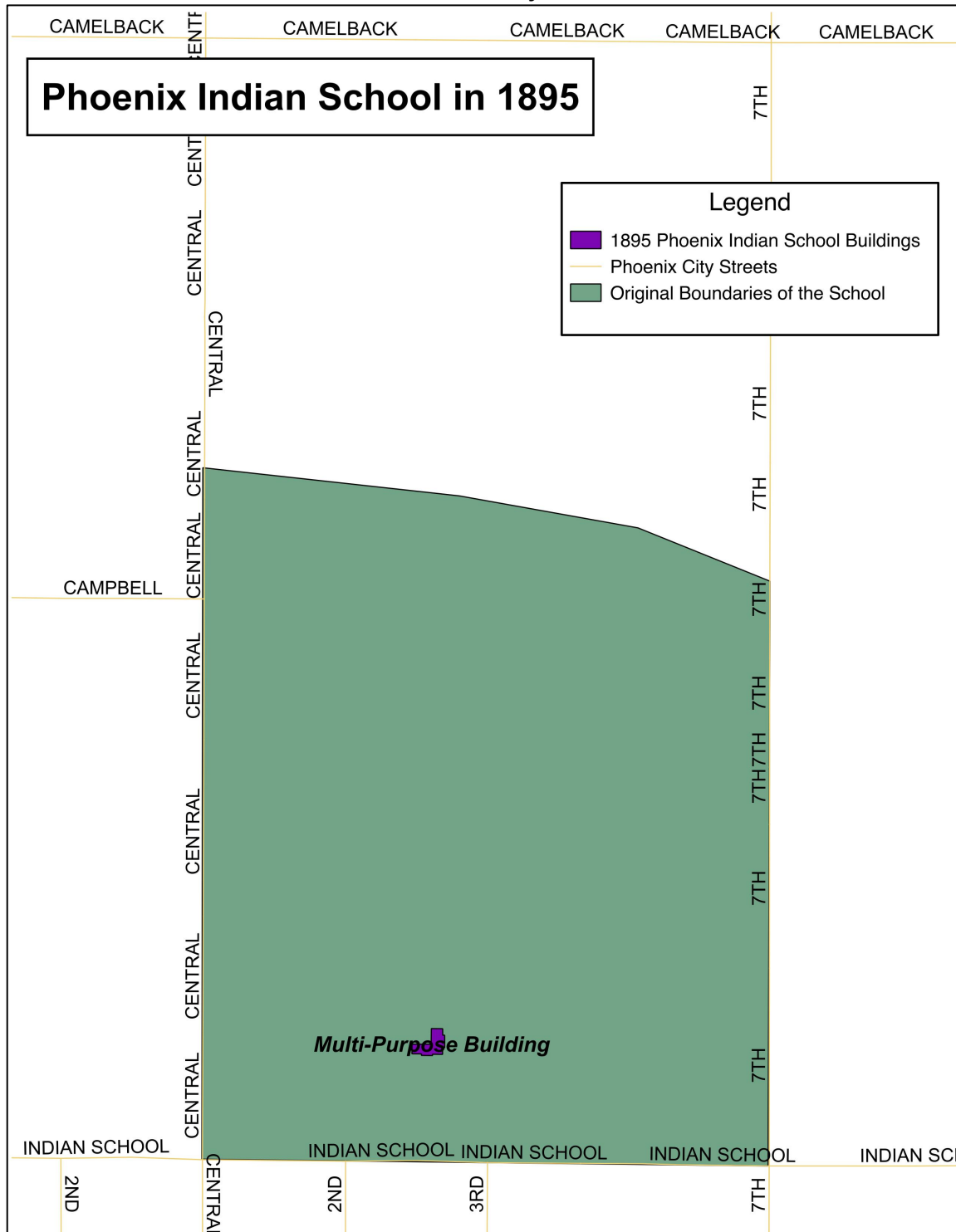Daniel Milowski
August 7, 2016

Changing Federal Priorities Drive Land Use Change at Phoenix Indian School

In the decades following the U.S. Civil War, American settlers began moving in large numbers into the American Great Plains and West. This put them into direct conflict with western Indian tribes for land and resources. As more settlers moved west, they demanded the federal government protect them from Indian attacks. This period of armed conflict between the U.S. Army and the western Indian tribes became known as the Western Indian Wars and lasted roughly from 1866 to 1890.

By 1890, the U.S. Army had largely succeeded in subduing the western Indian tribes and forcing them onto federally established reservations. With the wars over, federal priorities shifted from subduing the Indians to assimilating them. One such assimilation effort was the establishment of Indian schools. A series of Indian schools were established, and Indian children were forcibly taken from their homes by U.S. Army troops and sent to boarding schools. One of these schools was the Phoenix Indian School that opened in 1891. Tellingly, Fort Verde, the U.S. Army base established in 1866 to assist in the Army's efforts during the Indian Wars, closed the same year.

As the following series of maps illustrates, changing federal priorities in the West over the years greatly affected land use in and around the Phoenix Indian School. As federal priorities shifted from forced assimilation, to education, to military veterans, federal decisions changed the use of the land. This land use change represented the federal government shifting away from containing the Native American population, and toward meeting the needs of the growing southwestern United States.

The Early Years

Phoenix Indian School in 1895

CAMELBACK · CAMELBACK · CAMELBACK · CAMELBACK · CAMELBACK

CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL · CENTRAL

7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH · 7TH

CAMPBELL

Legend

■ 1895 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
— Phoenix City Streets
■ Original Boundaries of the School

Multi-Purpose Building

INDIAN SCHOOL · INDIAN SCHOOL · INDIAN SCHOOL · INDIAN SCHOOL · INDIAN SCHOOL

2ND · CENTRAL · 2ND · 3RD · 7TH
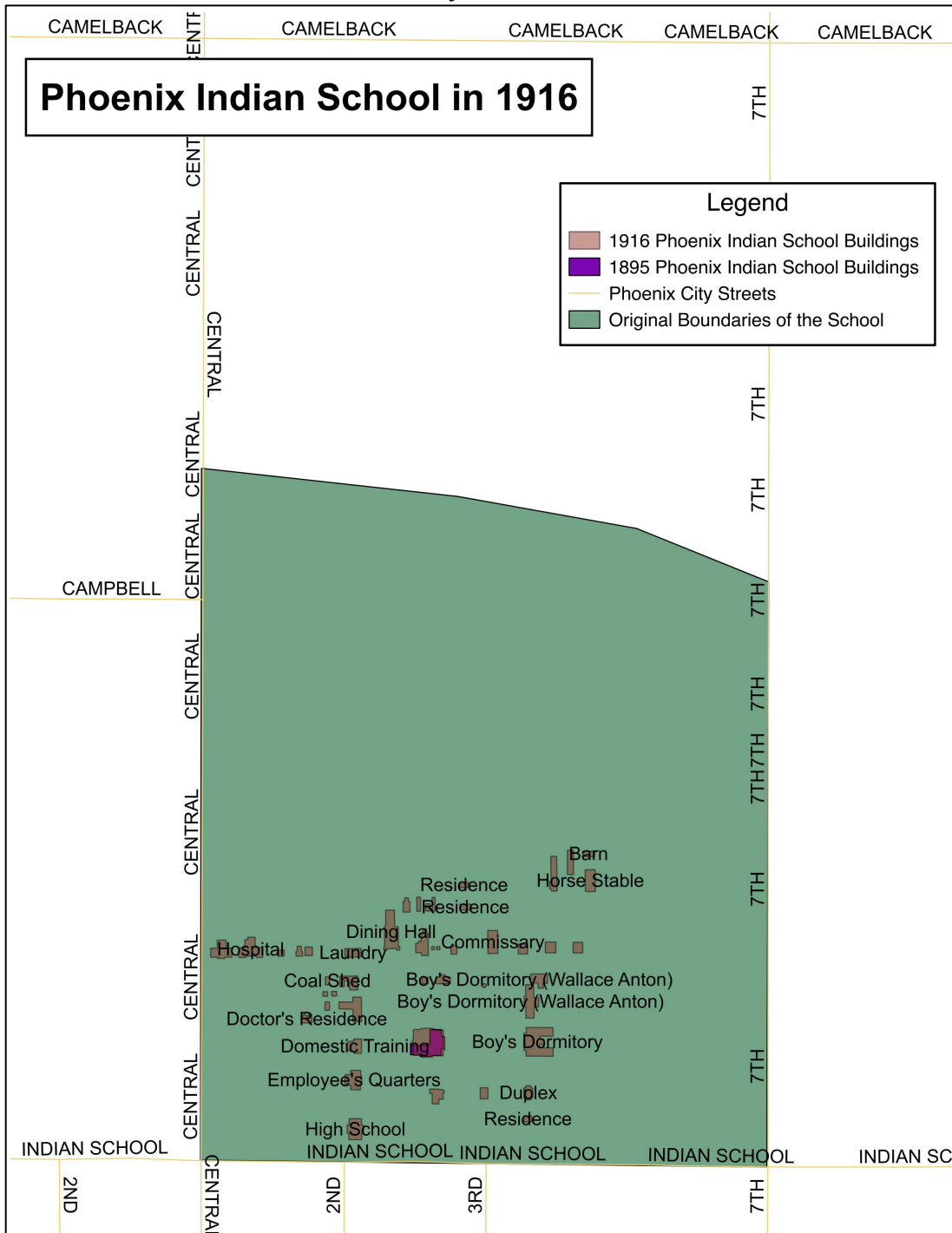
The Phoenix Indian School in 1895 four years after opening

Description: In 1895, the school had a single building with the rest of the land used for farming. The school was completely self-sufficient. The students learned to farm and lived off their crops. The priority was to turn them into farmers just like the other settlers.
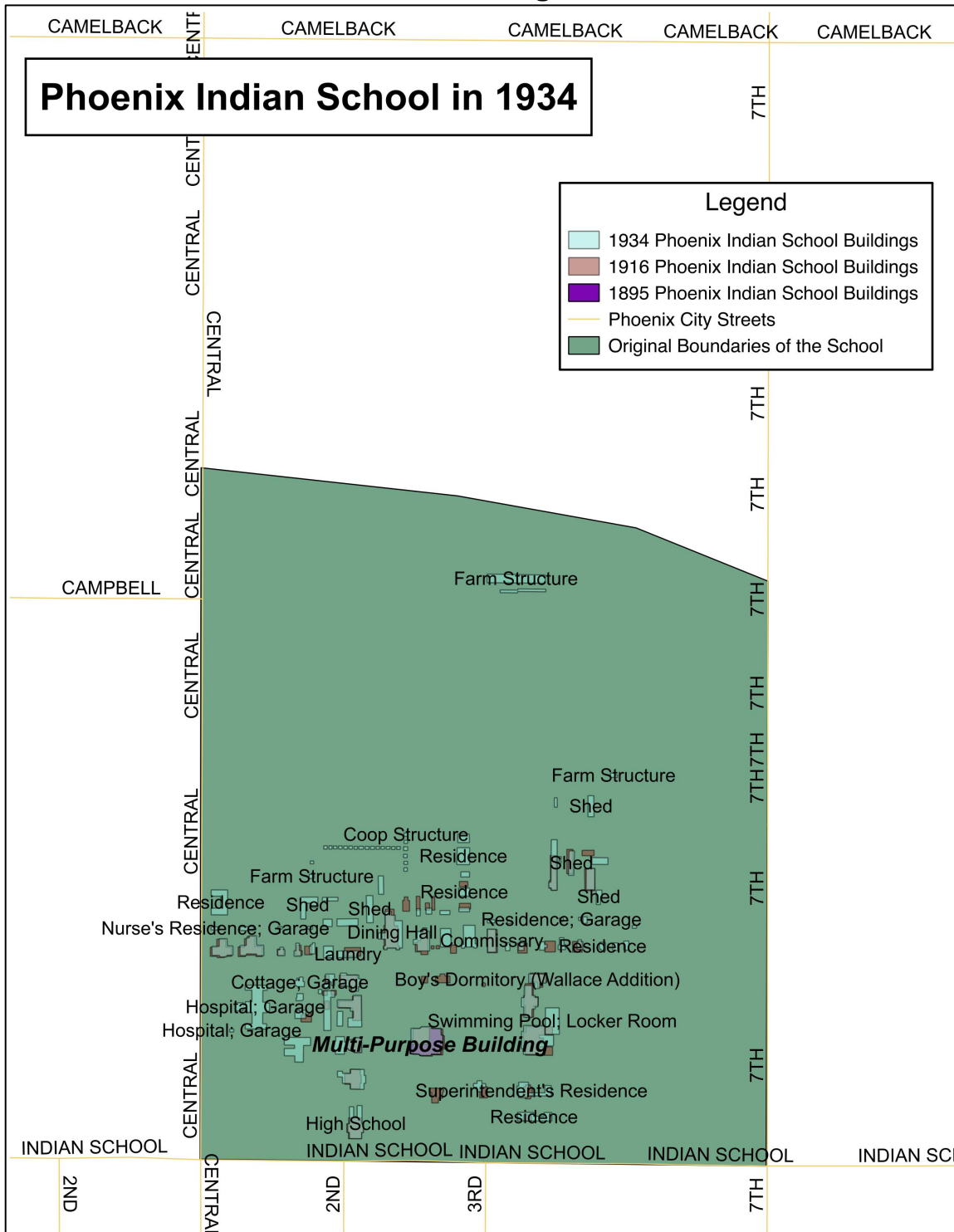
Early Growth

Phoenix Indian School in 1916

CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK

7TH

CENTRAL CENTRAL CENTRAL CENTRAL CENTRAL CENTRAL

Legend
- 1916 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1895 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- Phoenix City Streets
- Original Boundaries of the School

7TH

7TH

CAMPBELL

7TH

7TH 7TH

7TH

Barn
Horse Stable
Residence
Residence
Dining Hall
Hospital   Laundry   Commissary
Coal Shed   Boy's Dormitory (Wallace Anton)
Boy's Dormitory (Wallace Anton)
Doctor's Residence
Domestic Training   Boy's Dormitory
Employee's Quarters
Duplex
Residence
High School

7TH

INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL

2ND   CENTRAL   2ND   3RD   7TH

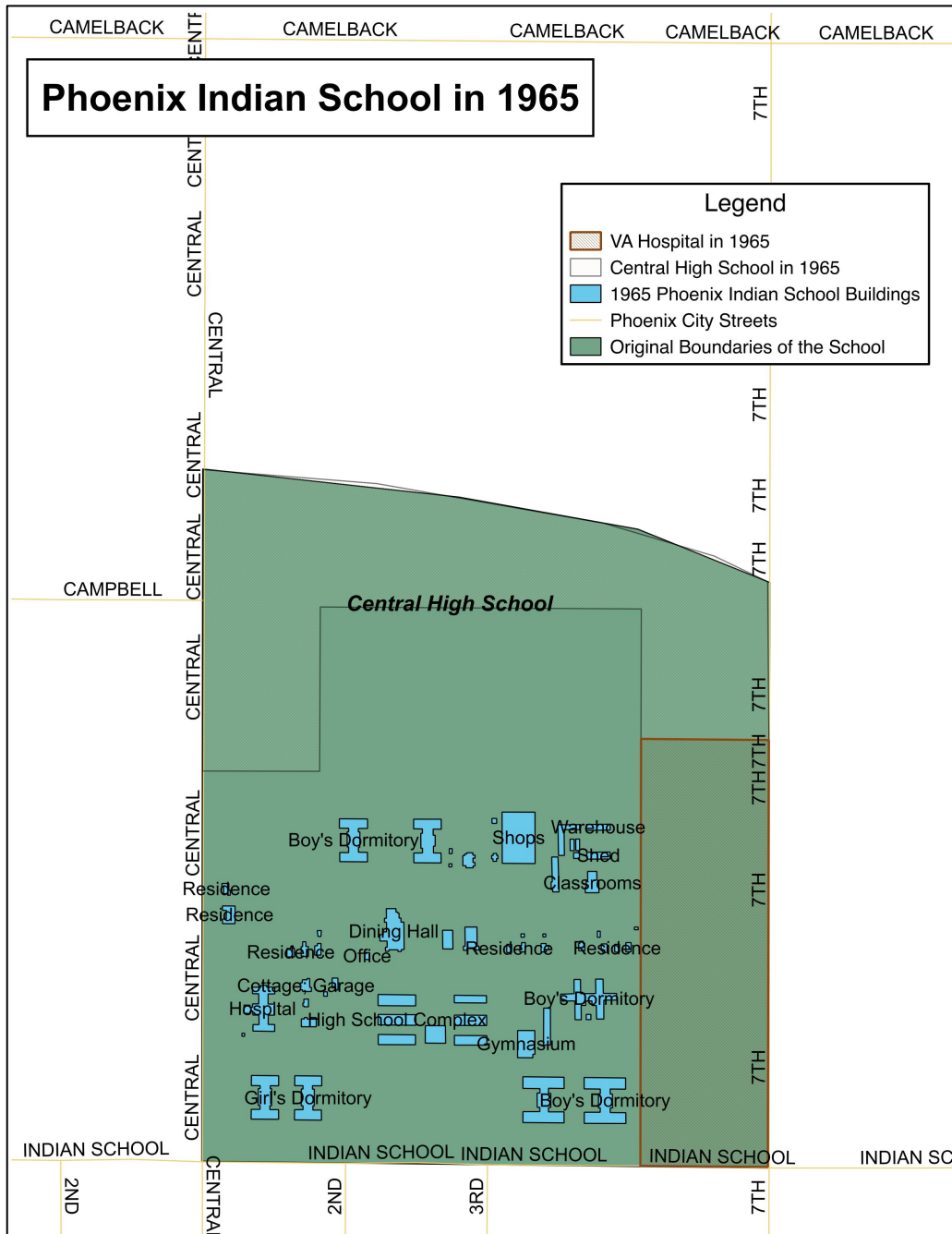*The Phoenix Indian School in 1916 25 years after opening*

Description: By 1916, the school infrastructure had grown considerably. In addition to the original main building, there were now several specialized buildings for teaching agricultural and industrial skills, as well as dormitories and a high school. Teaching at the school had also been professionalized with a new group of formally trained teachers from Tempe Normal School (Now A.S.U.).

Phoenix Indian School in 1934

CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK   CAMELBACK

7TH

CENTRAL

CAMPBELL

Legend
- 1934 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1916 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1895 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- Phoenix City Streets
- Original Boundaries of the School

Farm Structure

Farm Structure
Shed

Coop Structure
Residence
Farm Structure   Shed
Residence
Residence   Shed
Residence   Shed   Shed
Nurse's Residence; Garage   Dining Hall   Residence; Garage
Laundry   Commissary   Residence
Cottage; Garage   Boy's Dormitory (Wallace Addition)
Hospital; Garage
Hospital; Garage   Swimming Pool; Locker Room
Multi-Purpose Building
Superintendent's Residence
Residence
High School

INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SC

2ND   CENTRAL   2ND   3RD   7TH

The Phoenix Indian School at the height of its enrollment

Description: By 1934 the school was fully developed for its assimilation mission. By 1935, the school experienced its enrollment peak at 900 students. In addition to its agricultural and industrial education mission, the school also became known for its marching band.
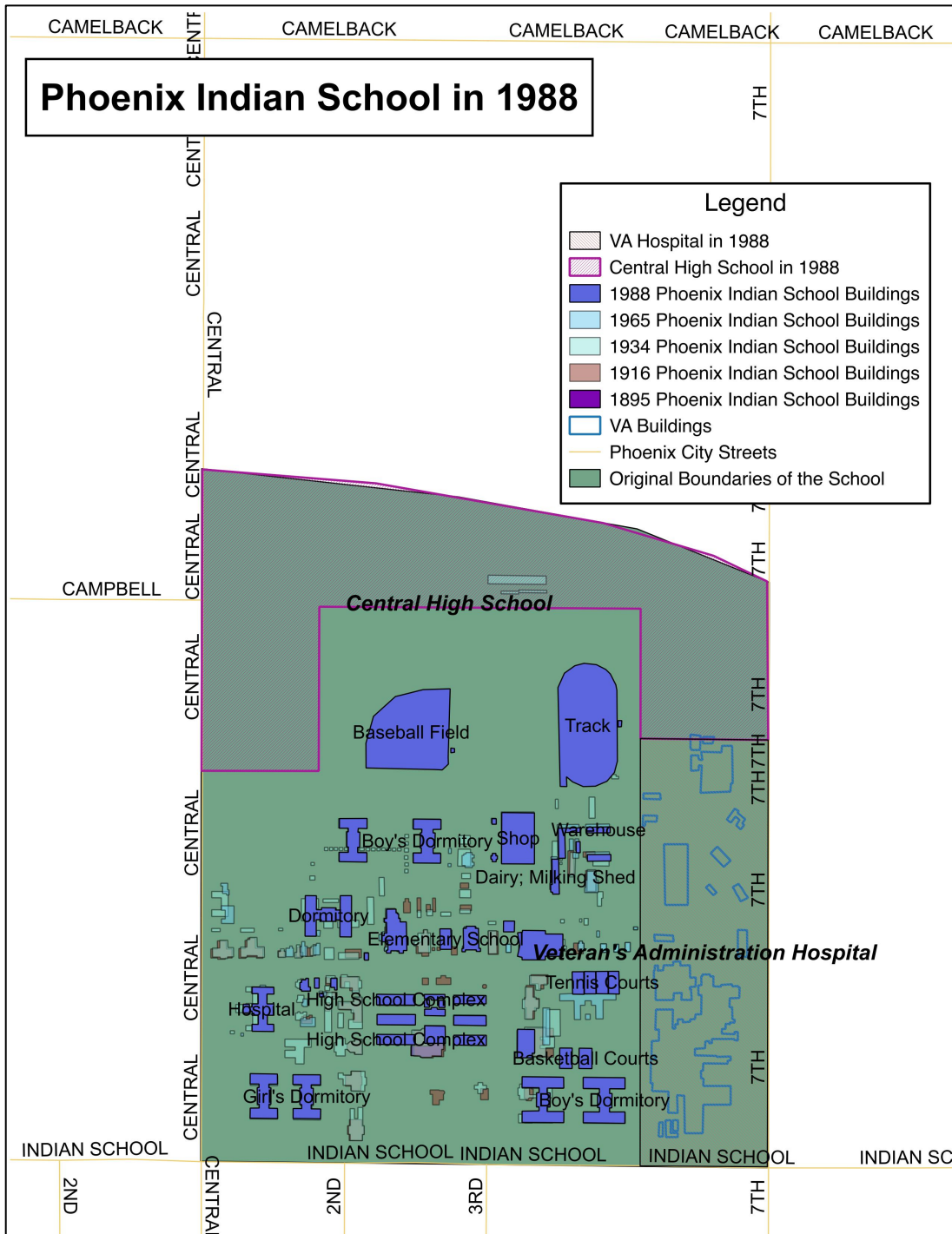
A Shift in Federal Priorities

Phoenix Indian School in 1965

Legend
- VA Hospital in 1965
- Central High School in 1965
- 1965 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- Phoenix City Streets
- Original Boundaries of the School

CAMELBACK CAMELBACK CAMELBACK CAMELBACK CAMELBACK

7TH

CENTRAL

CAMPBELL

Central High School

Boy's Dormitory   Shops   Warehouse
                            Shed
                   Classrooms

Residence
Residence
           Dining Hall
Residence Office   Residence   Residence
Cottage Garage
Hospital   High School Complex   Boy's Dormitory
                   Gymnasium

Girl's Dormitory   Boy's Dormitory

INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCHOOL   INDIAN SCH

2ND   CENTRAL   2ND   3RD   7TH

A reduced Phoenix Indian School as the result of changing federal priorities

Description: After WWII, federal priorities shifted. Assimilating western Indians took a backseat to meeting the needs of veterans returning from the war. President Truman signed Executive Order 9854 in 1947 transferring land away from the Phoenix Indian School to establish a new Veterans Administration hospital in Phoenix. By the time shown in the map above, the northern agricultural lands have also been transferred to the City of Phoenix for the construction of Central High School to support the educational needs of the growing city.
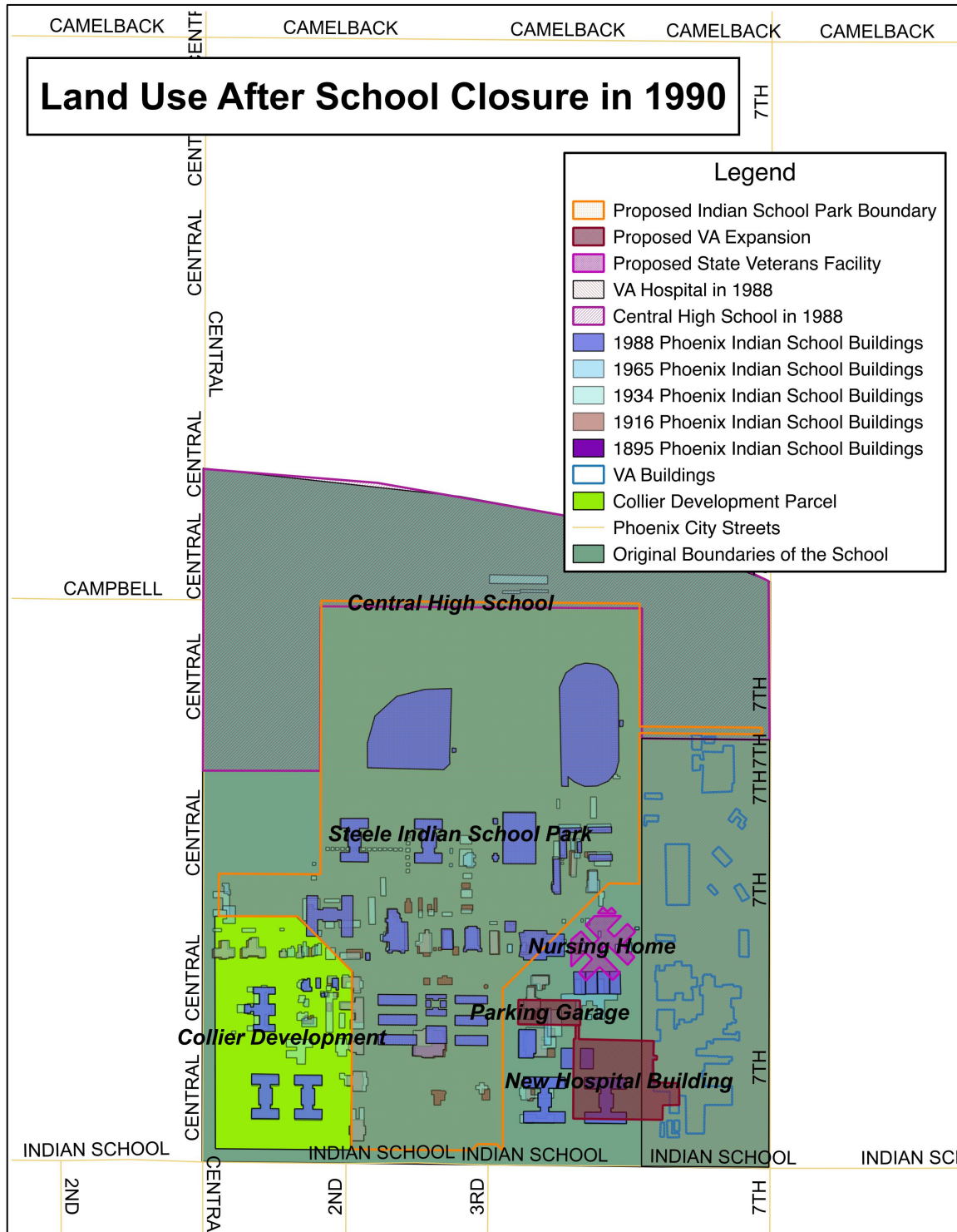
The Final Years

Phoenix Indian School in 1988

CAMELBACK CENTRAL **CAMELBACK** **CAMELBACK** **CAMELBACK** **CAMELBACK**

7TH

CENTRAL

CENTRAL

Legend

▨	VA Hospital in 1988
▨	Central High School in 1988
■	1988 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
■	1965 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
■	1934 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
■	1916 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
■	1895 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
□	VA Buildings
—	Phoenix City Streets
■	Original Boundaries of the School

CAMPBELL

Central High School

Baseball Field   Track

Boy's Dormitory Shop   Warehouse

Dairy; Milking Shed

Dormitory

Elementary School

Veteran's Administration Hospital

Tennis Courts

Hospital   High School Complex

High School Complex

Basketball Courts

Girl's Dormitory   Boy's Dormitory

INDIAN SCHOOL **INDIAN SCHOOL** **INDIAN SCHOOL** **INDIAN SCHOOL** **INDIAN SCI**

2ND   CENTRAL   2ND   3RD   7TH

The Phoenix Indian School two years before closing

Description: By 1988, the Phoenix Indian School had completely lost its original agricultural and industrial skills training focus. Instead it had become a "regular" K12 school including having athletic facilities, music, and art programs. It remained a boarding school, however, with Native American families choosing to send their children to the school.

Land Use After School Closure in 1990

CAMELBACK CAMELBACK CAMELBACK CAMELBACK CAMELBACK

7TH

CENTRAL

CAMPBELL

Legend

- Proposed Indian School Park Boundary
- Proposed VA Expansion
- Proposed State Veterans Facility
- VA Hospital in 1988
- Central High School in 1988
- 1988 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1965 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1934 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1916 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- 1895 Phoenix Indian School Buildings
- VA Buildings
- Collier Development Parcel
- Phoenix City Streets
- Original Boundaries of the School

Central High School

Steele Indian School Park

Nursing Home

Collier Development

Parking Garage

New Hospital Building

INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCHOOL INDIAN SCH

2ND CENTRAL 2ND 3RD 7TH

Proposed uses for the school grounds after its closing in 1990

Description: The school closed in 1990. At the time, only 100 students remained enrolled at the school. Local tribes with federal assistance had built out sufficient educational facilities

on their tribal lands to the point where it was no longer necessary to send children away to school. After closure, a number of priorities were identified for the old school grounds. These included an expansion of the VA hospital, the establishment of a state nursing home for veterans, swapping a portion of the school land to a developer in exchange for land wanted by the National Park Service in Florida, and turning the remaining land into a city park.

Through the years, as evidenced by these maps, the use of the Phoenix Indian School land changed considerably. This change was in large part driven by shifting federal priorities. These shifts represented a change of focus away from normalizing the frontier to supporting the needs of the modern Southwest. As was true from the founding of the country, Native Americans were caught up in this process due to their complicated, often strained relationship with the federal government.

Bibliography

1. Brand, Felicia. "Phoenix Indian School 1895 Buildings Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
2. Brand, Felicia. "Phoenix Indian School 1916 Buildings Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians,* accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
3. Brand, Felicia. "Phoenix Indian School 1934 Buildings Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
4. Brand, Felicia. "Phoenix Indian School 1965 Buildings Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
5. Brand, Felicia. "Phoenix Indian School 1988 Buildings Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
6. Brand, Felicia. "Central High School 1965 Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
7. Brand, Felicia. "Central High School 1988 Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
8. Brand, Felicia. "VA Hospital 1965 Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
9. Brand, Felicia. "VA Hospital 1988 Shape Files," *HST 580 GIS for Historians*, accessed August 7, 2016, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sap0ebi4u5yg0ek/AACRb014i6cVXuA-pu0J7_nma?dl=0
10. "Phoenix Street Centerline Shape Files," *City of Phoenix Mapping Portal*, accessed August 7, 2016, http://maps.phoenix.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/bab2b6d5f4de44ef8832d9d18318b9bf_0
11. "Phoenix City Park Boundaries Shape Files," *City of Phoenix Mapping Portal*, accessed August 7, 2016, http://maps.phoenix.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/ec37c79e2c20440aa7eeaa5678ec309f_0

12. "Phoenix Indian School Park Executive Summary," *City of Phoenix*, accessed August 7, 2016, chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://www.phoenix.gov/pddsite/Documents/pdd_pz_pdf_00097.pdf

13. "Fort Verde State Historic Park." *Arizona State Parks*, Accessed August 7, 2016. http://azstateparks.com/Parks/FOVE/

14. "Western Indian Wars." *National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution*, Accessed August 7, 2016. http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/printable/section.asp?id=6

15. Milowski, Daniel. Interview with Patty Talahongva. Personal Interview. Phoenix, July 29, 2016.

Made using QGIS version 2.14.3

All map designs by Daniel Milowski and created on August 7, 2016.