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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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N-5177

Property Name: J. Vandegrift House (High Hook Farm, 1893)

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The J. Vandegrift House is located on the south side route 44 (Vance Neck Road) approximately one mile east of its junction with route 13. The house and outbuildings are set in the midst of cultivated farmland. Included in the nomination are five acres containing the house, granary, and a dairy barn. Built within the past fifty years, the dairy barn is listed as a non-contributing element in the nomination.

Owner: Arnold Boyer
P.O. Box 141
Odessa, Delaware
19730

Description:

The house is a two-and-one-half story, three-bay sidehall plan house with a two-and-one-half story, two-bay addition to the east and a two-and-one-half story parged concrete rear wing to the south. The main block of the red brick structure, laid in seven course common bond is built on a brick foundation and has a full basement.

The house has a stepped brick cornice and two endwall chimneys in the main block of the house. The rear wing has a sidewall chimney.

The windows in the main block and addition (east) are all six over six sash and have wood surrounds. Those in the rear wing are eight over twelve sash. There are shutters across the north facade of the main block and east addition, those on the first floor being panelled, and those on the second floor being louvered. The

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attic is lit by one gable end light.

The sidehall entrance is a single leaf, six panel, wood door with a transom. The door is flanked by fluted pilasters and topped by a segmental arch and dentil molding. A shed roof entryway has been added to the east addition.

To the east of the house are a granary and a barn. The granary is a two-and-one-half story drive through, gable roofed structure. The barn, situated beside the granary, has a gambrel roof and is also two-and-one-half stories high.

Historic Background and Significance

Jacob Vandergrift, his family, and five black servants occupied this farm at the time of the 1850 census. The name "J. Vandergriff" appears on both the Rea and Price 1849 atlas and Beers' 1868 atlas. Later maps show Jas. M. Vandergrift, probably indicating an inheritance of the farm duties by Jacob's son.

In 1850, the agricultural census indicates that this was an average value farm strongly based in wheat, Indian corn, livestock, and butter production. These products, with the addition of sheep by 1870 and some orchard trees by 1880, remain the mainstay of the farm for at least the next thirty years after 1880. There is also a steady increase in the value of farm implements and machinery over that period.

As a farm at just above average size and production, mainly involved in the grain-based economy of the period, the Vandergrift property reflects the strong basic agricultural values of the nineteenth century. The brick house shows that a fair amount of expense was taken in building the farm's public face, while the drive-through granary reflects the agricultural period both in its technology and use.

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The windows in the main block and rear wing, are four over four sash, while the windows in the frame addition are six over six sash. The attic of the main block is lit by two over two sash, gable end windows. A single two over two sash end window lights the rear wing of the attic.

The windows on the main block and rear wing have wood surrounds and are shuttered on both floors, the first floor being white, with two panelled shutters; and the second floor shutters being black louvers.

There are three porches on the structure. The one on the front (north) facade is a one story, three bay, wood porch with brick foundation and hipped roof. There is evidence of stone plans under this porch. The side porch on the east facade is Victorian in its detailing. A third porch on the rear (south) facade is a one story two bay frame structure with shed roof.

The outbuildings are situated a few hundred feet away, and include two large barns and a granary. The frame barn has a gable roof and is built on an uncoursed stone foundation which features an arched doorway. A ramp leads to the second floor. The elaborate framing is done with hewn timbers, and unhewn timbers serve as joists. The southern facade features a cantilevered second floor. This barn is connected by a wing built on a concrete block foundation to a second two-and-one-half story frame barn built on poured concrete. The granary is a two-and-one-half story drive through, frame structure built on a rubble stone foundation. Both buildings are contemporary to the house.

Historical Background and Significance:

The agricultural statistics of the R.W. Cochran Farm from 1850 to 1860 portray the production and fluctuations of St. Georges agricultural economy through the mid 1800s. From 1850 through 1870 the improved acreage of the farm remained constant at 150 acres. In 1880 however, the amount of arable land increased to 185 acres. In terms of the value of the farm, the cash value of Retirement increased by an average of \$10,000.00 every ten years until 1880 when, despite the increased amount of productive land, the value of the farm fell by a third to \$20,000.00. In tracing R.W. Cochran's farm across the four sets of agricultural census returns, the pattern of farming in St.

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Georges Hundred through the mid-1800s is clearly illustrated. Up until 1870 regular increases in the amount or value of swine, livestock value, wheat, farm machinery, slaughtered animals, and cattle were recorded. The value or amount of Indian corn, hay, and working oxen remained static, while the worth of butter declined along with Irish potatoes. Wheat, as ever, remained the mainstay of the farm economy, but by the 1880 census had begun to be bolstered with the first appearance of income generated by orchard products.

Architecturally, the house with its late Federal appearance and containing an original service ell incorporated the values inherent in a worldview based on the literal unities of domestic life and household labor. This attitude, expressed through buildings, was carried over into the design and siting of the agricultural structures behind the house. The bank barn represented a building type advocated in the prescriptive agriculture literature of the mid 19th century and was intended to contain and streamline the functions of the farm. The reality of architecture however, suggests that the function of the big barn was largely symbolic, and, in a continuation of traditional 18th century organizational attitudes to farm planning, the barn became a centerpiece surrounded by multiple lesser and more individually specialized buildings such as the granary standing to the north of the barn.

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