

supplemental sources of cash income on an occasional basis (Taylor et al. 1989:25). Statistics indicate that workers in the powder yard (such as E. I. DuPont's, on the Brandywine) often left the company and the hazards of the job at an early age, taking their savings and purchasing farms nearby (Uminowicz 1979: 19). This helped to off-set a trend that centered on the migration of workers to urban areas.

Farming occupied the vast majority of those parts of the landscape suitable for agriculture until quite recently, and was practiced by the remaining descendants of the early settlers--those Swedes, Dutch and English who first broke ground here. Although at the beginning of the 1800s, agriculture had become significantly less productive under the old practices, new techniques such as the use of improved drainage systems, fertilizers, and farm machinery boosted production greatly. While the traditional crops--oats, corn and wheat--were still in demand, decreasing crop yields encouraged crop rotation with marketable fodder grasses, a commodity required by urban transportation (Bidwell and Falconer 1941:235; Passmore et al. 1978:29). Urban markets also required meat, fattened in the pastures before being sold; the cow manure was an important by-product, valued as fertilizer. Ultimately, dairying became an important alternative to crop production in Delaware (Passmore et al. 1978:36). Tenant farming, common in the eighteenth century, became even more prevalent in the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, over 50% of all the farmers in Delaware were tenants or share croppers (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:28).

New Castle County's proximity to Wilmington as well as its excellent transportation network are two of the factors which allowed the County to grow and diversify rapidly as it entered into the twentieth century, although the decline in the use of water power in favor of cheap fossil fuels and electricity directly contributed to the demise of the factories on the Brandywine (Taylor et al. 1989: 27). Today, considerable residential and commercial development has been carried out, and the area has taken on the character of a mixed land-use suburban environment, with numerous housing subdivisions, strip malls, large malls, and various small business and commercial complexes. Increasing intensity of cultural use of the area has meant that many older functional buildings (barns, coops, dairies, etc.) are gone or have been replaced by more modern ones, while the residences themselves are in various stages of restoration, remodeling or decay.

OWNERSHIP HISTORY

The following ownership history is taken from Taylor et al. 1989. Although the present study area consists of only one and a quarter acres, the Murphy House was originally situated on an approximately fifteen acre parcel located at the northeast corner of

farming oriented to the production of goods for household use, this pattern gradually changed to one that also involved the production of goods for consumption on the growing urban market (Bidwell and Falconer 1941:261). The farmers and merchants quickly adapted to this market system of agriculture, sending their grains to the local milling centers from which the wheat flour was then shipped to Philadelphia for export to the West Indies, to other North American colonies, or to southern European countries.

Settlement in New Castle County continued to expand during the eighteenth century; colonists began to move inland, away from the navigable rivers and streams, as the overland road transportation network improved. Although the good productive land was settled first, marginal property also became occupied as the population grew. The size of farms in New Castle County at this time ranged between one hundred and two hundred acres, a decrease in size from the original land grants averaging about five hundred acres, resulting from the grants and tracts being divided by inheritance or by sale.

Throughout the eighteenth century the increasing population stimulated the development of new towns as well as more effective communication networks. Hamlets grew up at crossroads and around taverns, ferries, churches, and mills. Roads were improved over the course of the century as the population grew and trade increased. Farming, the dominant occupation for the region's population, continued to be a combination of the cultivation of grains (wheat, rye, corn, barley and oats) and the raising of livestock. The iron industry, lumber production and grain milling enterprises continued to grow in Delaware, and, by the end of the eighteenth century, it had become one of the leading manufacturing states, with Wilmington and its environs representing one of America's leading industrial areas.

It was in the nineteenth century that methods of transportation changed considerably in New Castle County, when the quality of the flour milled on the Brandywine was legendary. The emphasis on improved market access for raw materials and products stimulated the construction of canals, railroads and turnpikes, such as the Lancaster Turnpike, the Kennett Turnpike, and the Concord Turnpike (Dauer 1978), although the road system within Delaware lagged considerably behind the railroads as a means of transportation.

That area of New Castle County in which the project area lies remained primarily agricultural from late colonial times to the end of the nineteenth century, although the nearby Brandywine industries (the powder mills, the producers of powder kegs, the grain milling and the cotton and woolen manufacturers) offered numerous opportunities for part-time employment--an attractive proposition for agriculturally-based workers who sought

TABLE 2
OWNERSHIP HISTORY OF THE WILLIAM MURPHY HOUSE
 (from Taylor et al. 1989:161-163)

Date	Doc	Book	Page	From	To
1804	Deed	C3	98	Adam Williamson, farmer & wife, Mary, Brandywine Hundred	William Young, Brandywine Hundred

This deed transfers 61 acres and 50 perches to Young. All three tracts comprising the Murphy parcel come from this 61+ acre transaction.

1815	Deed	Q3	275	William Young & wife, Rachel	Peter Alexander, Brandywine Hundred
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This deed transfers two "small lots", Lots 2 and 3, totaling 1 1/4 acres. No metes and bounds are provided. These lots are "Tract 3" for the Murphy House.

1817	Deed	T3	62	Peter Alexander & wife, Elizabeth	George Wallace, Christiana Hundred
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Description of property is same as preceding deed.

1836	Orphan Court	Q1	35	James Bayard, esquire, appointed auctioneer	James Goodman, Christiana Hundred
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George Wallace dies intestate and his estate is sold at a public auction. Goodman buys the 1 1/4 acre tract (Tract 3) in Brandywine Hundred for \$25.00.

1841	Deed	H5	87	William Young, Jr., & John McAllister, Jr., trustees, Philadelphia	George W. Murphy, Brandywine Hundred
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This deed transfers 7 1/2 acres and 25 1/2 perches (Tract 1) from the estate of William Young to George W. Murphy. The 1812 will of William Young (U1:169, 1829) had requested that his trustees sell all of his property unless specified differently.

1847	Deed	X9	61	James Goodman, carpenter, & wife, Margaret, Brandywine Hundred	William Husbands, Brandywine Hundred
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The 1 1/4 acre tract (Tract 3) is transferred to Husbands for \$33.00.

the Old Murphy Road and Rockland Road intersection. The parcel was composed of three contiguous tracts bought by George W. Murphy prior to 1851: Tract 1 (a little over seven acres, purchased in 1841), Tract 2 (a little over six acres, purchased in 1850) and Tract 3 (one and a quarter acres, purchased in 1849).

All three tracts were once part of a 61+ acre land transfer from Adam Williamson to William Young in 1804 (Deed C3:98). Young was a substantial landowner in Brandywine Hundred. The 1804 tax assessment showed him owning 335 acres, divided into five tracts; the 1816 tax assessments for his estate included 629 acres. In his will of 1812, Young requested that all of his real estate be sold; the executors of his estate sold seven acres and twenty-five and a half perches to George W. Murphy in 1841 (Deed H5:87). This purchase is denoted as Tract 1 in later deeds. No buildings or improvements were specified in the deed.

Murphy acquired the one and a quarter acre Tract 3 from William Husbands in 1849; it had changed hands numerous times prior to Murphy's acquisition of it. Some of the property which had been acquired by Young prior to 1812 had been laid out in lots of less than an acre and sold. Peter Alexander purchased two of these lots, Lots 2 and 3, for \$120.00 in 1815 (Deed Q3:275); these lots comprise Tract 3 of the Murphy property. The 1816 tax assessment for Peter Alexander noted that he was a Negro and he was assessed for three acres of land at \$30.00 per acre; no structures or improvements were listed in the assessment records. In 1817, Alexander sold the property to George Wallace of Christiana Hundred for \$60.00, half of the original purchase price (Deed T3:62). After George Wallace's death, the property was sold at public auction in 1836 in order to settle his estate (Orphan Court Record Q1:35, 1836). The assessed value at this time was \$25.00 and the parcel was purchased by James Goodman for that amount. No buildings were shown on a court ordered survey conducted at this time. In 1847, Goodman sold the property to William Husbands (Deed X9:61), who then sold it to George Murphy in 1849 (Deed F6:137).

George Murphy acquired the six plus acre Tract 2 from Young's executor in 1850 (Deed F6:137). Thus, by 1850, Murphy had ownership of all three contiguous parcels, totaling fifteen acres. The house had been constructed on Tract 1 at some point in time prior to 1849, when a structure is shown on the Rea and Price map (Figure 3).

In the 1850 Delaware State Census, George W. Murphy's occupation was listed as "gardener". He was 43 years old, had a real estate value of \$1,500.00, and lived with his wife, age 41, and four children, ranging from four to thirteen years old. The 1850

1849 Deed X9 59 William Husbands, farmer George W. Murphy, farmer
& wife, Jane

George W. Murphy acquired the 1 1/4 acre lot (Tract 3) in this transfer.

1850 Deed F6 137 John McAllister, Jr., George W. Murphy
Philadelphia

This deed transfers 6+ acres (Tract 2) adjoining Tract 1. McAllister had bought the tract from the estate of William Young (Deed F6:136, 1850) prior to selling it to Murphy.

1851 Deed N6 121 George W. Murphy, farmer, William Murphy
& wife, Mary Anne Brandywine Hundred

This deed transfers all three tracts totaling 14± acres to William Murphy, George's father.

1867 Will B2 102 William Murphy George Murphy

This will bequeaths to son, George, "the farm on which I now reside containing about 15 acres" in addition to lots located in Brandywine Village.

1881 Will F2 214 George Murphy Alfred Murphy

George ordered the sale of real estate within one year of his death; his brother, Alfred, is made executor of the will.

1882 Deed H2 105 Alfred D. Murphy, executor Henry DuPont,
of George Murphy, deceased, Christiana Hundred
late of Wilmington

This deed transfers the three tracts (Deed N6:121, 1851) to Henry DuPont for \$3,320.00.

1889 Will M2 74 Henry DuPont William DuPont

Henry leaves the farm to his son, William.

1916 Deed P26 156 William DuPont & Annie Rodgers, Alfred I. DuPont,
Brandywine Hundred Brandywine Hundred

This deed transfers the three tracts (Deed N6:121, 1851) for \$10.00.

From this time on to the late 1930's, the tracts changed hands several times, going from one DuPont entity to another. In 1983 Al-Zar, Ltd., a Florida-based corporation, acquired title to the property.

Agricultural Census listed Murphy as owning twelve acres of improved land and three acres of unimproved land, valued at \$1,500.00, as well as a milk cow and two pigs. One hundred pounds of butter had been produced during the year. Field crops listed included ten bushels of corn and seventy bushels of Irish potatoes; these were probably for home consumption. The market produce that the farm yielded was valued at \$300.00. Although summary data for Brandywine Hundred could not be calculated for 1850, a comparison with the 1860 summary data revealed that the average farm value entered for market produce was \$77.71 (Taylor et al. 1989: 164). The value listed for the Murphy farm is more than three times the average value for 1860.

In 1851, George Murphy sold the farm to his father, William (Deed N6:121). According to the 1850 Brandywine Hundred Tax Assessments, William Murphy was a seventy-two year old farmer who owned a sixty acre farm with a stone house and a stone barn, located on the opposite side of Rockland Road and to the southwest of the house owned by George Murphy, as well as four houses and some lots in Brandywine Village. The 1849 Rea and Price map shows William Murphy at the Rockland Road location. The 1852 tax assessment indicated that his fifteen acre purchase from his son included a stone house and frame barn, assessed at \$600.00. The 1860 Lake and Beers map indicates that "W Murphy Son" resides at William Murphy's original Murphy Road home site (Figure 4); by 1868, the Pomeroy and Beers atlas indicates that William owned the Murphy house in which he resided (at Rockland Road and Old Murphy Road) and his son, Alfred, owned the sixty acre property to the southwest. The 1870 census listed William Murphy as ninety-one years old and retired. At this time, his total real estate was valued at \$20,000.00 and his personal property was valued at \$6,000.00. At William Murphy's death in 1870, his will transferred the property on which he resided back to his son, George (Will B2:1867).

The 1870 census reveals that George Murphy had moved to Wilmington where he continued to live until his death in 1881. During his residence in Wilmington, the Murphy house was leased to tenants. George Murphy's will specified that his farm on Rockland Road (the Murphy house) be sold within a year after his death, and the property was sold in 1882 by his executor and brother, Alfred D. Murphy, to Henry DuPont (Deed H2:105) for \$3,320.00.

In 1889, with Henry DuPont's death, the property passed to his son, William DuPont. The 1893 Baist atlas (Figure 5) shows William DuPont as owner of the Murphy House site. According to Henry DuPont's will, the farm was rented at that time to Nelson Talley.

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.