

United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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The Boundary of the Henry Clay Village Historic District is as shown on the accompanying map: Starting at the northwest corner of the intersection of Breck's Lane and the Kennett Pike following the curb line of Kennett Pike and Montchanin Road to the north boundary of lot 070030.1 016 and then along the northern boundary of lot 070030.1 017 to the point where it meets the boundary of lot 07030.2 002 and following its north and west boundary line until it meets lot 07030.2 001 and following its west and north boundary line to Main Street (or Henry Clay Road) and crossing this road to the bank of the Brandywine River. Then following the river bank south to New Bridge Road, then southwest along the line of New Bridge Road and crossing Main Street to the southwest curb line of Main Street. Then following that curb line of Main Street to the south side of the railroad track where Main Street becomes Rising Sun Lane. Then crossing Rising Sun Lane to the northeast property line of 1930 Rising Sun Lane, then following that property line to Dorcas Lane and following along the rear property line of 2020, 1913 and 1907 Dorcas Lane. Continuing along the south property line of 1907 Dorcas Lane and across Dorcas Lane, then along the rear property lines of 1916 to 1912 Rising Sun Lane; Then crossing Rising Sun Lane and continuing along the curb line on the northwest side of Rising Sun Lane to its intersection with Kennett Pike. Continuing along the curb line on the north side of Kennett Pike and crossing Kennett Pike at 3104 Kennett Pike. Continuing along the southeast property line of that property and then along the rear property lines of the adjoining houses to lot 07030.3 118 (Greenhill Presbyterian Church). Continue around the property line of this lot and along the southeast curb line of the lane leading to Greenhill Presbyterian Church. Cross to the northwest side of Kennett Pike and continue along that curb line to its intersection with Breck's Lane.

The boundary justification is based primarily on the fact that the area within the historic district is the area that was considered to be Henry Clay Village in late nineteenth century directories. The northwest boundary excludes the new Columbia Gas building, but otherwise includes properties and lands that belonged to mill owners and Henry Clay Village residents until early in the twentieth century when the mills ceased to operate. The boundary along the river bank includes one mill and one mill site, but excludes Walkers Mill on the other side of the river. Although it was at one time considered a part of Henry Clay

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Village, it is listed on the National Register in two other districts. The southeast boundary includes mill workers' houses and properties of the du Pont Family along Rising Sun Lane. The southwest boundary crosses Kennett Pike to include Greenhill Presbyterian Church and four nineteenth century houses that historically have been considered to be a part of Henry Clay Village. It excludes the twentieth century housing development of Westover Hills and the modern golf course which border these properties. The southwest boundary also includes the properties of the du Pont family and the Alexis I. du Pont school that late nineteenth century directories specifically list as a part of Henry Clay Village. The boundaries exclude St. Joseph's Church properties and Mt. Salem Church because they are no longer contiguous with the district boundaries as outlined even though they were at one time considered to serve the residents of Henry Clay.

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Nemours Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number See Map

not for publication

city, town \_\_\_\_\_

vicinity Wilmington

state Delaware

code \_\_\_\_\_

county New Castle

code 01 003

zip code 19810

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

9

0

buildings

sites

19

structures

13

objects

Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
LANDSCAPE/garden  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum  
HEALTH CARE/hospital  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field  
EDUCATION/library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Beaux Arts

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
walls STUCCO  
roof TILE  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Nemours Historic District is the area around the Nemours Mansion which was the home of Alfred I. du Pont. The district occupies about one square mile north of the Brandywine River in Brandywine Hundred. It is bounded by a strip of land along Concord Turnpike (Route 202), Rockland Road, Route 141, Alapocas Road, and the Nemours property line between Alapocas Woods and Blue Ball with a section of the district extending along one side of Old Murphy Road near its intersection with Rockland Road. Most of the land within the district was farmland when Alfred I. du Pont purchased it and built his home there in 1910. Most of the terrain is fairly flat, but it does contain some gentle variations and a fairly steep wooded slope on the south side toward the Brandywine. Some sections of the district are heavily wooded, but there are also open fields, house lots, and the formal gardens of Nemours. In addition to the Nemours Mansion, the district includes several other residences which at one time belonged to the du Ponts and were used by employees of Nemours. Most of these houses are much older than the mansion. The Alfred I. Du Pont Institute, a modern hospital built at the bequest of du Pont, is also within the district.

Nemours Mansion is the most important building in the district. It was the home of Alfred I. du Pont who hired the New York architects, Carrere and Hastings to design it. The mansion was built between 1909 and 1910 by Smyth and Son, a Wilmington building company. Brandywine granite, the main construction material, is covered with pink stucco. The stone trim is Indiana limestone. The mansion is in the style for which Carrere and Hastings were best known: Beaux Arts Classicism. It embodies many classical elements. Du Pont and his second wife, Alicia, were great admirers of their French ancestors and the French court. Consequently, their home and gardens has a decidedly French emphasis.

3. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1880-1940

Significant Dates

1910

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

duPont, Alfred I.

Architect/Builder

Carrere and Hastings

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above

The Nemours Historic District in Brandywine Hundred, just outside Wilmington, Delaware is significant for its architecture (Criterion C), its history (Criterion A), and its association with individuals important in our past (Criterion B). The Nemour Mansion, for which the district is named, is the best example in Delaware - and one of the best examples in the nation - of domestic Beaux Arts Classicism of the early twentieth century. The firm of Carrere and Hastings, among the foremost practitioners of this style, designed the mansion for Alfred I. du Pont. The gardens, done primarily in the French style, include all the elements traditional to this type of formal garden: the vista, lagoon, colonnade, statuary, woods, reflecting pool, fountains, greenhouses, parterre, and numerous garden buildings. The district embraces the surrounding properties that, like the Nemours site, had been farms for many decades. Alfred I. du Pont purchased these properties, and his employees lived in the existing houses, which included a variety of ages and styles. Du Pont also built some of the buildings that are included in the district but are outside the Mansion grounds. The district is important historically because of its association with early farming and rural life in Brandywine Hundred and because it is tangible evidence of the impact that the du Pont family and the DuPont Company have had upon Delaware. The district is also important for its association with Alfred I. du Pont, an industrialist and businessman who spent his early years with the Du Pont Company in Delaware and later exerted a profound influence upon the development and economy of the state of Florida.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 345 acres

UTM References

A 

18	452330	4402280
Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

18	452240	4403850
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

18	453320	4402700
Zone	Easting	Northing

D 

18	451520	4409200
Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary line generally falls along the property line of Nemours. The property line follows the outside edge of the wall surrounding the estate. The boundary line deviates from this path in the area of Old Murphy. A home with surrounding yard is included in the district. The home is associated with the Nemours Mansion. The dairy barn and the Bird/Husbands house are also included. Both are outside the Nemours property but are

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Priscilla M. Thompson\*  
 organization The History Store date \_\_\_\_\_  
 street & number P.O. Box 207 telephone 302-684-1713  
 city or town Wilmington state DE

\*revised by Diane Bernardo, DE Dept. of Transportation, Box 77, Dover, DE 19901  
 302-736-4396

gods and goddesses: Summer with garment cast aside, Fall with grapes, Winter with wind blowing. In classical mythology, Spring had her head crowned with flowers, which bears no correlation to Crenier's Spring.

1.

## 8. REST ROOMS

### 9. MAZE GARDEN

Canadian Hemlock form the main hedges of the maze, and the inner hedges are of Helleri Holly. The Pin Oaks lining the Maze Garden have been cubed to create a formal setting. The entire garden is tilted so that the pattern can be seen from the Mansion.

"Achievement" by Crenier dominates the center of the Maze Garden. Triton, a merman, is sculpted in white carrara (sugar) marble on each side. The face of Neptune, King of the Oceans, is on the base of each Triton. The center statue of bronze was originally gold leafed; currently it is painted gold.

### 10. COLONNADE

The Colonnade was built of brick faced with Indiana limestone in 1926 by Stewart and Donahue of Wilmington. The structure was covered by a wood edifice to permit the statue and carvings on top to be sculpted in place. It is a memorial to Pierre Samuel duPont de Nemours and to his son, Eleuthère Irénée duPont.

2

The two pairs of red marble vases are from the palace of Franz-Josef, the Hapsburg Emperor (1830-1916).

The tubbed trees across the Colonnade are Ornamental Figs and Oleander. The boxes are based on the designs of André Le Nôtre (1613-1700) for ornamental trees at Versailles.

### 11. SUNKEN GARDENS

Alfred Victor duPont, son of Alfred I. duPont, and Gabriel Masséna designed the Sunken Gardens, which were constructed between 1928-1932. The walls and steps are built of travertine marble from Rome. The statuary is white carrara (sugar) marble.

3.

The main statuary at the top and the side statues in the fountains were sculpted in 1930 by Charles Sarrabezolles (b. 1888), who was primarily a religious sculptor, which may account for the fact that two of the figures in the main statuary group of the Sunken Gardens look remarkably like putti—small angels. The two marble statues at the top of the steps and the bronzes in the pools are the works of Claude Grangé (c. 1890-1971).

4

Grottoes were considered vestiges of the Roman bath. Throughout the gardens is a grotto motif, similar to water dripping down a cave wall or volcano rock used in Italian grottoes. It is called tufa. The "grotto" areas in the side fountains at the Colonnade end of the Sunken Gardens have a mosaic background, also reminiscent of Roman styling.

### 12. WREN'S NEST

The little gray house on the right is called the Wren's Nest and was used as a schoolhouse and playhouse by the children on the estate.

Across from the Wren's Nest is an orchard planted with apple, peach and pear trees.

*NATURAE PRIMUS IMPETUS*—The "First Instinct of Nature" is represented by a cast iron statue of a bull mastiff protecting her pups by A. Durene.

### 13. ROCK GARDEN

The rock garden was a favorite element in nineteenth century English gardens. It contains many species of bulbs and some selected dwarf conifers. The figurines date to the beginning of the century and are from Czechoslovakia.

5.

*Fagus sylvatica 'Pendula'*—This unusual variety of beech is known to cover nearly an acre when it reaches full maturity (c. 150-200 years). This tree is about 60 years old.

### 14. TEMPLE OF LOVE

This classically styled temple is the setting for a life-sized statue of Diana the Huntress cast by Jean Antoine Houdon (1741-1828) in 1780. He made friends with Benjamin Franklin while the latter was in Paris as minister to France. Congress invited Houdon to come to the United States in 1785 to sculpt a statue of George Washington. Houdon did a full-sized statue of Washington in 1786, which is now in the Virginia State House in Richmond. In 1801 he sculpted a bust of Washington, which is now at Mt. Vernon.

6.

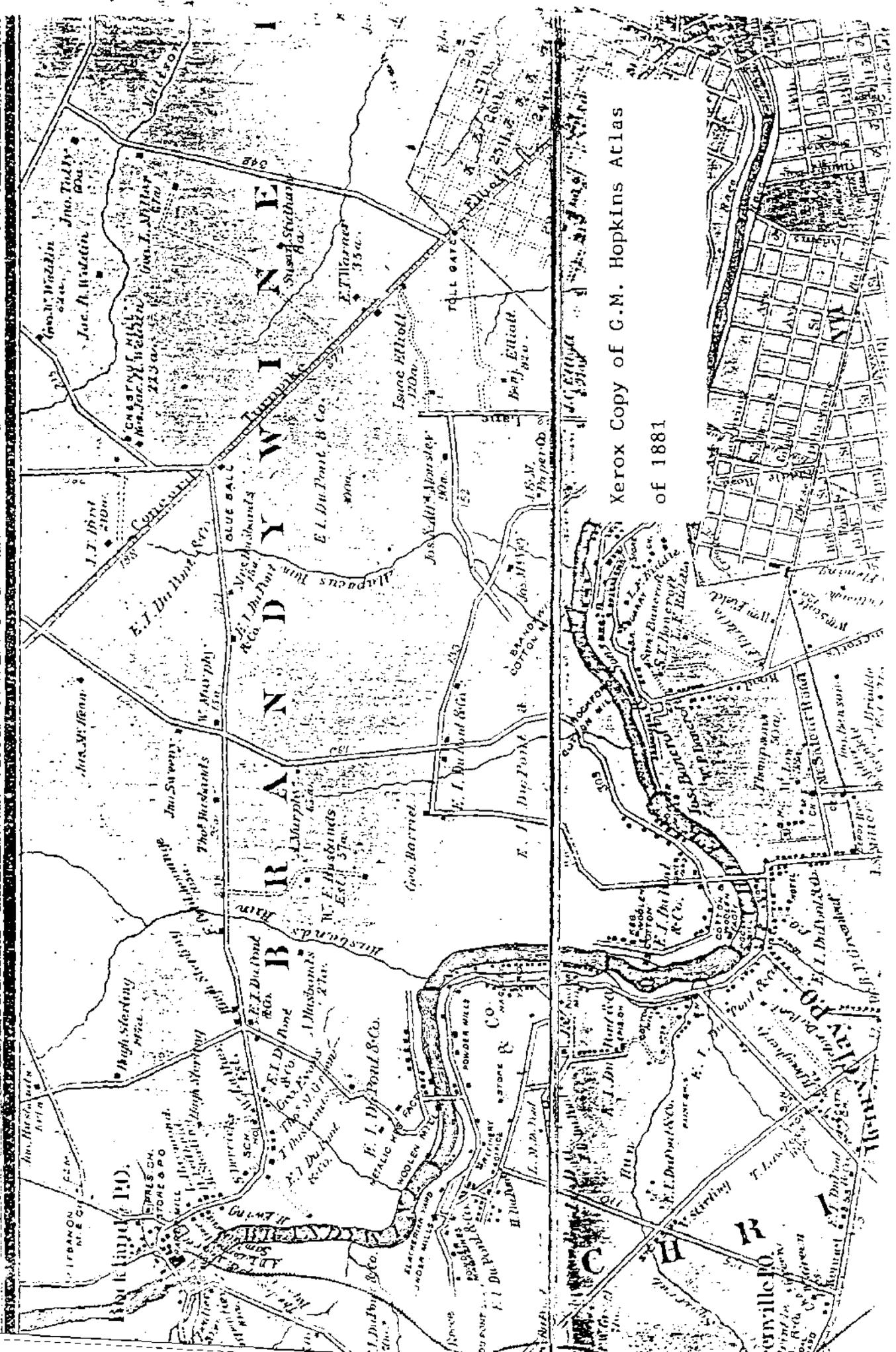
*CANNONS*—Launched in 1797, the frigate Constitution later took part in the War of 1812. When the Constitution was restored in the 1920's to its 1797 condition, Alfred I. duPont acquired these two cannons which had been later additions.

7.

*BLOODHOUNDS*—This cast iron statue by Jean de Sommevoire originally stood in the center of the Maze Garden.

15. All tubbed plantings are based upon the traditional French Garden Tubs. The materials used are citrus fruits (Orange, Tangelo, Lemon, Calamondin Orange), Oleanders, Loquats and Ornamental Figs.

Scale 100 feet to the inch.



Xerox Copy of G.M. Hopkins Atlas  
of 1881

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S. J. DUBOIS & CO.  
S. J. DUBOIS & CO.

**PO**  
WOODEN MILL  
WATER MILL

**PO**  
L. M. DUBOIS & CO.  
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S. J. DUBOIS & CO.  
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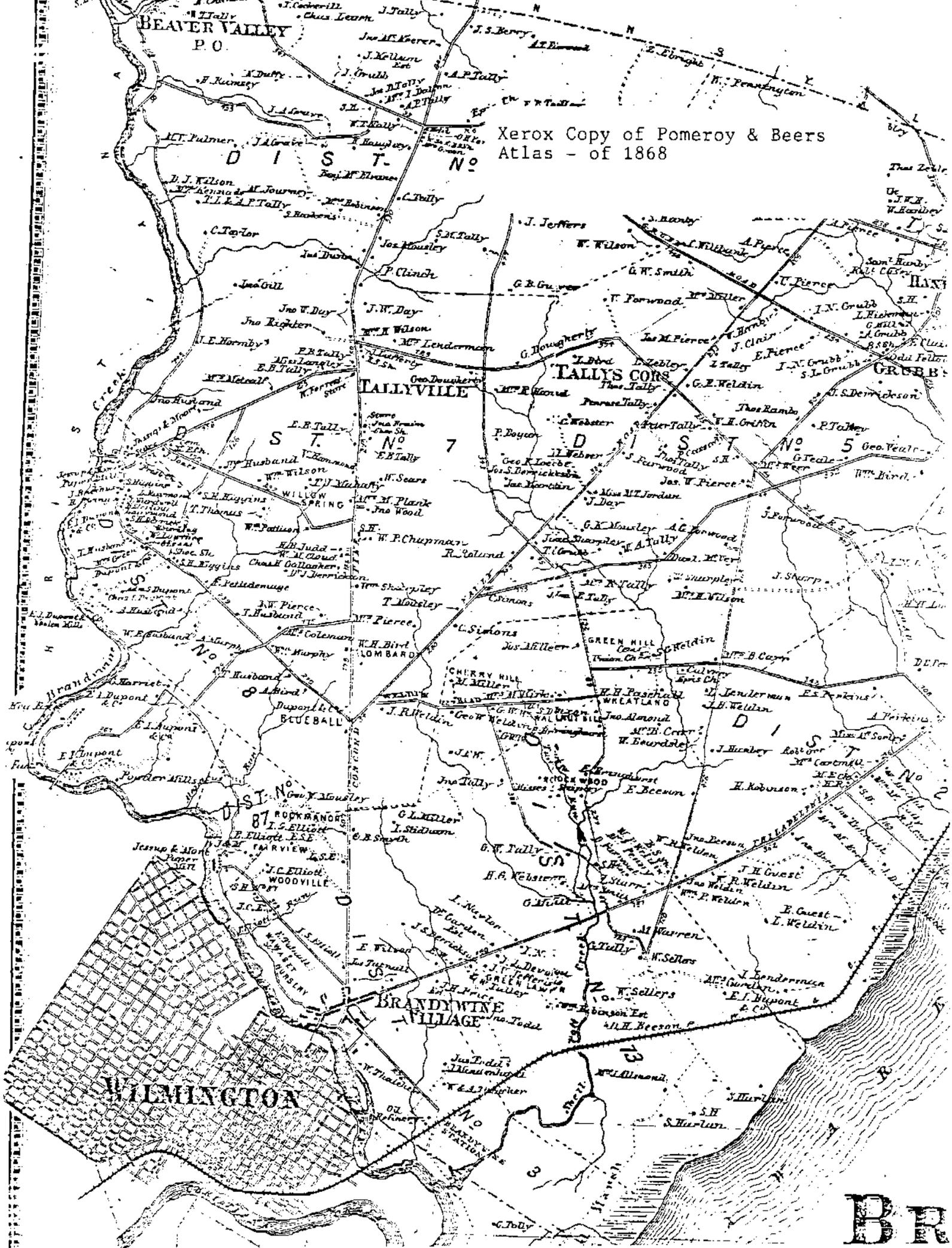
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Map of 1849

Xerox Copy of Price & Rea

Xerox Copy of Pomeroy & Beers  
Atlas - of 1868



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The main facade of the two and a half story mansion faces west. The central portion is five bays wide with the three central bays recessed to form a two story portico at the front of which there are six stone Corinthian columns including four in pairs. The main entrance is in the center of this portico and has a fanlight above it. The end bays of the central section of the facade are trimmed with quoins, and each bay contains large windows with a closed pediment above it. A dentilled cornice and stone balustrade run across the top of this central section. Six dormers with arched roofs project from the hip roof that is behind the balustrade. In keeping with the symmetry typical of the style, a smaller, two bay wide wing extends at each end of the main block and is slightly recessed from the facade.

The south end of the south ell is trimmed with a "trompe d'oeil" wood trim. This ell extends to yet another one story ell at the rear of the house. The rear ell is only one story high, is stone, and is trimmed with Doric pilasters and half columns between the windows. A stone balustrade surrounds the deck on top of the ell. The back of the main block of the mansion is simpler than the facade, but it does have the same dentilled cornice, balustrade, and dormer windows.

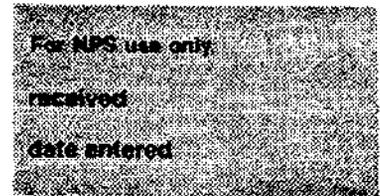
At the north end of the main block a two story hip roofed wing extends to the rear of the mansion. There are entrances to the north and east side of this wing which once housed servants, the kitchen, and utility rooms in the basement. The roof of the mansion is tile, and it is broken by a number of stone capped chimneys. A weathervane in the form of a rooster rises from the chimney at the north end of the main block.

The mansion contains 77 rooms, many of which are now open to the public as a museum. Rooms in the rear north ell that were used by servants are bedrooms frequently used by visitors to the Alfred I. du Pont Institute. Some rooms are also used by the museum staff. The main block, the north and south wings, the south rear ell, and the basement are open to the public and are basically furnished and maintained as they were when the du Ponts were in residence.

The main entrance below the facade portico leads to a reception hall that has a black and white marble floor,

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a coffered ceiling, and a large fireplace. This room extends through the main block to a terrace at the back. The dining room at the north end of the house is directly in front of the butler's pantry and kitchen which extend into the north rear ell. A library and sitting rooms are at the front of the house and a large drawing room is at the south end. Behind it there is a sun room in the south rear wing.

The interior of the mansion is as elaborate as its exterior. The furnishings and decorations reflect the personal taste of the du Ponts as they gathered about themselves furniture, works of art, and decorative items from many ages and countries.

Stairs rise just north of the reception room to the second floor where bedrooms are located. These include bedrooms for the family and guests and also reflect the eclectic taste of the du Ponts. The rooms are large and the ceilings are high, so the number of rooms in the main living quarters is not as great as might be expected.

The basement of the mansion reflects the inventiveness and personal preferences of Alfred I. du Pont. He had many patents to his name and used his technological skills to create a refrigerated room, an ice-making room, a power plant, and other devices in the basement. The basement also includes an exercise room, a two lane bowling alley, and a billiards room.

Since opening as a museum, the house has undergone some renovation, cleaning, and repairs, but it is essentially in its original condition. Maintenance is excellent, and because it is a museum it is likely to remain that way.

The mansion grounds include some utilitarian buildings as well as the mansion's famous gardens. A one story rectangular stucco laundry stands at the north rear of the mansion (#6) near a grape arbor and small parking area. A greenhouse (#7), cutting gardens and nursery (#8), gatehouse (#32), and water tower (#10) are a part of the grounds, but the gardens dominate the landscape. When du Pont completed the construction of the mansion he surrounded its 300 acres with a nine foot wall topped with fragments of glass. However, work on the gardens did not begin until some time after the mansion was finished.

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Thomas Hastings of the firm of Carrere and Hastings made designs for the gardens, but after his death in 1929, Alfred duPont's son, Alfred Victor du Pont and his partner in landscape architecture Gabriel Massena took over the work and designed the sunken gardens. The formal gardens stretch out from the facade of the mansion and include most of the traditional elements of the French formal garden: a vista, reflecting pool, maze, sunken gardens, rock garden, statuary, woodlands, lakes, and waterfalls.

The will of Alfred I. du Pont required that a large part of his estate go into the Nemours Foundation to establish a charitable institution for the care and treatment of crippled children. The result was the present Alfred I. du Pont Institute hospital which stands within the original mansion grounds. The original hospital, built in 1940 (#28) stands between Rockland road and the new hospital (#27). Most of the area between the gardens and Rockland Road is now used by the hospital and the museum's visitor center. However, that area does include the carillon tower (#29).

Alfred I. du Pont built the tower as a memorial to his parents, and it became his own burial place. One of the tallest structures in Brandywine Hundred, it plays regularly, and has been a local landmark for over half a century.

Within the mansion grounds there was also some housing for employees in the Old Murphy House (#30) and the chauffeur's quarters which were in the garage (#9). Du Pont purchased several properties further away from the mansion in which his employees also lived. These included the stucco William Murphy House (#34), and the frame Bird/Husbands House (#36). Du Pont built the large barn and dairy house at Blue Ball (#38 and #39) in about 1914 and they became a part of the farming operation which produced food for the mansion. Du Pont built two other houses in the early 1930s for employees. Both have been demolished.

The old farmhouses that Alfred I. du Pont purchased to house his employees represent an earlier farming era in Brandywine Hundred. Some of the fields

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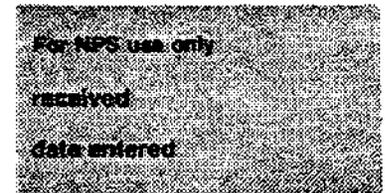
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within the district are still cultivated and are in stark contrast to the traffic choked highways and high commercial buildings which surround the district. The gently rolling landscape, old farmhouses, Alfred I du Pont's mansion and gardens, and the Alfred I. du Pont Institute which was his legacy, together form a cohesive district which blends old Brandywine Hundred with the home of an American industrialist.

An Inventory of the individual buildings, structures, and objects follows

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INVENTORY - Numbered as shown on plan

- .1 Nemours Mansion - two and a half story, stone and stucco, 77 room house in style of Beaux Arts Classicism. Built 1909 to 1910 by Smyth and Son of Wilmington, Delaware in accordance with design of architects Carrere and Hasting of New York. See general description for details. 1 Contributing building.
- .2 English Gates - Constructed in 1488 for Wimbledon Manor, the English estate which Henry VIII gave to his sixth wife, Catherine Parr. The gates stand slightly northwest of the mansion. 1 contributing structure.
- .3 Russian Gates - These ornamental iron gates were made in France for the palace of Catherine the Great outside St. Petersburg, Russia. The dates commemorate her birth and death. The gates stand to the southwest of the mansion. 1 Contributing structure.
- .4 Boxwood Garden - French parterre executed in English Boxwood. This garden is just south of the mansion. 1 Contributing structure.
- .5 Four Borders Garden - This section of the southern gardens is named for the mixed herbaceous borders in it which contain a total of one sixth of a mile of annuals and perennials. At the north end of this garden which is south of the Boxwood Garden is a large tulip tree which was standing when the mansion was built. "Tendresse" a bronze statue sculpted by G. Loiseau-Bailly in 1912 is near the woodlands bordering the garden. At the southern end of the garden the frog pond forms the transition from pleasure garden to woodlands. 2 Contributing structures. 1 Contributing Object.

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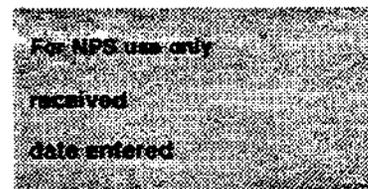
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- .6 Laundry - This is a one story rectangular stucco building with a hip roof at the rear of the mansion where laundry was done. 1 Contributing building.
- .7 Greenhouse - The central section of the greenhouse has a rounded hip roof and a central entrance shaped like a Palladian window. Wings extend to either side of the central section. 1 Contributing structure.
- .9 Nursery and Cutting Gardens - The nursery and cutting gardens to the south of the greenhouse produce plant stock for the gardens and cut flowers for use in the house. 1 Contributing structure.
- .10 Water Tower - The round pink stucco water tower is the equivalent of several stories in height. A clock built into the wall faces the mansion. A balustraded balcony in the upper section circles the tower. The roof is conical with a weathervane at the peak. Four gable roofed dormers project from the roof and below them four double glass doors appear to open onto the balcony. This is a part of the water system for the estate. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .11 Water Tower Vista - a short vista of lawn lined with evergreens traverses the diagonal from an original estate road to the water tower. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .12 Vista - The main vista extends from the mansion facade to the reflecting pool. One of the traditional elements of the formal French garden, this vista is lined with Japanese Cryptomeria, pink flowering horse chestnuts, and pin oaks. Prosper Lecourtier sculpted the two elk at the top of the vista. 1 Contributing Structure, 2 Contributing Objects.

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- .13 Reflecting Pool - The one acre reflecting pool is five and one half feet deep at the deepest section and holds 750 gallons of water. 157 jets spurt from a forty foot diameter ring inside the pool. When the jets are not operating the pool reflects the entire vista. White Carrara sculptures by Henri Crenier at the edge of the pool represent the four seasons. 1 Contributing Structure, 4 Contributing Objects.
- .14 Maze Garden - The entire maze garden is slightly tilted so that it can be seen from the mansion. Its main hedges are Canadian hemlock and the inner hedges are Helleri Holly. The sculpture "Achievement" by Crenier stands in the center of the maze garden. This statue is surrounded by a small pool with a white marble Triton on each side. 1 Contributing Structure, 3 Contributing Objects.
- .15 Colonnade - In 1926 Stewart and Donahue of Wilmington built the colonnade which is brick faced with Indiana limestone. It is a memorial to Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours and his son Eleuthere Irene du Pont. 1 Contributing Object.
- .16 Sunken Garden - The sunken gardens, built between 1928 and 1932 are the design of Alfred Victor du Pont and Gabriel Massena. The gardens combine a number of elements in one composition. The walls and steps are travertine marble from Rome and the statuary is white Carrara marble. The main statues sculpted in 1930 by Charles Sarrbezolles look like small angels. The two marble statues at the top of the steps and the bronzes in the pools are the work of Claude Grange. The grotto motif, another traditional element of the formal garden, also appears in the sunken garden. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .17 Avenue to Temple of Love - This landscaped area between the small lakes and the Temple of Love

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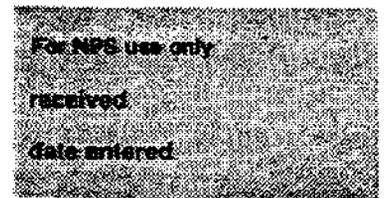
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- includes lawn and flower gardens. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .18 Temple of Love - This small round open temple with dome roof supported by Ionic columns shelters a life sized statue of Diana the Huntress cast by Antoine Houson in 1780. 1 Contributing Object.
- .19 Rock Garden - The rock garden contains many species of bulbs and some dwarf conifers. Czechoslovakian figures of dwarfs or elves are scattered through the rock garden. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .20 Wren's Nest - This is a small one story wooden house with wings extending in four directions. It was a schoolhouse and playhouse for children on the estate. 1 Contributing Building.
- .21 Rest Rooms - Small modern rest room building for visitors. 1 Non-Contributing Building
- .22 Visitor Reception - One story modern building containing a reception desk and seating area for visitors to the museum. This is where museum tours begin. 1 Non-Contributing Building
- .23 New Gate House - Very small one room, one story shelter for attendant at entrance to museum grounds or Alfred I. du Pont Institute. 1 Non-Contributing Building
- .24 Utility Barn - Utility barn used by the A.I. Du Pont Institute. 1 Non-Contributing Building
- .25 Utility Barn - Utility barn used by the A. I. Du Pont Institute. 1 Non-Contributing Building
- .26 Utility Building - Used by the A. I. Du Pont Institute. 1 Non-Contributing Building.

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- .27 New Hospital - This is a new concrete building, three stories high of a nearly rectangular shape with entrances and parking lots on its west and south sides. 1 Non-Contributing Building.
- .28 Old Hospital - The original Alfred I. du Pont Institute is a sprawling, mostly three story building. The hospital opened in 1940 and the central building is a symmetrical hip roofed building facing Rockland Road. A large three story wing extends to the rear of the central building and other wings extend to east and west. The building is not old enough to be considered contributing at this time, but it should be reassessed in the future. 1 Non Contributing Building.
- .29 Carillon Tower - Alfred I. du Pont built the Carillon Tower shortly before his death in memory of his parents. Alfred, his third wife, and his brother-in-law are now buried there. The pink stucco tower with limestone trim is a rectangular shape. It is the equivalent of several stories high and stands on a fieldstone base. A pointed roof with octagonal base shelters the bells which hang within an open belfry. The tower is a landmark visible for miles around, and the bells ring at regular intervals. 1 Contributing Object.
- .30 Old Murphy House - The Old Murphy House is a two and a half story, five bay wide stone house now painted white. The ridgeline of its steep pitch gable roof runs the length of the house and is broken by interior end chimneys. The facade is on the east side of the house and a small entrance porch shelters the central main entrance. The first floor windows are nine over twelve double hung wooden sash and the second floor windows are six over six. There is a wing extending from the center of the rear of the house. This was the home of several members of

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- the Murphy family and was purchased by Alfred I. du Pont when he started work on Nemours mansion. Du Pont used it to house employees, and it is now used by the Institute. The house probably dates from the early nineteenth century. 1 Contributing Building.
- .31 Estate Residence - This two and a half story pink stucco house with limestone trim was built in conjunction with the mansion house and matches it in style. 1 Contributing Building.
- .32 Estate Gate House - The original gate house for the mansion stands near Route 141 at the original entrance to the estate. This one and a half story house of pink stucco with limestone trim matches the mansion in style and finish. 1 Contributing Building.
- .33 Husband's Run Ponds - This series of ponds almost appears to be natural, but they are the result of Alfred I duPont's damming up of Husband's Run and diverting it to these ponds which are elements in the garden plan. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .34 William Murphy House - This pink stucco house faces Rockland Road and probably dates from the early nineteenth century. It has undergone some alterations, but retains many of its original interior and exterior features. The facade is three bays wide on Rockland Road with a central entrance below a small hip roofed entrance porch. Wood dentils line the cornice of the low pitch gable shingled roof. Interior end chimneys of unequal size pierce the ridge line. A gable roofed ell extends along Old Murphy Road. It is also two stories high with a gable roof and has a gable roofed dormer facing Old Murphy Road. A porch on the north and east sides of the house has a hip roof supported by plain posts with openwork brackets which meet to form shallow

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arches between the posts. 1 Contributing Building.

- .35 Bird-Husbands House - This frame house with finish of German siding stands on the south side of Rockland Road. The main block of the facade is five bays wide and two and a half stories high with a gable roof. A cross gable containing a pair of arch topped windows interrupts the roof cornice in the central bay. A small shed roofed enclosed entry porch now covers the main entrance in the central bay. A smaller frame, gable roofed-wing extends to the west of the main block. Despite the radical alterations that have been made on the interior of his house, it appears that the west ell is older than the main block. This house was used by the A. I. du Pont Institute which installed dropped ceilings, altered room sizes, and removed much interior detail. A portion of the original stairs, some handrail, original flooring, and trim still remain on the third floor. 1 Contributing Building.
- .36 Bird-Husbands Garage - This small garage at the rear of the Bird-Husbands House is a modern structure. 1 Non-Contributing Building.
- .37 Blue Ball (du Pont) Barn - This large rectangular stuccoed barn stands at the southwest corner of the intersection of Route 202, Rockland Road, and Foulk Road. The site has long been associated with the Blue Ball Tavern, demolished within the last decade. The tavern served travellers on the old turnpike which has now become Route 202. The present barn was built in about 1914 by Alfred I. du Pont. It was used as a part of the farming operation which produced food for the mansion residents. The barn faces Route 202 and two ventilators extend from the ridge of the gable roof. On the facade a ramp rises to the main entrance which is through a gable roofed entrance porch in the central bay; the pediment contains a semi-circular window

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opening. Gable roofed dormers with small rectangular window openings project from the roof on each side of the entrance. The window openings which include rectangular ones on the long sides of the barn still remain, but they contain no sash or glass. The fenestration at each of the barn ends includes three rectangular openings at the lower level, one high rectangular openings at the central level, and a semi-circular opening in the peak of the gable. The barn is not in good physical condition and the wood on the interior is unsound. Another barn very similar to this one still stands within the grounds of the Du Pont Country Club. 1 Contributing Building.

- .38 Du Pont Dairy - This one story rectangular stucco building with slate shingled hip roof is perpendicular to the south end of the facade of the barn. The facade on the north side contains openings for three windows and an entrance door. A remnant of the door and a few sash remnants are all that remain in the openings. These remnants indicate that a four light transom once topped the door, and that the windows were of the casement type. A small chimney with a corbelled brick cap projects through the roof. This served as the dairy or milk house for the mansion. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .39 Dressed stone wall - Remnants of a dressed stone wall still exist, especially near properties which were not originally within the mansion grounds. The use of dressed stone indicates that the wall is not as old as the traditional random fieldstone walls found around many farms. 1 Contributing Structure.
- .40 Estate Wall - A nine foot wall, stuccoed and topped with fragments of glass surrounds most of the mansion grounds. This was constructed at about the same time as the mansion, and most of the wall remains today. It includes gates at the former main entrance on Route 141 and at a secondary entrance with sentry house on Rockland Road. 1 Contributing Structure.

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The Nemours Historic District fits within the chronological period 1880-1940 as outlined in the Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. As the plan states, urbanization and suburbanization is characteristic of this period. Even though its owner was a part-time gentleman farmer, the construction of the Nemours mansion and gardens was one of the developments which helped change Brandywine Hundred from an area of farms to a suburban residential area. The district is near the Brandywine River, one of the major streams within the geographic area the Plan defines as the Pennsylvania Piedmont.

Within the state's group of themes related to landscape trends, the Nemours Historic District fits within the Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts theme. The main mansion, its gardens, and surrounding buildings are a direct reflection of the tastes of Alfred I. duPont who owned them. The district also exemplifies the Major Families, Individuals and Events theme within the plan's general category of "Cultural Trends." The owner and builder of Nemours was a member of the locally and nationally prominent duPont family who started E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Company. From its modest early-nineteenth century beginnings on the banks of the Brandywine, the company grew to become a chemical giant. The early twentieth century was a period of company expansion which enriched many members of the family enabling them to build large mansions.

Nemours, the main building in the district and the one from which it takes its name is a design of the prominent architectural firm of Carrere and Hastings. Beaux Arts classicism is the style for which the firm became famous, and its use at Nemours is a strong statement of the owner's desire for grandeur in his personal residence. As a property type it is one of many large Delaware mansions designed by prominent architects in clearly identifiable styles built in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries for members of the duPont family. Some have been destroyed, some are now included in historic districts, and some still serve as residences. Most, like Nemours, were surrounded by formal gardens and had outbuildings as well as a number of secondary residences for use by employees and servants.

Alfred I. du Pont, whom his biographer has called "the family rebel," gave long consideration to construction of a new home before starting work on Nemours in 1909. du Pont had grown up at "Swamp Hall", one of the family residences near the Du Pont powder mills, where he and his brothers and sisters had been orphaned at an early age. As an adult he lived at both Swamp Hall and Rock Farms, houses whose early origins could not be completely disguised by

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remodelling. The site on which the Nemours mansion stands is a plateau above the Brandywine River not far from the original Du Pont powder mills and very close to the Du Pont Company Experimental Station and Laboratories. Alfred I. du Pont had apparently given some consideration to the purchase of the property before the turn of the century and visited it with an engineer, from whom he requested a professional opinion on its potential.<sup>1</sup>

Probably by conscious design, the deed records on Nemours and the surrounding properties are difficult to follow. However, the Price and Rea Map of 1849 shows that neither the Du Pont family nor company owned any of the land at that time. About twenty years later, in 1868, the Pomeroy and Beers atlas shows that E.I. Du Pont and Company owned large tracts of land on the north side of the Brandywine as well as land at Blue Ball. By 1881, as shown on the Hopkins atlas, the company had expanded further and owned a number of houses in the village of Rockland in Brandywine Hundred. The company continued to expand its land holdings so that by 1893 it owned a large portion of the Nemours Historic District. William du Pont, Alfred's cousin and ally in many company issues, also owned two parcels in the district.

Alfred I. du Pont and his first wife, Bessie, separated in about 1904, and Alfred moved to Rock Farms, an old house that had belonged to the Elliot family and stood just east of the Nemours property. In 1907, after marrying his second cousin Alicia, Alfred I. du Pont began the development of Nemours in earnest. The bridegroom had made up a wedding announcement for the press in which he called himself Alfred I. du Pont de Nemours.<sup>2</sup> Du Pont was thereby adding onto his name the French town from which his forefathers had come to settle in America in 1800. He was also emulating his ancestors, who used this name in their early days in this country.

The accounts of Alfred's relationships with his family and with the company contain numerous variations of the story of differences of opinion that developed into outright hostility at times. There can be, however, no doubts about Alfred's admiration for his ancestor Pierre

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Samuel du Pont de Nemours and the eighteenth century France from which he came. Alfred's wife Alicia shared this admiration. Nemours would have been an appropriate name choice for the newest and probably the most elegant du Pont mansion.<sup>3</sup> A house in the popular architectural style called Beaux Arts Classicism suited the francophile du Ponts.

Beaux Arts Classicism is the style named for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, a school in Paris where a number of American architects studied at the turn of the century. The style reached its full expression in the architecture of the 1893 Columbian Exposition or World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893 which had a strong influence on American architecture. The exposition's array of buildings by John Wellborn Root; Daniel H. Burnham; Henry Van Brunt; and McKim, Mead, and White in a setting created by Frederic Law Olmsted became known as "The White City," an ideal that other American cities would try to emulate in what was to become known as the "City Beautiful Movement." Its "classical pictorialism," as mentioned by architectural historian Marcus Whiffen, and its grand scale made it a popular style for public buildings, banks, and institutions. Wilmington itself was caught up in the movement in the creation of Rodney Square. Alfred's cousin Pierre led the improvement of Rodney Square with commencement of construction of the new Du Pont Company building in 1906; it took three more decades to complete the square.<sup>4</sup> Nemours Mansion was completed in 1910, much earlier.

Although there are numerous stories about Alfred I. du Pont's friendliness with the powdermen at the company, his casual attitude toward convention, and his occasionally rustic behavior, he was a man of great wealth and talent. Du Pont had travelled extensively, was technically inventive, and enjoyed music and literature. It is not surprising that he and his wife Alicia selected the well-known New York architectural firm of Carrere and Hasting to design a house that would suit an affinity for the French, and what seems to have become Alfred's desire to create an outstanding building, something more sophisticated than the houses of the other du Pont homes.

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The "Beaux-Arts Men," as Alan Gowans calls them, included architects whose work incorporated elements of Roman, Georgian, and other styles. These men were highly trained academicians who had studied the earlier styles and rearranged them in a scholarly manner in their own designs. Among the best known of these architects were Richard Morris Hunt, Charles McKim, Stanford White, Ralph Adams Cram, and the firm of Carrere and Hastings.<sup>5</sup> John Mervin Carrere, the son of a Baltimore coffee merchant, had spent most of his youth abroad before attending the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. There he met fellow-student Thomas Hastings, the son of the pastor of West Presbyterian Church in New York. This was the church of Henry M. Flagler, the Standard Oil millionaire who developed resorts and railroads in Florida. According to Wayne Andrews in Architecture, Ambition, and Americans, "the firm (of Carrere and Hasting) might not have been founded as early as 1885, when Carrere was only twenty-seven and Hastings twenty-five, if Flagler had not decided that his pastor's son was the only architect who could translate into laths and plaster something of his own passion for the future of Florida."<sup>6</sup> Although the young architects had been working in the drafting room of McKim, Mead, and White, Flagler's Hotel Ponce de Leon was their first independent commission. The hotel design took liberties with the classical, but the firm's later work was based almost exclusively on the Renaissance in France. This was the case in their designs for Flagler's mansion in Palm Beach, the New Jersey villa of C. Ledyard Blair of the Lackawanna Railroad, the New York Public Library, and the Henry Clay Frick Mansion in New York. How could Mr. and Mrs. Alfred I. du Pont de Nemours have found architects more suited to their own taste?

Nemours was certainly one of the last designs in which Carrere participated, for he was hit by a taxicab and died in 1911. Hastings carried on the business of the firm by himself until his death in 1929. Although Alfred I. du Pont's biographer calls the architect "the co-designer with Mr. du Pont of Nemours," the design itself bears the unmistakable stamp of the trained architect, despite du

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Pont's innovations, suggestions, and additions.<sup>8</sup> At the present time the Alfred I. du Pont papers are not available for study, so the amount of surviving correspondence with the architects is unknown. It is also not clear whether the paths of du Pont and Flagler ever crossed or whether they ever had social contact with each other. Their careers had several similarities: their investments in Florida, their architect, and their yacht builder.

Du Pont stayed closer to home when he selected James M. Smyth of Wilmington as his builder. Smyth had already done work for the family and the company but was an unknown to the architects. In addition to having full confidence in Smyth, du Pont probably knew that Smyth would accept du Pont's on-the-job suggestions and changes. When complete, the 77-room mansion included innovations that reflected Alfred I. du Pont's technical ingenuity as well as his interests: a wind indicator; an ice making plant; a refrigerator room; an electrical plant; two bowling alleys; an exercise room; and a back-up for every mechanical system.

The mansion interior, with its gilding, marble, parquet floors, and other details complemented the exterior. The furnishings and decorations are a mix of periods, styles, and national origins and reflect the personal preferences of the owners. As Ruth Linton, the present curator of Nemours has written, Alicia du Pont selected the original furnishings, but Alfred's last wife, Jessie Ball du Pont, lived in the house for about fifty years and had a strong influence on the present furnishings.

Alfred and Alicia du Pont had collected about 3,000 books at Nemours, and in 1919, nine years after completion of the present mansion, they planned a library addition. Thomas Hastings designed a thirty by ninety foot room, but du Pont delayed construction when he received a tax bill for a million and a half dollars. Alicia died the following year, and the library was never built.<sup>10</sup>

About one hundred acres of formal gardens adjoin Nemours Mansion today. It took more than two decades to develop them. After completing the mansion du Pont surrounded his 300 acre estate with a high wall, just as Louis XIV had enclosed Versailles before starting to work on

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its gardens. Louis XIV hired Andre Le Notre, the best gardener France would ever know, to design the gardens of Versailles, gardens that would be the inspiration for the gardens at Nemours two and a half centuries later.

Landscape architecture is a relatively new term being applied to what was an attempt to make the landscape look like a painting. It is a complex and sophisticated art form. Landscape gardening is also very expensive, usually a product of the leisure class in any culture. Plants are used in an architectural way and, combined with water, often modify the micro-climate. The gardens of ancient Rome and the Italian gardens of the Renaissance were the inspiration for many of the elements in the French formal garden. The gardens of Nemours incorporate many of the elements of the gardens of Versailles: the vista, reflecting pool, maze, colonnade, statuary, parterre, woodland, cutting garden, fountains, and lagoons.

Gardening had been a long tradition in the du Pont family; E.I. du Pont, founder of the company, had brought the tradition to America. The fertile and temperate valley of the Brandywine is graced with many du Pont gardens. The most famous are probably those at Longwood, home of Pierre S. du Pont, to whom Alfred was to the lose in the struggle for power within the Du Pont Company. Some accounts of the du Pont family attribute the construction of Nemours and its gardens to a rivalry between the cousins in house and garden building as well. It may never be possible to know just how much of this rivalry existed, but it is somewhat beside the point for the two men were creating very different types of estates. Pierre was enlarging an old house and arboretum into a vast park that eventually included many types of gardens. Alfred was building a new house and garden within the discipline of one defined style.

Although Carrere of Carrere and Hastings was dead, Hasting drew up plans for the garden but did not receive orders from du Pont to proceed with the work in 1929. Hastings died before the work began, and Du Pont discussed his plans with his son, Alfred Victor du Pont. The younger du Pont was studying in Paris, where he formed a partnership with Gabriel Massena. The two came to Wilmington and

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carried on with the garden work; it was the first commission of du Pont and Messina in the United States. They enlarged the original design by adding the sunken garden.

Today the sweeping view of the original and enlarged garden from the mansion at one end to the Temple of Love at the other encompasses statuary by Prosper Lecourtier, Henri Crenier, Charles Sarrabezolles, Claude Grange, A. Durene, and Antoine Houdon. The colonnade by Stewart and Donohue is a memorial to Alfred I. du Pont's ancestors. Other items intended to capture the eye as it scans the view include such European souvenirs as red marble vases from the palace of Franz-Joseph, elf figurines from Czechoslovakia, and gates made for the palace of Catherine the Great outside St. Petersburg.

Historically, the garden has been a place for lovers, a place to bathe and to meditate, and a place for fun and for burial. The garden at Nemours fulfilled all of those expectations. With abundant water, quiet views, and touches of humor, it is obviously a place for fun and meditation and could be a place to bathe. It was certainly a place for lovers when it was the setting for the wedding of Alfred's sister-in-law in 1931. It is also a place for burial. The Carillon tower, designed by du Pont and Massena and built 1934-36 as a memorial to Alfred I. du Pont's parents, is also the burial place of Alfred and his third wife, Jessie Ball du Pont.

The Nemours estate could not operate without a large staff. There are rooms for employees in the rear wing of the mansion, but the surrounding houses and countryside also became a part of Nemours. As mentioned above, it is difficult to trace the transfers of all the parcels that came to be included by Alfred I. du Pont in his estate. However, he did purchase two tracts that had belonged to the Murphy family. One tract was incorporated into the main estate and contained the old stone house that still stands near the Institute. Although painted white, it is a typical Pennsylvania farmhouse with a gable roof and end chimneys. A second Murphy house stands at the northeast corner of the intersection of Old Murphy Road and Rockland Road.

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The Price and Rea map of 1849 includes both of those houses which were probably at least thirty to forty years old at that time. Later maps of 1868 and 1881 show either W. Murphy or A. Murphy as the owner of those houses, although William du Pont owned one of them by 1893. In the mid-nineteenth century both houses were owned by William Murphy who made his will in 1857 leaving all his property to his descendants. William Murphy apparently lived in both houses at one time or another for he left to his son Alfred D. Murphy the "farm on which he resides, my former residence". William himself was then living in the house at the intersection of Old Murphy and Rockland Roads. William Murphy died in 1870 owning the two farms in Brandywine Hundred, a brick house in Wilmington, and a stone house at the corner of Tenth and Shipley Streets in Wilmington. A substantial land owner, he also had enough money to be able to leave amounts of \$500 and \$1000 to his children and grandchildren. Alfred D. Murphy, William's son, continued to farm the land and was listed as a farmer in Rockland in the 1882 Delaware State Directory.<sup>12</sup> After Alfred I. du Pont purchased the two Murphy farms they housed Nemours employees.

Du Pont purchased two parcels on the south side of Rockland Road between Nemours and the Concord Turnpike. These were the Blue Ball property and the Bird/Husbands farm. In the mid eighteenth century the present Concord Pike was simply called the road to the Brandywine Ferry, and it terminated near the flour mills in Brandywine Village. In 1811 it was incorporated as the Wilmington and Great Valley of Pennsylvania from which grain came to the Brandywine millers. As Mary Sam Ward explained in "Inns and Taverns of Delaware," Blue Ball was also an interchange between West Chester and Philadelphia by way of Foulk Road. The Blue Ball Inn provided food and accommodations for both people and the animals they might be taking to market. The tavern operated by George Miller in 1809 no longer remains, and according to Ward, the old toll house was removed to

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become an ice house in Wilmington. Alfred I. du Pont used the Blue Ball Farm to produce food for his own mansion, and in about 1914 he built the barn that is standing today. At that time the surrounding Brandywine Hundred countryside had become a productive dairy farming area.<sup>13</sup>

The Bird farm, between Blue Ball and Nemours, also has a long history in Brandywine Hundred. Gunning Bedford, a Wilmington attorney whose house still stands a short distance north on the Concord Pike, sold the land to William Bird, a house carpenter, in 1809. The west end of the house appears to be much older than the main house, and it seems likely that William Bird built it. However, it may be even older because the deed from Bedford does mention houses and buildings. In accordance with the terms of William Bird's will of 1857 his son Amos Bird inherited the house and property. William's wife Naomi was to have a home and comfortable living in the house. The farmers of Brandywine Hundred had been on the land for many generations and frequently intermarried. Naomi Bird was the former Mrs. Naomi Husbonds. Amos Bird who inherited the property sold it to Andrew Husbonds.

Andrew Husbonds purchased the property in 1868. The style and workmanship of the house indicate that the larger section was probably built by Husbonds, who unfortunately died at the young age of 35 in 1874. The map of 1881 indicates that his widow continued to live in the house for some time. By 1893 it had become the home of a Mrs. Hunter. After Alfred I. du Pont purchased the Bird house it became the home of the superintendent for the entire Nemours estate.

The deeds for this property tell us that this land was once known as New Work or Pisgan, and that Rockland Road was once called Young's Road in honor of the mills that were operated by William Young at the place on the Brandywine now called Rockland Mills.<sup>14</sup>

The houses within the district, but outside the mansion walls had all been a part of the town of Rockland in Brandywine Hundred. The town residents were mostly farmers or employees of a paper mill that William Young had started on the Brandywine in 1793. The mill burned in 1814 and was rebuilt as a woolen mill. It converted to cotton after a flood in 1822. After further troubles in mid century it was sold to Jessup and Moore, who made paper.<sup>15</sup> Most directories published between 1874 and 1897 described Rockland as a thriving community where corn and wheat

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were the principal crops. The main businesses were grist mills, saw mills, and a large paper mill. The population grew from 200 in 1882 to 400 in 1897 and included members of many families who had lived in Brandywine hundred for generations.<sup>10</sup>

Alfred I. du Pont did some trading and negotiating with other Brandywine neighbors in establishing the full boundaries of his estate. The du Pont Company owned a large parcel of land between the Brandywine and Nemours. William P. Bancroft, a Quaker industrialist and philanthropist in Wilmington, also owned land along the Brandywine and had a special interest in establishing parks. Bancroft was certainly the catalyst in the dealings, for in 1910, at the time when Nemours Mansion was being completed, the Du Pont Company sold 106 acres between Alfred's land and the river to the city of Wilmington. Bancroft himself then transferred another much smaller piece of land to the city through the Security Trust and Safe Deposit Company. In 1914 the Du Pont Company transferred another small piece of land to the city. These parcels together became Alapocas Woods, the public park that adjoins the Nemours property. Alfred I. du Pont and William P. Bancroft then jointly paid for the paving of Alapocas Road. Thus Nemours was not only a private park for its owner, it was also next to a large, heavily wooded public park.<sup>11</sup>

Nemours was not to be Alfred I. du Pont's home for the rest of his life. In 1926, long before the gardens were completed he moved his legal residence to Florida. Alfred's cousin Pierre S. du Pont had become state tax commissioner and sent a deputy to investigate Alfred's books.

"I'll be damned if I'm going to have Pierre going over my books," snapped Alfred. And to thwart any further attempts by his old enemy to check him, Alfred transferred all his Delaware land holdings except Nemours into Florida corporations. Shortly thereafter he decided to move his legal residence to Florida. He already had purchased a beautiful home site on the St. Johns at San Jose, a new subdivision just south of Jacksonville, having given up plans to build at Palatka.<sup>12</sup>

By this time du Pont had hired his brother-in-law Edward Ball as a business manager. Ball proved to be an astute financier and advisor who multiplied du Pont's fortune in

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Florida. St. Joe Paper Company, actually founded after du Pont's death, was to become the eventual holder of many of his properties in Wilmington.

For various financial and personal reasons not fully explained, Alfred I. du Pont's properties were transferred several times over the years. Du Pont had purchased all the properties in the Nemours Historic District before 1918. In 1918 he transferred them to Dickinson Richards, a New York attorney. Richards then transferred them to Alicia du Pont, who transferred them to Nemours, Inc. After Alicia's death the properties went from Nemours, Inc. back to Alfred I. du Pont. In 1925, several years after du Pont's marriage to Jessie Ball, they jointly conveyed the properties to Brandywine Hundred Realty. This was a Florida corporation, and presumably the transfer was to remove the ownership from the prying eyes of the Delaware tax commissioner. The properties were then transferred to Almour's Securities, Inc., another Florida corporation, after du Pont's death. Within a year they were transferred from Almour's to the Florida National Building Company, which merged with St. Joe Paper in 1942.<sup>19</sup>

Alfred I. du Pont died in Florida in 1935. His will stipulated that the major portion of the estimated 25 to 35 million dollars that would be left in his estate after taxes was to be used to establish the Nemours Foundation.

"The Nemours Foundation shall be created and maintained as a memorial to my great, great grandfather, Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, and to my Father, Eleuthere Irenee du Pont de Nemours...for the purpose of maintaining...a charitable institution for the care and treatment of crippled children, but not incurables, or the care of old men or old women, and particularly old couples, first consideration, in each instance, being given to beneficiaries who are residents of Delaware."<sup>20</sup>

Du Pont specified that this charitable institution should be at Nemours but not in the mansion. The mansion could be used for receiving visitors, for entertainment, or for executive use, but should mainly be a library that exhibited literature and works of art for the advancement of education.<sup>21</sup> Mrs. du Pont lived at Nemours after her husband's death and elected to establish the Alfred I. du Pont Institute while she

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was still alive. It stands within the original mansion grounds and opened in 1940 to provide treatment for curable crippled children. The Institute has provided this service through the years and recently expanded its facilities.

Jessie Ball du Pont died in 1970 and was buried near her husband at the Carillon Tower. After her death the Nemours Mansion and gardens became a museum open to the public on a regular basis. The house and gardens are maintained in much the way they were when the du Ponts lived there. The furnishings and decorations, originally selected by Alicia du Pont and later changed or embellished by Jessie Ball du Pont, are the residents' choice. It is nearly unique among house museums because it is essentially as it was left by the owners: it never fell into disrepair; the furnishings and decorations are all original to the house; and the building was never altered. Nemours Mansion is the perfectly preserved home of Alfred I. du Pont, an American industrialist. It stands within the Nemours Historic District, which also preserves a small corner of the agricultural and industrial heritage of Brandywine Hundred. Perhaps Alfred I. du Pont did not intend to build a monument to himself, but he did.

1. Marquis James, Alfred I. duPont, The Family Rebel (New York: 1941) and replica Edition, 1978, p. 112, 225
2. Marquis. Alfred I. DuPont. p. 200. Marquis says that du Pont gave the press a sealed envelope containing the announcement that appeared in the newspaper the following day
3. An earlier du Pont house, now demolished, had also been called Nemours
4. Marjorie McNinch, "The Changing Face of Rodney Square" Delaware History Vol. XXI, Spring-Summer, 1985, pp. 139-163
5. Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (New York: 1964) p. 364 and lectures on architectural history by Dr. George B. Tatum
6. Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans (New York: 1947; Free Press Edition 1964) p. 201
7. Andrews. Architecture, Ambition, and Americans p. 198
8. James. Alfred I. du Pont pp. 225, 466

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9. Ruth C. Linton, "A Heritage of Books: Selections from the Nemours Library". Delaware History. Vol. XXI, Spring Summer 1985. p. 197
10. Linton. "A Heritage of Books" p. 199
11. General comments from landscape architecture lectures by Dr. Tatum and Julia S. Berrall, The Garden (New York: 1966)
12. Information about the Murphy family comes from Deed records and Will Record B2, page 102, New Castle County Register of Wills, and Delaware State Peninsula Directory 1882, Published by Ferris Brothers of Wilmington.
13. Comments about Brandywine Hundred Concord Pike, and Blue Ball from J. Thomas Scharf. History of Delaware (Philadelphia, 1888) Vol. 2: 906 and Mary Sam Ward, "Inns and Taverns of Delaware 1800-1850" unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Delaware, and Barbara McEwing. Neighbors of the Wilmington Great Valley Turnpike p. 4,8.
14. Deed Records R8, p. 72; Deed Record H 3, p. 214, New Castle County Register of Deeds; Will Record X1 p. 393 New Castle County Register of Wills; Geneological file of Historical Society of Delaware
15. H. Clay Reed. Delaware, A History of the First State. Vol. I, p. 495-498 (need pub & date) and Ray Boatman, "The Brandywine Cotton Industry 1795-1865" unpublished paper, April 1957, Eleutherian Mills Library
16. Delaware State Directory. Ferris Brother Publishers: Wilmington. 1882. p. 258. The Delaware State Directory and Gazeteer compiled by William H. Boyd (Wilmington: 1874) p. 497-498. Director of Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland Commercial Printing Co. (Wilmington: 1876) p. 39. Costa's State Directory, Published by M. A. Costa (Wilmington: 1894) p. 301-302. Delaware State and Peninsula Directory Homer Barry Publisher (Wilmington: 1897) p. 181-182.

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17. Wilmington City Park records and New Castle County Register of Deeds.
18. The Estate of Alfred I. du Pont and The Nemours Foundation.  
Published by the estate (Jacksonville: 1974) p. 21
19. Register of Deeds, New Castle County
20. James. Alfred I. du Pont p. 533
21. James. p. 533

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Ruth Linton, the curator for the Nemours Mansion and Gardens was very helpful in providing information, photographs, and material. Information given by the museum's guides in the course of a tour of the museum was also very helpful. Maps that provided information included the Price and Rea map of 1849, the Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of 1869, the Hopkins Atlas of 1881, and the Baist atlas of 1893. Wilmington City Directories, the New Castle County Deed Registry, New Castle County Registry of Wills, and Peninsula Directories were also helpful as cited in the text. Other sources providing useful information are:

Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans (New York: 1947; Free Press Edition 1964

Julia S. Berrall, The Garden (New York: 1966

Ray Boatman, "The Brandywine Cotton Industry 1795-1865" unpublished paper, April 1957, Eleutherian Mills Library

Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (New York: 1964)

Marquis James, Alfred I. duPont, The Family Rebel (New York: 1941) and replica Edition, 1978,

Ruth C. Linton., " A Heritage of Books: Selections from the Nemours Library". Delaware History. Vol. XXI, Spring Summer 1985

Marjorie McNinch, "The Changing Face of Rodney Square" Delaware History Vol. XXI, Spring-Summer, 1985,

H. Clay Reed. Delaware, A History of the First State. Vol I,

The Estate of Alfred I. du Pont and The Nemours Foundation. Published by the estate (Jacksonville: 1974)

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Boundaries are shown on the accompanying map: Starting at the property line, which coincides with the outside edge of the estate wall, at the southwest corner of the intersection of Route 141 and Rockland Road then continuing along the property line of the west side of Rockland Road to a point on the southwestern side of the intersection of Old Murphy Rd., then northeast along the property line of the south side of Old Murphy Rd. to a point about 100 feet north of the William Murphy House then southeast parallel with Rockland Road to a point about 100 feet east of the William Murphy House (#34 on the accompanying map), then southwest parallel with Old Murphy Road to the property line of the south side of Rockland Road, then following the Nemours property line on Rockland Road in a southeasterly direction to the property line at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Rockland Road with Route 202, then south along the property line on the west side of Route 202 to a point where the property line meets a wall on the south side of the Blue Ball Barn (#37 on the accompanying map), then west parallel with the wall and continuing in the same direction to the point where this line meets the Nemours property line, then following the Nemours property line along Alapocas Road and Route 141 to the point of beginning.

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at one time modernized with formica walls and new cabinets. A small elevator also rises from the kitchen to the second floor. Beside the elevator is a portion of a winding staircase which at one time also went to the second floor.

To the south of the main entrance at the front of the house is another parlor to which there is a wide opening from the central hallway. Remnants of a rod indicate that a heavy curtain once hung in this opening. This parlor contains the bay window. North of this room is the dining room which is also a part of the addition. It now has a dropped ceiling, but it also has a mantel shelf similar to the one in the north parlor.

The basic floor plan on the second floor is similar in that it contains four almost square rooms. However, they are of unequal sizes because there are also two bathrooms and an enclosed stair leading to the third floor of the rear ell. There is also an enclosed stair directly above the main stairway leading to the front attic. The front attic above the main block of the house has a very low roof and wide floor boards. There is no ridgepole at the peak, and the rafters are exposed. The rear attic where the dormer windows are located has been finished with plaster walls and wood trim.

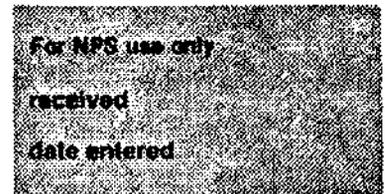
The walls and ceilings throughout the house are plaster. The wood trim includes baseboard with a moulded cap, round wooden corner protectors, moulded window and door trim with mitred corners, and some of the trim has bullseye corner blocks. Throughout the living areas of the house much of the original hardware remains: ornate iron door hinges, porcelain door knobs and rosettes, iron rim locks, and decorative closet latches.

The basement is accessible from the kitchen and from outdoors. It has not been altered much except for the addition of a modern furnace and hot water heater. The stone foundation, wooden floor joists, and wooden stairway are clearly visible.

There are four outbuildings near the main house. A three car garage (#2 on the plan - 1 contributing building) is a rectangular building with its long side parallel to Route 202. This is a one and a half story building with a stone foundation, vertical board siding, and a gable roof. It has three vehicle entrances and the interior contains a wooden stairway to a loft.

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A small wooden one car garage (#3 on the plan - 1 contributing building) stands directly at the rear of the house. This wooden rectangular building with a low pitch gable roof has vertical board and batten finish and wooden vehicle entrance doors. It is about large enough to accommodate one automobile of the early twentieth century, and seems to date from about that time.

The remnants of a large stone barn (#4 on the plan - 1 contributing building) stand at the rear of the property. Much of the original structure is missing, and it has a new wooden upper section which appears to be three buildings attached together. The lower section of fieldstone is probably part of an early nineteenth century barn, but very little of this remains. The section facing the east is now a shed roofed vehicle shelter.

The last outbuilding on the property is a wooden chicken house (#5 on the plan - 1 contributing building) at the north rear of the main house. The exterior is German siding and the assymetrical gable roof has sides of uneven lengths, typical of most chicken houses.

The outbuildings are typical of those found adjoining turn of the century houses which were outside urban areas but which were not farms; therefore they contribute to the significance of the Thomas T. Weldin property.

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The Wilmington and Great Valley Turnpike was the early name for today's Concord Turnpike or Route 202. As its original name indicates, the road connected the commercial center of Wilmington with the Great Valley of Pennsylvania. In the early 1800s the Lancaster Turnpike ran parallel to the Great Valley and connected Philadelphia with Lancaster, the nation's first great inland city. Thus the Wilmington and Great Valley Turnpike was a vital link in Wilmington's trade routes to the interior. Foulk Road, or Route 261 starts at Blue Ball, where it intersects with the Concord Turnpike, and ends in Pennsylvania. It is also a very old road dating from the eighteenth century, and is probably named for John Foulk, an early settler of Brandywine Hundred. Blue Ball, the community that developed at the intersection, was named for the blue ball displayed on a pole to tell the passing stage line to stop. The Blue Ball Inn was a well known tavern at this intersection and a familiar landmark until its recent demolition.

Before it became a state, Delaware was a part of the holdings of William Penn, and the Penn family granted large tracts in Brandywine Hundred. Here farms developed, frequently around a stone farmhouse. In the early twentieth century, before the present commercial development along the Concord Turnpike, the area was a tranquil one devoted almost exclusively to the raising of dairy cattle and the marketing of milk products. As the years passed agricultural patterns changed; the land was sub-divided; the population increased; and the children of farming families turned to business and commerce. This is precisely what happened in the Weldin family.

Jacob R. Weldin, who purchased the property from John Dickinson Logan, owned and operated extensive dairy farms near Wilmington. He married Hannah Talley, the daughter of another farmer in Brandywine Hundred, and they had five children. They lived near the intersection of Weldin Road and Foulk Road in a house that is no longer standing. The census for 1880 lists two adult children and one servant within the family. One child, Jacob Atwood Weldin, was already married and living away from home.

When Jacob R. Weldin died in 1891 his two sons were his only viable heirs; his other children had either

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died in infancy or were unable to manage independently. Through inheritance and the action of trustees the property of Jacob R. Weldin came into joint ownership of his two sons. On April 11, 1896, (Deed Record C-17, page 113) Jacob Atwood Weldin sold his half of the property to his brother Thomas T. Weldin. The deed covers lot #1 on which the present house stands and lot #2, a much larger lot on the east side of Foulk Road that is now the site of the Porter Reservoir.

Thomas T. Weldin married Emma Naylor in 1882 and left home. Family tradition states that Thomas T. Weldin built his house in the 1880s before he actually came into possession of the property. The architecture of the house and other details of family history indicate that the house was built in the 1880s or before he owned the property. The fact that he married and that his children were born in 1883, 1886, 1889, and 1895 provide further substantiation.

In 1900 Brandywine Hundred had a population of about 4,000. The census for that year listed Thomas T. Weldin as a farmer living in the house under study. According to the census he owned his farm, which had a mortgage on it. He lived with his wife and three children. Their daughter Eva, age 17, was in school, as was his son Thomas, Jr, who was thirteen. The youngest child, Herbert, was only four years old. The family also had a black servant, Harris Greenbury, who was 28 years old and was a farm laborer. Greenbury, like the adult members of the Weldin family, could read and write.

Thomas T. Weldin's days as a farmer were soon to end. In 1903 he was one of the owners of Splan and Weldin, a plumbing and heating firm with offices at 907 Orange Street in Wilmington. Splan and Weldin advertised "high pressure work, windmills, tanks and pumps, boat work, and general jobbing." At about that time Weldin sold the largest part of his farmland to the city of Wilmington. The land was 260 feet above sea level, and was to become the site of the city's new Porter Reservoir. With that move Thomas T. Weldin ceased farming and entered a business that would expand rapidly as interior plumbing and central heating became a necessity. His brother Jacob Atwood Weldin continued to farm in the Blue Ball area until his death.

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A family member says that Splan left the company in 1908. That seems to be accurate because in 1909 the Wilmington City Directory listed the firm as T.T. Weldin for the first time. By 1910 the census listed Weldin as a plumber by profession, but stated that he was also a farmer. Weldin was then 52 years old, owned his own property, and lived with his wife Emma and five children.

The family also had two servants: Peter Evans, a 62 year old black farm laborer, and Jennie Johnson, a 23-year-old black house servant. In 1911 the plumbing company became T.T. Weldin and Sons and moved its office across the street from its former location to 916 Orange Street in Wilmington. The firm still exists today. It became one of the largest plumbing and heating companies in Delaware, installing systems in most of the state's public schools in the 1920s and 1930s as well as in the University of Delaware, the Columbia Gas Building, and many other large structures.

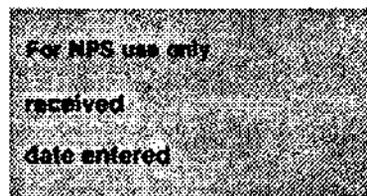
Thomas T. Weldin continued to live in his house at Blue Ball until his death there in 1939. Weldin left a substantial estate when he died, and with the exception of a few small personal bequests his will specified that his property was to be divided equally among his children.

Weldin's daughter Eva married Philip P. Husbands more than a decade before her father's death. In accordance with her father's will she received 25 shares in T.T. Weldin and Sons as well as the property on which the family home stood. T.T. Weldin, Sr. had hired the Wilmington surveyors, Price & Price, to make a plan of his property, specifying which portion of it would go to each of his children. The plan was based on the details given for lot #1 in the old deed from Jacob Atwood Weldin to Thomas in the 1890s. This lot, the house lot belonging to T. T. Weldin, was divided into the present triangular shaped house lot with two lots behind it. Eva received the house lot.

Eva Weldin Husbands was also the treasurer of T.T. Weldin and Sons. After her father's death the Wilmington City Directory began to list her residence as being in Blue Ball in the house she had inherited from him. Curiously, she was also consistently listed as living in the house while her husband's name did not appear in the City Directory until 1963. Both Philip and Eva Husbands lived

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in the house until their deaths. It is only recently that the house passed out of the immediate family of its builder. The same family had settled and farmed in Brandywine Hundred for many generations.

The Thomas T. Weldin House was originally an L-shaped, two and a half story brick house, a simple brick structure that combined the Italianate and Gothic Revival styles popular in rural and small town America in the late nineteenth century. When Weldin built the house he placed it on a high spot of land that overlooked his farmland, the city of Wilmington, and the distant Delaware River. The cross gable on the facade, the fairly heavy cornice, and the small arched windows in the gable ends are about the only condescensions to "taste" that embellish the basic plain one-room deep farmhouse with rear ell that had been popular for generations throughout Delaware.

The original house had a symmetrical main block with two rooms on each floor, and the rear ell had a kitchen on the first floor with another room above it. This was certainly ample room for Thomas T. Weldin, his wife, and two or three young children. It was, as quoted in A Century of Color, "The usual style of American Country or Village House, rooms and convenient; easily erected, and quite popular." The interior of the original section of the house appears to have undergone few changes except to accommodate more modern plumbing, heating, and lighting systems. The woodwork, trim, and shape of the rooms remain essentially the same except in the kitchen.

As their family grew the Weldins needed more space, and they were obviously able to afford enlarging and modernizing their home. Family tradition says that the main additions to the house date from about the turn of the century, and evidence in the house as well as contemporary style substantiate this. The addition fills in the space where the two original ells met. With the addition the house became almost square. However, the addition did not simply create a square house, it made a house in a more up-to-date style. The new addition incorporated elements of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles, the former slightly out of date at the time and the latter just becoming popular.

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The subject of popular taste, what is "in" and what is "out," has occupied both serious and comic writers for centuries. As Russell Lynes wrote in The Tastemakers, a "taste for the new" has always been an important element in the shaping of American taste, especially in housing. For over a century American house-pattern books, womens' magazines, and newspapers have carried advice on how to update your old house. The Thomas T. Weldin House is an excellent example of the actual execution of such advice.<sup>4</sup>

The main addition to the house not only created more room, it added wooden and slate shingles to make the variety of surfaces typical of the Queen Anne style. New dormer windows in the addition increased the space on the top floor and also accommodated a new bathroom. The large new curved verandah was also in the Queen Anne Style, but with the classical columns of the American colonial revival. A new bay window facing southwest was probably an attempt to make the old parlor lighter as well as to make it a bit more stylish. The new addition altered the roof line of the original house and created an attic room above the addition. This might have been a room for the female servant who lived in the house in 1910.

The interior of the house also retains most of the original finish in the old section, and there was little attempt to change interior walls or otherwise incorporate the new section. Even some of the lighting fixtures still have their old plaster medallions with remnants of gaslights incorporated into the new electric fixtures. There were some later alterations to the house, but they changed the earlier fabric of the house as little as possible. Part of the verandah was enclosed with glass to make a sunporch. An elevator from the kitchen to the second floor made it possible for Philip Husbands to go upstairs, and a new tile bathroom with large shower was probably also for his convenience.

Although there are several outbuildings on the property, there has been no substantial farming here since Thomas T. Weldin sold his farmland for the Porter Reservoir early in the century. The chicken house was used much later than that and indicates that the Weldins, like many other Americans, probably kept a few chicken for their own use just as they probably also kept a garden. Other

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outbuildings have been made into vehicle storage areas, reflecting the growing popularity of the automobile.

While the Weldin House was changing, the land around it was also changing. Brandywine Hundred is no longer farm country; it is filled with suburban housing developments, shopping centers, and the roads that carry automobiles between them. The additions to the Weldin House updated its style and increased its size, but they also made it look much more like a suburban house than the farmhouse it was originally. Today, it is one of the few houses on the Concord Turnpike that stands as a reminder of one of Brandywine Hundred's earliest farm families. It represents the changes they made over the generations as they turned from farming to business.

1. Milton E. Flower. Conservative Revolutionary 1983.
2. A.O.H. Greer, Journal Every Evening, September 14, 1946. p. 6
3. Roger Moss. A Century of Color. American Life Foundation, 1981. p. 42.
4. Russell Lynes. The Tastemakers Dover Publications, 1980, Reprint of 1955 edition. pp. 310-333.

Other References:

New Castle County Registry of Deeds, New Castle County Registry of Wills, Wilmington City Directories, United States Census (manuscript on microfilm), Atlases and maps including Pomery & Beers, 1868, Baist, 1893 and others. Newspapers and other sources as noted in text.

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The main sources consulted for specific information about the Weldin property and its residents were the New Castle County Registry of Deeds, New Castle County Registry of Wills, Wilmington City Directories, United States manuscript census for 1880, 1900, and 1910. Atlases and map consulted were the 1868 Pomeroy and Beers Atlas, the 1881 Hopkins Atlas, and Baist Atlas of 1893.

Other general sources were:

Evening Journal, December 19, 1973, p. 59

Flower, Milton E., Conservative Revolutionary, 1983

Journal Every Evening, Sept. 14, 1946, page 6

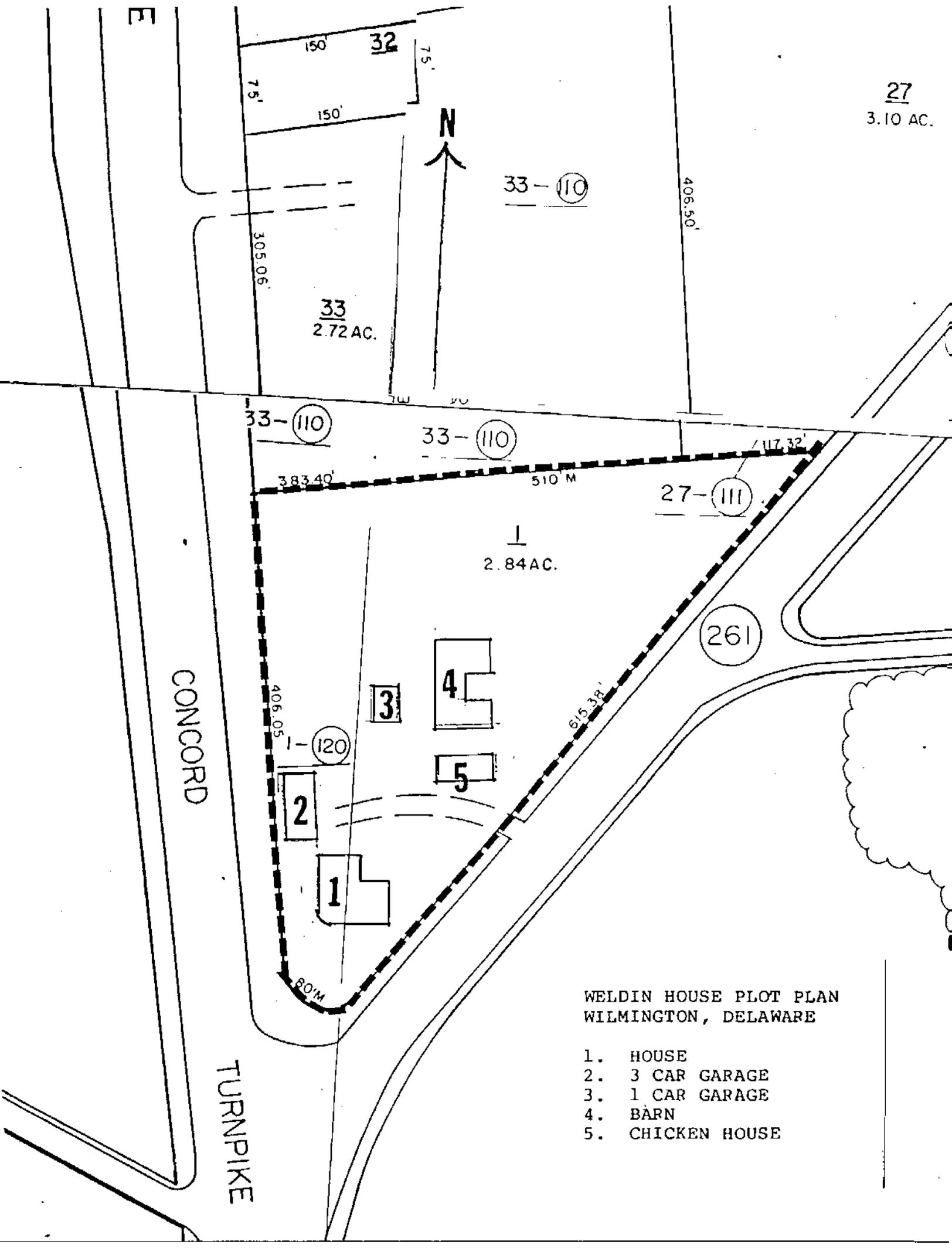
McEwing, Barbara, Neighbors of the Wilmington-Great Valley Turnpike, published in Wilmington, no date

Moss, Roger, A Century of Color. American Life Foundation, 1981

Weldin, Fred, Wilmington resident provided additional information about the family

Weldin, Lewis Cass, "History and Genealogy of the Weldin Family in America" Manuscript, 1922, at Historical Society of Delaware

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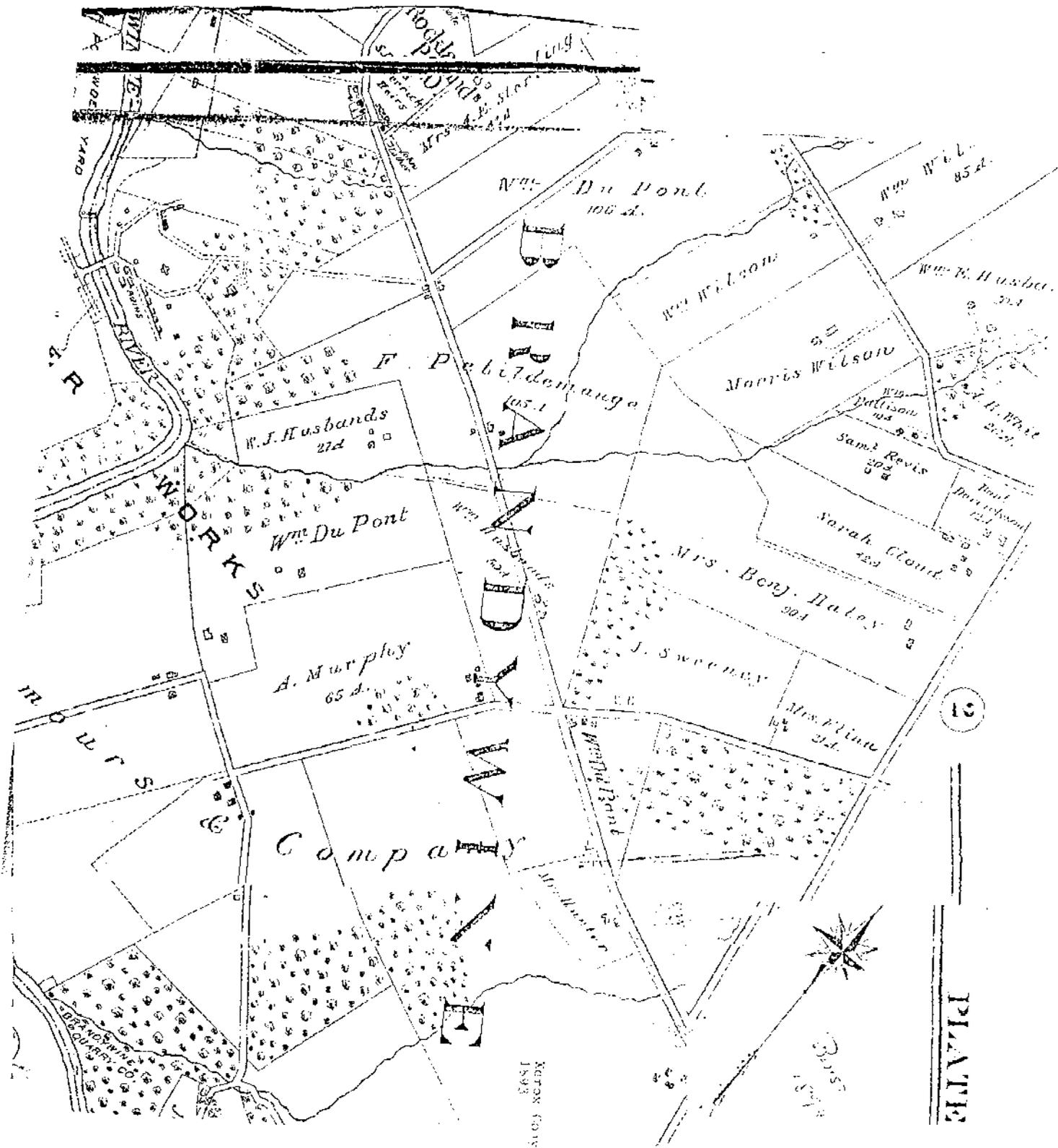


CONCORD

TURNPIKE

WELDIN HOUSE PLOT PLAN  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

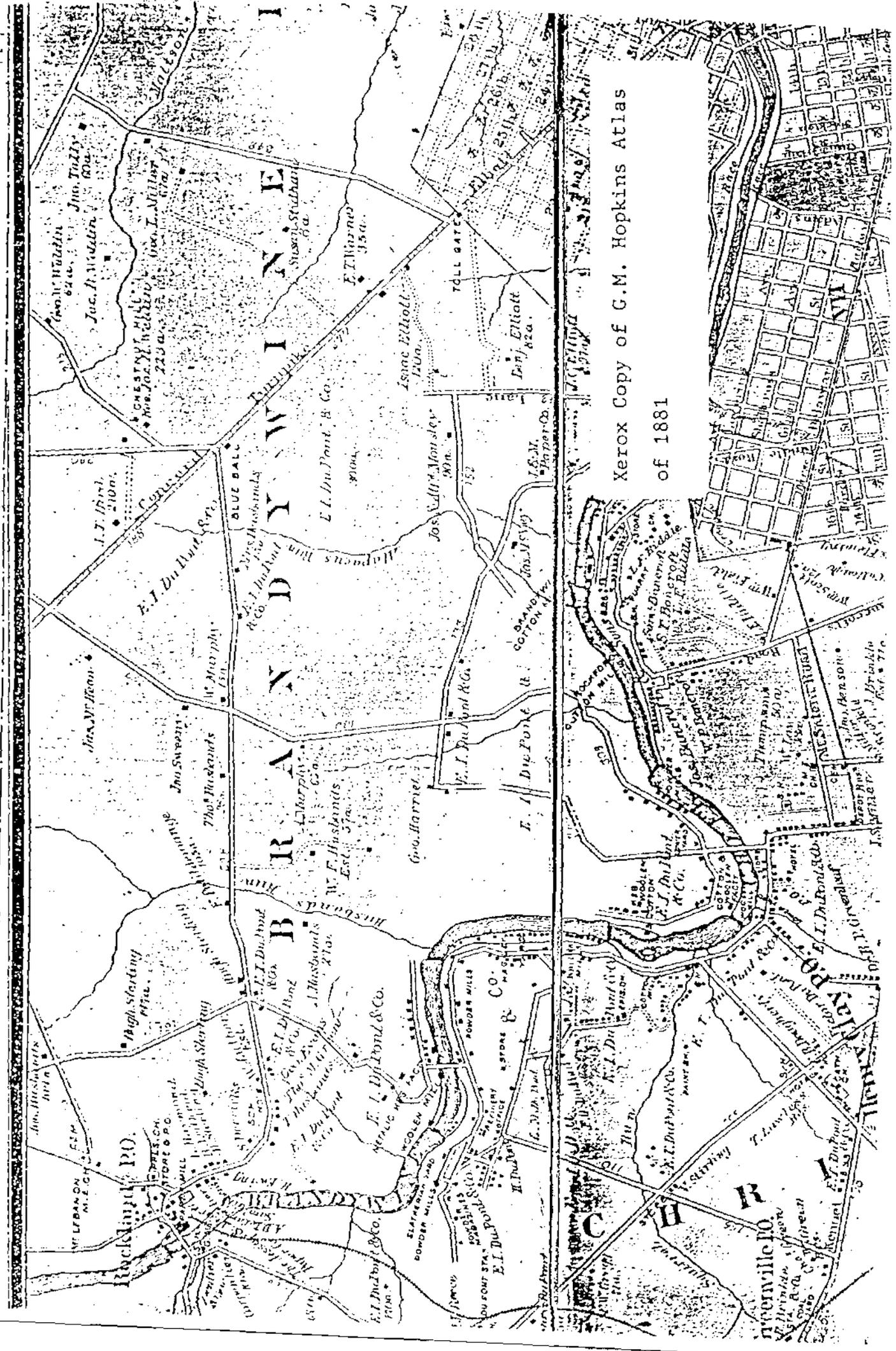
- 1. HOUSE
- 2. 3 CAR GARAGE
- 3. 1 CAR GARAGE
- 4. BARN
- 5. CHICKEN HOUSE



Xerox copy of Base Atlas of 1893

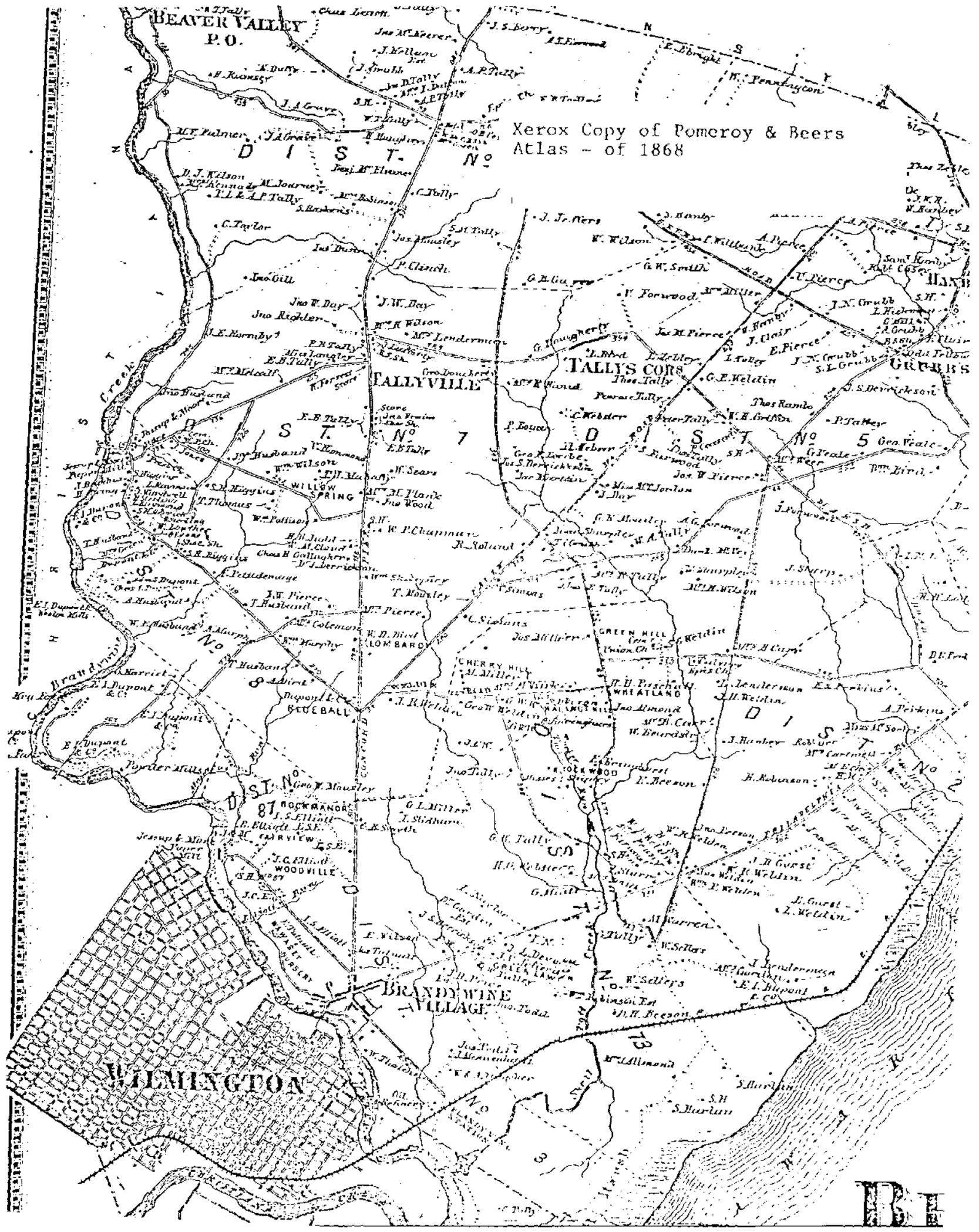
PLATE

Scale 100 feet to the inch.

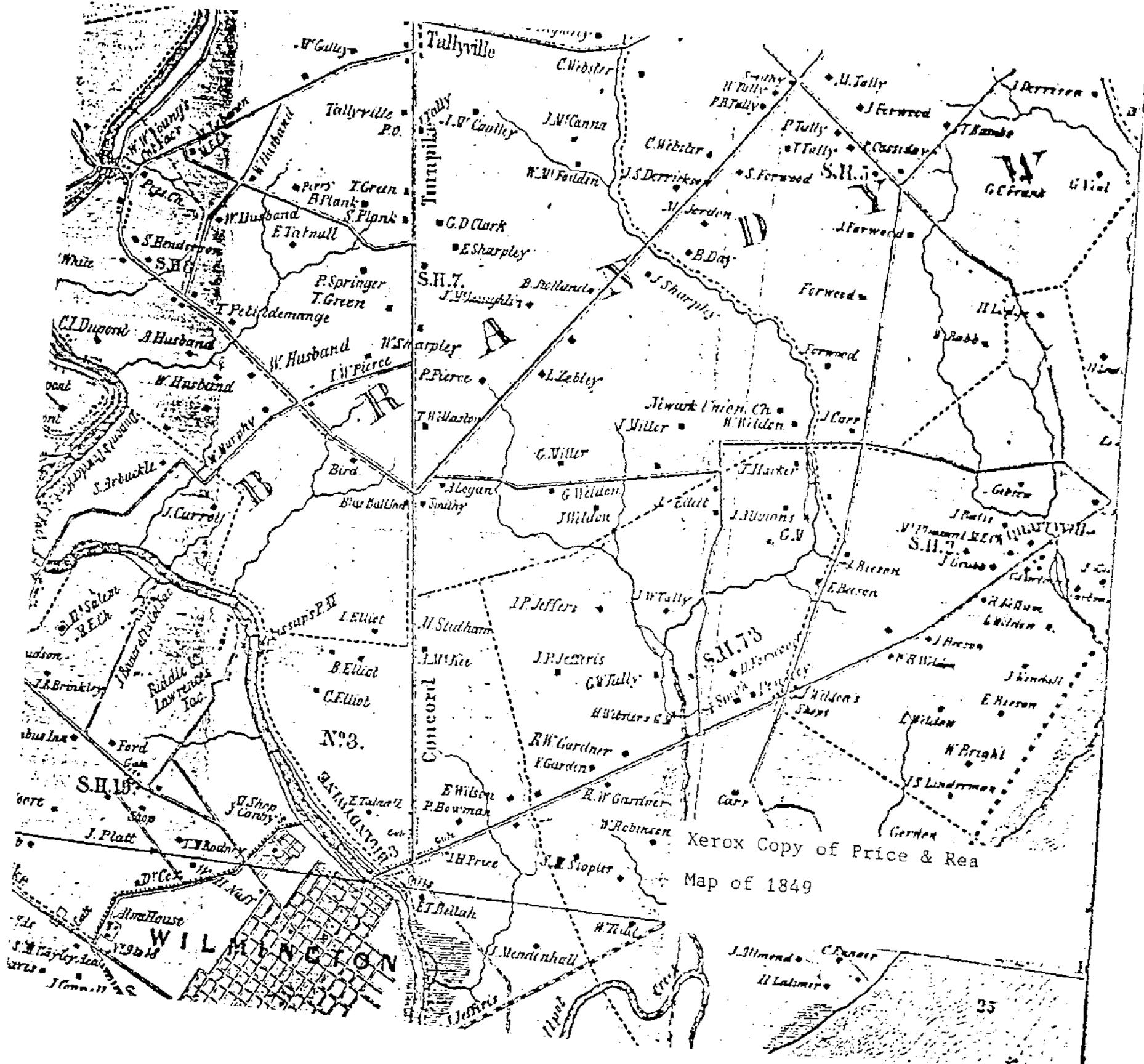


Xerox Copy of G.M. Hopkins Atlas  
of 1881

Xerox Copy of Pomeroy & Beers  
Atlas - of 1868



1868



Xerox Copy of Price & Rea  
Map of 1849