

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

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

For NPS use only

received **AUG 3 1987**
date entered **SEP - 8 1987**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cornucopia

and/or common John and Mary Price Farm

2. Location

street & number County Road 433 (Bethel Road) NA not for publication

city, town Middletown vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county New Castle code 002

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>NA</u>	<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 George F. Williams & Wife and William Bowe, Jr., c/o Brian Murphy

street & number 701 Bethel Road 55 West Main Street, Middletown, DE 19709

city, town Chesapeake City vicinity of state MD 21915

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Castle County Recorder of Deeds

street & number City/County Building, 800 French Street

city, town Wilmington state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Cultural Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 (Site #N-6193) federal state county local

depository for survey records State Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Old State House, The Green, P.O. Box 1401

city, town Dover state Delaware

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Cornucopia is located in Pencader Hundred south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal on the north side of Bethel Church Road (County Road 433). A piece of the farm tract extends into Maryland, however, none of that land is in the nominated portion.

The c.1845 frame farm house and eight associated farm buildings are situated on a 152 acre farm. The house is set back several hundred feet from the road preceded by a lane bisecting two rows of Walnut trees. The lane continues past the northeast side of the house and veers northeast to form a circle within a courtyard of farm buildings. The farm buildings range in date from the late 19th century to the late 1930's. All the buildings contribute to the character and significance of the site. In total, there are eleven contributing buildings.

Cornucopia was built in the subdued Greek Revival style typical of central Delaware in the mid-nineteenth century. It is a two and one-half story, L-plan, frame dwelling with a gable roof. The one and one-half story wing extends northwest off the northeast side of the northwest (rear) elevation. The wing has a single pitch or "flounder roof." It appears that the wing was built in two sections with the inner section possibly being an earlier dwelling.

The gable roof is covered with green asphalt shingles over wood shingles, and is pierced on each slope by three dormers. The dormers have segmental arched roofs with like windows trimmed with returned, moulded cornices, and paneled pilasters. Two rectangular brick chimneys are enclosed in the gable end walls. The roof is finished with beaded verge boards and a moulded box cornice.

The white weather board walls are currently covered with brick impressed asphalt sheet.

The dwelling rests on a quarried granite foundation, the granite is possibly construction material from the canal, and has a full basement. The basement floor is brick and in the southeast corner is a root pit. On one gable end there is a brick relieving arch, on the other end is a filled-in stone arch.

Cornucopia's fenestration features a five-bay facade with a center bay entrance. The windows are double hung sash with 6/6 lights, trimmed with a moulded surround. Shutters are non-extant. The center bay door has eight panels of variable sizes, and is finished with reeded and moulded side trim with bulls-eye corner boxes. Overhead is a flat transom within which is a six-light fan and solid, decorative corner fans.

Cornucopia is laid out in a center stair hall, single pile plan with a service wing. The southeast room is the parlor with its fancy moulded mantel supported by detached columnettes. To one side of the hearth is an architectural cupboard with four, two panel doors. On the side of the chimney breast is another built-in cupboard somewhat narrower than the first. Other trim consists of moulded base board and moulded panels beneath the windows. Windows are finished with moulded surrounds and bulls-eye corner boxes. Some doors are still wood-grained, and there are indications that other trim may have been grained as well. The mantel in the opposite room (southwest) is of

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 checked="" 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–1937	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Circa 1845 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Cornucopia is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, and C--historic events, and architectural significance as a good example of regional architecture. Cornucopia is associated with the rebuilding phenomena which occurred in southern New Castle County throughout most of the nineteenth century. The dwelling is representative of the vernacular Greek Revival style popular in this rebuilding period (1840 to 1880). The house is in excellent condition and has experienced few changes to compromise its integrity. The outbuildings are arranged in a typical courtyard fashion representative of late nineteenth century farm plans. Cornucopia can best be understood in the context of major societal changes--agricultural reform, social change, and architectural renewal, that occurred in southern New Castle County in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century.

Cornucopia is located in an agricultural area known for its flat terrain and rich soil. It is adjacent to and shares the same characteristics as the "Levels," an area known historically and presently as having some of the best farmland on the east coast. The soil type, Matapeake-Sassafras association, found in portions of Pencader, Appoquinimink and St. Georges Hundreds, is considered one of the finest soils for farming in terms of friability and fertility, and demarcates this area as the most productive in the state. The terrain and soil have historically enabled farmers to grow grain crops, especially wheat, in great abundance. Throughout the eighteenth century, farmers from this area supplied the reknowned Brandywine Mills, near Wilmington, with wheat. Butter was also produced in commercial quantities and was a cash crop along with wheat. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, due to poor farming practices, even these rich soils were exhausted.

One of the nation's first Agricultural Societies was formed in New Castle County in 1804 by farmers alarmed by the depressed state of agriculture. The society's goals were to encourage the farmer to practice scientific farming. An equally important tenet of the reformers in southern New Castle County was the reconsolidation of farmland. During this period of poor harvests, depressed land values and depopulation, wealthier landowners were able to acquire substantial amounts of land. The acquisition of land altered the character of farming and the social relationships between farm worker and landowner. Agriculture as business was to emerge from the ashes of this agrarian depression.

Farmers developed the business side of agriculture by keeping records of virtually every aspect of the farm and determining the cost effectiveness of each factor. Slavery was discontinued late in the eighteenth century because day labor was deemed more economical and efficient. Owner and worker relationships were formalized through contractual agreements. Portions of consolidated land holdings were run as individual farms by farm managers on a crop share basis. The houses built for the managers were comparable in form and finish to the landowner's dwellings although less ostentatious.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 50 acres

Quadrangle name Elkton, MD-DE

Quadrangle scale 1:2400

UTM References

A	1 8	4 3 3 5 6 1 0	4 3 7 5 5 2 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1 8	4 3 3 8 5 1 0	4 3 7 5 0 3 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 8	4 3 3 6 7 1 5	4 3 7 5 0 1 1 0
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D	1 8	4 3 3 4 9 1 0	4 3 7 4 8 4 1 0
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E	1 8	4 3 3 2 1 1 0	4 3 7 5 3 3 1 0
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F			
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G			
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H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

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

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

name/title Hubert F. Jicha, III, Assistant Historic Preservation Planner

organization New Castle County Department of Planning date December 1986

street & number 2701 Capitol Trail telephone (302) 366-7780

city or town Newark state Delaware

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title *John R. Kern* Director,
 DE Div. of Hist. & Cult. Aff. date 7/22/1987

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Byers Keeper of the National Register
 date 9-8-87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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the same basic form as the parlor however, it lacks the extravagantly moulded architrave. Second story trim is quite plain. Doors have five horizontal panels. Hearth mantels are equally subdued with their paneled pilasters and scaled down entablatures. The attic consists of three rooms and is finished with plastered walls and beaded, vertical board doors. The six dormers provide light and extra head room.

The wing consists of two rooms accessible on the interior from the parlor. There is a chimney at the center partition wall. Trim is plain, sometimes beaded, and doors are beaded vertical board. On the wing gable end is a shed-roofed addition. Attached to this on the southwest side is a flat-roofed addition extending southwest.

On the house facade is a tetra-style veranda on brick piers. The roof is supported by chamfered posts with lambs tongue stops and is trimmed with scroll cut brackets and saw-tooth board cheeks. On the northeast side of the wing is a semi-enclosed porch which connects to the site's only domestic outbuilding. This outbuilding is a type of combination building probably involved in storing meat and dairy products. Later in the twentieth century this meat/dairy house was transformed into a shower room one side and general storage on the other. The construction is braced frame with vertical sawn members. The batten doors have strap hinges. It probably dates from the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

The other outbuildings are clustered in a courtyard fashion northeast of the house. One exception is the oldest farm building which is almost directly north of the dwelling. This is the crib barn, a ubiquitous type of barn in central Delaware featuring a drive-thru center bay flanked by corn cribs, grain bins are in the loft. This form persists into the twentieth century often built of re-used timbers from demolished buildings and held together with iron tie rods and steel cables as is this example.

The courtyard northeast of the dwelling is formed by buildings built in the early twentieth century. Two barns are connected by an L-shaped implement shed. One barn is called the hay barn and is constructed with circular sawn timbers with principal members joined by mortise and tenon, and nailed secondary members. This barn has a large loft for hay storage and stables on the first floor. The L-plan implement shed consists of two sections at right angles. The section nearest the hay barn has five bays and is constructed with circular sawn scantlings. The shed-gable roof is supported by posts on conical piers. The section of the L-plan shed nearest the cow barn opens to the field and is constructed identically to the above described section except it has a gable roof.

The cow barn gable end faces the courtyard. This building built c.1930 is constructed in a post and rail method with very large timbers joined by spikes. Several large timbers are re-used from an earlier building. The hay loft in the second story was inaccessible. The ground floor is concrete as is a manure trough and a feed trough. Metal stanchions are extant. Connected to the cow barn is a small frame dairy of the same vintage with a beaded tongue and groove interior. It is sided with vertical board and has a gable roof.

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South of the cow barn are three poultry sheds constructed of nailed post and rail with vertical board siding and shed-gable roofs. The buildings also date from the early twentieth century.

Southwest of the courtyard is a late nineteenth century gable roofed implement shed constructed with spiked post and rails and sided with vertical board. Each end is enclosed, one is a shop, and the other is a wagon shed with double doors on strap hinges.

The twentieth century outbuildings of Cornucopia are evidence of agricultural continuity in Central Delaware in general, and on this farm in particular. After the peach boom, farmers returned to the cash crop staples which remained up until the 1940's cereal crops and dairy products. Presently, crops raised in central Delaware are mostly feed grains: corn and soy beans. Although dairy farming has waned, it has not disappeared.

The farm buildings on this site, although not all of the same period, still follow the form and patterns of traditional buildings of the area, and contribute to the significance of the site by creating a farm ambiance, and by serving as an example of farm building evolution.

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The construction of these managers' homes represents one aspect of the rebuilding phenomenon. Tenant farming was often somewhat centralized with farm machinery taken from farm to farm instead of each tenant having his own. With the advent of horse-drawn machinery, landowners were able to invest heavily in order to better engage in capital intensive grain farming where equipment and speed were needed to plant and harvest in a short period of time. The same advantages were afforded to farmers in the mid-west who flooded the wheat market after the Civil War. During this period, Delaware farmers began cultivating peaches as a cash crop for export to the large eastern cities.

Peaches were grown in Delaware during the eighteenth century primarily for distillation into brandy. Peach trees were first planted to bear market crops in 1832 near Delaware City, and were planted throughout central and southern Delaware from 1850 to 1900. The extension of the railroad and the invention of the "arctic" car enabled orchardists to plant prodigious numbers of trees and be relatively assured of prompt delivery to the big cities. Land values soared, sometimes doubling, between 1850 and 1870. Peach culture declined rather quickly in north central Delaware due to a glutted market and the natural 20-year life span of the peach tree. The greatest factor in the decline was the onset of the "Peach Yellows," a blight which destroyed the fruit and eventually killed the tree.

As greater numbers of trees were planted in southern Delaware and adjacent lands in Maryland, farmers in the north central hundreds returned to the traditional grain and butter cash crops. Some wealthy farmers acquired property in Maryland to continue peach cultivation. The prosperity of this era has led to a local tradition of calling large farm dwellings "Peach houses." These buildings should be more appropriately called "Wheat houses," since it was principally the cultivation of that crop which enabled the farmers to erect such structures.

The dwellings that survive today in the Pencader, Appoquinimink and St. Georges Hundreds were the homes of the wealthy who redefined the architectural landscape even as they redefined farming practices and social relationships. Prior to 1820, houses were constructed on a hall-parlor plan with outbuildings for domestic service functions. The nascent renewal began with the remodeling of older homes in the 1820's and 1830's. The architectural style which emerged featured an unheated center stair passage, and combined Gothic, Italianate and Greek Revival styles expressed in a rather subdued manner. Domestic functions, formerly relegated to outbuildings, were incorporated into the dwelling in the form of a service wing, lending to the building an L-configuration.

Cornucopia is an excellent example of the type of dwelling built during this period. Slightly less sophisticated than its neighbor, Fairview (N-6194) a cubic, brick hip-roofed dwelling, Cornucopia displays all the traits of the stylistic pattern used in the rebuilding of southern New Castle County. Although more traditionally rectangular and single pile in plan compared to some of its cubic and double pile neighbors, frame Cornucopia is nearly identical on the interior. Cornucopia displays the same decorative front rooms featuring elaborately moulded mantels and grained doors, and the less public, plainly trimmed second story and wing rooms. The dormers with segmental arch roofs and pilastered facades are also identical to others in this period. However, a

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major difference is the incorporation of an earlier dwelling as a service wing; something which is seen in southern Delaware but rarely in this section of New Castle County where dwellings in the mid-nineteenth century either totally replaced the previous building or were built on new ground.

The people most likely to have built Cornucopia were John and Mary Price who purchased the property from Samuel Thompson in 1838. The estate name first appears on Beers Atlas of 1868. In 1850, the U.S. census records the Prices as having a family of five children ranging from eight to twelve years of age. Also accounted for on the farm were three black laborers: Robert, John, and Edward Miller.

At roughly 200 acres in 1850, (as recorded in the Agricultural Census) Cornucopia was smaller than the average farm in the Levels (322 improved acres), was larger than the average farm in Pencader Hundred (120 improved acres), and was roughly equal to the average farm size in St. Georges Hundred (198 total acres). Cornucopia must have been either remarkably fecund, or remarkably managed, probably both, to have produced principal crop yields which were recorded as equaling or exceeding the Levels yields. A major emphasis was placed on wheat with a yield of 1400 bushels, double that of the Levels. This was done, perhaps, in lieu of energy expended on butter (400 pounds) and oats (100 bushels), which were somewhat short of other area averages although the Levels also only averaged 420 pounds of butter.

The emphasis on grains continued through 1860 when the 1860 Agricultural Census recorded the substantial amount of grain harvested at Cornucopia including 1200 bushels of wheat, 3000 bushels of Indian corn, 1000 bushels of oats, and 1000 pounds of butter. Other cash producers were the "other cattle" (either beef, cattle, or heifers) and twenty-four swine. Oats, Indian corn, and hay were fed to the livestock which included nine horses, two mules, eleven "milch" cows, and, surprisingly, four working oxen, by then an archaic power source.

By the 1870 Agricultural Census, production was down in all categories except the leading cash generator in the area: orchard produce, which amounted to \$2000 worth for Cornucopia in that year. Respectable amounts of grains and butter were produced, but not in the quantities of past years. Unfortunately, data from the 1880 Agricultural Census is not available for this farm which would undoubtedly trace its return to the grain and butter economy as documented for the area as a whole. Except for a period of about thirty years in the mid-nineteenth century when quick profits were sought from marketing peaches, grain has remained the staple cash crop of Cornucopia up until the present day.

Cornucopia, then, can be seen as an exemplary farm, a place where John and Mary Price raised a large family, bountiful crops, and numerous livestock. This achievement of wealth and status was monumentalized in the construction of a new dwelling and reflected in the appropriate estate title.

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Level of Significance

Local significance is being claimed for this site because of its association with the phenomena of architectural renewal and agricultural reform in southern New Castle County, Delaware.

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This nomination furthers the objectives outlined in the Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan. The study units covered are time periods 1830-1880 and 1880-1940; and the cultural concepts involved are Landscape and Social, Cultural and Economic Processes.

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The boundary of the nominated property lies within two legal parcels as indicated on the attached sketch map which is referenced: New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985, parcel numbers 11-056.00-002 and 11-056.00-006. The portion nominated is a rectangular piece extending 1600 feet northwest of Bethel Church Road with a width of 1325 feet, totaling approximately 50 acres. This configuration was chosen in order to include the farm lane, the agricultural complex, and sufficient land to retain integrity of setting. Included within this rectangle, adjacent to the road, is a separate parcel of one acre numbered 11-056.00-006 as referenced above. This parcel contains a modern dwelling and a portion of the farm lane. The 1/2 acre section with the dwelling is not included within the nominated boundary, but the 1/2 acre containing the farm lane is included to preserve continuity. Although the walnut trees flanking the lane are only 40 years old, and it is probable that they replace older trees, the configuration does follow a historical pattern of landscaping in central Delaware. As the present alignment of the lane is probably original, this justifies nominating a portion of parcel number 11-056.00-006 to enclose the entire lane within the nominated boundary.

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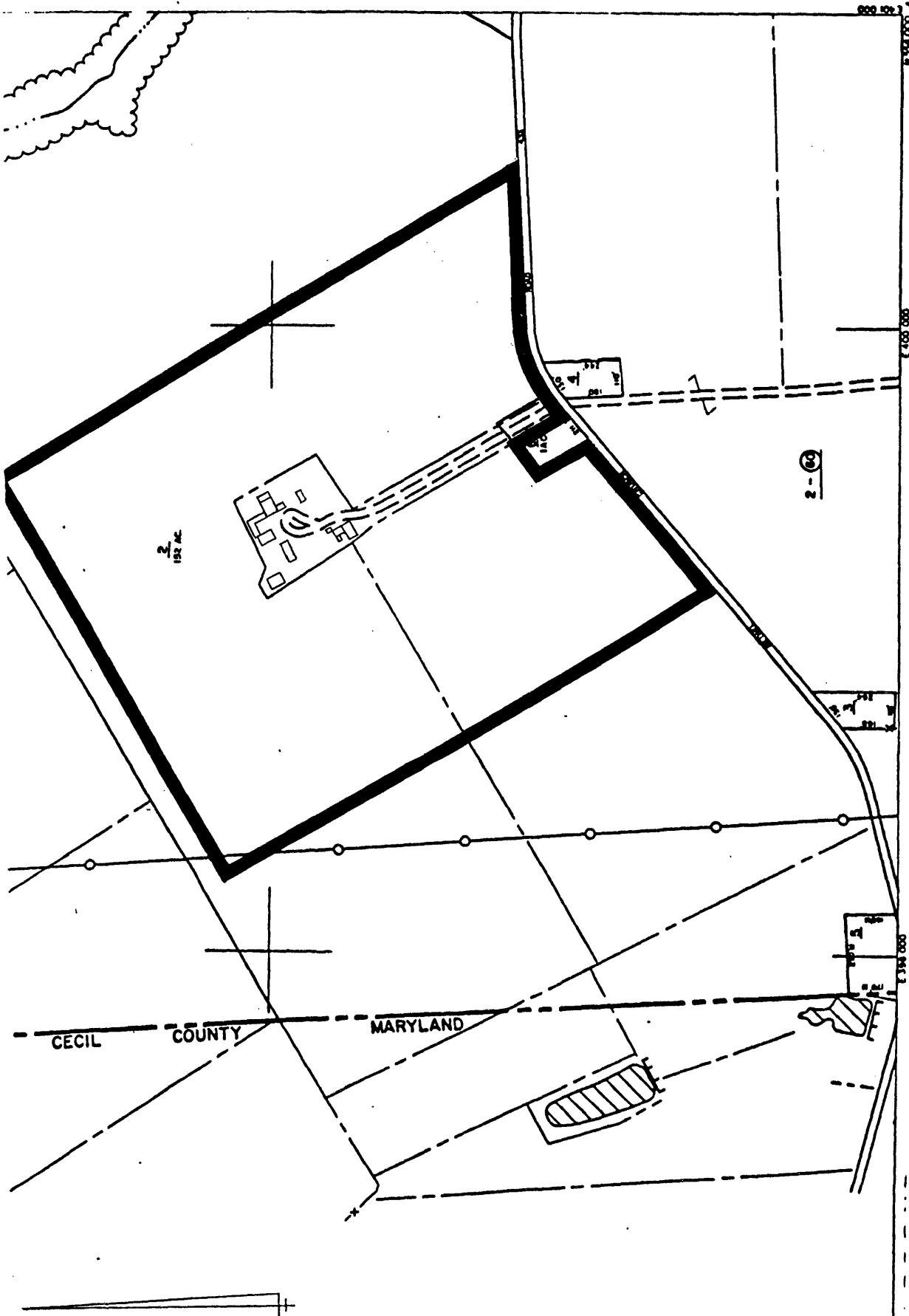
Cornucopia (N-6193)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register
Criteria.



Rita Justice
County Executive
New Castle County, Delaware

2-10-87
Date



PROPERTY MAP
NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE
 HUNDRED: **PENCADER** MAP NO
56

SCALE: 1" = 200'
 DATE OF PLANNING: 10-1-85
 DATE COMPILED: MAP NO. 56
 COUNTY: NEW CASTLE
 STATE: DELAWARE
 GRID SYSTEM: 11-056.00-002

SECTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1980	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1981	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1982	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1984	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1985	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



- PARCEL OUTLINE
- - - - - OUTLINED PARCEL LINE
- PARCEL HOOD
- PARCEL NUMBER
- TOTAL ASSESSED AREA
- TOTAL CALCULATED AREA
- TOTAL ASSESSED AREA
- TOTAL CALCULATED AREA
- TOTAL ASSESSED AREA
- TOTAL CALCULATED AREA

KETCH MAP

ornucopia (N-6193)

ew Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985

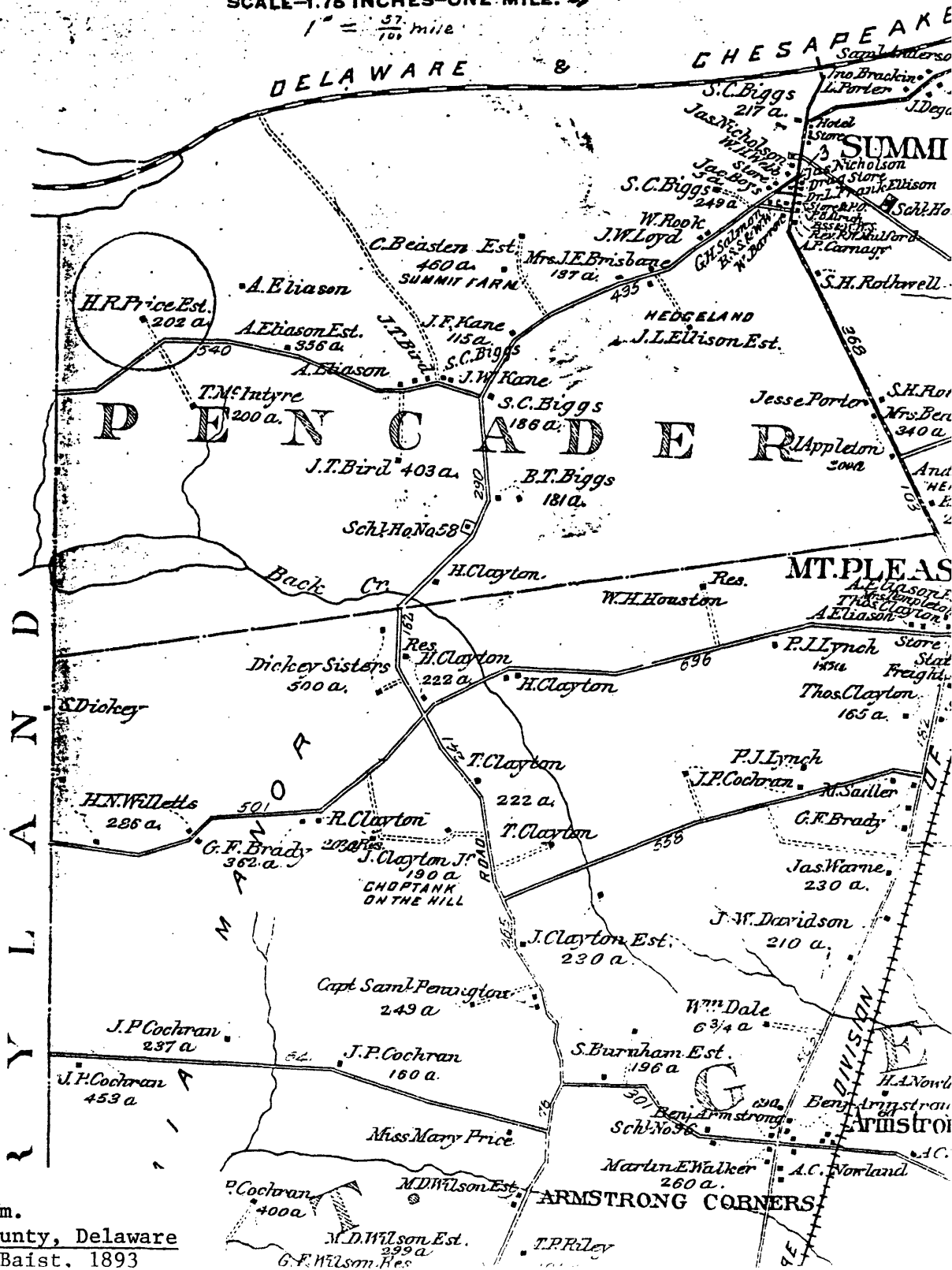
parcel Number 11-056.00-002

scale: 1 inch = 400 feet

ATLAS OF
 PUBLISHED BY G.W. BAIST
NEWCASTLE COUNTY
 DELAWARE

SCALE—1.75 INCHES—ONE MILE.

1" = $\frac{57}{101}$ mile



Baist, G. Wm.

Atlas of New Castle County, Delaware

Philadelphia: G. Wm. Baist, 1893

Christiana Business D

(H)

Richard Humphries... Bricklayer.
T. R. C. Oldham... Resident.
Geo. W. Hudders... Physician and Surgeon.
Wm. E. Small... Merchant Miller.
B. & J. Peters...
Walter F. Southgate... Dealer in General M

