

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

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

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Item number 7

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N-4072

Property Name: S. P. Dixon Farm

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The S. P. Dixon Farm is located on the east side of Wooddale Road (Road 258) less than 0.1 mile south of its junction with Brackenville Road (Road 274). The nominated site occupies a portion of Parcel Number 08-009.00-051, encompassing approximately three acres. The site is bounded on the west by Wooddale Road, on the east by a tributary of Red Clay Creek, and on the north by a split rail fence that is located halfway between the driveway and Brackenville Road. The site boundaries are delineated on the attached map titled, New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985.

UTM Reference: 18/443690/4405070

Owner: Mrs. Henry B. duPont
1004 Wilmington Trust Center
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Description:

The S. P. Dixon Farm contains three stone buildings that were constructed during the first quarter of the nineteenth century: a house, a springhouse and a barn. All three contribute to the historic significance of the site.

The two story, fieldstone house was first built as a two bay, one-room-plan building and was later expanded by the addition of two more bays, effectively doubling the size of the building. The house is undated, but a comparison to other similar houses in Mill creek Hundred indicates that the first section was constructed during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The stone addition was probably in place before 1830. The facade, which is oriented northwest, is a continuous wall; however, a slight difference in the color of the stone indicates the division between the original (northeast) wing and the addition. Its four bay fenestration is slightly uneven. The two first floor center bays were both doorways originally, but the northwest doorway has been partially filled and fitted with a window. The windows on the first floor of the original wing are six-over-nine sash, all other windows are six-over-six sash. The wood shingled gable roof and its molded box cornice is continuous across the facade; however, due to the greater depth of the original wing, there is a break in the cornice along the rear elevation.

A gable-roofed, stone springhouse is located southeast of the house adjacent to a small tributary of Red Clay Creek. The springhouse was doubled in size by the addition of a frame wing on its northwest entrance wall.

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The circa 1830 S. P. Dixon barn is a tri-level, or double decker, building with frame upper level walls and stone lower and middle level walls. The upper level is sided with board and batten. The barn plan includes a small, incorporated straw shed on the northeast elevation. The upper level is entered via a steep, artificial ramp extending from the road to the center bay double doors, which are hung on rollers. Flanking the barn doors and the ramp are late nineteenth century/early twentieth century, braced frame corn cribs. The framing members are spiked with nails instead of being joined by mortise and tenon.

The upper and middle level plan is three bays long by three bays deep, plus one bay for the straw shed. The upper level consists of a raised driveway which continues into the straw shed. On either side of the driveway are sunken hay mows. On the northwest side of the door is a stair to the middle level beneath the driveway.

The middle level consists of partitioned rooms beneath the driveway on the same floor as the hay mows. The plan of this area consists of a narrow aisle down one side, and three rooms partitioned off for grain, poultry and storage on the other side. These may not be their historic functions, however.

The bents of the upper level consist of hewn principal members and vertical sawn secondary timbers. The gable end bents are one level deep and are joined to a sill on the stone wall which extends up to the middle level. The outer posts of the four post bents are flared and notched. The girt is framed over the plate with a tie beam lap-dovetail assembly. Rails interconnect the posts and provide the nailing surface for the siding. The inner bents also consist of four posts but these posts extend to the middle level floor. The girts or tie beams are framed well below the outer post heads. Large horizontal beams between each post, joined with a double pin mortise and tenon joint, provide the base for the raised driveway floor. These beams are supported by a center stud, and are braced to the posts.

The roofing system consists of bridled common rafters on principal purlins which are supported by flared and notched struts emanating from the girts. One purlin has a chisel-edged scarf joint over the strut. The strut tenon pierces the lower member of the purlin scarf and is held fast with two pins on either side of the strut head.

The flooring system consists of transverse, face hewn log joists supported by hewn, longitudinal girders. The northeast stable long wall girder is supported by the gable walls on the ends and by two half round columns in the center. The straw shed long wall girder spans from gable to gable and is supported by intermediary posts.

The original floor plan is somewhat intact. The long wall girder with the colmunar supports indicates a recessed stable wall. There is a wagon entrance on the southeast wall beneath the straw shed. Three doorways, with half round arches composed of fieldstone voussoirs, are on the northwest gable end and have board and batten doors with strap hinges. The doorways have wooden sleeves inserted in the side walls to carry rails, which, when pulled across the entranceway, blocked egress for stock while

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allowing ventilation. The doorways also indicate a floor plan of three longitudinal aisles.

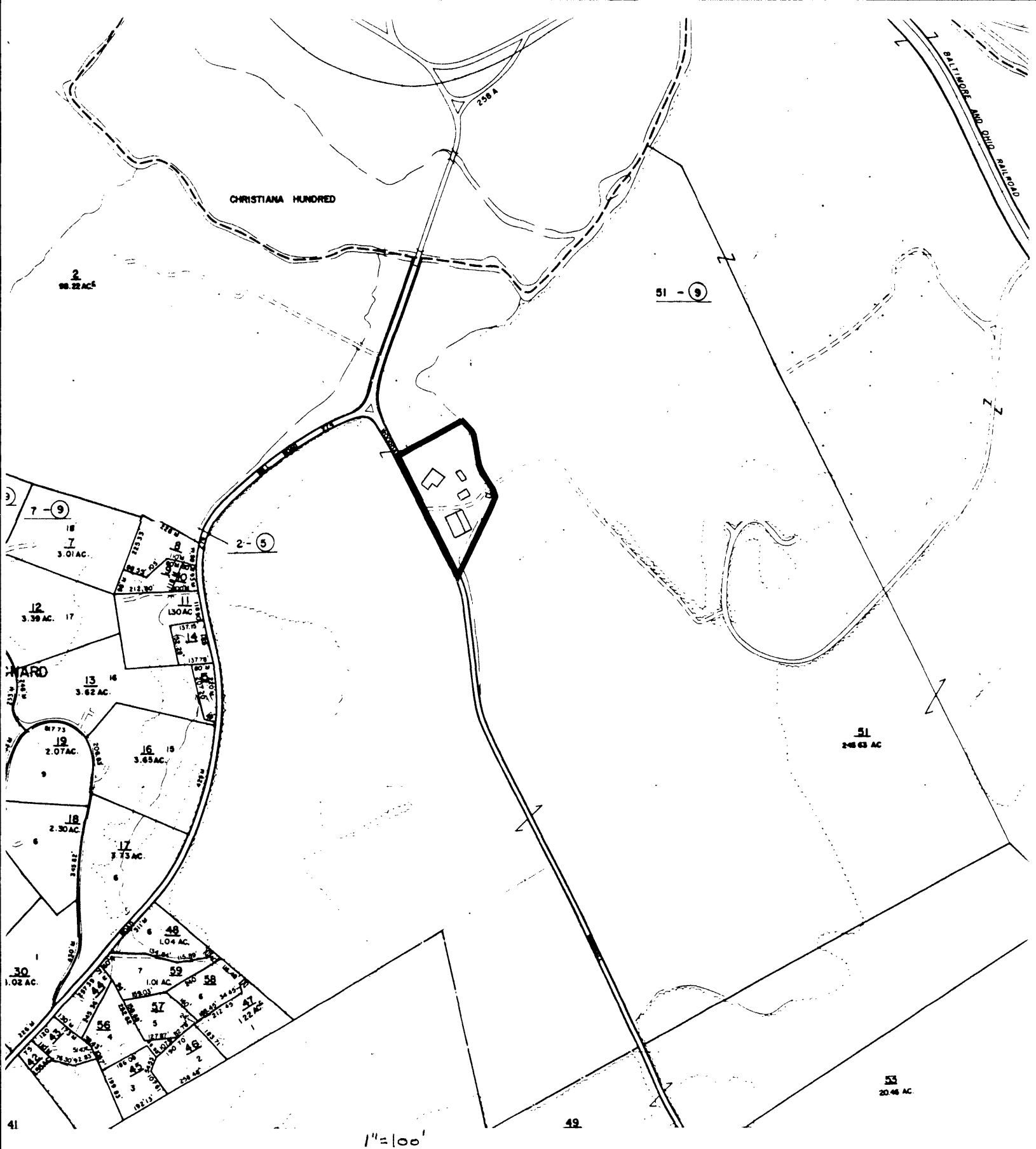
There are two additions on the barn. On the northeast long wall elevation is a modern, single level, shed-roofed shop. On the southeast gable end is a two level, shed-roofed addition built in the late nineteenth century.

Significance:

The S. P. Dixon farm site is significant under Criterion A because it represents the change from log buildings to stone buildings that occurred in Mill Creek Hundred in the early nineteenth century, and under Criterion C as a very well-preserved complex of stone buildings. The stone house is somewhat unique because the addition was added within the same rebuilding period as the original dwelling was built.

The barn is important for several reasons. The double decker form with the incorporated straw shed indicates a desire to enclose many farm activities within one building. The rather shallow straw shed, similar to additions on English barns, provides a new form to the recessed stable wall type. In fact, this appears to be similar to the Germanic form called the forebay. Thus, the Dixon barn may have influences from different ethnic groups and yet is well within the genre of Mill Creek Hundred barns.

Some framing features indicate experimentation with bent schemes, yet the flared post and strut were retained. The development of the tri-level barn was rather radical in combining functions but was within the prescribed bank barn form. Thus, the S. P. Dixon barn is important as an indicator of the progressive and archaic tendencies of barn builders in Mill Creek Hundred during the early nineteenth century.



N-4072 S. P. Dixon Farm
 New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985
 Parcel Number 08-009.00-051