National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ction number Page)				
ε	SUPPLEMENTA	ARY LISTII	NG RECORD		
NRIS Reference Number:	91001742	Date Liste	ed: <u>12/10/91</u>		
Wylie School Property Name		Windham County		CT State	
N/A Multiple Name	_				
This property is listed with the attached noming exclusions, or amends certification included Signature of the Keeper	ation documen ments, notw	ntation sub ithstanding ation docum	ject to the for	ollowing ex onal Park /	ceptions,
Amended Items in Nomina					====
8. Statement of Signif	icance: Area	(s) and Cri	iteria		
Criterion C applies to t of Architecture.	he documented	d significa	nce of the pro	perty under	the area
This information has Coordinator, CTSHPO, by		med with	John Herzan,	National	Register
DISTRIBUTION: National Register Nominating Author			:)		

NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property	
	WYI.IE SCHOOL
other name/site number:	N/A
2. Location	Hill Road (Route 49)
city/town:Volum	not for publication: <u>N/A</u> town vicinity: <u>N/A</u>
state: CT county: Wil	ndham code: 015 zip code: 06384
3. Classification	======================================
	buildings
Number of Resources with	nin Property:
Contributing I	Noncontributing
	buildings sites structures objects Total
Number of contributing Register:0	resources previously listed in the National
Name of related multiple	e property listing: N/A

4. State/F		n		
As the desorber of 1986, and a request for standards Historic Forth	signated authority under the samended, I hereby certified or determination of eliqibities for registering properties Places and meets the proced in 36 CFR Part 60. In my not meet the National Regi	e Nation y that lity med in the ural and opinion	hal Historic Presenthis \underline{X} nominations the documentation National Register professional requirements \underline{X}	rvation Act on ion of uirements _ meets
S.	my by frank		October 24,	1991
Signature	of certifying official		Date	
State or F	Federal agency and bureau			
	nion, the property mee criteria See continua			National
Signature	of commenting or other off	icial	Date	
	Federal agency and bureau			
	al Park Service Certificati			
enter deter Nati deter Nati remov	certify that this property red in the National Registe See continuation sheet. rmined eligible for the red onal Register See continuation sheet. rmined not eligible for the red from the National Register red from the National Register red (explain):	r		12/10/91
			gnature of Keeper	of Action
5. Functio	on or Use			
	EDUCATION			
Current:	RECREATION AND CULTURE	Sub:	museum	
				

7. Description
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.
8. Statement of Significance
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: <u>local</u> .
Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):
Areas of Significance: EDUCATION SOCIAL HISTORY
Period(s) of Significance: <u>c.1850-1939</u>
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):
<pre>_ 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 #</pre>
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: <u>approx. 1/4</u>
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing A 19 262980 4609910 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 - David Diagram 1 - David Diagram 2 - David Di
11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator
Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth
Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u> Date: <u>May 8, 1991</u>
Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268
City or Town: Hartford State: CT ZIP: 06106

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description

Wylie School Voluntown, Windham County, CT 7 - 1

Wylie School is a small wood-frame, clapboarded building standing on the northwest corner of the intersection of Wylie School Road, Stone Hill Road, and Route 49 in the northern part of Voluntown, Connecticut. The school is situated close to the road, with a small grassy area immediately adjacent to the building. The surrounding neighborhood is rural, with widely separated houses among the farmland and woods. In addition to the school building itself (Photographs 1 and 2), the property includes two small outbuildings, a privy original to the school (Photograph 7) and a modern storage shed (Photograph 1, left), counted as noncontributing. The shed, presently used to store firewood, was constructed so as to resemble the privy. A wooden flagstaff of indeterminate age stands at the northeast corner of the property.

Built about 1850, the school is a one-story gable-roofed building oriented with its gable end facing east. On this elevation are two entrances (Photograph 3) featuring paneled doors, simple board surrounds, and a plainly detailed cornice. The entry steps, like the foundation, are constructed of gray granite slabs. Centered above the entries is a triangular tablet naively lettered with the word "WYLIE." The side elevations have four windows with board frames and original six-over-six sash. A small exterior brick chimney is centered on the rear elevation. The school measures 20' by 30' in plan.

The interior has a single large classroom (Photographs 4 and 5). Interior finishes include plaster walls and ceiling, a simple board dado around the room, and a picture rail between window frames. In the back of the room, the yellow-pine floor is raised up to create a platform for a bench that extends the width of the room. There are two separate entry vestibule separated by closets and enclosed stairs leading to the attic. The vestibules (Photograph 6) are finished like the classrooms, with the addition of a peg-rack now fitted with coathooks. The doorways between the classroom and vestibules have four-panel doors and plainly finished surrounds.

The privy (Photograph 7) sits on a shallow rubble foundation and has vertical board walls and a batten door. Hinged to the rear wall are remnants of a lid that allowed the privy pit to be periodically dug out (Photograph 8). Inside, the privy provided accommodations for three students (Photograph 9). Like the school itself and the modern shed, the privy has a wood-shingled roof.

The building is used by the local historical society for meetings and events. It has been furnished with an old stove, desks, tables, chairs and artifacts suggestive of its use as a one-room school, though few if any of these furnishings are known to have been used in Wylie School.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Wylie School Voluntown, Windham County, CT 8-1

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 oneroom 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 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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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Wylie School Voluntown, Windham County, CT 8 - 2

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. 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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Wylie School Voluntown, Windham County, CT 8-3

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 clapboard 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 Over her long career, Miss Tanner had in her charge unmarried. innumerable residents of Voluntown, in many cases for eight years in a 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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography

Wylie School 9-1
Voluntown, Windham County, CT

- Bayles, Richard M. <u>History of Windham County, Connecticut</u>. New York: W. W. Preston, 1889.
- <u>Commemorative Biographical Record of Tolland and Windham</u>
 <u>Counties</u>. Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1903.
- Interview with Polly Florence, Voluntown resident, May, 1991.
- Gerrish, E. P. <u>Map of Windham County, Connecticut, 1855</u>. Philadelphia: E. M. Woodford, 1856.
- Gray, O.W. <u>Atlas of Windham and Tolland Counties</u>. Hartford: C.G. Keeney, 1869.
- Voluntown, Town of. Annual Report [title varies], 1879-1939.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photograph captions

Wylie School Voluntown, Windham County, CT Photos-1

All photographs:

- 1. Wylie School
- 2. Voluntown, Windham County, CT
- 3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
- 4. May, 1991
- 5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

Captions:

East (facade) and south elevations, woodshed (noncontributing modern building) in background, camera facing north Photograph 1 of 9

West (rear) and north elevations, camera facing southeast Photograph 2 of 9

Detail of left entrance, east elevation, camera facing northwest Photograph 3 of 9

Interior, classroom, camera facing west
Photograph 4 of 9

Interior, classroom, camera facing east Photograph 5 of 9

Interior, south vestibule, camera facing north Photograph 6 of 9

Privy, camera facing southwest Photograph 7 of 9

Rear elevation of privy, camera facing northeast Photograph 8 of 9

Interior of privy, camera facing west Photograph 9 of 9