

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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**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 George Washington Creef House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 304 Budleigh Street not for publication

city, town Manteo vicinity of congressional district First

state North Carolina code 037 county Dare code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Ben Creef

street & number 306 Budleigh Street

city, town Manteo vicinity of state North Carolina 27954

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dare County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Manteo state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title AB 100 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The George Washington Creef House, probably the most architecturally sophisticated of Manteo's remaining 19th century houses, is a two story Victorian cottage covered with board and batten and wood shingled gabled roofs. The design of the house and its construction are the results of its owner and builder who was also a master ship builder on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

Built on a Greek Cross plan and resting on shallow brick piers, the house has completely symmetrical gable end elevations flanked by one story shed porches which carry along the inside elevations of the four "Ls" occurring on the plan. The L-shape of two of these original porches--those on the rear (south) elevation--have been filled out and reshaped as rectangular rooms. Each porch shelters one or more entrances onto the interior. Under the front porches the door openings, surmounted by a two-pane transom, contain fully glazed fifteen pane doors which are replacements for the originals. The doors and window openings are set in plain band surrounds.

The house's symmetry is enlivened with carved and sawn architectural ornament which occurs chiefly on the porches, eaves, and the triangular shingled-faced gable ends, emphasizing the Gothic cottage flavor of the house.

Each of these projecting gable ends has a two bay division on the first and second story. A frieze board carries across the top of each elevation and acts as the base for the alternating bands of shaped and variously cut shingles which carry across the face of each gable end. A louvered ventilator with a triangular top is set in the center of each gable. Carved and spindle screens were originally placed in the apex of each gable, however, only fragments of these remain. The eaves of the house and porch feature molded rake boards and shaped-end rafters.

The porches are supported by chamfered posts graced with curvilinear open-work brackets at the top. They are connected by shaped and molded hand and bottom rails containing flat-shaped sawn balustrades which appear as a continuous pierced railing.

The interior of the house follows an unusual plan with three rooms of unequal size located along the east-west axis of the house with single rooms in the projecting front and rear ells. Originally there were four rooms here; however, the partition forming a small bedroom in the eastern end of the block was removed in the 1970s to create a larger stair hall.

The door under the northeast porch opens into the present rectangular stair hall where the stair rises along the west wall in a southerly direction. A door at the northern end of the west wall, and at the foot of the stair, leads into the off-center, yet centrally located sitting room. This room has no window openings. It can also be reached by doors under the northwest and southwest porches. Yet another door on its west elevation leads into the small bedroom which occupies the western end of the east-west series of rooms. The sitting hall is the most elaborately finished of the first floor rooms and features tongue and groove sheathing applied in a diagonal manner to form a wainscot below a plain chair rail. The wall above is finished with the same sheathing applied in a vertical fashion. The other rooms on the first floor

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 1

are also finished with vertical tongue and groove sheathing. The sitting room also contains doors into the single rooms located in the projecting front and rear ells. The parlor is located in the front ell while the room in the rear ell has always served as the kitchen. The mantel on the east wall in the sitting room is also the most elaborate of those in the house and is simply ornamental, being applied directly to the wall over the sheathing. It features applied consoles on the side members which rise to the projecting shelf. A shallow back-band carries across the top of the mantel. There is no fire opening.

The mantels on the south walls of both the parlor and kitchen are also ornamental, although instead of the expected fire opening there is merely a flue opening. They are simply constructed post and lintel affairs with curved friezes.

The stair, with turned newels and balusters, rises to the second story which contains five bedrooms. Here the stair hall repeats the proportions of the first story stair but with a long leg carrying across the south elevation of the east-west block providing access to the chambers above the sitting room, kitchen and small first floor bedroom. A small bedroom is set in the eastern end of the east ell with the fifth bedroom contained in the front north ell. The interior finish on the second story is also vertically applied tongue and groove sheathing with four panel doors. Several of the doors retain their original stained and oak grained finish.

A. The George Washington Wood House is associated with the local building industry of Annapolis and the Outer Banks. It is situated on the east side of the Chesapeake Bay, perhaps the most prominent family lineages in the world for over sixty years.

B. Constructed in the late 1800s by George Washington Wood, Jr. (1826-1928), the house remained the residence of the prominent Wood family until his death.

C. The most accomplished and artistically decorated of the 18th century houses remaining in the county east, the Wood House is a particularly handsome example of a board and batten village residence which has retained a high degree of integrity through eight decades of family occupancy and ownership.

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 type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George Washington Creef House, a two-story Victorian house built in the late 1890s, has strong local architectural and historical significance for Manteo, Roanoke Island, and Dare County. The Creef family has long been engaged in boat building on Roanoke Island, first at East Lake where they settled in 1878. There George Washington Creef, Sr., designed and constructed a shad boat which was used thereafter by fishermen in the North Carolina Sounds. About 1888, Creef, Jr. who had learned the boat building trade from his father, established his own boat yard at Shallowbag Bay where he constructed the Hattie Creef, named for his daughter who was born in 1889. Launched September 12, 1889, the Hattie Creef was used privately by Creef for his own commercial fishing until about 1900 when it began service as the main form of transportation for freight, passengers and the mails between the island and the mainland. The ship enjoyed a long public and private service under several owners until it was retired in 1968. Among its most illustrious passengers, coming to the Outer Banks to experiment with air flight, were the Wright Brothers. After the construction of the Hattie Creef, Creef continued his boat building and fishing interests from the island and in the late 1890s built this house in Manteo, the seat of Dare County. The most accomplished and ornately detailed house of the 19th century remaining in the village, it served as Creef's residence until his death in 1928, after which it remained the family residence until 1963 when his son, the present owner, vacated it.

- A. The George Washington Creef House is associated with the boat building industry on Roanoke Island and the Outer Banks, for it served as the home of the Creef family--perhaps the most prominent family involved in the trade--for over sixty years.
- B. Constructed in the late 1890s by George Washington Creef, Jr. (1856-1928), the house remained the residence of the prominent boat builder until his death.
- C. The most accomplished and elaborately decorated of the 19th century houses remaining in the county seat, the Creef House is a particularly handsome example of a board and batten village residence which has retained a high degree of integrity through eight decades of family occupancy and ownership.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Sometime between 1897 and 1900 George Washington Creef, Jr. (1856-1928) built a house in Manteo on Roanoke Island in Dare County. He constructed the dwelling on a parcel of land which he purchased from Richard and Delia A. Evans in 1897. He located the structure on a cart path which was later extended and eventually became Manteo's main street, known today as Budleigh Street.¹

Creef was the son of George Washington Creef, Sr., and Margaret Creef. The family first came to Roanoke Island around 1878 from East Lake, a small community on the mainland. On Roanoke Island they purchased a farm from one Abby Jarvis.² While living in East Lake the elder Creef was a boat builder and shortly after the Civil War designed and constructed a boat which made him famous in the area. The type of craft eventually replaced the old types used by the Outer Bankers and became a mainstay for fishermen. Creef's boat was a particular boon to fishermen because of its ability to maneuver in the shallow water and rapidly changing winds of the North Carolina sounds. It was a round bottom boat with a square stern, a sharply-pointed bow, and a shallow keel. It had three sails--a sprit mainsail, a jib, and the unique feature of a top sail. The latter operated independently of the other sails and could be lowered and raised in a few seconds, giving the boat exceptional speed or stability in changing weather. The vessel was usually made of native juniper or white cedar with frames of naturally-curved cypressknee roots. Outer Banks historian David Stick states that "Because Creef's boat was used in the shad fisheries it became known as a 'shad boat' or 'Pamlico Sound Fisherman.'" An example of the boat is now in Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.³

George Washington, Jr., learned the boat building profession from his father and took a job at a boat "railway" where vessels were pulled from the water and repaired on the northeast side of Roanoke Island. Creef also fished to supplement his income. In 1883 his father deeded him the farm on Roanoke Island where the family had lived since 1878. Creef had recently married Ann McCleese Baum of Roanoke Island, and they lived at the farm.

Around 1888 Creef decided to build his own boat repair railway. He purchased an acre of land in the curve of the shoreline on Roanoke Island near the dock at Shallowbag Bay. He planted pilings and built skids and a cradle. According to Creef's biographer,

George rigged up a large winch, with a long wire cable wound several times around it. His favorite old white horse, named Jack, was used along with the cable winch to take the place of machinery that was . . . not available to pull the boat out of the water.

After the boats were repaired, old Jack was used to keep the cable taut, while the boats slowly slid down the railway and back into the water. This system worked very well. Many fishing boats in need of repair came up the narrow rippling Shallowbag Bay which flowed toward the broad Roanoke and Albemarle Sounds.⁴

It was at this railway that Creef was to follow his father's example and construct a boat which would bring him a degree of fame on the Outer Banks. He built the vessel

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

with timber he had salvaged from the cargo of the shipwrecked schooner Savonaso. Creef worked on the craft, which apparently he had been planning for some time, between repair jobs at the railway. He used great care and skill in constructing the craft. The keel was of white oak and measured fifty-five feet and three inches in length. The heart pine that he had salvaged and had sawed into boards at Elizabeth City was used in the rest of the boat along with some juniper.⁵ One writer has testified to Creef's care in the construction:

Every plank fitted to the frames along the sides, around the stern, and on the deck, was carefully examined before caulking the seams and being treated with pitch to preserve the wood and prevent leakage. All planks, each one-and-a half inches thick and three inches in width . . . were fastened with . . . copper nails and wooden pegs.

On September 12, 1889, the sailboat was launched. Creef named it the Hattie Creef in honor of his daughter who was born in that year. For ten years he used the boat for fishing and gathering oysters. At the end of that period he remodeled the craft and hired her out as a passenger, mail and freight boat for the residents of Roanoke Island. Captain Martin Johnson was the first skipper, and for the first ten months he sailed the vessel twice a week from Manteo to Manns Harbor and Elizabeth City on the Mainland, delivering freight, passengers, and mail. It was around this time, 1899, that Creef built his house in Manteo.⁶

The Hattie Creef enjoyed a long and important career as the link of communication between the outer banks and the mainland of the Tar Heel state. In 1900 she began making daily runs to and from Elizabeth City, and transported Orville Wright to Kitty Hawk. At that community on the Outer Banks, Orville joined his brother Wilbur in making their experiments which led to the first manned airplane flight in history. The Wright brothers utilized the Hattie Creef for transportation for themselves, their supplies, and their airplane on several occasions.

In 1907 Creef converted the boat to diesel power by installing two 10-horse lathrop engines. She resumed her route, leaving Manteo at six o'clock in the morning and returning at six in the evening. In the following year Captain Johnson relinquished command of the boat to Captain Llewellyn Cudworth. Two years later the Hattie Creef was rebuilt to include a stateroom large enough to serve meals to passengers.⁷ She was then put on the "Currituck run," transporting farm produce and passengers to Elizabeth City. In 1908 Creef sold her to Eastern Carolina Transportation Company to carry boxes of fish and other cargo. Following that transfer the Hattie Creef had several owners, underwent a number of remodelings, and was used in a number of capacities including hauling fish and other cargoes as well as a tug boat. Much of the need for boats to transport passengers to the mainland disappeared in 1930 when a toll bridge was completed across Currituck Sound from Point Harbor to Kitty Hawk. In 1943 the Hattie Creef sank in the Pasquotank River, but was recovered and converted for commercial crabbing. Her career ended in 1968 when her owner retired her from service and transported her overland to a site near the Wright Brothers National Memorial at Kitty Hawk.⁸ She has since been moved to Salvo and converted into a restaurant.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

After building the Hattie Creef and launching her into an illustrious career, George Washington Creef, Jr., continued his trade as a boat builder and resided at his new house on present-day Budleigh Street. In the first decade of the twentieth century his wife Ann died, leaving him with three children--Ella, Hattie, and Hubert (spelled Hubbard in the 1900 census). After a short while he married Ada Blivens Chappell from Perquimans County, and they had two children, Benjamin Allen and Paul Chappell Creef. Paul died at the age of four. Besides his boat building and fishing interests, Creef built the Pioneer motion picture theater in Manteo in 1918. He constructed the movie house, which was the first on the island, from the materials of a demolished school. He evidently ran the theater until his death in 1928 when it was deeded to his son Hubert. The Creef family built a new theater in 1934.⁹

Since George Washington Creef, Jr.'s death in 1928 his house in Manteo has remained in the family and is presently owned by Benjamin Allen Creef who runs the family's theater. Adjacent to it is another house owned by the Creef family and built in the 1920s.¹⁰ On Roanoke Island today the name of George Washington Creef, Jr., remains associated with the Hattie Creef, the vessel that for a number of years provided the Outer Banks with a link to the outside world. As a boat builder like his father before him he left his mark upon the maritime history of North Carolina's coast.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Dare County Deed Book (microfilm), State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, Book F, 18, hereinafter cited as Dare County Deed Books; John F. Wilson, IV, "George Washington Creef House," an unpublished manuscript, at Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, 1.
- ²Dare County Deed Book A, 427; Milford R. Ballance, The Hands of Time (New York: Vantage Press, 1972), 70.
- ³David Stick, The Outer Banks of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 178-179; Interview of Davyd Foard Hood with Benjamin Allen Creef, April 6, 1980.
- ⁴Ballance, The Hands of Time, 75-76.
- ⁵Ballance, The Hands of Time, 83-85, 104-105, 107.
- ⁶Ballance, The Hands of Time, 122, 127-131; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Dare County Population Schedule, Nags Head Township, 3 hereinafter cited as Dare County Census, 1900.
- ⁷Ballance, The Hands of Time, 149, 171-175.
- ⁸Ballance, The Hands of Time, 179-198; Sticks, The Outer Banks, 246.
- ⁹Ballance, The Hands of Time, 178; Interview of Davyd Foard Hood with Benjamin Allen Creef, April 6, 1980; Dare County Census, 1900, Nags Head Township, 3.
- ¹⁰Interview of Davyd Foard Hood with Benjamin Allen Creef, April 6, 1980; John F. Wilson, IV, "George Howard Creef House," an unpublished manuscript at Archeology and History Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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Interview of Davyd Foard Hood with Benjamin Allen Creef, April 6, 1980.

Stick, David. The Outer Banks of North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Dare County, North Carolina, Population Schedule.

Wilson, John F., IV. "George Washington Creef House." An unpublished manuscript at Archeology and Historic Preservation Section. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

_____ . "George Howard Creef House." An unpublished manuscript at Archeology and History Preservation Section. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Handwritten signature

October 10, 1980

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Manteo

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8
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4	3	9	7	0	0
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3	9	7	3	2	1	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The area included in the George Washington Creef House includes the less than one acre town lot on which the house sits.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Architectural description: <u>Dayvd F. Hood, Survey Specialist</u>	Historical Statement: <u>Joe Mobley, Researcher</u>
organization	<u>Survey and Planning Branch</u> <u>Archaeology and Historic Preservation</u> <u>N.C. Division of Archives and History</u>	date <u>September, 1980</u>
street & number	<u>109 E. Jones Street</u>	telephone <u>(919) 733-6545</u>
city or town	<u>Raleigh,</u>	state <u>North Carolina</u> <u>27611</u>

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Fred E. ...*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 16, 1980

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
	date
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

