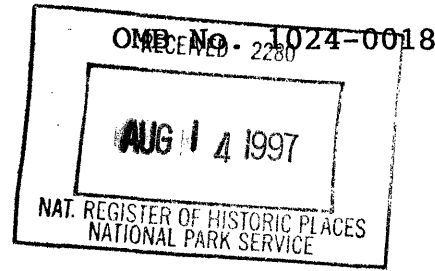


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1120

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Penn Farm of the Trustees of the New Castle Common

other names/site number Penn Farm; Farm No. 7; Delaware Cultural Resource Survey Number N-405

2. Location

street & number 807 Frenchtown Pike; New Castle Hundred
not for publication N/A city or town New Castle vicinity X
state Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003
zip code 19720

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Daniel R. Griffith
Signature of certifying official

July 18, 1997
Date

Delaware State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beal 9/11/87

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

7

1

0

0

8

Noncontributing

4 buildings

1 sites

0 structures

0 objects

5 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>Domestic</u>	Sub:	<u>single dwelling</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>animal facility</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>storage</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>outbuilding</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>Domestic</u>	Sub:	<u>single dwelling</u>
	<u>Trade</u>		<u>produce stand</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>storage</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>outbuilding</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>processing</u>
	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>horticultural facility</u>

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>stone</u>
roof	<u>asphalt shingle</u>
walls	<u>brick</u>
	<u>aluminum siding</u>
other	_____ _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Government

Period of Significance c. 1804-1941

Significant Dates c. 1804

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Trustees of the New Castle Common

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property 108 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>449900</u>	<u>4390460</u>	3	<u>18</u>	<u>449010</u> <u>4391200</u>
2	<u>18</u>	<u>448600</u>	<u>4390550</u>	4	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Martin B. Abbot

organization Kise, Franks and Straw, Inc. date June 1992

street & number 219 North Broad Street telephone (215) 561-1050

city or town Philadelphia state DE zip code 19107

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Clay Bridgewater, President; Trustees of the New Castle Common

street & number P.O. Box 453 telephone (302) 332-2809

city or town New Castle state DE zip code 19720

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Penn Farm
name of property
New Castle County, Delaware
county and State

Physical Description

The Penn Farm agricultural complex is located in the limits of the City of New Castle, New Castle Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, and northeast of U.S. 13 and Frenchtown Pike (SR 273). A farmhouse, barn, granary, milk house, carriage shed, tenant shack, garage, chicken house, and vegetable stand are located on the 108 acres, of otherwise cultivated farmland. The farmhouse and outbuildings are arranged in a courtyard plan with the main house to the east and the outbuildings to the north and west. The property is bordered on the west by U.S. 13 commercial development and on the northeast by residential subdivision.

- (1) Farmhouse -- This building has historically functioned and continues to function as the primary tenant house for the farm. Constructed c. 1804, the building is situated on a knoll with its principal facade facing south. The building is comprised of three distinct sections arranged on an east-west axis.

Running east to west, the three sections are: a two-story, three bay brick section; a two-story, four bay frame section; and a one-story frame shed. The two-story brick and frame sections have gable roofs. The shed has a low pitched shed roof. All three sections are single pile in width. The brick and shed sections are slightly wider than the four-bay middle section. The height of the building's sections descend from east to west with corresponding breaks in the roof. A porch, rebuilt circa 1982, runs the length of the south facade of the frame section and includes the easternmost bay of the shed-roofed section.

While the setting, massing, fenestration, and scale remain largely intact, select original detailing has been removed or obscured. The present appearance of the house, both exterior and interior, is largely the result of a major rehabilitation campaign undertaken circa 1982. While most of the work undertaken at that time was sympathetic to the character of the building, several critical details were removed or covered that would have shed much light on the construction history of the building. For example, all of the sash was replaced and the interior perimeter walls were furred out and insulated.

The Trustees and the current tenant kindly granted access to the first floor, cellar and a section of the second floor. The

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remainder of the building, including the upper floors and attic spaces, were not examined. The building was constructed in stages. The first increment, most likely built in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, was the eastern two-bay section of the present two-story, four-bay frame section. There is some question as to whether this section was one or two stories in height originally. There is a full basement, and no visible evidence survives to indicate that the upper floor was added at a later date.

The second increment, most likely built in the second decade of the nineteenth century, was either the separate or combined erection of the brick section to the east of the frame section and the westerly two bays of the frame section. The second floor of the frame section, if not original to the first construction period, was probably added during this renovation. The third increment was the shed addition at the west end of the building. Its massing and fenestration suggest a late-nineteenth or early-twentieth-century date of construction. The circa 1982 renovation removed or obscured all visible historic fabric preventing any speculation as to the date of construction at this time.

The exterior of the brick section contains three bays on the south (facade) and north (rear) elevations. The east elevation is two bays wide on the first floor, and two bays at the attic level, flanking an interior end chimney.

All of the sash on the first and second floors are double-hung, six-over-six, wood windows, installed circa 1982. The frame and sills on the first floor were installed circa 1982. The second floor and attic level frames and sills are original. The front door is a single-leaf six-panel and appears to be original to the house. The door is framed with a wood threshold, deep flat reveals, and a simple molded surround wood, which were installed circa 1982.

The brick masonry of this section is laid in six-course American Common bond with flush struck joints. The brick has weathered traces of the yellow ochre and white paints which once covered the walls. The brick work above the first floor openings was rebuilt and re-pointed circa 1982 after the original concealed lintels were removed and replaced.

The cornice on the primary facade contains a fascia and crown

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molding. The former is original and the latter was installed circa 1982. The end-wall rake boards appear to be original. The rake boards are simply detailed with a lower beaded edge. The cornice on the rear facade contains a simple fascia and angled cornice mold, both appear to be original to the house. Wrought iron shutter dogs and shadows in the weathered paint indicate that the first floor windows were once fitted with exterior shutters. While the shutter dogs remain, the lintels are no longer extant and were presumably removed when the window frames were replaced circa 1982.

The middle two-story, four-bay frame section has regular fenestration on the south facade and an irregular three-bay fenestration on the north. The west, or end wall, contains two small attic windows. There are two brick chimneys with simple brick caps. One of the chimneys is located at the approximate mid-point of the roof ridge and the other is an interior chimney, centered on the west elevation.

The most prominent feature of the south facade of the frame section is a six bay porch with a concrete base, simple square wood posts, exposed rafters, and aluminum gutters. The whole of this section of the house is covered in aluminum siding. Throughout this section, the sash was replaced during the circa 1982 renovations. The door and window configuration at the west end of the first floor on the south facade was reworked in the circa 1982 renovation to create the present regular fenestration. It appears, based on tenants' recollections, that the windows and doors, removed circa 1982, were late nineteenth or early twentieth century alterations. It is not known if the circa 1982 renovation replicated the original fenestration based on evidence uncovered at that time. The cornice is a simple box which appears original. The aluminum gutters and downspout were added circa 1982. The roof and porch are covered in asphalt shingles.

The one-story shed at the west end of the building is L-shaped and incorporates one bay of the south facade porch. In scale and mass, it appears that this addition could date from the mid-nineteenth through the early-twentieth-centuries. The aluminum siding, gutters, roofing and sash date from the circa 1982 renovations. The original use of this section of the house is not known. However, it most likely functioned originally as domestic offices, i.e., summer kitchen, laundry, larder, etc.

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The brick section contains a full cellar. The cellar walls are laid up in rubblestone which changes to brick courses at exterior grade level. The basement is accessed from the outside via a bulkhead in the south facade. In the northwest corner is a wood stair accessing the first floor. The south wall has a relieving arch and hearth support for the fireplace and chimneys above. The majority of the joists in this section of the basement were replaced circa 1982. Sunk into the floor is the remains of the furnace pit which, according to the present tenant, was wood burning and supplied the central heat until its removal circa 1982.

The first floor is laid out in a side hall and parlor plan; the hall to the west, the parlor to the east. The east wall of the parlor contains a projecting chimney breast with side cupboards. The cupboards are fitted with single-leaf paneled doors. The mantelpiece is a well-detailed late federal period design with engaged pilasters and a tripartite fascia with projecting end and middle blocks. It is believed that this mantelpiece is original to the house. The simple beaded baseboard is original; approximately two-thirds of the heart pine floor boards were replaced circa 1982. The window surrounds and chair rail were installed in 1982. The hall was entered through a double width doorway in the west wall. The opening to the hall was probably installed in the early twentieth century. At present, the opening is cased with a simple molding which appears to be made up of salvaged pieces dating from the early nineteenth century.

The hall has two doors. The primary door to the south and a secondary door under the staircase half-landing located to the north. The primary door is paneled on the exterior and finished with beaded match boards on the interior. The hardware appears original and includes a cast iron and brass rim lock. The staircase is a dog leg with winders. The first run has a simply detailed square newel post, square spindles, and molded handrail. The staircase has been boxed-in with a plastered partition at the landing. This enclosure does not appear original and appears to date from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The door accessing the exterior under the stair landing is single-leaf with six horizontal panels. Based on the panel configuration and molding profiles, this door appears to date from the early twentieth century. The hall trim is simple, including beaded baseboards and molded surrounds. The chair rail and sections of the flooring were

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installed circa 1982.

The dining room occupies the east portion of the four-bay frame section. The room is entered from the hall via a double width opening placed directly opposite the parlor doors. The paired double width openings of the parlor and dining room appear to be late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century alterations. The dining room opening is fitted with double-leaf multiple light doors which, according to the present tenant, were installed prior to 1940.

The north wall of the dining room contains two openings, a window, and a single-leaf door at the west end leading to the porch. The west wall has a mantelpiece with a simple molded surround fascia and shelf. The fireplace opening is bricked-in and plastered. The hearth was constructed of salvaged brick installed circa 1982. To the north of the fireplace is a matched plank single-leaf door leading to a closet. The depth of the closet suggests that this may have originally served as a stair opening to the cellar. To the south of the fireplace is a single-leaf door leading to the kitchen. The window surrounds and chair rail in this room were installed circa 1982.

There is a full cellar beneath the dining room. The walls are rubblestone with brick rows as a top course. The west end contains an arched chimney support and an opening leading to a crawl space to the west. At the east end of the cellar is an opening leading to the cellar in the brick section. The wall between the two cellars has a highly visible vertical seam clearly indicating phased construction.

The kitchen is located to the west of the dining room. The north wall has one window opening to the west fitted with multiple light casement sash. The south wall has two double-hung six-over-six windows, and a single-leaf door to the west. The current tenants stated that a door was removed in the north wall circa 1982 and that the present six-over-six double-hung windows in the south wall replaced a paired casement sash removed circa 1982 renovations.

The west wall has a central fireplace flanked to the north by a boxed-in closet and winder stair to the second floor. The closet and stair enclosure are sheathed in plank boards. The current tenant stated that the brick masonry of the chimney breast was

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exposed by the removal of plaster in the circa 1982 renovations. Exposing the brick revealed that the fire box opening was originally larger and was lowered at a later date with several brick rows held in place with a wrought iron angle iron. The lower hinge for a fireplace crane remains in situ within the fire box. All of the remaining trim, flooring, mantel shelf, and cabinets were installed in the circa 1982 renovations.

There is a crawl space below the kitchen which is accessed through the cellar below the dining room. The walls of the crawl space were parged and the floor joists replaced circa 1982.

The shed to the west was not accessible. The current tenants stated that this room was completely refurbished in the circa 1982 renovations. Contributing building.

- (2) Barn -- The barn is a Pennsylvania, or bank barn, form consisting of the main block with gabled end-walls to the east and west, a ramp to the main floor on the north elevation, and ground level forebay on the south elevation. The base of the barn is of rubblestone and upper levels are timber with board-and-batten siding. The main floor and upper section replaced the original barn, which was destroyed by fire in the 1920s.

The lower rubblestone section contains a regular fenestration of six-over-six double-hung sash in the east-west elevations. The east elevation has a single-leaf door, which appears to have been added in the early twentieth century. The south elevation forebay is divided into three sections, and the central bay is recessed. The current arrangement dates from the rebuilding of the barn following the fire. The forebay was most likely originally left open to provide a shelter for stock.

The interior of the lower level was reconfigured when adapted for dairy use in the early twentieth century, and contains a typical stall and stanchion layout. The main floor is divided into a central threshing floor with flanking hay mows. The roof is supported by the framing of the mows and timber trusses incorporating King post trusses and canted Y braces. The interior is lit by paired six-over-six sash in the gables. The forebay elevation contains an off-center, double-leaf door planked by six-over-six double-hung sash with simple surrounds. The rafter ends

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are exposed and the roof is covered in corrugated metal.
Contributing building.

- (3) Granary -- The granary is constructed in the typical early-twentieth-century arrangement of a raised gable end section flanked by lower sheds. The principal elevation faces east and contains three symmetrically arranged double-leaf doors fitted with large strap hinges. The interior is lit by six-over-six double-leaf sash in the gable. The whole is sheathed in board-and-batten siding. The roof is clad with a terneplate standing seam roof. The granary was extensively restored in 1991. The broad-and-batten sheathing and roof were installed at that time. **Contributing building.**
- (4) Carriage Shed -- According to the present tenant, this building is probably the oldest outbuilding on the farm. The shed is six-bays in length with a gabled roof overhang. The frame building is enclosed on three sides with vertical plank sheathing. The south elevation is open and divided by a series of posts which define the bays. The roof is covered with tin plates over earlier wood shakes. The building's massing and overall design suggest a mid-nineteenth century date of construction. However, the building, which rests on a cast in-place concrete foundation, appears to have been repaired and rehabilitated several times. The framing elements are made up of a mixture of timber ranging from salvaged hand-axed sections to recent pole barn post supports. **Contributing building.**
- (5) Tenant Dwelling -- The tenant dwelling, located west of the carriage shed, is a small one-story, one-bay frame building with a gabled end roof. According to the present tenant, this building was constructed on his grandfather's farm, located southeast of Hare's Corner, around 1940. The building was moved to its present site in 1945 when the present tenant took over the lease of this property. The building consists of clapboarded exterior walls, a single six-light sash window, and on the south elevation, an off-center, single leaf vertical matchboard door. The roof is covered with corrugated metal. The interior framing is exposed and the sill rests on an earth floor. The ceiling is covered in beaded boards. The building was used by the present tenant for housing "the hired man" and is referred to as the tenant shack. **Contributing building.**
- (6) Chicken House/Garage -- The garage was originally constructed as a chicken house in the late 1930's for the sum of \$175.00 according to

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the present tenant. Mr. Meggison was the tenant at the time of the construction of this outbuilding and was responsible for constructing several poultry related outbuildings on the farm during his tenancy. **Contributing building.**

- (7) **Chicken House/Repair Shop** -- This building, constructed in the 1930's, is frame, eight-bays in length and two-bays in width with a single slope shed roof. The building is clad in vertical boards with a regular fenestration on the south or principal facade. The south facade contains six symmetrical nine-light windows flanked by single-leaf doors. The cornice is exposed rafters with a single plank fascia. The roof is covered in corrugated metal. **Contributing building.**
- (8) **Chicken House/Machinery Shed** -- This building, now in ruin condition, was constructed between 1930 and 1935. The building was of frame construction with a gable end roof and regular fenestration. The building was constructed perpendicularly to the southwest corner of the barn. This building and the granary to the east defined and partially enclosed the barnyard. The building has suffered major structural failure. The walls have collapsed and the roof structure has fallen into the remainder of the building. **Non-Contributing building.**
- (9) **Silo Foundation**-- The silo was constructed in the early 1960s adjacent to the barn and the milk house. Dairy operations ceased in the mid-1970s. The silo was removed and only the concrete foundation survives. **Non-Contributing site.**
- (10) **Milk House** -- The milk house was constructed in the 1960s presumably replacing an earlier structure. The building is constructed of concrete block, one-story in height with a gable end roof. The south facade contains a single-leaf door and a four-light metal sash. The east facade contains a pair of four-light metal sash. The gable ends of the roof are sheathed in wood and the roof is covered in asphalt. **Non-Contributing building.**
- (11) **Greenhouse** -- The greenhouse is a modern, metal framed green house, gable end roof translucent corrugated plastic walls and roof. Constructed circa 1980, this structure is now abandoned and in ruinous condition. **Non-Contributing building.**

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- (12) **Produce Stand** -- The produce stand was constructed circa 1980 by the present tenant for the purpose of selling seasonal produce, ornamental plants, and nursery items. Both its wood frame end roof and its walls are clad in corrugated metal. There is an asphalt and gravel mix parking lot to the south. **Non-Contributing building.**

- (13) **Farm Lane** -- This dirt and gravel farm lane, dating pre-1941, runs north-south through the property providing access to the complex from both Frenchtown Pike and School Lane. **Contributing site.**

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Statement of Significance

Penn Farm is the last remaining farm of the eleven farms established in the early-nineteenth century on the lands of New Castle Common. New Castle Common was a large tract of common land that was set aside in the seventeenth century for the benefit of the people of New Castle. The Common is "unique in character, and almost without its counterpart in this or any other sister state and reflecting in our original settlers the ancient customs and habits of the land from which they came".¹ Originally the Common served as both pasture land for livestock and a source of wood for the inhabitants of New Castle. The common lands were divided up into eleven tenant farms in the late-eighteenth century. The others have been lost over time to development or to government projects. As the last surviving farm of New Castle Common, and as an example of the evolution of a tenant farm, Penn Farm is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the state level of significance.

The documentary evidence places the construction date of the frame section of the house at Penn Farm between 1799 and 1828; this work was done either by John Crow or his tenant. Erected between 1799 and 1810, it was the first building worthy of note by the Trustees of New Castle Common. The brick structure was added to the frame house between 1814 and 1828, the latter being the latest possible date according to tax records. Not much is known about the original outbuildings except that there was a stable, two corn houses and possibly a separate kitchen in 1810. The first mention of a granary was made in 1852 while a barn is noted in 1856. The original construction date of the first granary and barn may precede these mid-nineteenth dates significantly. Both were rebuilt to some extent in 1916.

The New Castle Common and the Trustees

New Castle Common is a large tract of common land that was set aside in the seventeenth century for the benefit of the people of New Castle. The Common is "unique in character, and almost without its counterpart in this or any other sister state and reflecting in our original settlers the ancient customs and habits of the land from which they came".² Prior to the estab-

¹Trustees of New Castle Common, 1944: 5

²Ibid.

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lishment of the farms, the Common served as both pasture land for livestock and a source of wood for the inhabitants of New Castle.

It is unclear when the Common was established as an entity. At least one account places it as circa 1660, indicating it may have originated during Dutch settlement of Delaware.³ The Common was definitely existing prior to the arrival of William Penn in 1682. It was under Penn's jurisdiction that the Common was formally granted to the inhabitants of New Castle and surveyed in 1704. The result was a 1068-acre tract north and west of New Castle.

Upon completion of the survey, no person or body was charged with protecting the Common from private property encroachments or illegal timbering. Such activities resulted in the inhabitants petitioning the Legislature of Delaware in 1760, suggesting the incorporation of trustees to protect the Common. When the legislature took no action on the petition, it was presented to Thomas and Richard Penn, the "true and absolute Proprietaries and Governors in Chief of the Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex, on the Delaware, and Province of Pennsylvania".⁴ It was thus that the Trustees of New Castle Common, which consisted of 13 citizens of New Castle, was incorporated by charter from the Proprietaries in 1764. The charter granted the Trustees perpetual succession and legal power to protect the Common from wrongful usage. Annual rent, if demanded by the Proprietaries or their heirs, was set at one ear of Indian corn.

It was realized in the following decades the charter was too restrictive, and did not allow the Trustees or the inhabitants of New Castle to derive much benefit from the Common. At that time, the tract probably consisted entirely of woodland from which the heavier timber trees had been taken, leaving overgrown fields and brush land.⁵ The Trustees felt the charter limited their use of the Common land and, as a result, in 1775, they presented the Assembly with a bill that would ease these restrictions. However, due to the ensuing Revolution, the bill was never acted upon.

Following the American Revolution, a representative of the Penn family, Edmund Physick, met with the Trustees, who argued that part of the Common

³Trustees of New Castle Common, 1944:12

⁴Trustees of New Castle Common, 1944:13

⁵Trustees of New Castle Common, 1944:18

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should be leased as tenant farms, and the rent then be applied to charitable purposes. The Penn family agreed in 1791 to grant the land outright to the Trustees. As part of this agreement, certain stipulations were included, such as the Common would be used solely for the benefit of the citizens of New Castle and that no parts of the Common could be sold. In 1792, the General Assembly recognized the grant and re-incorporated the Trustees with an enlargement of the powers existing in the old charter. Circa 1804, the Common was divided into a number of farms to be rented in tenancy.⁶ The farms were leased for terms from 15 to 30 years. The leases provided that the tenants should erect houses and buildings on the farm. Each farm was assigned a number and a name, usually after one of the Trustees, although Penn Farm (No. 7) was named in honor of the proprietary Penn family.

The other farms were named as follows: the original No. 1 farm became the Jefferson Farm; Nos. 2 and 4 were combined about 1812 and later became the Stockton Farm; No. 3 became the Oglethorpe Farm; No. 5 became known as Centre Hall Farm; No. 6 was divided between No. 5 and No. 7 (Penn Farm); No. 8 became the Union Farm; No. 9 was known as the Bayard Farm until the destruction of all buildings by fire in 1883, when the land was added to the Union Farm; No. 10 became the Clayton Farm; and No. 11 became the Model Farm.⁷

The rental received from the farms was used to benefit the people of New Castle. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Trustees have assumed a role of civic benefactors, with the town as the beneficiary. As early as 1807, the Trustees helped defray the expenses of furnishing light for the town. Also, both the Town Hall and Market House were built by the Trustees. Other improvements have included paving streets, erecting wharves, providing schools, funding volunteer fire companies, and creating parks and playgrounds. The nature of the original grant has evolved over the years.

The tenant farms remained in place until 1941, when all of the Trustees' land northwest of the Dupont Highway (U.S. 13), between Basin Road and Churchman's Bridge Road, was taken by condemnation for the New Castle County Airport, presently the Greater Wilmington Airport. This included much of the land of the Union Farm, including all of the land of the original Bayard Farm. The remaining farmland was incorporated into Penn Farm. In 1944, the Trustees secured a change in their charter which allowed the sale of land only if the

⁶Brows et. al. 1990:132

⁷Trustees of New Castle Common, 1944:40

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funds were used for investments open to Delaware trusts. In fact, the Trustees had secured the right to sell Common land in the late-nineteenth century. In 1885, the Delaware Legislature granted the Trustees the Authority to sell Common land and invest the proceeds in "good real estate security" (Higgins 1973: 50). Since 1944 all of the Trustees' farms have been developed for commercial, institutional, or residential use, leaving the Penn Farm as the only vestige of the Common's agricultural past.

The Penn Farm

The Penn Farm was one of eleven farms established in the mid-1790's subdividing the 1000 acre tract of land known as the New Castle Common. In 1792 the Trustees created an ordinance which created guidelines for sub-dividing and leasing the farms including the minimum sizes of the planned farms. The ordinance also called for the tenant to make improvements including, "...the out Lines thereof (each farm) to be secured by hedging and Ditching, and build thereon a brick House twenty feet by sixteen-two stories high, and Cover the same with a Roof of Cedar Shingles."⁸ These improvements would be verified by the Acting Committee of the Trustees of New Castle Common who would also be charged with collecting rent, writing leases, and other daily business⁹. The term of leasing was initially set at thirty years, but was later altered to fifteen, five and eventually one year.¹⁰ The mandate for tenant-financed improvements is significant because it eliminated the possibility that the Trustees would be in possession of construction records for the early period of the Penn Farm. Physical improvements increased the value of the property and thus benefit the Trustees of New Castle Common. Although, initially they were forbidden from selling any of the land, they could mortgage the property to finance civic improvements within the City of New Castle.

According to the surviving account books of the Trustees of New Castle Common, the Penn Farm (then known as Farm No. 7) was leased by John Crow for

⁸Trustees of New Castle Common Minutes, 1:21 (6 March 1792)

⁹Title Papers of the New Castle Common: Charger and Acts of Assembly: Incorporating and Enlarging the Corporate Powers of the Trustees and the By-Laws of the Corporation. (New Castle, Delaware: C.H. Sentman, 1893), 23

¹⁰TNCC., Minutes, 1:51 (10 January 1803); 1:311-312 (1 November 1853); one Michael Callahan rented the Penn Farm on one year terms after circa 1860.

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a term of fifteen years. John Crow was a member of the Trustees of New Castle Common as well as an owner of a tavern located on Delaware Street in New Castle.¹¹ During Crow's tenure with the Trustees of New Castle Common, the board normally met at his tavern. According to Constance Cooper, Crow was the owner of "one of the better taverns," in New Castle. Crow was also a member of almost every social and political organization in the town and county of New Castle, and the state of Delaware.

Apparently Crow was almost always a recording secretary for those bodies.¹² There is little evidence concerning his political power, but the tax rolls of 1816-1817 show that he was economically ambitious, renting farms in other hundreds in addition to the Penn Farm. Crow apparently had the influence and respect to be able to be elected to the Acting Committee despite a ruling by the Trustees that he could not rent Common property while serving on that committee.¹³ After the motion was read requiring Crow to vacate his seat, he was again elected to the Acting Committee.

It appears however, that Crow's influence was not unlimited. In order to renew his lease he was required to furnish significant improvements before 1814 when the term of his lease expired. A report entered in the minutes in 1810 reports that Crow's farm "...at Present with Thorn Hedges and an orchard planted therein of 140 apple Trees also a peach orchard Buildings therein a Frame House Two Stories High a Frame (Kitchen?) one a half stories a Stable & Two Corn Houses-" To meet the stipulations of the 1792 ordinances and be able to renew his lease, Crow needed to construct a brick house by the year 1814.¹⁴ It was probably to Crow's advantage to improve the property since he would be able to sublease the property at a higher price.

The neighboring farm, No. 6, leased by James Lackey had no significant improvements except for "...an old Log House-".¹⁵ Lackey's lease was not

¹¹Jennette Eckman, New Castle on the Delaware, (New Castle, Delaware: New Castle Historical Society, 1950), 86.

¹²Constance Jean Cooper, A Town Among Cities: New Castle, Delaware 1780-1840. (University of Delaware, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1983), 304.

¹³TNCC., Minutes, 1:46 (2 July 1798).

¹⁴Ibid., 1:75 (4 December 1810).

¹⁵Ibid., This is also significant because the Penn Farm is later known as Farm No. 6.

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renewed by the Trustees. Instead of the farm being leased to another tenant it was divided between John Crow and the leaseholder of Farm No. 5, Charles Thomas. Because no improvements had taken place on Farm No. 6, Crow and Thomas were required to construct "...an addition the House already (illeg.) by them to be Built on the Tract...Buildings equal to half of the present...Houses...".¹⁶

After circa 1860 when the farm was first given its name "Penn", it was then known as Farm No. 6. Before this time the original Farm No. 6 (that formally leased by James Lackey until 1811) was divided between the farms numbered five and seven. Apparently the farms traded designations for reasons still unknown at some point before 1863. By the year 1863, farms No. 6 and No. 7 existed independently. By this time farm No. 7 had been reduced to eighteen acres of land while farm No. 6 had increased to 141 acres.

The brick portion of the Penn farmhouse was constructed by 1828 at the latest. The tax assessment for New Castle Hundred in 1828 was the only assessment to list the sub-divisions of the property. In that year the Penn Farm was assessed for \$2700 and contained a brick house. By this time all of the farms on the Common except for two had brick farm houses.¹⁷ By this time John Crow had died and the lease was transferred to Andrew Colesbury.¹⁸ The probate documents for the estate of John Crow do mention a tenant by the name of Thomas Booth who appears to have paid rent to Crow both through crops and cash.¹⁹ It is unclear whether Colesbury leased that property until 1834 when Dr. Henry Colesbury (probably Andrew's father) assumed the lease.²⁰

Dr. Colesbury, according to an entry in the minutes of the Trustees of New Castle Common, rented the farm to one Henry Reynolds, who later leased directly from the Trustees of New Castle Common from 1844 to 1856. It is in these years that a clearer picture is drawn of what activities are taking place on the Penn Farm. The Acting Committee of the Trustees of New Castle Common reported in 1844 that the farm had produced 850 bushels of wheat, 1200

¹⁶Ibid., 1:79 (5 April 1811).

¹⁷Tax Assessment, New Castle Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, 1928.

¹⁸Trustees of New Castle Common, Account Book, 1:69.

¹⁹Estate of John Crow, Settlement, (19 September 1828).

²⁰Ibid., 33,69,77.

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bushels of corn, and 1200 bushels of oats.²¹ In 1852, \$600 was allocated for a granary on the Penn Farm.²² It is unclear from the minutes whether this constituted a new building or major repairs to an existing structure. It also cannot be determined if this structure, if in fact new, was replacing an older structure serving the same purpose.

The date 1852 is also significant for the history of the Penn Farm because it is the first time construction was paid for by the Trustees of New Castle Common for that farm. This is a departure from the earlier policy of tenant-financed improvements created in the late-eighteenth century. The precedent appears to have been established by a tenant named James McCoy, who in 1827 listed a number of improvements he desired before leasing a farm on the New Castle Common.²³ By 1832, funds were being allocated to McCoy for various improvements.²⁴ This policy change eventually included most major repairs, construction as well as taxes on the property (levied after the year 1828), lime, and fertilizer.

The first entry in the minutes to mention the erection of out-buildings on the Penn Farm was in 1852 when \$600 was allocated for the building of a granary.²⁵ The first mention of a barn at the Penn Farm was in 1856 when it was noted in a report that the existing structure was in disrepair. A new barn was proposed but it appears that no action by the trustees was even taken on this matter unless the tenant paid for the construction.²⁶ In that same year the farm was leased by Michael Callahan who apparently found the whole farm suffering from neglect. Henry Reynolds was fined \$400 for damages after leaving the farm.²⁷ By 1863, Reynolds was living in Maryland and still had not paid for the damages.²⁸ At this time the Trustees set out on an

²¹TNCC, Minutes, 1:222-223 (December 1844).

²²Ibid., 1:293-294 (26 July 1852).

²³Ibid., 1:144 (February, 1827).

²⁴Ibid., 1:161 (22 December 1832).

²⁵Ibid., 1:293-294 (26 July 1852).

²⁶Ibid., 1:345-346 (13 March 1856).

²⁷Ibid., 1:417 (6 March 1860).

²⁸Ibid., 1:466 (5 May 1863).

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expensive program to rehabilitate the Penn Farm now rented by Callahan. Between 1856 and 1867 over \$1700 was spent on repairs and improvements to the Penn Farm.²⁹ Throughout this period of high spending, much of the work was not enumerated so it is unclear if any new structures were built during this period. From the size of each allocation, averaging \$200 to \$300, the expenditures appear to be major repairs on existing structures. Of the work that is enumerated, most of it was for lime and for repairs on the fences. During Callahan's tenure at the Penn Farm, there appears a bill for a privy constructed for \$16.50 by J. Mornt.³⁰

At the same time, Callahan was falling into debt. By 1863 he owed the Trustees of New Castle Common \$1184.76.³¹ By 1865 Callahan could not afford to pay his rent in cash and arranged a share-cropping lease with the Trustees.³² Callahan sold hay, wheat, oats, pork, corn and potatoes to the Trustees to pay his rent. It also appears that Callahan was paid for marketing the crops he sold to the Trustees which disqualified this arrangement from being sharecropping in the classic sense of the term.³³

This arrangement became common on many of the Common's farms until circa 1870 when the trustees began to demand cash from their tenants once again.³⁴ The mid-nineteenth century appears to be the only period when rents were not paid in cash, with a few exceptions, including John Crow in the early-nineteenth century, who paid both in cash and for services rendered as a Trustee of the New Castle Common.³⁵ By the time the Callahan's rented the farm the leases

²⁹Ibid., 1:348-517 (3 June 1856 to 4 June 1867).

³⁰TNCC., Account Book, 2:171-172 (21 June 1861).

³¹TNCC., Minutes., 1:467 (5 May 1863).

³²TNCC., Account Book, 1:110.

³³Ibid., 2:381-382, 405-406. The arrangement differs from the form of sharecropping common after the Civil War in much of the American South because there was no set percentage of crops to be used to pay rent. There was also not the outright dependency on the landlord that existed in many sharecropping situations, with the landlord selling the tenant finished goods at inflated prices. In all cases, the dollar value of the crops were used to account for payment. In a sense, Callahan was still paying his rent in an equivalent of cash.

³⁴TNCC., Minutes., (5 December, 1871).

³⁵TNCC., Account Book Vol. I, Folios 27, 31, 45, 51, 59. 1:27, 31, 45, 51, 59.

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had been reduced to one year terms. This was a further decrease from the five-year lease enacted in 1853.³⁶ Apparently because of the growing number of tenants in arrears, the Trustees felt it necessary to have the option of evicting a tenant who appeared unable to pay rent in a somewhat timely manner.³⁷

For the Penn Farm at least, this share-crop arrangement lasted a bit longer. In 1867 Michael Callahan died and the lease was offered to his widow, Mary, on the same terms. It was not until the year 1872 that the Trustees demanded cash from Mary Callahan as well.³⁸ She was able to pay for one year but when the rent was raised to \$1,150 in 1873, tending to and paying for the farm became too much a burden for her and the farm was leased to Walter Beck.³⁹

During Beck's tenure on the Penn Farm the farm was connected to a new water system from a reservoir on Basin Road (now State Route 141). Approximately \$800 was expended for pipes.⁴⁰ The water probably did not enter the dwelling but rather via an outside pump. Beck died in 1878 and the Penn Farm was leased to Ezekiel Wheatly.⁴¹ Wheatly soon ran into financial difficulty and he was allowed to give his corn crop in exchange for the rent.⁴²

Wheatly, like his predecessors at the Penn Farm, was often in debt and had some trouble keeping the buildings in repair. When James McElvee took up residence in 1890, it was estimated that repairs to the farm would be about

³⁶TNCC., Minutes, 1:311-312 (1 November 1853).

³⁷Later in the nineteenth century, because of chronic low prices for farm commodities, most of the tenants had some outstanding debt. There are a few instances in the 1870's through the turn of the century where the tenants collectively requested a reduction of rents because of low farm commodity prices. For example see TNCC., Minutes 2:107 (12 April 1878): "A number of the present tenants were admitted who represented that they were not able to pay the present rent..." due to low crop prices.

³⁸Ibid., 2:6 (5 December 1871).

³⁹Ibid., 2:53 (2 December 1873).

⁴⁰Ibid., 2:79 (14 June 1875).

⁴¹Ibid., 2:101 (12 April, 1878).

⁴²Ibid., December 6, 1881, Vol. II, 134-135. 2:134-135 (6 December 1881).

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\$500 and later in the year a repair bill was received for \$209.⁴³ McElvee must have died during that year because in 1891 the minutes refer to a Mrs. McElvee who had given up the Penn Farm. It was subsequently rented to William Shokley on condition that he provide "sufficient security" for his rent. Nothing of note is mentioned concerning the tenure of William Shokley but he does not stay for very long. Robert Montgomery assumed the lease in 1892 and increased the size of the Penn Farm by renting two fields from the neighboring Union Farm, increasing the acreage from 141 to 173 acres.⁴⁴

Montgomery, for reasons unknown, left the Penn farm two years later and it was rented to William B. McCoy.⁴⁵ Apparently McCoy did not reside on the property but lived with a relative on a neighboring farm. The trustees felt it necessary to hire someone to watch the farm. A Mr. Fisher was hired to watch the farm in exchange for the use of the stable for his cattle.⁴⁶ William McCoy reaped the benefits of Montgomery's departure, harvesting the former tenant's winter wheat for the trustees in exchange for one-third of the crop. From 1894 to about 1906 the farmhouse appears to have been abandoned with the lessees using the fields and probably some of the out-buildings. During this period there are virtually no references to any major or minor repairs to the buildings. In 1905-06, Joseph Quigley leased the farm, and to the great annoyance of the trustees, used the house to store straw.⁴⁷

Abraham Ingram, who took over the Penn Farm after Quigley in 1907, complained to the trustees concerning the condition of the Penn Farm.⁴⁸ Ingram did not appear to get much relief until 1910 when Ingram had a shed rebuilt that was damaged by wind. The second decade of the twentieth century also sees the reconstruction of the granary and the barn. Both buildings were constructed between 1914 and 1915 by H.C. Clark for the sum of \$3635.00.⁴⁹ During the

⁴³Ibid., 2:230 (15 January 1890); 2:234 (1 July 1890); 2:238 (13 December 1890).

⁴⁴Ibid., 2:247 (12 January 1892). TNCC., Public Financial Statements, 1892, 1893.

⁴⁵Ibid., 2:283 (2 January 1894).

⁴⁶Ibid., 2:285 (6 March 1894).

⁴⁷Ibid., 2:431 (4 December 1906).

⁴⁸Ibid., 2:469 (6 October 1908).

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latter year, a new tenant by the name of Albert Lofland was chosen by the trustees to become tenant of the Penn Farm. Lofland's tenure saw numerous improvements including a concrete floor for the cow shed in 1918,⁵⁰ a shed and corn crib in 1922,⁵¹ paint on the exterior of the barn and house in 1924,⁵² as well as new interior doors for the farm house in the same year.⁵³

In January of 1927 a unique proposal was submitted to the Trustees from the Mason Alfalfa Process Company.⁵⁴ The company proposed renting the Penn farm for a term of five years to grow and process alfalfa. The company sent the trustees promotional material advocating the soil benefits that alfalfa could bring. The trustees accepted the proposal after consultation with professors of agriculture at the University of Delaware and soon the Mason Alfalfa Process Company had rented over 700 acres of farmland on the New Castle Common. This included farms numbered two, three, five, eight, nine as well as the Penn Farm.

The company retained tenants on each farm, presumably to oversee the various tracts and fields. Although the tenant for the Penn Farm is not stated in the record, it was most likely Lofland. The tenure of the Mason Alfalfa Process Company ended in 1932 when their processing plant, which was located on the present U.S. Route 13, was condemned by the state so the road could be significantly widened. The Penn Farm was subsequently rented by John Gavatos, a bank president and hobby farmer.⁵⁵ It is not stated clearly in the records, but there is a reference to a barn being "finished" in 1933.⁵⁶ This might refer to modifications made to turn the existing barn into a dairy. Mentioned also was the installation of stanchions at the Penn Farm, presum-

⁴⁹Ibid., 3:78 (2 November 1915).

⁵⁰Ibid., 3:107 (3 November 1918).

⁵¹Ibid., 3:144 (1 August 1922).

⁵²Ibid., 3:161 (3 June 1924).

⁵³Ibid., 3:167 (2 December 1924).

⁵⁴Ibid., 3:193 (31 January 1927).

⁵⁵Ibid., 3:298 (1 November 1932). John Gavatos to Patrick McCrory, Treasurer, September 26, 1932. (TNCC., Papers).

⁵⁶Ibid., June 29, 1933, Vol III, 316. 3:316 (29 June 1933).

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ably for dairy use. However, another entry refers to a "new barn" which contained thirty head of cattle.⁵⁷ There is no other structure on the site which would correspond to what is written in that entry. The problem might be one of context, with only contemporary observers understanding the full meaning of the language.

Although Gavatos had presumably performed some renovations to the farm, it was in "miserable condition" according to the Acting Committee in 1934. Gavatos was apparently in over his head financially, and was forced to give up possession of the Penn Farm in 1936 when the lease went to August "Pete" Lerony.⁵⁸ Lerony stayed on the Penn Farm from 1936 to 1941. During his tenure, a milk-house was built⁵⁹ as well as a new metal roof and new siding for the granary.⁶⁰

These improvements were not enough for the new tenant, Edward M. Meggison, who took residence on the Penn Farm in 1941. He demanded that the farm be provided with hot and cold running water and a bathroom inside the house.⁶¹ In 1942, Meggison was still complaining to the board and soon major renovations were undertaken.⁶² In 1944 the Penn Farm was found to be in "excellent condition".⁶³ Meggison also undertook some of his own renovations to the farm including a poultry house which was purchased in 1945 by the incoming tenant, Joseph Quigley, whose son and family reside on the Penn Farm today.⁶⁴

The Penn Farm represents a unique episode in the history of tenant farming. In the past ten years scholars working in early American history have become

⁵⁷Ibid., June 5, 1934, Vol. iii, 340. 3:340 (5 June 1934).

⁵⁸Ibid., January 7, 1936, Vol. III, 359. 3:359 (7 January 1936).

⁵⁹Ibid., May 5, 1936, Vol. III, 369. 3:369 (5 May 1936).

⁶⁰Ibid., June 4, 1940, Vol. III, 428. 3:428 (4 June 1940).

⁶¹Ibid., November 4, 1941, Vol. III, 448. 3:448 (4 November 1941).

⁶²Ibid., March 3, 1942, Vol. IV, 6; June 17, 1944, Vol. IV, 10-11. 4:6 (3 March 1942); 4:10-11 (17 June 1944).

⁶³Ibid., June 17, 1944, Vol. IV, 73. 3:73 (17 June 1944).

⁶⁴Ibid., March 6, 1945, Vol. IV, 119. 4:119 (6 March 1945).

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increasingly interested in this mode of agricultural production.⁶⁵ The arrangement on the farms administered by the Trustees of New Castle Common is not limited to one particular period, but stretches from the early national period up to and through the Great Depression. Therefore it has the potential to interpret and is representative of the history of agriculture and tenant farming over a long span of time. The Penn Farm is also somewhat unique in that it was leased by a charitable organization.⁶⁶ When most think of tenancy, they would immediately picture a private landlord renting land to a tenant. Often there might develop some sort of sharecropping arrangement which actually became quite common in the lower South where farmers did not have ready access to cash. This is not the case with the Penn Farm where almost all of the rents are paid in cash or equivalents of cash except for a short period of time during the mid-nineteenth century where a form of sharecropping was utilized.

During the early national period a typical tenant in the region might be an agricultural laborer on a private farm or a cottager living on the margins of a farm property often renting a field or two to supplement their income. In other cases, farmers might rent entire farms from private landlords. For the first part of the nineteenth century, most of the tenants on the Common owned property elsewhere and subleased the Common properties to subtenants. John Crow, a local property holder who originally leased the Penn Farm, is a perfect example. This was a method to earn extra income without the capital investment of purchasing the property outright and the liabilities the responsibility could entail.

By 1850 most of the Common farms appear to have been rented by families of more modes means who intended to occupy and tend the farms themselves. They appear to be less able to pay their rents in a timely manner and were normally not members of the Trustees of New Castle Common. These people were

⁶⁵For example see Paul G.E. Clemens and Lucy Simler, "Rural Labor and the Farm Household in Chester County, Pennsylvania, 1750-1820." in Stephen Innes ed. *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 106-143. New Castle Evidences many of the same patterns present in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁶Although initially tenancy was not a factor, a close relative to the Trustees of New Castle Common might be the New England township system of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when rights to a common would be sold off to inhabitants by a group of proprietors. [See Kenneth Lockridge, A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970); John Frederick Martin, Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

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part of a general rise in tenant agriculture which had been developing since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. During the period of 1798 to 1816 a full 45-50% of the land in the local area was rented by tenants or hired hands.⁶⁷ This figure is a testament to the growing rate of rural poverty growing in New Castle Hundred during the nineteenth century as a result of unfavorable market conditions.

⁶⁷Cooper, 114.

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Comprehensive Planning

Zone: Upper Peninsula

Periods: 1630-1730+/-: Exploration and Frontier Settlement
1730-1770+/-: Intensified Durable Occupation
1770-1830+/-: Early Industrialization
1830-1880+/-: Industrialization and Early Urbanization
1880-1940+/-: Urbanization and Early Suburbanization

Themes: Agriculture
Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change
Government
Major Families, Individuals and Events

Property Type: Agricultural Complex

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Boundary Description

The nominated boundary for Penn Farm is triangular in shape and conforms to the legal parcel, New Castle County Tax Parcel No. 10-024.00-053 (T0001). The boundary does not include the forty foot strip cleared for right-of-way as part of a never completed Delaware Department of Transportation project along Frenchtown Pike.

Beginning at a point approximately 970 feet southeast of the intersection of the south side of School Lane and the easterly right-of-way of U.S. Route 13, at the point marked Point of the Beginning (P.O.B.) on the attached map, the recommended boundary extends southeast, parallel to School Lane, approximately 3661.54 feet. The boundary then extends south along the eastern boundary of the tax parcel, approximately 105.7 feet, thence, west approximately 4052.67 feet, parallel to the northerly right-of-way for Frenchtown Pike. From there, the boundary extends northeast approximately 943.97 feet, then turns more easterly and continues 1561.76 feet to the point of the beginning.

Boundary Justification

The recommended boundary for the Penn Farm contains the early-nineteenth century tenant farmhouse and associated outbuildings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that contribute to the significance of the property. In addition, the boundary includes the land historically used for the cultivation of crops, raising of livestock, and other activities that contributed to the growth and economic development of the Penn Farm, the last active tenant farm and agricultural lands under the ownership of the Trustees of the New Castle Common. Thus, Penn Farm reflects the spatial organization and character of a landscape consciously developed, managed, and reconfigured over time by the Trustees of New Castle Common.

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with Farm No. 7, the Penn Farm, currently delineated as New Castle County tax parcel 10-024.00-053 (T0001), with the exception of a forty foot-wide strip of land at the southern boundary of the parcel, paralleling the northerly right-of-way of Frenchtown Pike. This exclusion is part of the same lands sold by the Trustees of the New Castle Common to the State of Delaware for the sum of one dollar on August 3, 1937 (New Castle County Deed Q40-111). This transfer of land was made in anticipation of the construction of a boulevard between New Castle and Route 13. In the late 1930s and through the 1940s, the land

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was cleared and graded but the road construction never took place. In 1967, the State sold the strip of land back to the Trustees (New Castle County Deed H79-164). Visually, this strip of land remains cleared and distinct from the rest of the parcel and is no longer a functioning part of the agricultural landscape at Penn Farm. For this reason, this strip of land is considered disturbed and is not included within the nominated boundary.

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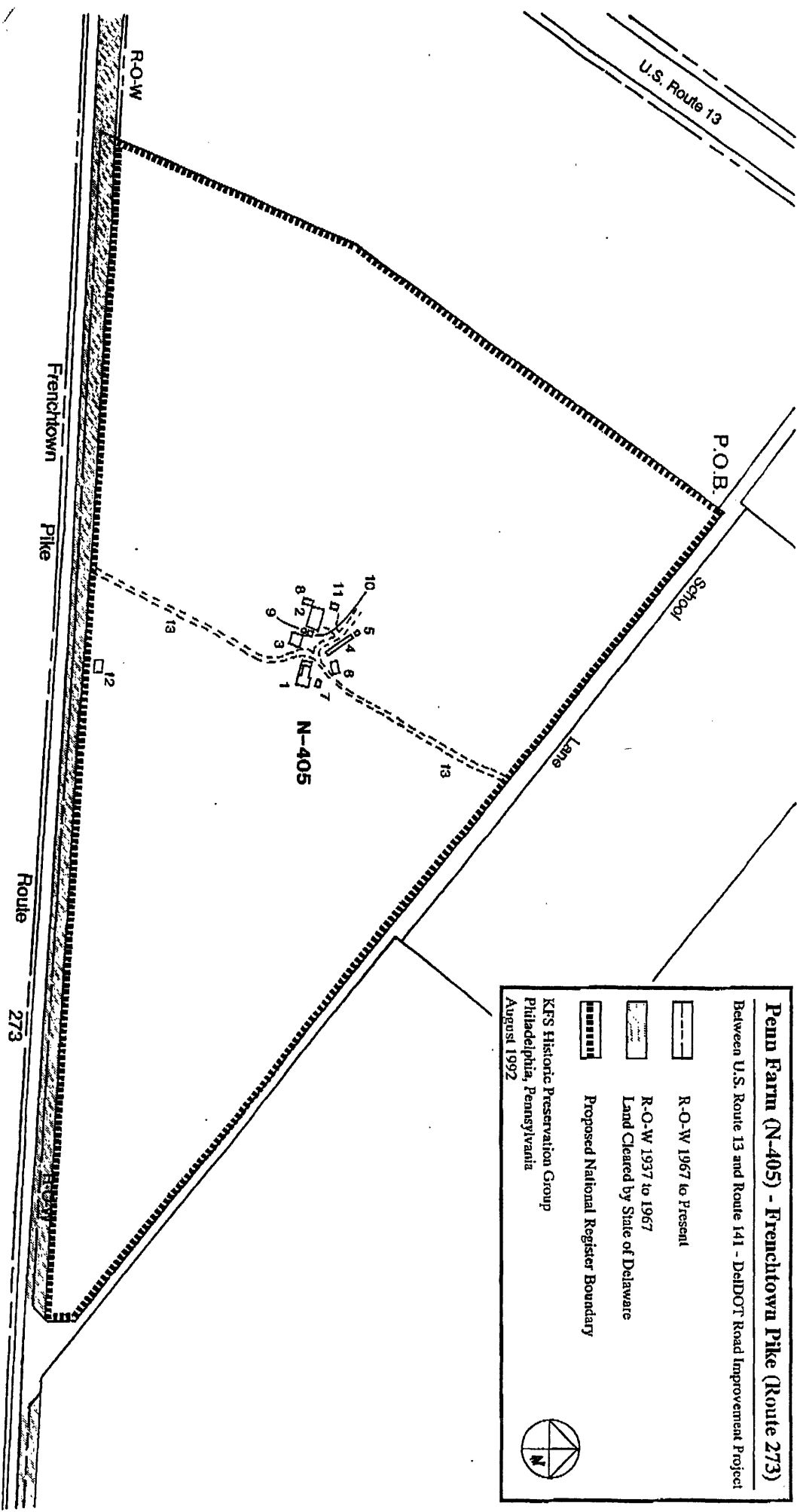
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Additional Research By:

Peter Klarnet
Department of History
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716




Form Edited By:

Robin K. Bodo, Historian
Delaware State Historic Preservation Office
15 the Green
Dover, Delaware 19901



Penn Farm (N-405) - Frenchtown Pike (Route 273)

Between U.S. Route 13 and Route 141 - DelDOT Road Improvement Project

-  R-O-W 1967 to Present
 -  R-O-W 1937 to 1967
Land Cleared by State of Delaware
 -  Proposed National Register Boundary
- KES Historic Preservation Group
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
August 1992



Penn Farm
807 Frenchtown Pike
New Castle, New Castle Co.,
Delaware

Boundary Map 1"=500'