

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001742 Date Listed: 12/10/91

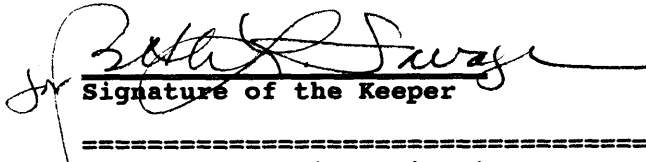
Wylie School
Property Name

Windham
County

CT
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

12-10-91
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Area(s) and Criteria

Criterion C applies to the documented significance of the property under the area of Architecture.

This information has been confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHP, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: WYLIE SCHOOL

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: Ekonk Hill Road (Route 49)

city/town: Voluntown

not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: Windham

code: 015 zip code: 06384

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eliqibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See cont. sheet.

John W. Hancock _____ October 24, 1991
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register _____ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Beth J. Savage _____ 12/10/91
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: EDUCATION Sub: school

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: museum

7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

no style

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation GRANITE roof WOOD
walls WOOD other BRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: EDUCATION
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period(s) of Significance: c.1850-1939 _____

Significant Dates: c.1850

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Not known

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approx. 1/4

UTM References: Zone		Easting	Northing	Zone		Easting	Northing
		<u>223030</u>	<u>4610125</u>				
A	<u>19</u>	<u>262980</u>	<u>4609910</u>	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

The nominated property includes the parcel referenced in Voluntown Land Records, Vol. 14, p.556 (1858).

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

The boundary embraces the historic lot given for the school in 1858.

11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth

Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: May 8, 1991

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: Hartford State: CT ZIP: 06106

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

Wylie School
Voluntown, Windham County, CT

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Summary

Wylie School is both historically and architecturally significant as a typical, though unusually well-preserved, one-room schoolhouse. Until well into the 20th century, small schools such as this represented the principal educational experience for many Connecticut residents, especially in areas outside the large towns and cities (Criterion A). In its small size and utilitarian architecture, Wylie School represents a particular type of building of which there were once hundreds scattered throughout rural Connecticut (Criterion C). Today, most one-room schools have disappeared or have been unrecognizably altered into houses or other uses. Wylie School is one of few that remain intact, and the only one in Voluntown. Wylie School is also significant for its association with Margaret E. Tanner. Miss Tanner, who taught in Voluntown from 1909 to 1947, influenced the lives of countless residents. Her career is an example of the often-overlooked contribution made by professional women in rural New England society.

Historical Context

From early in the 18th century, most Connecticut towns were divided up into school districts, with each part of town having its own one-room schoolhouse. The local school districts were responsible for spending their share of the town's educational funds, most of which, after 1795, came from the Connecticut School Fund set up with proceeds from the sale of the state's land in the Western Reserve in Ohio. Each district school society hired its teacher and supervised the school, though a town-wide Board of School Visitors or Board of Education also exercised oversight. Graded schools, with the children separated into eight grades according to age, became common in the larger towns and cities starting in about the middle of the 19th century, but ungraded one-room schools continued to predominate in rural areas of Connecticut as late as the 1930s. District schoolhouses had few physical amenities, and reformers campaigned against them in favor of schools with larger classrooms, better light, and fire-proof construction. The spartan nature of Wylie School was typical. Although it lasted in service long enough to be electrified, its heating and sanitary facilities never were improved beyond a stove and outhouse.

The educational experience offered by such schools is largely unknown today. The mixture of ages required creative planning and coordination on the part of the teacher, so as to have some children working quietly while another lesson or recitation was in progress. While it had

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Wylie School
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obvious disadvantages, the mixture of ages also allowed students to work above or below the average for their grade. Also, children were exposed not only to others of their own age but also to their neighbors up to eight years older and younger. Since the students were all from one small part of town, and many attended along with one or more siblings, the school reinforced existing familial and community ties. The setting must have been intimate and familiar: only fifteen to twenty students attended class in the room, and they returned year after year until they left school or enrolled in high school in a larger town. Whatever their advantages and disadvantages, one-room schools worked well in their day, producing not only civic leaders, clergymen, and scholars but also a general public with a solid basic education.

Wylie School served Voluntown's Tenth School District. As early as 1758 the town had been divided into three districts, with the number increasing to fifteen by 1797. The Tenth School District was given this parcel, one-quarter of an acre in size, in 1858 by Henry Wylie, though a map published in 1855 shows that a schoolhouse was already on the site. Henry Wylie (1806-1889) was a local farmer whose philanthropy included not only the school but also the Congregational Church, in which he served as a deacon and to which he left all his property at his death. The school was commonly known by his name, "Wylie School" appearing in published town reports as early as the first decade of the 20th century. In the 1890s Voluntown, declining in population along with the rest of rural Connecticut, began to consolidate its schools. The town had built a graded school in the mill village in the center, and by 1910 Wylie School was the only remaining outlying school. Wylie School served the entire north part of the town, which retained its agricultural character, until 1939. Further population decline during the Depression made it impossible for Voluntown to operate more than one school (even the central one was not filled to capacity), and Wylie School was discontinued following the 1938-1939 school year.

Architectural Significance

Wylie School is typical of the one-room schools built throughout rural America in the 19th century. Although some had simple Greek Revival detailing such as pilasters and cornice returns, many also, like Wylie School, were completely devoid of stylistic embellishment. The lack of moldings on door and window surrounds, the simple dado, and the plain

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plastered interior are representative of the utilitarian structures of the period. And while reformers made some headway in convincing local districts to build their schoolhouses of brick, wood-frame and clap-board construction still predominated for these small buildings.

Margaret E. Tanner

For many years Wylie School was under the care of Margaret E. Tanner (c.1885?-1974). A native of Voluntown, Miss Tanner first taught at the school in 1909. After an absence of a few years, she returned about 1920 and taught at Wylie School until it closed. She then moved to Voluntown's Center School, continuing until her retirement in 1947. As was expected of school teachers in that period, she remained unmarried. Over her long career, Miss Tanner had in her charge innumerable residents of Voluntown, in many cases for eight years in a row. She is still remembered for her insistence on correct answers quickly delivered, using a system she called "rapid work" for testing math facts. Although her long service was confined to one small community, her significance extends beyond Voluntown. She was representative of a large group of women whose devotion to teaching and many years of service gave structure to rural communities. Women such as Margaret Tanner are thus an important (if not always recognized) part of our heritage.

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