

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



539

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Sydenstricker School
other names/site number Pohick School #8, Upper Pohick Community League Hall; VDHR File Number 029-0154

2. Location

street & number 8511 Hoes Road

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town Springfield
state Virginia code VA county Fairfax code 059 zip code 22153

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 at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide local

[Signature] Signature of certifying official/Title 9/29/12 Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- 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] Signature of the Keeper 8-22-12 Date of Action

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

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
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
4	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: School

SOCIAL: Community Hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Community Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: One-room school

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

roof: METAL: Tin

other:

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Sydenstricker School, alternately known as the Pohick School #8, and as the Upper Pohick Community Hall since 1948, is a one-room schoolhouse located at 8511 Hooes Road in Springfield, Fairfax County, Virginia. The building is a one-story, front-gabled structure, covered in weatherboard, painted red with white trim, and topped with a metal roof. Situated on 0.91 acres adjacent to the Sydenstricker Methodist Chapel (circa 1911) and cemetery, the school was built in 1928 to replace an earlier school at the same location which had burned. The school has four original nine-over-nine, double-hung-sash wooden windows on the south side of the building, two on the east side and one on the west side.

The building consists of the main schoolroom, which measures approximately 805 square feet in the main core, and a 65 square foot cloakroom, which was the original entrance into the building, now used as a kitchen.

The schoolhouse sits parallel to Hooes Road on a lot that includes a gravel parking lot, picnic grove, and a wooded area that includes a number of hundred year old oak trees. A narrow gravel path cuts through the picnic grove, connecting the parking lot to the Sydenstricker Chapel property. The building retains many original features, as well as an authentic setting along a suburban road.

There are several secondary contributing resources on the property, including a combination storage shed and three-hole privy. The rectangular frame shed is painted red with white trim to coordinate with the school building. The shed was moved from another location on the property and remodeled in the late 1950s. A small poured concrete foundation, which appears to be the original privy pit, is located in the woods on the southwest side of the lot and is also a contributing site. The foundation is not dissimilar to that of the schoolhouse, and is likely contemporary with the Sydenstricker School. In addition, a large metal flag pole, donated in 1928, sits several feet from the original entrance to the building and is a contributing object.

Narrative Description

Situated on just under an acre of land, the Sydenstricker School sits parallel to Hooes Road, once a farm-to-market wagon road, and adjacent to the Sydenstricker Methodist Chapel, built in 1911, and cemetery (which predates the chapel). It is located in a suburban neighborhood; however the wooded property and the adjacent chapel and cemetery provide for an authentic setting.

The rectangular vernacular building was built in a form common to American schoolhouses of the period. As schoolhouses were often constructed without the assistance of a professional architect, they commonly reflected vernacular and cultural adaptations of contemporary architectural fashion. The simple, classic architectural traits of the Sydenstricker School are characteristic of other Fairfax County schoolhouses, most notably: the Legato School, City of Fairfax (VDHR File Number 029-0129), the Laurel Grove School, Alexandria (VDHR File Number 029-0361), and the Crouch School, Town of Clifton (VDHR File Number 029-5590).

The exterior is currently painted red. Records show that the building was originally painted yellow, and later white.¹ The doors, trim, and belfry are painted white. A broad cornice board wraps around the building, and is finished with a cornice return on the gable sides. Broad flat trim delineates the large nine-over-nine double hung sash windows and doorways. The building still retains its original foundation, framing and studs, trim, weatherboard and windows, and has been altered very little since it was used as a schoolhouse.

The lot is fairly flat, sloping slightly to the south. Most of the southern half of the property is wooded, and a strip of woods along the western edge of the parcel visually divides the lot from neighboring homes.

The adjacent Sydenstricker Chapel cemetery is separated from the school property by a white picket fence. The nearest headstones lie less than 30 feet from the front door of the school's entry foyer.²

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In 1955, a gravel parking lot was created on the west side of the building by members of the Upper Pohick Community League.³ The gravel lot is maintained to this day.

A poured concrete foundation, a contributing site, which is believed to be the original privy pit, is located in the woods to the southwest of the school building.⁴ The foundation is not dissimilar to that of the schoolhouse, and is likely contemporary with the Sydenstricker School. Records indicate that abandoned privy holes were filled in by members of the Upper Pohick Community League in 1954.⁵

In 1959, the League discussed whether to build a new shed or move and repair a shed already existing on the property. Ultimately the existing shed was moved and refurbished, to include a three-hole privy.⁶ This shed, a contributing structure, continues to be maintained and used by the Upper Pohick Community League; however the privies have been filled in. The shed is painted red with white trim to match the schoolhouse.

A large metal flag pole, a contributing object, set in concrete sits several feet from the original entrance to the building. The flag pole was donated by the father of the first teacher of the school, Evelyn Clarke, when it re-opened in 1928, after the fire that claimed the original building.⁷

The Sydenstricker School was recognized by Fairfax County as a historic landmark in 1971.⁸

EXTERIOR

Foundation. The schoolhouse sits on its original poured concrete foundation. There are six ventilation holes located along the north and south side of the foundation (3 on each side), and all but one are covered by what appears to be original wrought iron grillwork. Looking into a ventilation hole reveals that the building is also supported by a row of stacked brick piers running down the center of the structure.

East Elevation. Like the Crouch School, the Sydenstricker School was originally entered through a central door into a small attached cloakroom. Two nine-over-nine, double-hung-sash wood windows⁹ flank the projected central entryway. The windows are in fair condition and contain many of the original glass panes. There is a light fixture mounted on the wall above the door.

The concrete foundation of the cloakroom appears to have been poured independently of the main part of the building. The support studs of the cloakroom also encroach on the framing of the two east windows of the main part of the building.¹⁰ This is evidence that the cloakroom was added after the main part of the schoolhouse was built.

Although there is no definitive evidence, the cloakroom and belfry were almost certainly added prior to 1939, when the building was still used as a school. School records show that additional work was done on the school several months after the school was built, which perhaps correlates with the construction of the cloakroom.¹¹ A number of other still existing period schools in the county were constructed without a cloakroom, such as the Legato School and the Laurel Grove School, so it is not unlikely that the Sydenstricker School started out this way as well.

The cloakroom is topped with a simple belfry which still holds the original school bell. According to an interview with a former student, Edward Moravitz, the bell was purchased in the 1920s, for the prior school on the site, from a Sears store in Alexandria, Virginia for \$20.¹² Moravitz, one of the founders of the Upper Pohick Community League, explained how he and other men from the community picked the bell up from the Burke train station in a one-horse wagon and delivered it to the schoolhouse. When the original school burned a few years later, the bell dropped to the ground and the bell tower was crushed. Moravitz paid \$1 for the bell, and a new bell was procured from a nearby schoolhouse. The new bell was defective, so Moravitz took his dollar back and returned the original bell to the school, where it has resided since.¹³ The bell is marked "#24", and is almost identical to a 24-inch bell shown in a 1926 copy of the Sears & Roebuck catalog with a price of \$20.48.¹⁴ After a recent restoration of the belfry, the bell can now be rung for the first time in many years.

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South Elevation. There are four nine-over-nine, double-hung-sash, wood windows on the south elevation of the main schoolroom, facing away from the road.¹⁵ The windows are in fair condition and still contain many of the original glass panes. The size and spacing of these four large windows are unusual compared to other still existing Fairfax County one-room schoolhouses, such as Laurel Grove, Legato, Crouch, and the Vale Schoolhouse (VDHR File Number 029-5615, which became a two-room school in 1912, and was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places 2011) in Oakton, which all have at most three smaller windows on any wall. The design of the Sydenstricker schoolhouse is atypical in the placement of windows on only one of the two longer walls.

The south elevation of the cloakroom has one small three-over-one wood window.¹⁶ Detailed floor plans of the schoolhouse made during the 1950s (when the cloakroom was being converted to a kitchen) do not show this window, suggesting that it was not original to the schoolhouse. Its placement over the kitchen sink suggests that it was likely added at the time the kitchen was installed in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

West Elevation. The west wall originally had two nine-over-nine, double-hung-sash, wood windows (see fig. 1), but one window was replaced by a glass and paneled door in 1956 (which is now the main entrance into the building).¹⁷ ¹⁸ The door is protected by a bracketed hood, which was constructed by Upper Pohick Community League member Ben Morovitz in 1958.¹⁹ Concrete steps and two metal hand-rails lead to the door.

North Elevation. The north elevation (facing Hoes Road) has no windows. It has a broad cornice board and a large central white painted sign with black text which currently reads "Upper Pohick Community – Meet Us Here".²⁰

Roof. The roof is a standing-seam metal tin roof, original to the structure. An interior brick chimney, once located in the center of the north wall (see fig. 3), was removed sometime after 1957, at which time the roof was patched. The location of the original chimney can still be seen.

INTERIOR

The interior of the building includes one large room (the original schoolroom) and a small cloakroom, which was converted into a kitchen in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The main room of the schoolhouse measures 23 feet, 1½ inches wide and 35 feet, 2 inches long. The ceiling is 12 feet, 1 inch high.

The walls are covered in the original beaded-board wainscoting placed vertically to chair-rail height, and then horizontally to the ceiling. The original color of the interior walls, trim, and ceiling is unknown. In 1951, the Upper Pohick Community League decided to paint the interior walls light green, and the windows, wainscoting, and ceiling dark green.²¹ Chipping paint on the windows and underneath the door hardware indeed reveals a layer of green paint. Currently the walls are a light cream color. The paint throughout the building is in good condition.

On the west wall, the location of an original window (see fig. 1), which was later replaced by a door, is still visible. The interior trim around the door matches the trim on the existing windows. The old window trim was apparently re-used when the door was installed. A bulletin board, built and installed by League members in 1951,²² is also mounted on the west wall.²³

The location of a chimney is visible on the north wall, delineated by two parallel wood strips extending from the floor to the ceiling. An exterior photograph of the building from 1957 shows the brick chimney still in place (see fig. 3). It is unknown exactly when the stove and chimney were removed. The roof was insulated in 1958,²⁴ which may have coincided with the removal of the chimney.

There is no evidence remaining as to the location of the original chalkboards, but the long, windowless north wall would have been a likely location. If so, the chalkboards would have flanked the stove and chimney which was centered on the wall.

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The original quarter-sawn yellow heart-pine floor is in good condition. The floor planks are 3½ inches wide, and range from 6 feet to more than 14 feet long. The floor planks are stained a medium brown, and run the length of the building.

There is an attic crawl space accessible through a small panel in the ceiling on the southeast side of the main room. A 1956 Bryant gas heater is mounted to the ceiling in the southwest corner of the room, and exhausts through a stove pipe in the west wall of the building.

The building had no electricity while it operated as a school. The Upper Pohick Community League wired the building for electricity and installed lighting in 1950.²⁵ "Schoolhouse-style" hanging lights with milk-glass globes were donated by a League member in 1950.²⁶ These lights are still in use today.

Old oak pews currently line the walls of the schoolroom. The pews were originally from the Pohick Episcopal Chapel²⁷, which closed shortly after the Sydenstricker Chapel was built. They were used at the Sydenstricker Chapel until being donated to the Upper Pohick Community League by the church in 1956.^{28 29}

Cloakroom. The cloakroom measures 8 feet, 7 inches high, 7 feet wide, and 7 feet, 8 inches deep. Three of the walls and ceiling are covered in narrow beaded-board vertical wainscoting. The west wall of the cloakroom is covered in the same weatherboard as the exterior walls of the main part of the school building; further evidence that the cloakroom was added sometime after the schoolhouse was constructed.

The walls of the cloakroom are painted yellow. Layers of grey and light green paint are visible under the existing paint. There are marks on the east and south walls which suggest that two horizontal strips of wood were once attached to the paneling. The lower strip was at about 46 inches, and the higher strip about 65 inches above the floor. One small wood strip remains, with large screw holes spaced about 12 inches apart. It is possible that these strips held coat hooks for the school children. Marks on the opposite wall suggest that there were shelves, perhaps for lunch pails, books, or a water cooler. Upper Pohick Community League minutes describe the renovation of the "cloakroom" into a kitchen in the 1950s.

There is a fixture with a bare light bulb in the middle of the cloakroom ceiling. A rope hangs through a hole in the corner of the ceiling leading to the bell. The quarter-sawn yellow heart pine floor of the cloakroom sits approximately 1 inch lower than that of the main school room, and is in good condition.

An old five-paneled door with vintage hardware divides the cloakroom from the schoolroom. The door has been changed from an outward-swinging to an inward-swinging door, evidenced by routed out areas in the door frame where the original hinges and door latch would have been.

The cloakroom currently contains a green and ivory "Quality Insulated" enamel gas stove (circa 1920-1930), donated by an Upper Pohick Community League member in 1957³⁰. An early-20th-century porcelain sink with drying board is on the south side. Wood cabinetry was built and installed by the League in the late 1950s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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: N/A

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928 - 1962

Significant Dates

1928; 1939; 1954

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wooster, William Beauregard (1857 – 1945)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Sydenstricker School extends from 1928, when the school was constructed, to 1962, when the Upper Pohick Community League was actively using the building as a center for community activities. The building has continued to be used by the Upper Pohick Community League to the present date.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Located in Springfield, Virginia, in Fairfax County, the Sydenstricker School was built in 1928 by William Beauregard Wooster to replace an earlier school which had burned. The school closed in June 1939.

The Sydenstricker School is locally significant and eligible for state and national recognition under Criterion A in the areas of education and social history. The school was the last one-room schoolhouse built prior to school consolidation in Fairfax County, and it was the last operating one-room schoolhouse in the county when it closed in 1939. The Upper Pohick Community League purchased the building from the Fairfax County School District in 1954, and has owned and maintained the building since. The League is the oldest community association in the Springfield area, and one of the oldest in Fairfax County. Originally focused on the welfare and improvement of the community, the Upper Pohick Community League is now dedicated to the preservation of the schoolhouse as a historical building and a community center.

The Sydenstricker School is also locally significant and eligible for state and national recognition under Criterion C for architectural significance, as the best preserved example of an early-20th-century, one-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County in nearly original condition and still on its original site. Constructed as one large room in 1928, a small cloakroom was added to the façade prior to 1939, and the building still retains this form. Except for a few changes, the building remains architecturally intact.

The period of significance begins in 1928 with the construction of the building and ends in 1962 when the Upper Pohick Community League was actively using the building as a center for community activities. Secondary resources include a shed, a concrete foundation of a former privy, and a metal flag pole donated to the school in 1928.

Narrative Statement of Significance

BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted a new constitution, as a prerequisite for the state's readmission to the Union. Popularly called the Underwood Constitution, after the president of the state constitutional convention, John Curtiss Underwood (1809-1873), the new constitution stipulated "an Act to establish and maintain a uniform system of public free schools." The schools were "to prevent children growing up in ignorance, or becoming vagrants."³¹ The Underwood Constitution led to great progress in the education of the children of Virginia, though only an elementary education (grades 1-8) was required, with separate schools for black and white students.

Under this new system, a State Board of Education was established, as well as a State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each county had multiple districts, each with a District Superintendent appointed by the State Board and approved by the Senate. In Fairfax County, six districts were established, each with three trustees. They were responsible for enforcing school laws, hiring and firing teachers, suspending students, and managing school properties.³² The area surrounding the Sydenstricker School fell under the jurisdiction of the Lee District.

Communities played an integral role in the education of their children. Parents would petition their district to open a school, select a location, and donate the land to the county. Local citizens would often provide the materials and labor to build the school, supply wood for the stove, and make necessary repairs. Communities formed school leagues to support their schools. In the annual report of 1913, Virginia's superintendent of schools noted that the "credit for the improvement and care of school grounds and buildings belongs chiefly to the school leagues."³³

Schoolhouses served not only educational purposes, but became social and political centers as well. In the early 1900s, the United States Bureau of Education proclaimed that "Every school district should be a little democracy, and the schoolhouse the Community Capitol."³⁴ Commissioner of Education, P. P. Claxton stated that as a community center "the schoolhouse is specially fitted; it is non-

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sectarian and non-partisan; the property of no individual, group or clique, but the common property of all; the one place in every community in which all have equal rights and all are equally at home".³⁵ Curtis (1913) remarks on the necessity of the "rural social center", makes recommendations for organizing and implementing social and civic leagues, advocates for the use of one-room schoolhouses as community centers, and provides suggestions for outfitting a schoolhouse to meet the needs of a civic organization.³⁶

THE PREDECESSORS OF THE SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL: POHICK SCHOOL #5 AND POHICK SCHOOL #8

In January 1874, a parcel of land about one mile east of the Sydenstricker School, along Hooes Road (now likely covered by the Fairfax County Parkway), was conveyed by the heirs of Thomas Hall to the School Trustees of the Lee District for the purpose of building a school.³⁷ The school built on this site was referred to as both Pohick School #5 and Barker's School.³⁸ This school is indicated on an 1878 map of the Lee District of Fairfax County.^{39 40}

An interesting glimpse of this particular school is recorded in the minutes of the school board on December 10, 1888. The minutes document that "the [school board] clerk was ordered to write to R. H. Harrow, teacher of School #5 and request him to procure a boarding house as the use of his schoolroom for cooking and sleeping was entirely against the wishes of [the] school board".⁴¹

On July 1, 1897, a regular meeting of the Lee District school board was held at Pohick School #5. The minutes note that "[t]he attention of the Board was called to the dilapidated condition of the school building at Pohick #5, when upon close examination it was deemed unfit to repair. The location being a poor one a survey was taken of the neighborhood with an eye to the school population when the Board concluded to build a new house on land given by Barney Deavers and wife."^{42 43} This Deavers parcel is where the Sydenstricker School currently stands.⁴⁴

The school that came to replace Pohick School #5 at the Deavers site was known as Pohick School #8. It is not known precisely when Pohick School #8 was constructed and opened, as the Lee District School Board minutes from July 1897 to July 1904 are currently missing. The first written account of this new school is from March 3, 1901. On this date, Reverend Everard Meade, rector of Pohick Church (about 5 miles southeast, at 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton) held services at the school.⁴⁵ Later entries in his journal suggest that he held services at the school about once a month, for between 35 and 50 parishioners. Its use for Episcopal church services likely ended in 1903.⁴⁶

The earliest newspaper account of Pohick School #8 is a 1905 *Fairfax Herald* article announcing "The Last Meeting of the Lee District Teachers Assembly", held at the "Pohick School house at Gambrell".⁴⁷ Professor M.D. Hall, later the first superintendent of the Fairfax County Public School System, led the meeting, which included discussions on algebra, mental arithmetic, geography, grammar, and stocks and bonds. "Rev. Mr. Meade, rector of Pohick church, was present during the session and took part in the general discussion that followed the presentation of each subject."

In September 1909, the patrons of the Pohick School requested the use of the school for religious services.⁴⁸ This time, the school was used by a burgeoning Methodist congregation, many who had apparently left the Episcopalian congregation.⁴⁹ The Methodists were led by a minister named Christopher Sydenstricker (1846–1927).⁵⁰ The use of the school for church services appears to have continued until 1911, when the Sydenstricker Chapel was completed.⁵¹ The Sydenstricker Methodist Chapel still exists and is directly adjacent to the school, to its east.⁵²

Schoolhouse and chapel pairs such as this once dotted the landscape of Fairfax County. Only a few survive, most notably the Sydenstricker School and Sydenstricker United Methodist Chapel, and the Vale School and Vale United Methodist Chapel.⁵³ Silverbrook Chapel (VDHR File Number 029-5018),⁵⁴ located about 3 miles south of the Sydenstricker Chapel and School, also once had an adjacent one-room schoolhouse⁵⁵. The Laurel Grove Baptist Church, next to the one-room Laurel Grove School, burned in 2004. It is interesting to note that at Sydenstricker, Vale, Silverbrook and Laurel Grove, church services were held at the schoolhouses during the construction of the chapels.

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In 1900, there were 99 schoolhouses in Fairfax County serving 2,246 students.⁵⁶ As late as 1906, all the schoolhouses in Fairfax County had either one or two rooms.⁵⁷ Clara Hall, who started first grade at the Pohick School in 1918, recalled in 1989 that about 40 children attended the school, which served grades 1 through 7, and that most were related to each other. She stated that the school had two-seater desks lined in two rows on each side of the room. Students were responsible for purchasing their own books, as was common at the time.⁵⁸

In the mid-1920s, the *Herndon Observer* occasionally reported news from "Springfield and Sydenstricker" which mostly recounted the travels and health of local residents.⁵⁹ There would also be remarks about the condition of local roads, the chapel, and the school. Regarding the latter, a piece from February 1925 noted that the school had two teachers, was well attended, and that the children were doing well, and in excellent health.⁶⁰ A report the following month declared that the Pohick School was one of only ten schools in the county to have a library.⁶¹

Having already survived a blaze in 1910,⁶² tragedy struck on the morning of Thursday, July 12, 1928, when the school burned to the ground. The *Herndon Observer* reported that the fire was likely arson, and that the school, although not large, was "an important one", and would probably be rebuilt.⁶³ The *Fairfax Herald* ran a similar story, noting that the loss was partially covered by insurance.⁶⁴ Several weeks later, the *Herndon Observer* published a more detailed description of the event, provided by Mrs. Norman Deavers,⁶⁵ who lived within sight of the school. She stated that "[b]eyond a doubt [the school] was set on fire from underneath, as the foundation was open and giving free access to anyone to get under it" and noted that "[a] reward of one hundred dollars will be paid for evidence leading the arrest and conviction of the guilty parties."⁶⁶

THE NEW POHICK SCHOOL #8 / SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL

A few weeks after the fire, school board minutes record that Dr. F.M. Brooks, Trustee of the Lee District and the Division Superintendent, was directed to "secure a site, formulate plans, advertise for bids, award the contract and proceed with the construction of a new schoolhouse at Pohick in Lee District".⁶⁷ At the meeting on August 21, 1928, four bids for the construction of a new schoolhouse were reviewed, and the contract was awarded to William Beauregard Wooster (1857-1945), with the low bid of \$1,649.75.^{68 69} Wooster had done work on other schoolhouses in the Lee District, including the Ox Road Schoolhouse in October 1889.^{70 71}

The first payment of \$150 was approved by the school board on October 5, 1928, in addition to \$613.36 to W.A. Smoot & Company for building materials, and \$238 to George W. Hall for lumber.⁷² A month later a second payment of \$553.37 to Beauregard Wooster was approved.⁷³ On October 19, 1928, the *Fairfax Herald* reported that construction was completed, and a month later the school was reopened.⁷⁴

The new school was built upon a poured concrete foundation, and covered in weatherboard, painted yellow. Unlike the Legato, Laurel Grove and Crouch Schools, an early photo of the Pohick School (fig. 1) shows that the school did not have shutters on the windows.

Like the Legato and Laurel Grove Schools, the Pohick School was originally entered through a central door flanked by two windows. However, a small projected entrance vestibule, which was also used as a cloakroom, was added sometime after construction was completed. The vestibule was topped with a simple gabled belfry which still holds the original school bell (purchased in the early 1920's for the earlier Pohick School, from Sears & Roebuck).

The interior walls were covered in beaded-board wainscoting placed vertically to chair-rail height, and then horizontally to the ceiling. Like many other contemporary schoolhouses, Pohick originally had pull-down shades on the windows (fig. 1), and the original hardware is still existing. Although there is no evidence remaining as to the location of the original chalkboards, the long, windowless north wall would have been a likely location. If so, the chalkboards would have flanked the stove and chimney which was centered on the wall.

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The existing schoolhouse is larger than the previous building,⁷⁵ and is larger than the other existing one-room schoolhouses in the county.⁷⁶ The *Fairfax Herald* referred to it as "a model one-room schoolhouse."⁷⁷ An interview with former student Clara Hall suggests that the original school was built facing the Hooes Road, but the new school was turned parallel to the road.⁷⁸ Miss Evelyn Clarke⁷⁹ was the first teacher at the new Pohick School. Her father presented the school with a metal flagpole set in a concrete base in 1928,⁸⁰ which still exists.

In January 1929, the school board requested that a deed be drawn up to formally convey the land and the schoolhouse to the Fairfax County School District, because no actual deed existed. They also decided to procure an additional acre of land adjoining the schoolhouse property; however, this was never accomplished.⁸¹ At this same meeting, expenses were approved for additional labor and lumber for the new school,⁸² as well as a stove and stove-pipe.

On April 15, 1929, \$30 was set aside for a library at Pohick,⁸³ presumably to replace the books destroyed when the former school building burned.

Relatively few anecdotes about life at the new Pohick School survive. According to school board minutes from the time, the school year began in mid-September, and ended at the beginning of June. School hours were from 9:00 a.m. until 3:50 p.m. with a 60-minute recess at noon, and 10-minute recesses in the morning and afternoon (except during the months of December, January, and February, when recess was held at the discretion of the teacher). The school was only closed for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Washington's Birthday, and Easter, in addition to two days in September for "Teacher's Institute".⁸⁴

One glimpse, although most certainly an unusual one, is recorded in the meeting minutes of the School Board from February 17, 1932.⁸⁵ The clerk presented a letter from the school's teacher, Miss Elizabeth Gates, suggesting the suspension of twelve year old, Ewing Crawn. Miss Gates stated that Ewing "refused to stay in one day, and when I started to whip him he broke the switch and struck me". The boy was suspended, and the board expressed their belief that it was generally bad policy to suspend such young children; however, in small schools such as Pohick, it would do more harm than good to keep such a child in school.

Lindy Neish, a lifelong resident of Springfield, attended the Pohick School (which by then had come to be known as the Sydenstricker School) in the 1930s. In 1989, he recalled that the boys had to collect firewood for the stove and fresh water from the spring.⁸⁶ A 1933 report in the *Herndon Observer* notes that the community appealed to the school board for a well at the schoolhouse, so the children would not be forced to carry water "through rain and mud, year in and year out".⁸⁷ This well was never constructed.

THE SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL LEAGUE & SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

An October 1930 issue of the *Fairfax Herald* makes the first reference to the Sydenstricker School League, which had "reorganized for the school term"⁸⁸ – suggesting that the League existed prior to this point. Edward Moravitz was elected its president. (Moravitz would later become the first Vice President of the Upper Pohick Community League.)

In 1931, the Lee District Improvement Association met at the Sydenstricker School to discuss matters regarding local roads.⁸⁹ A notice in the *Fairfax Herald* on October 21, 1932 suggests that this organization was more than just a school organization:

"The Sydenstricker Community and School League, which is doing much toward building up that community, and which is taking an active interest in the advancements of the school at Sydenstricker, at its meeting last week elected Arthur Barbrey for its president for the ensuing term, Mrs. Norman Deavers, vice president; Benjamin Morvitch, secretary, and Archie Hall, treasurer."⁹⁰

The 1930s marked a turning point in the school system in Fairfax County and throughout the country. Improvements in local roads and the availability of automobiles made it possible to transport children to schools farther from home. Small schoolhouses were being closed in favor of larger, more cost effective elementary schools. The one-room Legato School (Fairfax, VA) was consolidated in 1929, and the Laurel Grove School (Alexandria, VA) in 1932. The *Fairfax Herald* reported in September 1932 that the Colchester

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and Pohick (Sydenstricker) schools were the only remaining one-room schoolhouses still operating in the county.⁹¹

In September 1934, the *Fairfax Herald* announced "Last One Room School in County, at Sydenstricker, to Close",⁹² The county school board decided to close the school and transport the children to the Burke School, located about five miles away.⁹³ The article noted that the closing marked the end of the old educational system in the county. The era of the one-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County had ended--or so it seemed.

On October 5, 1934, fourteen parents representing approximately twenty-five Sydenstricker children appeared before the Fairfax County School Board to request that the school be re-opened.⁹⁴ A petition signed by fifteen families was presented to the school board.⁹⁵ The petitioners complained about how early their small children had to leave for school, and expressed the opinion that the road from Sydenstricker to the Burke School would not hold up through the winter. It was mentioned that, up until the current year, no student from the area had been able to attend high school elsewhere in the county due to poor road conditions. The school board declined to reopen the school but agreed to revise the bus schedule so the Sydenstricker children would not have to leave home so early in the morning.⁹⁶

In October 1935, the Fairfax County School Board was presented a letter from a Mr. and Mrs. D.E. Otis, requesting an extension of the Sydenstricker school bus route, to make it more convenient for students. The board felt that this was impractical because of extremely steep hills and a curving road.⁹⁷

In October 1936, a list of twenty-six school children living in the Sydenstricker area was submitted to the Fairfax County School Board by J. W. Brookfield, the area's mail carrier. The list had been drawn up by members of the community, hoping that the school board would re-open the school to the first four grades. The school board refused.⁹⁸

In September 1937, a delegation from the Sydenstricker community attended the school board meeting and again requested the reopening of the school. The board agreed to open the school for the first four grades, as long as it could maintain an attendance of at least 20 students.^{99 100}

When the school reopened, the Sydenstricker League re-emerged. The secretary of the League, Albytene Roberts,¹⁰¹ was also the school's teacher from 1937 until 1939. The fact that the Sydenstricker School remained open as long as it did may well have been through the efforts of the Sydenstricker School League.

In February 1938, a new 4-H Club (focused on home-making) was organized by students at the Sydenstricker School.¹⁰²

In June 1939, the school closed for the last time. This date correlates with the construction and opening of the new, larger Burke Elementary School, where the Sydenstricker children were then sent.¹⁰³

Teachers at the Pohick School #8 / Sydenstricker School (1928 – 1939):

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Name of Teacher</u>
1928 – 1929	Evelyn Clarke
1929 – 1930	Evelyn Clarke
1930 – 1931	Blanche Brumback
1931 – 1932	Elizabeth Gates
1932 – 1933	Virginia Showalter
1933 – 1934	Virginia Showalter
1934 – 1935	SCHOOL CLOSED
1935 – 1936	SCHOOL CLOSED
1936 – 1937	SCHOOL CLOSED
1937 – 1938	Albytene Roberts
1938 – 1939	Albytene Roberts

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A month after the school closed, The *Fairfax Herald* reported that the "Sydenstricker League" was meeting at the schoolhouse.¹⁰⁴ Meetings were also announced for September and November 1939.¹⁰⁵ ¹⁰⁶ Nothing further is documented about the Sydenstricker League.

THE 1940s

In 1943, the *Fairfax Herald* reported that the "Old School House" at Sydenstricker had been converted into a center for making surgical dressing to support the war effort:

The bell at the little old school house near Sydenstricker rang this past week for the first time in a number of years. This time it was not calling to children, since it is no longer needed for school purposes, but calling to the adults in the community who have dedicated this quaint building to a need of the hour — a center for Red Cross surgical dressing.

Scrubbed clean, all the cobwebs swept away, curtains in the windows, long tables and straight chairs in place of desks. This was the setting for the dedication on August 31. Most of the volunteer workers live some distance from the school house, and walk back and forth to each meeting.¹⁰⁷

A follow-up story several months later reported that the unit had celebrated the completion of their 10,000th surgical dressing with a luncheon at the home of Mrs. Fred Golde.¹⁰⁸ (A few years later, Mrs. Golde would be a founding member of the Upper Pohick Community League.)

On October 20, 1946, Lorraine Orndorff married Lewis Peverill at the Sydenstricker Chapel.¹⁰⁹ They held their wedding reception at the schoolhouse, which was still being used for community activities.¹¹⁰

THE UPPER POHICK COMMUNITY LEAGUE & THE SCHOOLHOUSE

As one-room schoolhouses were becoming obsolete, local school leagues reorganized to support and foster the growth of their small communities. It was only natural that the empty schoolhouses would find a new purpose in their communities. Home Demonstration and 4-H Clubs were organized to instruct women and youth in home economics and agriculture. Community leagues were formed to support political and social functions, support public health and youth welfare, and act as proponents for community improvement. Vacant schoolhouses became the perfect meeting places for these organizations, and they gave communities a sense of history and identity.¹¹¹

On September 22, 1948, the "Community League" held and recorded its first official meeting at the old Sydenstricker schoolhouse.¹¹² Fifty-seven people gathered to elect temporary officers, organize committees, and set a membership fee (at \$1.00 per year). The purposes of the League were outlined as: 1) socials, 2) roads, 3) schools, 4) county laws, 5) community center, 6) youth welfare, 7) public health & welfare, and 8) fire prevention.

At its second meeting, on October 7, 1948, the organization officially adopted the name Upper Pohick Community League,¹¹³ and elected permanent officers.

At its third meeting, on November 11, 1948, the Upper Pohick Community League officially adopted its geographic boundaries. A recent analysis suggests that the area totaled nearly 8-square miles and included about 12½ miles of the area's main roads, including approximately 4¼ miles of Hooes Road (from Accolink Creek to Silverbrook Road), about 3¼ miles of Rolling Road (from about 3/10th of a mile south of Old Keene Mill Road, south to the high voltage power lines), nearly 3 miles of Pohick Road (from near the modern intersection of the Fairfax County Parkway and Huntsman Boulevard, southeast to the high voltage power lines), about 1.2 miles of Sydenstricker Road (from Hooes Road to near the modern intersection with Huntsman Boulevard), and all 1 mile of Gambrill Road

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(from Hoes Road to Pohick Road).¹¹⁴ While it is not clear how many people resided within the boundaries of the Upper Pohick community at that time, the Upper Pohick Community League had 92 senior members and 32 junior members by the close of 1948.

In 1953, a letter was sent to the community to raise funds to purchase the schoolhouse. The letter included the following remarks:¹¹⁵

For eighteen years, perhaps longer, the School House located on the Hoes Road near the Sydenstricker Methodist Church, has been used as a meeting place for all the civic bodies, and has been a center of the community effort. It has been used by the Church in its Social Services Activities, and frequently for private receptions and meetings by individuals in the community.

About the year 1939 the property ceased to be used for school purposes, and it was not maintained in a useable condition. The League has, gratuitously, provided for necessary repairs, has installed electric lighting and heating facilities, and has caused it to be painted inside and out. In short it has been maintained by this community as a combined Church and Civic Center.

A 1954 letter from the League's attorney, Ira Cochran, to the League's secretary, Ann Karns, also indicated that the Upper Pohick Community League or its predecessors had been using the building continuously since 1939, when the school closed.¹¹⁶

For a number of years, there was significant uncertainty regarding the ownership of the land and schoolhouse. The school board was never able to produce a recorded deed to prove ownership of the property. Descendants of Barney Deavers admitted that he had deeded the land for school purposes, but insisted that it was to be returned to his heirs when the building ceased to be used as a school. Ultimately the title to the property came to be held by Francis Fannon, an Alexandria merchant, who allowed the Upper Pohick Community League to use the building at no charge.¹¹⁷ Eventually, the Fairfax County School Board went to court to establish ownership so that the property could be sold.¹¹⁸

The Upper Pohick Community League officially incorporated as a non-profit organization, and purchased the land and schoolhouse at public auction on July 22, 1954, for the sum of \$550.¹¹⁹

The Upper Pohick Community League's use and eventual purchase of the Sydenstricker School was not unusual in Fairfax County. In 1931, a group of citizens formed the Colvin Run Citizens Association and purchased the Colvin Run Schoolhouse property in Great Falls, Virginia, from the Fairfax County School Board to establish a community center.¹²⁰ In 1938, the Vale Club purchased the Vale Schoolhouse, in Oakton, Virginia, from the Fairfax County School Board, becoming the first home demonstration club in the county to own its own building.¹²¹ During the 1950s, the Old Floris Schoolhouse, located in Herndon, Virginia, was preserved as a youth center to serve the Future Farmers of America, a 4-H Club, and scouting groups, and to provide a site for fairs and community recreation.¹²²

ACTIVITIES & ADVOCACY

From the beginning, the Upper Pohick Community League addressed a number of issues of importance to the community, and to Fairfax County in general.

Roads. The early minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League show that the condition of local roads and bridges was a major concern of the organization. Roads were largely unpaved and treacherous, bridges often washed out, and the community bore the burden of petitioning the county to repair and renovate roads. In some cases citizens even made repairs themselves. The Upper Pohick Community League lobbied the county on numerous occasions to repair or rebuild local roads, and improve access to the community. For example, in December 1948, the League wrote a letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors reporting:

There is no public transportation in, to or from this area. The condition of the roads over which we are compelled to travel leaves much to be desired and imposes upon us a very heavy burden by way of maintaining our vehicles in a safe operating condition and to satisfy the inspection requirements of the State. Within this community are 95

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families composed of a total of 337 persons. It is our considered opinion that we are justly entitled to at least one road, kept in a condition to enable us to reach the rest of the world, quickly, safely, and without unreasonable expenditures for constant repair of our equipment.¹²³

In February 1949, the Upper Pohick Community League hosted a Fairfax County road engineer, and a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to answer questions and discuss the conditions of the roads in the community, and the need for repairs.¹²⁴ In April of the same year, a report of the League's road committee reported that "[t]hings look bad for us to receive the road work as we have asked", because bridges would have to be rebuilt, and the county didn't have enough money.¹²⁵ Later in 1949, the Upper Pohick Community League sent a petition with 250 signatures to Richmond to protest road conditions in Fairfax County, and encouraged local businesses affected by the bad roads to write letters to complain as well.¹²⁶ In April 1950, a League member traveled to Richmond to meet with the State Highway Commission regarding the road situation.¹²⁷ As a sign of how dominant the road issue was for the League, in 1949, Herman Ficke, chairman of the League's Government Committee, refused the nomination for League president, and offered his resignation because the League seemed to have this singular focus. According to League minutes, "he said he was interested in the league as a community league, and not just a road committee".¹²⁸

Ten years later, in 1959, it seems roads still remained an issue. League minutes woefully record: "The report on the roads was the same sad story, namely no money for us. We agreed to keep working on the problem, for what it is worth".¹²⁹ In October 1960, Myron Klein, president of the Upper Pohick Community League, wrote a letter to Fred Burroughs, Resident Engineer of the Virginia Department of Highways, explaining that local road conditions had become intolerable. He pointed out that in 1956 local residents had donated land to straighten and widen a road, but that even four years later the road had yet to be improved or paved.¹³⁰

Telephone Service. Another issue of great concern to the Upper Pohick Community League was telephone service. In 1954, the League formed a Telephone Committee to investigate improvements to service within the community.¹³¹ On November 4, 1954, a representative from the phone company spoke to the League, but did not offer much hope for improvement.¹³² In May 1956, Donald Williams, the General Manager of the Fairfax Business Office of the C&P Telephone Company, spoke to the League regarding service to the area. At that meeting, League members complained of the high price of toll calls into Washington, D.C., and to Browning numbers (where the Burke School was located).¹³³ By September 1957, the telephone company provided an additional four exchanges, albeit at higher rates. Minutes note that: "We will welcome the relief. However, we are not satisfied with what we are receiving."¹³⁴ On June 2, 1960, the district manager of the telephone company spoke to the Upper Pohick Community League. He indicated that the Sydenstricker area was unlikely to see any improvement in telephone service unless the population of the area grew significantly.¹³⁵

Trash. Trash was also a significant problem in the community. In July 1949, the Upper Pohick Community League minutes record that a letter was to be written to county authorities asking that signs be put up on various roads to discourage people from dumping trash.¹³⁶ In 1954, the Upper Pohick Community League discussed the trash dumped on the schoolhouse property, and around the community, and explored what could be done to curb the problem.¹³⁷ In 1955, a motion was made to form a Trash Committee, and a letter was drafted to the County Board of Supervisors regarding the matter.¹³⁸ Later that year, the Upper Pohick Community League suggested that the county have a trash truck at a local intersection for several hours every Saturday to collect trash from the community.¹³⁹ It appears that the League's suggestions did not go completely unheeded. Minutes from October 1955 note that a trash truck was in fact visiting the community for several hours, every other Saturday.¹⁴⁰

Nevertheless, in June 1956, League president David Hall wrote a letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors regarding the trash situation:

It is the sentiment of our membership that this appalling situation is not receiving the emphasis by responsible officials that it justly deserves. Despite continuing protests and an obviously worsened situation, few concrete steps are being undertaken to alleviate this desecration of our community, with resultant depreciation of property value, not to mention an affront to aesthetics.¹⁴¹

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In 1957, the Upper Pohick Community League organized a "Litter Buggy" which traveled local roads and picked up trash. Red and white signs printed with "Just cleaned up by the Upper Pohick Community League – DON'T BE A LITTERBUG HERE!" were posted along local roads.¹⁴² A photo and story about the Upper Pohick Community League's clean-up campaign was featured in the *Washington Daily News* in 1958.¹⁴³

In January 1958, the League announced that they had arranged with the Fairfax County Sanitation Department to have a trash and garbage pick-up in the schoolhouse parking lot every other Saturday morning between 8:00 a.m. and noon.¹⁴⁴ In 1959, an interesting letter was written by Edward Gibbons on behalf of the Upper Pohick Community League to the Director of Public Relations at U.S. Steel, regarding the recent introduction of "throw-away cans" and the impact they were having on the litter situation throughout the community.¹⁴⁵

Local Development. The minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League reveal a keen interest in monitoring and regulating local development. For example, on June 16, 1949, the League hosted an engineer for the proposed "City of Springfield", and two builders who presented plans for local development.¹⁴⁶ A year later, minutes note that ½ acre lots were being offered for development nearby. Regarding this matter, the Upper Pohick Community League presented the following resolution to the zoning commission:

Whereas, the Upper Pohick Community League is interested in the development of the surrounding community to the best interests of all present and future residents of the community, and

Whereas, members of the League have been informed that plans are under way for subdivisions of areas in the community into small residential tracts without any restrictions or other assurances of proper community development,

Therefore, be it resolved that this League favors such legal and other steps as may be possible to assure the development of residential property in the area in such manner as will promote the present and future interest of the community.¹⁴⁷

In the mid-1950s, a proposal for a sewage treatment plant on Pohick Creek at Old Keene Mill Road (upstream from the community) attracted the League's concern. On December 10, 1953, Fred McLaughlin of the Mill Valley Sanitary Corporation spoke to the Upper Pohick Community League about plans for the plant. A representative from the Office of the Sanitary Engineers for Fairfax County also spoke that evening about the county's proposed sewage program to improve health and sanitary conditions throughout the county.¹⁴⁸ In response, the Upper Pohick Community League organized a committee to investigate the issue further, and arranged to contact local representatives who could help them fight the proposed sewage plant.¹⁴⁹ The League also sent a delegation to Richmond to appear before the State Water Control Board to protest the McLaughlin plant.¹⁵⁰ In August 1954, Virginia State Senator John Webb and Mason District Representative Anne Wilkens spoke to the League regarding stream pollution and the laws regulating treatment plants.¹⁵¹ The Upper Pohick Community League also cooperated with other local civic organizations to accomplish their mission. For example, in June and September 1955, the League, together with the Mason Neck and Belmont citizens associations, sent letters to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors opposing the county entering into any contracts for sewage treatment plants, and suggesting minimum provisions for agreements regulating such plants.¹⁵² In 1956, the Upper Pohick Community League resolved "to oppose any new construction or expansion of any treatment plant, the effluent of which will be emptied in the Accotink or Pohick Creeks."¹⁵³ Ultimately no sewage treatment plant was ever built on Pohick Creek at Old Keene Mill Road.

To impose some order on the development of Fairfax County, in 1952 the Planning Commission organized a staff and placed it under the direction of F. Dodd McHugh, a consultant from New York City. Two years later, McHugh presented a proposed "Master Plan" for Fairfax County, which included a sewage system and three-to-five-acre zoning for most of the undeveloped western two-thirds of the county,¹⁵⁴ which included the Upper Pohick area.

In May 1955, Mason District Representative Anne Wilkens and her challenger, Mr. Wills, outlined their election platforms for the Upper Pohick Community League, and discussed zoning, land use, and the Master Plan for Fairfax County.¹⁵⁵ Wilkens spoke again to the Upper Pohick Community League on several other occasions between 1954 and 1958 regarding county growth. In February 1956, the League issued a press release regarding the McHugh Master Plan, and recommended several land use provisions for any master plan

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adopted by the county, as well as preservation of rights for future highway development. The League went on record as supporting a well designed master plan for the county.¹⁵⁶ Later the same month, Martin Webb, Chairman of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, thanked the League for their suggested changes to the Master Plan, and indicated that their proposal was a distinct improvement over those recommended by Mr. McHugh. He praised the League, and said that they had "rendered a splendid service to Fairfax County".¹⁵⁷

In 1956, League president David Hall spoke before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at a public hearing regarding the McHugh Master Plan. Following the hearing, President Hall's statement was issued as a press release:

...I do not sit here tonight and presume to speak for every resident of the western two-thirds of the county. I do, however, speak for 90 percent of the members of the Upper Pohick Community League and for approximately 75 percent of the people in the general area served by the League. There is no apathy here. We are directly and personally concerned. Our problems are not the possibility of increased taxes in the year 1960 or 1970 or 1980. We do not fear annexation, even by an incorporated Springfield, in the year 2000. Our problems are lack of adequate roads today, lack of public utilities today, expensive telephone service today because of low population density. Our concern is that if the McHugh Master Plan is adopted by this Board, we will get no relief from any of these problems in the foreseeable future. It seems almost unnecessary to point out that, in addition, we will suffer a certain monetary loss through devaluation of our real property...¹⁵⁸

Ultimately, both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors rejected McHugh's plan, supporting landowners who felt that it would devalue their land.¹⁵⁹ In 1959, McHugh submitted a modified land-use plan, changing some of the proposed 3-5 acre minimum lot zoning in the western part of the county to a 2-acre minimum lot. Landowners challenged this revised plan in court and won the case. The decision resulted in the zoning of much of the county to a 1-acre minimum lot, which would allow for development of much higher population density.¹⁶⁰

In 1959, the Upper Pohick Community League joined the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations, describing themselves as "60-75 active, vociferous members".¹⁶¹

Proposed Burke Airport. In the late 1940s, the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administration determined that the existing Washington airport, now Reagan Washington National Airport, was inadequate, and began searching for an alternative site. For a time, the leading option was a location in nearby Burke, Virginia, where it planned to condemn over 4,500 acres of land.¹⁶² The Upper Pohick Community League minutes indicate that the League opposed the Burke Airport plan, and it held special meetings and formed a committee to address the issue. In August 1955, League minutes report that two members of the League had attended a meeting held by the Burke Airport Relocation Committee. They reported that the airport would be a bad thing for the Pohick community, because of the noise that the jet planes would make on takeoff and landing. League members were invited to sign a petition against the airport, which was later sent to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.¹⁶³ In November 1955, the Upper Pohick Community League voted to go on record as being opposed to the Burke Airport, and sent a letter stating their views to Secretary of Commerce Charles Sinclair Weeks, Senators Harry Byrd and Absalom Willis Robertson, and Congressman Joel T. Broyhill.¹⁶⁴ Ultimately, in 1957, a different site was selected, which is now Dulles International Airport, and the government was forced to dispose of the land reserved for the Burke Airport. Almost 900 acres was passed to the Fairfax County Parks Authority, where Burke Lake and Burke Lake Park are now located. The remaining land was auctioned off for residential developments.¹⁶⁵

Schools. Occasionally, school matters were also discussed. In 1948, a report by the Upper Pohick Community League's Schools Committee suggested that members with school-age children should join the local PTA to deal with issues, such as overcrowded buses.¹⁶⁶ At a meeting in 1949, a representative from the Fairfax County School Emergency Committee spoke of the serious overcrowding of county schools, and the need for improvements to school buildings.¹⁶⁷ In February 1952, the Upper Pohick Community League agreed to send a petition to the Superintendent of Schools protesting the juvenile bus drivers who transported children to schools throughout the county.¹⁶⁸ In 1951, the League sponsored a PTA dance at the schoolhouse to raise money for a

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new projector at the Burke Elementary School,¹⁶⁹ and in 1952 the League held a book sale, and sponsored another dance to benefit the construction of a new cafeteria.¹⁷⁰

Social Activities. The Upper Pohick Community League also organized a variety of social activities. Holiday parties, square dances, picnics and "box dinners" were frequent events at the schoolhouse, often in collaboration with the Sydenstricker Church. During the 1950s and 1960s the League regularly submitted press releases to local newspapers regarding these activities, and it distributed monthly newsletters to the community.

In the 1950s, the Upper Pohick Community League began to hold popular fall "Turkey Shoots" where, for a small fee, the community could shoot at targets from the schoolhouse windows.¹⁷¹ According to a League press release in October 1956, "[i]n a very successful shoot, several turkeys and hams, and side prizes of bacon, were awarded winners from among the sixty-odd ladies and gentlemen attending."¹⁷² The press release also indicated that the proceeds from the Turkey Shoot would be utilized to improve the League's property. This seems to have been an incredibly profitable endeavor for the League, but Fairfax County gun laws ended the Turkey Shoots in the late 1960s.

In 1950, League minutes reported Halloween night damage and injuries in nearby communities, but proudly reported that the Pohick area did not have any vandalism. This was believed to be due in part to the annual Halloween party thrown by the League for the community's youth.¹⁷³

Other Community Involvement. The Upper Pohick Community League involved itself in a number of other local matters, such as the location of the Springfield post office (1949), the site for the Fairfax Hospital (1956), the name of the new Springfield high school (1958), and location of a proposed branch of the University of Virginia (1958).

In January 1956, Springfield's only library service was an outdated bookmobile that served the rural community.¹⁷⁴ Members of the League joined the "Friends of the Library" committee, and at a meeting on December 12, 1956, it was reported that the Library Fund had received a larger percentage of donations from the Upper Pohick Community League than from any other community.¹⁷⁵

In 1957, the League drove its "Litter Buggy" in the annual Springfield Fourth of July parade,¹⁷⁶ and in 1958 it contributed money towards fireworks¹⁷⁷ and sponsored a float in the parade.¹⁷⁸ Indeed *The Springfield Independent* remarked that "Springfield's Greatest Ever" Fourth of July celebration was a joint effort of the Springfield-Franconia Chamber of Commerce, the Upper Pohick Community League, and the Springfield Estates Civic Association, as well as other area businessmen.¹⁷⁹

In 1950, the Upper Pohick Community League, spurred by the activities of other communities, started a short-lived Boy Scout troop. The troop, comprised of 19 scouts, was officially chartered with a celebration at the schoolhouse.¹⁸⁰ In April 1953, League minutes record that the charter would not be renewed.¹⁸¹ The League investigated other youth organizations, such as 4-H, but ultimately reallocated the funds left over from the Boy Scout troop into a "Youth Welfare Fund".¹⁸²

Upper Pohick Community League members also participated in the Mother's March on Polio, a Heart Fund drive, and a Cancer drive to raise money for these worthy causes. The March 1955 Upper Pohick Community League monthly news bulletin proudly reported that the community had the highest proportion of blood donors in all of Springfield.¹⁸³

Special Guests. The Upper Pohick Community League often invited speakers to address the members of the community regarding a variety of topics. For example, in 1950, Major Carl McIntosh, the Fairfax County Chief of Police, was a guest at the Upper Pohick Community League's monthly meeting, accompanied by Chief Detective, Tad Wells.¹⁸⁴ In 1951, a doctor was invited to speak and answer questions about polio.¹⁸⁵ Other special guests included a representative from the Fairfax County Fact Finding Committee in 1955,¹⁸⁶ and Fairfax County blood donor recruiters in 1956.¹⁸⁷ In February 1958, the Upper Pohick Community League hosted a presentation about the Moon Watch Station, and displayed one of the telescopes used to observe Sputnik.¹⁸⁸

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THE 1960s TO THE PRESENT

Few meeting minutes or correspondence survives from 1961 to 1969. The minutes from 1970 show that the Upper Pohick Community League remained very active in the community. By the early 1970s, the area had become significantly developed, and the focus of the League had shifted to zoning and watershed issues, public transportation, road development, and parkland preservation. The 1980s and 1990s saw a dramatic decline in League membership. A lighting strike in the 1980s damaged the electrical circuitry in the schoolhouse, and the building was without light or heat until repairs were made in 2006.

The current activities of the Upper Pohick Community League include a few social events, meetings, and fund-raising events to finance the maintenance of the schoolhouse.

ARCHITECTURE

The Sydenstricker School, built in 1928 as a one-room school with a vestibule/cloakroom added prior to 1939, has maintained its form and integrity throughout the decades and is the best preserved one-room school remaining in Fairfax County. Constructed without the assistance of a professional architect, which was commonplace during the era, the building reflects vernacular adaptations of contemporary architectural fashion. The simple architectural traits of the Sydenstricker School are characteristic of other Fairfax County one-room schoolhouses as well as those built across Virginia and the nation. Built of frame construction and clad in weatherboard, the building rests on a poured concrete foundation, and sits on its original lot.

In 1928, prior to the consolidation of Fairfax County schools, 29 one-room schools were still in use in Fairfax County.¹⁸⁹ According to records from Fairfax County, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and information from *Legato School: A Centennial Souvenir*, the Sydenstricker School is one of 12 known one-room schoolhouses still extant in Fairfax County. However, most of these buildings have been turned into residences and now have additions and alterations. The Legato and Laurel Grove Schools have both been restored to their original form, and now serve as museums. The Laurel Grove School is still located on its original site and the Legato School was moved to a new location.

CONCLUSION

Owned and maintained by the Upper Pohick Community League since 1954, the Sydenstricker School remains the home of Springfield, Virginia's, oldest community league, and one of the oldest civic associations in the county. The history of the schoolhouse and of the Upper Pohick Community League are interwoven with the development of Fairfax County, which today is the most diverse and populous jurisdiction in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

As a cultural resource, the one-room Sydenstricker School has public significance, structural integrity, and historic authenticity. The Sydenstricker School is a visible reminder of Fairfax County's past, and a testament to the generations of people who have cared for the building since its construction. As a community landmark it is a reminder of life in a small rural community in the early 20th century, and is worthy of preservation and recognition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sydenstricker School, DHR #029-0154

Name of Property

Fairfax County, Virginia

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1



Figure 1: Minerva Young Hawkins (1917 – 2011) at the Sydenstricker School , circa 1929 - 1930

West facade on the left, south facade on the right (camera facing northeast).

Video interview with Clara Hall regarding Sydenstricker Methodist Church history (1984), Archives of Sydenstricker Methodist Church (screen-shot of video)

Note the location of the window (on the far left) which was later replaced with a door (which is now the current entrance into the building). This is the earliest known photograph of the Sydenstricker School, and the only known photo of the building while it operated as a school.

VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_Figure1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sydenstricker School, DHR #029-0154
Name of Property
Fairfax County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2



Figure 2: Sydenstricker School / Upper Pohick Community League Hall, 1957

East facade on the left, North facade on the right (camera facing southwest).

Archives of the Upper Pohick Community League

VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_Figure2

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sydenstricker School, DHR #029-0154

Name of Property

Fairfax County, Virginia

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3



Figure 3: Upper Pohick Community League "Litter Buggy", 1957
East facade on the left, North facade on the right (camera facing southwest).
Archives of the Upper Pohick Community League

VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_Figure3

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

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Fairfax County, Virginia

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Sydenstricker School

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Fairfax County, Virginia

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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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources,
Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File Number 029-0154

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.91

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 305417 4797012
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: n/a
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 38.755472 Longitude: 77.239315

Verbal Boundary Description

The Sydenstricker School occupies tax parcel number 0893 01 0056. The lot is as follows: "Beginning at the northwest corner of Sydenstricker Church lot in the middle of the Hooe's Road, thence with the line of church lot S. 4° 15' E. (passing through a pipe at 15.27 ft.) 229 ft. to a white oak tree, a corner to the church lot and the Caleb Hall Estate, thence running through the land of Barney Deaver's heirs S. 85° 45' W. 205.9 ft. to a stone, thence N. 5° 37' W. (passing through a pipe at 174 ft.) 189.2 ft. to the middle of the Hooe's Road; thence with the middle of the road N. 75° 01' E. 214.15 ft. to the beginning, containing one acre." (Deed between the County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia and the Upper Pohick Community League, July 23, 1954. Deed Book 1199, page 422).

The land on which the Sydenstricker School sits is bordered by Hooes Road to the north, and the Sydenstricker Chapel lot to the east. The southern and western borders are adjacent to residential properties. Woods on the southern and western sides of the parcel visually divides the lot from neighboring homes.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the land owned by the Upper Pohick Community League, which is historically associated with the Sydenstricker School / Pohick School #8.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Friedrich Becker, President
organization Upper Pohick Community League date February 29, 2012
street & number 7513 Candytuft Court telephone 703-455-2935
city or town Springfield state VA zip code 22153
e-mail lisamfb@gmail.com

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

PHOTOGRAPHS

Name of Property: Sydenstricker School
City or Vicinity: Springfield
County: Fairfax County
State: VA
Name of Photographer: Lisa Friedrich Becker
Date of Photographs: February 2012

Photo 1 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0001)
North façade (left) and west façade (right), camera facing southeast.

Photo 2 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0002)
West façade (left) and south façade (right), camera facing northeast.

Photo 3 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0003)
East façade, camera facing west.

Photo 4 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0004)
Original school bell, camera facing west.

Photo 5 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0005)
North interior elevation of entry vestibule, camera facing northwest.

Photo 6 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0006)
East interior elevation of entry vestibule, camera facing east.

Photo 7 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0007)
South interior elevation (left), west interior elevation (center), north interior elevation (right), camera facing west.

Photo 8 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0008)
South interior elevation (left), west interior elevation (right), camera facing southwest.

Photo 9 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0009)
North interior elevation (left), east interior elevation (center), south interior elevation (right), camera facing east.

Photo 10 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0010)
Privy pit foundation, camera facing northeast.

PROPERTY OWNER

name The Upper Pohick Community League c/o Lisa Becker, President
street & number 7513 Candytuft Court telephone 703-455-2935
city or town Springfield state VA zip code 22153

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

ENDNOTES

- ¹ County of Fairfax Historic Landmarks Survey, Upper Pohick Community Hall, Property Identification Number 89-3-001-56, November 18, 1971.
- ² Among them, according to hand-written notes in the archives of the Sydenstricker Methodist Church archives, George Hall (1907-1910) died of a snake bite and was the first burial in the cemetery.
- ³ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, April 21, 1955.
- ⁴ The concrete foundation measures 44" x 58" overall, and is 5-1/2" thick and approximately 11" deep. There is no evidence of the original privy structure.
- ⁵ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 7, 1954.
- ⁶ _____, December 3, 1959.
- ⁷ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, History & Records Committee, Springfield, Virginia, page 35.
- ⁸ County of Fairfax Historic Landmarks Survey, Upper Pohick Community Hall, Property Identification Number 89-3-001-56, November 18, 1971.
- ⁹ The window openings measure 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁰ Fairfax County Park Authority Memorandum, January 30, 1997.
- ¹¹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, January 5, 1929.
- ¹² *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Sears & Roebuck catalog, 1926, page 16.
- ¹⁵ The window openings measure 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁶ The window measures 23"W x 36"H.
- ¹⁷ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, April 5, 1956.
- ¹⁸ The remaining window measures 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁹ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 3, 1958.
- ²⁰ The sign was altered in the 1990s from the original sign which read "Upper Pohick Community Hall". The original sign (painted black with white text) was made in 1956 and is shown in photos taken in 1957 leaning against oil tanks on the north side of the building (see fig. 2 and 3).
- ²¹ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 5, 1951.
- ²² Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 5, 1951.
- ²³ Local residents, Lorraine and Lewis Peverill were married at the Sydenstricker Chapel, and held their wedding reception at the schoolhouse in 1946. Mrs. Peverill recalled that the head table, where she sat with her groom, was located on the west side of the building, presumably where the teacher's desk was once located. A very large clock hung on that wall between the two windows. (See Becker 2009.)
- ²⁴ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 4, 1958.
- ²⁵ _____, April 20, 1950.
- ²⁶ _____, April 20, 1950.
- ²⁷ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 11.
- ²⁸ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, September 6, 1956.
- ²⁹ Letter from Sydenstricker United Methodist Church Pastor H.S. Amidon to the Upper Pohick Community League, November 6, 1957.
- ³⁰ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 2, 1957.
- ³¹ Virginia General Assembly, *Virginia Constitution, 1870*.
- ³² Netherton, et al. 1992, page 236.
- ³³ Stearnes 1913, page 76.
- ³⁴ Claxton 1918.
- ³⁵ Bushnell 1920.
- ³⁶ Curtis 1913.
- ³⁷ Deed transferring one acre of land to the School Trustees of District #3 in Lee Township, Fairfax County, VA "for the benefit of a public school for white children..." (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book R-4, page 51, January 29, 1874.)
- ³⁸ This general area was known as "Pohick". The nearby intersection of Hooes and Rolling Roads was, until relatively recently, also known as Barker's Corners, after John Barker who owned land here.
- ³⁹ Hopkins 1878, page 72.
- ⁴⁰ A 1922 deed documenting the schools in the Lee District that were transferred to the Fairfax County School Board includes the "Old Barker School", which was apparently still in existence, although no longer in operation. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.)
- ⁴¹ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, December 10, 1888.

Sydenstricker School

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⁴² _____, July 1, 1897.

⁴³ According to school board minutes, Barney Deavers (1843-1910) frequently provided wood for the new school, for which he was reimbursed. A Civil War veteran, he is buried in the Sydenstricker Cemetery, directly adjacent to the Sydenstricker School. According to the history of the Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, he was the first member of the church to be buried in the cemetery. His obituary (*Fairfax Herald*, November 10, 1910) notes "Pohick has lost one of its best citizens, and his family a good husband and father."

⁴⁴ The original deed to this land has long been lost. A 1922 deed, documenting the transfer of all the schools from the Lee District School Board to the newly formed Fairfax County School Board, conspicuously omits this property. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.) The deed was apparently already missing at this point. See also *The County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia, A Body Corporate, versus Francis H. Fannon et al.* (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Chancery #9180, April 3, 1954.)

⁴⁵ Sermon Journal of Reverend Evergard Meade. (Available from the archives of Pohick Church, Lorton, Virginia.)

⁴⁶ Interestingly, in 1902, Barney Deavers also deeded a one acre parcel of land to the Pohick Church for the purpose of establishing a chapel and burial ground for the community. (Deed of Sale from Barney Deavers to the Trustees of the Pohick Episcopal Church, January 28, 1902, Fairfax Deed Book J-6, page 31.) This triangular parcel was bounded by Hooes Road and what is now called Sydenstricker Road, on the north side of Hooes Road, nearly across the street from the Sydenstricker School. In October 3, 1903, the *Alexandria Gazette* announced the opening a chapel that could seat about 100 people. In 1907, the Pohick Chapel is described as "a small Chapel, situated about four and a half miles northwest of Pohick Church, to which it belongs. It was built in 1903 through the efforts of the Rev. Everard Meade, and consecrated by Bishop R. A. Gibson on October 12th of that year." (Slaughter 1907, page 157.) According to Meade's sermon journal, services were held at the chapel on Sunday evenings. In October 1909, Meade abruptly stopped calling on the chapel, perhaps not coincidentally at the time Reverend Christopher Sydenstricker was organizing a Methodist congregation in the community. In 1916, the Pohick Chapel property was sold to George W. Hall. See Deed of Sale from The Trustees of Pohick Church to George W. Hall. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book V-8, page 80, September 27, 1916.)

⁴⁷ *Fairfax Herald*, December 8, 1905.

⁴⁸ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, September 18, 1909.

⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that several of the trustees of the Pohick Chapel would become trustees of the Sydenstricker Chapel. Probably not coincidentally, Reverend Meade stopped calling on Pohick Chapel in October 1909. Interestingly, many of the original furnishings of the Pohick Chapel were obtained by the Sydenstricker Chapel, including the wooden pews, which were later donated to the Upper Pohick Community League, and still reside at the Sydenstricker School. (*Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 11.)

⁵⁰ In April 1909, Reverend Sydenstricker, approached John Quincy Hall, a local storekeeper, about using the dance pavilion in his picnic grove for evangelistic camp meetings. Ada Taylor, a founding member of the church, later recounted: "On more than one occasion he stood up there and told you if you didn't behave yourself you were going to hell." (See *Transcript of interview with Grace and Ada Taylor*, July 15, 1976.) Sydenstricker was an uncle of the Nobel Prize winning novelist, Pearl Sydenstricker Buck.

⁵¹ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 7.

⁵² In 1910, Caleb Hall donated land for the chapel. The church boundaries were described as beginning "at a stone on the south side of the County Road near the Pohick School House and running thence South... to a white oak tree near the corner of the school house lot..." See Deed of Sale from Caleb Hall to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book F-7, page 434, March 5, 1910.)

⁵³ History of Vale United Methodist Church. (Available from <http://www.valechurch.org/history.html>.)

⁵⁴ Like the Sydenstricker Chapel, the first minister of Silverbrook Chapel was Reverend Christopher Sydenstricker. See History of Silverbrook United Methodist Church. (Available from <http://www.silverbrook-umc.org/Files/SUMC%20History.pdf>.)

⁵⁵ The Silverbrook School no longer exists. See History of Silverbrook United Methodist Church. (Available from <http://www.silverbrook-umc.org/Files/SUMC%20History.pdf>.)

⁵⁶ *Address 1947*, page 29.

⁵⁷ *Address 1947*, page 27.

⁵⁸ *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.

⁵⁹ By now, the community was increasingly referred to as Sydenstricker, and the school was at times referred to as the school at Sydenstricker, or the Sydenstricker school – not to be confused with the structure that is the subject of this application.

⁶⁰ *Herndon Observer*, February 26, 1925.

⁶¹ *Fairfax Herald*, March 13, 1925.

⁶² "The Pohick school house at Gambrill, Fairfax County, was seriously damaged by fire on Wednesday evening. Neighbors who discovered the fire broke into the building and after considerable difficulty succeeded in extinguishing the flames, but not before much damage had resulted. The fire was caused by an overheated stove." *Alexandria Gazette*, December 3, 1910.

⁶³ *The Herndon Observer*, July 19, 1928.

⁶⁴ *Fairfax Herald*, July 20, 1928.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

- ⁶⁵ Mrs. Norman Deavers was the wife of Barney Deaver's oldest son, Norman Deavers (1876-1956).
- ⁶⁶ *The Herndon Observer*, August 2, 1928.
- ⁶⁷ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, August 6, 1928.
- ⁶⁸ Wooster's sister-in-law, Mary Lou Kines, was a teacher at the (destroyed) Pohick School in 1925, and his wife was a teacher at the Ashford School in nearby Burke, Virginia. Wooster's brother, Luther Francis "Frank" Wooster (1858-1927) was listed as a Lee District Public School Trustee in the deed documenting the transfer of schools from the Lee District to the newly formed Fairfax County School Board in 1922. See Deed documenting the transfer of all the schools in the Lee District School to the newly formed Fairfax County School Board. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.)
- ⁶⁹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, August 21, 1928.
- ⁷⁰ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, October 18, 1889.
- ⁷¹ Wooster's obituary (*Fairfax Herald*, November 9, 1945) says that he was "engaged in farming", making no mention of his building skills. He had a home on Braddock Road in Burke, Virginia.
- ⁷² Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 5, 1928.
- ⁷³ _____, November 5, 1928.
- ⁷⁴ *Fairfax Herald*, November 23, 1928.
- ⁷⁵ *Fairfax Herald*, October 19, 1928.
- ⁷⁶ At about 855 square feet overall (not including the 77 square foot cloakroom), the Sydenstricker School is larger than both the Laurel Grove School (approximately 720 square feet) and the Legato School (650 square feet). (Measurements verified by Lisa Friedrich Becker, January 15, 2012.)
- ⁷⁷ *Fairfax Herald*, October 19, 1928.
- ⁷⁸ *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ⁷⁹ Evelyn Clarke Bright (1907-1998).
- ⁸⁰ *Fairfax Herald*, November 23, 1928.
- ⁸¹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School, January 5, 1929.
- ⁸² These expenses could be related to the construction of the cloakroom.
- ⁸³ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, April 5, 1929.
- ⁸⁴ _____, September 6, 1927.
- ⁸⁵ _____, February 16, 1932.
- ⁸⁶ *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ⁸⁷ *Herndon Observer*, March 23, 1933.
- ⁸⁸ *Fairfax Herald*, October 17, 1930.
- ⁸⁹ _____, November 27, 1931.
- ⁹⁰ _____, October 21, 1932.
- ⁹¹ _____, September 9, 1932.
- ⁹² _____, September 14, 1934.
- ⁹³ The original two-room Burke School was built in 1911, and located at 9324 Old Burke Lake Road. The school closed in 1939 when a new, larger Burke Elementary School was constructed. The property was sold, and is today a private residence called "Whiteoaks".
- ⁹⁴ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 5, 1934.
- ⁹⁵ *Fairfax Herald*, October 12, 1934.
- ⁹⁶ _____, November 9, 1934.
- ⁹⁷ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 7, 1935.
- ⁹⁸ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 5, 1936.
- ⁹⁹ *Fairfax Herald*, September 10, 1937.
- ¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that when the school re-opened in 1937 the Fairfax County School Board refers to it for the first time as the Sydenstricker School, instead of the Pohick School.
- ¹⁰¹ *Fairfax Herald*, September 24, 1937.
- ¹⁰² _____, February 4, 1938.
- ¹⁰³ This second Burke Elementary School, still located at 9645 Burke Lake Road, opened in 1939 and was dedicated in 1940. It replaced a 1912 school building, now a private residence in Burke, Virginia named Whiteoaks. The school is still used today as a middle school special education facility. See Burke Elementary School Dedication Program, 6/7/1940. (Available from www.braddockheritage.org.)
- ¹⁰⁴ *Fairfax Herald*, June 2, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁵ _____, September 1, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁶ _____, November 3, 1939.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

- 107 _____, September 10, 1943.
- 108 _____, May 12, 1944.
- 109 Fairfax County, Virginia Marriage Index, 1853 – 1957, page 227.
- 110 See Becker 2009.
- 111 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Vale Schoolhouse; DHR File Number: 029-5615 (Available from http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Fairfax/029-5615_Vale_School-Community_House_2011_NRNomination_FINAL.pdf.)
- 112 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, September 22, 1948.
- 113 It is unclear why the organization decided on the name Upper Pohick Community League. Other names that were seriously considered were Pohick Community League and North Pohick Community League. Perhaps by calling themselves "Upper Pohick" they were appealing to a broader community than just the small Sydenstricker area.
- 114 For more information on the Upper Pohick Community League boundaries and their relationship to modern roads and landmarks, see Becker 2008.
- 115 Letter to the community from the Upper Pohick Community League, October 13, 1953.
- 116 Letter from Attorney Ira Cochran to Ann Karns, Upper Pohick Community League Secretary, June 30, 1954.
- 117 See Letter to the community from the Upper Pohick Community League, October 13, 1953, and The County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia, A Body Corporate, versus Francis H. Fannon et. al. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Chancery #9180, April 3, 1954.)
- 118 The County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia, A Body Corporate, versus Francis H. Fannon et. al. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Chancery #9180, April 3, 1954.)
- 119 Deed of sale between the County School Board of Fairfax County and the Upper Pohick Community League (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 1199, Page 422, July 23, 1954.)
- 120 History of Colvin Run Community Hall. (Available from www.colvinrun.org.)
- 121 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Vale Schoolhouse; DHR File Number: 029-5615 (Available from http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Fairfax/029-5615_Vale_School-Community_House_2011_NRNomination_FINAL.pdf.)
- 122 History of the Old Floris Schoolhouse. (Available from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp/school.htm.)
- 123 Letter from the Upper Pohick Community League to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, December 6, 1948.
- 124 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, February 17, 1949.
- 125 _____, April 21, 1949.
- 126 _____, August 18, 1949.
- 127 _____, April 20, 1950.
- 128 _____, September 15, 1948.
- 129 _____, February 5, 1959.
- 130 Letter from Myron W. Klein, president of the Upper Pohick Community League, to Fred L. Burroughs, Resident Engineer, Virginia Department of Highways, October 20, 1960.
- 131 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 7, 1954.
- 132 _____, November 4, 1954.
- 133 _____, May 3, 1956.
- 134 _____, September 1, 1957.
- 135 _____, June 2, 1960.
- 136 _____, July 1949.
- 137 _____, October 7, 1954.
- 138 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, January 5, 1955.
- 139 _____, June 5, 1955.
- 140 _____, October 6, 1955.
- 141 Letter from David Hall, Upper Pohick Community League President, to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, June 12, 1956.
- 142 Upper Pohick Community League Bulletin, June 1957.
- 143 *Washington Daily News*, February 3, 1958.
- 144 Upper Pohick Community League Bulletin, January 1958.
- 145 Letter from Edward Gibbons to John Marshall, Director of Public Relations at US Steel, October 16, 1959.
- 146 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, June 16, 1949.
- 147 _____, June 15, 1950.
- 148 _____, December 10, 1953.
- 149 _____, February 18, 1954.
- 150 _____, July 1, 1954.

Sydenstricker School

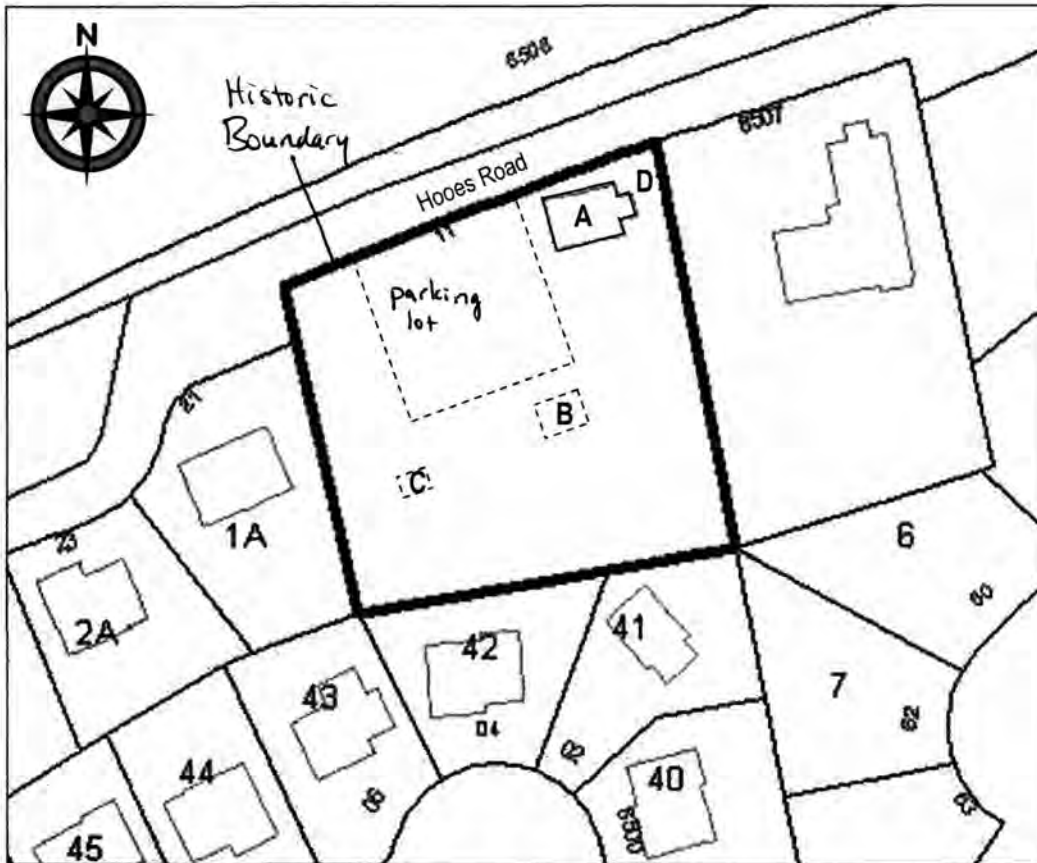
Fairfax County, Virginia

- 151 _____, August 5, 1954.
- 152 Letters from The Mason Neck Citizens Association, The Belmont Citizens Association and the Upper Pohick Community League to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, June 28, 1955 and September 19, 1955.
- 153 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, January 5, 1956
- 154 Harrigan and von Hoffman 2004.
- 155 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, May 6, 1955.
- 156 Press release of the Upper Pohick Community League, February 7, 1956.
- 157 Letter from Martin T. Webb to Loren L. Thompson, Upper Pohick Community League President, February 22, 1956.
- 158 Press release of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 5, 1956.
- 159 Harrigan and von Hoffman 2004.
- 160 _____.
- 161 Letter from Forbes Bryce, President of the Upper Pohick Community League, to the President of the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations, March 25, 1959.
- 162 Map: Proposed Burke International Airport. (Available from www.braddockheritage.org/items/show/78.)
- 163 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, August 4, 1955.
- 164 _____, November 3, 1955.
- 165 Burke International Airport Proposal, Land Auction Announcement. (Available from www.braddockheritage.org/items/show/80.)
- 166 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 9, 1948.
- 167 _____, May 19, 1949.
- 168 _____, February 21, 1952.
- 169 _____, January 18, 1951.
- 170 _____, October 18, 1952.
- 171 Shotgun shells are sometimes still found in the lawn outside the schoolhouse.
- 172 Press release by the Upper Pohick Community League, October 8, 1956.
- 173 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 16, 1950.
- 174 The History of the Friends of the Richard Byrd Library. (Available from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/friends/rb/.)
- 175 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 6, 1956.
- 176 *Washington Daily News*, February 3, 1958.
- 177 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, May 30, 1958.
- 178 _____, July 3, 1958.
- 179 *The Springfield Independent*, July 3, 1958.
- 180 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, June 15, 1950.
- 181 _____, April 23, 1953.
- 182 _____, May 19, 1958.
- 183 Upper Pohick Community League Bulletin, March 1955.
- 184 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 20, 1950.
- 185 _____, August 1951.
- 186 _____, November 3, 1955.
- 187 _____, August 2, 1956.
- 188 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, February 6, 1958.
- 189 Wrenn et al. 1976, p. 30.

The Sydenstricker School / Pohick School #8

8511 Hoes Road
Springfield, VA 22153

DHR#: 029-0154 USCG Quad: Annandale



KEY

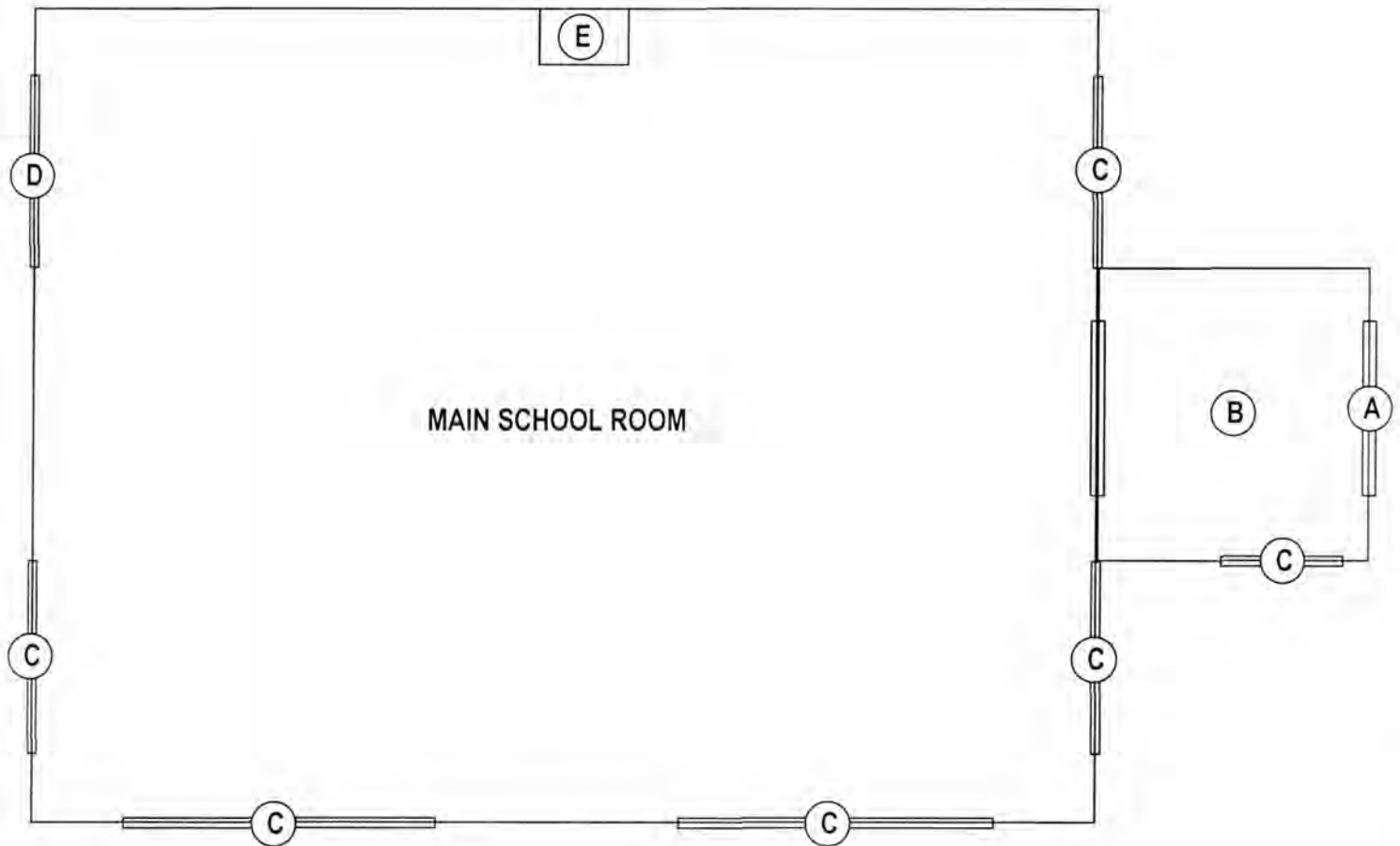
- A—Sydenstricker Schoolhouse (C)
- B—Shed (C)
- C—Location of Privy Pit Foundation (C)
- D—Flag Pole (C)

- NOT DRAWN TO SCALE -

The Sydenstricker School / Pohick School #8

8511 Hooes Road
Springfield, VA 22153

DHR#: 029-0154 USCG Quad: Annandale



FLOORPLAN KEY

- A—Original Entrance
- B—Entry Vestibule / Cloakroom
- C—Windows
- D—Current Entrance
- E—Location of Original Stovepipe / Chimney

- NOT DRAWN TO SCALE -

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA
VDHR FILE NO. 029-0154



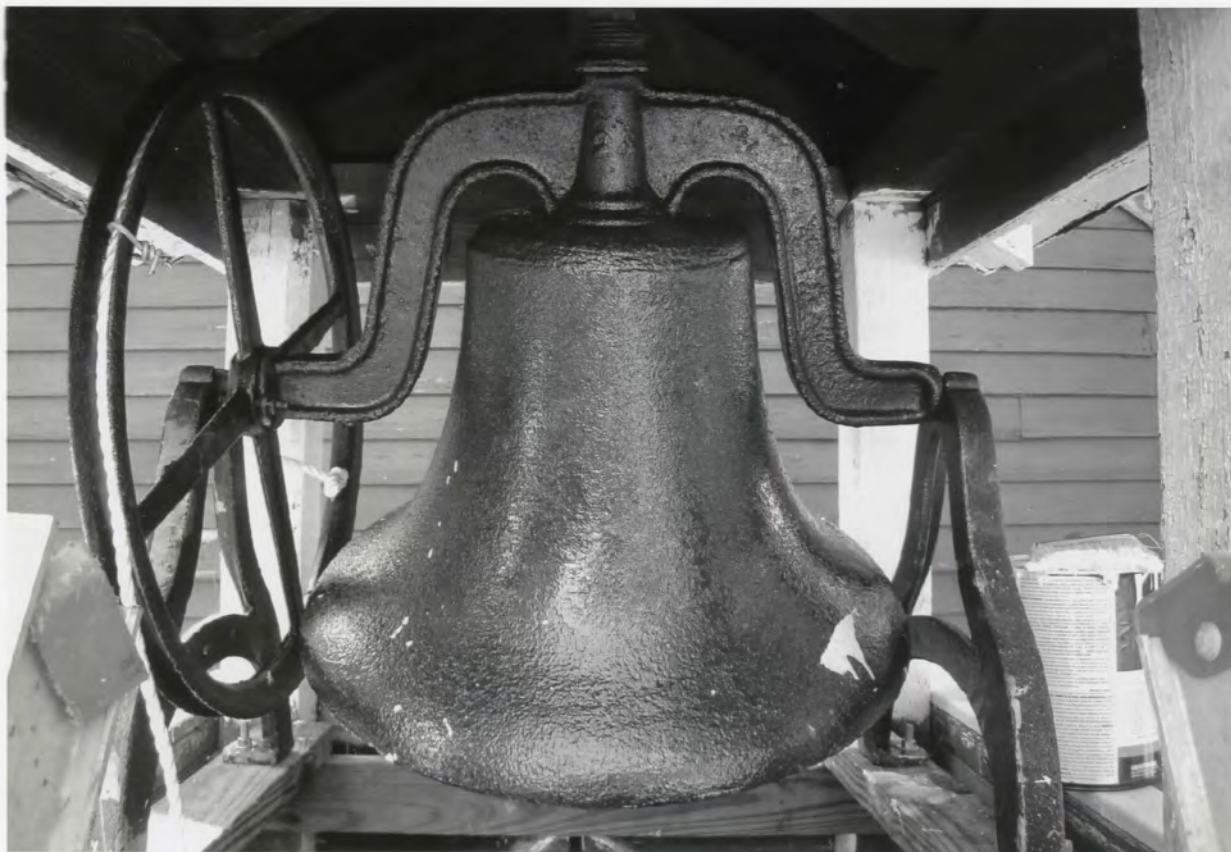
VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 0001



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 0002



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYOENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 0003



VA-FAIRFAXCOUNTY-SYDENSTRICKERSCHOOL-0004



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SHOENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 0005



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 2006



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SIDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 0007



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKERS SCHOOL - 2008



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SIDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - 0009



VIA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL #010



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - FIGURE 1

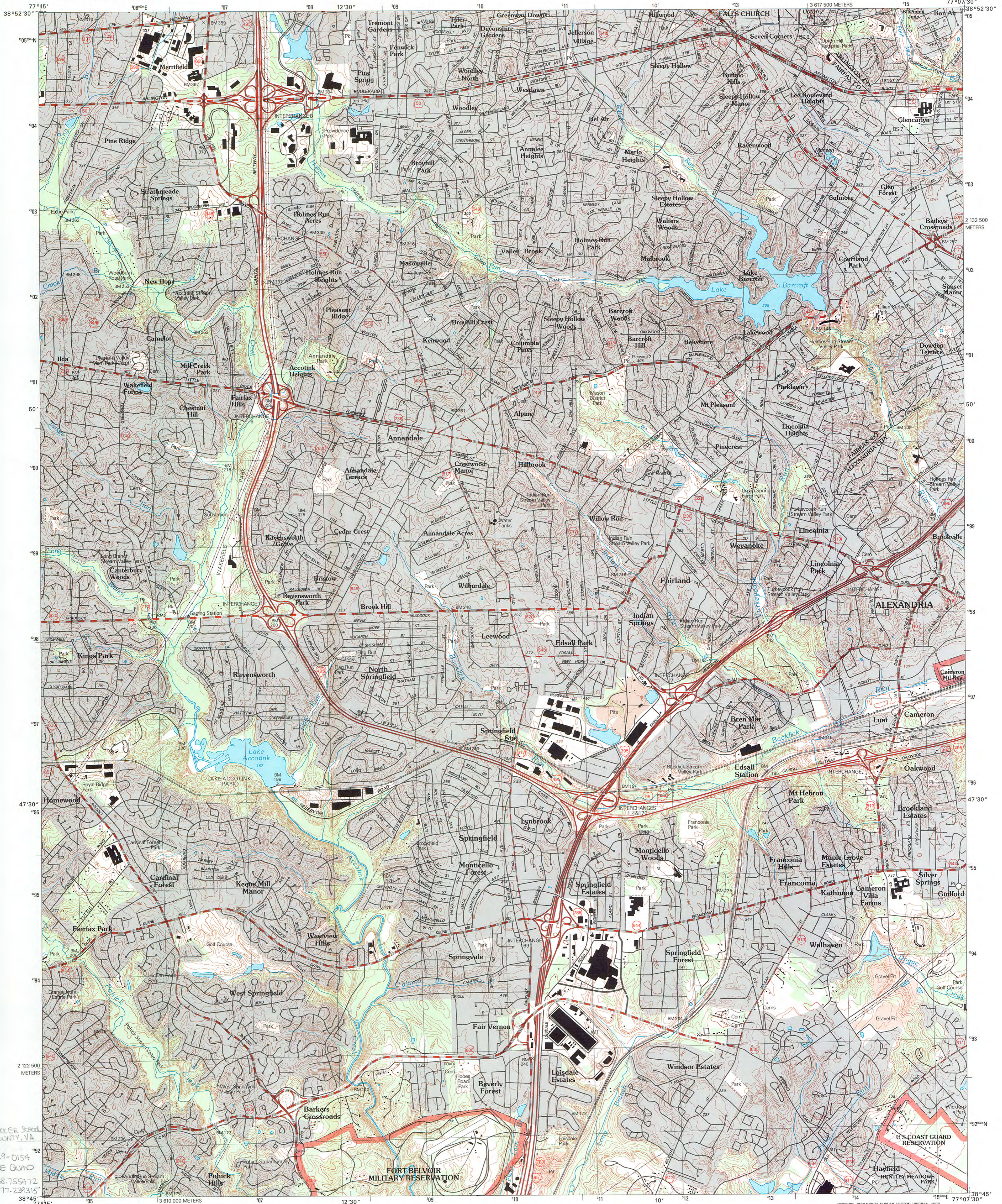
Additional Documentation



VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - FIGURE 2.

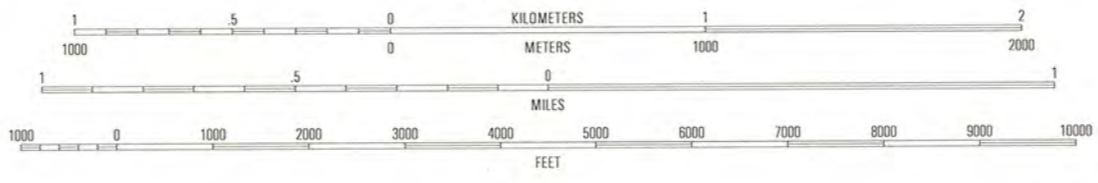
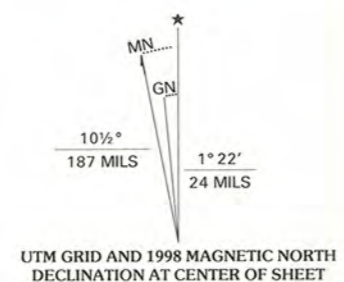


VA - FAIRFAX COUNTY - SHEDENSTRICKER SCHOOL - FIGURE 3



SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA
DNR # 029-0154
ANNANDALE QUAD
LATITUDE: 38.759472
LONGITUDE: -77.239315

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1955. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1994. Survey control current as of 1956. Contours that conflict with updated major features are dashed.
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18
2 500-meter ticks: Virginia Coordinate System of 1983 (north zone)
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway	Light-duty road, hard or hard surface
Secondary highway	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

1	2	3	1 Vienna
			2 Falls Church
			3 Washington West
			4 Fairfax
4	5	6	5 Alexandria
			6 Occoquan
			7 Fort Belvoir
			8 Mount Vernon
6	7	8	

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ANNANDALE, VA
1994

NIMA 5561 1 SW-SERIES V834



National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2015

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Located in Springfield, Virginia, in Fairfax County, the Sydenstricker School was built in 1928 by William Beauregard Wooster to replace an earlier school which had burned. The school closed in June 1939.

The Sydenstricker School is locally significant and eligible for state and national recognition under Criterion A in the areas of education and social history. The school was the last one-room schoolhouse built prior to school consolidation in Fairfax County, and it was the last operating one-room schoolhouse for white students in the county when it closed in 1939. The Upper Pohick Community League purchased the building from the Fairfax County School District in 1954, and has owned and maintained the building since. The League is the oldest community association in the Springfield area, and one of the oldest in Fairfax County. Originally focused on the welfare and improvement of the community, the Upper Pohick Community League is now dedicated to the preservation of the schoolhouse as a historical building and a community center.

The Sydenstricker School is also locally significant and eligible for state and national recognition under Criterion C for architectural significance, as the best preserved example of an early-20th-century, one-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County in nearly original condition and still on its original site. Constructed as one large room in 1928, a small cloakroom was added to the façade prior to 1939, and the building still retains this form. Except for a few changes, the building remains architecturally intact.

The period of significance begins in 1928 with the construction of the building and ends in 1962 when the Upper Pohick Community League was actively using the building as a center for community activities. Secondary resources include a shed, a concrete foundation of a former privy, and a metal flag pole donated to the school in 1928.

Narrative Statement of Significance

BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted a new constitution, as a prerequisite for the state's readmission to the Union. Popularly called the Underwood Constitution, after the president of the state constitutional convention, John Curtiss Underwood (1809-1873), the new constitution stipulated "an Act to establish and maintain a uniform system of public free schools." The schools were "to prevent children growing up in ignorance, or becoming vagrants."³¹ The Underwood Constitution led to great progress in the education of the children of Virginia, though only an elementary education (grades 1-8) was required, with separate schools for black and white students.

Under this new system, a State Board of Education was established, as well as a State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each county had multiple districts, each with a District Superintendent appointed by the State Board and approved by the Senate. In Fairfax County, six districts were established, each with three trustees. They were responsible for enforcing school laws, hiring and firing teachers, suspending students, and managing school properties.³² The area surrounding the Sydenstricker School fell under the jurisdiction of the Lee District.

Communities played an integral role in the education of their children. Parents would petition their district to open a school, select a location, and donate the land to the county. Local citizens would often provide the materials and labor to build the school, supply wood for the stove, and make necessary repairs. Communities formed school leagues to support their schools. In the annual report of 1913, Virginia's superintendent of schools noted that the "credit for the improvement and care of school grounds and buildings belongs chiefly to the school leagues."³³

Schoolhouses served not only educational purposes, but became social and political centers as well. In the early 1900s, the United States Bureau of Education proclaimed that "Every school district should be a little democracy, and the schoolhouse the Community Capitol."³⁴ Commissioner of Education, P. P. Claxton stated that as a community center "the schoolhouse is specially fitted; it is non-

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

ENDNOTES

- ¹ County of Fairfax Historic Landmarks Survey, Upper Pohick Community Hall, Property Identification Number 89-3-001-56, November 18, 1971.
- ² Among them, according to hand-written notes in the archives of the Sydenstricker Methodist Church archives, George Hall (1907-1910) died of a snake bite and was the first burial in the cemetery.
- ³ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, April 21, 1955.
- ⁴ The concrete foundation measures 44" x 58" overall, and is 5-1/2" thick and approximately 11" deep. There is no evidence of the original privy structure.
- ⁵ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 7, 1954.
- ⁶ _____, December 3, 1959.
- ⁷ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, History & Records Committee, Springfield, Virginia, page 35.
- ⁸ County of Fairfax Historic Landmarks Survey, Upper Pohick Community Hall, Property Identification Number 89-3-001-56, November 18, 1971.
- ⁹ The window openings measure 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁰ Fairfax County Park Authority Memorandum, January 30, 1997.
- ¹¹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, January 5, 1929.
- ¹² *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Sears & Roebuck catalog, 1926, page 16.
- ¹⁵ The window openings measure 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁶ The window measures 23"W x 36"H.
- ¹⁷ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, April 5, 1956.
- ¹⁸ The remaining window measures 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁹ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 3, 1958.
- ²⁰ The sign was altered in the 1990s from the original sign which read "Upper Pohick Community Hall". The original sign (painted black with white text) was made in 1956 and is shown in photos taken in 1957 leaning against oil tanks on the north side of the building (see fig. 2 and 3).
- ²¹ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 5, 1951.
- ²² Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 5, 1951.
- ²³ Local residents, Lorraine and Lewis Peverill were married at the Sydenstricker Chapel, and held their wedding reception at the schoolhouse in 1946. Mrs. Peverill recalled that the head table, where she sat with her groom, was located on the west side of the building, presumably where the teacher's desk was once located. A very large clock hung on that wall between the two windows. (See Becker 2009.)
- ²⁴ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 4, 1958.
- ²⁵ _____, April 20, 1950.
- ²⁶ _____, April 20, 1950.
- ²⁷ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 11.
- ²⁸ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, September 6, 1956.
- ²⁹ Letter from Sydenstricker United Methodist Church Pastor H.S. Amidon to the Upper Pohick Community League, November 6, 1957.
- ³⁰ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 2, 1957.
- ³¹ Virginia General Assembly, *Virginia Constitution, 1870*.
- ³² Netherton, et al. 1992, page 236.
- ³³ Stearnes 1913, page 76.
- ³⁴ Claxton 1918.
- ³⁵ Bushnell 1920.
- ³⁶ Curtis 1913.
- ³⁷ Deed transferring one acre of land to the School Trustees of District #3 in Lee Township, Fairfax County, VA "for the benefit of a public school for white children...". (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book R-4, page 51, January 29, 1874.)
- ³⁸ This general area was known as "Pohick". The nearby intersection of Hooes and Rolling Roads was, until relatively recently, also known as Barker's Corners, after John Barker who owned land here.
- ³⁹ Hopkins 1878, page 72.
- ⁴⁰ A 1922 deed documenting the schools in the Lee District that were transferred to the Fairfax County School Board includes the "Old Barker School", which was apparently still in existence, although no longer in operation. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.)
- ⁴¹ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, December 10, 1888.
- ⁴² _____, July 1, 1897.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Located in Springfield, Virginia, in Fairfax County, the Sydenstricker School was built in 1928 by William Beauregard Wooster to replace an earlier school which had burned. The school closed in June 1939.

The Sydenstricker School is locally significant and eligible for state and national recognition under Criterion A in the areas of education and social history. The school was the last one-room schoolhouse built prior to school consolidation in Fairfax County, and it was the last operating one-room schoolhouse for white students in the county when it closed in 1939. The Upper Pohick Community League purchased the building from the Fairfax County School District in 1954, and has owned and maintained the building since. The League is the oldest community association in the Springfield area, and one of the oldest in Fairfax County. Originally focused on the welfare and improvement of the community, the Upper Pohick Community League is now dedicated to the preservation of the schoolhouse as a historical building and a community center.

The Sydenstricker School is also locally significant and eligible for state and national recognition under Criterion C for architectural significance, as the best preserved example of an early-20th-century, one-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County in nearly original condition and still on its original site. Constructed as one large room in 1928, a small cloakroom was added to the façade prior to 1939, and the building still retains this form. Except for a few changes, the building remains architecturally intact.

The period of significance begins in 1928 with the construction of the building and ends in 1962 when the Upper Pohick Community League was actively using the building as a center for community activities. Secondary resources include a shed, a concrete foundation of a former privy, and a metal flag pole donated to the school in 1928.

Narrative Statement of Significance

BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted a new constitution, as a prerequisite for the state's readmission to the Union. Popularly called the Underwood Constitution, after the president of the state constitutional convention, John Curtiss Underwood (1809-1873), the new constitution stipulated "an Act to establish and maintain a uniform system of public free schools." The schools were "to prevent children growing up in ignorance, or becoming vagrants."³¹ The Underwood Constitution led to great progress in the education of the children of Virginia, though only an elementary education (grades 1-8) was required, with separate schools for black and white students.

Under this new system, a State Board of Education was established, as well as a State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each county had multiple districts, each with a District Superintendent appointed by the State Board and approved by the Senate. In Fairfax County, six districts were established, each with three trustees. They were responsible for enforcing school laws, hiring and firing teachers, suspending students, and managing school properties.³² The area surrounding the Sydenstricker School fell under the jurisdiction of the Lee District.

Communities played an integral role in the education of their children. Parents would petition their district to open a school, select a location, and donate the land to the county. Local citizens would often provide the materials and labor to build the school, supply wood for the stove, and make necessary repairs. Communities formed school leagues to support their schools. In the annual report of 1913, Virginia's superintendent of schools noted that the "credit for the improvement and care of school grounds and buildings belongs chiefly to the school leagues."³³

Schoolhouses served not only educational purposes, but became social and political centers as well. In the early 1900s, the United States Bureau of Education proclaimed that "Every school district should be a little democracy, and the schoolhouse the Community Capitol."³⁴ Commissioner of Education, P. P. Claxton stated that as a community center "the schoolhouse is specially fitted; it is non-sectarian and non-partisan; the property of no individual, group or clique, but the common property of all; the one place in every

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

community in which all have equal rights and all are equally at home".³⁵ Curtis (1913) remarks on the necessity of the "rural social center", makes recommendations for organizing and implementing social and civic leagues, advocates for the use of one-room schoolhouses as community centers, and provides suggestions for outfitting a schoolhouse to meet the needs of a civic organization.³⁶

THE PREDECESSORS OF THE SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL: POHICK SCHOOL #5 AND POHICK SCHOOL #8

In January 1874, a parcel of land about one mile east of the Sydenstricker School, along Hooes Road (now likely covered by the Fairfax County Parkway), was conveyed by the heirs of Thomas Hall to the School Trustees of the Lee District for the purpose of building a school.³⁷ The school built on this site was referred to as both Pohick School #5 and Barker's School.³⁸ This school is indicated on an 1878 map of the Lee District of Fairfax County.^{39 40}

An interesting glimpse of this particular school is recorded in the minutes of the school board on December 10, 1888. The minutes document that "the [school board] clerk was ordered to write to R. H. Harrow, teacher of School #5 and request him to procure a boarding house as the use of his schoolroom for cooking and sleeping was entirely against the wishes of [the] school board".⁴¹

On July 1, 1897, a regular meeting of the Lee District school board was held at Pohick School #5. The minutes note that "[t]he attention of the Board was called to the dilapidated condition of the school building at Pohick #5, when upon close examination it was deemed unfit to repair. The location being a poor one a survey was taken of the neighborhood with an eye to the school population when the Board concluded to build a new house on land given by Barney Deavers and wife."^{42 43} This Deavers parcel is where the Sydenstricker School currently stands.⁴⁴

The school that came to replace Pohick School #5 at the Deavers site was known as Pohick School #8. It is not known precisely when Pohick School #8 was constructed and opened, as the Lee District School Board minutes from July 1897 to July 1904 are currently missing. The first written account of this new school is from March 3, 1901. On this date, Reverend Everard Meade, rector of Pohick Church (about 5 miles southeast, at 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton) held services at the school.⁴⁵ Later entries in his journal suggest that he held services at the school about once a month, for between 35 and 50 parishioners. Its use for Episcopal church services likely ended in 1903.⁴⁶

The earliest newspaper account of Pohick School #8 is a 1905 *Fairfax Herald* article announcing "The Last Meeting of the Lee District Teachers Assembly", held at the "Pohick School house at Gambrell".⁴⁷ Professor M.D. Hall, later the first superintendent of the Fairfax County Public School System, led the meeting, which included discussions on algebra, mental arithmetic, geography, grammar, and stocks and bonds. "Rev. Mr. Meade, rector of Pohick church, was present during the session and took part in the general discussion that followed the presentation of each subject."

In September 1909, the patrons of the Pohick School requested the use of the school for religious services.⁴⁸ This time, the school was used by a burgeoning Methodist congregation, many who had apparently left the Episcopalian congregation.⁴⁹ The Methodists were led by a minister named Christopher Sydenstricker (1846–1927).⁵⁰ The use of the school for church services appears to have continued until 1911, when the Sydenstricker Chapel was completed.⁵¹ The Sydenstricker Methodist Chapel still exists and is directly adjacent to the school, to its east.⁵²

Schoolhouse and chapel pairs such as this once dotted the landscape of Fairfax County. Only a few survive, most notably the Sydenstricker School and Sydenstricker United Methodist Chapel, and the Vale School and Vale United Methodist Chapel.⁵³ Silverbrook Chapel (VDHR File Number 029-5018),⁵⁴ located about 3 miles south of the Sydenstricker Chapel and School, also once had an adjacent one-room schoolhouse⁵⁵. The Laurel Grove Baptist Church, next to the one-room Laurel Grove School, burned in 2004. It is interesting to note that at Sydenstricker, Vale, Silverbrook and Laurel Grove, church services were held at the schoolhouses during the construction of the chapels.

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In 1900, there were 99 schoolhouses in Fairfax County serving 2,246 students.⁵⁶ As late as 1906, all the schoolhouses in Fairfax County had either one or two rooms.⁵⁷ Clara Hall, who started first grade at the Pohick School in 1918, recalled in 1989 that about 40 children attended the school, which served grades 1 through 7, and that most were related to each other. She stated that the school had two-seater desks lined in two rows on each side of the room. Students were responsible for purchasing their own books, as was common at the time.⁵⁸

In the mid-1920s, the *Herndon Observer* occasionally reported news from "Springfield and Sydenstricker" which mostly recounted the travels and health of local residents.⁵⁹ There would also be remarks about the condition of local roads, the chapel, and the school. Regarding the latter, a piece from February 1925 noted that the school had two teachers, was well attended, and that the children were doing well, and in excellent health.⁶⁰ A report the following month declared that the Pohick School was one of only ten schools in the county to have a library.⁶¹

Having already survived a blaze in 1910,⁶² tragedy struck on the morning of Thursday, July 12, 1928, when the school burned to the ground. The *Herndon Observer* reported that the fire was likely arson, and that the school, although not large, was "an important one", and would probably be rebuilt.⁶³ The *Fairfax Herald* ran a similar story, noting that the loss was partially covered by insurance.⁶⁴ Several weeks later, the *Herndon Observer* published a more detailed description of the event, provided by Mrs. Norman Deavers,⁶⁵ who lived within sight of the school. She stated that "[b]eyond a doubt [the school] was set on fire from underneath, as the foundation was open and giving free access to anyone to get under it" and noted that "[a] reward of one hundred dollars will be paid for evidence leading the arrest and conviction of the guilty parties."⁶⁶

THE NEW POHICK SCHOOL #8 / SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL

A few weeks after the fire, school board minutes record that Dr. F.M. Brooks, Trustee of the Lee District and the Division Superintendent, was directed to "secure a site, formulate plans, advertise for bids, award the contract and proceed with the construction of a new schoolhouse at Pohick in Lee District".⁶⁷ At the meeting on August 21, 1928, four bids for the construction of a new schoolhouse were reviewed, and the contract was awarded to William Beauregard Wooster (1857-1945), with the low bid of \$1,649.75.^{68 69} Wooster had done work on other schoolhouses in the Lee District, including the Ox Road Schoolhouse in October 1889.^{70 71}

The first payment of \$150 was approved by the school board on October 5, 1928, in addition to \$613.36 to W.A. Smoot & Company for building materials, and \$238 to George W. Hall for lumber.⁷² A month later a second payment of \$553.37 to Beauregard Wooster was approved.⁷³ On October 19, 1928, the *Fairfax Herald* reported that construction was completed, and a month later the school was reopened.⁷⁴

The new school was built upon a poured concrete foundation, and covered in weatherboard, painted yellow. Unlike the Legato, Laurel Grove and Crouch Schools, an early photo of the Pohick School (fig. 1) shows that the school did not have shutters on the windows.

Like the Legato and Laurel Grove Schools, the Pohick School was originally entered through a central door flanked by two windows. However, a small projected entrance vestibule, which was also used as a cloakroom, was added sometime after construction was completed. The vestibule was topped with a simple gabled belfry which still holds the original school bell (purchased in the early 1920's for the earlier Pohick School, from Sears & Roebuck).

The interior walls were covered in beaded-board wainscoting placed vertically to chair-rail height, and then horizontally to the ceiling. Like many other contemporary schoolhouses, Pohick originally had pull-down shades on the windows (fig. 1), and the original hardware is still existing. Although there is no evidence remaining as to the location of the original chalkboards, the long, windowless north wall would have been a likely location. If so, the chalkboards would have flanked the stove and chimney which was centered on the wall.

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The existing schoolhouse is larger than the previous building,⁷⁵ and is larger than the other existing one-room schoolhouses in the county.⁷⁶ The *Fairfax Herald* referred to it as "a model one-room schoolhouse."⁷⁷ An interview with former student Clara Hall suggests that the original school was built facing the Hooes Road, but the new school was turned parallel to the road.⁷⁸ Miss Evelyn Clarke⁷⁹ was the first teacher at the new Pohick School. Her father presented the school with a metal flagpole set in a concrete base in 1928,⁸⁰ which still exists.

In January 1929, the school board requested that a deed be drawn up to formally convey the land and the schoolhouse to the Fairfax County School District, because no actual deed existed. They also decided to procure an additional acre of land adjoining the schoolhouse property; however, this was never accomplished.⁸¹ At this same meeting, expenses were approved for additional labor and lumber for the new school,⁸² as well as a stove and stove-pipe.

On April 15, 1929, \$30 was set aside for a library at Pohick,⁸³ presumably to replace the books destroyed when the former school building burned.

Relatively few anecdotes about life at the new Pohick School survive. According to school board minutes from the time, the school year began in mid-September, and ended at the beginning of June. School hours were from 9:00 a.m. until 3:50 p.m. with a 60-minute recess at noon, and 10-minute recesses in the morning and afternoon (except during the months of December, January, and February, when recess was held at the discretion of the teacher). The school was only closed for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Washington's Birthday, and Easter, in addition to two days in September for "Teacher's Institute".⁸⁴

One glimpse, although most certainly an unusual one, is recorded in the meeting minutes of the School Board from February 17, 1932.⁸⁵ The clerk presented a letter from the school's teacher, Miss Elizabeth Gates, suggesting the suspension of twelve year old, Ewing Crawn. Miss Gates stated that Ewing "refused to stay in one day, and when I started to whip him he broke the switch and struck me". The boy was suspended, and the board expressed their belief that it was generally bad policy to suspend such young children; however, in small schools such as Pohick, it would do more harm than good to keep such a child in school.

Lindy Neish, a lifelong resident of Springfield, attended the Pohick School (which by then had come to be known as the Sydenstricker School) in the 1930s. In 1989, he recalled that the boys had to collect firewood for the stove and fresh water from the spring.⁸⁶ A 1933 report in the *Herndon Observer* notes that the community appealed to the school board for a well at the schoolhouse, so the children would not be forced to carry water "through rain and mud, year in and year out".⁸⁷ This well was never constructed.

THE SYDENSTRICKER SCHOOL LEAGUE & SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

An October 1930 issue of the *Fairfax Herald* makes the first reference to the Sydenstricker School League, which had "reorganized for the school term"⁸⁸ – suggesting that the League existed prior to this point. Edward Moravitz was elected its president. (Moravitz would later become the first Vice President of the Upper Pohick Community League.)

In 1931, the Lee District Improvement Association met at the Sydenstricker School to discuss matters regarding local roads.⁸⁹ A notice in the *Fairfax Herald* on October 21, 1932 suggests that this organization was more than just a school organization:

"The Sydenstricker Community and School League, which is doing much toward building up that community, and which is taking an active interest in the advancements of the school at Sydenstricker, at its meeting last week elected Arthur Barbrey for its president for the ensuing term, Mrs. Norman Deavers, vice president; Benjamin Morvitch, secretary, and Archie Hall, treasurer."⁹⁰

The 1930s marked a turning point in the school system in Fairfax County and throughout the country. Improvements in local roads and the availability of automobiles made it possible to transport children to schools farther from home. Small schoolhouses were being closed in favor of larger, more cost effective elementary schools. The one-room Legato School (Fairfax, VA) was consolidated in 1929, and the Laurel Grove School (Alexandria, VA) in 1932. The *Fairfax Herald* reported in September 1932 that the Colchester

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and Pohick (Sydenstricker) schools were the only remaining one-room schoolhouses still operating in the county.⁹¹

In September 1934, the *Fairfax Herald* announced "Last One Room School in County, at Sydenstricker, to Close".⁹² The county school board decided to close the school and transport the children to the Burke School, located about five miles away.⁹³ The article noted that the closing marked the end of the old educational system in the county. The era of the one-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County had ended--or so it seemed.⁹⁴

On October 5, 1934, fourteen parents representing approximately twenty-five Sydenstricker children appeared before the Fairfax County School Board to request that the school be re-opened.⁹⁵ A petition signed by fifteen families was presented to the school board.⁹⁶ The petitioners complained about how early their small children had to leave for school, and expressed the opinion that the road from Sydenstricker to the Burke School would not hold up through the winter. It was mentioned that, up until the current year, no student from the area had been able to attend high school elsewhere in the county due to poor road conditions. The school board declined to reopen the school but agreed to revise the bus schedule so the Sydenstricker children would not have to leave home so early in the morning.⁹⁷

In October 1935, the Fairfax County School Board was presented a letter from a Mr. and Mrs. D.E. Otis, requesting an extension of the Sydenstricker school bus route, to make it more convenient for students. The board felt that this was impractical because of extremely steep hills and a curving road.⁹⁸

In October 1936, a list of twenty-six school children living in the Sydenstricker area was submitted to the Fairfax County School Board by J. W. Brookfield, the area's mail carrier. The list had been drawn up by members of the community, hoping that the school board would re-open the school to the first four grades. The school board refused.⁹⁹

In September 1937, a delegation from the Sydenstricker community attended the school board meeting and again requested the reopening of the school. The board agreed to open the school for the first four grades, as long as it could maintain an attendance of at least 20 students.^{100 101}

When the school reopened, the Sydenstricker League re-emerged. The secretary of the League, Albytene Roberts,¹⁰² was also the school's teacher from 1937 until 1939. The fact that the Sydenstricker School remained open as long as it did may well have been through the efforts of the Sydenstricker School League.

In February 1938, a new 4-H Club (focused on home-making) was organized by students at the Sydenstricker School.¹⁰³

In June 1939, the school closed for the last time. This date correlates with the construction and opening of the new, larger Burke Elementary School, where the Sydenstricker children were then sent.¹⁰⁴

Teachers at the Pohick School #8 / Sydenstricker School (1928 – 1939):

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Name of Teacher</u>
1928 – 1929	Evelyn Clarke
1929 – 1930	Evelyn Clarke
1930 – 1931	Blanche Brumbach
1931 – 1932	Elizabeth Gates
1932 – 1933	Virginia Showalter
1933 – 1934	Virginia Showalter
1934 – 1935	SCHOOL CLOSED
1935 – 1936	SCHOOL CLOSED
1936 – 1937	SCHOOL CLOSED
1937 – 1938	Albytene Roberts
1938 – 1939	Albytene Roberts

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A month after the school closed, The *Fairfax Herald* reported that the "Sydenstricker League" was meeting at the schoolhouse.¹⁰⁵ Meetings were also announced for September and November 1939.^{106 107} Nothing further is documented about the Sydenstricker League.

THE 1940s

In 1943, the *Fairfax Herald* reported that the "Old School House" at Sydenstricker had been converted into a center for making surgical dressing to support the war effort:

The bell at the little old school house near Sydenstricker rang this past week for the first time in a number of years. This time it was not calling to children, since it is no longer needed for school purposes, but calling to the adults in the community who have dedicated this quaint building to a need of the hour — a center for Red Cross surgical dressing.

Scrubbed clean, all the cobwebs swept away, curtains in the windows, long tables and straight chairs in place of desks. This was the setting for the dedication on August 31. Most of the volunteer workers live some distance from the school house, and walk back and forth to each meeting.¹⁰⁸

A follow-up story several months later reported that the unit had celebrated the completion of their 10,000th surgical dressing with a luncheon at the home of Mrs. Fred Golde.¹⁰⁹ (A few years later, Mrs. Golde would be a founding member of the Upper Pohick Community League.)

On October 20, 1946, Lorraine Orndorff married Lewis Peverill at the Sydenstricker Chapel.¹¹⁰ They held their wedding reception at the schoolhouse, which was still being used for community activities.¹¹¹

THE UPPER POHICK COMMUNITY LEAGUE & THE SCHOOLHOUSE

As one-room schoolhouses were becoming obsolete, local school leagues reorganized to support and foster the growth of their small communities. It was only natural that the empty schoolhouses would find a new purpose in their communities. Home Demonstration and 4-H Clubs were organized to instruct women and youth in home economics and agriculture. Community leagues were formed to support political and social functions, support public health and youth welfare, and act as proponents for community improvement. Vacant schoolhouses became the perfect meeting places for these organizations, and they gave communities a sense of history and identity.¹¹²

On September 22, 1948, the "Community League" held and recorded its first official meeting at the old Sydenstricker schoolhouse.¹¹³ Fifty-seven people gathered to elect temporary officers, organize committees, and set a membership fee (at \$1.00 per year). The purposes of the League were outlined as: 1) socials, 2) roads, 3) schools, 4) county laws, 5) community center, 6) youth welfare, 7) public health & welfare, and 8) fire prevention.

At its second meeting, on October 7, 1948, the organization officially adopted the name Upper Pohick Community League,¹¹⁴ and elected permanent officers.

At its third meeting, on November 11, 1948, the Upper Pohick Community League officially adopted its geographic boundaries. A recent analysis suggests that the area totaled nearly 8-square miles and included about 12½ miles of the area's main roads, including approximately 4¼ miles of Hooes Road (from Accotink Creek to Silverbrook Road), about 3¼ miles of Rolling Road (from about 3/10th of a mile south of Old Keene Mill Road, south to the high voltage power lines), nearly 3 miles of Pohick Road (from near the modern intersection of the Fairfax County Parkway and Huntsman Boulevard, southeast to the high voltage power lines), about 1.2 miles of Sydenstricker Road (from Hooes Road to near the modern intersection with Huntsman Boulevard), and all 1 mile of Gambrill Road

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(from Hooes Road to Pohick Road).¹¹⁵ While it is not clear how many people resided within the boundaries of the Upper Pohick community at that time, the Upper Pohick Community League had 92 senior members and 32 junior members by the close of 1948.

In 1953, a letter was sent to the community to raise funds to purchase the schoolhouse. The letter included the following remarks:¹¹⁶

For eighteen years, perhaps longer, the School House located on the Hooes Road near the Sydenstricker Methodist Church, has been used as a meeting place for all the civic bodies, and has been a center of the community effort. It has been used by the Church in its Social Services Activities, and frequently for private receptions and meetings by individuals in the community.

About the year 1939 the property ceased to be used for school purposes, and it was not maintained in a useable condition. The League has, gratuitously, provided for necessary repairs, has installed electric lighting and heating facilities, and has caused it to be painted inside and out. In short it has been maintained by this community as a combined Church and Civic Center.

A 1954 letter from the League's attorney, Ira Cochran, to the League's secretary, Ann Karns, also indicated that the Upper Pohick Community League or its predecessors had been using the building continuously since 1939, when the school closed.¹¹⁷

For a number of years, there was significant uncertainty regarding the ownership of the land and schoolhouse. The school board was never able to produce a recorded deed to prove ownership of the property. Descendants of Barney Deavers admitted that he had deeded the land for school purposes, but insisted that it was to be returned to his heirs when the building ceased to be used as a school. Ultimately the title to the property came to be held by Francis Fannon, an Alexandria merchant, who allowed the Upper Pohick Community League to use the building at no charge.¹¹⁸ Eventually, the Fairfax County School Board went to court to establish ownership so that the property could be sold.¹¹⁹

The Upper Pohick Community League officially incorporated as a non-profit organization, and purchased the land and schoolhouse at public auction on July 22, 1954, for the sum of \$550.¹²⁰

The Upper Pohick Community League's use and eventual purchase of the Sydenstricker School was not unusual in Fairfax County. In 1931, a group of citizens formed the Colvin Run Citizens Association and purchased the Colvin Run Schoolhouse property in Great Falls, Virginia, from the Fairfax County School Board to establish a community center.¹²¹ In 1938, the Vale Club purchased the Vale Schoolhouse, in Oakton, Virginia, from the Fairfax County School Board, becoming the first home demonstration club in the county to own its own building.¹²² During the 1950s, the Old Floris Schoolhouse, located in Herndon, Virginia, was preserved as a youth center to serve the Future Farmers of America, a 4-H Club, and scouting groups, and to provide a site for fairs and community recreation.¹²³

ACTIVITIES & ADVOCACY

From the beginning, the Upper Pohick Community League addressed a number of issues of importance to the community, and to Fairfax County in general.

Roads. The early minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League show that the condition of local roads and bridges was a major concern of the organization. Roads were largely unpaved and treacherous, bridges often washed out, and the community bore the burden of petitioning the county to repair and renovate roads. In some cases citizens even made repairs themselves. The Upper Pohick Community League lobbied the county on numerous occasions to repair or rebuild local roads, and improve access to the community. For example, in December 1948, the League wrote a letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors reporting:

There is no public transportation in, to or from this area. The condition of the roads over which we are compelled to travel leaves much to be desired and imposes upon us a very heavy burden by way of maintaining our vehicles in a safe operating condition and to satisfy the inspection requirements of the State. Within this community are 95 families composed of a total of 337 persons. It is our considered opinion that we are justly entitled to at least one

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road, kept in a condition to enable us to reach the rest of the world, quickly, safely, and without unreasonable expenditures for constant repair of our equipment.¹²⁴

In February 1949, the Upper Pohick Community League hosted a Fairfax County road engineer, and a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to answer questions and discuss the conditions of the roads in the community, and the need for repairs.¹²⁵ In April of the same year, a report of the League's road committee reported that "[t]hings look bad for us to receive the road work as we have asked", because bridges would have to be rebuilt, and the county didn't have enough money.¹²⁶ Later in 1949, the Upper Pohick Community League sent a petition with 250 signatures to Richmond to protest road conditions in Fairfax County, and encouraged local businesses affected by the bad roads to write letters to complain as well.¹²⁷ In April 1950, a League member traveled to Richmond to meet with the State Highway Commission regarding the road situation.¹²⁸ As a sign of how dominant the road issue was for the League, in 1949, Herman Ficke, chairman of the League's Government Committee, refused the nomination for League president, and offered his resignation because the League seemed to have this singular focus. According to League minutes, "he said he was interested in the league as a community league, and not just a road committee".¹²⁹

Ten years later, in 1959, it seems roads still remained an issue. League minutes woefully record: "The report on the roads was the same sad story, namely no money for us. We agreed to keep working on the problem, for what it is worth".¹³⁰ In October 1960, Myron Klein, president of the Upper Pohick Community League, wrote a letter to Fred Burroughs, Resident Engineer of the Virginia Department of Highways, explaining that local road conditions had become intolerable. He pointed out that in 1956 local residents had donated land to straighten and widen a road, but that even four years later the road had yet to be improved or paved.¹³¹

Telephone Service. Another issue of great concern to the Upper Pohick Community League was telephone service. In 1954, the League formed a Telephone Committee to investigate improvements to service within the community.¹³² On November 4, 1954, a representative from the phone company spoke to the League, but did not offer much hope for improvement.¹³³ In May 1956, Donald Williams, the General Manager of the Fairfax Business Office of the C&P Telephone Company, spoke to the League regarding service to the area. At that meeting, League members complained of the high price of toll calls into Washington, D.C., and to Browning numbers (where the Burke School was located).¹³⁴ By September 1957, the telephone company provided an additional four exchanges, albeit at higher rates. Minutes note that: "We will welcome the relief. However, we are not satisfied with what we are receiving."¹³⁵ On June 2, 1960, the district manager of the telephone company spoke to the Upper Pohick Community League. He indicated that the Sydenstricker area was unlikely to see any improvement in telephone service unless the population of the area grew significantly.¹³⁶

Trash. Trash was also a significant problem in the community. In July 1949, the Upper Pohick Community League minutes record that a letter was to be written to county authorities asking that signs be put up on various roads to discourage people from dumping trash.¹³⁷ In 1954, the Upper Pohick Community League discussed the trash dumped on the schoolhouse property, and around the community, and explored what could be done to curb the problem.¹³⁸ In 1955, a motion was made to form a Trash Committee, and a letter was drafted to the County Board of Supervisors regarding the matter.¹³⁹ Later that year, the Upper Pohick Community League suggested that the county have a trash truck at a local intersection for several hours every Saturday to collect trash from the community.¹⁴⁰ It appears that the League's suggestions did not go completely unheeded. Minutes from October 1955 note that a trash truck was in fact visiting the community for several hours, every other Saturday.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, in June 1956, League president David Hall wrote a letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors regarding the trash situation:

It is the sentiment of our membership that this appalling situation is not receiving the emphasis by responsible officials that it justly deserves. Despite continuing protests and an obviously worsened situation, few concrete steps are being undertaken to alleviate this desecration of our community, with resultant depreciation of property value, not to mention an affront to aesthetics.¹⁴²

In 1957, the Upper Pohick Community League organized a "Litter Buggy" which traveled local roads and picked up trash. Red and white signs printed with "Just cleaned up by the Upper Pohick Community League – DON'T BE A LITTERBUG HERE!" were posted

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along local roads.¹⁴³ A photo and story about the Upper Pohick Community League's clean-up campaign was featured in the *Washington Daily News* in 1958.¹⁴⁴

In January 1958, the League announced that they had arranged with the Fairfax County Sanitation Department to have a trash and garbage pick-up in the schoolhouse parking lot every other Saturday morning between 8:00 a.m. and noon.¹⁴⁵ In 1959, an interesting letter was written by Edward Gibbons on behalf of the Upper Pohick Community League to the Director of Public Relations at U.S. Steel, regarding the recent introduction of "throw-away cans" and the impact they were having on the litter situation throughout the community.¹⁴⁶

Local Development. The minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League reveal a keen interest in monitoring and regulating local development. For example, on June 16, 1949, the League hosted an engineer for the proposed "City of Springfield", and two builders who presented plans for local development.¹⁴⁷ A year later, minutes note that ½ acre lots were being offered for development nearby. Regarding this matter, the Upper Pohick Community League presented the following resolution to the zoning commission:

Whereas, the Upper Pohick Community League is interested in the development of the surrounding community to the best interests of all present and future residents of the community, and

Whereas, members of the League have been informed that plans are under way for subdivisions of areas in the community into small residential tracts without any restrictions or other assurances of proper community development,

Therefore, be it resolved that this League favors such legal and other steps as may be possible to assure the development of residential property in the area in such manner as will promote the present and future interest of the community.¹⁴⁸

In the mid-1950s, a proposal for a sewage treatment plant on Pohick Creek at Old Keene Mill Road (upstream from the community) attracted the League's concern. On December 10, 1953, Fred McLaughlin of the Mill Valley Sanitary Corporation spoke to the Upper Pohick Community League about plans for the plant. A representative from the Office of the Sanitary Engineers for Fairfax County also spoke that evening about the county's proposed sewage program to improve health and sanitary conditions throughout the county.¹⁴⁹ In response, the Upper Pohick Community League organized a committee to investigate the issue further, and arranged to contact local representatives who could help them fight the proposed sewage plant.¹⁵⁰ The League also sent a delegation to Richmond to appear before the State Water Control Board to protest the McLaughlin plant.¹⁵¹ In August 1954, Virginia State Senator John Webb and Mason District Representative Anne Wilkens spoke to the League regarding stream pollution and the laws regulating treatment plants.¹⁵² The Upper Pohick Community League also cooperated with other local civic organizations to accomplish their mission. For example, in June and September 1955, the League, together with the Mason Neck and Belmont citizens associations, sent letters to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors opposing the county entering into any contracts for sewage treatment plants, and suggesting minimum provisions for agreements regulating such plants.¹⁵³ In 1956, the Upper Pohick Community League resolved "to oppose any new construction or expansion of any treatment plant, the effluent of which will be emptied in the Accotink or Pohick Creeks."¹⁵⁴ Ultimately no sewage treatment plant was ever built on Pohick Creek at Old Keene Mill Road.

To impose some order on the development of Fairfax County, in 1952 the Planning Commission organized a staff and placed it under the direction of F. Dodd McHugh, a consultant from New York City. Two years later, McHugh presented a proposed "Master Plan" for Fairfax County, which included a sewage system and three-to-five-acre zoning for most of the undeveloped western two-thirds of the county,¹⁵⁵ which included the Upper Pohick area.

In May 1955, Mason District Representative Anne Wilkens and her challenger, Mr. Wills, outlined their election platforms for the Upper Pohick Community League, and discussed zoning, land use, and the Master Plan for Fairfax County.¹⁵⁶ Wilkens spoke again to the Upper Pohick Community League on several other occasions between 1954 and 1958 regarding county growth. In February 1956, the League issued a press release regarding the McHugh Master Plan, and recommended several land use provisions for any master plan adopted by the county, as well as preservation of rights for future highway development. The League went on record as supporting a well designed master plan for the county.¹⁵⁷ Later the same month, Martin Webb, Chairman of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, thanked the League for their suggested changes to the Master Plan, and indicated that their proposal was a distinct

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improvement over those recommended by Mr. McHugh. He praised the League, and said that they had "rendered a splendid service to Fairfax County".¹⁵⁸

In 1956, League president David Hall spoke before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at a public hearing regarding the McHugh Master Plan. Following the hearing, President Hall's statement was issued as a press release:

...I do not sit here tonight and presume to speak for every resident of the western two-thirds of the county. I do, however, speak for 90 percent of the members of the Upper Pohick Community League and for approximately 75 percent of the people in the general area served by the League. There is no apathy here. We are directly and personally concerned. Our problems are not the possibility of increased taxes in the year 1960 or 1970 or 1980. We do not fear annexation, even by an incorporated Springfield, in the year 2000. Our problems are lack of adequate roads today, lack of public utilities today, expensive telephone service today because of low population density. Our concern is that if the McHugh Master Plan is adopted by this Board, we will get no relief from any of these problems in the foreseeable future. It seems almost unnecessary to point out that, in addition, we will suffer a certain monetary loss through devaluation of our real property...¹⁵⁹

Ultimately, both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors rejected McHugh's plan, supporting landowners who felt that it would devalue their land.¹⁶⁰ In 1959, McHugh submitted a modified land-use plan, changing some of the proposed 3-5 acre minimum lot zoning in the western part of the county to a 2-acre minimum lot. Landowners challenged this revised plan in court and won the case. The decision resulted in the zoning of much of the county to a 1-acre minimum lot, which would allow for development of much higher population density.¹⁶¹

In 1959, the Upper Pohick Community League joined the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations, describing themselves as "60-75 active, vociferous members".¹⁶²

Proposed Burke Airport. In the late 1940s, the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administration determined that the existing Washington airport, now Reagan Washington National Airport, was inadequate, and began searching for an alternative site. For a time, the leading option was a location in nearby Burke, Virginia, where it planned to condemn over 4,500 acres of land.¹⁶³ The Upper Pohick Community League minutes indicate that the League opposed the Burke Airport plan, and it held special meetings and formed a committee to address the issue. In August 1955, League minutes report that two members of the League had attended a meeting held by the Burke Airport Relocation Committee. They reported that the airport would be a bad thing for the Pohick community, because of the noise that the jet planes would make on takeoff and landing. League members were invited to sign a petition against the airport, which was later sent to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.¹⁶⁴ In November 1955, the Upper Pohick Community League voted to go on record as being opposed to the Burke Airport, and sent a letter stating their views to Secretary of Commerce Charles Sinclair Weeks, Senators Harry Byrd and Absalom Willis Robertson, and Congressman Joel T. Broyhill.¹⁶⁵ Ultimately, in 1957, a different site was selected, which is now Dulles International Airport, and the government was forced to dispose of the land reserved for the Burke Airport. Almost 900 acres was passed to the Fairfax County Parks Authority, where Burke Lake and Burke Lake Park are now located. The remaining land was auctioned off for residential developments.¹⁶⁶

Schools. Occasionally, school matters were also discussed. In 1948, a report by the Upper Pohick Community League's Schools Committee suggested that members with school-age children should join the local PTA to deal with issues, such as overcrowded buses.¹⁶⁷ At a meeting in 1949, a representative from the Fairfax County School Emergency Committee spoke of the serious overcrowding of county schools, and the need for improvements to school buildings.¹⁶⁸ In February 1952, the Upper Pohick Community League agreed to send a petition to the Superintendent of Schools protesting the juvenile bus drivers who transported children to schools throughout the county.¹⁶⁹ In 1951, the League sponsored a PTA dance at the schoolhouse to raise money for a new projector at the Burke Elementary School,¹⁷⁰ and in 1952 the League held a book sale, and sponsored another dance to benefit the construction of a new cafeteria.¹⁷¹

Social Activities. The Upper Pohick Community League also organized a variety of social activities. Holiday parties, square dances, picnics and "box dinners" were frequent events at the schoolhouse, often in collaboration with the Sydenstricker Church. During the

Sydenstricker School

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1950s and 1960s the League regularly submitted press releases to local newspapers regarding these activities, and it distributed monthly newsletters to the community.

In the 1950s, the Upper Pohick Community League began to hold popular fall "Turkey Shoots" where, for a small fee, the community could shoot at targets from the schoolhouse windows.¹⁷² According to a League press release in October 1956, "[i]n a very successful shoot, several turkeys and hams, and side prizes of bacon, were awarded winners from among the sixty-odd ladies and gentlemen attending."¹⁷³ The press release also indicated that the proceeds from the Turkey Shoot would be utilized to improve the League's property. This seems to have been an incredibly profitable endeavor for the League, but Fairfax County gun laws ended the Turkey Shoots in the late 1960s.

In 1950, League minutes reported Halloween night damage and injuries in nearby communities, but proudly reported that the Pohick area did not have any vandalism. This was believed to be due in part to the annual Halloween party thrown by the League for the community's youth.¹⁷⁴

Other Community Involvement. The Upper Pohick Community League involved itself in a number of other local matters, such as the location of the Springfield post office (1949), the site for the Fairfax Hospital (1956), the name of the new Springfield high school (1958), and location of a proposed branch of the University of Virginia (1958).

In January 1956, Springfield's only library service was an outdated bookmobile that served the rural community.¹⁷⁵ Members of the League joined the "Friends of the Library" committee, and at a meeting on December 12, 1956, it was reported that the Library Fund had received a larger percentage of donations from the Upper Pohick Community League than from any other community.¹⁷⁶

In 1957, the League drove its "Litter Buggy" in the annual Springfield Fourth of July parade,¹⁷⁷ and in 1958 it contributed money towards fireworks¹⁷⁸ and sponsored a float in the parade.¹⁷⁹ Indeed *The Springfield Independent* remarked that "Springfield's Greatest Ever" Fourth of July celebration was a joint effort of the Springfield-Franconia Chamber of Commerce, the Upper Pohick Community League, and the Springfield Estates Civic Association, as well as other area businessmen.¹⁸⁰

In 1950, the Upper Pohick Community League, spurred by the activities of other communities, started a short-lived Boy Scout troop. The troop, comprised of 19 scouts, was officially chartered with a celebration at the schoolhouse.¹⁸¹ In April 1953, League minutes record that the charter would not be renewed.¹⁸² The League investigated other youth organizations, such as 4-H, but ultimately reallocated the funds left over from the Boy Scout troop into a "Youth Welfare Fund".¹⁸³

Upper Pohick Community League members also participated in the Mother's March on Polio, a Heart Fund drive, and a Cancer drive to raise money for these worthy causes. The March 1955 Upper Pohick Community League monthly news bulletin proudly reported that the community had the highest proportion of blood donors in all of Springfield.¹⁸⁴

Special Guests. The Upper Pohick Community League often invited speakers to address the members of the community regarding a variety of topics. For example, in 1950, Major Carl McIntosh, the Fairfax County Chief of Police, was a guest at the Upper Pohick Community League's monthly meeting, accompanied by Chief Detective, Tad Wells.¹⁸⁵ In 1951, a doctor was invited to speak and answer questions about polio.¹⁸⁶ Other special guests included a representative from the Fairfax County Fact Finding Committee in 1955,¹⁸⁷ and Fairfax County blood donor recruiters in 1956.¹⁸⁸ In February 1958, the Upper Pohick Community League hosted a presentation about the Moon Watch Station, and displayed one of the telescopes used to observe Sputnik.¹⁸⁹

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THE 1960s TO THE PRESENT

Few meeting minutes or correspondence survives from 1961 to 1969. The minutes from 1970 show that the Upper Pohick Community League remained very active in the community. By the early 1970s, the area had become significantly developed, and the focus of the League had shifted to zoning and watershed issues, public transportation, road development, and parkland preservation. The 1980s and 1990s saw a dramatic decline in League membership. A lighting strike in the 1980s damaged the electrical circuitry in the schoolhouse, and the building was without light or heat until repairs were made in 2006.

The current activities of the Upper Pohick Community League include a few social events, meetings, and fund-raising events to finance the maintenance of the schoolhouse.

ARCHITECTURE

The Sydenstricker School, built in 1928 as a one-room school with a vestibule/cloakroom added prior to 1939, has maintained its form and integrity throughout the decades and is the best preserved one-room school remaining in Fairfax County. Constructed without the assistance of a professional architect, which was commonplace during the era, the building reflects vernacular adaptations of contemporary architectural fashion. The simple architectural traits of the Sydenstricker School are characteristic of other Fairfax County one-room schoolhouses as well as those built across Virginia and the nation. Built of frame construction and clad in weatherboard, the building rests on a poured concrete foundation, and sits on its original lot.

In 1928, prior to the consolidation of Fairfax County schools, 29 one-room schools were still in use in Fairfax County.¹⁹⁰ According to records from Fairfax County, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and information from *Legato School: A Centennial Souvenir*, the Sydenstricker School is one of 12 known one-room schoolhouses still extant in Fairfax County. However, most of these buildings have been turned into residences and now have additions and alterations. The Legato and Laurel Grove Schools have both been restored to their original form, and now serve as museums. The Laurel Grove School is still located on its original site and the Legato School was moved to a new location.

CONCLUSION

Owned and maintained by the Upper Pohick Community League since 1954, the Sydenstricker School remains the home of Springfield, Virginia's, oldest community league, and one of the oldest civic associations in the county. The history of the schoolhouse and of the Upper Pohick Community League are interwoven with the development of Fairfax County, which today is the most diverse and populous jurisdiction in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

As a cultural resource, the one-room Sydenstricker School has public significance, structural integrity, and historic authenticity. The Sydenstricker School is a visible reminder of Fairfax County's past, and a testament to the generations of people who have cared for the building since its construction. As a community landmark it is a reminder of life in a small rural community in the early 20th century, and is worthy of preservation and recognition.

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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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources,
Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File Number 029-0154

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.91

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing

4 Zone Easting Northing

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: n/a

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 38.755472

Longitude: 77.239315

Verbal Boundary Description

The Sydenstricker School occupies tax parcel number 0893 01 0056. The lot is as follows: "Beginning at the northwest corner of Sydenstricker Church lot in the middle of the Hooe's Road, thence with the line of church lot S. 4° 15' E. (passing through a pipe at 15.27 ft.) 229 ft. to a white oak tree, a corner to the church lot and the Caleb Hall Estate, thence running through the land of Barney Deaver's heirs S. 85° 45' W. 205.9 ft. to a stone, thence N. 5° 37' W. (passing through a pipe at 174 ft.) 189.2 ft. to the middle of the Hooe's Road; thence with the middle of the road N. 75° 01' E. 214.15 ft. to the beginning, containing one acre." (Deed between the County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia and the Upper Pohick Community League, July 23, 1954. Deed Book 1199, page 422).

The land on which the Sydenstricker School sits is bordered by Hooes Road to the north, and the Sydenstricker Chapel lot to the east. The southern and western borders are adjacent to residential properties. Woods on the southern and western sides of the parcel visually divides the lot from neighboring homes.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the land owned by the Upper Pohick Community League, which is historically associated with the Sydenstricker School / Pohick School #8.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Friedrich Becker, President

organization Upper Pohick Community League

date February 29, 2012

street & number 7513 Candytuft Court

telephone 703-455-2935

city or town Springfield

state VA

zip code 22153

e-mail lisamfb@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

Name of Property: Sydenstricker School
City or Vicinity: Springfield
County: Fairfax County
State: VA
Name of Photographer: Lisa Friedrich Becker
Date of Photographs: February 2012

Photo 1 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0001)
North façade (left) and west façade (right), camera facing southeast.

Photo 2 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0002)
West façade (left) and south façade (right), camera facing northeast.

Photo 3 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0003)
East façade, camera facing west.

Photo 4 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0004)
Original school bell, camera facing west.

Photo 5 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0005)
North interior elevation of entry vestibule, camera facing northwest.

Photo 6 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0006)
East interior elevation of entry vestibule, camera facing east.

Photo 7 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0007)
South interior elevation (left), west interior elevation (center), north interior elevation (right), camera facing west.

Photo 8 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0008)
South interior elevation (left), west interior elevation (right), camera facing southwest.

Photo 9 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0009)
North interior elevation (left), east interior elevation (center), south interior elevation (right), camera facing east.

Photo 10 of 10: (VA_FairfaxCounty_SydenstrickerSchool_0010)
Privy pit foundation, camera facing northeast.

PROPERTY OWNER

name The Upper Pohick Community League c/o Lisa Becker, President
street & number 7513 Candytuft Court telephone 703-455-2935
city or town Springfield state VA zip code 22153

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ County of Fairfax Historic Landmarks Survey, Upper Pohick Community Hall, Property Identification Number 89-3-001-56, November 18, 1971.
- ² Among them, according to hand-written notes in the archives of the Sydenstricker Methodist Church archives, George Hall (1907-1910) died of a snake bite and was the first burial in the cemetery.
- ³ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, April 21, 1955.
- ⁴ The concrete foundation measures 44" x 58" overall, and is 5-1/2" thick and approximately 11" deep. There is no evidence of the original privy structure.
- ⁵ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 7, 1954.
- ⁶ _____, December 3, 1959.
- ⁷ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, History & Records Committee, Springfield, Virginia, page 35.
- ⁸ County of Fairfax Historic Landmarks Survey, Upper Pohick Community Hall, Property Identification Number 89-3-001-56, November 18, 1971.
- ⁹ The window openings measure 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁰ Fairfax County Park Authority Memorandum, January 30, 1997.
- ¹¹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, January 5, 1929.
- ¹² *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Sears & Roebuck catalog, 1926, page 16.
- ¹⁵ The window openings measure 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁶ The window measures 23"W x 36"H.
- ¹⁷ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, April 5, 1956.
- ¹⁸ The remaining window measures 39-1/2"W x 90"H.
- ¹⁹ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 3, 1958.
- ²⁰ The sign was altered in the 1990s from the original sign which read "Upper Pohick Community Hall". The original sign (painted black with white text) was made in 1956 and is shown in photos taken in 1957 leaning against oil tanks on the north side of the building (see fig. 2 and 3).
- ²¹ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 5, 1951.
- ²² Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 5, 1951.
- ²³ Local residents, Lorraine and Lewis Peverill were married at the Sydenstricker Chapel, and held their wedding reception at the schoolhouse in 1946. Mrs. Peverill recalled that the head table, where she sat with her groom, was located on the west side of the building, presumably where the teacher's desk was once located. A very large clock hung on that wall between the two windows. (See Becker 2009.)
- ²⁴ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 4, 1958.
- ²⁵ _____, April 20, 1950.
- ²⁶ _____, April 20, 1950.
- ²⁷ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 11.
- ²⁸ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, September 6, 1956.
- ²⁹ Letter from Sydenstricker United Methodist Church Pastor H.S. Amidon to the Upper Pohick Community League, November 6, 1957.
- ³⁰ Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 2, 1957.
- ³¹ Virginia General Assembly, *Virginia Constitution, 1870*.
- ³² Netherton, et al. 1992, page 236.
- ³³ Stearnes 1913, page 76.
- ³⁴ Claxton 1918.
- ³⁵ Bushnell 1920.
- ³⁶ Curtis 1913.
- ³⁷ Deed transferring one acre of land to the School Trustees of District #3 in Lee Township, Fairfax County, VA "for the benefit of a public school for white children...". (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book R-4, page 51, January 29, 1874.)
- ³⁸ This general area was known as "Pohick". The nearby intersection of Hooes and Rolling Roads was, until relatively recently, also known as Barker's Corners, after John Barker who owned land here.
- ³⁹ Hopkins 1878, page 72.
- ⁴⁰ A 1922 deed documenting the schools in the Lee District that were transferred to the Fairfax County School Board includes the "Old Barker School", which was apparently still in existence, although no longer in operation. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.)
- ⁴¹ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, December 10, 1888.
- ⁴² _____, July 1, 1897.

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- ⁴³ According to school board minutes, Barney Deavers (1843-1910) frequently provided wood for the new school, for which he was reimbursed. A Civil War veteran, he is buried in the Sydenstricker Cemetery, directly adjacent to the Sydenstricker School. According to the history of the Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, he was the first member of the church to be buried in the cemetery. His obituary (*Fairfax Herald*, November 10, 1910) notes "Pohick has lost one of its best citizens, and his family a good husband and father."
- ⁴⁴ The original deed to this land has long been lost. A 1922 deed, documenting the transfer of all the schools from the Lee District School Board to the newly formed Fairfax County School Board, conspicuously omits this property. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.) The deed was apparently already missing at this point. See also *The County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia, A Body Corporate, versus Francis H. Fannon et al.* (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Chancery #9180, April 3, 1954.)
- ⁴⁵ Sermon Journal of Reverend Evergard Meade. (Available from the archives of Pohick Church, Lorton, Virginia.)
- ⁴⁶ Interestingly, in 1902, Barney Deavers also deeded a one acre parcel of land to the Pohick Church for the purpose of establishing a chapel and burial ground for the community. (Deed of Sale from Barney Deavers to the Trustees of the Pohick Episcopal Church, January 28, 1902, Fairfax Deed Book J-6, page 31.) This triangular parcel was bounded by Hooes Road and what is now called Sydenstricker Road, on the north side of Hooes Road, nearly across the street from the Sydenstricker School. In October 3, 1903, the *Alexandria Gazette* announced the opening a chapel that could seat about 100 people. In 1907, the Pohick Chapel is described as "a small Chapel, situated about four and a half miles northwest of Pohick Church, to which it belongs. It was built in 1903 through the efforts of the Rev. Everard Meade, and consecrated by Bishop R. A. Gibson on October 12th of that year." (Slaughter 1907, page 157.) According to Meade's sermon journal, services were held at the chapel on Sunday evenings. In October 1909, Meade abruptly stopped calling on the chapel, perhaps not coincidentally at the time Reverend Christopher Sydenstricker was organizing a Methodist congregation in the community. In 1916, the Pohick Chapel property was sold to George W. Hall. See Deed of Sale from The Trustees of Pohick Church to George W. Hall. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book V-8, page 80, September 27, 1916.)
- ⁴⁷ *Fairfax Herald*, December 8, 1905.
- ⁴⁸ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, September 18, 1909.
- ⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that several of the trustees of the Pohick Chapel would become trustees of the Sydenstricker Chapel. Probably not coincidentally, Reverend Meade stopped calling on Pohick Chapel in October 1909. Interestingly, many of the original furnishings of the Pohick Chapel were obtained by the Sydenstricker Chapel, including the wooden pews, which were later donated to the Upper Pohick Community League, and still reside at the Sydenstricker School. (*Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 11.)
- ⁵⁰ In April 1909, Reverend Sydenstricker, approached John Quincy Hall, a local storekeeper, about using the dance pavilion in his picnic grove for evangelistic camp meetings. Ada Taylor, a founding member of the church, later recounted: "On more than one occasion he stood up there and told you if you didn't behave yourself you were going to hell." (See *Transcript of interview with Grace and Ada Taylor*, July 15, 1976.) Sydenstricker was an uncle of the Nobel Prize winning novelist, Pearl Sydenstricker Buck.
- ⁵¹ *Sydenstricker United Methodist Church History, 1909 – 1981*, page 7.
- ⁵² In 1910, Caleb Hall donated land for the chapel. The church boundaries were described as beginning "at a stone on the south side of the County Road near the Pohick School House and running thence South... to a white oak tree near the corner of the school house lot..." See Deed of Sale from Caleb Hall to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book F-7, page 434, March 5, 1910.)
- ⁵³ History of Vale United Methodist Church. (Available from <http://www.valechurch.org/history.html>.)
- ⁵⁴ Like the Sydenstricker Chapel, the first minister of Silverbrook Chapel was Reverend Christopher Sydenstricker. See History of Silverbrook United Methodist Church. (Available from <http://www.silverbrook-umc.org/Files/SUMC%20History.pdf>.)
- ⁵⁵ The Silverbrook School no longer exists. See History of Silverbrook United Methodist Church. (Available from <http://www.silverbrook-umc.org/Files/SUMC%20History.pdf>.)
- ⁵⁶ *Address* 1947, page 29.
- ⁵⁷ *Address* 1947, page 27.
- ⁵⁸ *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ⁵⁹ By now, the community was increasingly referred to as Sydenstricker, and the school was at times referred to as the school at Sydenstricker, or the Sydenstricker school – not to be confused with the structure that is the subject of this application.
- ⁶⁰ *Herndon Observer*, February 26, 1925.
- ⁶¹ *Fairfax Herald*, March 13, 1925.
- ⁶² "The Pohick school house at Gambrill, Fairfax County, was seriously damaged by fire on Wednesday evening. Neighbors who discovered the fire broke into the building and after considerable difficulty succeeded in extinguishing the flames, but not before much damage had resulted. The fire was caused by an overheated stove." *Alexandria Gazette*, December 3, 1910.
- ⁶³ *The Herndon Observer*, July 19, 1928.
- ⁶⁴ *Fairfax Herald*, July 20, 1928.
- ⁶⁵ Mrs. Norman Deavers was the wife of Barney Deaver's oldest son, Norman Deavers (1876-1956).
- ⁶⁶ *The Herndon Observer*, August 2, 1928.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

- ⁶⁷ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, August 6, 1928.
- ⁶⁸ Wooster's sister-in-law, Mary Lou Kines, was a teacher at the (destroyed) Pohick School in 1925, and his wife was a teacher at the Ashford School in nearby Burke, Virginia. Wooster's brother, Luther Francis "Frank" Wooster (1858-1927) was listed as a Lee District Public School Trustee in the deed documenting the transfer of schools from the Lee District to the newly formed Fairfax County School Board in 1922. See Deed documenting the transfer of all the schools in the Lee District School to the newly formed Fairfax County School Board. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 2-8, September 8, 1922.)
- ⁶⁹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, August 21, 1928.
- ⁷⁰ Minutes of the Lee District School Board, October 18, 1889.
- ⁷¹ Wooster's obituary (*Fairfax Herald*, November 9, 1945) says that he was "engaged in farming", making no mention of his building skills. He had a home on Braddock Road in Burke, Virginia.
- ⁷² Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 5, 1928.
- ⁷³ _____, November 5, 1928.
- ⁷⁴ *Fairfax Herald*, November 23, 1928.
- ⁷⁵ *Fairfax Herald*, October 19, 1928.
- ⁷⁶ At about 855 square feet overall (not including the 77 square foot cloakroom), the Sydenstricker School is larger than both the Laurel Grove School (approximately 720 square feet) and the Legato School (650 square feet). (Measurements verified by Lisa Friedrich Becker, January 15, 2012.)
- ⁷⁷ *Fairfax Herald*, October 19, 1928.
- ⁷⁸ *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ⁷⁹ Evelyn Clarke Bright (1907-1998).
- ⁸⁰ *Fairfax Herald*, November 23, 1928.
- ⁸¹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School, January 5, 1929.
- ⁸² These expenses could be related to the construction of the cloakroom.
- ⁸³ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, April 5, 1929.
- ⁸⁴ _____, September 6, 1927.
- ⁸⁵ _____, February 16, 1932.
- ⁸⁶ *The Springfield Connection*, October 11, 1989.
- ⁸⁷ *Herndon Observer*, March 23, 1933.
- ⁸⁸ *Fairfax Herald*, October 17, 1930.
- ⁸⁹ _____, November 27, 1931.
- ⁹⁰ _____, October 21, 1932.
- ⁹¹ _____, September 9, 1932.
- ⁹² _____, September 14, 1934.
- ⁹³ The original two-room Burke School was built in 1911, and located at 9324 Old Burke Lake Road. The school closed in 1939 when a new, larger Burke Elementary School was constructed. The property was sold, and is today a private residence called "Whiteoaks".
- ⁹⁴ The Sydenstricker School was the last operating white one-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County, however African-American one-room schools continued to operate into the late 1940s.
- ⁹⁵ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 5, 1934.
- ⁹⁶ *Fairfax Herald*, October 12, 1934.
- ⁹⁷ _____, November 9, 1934.
- ⁹⁸ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 7, 1935.
- ⁹⁹ Minutes of the Fairfax County School Board, October 5, 1936.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Fairfax Herald*, September 10, 1937.
- ¹⁰¹ It is interesting to note that when the school re-opened in 1937 the Fairfax County School Board refers to it for the first time as the Sydenstricker School, instead of the Pohick School.
- ¹⁰² *Fairfax Herald*, September 24, 1937.
- ¹⁰³ _____, February 4, 1938.
- ¹⁰⁴ This second Burke Elementary School, still located at 9645 Burke Lake Road, opened in 1939 and was dedicated in 1940. It replaced a 1912 school building, now a private residence in Burke, Virginia named Whiteoaks. The school is still used today as a middle school special education facility. See Burke Elementary School Dedication Program, 6/7/1940. (Available from www.braddockheritage.org.)
- ¹⁰⁵ *Fairfax Herald*, June 2, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁶ _____, September 1, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁷ _____, November 3, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁸ _____, September 10, 1943.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

- 109 _____, May 12, 1944.
- 110 Fairfax County, Virginia Marriage Index, 1853 – 1957, page 227.
- 111 See Becker 2009.
- 112 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Vale Schoolhouse; DHR File Number: 029-5615 (Available from http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Countries/Fairfax/029-5615_Vale_School-Community_House_2011_NRNomination_FINAL.pdf.)
- 113 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, September 22, 1948.
- 114 It is unclear why the organization decided on the name Upper Pohick Community League. Other names that were seriously considered were Pohick Community League and North Pohick Community League. Perhaps by calling themselves "Upper Pohick" they were appealing to a broader community than just the small Sydenstricker area.
- 115 For more information on the Upper Pohick Community League boundaries and their relationship to modern roads and landmarks, see Becker 2008.
- 116 Letter to the community from the Upper Pohick Community League, October 13, 1953.
- 117 Letter from Attorney Ira Cochran to Ann Karns, Upper Pohick Community League Secretary, June 30, 1954.
- 118 See Letter to the community from the Upper Pohick Community League, October 13, 1953, and The County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia, A Body Corporate, versus Francis H. Fannon et. al. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Chancery #9180, April 3, 1954.)
- 119 The County School Board of Fairfax County, Virginia, A Body Corporate, versus Francis H. Fannon et. al. (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Chancery #9180, April 3, 1954.)
- 120 Deed of sale between the County School Board of Fairfax County and the Upper Pohick Community League (Circuit Court of Fairfax County, VA, Deed Book 1199, Page 422, July 23, 1954.)
- 121 History of Colvin Run Community Hall. (Available from www.colvinrun.org.)
- 122 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Vale Schoolhouse; DHR File Number: 029-5615 (Available from http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Countries/Fairfax/029-5615_Vale_School-Community_House_2011_NRNomination_FINAL.pdf.)
- 123 History of the Old Floris Schoolhouse. (Available from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp/school.htm.)
- 124 Letter from the Upper Pohick Community League to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, December 6, 1948.
- 125 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, February 17, 1949.
- 126 _____, April 21, 1949.
- 127 _____, August 18, 1949.
- 128 _____, April 20, 1950.
- 129 _____, September 15, 1948.
- 130 _____, February 5, 1959.
- 131 Letter from Myron W. Klein, president of the Upper Pohick Community League, to Fred L. Burroughs, Resident Engineer, Virginia Department of Highways, October 20, 1960.
- 132 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, October 7, 1954.
- 133 _____, November 4, 1954.
- 134 _____, May 3, 1956.
- 135 _____, September 1, 1957.
- 136 _____, June 2, 1960.
- 137 _____, July 1949.
- 138 _____, October 7, 1954.
- 139 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, January 5, 1955.
- 140 _____, June 5, 1955.
- 141 _____, October 6, 1955.
- 142 Letter from David Hall, Upper Pohick Community League President, to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, June 12, 1956.
- 143 Upper Pohick Community League Bulletin, June 1957.
- 144 *Washington Daily News*, February 3, 1958.
- 145 Upper Pohick Community League Bulletin, January 1958.
- 146 Letter from Edward Gibbons to John Marshall, Director of Public Relations at US Steel, October 16, 1959.
- 147 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, June 16, 1949.
- 148 _____, June 15, 1950.
- 149 _____, December 10, 1953.
- 150 _____, February 18, 1954.
- 151 _____, July 1, 1954.
- 152 _____, August 5, 1954.

Sydenstricker School

Fairfax County, Virginia

- 153 Letters from The Mason Neck Citizens Association, The Belmont Citizens Association and the Upper Pohick Community League to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, June 28, 1955 and September 19, 1955.
- 154 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, January 5, 1956
- 155 Harrigan and von Hoffman 2004.
- 156 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, May 6, 1955.
- 157 Press release of the Upper Pohick Community League, February 7, 1956.
- 158 Letter from Martin T. Webb to Loren L. Thompson, Upper Pohick Community League President, February 22, 1956.
- 159 Press release of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 5, 1956.
- 160 Harrigan and von Hoffman 2004.
- 161 _____.
- 162 Letter from Forbes Bryce, President of the Upper Pohick Community League, to the President of the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations, March 25, 1959.
- 163 Map: Proposed Burke International Airport. (Available from www.braddockheritage.org/items/show/78.)
- 164 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, August 4, 1955.
- 165 _____, November 3, 1955.
- 166 Burke International Airport Proposal, Land Auction Announcement. (Available from www.braddockheritage.org/items/show/80.)
- 167 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 9, 1948.
- 168 _____, May 19, 1949.
- 169 _____, February 21, 1952.
- 170 _____, January 18, 1951.
- 171 _____, October 18, 1952.
- 172 Shotgun shells are sometimes still found in the lawn outside the schoolhouse.
- 173 Press release by the Upper Pohick Community League, October 8, 1956.
- 174 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, November 16, 1950.
- 175 The History of the Friends of the Richard Byrd Library. (Available from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/friends/rbl/.)
- 176 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, December 6, 1956.
- 177 *Washington Daily News*, February 3, 1958.
- 178 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, May 30, 1958.
- 179 _____, July 3, 1958.
- 180 *The Springfield Independent*, July 3, 1958.
- 181 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, June 15, 1950.
- 182 _____, April 23, 1953.
- 183 _____, May 19, 1958.
- 184 Upper Pohick Community League Bulletin, March 1955.
- 185 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, July 20, 1950.
- 186 _____, August 1951.
- 187 _____, November 3, 1955.
- 188 _____, August 2, 1956.
- 189 Minutes of the Upper Pohick Community League, February 6, 1958.
- 190 Wrenn et al. 1976, p. 30.

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Sydenstricker School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: VIRGINIA, Fairfax

DATE RECEIVED: 7/06/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/31/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/15/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/22/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000539

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8-22-12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Sydenstricker School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: VIRGINIA, Fairfax

DATE RECEIVED: 8/04/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY:
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/29/15

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000539

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9-29-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Edson Ball

DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 9.29.15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Douglas W. Domenech
Secretary of Natural Resources

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
TDD: (804) 367-2386
www.dhr.virginia.gov

June 29, 2012

Mr. Paul Loether
Chief, National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Armitage Manufacturing Company, City of Richmond; Briarwood, City of Virginia Beach; F.D. Crockett, Middlesex County; Mt. Airy, Augusta County; Riverlawn, Mathews County; and Sydenstricker School, Fairfax County, Virginia

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed nominations, referenced above, are being submitted for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The nominations have been considered, and approved, by the State Review Board and the SHPO has recommended them for listing. Any letters of comment or objection have been copied at the end of the nomination material, along with any FPO notification letters.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My direct phone line is 804-482-6439.

Sincerely,

Lena Sweeten McDonald
National/State Register Historian

Enclosures

Administrative Services
10 Courthouse Ave
Petersburg, VA 23803
Tel: (804) 862-6416
Fax: (804) 862-6196

Capital Region Office
2801 Kensington Office
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391

Tidewater Region Office
14415 Old Courthouse Way
2nd Floor
Newport News, VA 23608
Tel: (757) 886-2807
Fax: (757) 886-2808

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5396
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
P.O. Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7030
Fax: (540) 868-7033



12000539
RECEIVED 2280

AUG 14 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

Julie V. Langan
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
www.dhr.virginia.gov

August 4, 2015

Mr. Paul Loether
Chief, National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 I ("Eye") Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Sydenstricker School, Fairfax County, Virginia - CORRECTION

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed pages for the nomination, referenced above, are being submitted to allow a correction to the nomination form for the Sydenstricker School. The nomination author seeks to clarify that the Sydenstricker School was the last one-room schoolhouse for white students in Fairfax County. The corrected sentence is on page 8 of the form in the second sentence of the first full paragraph. Additionally, later in the Statement of Significance, on page 12, the school's closure is clarified a bit more in the last sentence of the first full paragraph. An endnote was added to the end of this sentence, and to the list of endnotes at the end of the document, which necessitated renumbering all endnotes thereafter. The Sydenstricker School originally was listed in the National Register in 2012. The corrections provided herein *do not alter* the property's original historic boundaries.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My direct phone line is 804-482-6439.

Sincerely,

Lena Sweeten McDonald
National/State Register Historian

Enclosures

Administrative Services
10 Courthouse Ave.
Petersburg, VA 23803
Tel: (804) 862-6408
Fax: (804) 862-6196

Eastern Region Office
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5443
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033