

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **MR 22 1983**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name Leipsic and Little Creek Multiple Resource Area

historic ~~Historic Resources of~~ Leipsic and Little Creek *MRA*

and/or common

2. Location DE 9

street & number Little Creek Hundred NA not for publication

city, town Leipsic; Little Creek vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 001

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (See Owner's List)

street & number NA

city, town NA NA vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse

street & number The Green

city, town Dover state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

CRS No. K-3057
title Cultural Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Old State House, The Green, P.O. Box 1401

city, town Dover state DE 19901

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The towns of Leipsic and Little Creek are in the eastern portion of Little Creek Hundred, Kent County. Leipsic is located at the northern boundary on the south bank of the Leipsic River at the first fast land up the river from the Delaware Bay and immediately west of the marshland along the bay. Little Creek is seven miles south on State Route 9, and is on the north shore of the Little River. Like Leipsic, Little Creek is located on the first fast land beyond the marsh land along the Delaware Bay. The land to the west of each town, and also that between both, is primarily agricultural with some residential use as one gets closer to U.S. Route 13 and to both Dover and Dover Air Base.

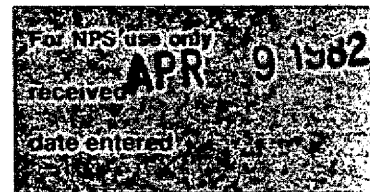
The town of Leipsic is bisected by Denny Street (Del. Route 9), which runs north to south. The main east-west roads are Front and Lombard Streets which parallel the river, while Main Street runs perpendicular to the river.

The town of Little Creek is a line town with almost all of its structures along Main Street (Del. Route 9), and a few buildings along small side streets. A dead-end road leads from the north edge of town east to Port Mahon, which serves as the principal anchorage for Delaware's oyster fleet. The Multiple Resources of Leipsic/Little Creek include the significant buildings as revealed in a cultural resource survey by students in the American Studies Program at the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware. The selected buildings were chosen on the basis of a comprehensive survey recording 108 structures in Leipsic and 95 in Little Creek. The buildings and vessels nominated are chosen as the most representative of the whole built environment and descriptive of the historical forces that shaped both Leipsic and Little Creek and unified their development through nineteenth century work on the water and agriculture, and architecture. The 203 structures represent all of the resources of both communities built before 1945. Each structure was recorded on survey forms used by the Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Each resource was well photographed and plotted on a series of aerial photographic maps maintained by the Bureau. The records of the survey are maintained by the Bureau.

As part of the cultural survey of structures in both towns, a survey was made of the oyster dredge fleet which played such an important part in the town's development. Seven oyster schooners were found to be still working out of the Leipsic-Little Creek area. The three boats being nominated represent the least altered and most significant of the boats. Both the Katherine M. Lee and the Annie R. Shilingsburg represent the close ties that Delaware oystermen had with New Jersey, since both boats were made in the same boat yard and owned by the same family. The Shilingsburg family not only owned the boats, but also the boat yard where they were built. The Maggie S. Myers is the oldest of the working oyster fleet still in Delaware. All of these boats are berthed in Leipsic Harbor and must travel downstream to reach the Delaware Bay and the oyster grounds.

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5. Significance:

The Sipple House is architecturally significant as the most elaborate Victorian dwelling erected in Leipsic. The two-story frame structure with its gable-roofed main block and projecting mansard-roofed central element is an important essay in Delaware Victorian-era architecture and the practice of aesthetic eclecticism in the late-nineteenth century. When the Sipple House was erected in the 1880 to 1890 period it was the most elaborate period architectural statement to be made in the context of the village's built environment. Other structures in Leipsic and Little Creek reflect the same concern with Late-nineteenth century architectural fashion through the addition of wings, overlays of ornament and the construction of new porches containing Italianate, Gothic, Stick Style, and Eastlake motifs. The Sipple House, however, stands alone as the built expression of the economic flourishment that the oyster trade brought to some segments of the Leipsic and Little Creek communities.

K-1563:

1. Property Name: ALEXANDER LAWS HOUSE (1868 name)

2. Location & Verbal Property Description: Southwest corner of Front and Walnut Streets, Leipsic, Kent County, Delaware. It is sited on an L shaped parcel of land fronting Front Street and the Leipsic River, 100 feet wide, 235 feet deep with a 110 feet and 120 foot deep extension fronting the east side of Denny Street (Route 9). The nominated property contains .843 acres.

3. Owner: Harold Remley, Box 324, R.D. 4, Dover, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

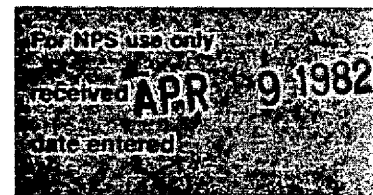
Located on the southwest corner of Front and Walnut Streets in Leipsic, the house is a two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed dwelling of braced frame construction, with frame wings extending to the rear of the structure along Walnut Street. The exterior of the structure is presently covered with aluminum clapboards, but the house is distinguished by a fine Eastlake porch, round-arched roof dormers, and handsome Greek Revival entry.

The earliest portion of the structure may be the kitchen wing, one-story in elevation with a large gable and hearth and an overhead loft originally reached by a ladder-like stair. Such low profile dwellings were common in Leipsic and several may still be found moved behind larger additions now fronting the village's primary thoroughfares.

Between 1820 and 1830 the main block of the present structure was added fronting on Front Street and the Leipsic River. The first floor of this section contains a Federal period side-hall plan, one room deep with an interior gable end chimney pile. All the rooms of the Federal period block retain their mantel pieces typified by the east parlor with a composition made up of a bulls-eye capital on an engaged fluted pilaster and bearing a full entablature. The paneled front door has a three light transom, side lights and pilasters, and a box lock and bell (dated September 8, 1868) on the inside. The stair passage contains an open string stair with a turned newel and stick type balusters.

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Outbuildings, no longer extant, included a smokehouse immediately behind the house and a horse barn and loft located across Front Street.

5. Historical Background

By 1868, this property had come into the ownership of Alexander and Elizabeth Laws. Alexander Laws represents the non-water-oriented component of nineteenth century Leipsic and Little Creek, through his activities as a farmer and merchant. The commitment of Laws to farming is illustrated in the 1850 census, which lists his wealth at \$33,000—86% of which was tied up in real estate.

6. Significance:

The architectural significance of the Laws house resides in its handsome millwork, which is unsurpassed in Leipsic and which adorns a structure substantial, unaltered in profile and mass. The exceptional Eastlake porch and the elegant surrounds of doorway and dormer add to the importance of an additive structure as a living document of the economic fortunes of the more affluent strata of the village population, as well their consciousness of style and architectural trends in the more populous urban centers to the north and west.

K-1564:

1. Property Name: "H.T. HOFFECKER HOUSE" (1868 name)

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: South side of Front Street on the southeast corner of Front and Walnut Streets, Leipsic, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Front Street, 65 feet wide and 145 feet deep, containing .216 acres.

3. Owner: Mae Northwood, Box 325, R.D. 4, Dover Delaware.

4. Property Description:

Located on the southeast corner of Front and Walnut Streets, the Hoffecker House is a Federal period dwelling dating to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Built as a two-and-a-half story block with a contemporary two-story ell, the structure possesses a three-bay, center door facade. The timber-framed dwelling is topped with a gable roof.

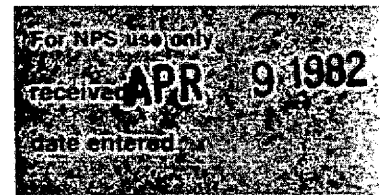
The central doorway exhibits a transom light, paneled door and solid panel shutters. The two original chimneys are of brick construction under a later coat of stucco. The facade windows are of six-over-six sash with solid raised panel shutters on the ground floor and louvered shutters on the second level. The shutters are held open with cast iron shell shaped shutter dogs. The interior was unavailable for inspection.

5. Historical Background:

The Hoffecker House stands on a parcel of land included in the first division of lots circa 1700 by Jacob Stout from his plantation, Fast Landing. The present structure however, was not erected until nearly a century had elapsed and docu-

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ments the fruition of Leipsic as a commercial port and regional shipbuilding center. The name of H.T. Hoffecker, listed as one of the village's Town Commissioners in 1871, is associated with the house in the 1868 Beer's Atlas; an earlier resident may have been Wilson Cannon, who owned the property from 1841 to 1863. Cannon was a particularly distinguished citizen: a Leipsic ship-builder between 1836 and 1854, recognized for his role in helping decide Delaware's commitment to the Union during the civil war, and father of Annie Jump Cannon, an internationally recognized astronomer.

6. Significance:

The significance of the H.T. Hoffecker House lies both in its architectural features and its siting. Although little remains from the earliest period of Leipsic's development as a village, the lot on which the Hoffecker House sits was definitely the product of an initial boosterism attempting to carve out a village community from an agricultural environment. Architecturally, the structure remains one of the finest and best preserved dwellings antedating Leipsic's growth period as an oyster shipping port. The adoption of a center-passage, symmetrically fenestrated architectural idiom in the village paralleled developments in the surrounding countryside. In the mainstream of a general rebuilding throughout the region in the years between 1820 and 1870, houses of this sort were erected with increasing frequency. The architectural significance of the Hoffecker house spring from the appearance of nationally rooted stylistic considerations, in a village economy built on the maritime trades rather than prevailing agricultural reform.

K-1577:

1. Property Name: FENNIMORE STORE

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: Southwest corner of the junction of Main, Lombard and Front Street, Leipsic, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Main and Front Streets and the Leipsic River, 34.5 feet wide and 52.9 feet long, containing .041 acres.

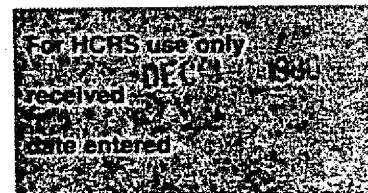
3. Owner: John T. Nichols, 121 New Street, Smyrna, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

Constructed between 1840 and 1860, the J.W. Fennimore Store, located on the southwest corner of Front, Main and Lombard Streets in Leipsic, remains as a fine example of mid-nineteenth century commercial vernacular architecture. Of frame construction, the building is two-stories in elevation sheathed with mill sawn weatherboard and surmounted by a tin covered hipped roof with plain sawn modillion blocks gracing the cornice. Both the north and eastern elevations are finished with display windows of modern origin although they are probably sited on the location of the original openings. The principal entrance is set into the northeast corner of the structure with flanking sidelights and an overhead transom. A porch runs along the full length of the Main and Front Street facades and supported on square posts resting on individual concrete piers. The interior shelving has been replaced in recent times (since the structure served as a muskrat skinning shed), but in its present use as a commercial structure

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5. Historical Background:

The earliest documented reference to the store is in 1888 when it was noted that, "in 1865 J.W. Fennimore bought out the store from Samuel Hargadine at Leipsic." Mr Fennimore was the son of a successful peach grower and farmer and was himself a working mason and plasterer prior to purchasing the store. Active in nineteenth century Leipsic community life, Fennimore served at various times in his life as Levy Court collector, Trustee of the Poor, school commissioner, farmer and merchant.

After John W. Fennimore's death his son took over as proprietor of the store and ran it as a profit making concern until his death. The store remained in the Fennimore family when John Fennimore, Jr.'s widow sold the concern to her brothers who ran the operation until 1953. After a series of short ownerships the store has come into the hands of John Nichols who continues to maintain its merchantile functions.

6. Significance:

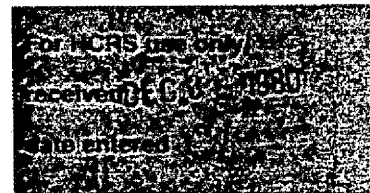
The Fennimore Store is the embodiment of the commercial enterprise of Leipsic and Little Creek's nineteenth century merchants. John Fennimore, Sr., bought and sold grain, coal, lime, fertilizers and general produce. He operated a steamboat running between Leipsic and Philadelphia in order to promote his own business and the general trade of the community. According to Beer's Atlas (1868) the store carried a full line of dry goods, groceries, hardware, tinware, clothing and other items.

In 1887 there were approximately four hundred residents in the village and about sixty working farms in close proximity to the town. As noted at the time, "the domestic trade of the town was quite large and profitable business was done in the shipping of marsh hay, grain and oysters." In addition to Fennimore's store the town also possessed a druggist, milliner, butcher shoemaker, shipbuilder, blacksmith, wheelwrights and assorted other tradesmen. In its heydey oyster schooners anchored across the street from Fennimore's store and the location served as a community focal point for the exchange of goods, news and local gossip. As one elderly resident recalls, "When I was about eight, I remember coming home from school and seeing farm wagons lining both sides of Front and Main Streets for several blocks. They were filled with tomatoes, hay, grain, and other produce to be shipped to market." The store additionally served as a ship's chandlery to the extent that it outfitted the vessels with provisions for their week long dredging voyages.

The business has been a general store, grocery and gas station, muskrat skinner's store and antique shop at various periods in its long service to the community of Leipsic. Because of its location, architectural elements and its role in the exchange of goods, services and social contacts, the J.W. Fennimore Store has always occupied a significant position in the village landscape.

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K-1551:

1. Property Name: MRS. REED HOUSE

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: Southeast side of Lombard Street at its termination adjacent to the Leipsic River. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Lombard Street and the Leipsic River, 50 feet wide and 200 feet deep, containing .299 acres.

3. Owner: Captain Kenney Wright, Lombard Street, Leipsic, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

The Reed House sits on a low knoll on the southeast side of Lombard Street and overlooks the Leipsic River and the anchorage of the New Jersey oyster schooner "Maggie Myers". The two-story braced frame dwelling consists of a sixteen by twenty foot one-room plan with a later one-story frame wing from the east gable end. The principal facade contains a three-bay facade with a centrally located door flanked on either side by four-over-four light sash. The exterior is presently covered with green composition shingle. The main block of the structure also possesses a gable roof with a shallow boxed cornice and is covered with composition shingle applied directly over earlier wood shingle. A plain tetra-style front porch with squared supports and shed roof graces the west facade structure.

The interior of the main block includes a gable end chimney pile with a heavily carved Federal mantel and a box winder stair leading to the upper floors of the house. While other interior elements have been masked with more modern trim, a board-and-batten door for the second floor stair entry remains in situ.

5. Historical Background:

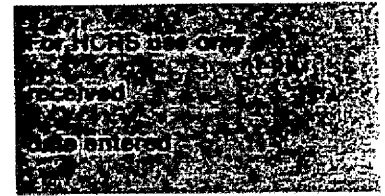
Dating from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Reed House is sited where the Leipsic River first enters the village from the Delaware Bay. The location of the structure, at the edge of the wetlands and high ground, illustrates the orientation of the community to water. The house was additionally connected with rum running activities in the Prohibition era of the 1920's and 30's when smugglers from Leipsic and Little Creek would meet ships outside the twelve mile coastal limit, pick up a cargo of bootleg liquor and run it back to shore in high powered boats propelled by surplus World War I airplane engines.

6. Significance:

The Reed House provides a vital index to the geographic growth and commercial development of the village of Leipsic in the nineteenth century. This site,

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originally known as Fast Landing, constituted the eastern most plot of land of Little Duck Creek (now the Leipsic River) in an area otherwise dominated by marsh and tidal drains. The geographic setting of the dwelling demonstrates the way in which Leipsic's nineteenth century inhabitants took part in trades and occupations closely linked to the water. From this location the building's original owners and subsequent occupants enjoyed a ready access to the water and its natural resources which supported a variety of land and water occupations. The dense marsh across the river supported an abundant muskrat population trapped for their pelts. Cutting marsh hay also contributed to the economic livelihood of the village. The harvested hay was used to produce cores for hollow bodied iron castings, as cattle feed or as packing material. The bulk of the one hundred tons of marsh hay annually cut in the vicinity of Leipsic was shipped directly to Wilmington and Philadelphia. The water not only supplied a variable harvest, but was also the primary commercial avenue linking Leipsic to the urban centers of Philadelphia and Wilmington and the oyster shipping centers of Port Norris and Bivalve, New Jersey.

Architecturally, the building's timber construction typifies the construction materials commonly employed in the flat sandy areas of southern Delaware's coastline where no natural stone existed for building purposes and brick was reserved for those who could afford to set up a clamp or kiln and fire their own. In plan the Reed House is truly representative of the vast majority of Federal period domestic architecture where rich and poor alike occupied a single ground floor room.

K-1593

1. Property Name: MRS RAWLEY HOUSE (1868)

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: West side of Main Street south of the intersection of Main, Front and Lombard Streets, Leipsic, Kent County, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting on Main Street, 40 feet wide by 120.5 feet deep, containing .426 acres.

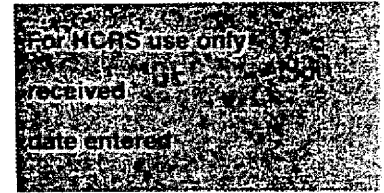
3. Owner: Ms. Anne M. Parvis, R.D. 4, Dover, DE 19901.

4. Property Description:

Located on the west side of Main Street, just south of its intersection with Front and Lombard Streets in Leipsic, the Rawley House is a two-story braced frame dwelling dating from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The present structure is sheathed with asbestos shingle and covered with a gable roof finished with flush vergeboard composition shingle. Laid out with a symmetrical three-bay facade, the dwelling began as a side-hall-plan, single-pile

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arrangement. Later additions include a two-story lean-to which transformed the plan into a double-pile configuration, a one-story, one-room plan lean-to to the north and a one-story frame ell to the rear. This last addition may have been an earlier dwelling fronting Main Street and moved to its present location in the course of nineteenth-century periods of rebuilding and alterations. A parallel instance of this occurrence in Leipsic is K-1569 (not included in our nominations), which began as a one-story, braced frame, gable-roof structure and was moved behind a store front in the late-nineteenth century.

The main block of the Rawley House is additionally unusual for its porch and chimney arrangements. The late-nineteenth century full length tetra-style porch is composed of a hipped roof supported by squared columns with sawn work, factory manufactured, trim. The gable end chimney located inside the south gable is of brick construction and displays an exposed exterior chimney back defined by a simply molded architrave. Although this feature is quite common further south on the Delmarva peninsula, its appearance on Leipsic documents the extreme northern range of this regionally defined architectural device.

The interior was not open for inspection at the time of the nomination.

5. Historical Background:

The historical development of the Rawley lot is obscured in the county records through lack of recordation. One possible allusion to the house and land appears in Kent County Chancery Court when, in 1862, a suit is filed and a judgement granted against the Pleasanton family who had conveyed the property to the Rawleys in 1853. A map of Leiosic, dating from 1868, shows the house still in the possession of Mrs. Rawley.

6. Significance:

The Rawley House is architecturally significant as an example of the mid-nineteenth century vernacular building traditions which continue to define the built environments of Leipsic and Little Creek. The two-story elevation, single-room depth and braced frame construction are features common to the dwellings of middle income farmers, oystermen, sea captains, and merchants residing in the villages and their rural environs. Of special architectural merit is the exposed exterior chimney base on the south gable end.

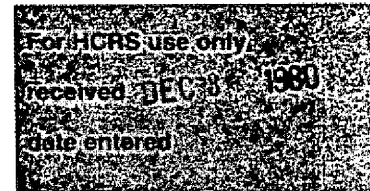
K1598

1. Property Name: McCLARY HOUSE

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: Northeast corner of Main and McClary

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Streets, Leipsic, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Main Street, 39 feet wide and 136 feet deep, containing .112 acres.

3. Owner: John T. Moore, Box 407, R.D. 4, Persimmon Tree Lane, Dover, Delaware 19901.

4. Property Description:

Situated on the northeast corner of Main and McClary streets the McClary House was built as a timber framed, two-story, single-pile dwelling covered with mill sawn weatherboard and resting on a full brick foundation. Built as a hall-parlor plan the house retains an interior gable end chimney at either end of the structure and a common rafter roof covered with wood shingles under later tin sheathing.

Alterations to the structure include the addition of asbestos shingle siding, the removal of the first floor partition wall and wings built on to the rear elevation. Despite these changes the house continues to exhibit its original lines and much of its mid-nineteenth century architectural character.

5. Historical Background:

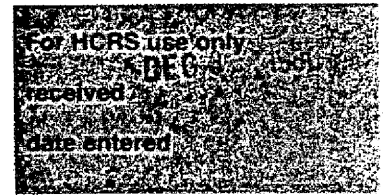
The present structure is one of three owned by the McClary family in 1868. The McClary family derived its fortunes in the nineteenth century by following the water. Working in a seasonal round of trapping, oystering, harvesting marsh hay and market gunning, the McClary family is emblematic of the "Proggers" mentioned in the 1870 census. Proggers were those individuals who did pursue a single water related occupation, but harvested from the wetlands all that was salable and would insure a comfortable existence.

6. Significance:

The importance of the McClary House is as a documented residence of a nineteenth century waterman's family. The house is neither the most stylish or humble dwelling in the village, but represents a middle ground of architectural competence in keeping with a livelihood derived from the natural environment. Erected in the middle of the nineteenth century the house additionally documents the shift in Leipsic's economic base from larger agrarian, commercial and ship-building concerns to an extra-local market based in securing "wild" produce for the urban markets of Philadelphia and New York.

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^{K-131}
1. Property Name: RUTH MANSION

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: The Ruth Mansion House sits on a plot of land 147 feet deep by 102 feet wide on Main Street, between Front Street and Second Street. It is on the west side in the middle of the block. The total acreage is .344 acres.

3. Owner: Mrs. Hilda G. Watson, Main Street, Leipsic, DE 19901

4. Property Description:

The Ruth Mansion House was built in the late 18th century as a 2-story, 5-bay, center-hall, brick building. It is a typical Georgian building. The facade is laid in Flemish bond, while the sides and rear are done up in common bond.

The Ruth Mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

K-1454:

1. Property Name: LITTLE CREEK METHODIST CHURCH

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: East side of Main Street at the intersection of Wilson Lane, Little Creek, Kent County, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Main Street, 65 feet wide and 210 feet deep, containing .313 acres.

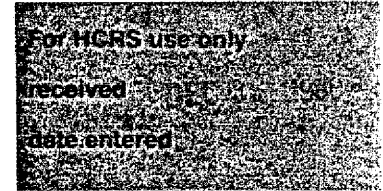
3. Owner: The congregation of the Little Creek Methodist Church, P.O. Box 317, Main Street, Little Creek, Kent County, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

The Little Creek Methodist Church stands as a detached, one-story frame structure. The church is ell-shaped with a poured concrete perimeter foundation and three-bay fenestration. The frame superstructure is covered with milled and lapped weatherboard. The frame gabled roof has a tilted, boxed-in cornice with decorative sawn brackets at the corners and is covered with asphalt shingles. The main gable end facade is bisected by a slightly projecting, square bell tower topped with a tapered, pyrimidical cupola housing the bell. The top of the cupola is surmounted by a copper spike with a copper sphere on top. The top two corners of the openings of the cupola house sawn, decorative latticework. A later, one-story wing extends from the south side of the main church. This wing has a small stoop with a shed roof supported by decorative, sawn brackets with Gothic motifs. The brackets that support the roof and the decorative Gothic cut outs are chamfered. A modern one-story shed addition occupies the southeast corner, at the juncture of the main structure and the wing. The stained glass windows of the main structure and wing are sliding sash with a Gothic, tripar-

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tite top section that is fixed and a two-light bottom section. A decorative wood molding surrounds the top portion of the windows. The bell tower has a circular, recessed, stained glass "rose" window. The modern aluminum and glass exterior door is framed by a projecting gable and is surmounted by a stained glass, tripartite, Gothic fanlight with a beaded molding at its base. A six-tread, brick stair with wrought iron railings leads up to the main entrance. The interior, main doorway is flanked on each side by a panel with six recessed panels. The door has six recessed panels and is also surmounted by a tripartite, stained glass, Gothic fanlight. The slightly wider door to the south wing is identical to the main door and is also surmounted by a tripartite, stained glass, Gothic fanlight with a beaded molding at its base. Decorative engaged buttresses made of wood occupy three of the corners of the main structure, as well as the southwest corner of the wing. The projecting main entrance way is flanked by a pair of engaged buttresses on each side. A stove chimney is located on the rear shed addition and an exterior, modern stovepipe runs along most of the length of the gable end of the wing. An original, interior brick chimney is located at the rear of the main church. A datestone, inscribed 1883, occupies the southwest corner of the principal facade. The interior of the church is plain with little ornamentation. The interior walls are vertically planked.

This church is still actively used by the Little Creek congregation. The interior and exterior condition of the structure is excellent.

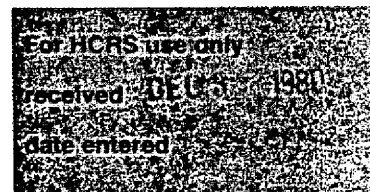
5 Significance:

The Little Creek Methodist Episcopal Church is significant to the architectural history of Delaware as an outstanding example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. Erected in 1883, at a cost of \$3,500.00, this church was dedicated in 1884 after a year of occupation and is the third in a succession of Methodist churches in the immediate vicinity. Prior to the construction of this church, services were held in the Gum Swamp Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1820, and originally sited approximately one-half mile north of town. It also functioned as a public school by 1832. In February of 1875, the building was moved into Little Creek and placed on the site of the present church. In 1878, it was again moved; this time to Bell Street in Little Creek, where it was converted into a private residence that exists today.

Architecturally, the church is notable for its bold expression of the Gothic idiom of style. There is an aspiration to style in the decorative elements of this church which are typical of the folk architectural expression of the residential structures in the town. Elements of style in this church include the Gothic, stained glass windows and fanlights, the decorative engaged buttresses, the doors with recessed panels, and the simple, but elegant, bell tower. The aspiration to style extends to the decorative brackets and Gothic cut outs supporting the shed roof over the stoop on the side wing, the decorative Victorian

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5. Significance:

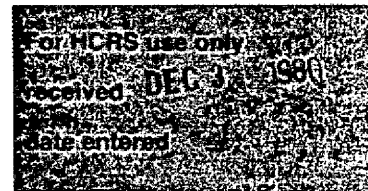
The Elizabeth Stubbs House, built c. 1866, is significant within the context of Little Creek as an unusual example of Second Empire residential architecture, which represents a stylistic departure from the dominant vernacular forms of architecture on the town. The Stubbs House is invested with an uncommon style to Little Creek. It is significant in being one of the few buildings in the town that suggests high style pretensions. It is the only structure in the town with a mansard roof and its exterior and interior details speak a conscious awareness of style. This two-story, three-bay frame dwelling is adorned with an over-sized dentil molding on its roof cornice and on its facade window and door lintels. Square and hexagonal patterned slate tiles ornament the roof and small, delicate cut out scrolls flank the dormers. A massive porch with square column supports runs the full length of the facade and continues around one side of the house. This same consciousness is apparent on the interior also. Originally a side-hall-plan, the hall wall was later removed to create one large front room. This front room contains a staircase, has raised wood panels beneath the windows panels beneath the windows on the facade wall, French doors leading into the rear wing, and small chimney closets flanking the stove flue. The three main rooms of the first floor are all equipped for parlor stoves. One of the rear rooms has an open corner winder staircase and French doors connecting the adjoining room. The floors throughout the house are painted and grained, but only at the edges of the rooms as there appears to have been carpets on the floors.

The majority of dwellings in Little Creek are small, simple, two-story, frame, unadorned structures and the Stubbs House stands out from among them because of its deliberate styling. In its departure from the architectural norm, it shows an awareness of life styles and events beyond Little Creek and its immediate environment. It is significant as a local interpretation of the Second Empire style at this time in more urbane centers. Because it is less ornate, and perhaps not proportioned in quite the same manner as examples of Second Empire design found in populous cities, it retains the character and spirit of Little Creek.

In Beer's Atlas of Delaware (1868) it appears that this property was owned by E. Stubbs, and the 1880 census for the town of Little Creek reveals Elizabeth Stubbs, age 55, as a head of household, keeping house. Her daughter Linda Stubbs, 24, lived with her and served the community as one of two local dressmakers. Mrs. Stubbs kept two boarders: James Barber, a seven year old boy, and Pernel Emmerson, 30, the local school teacher. Another Stubbs household appears on the census also. Edward Stubbs, a thirty-eight year old waterman, his wife Annie, and their three young children could also possibly have been the inhabitants of this house. Between these two households we see represented the water trade, which was one of the chief occupations of the citizens of Little Creek, and some of the community services necessary to the town as a whole.

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K- 1460

1. Property Name: JONATHAN WOODLEY HOUSE

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: East side of Main Street south of the intersection of Wilson Lane, Little Creek, Kent County, Delaware. It is sited on a parcel of land fronting Main Street, 47 feet wide and 320 feet deep, containing .345 acres.

3. Owner: Mr. & Mrs. Michael S. Rinehart, R.D. 3, Box 127, Dover, DE 19901

4. Property Description:

The house sits on a narrow town lot fronting Main Street and running eastward to the marshy area bordering Little River. The principal block of the Woodley House is of frame, two stories high, covered with wide mill-sawn weatherboard painted white, with a gable roof covered by a standing seam tin roof. A simple wooden box cornice defines the eave line on the three-bay facade. The principal entranceway is to the right and is shielded by the full facade hip-roofed porch supported by four equally spaced, turned wooden posts with decorative sawnwork brackets. Originally, a brick chimney projected from the roof ridge at the north gable end, but it has since been removed. The first floor facade windows are closed by four panelled shutters mounted on cast iron pintiles screwed to the interior edge of the architrave. The second-story shutters are louvered. Cast iron star-shaped shutter dogs are screwed to the weatherboard. The front doorway exhibits Greek Revival architectural characteristics with an architrave comprised of deeply reeded mouldings and bulls-eye corner blocks, framing a door consisting of four graduated recessed panels with applied Grecian ogee mouldings.

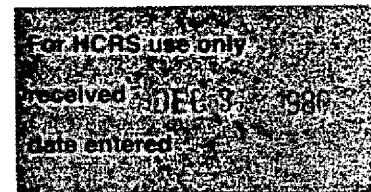
The rear wing of the house is a one-story-and-attic gable roofed frame unit set perpendicularly to the axis of the main block. Projecting from each slope of the wing roof are two gable roofed dormers, with decorative sawn work cresting along each dormer roof ridge. The wing is now partially covered by asbestos shingling. At the rear of the wing is located a brick interior end chimney. Immediately behind the kitchen wing is a large gable roofed, one-story frame shed of recent construction. On the south property line is an older, much weathered, frame shed.

5. Significance:

The Jonathan Woodley House is significant to the architectural history of Delaware as a good example of the vernacular housing traditions that characterized much of the residential building practices throughout the state during the nineteenth century. Though difficult to prove beyond a doubt, there is a high probability that Jonathan Woodley, a "house carpenter" by trade, built the

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dwelling, adding an additional piece of information to the historical record in an era and area of largely anonymous vernacular building. The house is particularly interesting from an architectural perspective as a combination of two typical Delaware mid-nineteenth century housing forms. The story and a half block, in this case utilized as a kitchen wing, often was a house in and of itself. It is possible, though difficult to substantiate or refute without detailed interior physical investigation of the house, that the story and attic unit once faced the street at the front of the lot and was later moved rearward to form the kitchen wing of the newer and larger frame block that now functions as the main block of the building. This practice of moving and reusing existing buildings as parts of later housing enlargements and improvement appears to have been rather commonplace, based on suspected parallels elsewhere in Little Creek and Leipsic and other rural areas of the state.

The 1850 census for Little Creek Hundred, Kent County lists Jonathan Woodley as the head of a household and carpenter by trade. An 1843 deed mentions that he resided in a two-story frame house with a one-story kitchen near Leipsic that he has built. By 1868, he and his family had moved to the town of Little Creek. The transaction whereby the Woodley's obtained the town land is elusive and there is uncertainty whether a house stood there at the time. Woodley's oldest son, Charles F. is listed as a carpenter as well in the 1860 census.

K-130

1. Property Name: STONE TAVERN

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: The Stone Tavern is located in the east side of Main Street, just north of Wilson Lane. The lot is 160 feet wide and 210 feet deep and contains .771 acres.

3. Owner: Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control, State of Delaware,
Dover, Delaware 19901

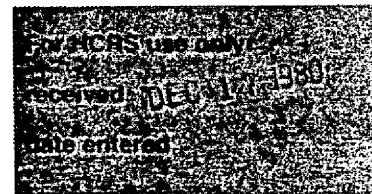
4. Property Description:

The Stone Tavern was built c. 1829 as a two-story, single-pile, five-bay, center-hall, stone building. It has a corbelled ribbed brick cornice and interior gable end chimneys. It is one of the few stone buildings in Kent County and was thought to have been a tavern by the local community, but records have shown that it was always a dwelling house.

The property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

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K-3058

1. Property Name: MAGGIE S. MYERS

2. Location: Anchored at Harry Killen's dock in the Leipsic River, on the south bank, opposite Front and Lombard Streets in Leipsic, Delaware.

3. Owner: Harry Killen, Leipsic, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

The Maggie S. Myers, built in 1893, is the oldest of the oyster schooners still working out of Leipsic and Little Creek. The vessel has a length of fifty feet, a beam of eighteen feet, and a five-and-a-half-foot draw. Converted to power in the 1940's, the Maggie S. Myers was demasted, although a section of the bowsprit was left in situ. The framing for the hull is made of sawn white oak fastened with iron spikes protected by half-inch-deep wooden plugs. The hull is finished with carvel sheathing, the interstices of which are caulked with a combination cotton, oakum and seaming compound. The decking, some of which is original, is built of fir sealed with tar and linseed oil. The present diesel engine sits in the hold below the original cabin. The present pilot house was added to the top of the cabin. Two power dredges and the winding machinery are located almost directly amid-ships, and stands forward of the pilot house. The Maggie S. Myers was reportedly built in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

K-3059

1. Property Name: ANNIE R. SHILLINGSBURG

2. Location: Anchored at Daniel Fox's dock in the Leipsic River, on the south bank opposite Front and Lombard Streets in Leipsic, Delaware.

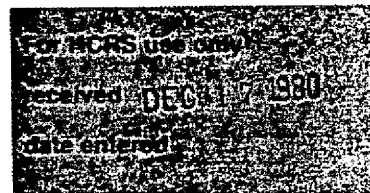
3. Owner: Daniel Fox, Leipsic, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

The Annie R. Shillingsburg was built by Parsons Bill Boats, Greenwich, New Jersey, in 1909 as a two-masted, sail-powered oyster schooner. The vessel's length is presently sixty-nine-and-a-half feet with a beam of twenty-feet, eight inches and draft of five-feet, seven inches. The net tonnage of the Annie R. Shillingsburg is thirty tons, with a forty-five-and-a-half ton burden. Except for the deck, which is cedar, the vessel is constructed of sawn white oak fastened with iron spikes and plugged below the waterline with circular wood fittings. Although all the rigging was removed during the Annie R. Shillingsburg's conversion to power in the 1940's, approximately two-thirds of

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the forward mast was left intact to carry a loading boom. The present pilot house is added to the top of the original cabin.

K-3060:

1. Property Name: KATHERINE M. LEE

2. Location: Anchored at Daniel Fox's dock in the Leipsic River, on the South bank opposite Front and Lombard Streets in Leipsic, Delaware.

3. Owner: Daniel Fox, Leipsic, Delaware.

4. Property Description:

The Katherine M. Lee was built by Parsons Bill Boats in Grenwich, New Jersey, and launched as a sail-powered oyster schooner in 1912. An early photograph of the Katherine M. Lee shows the vessel dredging for oysters off the New Jersey coast. At the time of the photograph, the Katherine M. Lee was working under sail with a two-masted arrangement and forward jib. The two masts were slightly raked sternward with the dredge machinery located almost directly amidships. A low cabin stood toward the rear of the schooner with the wheel located immediately behind the hatchway leading below deck. The lower area of the vessel was primarily used for storage and sleeping areas with a cooking and dining area situated beneath the cabin. The oysters and other cargo were typically carried on deck.

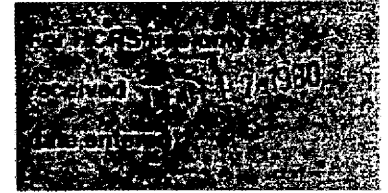
The Katherine M. Lee continues to work the Delaware Bay as an oyster schooner. The rigging was removed in the 1940's, when the vessel was converted to diesel power. The bowsprit and both masts have been totally removed. A pilot house was added to the top of the original cabin to accomodate new steering gear and navigation equipment. The cabin is still in its original condition and was not altered, except for the slight flattening of the roof. The vessel has a seventy-foot keel, eighty-five foot overall length, nineteen-foot beam and six-foot draft. The hull is composed of sawn timbers fixed in place with iron spikes and protected with wooden plugs. The carvel-planked hull is seamed with a combination of cotton, oakum and seaming compound. All the framing is of white oak.

SIGNIFICANCE: MAGGIE S. MYERS, ANNIE R. SHILLINGSBURG and KATHERINE M. LEE

The significance of the Maggie S. Myers, Annie R. Shillingsburg and Katherine M. Lee lies in their documentation of the actual working of the Delaware oyster trade and their description of a regional boat type. All three vessels, as was the case with almost all of the oyster schooners sailing out of Delaware in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were built in New Jersey boatyards. As

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a boat type, the "Jersey schooner" was a two-masted vessel with large jib sail, broad beam and shallow draft. In the 1940's, both the New Jersey and Delaware fleets were converted to power dredging utilizing diesel engines. In the conversion process the sail rigging was removed, the masts cut down in size or taken out, and the bowsprits cut back to the hull. Despite these highly visible changes, the basic hulls of the vessels retained their integrity and continue to mirror boat building technology and ship design that evolved during the nineteenth century to meet the need for an efficient and reliable means of harvesting the rich oyster beds of the Delaware Bay. That the boats continue to be used in the same manner indicates a highly successful work method combining boat, dredge and man.

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Little Creek was developed beginning in the mid-eighteenth century as a line town laid out along a road dividing two neighboring plantations named "London" and "Simpson's Choice." The road which was the continuation of modern Route 9, running south from Leipsic seven miles to the north, crossed Little River at the southern border of the town. Like the Leipsic River at Leipsic, Little River formed its first fast landing at this location and the town came into being as a trading port and shipping location for agricultural and maritime produce harvested in the area. By 1887, the main business of Little Creek Landing was "dealing in oysters" and the harvest of marsh hay for use in iron castings, livestock feed, rope manufacture and packing.

By the early-twentieth century both communities were populated by a substantial number of watermen whose occupation included crabbing by use of trot lines (half mile lengths of rope with bait tied at intervals along their reach), fishermen working drift nets, seines and pounds and fur trappers. These watermen were known in the area as "proggers." The oystermen, however, formed a different laboring class where there was some division of work starting from the captain and working down through the cook, dredge handlers, and cullers. As a single point of focus, the oyster industry and its commercial ties form the theme of this nomination.

In 1887, George B. Goode characterized the oyster industry around Leipsic and Little Creek:

Little Creek Landing is the headquarters of the native oyster business. The southern oysters are planted on beds at several places along the shore, but chiefly opposite the villages of Little Creek Landing and Mahon's Ditch, and are raised mostly for the Philadelphia trade, the beds and planting being largely controlled by the dealers of that city.

A year later, Scharf described the oyster business of the area with particular emphasis on Little Creek:

Little Creek is one of the most prosperous towns in the state. Its main business is dealing in oysters. Over fifty thousand dollars is invested in this industry alone. The State oyster beds are west of this (Little Creek) hundred, and the landing and Port Mahon, two miles distant, are the important points for this trade. ..Seventy-five boats are engaged in taking them and in transportation to market.

To better understand the significance of Leipsic and Little Creek, it is necessary to deal with the larger history of the Delaware Bay oyster trade.

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The following properties of the Leipsic-Little Creek MRA
were listed on the National Register on May 24, 1982

Fennimore Store
Sipple House
Little Creek Methodist Church
Stubbs House
Woodley House

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K-130

1. Property Name: STONE TAVERN

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: The Stone Tavern is located in the east side of Main Street, just north of Wilson Lane. The lot is 160 feet wide and 210 feet deep and contains . 771 acres.

3. Owner: Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control, State of Delaware, Dover, Delaware 19901

4. Property Description:

The Stone Tavern was built c. 1829 as a two-story, single-pile, five-bay, center-hall, stone building. It has a corbelled ribbed brick cornice and interior gable end chimneys. It is one of the few stone buildings in Kent County and was thought to have been a tavern by the local community, but records have shown that it was always a dwelling house.

The property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

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K-131:

1. Property Name: RUTH MANSION

2. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: The Ruth Mansion House sits on a plot of land 147 feet deep by 102 feet wide on Main Street, between Front Street and Second Street. It is on the west side in the middle of the block. The total acreage is .344 acres.

3. Owner: Mrs. Hilda G. Watson, Main Street, Leipsic, DE 19901

4. Property Description:

The Ruth Mansion House was built in the late 18th century as a 2-story, 5-bay, center-hall, brick building. It is a typical Georgian building. The facade is laid in Flemish bond, while the sides and rear are done up in common bond.

The Ruth Mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1930	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1830-1930 Builder/Architect NA

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Historic Resources of Leipsic and Little Creek are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the Delaware Bay Oyster Industry. The two towns, along with the associated harbor at Port Mahon just outside of Little Creek, were and still are the center of the oyster industry in the State of Delaware. While not as large as the New Jersey fleet, the Delaware industry was significant to the regional economy and had developed its own traditions and folkways. The historic resources are also eligible for listing under Criterion C as a representative example of vernacular building tradition in a non-agrarian setting. The three oyster dredge boats are further eligible under Criterion C as a representative type of traditional water craft that evolved to meet the demands of the oyster industry during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

A century ago, the Delaware Bay towns of Leipsic and Little Creek were in pursuit of what was popularly known as "white gold"—oysters planted and harvested for the urban markets of Philadelphia and New York. Located in eastern Little Creek Hundred, Kent County, the two villages remain as monuments to life in the water and the seasonal round of trapping, oystering, crabbing, clamming and fishing, as well as agriculture, shipping and shipbuilding.

Leipsic, the northernmost of the two communities, is sited on the south shore of the Leipsic River on a tract of land patented in the late-seventeenth century as a plantation named "Weald." A town was first proposed for the site known as Fast Landing in the early eighteenth century, but it was not until a century later that the town actually began to achieve its present configuration. Today, there are three major thoroughfares in the village, including Front and Lombard streets, which run parallel to the river and Main Street which meets the former two at their juncture and leads southward out of town. Whereas Fast Landing achieved its existence as the first major anchorage on the Leipsic River, the town of Leipsic came into being in 1814 in recognition of its significance in Delaware's fur trade. At that time, the wharves were described as "hives of industry." Boat yards owned by James G. Waples, Wilson L. Cannon and George Parris were active concerns and the landing was shipping "large quantities.... Grain, oysters...to all parts of the world." Shipbuilding, as an economic mainstay, was short-lived and the last major vessel was completed in 1854.

The strength of Leipsic's economy lay in its location as a shipping point and the advent of the nineteenth century sail-powered oyster trade. Residents of the village recall the times when cargo schooners would be lined up at anchor off the corner of Lombard and Front streets and wagon loads of farm produce, grain and other local goods would await loading. In addition to shipbuilders, merchants and watermen, the town had a substantial population of craftsmen including wheelwrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, a druggist, a milliner, and a butcher, as well as a large segment of day laborers, farmers and farmhands.

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By the early-twentieth century both communities were populated by a substantial number of watermen whose occupation included crabbing by use of trot lines (half mile lengths of rope with bait tied at intervals along their reach), fishermen working drift nets, seines and pounds and fur trappers. These watermen were known in the area as "proggers." The oystermen, however, formed a different laboring class where there was some division of work starting from the captain and working down through the cook, dredge handlers, and cullers. As a single point of focus, the oyster industry and its commercial ties form the theme of this nomination.

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To better understand the significance of Leipsic and Little Creek, it is necessary to deal with the larger history of the Delaware Bay oyster trade.

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Delaware passed its first law to protect its oyster industry on February 12, 1812, which stated that access to its oyster grounds would be limited to residents of the state. With the passage of laws in all the states regulating the industry, oystermen devised ways to get around these laws by organizing themselves to protest restrictive laws. An early protest occurred in 1849, when Philadelphia oystermen created an organization called the "Watermen's Association" to "fight the seizure of their boats and property by the State of Virginia while they fished in Chesapeake Bay." They also voted to tax themselves to fight the law in the courts and also voted to send a representative to the various oyster houses or "cellars" to solicit money to help aid their fight.

Delaware passed a law in 1835 that established its first harvest season, set up culling requirements which would protect the young oysters, and also set up gear limitations on the oystermen. Laws were also written in 1851 that established requirements for license fees and for the leasing of state-controlled oyster banks for the purpose of growing oysters. This marked the introduction of the plantation system to Delaware waters. The plantation system is an institution that had been tried earlier in the Long Island Sound and found successful, but one that is not used in the Chesapeake. It allows a planter/oysterman to hold title to a section of oyster ground provided he pays a yearly fee. It can apply to either natural beds or to man-made beds, as it does in Delaware.

While the industry was developing, the major market for the Delaware Bay was Philadelphia, as it was for almost anything grown or produced in the Delaware Vaalley. Some competition was introduced before and during the Civil War by Baltimore firms escaping from the turmoil in their home waters, but with the end of the war and the passage of another set of regulations that set up an exporter's license fee, most of these firms returned to their own waters.

The 1871 regulations created the position of oyster revenue collector and established a watch boat to patrol Delaware's waters and enforce its regulations. They also reaffirmed the plantation system. The planters would pay a yearly ground rent of \$25 plus an additional tax of \$3 per ton on the boat used to work the grounds. The plantations would be limited to fifteen acres and would be the property of the planters, provided they paid their ground rent. Non-residents would be allowed to dredge for oysters provided they paid the various fees which were the same for both groups. This last had important consequences because it allowed residents of Pennsylvania and New Jersey to enter the Delaware industry. These states had greater working capital and a larger fleet than did Delaware and by 1880 the Delaware industry was controlled from those states or, perhaps more accurately, both the New Jersey and the Delaware industry were controlled from Philadelphia. The 1871 laws are interesting also since at the same time New Jersey had enforced earlier laws that restricted oystering to her own residents. A resolution passed by the Pennsylvania legislature protested this and said in part, "The citizens of this Commonwealth, for a long series of years, enjoyed the right to plant and gather oysters in the Delaware River and Delaware Bay...they have increased and improved the oyster beds...The action of the New Jersey authorities has compelled...upwards of one thousand fishermen...(to be) deprived of a lawful employment." The resolution is significant in that it highlights the extent of the involvement of Philadelphia in the oyster industry since, by 1880, their native supply was gone.

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As part of the 1880 U.S. Census, a study was done of the fishery industries in the country. The oyster industry was studied by Ernest Ingersoll and this report is very timely, occurring as it did during the period in which oysters were in the greatest demand. It is also valuable in that while he treats each political division in turn, he is very much aware of the network that existed not only between Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, but also of their relationship to the Chesapeake Bay industry.

By this time, New England oystermen went directly to the Chesapeake for stock, rather than stop in the Delaware Bay. In his report, he divides the Delaware industry into two parts. The first is the raising of native seed oysters and harvesting them for market, and the second is the planting of oysters from the Chesapeake Bay in the Delaware Bay and harvesting them later for the Philadelphia market. Among his conclusions, he states that "a large part of all the floating and shore property credited to the shores of Delaware Bay...is really owned...in Philadelphia. In addition, the same study reports that out of sixty-two boats licensed to work in Delaware in 1879, only twelve are kept in the state, chiefly at Little Creek, and further that these twelve boats only employ fifty citizens of Delaware. New Jersey on the other hand had 300 boats listed in the same study.

The 1880 U.S. Census of Population for Little Creek Hundred, Kent County, records that forty-four people listed their occupation as either oysterman or waterman. This was 8% of the total work force in the hundred. They supported 9.2% of the hundred's population of 1909 people. The 1880 census also reveals that 25% of the oystermen were born out of state. The average wage of an oysterman was \$25 per month for ten month's work. The average wage for manufacturing employees in Kent County for 1880 was \$12.53 per month, according to the 1880 U.S. Census of Manufacturers.

The relationship between Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania can be illustrated in other ways as well. The demand for oysters was so great that there was not enough seed oysters available from the natural beds to plant on the privately-owned plantations. The state of Delaware produced 210,000 bushels of seed oysters, but an additional 160,000 bushels of seed oysters were secured from New Jersey beds. Because this is a violation of New Jersey laws, the Jersey oystermen would take a load of small oyster-seed oysters to the market in Philadelphia, sell them to a buyer who would, in turn, take them to the Delaware plantations and plant them. Another method was for Jersey oystermen to sell their loads to specially converted schooners, who would then dump their cargo in Delaware. If caught, they were simply engaged in the oyster trade.

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It is in this area of seed oyster supply that the Chesapeake industry enters the network and takes on importance to Delaware. The planting of Chesapeake oysters took place wholly in Delaware's waters, but this phase of the industry was almost exclusively owned and operated by Philadelphians. In compiling this section of his report, Mr. Ingersoll spoke with the collector of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company in Chesapeake City, Maryland, a Mr. J.C. Cleaver. He did this because the majority of the Chesapeake oysters arrived in Delaware through the canal and the canal company keep records of the cargo and passage in order to charge the correct toll. During the 1879-80 oyster season (May to April) 939,600 bushels of oysters were brought through and of this amount 704,700 were planted in the Delaware Bay. They were left there only until the next fall and were shipped to Philadelphia to be sold. In 1880, a bushel of southern oysters sold for an average of 76.9¢, while northern oysters sold for an average of \$1.08 a bushel.

Another way of illustrating the relationship between Philadelphia, Delaware, and New Jersey is to examine the activities of one family that was involved in the business for many generations- the Shillingsburg family.

In 1874, 107 oyster dealers are listed in Gospill's Philadelphia Business Directory. One of these was William Shillingsburg at pier 18, South Delaware Avenue, Philadelphia. In 1879, he joined with John Myers to form the company listed in the directory as Myers and Shillingsburg, located at 316 South Delaware Avenue. Boyd's Philadelphia City Business Directory of that year lists 106 oyster dealers. The next year, in a list of boats licensed to dredge and plant oysters in the state of Delaware, the firm of Myers and Shillingsburg owned three boats, all of them schooners over twenty tons. In 1891, this firm split with William Shillingsburg returning to pier 18, South Delaware Avenue. By this time, the Shillingsburg family had expanded their interests and owned a shipyard in Greenwich, Cumberland County, New Jersey on the Cohansey River. At this time, it was operated for them by William Parsons but, by 1900, the shipyard was called the Greenwich Pier Marine Railway and owned jointly by William Shillingsburg and William Parsons. The 1900 report of the Delaware State Auditor has William Shillingsburg listed as the owner of seven boats, making him the largest single oyster-boat owner in the State of Delaware. Of the seven men who came closest to him in size of their fleets, with three or four boats each, six are from out of state. To further highlight the extent that the Delaware industry was maintained out of the state, the same auditor's report lists disbursements of \$254.01 to the Greenwich Pier Marine Railway Company, probably for repairs to the watch boat.

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The 1901 Delaware State Auditor's Report gives an even clearer picture of how non-residents had moved into the Delaware industry. Thirty-five non-residents took out licenses versus fifteen residents. In addition, the average boat size for non-residents was 16.6 tons against 13.5 tons for residents. The Greenwich Pier Marine Railway Company again received \$254.01 for services rendered to the State of Delaware. This trend of non-residents having larger holdings than residents in both tonnage and acreage would continue at least up until the 1930's and the Depression (see Table 2). The 1900 U.S. Census of Population for Little Creek Hundred lists eighty-four men and one woman with the occupation of oystermen or waterman. (The woman was Elizabeth Tarkinton of Little Creek Landing, whose husband and three sons were also so employed). The percentage of Oystermen/watermen born out of state was 8.2%. In 1909, the average boat tonnage for non-residents was 16.9, while that for residents was 9.97. William Shillingsburg was still the largest oyster-boat owner in Delaware with seven boats, including two that were the largest registered in Delaware— the William Shillingsburg III at 30 tons, and the Annie R. Shillingsburg at 29 tons.

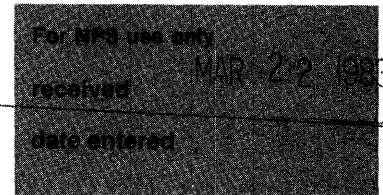
During all this time, Philadelphia remained the primary market for all the oysters of the Delaware Bay. Until the railroads were introduced in New Jersey's Cumberland County, the catch of both New Jersey and Delaware was taken to the docks of Philadelphia. The oyster dealers were located primarily at the foot of Spruce Street, Vine Street, and at the Brown Street wharves. After the railroads came in, most Delaware oystermen took their catch to New Jersey for shipment to Philadelphia.

Oysters that were marketed to Philadelphia were sent unprocessed, still in the shell. When they were first harvested, they would be taken to a dealer's landing or dock area and would be floated for a short time to "plump them up." That is, they would be placed in wooden troughs located in fresher water which would force the oysters to absorb more water and look fuller and more marketable. Upon reaching Philadelphia, they would be processed and shipped throughout the eastern United States. However, because of increased pollution of the Delaware River and the danger to public health, this practice was stopped in the 1920's by the federal government, at least for interstate oyster trade.

Mr. George Shillingsburg, who carried on the family oyster trade, provided many of the details of the business from the 1920's forward. His company operated boats in Delaware and employed a Delaware master to allow the boats to operate in Delaware waters, but the control of the boat rested in New Jersey. This was a boom period for the industry with the oyster harvest and the price increasing at a good pace and let the oyster earn its nickname of "white gold" (see table 1). At Mr. Shillingsburg's Greenwich Pier Marine Railway Company, a boat could be built for around \$9,000. This included all rigging and supplies, down to the dishes for the crew. While this may seem like a large sum, he states that an oysterman could pay off the boat in about ten days during the harvest season. Financing for the boats and for the industry were not a problem during this time. Mr. Shillingsburg is very proud of the fact that no bank ever lost money on the industry during the time before the Depression. In fact, the banks would seek out the oystermen and were offering them loans at 2½%, while the normal interest rate was 6½%. Mr. Shillingsburg, himself, had a personal credit line of \$500,000. He was also a bank director.

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Another oysterman, Captain Kenny Wright of Leipsic, remembers the same situation. By 1918, the pay rate was up to \$55 a month, but "you still got up at 4:00 a.m. and worked till dark. The work was hard and if you didn't produce, then you didn't stay." According to Captain Wright, if you needed to borrow to buy a boat you borrowed from a backer that was more often than not a friend or relative. Also, in many cases a Delaware man was given title to a boat but the real owner was a Philadelphia merchant.

Over a period of time, the control of Philadelphia over the oyster industry had lessened so that by the 1920's only six companies handled oysters exclusively in Philadelphia, or at least themselves in the city business directories of the time. Many of them had followed the Shillingsburg company to New Jersey and established a network of customers who they would contact every day and ship oysters to them by rail.

Captain Wright, in his narrative, says that the Jersey oystermen kept the Delaware industry going for years. They had the money and would back a Delaware man. However, a new element was introduced into the industry as a result of the anti-floating regulations already mentioned. Shucking houses and canneries were expanded or established in both Delaware and New Jersey, but the prime focus remained New Jersey. Because of the relative inexperience of the New Jersey men in marketing processed oysters, Baltimore firms soon were able to control that aspect of the trade and, as a result, most Delaware Bay oysters went to Baltimore as the primary market. They would then be shipped all over the country under various brand names. Mr. Shillingsburg had only a small house at Greenwich employing sixty workers. The larger houses at Port Norris, Bivalve, etc., employed around 1,500 each and represented the Baltimore firms.

The Baltimore firms had actually been started by New England companies in the 1830's and 1840's, in response to Maryland laws that forbade them to take oysters out of Maryland waters. This early start gave them almost one hundred years to set up their market systems and to develop canning technology.

The Depression and reports of unhealthy oysters weakened the industry and depressed both the price and the yearly catch. Table 1 gives the value and size of the Delaware harvest and it shows a very great drop in production from 489,484 in 1926, to 40,729 in 1939. Mr. Shillingsburg records that the Depression was so bad to the industry that many boats were sunk or abandoned and that it was not unusual for oystermen to offer to work on his boats a day without pay, just to show him how they could work. The Depression also affected him to the extent that he sold some of his boats for prices far less than they had been worth in past years. The Annie R. Shillingsburg was sold in 1938 for \$3,500 or, as he puts it, he gave away the boat and some ground in Delaware that just was not profitable to work any more.

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Leipsic and Little Creek served as the home towns of the oystermen, but very few of the Delaware boats were actually berthed there. They were kept at Port Mahon, which is also in Little Creek Hundred, Kent County, but it is right on the Delaware Bay and makes a convenient port for the fleet. Scharf, in his history of the state, says that Leipsic in 1836 was one of the most important on the peninsula being involved in the shipment of lumber, grain and oysters to all parts of the world. Three stores were kept in the town and as many as twenty-four boats could load at one time for the docks there. There was also a ship yard, but that closed in 1854. A steamship line was organized and business got underway in 1853, with two steamboats connecting the town to Philadelphia. Leipsic also had hotels, tomato canneries, and a phosphate factory, as well as a steam-powered grist mill. In fact, Leipsic oysters were not its prime business, but rather the shipment of farm products to the market was the major business activity. The majority of people in Little Creek Hundred were farmers and their families. The various commercial state directories for the period describe Leipsic as the center of trade for a large productive agricultural region, with a population of around 400-500 people. In 1874, the town had two schools, a building and loan association, a farmer's grange, an order of the Knights of Friendship, and a Good Templar's Lodge. The shipment of muskrat furs was also listed as a major activity.

The oystermen were fairly well integrated into the community. During the summer months, oyster schooners would come up to Leipsic and haul out shipments of tomatoes and watermelons as a way of earning extra money. Both the oystermen and the farmers also attended the same churches and the social life of the town was limited. As William McClary says, "when there was opportunity for a gathering everyone got together." He also says that there was no difference between the two groups in shows of wealth. Everyone was poor and most rented their homes from a few wealthy people.

Little Creek is smaller than Leipsic and the state directories noted its population consisted of about 175 people and most were oystermen and seamen. It did have its own merchants and its own church, but was wholly dependent upon the oyster industry. Scharf says that there was a small cannery there that went out of business, but that some grain and marsh hay were shipped from here. Captains Harry and William Haggerty of Little Creek confirm this division and said that Little Creek was an oyster town, and that Leipsic had a lot of tongers and trappers as well as being involved in a lot of other businesses.

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Based on the preceding research, a number of conclusions can be reached concerning the Delaware oyster industry. These are that the Delaware industry is a part of a larger industrial/commercial network that includes New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Chesapeake Bay states of Maryland and Virginia. The primary markets for the industry were at first in Philadelphia and then, during the 1920's, shifted to Baltimore which had had more experience in marketing processed oysters and had already established markets for its product. During the shift from Philadelphia to Baltimore, New Jersey acted as the point of landing for the oysters for shipment to Philadelphia. As Philadelphia's importance declined, New Jersey began to take its place as the controlling point but not enough time was involved to let it fully develop the market before Baltimore interests came into the state and took a leading role in the industry.

Economically, during this period the oyster industry was a very profitable one and the oyster earned the nickname "white gold." Financing was not a problem and the oyster towns, by all accounts, were all very prosperous. Hotels, stores, and restaurants were all regular features of the towns on both sides of the Delaware Bay.

The general prosperity of these towns changed with the coming of the Depression and they lost services and population. The industry now is not the economic force it once was. For many oystermen, it is now a part-time occupation that they follow, in addition to a more traditional occupation on the land.

The sites included in the multiple resource nomination for Leipsic and Little Creek portray a cross section of the physical development and economic, social and occupational life of the two villages. Their appearance and the history of the Delaware Bay oyster trade are the product of a whole cultural environment balanced between the contemporary harvests gleaned from both the agricultural landscape to the west and the marshes and open water of the Delaware Bay to the east.

Architecturally, the nominated structures and vessels symbolize the development of a local economy diversified between work on land and bay. Dwellings include the homes of merchants, farmers, and watermen, such as the Sipple, Laws, and McClary House, while other structures include places of commerce, (Fennimore Store) worship (Little Creek Methodist Church) and day to day social interaction (Stone Tavern). The schooners represent the means of which a substantial part of the two towns' economic mainstay--oysters--was harvested. More than an occupational cross section of building and boat types, the resources of Leipsic and Little Creek describe broader regional trends in architectural and maritime design.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property (see individual properties)

Quadrangle name Little Creek, Delaware

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References (See continuation sheet)

A

Zone	Easting								

B

Zone	Easting								

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual properties

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

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title (see continuation sheet)

organization Division of Historical & Cultural Affrs. date November 18, 1980

street & number Old State House, The Green telephone (302) 736-5685

city or town Dover state Delaware 19901

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Daniel R. Griffith

title Chief, Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

date March 18, 1983

For NPS use only

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

See Continuation sheet for listing date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Page 1

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UTM REFERENCES:

<u>Individual Properties</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Acreege</u>
K-1560	18-455320	4343410	.203
K-1563	18-455420	4343420	.843
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K-1577	18-455630	4343420	.041
K-1551 <i>K-1511 Linnington</i>	18-455730	4343550	.229
K-1593	18-455630	4343400	.426
K-1598	18-455670	4343300	.112
K-130	18-461380	4334840	.771
K-131	18-455610	4343360	.344
K-1454	18-461380	4334820	.313
K-1460	18-461418	4334720	.345
K-1510	18-461348	4334778	.241
K-3058	18-455570	4343500	N/A
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K-3060	18-455640	4343530	N/A

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Nomination researched and prepared by:

Stephen Del Sordo
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Linda Watts
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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Leipsic and Little Creek Multiple Resource Area
State Delaware

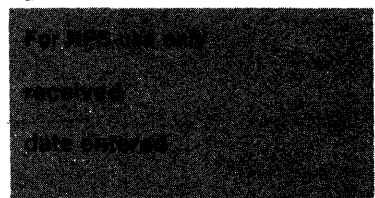
Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|---|
| X | 1. Laws, Alexander, House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 4/25/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>accept Patrick Andrews 4/21/83</u> |
| X | 2. McClary House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 4/25/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>accept Patrick Andrews 4/21/83</u> |
| X | 3. Hoffecker, H. T. House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 4/25/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>Eligible Patrick Andrews 4/21/83</u> |
| | 4. Sipple House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Tom McDaniel 5/29/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>Emma Jane Saye 5-14-82</u> |
| | 5. Fennimore Store | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Tom McDaniel 5/29/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>Emma Jane Saye 5-14-82</u> |
| | 6. Little Creek Methodist Church | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Tom McDaniel 5/29/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>Emma Jane Saye 5-14-82</u> |
| X | 7. Reed House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 4/25/83</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>accept Patrick Andrews 4/21/83</u> |
| | 8. Stubbs, Elizabeth, House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Tom McDaniel 5/29/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>Emma Jane Saye 5-14-82</u> |
| | 9. Woodley, Jonathan, House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Tom McDaniel 5/24/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>Emma Jane Saye 5-24-82</u> |
| X | 10. Rawley House | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 4-25-83</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>accept Patrick Andrews 4/21/83</u> |

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Leipsic and Little Creek Multiple Resource Area
State Delaware

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Shillingsburg, Annie R., (schooner)

Keeper

W.

Attest

12. Myers, Maggie S. (schooner)

Substantive Review

Keeper

Linda McClelland 4/29/83

Attest

accept Patrick Andrews 4/21/83

13. Lee, Katherine M. (schooner)

Substantive Review

Keeper

Linda McClelland 4/29/83

Attest

accept Patrick Andrews 4/21/83

14. Ruth Mansion (Previously listed 4-11-73)

Keeper

Attest

15. Stone Tavern (Previously listed 7-2-73)

Keeper

Attest

16.

Keeper

Attest

17.

Keeper

Attest

18.

Keeper

Attest

19.

Keeper

Attest

20.

Keeper

Attest