

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Delaware	
COUNTY: New Castle	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER NOV 21 1974	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Old Customs House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Customs House/Federal Building

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
6th and King Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Wilmington **Congressional District One**

STATE Delaware	CODE 10	COUNTY: New Castle	CODE 003
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
United States Government - (General Services Administration)

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington **D.C.**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
New Castle County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:
King Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Wilmington **Delaware**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

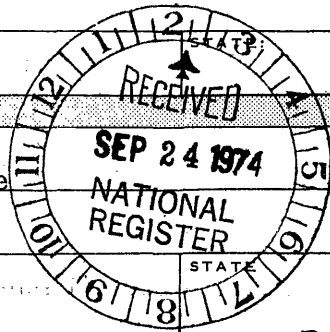
TITLE OF SURVEY:
A List of Delaware Heritage Buildings and Areas in New Castle County

DATE OF SURVEY: **1963** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Greater Wilmington Development Council

STREET AND NUMBER:
300 Delaware Avenue, Suite 1320

CITY OR TOWN:
Wilmington **Delaware**



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

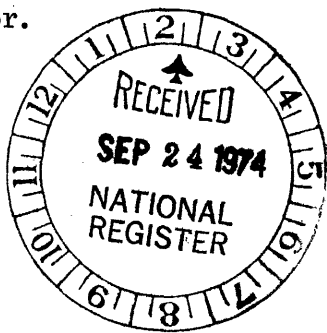
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Customs House is a simple rectangular building measuring fifty-six feet (King Street facade) by eighty (Sixth Street). The main floor level is raised on a cut stone base six feet above the King Street level. Due to the sloping contour of the site, the basement floor is above grade on the east. The west front, containing the principal entrance had a slightly projecting portico with engaged flat pilasters supporting a triangular pediment. A double door is centered and windows on either side are trimmed so that they appear to be matching doors. Three windows are centered above the first floor openings. The north and south elevations are identical, composed of five (windows) evenly spaced windows. The windows on the first floor, except for those on the west elevation, have projected heads supported by shaped brackets. The window sills are square and project slightly from the stuccoed walls. The second floor windows have stucco frames, but the sills project boldly from the walls and are supported by double brackets as each end.

The hipped roof is in the form of a truncated pyramid, the pediment intersecting on the west side. The whole roof is defined by a heavy cornice with deep dentils resting on a moulded stucco bed mould. Four chimneys are centered between the first and second windows and the fourth and fifth on the north and south elevations.

Since the building was completed in 1855, only minor alterations have been undertaken. The first floor was originally appropriated to the offices of the Customs Department. Here were located the Collector's Office, Post Office, Post Master's Room, and a large hall which contained the principal stair and served as an entrance foyer to the Letter Boxes. The Second floor contained the United States Court Room, Judge, Clerk, and Jury Rooms.

In 1869 additional improvements were made to the building which cost approximately \$5,000.00. The Post Office remained in the building until 1897 when it was moved to 9th and Shipley Streets. In 1929 repairs were made to the cornice; and specifications issued February 21, 1930 resulted in the removal of the east iron and granite balcony from over the main entrance which measured 32'-3" by 5'-6" and extended one foot on each side of the projection around the main entrance. The posts supporting the railing were of cast-iron as were the supports for the balcony floor. The railing and the floor were of granite. Removed at the same time were the dutch doors; the area under the new windows were bricked in. In 1968, the building was re-painted its original white color.



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1853

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

About 1800, the collection of Customs was transferred from New Castle, Del. to Wilmington. This duty of the Federal Government was performed in a small rented store on Water Street. It was not until August 31, 1852, that the construction of a New Customs House for Wilmington was authorized by the United States House of Representatives with an enabling appropriation of \$25,000.00. George Read Riddle, the Delaware Representative, sponsored the bill through the House. It was also Riddle who the following year purchased for \$3,500.00 the site of Moore's Carriage Works at Sixth and King Streets.

The proposed designs for Wilmington must have been one of the earliest prepared by Ammi Burnham Young (1798-1874), after his appointment as the Supervising Architect of the Offices of Construction of the Treasury Department. Appointed to this post on September 27, 1852, Young retained this position for nearly ten years during which time nearly seventy Federal buildings were constructed. Captain A. H. Bowman was the engineer in charge of all Federal construction.

A proposal for erecting the Customs House in Wilmington advertised in the Delaware Gazette in June and July of 1853. On August 1st the resulting bids were opened in Washington and the contract awarded to William Graves, Carpenter, of Wilmington, Delaware: this in spite of the fact that his estimate was \$14,000.00 more than had been appropriated. Considerable debate was held on this difference in the House. McCullough & Co. were given the contract for the iron roof, a difficult technique for that day.

Although the iron founding and fabricating business in Delaware was not established until 1826, with the forming of the Phoenix Foundry; by 1860 this had become the second most important industry in the State. McCullough and Co. was organized in 1847 when three Wilmingtonians, Delapaine McDaniel, Jethro McCullough, and E. A. Harvey bought a small iron works at North East, Maryland. In 1853, the year they were awarded the Customs House contract, McCullough and Co. secured some trained men from England. Under the supervision of Mr. E. A. Harvey, they erected a small galvanizing works, which was the start of the manufacture of galvanized sheet iron in the United States. Mr. Harvey further invented a machine for cleaning the previously black sheets. These plates became known as "Harvey's Patent Cleaned" iron. Other Wilmington firms added to the local reputation for finely engineered, prefabricated architectural iron work. Bush and Lobdell construction the trusses for the

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hamlin, Talbot, Greek Revival Architecture in America. London, 1944. pp. 108
 109. Also New York, 1964. p. 107
 Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware. Philadelphia, 1888. Vol. II, P. 663,
 p. 752.
 Withey, Henry F., & Elsie R. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects.
 (Deceased). Los Angeles, 1956, p. 676.
 Wodehouse, Lawrence. "Ammi Burnham Young 1797-1874" Journal S.A.H. Vol.
 XXV No. 4, (Dec. 1966) pp. 268-280.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

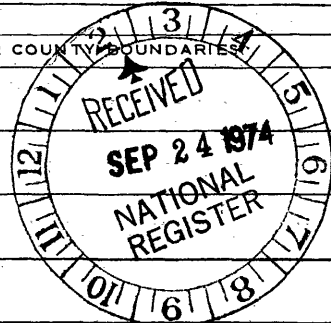
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N39	44	28.4
NE	° ' "	° ' "		W75	32	59.3
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

18/452910
 4398966
 (U)

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One Acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard L. Dayton, A.I.A.

ORGANIZATION: President, Delaware Chapter, The Victorian Society in America DATE: 11/14/73

STREET AND NUMBER:
2003 North Scott Street

CITY OR TOWN: Wilmington STATE: Delaware 19806 CODE: 10

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Ronald M. Finch
 Ronald M. Finch

Title Director, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Date 9/18/74

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

W. B. Montague
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/21/74

ATTEST:

Tom Montague
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 11-20-74

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

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train shed of the Philadelphia station of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. The Public Ledger and Daily Transcript (Tuesday, May 18, 1852) described its "majestic roof, rising with daring and lofty curve, and spanning with one sweep the entire width of 150 feet from wall to wall." Two of the largest buildings at the Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia in 1876 were fabricated in Wilmington.

Thus the Customs House is of national significance not only because of its design, the recognized talents of its architect, but also for its role in the development of fire proof construction and cast and wrought iron technology. Bowman in a letter sent to several colleges and learned societies, including the British Museum, London stated "The introduction of wrought iron beams and girders in these Edifices, (U.S. Customs Houses then being constructed). instead of groined arches as formerly used, is, I believe, wholly new." (National Archives, Record Group 77, letter 13 December 1856). A similar building by Young in Galveston, Texas has recently been restored and opened to the public with great fanfare.

