### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instrictions RESQUECES DIVISION National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item NATIONAL "FARKIS Epoyage at a box of by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, onto: "NA" for "not applicable." For functions architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place admitted

OMB No. 10024-0018

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districts. See ristrictions resources from the instructions. Place additional

	perty			
storic name	A. J. M	eerwald		
her names/site	numberClyde A	. Phillips		
Location				
eet & number	Maurice River	(undergoing restoration	n at 22 Miller Ave.	on
y or town	Bivalve, Comme	rcial Township	□ vicinity	
te <u>New Jer</u>			and code 011 zip code 08349	<del>)</del>
State/Federal	Agency Certification			
Signature of constant State of Federal	does not meet the National  I statewide locally continued by the commissioner for agency and bureau	Register criteria. I recommend that thi See continuation sheet for additional (James F. Hall)	(07/17/95)	
Signature of ce	ertifying official/Title	Date		
State or Federa	al agency and bureau	Λ		
reby certify that the	National Register. continuation sheet. igible for the	Signature dythe K	the	

## <u>Cumberland Co., New Jersey</u> County and State

5. Classification						
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)				
☑ private ☐ public-local ☐ public-State	☐ building(s) ☐ district ☐ site		Noncontributing			
☐ public-Federal	⊠ structure □ object					
		1	0	objects		
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part	roperty listing of a multiple property listing.)		ntributing resources pre			
N/A			0			
6. Function or Use						
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Function (Enter categories from				
Transportation	_	Work in prog	ress			
Sub: Water rel	Lated	Transportation				
		Sub: W	ater related			
Agriculture/Subsiste	ence	Education				
Sub: Fishing		Sub: School				
	to PUFFACION TO THE PURPLE OF	Recreation a	nd Culture			
AND ADDROGRAM OF THE PROPERTY	The transition of the second o	Sub: M	useum			
7. Description						
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)			instructions) White Oak bone)Long leaf yel			
Other: Delaware Bay	y oyster schooner		ks & frames) White			
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	roof(Deck	) White cedar			
		other Wood				

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
ioi National negister listing.)	Maritime History
🛚 A Property is associated with events that have made	
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	- Commerce
•	- Architecture
☐ <b>B</b> Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
▼ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics	
of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses	
high artistic values, or represents a significant and	
distinguishable entity whose components lack	Period of Significance
individual distinction.	1928-1942
D. D. Donner Allebra and deliberation of a Physical Activities	
☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	
Criteria Considerations N/A	Significant Dates
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	•
Proposity is:	N/A
Property is:	
☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for	
religious purposes.	
_	Significant Person
☐ <b>B</b> removed from its original location.	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
☐ <b>C</b> a birthplace or grave.	N/A
a bittiplace of grave.	Cultural Affiliation
□ <b>D</b> a cemetery.	
	N/A
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
☐ <b>F</b> a commemorative property.	
```	A making an / David and
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance	Architect/Builder
within the past 50 years.	Stowman, Charles H. & Sons
Narrative Statement of Significance	
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Bibilography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on or	ne or more continuation sheets.)
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individual listing (36	☐ State Historic Preservation Office
CFR 67) has been requested	☐ Other State agency
previously listed in the National Register	☐ Federal agency
previously determined eligible by the National	☐ Local government
Register	☐ University
<ul> <li>☐ designated a National Historic Landmark</li> <li>☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey</li> </ul>	X Other Name of repository:
#	
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering	<u>Schooner Center, Delaware Bay Sch</u> ooner Project
Record #	e de la companya de

10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property <u>less than 1 acre</u>	Port Norris Quad
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1 1 8 4 9 7 3 6 0 4 3 4 2 6 2 0 Northing 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3 Zone Easting Northing 4 See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Meghan E. Wren, Executive Director	
organization Delaware Bay Schooner Project	date11/30/94
street & number P.O. Box 57	telephone (609) 785-2060
city or townDorchester	state NJ zip code 08316
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the pro	perty's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having	large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the pro-	perty.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name <u>Delaware Bay Schooner Project</u>	
street & number P.O. Box 57	telephone (609) 785-2060
city or townDorchester	state NJ zip code 08316

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

#### **Summary**

The CLYDE A. PHILLIPS/A.J. MEERWALD, registered number 227932, was built in 1928 as a 'new style' Delaware Bay or 'Jersey' oyster schooner. The schooner saw several career and rig changes before her eventual retirement in 1980. She has been in the possession of the nonprofit preservation organization, the Delaware Bay Schooner Project since 1989 and on the bank of the Maurice River for restoration since early 1992.

#### General Characteristics and Principal Dimensions

The A. J. Meerwald was launched on September 7, 1928 by Charles H. Stowman & Sons at Dorchester, New Jersey. The official Builder's Certificate submitted to the Department of Commerce at that time describes her as having a single deck and two masts, and is designated as an "oil screw" vessel, indicating that she was fitted with an auxiliary diesel engine. She was built a wooden, centerboard schooner with low freeboard and a raked transom stern designed for oyster dredging under sail and power. She had and still has minimal draft and considerable beam and a flush deck from stem to stern. Her original sail rig, as evidenced in photographs taken during her first oystering season in 1929, typified the new style schooners; bald-headed (without topmasts), gaff rigged, with a large 'gloriana peaked' mainsail, a smaller foresail and a spike bowsprit supporting a single large club staysail. (Photographs 1-3).

The schooner is registered as 76.1' between perpendiculars, 22.1' beam, 6.3' depth of hold, 46 net tons and 57 gross tons. She measures 85' on deck and will be 115 overall when fully rigged. Her construction was and remains, 'oak on oak', oak planks laid on oak frames as was the tradition in Dorchester built vessels. She has relatively light scantlings, no knees and no horntimber; also characteristic of Dorchester schooners.

#### **Specific Features**

Hull - (Photograph 4). The keel is an 8" x 8" long leaf yellow pine structure. The frames are double sawn white oak on 24" centers; there are 38 frames from stem to transom. Each frame is made up of as many as thirteen "futtocks", individual timbers that are fastened together with iron drifts. The frames lay on the keel and under the keelson, " 8 x 9-1/2" long leaf yellow pine, which runs from the forward end of the keel aft to the sternpost (Photograph 6). The stem is the same dimension as the keel and is backed by an apron of varying dimensions - up to 18" deep - which serves somewhat like a knee (Photograph 5). The interior of the hull is ceiled with yellow pine planking that extends from the stem to the rudder post, and from the clamps to the keelson. Hull planking is white oak, both above and below the waterline. Thickness ranges from 1-3/4" to 1-7/8". Fastenings throughout are iron or steel drifts, clench bolts, and square boat nails. The bed log and centerboard slot are set to starboard of the centerline. The bed log (pine, 12" molded x 8" sided) is 28' long The centerboard slot is 18' long and is centered fore and aft in the bed log.

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Deck - The deck is planked with 1-3/4" cedar planking in widths varying up to 6". A margin plank, or covering board, a single width plank that is notched out and fitted over the top timbers, runs the length of the deck. The deck is supported by 5-1/2" x 6" pine deck beams that rest on the clamps.

Accommodations/Interior Spaces - The forecastle originally provided berthing for deck hands. It contains eight berths: two upper and lower berths, port and starboard. The forecastle is fitted out in simple joinerwork, with some tongue-and-groove sheathing below the berths (Photograph 7).

There are four berths in the aft cabin, two on each side under the deck. A low curved bench seat extends around the aft end of the cabin and inboard of the berths. (Photograph 9). A semi-curved access ladder rests on the port aft corner of the bench and rises to the companionway at the aft end of the cabin trunk. (Photograph 8). The cabin trunk is 20' fore and aft, 10' feet wide, and 32" tall.

Traditional Gear - The schooner was outfitted with a pair of iron davits over the stern with a yawl boat in them. The oystering dredging gear forward of the main mast consisted of a "winder", or winch, for hauling the dredges, and an adjacent box that housed a small gasoline engine that powered the winder. There were two anchors and an anchor windlass mounted on the sampson post.

Decorative Elements - During her period of significance the A. J. MEERWALD was adorned with two round balls, painted in gold leaf - one atop each of her masts. Her traditional coat of white hull-paint was interrupted by three stripes; yellow, red and green, highlighting her sweeping sheerline.

#### **Chronology of Use and Alterations**

The configuration of the vessel changed during five distinct periods, as she was altered to better suit the particular requirements of each trade. The following is a chronological accounting of the construction of the vessel and the physical changes she has undergone since her launching.

1928-42: Sailing in the Oystering Trade - The A.J. MEERWALD went into service as a sailing auxiliary oyster dredge after her launching in 1928. As with many other auxiliary oyster schooners operating during the 1920's and 1930's, the A.J. MEERWALD was seasonally altered to operate solely as a motor vessel (oystermen were legally required to be under sail only when working the oyster seed beds in the upper Delaware Bay). A photograph of the vessel taken in 1931 shows her with gaffs and booms unshipped, and a removable pilothouse mounted on the cabin trunk. During the seasonal refit to resume sailing, the pilothouse would be sent ashore and the rig outfitted. The propeller would be removed and the propeller aperture sealed to reduce drag on the hull. During this period the vessel remained structurally unaltered.

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1942-47: Service During WWII - In June of 1942, the A.J. MEERWALD was commandeered by the Maritime Commission under the War Powers Act. She was turned over to the U.S. Coast Guard, who outfitted her as a fireboat. The vessel underwent a dramatic change at this time; most of her sailing rig was removed. Pumps and a large sea suction were installed to supply sea water for fire fighting. She served as a fireboat on the Delaware River for approximately four years beginning in 1942.

1947-59: Postwar Oystering - In January 1947, the A.J. MEERWALD was returned to the Meerwald family. Eight months later, they sold the vessel to Clyde A. Phillips who placed her back in service as an oyster dredge operating under power alone. Major alterations made at this time included removal of fire fighting equipment, reconstruction of the wood bulwarks forward of the trunk cabin, replacement of the original Standard main engine with a Gray Marine 6-71, and installation of oyster dredging equipment. The "winder" installed for oyster dredging differed from that used prior to the War; it consisted of a power takeoff mounted forward of the engine. From the power takeoff, drive chains led forward to sheaves at the forward end of the centerboard trunk and thence up to the winding gear on deck. It was at this time (1947) that the vessel's name was changed to CLYDE A. PHILLIPS.

In 1949, a permanent pilothouse was installed on top of the cabin trunk (this pilothouse remained with the vessel through the end of her working career). At about the same time, the Gray Marine 6-71 main engine was replaced with a larger GM 6-110. Installation of the larger engine required the creation of a hatch in the deck over the engine compartment forward of the cabin trunk.

1959-79: Operation in the Clamming Trade - In 1959, ownership of the CLYDE A. PHILLIPS passed to Cornelius (Nicky) Campbell who outfitted her for surf clamming. From this date to her final retirement in the late 1970's, she operated primarily as a clam dredge, undergoing numerous modifications along the way. Major re-outfitting during this period included: a new engine, a steel mast with two steel booms and an aft towing mast, metal sheathing on much of the deck, steel bulwarks on the bow and continuing on the starboard quarter to the trunk cabin, a large clam pump with sea suctions and piping with an additional engine to power it.

By the late 1970's (circa 1977), the stern had become so deteriorated that it fell off while the vessel was underway. The CLYDE A. PHILLIPS was immediately hauled out and her stern rebuilt, though in an altered configuration -- the transom was terminated at the deck level rather than extending aft to the level of the cap rail as in the original arrangement. A vertical steel bulwarks was installed, giving the stern a squared off appearance. Operation of the CLYDE A. PHILLIPS tapered off in the late 1970's, with only occasional trips being made in order to keep the vessel's license current.

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Recent Stabilization Efforts - She was inactive through the 1980's and remained idle without alterations or maintenance until she was acquired by the Delaware Bay Schooner Project with the intention of restoring the vessel to her original sailing configuration. The schooner was in dire need of stabilization - she sank twice at her berth due to the lack of watertight integrity of her hull. In the autumn of 1988 she was hauled out and caulked. Next, to alleviate the stress caused by the many tons of steel encompassed in it, her surf clam rig was removed after being deemed non-significant. By January 1990 the pilot house (added in 1949) and the remainder of the surf clam equipment was removed. Buttressing and shoring implemented during the winter of 1990 relieved some of the structural distress. She was also hauled out at this time so that her hull could again be repaired, caulked, and painted to prevent her from sinking again. Stabilization work, mainly efforts to waterproof and ventilate the vessel, was largely completed in the summer of 1990.

#### **Historic Integrity**

The A. J. MEERWALD/CLYDE A. PHILLIPS has maintained a high degree of integrity particularly as related to her period of significance. The quality of this integrity will be heightened upon the completion of the restoration at which time the schooner will be re-fitted with her traditional oystering gear.

Location - The A.J. MEERWALD/CLYDE A. PHILLIPS is located in Bivalve, New Jersey, within a mile of the shipyard where she was built in 1928, within site of the wharf where she worked as an oysterboat and a few miles upriver from the Delaware Bay where she worked for the majority of her career. Her future winter berth will be at the very wharf that was the centralized base of operations for the entire Delaware Bay oyster industry.

Design - A.J. MEERWALD maintains many of the prominent features of her historic type: shallow draft, long overhanging bow and stern, and considerable beam for her length. These are design features that were dictated by the particular requirements of the oystering trade in Delaware Bay. Her hull retains integrity of form and remains essentially as-built. The large forecastle and main cabin, needed to accommodate the large crews required for oystering under sail, are characteristic features that remain intact. Although the rig, auxiliary machinery, and oystering equipment have been removed, the mast steps, engine beds, and machinery foundations remain and are in their original locations.

Setting - The schooner is currently hauled for restoration and is scheduled to be launched in late spring of 1995. Upon the completion of the restoration she will be launched into a new career - education - that will not only call for her to be maintained in the water, but also her setting will be as authentic as can be when she sails on the Maurice River and Delaware Bay.

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Materials/Workmanship - Approximately 85% of the A.J. MEERWALD's original fabric was extant at the beginning of her restoration, and all repairs/replacements are consistent with the original fabric in terms of materials, workmanship, fastenings, and construction methods. Most of the repairs took place at Dorchester Shipyard, formerly Charles H. Stowman & Sons Shipyard, were she was launched in 1928. Any replacement of fabric was done in-kind; many times by the same men who were involved with the original construction. The methods of workmanship have been passed along year after year through the continued maintenance of the oyster fleet at Dorchester and other local shipyards where she was worked on. Any replacement of wood was done with in-kind species. Much of the wood used was milled by the sawmills that supplied the shipyards in the 1920s, so not only was the wood replaced in-kind, but quite possibly it was replaced by wood cut from the very stand the original member was cut from. These same criteria are driving the current restoration and although the percentage of original fabric will be lessened upon its completion, nothing will be lost in integrity of workmanship or materials.

Feeling - Inside the vessel; in the aft cabin, the engine room, the main hold and in the forecastle, a strong feeling of historic integrity exists. The accommodations have retained much of their furniture, detailing and structure including bunks, settee, wainscoting, molding, companionways, windows, storage lockers, cabinets, bulkheads and general layout. With the deck cleared of the metal surf-clamming equipment and the non-authentic pilot house removed, the feeling of a Jersey oyster schooner can once again be experienced on deck. Upon completion of the restoration, the feeling will be very nearly duplicated to perfection.

Association - The Maurice River served as the hub of the oyster industry, harboring most of the fleet, the shipping sheds, the packing and shucking houses and numerous peripheral and supporting industries. This same river supported a major shipbuilding industry: there were at least seven shippards on the River, not including small, back yard operations associated with the Delaware Bay oyster and shipbuilding industries from which she derives her historical significance.

#### **Historic Basis for Restoration**

In 1988 the A. J. MEERWALD/CLYDE A. PHILLIPS had been all but abandoned after being deemed obsolete by the surf clam industry. The Delaware Bay Schooner Project was then founded to take on her preservation in order to teach about the maritime heritage and sensitive ecology of the Delaware Bay region. The preservation of the schooner was carefully planned utilizing historic research, careful analysis of existing conditions, and an assessment of the availability of materials and skilled labor. It was determined that the appropriate preservation treatment was restoration. The decision to restore the vessel to her original configuration as a sailing oyster schooner (1928-42), was based on the following considerations:

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- o The sailing period represents the usage that influenced the vessel's particular design and construction -- she is the evolutionary product of the sailing oyster trade. The sailing period is therefore the vessel's period of greatest historical significance;
- o The sailing period of Delaware Bay oystering is not presently represented through preservation or restoration of historic vessel types (although a handful of former Delaware Bay schooners have been rebuilt, none can be considered historic restorations);
- o As a sailing vessel, she will provide a more versatile vehicle for interpretive/educational programs.

#### **Restoration Method and Intent**

The Delaware Bay Schooner Project initiated restoration efforts in 1988 beginning with stabilization and site preparation by a volunteer workforce. In 1994, funded by grassroots support, the New Jersey Historic Trust and the New Jersey Department of Transportation, a professional crew began the 18 month restoration process. The Delaware Bay Schooner Project will reinstate her name as the A.J. MEERWALD to coincide with her launching in 1995.

Enough of the original structure remains to allow an accurate restoration to her original configuration as a sailing auxiliary oyster schooner. The planned treatment of the A.J. MEERWALD will seek to enhance the historic integrity of the vessel by preserving, restoring, or recreating elements that contribute to her historical significance as a Delaware Bay oyster schooner. These elements include existing fabric and features that are original to the vessel, and missing features that are known to be characteristic of the vessel or her type.

Restoration of the hull structure will involve a combination of preservation and in-kind replacement. Fabric that retains structural integrity will be preserved through the use of rot treatments and wood consolidating materials. Fabric that has lost structural integrity due to damage or decay will be replaced in kind. The materials and methods used in the original construction of the hull are clearly evident in the existing structure.

In-kind replacement will be based on evidence of the species and grade of wood, the nominal dimension of timbers, the design and arrangement of joints, including the shift of butts in planking and other longitudinal members; the size, type, quantity, and location of fastenings (spikes, drifts, etc.); the visual appearance of fabric, including the grade of surface preparation and type of finish coatings. The goal of hull restoration will be to restore strength and watertight integrity in a manner that will preserve the hull's original form and method of construction. All work will follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation.

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#### **Summary of Condition**

At the beginning of the restoration, the vessel was basically a bare hull; rig, machinery, and equipment had been removed. It was found to have retained its general shape, but showed measurable distortion of the sheer line (hogging) and variation in the alignment of the stem and sternpost (twist) as well as some racking and loss of deadrise. The initial step in the structural restoration was the elimination of these various forms of deformation so as not to become permanently "built in" as structural work progresses. The deformations were primarily the result of stresses imposed by the hard service the vessel was subjected to and the progressive weakening of the hull due to decay.

Hull - The major components of the backbone including the keel, keelson, centerboard bedlog, and deadwood were found to be largely salvageable. The stem and apron were both replaced - in part due to the fact that they were recent replacements and left the scarfing in a less than desirable pattern.

The rest of the hull. including framing, planking and ceiling has been and will continue to undergo sequential restoration following the aforementioned criteria and methodology. The centerboard and centerboard trunk have long since been removed from the vessel. Both will have to be entirely reconstructed. The existing bed log, the foundation of the trunk, serves as a reference for the length, width, and original position of the trunk. Construction of the trunk will be based on physical evidence from other oyster schooners that retain all or portions of their centerboard trunks. To restore the vessel to her original configuration, the transom would need to be extended aft to meet the line of the bulwark cap rail.

Deck and Deck Structures - The deck will undergo a sequential rebuilding similar to that of the hull, with each deck beam being removed and either repaired or replaced. The majority of the existing deck beams and planking will have to be replaced. The starboard quarter section of the bulwarks is original and provides the structural details to restore the entire bulwarks.

Interior Spaces - The forecastle and aft cabin have remained essentially unaltered. These compartments will be restored as found and will be interpreted to the public. They have been thoroughly documented with photographs and scale drawings, the woodwork has been labeled and removed to protected storage; it will be reinstalled after completion of hull repairs. The cabin trunk will be removed to renew the sill timbers underneath. The trunk will then be rebuilt on the new sills, using salvageable portions of the original.

The original arrangement of the hold is believed to have remained essentially empty, with exception of ballast or stores during the sailing period. Portions of the hold will be utilized for the gear and equipment required for an operational sailing program. This compartment is not planned as a public access space.

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A General Motors 6-71 diesel will be installed at the location of the original engine beds (the vessel had this type of engine at two different times in its career). The mechanical and electrical systems will be non-historic additions that are necessary for the maintenance and safe operation of the vessel. In general, non-historic additions will be limited to the non-significant spaces below deck that are not planned for public access and interpretation, primarily the hold and engine room. The engine compartment will not generally be open for public viewing.

The Rig - The A.J. MEERWALD's schooner rig will be a complete replication of her original rig. The location of the masts has been established from physical evidence. The overall rigging plan, including dimensions of spars and sails, has been developed from historic photographs. The materials used in the reconstruction of the rig will be those traditionally used in NJ oyster schooners.

Traditional Gear - All traditional gear including oyster dredging gear, yawl boat, anchors and windlass will be salvaged from local sources or reconstructed to original specifications

Decorative Elements - All Decorative elements will be duplicated as the final step of the restoration.

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A.J. MEERWALD's significance can be ascribed to two major themes. Under National Register Criteria A., the schooner's involvement in New Jersey's oyster industry allowed her to contribute to national maritime history trends and South Jersey's regional economy as well as its way of life. Secondly, under Criteria C., the A.J. MEERWALD is a significant representative of a 'new style' Jersey oyster schooner, built at the most productive shipyard in the nationally important shipbuilding node of the Maurice River/Delaware Bay region.

#### Justification of Significance under National Register Criteria A.

In the southern part of New Jersey, on the shores of the Maurice River, is located the largest oyster-producing region entirely in the jurisdiction of any single state in the union. In fact, we may consider that New Jersey leads the world in oyster production because the yield of oysters in other countries is negligible compared to that of the United States. Both in number of pounds of meats and in total value of the product, New Jersey far exceeds any other State. The total value of the industry is more that of the next two highest competing States combined.

Earle B. Perkins, Ph. D. -1931 New Jersey Oyster Investigation Laboratory

This excerpt from the paper "The Story of an Oyster" sets the tone for describing the magnitude of the industry of which the A.J. MEERWALD was a product. The heyday of New Jersey's oyster industry defined the bayshore region of New Jersey; it was its economic foundation and a major influence on its development and way of life through the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The impetus behind many of the major events in the history of this vessel, including original construction, rig alterations and shifts in career can be most clearly understood by plotting the ups and downs of the Delaware Bay oyster industry.

Oysters were harvested by the Lenape Indians as well as the first settlers of the Delaware Bay area by hand from the shallows and at the mouths of the tributaries from small open boats using rakes and oyster tongs. In the mid 1800's the oyster dredge - a straight rake trailing a chain basket - was introduced to America from Europe. This called for more powerful vessels to haul the dredge across the bottom. Tonging continued inshore but dredgeboats grew in number in the deeper areas of the bay where the oysters grew in vast beds. The early dredgeboats, sloops and small schooners, carried their catch to market in Philadelphia, working from the tributaries along the bayshore.

The introduction of the oyster dredge, though decidedly a factor in the ability of the oystermen to increase their catch, was not the primary impetus for the efficiency and eventual success of the Delaware Bay oyster industry - this was provided by the railroads. In the 1830's the soon to be bustling oyster town of Port Norris had a total of eight dwellings. Its principle function was the

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shipping of cordwood and lumber. Following the construction of railroad lines to the mouth of the Maurice River in Bivalve (Port Norris' waterfront section) in the 1870's and 1880's Port Norris' population jumped to 885 and just twenty years later it was up to 1800. Bivalve quickly supplanted Philadelphia as the shipping point for Delaware Bay oysters. Most of the vessels traditionally harvesting oysters from various tributaries along the bayshore started using Bivalve as their homeport - at least during the harvest season.

There was also a railroad line on the opposite bank of the river which spawned a town referred to simply as Maurice River, its rails led to the Baltimore market. The yield of the two shipping sites, collectively referred to as the Maurice River Cove Oyster Industry, was sustained at 80 train cars per day for as many as three months out of the year during the peak of the industry.

A series of shipping sheds, built by the railroad company and leased by individual oystermen ('Planters and Packers') served to industrialize Maurice River Cove oystering. Everything needed to efficiently run the industry was housed in these segmented sheds along the Bivalve and Maurice River wharves. Included in the buildings were chandleries, meat markets, a post office, equipment dealers, living quarters and office space.

During the early twentieth century, oystering supported both the local and regional economies. The peak of New Jersey's oyster industry in the Maurice River Cove was in the late 1920's and the first years of the 1930's, before the depression slowed it down considerably. In 1929, as cited in "An Industrial and Agricultural Review of Cumberland County New Jersey" published by the Bridgeton Evening News, annual sales were \$6,000,000; invested capital was \$15,000,000; and 4,500 people were employed for the Bay season with a weekly payroll of \$112,000. Local folklore has it that through the prosperity of the oyster industry, there were more millionaires per square mile in Port Norris than any other place in New Jersey.

It may be difficult in the 1990's to appreciate the demand for oysters that allowed the industry to reach such heights. At the turn of the century the oyster was the United State's chief fishery product and the most extensively eaten of all shellfish; it was treated more as a staple than a delicacy. A French visitor to Philadelphia wrote in 1798:

Americans have almost a passion for oysters, which they eat at all hours, even in their own liquor, and are sold by dozens or hundreds up to ten o'clock at night in the streets, where they are peddled on barrows to the accompaniment of mournful cries.

Quoted by Daniel J. O'Conner - 1987 A Brief Overview of the History and Present Status of the Delaware Bay Oyster Industry

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NJ Cumberland Co.
A.J Meerwald, schooner

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Section number		Page	3015

Augustus J. Meerwald contracted the A.J.MEERWALD to be built in 1928 - a new, bigger, better schooner to add to his family's fleet of two - the booming industry tempted many mid-sized oyster companies to invest major capital in the hopes of joining the ranks of the fabled Port Norris millionaires. The Meerwald family's fleet worked out of a shipping shed and wharf in Maurice River during the oyster season and laid up during the off season in Dennis Creek. As a living artifact, the schooner documents the wealth of the oyster industry in the late twenties; unfortunately for the Meerwald family's aspirations, her career documents the economic health of the industry, and that of the country, in the mid-thirties. She lay idle several years through the depression and, like much of the nation's labor force, was put back to work during the war.

NOTE: The MEERWALD's service as a fireboat may be of secondary significance although, to date, scant information is available. Due to the incompatibility of the deck structures and outfitting during this era with those of her period of primary significance, this era will be interpreted through an exhibit rather than with the vessel itself.

At the end of World War II the schooner was returned to the Meerwalds who had since left the oyster business to move into chicken farming. Clyde Phillips purchased the schooner, refitted her, renamed her and put her back into oystering - without sails. Wartime had left the oystermen with limited crews and they had successfully lobbied for permission to oyster under power.

The industry reached a lesser peak in the early 1950's and flourished until, in 1957, it was hit by an epidemic disease known as MSX (Multi-nucleated Sphere - unknown). Infected oysters would become emaciated and would die within a few weeks of exposure. Between 1957 and 1959 an estimated 90-95% of the marketable oysters in the lower bay died, and 50% upbay. This resulted in a 97% drop in production in only a few years (ref. Interview - Dr. Harold Haskin, Rutgers University).

The CLYDE A. PHILLIPS again left the industry in its period of decline, this time she was purchased by an entrepreneurial captain/investor who was pioneering a new fishery - surf clamming. She labored as a surf clammer until her old wooden hull could no longer compete with the new steel hulled surf clammers designed specifically for that industry. She was retired and faced an uncertain future at the time of her acquisition by her present owners.

Currently, the Jersey oyster schooner is a strong thread in the fabric of South Jersey's history and way of life. The harvesting and marketing of oysters has long been an inherited tradition for many of the people of the Delaware Bay Region. Most of the families involved in oystering pass the business from generation to generation. The vessels themselves take on a role of investment, provider, estate and almost family member or local character - they permeate the very culture of the region.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NJ Cumberland Co. A.J Meerwald, schooner

Section number 8 Page 4of 5

The many schooners around the Delaware Bay oystering community of Port Norris are not all on the water and in the boatyards. They are in the homes, miniaturized or sketched by local artists. They are in journals and local histories written by residents. They are in the chronicles of daily life, gossip and narrative. One of them even sails on the door of the Port Norris Fire engine, a metonym for the community.

Rita Zorn Moonsammy - 1987 Smart Boats, Able Captains: The Schooner as a Metaphor

As most vessels that span several generations in the same community develop a folklore and 'alumni' of owners, captains, and crew, the A. J. MEERWALD/CLYDE A. PHILLIPS's longevity has given her local notoriety. Her restoration has elevated her to folkhero status. The pride and heritage of the oyster industry and maritime legacy embodied in this schooner is now celebrated by the community and region through her public restoration. Ironically, the act of preservation itself has added to her significance as a contributor to a maritime theme, emboldening her individual character and elevating her life history to a level of importance surpassing that of her sister ships that either quietly succumbed to the elements along the Maurice River bank, left the region to seek their fortune in alternate trades or steadfastly hold out for the oyster industry to come back to life.

#### Justification of Significance under National Register Criteria C.

The A.J.MEERWALD/CLYDE A. PHILLIPS is a prime representative of a nationally, regionally and locally significant vessel type.

#### **National Significance of Vessel Type**

The schooner developed on the East Coast of the United States based on European prototypes that were introduced to the continent before the American Revolution. It was the third step in an evolution of inshore workboats from shallop to sloop and finally to schooner. The schooner was generally larger than either of its forerunners, and quickly became ubiquitous in rivers, bays, and coastal waters, especially along the East Coast, because of its versatile rig. The schooner, by definition, has sails that set fore and aft rather than thwartships like the older square riggers. This type of rigging enables schooners to "sail closer to the wind," making them more maneuverable, just right for moving in and out of tight harbors.

This maneuverability and the relatively small crew necessary to operate the schooner, as compared to the oceangoing square rigger, made it particularly suited to coastal fisheries and commerce. These attributes, coupled with its adaptability to regional needs led the schooner to become the most important American merchant vessel type. Well into the twentieth-century, they were the lifeline of American industry. The remarkably long existence of the schooner rig demonstrates the efficiency with which it met economic and natural requirements.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NJ Cumberland Co. A.J Meerwald, schooner

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#### Regional Significance of Vessel Type

The two-masted fishing schooner was a widely prolific vessel type from the eighteenth through the early-twentieth century. Thousands of these vessels were built on the Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf coasts as well as in the Great Lakes. Oystering was a major subset of the American fishing schooner with regional variations produced in each region supporting a major oyster fishery including Long Island Sound, Chesapeake Bay and, most notable in terms of number of vessels, Delaware Bay.

Jersey oyster schooners, or Delaware Bay oyster schooners, are the distinct vessels that evolved specifically to meet the needs of Delaware Bay's oyster fishery. These schooners developed in two stages, the earlier type, now referred to as 'old style', was considerably smaller and had a taller, more complicated sail configuration. The A<sub>x</sub>J MEERWALD is a representative of the later Jersey schooners, most of which were built in the 1920's, called 'new style' or 'new boats'.

These 'new boats' were characterized by their comparatively large size, spoon bow (replacing the earlier clipper bow), and their 'pole rig' - lacking the topmast of the 'old style' schooners. They retained several of the features of the old style schooners that had proven successful in Delaware Bay: a centerboard and shallow depth of hold for navigating the many shoals of the Bay, and a broad beam for carrying large deckloads of oysters.

Her characteristic design features - spoon bow, shallow draft, centerboard, large sail area on short (bald) rig, and relatively large size (75'-100') - were evolved over hundreds of years for optimum advantage in the prevailing conditions on Delaware Bay. Approximately 35 similar vessels were constructed from the early 1920's until 1932, physically documenting the success of the Delaware Bay oyster industry. The fleet of oyster vessels, (sloops, 'old style' and 'new style' schooners, nonnative bug-eyes, skipjacks, and others), numbered in the hundreds over a span of nearly a century. The peak years saw over five hundred vessels licensed in New Jersey to oyster on Delaware Bay.

#### Local Significance of Vessel Type

The A. J. Meerwald was one of 109 vessels built at Charles H. Stowman & Sons Shipyard, in Dorchester, New Jersey, in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Considered to be the most productive shipyard on the Maurice River and New Jersey's Delaware Bay region, the yard is still operational today as Dorchester Industries. As a representative of the work done by Stowman Shipyard, she embodies the careful craftsmanship, quality of material, and integrity of design known as still recognized by the people in the trade as 'Dorchester built'.

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NJ Cumberland Co. A.J Meerwald, schooner

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Smithsonian Maritime Collection

South St Seaport Museum Library

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Yarnell Collection

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A.J Meerwald, schooner

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#### Interviews:

Bill Arnold (crew member 1970s), taped interview with Meghan E. Wren, 27

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NJ Cumberland Co.

A.J Meerwald, schooner

Section number Bb. Page 4.55

Cornelius Campbell (owner 1959-1965), taped interview with Meghan E. Wren and Donald E. Birkholz, Jr., 18 Sept 1991.

John Dubois, (shipyard operater, builder/captain of schooners) taped interview with Meghan Wren, 7 May 1991.

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Clyde Phillips (owner 1947-1957), taped interview with Meghan Wren, 24 Sept 1988.

#### Interviews with crew members of Clyde A. Phillips/AJ Meerwald during use as fireboat:

Robert Albertson, Drexel Hill, PA John Blackburn, Newtown Sq., PA John Haskill, Boothwyn, PA Charles (Bob) Hensil, Havertown, PA

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Gladys Brewer (family member of owner 1928-1942, 1947), Reedy Point, CA
'Hop' Hoffman (shipwright), Dorchester, NJ
Warren Hollinger, (oysterman), Port Norris, NJ
Mort Hughes, (shipwright, personal knowledge of vessel's history), Erma, NJ
Norman Jeffries, '(oysterman), Beesleys Point, NJ
Donnie McDaniels, previous owner of vessel, Cape May, NJ
Robert Morgan Jr. (shipyard operator), Dorchester, NJ
Robert Morgan Sr. (shipyard operator), Dorchester, NJ
Margaret Louise Mintz Ogden (local historian/author), Port Norris, NJ
Harold Perry (fisherman/lifelong Bivalve resident), Bivalve, NJ

NPS Ferm 10-600-6

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NJ Cumberland Co. A.J Meerwald, schooner

Section number <u>Bib.</u> Page <u>5 of 5</u>

William Riggins (oysterman), Port Norris, NJ Leon Robbins (oysterman), Port Norris, NJ Clem Sutton, (shipwright) Greenwich, NJ NPS Ferm 10-800-4

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

NJ Cumberland Co. A.J Meerwald, schooner

Section number 10 Page 10f /

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

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

#### **Boundary Justification**

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo Page 1 0f 1

NJ Cumberland Co., AJ Meerwald, schooner

#### PHOTOGRAPH INVENTORY

Photographer: Meghan Wren Date of Photographs: 1995

Negative Repository: Delaware Bay Schooner Project

P.O. Box 57

Dorchester, NJ 08316

Photos #1 - #3 - - 1929 views of A. J. Meerwald schooner at full sail

Photo #4 - Hull before restoration

Photo #5 - Stem before restoration

Photo #6 - Long leaf yellow pine frames

Photo #7 - Forecastle

Photo #8 - Semi-curved access ladder in aft cabin

Photo #9 - Curved bench seat in aft end of cabin

(P.4. 756, 3, 1925)	
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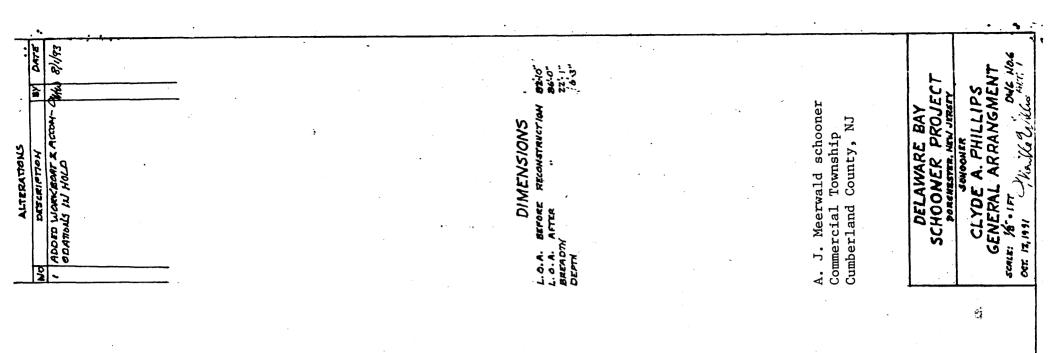
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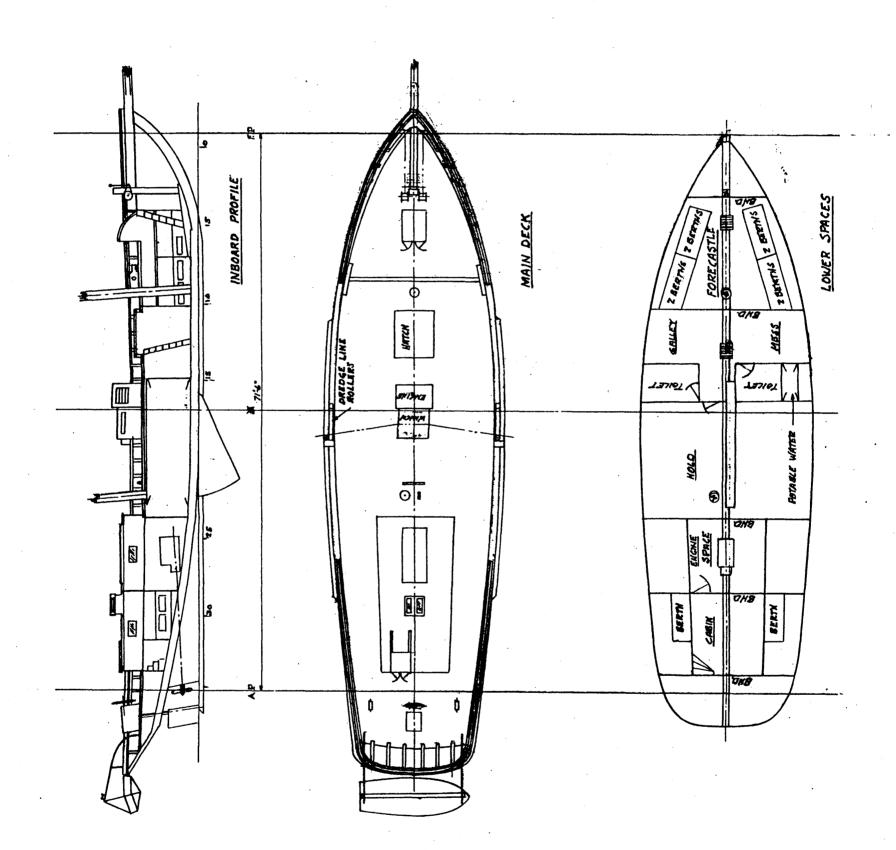
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APPROVED 7/31/93 A. J. Meerwald schooner Commercial Township Cumberland County, NJ HODED FRESTRIANCES RINKS DESCRIPTION

TOP RAIL 2"4"

INTERMEDIATE RAIL 4"+ 4"

CAP RAIL 21/2 x 9"

CEILING 2" " 9" TWO 14" BORT NANS, ERIH PLANK ERIN FRANE

PLANKING 13/4"THICK YARIABLE WIDTH. TWO 3/6" BOAT HAILS EACH PLANK EACH FRAME

FRAMES 4" SIDED (DOUBLE) 6/K MOULDED AT KEEL, 4" AT DECK. TWO SE" DRIFT BOLTS ERCH FAWK, SUFFACE

LOWER CLAMP 1/4", 9/1", INSOARD OF CEILING, TWO/E DRIFT BOXTS ENCH TOP TIMBER.

PORTION NOT SHOWN SIMILIAR TO OPPOSITE SIDE

CLYDE A. PHILLIPS SCHOONER PROJECT

34" DRIFT BOLT

ALTERATIONS

DETAIL OF JOINT - KEELSON TO FRAME

UPPER CLAMP, DOUBLE EACH 21/4 !)". THO K" DRIFT GOLTS RACH TOP THBER

DECK BEAMS 5/4" MOULDED 6" SIDED

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KFELSON B'WIDE 95." DEEP TWO IN WAT OF CENTER BOARD

CENTERBOARD TRINK PLAKKING 4" + 6"

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SCALE: 12 - 1 POSHIP SECTION DOIL DECK HOUSE

