

Neighborhood Property History:
Jamison's Corner and Shallcross Lake Vicinity
Saint Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware

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I. INTRODUCTION

Blenheim Homes submitted an application for subdivision for a project to be known as Bayberry Village. The subdivision covers an area of 880 acres, bounded by Boyds Corner Road, Shallcross Lake Road, Shallcross Lake, and Cedar Lane Road (Figures 1-6). The New Castle County Historic Preservation Review Board approved the application, with the requirement that a property history of the 880 acres be completed. Documentary resources such as deeds, wills, probate inventories, agricultural and population censuses, and historic maps aided in reconstructing the farms and families that contributed to two centuries of agricultural life in the Jamison's Corner locality.

Each property in the report is identified by the name given on the Beers 1868 atlas. Additional historic names associated with a property are noted in parentheses. Only a few of the properties contain surviving buildings. Each property narrative describes the history of ownership and occupancy of the property, as far as it could be determined in the documentary records. Descriptions of buildings related to the property are included if possible, based on field work, past Cultural Resource Survey forms, or records such as tax assessments. Photographs of the corncrib/granary and dairy barn at Congress Hall are included as Appendix A.

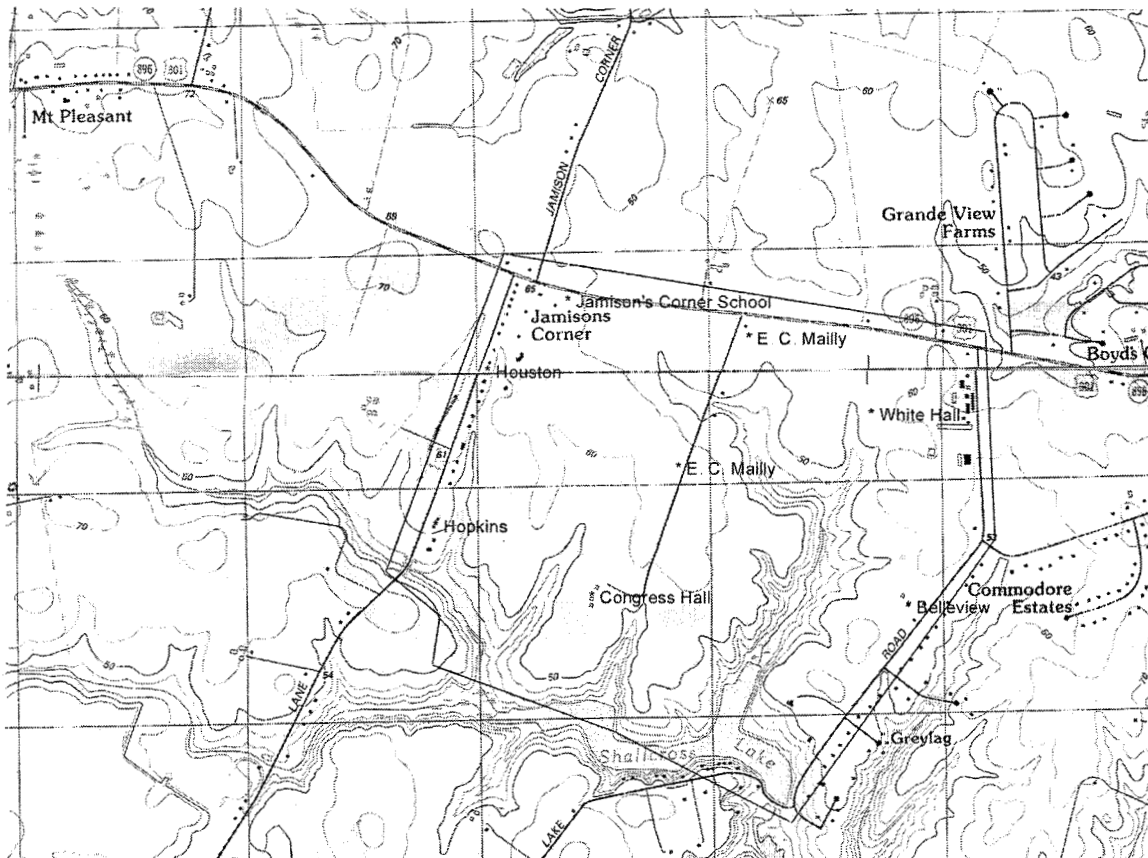


Figure 1: U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle map of the Jamison's Corner and Shallcross Lake vicinity, 1993.



Figure 2. Rea & Price Atlas of New Castle County, Jamison's Corner vicinity, 1849.



Figure 3. Beers Atlas of Delaware, Jamison's Corner vicinity, 1868.

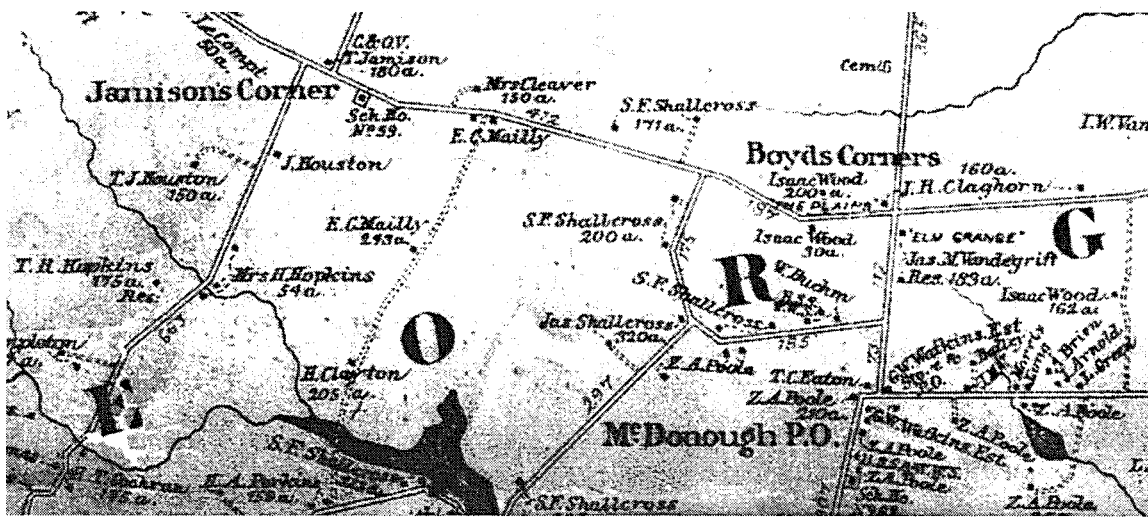


Figure 4. Hopkins Atlas of New Castle County, Jamison's Corner vicinity, 1881.



Figure 5: Aerial photograph of Jamison's Corner vicinity, 1937.



Figure 6: Aerial photograph of Jamison's Corner vicinity, 1997.

II. PROPERTY HISTORIES

White Hall (R. L. Mailly/Sereck F. Shallcross)

The property historically known as White Hall is located on the southwest side of the intersection of Shallcross Lake Road (County Road 428) and Boyd's Corner Road (U.S. Route 301/896) in St. Georges Hundred. Currently including 225 acres owned by Baker Farms, the original White Hall farm formed in the late eighteenth century with approximately 404 acres, a frame house, corncrib, and probably a barn. No site plan, floor plans, or photographs of the nineteenth-century farm complex could be located.

In 1786 William Frazer¹ bid one thousand and forty-five Pounds, fifteen Shillings and three pence for 225 acres at a sheriff's sale for property belonging to the estate of William Read.² Read died in debt to George Crow and the New Castle County Court of Common Pleas ordered the sale of his real estate to settle the debt. Frazer purchased a second, adjoining tract at another sheriff's sale in 1790.³ This tract, which included 152 acres, belonged to William Clark and was sold to settle debts owed by his estate. Together the two parcels totaled 373 acres, which became known as White Hall.

In 1797 Frazier's holdings included a total of 612 acres, with 452 improved and 160 unimproved.⁴ The tax assessment listed "3 houses, stable, carriage house, 3 cribs, smoke house and granary." Frazier was also taxed for thirteen slaves. It is unclear whether Frazer lived at White Hall or at one of his other properties, but he continued to farm the tract until he sold it in 1814.

Frazer sold the White Hall plantation, described as two tracts totaling 404 acres, to Samuel Thomas in 1814 for \$16,160.⁵ A member of the local rural elite, in 1816 Samuel Thomas owned 690 acres in New Castle County, four houses,

¹ William Frazer's name appears on different documents as both Frazer and Frazier.

² New Castle County Deed Book M2, page 114-117, 23 November 1792.

³ New Castle County Deed Book H2, page 290-294, 19 February 1790.

⁴ New Castle County Tax Assessments, 1797 (Dover: Delaware State Archives).

⁵ New Castle County Deed Book N3, page 457-460, 10 March 1814.

one mill, a barn, and one slave between the ages of eight and fourteen.⁶ Along with his many other landholdings, White Hall served as an income-generating property for Samuel Thomas, who made his home in a “mansion house” in Cantwell’s Bridge. The use of tenants in multiple landholdings represented a common strategy for landowners of the time:

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, and the chance to acquire more livestock and farming equipment.⁷

Samuel Thomas owned White Hall until his death in 1829. His detailed will and extensive probate inventory further document his role as a member of the rural elite in southern New Castle County. His property included at least four houses, a mill, a granary and wharf on the Appoquinimink Creek, and a variety of agricultural outbuildings.⁸ His household property, valued at \$2268, included an array of fine furniture, books, silver, livestock, and one slave.⁹

In his will, Thomas described the White Hall property as two tracts, rented to Alexander McCaulley.¹⁰ He left the White Hall farm in trust for Mary Ann Thomas, his daughter.¹¹ From 1829 until Mary’s death in 1846, Daniel Corbit of Cantwell’s Bridge and James Booth of New Castle served as the trustees. Following the death of Mary Ann Thomas, who had since married Augustine Mailly, Corbit and Booth conveyed White Hall to her six children—Charles Edward Mailly, Augustine Mailly, Jr., Samuel Thomas Mailly, Richard Lindsay

⁶ New Castle County Tax Assessments, 1816 (Dover: Delaware State Archives).

⁷ Rebecca J. Siders with Bernard L. Herman, David L. Ames, Andrea L. Marth, Gabrielle M. Lanier, Margaret H. Watson, Elizabeth M. Bellingrath, Nancy I. Van Dolsen, Leslie D. Bashman and Susan M. Chase Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900+/-: A Historic Context (Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Delaware), July 1991, 3.

⁸ Will of Samuel Thomas, dated April 5, 1829, page 1.

⁹ Appraisement and inventory List of Samuel Thomas, 1829.

¹⁰ Will of Samuel Thomas, 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

Mailly, Mary Constance Mailly, and Eugene Corbit Mailly.¹² The trustees split the White Hall property into three pieces, totaling 245 acres. Charles L. Mailly received 94 acres, which he kept until 1866. In November 1866, Charles and his wife Harriet Lucinda sold his share of the farm to his two brothers, Richard and Eugene Mailly, for the sum of ten thousand dollars.¹³ In 1871 Richard L. and Eugene C. Mailly sold this parcel as well as their own plots (totaling 245 acres) to Sereck F. Shallcross for \$36,750.¹⁴

Sereck Fox Shallcross was born on March 29, 1816, in Oxford Township, Pennsylvania, and moved to Odessa, Delaware, in 1842.¹⁵ In 1843, Sereck married Ann Fenton of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and together they produced five children.¹⁶ In addition to White Hall, by 1881 Sereck Shallcross owned property on both sides of Boyd's Corner Road, as well as both sides of the lake that now bears his name (see Figure 4). Like Samuel Thomas, Shallcross continued to live near Odessa while renting his farms to independent tenants. However, from 1878 through 1885, Sereck leased four properties (White Hall, Belleview, the Home Farm, and the Richard Thomas Farm) to his son James T. Shallcross for the sum of \$4,900 per year for five years.¹⁷ The lease agreement for White Hall required James Shallcross to pay \$1000 per year for the 240-acre farm,¹⁸ broken down as follows: \$150 semi-annually to Charles L. Mailly, \$172 semi-annually to Richard S. Mailly, and the remaining \$355 to cover taxes issued on the farm for the term of five years. It is likely that James T. Shallcross lived either at White Hall or Belleview for a short time prior to 1885 when S. F. Shallcross conveyed Belleview Farm to him permanently.¹⁹ Sereck retained White Hall farm until his death in 1897, when his will stipulated:

¹² New Castle County Deed Book Q5, page 263, February 3, 1846.

¹³ New Castle County Deed Book H8, page 374, 19 November 1866.

¹⁴ New Castle County Deed Book O9, page 41, 11 November 1871.

¹⁵ Thomas J. Scharf, *History of Delaware, 1609-1888*, Volume II (Philadelphia: L.J. Richards & Co., 1888), 995.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ New Castle County Deed Book K11, page 3-5, lease agreement, 9 December 1878.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁹ New Castle County Deed Book G14, page 133, 17 June 1885.

My son James T. Shallcross having loaned and advanced to me at different times large sums of money, and he having also at different times paid sundry indebtedness due from me, I have conveyed to him about all the property that I possessed; but there is still due from me to my said son James T. Shallcross a considerable amount of money that I am unable to pay and never expect to be able to pay. Therefore in order to avoid any contention after my decease I give, devise and bequeath all my estate, real, personal and mixed...to my said son...²⁰

James T. Shallcross married Mary E. Vandegrift, a member of another local family with large landholdings in St. Georges.²¹ James and Mary had six children: Mary, James, Jr., Eugene, Esther, Helen, and Edwin. At the time of James T. Shallcross' death on 26 January 1911, his will stipulated that his widow was to inherit the 245-acre plantation called White Hall.²² His wife purchased the property from her children for \$18,375 in April 1911²³ and retained it until her death in 1944. Mary Shallcross' will stipulated that her daughters Helen V. Shallcross and Mary Shallcross Ferguson inherit White Hall and divide it equally between them.²⁴ The two brothers, Eugene and Edwin, purchased their sisters' shares of White Hall in May 1947.²⁵ The parcel stayed in the Shallcross family until Christopher Wicks purchased it in 1953.²⁶ Wicks sold the property to Warren Baker in 1959 for \$70,000.²⁷ White Hall, described in 1971 in a transaction between Warren Baker to Baker Farms, Incorporated, was 231.5 acres with a frame dwelling, frame barns, and stables.²⁸

Bellevue (John H. Cannon/James T. Shallcross)

Bellevue Farm is located on the west side of Shallcross Lake Road, south of Boyd's Corner Road. The 1849 Rea & Price map marks James H. Cannon in possession of what would become Bellevue (see Figure 2). The United States Census in 1850 notes that James H. Cannon was fifty-five and his wife Mary was

²⁰ Will of Sereck Shallcross, dated January 4, 1897.

²¹ Scharf, History of Delaware, 995.

²² Will of James T. Shallcross, 6 February 1911.

²³ New Castle County Deed Book H23, page 295, 11 April 1911.

²⁴ Will of Mary Shallcross, Will Book A. Vol. 7, page 162.

²⁵ New Castle County Deed Book F47, page 66, 26 May 1947.

²⁶ New Castle County Deed Book I54, page 271, 18 December 1953.

²⁷ New Castle County Deed Book K63, page 581, 9 February 1959.

²⁸ New Castle County Deed Book M89, page 350, 7 December 1971,

forty-one, and their real estate holdings were valued at \$12,000.²⁹ In January 1857, James H. Cannon sold his 162-acre farm to Sereck F. Shallcross for \$13,000.³⁰ In conjunction with White Hall (acquired in 1846), Sereck was steadily increasing his holdings in the mid-nineteenth century, many of which he leased to his son, James T. Shallcross. James T. Shallcross appears on the 1868 Beers map as owning or residing on the Belleview farm, but did not officially own Belleview until 1885.³¹

The 1870 Agricultural Census lists five farms associated with James T. Shallcross. The entries vary from just acreage to some that have extensive livestock and crop descriptions. Although the entries do not specify which farms are which, the entries provide information on what kinds of agricultural activities James Shallcross performed in the 1870s. The largest entry is 525 acres with ten horses, ten mules, six milk cows, two work oxen, 150 sheep, and twenty swine.³² However, the 1870 schedule also lists more modest tracts of lesser acreage with apparently just fields for grazing, due to the lack of listed livestock. The entries in the census also list the types of grain and cereals that James Shallcross produced at the time of the survey, including bushels of winter wheat, Indian corn, peas and beans, potatoes, hundreds of pounds of butter and tons of hay.³³

The marriage of James to Mary Vandegrift, whose family holdings rivaled those of the Shallcross family, produced six children—three daughters and three sons.³⁴ The 1880 United State Census describes the James T. Shallcross family and a large contingent of African-American laborers and servants. The census lists James T. Shallcross and Mary E. Shallcross as thirty-three and twenty-eight respectively. At the time of the census they only had two children, Mary who was four and James T., Jr., who was one year old.

²⁹ United States Manuscript and Summary Population Census for Delaware: 1850.

³⁰ New Castle County Deed Book Y6, page 337, 17 January 1857.

³¹ New Castle County Deed Book G14, page 133, 17 June 1885.

³² United States Manuscript and Summary Agricultural Census for Delaware: 1870.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ The Shallcross children of this generation included Mary, James T., Jr., Eugene H., Esther L., Helen V., and Edwin E.

By the late 1860s, it appears that James Shallcross leased Bellevue from his father, in conjunction with the three other properties.³⁵ The lease is an interesting artifact of nineteenth-century landlord-tenant relationships, made more so by the family connection of father and son. The lease agreement stipulated that James T. Shallcross rent the Bellevue Farm, "it being the farm where the said James T. Shallcross now resides, containing three hundred and forty acres,"³⁶ for the term of five years from 1 January 1879 through 31 December 1885³⁷ "...for the sum of \$1000."³⁸ Sereck stipulated that two semi-annual payments of \$333 go to Eugene Corbit Mailly (in June and December) and the other \$334 go toward paying taxes on the property.³⁹

The 1881 Hopkins map (Figure 4) shows James Shallcross' Bellevue Farm as 320 acres bounded by Sereck's land on the south (near the mill pond and Shallcross Lake), on the west by Eugene Corbit Mailly's farm and Henry Clayton's Congress Hall, and on the north by White Hall. In June 1885, Sereck conveyed Bellevue and another tract known as the Polk tract to James T. Shallcross for the sum of \$22,000.⁴⁰ The deed describes the Bellevue Farm and the three purchases Sereck Shallcross made to form the approximately 303 acres. Sereck purchased the Bellevue tract from John H. Cannon (1857), Gassoway Watkins (1865), and James S. Janvier (1872).⁴¹

James Shallcross's death in 1911 left many tracts and parcels to his widow, Mary, including the Bellevue Farm. His will describes the Bellevue Farm as containing 325 acres. As mentioned above, a deed dated 22 April 1911 between Mary Shallcross Ferguson and husband Bassett Ferguson; James Shallcross, Jr.; Elizabeth S. Shallcross (his wife); Eugene; Esther; Helen; and Edwin, specifies that the children convey the conglomeration of James

³⁵ New Castle County Deed Book K11, page 3-5, lease agreement, 9 December 1878.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ New Castle County Deed Book G14, page 133, 17 June 1885.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 135. The deed references the two other tracts that comprised Bellevue with the Cannon tract. Gassoway Watkins conveyed unto Sereck Shallcross a tract, New Castle County Deed Book A8, page 204, 1 March 1865, in conjunction with a tract conveyed from John Janvier, New Castle County Deed Book R10, page 107, 17 April 1872.

Shallcross' lands to his widow Mary Vandegrift Shallcross.⁴² The agricultural and grazing lands of the Belleview Farm remained in her tenure until 1961 when Eugene Shallcross, his wife Maybel, and Edwin Shallcross sold the tract and other parcels totaling 363 acres to the Shell Oil Company.⁴³ Two years later, in 1962, Ruth Vogel purchased the lands from Shell Oil.⁴⁴

A farmhouse survives from the mid-nineteenth century Belleview Farm and imparts an impression of the social and economic status of the Shallcross family (Figure 7). Surveyed in May 1979 for the Delaware Cultural Resources Survey (CRS), the Belleview house sits on the west side of Shallcross Lake Road one-eighth of a mile south of the junction with Boyd's Corner Road.⁴⁵ The brick, L-shaped building has three stories, five bays on the front elevation, and a rear wing extending perpendicular to Shallcross Lake Road (Figure 8).⁴⁶ A whitewashed, uncoursed, fieldstone foundation supports seven-to-one common bond brick walls, with a centrally placed door.⁴⁷ Besides the central paneled door with sidelights and an overhead transom, the front façade has one window on either side of the door and windows above the door.⁴⁸ The first and second floors have four-over-four-light, sash windows, and the third floor has smaller two-over-two-light sash windows.⁴⁹ All of the windows have white painted trim and stone lintels and sills.⁵⁰ The Belleview farmhouse has a shallow, hipped roof with bracketed cornice and three common bond, corbelled, interior chimneys.⁵¹ The CRS form indicates a few modern outbuildings and one brick milk house that dates to the period of the house.⁵²

⁴² New Castle County Deed Book H23, page 295, April 11, 1911.

⁴³ New Castle County Deed Book P68, page 239, 13 November 1961.

⁴⁴ New Castle County Deed Book Y69, page 568, 8 August 1962.

⁴⁵ Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Cultural Resource Survey of Belleview (CRS # N-5155), 12 May 1979.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

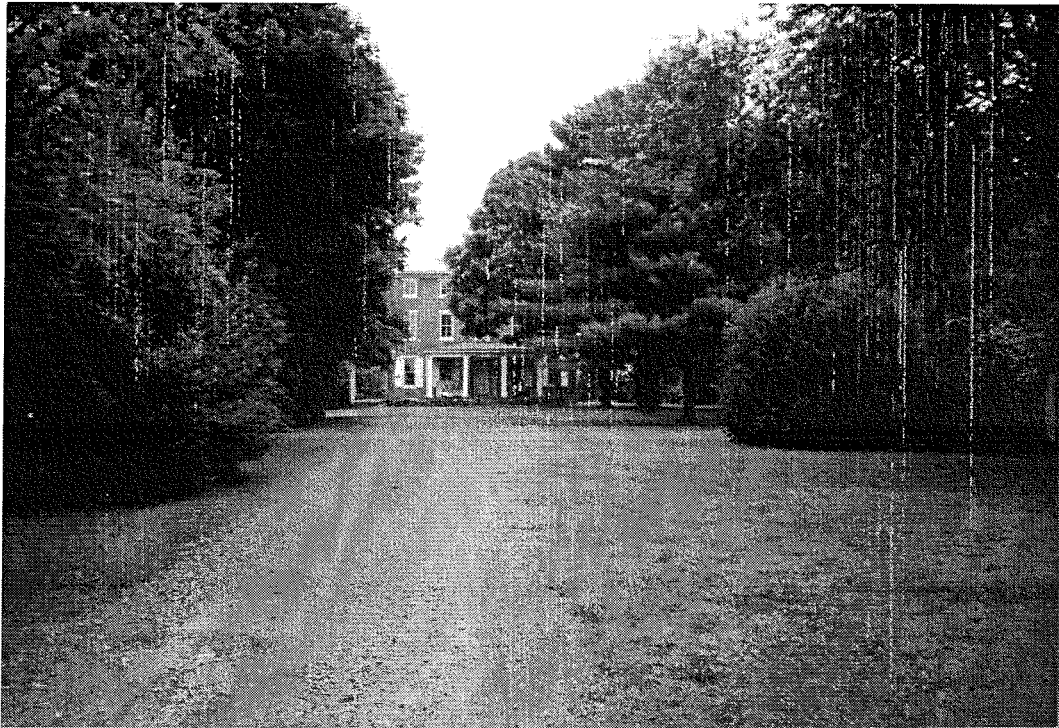


Figure 7: View of Belleview on Shallcross Lake Road, looking west. Photograph by Kelli Dobbs, 2001.

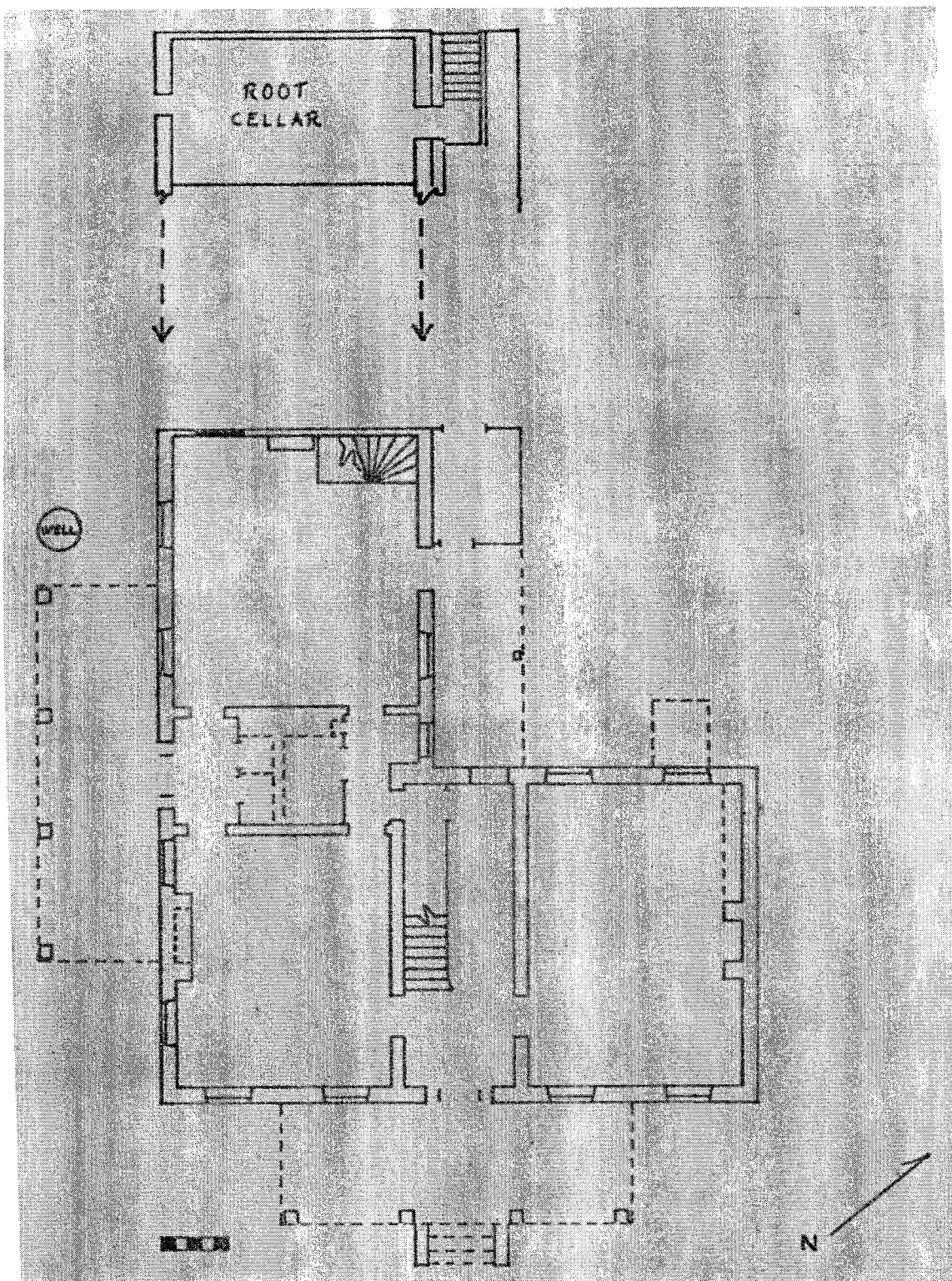


Figure 8: Cultural Resource Survey form showing Bellevue's floor plan, 1979.

Courtesy of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office.

Congress Hall

Approximately two hundred and five acres in size, Congress Hall lies just north of Shallcross Lake, at the end of a lane leading south from Boyd's Corner Road. It passed through several families in the nineteenth century. The only remaining buildings on the property are a corncrib/granary and a dairy barn, both slated for demolition.

Robert Haughey, Jr., noted as a merchant of St. Georges Hundred, assembled the farm in the late eighteenth century with the purchase of two adjacent parcels of land. In August 1770, Haughey purchased 66 acres from Cornelius Armstrong after Armstrong's father died intestate.⁵³ Haughey paid 239 Pounds, five Shillings for the acreage.⁵⁴ He purchased the second tract, an adjoining parcel of 150 acres with a log house, from a sheriff's sale of Robert Bryan's land in 1774 for the sum of 346 Pounds.⁵⁵ At the time of his death in 1794, Haughey owned a total of twenty tracts of land in St. Georges, Appoquinimink, and Pencader hundreds.⁵⁶ The farm that would later be known as Congress Hall passed to Haughey's son, Francis, after his death; however, the state seized the farm from Francis in November 1794 to pay off a debt.⁵⁷ Sheriff Maxwell Bines auctioned off several parcels to pay off Robert Haughey's debts, including the 200-acre farm,⁵⁸ which William Stidham purchased for 331 pounds in October 1801.⁵⁹

William Stidham owned the Congress Hall property until his death, when his son Isaac inherited it.⁶⁰ After Isaac's death the parcel passed to his wife, Ingebar Stidham,⁶¹ who sold the parcel to Leonard Vandegrift in 1825 for \$400.

Leonard Vandegrift, a member of a local family that had large landholdings and roots in Delaware's early history,⁶² sold the farm to Henry

⁵³ New Castle Deed Book A2, page 150, 22 August 1770.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ New Castle County Deed Book B2, page 43, 28 April 1774.

⁵⁶ New Castle County Deed Book W2, page 153, 13 April 1801.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 154-155.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 154.

⁶⁰ New Castle County Deed Book L7, page 204, 18 June 1825.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Scharf, *History of Delaware*, 988.

Templeman, Jr., for \$8,206 in 1854.⁶³ Henry Templeman, Jr., further increased his holdings when his father Henry Templeman, Sr., died, leaving a 190-acre property located elsewhere in St. Georges Hundred.⁶⁴ Henry Templeman, Jr., died intestate in 1866 and his executors sold two tracts of his land to Henry Clayton.⁶⁵ The first property was a 167-acre parcel and the second a parcel of 205 acres.⁶⁶ A deed dated 4 September 1866 officially conveys the two tracts to Henry Clayton, "subject to the dower of Henrietta Templeman, widow of the late Henry Templeman."⁶⁷ Historic maps of St. Georges Hundred show Henry Clayton's 205-acre property at Shallcross Lake, which was named Congress Hall during his tenure (see Figures 3 and 4). It is possible that Clayton named the property Congress Hall in honor of his father Colonel Joshua Clayton, who had sailed with Caesar Rodney to Argentina on a frigate named "Congress," or after his father's judicial and agricultural career (owning at one time over 3000 acres).⁶⁸

Henry Clayton died in January 1896; his will⁶⁹ stipulated that after his death his lands would pass to his wife, Margaretta R. Clayton, for the duration of her natural life.⁷⁰ In 1907, Margaretta died and the lands passed from her trust to their children.⁷¹ One son, Henry Lockwood Clayton, died in 1896, and his half of the estate went to his brother Richard Thomas.⁷² In 1918, Richard Thomas Clayton died, and in accordance with Henry Clayton's will, the lands passed into the hands of his executors.⁷³ William Eliason and several other parties sold Congress Hall to William Lockwood the following year.⁷⁴ The property changed hands several more times until Baker Farms acquired the farm in 1985.⁷⁵ When

⁶³ New Castle County Deed Book S6, page 158, 18 February 1854.

⁶⁴ Will of Henry Templeman, Sr., dated 14 March 1851.

⁶⁵ New Castle County Orphan's Court Record Z1, page 150-152, 22 February 1866.

⁶⁶ New Castle County Orphan's Court Record Z1, page 204, 4 September 1866.

⁶⁷ New Castle County Deed Book G8, page 362, 4 September 1866.

⁶⁸ Scharf, *History of Delaware*, 995-996.

⁶⁹ New Castle County Will Book S2, page 366, 15 November 1895.

⁷⁰ New Castle County Deed Book P28, page 520, 12 July 1919.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 523.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ New Castle County Deed Book 331, page 284, 2 December 1985.

surveyed in 1979, the frame house was still standing, along with the frame barn and corncrib.⁷⁶

The Delaware Cultural Resource Survey form for Congress Hall, completed in 1979, shows the farm complex at the end of the long drive, just as it appears on the aerial photograph of the area pictured in Figure 5. The farm lane proceeded south from Boyd's Corner Road and near the house and farm complex, turned ninety degrees west towards the complex.⁷⁷ The house sat at the front of the complex, facing north towards Boyd's Corner Road. The granary was located southwest of the house and the barn to the rear of the farmhouse. Based on the attached floor plan (Figure 9) and the reference to the log house in the 1774 deed, the frame dwelling at Congress Hall (no longer extant) appears to have been constructed in two periods. The southeastern section was the log main block—a one-room plan with a side entrance, winder stair, and gable-end fireplace. To the north stood the main block, a four-bay, two-room, single-pile dwelling, probably constructed by Leonard Vandegrift in the late 1820s or early 1830s. It is likely that the corncrib and the addition to the house were constructed at about the same time as part of a process of upgrading the farm complex.

The corncrib-granary is a three-bay, braced-frame, gable-roofed outbuilding with a twentieth-century shed addition on the south side.⁷⁸ The building measures approximately 28 feet wide by 32 feet long, with a sixteen-foot shed addition. A drive-through passage opens in the center of the east and west gable ends to allow wagons to pull in to the building and unload corn into the cribs on the north and south sides of the aisle.

⁷⁶ Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Cultural Resource Survey of Congress Hall (CRS #N-3961), 28 April 1979.

⁷⁷ Description taken from view of 1937 aerial photographs, courtesy of the National Archives.

⁷⁸ Descriptions of the corncrib-granary and dairy barn are based upon fieldwork conducted on the site by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 19 January 2002.

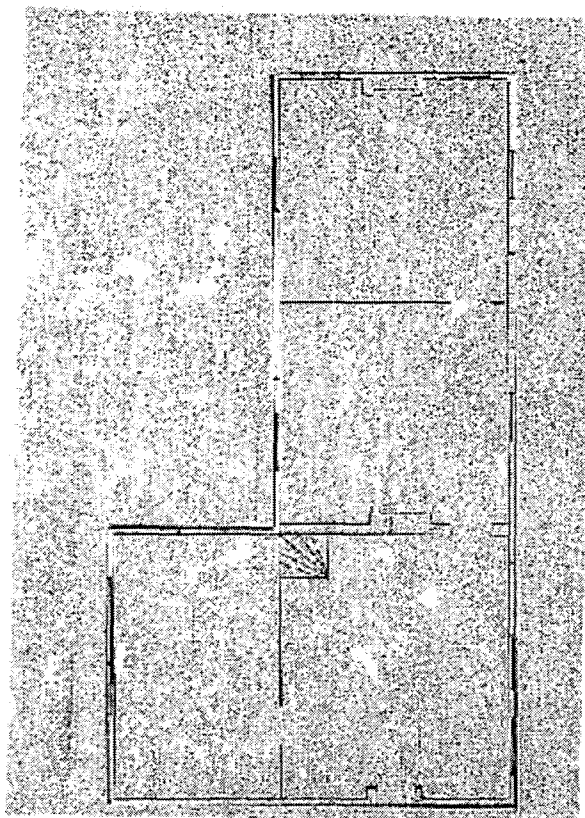


Figure 9: Cultural Resource Survey form showing Congress Hall, 1979.

The corncrib-granary rests on poured concrete piers with quartz rubble fieldstone elements. The building is constructed primarily of sash-sawn timbers, with some large hewn elements used as floor and ceiling joists; a few reused elements appear in various places throughout. Most of the major joints are mortise-and-tenoned and secured with pegs. Both wire and machine-cut nails secure the approximately one-foot-wide floorboards and siding. Large logs, floor joists, hewn flat on the top and sides and running east to west, lie close together under the floorboards to support the drive-through bay. Large hewn timbers running north-to-south and overlapping the partition walls for the corncribs support the floor for the granary on the upper floor. The partition crib walls are constructed with smaller sash-sawn studs and narrow horizontal slats for ventilation.

In the northeast corner of the corncrib-granary a winder stair leads up to the second floor. This upper floor shows evidence of storage bins with tightly

fitted horizontal panels. Bins were arranged along the exterior of the building, with a central aisle for access. The floorboards on the second floor appear to be replacements.

On the southern side of the granary stands a relatively modern shed addition. Running along the full length of the granary's south side, it measures sixteen feet deep. The interior is open and is framed by circular-sawn studs resting upon poured concreted piers. Corrugated metal sheeting covers the roof and sides.

The braced-frame, gable-roofed dairy barn stands to the north of the corncrib-granary, with the gable roof running east to west, and the long elevation facing the farm lane. All timbers are circular-sawn; major joints are mortise-and-tenoned and pegged, while minor ones are wire-nailed. Divided into two sections on the interior ground floor, the barn measures 59 feet long by 24 feet wide. The southern section of the barn served as a milking parlor, while the northern part contained stalls. Two milking aisles run east to west in the milking parlor. Doors on the east and west elevations provide access for cows to the milking aisles and for humans to the central passage between them. Whitewash coats all the interior walls in the milking section. A poured concrete floor with a manure gutter, feed troughs, and 16 stanchions allowed for milking a full shift of 32 cows. The northern section of the barn contains two aisles of stalls, running east to west with a center passage. Exterior doors open into the two aisles and the central passage. The upper floor of the barn is open for hay storage.

H. McVey & J. Houston

The J. Houston and H. McVey farms are treated together in this narrative because the two properties took shape as a result of a probate division of real estate in 1853, and understanding their development requires knowledge of the family's history. The Hook, McVey, and Houston families are related by marriage, and several real estate transactions resulted from these unions. An 1816 tax assessment of St. George's Hundred lists the estate of Henry Hook as including an 180-acre farm, 140 acres of which were improved and 40 of which were

woodland; an old wooden dwelling; a barn; and stables.⁷⁹ Henry Hook died in 1814, leaving his estate to his wife, Ann, and two minor daughters, Rebecca Jane Hook and Henrietta Ann Hook.⁸⁰ An 1814 probate inventory lists extensive possessions including livestock, fodder houses, home furnishings, and a Negro boy named Samuel who was indentured to work for fifteen years after the death of his owner. The 1816 Orphan's Court valuation further describes the Henry Hook estate as including houses, outhouses, and an orchard valued at \$1700. The overall condition of the property was described, however, as marginal:

...we find a dwelling home and kitchen in bad repair, a barn and stable wanting repair, a smoke house and corn crib in good repair, a few old declining apple trees, and no land to be cleared.⁸¹

In order to settle debts and generate income after Henry Hook's death, his widow, Ann Hook, sold a large portion of the estate's livestock and crops but retained the actual land and most of the home furnishings. One patron of the estate sale, James Hanson, purchased one shovel, one hog, one double coverlid, and two bed sheets.⁸² Hanson married the widowed Ann Hook in 1816.⁸³ Ann Hook Hanson retained one-third, or 60 acres, of Henry Hook's original 180 acres as her widow's dowry, which became the property of James Hanson after their marriage.⁸⁴ A deed transaction dated 25 January 1853 stipulated that after the decease of Ann Hook Hanson, daughters Rebecca Jane Hook and Henrietta Ann Hook were to become the sole heirs to the remaining 120 acres of Henry Hook's estate.⁸⁵

Rebecca Jane Hook later married Samuel McVey and the couple had one son, Henry Hook McVey. Henrietta Ann Hook married John Houston in February

⁷⁹ Tax Assessment Record of 1816 of St. George's Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware.

⁸⁰ Inventory and Appraisement of the Estate of Henry Hook, dated 21 March 1816.

⁸¹ Orphan's Court Valuation of the Henry Hook Estate, dated 1816.

⁸² Inventory and Appraisement of the Estate of Henry Hook, dated 21 March 1816.

⁸³ New Castle County Marriage Records, Volume 6, page 72, dated 8 March 1816.

⁸⁴ It was customary at this time for a widow to receive one-third of her late husband's estate as a dowry. In the event she remarried, the dowry then became property of her new husband and was absorbed into his estate.

⁸⁵ From a deed dated 25 January 1853, New Castle County Deed Book M6, page 385.

of 1830,⁸⁶ producing two sons, George and William Houston. Rebecca Jane Hook McVey and Henrietta Ann Hook Houston maintained joint control of their 120 acres until 1853, when Rebecca Jane and Samuel McVey died. At that time Henry Hook McVey and his uncle, John Houston, formally divided the property, located south of Jamison's Corner near the lands of Richard Thomas (see Figure 3). Each party received 54 acres in this transaction.⁸⁷

John Houston Farm. John Houston appears on the 1870 Agricultural Census with 54 acres of improved land, three horses, two cows, and one head of cattle on a farm valued at \$10,000. This suggests that he was a small farmer.⁸⁸ John Houston died intestate in 1881, and his estate passed to his wife, Henrietta Ann Houston, and their two sons, William Houston and George Houston.⁸⁹ Henrietta Ann Houston died in 1898 and left the 54 acres of farmland that she and her husband had received from the division of Henry Hook's land in 1853 in trust for their sons William and George.⁹⁰ William Houston died in 1897, so his share of his mother's estate passed to his daughters, Myrtle C. Houston and Frances Naudain.⁹¹ George Houston died in 1922 and left his estate to his only child, Anita Rothwell.⁹²

In 1923 Myrtle C. Houston, Frances and John Naudain, and Anita and Eugene Rothwell jointly sold their property, totaling 54 acres, to Ernest Weldon for \$5,600.⁹³ Weldon bought several other adjoining parcels at this time, and the 54-acre John Houston parcel was absorbed into these other purchases.⁹⁴ The Houston parcel of land was bounded on the north by the lands of Mrs. E. Green and the Mailly heirs, on the east by the lands of the Mailly heirs, on the south by the lands of Emory Jarrell, and on the west by the road leading from Jamison's Corner to Middletown (presently Cedar Lane Road). In 1965, Ernest Weldon

⁸⁶ New Castle County marriage Records, Volume 11, page 13, dated 22 February 1830.

⁸⁷ From two deeds dated 25 January 1853, in New Castle County Deed Book M6, page 385-387 and New Castle County Deed Book M6, page 499-501.

⁸⁸ New Castle County Agricultural Census of 1870 for St. George's Hundred.

⁸⁹ From a deed dated 29 January 1923, New Castle County Deed Book Q31, page 191-195.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ernest Weldon is listed in the New Castle County Deed Indirect Index as being a multiple landowner of parcels in and around the area in question.

sold this land to Nursery Transport for \$5 and “other valuable considerations.”⁹⁵ Twenty years later in 1985 this same parcel of land was sold to Baker Farms for the sum of \$686,250.⁹⁶

McVey/Templeman/Hopkins Farm. The ownership transactions that occurred between the Henry Hook McVey, Henry Templeman, Jr., and Thomas Hopkins tracts can be explained by the multiple marriages of Henrietta McVey. Henrietta McVey was the daughter of Henry Hook McVey and Mary Clark McVey. Henry Hook McVey married Mary Clark in February of 1844, and Henrietta was born two years later. In the 1850 United States Population Census, the members of the McVey household included 27-year-old Henry Hook McVey, 24-year-old Mary Clark McVey, and four-year-old Henrietta McVey. At that time, the Henry Hook McVey farm was valued at \$2000.⁹⁷ In 1853, Henry Hook McVey received 55 acres of land as a result of a division of his mother’s (Rebecca Jane Hook McVey) property.⁹⁸ By 1870, the 55-acre farm on the eastern side of present-day Cedar Lane Road was valued at \$8,500 and included three horses, two milking cows, two other cattle, five swine, and wheat and oat crops.⁹⁹ The 1868 Beers Atlas indicates that Henry Hook McVey owned three properties on the eastern side of present day Cedar Lane Road; however, his widowed mother, Rebecca Jane Hook, inhabited the other two parcels. Rebecca Jane Hook McVey exercised no legal control over the property, as it had become her son’s property upon the death of her husband, Samuel McVey.¹⁰⁰ For the purposes of this report, only the 55-acre parcel Henry Hook McVey inhabited is of concern.

On the 1849 Rea & Price Map (Figure 2), Henry Templeman is shown as owning the farm on the western side of present-day Cedar Lane Road, directly opposite the McVey properties. When Henry Templeman died in 1855, his property was divided into “two allotments” for his two sons, Henry Templeman,

⁹⁵ From a deed dated 10 June 1965, New Castle County Deed Book B75, pages 681-683.

⁹⁶ From a deed dated 2 December 1985, New Castle County Deed Book 311, pages 284-287.

⁹⁷ United States Population Census, New Castle County, Delaware, St. George’s Hundred, 1850.

⁹⁸ From a deed dated 25 January 1853 in New Castle County Deed Book M6, page 385.

⁹⁹ 1870 United States Agricultural Census, New Castle County, Delaware, St. Goerge’s Hundred.

¹⁰⁰¹⁰⁰ Samuel McVey died intestate, but as Henry H. McVey was his only child, and women could not own property, it is reasonable to believe that Henry H. McVey was the sole heir of this property.

Jr., and George S. Templeman. Henry Templeman, Jr.'s, tract contained 177 acres, and George S. Templeman's tract contained 88 acres (see 1868 Beers Atlas).¹⁰¹

Henry Templeman, Jr., died sometime between 1865 and 1867, after marrying Henrietta McVey.¹⁰² Henry Templeman, Jr., left his estate to his widow, Henrietta McVey Templeman, because "Mrs. Templeman" appears as the owner of his 177-acre tract. Henrietta McVey Templeman married Thomas Richard Hopkins shortly after her first husband's death.¹⁰³ In the 1870 Agricultural Census Thomas Richard Hopkins is listed as owning 177 acres, valued at \$30,000.¹⁰⁴ These are the 177 acres that Henrietta McVey Templeman Hopkins inherited from her late husband, Henry Templeman, Jr. The 1880 Population Census lists both Thomas Richard and Henrietta McVey Templeman Hopkins as being 33 years of age with four children between the ages of one and twelve: Thomas W., Ida May, Josephine, and William B.¹⁰⁵ On the 1881 Hopkins Map of the area, "T. R. Hopkins" is listed as the owner of the 175-acre tract acquired through his wife, and "Mrs. H. Hopkins" (Henrietta Hopkins) is listed as owning a 54-acre tract of land on the opposite side of Cedar Land Road. The latter parcel was her inheritance from her father, Henry Hook McVey.¹⁰⁶ This explains how the parcels described above progressed in ownership from the McVeys, to the Templemans, and finally to the Hopkins.

Thomas R. and Henrietta McVey Templeman Hopkins lived on the 177-acre estate as late as 1894. A transaction recorded in 1894 shows Henrietta ceding her one-third part of her late husband, Henry Templeman, Jr.'s, estate to her three living children, Thomas W., Ida May, and Josephine. This is strictly a monetary transaction to ensure that her children will receive all the "one-third part

¹⁰¹ From the will of Henry Templeman, New Castle County Will Record W1, page 241, dated 14 March 1851.

¹⁰² This conjecture is founded upon the fact that Henry Templeman, Jr.'s, widow, Mrs. Henrietta McVey Templeman is listed as having a twelve-year-old son, Thomas W. Hopkins, with Thomas Richard Hopkins on the 1880 Population Census. Thomas W. Hopkins would have to have been born in 1868 to be twelve at the time of the 1880 census.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ 1870 Agricultural Census, New Castle County, Delaware, St. George's Hundred.

¹⁰⁵ 1880 United States Population Census, New Castle County Delaware, St. George's Hundred.

¹⁰⁶ Although no will or deed record was found, the 54 acres in question was the same tract passed from Samuel and Rebecca Jane McVey to Henry Hook McVey in 1853. See Deed Record M6, page 385.

of the proceeds from the sale of said real estate being the sum of \$2,375 dollars....”¹⁰⁷ Through this act, Henrietta was essentially assuring that her children would receive what was rightfully theirs from her widow’s dowry.

The history of the Hopkins tract is scattered after 1894. It is known that the 177-acre property was sold and divided into at least two tracts and partially absorbed into contiguous property sometime prior to 1954. In 1954, Bronislaw Koper and his wife, Jennie Koper, bought two parcels from Charles and Regina Paruszewski. One parcel was described as being “situate on Cedar Lane Road containing 170 acres and a building thereon erected.” The same deed described the other parcel as being 80 acres, for a total purchase of 250 acres.¹⁰⁸

When Jennie Koper died in 1973, her will listed her real estate as “a farm in St. Georges Hundred on Cedar Lane Road containing 240 acres more or less” valued at \$160,000. The entire property passed to her husband, Bronislaw Koper and their three children, Walter, Adam, and Theresa Koper.¹⁰⁹ At the time of Adam Koper’s death in 1998, his portion of the real estate was valued at \$778,883,¹¹⁰ but it is not known how many acres this entailed. A look at the 2000 tax parcel map for St. George’s Hundred, however, reveals the “Koper Subdivision” on the west side of Cedar Lane Road, indicating the Koper family’s continued ownership of the former Templeman/Hopkins property.

Schoolhouse Number 59—Jamison's Corner Schoolhouse

Schoolhouse Number 59 stood east of Jamison’s Corner (present-day intersection of Cedar Lane Road and Boyd’s Corner Road) throughout the second half of the nineteenth century (see Figures 1-3). Although the building disappeared circa 1930, a survey of Delaware schools in 1919 provides a snapshot of information about the school that indicates that it shared common traits with other rural Delaware schools (Figure 11).¹¹¹ Another undated

¹⁰⁷ From a deed dated 1894 in the New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Deed Book Q16 page 401.

¹⁰⁸ From a deed dated 23 July 1954 in the New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Deed Book 144 page 531.

¹⁰⁹ From will record WR 063576 dated 23 October 1973 in New Castle County.

¹¹⁰ From will record WR 118168 dated 22 September 1998 in New Castle County.

¹¹¹ George Strayer, N. L. Englehardt, and F. W. Hart, General Report on School Buildings and Grounds of Delaware, 1919, Wilmington, Delaware: Service Citizens of Delaware, 1919.

photograph from the Delaware State Public Archives illustrates the school before the 1919 survey (Figure 10).¹¹²

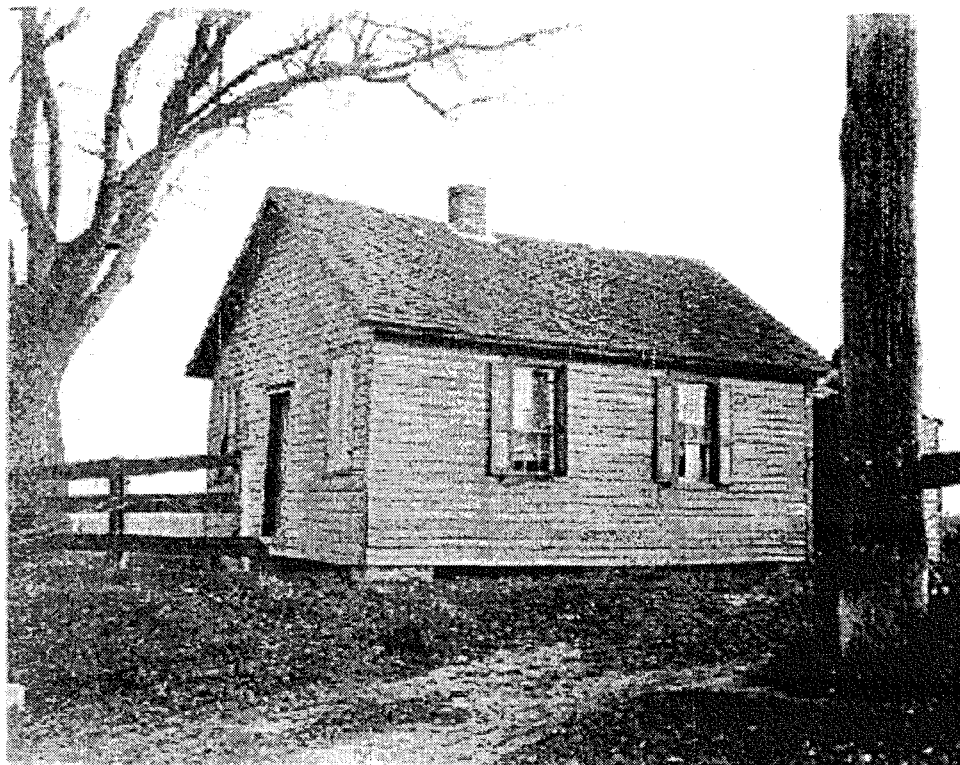


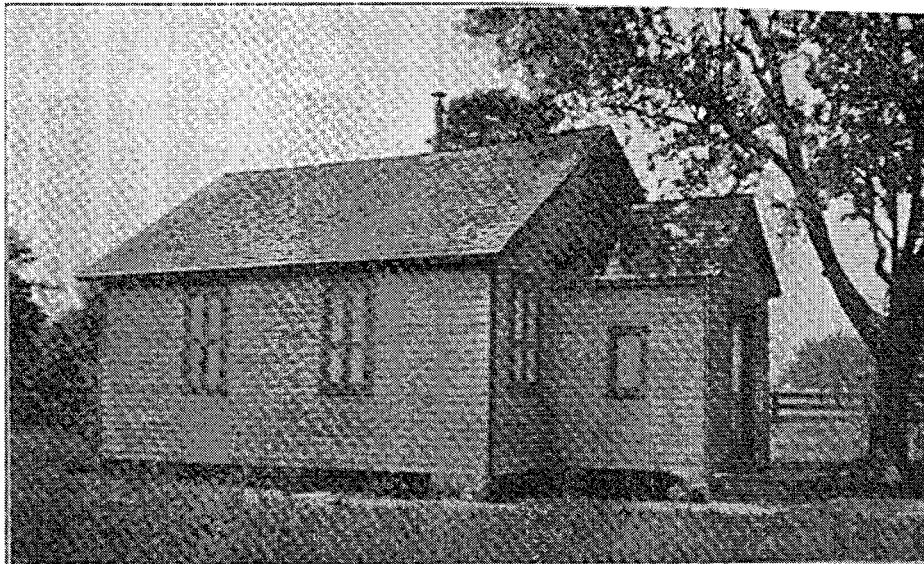
Figure 10: A late nineteenth-century photograph of Jamison's Corner School. Photograph courtesy of the Delaware State Archives, Board of Education Photograph Collection.

Cynthia Eastburn's masters' thesis on Delaware's one-room schools notes that nineteenth-century one-room schoolhouses had "simple gable roofs, little ornamentation, and were often situated close to roads on small lots."¹¹³ Jamison's Corner Schoolhouse was a timber frame building set upon brick piers and sided with wooden clapboards. The photograph shown in Figure 10, possibly taken in the late nineteenth century, shows the school with a brick center chimney, frame construction and clapboard siding, and a small shed

¹¹² Board of Education Photograph Collection, Delaware State Pubic Archives.

¹¹³ Cynthia Eastburn, *One-Room Schools in Rural Delaware*, MA thesis (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware, 1997), 75.

extending from the schoolhouse's rear wall. The sash windows have nine lights over six and feature wooden shutters on the two elevations visible in the photograph. The 1919 photograph in Figure 11 shows an enclosed front vestibule, absent from the earlier photograph, and a stovepipe for a coal stove that protrudes through the center of the wood shingled, gable roof. Cultivated fields and shade trees surrounded the school building. While the school's position along Boyd's Corner Road made it easily accessible to students who walked from nearby farms, poor heating and lighting (only three sides of the building had windows) added to the school's problems and low overall score by the Columbia University surveyors.¹¹⁴



JAMISON'S CORNER SCHOOL

Figure 11: Jamison's Corner School as it appeared in the Columbia University survey in 1919. This photograph shows the opposite side of the school from the earlier photograph in Figure 10.

¹¹⁴ Strayer, et al., General Report on School Buildings, 75.

Delaware's rural one-room schools declined for a number of reasons that may also explain the disappearance of Jamison's Corner Schoolhouse. Factors decreasing the need for scattered, rural, one-room schools include: improvements in the overall condition of Delaware's roads, the advent of bus transportation on these enhanced rural roads, and a decline in dependence upon children for agricultural labor and harvesting.¹¹⁵ It is possible that the schoolchildren in School Number 59 consolidated with Middletown's new and larger school facilities in the 1920s and 1930s. Although the actual date that the school disappeared from the landscape is unknown, the widening of Boyd's Corner Road in the 1930s may have prompted the move of the school to another location.

Richard Thomas/Sereck F. Shallcross

According to 1868 Beer's map, Richard Thomas owned a 240-acre farm in the middle of the Bayberry property, and Sereck Shallcross owned a dwelling or small farm lot on Boyd's Corner Road. In the years between Beers' 1868 map and Hopkins' 1881 map, Eugene Corbit Mailly, grandson of Samuel Thomas, became the sole owner of these lands. The following description traces these changes of ownership.

The son of Samuel Thomas (see White Hall description), Richard Thomas owned a 240-acre farm north of Henry Clayton's Congress Hall and east of Richard Lindsay Mailly's White Hall. Mary Ann and Richard Thomas were minors at the time of their father's death; their inheritance was placed in the trust of Daniel Corbit and James Booth of Odessa. Samuel Thomas' will stipulated that Mary Ann and Richard receive the rents and profits of the White Hall property (described as two tracts tenanted out to Alexander McCaulley). The White Hall property, totaling approximately 404 acres, was located on the west side of Shallcross Lake Road and the south side of Boyd's Corner Road. Samuel's will further dictated that should Richard or Mary Ann die with children, their portions

¹¹⁵ Eastburn, One-Room Schools in Rural Delaware, x.

of the inheritance should be divided equally among their children. This property would have been contiguous to White Hall, but it is unknown whether Richard's dwelling was already in existence or if he used his inheritance to erect it for himself.

Richard Thomas died on 26 July 1870 with no children and a will that did not specify what would happen to the farm.¹¹⁶ Richard Thomas' executor, William Spruance, ordered the farm put up for sale to the highest bidder.¹¹⁷ The deed proposed that Charles, Richard Lindsay, and Eugene Corbit Mailly (mentioned as tenants on the Richard Thomas Farm) petition the court to sell off the farm and release them from their obligations as tenants.¹¹⁸ Sereck Shallcross consequently purchased the farm for \$29,047 from William Spruance and the tenants in common (Charles, Richard and Eugene Corbit Mailly).¹¹⁹

Six years later, in December 1878, Sereck (in the same lease agreement described with regard to Belleview and White Hall) leased the Richard Thomas Farm to his son, James T. Shallcross, for the annual sum of \$900.¹²⁰ The elder Shallcross directed two \$290 payments to be paid to the Farmer's Bank of New Castle in July and January and the remainder to cover taxes on the farm.¹²¹ The lease agreement between father and son also issued the following instructions for use and general upkeep:

...That the said James T. Shallcross is to keep all the fences on said farms in repair and have the hedges trimmed at least twice during the year and he is to keep the orchards well worked—annually and it is also agreed between the parties that the said James T. Shallcross is not to sell or hand off any cereal crop hay—straw or corn fodder and he is to keep the head land clear of all weeds...¹²²

¹¹⁶ New Castle County Will Book E, page 310, 22 November 1873.

¹¹⁷ New Castle County Deed Book U9, page 142, 8 October 1872.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ New Castle County Deed Book K11, page 3-5, lease agreement, 9 December 1878.

¹²¹ Ibid., 4.

¹²² Ibid.

James Shallcross did not lease the Richard Thomas Farm for very long, however. In December 1879, one year after the lease agreement, Sereck Shallcross sold the farm to Eugene Corbit Mailly for \$19,365.¹²³

Between December 1879 and his death in the early 1890s, Eugene C. Mailly farmed the tract previously known as the Richard Thomas Farm. The 1881 Hopkins map shows the 243-acre farm north of Henry Clayton's Congress Hall as being in Eugene Mailly's control with one dwelling along Boyd's Corner Road (the dwelling that Sereck Shallcross owned on the 1868 map). Eugene Mailly's will, published in February 1893, directed that his real estate be placed in trust for his nieces, Mary A. M. Davis and Ethel L. Mailly, daughters of Rachel J. Mailly (wife of Eugene's brother Richard Lindsay Mailly).¹²⁴

The farm stayed in the control of the Davis family. Deeds from the 1980s mention Mary Mailly Davis and Ann Wilson Davis as owners of property bounding the White Hall Farm that Warren Baker conveyed unto his corporation Baker Farms, Inc.¹²⁵

Conclusion

The landscape in the vicinity of Jamison's Corner has changed from the late eighteenth through the twentieth centuries by the passing of the agricultural lands from one family to the next until the present. The study of these farms and agricultural landscapes not only describes this progression of ownership; it also displays the social and economic ties to the land by the use of tenants, the state's role in settling family debt and holding sheriff's sales, and the passing of family landholdings to the various heirs through trustees and wills.

¹²³ New Castle County Deed Book O11, page 250, 29 December 1879.

¹²⁴ New Castle County Will of Eugene C. Mailly, 8 February 1893.

¹²⁵ New Castle County Deed Book 311, page 284, 2 December 1985.

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MID-ATLANTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Congress Hall Dairy Barn and Corncrib/Granary
South side of Boyds Corner Road, between
Cedar Lane Road and Shallcross Lake Road
St. Georges Hundred
New Castle County, Delaware

CRS#: N-3961

Photographer: Rebecca J. Sheppard

January 2002

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| N-3961-1 | Environmental view of dairy barn and corncrib/granary, looking northeast |
| N-3961-2 | Perspective of south and east elevations of granary and barn, looking northwest |
| N-3961-3 | Perspective of north and east elevations of granary and barn, looking southwest |
| N-3961-4 | View of east elevation of corncrib/granary, looking west, showing drive-through |
| N-3961-5 | Interior of corncrib/granary: view of framing on crib partition wall looking south |
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