

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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N-5196

Property Name: Old Ford Dairy (D.J. Cummins, 1868)

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The Old Ford Dairy is located on the west side of route 13 approximately 1.80 miles south of the St. Georges Bridge and .5 miles south of the junction of routes 412 and 13. The nominated property contains the house, yard, and outbuildings and is composed of a five acre square containing the above listed structures. Excluded from the nomination, but within the designated boundaries, are a modern frame garage, gambrel roof barn, and machine sheds. These structures are listed as noncontributing due to their construction within the past fifty years.

Owner: Parkway Gravel, Inc.

4048 New Castle Avenue

New Castle, Delaware

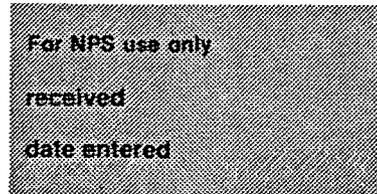
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Description:

The structure is a two-and-a-half story, 5 by 2 bay, double cross gable, vernacular Victorian farmhouse. This frame structure is covered by wood siding painted white, and built on a brick stuccoed foundation. A rear wing features another cross gable. The cornice is boxed, with paired brackets running the full perimeter of the roofline. There are two brick endwall chimneys with corbelled caps in the main block, and a third plain endwall chimney in the rear wing.

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The windows are two over two sash with distinctive wood pediment shaped lintels over each window and wood surrounds, all painted green. The windows in each of the cross gables are six over six sash, but the corners of the top sash in each case, have been clipped to form an angle matching the pitch of the gable. The attic lit by four-paned semi-elliptical gable end windows. ^{is}

The center front passage of this central hall plan house is a double leaf, elaborate, panelled door with three light transom and sidelights. The trim surrounding of the door is a repeat of the pediment motif over the windows.

The house has two porches, one on the front (east) facade and one on the south facade. The front porch is a one story, three bay wood porch. The four by four posts that support the porch have beveled edges and trim detail, indicating that the porch is contemporary with the house.

The property which was once a dairy, still has all the outbuildings relating to that phase in its history. They are all arranged on the north and south sides of a dirt lane running behind the house. Directly behind the house is a small board and batten, gable roof structure, possibly a meathouse, on a brick foundation. The doors are hung with strap hinges.

There is a drive through, two-and-a-half story granary built of braced frame construction on a stone foundation. At the far end of the road is a rectangular lathed grain storage bin. Heading back east toward the house, one passes the three-story gambrel roofed dairy barn. It is of frame construction on the second and third floors, resting on a concrete foundation and ground floor. A fully framed barn sits next to the dairy barn. It is built on poured concrete.

There is evidence of a portico having been on the north side of the rear addition, but other than that, there are very few structural changes evident. There are shutter holders all the way around the house, but currently there are no shutters.

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Historical Background and Significance:

At the time of the 1850 agricultural census, the Old Ford Dairy owned by W. Polk fell into the upper range of St. Georges Hundred farmsteads based on improved acreage, but was placed exactly in the mid range of local farm values. Like most of his neighbors, Polk was involved in cereal production cultivating and harvesting wheat, oats, and Indian corn in above average amounts. In fact, Polk's Indian corn harvest was in the top ten percent for the entire hundred. Also significant to the farm's value in 1850 were butter production and farm implements. By the 1860 agricultural census, Polk's farm had nearly doubled in value with significant increases in the reported value of livestock, slaughtered animals, wheat, oats, and butter. At the same time Polk described equally significant decreases in the value of farm machinery and Indian corn. Part of the change in the farm's value rests in the fact that Polk was able to acquire an additional 50 improved acres between 1850 and 1860.

As a farm of average value with deviations in the categories of individual crops and other areas of production, the Old Ford Dairy represents the strength of St. Georges grain based economy at mid century. Absent from the farm values is any mention of orchard produce indicating that peaches and apples as cash crops were still a wave of the future on the eve of the Civil War. The house itself with its extensive vernacular Gothic detailing, incorporation of service spaces into a rear ell, and setting amidst a courtyard of agricultural buildings devoted to grain production and dairying underscore that the economic foundation for the rebuilding period of the 19th century lay in grain, butter, and livestock for urban markets.

Nomination by B. Herman and Trish Bensinger

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The attic is lit by gable end, six-paned windows flanking the chimneys. The door openings are trimmed with fluted wood and corner blocks, as well as wood trim at the base of the door cut to match the curve of the water table on the south facade. The trim surrounding the door on the south facade appears to be more elaborate, indicating a southern orientation for this center hall plan house which now is oriented toward the driveway coming in on the north side of the house. The interior remains some Federal period trim including a mantel with reeded pilasters and a plain entablature.

A one story, concrete block foundation, shed and a brick foundation shed porch have been added to the south facade of the addition. It extends over a part of the main house's southern facade as well.

To the northeast of the house is a two story drive through granary. It features a stone foundation and sawn timbers. There is also a modern equipment shed beyond the granary. Directly east of the house is a small frame milkhouse.

A large brick bank barn, ca. 1850, associated with the house was destroyed by fire in 1983.

Historic Background and Significance

Idalia Manor is a late Federal style building despite the fact that it doesn't show up on an atlas drawn by Rea and Price in 1849. A map of Delaware drawn by J. G. Bears in 1868 identifies the owner as Mrs. M. A. Osborne, and the house as Idalia Manor. Two years later in 1870, Mrs. M. A. Osborne appears on the Delaware Manuscript Agricultural Census, owning 272 improved acres valued at \$50,000. The land was producing Indian corn, winter wheat and oats and Irish potatoes. They grew ten tons of hay to support the cows, swine and a large number of horses on the farm. Two hundred pounds of butter were produced in 1879. From 1881 through 1893, both Hopkins and Baistes' atlases showed Mrs. M. A. Osborne owning 300 acres of property.

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Architecturally, Idalia Manor is significant as an example of the process through which housing stock developed in the 18th and early 19th centuries was improved in the course of the mid 19th-century rebuilding cycle. Begun in the late 18th century, Idalia Manor was enlarged to its present size by the 1820s. In the period following up until the 1850s the house was remodeled on the interior with more stylish Empire trim. At the same time the agricultural complex associated with the house was completely replaced with an equally stylish brick bank ornamented with lozenge work ventilation openings, and with a new style drive through combination granary and crib barn. The final effect was the creation of a farmstead more typical of the mid 1800s than of its late 18th century origins.

Nomination by Trish Bensinger



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