

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 8 1976

DATE ENTERED JUL 15 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Skagit City School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

3.5 mi S of Mt Vernon on
~~Route #3~~ Moore Road

CITY, TOWN

Mount Vernon *vicinity* VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd - Lloyd Meeds

STATE

Washington

CODE

53

COUNTY

Skagit

CODE

057

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Club House

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Skagit City Community Club (Ronald Holttum, President)

STREET & NUMBER

1710 Old Highway 99 South

CITY, TOWN

Mount Vernon VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Auditor's Office, Skagit County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Kincaid Street

CITY, TOWN

Mount Vernon

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Skagit City School, located in the vicinity of Conway and LaConner near the mouth of the Skagit River, is a modest frame schoolhouse constructed in 1902. About twenty miles from Skagit Bay and the inland waterways of Puget Sound, the Skagit River sub-divides into a system of meandering streams. These outlets have formed a broad delta of fertile flatlands and sloughs. Within the delta is a stream-encircled body of land known as Fir Island. The Skagit City School is situated on Moore Road which crosses Fir Island at its northerly end.

Surrounding the one-acre school site are open fields and pastures, and country roads which criss-cross the delta. The school property is heavily wooded, obscuring a major portion of the building from view. Many of the now mature trees and shrubs were planted in memory of particular Skagit City pioneers.

The school building is a one-story, L-shaped structure with steeply-pitched, gabled roofs. It is supported by a system of wooden posts on cement piers, which creates a four-foot crawl space underneath the building. The original one-room school, with its gable ends oriented to the north and south, was enlarged in 1909 with the addition of a second gabled unit to the west. The rear or south facades of these two units are flush with one another. The entire frame structure is sheathed with carefully matched shiplap siding, and the roof is clad with wood shingles which are currently in a state of disrepair.

At the ridge of the north gable end on the main elevation is the belfry. It is a four-square open tower with a bellcast hipped roof, and it rises approximately thirty feet in the air. The school bell is no longer in position. Below the belfry, the major entryway is sheltered by an open, hipped roof porch. A double leaf, five-panel door with transom leads directly into the cloak room or foyer. A second porch with a raised wooden deck is recessed under the roof on the north face of the 1909 addition. From this porch, access is provided to an interior classroom and to a lavatory at the westernmost gable end.

Although the Skagit City School is a notably simple structure in terms of its design and detailing, it is solidly and thoughtfully constructed. Just as the shiplap siding was neatly continued at the juncture of the 1909 addition, so is the fenestration consistent on all faces of the building. The windows are comprised of one-over-one light, double-hung sash with simple frame surrounds, arranged in ribbon units on the east, west, and south elevations. Other features which unify the two portions of the building are cornerboards, and a continuous broad, plain frieze under boxed eaves.

No alterations of consequence have taken place on the interior of the school building. Two spacious classrooms, now used for community gatherings, are distinguished chiefly by the extensive use of narrow tongue-in-groove panelling on walls and ceilings. The interior of the building has been exceptionally well-maintained over the years.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1902

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Skagit City School is the only surviving public structure associated with the now-extinct village of Skagit City. Skagit City was the first settlement on the lower Skagit River, the largest river to empty into Washington's Puget Sound. From 1870-1890, Skagit City flourished as the major inland port and supply center of the Skagit Valley. Although the Skagit City School was constructed in 1902 in the declining years of the community's importance, it represents the last of a series of country schools built to accommodate the children of the Skagit Delta. It is one of few early schools in the area to have endured the ravages of Skagit River floods, and it remains the single well-recognized link to the once-thriving village of Skagit City.

In 1858, the Whatcom (now Bellingham) Northern Light reported on prospecting activity on the upper Skagit River in the Cascade Mountains. The discovery of gold in that territory one year previous had prompted expeditions by fortune-seekers to the headwaters of the Skagit, south and east of Mt. Baker. Navigation up the river was severely hindered by a massive log jam in the vicinity of what is now South Mount Vernon, about twenty miles from the mouth of the Skagit at Puget Sound. At this point, the Military Road from Bellingham to Fort Steilacoom crossed the river. Because upriver navigation was interrupted and over-land traffic converged here, a campsite and outfitting post soon sprung into being. By the late 1860s, a supply station and trading post for miners and trappers had been established at the north end of Fir Island, where the Skagit diverges into its North and South Forks. This delta outpost, logically known as Skagit City, was situated approximately one-quarter mile south of the log jam campsite.

The rich delta flats between the North and South Forks, at first heavily forested, rapidly attracted homesteaders. As the virgin timber was cleared, Skagit City grew as an agricultural service center. The community reached its heyday between the years 1870 and 1890, when the village achieved a stable population of 500 residents. During this period the town boasted a hotel and restaurant, a Methodist and a Baptist Church, a recreation hall and a post office. Skagit City received the first Western Union telegraph office in Skagit County, and included among its citizens the county's first doctor, dentist, photographer, and undertaker (the latter serving also as an interpreter for the local Skagit Indians).

In 1874, five local men contracted to remove the log jam. The treacherous job required four years of labor and cost two lives. At long last the day arrived when the first steamer made its way through the narrow passage upstream to the tiny settlement of Mount Vernon. For a time, Skagit City participated in the increased traffic of goods and passengers to and from points upriver. At the town wharf docked steamers and sternwheelers (some of which had plied the waterways of Puget Sound prior to the clearing of the river) such as the Shoo Fly, the Skagit Queen, the T. C. Reed, the Gleaner, the Harvester, and government snagboats such as the Black Prince. Pleasure steamers transported the delta people to

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Holtum, Ronald, Collection. Documentary material - photographs, newspaper clippings, compiled data - on Skagit County.

Holtum, Ronald. "The Schools of the Skagit River Pioneers of 1860." unpublished manuscript. 1954.

(see attached sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	5,4,6,9,2,0	5,3,5,7,4,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Based on information submitted by:

Ronald Holtum, President

ORGANIZATION

Skagit City Community Club

DATE

October, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1710 Old Highway 99 South

TELEPHONE

(206) 424-3898

CITY OR TOWN

Mount Vernon

STATE

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

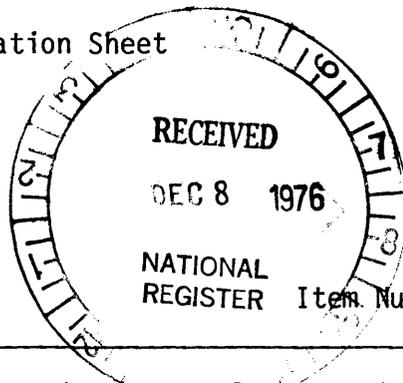
DATE

2/15/77

DATE

6.15.77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

SKAGIT CITY SCHOOL
SKAGIT CO., WASH

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scenic locations on Whidbey and Camano Islands. Pioneers preparing to homestead lands further upstream equipped themselves for the journey in Skagit City.

Several factors were responsible for the eventual demise of Skagit City. The removal of the log jam and the accompanying increase in river traffic encouraged the growth and development of previously tiny upriver settlements. These in turn began to function as markets, ports, and service centers in direct competition with Skagit City. Continual erosion of the town's river banks remained an unsolved problem. The arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1890 connected Mount Vernon with Seattle and points south, and increased the importance of neighboring communities such as Conway and Fir. An auto road between Conway and Mount Vernon constructed in 1919, decreased the need for short-distance river transport, and further isolated Skagit City itself. The shut-down of the Fir Island ferry operation, which for many years connected Skagit City with the "mainland", signaled the end for the pioneer community. Today only a single warehouse and the Skagit City School survive as reminders of the once-flourishing inland port.

Prior to 1901, Skagit City and its surrounding flat lands formed County School District #3, an area of ten square miles. Six different school buildings were erected, including the extant Skagit City School, in various locations on Fir Island and east of the South Fork. For the most part these schools were built directly on the river bank, as there was a shortage of cleared land, and a central location convenient to children of the entire district was essential. Following the removal of the log jam in 1879, the delta lowlands were subjected more frequently to flooding of the Skagit's lower channels. The fragile dikes privately erected by individual settlers often proved inadequate in high waters. Time and again, the simple frame schools were undermined by turbulent flood waters, and required relocation and reconstruction.

The fifth District #3 schoolhouse was built in 1892 on Fir Island. It stood on the property of John and George Moore on the west bank of the river, approximately one-quarter mile from the location of the present-day Skagit City School. This two-story clapboarded structure with its ornate, arcaded bell tower was irreparably damaged by floods in 1901. The building was dismantled and the lumber salvaged. In the same year, School District #3 was subdivided. Fir Island and lands west of the South Fork were encompassed in a newly-created District #57.

In May of 1902, District #57 purchased a one-half acre lot on the property of Knute Lang on Moore Road. This time, a site somewhat removed from the river bank was selected, to minimize the danger of flood damage. The present-day Skagit City School was erected on this wooded site utilizing the salvaged lumber from the recently dismantled schoolhouse. Originally, the new school was a one-story gabled structure, rectangular in plan, with a bell tower at the ridge of the forward gable. In 1909, a large room was appended to the west elevation. An additional one-half acre of land was purchased for playground space in 1911.

The Skagit City School continued to serve the children of the Fir Island community until consolidation of district schools closed its doors in 1940. At that time, approximately 60 pupils were in attendance. In 1943, the building was purchased by the Skagit City Community Club, and has since served as a gathering place for various community activities.

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Item Number 9

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Willis, Margaret, Ed. Skagit Settlers: Trials and Triumphs, 1890-1920. Skagit County Historical Series No. 4. Skagit County Historical Society. Mount Vernon, Washington, 1975.

