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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUN 3 () 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines* for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

7 71			
1. Name of Property			
historic name Montgomery	House		
other names/site number N-252			
2. Location			
street & number 2900 Old Lime	estone Road		not for publication
city, town Wilmington			vicinity
state Delaware code	DE county New Castle	code 003	zip code 19808
3. Classification			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resour	ces within Property
X private	X building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
public-local	district	_3	0 buildings
public-State	site	0	1 sites
public-Federal	structure	0	() structures
F SS 10 10 SS 10 S	object	0	0 objects
		3	Total
Name of related multiple property listing	٦٠		uting resources previously
NA	9.		nal Register0
		iisted iii the Hatioi	lai riegistoi
4. State/Federal Agency Certifica	tion		
Signature of dertifying official	of Historical and Cultural		6/28/86 Date
In my opinion, the property meet	s does not meet the National Reg	lister criteria. See co	ntinuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official			Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
5. National Park Service Certifica	tion		
I, hereby, certify that this property is:	uvii		
entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.	Helores Byen	Entered in the National Regis	7-28-88
determined not eligible for the National Register.			
removed from the National Register other, (explain:)		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	Signature of t	he Keeper	Date of Action

6. Function or Use		
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Fun	ctions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling	DOMES	STIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/Agricultural outbuilding	DOMES	STIC/garage
DOMESTIC/secondary structure		STIC/secondary structure
7. Description		
Architectural Classification	Materials (e	nter categories from instructions)
Architectural Classification	Materials (e	nter categories from instructions)
Architectural Classification	•	
Architectural Classification	foundation _	STONE
7. Description Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions) other: bank house other: stable	foundation _	STONE STONE

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The William Montgomery House in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, is a well preserved example of a rural stone, Penn Plan, bank house dating from the early nineteenth century. Located in the Delaware Piedmont, it stands on the west side of Old Limestone Road about 400 feet south of its intersection with Limestone Road. The two story facade faces the road while the three story rear overlooks Mill Creek. The main block of the house dates from about 1805 and is a three bay wide, gable roofed, bank house of uncoursed fieldstone. Although the Montgomery house is near a number of modern housing developments and shopping centers, its lot includes large trees, a small midnineteenth-century board and batten stable, a small late nineteenth-century frame well house, the remains of a nineteenth-century mill race and sufficient land to retain a rural atmosphere. The interior of the stone section of the house includes many original elements, including mantels, baseboards, window frames, and chair rail. A two story frame addition at the south side of the house is smaller than the main block and dates from the 1950s. Its size and lack of prominent architectural features makes the addition bland with the original house rather than distract from it.

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this prop	perty in relation to other properties:	
Applicable National Register Criteria A B X C	□D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	□D □E □F □G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
ARCHITECTURE	1805 - 1855	
	Cultural Affiliation	
	N/A	
Significant Person N/A	Architect/Builder Unknown Unknown	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The William Montgomery House in Mill Creek Hundred is significant under criterion C as an excellent example of the late use of a seventeenth-century English double cell plan known as the "Penn Plan." The plan is incorporated into a bank house built of random rubble or fieldstone during the early nineteenth century. The house dates from about 1805. The Penn Plan is a seventeenth-century London townhouse plan that was recommended to new colonists by William Penn. It was popular in the Pennsylvania and Delaware colonies until the mid-eighteenth century when it was largely superseded by traditional hall-parlor plans and by developing Georgian floor plans. Its use in the nineteenth century indicates the maintenance of traditional architectural values.

William Montgomery, who lived in the house from about 1805 until his death in 1838, had a family of nine. George P. Alcorn, his son-in-law who lived there from shortly after Montgomery's death until 1855 also had a family of nine; so the house accommodated what would be considered a large family by almost any standards during its first half century. The existing foundation below the 1950s addition was the foundation for a nineteenth-century lean-to addition according to local residents.

Both the 1790 census and the 1810 census list several members of the Montgomery family, including a William, but these records do not include information on property they might have owned. Today two initials, one of which is M, and the date 1789 are roughly carved on a stone on the facade of the Montgomery House. So far, it has not been possible to prove that the house was standing at that time, so the date may have been inscribed by a later owner or it may commemorate a date other than that of the house construction. It is not until the tax assessment records of 1816-17 that positive evidence of a stone house on this property appears. That assessment shows William Montgomery as the owner of 150 acres of land valued at \$5 per acre including fifty acres of woodland and a stone dwelling. With his personal worth of \$150 and livestock valued at \$208, William Montgomery had a total taxable worth of \$9,220.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

10. Geographical Data Acreage of property 2.359 UTM References A 1 8 4 2 5 4 0 4 3 9 7 9 0 0 B Cone Easting Northing C Northing Zone Easting Northing C See continuation sheet Verbal Boundary Description As shown on the attached New Castle County Tax Assessment map, the boundaries for the Montgomery House lot are identical to those for Parcel 08 037.00 042 on which the existing buildings are located See continuation sheet Boundary Justification The boundaries for the Montgomery House lot are identical to those for New Castle County Tax Assessment parcel 08 037.00 042, because this is the parcel currently known as 2900 Limestone Road, the address of the Montgomery House. At one time there was more acreage but it cannnot be included because it is in different ownership and contains no historic buildings or sites. See continuation sheet 11. Form Prepared By name/little See attached sheet organization Bur. of Archaeology and Historic Preservationate June 1988 street & number 15 The Green telephone 302-736-5685 city or town Dover, DE 19901 state DE zip code 19901	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: X State historic preservation office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify repository:
UTM References A 1 8 2 2 5 4 0 4 3 9 7 9 0 0 Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing C See continuation sheet Verbal Boundary Description As shown on the attached New Castle County Tax Assessment map, the boundaries for the Montgomery House lot are identical to those for Parcel 08 037.00 042 on which the existing buildings are located See continuation sheet	10. Geographical Data	
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city or town <u>Dover, DE 19901</u> state <u>DE</u> zip code 19901		
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William	Montgomery House (N-252)		
In my op criteria	pinion the propertymeets/doe	es not meet the National Register	
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Lawn, large trees, and a variety of shrubbery surround the William Montgomery house which stands about 100 feet from the west side of Old Limestone Road. The house lot covers 2.359 acres and slopes down to the two story wooden stable. There have been alterations to the stable over the years, but it appears to be the frame stable listed on the property in the tax assessment of 1852-53. At that time, George P. Alcorn, a shoemaker, owned and lived in the Montgomery house, and he presumably built the "stable" listed in the tax assessment.

This outbuilding is perpendicular to the house, has two vehicle doors facing the driveway from the street, and is used for a garage and storage area. The building has a gable roof and its rear extends downhill slightly with the natural slope of the land. A brick walk leads to the main entrance of the house and a picket fence screens a swimming pool between the house and barn so that there are no modern visual intrusions in an essentially nineteenth-century scene. North of the house is a small frame well house. It is a small gable roofed building designed to cover the well and to protect the integrity of the water supply.

West of the house and part way down the slope to Mill Creek is the remains of a nineteenth-century mill race. The mill was located further down the creek and this portion was a head race designed to provide a more stable water supply for the mill without the use of a mill pond. The race is filled in on this property, but the terrace that it created is still visible along the property and the adjoining properties as well.

The main block of the William Montgomery House is a rectangular shaped bank house made of uncoursed fieldstone or rubble. It dates from about 1805 and was built by or for William Montgomery, a farmer. The bank house is a common form in the Delaware Piedmont and in southeastern Pennsylvania, just as it is in other hilly areas of the nation. It is built into a bank making one principal facade a story higher than the other. While there is access from the exterior to the main floor on one side, there is access from the exterior to the basement on the other. The lower level in the Montgomery house was a kitchen.

The secondary block, a frame addition on the south side of the house, is similar in shape to the main block but is much smaller. It dates from the 1950s. A brick interior gable end chimney rises through the gable peak at the north end of the house and a modern brick chimney rises through the gable peak at the north side of the addition where it joins the main block. The entire house stands on a stone foundation. Under the addition, the stone foundation also follows the contour of the bank, making it much higher on the rear of the house. It appears to be the remains of a wing or addition that dates from the mid- to late nineteenth century. It supports the twentieth-

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century addition that is now on top of it. Long time local residents have advised the present owner that this was a lean-to addition and probably contained a root cellar at one time.

The main facade of the Montgomery House is parallel to the west side of old Limestone Road and is two and a half stories high with a gable roof. The stone main block is three bays wide with the main entrance in the south bay. White mortar, mostly with flush joints, forms a sharp contrast with the grey granite stones in a variety of shapes and sizes that form the wall. The repointing that has been necessary over the years to keep the house in good physical condition matches what seems to be the original. The natural surface of the stones creates a rough finish. The first floor windows in the main block are nine-over-nine double-hung wooden sash enclosed with raised panel wooden shutters; iron shutter catches of a simple design hold them open. Wooden frames and sills surround the window openings. A four-light transom tops the main entrance which contains a heavy wooden door with two sets of vertical panels. The second floor windows in the stone section are six-overnine double-hung sash surrounded by wooden frames with louvered blinds. Above these windows a fret band trims the roof cornice where modern material now covers the soffit.

In the center of the stone facade are two initials, one of which is an M, and the date 1789. Research indicates a construction date of about sixteen years later than that. These letters and numbers are on a plain stone with no decoration, and there is no way of knowing when they were put there nor by whom. It is possible that a later occupant added them or that they may commemorate some other date important to an occupant of the house. Wooden clapboards cover the exterior facade of the frame addition which contains three six-over-six wooden double-hung sash windows; two are on the first floor and one is on the second floor.

The north side of the house, like the facade of the main block, is stone. As in most stone bank houses of the early Federal period in the Delaware Piedmont, the only windows in this wall are at the attic level. Here two small windows provide the only source of light on this floor. Because of the addition, only a small portion of the south side of the main block is visible. It contains one small window at the attic level. The south end of the addition, like the facade, is covered with wooden clapboards and contains three six-over-six wooden double-hung sash windows. There is an entrance to the basement level which contains a modern door.

The west side of the house, or the rear elevation, faces Mill Creek. Here the bank descends giving the house its typical bank house form. On the rear of the main block, the stone and mortar match that on the rest of the house. As is frequently the case with houses of this type, there is a

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disregard for symmetry on the back; a total of five window openings simply follow the interior room arrangement which happens to include a stairwell. Therefore, no two windows are at the same level, nor are all the same size. Those in the stairwell are six-over-six and the others are six-over-nine. The entrance, near the center of the ground level, contains a modern door with multiple lights in the upper half. The frame addition is two bays wide on the rear, and the high foundation which contains the basement windows is stone as mentioned above. A shed-roofed porch with square wooden posts and a wood balustrade fills the intersection of the main block and the addition at the main floor level.

The basement level of the stone block appears to have been the original kitchen. This is one large room containing a hearth that is large although not of the walk-in type. The chimney is stone, and a roughly outlined segmental arch tops the opening which contains an operating flue. A heavy coat of paint now covers the stone chimney base and walls. The present owners use this area, which has a brick floor, for a dining room. The ceiling is lower than in the rooms on the upper floors, and contains some of the original floor joists running from east to west and the heavy summer beam running from north to south; these supporting members have been refinished. The adjoining basement of the addition contains a modern kitchen.

A six-step straight-run closed-string wooden stairway rises along the south wall from the east at the southwest corner of the main block; it continues in a tight winder to turn 145 degrees so that it faces east where it reaches the main floor. A slender turned newel post, moulded handrail, and spare balusters make up a wood balustrade that borders the straight run of the stairs from the rest of the basement. The single six-over-six window sill and apron are probably replacements made during a twentieth century renovation, but they do not alter the original contours of the window opening. The only other window bringing light into the basement area is a six-over-six double-hung sash window at the curved section of the stair. It also has a deep wooden sill and a wood moulding trims the deep plaster reveal which is at right angles to the window.

The main floor of the main block is at the ground level of the facade which faces Old Limestone Road. The front door leads to an approximately 12' by 16' room which takes up slightly more than half of the floor at this level. The granite sill at the front door is worn with years of use, and wide pine boards form the floor. The floor plan consists of two rooms plus stair hall, a separate room as shown on the floor plan; the main room occupies the front half of the house and a slightly smaller room with stair hall beside it occupies the rear half of the house.

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The front room is the largest room in the original house. A chimney breast at the north end indicates the presence of a fireplace at one time. A low baseboard with moulded cap surrounds the room. A plain chair rail with moulded cap crosses the east and south walls at the level of the deep window sills. Matching chair rail has also been installed across the chimney breast on the north wall. The windows are nine-over-nine double-hung wooden sash with plain wooden frames set within deep plaster reveals which are trimmed with moulded wood corners. The walls are plaster, and like the other walls in the house contain original plaster with the patching, replacement, and repair necessary through the years. A board and batten door with iron thumb latch leads to a closet on the east side of the chimney breast; a narrow door with three panels leads to a closet on the west wall. Architrave moulding surrounds the interior of the opening of the main entrance door. Unfortunately, there are no records to state clearly the original or subsequent uses of this room. However, if the kitchen was in the basement as indicated, this was undoubtedly the most formal room in the house for family living or for special occasions.

The stairs rise in the southwest corner of the house and are visually prominent to anyone entering the house through the main door. The stairs, including straight run, winders, and balustrade, are identical to the stairs from the basement to the main level. However, on the main level the stairway is enclosed with walls creating a small stair hall. Beside the stair hall is a room which may have been a sleeping room originally. Its one window on the west wall is a six-over-nine double-hung wooden sash with the same deep wooden window sill and simple frame found elsewhere in the house. Here, however, no moulding trims the deep plaster reveals. A wooden mantel, which appears to be original to the house, surrounds a working fireplace on the north wall. The decorative elements of the mantel include an architrave moulding surrounding the opening and end blocks below a narrow shelf. A board and batten door to the west of the fireplace leads to a closet about three feet above the floor.

At the ground floor level the addition consists of one large room with two windows on the east side and two windows on the south side. Walls, trim, windows, and other elements are all modern materials. A mantel which appears to date from the early nineteenth century surrounds a fireplace on the north wall of this room. Although it is slightly more ornate and incorporates a larger number of classical elements, it is similar in style to the mantel in the main floor rear room in the stone section of the house. The owners who made the addition installed the mantel, and there is no evidence as to its origin. A narrow shelf above a course of dentils tops a plain frieze with central tablet and reeded pilasters from the sides of the openings.

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The floor plan for the second floor is similar to that on the first floor in the stone block except the front is divided into two rooms. What was originally a small chamber above the main entrance, typical of many houses of the colonial and early federal period, is now a bathroom. There are now two bedrooms, one behind the other on the north side of the house, and both have board and batten doors on cupboards beside the chimney. The windows have the deep wooden window sills and plaster reveals found elsewhere in the house. The narrow baseboards are plain, and architrave trim surrounds the doors. The doors from the stair landing to the two bedrooms and their frames do not match, indicating alteration at some uncertain date. The door to the north room has two sets of slightly raised vertical panels and an iron thumb latch; the door to the other room has six raised panels and thumb latch. As on the first floor, the frame addition creates one large room. It has one window on both east and south walls and two windows in the west wall. Modern materials form walls, baseboards, and other finishes.

The stairs from the second floor to the attic rise directly over the stairs on the lower floors and have the same newel post, balusters, and hand rail on the straight run. The winding section has a plain square newel and handrail without balusters. There is one room on the north side of the stone block on this level. Plaster now covers its sloping walls as well as the chimney which narrows here before rising through the roof. Modern replacement windows fill the two openings beside the chimney. There is now also a bathroom in the southeast section of this floor. Access to the upper attic space above this third floor or attic room makes it possible to see some of the present roof framing although most is either within the plaster walls of the room just described or obscured by insulation. There appear to be some original rafters on top of which there is plywood to support a modern roof.

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William Montgomery was not included as a property owner in the 1804 assessment. Therefore, it would appear that he built the house between 1804 and 1816, when it first appeared in the tax assessment. The 1810 census listed Montgomery as living in Mill Creek Hundred. A decade later, in 1820, there were three sons and four daughters in the household. Two males were engaged in agriculture. They were undoubtedly William Montgomery and his oldest son.

Unfortunately, the early census records give very few personal details about the individuals listed, but in 1830 William Montgomery was still listed in Mill Creek Hundred. It appears that he was a farmer in Mill Creek Hundred for most of his adult life.

William Montgomery died in 1838 at the age of 68 and was buried in the Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery. Although the inventory of his estate no longer exists, his property passed to his heirs. On March 23, 1842, the heirs sold his house and property to Zachariah Derrickson, who was married to William's daughter Martha. It is the deed for this transaction that provides many details about the family. At the time of his death, William Montgomery and his widow Jane had seven children. The court appointed a committee to assign dower rights to the widow and to divide the balance between the heirs. The committee determined in 1839 to give the widow the right to the house and its lot of over fourteen acres plus another lot of twenty-six-plus acres. They decided that it was not possible to make an equitable division of the remaining 117 acres, which were appraised for \$4,446.00, "without detriment to the parties." Therefore, the heirs sold the property, subject to dower rights of the widow, to Zachariah Derrickson for \$5,642.30.

In March of 1842, the widow, Jane Montgomery, gave her dower right to Zachariah Derrickson, who sold the house and its fourteen-acre lot to his brother-in-law George P. Alcorn for \$900. Alcorn is the name for the property on the Price and Rea Map of New Castle printed in 1849. The 1850 census lists George P. Alcorn in Mill Creek Hundred as a fifty-one-year-old Maryland-born shoemaker who lived with his wife, Elizabeth, age 46. Seven children lived with the Alcorns. The New Castle County tax assessment for 1852-53, made two years after the census data was collected, lists George P. Alcorn as the owner of fourteen acres, a stone house, and frame stable. The small stable that stands on the property today, used as a garage, has undergone alterations, but it is the stable built by Alcorn. The only census of agriculture taken within the period of significance for the house was the 1850 agricultural census of Delaware. It does not list Alcorn, probably because he was a shoemaker, the only early resident of the house who was not a farmer. In addition to the regular census, the census of manufacturers of 1850 listed Alcorn as a shoemaker. He had two employees and used hand power.

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In 1855 Alcorn sold the Montgomery house to George Harrison for \$500, much less than he had paid for the property. Harrison and his wife Susannah, both born in England, lived in Cecil County, Maryland, at the time they purchased the house. In 1860, when he was 67 years old and his wife was 53, Harrison's real estate was listed in the census with a value of \$2,000. The Harrisons sold the William Montgomery house and its fourteen acres to Lemuel Jones of Wilmington in 1867 for \$2,600, and the Beers Atlas of Delaware printed in 1868 confirms Jones' residency. Jones, a farmer, was born in Pennsylvania and lived in the house with his wife, Mary, his daughter, Esther, and two other adults. At about this time the Delaware State Directory and Gazetteer described Mill Creek Hundred as a rich agricultural hundred with a population of 3,302.

Jones lived in the house until his death on June 23, 1887, when his wife and daughter moved to Philadelphia. Jones' heirs sold the house and land for \$2,825 to George F. Gebhart of Mill Creek Hundred on March 11, 1889. Because the manuscript population census records of 1890 no longer exist, it is difficult to know anything about Gebhart in that year, but the name Gebhart is shown on the property on the Baist Atlas of New Castle in 1893. He sold the house and land on April 18, 1899 to Jonas S. Klair for \$1,400. Klair, a Delaware-born farmer, owned substantial land in the area, and lived on Limestone Road until at least 1910. Klair did not live in the Montgomery house himself.

When Klair died on February 19, 1926, he left his real estate and personal property to his wife for her life use. Upon her death Klair willed the "small farm at Milltown" to be disposed of by his executors with the proceeds divided equally among his six children. This "small farm" included the William Montgomery House. On December 26, 1933, Jonas Klair's children sold the property to Frederick W. Pickard. Four years later Pickard sold four and a half acres and the house to Robert and Ruth Hall. The Halls owned the house until January, 1954, when they sold it to Anthony and Linda Bryan, who sold it three years later to A. Felix du Pont and his wife Mary. The du Ponts added the frame wing to the house making it in a size and style that blends with the original house. Members of the well-known du Pont family of wilmington, Delaware, the Felix du Ponts did not live in the house themselves, but they owned it until 1970. Norman and Gayle Davis purchased the house in 1985 and are the present owners.

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In a 1681 pamphlet, William Penn recommended a three room plan to the colonist coming to Pennsylvania. This plan, plus a two room plan, seems to have been popular with the early colonist. It was reported on by early travelers and it has been observed by architectural historians along the east coast in Quaker settlement areas. The plan's association with Penn and with Quakers has resulted in a great deal of confusion as to the name of the plan, its variants, and its background.

In the Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania cultural region, the Penn Plan is the double cell, two room house with the rooms set front to back. The stair is usually located in the rear room. Heating is accomplished by individual fireplaces set on either side of the partition wall. The fireplaces share a common stack and flue system.

The double-cell Penn Plan appears to be related to seventeenth-century London house plans. Some authors have ascribed it and the three room variant to Swedish sources, but those antecedents have not been carefully developed. What is important to the significance of the Montgomery House is that the double-cell plan began to lose popularity to more traditional English plans such as the hall-parlor plan and to the emerging Georgian plans which emphasized internal balance and the use of a center or side passage. Those scholars conducting intensive field work in the Pennsylvania Culture Region note that the double-cell plan began to disappear by the mid-eighteenth century. Its use after that period is so rare that the plan and its study have become footnotes in the analysis of material culture.

From outward appearance, the Montgomery House appears to be influenced by Georgian design considerations. Its facade shows a side entrance passage or two-thirds Georgian plan. While this pattern is an expected one in small Delaware houses, its interior is not. The interior should have been either a single room or a hall with side rooms. The Penn Plan's use in the second decade of the nineteenth century is a cultural anomaly that can only be attributed to a maintenance of traditional values.

While one might assume that traditional design features and technology would survive most commonly in the lower economic strata, the Montgomery family wealth placed them in the upper income group for northern Delaware. This continued use and acceptance of the Penn Plan indicates that economic level does not have a direct bearing on the use of traditional or uncommon floor plans.

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#### Comprehensive Planning

The Montgomery House is located in the Pennsylvania/Delaware Piedmont region in Delaware. Its construction, c. 1805, places it near the middle of a 1770 - 1830 period of early industrialization in Delaware. The Montgomery family, as a farming family, would have been effected by changes in industrial technology, particularly that associated with milling. A mill was located just below the property. While not associated with the Montgomery House, its location in a farming area is indicative of the close relationship between agriculture and manufacturing.

The Montgomery House is an interesting building from the standpoint of demographic pattern. The house was always considered a small lot, separate from any agricultural land. The separation of the family home from their farm fields was curious, but it foreshadowed a pattern that would begin to emerge in the mid- to late nineteenth century. By the 1850's the property was the site of a small shoemaking operation, most likely conducted in the stable. Eventually the property would become a residence in the country for a series of owners and tenants similar to its current role.

The Montgomery House is also important as part of a context development for the study of traditional architectural plans that survived the general georgianization of Delaware Valley architecture.

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Form prepared by

Statement of Significance - Stephen G. Del Sordo, Historian Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Description and Property Research - Priscilla Thompson The History Store











