

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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.

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1. Name of Property

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historic name : Merestone

other names/site number : Reese, John S., IV, House; N-289

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2. Location

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street & number : 1610 and 1620 Yeatman's Mill Road (in DE) not for publication: NA
Yeatman's Station Road (in PA)

city or town : Newark, Mill Creek Hundred (DE) vicinity : X
Landenberg, New Garden Township (PA) X

states: Delaware codes: DE counties: New Castle codes: 003 zip codes: 19711
Pennsylvania PA Chester 029 19350

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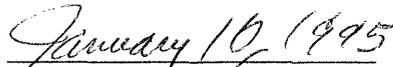
3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official



Date

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

Merestone
New Castle County, DE

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Domestic	Secondary Structure
Agriculture	Secondary Structure

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Domestic	Secondary Structure
Domestic	Secondary Structure

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: stone
roof : wood shingle
walls : log
stone
other : weatherboard

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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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)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1942

Significant Dates 1942

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

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Merestone
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Architect/Builder Okie, Richardson Brognard

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

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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 (New Castle County Department of Planning)
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: 2.84

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>435840</u>	<u>4401465</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	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.)

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11. Form Prepared By
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name/title: Anne G. Copley, Owner; Valerie Cesna, N.C.Co. Preservation Planner
organization: New Castle County Department of Planning date: July 1993
street & number: 2701 Capitol Trail telephone: (302)366-7780
city or town: Newark state: DE zip code: 19711

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Additional Documentation
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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)

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

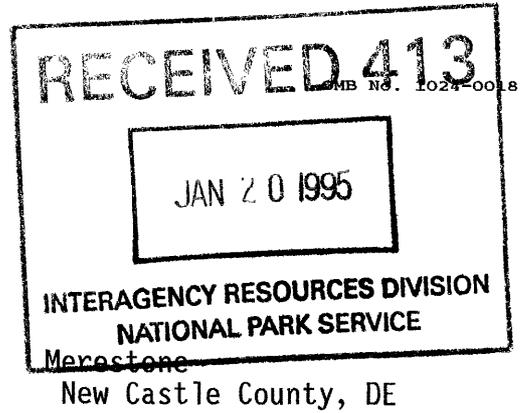
name: Anne G. Copley
street & number: 1610 Yeatman's Mill Road telephone: (302)234-0341
city or town: Newark state: DE zip code: 19711

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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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Agency Certification

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



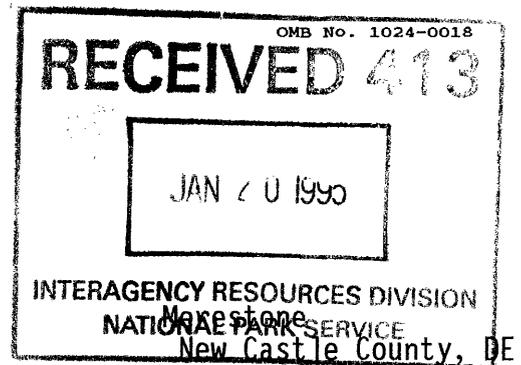
 Dennis E. Greenhouse
 County Executive
 New Castle County, Delaware

 9/17/93
 Date

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Description

The property at 1610-1620 Yeatman's Mill Road contains a five unit complex comprised of Merestone House, a guest house/garage that incorporates the ruins of an 1806 barn, a milk house, a stone shed, and a machinery shed with several attached sections. All of the buildings except the machinery shed contribute to a Colonial Revival-style landscape instituted in 1941/1942 and used for agricultural purposes as part of a larger farm until 1987. The buildings today are located on lot numbers 62 and 63 in Merestone, a residential development named after the house and currently under construction.

The property is located on the south side of Yeatman's Mill Road, which becomes Yeatman's Station Road in Pennsylvania. Both lots straddle the arc-shaped state boundary line just northeast of boundary marker number three. The house is actually located in both states; the outbuildings are all in Delaware. The fast flowing White Clay Creek is a short distance to the west.

The topography is characteristic of the Piedmont region with many streams draining the nearby hills and the elevation rising steadily to the north. The topography is an important aspect of this property as the house and most of the associated outbuildings are placed to take advantage of the hillside site. They are bank buildings with the south elevations having an exterior ground level access to functioning lower level areas.

Merestone was named by John S. Reese IV, the man who commissioned the Colonial Revival redesign of the buildings. The word Merestone is an Anglo-Saxon term which means boundary or marker of stone. It is an appropriate name for the property since, after the Hodgkins boundary resurvey of the Delaware-Pennsylvania line in 1892, the house has been located in both states: Mill Creek Hundred, Delaware, and New Garden Township, Pennsylvania. (Chester County, PA deed book N 11, page 49.) Anne G. Copley, the present owner, calls the dwelling "Merestone House" to differentiate it from the surrounding residential development, also called Merestone.

1. Dwelling

Merestone House represents a four generation accumulation of domestic architecture and construction, climaxing in the 1941/1942 renovations and the final addition designed by R. Brognard Okie. Contained within this accumulation are four distinct connected sections. Three sections are built into the side of the hill with two stories on the north elevation, or front, and three stories facing south overlooking the valley. The one story service wing is also built into the hillside. Three massive stone chimneys accommodate the six working fireplaces.

Since the house was built in stages, the following narrative describes the construction history beginning with the earliest known construction details, adding

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known changes as they occurred and ending with restoration, alterations, and the east end addition under the direction of the architect Okie for Mr. and Mrs. Reese.

Merestone is believed to have originated with the construction, circa 1720 to 1734, of the center section: a three bay, two story log house measuring about 24 feet wide by 20 feet deep. Evidence of the third bay shows in the north exterior wall of the first floor where a window has been closed up. It appears that this was followed shortly by the construction, probably between 1725 and 1750, of a two bay, two story frame addition to the east end, which measures about 19 feet by 18 feet. These dates are based on the fact that it contained a beehive oven. Beehive ovens first began to be used in this area between 1725 and 1750 according to the Chadds Ford Historical Society. About 1802-1806, a one bay, two story stone wing was attached to the west side of the central log section. The work on the house was completed in 1942 with renovation of the existing building and the addition of the east stone service wing. (See floor plan.) The first three sections had also undergone various changes prior to Okie's renovation.

THE LOG SECTION (Circa 1720 to 1734)

The log section was built of exposed, chinked, and V-notched logs on the first and second floors. The stone foundation functions as an exterior wall on the south elevation, due to the sloping ground which leaves the basement fully exposed on this side. The roof was probably covered with wood shingles, originally. The south facade has been left as it was with the logs exposed on both levels. Where the log part meets the eastern frame addition, only the ends of the logs are still in place to accommodate the interior doorways.

The north facade, or front, was changed when the stone wing was added circa 1802-1806. It was then that the second floor was extended to meet the edge of the stone part, forming a porch below. At that time, the first floor log exterior was plastered over, and narrow clapboards were used to cover the second floor exterior. A change was again made in 1941/1942 when the second floor exterior was covered with wide, tapered and beaded clapboards. At that time, the original porch posts were embellished with five segmental arches. These changes were typical "Okie" trade marks.

Major changes were made to the log section when the stone wing was added. A new roof was made to cover both sections. This roof was probably also covered with wood shingles. In 1941/42 the roof was changed back to two distinct sections, again using wood shingles as a cover. A wide box cornice and a pole gutter were used. The present owner has recently replaced the old wood shingle roof with new wood shingles, and handmade box gutters along the cornice to replace the pole gutters.

Fenestration is symmetrical and consists of two, six-over-six sash windows on both floors of the north and south elevations, except for the first floor front where there is only one window and the center exterior door. The other window, now closed, can still be seen in the stairwell to the basement. The window opening,

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with the sash removed, is apparent from the interior, but on the exterior the space has been covered and stuccoed to match the rest of the wall. There is an opposing exterior door between the two windows on the first floor south facade.

The first floor interior appears to be as it was originally, except that only the west wall, once the gable end, still has the chinked logs exposed. The other walls are plastered. The ceiling has exposed hewn joists which are constructed with mortise and tenon joints. At one time, these joists were also plastered over. In 1941/42 the plaster was removed. The east wall is occupied with a seven foot wide cooking fireplace with a crane and a stone hearth. Above it is a nine foot long, ten inch square log lintel and a plain, narrow mantel shelf. On the north side of the fireplace is an under the stairs cupboard and a winding staircase to the second floor. Both have board and batten doors and original wooden latches. Other similar doors lead to the dining room passage along the side of the massive chimney, and the north and south porches. The floors are oak. There is no sub-floor. The stair enclosure and the dado are made of wide, beaded vertical boards.

Some of the changes made over the years include the addition of a box stair enclosure with straight stairs leading to the second floor and with access provided to the west basement, two paneled doors to the west section, and glass panes to the two exterior doors.

The basement consists of a solid stone fireplace foundation support built directly on the ground and enclosed with stone walls. The westernmost wall is about a foot thick and runs from north to south about the middle of the basement. This wall might be evidence that the first floor was once a hall/parlor plan. It could have been a foundation for a dividing wall above, or an original wall separating a full height basement area from a crawlspace adjacent to the fireplace support.¹ The rest of the basement has been excavated to provide an exterior entrance at ground level on the south (downhill) side.

The second floor was originally much narrower. About 1802-1806, it was extended out over the porch, enlarging the hall. There were two small rooms and a hall with winding stairs to the attic and lower floor in the old part. Evidence of these changes can be clearly seen in the hall where there is a difference of five inches in the height of the ceiling between the original and the later part. Here, a huge beam once part of the exterior wall, is still in place. Throughout the second floor, hewn ceiling joists, board and batten doors, some original wrought iron hinges and latches, and original wooden latches, as well as old pine floors are found.

In 1941/1942, concessions to modern living were made by making one room from two small ones. To the fireplace has been added a simple mantel shelf and a narrow

¹ This interpretation is based on observations made by Alice Kent Schooler, Architectural Historian.

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molded fireplace surround. The closets with doors of wide beaded board, built across the west end of the room, are another Okie feature. One step up on the east wall allows access to the bathroom level. This narrow bath has a door at each end connecting the log and frame sections.

THE FRAME SECTION (Circa 1725 to 1750)

The frame section was added to the east end of the log part probably in the early to mid 1700's. Originally, it had one room down and two small rooms upstairs. The exterior is believed to have been plank, but was covered with narrow clapboards by 1941 when Okie began his renovation. Here again, the fenestration is symmetrical on the north facade and on the second floor of the south elevation. The windows are six-over-six sash. The first floor has an exterior door to the porch and only one window on the south facade. Okie used wide, tapered, beaded clapboards to replace the narrow siding on both the north and south facades except under the south porch where the planks are plastered over. This matches the siding used on the front of the log part, tying the house together.

The first floor interior consists of one room. In the northwest corner is a very steep winding staircase. Across from this is a large cooking fireplace which still had its beehive oven in 1938.² It appears that the original pine floors have been retained. The walls are plastered except for the fireplace wall which is paneled with beaded boards and has a small cupboard (1 by 1½ feet) to the left side of the overmantel. There is a plain narrow mantel shelf over a fireplace surround of narrow molding. The staircase enclosure has raised panel doors. These details are typical of Okie designs.

The second floor was used for the hired help in 1938.³ There were two small rooms, one of which had a small window in the gable end where there was no fireplace. There was no access to the center section from this floor. Okie redesigned these rooms by removing the partition wall and adding to the east end a little fireplace with a circular brick hearth. His addition of a bathroom along the south side of the chimney now provides access to the rest of the house.

In the basement of this section can be seen the massive arched fireplace support, rebuilt stairs to the room above, and reinforced walls. There is a six pane window and an exterior door leading to ground level on the south side. A new opening has been made in the eastern stone foundation, giving access to the service wing. The oil furnace is housed there.

² Interview with Margaret Wordsworth and Elsie Woodward, daughters of S. Leslie McCormick, a former owner of the property.

³ Interview with Margaret Wordsworth.

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THE STONE SECTION (Circa 1802 to 1806)

In the early 1800's William Beeson acquired the property.⁴ He is believed to have built the stone wing circa 1802 to 1806, when he also built the barn. The construction of the house matched that of the barn which had an 1806 datestone inscribed with Beeson's initials.

The stone wing is a one bay, double pile, two story addition to the west end of the log section and is built of native stone with struck joints. There is one, six-over-six window on each floor on both the north and south facades. The fenestration is symmetrical on the gable end. The attic has two, four light windows, one on each side of the center chimney. The first and second floors each have two, six-over-six sash windows, one above the other. At the basement level are two, six pane windows.

The first floor was originally two rooms with back to back fireplaces. Later, the house was Victorianized, probably under the ownership of Thomas G. Seal. At that time, the dividing wall was replaced with a colonnade, making it into one room. Okie again divided the room retaining the present library fireplace and closing up the other one to accommodate a powder room. He divided the space with a bookshelf wall of his own design. The top has open shelves but the bottom consists of cupboards with raised panel doors. Over the fireplace is a plastered panel surrounded by flush beaded paneling with a narrow mantel shelf under which the beaded panels continue down to surround the opening. The area around the opening is trimmed with narrow decorative molding. There is also a six inch wide flat chairrail around the room. The other half of the room became a powder room and entrance hall which has an exterior raised panel door to the porch in its east wall. This door has an unusual lock. After locking the door, the knob must be removed on the outside. It must be screwed in again from the outside to unlock the door. This entrance is used as a front door. There are deepset windows with interior shutters in these rooms. The partition walls are vertical beaded board while the perimeter walls are plastered.

The second floor originally contained two bedrooms, each with a corner fireplace. In Okie's plan the south bedroom stayed as it was. The fireplace is plastered and has no mantel. The north bedroom became a bath and dressing room, again with wide, beaded board partition walls. The fireplace was closed. The windows in this part are very deeply set in narrow beaded frames. The perimeter walls are plastered.

In the basement, the fireplace supports can still be seen in the center of the west wall. On either side of these is a six-pane window. The original foundation and exterior wall of the log section still supports the log wall above and partly divides the basement into two rooms.

⁴ New Castle County Deed Book C, Volume 3, page 269.

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As has been mentioned, some changes took place when William Beeson is believed to have added the stone section. At that time, the roof on the log section was changed so that one roof covered both sections. Okie redid the roof, separating the roof levels for each section. The attics are also sectional. They have floors and electricity, but are otherwise unfinished. The boards forming the ceiling of the hall in the log section also serve as the floorboards in the attic. Insulation was placed between the rafters in 1941/1942.

THE STONE SERVICE WING AND PORCHES (Built 1941-42)

The final sections of the house include the service wing and a narrow porch along the older log and frame sections. These improvements were designed and built by Okie in 1941/1942. The service wing, a one story with attic, two bay wing contains a butler's pantry, a kitchen which was remodeled in 1989 by the present owner, an entry, a small entrance porch, a maid's room, and a bath. It is built of native stone with struck joints. The stone was taken mostly from ruins of the barn. Even in this service wing Okie's attention to detail is apparent in his use of beading on all of the trim and the reproduction of board and batten doors. He also used an arch to separate the entry from the kitchen. In the entry is a staircase to the laundry and shop on the lower level. The laundry has two, six-pane windows, one on the north wall and one on the south wall. These windows are directly under six-over-six windows in the kitchen above. Again, Okie used the area beside the big chimney. This time he combined it with part of the new wing to form the butler's pantry. The cupboards here are made of wide boards with beading on the doors and trim. The drawers and cupboard doors have reproduction brass knobs and latches. Over the sink is a six-over-six window. No changes have been made to the pantry.

The eastern gable end has one, six-over-six window in the maid's room, and one, four light window in the bath. The lower level room is a shop. It has one, four pane window and one with six panes on the gable end. There is also a six pane window on the south side under a six-over-six window in the maid's room. On the roof of this section is a cupola containing a cast iron farm bell.

The narrow porch, designed by Okie and built on existing stone pilings, reaches across the south facade of the log part as well as the frame section where the planks are plastered at the first floor level. Doors from both sections open onto it. On the west end, stone steps go down to ground level where a stone and brick terrace, designed by Victorine and Samuel Homsey, Architects, of Wilmington, was added by Mr. Reese in 1942. This porch replaces and uses the original stone supports of a leanto porch and shed that had probably been added by Mr. Seal and used by the McCormicks as a wash house and summer kitchen.

Okie skillfully unified the exterior of the house by the use of segmental arches on the front porch, wide beaded clapboards on both the log and frame sections, and native stone with struck joints for the service wing, so as to match that on the existing western section. The design of the narrow south porch also ties the house together. Typical on houses in the region, is Okie's choice of raised panel

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shutters on the first floor windows and louvered shutters on the second floor. The shutters have wrought iron, S-curve tiebacks. The interior was unified by Okie's clever use of passages, a bath, and the butler's pantry. Throughout the house there are features such as custom made radiator covers and door stops, the use of beaded trim, the use of raised paneling and segmental arches, the addition of a circular hearth and small new fireplace upstairs in the frame section, and the use of original or old hardware. These are typical stylistic elements found on Okie's Colonial Revival style houses. Using his own particular style and designs while retaining most of the original features where he could, Okie made Merestone into a unique and livable Colonial Revival house.

The present owners purchased the property on March 16, 1989. Since that time, the Copley's have updated the kitchen and replaced the old wood shingle roof and pole gutters with a new wood shingle roof and hand made wooden box gutters. No other changes have been made. The house retains a very high level of integrity from its 1941/1942 period. (Contributing)

2. Guest House/Garage (1942)

This three bay, 1½ story, gable-roofed, frame cottage was built in 1942. It measures 32 feet by 24 feet. The exterior is covered with white clapboard siding and asphalt shingle roofing. There is a small, interior stone chimney. The first floor, front (north) elevation and east endwall are at ground level. Because the house is built into the side of a hill the basement level, three car garage has ground level access on the south elevation. A small, glazed entrance porch is located on the east endwall.

The primary entrance is located in the center of the north elevation. The door has four panels topped by two small lights, and is surrounded by flat board trim, and a wide lintel with a molded dripcap. Two eight-over-eight sash windows with louvered shutters flank the door.

The west endwall has a symmetrical window arrangement with two, eight-over-eight windows on the first floor and a connected pair of six-over-six sash in the gable. The east endwall has a center door that provides access to the kitchen. The door is flanked by two, eight-over-eight sash windows. Like the other end, a connected pair of six-over-six sash occupies the gable. The shed-roofed, glazed porch encloses the doorway and one window. The rear elevation has an irregular arrangement of four windows: two different sizes of eight-over-eight sash and one, eight pane casement.

The basement of the house functions as a two car garage. A shed wing extending from the west endwall provides a third garage unit. The foundations of the north and east walls are stone walls that were originally part of the 1806 barn. The south and west foundation walls, which are visible at the garage entrances, are made of concrete block.

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The guest house contains a small living room, kitchen-dining area, two very small bedrooms, and a bath on the first floor. The second floor has one unfinished room. There is a central enclosed staircase to the upper floor. The stairs to the garage are open and unfinished. Throughout the house the trim is very plain. The living room doors have simple, 2½ inch wide molding as a frame. The doors have two large raised panels.

The 1806 barn that stood on this site was destroyed by a hurricane in 1938. Okie carefully reused the stone foundations and massive stone pilings in the design of the guest house, garages, parking area, and stone shed. He stabilized and capped with cement the walls and supports, leveled and blacktopped part of the former barnyard for a parking area, and reclaimed the stone shed. Along the east side of the parking area is a wall two feet thick and eighteen feet long, containing three supports that once held up the second story of the barn. To this is attached a 32 foot retaining wall extending to the south. There are matching supports and a 43 foot wall to the west. These were probably part of the barnyard. Some of the original hardware is still attached to the stone. The Barn had a datestone marked "W E B 1806 N" which was in the possession of John Reese in 1987, but is no longer on the property. Okie's skillful reuse of the barn ruins stylistically enhances his design concept for the main house. (Contributing)

3. Stone Shed (Mid 19th Century)

The stone shed is also built into the hillside. It was originally used as a wagon shed and was attached to the barn. The opening on the downhill side is eighteen feet wide. The east wall is 41 feet long including the remains of a piece of wall with an arched doorway and supports which led to the former barn. The shed wall also contains two stone arched doorways with old hinges and latches still attached. The west wall is 30 feet long and partially concealed on the exterior by the slope of the hill. None of the original doors survives. The doorways lead to a small grassy area where the original stone foundation to the barn can still be seen against the hillside between this building and the west garage. Okie put two rows of cement blocks on top of the repaired walls of this shed and covered it with a low pitched gable roof clad with asphalt shingles. (Contributing)

4. Milk House (Early 20th Century)

This small, frame, gable-roofed building, measuring ten feet by ten feet, was used as a milk house according to several members of the McCormick family who lived here until 1938. It has a wood shingle roof and beaded tongue and groove siding. On each of the west and south walls are six-pane windows. The interior is unfinished. It does not appear to have been altered. (Contributing)

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5. Machine Shed (Circa 1890 with mid 20th Century Addition)

This large shed is made up of two parts. The western section appears to be the original McCormick farm shed, circa 1890. It measures 36 feet wide by 16 feet deep and has a corrugated metal gable roof. It originally had four open bays, but one has been made into a cement block dog/sheep pen. The exterior is covered with asphalt shingles. Attached to the east end is a large cement block building, measuring 60 feet wide by 28 feet deep, which houses a machine shop and three large open machinery/cattle feeder bays. On the north side are four, six-pane windows. The gable roof on this new wing is also covered with corrugated metal. In front of the open bays is a cement alley with a hay rack. Mr. Reese built the addition after 1942 to use as a feeder barn for beef cattle, and later to store machinery. These sheds are built on the flat top of the hill. Because the original 1890 section of the shed has been altered, and the addition is much larger than the older section, this building has lost most of its historic character. (Non-contributing)

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CONTINUATION FORM**

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Merestone
New Castle County, DE

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Statement of Significance

Merestone is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and the theme Architecture. Although initially built in the 18th century, the house is significant for the 1941/1942 Colonial Revival style redesign accomplished by Philadelphia architect Richardson Brognard Okie (1875-1945). As one of Okie's final commissions, Merestone represents his mature style, a combination of historic restoration and modern adaptation on an authentic Colonial period farmhouse. Okie spent his career working in the Philadelphia area. He was a notable restoration architect who undertook several major commissions including projects associated with Betsy Ross and William Penn. But, he is best known for his unique interpretation of the Colonial Revival style, especially in the design of country houses. His work was admired by both his clients and fellow architects for the creative and artistic expression of colonial design themes. His body of work constitutes a recognizable style that preserves elements of 18th century design while introducing 20th century amenities. Throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware, Okie left a lasting image on the landscape.

A native of Camden, New Jersey, Okie received a degree in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1897, then worked with the firm Duhring, Okie and Ziegler until 1918. This firm specialized in the design of country houses. After World War I, Okie worked independently. His earliest commissions provided the foundation for his later work in the Colonial Revival style. Among his first projects were the restoration of the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia; the reconstruction of William Penn's estate, "Pennsbury Manor" using historic documents for authenticity; and the reconstruction of High Street for the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial in association with E.P. Bissell and J.B.P. Sinkler. Okie loved the country and lived on a farm himself. As a result, he later concentrated on the design of the southeastern Pennsylvania farmhouse, which became his specialty.⁵

The inspiration for most of Okie's designs is the vernacular, southeastern Pennsylvania farmhouse of the 18th and early 19th centuries: simple, two story, gable-roofed houses built of native, undressed stone. His designs for new houses frequently borrowed historic details, while his renovation projects usually combined a concern for historical accuracy with the introduction of modern amenities demanded by his mostly upper-class clients. Okie was known for his practice of driving the back roads of Pennsylvania in search of colonial buildings, measuring and recording their details of design and construction. His knowledge of early architecture thus gleaned, resulted in the infusion of authentic colonial design elements in his own work. Because of his skill in blending old and new, it is often difficult to separate refinished original features from his own design when they are combined in

⁵ Leon Brown Senseman, Edwin Bateman Morris and Charles T. Okie, The Residential Architecture of Richardson Brognard Okie of Philadelphia, privately published, circa 1949, introduction.

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Section 8 Page 2

Merestone
New Castle County, DE

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one building.

A common denominator in Okie's houses is the use of undressed stone with either pointed or struck joints. Other characteristic features are his use of solid oak for door and window frames, box cornices with pole gutters, segmental arches, and thin bargeboards on the gable ends. His designs were also noted for their beautifully proportioned chimneys and fireplaces.

Most of Okie's characteristic design elements can be seen in his renovation of Merestone. He retained the rusticity of the predominant log section and the flanking units while reconstructing the roof, reinforcing excavated spaces, introducing heating, plumbing, and electrical systems, as well as his own characteristic designs for multi-unit closets, an arcaded breezeway, and the use of native stone in the new wing (See photo #2). He replaced the Victorian siding used on the frame wing with wide, beaded siding (See photos #1 and #16). Of special interest is a small plastered fireplace with a circular brick hearth, an original Okie design, in the second floor bedroom of the frame wing (See photo #10).

Some structural changes were necessary in order to provide spaces to install the utility systems. Foundation walls were cut through to install ductwork, pipes, wiring, and the furnace. The walls were then reinforced. Two of the original fireplaces in the stone wing were closed up to make room for bathrooms. One of the major changes was the removal of the beehive oven to accommodate the addition of the service wing. Another big change was the trimming back of the stone chimney in the log wing to provide space for a second floor bathroom (See attached plans).

An attempt was made to retain as much of the original house as possible and to return it to its earliest appearance. The outstanding exterior example is the log wall on the south facade. Stucco was removed and the chinking was repaired (See photo #3 and #8). Inside the log section, Okie removed the plasterboard from the first floor ceiling to expose the original joists. In this room he also retained the exposed western log wall, board and batten doors, the large cooking fireplace, and the original floors (See photo #4 and #6). Upstairs in this section can be seen an original large beam which marked the exterior on the north elevation of the log house. The old hardware, floors, winding staircases, and board and batten doors are still in evidence (See photo #9).

Many period details were incorporated into Okie's modernization. The bookcase wall he added to the library is an early 1800s design. The balance of the woodwork is also in keeping with building's date (See photo #5). The fireplace wall in the frame section is another example of reproduced period woodwork with its small cupboard and narrow mantel shelf. Throughout the house much old hardware is used (See photo #7). Many of the lighting fixtures are electrified pewter wall sconces made to resemble candles. Probably the biggest period reconstruction is the long, narrow porch on the south elevation (See photo #3). This style of porch was often used on early bank houses.

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The design of the 1942 guest house is very plain. No attempt was made to give it a historic appearance. In this case, Okie's real skill is evident in the reuse of the stone foundation and remaining walls of the barn ruins, tying it into the rest of the complex (See photos #11-15).

The northern Delaware/southeastern Pennsylvania area contains many examples of Okie's characteristic designs. A few examples are the Nicholas R. du Pont House, located outside Wilmington, Delaware; the William L. Edison house, Wilmington; and the Joseph Hergesheimer House near West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The Nicholas R. du Pont House is a large stone house. It has a porch with wide segmental arches under wide, tapered, beaded siding, almost exactly like the porch at Merestone. It too, is built in sections. Another similarity is the wide box cornice with a pole gutter. Merestone still has the box cornice but, the pole gutter was not replaced when the house was reroofed. This same type of porch with arches also appears on the William L. Edison House. The wide board siding is found on many other Okie houses including the porches at the Joseph Hergesheimer House. The first section of the Hergesheimer house was built in 1712 and remodelled in the 1920's. It is also built of stone and in sections. Here, Okie used authentic details such as old hardware and wide boards, much as he did at Merestone. There is also a porch similar to, but not as long as, the one on Merestone's south side.

R. Brognard Okie retained the integrity of the 18th century bank house as well as its floor plan in his 1941/1942 renovation of Merestone. He also integrated the ruins of the barn in his design of the guest house/garage and parking area. By stabilizing the stone shed, supports and walls, and retaining the milk house he established a unified Colonial theme for the residential complex.

The early builders of Merestone took advantage of common building materials of the 18th century, such as log and plank. When economics improved, the trend changed to more permanent materials. Plentiful native stone soon replaced logs as a favored building material. In 1804, the Mill Creek Hundred tax list showed 433 taxables who lived in 99 log, 48 stone, and 21 brick houses.⁶ By 1818, the number of stone houses in Mill Creek Hundred had nearly doubled while the number of log houses showed a large decrease.

Merestone's builders also took advantage of the hillside site. In the hilly piedmont region the construction of bank houses was almost a necessity. Having usable basement rooms with ground level access was an economical use of space on the steep terrain. Some bank houses had a kitchen, a spring, or a well located in the basement. However, there is no evidence for these particular features at Merestone.

⁶ J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware, 1609-1888, Philadelphia: L.J. Richards and Co., 1888, page 914.

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Merestone
New Castle County, DE

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Two other local examples of bank houses are the circa 1816 William Little House (N-10,248) in Mill Creek Hundred and the 1725 Hockley Mill House (NR 1990) on French Creek in Chester County.⁷

Summary of Documentary History

Both the extant physical evidence and documentary evidence for Merestone support the dates of the two oldest sections.⁸ In 1734, John Evans, Jr. purchased 1000 acres of Stenning Manor, a 14,000 acre tract owned by William Penn, Jr.⁹ Merestone stands on this land at the southern tip of New Garden Township, Pennsylvania and across the State line in Mill Creek Hundred, Delaware. Settlement of the Stenning Manor land began in 1710-1720. The house appears to have been built by early Welsh settlers.¹⁰ John Evans, Jr. may have been the builder. It appears that construction began around 1720 to 1734. Many early settlers lived on property for quite some time while waiting for warrants, surveys, and deeds to be completed.¹¹ It is possible that this was the case with the transfer of land for Merestone.

In 1701, John Evans, Sr. purchased 100 acres in Mill Creek Hundred and in 1714 he purchased another 100 acres in Chester County. The Evans were a prominent Welsh family that owned important local mills. John Evans, Sr. donated the land for the nearby London Tract Baptist Church.¹² The Merestone property stayed in the Evans family until 1776 when George Evans, son of John Evans, Jr., sold it to John Beeson,

⁷ Daily Local News, Chester County, Pennsylvania, September 16, 1990, Living Section, pages 2-3.

⁸ Ann Hagerty, Once Upon A Time In New Garden Township, Privately published, May 1977.

⁹ Chester County Deed Book E, Volume 5, Page 366.

¹⁰ Dr. Bernard L. Herman, lecture on the Stenning Manor Houses given at the New London Historical Society, June 27, 1990.

¹¹ Jonathan Stayer, Pennsylvania Bureau of Archives and History, Lecture titled, "Resources at the State Archives", given at the Chester County Historical Society, April 11, 1992.

¹² Hon. Septimus E. Nivin, Genealogy of Evans, Nivin, and Allied Families, Second Edition, Philadelphia, International Printing Company, 1930, Pages 9, 11, 16.

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Merestone
New Castle County, DE

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grandson of Edward Beeson who came to America with William Penn.¹³ Mary Beeson, widow of John, was taxed for a log house in 1799.¹⁴

In 1802, William Beeson, the son of John and Mary Beeson, bought the land from the other heirs.¹⁵ Since he had recently married Elizabeth Mansel and was settling down, he is believed to have added the stone wing about the same time he built the barn, which had a datestone bearing 1806 and their initials.¹⁶ William Beeson was also the proprietor of the nearby Corner Ketch Tavern in 1829.¹⁷

Later owners of Merestone were members of prominent local families. In 1865, Halliday Hoopes sold the property to Thomas G. Seal, a member of an old Quaker family in the Unionville-Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania area. He is probably the one who made the Victorian changes to the house. Other owners were Thompson McCormick, Leslie McCormick, and John S. Reese IV, for whom Okie did the renovation. John S. Reese IV was a son of the head of the chemical division at E.I. Du Pont de Nemours and Company, and a brother of Charles Lee Reese, Jr., former editor and board chairman of the News Journal papers in Wilmington, Delaware.

Mr. Reese signed a contract in 1938 to buy the property, but a hurricane destroyed the barn before settlement. The contract was renegotiated and settlement occurred in 1941.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that the deed is recorded in both Delaware and Pennsylvania. In 1987, the Reeses sold 97.74 acres to Wilkinson Partnership "A".¹⁹

Mrs. Harold E. (Anne) Copley, the present owner, purchased the property from Wilkinson Partnership "A" on March 16, 1989.²⁰ Mr. and Mrs. Copley have replaced the roof and have remodeled the kitchen during their ownership.

¹³ New Castle County Deed Book C, Volume 2, Page 101.

¹⁴ New Garden Tax List, 1799.

¹⁵ New Castle County Deed Book C, Volume 3, Page 269.

¹⁶ Francis A. Cooch, Little Known History of Newark and Its Environs, Newark, Delaware, Press of Kells, 1936, page 163.

¹⁷ Delaware State Archives, Tavern Petitions 1829, RG 2805.

¹⁸ New Castle County Deed Book T, Volume 42, Page 319.

¹⁹ New Castle County Deed Book 648, Page 234.

²⁰ New Castle County Deed Book 859, Page 129.

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Merestone
New Castle County, DE

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The resurvey of the Delaware-Pennsylvania line in 1892 was finally ratified by Delaware in 1921. This survey caused the house to be located in both states. Previously, the house had been located entirely within Delaware, but the land crossed the state line.²¹

²¹ Dudley Lunt, The Bounds of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware, The Star Publishing Company, 1947, page 58; and Chester County Deed Book N, Volume 11, Page 49.

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Merestone
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New Garden Return and Validation for Raising County Rates for the Year 1799

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Deed Book W, Volume 7, page 202; J.M. Beeson to Hoopes.
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Jonathan Stayer, "Resources at the State Archives", given at the Chester County Historical Society, April 11, 1992.

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New Castle County, DE

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Interviews:

Ernest Lamborn, Newark, Delaware: Beeson Family Records.

John S. Reese IV, former owner.

Elsie McCormick Woodward and Margaret McCormick Wordsworth: former residents prior to 1938.

Alice Kent Schooler, Architectural Historian.

William Woys Weaver, Architect and Okie specialist.

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Merestone
New Castle County, DE

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary for Merestone consists of the two legal parcels which contain the four contributing resources and one non-contributing resource. These two parcels total 2.848 acres and are located on the south side of Yeatman's Mill Road (a.k.a. Yeatman's Station Road in Pennsylvania) where the Delaware-Pennsylvania line crosses the road. The two parcels were created on February 16, 1990 when the Record Subdivision Plan for a residential community, also named Merestone, was approved by New Castle County (microfilm number 10443). This plan supersedes a subdivision plan recorded on February 15, 1989 (microfilm number 9649). The two parcels are identified as lot numbers 62 and 63 on the 2-16-90 plan.

Both parcels straddle the Delaware-Pennsylvania state line, although the majority of the property is in Delaware. The main dwelling is actually located in both states. The guest house/garage, stone shed, milk house, and machine shed are located in Delaware.

Lot No. 62

New Castle County, DE portion (tax parcel #08-016.40-006):	1.30 acres
Chester County, PA portion (tax parcel #60-7-10.43)	: <u>0.007 acres</u>
Total Acreage of Lot 62	1.307 acres

Lot No. 63

New Castle County, DE portion (tax parcel #08-022.20-070):	1.1546 acres
Chester County, PA portion (tax parcel #60-7-10.43)	: <u>0.3864 acres</u>
Total Acreage of Lot 63	1.541 acres

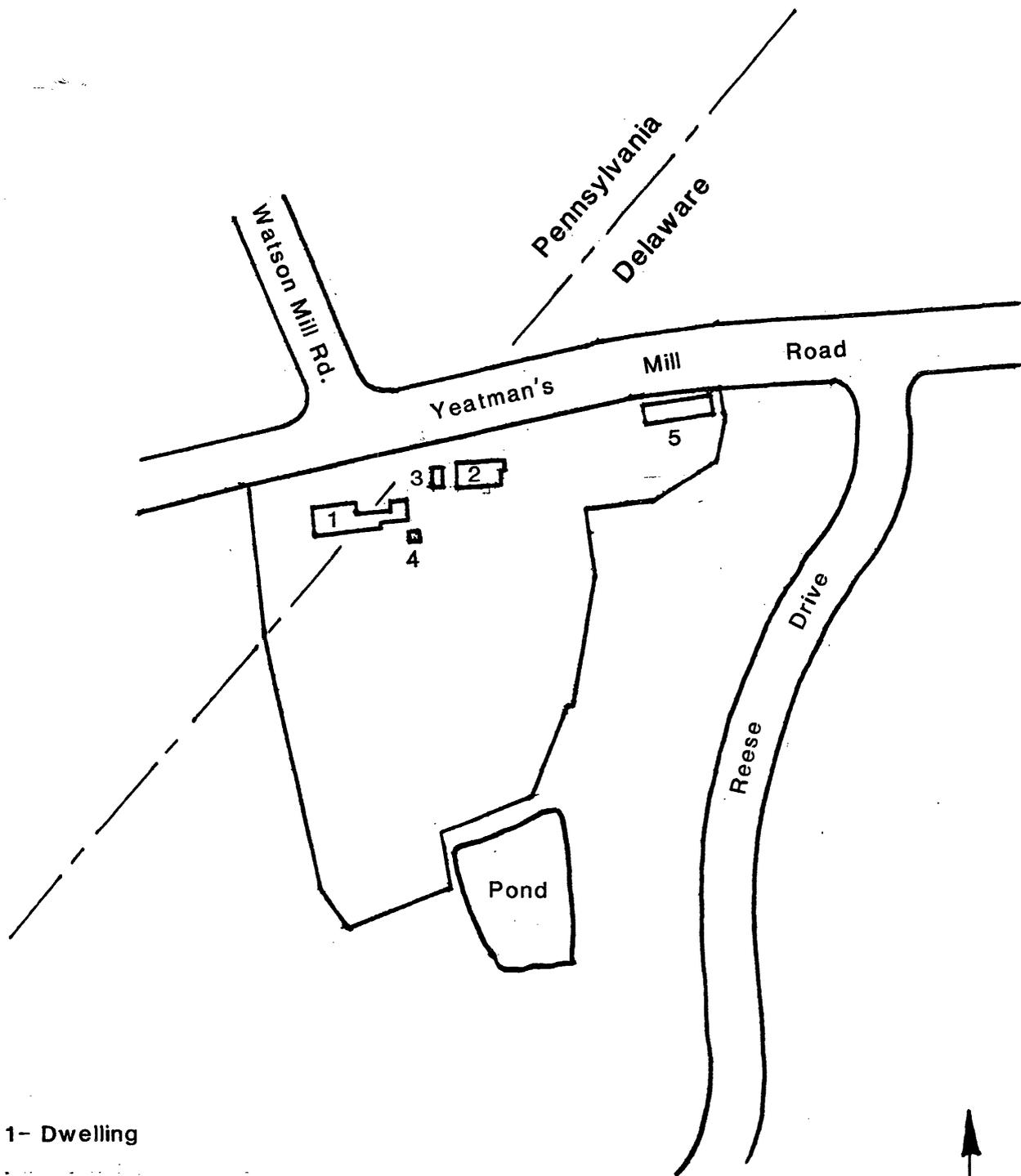
Combined Acreage of Lots 62 and 63: 2.848 acres

The following boundary exhibits are attached to this nomination:

1. Site Plan.
2. New Castle County, DE Tax Parcel Map.
3. Chester County, PA Tax Parcel Map.

Boundary Justification

The two legal parcels (Numbered by tax parcel 08-016.40-006 and 08-022.20-070 in Delaware and 60-7-10.43 in Pennsylvania) contain all of the contributing resources associated with the main dwelling. The surrounding area, which was originally associated with the main house, was subdivided in 1989 and developed as a residential community. This development altered the historic character of the landscape, precluding any extension of the boundaries beyond the two identified legal parcels.



1- Dwelling

2- Guest House/Garage

3- Stone Shed

4- Milk House

5- Machine Shed

Merestone
 1610/1620 Yeatman's Mill Road
 Newark vic, New Castle Co, DE

SITE PLAN



1 inch : 100 feet

11
0.5 AC.

13
39 AC.

15
4.2 AC.

15.1
11.8 AC.

17
13.3 AC.S

19.1
2.3 AC.

19.9
1.4 AC.

19.8
1.3 AC.

19.6
1.2 AC.

19.5

19.2
1.5 AC.

19.3
1.3 AC.

19.4

19.11
1.1 AC.

19.12
1.2 AC.

19.10
1.0 AC.

19.11
1.1 AC.

19.12
1.2 AC.

19.13
1.3 AC.

19.14
1.4 AC.

19.15
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19.16
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19.17
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19.18
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NEW GARDEN
LONDON BRITAIN

STATE OF DELAWARE

MERESTONE

Chester County, Pennsylvania

Tax Parcel Map

Parcel 60-7-10.43

1 inch : 400 feet

60-8

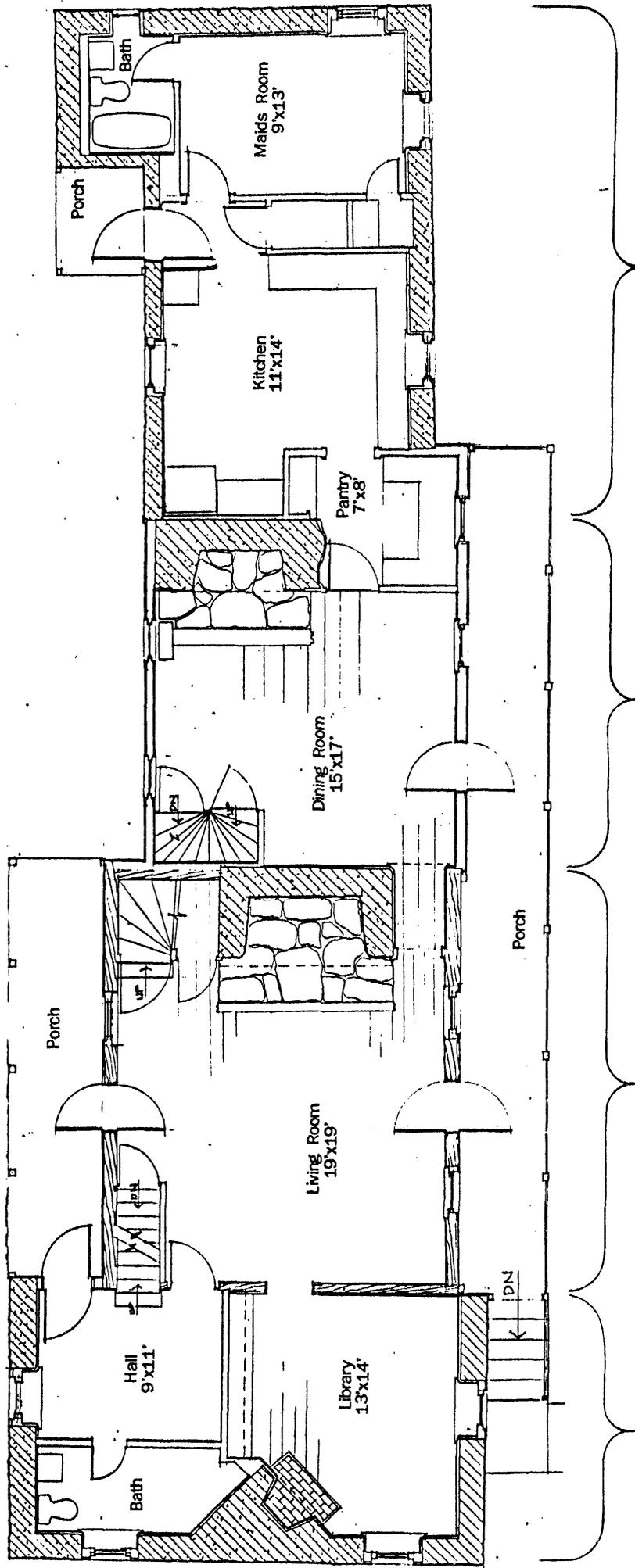
Merestone
1610/1620 Yeatman's Mill Road
Newark vic, New Castle Co, DE

Tax Map- Chester Co., PA



MERESTONE HOUSE

New Castle County, DE and Chester County, PA



FIRST FLOOR PLAN (1992)

Measured and Drawn by: David H. Copley AIA

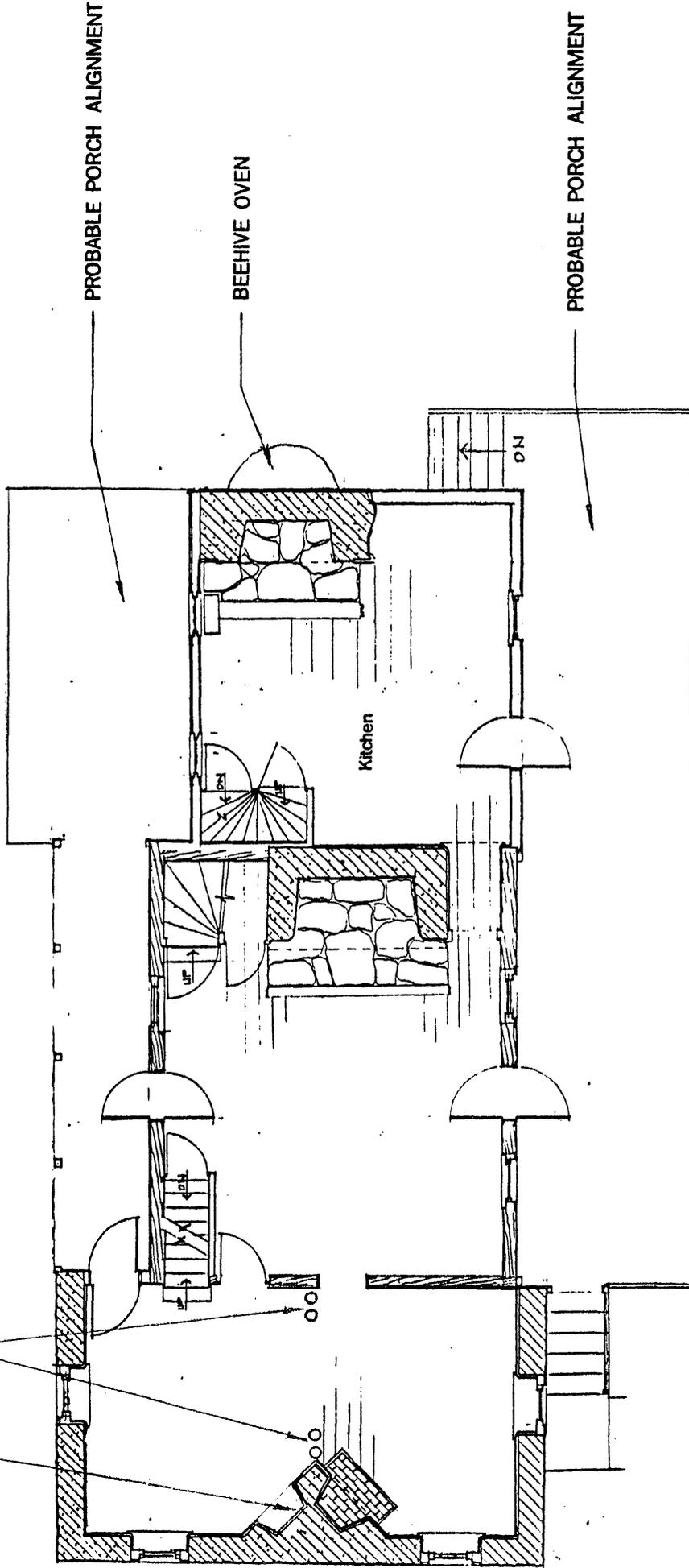


MERESTONE HOUSE

New Castle County, DE and Chester County, PA

BACK TO BACK FIREPLACES

COLONADE



PROBABLE PORCH ALIGNMENT

BEEHIVE OVEN

PROBABLE PORCH ALIGNMENT

NORTH

12' 0" 4' 8' 12'

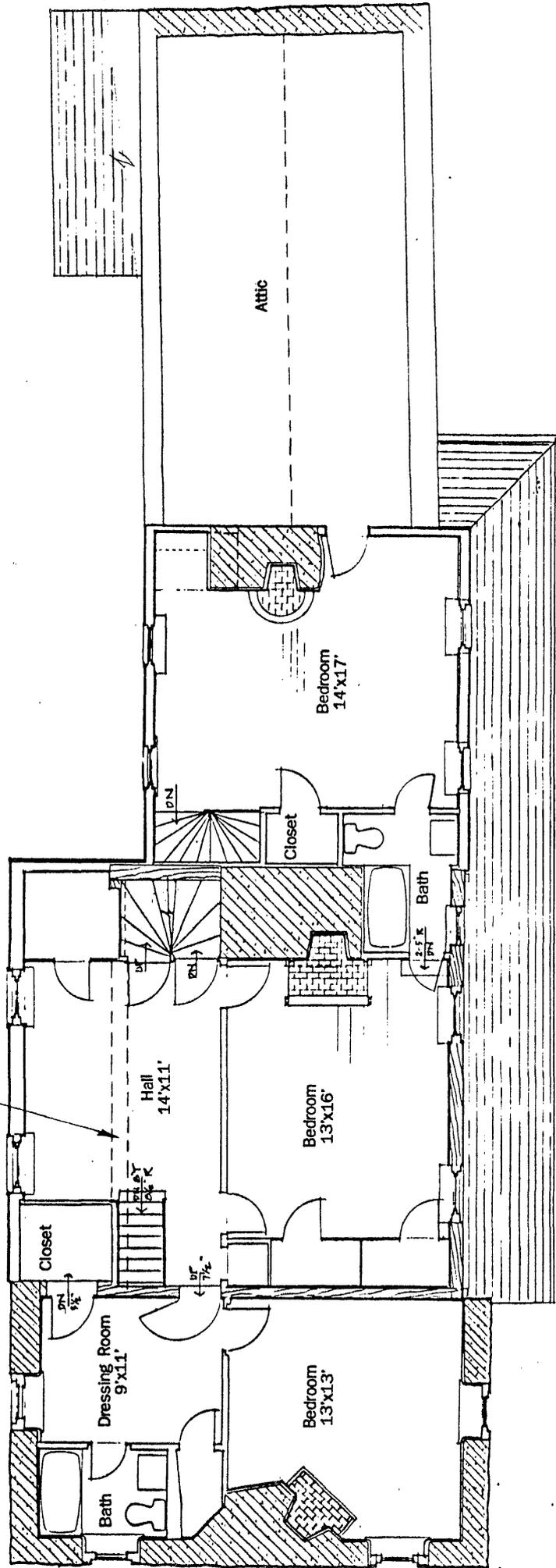
FIRST FLOOR PLAN (1938)

DRAWN TO INDICATE CONDITIONS AS DESCRIBED BY MARGARET AND ELSIE MCCORMICK WHO LIVED HERE IN 1938.

MERESTONE HOUSE

New Castle County, DE and Chester County, PA

LARGE BEAM - PART OF ORIGINAL EXTERIOR LOG WALL



C. 1802 Stone

C. 1720 - 1734 Log

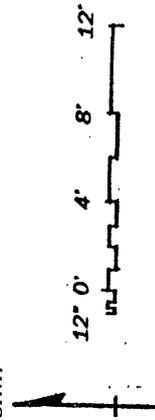
C. 1725 - 1750 Frame

1941 - 1942 Okie Addition Stone

SECOND FLOOR PLAN (1992)

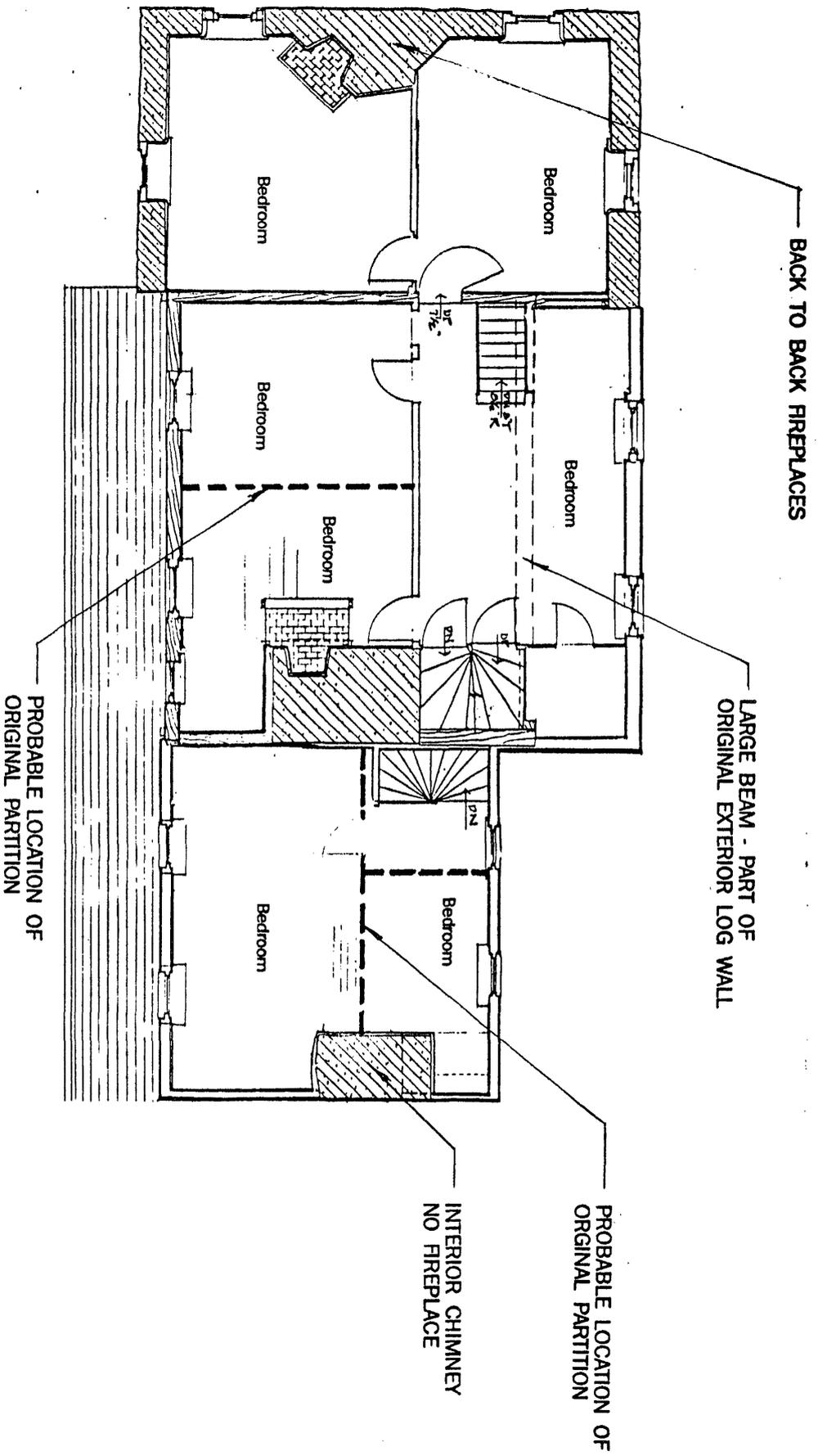
Measured and Drawn by: David H. Copley AIA

NORTH



MERESTONE HOUSE

New Castle County, DE and Chester County, PA



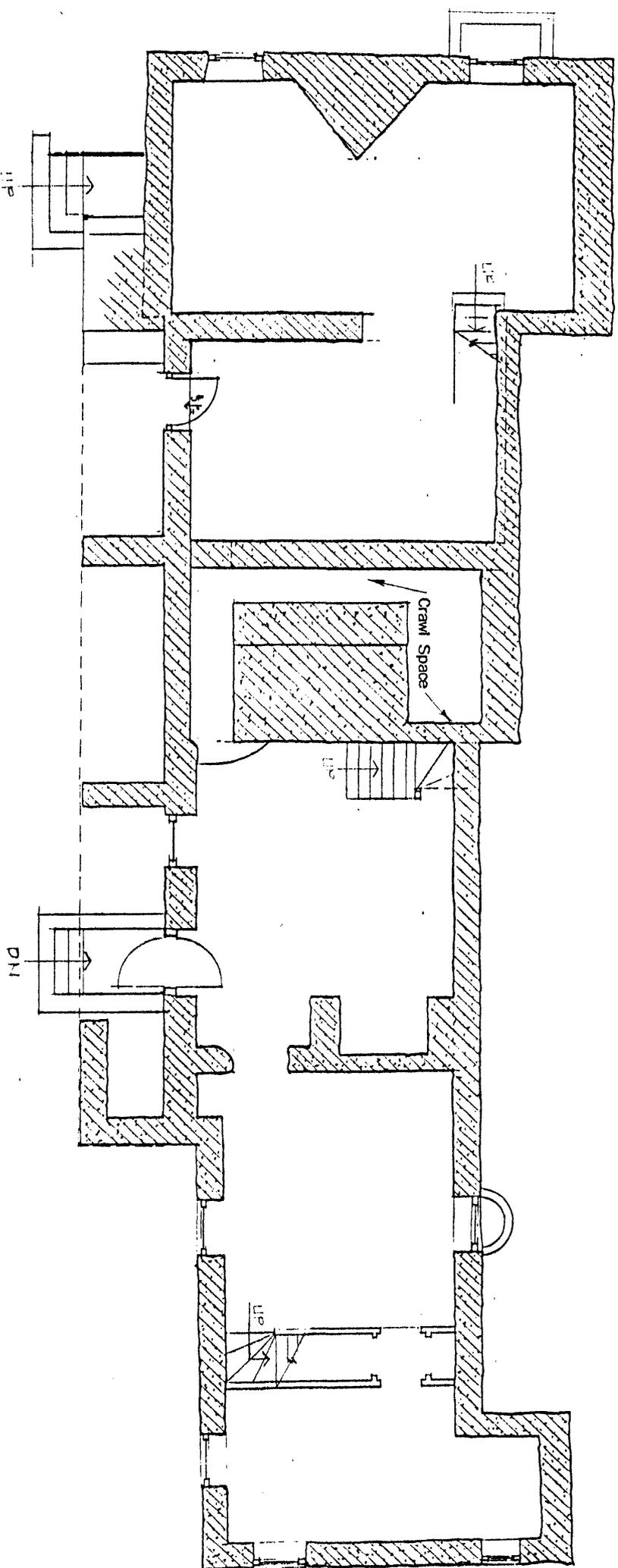
SECOND FLOOR PLAN (1938)

DRAWN TO INDICATE CONDITIONS AS DESCRIBED BY MARGARET AND ELSIE MCCORMICK WHO LIVED HERE IN 1938.

Measured and Drawn by: David H. Copley AIA

MERESTONE HOUSE

New Castle County, DE and Chester County, PA



BASEMENT PLAN (1992)

Measured and Drawn by: David H. Copley AIA

NORTH

