

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

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

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Continuation sheet

Item number K-183

Page 1

K-183:

Property Name: Hoffecker-Lockwood House, "Bellevue" *(K-183-1000-1000-1000)*

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The Hoffecker-Lockwood House is located on the Smyrna-Millington Road, Route 6, about 1/4 mile east of the intersection of Road 133, Road 138 and Route 6. The farm is on the north side and occupies a total acreage of 150 acres. The nominated property contains 51.65 acres. This smaller plot incorporates the house and its associated agricultural outbuildings and, at minimum, would preserve the relationship of the complex with the farmland that it has always been a part of. The boundaries of the nominated plot are Route 6 on the south for a distance of 750 feet on either side of the driveway; on the east and west sides the boundary goes at a right angle from the road for a distance of 1500 feet, the north boundary completes the square.

Owner: Ralph D. Knotts, Jr.
437 N. Governors Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

Description:

The Hoffecker-Lockwood House, "Bellevue," was built in the mid-eighteenth century as a 3-bay, 2-story, hall-parlor-plan dwelling. The exterior is very plain, while the interior is elaborately decorated with boldly-carved Georgian-style panelling. The low, 2-story, west gable wing is part of the original structure and served as a service wing.

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Page 2

The facade of the main block is laid in Flemish bond, while the rest of the house is laid in common bond. There is no belt course around the house. The cornice is a simple box cornice. The entire house is painted white. The first few courses of brick on the main block are heavily stuccoed in imitation of a water table. The windows on the first floor are nine-over-nine. Those on the second floor are six-over-nine. The low, 2-story wing on the west side is part of the original construction. It housed service functions for the dwelling.

The largest room, the hall, in the main block is the eastern room and it has the most elaborate detailing. The winding stair to the second floor is in the northeast corner. Next to it is a closet. On the opposite side is a cupboard with paired 3-panel doors. In the center is a well-executed chimney breast with an eared panel and overmantel of applied mouldings. An elaborate crown cornice and heavy chair rail are also used in the room. The parlor has much simpler woodwork. There is no panelled end wall.

Historical Background:

The Hoffecker-Lockwood House, "Bellevue," is built on land that was originally warranted to David West, Sr., in 1745 by the Penn family. The tract at that time was 300 acres. The land remained in the West family until 1802, when it passed out of the family. After 1802, it had a series of successive owners and was reduced in size to 150 acres. Thomas B. Lockwood bought the property in 1847 and held it until 1870. Lockwood was involved in a number of business activities. From 1851 to 1861, he was an agent for the Kent County Mutual Insurance Company. The policy he took out when he purchased the property listed a brick house and kitchen, smokehouse, barn and stable. He cancelled the policy when he became an agent for the insurance company.

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Continuation sheet

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Page 3

The agricultural use of the land follows a pattern that was typical for Kent County farms during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The inventory for David West in 1762 shows that he grew wheat, corn and some flax. His son's inventory, done in 1773, indicates that he grew wheat exclusively. The emphasis on wheat shifted in the nineteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, corn was the principal crop. During the 1880's, peaches were the principal crop. With the peach blight, the owners shifted back to corn.

Local legend claims that during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Hoffecker family lived in the house. They were supposed to be a family of German immigrants whose household head was a tailor. Members of the Hoffecker family, a prominent family in the nineteenth century, did own the house from 1894 to 1934. If the Hoffecker family did live in the house, they did so as tenants, not as owners; however, the documentary records show that the West's were occupying the house. The house is known locally and in the HABS survey as the Hoffecker House.

Statement of Significance:

The Hoffecker-Lockwood House, "Bellevue," is illustrative of the early building period and first settlement of the hundred. As a hall-parlor house, it was the expected choice for many of the first settlers. The house does, however, foreshadow the development of Georgian building patterns by the use of the balanced 3-bay facade of the main block. The decoration of the interior space further highlights the introduction of the Georgian idiom by its balanced order of openings on either side of the central fireplace. The individual decorative elements of the chimney breast also show the influence of Georgian ideals through the use of the eared architrave and overmantel. This house is being nominated under Criterion C, as an example of the transition from medieval to Georgian forms of spacial arrangement.