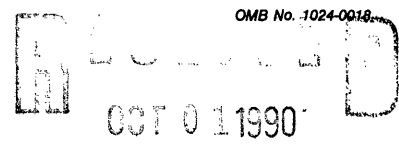


11692



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).

1. Name of Property

historic name Collins Potato House other names/site number CRS#-6754

2. Location

street & number Road 509, Box 814 city, town Laurel state Delaware code DE county Sussex code 005 zip code 19956

NA not for publication vicinity

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public and building/site/structure/object.

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, 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. Signature of certifying official: Daniel P. [Signature] - SHPO Date: 9/25/90

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.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain):

Entered in the National Register

Signature of Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: 11/15/90

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/weatherboardsome metal siding

roof tinother concrete (first floor)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Collins Potato House is a two-story, balloon frame, gable fronted building built in the late nineteenth century and measuring 19 by 30 feet. It is located 1.9 miles south of Laurel, Delaware 400 feet northeast of the junction of roads 509 and 510A, lying on the east side of Road 509. The surrounding environment consists of flat, uncultivated fields, meadows, and scattered stands of trees as well as non-contributing outbuildings in close proximity (two sheds and one garage).

The Collins Potato House is triple sided with narrow, mill-sawn weatherboards over diagonal siding, over interior wall planking.

The original fenestration remains on the west gable end of the building and remains intact (in situ) beneath modern metal siding. The west (rear) gable end features a central door with a large window directly above it at second floor level. A small ventilation window occupies the attic story under the roof gable. The east (front) gable end exhibits similar features. A central door on the ground floor is accompanied by a second floor loading door intended to facilitate loading of potatoes into the second floor bins. The east (front) gable end has an attic story window now obscured by metal siding.

The identical first and second floor plans of the building consisted of a central aisle flanked by three-sided bins. The plan is characteristic of potato house construction. Today the first story has been transformed into a stable though the center aisle plan remains clearly marked by supporting posts. The second floor retains its original appearance, including original storage bins. The bins, five per side, are deep, narrow, slated, and rising to ceiling height. Stairs in the northeast corner provide access from first to second floors. Interior framing remains unchanged.

A coal stove stood in the first floor's center aisle. The stove is no

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

1895-1937

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

~~N/A~~ unknown

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

The Collins 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 modern agricultural marketing. The growth of sweet potato cultivation in southern Delaware was one of the major manifestations of these changes in production practices 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

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Delaware Agricultural Statistics, Historical Series 1866-1974, Bul. no. 419, Newark: University of Delaware, Agriculture Experiment Station, 1986.

Hancock, Harold B. The History of Sussex County, Sussex County Bicentennial 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, Delaware. August 1986. Tapes with the Center for Historical Architecture and Engineering, Univ. of DE.

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

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

- 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 .078 acres (1600.8 square feet)

UTM References

A

1	8
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4	4	7
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2	6	3
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4	2	6	4
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1	9	3
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Tax Parcel Map #: 4-32-11, 15

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the site is a rectangle surrounding potato house and adjoining lean-to additions and extending ten feet from respective roof lines on each side of that rectangle.

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 structures associated with the site are not included in this nomination. Lean-to additions are included within the boundary description only because they are inseparable from the potato house.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Quinn

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

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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longer present but the interior chimney still stands in the west end of the building.

In form and materials the Collins Potato House stands as an excellent example of a once essential farm building in Sussex County. The present owner, Paul Collins, reports that this potato house built by his grandfather was the first potato house to be built in Little Creek Hundred. At the time of the sweet potatoes' heyday the Collins Farm grew Indian corn and produce vegetables such as peas, cucumbers, tomatoes as well as cantalopes and strawberries.

Lean-to sheds have been added to north and south sides of the building and tin siding now covers the front gable facade. The value of the building's interior integrity (particularly the existence of storage bins) outweighs any detriment perceived in exterior changes. No structural alterations mar the original building, it remains intact within the above mentioned changes.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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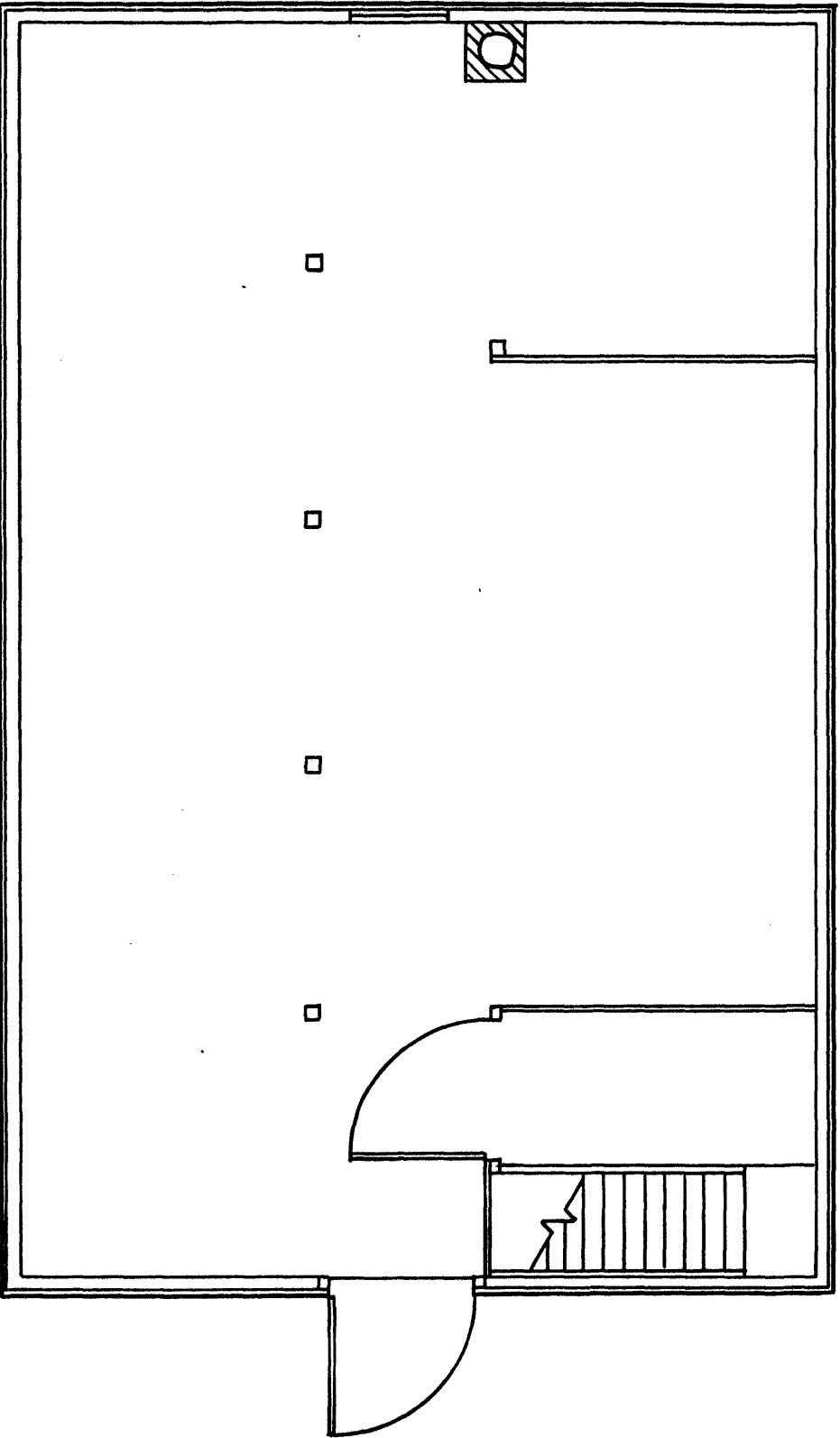
CRS#-6754

to the process of sweet potato production in both curing and storage capacities and was developed as a distinct building type 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 Collins Potato House is an excellent example of the property type retaining elements characteristic of potato house construction and function. These elements include; tall and narrow proportions, triple siding, minimal fenestration, interior chimney, tightly fitting window and door hatches, interior ventilation features, and original storage bins.

The Collins Potato House is particularly important due to the rare example of extant potato bins found in its second story. The well preserved bins provide invaluable evidence of storage techniques developed by the farmers of southwestern Delaware. The information the building provides reflects the significance that the sweet potato crop had for the farmers of Little Creek Hundred in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Collins Potato House has integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

Collins Potato House
CRS#-6754
First Floor Plan



Collins Potato House
CRS#-6754
Second Floor Plan

