Lincoln-Adelaida School
San Luis Obispo County, CA

Description

The Lincoln-Adelaida School building is a large wood frame, single story, one-room schoolhouse built in 1917. Chimney Rock Road fronts the playground and school in this rugged agriculture area northeast in the Santa Lucia Coastal Range in San Luis Obispo County affectionately called Adelaida. The school site is on a 1.5 acre flat surrounded by orchard, vineyards and open fields. Two redwood outhouses on the west side were also built - one for the boys and one for the girls. The two original outhouses where replaced in 1939 and those removed in 1948. The two outhouses on the site map were moved there in the 1960s. Locals constructed a rough redwood barn/shed on the south side of the school building, before the school opened in 1917. It was designed for the students' horses and also to keep the supply of firewood furnished by the area families for the schools' heating stove. The original well and pumpjack still stand on the east side though no loner in use. The school started serving the Adelaida elementary children in grades 1-8, in the fall of 1917. By 1925, the school buildings and grounds began to also serve the Adelaida community as a meeting place. It has continued to be the community center for regular local club meetings, government workshops, and social functions. The school and grounds look as they have for many decades. The exception being the addition of modern play ground equipment in the 1950s, and the following alterations descriptions.

Work started in June of 1917 on the concrete perimeter foundation with intermediate piers for the original 45 feet by 42 feet school structure. This included the 8 feet by 8 inch wide covered veranda supported by 8 (eight) columns on the north side and that continued along

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Description (continued)

the west side of the school for 30 feet. The last 12 plus feet on the west side and 8 plus feet on the south side was finished as a library.

The exterior of this school building has painted redwood tongue and groove siding over Douglas fir framing. Cedar shingles originally covered the roof and can still be seen at the edges under the asphalt roofing. The floor is pine tongue and groove now partly covered with tiles. Three 15 feet 8 inch steps led up to the veranda on the north side and two concrete steps 6 feet long were originally on the front west side.

Entry is still through the two original single light raised panel doors on the north side. Inside to the right and left are two side doors each opening into a supply and closet area. The boys used the right closet to hang their coats and dust off and the girls the left. One window in each closet provided light and acted as a vent. The classroom except for the doors and the windows on the south side is painted tongue and groove paneling on the ceiling and the walls. There are 36-inch wide wrap around black boards on all the walls.

Of special note is the library's original 12 feet long by 7 feet 10 inches glazed cabinet doors bookcases on the south and north walls. Supplies and maps were available in the two large drawers beneath the bookcases on each side.

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Description (continued)

Volunteers in 1924 enclosed 16 feet and screened 4 feet of the west veranda to provide a sleeping area and private porch for the teacher. This room had an entry door through the west classroom wall. Students remember Edgar Gerst, one of the trustees, used his 1924 Fordson tractor with a chain and bar to hook and drag the concrete steps from the west side to the east side of the porch, where they remain in place today.

In 1929 bracing was needed to halt a shift on the south and west sides. The school trustees bought materials and used hired workers and volunteers to do this repair work.

The cedar roof shingles were covered in 1930 with rolled asphalt roofing after prompting from the forestry department. Before 1930 the screen porch on the west side was enclosed to provide a larger living area. An entry/exit door was added from the living area to the north veranda.

During the summer of 1938 the barn/shed was repaired and its wood roof replaced with sheet iron. The school roof also was repaired with rolled asphalt.

Major alternations came in 1948 when electricity arrived. The old gasoline lanterns were replaced with 4 (four) new electric light fixtures. Two modern bathrooms with a toilet and sink were constructed in part of each closet with their entrance on the front porch. Each of these bathrooms had a light and a window. The entrance to the double entry doors was screened in and a screen door hung.

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Description (continued)

Closure of the nearby Klau Mine in the late 1940s caused the enrollment to drop in several of the local schools, which started the consolidation of schools. Mandatory up grades at this time included a fire exit door and steps on the south side, casement 2/6 light windows replaced the same size original double hung windows on the south side and a butane heater replaced the wood heating stove.

Statement of Significance

This basic structure, the Lincoln-Adelaida School, built in 1917 provided a solid structure and a large playground for the schooling of Adelaida area children till 1964. This close knit community by the mid 1920s also used the school as a community center. School Trustee Meetings, Girls Club, Boys Club, Mom's Club, the Adelaida 4-H, the Adelaida Farm Center, The Adelaida Home Department, the Eatable Nut Tree Committee, and the Neighborhood Marketing Club all met or used the school for functions. Government agencies, politicians, county leaders, and musicians presented information, listened to concerns, and entertained at the school. General and Primary Elections were held at the school from the late 1930s to mid 1980s. Social and recreational events brought the community together for 85 years at the school and grounds.

The name change from Lincoln School to Adelaida School was never meant in any way to demean the heritage of the Lincoln name. Rather it was a slow process that started after the close and disassembly in 1936 of the Adelaida Post Office and the other buildings in the

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Statement of Significance (continued)

area known as the Adelaida District. By 1948 with the decline in student enrollment and the discussion of consolidation with other area schools the Lincoln School became known as the Adelaida District. When the name changed officially in 1959 it was to retain the historic Adelaida name for the benefit of the community's history.

Historical background and significance

Adelaida until 1877 was known as Las Tablas, and was on the mail route of Cayucos and Cambria. These Central Coast shipping stops (approximately half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco) brought the miners and homesteaders that settled in this remote area northeast of the Pacific Ocean over the San Lucia Range. Chumash and Salinan Native Americans used some of the same treacherous trails to trade with each other, that the early settlers used after the 1860s. Portola and his men in 1769 crossed the rugged crest of the Santa Lucia Range with pry bars, Machetes, and pick axes when trying to reach and explore this region.

The Lincoln-Adelaida School building is the last site and school structure of the Lincoln School established by the San Luis Obispo County Supervisors on May 21, 1881. The $2,700 in bonds appropriated for a new school in 1917, where the result of the Adelaida community's concern with the condition, size, and play area of the previous school site. Mr. & Mrs. Isaac Sims for the sum of $10 (ten dollars) on April 18, 1917 deeded this site of one and one half acres in Section 14 T26 SR 10 E to and for the Lincoln School.

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Historical background and significance (continued)

Students from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s remember that parents and local families were often at the school to repair, paint, or help out. Edgar Gerst, John Dyck, Alfred Dubost, James Bousfield, Bill Gerst, and Conrad Juhl volunteered efforts are clearly remembered. Bill Claussen seated on his mowing machine drawn by his team of horses keeping the school grounds clear is a favorite memory of many of the students attending the school in the 1930s. For major repairs the trustees hired the skilled services of Al Dyck and Mr. Jerden. The school was a community effort and three generations at times would work together as the students weren't exempted from helping.

The elected Lincoln School Trustees normally had the school year start a week late so the students could help with the harvesting of fruits and nuts - their family's livelihood. These trustees were responsible for the upkeep of the school plant, hiring the teacher, and the enrollment problems of this approximately 6 miles by 5 miles district.

Young Helen Heaton, a new graduate from San Jose Normal School, was the first of eleven (11) teachers to instruct the students of Lincoln School between 1917 and 1950. All of these teachers, taught the State Curriculum and used the San Luis Obispo County Library System to supplement the reading material. The average student enrollment for these thirty-three years was 9.5 with a low of 4 and a high of 23 (twenty-three) students.

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Historical background and significance (continued)

4-H members planted the locust trees in 1932 that still shade the playground. There is still the large pink miniature rose bush on the west side whose petals provided the girl students with their first cheek blush. Narcissus that Mrs. Anderson the teacher had her students plant for a science project still bloom each winter on the north and west side of the school.

Minutes of the Adelaida Farm Center have recorded not only the agriculture concerns of the Adelaida farmers, but also tell of the social functions, community actives, political issues, youth involvement, musical entertainment, and reflect the strength and moods of the Adelaida Community through the depression and war years that took place or were expressed in the Lincoln-Adelaida School.

The Adelaida School and grounds are still surrounded by agriculture lands in this rural area known affectionately as Adelaida. There is need at this time for some significant work to be done on the building and grounds. Chimney Rock Road makes its wide turn in front of the school just as the old dirt road did when the school was built in 1917.

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Bill Gerst, January 15, 2001 - no tape

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Researchers

Raymond Dodd, Sr., Past Chairman, Adelaida Farm Center

H. E. Blythe, Past Chairman, Adelaida Farm Center

Virginia Peterson, Retired School Teacher

Nick Gilman, Architect, February 9, 2001

John Comino, Chairman, Adelaida Farm Center

Blanche Comino, Past Chairman, Adelaida Farm Center