

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0676403

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 3 1979
DATE ENTERED JUN 4 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Seha Sorghum ^g ^g [Syrup] Mill

AND/OR COMMON

Seha Sorghum Mill

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SE of Janesville off MN 60
NE 1/2, NE 1/2, Sec. 1, T 108 N R24 W (mill is located in Waseca County
but nearest community is in neighboring LeSueur County)

R.F.D.

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Janesville ^{mn.} (~~Waseca Co.~~) X VICINITY OF Elysian (LeSueur County) 2nd

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Minnesota

22

Waseca

161

~~LeSueur~~ 079

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

— DISTRICT

— PUBLIC

— OCCUPIED

— AGRICULTURE

— MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

X UNOCCUPIED

— COMMERCIAL

— PARK

— STRUCTURE

— BOTH

— WORK IN PROGRESS

— EDUCATIONAL

— PRIVATE RESIDENCE

— SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

— ENTERTAINMENT

— RELIGIOUS

— OBJECT

— IN PROCESS

— YES: RESTRICTED

— GOVERNMENT

— SCIENTIFIC

— BEING CONSIDERED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

— INDUSTRIAL

— TRANSPORTATION

— NO

— MILITARY

X OTHER: unused

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Clarence Seha

STREET & NUMBER

R.F.D. #1

CITY, TOWN

Janesville VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Waseca County Courthouse - Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Waseca,

STATE

Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Minnesota Statewide Survey

DATE

May 1978

— FEDERAL ^{STATE} — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society - 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Seha Sorghum [Syrup] Mill stands on a farmstead located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 1, T 108N, R24W, amongst low rolling hills is the rich agricultural land of south central Minnesota. It is about one mile east of the community of Elysian.

The mill consists of a small cluster of adjoining wood frame buildings, lean-tos, and sheds, all on a stone rubble foundation. All are single story although the complex is built on a low hill with the rear structures at a higher elevation than the front structures thus allowing the entire operation to use a liquid gravity flow system with no pumps.

The elements of the sorghum mill are as follows (not in order of process):

Evaporator Room. The evaporator room is located on the northwest corner of the complex and is the oldest part of the structure, being built ca. 1904-05. It is approximately 16 x 27 feet, single story, wood frame with vertical wood siding, and a low pitched gable roof of unequal slopes, with wood shingles. There are two eight-over-eight double hung sash windows in each of the two exterior (north and west) walls. Along the south eave are three small windows which give a monitor-like appearance. The main mill door is in the west wall. Atop the roof is the evaporator ventilator monitor, 12 feet long, a structural element which usually distinguishes all sorghum syrup mills.

Storage Tank Room. This is a 9-foot 4-inch x 16-foot 6-inch shed addition to the south wall of the evaporator room.

Defecation Tank Room. This 11-foot 8-inch x 21-foot structure is located to the west (slightly uphill) of the evaporator room. Reportedly built in the 1930s, its construction is similar to that of the evaporator room.

Stationary Steam Engine and Boiler. Directly to the south of the evaporator and defecation tank rooms are the stationary steam engine and boiler. The steam engine is mounted on a 6-foot 8-inch x 18-foot concrete and brick platform partially surrounded by a rubble stone wall. The engine is of Mankato (Minnesota) manufacture, reportedly ca. 1860s. It was installed in its present location when the mill was first constructed, ca. 1904-05. It has a 4-foot diameter flywheel and generates about 16 horsepower using 80 to 105 pounds per square inch of steam. To the southwest is the boiler, mounted on an 8-foot 8-inch x 20-foot 6-inch yellow brick base. Manufactured by William Bros Boiler & Manufacturing Company of Minneapolis, it reportedly was installed in the 1940s. A tall metal pipe chimney rises above the boiler which was fired by either two tons of coal or four cords of wood, per day. This engine and boiler area is open to the east and south.

The entire defecation tank room and the steam engine and boiler area immediately to the south are covered with a single gable roof constructed of widely spaced wood boards sheathed in places with corrugated metal sheets. The southeast corner of this roof structure (that section covering the open area in front of the engine and boiler) is now partially collapsed.

(see continuation sheet)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1904-05; 1930s BUILDER/ARCHITECT Cornelius L. Seha

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Seha Sorghum [Syrup] Mill, built ca. 1904-05, is significant for its historic associations with county and regional agriculture and industry. In addition, it is the only known historic sorghum syrup mill remaining in Minnesota. This fact is enhanced by the presence of all of the mill's sorghum syrup processing machinery, including a stationary steam engine on its original mount.

Sorghum syrup production in Minnesota is reported in the United States Census as early as 1860 and reached its peak production in 1880 when 543,369 gallons were produced. The Seha Mill site is in the south central region which consistently supplied about three-quarters of all sorghum syrup produced in the state between 1870 and 1940. Sorghum processing at the Seha mill location reportedly began during the 1880s or 1890s, employing portable equipment which was used in the sorghum cane field during the harvesting season. Minnesota business directories report more than 60 different sorghum syrup manufacturers for the mid-1880s. By 1940 state syrup production was down to 29,819 gallons and today there are only two active commercial sorghum mills remaining in Minnesota and they are not historic structures.

About 1904-05 Cornelius L. Seha, father of the current owner, built a permanent sorghum syrup mill installation on his farm. Part of this structure survives today as the evaporator room which is the most prominent part of the mill building complex when viewed from the east or front. Cornelius designed the mill on a hill location so a gravity flow system could be employed for transportation of sorghum liquid through the various stages of the syrup-making process.

At the same time that the first structure was built the stationary steam engine was mounted on its present site. The engine and boiler served a double function. The engine itself powered the cane roll mill and stalk conveyor while additional steam heated the sorghum juice in the defecation tanks and boiled down the juice into syrup in the evaporator.

During the 1930s the mill underwent repair and renovation. The structures other than the evaporator room were erected and much of the processing equipment was installed, although it reportedly was old equipment at that time. Sorghum syrup processing stopped ca. 1955-56 and the mill and all equipment remain today as they were when operations ceased.

The present owner is very much in favor of the preservation of the mill as is the nearest local historical society, which envisions a restored sorghum syrup mill to complement the nearby steam powered Geldner Saw Mill (National Register) which they are also restoring.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Collier, Peter. Sorghum: Its Culture and Manufacture, Economically Considered as a Source of Sugar, Syrup, and Fodder. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1884.
 Willaman, J.J., R.M. West, and C.P. Bull. Sorghum and Sorghum Sirup Manufacture. University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station (St. Paul) Bulletin 187, September, 1919.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Elysian

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 5 | 4, 4, 8 | 1, 2, 0 | 4, 8 | 9, 3 | 3, 8, 0

B | | | | |

C | | | | |

D | | | | |

E | | | | |

F | | | | |

G | | | | |

H | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The mill is located in Block 13 of the Original Town of Okaman, Janesville Township, Waseca County. The nominated property includes the property on which the mill stands (see floor plan sketch for dimensions) plus a buffer zone on all sides of the mill building

to a depth of 50 feet.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert M. Frame III, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION

State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society March 26, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul

DATE

TELEPHONE

(612) 296-9074

STATE

Minnesota

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley

TITLE

Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

3/26/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

June 4, 79

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

6.4.79

DATE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Seha Sorghum /Syrup/ Mill

CONTINUATION SHEET

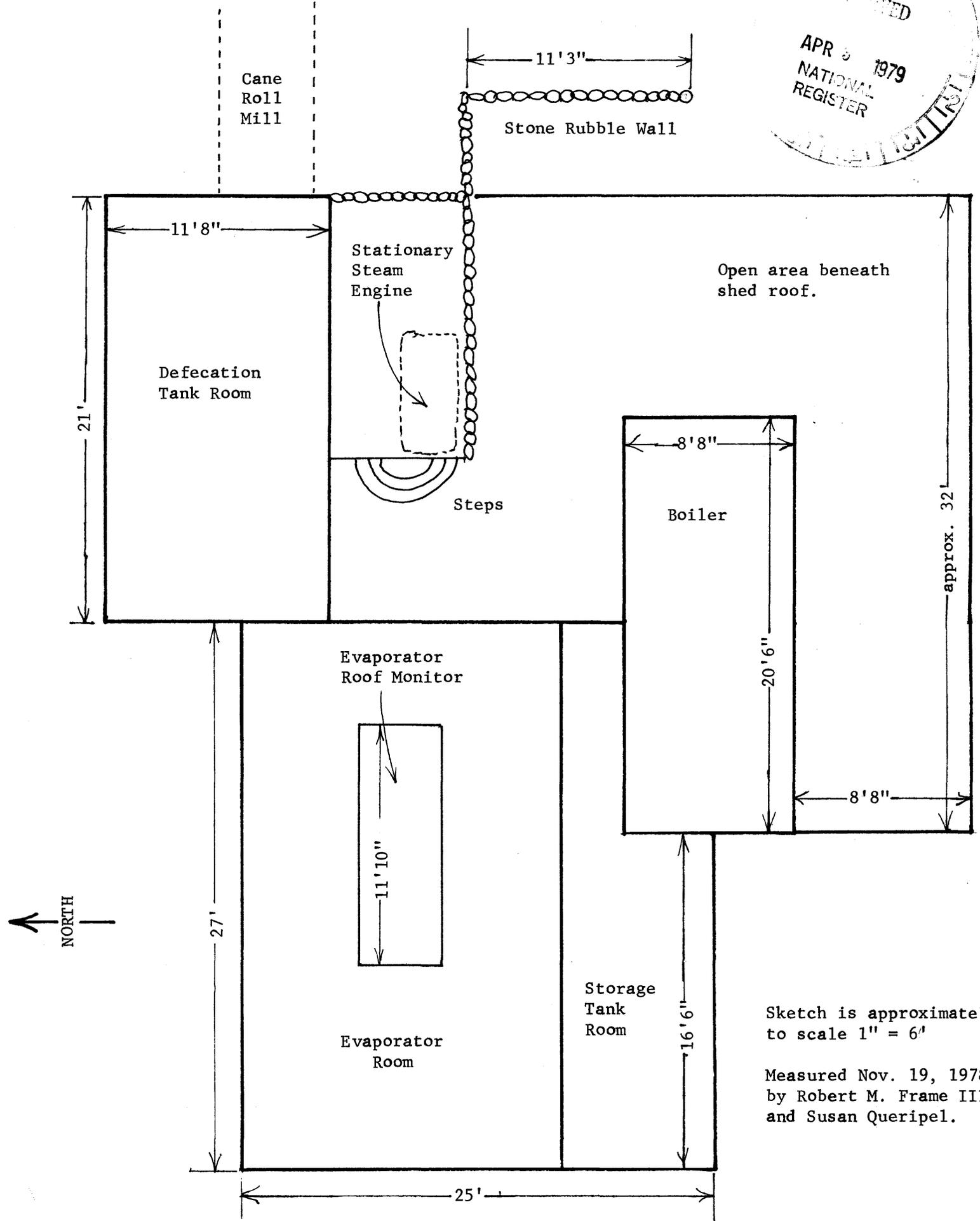
ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

Other Equipment. Immediately to the east of the defecation tank room is the three-roll cane mill and stalk conveyor, built by the Blymyer Manufacturing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, in the late 19th century. It was powered by belt drive from the steam engine. Juice from the cane roll mill emptied via gravity flow into the defecation tanks below. The defecation tank room contains three tanks custom-built in Red Wing, Minnesota, and installed in used condition in the 1930s. Each tank is 5-feet x 7 feet 5-inches x 2-feet 4-inches deep. Here juice was heated with steam to the boiling point to remove impurities or "green scum." Thus purified, the juice flowed via gravity into the custom-built Red Wing evaporator which boiled juice down to syrup using steam pipes laid in the sloping evaporator troughs, with the moisture carried out through the ventilator monitor on the roof. The evaporator could process 50 gallons of syrup per hour, and reportedly was installed used in the 1930s.

Syrup was cooled in a water cooler and then transferred via gravity flow into the three basswood holding tanks in the storage tank room. The syrup was sold in 60 gallon hogsheads, 32 gallon barrels, and 5 and 10 pound pails.

Except for the partially collapsed roof over the southeast corner all structures are in fair to good condition. Some floorboards in the defecation tank room are disintegrating. With the possible exception of the boiler and power transmission belting, all equipment including the steam engine would be operable if cleaned, according to the present owner who was the last person to operate the mill.



Sketch is approximately to scale 1" = 6'

Measured Nov. 19, 1978 by Robert M. Frame III and Susan Queripel.

SEHA SORGHUM (SYRUP) MILL, Janesville (Waseca Co.), vicinity of Elysian (Le Sueur Co.), MN.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

**Note: These changes apply to
Seha Sorghum Syrup Mill in Waseca
County, Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 79003718

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Waseca

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Seha Sorghum Mill

CITY:

VICINITY OF: Elysian

ADDRESS: Co. Hwy. 5

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

**Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer**

JUN 17 1988

Date