

215

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 16 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Venersborg School
other names/site number Venersborg Community Club

2. Location

street & number N.E. 209th Street at N.E. 242nd Avenue not for publication
city, town Battle Ground vicinity
state Washington code WA county Clark code 011 zip code 98604

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Rural Public School Bldgs. in Wash. State

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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. See continuation sheet.

James E. Johnson 2/7/89
Signature of certifying official Date
Washington State Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Alvina Byer Entered in the National Register 3/16/89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)SCHOOL/Other/gabled vernacular

PRIVIES/Other/shed roof vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood (post and beam)

walls weatherboard; shingle

roof asphalt (composition)

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Venersborg School is a simple one-room, one-and-one-half story, wood frame, gabled, schoolhouse in a rural wooded setting. It is located in central Clark County, Washington, in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, in the watershed of Salmon Creek. The structure was built in 1912 by community resident John Kullbert, a Swedish carpenter who also crafted a church and many homes in Venersborg. The school was built to accommodate the children of Swedish immigrants who settled in the recently platted and subdivided settlement. Oriented to the north, the school faces N.E. 209th Street, formerly County Road #10. The building and its two associated privies are well maintained and retain their architectural integrity. With its deep, grassy and coniferous shaded setback, the setting also retains its original feeling and association.

The wood frame structure is rectangular in massing and plan. The building rests on a post and beam foundation set on stone footings. A shed roof addition runs the length of the gable. Front and side elevations are clad in weatherboard; the rear is covered with wood shingles. The whole is finished with a plain frieze and cornerboards.

A medium pitched roof of composition asbestos displays exposed purlins capped at the eave with exposed rafters raked at the eave line. A square, hipped roof, open belfry straddles the gable ridge at the north elevation. Its base is shingled and the roof is supported by four posts. The original bell is in place and in good working order. A plain brick chimney is set on the east slope of the roof.

The south elevation is symmetrically composed on a bilateral axis with four large windows in paired groupings. Originally there were five windows; the center window, however was removed when an interior partition was installed to divide the single room. The partition, which did not reach the ceiling, has since been removed. Fenestration on the south elevation provides most of the interior light. Windows are double hung wood sash of six panes each. The north elevation contains 2/2 double hung sash with plain surrounds. The opening for the attic also contains a four light, fixed pane opening. The rear elevation features four small square windows with four panes each. They are placed on the wall and are symmetrically spaced.

Originally the entry was on the east elevation. It was accessible from a simple gable-roofed porch. There were no windows on this elevation. The porch was enclosed in the 1920s and a small, one room shed addition was attached to it on the south. This became the teacher's office and it has a small stove in it, evidenced by a stovepipe emerging from the shed roof in a 1959 photograph. The entry was basically the same, except the double front doors were pushed out and installed on the north side of the enclosed porch.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

A modest shed roof kitchen addition was added in c.1960. This alteration subsumed the enclosed porch with its minute kitchen and teachers office, and the entry was extended flush with the north elevation. Fenestration on this elevation is irregular; a six-paned window is at the north end; the middle opening is a larger three-paned window featuring a broad center pane surrounded by smaller rectangular sidelights; and at the south is a small four bay multipane casement. The main entry doors are paneled and feature a single light.

The interior consists of a large rectangular room with its original black wood stove on the north side, and a low ceil, open kitchen along the east side of the building. Cloakrooms have been removed, but their original wall placement is suggested by a line in the fir plank flooring. The main room features low wainscoting, a chair rail, and, at window sill level, a picture molding encircles the room. A two-paneled blackboard is set on the walls in the northwest corner. Originally the east wall had a full length blackboard. It was removed during the c.1960 renovation. The ceiling is constructed of tongue and groove paneling; attached overhead are two simple, unadorned light bulbs in hanging sockets. The kitchen is paneled in varnished fir plywood. The sink is located on the south side of the east wall. There are two exits: one from the kitchen and one from the main room; both lead to the south side of the building. The doors each have five panels, and the unpainted door in the main room has white porcelain doorknobs. Two wood frame outhouses, with gabled roofs and weatherboard siding, still stand on the property.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education _____

Ethnic Heritage: European _____

Significant Person

N/A

Period of Significance

1912-1931

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Dates

N/A

Architect/Builder

John Kullberg, Builder

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

Venersborg School is historically significant for its association with rural public education in Clark County, Washington, and for its associations with the settlement and development of the Swedish immigrant colony of Venersborg. Built in 1912 in simple vernacular design, the wood frame building retains its rural, vernacular integrity as the nucleus of community life in the small unincorporated village. Though the school district was consolidated in 1931 with the larger Battle Ground district, the schoolhouse has remained in continuous use by community residents and is the last intact one room school in Clark County.

Historical Background: Venersborg was founded in 1909 by the Swedish Land and Colonization Company of Portland, Oregon. The company was formed by two Swedes, C.J. Lannerberg and John Anderson, who chose the attractive name of Venersborg, or "friends haven" for their settlement. They purchased one and one-fourth sections of land from the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company and a number of tracts from early settlers in the area. Partners Lannerberg and Anderson divided their holdings into parcels of ten to forty acres. Three years later, 43 houses, including some cabins, had been built and a prune dryer had been constructed in anticipation of a bountiful fruit harvest. By 1913 the secretary of the "colony" reported that the organization had added 1,200 acres to its original 1,000 acre holdings and that plans were afoot to purchase additional acreage.

The Swedish Land and Colonization Company promoted the "colony" by advertising extensively in Swedish language newspapers throughout the United States, Cuba, and Canada. These colorful, full page ads gave glowing accounts of the prosperous life which awaited potential colonist investing in the "koloni". The development company, however, exaggerated its claims, first by implying that street car service would be extended and shares in the profits from the timber sales were offered from land that was not yet cleared for farming. In 1911, a single mill was, in fact, built and it provided unsteady, seasonal employment for four years. Though the advertisements described the land as "cheap", it actually sold at higher prices than more desirable land nearby, and was in reality, rocky, uneven, forest stumpage land. Nevertheless, the colonization firm promoted Venersborg among prospective settlers, on one occasion at least, by luring a large group to the site "in a caravan with brass band, music, dinner, etc." Other settlers eschewed the promotional entertainment and simply bought their property without inspecting it, paying an average of \$90 per acre.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Allworth, Louise M. and Bonnie J. Walden, Battle Ground...In And Around. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1976.
- Drum, Eben H., Federal Writers Project Mss. Collection, 1939. Washington State Historical Society.
- The Vancouver Columbian. "Venersborg Colony Has Fine Future," August 23, 1911; "Venersborg Founding Feted; Fifty Years of Growth Recorded," August 19, 1959; "Swedish Colony Carved From Land As Venersborg Pioneers Labored," February 18, 1964; "Traces Of Swedish Pioneer Origin Vanishing As Community Ties Lost," February 19, 1964; "Ties To Community Once Strong But Now Fading As Era Passes," February 28, 1964; "Homemakers Maintain School For Community Uses," August 3, 1977.
- Engstrom, Mrs., "Sweat, Tears and Victory," in From A Forest Clearing, edited by Dorothy E. Person. Vancouver: Marque Printing Company, 1971.
- Moberg, Esther. Oral Interview. August 15, 1988.
- Moberg, Esther, "Venersborg--50th Anniversary," Clark County History 1 (1960): 56-57.
- Veirs, Kristina, ed., Nordic Heritage Northwest, Seattle: The Writing Works, 1982.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property .92 acres

Quadrangle Name: Yacolt Quadrangle Scale: 1:24000

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Venersborg Acre Tracts #1 Lot 36 Block 2

Beginning at the northeast corner of western 1/2 of Lot 36 Block 2 of Venersborg Acre Tracts said point being northwest corner of church lot thence south 200 feet thence west 200 feet thence north 200 feet thence east 200 feet to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ms. Linda S. Dodds with Melissa Cole Darby for the Heritage Trust of Clark County

organization History Resources date August 28, 1988

street & number 1665 N. 131st Avenue telephone (503) 644-8921

city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97229

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

In the spring of 1909 there were only two families in the community. By 1910 the colony was on firmer footing with settlers arriving and taking hold of their parcels. The new arrivals were mainly immigrants and first generation Swedes who preferred the gentler marine climate of the Pacific Northwest to the harsh winters of the eastern and plains states, their first American residences after leaving Sweden. Participating in the colony development with their countrymen and having the opportunity to become independent landholders also appealed to Venersborg settlers. Then, too, the relative isolation of their new settlement engendered the preservation of their Swedish culture. In this respect the Venersborgers were not unlike other Scandinavian immigrants who came to Washington during the period, in that they "...clung together in a tight community, for protection against hardships and loneliness."

In addition to their difficulties with the land and with providing for their families, the settlers also endured other hardships of nature. The Yacolt forest fire of 1910 destroyed several of the new homes that the colonists had built, as well as several piles of lumber that were to be used for new homes. Some of the houses were insured and were rebuilt as more settlers continued to pour in. Old World design elements such as stone foundations, jig sawn brackets, and sun porches on the second story were incorporated into the colonists' homes. European style stone fences were also constructed by the immigrants who used the cleared stone from their rocky acreage to divide their farms.

Eventually the community numbered some 75 or 80 families, many with school age children. In 1912 the promoters of the colony donated acreage for a public school and plans were laid to construct the one room facility. John Kullberg, who had arrived in the colony the previous year, was the builder of the schoolhouse. Kullberg also crafted homes for the colonists and he constructed the community's Methodist Church, adjacent to the school.

The one room school opened in the fall of 1912 with 34 students ranging in age from 5 to 16 years. Reflecting their parents' ethnicity, many did not speak English but they were encouraged by the school's first teacher, Miss Peterson, to learn the language. A former student recalls that the pupils worked at becoming "Americanized" and that the school was influential in bringing forth these cultural changes. Students and parents alike enjoyed the cultural enrichments offered at the school, including events such as box socials, picnics, and occasional silent movies.

The colony disbanded about 1920, not long after its last cooperative effort, the Venersborg Cannery Association, was founded. The school continued to thrive, however, and, parallel with developments in the community, received electricity in 1925. In 1927, to segregate graded classes, the schoolhouse was partitioned into two classrooms - a physical adaptation that was reversed in 1960. The division in the building necessitated a faculty expansion and a second teacher was hired. Consolidation occurred in 1931 when Venersborg School was absorbed into the larger, more urban Battle Ground School District, centered six miles to the northwest. The connection with the Battle Ground district was not a new one since high school students from Venersborg had commuted there for some years. Until 1922 students were forced by often impassable roads to make the ride to Battle Ground by horseback, or to board with a Battle Ground family. Beginning in 1922, however, high school students were transported by a touring car that was used as a school bus.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

The Venersborg Social and Athletic Club, formed in 1910, purchased the school property in 1933. The club sponsored community activities that included music and ethnic dancing; polkas, schottishes, and hambos were among the most popular. Weekly gatherings were held in the building until around 1940 when crowd control forced the events to be discontinued. Sometime later the club changed its name to the present Community Club.

Another group to use the structure was the Venersborg Sewing Club. Its modern counterpart, the Venersborg Homemakers Club, now meets at the schoolhouse and assumes responsibility for the building's maintenance. Youths belonging to the Cub Scouts organization and to the 4-H currently meet at the school, and the Venersborg church next door uses the facility for Bible classes and wedding receptions.