

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

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

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Continuation sheet N-5209

Item number 7

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N-5209

Property Name: ✓ J. K. Williams House (1868), (Tenant farm).

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The J. K. Williams House is located on the north side of Rt. 299 approximately one mile west of the intersection of Route 13 and Rt. 299. The nomination includes seven acres containing the house, granary, barn and cartshed. The nominated parcel is situated on land that has remained agricultural.

The nominated parcel begins 200 feet west of the intersection of the present driveway and Rt. 299, extends north 300 feet, turns east at 90<sup>o</sup> and runs 400 feet, and then runs back to Rt. 299 at a point 200 feet east of the present driveway. The final line joins the points where the east and west boundaries strike the north side of Rt. 299.

The nominated parcel is of sufficient size to provide for the preservation of the house and its associated grounds.

UTM 18.41180.67100 Tax parcel 13-023.00-007

Owner: Felix J. and Mary F. Rutkoske

R. D. 2

Middletown, Delaware 19709

Description:

The J. K. Williams House is a two-and-one-half story, five-bay, frame house constructed in a vernacular Victorian style. A three-by-two bay wing on the rear of the house, forms an ell. The exterior walls are painted white, clad with wood siding. The cross-gabled roof is sheathed with tin and covers two brick end chimneys in the main block, and a third in the rear wing. Two dormers with gable roofs flank the front (south) cross gable. There is one dormer on the north face of the main block. On the rear wing there are three dormers, two facing west, and one facing east. There is a full basement under all sections of the house. The windows are all two-over-two sash with white trim molding and modern storm windows. The attic is lit by three, two-over-two sash gable end windows. There is no evidence of shutters.

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The center front passage on this central-hall plan house is a single leaf, four-panel door. The top two panels are of one pane of glass. The sidelights flanking the door repeat this sectional pattern. The wood moldings that surround the windows are repeated above the door.

There are three porches on this structure, the most elaborate being the three bay, wood porch on the front (south) of the house. Brick columns support the floor of the porch, while four-by-four inch wood posts support the flat roof. Decorative lattice work covers the crawl space beneath the porch. The porch has been ceiled, but the overhanging eaves expose the rafter ends.

The porches on the west and east of the house have low pitched shed roofs, and are supported by wood posts. The west porch is built on brick piers while the foundation of the east porch is stone and brick.

Surrounding the house are a number of outbuildings, the largest of which is a frame barn with a hipped roof addition. There is also a drive-through granary with a shed addition. An equipment shed framed with mortise and tenon joints, completes the courtyard arrangement behind the back of the residence. Centered among these buildings is a modern windmill.

Historical Background and Significance:

The J. K. Williams House and associated farm were operated in the mid nineteenth century as a tenant operation under the direct supervision of the owner, Williams. Williams' home farm was Woodlawn (N-120) to the north and contained a ca. 1855 brick dwelling and a complete complex of barn, cartsheds, granary, and stable erected in 1885-86. The present house and outbuildings on Williams' tenant farm date to the latter period when the owner was investing heavily in capital improvements.

Under Williams' supervision in 1870 300 improved acres on his 326 acre home farm produced butter, wheat, and orchard products for market. These were the customary sources of agricultural revenue for the area of St. Georges Hundred. Unusual though, was Williams' 150 sheep raised for their wool and sold to textile mills in the northern end of the county. The previous owner of the farm, S. Shallcross, also ran the farm as a satellite of his own lucrative agricultural pursuits. Like Williams, Shallcross was involved in raising sheep for wool. In 1850 the owner appears to have been Thomas Ford. Ford was caught up in the areas wheat and dairy economy reaping 730 bushels of grain and 520 pounds of butter annually. Ford owned an unusual number of animals: 14 horses, 10 milk sows, 10 head of cattle, 8 working oxen, 24 sheep, and 30 swine.

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The numbers of animals in the possession of the farm's successive owners is suggestive. No reference to tenants survives in their account books and ledgers. Because of the land required it is possible that the farm was dedicated to livestock and overseen by a resident manager answerable to the owner. The surviving nineteenth century farm buildings—especially the large barn and cartsheds—seem to substantiate this view.

Nomianted by Lauren Archibald and Trish Bensinger