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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM**

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor or computer to complete all items.

X New Submission             Amended Submission

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**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

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Dwellings of the Rural Elite in Central Delaware, 1770-1830+/-

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**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

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Architectural Trends of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone, 1770-1830+/-

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**C. Form Prepared By**

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**D. Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth the requirements for listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

       See continuation sheet for comments.

*David M. [Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official

7/24/92  
Date

Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Dover, Delaware  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

*Patrick Andrews*  
Signature of the Keeper

9/11/92  
Date

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

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**Architectural Trends of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone, 1770-1830 +/-**

X See continuation sheet

The architectural development of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone from 1770 through 1830 was strongly influenced by a period of intensive building activity that resulted in increased numbers of durable houses. A significant component of this new architectural landscape was made up of the houses of the rural elite--individuals who were among the wealthiest 20 percent of the taxable population, owned land, and were engaged in a market-based extensive agricultural economy. They also tended to promote several new concepts: the privatization of the countryside--through forms of enclosure; the industrialization of agriculture--through their commitment to agricultural reform and scientific farming; the regulation of the rural economy--through the control of labor and tenancy; and the capitalization of farming--through agricultural machinery, farm buildings, and livestock. The dwellings of the rural elite symbolized their self-perceived status within the communities they occupied.

The ten dwellings considered in this nomination are the D.W. Thomas House (N-6237), Hill Island Farm (N-5898), Green Meadow (N-6240), Brook Ramble (N-101), the Vandyke-Heath House (N-5891), the Johnson Home Farm (N-4247), Mount Jones (N-1503), Windsor (N-12738) the Savin-Wilson House (K-3967), and Mount Pleasant (K-3863). There are other dwellings within the geographical boundaries of this nomination that share the characteristics of this thematic nomination and have already been listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places. These related sites are listed in an appendix to the Statement of Historic Contexts.

In the third quarter of the eighteenth century there arose an elite class of farmers. These men were increasingly removed from the actual labor of farming and devoted their energies instead to the administration and management of agricultural estates. Their ambitions were widely characterized in agricultural and general-interest newspapers and agricultural treatises; their common goal was to systematize the production activity of the farm. Essays appearing in the Memoirs of the Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, American Farmer, and other journals and newspapers, as well as book length guides, consistently promoted eighteenth-century values of industry, economy, and order. The ideal model of the farmer's world paradoxically consisted of a Virgilian dream anchored in an early industrial mentality. John Spurrier of New Castle County represented this view when he wrote in 1793, "The practice of husbandry requires precept, reflection and study."<sup>1</sup> Spurrier wished to reduce agriculture "to a regular system" not unlike those observed

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in the "manufactures, and sciences."<sup>2</sup> Other regional writers extended the idea of an encompassing rural order to all aspects of rural life.

The most powerful evocation of a hierarchical rural order is contained in Benjamin Rush's 1789 personification of the model farmer.<sup>3</sup> The progress of the model farmer was symbolized by his choice of crops, husbandry, fields, and farm buildings. The house was one of the most visible symbols in this emergent order: the dwelling was to be of masonry construction, "large, convenient, and filled with useful and substantial furniture." Ironically, the house, which was intended to symbolize "republican virtue," was perceived by the community as an intrinsic element in their hierarchically ordered rural society. The symbolic function of housing in this context is exemplified by J. B. Bordley's observations in Essays and Notes on Husbandry and Rural Affairs. For himself and others of his economic and social stature, Bordley advocated a central-passage double-pile mansion. His recommendation for tenants, however, was quite different: "It is deemed advantageous for the farmer to have some number of labourers on his estate at a rent, in a small very confined house called a cottage; and the labourer taking it is called a cottager."<sup>4</sup> The recommended cottage was 12 by 16 feet with 144 square feet for the family "To fit in, dine in, &c.," and the remaining 48 square feet was given over to stairs and cupboards. The loft was subdivided into two chambers.

The explicit meaning of "estate" as it was employed by Bordley and his contemporaries had its roots in an American version of a gentry class. In 1819 Dr. Samuel Henry Black, a farmer and physician from Pencader Hundred, wrote "An Essay on the Intrinsic Value of Arable Land" for the American Farmer. The editor prefaced it with the observation:

It will be impossible for any one to read this essay and possess one drop of farmer's blood, without feeling it start in every vein, and flush him with the expectation of realizing the promise of the essayist; in other words an estate.<sup>5</sup>

The values intrinsic to this notion of "estate" combined principles of enlightened governance, scientific practice, Christian morality, and a

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carefully formulated sense of order. The visual and symbolic center of the gentry's neatly ordered universe was the mansion house.

By the late 1830s there was a growing sense that the old post-Revolutionary elite had begun to disappear. An essay on rural life in The Delaware Register and Farmers' Magazine of 1838 described the change, laying its cause to the nature and practice of agricultural tenancy. "There is no sight more pleasing to the philanthropist," the author begins, "than to behold the head of a happy family, contentedly occupying the patrimonial estate inherited from his ancestors."<sup>6</sup> It was the goal of every gentleman farmer to achieve an estate, as advanced and realized by Dr. Samuel Henry Black of Pencader Hundred. The houses, agricultural compounds, orchards, and fields of these individuals reflected a pervasive concern with a hierarchical social, as well as agrarian, order. The conflict between the popular symbolism of the republican farmer (the apotheosis of the romanticized old "yeoman") and the capitalization of the landscape through institutions like tenancy proved irresolvable. The result, somewhat overstated, was:

Most of the old and time honored families, who once adorned our society by their primitive manners, and friendly hospitality have been broken up and scattered abroad. And their possessions have fallen into the hands of a few land jobbers; and they are let out to a migratory race, who changing their residence with every revolution of the seasons, form no attachment for their places of abode...<sup>7</sup>

One visible result of the eclipse of the older generation of the rural elite was the increasing number of old rural estates let out for rent. Thus, buildings and farms like Brook Ramble, Windsor, Hill Island, and the D. W. Thomas House, built as the homes of owners, were preserved as the houses of tenants.

The elite class of farmers had certain characteristics or qualities in common. First, they were among the wealthiest people in their communities. Second, their houses tended to be large, two-story brick buildings with a central stair passage and ornately finished interiors. Moreover, great care was taken in orienting these houses

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to public view. Third, their personal possessions included objects that served as visible symbols of wealth and social status. Fourth, unlike the majority of the taxable population, they owned land-- frequently multiple properties. Their lands were located both in town and in the countryside and were treated as investments, often rented out to tenants or operated by individual farm managers. Finally, they were responsible for the introduction of innovative agricultural methods and machinery.

Although the ten dwellings listed in this nomination share a number of characteristics in terms of plan, construction, and finish, they do not describe an exclusive category of elite housing. While we can generally assign two-story, brick, stair-passage plan residences to builder/occupants in the economic elite, there are also one-room, one-story wood buildings occupied by similar individuals. Still, there is pattern in the elite housing of the Upper Peninsula in the 1770-1830 +/- period.

Eight of the ten buildings are brick with Flemish bond front elevations and English or common bond secondary elevations. The two remaining buildings are of post-and-plank (Johnson Home Farm) and log (Vandyke-Heath House). Seven dwellings are built on stair-passage plans; six are center-passage, single-pile and one is side-passage, double-pile in form. The configuration of the remaining dwellings includes a one-room plan (Vandyke-Heath House), a hall-parlor plan (D. W. Thomas House), and a four-room plan with the stair located in a heated entry room (Mount Jones). All but one (Vandyke-Heath House) are two stories in elevation.

Two of the ten structures were first built in the early to mid-eighteenth century and subsequently modified in the 1770-1830 period. Hill Island, dating to late in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, was originally built with an atypical hall-parlor plan and converted in the early federal period to a center-passage arrangement. Green Meadow, begun circa 1750, was raised as a two-story hall-parlor plan of the type widely associated with the housing of a native-born rural elite throughout the lower Delaware Valley. The remodeling of Green Meadow late in the federal period dramatically transformed the old house into its current center-passage form. The refurbishing and

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spatial redefinition of Hill Island and Green Meadow anticipated a more pervasive cycle of domestic and agricultural rebuilding activity that occurred from approximately 1840 through 1870 in central Delaware (see National Register of Historic Places nomination, "The Rebuilding of St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware). Two of the dwellings were built at the threshold of the period under consideration--Windsor and Mount Jones were both erected in the 1760s. Windsor anticipates the favored pattern of post-Revolutionary elite housing with its two-story, five-bay, center stair-passage. Mount Jones, in contrast, reflects a more subtle meshing of customary architectural forms and domestic hierarchical concerns with its four-room plan and elaborate interiors.

Like Windsor and the remodeled forms of Hill Island and Green Meadow, Mount Pleasant (ca. 1810), Johnson Home Farm (ca. 1790), and the Savin-Wilson House (ca. 1820) display the continuation of the single-pile, center-passage plan. Brook Ramble (ca. 1810), with its side-passage plan, displays identical formal usages in an alternative arrangement. From its introduction into the area in the 1730s, the stair-passage plan had grown in favor among the most affluent members of rural society. The presence of a substantial interior passageway physically distanced rooms and functioned to control and direct movement through the house. Rooms were no longer separated just by walls, but also by space, reflecting the owner's desire for, and ability to afford, specialized rooms that symbolized more segmented sets of domestic relationships. Although the addition of a stair-passage did not necessarily extend domestic activity beyond more than one or two rooms, it did redefine older spatial uses by transforming, for example, the former common room or hall into a specifically designated and appointed dining room. The increased isolation of function by physical space is further underscored by the numbers and types of domestic support buildings associated with the houses of the rural elite. Although actual examples of these buildings rarely survive, they are repeatedly mentioned in documentary sources such as the orphans court valuations, and commonly include kitchens, smokehouses, poultry houses, and carriage houses.

Although Georgian house types remained the property of the wealthy and were not adopted by poorer residents except as tenant housing, members

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of the rural elite could and did own and occupy non-Georgian houses. The stair-passage plans typically associated with the housing of the rural elite were contrasted by the hall and hall-parlor plans of the Vandyke-Heath House (ca. 1785) and the D. W. Thomas House (1820). During the federal period, hall-parlor plans were adopted by some members of the rural elite; however, with their origins in the regional plantation housing of the colonial period, they were more typical of middle-income farmers.

The interiors of elite houses were expensively finished with paneled doors and end-walls and moulded trim and fireplace mantles. Most fireplace mantles were classical in form, such as at Mount Pleasant, the D. W. Thomas House, Brook Ramble, and Johnson Home Farm, which all feature Doric pilasters supporting a moulded cornice and shelf. Stairways typically displayed moulded handrails, turned balusters, and paneled soffits, as at Windsor and the Savin-Wilson House. Most stairs were built as winders or half-turns with landings, but Brook Ramble contains an elliptical stair that rises two-and-a-half stories.

Architectural furniture such as built-in corner cupboards and dining room chimney cupboards are common features in these buildings. Windsor retains a dining room fireplace wall with one display cupboard fitted with butterfly shelves and a second plainer storage cupboard, while Mount Jones possesses a glazed corner cupboard with butterfly shelves for dining room display. Finally, the finishes within the buildings commonly yield information about an internal hierarchy of finish with the most socially important rooms containing the more elaborate woodwork. In descending order, the typical hierarchical pattern observed within these buildings is parlor, dining room, ground floor entry, second floor entry, parlor chamber, dining room chamber, entry chamber, kitchen chamber, and kitchen.

Only the Vandyke-Heath House lacks all the qualities generally associated with the housing of the rural elite. As a one-story, one-room, log house, it had more in common with the mainstream of local housing. Two-story, stair-passage plan houses like Windsor, Hill Island, Brook Ramble, or the Johnson Home Farm stood in sharp contrast

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to the average range of dwellings commonly found in the Upper Peninsula landscape. New Castle County orphans court valuations indicate that the vast majority of houses were of wood construction (log, plank, or frame) and only a single story in elevation. Ordinary houses usually contained one or two principle rooms equipped with fireplaces and a number of leanto additions. Additionally, the average house would typically have no cellar, be supported on wood blocks or stubby masonry piers, and possess unfinished rooms on the interior. Within the general range of housing there was considerable room for variety. While stair-passage plans were almost invariably built as elite housing, dwellings laid out in hall, hall-parlor, double-cell, cross-passage, chambered hall, and other configurations had been built throughout the colonial period and continued to be raised well into the mid-1800s. Moreover, even within the categories defined by certain plan types such as a one-room or hall plan, there was significant variation in terms of architectural finishes and amenities. A one-room dwelling for a poor tenant might have a stick chimney, clay floors, no windows, ladder stair to an unfinished loft, and no interior finish; a one-room dwelling for a land owning farmer of middling means would more likely have been floored, provided with a masonry chimney pile and windows, and finished on the interior with mantels, baseboard, and board or plaster walling. While some elite dwellings like the Vandyke-Heath House were architecturally indistinguishable from mainstream housing stock, the overwhelming majority (as reflected in this nomination) were unabashedly distinctive in terms of plan, size, finish, and/or quality of construction. The factors placing the Vandyke-Heath House in the context of the housing of the rural elite, 1770-1830 +/-, relate to the wealth and position of its first owner, Daniel Heath. Heath, assessed in 1797 for 5000 acres, 47 slaves, two dwellings, and nine "outhouses" or tenements, ranked as one of the wealthiest individuals in his community.

The importance of the Vandyke-Heath House to this nomination lies in its position as the exception to the rule of elite housing. The two-story, brick, stair-passage plan idiom does describe the housing type most closely (and most exclusively) associated with these elite farmers. But, as the Vandyke-Heath House proves, not all members of the rural elite chose to build and occupy the sorts of houses that



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most obviously advertised their economic means and social position. The fact of architectural ownership, for example, was generally limited to the top 30 percent of the taxable population in the early 19th century. Within the restricted class of property owners, housing ranged from the expected brick plantation house to the roughest, most worn structures such as James Buckson's. Buckson, who ranked in the top 15 percent of taxables in Appoquinimink Hundred in 1816, left an estate in 1820 described as:

The dwelling House is of one story built of Logs and covered with oak shingles, and seems to require [ ] to make it comfortable but habitable a Roof, sills, a Floor and repair of the gable ends. The Kitchen is a small hut built of logs but without a chimney, a good cover, a safe gables.<sup>e</sup>

The house, which most likely consisted of a single room and loft, contained 7 chairs, a chest of drawers, two tables, two beds, a chest, and a trunk. Still, there were items associated with wealthier households, including silver teaspoons and a looking glass. As poor and wretched as Buckson's housing may seem, it was likely better than the accommodations of many of his poorer neighbors. The coarser range of elite housing characterized by these lesser, often ephemeral, buildings such as Buckson's house and kitchen is characterized by the Vandyke-Heath house.

Similarly, dwellings which followed the general pattern of elite housing often came to house tenants and farm managers. Thus, Windsor and Brook Ramble both became tenant houses following the deaths or failed business endeavors of their builders. In the case of Windsor, the fate of the house built by Jacob Vandyke was caught up in the settlement of his estate and an ensuing mortgage by the heirs. In 1796, following the heirs' default on the mortgage, the land and house was acquired first by Nicholas Vandyke IV, of New Castle, who sold the property in 1796 to his neighbor Kensey Johns. Johns, whose total holdings in St. Georges Hundred amounted to 1061 acres in 1797, leased the house back to the Vandyke family. In the case of Brook Ramble, personal mismanagement caused the builder, John Crawford, to forfeit his property at public auction in the late 1820s. The purchaser,

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William Rothwell, allowed Crawford to live in the house until his death in 1839.

Siting, as much as house form and finish, further distinguished the dwellings of the rural elite. Typically their houses were aligned with public roads and placed on a rise in the landscape. As evidenced in the ten sites included the nomination, cardinal orientation had little influence on siting decisions. Thus, Mount Jones and Windsor face roughly east; Brook Ramble, Hill Island Farm, and the Vandyke-Heath House front south; the Savin-Wilson house looks westward; and Mount Pleasant and the Johnson Home Farm are oriented to the north. Despite the different directions these houses face, they are all aligned with the nearest road, even though it may lie hundreds of feet away. Being situated on even the most subtle rises in the natural topography made them even more visible to passersby. Mount Jones perches on the brow of a hill overlooking the old King's Highway (present day Route 13); Mount Pleasant, oriented at right angles to the public road, occupies the crest of a gentle swell rising out of the surrounding fields. The orientation of these houses confirms their symbolic value as material markers of hierarchical social relationships.

In addition to form, fabric, and location, the contents of the dwellings of the elite provide evidence of their owners' status and aspirations. A gentleman was characterized as having a refined aesthetic taste, rational thought, and an education. These characteristics are manifested in the objects listed in the inventories of the rural elite.

Books were recorded in every inventory, indicating a high level of literacy and education among the rural elite. Dr. William Johnson owned 49 volumes of medical books, and John Savin left two commentaries on the Bible in his bedchamber. Samuel Thomas, although he was a merchant, kept a law dictionary, three medical dictionaries, a five-volume biography of George Washington, and 21 books of history along with other books in his secretary and bookcase.

During the federal period, the ownership of a watch or clock was not only a sign of wealth (a \$30 clock and case was the same price as a

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good horse) but of a new, rational, way of thinking. As farmers, their work was guided by the rising and setting of the sun, and the hours of daylight would lengthen or shorten depending on the season. But with a watch, a machine for measuring time, each hour was the same length and each work day began and ended at the same hour. It was a rational way to order one's life, for it no longer depended on the unpredictable variability of the natural world. Samuel Thomas, Samuel Cahoon, William Johnson, and John Savin all owned clocks. Similarly, the rural elite were also likely to own medical equipment, surveyors tools, and/or scientific and measuring instruments.

Status and wealth are also revealed in the luxury items, such as silver spoons and carpets, that appeared in nearly every household. A sense of the aesthetics of this group may be gathered from the frequent appearance of walnut and mahogany furniture, a wood that was not only expensive but whose fine grain made it particularly suited for smooth, polished surfaces. The types and numbers of possessions relating to agriculture and husbandry further identify the rural elite. Often they owned agricultural machines and implements such as wheat fans, corn shellers, farm wagons, multiple plows and harrows, and numbers of hand tools like William Johnson's "Lot of shovels, spades, hoes, & dung forks." John Savin, for example, purchased a "pattent rake," while Samuel Cahoon owned a "Wheat Mashean." Multiple numbers of tools like scythes and cradles or plows were used to equip a force of day and tenant labor, while threshing and seeding machines could be purchased in shares or rented to neighboring farmers. As important as implements in identifying the rural elite are their livestock holdings. The large number and types of livestock indicate a market-based agricultural economy. Individuals associated with the rural elite owned dairy cows, steers, and swine clearly in excess of the needs defined by subsistence farming. Multiple teams of horses, able to plow twice the daily average acreage covered by oxen, reflect an increasingly mechanized agricultural landscape. Substantial plantings or harvests of crops, such as wheat, buckwheat, oats, and hay, indicate both a market economy and the need to provide specialized feeds for draft and dairy animals. Finally, agricultural buildings associated with the estates of the rural elite in the 1770-1830 +/- period include barns, granaries, corncribs and corn houses, combination farm structures (i.e., barn with stable), and stables--all

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necessary for sheltering animals, processing and storing crops, and housing equipment.<sup>9</sup>

After the Revolution, prosperous farmers shifted their attention from cultivating the soil to building new houses and outbuildings, investing significant portions of their farm income in the farm buildings, particularly barns and granaries. As capital investments, the new houses increased the property value of the farms. But more importantly, the investments in brick, plank, and paint were testimony of the owners' economic successes and social ambitions.

At this time, the majority of dwellings were of log or frame construction; a significantly lesser number were made of brick. The 1816 tax assessment for St. Georges Hundred reveals that only 5 percent of the taxable population owned brick houses. Ownership of brick houses was directly associated with wealth and prosperity. Of the owners of brick houses, 90 percent possessed more than a hundred acres of land; 93 percent were among the richest 20 percent of the population. Analysis of the orphans court valuations for St. Georges, Appoquinimink, and Duck Creek hundreds shows that farmsteads with brick houses differed significantly from the average farmstead in the region in terms of types, numbers, and condition of buildings. On the average, farmsteads with brick houses contained one to three more buildings than the norm. While the average farm in the region held only four or five buildings, those with brick houses averaged six or seven. In addition, there were fewer types of farm buildings found on brick house farmsteads than on the average farm. Specifically, they were more likely to have buildings such as barns, granaries, corn cribs and corn houses, stables, kitchens, meat or smoke houses, poultry houses, and secondary dwellings or tenant houses, but lacked the greater variety of building types available in the region. Robert Milligan, for example, had three properties with brick dwellings. The first, Mount Jones, had nine buildings: a brick house, brick kitchen, log meat house, log granary, log carriage house, two log stables, and two log corn cribs. The other two farmsteads had six and eight buildings respectively, including kitchens, smoke/meat houses, poultry houses, corncribs, a combination cornhouse and granary, stables, and secondary dwellings or tenant houses. Hill Island Farm, owned by

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Edward Wilson, contained six buildings: a brick dwelling, brick kitchen, frame barn, log meathouse, a corn crib, and a stable.

A major investment for the rural elite was made in land. As indicated by the statistical analysis of local tax lists, the holdings of the rural elite were far above those of the average taxpayer. In St. Georges Hundred in 1816, only 29 percent of the taxable population owned any amount of land, and the average landholder owned 235 acres. Thomas Rothwell III owned 709 acres with two brick dwellings, including Hill Island Farm. The builder of Brook Ramble, John Crawford, owned 337 acres in 1804, and twelve years later his holdings had increased to 636 acres.

While some members of the elite kept their landholdings solely in the countryside, others invested in town property as well. Samuel Thomas owned seven house lots in Cantwell's Bridge, four farms, and a merchant mill on Drawyer's Creek--a substantial increase from his first property, a town lot given to him by his father-in-law, David Wilson, in 1798.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that the dwellings of the rural elite were exceptional in terms of plan, construction, ornamentation, and siting communicated the structure of social and economic relationships, which in the Upper Peninsula were the architectural reflection of growing inequities within Delaware's rural economy.

An examination of the tax lists for the vicinity clearly demonstrates the growing level of inequity in the distribution of wealth throughout the population. Figure 1 illustrates a pattern of uneven, but definite, movement toward a greater disparity in the possession of wealth in St. Georges Hundred between 1787 and 1852. The lines for the years 1816 and 1852 clearly represent the periods of greatest

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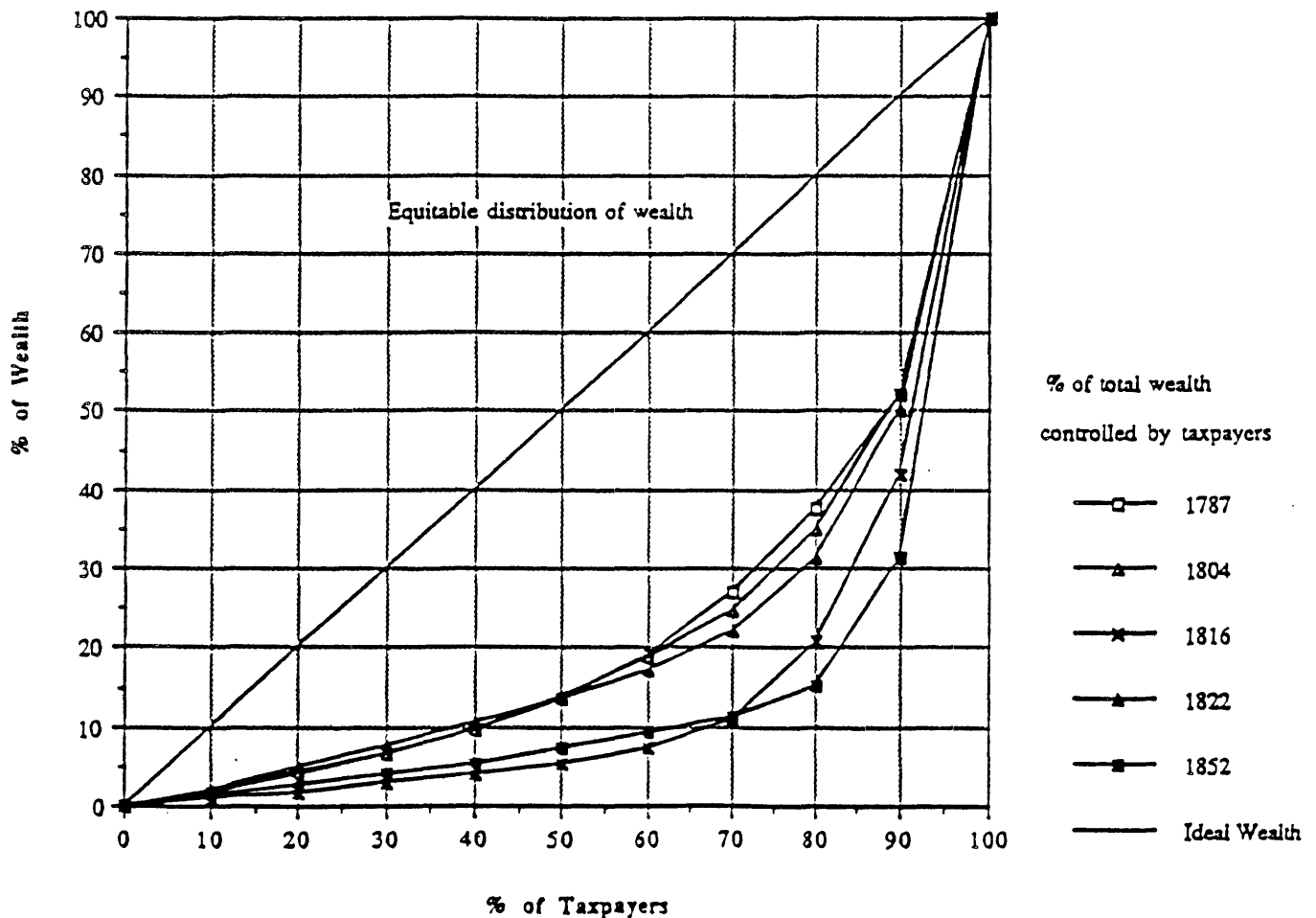
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Figure 1: Distribution of Wealth in St. George's Hundred, 1787-1852

Source: 1787, 1804, 1816, 1822, and 1852 Tax Assessments, St. George's Hundred



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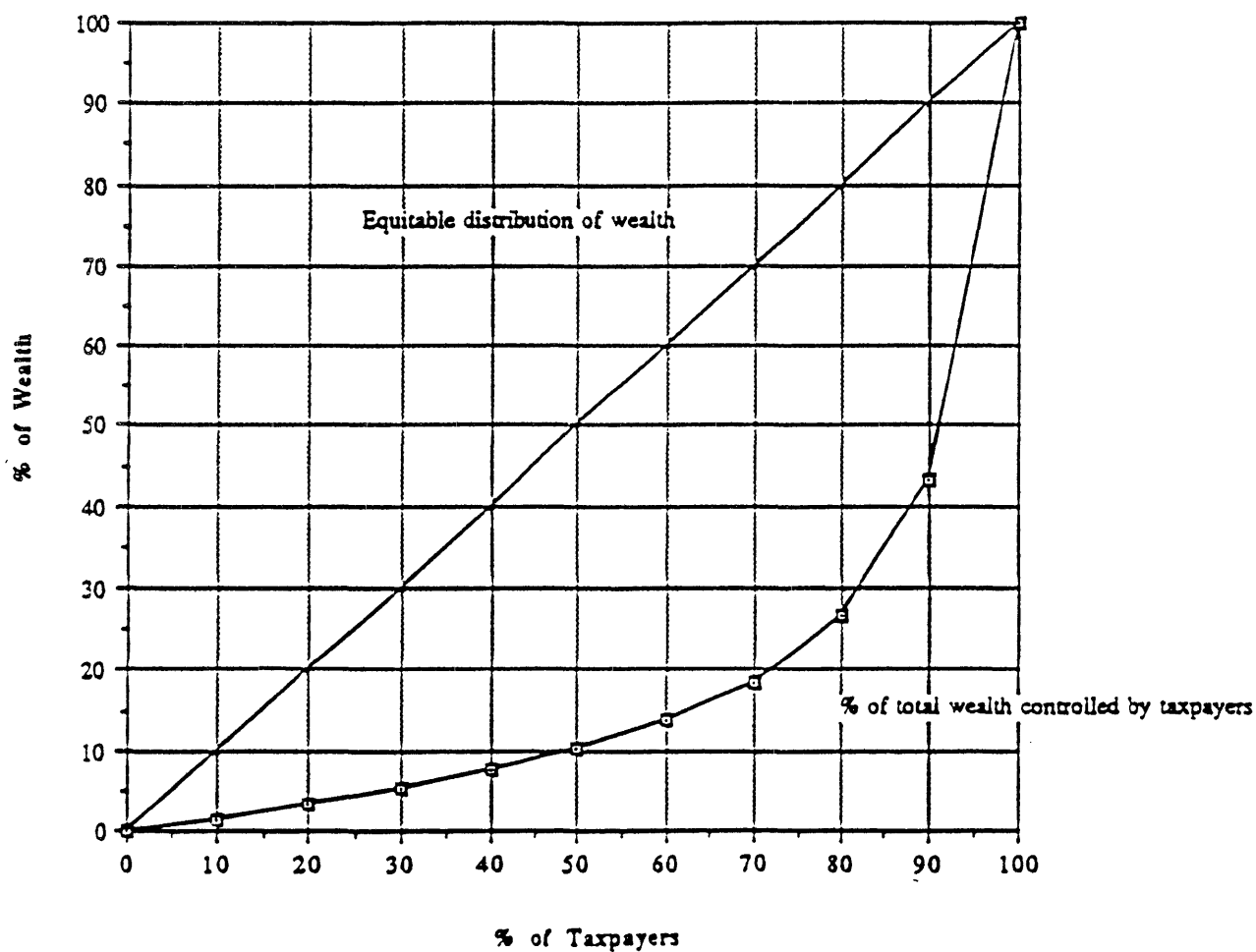
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Figure 2: Distribution of Wealth in Duck Creek Hundred, 1804

Source: 1804 Tax Assessment, Duck Creek Hundred



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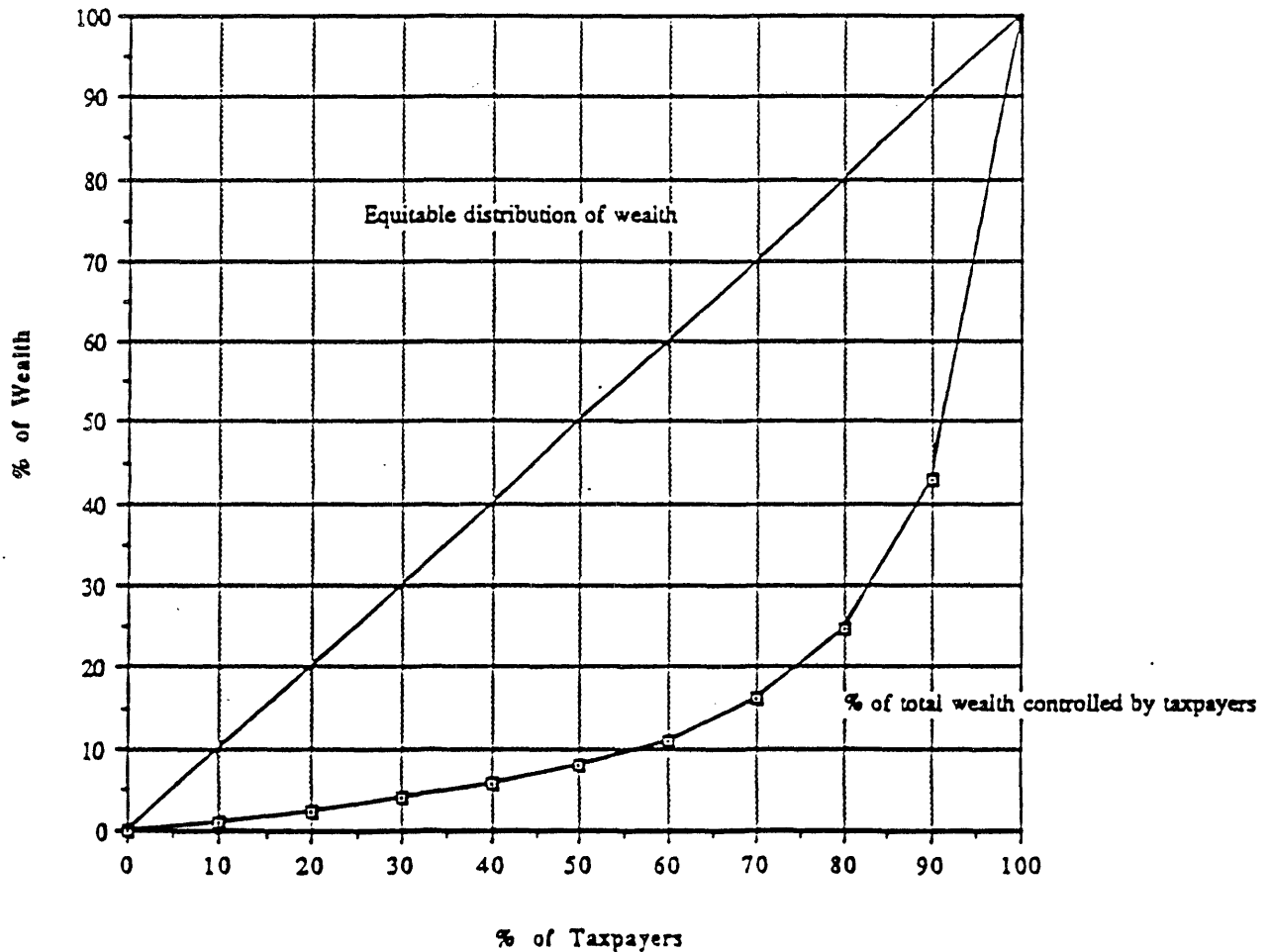
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Figure 3: Distribution of Wealth in Appoquinimink Hundred, 1816

Source: 1816 Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred





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inequality; the shift in 1822 can be explained by a national depression in the agricultural markets of the late 1810s. Similar graphs for Duck Creek Hundred in 1804 (Figure 2) and Appoquinimink Hundred in 1816 (Figure 3) reveal the same level of inequality in the distribution of wealth. In 1804, the top 20 percent of the taxable population in the region possessed 65 to 75 percent of the total wealth; by 1816, this group controlled 75 to 80 percent of the region's wealth. In St. Georges Hundred alone, the top 20 percent of the population acquired an additional 14 percent of the total wealth in the hundred. Seven of the individuals associated with the dwellings in this nomination in 1816 were located in the wealthiest tenth of the population in their hundred; the remaining three were located in the second wealth decile. Clearly, these men represented a segment of the population which had the economic power to influence the structure of their respective communities.

The historic theme, Dwellings of the Rural Elite in Central Delaware, 1770-1830 +/-, set forth in this nomination recognizes the impact this class of builders had on the visual and material organization of the Upper Peninsula countryside. The most striking and substantial objects associated with the rural elite and remaining on the landscape are their houses. Within the historic context of Architectural Trends of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone, 1770-1830 +/-, the dwellings of the rural elite continue to dominate and shape our understanding of historic social and economic process and material expression.

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Footnotes

1. Spurrier, 14.
2. Spurrier, 11.
3. Rush, 117-122.
4. Bordley, 389.
5. Black, 9-11.
6. Delaware Register, 195.
7. Delaware Register, 196.
8. NCOC, Book L, Volume 1, p. 27 (1820).
9. Statistical analysis of the orphans court valuations for St. Georges, Appoquinimink, and Duck Creek hundreds by the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware.
10. NCTA, St. Georges and Appoquinimink hundreds, 1816. Statistical analysis by the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware.

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Comprehensive Planning

The history of the housing of the rural elite in the Upper Peninsula Zone provides significant additional information related to the emergence of a post-Revolution landed gentry class. The primary historic theme is therefore **Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change**. Because domestic buildings were a primary means for articulating values of social class and economic authority, the theme of **Architecture** is of major importance. The fact that all the builders of the historic properties in this nomination were placed in the top two wealth deciles of their respective communities also recognizes the theme of **Major Families, Individuals, and Events**. Finally, the identification of the property owners with extensive landholdings, tenant farming, and early efforts in agricultural improvement relates the historic properties under consideration to the theme of **Agriculture**.

Although several of the historic properties in this nomination have initial construction dates from the early eighteenth century and all received later nineteenth and early twentieth-century additions or modifications, the period of significance established in the Statement of Historic Contexts is 1770-1830 +/-: Early Industrialization.

All the historic properties considered in the nomination are located in the northern half of geographic zone II: the Upper Peninsula Zone. The soils of the Upper Peninsula Zone range from medium textured to moderately coarse, with some areas being well drained and others very poorly drained. Land contours range from level through gently rolling or sloping to steep. At present much of the zone is under cultivation for agriculture, although residential and commercial encroachments on formerly open land are currently changing the historic topography.

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List of Related National Register Properties

<u>Property Name</u>	<u>Cultural Resource Survey Number</u>
Andrew Fisher House	N-263
La Grange	N-576
Bellvue Farm	N-3975
Mansfield	N-6210
C. Boulden House	N-3986
Catholic Diocese House	N-5031
Poplar Hall	N-6199
William Cann House	N-3983
J. Vandegrift House	N-143
Corbit-Sharp House	N-125
Greenlawn	N-188
Achmester	N-3930
Noxontown	N-122
Belmont Hall	K-105
John Cook House	K-3865
David J. Cummins House	K-3938
Timothy Cummins House	K-203
Macomb Farm	K-321
Snowland	K-132
Wheel of Fortune	K-136
Alexander Laws House	K-1563

Determinations of Eligibility:

Architectural Investigations of the Route 896 Corridor: Summit  
Bridge to SR 4, New Castle County, Delaware

Bellvue Farm	N-3975
Cann Farm	N-3977

Architectural Investigation of the U. S. Route 13 Relief Route

Watkins House	N-5156
Dwelling No. 8 (Blackbird Historic District)	
Naudain-Senn House	K-955

NPS Form 10-900-a  
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OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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Architectural Investigations on State Route 7

John T. Simmons Farm    N-4039

National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Resource Nominations  
for Kenton, Little Creek, Pencader, and Red Lion hundreds

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F. Associated Property Types

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X See continuation sheet.

I. Name of Property Type(s) Dwelling, Stair-Hall and Customary Plans,  
Georgian and Federal Vernacular Style

II. Description

The dwellings of the rural elite are a distinctive property type generally sharing a number of architectural features. Because the property type is associated with a particular socio-economic group, however, there are notable exceptions to the general rule. The most common form of dwelling associated with the rural elite of the Upper Peninsula Zone, 1770-1830 +/-, is a two-story house often of brick construction and laid out on a stair-passage (most often center-passage) plan. The interiors of the dwellings of the rural elite are typically

III. Significance

The dwellings listed in this nomination are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as excellent examples of housing associated with and illustrating a broad historical trend. The houses of the rural elite, as a functional type, relate to the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan's property type dwelling/stair-hall and customary plans/Georgian and Federal Vernacular style, reflecting major economic and cultural trends relating to architecture and the landscape.

The broad historical pattern to which the houses of the rural elite are linked is the redefinition of agrarian class structure. The houses of the rural elite symbolize the privatization of the countryside, the early industrialization of agriculture, and the capitalization of farming.

IV. Registration Requirements

The primary criteria for determining whether individual historic properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places within the Statement of Historic Contexts established within this nomination are first, associative, and second, architectural. An individual property cannot be eligible for listing within this historic context without possessing a minimum total of three attributes drawn in any combination from both categories.

**Associative Requirements.** An eligible historic property must be associated with an individual or individual(s) ranking in the top 20 percent of the total local taxable population, and the building must be documented as the primary residence of the landowner at the time of construction and/or assessment. The owner of the property should own some combination of the following taxable goods: land (total assessed acreage including tenant farms) in excess of 200 acres; at least six dairy cows, six swine, a yoke of oxen, and two horses; a controlling interest in other rural enterprises such as a grist and flour mill or a

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fitted with paneled fireplace walls or mantles, open stairways with turned balusters and newels, and an internally consistent hierarchy of finishes signifying the relative importance of rooms within the house. Because the dwellings of the rural elite are recognized as expressions of social and economic status, there are non-architectural features which define the property type. The dwellings, in the period of greatest significance, are associated with and occupied by individuals ranking in the top two deciles of assessed wealth within their hundred. Furthermore, these individuals are land owners, most owning multiple farms, who are engaged in extensive commercial relations and invest in agricultural improvement and the early industrialization of agriculture.

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tannery. Probate inventories should list at least five items drawn from the following categories: watches or clocks; books, desks, writing stands, or bookcases; ledgers or outstanding contractual obligations and debts; surveying, medical, or scientific equipment; a carriage, chaise, or gig; farm machinery such as wagons, wheat fans, multiple plows and harrows, and implements like multiple cradles; crops in the ground or in storage with an emphasis on wheat, buckwheat, oats, hay, and corn; livestock in numbers comparable to those specified under tax lists (above). Architectural holdings as reflected in county orphans court valuations should contain at least two of the following farm building types: barn, stable, granary, corn house, or combination farm building (ie. barn with stables).

**Architectural Requirements.** An eligible property must clearly illustrate the period 1770-1830 +/- . Historic properties existing or built during the time period established in the Statement of Historic Contexts but with architectural features emphasizing an earlier or later time period are not eligible for listing within this historic context. An eligible building must clearly illustrate at least four of the following attributes: plan (even with later additions, the 1770-1830 +/- formal arrangement of the house should be plainly evident); form (the massing of the house in terms of elevation and/or fenestration); construction (period walling, roofing, and cladding features should be readily visible); interior finishes (two or more rooms must retain discernible evidence of period decorative treatments); siting (the historic property should occupy a place in the local topography consistent with siting patterns discussed in the Statement of Historic Contexts); setting (the historic property should remain in a historic setting surrounded by agricultural lands and extant period or archaeologically known farm buildings). Alteration through additions and remodeling are more common among frame and log examples of the property type. Thus, eligibility on the basis of architectural features should be more flexible for non-masonry houses and include three of the attributes listed above.

Deterioration due to neglect or vandalism is a common occurrence within the property type. A reasonable amount of loss through either deterioration or alteration is acceptable. However, if a building appears beyond repair or is significantly altered it is not eligible



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## G. Geographic Data

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New Castle County, Delaware: Appoquinimink Hundred  
Blackbird Hundred  
St. George's Hundred

Kent County, Delaware: Duck Creek Hundred

Though the dwellings listed in this nomination are located specifically in Appoquinimink, St. George's, Blackbird, and Duck Creek Hundreds, examples will likely be found in Pencader, Red Lion, Little Creek, Kenton, and Dover Hundreds. For this reason, all of these hundreds are designated as the geographical area for this property type.

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## H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

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The thematic property listing for the Dwellings of the Rural Elite in Central Delaware, 1770-1830 +/-, initially includes all houses in the Upper Peninsula Zone meeting the criteria established in section F-IV, "Registration Requirements." The nomination is based on comprehensive cultural resource surveys and National Register of Historic Places eligibility evaluations for Pencader, St. Georges, Red Lion, Appoquinimink, and Blackbird hundreds in New Castle County, and for Duck Creek, Little Creek, and Kenton hundreds in Kent County. The comprehensive cultural resource surveys were conducted by the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the New Castle County Department of Planning, and the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering from 1974 through 1988 and are collected in the Bureau. The comprehensive cultural resource survey methodology is designed to record all standing structures built prior to 1945. All roads in the survey area are traversed, all standing structures are mapped and cross referenced to historic atlases and contemporary USGS and State Planning Office maps, and initial field assessments regarding integrity and significance are included in written survey summaries. Subsequent evaluations include the comprehensive review of all cultural resource survey materials to determine historic contexts, property types, integrity, and significance regarding eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Written eligibility evaluation studies are on file in the Bureau. Finally, additional evaluations occur through the development of multiple resource National Register of Historic Places nominations and cultural resource management studies in relationship to federally funded or licensed projects.

The typology and identification of significant property types has been based on function and association with Architectural Trends of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone, 1770-1830 +/-, which has been identified in the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. The nominated properties were selected for their close association with the historic theme and their representation of a property type defined in architectural and associative terms relating to important aspects of settlement history and the redefinition of agrarian class structure.

The standards for integrity are based on established National Register guidelines for assessing integrity. Information gleaned from research literature, survey data, and statistical analysis has been employed to assess relative condition and scarcity of the property type, as well as to determine the degree to which allowances should be made for alterations, deterioration, and vandalism.

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I. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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Primary Sources

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KCOC. Kent County Orphans Court Records, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

KCPR. Kent County Probate Records, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

KCRD. Kent County Recorder of Deeds, Dover, Delaware.

KCTA. Kent County Tax Assessments, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

NCOC. New Castle County Orphans Court Records, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

NCPR. New Castle County Probate Records, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

NCRD. New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Wilmington, Delaware.

NCRW. New Castle County Recorder of Wills, Wilmington, Delaware.

NCTA. New Castle County Tax Assessments, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

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