

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Item number N-4003

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INVENTORY FORM: WHITE CLAY CREEK HUNDRED MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

2. A. Property Name: James, Stewart, Jr., House (N-4003)  
~~County Road 346 (Witten Road)~~

B. Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The James Stewart, Jr. House is located on the northeast side of County Road 346, approximately .2 mile northwest of the Christina River. The house is situated on a 46.29 acre parcel, however, due to intrusive elements only a .75 acre section of this is being nominated. This nominated area has a frontage of approximately 285 feet along County Road 346, and an approximate depth of 115 feet (1982 New Castle County Property Tax Map; Map Number 9-41, Parcel 5).

UTM Reference: 18/441340/4387880  
U.S.G.S. Quadrangle: Newark East, Del.

C. Owner: Charles Walther, Jr.  
563 Walther Road  
Newark, Delaware 19702

D. Property Description:

The James Stewart, Jr. House is a brick, five bay late eighteenth century dwelling house composed of two well-defined sections that were constructed as a unit. The larger of these two sections is three bays wide and is double pile in plan, rising two and a half stories to a gable-roofed attic with a linked stuccoed interior chimney at the west end. The smaller section, to the east, is two bays wide and single pile in plan, rising two stories to a gable-roofed attic level, the ridgeline of which is somewhat lower than the western block. A tall, capped interior chimney with paired "belt courses" at its mid-section pierces the ridgeline at the eastern end. Both roofs are covered with composition shingles. The facade elevation is laid in Flemish bond and the remaining walls are constructed in common bond. No outbuildings survive from the period of original construction of the dwelling house and existing outbuildings are severely deteriorated or very late in date. The house is remarkably well preserved, as there have been no major modifications of its exterior fabric. The only substantial alterations involve the addition of a three bay, one story, hip-roofed facade porch with turned posts sometime in the twentieth century and the modern construction of a one story frame shed in the angle formed at the rear of the house by the joining of the double and single pile sections. A modern aluminum box cornice has also been installed. Minor modifications include the replacement of six-over-six sash with two-over-two sash on the first story facade windows.

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Both wings rise over a full raised basement and a rubble stone foundation. This raised basement is entered from the exterior by a bulkhead entrance at the base of the western end wall near the facade and is illuminated by flat-arched windows on the front and presumably on the rear elevations. The area over the rear windows has been patched with concrete in a way that suggests the dimensions of the facade arches. The raised basement is emphasized on the lower facade wall by the use of common bond brickwork between the rubble foundation and the top of the flat arches where a single header course marks the beginning of the Flemish bond brickwork.

The principal facade entrance is located at the eastern end of the double pile block and is composed of a paneled surround topped by a two-light rectangular transom. The door itself is a late nineteenth century replacement with a large rectangular glass pane over four raised and moulded panels. Situated immediately to the right of the main entrance is the secondary facade entrance with a plain surround and, again, a late nineteenth century door composed of two small raised and moulded panels over a pair of glass panes over two larger panels. Both of these doors appear to have been six-panel doors originally, the glass panes having replaced two panels on each door at a later date.

E. Justification of Boundaries

The choice of boundaries was dictated by the existence of intrusive elements immediately outside the vicinity of the house and the location of the house just off the roadway. The Stewart House fronts on the roadway to the west, is bounded on the north by modern residential properties and on the south and east by land that has been significantly disturbed by a sand and gravel excavation.

F. Statement of Significance

The James Stewart, Jr. House is significant to our understanding of local history, particularly the movements of people and their interconnections with other hundreds within New Castle County. It is important to the architectural history of the area in that it represents a type of building seen nowhere else in the hundred. The Stewart House is significant under criterion C for National Register eligibility since it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Because of the information it reveals about the inter-relationships of different families, it is also eligible under criterion B as it is associated with persons significant to the local past.

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10/11/84  
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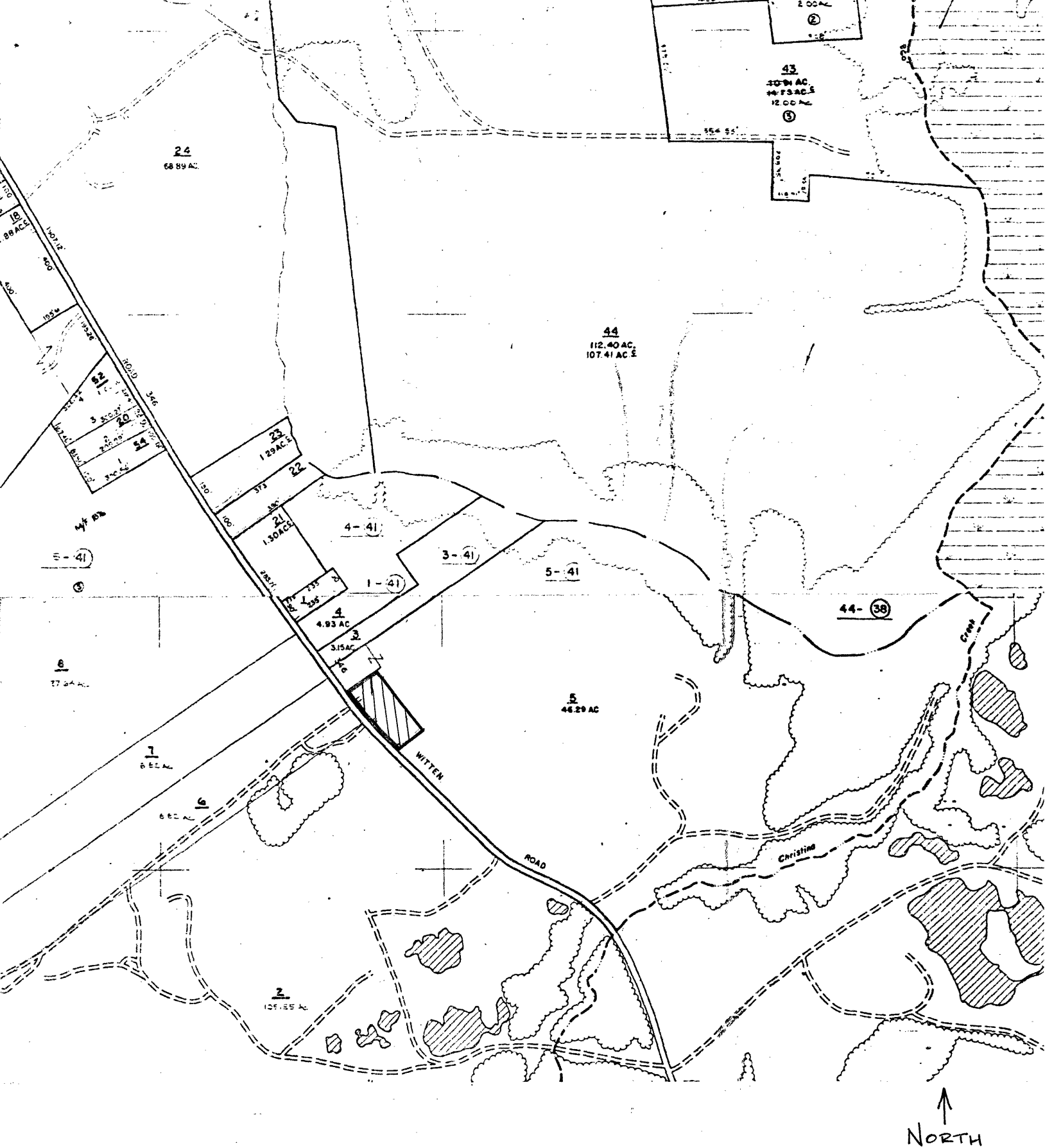
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Sometime during the last part of the eighteenth century, James Stewart, Jr. of Pencader Hundred bought several tracts, had them surveyed and from that time on the property was sold as one large tract, totalling 260 acres. The fact that James Stewart, Jr. owned this tract of land is significant for he is of the Pencader Hundred family that married into a Welsh Presbyterian family, the Wanns, and it was James Stewart who, in 1807 (at the time he sold this tract), bought his wife's family's mansion tract known as the Isaac Alexander property which is located in Pencader Hundred. From 1830 until the present day, this property has been associated with only three families, the Harmons, Whittens and Walthers.

The plan and massing of the Stewart House is notable in that a two and a half story, double pile section is combined with a two story, single pile section that presents a unified and continuous two story, five bay facade to the roadway. Such a configuration would normally suggest the addition of one of the sections at a later date; however, external evidence suggests that both sections were constructed at the same time. This apparent attempt to visually unify yet physically segregate may perhaps be explained by the lack of any internal connection of the two sections on the second level. Such spatial separation is typical of buildings with service wings and servants' quarters. It is much more common, however, to have service wings depressed from the principal facade or particularly arranged at right angles to the main block.

Level of Significance

The level of significance claimed for the Stewart House is local. While it possesses uncommon features which make it interesting to the architectural history of the entire state, information regarding the distribution and frequency of similar forms elsewhere in the state is incomplete. Therefore, at this time, it is best understood in the local context of White Clay Creek Hundred.



↑  
NORTH

SKETCH MAP

2. James Stewart, Jr. House (N-4003)  
 New Castle County Property  
 Tax Map, 1982  
 Map No. 9-41, Parcel 5  
 Scale 1 inch = 400 feet