II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. THE SETTLING OF THE APPOQUINIMINK RIVER VALLEY

The first European settlers along the Appoquinimink River were Dutch. Dutch traders had been working on the Delaware River since the first decade of the seventeenth century, but it was not until 1651 that they established a permanent settlement, and then only in response to the actions of the Swedes, who had constructed Fort Christiana in 1638. The Dutch established their base at Fort Casimir, near modern-day New Castle, and challenged the Swedes and English for control of the Delaware River. The first Dutch settlements were around New Castle and Lewes, but in the later 1650s the interest of the settlers turned toward the Appoquinimink River as a likely ground for expansion. The headwaters of the Appoquinimink River near Middletown are only a few feet from the headwaters of Bohemia Creek, a navigable stream that flows west toward the Chesapeake Bay, and in colonial times the distance between navigable water on the two creeks was less than five miles. Already in the 1650s trade between the Dutch settlements and Maryland had sprung up along this route, and two landings had been established in the vicinity of Middletown. In 1661, Alexander d'Hinojossa, administrator of the Dutch settlements, met Cecil Calverton, governor of Maryland, on the Appoquinimink River to discuss trade between the two colonies. A regular road, known as the Bohemia Cart Road, soon developed between the Appoquinimink River landings and Bohemia Manor in Maryland. The exact date of the first Dutch land grants on the Appoquinimink River is not clear, but several grants seem to have been made by 1663.

In 1664, during the second Anglo-Dutch War, the British seized the Dutch colonies in North America, and their possession of these territories was confirmed by the Treaty of Breda in 1667. Several leaders of the Dutch colonies lost their land, but most of the settlers had their patents confirmed by the British in 1671. Many Dutch settlers prospered and even held political office under British rule, and intermarriage between English and Dutch settlers was common. The Appoquinimink River Valley remained an area of mixed English, Dutch, and Swedish culture until the early eighteenth century, when the other traditions were absorbed into the dominant English culture.

The McKean/Cochran Farm was located on a 300-acre tract patented by Barent Hendrickson sometime in the 1660s. The tract was bounded by the land of Adam Peters on the northeast and John Breadband on the southwest, and Hendrickson paid three bushels of winter wheat as annual quitrent (Sunday Star Print 1903:146). Dutch land grants were characteristically laid out in narrow strips from stream to stream, called "long lots" (Heite 1972), and Hendrickson's patent extended from the Appoquinimink River to Drawyer Creek. (The long lot system was developed in medieval Holland during the draining of the Rhine marshes, with each lot extending between two major canals and separated from its neighbors by smaller canals. The system allowed each farmer access to the canal and made it easier to distribute the burden of maintaining the canals among all those who benefited

from them.) The Dutch grants along the Appoquinimink River were thought of as a town, called Appoquemenen, and some communal institutions did develop in the area.

Although the Dutch government granted lots along the Appoquinimink River to at least a dozen men, no archaeological sites dating to the Dutch period have been found in the Odessa area. Since several archaeological surveys have now been carried out around Odessa, and several local collectors have been looking informally for such sites for decades, sites dating to the Dutch period must be very rare. It seems that few, if any, of the Dutch property owners actually took up residence on their lots. The archaeological survey carried out as part of the SR 1 projects covered most of at least two Dutch long lots, and showed conclusively that neither had been occupied before 1750 (Bedell et al. 1997). One possible explanation is that rather than building on their lots the Dutch owners lived in houses in the center of the town, on land that is now buried beneath the modern town of Odessa.

The Dutch settlement system gradually disappeared, to be replaced by the English "metes and bounds" system, in which most lots were rough squares bounded by roads, streams, and other natural features, connected by arbitrary lines, and the Dutch township organization was replaced by an Anglo-colonial system based on counties and hundreds. Delaware is the only state which retains the hundred, an ancient, Anglo Saxon division of the county, as a jurisdiction; New Castle County is divided into 10 hundreds, and the McKean/Cochran Farm is located in St. Georges Hundred.

B. HISTORY OF THE MCKEAN/COCHRAN FARM

Sometime between 1671 and 1695, Barent Hendrickson sold the 300 acres of land held in Appoquemenen to Paul Barnes (Table 1). On March 3, 1695, Barnes sold this land to Hilitie Anderson, wife of Roaloffe Anderson (Tribune Publishing Company 1935:218). On February 19, 1700, Hilitie Anderson, now a widow, conveyed three parcels of land to her father, Adam Peterson. The three parcels consisted of 380 acres on the north side of the Appoquinimink River in the tenure of Abel Dodd, 400 acres of land on the south side of the same creek in the tenure of John Job Nanscoyne, and a lot situated in the city of New Castle in the possession of Samuel Vans (unrecorded deed, cited in New Castle County [NCC] Deed Book C-1:11). The 380 acres on the north side of the Appoquinimink River seems to have included the 300 acres Hilitie Anderson had received from Paul Barnes in 1695. Transfers of land from children to their fathers were unusual, and this transaction may have been part of an exchange.

Adam Peterson, Sr., was a major landowner in the Appoquinimink area. In 1684 he was assessed for 390 acres of land on the north side of the Appoquinimink River (Heite 1972:33), and by the time of his death in 1707 he owned three tracts totaling 1,204 acres in the Middletown vicinity. One of these was known as New Tiel, and another as Middletown (Heite 1972). Adam Peterson, Sr., had five children who survived to adulthood: Adam [Jr.], Andrew, Hermania, Hilitie, and Garret, names which were often repeated among their descendants. Hermania married Matthias Van Bibber, a Maryland merchant. Her brothers married nieces of Matthias Van Bibber: Andrew married Hester Van Bibber and Adam married Veronica Van Bibber Birmingham. Hilitie married Isaac Vigoren.

Table 1. List of Property Owners

DATE	TRANSACTION
1991	Fusco Properties, from Commonwealth Trust Company (NCC Deed Book 1148:275, 280)
1986	Commonwealth Trust Company, from Spring Valley Farms (NCC Deed Book 481:310)
1969	Spring Valley Farms, from Walter and Thelma Guseman (NCC Deed Book U-81:128)
1945	Walter and Thelma Guseman, from the executors of Daniel Corbitt's estate, for $10 (NCC Deed Book R-45:262)
1923	Daniel Corbitt, inherited from Alexander Corbitt (NCC Deed Book D-43:83)
1907	Alexander Corbitt, inherited from John C. Corbit (NCC Deed Book D-43:83)
1888	John C. Corbit, from Catherine Pascault (NCC Deed Book N-14:337)
1888	Catherine Pascault, from William A. Cochran (NCC Deed Book H-14:337)
1843	William A. Cochran, inherited from Robert Cochran (NCC Will Book U-1:208)
1830	*McKean/Cochran Farm abandoned (approximately)*
1814	Robert Cochran, from T.M. Thompson, executor of Letitia Clark's will (NCC Deed Book G-4:454)
1775	Letitia Clark and Thomas Clark, inherited from Veronica Peterson (NCC Will Book N-1:161)
1763	Veronica Peterson, inherited from Adam Peterson, Jr. (NCC Probate Records, Adam Peterson 1763)
1750	*McKean/Cochran Farm established (approximately)*
1707-	Adam Peterson, Jr., inherited from Adam Peterson, Sr., and purchased from his siblings (NCC Deed Book 1763 C-1:111)
1700	Adam Peterson, Sr., from Hilitie Anderson (NCC Deed Book C-1:111)
1695	Hilitie Anderson, from Paul Barnes (Tribune Publishing Company 1935:218)
1671-1695	Paul Barnes, from Barent Hendrickson (no surviving deed)
1671	Barent Hendrickson, patent confirmed (Sunday Star Print 1903:146)

No will for the elder Adam Peterson survives in the New Castle County records, but his large landholdings appear to have been divided among his five children. In 1700, Hilitie and Hermania and their husbands transferred their shares of the estate to Adam and Veronica, and by the time of his death in 1763, Adam Peterson, Jr., controlled all these lands (NCC Deed Book C-1:111). After the payment of his debts, funeral expenses, and a legacy of £50 each to his cousins Richard and Lydia Cantwell, he bequeathed the remainder of his estate to his "loving" wife, Veronica Peterson (NCC Probate Records, Adam Peterson 1763). The frequent transfers of the property, and its incorporation into several different large blocks, represent a common pattern of land speculation among wealthy colonists. Buying and selling property was one of their obsessions, and most tracts changed hands several times. This was especially true of properties, like the Hendrickson tract, that had not become the seats of farms.

Veronica Van Bibber, Adam Peterson, Jr.'s wife, was first married in 1726 to John Birmingham (Figure 4). The Birminghams had two daughters, one of whom was named Mary. Veronica had been widowed by 1735, when she married Adam Peterson. Adam and Veronica had no children. When Adam gave his farm to Veronica, therefore, he was disinheriting his blood relations, and one wonders if they objected. Whatever the case, there is no record that they ever took legal action against Veronica. Veronica's daughter, Mary Birmingham, was first married to Matthew Reah, with whom she had a daughter, also named Mary. Mary Birmingham was evidently widowed, because she married William McKean in about 1765. He became the guardian of her daughter, Mary Reah (NCC Orphans' Court Record E-1:98). William and Mary McKean also had two children of their own, Thomas Birmingham McKean and Letitia McKean.

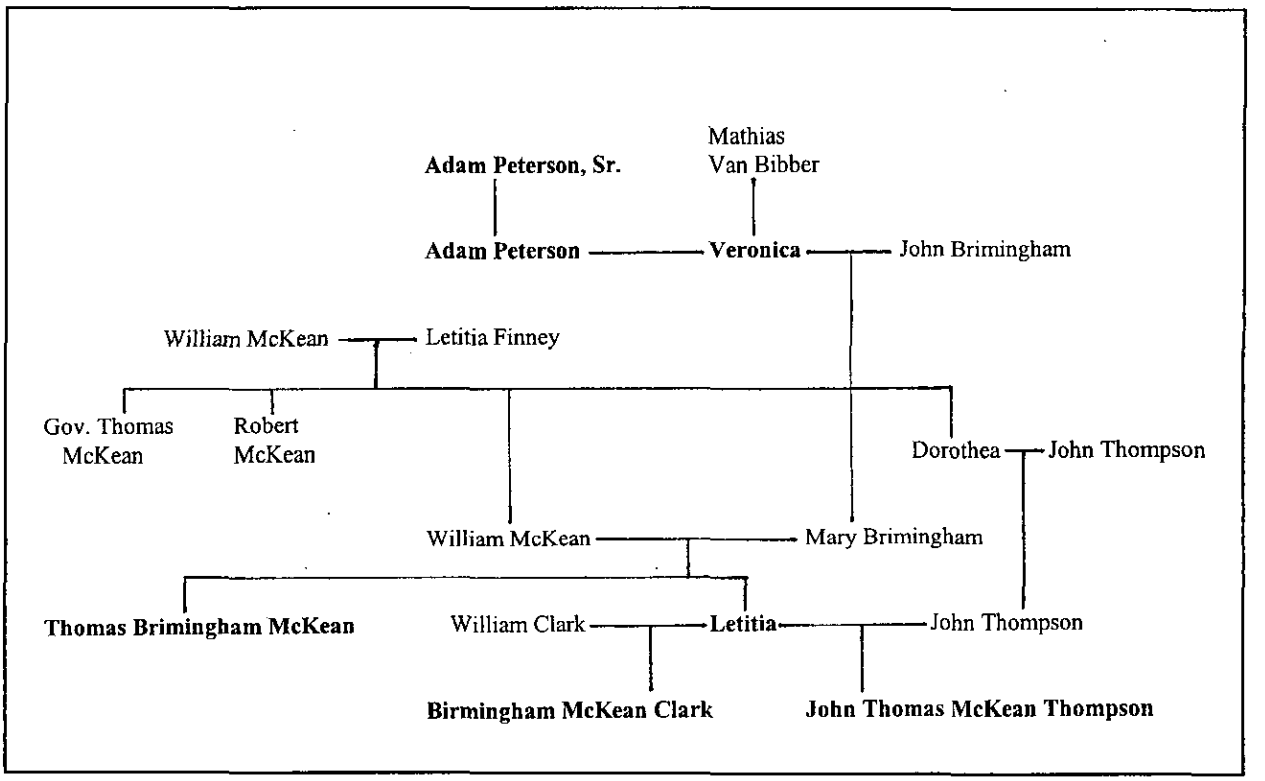

FIGURE 4: Family Tree of Letitia McKean (owners of the McKean/Cochran Farm in boldface)

William McKean's grandmother had immigrated from Ireland by 1725. Her son, also named William McKean, was a tavern keeper. He married Letitia Finney, with whom he had three sons and a daughter. William and Letitia McKean saw carefully to their children's education, and all of the children became socially prominent. Their eldest son, Robert, was a doctor of medicine and a clergyman in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Thomas McKean, the second son, had a truly remarkable career. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress from Delaware and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He became Pennsylvania's chief justice in 1777 and held that office for 22 years. He simultaneously served in Delaware's House of Assembly and as a congressional delegate. In 1799 he began serving the first of three consecutive terms as governor of Pennsylvania. Thomas McKean's simultaneous service in the governments of Pennsylvania and Delaware underlines the close connections between the two states, although he did give up his Delaware offices when he became Pennsylvania's governor. He married Mary Borden, one of the Bordens of Bordentown, New Jersey, and they had several children. One daughter, Sally McKean, was a celebrated beauty of the day, and from her many suitors she chose to wed a Spanish nobleman who was serving as ambassador to the new United States, becoming the Marchioness de Casa Yrujo.

William and Letitia's daughter, Dorothea, married John Thompson, of Delaware. The Thompsons maintained close ties with their McKean relations. Their only son, Thomas McKean Thompson, became Pennsylvania's secretary of state under his uncle (Buchanan 1890:9-10, 54, 106).

William and Letitia McKean's youngest son was William. He and his wife, Mary, had a house in Newark, Delaware, and a plantation on Duck Creek in Appoquinimink Hundred, which they rented out. William and Mary's one son and one daughter—Thomas Birmingham McKean and Letitia McKean—were particularly fortunate children. They grew up in a wealthy household and became rich in their own right while they were still minors. In 1775, Veronica Peterson conveyed 400 acres of land on the north side of the Appoquinimink River, including the McKean/Cochran Farm site, to Thomas and Letitia, who were her grandchildren. Letitia may have been a favorite of Veronica's, since she also willed to her a set of silver spoons. Because Thomas and Letitia were minors, in fact both still under the age of 10, trustees were appointed to act for them in legal and property matters. The trustees were their uncle, Thomas McKean, and John Thompson, Esq. Veronica was about 84 years old when she transferred her property to her grandchildren. Her only other heirs were her granddaughters Mary Reah O'Hara Frazier and Nancy McLean. Veronica Peterson died in 1785. In her will, she bequeathed a farm called "The Mansion Plantation" to Thomas and Letitia. Thomas and Letitia were thus quite wealthy, having inherited property from their father and their grandmother. Veronica also left farms to her other granddaughters, Mary and Nancy (NCC Court of Chancery Records, *William Clark Frazier* vs. *Robert Maxwell*; NCC Deed Book N-2:381).

It is interesting that the descendants of Veronica Van Bibber Peterson and John Birmingham never used any of the given names or surnames from the Dutch and Swedish side of the family. None of the Birminghams, McKeans, or Thompsons who inherited the farm on the Appoquinimink River ever honored the Dutch and Swedish founders of the plantation. Despite Veronica's bequests and her apparent relationship with her grandchildren, her name dropped out of use in the family. John

and Veronica's marriage took place around the time when, according to contemporary observers, distinctive Dutch and Swedish cultural practices were fading from the area (Kalm 1937).

William McKean wrote his will in 1779, before beginning a voyage to the West Indies. In it he left his Duck Creek plantation to his son, Thomas, and his town lots in New Castle to his daughter, Letitia, and asked his brother-in-law, John Thompson, to bring up his children and look after their finances should he and his wife die. William also specifically asked his brother, Thomas McKean, to arrange for young Thomas to study law (NCC Will Book L-1:258). William McKean died in 1779, soon after writing his will, and his wife, Mary, not long after. Thomas and Letitia, still minors, were indeed looked after by their uncles. Financial records concerning the McKean estate indicate that Letitia's education included dancing lessons and tutoring in writing and arithmetic (NCC Probate Record, Estate of William McKean, Executor's Account, 1782). While he was growing up, Thomas Birmingham McKean received money from his uncle Thomas for living expenses. The money was later repaid when William and Mary McKean's estates were settled in 1788. Thomas Birmingham McKean became a merchant rather than studying law as his father had wished (NCC Court of Chancery Records, *John Thompson, Esq.* vs. *Mary and William Johnson*).

An inventory of William McKean's personal property was made on January 3, 1782. His personal property was appraised at £523.5.10, of which £360 was the value of his slaves. McKean owned seven slaves. Letitia McKean was also the owner of a slave, a gift from her grandmother, Veronica Peterson, along with the silver spoons. Many of the items in the inventory indicate that the McKeans were wealthy, prominent people. The inventory lists a walnut desk, a pewter inkstand, a large walnut dining table, a tea table, a large looking glass, china, delft, and pewter dishware, and a silver watch (NCC Probate Record, Estate of William McKean, 1782).

Thomas Birmingham McKean died at Bordentown, New Jersey, in 1788, when he was about 22. He bequeathed his entire estate to his sister, Letitia, who was then about 15 years old. His will stipulated that if Letitia died while still a minor and without children, his estate would pass to his cousins, Joseph, Robert, Elizabeth, Letitia, and Ann McKean, the children of Thomas McKean. Thomas ordered his executors, his cousins Joseph and Robert McKean, to rent out his real estate and invest the proceeds in order to supply Letitia with an "education, clothing, boarding and other contingent expenses" (Burlington County [New Jersey] Estate File 11246). Letitia McKean held sole title to the Appoquinimink North farm for 26 years.

Letitia married twice. Her first marriage was to a Presbyterian minister named John Thompson, with whom she had a son, John Thomas McKean Thompson. Her husband was almost certainly her first cousin, the son of her uncle, John Thompson. Such marriages between cousins, although condemned by Quakers and Puritans and therefore rare in Pennsylvania and New England, were common among the British elite both in Virginia and in England (Fischer 1989:284). John Thompson, Letitia's husband, was a wealthy and well-educated man, a graduate of Princeton. He became minister of a congregation in New York, but he had not been there long when he died, in 1795. According to his will (NCC Will Book O1:79), he left one-third of his estate to Letitia and two-thirds to their young son. John appointed Letitia and his brother, Thomas Thompson, guardians of the boy. In the will,

John Thompson offered Letitia "her choice of my two carriage horses" and "a good new chaise (carriage) to be purchased by my executors."

In 1797, Letitia, a widow, appears as "Latitia Thompson" on a list of taxables for St. Georges Hundred. She owned 400 acres of land in the hundred, of which half were improved. Her farm, worth $1,600, included a house, kitchen, barn, crib, and smokehouse (NCC Tax Assessment 1797:not paginated). This list provides the first written record of the buildings on the McKean/Cochran Farm. In about 1799, Letitia was married for the second time, to William Clark. They also had a son, whom they named Birmingham McKean Clark. Neither death records nor estate papers could be located in Delaware for Letitia's husband, William Clark. He died sometime between 1806 and 1810. Letitia was enumerated in the 1810 census in St. Georges hundred as a widow with four other people in her household. These were her two sons, both under 16 years of age, a woman between 26 and 45, and an African-American person (U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1810:280). Letitia Clark died in 1813 in Washington County, Pennsylvania, where she had probably been visiting her Thompson relatives. She bequeathed her entire estate to her two sons, who were still under the age of 21. Letitia appointed her cousin, Thomas McKean Thompson, to be the guardian of her son, Birmingham, and to be the sole executor of her will. Letitia wrote her will on October 14, 1813, in Washington, Pennsylvania, a town located southwest of Pittsburgh. The will was probated in Washington County on November 3, 1813, and a copy was filed in New Castle County.

Because Letitia's children were minors, her estate was administered for them by their guardian. Thompson, the guardian, kept very careful records of the expenditures from the estate, and these records are still on file in Washington, Pennsylvania (Washington County Accounts C-8, 1818). In her will Letitia asked that her personal possessions be sold to pay off her debts, and some of the items sold are itemized in the estate papers. These included 10 pairs of kid gloves, four pairs of silk gloves, and a quantity of fine cloth, suggesting a love of fine clothes. No inventory of her possessions in Delaware survives, but there is a list of her possessions in Philadelphia. The list appears to describe the furnishings of a single room, perhaps in the house of one of her Philadelphia relatives. It was an elegant room, furnished with a mahogany writing desk and tea table, a high-post bedstead and featherbed, an open (Franklin) stove, a china tea set, a gilt framed mirror, and a gilt framed painting of the Nativity. Letitia seems to have kept a residence in Philadelphia even after she established herself at the McKean/Cochran Farm. The records from her son Birmingham's minority describe his time at Washington College in Pennsylvania, where his tuition was $10 a term and he paid $2.50 a week for room and board. His books are listed—a Greek and Latin grammar, a Classical dictionary, a book of "Roman Lives," and works by Caesar, Virgil, and Horace—and show that his studies focused on Latin and Greek. Both of Letitia's sons seem to have inherited her interest in clothes, and the records include numerous charges for suits, coats, shirts, and beaver hats. After Benjamin graduated from college and came of age he moved further west, rather than returning to Delaware, and he became a prominent attorney in Arkansas.

On June 14, 1814, Thomas McKean Thompson (apparently the brother of her first husband), executor of Letitia Clark's will, sold the 400-acre farm tract on the Appoquinimink River to Robert

Cochran at public auction for $8,000 (NCC Deed Book G-4:454). For the next 74 years the land remained in the Cochran family.

The Cochran family of Delaware were descended from the Cochrans who had left Paisley, Scotland, for northern Ireland in about 1570. The American progenitor of the Cochran family first settled in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in about 1742. The Cochran family of St. Georges Hundred were descended from John and Mary Cochran of Cecil County in northern Maryland (Figure 5). John Cochran paid taxes on land in St. Georges Hundred between 1780 and 1787, but he is first recorded as living in Delaware in 1800. The census of that year recorded his household as consisting of one female under the age of 10, two males 10 to 16, two males 16 to 26 and one male 26 to 45, one female over 45, one free servant, and 13 slaves. The ages of the whites enumerated conform to those of John and Mary Cochran and their six children. In 1813, John Cochran paid tax on 41 cattle, 10 slaves, and metal-ware or "plate" (NCC Tax Assessments 1813:not paginated). The Cochrans' movements between southern Pennsylvania, northern Maryland, and Delaware underscore the close cultural ties among these areas, all of which can be described as part of the Pennsylvania or Middle Atlantic cultural sphere (Glassie 1968).

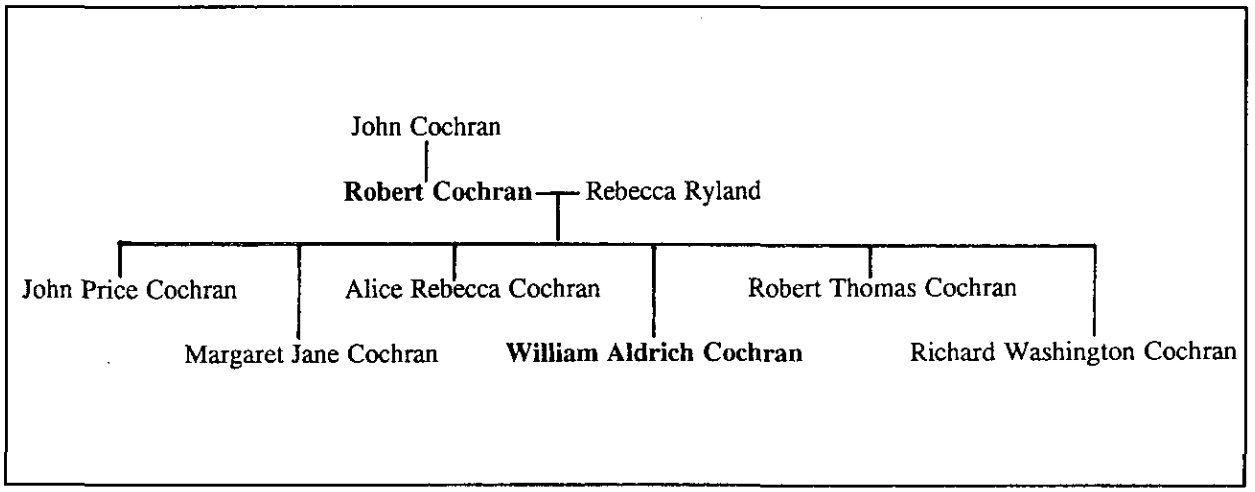

FIGURE 5: Cochran Family Tree (owners of the McKean/Cochran Farm in boldface)

John and Mary's son Robert married Rebecca Ryland in 1808 at the age of 27. Together, Robert and Rebecca Cochran had six children: John Price Cochran, Alice Rebecca Cochran, Robert Thomas Cochran, Margaret Jane Cochran, William Aldrich Cochran, and Richard Washington Cochran (Cochran Family Reunion Booklet 1986). Although young families of the Cochrans' status usually set up households soon after marriage, Robert and Rebecca were not listed in the census until 1820. That portion of the census record is very difficult to read, but it clearly lists Robert, age 39, and three sons under the age of 16. Rebecca Ryland died in 1824 at the age of 36. The more legible 1830 census lists Robert Cochran, three sons under 20 years of age, two daughters between 5 and 10, and a female over 70, who may have been Robert's mother or mother-in-law. It is not known who the young girls were, since the recorded daughters should have been much older at that time.

Robert Cochran's mansion farm, which included the McKean/Cochran Farm, consisted of almost 400 acres, situated between the Appoquinimink River and Middletown Road. In 1816, Robert Cochran paid taxes on 388 acres of land, 288 acres of which were improved. The farm included a "good wooden dwelling" and a log stable. He also paid taxes on 100 acres of "branch and cripple" (a branch is a small stream, and cripple is marsh), 50 acres of woodland, one lame male slave named Moses, two female slaves named Hannah and Susan, and unspecified livestock (NCC Tax Assessment 1816).

C. LATER HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

By the time Robert Cochran died, in 1843, the McKean/Cochran Farm Site had been abandoned. Cochran divided the farm between two of his sons, Richard Washington Cochran and William Cochran, and the description of the division mentions "the place where a gate stood formerly, the entrance into the old road or lane that used to lead down to the old frame dwelling house" (NCC Will Book U-1:208). William obtained the mansion house and 270 acres of land, including the McKean/Cochran Farm Site, while Richard received 150 acres. The two new farms included frontage on both Middletown Road and the Appoquinimink River, with William's farm east of Richard's. The division of the farm has survived to the present day. These two farms appear on the 1849 Rea and Price map of New Castle County (Figure 6) as "R.S. Cochran" (sic) and "W.A. Cochran." Later maps call the W.A. Cochran farm "Spring Valley" and the R.W. Cochran farm "Retirement." The elder Cochran's will also specified that six of his slaves be freed when they reached the age of 28. This provision, based on the notion that slaves ought to work off the cost of raising them, meant that parents Sally and Lewis Wright would be freed years before their children, and we can assume that they continued to live at or near the Cochran farm until their children were of age. The Cochrans owned other slaves who were not freed until the Civil War.

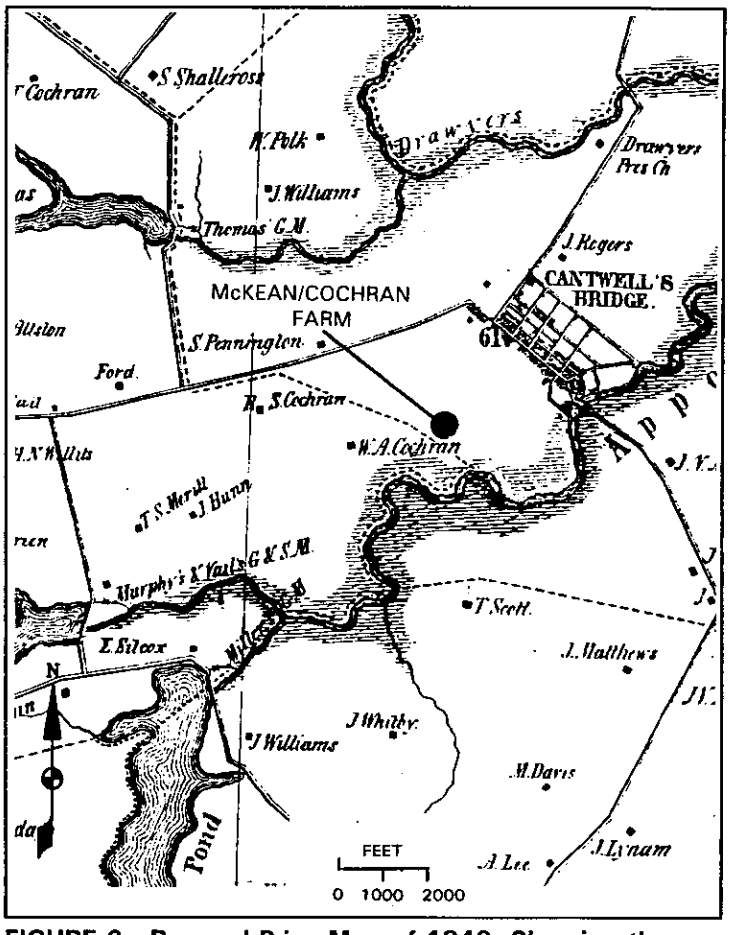

FIGURE 6: Rea and Price Map of 1849, Showing the Location of the McKean/Cochran Farm, Abandoned Around 1830

Both Cochrans appear in the population and agricultural schedules of the 1850 U.S. Census. W.A. Cochran had real estate worth $16,000, and his household included his wife, Sarah, his children, Harry, Francis (Fanny), and Sarah, a 35-year-old laborer from Maryland named William G., a 22-year-old laborer from Ireland named Sarah McDougherty, and three male slaves. The farm produced wheat, oats, Indian corn, Irish potatoes, hay, and 832 pounds of butter. The Cochran family continued to grow, and in 1870 included eight children. Sarah Cochran, the mother, died in 1873.

William Cochran retired in 1886, at the age of 66, and went to live with his daughter Fanny, who had married a cousin named Richard R. Cochran and still lived in St. Georges Hundred (Cochran Family Reunion Booklet 1986). Tenant farming was on the rise in Delaware in that period (De Cunzo and Garcia 1993:28), and Spring Valley was presumably leased to tenants. The arrangement must not have worked out satisfactorily, however, because in 1888 Catherine Pascault of Talbot County, Maryland, brought suit against William for nonpayment of a mortgage. The farm was sold at auction to pay the debt, and Catherine Pascault was the highest bidder (NCC Deed Book H-14:337). Pascault resold the farm six months later to John C. Corbit for $10,000 (NCC Deed Book N-14:337). At that time the farm was said to include 250 acres.

The Corbits retained ownership of Spring Valley until 1942. After a series of transactions, it was obtained by Walter C. Guseman in 1945 (NCC Deed Book R-45:262). In 1969 Walter and Thelma Guseman sold this tract, along with two others, totaling 413 acres, to Spring Valley Farms, Inc., for $380,000 (NCC Deed Book V-82:71 and V-82:68). Sometime between 1969 and 1986 Spring Valley Farms conveyed half their interest in the three parcels to Appomink Farms, Inc., which seems to have had the same owners as Spring Valley. In 1986, Spring Valley and Appomink sold all three parcels to the Commonwealth Trust Company (NCC Deed Book 481:310), and in 1991 Commonwealth conveyed them to Fusco Properties, a Delaware Limited Partnership, for $1 (NCC Deed Book 1148:275, 280).

D. HISTORY OF THE SITE

The McKean/Cochran Farm was established in about 1750, when the property belonged to Adam Peterson and his wife, Veronica Van Bibber Birmingham Peterson. Adam Peterson's main residence seems to have been on his Middletown farm, which Veronica in her will called the "Mansion Plantation," so the McKean/Cochran Farm was probably occupied by tenants. After 1775 the property belonged to two children, Letitia and Thomas McKean, and the farm continued to be leased out. In 1788, when he died, Thomas McKean had directed in his will that the farm be rented out to support his younger sister. In 1797, Letitia paid taxes on the farm and its buildings in St. Georges Hundred, but not the poll tax. Since she did not pay poll tax in St. Georges Hundred she probably lived elsewhere, implying that the farm was still occupied by a tenant. For a tenant, however, the farmer of the McKean/Cochran property ran an unusually large and well-stocked operation. Architectural historians can usually identify tenant farms because of the relatively few outbuildings present; people who do not own the land they farm are often unwilling to invest much capital in structures that would belong to the property owner. Yet the tax record of 1797 clearly states that the McKean/Cochran Farm included a house, a barn, a granary, a kitchen, and a smokehouse. The size

of the property, 388 acres, is also unusually large for a tenant. The tenant farmer seems, therefore, to have been quite secure in his position. Perhaps he was a relative of the owners, or a close friend.

From 1814 until its abandonment in around 1830 the farm was occupied by Robert Cochran. Cochran was a wealthy man and he eventually constructed a much grander house for himself at "Retirement," half a mile inland from Site 7NC-F-13. His will shows that the new house had definitely been built by 1843, which supports the archaeological evidence that the McKean/Cochran Farm had been abandoned by that date. Robert's son Richard later built an even grander house, called Spring Valley, on his half of the estate, a few hundred yards from the McKean/Cochran Farm Site. For the Cochrans, Letitia McKean's old house was merely a temporary lodging where they stayed until they had invested enough time and money in their farms to begin constructing the grander houses that suited their wealth and status.