

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 04 1988
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Richwood Estate

and or common Tyler Estate

2. Location

street & number Route 7 N/A not for publication

city, town Swanton N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Franklin code 011

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Carol S. and Edward J. Tyler III

street & number RFD 1

city, town Swanton N/A vicinity of state Vermont

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk's Office

street & number Academy Street

city, town Swanton state Vermont

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites & Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 13, 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

See Continuation Sheets.

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Dominating a small knoll set amidst mature deciduous and coniferous trees, Richwood looks down over a broad, sloping lawn across Route 7 to Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks beyond. This French Second Empire house of two stories is distinguished by its elegant use of native building stone and the interior use of fine woods and marble. The foundation and first floor are constructed of random coursed, Isle LaMotte (Vermont) redstone with slightly vermiculated limestone (locally quarried) quoins, window and door enframements, and watertable. Above the modillion cornice, the purple, Fair Haven (Vermont) slate roof is highlighted by fishscale and diamond patterns. The central block of 3x3 bays has various projections including a front entrance pavilion and a porte cochere on the southwest. To the northeast of the house, sits a long, two story carriage barn of similar materials and style.

A low stone wall lined with maple trees separates the grounds of Richwood from Route 7. Woods border the large lawns on north, south, and east, with a swampy area to the northeast. Following the edges of the trees, a gravel drive stretches along both the north and south verges and connects across the front of the house where it meets two tiers of limestone steps leading to the pavilion. The drive also runs behind the house passing through the porte cochere on the southwest.

A little unusual for French Second Empire style is the prominent hip roof with purple slate shingles clearly visible over the flared mansard. An historic photograph reveals that a cupola once perched at the roof peak. It is said that the wife of the original owner, Mrs. C.W. Rich, was not fond of the cupola and demanded its removal. Rising from the north and south roof slopes and clearly visible from the front are square, brick chimneys with corbelled caps and circular, Dutch ceramic chimney pots. Dominating the facade is a two story, 1x1 bay entrance pavilion with double leaf doors with large top lights over bolection molded panels. A shed wall dormer projects from each face of this pavilion. Narrow shed dormers in the outer bays are centered above the first floor windows. A wide band of fishscale slates runs around the mansard; the faces of all dormers feature diamond pattern slates. At the time of construction (1871), the dormers had flat roofs; apparently their inadequacy necessitated the addition early on of shed roofs which are continuations of

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the main roof plane.

A c.1885 porte cochere extends from the southwest corner. Redstone walls with limestone quoins support rectangular, limestone piers which in turn support a simple entablature with molded cornice and a metal clad, shallow hip roof. A small circular porch extends west of the porte cochere and here the piers are replaced by wooden Doric columns. The ceiling is matchboard.

Extending from the south elevation (and connected with the porte cochere) is a broad, 1 bay deep, two story pavilion. A smaller, two story projection breaks the north elevation just to the rear of the facade. Projecting from the northeast corner (rear) is a two story, 2x2 bay kitchen wing, with front and rear a brick chimney similar to those on the main block. A hip dormer with triplet, round arched, 1/1 sash windows interrupts the rear (east) roof slope (Parts of this dormer are claimed to have been taken from the original cupola.). A brick chimney similar to the others abuts this dormer on the south.

Fenestration is somewhat irregular, features various sizes and is composed of 1/1, 2/1 and 2/2 sash windows. Windows on the first floor are framed by segmental arched (with angled skewbacks), quoined limestone surrounds with limestone sills. Wall dormer windows at the mansard level have heavy bolection molded, wooden surrounds with segmental arches. Basement windows are triple paned with molded surrounds.

Above the first story runs a modillion cornice while above the mansard is a simpler molded cornice. In addition to the pavilion and porte cochere entrances, there are secondary entrances on the east elevation of the rear kitchen wing and on the north elevation of the main block abutting this wing. This latter entrance is reached via limestone steps and carved into the sill is "Rich 1871"; this 4 panel door is now sealed. A cellar entrance is placed on the rear of the kitchen wing's north elevation; paired, segmental arched, vertical board doors with metal strap hinges are flanked by narrow limestone slabs and topped by a segmental arch with limestone voussoirs.

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The interior of Richwood features perhaps an even more luxuriant use of materials. After passing through the mahogany pavilion doors, one crosses an inlaid marble floor in a geometric pattern of alternating Swanton Red marble, Danby White marble, and a black marble. The grand entrance hall, library, and stairway are crafted in Italian black walnut. The stairway, which rises on the left (north) side of the entrance hall, has a paneled newel post with an intricate lamp atop (originally a gas lamp, now electrified) and a stair rail of half-turned balusters with trefoil arched panels between. To the north of the entrance hall is a living room with a marble fireplace composed of fluted Ionic pilasters supporting carved panels and a projecting mantel shelf. The south parlor fireplace is elaborately carved wood with a mirror and flanking lamps set in carved panels above the mantel.

Directly to the rear of the entrance hall is the dining room with oak wainscoting. Paneled pilasters with small, carved, inlaid, floral panels at the capitals rise to support a carved bed molding and dentil course. Atop the doors are footed cornice caps with carvings. At the east end of the room is an elliptical arch over triplet windows; a carved, mesh-like screen fills the top of the arch. On the south wall is a grey marble fireplace which was once in the house of Daniel Webster; spiral fluted columns flank the opening and support the entablature with carved patera and the projecting mantel shelf.

On the first floor, only the kitchen has seen major changes. When the House was used as a convalescent home and then as an inn (1950s), the kitchen was altered to suit more intensive use. The current owners, in a more recent renovation of the kitchen, discovered a capsule with a list of the builders and carpenters for the house.

The second story with its seven bedrooms is intact with the exception of the addition of modern bathrooms.

The carriage barn of Second Empire style is actually composed of 3 two story blocks with a one story, more recent connector. The central, main block was the actual carriage barn (now serving as a garage); the east wing still contains the horse stables though today they are unused. To the west

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is the combined wood shed/coachman's quarters building which is connected to the main block by an open, wood framed connector with a rear (north) stone wall.

The main block and east wing have random coursed redstone first floors with brick quoins and window enframements; the smaller building, the coachman's quarters, has a diagonal wood lattice on the south with stone elsewhere. The mansard level on both buildings features diamond pattern slates with occasional rows being grey; the other slates are purple matching the square slates of the hip roofs of each block. Shed wall dormers and windows interrupt the mansard at various locations.

The east wing is slightly recessed from the main block on the north and south elevations. The east elevation second story of the wing has wood shingles and a loft door with hoist bar. Projecting to the rear (north) of the main block is a shed roofed extension with board and batten first floor, and round arched windows. Projecting from the peak of the main block, wing and connected block are small, louvered cupolas with pyramidal hip roofs; these roofs feature diamond pattern purple slates with a central, grey slate diamond on each face.

Fenestration is irregular. Windows are generally 6/6 with plain surrounds. Doors on the main block are interior sliding doors of different design; those on the north and south feature multi-paned toplights over molded panels; that on the west has multi-pane toplights over cross-braced panels; the east door which leads to the stable wing is a vertical matchboard door. The sliding doors on the north, south, and east are still operable while that on the west is walled over on the interior.

Original brick floors and the original stalls remain in the east wing; the ceiling and walls are covered with matchboard siding. Painted on a southwest corner cupboard is the name "Rich". The second story coachman's quarters in the west block are also intact although the plaster is damaged in places; there are remains of a stove chimney on the north roof slope. Interiors of all three blocks are largely intact if somewhat in need of work.

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Southeast of the house and located in a small clearing in the woods is the Rich family cemetery. A low stone wall surrounds the now overgrown area. A wrought iron gate on the north provides access. The property deed guarantees a right of way to the cemetery for Rich family members

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 9+/-

Quadrangle name St. Albans

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Being the same land and premises described in a warranty deed dated December 20, 1962, and recorded in the Swanton Land Records Book 76, page 37. The nominated property is sufficient to protect the integrity of the of the nominated structure.

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

N/A state code county code

N/A state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Tansey, Architectural Historian

organization VDHP

date September 1988

street & number 58 East State Street

telephone (802) 828-3226

city or town Montpelier

state Vermont

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 

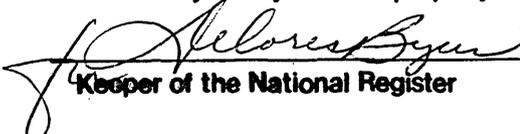
title Vermont Director/State Historic Preservation Officer

date 09/22/88

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

date 11/3/88


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Richwood Estate, built in 1871, is a unique expression of the French Second Empire style in Vermont with its extensive use of native building stone: local limestone, Swanton Red marble, Fair Haven (Vermont) slate, and Isle LaMotte (Vermont) redstone. The interior which is mostly intact features several marble and carved wood fireplaces; original walnut paneling and carved woodwork remain in place. The importance of Richwood's original owner, the local industrialist C.W. Rich whose fortune was gained in the limeworks, is reflected in the excellent craftsmanship and rich materials of both the house and carriage barn.

The limestone industry is one of the oldest and most enduring industries in Swanton. Aldrich's **History of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties** referred to it:

Lime rock is found near the surface about two miles east from the lake shore, from which the very best of lime in large quantities has been annually manufactured for many years past. The lime rock ledges near Swanton village are inexhaustible. The burning of lime rock is one of the leading industries of town.

C.W. Rich was the first to manufacture lime in permanent kilns beginning in 1847, four years before the arrival of the Vermont Central Railroad. The railroad greatly aided the expansion of the business and Rich became a leading industrialist in Swanton.

Richwood was constructed in 1871. The house and carriage barn reflected the influential position of C.W. Rich in the community. The finest materials were used inside and out. The craftsmen who worked on the building were proud enough of their work to include their names in a capsule placed in a kitchen wall (discovered during renovation work by the current owners).

The house originally had a cupola rising from the roof peak. This was removed and changes made in the roof probably late in the century (shed roofs added to the dormers, rear dormer added, and the original oval window on the south pavilion mansard replaced by a dormer). The porte cochere was added c.1885 to complete the house as it now stands.

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Charles Rich in the partnership "Rich & Jewett" was also a dealer and shipper of hay. The Child's Directory of 1882-83 described the business of Rich & Jewett as "baled hay shippers and dealers in the best Vermont and Canada hay." But the Rich fortune was developed primarily in the lime industry. (John Rich, the son of C.W., was later in partnership with A.B. and E.W. Jewett in a lime operation at Fonda Junction.)

In 1888, John P. Rich acquired ownership of the limeworks from his father, C.W. Rich. The Aldrich History described the operation under John:

The plant is now owned by John P. Rich, whose careful attention and business ability has won for him an enviable reputation among the consumers of lime in New England, and he is doing a large and prosperous business. . . This industry is one of the best and most valuable in town, giving constant employment to a large number of men. There are three separate plants, all operating some 15 kilns, which run most of the time during the year; hundreds of barrels are made each day, and immediately shipped to New England cities and towns for use in manufacturing establishments. The lime rock is a "gold mine" to this town, producing many thousand dollars every year, mostly paid out for labor and fuel (wood), adding to the prosperity and wealth of the village and town. The increased demand for Swanton lime is constantly developing the business. . .

It was not just the prosperity of the town that grew with the limeworks. According to deed research by Jeffrey D. Glassberg, the Richs acquired over the years numerous agricultural parcels in the Swanton and St. Albans area in addition to land acquired for quarrying purposes. The Richwood Estate is one of those parcels. **The Vermonter** in 1899 claimed that John Rich and W.B. Fonda were the owners of all the lime quarrying property in the town and had annual production of three hundred thousand barrels.

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The Richs were thus a very wealthy and influential family in Swanton and by the 1890s and early 1900s, Richwood became famous for elegant parties.

In 1937, John Rich passed on the ownership of Swanton Limeworks to his sons Davis, Charles, and John. Although ownership of the limeworks remained in family hands until 1976, Richwood was sold in 1947. After that the house was used as a convalescent home and then an inn until the current owners purchased the property in 1962.

In addition to the carved "Rich 1871" on the north entrance door sill and the painted "Rich" on the stable cupboard, the Rich name is still found in the cemetery. Charles Wright Rich (1817-1889) and John Parker Rich (1858-1939) as well as other family members are buried on Richwood grounds.

With the exception of alterations to the kitchen wing and the addition of bathrooms, Richwood is virtually intact from its late 19th century condition. It continues to evoke the power, influence and taste of an important Swanton family.

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Aldrich, L.C. **History of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties**
(Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Company, 1891)

Child, Hamilton **Child's Franklin and Grand Isle County
Directory 1882-83** (Syracuse, N.Y.: Journal Office, 1883)

Forbes, Charles Spooner Swanton, **The Vermonter** Vol.IV No. 8
(St. Albans, Vt.: Charles S. Forbes, March, 1899)

Ledoux, Rodney R. eds. and comps. **The History of Swanton
Vermont** (Swanton, Vt.: The Swanton Historical Society, 1988)

Interview with Carol S. Tyler; September 12, 1988.