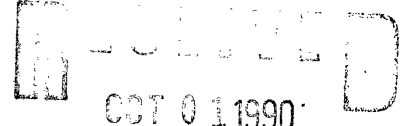


1695



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name E. L. Hitch Potato House

other names/site number CRS# 5859

2. Location

street & number RD# 3, Box 146

NA not for publication

city, town Laurel

vicinity

state Delaware

code DE

county Sussex

code 005

zip code 19956

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Contributing | Noncontributing |
| 1 | N/A buildings |
| | sites |
| | structures |
| | objects |
| 1 | NA Total |

Name of related multiple property listing:
Sweet Potato Houses of Sussex County, Delaware

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Laurel M. [Signature]
Signature of certifying official

- SHED
Date 9/25/90

Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

INA

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.

Patrick Andrews

11/15/90

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/processing, storage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Other: Potato House

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls wood/weatherboard

roof asphalt shingles over wood shinglesother concrete (first floor)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The E. L. Hitch Potato House is a one and one half story, gable fronted, balloon frame structure of dimension cut lumber built circa 1920 and operated until the mid-1940s. In the 1940s the farm turned to poultry raising. Today the farm produces some Indian corn and raises a small number of white leghorns (chickens). Present owners have used the potato house for raising chickens and rabbits. Currently it is a storage building. It is located north of Laurel, Delaware 1 mile east of Route 13 at the junction of Roads 460 and 489 lying on the west side of Road 489. It belongs to a farm complex which is not being considered for nomination. The surrounding environment consists of open fields and scattered stands of trees. The complex's mid-nineteenth century dairy, two twentieth century barns, and a late nineteenth century house with a possible early wing lie in close proximity to the potato house. The complex lies directly on the light duty Road 489 (west side) which features (on the east side) a row of modern factory built (prefabricated) homes.

The overall condition of the potato house is excellent. The triple siding is completely intact consisting of narrow face milled weatherboards on diagonal planking, over interior beaded tongue and groove horizontal planking. Corner boards protect the building's corners.

The roof is a modern replacement of asphalt shingles over original wood shingles. The whole rests upon a brick foundation.

The fenestration is original and characteristic of potato house construction. The front gable end has a main loading door on first and second stories. Both openings have two doors, interior (sliding) and exterior (hinged) doors, for insulation. This type of doubled door is a precaution frequently taken to insure climate control within the building. Braces for a second floor loading platform exist on the front elevation as they do at the Hearn Potato House (CRS# 5761). Both lateral sides contain one first story window.

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Architecture

Period of Significance

1920-1937

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

~~NA~~ Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The E. L. Hitch Potato House is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as an excellent example of an architectural reflection of a broad historical trend and as a significant architectural type. The potato house, as a functional type, relates to the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan's study unit III under the 1880-1940 period and is an example of that plan's property type 1B reflecting major economic and cultural trends relating to agriculture.

The broad historical pattern to which the potato house is directly linked is the modernization of agricultural practices in southern Delaware during the first half of the twentieth century including the emergence of truck farming, the growth of perishable produce crops, and the development of agricultural marketing. The growth of sweet potato cultivation in southern Delaware was one of the major manifestations of the changes in production practice and crop choice. The potato house is the remaining physical evidence of this important trend in Sussex County's agricultural history when the sweet potato was "king".

Sweet potato cultivation dominated the region particularly in the years between 1910-1940, and was one of the first crops to benefit from truck farming and modern agricultural marketing. The long (eight month) and multi-phased process of sweet potato production impacted the culture and economy of the rural community in Sussex County during the years of its prominence as one of the area's cash crops.

The potato house is significant as an architectural type. It was essential to the process of sweet potato production in both curing and storage capacities

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Delaware Agricultural Statistics, Historical Series 1866-1974, Bul. no. 419.
Newark: University of Delaware, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1976.

Hancock, Harold B. The History of Sussex County, Sussex County Centennial Committee 1976.

Herman, Bernard and Siders, Rebecca. The Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, prepared for the Delaware State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1987.

Oral History Interviews with retired sweet potato farmers of Sussex County, August 1986. Tapes with the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware.

Scharf, Thomas. History of Delaware, 1609-1888, Philadelphia: L. J. Richards & Co., 1888.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .034 acres (702 square feet)

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Tax Parcel Map #: 1-32-7, 99

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the site is a rectangle surrounding the potato house and extending ten feet from theroofline of the building on all sides.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is justifiable because this nomination asks for the consideration of only the potato house. The property and additional non-contributing structures associated with the site are not included in this nomination.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Quinn

organization Center for Historic Architecture & Engineering date December 23, 1987

street & number Urban Affairs, University of Delaware telephone 302-451-2394

city or town Newark state Delaware zip code 19716

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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CRS#-⁵⁸⁵⁹~~5789~~

The interior brick chimney is located on the rear wall of the house and survives inside while the exterior stack has been removed. Potato bins arranged on a center aisle plan survive in the second story (six to each side of a center aisle) and slated rear and side wall of a bin still stand in the northwest corner of the first floor. A partition wall with center door of tongue and groove boards divides the first floor space in half. This is a unique feature in potato house construction. Also unique is a crude wooden ventilator shaft which extends from the first floor through the second and attic floors exiting through a metal ventilating pipe in the center of the roof. Additional ventilation features include the characteristic sliding trap door in the second floor ceiling enhancing circulation in the attic.

The E. L. Hitch Potato House is an especially fine example of a complete exterior exhibiting the characteristics associated with potato house construction. These characteristics include; minimal fenestration, triple siding, interior and exterior doors, tightly shuttered windows, interior chimney, and storage bins.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number 8 Page 1

5859
CRS#-~~8789~~

and was developed as a distinct building type designed to provide the functional needs required for a successful, saleable sweet potato crop. Potato houses share common construction elements and are recognizable on the landscape as belonging to this specific property type. The E. L. Hitch Potato House is a significant example of the property because it retains an important number of elements characteristic of potato house construction and function and is in excellent condition. These elements include; triple siding, interior chimney, tightly fitting window and door hatches, interior ventilation features, and surviving storage bins on the second story. It is a rare example of an existing potato house in nearly original condition. The E. L. Hitch Potato House has integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

