

AUG - 7 2001  
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
OMB NO. 1024-0018

NPS Form 10-900-b  
(March 1992)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form

*Cover*

New Submission  Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The House and Garden in Central Delaware, 1780-1930+/-

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware (Upper Peninsula Zone), 1770-1900+/-  
Architectural Trends of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone, 1770-1940+/-

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the 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 Archeology and Historic Preservation.

*Daniel P. Gifford* *July 26, 2001*  
Signature and title of certifying official Date

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.

Signature of the Keeper Date

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).  
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**E. Statement of Historic Context**

**The House and Garden in Central Delaware, 1780-1930+/-**

**Introduction**

In response to demographic pressures, changing agricultural practices, and the influence of agricultural reform writers, central Delaware farmers began to develop new strategies for dealing with married agricultural laborers and their families during the nineteenth century. They constructed dwellings specifically designed to house these laborers and established lease-labor arrangements that governed both labor obligations and housing rental. Known as a "house and garden," these buildings typically took the form of one finished room and a rough kitchen shed on the ground floor, with a winder stair leading to a second room under the roof (Figure 1). Characterized by extremely plain finish on walls and architectural elements, and built to be easily portable, the dwellings sat on a small plot of ground suitable for a garden and a few animals. Variations in the physical form of the house and garden dwelling include orientation to the road (either gable or elevation), height (1 1/2 or 2 full stories), the number of bays on the front elevation (usually two or three), and the position of a shed (gable end, rear elevation, or none).

The location of these house and garden dwellings within the agricultural landscape represents an important element in their identification during field survey. House and garden dwellings follow a specific locational model that differentiates them from the larger agricultural complexes in the region. Farm complexes tend to be set back from the road, often with a tree-lined land leading up to the front yard and its garden with ornamental plantings. House and garden dwellings, on the other hand, are generally located on the edges of agricultural properties, either tucked against the trees or in clusters of two to five dwellings along the road. Little space was available for flowers or shrubs. Significantly, despite the distance of these dwellings from the main farm complex, they still remained within visual range of the main farm dwelling and their employer. A second important aspect of the location of these dwellings lies with their portability. Farmers moved their house and garden dwellings about the agricultural landscape frequently. Usually constructed to stand on piers, the buildings changed positions on individual farms and within neighborhoods on a regular basis.

A clear chronology appears in the development of the house and garden as a labor housing solution. In its earliest incarnation (1780-1820), the house and garden model served a wide range of individuals in the rural population of central Delaware. In this period the house and garden dwelling possessed no particular form, but rather represented an accepted practice for housing certain elements of the population. Between 1820 and 1860 farm owners focused on a specific building type as the one most appropriate for housing their agricultural laborers. They combined this traditional building plan with the accepted practice associated with the concept of the house and garden to solve some of their labor housing needs. In this period, farmers most commonly controlled these house and garden dwellings as part of their farm

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Figure 1: Dill Tenant House, a typical house and garden, located in South Murderkill Hundred, Kent County.  
Photograph by Rebecca Sheppard, CHAD, 1995.

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property, but after 1860 some farmers began to partition the dwellings with their small lots and either sold or gave them to the laborers. In some cases, the laborers received only land and proceeded to build new dwellings, often following an architectural pattern familiar from their time as house and garden tenant-laborers. Although the laborers now owned their homes, they maintained their labor relationships with the farmers. Construction of this building type, and its use as housing for agricultural laborers, continued through the early decades of the twentieth century.

Based on the characteristics outlined above, three configurations of the house and garden dwelling can be identified: 1) owned by a farmer and located within the boundaries of the main farm property, constructed at any time between 1780 and 1930; 2) owned by a farmer but established on a separate piece of land (usually less than five acres), most likely constructed between 1800 and 1880; and 3) owned by an agricultural laborer on a plot of less than five acres, most likely built between 1850 and 1930.

The five resources nominated at this time are the Robert Grose House (N-13383), the Ridgely Tenant House (K-2040), the Conwell Tenant House (K-901), the White-Warren Tenant House (K-3023), and the Durham-Shores House (K-1080). Each represents a particular combination of the physical, chronological, and contextual characteristics outlined above. There are other dwellings within the geographic boundaries of this nomination that likely share the characteristics of this property type and thematic nomination. A list of those identified by the survey field work conducted for this project is included in Section H: Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods.

**Context Narrative**

On a spring day in 1847, John Alston, a wealthy Quaker farmer, and James Ryan, "a colored man," met at Alston's home near Middletown, Delaware, to sign a lease agreement. In early January, when Ryan and his family first moved into the house, they did so without a formal written lease; now, with the start of the agricultural season, both parties felt ready to formalize their arrangement. In return for "the sum of twenty five Dollars in work or money," Alston leased to Ryan for one year a "small tenement...with the garden attached" and firewood "to be cut where shown or directed." For his part Ryan agreed to give Alston "the preference of his labor at all times... at the current wage of the neighborhood." Ryan also promised to limit the inhabitants of the house to himself, his wife, and their children, except in the event of illness when a physician or nurse could live in the house as needed on a temporary basis. This lease-labor agreement provided obvious benefits to both men. Alston secured the presence of a laborer when the seasonal cycles of planting and harvest, farm maintenance, and new improvements required help beyond the hired men he kept on a regular basis. Ryan acquired a place to live, sufficient land to plant a garden and pasture a cow in order to supplement his family's diet, firewood for heat and cooking, and the promise of paid labor to provide cash for items the family could not grow or make.<sup>1</sup>

Tenant-labor agreements such as the one between Alston and Ryan, and the houses they referred to, proliferated

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<sup>1</sup>John Alston Papers, Folder 2, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

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appeared on the landscape and in farmers' ledgers largely in response to changing agricultural methods and crops, and a reorganized farm labor force. Exhausted soils and competition from new markets prompted farmers in southern New in central Delaware throughout the nineteenth century, especially during the period from 1820 to 1860 (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> They Castle County and Kent County to explore the suggestions of agricultural reformers, diversifying their crops and changing agriculture from a cooperative family enterprise to a commercial operation. Accompanying these changes in agriculture came a shift in the source of agricultural labor. Once dependent on a labor pool filled largely by slaves, many nineteenth-century farmers now found themselves relying on a new labor force made up of former slaves and other free blacks, recent immigrants from Europe and Great Britain, and poor whites who lacked the resources to purchase or tenant their own farms. This new labor system replaced the use of slave labor, which required financial and material support throughout the year, with a free population that sought greater physical and financial separation from the farm owner. In response to all of these changes, landowners and tenants transformed the agricultural landscape with new types of outbuildings, new or rebuilt mansion houses that reflected their improved economic status, and a multitude of small tenant dwellings scattered about on the edges of fields and farm complexes.<sup>3</sup>

This nomination focuses on a building type known to its owners and occupants as a "house and garden," which represented one of several strategies for housing the new labor force. Most commonly constructed to house married laborers and their families, the house and garden dwelling found its greatest popularity among large landowners or farm managers, men engaged in the new "business" of agriculture. These large landowners chose a traditional one-room plan widely used among the rural population of central Delaware in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Considering this form the appropriate level of housing for their laborers, the landowners adapted it to fit the prescriptions of agricultural reform writers and adopted the name "house and garden" for the building type. Typically the house and garden dwelling contained a main room on the first floor with a winder stair leading to a single open room above, and a rough one-story shed extending from either the gable end or the rear elevation (Figures 3 and 4). Characterized by extremely plain finish on walls and architectural elements, and placed on piers to be easily portable, new construction of this form continued from the early 1800s through the first quarter of the twentieth century.

At the time of its earliest use, the house and garden existed more as an idea than a particular building type. For

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example, the records of Daniel Corbit and John White; nineteenth-century tax assessments also reference these arrangements. Daniel Corbit, account books and ledgers, Historical Society of Delaware; KCPR, John White, guardianship accounts, 1825-1838; New Castle and Kent County tax assessments, 1797-1896.

<sup>3</sup>The process of reform and rebuilding in central Delaware has been well-documented by Bernard Herman, Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987).

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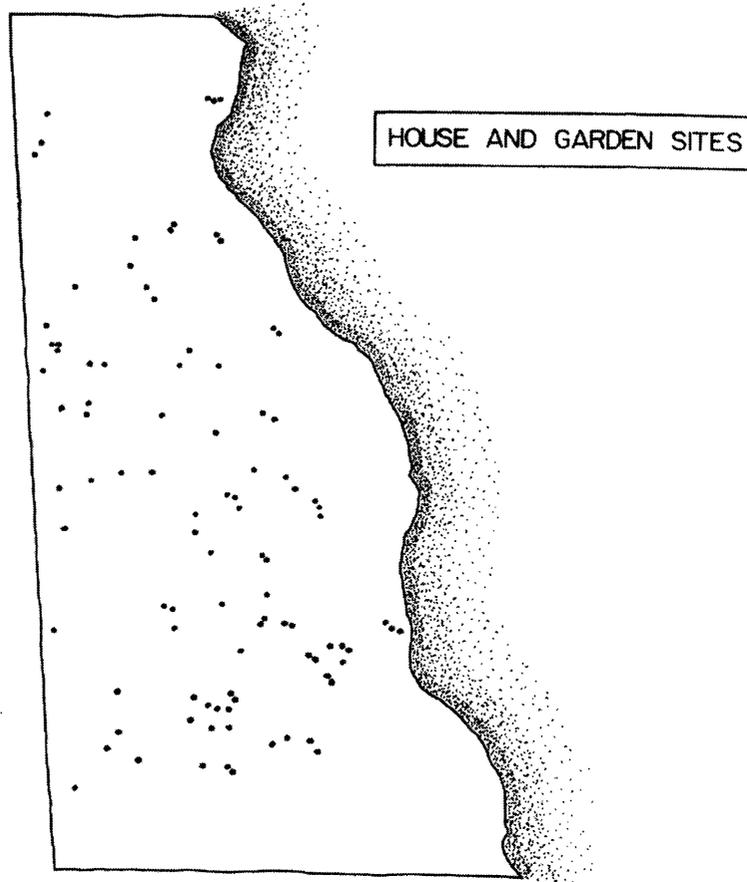


Figure 2: Map of project study area showing distribution of potential house and garden sites. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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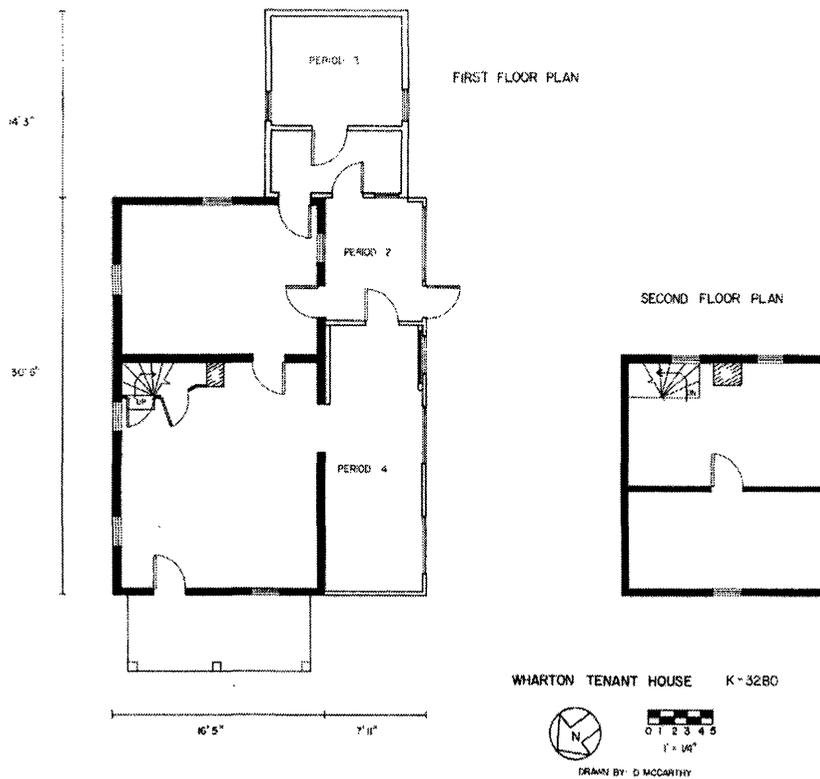


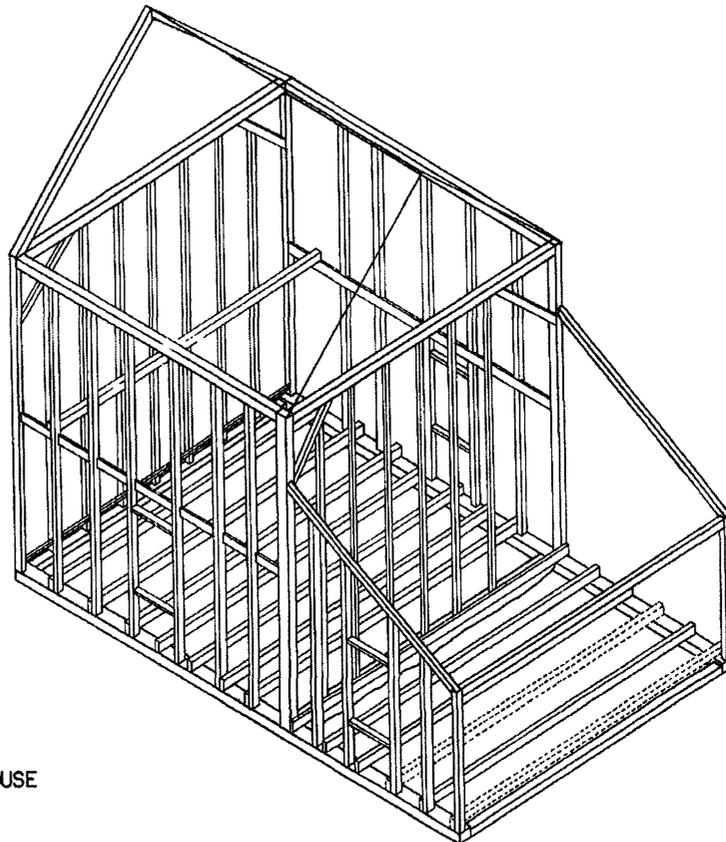
Figure 3: Floor plan of the Wharton Tenant House, South Murderkill Hundred, Kent County. Note Period I floor plan outlined in black with main room containing winder stair and one-story shed room off the rear. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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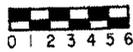
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MOODY - CLAYTON HOUSE



1" = 1/4"

DRAWN BY: D. MCCARTHY

Figure 4: Axonometric view of the Moody-Clayton House, St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County. This view shows the typical placement of the one-story shed on the gable end. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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the most part, the concept of the house and garden served individuals who existed on the fringes of farm households and rural communities. Between 1780 and 1820, landowners used this method to house itinerant artisans, single women, elderly relatives, former slaves or servants, and laborers of all sorts.<sup>4</sup> Landowners who felt some responsibility towards particular individuals might rent or give to them small dwellings with a few acres of land. John Dickinson owned more than 3500 acres along the St. Jones Creek in Kent County between 1790 and 1808. Divided into six large holdings run by individual farm managers, the property also contained numerous additional small dwellings which Dickinson leased to a variety of tenants (Figure 5). For example, in the 1790s Dickinson entered into a contract with an itinerant carpenter named Samuel Bennett. In return for a small house with several acres of ground and a yearly wage of \$100, Bennett agreed to carry out any carpentry work Dickinson required during the ensuing year. Dickinson executed similar agreements with ditch diggers, carpenters, masons, and farm laborers.<sup>5</sup>

Besides itinerant artisans, newly freed blacks often inhabited house and garden dwellings. Many farmers in central Delaware freed their slaves between 1790 and 1820.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes part of the act of manumission included the gift of a small piece of land with a house, marked in later deeds as an acre set aside for negro Priscilla." Most often these pieces of land existed in locations that created no major incursions on the former master's prime agricultural land. Thomas Denny, for example, set aside land for his former slave, Priscilla, at the edge of a coppiced field in Duck Creek Hundred.<sup>7</sup> Orphans Court plats, such as the one in Figure 6, demonstrate the presence of these dwellings in small pockets of marginal land in a landscape where good soil brought a premium.

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<sup>4</sup>Lucy Simler discovered similar patterns of tenancy among the farmers of colonial Chester County, Pennsylvania, where the dwellings were known as "Garden Tenements." Simler, "The Landless Laborer in Perspective: Part II. Inmates and Freeman: A Landless Labor Force in Colonial Chester County," paper presented to the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies, April 1986.

<sup>5</sup>Rebecca Siders and Pamela Edwards, The Changing Landscape of the St. Jones Neck Under the Influence of the Dickinson Family, 1680-1880: An Exhibit Script (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1994); Dickinson Collection, Delaware State Museums.

<sup>6</sup>David Ames and Rebecca Siders, Priorities for the Development of a Historic Context for the Minority Experience in Delaware (Newark: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1991); Rebecca Siders et al., Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900 +/-: An Historic Context (Newark: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1991).

<sup>7</sup>Lands of Thomas Denny, Kent County Orphans Court Plot Book 1 p. 31, 1819-1823.

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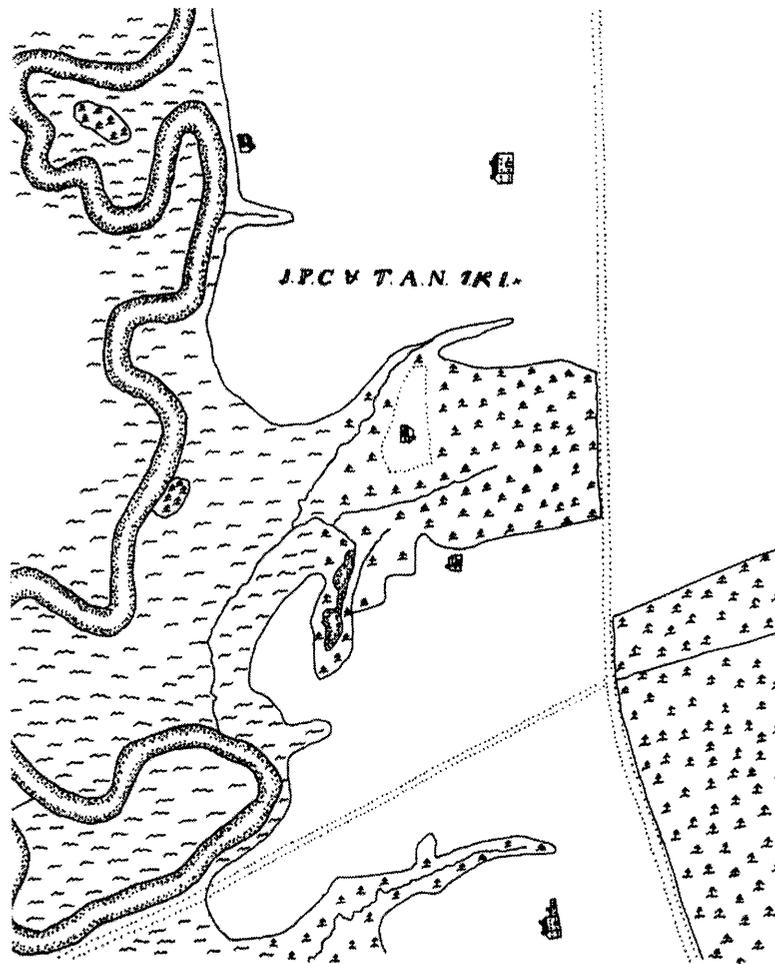


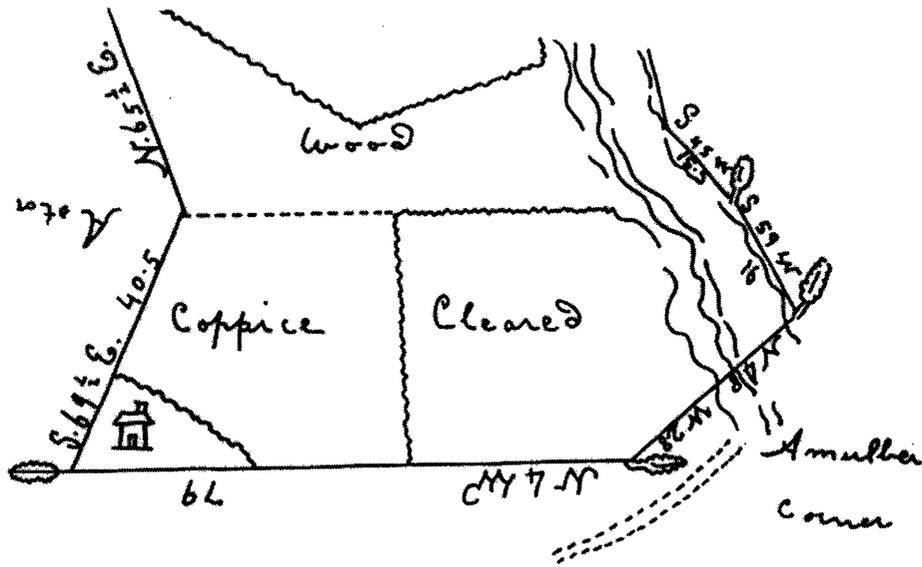
Figure 5: Detail of map showing property left to John Dickinson's heirs, 1857. The map shows two larger dwellings facing the road and three smaller tenant dwellings, or house and gardens, located on the edge of marsh or woodland. Hopkins Plots, Delaware State Archives.

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*A stake near the South side of a witness 50. and at the N. W. corner of a lot and near a small house where negro Priscilla lives. -*

Figure 6: Orphans Court plot showing the house set aside by Thomas Denny for his former slave, Priscilla. Kent County Orphans Court Plot Book 1 p. 31, Division of the lands of Thomas Denny, 1819-1823.

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A third group that commonly inhabited these early house and garden dwellings included single females, both widows and unmarried young women. Israel Alston, a farmer in Little Creek Hundred, died intestate in 1794, leaving a small farm to his widow and several children.<sup>8</sup> In the years following Alston's death, his widow, Mary, purchased another small piece of land with a house and turned over the farm and larger dwelling to her eldest son, Jonathan. When Mary died in 1803 she left the farm land to Jonathan but made special provisions for her daughters. While any of the five girls remained single, they "shall have my House Garden and full privilege of the lane...for a Home for them." So long as they remained unmarried, the women also received the use of Mary Alston's horse and carriage and the right to apples from the orchard. After marriage, Alston expected their husbands to provide for the girls, but so long as they stayed single, she guaranteed them a home of their own.<sup>9</sup>

Based on the room by room inventory of Mary Alston's estate, we can visualize the dwelling she called a "house and garden." It contained two rooms on the ground floor, along with a shed kitchen, and a half-story work room on the second floor. The "inner room" contained the bulk of the large furniture, including five beds, two tables, eight chairs, and a corner cupboard. By contrast, the "outer room" held only a desk, two tables, and five chairs. The single room upstairs apparently served as a work room for textile production, containing only a spinning wheel, table, and a quantity of thread on spools. Items in the kitchen included primarily cookware, pots to be hung from a crane, and a meal chest.<sup>10</sup>

This configuration represents a common dwelling form for the period. In fact, the greatest distinction between the dwellings inhabited by different segments of the population lay in the level of finish used on the interior, the type of materials (log or frame), and the number of stories (one, one-and-a-half, or two).<sup>11</sup> Only when a person fell into the uppermost wealth deciles did significant differences in dwelling size appear, along with the use of brick as a building material. Very few of these bottom-level dwellings survive today. When they do survive, they have often been incorporated into larger dwellings as service wings. Despite the construction of many larger and more elaborate houses during this time period, the bulk of dwellings continued to fall within this category of small frame or log buildings, with between one and three rooms on the ground floor.

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<sup>8</sup>KCPR, Israel Alston, 1794-1803.

<sup>9</sup>KCPR, Mary Alston, will, 1803.

<sup>10</sup>KCPR, Mary Alston, inventory of goods, 1804.

<sup>11</sup>Bernard Herman, "Ordinary Mansions," in After Ratification: Material Life in Delaware, 1789-1820, edited by J. Ritchie Garrison, Bernard L. Herman, and Barbara McLean Ward (Newark: Museum Studies Program, University of Delaware, 1988).

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Persistence of this building tradition as one acceptable for either tenants or owners of a particular economic status can be seen in the case of James Hurlock and his log dwelling, constructed about 1820. Built by Hurlock to house his young family, this dwelling held a minimal amount of furniture--two beds, two tables, one desk, a corner cupboard, four chairs, along with some cooking utensils, a gun, and a "Yankee clock" constituted the family's belongings.<sup>12</sup> After Hurlock's death in 1832 a tenant named John Jackson occupied the 50-acre farm. Jackson tenanted the house for two years before purchasing a plank dwelling with thirty acres of land nearby.<sup>13</sup> While he continued to farm the Hurlock property he lived in this dwelling, which probably differed very little from Hurlock's house. It contained one main room of 19 by 16 feet and possibly a one-story shed kitchen; the winder stair led to a single room open to the rafters (Figure 7). Finish in the dwelling consisted only of white-wash on the log walls, joists, and rafters. Jackson considered either dwelling acceptable for himself and his family, regardless of his change in status from tenant to owner.

From the 1820s through the mid 1860s farmers systematically adopted the idea of the house and garden to shelter agricultural laborers. In this period, the farmers of southern New Castle County and Kent County faced a growing problem in the form of unproductive soils. Property valuations conducted for the Orphans Court in the first quarter of the nineteenth century document landholders' concerns over the depletion of woodland and the proper husbandry of agricultural land. Repeatedly the freeholders directed the guardians of various farms to work the land in rotation and to avoid the cutting of any timber.<sup>14</sup> Increasingly farmers turned to a growing prescriptive literature about the use of new scientific agricultural reforms such as crop rotation, fertilizers like guano and lime, reclamation of marsh for farm land, the adoption of new farm machinery, and new types of crops to help regenerate the worn-out soils. Reform farmers reconceptualized their farms with new building forms and new attitudes towards profit. The construction of dwellings specifically intended to separate some laborers from the households of their employers, and the creation of a more business-like arrangement between tenant-laborer and landlord-employer--two key aspects of the house and garden as it emerged in the nineteenth century--both derived significant inspiration from the agricultural reform movement.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>KCPR, James Hurlock, inventory of goods, 1838.

<sup>13</sup>KCTA, Duck Creek Hundred, 1820-1845; KCRD, Book N Volume 3 p. 157.

<sup>14</sup>Rebecca Siders et al., Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900+/-: An Historic Context (Newark: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1991).

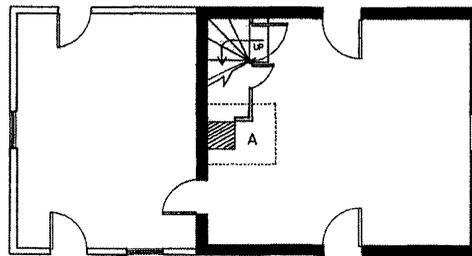
<sup>15</sup>William Chapman's work on slave housing in the West Indies discovered similar adaptations of reform writings to local needs. William Chapman, "Slave Villages in the Danish West Indies: Changes of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," in Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IV, edited by Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1991) p. 115-117.

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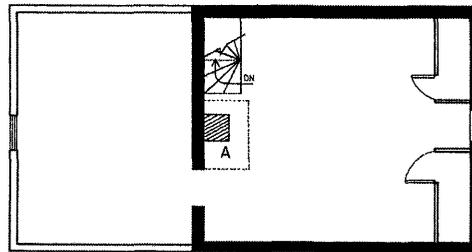
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

A: GHOST OF EARLY CHIMNEY AND HEARTH  
■ PLANK SECTION OF BUILDING

JOHN A. JACKSON HOUSE K - 4975



DRAWN BY: D. MCCARTHY

Figure 7: Floor plan of the John A. Jackson House, Kenton Hundred, Kent County. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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Landowners who dealt with tenants as a labor source and agricultural reform writers developed informal standards for acceptable types of labor housing at an early date. In 1792, John Dickinson described in detail the features of the tenant house he wished a carpenter to construct on one of his farms. He intended this building to be a farm dwelling, not labor housing, but comparison of this description with a laborer's log dwelling at the John Dickinson Plantation demonstrates the potential difference between the economic situations of farm tenants and laborers. For the farm dwelling, Dickinson wrote that he desired:

A Frame House 22 feet by 18, with a partition--upper and lower floors of best second rate pine Boards--2 twelve Light Windows below; one in Front, the other back--the whole House to be underpinned with Brick, and the chimney to be of Brick--All the joists and Rafters to be sawed--the roof to be the best Cedar Shingles, showing nine inches--A passage of ten feet wide between the House and Kitchen.<sup>16</sup>

Delaware State Museums staff reconstructed a log dwelling based on extensive documentary research and field examination of the few known surviving log buildings in the area. For interpretive purposes, it demonstrates the level of housing available for free black or poor white laborers. The log dwelling represents the low end of the range of housing available at the time (Figure 8). Made of rough-hewn planks resting on wooden piers, its single room measures 16 by 18 over an earth floor. A ladder accesses the space under the roof. Finish on the interior of the dwelling consists only of exposed planks and joists, with no whitewash.<sup>17</sup>

Writing from a different perspective in 1806, John Wood, an architect from Bath, England, published a book of plans suitable for "Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer." Wood offered a selection of plans intended to make life more comfortable for laborers, and less "offensive both to decency and humanity." He specified seven principles to be followed when building dwellings appropriate for laborers. First, the house ought to be dry and healthy, with a floor sixteen to eighteen inches above the ground and the ceilings at least eight feet high. Second, the construction of the cottage should render it "warm, cheerful, and comfortable" so that the laborer would look forward to returning to his home at night. Methods for achieving this goal included building thick masonry walls and sheltered entrances to keep out the cold air. The third principle advocated making the dwellings convenient through the construction of porches, sheds, and privies, and by building the house to a size appropriate to the number of people in the tenant's family.

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<sup>16</sup>Dickinson Collection, Delaware State Museums.

<sup>17</sup>Log Dwelling at Dickinson Plantation, Historic Properties File, Delaware State Museums.

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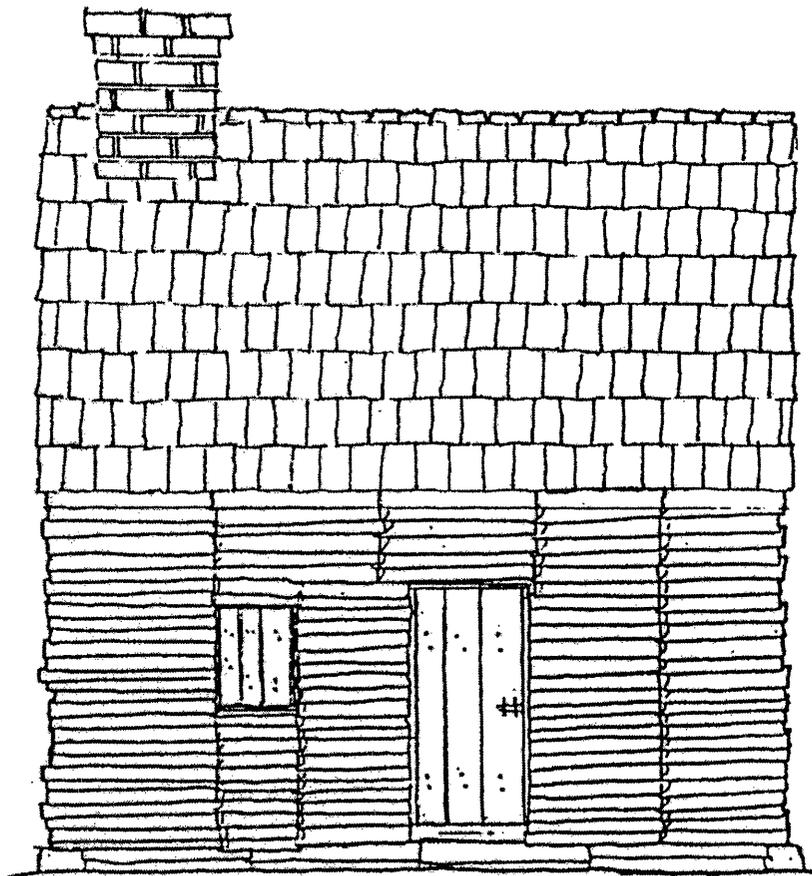


Figure 8: Front elevation of the Dickinson Log Dwelling as reconstructed at the John Dickinson Plantation, East Dover Hundred, Kent County. Drawn by William Macintire for Delaware State Museums.

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Fourth, Wood argued, the cottage should be no more than twelve feet wide, since “if it be wider, it approaches too near to what I would call a house for a superior tradesman,” and in addition, larger buildings would require larger timbers and greater expense. Fifth, Wood believed that the cottages should be located in pairs so that the inhabitants could assist each other in times of need. Sixth, for economy’s sake, the cottages required strong building materials and skilled construction so that they would not need expensive repairs and so that they would act as “ornaments to the country, instead of ...disagreeable objects.” Lastly, Wood stipulated that each cottage ought to be situated on a piece of ground, and provided with a source of fresh water, either a spring or a well. Clearly, Wood formulated his plans for tenant-laborer cottages on the basis of common conceptions regarding appropriate housing for a particular group of people. To him, it was important that these people be warm and happy in their conveniently organized homes, but the buildings themselves should not give anyone ideas that they belonged anyplace but in that particular class of laborers.<sup>18</sup>

Five years earlier, J.B. Bordley, an American farmer who advocated agricultural reform, described his version of a cottage suitable for laborers in very similar terms. According to Bordley, a farmer would find it to his advantage to provide his laborers with housing in the form of “a small very confined house called a cottage.” He described the cottage as follows:

It is recommended by an experienced farmer, that for a man, wife, and children, it be in the clear 12 by 16 feet area for the ground floor, of which 12 feet square is for the family to sit in, dine, &c. The rest of the area of the ground floor, 12 by 4 feet, is divided for the stairs and closet or pantry. The steps are 7 1/2 inches rise, 9 inches tread. Over the ground floor are two rooms for beds, partly in the roof, and 3 feet from the eaves down to the second floor; that is the pitch or height of the wall or side is 11 feet from the ground floor up to the eaves, of which 3 feet are in the second story or floor of rooms upstairs; the other 8 feet are the pitch of the room on the first or ground floor.<sup>19</sup>

Bordley’s proposed design shows both the dwelling and the garden area, which he claimed “gives employment and comfort to the wife and children” (Figure 9). He specified that the garden plot attached to the house should not be so large as to tempt the cottager to put his effort into his own crops and livestock rather than his employer’s. This, Bordley felt, could only result in the laborer becoming “uneasy in himself” instead of remaining a “decent, independent and

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<sup>18</sup>Wood, John, A Series of Plans for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer, either in Husbandry, or the Mechanic Arts, Adapted as well to Towns as to the Country, London: printed for J. Taylor at the Architectural Library, 1806 (reprinted by Gregg International Publishers, Limited, England, 1972.) See esp. Introduction.

<sup>19</sup>John B. Bordley, Essays and Notes on Husbandry and Rural Affairs, (Philadelphia: Budd and Bartram, 1801) p. 389-391.

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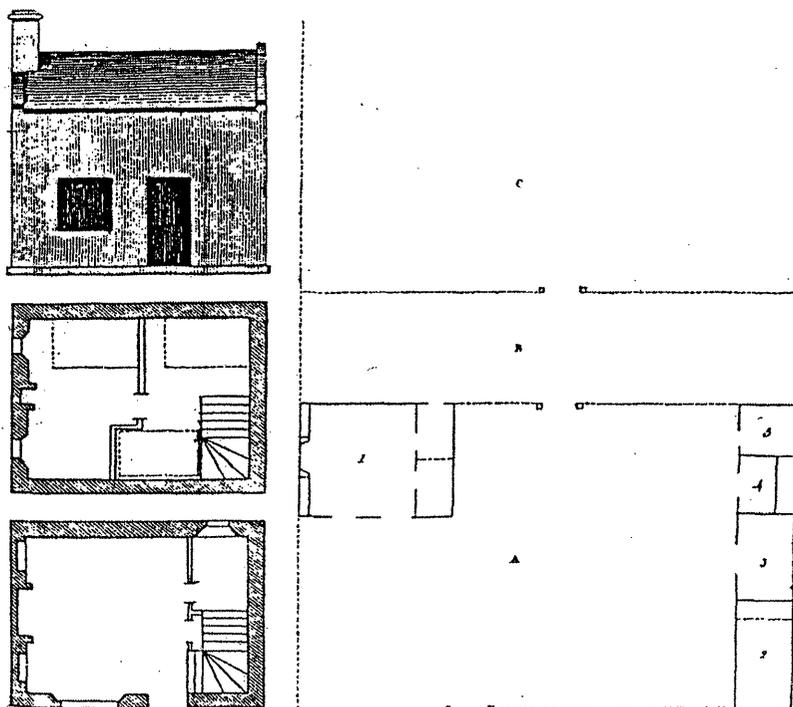


Figure 9: J.B. Bordley's plan for a cottage and garden. Note the single room on the ground floor and the winder stair; the area marked C was to be the garden. J.B. Bordley, Essays and Notes on Husbandry and Rural Affairs (Philadelphia: Budd and Bartram, 1801).

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contented laborer.”

Landowners and farm managers in central Delaware did not blindly follow the directions of agricultural reform writers but employed a variety of methods for housing their agricultural laborers during the nineteenth century. Some owner-occupant farmers and farm managers found space for their laborers within their own homes, usually in a common sleeping room above a kitchen or work room. The last bay of the Fields' Heirs House forms an addition that contained kitchen work space on the first floor and two narrow unheated rooms on the second floor (Figure 10). There was no access to the second floor of the main house, protecting the family's privacy. In these cases farmowners provided laborers with room and board, and often some arrangement for washing and mending their clothes, in addition to their wages. Farmers also hired the young sons of neighborhood families; these young men lived at home and incurred no charges for washing or mending at the home of their employer. As a final alternative for single laborers, the employer might locate a suitable family willing to board the young man for a fee.

The Forkner House and its inhabitants illustrate one method for handling a household full of laborers. In 1857 Andrew Jackson Forkner purchased a frame dwelling on twenty acres in Appoquinimink Hundred. This land represented a slice out of a much larger farm of 320 acres; the dwelling was one of two tenant houses associated with the farm (Figure 11).<sup>20</sup> Forkner lived in this dwelling, and managed the adjoining farm with the assistance of nearly a dozen servants and laborers. Forkner's house existed as a hall-parlor plan measuring roughly 30 by 16 feet, with different story heights over the two ground-floor rooms (Figures 12 and 13). Above the larger of the two rooms, accessed by a winder staircase, lay an open stairhall and two smaller rooms of roughly equal size. This section rose two full stories in height with an attic above. Over the smaller first floor room lay a single room, probably open to the rafters and separated from the rest of the second floor by a solid wall. This area most likely provided sleeping space for the ten single men who worked for Forkner, mostly recent immigrants from Ireland.<sup>21</sup> This method functioned efficiently so long as the laborers were single men without dependent wives and children.

But for married laborers large landowners made other arrangements, leasing them a property called variously a house, house and lot, tenement, tenant house, tenement and garden, or house and garden. Under formal arrangements like the one between John Alston and James Ryan or more informal ledger accounts, this method provided farm laborer families with private space in which to maintain their own households, as well as sufficient room for raising a garden, a cow, and a few pigs. In constructing these dwellings for their agricultural laborers, farmers followed the guidance of

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<sup>20</sup>NCCRD, Book Y Volume 6 p. 307 (1857); NCCOC, Book V Volume 1 p. 399 (1849).

<sup>21</sup>USPC, Appoquinimink Hundred, 1860.

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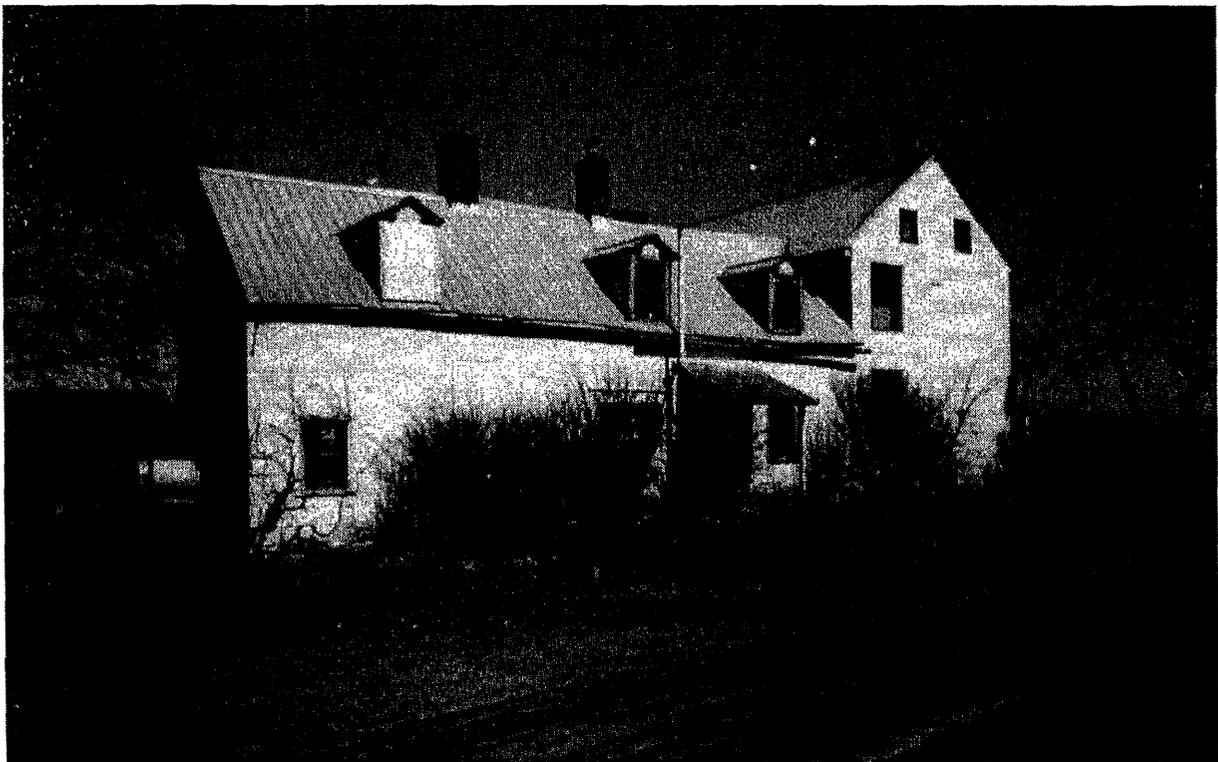


Figure 10: South elevation of the Fields' Heirs House, St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County. The last bay of the service ell contains the unheated servants' quarters on the second floor. Photograph by Dean Doerrfeld, CHAD, 1995.

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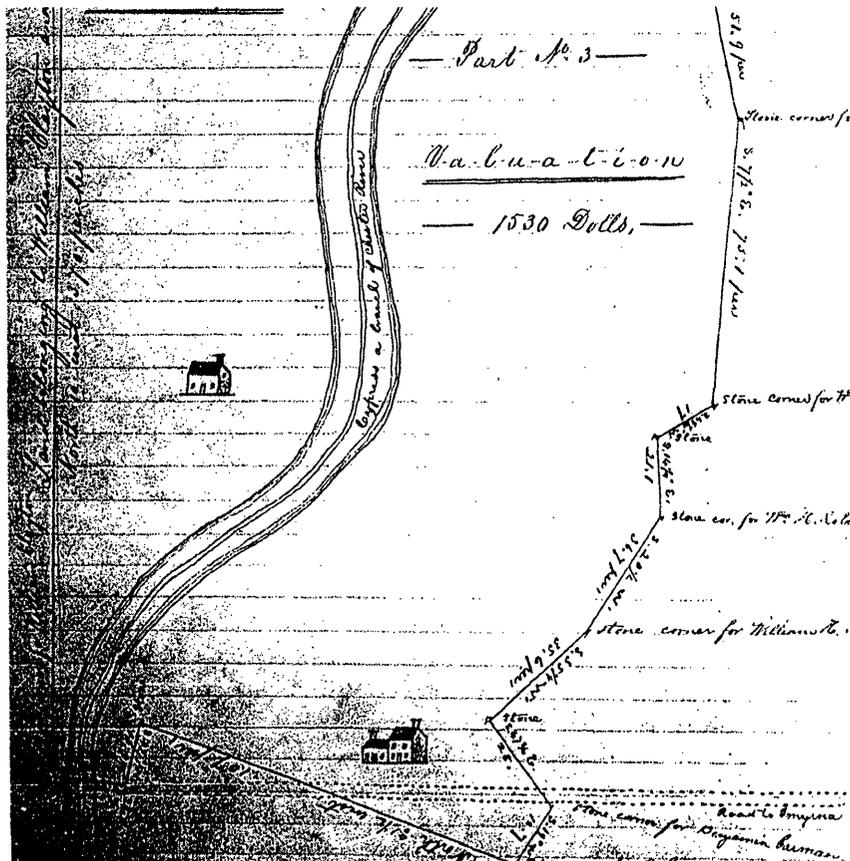


Figure 11: Orphans Court plot showing two tenant houses on the property before one of the houses was sold to Andrew Forkner. New Castle County Orphans Court, Book V Volume 1 p. 399 (1849).



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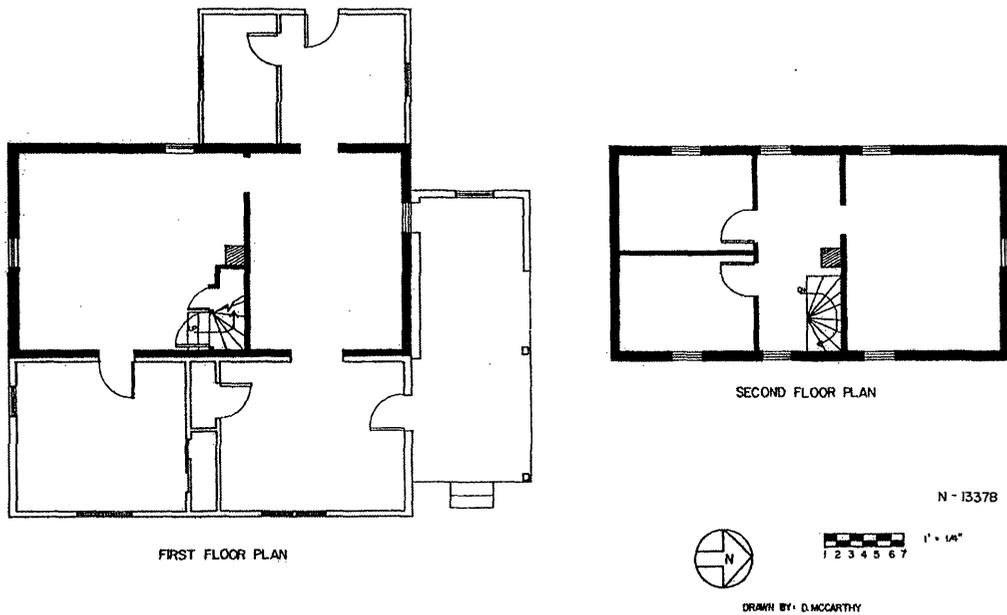


Figure 13: Floor plan of Forkner House, Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995

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Wood and Bordley closely.

Two surviving house and garden dwellings from this period (1820-1860) match both Bordley's and Wood's directions very closely in many ways. The Ridgely Tenant House, built about 1850 near a small rural community known as Cowgill's Corner, exemplifies the house and garden dwelling as it existed in central Delaware during the mid-nineteenth century. Standing one and a half stories in height with a main block of roughly 16 by 18 feet, the house originally consisted of a single finished room and a shed addition on the ground floor and two rooms on the second floor (Figure 14). The front elevation, which faced the road, contained only a single door and window on the ground floor (Figure 15). Small windows in the gable ends provided light to the second-floor rooms. The west gable end of the house held a chimney stack, most likely fitted for a stove rather than a cooking fireplace, and a narrow stair passage leading to the second floor. When first built, this dwelling sat on a wooded lot of 25 acres with a second house of similar proportions (which no longer stands), possibly following advice from a writer like Wood who advocated building cottages in pairs.

The second dwelling that fits the house and garden profile, as well as the guidelines of Wood and Bordley, is the Wharton Tenant House. The Wharton Tenant House exhibits a plan very similar to the Ridgely Tenant House, with the key exception being that the front of the building is located in the gable end rather than an elevation (Figure 3). The dimensions of the main block, roughly 16 by 18 feet, also correspond to the Ridgely Tenant House, but in this case the original shed kitchen sat on the rear gable end rather than the rear elevation (Figure 16). The Wharton Tenant House retains its original winder stair, cupboard under the stair, and chimney stack configuration on the south gable end. While the current staircase in the Ridgely Tenant House is a straight passage accessed from the rear shed, evidence on the floor above indicates that it once existed as a winder stair on the opposite side of the chimney, in much the same position as the one in the Wharton Tenant House.

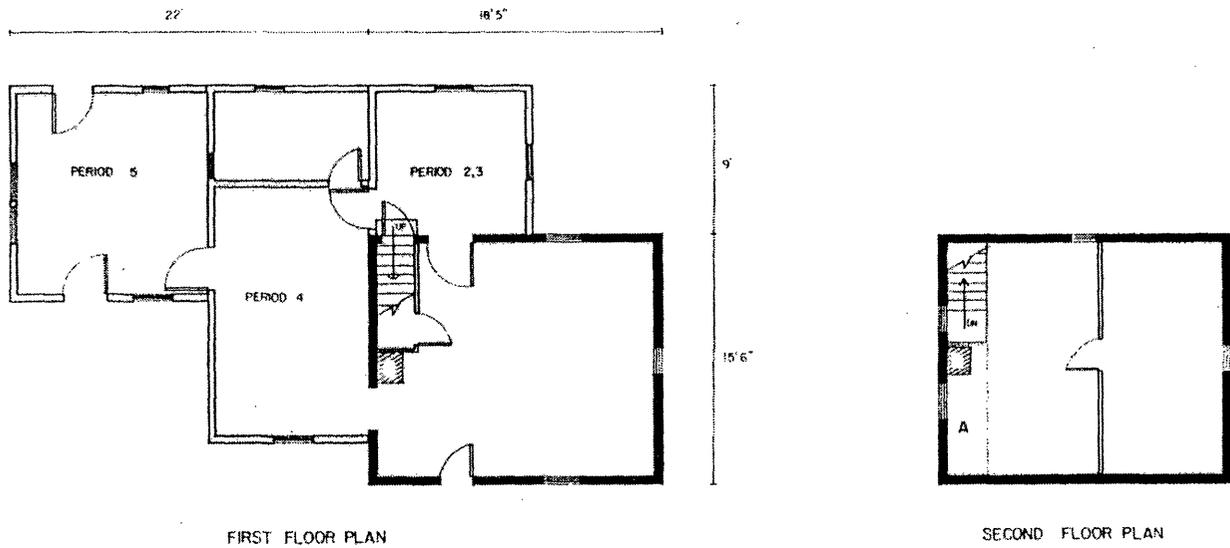
When compared to the principals and guidelines supplied by Wood and Bordley, these two dwellings offer only a few significant differences. Specifically, they provided more square footage in living space than recommended by the writers. While Wood suggested 144 square feet on the ground floor and Bordley advocated 192, both the Ridgely and the Wharton houses contained approximately 288 square feet of living space in the main block as well as additional space in a shed kitchen. Another difference can be found in the materials and methods of construction used to build these little houses. While both Wood and Bordley argued that the use of high quality materials and the best construction methods would lessen the need for future repairs, not all farmers followed these guidelines. Although the Wharton Tenant House exhibits good craftsmanship in the details of its construction and finish, including lath and plaster on both walls and ceiling in the second floor and an unusually detailed front door, some of these details may date to a later period than the initial construction; the Ridgely Tenant House seems less carefully constructed and even includes some reused timbers.

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RIDGELY TENANT HOUSE

K-2040



DRAWN BY D MCCARTHY

Figure 14: Floor plan of Ridgely Tenant House, Little Creek Hundred, Kent County. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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Figure 15: South elevation of Ridgely Tenant House, Little Creek Hundred, Kent County. Photograph by Kirk Ranzetta, CHAD, 1995.

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Figure 16: North elevation of Wharton Tenant House, South Murderkill Hundred, Kent County. Photograph by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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A key aspect of the identification of the house and garden dwelling in central Delaware is its location on the agricultural landscape, which is significantly different from that of the larger agricultural complexes in the area. Farm complexes, whether tenant or owner-occupied, tended to be set back from the road. Often a tree-lined lane led up to the front of the house, and a garden with ornamental plantings lay in the front yard. These dwellings and their complexes of outbuildings took up several acres of space in the middle of prime agricultural land. Evidence from field survey, oral histories, and documentary evidence strongly suggests that farmers in central Delaware followed very different patterns in choosing sites for their house and garden dwellings. In most cases they placed the dwellings on land considered marginal in terms of agricultural value. Sometimes the dwellings sat in clusters of two to five buildings along a road that bordered or ran through the farm (Figure 17). An alternative possibility was to place the house and garden at the edge of a planted field, tucked against the tree line (Figure 18). In either case the house and garden dwellings usually remained within visual range of the main farmhouse. The property located at Barker's Landing exemplifies this practice (Figure 19). The main house, home to the owner of a wharf, general store, and extensive farm in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, lies set back from the road along a lane. Surrounded by fields planted in wheat and corn, the farm also contained a number of small tenant houses. Three still stand today in locations established during the second half of the nineteenth century. They form a row along the main road from the river to the town of Magnolia, sheltered by a line of trees but still visually linked to the main house. A third potential for placement of a house and garden was to locate it in or near the complex of agricultural outbuildings, sometimes even in the middle of a planted field.<sup>22</sup>

A final factor related to the locational model for the house and garden dwellings is their portability. As mentioned earlier, farmers constructed these dwellings in a fashion that made them easy to move. The surviving dwellings consistently exhibit foundations that lent themselves to portability, using corner supports built of tree stumps, brick piers, concrete blocks, and even granite slabs. None of the house and garden dwellings examined in this study contained a cellar, or any indication of one existing at a previous location. This cannot be attributed to geographic factors such as the water table since many other dwellings in the region featured cellars during this time period. The transportation of many types of buildings to different locations took place frequently in central and southern Delaware.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The question of whether the African-American presence influenced the siting patterns of these houses has raised considerable debate. The population of central Delaware contained a significant proportion of African-Americans during the nineteenth century. By 1840 most of them were free rather than slave, and they did indeed occupy many of the house and garden dwellings. One of the factors we have been unable to address is whether the occupants of these dwellings shared in the discussion of construction, plan, and siting. There simply is no evidence at this time to support a particular theory one way or the other. It must be remembered, however, that white tenant-laborers occupied these house and garden dwellings also; later on, both whites and African-Americans owned the houses.

<sup>23</sup>Movement of many different types of buildings occurred regularly in central and southern Delaware, but house and garden dwellings were specifically built on pier foundations to permit easy movement. On movement of buildings, see Bernard L. Herman, The Stolen House (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

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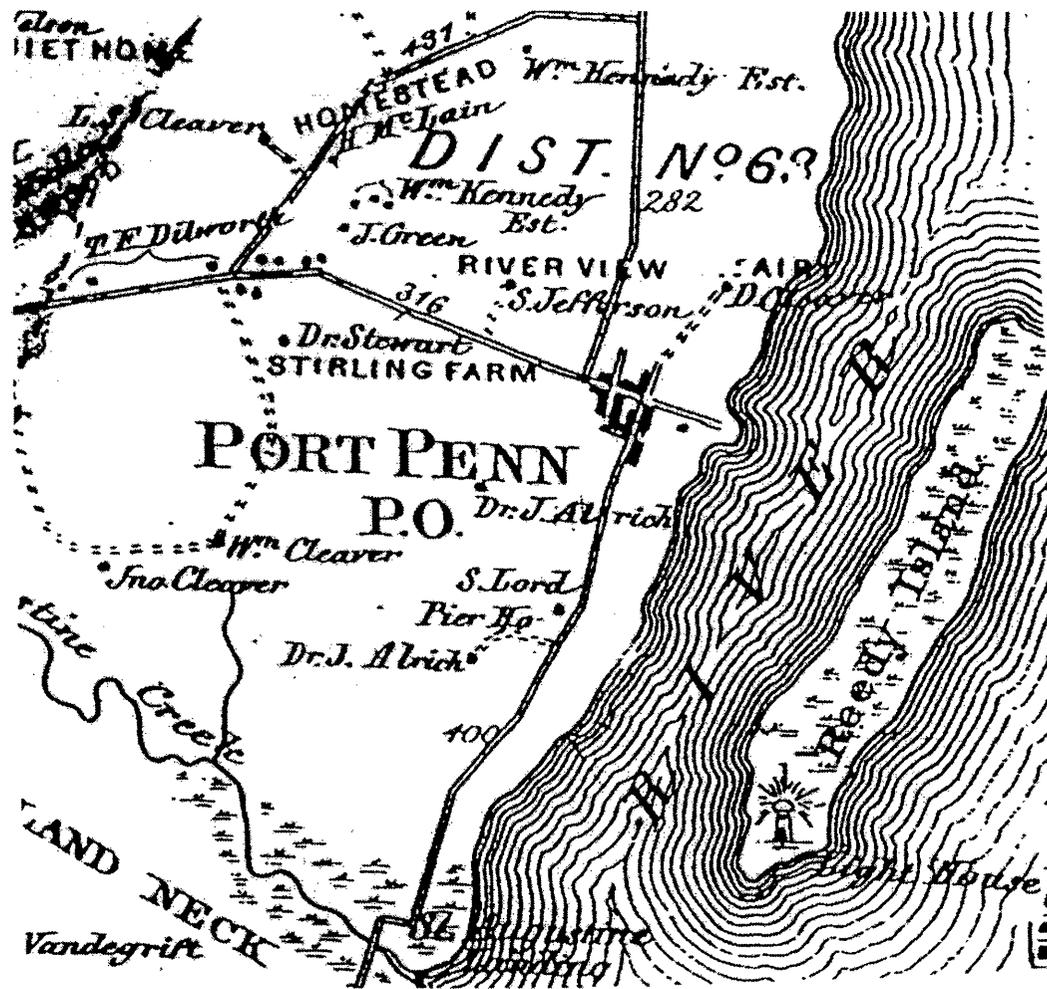


Figure 17: Detail of Beers' Atlas of the State of Delaware, 1868, showing the location of several house and gardens along the road leading west from Port Penn. Beers' Atlas of the State of Delaware, 1868, (Philadelphia: Pomeroy and Beers, 1868).

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Figure 18: Photograph of a house and garden dwelling set against the treeline, Sharon Hill vicinity, West Dover Hundred, Kent County. Photograph by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1994.

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Figure 19: House and garden at Barker's Landing with main farm dwelling visible in background. Photograph by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1994.

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People moved house and garden dwellings, in particular, regularly. Farmers may have constructed these small dwellings with the intention of moving them at a later date, as the situation warranted. Cases such as the Ridgely Tenant House and the White-Warren Tenant House demonstrate the practice of moving house and garden dwellings to suit the owner's needs. The owner of the Ridgely Tenant House moved two house and garden dwellings from a 25-acre wooded lot to a location on the edge of a field facing a road less than a mile away from the original location (Figure 20).<sup>24</sup> In the 1930s, the Warren family moved the White-Warren Tenant House from its original location along a tree-line so that it would be closer to the main house, largely because the tenant worked in the main house rather than as an agricultural laborer.<sup>25</sup> Both the location patterns of the house and gardens and their portability document ways in which Delaware farmers modified the recommendations of agricultural reform writers to suit their particular situation.

The *agricultural reform movement* exerted a powerful influence on the landscape of central Delaware and on the behavior of its inhabitants. Prompting a shift from family-oriented farm production to a market orientation for agriculture, the reform movement brought new types of outbuildings and crops. It also fostered a new attitude towards conducting the "business" of agriculture.<sup>26</sup> Many farmers became more methodical about recording their expenses for labor in standardized formats; they shifted from operating on a local web of exchange to a system based more on the payment of cash for goods and services.<sup>27</sup> This shift affected the house and garden system in very specific ways, eventually prompting many farmowners to divest themselves of responsibility for the dwellings by selling them off to their laborers.

Another factor related to the appearance of the house and garden dwelling, and the specific arrangements that governed its use, was the demographic situation in central Delaware. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a large number of property owners migrated out of the region, often heading to large cities or west to the Ohio Valley

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<sup>24</sup>Beers' *Atlas of the State of Delaware, 1868*, see page for Little Creek Hundred, Kent County; interview with John Clendaniel, January 1995.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Albert Warren, January 1995.

<sup>26</sup>Bernard L. Herman, *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900*; Rebecca Siders et al, *Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900 +/-: A Historic Context*.

<sup>27</sup>The account books of Daniel Corbit clearly demonstrate this shift from the exchange of goods and services to one based on cash between 1830 and 1850. Daniel Corbit, account books and ledgers, Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware.

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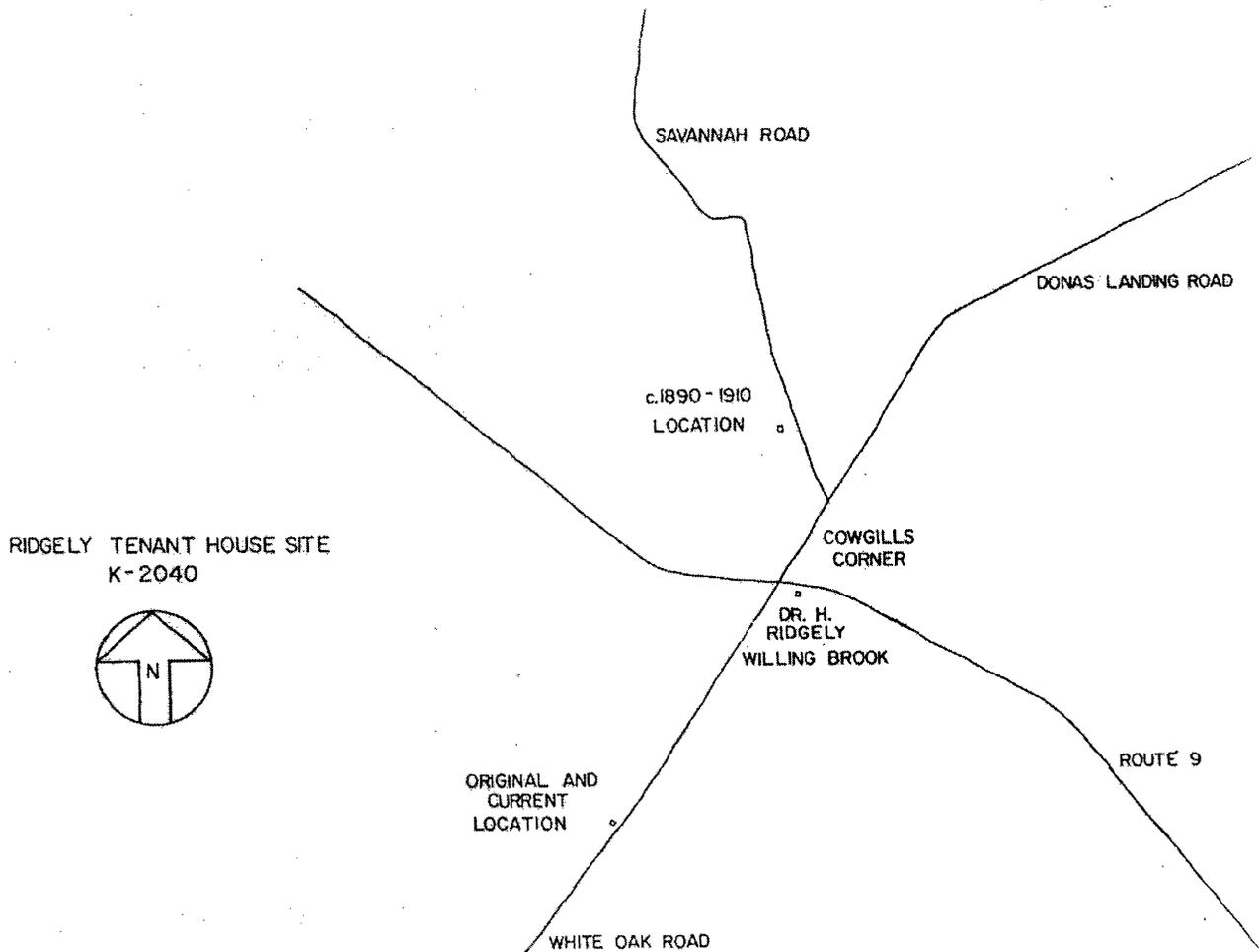


Figure 20: Map showing the movement of the Ridgely Tenant House between 1850 and 1945. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

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frontier.<sup>28</sup> The farmers who remained began to purchase the vacated properties, and an increasing level of inequity in property holding developed. A small minority of wealthy landowners controlled multiple pieces of property, prompting a need on their part for farm tenants and laborers. This shift in population and land ownership also prompted a need to more clearly define the relationships between different groups in the neighborhood.

The agreements that described lease-labor and hired labor contracts contributed to the definition of those relationships. Account books and ledgers suggest that the relationships between tenant-laborer and employer-landlord retained a great deal of flexibility while still clearly defining the authority of the landowner. The specific characteristics of the lease-labor arrangements become clearer when compared to the conditions and characteristics of simple hired labor contracts. In these lease-labor agreements we can discern the growing gap between economic groups within the region.

A key difference between the lease-labor agreement and a contract for labor only lay in the length of the contract. The leases invariably lasted for a twelve-month period starting in March; the labor agreements contracted for only seven or eight months, usually beginning in April or March and ending in November or December. Obviously both sets of contracts followed established patterns related to the agricultural year. Tenant farm leases ran for blocks of time based on March to March years, only the number of years in the lease varied.<sup>29</sup> House and garden leases followed the same pattern because the labor part of the lease related to the agricultural year even though their occupation of a dwelling did not need to do so. Hired laborers, on the other hand, were only needed by the employer during periods when intensive agricultural activities occurred. Their contracts, therefore, were tied more closely to the seasonality of those activities than to their need for housing. Hired laborers could maintain a higher degree of mobility, often leaving a job in the middle of the season simply because they did not like their employer. Tenant-laborers, on the other hand, fell under a greater obligation to the employer-landlord; if they refused to work for him, he could break the lease and leave them homeless.

A second difference between the two types of contracts appears in the account book statements kept by farmers for both tenant-laborers and hired hands. The statements reveal significant differences in the relationships between these individuals and their employers. Lease-labor agreements could be executed formally, like the one between John Alston and James Ryan, but in many cases the only record of the contract existed in the form of the account book kept by the farm owner or manager. The farmer recorded the conditions of the agreement and any debits or credits built up over the lease year. The accounts for the tenant-laborers reveal that rental payments could be made on either a yearly or

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<sup>28</sup>Rebecca Siders et al, Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900/-: A Historic Context; Rebecca Siders, unpublished manuscript, "The Outmigration of Quakers from Central Delaware, 1775-1830," 1993.

<sup>29</sup>Siders et al, Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware.

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quarterly basis. Sometimes firewood constituted part of the rental agreement; in other cases the accounts included separate charges for firewood. The account books documented charges for food and other basic supplies such as seed, counterbalanced by accounts of specific days worked and the particular tasks accomplished. By the end of the lease year the account often balanced very closely, requiring a minimal exchange of cash between employer and employee, or tenant and landlord.

Under the labor contracts a hired worker received a monthly wage based on the premise of constant work. When the employer tallied the final account for the season's labor he deducted any days missed for reasons ranging from illness to attendance at funerals to time taken to "work in his garden." The accounts for hired laborers rarely specified particular tasks. Wage rates varied greatly, depending upon whether they included room and board; the rate also might or might not include washing and mending. Charges incurred against labor accounts included clothing, liquor, and other miscellaneous items, but rarely food or agricultural supplies. Hired laborers usually received some sum of cash at the end of their contract period. Over the period from 1830 to 1860, a shift can be observed in the account book statements of both hired workers and tenant-laborers. While early accounts documented extensive charges for both groups in the form of goods and services, by the end of the period more and more transactions took place in the form of cash. Debts on both sides appeared with cash payments rather than an exchange of services. It may have been this shift in the economic system of the neighborhood that prompted many farmers to decide that they no longer needed to maintain house and garden dwellings on their properties.

Opportunities for power and control existed on both sides of the house and garden lease agreement. The farmer needed the tenant's labor at crucial points in the agricultural season. In order to keep that labor available, he had to provide housing in a form agreeable to the tenant. The tenant, on the other hand, needed a place for his family to live. He also needed a way to produce the food and other items his family required for survival. So he promised his labor in return for a house. Both parties possessed something the other needed very badly, giving them each some level of power and authority in the relationship.

One important element in the relationship between tenant-laborers and their landlord-employers lay with the fact that tenants could market their labor to other farmers in the area if they wished. Census records for 1850 and 1860, which itemize occupations of the inhabitants, demonstrate the connections between house and garden households and their neighbors, both farmers and other house and garden tenants. As one follows the census taker from one household to another, a clear pattern emerges--clusters of two to four tenant-laborer households sandwiched between the households of farm owners or farm managers who provided their housing and employment opportunities.<sup>30</sup> House and garden tenants could offer their services to any of the farmers in the area; most of the time they did not, in fact, work exclusively for one employer during the term of a contract. While one farmer might have a primary claim on a tenant's

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<sup>30</sup>USPC, St. Georges and Little Creek hundreds, 1850 and 1860; also see Beers' Atlas of the State of Delaware, 1868, especially the pages for hundreds in the study area.

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labor at peak periods, the tenant often worked for other farmers during the same lease period. In some cases, the primary employer located potential work for his tenants. Understanding their proximity to more than one farm makes this practice easier to understand.

House and garden tenant-laborers maintained a high level of geographical mobility. They moved frequently, shifting from one landlord to another, often so mobile that the census missed them completely. This transience generally occurred within a circumscribed area; most movement took place within an area of twelve to sixteen square miles. Between 1828 and 1870, John A. Jackson lived in multiple locations in Little Creek, Duck Creek, and Dover hundreds, and possibly in Maryland for a short period (Figure 21).<sup>31</sup> Timothy Collins presented an extreme case of mobility. Between 1838 and 1840, Collins and his wife, both recent immigrants from Ireland, rented a house and garden from Daniel Corbit for \$32. Over the next decade they explored the possibilities for advancement in the Ohio Valley, living for some time in Illinois and Pennsylvania before returning to Red Lion Hundred by 1850 with their four young children. Within this pattern of mobility, there existed some long-term commitments between tenant and landlord. Some of Corbit's tenant-laborers remained in his tenant houses for up to eight or nine years, sometimes consecutively, sometimes in shorter periods broken by intervals of a year or more (Figure 22).<sup>32</sup>

Beginning in the late 1850s, some farmers started to partition and sell the plots of land that held the house and garden dwellings to their tenant-laborers. Sometimes the transaction took the form of a gift, in return for years of service, but most often some money changed hands.<sup>33</sup> In many cases the new owners continued to work as laborers in the neighborhood. The Grose House provides a good example of this type of situation. Located on the outskirts of the town of Port Penn, this dwelling was built circa 1850 by a farmer for his tenant-laborers (Figure 23). Shortly after that the farmer sold the house with its one-acre plot to a free black tenant-laborer who continued to work as an independent agricultural laborer for several farmers in the area. Succeeding owners of the dwelling during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries maintained this practice.

Not all farm owners abandoned the house and garden as an effective method of housing agricultural laborers.

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<sup>31</sup>KCTA, 1822-1872.

<sup>32</sup>Daniel Corbit, Account Books and Ledgers, 1835-1860, Historical Society of Delaware.

<sup>33</sup>This information is often difficult to substantiate as the documentation is buried in records other than conventional property deeds. Often it is a matter of piecing together scraps of information about an individual's employment history and changes in the tax assessment listings for his employer.

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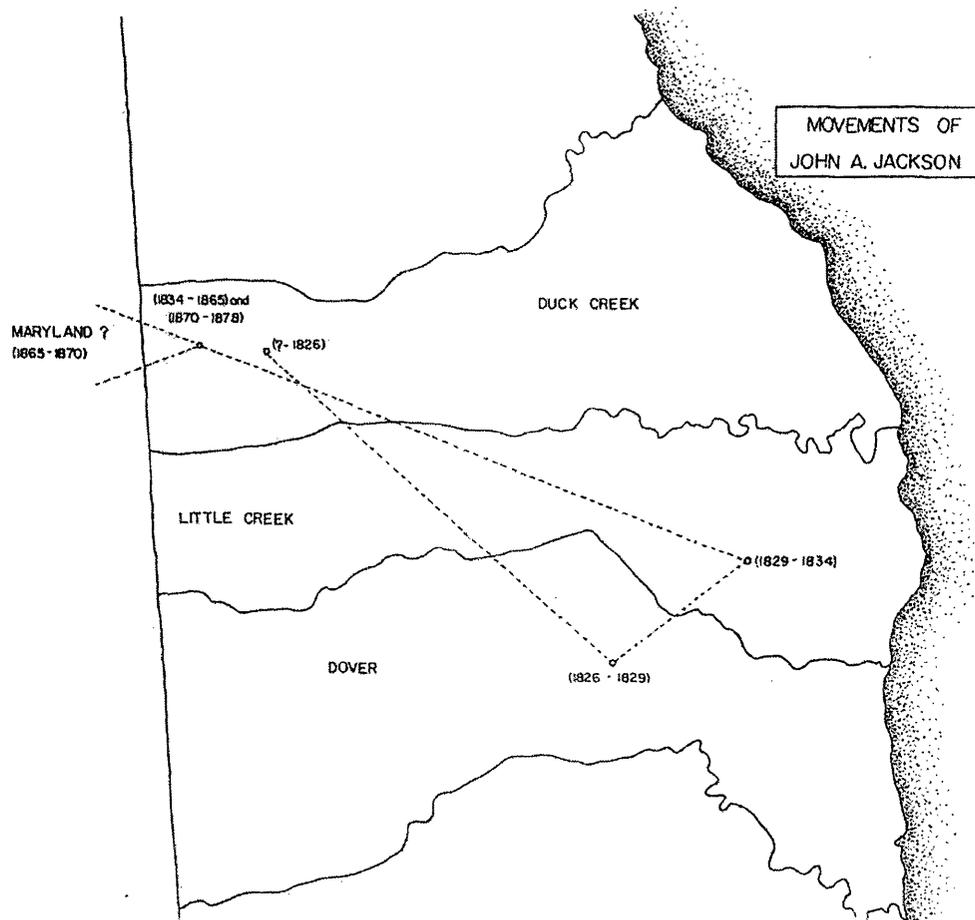


Figure 21: Map of the movements of John Jackson between 1826 and 1870. Based on information drawn from a series of tax assessments and census records during that period. Drawn by Deidre McCarthy, CHAD, 1995.

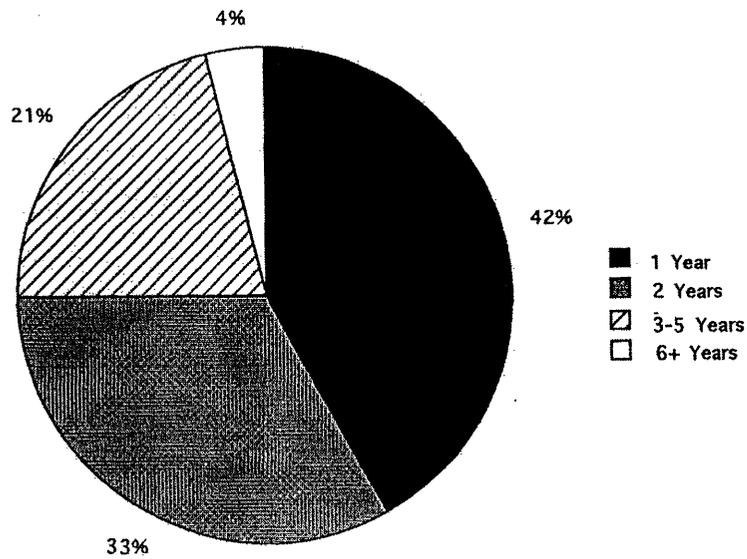
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Duration of Daniel Corbit's House and Garden Tenants, 1830-1850



Source: Ledger Books of Daniel Corbit, Historical Society of Delaware

Figure 22: Duration of Daniel Corbit's house and garden tenants, 1830-1850. Based on Daniel Corbit's Ledgers and Account Books, Historical Society of Delaware.

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Figure 23: North and east elevations of the Robert Grose House, St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County. Photograph by Kirk Ranzetta, CHAD, 1995.

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Some maintained their ownership of the tenant houses well into the twentieth century; in fact, some continued to build new dwellings in the same form during this period. The White-Warren Tenant House sits on a farm occupied by the same family since the late eighteenth century. When John White died in 1825 he left a widowed mother, his own widow, and two small daughters. During the time his children remained minors, the Kent County Orphans Court oversaw the rental of the farm to generate income for their care. The administration accounts for the estate document the presence of a house and garden on the farm, used to house laborers who assisted the farm tenant in working the property.<sup>34</sup> When the daughters came into control of their inheritance they continued to operate the farm in much the same manner. They built new house and garden dwellings when the older ones deteriorated. In the early twentieth century, three or four of the small dwellings sat along the tree line across the field from the farmhouse.<sup>35</sup> Circa 1930, most of the house and garden dwellings along the tree line were demolished; one was moved closer to the house to provide separate housing for an African-American family that continued to work for the Warrens. The Warrens chose not to partition the house and garden dwelling onto its own land, preferring instead to retain control and responsibility for the dwelling.

**Conclusion**

The nineteenth century witnessed a multi-faceted transformation of the agricultural landscape in central Delaware; the house and garden represents just one element in that change. With growing levels of inequity in the ownership of property and a new orientation to markets and agriculture for profit, farmers reorganized their landholdings, buildings, and labor arrangements. In response to demographic pressures, changing agricultural practices, and the influence of agricultural reform writers, central Delaware farmers adopted the earlier idea of the house and garden as a strategy for housing their married agricultural laborers and created a specific building form to meet their needs. The house and garden helped bring order and stratification to the agricultural landscape by making a clear statement about the place of laborers in the business of agriculture. Farmers recognized the need to create an environment that would keep good laborers in the community, but insisted that the form and appearance of the buildings reinforce the economic and social distinction between farm owners or managers and their employees.

These broad changes affected not just large landowners like Daniel Corbit or Joshua Clayton, both of whom owned in excess of \$100,000 worth of real estate in 1860, but also the middling landowners like John Alston. In his lifetime Alston owned one farm of 153 acres inherited from his father, and valued at \$25,000 in 1860. After his marriage in 1856, Alston controlled a second farm in Little Creek Hundred that belonged to his wife, Lydia Cowgill Wilson Alston. On a smaller scale, Alston heeded the same recommendations of agricultural reform writers that the large landowners followed. He farmed his land intensively, leaving none unimproved. He produced a range of crops including wheat,

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<sup>34</sup>KCPR and KCOC, property valuations and guardianship accounts for the heirs of John White, 1825-1838.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Albert Warren, January 1995.

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Indian corn, oats, Irish potatoes, and hay, along with butter and a small number of livestock raised for slaughter. Significantly, he does not appear to have capitalized on the peach market that boosted many farmers in the area to prosperity. He used horses rather than oxen to plow his fields, valuing their speed over the low maintenance of the oxen. Unmarried until he reached his late fifties, Alston relied on a combination of live-in hired laborers and house and garden tenant-laborers to accomplish the work of farming his land. Despite his middling status as a farmer, Alston chose to build a new house in 1854, just as the larger landowners around him built to exhibit their economic status.<sup>36</sup> The pronounced differences between their new mansions and the house and garden dwellings inhabited by the laborers served to reinforce the social and economic separations between them.

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<sup>36</sup>Alston Papers, account books and journals, Friends Historical Library; USAC, Appoquinimink Hundred, 1850 and 1860.

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**Comprehensive Planning**

The history of the house and garden in the Upper Peninsula Zone provides significant information related to changes in the agricultural landscape that accompanied the agricultural reform movement and the shift to a market economy in central Delaware. The primary themes therefore are **Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change** and **Agriculture**. Because the dwellings were erected according to specific architectural characteristics of construction, plan, and finish, the theme of **Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts** is also important.

While the dwellings specifically listed in this nomination possess construction dates ranging from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the house and garden dwelling is known to have been constructed in the Upper Peninsula Zone as early as the 1780s and as late as the first decade of the 1900s. For this reason, the period of significance established in the Statement of Historic Contexts for this nomination crosses three of the chronological periods established by the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan: 1770-1830+/-, Early Industrialization; 1830-1880+/-, Industrialization and Early Urbanization; and 1880-1940+/-, Urbanization and Early Suburbanization.

The historic properties considered in this nomination are located throughout the portion of the **Upper Peninsula Zone** that lies south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Much of this area presently remains under cultivation for agriculture. 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. The landscape consists largely of open fields dotted with agricultural complexes and small rural communities associated with major or minor crossroads, railroad stations, and former river ports. Within the last twenty years residential and commercial encroachments on formerly open land have begun to change the historic topography of the region.

The house and garden dwelling was first identified as a property type during the research process conducted for the preparation of the historic context, Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900+/-. The property type appeared on tax assessments and other documentary records examined for that project and an initial description and assessment of the property type were included in that volume. During the process of survey, field work, and archival research for this nomination, the definition of the house and garden dwelling has been clarified considerably.

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**F. Associated Property Types**

**Name:** House and garden dwelling

**Description:**

The house and garden is a distinctive property type generally identifiable through specific architectural features. Part of its architectural significance lies in the standards adopted and shaped by farmers who sought to establish the social and economic status of their laborers through the housing provided to them. Although construction of these dwellings spanned a period of more than a century, they maintained a uniformity of plan and style throughout. The house and garden dwelling typically took the form of one finished room and a rough kitchen shed on the ground floor, with a winder stair leading to a second room under the roof. Characterized by frame construction (both braced and balloon), extremely plain finish on walls and architectural elements, and built to be easily portable, the dwellings sat on a small plot of ground suitable for a garden and a few animals. Variations in the physical form of the house and garden dwelling include orientation to the road (either gable or elevation), height (1 1/2 or 2 full stories), the number of bays on the front elevation (usually two or three), and the position of a shed (gable end, rear elevation, or none).

The location of these house and garden dwellings within the agricultural landscape represents an important element in their identification during field survey. House and garden dwellings follow a specific locational model that differentiates them from the larger agricultural complexes in the region. Farm complexes tend to be set back from the road, often with a tree-lined lane leading up to the front yard and its garden with ornamental plantings. House and garden dwellings, on the other hand, are generally located on the edges of agricultural properties, either tucked against the trees or in clusters of two to five dwellings along the road. Little space was available for flowers or shrubs. Significantly, despite the distance of these dwellings from the main farm complex, they still remained within visual range of the main farm dwelling and their employer. A second important aspect of the location of these dwellings lies with their portability. Farmers moved their house and garden dwellings about the agricultural landscape frequently. Usually constructed to stand on piers, the buildings changed positions on individual farms and within neighborhoods on a regular basis.

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The house and garden is also defined by its role as housing for agricultural laborers. Owned in the earlier period by wealthy farmers and rented to married laborers, the house and gardens in the period after 1860 were often owned by the laborers themselves. A clear chronology appears in the development of the house and garden as a labor housing solution. In its earliest incarnation (1780-1820), the house and garden model served a wide range of individuals in the rural population of central Delaware. In this period the house and garden possessed no particular form, but rather represented an accepted practice for housing certain elements of the population. Between 1820 and 1860 farm owners focused on a specific building type as the one most appropriate for housing their agricultural laborers. They combined this traditional building plan with the accepted practice associated with the concept of the house and garden to solve some of their labor housing needs. In this period, farmers most commonly controlled these "house and gardens" as part of their farm property, but after 1860 some farmers began to partition the dwellings with their small lots and either sold or gave them to the laborers. In some cases, the laborers received only land and proceeded to build new dwellings, often following an architectural pattern familiar from their time as house and garden tenant-laborers. Although the laborers now owned their homes, they maintained their labor relationships with the farmers. Construction of this building type, and its use as housing for agricultural laborers, continued through the early decades of the twentieth century.

Based on the characteristics outlined above, three configurations of the house and garden dwelling can be identified: 1) owned by a farmer and located within the boundaries of the main farm property, constructed at any time between 1780 and 1930; 2) owned by a farmer but established on a separate piece of land (usually less than five acres), most likely constructed between 1800 and 1880; and 3) owned by an agricultural laborer on a plot of less than five acres, most likely built between 1850 and 1930.

**Significance:**

The house and garden dwellings included in this nomination are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Reflecting major economic and cultural trends related to agriculture and architecture, the house and garden dwellings represent an essential element of the landscape transformation that occurred in central Delaware in response to the agricultural reform movement, powerful demographic pressures, and changing social structures. As part of this transformation process, central Delaware farmers began to develop new strategies for dealing with married agricultural laborers and their families during the nineteenth century. They constructed dwellings specifically designed to house these laborers and established lease-labor arrangements that governed both labor obligations and housing rental. The social and economic

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status of the occupants of house and garden dwellings was as evident and planned into the design of these buildings as it was in the larger, more impressive dwellings of wealthy farm owners. The general physical characteristics of the house and garden were established by nineteenth-century agricultural reform farmers, as the form they saw as appropriate for agricultural laborers and their families. The physical form they shaped was built and used throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and persists on the landscape to this day.

The nineteenth century witnessed a multi-faceted transformation of the agricultural landscape in central Delaware; the house and garden represents just one element in that change. With growing levels of inequity in the ownership of property and a new orientation to markets and agriculture for profit, farmers reorganized their landholdings, buildings, and labor arrangements. Central Delaware farmers adopted the earlier idea of the house and garden as a strategy for housing their married agricultural laborers and created a specific building form to meet their needs. The house and garden helped bring order and stratification to the agricultural landscape by making a clear statement about the place of laborers in the business of agriculture. Farmers recognized the need to create an environment that would keep good laborers in the community, but insisted that the form and appearance of the buildings reinforce the economic and social distinction between farm owners or managers and their employees.

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**Registration Requirements:**

The criteria for determining whether individual historic properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the Statement of Historic Contexts established within this nomination are both physical and associative, with the physical criteria applying to the resource's eligibility under Criterion C and the associative criteria related to eligibility under Criterion A. **An individual property cannot be eligible for listing within this historic context without meeting the minimum requirements established in each of these categories.** The resource must also meet the criteria for integrity as established for the context.

**Associative Requirements**

Under Criterion A, a resource must demonstrate significance in relation to a particular broad pattern or event in the history of the state or nation. House and garden dwellings are considered significant because of their connection with the larger transformation of Delaware's Upper Peninsula Zone during the nineteenth century, particularly of the agricultural landscape and the social stratification that accompanied that change. Documented association with the practice of house and garden lease-labor arrangements is essential to establishing the significance of a resource related to this historic context. Therefore, documentary evidence must exist that links a particular dwelling to **at least one** of the following profiles for house and garden dwellings. It is entirely possible, in fact very common, for a particular house and garden dwelling to demonstrate characteristics of more than one of the profiles over an extended period of time. Note that it is not the words "house and garden" that must appear in the documentary records, but rather a situation that matches one of the following scenarios:

1) **a house and garden dwelling owned by a farmer and located on a farm:** In this case, during the period of significance, the house and garden dwelling was owned by an individual, often a multiple property owner, and rented to agricultural laborers who worked on that farm. The main farm might be occupied by either the owner or a farm manager, and the lease of the house and garden dwelling could be controlled by either of these individuals. The dwelling may appear on tax assessments as a tenant house or tenement, or may not be listed at all because it was considered part of the outbuilding complex. The existence of account books, probate records, or other sources documenting a relationship between the farm owner, or the farm manager, and his laborers will strengthen significance in this situation. This particular scenario may result in a house and garden that dates to any time between 1780 and 1930; resources dating to the periods of 1780-1820 or 1820-1860 should be considered especially significant due to rare survival. These resources may be positioned at the edge of an agricultural field, along the road, or mixed in with the agricultural

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outbuildings.

2) **a house and garden owned by a farmer but established as a separate piece of property, usually less than five acres:** In this profile, the owner is also likely to be a multiple property owner. Often the laborers who rented these properties worked both for the landlord and for other farmers in the neighborhood. Again, documentation of the tenant's occupational relationship with the owner, farm manager, or neighboring farmers will contribute to the significance of the resource. Resources following this pattern are most likely to date to the periods after 1820, and will often be found at the edge of a road rather than in a field.

3) **a house and garden owned and occupied by an agricultural laborer:** Many house and garden resources retain significance in either Profile 1 or 2 for their earliest years and after about 1850 move into Profile 3. In this case, the laborer has managed to purchase (or been given) the land and/or the dwelling in question. Establishing the way in which the laborer acquired the property is valuable to establishing significance, but not required. (In many instances of gifts this information seems to be buried in records other than conventional deeds or wills, making it impossible in some cases to do more than speculate about the transaction.) Documentation of a transfer of the land and dwelling from an employer-landlord to a tenant-laborer would greatly strengthen the significance of the resource. Documentation of a continuing connection to agricultural labor as a form of employment for the owner is important to the significance of the resource in this profile. Resources falling into this category are most likely to date from the period after 1850, and are almost always located at the edge of a road. Dwellings in this category may be built either by the original landlord, or by the agricultural laborer after purchase of the land.

**Physical Requirements**

Under Criterion C of the National Register's criteria for significance, a resource must demonstrate "the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction...or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction." The house and garden dwelling is a distinctive property type identifiable through specific architectural features and landscape characteristics. In order to be considered significant under this context, a resource **must possess a minimum of 6 of the following 11 attributes.** Although construction of these dwellings spans more than a century, they maintain a uniformity of plan and style throughout.

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**Plan:**

- 1) the house and garden as built in the Upper Peninsula Zone between 1800 and 1930 consists of a **one-and-one-half or two-story dwelling with a single finished room on the ground floor and one or two additional rooms under the roof on the second floor;**
- 2) these dwellings often exhibit a **one or one-and-one-half-story shed on the gable end or rear elevation;**
- 3) the facade of these dwellings will exhibit **two or three bays**, sometimes symmetrically balanced but not always.

**Interior Finish:**

- 4) The finished room on the first floor should contain a **winder or box stair in one of the gable ends or evidence of such a stair;**
- 5) This room will also contain a **chimney stack constructed for stove access;**
- 6) **Finish on window and door surrounds is very plain**, remarkable for its spare nature;
- 7) Wall finish in the original section of the dwelling should demonstrate evidence of early **whitewash on bare wood walls and ceiling joists** in both first and second floor rooms.
- 8) Later upgrades in wall and ceiling finish may include **lath and plastering or early forms of wallboard.**

**Landscape Features:**

- 9) These elements must be dealt with in terms of the context. It is preferable for the building to remain in its **original location**, but given the high instance of portability among these dwellings that is not always possible. A house and garden that has been moved from its original location may be nominated only if the move can be documented, and preferably if the move occurred on the same farm;
- 10) More important in terms of landscape characteristics is the survival of a **visual connection between the dwelling and the farm complex** to which it was originally related;
- 11) **If the dwelling historically sat on a separate parcel of land, the majority of that parcel should remain intact.**

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**Integrity**

The National Register defines integrity in terms of seven specific categories—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—and requires that a resource retain integrity in at least four of those areas. The following sections describe the criteria for determining whether a particular house and garden dwelling possesses integrity in those categories under this context.

**Location.** Location is defined as the place where the historic property was constructed. The present location of the house and garden should be connected to its historic placement on the landscape. For the purposes of this context, given the portable nature of the property type, a dwelling moved from its original location may still possess integrity of location if the move is documented and the building still retains a connection to the original site. For example, a house and garden known to have been moved about on a farm still retains integrity of location if its visual connection with the main dwelling remains, and if its earlier location on the farm is known. Movement of the building is acceptable only if the move occurred **during** the building's period of significance.

**Design.** Design is defined as the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. This is a particularly important element of integrity for the house and garden property type. The nominated resource should retain significant evidence of the physical design elements suggested by agricultural reform writers like Wood and Bordley. Specifically, these include the hall-chamber and shed plan, height of the elevation (1-1/2 to 2 stories), presence of original stair passage and chimney stack, and the plain level of finish.

**Setting.** Setting is defined as the physical environment of a historic property. This characteristic is also very important to the house and garden property type. Significant elements for this category include the visual link to the main farm dwelling, placement along a road or treeline on marginal land, association with a cluster of similar dwellings, the presence of agricultural lands in the environment, and the survival of the land that may once have served as garden or pasture land for the house and garden. While each individual house and garden will possess only some of these characteristics, the survival of the setting for the house and garden adds significantly to its integrity.

**Materials.** Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. For a house and garden, the significant materials are exterior covering such as weatherboard; fenestration; stair and chimney stack; plan; construction material; and interior finish. The dwelling

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need not retain all six of these features but **should possess at least three** of them. Changes in exterior siding occur often in these dwellings and are acceptable if original fenestration is present. On the interior, the dwelling should minimally retain **evidence** of the original stair passage and chimney stack; either the original interior finish or an upgrade (ex: lath and plaster walls and ceilings) that occurred within the period of significance; and interior spaces that reflect the original plan. Significant changes in the construction material of the dwelling (replacement of frame walls with some other material such as brick, for example) would lessen the integrity of the building.

**Workmanship.** Workmanship is defined as the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. House and garden dwellings are characterized by a very plain level of finish on *both the exterior and interior*. Significant alterations to that level of finish, beyond the period of significance, would seriously degrade the integrity of the dwelling.

**Feeling.** Feeling is defined as a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. This is important to the house and garden property type, but difficult to define. The survival of setting and location contribute to the feeling of these buildings, as do materials, but most important is the survival of the building within a landscape of agricultural fields, farm complex, and possibly other house and garden dwellings.

**Association.** Association is defined as the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. In terms of a house and garden dwelling, this element is present if sources (either documentary or oral history) can document a continuing relationship between a particular family as tenants of a specific house and garden dwelling, or one between a family of farmowners and the house and garden dwelling, or even a relationship between the family of farmowners and a family of tenants. For example, one dwelling studied during this project was occupied at various times by five different generations of the same family as tenants, during a period in which several different families owned the house and garden dwelling and the main farm. Alternatively, another house and garden dwelling sits on a farm that has been owned and occupied by the same family since the late eighteenth century. Lengthy relationships, or associations, of these types help to demonstrate the significance of the house and garden dwelling in defining social relationships in the neighborhood.

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**G. Geographical Data**

The initial survey for the project identified resources potentially eligible for nomination under this context as house and garden dwellings throughout all of the hundreds listed below. Basically, this is a property type likely to be found almost anywhere in the Upper Peninsula Zone, and possibly in parts of the Piedmont Zone as well.

Kent County

Duck Creek, Kenton, Little Creek, East Dover, West Dover, North Murderkill, and South Murderkill  
Hundreds

New Castle County

St. Georges, Appoquinimink, and Blackbird Hundreds

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**H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

The resources included in this multiple resource nomination of the property type called the "house and garden dwelling" were identified through a multi-step analysis carried out by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), University of Delaware. Staff for the project included Rebecca Sheppard (principal investigator, 25% of yearly effort), and three graduate students: Anna Andrzejewski (95%), Deidre McCarthy (95%), and Kirk Ranzetta (20%).

The property type itself was initially identified as part of an historic context, Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900+/-, produced in 1991 by CHAD. Working from the preliminary description of the property type in that context, project staff reviewed the cultural resource survey files at the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office for the entire study area (Upper Peninsula Zone south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal) to identify potential resources fitting that description. Some 245 resources were identified from that initial review. All sites were mapped onto USGS quad maps for field review.

Project staff then undertook a windshield survey of the identified resources to determine whether they fit the physical profile for the house and garden dwelling. Over the course of several field days, 101 previously surveyed resources were found to be demolished; 119 previously surveyed resources did not fit the physical characteristics established by the context for the property type of the house and garden dwelling. An additional 61 sites were identified during fieldwork as potentially fitting the property type. A check of the SPO maps at the DESHPO determined that 42 of those 61 had been previously surveyed. CRS numbers were assigned to the remaining 19. Initially, then, 99 resources were potentially eligible for inclusion in the thematic nomination.

At this point, staff began to conduct documentary research in order to clarify understanding of the house and garden as a property type. This included sources such as property deeds, tax assessments, account books, insurance policies, orphans court records, and probate files. As we developed a better understanding of the building form, we reviewed the surveyed sites and began to narrow down the potential resources to the best candidates representing the different architectural forms. Having chosen approximately 40 sites to focus on, we began to research title traces and contact owners for access to the properties. We had mixed success in acquiring access, but eventually conducted intensive-level field work at fourteen sites. Of those sites, four later proved to have no documentary link to use as a house and garden, while another three posed difficulties for nomination due to loss of integrity or movement from undocumented locations. The remaining seven resources are included in this nomination. The attached list includes all of the resources that have been determined **potentially eligible for inclusion in the context**. All of these resources will

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require further documentary and architectural investigation before a final determination of their eligibility for listing on the National Register under this historic context can be made.

**Resources Potentially Eligible for Listing as "House and Garden Dwellings"**

<u>CRS Number</u>	<u>SPO Map</u>	<u>Hundred</u>
<u>Kent County</u>		
K-901	12-13-20	East Dover
K-926	14-15-20	East Dover
K-1033	10-11-22	Little Creek
K-1038	08-09-22	East Dover
K-1080	10-11-22	East Dover
K-1090	08-09-21	East Dover
K-1121	06-07-22	West Dover
K-1192	08-09-20	West Dover
K-1402	08-09-22	Kenton
K-1774	08-09-21	West Dover
K-2040	12-13-22	Little Creek
K-2676	12-13-19	South Murderkill
K-2677	12-13-19	South Murderkill
K-2691	12-13-19	South Murderkill
K-2795	12-13-18	South Murderkill
K-2802	12-13-18	South Murderkill
K-2884	08-09-18	South Murderkill
K-2891	08-09-18	South Murderkill
K-2994	08-09-18	South Murderkill
K-3023	06-07-19	South Murderkill
K-3218	08-09-20	North Murderkill
K-3280	12-13-20	South Murderkill
K-3571	10-11-20	North Murderkill
K-3577	10-11-20	North Murderkill
K-3611	06-07-19	North Murderkill
K-3671	08-09-20	North Murderkill
K-3709	10-11-18	North Murderkill
K-3758	08-09-20	North Murderkill
K-3814	10-11-19	North Murderkill
K-3953	10-11-24	Duck Creek

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K-3996	10-11-26	Duck Creek
K-5640	04-05-24	Kenton
K-6735	12-13-22	Little Creek
K-6767	10-11-18	South Murderkill
K-6768	06-07-19	South Murderkill

New Castle County

N-128	06-07-25	Blackbird
N-5136	06-07-29	St. Georges
N-5893	04-05-26	Appoquinimink
N-5860	06-07-26	Blackbird
N-5876	06-07-29	Appoquinimink
N-6226	06-07-29	Appoquinimink
N-7651	06-07-27	Appoquinimink
N-12753	10-11-31	St. Georges
N-13311	06-07-28	St. Georges
N-13375	06-07-27	Blackbird
N-13377	10-11-25	Blackbird
N-13380	06-07-29	Appoquinimink
N-13381	06-07-29	Appoquinimink
N-13383	10-11-31	St. Georges

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KCRW. Kent County Recorder of Wills. Kent County Administration Building, Dover, Delaware.

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