

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

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

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Continuation sheet

N-5176

Item number 7

Page 1

N-5176

Property Name: J. M. Gordon House (1868), Built ca. 1800-20 with additions.

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The J. M. Gordon House is located on the south side of Rt. 44 (Vance Neck Road) approximately 2 miles east of its junction with Rt. 13. The structure is situated in an area of cultivated fields and pasture. The nominated area includes 5 acres containing the house and eligible outbuildings. Non-contributing buildings include tractor sheds, a silo, and frame storage buildings erected within the last fifty years.

The nominated parcel begins 100 feet west of the intersection of the present farmlane and runs southward 1200 feet. At this point the line turns 90° to the west and runs 250 feet before turning south at 90° and proceeding 500 feet to a point where the line turns 90° north and continues back to Rt. 44 where it turns 90° west and completes the boundary.

The nominated area includes sufficient acreage to provide for the preservation of the structure, grounds, and immediate setting.

UTM 18.46240.69280 Tax parcel 13-019.00-004

Owner: Arnold Boyer

P. O. Box 141

Odessa, Delaware 19730

Description:

The Gordon House is a two-and-one-half story, three-bay, brick structure with a two-and-one-half story, four-bay addition to the east. A one story, frame leanto addition on a concrete foundation has been added to this. The brick portion is built on a brick and stone foundation, with a full basement below. The exterior brick walls are painted white. The south facade is laid in flemish bond, while the north and west facades are laid in seven course common bond, indicating that the structure was at one time oriented towards Appoquinimink Creek. The gable end windows flanking the chimney on the east facade are evident, but have been filled in and built over when the frame addition was added.

The windows in the brick portion of the structure are six-over-one sash with wood surrounds. The attic is lit by a single gable end sash window on the west elevation. The frame addition features four-over-four, and two-over-two sash with wood surrounds, but no attic lights.

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Page 2

The center passage on the south facade has a single leaf door featuring ten panes of glass. The side-hall passage on the north facade is a single leaf door with four panes of glass.

There is a one-story screened porch on the south facade of the brick structure and a one-story enclosed porch on the south facade of the frame addition. Both have concrete foundations.

The outbuildings on this property are to the south and east of the house and reflect the raising of beef cattle. There two, two-and-one-half story gable roof barns—one having a shed addition and interior chimney; the other, somewhat larger, having a silo beside it. The property is divided into sections by split rail and electric fencing. Cattle ramps are set up beside the barns. There is a chicken coop to the east of the house and a small one story frame gable roof structure directly south of the house. Another frame structure of the same proportions is located between the barns. There is also a garage at the west end completing a courtyard plan.

Historic Background and Significance:

The J. J. Gordon house is first mentioned on the Rea and Price atlas of 1849 as the property of S. Townsend. Beers' atlas of 1868 lists the change of lands and J. M. Gordon's acquisition of the farm. The farm remained in J. M. Gordon/Gordon's possession until after 1893. The 1870 agricultural census, reveals a farm a little larger than average (260 acres) with a devalued cash value typical of the post-war period. Butter and hay were the main products with 40 acres being concentrated in hay. A three-acre apple orchard provided some extra income. The brick house with its extended facade indicates the prosperous re-building period and landward orientation change from the original orientation facing the Appoquinimink Creek as indicated by the Flemish bond south facade.

The 1880 agricultural census returns describe a 33 percent decrease in the cash value of the farm and a doubling of cultivated acreage. The pattern of increased amounts of land in production and falling values was common for the area at that time. Also associated with these changes is a shift toward feeding livestock hay instead of corn and oats, a falling off in orchard produce (down 45 percent from an 1860 high of \$200.00), and a renewed emphasis on dairying.

Nominated by Trish Bensinger and William Macintire