

**APPENDIX III
HABS Document**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE

HABS No. DE-284

- Location:** Junction of Rockland Road and Old Murphy Road, Wilmington Vicinity, New Castle County, Delaware
- USGS Wilmington North, Del. - Pa., Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.452475.4403520
- Significance:** The George Murphy House was built in the 1840s, with several additions constructed in the later nineteenth century. Although the house has been referred to in past cultural resource reports as the William Murphy House, the house was actually built by William's son, George. William did own and live in the house between 1851 and 1870, however. The significance of the house lies in the fact that it is one of a handful of surviving nineteenth-century farmhouses in the area. It stands as a relatively intact example of Greek Revival vernacular design in northern New Castle County and exhibits the methodology of constructing additions to buildings as practiced in the nineteenth century. Its history is connected with the agricultural traditions of the area as well as the specific history of Alfred I. du Pont's Nemours estate, which is located to the south of the house and for which the Murphy House was once used as employee housing (see HABS No. DE-283). In fact, the George Murphy House is part of the Nemours Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Description:** The Murphy House is a two-and-one-half-story, three-bay, side-gabled, stone house with a two-and-one-half-story, frame rear wing, a front entrance porch, and a rear, two-sided wraparound porch. The house is oriented to the south and sits on level ground at the northeast corner of the intersection of Rockland Road and Old Murphy Road. The house was built in the 1840s in the Greek Revival style; it also exhibits details from the later Gothic Revival style. Previous studies of the house have dated its construction to the early nineteenth century, for at first glance, the house appears earlier than it is, mainly due to the carryover of earlier vernacular treatments. Yet, taken as a whole, the house displays the proportions, features, and finishes of an 1840s Greek Revival-style house. Overall, the house is in good condition, however, specific areas exhibit signs of deterioration. For example, roofing shingles are missing on the south roof slope of the front section and the east roof slope of the rear wing.
- The original section of the house is the two-and-one-half-story, side-gabled, stone front section. Physical inspection indicates that it is the original section due to the way in which the first- and second-story west-bay window openings of the rear elevation have been reconfigured. Originally, both openings contained double-hung sash windows that looked out into the rear yard of the house; however, the first-floor window is now a cupboard and the second-floor window is a closet. The location and dimensions of the cupboard and closet openings corroborate that they were the rear west-bay window openings, which were infilled and used for other purposes when the rear wing was attached to the original section
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of the house. The second-floor closet still displays the original window reveals, indicating that it was once an exterior wall window.

Another indicator that the front section of the house is the original section is the awkward manner in which the rear wing attaches to the front section. This is especially evident at the first- and second-story windows of the section's rear east bay. Here, the east wall of the wing nearly abuts the west edge of the window frames, making it impossible for the west shutters to lay flat against the rear elevation of the section. In addition, the east cornice of the rear wing meets the rear cornice of the front section at a butt joint instead of a mitered joint, another indication that the front section predates the wing. (The west cornice of the wing has been configured to extend beyond the south end of the wing, in effect becoming the north end cornice return of the front section's west gable.) An additional clue is provided by the dentil moldings beneath the front and rear cornices of the front section. The front dentil molding traverses the entire front facade of the section, while the rear molding ends abruptly at the east wall of the rear wing--an indication that the wing was a later addition and the cause of the removal or concealment of the west end of the rear dentil molding.

Physical inspection also indicates that the current rear wing may have started as a one-story frame kitchen wing, built off of the rear of the front section of the house concurrent with the construction of the front section. The assumed existence of such a wing is based on two factors. First, the two-story front section does not contain evidence of a kitchen; thus, there would have to have been an addition to house the kitchen. One might argue that the kitchen could have been housed in a detached building; however, the location of foundation walls in the basement indicates the possibility of a smaller, integral wing above. Moreover, the use of detached kitchens in Delaware, especially northern Delaware, had been discontinued by the 1840s, with preference given to attached kitchens located to the rear of the house.

The second factor denoting the existence of an earlier, one-story rear wing is the fact that the present rear wing has cornices that are an exact match to those of the front section, indicating that they were all constructed at the same time. It has always been common building practice that later features are not crafted to match the exact size and profile of earlier elements but instead reflect the characteristics of the styles of their day. In this case, the similar cornices would indicate that a rear wing and the front section of the house were built at the same time. One might argue that the wing was constructed at two-and-one-half stories from the very beginning; however, the presence of the rear dentil molding that has been eclipsed by the rear wing as well as the butt joint at the wing's east cornice and the extension of the west cornice would seem to indicate that a one-story, not a two-and-one-half-story, rear wing was built at the time of the front section.

Physical evidence also shows that the one-story rear wing was centrally located between the two first-story windows of the front section's rear elevation. The arrangement of the basement walls and supports and first-story floor joists indicates that a distinct central wing existed to the rear of

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the front section. The first-story floor joists run from the east foundation wall approximately five feet west to a wooden plate supported by stone pillars. This span corresponds to the concrete floor pad of the east leg of the rear wraparound porch. Separate joists then continue west to an interior support wall located some five feet east of the existing west foundation wall. This span corresponds to the original central wing. Once again, separate joists then continue west to the west foundation wall, with this span corresponding to the west bay of the rear wing (as it was later constructed). This arrangement would seem to confirm the existence of an earlier, central rear wing that predated the later wider wing.

As discussed above, it would appear that the front section of the house was constructed with rear west bay windows at each floor. Had the wing been constructed at its current width originally, there would have been no need to place west bay window openings in the rear elevation of the front section. Only a central, one-story rear wing would have allowed for the placement of windows in the first and second story of the west bay, as well as the construction of a cornice and dentil molding across the entire length of the rear elevation. A final clue as to the existence of a central rear wing is the door surround facing into the wing at the opening to the front section of the house. The surround exhibits Greek Revival moldings and corner blocks, which shows that it is an original feature of the house. More importantly, the surround is very plain in its detailing, indicating that it was likely meant to function as an interior, not exterior, surround, and intended from the beginning to face into another interior space, such as a rear kitchen wing.

At an unknown date, the rear wing was widened to the west and raised to the two-and-one-half-story height of the front section of the house. At this time, the roof of the wing would have been joined with the roof of the front section. It is not known if the widening and the raising of the wing occurred at the same time or if the widening predated the raising. The fact that both stories of the wing share the same window sash, surrounds, and shutters could be an indication that the widening and raising were done concurrently. Yet, it is also possible that the first story of the wing was remodeled to match the second story at the time of the raising work. The raising of the wing's cornices to the level of those of the front section of the house resulted in a greater than normal amount of wall space between the wing's second-story windows and the cornices above. It appears likely that the cornices were raised to that level to make the front section and wing appear unified, giving a more symmetrical and aesthetically pleasing appearance to the overall house. The arrangement also resulted in an increased amount of floor-to-ceiling space within the wing's attic. Although the date of the widening and raising work is not known, the presence of the Greek Revival-style window sash and surrounds would indicate that the work was likely conducted between the 1840s and the 1860s.

The date of construction of the front and rear porches is not known at this time, although the presence of Gothic Revival-style brackets and chamfered support posts indicates a date of between ca. 1860 and ca. 1880. The brackets of the front porch and of the north leg of the rear porch differ

slightly in their design from those of the east leg of the rear porch. This may indicate that the east leg was built at a different time than the north leg and the front porch. It is likely that both porches replaced earlier porches or porticoes, given the fact that such features were an important characteristic of the Greek Revival style. In addition to the porches, the adjustable louvered shutters and the shutter hardware at each of the window openings may have been installed at this time.

Two roof dormers on the south slope of the front section's roof were removed at an unknown date; evidence of the dormers' framing is still visible within the attic. The dormers may have been removed in conjunction with the reconfiguration of the front section's roof to accommodate the new roof of the wing. It is likely that the roof was reclad at the time of the roof reconfiguration, possibly with an earlier generation of wood shingles similar to those that appear at present. The stuccoing of the entire house may have been undertaken when the rear wing was raised and tied into the front section. It is not known if any part of the house was stuccoed prior to the raising of the rear wing.

Based on physical inspection and the stylistic features of the house, it would appear that all construction and remodeling work was complete by ca. 1880. This would correspond with a change in ownership, the 1882 sale of the house and property to Henry du Pont by Alfred D. Murphy. This marked the first time that the property was sold outside of the Murphy family since the construction of the house in the 1840s. The 1893 Baist atlas shows the house in its current form--a front rectangular section parallel to Rockland Road with a rear, right-angle wing--although the atlas incorrectly depicts the wing as lying off of the east rear of the front section instead of the west rear.

The Baist atlas indicates that there were two outbuildings to the rear of the house in 1893. One of the outbuildings may have been the frame barn referred to in tax records from 1851 (see History section). By 1917, both of the outbuildings were gone, for the Price and Price plan of Alfred I. du Pont's Nemours estate (located on the south side of Rockland Road) shows the Murphy House with only a windmill to the rear. The windmill was later demolished, but the date of the demolition is not known. A frame, one-story garage was constructed to the northeast of the house sometime after 1917 and demolished in ca. 1990.

An aerial photograph from the years between 1916 and 1926 shows the Murphy House surrounded by a number of tall trees. This tree cover appears to have been removed by the 1930s. Aerial photographs from 1935 and 1944 show the house, the garage, and a picket fence around the yard. A Department of Transportation road improvement plan from the years between 1944 and 1952 shows the house, the front walk, numerous trees, flower beds, and shrubs, the surrounding picket fence, and a nearby low stone wall (part of the system of walls throughout the area, likely constructed by the E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century). At present, the flower beds and shrubs no longer exist, except for two shrubs flanking the front walk at

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the entrance porch. The picket fence has been removed, and the sections of stone wall to the southeast, south, and west are no longer extant.

The Murphy House sits on a rubblestone foundation, with the interior elevations of the basement walls covered with plaster. There is no water table. The walls of the front section are of rubblestone construction, covered with a smooth, pink stucco. It is assumed that the rubblestone was taken from a local quarry. The walls of the rear wing are of frame construction, covered with the same smooth, pink stucco. None of the walls exhibit any ornamental features. The structural system employed by the front section consists of the exterior rubblestone walls acting as load-bearing walls and serving to support the wooden floor joists of the first, second, and attic levels, with the attic framing also of wood. The rear wing utilizes all wood framing, at exterior walls and at interior floors and inside the attic.

The front section of the house displays a central, one-story porch, which may have replaced an earlier porch or entrance portico. The wood-framed porch extends between the inside edges of the two first-story windows, prohibiting the inside shutters from laying flat against the front facade of the house. A single stone block serves as the step leading to the narrow-width board floor of the porch, which rests on wooden joists on top of a stucco-covered, masonry foundation. Two chamfered wood posts and two pilasters support a half-hipped roof, covered with wooden shingles and encircled with an aluminum gutter. The east and west ends of the porch are infilled with wooden lattice, and two wooden benches are fixed within the porch against the inside face of each lattice panel. Gothic Revival-inspired wood brackets are located at the front facade of the porch. The brackets exhibit triangular cutouts in the end pieces and diamond-shaped holes in the central pendant. The underside of the porch roof consists of a narrow-width board ceiling, which cuts into the top of the front door surround. A modern light fixture is set into the ceiling.

The rear wing of the house exhibits a two-sided, one-story wraparound porch, which, like the front porch, may have replaced an earlier porch. The wood-framed porch is supported by seven chamfered wood posts and two chamfered wood pilasters. Several of the posts display square wood bases. The floor of the porch is a poured concrete slab; at the east leg of the porch, the floor is covered with indoor/outdoor carpeting. The roof of the porch is covered with wood shingles and is encircled by an aluminum gutter with downspouts. Gothic Revival-inspired wooden brackets, of the same design as those found on the front porch, are located along the north leg of the porch and at the north bay of the east leg. Wooden brackets incorporating cloverleaf cutouts in the end pieces and central pendants without holes are located along the east leg of the porch (except for the north bay). The underside of the porch roof consists of a concave, narrow-width board ceiling. A single-bulb light fixture with a glass shade is mounted in the center of each leg of the porch ceiling, with a ceiling-mounted conduit line serving to connect the two fixtures.

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A bulkhead with a pair of wooden doors leading to the basement of the house is located in the center of the front section's east elevation.

Single-leaf wood doors are located at the front facade of the house and at the north and east elevations of the rear wing. The front facade door features eight molded panels of varying sizes. The door contains a historic metal door knob, keyhole, and dead bolt keyhole as well as a modern door knocker. The door is set in a paneled inset beneath a three-light wood transom. The inset features five molded panels along each vertical and two molded panels separated by a piece of molding along the horizontal. The door's wooden surround exhibits Greek Revival detailing, with plain bases, fluted pilasters, and plain corner blocks comprising the vertical sections of the surround, and the same fluted design marking the horizontal section. A half-step up onto a wooden sill provides access into the house. The hinges for an outer door are still in place on the west vertical of the surround.

The two doors at the rear wing display single panes of glass over two vertical, molded panels. The east elevation door contains a historic metal door knob and keyhole and a modern dead bolt key pad. The north elevation door contains a historic knob and keyhole only. A wooden sill located a half-step up from the porch floor and a molded wood door surround are features of both of the doors.

The first-story, second-story, and dormer windows of the house contain six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash, with wood surrounds and sills. The windows of the front section are larger than those of the rear wing, however, and exhibit larger sills. Moreover, the molding profiles of the surrounds differ somewhat between the front section and the rear wing. These differences offer another indication that the house was built in stages. Even with the differences, however, the front section and rear wing windows are typical of the Greek Revival style.

The front facade of the front section contains four windows, two each in the east and west window bays. The east elevation of the front section has no windows, while the west elevation contains two windows in the north bay. The portion of the rear elevation not obscured by the rear wing contains two windows (one at each story). The east elevation of the wing has two windows in the south bay and one in the north bay (second story). The north elevation has two windows, both at the second story. The west elevation contains four windows, two each in the south and north bays.

The basement windows of the house are single-sash, wood units set in wood frames with wood sills. One window is located in the east elevation of the front section of the house, to the north of the bulkhead. Two windows are located in the west elevation of the rear wing, in the north and south bays; brick-lined wells provide light to the windows. The attic windows are small, square, wood sash units located in the gables of the front section and rear wing. The front section windows contain double-hung sash with molded wood surrounds and wood sills. A pair of windows is located in the west gable, while a single window is located in the

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east gable (north bay). The north gable of the rear wing displays a pair of four-light, casement sash windows set in wood frames with wood sills.

The wooden shutters employed at the first- and second-floor windows of the house vary in design according to location. As with the windows, the shutters used on the front section of the house are larger than those used on the wing. All shutters, however, display similar hardware, consisting of iron pintles, rings, latches, and dogs. Most of the hardware remains in place, as do most of the shutters. The front facade of the house displays first-floor shutters with three molded panels and second-floor shutters featuring fixed louvers. The west elevation shutters feature two molded panels at the first floor and adjustable louvers at the second floor. The shutters on the rear elevation have three molded panels at the first floor and adjustable louvers at the second floor. The shutters used throughout the rear wing feature two panels at the first floor and adjustable louvers at the second floor. None of the attic windows display shutters.

The front section and rear wing of the house both display gable roofs covered with wood shingles. All cornices are boxed, as are all eaves. Each cornice exhibits a small crown molding at its top with a simple beaded molding below. Cornice returns are slight and incorporate an additional piece of crown molding above that of the main cornices. A dentil course is located beneath the front and rear cornices of the front section of the house (along the rear cornice, the west end of the dentil course has been removed or obscured by the rear wing). The gutter system serving the roof has been removed, except for an unattached downspout at the east end of the front facade.

The house contains two dormers, located on the east and west roof slopes of the rear wing. Each dormer has a boxed cornice and eaves beneath a gable roof covered with wood shingles. The cheek walls of each dormer are also clad in wood shingles.

Three interior end chimneys are located on the roof of the house, two on the ridge of the front section and one on the ridge of the rear wing. All three are of brick construction. The chimney stacks at the front section of the house have corbeled tops, while the stack at the rear wing displays the top of a flue pipe. A metal vent pipe protrudes from the roof just to the east of the rear wing chimney stack.

The first floor of the house contains two equal-sized parlors within the front section and a large kitchen room within the rear wing. The east parlor contains the main entrance off the front porch, a fireplace, the stairs to the basement, the stairs to the second floor, and the doorway to the rear wing. The west parlor is accessed through a doorway from the east parlor. Evidence of a fireplace or chimney stack in the west parlor has been removed. The rear kitchen room contains numerous built-in cupboards, a chimney stack on the north wall, and two doors leading to the east and north legs of the rear porch.

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The second floor of the house contains a hall and two bedrooms within the front section, and a hall, two bedrooms, and a bathroom within the rear wing. The front hall is located in the northeast corner of the front section and accesses the two front bedrooms, the rear wing, the stairs to the first floor, and the stairs to the attic. The bedroom to the south of the hall contains a built-in closet and a fireplace. The bedroom to the west corresponds in size to the west parlor beneath it. The rear hall is located in the southeast corner of the rear wing and accesses two bedrooms to the west and a bathroom to the north. The hall and bedrooms contain built-in closets, and a chimney stack is visible in the northwest bedroom. The attic is essentially one large space, while the basement is divided into several sections, separated by load-bearing foundation walls. Further information on floor and room layouts is presented in the attached sketch floor plans.

All stairways within the house are located in the northeast corner of the front section. An enclosed winder stair provides access between the first and second floors. The stairway has plaster walls, a plain board skirt with a beaded top, and a simple crown molding. On the first floor, a door directly south of the stair leads to the basement stairway. On the second floor, a door to the north of the stair accesses the attic stairway. Both basement and attic stairways are partially enclosed, right-angle stairways with little or no trim.

Medium-width, polished boards comprise the flooring used throughout the first and second floors of the house. The floor of the first-floor kitchen room is covered with modern carpeting. The basement has a concrete floor, while the attic floor consists of rough, unpolished boards attached to the floor joists with square-head nails.

The interior walls of the house are covered with plaster. The second floor ceilings are also of plaster, but the first-floor ceilings appear to have a painted drywall veneer. Due to the lack of cornice moldings and the proximity of the ceilings to the top edges of the door and window surrounds, it would appear that the first-floor ceilings have been lowered (by way of the drywall veneer). The date of the work is not known.

Other than door and window surrounds, baseboard comprises the extent of the decorative trim within the front section of the house. The first-floor baseboard consists of a simple board with a beaded top and an applied floor molding strip. The second-floor baseboard consists of a plain board with a smaller board fronting it. The rear kitchen room displays vertical-board wainscoting, with a beaded top and an applied floor molding strip. A small section of baseboard is located at the chimney stack on the north wall; its design is the same as that used in the first-floor front rooms. There is no cornice molding in the room. The second-floor rooms of the wing exhibit simple baseboard and display no cornice molding. The bathroom features plaster and wallpaper surfaces and utilizes simple trim.

The first-floor entrance parlor of the front section has several doors and doorways of various designs. The inner face of the entrance door is flush but shows the markings of the outward-facing panels. The surround is

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typical of the Greek Revival style, with a molding profile that is somewhat heavy and that cuts almost straight back from the face of the molding. The doorways to the west parlor and the rear wing have surrounds with the same molding profile; however, no doors remain in the doorways. In the southeast corner of the room is a built-in cabinet with upper and lower vertical-board doors. The upper door has a single pane of glass and a wooden knob, while the lower door is solid and also has a wooden knob. The cabinet surround utilizes the same Greek Revival molding of the doorway surrounds. To the north of the fireplace is a vertical-board door with a plain door surround, which leads to the basement stairway. Further north is the stairway to the second floor, which is also framed by a plain board surround. Hinge scars indicate that a door was once located there.

The rear kitchen room contains three doorways, two of which lead to the rear porch and one that leads to the front section of the house. The two porch doorways contain wood doors (see above) and display plain board surrounds. The doorway to the front section contains no door but displays a Greek Revival surround comprised of simply fluted vertical and horizontal moldings and plain corner blocks. On the south wall of the room is a built-in cupboard with a plain board surround and double vertical-board doors. The cupboard is located in the former west bay window opening of the front section's rear elevation. In the northwest corner of the room is a built-in closet with double vertical-board doors and a section of cornice molding at the ceiling. In the northeast corner of the room is a built-in cupboard with upper and lower sets of vertical-board doors. The room also contains two modern, wall-mounted metal cabinets.

The doors and doorways of the second-floor rooms follow a standard design of vertical-board doors with plain board surrounds. Hinge scars indicate that a door was once located at the top of the circular stair leading to the first floor. Built-in closets are located in the southeast and west rooms of the front section of the house; the closet in the west room occupies the former west bay window opening of the rear elevation. The hall and bedrooms of the rear wing contain one built-in closet each.

The windows of the front section of the house exhibit wide window reveals that angle in as they move toward the outside. The inner half of each reveal consists of a plain board with a beaded edge, while the outer half consists of a plaster coating over the stone of the wall. The first-floor window surrounds utilize the same Greek Revival molding used at the door surrounds and have sills with rounded nosings. The second-floor windows have plain surrounds and sills. The windows of the rear kitchen room have plain board surrounds, and the sills have simple rounded nosings. The windows on the second floor of the wing utilize plain surrounds and sills.

The wooden fireplace surround in the front entrance parlor consists of a pair of fluted pilasters with plain bases that support three tiers of cornice molding and a mantel shelf. The fireplace opening has been infilled, but the brick hearth remains visible. As noted earlier, the west parlor contains no evidence of a chimney or fireplace. The rear kitchen room contains an

encased chimney stack with a stove pipe opening near the ceiling. The wooden fireplace surround of the second floor southeast room is of the same design as the entrance parlor surround; moreover, the opening has been infilled, and the brick hearth is visible. In the adjacent west bedroom, there is no evidence of a chimney or fireplace (as is the case on the first floor). The northwest bedroom of the rear wing has an encased chimney stack in its northeast corner, but there is no visible opening.

The basement contains a notable feature at the east wall of the front section: a rounded brick arch over the stairs leading to the bulkhead doors. It would appear that the arch is part of the supporting structure for the interior end chimney at the front section's east wall.

Throughout the house are several examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century door hardware. The main entrance door contains a modern chain lock as well as a Victorian-era door bolt and dead bolt box lock with an ornamental metal knob. The door also displays a ca. 1830s-1840s Carpenter's latch, which consists of an iron box mounted to the door, containing the latch mechanism, the keyhole, and the metal knob, and an adjacent iron box mounted to the door jamb, which receives the latch and allows the door to be closed and locked. Within the same room, the door leading to the basement stairway has a variation of the Suffolk thumb latch as well as a modern door bolt. Several of the second-floor room and closet doors display variations of the Suffolk thumb latch. The bathroom and northwest bedroom of the rear wing exhibit mid-nineteenth-century metal box locks with porcelain and metal knobs.

Historically, the house was heated by fireplace and/or stove. In modern times, the house was heated via steam heat, as is evidenced by the radiators in several of the rooms and the furnace and oil tanks in the basement. There is no evidence of an air conditioning or ventilation system other than the use of natural air circulation via open doors and windows.

No historic interior lighting fixtures survive, except for the twentieth-century fixtures over the bathroom mirror; the only other fixtures in the house are the modern ceiling-mounted fluorescent fixtures in the kitchen room. Existing plumbing fixtures include the modern freestanding sink in the kitchen room, and the clawfoot bathtub, porcelain sink, and modern toilet in the bathroom.

The landscape of the Murphy House consists of a surrounding lawn, several trees, and two prominent shrubs at the front porch. A walkway of three stone pavers leads to the porch, and a stone carriage block is located at the intersection of Rockland Road and Old Murphy Road. The rear of the house contains a gravel parking lot with several concrete wheel stops. At the rear of the property are a few sections of a three-rail fence. Nearby are the remnants of the low stone wall that once ran along the south and west edges of the property (the wall built by the E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company). Across Old Murphy Road to the west is an open field and wooded area. To the rear of the property is another wooded area. To the east are three modern buildings containing medical offices associated with

the Alfred I. du Pont Institute, which is located within the Nemours Foundation property on the south side of Rockland Road.

The Nemours Foundation property contains the Alfred I. du Pont Institute and the Nemours Mansion and Gardens and encompasses approximately 320 acres. Rockland Road serves as the northern boundary of the property. The property roughly divides itself in half according to usage, with the Institute occupying the northern half and the Nemours mansion and gardens occupying the southern half. The northern half includes the ca. 1935 Carillon Tower and the nineteenth-century house and barn of the Alfred D. Murphy farm.

The nine-foot estate wall directly across Rockland Road from the Murphy House was built in ca. 1910 by Alfred I. du Pont. The wall is of randomly coursed stone, covered by a cementitious parge that allows some of the stone to show through. The wall sits on a slight stone base and is capped by a single layer of stone, which extends out over the plane of the wall and is, in turn, capped by a layer of concrete with pieces of glass embedded in it. A double row of evergreens runs along the inner face of the wall between the Rockland Road gates and Route 141. Other, more sporadic plantings of trees are located along the remainder of the Rockland Road section of wall. The Rockland Road gates are located directly across from the Murphy House and were installed in ca. 1984, when the large addition to the Alfred I. du Pont Institute was completed. Until that time, there was no opening in the wall in the area of the Murphy House, except for a service gate located some one thousand feet to the east.

History:

The land on which the George Murphy House sits was part of a sixty-one-acre tract conveyed by Adam Williamson to William Young in 1804. In 1815, Young sold a 1.25-acre parcel to Peter Alexander. Two years later, Alexander sold the parcel to George Wallace. In 1836, Wallace died intestate, and the parcel was purchased by James Goodman at public auction. In 1841, William Young, Jr., and John McAllister, Jr., acting as administrators of William Young's will, sold a seven-acre parcel at Rockland Road and Murphy Road (now Old Murphy Road) to George Murphy. In 1847, Goodman sold the small parcel to William Husbands; two years later, Husbands sold the parcel to Murphy. Sometime between 1836 and 1850, McAllister bought a six-acre parcel from the estate of William Young. In 1850, McAllister sold the parcel to Murphy. By 1850, then, George Murphy owned approximately fifteen acres at the intersection of Rockland and Murphy Roads.

George Murphy likely built the existing house between 1841 and 1849, based on the fact that he acquired the seven-acre corner parcel in 1841 and the fact that a building appears on the 1849 Rea and Price atlas. The 1841 deed does not mention a house or building as part of the transaction. Moreover, the 1841 transaction marked the first time that the seven acres had been split off from the original sixty-one acres. Another confirmation of the date is the physical evidence supplied by the house itself, which indicates an 1840s construction date. The fact that George Murphy built the house is in contradiction to the name given to the house in previous

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cultural resource reports, i.e., the William Murphy House. William Murphy, who was George's father, did not become associated with the house until 1851, when George conveyed it to him as a place to retire. Tax records indicate that the transfer included a stone house and a frame barn.

George Murphy is listed in the 1850 agricultural census as a gardener with a wife and four children. His real estate was valued at \$1,500.00. The census notes that he had twelve acres of improved land and three acres of unimproved land. He owned one milk cow and two swine valued at \$30.00. His produce that year consisted of ten bushels of corn, seventy bushels of Irish potatoes, garden produce valued at \$300.00, one hundred pounds of butter, and slaughtered animals valued at \$12.00. William Murphy was a farmer by occupation, owning in ca. 1850 a sixty-acre farm with a stone house and barn as well as four lots and houses in Brandywine Village. The sixty acres and the house and barn were located southwest of the George Murphy House on the opposite side of Rockland Road, on the site of the future Nemours estate. The Rea and Price atlas of 1849 shows William Murphy at this location. The 1860 Eckel atlas shows William as owner of both Murphy properties. The 1868 Pomeroy and Beers atlas indicates that William owned the George Murphy House, while his son, Alfred D. Murphy, owned the sixty-acre property to the southwest (Alfred sold the property to Alfred I. du Pont in 1909).

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In 1870, William died, and in accordance with his will, the Murphy House property reverted to George. Until his death in 1881, George lived in Wilmington, so the property was most likely run by a tenant. In 1881, George died, and the property went to his brother, Alfred, in accordance with George's will. The 1881 Hopkins atlas shows William at the Murphy House property, which is incorrect due to his death in 1870. In 1882, Alfred sold the Murphy House property to Henry du Pont. The 1889 will of Henry du Pont provided for the conveyance of the property to his son, William. The 1893 Baist atlas shows William du Pont at the site of the Murphy House.

In mid-1909, Alfred I. du Pont acquired four hundred acres on the south side of Rockland Road across from the Murphy House property. (In later years, his holdings grew to encompass some fifteen hundred acres.) When Alfred selected the site for his estate, he was purchasing an area that had been used for agriculture since at least the eighteenth century. The area in 1909 was characterized by gently rolling farmland, with pockets of woodland, under the ownership of six individuals and the E. I. du Pont de Nemours Company. By December of 1910, the estate mansion, upper gardens, associated buildings, and nine-foot estate wall were complete. In ca. 1935, the Carillon Tower was constructed some four hundred feet southwest of the Murphy House; it continues to dominate the local landscape. In ca. 1940, the original Alfred I. du Pont Institute building was constructed. In ca. 1984, a large addition was built to the south of the original building, along with a new access drive to Rockland Road. A section of the estate wall was removed, and two pairs of gates were installed directly across from the Murphy House to mark the new drive.

In 1916, William du Pont sold the Murphy House property to Alfred I. du Pont. Over the next sixty-seven years, the Murphy House property remained part of the Alfred I. du Pont holdings, although it was transferred among numerous individuals and corporations for tax and other financial reasons. In 1918, Alfred I. du Pont and his second wife, Alicia, conveyed the property to Dickinson W. Richards of New York City, who with his wife then conveyed the property back to Alicia, who then conveyed the property to Alfred. In 1921, Nemours, Inc., conveyed the property to Alfred. In 1925, Alfred and his third wife, Jessie, conveyed the property to the Brandywine Hundred Realty Corporation of Florida. In 1936, the property was transferred from the Brandywine Hundred Realty Corporation to Almours Securities, Inc., of Florida. Two years later, the holdings of Almours Securities, Inc., were liquidated and transferred to the Florida National Building Corporation of Delaware. In 1942, the Florida National Building Corporation merged with the St. Joe Paper Company of Florida. In 1983, the property was conveyed by the St. Joe Paper Company to the current owner, Al-Zar, Ltd., of Florida.

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During the years that the Murphy House property was part of the Alfred I. du Pont holdings, estate employees occupied the house. An undated drawing (perhaps 1930s or later), showing underground estate water lines, depicts the Murphy House as the "Cudnik House". Seven other employee houses appear nearby on both sides of Murphy Road. Of the eight houses, only the Murphy House survives.

As part of the construction of the Nemours estate, Alfred I. du Pont closed two roads that had previously run through the area within his estate boundary. One of the roads was Murphy Road. Prior to its closure, Murphy Road did not terminate at Rockland Road but continued in a southwesterly direction to the sixty-acre Murphy farm on the other side of Rockland Road. At the farm, the road turned to the south and continued until it terminated at Paper Mill Road near the southwest corner of the estate (Paper Mill Road was the other road that Alfred closed). Although he closed the roads to public travel, Alfred retained both of them for use within his estate. At its north end, Murphy Road became an access drive linking the Murphy farm with the service roads leading to the Rockland Road service gate. The remaining section of road became the north-south axis linking the Carillon Tower with the formal gardens in front of the mansion. Paper Mill Road was retained as an access road and as an east-west garden axis. To replace the public access lost by closing Murphy Road, Alfred had a new road built approximately 1,000 feet west of Murphy Road, just west of the estate wall. This new road served to connect Rockland Road with New Bridge Road, which until that time terminated at Paper Mill Road just outside the estate's southwest corner.

In 1952, the Delaware Department of Transportation made improvements to Concord Pike from within the Wilmington city limits north to Murphy Road. As a separate part of the project, New Bridge Road was extended north beyond Rockland Road to join with Concord Pike near the intersection with Murphy Road. The new road was named Murphy Road, causing the former Murphy Road to be renamed Old Murphy Road. The

north end of the former Murphy Road was reconfigured so as to tie into the new Murphy Road instead of Concord Pike.

Since 1983, the current owner of the Murphy House has utilized the building for office space and, more recently, storage purposes. The one-story garage to the rear of the house was demolished in ca. 1990. The nearby low stone wall and the surrounding picket fence were removed at an unknown date.

This HABS document has been prepared as a mitigative measure to satisfy the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, as well as a July 1992 Memorandum of Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Delaware State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, with the Delaware Department of Transportation and New Castle County, Delaware, concurring. The impetus for the preparation of this document has been the Route 141 improvements project, a project proposed by the Federal Highway Administration and the Delaware Department of Transportation for the purpose of improving problems of traffic congestion and safety along Route 141 between Montchanin Road (Route 100) and Concord Pike (Route 202). ~~The proposed work calls for the expansion of the current roadway into a four-lane divided highway.~~ The first phase of the project--slated to begin in early 1995--will involve the section of Route 141 between Alapocas Drive and Route 202. This section abuts the western boundary of the A. I. du Pont Estate (Nemours). A key component of the phase will involve the construction of a pair of Route 141 overpasses at Rockland Road. As proposed, the overpasses will be at existing grade, while Rockland Road, which abuts the northern boundary of the estate, will be submerged below grade from a point west of Route 141 to a point west of Old Murphy Road and the George Murphy House. A future phase of the project will include a realignment of Old Murphy Road and improvements at Route 202 in conjunction with improvements at I-95.

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to the Route 202 and I-95 northbound ramp widening

Sources:

Architectural Drawings:

Baist, G. W. *Atlas of New Castle County, Delaware, from Actual Surveys, Official Records and Private Plans...* Philadelphia: G. W. Baist, 1893.

Drawing W-10-1 of the collection of the Nemours Foundation, Wilmington, showing employee housing along Murphy Road (now Old Murphy Road). No title, publishing information, or date is given on the drawing. It appears to date to the 1930s or later (but no later than the mid-1980s).

"Map of Upper Delaware, Wilmington and Vicinity." N.d. Drawing 65.1 of the collections of the Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington.

"Murphy Road Improvement Plans, Rockland Road to Concord Pike, New Castle County, Delaware." Contract #799, 1952. Original located at the State of Delaware Department of Transportation, Dover.

Price, Francis A. and Fred Somers Price. *"Nemours" and Vicinity, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware.* N.p.: Francis A. Price and Fred Somers Price, 1917.

"Rockland Road Improvement Plans, New Castle County, Delaware." Contract #1064, n.d. (possibly dates to between 1944 and 1952). Original located at the State of Delaware Department of Transportation, Dover.

"Topographic Map of a Part of Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, 1914." Used as base map with later notations and alterations. Marginal note reads: "R. Robertson 7-2-34/City of Wilm./Revised 4-1-54." Drawing M-5-5 of the collection of the Nemours Mansion and Gardens, Wilmington.

Historic Views:

Aero Service Corporation Collection. Photographs of the A. I. du Pont estate (Nemours) and vicinity, 1936, 1944. Black and white aerials. Photograph nos. 88.8.1, 88.8.243, 88.8.328. Originals located at the Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington.

Delaware Department of Transportation. Photograph of Wilmington and vicinity, showing the A. I. du Pont estate (Nemours), 1977. Black and white aerial. Photograph no. 10003-177. Original located at the State of Delaware Department of Transportation, Dover.

Nemours Foundation. Photograph of the A. I. du Pont estate (Nemours) and vicinity, ca. 1916-1926. Black and white aerial. Photograph no. N10-10. Original located at the Nemours Mansion and Gardens, Wilmington.

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1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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Thompson, Priscilla M., with revisions by Diane Bernardo. "Nemours Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Prepared by Priscilla M. Thompson of The History Store, November 11, 1985, with revisions by Diane Bernardo of the State of Delaware Department of Transportation, ca. 1989. Original located at the State of Delaware Historic Preservation Office, Dover.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Herman, Bernard L. *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

Wall, Joseph Frazier. *Alfred I. du Pont: The Man and his Family*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

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KFS Historic Preservation Group
1993-1994

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

George Murphy House
Junction of Rockland Road
and Old Murphy Road
Wilmington vicinity
New Castle County
Delaware

HABS No. DE-284

Photographer: Rob Tucher

April 1993

- DE-284-1 VIEW EAST, JUNCTION OF ROCKLAND ROAD AND OLD MURPHY ROAD, GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE TO LEFT AND ALFRED I. DU PONT INSTITUTE GATES TO RIGHT
- DE-284-2 VIEW SOUTH ALONG OLD MURPHY ROAD TOWARD JUNCTION WITH ROCKLAND ROAD, GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE TO LEFT, ALFRED I. DU PONT INSTITUTE GATES AT CENTER, AND NEMOURS ESTATE WALL AND CARILLON TOWER TO RIGHT
- DE-284-3 VIEW SOUTH, GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE TO LEFT, ALFRED I. DU PONT INSTITUTE GATES AT CENTER, AND NEMOURS ESTATE WALL AND CARILLON TOWER TO RIGHT
- DE-284-4 VIEW WEST ALONG ROCKLAND ROAD, NEMOURS CARILLON TOWER AND ESTATE WALL TO LEFT AND GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE TO RIGHT
- DE-284-5 VIEW NORTH THROUGH ALFRED I. DU PONT INSTITUTE GATES TO JUNCTION OF ROCKLAND ROAD AND OLD MURPHY ROAD, GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE TO RIGHT
- DE-284-6 FRONT (SOUTH) FACADE
- DE-284-7 WEST SIDE
- DE-284-8 EAST AND NORTH SIDES, NEMOURS CARILLON TOWER IN BACKGROUND



HABS No. DE - 284 -1



HABS No. DE - 284 -2



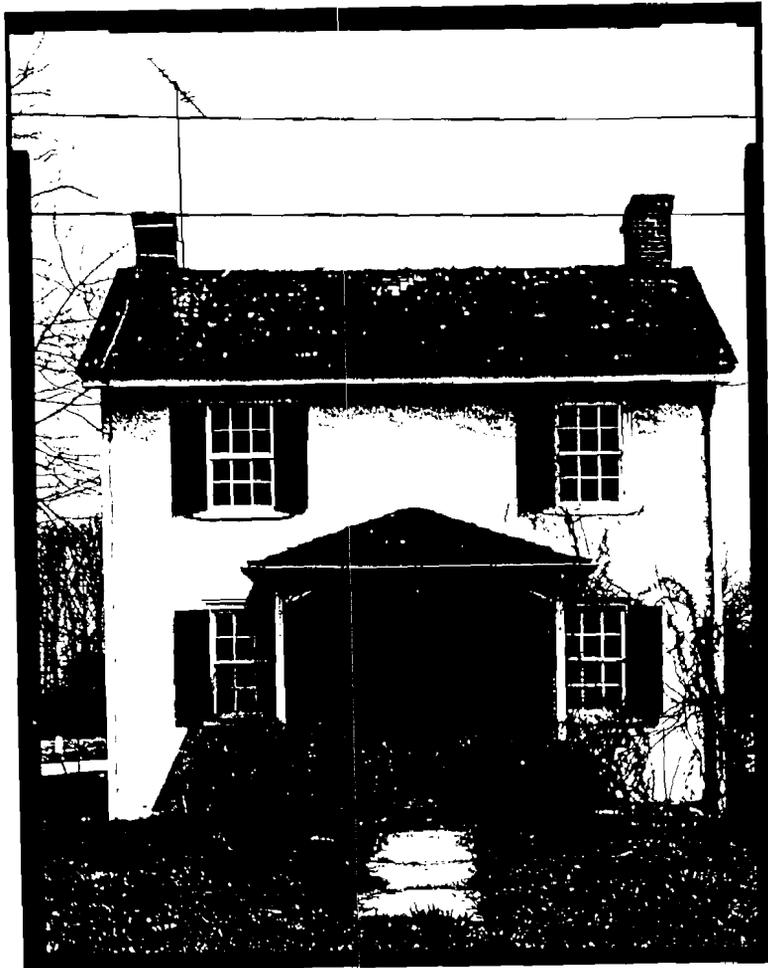
HABS No. DE - 284 -3



HABS No. DE - 284 -4



HABS No. DE - 284 -5



HABS No.
DE - 284 -6

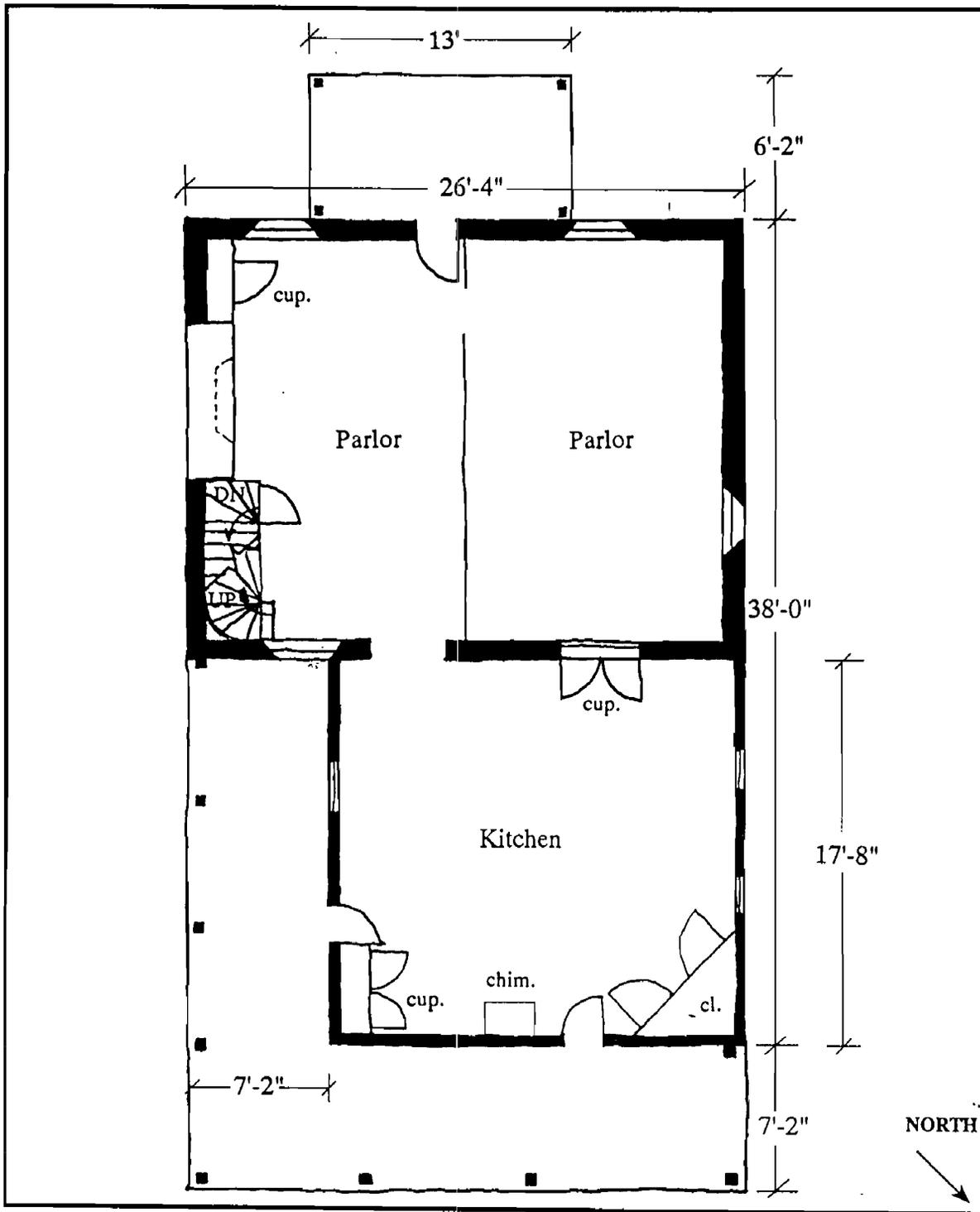


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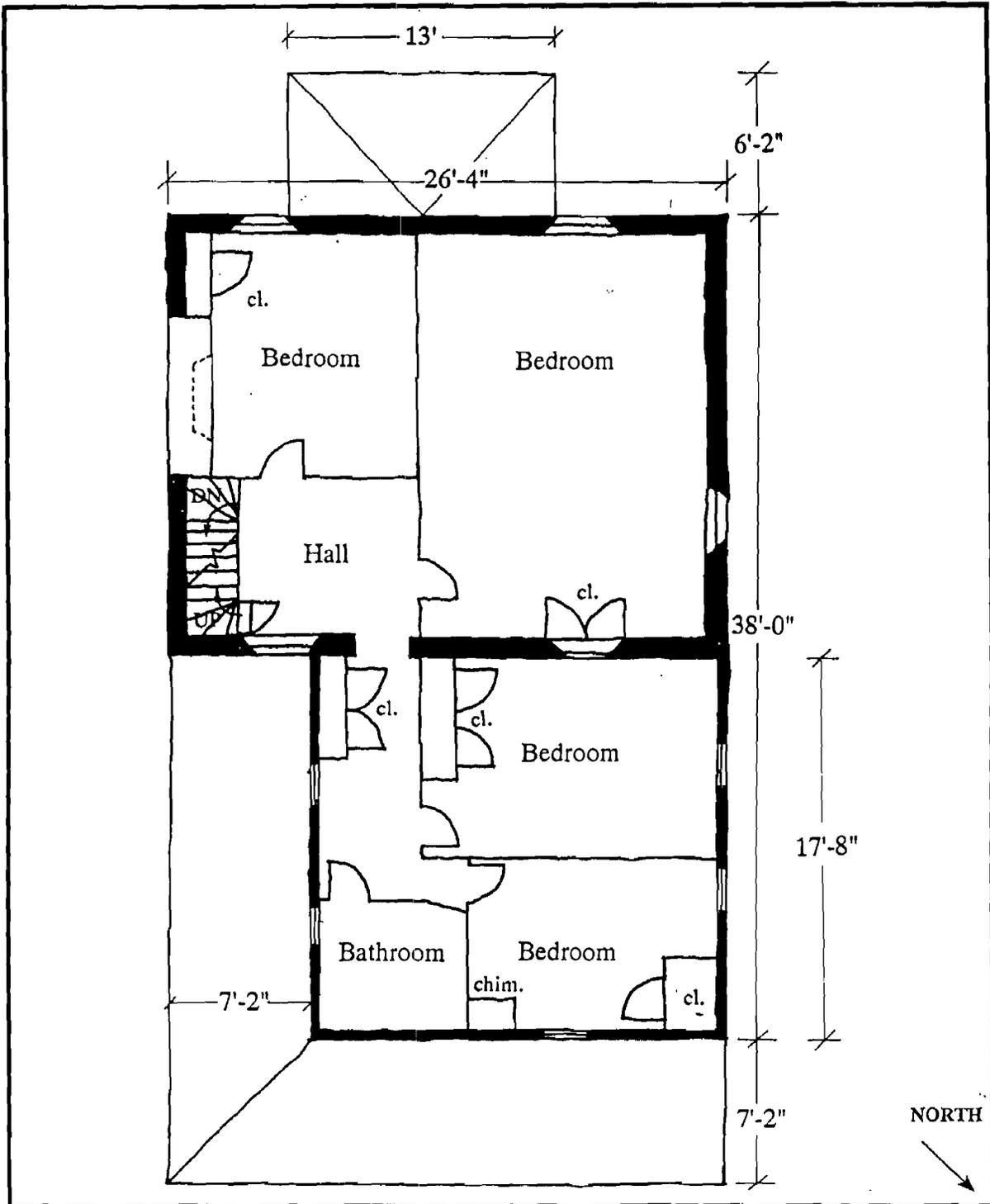


HABS No. DE - 284 -8

GEORGE MURPHY HOUSE
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First Floor Plan
Not to Scale
Date Drawn: 1993
Prepared By: Jill Cremer
Source: Physical inspection



Second Floor Plan
Not to Scale
Date Drawn: 1993
Prepared By: Jill Cremer
Source: Physical inspection