

## II. HISTORIC CONTEXT

### *General History*

The *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* defines the Upper Piedmont's geology and geography as a fairly consistent soil type and topography. Land-use is dominated by both Dover and outlying rural economies.

The soils in this zone range from medium-textured to moderately coarse, with some areas being well-drained and others very poorly drained. The subsoil consists of sandy loam or sandy clay loam. Land contours range from level through gently rolling to steep.... Originally, the entire area was full of waterways. Many of the large creeks and rivers that flowed into the Delaware River were navigable by small boats for a fair distance inland. In addition, numerous small streams drained into the larger creeks. Like those in the Piedmont Zone, these streams have been subject to heavy silting and deposition over the past three centuries and in most cases are no longer navigable except by canoe or rowboats.... The zone was also heavily wooded with a variety of trees: oak, hickory, poplar, walnut, ash. Indian corn grew wild in many areas, and the land was inhabited by a large range of animals. At the present time much of the zone is under cultivation for agriculture. Dover, the state's capital, is the only large town in the zone, but there are many smaller communities (Ames et al. 34).

While the geography of the portion of Smyrna within the APE reflects earlier agricultural land-use, Smyrna is primarily reflective of the theme of Urbanization and Early Suburbanization (as defined in the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*). The APE features a number of property types from the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries which are directly related to that theme.

The earliest explorations of Delaware occurred during the sixteenth century when Spanish and Portuguese merchants charted portions of the state's coastline. Henry Hudson and Cornelius Hendricksen followed later (the former in 1609 and the latter in 1614), establishing a Dutch presence in Delaware. The first recorded Dutch settlement occurred in 1631, near present-day Lewes. Thirty settlers under the auspices of the Dutch East Indies trading company erected a settlement (Zwaanendael) on the west bank of Lewes creek. Native Americans destroyed the small settlement in 1632 and Dutch colonization came to a standstill in the Lewes area until 1658, when the Dutch—intending to secure the region—erected a settlement called Hoerckill.

By the third decade of the seventeenth century, settlement within Delaware had become concentrated in the northern region. In 1638, a group of Swedish settlers established a colony in present-day Wilmington. The settlement known as Fort Christiana was erected at the confluence of the Christiana and Brandywine Rivers. After the erection of a log fort, a village known as Christineham was established (Thomas, Regensburg, and Basalik II-1). Control of the state would oscillate between the Dutch and Swedish during the next seventeen years. During the eighteenth century, Christineham was joined to the village of Willingtown (Wilmington). Appointed by Queen Christiana, Colonel Johan Prinz served as governor of New Sweden from 1643 to 1653.

In 1651, Peter Stuyvesant purchased a tract of land from the Lenapi, which had been sold previously to the Swedes. Believing the land to be under Dutch ownership, Stuyvesant erected Fort Casmir, which led to the establishment of the village of New Amstel. Three years later in 1654, Prinz's successor, Johan Rising, seized Fort Casmir and renamed it Fort Trinity. Though the Lenapi confirmed Swedish ownership of the west bank of the Delaware River, the Dutch sent Stuyvesant back in 1655 to recapture the fort from the Swedish. On August 31, 1655, Stuyvesant was successful, and Fort Casmir was returned to the Dutch. In addition, the Swedes were driven from both banks of the Delaware River. Fort Christiana was captured two weeks later and the territory remained under Dutch control until 1663, when the Dutch West India Company transferred rights to land along the Delaware to King Charles II of England. Charles granted the tract—which extended from south of Christiana Creek to Bombay Hook—to James, Duke of York in 1644 (Scharf). Desiring a British territory for British subjects, the duke drove the Dutch from the region and changed the name of New Amstel to New Castle.

The Dutch recaptured the territory in 1673; however, the English regained control by 1681. In that year, a twelve-mile arc was drawn delineating the northern border of New Castle County, and William Penn was granted the Province of Pennsylvania. In an effort to ensure that Pennsylvania would have land along the Delaware River, Penn petitioned the Crown for the land south of the province on the west side of the Delaware River and Bay. The Duke of York granted Penn's petition in 1682; by 1683, the Province of Pennsylvania annexed the counties of New Castle, St. Jones, and Deale. That same year, Penn renamed St. Jones County and Deale County (newly named Kent and Sussex Counties, respectively).

Delaware continued to be the subject of territorial disputes well into the eighteenth century. A lengthy dispute had erupted between Lord Calvert and William Penn concerning the boundaries of their respective provinces. This dispute continued between their heirs until the Mason-Dixon line was established. In 1776, Delaware declared itself not only independent of English rule but also separated itself from Pennsylvania to form its own state. In 1787, when the U.S. Constitution was submitted to the states for ratification, Delaware became the first of the thirteen original states to ratify the Constitution of the United States when it signed document on December 7 at a convention in Dover.

From its first settlements in the seventeenth century until the late nineteenth century, northern Delaware was Delaware's chief economic region, with Wilmington the major economic center. Starting in the 1720s, a milling industry had begun along the Brandywine Creek in Wilmington (Hoffecker 24). In 1731, Thomas Willing laid out property lots on a tract of land near the earlier Fort Christiana, where he intended to establish a commercial center that would develop into a transshipment point for grain and other agricultural produce from northern New Castle County to Philadelphia. In 1739, the town received its borough charter and its name changed to Wilmington. By the late 1700s, Wilmington was a town of artisans and merchants, with an economy focused on shipbuilding, milling, coopering (barrel making), and the export of flour and other products. The milling industry burgeoned throughout northern Delaware and continued to thrive financially, especially during the Revolutionary War, when area millers supplied flour and meal to Washington's troops.

Wilmington continued to develop its industrial base and by the first decade had established itself as Delaware's industrial and commercial center. Instrumental in the genesis of the city of Wilmington was E. I. DuPont. In 1802, DuPont moved from France to Delaware, purchased property on the Brandywine River and began construction of his gunpowder plant, Eleutherian Mills. A year later DuPont began to manufacture and sell gunpowder, with exports to Spain. By 1811, Eleutherian Mills was recognized as the largest manufacturer of gunpowder in America and supplying gunpowder to the nation's militia during the War of 1812. Lammont DuPont developed blasting powder in 1857 and dynamite in 1861. During the Civil War DuPont refused to sell gunpowder to the Confederate States. The DuPont Company continued to contribute to Delaware's economic base by expanding from gunpowder and dynamite production into the chemical industry. By the first decade of the twentieth century the company had perfected cellophane wrap. Prior to World War II, the company developed nylon stockings or "synthetic silk" for women and by the mid-twentieth century has developed Teflon (DuPont Company Pamphlet).

In 1802, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company was chartered. Within two years the canal company had begun construction on the 14-mile long canal and fourteen locks that would connect the Christiana River in Delaware to the Elk River in Maryland. By 1806, financial problems had stalled completion of the canal. In 1822 the canal company was reorganized and construction resumed in 1824. Despite reorganization the canal was not completed until 1829 due to strikes and financial difficulties. The canal continued under the auspices of the canal company until 1919 when the United States government purchased it. The government in turn refurbished the canal and despite one-way traffic and numerous accidents, the canal remains an important navigation route today.

The remainder of Delaware continued to be largely agricultural well into the twentieth century. Counties such as Sussex and Kent were known for their peach orchards canning factories. The agricultural areas experienced an increase in production with the incorporation of the Delaware Railroad in 1855. Though railroads such as the New Castle-Frenchtown Railroad, the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River Railroad, and the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad has been established circa 1832-1838, they primarily served the Northern Delaware area linking Wilmington to larger commercial markets. The Delaware Railroad enabled farmers in southern Delaware to ship their products to other larger markets via Wilmington (Historical Society of Delaware Pamphlet). When the Delaware, Maryland & Virginia Railroad was extended from Harrington to Georgetown in 1869, fruit processing plants and canneries proliferated (LeeDecker et al. 20).

Though peach production declined throughout the state in 1900 due to an unknown disease, corn and wheat remained staples in Delaware's agricultural base. During the second decade of the twentieth century, Kent County became the state's leading apple producer. Following World War II, Delaware experienced suburbanization, most notably in the Wilmington area, but a large portion of the state has remained agricultural with 85 percent of residents classified as rural in 1970 (Hancock 1101). With the development of a state highway system during the 1930s, Delaware experienced another important shift towards commercialism, especially in its rural areas. The new roadways brought an increase in gas stations, convenience stores, restaurants, and roadside produce stands. In addition, suburban growth also increased due to the proliferation of

highways allowing many third-generation farm residents to move to towns such as Smyrna, Georgetown, Milford, and Odessa. Despite suburban growth, one half of Kent County remains farmland producing both soy and corn.

### *Project Area Narrative History*

#### *Smyrna*

Situated in the Upper Peninsula Geographic Zone, as defined in the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Ames et al. 1989), much of the project area is located in the town of Smyrna and along on Carter Road between Wheatley's Pond Road and Sunnyside Road.

#### *Exploration and Frontier Settlement*

The project area, located in Kent County, is historically part of the "Hundred of Duck Creek," which was established in 1682. Originally called St. Jones County, Kent County's first recorded land transactions occurred in 1671 with the sale of 5,300 acres, which were divided into ten sites on or near the lower part of the St. Jones River. In 1683, the county was renamed and re-chartered Kent County by William Penn (Jackson).

During the period 1674–1681, Sir Edmond Andros, served as Delaware's Colonial Governor, governed Delaware. Though the "Hundred of Duck Creek" was not established until 1682, Governor Andros had granted land patents in the area to a handful of settlers, primarily in the Bombay Hook (also known as Boomptiens Udden and Bombo Hook) area circa 1675 (Conrad 1908:613). These settlers included:

- Peter Bayard—"Bombay Neck"—600 acres;
- Francis Whitwell (1675)—"Whitehall Neck"—1,000 acres;
- Francis Whitwell and John Richardson (1680)—2,000 acres;
- William Shurmer—Town of Duck Creek (Salisbury);
- William Frampton—"Bear Garden";
- John Hillyard—"Westmoreland"—200 acres, (1680); "Coventry—425 acres, (1675); "The Mother Plantation"—200 acres, and (1677)—"Hillyard's Adventure"—600 acres;
- H. Pearman (1684)—"Pearman's Choice" (Belmont Hall)—600 acres granted by William Penn; and
- William Shurmer (1674)—"Gravesend"—1,000 acres granted by William Penn (portion of which is the site of present day Smyrna and Clayton).

#### *Intensified and Durable Occupation*

By 1768, the area was known as Duck Creek Crossroads, and it experienced sparse settlement during the late eighteenth century (Figure 3). Large portions of Duck Creek Crossroads were originally part of William Green's circa 1680 "Gravesend Tract," while the section between Duck Creek Crossroads and Bombay Lighthouse was part of William Frampton's "Bear Garden"

Figure 3 - 1740 Map of Pennsylvania



tract and the south side of a branch of the Duck Creek where Belmont Hall is located was formed from H. Pearman's 1685 tract "Pearman's Choice" (Caley "Duck Creek"). The present town of Smyrna is believed to have been part of the "Gravesend Tract." In 1674, William Penn granted William Shurmer 1,000 acres along the Duck Creek and six years later, Shurmer sold the tract to William Green. James Green, son of Thomas Green and grandson of William Green inherited a portion of Gravesend in 1768. During the same year Green sold 15 acres for the creation of Duck Creek Crossroads (Caley "Duck Creek" 13). Within a year Duck Creek Crossroads was comprised of a gristmill, a bolting mill, a tan yard, a blacksmith shop, a tavern, two cemeteries, a church, two businesses, and a Quaker Meeting House (Scharf).

In 1705, the Society of Friends established a congregation near Duck Creek Crossroads, where they later erected a meetinghouse and schoolhouse. The area remained predominantly Quaker until 1733, when the Presbyterians established a church. The Presbyterians were followed by the Episcopalians, who erected St. Peter's Church in 1740, and the Methodists, whose church was established in 1780. The Roman Catholics did not establish a church in Smyrna until 1863.

Early eighteenth-century industries were limited to agriculture and milling, with products being transported to markets in Wilmington and Philadelphia by way of Duck Creek. In 1717, Richard Empson built a gristmill, a bolting mill, and a sawmill on the Gravesend Tract (Conrad). The chief agricultural products in the Duck Creek area were wheat, corn, and peaches. In addition to yeoman and "middling" farmers, several large estates were also established, including "Belmont Hall" which had formerly been part of the "Pearman's Choice" tract. Located in South Smyrna, John Moore purchased the property in 1753 and built Belmont Hall. In 1781, Governor Thomas Collins purchased the property and used it as his residence (Siders et al.). John Cummins, a gentleman farmer is credited with making Smyrna an important grain market, second only to Wilmington. Cummins erected granaries at Smyrna Landing and purchased several large vessels to transport the grain. He served as president of the Commerce Bank during the first decade of the twentieth century.

### *Early Industrialization*

During the period 1768–1785, the village of Duck Creek Crossroads experienced steady population growth; by 1787, the Indian King Hotel had been built to accommodate visiting merchants and stagecoach travelers. Duck Creek Crossroads had become an active shipping center for the central Delaware region by the late eighteenth century. In 1790, a post office was established in the community (Bounds). The area between the river landing and the village was named for the London suburb of Wapping. Wapping later became the center of a large African-American community (Scharf 1081). Historic maps and accounts indicate that the village grew and had become an important commercial center by the start of the nineteenth century (Figure 4).

In 1806 the village's name was changed to Smyrna, its namesake a Turkish seaport in Asia Minor (*City of Smyrna Information Guide*). Smyrna's first bank, the Commerce Bank of Delaware, was established in 1812, and in 1817 the town was incorporated. In 1818, three local women, Anne Spruance and Mary and Ann Patterson, started the first free school on Commerce Street. Several major roadways used for transportation of products to the landing and other



markets entered the community including present-day Route 13 and Carter Road. Indicated on early-nineteenth-century deeds as the “Road to Font Hill,” Carter Road has historically remained a transportation link between the Lake Como/Mill Creek area and Clayton (Caley “interview”). Despite improvements to overland roads, river transportation continued to be important to Smyrna and in 1837, the Delaware House—a hotel that catered to Steamboat passengers—opened. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, small ancillary industries were established in Smyrna. By 1830, these industries included Green’s Pottery, John H. Pennington’s “Piano Fortes,” and Benson & Colt Carriage Makers were successfully established within the town circa 1830 (Scharf). The Bank of Smyrna was incorporated in 1821 and served the newly expanded business community.

### *Industrialization and Early Urbanization*

Smyrna’s economy remained dependent upon shipping and agriculture through the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Through the creation of several small industries, however the economy began to shift to an industrial base. These industries included: pottery kilns, carriage and wagon works, several foundries, a tannery, fruit basket factory, and a wheelwright. Specific companies established during the period 1840-1880 included:

- Millaway & Son Foundry;
- J.M. Denning Carriage Factory;
- Isaac Solomon Soap and Candle Factory;
- Clegg and Ruth Foundry;
- Pratt and Lockwood Foundry;
- Hoffecker Cannery;
- William Worden Steam Saw Mill and Machine Shop;
- James Taylor Wheelwright and Wagon Manufactory;
- Tilghman Wagons and Agricultural Implements;
- Coshill and Jorman Peach Evaporators; and
- Lassell and Curry Wagon Manufacturers (known as J.C. Lassell & Company circa 1882).

By 1857, Smyrna had a population of 1,800 and the industrial base had expanded from primarily shipping of agricultural products to include:

- Twelve dry goods and groceries;
- One tannery;
- Four clothing stores;
- One marble yard;
- Two jewelers;
- Two hotels;
- Three foundries;
- Three churches;
- Three coach shops;
- Two stove and tin ware stores;
- Two machine shops;

- One gun and locksmith shop;
- Six blacksmith shops;
- One select school and several district schools;
- Two harness makers;
- Three ale and oyster saloons;
- Four wheelwrights;
- Six doctors;
- Four boot/shoe stores;
- One barber;
- Two basket factories; and
- One china store (Scharf 1099).

That same year the Smyrna Coal, Coke and Gas Company, Inc. was formed furnishing gas to Smyrna residents and businesses. The gas, originally made from rosin, was converted to coal gas in 1875. Gaslights had been installed circa 1860 and by 1880 there were three miles of gas pipes and 47 gas street lamps within the town. A new industry evolved as a direct result of the increase in agricultural business. In 1860, the first fertilizer shipment was made from Smyrna Landing by the J. F. Tygent Company (Caley 31). In 1875, the Delaware State Grange was organized and chapters were opened in Kent County to assist farmers.

In 1865, John Anthony of New York moved to Delaware to establish a peach orchard. That same year he purchased the Fox Hall Estate from Isaac Budd. Also known as the Baynard House, the estate featured a two-story brick house built circa 1750. In 1866, John Anthony erected what is believed to be the first pre-fabricated home in Delaware. Boxcars from New York transported building materials that had been pre-cut and prepared in Troy, New York. Once at the site, workmen assembled the building materials atop an existing foundation (National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form). The property slowly evolved from a peach orchard to an arboretum. Begun with the tree-lined driveway planted by John Anthony, subsequent members of the Anthony family expanded the arboretum to include evergreens, Japanese pines, locust, gum, and oak trees, various shrubberies and plants. In 1886, Fox Hall estate was renamed Bannister Hall.

James W. Spruance, another nineteenth-century, local entrepreneur purchased the Font Hill Estate from Eliza Blackiston Cummins Derrickson in 1868. The estate had originally been part of the Van Gasken tract and was sold in 1850, with an adjoining 200-acres, to Daniel Cummins. Cummins unsuccessfully tried to sell the estate in 1854; however, it remained unsold and passed to his daughter Eliza Blackiston Cummins Derrickson upon his death (Caley “Footprints” 33). Immediately after the purchase, Spruance had the tract divided into lots with 60-foot wide avenues running east and west and 40-foot wide streets extending north and south (Figure 5). In December 1869, James W. Spruance advertised lots in his newly formed “Spruance City” development for \$100.00 per lot. Included in the sale was the mansion known as Font Hill. The development was bounded by Carter Road to the west, Howard Street to the east, Delaware Avenue to the north, and Frazer Street to the south (Figure 6).

Figure 5 – Map showing Spruance

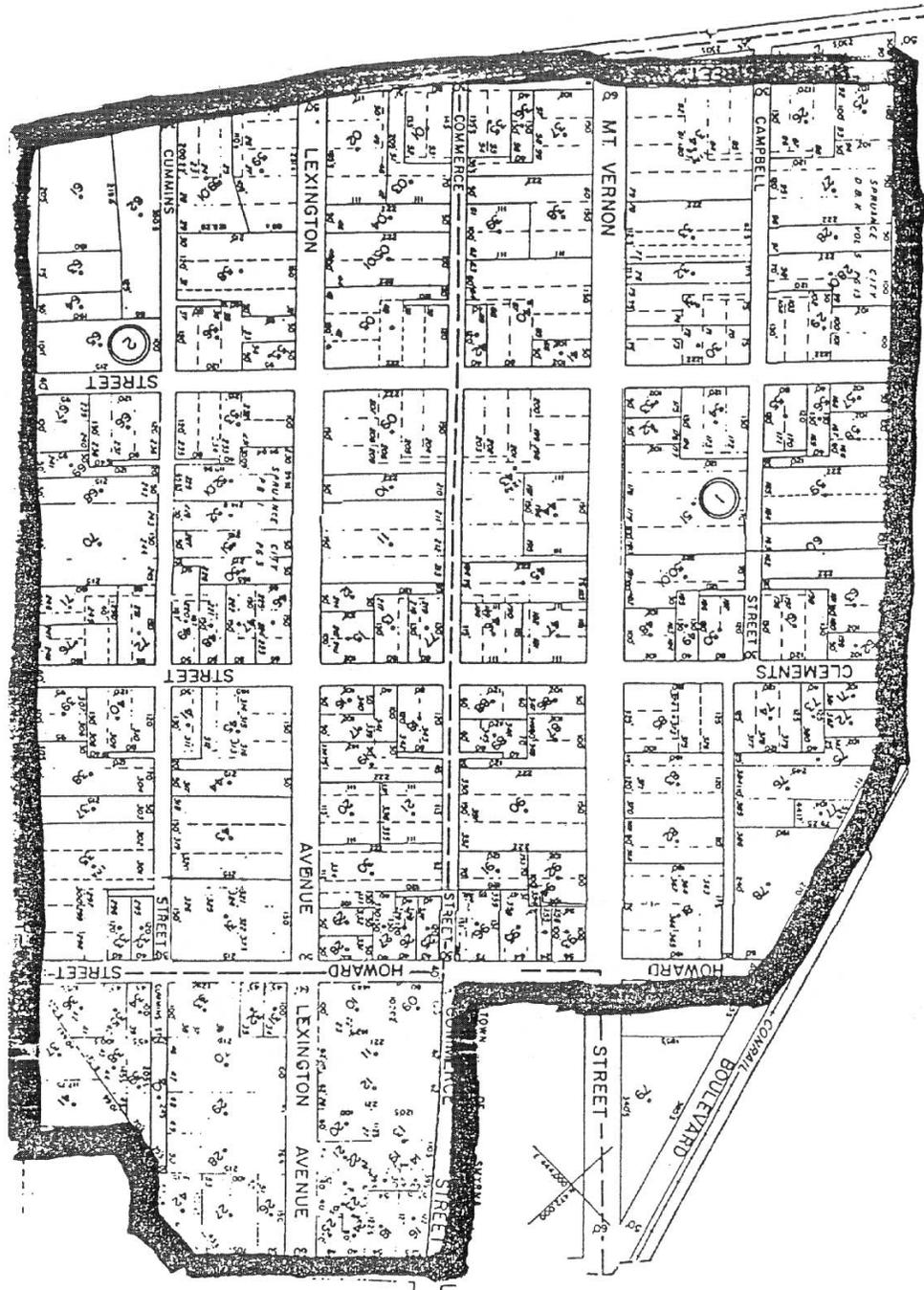
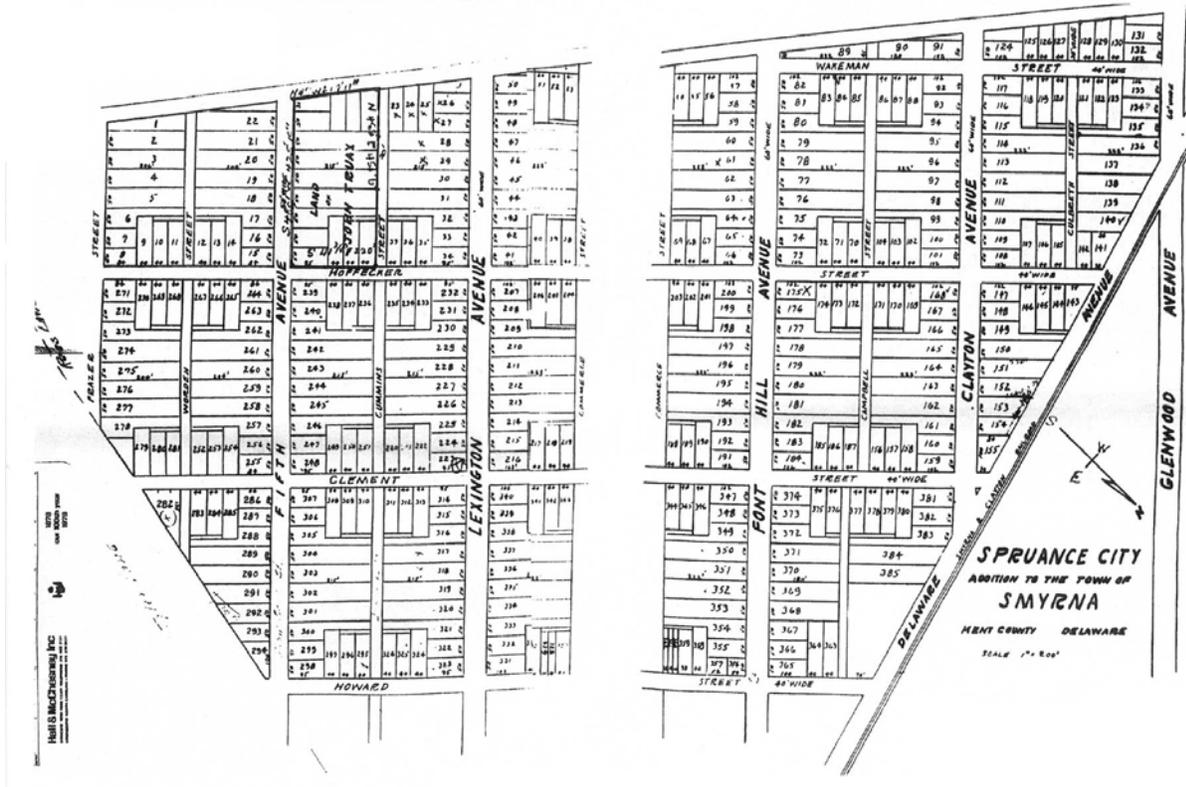


Figure 6 – Plot Plan



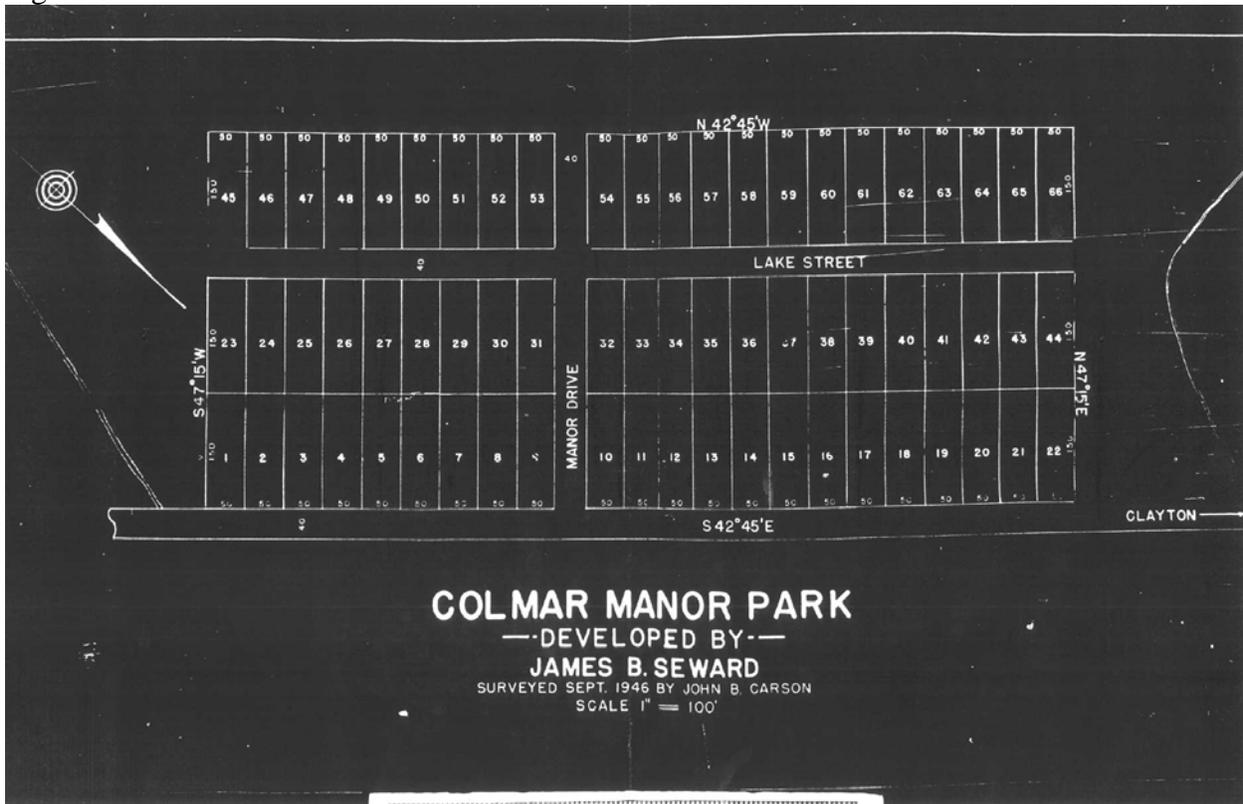
A lottery was scheduled for February 15, 1870 and by the end of January 140 persons had purchased tickets for the lots. Mrs. Christiana Heimerdinger of Philadelphia held the winning ticket for the Font Hill Mansion, which she immediately sold to James Spruance's brother Presley. Presley Spruance and his wife lived at Font Hill for over twenty-five years; after Presley's death in 1896, the house passed to his widow Mary, who owned it until her death in 1921 (Caley 34). Font Hill is still extant and is currently privately owned. Despite the popularity of the lottery, only a few houses were built within Spruance City, the majority of these along Howard Street between Mt. Vernon and Cummins Streets. This was due in part to the fact that the lots were only 25 x 25 feet, and also to the fact that Spruance often did not provide the deed after the lot was purchased. Eventually, squatters moved into Spruance City and were granted ownership by paying taxes on the lots for twenty-five years (Caley "interview").

Perhaps because of its growing suburbs, the 1880 census of Smyrna counted 2,423 persons within the city limits. Smyrna continued to expand its boundaries during the late 1860s; by 1868 three railroads—the Delaware Maryland Railroad, the Smyrna Railroad, and the Delaware Railroad—served the Smyrna area (Figure 7). The Branch Road Line erected in 1861 connected Clayton to Smyrna. With the establishment of the railroad line through Smyrna in 1885, industry and population continued to grow so that by 1888 numerous businesses were located within the city. The Smyrna Railroad line originally passed through the town and traveled along Main Street to and from a depot at the Presbyterian Church. Near the site of present-day Dave's TV Repair, the track formed a sharp curve resulting in repeatedly derailments of the line's engine. The line was eventually moved to the town's outskirts and remained in use until the mid-nineteenth century (Caley "interview").

Although the town's industry continued to develop, agriculture continued to be important to Smyrna's economy and in 1880 the town was the peach center of Delaware. Strawberries, which had been introduced after the Civil War, were Smyrna's other dominant fruit product, while corn and wheat continued to be the principal grains. Economic expansion in Smyrna continued after the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, Smyrna's commercial success had started to wane. Wilmington became the center for all of Delaware's major shipping. Despite a decline in commerce and industry, the population continued to grow through suburbanization, during the post- World War II period. In 1946, developer James B. Seward purchased a 111-acre parcel on the west side of Carter Road for development of his planned community "Colmar Manor Park" (Figure 8). The land was formerly part of the Joseph Moore Farm (Kent County Recorder of Deeds). Colmar Manor Park was developed in three stages, the first stage (known as Colmar Manor Park) was developed in 1947, the second stage (Colmar Park "A") in 1966, and the final stage (Colmar Park "B") in 1968. Though the Joseph Moore Farm was once a part of the nineteenth-century Jonathan Rees Farm, which appears on the 1868 Beers map, no nineteenth century historic buildings associated with the Rees tract are extant. During the period 1925 to 1980, Wheatley's Service Station, which is located at the intersection of Route 6 and Wheatley's Pond Road, was an automobile dealership. This property was purchased in 1925 by Albert Pleasanton from Maie and Frederick Thomas (Kent County Deed V-12, 314).



Figure 8



## *Clayton*

The northwestern portion of the project area is adjacent to the town of Clayton. The town is located in the Kenton Hundred, which was formed in 1689 from the western portion of the Duck Creek Hundred and a portion of the Little Creek Hundred. Settlement of the area can be traced to 1683, when William Penn offered patents for parcels on a 10,000-acre tract of land known as the “Manor of Freith” for purchase. The land was later sold to various entrepreneurs and the British Naval Store Company. The BNS Company purchased their tract in 1714 and cultivated the land for the production of hemp. Other early patentees included:

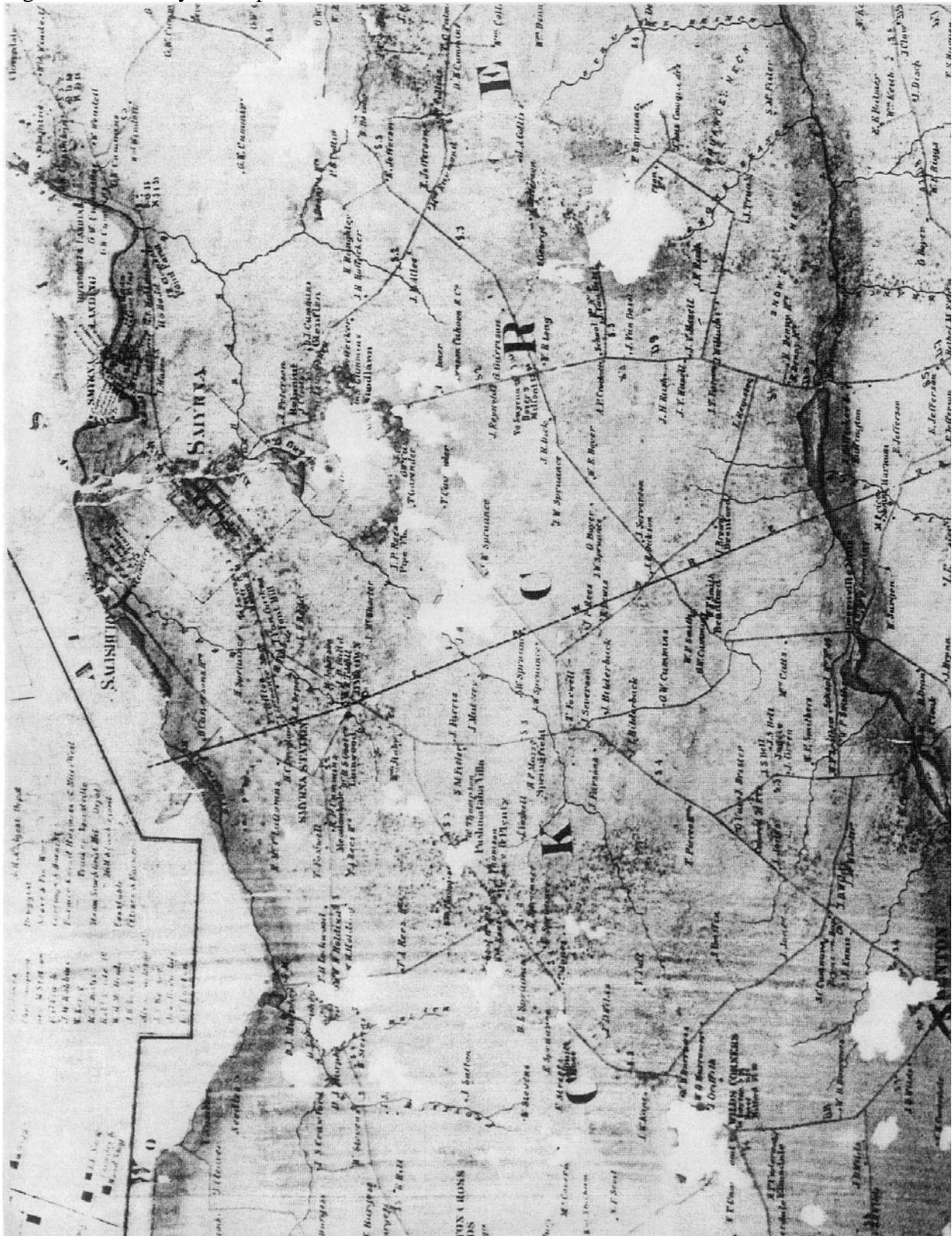
- Benjamin Shurman—2,125 acres;
- Walter Dulaney (1706);
- Captain Richard Smith (1710);
- Benjamin Blackeston (1723)—“Deer Park”—2,255 acres;
- Samuel Chew;
- William Ellinsworth—“Duncaster”;
- John Hillyard—“Hillyard’s Exchange”—426 acres;
- James Green —“Brenford”; and
- Philip Lewis —“Seven Hickories” (Conrad).

In 1710, Moors from Spain are believed to have settled a 1,000-acre “Moorstown” tract on the Dover Kenton Road; the community was later renamed Cheswold. According to some local historians, the community’s leaders, John and Israel Durham, refused to intermingle with either African-American or white settlers and optioned for an isolated settlement. The origins of the “Moors of Delaware” have historically been subject to speculation and theory and the topic of numerous ethnological studies and theories (David).

As with other regions within Kent County, the economy was heavily dependent upon agriculture. In 1820, the Griffith Grist Mill was erected 1½ miles north of present-day Clayton and served the surrounding area. The earliest recorded settlement within the Clayton area was “Jimstown,” alleged to have been located one-quarter mile from Clayton (Conrad). Documentation on this early settlement is sparse and historical accounts are vague, however, the Byles 1859 *Map of Kent County* clearly indicates the crossroads settlement of Jimstown near the Delaware Railroad (Figure 9). Richard Tibbitt, the founder of Clayton, is listed as a resident of Jimstown. The 1868 Beers map also shows the crossroads settlement though it is not labeled as Jimstown. The former nineteenth century settlement is outside of the survey area, west of the Baynard House.

The town of Clayton was established in the mid-nineteenth century in relation to the development of the railroad in Kent County. Although the residents of Smyrna wanted a train station within the town limits of Smyrna. Unfortunately, the Philadelphia Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad could not afford to purchase the land necessary in order to build the station within the city limits. In 1854, the Delaware Railroad Company began to lay track within Kent County. Seeing an opportunity to create a town, the railroad company purchased 175 acres from Richard Tibbitt in 1859. The Delaware Railroad Company erected Smyrna Station, which contained a depot, store, and hotel, circa 1860 (Scharf). In 1877, the town’s name was officially changed to Clayton after the former U.S. Secretary of State John M. Clayton. From 1880 to

Figure 9 – A.D. Byles Map



1920, Clayton was the division headquarters for the P.W. & B. Railroad and later the Pennsylvania Railroad, which had purchased the P.W. & B. Railroad in 1907.

In 1861, Mrs. George McConaghy founded the *Clayton Herald* successfully operating the newspaper until she sold it in 1868 to James W. Spruance, developer and entrepreneur (Caley “Footprints”). Spruance relocated the newspaper to Spruance City and renamed it the *Font Hill News*. In 1882, Clayton experienced a large influx of immigrants coming from northern cities. By 1885, the Delaware Railroad had opened a main office within the town. In response, the Clayton Savings and Loan Association was opened that same year for the employees of the railroad. Interestingly, when Tibbitt sold his parcel for the town site he had neglected to mention that his will had left the land to William Wartenby. After Tibbitt’s death, Wartenby sued for the return of the 175-acre tract, which included Clayton. The courts ruled in Wartenby’s favor, and his heirs owned a large portion of the town of Clayton until well into the nineteenth century (Conrad). The town was incorporated in 1887 and the population consisted of 400 people (Scharf).

The town of Clayton remained a railroad town until the early twentieth century when it was absorbed by the town of Smyrna (Hancock 49). Clayton’s association with the survey area is limited to its historical association with the Delaware Railroad Company, which provided, farmers and entrepreneurs in the project area the means to transport their products to larger markets. Though the town is maintained as a separate entity, residents still consider Clayton a suburb of Smyrna.

#### *African American Schools*

At the start of the second decade of the twentieth century, the Smyrna-Clayton area was served by five schools for white children (#119, #3, #5, #77, and #107) and two schools for African American children (#135 and #136). During an interview with local historian George Caley, it was mentioned that, according to an unsubstantiated rumor, the service station at the intersection of Carter Road and Wheatley’s Pond Road was at one time the “Clayton Colored School.” Research has found that the Clayton Colored School, built by Pierre S. Du Pont’s organization, was in fact located on South School House Road, southwest of Bannister Hall (Figures 10 and 11). Neither the Clayton Colored School nor South School House Road is extant. The Clayton Colored School was part of philanthropist Pierre S. Du Pont’s educational reform experiment of the 1920s. Du Pont donated \$2 million dollars for statewide modernization of existing schools and the construction of schools in rural areas. One area of special interest was the education of the state’s African-American children; to this end, DuPont supplied materials and architects to construct over 80 schools. This project was very similar in its building designs and concept to Julius Rosenwald’s program in the Southern United States.

Figure 10 – Location of Former Clayton

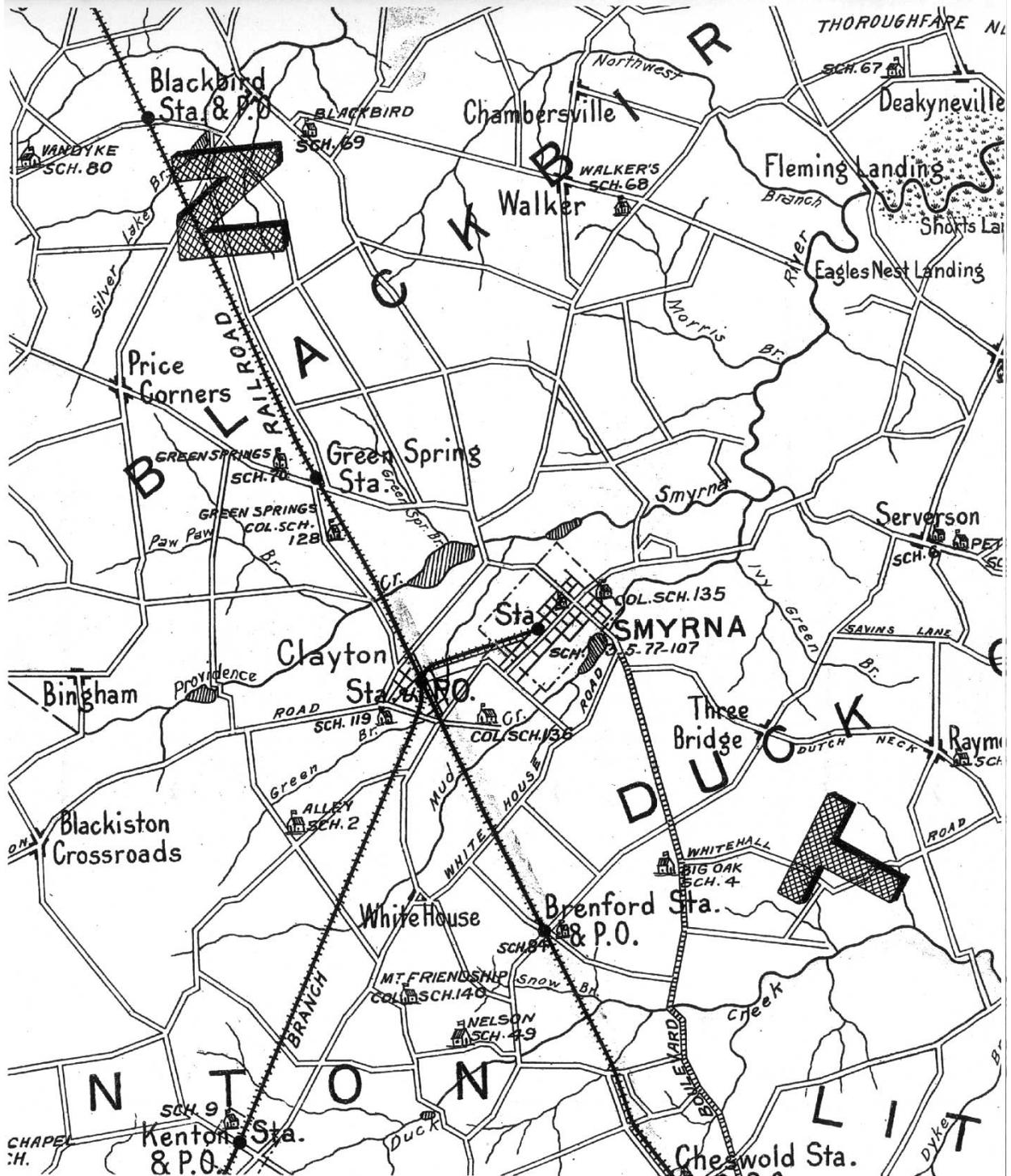


Figure 11 – Circa 1921 Photograph

