

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 5 1987

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Fox Island School
other names/site number n.a.

2. Location

street & number Gway Dr. & 9th St. not for publication
city, town Fox Island vicinity
state Washington code 053 county Pierce code 053 zip code 98333

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
Rural Public School Buildings in
Washington State

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 5-20-87
Signature of certifying official Date
State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

[Signature] 7-15-87
Entered in the National Register

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Hipped roof vernacular (school)

Other: Rustic style (play shelter)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete (school); wood (shelter)
walls weatherboard (school & shelter)

roof asbestos shingle (school); wood shingleother _____ (shelter)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Fox Island School is a wood frame, hip roofed schoolhouse with an adjacent play shelter and playfield located on rural Fox Island in Pierce County, Washington. The island is located on the Puget Sound off the southern end of the Gig Harbor Peninsula. The school house, which is located at its historic site, is surrounded by forested land. The wood frame school building was built in 1934 as a Works Progress Administration project and was built to replace an earlier building located elsewhere on the island and now destroyed. The building, shelter, and field are unaltered and well maintained and located in a setting which reflects historic associations.

The single story wood frame structure is rectangular in shape. The school is sided with weatherboards and rests on a concrete foundation. The truncated hip roof has boxed eaves and is surfaced in composition shingles. A central brick chimney rises from the roof. Front (east) and rear (west) windows are wood frame, nine-over-nine double-hung sash banded in groups of five. On the front facade, the two groups of windows flank the central entry. Four concrete steps lead to the front entry. The steps have a pipe railing. The porch roof is gabled with decorative brackets. The wood paneled double doors have four-light fixed windows.

On the rear, the two groups of windows are placed closer together to the north and a rear entry porch is placed on the south. The rear entry consists of three wood steps leading to a wood paneled door with a four-light fixed window. The north side wall of the building has one four-over-four double-hung sash window flanked by two wooden doors whose windows have been covered with plywood. Four wood steps lead to the side door. The south side wall of the building contains one wood frame door with a single light fixed window and three four-over-four double-hung sash windows placed near the west corner of the south wall.

The building is presently owned by the Peninsula School District but leases the building to a Fox Island community organization. In addition to community functions, the school has been used as a church. Despite changing uses, however, the original interior has remained unaltered. The interior consists of a central hallway, with wainscoting, and four wood paneled doors leading to the four classrooms. The original cabinetry and blackboards remain in the classrooms.

To the rear (west) of the school is a rectangular gable roofed play shelter, probably constructed during the WPA project. The structure is composed of heavy timber poles, exposed log trusswork in the gable ends, and a shingled roof. The exterior of the structure has been sheathed in weatherboard siding. A large sliding door provides entry on the south side and the east facade has four six-over-six double-hung sash windows and a ramped center entry with wood paneled doors. One window has been boarded over. The building has not been altered but is in poor condition and is deteriorating.

The school and gymnasium are surrounded by a large open field complete with backstop. A concrete pipe fence borders the school property on the front and sides of the building. The school and gymnasium retain good integrity except for the boarded openings discussed above.

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Education

Period of Significance
1934 1936

Significant Dates
n/a

Cultural Affiliation
n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Works Progress Administration

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

The Fox Island School is historically significant for its association with rural public education in Pierce County. The four-room, hip roofed schoolhouse and adjacent play shelter reflect the final era of rural school expansion, when small communities (sometimes assisted with WPA funds) constructed multi-room schools and recreational facilities. The Fox Island school retains outstanding integrity of form, fenestration, interior and exterior design, and setting. It is only one of four schools on the island which survive and reflect the community life of the island before World War II and suburbanization.

Historical Background: Like other counties in the Puget Sound region, Pierce County was settled in the mid and late 19th century by Americans from more eastern states and by European immigrants attracted by the area's vast forests, rich mineral deposits, fertile farmland, and saltwater harbors. Given these physical features, it is not surprising that the economy was dominated by extractive industries--principally logging but also mining, fishing, and farming. Even in the 1930s, when other industries (notably manufacturing) had developed in urban areas, the county's rural economy was fueled by the products of its forests, fields, and the Sound.

This economic base led to the creation of widely scattered rural communities (usually unincorporated) close to natural resources but often inaccessible to urban areas except by difficult water or overland transportation. While Tacoma had a diversified economy based on heavy industry, trade, and transportation, the sparsely settled rural areas were independent and isolated communities characterized by a single economic mainstay.

Without exception, each of these small rural communities established a school district shortly after the first settlers arrived. As elsewhere in the state, the creation of a district and the construction of school buildings signalled the formation of a community and reflected a belief in both the importance of universal education and the permanence of the community itself. The school buildings were often the first and sometimes the only public structures in the area, and thus served as social and cultural centers as well as centers of education. The typical schoolhouse served all school age children in the area and often doubled as a meeting place for their parents. Between 1853, when Washington became a territory, and the 1940s, when rural school consolidation resulted in the construction of larger schools serving several communities, the small community schoolhouses were the primary public structures on the Pierce County rural landscape and today they often are the only surviving evidence of the once thriving rural communities that dotted the county.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

MacDonald, Alexis, Fox Island: Its History and Development, n.p., July 20, 1966.

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:

Pierce County Dept. of Planning & Development, Tacoma, Washington

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A

1	0
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5	2	8	7	3	0
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5	2	3	3	2	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Quadrangle name: Gig Harbor
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal Boundary Description

The Fox Island School is located on the west side of Gway Drive at 9th Avenue on Fox Island, in Section 1, Township 20 North, Range 1 East, W.M., legally described as Parcel No. 1-20-01-2-011.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title <u>Caroline Gallacci, Preservation Planner</u>	(Edited by L. Garfield)
organization <u>Pierce County Planning Division</u>	date <u>December 30, 1986</u>
street & number <u>2401 S. 35th St.</u>	telephone <u>206/591-7172</u>
city or town <u>Tacoma</u>	state <u>WA</u> zip code <u>98409</u>

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Pierce County's rural schoolhouse construction reflected three general periods of development. Shortly after initial settlement, a one-room log or frame schoolhouse was constructed on land usually donated by an early homesteader. As the community grew, two or four-room frame schoolhouses were constructed, indicating increased community stability, the growth of the school age population, and the expansion of the school curriculum. Schools built between statehood (1889) and World War I often reflect this second period of growth and expansion. A third phase of growth is reflected in buildings constructed after World War I, when many frame buildings were replaced by larger brick structures and ancillary structures--including gymnasiums and play shelters--were constructed adjacent to the schoolhouse. This period, which lasted through the 1930s, included structures built by the federal Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. This third period ended by 1940 when the last WPA projects were constructed and the move toward full-scale rural school consolidation was well underway.

Settlement of Fox Island began in the early 1880s and by 1896 two distinct communities with separate post offices had been established. The first, Sylvan, located on the northeast side of the island, was an almost utopian settlement of Grinnell, Iowa, migrants who prided themselves on a place where neither drinking nor swearing was in evidence. The second community, named Macklin and located on the southwest side, developed along more traditional pioneer patterns. In both places, farming was the primary economic activity with orchards and other forms of fruit production predominant. Gradually, farming activity was dispersed throughout the island and a third community was established near the south end of the island. Neither this community, called Hope, nor Macklin, survived past World War I. Sylvan, to this day, is the focal point for community life on the island.

The Sylvan school district was formed in 1885 and a one-room log school was constructed south of the community. Classes continued to be held in the log structure until 1906. At that time, a larger one-room wood frame weatherboard school was built north of Sylvan. Called Lincoln, it replaced the Sylvan school. Two years later, in 1908, a second school, called Benbow, was constructed in the southern part of the island. Existing records do not indicate if a second district was formed at this time or what the Benbow school looked like. Interviews with island residents, however, suggest a social division between the northern and southern islanders and the two schools could reflect this separation.

Lincoln and Benbow schools were consolidated with the construction of the nominated Fox Island School in 1934. The wood frame building contained four classes and continued to function as a school until 1961 when the enrollment dropped below the minimum allowed. With rural consolidation in the early 1940s, the Peninsula School District acquired ownership of the building and remains its owner.

When the original Sylvan School was constructed in 1885, it was the single public gathering place on the Island. It retained that status until the island's only church was constructed in 1900. Since not all islanders subscribed to the same religious dogma, others used the school building for both religious and secular social purposes.

The Sylvan and Benbow schools have both been demolished. The Lincoln School, while still standing, has been severely altered and converted to a private residence with only a few original windows remaining intact. Only the Fox Island School reflects the role of public schools on the island. As a WPA project, the school and play shelter are one of

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five such school structures in the county. All five, built between 1934 and 1939, represent the belief that the area was about to experience a boom in population following the completion of the WPA funded Tacoma Narrows Bridge which would link the peninsula with the Pierce County mainland.

Methodology: The project of surveying and documenting Pierce County's rural schools was conducted by James Widrig, architect of the Pierce County Landmarks Board, and Caroline Gallacci, Preservation Planner for Pierce County. The nominated schools were drawn from a list of 84 school buildings and associated sites included in the countywide historic sites survey. The project followed federal survey guidelines and the results are filed in the Washington State Inventory of Cultural Resources at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in Olympia. Each property was physically evaluated to determine its integrity. In addition, traditional research methods were used to place the building in its local historic context as well as to evaluate the property within the statewide context of rural public education.