

027 10-100-110
EXP. 12/31/84

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

JUL 6 1982

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic CHARLES E. TILTON MANSION

and/or common CHARLES E. TILTON MANSION

2. Location

street & number School Street not for publication

city, town Tilton vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~ (1st)

state N.H. code 33 county Belknap code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: library

4. Owner of Property

name Tilton School

street & number School Street

city, town Tilton vicinity of state New Hampshire

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Belknap County Courthouse
Belknap County Registry of Deeds

street & number 64 Court Street

city, town Laconia state New Hampshire

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NONE has this property been determined eligible? yes no

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>n/a</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Present appearance: The Tilton Mansion is a large, three-story framed dwelling with a stone foundation, clapboarded walls and a Mansard roof. The main block has a facade three bays wide, and attached to each side of the principal structure are two-story wings with low-pitched hipped roofs. At the rear (north) of the building is a large three-story wing with a hipped roof; this originally provided kitchen facilities and servants' quarters, and has now been remodelled into an independent apartment. The east, south and west sides of the main house are embraced by a two-story porch, and a one-story porch shelters part of the western elevation of the wing.

The facade (south elevation) has detailing of classical derivation. The doorway is a rectangular opening framed by an architrave of complex profile; each of the two leaves of the door has a round-arched window, and a transom sash extends across the door opening. The two first-floor windows in the main block are rectangular openings containing two sets of sashes separated by mullions and surrounded by a moulded casing. The second floor of the facade has a Palladian doorway in the center, above the main entrance. This is surmounted by a segmental pediment with a modillioned cornice. The two flanking second-floor windows each consist of paired arched sashes separated by mullions and cased by eared archivolt. The front slope of the Mansard roof is pierced by three dormer windows, each of which contains a pair of arched sashes. Each dormer is buttressed by wooden baroque volutes at its base and is surmounted by a segmental pediment with a modillioned cornice. Between the moulded cornice of the lower slope of the roof and the ornamented wooden curb, the slightly concave roof surface is covered with tin-plated metal roofing. This early covering has been replaced by asphalt shingles on the east end of the roof.

On each side of the main block of the house and recessed about two feet behind the line of the main facade is an added two-story wing. That on the right (east) is the smaller of the two, measuring about 16 by 40 feet; that on the left (west) measures 28 by 40 feet. Both are clapboarded and have rectangular windows. The wing on the right, originally an aviary, has a single window on each floor of its front (south) elevation. The first floor of the east elevation is lighted by a bank of tall windows filled with 1/1 sashes separated by mullions. Each window is four feet wide and ten feet high, and each mullion is treated on the exterior as a pilaster with moulded cap and base. The windows on the second floor of this wing occur singly or in pairs; their side casings are also treated as pilasters.

The west wing has a single two-story window on its southern elevation and three such windows on the west. These have side and top casings in the form of moulded architraves, and caps in the form of friezes and denticulated cornices.

The two-story porch that encloses the east, south and west elevations of the structure is entered at the first-story level by a flight of semi-circular granite steps in front of the main door of the house and by steps leading from a porte-cochere at the southwest corner. Access to the second story of the porch is gained from the Palladian doorway directly above the main entrance. Each story of the porch is supported by a colonnade of square chamfered columns which rise from pedestals and terminate in moulded capitals. Above each capital is an architrave block which supports a continuous frieze. Spanning the intervals between columns are arched members of solid wood which rise from the capitals to intersect the soffit of the frieze. Above the frieze is a continuous denticulated and modillioned cornice. The entablature above each column is marked by a sawn bracket which rises to support the cornice. Brackets on the first story take the form of doubled S-scrolls, terminating under the cornice in a turned pendant; those on the second story are single S-scrolls. The intervals between the pedestals are spanned by a

-see Continuation Sheet #1

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The front room to the left of the hallway extends about two-thirds the depth of the house. The door and window casings of this room correspond to those in the adjoining drawing room and take the form of pilasters with incised ornamentation. Each pilaster terminated in a Gothic pinnacle with an applied dogtooth boss and an incised quatrefoil. The head casings of the doors and windows take the form of an architrave with dogtooth bosses spaced at regular intervals. The fireplace of this room, originally the library of the house, is faced with blue-green rectangular tiles and has a simple panelled mahogany mantelpiece. In the center of the ceiling is a gas chandelier, now electrified, and this is surrounded by a painted oval arabesque with torches in each corner. Around the perimeter of the ceiling is a painted laurel-leaf border.

The adjoining room to the north, originally a bedchamber for Charles Tilton's semi-invalid first wife, has similar detailing, with plaster ceiling mouldings and cornice. It has an arched window filled with leaded glass, probably part of the fenestration accompanying a doorway that once entered the room from the back porch of the house.

The entire western wing of the house is given over to a drawing room which is treated as a grand hall measuring about 28 by 40 feet and rising 22 feet to the ceiling. The focal point of the room is a great fireplace in the Tudor style, topped by a sloping chimney hood that rises to the ceiling. The fireplace itself has a hearth of glazed tiles, with others on the jambs which together form a frieze of arabesques, urns, and grotesque figures. The fireplace cheeks are copper, with repoussé cabochons ornamented with cherubs and tile inserts. The back of the fireplace is ornamented by a strapwork cabochon surrounded by half-human figures and enclosing an oval air register.

The hearth is flanked by turned mahogany columns capped by dossierets with chamfered corners and incised quatrefoils in their faces. Spanning the interval between these members is a moulded architrave which is ornamented with dogtooth bosses and which supports a heavy shelf. Above the shelf is a colonnade of six turned and engaged mahogany columns (four across the front of the chimney) which support an entablature having a cornice with a calf's tongue bed moulding, ballflowers, and a crenellated top. Between the columns are looking glasses of polished plate glass.

Above the cornice of the overmantel rises the sloping mahogany chimney hood. Mounted on the face of the hood is a small clock platform (the clock has been removed), and behind this rises an aedicule with two turned columns, a frieze embellished with scallops and bellflowers, and a flowered cornice. The tympanum of the pediment is cross-hatched and bears a pseudoarmorial shield. Above the pediment rises a pyramidal roof with scalloped laminae and a carved poppyhead. Behind this feature, the main chimney hood is composed of engrailed laminae and rises to a coved cornice with acanthus carving at the level of the ceiling.

The walls of the drawing room are divided into bays which are defined by a gridwork of pilasters and cornices. The pilasters are flat, with a single central bead on their faces. At the level of the chair rail they are interrupted by blocks with incised quatrefoils, and at the level of the lower cornice of the room they have capitals in the form of Gothic pinnacles with an applied dogtooth boss and an incised quatrefoil. Above these capitals, the pilasters rise to outward-flaring corbels bearing engaged turned columns at the level of the upper wall frieze. These columns support paired brackets which in turn bear moulded

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Continuation sheet #3 - DESCRIPTION

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beams that extend about four feet onto the ceiling, dividing the latter into compartments that surround the central ceiling panel.

The walls of the room are divided into four horizontal zones. The lowest is wainscoted with light-colored mahogany. The stiles and rails of the panelling are elaborately chamfered and the panels, of slightly darker hue and more pronounced figure, are flat.

Above the wainscoting is a section of frescoed plaster which is decorated in a diaper grid of characteristic "Eastlake" design. Above this diaper panel is a mahogany cornice which continues the line of the cornice of the fireplace overmantel. This heavily-moulded cornice is ornamented at intervals with dogtooth bosses.

Above the cornice, the third wall section is frescoed at the bottom with a narrow band of arabesque ornament painted over textured gold leaf and be a band of flowers above, set against a dark green background. At the top of each panel in this section is a painted guilloche band.

The upper frieze is separated form the section below by horizontal mahogany members that run from pilaster to pilaster and are ornamented with circular holes. Each panel of the frieze is decorated with square painted panels bearing stylized flowers.

The walls flanking the fireplace are painted in a Pompeian arabesque pattern that echoes the designs of the face of the fireplace opening.

The outer ceiling panels of the room have painted decoration that echoes the stylized flowers on the upper wall frieze. Directly over the fireplace, and above the window opposite, are panels bearing musical trophies.

The central panel of the ceiling is divided into a multitude of painted sections of contrasting motifs and colors. The principal style of the ceiling is Pompeian or neo-Adamesque, with numerous arabesques and grotesques, guilloches, urns, cherubs, and other late classical motifs. The center of the ceiling is dominated by an oval rosetts from which depends an ornate chandelier, originally for gas but now electrified, with a metal frame in the rococo style, two tiers of burners, and numerous prisms.

The second and third stories of the main House have detailing similar to, but generally somewhat simpler than, that of the first floor. Doors on the second floor have four panels and are grained pine; woodwork on the third floor is generally of brown-painted pine. Both the third floor and portions of the rear wing of the house have pressed metal ceilings of various patterns.

The second floor bedchamber on the east is a single long room running the full depth of the house. It has two marble mantelpieces, the southernmost one matching the chimneypiece in the room directly below. The northern mantelpiece, also of grey-veined white marble, is more ornate. Access to the nursery, in the second story of the eastern wing, is gained through two glazed doors leading from this bedchamber. Most of the original color schemes throughout the second and third stories have been overpainted, but are described as originally elaborate. In the master bedroom, opposite ends of the chamber were painted with allegorical scenes representing night and dawn.

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Original appearance: Begun in 1861 or 1862 and completed by 1864, the original Tilton Mansion was a rectangular three-storied house with a Mansard roof. Unverifiable tradition states that the rear wing of the dwelling was part of an original building standing on the property when Charles Tilton purchased the land in the 1850s. The plan of the front portion of the building was basically as it is now, but remodellings over the years have made it difficult to differentiate surviving original detailing from changes made during the next decade.

During the late 1870s, Tilton carried out major additions and alterations. At the east of the main house, he added a two-story aviary and conservatory, illuminated by tall windows, paved with tiles, equipped with a working fountain in the center of the floor, and filled with palm trees, exotic plants, and birds. Tilton remodelled the aviary in 1887 at the birth of a son, dividing the room into an upper and lower chamber with hardwood floors. The upper room, adjacent to the master bedroom, became a nursery.

During the alterations of the 1870s, Tilton added the grand drawing room on the west side of the house, personally selecting the 7,500 board feet of choice mahogany used in its finish. The walls and ceiling were frescoed by an unidentified artist who is reputed to have worked for three years on the commission, undoubtedly painting the equally impressive murals elsewhere in the house at the same time. In 1883, at the completion of the work, the drawing room and the remainder of the house were filled with custom-made furniture in the Renaissance Revival style, a few pieces of which remain. Chief among them is a monumental pier glass in the drawing room, supported by terminal figures and decorated with gilt and with enamelled plaques.

An early woodcut indicates that the house originally had a one-story porch extending across its facade. A lithograph of 1884 suggests that a second story was added to the porch when the wings were added to the house. Shortly thereafter, the front and two sides of the house were embraced by the present two-story porches, which unify the building and disguise the variations in style between the original block and the added wings.

Terraced landscaping, which still contributes to the monumentality of the house, was completed by 1884. The site still retains a wide variety of plantings, some of which date from this era.

The advent of the automobile saw minor changes on the property. A two-story, concrete block automobile garage was constructed north of the stable during the 1920s; its upper story has subsequently been adapted as a residence. The porte-cochere, originally placed at the northwest corner of the porch, was moved to the southwest corner and the driveway that approached the building was rerouted.

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 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 checked="" 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 c.1861

Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary: The Charles E. Tilton Mansion in Tilton, New Hampshire is an extremely well-preserved example of late 19th century residential architecture. So illustrated the tastes and trends of the period generally, as well as the specific preferences of the man for whom it was constructed, an individual who took an active part in westward expansion and the entrepreneurship which accompanied it.

Architecture: The Tilton Mansion is one of New Hampshire's best eclectic dwellings of the post-Civil War era. The interiors of the house are especially important, representing ambitious and well-preserved examples of several styles. Finished in choice woodwork and fluent painting, and originally complemented by custom-made furniture (of which a few pieces remain), the rooms of the house are among the best domestic interiors of their period in New Hampshire.

At the completion of the original portion of the Tilton Mansion, the house was described as "one of the best in central New Hampshire." When the drawing room was added in the early 1880s, this extraordinary hall was thought to be "unequaled in its appointments, perhaps, in New England."¹ Although the Tilton Mansion stood in a small town, it distilled the best design and workmanship of its era and remains one of the finest eclectic dwellings in New Hampshire both in its detailing and in its decorative painting.

The most striking characteristic of the house is its eclecticism. The combination of styles evident in the dwelling is partly the result of the evolution of the structure over a twenty-five year period. The building's growth transformed a standard but ambitious French Second Empire design into an architectural composite embracing several stylistic vocabularies.

But the various styles encompassed in the dwelling were the result of more than an accretion of elements at various periods in which different styles were in vogue. The final design of the mansion embodied a deliberate mixture of styles, chosen so that the completed house remained coherent yet juxtaposed many architectural vocabularies, sometimes in a single feature like the great chimneypiece in the drawing room. Among the styles embraced in the completed dwelling are the Second Empire, seen in the exterior form and detailing of the original block; the Renaissance Revival and bracketed, suggested in the two-story piazza; the Classical Revival, seen in the door casings of the hallway; the Gothic Revival, Tudor, Eastlake, and Pompeian, seen in the drawing room and, to a more modest degree, in the adjoining library; and the Rococo Revival with hints of Art Nouveau, seen in certain of the ceiling rosettes and chandeliers.

-see Continuation Sheet #5

9. Major Bibliographical References

-see Continuation Sheet #6

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .7

Quadrangle name Penacook, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	9	2	9	0	3	3	0	4	8	1	3	1	5	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary of the Charles E. Tilton Mansion nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying map entitled "Survey, Tilton School, 1962" and drawn at a scale of 60 feet to the inch. Tax map U5, lot #108.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Justine B. Gengras

organization Tilton School date March 8, 1982

street & number 5 School Lane telephone 286-8558

city or town Tilton state New Hampshire 03276

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 

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date June 28, 1982

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

William H. Brauman date 8.10.82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick W. Andrews date 8/9/82

Chief of Registration

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The painting of the porch ceiling suggests Spanish influence, while the interior wall and ceiling painting of the house includes many of the decorative styles of the late nineteenth century. Among these are the so-called Eastlake style, evident in the lower diaper-work of the drawing room; the Pompeian or Neo-Adamesque, especially prominent in the ceiling painting of the drawing room and the adjacent library; and naturalistic painting which in some instances suggests the early European phases of Art Nouveau and in others recalls the literal naturalism of the Renaissance or Baroque periods. A contemporary observer called these various themes "individual conception(s) of the artist, (which) collectively form a general design."² Now preserved as the library of a private preparatory school, the Tilton Mansion remains one of the most important examples of eclectic design in New Hampshire.

¹Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men (Manchester, N.H.: John B. Clarke, 1882), pp. 111-112.

²Ibid., p. 112.

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SIGNIFICANCE-Commerce:

Charles Elliott Tilton was a major force in Pacific Coast banking, trade with the Orient, nineteenth century shipbuilding, and western settlement. Yet this pioneer of western commerce never lost interest in his native New Hampshire. He invested his money in Granite State railroad construction and, typical of many "Gilded Age" elites, he was the major benefactor of his home town of Tilton.

Tilton was born in 1827 in that part of Sanbornton, New Hampshire, known as Sanbornton Bridge, later incorporated as the town of Tilton. He attended local schools before moving on to Norwich University. At the outbreak of the Mexican War, and after three years at Norwich, Tilton went to New York City, joining his older brother in trade. After a brief stay in New York, he went to the West Indies and South America, travelling to California upon news of the Gold Rush of 1849. Deciding against prospecting, Tilton moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1850, joining his cousin W.S. Ladd in trade. For the next nine years, the firm of Ladd and Tilton built and equipped vessels for trade with eastern United States and with China. One of their vessels, the C.E. Tilton, made a voyage in record-breaking time between New York and Oregon. In 1859, the two partners opened Portland's first bank--the first of several banking interests assumed by Tilton. Subsequently, Tilton worked actively on opening up the Columbia and Willamette Rivers to navigation, becoming one of five incorporators of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company with a capital of \$24,000,000. Tilton personally outfitted and financed a number of wagon trains operating between Utah and California, as well as from Missouri to Colorado and Montana. In conjunction with these overland operations, Tilton became a major investor in western real estate.

Throughout his various western ventures, Tilton remained a part time resident of New Hampshire. He spent most of his summers in New Hampshire, first at the family home, and later, at his Tilton Mansion. After 1879, Tilton moved permanently to his old home town, liquidating many of his western interests. Some of the money was reinvested in the Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad, where Tilton served as a director. He was also the major investor behind the construction of two local rail lines as well. Other Tilton money was put into the growing Tilton Mansion. Finally, a considerable fortune was spent for public facilities within the local community. Tilton was the benefactor to the Tilton Town Hall, the Public Library, the new railroad station, two public parks, the local fair grounds and buildings, and the Memorial Arch of Tilton, recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places. His money paved and lit the main street of town, and he had statues, fountains and reflecting pools, and at least one gazebo placed in public areas. It was in recognition of his generosity that the newly incorporated town was named Tilton, in honor of Charles Tilton's grandfather.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

Continuation sheet #6 - REFERENCES

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Page 1

Centennial Tilton, New Hampshire. 1869-1969. (booklet) Plymouth, N.H.: Clifford-Nichol, Inc.

Journal Transcript (Franklin, N.H.) (newspaper) obituary. October 4, 1901.

Journal Transcript (Franklin, N.H.) (newspaper) news item. October 28, 1887.

Moses, George H. "The Arch on a Hilltop: A Sketch of Tilton." The Granite Monthly, XVI, March 1894, No. 3.

Moses, George H. "The Grange Fair By Pen and Camera". The Granite Monthly, XVII, October 1894, No. 4.

Reminiscences of a New Hampshire Town - The Belmont Centennial 1869-1969. (booklet)
Compiled by Walter C. Rhodes.

Runnels, Moses T. History of Sanbornton. Vol. 1 and 2. Alfred Mudge & Son, 1882.

Stearns, Ezra S. Genealogical and Family History of the State of New Hampshire.
New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1908. Vol. 4. pp. 1968 -1969.

Note: The information taken from the above sources has been verified by the grandson of Charles E. Tilton, S. Webb Tilton of Northfield, N.H. as correct.

also...

Willey, George Franklyn, editor. State Builders, "Charles E. Tilton". State Builders Publishing Company. Manchester, N.H.: The New Hampshire Publishing Corporation, 1903. pp. 348-349. (confirms other biographies; mentions involvement in real estate, business enterprises, and railroads)

Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men. Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1882. "Charles Elliot Tilton". pp. 110-112. (similar to other biographies but does have description of some of the interior of the mansion.)

Charles E. Tilton, Jr.

"N.H. State Government of 1913-1914". "Charles E. Tilton". Granite Monthly, XLV, New Series, No. 8, Vol. 3-4. (p. 110) March, April, 1913.

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DOCUMENTATION

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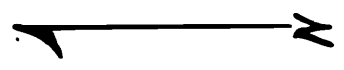
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PHOTOGRAPHS:

The appearances have not changed since these photographs were taken (6/24/82).

SURVEY, TILTON SCHOOL, 1962

SCALE: 1" = 60'



SCHOOL STREET

TILTON HALL

U.S. ROUTE

