THREATENED BUILDINGS DOCUMENTED IN DELAWARE, 1999-2000

By

Emily Paulus
Rebecca J. Sheppard
Kelli W. Dobbs

with

Jennifer Cathey, Kevin Puleo, Sarah Killinger, Lindsey Breithaupt, Amy Richards, Romy Brossman, Jeffrey Everett, Christie Kershaw, Amy Johnson

Photographs by David L. Ames and Rebecca J. Sheppard

Center for Historic Architecture and Design
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware

2000

Preface

In 1999 the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware (CHAD), received a matching funds grant from the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DE SHPO) to provide documentation of threatened resources in Delaware. This project focuses on standing resources threatened by a variety of factors, including abandonment, neglect, development pressure, and renovation. Funding for this grant provides a level of documentation for buildings facing serious threats in cases where there is no other funding source to pay for such recordation. Dwellings threatened by highway projects receiving federal funding, for example, are documented through the Section 106 process. It should be noted that, due to lack of funds, the DE SHPO does not expect to be able to continue its funding of this activity after June 2000.

Between August 1999 and September 2000, CHAD students and staff documented eleven properties located throughout the state, including a nineteenth-century school, an early nineteenth-century urban tenement, several farm complexes, and the state's only round barn. Sites were documented in all three counties in Delaware, in both urban and rural settings.

Threats to these sites take a variety of forms. The Barber House and the Water Street Tenement were demolished shortly after the documentation took place; two farm complexes are currently slated for demolition; the Reed House, the Crawford House, and the Hayes-Campbell Tenant House are all seriously deteriorated; and the round barn lost its roof in a storm.

Most of the documentation carried out under this grant occurred at the Category II level (Partial Intensive Documentation). This included a set of archival measured field notes, annotated and to scale; large-format (4" x 5") black-and-white photographs or 35mm color slides; and an architectural data form. Included in this report are the narrative data sheets; hand drawn or AutoCAD generated drawings; and photographic documentation for each resource. Full size copies of all field notes and drawings are stored at both the Center for Historic Architecture and Design and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office.

All of the documentation produced by this grant is available to the public. If you are interested in further information, contact one of the following sources:

1) Center for Historic Architecture and Design
307 Alison Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-7360
(302) 831-8097

2) Delaware State Historic Preservation Office
15 The Green
Dover, Delaware 19901
(302) 739-5685

Documentation in Kent County

Site Name:	Jehu M. Reed House
CRS Number:	K-137
Location:	420 U.S. Route 113, just west of its intersection with Bowers Beach Road Little Heaven South Murderkill Hundred Kent County, Delaware
Date of Fieldwork:	February 2000
Type of Documentation:	Level II: Partial Intensive Annotated field notes (2 sheets) Measured drawings--CAD (1 sheet) 35 mm color slides (7) Architectural data narrative

Threat: Although currently occupied, the Jehu M. Reed House is seriously deteriorated on both the exterior and interior. All of the outbuildings associated with the property, save for the garage, have either deteriorated or are in extremely poor condition.

Significance: The Jehu M. Reed House is significant on several accounts. [1] For more than 200 years, from 1685 through 1912, the property maintained an association with the Reed family, a well-known and prominent Central Delaware family. Constructed in 1771, the house was expanded in 1868 to both accommodate and express the lifestyle of Jehu M. Reed, an agricultural pioneer and benefactor whose advances and techniques in farming helped foster Delaware's peach and apple industry. Additionally, the house stands as an exemplary breed of rural Mid-Atlantic architecture that melds the original fabric of a Georgian structure with an Italianate/Victorian plantation house.

Description: The Jehu M. Reed House is located on U.S. Route 113 at the intersection with Bowers Beach Road in Little Heaven, Kent County, Delaware. Little Heaven is a small town

---

[1] Vincent Rogers, *National Register of Historic Places, Jehu M. Reed House* (Dover: Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, 1972).

built up with residential and commercial development along this intersection. U.S. Route 113 is currently a heavily traveled road. The house faces toward the east and is approximately fifty feet back from the road. It is part of an agricultural complex and there is a barn, two milk houses, and the remains of several other buildings on the property.

The house is currently a three-story, five bay Italianate building with a hip roof. Originally, the house was a two-and-a-half-story, three-bay Georgian dwelling, with the upper story and the southern two bays added later. This Georgian house was a side-hall, double-pile plan. On the rear elevation, there are two additions: a two-story, gable wing and a one-story, shed addition. The main block and the two-story addition form an "L" shape, with the one-story addition tucked into the bend.

The front (or east) elevation of the main block is five bays wide, with the northern three bays being part of the original portion of the house. The northern three bays of the first two floors are in Flemish brick bond with glazed headers. The remainder of the front elevation is seven-course common brick bond. There is a one-story Victorian porch with decorative ironwork covering the central three bays of the front elevation. The central entry way is a recessed, double leaf door with a semi-circular fanlight. The windows on the first and second floors are narrow, two-over-two double-hung sashes, with paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered shutters on the second floor. The windows of the original Georgian building have segmental arches above. The windows on the third floor are paired, arched, one-over-one double-hung sash windows. There are paired, heavy brackets along the cornice. The roof is a low-pitched hip roof with two interior chimneys on both the north and south ends.

The south elevation is in seven-course common brick bond and is two bays wide, with two bays of the same two-over-two windows as on the front. The third story contains a date stone, "J.M.R 1868." There is an identical date stone on the third floor of the north elevation.

The rear (or west) elevation is seven-course common brick bond with a two-story addition projecting from the northwest corner of the main block and a one-story shed addition in the corner of the "L" which is formed by the main block and the two-story addition. The one-story addition is clad in plywood. There is a single leaf entrance on the south side of the shed addition and two nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows on the west side. The two-story

addition has a seven-course common brick bond on all sides and a gable roof, with the ridgeline running perpendicular to U.S. Route 113. The addition has nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows on the first floor and six-over-nine double-hung sash windows on the second floor. Only one bay on the southern elevation of the two-story addition is visible from the exterior. The west side is featureless. The north side of the two-story addition is flush with the north side of the main block. The addition is three bays wide on the north side, with a single leaf door being the central bay.

The north side of the main block has Flemish brick bond with glazed headers and is two bays wide. A belt course from the original building runs around the corner from the front elevation and across the northern elevation.

The layout of the main block of the building is a central hall, double-pile plan. From the front entrance, one enters into the hall, where a stair leads straight up to the second floor. The newel post is octagonal in shape and very ornate. The two rooms to the south of the hall were part of the Italianate addition. At one time these two rooms were one space, but are now separated by a modern, frame partition.

The door into the southeast room is wood paneled with a porcelain knob. The walls and doorjamb have recessed wood panels. The floor is linoleum and all of the walls are plaster except for the west wall, which is the modern partition. The windows have molded surrounds. The room contains a ghost of a fireplace on the south wall. The southwest room resembles the southeast room, with recessed paneling, molded window surrounds, and plaster wall except for the east wall, which is the modern partition.

At the rear of the central hall, a plywood wall runs from north to south to create a small bathroom. The bathroom was later enlarged by knocking a door through the exterior brick wall and extending a plywood wall into the shed addition. Under the main stair there is an angled storage area/passage that leads into the northwest room of the original Period I house. The room has hardwood floors and plaster walls. From a door on the southwest side of the dining room, a set of stairs under the main staircase leads down to the cellar. A door on the northwest side of the room that once led to a flight of stairs has been closed off. A single leaf door on the east wall leads into the original front parlor.

The primary entrance to the parlor (or northeast room) is from the central hall, through a single leaf, glass plane door with an iron knob. Both this room and the northwest room have hardwood floors and plaster walls. Back-to-back corner fireplaces are located on the north gable wall. The fireplace in the northeast room is paneled with an arched opening, topped by a keystone. The fireplace in the northwest room has a simple mantelpiece. Both fireplaces have been closed off. On the south wall of the northwest room a door accesses the stair to the cellar, which was originally entered from an exterior door leading onto the rear porch. At the north end of the west wall in this room is a door that has been closed off. Originally it led to a stair that ran up to the second floor. Finally, at the south end of the west wall, a door opens into the rear kitchen wing.

The kitchen has been modernized, though it does retain some of the original cupboards and the winder stair in the northwest corner. A pantry has been created on the east side of the kitchen, under the closed stair. On the west side of the kitchen, there are two steps up to an enclosed stairway that makes a ninety-degree turn up to the second floor. There are two exterior doors to the kitchen: the single leaf door on the north side leads directly outside, while the single leaf door on the south side leads into the shed porch addition.

The cellar is accessed from stairs located in the dining room. The floor of the cellar is brick. Underneath the main block, the brick walls and the rough-hewn ceiling joists are whitewashed. Machine-cut nails, several with square heads, are visible in the joists. Relieving arches support the chimneystacks. Beneath the gable addition, the cellar has a dirt floor, lath and plaster ceiling, and whitewashed brick walls.

The layout of the second floor is identical to that of the first floor, with the main block consisting of a central hall with four flanking bedrooms. The southeast bedroom contains wide floorboards and plaster walls. The molded window surrounds and baseboards are the same in all four bedrooms. A single leaf, wood paneled door with a porcelain knob has a louvered transom above. The southwest bedroom has narrow floorboards and wallpapered walls. The door is a single leaf. Across the hall is the northwest bedroom, which has wide floorboards and wallpaper on the walls. A hole in the ceiling reveals lath and plaster with circular saw marks. The room has a paneled, single leaf door. The northeast bedroom has wide floorboards and plaster walls.

A single leaf, wood paneled door with porcelain knob has a louvered transom above. Between the northeast and southeast bedrooms is a small office. It has plaster walls, molded window surrounds, and baseboards. Paired arched windows above the main entrance light the room. The second floor of the gable addition has hardwood floors and plaster walls. The northwest corner of the room is taken up by the enclosed stairway leading down into the kitchen. The single leaf door for the room is directly across the hall from the enclosed stairwell leading up to the third floor. The stairwell is located in the main block on the north side of the northwest bedroom. The stairs are parallel to the main staircase.

The third floor has been subdivided into small single-occupancy rooms for rent. The place is in poor condition, with plaster falling off the walls, revealing the lath and plaster underneath. From the stairway a hall runs perpendicular to the central hall below. There are four bedrooms on the east wall and three along the west wall. What would have been a fourth bedroom on the west wall is a communal bathroom with tub and toilet. All of the bedrooms are very simple with hardwood floors and a sink in each room. They all have single leaf doors with numbers attached to each room.

History: The land on which the Jehu M. Reed House stands was originally part of a vast tract of land encompassing 950 acres and referred to as "Bartlett's Lot." In 1685 John Newell, Sr., the great-great-great-grandfather of Jehu M. Reed, purchased a portion of Bartlett's Lot, thus beginning its lengthy association with the Reed family. John Newell, Sr., died in 1739 and willed "where he now lives, Plantation with 150 acres" to his one of his three sons, John Newell, Jr. John Newell, Jr. occupied the property for 20 years with his wife, Mary Edmons, his sons Henry and William, and daughters Tabitha, Lydia, Hannah, and Mariam. At the time of his death in 1759, Newell divided the property between his two sons and left money and slaves to his four daughters. The plantation was left to his son Henry and his wife, Margaret Wilson. In

1771 Henry constructed the northern three bays of the present-day dwelling on the plantation, replacing an earlier dwelling.[2]

Henry and Margaret had five daughters, Patience, Mary, Ann, Tabitha, and Lydia. Henry died in 1797, leaving a total of 105 acres to his daughter Ann and her husband Elias Sipple and dividing the remaining 45 acres between his other four daughters. Both Ann and Elias Sipple died shortly thereafter, Ann in 1804 and Elias in 1805, leaving five small children. The Sipple children were raised by their aunts at the farm until Margaret Sipple acquired the whole 105 acres by purchasing the shares left to her siblings. Margaret Sipple and Jehu Reed were married in 1827 and together had three sons, James, Elias, and Jehu Margaret. Margaret Sipple died in 1834, just eight days after the birth of Jehu.

According to J. Thomas Scharf's *History of Delaware*, Jehu Reed was an "enterprising merchant, agriculturist, and horticulturist of Kent County" and a "man of considerable force of character, [who] obtained some notoriety in his day. He is said to have been the first person who introduced the culture of the peach in this country for profit by putting out a large orchard in 1830, and adding thereto from year to year." Peaches were a vital and lucrative crop for Delaware farmers, and the Reed farmstead's proximity to Murderkill Creek provided easy shipping of the produce into cities like Philadelphia via the Delaware River.[3]

Jehu M. Reed purchased his father's property in 1858, the same year he married Emily Buckmaster. At this time, he expanded the property to include an additional 250 acres. In 1866 he eventually paid his father $10,000 for the property and additional land with produce from the farm. Like his father, Jehu M. Reed was a forerunner of progressive agricultural practices and continued to hone his father's peach cultivating techniques. He grew numerous types of crops in addition to peaches, including cultivated strawberries, asparagus, pears, apples, wheat, and corn. Jehu M. also took an interest in mulberry trees for their potential to support silk worms, though not for commercial profits. According to Scharf, from 1858 and into the 1880s, the value of the produce produced on the farm varied from $6,000 to $10,000 annually.[4]

---

[2] J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Delaware, 1609—1888, Volume II* (Philadelphia: L.J. Richards & Company, 1888), 1150-1151.
[3] Ibid., 1151.
[4] Ibid., 1152.

Data from Delaware's agricultural census and schedules testifies to Jehu M.'s economic success. The average value for orchard produce in 1850 in Murderkill Hundred was $1.70, whereas Jehu M. boasted profits of $4000 in 1860. Jehu M. produced 1,200 bushels of Indian corn in 1860, while the average for the hundred hovered around 415 in 1850. Even for such unrelated farm products as butter, Jehu M. churned over 400 pounds in 1860 when the hundred average was 62.3 pounds in 1850. Finally, these results must be tempered by the fact that the average farm in Murderkill Hundred tilled approximately 183 acres, while Jehu M. possessed 250 improved farm acres in 1860. Jehu M.'s farm and outbuildings alone were valued at over $35,000 in 1870, further evidence of his success in farming. Additionally, Jehu M. reported in the 1880 agricultural census that he hired in excess of $3,200 worth of labor to assist him in the 1879 harvest.[5] A mid-nineteenth century rendering of the "Reed Farm" supports this image, depicting the dwelling with numerous outbuildings and a tenant house.[6]

This outward manifestation of Jehu M.'s success can be seen in the extensive additions and renovations the property underwent in 1868. Given the prominent placement of his dwelling along a major thoroughfare, these additions afforded him the opportunity to display his newfound wealth. According to Scharf, "in 1868 he remodeled and improved the buildings in a large degree, costing him over twelve thousand dollars."[7] The additions to the dwelling more than doubled the size of the Period I building. A third story was added to the main block, a three-story, two-by-two bay addition was constructed on the south elevation of the main block, and a two-story, two-bay addition was attached to the northwest corner of the main block. Still visible today is the date stone containing the initials "J.M.R" and the date "1868" carved into the south gable-end elevation of the Period II main block.

Probate and insurance records shed light into the everyday material items surrounding the Reed family. In 1871 an insurance policy valued "high quality drinking glasses, 1 sofa, 1 cane set rocker, a cookstove and furnace, 2 featherbeds with pillows, floor oil cloths, 1 pendulum clock, 1 spittoon and one parlor carpet," at over $1224.68. When Reed died in 1908, his probate

---

[5] United States Manuscript Agricultural Census, South Murderkill Hundred, 1860, 1870, 1880.
[6] Scharf, 1151.
[7] Ibid.,

inventory listed hundreds of farm implements used in the orchards, as well as an "organ, a piano, plush rocker, extension tables, bedsteads."[8] The Reed family occupancy of the property ended in 1912 with the death of Jehu M.'s wife, Emily Buckmaster Reed. Arley Magee, a Dover lawyer and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, purchased the property from Reed. The farm changed hands several times in the twentieth century and is currently owned by the Pardee family.[9]

---

[8] Kent County Probate Records, Jehu M. Reed, 1908.
[9] Rogers, 6.

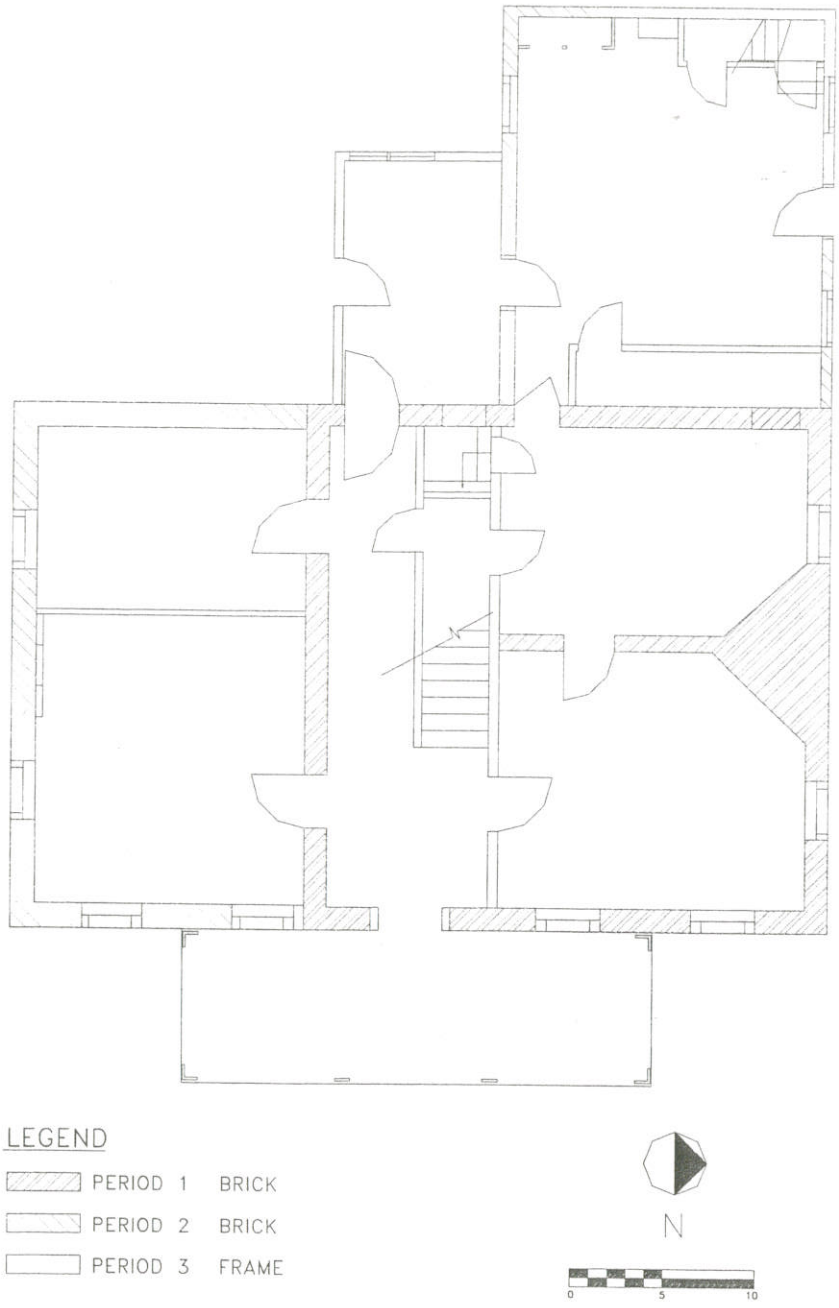


Figure 1: Jehu M. Reed House, first floor plan.

MID-ATLANTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Jehu M. Reed House
420 U. S. Route 113
Little Heaven
South Murderkill Hundred
Kent County, Delaware

DE CRS No. K-137

Photographer: Rebecca J. Sheppard

February 2000

K-137-1	View of east and south elevations looking northwest
K-137-2	View of west elevation looking northeast
K-137-3	Detail of window on east elevation of Period I block
K-137-4	View of east and south elevations of garage, looking northwest
K-137-5	View of north and east elevations of concrete block outbuilding, looking southwest
K-137-6	View of collapsed shed at northwest corner of property, looking north
K-137-7	View of north and east elevations of barn, looking southwest

Figure 2: Jehu M. Reed House, view of south and east elevations looking northwest.

Figure 3: Jehu M. Reed House, view of west elevation looking northeast.

Figure 4: Jehu M. Reed House, detail of window on east elevation of Period I block.

Figure 5: Jehu M. Reed Farm, view of east and south elevations of garage, looking northwest.

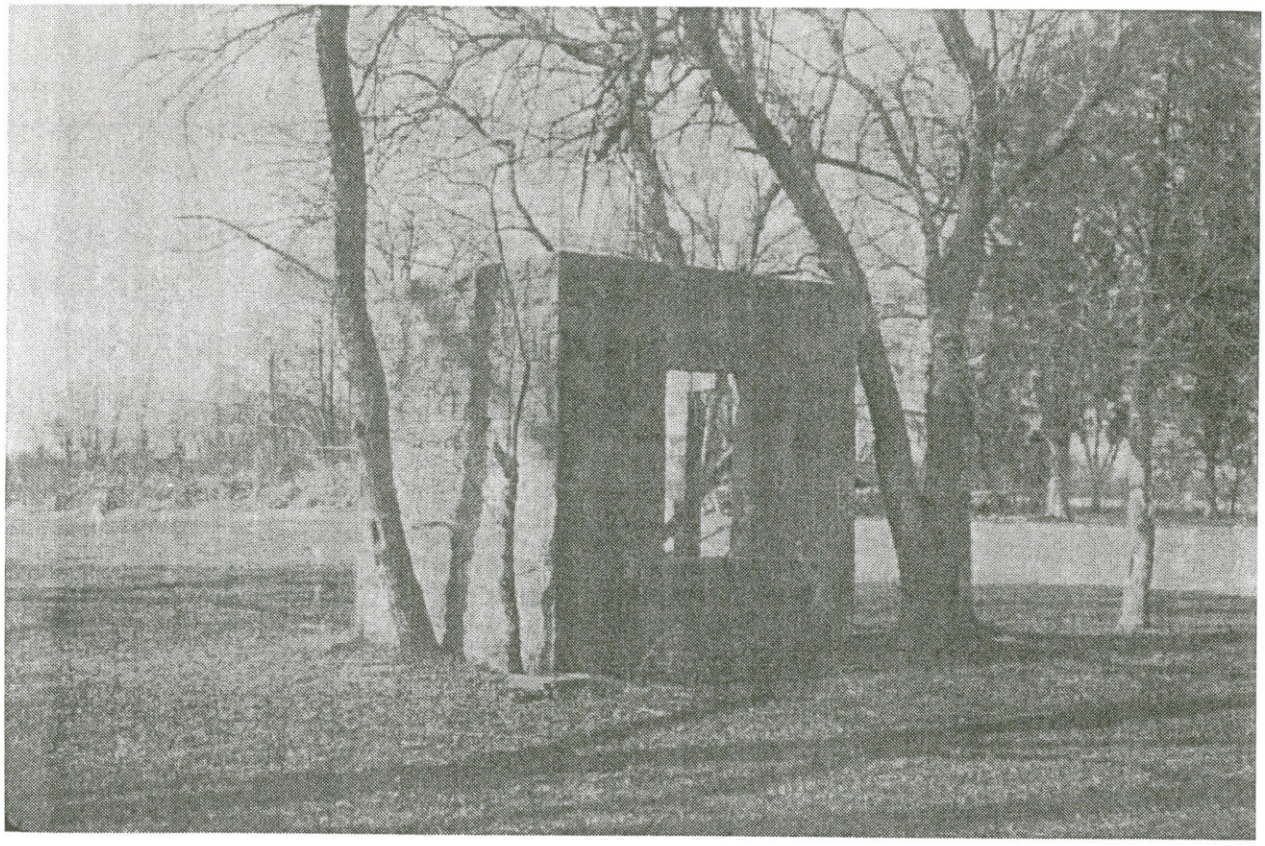


Figure 6: Jehu M. Reed Farm, view of north and east elevations of concrete block outbuilding, looking southwest.

Figure 7: Jehu M. Reed Farm, view of collapsed shed at northwest corner of property.

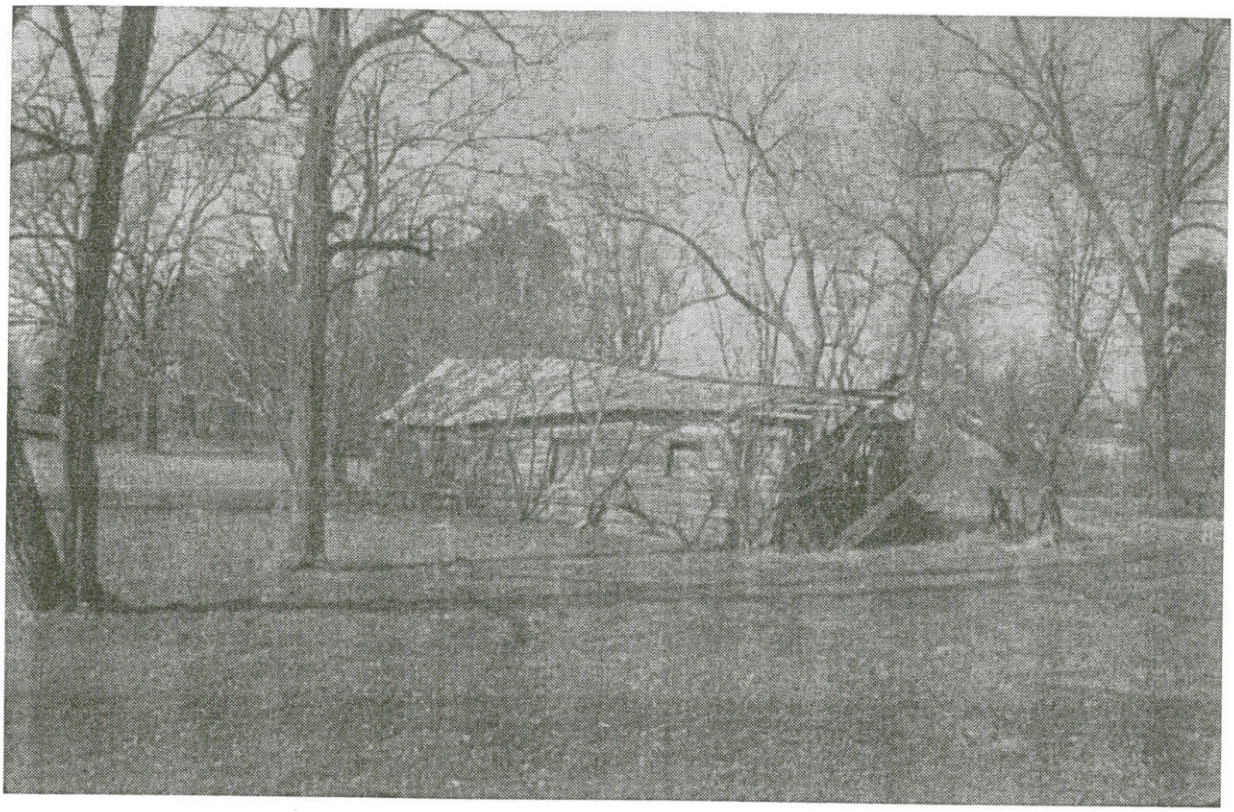
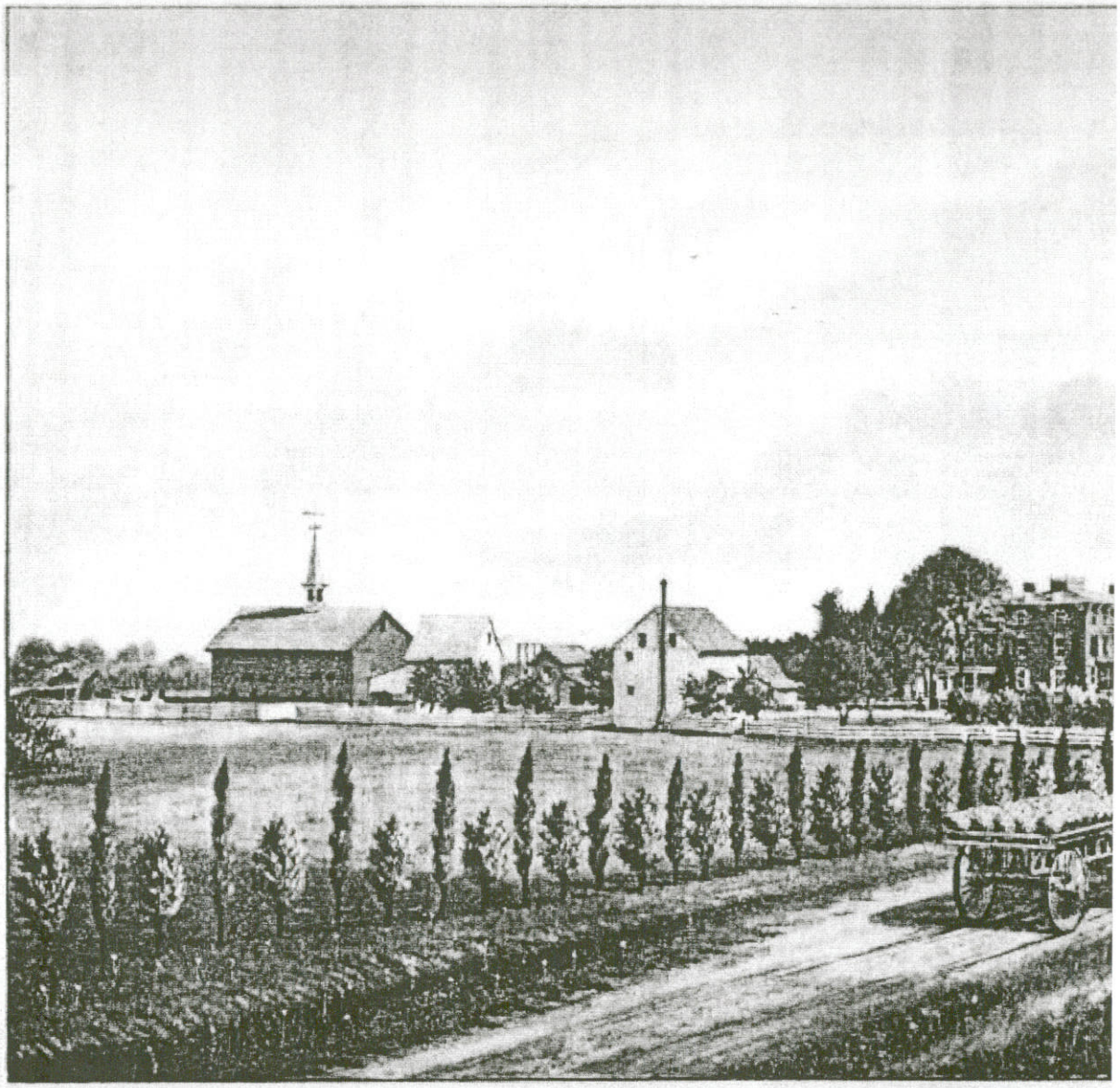


Figure 8: Jehu M. Reed Farm, view of north and east elevations of barn, looking southwest.



"REED PLACE."
RESIDENCE OF JEHU M. REED,
NEAR FREDERICA, DELAWARE.