

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Shady Grove School/Community Building, Beauregard Parish, LA

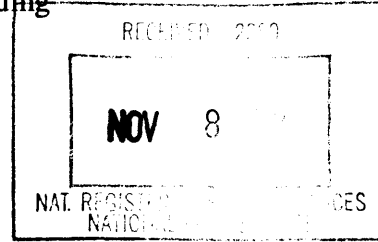
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Shady Grove School and Community Building

Other Name/Site Number:



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 2400 LA HWY 26

Not for publication: NA

City/Town DeRidder

Vicinity: X

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Beauregard Code: 011 Zip Code: 70634

3. 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.

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

Nationally: Statewide: X Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Laurel Wyckoff, LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

November 7, 2002 Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

Edson H. Beall 12/20/02

- 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):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing
1

Non contributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: education Sub: school
 social meeting hall

Current: social Sub: meeting hall

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Colonial Revival

Materials:

Foundation: brick
Walls: weatherboard
Roof: metal
Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The building which served from 1919 to 1928 as the Shady Grove school and subsequently as the small village's community center survives almost completely unaltered in a rural setting on Louisiana Highway 28 east of DeRidder. Although the one story wooden building on the whole is quite simple, the Colonial Revival porch makes enough of a statement for the building to be classified by that style.

The Shady Grove School-Community Building has a T-shape footprint. A single large space is located at the middle, beginning at the façade and continuing through a long rear wing (the leg of the T). It served as an auditorium/classroom with cloakrooms at the front (see below). To each side of the auditorium is a single classroom. The pitched roof of the main block culminates at each end in a gabled roof. The rear wing has a hipped roof. The east and west classrooms have abundant light thanks to windows grouped in threes (with nine over nine sashes) on two walls. Transomed double doors and a window to each side continue the multi-pane treatment, as do the numerous windows which appear singly along the sides of the auditorium. These small panes of glass were, of course, quite the "colonial" look of the era. The building's entrance is marked by a flat roof porch with four Tuscan columns and matching pilasters. The porch and the main roofline feature wide overhangs, both with a molded cornice and a paneled treatment under the overhang. The building is sheathed in narrow gauge weatherboard. Originally a door on each side of the rear wing provided additional access to the auditorium (located where the rear wing and main block join). The door on the western side survives with its bungalow style shed roof. The opening on the eastern side has been filled in.

The school-community building survives surprisingly intact on the interior as well, including two of the three wood-burning cast-iron stoves. (One chimney remains.) The quite well preserved stoves are sheathed in decorative pressed metal. Next to each is a wood closet. While the stove in the west classroom is gone, its wood closet remains. All interior spaces are sheathed in narrow gauge beaded board (walls and ceilings). The wooden floors remain uncovered. Door and window frames feature a fairly pronounced molded cornice. The west classroom even retains its blackboard, which is remarkable, considering that the building has not been used for education since 1928.

According to the recollections of former students (now in their 80s), the double entrance doors opened into a foyer with a long cloakroom along each side and then the classroom/auditorium space. One suspects the cloakrooms were removed soon after the building was converted into a community center in the late 1920s to provide additional space. This change certainly is not noticeable today. The auditorium space culminates in a simple wooden stage. According to former students, the homemade wooden reclining bench on the stage is the one they used as a prop in play-acting. It certainly looks old enough. The auditorium is now filled with church pews not original to the building.

Non-historic alterations to the interior include the insertion of a bathroom with accompanying vanity in one corner of the west classroom and the addition of kitchen equipment to the east classroom.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance: education; social history

Period(s) of Significance: 1919-28 (education); 1928-1952 (social history)

Significant Dates: NA

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: contractor: Ira A. Lundy

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The historical significance of the Shady Grove School and Community Building is twofold. From 1919 to 1928 the building served as a school and today survives amazingly intact from this period. As such, it is a rare surviving icon of rural America – the small wood frame country school. The context for evaluation under education is rural Louisiana. Such schools existed by the hundreds across the state in the early twentieth century – they were the face of rural education. Today there are probably less than 20 remaining, if that many. Shady Grove survived because it continued to be used. After the school was closed in 1928, the building became the center of community life for Shady Grove (a role which fits best under the National Register’s “social history” category). Here the period of significance (local) ends at the current 50 year cutoff (1952).

Shady Grove school is a rare survivor to tell the story of rural education as it typically appeared across Louisiana in the early twentieth century. Prior to consolidation, which generally occurred in the 1920s and ‘30s, every little community had a school where grades 1-6 or 1-7 were taught. For most rural areas, the nearest secondary education would have been in the parish seat. As transportation improved, consolidation resulted in fewer but larger schools. Shady Grove’s closing in 1928 was due to consolidation. The candidate is the third school for the community. School board minutes show the construction contract being awarded on May 18, 1919 to Ira A. Lundy for \$5,649.

Several former students were interviewed for this nomination, including Reiddie Simmons Harper, who started school there in 1919. They placed the number of teachers between 1 and 3. The best estimates on enrollment come from class photos dated 1919 (approx. 60 students) and c.1924 (approx. 75). The circa 1924 photo shows three people of sufficient age to be teachers.

The former students gathered together for this nomination, all of whom still live locally, had a grand time reminiscing about their school days. Recurring themes were discipline (severe by today’s standards), sharing lunches on the grounds, and what fun they had walking to school in groups, fighting and playing along the way. It seems that the longest walk was about two miles. Winfred Moses (b.1918) was lucky. He lived about nine miles away and rode the school bus, which his father drove. Everyone remembered what was quite common at the time – farm children doing their chores before leaving for school. Teachers boarded with students’ families.

But some nine years after classes began, the school was closed as consolidation changed the face of rural education. School board minutes reveal that in October 1928 the parish superintendent was authorized to offer the building first to the community for purchase. It appears that finding the money became an issue because a public auction was scheduled for March 30, 1929. In that month a petition was presented to the school board, signed by citizens of Shady Grove, asking the board to delay the public auction for 15 days to allow them time to secure funding. Negotiations continued through April and May. On May 31, 1929, over 40 Shady Grove citizens appeared before a notary to incorporate the Shady Grove Community Club. The capital stock was set at \$1,000, divided into one thousand shares at one dollar each. By buying shares in the corporation, community members were able to buy the school building. The signatures of the original shareholders and the number of shares can be found on the articles of incorporation (ranging from 1 share to 25 shares).

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As the center of social life for Shady Grove, the candidate provides a valuable glimpse of rural life in the 1930s and '40s. Entertainments that would seem rather boring to television and Internet generations were fondly recalled, important events. Business meetings of the Shady Grove Community Club, held once a month, also included some type of social event (a program or a covered dish supper, for example). Locally organized three-act plays, performed by both children and adults, were quite popular. Two week "singing schools" were held regularly, with teachers boarding in the community. "Chalk talks" (colored chalk drawings done to musical accompaniment) were also much anticipated events. Boxed suppers and pie and cake sales were held to offset upkeep expenses. Former student Reiddie Simmons Harper met her future husband there at a pie supper. Besides social events, the home demonstration club met in the building in the 1930s, and after WWII, veterans took classes there. A few weddings and funerals were also remembered. And because Shady Grove did not have a church, the building was used for various religious purposes (although this cannot be taken into consideration for National Register eligibility).

The building's heyday as a community center was clearly the 1930s and 1940s. The 1950s would have been a transition decade for the way of life described above. The building, however, remains in community use through the present and is still owned and operated by the Shady Grove Community Club, as chartered in 1929. One can still purchase shares. Today the building is used mainly as a polling place and for reunions and garage sales. And while the days of chalk talks, singing schools, and covered dish suppers are long gone, the building is greatly cherished by those who remember it as the center of Shady Grove community life.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Various historic photos of the school and student body.

Beauregard Parish School Board minutes, various dates between 1913 and 1929.

Shady Grove Community Club, Articles of Incorporation, May 31, 1929.

Interviews with Reiddie Simmons Harper, Cecil Young, Winfred Moses, Audrey Martin Tyler, Hazel Blankenbaker Thigpen, Beatrice Murphy, and Mamie Rathburn. Conducted by Donna Fricker, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, July 23, 2002.

Note: Copies of most primary sources noted above available in Shady Grove School/Community Building File, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, as well as summary of interviews.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: approx. 5 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 483200 3407900

Verbal Boundary Description:

Legal property description: "Part of the Southwest Quarter of Northeast Quarter of Section Fifteen(15) in Township Three (3) South, Range Eight (8) West, La. Mer., described as beginning at the Southwest corner of said subdivision and running thence North 40' West with its west line a distance of 466 7/10 feet; thence North 89 deg. 20' East 466 7/10 feet; thence South 40' East 466 7/10 feet to the South line of said subdivision; thence South 89 deg. 20' West 466 7/10 feet, more or less, to the place of beginning, containing 5 acres, more or less."

Boundary Justification:

Boundary lines follow property lines of the parcel of land historically associated with the building.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff (assisted by Reiddie Simmons Harper)

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: August 2002

PROPERTY OWNERS

Shady Grove Community Club, Inc.
Don Gray, President
310 Don Gray Road
DeRidder, LA 70634