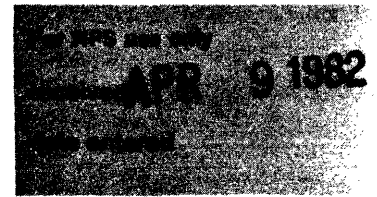


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ments the fruition of Leipsic as a commercial port and regional shipbuilding center. The name of H.T. Hoffecker, listed as one of the village's Town Commissioners in 1871, is associated with the house in the 1868 Beer's Atlas; an earlier resident may have been Wilson Cannon, who owned the property from 1841 to 1863. Cannon was a particularly distinguished citizen: a Leipsic shipbuilder between 1836 and 1854, recognized for his role in helping decide Delaware's commitment to the Union during the civil war, and father of Annie Jump Cannon, an internationally recognized astronomer.

6. Significance:

The significance of the H.T. Hoffecker House lies both in its architectural features and its siting. Although little remains from the earliest period of Leipsic's development as a village, the lot on which the Hoffecker House sits was definitely the product of an initial boosterism attempting to carve out a village community from an agricultural environment. Architecturally, the structure remains one of the finest and best preserved dwellings antedating Leipsic's growth period as an oyster shipping port. The adoption of a center-passage, symmetrically fenestrated architectural idiom in the village paralleled developments in the surrounding countryside. In the mainstream of a general rebuilding throughout the region in the years between 1820 and 1870, houses of this sort were erected with increasing frequency. The architectural significance of the Hoffecker house spring from the appearance of nationally rooted stylistic considerations, in a village economy built on the maritime trades rather than prevailing agricultural reform.

K-1577:

1. Property Name: FENNIMORE STORE

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: Southwest corner of the junction of Main, Lombard and Front Street, Leipsic, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Main and Front Streets and the Leipsic River, 34.5 feet wide and 52.9 feet long, containing .041 acres.

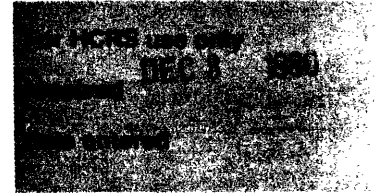
3. Owner: John T. Nichols, 121 New Street, Smyrna, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

Constructed between 1840 and 1860, the J.W. Fennimore Store, located on the southwest corner of Front, Main and Lombard Streets in Leipsic, remains as a fine example of mid-nineteenth century commercial vernacular architecture. Of frame construction, the building is two-stories in elevation sheathed with mill sawn weatherboard and surmounted by a tin covered hipped roof with plain sawn modillion blocks gracing the cornice. Both the north and eastern elevations are finished with display windows of modern origin although they are probably sited on the location of the original openings. The principal entrance is set into the northeast corner of the structure with flanking sidelights and an overhead transom. A porch runs along the full length of the Main and Front Street facades and supported on square posts resting on individual concrete piers. The interior shelving has been replaced in recent times (since the structure served as a muskrat skinning shed), but in its present use as a commercial structure approximates its earlier character.

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5. Historical Background:

The earliest documented reference to the store is in 1888 when it was noted that, "in 1865 J.W. Fennimore bought out the store from Samuel Hargadine at Leipsic." Mr Fennimore was the son of a successful peach grower and farmer and was himself a working mason and plasterer prior to purchasing the store. Active in nineteenth century Leipsic community life, Fennimore served at various times in his life as Levy Court collector, Trustee of the Poor, school commissioner, farmer and merchant.

After John W. Fennimore's death his son took over as proprietor of the store and ran it as a profit making concern until his death. The store remained in the Fennimore family when John Fennimore, Jr.'s widow sold the concern to her brothers who ran the operation until 1953. After a series of short ownerships the store has come into the hands of John Nichols who continues to maintain its merchantile functions.

6. Significance:

The Fennimore Store is the embodiment of the commercial enterprise of Leipsic and Little Creek's nineteenth century merchants. John Fennimore, Sr., bought and sold grain, coal, lime, fertilizers and general produce. He operated a steamboat running between Leipsic and Philadelphia in order to promote his own business and the general trade of the community. According to Beer's Atlas (1868) the store carried a full line of dry goods, groceries, hardware, tinware, clothing and other items.

In 1887 there were approximately four hundred residents in the village and about sixty working farms in close proximity to the town. As noted at the time, "the domestic trade of the town was quite large and profitable business was done in the shipping of marsh hay, grain and oysters." In addition to Fennimore's store the town also possessed a druggist, milliner, butcher shoemaker, shipbuilder, blacksmith, wheelwrights and assorted other tradesmen. In its heydey oyster schooners anchored across the street from Fennimore's store and the location served as a community focal point for the exchange of goods, news and local gossip. As one elderly resident recalls, "When I was about eight, I remember coming home from school and seeing farm wagons lining both sides of Front and Main Streets for several blocks. They were filled with tomatoes, hay, grain, and other produce to be shipped to market." The store additionally served as a ship's chandlery to the extent that it outfitted the vessels with provisions for their week long dredging voyages.

The business has been a general store, grocery and gas station, muskrat skinner's store and antique shop at various periods in its long service to the community of Leipsic. Because of its location, architectural elements and its role in the exchange of goods, services and social contacts, the J.W. Fennimore Store has always occupied a significant position in the village landscape.