

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

A) Identification

Historic Name: **Mabana School**

Common Name:

Address: 3648 South Camano Drive

City: Camano Island

County: Island

B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

The Mabana Schoolhouse is located on the west S. Camano Drive just south of Seth Drive; directly across the street from the Mabana Fire Station

C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: Linda Demetre

Address: 3190 Hidden Shores Lane

City: Camano Island

State: WA

Zip: 98282

D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel: S7125-00-00004-2

Boundary Justification: The boundaries encompass the entire tax lot which is associated with the Mabana Schoolhouse.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Linda Demetre (Edited by DAHP Staff)

Address: 3190 Hidden Shores Land

City / State / Zip: Camano Island, WA 98282

Phone: 360-387-8248

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E) Category of Property (Choose One)

- building structure (irrigation system, bridge, etc.) district
 object (statue, grave marker, vessel, etc.) cemetery/burial site
 historic site (site of an important event) archaeological site
 traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.)
 cultural landscape (habitation, agricultural, industrial, recreational, etc.)

F) Area of Significance – Check as many as apply

- The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.*
- The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which served as a focal point for a community or group.*
- The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.*
- The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.*
- The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, recreation).*
- The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.*
- The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.*
- The property was designed or built by an influential architect, or reflects the work of an important artisan.*
- Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or life ways.*

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

G) Property Description

The Mabana Schoolhouse is located on the south end of Camano Island at 3648 S. Camano Island Drive. It is twenty minutes from Stanwood, the closest incorporated city. The Schoolhouse was built in 1916 and sits on a flat 12,500 ft. lot surrounded on three sides by thick woods. The boundaries are marked by a cedar split rail fencing on the street side. The school sits directly across from the Mabana Fire Station, both of which were built on original land grant lands deeded to Nils Anderson.

The schoolhouse is 23' x 23' rectangular structure resting on a concrete foundation. The side gable roof is covered with a standing seam metal roof and has exposed rafter tails and decorative clipped gable ends. Exposed purlins are also found in the gable ends. At the ridge is the original school bell cupola, still operational. Entrance to the school is through a small gabled entry vestibule extending from the east side of the building. The walls are clad with drop shiplap siding. A simple brick chimney is found at the SW corner and serves a large vintage wood burning stove. Wood, multi-lite double hung windows are surrounded by simple 4" moldings. A newer front entry door greets visitors off a shallow entry stoop.

Inside the 1,134sq ft. school has been divided into three rooms: the main living area, a bathroom (7x10) and a kitchen (9x12). Despite these additions, the large open classroom space remains mostly intact with wainscoting, chalkboards, hardwood floors and high ceilings.

In 1984 Jackie Longo bought the rundown school for \$12,000. She hired architect, R. Roy to rehabilitate the schoolhouse and convert it into a home. Electric and plumbing upgrades occurred as well as the installation of a the bath and kitchen spaces in the former cloak room area. Roy also added the shallow front porch, and lowered the attic ceiling over the two smaller rooms to create a bedroom loft area. He designed a simple staircase, with vertical grain fir balusters and rails. A second building (20'x38'), separate from the schoolhouse, was designed and built as an artist studio. It was designed to complement the schoolhouse, and is not seen from the street.

H) Significance

The Mabana School is historically significant as example of an early one-room school house, directly linked to the early educational system of Washington State. The school was built in 1916 to serve the logging community of Mabana, which flourished in the early 1900's. Nearly gone today, the community was located on the west side of Camano Island, near the northern tip. The school house is also significant as a property that is associated with the pioneering family of Nils Anderson, who established the community. Nils and his daughter, Pearl, would achieve local, state and national recognition as important political players in the State legislature and public educational system.

Most of the Camano Island communities grew from small logging camps that operated at various island locations in the 1890s and early 1900s. One of the largest and earliest mills on Camano was at Utsalady on the island's northwestern tip. Near the southern end, Nils Anderson began logging in the 1890s. Around 1911, Anderson purchased the tidelands and a year later platted the community of Mabana (the name Mabana is said to be a word created by combining the first letters of daughter Mabel's name and the last letters of wife Johanna's name), and began to sell parcels of logged-off land. About the same time E. G. "Jack" Hogle opened a store and established a post office on August 3, 1912.

Until a bridge was built in 1909 to Camano Island from Stanwood on the mainland, Camano was a very isolated place. The south end of the island was even more so. To combat the isolation, Anderson built a 900-foot wharf that became known as the Mabana Dock. The wharf was long because the water was very shallow and needed to accommodate passenger, mail and freight service. Before the dock existed, travelers had to row out to board the shallow-draft launch Ruby Marie but after the dock was built, the Alvarene provided regular passenger service. The dock had a narrow-gauge track that operated with a small rail car that transported logs onto steamers. A rough road was finally built from the north to Mabana in 1916.

Anderson was a Swedish-born immigrant who had arrived in the U.S. in 1879, and came to Washington in 1883. Initially he lived at Sandy Point on Whidbey Island where he met and married Johanna (Hana) Hellman in 1891. Known as "Peg Leg" due to a serious logging accident and resultant amputation of a leg, Nils continued to log and prospered from both the sale of timber and real estate.

In 1898 the Andersons established a ranch at Mabana and built a home for their family that eventually included Mabel (b. Maude Margaret in 1894), Helen Dorothy (b. 1897), Pearl Adella (1899-1984), and a son, Niles. By the early 1900s the Andersons had moved to Seattle's Rogers/Seward neighborhood but they kept the property at Mabana as a summer retreat. When the children were grown, Nils and Johanna moved back to Camano Island where Nils held various Island County offices including County engineer, Island County Commissioner and State Representative (1923).

Concerned with the educational needs of the local logging families, Anderson helped establish the Mabana School District No. 23 in 1910. For the first few years, classes were held in a small building that he owned near the bluff (Tract No 1). In 1916, classes were moved to a new schoolhouse (lovingly called Anderson Hall). The first teacher in the new school was Nils daughter, Pearl. Anderson other daughter, Dorothy also became a school teacher in the Seattle Public school system.

Pearl had entered the University of Washington at the young age of 16. Answering a call for teachers to replace World War I draftees, she interrupted her education for three years to teach at the rural one-room school in Mabana and to work as an elementary school principal in a two-room school on Whidbey Island. At times teaching boys older than her 18 years, her duties included keeping a wood stove burning, carrying water, and sweeping floors. During this time, she attended summer school at Bellingham Normal School (now Western Washington University). She eventually returned to the University of Washington, where she graduated with a degree in education in 1922.

After college, Pearl went to Jordan, Montana, as a teacher and dormitory matron, but she had already decided to run for the non-partisan Island County Superintendent of Schools. She returned in 1923 to win that position as the youngest (age 24) elected county school superintendent in the country. She shared the ballot with her father, by then an Island County Commissioner running for state representative. They both won. Pearl's job took her to the county's rural schools, many accessible only by ferry or small boat. She shared many hours on these water-craft with the quiet, shy County Engineer, Lemuel A. Wanamaker. They wed in 1927.

Pearl had run and lost a race for the State Legislature in 1926, and reportedly Lem made her promise she'd quit teaching and politics to be a homemaker and do the clubby civic duties expected of married women of the time. However, within a year, Pearl was bored and with Lem begrudgingly in agreement ("I was pretty well broken in by then," he said), she ran for the 38th District House seat in 1928. This time she was successful, running largely on the issue of the proposed Deception Pass Bridge between Whidbey and Fidalgo Islands, which she favored.

A freshman, minority Democrat in the 1929 session, Representative Wanamaker was one of four women in the House. Having run on the bridge issue and being the daughter and wife of civil engineers, Pearl took great interest in highways and bridges. She helped shepherd the a bridge bill through both houses, but it was felled by the busy veto pen of Republican Governor Roland Hartley.

Considering herself a failure after losing a spirited battle to override the veto, Pearl left the Legislature, went back to Camano, taught high school, and had three children. Without maternity leave or fuss, she taught school and held public office during her pregnancies. The fact that she was pregnant was not generally known to her professional cohorts. Governor Martin visited the Wanamaker's Coupeville home to ask Pearl to represent him at a Salt Lake City highway conference. He was astonished

when told she him that she had just given birth to a baby girl in a Seattle hospital. Wanamaker said, "I never did buy any maternity clothes. The fact that my pregnancies didn't show was due to ... my good posture, my physique, carrying position, a good girdle, and small babies".

She ran again and was elected to the House in the 1932 Democratic landslide. This time, given a Democratic majority and new governor, she was able to pass the Deception Pass Bridge plan and get it funded without tolls. Pearl Wanamaker presided over its dedication in 1935.

Pearl challenged incumbent 2nd District Congressman Mon Wallgren in the 1936 Democratic primary and lost. However, a couple of months later, just as she had taken a lobbyist job for the Washington Education Association for the upcoming legislative session, there was a sudden resignation, and Island County Commissioners appointed Wanamaker to a State Senate seat.

As Senator (1937-40), Wanamaker hit her stride as an innovative and adroit solon; she developed her interest and knowledge of education policy and honed her political acumen. She built a power base among her peers and developed a strong, statewide constituency of what was known (sometimes pejoratively) as the "school forces": the public school interests, the PTA, higher education advocates, teacher's unions, and other professional educators' groups.

Dissatisfaction caused educators and others to search for someone to oppose State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Stanley Atwood in the next election. Wanamaker, a teacher and legislative stalwart for education, was a natural choice. In March 1940, a 50-car caravan of supporters, many of them educators, armed with a 9,000-signature petition, traveled to Wanamaker's Coupeville home to urge her to run. A couple of days later she agreed. In November she won the non-partisan race handily. In her 16-year tenure as Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wanamaker oversaw deep and sweeping changes in education. Following a national but controversial trend, she began the virtual elimination of one-room multi-grade schools, and the installing of junior and senior high school systems. The old non-system of locally funded and controlled facilities and of narrow, autonomous curricula was fiscally deficient and educationally inadequate to new needs.

Reorganizing and consolidating local school districts to meet the demands of a wartime nation with a growing population was a massive, costly, and politically painful task that required legislative affirmation and gubernatorial approval. Rural consolidation meant extensive building programs and new taxes. Ruralites saw it as further degeneration of their power and local control. Schools were put into the transportation business with busing, an expensive logistical problem that meant long bus rides, always an emotional issue for parents. The powerful State Grange, fiscal conservatives, and rural legislators opposed Wanamaker and her allies with cries of centralization. Nevertheless, by 1946, the number of independent districts had been reduced from 2,700 to 800.

World War II could have seen the deterioration of state educational system, but Wanamaker recognized the need to address the wartime demand for the training of skilled workers. Teachers were in short supply due to loss to the military and schools faced the growing demands of a burgeoning enrollment of war babies. This required such stop-gap measures as emergency certification of teachers with incomplete degrees and rehiring of retirees, but these led to larger-scale re-evaluations and modernizations in certification and teacher-training. Wanamaker completed these reforms between 1944 and 1948.

Wanamaker made headlines by firmly opposing (and winning) the argument against war industry demands that high school students be allowed to work full time. "We must keep our youth in school to prevent a 'lost generation,'" she said (Angelos). Named by General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) to the U.S. Education Mission to Japan, she traveled to that country in 1946 and 1950 to study its schools and make recommendations for its demilitarization and post-war reorganization. Wanamaker championed and got such innovations as community colleges, school nursing, and special education of handicapped children and exceptional children alike. She sponsored the state matching-fund program for local school buildings, and increased teachers' salaries in every budget. Although she always made sure she controlled it, she restructured the State Board of Education from professional educators to lay citizens.

During her tenure she also began programs for the handicapped, as well as for exceptional children; she pioneered the community college concept, and made enemies in the education community by separating vocational training from other two-year college education.

Wanamaker also had a high national profile, and knew how to use it. She served as president of the National Education Association (1946-1947), received honorary degrees from colleges and universities all over the country, and made time to appear on many national platforms and in many publications to advocate for progressive education policies.

A national bogeyman of politics at the time was federal aid to education. Pearl was a fiercely outspoken advocate of it, although she insisted such aid be without government curriculum control. She led the fight to place a federal aid plank in the final report of the 1956 White House Conference on Education. Her activism at the conference got much media attention, and the national notice from conservatives was to play into her eventual political defeat.

Always controversial, Wanamaker was denounced from pulpits for insisting that the state and federal constitutions forbade parochial school students from using public-school buses. The courts backed this view, but Seattle Catholics and Lynden's Dutch Reformed alike bitterly blamed her.

At the height of her power, (1952-1956) Pearl Wanamaker fended off several attempts to curb her clout, and punished those who tried. Her budgets and policies were seldom defeated, but her enemies piled up over the years: legislators in both parties, taxpayer's groups, the Grange, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Catholics, the Republican Party, vocational educators, Governor Langlie, and others.

After losing her office, she became active in national education circles, as a speaker traveling all over the country. She worked for Scholastic magazines and served on the Washington State Arts Commission and served on many other state and national boards and committees. She passed away in 1984 at the age of 85.

Back in Mabana, students began riding the bus to Stanwood as high school students. In 1926 after merging with the Algers Bay and Triangle Bay Schols, students attended Central School. Finally in 1936, students from all grades rode the bus to Stanwood. Mabana school continued in use as a community meeting hall, wedding chapel, church, and banquet facility. It was eventually donated to the Ladies Aid Society in 1962 by Nils Anderson, whom had retained ownership of the building all those years.

Today, the Mabana Schoolhouse serves as physical testament to early pioneer Nils Anderson and his daughter Pear Anderson–Wannamker. The Mabana School was the place where she cut her teeth in the educational system and began his long and distinguished career.

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

I) Documentation

Xerox and attach any information or evidence that supports the property's significance.

Written Sources (books, articles, newspapers):

"Images of America: Camano Island" Karen Prasse, pg. 87-90

National Grange Community Services

Pearl Wnamaker, Champian "Fighter for Education"

In Making a Difference, A Centennial Celebration on Washington Women, Vol 11, Rev 1992.

Island County Commissioners Establish Port of Mabana on Camano Island on March 1, 1926 - History Link Essay:

Wanamaker, Pearl Anderson (1899-1984) - History Link Essay

Oral History/Interviews:

Graham Anderson, grandson - may 2014

darlene Waite, historian and neighbor - Sept 2015

Grace Cornwell, Stanwood Museum historian - 1990

jackie Longo, previous owner - June 2014

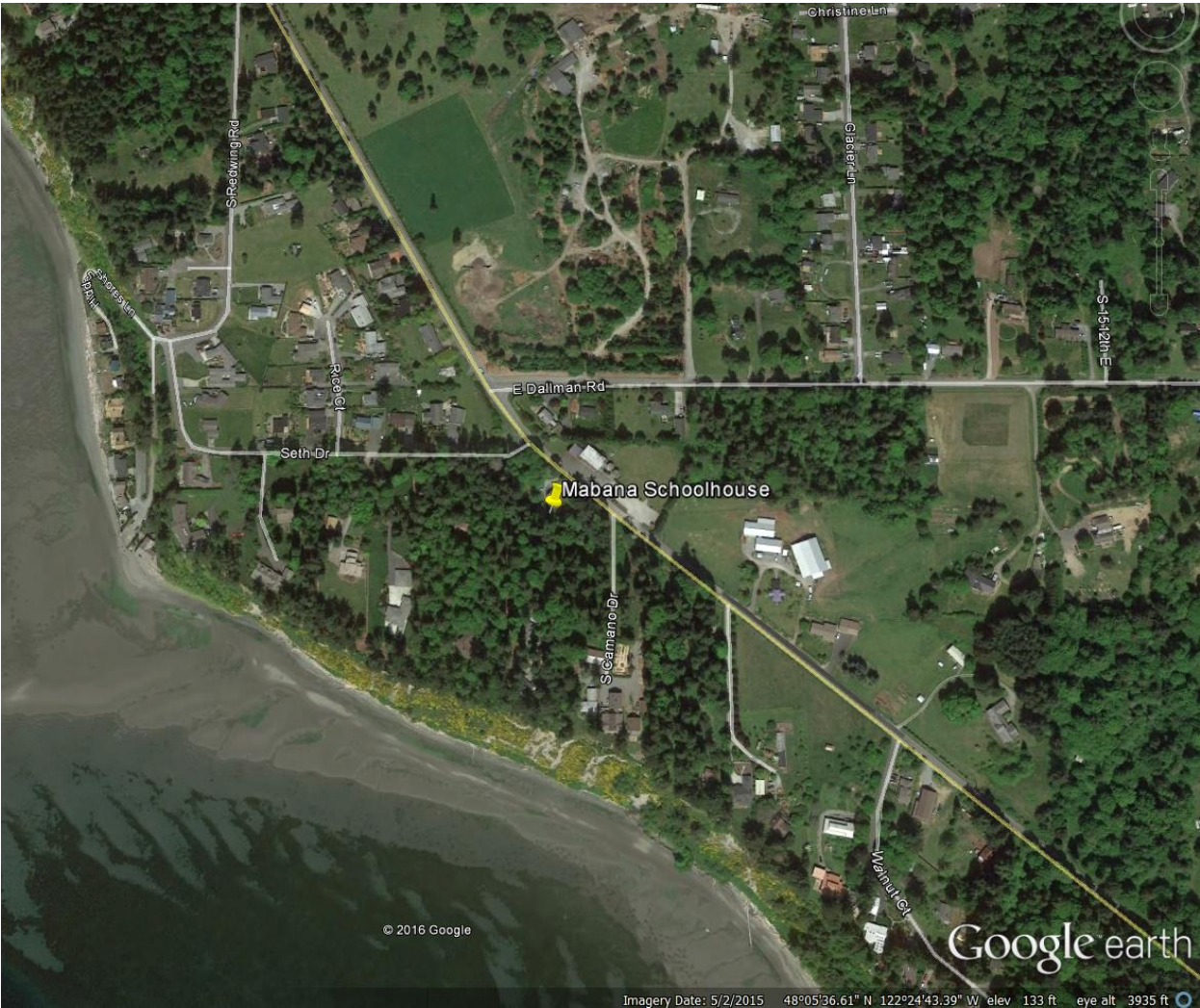
Carol Hall, glass artist/ previous owner - July 2015

Dr. Steve Gilbert, previous owner - Feb 2013


J) Map and Photographs

Attach copies of historic maps or photos if available, and current photos (5 x 7 B & W). Include a current map – appropriate U.S.G.S. map and parcel map – with the location of the property and its boundaries clearly marked. (see instructions)

MABANA SCHOOLHOUSE



Google Earth - Edit Placemark

Name: 

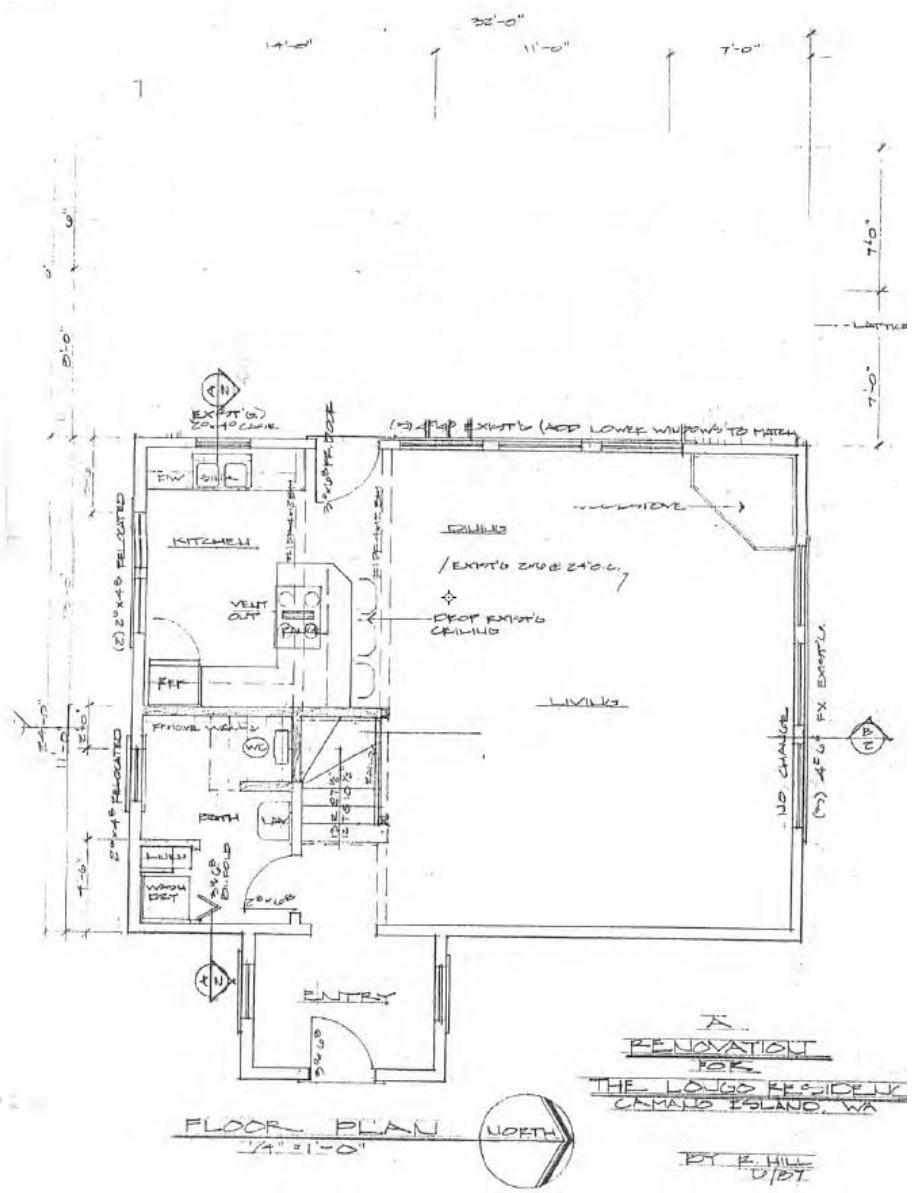
Latitude:

Longitude:



Property ID: 270174 Geographic ID: S7125-00-0000-2

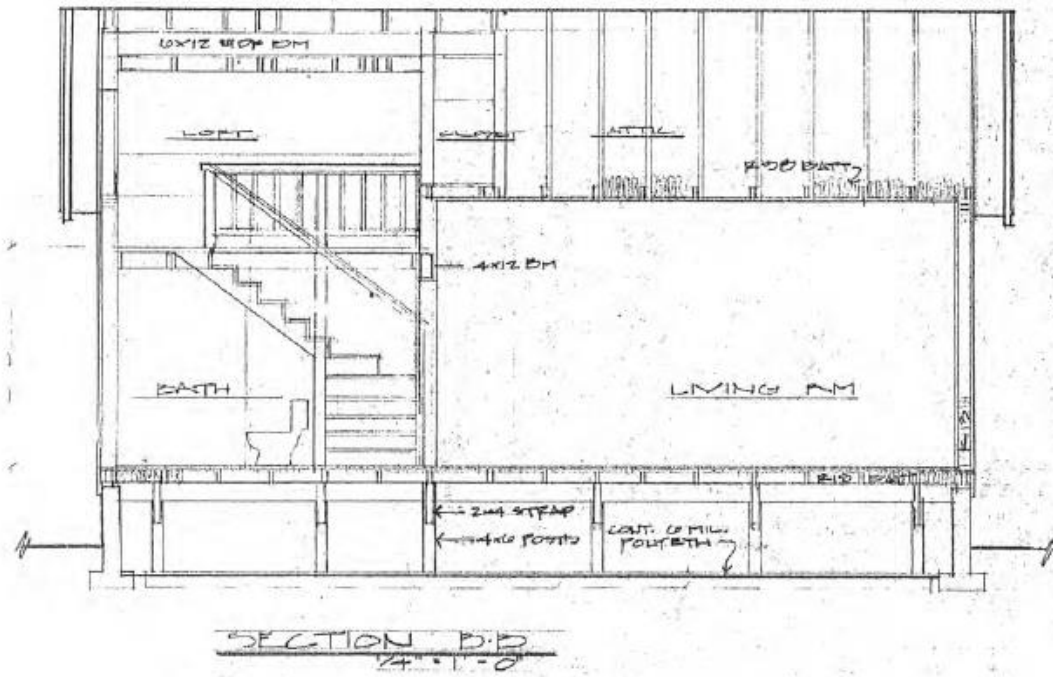
Legal Description: HILNDS CAM PT LOT 4: BG NECR LOT 4 S ALG ELN 90' W100' N127' N37*E TO NLN SD LOT SELY ALG SD NLN 100' TPB



Mabana School

Floor Plan

Not to scale



Mabana School

Cross Section

Not to scale



Mabana Schoolhouse – c. 1920



Mabana Schoolhouse – c. 1953



Mabana Schoolhouse – c. 1925



Mabana Students – 1920. Beatrice Harth was teacher (1919-20)



Painting party by the South Camano Grange. Done as part of the 1949 National Grange Community Service Contest – 1949



Pearl Anderson Wanamaker Mabana Class of 1919



Pearl Anderson-Wanamaker – c.1923





