

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 11 1982  
APR 12 1982

DATE ENTERED

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 Southwest District School, (Woodtick Schoolhouse)  
(Stone School)

AND/OR COMMON Old Stone School

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 155 Nichols Road

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wolcott

N/A VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

New Haven

CODE

009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

N/A

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Wolcott Historial Society

STREET & NUMBER 155 Nichols Road

CITY, TOWN

Wolcott

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE, WOLCOTT TOWN HALL  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER 10 Kenea Road

CITY, TOWN

Wolcott

STATE

Connecticut

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE State Register Of Historic Places (Connecticut)

DATE

1981

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Stone School is a simple, 1-room schoolhouse located on the north side of Nichols Road, one of the oldest roads in the southwest portion of Wolcott. The building occupies a high point along the road, and the land to the rear (wooded and unoccupied except for the small outhouse) slopes up sharply. On the northwest side of the site, as well as directly across the street, are modern ranch-style dwellings (1960s) while on the southeast is a garage erected in the 1950s followed by a late 18th or early 19th-century house modified by numerous alterations. Beyond, on the east, is the Scoville Reservoir and recreational area (photo 1).

The original portion of the schoolhouse, 38'3" x 20'5" in dimension, is constructed of untrimmed, roughly coursed granite quarried locally. In 1898 a 10' extension was added to the rear of the building, in more evenly coursed, drill-cut granite blocks (photo 2). At this time the extended portion was attached to an earlier frame woodshed forming a wing on the southeast side of the building.<sup>1</sup> The plain, unmolded trim of the cornice and window frames are original and are painted white. The single hinged shutters date from at least 1898 and some may be older. The present wood shingle roof replaces an original one of the same material. The date 1825 is carved in the highest stone under the roof peak on the southwest end wall, in the same hand as the date 1898 in a corresponding stone in the northeast end wall (photos 1, 3).

Originally, the entrance to the building was in the 3rd bay on the southeast side. When the 1898 extension was added, the entrance was removed to the southwest side of the frame wing, which opens into a small coatroom connected to the schoolroom by a door in the northwest side. This inside door is of thick pine construction with 6 molded panels and an ornamental handle dating from the construction of the extension. Opposite the schoolroom door, on the southeast side of the coatroom, an old plank door opens into a storage area within the woodshed. The coatroom has been recently restored to a general historical appearance with weathered barnboard paneling and rows of wooden coat pegs.

The interior of the schoolhouse is, as it was originally, a single, uninterrupted rectangular space. The walls are plaster and are continuous with the elliptical arched ceiling, an early or original feature displaying a seam at the juncture of the 1898 extension. The date of the present cement floor is not known (photo 5).

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<sup>1</sup>The Wolcott Historical Society possesses a bill for the construction of the woodshed, dated 1882.

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Wolcott, CT

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The building is presently occupied by the Wolcott Historical Society and is used as a museum of Wolcott history and memorabilia relating to early education in the town. During a restoration program conducted in 1976-77, as part of the town's Bicentennial activities, the building was reroofed, the exterior trim painted, the interior plasterwork repaired, and the coatroom paneled. Also at this time a continuous writing shelf was built around 3 sides of the schoolroom, a reproduction of the original arrangement.<sup>2</sup> A large Franklin stove was also placed at the southwest end of the room, opposite the position of such a stove in 1898 (at the northeast end, where there is still a small chimney). Other items relating to schoolhouse activities displayed in the room include an early 19th-century schoolmaster's lecturn (larger and more elaborate than the teacher's table originally used in this building), originally belonging to Reverend Joseph E. Camp of Northfield, Connecticut. The wall space is now used for hanging displays, and rows of glass display cases occupy the center of the schoolroom (photos 5, 6

As part of the restoration, the historical society has also placed a cedar log flagpole and an old iron hand pump (inoperative) in the southeast part of the grounds, in accordance with 19th-century photos of the schoolyard, and in 1978 planted a seedling from the Charter Oak in the same area. The outhouse set behind a group of trees northeast of the schoolhouse probably dates from between 1910 and 1930, and is the last of a series of such structures regularly used during school sessions (photo 4).

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<sup>2</sup>The society's restoration is based upon old photographs of the building, before and after the 1898 extension, and written accounts of the school's interior arrangements by former teachers and pupils who attended the school (Wolcott Historical Society).

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1821 or 1825

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Stone School is the principal extant landmark of Wolcott's distinguished 19th-century public school system (Criterion A). It is also architecturally significant (1) as the only remaining, intact example of early 19th-century locally-quarried granite construction in the town, and (2) as a revealing example of the early, rural school-house in Connecticut and New England as a whole (Criterion C).

#### History of the Structure

As the facility serving Wolcott's Southwest District, 1 of 6 school districts in the town in the 19th century, the Stone School replaced an earlier frame structure on the same site built in the late 18th century. The dates 1821 and 1825 have been given for the construction of the 2nd building, but the earlier date is supported by the fact that the previous structure burned down in 1820, as well as by the family record of one Wolcott resident, Charles Miller, which states that an ancestor, Almira Frisbie, attended the 1st session of the new school in 1821.<sup>1</sup> The school was in continuous operation from the time it was erected until 1930, when a new Woodtick School was completed, and again used for overflow from that school in 1942-43 -- well over 100 years in all. As many as 5 generations of the same Wolcott families attended the school, which held between 14 and 28 students yearly until 1898.'

The 1898 extension, constructed of commercially quarried and cut granite, provides a contrast with the adjacent original random cut stone work along the northwest and southeast walls. Also around 1898 a frame entrance hall/coatroom was built connecting the extension with the earlier woodshed (see under Item 7). With the enlargement, the school serviced classes of from 22 to 42 students. Aside from the extension (a natural response to expanding enrollment), the present concrete floor (20th-century), and the removal of the built-in writing shelves and other original furnishings, there have been no major alterations to the building since it was erected. The early 20th-century

<sup>1</sup>Recorded in John H. Washburne, "Story of the Old Stone School" (unpub. typescript, Wolcott Historical Society, 1978), p. 1.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- "William Andrus Alcott." Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. I. Edited by Allen Johnson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928.
- John Brouker. A Salute to Two Centuries of Education in Wolcott. Wolcott: The Wolcott Historical Society, n.d.
- History of New Haven County. Vol. 2. Edited by J. L. Rockey. New York: W. W. Preston & Co., 1892. Pp808-822.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1/3 acre **NOT VERIFIED**

QUADRANGLE NAME Southington Quadrangle QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1,8</u>	<u>6,6,7,8,8,1</u>	<u>4,6,0,4,9,1,0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property occupies a parcel of land identified on Wolcott Assessor's Map 115 as lot 24, plus a portion of lot 26 on same map. It is bounded on the southwest by Nichols Road. The northwest boundary begins at a

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Susan Ryan, Consultant

ORGANIZATION Connecticut Historical Commission DATE 2/1/1979

STREET & NUMBER 59 South Prospect Street TELEPHONE (203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN Hartford STATE Connecticut

## 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 Director, Connecticut Historical Commission DATE February 16, 1982

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Entered in the  
National Register

DATE 4/12/82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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outhouse is in the tradition of a succession of such facilities located in the same general area northeast of the schoolhouse, and contributes to the overall authenticity of the schoolyard (photo 4).

In 1930 the building was purchased by Emily Morris of New Haven. In 1937 Miss Morris presented it to the Mattatuck Historical Society of Waterbury, Connecticut, as a gift and a memorial to her mother and to her mother's father, Lucius Tuttle, who taught at the Old Stone School in 1829. The Waterbury society used it for occasional exhibits. A pamphlet published by the Mattatuck Historical Society in 1956 outlined a restoration plan for the building, which included reducing the structure to its original pre-1898 size, and installing a permanent exhibit on the life and work of Amos Bronson Alcott.<sup>2</sup> The plan was not accomplished due to lack of funds and in 1963 the school was purchased by the Wolcott Historical Society (established in 1958). The recent restoration of the school was the project of the Wolcott Society, and subsequently of the town's bicentennial activities in 1976-77. The school was dedicated as the society's museum in October, 1977.

Criterion A

The Old Stone School is the most authentic and important relic of 19th-century public education remaining in Wolcott, and is therefore the key structure associated with the town's distinguished educational history. Prior to its incorporation as a separate township in 1796, Wolcott was established in 1770 as the Parish of Farmingbury, originally a part of the towns of Waterbury and Southington. A rural, agricultural community from its beginnings through the mid 20th century, Farmingbury (Wolcott) demonstrated an early and active interest in public education. Publicly supported schools were held in the area as early as 1763. With the establishment of the parish, 9 school districts were formed (the number was reduced to 6 by the 19th century), and matters such as procedures for collecting funds for the support of the schools and teachers and the length of the sessions were regulated by parish vote.

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<sup>2</sup>The Old Woodtick School in Wolcott: A Report on its Present Condition and Proposed Restoration, Mattatuck Historical Society, Occasional Publications, New Series, No. 24 (October, 1956).

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The vital character of Wolcott's early public school system is represented by the fact that 2 key figures in the history of American primary education were born and attended schools there: Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), Transcendentalist and founder of the Fellenbergian Temple School and the utopian educational community at Brook Farm; and William Andrus Alcott (1798-1859), pioneer in the field of student health, who popularized the ideas of Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi in America.

In connection with the Stone School's exceptionally long term of operation, numerous records and memoirs of its teachers and of students who attended classes there survive, comprising a unique and illuminating historical resource for the town. The perspective on classroom arrangements and activities, and the background and attitudes of the students, found in extant diaries and memoirs of former teachers and pupils, reports of school committee members, and sundry bills, certificates, contracts and other documents relating to the schoolhouse and its operation, establish the building as a local landmark in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and contribute to its present-day significance for the Wolcott community.<sup>3</sup>

Criterion C

The Stone School is unique as the earliest existing granite structure -- the only 19th-century example -- in Wolcott. A town of numerous small hills, Wolcott is marked by its granite ledges and outcroppings, a few of which, such as those on the present-day farm of James Wakelee and on the south side of Todd's Pond, are known to have been local quarries for building material in the early 19th century. While granite was commonly used for the foundations of the town's early houses, the Stone School provides a modest but rare example of an entire Wolcott building constructed of this locally-quarried material.

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<sup>3</sup>Original documents and written and verbal memoirs (recorded) are in the collection of the Wolcott Historical Society.

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The schoolhouse is also among the earliest examples of the 19th-century vernacular schoolhouse in Connecticut. The unbroken interior space, plaster interior finish, vaulted ceiling and general lack of architectural embellishment were typical of this type of structure throughout New England and illustrate the simple, functional requirements of public school education in this period (photo 5). The Stone School's long term of use as a 1-room schoolhouse in a community which maintained its rural character until the mid 20th century may explain why the building has undergone no **major** alterations since the 1898 addition, outside of periodic changes in the furnishings, and the addition of the concrete floor. The Wolcott Historical Society has encouraged the effectiveness of the building as a relic of 19th-century public school education by restoring the original arrangement of student writing shelves and stools, and installing displays and other articles illustrating early classroom activities. In addition, the old hand-pump, cedar flagpole and outhouse, all installed by the Society, reflect the original components of the schoolyard.<sup>4</sup>

As an example of early New England schoolhouse architecture, the Stone School bears a particular relationship with the ideas of educational pioneer William Andrus Alcott (1798-1859). Alcott, born in Wolcott, attended the Central District School in 1812-16,<sup>5</sup> and taught there (and occasionally at schools in Hartford and Lightfield) at various times between 1816 and about 1839, alternating his educational career with the study and practice of medicine. After 1830 Alcott assisted the Reverend W. C. Woodbridge in establishing an experimental school in Hartford after the innovative Fellenberg model of J. H. Pestalozzi. During the 1830s, in Boston, Alcott edited the Juvenile Rambler, probably the 1st American

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<sup>4</sup>Restoration based on 19th-century photographs of the schoolhouse (exterior and interior) and former students' and teachers' written and verbal accounts of the building's 19th-century appearance.

<sup>5</sup>The early 19th-century Central District schoolhouse survives, but is an almost totally altered structure incorporated into a larger factory building.



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children's magazine, and Parley's Magazine. In addition, Alcott published in all 19 volumes on education, including Confessions of a Schoolmaster (1839), which includes accounts of his experiences teaching in communities such as Wolcott.

In his writings Alcott sought reform in almost every aspect of public school education, but is probably best known for his interest in student health and the affect of schoolhouse design on student learning abilities. Alcott's major work on this subject, Essay on the Construction of Schoolhouses (1831), which won an award from the American Institute of Education, analyzed such factors as construction, ventilation, heat, lighting, the size and position of windows and the arrangement and design of schoolhouse furnishings. The Stone School was the most ambitious schoolhouse constructed in Wolcott while Alcott was teaching in the town, during the years just prior to the publication of this essay. The building anticipates some of the educator's recommendations, such as elevated site, location on a principal road (of the district), solid and permanent construction, and numerous windows to provide ample light and ventilation. At the same time, the Southwest District schoolhouse exemplifies traditions which Alcott was to criticize, such as windows set too low, a potential distraction for the scholars; and the continuous writing shelf around the perimeter of the schoolroom, which Alcott felt caused discomfort and bad posture, exposed the students to drafts and hindered communication between students and teacher.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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The Old Woodtick School in Wolcott: A Report on its Present Condition  
and Proposed Restoration. Mattatuck Historical Society,  
Occasional Publications, New Series, No. 24 (October, 1956).

John H. Washburne. "The Story of the Old Stone School." Unpub. MS,  
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA: Verbal Boundary Description (cont.)

point on Nichols Road and travels in a northwesterly direction 93.5' more or less along land now or formerly owned by Claude V. Badger. At this point the northeast boundary travels in a southeasterly direction to a point 15' northwest of the northwest side of the outhouse now or formerly located northeast of the schoolhouse, and travels northeasterly and southeasterly along a line running 15' around the outhouse on the northwest and northeast sides. From here the southeast boundary runs in a southwesterly direction to Nichols Road.