

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 20 1985

date entered

DEC 19 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Main Office of the New Castle Leather Company

and/or common The Main Office

2. Location

street & number 11th and Poplar Streets not for publication

city, town Wilmington vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county code 3

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Ann Lemay and/or Patricia Bowen

street & number c/o Lemay Realtors, 3301 Lancaster Pike

city, town Wilmington vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Castle County Recorder of Deeds

street & number City-County Building

city, town Wilmington state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

N. 2976

title De. Cultural Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date 1985 federal  state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state Delaware

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date .....

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Main Office of the New Castle Leather Company was completed in 1917 for use as the Administration Building and Payroll Office of the company. It was in continuous use until 1933, when New Castle Leather was purchased by the Allied Kid Company. From that time, it was called The Main Office of the Allied Kid Company, as the building is most commonly known. It was in use until 1977 as Payroll and Executive Offices for Allied Kid. In 1977, Allied Kid Company closed its offices and the building has fallen into disrepair and has been vacant. However, the building has undergone few alterations since its construction as evidenced by an early photograph found in the building. A copy of that photo is enclosed in this report. The building is of a unique style, with a Spanish Colonial design, red tile mansard and flat roof and impressive lines. It is not typical of the type of architecture found in Wilmington. Leather manufacturing was one of Wilmington's chief industries and this building is one of the few remaining structures to attest to that prominence. Other buildings reminiscent of the leather business have been torn down or are beyond repair.

The Main Office of New Castle Leather Company was built on the corner of 11th and Poplar Streets. The location was directly across the street from the warehouse and tannery which Richard Patkowsky, founder of New Castle Leather Company, had built in 1901. Other buildings owned by the company were also nearby on Poplar and Wilson Streets, covering an eight block area.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1917 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Main Office of the Allied Kid Company, formerly the Administrative Offices of the New Castle Leather Company, is architecturally significant in accordance with Criterion C because it is a fireproof office building in the Spanish Colonial style of the early 1900's. Moreover, it is a good example of Spanish Colonial architecture and is a unique choice of style for the City of Wilmington. The Main Office has had few alterations and has been in continuous use from 1917 until 1977. It has been used for storage of documents since 1977 until the present time.

In accordance with Criterion A, the building is historically significant because of its association with two world-reknown leather companies--New Castle Leather Company and the Allied Kid Company. Both companies were leaders in their field and employed significant numbers of people in Wilmington.

At one time Wilmington was the world's second largest producer of glazed kid, or Moroccan leather. Carol Hoffecker in Wilmington Delaware, Portrait of An Industrial City said that there were 3,000 people in the leather manufacturing business at the turn of the century and that 40 plants were operating in the leather business in Wilmington. The journal of Allied Kid Company said there were 6,000 employees in 1933 working in the leather business. Richard Patzowsky started New Castle Leather Company by building a tannery on 11th and Poplar Streets in 1901. By 1917 the company had grown to include eight city blocks which included Poplar Street, Wilson Street, and 10th to 14th Streets. The

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .48

Quadrangle name Wilmington South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 1 8 4 5 3 4 1 0 4 3 9 9 3 5 0  
Zone Easting Northing

B [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Zone Easting Northing

C [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

D [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

E [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

F [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

G [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

H [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Attached Sheet

Legal parcel to include entire building

Parcel # 26-036.10-089

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Bowen

organization A and P Partnership date August 1985

street & number C/O Lemay Realtors, 3301 Lancaster Pike telephone 302-655-6550

city or town Wilmington state Delaware

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title John E. Kern Director Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs date 11/5/85

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

J. Andrew Byers Keeper of the National Register date 12-19-85

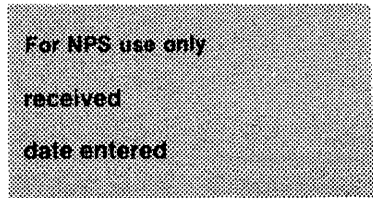
Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet      Description      Item number      7      Page      2

---

The Main Office was build on what had been two building lots. Before New Castle Leather purchased the land, there had been two houses at 1041 and 1043 Poplar Streets. New Castle Leather purchased the houses in 1916. When the Main Office was built, the building was designed to fill the two lots. The building is 68' wide and 30' deep. It is three stories high. There is a main entrance on the corner of 11th and Poplar Streets. A revolving door and curved granite steps on the Northeast corner of the building are distinguishing features. The largest wall of the building is on the North side of the building, and is 68' along East 11th Street. There is a rear entrance on the Northwest corner of the building. Over the rear door is a sign which says, "The Main Office". The West side of the building is 30' across. On the West side of the building is a vacant lot adjacent to the building. The South side of the building is adjacent to a row house which is attached to the building. A portion of the South side has a narrow alley between the buildings. There are no windows on the first floor on the South side, but there are two windows on the second and third floors. There is fine natural lighting because large windows are on all three sides of the building, East, West, and North.

The Main Office has had few alterations since it was completed in 1917. The large decorative iron bars and grill work on the windows on the first floor have provided the building with a kind of "built in" security system. In

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet      Description      Item number      7      Page      3

the building the stairway is located in the central area. The slate stair treads and iron railings with pineapple finials are in fine condition.

There are broken tiles on the east mansard, but in general, the red Mission style tiles are in good condition. Fortunately, replacment tiles have been stored in the attic from the original construction. The building has been constructed with steel support beams and joists. The flooring was constructed with building tiles with poured concrete on top of the tiles and the wood flooring placed over the concrete. The exterior walls are brick curtain walls. The surface of the interior walls are plaster on brick. The building is symmetrical, rectangular and has a projecting roof cornice.

Each window is three lights wide with four lights high. The windows on the first floor are largest with three lights across and five lights high. A large percentage of original lights remain. The heavy thick glass distinguishes the original lights from more recent replacement glass panes, which are thinner.

A simple cornice projects at the Northeast corner of the building and at the Northwest corner which tends to soften the design of the rectangular shape. The roof has two surfaces: the flat roof portion and the red tiled mansard. The cornices are copper and appear to be in good condition.

The exterior surface has cream colored paint on the rough stucco. There are horizontal wood panels under the windows on the second floor. The wood is painted the same cream color as the stucco.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet                      Description                      Item number                      7                      Page                      4

---

The basement is below ground level. It has some light from three below ground level windows. The walls are finished with plaster over brick and stone. There is outside access to the basement from sidewalk bilco doors on the East side of the building at sidewalk level. There is heating ductwork in the basement. Heat had been supplied to the building by the tannery across the street. It was pumped under 11th Street through a large underground duct which was constructed under the street. Some of the ceiling light fixtures are still in evidence.

There are two skylights on the ceilings of the bathrooms on the first floor. The construction of the building with a large walk-in safe room, which measures eight feet by ten feet, with shelving and security door, has continued to make it a most useful building for payroll, or as a vault for storing of valuable documents.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

building was completed in 1917 as it was documented in an article in National Magazine, Vol. XLVIII, No. 1, January, 1919. In that article the author, William Edward Ross has stated:

The New Castle Leather Company occupies a very extensive plant, covering portions of eight city blocks and extending from 10th to 14th Streets, centering on Wilson. The company is systematically adding to its buildings in order to accommodate its increasing business. The present year witnessed the installation of a very complete sprinkler system for fire protection, and in 1917 there was erected a model warehouse, two-hundred by one-hundred feet, with a capacity for one and one-half million goat skins, and during the same year a very fine administration building was also constructed. In 1916 the company erected a commodious building for the storage of chemicals and other mill supplies. p. 16

The Administration Building the writer was referring to was The Main Office on the corner of 11th and Poplar Streets. The model warehouse was the building known today as the Kaumagraph Building (listed on the National Register, June 16, 1983) on 14th and Poplar Streets. Both of these buildings were the



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Significance	Item number	8	Page	3
--------------------	--------------	-------------	---	------	---

pride of New Castle Leather Company. Both buildings were constructed in such a way as to be considered fireproof and indestructible. The utilitarian structure of steel beams, concrete floors, brick and tile construction between floor joists was a sound construction which even today gives a good fire code rating. The Main Office has undergone very few alterations. Proof of this is the enclosed copy of an early photograph found in the building during renovations. The photo shows a boy in knickers and a gas lamp which help to date the photo. The building looks very much as it does today. We believe that the photo may have been taken sometime between 1917 and 1918.

In the 19th century and early 20th century Wilmington was a manufacturing center for the production of glazed kid. Wilmington was the second largest producer of this soft leather which was commonly called Moroccan leather. Goatskin leather has been used since early history. It was imported to the Wilmington tanneries from other parts of the world. The leather trade grew in Wilmington because the city was located at the apex of three rivers: Christiana, Brandywine, and Delaware. The port in Wilmington was a fine stop for ocean going boats. Goatskins, which were best suited for the manufacture of fine leather, came mostly from Europe, Central Africa, South America, India, and China.

Wilmington, Delaware began to manufacture Moroccan leather in 1828. The Delaware leather trade grew rapidly through the 19th century. Most goat skins were imported from Spain or South America and Wilmington had good sources of transportation from importers using ports in Philadelphia or Wilmington. The port in Wilmington was a natural stop since it was 30 miles nearer the ocean than Philadelphia.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Significance	Item number	8	Page	4
--------------------	--------------	-------------	---	------	---

Demands on manufacturers of leather goods were great so plants increased their facilities. In 1853 Stephen Postles and Thomas Baynard formed a profitable company which eventually became the American Leather Company. G. T. Clark Company was formed in 1858. By 1870 larger mechanized leather factories, like Pusey Scott and Company, replaced neighborhood tanyards. Mechanization, modernization of plants, and enlarged facilities could increase production and profit.

George W. Baker founded a company in 1870 in Wilmington to make the machinery needed for tanning of Moroccan leather. J. E. Rhoads Company moved from Pennsylvania to Delaware in 1867 when Rhoads purchased Downing and Price Company, a small leather tanning company. Rhoads took an existing company and made it larger.

The leather business and related businesses employed a great number of people in Wilmington. Many of the employees in the leather manufacturing trades were immigrants from Poland. Some union notices to employees of New Castle Leather Company were written in both English and Polish.

New Castle Leather Company of Wilmington had become the leading manufacturer of Moroccan leather in the world. People working in the leather business were not affected by economic changes as were people in other businesses. Workers employed in leather manufacturing were engaged in a business which was profitable and growing, and one which was constantly producing a product which was very much in demand.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet                      Significance                      Item number                      8                      Page                      5

Richard Patzowsky came to America from Prague at eighteen. He came at a time when businesses were expanding. Small neighborhood tanning companies were becoming larger. Larger companies were forming mergers and consolidating with smaller companies. For seven years Richard Patzowsky worked as a manager for F. Blumenthal and Company and learned the business. In 1900 he left to form his own company at 11th and Poplar. He called his company New Castle Leather Company. The tannery warehouses were located in a group of brick buildings between Poplar and Walnut and 10th and 14th Streets. The buildings covered more than a block of land.

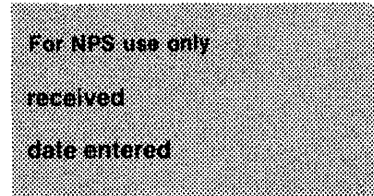
The philosophy of the New Castle Leather Company was to use the finest grade of goatskins and to employ the most skilled labor. Many of the craftsmen were immigrants from Poland. The partners in the formation of the new company were the following: Gustav Binger, whose job it was to purchase raw stock; Sidney New, who acted as Treasurer; and Richard Patzowsky, who was the local plant manager. They formed a co-partnership in 1901. The quality of their product produced acclaim and prominence in world markets.

Richard Patzowsky was a public spirited member of the community. His home was at 1011 Jefferson Street where the YMCA now stands. His son, Robert Patzowsky, lived at 1111 Jefferson Street. Robert's home is still standing.

J. Wirt Willis had also been employed by F. Blumenthal Company. He worked there for three years. He joined Richard Patzowsky at New Castle Leather in 1901. The company thrived and received world recognition for their quality of work and for their excellent work with pastels and Havana Brown glazed kid.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet                      Significance                      Item number                      8                      Page                      6

---

On November 24, 1916, Richard Patzowsky died. J. Wirt Willis, Patzowsky's friend and co-worker, took over. The co-partnership of Patzowsky, Binger and New was dissolved on January 31, 1917, and New Castle Leather Company formed a new co-partnership with Binger, New and Willis. Under the leadership of J. Wirt Willis, New Castle Leather Company was one of the first to develop colored glazed kid. Under Mr. Willis's guidance, New Castle Leather continued to prosper. New Castle Leather Company occupied eight city blocks.

In 1917 the Administrative offices were completed. The Main Office of New Castle Leather Company housed the payroll and other offices of the company. The National Magazine in January, 1919, said that there were over 6,000 people employed in the manufacture of leather in Wilmington.

On December 22, 1921, there was a large fire which damaged the warehouses and tannery near 11th and Wilson. The Main Office was not damaged. Some of the buildings belonging to New Castle Leather were destroyed.

Though New Castle Leather continued to stay in business, the trend was to grow larger. Solomon Agoos started a branch of Standard Kid in Wilmington in 1917. This merged with two Philadelphia companies in 1929, the McNeely Company and Quaker City Morocco Company. When the Standard Kid Company of Massachusetts and the Standard Kid Company of Wilmington were joined, then all four companies formed into one larger company which became the Allied Kid Company. Thus, the Allied Kid Company was organized in May, 1929. In 1933 Allied Kid purchased New Castle Leather Company and the trademark of Sterling Patent Colt and the assets of Henry Rose Incorporated Plant. Allied Kid became the largest manufacturer in Wilmington

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number

8

Page

7

and gained national recognition as a leader in new and innovative techniques in the production of Moroccan leather. (Enclosed is a map showing the large areas owned by Allied Kid in Wilmington, dated 1936.)

Many employees who worked in the leather tanning businesses were Polish immigrants. A large number of women were also employed in the tanneries. Since employees were highly skilled workers they were instrumental in organizing into union groups to improve working conditions.

Demand for leather products changed as world markets used products other than leather to make shoes and other goods. With the change, leather goods were no longer in such great demand and the leather manufacturing business went into a decline. Allied Kid, the company which had once dominated the world leather market closed its facility in 1977. The Allied Kid factory and offices were in use, however, on a reduced production scale, until that time.

In recent years the tannery buildings, which once dominated the East Side, have been torn down. Some have been used in other services, or have been turned into vacant shells. None of the buildings, however, were as distinctive or as unique as The Main Office. It is a fine example of Spanish Colonial architecture. It is of quality construction and is in good condition. All these things, together with its historical value, make this building special and worthy of consideration for nomination on the Historic Register.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet      Significance      Item number      8      Page      8

---

The company which Richard Patzowsky formed became one of the world's leading manufacturers of glazed kid. Richard Patzowsky distinguished himself and became one of the world's experts on leather manufacturing. His successor, J. Wirt Willis, also distinguished himself in his chosen field--the leather business. It is important that this building, The Main Office, be preserved and restored to its former prominence so that when school children see the building, they may understand that here is someone who could demonstrate the slogan, "Wilmington is a place to be somebody." Richard Patzowsky and J. Wirt Willis fill that definition.

This building was significant in the past because of its excellent location, its close proximity to commercial downtown and to industrial manufacturing needs, such as railroad and shipping transportation supply lines.

In summary the reasons for placing this building, The Main Office of the Allied Kid Company, (formerly The Main Office of New Castle Leather Company) on the historic register are many. Primarily, the building is of historic significance. It represents the importance of an industry which dominated Wilmington in the period 1828 to 1977. The leather business was a thriving industry which brought world wide recognition to the city and the companies which operated in the city. Secondly, the building is a distinctly unique architecture, and not a common style for Wilmington. Not only is this building Spanish Colonial style, but it is described by architects as a fine example of this type. The building has the essential characteristics of Spanish Colonial with its stuccoed walls and red curved Mission tile roof. The Northeast corner and Northwest corners have

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Significance

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

9

Chanfer corners and contribute to the Spanish Colonial design. The company which built the building was engaged in the leather business. It is possible that they may have had reasons for choosing this style of architecture. It is representative of their product, which was Moroccan leather. The building then itself has a message, since it reflected the product the company manufactured.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

The Main Office  
11th and Poplar Streets

Reference Notes

Photographs were taken with a Pentax Camera, using 35 mm film

All Photographs were taken by Patricia Ann Bowen

Geographical Data

1. Deed description Parcel 1 and Parcel 2
2. Copy of Section of Baist's Property Atlas of City of Wilmington 1901
3. Franklin Survey Company map  
Copyright 1936 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
4. City of Wilmington Map for 1975
5. Wilmington South Quadrangle  
Department of Interior Geological Survey Map

References and Supporting Materials

1. News Article from "The Star" July 19, 1923  
Describes the company's development
2. Illustration of Stationery of New Castle Leather  
Shows the trade mark and buildings belonging to company  
Dated 1914
3. Illustration of stationery showing the Main Office in lower left  
Dated 1920
4. Illustration of stationery and letterhead showing The Main Office  
Dated 1920
5. Shipping Label for New Castle Leather Company  
Advertisement
6. Notice of death of Richard Patzowsky
7. Announcement of formation of new partnership of Binger, New and Willis
8. News Article on Willis
9. Christmas Greeting from New Castle Leather written by Willis



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

2

The Main Office  
11th and Poplar Streets

10. Pamphlet to workers at New Castle Leather written in Polish and English
11. New Castle Visitor (Clipping 1820)
12. History of Delaware  
Henry C. Conrad  
Vol. I, p. 390, 1908  
Hagley Museum
13. 250th Anniversary Year  
J. E. Rhoads and Sons

Sources and Location of Reference Materials

Hagley Museum

Historical Society of Delaware

City Hall

Wilmington Public Library

University of Delaware Reference Room