

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

3162

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OCT 19 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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chambers House
other names/site number N-6770

2. Location

street & number Hopkins Road & Creek Road not for publication
city, town Newark vicinity
state Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003 zip code 19711

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0 buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	3 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0 objects
		1	3 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official John Ken Date 10/11/88
Director, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrews 11/29/88
 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Other: Penn Plan bank house

foundation Stone

walls Stone

Wood/weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Chambers House is a Penn Plan bank house built of uncoursed field-stone standing in an undeveloped area within the White Clay Creek Preserve in White Clay Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. Deeds, tax records, and the fabric of the house indicate that this single family dwelling was built between 1816 and 1852 by Joseph Chambers. The house is about 500 feet west of Creek Road (County Road 311) at a point about 1,000 feet north of its intersection with Hopkins Road. The two story main facade of this gable roofed house faces north where an old driveway led to the house. The side which was originally the rear of the house is on the lower side of the bank and is three stories high and three bays wide. A one and two story frame addition at the east of the house dates from the late nineteenth century. Because the addition is smaller than the stone block and also fits into the natural slope of the bank, it does not distract from the historic character of the original house. The house is in a rural conservation area and the immediate house lot includes large trees, meadow, and the partial foundations of a barn which tax records indicate dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The interior of the main block of the house includes an open room, probably originally used as a kitchen, on the lowest level. There are two rooms, one behind the other on the ground level of the main facade (the essential elements of a Penn Plan), and two sleeping chambers on the second floor. A winding staircase rises in the southeast corner of the house from the basement to the top floor. The interior retains original baseboard and other wood trim which includes few elements in any formal style. The high degree of original fabric in the main block of the Chambers House and its rural setting recall its early nineteenth-century origins.

The Chambers House, sometimes called "Stairways" locally, stands in a rural area. This is in the gently rolling terrain of the Piedmont area of northern Delaware near the Pennsylvania border. Today the driveway into the house lot is on the west side of Creek Road about 1,000 feet north of its intersection with Hopkins Road. The Chambers house stands near the end of this driveway and about 500 feet from Creek Road. The White Clay Creek runs

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1816

Significant Dates

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

The Chambers House in White Clay Creek Hundred, Delaware, is significant under Criterion C because it is an excellent late example of the use of the Penn Plan incorporated into a bank house made of fieldstone. The main block of the house probably dates from the second decade of the nineteenth century and displays the most common characteristics of the Penn Plan: two back to back rooms heated by fireplaces connected to a common stack. Its rural setting near White Clay Creek creates a rare early nineteenth-century atmosphere around the house. Located only about 1,000 feet east of the Pennsylvania border, the house exemplifies the cultural and economic ties between Delaware and the adjoining counties of Pennsylvania. The house stands on what was at one time a substantial landholding extending into Chester County, Pennsylvania, with its roots in one of the "Manors" or land tracts of William Penn. The Chambers House is an important piece of the material evidence of the architectural history of northern Delaware.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

DE Dept. of Parks

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .7

UTM References

A

1	8	4	3	4	1	5	0	4	3	9	7	5	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Chambers House lot includes .7 acres within New Castle County Tax Parcel map #09 002.00 007. The specific boundaries are shown on the attached map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Chambers House include the house, the foundations of a barn, a small section of an old road that passed in front of the house, and a cleared area to the south of the house in order to encompass the primary building, the ruins of the outbuildings, and its immediate surroundings. The boundaries include an area which constitutes the historical habitat of the Chambers House

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See attached sheet

organization Bur. of Archaeology and Hist. Preservation date June 1988

street & number 15 The Green telephone 302-736-5685

city or town Dover state DE zip code 19901

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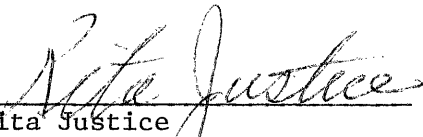
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Chambers House (N-6770)

In my opinion the property ✓ meets/ does not meet the National Register
criteria.



Rita Justice
County Executive
New Castle County, Delaware

1-25-88

Date

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along the east side of Creek Road. A small tributary is generally parallel to Hopkins Road and is now a very small stream. Neither stream is visible from the house. The meadows and woodland of the preserve surround the house lot. Because it is in this quiet protected environment, there is little evidence of the twentieth century in the immediate surroundings of the Chambers house. There is a modern house west of the Chambers house as shown on the New Castle County tax map enclosed with this nomination. However, when the leaves are on the trees it is not visible at all from the Chambers house; in the winter months it is hardly visible. The lane to the modern house does not pass through the Chambers house lot, and natural growth shields it from view from the Chambers House. That lane is north of and separate from the old overgrown lane to the Chambers House.

On the nominated lot are some large trees, an area of mown field to the south of the house, old shrubs, and the foundations of a nineteenth-century barn and two nineteenth-century outbuildings to the west of the house. Tax records indicate the barn was built in the mid-nineteenth century. According to a former resident, this was a bank barn. All that remains today is an irregular section (vaguely in an F-shape) of the stone foundation, which is falling down upon itself and is overgrown with bushes and small trees. The ruin is composed of stones of various sizes, there is little trace of mortar, and many of the stones have fallen away. Between the house and the barn ruins are two other small ruins. The one nearest the barn foundation is roughly a U-shape and the stones are similar to those in the barn ruins. The other, west of the house and parallel to the original drive is the ruin of a partial wall built into the bank with a small section of floor. This is a mix of stone and concrete. The sections of the ruins that are built into the banks are an average of five to six feet high and the height varies slightly along their tops.

An overgrown roadway passes about 45 feet from the north side of the house and continues to the barn foundations. This was the original access to the house from Creek Road and is parallel to the present driveway. The main block of the Chambers house is a rectangular (app. 23' x 28') bank house of uncoursed fieldstone. Asphalt roofing now covers its steep pitch gable roof which has a plain box cornice. The ridge line is parallel to the driveway and a stone interior gable end chimney rises through its east end. The chimney contains replacement stones and mortar, the result of repairs made when there was a roof fire in the house within the past ten years. On the east side of the house an irregularly shaped frame addition dates from the late nineteenth

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century. Although the exterior walls appear to be in a regular shape on the floor plan, the exterior photograph of the east end of the house clearly shows the irregularity of the massing of the addition. The north side of the house, which was originally the primary facade, is three bays wide with a central entrance at ground level. Today this entrance is approximately two feet above the ground, indicating that at one time there were steps between it and the ground. The condition of the walls on the basement interior indicate the presence of water over a long period of time. This damage and the contour of the land indicate that there has probably been some washing away of soil at the base of this side of the house. A wooden door with four vertical boards on the exterior and two sets of vertical raised panels on the interior fill the opening. A very simple wood frame surrounds the opening. The two windows on each of the two floors contain six-over-six double-hung wood sash with exterior wood frames matching that around the door. White mortar in flush bond contrasts with uncoursed fieldstone in a variety of shapes, sizes, and shades. There is one small basement window on the west side of the facade. It does not appear to be original. On this side of the house it is possible to see only the top section of the two-story gable-roofed part of the frame addition.

The west side of the Chambers House shows the slope of the bank as it descends to the south side of the house. As is typical of most stone houses in the Delaware Piedmont, there are no windows lighting the main floors at this end of the house. There is one small four-light window in the gable peak, above which there is a small parged area in the stone. A former resident of the house has advised the present owner that this may have at one time held a date stone. At the basement level of this end of the house there is a six-over-six double-hung wooden sash window and a four-light basement window. The stone and pointing here is similar to that on the north facade.

The south side of the Chambers house appears to have been the original rear of the house, but in its most recent occupancy it was used as the main facade and contained the main entrance. The stone block is three stories high and three bays wide on this, the lower side of the bank. An entrance in the central bay at the basement level holds a wooden door with two sets of vertical panels; it hangs at the interior edge of the opening which is framed with plain boards. Wooden six-over-six double-hung sash windows fill all the window openings. The stonework on this side matches that on the rest of the main block, but here whitewash covers much of the surface, and is particularly heavy on the basement level. A one-story porch with tarpaper shed roof crosses the main block and extends across the frame addition where it becomes an enclosed room at its east end. Five square wooden posts support the roof and a balustrade made up of two boards connects the posts. The porch materials all date from near the mid-twentieth century.

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The frame addition at the east end of the house is most clearly visible on the lower side of the bank. It includes a two-story frame addition with a low pitch gable roof. On its south side this section of the addition has one six-over-six double-hung sash window on the second floor and an identical window on the first floor where an entrance contains a modern door with glass in the upper half. The porch, which wraps around the southeast corner of the house, terminates in a one-story room. Wooden weatherboards and modern siding cover the exterior of the addition. Part of the foundation appears to be stone.

At the east side of the house only a small section of the upper portion of the main block is visible. It is stone with white mortar like the north side and contains two small windows on either side of the chimney at the attic level. Looking at the east side of the house, the addition has an irregular shape. It is possible to see the gable end and upper part of the two story addition which has an attic window and a second six-over-six window. The one-story room at the end of the porch contains three six-over-six windows and to its north is a tiny one-story shed-roofed section. Slightly uphill from this is another larger shed-roofed addition which extends from and is lower than the two-story section.

The south side entrance to the basement level of the house leads to one large room that originally served as the kitchen. On the east wall there is a nine-foot-wide fireplace at the base of the chimney. It has no mantel, heavy paint covers the stone, and there have been alterations to the hearth. However, it does contain the remains of the beehive bake oven which extended through what was once the exterior east wall. An opening on both sides of the fireplace leads to the addition on the east side. A six-panel door with a horizontal raised panel above fills the opening on the south side of the fireplace. This has a thumb latch and may be original to the house, although the openings through the stone wall to the addition do not appear to be original. There is no door in the opening on the north side of the fireplace and vertical beaded boarding framing the opening indicates a late nineteenth-century origin. Two wooden six-over-six double-hung sash windows in the south wall have deep wooden window sills and plaster reveals with moulded wood edges. A wooden chair rail with moulded top and beaded bottom crosses the wall just below the windows. The chair rail continues around the west wall to the one window there where it turns a 45 degree angle to rise to the window in the west wall. Its opening is nearly identical to the windows on the south wall, but it is set at a higher level, making this change in the chair rail necessary. A low baseboard with beaded top trims the south and west walls.

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The only opening in the north wall of this room is a small basement window that is a later addition. There has been a considerable amount of water damage on the north wall which is within the bank. It is now in very poor condition despite repairs over the years. A cement floor is an addition of the 1950s. In the southeast corner of the room a tight winder staircase of twelve steps rises to the floor above. A framed opening at the level of the third riser once held a door to enclose the stair. As is usual in this type of stairway, it turns upon itself and has no balustrade. About halfway between the two floors there is a small square window in the east wall of the stone block.

The floor plan for the addition is very irregular at the basement level and has probably undergone several alterations. A room beside the stone section runs the full depth of the house and is approximately rectangular in shape. Its west wall has plaster over the stone wall of the main block. The bake oven opening is very visible on this wall. On the south side an entrance containing a modern door with glass in the upper half leads to the porch; a window east of the door contains six-over-six wooden double-hung sash. Most of the east wall of the room has been cut away to provide a pass-through and access to the adjoining kitchen. At the rear of the room a seven step straight run stair rises to a landing where it makes a right angle turn to rise to the floor above. The stair is a twentieth-century addition and runs along a small section of heavily plastered masonry that is one wall of a keeping room that is between the stair and the outside wall. Its original function is unknown.

The kitchen is in the enclosed porch section at the east end of the house. It is a rectangular space with sinks and counters along the pass-through on its west side. It contains five double-hung six-over-six windows - two on the south wall and three on the east wall. A door of vertical beaded boards leads to a storage room at the rear. This is within the small shed-roofed section of the house that is visible from the exterior. North of this storage room is another open ladder-type stair leading to a small storage loft in the slightly higher shed roofed section that is also visible from the exterior.

The floor above the basement level in the stone block was the main floor. This floor has two rooms, one behind the other on the main floor. On the north wall is what appears to have been the main entrance. It contains a door with two sets of vertical raised panels, and recessed wooden panels trim its opening. Architrave trim with a beaded inner edge forms the door frame. Matching trim and deep wooden windowsills surround the six-over-six double-hung sash windows of which there are two on the north side and three on the south side. Some plaster, much of it replacement, and drywall covers the walls and ceilings. Floorboards of about six to eight inches in width cover

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the floor. No baseboards remain except for a small section near the staircase, and new heat ducts, electrical outlets, and cold air returns have been installed at the floor level. This floor of the stone block is divided in half by a wall that runs from east to west. An opening in the center of this wall connects the two rooms. This wall is made of upright studs with wide boards that run diagonally across the studs. The wall studs are secured by handmade rose-headed nails. The wall was plastered. On either side of the dividing wall is a fireplace opening; there is no mantel, finished hearth, or other trim remaining. The winding stairs at the southeast corner of the house lead into the south room. Here is a door with two sets of vertical panels and thumb latch. There are several other wooden doors standing in a corner on this floor, but the only other door installed is a six-panel door with thumb latch which leads to the addition at the east side of the house.

The second floor of the frame nineteenth-century addition is now a bathroom and a small stair hall that accommodates the stairway that rises from the room below it. Resilient flooring, twentieth-century moulding and bathroom fixtures, and other new features have replaced most of the original fabric.

On the top floor there are now two bedrooms with a side hall. This is a recent alteration made to accommodate the last resident of the house. Little original fabric remains in the attic above where new common rafters form the roof supports.

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The Chambers house stands on a rise of land near White Clay Creek, for which the Hundred is named, and overlooks the site on which a saw and gristmill stood in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is nothing in deed records or other material to pinpoint the precise date of construction. Tax records, deeds, other historical documents, and the fabric of the house indicate that it was built between 1816 and 1852, and probably nearer the earlier date, by Joseph Chambers. Although suburban housing developments and shopping centers are only a short distance away, a series of fortuitous circumstances have preserved the Chambers House in the midst of woodland and meadows much like its original setting. Ownership of the property passed out of the family in the late nineteenth century, but the house and the land on which it stands came back into the Chambers family and has now become part of the state-owned White Clay Creek Preserve.

In 1775 David Evans, yeoman of White Clay Creek Hundred, sold approximately 250 acres in White Clay Creek to Benjamin Chambers. By calling himself a yeoman Evans used the English term for a landholder and farmer, not a member of a privileged class or aristocracy but much better off than the majority of people who were not landholders. Chambers paid 1,000 pounds for this land. Evans had purchased 200 acres of it, partly in Chester County, in 1762. He had purchased the other fifty acres, which were in Penn's Manor of Stining, at an earlier time. The deed covering the transfer refers to Benjamin Chambers as a "shop joiner" and a resident of White Clay Creek.

Benjamin Chambers, like later owners of the land and the Chambers House which stands upon it, was a Quaker. As James T. Lemon explained in The Best Poor Man's Country, because the Quakers were the earliest European settlers in Southeastern Pennsylvania (to which northern New Castle County was closely associated both physically and culturally), their influence on the initial patterns of action on the land was much stronger than that of the Presbyterians and Lutherans who arrived later. As Lemon explains, the Quakers committed themselves at an early date to "building a liberal society open to the persecuted and to the philosophy of material success through exploitation of the soil and commerce." Buildings, while simple by today's standards, existed for the individual and his family. In Southeastern Pennsylvania and adjoining New Castle County, villages were few and farms were scattered over the rural landscape. "The Quakers firmly established the pattern for all who followed in the eighteenth century, indeed well into the twentieth century." The Chambers House is a part of that tradition.

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According to the late nineteenth-century historian, J. Thomas Scharf, Benjamin Chambers built a sawmill on White Clay Creek before 1798 and the tax assessment for that year verifies this information. However, that assessment lists no other buildings in Chambers' ownership. By 1810 the census listed Chambers, his three sons, four daughters, and wife as residents of White Clay Creek. In 1816 his holdings had a value of \$5,523 for tax assessment purposes. This included 140 acres of land (of which 40 acres were woodland), a "good framed dwelling and unframed barn," and livestock worth \$523. Because Benjamin Chambers' residence was not a stone house, it was not the present Chambers house, indicating that the present house was built after 1816.

Upon Benjamin Chambers' death his two sons, Samuel and Joseph, received their father's real estate. To Samuel, Benjamin left the westerly part of his lands, while his son Joseph received the easterly section. Joseph received 100 acres including the land on which the Chambers house stands. There is no mention of a house standing on that tract of land at the time Benjamin Chambers made his will. The wording of later deeds indicates that the house was probably built by Joseph Chambers. This information and the fabric of the house suggest a construction date of about 1820. However, the house is of a simple type which appeared in this area from the seventeenth century until well into the nineteenth century.

Joseph Chambers, according to Scharf, dismantled the mill that his father had built many years before. Scharf's reference is to a mill on White Clay Creek, but it seems likely that the mill was on a small branch south of the Chambers house that flowed into White Clay Creek. Maps of later dates show what was undoubtedly this mill site on just such a small stream west of White Clay Creek. Today, nothing remains of the mill. Census records of 1820, 1830, and 1840 all list Joseph Chambers and his family as residents of White Clay Creek Hundred. One member of the family, presumably Joseph himself, was a farmer.

On May 5, 1841, Chambers' property was sold at sheriff's sale to Daniel Thompson. Scharf states in his history that Thompson rebuilt the mill that Joseph Chambers had demolished. While Scharf's dates are not quite correct, it does appear that the mill went into operation again. On March 28, 1849, Daniel Thompson and his wife Beulah sold twenty acres of the land that he had purchased at sheriff's sale to Lamborn Pyle of New Castle County. The deed describes the land as messuage, or tenement, indicating buildings within the twenty acres. In 1850 Lamborn Pyle was a thirty-seven-year-old farmer who lived here with his wife, Hannah, and their children, Edward and Phoebe.

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The Delaware tax assessment records for 1852-53 listed Lamborn Pyle of White Clay Creek Hundred as the owner of twenty acres of land, a stone house, and a frame barn. This is the first positive identification of the present Chambers House. The Price and Rea Map of 1849 shows Pyle's house and mill in the location of the Chambers House. Pyle was not listed in the first agricultural census taken in Delaware in 1850. The agricultural census of 1860 listed him as the owner of two horses, three milk cows, four other cows, and four swine with a combined value of \$342. He was also credited with forty bushels wheat, two hundred bushels corn, seventy bushels oats, and fifty bushels potatoes, and an orchard valued at \$150. The industrial census of the same year listed him as the owner of a saw mill with one employee and operated by an overshot wheel in which he had an \$800 investment. The overshot wheel required a dam and a millrace, a portion of which was visible until a few years ago in the field below the house. The mill site and race are not within the house lot as outlined on the accompanying map. Cara Wise, archaeologist working with the Division of Parks and Recreation, has investigated and considered the mill site in the "Cultural Resources Management Plan for White Clay Creek Preserve."

The Pyles lived in the Chambers House for nearly thirty years. Today stone ruins of a barn foundation still exist near the house, and it appears that Pyle probably built the barn that once stood there. The census records consistently listed him as a farmer, but he also operated a flour mill. The census of 1870 shows that he had at least one and possibly two servants in the house. In a local directory, Lamborn Pyle listed himself under the Thompson Post Office as the owner of a flour mill, while at the same time he appeared as the operator of a sawmill under McClellandville. The Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of New Castle for 1868 shows L. Pyle with a saw- and gristmill. He obviously used the waterpower for sawing wood or grinding grain depending upon the demand.

On December 13, 1886, Pyle sold his property to Joseph P. Eldridge for \$2,500. Eldridge kept the property for less than six months when he sold it to Jesse P. Hannum of Kennett, Pennsylvania. Although it is difficult to find any other record of Eldridge's milling activities, Scharf states that Joseph Eldridge succeeded Pyle and that the mill did not operate after 1881.

Jesse P. Hannum, like his predecessors at the Chambers House, was a Quaker. Hannum, a member of the Kennett Meeting, married "out of union," that is, to a non-Quaker. In 1893 the name Hannum appears on the Chambers House property in the Baist Atlas of New Castle County, and the Delaware State Directory for 1897-8 listed Barclay Hannum as a farmer.

Jesse P. Hannum died without leaving a will and in 1909 the sheriff sold the property to Harry and Susan Joclyn who sold it to Margaret L. Yeatman and

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William Sharpless in the same year. The following year the house returned to the Chambers family, when John J. Chambers purchased the property for \$1,000. In 1927 John Chambers sold the Chambers house lot to Mary Chambers Folwell as part of a larger tract.

Folwell, a direct descendant of John Chambers, the first member of the family to settle in American, wished to reassemble the early Chambers landholdings. In the process of doing that she and her husband worked with the Soil and Conservation Service in using modern methods to establish a model dairy farm on the Chambers land. During the time the Folwells owned the house, they did not live in it themselves. They altered the east wing of the house, and modernized the plumbing and electrical service. Probably because of their interest in the Chambers family heritage, they made no substantial alterations to the main stone block. The result was an irregularly sized and shaped addition that made necessary the installation of several staircases of different sizes. Therefore, "Stairways" has been the name of the house in recent years.

E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Company purchased the Chambers House as part of a much larger tract in both Delaware and Pennsylvania on May 29, 1959. This sale came about because of a fear that existing water sources would not be sufficient in the future, and the DuPont Company made plans to create a reservoir covering as much as 1,000 acres. Conservation groups and citizens opposed the reservoir plan and organized their forces to preserve the White Clay Creek Valley in its natural state. As a result, the State of Delaware purchased the land that is now within the Walter G. Carpenter State Park. Subsequently, the state investigated the purchase of additional land, and, with the reservoir plan abandoned, the Du Pont Company asked the National Park Service for advice on conserving its holdings in White Clay Creek Valley. The Park Service recommended that the land become public, and Du Pont transferred their land to the State of Delaware and Pennsylvania in August 1984. In this way the Chambers House became a part of the White Clay Creek Preserve.

Through the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Division of Parks and Recreation, the Chambers House will become a visitor center. Restoration for this adaptive use will preserve the original fabric, character, and environment of the house, while making it available to the public. There may be archaeological potential in the house lot included in the nomination, and the Division of Parks may undertake an investigation in the future to determine what type of archaeological potential this is. In the meantime, they will not disturb the area.

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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 Chambers 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 Chambers House appears to be influenced by Georgian design considerations. Its facade shows a center entrance with flanking windows. 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-parlor arrangement of two side-by-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. The use of hand-made rose-headed nails in the interior wall helps reinforce the slow acceptance of new developments. Machine made nails had been available in northern Delaware for at least ten years prior to the construction of the Chambers House.

While one might assume that traditional design features and technology would survive most commonly in the lower economic strata, the Chambers family wealth placed them in the upper income group for northern Delaware. Their 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 Chambers House is located in the Pennsylvania/Delaware Piedmont region in Delaware. Its construction, c. 1816, places it in the middle of a 1770-1830 period of early industrialization in Delaware. The Chambers, as millers, would have fully participated in that development. The mill seat is located to the south of the house. All above ground traces of the mill and the race have been destroyed over the years. Its location can be pinpointed by reference to historic maps.

The house and property were developed to take advantage of economic trends. Farming played a significant role in the finances of the Chambers family but the milling activities would have enabled the property owners to take advantage of both ends of food production.

The house is also important as part of a context development for the study of traditional architectural plans that survived the general georgian-ization of Delaware Valley architecture.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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

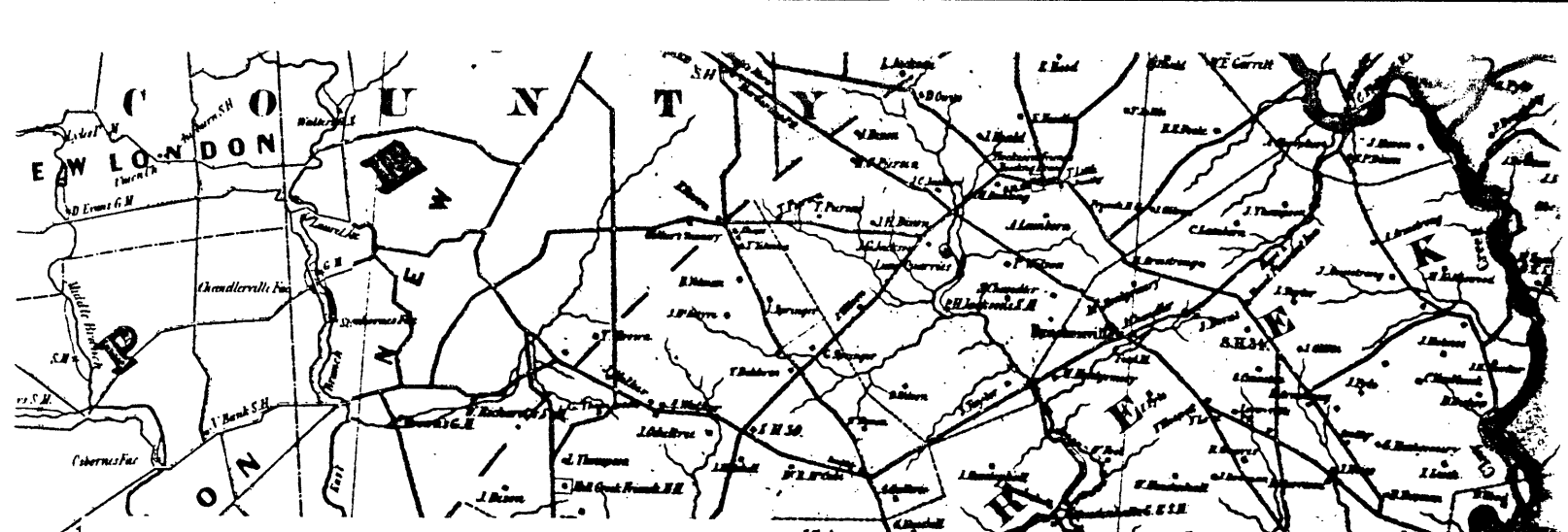
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Form prepared by

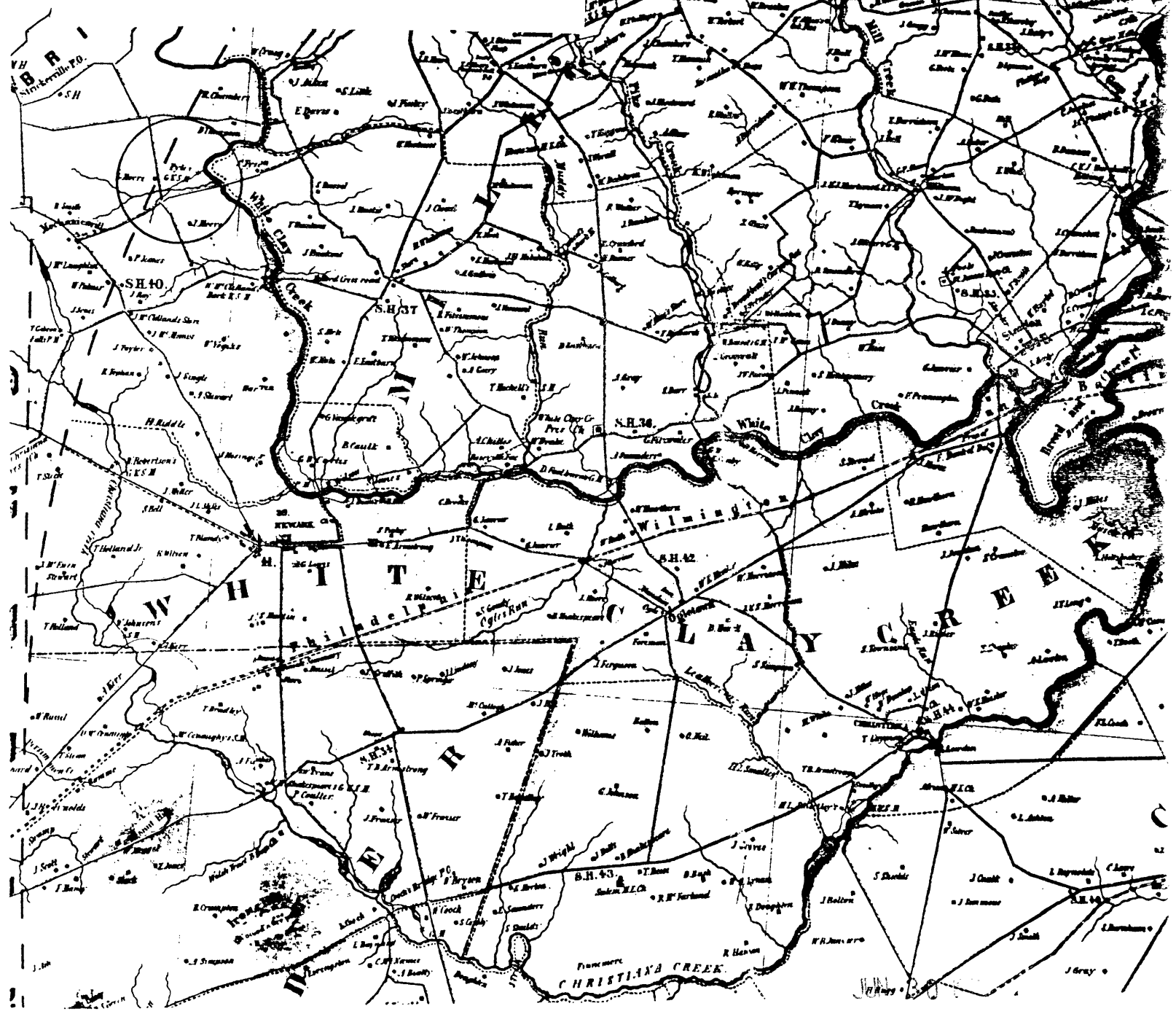
Statement of Significance - Stephen G. Del Sordo, Historian
Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

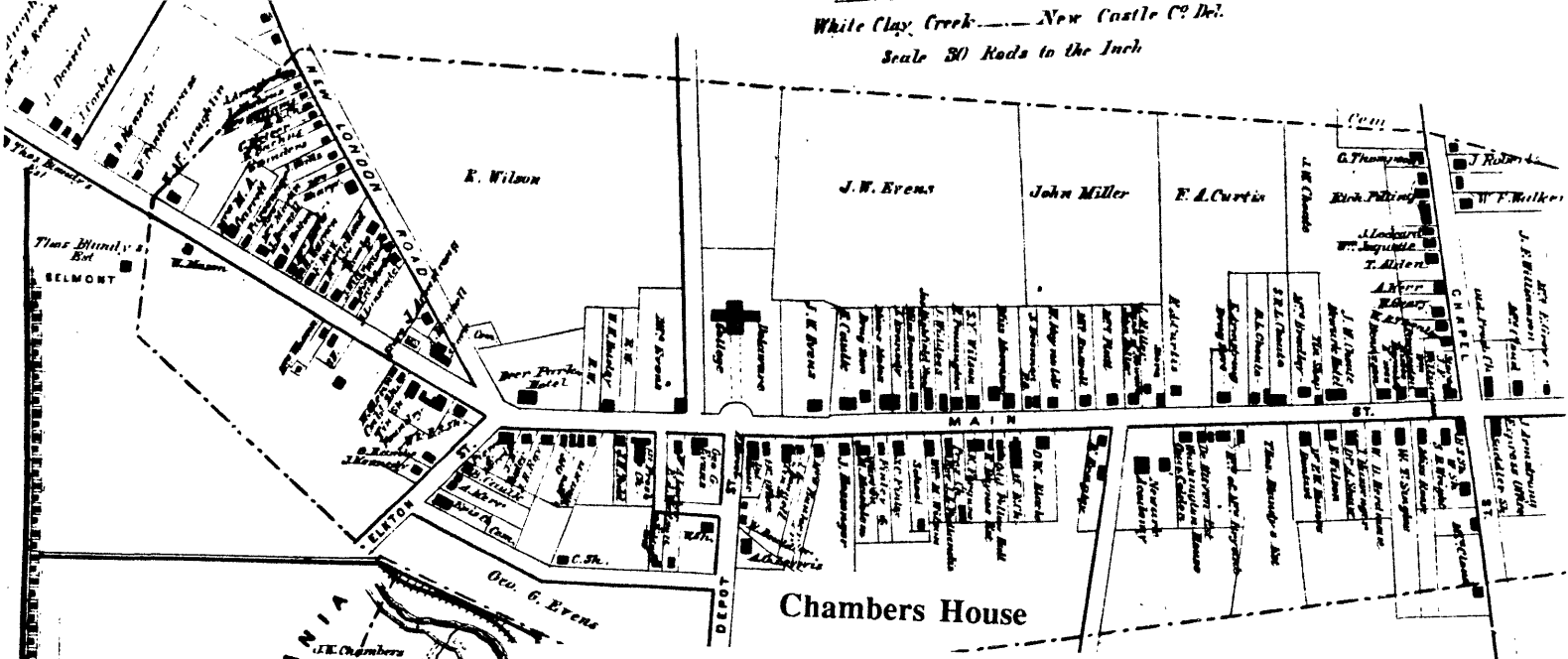
Description and Property Research - Priscilla Thompson
The History Store



Chambers House

Price and Rea. Map of Delaware. 1849. Note Pyle





Pomeroy and Beer's New Topographical Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia, Pomeroy & Beers, 1868. Note L. Pyle

NEWARK BUSINESS DIRECTORY.

- Hotels.**
 Jas. Meehan... Proprietor of Washington Hotel.
 Philip Marvill... Proprietor of Delaware House.
- Merchants.**
 J. F. Williamson... Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Glassware, Hats, Caps, Boots, & Shoes, &c.

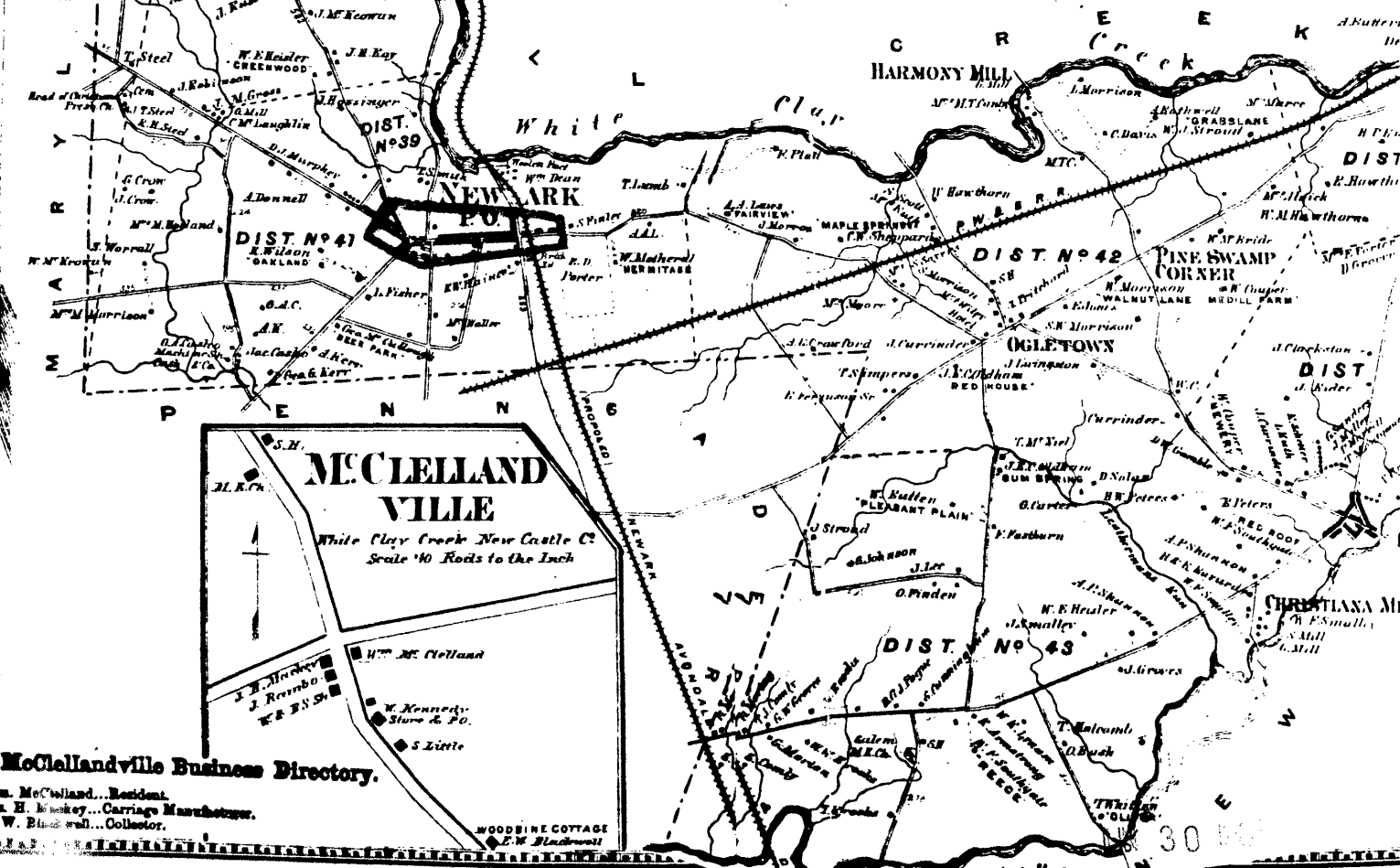
- Shoes, Hardware, Glassware, Crockery, &c.
 Geo. Evans... Dealer in General Merchandise.
 Benj. Cault... Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Window Glass, Cigars, &c.
 A. Lorber, Jr... Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Dye-Stuffs, Glass and Cigars.
 J. W. Evans... Grain Merchant.
 Chas. F. Lippincott... Dealer in Stoves, Tin and Sheet Iron Ware, Zinc, Roofing and Spouting.

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 Dean & P
 Cash & S
 Sh
 Jas. Arms
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Prof. E. I
 Jas. Ray
 Wm. Key
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 Charles E
 A. Lowbe

WHITE CLAY CREEK

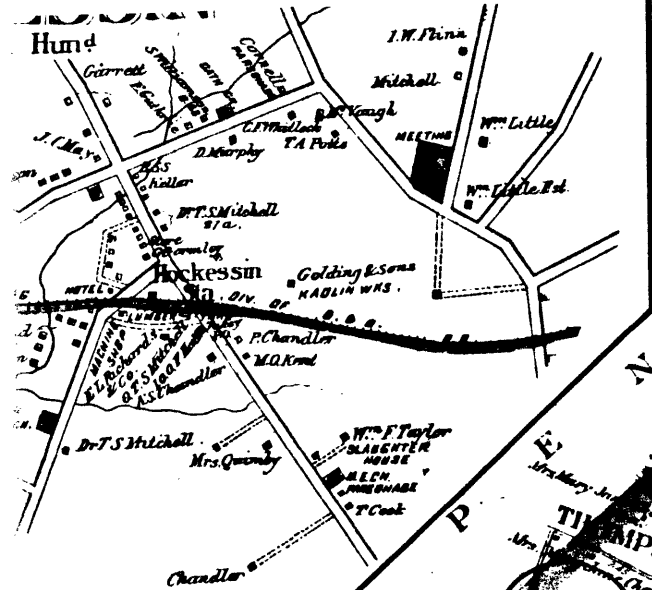
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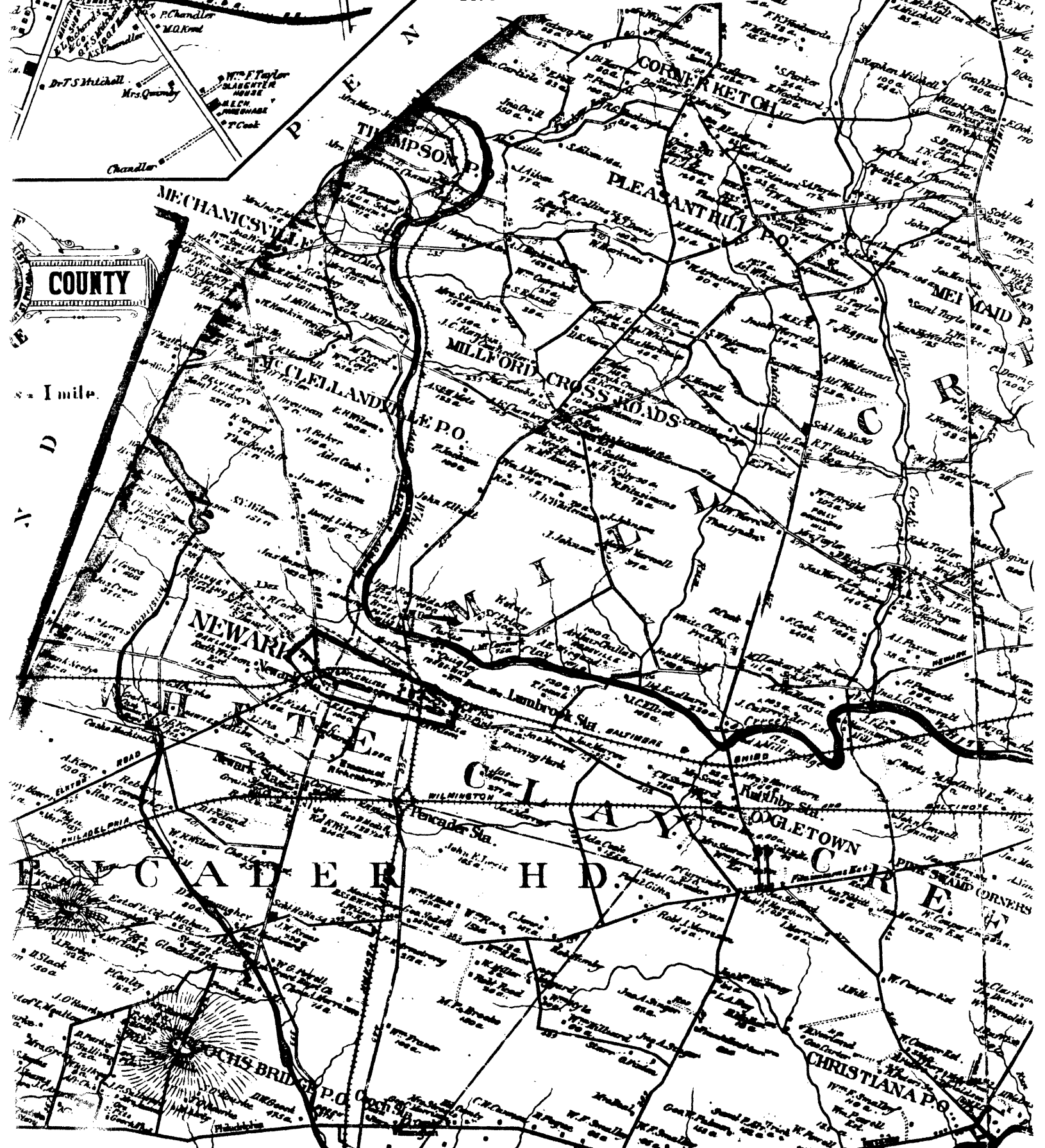
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 Jas. H. Hensley... Carriage Manufacturer.
 E. W. Blackwell... Collector.

WOODBINE COTTAGE
 E. W. Blackwell



Chambers House
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1893 Note B. Hannum



COUNTY
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THE CHAMBERS HOUSE (N-6770) NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DE

UTM REFERENCES:
Zone-18 Easting-434150 Northing-4397560

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale: 1: 24000)
Newark West, DE 1953 (PR 1970)

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NEW CASTLE CO

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PENNSYLVANIA
MARYLAND

Smith

Arc Corner

Mechanicsville

Gaging Sta

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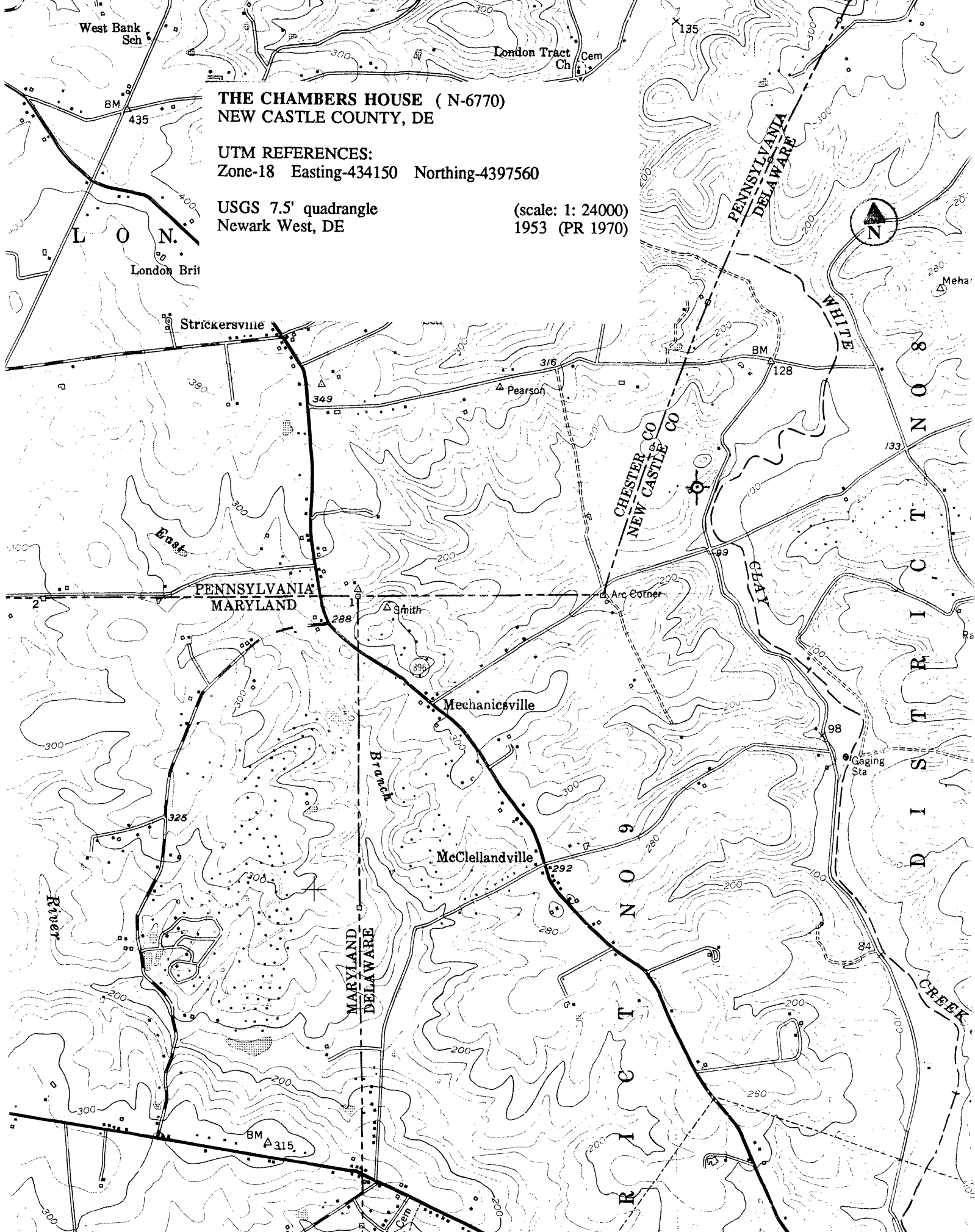
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MARYLAND
DELAWARE

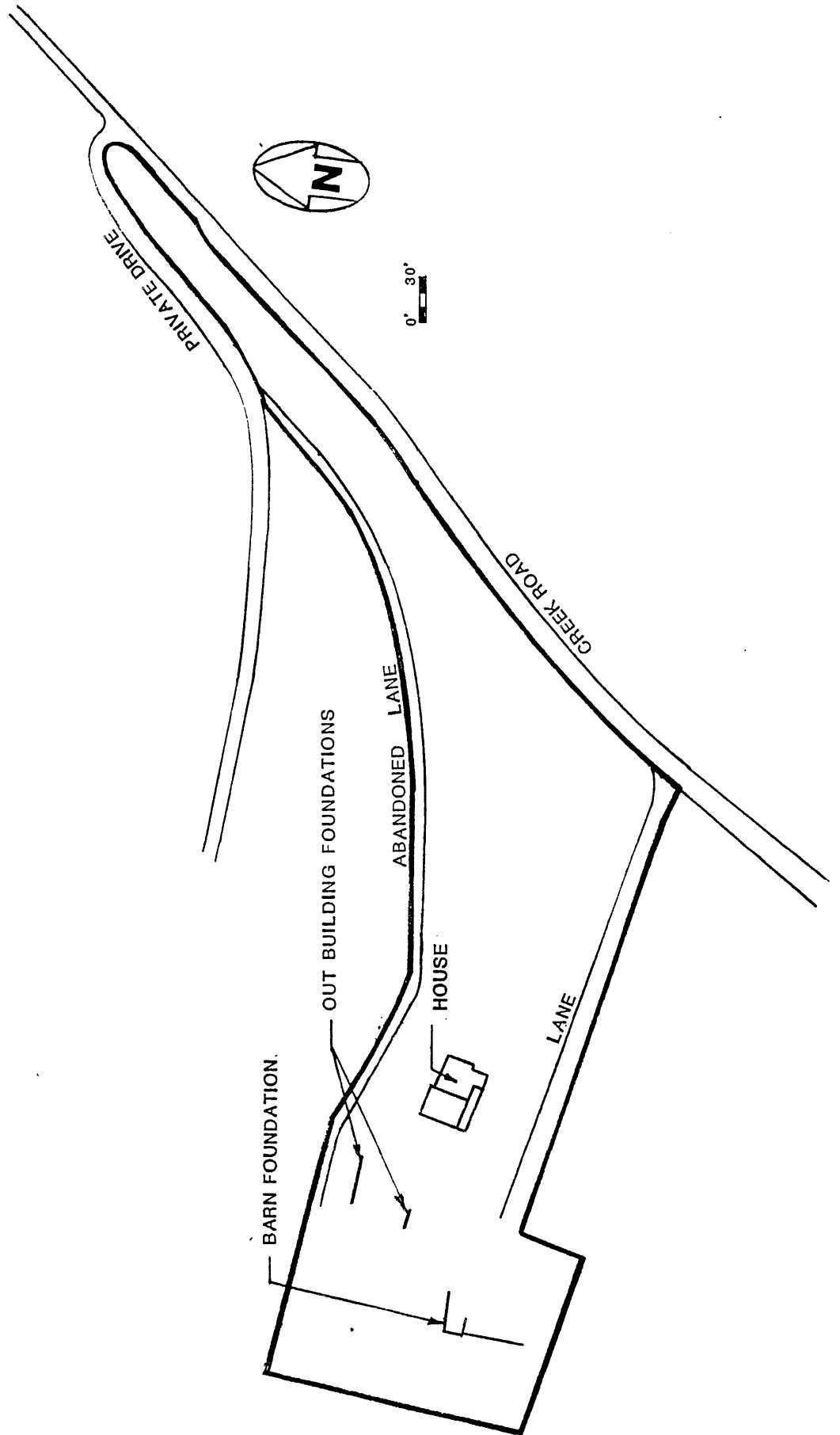
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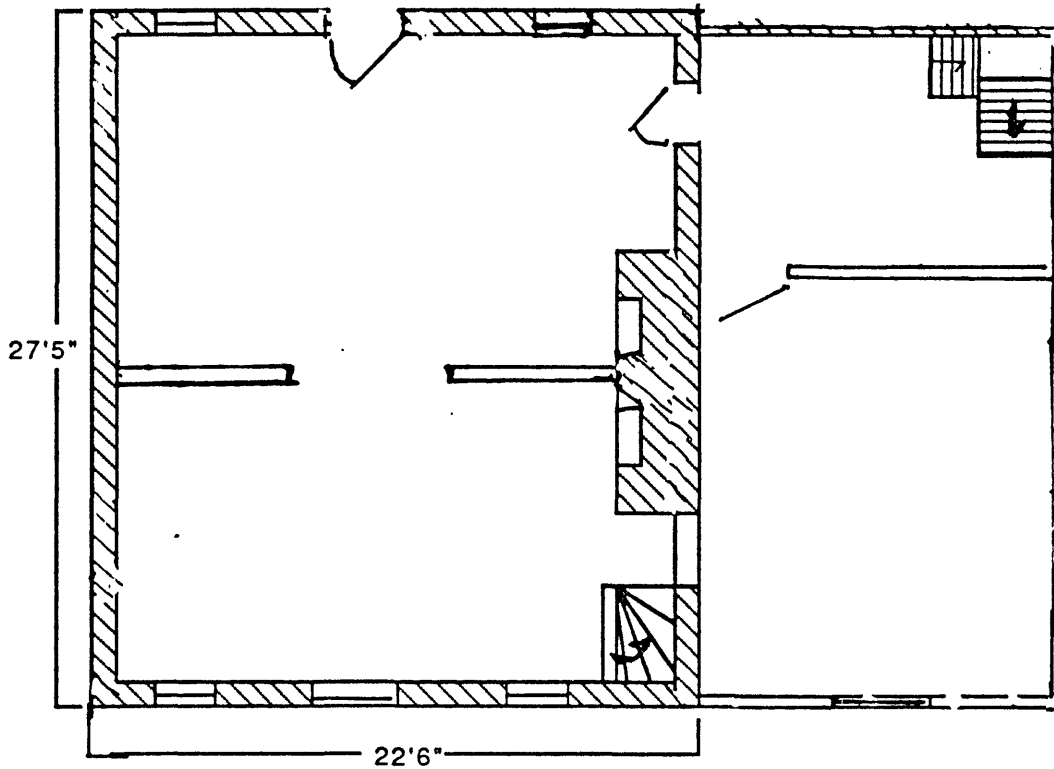


CHAMBERS HOUSE BOUNDARY MAP



Main Block

Addition



Main Level

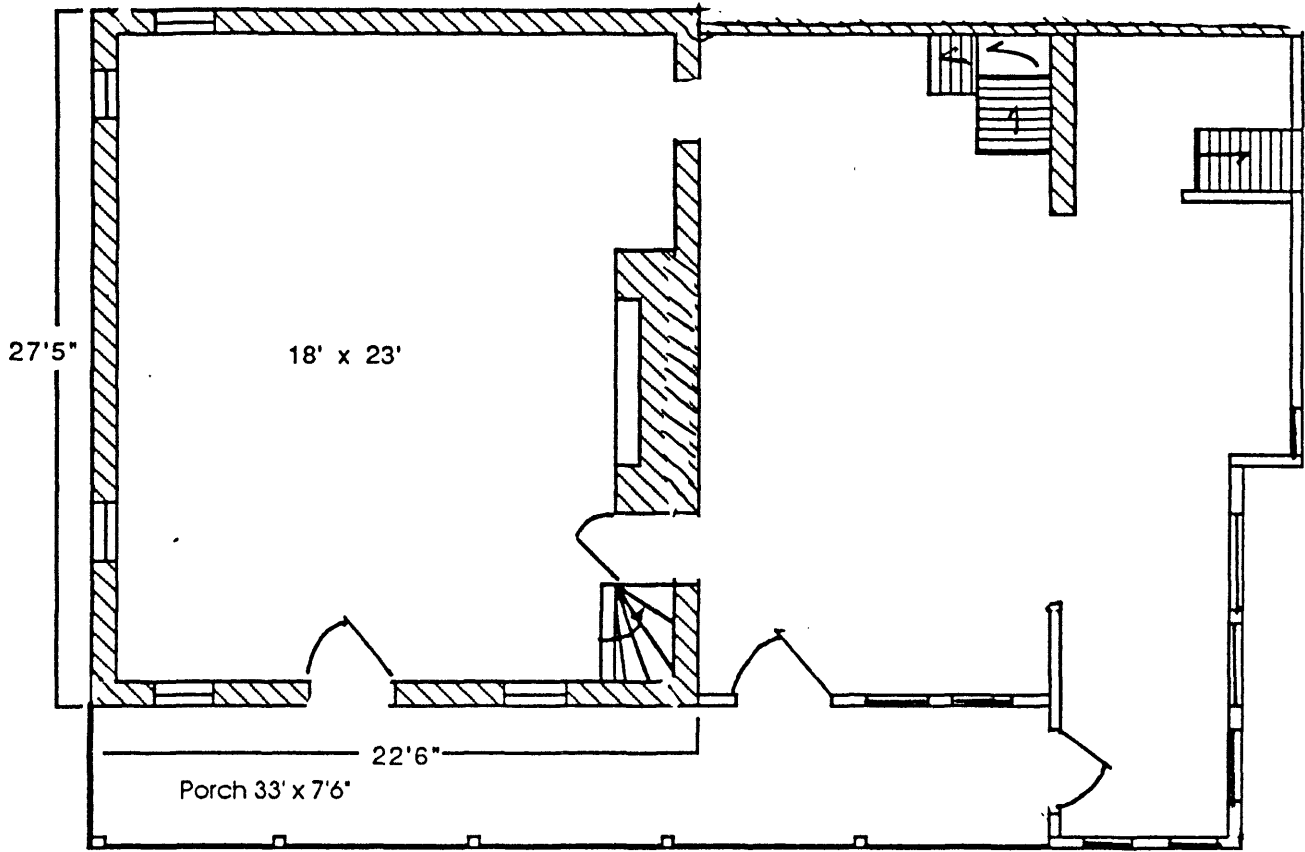


Plan is not to scale

THE CHAMBERS HOUSE
NEW CASTLE CO., DELAWARE
N - 6770

Main Block

Addition



Basement Level



Plan is not to scale

THE CHAMBERS HOUSE
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