

Institute, a part of the 320 acre Nemours Foundation property. A nine-foot estate wall runs along Rockland Run, with gates located across from the Murphy House.

At the time of the survey, the Murphy House was the only standing structure on the property (Plates 1 and 2, from Taylor et al. 1989: 160). Concrete sidewalks run adjacent to the house along its east, north, and west sides. Close to the house, the yard was grassy, with scattered trees and shrubs. The currently used gravel driveway and parking lot were located to the back of the house, and there were a series of electrical terminals and underground utility boxes east of the parking lot. A few trees and a clump of ornamental grass were growing in the back yard next to the remnants of a low stone wall bordering Old Murphy Road. A short (30 foot) line of split rail fencing marked the back yard boundary. Small piles of rocks, metal debris, paint cans and other construction debris were observed on the ground surface in this area. In the 1989 photographs one can see a split-rail fence running along Rockland Road as well. This fence had been removed by the time of this survey. The 1989 photographs also show an outbuilding located east of the Murphy House; although this building was indicated on the project area maps furnished by DelDOT, it was no longer standing at the time of the Phase I and II surveys.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Murphy House was built between 1841 and 1849 by George W. Murphy and occupied by the Murphy family until 1870. During this time, the house and associated acreage served as a small owner occupied farm at which produce was grown both for home consumption and for market. During the period from 1852 to 1870, the house served as a retirement home for William M. Murphy, who had purchased the property from his son in 1851. At his death in 1870, William Murphy left the house to his son, George. George Murphy and his family resided in Wilmington, so they did not occupy the house, but rather leased it to tenants. The house was sold to Henry DuPont at the time of George's death in 1881 and continued to be leased to tenants until 1916, when it began to be occupied by employees of the Nemours estate.

There were no obvious disturbances at the Murphy House back yard area, although the eastern side yard and that portion of the back yard closest to the house had been disturbed by the installation of various underground utilities and the addition of a gravel drive and parking lot. It seemed feasible to expect archeological remains relating to the early occupation at the house in the form of midden deposits and features such as privies, wells, and outbuildings to be present in the undisturbed portion of the back yard. These features would be of particular importance to the isolation of periods of different economic usage of the house.

The Management Plan for Delaware's Historic Archeological Resources by DeCunzo and Catts (1990) presents four research domains designed to be compatible with current historic archeological research practices. These domains, or themes, are related to: 1) the reconstruction of the domestic economy; 2) questions centering around manufacturing and trade; 3) problems relating to the reconstruction of, and changes within, the cultural and natural landscapes; and 4) a concern with socio-economic group identification and behavior as this is reflected in various aspects of the archeological and historic records.

The Murphy site, a domestic occupation, is of particular interest in terms of its agricultural context: after he acquired his first tract of land, George Murphy built a house and barn and used the property to grow produce for urban markets. As a full time market gardener, he represented a kind of extreme response to market demands of the time, when other farmers serving that market tended to have more property and a more diversified output (Taylor et al. 1989). His farm represents an intense and specialized usage of a relatively small area of land for market production and his father, a farmer, may have followed suit to some degree during his occupation of the property. William Murphy's estate inventory (Table 1) included a few miscellaneous tools and farm related objects, such as grain bags, as well as household items such as card tables, chairs and cards.

The Murphy Houseyard site was felt to offer the potential to examine an archeological site that reflects the changes through time from an owner occupied farm to a tenancy. It also afforded an opportunity to study changes in tenant occupancy from the latter part of the 19th century until the present time, depending upon the degree of separation evident within any archeological contexts that might be present.

In general, the purpose of the Phase I testing was to determine if intact archeological contexts were present, as well as to determine the size, function and chronological placement of any component or components within the proposed right-of-way. The Phase II testing was designed to evaluate the significance and site integrity of what appeared to be an intact component, in order to determine its eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places according to the criteria established by the Department of the Interior (36CFR 60.6).

PLATE 1
Murphy House, viewed from front yard



PLATE 2
Viewed from backyard, showing west side

