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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Allen, W. Roby, Oral Home School other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 525 5th Street NE city, town Faribault state Minnesota code MN county Rice code 131 zip code 55021

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal. Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 1 buildings, 1 sites, 1 structures, 1 objects, Total 1.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A. Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 6/7/90 State or Federal agency and bureau: Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: _____ Date: _____ State or Federal agency and bureau: _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: [X] entered in the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] removed from the National Register. [] other, (explain): _____ Entered in the National Register: [Signature] 7/12/90 Signature of the Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Education/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestone

walls wood/clapboard

wood shingles

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

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Allen, W. Roby, Oral Home School
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The W. Roby Allen Oral Home School is a Queen Anne influenced two and a half story frame structure located on a large corner lot dotted with mature deciduous trees. The site also contains a non-contributing frame, gable roofed garage. The house sits on a limestone foundation and is finished with clapboards, corner boards, and displays Stick Style definition between stories. Its present configuration is the result of the original ca. 1890 home and the 1923 mirror-image addition that was built to accommodate the Home School's boarding students.

The main (north) facade is composed of two identical bays each supporting a gable. The twin gables are decorated with scalloped shingles and punctuated by a Palladian style window. Each bay displays a pair of one-over-one double hung wood windows at the second story. A single one-over-one window exists where the two bays meet. Chamfered corner windows with drop finials add visual interest to the corners at the first story. A single story bay window is centered on the east elevation. A single story enclosed frame porch spans the front facade between the chamfered corners. The porch was enclosed in 1923 when the west addition was built. A center entrance to the porch is highlighted by a gabled peak in the hipped porch roof.

The asphalt shingled roof is a complex of gables and hips, displaying bracketed eaves and simple bargeboards.

Recent alterations to the house include the 1958 expansion of the west wing to the rear of the lot.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Period of Significance

1923- 1931

Significant Dates

1923

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Allen, Bessie B.

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

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Allen, W. Roby, Oral Home School

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The W. Roby Allen Oral Home School is significant within the context of a wide range of public, private, and parochial schools that flourished in Faribault as a result of several factors: the early emphasis on education nourished by Episcopal Bishop Whipple and founding father Alexander Faribault; the desire of city leaders to locate state institutions for the physically and mentally challenged in the city; and the desire of local ethnic groups to perpetuate their separate cultural identity in church-operated schools. (This context spans both the Minnesota Historical Society's contexts, *Early Agriculture and River Settlement*, and *Development of Agriculture and Railroad Construction*.) The Oral Home School is also significant for its association with Bessie Blaker Allen, school founder and pioneer educator for the deaf.

Both the Episcopal and State boarding schools drew students from all over the United States and helped establish Faribault's early reputation as a center of education within the State. Episcopal Education began as early as 1858 with a primary school in a rented storefront. The earliest state institution school to be established in Faribault was the Minnesota Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in 1863 followed by the separate Blind Department, 1874, and the State Schools for Idiots and Imbeciles, 1881.

It was the State School for the Deaf and Dumb that originally attracted Bessie Blaker Allen to Faribault. Nine years after arriving in Faribault, Ms. Allen developed an alternative to traditional deaf education. It too, drew students to Faribault from across the United States and Canada.

The W. Roby Allen Oral Home School for the deaf has served the interests of deaf education in the region in three ways: 1) it pioneered the concept of early childhood education, 2) it pioneered the practice of mainstreaming young deaf students into

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hearing schools, and 3) it provided an alternative setting and educational philosophy for deaf students.

Bessie Blaker Allen arrived in Faribault with her husband, six daughters, and her deaf parents in 1914. She was a graduate of Ward Seminary in Nashville Tennessee and the University of Vanderbilt, and had accepted a teaching position at the Minnesota School for the Deaf where her sister, Sallie Mae Blaker, also taught. She had previous teaching experience at the Florida and Mississippi State Schools for the Deaf.

During her teaching career, Bessie Blaker Allen became interested in pre-school education for the deaf. When she established the W. Roby Allen Oral Home School (named for her husband) in 1923, the concept of early childhood education for the deaf was very new. Her efforts preceded the 1924-30 recommendations of the National Research Council in Washington D. C. and the White House Health Conference for experimental nursery schools for the deaf, ages one through six,¹ as well as the Clarke School's 1933 experiment with six children ages 3 through 5.² Bessie Allen's first students were referred to her, at her request, by physicians at Rochester's Mayo Clinic.³ The following excerpt explains the development of Bessie Blaker Allen's educational philosophy:

During those years of teaching at the State Schools our mother had been dreaming dreams, defining goals, evaluating the philosophy and methods currently in the educational program for deaf children. At that time, deaf children were not accepted at the Minnesota School

¹ Kilpatrick, Walter M. "Preschool Needs of Handicapped Children," American Annals of the Deaf, 1932, vol 77, p. 323.

² Wagner, Mary A., "The Experimental Preschool Group of Clarke School," American Annals of the Deaf, 1932, vol. 77, p. 391.

³ Personal interview with Dena and Faye Allen, 4/17/89, Faribault, Minnesota.

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until they were eight or nine years. ... Parents may have been reluctant to have their young deaf children leave home...and... facilities at state schools may not have been designed for such young children. ...Pre-schools and nursery schools were not a part of existing school programs. Teacher-training for these early ages was not available.

Our mother lamented the loss of these early years in the education of deaf children. By the age of eight or nine, these youngsters had formed habits of communication that ruled out the need for speech. Lack of understanding resulted in disciplinary problems. ...She believed that a well-planned program should involve the home, parents and siblings. ... Such a program should be available just as soon as a child's hearing loss was detected.

She had memories of accompanying her parents everywhere to serve as interpreter. She knew their isolation because of lack of communication. By starting an education program at an earlier age, differences in grade and age levels would be minimized. Using speech and lip reading throughout the day in home life as well as in a school environment, deaf children would be able to enter regular schools and continue their regular education with peers of normal hearing. ... Our mother did not live to realize her dream. Her efforts to enroll deaf youngsters from the W. Roby Allen School [in 1923] were to no avail. Public schools were not ready to accept "deaf and dumb" children into classes with "normal" children.⁴

⁴ Allen, Faye, personal written account. nd.

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After Bessie Allen's death in 1931, her daughter, Faye Allen, continued the job of teaching deaf boarding students from all over the U.S. and Canada. A younger sister, Dena, joined her in 1945 and the two have run the school to the present.

In 1933 Faye Allen consulted with the parochial schools in a second, but successful, attempt to mainstream two seventh grade students into a hearing school (Sacred Heart). These students received their daily instruction at both the Home School and the parochial school. This attempt to mainstream students was the first in the region. Other schools may have been experimenting with mainstreaming at the time, but only at the eighth grade level and above.⁵ In subsequent years, Faye and Dena were able to enroll even younger students in the parochial schools of Faribault.

The educational philosophy of the W. Roby Allen Oral Home School emphasizes total integration of the deaf into hearing society. Only the lip-reading, or oral, method is taught. (This method is not useable by all deaf students.) The school has always emphasized the unlimited abilities of deaf children to attain equal social and economic status in the larger society. In the 1930s, when state institutions across the United States were emphasizing the deaf student's acumen toward industrial and vocational training,⁶ the W. Roby Allen School was striving for the highest possible level of academic achievement in its students. The first Roby Allen student to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree from a hearing college was matriculated in 1939.

The school, with its home atmosphere and nurturing instruction is the life work of Bessie Allen and her daughters Faye and Dena. Its existence will likely end with the

⁵ Personal interview with Dena and Faye Allen 4/17/89, Faribault, Minnesota.

⁶ "Twenty-Sixth Biennial Report, Minnesota School for the Deaf," 1930, Faribault, Minnesota. p. 83.

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graduation of their last three students. The retirement of Faye and Dena Allen may also signal the end of the Home School philosophy in the region.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Fort Snelling History Center
Saint Paul, Minnesota

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

1	5
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4	7	9	3	2	5
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4	9	0	3	5	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the north line of Block 28, Town of Faribault, 132' west of the NE corner of said block, thence west on said north line 33', thence south at right angles with said north line 165', thence east parallel with said north line 33', thence north 165' to place of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots, and portions of city lots, that have historically been associated with the property. City legal description.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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