NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90000586 **Date Listed:** 04/18/90

CORA F. CRESSEY
Property Name

Lincoln
County

ME
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth A. Savage
Signature of the Keeper

4-18-90
Date of Action

==========

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Level of Significance

The applicable level of significance is national.

This information was confirmed with Jim Delgado, Maritime Historian, National Maritime Initiative, NPS.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cora F. Cressey
other names/site number Five-masted Schooner Hulk, Cora F. Cressey

2. Location

street & number Keene Narrows ☐ not for publication
city, town Bremen ☐ vicinity
state Maine code ME county Lincoln code 15 zip code

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☒ private	☐ building(s)	_____	_____ buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district	_____	_____ sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	1	0 structures
☐ public-Federal	☒ structure	_____	_____ objects
	☐ object	_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

_____ _____
Signature of certifying official Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

_____ _____
Signature of commenting or other official Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☑ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet. — Beth L. George — 4-18-90
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

_____ _____ _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

☐ See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

☐ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CITATIONS IN TEXT.

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Specify repository:

Nicholas Dean, RR 1, Box 242
N. Edgecomb, ME 04556

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .1

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	19	466715	4870000
B			
C			
D			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All that area encompassed within the extreme length and beam of the vessel as it lies partially submerged on the bottom and above the surface.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary incorporates the entire area of the vessel.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nicholas Dean, Historian
organization c/o National Park Service date January 15, 1989
street & number P.O. Box 37127 telephone (202) 343-9528
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20013-7127

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation-Water-Related	Breakwater

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
N/A	foundation N/A walls N/A N/A roof N/A other N/A N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The five-masted schooner Cora F. Cressey is aground but substantially above water on the west shore of Keene Narrows in the town of Bremen, Maine. She lies roughly parallel to the shore, her bow facing north. She is used as a breakwater for the Keene Narrows Lobster Company. The hull of the vessel lies on an even keel and is filled with mud to an undetermined depth.

CORA F. CRESSEY AS BUILT AND OPERATED

Cora F. Cressey is a five-masted schooner, built in 1902 by the Percy and Small yard on the Kennebec River at Bath, Maine. She was launched on April 12, 1902. She is built of wood, and was registered at 2,499 gross and 2,089 net tons. Cora F. Cressey is 273 feet in length, with a breadth of 45.4 feet, and a depth of hold of 27.9 feet. She had two decks and carried a crew of eleven. [1] The large hull, while not diagonally reinforced, does have two horizontal iron "belts" of 5/8- by 9-inch iron, one just below the weather deck, another at the sheer. [2]

Though Cressey had no inboard auxiliary propulsion, she made her maiden voyage on April 15, 1902, with what was then an innovation, "a gasoline-powered launch secured under her stern davits." [3] By 1920 she was "equipped with wireless," another modern innovation. [4]

In large coal schooners such as Cressey, "the bows were moderately sharp with considerable flare, the floors very long and flat, the bilges extremely hard, and the run well formed but short. The ugliness of their "wall sides" was largely overcome by a handsome sheer which was often [as it was on Cressey] accentuated by a flyrail, set upon turned wooden stanchions, which ran unbroken from knightheads to taffrail." [5]

[X] See continuation sheet

Cressey had a relatively short quarterdeck from the aftermost or "spanker" mast aft and a very high topgallant forecastle foreward of the forward deck house. Headroom in the forecastle was just enough to accomodate an 11-foot high boiler for the engine used to raise anchor and hoist sail. [6]

CORA F. CRESSEY'S PRESENT CONDITION

Cora F. Cressey's masts were removed at east Boston, Massachusetts in 1938. She was then towed to Bremen, Maine, and filled with sand to serve as a breakwater. About this time a hole was cut into her starboard side to allow shoreside access to her `tweendecks, then in use as a lobster pound. [7] In the spring of 1988, approximately 40 feet of her stern fell into the cove at the cut.

The bowsprit has fallen; her main deck has largely collapsed, yet her remaining hull largely retains its shape. Though her steam hoisting engine was removed before she left for Maine, some machinery, such as the after capstan and a windlass, survive. Some traces of the wooden rail remain aboard. Other sections of it were removed to the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, Maine, together with other items of her equipment. These include the steering gear, including the tiller and worm; an assortment of cabin panelling, mouldings and combings from the deckhouse: a window slide from the afterhouse, the rack for capstan bars; and at least one turnbuckle and chainplate. [8]

NOTES

1
U.S. Department of Commerce, Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States.... (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920) n.p.

2
Interview with Capt. Douglas Lee, Rockland, Maine, January 1989.

3
William Avery Baker, A Maritime History of Bath, Maine (Bath: Marine Research Society of Bath, 1973), p. 770.

4
Annual List of Merchant Vessels...., 1920, n.p.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

5
Lt. W.J. Lewis Parker, The Great Coal Schooners of New England (Mystic, Connecticut: The Marine Historical Association, 1948) p. 43.

6
Interview with Capt. Douglas Lee, Rockland, Maine, December 11, 1988.

7
Interview with Mrs. Nancy Zahn, Newcastle, Maine, June 30, 1980.

8
Interview with Nathan Lipfert, Librarian, Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, Maine, December 1988.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☒ D NHL CRITERIA 1,4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance-(enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Maritime History	1902-1938	1902
Commerce	1902-1929	
Architecture (Naval)	1902-1938	1902
NHL XII L: Business: Shipping and Transportation		

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: N/A

Architect/Builder: Percy and Small, Bath, Maine

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The 1902 five-masted schooner Cora F. Cressey, still in use as a breakwater for the Keene Narrows Lobster Company in Bremen, Maine, is the best-preserved example of the five-, six-, and on occasion seven-masted schooners that were built on both the east and west coasts of the United States between 1888 and 1920. These huge vessels, many of them nearly 300 feet in length, and a few over 300 feet, were some of the largest wooden hulls ever constructed. They were intended for the coastwise shipping of bulk cargoes, lumber and coal being the most common. A few made longer voyages. No example of a six- or seven-masted schooner survives. The one seven-masted schooner, Thomas W. Lawson, was a steel-hulled vessel in any case and proved to not be a very successful experiment. One other five-masted schooner, Mary F. Barreyy, exists in very deteriorated condition in Georgetown, Maine, while the remains of the burned-out hull of the five-masted schooner Gardiner G. Deering are occasionally visible at Brooksville, Maine. Cora F. Cressey is not only a significant example of an attempt to push wooden technology to its limits, but she is also the last representative of a commerce which was intended, on the east coast, to link southern ports with northern ports on a scale new in the merchant marine of any nation.

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

☒ See continuation sheet

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIVE-MASTED SCHOONER

In 1911 the Encyclopaedia Britannica defined a schooner as

> A vessel rigged with fore and aft sails, properly with two masts but now often with three, four and sometimes more masts; they are much used in the coasting trade and require a smaller crew in proportion to their size than square-rigged vessels. [1]

The origin of the schooner rig and even of the term "schooner" itself are obscure. One of the earliest prints which shows a schooner rig was engraved after the Dutch artist Van de Velde, who died in 1707. It depicts a two-masted vessel with a gaff-rigged sail on each mast. [2] There is a Scottish verb "to scoon," which is defined as "to skim along the water." However, Webster's says that the term is of "origin unknown." [3]

The earliest American schooners were two-masted, some of them undecked, in the 18th century. "One thing certain about the early American schooner, is its rapid appearance in the fishing fleet." [4] As coastwise trade grew, the schooners proliferated. Three-masted schooners appeared around 1800 though the rig did not become widespread until after the Civil War. [5]

Coastwise trade was reserved to American-flag vessels by an Act of Congress in 1789. [6] Schooners carried on much of the coastwise trade:

> Such vessels were handy, economical, easily built of readily accessible materials, perfectly suited to their task, and their number was legion. They were the errand boys, the short-haul freight droghers, and the passenger buses for many a year, and their contribution to coastal community life, especially in New England, was substantial. [7]

Prior to 1870, the coasting schooner was "a small vessel." [8] By the early 1880s, the size increased substantially.

> Originally regisering no more than 40 or 50 tons, the schooner has become...a large vessel, the two-masters ranging from 100 to 200 tons, the three-

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masters from 300 to 750 tons. The popular size now for a three-masted coasting schooner on the Atlantic is about 550 to 600 tons. [9]

Henry Hall wrote the above in 1882 in his landmark Report on the Ship-Building Industry of the United States. Six years later, though the small coasters were, in effect, the pickup trucks of the coastal trade, long-haul carriers were thinking bigger. The first four-masted schooner built specifically as such (a few had been re-rigged from existing vessels) was the 205-foot, 996-ton William L. White, built by Goss, Sawyer and Packard at Bath, Maine, in 1880. [10]

As reported by Hall, William L. White could carry 1,450 tons of anthracite coal, the fuel from southern mines needed for industrial expansion and the homes of the northern states. White, as built, had two advantages. First, "to have fitted her out with three masts would have required such large lower sails that the strain upon the masts would have been destructive, and she was thereupon furnished with four;" second, she required "a crew of only five men before the mast, besides her two mates and captain." [11]

The first five-masted schooner built on the east coast of the United States was Governor Ames, launched at Waldoboro, Maine, on December 1, 1888. An earlier five-masted schooner was built at Toledo, Ohio, in 1881. Ames was approximately 20 percent larger than William L. White; 245 feet in length, 49.6 feet in breadth, 21.2 foot deoth of hold, registering 1,778 gross, and 1597 net tons. As with White, size was a factor in adding yet another mast. "Due to the large size of the vessel it was decided to rig her with five instead of four masts." [12] Governor Ames also incorporated an experiment that was not repeated in later five-masted schooners. "She was the only five-masted schooner ever to be equipped with a centerboard, it being 35 feet long, set off-center and dropping 14 feet." [13]

The trend tioward even larger schooners continued. In 1900, the first six-masted schooner, George W. Wells, one of eleven such vessels to be built, appeared, and in 1902, the steel-hulled seven-master, Thomas W. Lawson, followed. [14] Lawson, however, was never a great success and ended her career in 1907, when she was blown ashore in the Scilly Islands, Great Britain, with great loss of life. [15] The large schooner hull (the four-, five-,

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and six-masted vessels) became "almost standardized except for dimensions,"

> The vessels had a strong sheer and a strongly raking stem rabbet on which was either a plain gammon knee with some carving or a light head fitted with trail boards and, in some cases, with single head rails. The post was nearly vertical and the stern was formed with a short and light counter having a wide elliptical transom. The entrance was sharp convex, and of moderate length; the run was likewise rather short but often well formed and as fine as in many of the clipper ships of the 1850s. These big schooners were sometimes fast sailers under favorable conditions, but were too lightly manned to allow them to be sailed hard: in addition their construction was rarely strong enough for such treatment. [16]

However, economy of operation, not speed, was what brought the large schooners into being. William F. Palmer, owner of a fleet of fiev- and six-masted schooners, is quoted as saying that "It is not the fastest ship which is necessarily the most profitable vessel." [17] On the other hand, at nearly 300 feet in length, the large schooners often developed structural problems in spite of being fitted with large keelsons of hard pine, "built up six or seven feet high." [18]

> The large amount of sheer which characterizes almost all of thse vessels served to make the effect of hogging less apparent, although it was of more practical value in keeping the forecastle and poop dry when deep-loaded with only a few feet of freeboard in the waist. As a result of this structural weakness, all the large schooners leaked badly and were forced to depend heavily on their steam pumps. [19]

For a time the large schooners were, in spite of problems, profitable, but shortly after the turn of the century sail, had began to give way to steam. By the 1920s, ocean freights had fallen. The fall, which continued into 1921, "caused countless sailing vessels, some of which had made but a single voyage, to be laid up indefinitely and then permanently." [20]

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

> Occasionally, during the `20s a New England coal charter still came to the dwindling schooner fleet, but "as the mate of the five-master Nancy, stranded on Nantasket beach a few years ago remarked, "We may take four or we may take twenty days to make Boston from Norfolk. We can't compete with the steamers...." [21]

CONSTRUCTION AND CAREER OF CORA F. CRESSEY

Cora F. Cressey was launched in 1902 from the yard of Percy and Small in Bath, Maine. She was built for their own account. Launched on April 12, Cressey was towed down the Kennebec River on April 15. [22] While this may appear to be a short period between launch and entry into service, schooners like Cressey "were virtually complete when launched" in most cases. [23]

Cressey was typical of the five-masters. The Percy and Small yard was largely self-sufficient, and what was not produced at the yard was manufactured nearby by local artisans.

> Bath and Camden could boast that every bit of equipment including sails, anchors, pumps, donkey engines, capstans and windlasses were made directly in the town. Thus the whole community, directly or indirectly, was deeply involved in the building of each vessel. During the six to eight months they were on the stocks a small army of men found employment in the yards and foundry, and when, at length they put to the sea very often local money sailed with them and local men frequently commanded and officered them. [24]

Three buildings from Cora F. Cressey's period survive at the shipyard site, a component of the Maine Maritime Museum listed in the National Register. In a break from the tradition described above, her first captain was not a Bath area native, but Captain W.F. Harding of Wollaston, Massachusetts. [25]

As with so many other coasting schooners, details of Cressey's career are somewhat sketchy. With her high bow, "probably the highest bows of any schooner on the coast," the windage it created made her "hard to handle when light, being on the cranky side." [26] This high bow reportedly enabled her to ride out the so-called "Wyoming gale" of March 1924, when that six-master and

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

another schooner were lost near Pollock Rip Lightship on Nantucket Sound, Massachusetts. [27] One aspect of the working life of Cressey and large schooners like her, of which she remains the most visible symbol, is the appalling conditions under which these vessels received their cargo of coal, generally at the Newport News terminal of the Chesapeake and Ohio Company, inthe early 20th century "the largest shippingpoint for the New England market." [28]

> Loading was done by gravity; "the cars being brought from a low grade, pushed up the incline by a locomotive to the crest of the grade, where they are left by the locomotive, and then moved by hand, with the assistance of gravity, to the end of the pier and unloaded while in transit...." Below in the confined space of the hold gangs of colored trimmers toiled ceaslessly in the stifling darkness, shovelling the coal out from under the hatchways to the sides of a vessel until they were bent double under the deck beams. For the services of these trimmers the schooners paid seven or eight cents per ton and a small sum of beer money to stimulate their efforts. [29]

In 1925 Cressey was sold for $3,610, an indication of the continuing maritime depression. [30] Her last voyage under sail was in 1928. [31] In 1929 she was again sold, this time to become a floating nightclub as "Levaggi's Showboat" in Boston, Massachusetts. [32]

In 1938, after lying idle for sometime, she was towed to East Boston where the masts were removed. Learning that Cressey was available for the asking, Bernard T. "Bunny" Zahn of Bremen, Maine, hired a tugboat and had her towed to his lobster pound, where she served as pound office and breakwater. Lack of help during World War II shut down Zahn's operation temporarily. [33] At the beginning of 1989, while Cora F. Cressey continues to serve as a breakwater, her condition becomes increasingly precarious.

NOTES

1
Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 11th edition. (New York: Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 1911) Vol. XXIV, p. 372.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

2
E.P. Morris, The Fore-and-Aft Rig in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927) p. 178.

3
Eric Partridge, Origins (New York: Greenwich House, 1983) p. 594; also see Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam & Co., 1981) p. 2031.

4
William Avery Baker, Schooner Design and Construction; Symposium on the American Schooner (Bath, Maine: Bath Marine Museum, 1973) p. 3.

5
Ibid., pp. 8-9.

6
Charles S. Morgan, "New England Coasting Schooners," in E.W. Smith, ed. Workaday Schooners (Camden: International Marine Publishing, 1975) p. 156.

7
Ibid.

8
Lt. W.J. Lewis Parker, The Great Coal Schooners of New England (Mystic, Connecticut: The Marine Historical Association, 1948) p. 14.

9
Henry Hall, Report on the Ship-Building Industry of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882) p. 94.

10
Ibid., p. 94.

11
Ibid., p. 94.

12
Paul C. Morris, American Sailing Coasters of the North Atlantic (New York: Bonanza Books, 1979) p. 35.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

13
Ibid.

14
Ibid., p. 202.

15
Ibid., p. 196.

16
Howard I. Chapelle, The National Watercraft Collection (Washington, D.C.: Museum of History and Technology of the United States National Museum, Government Printing Office, 1960) p. 42.

17
Parker, op.cit., p. 49.

18
Ibid., p. 41.

19
Ibid.

20
Ibid., p. 101.

21
Ibid.

22
William A. Baker, A Maritime History of Bath, Maine and the Kennebec River Region (Bath: Marine Research Society of Bath, 1973), p. 770.

23
Parker, op.cit., p. 49.

24
Ibid.

25
Baker, op.cit., p. 770.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

26
Giles M.S. Tod, The Last Sail Down East (Barre, Massachusetts: Barre Publishers, 1965) pp. 259-260, 262.

27
Morris, op.cit., p. 197; and Tod, op.cit., p. 253.

28
Parker, op.cit., p. 53.

29
Ibid., p. 54.

30
Tod, op.cit., p. 253.

31
Ibid., p. 254.

32
Interview with Mrs. Nancy Zahn, Newcastle, Maine, June 30, 1980.

33
Ibid.