

PH0509302

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 23 1977  
DATE ENTERED JAN 31 1978

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC WAHERAK "MAIHAR"

\*\*

AND/OR COMMON  
Puluwat Sailing Canoe

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Temporarily stored in the Headquarters Public Works compound  
m at Lower Base

CITY, TOWN Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE VICINITY OF CODE COUNTY CODE

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: not in use

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950  
VICINITY OF

STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. None

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE NA

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE June 1976

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The canoe is an excellent example of an ocean going out-rigger sailing canoe traditionally used in the central Caroline Islands. The design, materials and construction methods have remained virtually unchanged for hundreds of years. The canoe has an overall length of 26' with a beam of 36". It is constructed of native materials from the Island of Puluwat (coconut, pandanus, breadfruit)

The canoe has four principal components; Hull, out-rigger, lee platform and rigging.

The hull is asymmetric, narrow and deep and is V shaped on a cross section. The keel is shaped from a single breadfruit log and the hull is formed of precut and fitted breadfruit planks lashed together with coconut rope. The hull planks are caulked with coconut fiber and made waterproof with sticky breadfruit sap. The hull is painted black with red trim.

The out-rigger assembly is built around two heavy timber beams which arch up out of the hull and then curve down to the float. The booms are curved upwards to avoid contact with waves. The float is a solid carved piece of breadfruit wood securely lashed with booms forming a large work and storage area. This also adds to the structural strength of the canoe's hull.

Opposite the out-rigger is the lee platform. It rests upon two heavy timbers and forms a raised bench. The bench is reserved for the navigator. Two other benches at right angles to the navigator's are formed of boards extending across the hull. Together these three benches comprise the cockpit in the center of the canoe.

The rigging is unique. Since the out-rigger is always kept to windward the canoe cannot tack in the manner of western sailing craft. When tacking the mast and rigging must be changed from one end of the canoe to the other (the stern becomes the bow and vice versa) In order to accomplish this the canoe has no standing rigging. The cloth sail\* is tied to the yard along its upper front edge (the yard is nearly vertical and fits into a socket in the bow) and along the lower edge to a boom, which curves upwards. The sail, yard and boom are suspended from a 25' mast that is secured in the center of the canoe. Coconut fiber rope of varying diameter is used in all running rigging. This rig is designed to be picked up and physically moved from one end of the canoe to the other when tacking.

\*Cloth sails have replaced the traditional woven pandanus sails in the last 20 years.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      Constructed 1958      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The sailing canoe in several atolls of the central Carolines remains the single most important element in the life of the islanders.

In days before western contact, the skills of canoe building, sailing and navigation were common throughout Micronesia. It was the only means of transportation, communication and trade that existed between the small scattered islands. The craft were also used for fishing and played an important part in local warfare.

The canoe was a symbol of wealth, importance, power, knowledge and self-esteem among the islanders. Navigators were afforded the highest status in island society, canoe builders were second (this hierarchy is still maintained in islands that still use canoes)

Canoe building and navigational skills were (and are) closely guarded secrets passed down from father to son and surrounded by superstition, taboos and magic. Navigational skills depended totally upon the physical senses and master navigators were ultimately familiar with all physical components of their ocean environment.

The basic design of the canoe has changed little in hundreds of years. Micronesian sailing canoes were superior to any in Oceania because of two design features. The flexible running rigging and the double bowed design allowed the sailors to keep the out-rigger to windward regardless of tack. The addition of the lee platform increased both stability and allowed for a much greater cargo capacity for trading. Because of these two features the Micronesian canoe was much more adapted to the long ocean voyages.

Although the basic components of the canoe remained the same, performance improvements, especially in hull shaping was a continuous project. New designs were checked for improved performance by constructing models.

As contact with western technology increases the skills associated with the sailing canoes has diminished greatly. Today only a handful of isolated islands in Yap and Truk still carry on the tradition. Although the sailing canoe is still very important in the lives of the people of Puluwat, it is not hard to imagine that sometime in the not so distant future this tradition will disappear completely. Canoes are constructed of local materials and require constant protection and upkeep. Left unattended they quickly rot. It seems wise to acquire and protect such a craft while there is an opportunity to do so.

This canoe has particular significance as it was originally donated by the Island of Puluwat to participate in Operation Sail during the U.S. Bicentennial celebrations. Because of transportation problems the canoe never reached the States.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Apple, Russell A., Rogers, Jerry L. Historical Integrity in a Pacific Island Context . Guam Recorder No. 1 1976 p.33-36  
 Gladwin, Thomas East is a Big Bird Harvard University Press 1970  
 Haddon, A.C., Hornell, James Canoes of Oceania Bishop Museum Special Publication 1975

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY NA

UTM REFERENCES

A 

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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 

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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 

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 VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

D 

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NA

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	NA	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Scott Russell 10-19-77  
 ORGANIZATION Trust Territory Historic Preservation Staff DATE  
 STREET & NUMBER Lands and Surveys Division TELEPHONE  
Department of Resources and Development 9350  
 CITY OR TOWN Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950 STATE

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL xx 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 *Maynard Neas*

TITLE Maynard Neas Acting Historic Preservation Officer DATE 11-14-77

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST: <i>Charles A. King</i>	DATE <u>1/31/78</u> KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE <u>1-16-78</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE

Significance continued.

Although the canoe is less than fifty years old it can be argued that it possesses both historic significance and integrity.

Russell A. Apple and Jerry L. Rogers in their article entitled "Historical Integrity in the Pacific Island Context" state that when evaluating integrity of Pacific properties "the professional must take into account the fragility of the building materials used by the tropical peoples, and the transitory nature of buildings constructed thereof."

Because of the rapid deterioration of materials there are no canoes in use in Micronesia that are more than 20 years old. The Puluwatans still depend on the canoes for transportation, fishing and trade. A Canoe is used until age lowers its performance to an unexceptable level and then it is replaced.

Apple and Rogers argue that "...integrity must be construed to include recent alterations and even construction of replicas. The traditional style buildings that remain subject to the rapid bio-degradation processes of the tropical jungle environment are all significant."

The canoe is just one representative in a continuous and traditional build, use, and replace cycle that has operated for hundreds of years. Although less than fifty years old it possesses both historic significance and integrity.