unadorned four-by-four post. [Private collection of Bernice D'Arcy.]



Physical History #8 View from southwest showing detail of porch and portion of south wall, 1942. Note enclosed toilet (girls on the south end, boys on the north). The window on the exterior wall of the toilet room will later be replaced with a louvered vent. Note also the foundation plantings and river stone border. The border is no longer present. [Private collection of Bernice D'Arcy.]



Physical History #9 Photo of Virginia O'Neil, teacher at Bear Valley School from 1941 to 1942, raising the flag on the flagpole in front of the school house. The concrete socket is still present at this site. ["Aunt Grace Album."]

Post-Homestead Period

World War II dramatically changed life for the agricultural community of Bear Valley, and this was witnessed nowhere more visibly than in the fate of its school. In the years following the war, the school-age population in Bear Valley, as in many rural districts, fell precipitously. Although the war itself was a major factor in this trend, it only accelerated a fundamentally economic process that had been going on for nearly five decades. The war had brought new jobs and economic opportunities to most urban areas, encouraging movement of the population throughout the United States from country to city. This demographic shift was driven simultaneously by declining opportunities for the independent small farmer in rural districts as agriculture became more heavily capitalized and increasingly competitive. This was especially true in California where the emphasis had already shifted to intensively-grown, irrigated crops. Remote, mountainous areas like Bear Valley, which had once supported numerous homesteads, witnessed the diverse economy of the small farmer gradually transformed to the simplified economy of the cattle rancher. Since the latter required extensive acreage to maintain a profitable herd, especially in this semi-arid environment, the land supported far fewer people than before. Within five years of the war's end, there were not enough children left in Bear Valley to justify an independent school district, and the Bear Valley School was closed in 1950 after seventy-six years of operation (and almost fifty years in the present building). Loretta Bowman was the teacher that term. She dismissed her class, the last class to

attend school here, in June of that year. Although the Bear Valley School District remained in existence for another year, this was simply a formality until the district trustees had completed their terms of office. The now-lapsed Bear Valley School District was absorbed into the Jefferson School District further south, where eventually a multi-room consolidated school would be built.

Although Bear Valley School closed its doors to students in 1950, the building itself remained open and continued to serve a vital purpose for local residents of Bear Valley as a community hall, and soon became known as the Bear Valley Hall. The property was officially owned by the Jefferson School District, but caretaker responsibilities were assumed by the county Farm Bureau, which used the building for meetings and other events. Other organizations, such as the local 4-H chapter and Home Department, the women's branch of the Farm Bureau, also held meetings here. These activities were a continuation of existing practice, since the schoolhouse had always been used by the community for a variety of non-scholastic purposes. Mostly these had been informal events, ranging from a celebration for recently-graduated students, to an evening of festivities for the entire community. For example, the local newspaper described a typical holiday party held at the original Bear Valley Schoolhouse on 6 January 1899, "An entertainment and supper was given at the school house on Friday evening before Christmas. The literary programme consisted of songs, recitations, and the farce 'Hans Von Smash.' Refreshments included coffee and cake."

A number of changes occurred shortly after the Farm Bureau began managing the Bear Valley School. One of the first of these was installation of an oil-burning heater to replace the original wood-burning pot-bellied stove. The new heater had fans, and the venting pipe would become red hot when it was in use. Evidence of this excessive heat can still be seen in the blistered condition of the paint on the boxed casing on the back wall of the room just below the aperture where the original flue pipe entered the chimney. This problem was remedied by redirecting the flue straight up through the ceiling and out the roof rather than back to the chimney by means of an elbow. The new flue consisted entirely of metal pipe, and a new hole had to be cut into the roof to accommodate it a few feet west of the original chimney. The exterior masonry was subsequently removed and the original chimney passage blocked off at either end. (See Physical History 9)

A more significant modification occurred with the installation of flush toilets in the porch anterooms. This was done in March 1956 by local residents Jef Schmidt, Walter Melendy, and Horace Bacon (grandson of the teacher Horace Bacon). Over the next few years, substantial changes were made to the interior of the classroom as well in order to keep it up-to-date and accommodate its new function as a community meeting hall. During the early 1960s, the building was rewired and cabinets were installed along the back wall and northwest corner. Any original cabinetry and furniture, such as the built-in library shelves, were removed at this time or disappeared. Only the blackboards remained. The rear of the room was subsequently used as a kitchen where simple meals could be prepared when people met for meetings or evening card games. Presumably, the appliances and sink were installed at this time as well. Linoleum was also put down over the original wood floor during this decade.

Although the Bear Valley Schoolhouse continued to be used regularly for community meetings and other events, it was now vacant most of the time. Local residents maintained the building on a voluntary basis, and one neighbor acted as caretaker, keeping the building locked when it was not in use. Vandalism, however, became a persistent problem. The schoolhouse was broken into on several occasions, and articles of value were stolen, including the school bell. On at least one occasion, a passerby shot the lock off the bathroom door in order to gain access to the toilet inside. In response to these intrusions, local residents Jef Schmidt, Walter Melendy, and Horace Bacon enclosed the entire front porch in wire screen

Bear Valley School Pinnacles National Park

mounted on reinforced wood framing. They narrowed the porch entryway by erecting two additional posts and extending the half-wall in order to accommodate a door. This allowed the porch itself to be secured and locked. They also installed a heavier gate on the entrance lane. These modifications were made in about 1966. Not long afterwards, the shed out back was demolished by volunteers during a community clean-up day. Photographs of this event are undated but appear to have been taken during the late 1960s or early 1970s. (See Physical History #10)



Physical History #10 Painting of the Bear Valley School by artist Rachel Bentley, 1950, as part of a series of watercolors representing all of California's schools, commissioned by the California Department of Education. Note the heating oil platform immediately to the south of the schoolhouse and the new flue on the roof. [Original painting owned by San Benito County.]



Physical History #11 Old storage shed seen from southeast (rear) corner of schoolhouse just prior to demolition, ca. 1960. This building was constructed during 1890s of redwood lumber salvaged from original 1873 schoolhouse. Demolition was carried out by local 4H volunteers as part of annual clean-up day. The debris was later burned. [Private collection of Jane Lausten.]

NPS Acquisition

Over the three decades that the Bear Valley Schoolhouse served as a community center for local residents, regular maintenance kept the building in stable condition, though some deterioration was inevitable. The most noteworthy and serious damage was caused by acorn woodpeckers excavating holes in the exterior walls. In 2002, the Jefferson School District, which still owned the Bear Valley School, shuttered the building as an insurance liability. The building ceased to be used for any other purpose except storage. The old school remained significant to many local residents, however, and efforts were made to transfer it to private ownership with the intent of preserving the building. When these efforts failed, the National Park Service, through the superintendent of Pinnacles National Monument became party to negotiations over the future disposition of the schoolhouse. In 2010, a minor boundary adjustment was made, giving the monument the authority to acquire the property. On 17 November 2011, the National Park Trust, Inc. purchased the Bear Valley School for \$150,000.00. Four days later, ownership was conveyed to the National Park Service for the same amount. As of 21 November 2011, the Bear Valley Schoolhouse and lands representing the original school parcel of 1.5 acres, became part of Pinnacles National Monument (now Pinnacles National Park). The addition of Tract 02-108 in 2014, purchased from a neighboring landowner, brought the full three acres of the historic Bear Valley School into National Park Service ownership.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The cultural landscape of the Bear Valley School Historic District (Historic District) contains buildings, structures, vegetation, and natural systems from the period of significance that spans from 1902 to 1950, when the property was used as the only public, or common, school serving the small, agricultural homesteading community of Bear Valley. The historic character of the district is evident in the following landscape characteristics: natural systems and features, spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, and buildings and structures. The Historic District has historical integrity because the vernacular landscape characteristics and features associated with the school are retained from the period of significance. This integrity helps to convey its historical significance as the only public school in the small community of Bear Valley during the homesteading era in San Benito County, California.

The natural systems and features of Bear Valley School have contributed greatly to the significance of the historic setting. The gentle terrain of the bottomland provided naturally level land for use as a schoolyard while the riparian corridor and the small grove of oak trees afforded shade in an area otherwise exposed to the elements. The Bear Creek that flowed behind the schoolhouse served as the primary, and reliable, source of water for the school (through its underlying water table). These natural systems and features remain unchanged and continue to convey the historic setting of the school.

The spatial organization of the landscape consists primarily of a one-room frame schoolhouse set in the shade of a small grove of four valley oaks with an expansive, grassy schoolyard in its foreground and Bear Creek and the associated riparian corridor to its rear. A commemorative tree planted in honor of esteemed educator Horace Bacon is protected by a wooden enclosure to the north of the schoolhouse and a historic well bored in 1902 is housed in a modern lean-to shed immediately south of the tree. A wooden heating oil platform is located immediately south of the schoolhouse and likely serviced the stove in the historic building. An 1895 perimeter fence delineates the extent of the school grounds as used during the period of significance. Although this fence pre-dates the period of significance, it remained significant as the perimeter fence after the construction of the Bear Valley School in 1902 and therefore contributes to the historic district. Finally, despite the blocking of the entrance/exit at the northwest corner of the property by the adjacent property owner's fence that prevents circulation through the site as it historically occurred, the district retains its historic spatial organization within the bounds of the historic schoolyard which helps to convey the past land use as a school.

A number of buildings and structures dot the Bear Valley School parcel. The primary contributing feature is the one-story schoolhouse built within a small grove of valley oaks. To the north of the schoolhouse is the 1923 Horace Bacon commemorative tree enclosure constructed to protect the tree from wild animals. The historic district also includes a well, located approximately eighty-five feet north of the schoolhouse, bored in 1902 when construction of the schoolhouse was just getting underway. These contributing resources are all enclosed within the contributing 1895 perimeter fence. In addition to these four contributing buildings and structures are a wooden heating oil platform, a modern wooden pump house, a flagpole, a concrete flagpole socket, a wooden post, and two concrete foundations. While these features are either undetermined or non-contributing in status, they do not detract from the character of the historic vernacular landscape. Also a part of this historic vernacular landscape is the commemorative tree planted in 1923.

Overall, the landscape characteristics and features of the Bear Valley School site convey the historic significance of the small-scale, one-room building that served as the only public school for the

homesteaders of Bear Valley in the early period of American settlement of California. As a whole, the landscape characteristics and features retain integrity from the historic period dating from 1902 to 1950.

Integrity

Of the seven aspects of integrity defined in the National Register guidelines, the Bear Valley School Historic District retains all seven aspects of integrity, including setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling.

The location of Bear Valley School has remained intact since the construction of the Bear Valley Schoolhouse in 1903. It retains its association with the homesteading community through its proximity to the historic ranching district to the south, the Ben Bacon Historic District, and the continued use of the Bear Valley bottomlands as active ranching grounds. The site also retains its association with the historic context of education through its spatial organization of the simple single-story one-room schoolhouse with an open, level schoolyard in its foreground. The Horace Bacon commemorative tree and flagpole also signals the site's affiliation with education. The grassland school grounds with a backdrop of the riparian corridor, in conjunction with the site's remoteness from major development, have also preserved the historic setting and feeling of the landscape.

The primary contributing resource on site, the Bear Valley Schoolhouse, was constructed from 1902 to 1903 as a one-room, one and a half story, wood-frame structure in the simplified, Greek-revival style typical of the rural architecture from this period throughout the American West. This building has experienced minimal changes since the period of significance, mostly to the porch and window placement. All but the porch modifications were made during the period of significance and the building therefore retains most of its original design, materials, and workmanship. The Horace Bacon commemorative tree enclosure, another contributing resource to the landscape, also remains intact. As such, the tree enclosure also retains its design, materials, and workmanship from the historic period.

One notable alteration to the Bear Valley School landscape is associated with the historic well that was bored in 1902. An electric pump was installed and a lean-to pump house was constructed to replace an old windmill depicted in the 1950 watercolor painting of the school. However, these features do not disrupt the historic spatial organization or the overall integrity of the school site as these are minor in scale and enable the continued use of the historic water feature as well as sustain the historic function of the old windmill.

Landscape Characteristics

Natural Systems and Features

Natural systems refer to the natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the landscape.

Bear Valley is a broad, crescent-shaped valley extending approximately six miles in length and two miles in width. The valley floor lies at an average elevation of 1,250 feet, though it declines in a southwesterly direction with a drop of ten to 50 feet to the mile. At its north end, the valley begins at the top of the Bear Valley Grade, where Highway 25 rises through a narrow chasm from the confluence of Willow Creek and the San Benito River. Bear Creek flows from the foot of the hills on the west side of the valley near this end, though most of the year the creek lies below the surface, appearing only during winter floods.

Hydrology

Bear Valley had many qualities to recommend it to the homesteaders, not least of which was the abundance of artesian springs in the vicinity of the Pinnacles, and the relatively high water table on the floor of the valley itself. A portion of Bear Creek, just north of the State Highway 25 bend, is located to the east of the Bear Valley School parcel. This creek was the primary water source to the school property, accessed by the historic well bored in 1902. Bear Creek continues southward from the school parcel and becomes known as Sandy Creek in its last two miles through the Ben Bacon Ranch Historic District, which then flows into Chalone Creek through the National Park and eventually reaches the Salinas River.

Topography

The topography of Bear Valley greatly influenced the homestead land uses along Bear Creek. Sandy Creek is the name of the southern portion of Bear Creek, the portion south of Highway 25 that passes through the Ben Bacon Ranch Historic District within Pinnacles National Park. The name refers to the portion of Bear Creek where the creek bed widens into a broad, sandy wash. The flat bottomland along Sandy Creek, varying from 800 feet to 1600 feet wide, is enclosed by steep slopes and hills.

The Bear Valley School site is characterized by the gentler terrain of the Bear Valley bottomlands. Bound by the Gabilan Mountains to the west and Bear Creek to the east, the school parcel is a relatively level area of land that allowed for ease of access and use as a functional schoolyard with minimal changes to the natural landscape. This gentle topography of the Bear Valley School site persists today and is a major component in the preservation of the historic character of the school.

Natural Vegetation

The natural vegetation at the historic Bear Valley School comprises grassland and brush that create a relatively open, level landscape. This grassland is flanked by the woodlands of the hills to the west and the riparian corridor to the east. A small grove of large valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*) lies within the otherwise open grassland. The Bear Valley Schoolhouse was built within this oak grove and utilized the shade provided by the mature trees.

Bear Valley School Pinnacles National Park

Historic photographs show that the landscape was kept relatively open during the historic period of significance to allow play and to reduce risk of fire by preventing excessive growth and further encroachment of native brush.

The two natural vegetation associations, grasslands and riparian, that established the natural setting for the historic Bear Valley School remain largely unchanged today. Although the riparian corridor has matured through the decades, the natural vegetation present at the school parcel continue to convey the character of Bear Valley School as established during the period of significance.

Summary

The existing natural systems convey the historic character as established by the homesteading community during the historic period. The Bear Valley School continues to stand within a grove of four valley oaks on the level bottomland of Bear Creek. The southwest facing school still enjoys the shade and protection provided by its woodland location. To its east, the school is adjacent to a denser riparian corridor between the parcel and Bear Creek that served as the main source of water to the property through a historic well bored in 1902.



Natural Systems and Features #1 Bear Valley School within a small grove of valley oaks, view east-southeast. Note the open grassy landscape in the foreground and the dense riparian vegetation in the background. (NPS, March 2020)

Spatial Organization

The Bear Valley School parcel is situated in the relatively level bottomland bounded by State Highway 25 to the west and Bear Creek to the east. The primary contributing structure, the schoolhouse, is situated facing west within a small grove of four mature valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*), all of which are still present, with open fields to its north and south. These historic oaks provide shade and contribute to the peaceful, sylvan character of the schoolhouse setting. This site is entered through two historic points of access/egress, one located at the northwest corner and the other at the southwest corner of the schoolyard. The northwest point of access/egress is located outside the present historic district boundary. Also immediately outside the district boundary is a partial road trace that provides information on the historic circulation through the parcel. This road trace is described in the adjacent lands section. Just 100 feet north of the schoolhouse is a commemorative tree and an associated wooden enclosure from 1923, both contributing in status. Between this tree and the schoolhouse is a historic well bored 1902, also contributing.

Historic photographs show that the historic landscape was relatively open, comprising grassland and brush. This suggests that maintenance during the historic period of significance likely focused on keeping the schoolyard open to allow play and to reduce the risk of fire by preventing growth and further encroachment of native brush into the space. Likewise, during this period, vegetation within the wide, braided channel of Bear Creek to the east of the schoolhouse was substantially thinner than at present. This allowed for unobstructed sightlines toward the hills bordering Bear Valley on the east and to the Diablo Range beyond. The said sightline has since been obscured by the riparian vegetation within the Bear Creek channel that has grown denser and taller since the period of significance.

The non-contributing features are integrated into the school parcel without detracting from the school's significance. These features include an electric pump and a wooden lean-to pump house situated over the historic well. The existing pump and the pump house are simply modern versions of historic features and thus do not undermine the integrity of the site as a whole.

Summary

Today the schoolhouse with the open grassy schoolyard in front and the riparian corridor to its rear continues to convey the historic character of Bear Valley School. The open schoolyard dotted with a pump house, flag pole, and vegetative plantings around the central schoolhouse convey the historic spatial organization established during the period of significance.



Spatial Organization #1 Bear Valley Schoolhouse and yard, view to north. (NPS, March 2020)



Spatial Organization #2 Bear Valley Schoolhouse and yard, view south-southeast from the north end of the schoolyard. (NPS, March 2020)

Vegetation

Vegetation refers to the deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers and herbaceous plants, and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced into the landscape. Most of the vegetation within the Bear Valley School parcel are naturally occurring. This includes the four valley oak specimen trees, which appear to be in good condition, with the exception of a few fallen limbs.

At least one native species present in the Bear Valley School site is identified to have been purposely planted. This is the Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*), located north-northwest of the schoolhouse, which was planted in 1923 to honor Horace Bacon for his service to the school. This commemoration is a testament to the importance of Bear Valley School to the surrounding homestead community. The oak is differentiated from the other four Valley Oaks in that it is enclosed by a wooden enclosure, which may have once protected it as a seedling. Currently, the fence appears to foster the growth of vegetation inside the enclosed area that is encroaching on the specimen tree.

Two other native trees present at the site are the mature California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) and the blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), located to the southeast of the schoolhouse near the 1895 perimeter fence. Both species are commonly found within the local area, especially along riparian corridors where there is plenty of water. As their location is at the periphery of a riparian area, it is unlikely, though possible, they were planted.



Vegetation #1 View of the Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree and exclosure, looking northwest (NPS, March 2020).



Vegetation #2 View of the California black walnut located at the eastern corner of the schoolyard, looking west (NPS, March 2020).



Vegetation #3 View of the blue elderberry located near the walnut tree in the eastern corner of the schoolyard, looking southwest (NPS, March 2020).



Vegetation #4 View of the southwestern most Valley Oak, looking west (NPS, March 2020).

Buildings and Structures

Buildings are defined as those features that are built primarily for sheltering any form of human activity. Structures are defined as features constructed for purposes other than sheltering human activities.

Contributing buildings and structures at the Bear Valley School parcel include the schoolhouse, the Horace Bacon commemorative tree enclosure, the school well, and the 1895 perimeter fence.

Bear Valley School (Contributing)

Constructed from 1902 to 1903, the Bear Valley schoolhouse was originally a rectangular building 24 feet wide and 44 feet deep, complete with a full width, shed-roofed porch seven feet deep. The vernacular building was a one-room, one and a half story, wood-frame structure in simplified, Greek-revival style typical of the rural architecture from this period throughout the American West. It had a moderately pitched front gable roof with wide bands of unadorned trim and simple drop siding. The schoolhouse had two, symmetrically-placed entrances from the front, one for boys and one for girls. Its side elevations, northwest and southeast, each had three symmetric, double-hung, four-over-four sash windows.

As it stands now, the schoolhouse has experienced minimal changes, mostly to the porch and window placement. Two of the three windows on the north elevation were removed and installed between the existing three windows on the south elevation to accommodate for an additional blackboard in the schoolroom to provide separate instruction for high school students. The porch was extended on either side by two feet to accommodate the construction of coatrooms, which required a change in the porch roof style—from simple shed style to a more elaborate hipped roof. The originally open porch was later enclosed by wire screens mounted on reinforced wood framing due to increased vandalism. These modifications took place in 1921, 1928, and 1966 respectively. All but the most recent porch modifications were made during the period of significance and reflect patterns of maintenance and adaptation significantly associated with the history of the property.

Vacant for numerous years, the Bear Valley Schoolhouse is in need of routine maintenance to prevent loss of historic fabric. Although the building is structurally stable, weathering and peeling paint is exposing the wood siding to the elements. Woodpecker activity, common in the area, is also evident around the window frames and vertical posts.

Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree Enclosure (Contributing)

Approximately 100 feet north of the Bear Valley schoolhouse is a small enclosure constructed of wooden posts and rails with wire fencing. It was installed to protect a young valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), the Horace Bacon tree, from deer. This structure still stands within the Bear Valley School parcel and retains its physical integrity. Its function to protect a tree honoring an individual closely related to the success of the school reflects the community's sentiments toward the school during its period of significance. It contributes to the school's significance as a site of community involvement and pride.

With the maturation of the commemorative oak tree, however, the protective tree enclosure's intended function, to protect the young sapling from animals, has diminished. While it has successfully allowed the young tree to mature, it has also inadvertently encouraged other volunteers within the enclosure. As a result, the commemorative valley oak is now crowded by a dense cluster of competing vegetation.

Bear Valley School Well (Contributing)

A well was bored immediately east of the Horace Bacon tree in 1902 to service the school. Historically serviced by a non-extant windmill, it is currently housed within the non-historic wooden shed-style pump house (below).

Redwood Stave and Wire Perimeter Fence and Gate (Contributing)

Constructed in 1895 as a substantial improvement project to the Bear Valley School, the perimeter fence is seen in the background of many historic photos of the school. The fence was constructed of redwood. It consists of thin wooden staves that are oriented vertically and held by strands of unbarbed wire. Two sets of these wire strands twist together around the top and bottom of the staves, creating tight pockets for each one. This perimeter fence encompasses the entire three-acre space utilized by the school during its period of use, extending north to encompass most of the natural bench lying between CA State Highway 25 and Bear Creek up to the next private land holding. Two breaks in the fence line, one at the northwest corner and another at the southwest corner, historically served as points of access/egress. The southwest entrance/exit is currently marked with a gate that post-dates the period of significance. Although originally constructed for the first Bear Valley School, it remained significant as the perimeter fence after the construction of the second Bear Valley School in 1902, and is therefore a contributing structure to the historic district.

While the 1895 perimeter fence retains high integrity in material, workmanship, and design, a fire at the site in August of 2015 resulted in damage to sections of the resource. Some portions of the fence have also collapsed, but they have been left in place and continue to define the original perimeter of the historic schoolyard.

Bear Valley School Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures

The following structures associated with the Bear Valley School parcel do not contribute to the Ben Bacon Ranch Historic District; however, most are compatible features associated with settlement in the area.

Electric Pump/Wooden Shed-Style Pump House (Non-Contributing, Compatible)

Immediately east of the Horace Bacon tree stands a small wooden shed-style structure that houses an electric pump. These two features are associated with the historic well (extant, above) that was bored in 1902, though the well was originally serviced by a non-extant windmill. The exact time of this change is unknown; however, the 1950 watercolor painting of the school by Rachel Bentley depicts the old windmill. As electrical power reached Bear Valley only two years earlier in 1948, it is likely that the electric pump was not installed until after the commissioned painting—post-1950. Though these structures are considered non-contributing due to their assumed time of construction, they enable the continued use of the historic well and sustain the historic function of the old windmill—they are simply the modern form.

Bear Valley School Undetermined Buildings and Structures

The following buildings and structures associated with the Bear Valley School cluster are undetermined in status and require further analysis.

Heating Oil Platform (Unknown)

A small wooden structure stands in close proximity to the southeastern elevation of the Bear Valley schoolhouse, next to one of the original four valley oaks. The presence of a pipe/hose exposed from the exterior wall suggests that this structure served as a platform for metal tanks from which oil would be pumped into the schoolhouse to the oil-burning stove. Roughly 18 feet square and four feet tall, a similar structure is depicted supporting what appear to be oil tanks in the 1950 watercolor painting of the school. Though it is likely that the extant feature is the same structure depicted in the painting, this cannot be confirmed. The heating oil platform is therefore unknown in status.

Barbed Wire Perimeter Fence (Undetermined)

Another fence stands within the Bear Valley School parcel, enclosing an area similar to that of the 1895 historic perimeter fence. This fence follows the boundaries of the historic fence, standing just inside the property outlined by the latter. It retains a high level of integrity as the physical material of this structure can still be found, though collapsed, even in the downward slope toward the creek. The fence is comprised of three strands of barbed wire extended between wooden posts and can be seen in the background of historic photographs as early as 1915. However, as the exact date of and reason for its construction cannot be determined, its status is undetermined.

Flagpole (Undetermined)

Associated with the Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree Enclosure is a wooden flagpole attached to its southern post, on the southwestern face. This flagpole is approximately 3.5 inches by 3.5 inches in footprint and is undetermined in height. There are remnants of dark green paint similar to that used on other historic features, such as the enclosure and the building porch.

There is insufficient evidence to date this resource. While a 1942 class photograph demonstrates that there was a flagpole within the school grounds during the period of significance, a concrete socket for the flagpole was recently uncovered in front of the schoolhouse and is consistent with the location of the feature depicted in the photograph. This recent finding confirms that the extant flagpole is not the resource photographed in the 1940s. However, without further evidence, it is impossible to establish that the two flagpoles did, or did not, coexist within the school grounds. The extant flagpole is therefore undetermined in status.

Wooden Pole (Undetermined)

In close proximity to the flagpole and tree enclosure, to the west, is another single wooden post. Free-standing and roughly the same in footprint size as the flagpole, this structure shows no remnants of paint and bears numerous exposed nails. It is also noticeably shorter in height than the flagpole, though exact measurements are needed. The post appeared on site after 1942 as photographs from this time depict metal playground structures in the area where the post stands today. However, its exact date and use are unknown and it is therefore undetermined in status. It currently displays significant woodpecker damage concentrated at the top of the pole.

Concrete Slab #1 (Undetermined)

A few feet northeast of the rear concrete steps of the schoolhouse is a concrete slab that measures roughly four feet by six feet and four inches thick. Currently almost completely concealed by dried vegetation, this slab is in close proximity to a pipe (also concealed) that points towards Bear Creek and appears to be

covering a hollow space. Though it is possible that it is covering the remnants of the old flushable toilets that were removed ca. 1956, its exact date and use are unknown and is therefore undetermined in status.

Concrete Slab #2 (Undetermined)

Southeast of the Concrete Slab #1 is another concrete slab that measures roughly two feet by three feet and one foot thick. This concrete slab bears metal braces on top and a pipe out of its northeastern face that points towards Bear Creek. The metal features suggest that it once supported something very heavy while the pipe suggests that this heavy feature was likely a tank or a reservoir. As its date and exact use are unknown, this concrete slab is undetermined in status.



Buildings and Structures #1 Bear Valley School, view east-southeast. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #2 Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree Exclosure, view southwest. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #3 Close-up of the damaged Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree Enclosure.
(NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #4 1895 Redwood stave and wire perimeter fence, view north. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #5 Electric Pump/Wooden Shed-Style Pump House, view north. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #6 Heating oil platform, view north-northwest. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #7 Barbed wire fence to the rear of the schoolhouse. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #8 Wood pole, view southeast. (NPS, March 2020)



Buildings and Structures #9 Concrete socket of 1940s flagpole, located in front of the Bear Valley Schoolhouse. (NPS, June 2020)

Contributing Resources

Resource Name	Resource ID
Bear Valley School	1041978
Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree Exclosure	TBD
Bear Valley School Well	TBD
Redwood Stave and Wire Perimeter Fence and Gate	TBD

Non-Contributing Resources

Resource Name	Resource ID
Electric Pump/Wooden Shed-Style Pump House	TBD

Unknown Resources

Resource Name	Resource ID
Heating Oil Platform	TBD
Barbed Wire Perimeter Fence	TBD
Flagpole	TBD
Wooden Pole	TBD

Bear Valley School
Pinnacles National Park

Concrete Slab #1
Concrete Slab #2

TBD
TBD

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 3/17/2020

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Through the analysis and evaluation of landscape characteristics and features, it has been determined that the Bear Valley School is in “Fair” condition. The landscape shows clear evidence of minor disturbances by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Impact Description: The Horace Bacon Commemorative Tree is crowded by volunteer saplings within its enclosure. These need to be removed. The possibility of removing a portion of the enclosure should be considered—for example, the wire mesh from two of four sides—in order to prevent further volunteerism and to facilitate ongoing maintenance.

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Impact Description: The historic oak trees under which the Bear Valley Schoolhouse is located display hanging limbs and deadwood. These should be removed to reduce risk of carrying fire onto the historic building and to eliminate a falling hazard for visitors.

Type of Impact: Exposure to Elements

Impact Description: Exposure to elements is a condition that often affects buildings and structures located in natural settings. In the absence of regular maintenance activities, this can quickly lead to deterioration.

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Impact Description: The deferral of regular, cyclical maintenance activities has had a negative impact on the condition of the Historic District and its associated features. The historic schoolhouse displays large patches of peeling paint which directly exposes the wood siding

and frame to the elements. Cyclical maintenance will prevent further deterioration in the future.

Type of Impact:

Pests/Diseases

Impact Description:

Woodpecker damage is found across the wood features within the Bear Valley School site, including the Bear Valley Schoolhouse, fence posts, and the wooden pole. While woodpecker activity is common in the region, measure should be taken to either routinely repair damages or prevent/discourage woodpecker activities on the historic fabric. Not only do these pecking holes impact the structural integrity of the historic fabric but they also expose the wood members to the elements and further accelerate deterioration.

Type of Impact:

Deferred Maintenance

Impact Description:

Increased brush growth within the northern half of the schoolyard is obstructing the historic open grassland character of the Bear Valley School site and is obscuring the historic road trace that once led to the schoolhouse from the northwestern entrance. Such growth also increases the risk of fire in the area. Brush and grass should be mowed on a regular schedule, especially prior to the annual fire season.

Type of Impact:

Vandalism/Theft/Arson

Impact Description:

The Bear Valley School site is subject to vandalism and trespassing, as evidenced by small liquor bottles found strewn in the schoolyard and the boarded windows on the vacant building, which pose a major concern to the park. While the park has taken measures to board up the windows and secure doors with locks, additional security measures are necessary to prevent such activities.

Stabilization Measures:

Animal/pest management: A historical architect, structural engineer, and pest management specialist should be consulted to develop a strategy to effectively repair and discourage woodpecker activities on the historic schoolhouse while maintaining sensitivity to the historic fabric.

Fire risk: The fire management officer, park maintenance staff, and park natural resource specialists should develop an appropriate strategy for reducing and controlling hazardous fuel loading in site vegetation. This should be part of a cyclic maintenance schedule.

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography

Babalis, Timothy. "Bear Valley School," National Register of Historic Places, Ref. #14000267, listed June 2, 2014.

Ben Bacon Ranch Cultural Landscape Inventory, Pinnacles National Park. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2009.

Supplemental Information

Title: Bear Valley School Site Plan

Description: Bear Valley School existing conditions site plan, July 2015.

Pinnacles National Park

Bear Valley School Historic District

Existing Conditions Site Plan | March 2020

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Legend

Contributing (C) ■

01. Bear Valley Schoolhouse

Non-contributing (NC) □

02. Electric Pump and Pumphouse

Unknown (U) □

03. Flagpole

04. Wooden Pole

05. Heating Oil Platform

06. Concrete Slab #1

07. Concrete Slab #2

Vegetation ●

08. Horace Bacon Commemorative

Tree - Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) (c)

09. Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

10. Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

11. Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

12. Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

13. Unidentified Shrub

14. Walnut spp.

