



(Oct. 1990)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY


HISTORIC NAME: Willow City School
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 2501 RM 1323
CITY OR TOWN: Willow City
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Gillespie
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A
CODE: 171 ZIP CODE: 78675

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant (nationally) (statewide) (locally). (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

March 24, 2005
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

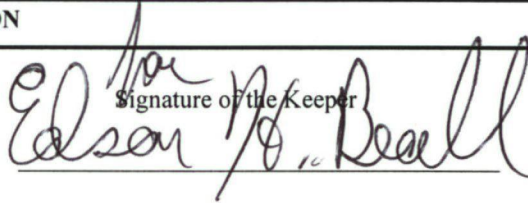
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 of the Keeper
Date of Action: 5/6/05

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public - local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	4	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	2	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	6	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: EDUCATION/school, school-related

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: SOCIAL/clubhouse

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION STONE/Sandstone; CONCRETE
WALLS STONE/Sandstone, Granite
ROOF METAL/Tin
OTHER GLASS, WOOD

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).

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Willow City School
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

Willow City School is at the heart of Willow City, a small town in northeastern Gillespie County, Texas, approximately twelve miles northeast of the county seat of Fredericksburg. The school complex consists of four buildings and two structures built between 1905 and 1955. The five acre school site north of Ranch Road 1323 includes a rectangular-plan two-story sandstone schoolhouse from 1905, a barbecue pit shelter, well, bus barn, and two privies. The school grounds have been a center of social activity for Willow City since the site was established in 1890. With relatively little alteration since the school was closed in 1961, the property presents an intact view of rural life from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Setting

Willow City is a small town in northeastern Gillespie County, Texas, settled along Willow Creek, a tributary of North Grape Creek. The settlement is scattered along Farm to Market (FM) 1323, about fifteen miles northeast of the county seat of Fredericksburg. The Willow City Loop is a scenic road connecting FM 1323 and State Highway 16 that winds through limestone hills and steep slopes, with sandy soils, grasses, and groves of live oak, mesquite, and pecan trees. Willow City includes a few historic commercial and residential buildings scattered through the community, which today maintains a post office, church and volunteer fire department. A community cemetery is located one half-mile southwest of the school site.

The school complex consists of a rectangular plan, two-story sandstone schoolhouse, frame bus barn with asbestos siding, cedar post and metal roof barbecue pit shelter over a limestone and granite barbecue pit, a well, and two wood and metal privies. The surrounding land is generally farmland, and slopes to the south and east toward Willow Creek. Four buildings (schoolhouse, garage and two privies) and two structures (well and barbecue pit shelter) are considered contributing resources in this nomination (see table of resources on continuation sheet 7-8).

Architectural description

A gravel driveway leads up the hill to the 32' x 60' two-story Hickory sandstone Willow City School house, built in 1905. The school is a Colonial Revival building, with a symmetrical plan and primary elevation, double-hung windows, and an accentuated front door. The south elevation is the primary façade, and two red brick chimneys pierce a corrugated tin roof on the south side. A 6' x 8' concrete porch with five-inch posts supporting the corrugated tin roof centers the building. Mounted on top of the porch is the original school bell. The ghost of a previous pedimented entry is also visible above the south door. A concrete step surrounds the porch with one concrete step leading into the hallway. Large granite rocks form the lintel on the fourteen upstairs windows, eight East Room windows and six West Room windows, all of which are 4/4, double-hung wooden frames. Granite also forms the lintel, with another large granite rock forming the step for the recessed double, diagonally laid beaded wood, solid core doors, now enclosed in plywood, on the west side of the building. Similar granite rocks are in existence on the east side of the building where double windows replaced the double doors prior to 1933. Covering these two east side windows is a beaded canopy with corrugated tin roof. One porcelain light receptacle hangs above these windows. New screens cover the downstairs pine framed windows while hardware cloth covers the upstairs windows. The front, diagonally laid beaded wood, solid core double doors have a transom. Added in the early 1950s, a hollow tile 16' x 18' restroom addition on

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the north elevation has a v-groove sloped tin roof. Two solid pine panel doors with glass on top exit to the east and west from the restroom hall, and two hinged, frosted glass windows open from the top into the interior of the restroom areas. Each restroom has a drain in the floor, two lavatories with cold running water and a paper towel holder. In addition, the boy's side contains a urinal and two stalls. One of the four stalls on the girls' side was removed to accommodate wheelchairs. The girls' side also contains a wall faucet where students connected a garden hose when washing down the concrete restroom floors. Stalls in the restroom are plywood, and pine panel doors lead into each restroom.

Floors in the Willow City School building are pine tongue and groove with the exception of the restroom addition, which is concrete. The twelve-foot ceilings in the classroom area are bead board. Restroom ceilings are plywood. Twelve-inch pine baseboards and quarter-round run at the base of all inside facing walls in the classroom and halls. The quarter-round also runs at the base of the plastered walls. Crown molding, three feet from the ceiling, spans the interior walls on top of the blackboards in the downstairs classrooms and the entrance area of the hallway. The exterior facing walls inside the building are plaster, again with the exception of the restroom area, which is hollow tile. Beaded wood forms the interior facing walls in the hall and East Room. Recessed twelve inches, the pine framed windows have pine sills and plastered tops and sides. Post-consolidation additions to the classroom portion of the building include fluorescent and incandescent light fixtures, ceiling fans and electric outlets. The restroom area contains one original porcelain light receptacle in each restroom and the restroom hall.

The East Room includes a closet under the stairwell on the southeast side of the room. Items in this closet contain some paperwork and items used prior to consolidation, including a medicine cabinet and crock that held drinking water for the students. The painted canvas stage curtain from the former Nebo School is being stored in this closet prior to its restoration and preservation. The closet is tongue and groove and the side of the stairwell is beaded wood. Two 5 1/2" posts in this room hold the support beam for the upstairs. Stair steps are pine with a pine tongue and groove door leading upstairs. Hanging above the blackboard, which covers the west wall, is a picture of President George Washington dating back to the early days of the school. A pine trophy case and pine bookcase that contain library books, a dictionary and song books are in this room. The ventilated propane heater installed in the 1950s provides heat. A solid pine panel door leads from the East Room into the hall. The East Room was the classroom for the lower grades.

The West Room provides one 5 1/2" post for the support beam for upstairs. The repainted blackboard covers most of the tongue and groove east wall in this room. The ventilated propane heater provides heat. Diagonally laid beaded wood, solid core double doors, which provided the outside exit through the west side of the room, are now enclosed in plywood. The Willow City School stage curtain, with its nature scene and advertising logos painted on canvas, is on display along the west wall awaiting restoration and preservation. A solid pine panel door exits into the hallway. The West Room held classes for school children in the middle grades.

Solid core double doors lead from the front porch into the hallway where a water fountain hangs on the west wall. The main stairway is in this portion of the hall. A pine handrail leads up to the pine panel door, which

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partitions the hallway from the upstairs. A pine panel door separates the "coatroom/lunchbox" area of the hall from the entrance portion. In the coatroom area, under the stairwell, is a beaded ceiling closet. Housed in the former coatroom area are three refrigerators that the Community Club uses for storage and cleaning supplies. Brooms hang from hooks as they did in years past. A solid pine panel door with glass panels on top separates the hallway from the restroom area.

The upper floor of the Willow City School is one open room with a raised stage on the west end. The stairway from the east room has a new pine handrail. This stairwell is beaded wood on the inside and tongue and groove on the outside. The stairway in the middle of the room has the original pipe handrail. This stairwell is tongue and groove and beaded wood on the inside with beaded wood on the outside. One pine wood step spans the length of the stage area, partitioned by plywood walls and ceiling. The original stage curtain was replaced by a new stage curtain in the 1930s, with some of the business sponsors from the early 1900s again providing financial support. The four backstage windows have metal bars across them to protect students from accidental falls. Upstairs are various books, Trustees' minutes, parts of a chemistry set and trunk. The upright piano used at the weekly assembly and social gatherings stands upstairs. A blackboard covers a portion of the north wall. One of the two ventilated propane heaters provides heat for the upstairs.

On the northeast side of the building is a 30" x 40" charcoal filter box for the cistern. A hand crank dipper water pump is on a raised 30" x 40" concrete platform approximately six feet from the filter box. Remains of a hollow tile shelter cover one of the two drilled wells on the school property, north of the bus shed. Originally built as a bus barn, a 30 by 50 foot asbestos siding frame building serves as a storage area for some original benches, bookcases and doors, and many miscellaneous items that accumulated after consolidation. The bus shed roof is single gable corrugated tin. Two double corrugated tin doors provide entrance into the building, which contains a concrete slab floor. The windows in the bus shed are boarded closed.

Ten cedar posts support a 12' x 28' corrugated tin roof covering the 5.5' x 22' original limestone barbecue pit. Granite frames the top of the large opening on the south side and on the two smaller openings on the west side of the barbecue pit. A new grate rests on four of the original six solid support pipes in the barbecue pit. Stored across the rafters are three original pine benches. Two privies are on the property, both of pine lumber with corrugated tin roofs. Portions of the original baseball backstop, posts and wire, as well as one basketball goalpost still stand as testament to years of camaraderie and friendly competition at the Willow City School.

Changes since construction

The Willow City School complex reflects the continued use and expansion of the facilities through the historic period. The property is virtually unchanged since the school was consolidated with Fredericksburg in 1961. Significant changes occurred after consolidation of schools with Willow City in 1949. A restroom addition was built on the north elevation of the schoolhouse, and a garage was built for a new school bus.

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Even before the rural schools of Gillespie County closed as educational facilities, they were also serving as social gathering centers, polling places, and community clubs, often for several decades. As the schools closed the students and facilities were absorbed into the Fredericksburg Independent School District. In 1999 a concerted effort to document and preserve these properties was begun, with the establishment of Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools. In an effort to assume full stewardship of the historic buildings, a group of twelve community clubs that were leasing their meeting spaces from the Fredericksburg ISD sought to have the properties donated to them. But state law forbade school districts from donating such surplus property, even to non-profit groups and community associations. The Friends wrote legislation, sponsored by State Senator Jeff Wentworth and State Representative Harvey Hilderbran, to allow donation of these properties to a governmental or non-profit organization. The bills were passed in the Texas Legislature and ratified by voters as an amendment to the state constitution in November 2001. The Friends have received preservation awards from the Texas Historical Commission and Preservation Texas, and have also sponsored open houses and fundraisers to build support for the preservation of twelve of the rural schools of Gillespie County. The Friends are now completing nominations to list these twelve schools on the National Register of Historic Places.

Table of resources within property:

Willow City School	1876 / 1950	BUILDING	contributing
Barbecue pit shelter	c. 1940	STRUCTURE	contributing
Well	c. 1920	STRUCTURE	contributing
Privy (1)	c. 1940	BUILDING	contributing
Privy (2)	c. 1940	BUILDING	contributing
Garage	1950	BUILDING	contributing

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: EDUCATION, ARCHITECTURE

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1905-1955

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1905

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: N/A

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-8 through 8-13).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-14 through 9-18).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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 (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- Other state agency (*Texas Education Agency*)
- Federal agency
- Local government (*Gillespie County Courthouse, Fredericksburg, Texas*)
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository (*German-Texan Heritage Society, Austin, Texas*)

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The Willow City School complex in Gillespie County, Texas is nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Education and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The property has undergone little alteration since the historic period, and is able to convey its significance as a place where the process of conveying and acquiring knowledge and skills through systematic instruction, training and study was undertaken. It is a good local example of a Colonial Revival building, with a symmetrical plan and primary façade, double-hung windows, and craftsmanship exhibited in its stonework. The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to a high degree.

Education in Gillespie County

German immigrants set the standard for education after Texas achieved statehood in 1845. Historian and educator Frederick Eby asserted that the German settlements had a spirit of intellectual development and social improvement:

By far the most progressive measures for the promotion of schools were adopted by the German communities of south central Texas. As early as 1845 a colony of Germans settled in New Braunfels. After the Prussian Revolution in 1848 large numbers emigrated for political reasons and located upon the fertile lands of the south central portion of the state. Among them were many of superior intelligence and training; they brought with them the customs, love of learning, and idealism of the older Germany of Kant, Fichte, and Schiller. Many of them had left the Fatherland to secure a larger measure of political and religious freedom. They had been educated in schools which from the lowest to the highest were maintained and supported by the state and were free to all children. They naturally desired similar advantages for their children here in Texas.¹

The German immigrants who settled Gillespie County carried with them a keen interest in education, and as a result educational institutions and facilities around Fredericksburg tended to be of higher quality than typical rural schools in Texas. The first school was established in the *Marketplatz* (Market Square) at the center of Fredericksburg. The *Vereins Kirche* (Community Church) was an octagonal-shaped structure built in 1847 as a combination church, school, fort, and storehouse. Tuition at the school began at one dollar per pupil per quarter, and the *Vereins Kirche* could hold about seventy pupils. The earliest teachers, including Johann Leyendecker, Jacob Brodbeck, Reverend Burchard Dangers, and Heinrich Ochs, were also noted writers, scientists, and men of letters. August Siemering was secretary for an intellectual community established at Sisterdale, 25 miles southeast of Fredericksburg.²

In 1854, the Texas Legislature established a public school system for the first time, encouraging counties to create public school districts to bring educational opportunities to more citizens. Out of one hundred counties, only a handful organized a public school system. Gillespie County created five school districts that year to

¹ Eby 130.

² Mohon and Mohon, 125-126.

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cover the entire county population. The state provided some financial support, including a steady income for teachers who taught English, an improvement for teachers over the uncertain tuition-supported system. The first public schools in Gillespie County opened that year, as well as the first parochial school through St. Mary's Catholic Church.³

The Civil War disrupted educational efforts, but following the war there was an increase in the establishment of rural schools. Rural schools were organized through the county commissioners court, and a superintendent of education oversaw the educational program within the county. The superintendent had jurisdiction over all the schools in the county except the independent school districts, which were organized starting in the 1880s. Many rural schools were built on donated land centrally located in dispersed agricultural communities, with many children walking or riding horses several miles to school. Rural schools operated through an ad valorem property tax, providing income for the teachers and perhaps a small maintenance budget for the school building and grounds. The school year was often scheduled around the fall harvest, and many students' attendance was irregular when their help was needed at home. Some children received the majority of their schooling at home. One writer recalled the he was "more than fifteen years old before I ever attended school. My mother had given us all the help she could, and we had applied ourselves to studying such books as we had."⁴

Many of the Gillespie County schools offered courses both in German and English to cater to the predominantly German-speaking settlers. The end of the school year was often celebrated with an all-day affair called the *Schulpruefung* (school examination). The students demonstrated their knowledge of subjects through oral exams, and often when the testing was complete a picnic was held, with barbecue, beer and dancing for the families of the students. The *Schulpruefung* tradition continued through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵

From 1876 to 1884 the German Methodist Church in Fredericksburg operated Fredericksburg College as a way to supplement the educational opportunities of area students. The school was one of four in the state to receive aid from the Peabody Fund, established by George Peabody to assist the former Confederate states in establishing free public schools.⁶ The building converted to a public school in Fredericksburg, and is still used today on the Fredericksburg Independent School District middle school campus.

The African-American population in Gillespie County was never very high historically, and none of the rural schools had separate facilities for African-American students. In the late 1860s children of the Washingtons, who were freed slaves, attended Meusebach Creek School with Anglo children, probably one of the first cases of an integrated school in the South.⁷ Records from 1871 report eighteen African-American students at a school in Fredericksburg. In 1937 the Fredericksburg Independent School District was the only district in Gillespie

³ Mohon and Mohon, 126.

⁴ Biggers 85.

⁵ Mohon and Mohon, 127-128.

⁶ Gold 28.

⁷ Mohon and Mohon, 133.

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County with separate facilities for African-Americans, with seven students reported that year out of a countywide total of 2,862.⁸ The African-American school in Fredericksburg was moved from its original site to 107 E. Schubert Street.

Rural school districts proliferated in Gillespie County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reaching a peak of 42 districts at one point. In 1937, thirty of forty-one rural school districts were served by a single teacher, while eight districts had two teachers, two had three each, and one rural district, Stonewall, had four teachers for its average daily attendance of 86 students. Average daily attendances (A.D.A.) at the other rural schools ranged from six at Flat Rock to 65 at Morris Ranch.⁹ Today Gillespie County is served by four school districts. Fredericksburg Independent School District serves the largest area and offers courses in grades one through twelve. Harper, west of Fredericksburg, also teaches twelve grades. Doss schools, in the northwest part of the county, teach grades one through eight, and Stonewall in the east part of the county offers classes through fifth grade.¹⁰

The Gilmer-Aikin Law of 1949 resulted in the consolidation of most rural schools in Texas. But in Gillespie County, a stronger sense of rural community prevailed, and a dozen of the rural schools operated well beyond the mandated consolidation into the 1950s and 1960s. Stonewall and Rocky Hill schools held off consolidation with Fredericksburg until the 1970s. Many of the rural schools in Gillespie County were already serving multiple purposes as community centers and as hubs of social activity when they ceased to operate as educational centers. As a result, Gillespie County has perhaps the most intact collection of rural schoolhouses remaining in Texas. With few exceptions, the schoolhouses and ancillary buildings and structures retain a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The White Oak School was moved to the Pioneer Museum Complex in downtown Fredericksburg in 1990. The 1905 schoolhouse at Doss now serves as the local fire station. A few of the former schools, such as at Nebo (Eckert), have been converted to residences. The Petersburg and Squaw Creek schools are used as hay barns. Out of more than forty historic schools, only the main buildings at Hayden and Palo Alto have been demolished, but even at the latter site the barbecue pit remains standing.¹¹ Other school buildings that remain still operate as community centers, reunion halls, festival headquarters, and voting places.

The table "Gillespie County School Districts" on page 8-11 includes the rural district number, name, years established and consolidated, average daily attendance in 1937 (A.D.A.), and historical designations for each of 42 rural school districts and two independent school districts in Gillespie County. Abbreviations for historical designations are OTHM (Official Texas Historical Marker), RTHL (Recorded Texas Historic Landmark), NRHP (National Register of Historic Places), and NHL (National Historic Landmark, for the Junction School at Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park).

⁸ Texas Statewide School Adequacy Survey, 659-670.

⁹ Texas Statewide School Adequacy Survey, 659-670. See also table on page 8-11.

¹⁰ Mohon and Mohon, 130, "Lower South Grape Creek."

¹¹ Gillespie County School Histories.

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Gillespie County School Districts

No.	Name	Established	Consolidated	A.D.A.	Consolidated with	Historical designations
1	Big Flat (Tasca)		1939	15	Willow City	
2	Live Oak	1854	1949	25	Fredericksburg	
3	Luckenbach	1855	1964	29	Fredericksburg	RTHL 1982
4	Cave Creek	1870	1950	28	Fredericksburg	
5	Rocky Hill	1885	1977	39	Fredericksburg	
6	Palo Alto	1870	1946	48		
7	Pilot Knob	1880	1963	40	Fredericksburg	
8	Grape Hill	1885	before 1937	--	Luckenbach	
9	Squaw Creek	1867	1954	12	Doss	
10	Crabapple	1877	1957	33	Fredericksburg	OTHM 1994
11	Meusebach Creek	1858	1951	47	Fredericksburg	
12	Pedernales	1867	1945	10		OTHM 1993
13	Young's Chapel	before 1889		11		
14	Grapetown	1859	1949	25	Rocky Hill	RTHL 1984
15	Junction	1881	1947	30	Stonewall	NHL
16	Cherry Spring	1859	1962	22	Fredericksburg	OTHM 1985 RTHL 1988
17	Honey Creek	before 1889	1942	7	Fredericksburg	
18	Stonewall	1860	1970	86	Fredericksburg	
19	Hayden	before 1904	1942	18	Morris Ranch	
20	Wrede	1871	1960	14	Fredericksburg	
21	Lower South Grape Creek	1871	1960	25	Fredericksburg	RTHL 1994
22	Rheingold	1873	1949	33	Fredericksburg	
23	Knopp	before 1889	1947	49	Fredericksburg	
24	Doss	1884	--	44	--	OTHM 1985
25	Tivydale	1880	1950	21	Harper	
26	Wolf Creek	1899	1946	15	Morris Ranch	
27	Cherry Mountain	1883	1949	11	Fredericksburg	RTHL 1992
28	Onion Creek	1881	1947	9	Doss	
29	Pecan Creek	1889	1955	25	Fredericksburg	
30	Nebo (Eckert)	1889	1950	36	Willow City	
31	Bear Creek	1889	1949	13	Wrede	
32	Klein Branch	1884		22		
33	Nebgen	1881	1949	14	Stonewall	
34	Pocket		1940	10	Harper	
35	Flat Rock	1889	1937	6	Harper	
36	Klein Frankreich	1900	1949	12	Fredericksburg	
37	White Oak	1892	1950	20	Morris Ranch	
38	Williams Creek (Albert)	1890	1950	31	Stonewall	RTHL 2002
39	Petersburg	1890	1951	16		
40	Morris Ranch	1890	1962	65	Fredericksburg	NRHP 1983 RTHL 1980
41	Willow City	1876	1961	35	Fredericksburg	
42	Cain City	1915	1949	19	Rocky Hill	
	Fredericksburg ISD	1847	--	601	--	
	Harper ISD	1884	--	139	--	

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Willow City School

Willow City is on Willow Creek, twelve miles northeast of Fredericksburg in northeastern Gillespie County. The earliest recorded settler from about 1860 was a slaveholding Baptist preacher reported to harbor a strong dislike for the neighboring Germans. During Reconstruction a group of settlers, including ranchers Andrew Moore, Jim Renick, William Luckenbach, Bill Hardin, and Pierce Smith, storekeeper Gene Harrison, and miller Bill Ricks, came to Willow Creek and founded one of the few Gillespie County communities settled by English-speakers rather than Germans. These early settlers traded mostly in Austin because they preferred dealing with other Anglo-Americans rather than with the Germans in nearby Fredericksburg. The town prospered but gained an early reputation as a criminal hangout.¹²

School children in Willow City attended class in a one-room school building, which also served as a church, as early as 1876. The post office opened in 1877 and was named Willow until 1887, when it changed to Willow City. The town had two teachers as early as 1881; one was John Warren Hunter, who once had to wrestle a six-gun away from an angry student. Built on the banks of Willow Creek, the village flooded in the late 1880s, after which time the inhabitants moved about a half-mile northwest to higher ground. In 1885 a Methodist congregation was organized under Rev. T. J. Lassater. A two-story frame building, erected in 1890, became the second schoolhouse. The growing community of Willow City supported a gristmill, three general stores, several doctors, a drug store, post office, two blacksmith shops, a saloon, hotel, cotton gin, and three churches. From 1892 to 1894 Green Harrison published the *Gillespie County News*; later he sold the newspaper to Webster McGinnis, who moved it to Fredericksburg. Willow City received telephone service in 1893.¹³

In 1905, the citizens voted to issue two \$500.00 bonds bearing six percent interest and maturing in twenty years to pay for a new, larger school building. A 22 cent per \$100 ad valorem tax was levied to cover the bond issue. J. W. Lindemann and J. C. Hardin donated five acres of land on a hill approximately a quarter mile northwest of the second school building for the new school. Students from first through tenth grade attended school in the two-story, three-room building. When George T. Butler was principal in 1913-15, curriculum included three years of Latin as well as physics, plane geometry, English and history. When J. F. Roege was principal in 1915-17, classes included reading and writing in German for pupils who had a speaking knowledge of German.

A large number of English speaking people, rather than Germans, inhabited Willow City. Some settlers of Scotch-Irish descent came from Tennessee, Mississippi, and other states of the Old South. These, as well as the German settlers, became the backbone of the community. Some of the more prominent settlers were J. D. (Green) Harrison, owner of a general store, Bill Ricks, who ran the gristmill, Dr. Williamson, Andrew Moore, Jim Renick, William Luckenbach, Bill Hardin and Pierce Smith, all ranchers. A native of the area, Miss Myrtle Renick, became the first female principal in 1920. Her brother Larkin was her assistant teacher.

¹² "Willow City, Texas."

¹³ "Willow City, Texas."

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Willow City School
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

Support for the Willow City schools came from ad valorem taxes. On January 1, 1910, the school tax was 35 cents per \$100 for support and maintenance of a public free school (21 cents for support and maintenance and 14 cents for the interest and sinking fund), 50 cents in 1915, and 40 cents in 1929. The year of 1915 brought the installation of jacketed stoves and ventilators to the school, the addition of blackboards in the classrooms and a partition on the first floor to create an entrance hallway. A female teacher made her living quarters in the partitioned hallway for a short time. About 1920, a well was drilled, with another added in later years. However, at this time neither well contains potable water. Added in the 1950s were the restroom facilities and ventilated propane heaters to replace the wood stoves. The population of Willow City peaked about the time the 1905 school was built, although the scholastic population increased briefly following consolidation of schools in 1949. In 1961 the Willow City School was consolidated with the Fredericksburg Independent School District.

Conclusion

Rural schools were the primary educational institutions for the majority of Texans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These facilities provided the highest level of schooling for many individuals, and as training and education centers for those who went on to high school or college in larger cities. Rural schools also served as social centers for smaller communities. The school buildings were most often vernacular, with no discernible architectural style, and built from local materials with log, frame, or stone construction. Through the process of school consolidation, the majority of these rural school buildings were vacated and subsequently demolished. In Gillespie County, the tradition of community activity continued in these rural buildings, preserving many of the structures that otherwise would have been lost. In addition, the tradition of rural education was continued in Gillespie County for a longer period than elsewhere in the state. As a result, Gillespie County has one of the most intact concentrations of rural schools in Texas.

The Willow City School complex comprises an intact rural landscape from the early twentieth century. Built largely of local materials in vernacular style, the buildings convey a sense of their time and place as a good example of the early days of education in the state. The resources are nearly unaltered since the school was active from 1905-1961, and much of the original historic material remains intact. The facility continues to serve as a social gathering place for the community. The Willow City School complex meets Criterion A, in the area of Education, for its role in the process of conveying and acquiring knowledge and skills through systematic instruction, training and study. The schoolhouse also meets Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a well-designed local example of a Colonial Revival style building. The property retains integrity of materials, workmanship, design, location, setting, association and feeling to a high degree.

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Willow City School
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

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Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

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Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

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Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 5.00 acres

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
	14	528570	3363270

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Legal parcel number Property ID R83750, Willow City Block School, 5.00 acres in Gillespie County, Texas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The boundary includes all property historically associated with the resource.

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Bob Brinkman, Texas Historical Commission)

NAME/TITLE: Ronni Pue

ORGANIZATION: Save Rural Texas Schools

DATE: December 10, 2004

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 413

TELEPHONE: (830) 997-8655

CITY OR TOWN: Fredericksburg

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 78624

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheets MAP-19 through MAP-20 and topographic map)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet PHOTO-21)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Gillespie County, ATTN: The Hon. Mark Stroehrer

STREET & NUMBER: 101 West Main

TELEPHONE: (830) 997-7502

CITY OR TOWN: Fredericksburg

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 78624

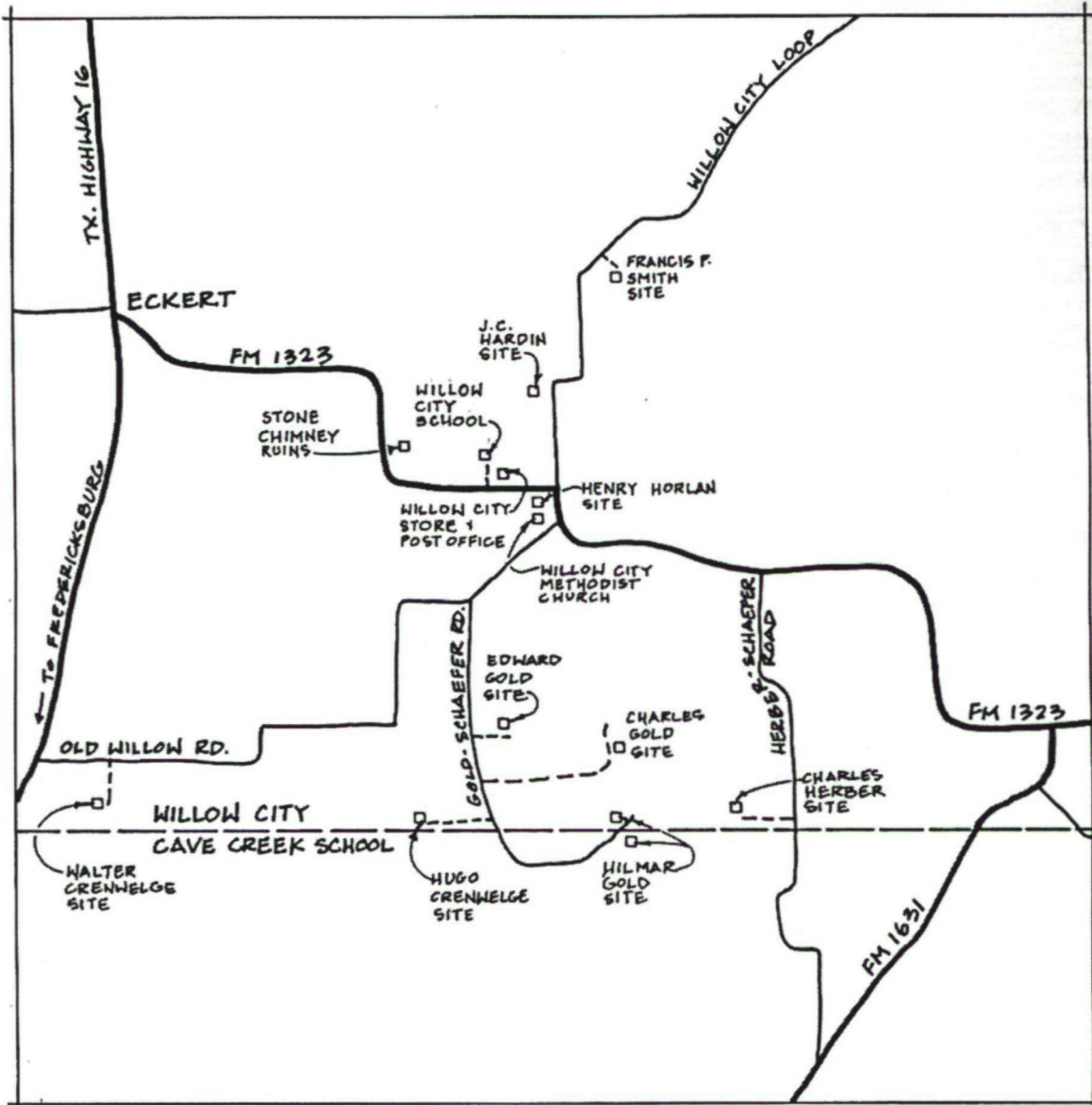
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Section MAP Page 20

Willow City School
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

Willow City area map, north at top. Source: A Photographic Survey of Rural Gillespie County.



**WILLOW CITY
COMMUNITY**

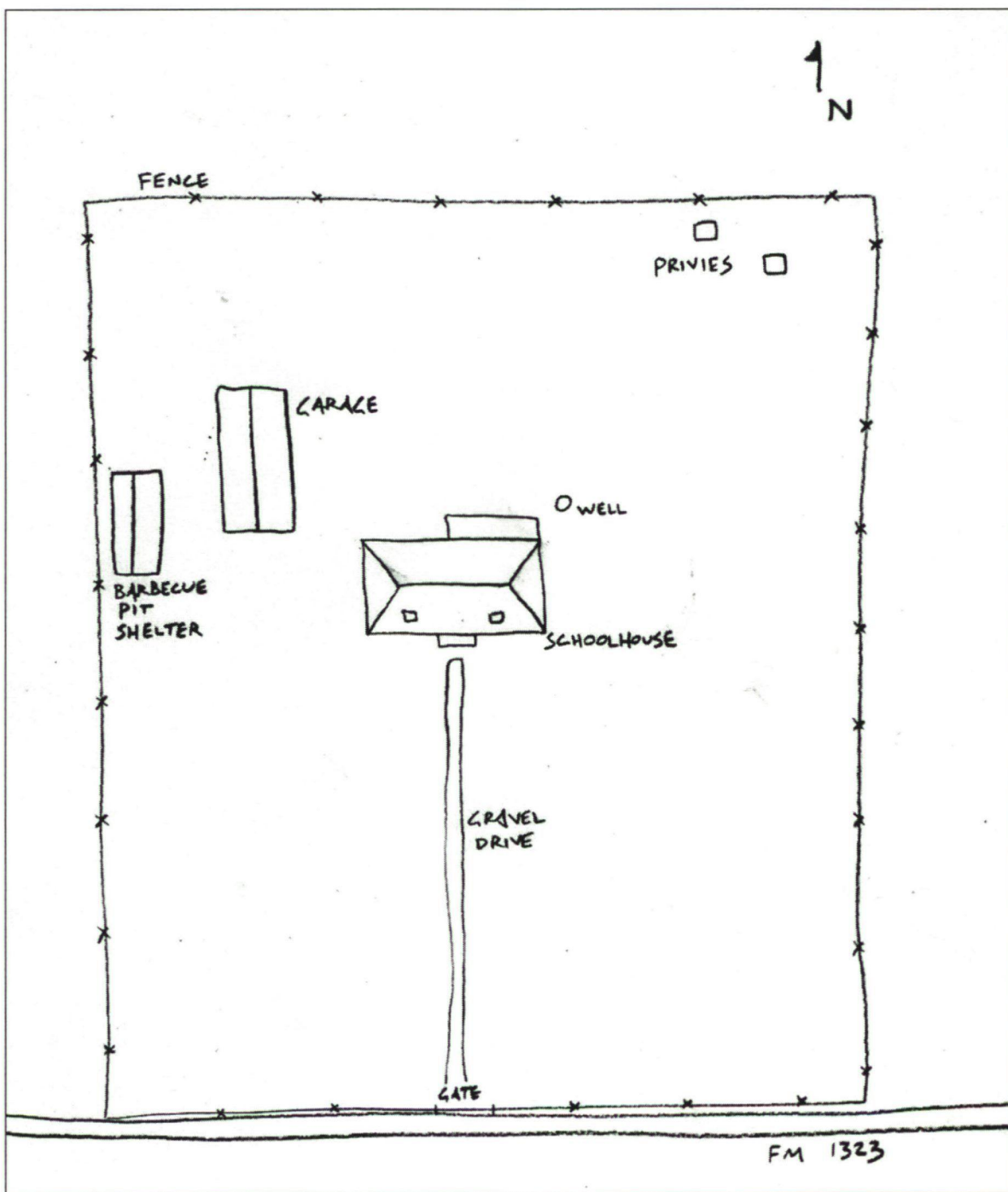
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Willow City School
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

Site plan of Willow City School, north at top. Not to scale.



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Section PHOTO Page 22

Willow City School
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

Willow City School
2501 Ranch Road 1323
Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas
Photographs by Greg Smith, October 2004.
Negatives on file at Texas Historical Commission.

Photograph 1 of 2
Willow City School, south elevation
Camera facing north

Photograph 2 of 2
Willow City School, garage and barbecue pit, south elevation
Camera facing north

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Willow City School

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Gillespie

DATE RECEIVED: 3/25/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/20/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/05/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/08/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05000385

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5/8/05 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





WILLOW CITY SCHOOL

2501 RM 1323

WILLOW CITY, GILLESPIE COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 1 OF 2



WILLOW CITY SCHOOL

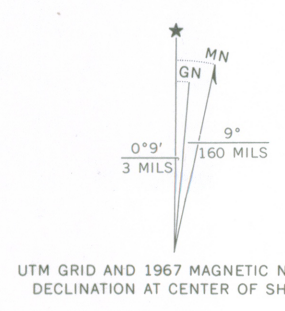
2501 RM 1323

WILLOW CITY, GILLESPIE COUNTY, TEXAS

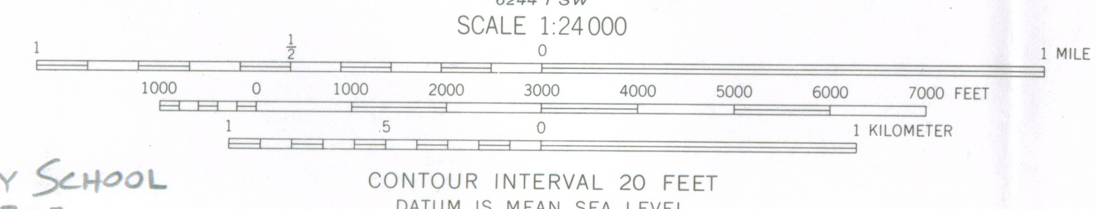
PHOTO 2 OF 2



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



WILLOW CITY SCHOOL
2501 RM 1323
WILLOW CITY, GILLESPIE COUNTY, TEXAS
ZONE 14 528570E 3363270N



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Unimproved dirt - - - - -
State Route ○

3098-243

WILLOW CITY, TEX.
N3022.5-W9837.5/7.5

1967

AMS 6244 I NW—SERIES W882

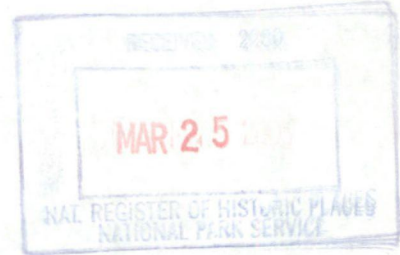
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Rick Perry • *Governor*
John L. Nau, III • *Chairman*
F. Lawrence Oaks • *Executive Director*

The State Agency for Historic Preservation



TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Willow City School, Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

DATE: March 25, 2005

The following materials are submitted regarding: Willow City School, Willow City, Gillespie County, Texas

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original National Register of Historic Places form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resubmitted nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Property nomination form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photographs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	USGS map
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondence
	Other:

COMMENTS:

SHPO requests substantive review

The enclosed owner objections (do) (do not) constitute a majority of property owners

Other _____