

The farm remained in William DuPont's hands until 1916, at which time he sold it to Alfred I. DuPont (Deed P26:156).

In 1909, Alfred I. DuPont acquired four hundred acres on the south side of Rockland Road across from the Murphy House property as the site for his estate. This property, used for agriculture since at least the eighteenth century, was gently rolling farmland with pockets of woodland. In later years, DuPont expanded his holdings to encompass some fifteen hundred acres. Although, after 1916, the Murphy House property was transferred among numerous individuals and corporations for tax and other financial reasons over the years, it remained part of the Alfred I. DuPont holdings. During this time, estate employees occupied the house, as they did seven other houses nearby on both sides of Murphy Road. Of the eight houses, only the Murphy House remains standing.

THE MURPHY HOUSE

The following description of the Murphy House has been taken from the HABS document prepared in 1993 and 1994 by the KFS Historic Preservation Group. This document may be found in Appendix III and will offer greater detail than does the summary presented below. The photographs included within this section of the report were taken during the late summer of 1996; the house has been unoccupied for a number of years and is gradually decaying. Plates 3, 4, 5 and 6 show the four sides of the building in its current state.

The Murphy House, built in the 1840's in the Greek Revival style by George Murphy, was originally a two and a half story, side gabled stone dwelling with two roof dormers on the south slope of the roof. The house is oriented south, facing Rockland Road. It seems likely that a one-story frame kitchen wing was originally built off of the rear of the house. This earlier wing was centrally located between the two first-story windows of the rear elevation, and was entered from inside the house through the first-story rear door. This door has a surround exhibiting Greek Revival moldings and corner blocks--an indication that it is an original feature of the house.

A number of arguments may be made for the presence of this earlier kitchen:

- 1] the two story front section does not contain evidence of a kitchen. By the 1840's, when this dwelling was built, detached kitchens had been discontinued, replaced by attached kitchens located to the rear of the house.
- 2] only a central, one story rear wing would have allowed for the original placement of windows in the first and second story of the west bay.

PLATE 5
View of the back of the Murphy House



PLATE 6
Looking at the east side of the house



PLATE 3

View of the front of the Murphy House from Rockland Road



PLATE 4

Looking at the west side of the house from Old Murphy Road



PLATE 7

**View of the east side showing cornice with dentil detailing
against rear addition**



PLATE 8

**Dentil detailing runs into rear wing and shutter cannot lie flat
against the house wall**



- 3] physical evidence in the form of basement walls and supports and first story joists reveals that the one story rear wing was centrally located between the two first story windows of the front section's rear wall.
- 4] the cornice and dentil molding visible in Plate 7 once ran across the entire rear wall of the building and is now partially obscured by the rear wing.
- 5] the door surround facing into the wing is very plain in its detailing, indicating that it was most likely meant to function as an interior, not an exterior, surround, and was intended from the initial construction to face into another interior space--such as a rear kitchen wing.

The frame two and a half story rear wing and a rear, two-sided wraparound porch was added to the original stone house at an unknown date. A full basement extends under the porch as well as under the wing area. This is the current location of the kitchen (first floor) and two bedrooms and a bathroom (second floor). The first and second story west-bay windows at the rear of the house, originally double-hung sash windows, have been altered: the first story is now a cupboard and the second floor window is a closet. The second floor closet still displays the original window reveals, indicating that it was at one time an exterior wall window. The awkwardness of attachment of the rear wing to the front section is another indication; because the east wall of the wing nearly abuts the west edge of the window frames, the shutters cannot lie flat against the rear wall of the original section (Plate 8).

The presence of the Greek Revival-style window sash and surrounds suggest a renovation date sometime between the 1840s and the 1860s. Gothic Revival-style brackets and chamfered support posts of the front and rear porches suggest a remodeling of the porches between circa 1860 and 1880. The dormers were removed at some point (perhaps either when the addition was built or at a time when the roof was reclad) and the entire house was stuccoed (it is not known if any part of the house was stuccoed prior to the raising of the rear wing). It would appear that all construction and remodeling work was completed by about 1880. By 1893, after the house had passed from ownership by the Murphy family to Henry DuPont, the house was in its current form and there were two outbuildings located to the rear of the house (as indicated by the 1893 Baist atlas); one of these may have been the frame barn mentioned earlier (indicated in the 1851 tax records).

By 1917, both buildings were gone, and the Price and Price plan (Figure 6) of the Nemours estate show the Murphy House with only a windmill in the backyard; this, too, was destroyed at some point. A frame, one-story garage was built just northeast of the house at sometime after 1917; this was demolished around 1990.