

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH06 80435

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 26 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 11 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 PORT PENN HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Port Penn VICINITY OF _____ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT One

STATE Delaware CODE 10 COUNTY New Castle CODE 002

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME (See Attachment)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE _____
VICINITY OF _____

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Public Building

STREET & NUMBER

Rodney Square

CITY, TOWN Wilmington STATE Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Delaware Cultural Resource Survey; N-3928

DATE 1977 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

CITY, TOWN Dover STATE Delaware

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Port Penn Historic District contains the entire eight-block town plan laid out by Dr. David Stewart in the second half of the 18th century, plus a one-block area of 19th-century expansion along Congress Street paralleling the Delaware River. The bounds of the district are marked to the west by the juncture of Route 9 with Market Street and to the north, south, and east by the present town limits bordering on the Delaware River and two lying pockets of marsh hemming in the village on three sides. The center of the town is the intersection of Market Street and Stewart Street - an area which contains three of the village's earliest extant structures - the Presbyterian Church, and the site of the original town market. The rest of the community is largely residential, interspersed with occasional commercial structures and containing along the river front the archaeological remains of a fishing harbor and steamboat landing. Fully eighty percent of all extant structures within the bounds of the village antedate 1868 and provide insight into a well-preserved rural town, planned and developed in the late-18th and early-19th century.

The earliest surviving structure in Port Penn is the Dr. David Stewart House (N-3928.17) situated on Stewart Street south of Market Street and behind the Presbyterian Church. Two stories in elevation with a plain gable roof, the Stewart House is of brick construction laid in Flemish bond on three sides and using glazed headers on the east facade and south gable end. The fourth wall, the north gable end, is of English bond construction. The openings in the five-bay, center-door facade are capped with segmental and flat arches. The upper floors of the house sit on a raised watertable. The Dr. Stewart House, erected around 1755, was originally a farmhouse built by a family of substantial means, as evidenced in both the structure itself and a series of inventories taken in the second half of the 18th century. Set at an oblique angle to Stewart Street, the house exhibits its pre-village setting and is the only structure surviving from Port Penn's period of initial growth between 1764 and 1790.

Directly opposite the Dr. Stewart House are two, late-18th-century dwellings remaining from the first major growth period of Port Penn, dating from between 1792 and 1826. On the southeast corner of Market Street and Stewart Street stands the Dunlap, or Bendler House (N-3928.22), begun in the 1790's as a two-story frame dwelling with a gable roof and a single brick interior gable end chimney. The exterior of the frame fabric is sheathed with sawn and beaded weatherboard, while the interior is finished with plaster applied to riven lath nailed across timber studs fixed between the principal posts protruding into the room. The exposed posts along the east wall are finished with beaded casings, while those along the west wall are simply plastered over and flare inward at their juncture with the girts. The one-room-plan core is further finished with a partially-panelled south

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1760 - 1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The village of Port Penn exists today as an unusually well preserved example of a small 19th century Delaware river town. Port Penn originated and developed within the framework of an early town plan devised prior to 1764 by its founder, Dr. David Stewart. From the final decades of the 18th century until well after the Civil War the town was a port of entry and an active commercial center engaged in the coastal shipment of local agricultural products. In the 19th century Port Penn underwent an extensive period of rebuilding as evidenced by the great discrepancy between early town population levels and the few surviving buildings that can be dated with certainty to the 18th century. Port Penn is important archaeologically in that it has the potential to yield information about past lifeways of a river town and to offer insight into the nature and extent of the "rebuilding" which seems to have occurred in Delaware in the first half of the 19th century. Like many other towns throughout Delaware, Port Penn was affected by internal transportation improvements with the opening of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in 1829 and the construction of the Delaware Railroad in the 1850's. With the ascendancy of the railroads as a means of commercial transportation, Port Penn's river oriented trade stagnated and its sustained period of moderate prosperity came to an end. The buildings that remain in Port Penn comprise a visually unified assemblage of residential, commercial and ecclesiastic structures which document its appearance in the late 19th century. Since then 100 years have passed, but there have been relatively few visible changes to Port Penn's overall 19th century architectural and environmental character.

The earliest European interest in the northeastern corner of St. Georges Hundred in the vicinity of Port Penn involved Dutch speculative land transactions. In 1646, the Director General of Dutch Colonies in Delaware, William Kieft, gave a parcel of some 1200 acres to four Dutchmen with the stipulation that the lands be occupied and settled within one year. These conditions were not met and the patent was revoked and the lands incorporated within a larger tract granted jointly to Peter Alricks and Casparus Herman, both members of prominent Dutch families taking an active role the Dutch colonization of the Delaware River. Both Alricks and Herman held extensive lands elsewhere in Delaware and neither ever established residence on their Port Penn area grants. In the 1690's, three decades after the English wrested control of Delaware lands from the Dutch, Robert Ashton, a cousin of William Penn and a justice for New Castle County, became the first of the 17th century patent holders to develop his grant. Ashton's grant and plantation occupied a small neck of land a mile and a half north of Port Penn.

Sometime in the second quarter of the 18th century Dr. David Stewart acquired the lands that were later to become the village of Port Penn. By 1750 he had constructed a fine two story brick plantation house (N-3928.17) to replace his earlier gambrel roof plank residence (N-3928.15).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Beers, D.G. Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia, Pomeroy & Beers, 1868.
 Rea, Samuel and Jacob Price. Map of New Castle County, Delaware. Philadelphia: Smith and Wistar 1849.
 Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware: 1609-1888. Reprint ed., Port Washington, New York: Kenikat Press, 1972.
 Manuscript Research Papers, University of Delaware American Studies Students, Fall Semester 1977; on file, Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, Dover, Delaware.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 71 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Delaware City, Delaware

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	4,5,0	5,4,0	4,3	7,4	2,8,0	B	1,8	4,5,0	7,7,0	4,3	7,4	2,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
C	1,8	4,5,0	7,9,0	4,3	7,3	9,6,0	D	1,8	4,5,0	6,0,0	4,3	7,3	5,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
E	1,8	4,5,0	2,6,0	4,3	7,3	6,9,0	F	1,8	4,5,0	1,2,0	4,3	7,4	0,7,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
G	1,8	4,5,0	1,2,5	4,3	7,4	1,7,0	H						
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary description is based on New Castle County Property Maps, numbers 10.09, 10.10, 10.13 and 10.14, which were compiled in May, 1970. (See Continuation Page)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY : 1. Bernard Herman, Lecturer, American Studies Program, U.of D.

- NAME/TITLE 2. Students: American Studies Program, University of Delaware.
 3. Dean Nelson, Historian

ORGANIZATION	Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs	DATE	April 1978
STREET & NUMBER	Hall of Records	TELEPHONE	(302) 678-5314
CITY OR TOWN	Dover	STATE	Delaware 19901

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 *Lauren*

TITLE Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs DATE 7/21/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 11.20.78

ATTEST: *W.A. Beese* DATE Nov 17, 1978

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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PORT PENN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

1. Port Penn Museum
Robert Beck, President
Port Penn Civic Association
P. O. Box 55
Port Penn, DE 19731
2. J. L. Campbell and B. Stevenson
Meggison Avenue
New Castle, DE 19720
3. Thelma E. Pierce
2 North Liberty Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
4. Joseph A. Stapleton
R. D. 2, Box 30-50
West Grove, PA 19390
5. Mr. & Mrs. James L. Schaffer
3 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
6. Mr. & Mrs. Henry A. Blanck
5 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
7. Lewis W. Walker
7 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
8. Mr. & Mrs. James J. Blanford
9 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
9. Mr. & Mrs. Norris L. Smith
11 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
10. Isaac Earl Hall
3 Stewart Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

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11. Mr. & Mrs. William R. Fleming
Stewart Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
12. Mr. & Mrs. James Fleming
1219 Mount Holly Road
Beverly, NJ 08010
13. James C. and Alberta E. Dyer
2 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
14. George B. and Acey V. Gibson
4 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
15. Presbyterian Church
Port Penn
Delaware 19731
16. William H. Backus
R. D. 1, Box 69-A
Sudlersville, MD 21668
17. Mr. & Mrs. Edward E. Stephenson
Box 54
1 South Stewart Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
18. Port Penn Presbyterian Church
Market & Stewart Streets
Port Penn, DE 19731
19. Frederick C. Lecompt
77 Louisville
Box 237
Lawrenceville, NJ 08532
20. Blanche V. Freeman
Merchant Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

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21. Mr. & Mrs. Howard B. Carter
Townsend, DE 19734
22. Gertrude T. Bendler
100 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
23. Mr. & Mrs. John Hall
4 South Stewart Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
24. Donald L. Moore
101 East Merchant Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
25. Mr. & Mrs. Donald Callaway
103 East Merchant Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
26. Louis & Jennie Jackson
105 East Merchant Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
27. Mr. & Mrs. John Martynick
11 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
28. Myrtle M. McKinney
9 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
29. Mr. & Mrs. William B. Poore
5 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
30. Merville E. and Edith L. Koria
3 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
31. Helen M. Reader
102 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

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-
- 32. St. Daniels M. E. Church
2 North Stewart Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 33. Mr. & Mrs. Charles Abe
R. D. 2, Box 285
Townsend, DE 19734

 - 34. Edward Walsh
Lechateau 43
Sarasota, FL 33577

 - 35. Mr. & Mrs. William Roemer
107 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 36. Thelma Q. Hubbs
109 East Market Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 37. P. H. and Eaby G. C. Carson
3 North Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 38. Roland S. Quillen
7 North Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 39. Isaac Nall, et al
9 North Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 40. C. Kirk Lynch
101 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 41.
to 45. Myrtle C. Shorts, et al
Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

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-
- 46. Orlean P. Jackson, et al
Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 47. Mr. & Mrs. Charles J. Divirglio
Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 48. Cora Yearsley
6 North Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 49. Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Roberts
4 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 50. Roger Mason
1509 Lancaster Avenue
Wilmington, DE 19800

 - 51. George H. Marshall
4432 Sandy Drive
Wilmington, DE 19731

 - 52. Sherry Dunkleberger
2 Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 53. Mr. & Mrs. Charles G. Coleman
6 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 54. Norman L. Fleming
8 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
and
Mildred and Staats Sacheis
10 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731

 - 55. Myrtle Shorts, et al
Port Penn, DE 19731

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- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 56. Mr. & Mrs. Lewis J. Lee
36 Lea Road
New Castle, DE 19720 | 65. Mr. & Mrs. George B. Cannon
614 South Street
New Castle, DE 19731 |
| 57. C. Kirk Lynch
101 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 66. Mr. & Mrs. Richard J. Steele, Jr.
100 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 |
| 58. Mr. & Mrs. John Pfister
103 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 67. Mr. & Mrs. Clifford H. Howell
104 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19734 |
| 59. Mr. & Mrs. George F. Lancaster
105 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 68. Mr. & Mrs. John D. Genet
106 Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 |
| 60. Mr. & Mrs. George A. Hall
107 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 69. Mr. & Mrs. Norman Fleming
Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 |
| 61. Dr. William Shea
111 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731
and
Mr. & Mrs. Harry P. Wilkinson
113 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 70. Mr. & Mrs. John W. Sturgis
General Delivery
Bluffton, SC 29910 |
| 62. Mr. & Mrs. William D. Dolbow
115 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 71. Effie D. Sibel
114 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 |
| 63. Mr. & Mrs. Donald B. McElrath, Sr.
117 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 72. Mr. & Mrs. John E. Messick
116 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 |
| 64. Mr. & Mrs. Robert F. Hitchens
119 South Congress Street
Port Penn, DE 19731 | 73. Myrtle Shorts, et al
Port Penn, DE 19731 |

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gable wall containing a boxed corner winder stair and closet concealed behind raised, six-panel doors and a simply-executed, Federal-period mantel with a moderate amount of hand carving. The second floor chamber is finished with plastered walls and a small undecorated mantel. The attic area is unfinished and has a common rafter roof system with the rafters based on a continuous board false plate. In the mid-19th century, the house was enlarged first with a gable end addition extending toward Market Street, and later with a second two-story wing toward Stewart Street. Finally, a one-and-a-half-story frame wing was appended to the rear gable wall of the original block. The Dunlap or Bendler House has served in a number of capacities, including use as a combination store and residence.

Adjacent to the Dunlap-Bendler House at 3 Stewart Street, is the Cleaver or Hall House (N-3928.23). Of frame construction covered with composition shingle siding and two-stories in elevation with a gable end front, the Cleaver-Hall House is probably the second earliest house surviving in Port Penn. Originally, the dwelling possessed a two-story brick lean-to addition running the full depth of the south wall but, due to structural deterioration, the wing collapsed in 1976. The core of the dwelling is built on a variation of a side-hall-plan with the principal entrance opening into a stair hall containing an open string staircase to the second floor. Beside the stair hall is a large parlor with a fully paneled end wall of the late-18th century. A central block extends forward into the room containing the hearth and chimney pile and having a simply molded surround surmounted by a large overmantel with crossettes. On either side of the central block are recessed paneled door cupboards and beside the north wall a six-paneled door opening into the rear room. The back room, presently the kitchen, has been remodeled but still retains a deep mantel shelf over a second hearth in the central chimney pile and a narrow enclosed stair to the second floor finished with straight-sawn vertical planking. A fourth room, the pantry, is contained in the southeast corner of the dwelling and opens directly to the outside. The entire interior of the house, except where paneled, was finished with plaster over riven lath. The Cleaver-Hall House stands on lot number 53 of David Stewart's town plan of 1792, and was to be sold by direction of his will to one Richard Will.

Adjacent to the Dr. Stewart House stands the Port Penn Presbyterian Church (N-3928.18) built shortly after 1856 on the former town market square. The nave of the brick church rests on a full basement containing a number of work and meeting rooms. The brick walls are laid in a combination of common and stretcher bonds with engaged brick pilasters running from grade to a simply articulated brick

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cornice surmounted with sawn-work wood trim. The principal gable end facade fronting on Market Street is topped by a square-based steeple with a conical eight-sided belfry. The sides of the steeple base are pierced with louvered round arched windows along the round, arched, gable-end entrance into the nave. The gable end front is divided by engaged brick pilasters into three recessed fields. The central space contains the entrance door finished with slender Gothic Revival pilasters and a plain rose window beneath a segmental arch spanning the tops of the two central pilasters. On either side of the central panel are two narrow recessed panels containing rounded arch windows illuminating the gable end vestibule and overhead gallery. The windows along the sides are of similar proportions, but finished with plain sash and stretcher bond tops. The interior of the church is finished with blue plaster and wainscot, painted glass windows, and a cast plaster floral medallion in the center of the ceiling.

Market Street west to the junction with Route 9 presents a streetscape of dwellings all built before 1868 and, while the interiors of several of these houses have been altered, their exterior trim and profiles are reflective of Port Penn's boom period of growth. On the south side of Market Street are the Eaton House (N-3928.13) and the Presbyterian Parsonage (N-3928.14). The Eaton House dates from the mid-19th century and is a frame two-and-a-half-story gable roof dwelling with projecting eaves and short cornice returns. The house is built on a side-hall, double-pile-plan and has a simple full-length front porch. On the neighboring lot stands the Parsonage, also a two-and-a-half-story frame structure, but begun as a one-room-plan dwelling similar to the Bendler House and later extended into a two-story hall-and-parlor-plan house. The house has been extensively altered on the interior, but it's exterior detailing still conforms to it's original appearance. On the north side of Market Street is a row of six dwellings all built prior to 1868. Each house is an individual dwelling unit and sits on a separate lot in Block B of Dr. Stewart's 1792 town plan. At the corner of Stewart and Market Streets is a two-story, center-hall-plan frame dwelling (N-3928.9) which, while it retains its exterior lines, has been modernized with textured aluminum siding, two-over-two sash windows, and the removal of the original interior end chimneys. On the adjacent lot stands another two-story frame dwelling (N-3928.8) erected on a side-hall, one-room-deep plan, later enlarged into a double-pile arrangement listed as the H. Fleming House. On the east gable end is a two-story hexagonal front bow window, while on the west end the original end chimney has been removed. The windows are finished with two-over-two windows with louvered exterior shutters, and the first floor is spanned by a one-story, hip roof with turned posts and balustrade and sawn work cornice brackets. West of the H. Fleming House stands the T. Cleaver House (N-3928.7) dating from the mid-19th century. Built on a

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double-pile, center-hall-plan, the Cleaver House is built of frame presently covered with asbestos shingle and resting on a brick and rubble stone foundation. Two stories in elevation, the house is covered with a gable roof with projecting eaves filled in with a cornice of closely-spaced, sawn-work brackets. Flat-roofed porches across the front and over a gable end employ the same cornice line and bracketing. A single interior gable end chimney stands in the west gable wall, while the east end chimney has been removed. With its larger dimensions and Italianate trim, the Cleaver House dominates the west block of Market Street in much the same manner as it did when it was built. To the west of the Cleaver House is the S. Carpenter House (N-3928.6), a two-story, gable-roofed, frame dwelling built before 1830. Begun as a one-room-plan dwelling, the Carpenter House retains a brick interior gable end chimney with a corbeled cap as well as a moderate amount of its interior trim and woodwork. Later in the 19th century, the plan was extended from the west gable end into a hall-parlor arrangement, and still later additions were made to the rear of the house. The exterior is presently sheathed with composition shingle and has no front porch. The next house to the west is the S. Jefferson House (N-3928.5), also built of frame and covered with sawn weatherboarding. The house was erected on a one-room-deep, side-hall plan with a gable roof with projecting eaves and interior gable end chimney. Later additions include a stick-style, full-length front porch with a hip roof and numerous rear wings. Although the interior has been somewhat remodeled, many original features including chimney closts and mantels remain in place. The last house on Market Street, at the corner of Route 9, is the M. Nandine (N-3928.4) dwelling dating from the same mid-19th-century period of construction as the Jefferson and Fleming houses. Two stories in elevation, the Nandine House has a gable roof with projecting eaves having slight returns, a hall-parlor-plan, and central chimney pile. The frame core has lean-to additions on both the rear and east walls and a gable end front porch of recent construction. The Nandine House is only one of two gable end front houses in Port Penn and marks the end of the early residential district.

West of the C. Eaton House and Nandine House stands the Port Penn School (N-3928.1) and site of the Port Penn cannery (N-3928.2) which operated during the first half of the 20th century. The cannery, now destroyed, stood across Market Street to the south of the school. The structure was a long, low frame building with multi-leveled gable roofs and a large cylindrical chimney stack rising above the cooking areas. Like numerous small-scale, family-owned canneries on the Delmarva Peninsula, the Port Penn cannery specialized in packing local produce under its own label. Run by the Zachis family of Port Penn, the cannery hired local help and paid them with cash-redeemable tokens for piecework.

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Back in the town, Market Street continues beyond Stewart Street to Congress Street and then dead ends at the old wharf and steamboat docking area (N-3928.45). On the north side of Market Street, between Stewart and Congress Streets, is a range of four dwellings. On lot 227 of Stewart's town plan stands the W. C. Webb House (N-3928.36), a plain two-story frame gable roof structure with an interior end chimney and late one-story, hip roof, full-length front porch. The original weatherboarding has been sheathed with composition shingle siding and lean-to additions made to the rear. The Webb House dates from the early 19th century and is one of the earlier structures remaining in the town. On lot 226 to the west is the T. Price House (N-3928.35), another two-story, side-hall-plan frame dwelling, but built towards the mid-19th century. The Price House retains a particularly fine Eastlake-style, shed-roofed, full-length front porch with delicate sawn work brackets at the top of each principal post. The gable roof has extended eaves with cornice returns and a plain box cornice, and the exterior of the walls is sheathed in plain mill-sawn weatherboarding. A full, two-story gable roof extends from the rear of the house. Adjacent to the Price House on lot 225 is the A. J. Vandergrift House (N-3928.35). Also built in the mid-19th century, the Vandergrift House is a two-story, center-passage-plan dwelling of frame construction with a gable roof and interior end chimneys. Across the three central openings in the five-bay facade is a flat roof, tetrastyle porch. The principal posts are squared columns with recessed center panels defining the shaft and corbeled woodblock capitals. A low, square, baluster porch rail fills in the street facade and the porch is entered from the ends. Although the Vandergrift's were comparative latecomers to Port Penn, the family has played a substantial role in the development of St. Georges Hundred and have contributed to the growth of nearby Odessa and local agrarian culture. Finally, on the northeast corner of Stewart and Market Streets stands an early 20th-century combination store and dwelling (N-3928.33). Built on a T-plan, the east wing of the house served as the residence, while the gable end front west wing contained a store. Two stories in elevation, of frame construction sheathed with horizontal and vertical mill-sawn weatherboarding, the house is one of several combination business and domestic structures built in Port Penn. The structure sits on lot 224 which was not developed until after 1895.

On the south side of Market Street, between Stewart and Congress Streets, is the site of an early Port Penn tavern. Two-and-a-half-stories in elevation, the tavern is shown on an 1868 map of the village as the L. A. Pennington Hotel. The position of the Pennington Hotel at the corner of Market and Congress Streets oriented the building towards the wharf area and steamboat landing and a regular stream of clientele. Photographs of the hotel prior to its demolition show a

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frame weatherboarded structure covered with composition shingle. The dormer windows in the attic level were capped with segmental roofs and finished with reeded trim. The site of the hotel was left vacant, and a modern tavern (N-3928.31) erected next to the site.

Paralleling the Delaware River, Port Penn's second principal thoroughfare is Congress Street. On the northeast corner of Market and Congress Streets, and adjacent to the old road to the wharf area, stands "Linden Hall" (N-3928.50) built in the 1840's by Joseph Cleaver as his "mansion" house and later converted to a hotel and post office. "Linden Hall" is a brick structure, two-and-one-half-stories high and is in its altered form, an "L" shape. The original part is the two-and-one-half-story brick, Georgian, double-parlor-plan. After 1858, the brick two-story wing, with its shed roof, extended the building to the rear in its "L" shape.

The Commodore's House (N-3928.49), next to the Cleaver mansion, was built as the commanding officer's quarters for the government quarantine station established on Reedy Island offshore from Port Penn. Built in the colonial revival style, the Commodore's House is a two-story, three-bay, center-hall-plan dwelling of weatherboarded frame construction with a gable roof. The interior retains much of its original trim including colonial revival mantels, doors and woodwork. The original front of the house now faces Linden Hall to the south, and the principal entrance has been moved around to the gable end fronting on Congress Street. Built in the 1930's, the house was moved to lot 222 in Port Penn when the Reedy Island quarantine station was decommissioned following World War II.

On lot 221 sits the B. J. Eaton House (N-3928.48) built in the 1830's as a two-story, frame, hall-parlor-plan dwelling. Architecturally, the Eaton House retains a great deal of its original first floor interior trim including chair rail, a corner boxed winder stair, and elaborately-decorated, late-Federal punchwork mantels. As in other braced frame structures in the village, the principal posts project into the rooms. The Eaton House is also notable for its atypical chimney placement where a single stack in the rear wall produces a diagonally-placed corner hearth in each room. A later-19th-century el extended the house to the rear.

Across the street from the Eaton House and the Commodore's House are two small frame, two-story dwellings (N-3928.37 and .38) dating from before 1868. Like many of the mid-19th-century houses in Port Penn, they are built on a side-hall-plan with later rear additions and full-length front porches. Four other houses stood on various lots on both sides of Congress Street to the north of the Eaton House,

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but these have been demolished and replaced with early and mid-20th-century cottages (N-3928.46 and .47).

Going south on Congress Street from its juncture with Market Street are numerous sites and structures that constituted the heart of Port Penn's commercial district. To the east on the corner are several lots formerly occupied by three business and dwelling structures owned by Joseph Cleaver whose Port Penn property holding in 1845 consisted of six lots, a brick house, five smaller frame houses, a storehouse, wharf and stable. Across the street are the sites of the Pennington Hotel previously described and a smaller house, both of which were standing prior to 1792. Only one structure of this early grouping remains; a two-story, frame, gable roof combination store and tenant dwelling (N-3928.52) dating from the mid-19th century. Now covered with composition shingle, half the structure continues to function as an apartment house, while the commercial half remains unoccupied. Neither portion is open for interior examination. Back across Congress Street stand two frame dwellings - one dating from the 1870's, and the other from the 1840's. The later of the two is a two-and-a-half-story, frame, hip roof, double-pile, side-hall-plan dwelling (N-3928.30) with a later-19th century, two-story storefront addition. The original block is finished with a hip roof, full-length front porch supported by turned posts and with paired Italianate cornice brackets spaced between the half-story windows. The wing also retains a full-length front porch and presently serves as the village post office. Some of the early counter and shelving elements were saved when the store was remodeled and installed in the Port Penn Museum, now occupying the old schoolhouse. The house and store are listed in 1893 as part of the W. H. Miller estate. The dwelling (N-3928.29) on the lot adjoining to the south, also owned by W. H. Miller, began as a simple two-story, frame, gable-roofed dwelling and was enlarged in the 1850's with a two-and-a-half-story, frame, side-hall-plan wing. Both sections of the house are quite plain and have additions to the rear. At the northwest corner of Congress Street and Merchant Street is the S. Garrett Store (N-3928.27) which, though standing prior to 1868, has been heavily altered. Completing the block across Congress Street are the W. Eaton (N-3928.53) and O. Webb (N-3928.54) dwellings. Like the majority of early houses in Port Penn they are gable-roofed, frame, two-stories in elevation and built on a side-hall plan. While the Webb house is in use only as a residence, the Eaton house exists as a combination store and dwelling.

Continuing south on Congress Street, Port Penn stretches another full block beyond Dr. Stewart's 1792 town plan. On the west side of the street is a range of three pre-1868 dwellings beginning with a second Stewart family house. Built as a two-story, frame, gable-roofed, hall-parlor-plan dwelling, the Stewart House originally

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stood directly on the corner of Merchant and Congress Streets. Sometime after 1868 the house was moved back on its lot and the original interior gable end chimney piles destroyed. The Stewart House is particularly notable for its riven wood shingle roof covering. Next to the Stewart House is a two-story, frame, double house (N-3928.58) with common central chimney pile. Although the house retains its original lines and a fine Eastlake-style front porch, the exterior surface has been sheathed with composition shingle and all the original interior trim removed in the course of various renovations. The third dwelling in this group is the T. Price House (N-3928.59) - a two-story, frame, center-hall, single-pile-plan structure with a plain gable roof and interior end chimneys. On the interior, the house possesses some of its Federal period trim and the exterior is graced with a porch of later vintage. The Price House dates from the early-19th century, and is one of the three largest dwellings in the village from the period of prosperity brought about by the completion of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Opposite the Price House is the S. Jefferson House (N-3928.67), a simple one-and-a-half-story, frame dwelling with a saltbox addition and gable end bow front window. Like the houses on the west side of Congress Street, the Jefferson House was extant prior to 1868, though its date of construction is certainly not before 1850.

As Congress Street continues toward Augustine Street at least two, and possibly four more, houses remain from the second quarter of the 19th century. All of these, with the exception of the J. H. Vandergrift House, are modest one-and-a-half and two-story frame dwellings similar to those found in the heart of the village. The Vnadergrift House (N-3928.72) is a composition shingle-covered, two-story, frame Victorian house with cross gables and some sawn work trim. Two of the remaining houses on the block were, like the Commodore's house, floated on barges to Port Penn following the closing of the Quarantine Station on Reedy Island. Situated side-by-side, both houses are squared, double-pile structures capped with pyramidal roofs sheathed with raised seam rooled sheet metal and terminated by small-windowed monitors at the peak. Both houses also have flat, flared, hip roof porches and rear one-story lean-to additions. The house to the south is a story-and-a-half in elevation with the half-story decorated with vertical sawn work trim. As at the other end of Congress Street, the village ends with a scattering of late-19th and early-20th-century, small-scale dwellings.

Returning to the intersection of Congress Street and Merchant Street the original town plan is resumed. As laid out by Stewart, Merchant Street was designed to run out to a second landing area but the street was apparently never completed. Although four dwellings were listed on Merchant Street in 1868, only one survives.

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Dating from about 1810, the Jackson House (N-3928.26) was built on a hall-parlor Penn plan with a massive, center-chimney pile. Frame, two-stories in elevation with a steeply pitched gable roof, the Jackson House retains nearly all its original Federal period trim, including punchwork decorated mantels, chair rail, diagonally-battened, six-panel doors, and a paneled front boxed winder stair. A later partition was inserted to create a separate stair hall, and a one-story lean-to kitchen added to the rear. The principal posts of the frame superstructure project into the rooms which were finished with plaster. The exterior is sheathed with plain-edged, sawn weatherboarding on the front and asbestos shingle on the gable ends. With its plan and detailing, the Jackson House is one of the best-preserved early dwellings in Port Penn.

Across from the Jackson House is a frame, two-story, irregular plan, Victorian house (N-3928.55) with little decorative detailing. To the west is another late-19th-century dwelling (N-3928.21) standing on the site of an earlier structure. This dwelling is notable for its false front facade and full-length front porch with Eastlake-style, turned cornice brackets. At the corner of Merchant and Stewart Streets stand two single-family and one double-family tenant houses, all of frame construction, two stories in elevation, and with gable roofs. Sometime after 1893 Merchant Street was extended a half block west and three 20th-century dwellings and a long, frame, work-shed were built.

Finally, down Stewart Street and back across Market Street is St. Daniel's Methodist Church (N-3928.32), built in 1844. Originally surrounded by two other structures, St. Daniel's Church now stands alone. Of frame construction, built on a nave plan and having a bell tower with a sawn-work cornice, St. Daniel's Church has undergone numerous minor alterations. However, it still stands as a fine example of vernacular ecclesiastical architecture.

Taken as a single unit, Port Penn presents a tightly-knit and visually-harmonious series of streetscapes. The modest 18th- and 19th-century dwellings and business structures belie Dr. Stewart's grandiose ambitions for his town, but at the same time display a comfortably well-to-do continuity in house scale and design. As a vernacular village, built on a neo-classically-derived town plan, Port Penn presents in unusual completeness the typical architectural assemblage common to early-19th-century, mid-Atlantic-region villages and towns.

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PORT PENN HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

- 1 Intersection of Route 2 and Route 9 - c. 1886, 3-bay, 1-story frame school house. Currently the Port Penn Museum.
- 2 Intersection of Route 2 and Route 9 - site of early 20th-century cannery.
- 3 2 North Liberty Street - site of mid-20th-century black school house.
- 4 1 East Market Street - Third quarter 19th-century, 2-story frame house with composition siding.
- 5 3 East Market Street - Second quarter 19th century, 2-story frame house with composition siding.
- 6 5 East Market Street - Early 19th century, 3-bay, 2-story braced frame center-hall-plan house, with small 2-bay addition on west gable end; east gable interior end chimney.
- 7 7 East Market Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 5-bay frame center-hall-plan house; box cornice with sawnwork brackets.
- 8 9 East Market Street - Second quarter 19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side-hall plan house; c. 1900 wing to rear with altered roofline; 2-story bay window added to east end.
- 9 11 East Market Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story frame house.
- 10 3 North Stewart Street - Early-20th century, tiny 1-story, 3-bay frame cottage with green aluminum siding.
- 11 5 North Stewart Street - Mid-20th century, metal framed house trailer.
- 12 7 North Stewart Street - Early 20th century, 1-story, 1-room frame dwelling, covered with composition siding.
- 13 2 East Market Street - Mid-19th century, 2½-story, 3-bay frame side-hall-plan house; interior end chimney; full length front porch with Eastlake style posts and open brackets.

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PORT PENN HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

- 14 4 East Market Street - Late-18th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame center-hall-plan with mid-19th century gable end wing; 20th-century rear lean-to addition; heavily altered.
- 15 Lot to southwest of 1 South Stewart Street - site of c. 1730 gambrel roof plan house moved in 1968 to Warwick, Maryland. (Also N-149).
- 16 Northwest corner of Stewart & Merchant Streets - Mid-20th century, 1-story, 3-bay, central door masonry house covered by permastone.
- 17 1 South Stewart Street (Dr. David Stewart House) - Mid-18th century, 2-story, 5-bay, central door brick house with glazed header; Flemish bond facade. (Also N-1495).
- 18 8 East Market Street (Port Penn Presbyterian Church) - c. 1856, 2-story brick building, with single central spire.
- 19 Southwest end of Merchant Street - Mid-20th century, 1-story, 2-bay frame side door frame gable end facade house with asbestos shingles.
- 20 South side of Merchant Street - Late-19th century, 2-story, 4-bay frame house with central chimney and central double door.
- 21 South side of Merchant Street - c. 1910, 2-story, 3-bay frame side-door house.
- 22 100 East Market Street - c. 1790 with later additions; 2-story, braced frame with beaded weatherboards on earliest sections.
- 23 4 South Stewart Street - c. 1790, 2-story, 2-bay, braced frame gable end facade with center chimney; composition siding.
- 24 101 East Merchant Street - Late-19th century, 2-story, 2-bay frame side hall plan house.
- 25 103 East Merchant Street - Late-19th century, 2-story, 2-bay frame side-hall plan house.

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- 26 105 East Merchant Street - c. 1810, 2-story, 2-bay braced frame hall-parlor plan; exposed interior principal posts; excellent original federal period interior mantels, chimney cupboards and other detail.
- 27 11 South Congress Street - Late-19th century, heavily altered frame store.
- 28 9 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side hall house with Eastlake style portico.
- 29 5 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2½-story, 3-bay frame side door with eyebrow windows; with 2-bay, side-hall gable end addition.
- 30 3 South Congress Street - Late-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame center-door house with hip roof.
- 31 102 East Market Street - Mid-20th century, 2-story cinderblock tavern.
- 32 2 North Stewart Street (St. Daniels Methodist Episcopal Church), c. 1844, 1-story frame; center main door at base of bell tower.
- 33 103 East Market Street - Early-20th century, 2-story frame, side hall, 1-room-deep plan with double pile gable end; full front porch with Eastlake style turned posts and sawwork brackets.
- 34 105 East Market Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 5-bay frame center hall plan house with 2/3 front porch, of late classical revival style.
- 35 107 East Market Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side hall plan house with millsawn weatherboards; full facade porch with Eastlake style turned posts and sawwork brackets.
- 36 109 East Market Streets - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side door house with mid-20th-century porch.
- 37 3 North Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side door house.
- 38 7 North Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side door house.

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- 39 9 North Congress Street - c. 1900, 2½-story, 2-bay, frame house with projecting front gable, Eastlake-style full facade porch.
- 40 Lot on northwest side of North Congress Street - site of several mid-19th century houses.
- 41 Lot on northeast side of North Congress Street - site of late-18th-early-19th century Customs House.
- 42 Marsh, east of North Congress Street - site of 19th-century canal leading to U. S. Customs House.
- 43 Extension of East Market Street - causeway through marsh leading to site of 18th and 19th-century wharves.
- 44 Extension of East Market Street - Late-19th century, **one story frame house.**
- 45 Junction of East Market Street extension causeway and Delaware River, site of 18th and 19th-century wharves.
- 46 10 North Congress Street - Mid-20th century, 1-story, 3-bay frame house with a hip roof.
- 47 8 North Congress Street - Mid-20th century, 1½-story, 3-bay frame center door house.
- 48 6 North Congress Street - c. 1830, 2-story, 4-bay braced frame house with late federal interior detail.
- 49 4 North Congress Street - c. 1930 (Commandant's house, moved from Reedy Island Quarantine Station following World War II); 2-story, 3-bay, center door house with colonial revival details.
- 50 2 North Congress Street (Joseph Cleaver House) - Second-quarter 19th century, 2½-story, 5-bay Flemish bond facade with center hall; two-room deep plan; corbelled brick cornice; interior gable end chimneys, bow-roofed dormers with flanking fluted pilasters.

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PORT PENN HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

- 51 Extension of East Market Street - c. 1970; small frame ranch house.
- 52 2 and 4 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story frame double house, the left half of which is a 3-bay, 1-room deep, side-hall-plan house; the right half has large store-front facade.
- 53 6 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame center door house.
- 54 8 and 10 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, double house, each half 2-story, 2-bay frame, side-door house; full length porch with Eastlake turned post and closed string turned balustrade.
- 55 102 East Merchant Street - c. 1905, 2-story, 3-bay, with projecting center bay and flanking entrances frame house; wrap-around front porch with scalloped cornice.
- 56 118 South Congress Street - Mid-20th century, 1-story, 3-bay, stuccoed masonry, center-door house.
- 57 101 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame center door, hall-and-parlor-plan house, with gable end bow front addition. Moved c. 1893 from a location some 20 ft. north of where it now rests.
- 58 103 South Congress Street - c. 1830, double house, modified to a single house; 2-story, 6-bay frame house comprised of two center-door, 3-bay units.
- 59 105 South Congress Street - c. 1820, 2-story, 5-bay frame center-hall plan house.
- 60 107 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side-hall house; full front porch with turned Eastlake posts and open sawnwork brackets.
- 61 111 and 113 South Congress Street - c. 1880 (U. S. Government building moved from Reedy Island in 1940's); 2-story, 5-bay frame house with hip roof with monitor; 2/3 facade porch with iron railing.

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- 62 115 South Congress Street - c. 1880 (U. S. Government building moved from Reedy Island in 1940's); 2-story, 3-bay, frame center-door house with hip roof and monitor.
- 63 117 South Congress Street - Mid-20th century, 1-story, 2-bay frame house with aluminum siding.
- 64 119 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay frame side-door house.
- 65 121 South Congress Street - Mid-20th century, 1-story, 2-bay, frame side-door house.
- 66 100 South Congress Street Third quarter 19th century, 2½-story, 5-bay, frame, center-hall-plan, with central cross gabled gable roof.
- 67 104 South Congress Street - Third quarter 19th century, 2-story, 4-bay, frame, center-door, two-room-deep house with shiplap siding; full facade porch with Eastlake turned posts.
- 68 106 South Congress Street - Late-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay, frame, center-door house.
- 69 108 South Congress Street - Early-20th century, 2½-story, 3-bay, frame, off-center, central doorway house; hip roof with deep box cornice and hip roof dormer windows.
- 70 110 South Congress Street - Mid-19th century, 2-story, 3-bay, frame center-door, one-room-plan house; full facade porch with turned tetra-style Eastlake posts and nailed board railings.
- 71 114 South Congress Street - Third quarter 19th century, 2-story, 3-bay, frame center-door, one-room-plan house; full facade porch with turned Eastlake style tetrastyle posts, closed string turned balustrade and fine sawnwork brackets.
- 72 116 South Congress Street - Third quarter 19th century, 2½-story, 5-bay, frame center-door house; gable roof with paired front cross gables; double Italianate doors with 2-light sidelights and 3-light transom; hexagonal bowfront facade and south gable end windows with bracketed cornices.
- 73 East of south end of South Congress Street - Early 20th century, 1-story, frame dwelling, abandoned.

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Dr. Stewart recognized the developmental potential of the area and its natural suitability as a protected harbor. In 1764 he placed an advertisement promoting his enterprise in the "Pennsylvania Gazette" in which he enumerated Port Penn's natural advantages: "PROPOSALS for building a Town on the River Delaware, opposite to Reedy-Island, in the County of New Castle.

As the Erection of Towns in every County, capable of them, is justly esteemed a public Utility, as it increased the Number of Inhabitants, enlarges Trade, and thereby contributes to the Strength of Government, and the Riches of a People, it is hoped this Scheme will meet with proper Encouragement for this Town is extremely pleasant and convenient for Trade; Reedy Island forming a most commodious Harbour for Shipping; the Navigation there is scarce ever interrupted by Ice; the County around it is very fertile, and abounds with such Commodities as especially suit the West-India Market -- this Place lies contiguous to the Heads of three Navigable Rivers, that makes out of Chesopeak Bay, in the Province of Maryland, those of Elk, Bohemia, and Sassafras, by which an advantageous Trade may be carried on with that Province -- the Ground will be laid out in the most advantageous Manner for the Benefit and Convenience of the Purchasers, and lett at a ver easy Rate...
David Stewart"

By 1780 the Port Wardens of Philadelphia had authorized the construction of docking facilities at Port Penn. The earliest extant map of Port Penn was drawn to facilitate settlement of Stewart's estate in 1792 and indicates the general scope of his dreams. He chose for his town such street names as "Liberty", "Congress", "Market" and "Merchant" (unchanged to this day) and in doing so echoed several patriotic and commercial themes of the emerging Republic. A portion of Stewart's development plan was either very ambitious or overtly fraudulent. He plotted out and proposed to sell lots adjoining two streets, Beaumaris Street and Delaware Street, on what is now and has always been, soggy marshland situated between fast land of the village and the wharfs on the Delaware. Perhaps he had in mind an elaborate scheme to fill the marsh which was never carried out.

At the time of the Revolution an alarm post was established at Port Penn. The town residents, and indeed, all persons living near the Delaware Coast, were subject to sporadic harassment by British naval landing parties. Caesar Rodney, a Delaware delegate to the Continental Congress, reported that ten Port Penn residents were abducted in the course of one such raid and never heard from again. In the winter of 1777-78 there was an encounter between several small armed row galleys commanded by John Barry of the Pennsylvania Navy and some British warships off of Reedy Island. Port Penn was bombarded in the course of the engagement which generated more noise than damage.

Port Penn's present tranquility belies its past role as a port of entry and active commercial center. In the 19th century the southern region of New Castle County attained national prominence as a producer of grain and peaches. Port Penn profited from this agricultural boom and long lines of farm wagons jammed the village wharf approaches waiting to unload their cargo. By 1792 a U.S. Customs House was established by the federal government to oversee the harbor's shipping activity.

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The completion of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in 1829 was a mixed blessing to the commercial and agricultural activity of Port Penn. The eastern end of the canal lay several miles north of town and it drew an ever increasing volume of river traffic to the area. But the town of Delaware City was founded where the canal met the river and it tapped much of the profitable river trade that might have otherwise benefited Port Penn.

Port Penn found it increasingly difficult to compete as a port town with the establishment of the Delaware railroads in the 1850's. Crops once shipped by water out of Port Penn were instead taken to rail depots for shipment to the bustling markets of Wilmington and Philadelphia. To make matters worse, a series of various blights severely curtailed the productivity of local farms. The period of grain and peach prosperity drew to a close in Delaware and Port Penn settled into an era of very limited change and growth. The town had sufficiently satisfied the demands of its agricultural hinterlands from the time of the Revolution to the start of the Gilded Age, but the transportation innovations brought by canal and railroad reduced Port Penn's role in the farm-to-market commercial network.

Port Penn's present architectural composition reflects its historic development. Though it is known from census records that 270 persons lived in the town in 1800, only a few surviving buildings pre-date this time. Clearly there was in the 19th century a large scale replacement of existing 18th century housing. What is not known are the factors that rendered these earlier structures unsuitable to the later requirements of the town. The houses that replaced them are, in general, relatively modest examples of 19th century Delaware vernacular architecture which were inhabited largely by the families of laborers, mechanics, farmers and tradesmen that populated the town.

Archaeological investigations in the vacant lots and yards of Port Penn can yield otherwise unobtainable information about the nature and quality of these vanished dwellings. This information, in turn can do much to explain the rebuilding phenomena of Port Penn and other areas of Delaware during the 19th century.

The most sophisticated dwellings that remain in Port Penn were built by its most prominent inhabitants. The 1750 two story brick residence of town founder Dr. David Stewart (N-3928.17) was the premiere dwelling in the town until the 1830's when Joseph Cleaver built his mansion house "Linden Hall" (N-3928.50) on the northeast corner of Congress and Market Streets to overlook his lucrative business endeavors consisting of the wharf, storehouses and several rental properties on Congress Street.

As Port Penn continued to grow and its community matured there arose a need for a house of worship as a sufficient number of area residents found the six mile trip to churches in neighboring St. Georges and Cantwell's Bridge (now Odessa) increasingly inconvenient. In 1834 a modest frame church was built and soon became an important focus for social activity in the town. Its members for several decades actively distributed bibles and religious tracts in town and to the region's scattered farms. In 1856 it was replaced by the substantial brick neo-classical Port Penn Presbyterian Church (N-3928.18) which still stands.

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Much of Port Penn's character derives from its unspoiled relation to the Delaware River and the marshes that border it. It is important to note, however, that the dominant marsh vegetation, the Fragmite, was not natural to the Delaware coast in historic times. It was introduced from France as a decorative plant in the 1930's and rapidly spread throughout the marshlands of the Atlantic Coast. Of the many forms of wildlife in the area, the muskrat and the shad have been most important to the economy of Port Penn as commercial food sources.

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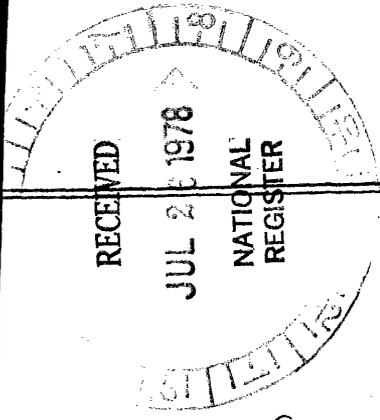
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PORT PENN HISTORIC DISTRICT

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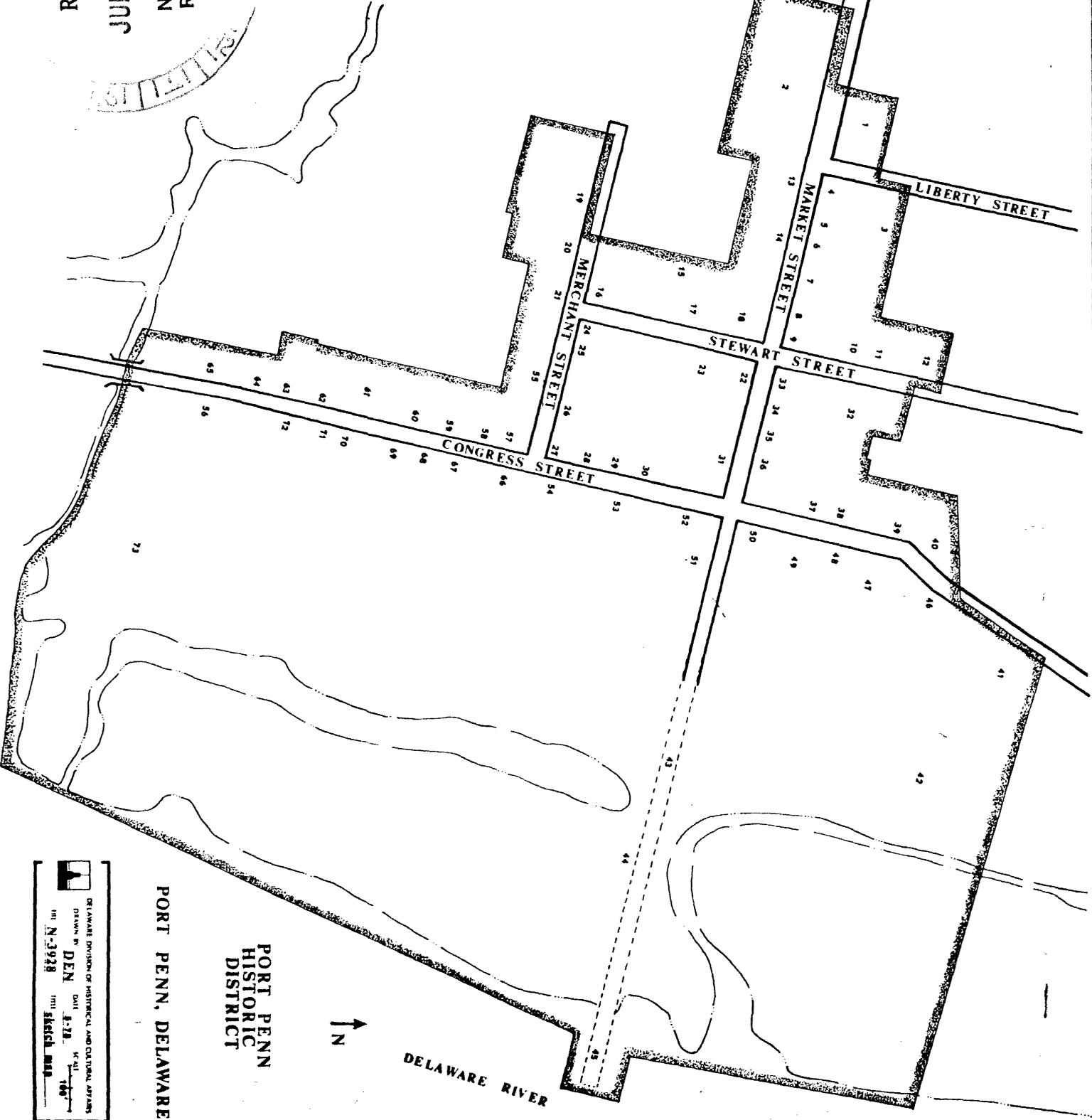
Beginning at a point where the centerline of South Congress Street intersects the centerline of a small, unnamed creek immediately south of the village of Port Penn and thence from this point westward with the centerline of said creek until it intersects an extension of the west lot line of 119 South Congress Street and thence with this line northward until it intersects the south lot line of 117 South Congress Street and thence with this line westward until it intersects the west lot line of said lot and thence with this line northward until it intersects the north lot line of said lot and thence with this line eastward until it intersects the west lot line of 115 South Congress Street and thence with this line northward with the west lot lines of 115-105 South Congress Street until it intersects an extension of the south lot line of the dwelling on Merchant Street at the southernmost end of South Stewart Street and thence with this line westward until it intersects the west lot line of said lot and with this line southward for a distance of 60 feet and thence from this point westward for a distance of 96 feet and thence from this point southward for a distance of 15 feet and thence from this point westward for a distance of 215 feet and thence from this point northward until it intersects with the centerline of Merchant Street and thence with this centerline eastward until it intersects an extension of the east lot line of 4 East Market Street and thence with this line northward until it intersects the south lot line of said lot and thence with this line westward along the south lot line of 4 and 2 East Market Street until it intersects the east lot line of 2 East Market Street and thence with this line southward for a distance of 90 feet and thence from this point westward for a distance of 360 feet and thence from this point northward until it intersects the centerline of East Market Street and thence with this centerline eastward until it intersects an extension of the west lot line of the Port Penn Museum and thence with this line northward until it intersects the north lot line of said lot and thence with this line eastward until it intersects the centerline of North Liberty Street and thence with this centerline northward until it intersects an extension of the north lot line of 7 East Market Street and thence with this line eastward until it intersects the east lot line of said lot and thence with this line northward for a distance of 160 feet and thence from this point eastward until it intersects the centerline of North Stewart Street and thence with this line southward until it intersects an extension of the north lot line of Saint Daniels Methodist Episcopal Church and thence with this line eastward until it intersects with an extension of the west lot line of 9 North Congress Street and thence with this line northward for a distance of 200 feet and from this point eastward until it intersects the centerline of North Congress Street and thence with this line northeastward for a distance of 200 feet and thence from this point eastward until it intersects the shoreline of the Delaware River and thence with this shoreline southward until it intersects the centerline of aforesaid small unnamed creek flowing into said river and thence westward with this centerline to the centerline of South Congress Street, the point of beginning.



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PORT PENN., DELAWARE

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DELAWARE RIVER

DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
 DRAWN BY DEN DATE 3-72
 INT. N-3928 INT. ARCH. MAP
 1" = 100'