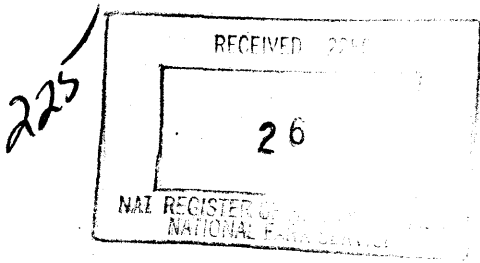


**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



**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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Saylesville Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	Saylesville Road (County Highway X) from Genesee Creek to Point Drive	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Town of Genesee	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Waukesha	code 133 zip code 53189

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alicia J. [Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

February 19, 2003
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Saylesville Historic District

Waukesha County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

4.11.03

Bar

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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
- structure
- site
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
14	4 buildings
	sites
2	3 structures
1	objects
17	7 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/ manufacturing facility

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

SOCIAL / meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY

LATE VICTORIAN/ Queen Anne

LATE VICTORIAN / Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation STONE

walls WEATHERBOARD

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Description

The Saylesville Historic District, located approximately 6 1/2 miles southwest of Waukesha, encompasses the buildings and structures east of Genesee Creek along Saylesville Road, also known as County Trunk Highway (CTH) X, in the community of Saylesville. This area includes the majority of the mid- to late-nineteenth-century buildings associated with the early development of this small crossroads community.

Historically, Saylesville, in the Town of Genesee, was a rural agricultural landscape. In more recent times, the area both east and west of Saylesville has become more suburban, but the area immediately surrounding Saylesville has remained wooded and rural in character. These wooded areas obstruct the view of modern development from most vantage points in the district. Saylesville Road, a two-lane highway, runs east and west through the district. Approaching the district from the west, Saylesville Road makes a gradual turn to the north at the lower, western end of the district near Genesee Creek. The highway elevation rises as it approaches the eastern edge of the district near the community hall. Large mature deciduous trees line the highway, creating a directed view through the center of the district.

The Saylesville Historic District is linear in form, and follows Saylesville Road to the east and west, extending north and south to encompass related outbuildings and landscape features. The core community, located between the Saylesville Bridge over Genesee Creek and Point Road, includes 24 resources, including buildings, a bridge, dam, and a small-scale World War I memorial. Eighteen of these are contributing resources and were built between 1841 and c. 1900. The mill pond created by the dam also remains, located along the northwest edge of the district.

The Saylesville Mill, blacksmith shop and Community Hall are all contributing resources, and remain in good condition with few changes or alterations. The dam at Genesee Creek is also a contributing structure in the district, although it has been repaired several times. The district retains four contributing residential buildings that were built between c. 1848 and c. 1900. The residences are oriented toward Saylesville Road, and those on the southern side are set back at similar distances from the road (approximately 50 feet). The residential property on the northern side of the road has a much deeper setback of approximately 150 feet. The four residential buildings are frame construction, and although they are simple in design, three houses display elements of the Queen Anne style and one displays Italianate style details. Two of the residential properties B S52 W28809 and S52 W28799 B retain contributing barns and other associated outbuildings.

In an effort to assign historic names and construction dates to the properties, Genesee Township tax rolls and historic plat maps were researched. Tax rolls for the area date to 1849; however, they give limited information about the exact property location. Between 1849 and 1910, the tax rolls did not denote individual lots within the community of Saylesville. Instead, most locations were recorded as part of the east or west half of the southwest quarter of Section 25, Genesee Township. When possible, historic names were assigned to the properties based on available historic information.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Historic name: Community Hall
Address: S52 W28731 Saylesville Road
Date: 1890¹
Resources: 2 Contributing Buildings (hall and privy); 1 Noncontributing Building (barn)

The Community Hall is located at the eastern edge of the district near Point Drive on the south side of Saylesville Road. Built in 1890, the Community Hall is a one-story, front-gabled frame building built on a limestone foundation. The building retains many of its original features, including its decorative entry and original windows. The entry consists of double-doors with a stained-glass transom inscribed with "1890," Doric pilasters, and classic entablature. Elongated four-over-four windows are found on all four facades. The building is oriented toward Saylesville Road and has a shallow setback, located only several feet from the road. A contributing gabled privy, clad in clapboard, constructed c. 1890, is located directly behind the hall. A noncontributing barn is located behind the hall, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the district. The original section of the barn was constructed c. 1890, but it has had several additions, is clad in aluminum siding, and has diminished historic integrity.

Historic Name: Commercial Building
Address: S52 W28741 Saylesville Road
Date: c. 1950
Resources: 1 Noncontributing Building

This c. 1950 Commercial Building is a noncontributing resource found within the Saylesville Historic District. It is located at the eastern end of the district, just west of the Community Hall. It is a two-story, front-gabled structure, clad in artificial siding. The lower level of the north (front) facade is dominated by modern plate-glass windows with a recessed entry. A modern entrance has been added to the east facade. The Venske family constructed the building to house an appliance store on the first story, with living quarters above. It has recently undergone exterior remodeling. Because it retains similar size, massing, and setback, it does not detract from the historic setting of the district.

¹ An article by Libbie Nolan in the *Waukesha Freeman* (18 March 1967) entitled "Rich Heritage Surrounds Saylesville," gives 1878 as the construction date for the Community Hall. This was the year that Whitman Sayles donated the land the hall was built on. If the 1878 date is accurate, the transom window with the date 1890 may have been added at a later date to commemorate an occasion or event.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Historic Name: House
Address: S52 W28757 Saylesville Road
Date: c. 1873
Resources: 1 Contributing Building (house), 1 Noncontributing Building (garage)

The residence at S52 W28757 is a one-and-one-half-story frame house built c. 1873 and is a contributing resource to the district. The house is vernacular in form and has hip-and-gable roof form. It is clad in clapboard and rests on a limestone foundation. The front facade of the house displays some Queen Anne influences such as the irregular massing of the building and fishscale shingles in the gable end. Windows are one-over-one, double-hung sash. A small, hipped-porch, which has been enclosed, is located on the northeast corner of the front facade. A one-story, gabled addition, likely dating to the turn of the century, is located on the rear. A modern deck addition is located at the southeast corner of the house. The house displays good integrity. A modern, concrete-block garage is located at the rear of the property and is a noncontributing resource.

Historic Name: House
Address: S52 W28799 Saylesville Road
Date: c. 1873
Resources: 6 Contributing Buildings (1 house, 2 barns, 2 privies, and 1 sheds), 1 Noncontributing Building (shed)

The residence at S52 W28799 is a two-story house built c. 1873 and is a contributing resource to the district. The one-and-one-half-story dwelling is clad in clapboard and rests on a limestone foundation. Although vernacular in form, the residence displays some Queen Anne details, including irregular massing and fishscale shingles in the eaves. A large addition was built on the rear of the house in 1997, but was designed to match the materials and form of the existing house and does not affect the buildings integrity. Several contributing outbuildings are found to the rear of the property and were probably built around the same time as the house. They include two barns, two privies, and two sheds. A gabled privy, clad in clapboard, is located off the southeast corner of the house, with a brick path connecting the two buildings. The two, large-frame, two-story gabled-roof barns are located behind the house and face each other to form a small "courtyard." Both are clad in clapboard and have six-over-six, double-hung sash. The westernmost barn has slatted openings in the gable ends originally used by pigeons to enter and exit the structure. A gabled shed with sliding doors on the south facade is located off the southeast corner of the eastern barn. It was originally located immediately adjacent to the privy at the rear of the house and is believed to have been a storage unit. The current owners moved it to the present location, on the foundation of a non-extant sheep barn. A second gabled privy is located off the southeast corner of the shed. A second, gabled shed with four-over-four, double-hung sash is located near the southeast corner of the property. This building originally stood further south, outside the district boundaries, but was moved to the present location by the current owners and is non-contributing. It had been used for wood storage by the Campfire Girls for several years at its previous location. An additional foundation is located at the rear of the property, and the original building and use are unknown.

The residence was previously occupied by Charles Fiebrantz, a sheep farmer who also raised prize pigeons. Fiebrantz is not believed to have been the original occupant, since he does not appear in tax rolls until 1910, when "Fiebrantz and Wendell" appear as owners of a building and 3.25 acres in part of the west half of the southwest quarter of Section 25, Genesee Township. This may have been the site of an early general store. The general area is marked as a store on the 1859 plat map, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 4

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Saylesville residents believed that a store was housed in one of the barns. The easternmost of the two barns appears to have been used for commercial purposes and it is rumored to have been an illegal drinking hall during Prohibition.²

Historic Name: William Brown House
Address: S52 W28809 Saylesville Road
Date: c. 1849
Resources: 2 Contributing Buildings (house and barn)

The William Brown residence, which is historically associated with the blacksmith shop, also has a large-frame basement barn on the property. Both the residence and the barn are contributing resources of the historic district. The one-and-one-half-story house is clad in clapboard and rests on a limestone foundation. The original house was built by William Brown at the same time as the blacksmith shop, c. 1849, and represents only a small portion of the current structure. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, several additions were made to the house, enlarging it to a gabled-ell with Queen Anne detailing. According to property owner Jennifer Anderson, early additions included a front addition and porch.³ Queen Anne details include decorative barge boards in the gable ends, fishscale shingles in the gable ends and between the first and second stories, and a decorative spindled porch with a mansard roof, located at the intersection of the ells. Several small, one-story additions are located on the rear of the house and appear to date to the turn of the century. Modern windows are the only exterior alteration. A wrought-iron fence dating to the period of significance is located at the front of the property. It is not original, but was moved from the Wales Cemetery to the property several years ago.

The barn, built c. 1850, is timber construction with a limestone foundation and is located between the house and the Blacksmith Shop on the south side of Saylesville Road. Like the blacksmith shop, the barn has a shallow setback of approximately 25 feet. It has a gabled-ell form, with a front-facing gable prominent on the north (front) facade, and a smaller side gabled-ell on the east facade. The structure is clad in drop siding and displays endboards. A pair of sliding doors are located on the north facade, with a slight incline between Saylesville Road and the entrance. A double-leaf entrance is located at the basement level on the west facade. The majority of windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash. The south (rear) facade has modern plate-glass windows and a modern entrance. During the 1940s, dances and card parties were held in the barn, which was known as Murray's Dance Hall. During this period, a small store operated out of the basement.

² Mead & Hunt, personal interview with Sharon Moran, 15 March 2002.

³ Mead & Hunt, personal interview with Jennifer Anderson, 5 May 1998.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Historic Name: *Blacksmith Shop*
Address: *S52 W28809 Saylesville Road*
Date: *c. 1849*
Resources: *1 Contributing Building*

The blacksmith shop is located opposite the mill on the south side of Saylesville Road. Built c. 1849, this is a single-story vernacular building of fieldstone construction on the north (main) facade and yellow limestone on the east and west facades. The south facade and front gabled end are clad in drop siding. The roof is a moderately pitched front-facing gable with wood shake shingles. The building retains original features, including the double-door front and rear entrances and the six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. A brick chimney has been removed from the west facade. Remnants of an exterior brick kiln are visible on the west facade. The building has a very shallow setback, and is only several feet from the road. The tailrace stream runs under the Saylesville Road through a pipe culvert and past the western side of the building.

Historic Name: *Saylesville Bridge*
Address: *Saylesville Road over Genesee Creek*
Date: *1934*
Resources: *1 Contributing Structure*

Constructed within the period of significance, the 1934 Saylesville Bridge, spanning Genesee Creek, is also a contributing resource within the district. It is a single-span deck girder, constructed of steel panels and I-beams, supported by concrete abutments. Alterations to the bridge include the replacement of the guardrail on the north side of the bridge and the addition of a concrete retaining wall along the southeast abutment. The bridge replaced a double-arch stone bridge constructed around the turn of the century. Because of its construction date, the Saylesville Bridge is a contributing element to the historic district.⁴

⁴ The Saylesville (CTH AX≅) Bridge is planned for replacement in the near future. This nomination is being prepared by Mead & Hunt for Waukesha County as a condition of the Memorandum of Agreement for the CTH AX≅ Bridge replacement project over Genesee Creek.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 6

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Historic Name: Saylesville Dam
Address: Genesee Creek, northwest of the Saylesville Bridge
Date: c. 1841, rebuilt 1928
Resources: 1 Contributing Structure

The Saylesville Dam, which is located behind the mill to the west, was originally built in 1841 and was largely rebuilt with a concrete spillway section in 1928 after a flood. The dam separates the Saylesville Mill Pond, created by the mill, and Genesee Creek. The dam supplied water power to the Saylesville Roller Mill, which functioned as a flour, feed and grist mill.⁵ The dam underwent restoration in 1994, under the supervision of the Department of Natural Resources, which included tree and brush removal, grading, riprap, and spillway repair. The Saylesville Dam retains its historic setting and is considered a contributing structure within the district. Its western shore is a wildlife corridor and remains undeveloped. Views from the mill property of new development beyond the mill pond shores are obscured by woodland vegetation.

⁵ Department of Natural Resources, Office of Dam Safety, File No. 67.7, ASaylesville Dam.≡

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 7

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Historic Name: Saylesville Mill
Address: S52 W28794 Saylesville Road
Date: 1876
Resources: 1 Contributing Building

The Saylesville Mill is located next to Genesee Creek, between the Saylesville Road and mill pond. The mill has a deep setback from the road with vegetation filtering the view of the mill from the road. The wood frame mill was built in 1876, and was the second mill at this location. The first, built in 1841, burned in 1876. The existing two-and-one-half-story mill has a limestone foundation and sits over a headrace and tailrace, both of which are now dry. It is clad in clapboard and displays endboards. Fenestration is symmetrical and entrances are located on the south, east, and west facades. A steeply pitched, gabled roof covers the entire building. A small pent roof porch extends out from the front of the mill with a plank platform above the tailrace. The foundation of a former rock-crushing building also remains within the mill site, and is located to the west of the mill. This building may have been built c. 1930 and is considered part of the mill. The Saylesville Mill retains both small-scale internal artifacts, including mill stones, machinery, and works technology, and its original power systems. It is typical of the majority of early mills built in Wisconsin, which were relatively crude and functional in design. The early mills were built using mostly wood construction, and often utilized heavy timber framing to support the excessive weight of the grind stones that were the heart of the milling process.⁶

Alterations to the building include window replacements (1996) and a new roof (2001). The custom-made, six-over-six, double-hung windows were designed to match the original windows' style and configuration.

Historic Name: World War I Memorial
Address: North side of Saylesville Road, across from the Blacksmith Shop (S52 W28809)
Date: 1918
Resources: 1 Contributing Object

The 1918 World War I Memorial, located on the north side of Saylesville Road, is considered a contributing object within the district. This small-scale resource consists of a flagpole, a small steel cannon, and a plaque that memorializes the men of Saylesville that served in World War I: Lewis R. Aldrich, Everett Holcomb, Charles Howard, George Kern, and Ira H. Smart.

⁶ Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Vol. 2* (Madison, Wisc.: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 8-12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Historic Name: Allen House
Address: S52 W28794 Saylesville Road
Date: c. 1858
Resources: 1 Contributing Building (house), 3 Noncontributing Structures (gazebo, granary and pool)

The residence at S52 W28794 is a two-story frame house built c. 1858, and is a contributing resource. Although it is located east of the Saylesville Mill, the house was never owned by the Sayles family. The house is a vernacular gabled-ell with some Italianate details, which include a two-story polygonal bay with bracketing and dentils, and a decorative porch. Two additions were made to the house sometime during the early 1900s: a shed roof addition was built on the east side of the house, and a one-story, gabled-roof addition was built to the rear. The windows are modern replacements, and large fixed windows are located on the west and north facades. Two curved limestone walls and square piers mark the driveway. The property has three noncontributing resources: a modern stone gazebo located behind the house to the north, a granary at the rear of the property, and an in-ground pool adjacent to the granary. The granary was originally located on the Sayles farm, which extended approximately 3 acres behind the Allen House along the mill pond. It was moved to the present location by the current owners in the 1970s.⁷ It has been significantly altered by the addition of vertical artificial siding. A tall privacy fence marks the property line to the east of the house, and delineates a portion of the district boundary.

According to the 1859 plat map, E. A. Allen owned this parcel. Tax rolls for Genesee Township for 1858 show Egbert Allen owning 13 acres in part of the west half of the southwest quarter of Section 25. The property was valued at \$250. It is assumed that a dwelling was present at the time, because a structure appears on the 1859 map and a larger 2 1/4-acre parcel was valued at \$125.⁸ The house likely began as a modest front- or side-gabled structure that was later enlarged into a gabled-ell with Italianate style details.

Integrity

The buildings, structures and object located within the boundaries of the Saylesville Historic District retain good integrity and appear much as they did during the period of significance. As a whole, they form a cohesive group of mid- to late-nineteenth-century resources and tell the story of the rural crossroads community that evolved around the mill. The buildings in the Saylesville Historic District display simple designs and their construction makes use of a variety of available materials and

⁷ Mead & Hunt, personal interview with Evelyn Reid, 19 May 1998.

⁸ Genesee Township Tax Rolls, 1858, Milwaukee Area Research Center, Milwaukee, Wisc.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 9

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

construction techniques.⁹ These buildings reflect the earliest buildings constructed by settlers in rural communities in Wisconsin. The later additions and attempts to add stylistic features to the buildings near the turn of the century demonstrate common practices, where property owners would enlarge their homes with additions and add exterior ornamentation compatible with popular styles. Three properties display Queen Anne ornamentation B a popular style in Wisconsin between 1880 and 1910, including a variety of surface textures and decorative porches. One property displays elements of the Italianate style popular in Wisconsin between the late 1850s and the 1870s, which can be identified by decorative brackets and the paneled bay.

The bridge, dam and war memorial likewise retain good integrity. The original 1841 dam was largely rebuilt in 1928; however, this reconstruction falls within the period of significance.

⁹ Wyatt, 4-1.

Saylesville Historic District
Name of Property

Waukesha County
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1849-1945

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Statement of Significance

The Saylesville Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) at the local level under *Criterion A: Community Planning and Development* as a good collection of mid- to late-1800s buildings and structures representing the typical pattern of rural community development that occurred throughout Wisconsin during the mid-1800s.

As a small crossroads community centered around a mill, Saylesville was the center of commerce for farmers in the area. It served as a location for milling grain, collecting mail, and purchasing goods, and was the primary center of agricultural commerce in the area during the period of significance, which begins in 1849 with the construction of the first extant buildings that retain integrity to their date of construction and ends in 1945 when the mill closed. The district draws its significance from the remaining building types that are representative of the mid- to late-1800s settlement pattern, including the mill, blacksmith shop, residences, and community hall. The buildings within the district retain historic integrity and convey the character of a crossroads community. The district's cohesiveness is augmented by its natural and visual boundaries formed by the Genesee Creek, the mill pond, and the densely wooded areas that block the view of modern development.

Historic Context

Historical Background

The small crossroads community of Saylesville is located approximately 6 1/2 miles southwest of the city of Waukesha, in Waukesha County, along an old Indian trail that ran between Mukwonago and Waukesha. The settlement was established shortly after the Wisconsin Territory was formed in 1836. The subsequent explosion of land investors and settlers brought large numbers of settlers to the territory and the area that would become Waukesha County.

The community of Saylesville was first settled in 1837, when Alexander Rankin settled along White's Creek (later Genesee Creek) in the town of Genesee. By 1840, a post office was established at the crossroads and a small community began to develop. Over the years, the post office's name changed several times, and the area has been known as either South Genesee or Saylesville since at least 1850.¹⁰ The name Saylesville was adopted in 1894, named for the Sayles family.¹¹

¹⁰ The information regarding the name changes for the post office comes from "Post Offices and Postmasters of Waukesha County, 1837-1970," located in the files of the Waukesha County Historical Society.

¹¹ The 1859 atlas of Waukesha County does not have a name for the small community. However, by 1873 it was known as South Genesee, and in both 1891 and 1914 the name on the Atlas maps is both South Genesee and Saylesville.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

In 1839 Asa Sayles purchased a U.S. government land patent located on the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 25, Genesee Township (T-6N, R-18E).¹² In 1841 he sold a portion of his holdings along White's Creek to his brother, Stephen Sayles. Two years later, Stephen's sons, Mortimer, Whitman, Daniel, and George also settled in the area. On Stephen's land, Whitman Sayles dammed the creek with the help of Charles Smith, a stone mason. This dam created the Saylesville Mill pond on which Mortimer Sayles and David Orendorf built the first mill.¹³ The mill, constructed in 1841, operated as a flour mill during the early years of operation. The mill supported many of the local farmers, who brought their wheat to Saylesville for processing. It was destroyed by fire in 1876 and rebuilt on the same location.

Early settlers in the community included Alexander McFarlane, a woodworker from Scotland (1840); David Orendorf, a miller from Germany (1841); William Johnston, a quarryman from Scotland (1842); and William Brown, an Englishman who served as the town blacksmith (1849). Norman Shultis, from New York State, settled in Saylesville in 1841 and is credited with building the first frame house and barn in the area and helped to establish schools and lay out roads.¹⁴

Scotch immigrant William Johnston settled in the area because of the high-quality limestone deposits surrounding the community. He established a stone quarry and lime kiln one mile north of Saylesville in 1844.¹⁵ His limestone was used in the construction of several Saylesville properties. Stone from the quarry was also used on two of the Wisconsin State Capitol buildings and several Waukesha area buildings. The lime kiln and quarries eventually closed after cement replaced limestone grout as a building material. However, veneer stone, flagstone, and crushed rock continued to be quarried in the area.¹⁶ Alexander Rankin, the first settler in Saylesville, constructed a house in 1850 with stone taken from Johnston's quarry.¹⁷

The 1859 plat map, the earliest available plat map, shows several buildings already standing in Saylesville, the majority located along Saylesville Road. These structures include the Saylesville Mill and blacksmith shop, a school (non-extant) located west of Genesee Creek, and a general store (possibly the location of S52 W28799 Saylesville Road). The mill has been replaced since 1859 but the blacksmith shop appears much as it did then. The former school, constructed in 1847, was located across from the Saylesville Cemetery. It was called the "grout school" because it was built solidly of grout with walls over 1-foot thick. The school operated until 1896, but the demolition date is unknown.¹⁸

¹² Deed record, collection of Drake Reid.

¹³ Nolan. David Orendorf's wife was Juliana Sayles, sister of the Sayles brothers.

¹⁴ Nolan.

¹⁵ *William Johnston Lime Kiln*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1982.

¹⁶ *Saylesville School, Genesee Township, Waukesha County, Wisconsin*. Waukesha County Historical Files.

¹⁷ Nolan.

¹⁸ "A History by the Students Circa 1950," *Waukesha Freeman*, 23 April 1977.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 3

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

In addition to the commercial and public buildings present in Saylesville in 1859, the community had several residences located along Saylesville Road. Egbert Allen owned a parcel east of the mill with a house dating to c. 1858 that is still standing (S52 W28794 Saylesville Road). David Orendorf, co-owner of the mill, owned a residence on a 3-acre parcel located on the west side of the creek, across from the mill. E. K. Dodge owned a dwelling west of the mill and creek. Stephan Sayles owned the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 25, as well as a parcel on the west side of the mill pond and a lot along Saylesville Road with a dwelling (non-extant) located near the present location of Rockwood Trail. The majority of these early dwellings were located outside the district boundaries and are non-extant.¹⁹

The Sayles family helped build the business and social community of Saylesville as more people claimed land surrounding the settlement. Whitman and Mortimer Sayles built the first creamery (located west of the creek) and George Sayles operated the first general store, opened in 1842. In addition to building and operating early commercial ventures in the community, the Sayles family donated land for public use. Stephen Sayles donated land for the cemetery located west of Genesee Creek and Whitman Sayles donated land for the Community Hall. It was at this time that the community began to be called Saylesville.²⁰

By 1873, the community had grown and included several permanent residences, all located along Saylesville Road, within proximity of the mill. The 1873 Atlas of Waukesha County shows the majority of buildings within the Saylesville Historic District. Within the district boundaries, the blacksmith shop and three buildings are located along the south side of Saylesville Road, and the Saylesville Mill and a building believed to be the Allen House are located on the north side of the road. A cheese factory, school, and additional residences are located outside the district boundaries, on the west side of the creek. These are excluded because of their physical separation from the core of the settlement and because of modern intrusions.

The earliest settlers in the Saylesville area were farmers. It can be assumed that wheat and grains were grown and processed at the mill. It can also be assumed that dairy herds were kept in the community to support the local creamery. Stephan Sayles harvested hay along the east side of the mill pond, possibly in addition to other crops. Stephen Gernon, who resided in Saylesville on a farm until 1904, had Jersey cows and bees on his property.²¹

¹⁹ The 1859 Atlas of Waukesha County; 1858 Waukesha County Tax Rolls.

²⁰ Joan Holman, "Founders' Ancestors Find Roots and Rebuild Them in Saylesville," *Waukesha Freeman*, 27 December 1989.

²¹ Mead & Hunt, personal interview with Evelyn Reid, 13 February 2002; *Saylesville School Genesee Township, Waukesha County, Wisconsin*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

David Orendorf sold the mill to George Vincent in 1866. Vincent also purchased the Orendorf residence outside the district boundary. After purchasing the mill Vincent remodeled it with two runs of stone propelled by three turbines. Under Vincent, the mill produced fine-grain flour. The original mill burned in 1876 and was rebuilt that same year.²²

In addition to milling, Vincent also purchased the creamery constructed by Whitman and Mortimer Sayles, and along with Shultes, operated the Excelsior Cheese Factory. Up to 400 pounds of butter was produced weekly shortly after the purchase. In 1900 the operation was purchased by Arthur Venzke who continued to operate it until it was destroyed by fire in 1911.²³

The Saylesville Community Hall was constructed in 1890 on land donated by Whitman Sayles in 1878. The National Grange movement, a fraternal organization of farm families that was very popular at the time of construction, backed the construction of the hall. It was originally used for Sunday school and religious services. The Sunday school was discontinued in 1915 and the building became a community center. Community activities at the hall over the years included socials, bazaars, community plays, and amateur shows, among other activities.²⁴ Dances and card parties were banned in a clause that stated if violated, the property would revert back to the donor.²⁵

²² "Saylesville Sesquicentennial," reprinted clipping from the *Waukesha Freeman*. Collection of Drake Reid.

²³ Nolan. The year that Vincent and Shultis purchased the creamery was not included in the article. Since neither Vincent or Shultis appear in the 1870 Genesee Township Tax Roll, and both appear in the 1880 Tax Roll, it can be assumed that they purchased property in the community sometime during the 1870s. Norman Shultis was one of the first settlers in Saylesville, but Frank Shultis is the only one to appear in Genesee Township Tax Rolls, beginning in 1880.

²⁴ *Saylesville School Genesee Township, Waukesha County, Wisconsin*.

²⁵ H. Russell Zimmerman, *Heritage Guidebook: Landmarks and Historical Sites in Southwestern Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, Wisc.: Inland Heritage Corp., 1976), 317.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

In 1890 the population of Saylesville stood at 300, supporting the mill, a creamery, blacksmith, and a general store.²⁶ However, development in the community faltered during the twentieth century. The majority of Saylesville business enterprises gradually began closing in the early twentieth century. The blacksmith shop, begun in 1849 by William Brown, Sr., and later operated by his son, closed in 1939. The creamery was destroyed by fire in 1911 and never reconstructed. The general store closed, although an unofficial general store operated in a barn or out of a house until much later. The Saylesville Mill, once the lifeblood of the community, was the last business in the district to close, ending operations in 1945. The mill served the community for over a century, operating as a flour mill, sawmill, grist mill, and feed mill.²⁷ While these businesses were closing, Harold and Irvin Veneske began construction of an electrical appliance store, c. 1950 (S52 W28741), in the community. The brothers were from Saylesville and lived next door with their father at S52 W28757 during construction.²⁸

Rural Community Development

Like many other small rural Wisconsin communities in the mid-1800s, the village of Saylesville evolved around the pioneer local mill as a center of industry, commerce and communication. During this period, every village located on a stream that had enough power to turn a waterwheel had a grist mill and supplied flour to the people of the surrounding area. The location of a mill was often the key to the development of a commercial village center, acting as an early hub for trade and business, as well as a meeting place for the exchange of news. Other related businesses such as general stores and blacksmith shops often appeared in these new communities, as did residences and community meeting halls.²⁹

²⁶ *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1895-6* (Chicago: R.L. Polk & Co., 1896) and *Waukesha City Directory, 1890* (U.S. Central Publishing Company, 1891), Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisc.

²⁷ Lisa Young Stiers, "Restoration of Dam Saves Saylesville Pond," *Waukesha Freeman*, 2 November 1994.

²⁸ *Saylesville School Genesee Township, Waukesha County, Wisconsin*, 9.

²⁹ Wyatt, 8-1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 6

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

From approximately 1845 to around 1875, Wisconsin was an important wheat-producing state, and flour milling ranked as the leader of its industrial economy. Milling produced more revenue than any other industrial enterprise.³⁰ As farmers entered the region in increasing numbers between 1830 and 1850, they turned almost exclusively to winter wheat as a staple crop. As a result of this emphasis on wheat farming, flour mills in Wisconsin were of vital importance. In the days of poor transportation and scattered development, each village needed a flour mill; and by the 1840s and 1850s, small wind or water-powered mills were scattered across the settled portions of the state. While only 29 grist mills were located in the state in 1840, by 1850 the number had reached 117, and by 1860 the number had exceeded 370.³¹

Saylesville demonstrates this pattern and evolution of rural community development around a mill. The mill and dam that created the mill pond were some of the first structures constructed in the small community of Saylesville. The mill supplied flour to the community and became the center of community development. Although the community of Saylesville developed in a linear fashion along Saylesville Road, the earliest residences and commercial properties were located in close proximity to the mill. The creamery, early general store, and first school (all non-extant) were also constructed in close proximity to the mill. The blacksmith shop, the earliest remaining structure in the district, was constructed directly across from the mill only a few years after the first mill was completed. The Community Hall was constructed only a short distance from the mill and other commercial buildings. The small crossroads community of Saylesville developed into the social and business center for the surrounding community.

Archaeological Potential

To date, archaeological surveys have been limited to the road right-of-way. The area around the mill, in particular north of the mill, has the potential to yield archaeological information. According to the various sketch maps, the millrace has not changed course since 1914 and the original location and purpose of the rock-crushing building are known. Archaeological remains may reveal information about the use of the mill and its operation, in addition to early settlement patterns and life ways of the mid-to late-nineteenth century.

Preservation Activity

Property owners within the Saylesville Historic District take pride in the historic character of their buildings and crossroads community. These buildings have been maintained and preserved due to the efforts of past and current property owners.

³⁰ Wyatt, 8-1.

³¹ Wyatt. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Vol. 2, 8-2*, citing *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and States of the United States*, 356; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Abstract of the Statistics of Manufactures*, 51; *Eight Census of the United States, 1860: Manufactures of the United States*, 657.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 7

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Statement of Significance

The core community of Saylesville, located between the Saylesville Bridge and Point Road, is eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A: Community Planning and Development* for the role it played in the development of rural Waukesha County. The Saylesville Historic District is a good collection of nineteenth-century community buildings associated with rural community development in Waukesha County. This small crossroads community was a commercial and social center of life for the surrounding area during the period of significance. The period of significance begins in 1841 when the dam and the first mill were built and extends to 1945 when the mill closed. During the period of significance, Saylesville functioned as a central location for commerce, communication, socialization, and industry for farmers in the area. The district includes original nineteenth-century homes and outbuildings, the Saylesville Mill, blacksmith shop, and Community Hall associated with the residential and commercial development of Saylesville. All of the contributing resources date from the historic period and retain good integrity.

Name of Property

County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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
- Name of repository:
Waukesha County Historical Society

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 11.7 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	3/9/2/0/3/0	4/7/5/5/7/5/0	3	16	392270	4755840
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	392160	4755830	4	16	392340	4755750
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

 See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Emily Schill and Christina Slattery, Historic Preservation Specialists		
organization	Mead and Hunt	date	April 2002
street & number	6501 Watts Road	telephone	608-273-6380
city or town	Madison	state	WI
		zip code	53719

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

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- Genesee Township Tax Rolls, 1849-1910, Milwaukee Area Research Center, Milwaukee, Wisc.
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NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Zimmerman, H. Russell. *Heritage Guidebook: Landmarks and Historical Sites in Southwestern Wisconsin*. Milwaukee, Wisc.: Inland Heritage Corp., 1976.

Plat Maps and Atlas

1859, 1896, and 1914 plat maps and atlas of Waukesha County. Waukesha County Historical Society Collection, Waukesha, Wisc.

1873, 1891, 1921, 1928, 1949, and 1967 plat maps and atlases of Waukesha County, Wisconsin. Wisconsin State Historical Society Collection, Madison, Wisc.

Saylesville Historic District
Name of Property

Waukesha County
County and State

Wisconsin

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	various				date
organization					telephone
street&number					zip code
city or town		state	WI		

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Saylesville Historic District
Town of Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Geographical Data

UTM References

5.	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/9/2/1/9/0</u>	<u>4/7/5/5/6/3/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached site map.

The boundary of the Saylesville Historic District is shown as the dashed line on the accompanying map entitled *Saylesville Historic District*. Genesee Creek, which provided the impetus for the development of the community, forms the western boundary, which encompasses the bridge over Genesee Creek. The northern boundary follows the edge of the mill pond and includes the property associated with the c. 1858 Allen House (S52 W28794). The eastern boundary was delineated to include related contributing historic resources and generally follows the property lines of S52 W28794 and S52 W28731). The southern boundary follows the rear property lines to include properties along the south side of Saylesville Road.

Boundary Justification

The Saylesville Historic District boundary was delineated to include all the buildings and structures that retain good integrity and are representative of the early community development of Saylesville. In general, the integrity of historic resources diminishes and the number of modern intrusions increase outside of the district boundaries.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photographs Page 1

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

The following information pertains to all photographs:

*Saylesville Historic District
Saylesville, Waukesha County, Wisconsin
Date: February 2002
Photographer: Emily Schill, Mead & Hunt, Inc.
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society*

*Photograph 1 of 21
Streetscape, south side of Saylesville Road
View looking southwest*

*Photograph 2 of 21
Streetscape, south side of Saylesville Road
View looking southwest*

*Photograph 3 of 21
Streetscape, north side of Saylesville Road
View looking west*

*Photograph 4 of 21
Streetscape, south side of Saylesville Road
View looking northeast*

*Photograph 5 of 21
Streetscape, south side of Saylesville Road
View looking northeast*

*Photograph 6 of 21
Community Hall, S52 W28731 Saylesville Road
View looking south*

*Photograph 7 of 21
House, S52 W28757 Saylesville Road
View looking south*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photographs Page 2

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Photograph 8 of 21
House, S52 W28799 Saylesville Road
View looking southeast

Photograph 9 of 21
Barn, S52 W28799 Saylesville Road
View looking north

Photograph 10 of 21
House and outbuildings, S52 W28799 Saylesville Road
View looking northeast

Photograph 11 of 21
William Brown House and Barn, S52 W28809 Saylesville Road
View looking south

Photograph 12 of 21
William Brown House, S52 W28809 Saylesville Road
View looking east

Photograph 13 of 21
William Brown Barn, S52 W28809
View looking north

Photograph 14 of 21
Blacksmith Shop, S52 W28808
View looking east

Photograph 15 of 21
Saylesville Road Bridge Over Genesee Creek
View looking southeast

Photograph 16 of 21
Saylesville Dam
View looking northwest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photographs Page 3

Saylesville Historic District
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Photograph 17 of 21
Saylesville Mill
View looking north

Photograph 18 of 21
Saylesville Mill
View looking north

Photograph 19 of 21
World War I Memorial along Saylesville Road
View facing northwest


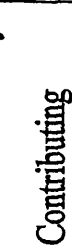

Photograph 20 of 21
Allen House
View facing northwest

Photograph 21 of 21
Allen House and Outbuildings
View facing northeast

Saylesville Historic District

District Boundary Map
Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Legend:

	District Boundary
	Contributing
	Non-Contributing

