

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

**DRAFT**

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Irene Burns House  
Other names/site number: Burns School, Burns-Howell Home  
Name of related multiple property listing:  
Architectural and Historic Resources of Auburn, California  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 405 Linden Avenue  
City or town: Auburn State: California County: Placer  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D

<hr/>	
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<hr/>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register           

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

EDUCATION/School

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Stick-Eastlake

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood, asbestos siding

### Narrative Description

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

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Irene Burns House is a two-story Stick-Eastlake residence located on the northeast corner of Linden Avenue and Boardman Street in Auburn, California, Lot 2 of the Tibbs Addition, aka Linden Heights of East Auburn. Built in 1895 by Roy and Sarah Brown as their residence, the home was sold to Miss Irene Burns and her brother Robert in 1900. The building has an L-shaped plan, with a hip-on-gable main roof and a side-gabled wing on the northern wall. Siding was originally constructed with wooden shiplap, currently covered with asbestos siding. The foundation is brick except for a concrete foundation on a screened back porch constructed in 1936. Windows are double-hung with wooden sash.

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#### Narrative Description

The building's plan is L-shaped, with a hip-on-gable main roof of moderate pitch and a front-facing side-gabled wing, with composition shingles. Two tall brick chimneys are located on the roof ridge, slightly set back from each gable end. A rectangular bay projects diagonally from the wing. The wing's gable features a pediment with decorated verge boards, fish-scale shingles, and a semicircular louvered vent. The cornice line is supported by decorative brackets around the roof's perimeter. An asymmetrical front porch with hipped roof is supported by four turned porch posts with a spindlework frieze and brackets. Between the porch supports is a wooden balustrade of turned posts. Stairs to the front porch are brick. Foundation is brick with a concrete planter box. The main entrance is a wooden two-panel door with transom window. Windows are all single-light double-hung wooden sash except for metal slider windows on the building rear, in utility room and second-story enclosed porch. The bay window has stained glass squares bordering the upper center light. Most of the windows have green canvas awnings. Front and rear doors have Stick-Eastlake style screen doors with spindlework details.

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The building rear features enclosed porches on the first and second floor with windows of metal screen material. Back stairs are wooden with a wooden handrail. The house is constructed on a hillside, descending at the building's northeastern corner, revealing more of the building's basement at that corner.

The house is located on a small lot with picket fence and multiple mature trees. There is no apparent landscape plan other than a mowed front lawn with concrete walkway, with small concrete retaining wall along the sidewalk.

### **Interior**

The original front door opens into a small vestibule with stairs directly in front. The floor is of 5" planking throughout. The door and window trims feature five different patterns, including standard rosette, sunburst, and brace and bit originals. The baseboard is original in most rooms. Sheetrock has replaced lath and plaster on most interior walls. To the left are the front parlor with bay window and back parlor with functional pocket doors. To the right is the sitting room. The kitchen is on the rear of the building. A door from the kitchen leads to the laundry and bath on the rear porch. Another door from the kitchen leads to the porch, and to the back steps outside.

The second floor has a balcony above the rear porch. There were five original bedrooms, one of which was remodeled into a bathroom, and the original bathroom is now the hallway to the second-story back porch. The second story porch has glass windows and is completely enclosed.

### **Integrity**

The two-story back porch and second-story porch were added in 1936, during the period of significance, to facilitate conversion of the home into a boarding school. The asbestos siding was added prior to 1962. The siding is obviously not original to the property, limiting integrity of materials and workmanship, but resembles the orientation and dimensions of the original wooden siding.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education  
Politics/Government  
Other (Women)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1900-1943  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Burns, Irene  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Irene Burns House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion B at the local level of significance for its association with educator Irene Burns, a schoolteacher who became the first woman elected to political office in Placer County, California. After three terms as County Superintendent of Schools, she taught developmentally disabled students in San Francisco, then established a school for disabled students in her Auburn home, known as the Burns School. The period of significance is 1900-1943, from her first purchase of the house as a schoolteacher in the city of Auburn until her retirement and the end of the use of the house as an educational facility. This property is nominated under the *Architectural and Historic Resources of Auburn, California* Multiple Property Document under the Residential Buildings property type.

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

**Criterion B: Irene Burns as Educator and Elected Official.**

Irene Burns represents an individual significant under Criterion B for her role as an educator and administrator in Placer County, California. As a woman of the Progressive Era, Irene Burns represented part of a generation of women with expanded opportunities for education and political voice. Earlier female social reformers often worked as non-professional volunteers, due to women's more limited economic and political independence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Women gained the right to vote in California in 1911, opening new doors for elective office, and represented a growing acceptance of women in professional roles. Employment opportunities were often constrained by perceived social norms, so many of this generation of professional women pursued education, employment and political office in fields like nursing, child welfare, sanitary commissions, and schools. Her role as educator and elected official brought her into contact with other female professionals throughout California, and mention of her work in educational journals shows her participation in the development of education in Placer County and its influence on other California educators.

The Irene Burns House represents the single property that best reflects Burns' working life. Most of the schools where she taught are no longer standing, and while her office was probably in the Placer County courthouse, most of her work as a commissioner was spent in the field, touring schools throughout Placer County. The house was also used for educational purposes during the summers from 1930-1937 while she ran the Burns School in San Francisco, and as a boarding school from 1937-1943.

Irene Burns was born in Auburn, California in 1872. After completion of studies in Placer County schools and a qualifying examination, she obtained a certificate to teach. She supplemented her studies at Curtiss and Patchett's Normal School in San Francisco, and classes at the University of California, Berkeley. At the age of eighteen, she took her first job teaching seven students at Deadwood, Placer County. Deadwood was a seven mile weekly commute from her family home in Michigan Bluff, via horseback on a mountainous trail. After her first year at Deadwood, she spent several succeeding years at various other small schools in Placer County,



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including Blue Canyon, Foresthill and Lone Star. Irene then accepted a job in Auburn and spent the following sixteen years teaching in the Auburn schools.

In 1914 she successfully ran for the office of Placer County Superintendent of Schools, becoming the first woman to hold that position. This also gave her the distinction of being the first woman to be elected to any public office in Placer County. Her success at that job led her through two re-elections. During her time in this office, she was instrumental in forming several different school districts in the county and instigated the school nurse program. Being one of the first women to drive an automobile in Placer County made her quite a distinctive sight as she visited the schools scattered throughout the large county.

It was her decision not to seek a fourth term as Superintendent of Placer County Schools, but instead to add a new dimension to her career in education. In 1930 she went to San Francisco and spent a year in the public school system there. She then started her own school in San Francisco, "The Burns School," and taught developmentally disabled children. This was one of the earliest schools in California to specialize in the teaching of developmentally disabled children. She returned to her Auburn home during those San Francisco years and often brought several of her students with her. They would receive room and board, as well as daily instruction in her home. In 1937 she returned to Auburn permanently and brought four of her pupils with her. They stayed with her and continued their instruction. She continued her work until retirement in 1943. Irene Burns died in 1962. A room has been named in her honor in the newly constructed Placer County Office of Education in Auburn.

The home Irene purchased in 1900 was built several years earlier by Roy Brown. She bought the home when she was twenty-seven years old and lived there throughout the rest of her life. She also made it home for her mother and, at various times, her brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, as well as her students. In 1936, to prepare accommodations for the students she would be bringing home the following year, a sleeping porch was built onto the original house.

### **Accomplishments of Irene Burns as Placer County Superintendent of Schools**

During Irene Burns' tenure as Superintendent of Schools, she oversaw the construction of a new William H. Weeks designed school in the city of Auburn, in 1915.

In 1916, State Commissioner of Elementary Schools Dr. Margaret S. McNaught accompanied Irene Burns on an inspection of Placer County schools. According to the report, there were only two "insanitary" toilets of fifty-four county school districts. ("Rural School Trustees Improve Sanitation," *California State Board of Health Monthly Bulletin*, Vol. 11 No. 11, May 1916, p. 611)

In 1916, Irene Burns encouraged Placer County schools to prepare booklets on Placer County's historical places, using a student-prepared history of the Placer County community of Iowa Hill. (*Western Journal of Education*, Vol. XXII No. 8, August 1916, p.11)

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From April to June 1920, Irene Burns coordinated an experimental education project, called the Los Angeles Adjustment Plan, a method of individualized education intended for small schools. The plan was implemented in four one-room schools and one three-room school in Placer County, at the suggestion of State Commissioner of Elementary Schools Dr. Margaret S. McNaught. (Sutherland, A.H., "Methods of Individual Instruction in the Adjustment Rooms of Los Angeles," Terman, Lewis, ed., *Intelligence Tests and School Reorganization, Prepared as a subcommittee report to the Commission on Revision of Elementary Education, National Education Association, Dr. Margaret McNaught, Chairman, 1922 World Book Company, Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York, p. 70-72*)

In 1921, Superintendent Burns reported on the success of the "Community Play Day," a physical education program initiated in conjunction with Assistant Supervisor of Physical Education in California, Winifred Van Hagen, to the annual meeting of the School Superintendents of the State of California. This presentation led to the adoption of Community Play Day events in other California schools, including San Diego. (York, Ada, "A Rural School Play Day," *The Journal of Rural Education*, Volume 2, Numbers 2&3, October-November 1922, National Education Association, p. 372-374)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Lardner, W.B. and M.J. Brock, *History of Placer and Nevada Counties, California*, Los Angeles, California, Historic Record Company, 1924.

Auburn Journal, February 10, 1951.

Auburn Journal, April 26, 1962.

Sacramento Bee, February 12, 1951.

Oral history interview with Elaine Dennison, niece of Irene Burns

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1 acre

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Lot 2 of Tibbs Addition, aka Linden Heights of East Auburn, NE corner of Linden Avenue and Boardman Street, Auburn, California.  
Parcel #002-161-007-000.  
60'x120' lot.

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

The property boundary is the original city lot were the Irene Burns House was located.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Donna Howell  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 405 Linden Avenue  
city or town: Auburn state: California zip code: 95603  
e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone: (530) 885-2891  
date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

### Photographs

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

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Irene Burns House

City or Vicinity: Auburn

County: Placer

State: California

Photographer: Donna Howell

Date Photographed: June 27, 2012

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

- 1 of 7 South elevation, camera facing north
- 2 of 7 North elevation, camera facing south
- 3 of 7 West elevation, camera facing east
- 4 of 7 East elevation, camera facing west
- 5 of 7 Parlor, camera facing southwest
- 6 of 7 Dining room, camera facing north
- 7 of 7 Vestibule, camera facing north

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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**FIGURE LOG**

Figure 1. Historic photo. Left to Right: Irene Burns, Margaret McNaught (State Commissioner of Elementary Schools) and Annie Smith (elementary school teacher) riding on school inspection tour in Placer County, circa 1916.

Figure 2. Photo of Irene Burns circa 1890.

Figure 3. Photo of Irene Burns circa 1898.

Figure 4. Photo of Irene Burns in front of her home, 1941.

Figure 5. Sketch map, indicating location of Burns House. Image taken from 1899 Sanborn map, Auburn, CA.

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Figure 1. Historic photo. Left to Right: Irene Burns, Margaret McNaught (State Commissioner of Elementary Schools) and Annie Smith (elementary school teacher) riding on school inspection tour in Placer County, circa 1916.

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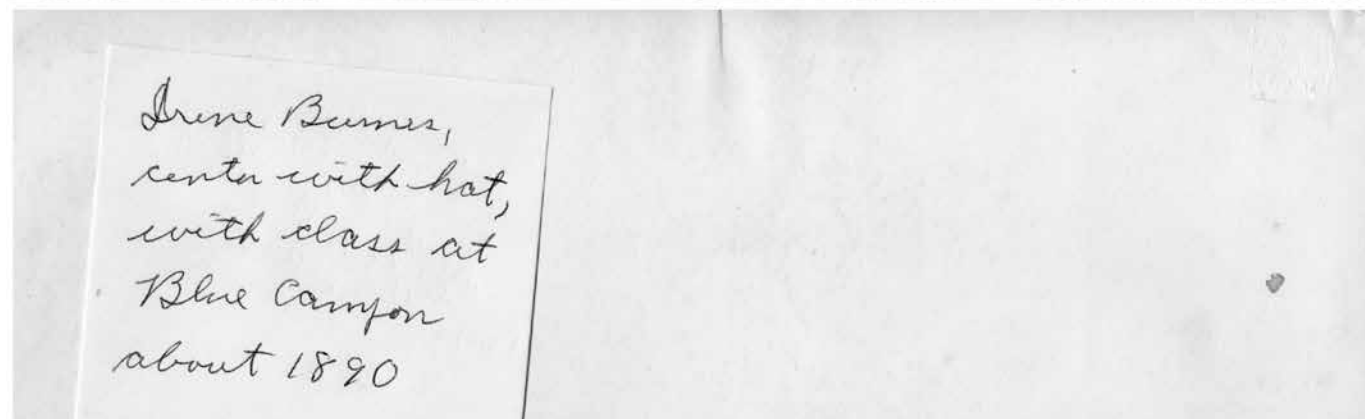


Figure 2. Irene Burns with students, Blue Canyon School, circa 1890.



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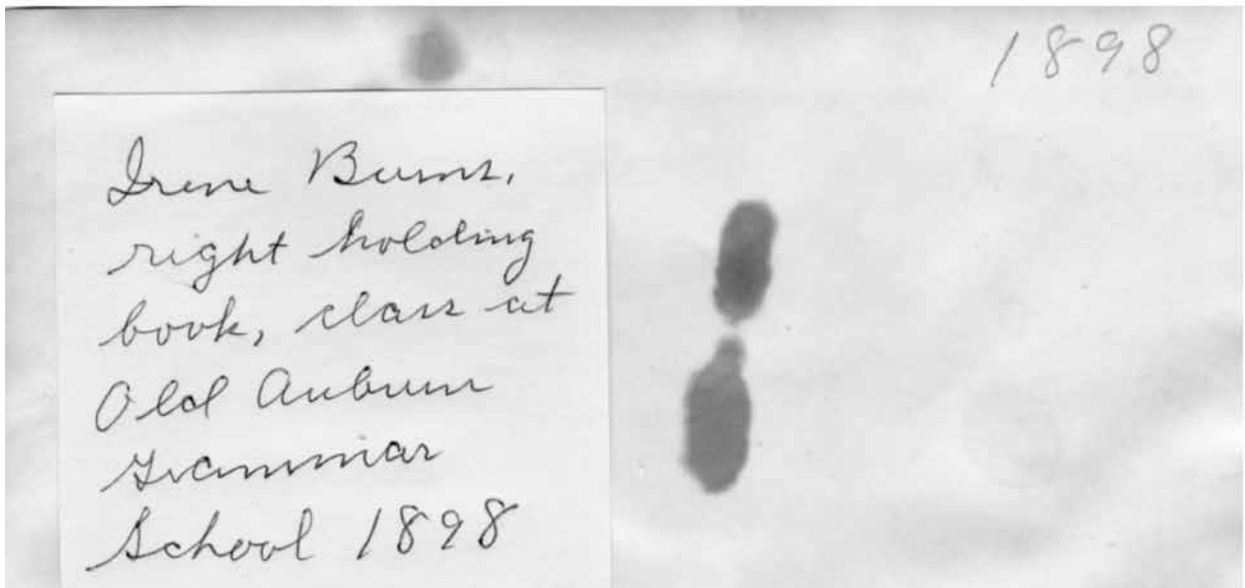


Figure 3. Irene Burns with students, Auburn Grammar School, circa 1898. Burns is the woman on the far right in the second row, holding a book.

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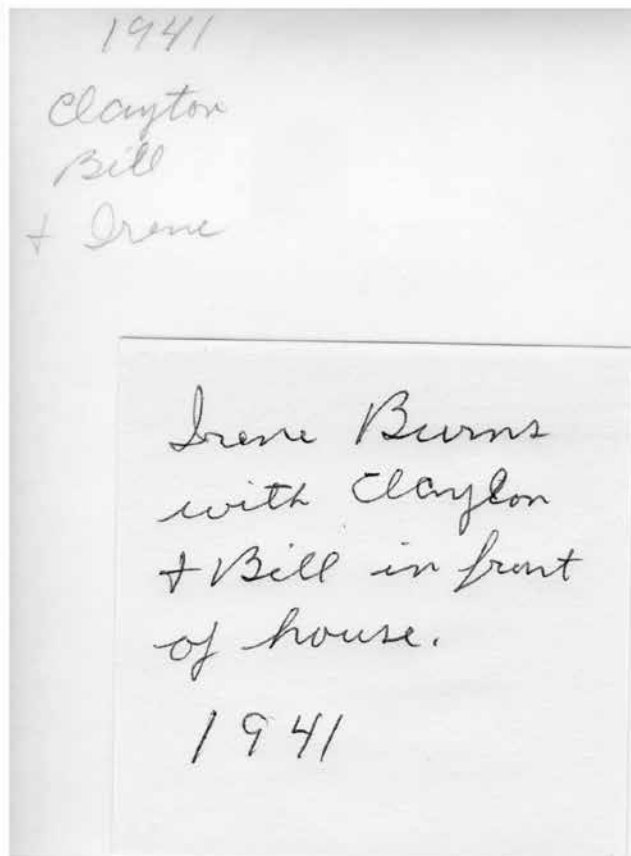


Figure 4. Irene Burns, right, in front of subject property, 1941.

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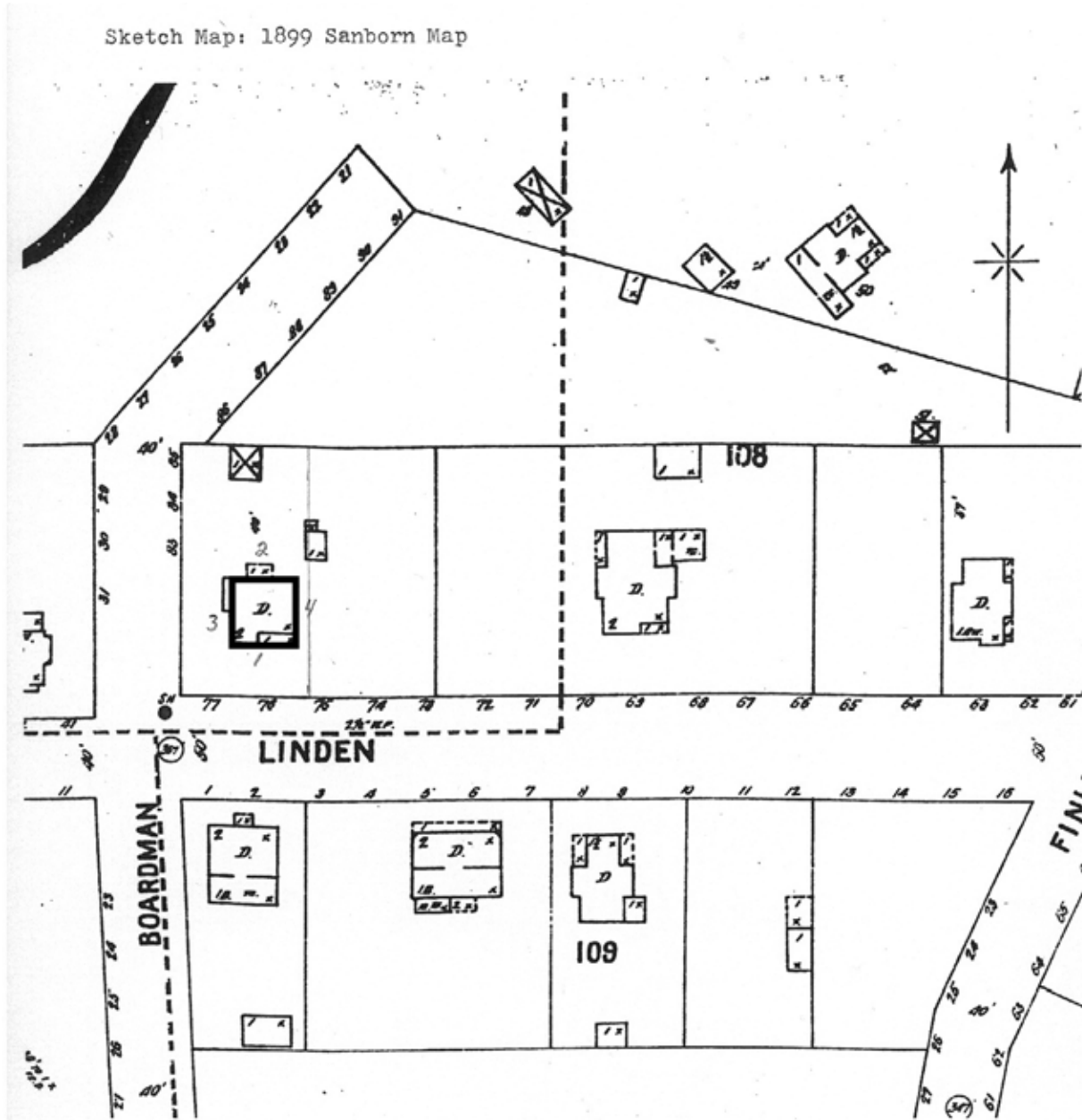


Figure 5. 1899 Sanborn map showing location of Irene Burns House. Numbers around building are keyed to exterior photographs 1-4 in photo log.