

I. ELEMENTS OF THE HISTORIC CONTEXT

A historic context is defined as an “organizational format that groups information about related historic properties, based on theme, geographic limits, and chronological period. The Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan (hereafter “the Delaware Plan”) identifies eleven elements that must be defined in order to complete a fully-developed historic context:

1. historic theme
2. geographic zone
3. chronological period
4. information needs and recent preservation activity
5. reference bibliography
6. method for involving the general and professional public
7. mechanism for updating the context
8. known and expected property types
9. criteria for evaluating existing or expected resources
10. distribution and potential distribution of property types
11. goals and priorities for the context and property types

Each of these elements has been addressed in this historic context for agricultural tenancy. The principal defining elements of the agricultural tenancy historic context are its historic theme—Agricultural Tenancy; its geographic zone—the Upper Peninsula Zone; and its chronological period—1770 to 1900 +/- . Chapter I discuss each of these elements and describes them in terms of the Delaware Plan. Property types are introduced in Chapter I – known and expected property types, criteria for evaluating existing or expected resources, and distribution and potential distribution of property types are covered in detail in Chapters II and III. Information needs and recent preservation activity are discussed in the Prefaces. A reference bibliography concluded this volume. Consisting o both primary and secondary of suggestions from the advisory committee. The method for involving the general and professional public was the creation of an advisory committee of scholars and preservation professionals. The committee was consulted regarding the research methodology, the bibliography, and the direction of the research, and the members of the committee were made aware of the progress and problems encountered. Recommendations for a mechanism for updating the context are included in Chapter VI: Priorities and Goals for Agricultural Tenancy, along with goals and priorities for the context and property types.

Historic Theme: Agricultural Tenancy

Agricultural tenancy is a subtheme of the historic theme of Agriculture defined in the Delaware Plan. The second volume of the Delaware Plan, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, describes agriculture in the Upper Peninsula Zone as follows.

The 1770-1830+/- period witnessed the advent of agricultural reform and experimentation resulting in new systems of crop rotation and field patterns. Like farmers in the Piedmont Zone, landowners in this zone became more concerned with the productivity of their soil in this period. *ii*; They formed the New Castle County Agricultural Society in 1819 and began to experiment with ways to increase their crop yields. This activity would eventually result in the highest level of wheat and dairy product yields in the state.

During [the 1830-1880+/-] period, the Upper Peninsula Zone was divided into two agricultural regions: the northern part (New Castle, Red , Lion, Pencader, St. Georges, Appoquinimink, Duck Creek, and Little Creek hundreds), known as the grain region, and the southern section (Dover, Murderkill, and Milford hundreds), or mixed farming region. In the grain region the land is fairly level; the soil is well-drained and very productive. *!* The farms were large compared to the rest of the state, cultivating an average of three times more acreage per farm than the other regions (about 150 acres). Primary crops were corn and wheat, produced in the highest volume per acre in the state. In addition, these farmers produced a great many dairy products, again more than anywhere else in the state. In essence, this region held the state's first modern market-profit farms.

The mixed farming region consisted mostly of self-sufficient family farms. The soil was wet and exhausted, forcing a much less intensive use of the land. Farm size in this region averaged about-50 acres, with much of it still in woodland. Wheat was grown only for family use, with corn being the only real market crop.

Some of the differences between these two regions may be attributed to the opening of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in 1829 and the gradual north-south extension of the railroad in the 1850s. These new methods of transporting produce to the major markets affected the grain region much earlier than the mixed farming region.

.In the later part of the period the peach industry flourished, creating fortunes for many farmers in the northern section of the zone. The railroad allowed quick and easy transportation of this perishable crop to the large urban markets. B) the 1870s economic decline in the rural markets set in due to major national shifts in grain production and the relocation of the milling industry to the upper midwest; agriculture was forced to become more diversified.

By the agricultural census of 1880, farm values had dropped to their 1850 levels. Rural social movements, such as the Grange, grew to meet the needs of the rural populace. The Depression years of the 1890s ...undermined the local landholding patterns of the area, resulting in the diversification of land ownership and the reallocation of property. Proprietors of twenty or more farms in the 1860s now found themselves reduced to five or six properties or completely dispossessed. During [the 1880-1940+/-] period the agricultural³¹ economy continued its trend

toward greater commercialization.

This context will explore the role of tenant farms, tenant farmers, landlords, and farm laborers in the agricultural community of nineteenth-century central Delaware, and the effect those individuals had on the landscape. Particular emphasis is given to architectural resources illustrating the theme.

Tenant farms accounted for approximately half of the farms in the region from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century and played a major part in agricultural development. Tenancy offered certain advantages to both landlord and tenant. The landlord profited from the contractual improvement of depleted agricultural lands and a solution to the shortage of seasonal farm labor. The tenant gained access to larger, more productive farms. Such capitalization represented the first step toward the leap into the landowning classes. While tenants and landlords typically formalized arrangements by lease, individual terms and situations varied. Tenancy represented social as well as economic circumstance. Tenants contracted themselves for varying lengths of time, regardless of their age or social status. Tenants came from all walks of life--some owned their own livestock and/or slaves, some even owned land that they rented to others. It was not unusual for a tenant to occupy more than one piece of land, particularly if one was mostly arable, or cleared, land and the other was woodland. As tenants and landlords strove to maximize yields and profits agricultural tenancy contributed to the success of agricultural reform methods in the Upper Peninsula Zone and the accompanying rise in farming production. In short, Delaware agriculture depended upon tenancy for its survival from the colonial period to the present.

Agricultural tenancy is not synonymous with farm labor. Through either verbal or written contracts, landowners arranged for the cultivation and maintenance of their lands. The tenant who occupied that land obligated himself to meet specified requirements including land clearance and cultivation, building and enclosure improvements, and of course either a fixed rent or a share in the harvest. These tenants represented a class of nonlandowning but land holding farmers and farm managers. Other tenants occupied the farm with the landowner or manager and worked at specific seasonal tasks. These individuals, who were typically provided with a small house and garden plot, received wages but seldom profits (or losses) from the harvest. Nonresident, nonlanded day labor represents a third category that augmented the work force of resident tenants and cottagers. Slaves represented a significant but diminishing segment of the agricultural work force from the eighteenth through the mid- nineteenth centuries.

Each tier of agricultural labor and management used and furnished the physical environment according to differing needs, sensibilities, and accessible resources. A case in point is the late eighteenth century estate of Dr. Thomas Evans of Pencader Hundred. Evans owned three farms. One, the home farm, was occupied by himself and his heirs. In addition to the mansion house, Evans had improved his farm with numerous outbuildings including barn, granary, stables, corncribs, and tenements. Resident tenants operated the other two farms, both of which were limited to house, kitchen, and barn--a pattern that has been identified with other archaeologically examined Delaware tenant farms. The tenements and lots on Evans's home farm were rented to resident laborers who also appear in Evans's agricultural accounts building debt and credit through contracted services including hoeing, plowing, reaping, threshing, and gleaning. The house and lot these lesser tenants rented consisted only of a small wooden dwelling, garden space, and an animal pen. Still, Evans's accounts record a fourth group who traded the credit of their labor for the doctor's ministrations, dry goods, and provisions. Although they were not resident on Evans's lands, they certainly tilled the landowner's fields. The presence of slaves owned by some of Evans's neighbors as well as Evans himself is well documented but the accommodations and working spaces for slaves, men or women, in the house or farmyard is poorly defined. Where did Evans's two slaves live? Where did they work?

The instance of Evans's estate stands as a prime example of the potential and pitfalls inherent in the recognition of the cultural resources identified with the historic context of tenancy from the 1770s through the end of the 1800s.

Landowners', farm managers', cottagers', and laborers' (free and slave) houses and farm buildings all draw from the same architectural repertoire and agricultural economy. With the exception of "house and garden" lots (and even this is not absolute) there are no distinctive functional property types associated with an agricultural tenancy historic context.

There are, however, many historic properties—houses, outbuildings, and farms—concretely linked to tenant farming.

What identifies these properties with tenancy context is the world dependent economic associations revealed in the documentary record. Thus, as the following context study clearly demonstrates, we know the historic properties of a tenancy context through associative property types. The key implications for historic properties identified with the historic context for rural tenancy 1770 – 1990+/- are first, that these properties are identified almost exclusively in the documentary record; second, that the historic properties linked to tenancy are known through associative rather than functional property types; and third as the following examples reveal, the experience and cultural resources bound to a tenancy context are extremely variable.

James Collins, a white man, leased "40 acres of land valued @ \$35.00 [per acre] all cleared with a frame tenement" from John Cowgill, a multiple property owner with extensive

livestock holdings. Collins owned no livestock or other taxable property, but may have made arrangements with Cowgill for use of some of his 6 horses and 2 yokes of oxen at plowing and harvest time.

Rachel Harper, a widow, was tenanting a 203-acre farm belonging to the estate of her husband Charles--"150 acres Cleared with a Brick dwelling frame Barn Stables &c."--the land was valued at \$20 per acre. An inventory of her husband's estate in 1815 reveals that the house contained a common room, middle room, parlor chamber, parlor, c[hamber] room, garrett, kitchen, and cellar. Other buildings on the property included a granary, fodder house, three corn cribs, and a smoke house. Charles Harper's estate was also taxed for a second property of 75 acres valued at only \$10 per acre that was leased to Benjamin Dorathea. Rachel Harper owned 3 horses and 2 yokes of oxen in addition to 42 other creatures for a total taxable value of \$300.

Jesse Dean, mulatto, owned a 20-acre farm (valued at \$8 per acre) that he leased to John Derham, his son-in-law. Dean himself was tenanting a 250-acre farm belonging to Mary Ann Fulce, a minor. The farm contained "200 acres Cleared with old Brick house...50 acres of woodland;" the land was valued at \$10 per acre. Dean owned a large number of livestock, compared to either black or white taxables--among them were 5 horses and 1 yoke of oxen. His investment in livestock represented 66% of his total taxable wealth.

John Jackson leased 144 acres from the heirs of Wilson Buckmaster, "120 acres cleared with old frame dwelling barn and stable...24 acres Gum Swamp;" the land was valued at \$30 per acre. Jackson owned 2 horses, 2 yokes of oxen, and 21 other animals--an investment of \$188 in livestock.

George Cabbage owned 4 slaves (3 males between the ages of 19 an~ 24 and a 12-year- old girl) valued at \$620. He occupied a farm of 144 acres--" 130 acres Cleared with frame dwelling Stables &c...14 Acres Woodland;" the land was valued at \$30 per acre. His livestock holdings were not as extensive as others with farms of this size: 1 horse, 1 yoke of oxen, 1 cow, 2 young cattle, and 3 hogs, for a total value of \$120."

There are several subthemes associated with the context considered here that will be explored in some detail: Settlement Patterns & Demographic Change; Transportation & Communication; Architecture, Engineering & Decorative Arts; Retailing & Wholesaling; and Finance. Each of these subthemes relates in some way to the historic development of agricultural tenancy in Delaware and will be discussed in the narrative.

Geographic Area: Upper Peninsula Zone

The geographic area for this historic context is the Upper Peninsula Zone, defined by the Delaware Plan as follows: The Upper Peninsula Zone covers the largest land area *of* all the

zones, stretching from the southeastern border of the Piedmont Zone through New Castle, Pencader, Red Lion, St. Georges, Appoquinimink, Blackbird, Duck Creek, Little Creek, Kenton, East Dover, West Dover, North Murderkill, South Murderkill, and Milford hundreds to the Sussex County line. The soils in this zone range from medium-textured to moderately coarse, with some areas being well-drained and others very poorly drained. The subsoil consists of sandy loam or sandy clay loam. Land contours range from level through gently rolling or sloping to steep. Major topographical features for this zone include Garrison's Lake, Killen Pond, Lums Pond, and McCauley Pond. Originally, the entire area was full of waterways. Many of the large creeks and rivers that flowed in the Delaware River were navigable by small boats for a fair distance inland. In addition, numerous small streams drained into the larger creeks. Like those in the Piedmont Zone, these streams have been subject to heavy silting and deposition over the past three centuries and in most cases are no longer navigable except by canoe or rowboat. The major streams that remain are the Christiana River, Duck Creek, Smyrna River, St. Jones Creek, Murderkill River, Little River, Leipsic River, Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, Appoquinimink River, and Blackbird Creek. The zone was also heavily wooded with a variety of trees: oak, hickory, poplar, walnut, ash. Indian corn grew wild in many areas, and the land was inhabited by a large range of animals. At the present time much of the zone is under cultivation for agriculture. Dover, the state's capital, is the only large town in the zone, but there are many smaller communities.

The Upper Peninsula Zone contains the three test hundreds used to establish the historic context: Little Creek and Murderkill in Kent County, and Appoquinimink in New Castle County (see Figure 2). The test hundreds represent a cross-section of the types of agricultural lands found in the zone. Additionally, each hundred provides a cross-section of Delaware, stretching from the coastal shoreline well into the rural hinterlands. Finally, extensive runs of documentary records available for their populations combined with the extant agricultural topography enabled us to match landscape and written evidence for the historic context.

Delaware hundreds are roughly equivalent to townships in other states. Hundred boundaries were used as divisions when recording the population for tax assessments and census records. Individuals commonly described themselves in legal documents (such as property deeds, wills, inventories, &c.) as "William Harper of Little Creek Hundred." Court records used hundred designations to locate real estate. Property deeds and orphans court valuations might refer to a piece of land located "in Little Creek Neck and Hundred" or "in Little Creek Hundred on the road from Kenton to Maryland." In the context period, voting was administered by referees from each hundred. The original hundred boundaries established in the seventeenth century were occasionally changed. Kenton Hundred, for

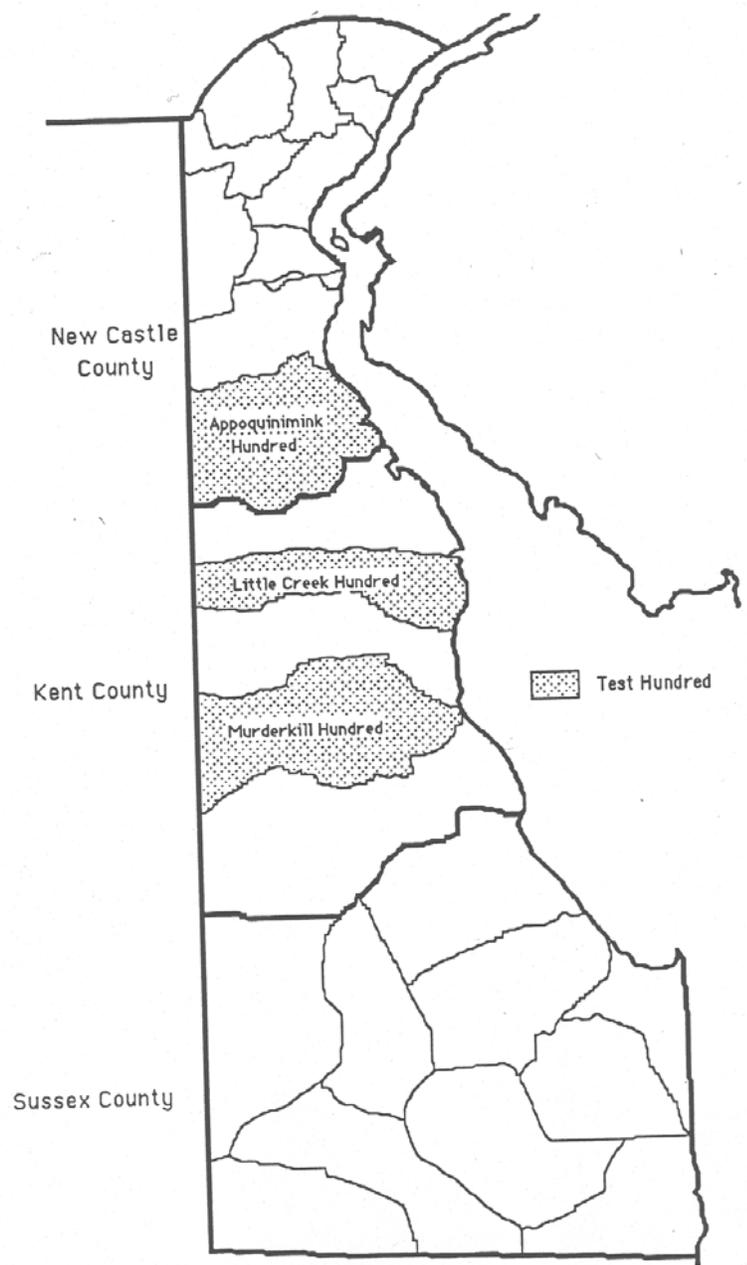


Figure 2: Location of Test Hundreds

example, was partitioned from the western halves of Duck Creek and Little Creek hundreds in 1869.

The Test Hundreds

Appoquinimink Hundred. Originally bounded on the north by Appoquinimink Creek and on the south by Duck Creek, both of which flow east into the Delaware River, Appoquinimink Hundred was the southernmost hundred in New Castle County, between St. Georges Hundred and the Kent County line (Figure 3). A third waterway, Blackbird Creek, became the dividing line when Blackbird Hundred was partitioned from Appoquinimink in 1875. Blackbird Creek flows from the southwest corner of the hundred northeast into the Delaware River. Numerous small landings were located on the banks of these three creeks and were used for shipping crops on the Delaware River. Other small creeks run throughout the hundred emptying into the Delaware and its tributaries. Extensive coastal wetlands range along the Delaware River. These tidal areas provided the environment for water trades such as the shad fishery and agricultural efforts such as pasturing and salt hay cultivation. Most of the arable land in the hundred was used for agricultural purposes. Appoquinimink and Blackbird hundreds contain five basic soil types. Most fertile are the Matapeake-Sassafras associated soils characterized as "nearly level to steep, well-drained, medium-textured and moderately coarse textured soils on uplands." The Matapeake-Sassafras soils compose the Levels west of Middletown and represent Delaware's most productive farming resource. The southwest corner of New Castle County is composed primarily of the Fallsington-Sassafras-Woodstown association described as "undulating, poorly-drained to well-drained, medium-textured and moderately coarse-textured soils on uplands." Much of this section of the hundred is broken up with shallow ponds and second growth timber. Farming here has historically been of a less intensive character than on the better lands to the immediate north. An area of Sassafras-Fallsington soils extends to the east of the association. Here the land is slightly more fertile with "nearly level to gently sloping, well-drained and poorly drained, moderately coarse textured and medium-textured soils on uplands." The Keyport-Elkton association to the east exhibits the same qualities on what are some of the oldest farmlands in the state. Finally, the eastern shoreline composed of marsh and "short tidal streams" ranges along the coastline.

The Delaware Railroad, built in the 1850s, ran north to south through the hundred, separating the western third of the hundred from the eastern section. In 1868, there were two rail stations in Appoquinimink Hundred: Blackbird Station, Sassafras Station, and Townsend. The western third contained a few crossroads towns and a dispersed settlement pattern.



Figure 3: Appoquinimink Hundred, Beers' Atlas of Delaware, 1868

Elements of the Historic Context

Several small river and crossroads towns including Blackbird, Deakynesville, Fieldsboro, and Noxontown Mills, comprised the nucleated settlements to the east. Encompassing 114 square miles the hundred stretched approximately 13 miles from the Delaware River shoreline to the Maryland border and roughly 10 miles from the Appoquinimink Creek to Duck Creek. This study refers to Appoquinimink Hundred as it was prior to the creation of Blackbird Hundred--in the later period, statistics for the two hundreds following the division have been aggregated to insure continuity.

Little Creek Hundred. Little Creek Hundred is located in northern Kent County, between Duck Creek and Dover hundreds (Figure 4). It is bounded on the north by the Leipsic River and the Little Duck Creek and on the south by the Little Creek, all of which flow east into the Delaware River. These rivers are fed by numerous small tributaries that wander through the hundred, reaching back to the divide that separates the Delaware watershed from the Chesapeake. There is easy access to water everywhere in the hundred, but the western section is considerably less marshy and swampy than the eastern coastal portion.

During the mid to late eighteenth century the hundred contained some of the most fertile agricultural lands in the state. The western third of the hundred consisted of Fallsington-Sassafras- Woodstown and Pocomoke-Fallsington-Sassafras associations of level to sloping, variably drained soils composed of moderately to rapidly permeable subsoils and clay and sand loam. The Sassafras-Fallsington association occupying the middle third of the old hundred are comparable to those found in Appoquinimink Hundred. To the east the moderately permeable salty clay loam soils of the Othello-Matapeake-Mattapex association give way to tidal marsh.

Of the two major ports in the hundred, Leipsic (or Fast Landing) is located on the Leipsic River, approximately 6 miles from the Delaware River coastline; Little Creek Landing is on the Little Creek, approximately 2 miles inland. Both were prominent grain shipping ports in -the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The only railroad station in Little Creek Hundred was Moorton Depot, located roughly in the center of the old hundred.

From 1770 to 1869, the hundred encompassed 71 square miles, stretching approximately 19 miles from the coast of the Delaware River to the Maryland border. In 1869, Kenton Hundred was created from the western sections of Duck Creek and Little Creek-hundreds. The new western border of Little Creek Hundred became the track of the Delaware Railroad, which lies to the west of and roughly parallel to U.S. Route 13. The new hundred was approximately half the size of the original area. Because Kenton Hundred was partitioned

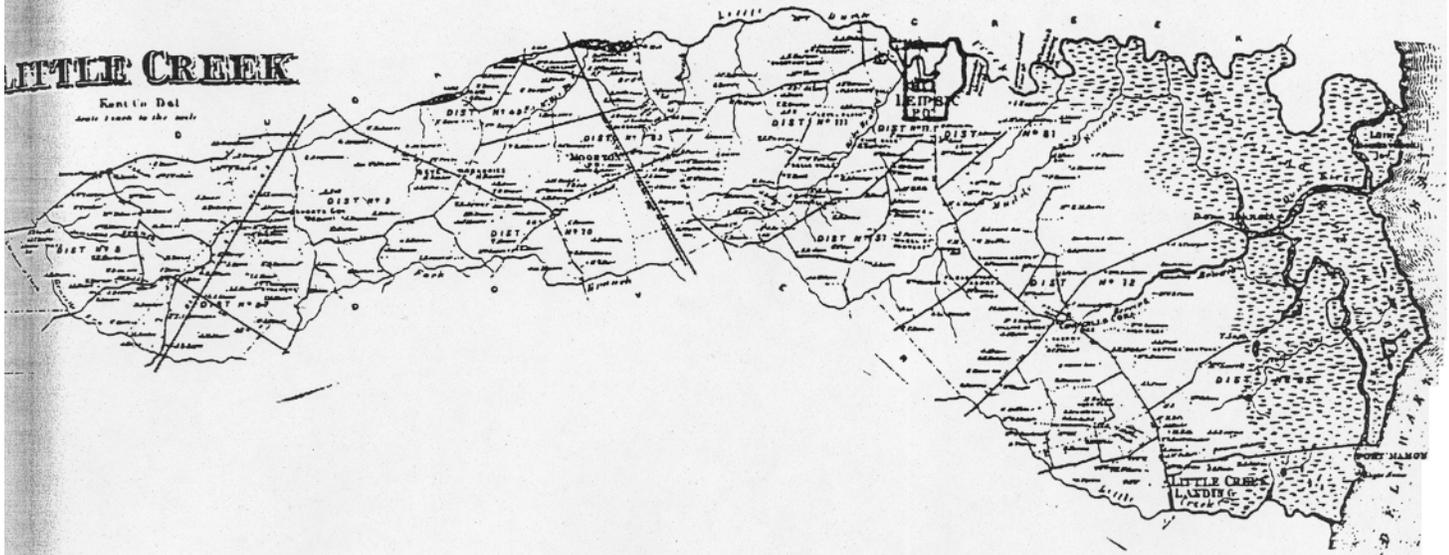


Figure 4: Little Creek Hundred, Beers' Atlas of Delaware, 1868

From two different hundreds, the statistics in this study cover the area within the official of Little Creek as they existed in each period.

Murderkill Hundred. Bounded on the north by the Saint Jones River and Murderkill. to the south, Murderkill Hundred is located in central Kent County between Dover Hundred and Mispillion Hundred (Figure 5). The soil associations for Murderkill Hundred are comparable to those described in Little Creek Hundred. In 1867 the hundred was divided in half as North and South Murderkill hundreds. The dividing line was a series of roads running from the Maryland border through Petersburg, Plymouth Station, and Canterbury, and ending at Barker's Landing on the Saint Jones River. Other small towns scattered throughout the hundred include Camden, Lebanon, Willow Grove, Magnolia, Frederica, Felton, Berry town, and Whiteleysburgh. The Delaware Railroad ran straight through the center of the hundred. There were five railroad stations located in Murderkill Hundred in 1868: Wyoming, Willow Grove Station, Canterbury Station, Plymouth Station, and Felton. The largest of the test hundreds, Murderkill Hundred encompassed 140 square miles, extending 18 miles from the Delaware shoreline to the Maryland border and 10 miles from the Saint Jones River to the Murderkill Creek. For the purposes of the historic context, North and South Murderkill are treated as a single study area.

Chronological Period: 1770-1990+/-

The overall time period for this context is 1770 to 1900. It covers two of the time periods identified by the Delaware comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan and part of a third: 1770-1830+/-: Early Industrialization, 1830-1880+/-: Urbanization and Early Urbanization, and the first two decades of 1880-1940+/-: Urbanization and Early Suburbanization. The beginning of the time period was defined as 1770 because the extent and availability of documentary records is much better after 1770 than before that date. Similarly, the survival of rural buildings representing all sorts of uses dramatically rises through the 1800s. The relationship between standing structures and broad patterns of agricultural, architectural, economic, and social change has been described in several recent studies. A study of the earlier colonial period would rely largely on archaeological source materials. The end date was set at 1900 because the nature of agriculture in the state began to undergo major changes in the twentieth century related to crops, production methods, transportation, and markets. The methods of reporting census and assessment data also began to change, making it more difficult to compare data in a reliable manner. Specifically, geographic areas are identified differently and with different boundaries in the census after

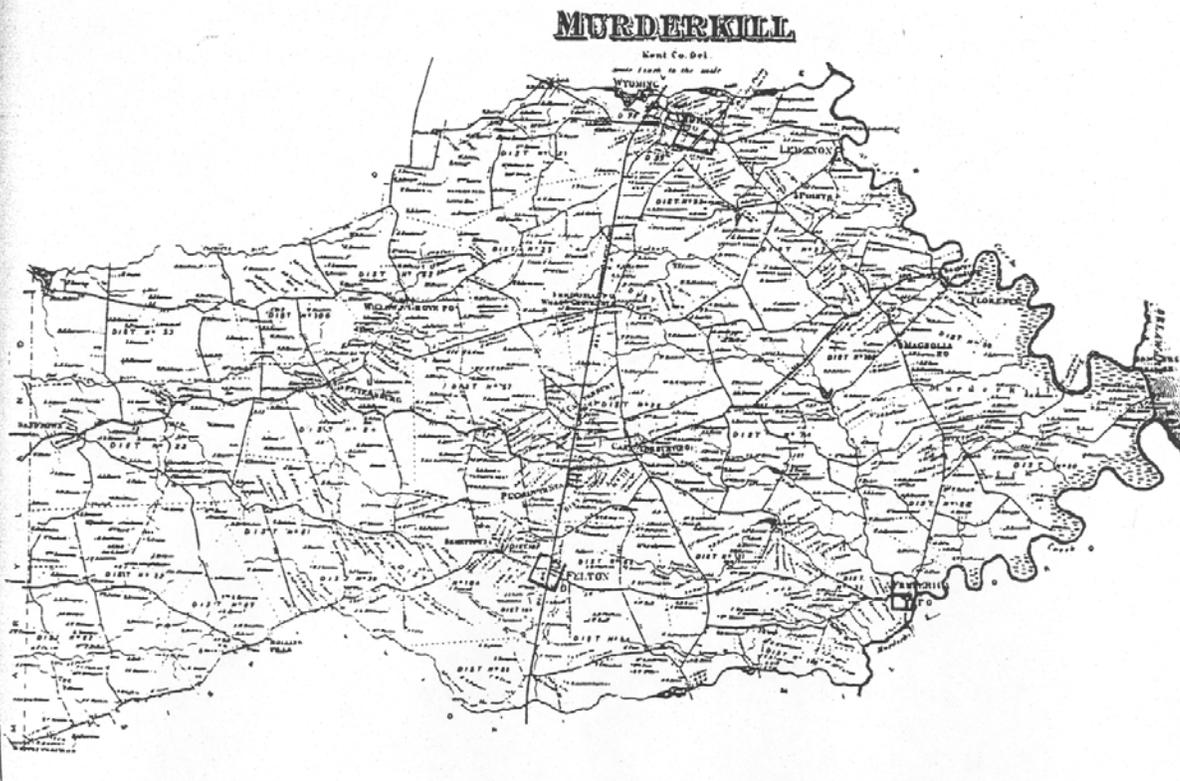


Figure 5: Murderkill Hundred, Beers' Atlas of Delaware, 1868

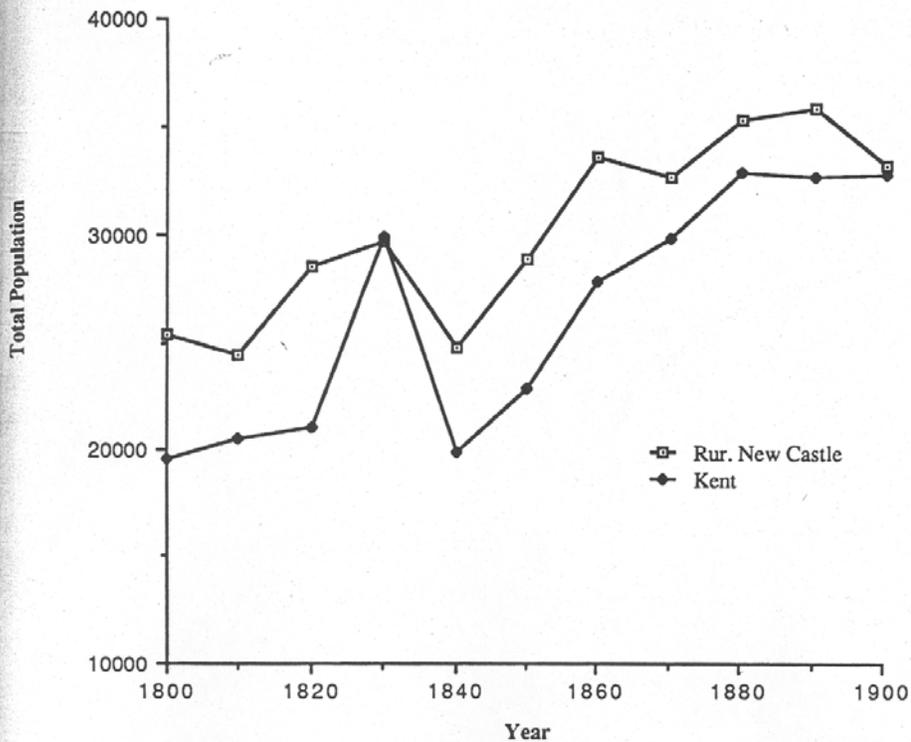
1900, thus making it difficult to reconstruct census data for particular areas. In addition, the manuscript census is only available through 1910, further complicating any attempt to obtain census data on individual people, households, and farms. Assessment lists after 1900 lose much of their detailed descriptive material after 1900, making it difficult to recover information such as tenant names and details of building types and construction material.

Demographic Patterns in the Upper Peninsula Zone

Several of the major causes of agricultural tenancy in the Upper Peninsula Zone were related to demographic conditions. Population growth in the Upper Peninsula Zone was minimal during the first four decades of the nineteenth century; in some periods there was actual decline in the total population (Figures 6 and 7). Between 1800 and 1840, Kent County's population increased by only 2%. Appoquinimink Hundred, just over the county line, lost 27% of its population in the same period; Little Creek Hundred increased by 7%; and Murderkill lost 33%—one-third of its total population. During the middle part of the century, from 1840 to 1870, the population of Kent County rose by 50%. This was mirrored by growth in Appoquinimink (40%) and Murderkill (68%) hundreds. Little Creek grew by 29% between 1840 and 1860 before it was partitioned for Kenton Hundred. In the final third of the century, from 1870 to 1900, population growth in the zone slowed dramatically; Kent County's population increased by only 10%. Appoquinimink Hundred lost one-fifth of its population; Little Creek lost one-quarter; Murderkill Hundred remained virtually stable.

These changes in the population are emphasized by changes in the number and size of households recorded by the population census in Appoquinimink, Little Creek, and Murderkill hundreds. In Murderkill Hundred, the number of households increased by 142% over the century; in Appoquinimink, the increase was less substantial (47%) but still significant, and Little Creek Hundred saw a rise of similar proportions (45%) between 1800 and 1860 (Figure 8). A decline in the average household size suggests that much of the increase in households was probably due to new family formation. Table 1 illustrates the drastic reduction in the average household size in Appoquinimink, Little Creek, and Murderkill hundreds—in each one, it was reduced by almost half over the century. (Figure 9 illustrates the change in average household size for the three hundreds.) An analysis of the age-groups reported by the census between 1800 and 1840 reveals that between 40% and 57% of the population was under the age of 30 in all three hundreds during this time period. In 1830 and 1840, the single age group with the largest segment of the population in all three hundreds was that of 20 to 29 year olds, comprising 13-15% of the total population. These figures indicate the probability that a large number of new young families were being formed in the middle of the century. Rather than live in the same house with an extended family, they were opting to build new homes for themselves.

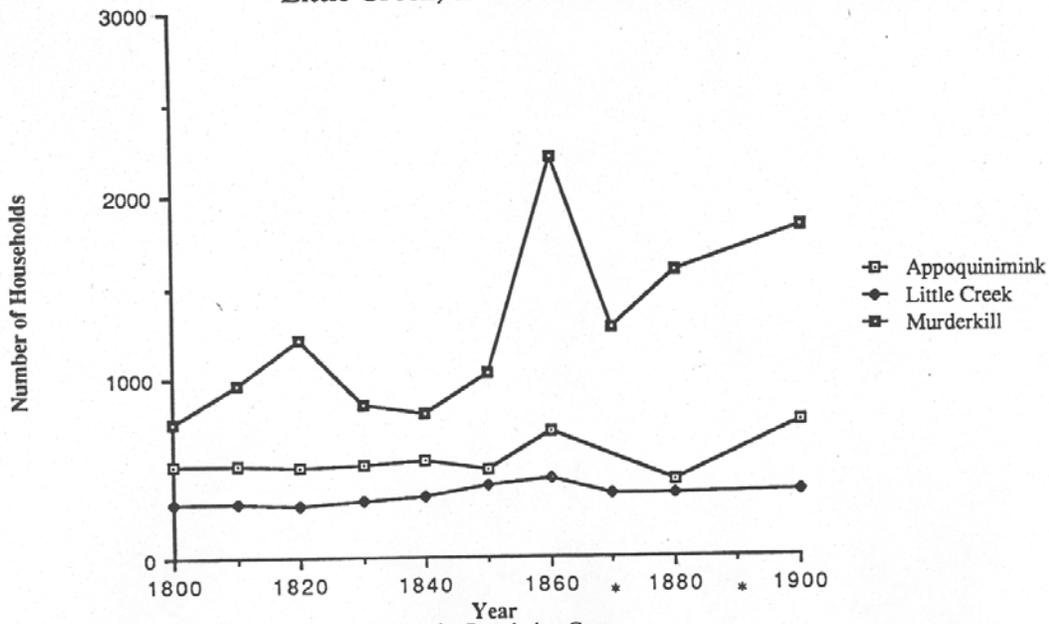
**Figure 6: Population Change in Kent
and Rural New Castle Counties***



Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census

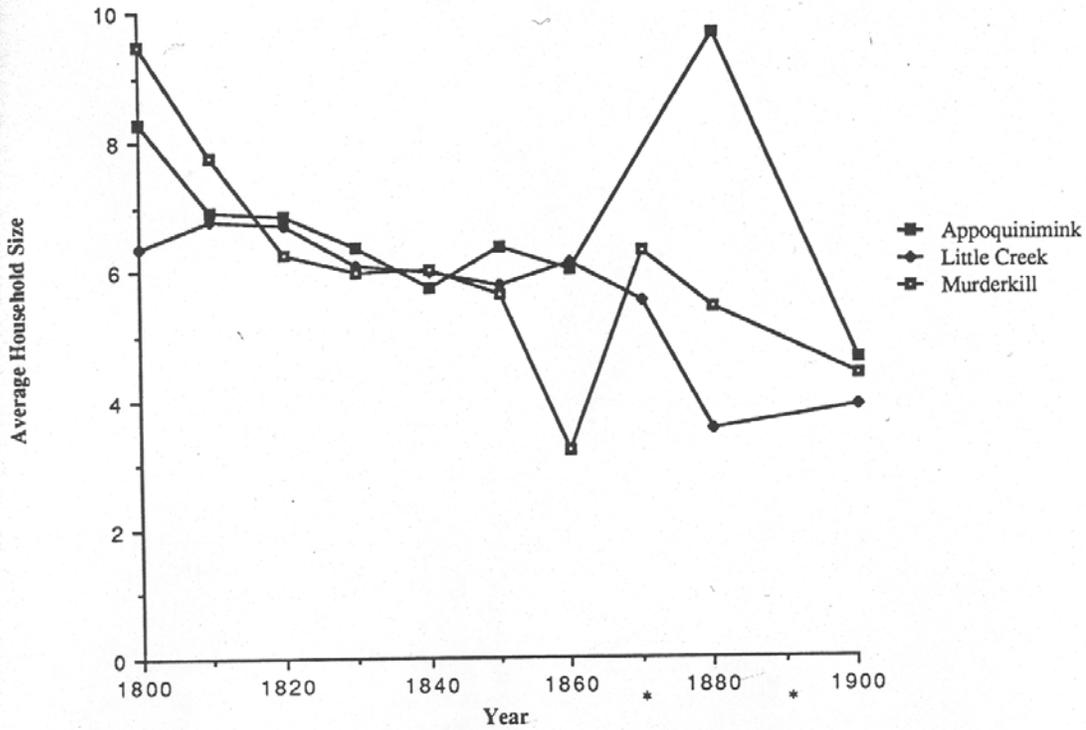
* Rural New Castle County population figures include all parts of county with the exception of the City of Wilmington

Figure 8: Change in Number of Households: Appoquinimink, Little Creek, & Murderkill Hundreds, 1800-1900



Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census
* Data unavailable for Appoquinimink 1870, and for all hundreds in 1890.

Figure 9: Change in Average Household Size: Appoquinimink, Little Creek, and Murderkill Hundreds, 1800-1900



Source: U.S. Manuscript Population Census

* Data Unavailable for Appoquinimink in 1870 and for all sampled hundreds in 1890.

Table 1
Average Household Size: 1800-1900

	Appoquinimink Hundred	Little Creek Hundred	Murderkill Hundred
1800	8.3	6.4	9.5
1810	6.9	6.8	7.7
1820	6.8	6.7	6.3
1830	6.9	6.1	6.0
1840	5.7	6.0	6.0
1850	6.4	5.7	5.6
1860	6.0	6.1	3.2
1870	N/A	5.5	6.3
1880	9.6	3.5	5.4
1890	N/A	N/A	N/A
1900	4.6	3.9	4.4

Source: Manuscript Population Census, 1800-1900.

Some of the population loss in the early decades was probably due to outmigration following the panic of 1816 and the crop failure of 1817, and the reorganization of landownership patterns in the late eighteenth century. In 1838 William Huffington wrote:

Most of the old and time honored families, who once adorned our society by their primitive manners, and friendly hospitality, have been broken up and scattered abroad. And their possessions have fallen into the hands of a few land jobbers; and they are let out to a migratory race, who changing their residence with every revolution of the seasons, form no attachment for their places of abode; take no care of the soil or the improvements; and dilapidation and poverty follows, as a necessary consequence.¹⁹

This idea of migration is supported by a quick survey of the surnames listed in the population census between 1800 and 1830 in Little Creek Hundred. Of the 213 names included in the 1800 manuscript census, 57% had disappeared by 1820 and another 12% of the remaining families were gone by 1830. New surnames were appearing at a rapid rate also--between 1800 and 1820, 112 new names appeared in the census; between 1820 and 1830, an additional 89 names were recorded.

Property Types

One of the most important parts of a fully developed historic context, from a preservation planning perspective, is the definition, description, and evaluation of property

¹⁹ William Huffington, in The Delaware Register and Farmers' Magazine. April 1838, p. 196.

Types related to the particular context. The Delaware Plan defines property types as follows:

Property types relate historic contexts to individual resources by functioning as conceptual bridges between historic themes and particular buildings, structures, sites, and objects. To function as a classification system, property types must be general; they must also be particular enough to provide for the meaningful evaluation of integrity and significance reflected in individual historic resources...property types are the physical resources that embody and manifest the characteristics of the historic context. A property type is a group of individual resources which have some shared physical or associative characteristics that set them apart from other resources.

Elements that must be included in the definition of property types are the description of known and expected property types, development of criteria for the evaluation of existing or expected resources in terms of the historic context and the property types, and identification of the distribution and potential distribution of expected property types. These items are addressed here and in Chapters II and III.

Evaluation Criteria for the Agricultural Tenancy Historic Context

The primary criteria for evaluation of a resource for inclusion in the agricultural tenancy historic context is the positive linkage of one or more specific tenants with the property at one or more points during the period of the context (1770 to 1900 +/-). This assessments, leases, insurances policies. Orphans Court valuation, probate of significance for the significance for a property or several spread throughout the period of the contexts. The length of the period of significance is limited only by the length of tenant occupancy.

Once a property has been determined eligible for inclusion in the agricultural tenancy historic context, further action towards nomination the property to the National Register of Historic Places should be determined by its evaluation against the Secretary of the Interior's criteria for integrity and significance. It should be noted that the specific items discussed here relate only to the nomination of a resource under the agricultural tenancy historic context--in some cases a resource may be nominated for its relationship to other contexts and it should be against those criteria as well.

Criteria for Integrity. The Secretary's Standards specify seven areas of integrity to be considered when determining whether a property is eligible for nomination to the National Register: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The most important elements in relation to the agricultural tenancy historic context are feeling, design

Location, and setting. Association with a major character such as a multiple property owner or a member of an agricultural reform society can also be important. The key is that a level of integrity for these elements must remain in connection with the period of tenancy.

Another important point for purposes of integrity is that the buildings being nominated under the context should relate to the period of significance (i.e. the period of tenant occupation). A field evaluation of the site should be conducted by an individual who is CFR 61 qualified in architectural history or a closely related field to determine whether the extant buildings date to the period of significance that has been identified through the documentary record.

Criteria for Significance. The Secretary's Standards specify four areas of significance:

- A. association with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history;
- B. association with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, a master, or high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity;
- D. information, or potential information, important to history or prehistory.

Properties eligible for inclusion in the agricultural tenancy historic context could be nominated under criterion A, B, or C, depending on the particular property, its history, and its circumstances of tenancy. Properties related to this context are unlikely to be nominated under criterion D because this context deals only with above-ground resources.

Physical and Associative Property Types

Once a linkage has been made between a resource and a period of tenant occupation and the resource has been evaluated for its relationship to one or more of the physical and associative property types established for the agricultural tenancy historic context, it must then be evaluated against the criteria for integrity and significance. A certain level of information about the history of the property, its owners, and its tenants must be collected in order to compare it to the physical and associative characteristics described in Chapters II and III. At a minimum, this would include at least one period description for the period of tenant occupation (describing buildings and land). This description need not be the same source that provides the linkage establishing the site as a tenant farm. Potential sources for period property descriptions include orphans court valuations, tax assessments, insurance policy applications, and deed records. While we considered using more minimal standards for inclusion in the context, we concluded that a period description was necessary to establish a linkage between the tenancy period and the extant structures on the farm; from our test fieldwork, we derived more than adequate numbers of resources eligible for the context. The minimum level of information collected should also include biographical and tax assessment information for, both landlord and tenant (describing taxable property such as livestock,

slaves, and land, as well as race, gender, and total wealth). Ideally it would also include a history of property owners and a tentative history of the construction of buildings on the site.

Chapter II identifies certain physical characteristics that should be met by all tenant farms considered for inclusion in the historic context – these relate primarily to characteristics of dwellings, farm buildings, and farm size. Only one specific physical property type was identified for agricultural tenancy – house and gardens. Specific characteristics and criteria for evaluation of resources related to this property type are discussed in Chapter II as well.

Most of the property types related to the agricultural tenancy context are associative in nature with characteristics determined by historic documentation. These property types include resources related to multiple property owners, estates, and African-American tenancy. The characteristics of these property types, defined historically through documentary research, are described in Chapter III along with specific criteria for the evaluation of resources related to those property types.

Distribution of Property Types

Location patterns for tenant farms are difficult to identify because geographic location does not appear to have been a major factor in determining whether a property was tenanted. Tenant farm sizes were distributed in a fairly random manner throughout the Upper Peninsula Zone. Maps of the tentatively identified extant sites in Murderkill and Little Creek hundreds from circa 1860 illustrate the lack of pattern (Figures 10 and 11). It is possible that more extensive and positive identification of tenant sites from other periods in the context may present more identifiable patterns, but this would require extensive documentary research on numerous individual properties and is outside the scale of this project. Since different farms were tenanted at varying times, survival rates for tenant farms should be determined for several specific points in time throughout the context. Based on the reconnaissance fieldwork in Murderkill and Little Creek hundreds, approximately one-third of the tenant farms identified on the 1860 tax assessments survive today. At any given time between 1770 and 1900, approximately half of the farms were tenant-occupied; the particular sites that made up that group changed through time. At this time there is no way of measuring how many of the entire population of tenant farms actually survive, nor can we measure how much of the surviving agricultural landscape is made up of tenant-related sites.

Distribution patterns for the house and garden property type are equally difficult to discern. While some of the identified properties appear to be located in or near small towns such as Leipsic and Little Creek Landing, others are located at the edge of a farm. Since very few sites have been positively identified so far, however, further research on such sites throughout the zone is required before the existence of a particular pattern can be proven.

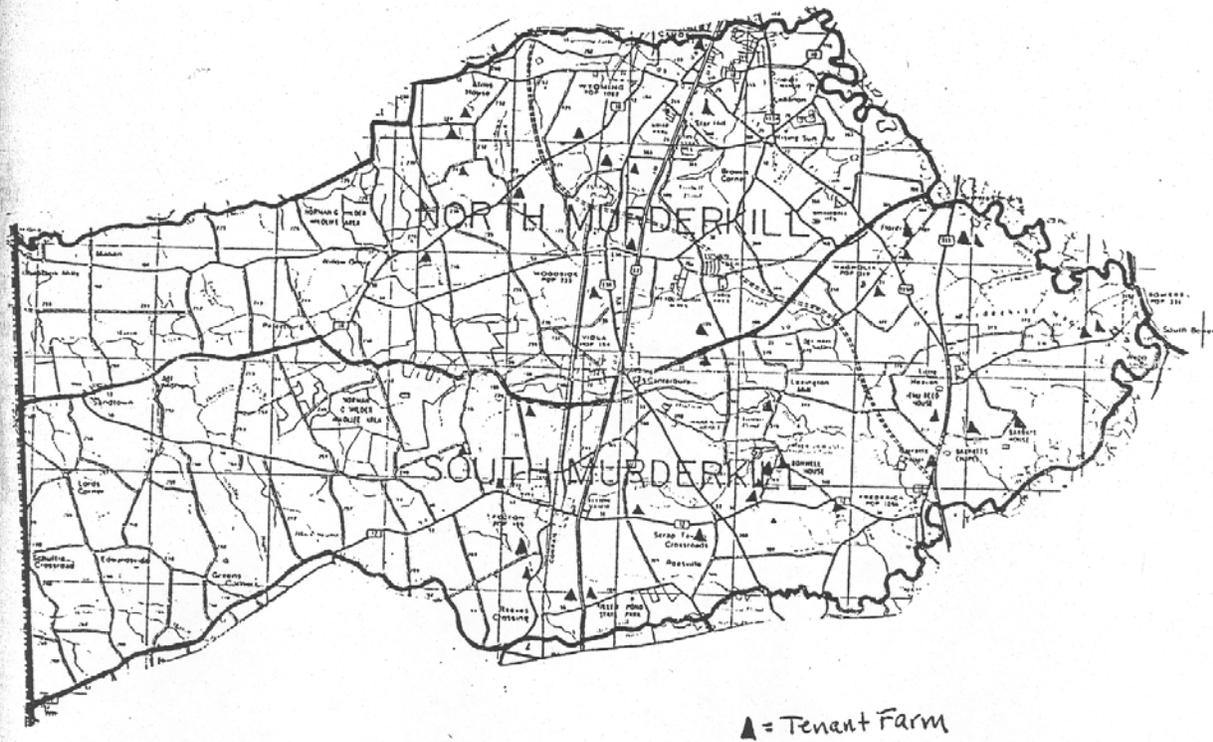


Figure 10: Farms Potentially Eligible for Inclusion in the Agricultural Tenancy Historic Context, Murderkill Hundred

(See Appendix A for explanation of the methodology used to identify the tenant farms.)

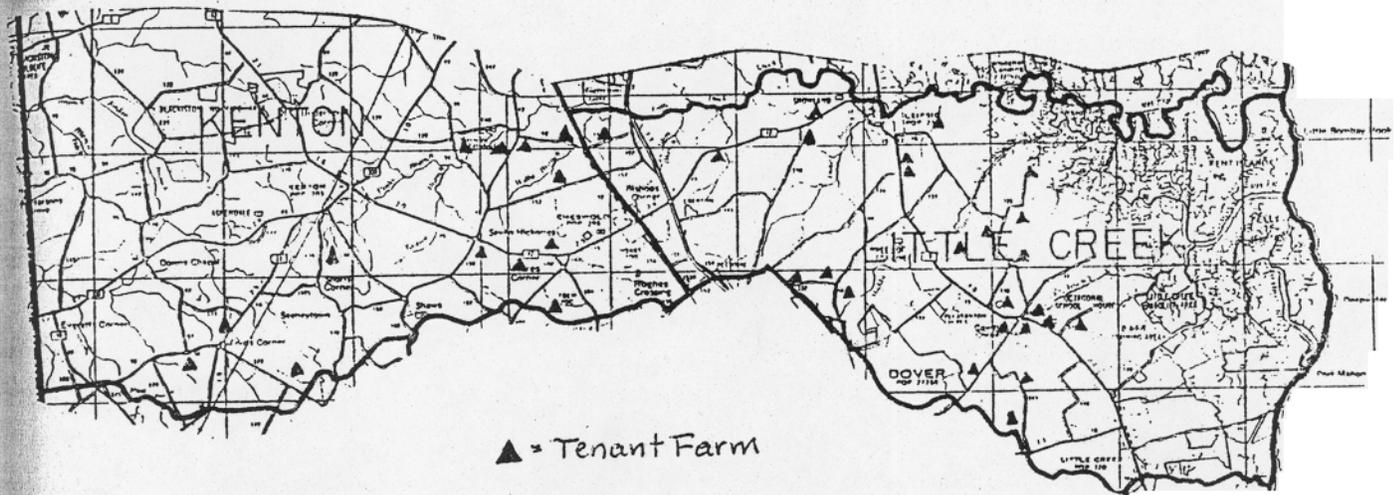


Figure 11: Farms Potentially Eligible for Inclusion in the Agricultural Tenancy Historic Context, Little Creek Hundred

(See Appendix A for explanation of the methodology used to identify the tenant farms.)