

#### IV. HISTORY OF THE BOWMAN PROPERTY

The property that contains the three Bowman sites (Bowman Tenant, Mrs. Bowman, and Bowman #3) was originally part of a 500-acre patent awarded to Thomas Lawes in 1683 (Table 1). On February 18, 1684, Lawes had his holding surveyed by Thomas Pierson (Figure 8). The 500-acre tract extended along the entire northwest bank of Scott Run and was bordered to the north by the lands of William Grant. Pierson's plat is fairly detailed and even shows the location of Thomas Lawes's manor, which is located far northwest of the Bowman archaeological sites. Today the Thomas Lawes manor house would be located among the housing developments north of St. Georges Technical High School.

Thomas Lawes resided on his 500-acre estate for four years with his wife, Ann, their son, John, and their three daughters, Ann, Mary, and Jane (Satcher 1982). Thomas Lawes and his family were Quakers and members of the Duck Creek Meeting (Duck Creek Monthly Meeting [DCMM] 1705-1800). Thomas died in February 1687, and left the property to his widow and their four children (New Castle County [NCC] Will Book Misc. 1:287).

The ownership and use of the property from 1683 until 1788 cannot be reconstructed with certainty. The property seems to have descended through the Lawes family throughout that time. After Thomas Lawes's death in 1687, two of his daughters married neighbors and fellow Quakers. Ann Lawes married Ellis Humphries, who was living on St. Georges Creek as early as 1675 (Satcher 1982). Following the death of Ellis Humphries, Ann remarried, this time to another Quaker, John Ashton. Sometime before 1722, Ann Ashton and her son, Richard Humphries, received 300 acres of Thomas Lawes's 500-acre tract. These 300 acres lie to the west, adjacent to the Bowman Farm property.

Mary, the second daughter of Thomas Lawes, was married to John Howie prior to 1712. By 1712 John Howie had died (NCC Will Book B:80). His widow remarried in 1717, this time to John McCooles, Jr., a cooper of St. Georges Hundred. Records from the Duck Creek Meeting provide some insight into the couple's courtship. On January 18, 1717, Mary (Lawes) Howie and John McCooles appeared before the meeting and announced their intention to wed (DCMM 1717). The following month, the couple once again appeared before the meeting where fellow Friends William Cureton and John Hales reported on the inquiries they made into the past of John McCooles. Thirteen days later, the couple appeared before the meeting one last time to sign their certificate of marriage in front of witnesses.

In 1718 John and Mary McCooles received interest in the 200-acre tract of Thomas Lawes's warrant. This property would eventually become the Mrs. Bowman Farm. In the deed Mary's sister, Ann Ashton, relinquished her interest in the property to John and Mary McCooles. The deed indicates that the couple were already living on the property as the document refers to them as "John McCooles and Mary, his wife, of Scott's Runn" (NCC Deed Book G1:18).

The property does not appear in the records again until 1788. In that year Thomas Kean, Sheriff of New Castle County, sold the property to Alexander Stewart, a doctor of Kent County, Maryland. According to the deed, the 200-acre parcel was sold at public auction on November



TABLE 1. PETER BOWMAN FARM CHAIN OF TITLE

DATE	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	ACRES	LIBER/FOLIO	NOTES
Nov 22, 1683		Thomas Lawes	500	Warrants L2/37a	
Nov 5, 1718	John Ashton and Ann (Lawes) Ashton	John McCoole and Mary (Lawes) McCoole	200	G1/18	
Nov 27, 1788	Thomas Kean, Sheriff	Alexander Stewart, MD	200	I2/410	Kean sold the property to pay debt of Richard Humphries to the Cantwells
Dec 15, 1794	Alexander Stewart and Mary Stewart	Peter Bowman, Sr.	197.25	N2/206	
Mar 18, 1795	John Chatten and Mary Chatten	Peter Bowman, Sr.	95.00	O2/289	Property acquired south of the APE
1797	Peter Bowman, deceased	Peter Bowman, Jr., William Bowman, James Bowman, Curtis Bowman, Hester Bowman	197.25 95.00		NCC Probate Files, Peter Bowman
May 19, 1829	Henry Colesberry	Peter Bowman, Jr.	197.25 95.00	I4/129	Colesberry sold 1/5 interest in the two properties
Apr 12, 1864	Peter Bowman, Jr., deceased	Ann Bowman, Mary Bowman, Susan Bowman	197.25 95.00	WB Y1:42	
Sept 1, 1924	Mary C. Bowman	Peter Bowman Bird	197.25 95.00	WB X4/17	Sold ½ interest in the two properties
Feb 4, 1935	Peter Bowman Bird	Barbara Bird		M39/24	
July 15, 1940	Susan Bowman	Barbara Bird			Other ½ interest in the two properties
Apr 20, 1943	Barbara Bird	Howard Crothers		V43/22	
Apr 9, 1952	Howard Crothers	James Crothers Henrietta Crothers		WB X8/421	
Jan 30, 1973	James Lawson, Betty Crothers, Edger Spanagel, Henrietta Spanagel	James Lawson		H87/511	
Aug 14, 1974	James Lawson and Betty Crothers	Delmarva Power & Light	319.612	N89/999	
Dec 28, 1984	Delmarva Power & Light	Welfare Foundation, Inc	1903.43	189/140	Composed of 13 tracts

20, 1788. Prior to the auction, the “plantation tract with frame messuage & other improvements” belonged to the estate of Richard Humphries.

Mary Lawes McCoole seems to have died by 1719. The Duck Creek Meeting Minutes for December 22, 1719, read:

There happening a very great sickness and mortality in this place about the time of the last monthly meeting. Friends are desired to bring in their account of burials that have happened lately out of their respective families to next monthly meeting [Satcher 1982].

By 1730 John McCoole had remarried, this time to Sarah Norris of Pennsylvania. Historical records are unclear as to if or when John McCoole left the Lawes family property on Scott Run. From 1730 until his death in 1761, John McCoole remained in St. Georges Hundred and continued to be an active member of the Duck Creek Meeting, rising to the position of Elder in 1729.

Two years later, Thomas Chalkley, a Quaker minister from Philadelphia, wrote about the time he spent at the home of John McCoole. Late that year, Chalkley was on a return voyage from Barbados to Philadelphia when his ship, the *New Bristol Hope*, was damaged by ice on the Delaware River near Reedy Island. He and the crew were rescued and brought to St. Georges Hundred. Chalkley wrote in his journal:

Here I went on shore, where the people were very kind to us, particularly the sheriff of the county, John Gooding, and his wife and family. I also went to the house of John M'Cool, who with his wife were very tender in their care and love toward me; bathing my swelled and benumbed limbs until the frost was pretty well out of them. The good will and tender love and care I here meet with, affect my mind in the noting of it [Satcher 1982].

The journal does not say whether the home Chalkley visited was on Scott Run or at another location. In either case, by 1761 John McCoole had died. His will makes no mention of owning any property, suggesting that the 200-acre property on Scott Run remained with the Lawes family.

By the mid-eighteenth century ownership of the property had passed to Richard Humphries, the grandson of Thomas Lawes through Ann Lawes Ashton. Richard did not reside on the property; rather, he leased the land to tenant farmers. In 1788 the estate of Richard Humphries owed £1,248 to the estate of Richard Cantwell. Since Humphries was unable to pay the debt, Thomas Kean, the High Sheriff of New Castle County, sold the 200-acre parcel to Alexander Stewart of Kent County, Maryland. The land record indicates that the land and tenement of Richard Humphries included a “frame messuage & other improvements.” The sale of the property raised £1,134 toward the settlement of the debt.

Alexander Stewart and his wife, Mary, only owned the 200-acre tract for six years. In that time they likely continued to lease the property to tenants. In December 1794 Dr. Stewart sold the estate to Peter Bowman, Sr. A year later, in 1795, Peter acquired an additional 95 acres located to the south of the 200-acre parcel. For three years Peter Bowman resided on the estate, building a small one-story dwelling on the western corner of the property that he shared with his wife, Agnes, and their five children. St. George Hundred tax records for that period assessed the Bowman property for \$28 a year.

In 1797 Peter Bowman, Sr. died, and left the estate to his widow. Agnes Bowman and the children remained at the farm. In 1798 tax records indicate that the Bowman family owned 293 acres and held six enslaved persons. The entire estate was assessed for \$306 that year.

By 1801 Agnes had also died, leaving five minor children without a mother or father. The plight of the Bowman children was brought before the Orphans Court of New Castle County. The court decided the best course was to appoint a separate guardian for each of the five children. To

defray the cost to the guardians, the group of five collected rents from the Bowman farm. The rents were collected every March and amounted to £20 or \$53.33 a year (NCC Orphans' Court RG2840.039).

In 1811 the estate received \$6.66 in damages for the creation of a public road (Hyett's Corner Road) that bisected the property. Rents continued to be collected until 1816. During that time the property was assessed for \$1,465. In the New Castle County Tax Assessments for 1806, there appears a description of the Peter Bowman estate:

a frame Dwelling House and Kitchen in tolerable repair, a frame Barn wanting a new Roof, a frame Granary wanting a new roof on the east side a log smoke House wanting a new roof, an old Garden wanting new paling an Apple Orchard of about two hundred trees and about sixty peach trees (scattering) and some on the decline [NCC Tax Assessments 1806].

While the estate remained in probate until 1837, it appears that one of the Bowman children, Peter Bowman, Jr., moved to his father's property around 1816. After 1815 rents were no longer collected on the property. In the 1820 and 1830 U.S. Censuses, Peter Bowman, Jr. is listed as a head of household in St. Georges Hundred. In 1820 his household includes his wife, his teenage brother, a young girl under the age of 10, and a woman over 44 (likely his mother-in-law). Peter Bowman's household also included six enslaved persons and one free black boy under the age of 14. Bowman's enslaved household was described as one man over the age of 26, a man or boy under the age of 25, a woman or girl between the ages of 14 and 25, and three girls under the age of 14.

In 1829 the annual tax assessment for St. Georges Hundred provided a description of Peter Bowman's farm:

A two story frame dwelling about thirty feet by twenty and two shed Rooms attached, a frame Kitchen, a frame barn and shed stables attached, crib, granary and Carriage house under one roof a log meat house, stone milk house and cow shed all in tolerable repair, an orchard of about two hundred apple trees on the decline & a few peach trees, the fields and gardens are under good enclosures [NCC Tax Assessments 1829].

The tenant house at the Bowman Tenant Site was not mentioned.

The following year, Peter Bowman once again appeared as head of household in the 1830 U.S. Census. By that time Bowman and his wife were in their early thirties and owned nine enslaved persons. The slaves were listed as a man over 36, a man or boy under the age of 23, a woman over the age of 24, a girl between the ages of 10 and 23, and two young girls under 10 years old.

In 1837 the estate of Peter Bowman, Sr. was finally settled when Peter Bowman, Jr. officially received the entire property (NCC Probate Files, Peter Bowman). A survey of the property in that year illustrates the conditions at the Bowman farm (Figure 9) The map shows a small one-story house on the western side of the property at the intersection of Hyatt's Corner and Jamison Corner Road. The small house is located in a 30-acre wooded lot approximately in the same location as the Bowman Tenant Site.



The small house at the Bowman Tenant Site contrasts greatly with the principal residence on the property, which was depicted as a grand house with multiple chimneys, surrounded by outbuildings and set back from Hyatt's Corner Road along an avenue that bisects the apple and peach orchard. This residence was located outside the current project area, and was likely destroyed during the construction of St. Georges Technical High School.

By 1840 Peter Bowman and his family had left St. Georges Hundred. The U.S. Census for that year shows that Peter and Mary Bowman moved to Brandywine Hundred. By 1850 the family had moved to the City of New Castle. In 1850 Peter and Mary Bowman had four daughters: Lydia (13), Virgilia (10), Mary (9), and Susan (3). Before 1860 the family moved again, this time to Wilmington.

It appears Peter Bowman mainly occupied the property in St Georges Hundred to gain control of it in the Orphans Court settlement. Once he legally received the property, Peter could move elsewhere. After the Bowman family left, the farm was probably leased to tenants once again. The Rea and Price (1849) map of New Castle County indicates that the Bowman family built a new dwelling on the south side of Hyett's Corner Road near the center of the property and listed on the map as "P. Bowman." The principal residence on the north side of Hyatt's Corner Road is also present on the map. The one-story dwelling on the western end of the property is not present in the 1849 map but appears in later maps and atlases. Since the Bowman family was residing in New Castle by that time, the old and new dwellings were likely occupied by tenants. The Bowmans did not appear in the 1850 or 1860 agricultural census, so they certainly leased out all of their land to tenant farmers.

By 1864 Peter Bowman had died. In his will, dated April 12, 1864, Peter Bowman gave one third of his rents, interest, and income from his real and personal estate to his wife Mary. He also provided for his three youngest daughters, Virgilia, Mary, and Susan, equal shares of the same estate. For his eldest daughter, Lydia, he made special accommodations. According to the 1850 census, Lydia was not attending school at the age of 13. In his will, Peter Bowman wrote:

I give to my eldest daughter Lydia Miles Bowman, an annuity of three hundred dollars for and during her natural life, to be paid to her semi-annually, the first semi-annual payment of one hundred 150 dollars to be made within six months from and after my decease, which annuity I charge upon my Plantation and tract of land situated in St. Georges Hundred [NCC Probate Files, Peter Bowman].

His last will and testament further instructs:

The annuity I have herein given to my eldest daughter, I direct to be paid to my said wife, as her trustee and guardian, for my said daughter's support and maintenance, and at the decease of my said wife, I direct said annuity to be paid to whichever of my said daughters who take charge of and support and maintain my said eldest daughter, in a suitable manner [NCC Probate Files, Peter Bowman].

In 1868 the property appears in the Pomeroy & Beers *Atlas of New Castle County Delaware* (Figure 10). The atlas depicts the former Peter Bowman manor on the north side of Hyatt's Corner Road as being owned by J.P. Hudson, and on the opposite side of the road sits the circa 1840s dwelling as well as the former tenant house.

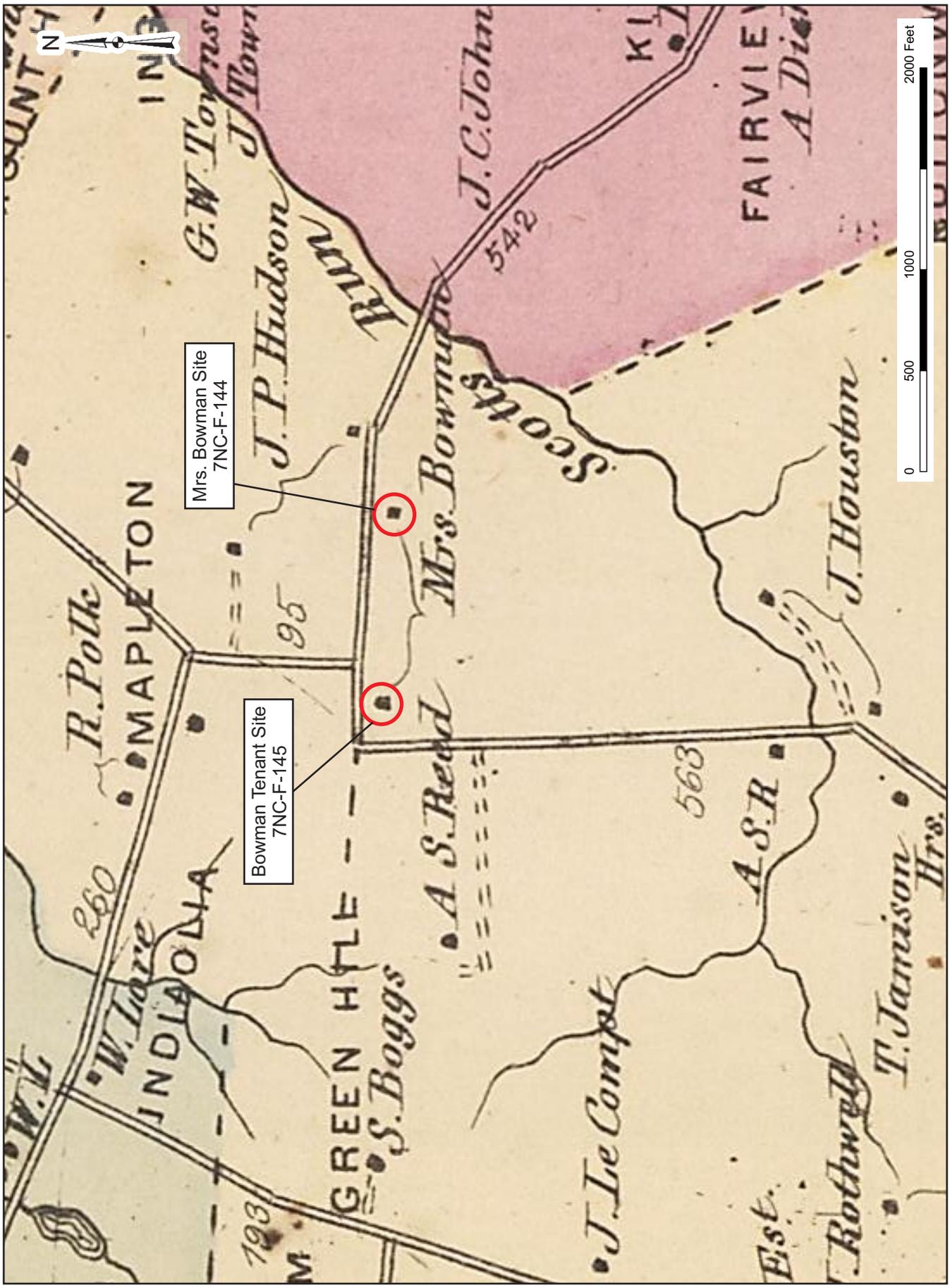


FIGURE 10: The Bowman Property in 1868

SOURCE: Beers 1868

The granddaughters of Peter Bowman, Sr. continued to own the farm and tenements until 1940. The Bowmans do not appear in the 1870 or 1880 agricultural censuses, so they continued to lease all of their land to tenant farmers. In 1924 Mary C. Bowman Bird died, passing her half interest in the property to her son, Peter Bowman Bird, who in turn sold it to his daughter, Barbara Bird, in 1935. Five years later, Susan Bowman died. In her will she left the remaining half interest to her niece, Barbara Bird.

In 1943 Barbara Bird sold the Peter Bowman farm to Howard B. Crothers of Mt. Pleasant. Nine years after the sale, Howard passed away, leaving the property to his widow, Henrietta, and his son, James. In 1974 James Crothers and his wife, Betty, sold the property to Delmarva Power & Light, which was acquiring property in the area because of plans to build a nuclear power plant. When the plans to build the plant fell through, Delmarva Power & Light sold the former Peter Bowman farm to the Welfare Foundation, Inc. (in 1984), and it was once again leased to tenants for agricultural purposes.

What does the written record tell us about the archaeological sites? There seems to be no record at all of a house at the Bowman #3 Site, 7NC-F-85. From the mid-1700s until 1795, when Peter Bowman, Sr. purchased the property, it seems to have been occupied entirely by tenants. So Site 7NC-F-85 was a tenancy, most likely under the ownership of Richard Humphries.

The small house at the Bowman Tenant Site appears on two maps, dating to 1837 and 1868; however, these maps appear to be the only documents that mention the house. The possibility was considered that the 1806 tax record describes the Bowman Tenant Site, but this seems unlikely. That house was frame, whereas the small number of nails found at the Bowman Tenant Site suggests that this house was log. The 1806 house was also accompanied by several outbuildings, of which there is no indication at the Bowman Tenant Site, and was associated with orchards. In 1837 the Bowmans' orchards were north of Hyatt's Corner Road, and the location of the Bowman Tenant Site was described as a "wood lot." The simplest interpretation of this information is that the main residence on the property, from the 1710s on, was in the same place, north of Hyatt's Corner Road. The Bowmans did own slaves, so it is possible that the Bowman Tenant was occupied by enslaved people, at least for a time. However, given the small size of the enslaved population at the site, they most likely lived in or around the main house.

The Mrs. Bowman Site is the remains of a house built in the 1840s. At that time all of the Bowmans seem to have lived elsewhere, and they certainly rented out all of their land. The new house may have been built for a tenant farmer to whom the southern half of their property was leased. The simplest interpretation of the documentary record is that this house was leased to tenants throughout Bowman ownership, down to 1943.