

**MARITIME HERITAGE OF THE UNITED STATES NHL THEME STUDY--LARGE VESSELS**

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**ISAAC H. EVANS (Schooner)**

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name: Isaac H. Evans

Other Name/Site Number: Two-masted schooner Isaac H. Evans

**2. LOCATION**

Street & Number: Rockland Harbor

Not for publication:       

City/Town: Rockland

Vicinity:       

State: ME

County: Knox

Code: 013

Zip Code: 04841

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-local:       

Public-State:       

Public-Federal:       

Category of Property

Building(s):       

District:       

Site: X

Structure:       

Object:       

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

      

      

      1

      

      1

Noncontributing

       buildings

       sites

       structures

       objects

      0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register:       0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: Transportation                      Sub: Water-related  
 Current: Transportation                      Sub: Water-related

**7. DESCRIPTION**

|                               |                    |      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| Architectural Classification: | Materials:         |      |
| N/A                           | Foundation:        | Wood |
|                               | Walls:             | Wood |
|                               | Roof:              | Wood |
|                               | Other Description: | Wood |

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

The two-masted schooner Isaac H. Evans, formerly Boyd N. Sheppard, Official Number 3362, is a historic vessel homeported in Rockland, Maine. The vessel is operated in the unique passenger coasting trade of Maine as one of the "Maine Windjammers" of Rockland and Camden. From June to September of each year, Evans sails from Rockland every Monday to spend a week cruising the rugged Maine coast from Boothbay to Acadia National Park, "visiting picturesque fishing villages and historic towns."

**ISAAC H. EVANS AS BUILT AND MODIFIED**

As built in 1886, Isaac H. Evans is a wooden-hulled vessel with a scroll head and counter stern. Evans was and remains a single-decked centerboard schooner 57.9 feet long between perpendiculars, with a 19.7-foot beam and a 5.2-foot depth of hold. The schooner is 64.5 feet long overall. Evans has a 6-foot draft. The schooner was originally registered at 52.9 gross and 30.6 net tons when admeasured to obscure fishing convention standards of the 19th century. She is now registered at 52 gross and net tons, and displaces 65 tons.<sup>1</sup> The ship has double-sawn oak frames, originally treenailed but now spike-fastened, and is planked with oak.

Isaac H. Evans was built as a two-masted, gaff-rigged topsail schooner. The vessel remained rigged as a schooner until 1946, when the mainmast was pulled and a 90-horsepower engine was

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment No. 36, Port of Bridgeton, New Jersey, March 26, 1887. National Archives Record Group 36, Records of Merchant Vessel Documentation, Washington, D.C. Also see the Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States for 1887 and for subsequent years up to 1946, when Evans changed to a motor vessel.

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installed that drove a single screw.<sup>2</sup> Evans remained a motor vessel, with her after cabin converted into the engineroom and surmounted by an elevated pilothouse, until 1971. Between 1971 and 1972, the vessel was restored. The engine was removed, and the mainmast was reinstalled. Evans is traditionally rigged and now carries sail in the same configuration she did from 1886 until 1946. The sail plan includes a mainsail, maintopsail, foresail, staysail, and jib.<sup>3</sup>

A low deckhouse aft leads into the cabin, while a hatch fitted with a scuttle forward leads into the forecastle. A cargo hold amidships has a scuttle fitted over it. A ladder leads below into the hold. The hold, separated by the centerboard trunk, is now subdivided into passenger accommodations. Evans has eleven double berth cabins with both side-by-side and upper-and-lower bunks. The interior joinery is varnished pine, with gleaming brass lamps and fixtures. Wash basins with cold running water are provided below, as are the heads. A ladder forward leads into the forecastle, where the galley is located. The construction of the accommodations below deck, completed in 1972, do not impact the integrity of the hold, which has its area and construction characteristics unimpaired and merely covered by the joinery.

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<sup>2</sup> Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1947), entry for Isaac H. Evans.

<sup>3</sup> Plans of Isaac H. Evans, drawn by Doug Lee, showing her lines, configuration as a motor vessel, and as restored, 1971. Collection of Doug Lee, Rockland, Maine. Additionally, discussions at Rockland aboard the vessel on May 19, 1989 with Doug Lee and Ed Glaser, present owner of the schooner, were helpful in assessing the restoration.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: \_\_\_ Locally: \_\_\_

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B \_\_\_ C X D \_\_\_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G X

NHL Criteria: 1, 4

NHL Theme(s): XII. Business  
A. Extractive Industries  
5. Fishing & Livestock  
L. Shipping and Transportation

XIX. Transportation  
B. Ships, Boats, Lighthouses & Other Structures

XXXIII. Historic Preservation  
G. Federal Gov't Enters the Movement 1884-1949

XXXIV. Recreation  
E. General Recreation  
3. Other

| Areas of Significance: | Period(s) of Significance | Significant Dates |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Maritime History       | 1886-1986                 | 1886              |
| Historic Preservation  | 1972-Present              | 1972              |

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: J.W. Vannaman & Brother, Mauricetown, New Jersey

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

The most common American vessel type was the two-masted schooner. Tens of thousands of these vessels were built and operated on the Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf coasts, and on the Great Lakes in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Large numbers of these schooners were also built to work in the fisheries of the United States in a variety of trades, including oystering on inland sounds and bays. From the 1880s through the 1930s oystering was a national industry with thriving centers on San Francisco, Mobile, Chesapeake, Delaware, Narragansett, and Great Sound Bays, as well as on Long Island Sound. At the turn of the century, oysters were the chief fishery product of the United States.

There are now only five oyster schooners known to survive in the United States, all of which were employed on Delaware Bay--Isaac H. Evans (1886); Nellie and Mary (1891); Richard Robbins, Sr. (1902); Clyde A. Phillips (1928); and J. & E. Rigg (1929). Isaac H. Evans is the oldest surviving oyster schooner in the United States and is an outstanding representative of the early form of oyster schooner. Nellie and Mary, the other early form oyster schooner, is a deteriorated and dismasted hulk awaiting uncertain restoration. Richard Robbins, Sr., which represents the intermediate design oyster schooners, sails on cruises out of New York. Clyde A. Phillips, a representative of the late, final form of oyster schooners, is undergoing restoration, and J. & E. Rigg, also a subject of study, which retains the best integrity as a late form oyster schooner, sails out of Rockland, Maine with Evans. After more than a century in service, including time as a motor-powered vessel, Isaac H. Evans was restored to her sailing rig and placed in service as a "Maine Windjammer," in 1972, carrying passengers in commercial recreational service as part of a "dude fleet" that dates to the 1930s and was and remains unique in the annals of marine recreation and maritime preservation as part of a fleet that first introduced the concept of adaptive use to historic vessels.

The preceding statement of significance is based on the more detailed statements that follow.

**THE AMERICAN OYSTER INDUSTRY UNDER SAIL**

The harvesting, and later the cultivation of the oyster was one of the earliest fishing industries in North America. Native Americans harvested the rich oyster beds that proliferate along the coast from Texas to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as well as on San Francisco Bay. Colonial interest in oystering led to widespread and intensive harvesting, and ultimately, by the 18th century, to government efforts to regulate the industry and conserve and nurture oyster beds. Oyster cultivation began in

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the 1820s, and gradually reinvigorated a flagging industry at a time when demand for oysters was increasing.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1800, "the widespread desire for oysters on the half shell at home or in public eating places kept the shell trade alive."<sup>2</sup> A century later, oysters were "the chief fishery product of the United States and the most extensively eaten of all shellfish.... Everyone, especially those living along the shore, knew all about this wholesome, nutritious bivalve and the multimillion dollar industry it spawned."<sup>3</sup> Millions of acres of seabed were cultivated and harvested--on New York's Great South Bay, for example, 50,000 acres alone were under cultivation in 1916.<sup>4</sup> Fleets of hundreds of schooners, sloops, and oyster boats worked the beds, and thousands of men and women were employed afloat or ashore, tonging, dredging, shucking, canning, or serving oysters.

The vessels used to harvest and bring oysters to market generally fit into three categories: 1) the oyster tonging boats, usually canoes, skiffs, or sharpies in which one man used wooden tongs to pluck the oysters from the seabed; 2) the oyster sloops, round-bottomed, gaff-rigged, centerboard one-masted vessels that pulled oyster dredges or served as platforms for tonging; and 3) the sailing oyster freighters, the two-masted centerboard schooners. These vessels, developed in the mid-19th century, were stout and rugged. Additionally,

Centerboarders possessed considerable versatility. Their shallow draft and long straight keel allowed them to rest on a beach between tides to load cargoes...and for repairs. Such a capacity to beach gave them greater ability to get cargoes. And light draft had the added advantage of permitting the schooner to sail in shallow inlets and bays.<sup>5</sup>

Regional variations in the oyster schooners were basically few, though changes in the schooners began to be introduced after 1848, when Chesapeake Bay centerboard schooners "became characterized by exaggeratedly long and pointed cutwaters; this

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Kochiss, Oystering from New York to Boston (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1974), pp. 8-14, pass.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. xix.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-127.

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soon became a traditional finish in all the Bay sailing craft...."<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, on the other oyster beds,

New Jersey schooners were based upon those of the [Chesapeake] Bay and it was not until after 1900 that they departed much in appearance from the Chesapeake Bay centerboard oyster schooner. In about 1910, stems round in profile came into fashion in the Jersey schooners. The Long Island oyster schooners were also like the Chesapeake Bay and Jersey centerboarders and were basically on the same model, although at times the oyster schooners at the western end of Long Island were much influenced by contemporary schooner yachts, particularly in the 1870s. The Cape Cod oyster schooners were usually keel fishing vessels employed in summer in the mackerel fishery. A number of centerboard schooners were employed...the model being essentially that of the Long Island Sound oyster schooners.

The advantages of the two-masted schooners in the oyster trade were wide decks that provided stability and space to stow large numbers of oysters on deck instead of in the hold. While some larger sloops worked as freighters, their large rigs made them difficult to work. "The equally large or larger two-masted schooners with smaller, handier, easily-managed sails, however, remained the favorite rig until the end of commercial sail."<sup>8</sup>

**CONSTRUCTION AND CAREER OF ISAAC H. EVANS**

Isaac H. Evans was laid down and built at Mauricetown, New Jersey, by J. W. Vannaman and Brother in 1886 as Boyd N. Sheppard for use as an oyster freighter.<sup>9</sup> Owned by Harrison Sheppard (the managing owner), Frank Sheppard, Moses Bateman and Thomas A. Rogers, the schooner gradually passed into the hands of the two Sheppards, and finally completely into those of Harrison Sheppard, who remained managing owner and master of Boyd N. Sheppard until 1909. Boyd N. Sheppard worked the oyster beds of Delaware Bay, carrying New Jersey oysters to market in New York throughout her career, homeported at Mauricetown, New Jersey.

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<sup>6</sup> Howard I. Chapelle, The National Watercraft Collection (Washington, D.C.: The National Museum of American History, 1960), p. 176.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Kochiss, op.cit., p. 127.

<sup>9</sup> Enrollment No. 36, Port of Bridgeton, New Jersey, March 26, 1887. National Archives Record Group 36, Records of Merchant Vessel Documentation, Washington, D.C.



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Early in 1909, the schooner was sold to Edgar, Norman, and Joshua Evans of Millville, New Jersey, and continued oystering. The three Evans, sons of New Jersey oysterman Isaac H. Evans, renamed the schooner for their father in 1919.<sup>10</sup> As Isaac H. Evans, the schooner continued to work under sail until 1946, when a change in the laws of New Jersey allowed oyster dredging under power. That year, Evans, like many other surviving oyster sloops and freighters, was converted to a motor vessel.

She continued to work through the decline of oystering, which was marked by the destruction of many of the fleet in the Great Hurricane of 1938 and the Second World War. The introduction of boom and later hydraulic dredges changed the need for the older style boats after 1950, and despite period "booms," oystering declined because of pollution and decreased consumption. By the early 1970s, the New England oyster fleet was described as consisting of a "small varied assortment of ancient and near ancient craft. No known conventional style oyster boat has been built in the last twenty years."<sup>11</sup> Conventional style boats remaining in service had all been converted to motor vessels, except for the small, sailing skipjacks of Chesapeake Bay, which remain in use harvesting oysters into the 1990s.

The only reason for the survival of Evans, as well as several other historic 19th and early 20th century schooners, is that they ultimately earned their keep in a new maritime trade. During the Great Depression, scores of old vessels were laid up, and left to slowly rot in every cove and mudflat along the coast. In 1935, artist Frank Swift, then living at Bucksport, Maine, conceived the idea of saving the rapidly vanishing schooners. While watching a coaster unloading pulpwood at a mill on the banks of the Penobscot River near his home, Swift thought of chartering a schooner for extended passenger cruises. While several vessels, including the schooner Stephen Taber, were available for day-long sails, a prolonged cruise similar to the "dude" ranch experience in the west was a new concept. It was also the first time the concept of an operating, adaptive use of a historic vessel was applied to maritime preservation. Swift's first vessel, the 1881-built schooner Mabel, was chartered in 1936, with a Deer Island skipper as captain and his wife as ship's cook.<sup>12</sup>

At first the concept was slow in catching on, but by 1939, Swift was able to purchase the schooner Annie F. Kimball and began operating her out of Camden, Maine, on six-day cruises at \$32 a head. Around that time, Swift advertised one or two-week cruises:

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<sup>10</sup> Enrollment No. 10, Port of Bridgeton, February 5, 1909.

<sup>11</sup> Kochiss, op.cit., p. 153.

<sup>12</sup> Christina Tree, "Windjammer Days," Historic Preservation, vol. XL, no. 4, July/August 1990, p. 24.

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These schooners are not yachts--just picturesque down-east sailing vessels, clipper-bowed and able, with billowing sails and hempen rigging. Each Monday, from July 4th until September 10th, the Annie Kimball and the Lydia Webster will sail from Camden, Maine for a week's cruise--not to follow an exact itinerary but to use the winds and tides to make the cruise most interesting.<sup>13</sup>

Other entrepreneurs and vessels followed Swift's lead, and by the late 1940s several schooners, saved from oblivion, were part of the "Maine Windjammer" fleet, otherwise known as the "dude fleet" or the "head boats."

The trade was declining in the mid-1960s when a new group of entrepreneurs, young men and women who had crewed and skippered the schooners, took over the business. At the same time the old vessels themselves were wearing out, and only a handful were left. In the early days of the trade, with an over-abundance of schooners, Swift and the other owners had usually run a ship hard, stripped and sank her, and bought another. Now, in order to survive as demand increased for the "windjammer experience" in an age of few surviving historic schooners, the young entrepreneurs turned to building new schooners on the lines of the old vessels, with a few modern improvements, and rescuing laid-up or soon to languish schooners, some of them former fishing vessels, for the trade.

In 1971, Isaac H. Evans was purchased by Doug and Linda Lee of Rockland, Maine, and restored to serve as the first "new" vessel in the windjammer fleet. The success of Evans inspired John Foss, who bought and restored Lewis R. French between 1973 and 1976. To do the work, Foss and the Lees purchased an old shipyard at the north end of Rockland. Joined by the dragger J. & E. Riggin, a 1927-built oyster schooner owned by David and Sue Allen, the fleet, collectively run out of the "North End Shipyard" as "Maine Windjammer Cruises," was augmented by the arrival of the Gloucesterman American Eagle, bought and restored by John Foss in 1986 to replace French, which he sold that year to his brother-in-law, Dan Pease.<sup>14</sup>

There are now some 15 "windjammers," including Isaac H. Evans, operating along the Maine coast. The schooners no longer carry loads of wood or granite, but, as owner/captain Doug Lee remarked, "the only cargo that loads and unloads itself."<sup>15</sup> The windjammers are unique in the nation in their offering of marine

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<sup>13</sup> Pamphlet in the collection of Nicholas Dean, Edgecomb, Maine.

<sup>14</sup> Tree, op.cit, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Dean, interview with Capt. Doug Lee, Rockland, Maine, May 1990.

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recreation. They do not provide "sail training," but instead instill a relaxed sense of the sea and travel under sail, in which the passengers are encouraged, not required, to lend a hand as needed. The North End Shipyard continues to maintain and restore the schooners as needed, and offers its services to other historic vessels on the coast. Thus, skills are preserved along with the historic fabric of the vessels themselves--the vanishing trades of shipwrightery and, in the operation of the schooners, the skills of seamanship.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See Footnotes in text.

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  
X Federal Agency  
 \_\_\_ Local Government  
 \_\_\_ University  
 \_\_\_ Other: Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: Less than one (1) acre.

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A 19 491285 4883750

## Verbal Boundary Description:

All that area encompassed within the extreme length and breadth of the vessel.

## Boundary Justification:

The boundary incorporates the entire area of the vessel as she lays at her berth.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: James P. Delgado, Maritime Historian

Organization: National Park Service

Date: 31 October, 1990

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