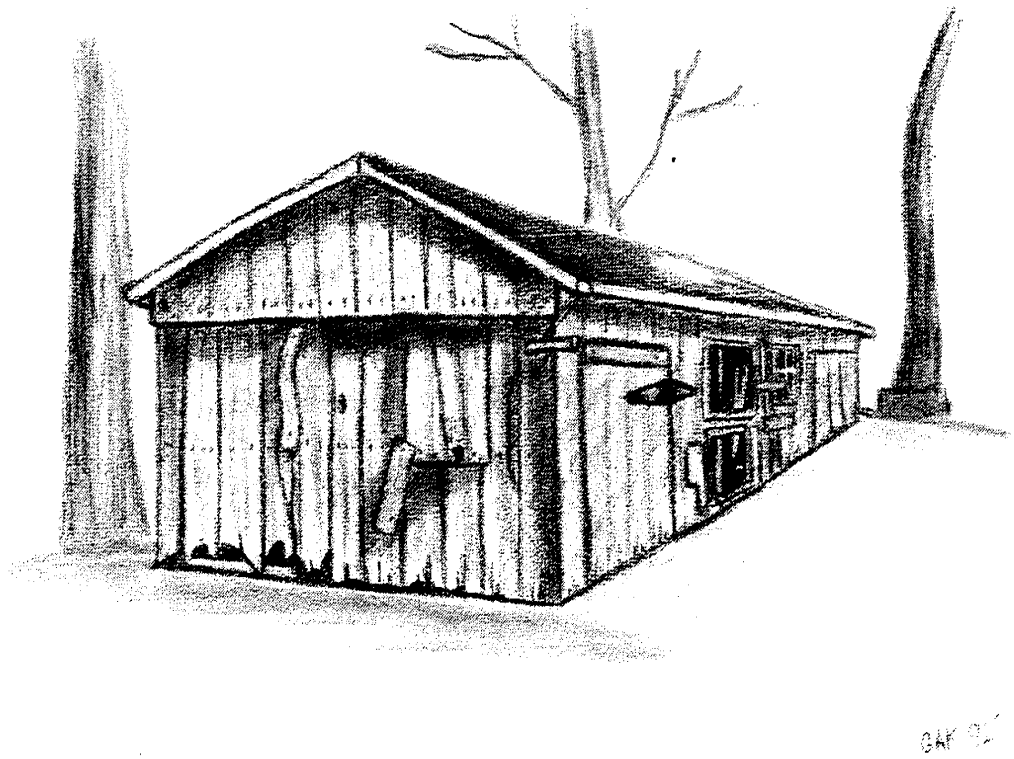

Figure 18
Sawmill accessory building
Charcoal sketch by George A. Keeler

8. The Scotten-Ford Agricultural Complex

The family of the current owners have built all the buildings now standing on the Scotten-Ford (K-6694) toft during the past century (Figure 19). These first resident owners had farms elsewhere, but preferred to reside here because it was close to the more convenient environment of nearby Dover. Their status and wealth were considerably above the previous occupants'.

The earliest representation of a toft on the property is found in the Susannah Stoops estate division of 1804, which was echoed in the 1840 plot (Figure 9). This toft stood in the field between the present toft and the railroad, an area marked by few artifacts.

In 1867, Beers' *Atlas* showed a house at the same location and another house, apparently the Nathan Williams toft, as well. Both houses communicated to the outside by a lane that ran toward the present College Road.

Two tofts are clearly indicated on the 1882 plot, made a few years before Emory Scotten bought the farm in 1888. He relocated the farm's toft and built the present house soon after he bought the farm.

Ground cover has not changed since 1882, except for clearing of the field north of the driveway between the toft and McKee Road. This field is artificially drained. The driveway appears to be largely unchanged since before McKee Road was built; it crosses a boggy area on a natural causeway and runs along the boundary of the former woods.

Since much of the farm consists of poorly-drained hardwood forest, timber harvesting has been an important economic activity in this vicinity since first European settlement. During the eighteenth century, the Loockerman family kept a water-powered sawmill near the present College Road bridge on the St. Jones River. Later there was a sawmill on Maidstone Branch at duPont's mill seat.

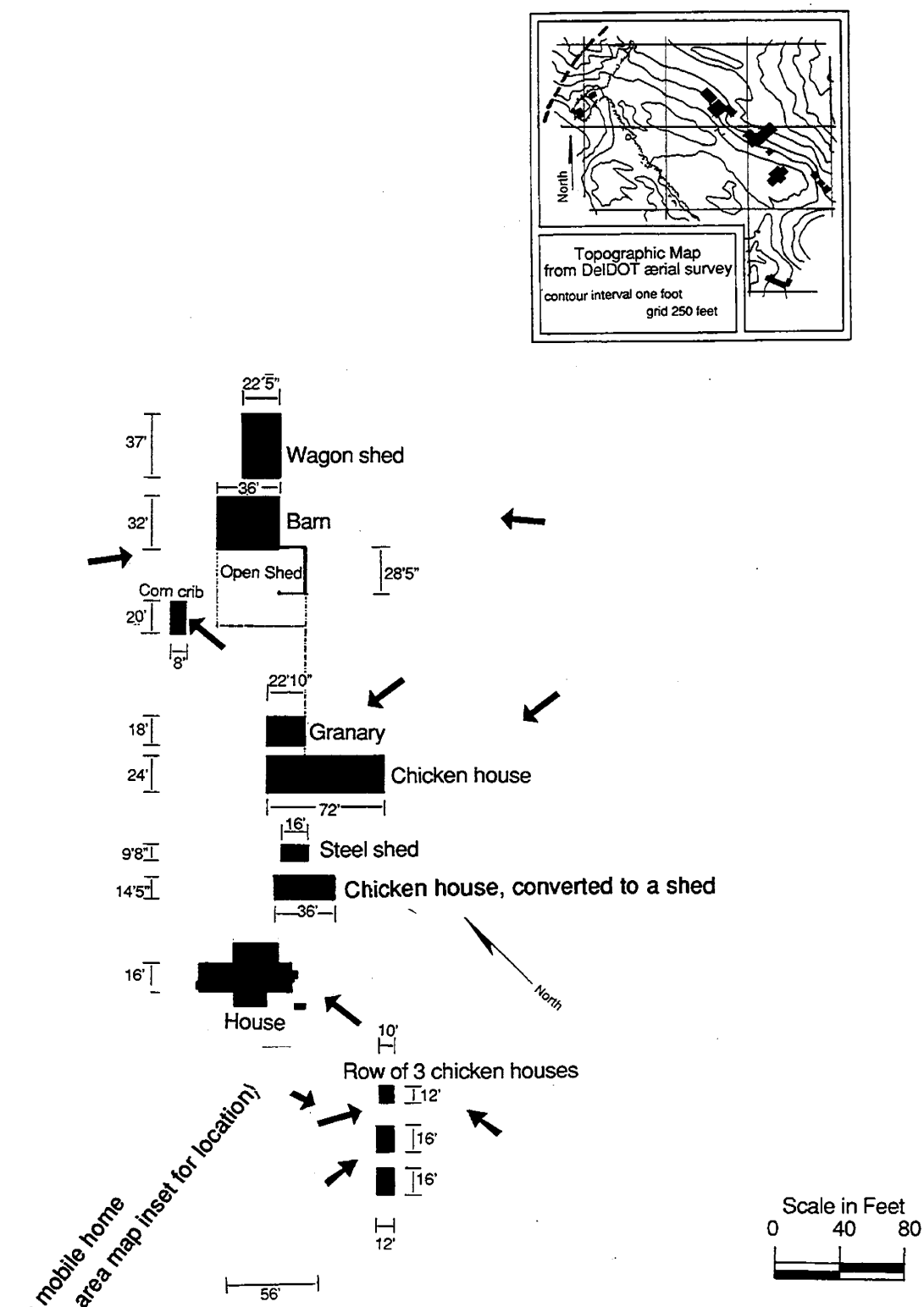

Figure 19
Plan of the Scotten-Ford agricultural complex

Finally, in the present century, internal combustion engines took over sawing duties. Farmers without water power sources could operate their own mills for their own use and for local markets.

MEDFORD FORD'S SAWMILL

In the woods near the barn stand two small sheds. One of these sheds is a former sawmill support building. The other is an equipment shed less closely related to sawing, which once served as a repair shop for farm machinery.

Remains of old machines are scattered through the nearby woods. The mill itself has been dismantled, and parts are now thought to be located in another mill near Cheswold (Heite and Blume 1992:10). The wooden structure of the mill foundations still may be seen in the ground, however (below).

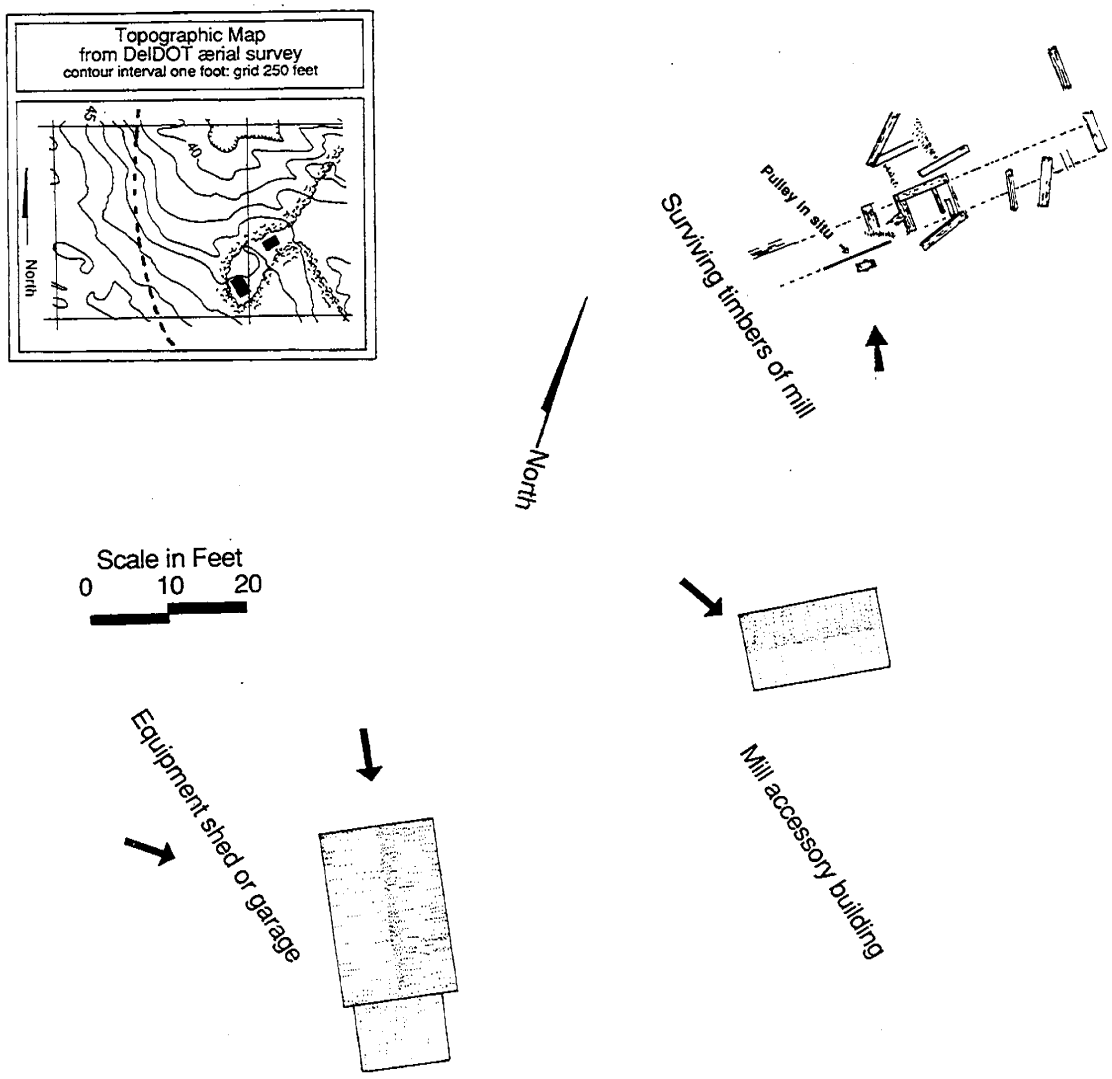

Figure 20
Ground plan of the sawmill complex
with references to camera positions

Plate 4
Pulley found *in situ* in sawmill
See figure 20 for location

Motive power for these mills frequently was provided by the farmer's steam or gasoline tractor, although stationary engines are used in larger operations today. A large pulley on the tractor would drive a long, loose, leather belt, which in turn drove the pulley that powered the mill.

Plate 5
Rear of shed or garage at sawmill
See figure 20 for location

Plate 6
Front elevation of shed or garage
See figure 20 for location

Plate 7
Sawmill accessory building
See figure 20 for location

Such portable sawmills were a significant part of the Delaware rural economy, allowing farmers to extract a cash crop out of high wetland, called "white oak soil" in the local vernacular. Even though western lumber took away considerable market share, hardwood products continue to be sawn in Kent County, mostly for pallets and other low-value end uses

The mill group delineates the northern edge of the farmstead complex. At the other end, five structures exemplify another major theme in Delaware agricultural history.

CHICKEN HOUSES

Three small chicken houses southeast of the house, built by Medford and Florence Ford, represent the earliest period of what became Delaware's dominant rural industry. The first of these, 10 by 12 feet, is the northern of the three. Its siding is beaded tongue-in-groove. The other two, on the south, are 12 by 16 feet and covered with board-and-batten siding.

A fourth chicken house, north of the dwelling, is now used as a shed. It is 36 feet long by 14 $^1/_2$ feet wide. The final chicken house is 72 by 24 feet, farther from the dwelling. It represents the last period of farmer-built houses, before the advent of the much larger modern factory houses.

Behind the chicken houses are a granary and a corn crib, essential adjuncts of any livestock or poultry operation. There is no evidence of the automatic feeding equipment and production-line system typical of contract poultry farms since World War II.

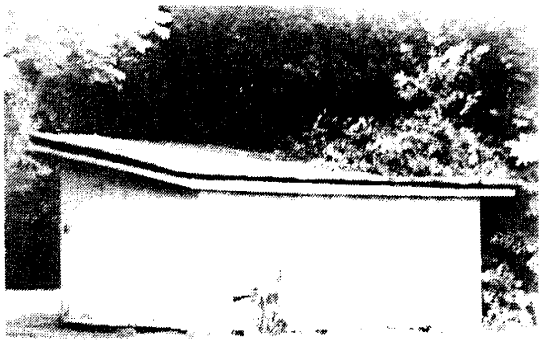

Plate 8
North chicken house, from rear
See figure 19 for location

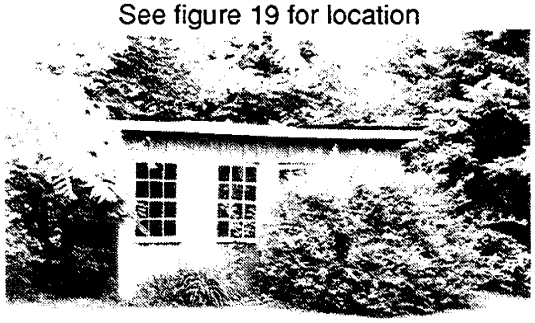

Plate 9
North chicken house, from front
See figure 19 for location

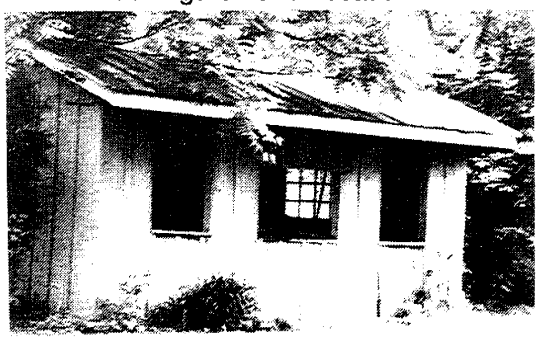

Plate 10
Middle chicken house, from northwest
See figure 19 for location

Plate 11
Middle chicken house, from southwest
See figure 19 for location

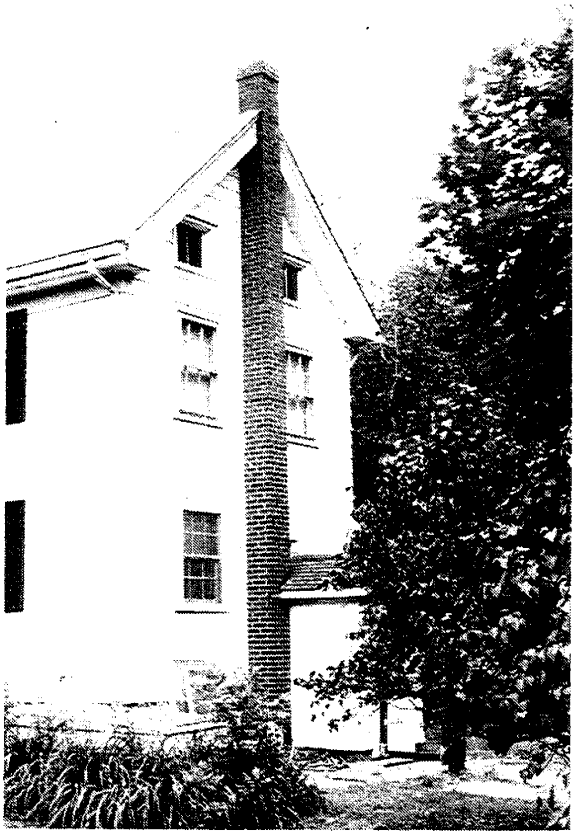

Plate 12
Scotten-Ford farm house
See figure 19 for location

Plate 13
Largest chicken house
See figure 19 for location

Plate 14
Granary
See figure 19 for location

Plate 15
Corn crib
See figure 19 for location

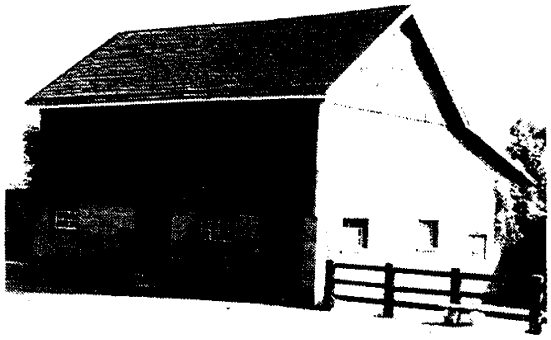

Plate 16
Barn
See figure 19 for location

Plate 17
Barn and wagon shed, from the southeast
See figure 19 for location

RESOURCES IN THE SCOTTEN-FORD AGRICULTURAL COMPLEX

DESCRIPTION	AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE	INTEGRITY	CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE?	DATE OR PERIOD
Sawmill area:				
Sawmill ruins	industrial archæology	excellent	yes	early 20th century
Sawmill accessory building	industrial archæology	excellent	yes	early 20th century
Equipment shed or garage	agriculture	good	yes	mid 20th century
Agricultural Area (north to south):				
Wagon shed	agriculture	good	yes	mid 20th century
Barn	agriculture	fair	yes	circa 1890
Corn crib	agriculture	good	yes	early 20th century
Granary	agriculture	excellent	yes	circa 1940
Chicken house 72 feet long	agriculture	excellent	yes	circa 1940
Steel storage shed	agriculture	excellent	no	recent
Chicken house 36 feet long	agriculture	excellent	yes	circa 1940
Chicken house 10' by 12'	agriculture	excellent	yes	circa 1930
Chicken house 16' by 12'	agriculture	excellent	yes	circa 1930
Chicken house 16' by 12'	agriculture	excellent	yes	circa 1930
Dwellings:				
Mansion house	domestic	fair	yes	circa 1890
Mobile home with outbuilding	domestic	excellent	no	circa 1960
Baynard residence (Not located in the toft)	domestic	excellent	no	1955
Sites:				
Ford Farm site locus E	archæological	good	no	prehistoric
Nathan Williams site	archæological	good	yes	early 19th cent
Delaware Railroad (Conrail)	transportation corridor	good	yes	1856

OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE TOFT

The small frame barn stands on a cement-block ground-floor story that includes a horse stall. The barn is older than its lower story, which was replaced by Medford Ford. It is attached to an open shed within a fenced paddock. Beyond the barn is a frame wagon or equipment shed.

The farmhouse is a two-story frame building covered with replacement siding. It was built in two sections, with a porch addition on the south (front) and a kitchen wing on the north.

This typical Delaware vernacular house was built by Emory Scotten soon after he bought the farm. Over the years, it has been adapted to successive conditions and styles. There is no evidence that any above-ground elements of the previous farmstead were preserved.

INTERPRETATION

The toft, the croft and the sawmill site retain excellent integrity and well-defined historic boundaries. Only one non-contributing element, a steel shed, has been injected into the complex itself.

Outside the toft, the present owners of the property have erected their own residences, a mobile home and a brick house, within the past forty years. While these intrusions stand on the Scotten-Ford tract, they do not occupy locations where they intrude visually on an appreciation of the complex from an architectural or purely æsthetic point of view.

The sawmill-related industrial area was investigated archæologically, by uncovering and measuring visible remains. During the clearance, many pieces of machinery and tools were observed scattered around the property, as if they were discarded the last day the mill was used. Abandoned industrial sites are frequently picked-over by scrap dealers or cleared for re-use. In such cases, delicate features of the site's internal organization are lost. In this case, the only disturbance appears to have been removal of the main elements of the sawmill machinery.

Farm buildings have been spared both modernization and decay after the end of the family's active participation in farming. Even though the ground is rented, the owners have carefully preserved the unused buildings. The result of this curation chronicles Kent County agricultural technology between 1888 and 1970.

ELIGIBILITY

In terms of both industrial archæology and the history of agricultural technology, the property clearly is eligible for the Register.

As a district, the farm meets several of the Delaware historical archæological criteria for evaluation listed on page 30. Both the mill and the agricultural buildings are representative of a type. The mill possesses good archæological integrity, as do the above-ground remains of the farming operation.

A mainline railroad, now Conrail, has been a significant part of the farm's history since it was built in 1856. The railroad does not cross the toft area, but its location significantly affected the way the farm is cultivated.

The railroad is a contributing element, or at least it is not a non-contributing element, of the site. It is the oldest visible feature of the property, and it certainly played a central role in the history of Delaware agriculture, even though its role in this particular farm's history is peripheral.

The five-acre Baynard property, which has been separated from the main body of the farm, contains some of the plowed field of the former Nathan Williams croft, and continues to be a functional part of the farm. The house is a non-contributing element, but most of the lot area remains in agricultural use and therefore is a contributing element.