

PH 0508314

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

OCT 31 1977

DATE ENTERED

MAR 30 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

Rumsey Farm

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

U.S. Rt. 301, On right 1.5 mi. west of RR tracks

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Middletown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

One

 VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

CODE

10

COUNTY

New Castle

CODE

002

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

 IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Jefferson F. Pool

STREET & NUMBER

Rumsey Farm

CITY, TOWN

Middletown

VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

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-113

DATE

1972

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

CITY, TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Situated on a 400-acre farm in southwestern New Castle County, Rumsey Farm is a superior example of Delaware architecture characteristic of the peach prosperity. Built in 1854, it contains all the major characteristics of that style.

Rumsey is L-shaped in plan as were most of the peach houses. The wing is placed so as to extend one endwall of the main body of the house. From the lane which approaches the house, this presents a well-calculated illusion that the house is square. The roof is relatively flat and therefore does not detract from this impression.

Flat roofs with protruding bracketed cornices were characteristic of the Italianate, one of the styles reflected in peach house architecture. On Rumsey, the box cornice protrudes; however, enlarged Georgian dentils compose the bracket course. Below this is an unembellished frieze and an architrave with guttae. This same cornice is found on all of the porches on the house.

Window placement is balanced and reflects the ceiling height of the interior. The facade is broken by five lights on each floor. Both of the endwalls in the main block have windows flanking the chimneys. The rear wall of the wing has no fenestration. The sashes are small-paned and have thin muntins as in windows of Federal period houses. The sashes have six-over-six lights on the first two floors; three-over-three on the third floor. Shutters flank each of the windows throughout the house, paneled on the first floor, louvered on the second and third.

Porches are found over the front and side doors and in the right angle of the rear. The front porch is small, being only wide enough to cover the entry. It is held up by square columns in the Doric order. Similar pilasters are fixed on each side of the door. The six-panel door is surrounded by narrow sidelights and transom. The moulding of the recessed door panel is repeated in the square columns, pilasters, and in the panels under the sidelights. The side porch encompasses the area which is the wing of the house. It is supported by square columns at the corner and by posts. The architrave has been replaced by lattice work. The door has four horizontal recessed panels and is flanked by sidelights. The door frame is plain and is similar to the front door. The rear porch has been screened. The fully-developed entablature is supported by square Doric columns similar to those on the front porch.

The Greek Revival style is reflected not only in the porches with their Doric columns, but also in the Doric pilasters with recessed panels which form each of the front corners of the clapboard-sheathed house. All of the detailing on the house is of wood.

The finest carpentry in the house can be found on the interior. The parlor of the house, its largest room, reflects this. A white marble mantel is set on the side wall and is flanked by windows. All of the windows are set on pedestals and are surrounded by a heavy moulded architrave, which terminates in a fully-developed entablature. The door is similarly detailed. The architrave takes the form of heavily moulded pilasters set on plinths. The architrave and frieze of the entablature are devoid of embellishments and the cornice is slightly arched. The door has four recessed panels set with cyma reversa moulding and a brass doorknob with a porcelain keyhole cover. The

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" 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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1854

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Mr. Stevens

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rumsey Farm is a finely detailed and preserved architectural expression of Delaware's peach prosperity, built by one of the State's most prominent agriculturalists, Governor John P. Cochran.

The peach industry developed in Delaware at about the middle of the nineteenth century. In the Levels, west of Middletown, the industry was extensively cultivated. The land was well-suited for peach orchards, and the peach growers prospered. They often chose to express their new wealth in their houses. Combining stylistic elements of the Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate, a highly eclectic style of architecture was created. Buildings of this style have come to be associated with the peach prosperity and have been termed peach houses. The Levels has many extant examples of this style, one of which is Rumsey Farm.

Rumsey Farm is one of the finer examples of Delaware's peach house architecture. It is L-shaped in plan, has a flat roof, the heavy bracketed cornice of the Italianate, the Doric corner pilasters of the Greek Revival, and the small-paned, thin-muntined windows of the Federal style. All of these features appear elsewhere on houses of the peach style; however, in its interior detailing Rumsey is surpassed by few. Among its finer details are interior doors with reeding on the flat of the exterior edge and fully-developed door and window surrounds. Changes to the fabric have been sympathetic and do not detract from the architectural character of the house.

In building Rumsey, Governor John P. Cochran contributed significantly to the architectural integrity of the Levels. Within sight of it are his other fine contributions - his own home, Cochran Grange, and Hedgelawn, a house almost identical to Rumsey. Cochran is said to have engaged a Mr. Stevens to build Rumsey. The same man is most certainly also the builder of Hedgelawn. The skill and craftsmanship exhibited in these two houses is also evident in the later work of a firm called Stevens, Miller and Company, and known to have been working in Middletown in the early 1880's.

Governor Cochran never introduced his children into political life, but he provided adequately for their establishment in agricultural pursuits. His goal seemed to be to provide each son with a farm so that he could draw his livelihood in that manner. Rumsey and Hedgelawn are two of the fine houses which he provided for his children. Rumsey was built in 1854 on land which Eliza Cochran had been recently bequeathed by her father, William Polk. In his will, Polk states that this tract was purchased from William Rumsey. The Cochran's intention may have been to deed the 400-acre

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

New Castle County Deeds and Wills.

Beer's Atlas of Delaware, 1868.

Historical & Biographical History of Delaware. Wilmington: Aldine Publications, 1882.

Cochran-Pool Papers, unpublished Mss.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	_____	_____	_____
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C	_____	_____	_____

Latitude: 39° 26' 28"

Longitude: 75° 44' 58"

B	_____	_____	_____
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
D	_____	_____	_____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The frontage of the nominated area on Route 301 is approximately 200 feet. It extends back (north) approximately 800 feet. The north boundary line falls at the rear of the flower garden in back of the house. The farm outbuildings are not included in the nomination.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joan M. Norton, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

March, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Hall of Records

TELEPHONE

(302) 678-5314

CITY OR TOWN

Dover,

STATE

Delaware

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 [Signature]

TITLE Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

10/25/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST Lauren Cole
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE 3-30-78
 DATE 3-17-78

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baseboard is quite high and terminates in a cyma reversa moulding. This same moulding is repeated throughout the house. Another interesting feature is the folding doors which were located between the living and dining rooms. They have been removed but are in storage in the house. Plainer marble mantels and less elaborate window and door architraves are found in the latter two rooms.

Rumsey has a stacked floor plan. The front door opens onto a central hall. The parlor is to the left, the living and dining rooms to the right. Behind the dining room in the wing is the kitchen. From the center hall, the open string stair rises to the second and third floors. The bedrooms on the upper floors are located directly over the rooms below. On each of the upper floors, two bedrooms are located on the parlor side, and two over the living and dining room. The rooms are less elaborately detailed on the second floor and there is almost no detailing on the third floor. The wing, in which there is only one room on each floor, is even plainer for it was used for the servants. Two more stairs are located in this area.

The current owners have installed central heat and plumbing. Prior to 1957, heat had been provided by coal-fired heaters. Vents in the floor allowed the heat to travel to the second floor where there were no fireplaces. Only the parlor fireplace is operable since the installation of central baseboard heat. Other than running water in the kitchen, and a copper bathtub in a room behind one of the bedrooms, there was no plumbing in the house until 1957. There is now a bathroom located in the front of the center hall on the second floor. The privy is still standing, however, not far from the rear of the house. The kitchen of the house has been modernized, but some of the old woodwork is still present. The only major architectural feature which the present owners have added is the chair rail in the dining room.

Rumsey is set on a naturally landscaped plot of ground, two-tenths of a mile off of U. S. Route 301.

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farm to their oldest son William, who would soon come of age. Eliza's death in 1855 caused a change in these plans. As the land was still in her name, and she had died intestate, the land descended to her husband by right of courtesy and to her six children. In the next year, 1856, Hedgelawn was built on land which John Cochran owned and which he deeded to his oldest son William. There is no evidence to point to who lived in Rumsey until 1868 when Beer's Atlas lists Charles Cochran, John's second son, as the occupant. His marriage in 1867 may have precipitated the move to Rumsey.

Rumsey Farm did not come again into a single ownership until 1878, when William Cochran bought the other shares from his family. Throughout this period, about two hundred acres of the farm were used for the cultivation of peaches. The peach blight brought insolvency to many of the growers. In 1894, William Cochran was forced to sell Rumsey to pay his debts. In the next three years, the property changed hands several times. In 1897, it came into the possession of Jefferson B. Foard, the grandfather of the present owner.

Foard, a retired Middletown merchant, bought the property for investment purposes. He rented the land to tenant farmers who lived in the mansion house on the property. A half-mile horse track was built on the property and his interest in horse racing caused him to be on the farm quite often. The farmland has continued to be rented out to the present day. The main house returned to owner occupancy in 1957.

Rumsey Farm is fortunate to have retained not only the elegance of its mansion house, but also its full acreage as first possessed by the Cochrans in 1853, and an owner who is descended from a branch of the Cochran family.

