National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property	
historic name Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder	
other names/site number	
2. Location	14
street & number Stacy Road	not for publication
city or town Malone	X vicinity
state New York code NY county Franklin code 033	zip code12917
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering propertie of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. X meets	In my opinion, the property sidered significant
State or Federal agency and bureau	
additional comments.	continuation sheet for
Signature of certifying official/Title Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau	
4. 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.	Date of Action
determined not eligible for the National Register.	
removed from the National Register.	
other, (explain:)	

Franklin County, New York
County and State

5. Classification					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)		Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count		
X private	building(s)	58	Contributing	Noncontributing	
public-local	X district		I	8	buildings
public-State	site		0	0	sites
public-Federal	structure		0	0	structures
E E	object		0	0	objects
*			1	8	Total
Name of related multiple propert (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a	multiple property listing.)		listed in the N	ntributing resources ational Register	previously
N/A	· · · · ·		_ 0		
6. Function or Use		a a			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)			nt Functions categories from ins	structions)	
DOMESTIC: Dwelling		RECE	REATION AND C	CULTURE : Museum	
AGRICULTURE: agricultural field.	t			1	
					1
	·			×	
20					-
	545			-	
					19
-			7.		
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materi (Enter d	als categories from ins	structions)	
MID-19 TH CENTURY: Greek Reviva	d	founda	tion Limesto	one ·	
		walls	Timber frame,	wooden clapboard	
			2	11	
	8	roof	Wooden shing	le	
		other			
	70	#y46.76(TST)		8	
	A				

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

Franklin County, New York County and State

8 State	ement of Significance	
	able National Register Criteria	Areas of Significance
(Mark "	x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the y for National Register listing.)	(Enter categories from instructions)
2-2		LITERATURE
XA	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	ARCHITECTURE
В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
ХC	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.	Period of Significance 1842-1875
\Box D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,	Significant Dates
	information important in prehistory or history.	1842; 1857; 1866; 1875
	a considerations x" in all the boxes that apply.)	
		Significant Person
Proper	ty is:	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
A	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
В	removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation N/A
С	a birthplace or grave.	
	a cemetery.	
E	a reconstructed building, object or structure.	Architect/Builder Unknown
F	a commemorative property.	
□ G	less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	
	tive Statement of Significance n the significance of the property on one or more continuation	on sheets.)
9. Maj	or Bibliographical References	vi
Biblio	graphy e books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this fo	orm on one or more continuation sheets.)
7.65	ous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data
Previo	preliminary determination of individual listing (36	
	CFR 67) has been requested	x State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency
		I De la company
	previously listed in the National Register	Federal agency
	previously determined eligible by the National	Local government
	Register	University
	designated a National Historic Landmark	Other
	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Name of repository:
	# recorded by Historic American Engineering	Record #

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder	Franklin County, New York County and State	
Name of Property		
10. Geographical Data		
Acreage of property 84		
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)		
1 Zone Easting Northing 2	3 Zone Easting Northing 4	
	X See continuation sheet	
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)		
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)		
11. Form Prepared By	47	
name/title <u>Travis Bowman</u>	* ,	
organization New York State Historic Preservation Office	date <u>May, 2008</u>	
street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189	telephone <u>518-237-8643 x 3259</u>	
city or town Waterford	state New York zip code 12188	
Additional Documentation		
Submit the following items with the completed form:		
Submit the following items with the completed form.	# ×	
Continuation Sheets	9 ×	
Continuation Sheets	2 ×	
Continuation Sheets Maps	property's location.	
Continuation Sheets Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the p		
Continuation Sheets Maps		

Additional items

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

Property Owner	-			
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)				
name Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Association				
street & number PO Box 283		telephone	518-483	-1207
city or town Malone	state	<u>NY</u>	zip code	12953

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this from to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

OMB No. 1024-0018, NPS Form National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 10 Geographical Data Page 1

UTM References

Zone	Easting	Northing	
18	562073	4968973	
18	562129	4968367	
18	561538	4968343	
18	561485	4968805	
18	561602	4968941	

SITE PLAN Wilder Homestead, Franklin County, NY-Malone Barn Complex (Reconstructions) Not to Scale Stacy Road Main House Visitors Center Wooded Area 1. Main House 2. Visitors Center 3. Corn crib 4. Main Barn **Trout Stream** 5. South Barn 6. Picnic Pavilion 7. Restrooms 8. Horse Barn 9. Pump House

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 7 Page 2

Non-Contributing Buildings:

Eight outbuildings have been constructed on the nominated property for interpretive purposes. The story of Farmer Boy cannot be properly understood without the use of the agricultural outbuildings which feature prominently in the narrative. Though of modern construction, these buildings do significantly add to the setting, feeling and association of the property with the story. Unless otherwise noted, all of the buildings are all wood-framed, clad in vertical wooden boards and architectural shingles. The non-contributing buildings are:

- 1. Visitors Center, 1989. 2 ½ story gable-roofed building with shed-roofed porch projecting from south elevation and rear-wing projecting to the east. Houses gift shop, exhibit space, staff offices and site archives.
- 2. Corn Crib, 1989. Small single story, single room structure with inwardly sloping walls. Accessed via a single door. Based on Almanzo Wilder's descriptions and Farmer Boy.
- 3. Main Barn, 1995. Foundations discovered 1988 by archaeologists with SUNY Potsdam. Reconstructed building based on archaeology, Almanzo's descriptions/maps and Farmer Boy. The "big barn" was used to house oxen, cows, hay and wagons.
- 4. **South Barn, 1997**. Gable-roofed single story structure. Reconstructed building based on archaeology, Almanzo's descriptions/maps and *Farmer Boy*. Historically it contained a sheepfold, a manger, a cattle shed, calf pens, hog pens and a feed room.
- 5. Picnic Pavilion, 1998. Open sided pavilion on concrete pad. Constructed away from historic core of buildings. It does not substantially distract from other resources.
- Restrooms, 1999. Single story gable roofed structure. Constructed away from historic core of buildings. It does
 not substantially distract from other resources.
- 7. Horse Barn 1999. Gable roofed single story building with large outwardly swinging entrance doors. Connected at an ell to the Main Barn (see above) but not truly integrated structurally. Does have an entrance into Main Barn, though historically treated as different building. As the narrator of Farmer Boy, Almanzo mentions the door connecting the horse barn and the main barn was quite special and unusual for the time. Reconstructed building based on archaeology, Almanzo's descriptions/maps and Farmer Boy. Historically it contained hen houses, horse stalls, calves sheds, box stall and buggy house.
- 8. Pump House 2002. Gable-roofed single story structure containing a well and pump. The well is most likely the original family well given its proximity to the house and the intense labor required to dig it. The pump is not original to the Wilder homestead. Reconstructed building based on archaeology, Almanzo's descriptions/maps and Farmer Boy.

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

The Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, is located about three miles east of the village of Malone, New York, the county seat of Franklin County. The house and associated outbuildings are grouped just east of Stacy Road. There are currently nine buildings onsite, but eight of these are modern reconstructions. The original farmhouse is the only building considered contributing for the nomination, but the other associated agricultural outbuildings are very important to establishing a proper setting and context.

Farmhouse, 1843, contributing.

The main dwelling onsite is a two-story, three-bay center entrance farmhouse with a projecting rear wing attached. The structure is gable-roofed on both blocks, with the west gable end fronting Stacy Road. The main block is vertical planking (2" x 14") clad in 6" weatherboard and resting on a limestone foundation. The moderately-pitched roof is covered in architectural shingles. Fenestration on the entrance (west) facade consists of a four-panel center entrance door, covered by a small, half-height Greek Revival style porch with squared columns supporting a triangular pediment and a small railing. The entranced is accessed via four concrete steps. Two, double-hung twoover-two shuttered windows flank the entrance on the first floor along with flanking rectangular casement windows in the foundation. The second floor has two regularly spaced double-hung, two-over-two windows in the pediment area. Details include a chamfered Greek Revival style cornice and raking gable forming a broken pediment and beaded corner boards. Moving around the building, the north elevation of the main block has three, regularly spaced double-hung, two-over-two windows. The rear (east) elevation faces the barnyard and outbuildings. Fenestration consists of a small, single-hung window on the second floor and a double-hung, two-over-two window on the first floor, but overall is dominated by the two gable end elevations of the main block and rear wing. The south elevation has a slightly offset entrance, accessed by three concrete steps and covered by a modest, Greek Revival style porch with squared columns. The door is flanked by two, double-hung two-over-two shuttered windows flank the door on the first floor and rectangular casement windows in the foundation.

The rear block is a 1 ½ story, four bay by three bay wing of post-and-beam construction. The roofline is parallel to the main block, and stepped down about six feet. Wall cladding, roof cladding and foundation materials are all the same as the main block. Detailing is similar to, but not an exact copy of, the main block, and includes a flatter profiled Greek Revival style cornice, raking gable and beaded corner boards. The south elevation of the wing presents the most elaborate fenestration, with two entrances and windows. The easternmost door is covered by a small colonnaded portico with squared columns and is flanked by a single six-over-six double hung window. The western door is accessed via three concrete steps and has a single six-over-six double hung window flanking. The north elevation has three offset, double-hung six-over-six windows and an entrance door covered by a small shedroofed bracket top. This long elevation side is a continuous plane from the rear to the main block. The door is accessed via three wooden steps. Fenestration on the rear elevation of the wing consists of two offset windows. The first floor window is a double-hung, six-over-six window and the upper window is single-hung with nine-panes.

The interior retains some integrity, but has been extensively restored. The original 8" plank flooring was retained under the c1900 alterations that occurred, and has now been restored. Also extant in several rooms is the original plaster over accordion lath and several examples of 1 x 6" beaded baseboard. The floor plan appears to have changed little, and retains integrity to Almanzo's time period.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance

The Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder is nationally historically significant for its association with the work of author Laura Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957), a prominent member of the American literary community during the early to mid twentieth century. Wilder achieved considerable attention with the publication of her 1932 book Little House in the Big Woods, which she followed up with Farmer Boy in 1933. Her accurate descriptions of frontier life and style emphasizing the daily routine and simple events led to her authoring of a highly popular series of children's books—selling millions of copies worldwide. Her best known work is Little House on the Prairie (1935), which spawned a multimillion-dollar franchise of mass merchandising and a popular, longrunning television show of the same name. Inspired by the popularity of the Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House," thousands of visitors have sought out the nominated property to experience first-hand the literal and actual setting for Wilder's Farmer Boy. Farmer Boy records one year in the childhood life of Almanzo Wilder (1857-1949), Laura Ingalls Wilder's husband, who was born in the nominated farmhouse in 1857 and spent most of his childhood on the property. Out of all the homes immortalized in the book series, the Wilder homestead is the only original "Little House" residence still standing on its original site. The extant Wilder farmhouse, coupled with numerous surviving landscape features meticulously described in the book, enables the overall site to maintain a superb degree of integrity to the setting of Farmer Boy. Although Laura Ingalls Wilder never visited the property personally, her book was based directly and specifically on her husband's memories of his childhood there. Almanzo provided Laura not only with number of anecdotes, each of which is related in one chapter of Farmer Boy, but also with accurate sketches of the house and farmstead that substantially correspond with its current appearance.

The Wilder homestead is also locally architecturally significant as an intact, representative example of a vernacular Greek Revival style farmstead. Surviving examples of such working-class, mid-nineteenth century farmsteads in the North Country region of New York State are rare. Few changes were made to the structure after Almanzo and his family moved west; further, Almanzo's sketches and descriptions of the house compared with numerous early twentieth century illustrations of the house (due to the popularity of the book), allowed for an accurate restoration to its 1866-70 appearance. The date of significance corresponds to the Wilder family occupation of the farmstead, 1842-1875. Farmer Boy is set to c.1866, but it is reasonable to assume some of Almanzo's memories were of earlier or later dates rather all having taken place at age nine. The property remained an active farmstead until the 1970s, but James Wilder had moved his family west by 1875.

The Wilder Farm

The Wilder family had early roots in the town of Malone, NY. Immigrating from New England, Abel and Hannah Wilder settled in the North Country frontier town in 1816, only twelve years after the founding of the town. Abel and Hannah's son James Wilder (1813-1899) purchased a farm near his parents' land on a branch of the Trout River in 1840. Two years later, probably near the time of his marriage to Angeline Day, James began construction of modest, two-story farmhouse situated on a slightly raised bluff just east of Stacy Road. According to a Historic Structures Report prepared by Crawford & Sterns Architects in 1998, the original dwelling was nearly square (25' x 25'), with a moderately pitched roof, a bold Greek Revival style cornice and raking return, and a small, Greek Revival Style porch. Fenestration consisted of regularly spaced six-over-six double hung windows on the first floor elevations, and two similar windows on the second floor of the west gable elevation. The house was sided with 6" weatherboard and detailed with an 8" water table board and beaded corner boards. This block of the house was is of vertical plank (2" x 14") construction. Within a few years, circa 1855, the Wilder family added the rear block of

¹ Crawford & Sterns, "Historic Structure Report: James Wilder Farmhouse," Unpublished, October, 1998. p.14. Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Association Archives, Malone, NY.

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 2

the farmhouse. This block utilized the more common post and beam construction technology, projecting at an ell with the gable end roofline and cornice running parallel to the main block. The ell is not integral with the main block in construction or at the foundation. The detailing remained sympathetic to the Greek Revival style—albeit slightly updated to keep with the more fashionable trends of the 1850s. Flattened, more angular cornice molding profiles are one example of this trend. Windows were probably updated to the more popular two-over-two sash at this time as well. A half-height entry porch, accessed via three steps, covered the entrance to the ell on the south elevation, utilizing square Greek Revival columns. Both the main block and rear ell indicate James Wilder employed common designs for a simple and frugal Greek Revival Style dwelling. The lack of a tripartite entrance, elaborate corner pilasters or trabeated window surrounds point not to a high stylistic design, but a working class farmstead of the period.

The popularity of the Greek Revival style on the mid-nineteenth century went deep into the American psyche. Classical forms represented liberty for all, the epitome of American ideals, reassuring bankers and yeoman farmers alike that America had succeeded. Sympathy for the Greek Wars of Independence (1821-30), coupled with a distaste for English forms after the War of 1812 led American architects and builders to search for new forms, appropriate to the new republic, and classical forms were an obvious choice. These forms had been in use in America since the eighteenth century, but numerous archaeological investigations in the early nineteenth century brought to light new forms, details and motifs. Consistent with the new style for the new nation, a democratization of architecture occurred. The publishing of several carpenters' guides, notably the works of Asher Benjamin (The Practical House Carpenter; The Builder's Guide) and Minard Lafever (The Modern Builder's Guide; The Beauties of Modern Architecture), allowed rural carpenters to interpret the new aesthetic. The modest farmhouse of James Wilder embodied the principles and ideologies of the architecture of the day—a vernacular, North Country interpretation of the language of the Greek Revival style.

Almanzo Wilder

Born February 13, 1857, Almanzo Wilder was the fifth child of James and Angeline Wilder. In 1875, as a response to several years of a poor hops harvest, James Wilder moved his family to Spring Valley, Minnesota, establishing a prosperous farm there.³ Four years later, in 1879, Almanzo, his sister Eliza Jane and his older brother Royal moved to De Smet, South Dakota to take advantage of the 1862 Homesteading Act, giving 160 acres of lands to claimants who could improve the land. The recent defeat of the last bands of Lakota Sioux who refused to be placed on a reservation had led to the perception of the Dakota Territory finally being safe for immigration, and thousands of homesteaders made their way west on the railroads.⁴ The resulting "Dakota Boom" of 1878-1887 saw the founding of 238 towns, almost all of which, including De Smet, were created by railroad companies or were built along the railroad right of way. In De Smet, Almanzo met Laura Elizabeth Ingalls, whose family had also immigrated to the Dakota Territory in 1879.

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Laura Elizabeth Ingalls, the second of five children, was born on February 7, 1867 near the village of Pepin, Wisconsin, to Charles and Caroline Ingalls. The Ingalls's family moved several times throughout Laura's childhood, homesteading in Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, Indian Territory, Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota. Her

² Ibid. 17-18.

³ John E. Miller, Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Woman Behind the Legend, (University of Missouri Press: Columbia, Missouri) 1998, 72. James Wilder and his would eventually settle in Crowley, Louisiana.

⁴ A small force of Lakota under Lame Deer was the last holdout, they were defeated on 7 May 1877 by Colonel Nelson A. Miles, commander of the 5th Infantry Regiment near the modern South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana border on the Rosebud Creek; The population of the Dakota Territory roughly quadrupled in this time, form 135,000 in the 1880 census to 540,000 in the 1890 census.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 3

childhood experiences formed the basis for her later works, as Wilder wrote in a style best described as fictional autobiography. Laura's family endured several hardships during the course of their pioneering—the loss of an infant (Laura's baby brother Charles), destruction of an entire year's worth of crops to grasshoppers (twice), the possibility of starvation during a severe winter, and the severe illness that claimed the sight of Laura's elder sister Mary. Laura began working at very young age to help support her family, she accepted he first teaching position at age 15. In addition to the hardships of prairie life, Laura was continually faced with the challenge of moving and making new friends, many of whom became fictionalized as characters in literary works. In De Smet, SD, Laura met Almanzo Wilder, a fellow homesteader, and Almanzo and Laura were married on August 25, 1885. Fifteen months later Laura gave birth to their daughter Rose (1886-1968). Married life brought no reprieve from the difficulty of frontier life for Laura Ingalls Wilder. Complications from diphtheria nearly killed Almanzo (eventually the disease left him crippled for life), Laura lost a child in infancy in 1889, and the Wilder's home and barn were destroyed by fire. Moving was a frequent occurrence, but they finally settled for good in 1894 at Rocky Ridge Farm in Mansfield, Missouri. After years of scratching out a subsistence existence, the Wilders finally transformed Rocky Ridge in a relatively prosperous poultry, dairy and fruit farm. By 1912, the family was even able to replace their ubiquitous pioneer log cabin with a comfortable, ten-room farmhouse.

Laura Ingalls Wilder's Literary Career

Laura and Almanzo's savings were lost during the Stock Market crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression, and the couple became dependent on their daughter Rose for financial support. By the late 1920s, Rose Wilder (Lane) (1886-1968) had enjoyed success as a travel writer, newspaper columnist, novelist, and Libertarian political theorist. In 1931, Rose was instrumental in encouraging her sixty-four year-old mother to write down her frontier experiences, with the former serving as editor and encourager for Little House on the Big Prairie. The book was immediately praised by critics and the response from readers was overwhelmingly positive. Wilder's candid and detailed descriptions of overcoming hardships and the "pioneer spirit" struck a resonance with readers during the hard times of the Great Depression. Success bred more success. Readers begged Wilder for more books in the series, which she began to deliver at a steady pace. Wilder finished her career with the 1943 publication of These Happy Golden Years, documenting the first, happy years of her courtship and marriage. At age seventy-six, she consciously decided to end the "Little House" series with her marriage to Almanzo—ensuring the story did not truly extend into her character's adulthood. Her decision to write each book from the perspective of a girl the age Laura had been when the action took place had led to a progressively maturing narrative voice, to carry that style into adulthood would have required a complex revamping.

Conservative estimates of printings of her books tally at over 60 million, putting her in the top 25 best selling children's authors of all time (by way of perspective, the Curious George series has sold about 27 million while Harry Potter has sold over 400 million by the date of this nomination). The books have never been out of print. There are several museums dedicated to Laura Ingalls Wilder, five National Register properties associated with her (see context statement below) and fan clubs dedicated to her works are legion. Laura was inducted in the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame and the state Halls of Fame in Missouri and South Dakota; Minnesota travelers can drive the Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway. The mass marketing of Little House merchandise includes cookbooks, aprons, paper dolls, sewing books, craft books, calendar and diaries to name a few, sparking one Los Angeles Times writer to quip "Little House is...its own industry." Laura's fame was acknowledged in 1993 when the

⁵ Miller, Becoming Laura Wilder, 188-9.

⁶ Ibid. 241

⁷ As quoted in: Anita Clair Fellman, *Little House, Long Shadow: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Impact on American Culture* (University of Missouri Press; Columbia Missouri.) 2008, 200-01.

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 4

US Post Office included Wilder's Little House on the Prairie as one of its four Classics of American Children Literature 29¢ stamps.

Farmer Boy and The Wilder Homestead

The book itself chronicles one year in the life of a nine year-old Almanzo Wilder, told in the third person. Each of the twenty-nine chapters is a short episode of Almanzo's life (See Continuation Sheet for a chapter list), relating detailed descriptions about his home life, his schooling, interpersonal relationships with his family and the townspeople. Large portions of the book are dedicated to cuisine as the family enjoys the bounty of their farm labors. Especially notable in the narrative are Almanzo's descriptions of the omnipresent farm duties—planting, hoeing, harvesting, plowing, breaking calves, sheep-shearing, ice cutting, butter-making, maple-sugaring, and varied others as the book chronicles the seasons. Farmer Boy has long been praised for its depictions of tools and processes—everything from Almanzo's chores to his father's business dealings is related with detailed and meticulous historical accuracy. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the book takes place on Almanzo's father's farm, comprising the farmhouse, the outbuildings, the fields and the immediate environs. Based on the level of accurate detail present in Farmer Boy, one can assume Laura Ingalls Wilder strove for accuracy.

Farmer Boy thus can properly be viewed as a collaborative effort between Laura Ingalls Wilder and her husband Almanzo. According to Laura, Almanzo supplied anecdotes, descriptions and diagrams to her, bringing alive his childhood experiences in mid-nineteenth century Malone.8 Almanzo supplemented his stories with hand-drawn sketches of the house and the property, described by Crawford and Sterns, Architects Historic Structures Report as "amazingly accurate." Farmer Boy makes approximately fifty specific references to the farmhouse, which aided Crawford and Sterns in documenting the c1866 appearance of the farmstead. In the text, Almanzo describes the house's color (red), fenestration, the floor plan and layout, orientation and interior finishes, etc. Dozens of specific examples, as exactly described in the book, are still visible—including details like the front parlor with a door leading to the porch off the west elevation, a bedroom door in the south wall, an elaborately described a woodstove in a niche opening between the parlor and dining room. These descriptions, coupled with the aforementioned Historic Structures Report, allowed for an accurate restoration of the house to the time of Farmer Boy. Although portions of the building were re-created, the proportion, organization of the façade, basic plan and mass, size and shape of window and door openings, and other such macro features all remain to the time of the book. As part of a comprehensive restoration plan, twentieth century alterations have been removed, siding was recreated based on the survival of several original 6" weatherboards, replacement windows were period replicas, original architectural and interior elements were kept whenever possible and interior finishes were documented and recreated. The exterior environs so accurately described in the book remain largely intact as well; specific descriptions of, and references to, landscape features, barns and other outbuildings in the text number in the hundreds. Many features of these are still visible—the Trout Stream, the square barnyard, the St. Lawrence as a "silver streak" in the distance, probable descendants of original nineteenth century plant material (roses, the apple orchard, raspberry bushes, lilacs in the front yard and sugar maples), various pastures and fields, etc. According to Landscape Architect Scott Shannon, the overall site "retains its original orientation, and, to some degree, its original character as well." 10 Work on landscape restoration began in the 1980s and continues today. The Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Association have used Farmer Boy and extensive archeological work conducted by nearby SUNY Potsdam to reconstruct several farm

⁸ William T. Anderson, "Little House in the North Country: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Farmer Boy Describes Life in Malone a Century Ag." Adirondack Life. (Jay, NY), March-April 1996, 28-31.

Orawford & Sterns, "Historic Structure Report: James Wilder Farmhouse." Unpublished. October, 1998, p.77. Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Association Archives, Malone, NY

¹⁰ Scott Shannon, "Technical Report: Landscape Grading and Drainage, Almanzo Wilder Homestead, in Crawford & Sterns, "Historic Structure Report: James Wilder Farmhouse." Unpublished. October, 1998. Unpaginated. Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Association Archives, Malone, NY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 5

outbuildings on the property. The reconstructed agricultural buildings add substantially to the overall setting of the historic farmstead. By giving the farm its original feeling and association to the time period of Farmer Boy, these modern buildings enhance the functional qualities of the nominated property, but do not contain enough architectural or historical qualities to warrant inclusion in the nomination. Together the extant farmhouse, landscape features and reproduction buildings built on archaeological and historical research make a substantial contribution to the interpretation and understanding of the events of Farmer Boy.

Context of the Wilder Homestead within the "Little House" milieu

The birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder in Pepin Wisconsin, the setting for Wilder's Little House in the Big Woods, features a replica cabin on the site of Laura's birthplace. Known as the "Little House Wayside", it is operated as a museum. The setting has changed dramatically as the site is now open prairie rather than the dense hardwood forests described by Wilder in her book.

Shortly after Laura's birth, her family moved to Kansas, homesteading in the Rutland Township. Unbeknownst to them, the Ingalls had settled within the Diminished Reserve of Osage Indian Nation, lands not technically opened for settlement yet. As a result, the family moved back to Wisconsin sometime in 1871. Despite only occupying the site for two years, this farmstead became the setting for Wilder's most famous work, The Little House on the Prairie. In 1977, volunteers located the original foundation of the Ingalls' family farmstead and constructed a replica cabin there, based on descriptions in the book. The state of Kansas has designated the cabin as the official historic site of the Little House on the Prairie. Although the original home is no longer extant, the site retains many features prominently mentioned in the book, including the well Charles "Pa" Ingalls dug, the Walnut Creek, the high prairie where Laura and her sister played, and the bluffs described to the north of the house. Nearby in Independence, KS, where Wilder described the family going for supplies, is the grave of Dr. George Tann, the real-life "Dr. Tan" from the book. Two period historic buildings have been moved to the site, a one-room schoolhouse which operated from 1872-1947 and a c1900 Post Office, neither building has any direct connection to Laura Ingalls Wilder or the book. The site is operated as museum.

From 1874-1876 the Ingalls family, including Laura, lived in Walnut Grove, Minnesota. Approximately 1.5 miles north of town, along the Plum Creek, the family lived in a "dugout" house. Such pioneer dwellings, common on the American prairie during the early settlement period, were generally constructed of thick blocks of cut sod, covered by a grass roof. This Ingalls' home was the setting for Laura Ingalls Wilder's *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, and only retains a fair amount of landscape integrity to the book as all structures onsite have been lost. The only physical trace left of the Ingalls' home is a shallow depression in the bank of the creek. The Laura Ingalls Wilder Dugout site was listed on the National Register in 1978. Although privately owned, access is allowed to the site for a fee, a Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum operates out of a series of historic buildings in the town of Walnut Grove. Walnut Grove was the home to The Little House on the Prairie television series.

In 1876, Charles Ingalls and his family moved again, this time to Burr Park, Iowa to help a friend manage the Masters Hotel. The Burr Oak House/Masters Hotel was National Register listed in 1983 and is now operated as the Laura Ingalls Wilder Park and Museum. The family only stayed in Burr Park for one year, and neither the town nor the hotel were a setting for any of Wilder's works.

¹¹ Penny T. Lisenmayer, "Kansas Settlers on the Osage Diminished Reserve: A Study of Laura Ingalls Wider Little House on the Prairie" Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains., (Kansas State Historical Society Inc.: Topeka Kansas), Vol. 24, No. 3 Autumn 2001, 168-85. http://www.kshs.org/publicat/history/2001autumn_linsenmayer.pdf Accessed 14 July 2008.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 6

The Ingalls home in De Smet, SD from 1879-80, known as the "Railroad Shanty," was NR listed in 1973. The family's experiences there were the subject of Wilder's By the Shores of Silver Lake. The Railroad shanty was moved three blocks from its original location and placed on a cement block foundation. It is now operated as a museum. In the spring of 1880, Charles "Pa" Ingalls built a small homestead just south of the town of De Smet. The Ingalls Family homestead was the setting for Wilder's The Long Winter, and The Little Town on the Prairie. The building is no longer extant, but a reproduction stands in its place, it is operated as a museum. Laura lived at the Ingalls family homestead until her 1885 marriage to Almanzo when she moved to a nearby farmstead slightly north of town. Laura and Almanzo's farmstead is no longer extant. In 1887, Charles, his wife Caroline and Laura's sister Mary moved into a one-and-a-half story frame house on West 3rd Street in De Smet. Although the home was not the subject or setting for any of Wilder's books, it was listed on the National Register in 1975 because of its association with the prominently featured "Pa" Ingalls, "Ma" Ingalls and the blind Mary Ingalls—all major characters in the "Little House" series.

In 1890, Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder moved to Spring Valley, MN, living either with or near Almanzo's parents. Their home is no longer extant (a barn still stands), but the Spring Valley Methodist Church they attended from 1890-1 was NR listed in 1975. It is now operated as the Methodist Church and Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum by the Spring Valley Historical Society. After moving at least two more times, Laura and Almanzo purchased their "Rocky Ridge Farm" in Mansfield Missouri in July of 1894 (NR Listed 1970).

Of the many homes occupied by the Ingalls family, only two stand in their original locations. The Masters Hotel in Burr Park, Iowa and the Ingalls' family house on West 3rd Street in De Smet, SD, and Laura Ingalls Wilder never lived in the latter. Of the six homes that served as settings for Laura Ingalls Wilder's classic "Little House" series, only two are extant—the "Railroad Shanty" in De Smet, SD (setting of 1939 By the Shores of Silver Lake) and the boyhood home of Almanzo Wilder in Malone, NY (setting of 1935 Farmer Boy). Of these two, only the James Wilder house retains its original location, foundation and setting. Historian Ann Romines describes the importance of such tangible, material reminders of the series to Laura's loyal readers: "The survival of such objects is doubly important because the dwelling Wilder wrote about did not survive [i.e. the Little House on the Prairie dwelling]. The Little House, like the books is serial. One by one the houses are built, furnished, inhabited and left behind...finding these things physically present...seems to confirm the triumphant durability of the Little House myth..." 12

Popularity of Farmer Boy

Wilder's sentimentality and unpretentious characterizations of frontier life made her works especially popular with children, and her detailed descriptions of the past along with characters that served as literary and historical role models gave the books tremendous educational value.¹³ After the publication of Farmer Boy, a teacher in Minnesota wrote Wilder to inform her that her first two books were being used in every third-grade class in the state; a teacher in Buffalo, New York declared Farmer Boy to be better than the history books for that period.¹⁴ The Little House books, including Farmer Boy, are recommended reading for primary school students in both America and Canada, and were listed among the 100 best books for children and young people by the National Education Association and in Anita Silvey's guide for parents, the 100 Best Books for Children.¹⁵ First Lady Laura Bush, a former librarian,

¹² Ann Romines. Constructing the Little House: Gender, Culture and Laura Ingalls Wilder. (University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst, Massachusetts) 1997, 4.

¹³ Wayne Jebian "Little House in Limbo: Rediscovering Almanzo Wilder" (Hollywood, CA: Americana: The Institute for the Study of American Popular Culture), October 2007. http://www.americanpopularculture.com/archive/bestsellers/almanzo.htm Accessed July 9, 2008.

¹⁴ Miller, Becoming Laura Wilder, 215. and Anita Clair Fellman, Little House, Long Shadow, 7.

¹⁵ For America see: ED375075 - National Standards for History for Grades K-4: Expanding Children's World in Time and Space. Expanded Edition. Including Examples of Student Achievement for Grades K-2 and 3-4. by the Educational Resources Information Center in Washington, DC as well as ED295760 - James

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 8 Page 7

even listed Wilder's books in her short list of recommended books for the entire family to enjoy. A Laura Ingalls Wilder biographer requested feedback in the early 1990s about how Wilder's works were used as a teaching tool, the letters of inquiry evoked responses from "[t]eachers from every section of the country [who] wrote to me describing how they had used, or were using the Little House books in their classroom." The same biographer notes the inclusion of Wilder's works in so many curriculums had led to "tens of millions of youngsters" becoming familiar with the series, though new governmental standards of the 2000s have diminished their classroom role recently. As essential parts of any elementary school library, the books have served as popular basal readers, cornerstones of literature-based curriculums, foundations for Social Studies units on pioneer life—sometimes for every grade between first and fifth. The extraordinary appeal of Farmer Boy is in its detailed descriptions of ordinary life in the past. Most modern readers no longer need to work long hours on a mid-nineteenth century farmstead, so the previously mundane events became a history lesson on the "Old East." Farmer Boy is especially important as the only Little House book to feature a male protagonist, giving young boys an entry into a series generally thought of as "girl's books."

Conclusion

Laura Ingalls Wilder literary fame and popularity is unquestioned, and Farmer Boy is among her most important and beloved works. As the setting for an internationally significant book, the Wilder homestead has become a destination for thousands of tourists who wish to revisit the everyday memories of a nine year-old boy's life on a rural, 1860s, North Country, New York farmstead. Professor of literature and Almanzo researcher Wayne Jebian summed it up thusly: "Almanzo Wilder was more than just a supportive husband; he became the second lead character in her bestselling series and the main protagonist of Laura Ingalls Wilder's second book, Farmer Boy." The Wilder homestead should be viewed through this prism. The book only comes to life through Almanzo's drawings and descriptions, his intimate and irrevocable connection to Farmer Boy could virtually be described as coauthor. If it were not for Famer Boy, the legion of Laura Ingalls Wilder fans would have no reason to venture from the Midwest to experience the real "Little House" world, but the book immortalized the boyhood home of Almanzo Wilder as, literally, a literary shrine. Taken together, the extant farmhouse and the prominent landscape features retain enough authentic historic integrity to convey the property's significant associations with Farmer Boy. With the addition of the reconstructed buildings, sympathetic to Almanzo's primary source descriptions, the farmer boy would surely recognize his boyhood home as it exists today.

20 Ibid.

Madison Elementary School: A Curriculum for American Students. In Canada, the Saskatchewan Biotechnology: Teacher Guide recommends the works of Wilder as well.

¹⁶ Laura Bush, "Laura Bush's Family Favorites." http://www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/initiatives/familyfavorites.html. Accessed 15 July, 2008.

¹⁷ Fellman, Little House, Long Shadow: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Impact on American Culture (University of Missouri Press; Columbia Missouri.) 2008, 7.

¹⁹ Jebian, "Little House in Limbo."

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Photo Log (Prints from Digital Photos)

Name of Property:

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder

Location:

Franklin County, New York

Photographer:

Travis Bowman

Date:

May 21, 2008

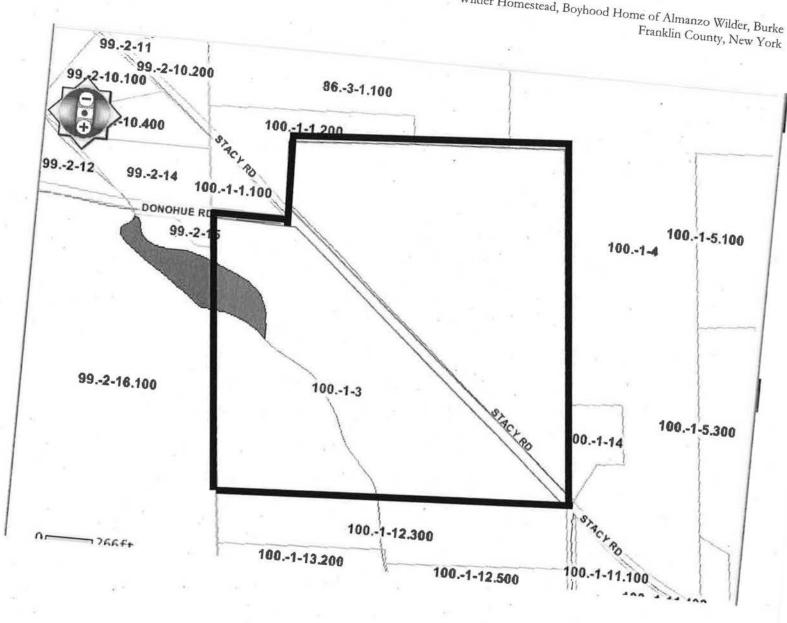
Location of Negatives: CD-R Included

NY_FrnkCo_Wildr

Reference #	Caption
E-1	Exterior view, facing NW.
E-2	Exterior view, facing SE.
E-3	Exterior view, facing NW.
E-4	Exterior view, facing NE. Representative views, non-contributing buildings: Main barn, Horse Barn, South Barn, Pump House, and Corn Crib.
E-5	Exterior view, facing NW. Representative views, non-contributing buildings: Main Barn, Horse Barn, and South Barn.
I-1	Interior view, front Parlor.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Section 10, Boundary Description

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Burke



Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Farmer Boy Chapter List:

- 1. School Days
- 2. Winter Evening
- 3. Winter Night
- 4. Surprise
- 5. Birthday
- 6. Filling the Ice-House
- 7. Saturday Night
- 8. Sunday
- 9. Breaking the Calves
- 10. The Turn of the Year
- 11. Springtime
- 12. Tin-Peddler
- 13. The Strange Dog
- 14. Sheep-Shearing
- 15. Cold Snap
- 16. Independence Day
- 17. Summer-Time
- 18. Keeping House
- 19. Early Harvest
- 20. Late Harvest

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Photo Log (Prints from Digital Photos)

Name of Property:

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder

Location:

Franklin County, New York

Photographer:

Travis Bowman

Date:

May 21, 2008

Location of Negatives: CD-R Included

NY_FrnkCo_Wildr

Reference #	Caption	
E-1	Exterior view, facing NW.	
E-2	Exterior view, facing SE.	
E-3	Exterior view, facing NW.	
E-4	Exterior view, facing NE. Representative views, non-contributing buildings: Main barn, Horse Barn, South Barn, Pump House, and Corn Crib.	
E-5	Exterior view, facing NW. Representative views, non-contributing buildings: Main Barn, Horse Barn, and South Barn.	
I-1	Interior view, front Parlor.	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Wilder Homestead, Boyhood Home of Almanzo Wilder, Malone Franklin County, New York

Section number 9, 10 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Anderson, William T. "Little House in the North Country: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Farmer Boy Describes Life in Malone a Century Ag." Adirondack Life. (Jay, NY), March-April 1996.

Crawford & Sterns, "Historic Structure Report: James Wilder Farmhouse." Unpublished. October, 1998. Almanzo and Laura Ingalls Wilder Association Archives, Malone, NY.

Fellman, Anita Clair Fellman, Little House, Long Shadow: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Impact on American Culture (University of Missouri Press; Columbia Missouri.) 2008.

Jebian, Wayne. "Little House in Limbo: Rediscovering Almanzo Wilder" (Hollywood, CA: Americana: The Institute for the Study of American Popular Culture), October 2007. http://www.americanpopularculture.com/archive/bestsellers/almanzo.htm Accessed July 9, 2008.

Lisenmayer, Penny T. "Kansas Settlers on the Osage Diminished Reserve: A Study of Laura Ingalls Wider Little House on the Prairie" Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains., (Kansas State Historical Society Inc.: Topeka Kansas), Vol. 24, No. 3 Autumn 2001. http://www.kshs.org/publicat/history/2001autumn_linsenmayer.pdf Accessed 14 July 2008.

Miller, John E. Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Woman Behind the Legend, (University of Missouri Press: Columbia, Missouri) 1998.

Romines, Ann. Constructing the Little House: Gender, Culture and Laura Ingalls Wilder. (University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst, Massachusetts) 1997.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property consists of a roughly square lot measuring approximately 200' on a side, with the northwest corner missing, and straddling Stacy Road in the town of Malone. As indicated by the heavy black line on the attached map, it consists of all of the tax parcel #100.-1-3 in the town of Malone.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The nominated property includes all lands of the historic James Wilder farmstead under current ownership. This includes the buildings and immediate environs as well as the preserved open spaces separating the structures. The 84 acre parcel under current ownership includes enough of the original cultivated lands, pastures, associated landscape features and fallow fields to provide a representative example of the types of lifeways and agricultural practices which occurred on James Wilder's larger 88 acre farm, as depicted in the book *Farmer Boy*. The four acre difference between the nominated property and James Wilder's original farmstead contains no significant structures, buildings or features which would have been considered contributing and thus can be excluded.















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION:	RESUBMISSION		
PROPERTY NAME:	Wilder Homestead		
MULTIPLE NAME:			
STATE & COUNTY:	New York, Franklin		
DATE RECEIVED: DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF WEEKLY LI			.4
REFERENCE NUMBER:	09000720		
NOMINATOR: STATE			
DETAILED EVALUATION ACCEPT RABSTRACT/SUMMARY	ETURN REJECT	DATE	
RECOM./CRITERIA_			
REVIEWER alelly	thy	DISCIPLINE	
	()	DAME	

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 National Park Service.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION
PROPERTY Wilder Homestead NAME:
MULTIPLE NAME:
STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Franklin
DATE RECEIVED: 8/07/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/24/09 DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/08/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/20/09 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:
REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000720
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: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y
COMMENT WAIVER: N
ACCEPT X_RETURNREJECT 9 18 09 DATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:
CORVERSALON SCOT
RECOM./CRITERIA
REVIEWER WERKEN 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.



David A. Paterson

Governor

Carol Ash Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 518-237-8643 www.nysparks.com

August 6, 2009

Ms. Alexis Abernathy National Park Service National Register of Historic Places 1201 Eye St. NW 8th Floor Washington, D.C. 20005

> Re: Transmittal of National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to transmit five new National Register nominations to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register as follows:

Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, New York Co., NY

Kilts Farmstead, Stone Arabia, Montgomery Co., NY

Bullard Block, Schuylerville, Saratoga Co., NY

Wilder Homestead, Malone, Franklin Co., NY

Hiram Lay Cobblestone Farmhouse, Seneca Co., NY (NYS Cobblestone MPDF)

Thank you for your assistance in processing these proposals. Please feel free to call on me at 518-237-8643 ext. 3258 if any questions arise.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Peckham National Register

Mar A Shalle

Program Coordinator

enclosures