

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 27 1982  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Raymond Neck Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Road 85 NA— not for publication

city, town Leipsic ~~vicinity of congressional district~~

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 01

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple; see attached list

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Recorder of Deeds

street & number Kent County Administration Building

city, town Dover state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state Delaware

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	NA
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Raymond Neck Historic District lies north of Leipsic River, south of County Road 85, and east of State Route 9 in Duck Creek Hundred. The landscape consists of low wooded horizons stretching beyond broad, low-lying open fields, a few feet above the level of the salt marshes and the Delaware Bay several miles to the east. The district consists of three nineteenth century farmhouses, the agricultural spaces between them, and the sight-lines they establish. The houses range in date from the 1820s, during which decade the Raymond and Hoffecker houses were built, to 1867, the secure date of the Wilson house. They represent differing but clearly related plans, five, four, and three bays in width. All are brick, north-facing, two-story, with central halls and, originally, two-story brick service wings. Taken as a whole, the group has a very high degree of cohesiveness and integrity, with its consistency of material and scale, and with the impressive repetition on the landscape of the forms of the gable-end chimneys and ell-plans. Exterior and interior integrity of the individual properties is also high. Although there are modern elements visible on the northern edge of the district (see justification of boundaries, below), and although each of the historic properties has experienced losses of one kind or another--e.g., the Raymond and Hoffecker houses have lost their original brick service wings, the Raymond and Wilson houses have lost most of their outbuildings--each retains sufficient integrity and significance that it would be considered for individual eligibility if it stood alone. Standing as they do in a group, they maintain more than sufficient integrity to contribute to a district. The visual impact of the whole is even greater than the considerable visual impact of the several parts. Further, each element preserves information which illuminates the options available to the builders of the others.

### Justification of boundaries

Since the sight-lines and spaces which connect these three houses are felt to be the unifying element of the district--several farmhouses further east date from the same general period, but were not included because they lacked clear visual connection with these three--considerable acreage has been included within the boundaries. The northern boundary has been set at the southern edge of the public right-of-way of County Road 85, a principal line of visual and physical access to the district. The western boundary was set at the western property line of the Raymond Farm, property #1; it would have been extended westward to Route 9, the other principal line of visual access, except that this would have meant involving a fourth owner whose open fields contain no structures, historic or modern. Should a future environmental review issue impinge on this intervening acreage, indirect effects on the district could be demonstrated. The southern boundary is set at the 10' elevation line on fast land above Leipsic River, again to preserve the historic vista and the historic relationship with the water, but also to avoid unnecessary triggering of environmental review issues during routine dredging of the river. The eastern boundary is set at a line of convenience, the property line between the Wilson house farm, property #3, and the next farm east. The only deviation from the regularity of these boundaries is the notching out of a 2.2 acre, rectangular lot from the northern border, west of the Raymond house lane. The twentieth century house on this lot is the home of the son of the present owner of the Raymond farm. Because of its

(see continuation sheet)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) social history
<b>Specific dates</b>	ca. 1820–30, 1867	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	unknown	

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Raymond Neck Historic District preserves on the landscape the architectural forms and spatial relationships of the nineteenth-century rebuilding of Duck Creek Hundred, wherein modest eighteenth-century mansion and tenant houses were enlarged or replaced with much more massive and substantial dwellings. Much of the architecturally rich landscape of the Hundred expresses this economic and architectural evolution. But because of the proximity and alignment of these three houses, and the resulting repetition on the landscape of their red-brick, end-chimneyed, ell-planned forms, this district makes its point in a clearer, more compact, and more compelling way than is readily to be found elsewhere in the state. Moreover, the particular histories of these farms, and of the prominent and anonymous people whose capital and labor built them, are illustrative of more than a range of building options. They also illustrate a number of developments in geographical and social relationships, and in the landscape and architectural forms that support them. Among these are the rapid division of the original land-grants into smaller tenanted and mansion farms, and the shifting orientation from the river to the land as the primary mode of transportation. Documentary sources record the overlapping of economic and political influence often enjoyed by the men who prospered on these farms, and the landscape preserves the changes they effected on it. Documentary sources also suggest, if obliquely, the role of slave labor in building the prosperity that made these comfortable houses, and the relative obscurity of the women who lived and worked in them. Finally, the houses and what remains of the outbuildings illustrate the variable economics of building order; the use of architectural form and style to express status and attitude; the evolving domestic arrangements that saw the provision and the eventual attrition of servants' quarters; and the functions of outbuildings gradually absorbed into the house. On the basis of its architectural integrity and of these illustrative qualities, the district is considered significant in terms of National Register criterion C, as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; and in terms of National Register criteria A & B, for its associations with events and persons significant to the local past.

The western end of Whitehall Neck has been known as Raymond's Neck since the early-nineteenth century, and is so identified on modern maps. Much of Whitehall Neck, and all of these three farms, was part of a 1000-acre grant made by the Penn proprietorship to Francis Whitwell in 1675, north of what was then called "the South West branch of Duck Creek." The landscape at that time would have been a much more uniformly wooded plain, and but very sparsely settled; when Kent County was divided off from the jurisdiction of the Whorekill Court in Sussex County in 1680, it was to serve the 99 citizens recently located in a census from "ye upper part of Cedar Creek to ye upper part of Duck Creek." Whitwell's tract he named Whitwell's Chance. There is also reference to a tract "Benefield," and Whitwell may have received a second grant on the south side of the stream and still another in the western part of the Hundred. In any case, he built a house called Whitehall above his own landing, several miles east of the present district. The remains of these early uses of the land have not been located.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Beers' Atlas of Delaware, 1868  
 Conrad, History of Delaware  
 Kent County deeds and Orphans' Court records  
 K.C. tax records, U.S. census records, inheritance records, Del. State Archives  
 1821 Survey plot of J. Hoffercker Farm, in possession of Dr. Bruce Wright

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 432 Approx.

Quadrangle name Smyrna, Bombay Hook

Quadrangle scale 7.5

### UMT References

A 

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

B 

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

C 

1	8
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4	5	6	3	3	0
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4	3	4	4	4	8	0
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D 

1	8
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4	5	5	7	9	0
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4	3	4	4	5	2	0
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E 

1	8
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4	5	5	2	7	0
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4	3	4	4	8	6	0
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F 

1	8
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4	5	5	4	6	0
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4	3	4	5	8	7	0
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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Wright, Historian

organization Bureau of Arch & Hist Pres.

date May, 1982

street & number Old State House, The Green

telephone 302 736-5685

city or town Dover

state Delaware

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Daniel R. Griffith*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/15/82

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 11/8/82

*J. Helene Byers*  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

022 10 11 1988  
10 10 1988

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presence on the edge of the district, the boundary can readily be drawn to exclude it, although it must of course be considered in an evaluation of the integrity of the district. No such effort was made to exclude the largely modern outbuilding complex that lies between this house and the Raymond house. The land the outbuildings occupy is under the same ownership as the historic house; and they in fact stand in the historic relationship of outbuildings to that dwelling. They are referred to further in the inventory entry for the Raymond house.

INVENTORY

1. John Raymond house. Five-bay, two-story, single-pile, center hall brick house, probably dating ca. 1830. Gabled roof with corbelled cornice under lateral eaves; close eaves on gable ends, with interior chimneys rising between square attic lights. Glazed headers forming initials "JR" in east gable end, a single diamond shape in west gable end. Symmetrically disposed windows with wooden sills and lintels, generally glazed with two-over-two light sashes. Two original round-arched roof dormers on front slope (middle dormer destroyed in 1938 fire), with eave returns, fluted pilasters, and small six-over-six light sashes. Centered entrance with fanlight and paneled wood door. Shed-roofed porch century construction, replacing earlier one-bay porch. Gabled frame wing at left rear, built on foundations of 18th century brick service wing destroyed in 1938 fire.

The plan of the main block of the Raymond house is fully symmetrical, with a parlor to the right and a sitting room to the left separated by a central stairhall. The upper story, which contains bedrooms, repeats the plan of the first except that a modern bathroom has been installed in the front of the hall. The modern frame wing at left rear repeats the original form only generally; it contains a large kitchen and utility area where the dining room and a smaller kitchen were once aligned, and a narrow den over the area once occupied by the porch. The upstairs is devoted to bedrooms as before, though in a different configuration. Originally, the rear-most brick section contained the kitchen, which was probably the original mid eighteenth century house. It had a very large hearth, and a ladder-like, retractable stair to a single-cell attic. The dining room, two steps up from the kitchen and one down from the sitting room, was probably a later addition; it too had a fireplace, with a box winder, on its rear wall. A frame summer kitchen also existed, at the extreme rear of the service wing.

The interior of the main block is in a very good state of preservation, with fine woodwork and ornamental plaster ceiling medallions. The downstairs mantelpieces are particularly handsome, with elaborately broken, denticulated cornices, bullseye corner blocks, reeded frieze and doubled, bundled pilasters. Window surrounds are also fluted and blocked, with beveled panels bridging the thickness of the wall. The stair balusters are simply but finely turned.

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The outbuilding group facing the house to the northwest is in the location occupied by such buildings at least since the early 19th century, when a large wooden, perhaps log, barn appeared on a survey plot. One early frame structure remains under metal cladding, but the visual aspect of the group does not contribute to the sense of a nineteenth century place evoked by the dwelling itself. However, while the outbuildings do not meet the National Register criteria for architectural significance, they are part of an historic farm and only artificially separable from it; further, they are consistent with the reality of the farm as a living and evolving entity. Most importantly, as discussed in the section 8 statement of significance, the placement of the outbuildings preserves an 18th century orientation to the water which is important to an understanding of the evolution of the Delaware landscape .

2. James Hoeffcker house. Four-bay, two-story, single-pile brick house with entrance and entry hall in third bay from left; ca. 1820. Gabled roof with corbelled cornice under lateral eaves; close eaves on gable ends, with corbelled interior chimneys (now stuccoed) rising between square attic lights. Windows symmetrically-disposed with nine-over-nine light sashes, plain surrounds, surviving shutter dogs and pintles. Rebuilt sills on first-floor front elevation, both stories on rear; probably originally plain wood, as on second-floor front. Off-center entrance with panelled wooden door and plain five-light transom. Front stoop rebuilt in brick; original one-bay, gabled porch removed. Modern one-story frame kitchen wing at left rear replaces two-story brick kitchen wing, probably itself a nineteenth century addition to the main block, demolished due to deterioration in mid-twentieth century.

The plan of the Hoeffcker house preserves the same functional spaces as does the probably slightly later Raymond house, but not the same symmetry. The right-of-center stairhall separates a two-bay sitting room--or dining room, since the service wing contained only a kitchen--from a one-bay parlor. The brick kitchen wing which extended at left rear appears to have been younger than the main house, though its masonry deteriorated more quickly. The gable-shaped scar on the rear wall of the main block is visible above the room of the present kitchen. But the wall itself is unbroken, suggesting that the former wing was applied against it, rather than the reverse. In any case, this wing contained a large fireplace and a box winder on the rear wall.

The interior of the front section is relatively simple. The parlor mantelpiece has forms almost identical to those of the Raymond house, but with almost all detail smoothed away. The sitting/dining room mantle is simpler still, all but omitting the broken cornice and the impression of entablature. Architrave trim on doors and windows is reduced to simple molding, and the stair balusters to plain squared sticks.

The outbuildings, counterclockwise from the rear of the dwelling, include a twentieth century chicken house; a long, braced-framed, mortice-and-tenoned barn dating from the early twentieth century; a milkhouse of later twentieth century date; and a corncrib, granary and loafing shed. All of these last are of braced-frame construction. The corncrib and granary particularly early because of hewn corner timbers. All of the outbuildings are in unused and somewhat deteriorated, but basically stable condition (continued)

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3. Robert Wilson's "Hebron." Three-bay, two-story, single-pile brick house, with center entrance and contemporary three-bay brick service wing; 1867. Gable roof on main block, with deep raked and lateral eaves lined with closely spaced, scroll-sawn brackets over plain frieze boards. Corbelled gable-end chimneys (rebuilt and stuccoed) rising between paired attic lights. Close-eaved gabled roof on service wing; capped interior stack at rear of kitchen, modern metal stovepipe from dining room stack at center of rear ridgebeam. Windows symmetrical, two-over-two lights on main block, six-over-six on rear wing; surrounds consist of plain curved moldings, plain wood lintels and sills; surviving pintles. Original front porch roof--bracketed, with coffered ceiling--supported on single pair of fluted metal columns, replacements for original, unfluted, double wooden pairs. Coffered wooden door, deep three-paned transom, narrow, three-paned, three-quarter-length sidelights. Shed-roofed porches of recent construction on either side of service wing.

Stone sill in door at rear of hallway incised "RW" and "1867". The plan of the Wilson house, like those of the others in the district, has two rooms downstairs, a parlor and sitting room on either side of a central hall. However, the hall is an open passageway rather than a container for the stair. Stairs up into the second story and down to the basement are located behind the back wall of the main block, along the north wall of the dining room. The stair gives access to an upstairs hall running across the back of the main block the width of the service wing. The hall contains doors to the three bedrooms aligned across the front, and to the attic stair. Downstairs, the dining room has its own mantelpiece and chimney stack on the wall it has in common with the kitchen. At the rear of the kitchen is still another fireplace and stack, invisible from the exterior, with a box winder beside them. Below grade there is a full communicating basement under the dining room and the main block, and a one-room cellar, accessible only from outside, under the kitchen. Despite the impression of additive building that the arrangement of the service wing suggests, the masonry is consistent throughout the house, with the same pressed brick on stone foundations, and no visible seams.

The internal expression of the chimney stacks is curious. Downstairs, the surround in the parlor is original, with a simple, boldly curved mantel supported on paneled pilasters; the one in the sitting room has been rebuilt. The east stack, above the sitting room, is visible but does not open in the bedroom above; the west stack has an architectonic surround in the bedroom, similar to the one in the parlor below it; at attic level, stove-holes are visible. The basement supports for these stacks are shallow buttresses, rather than the masonry arches that occur under the service wing stacks. This suggests that the "fireplaces" in the front rooms may have supported stoves or coal grates rather than open wood fires.

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Interior decorative treatment, as the description of the parlor mantelpiece would suggest, is generally simple but handsome. In parlor and sitting room, the deep windows are paneled to the floor. Another distinctive feature of this section of the house is the ornamental plasterwork, which takes the form of molded string cornices and, in parlor and hall, foliated ceiling medallions. The rear rooms are much simpler, but retain their original woodwork: plain mantelpieces, built-in dining room cupboards, enclosed kitchen cupboard and stair.

The outbuildings to the rear of the dwelling must be greatly reduced in number. They consist now only of a frame barn and granary, both in deteriorated condition; the form of the granary, with its broad, enclosed, turning stair on in one corner, is closely similar to the one surviving in association with the Hoffecker house.

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The same orientation to the river, however, survives in the early documents relating to the Raymond Farm. The road to Raymond's Landing is a common geographical reference in the deed descriptions of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The road would have been an extension, now absorbed in the fields, of the lane that still leads from the county road to the house. By the time the main block of the house was built in the 1820s, the land orientation was the important one, and the house faced north. So do the two other houses in the district, which were built from the ground in the nineteenth century. But the original section of the Raymond house probably took its orientation at least as much from the water as the land, with the entrance facing east or west and the outbuildings arranged, as they still are, to the north.

Members of the Raymond Family were, by the 1740s, among those who had begun acquiring land parceled out from the original large tracts, or smaller tracts of land previously ungranted. Jonathan Raymond is the first to appear in the land records, accumulating land by patent and through the medium of Sheriff's sales. And Raymond himself served terms as County Sheriff during this period.

This convergence of political office with the acquisition and profitable exploitation of the land appears again and again. James Raymond, who owned the Raymond plantation from 1775 to 1817, was one of the wealthier men in the Hundred and repeatedly held political office: Privy Councilor of Delaware in 1779, multiple terms as Kent County Senator and Representative in the Delaware Assembly, in the '80s and '90s. His son John Raymond was also elected to multiple terms in the House. He probably built the five-bay mansion house that stands today at about the time of his greatest political visibility, for in 1831 he was a Kent County delegate to the convention to revise Delaware's constitution, and in 1833 was made Speaker of the House. Jacob Stout, who acquired the farm after John Raymond's death in 1843, and who owned the Wilson Farm as well during those years, was even more imposing. He was president of the Bank of Smyrna during the '40s, a director of it for many more years. He was a frequent member of the General Assembly, and in fact his position as Speaker of the Senate propelled him into the 21st Governorship of Delaware in 1820-21, when the man who had been elected to the office died. Stout was thereafter variously referred to as Governor and Judge, since for some years after his term as governor he sat on the Court of Common Pleas. And he accumulated very large quantities of land, very often through the mechanism of the sheriff's sale. James H. Hoffecker, builder of the 1820 Hoffecker house, also sat in the Delaware Assembly. In 1848 he was State Senator from Kent County, in 1864 State Representative; while in the lower house he had the opportunity to vote with the minority for the abolition of slavery. The builder of the Wilson house was likely the same Robert Wilson who was Treasurer of Kent County in 1871-3, and perhaps the State representative of 1896 and State News editor of 1901.

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The impression created by this litany of positions is that of a more-or-less seamless system of prosperity and power, in which a relatively few names repeatedly recur. The system left its image on the landscape not only in fine houses, but in fertile cleared fields and in even more ambitious alterations of the topography. An historian of the 1880s reported of Duck Creek Hundred that where there had been continuous woods, "Great crops of wheat are grown, and in Raymond's and Whitehall Necks, near the town of Leipsic, the wheat average is equal to any section of the U.S." Historian Scharf continued that "a large part of the land near the bay and creek was formerly marsh, of which much has been drained and reclaimed." It is not surprising that the names of these wealthy and influential landowners also appear in references to these topographical undertakings. For example, In 1816 James Raymond was first named among a group of landholders who applied for a permit to bank and drain some marshlands contiguous to their properties. Raymond's Pool, at the head of Raymond's Gut within the borders of Bombay Hook Refuge east of the district, probably recollects this project. Similarly, Jacob Stout is recorded as having shortened the course of Little Duck or Leipsic Creek by having it cut through to the bay in 1820.

The earliest known occupant of a substantial house on the mansion farm of the Raymonds was Jonathan's brother or cousin John, who died in debt in 1772. The documents pertaining to the settlement of this estate refer to Raymond's "old brick mansion house." It can be surmised that this was a one-room-planned, large hearthed, story-and-a-half house, dating probably from the mid-eighteenth century, which formed the first unit of the service wing lost in the 1938 fire. After his death John Raymond's plantation, which then included among other acreage the land to the east which would eventually become the Hoffecker farm, passed into the ownership of James Raymond, probably his nephew.

The eighteenth century reality that a house in brick was a substantial one, even if it was only a one-room plan, is reinforced by the fact that a relatively wealthy and important Federal period landowner such as James Raymond apparently contented himself with adding a single room, and perhaps lifting the roof on the old brick mansion house. Depictions on survey plots up until 1819 show the house with three windows across the upper story, two windows and two doors below. Also, the inventory taken after James Raymond's death does not itemize by room the objects in an apparently small house, and has him in possession of only two sets of andirons. So it appears virtually certain that the present five-bay, two-story, double-chimneyed main block was the contribution of still another John Raymond, James' son, who inherited it from a short-lived brother in 1818, and that he is the "JR" commemorated in glazed headers in the gable. It is valuable to recognize in looking at the landscape of today that the modest brick house which later became a service wing was, almost until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the most imposing structure in view as one looked east over Raymond's Neck. It was the mansion house, not only to the home plantation, but to a loosely grouped collection of tenant farms, marsh tracts and woodlots that brought James Raymond's assessed worth in 1797 to over £ 8000.

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It is also valuable to remember something that is mentioned too seldom, and that is the contribution to these kinds of achievements of women and slaves. People in these categories appear infrequently in the documents, which refer primarily to relationships among landowners and between owners and tenants. But the briefest consideration of the labor-intensive domestic and agricultural activities required on these farms will remind us that their prosperity rested on a considerable amount of uncongratulated labor. White women, though obviously more privileged than slaves, generally appear in the land records only as the wives of men and subsidiary parties to their transactions. Slaves, because they were more literally property, are listed in the tax rolls by name, sex, age and assessed value. In the 1800 census, James Raymond's household included, besides six men and boys, two women and a girl, and three "other free persons." It also included eight slaves. This was as many as were reported for any household in the Neck, except for an anomalous-looking entry of 46 slaves for Joseph Porter; this must either be an error or reflect the activities of a trader or contractor of slave labor. In any case the labor of these people of color, like that of the white women of the household, would have been an extremely important element in a prosperity too easily subsumed under the name of the head of a household. These same considerations hold true for the Hoffecker farm, which became a substantial mansion farm, tenanted by the owner, around 1820. The Wilson house is post-Civil War and so dates from a period of changed conditions, at least for Blacks. But it remains important to recognize the degree to which these structures and complexes reflect the accomplishments of more than a single person.

James Hoffecker acquired the land to the east of the Raymond house in 1818 and a brick house "lately built," appears on a survey plot dated 1821. Also shown was the site of a small log house, by then demolished and said a few years earlier to have stood "in bad repair." This very modest dwelling, in use at a time when most tenant houses listed in the tax rolls were frame, appears to have been the principal dwelling on this land during its years as a tenant farm, after it was divided off from John Raymond's mansion farm in the 1770s settlement of his estate. Thus, we can set a small log house beyond the small brick mansion house of the Raymonds, in our mental image of the early-nineteenth-century appearance of the district. The two-story, four-bay brick house built by Hoffecker represented a quantum leap in substantiality and mass. It is also a nice rural reflection of the style appropriate to its period, for Federal forms were still current in Delaware in the 1820s. There is a general appearance of symmetry in the end-chimneyed gabled form, but an obvious relaxation of it in the broadening of the sitting room to two bays in width (or the narrowing of the parlor to one) and the consequent off-centering of the hall.

The smoothness of the forms of the Hoffecker house may reflect a version of Adamesque refinement of burlier Georgian forms. Or it may reflect, at least in part, the relative modesty of this house. Such an economic interpretation is favored by a comparison with the Raymond house main block. This was probably constructed a few years later, perhaps toward the end of a decade in which John Raymond's assessed worth and political prominence markedly increased. To judge

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from the close similarities between the forms of the two houses, it was probably put up by the same builder as the Hoffecker house. The Raymond house also has a certain smoothness of surface, and the sleek little fan-lighted entry and foliated ceiling medallion are certainly in good Federal style. But the extras which produced a very pretentious country house for the Raymonds tend to be conservatisms: the re-evocation of high Georgian symmetry in the widening of the parlor, and woodwork which is not lightened in the Adamesque manner but rather heavily enriched with classical detail. When compared to the smaller and less formal house raised by the Hoffeckers a short time before, the effect may have been reaffirmation of the dominant position of the Raymond family on the Neck. This is especially true since the five-bay Raymond house would have had an extensive service wing, representing the whole original dwelling. The brick service wing of the Hoffecker house, as noted in the description, was most likely a later addition. In the 1820s, a modest frame kitchen probably stood behind the new main block. These two houses, then, seem to represent two of the options for building order: the Raymond house an additive composition built up from the service elements, the Hoffecker house an additive composition which began with the main block and replaced temporary service elements over the course of time.

The Wilson house represents still a third option. This unusual structure dates almost half a century later. The property had been associated with the Stout family almost continuously since the mid-eighteenth century, and there had most likely been tenant houses upon it. But no record has been found of a substantial building there until Robert Wilson's "Hebron," shown in the 1868 Beers' Atlas. The house itself is sill-dated and initialed, R. W. 1867. What is remarkable about the structure is that while the physical evidence makes it quite certain that it was built all of a piece, its forms replicate the kind of additive building process which had produced the Raymond and Hoffecker houses. It reflects its much later date in the picturesque deep eaves which the end chimneys punch through, and in the eclectic amalgam of Greek Revival and Italianate detail. It might in fact be argued that the exact symmetry of the principal section is a response to currents within those styles. But in the current context, and with a service wing disposed as it is, the house seems more a response to the traditional configuration of other, earlier houses built in this substantial red brick in the Hundred and in the neighborhood. The Wilson house is fully symmetrical, though with an empty "stairhall," and equipped with balanced parlor and sitting room, though these seem to be fitted for stoves or coal grates rather than wood fires. Most surprisingly, the service wings contain separate stairs and chimney stacks in the dining room and kitchen. The separate stacks are particularly inexplicable in a single building campaign, where masonry costs could have been cut by setting the hearths of the two rooms back to back. However, the physical evidence of the house convincingly suggests that a single campaign is what produced it. The builder produced, as well, the near-perfect image of a two- or three-stage composition.

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No purpose is apparent for these curious features, except the desire to replicate a traditional form. Perhaps Robert Wilson, who like John Raymond was a substantial landowner, desired like Raymond an especially substantial image--which seems to have meant a rather conservative one--in the house he had built and marked with his initials. Whether Wilson actually lived in this house, among the various properties identified with him on the Beers' Atlas maps, is not known. But its stylishness and substance, and the fact that it was self-consciously named, dated, and marked, makes it a fair bet that he did.

After the building of the Wilson house and its outbuildings in the 1860s, the architectonic profile of the district would have been much the one that we see today, with two exceptions that need to be borne in mind. Both relate to building density; one is the somewhat decreased density of the scatter of buildings on the land, and the other is the markedly decreased density of the buildings immediately surrounding the mansion houses.

The overall density of large dwellings in the Neck is closely similar to that of the nineteenth century. Few twentieth century houses have been built. In terms of principal households, the population of Whitehall and Raymond's Necks is not greatly less than it was in at the time of Beers' Atlas, or even in 1800, when the census taker found 24 households. But as a result of changes in family size and structure and in agricultural practice, many fewer people live on the land. This is reflected in empty bedrooms and attics in the big houses, but also in the scarcity of the smaller, frame tenant houses that are probably what is represented by the multiple dots appearing in loose association with the principle residences on the Beers' Atlas map. Mechanized farm equipment allows the landowners and tenants to farm more acres with less human assistance, and on this stretch of landscape small tenant houses have largely disappeared.

Outbuilding complexes directly associated with the mansion houses have also atrophied. Both dwelling and storage/processing functions would have been represented in the little villages of functional structures that would have clustered near each one. There would surely have been quarters for field hands; the twenty-member household of James Raymond at the turn of the century, for example, could never have fitted into the small brick mansion house, and even when construction of big front sections with family bedrooms freed attic space in the service wings, it is unlikely that all "dependents" were sheltered under the same roof. There would also have been extensive accommodations for draft and dairy animals; several large barns and granaries remain, though unused, to attest to this function. Almost as complete as the loss of subsidiary dwelling spaces, however, has been the loss of domestic outbuildings. The functions of privies, smokehouses, icehouses, and summer kitchens have been absorbed into the main houses. The function of carriage houses, sometimes transferred to domestic garages, has here been let lapse. Only a chicken house, closest outbuilding to the Hoffecker house, remains to recall something of the dooryard clutter of small service buildings.

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The Hoffecker house has in general the best approximation of a full set of out-buildings. The fact that the long braced-frame barn is known to have been pegged together by a Leipsic builder early in this century makes it a fine example of the tenaciousness of traditional building technology. The close similarity of the granary to the one at the Wilson farm demonstrates the existence of at least a local lexicon of types. The documentary sources that remind us how simplified is the outline of the district today--for example, a tax roll reference to a "brick dwelling house, barn, stable, cribs, carriage house, smoke house, etc., etc."--can only enhance our appreciation of an historic vista which retains, after all, a remarkable number of the elements which characterized it over a century ago.

Level of Significance

The level of significance checked in item 10 is state. The architectural forms and historical patterns represented here are for the most part not unique to the area; in fact the relationships preserved in the district, for example early orientation to the water, confluence of economic and political power, and the conservative approach to form, are illustrative of patterns important to the state as a whole. Herein lies part of their wider interest. Even more conducive to that interest, however, is the particularly powerful expression of these and other relationships created by the alignment of these houses on the landscape. They create an exceptional historic vista which is of more than local significance.

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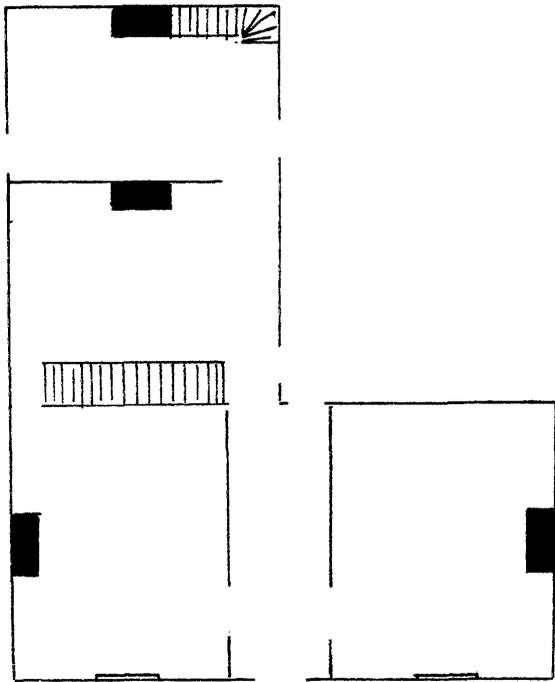
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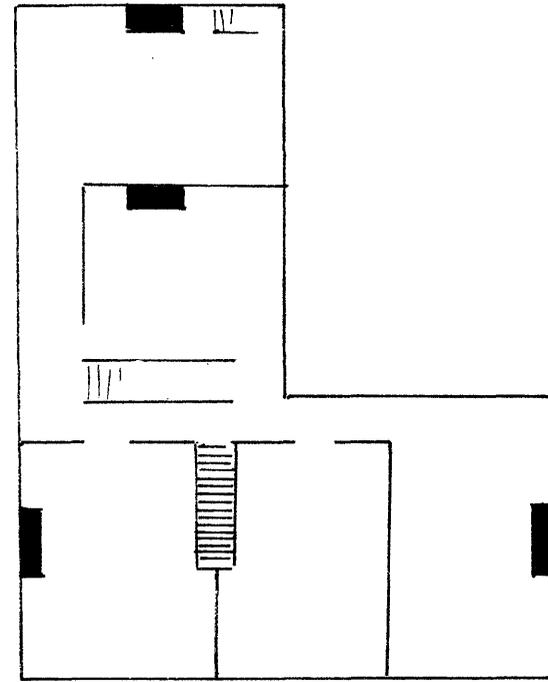
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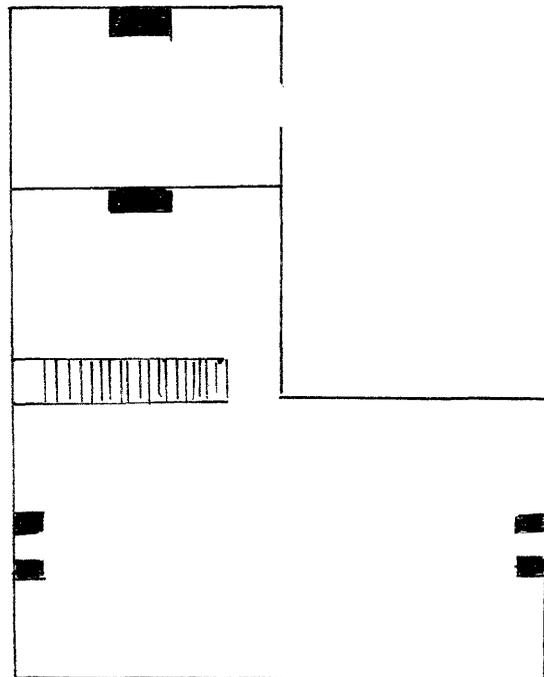
The boundaries of the nominated district are shown as the dotted line on the enclosed sketch map. They follow the 10' elevation line above Leipsic River on the south; the outer boundaries of properties #1 and 3 on the west and east, respectively; and on the north, the southern right-of-way of county road 85, except for the further notching out of a 2.2 acre plot under other ownership, west of the Raymond house (property #1) lane.



**FIRST STORY**



**SECOND STORY**



**BASEMENT**

# **WILSON HOUSE**

- drawn by PH 6/82  
- not to scale