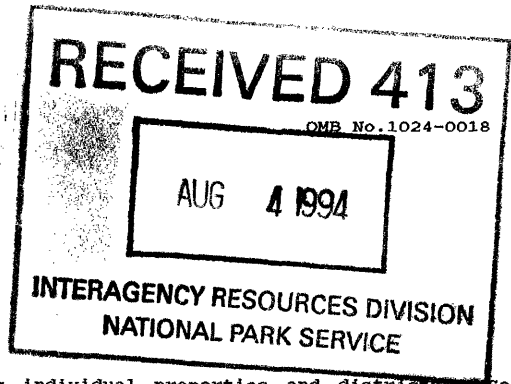


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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

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.

=====

**1. Name of Property**

=====

historic name : Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House

other names/site number : Chas. C. Connell Roofing, Gutter, and Siding Co., N-12992;  
and Seemans, Jeffrey and Pamela, House, N-12991

=====

**2. Location**

=====

street & number : 1201 and 1203 Greenbank Road not for publication : N/A

city or town : Marshallton vicinity : N/A

state : Delaware code : DE county : New Castle code : 003 zip code : 19808

=====

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

=====

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.)

*David R. Griffith*  
Signature of certifying official

*July 28, 1994*  
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

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CONTINUATION SHEET**


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Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House  
New Castle County, DE

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**Agency Certification**

In my opinion, the Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House  
  ✓   meet/        do not meet the National Register criteria.

  
Dennis E. Greenhouse  
County Executive  
New Castle County, Delaware

  5/23/94    
Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

entered in the National Register

*Gregory Lapsley*

*9/2/94*

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the

National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the

National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

*for* Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  2  </u>	<u>  1  </u> buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> objects
<u>  2  </u>	<u>  1  </u> TOTAL

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Trade	Specialty Store
Agriculture	Animal Facility
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Trade	Warehouse
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Side-Passage with Stick Trim

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

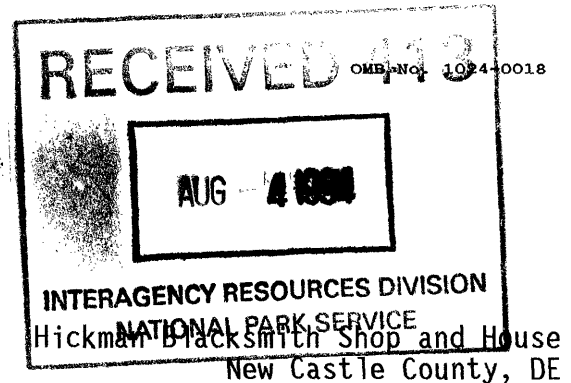
foundation	Stone
roof	Asphalt
walls	Weatherboard
other	Brick
	Concrete
	Wood

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

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**Description**

The Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House complex is comprised of the circa 1899 shop, a rectangular, frame, 1- and 1/2-story building on a high stone foundation; and the circa 1860 house, a side-passage plan, frame, 2-story dwelling on a stone foundation, with Stick trim and modest interior finish. The complex is named for Erasmus Hickman, the blacksmith who built the shop and lived in the house. The complex is situated on the southwestern corner of the intersection of Greenbank Road and Franklin Avenue, locally known as Stoney Hill, in the mill town community of Marshallton, Mill Creek Hundred. The property is located near the southern border of the Piedmont Zone, which is evident in the hilly, rocky topography of the area. Northwest of the Greenbank Road and Franklin Avenue intersection there was once a blue rock quarry. Both the Hickman shop and house are prominently located on the rise of the land sloping uphill from the Red Clay Creek. The buildings are oriented toward Greenbank Road, which forks 1/10th of a mile below the Hickman property. The southern road leads to Stanton, the oldest village in this Hundred. The western road is Old Capitol Trail, a route which ultimately led to Washington, D.C. This northern portion of Greenbank Road is locally referred to as the "Old Old Capitol Trail." The house is set back from Greenbank Road and farther uphill than the shop. Two sugar maples, which are at least 100-years old, flank the walkway leading to the house, further separating the residence from the street below. The blacksmith's place of trade, however, is conveniently accessible to the main thoroughfare. The shop was originally accessed from Franklin Avenue and was separated from Greenbank Road by a wall embankment. Alterations visible from the street have mainly been limited to the replacement of deteriorated materials.

The Hickman complex is located in a transitional zone between a manufacturing/commercial area and a residential one. The property is located just 2 blocks south of the original crossroads of Marshallton between Greenbank and Duncan/Newport Roads. This crossroads was once a bustling intersection where a post office, fire company, store, lodge, duplexes, mill-owner's mansion, and barber shop were located. Most of these buildings are no longer standing. The blacksmith shop is approximately 2/10ths of a mile south of the Ametek Corporation, the site of an iron-rolling mill established in 1836 by John Marshall, after whom Marshallton was named. The industrial function of the mill site has continued uninterrupted since 1836. South and west of the property the land serves a primarily residential function.

**Hickman Blacksmith Shop**

The Hickman Shop is a small, rectangular-plan building approximately 23' x 29'. This 1- and 1/2-story building is 2-bays wide, with the main entrance on the gable end facing Greenbank Road. All of the shop's window and door openings are symmetrically arranged. The building rests on a 14"-wide stone foundation painted white. The braced-frame walls are clad in white-painted cedar weatherboard with a 4-3/4" overlap. Some boards are replacements of deteriorated boards, and these

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replacements were milled about ten to fifteen years ago to match the size of the original boards. The corners of the building are finished with forest green corner boards. The gable roof is a prominent feature of the building, because of the building's location on the slope of a hill. The 2" x 6" exposed cedar rafters on 2'1" centers have a combination 45-degree and plumb rafter end. These support the green, folded-seam metal roof. The metal roof replaced cedar shakes and dates to the 1940s when the building was rented by Charles Connell.

The building is accessed at ground level of the east elevation through a pair of beaded-board sliding doors that cover a 20'4" opening, almost the entire width of the gable front. The doors date to the late-1930s and are replacements in-kind of the original doors, which were deteriorating. The doors were replaced by the State Highway Department when it was renting the building from Hickman before Charles Connell rented the shop. The right door has been rebuilt by Charles Connell's sons; the original 12-light fixed window was retained. The narrow pent roof over these doors was also built by Mr. Connell's sons to protect the doors from the elements. The windows are original throughout, except for those in the east gable end. The main floor of the building is lighted by four symmetrically spaced 12-light fixed windows on the building's north elevation. Sheet metal sheaths the inner portion of the narrow frames, the sills, and narrow hoods of the windows, presumably to protect the wood. It is likely that this work was done in the early 1940s by Mr. Connell. The south elevation and rear or west elevation of the first floor are banked into the hill and therefore contain no openings. On the east end of the north elevation a small shed addition, approximately 1' x 2', was built by Mr. Connell's sons with beaded board and a metal roof, to conceal the utilities.

The interior arrangement of the first floor is unchanged from its original design--no interior walls have been created. The open space is divided down the center by a single bent, which consists of two approximately 6" square posts symmetrically spaced on the length of the building. The posts appear to be reused. There is a board capital between one post and beam; the other main post supports two upbraces. There is one built-up 10" x 4-1/2" post behind the front doors. These posts support a circular sawn 4" x 5" beam. Only wire nails were found throughout the building. The framework of the walls is concealed by the composite material lining the walls, although three approximately 4" square posts are visible. The lower walls are stone to an approximate 2'8" level. The concrete floor was poured August 3, 1988. Prior to that date the floor was dirt. Shortly after the building was rented by the Connell roofing business, the contents of the room were removed and replaced by equipment required for that business. Most of that equipment has also been removed, except for two galvanized sheet-metal hoods centered on the exterior walls, which date to July of 1966 and were used for welding. They are vented below the roof on the north elevation between the two middle windows. Access to the loft area is also unchanged. There is an open stair leading to the loft at the rear of the shop in the southwest corner. The incline of the stair is not right for this space, suggesting that the stairs were also reused from another building at the time of the construction of this shop.

The loft is accessed on the interior through a wood hatch door and, from the

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exterior, through double doors that span a 7'9-1/2" opening on the west gable end. The doors lead to four new wood steps which descend to the ground. At the opposite east gable end are a pair of 12-light windows. These are replacements for what was apparently a solid door, which was replaced in the early 1940s because it dripped rain on the doors below. The loft was originally lit by four symmetrically-spaced, 6-light windows on the north elevation and three on the south. These windows are suspended between two boards attached to the interior wall at the top and bottom, so that air can be let in by sliding the windows sideways. One of the windows on the south elevation has been infilled with siding, which matches the original. The floor is tongue-and-groove and attached with wire nails. The corner posts are 6" square. The upbraces are 3" x 6" and pegged. The cedar purlins and rafters are original, and there is no ridge board.

Several features allude to the building's previous life as a blacksmith shop/pigeon coop. On the south elevation, four pigeon holes, which are approximately 8" round-arched openings, have been cut through the siding. These are irregularly spaced, but all on the same level. There are doors behind each opening which slide up in an arrangement similar to the window-opening system. In the 1930s this building was attached to a 3-story pigeon coop, which extended from the rear of the shop to the alley. These loft doors once led directly into that coop. These doors are attached with long, wrought-iron strap hinges hung on pintles. Alfred Guthrie, the nephew of Erasmus Hickman, who worked in the shop as a boy, identified this hardware as a product of the shop. These are not identical in size, suggesting they were extras or leftovers. The lower straps are approximately 1- and 1/2' long, and the upper straps are about 2' long. The business is also recalled by a metal weather vane cut in the shape of a horse, which is fastened to a small cupola on the center ridge of the roof. Mr. Guthrie recalled the weather vane was always there but was attached to a metal rod originally. There are four wrought-iron rings, attached to wrought-iron loops, which are embedded into the top of a stone wall adjoining the shop. The wall extends from the front of the shop to the street. These rings for tethering horses are further evidence of the business that once occupied this shop.

Hickman House

The Hickman House is a side-passage, single-pile, 2-story dwelling, with white-painted cedar weatherboard walls. Built circa 1860 as a tenement, the simple plan and plain finish of the Hickman house are typical of the modest farm houses in New Castle County in this period. There are references to a national stylistic trend in the Stick trim. The 3-bay east elevation, or main facade, faces Greenbank Road. The building rests on a thick uncoursed rubble stone foundation, approximately 20" wide. Throughout, the corner boards, window and door frames, verge boards, and Stick trim are painted forest green. The cornice is closed with wide, overhanging eaves. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles, which replaced cedar shakes.

The original house was approximately 24'6" wide by 19' deep. There is a full

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basement below this main block. Two additions were constructed on stone foundations behind the house sometime in the early twentieth century. There is no basement under the rear additions. This second-period section includes a 2-story, shed-roofed square addition, extending about 16' from the north end of the rear of the house; and a 16' x 8-1/2' 1-story kitchen. These created a rectangular plan, with approximate overall dimensions of 24-1/2' wide by 35' deep. Between 1992/93 the 1-story addition was raised to two, and a new gable roof over the entire rear addition was tied into the existing gable.

The facade is defined by three bays of symmetrical openings and by the off-center, 1-story, shed-roof porch, which extends from the center bay to the door. The wood door has a single-light top half with two vertical panels below. A 2-light transom lights the stair-hall within, and the door opening is trimmed with a plain board surround. Like the shop, the narrow drip hood is sheathed in sheet metal. Except for one 6/6 window over the main door, the windows throughout are 1/1 double-hung sash with a plain board surround. The first floor windows are slightly more elongated than the second. There is no evidence of shutters. The off-center porch rests on a concrete foundation. Three square wood posts support square beams with chamfered corners. The tail cut of the rafters are a decorative birdmouth with a rounded end. Four scroll-sawn brackets decorate the front of the porch.

The south elevation of the main block has a window on each level at the rear or west end of the building. Like those on the facade, the first floor windows are slightly elongated. East of the first floor window is a bulkhead entrance leading to the basement. The wood doors, which are not the original, are attached with unmatched strap hinges, possibly the blacksmith's own products. There is a 4-light, off-center window in the gable end of the attic. A brick interior chimney at this south end of the building extends through the ridge of the roof. A new parged concrete block exterior chimney was built in 1979 by John Seemans. This is located near the east end of the south elevation. The rear addition on this south elevation is separated from the original block by a corner board at the end of the original building. The first floor of this elevation is clad in its original weatherboard. When this 1-story wing was raised to two, it was clad in new cedar siding to match the existing. The first floor is accessed through a frame door at the eastern end of the addition. A narrow vertical window lights the interior on this elevation. Two new windows are symmetrically arranged on the second level, and are similar in size to the windows on the second level of the main building.

The rear or west elevation is 2 stories with a gable roof. When the renovations were made to this rear addition, new cedar siding matching the existing was used to cover the walls. There is one window on the elevation of the previously 1-story wing and a single window above it on the second floor which matches the window below. There is a 2-light, horizontally-arranged window on the north end of this west elevation. This was constructed in the 1950s in the location of a fireplace, which was removed at that time. Except for the 4-light attic window, there are no windows on the north elevation of the main block. At the west end of the north elevation of the rear addition, there is one window on each floor, asymmetrically placed.



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Trim elements relate the building to the nationally-popular Stick Style. Specific features include the decorative trusses in the gables, which are a variant of the common king's post form. In addition, turned pendant drops are attached to the overhang of the gable roof at the four corners of the main block. Other elements typical of the period in general include the scroll-sawn brackets on the porch and the verge board with ends cut like the porch rafters, with a rounded end and birdmouth. These elements have been carefully preserved and recently painted.

The interior finish of the Hickman house is in keeping with the building's modest hall-and-parlour plan. The stair hall occupies the north end of the building. The hall is plainly finished--the original trim consists of plain wide baseboards and plain board door surrounds with corner blocks. The original stair with open newel returning on itself is intact. Situated at the top and bottom of the first (leading) flight are small columnar newel posts consisting of a shaft, which bulges slightly in the middle and tapers toward the top, and a capital with a narrow cushion form. Two square balusters rest on each step, and the narrow handrail is curved. The only lighting for the stair hall is through the 2-light transom over the front door. The hall floorboards are random width, and the walls are plaster and horsehair. There are two door openings in the stair-hall. One leads into the addition at the rear of the building and the other is opposite the bottom landing of the stairs.

The living room or parlour is accessed through the doorway asymmetrically located in the wall separating the hall from this room. The living room is approximately 15'10" x 17'2". The large fireplace is centered on the south wall. The fireplace has been blocked in and no mantel exists, though the chimney closets, which flank the fireplace and are positioned on the sides of the fireplace block, are preserved and retain their original hardware. The original interior finish in this room has also been preserved and consists of the random-width floorboards, the plaster and horsehair walls, the plain, wide baseboards, and plain board door surrounds with corner blocks. A hole for a stove pipe is the only evidence of the new exterior chimney.

A door opening on the north end of the west living room wall leads from this room into the rear addition. As noted above, the rear addition is also accessed from the hall. Both doorways lead to a dining room 15'6" by 15'3". A door opposite the entrance on the south side of the house leads to the kitchen addition, which measures 7'6" by 15'6".

The two-room plan of the first floor has been divided into four distinct spaces on the second: the stair-hall; bathroom; and two bedrooms. (There are now three bedrooms on the second floor. Two are in the original part.) The returning flight of stairs, leading to the second floor, continues the balustrade form of the first flight. Columnar newel posts are situated at the top and bottom of the return flight and continue eastward half the length of the hall leading to the bathroom. A bathroom has been installed in the space above the first floor hall at the east end of the building. There are two rooms above the living room space. The east room is 10' x 13'9" and the west room is 6'8" x 15'9". The second floor of the rear

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addition is accessed from two points. A door from the landing leads to the 12'10" x 15'4" master bedroom, and a door from the west bedroom leads to a walk-in closet, beyond which is a dressing room accessed from the master bedroom.

Access to the closed, straight stair leading to the attic is through the bathroom. The attic is lit by one 4-light window in each gable end. The attic floorboards are as wide as 17" and are secured with cut nails. The rafters are approximately 3" x 4". Each has a slightly different dimension. Each rafter is numbered with Roman Numerals, though in no readily apparent system. There is a 1'10-1/2" to 2'1" center on the rafters. The ridge joint is mortise and tenon, with irregularly spaced peg holes, but no pegs. The rafters are birdmouthed to the plate.

The entrance to the full basement is at the rear of the first floor hall, behind the stair. Narrow stairs descend along the north wall of the stone foundation. The floor joists are 3" x 11" and up-and-down saw marks are clearly visible. The heating system is located in the south end of the basement near the bulkhead entrance. The sides of this entry are stone, and the present stairs were built by John Seemans. The stair space originally served as the coal chute. In 1985 the oil system, which had replaced the coal, was converted to gas.

There is a noncontributing frame garage on the property, which was built by John Seemans in 1960-65. When the garage was first built, one end was used as a horse stable.

The nominated property also includes within its boundaries a sugar maple, whose size ranks number five in the State (Tim Kaden, Forestry Section, Delaware Department of Agriculture). As of January 3, 1994, this ranking did not place the tree on the Delaware State Big Tree List, which includes the top four trees. This ranking is determined by the trunk's circumference (140"); tree height (52'); and crown spread (90' x 75'). The approximate minimum age for this tree is 100 years. The tree is located at the top of an ivy bank and west of the steps leading up from Greenbank Road to the Hickman residence. The age of the tree corroborates the date of the house as predating the shop.

Summary of Resources within Property:

- |                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| House           | 1 contributing building    |
| Blacksmith Shop | 1 contributing building    |
| Garage          | 1 noncontributing building |

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

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

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

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

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

**Period of Significance** 1899-ca. 1935

**Significant Dates** 1899

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** unknown

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

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**Statement of Significance**

The Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and the theme of Commerce, with a sub-theme of blacksmithing, during the period from 1899 to circa 1935. During these years, the shop fulfilled for its community a function common to blacksmith shops of the period--Erasmus Hickman's activities were primarily those of the farrier, the shoer of horses, although small smithing jobs were also performed. The close proximity of Mr. Hickman's shop to his house exemplifies the practice of tradesmen to live near their place of trade. The complex is located on the main road through the mill town of Marshallton, near the once-bustling crossroads of that town. Within its immediate setting, the complex is a rare-surviving, well-preserved example of the several small home-industries that once were common in this village community. The complex is also a rare-surviving example of both property types, the blacksmith's shop and house, in Mill Creek Hundred and New Castle County. The end of business at the shop coincided with the end of blacksmithing as a viable business throughout the country. By the 1930s, the farrier's trade was made virtually obsolete as the automobile became more widely available. The complex retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and feeling from the 1899-ca. 1935 period.

**Blacksmithing in Marshallton, Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, DE, 1880-1940**

At the beginning of the 1880 to 1940 period, which was defined in the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan as one of urbanization and early suburbanization, the blacksmith was still essential to every community. In an essay entitled "Delaware Manufactures, 1789-1900," Harold Hancock noted the self-sufficiency of many farmers except for their need for iron and salt, in particular (Hancock, 422). This held true nationally in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when there were a greater number of blacksmiths than of any other craftsmen in a community (Gunnion and Hopf, 5). In Mill Creek Hundred, blacksmith shops and grist mills outnumbered other places of industry in the Census of Industry for 1850-1870. During this period, the number of places of industry in Mill Creek Hundred declined, from 30 in 1850 to 20 in 1870. However, the number of blacksmith shops, while dropping slightly in frequency of occurrence between 1850 and 1860, was up by 1870. 20 per cent of the industries in Mill Creek Hundred in 1850 were blacksmiths; in 1860 the number had dropped to 16 percent; but by 1870, 25 per cent of the places of industry were blacksmith shops.

Existing primary records indicate that there were three men working as blacksmiths in Marshallton at the beginning of the 1880 to 1940 period and one at the end of this period. In 1880, three blacksmiths were listed in the population census village enumeration. Only one, James McVey, was the head of a household and was employed throughout the year. It is not known where his shop was located. Eli Bowling, who lived with his widowed mother, was employed six months of the year. Henry Swingemen was a boarder employed as a blacksmith nine months of the year.

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It is likely that the Marshallton blacksmith shop was operated by McVey, who possibly employed both Bowing and Swingemen part-time during the year. This number of employees corresponded with the number in Mill Creek Hundred during the 1850-70 period, where shops typically employed one to two persons. Nationally as well, it appears that the rural smith usually worked alone or with one helper (PA Farm Museum Catalogue). In the Delaware State Directory for 1888 there is only one blacksmith listed in Marshallton, T. Broomall. Neither James McVey nor Henry Swingemen was listed. Eli Bowing was described as a laborer. On the 1893 Baist map, there is one blacksmith shop in Marshallton in the vicinity of 3723 Old Capitol Trail (N-12985, Tax Parcel #08-045.10-103). This is the only blacksmith shop to appear on historic maps of this area.

In 1900, Erasmus Hickman was recorded in the population census as a blacksmith. Mr. Hickman's shop is located not far from the shop documented on the 1893 Baist map. In the 1910 population census, two blacksmiths were enumerated in Marshallton, Maulin C. Davis and William Moran. No Hickman was listed, suggesting inaccuracies in existing records. Davis worked in a shop, which was his own business. He and his family rented their home. Moran worked for someone else and was unemployed for twelve weeks in 1909. Erasmus Hickman owned both his shop and house. Mr. Hickman followed the local pattern of employing a part-time assistant, although in Mr. Hickman's case, he employed his six-to-seven year old nephew during the mid-1920s, Alfred Guthrie. Mr. Guthrie was paid ten cents to assist his uncle by doing such things as turning the blower handle to keep the coals in the forge hot. Although primary records indicate there were two shops in Marshallton at the beginning of the century, long-time Marshallton residents recall only the shop of Erasmus Hickman on Greenbank Road. The Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House are the last remaining examples of this property type in Marshallton. By the end of the 1880-1940 period, the trade of the blacksmith was obsolete across the country, with most businesses closing in the 1930s (Lasansky, 14). In the mid-1930s, Mr. Hickman rented his shop to the State Highway Department. In 1939, Charles Connell rented the shop for his roofing business.

Historians have discerned a trend in the blacksmith's trade from smith-work products in the first half of the nineteenth century to shoeing in the latter half. The image of the blacksmith as a shoer of horses was therefore created in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is the image preserved in the poem "The Village Blacksmith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. A number of industrial processes and inventions contributed to this trend. More iron foundries were available to cast tools and hardware, freeing the blacksmith from making these products. Well-known foundries included the Champion Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and the Buffalo Forge out of Buffalo, New York. These products were available from Sears, Roebuck and Company, as well. Significant inventions include machine-cut nails, invented in the late eighteenth century, and Henry Burden's patent in 1835 for a horseshoe-making machine, which could turn out horseshoes from bar iron at the rate of 1 per second (Lasansky, 13). The smiths could now order their tools and shoes, then fit the pre-made shoes to the animal.

This trend from smith work to horseshoeing is documented in the census records

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for Mill Creek Hundred. In 1850, the product was "smith work"; the 1860 census lists as products "country work" and "shoeing horses, etc."; in the 1870 census, most of the blacksmiths' products were classified as "horse shoeing." The smith had essentially become a farrier. Historians have also noted that although the most visible and documented activity for many smiths had become horseshoeing, it appears that the blacksmith continued to produce more traditional smith-work products. The small smithing jobs that the local shop continued to undertake are not as well-documented as the main business.

Erasmus Hickman fits this description; he was both farrier and blacksmith. Horseshoeing is the activity best recalled by long-time Marshallton residents, who remember that there were generally one-to-three horses tethered at the shop, waiting to go inside to be shod (Hedrick notes). However, Alfred Guthrie, Hickman's nephew, remembers his uncle occasionally making other products, such as hinges and fireplace equipment, as well as odd jobs, such as tempering masons' tools and some work for Greenbank Mill. The types of equipment and tools that were once in the shop corroborate the fact that the shop's activities included both smithing and shoeing.

The equipment and forge were apparently removed from the shop in the mid-1930s when the building was rented. (It is not known to whom the equipment was sold). Donald Schneckeburger, who went to work for Mr. Connell in 1941, does not recall any tools or materials from the blacksmith shop still in the building at that time. Alfred Guthrie, in a conversation with Robert Howard, the Curator of Industry and Technology at the Hagley Museum and Library, recalled the original interior arrangement of the shop equipment and tools. The general arrangement of the shop is recorded on the reconstructed plan (see plan). The metal forge sat on the dirt floor in the center of the building, with the hand-cranked blower located in front of it, near the doors. Stock racks lined the north wall, and two benches were located in front of the racks. Three anvils of different sizes sat on the floor between the forge and the south wall, where the main wooden work bench, tongs, and vise were located. A tub of water was located at the end of the work bench behind the anvils. An "office" was set up in the northwest corner, with a desk, chair, and perhaps a file cabinet. The building had no electricity at that time; instead, kerosene lamps were used. It is not known where the coal for the forge was stored. Heat from the forge was not sufficient to warm the building in the winter. A wood-burning, pot-belly stove was located behind the forge.

Specific tools and equipment of both the farrier and the blacksmith were recalled by Mr. Guthrie. The tools listed below were identified from the pages of a ca. 1920 trade catalogue of the Champion Blower and Forge Company, of Lancaster, PA and from illustrations in the Antique Tool-Collectors' Guide to Value:

- Champion Cast Iron Blacksmith Forge No. 433, with large hot coal box
- Bottom Fuller and Swage
- Hot and Cold Hardies
- Cold Chisel and Cape Chisel
- Cold and Hot Cutters and Flatter
- Ball-peen, Cross-peen, Set, and Fuller Hammers

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- Wood vise
  - Post-drill similar to Champion Self-feed Drill N. 101
  - Bellows
  - Fire set: Scraper, shovel, poker
  - Tongs
  - Hoof parer
  - Hoof tester
  - Farrier's hammers--Philadelphia and Boston patterns
  - British Hoof Trimming Butteris
  - Hoof Knife
  - Hoof Filing Rasp
  - Cowboy Style Shoe
  - Mule Shoe
  - Burden Horseshoe

When Erasmus Hickman established his shop in Marshallton in 1899, the profession of the blacksmith would survive about three more decades. Mr. Hickman was forty-one when he set up his shop in Marshallton. Because he started this shop later in his life, he did not have to make an adjustment from one trade to another. Mr. Hickman's shop is recalled as a busy place where there was always activity (See notes from Hedrick). Hickman's customers seem to have come from all over, including the Limestone Road area. However, not all Marshallton residents were serviced by the Hickman shop. One long-time Marshallton resident recalled that his family's horse and buggy were serviced by a blacksmith from Duncan and Faulkland Roads, who traveled to the house to make repairs (Interview with Joseph Cain). Indeed, it was the portable blacksmith who would take over the market from such small, rural shops as Hickman's. Automobiles and the development of the trade of the itinerant farrier to service farm animals led to the decrease in demand for the smithy and farrier and to the eventual decline of this trade.

Integrity Criteria and Evaluation

A turn-of-the-century blacksmith shop associated with a village community is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places if it possesses integrity of location, setting, design, and materials. The location of the shop on its original site is necessary as an element in defining its function as a support service for the community. The setting of a blacksmith's shop includes the blacksmith's house, which illustrates the practice of tradesmen to live near their place of trade, a practice that became less frequent during the early suburbanization period. The existence of the house is not necessary for defining a shop's eligibility. However, a complex would be more strongly representative of the historic context of blacksmithing than a single shop building. The setting of the shop also includes its accessibility to a main road. To convey its period the building should retain most of its historic materials. The shop must also possess integrity of design. This includes the building's configuration, its overall shape and proportions, as well as the door and window patterns. The integrity of design also includes the building's floor plan. To express its function as a workshop, the interior plan should remain open. This property type lost its viability because the

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function it housed lost its importance. As these buildings went on to serve other purposes, their equipment was removed, including the forge, which occupied a good deal of space. The existence of the equipment would make a building particularly eligible for the National Register. A building can still be eligible without its equipment if it retains integrity of location, setting, design, and materials.

The Hickman Blacksmith Shop possesses integrity of location, setting, design, and materials, as well as feeling. The shop is located on its original site on the main road through the mill town of Marshallton, near the once-bustling crossroads of that town. The Hickman complex is composed of two elements--the blacksmith's house and shop. The survival of both of these building types make this complex even more rare. The integrity of the house in terms of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association is also intact. The setting is also defined by the close proximity of the shop to a main road. The shop also retains most of its historic materials. On the exterior, the siding is original, except for a few boards that were milled to match the original, which were deteriorating. The wooden sliding doors are replacements in-kind for the original doors, which were in poor condition. The folded seam metal roof dates to the early 1940s, and replaced a roof of cedar shingles. The rafters and purlins are original. The interior posts are also intact. The shop possesses integrity of design. Typical plans for blacksmith shops were published in 1899 in a book entitled Practical Blacksmithing. The book is a compilation of articles from the journal The Blacksmith and the Wheelwright. In comparison with these, and in the opinion of Robert Howard, the Curator of Industry and Technology at Hagley, the Hickman shop appears to be a common plan. The first element of a typical shop was its overall rectangular dimensions. One shop was described as 24' x 34' with a large door at one end (Richardson, 64). The Hickman shop is approximately 23' x 29' with a pair of double doors at one end. This simple format was described by Jeannette Lasansky as having changed little from 1742-1935. A typical shop was constructed like a large garage, usually with a pitched roof (Lasansky, 6). The overall shape, proportions, and door and window patterns of the Hickman shop are unchanged. The floor plan has also not been altered. The property also possesses integrity of feeling--its physical features taken together convey the property's historic character. Long-time residents say the shop looks much as it did, and it recalls to them the activity there in the early part of this century.

Although statistics indicate that this was once a very common type of building complex, few blacksmith shops and related houses survive in New Castle County from the 1880-1940 period. This is the only remaining example in Marshallton. Of the 11 blacksmith shops mapped on the Baist Atlas of Mill Creek Hundred in 1893, it appears that none are extant. The Hickman shop appears to be one of only two remaining examples in Mill Creek Hundred. The other example post-dated the Baist Atlas. It consists of a shop and house and is located south of Kirkwood Highway on Old Pike Creek Road (N-10068). This shop was built between 1903-05 and the house dates to 1915. This shop was in use until the 1960s. Some of the equipment from this shop is now in the Hagley collection. There is purportedly another shop in the Eastburn-Jeanes Historic District (N-194) on Upper Pike Creek Road. Neighbors recall that the wheelwright shop was also a blacksmith shop, although the nomination does not



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document this function. This building has been converted to a residence. In New Castle County from the 1880 to 1940 period, The Mt. Cuba Blacksmith Shop is still extant (N-5001.6, also N-303). This shop, on County Road 261 in Christiana Hundred, is now a residence. It was constructed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The blacksmith's house is still extant next door. This shop was in use until ca. 1936. Other known examples predate the 1880-1940 period. Notable examples from this period include the Blacksmith Shop at Hagley Museum and Library, Christiana Hundred (N-1405), and a shop that is no longer extant but was well-documented before demolition, the Wilson/Slack Blacksmith and Wheelwright/Machinist Shop, Pencader Hundred (N-6269).

The Decline of the Blacksmith/Farrier Business

Long-time residents and the assessment records document that Mr. Hickman was engaged in another activity toward the end of his life--pigeon raising. This activity his nephew, Alfred Guthrie, suspects was to supplement his income as the need for the blacksmith/farrier declined. It is not known when he began this activity. The census records do not note this activity in 1925, but by 1940 a pigeon house was assessed. Although the pigeons were raised upstairs in the loft area of the shop, the assessment of a pigeon house likely refers to a large, three-story, frame building that was attached to the rear of the shop, and accessed through the double doors on the shop's second floor. Mr. Guthrie recalled thousands of pigeons in the three-story coop, which amounts to a large operation. It is likely that Hickman's pigeons were raised to be sold as squabs, since it is recalled that they were kept penned and not allowed to roam from the building. Mr. Guthrie recalled that the squabs were sold in the New York market, and were first sent live in cages to a dealer in Wilmington. This parallels the practice of the Delaware broiler industry at this time. Apparently, another side-profit was made from this business. Mr. Donald Schneckenburger, who later worked for Charles Connell, worked as a boy cleaning out the pigeon coops, and he recalls that the guano was sold as fertilizer.

In Delaware, pigeon-raising was not a big industry. Some of the Delaware agricultural census statistics did not include pigeons in their counts. In 1939, the state totals for pigeons was \$24.00. Pigeons, however, were a popular livestock in Marshallton. Some pigeons were raised for sport, as homing pigeons, and others were raised to be sold as squabs. According to several residents, a small building, 1211 Greenbank Road (N-12990), which has been converted to a residence, was once a lodge or club for those who raised homing pigeons. Three families were in the squab business in Marshallton, the McVeys, Carinders, and Hickmans. William McVey, whose name is most often associated with pigeons, had a two-story coop with a net across the front, at the corner of New Street and Franklin Avenue in Marshallton. Although the pigeons raised in the loft of the Hickman shop amounted to a small-scale business in relation to others in the area, the shop appears to be the last extant site in Marshallton connected with this business.

Squab raising was an increasingly popular business in the early twentieth century. In 1915, the United States Department of Agriculture published a bulletin

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on the subject. The article noted that demand for squabs was increasing, particularly in the large cities in the Northeastern states. Squabs were typically raised in the areas outlying these cities, and most successfully "as a side issue on a small scale in towns and cities and on general farms" (Lee, 1). The common practice was to use available buildings, such as the lofts of barns (Lee, 6-7). Pigeon holes cut in the side of the building could allow birds into a confined outdoor area (Lee, 7), although it was more typical for small breeders to allow their pigeons free range (Lee, 15).

The coops and pigeon holes would be the main defining elements of a building that had been adapted for this purpose. The pens are no longer in the loft of the Hickman shop, so the pigeon holes are the only physical evidence of this function. Although the primary function of the shop was blacksmithing, the pigeon-raising activity illustrates another dimension of the way the building functioned in the early-twentieth-century village community, as well as the way in which the blacksmith supplemented his income as his trade declined.

### Summary of Documentary History

Both documentary and physical evidence indicate a construction date of circa 1860 for the house and 1899 for the shop. Until 1899, the land on which the shop and house are located belonged to the Cranston family, the predominant landholders in the Marshallton region. In 1854-56, Simon Cranston was assessed for a stone house, a barn, and three frame tenements. In his Will probated February 1, 1856, Simon Cranston left the property to son James. In 1868, James was assessed for a stone house, a barn, and four frame tenements, one of which is in the approximate location of the Hickman house on the Beers Atlas and is a little separate from the other three. In 1873, James Cranston was assessed for a stone house, a barn, and five frame tenements. James sold the property to Edwin J. Cranston in 1876. On the 1881 Hopkins Atlas, Edwin J. Cranston owned five houses in the vicinity of the Hickman house, one of which is separate from the others. Mrs. Connell and other long-time residents recall four duplexes built close to each other next to the Hickman property. By 1893, Edwin J. Cranston owned a total of twenty-seven frame dwellings in Mill Creek Hundred. The hall-parlour plan, interior elements such as the baseboards and stair, and construction materials and methods of the Hickman house, and the approximate dates of construction of the early Cranston tenements, suggest a date of ca. 1860 for the Hickman residence.

In 1899 Erasmus Hickman purchased 1.7 acres from Edwin J. Cranston and his wife, Annie. According to his obituary, Erasmus Hickman was a native of Newark but had lived at Mt. Cuba until about the time he moved to Marshallton (Journal Every-Evening, 9/7/1943, p. 15). Erasmus Hickman settled in Marshallton possibly because his wife, Bertha Hickman, was a Guthrie, a long-time Marshallton family. The property remained in the Hickman family through the period of significance. There is no record of a blacksmith shop having been owned by the Cranstons in the nineteenth-century assessment records. In the 1900 population census, Erasmus Hickman's profession was "blacksmith." In 1901 Erasmus D. Hickman was assessed for a frame house, a stable, and a blacksmith shop. These records, along with the

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construction materials and methods of the building, indicate a date of circa 1899 for the shop. In 1939, Charles Connell rented the shop for his roofing business, which he moved to Marshallton from Central Avenue in Brack-Ex. In 1940 Erasmus D. Hickman was assessed for a frame dwelling, a garage (presumably the shop), and a pigeon house (the building that was attached to the shop).

In 1943, Erasmus Hickman died, leaving his estate to his wife, Bertha. Mr. Hickman's obituary noted that he had been a member of the Improved Order of Red Men, an order some local residents recall used to meet in a building two blocks from Hickman's property, 1005 Greenbank Road (N-12997). He was buried in the St. Barnabas Cemetery (N-13115). In 1945 Bertha Hickman sold the part of the 1.7 acres containing the blacksmith shop to Ivanhoe Willis (Deed G-45 429). Charles C. Connell Sr. and his wife, Jeanette A., purchased the shop in 1950 from the executors of the estate of Willis. The blacksmith shop has been preserved by Mrs. Jeanette A. Connell, the widow of Charles Connell, and their two sons Harry and Louis. In 1958, Bertha Hickman bequeathed the house to her niece, Mary Eleanor Edwards and her husband Harry W. Edwards (Deed I-62 208). The Edwards sold the house to John W. Seemans and Betty B. Seemans on July 10, 1959 (Deed G-64 64). The deed was transferred to John W. Seemans in 1972 (Deed D-87 542). In 1988 the house was deeded to the son of John W. Seemans and Betty B. Seemans, Jeffrey Seemans (Deed 718 0286).

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Hickman Blacksmith Shop (N-12992) and House (N-12991)

Comprehensive Planning

Geographic Zone: Piedmont  
Theme/Time Periods:

Manufacturing (6E)

In reference to the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, this nomination for the Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House expands the available information on the historic context of blacksmithing in the Piedmont Zone during the 1880-1940 period.

Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change (11E)

The shop is an example of a support service for an industrial settlement that was formed in the nineteenth century.

Agriculture (1E)

During this period, pigeons were a popular livestock in Marshallton as well as other areas of the county. Some pigeons were raised for sport, as homing pigeons, and others were raised to be sold as squabs. A small building (N-12990), which has been converted to a residence, was a lodge or club for those who raised homing pigeons, according to several residents. Three families were in the squab business in Marshallton, the McVeys, Carinders, and Hickmans. William McVey, whose name is most often associated with pigeons, had a two-story coop, with a net across the front, at the corner of New Street and Franklin Avenue in Marshallton. The pigeons raised in the loft of the Hickman shop amounted to a small-scale business in relation to others in the area. However, the shop appears to be the last intact example in Marshallton of this business. William McVey's son is supposed to have had a business in Elsmere similar to his father's in Marshallton (Notes from interview with Cain). Pigeons were also supposed to have been raised by the Mitchell's in Cranston Heights (Notes from interview with Ford). Homing pigeons were raised as a hobby in the 1930s by Joseph Corbett in the icehouse and later in the barn loft at the Anchorage (the John Brown House) in Browntown, where a pigeon club also met at the barn (Information provided by Clara Corbett).

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

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

**Primary location of additional data**

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

Name of repository: New Castle County Department of Planning

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .71 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>445300</u>	<u>4397640</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

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

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Susan Brizzolara, Assistant Historic Preservation Planner  
organization New Castle County Dept. of Planning date January 31, 1994  
street & number 2701 Capitol Trail telephone 302-366-7780  
city or town Newark state DE zip code 19711

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**--Continuation Sheets**

**--Maps**

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

**--Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

**Property Owner**

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

Hickman Blacksmith Shop/Pigeon Coop:

name Jeanette A. Connell

street & number 2010 Franklin Avenue telephone 999-1239

city or town Marshallton state DE zip code 19808

Hickman Residence:

name Jeffrey W. Seemans

street & number 1203 Greenbank Road telephone 994-6343

city or town Marshallton state DE zip code 19808

Greenbank Road and Franklin Avenue Right-of-Way:

name Anne Canby, Secretary of Transportation, Delaware Department of Transportation

street & number P.O. Box 778 telephone 652-5600

city or town Dover state DE zip code 19903

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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**Will and Probate Records:**

Simon Cranston Will (probated 1856)  
Erasmus Hickman Inventory (1943)  
Ivanhoe Willis Inventory (1949)

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**Geographical Data**

***Verbal Boundary Description***

The nominated boundary for the Hickman Blacksmith Shop and House is the boundary line around the legal parcels on which the buildings are located, except on Franklin Avenue and Greenbank Road, where the boundary lies outside the existing right-of-way for these roads, following the present curb line for the most part. The nominated boundary is outlined in a bold, black line on the accompanying map, "New Castle County Property Tax Map, Revised 5/26/93." The outlined area, parcels 08-045.10-093 and 08-045.10-094, contains .71 acres. A detail of the boundaries on Franklin Avenue and Greenbank Road is shown on the accompanying map, "Detail of Nominated Boundary at Curb Line." This map was traced from the DeIDOT Division of Highways Contract #80-031-08. The nominated boundary seen on this map lies 7 feet outside the existing right-of-way along Franklin Avenue and 5 1/2 feet outside the existing right-of-way along Greenbank Road.

***Boundary Justification***

The boundaries of the two legal parcels were chosen as the nominated boundary because these lines contain both the contributing resources. The .71 acres included in these boundaries were part of the 1.7 acres purchased by Erasmus Hickman in 1899. The right-of-way is included within the boundary because it is part of the original Hickman property and contributes to the setting of these buildings at the intersection of Greenbank Road and Franklin Avenue. Although the shop was historically intended to be located close to the road, this resource would be jeopardized if the boundary were drawn on the right-of-way line (see map "Detail of Nominated Boundary at Curb Line"). Specifically, the right-of-way line runs through the wall with horse tethering rings, which is attached to the blacksmith shop, and is part of that contributing resource. Presently, the curb line is 2 1/2 feet from that resource. The right-of-way line lies approximately 2 feet from the east corner of the shop. The nominated boundary line was drawn outside of the existing right-of-way line, as indicated above, and not on the right-of-way line, in order to protect the resources.

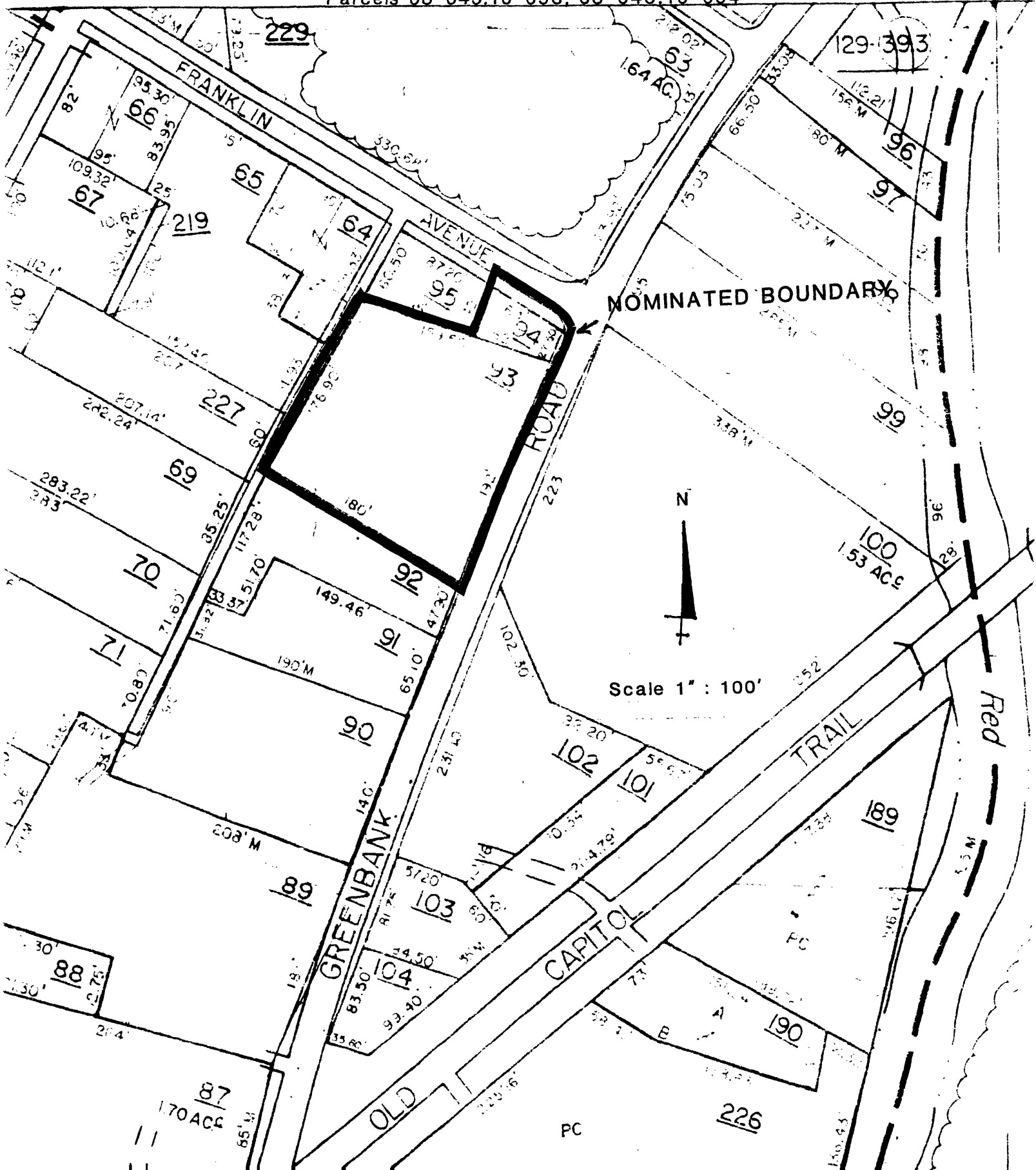
# HICKMAN BLACKSMITH SHOP AND HOUSE

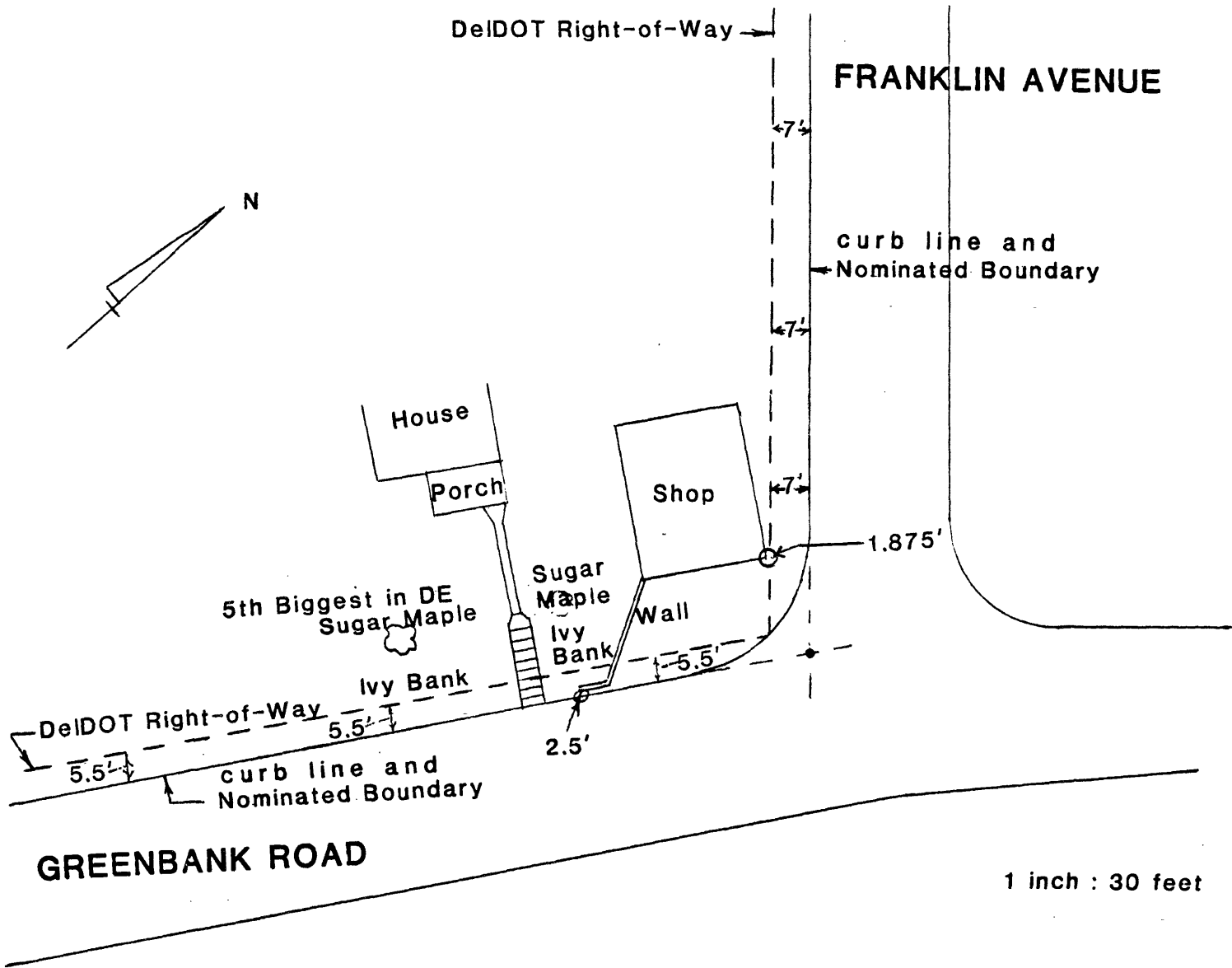
N-12991 and N-12992

New Castle County Property Tax Map

Revised 5/26/93

Parcels 08-045.10-093, 08-045.10-094

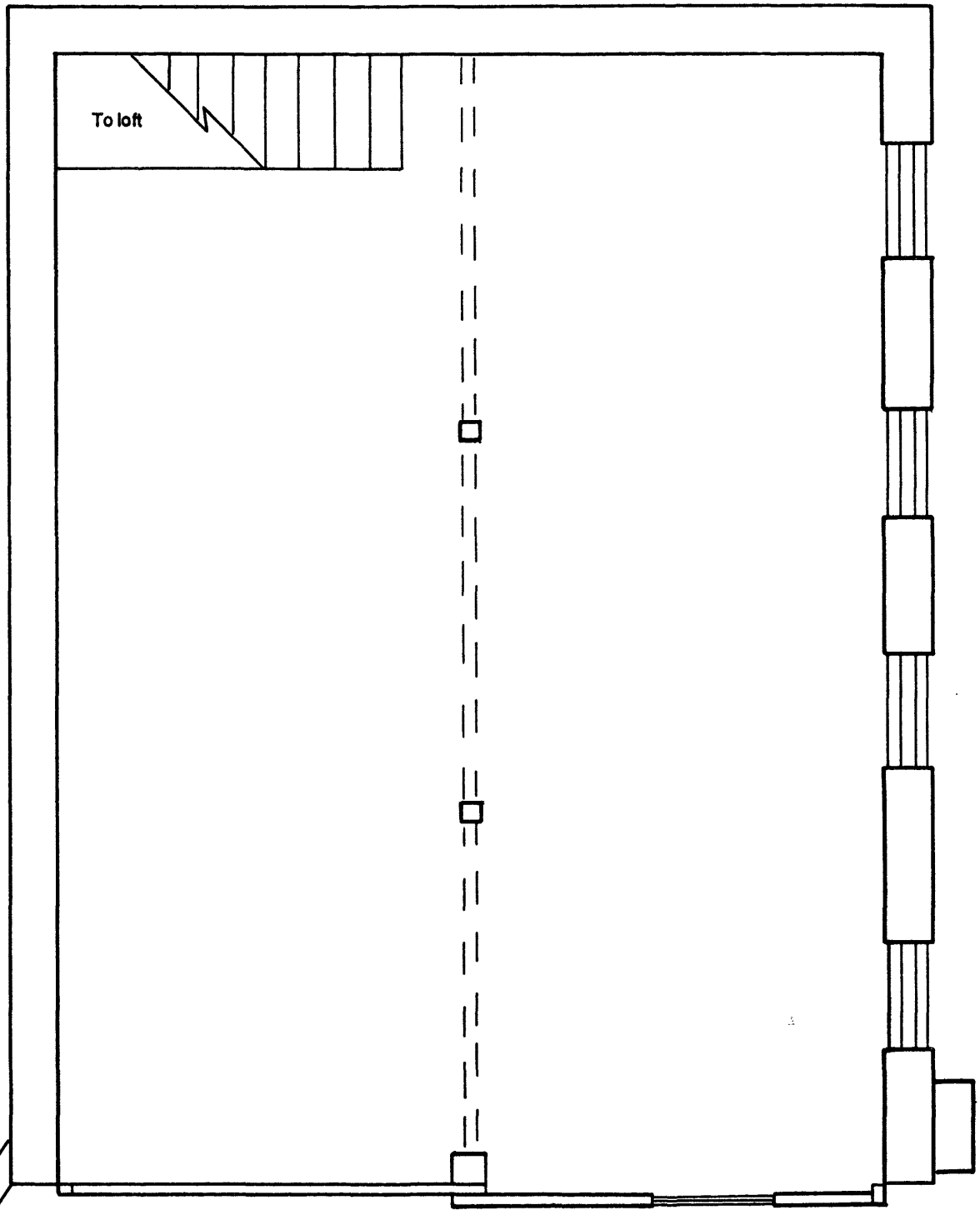




**HICKMAN BLACKSMITH SHOP AND HOUSE**  
**N-12991 AND N-12992**  
**DETAIL OF NOMINATED BOUNDARY AT CURB LINE**

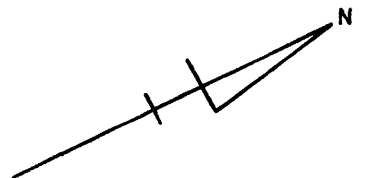
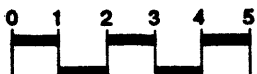
Delaware Dept. of Transportation,  
 Division of Highways, Contract No. 80-031-08, 12/7/79

Tracing and Existing Measurements 1/31/94

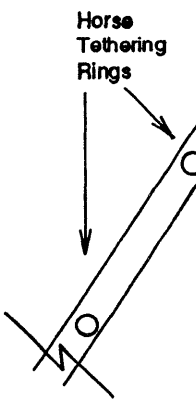
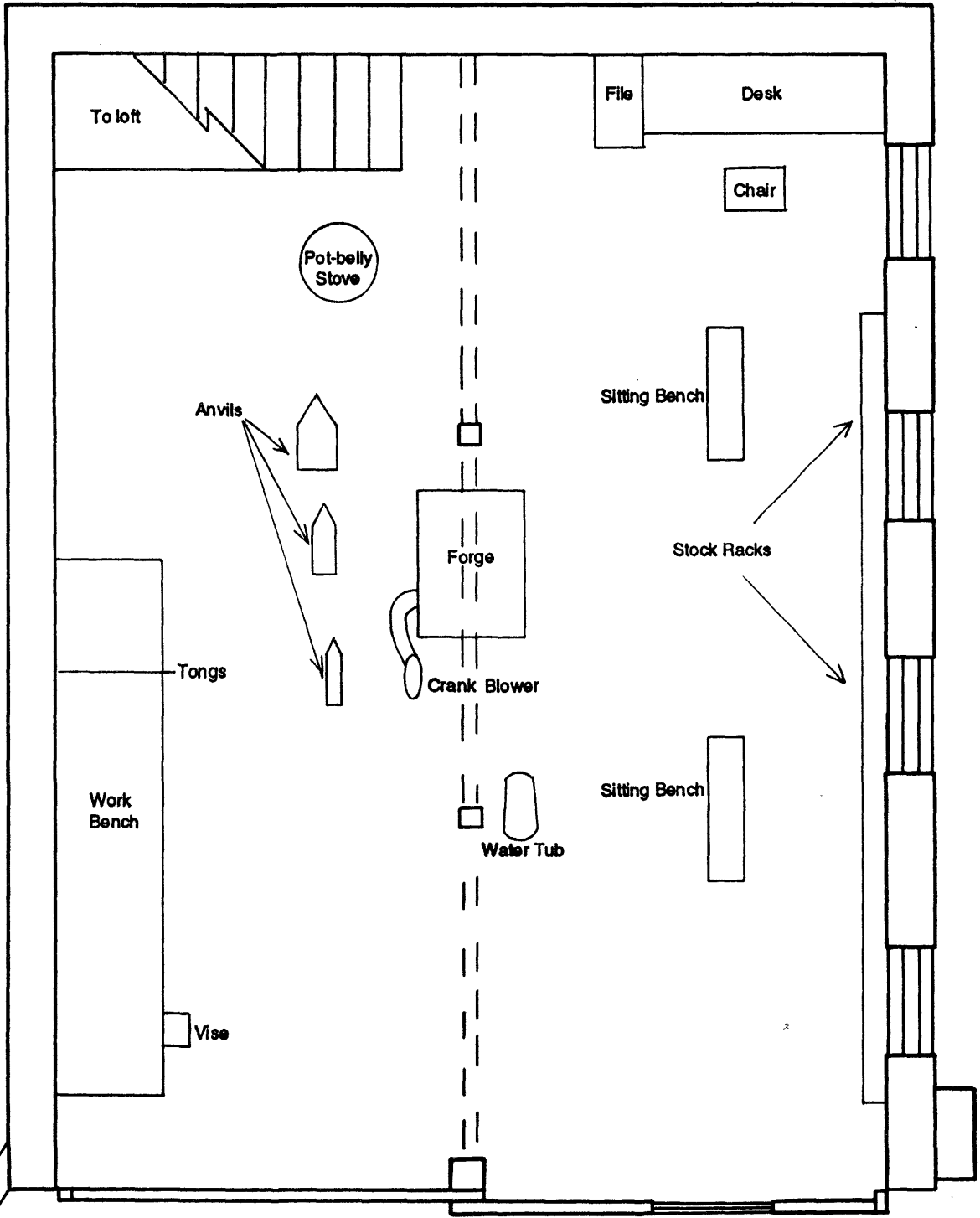


HICKMAN BLACKSMITH AND FARRIER SHOP  
 1201 Greenbank Road, Marshallton  
 Mill Creek Hundred  
 New Castle County, DE  
 N-12992

SCALE: 1/4 inch = 1 foot

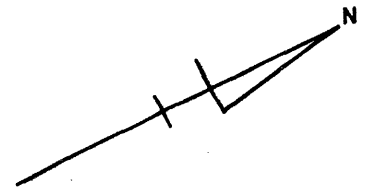
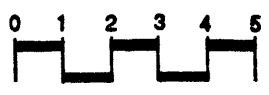


Reconstruction by Robert A. Howard, Curator of Industry & Technology,  
Hagley Museum & Library. Based on Information provided by Alfred Guthrie,  
nephew of Erasmus Hickman



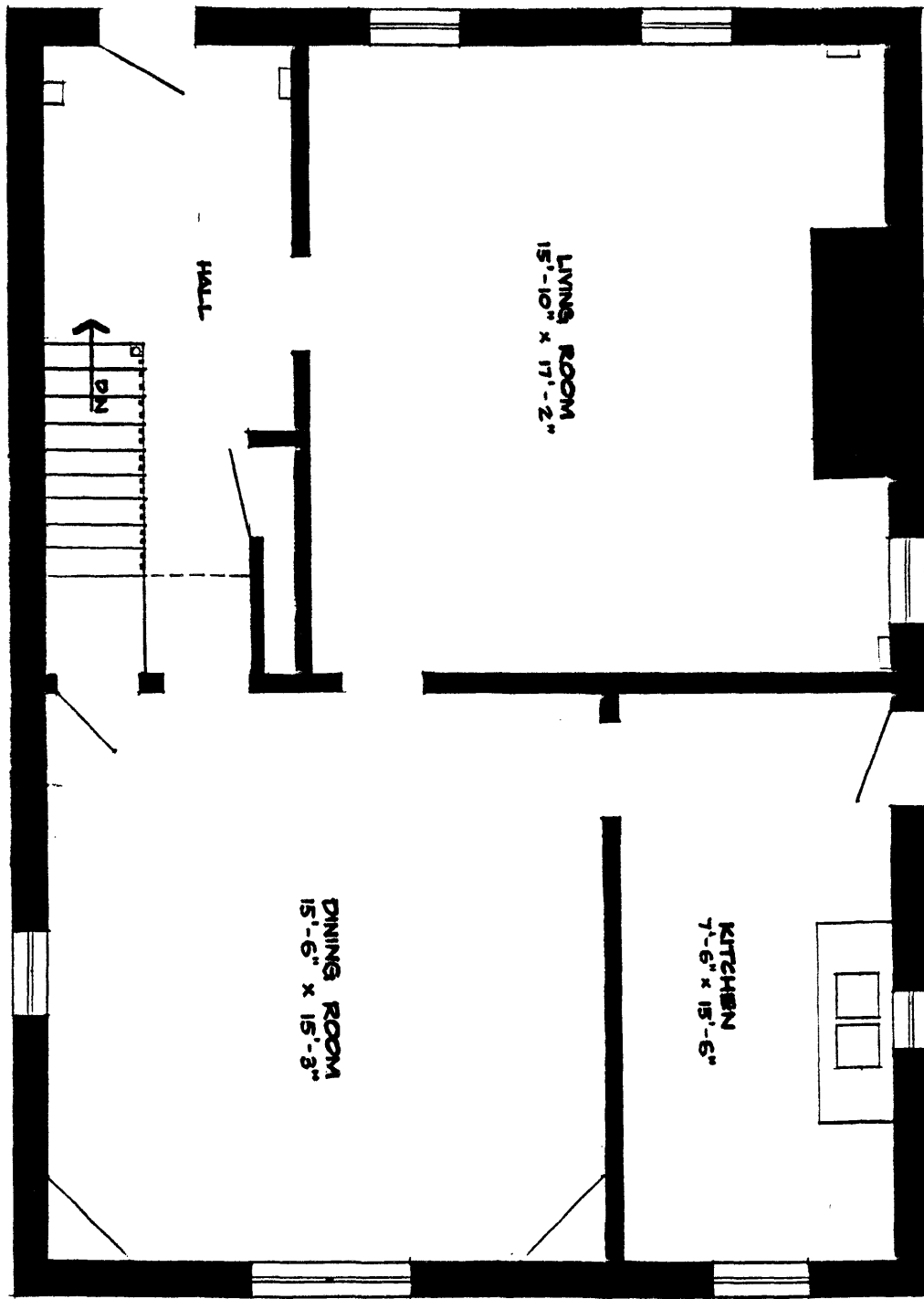
**HICKMAN BLACKSMITH AND FARRIER SHOP**  
1201 Greenbank Road, Marshallton  
Mill Creek Hundred  
New Castle County, DE  
N-12992

SCALE: 1/4 inch = 1 foot



HICKMAN HOUSE

N-12991



*First Floor*  
773 sq. ft.

*Home of Jeffrey & Pamella Seemans*  
*1203 Greenbank Road*  
Reduced for photocopying  
2089285" : 1'0"

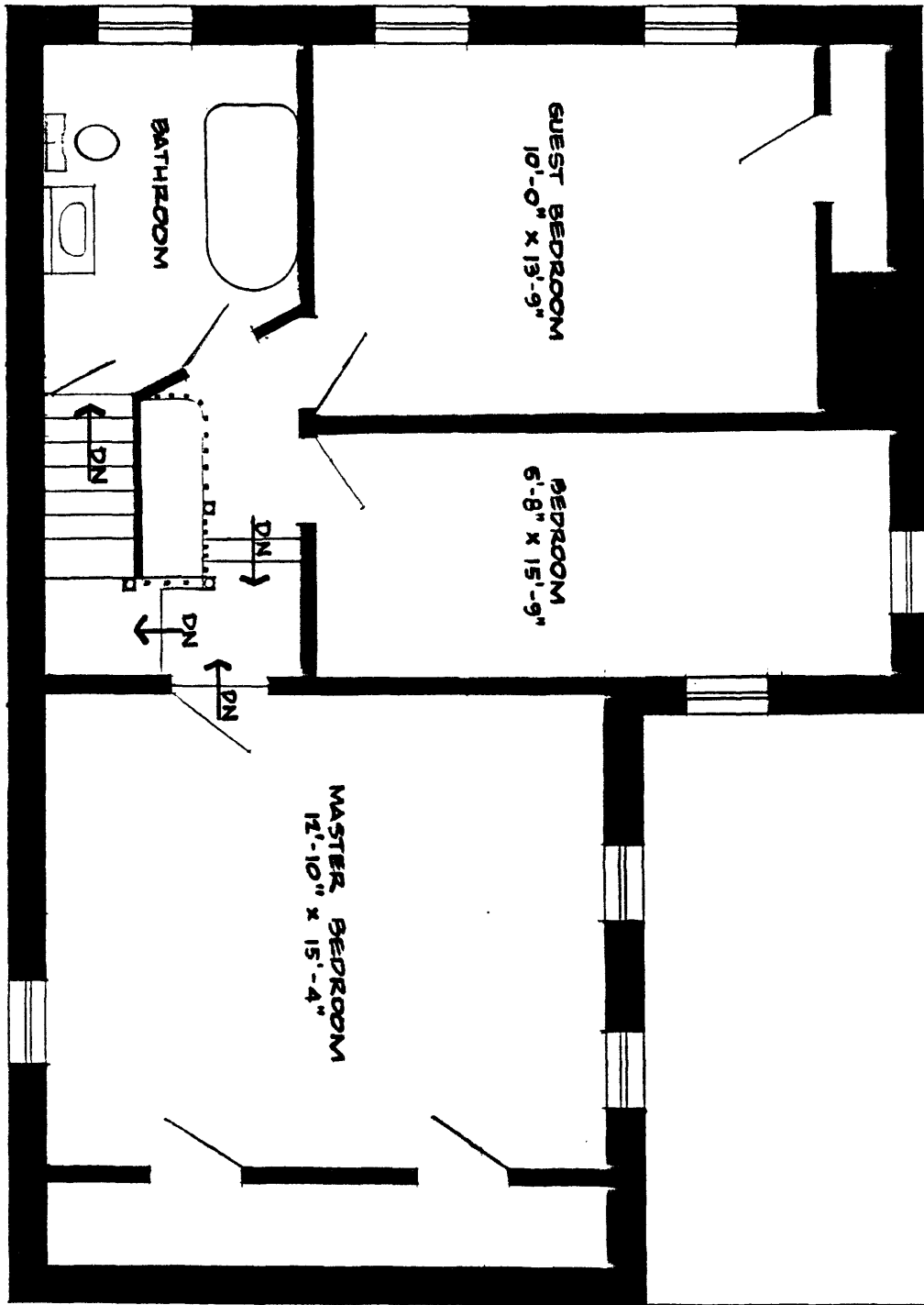
Marshallton  
Mill Creek Hundred  
New Castle County, DE

Drawn by Jeffrey Seemans



# HICKMAN HOUSE

N-12991



*Second Floor*  
620 s.f.

Reduced for photocopying  
.2089285" : 1'0"

1203 Greenbank Road, Marshallton  
Mill Creek Hundred  
New Castle County, DE

Drawn by Jeffrey Seemans

