



Name of Property: Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School
City, State: Whiteriver, Arizona
Significant Dates: 1879-1948
NHL Criteria: 1
NHL Theme: I. Peopling Places
6. Encounters, Conflicts, and Colonization
Previous Recognition: 1975 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations
D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
6. The Myth of the Vanishing Native
E. Contemporary Reservations and Villages
X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
C. Military-Aboriginal American Contact and Conflict
4. The Southwest
XXVII. Education
H. Special Populations
1. Aboriginal Populations

NHL Significance:

- The Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School reflects several decades of highly influential national policy targeting American Indian sovereignty, land, culture, and education. The site currently serves as a unique architectural compendium representing

National Park System Advisory Board



the efforts by the Federal government to address the “Indian problem” throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- During the late nineteenth century, Fort Apache became the most important base of Apache scout recruitment and operations as well as a crucial node in the dynamic network of forts established in support of westward American expansion. Apache scouts, who sought peace and status through collaboration with the U.S. Army, gained both national and international renown.
- Between 1871 and 1923, soldiers from all four of the African American units (Ninth and Tenth Cavalries and the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Infantries) served at Fort Apache. Despite white officers’ tendency to dismiss non-white soldiers as inferior to their white counterparts, “Buffalo soldiers” excelled in field duties becoming world-renowned for their skills.
- In 1923, the BIA inherited the post for use as the Theodore Roosevelt School (TR School). One of only fourteen forts to become a school, Fort Apache changed names, methods, and supervisors but its core mission--Indian control and assimilation--remained the same.
- From 1934 until 1939, the TR School served as a special facility in which the BIA treated and sought to continue the education of Indian children suffering from trachoma, a disease that causes blindness. With research support from Columbia University, Dr. Fred Loe and other physicians at TR School discovered and refined the effectiveness of sulfanilamide (sulfa-based antibiotics) in treating trachoma.

Integrity:

- The district encompasses 27 buildings, 16 sites, and 2 structures on 288 contiguous acres, plus the five-acre former military cemetery located about a quarter mile to the east. The Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School retains its historic character based on a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.



- The property, including its setting, conveys historic character and associations. The only remaining noncontributing buildings within the district are the *Nohwike' Bágowa* (House of Our Footprints) and the White Mountain Apache Cultural Center and Museum, the latter partially constructed ca. 1985 and rehabilitated for opening in 1997.

Owner of Property: White Mountain Apache Tribe

Acreage of Property: 288 acres

Origins of Nomination: The Tribal Historic Preservation Office initiated the nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation will ensure the protection of a site that enhances understanding of the complexity of Federal Indian policy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- Since 1992, the Tribal Council has established partnerships to ensure the preservation and interpretation of the district as the Fort Apache Historic Park. Designation will assist in and encourage these partnerships to prioritize interpretation of the site to reflect Federal Indian policy.
- The TR School served multiple Indian tribes; designation of the site will help ensure that the story of diverse tribes is told at this site.
- Designation will undoubtedly bolster efforts to preserve this unique property.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Public Comments Favoring Designation (comments received as of 05/11/11):

Michael Black, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Advisory Board Recommendation: