

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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received
date entered

1. Name

historic Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, 1850-1880

and/or common

2. Location

street & number see individual nominations not for publication

city, town vicinity of congressional district

state code county code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name see individual nominations

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Castle County Courthouse, Recorder of Deeds

street & number 7th and French Streets

city, town Wilmington state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Cultural Resource Survey CRS N-9567 has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The twenty-eight sites included in the thematic nomination, "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred, 1850 - 1880", are representative of a broad pattern of historically documented architectural, agricultural, and social change that swept through southern New Castle County, Delaware, in the second and third quarters of the 19th century. The selected sites all document one of three major areas of change in domestic architecture as it relates to rebuilding cycles: the improvement of standing buildings, the replacement of standing structures, and the development of new sites (often at the cost of abandoning earlier settings). Also associated with these dwellings and the social processes they represent and articulate, are a number of agricultural buildings reflecting the new design options for work space developed in the course of the rebuilding.

Architecturally, all the individual components of the nomination are unified through their embodiment of the rebuilding theme. They are all rural farmsteads which survive in predominantly agricultural settings, although those settings are threatened by the increasing demands of industrial and residential usage. All the buildings make use of a locally characteristic mix of Italianate, Second Empire, Gothic, late Federal, and Greek Revival architectural elements. More significant however, is the way the new and rebuilt houses of the period redefine social and domestic relationships through the organization of household spaces. The appearance of center-passage plans coupled with service wings describe a pattern of usage fundamentally different from the mainstream of domestic architecture characterizing the same area prior to 1820. The same distinctions extend to farm buildings, but in their design the form of architecture is more obviously symbolic in the flux of more slowly changing attitudes to the actual use of work space. The preceding comments are intended to introduce the basic precepts behind the nomination. These ideas are amplified and illustrated through the constituent parts of the nomination and fully developed in the statement of significance.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The twenty-eight properties included in the "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred, 1850-1880" thematic nomination are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C - historical events and architectural significance. The properties selected for the nomination retain their architectural integrity as it relates to the historical period under consideration. In some instances the integrity of nominated buildings antedating the mid 19th century has been compromised as a direct result of historically documented actions taken in the middle decades of the 1800s.

Historically, the rebuilding of St. Georges Hundred has its origins in the early 19th century in the years prior to 1820. Through the 18th century and into the first two decades of the 19th century, building activity in St. Georges Hundred moved through a series of building cycles. These cycles can be read as generally consecutive, but as also having substantial periods of overlap. In order they are 1) impermanent architecture replaced by 2) durable housing beginning as early as the close of the first generation of permanent English settlement, and 3) formally increased through the introduction of stair passage plan types in the late 1740s. By the close of the 18th century 4) the pattern of separate kitchen buildings began to be replaced by the custom of incorporating kitchens onto the secondary and tertiary elevations of the main house as service wings or ells. This general pattern of building has been documented throughout the eastern seaboard of the United States and the Canadian maritimes. In the Chesapeake Bay region of the upper South for example, impermanence in architecture remained a viable tradition well into the 18th century, while in New England and southeastern Pennsylvania the move to durable building began to occur in the first generation of recorded settlement.

By the third quarter of the 18th century the architectural traditions of southern New Castle County in general, and St. Georges Hundred in particular,

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual nominations

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edited by Bernard L. Herman, College of Urban Affairs, University

organization of Delaware date 3-28-84

street & number University of Delaware telephone 451-3414

city or town Newark state Delaware

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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had been fully developed. At the time of the 1816 tax assessment, the majority of buildings in St. Georges Hundred were built of wood. Of the 567 taxables only 30 percent owned land and dwellings. Within that sample brick dwellings were available to only 5 percent of the total taxable population. The lack of owner-occupant housing for two thirds of the population is significant. Almost 400 taxable individuals and their families were living in housing provided for them on other people's lands. Some of these dwellings were on out plantations, but the majority seem to have been grouped around crossroads, in villages, or in close proximity to the owners' dwellings. The types of buildings these folk occupied were typically hall or hall-parlor plan dwellings with separate outbuildings containing the cooking functions of the household and quarters for servants. There were, of course, the houses of the wealthy which incorporated fashionable stair passage plans and attached service wings. In terms of long term durability, it is the latter which have survived and skewed our perceptions of what the normative range of housing included in terms of form and fashion.

The period of the early 19th century witnessed several major economic, social and demographic shifts which set the stage for the rebuilding period to follow in the mid 1800s. First, there was a general population decrease throughout the hundred from 1800 to 1820. This was related in part to a break up of farms in terms of size over the preceeding century and a general decline in agricultural productivity. Second, in response to a perceived agricultural crisis, the New Castle County agricultural society was formed with the goal of promoting agricultural reform and the methods of scientific farming. An unspoken aspect of this reform was the reconsolidation of land into larger holdings - an achievement which can be seen in the 1816 tax returns. Third, the opening of the canal, an act of more symbolic than practical consequence, mirrored a closing down of a trans-Atlantic market place into one defined by regional urban centers. Fourth, the cultivation of peaches, as a market rather than a distillery crop, signaled a new type of agriculture which was to become dominant in the decades following the Civil War. Peaches had been grown locally since the mid 18th century, but their cultivation related to the financing of mid 19th-century building activity is overestimated.

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The pattern of response to these various situations was the continued acquisition of land into consolidated holdings farmed on a share economy by resident farm managers. As depopulation increased, the quality in tenant housing improved but the business relations between farm owners, managers, and day labor became more formal and were more likely to be maintained in recorded contracts. There was an increased reliance on farm machinery ranging from wagons to reapers, and a corresponding interest in the use of lime, manures, and other fertilizers. By the time of the 1850 agricultural census farming in St. Georges Hundred had become characterized by farms averaging 184 improved acres and a mere 14 unimproved acres. Although the average farm size seems modest, it is important to realize that many individuals owned more than one farm and some families such as the Bradys, Claytons, and Cochrans controlled scores of these tracts. The cash value of individual farms was almost \$12,000.00, a level shared only by farms in Red Lion and New Castle hundreds and way above the average \$3000.00 farm value of a hundred like Little Creek in northern Kent County. Cows were kept for dairy production, especially for butter production which the average farm churned out at a rate of 534 pounds a year. The mainstay of the farm economy however, were cereal crops with the mean harvests being 474 bushels of wheat, 1388 bushels of Indian corn, and 651 bushels of oats. Orchard produce in 1850 was almost nonexistent with an average per farm value of only \$27.00 -- scarcely enough to finance the elaborate buildings known throughout the district as "Peach houses".

Having gained the status of being one of the three wealthiest hundreds in Delaware in 1850, St. Georges Hundred (along with Red Lion, New Castle, and sections of Pencader and Appoquinimink hundreds) became the setting for intensive rebuilding activity. Rebuilding projects can be traced back to the second decade of the 19th century and such notable projects as the building of La Grange in 1815, the extension of the Wilson House in Odessa in 1816, or the construction of Brook Ramble in Appoquinimink Hundred and Achmester in St. Georges Hundred around 1820. By the 1830s

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rebuilding activity was generally widespread, but in terms of practice it focused on remodeling existing houses, adding on service wings, and replacing farm buildings. Examples of this level of construction can be seen in Idalia Manor (N-3947), Quiet Home (N-3944), J.M. Gordon House (N-5176), and Retirement (N-5201). In the late 1840s housing starts dramatically accelerated and were to remain unabated until the mid 1860s. Houses and complexes like Old Ford Dairy (N-5196), Riverside (N-5170), Fairview (N-5193), Bellevue (N-5155), Roseland (N-5148), Weston (N-121), and Okolona (N-5135) represent the vigor and pervasiveness of a local concern with what can be designated an appropriate architecture.

The architectural significance of these properties rests firmly in a notion of what constitutes an appropriate form of building. At the close of the rebuilding cycle around 1880 and at the time Scharf began to compile his history of Delaware in the early 1880s, the people who had commissioned the buildings in question also began to patronize through subscription the writing of history. Andrew Eliason, for example, celebrated both his rags to riches rise and the house that became a monument to his success. In a different vein, a number of families remained clustered in local enclaves and built for themselves in rapid succession a neighborhood of new dwellings. In some instances these multiple contemporary statements could cover quite a bit of stylistic ground as at Claytons Corners which includes Woodside (N-427), Choptank-Upon-The-Hill (N-5243), and Choptank (N-109). As different in matters of form, material, or style as the Clayton's houses were, they were nonetheless unified through the simple fact that they were all new and all of the best quality. The appropriate nature of architecture assigned to the rebuilding period then, is born of its expression of certain sets of social and domestic relationships.

Taking Okolona (N-5135) as an example, we know from the documentary record that the house replaced by the 1860s an earlier house dating from the 1830s and enlarged around 1850. The first house, Muddy Branch, began as a two-story, hall-parlor plan dwelling with a separate kitchen located elsewhere

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on the lot. In the mid 1800s the house that was built as part of the rebuilding process was rebuilt again. At this point the separate kitchen was demolished and a two-story, one-room plan gable end wing added to the east end of the house. The wing contained a servants' room upstairs and a kitchen and pantry downstairs. At the same time a large two-story frame wing was added to the west gable of the house. The west wing, finished with stenciled and freehand painted ceilings, steel engraved wallpaper, cast plaster ornament, an open stair passage, and a one-story portico, became the new best room of the house with the best chambers overhead on the second story. The rebuilding of Muddy Branch though, was not enough, and in 1866 Robert Cochran built a new house, Okolona, across the road and moved his family out of the old dwelling. While situations, as dramatic as the history of Okolona and the Cochrans or of Weston, Greenlawn and the Bradys, are unusual in their representation of one extreme of the rebuilding process, they are still representative of generally held attitudes and actions worked out throughout the middle decades of the 19th century.

A second area of historical and architectural significance rests in the inversion of domestic values and household organization as reflected in spatial organization. In the extended historic period prior to the advent of the rebuilding cycle of the 1800s, the pattern of usage had been one where the unity of life and work was understood in the organization of things, and, as a consequence, its separations were made literal through the construction of many satellite structures with each containing a designated set of functions. With the rebuilding period those old expressions were erased or masked, and the new order became one where unity of work became literal as manifest in complex service ells, multi-functional outbuildings, and agricultural structures designed to contain everything from mangel wurzel pits to hay lofts and grain bins. What was implicitly understood, at least superficially, was the concept of separation and segregation. If one examines these buildings in greater detail however, we find that beneath the veneer of a new order, the old way of doing things provided the sense that made architectural symbols practical expressions.

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By the time of the 1870 agricultural census the architectural landscape had been reformed into what now distinguishes the rural area of St. Georges Hundred. Farms had risen in cash value at a steady rate and typically stood at a figure double their 1850 monetary worth. Orchard crops had begun to be introduced into the farm economy, but most orchards were immature and not bearing fruit at the time of the census. By the 1880 agricultural census the situation was quite different. The average farm value declined by 50 percent from its 1870 worth, and peach trees and other orchard crops were at last in full production. The changes in the value and type of agriculture in St. Georges Hundred related to a post-Civil War agricultural economy which saw the heart of American grain production in terms of wheat and the great milling centers move to the Mid-West and West. To compensate for eroding markets and falling prices, St. Georges Hundred farmers turned to peaches as an agricultural panacea, just as Connecticut farmers of the same period were turning to eggs. Unfortunately, peaches did not bring prosperity for all. Decimated by later blights and their intrinsic value depressed by an oversaturated market, the peach orchards heralded the end of an agrarian and architectural era.

The "Rebuilding of St. Georges Hundred, 1850-1880", as a thematic nomination then, culminates in buildings like Shady View (N-5165). Built toward the end of the 19th century, Shady View and a few other houses of similar vintage illustrate the end of a historic period defined in agricultural and architectural terms. The patterns described in this nomination are not unique in American, Canadian, or European history; but the intensity with which they were manifest in St. Georges Hundred is remarkable. In the rebuilding period we find not only the roots of American agribusiness, but also the drive to monumentalize an American landscape through the vernacular architecture of a single community.

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The sites are located in St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. St. Georges Hundred is bordered on the north by the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and the southern spur of Pencader Hundred, on the east by the Delaware River, on the west by Cecil County, Maryland, and on the south by Appoquinimink Creek and Appoquinimink Hundred. The land is primarily flat with rolling terrain towards creeks and streams that drain into the Delaware River. Made up of some of Delaware's most fertile and well drained soils, the land of St. Georges Hundred has historically been some of the most productive and most valued throughout the state. Farm production has been historically geared to the cultivation of grain, although an intensive bout of orchard growth took over as much as a third of the land on some of the larger farms in the two decades following the Civil War.

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N-5253

Property Name: Mondamon Farm (J. McMullins Farm, 1868)

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

Mondamon Farm is located on route 2 approximately one mile east of its intersection with route 13. The farmstead is situated in a rural area and remains in agricultural use. The nominated parcel contains ten acres and includes the house, hay barrack, granary, barn, a schoolhouse, and related outbuildings.

Owner: Lillian McMullin

R.D.1, Box 199

Middletown, Delaware

19709

Description:

Mondamon Farm is an unusually complete mid- to late 19th century agricultural complex. The central element of the farm is the two-and-a-half story frame house with its two-bay, two-story shed roof service ell. The house, with its balanced five-bay fenestration, stands on a brick foundation and is now covered with aluminum siding over the first period weatherboard. The moderately pitched gable roof is covered with composition shingle over wood shingle and is finished with flush verge boards and a plain boxed cornice. The windows, set in plainly molded architraves, are six over six light sash with raised panel shutters on the ground floor and louvered shutters on the second. Over the front door is a five-light transom fitted with alternating elliptical and lozenge shaped lights mounted in wrought iron comes. The side-lights are finished with split elliptical lights. A tetra-style one-story frame porch covers the principal entry into the house and a two-story porch provides sheltered access to the rooms contained in the service ell.

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The outbuildings associated with the house include a framed granary and barn of the types typically found throughout the area as being a part of the redesign of farmsteads in New Castle County's lower hundreds during the 19th century. Of greater significance however, is the earthfast hay barrack raised on unhewn posts set in the earth and then hewn square at the height of approximately ten feet to take the braced framing required for the roof structure. Documentary references to these structures used to store sheaves prior to threshing or to shelter hay stacks are quite frequent, but the Mondamon barrack is the only one known to survive in the area from the 19th century. Also included in the nomination are several small storage sheds, a frame privy, and a schoolhouse moved to the site and converted into a storage structure.

Historical Background and Significance:

Built in the second quarter of the 19th century, Mondamon Farm has remained in the possession of the McMullins family up to the present day. The house begun as a center-passage plan illustrates the integration of most domestic service activities into the block of the house by the mid 1800s. The pattern of giving up separate kitchen structures and dairies and bringing them into the dwelling has its local origins in the 1770s, although it is not until the 1830s that the pattern became common.

As a farm operation, Mondamon remained at around 190 acres through the mid 19th century. From 1860 to 1870 the value of the farm as evidenced on the manuscript agricultural census returns showed a general increase. The value of the farm rose \$3500.00 from \$20,000.00 in 1860 and the value of wheat and Irish potatoes rose at a parallel rate. Little change is seen in the number of livestock or in the cultivation of oats, but there is a 40% decrease in the amount of butter produced on the farm. The most dramatic changes occur in the four fold increase in the value of farm machinery and the appearance of orchard crops in 1870. While the so-called Peach Boom is credited with generating much of the capital invested in the rebuilding of mid 19th-century St. Georges Hundred, it is clear that the buildings

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erected in advance of any appreciable orchard generated revenues.

As a median farm of the mid 19th century as exemplified by its agricultural status at mid century and the extent and condition of its numerous farm structures, Mondamon Farm is a significant representation of the rebuilding process.

Nomination by Bert Jicha and Trish Bensinger

MONROVIA FARM
N-5253

