Form 10-300

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(TYPE ALL ENTRIES - COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS)

1. NAME

COMMON:
First Broiler House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Mrs. Wilmer Steele's broiler house

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
University of Delaware Experiment Station

CITY OR TOWN:
Georgetown

STATE:
Delaware

COUNTY:
Sussex

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (CHECK ONE)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

OWNERSHIP
- Public
- Private
- Both

STATUS
- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress
- In Process
- Being Considered

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
- Yes
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

PRESENT USE (CHECK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE)
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainement
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Park
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
University of Delaware, Attn: Dean William E. McDaniel

STREET AND NUMBER:
College of Agricultural Sciences

CITY OR TOWN:
Newark

STATE:
Delaware

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Not applicable

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Not applicable

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered</td>
<td>Unaltered</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>Original Site</td>
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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

This is an individual-colony brooder house, of the design that was built by many Delaware farmers during the nineteen-twenties. As restored, it is quite similar to its original appearance. Much of the original oak framing is part of the present structure. During restoration, a new wood shingle roof was applied and decaying rafters were replaced. The original two windows and door remain as parts of the present building. Restoration also included a new coat of barn red paint, typical of the kind used when the structure was constructed. The building, 16 feet square, housed 500 chickens. They were heated by a coal stove and were fed and watered by hand.

On its original site, the structure was one of several chicken houses at the Steele broiler farm. It now stands at the University of Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station near Georgetown, preserved as a museum.
### 6. SIGNIFICANCE

**PERIOD**

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 20th Century
- [ ] 19th Century
- [ ] 17th Century

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

- [ ] 1923

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- [ ] Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [x] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [x] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation

- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music

- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

One of the major developments in the field of Delaware agriculture has been the commercial broiler industry.

Mrs. Wilmer Steele, of Ocean View, Delaware, is generally credited with originating the commercial broiler industry as it now exists. Mrs. Steele had raised a small laying flock for years; in 1923 she started a brood of 500 chicks in addition to her laying flock. When the birds reached an average weight of about two pounds, she sold the surviving 387 for 62¢ per pound, live weight. The following year Mrs. Steele started 1,000 chicks; by the third year the Steeles had a capacity of approximately 10,000 broilers. News of this new venture spread; one early writer estimated there were 50,000 broilers raised during 1925 in Baltimore Hundred alone.

The year 1973 will mark a half-century since Mrs. Steele's first flock of broiler chickens. In that fifty years, the commercial broiler industry has spread to other areas of the country; 22 major broiler-growing states now are included in the USDA statistical reports. These 22 states produce three billion chickens each year.

Delaware farmers started 130,920,000 broiler chicks last year. Cash receipts from broilers alone exceeded $72,000,000, just over 50 per cent of Delaware's total farm income.

Evidence of appreciation by consumers of this high-protein, low-calorie meat is demonstrated by the fact that the average American consumed only 8.6 pounds of broiler meat in 1950, compared to 37.2 pounds in 1971.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hugh A. Johnson, *The Broiler Industry In Delaware*. Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 250, October, 1944.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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<th>CORNER</th>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

J. Frank Gofdy, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:

Route 2, Box 47

CITY OR TOWN:

Georgetown

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

Dr. E. Berkeley Tompkins

Title

Director, Div. of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Date

10-6-72

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

7/3/74

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

7-2-74