

Detail of USGS Dover 7.5 minute quadrangle



Location of the Scotten-Ford Toft

Site boundaries are marked with a solid line

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: Vernacular

Materials

foundation brick

walls board and batten, wood plank

roofs tin, asphalt, cedar shingle

Narrative Description:

At the core of the complex is a four-bay two-story frame farmhouse built around 1890. Contributing buildings include chicken houses, a barn, granaries, and sheds. In the woods is a sawmill site. The only non-contributing buildings on the property are a mobile home with attached garage, a steel storage shed, and a recent brick house. The nominated area includes the Nathan Williams site, which is being nominated separately.

The main line of the Delaware Rail Road, now Conrail, is the oldest element of the built environment; it is therefore a contributing part of the historic landscape that has little direct bearing on the history of the property as described here.

The sawmill complex, in the woods at the north end of the toft, consists of two sheds and the ruins of the mill. Mill ruins consist of timbers still in place, the main drive pulley still in place, and an excavated area where adjacent machinery was mounted. Steel parts lie on the ground nearby. Even though the mill machinery has been dismantled, all essential elements of the plant can be discerned from the ground plan of what remains. The integrity of the site is excellent from an industrial archaeological point of view.

Nearby is an accessory building with a tin gable roof and vertical plank siding. This building served as the equipment shed for the sawmill.

An equipment shed or garage, also with a metal-covered gable roof and vertical plank siding, stands nearby. It has been extended by a shed-roofed addition. One end of the building is open. Around this building lie pieces of farm machinery, indicating that this was a repair shop. In the woods behind lie the remains of mowing machines, combines, and other farm machines, from which most of the wooden parts have perished.

There are five frame chicken houses, all with tin roofs and board-and-batten wood siding.

The three oldest chicken houses, built around 1930, stand in a row south of the house. The smaller, northernmost, building is 12 by 10 feet, while the two larger ones are 12 by 16 feet. The newer chicken houses, built around 1940 north of the house, are larger. The smallest house, which apparently is the oldest has a shed roof, while the other four have gable roofs. Internal roosts and outdoor water faucets remain from the period when these houses were in use.

All are virtually unchanged from the days when they were in service. A granary adjacent to the larger chicken house is part of the poultry-production complex.

Between the chicken houses and the sawmill is a well-preserved cluster of buildings consisting of a corn crib, a barn, and a wagon shed, which are related to the livestock and cultivation functions.

The corn crib has a shingled gabled roof and ventilated wood sides typical of local corn cribs. It stands on brick piers. The barn has an asphalt-shingled gable roof with a shed-roofed addition. It is older than the cement-block first story on which it stands. According to the owner, her father removed and replaced the original first story. This building contains stalls for horses and is attached to a paddock. It has good integrity, despite the added ground floor that replaced a former brick foundation.

The frame equipment shed, with a metal gable roof, is open on one side. It has good integrity.

At the center of the chicken house group is a two-story, four-bay frame farmhouse with an asphalt-shingled gable roof. It has been covered with aluminum siding. A porch has been added to the front, a

chimney to the east end, and a kitchen to the rear (north) side. While the building is structurally well preserved, it has been much altered.

The group of buildings continues to function as an agricultural support facility. Soybeans, winter small grains, and corn are grown on the farm, and the machinery shed still is used to house farm machinery. The owners sometimes keep horses in the barn, and both the house and mobile home are occupied by the owners' families. One of the owners lives in a modern house on a separate lot, the only part of the original Scotten tract that is no longer part of the farm property.

The grounds immediately adjacent to the toft are extensively landscaped with mature plantings and covered with neatly-mowed lawns. Areas that formerly were bare ground, such as chicken yards, are no longer fenced and are covered by lawn. In spite of this landscape alteration, the outlines of former internal divisions of the farmyard can be discerned as subtle grade shifts and linear features on the surface and would undoubtedly appear in an archæological survey.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name

other names/site number

Mosley Rural Archeological and Historic District
K-6689 K-1059 K-1060 K-6690 7K-C-408 K-6691 K-6692

2. Location

street & number

West side of McKee Rd. between College Rd. and Maidstone Br.

city or town

City of Dover

state Delaware

code DE

county Kent

code 001

zip code 19901

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

private

Category of Property

district

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

7

14

buildings

3

sites

10

14

total

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

AGRICULTURE/ agricultural field

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/ agricultural complex

Current Functions

AGRICULTURE/ agricultural field

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/ agricultural complex

grade, for pallets, crates, dunnage, fences and other rough applications. Margins in these product lines are so low that large operators seldom engage in the rough lumber trade, which has by default fallen to the small operators, of whom Medford Ford was typical.

Ford's mill was abandoned and left in place until about thirty years ago when usable moving parts were salvaged for a reconstruction in Cheswold that is still standing. The site was left undisturbed as Ford's daughters turned the farm over to non-resident contract farmers who today use only the fields.

Aside from the removal of certain mill machinery and the rotting of wooden parts, the machinery shop and the sawmill industrial site remain intact, and capable of providing detailed information on the disposition of resources in such an installation. In terms of the discipline of industrial archaeology, therefore, the sawmill area is capable of revealing considerable information about the operation of a small farm-based sawmill.

The boundaries include the Nathan Williams site and the Ford Farm Prehistoric Site, which are discussed in separate nominations.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ames, David L., Mary Helen Callahan, Bernard L. Herman, and Rebecca J. Siders
1989 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.*

Custer, Jay
1986 A management plan for Delaware's Prehistoric Cultural Resources. *University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research Monograph No. 2.*

Heite, Edward F., and Cara Lee Blume
1992 *Archaeological and Historical Discoveries in Connection with Scarborough Road.* Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeology Series 91. Dover.

Herman, Bernard L., and Rebecca J. Siders
1986 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan: Historic Contexts.*

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property: 175.75 (two parcels)

Verbal Boundary Description Two parcels, bounded on the northeast by St. Jones River and on the southwest by McKee Road, on the northwest of lands formerly of Lewis Geiser and on the southeast by lands formerly of Eldad Lore.

Kent County property tax tract numbers ED 67.00 - 01 -02 and ED 67.00 - 01 - 01

Boundary Justification

These two tracts contain all the land the present owners' grandfather bought in 1888, and which have constituted the family farm during the entire period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

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Camden, DE 19934

December 1992
302-697-1789

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Period of Significance
1888-1942

Areas of Significance

Agriculture

Industry

Other: Industrial Archaeology

Cultural Affiliation
Euro-American

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Scotten-Ford Toft is a well-preserved example of a Kent County farmstead of the early twentieth century, containing buildings that reflect the area's major agricultural products: lumber, chickens, field crops, and horses. A sawmill and equipment area contains significant remains that can provide valuable industrial archaeological information about the functioning of a country sawmill during the early twentieth century. Such mills often were used by Delaware farmers to process the hardwoods that are abundant in the high freshwater wetlands. While these mills were nominally portable, they usually were fastened to heavy timber foundations like the one surviving here.

Three generations of his family have owned and farmed this property since Emory Scotten bought it in 1888. When Scotten bought the former tenant farm, he built the present house and the first of the outbuildings, replacing the old farmstead that stood farther to the east. The barn and the residence date from this period. His son-in-law, Medford Ford, built the chicken houses and the sawmill. Since Ford's death in 1973, his widow and then his daughters have rented the fields to others. In the absence of a resident farmer, most of the buildings remain unused but preserved. Only three elements of the property are clearly recent: a mobile home with a garage, a steel storage shed, and a brick house.

The pattern of forests and fields has not changed substantially since it was mapped in 1882. The only major changes in land use and ground cover has been the clearing of the field that lies between the toft and McKee Road and the erection of a house on a new lot that has been set aside for one of the owners in the extreme south end of the property.

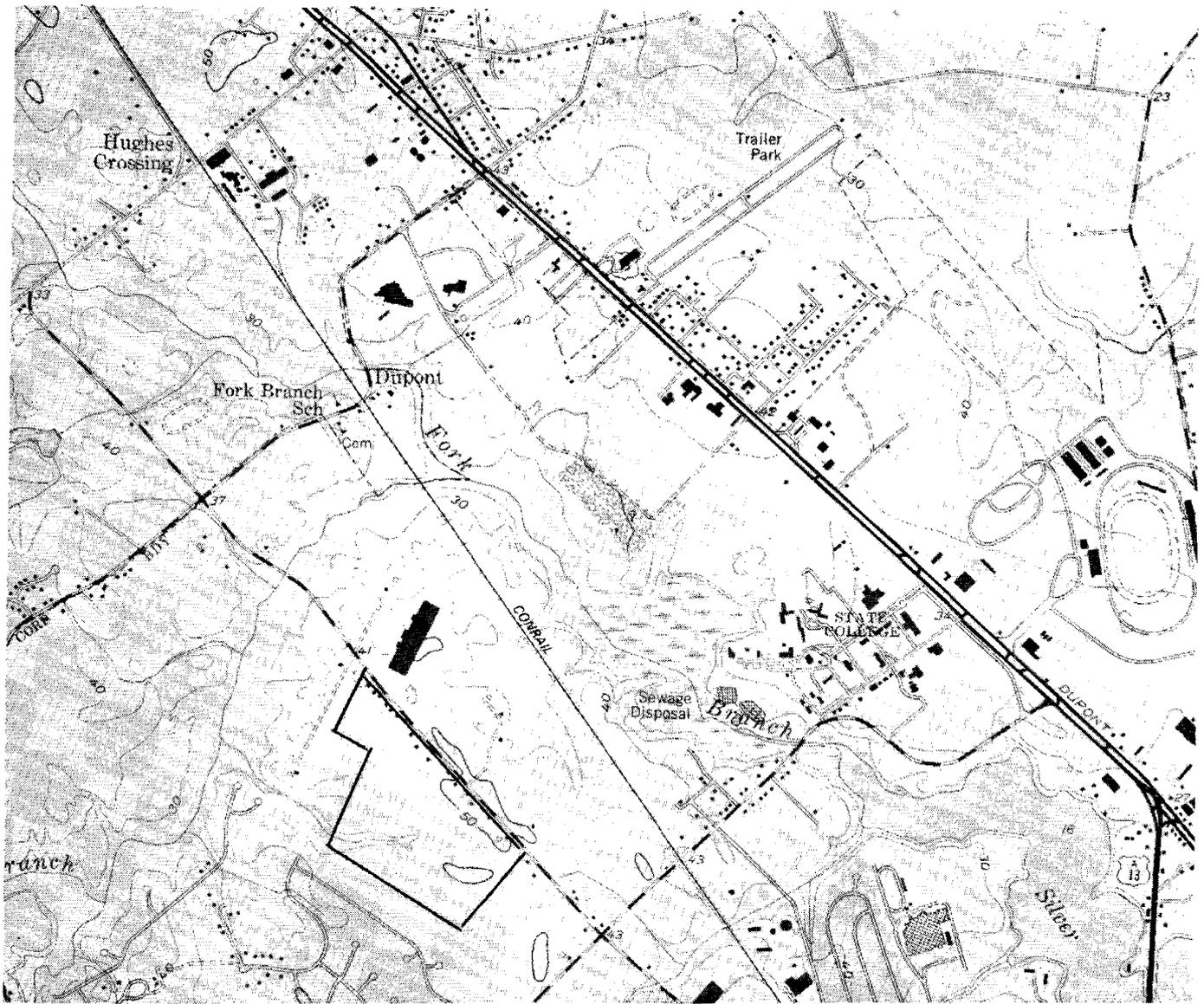
The poultry industry has been a central feature of Delaware's economy since 1923, when Mrs. Wilmer Steele introduced mass production of chickens. Her broiler house, now preserved at the Delaware Agricultural Museum, is similar to three small houses at the south end of the Scotten-Ford complex. Unlike the original broiler house and most of the other surviving early examples, these houses are on their original site.

In addition to its significance as part of the agricultural production system, the sawmill site is significant in the discipline of industrial archaeology because it can provide extensive information concerning the ground plan, internal organization, and production systems of a small farm sawmill.

Since farms in this part of Kent County contain large areas of poorly-drained hardwood forest, timber harvesting has always been an important industrial activity. Because most of the county's forests are upland hardwoods like the Scotten-Ford woodlot, the local sawmill products are outside the commercial mainstream.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nearby water-powered sawmills were available to process the timber output; when portable power sources came available in the form of tractors, farmers began buying their own mills, like the one represented here.

Most high-quality framing and finish lumber sold through commercial channels during the past century has been western softwood. Hardwood, such as the Kent County forests produce, is sold as a much lower



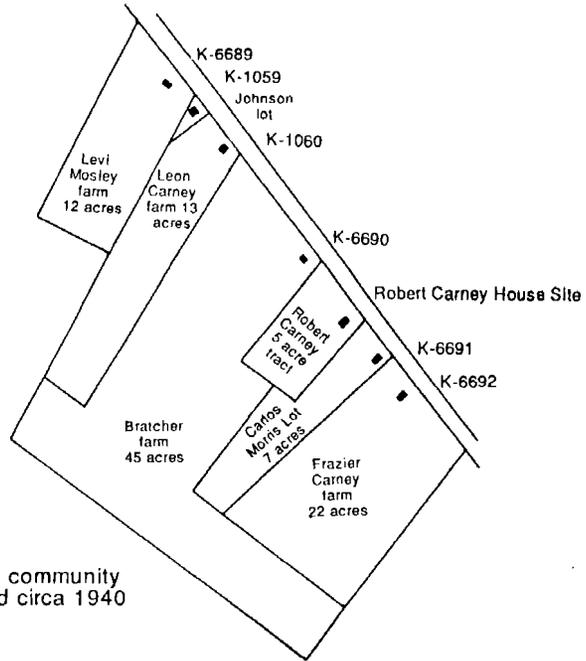
Detail of USGS Dover 7.5 minute quadrangle



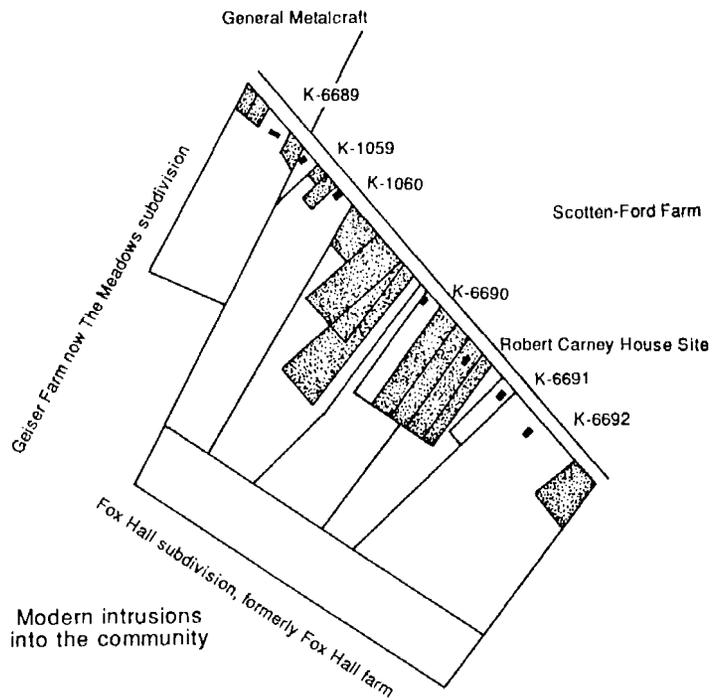
Location of the Jacob Mosley Historic District

Site boundaries are marked with a solid line

- K-6689: Levi Mosley House
- K-1059: Johnson lot
- K-1060: Leon Corney House
- K-6690: Mosley-Bratcher House
- Robert Carney House Site not listed
- K-6691: William Morris Carney House site
- K-6692: Frazier Carney House



Farms in the community as configured circa 1940



Modern intrusions into the community

Land use, infill, and contributing resources on the Mosley tract
 Source: county tax maps. Shading indicates non-contributing properties.

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: Vernacular

Materials

foundation brick piers
 walls clapboarded wood, composition
 roofs tin, asphalt, cedar shingle

Narrative Description:

The district is a contiguous group of related agricultural properties, about 95 acres, containing a significant concentration of agricultural fields historically linked through common development by members of a Native American remnant population during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Two of the original houses survive in the district and the sites of four others are identified. Three agricultural outbuildings remain in place.

Most of the community's agricultural land, reclaimed a century ago from wetlands, remains undisturbed, even though recent suburban-type houses have been built along the eastern edge of the tract. Contributing properties are:

NAME OF PROPERTY	STATE SITE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION AND TAX MAP PARCEL	INTEGRITY	CLASSIFICATION
Site Frazier Carney House	K-6692	Site of 2-story frame house, barn, corncrib and privy ED 05 67.00 01 29	Fair	Buildings and Site
Site of the William Morris Carney House	7K-C-408	Site of a house moved to the Delaware Agricultural Museum grounds ED 05 67.00 01 27.01	Good	Site
William Morris Carney House	K-6691	House now at the museum <i>(not included in this nomination)</i>	Moved	Building
William Morris Carney fields		Agricultural fields ED 05 67.00 01 27.01	Good	Site
Site of the Robert Carney House		Site of a house known from documents and oral history ED 05 67.00 01 26	Unknown	Site
Site of the Mosley-Bratcher House	K-6690	2-story frame house ED 05 67.00 01 21	Fair	Site
Mosley-Bratcher fields		Agricultural fields ED 05 67.00 01 24, 24.01, 28	Good	Site
Leon Corney House	K-1060	2-story frame house ED 05 67.00 01 16	Good	Building
House currently on Martha Johnson Lot	K-1059	1-story old frame school, moved to the site more than 50 years ago ED 05 67.00 01 13	Good	Site and possibly building
Levi Mosley House	K-6689	2-story frame house ED 05 67.00 01 09	Good	building

FRAZIER CARNEY HOUSE SITE AND OUTBUILDINGS

The Frazier Carney House was a two-story clapboarded gable-roofed frame dwelling that stood on a knoll. The plan is L-shaped, with a porch across the front. The gable end presents a two-bay aspect to the road, but the house is three bays wide including the facade of the rear ell. Enclosed porches connect the main house to a separate kitchen. A barn, a corncrib, a pumphouse, and a privy still stand.

FRAZIER CARNEY AGRICULTURAL FIELDS
WILLIAM MORRIS CARNEY AGRICULTURAL FIELDS
MOSLEY-BRATCHER AGRICULTURAL FIELDS
LEVI MOSLEY AGRICULTURAL FIELDS

Behind the houses along McKee Road are the fields formerly cultivated by the occupants of the houses. Some of the fields are now grown up in scrub hardwoods, and others have been enclosed in carefully maintained suburban lawns. Ditches, hedgerows, and even plowed furrows remain visible, even in the fallow ground and second growth.

WILLIAM MORRIS CARNEY HOUSE SITE

Yard trees, driveway, and minor landscape features still mark the site of the William Morris Carney house, which has been moved to the Delaware Agricultural Museum. Archæological tests confirmed existence of below-grade features and a very high probability that significant remains survive below grade. These tests consisted of two meter-square test pits in the house area.

ROBERT CARNEY HOUSE SITE

Shade trees mark the site of the Robert Carney House, now part of a suburban lawn. The site has not been archæologically tested, but the historic garden area has not been built upon.

Non-Contributing Properties on the Robert Carney Tract, built since 1976

JAMES F. MILLER HOUSE, a split-level brick and frame house
RUDOLPH E. BROWN II HOUSE, a two-story Tudor-style brick and frame house
THOMAS V. ALLEN HOUSE, a one-story brick and frame raised bungalow
WILLIAM T. DEMBY HOUSE, a frame rancher.

MOSLEY-BRATCHER HOUSE SITE

This two-story, two-bay, gable-roofed frame house was covered with a combination of imitation clapboard siding and asbestos shingles. An enclosed porch on the north and west sides connected the house to the kitchen. Open porches survived on the east and south. A shed-roofed addition was attached to the rear of the L-shaped main house.

Non-Contributing Properties on the Mosley-Bratcher Tract,

NEW CHURCH, a frame modular building and an adjacent house.
OLDER CHURCH, a frame building.
BRICK HOUSE, a brick rancher

LEON CORNEY HOUSE

This two-story, two-bay, gable-roofed frame house is now covered with asphalt imitation stone siding. Open porches survive on the south and east. Enclosed porches on the north and west connect the house to the kitchen.

Non-Contributing Properties on the Leon Corney Tract,

LONEE CORNEY MOBILE HOME on a one-third acre tract conveyed by the father of the owner.

FLOYD CORNEY HOUSE, rancher on 7,300 square foot lot conveyed by father of the owner.

MARTHA JOHNSON LOT

A one-story frame house with its gable facing the road was originally built as a schoolhouse. It was moved to the site, and served as a dwelling here during the period of significance. It is currently covered with vinyl siding.

LEVI MOSLEY HOUSE

The Levi Mosley House is a two-story frame house covered with asbestos shingles. The original gable-roofed house has been extended to the front with a hip-roofed wing, to which an enclosed porch subsequently has been added. It is the only occupied building among the contributing resources.

Non-Contributing Properties on the Levi Mosley Tract,

MARSHALL HOUSE, frame rancher on a lot containing 13,668 square feet.

CANNON HOUSE, frame rancher on a lot containing 13,440 square feet.

WILTBANK HOUSE, frame rancher on a lot containing 8,943 square feet.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Period of Significance
1884-1942

Areas of Significance

Agriculture
Ethnic Heritage/Native American
Archæology/Historic - Aboriginal

Cultural Affiliation
Acculturated Native American

Narrative Statement of Significance

Beginning in 1884, a group of families of Native American ancestry, locally known as moors, established a community when they bought poorly-drained scrub woodland from absentee landlords whose families had neglected it for generations. They installed drainage, built houses, and farmed the property for two or three generations until the neighborhood fell to suburban strip development. Their houses, of which three survive on site and another offsite, and their agricultural fields, have a high potential for providing information about ethnicity, agricultural history, and nineteenth-century land reclamation strategies, in an ethnic context. The potential research value of the site is enhanced by the fact that no other group of people are known to have cultivated it, and some fields have not been touched since the moor families left. Even where intrusive suburban lots have been cut out of the property, large areas may be expected to contain archæological evidence for agricultural and horticultural practices. Comparison of such agricultural evidence with fields cultivated by other social and cultural groups may help to define these people culturally in terms of farming practice, gentrification, and educational level.

Remaining buildings are significant for their association with the moor community. Limited data currently available suggests that survival of a conservative dwelling type, including external kitchens and extensive attached porches, may be a characteristic of moor housing preferences. However, these are the only documented examples of this type, and represent only a limited period of construction. More extensive survey might refine this property type. Essential to development of a moor property type will be a definition of associated agricultural remains.

Background history

The community came into being in 1884 when Jacob Mosley bought a 36-acre tract from Samuel Pleasanton Mifflin. Within the next few years, Mosley sold off parts of the tract to other members of the moor community. In short order, a row of seven small two-story farmhouses stood along the road and the former wasteland had been put under the plow through clearance and drainage.

The community remained stable for nearly three-quarters of a century. Houses were occupied by two or more generations, and the small farms provided subsistence or supplemental food and income. With the passing of the second generation, the properties again fell into the hands of younger family members who were absentee owners. These heirs sold off their portions as building lots, creating the present infill of modern houses and mobile homes that now line the road. Eventually the older houses were abandoned as McKee Road became a suburban street consumed by the Dover urban sprawl.

Integrity

Of the seven original moor tofts, the original houses still stand on two. One house has been moved and preserved in a museum offsite. One house on the site was moved in during the period of significance, and therefore contributes even though it is architecturally dissimilar to the others. Sites of the four missing houses are preserved. One of these was tested and found to contain significant intact archæological

deposits. From superficial examination it appears that the site of another removed house probably is archæologically intact; it was unavailable for testing because a lawn covers it.

All major features of the agricultural fields remain visible. Farm tracts, which are contiguous across the back of the district, retain all the outward signs of agricultural activity.

FRAZIER CARNEY TOFT

Frazier Carney (1883-1946), built the house that still stands in poor condition (K-6692). When he died, the farm contained 22 acres. Frazier Carney's parents, William Morris Carney and Sallie Carney, lived next door. He obtained the house site by purchase and later added land inherited from his parents, including the farm field that still separates the two sites.

This house is larger and more elegant than the others, but it shares the separate kitchen that characterize the other houses in the group. It is the only one of the group that still has its farm buildings. The plan is L-shaped with a broad verandah on two sides.

WILLIAM MORRIS CARNEY TOFT

North of the Frazier Carney house was the lot Isaac Mosley conveyed to Sallie Carney in 1885, part of the ten acres he had bought from Jacob Mosley the year before. The house she built with her second husband, William Morris Carney, (K-6691) is now at the Delaware Agricultural Museum.

ROBERT CARNEY LOT

A row of modern houses now occupy the five-acre lot that Jacob Mosley sold to Robert Carney in 1884, part of the original subdivision. Within living memory this lot contained an old house, south of the Mosley-Bratcher house and north of the William Morris Carney house. Since the modern houses have been built to the rear of the original houses, there is a very high probability that the Robert Carney toft site has not been archæologically compromised. The survival of a large yard tree at apparent original grade may be taken as evidence that major ground disturbance has not occurred. Integrity is therefore likely to be good.

MOSLEY-BRATCHER HOUSE SITE

In 1888, Jacob Mosley conveyed three acres to Lucinda Mosley, wife of his son David. On this three-acre tract stood a house (K-6690) that probably was built soon thereafter. David and Lucinda added to their holdings. In 1900 they bought 19 acres of the Pleasanton estate from Florence Creadick, a widow whose husband had bought it for investment.

David eventually controlled about 40 acres in the community on the west side of McKee Road. Between 1911 and 1915, he also owned the part of the adjacent Geiser farm. In 1919 David and Lucinda conveyed the remainder of the home farm to Herbert Harmon of Philadelphia. The Harmons added to the holding by purchasing yet another tract to the west. The Harmons held the property forty years, until 1950, when they sold it to Albert and Emma Bratcher, who resided there for many years. It was destroyed in 1993.

LEON CORNEY HOUSE

The two-bay, two-story Leon Corney house (K-1060) is one of three surviving similar houses built by the first generation settlers along the road. The property was conveyed in 1938 to the bank by Clody and Estella Pritchett. The Pritchetts had obtained the tract from David and Lucinda Mosley in 1910. At that time it was 16 acres, the residue of the original Jacob Mosley farm. This may be the Jacob Mosley house. Leon Corney, or Carney (1898-1973) bought 13 acres from the First National Bank of Dover in 1939.

MARTHA JOHNSON LOT

Next south from Levi Mosley's tract is a triangular half acre Jacob Mosley sold to Martha Johnson, wife of Burton Johnson, in 1885. She was a widow in 1906 when she sold it to Walter H. Carney. He

held it until 1937, when he sold it to Frank Hall Pritchett, who conveyed it to Paul Smith, the present occupant, in 1955. The property has a history of lifetime owner-occupancy unrivalled in the neighborhood. The present one-story frame house (K-1059) is said to be an old school moved more than fifty years ago, after the earlier house burned. Whatever the history of the house, the toft has undergone considerable renovation during the century since it was established.

Aside from superficial changes to the appearance of the house, there is no evidence that the subsurface features of the toft have been compromised. The general form of the original building has not changed, according to old residents.

LEVI MOSLEY PROPERTY

Between 1896 and 1903, Levi Mosley bought three parcels, totalling twelve acres, from Geiser, adjoining the land Jacob Mosley had bought from the Pleasanton heirs. The two-story house on that parcel (K-6689) is larger than most of the neighbors', and has been altered. An unusual floor plan, with the hip-roofed gable in the front, sets this apart from the local folk architectural genre.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ames, David L., Mary Helen Callahan, Bernard L. Herman, and Rebecca J. Siders
1989 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.*

Cusser, Jay
1986 A management plan for Delaware's Prehistoric Cultural Resources. *University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research Monograph No. 2.*

Heite, Edward F., and Cara Lee Blume
1992 *Archaeological and Historical Discoveries in Connection with Scarborough Road.* Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeology Series 91. Dover.

Herman, Bernard L., and Rebecca J. Siders
1986 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan: Historic Contexts.*

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 95±

Verbal Boundary Description

Bounded on the northeast by McKee Road, on the Northwest by The Meadows subdivision, on the southwest and northwest by the Fox Hall subdivision, and on the southeast by lands now or formerly of McKee.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries contain all the land the subject group bought and farmed during the period of significance.

Evidence for contiguity in the agricultural portions of the property was obtained by observation of topographic and natural features, observation of land alterations, and study of historical documents.

Portions of the district have been separated by intervening development, but the visually separated portions are contiguous and all the visually separated parts have sufficient significance and integrity to meet National Register criteria. Visual continuity is a minor factor in significance.

11. Form Prepared By

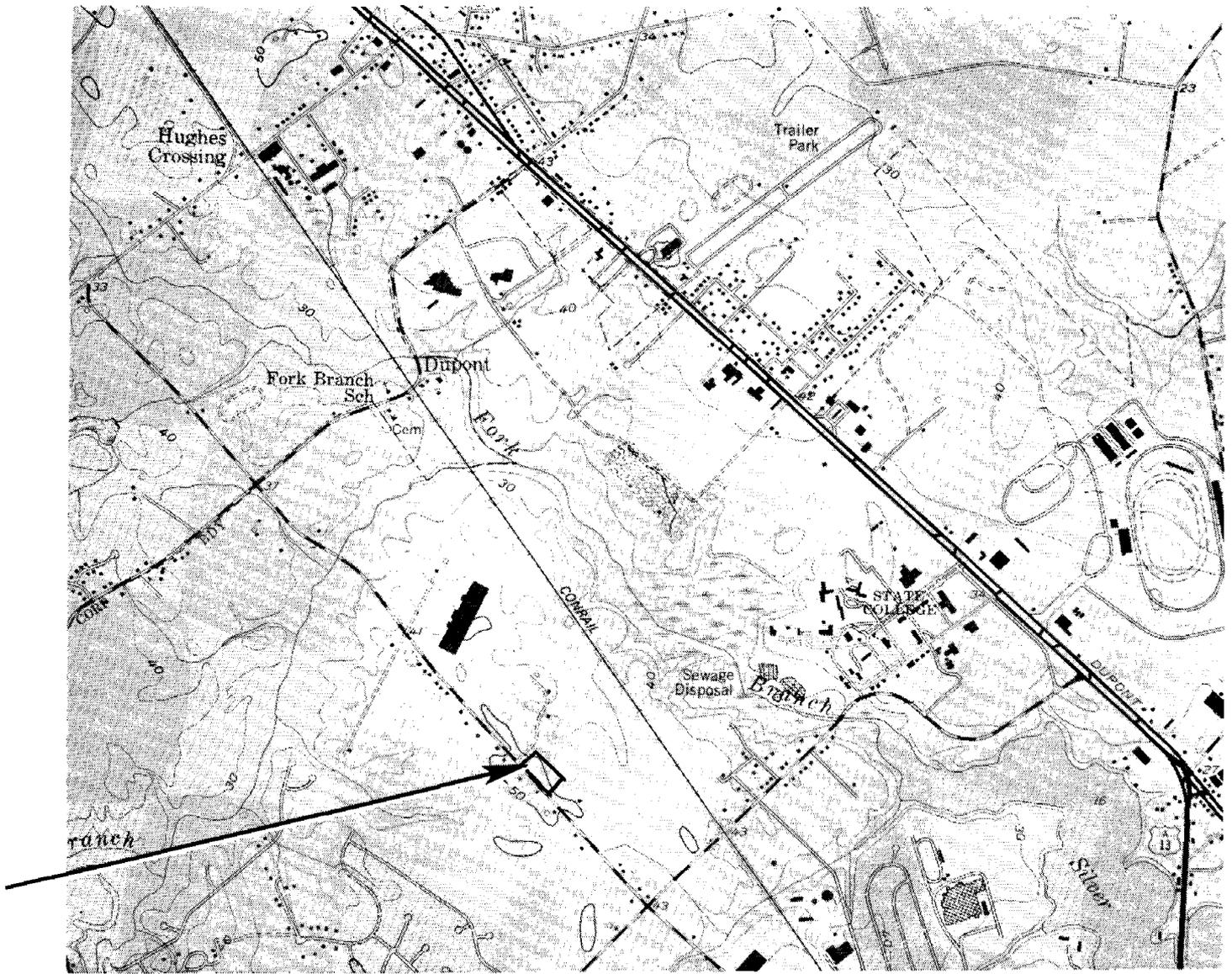
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December 1992
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During tests in the spring of 1992, a controlled surface collection in the newly-cultivated field produced an approximate boundary for the site. This approximation was confirmed when a Gradall trench uncovered buried features in precisely the same area as the artifact concentration. Because the Gradall trench through a standing crop was by necessity relatively narrow, features could not be fully uncovered and interpreted.

Features included a linear feature that may have been a sill mold or planting bed, a square postmold, and an amorphous pit. In such a narrow trench, it was impossible to interpret these features, but all are consistent with domestic activities. The features were concentrated in the same area that was the center of the surface artifact concentration. Analysis of soil chemical residues likewise indicated the presence of a site in this spot.

The artifact collection consisted to two temporal clusters. Early materials, including white saltglaze stoneware and free-blown beverage bottles, indicate an occupation during the eighteenth century or the early nineteenth century. Later materials, which were more abundant, included refined white earthenware and bottles, were consistent with occupation around the middle of the nineteenth century.



Detail of USGS Dover 7.5 minute quadrangle



Location of the
Nathan Williams House Site, 7K-C-389

Site boundaries are marked with a solid line

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

Agriculture
Archeology / Historic, non-aboriginal

Period of Significance

1804-1881

Cultural Affiliation

African-American

Narrative Statement of Significance

This site derives much of its significance from the fact that it was occupied by a poorly-documented class of landholder. Sites associated with antebellum free black non-landowners are extremely difficult to identify, since there was no legal compulsion to make a record of their tenure. Free black landowners have received considerable attention in the historical literature because they are readily identified in the tax rolls and deeds.

The state management plan for historical archaeological sites does not single out the antebellum free black population for study, but identifies dislocations caused by Civil War as an appropriate area for study. Since the Nathan Williams property spans the Civil War period, excavation could shed light on the social transformations that occurred.

The Nathan Williams property was first identified in the records by the will of John Pleasanton in 1838. At that time, the property consisted of approximately eleven acres with a house. It cannot be determined if this was one of the houses identified in earlier documents. Williams was a free Negro with some rights to the property that were less than freehold, perhaps a life estate.

When the present McKee Road was laid out in 1881, a house still stood on the site. It is possible from the documents to identify the Williams holding, roughly congruent with a field that still exists in the farm.

Artifact collections suggest that the site was created over a long period, which is consistent with the documentary evidence for at least a fifty-year occupation.

The open field that includes this site is a contributing part of the setting of the Scotten-Ford agricultural complex. Since the Nathan Williams occupation predated all the features now visible on the property, it does not contribute to the significance of that property.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ames, David L., Mary Helen Callahan, Bernard L. Herman, and Rebecca J. Siders
1989 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.*

Custer, Jay
1986 A management plan for Delaware's Prehistoric Cultural Resources. *University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research Monograph No. 2.*

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Herman, Bernard L., and Rebecca J. Siders
1986 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan: Historic Contexts.*

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one

Verbal Boundary Description The site is bounded on the west by McKee Road and is about thirty meters square, centered on a point fifty meters south of the Ford Farm driveway. On the east the site boundary is a field edge about 250 feet from the road.

Kent County property tax tract numbers ED 67.00 - 01 -02 and ED 67.00 - 01 - 01

Boundary Justification

The boundary coincides with surface collections and subsurface discoveries. During 1992 archaeological testing, features were found in a Gradall cut across the known site. These features were concentrated about the point 50 meters southward from the farm drive. Controlled surface collection confirmed the size and extent of surface indications. This size is consistent with the sizes of tofts of tenant houses in Delaware. The eastern boundary is the limit of the property Nathan Williams controlled.

11. Form Prepared By

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