

# 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 Chambers House  
other names/site number N-6770

### 2. Location

street & number Hopkins Road & Creek Road (County Road #311)  not for publication  
city, town Newark  vicinity  
state Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003 zip code 19711

### 3. Classification

<p>Ownership of Property</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> private</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public-local</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal</p>	<p>Category of Property</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> district</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> structure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> object</p>	<p>Number of Resources within Property</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Contributing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Noncontributing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>1</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: right;">buildings</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>1</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: right;">sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: right;">structures</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: right;">objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>0</u></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Total</td> </tr> </table>	Contributing	Noncontributing		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Total
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Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/subsistence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor recreation

park visitor center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC

other:stone bank house

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

WOOD/ weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other WOODEN PORCH

Describe present and historic physical appearance

SUMMARY

The Chambers House is a bank house built of uncoursed fieldstone standing in an undeveloped area within the White Clay Creek Preserve in White Clay Creek Hundred, Delaware. Deeds, tax records, and the fabric of the house indicate that this single family detached dwelling was built between 1816 and 1852 by Joseph Chambers. The house is about 500 feet west of Creek Road (County Road 311) at a point about 1,000 feet north of its intersection with Hopkins Road. The two story main facade of this gable roofed house faces north where an old driveway led to the house; The side which was originally the rear of the house is on the lower side of the bank and is three stories high and three bays wide. A one and two story frame addition at the east of the house dates from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because the addition is smaller than the stone block and also fits into the natural slope of the bank, it does not distract from the historic character of the original house. The house is in a rural conservation area and the immediate house lot includes large trees, meadow, and the partial foundations of a barn which tax records indicate dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The interior of the main block of the house includes an open room, probably originally used as a kitchen, on the lowest level. There are two rooms, one behind the other on the ground level of the main facade, and two sleeping chambers on the second floor. A winding staircase rises in the southeast corner of the house from the basement to the top floor. The interior retains original baseboard and other wood trim which includes few elements in any formal style. The high degree of original fabric in the main block of the Chambers house and its rural setting recall its early nineteenth century origins.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 7 Page 1

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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Chambers House, sometimes called "Stairways" locally, stands in a rural area within the White Clay Creek Preserve in White Clay Creek Hundred Delaware. Today the driveway into the house lot is on the west side of Creek Road about 1,000 feet north of its intersection with Hopkins Road. The Chambers house stands near the end of this driveway and about 500 feet from Creek Road. The meadows and woodland of the preserve surround the house lot. Because it is in this quiet protected environment, there is little evidence of the twentieth century in the immediate surroundings of the Chambers house. From the house it is not possible to see a modern house, road, or automobile. On the house lot included in the National Register nomination are some large trees, an area of mown field to the south of the house, old shrubs, and the foundation of a nineteenth century barn to the west of the house. Tax records indicate the barn was built in the mid-nineteenth century. According to a former resident, this was a bank barn. All that remains today is an irregular section of the stone foundation, which is falling down upon itself and is overgrown with bushes and small trees. Between the house and the barn ruins are partial foundations of two other small outbuildings.

An overgrown roadway passes about 45 feet from the north side of the house and continues to the barn foundations. This was the original access to the house from Creek Road and is parallel to the present driveway. The main block of the Chambers house is a rectangular (app. 23' x 28') bank house of uncoursed fieldstone. Asphalt roofing now covers its steep pitch gable roof which has a plain box cornice. The ridgeline is parallel to the driveway and a stone interior end chimney rises through its east end. The chimney contains replacement stones and mortar, the result of repairs made when there was a roof fire in the house during the past ten years. On the east side of the house an irregularly shaped frame addition dates from the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The north side of the house, which was originally the primary facade is three bays wide with a central entrance at ground level. Today this entrance is approximately two feet above the ground, indicating that at one time there were steps between it and the ground. A wooden door with four vertical boards on the exterior and two sets of vertical raised panels on the interior fills the opening. A very simple wood frame surrounds the opening. The two windows on each of the two

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 7 Page 2

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floors contain six-over-six double-hung wood sash with exterior wood frames matching that around the door. White mortar in flush bond contrasts with uncoursed fieldstone in a variety of shapes, sizes, and shades. There is one small basement window on the west side of the facade. On this side of the house it is possible to see only the top section of two-story gable-roofed part of the frame addition.

The west side of the Chambers House shows the slope of the bank as it descends to the north side of the house. As is typical of most stone houses in the Delaware Piedmont, there are no windows lighting the main floors at this end of the house. There is one small four-light window in the gable peak above which there is a small parged area in the stone. A former resident of the house has advised the present owner that this may have at one time held a date stone. At the basement level of this end of the house there is a six-over-six double-hung wooden sash window and a four-light basement window. The stone and pointing here is similar to that on the north facade.

The south side of the Chambers house appears to have been the original rear of the house, but in its most recent occupancy it was used as the main facade and contained the main entrance. The stone block is three stories high and three bays wide on this, the lower side of the bank. An entrance in the central bay at the basement level holds a wooden door with two sets of vertical panels; it hangs at the interior edge of the opening which is framed with plain boards. Wooden six-over-six double hung sash windows fill all the window openings. The stonework on this side matches that on the rest of the main block, but here whitewash covers much of the surface, and is particularly heavy on the basement level. A one-story porch with tarpaper shed roof crosses the main block and extends across the frame addition where it becomes an enclosed room at its east end. Five square wooden posts support the roof and a balustrade made up of two boards connects the posts. The porch materials all date from near the mid-twentieth century.

The frame addition at the east end of the house is most clearly visible on the lower side of the bank. It includes a two-story frame addition with a low pitch gable roof. On its south side this section of the addition has one six over six double hung window on the second floor and an identical window on the first floor where an entrance contains a modern door with glass in the upper half. The porch, which wraps around the southeast corner of the house, terminates in a one story room.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 7 Page 3

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Wooden weatherboards and modern siding cover the exterior of the addition. Part of the foundation appears to be stone.

At the east side of the house only a small section of the upper portion of the main block is visible. It is stone with white mortar like the north side and contains two small windows on either side of the chimney at the attic level. Looking at the east side of the house, the addition has an irregular shape. It is possible to see the gable end and upper part of the two story addition which has an attic window and a second six-over-six window. The one-story room at the end of the porch contains three six-over-six windows and to its north is a tiny one story shed roofed section. Slightly uphill from this is another larger shed-roofed addition which extends from and is lower than the two story section. In looking at the east side of the house, it is quite obvious that although there was a late-nineteenth century addition, later twentieth century additions and alterations have obscured or removed much of it.

The south side entrance to the basement level of the house leads to one large room that probably originally served as a kitchen. On the east wall there is a nine-foot-wide fireplace at the base of the chimney. It has no mantel, heavy paint covers the stone, and there have been alterations to the hearth. However, it does contain a working flue, the main indication that this basement level of the house originally served as a kitchen. An opening on both sides of the fireplace leads to the addition on the east side. A six-panel door with a horizontal raised panel above fills the opening on the south side of the fireplace. This has a thumb latch and may be original to the house, although the openings through the stone wall to the addition do not appear to be original. There is no door in the opening on the north side of the fireplace and vertical beaded boarding framing the opening indicates a late nineteenth century origin. Two wooden six-over-six double-hung sash windows in the south walls have deep wooden window sills and plaster reveals with moulded wood edges. A wooden chair rail with moulded top and beaded bottom crosses the wall just below the windows. The chair rail continues around the west wall to the one window there where it turns a 45 degree angle to rise to the window sill. It continues along a part of the north wall. Although the window in the west wall and its opening are nearly identical to the windows on the south wall, it is set at a higher level, making this change in the chair rail necessary. A low baseboard with beaded top trims the south and west walls.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 7 Page 4

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The only opening in the north wall of this room is a small basement window that is a later addition. There has been a considerable amount of water damage on the north wall which is within the bank. It is now in very poor condition despite repairs over the years. A cement floor is an addition of the 1950s. In the southeast corner of the room a tight winder staircase of twelve steps rises to the floor above. A framed opening at the level of the third riser once held a door to enclose the stair. As is usual in this type of stairway, it turns upon itself and has no balustrade. About halfway between the two floors there is a small square window in the east wall of the stone block.

The floor plan for the addition is very irregular at the basement level and has probably undergone several alterations. A room beside the stone section runs the full depth of the house and is approximately rectangular in shape. Its west wall has plaster over the stone wall of the main block. On the south side an entrance containing a modern door with glass in the upper half leads to the porch; a window east of the door contains six-over-six wooden-double hung sash. Most of the east wall of the room has been cut away to provide a pass-through and access to the adjoining kitchen. At the rear of the room a seven step straight run stair rises to a landing where it makes a right angle turn to rise to the floor above. This is a twentieth century addition and runs along a small section of heavily plastered masonry that is probably a remnant of the foundation of a long-missing early addition.

The kitchen is in the enclosed porch section at the east end of the house. It is a rectangular space with sinks and counters along the pass-through on its west side. It contains five double hung six-over-six windows - two on the south wall and three on the east wall. A door of vertical beaded boards leads to a storage room at the rear. This is within the small shed-roofed section of the house that is visible from the exterior. North of this storage room is another open ladder-type stair leading to a small storage loft in the slightly higher shed roofed section that is also visible from the exterior.

The floor above the basement level in the stone block appears to have been the main floor. On the north wall is what appears to have been the main entrance. It contains a door with two sets of vertical raised panels and recessed wooden panels trim its opening. Architrave trim with a beaded inner edge forms the door frame. Matching trim and deep wooden windowsills surround the six-over-six double-hung sash

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 7 Page 5

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windows of which there are two on the north side and three on the south side. Some plaster, much of it replacement and drywall, covers the walls and ceilings. Floorboards of about six to eight inches in width cover the floor. No baseboards remain except for a small section near the staircase, and new heat ducts, electrical outlets, and cold air returns have been installed at the floor level. This floor of the stone block is now divided in half by a wall that runs from east to west. An opening in the center of this wall connects the two rooms. All that remains of this wall is some upright studs, and two wide boards that run diagonally across these sections of the wall. On either side of the dividing wall is a fireplace opening; there is no mantel, finished hearth, or other trim remaining. The winding stairs at the southeast corner of the house lead into the south room. Here there is a door with two sets of vertical panels and thumb latch. There are several other wooden doors standing in a corner on this floor, but the only other door installed is six panel door with thumb latch which leads to the addition at the east side of the house.

The second floor of the frame nineteenth century addition is now a bathroom and a small stair hall that accommodates the stairway that rises from the room below it. Resilient flooring, twentieth century moulding and bathroom fixtures, and other new features have replaced most of the original fabric.

On the top floor there are now two bedrooms with a side hall. This is recent alteration made to accommodate the last resident of the house. Little original fabric remains in the attic above where new common rafters form the roof supports.

8. 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  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1820-1850  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

SUMMARY

The Chambers House in White Clay Creek Hundred Delaware is significant under Criterion C because it is an excellent example of the modest-sized bank house made of fieldstone, a type that was popular in the rural Piedmont area of Delaware near the Pennsylvania border during the early Federal period. The main block of the house probably dates from the second decade of the nineteenth century and displays the most common characteristics of this house type: fieldstone construction, two full floors plus basement and attic, gable roof, and one interior end chimney. Its rural setting near White Clay Creek creates a rare early-nineteenth-century atmosphere around the house. Located only about 1,000 feet east of the Pennsylvania border, the house exemplifies the cultural and economic ties between Delaware and the adjoining counties of Pennsylvania. The house stands on what was at one time a substantial land-holding extending into Chester County, Pennsylvania, with its roots in one of the "Manors" or land tracts of William Penn. The Chambers House is an important piece of the material evidence of the architectural history of northern Delaware.

See continuation sheet

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 8 Page 1

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## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Chambers house stands on a rise of land near White Clay Creek, for which the Hundred is named, and overlooks the site on which a saw and gristmill stood in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is nothing in deed records or other material to pinpoint the precise date of construction. Tax records, deeds, other historical documents, and the fabric of the house indicate that it was built between 1820 and 1852 and probably nearer the earlier date by Joseph Chambers. Therefore, this is the period of significance associated with the property. Although suburban housing developments and shopping centers are only a short distance away, a series of fortuitous circumstances have preserved the Chambers House in the midst of woodland and meadows much like its original setting. Ownership of the property passed out of the family in the late nineteenth-century, but the house and the land on which it stands came back into the Chambers family and has now become part of the state-owned White Clay Creek Preserve.

The Chambers House is architecturally significant because it is a good example of an early Federal period bank house of stone in the Piedmont section of New Castle County. It is literally built into a bank creating a house that has two stories on one side and three stories on the other with direct access into the basement or lowest floor of the house. The original main entrance to the house is on the uphill side of the bank which faces the original lane into the property. The Chambers house has a gable roof, and its exterior of uncoursed fieldstone has no openings above the basement in the end wall other than small windows at the attic level. Despite its many eighteenth century characteristics, the Chambers house seems to be a nineteenth century building and as such represents the continuation of the stone building tradition in this rural part of New Castle County.<sup>1</sup>

There are few elements in the Chambers house in any formal architectural style. Though its facade symmetry is vaguely Georgian, the house does not conform to the Georgian type, the Pennsylvania Farmhouse type, nor the I-house described by Henry Glassie in "Eighteenth Century

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1. Henry Glassie. "Eighteenth Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building" *Winterthur Portfolio* 1972. Vol. 7, p. 35. Glassie writes: "Basic house forms, because of the conservatism of builders and inhabitants, persisted unchanged despite the fluctuations of taste represented by architectural detail. Secondly, the major Mid-Atlantic house types of the eighteenth century continued to be erected for better than a century after their introduction or development, so that forms of eighteenth-century origin are not now rarities on the landscape."

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 8 Page 2

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Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building".<sup>2</sup> Although built at a time when agricultural reforms were improving the lot of farmers, it bears out contemporary observances that American farmers tended not to display their wealth in their houses<sup>3</sup>. The Chambers house is modest in size compared to the large four and five bay wide houses that were built in the Delaware Piedmont and adjacent southeastern Pennsylvania during the same period. The random rubble and fieldstone exterior of the house is in good original condition. As in most stone bank houses in this area, the end wall has no windows above the basement except at the attic level.

The interior of the Chambers House has a plan that is simple but different from those shown in most standard architectural references<sup>4</sup>. The lowest level contains one room, and its large hearth indicates that it was originally a kitchen. A tight winder stair rises from the basement to the attic at one corner of the house. While it is not unusual to find the tight winder stair in this position, it generally appears in eighteenth century houses with slightly different room plans than this one. The level at the high side of the bank appears to have been the most formal floor in the house, because its wood trim is more ornate than that in the other rooms. This floor is divided into two rooms, one across the front of the house and the other across the rear of the house where the stair rises. This room division in a house with a central entrance is unusual. Large planks, some set diagonally, form the room division. The top floor contains two sleeping chambers and a side hall. The attic level has also been finished in the twentieth century to provide additional sleeping rooms.

Stone foundations at the side of the house indicate that there was an addition that pre-dated the present frame addition. The present addition expanded the living space in the house, and although it is a combination of late nineteenth and twentieth century materials, it is smaller than the main stone block and does not detract from the original character of the house. Research and general familiarity with the Piedmont area along the curving Delaware/Pennsylvania border indicate that there are only a few rural houses of this type that retain most of their original form and fabric on the exterior. A recent National

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2. Glassie. p. 29-47.

3. John Allen Krout and Dixon Ryan Fox. *The Completion of Independence* (Chicago, 1971 edition) pp. 92-121.

4. The interior plan is unlike any shown for instance, by Glassie, or in Andrew Kardos and Richard Pillsbury, *Field Guide to the Folk Architecture of the Northeastern United States* (Hanover, N.H., No date); Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, 1986),

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number   8   Page   3  

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Register nomination of agricultural complexes in Mill Creek Hundred emphasizes barns but does include three houses of this type on the J. Walker farm, the Springer Farm, and the J. Mason Farm. Today the Chambers house is within a publicly owned park and conservation area which will continue to preserve the fabric and character of the house for many years to come.

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In 1775 David Evans, yeoman of White Clay Creek Hundred, sold approximately 250 acres in White Clay Creek to Benjamin Chambers.<sup>5</sup> By calling himself a yeoman Evans used the English term for a landholder and farmer, not a member of a privileged class or aristocracy but much better off than the majority of people who were not landholders. Chambers paid 1,000 pounds for this land. Evans had purchased 200 acres of it, partly in Chester County, in 1762. He had purchased the other fifty acres, which were in Penn's Manor of Stining, at an earlier time. The deed covering the transfer refers to Benjamin Chambers as a "shop joiner" and a resident of White Clay Creek.<sup>6</sup>

Benjamin Chambers, like later owners of the land and the Chambers House which stands upon it was a Quaker. As James T. Lemon explained in *The Best Poor Man's Country*, because the Quakers were the earliest European settlers in Southeastern Pennsylvania, (to which northern New Castle County was closely associated both physically and culturally) their influence on the initial patterns of action the land was much stronger than that of the Presbyterians and Lutherans who arrived later.<sup>7</sup> As Lemon explains, the Quakers committed themselves at an early date to "building a liberal society open to the persecuted and to the philosophy of material success through exploitation of the soil and commerce". Buildings, while simple by today's standard existed for the individual and his family.<sup>8</sup> In Southeastern Pennsylvania and adjoining New Castle county villages were few and farms were scattered over the rural landscape. "The Quakers firmly established the pattern for all who followed in the eighteenth century, indeed well into the twentieth century".<sup>9</sup> The Chambers House is a part of that tradition.

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5. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, B2, p. 672.

6. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, B2, p. 672

7. James Thomas Lemon. *The Best Poor Man's Country*. (Baltimore, 1972) p. 21.

8. Lemon. p. 219

9. Lemon. p. 219. While Lemon's main thesis has to do with farming methods and that while they were unproductive by modern standards, they were sufficiently successful for people to live

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 8 Page 4

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According to the late-nineteenth-century historian Joseph Scharf, Benjamin Chambers built a sawmill on White Clay Creek before 1798 and the tax assessment for that year verifies this information. However, that assessment lists no other buildings in Chambers ownership.<sup>10</sup> By 1810 the census listed Chambers, his three sons, four daughters, and wife as residents of White Clay Creek.<sup>11</sup> In 1816 his holdings had a value of \$5,523 for tax assessment purposes. This included 140 acres of land (of which 40 acres were woodland), a "good framed dwelling and unframed barn," and livestock worth \$523.<sup>12</sup> Because Benjamin Chambers' residence was in White Clay Creek Hundred and he owned only one house there, that is almost certainly the house where he lived. Because that was not a stone house, it was not the present Chambers house, indicating that the present house was built after Benjamin Chambers' death in 1819.

Upon Benjamin Chambers' death his two sons, Samuel and Joseph, received their father's real estate. To Samuel, Benjamin left the westerly part of his lands, while his son Joseph received the easterly section. Joseph received 100 acres including the land on which the Chambers house stands. There is no mention of a house standing on that tract of land at the time Benjamin Chambers made his will. The wording of later deeds indicates that the house was probably built by Joseph Chambers. This information and the fabric of the house suggest a construction date of about 1820. However, the house is of a simple type which appeared in this area from the eighteenth century until well into the nineteenth century.

Joseph Chambers, according to Scharf, dismantled the mill that his father had built many years before. Scharf's reference is to a mill on White Clay Creek, but it seems likely that the mill was on a small branch south of the Chambers house that flowed into White Clay Creek. Maps of later dates show what was undoubtedly this mill site on just such a small stream west of White Clay Creek.<sup>13</sup> Today, nothing remains of the mill. Census records of 1820, 1830, and 1840 all list Joseph

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comfortably without extensive town-building in the region (also lectures by Dr. George Frick, 1978) with the exception of Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Lancaster. His book does include statistics on size of landholdings, population density and other matters that support the idea that the Chambers House is a continuation of a pattern established in the early eighteenth century and continuing through the nineteenth century.

10. 1798 Tax Assessments, White Clay Creek; Scharf, *History of Delaware*. p. 939

11. U.S. Census for White Clay Creek Hundred, 1810

12. New Castle County Tax Assessments for White Clay Creek Hundred, 1816-17.

13. Price and Rea map of 1849; Beers Atlas of 1868, Baist Atlas of 1893.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 8 Page 5

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Chambers and his family as residents of White Clay Creek Hundred. One member of the family, presumably Joseph himself, was a farmer.<sup>14</sup>

On May 5, 1841, Chambers' property was sold at sheriff's sale to Daniel Thompson. Scharf states in his history that Thompson rebuilt the mill that Joseph Chambers had demolished. While Scharf's dates are not quite correct, it does appear that the mill went into operation again.<sup>15</sup> On March 28, 1849, Daniel Thompson and his wife Beulah sold twenty acres of the land that he had purchased at sheriff's sale to Lamborn Pyle of New Castle County. The deed describes the land as messuage, or tenement, indicating buildings within the twenty acres.<sup>16</sup> In 1850 Lamborn Pyle was a thirty-seven-year-old farmer who lived here with his wife, Hannah, and their children, Edward and Phoebe.<sup>17</sup>

The Delaware tax assessment records for 1852-53 listed Lamborn Pyle of White Clay Creek Hundred as the owner of twenty acres of land, a stone house, and a frame barn. This is the first positive identification of the present Chambers House.<sup>18</sup> The Price and Rea Map of 1849 shows Pyle's house and mill in the location of the Chambers House.

The Pyles lived in the Chambers House for nearly thirty years. Today stone ruins of a barn foundation still exist near the house, and it appears that Pyle probably built the barn that once stood there. The census records consistently listed him as a farmer, but he also operated a flour mill. The census of 1870 shows that he had at least one and possibly two servants in the house.<sup>19</sup> In a local directory, Lamborn Pyle listed himself under the Thompson Post Office as the owner of a flour mill, while at the same time he appeared as the operator of a sawmill under McClellandville.<sup>20</sup> The Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of 1868 shows L. Pyle with a saw- and gristmill. He obviously used the waterpower for sawing wood or grinding grain depending upon the demand.

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14. U.S. Census for White Clay Creek, 1820, 1830, 1840.

15. Scharf. *History of Delaware*. p.939

16. New Castle County Registry of Deeds. V5, p. 59-60, and Price and Rea Map, 1849.

17. U.S., Census for White Clay Creek Hundred, 1850.

18. Delaware Tax Assessment records for 1852-53.

19. U.S., Census for White Clay Creek Hundred, 1860, 1870, 1880.

20. *Delaware State and Peninsula Directory.*, (Wilmington, 1879) pp. 196-97, 211, 235

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 8 Page 6

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On December 13, 1886, Pyle, sold his property to Joseph P. Eldridge for \$2,500<sup>21</sup> Eldridge kept the property for less than six months when he sold it to Jesse P. Hannum of Kennett, Pennsylvania. Although it is difficult to find any other record of Eldridge's milling activities, Scharf states that Joseph Eldridge succeeded Pyle and that the mill did not operate after 1881.<sup>22</sup>

Jesse P. Hannum, like his predecessors at the Chambers House, was a Quaker. Hannum, a member of the Kennett Meeting, married "out of union," that is, to a non-Quaker. <sup>23</sup> In 1893 the name Hannum appears on the Chambers House property in the Baist Atlas, and the Delaware State Directory for 1897-8 listed Barclay Hannum as a farmer in Thompson.

Jesse P. Hannum died without leaving a will and in 1909 the sheriff sold the property to Harry and Susan Joclyn who sold it to Margaret L. Yeatman and William Sharpless in the same year. The following year the house returned to the Chambers family, when John J. Chambers purchased the property for \$1,000.<sup>24</sup> In 1927 John Chambers sold the Chambers house lot to Mary Chambers Folwell as part of a larger tract.<sup>25</sup>

Folwell, a direct descendant of John Chambers, the first member of the family to settle in America, wished to reassemble the early Chambers landholdings. In the process of doing that she and her husband worked with the Soil and Conservation Service in using modern methods to establish a model dairy farm on the Chambers land.<sup>26</sup> During the time the Folwells owned the house, they did not live in it themselves. They altered and expanded the east wing of the house, modernizing the plumbing and electrical service. Probably because of their interest in the Chambers family heritage, they made no substantial alterations to the main stone block. The result was an irregularly sized and shaped addition that made necessary the installation of several staircases of different sizes. Therefore, "Stairways" has been the name of the house in recent years.

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21. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, T13, p. 535

22. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, Z13, p. 125 and Scharf, *History of Delaware*. p. 940.

23. Kennett Meeting records transcribed by Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

24. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, Q22, p. 48; p. 22, p. 232, and F24, p. 319.

25. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, W35, p. 91

26. Wise, *Resources Management Plan.*, p. 22.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number 8 Page 7

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E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Company purchased the Chambers House as part of a much larger tract on May 29, 1959.<sup>27</sup> This sale came about because of a fear that existing water sources would not be sufficient in the the future, and the Du Pont Company made plans to create a reservoir covering as much as 1,000 acres. Conservation groups and citizens opposed the reservoir plan and organized their forces to preserve the White Clay Creek Valley in its natural state. As a result, the State of Delaware purchased the land that is now within the Walter G. Carpenter State Park. Subsequently, the state investigated the purchase of additional land, and with the reservoir plan abandoned, the Du Pont Company asked the National Park Service for advice on conserving its holdings in White Clay Creek Valley. The Park Service recommended that the land become public, and Du Pont transferred their land to the State of Delaware in August 1984.<sup>28</sup> In this way the Chambers House became a part of the White Clay Creek Preserve.

Through the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Division of Parks and Recreation, the Chambers house will become a visitor center. Restoration for this adaptive use will preserve the original fabric, character, and environment of the house, while making it available to the public. There may be archaeological potential in the house lot included in the nomination, and the Division of Parks may undertake an investigation in the future to determine what type of archaeological potential this is. In the meantime, they will not disturb the area.

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27. New Castle County Registry of Deeds, 263, p. 370

28. Wise, *Resources Management Plan.*, pp. 5,6; New Castle County Registry of Deeds, 164, p. 11; Property Plan of E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company Microfilm 7259 in Registry of Deeds

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstracts from the New Garden and Kennett Meetings in Quaker Records, at Friends Historical Society, Swarthmore College.

Baist's Atlas, New Castle County. Philadelphia, G.W. Baist, 1893.

Barry's Delaware State Directory. Wilmington: Homer Barry, 1897

Conrad, Henry C. History of the State of Delaware. Wilmington, Henry C. Conrad, 1908

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
- Specific repository  
State of Delaware Department of Parks \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.8436639

USGS quad NEWARK WEST

UTM References

A 18 14 13 14 11 15 10 4 8 9 7 5 16 0  
 Zone Easting Northing

8 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Chambers House lot includes .8436639 acres within New Castle County Tax Parcel # 09 002.00 007. As shown on the accompanying tax assessment map, the lot includes a rectangle 245 feet from east to west and 150 feet from north to south.

see continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Chambers House include the house, the foundations of a barn, a small section of an old road that passed in front of the house, and a cleared area to the south of the house in order to encompass the primary building and its immediate surroundings. The boundaries include an area which constitutes the historical habitat of the Chambers house.

see continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Priscilla M. Thompson date December 11, 1987  
 organization THE HISTORY STORE telephone (302) 654-1727  
 street & number 827 TATNALL ST P.O. BOX 207 city or town WILMINGTON state DE zip code 19801

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chambers House

Section number   9   Page   1  

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*Delaware State Directory and Gazeteer.* 1874

*Delaware State and Peninsula Directory.* Wilmington: W. Andrew Boyd, 1879

*Delaware State and Peninsula Directory.* Wilmington: Ferris Bros., 1882

De Valinger, Jr. "Reconstructed 1790 Census." Reprint from *National Geneological Society Quarterly*.

Fletcher, Stevenson Whitcomb. *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life.* Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. 1971

Glassie, Henry. "Eighteenth Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building". *Winterthur Portfolio*. Vol. 7, 1972. pp.29-57.

Lemon, James Thomas. *The Best Poor Man's Country.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972

New Castle County Tax Assessments, 1804, 1816-17, 1852-53

New Castle County Registry of Deeds, specific deeds as noted in footnotes and text

New Castle County Registry of Wills. Wills and other notations as specified in footnotes and text

*Pomeroy and Beer's New Topographical Atlas of the State of Delaware.* Philadelphia, Pomeroy & Beers, 1868

Price and Rea. *Map of Delaware.* 1849

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Delaware.* Philadelphia, L.J. Richards & Co. 1888

United States Manuscript Census for New Castle County, 1800, 1810 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900

White, Emma Chambers. *Your Family, An Informal Account of the Ancestry of Allen Kirby White and Emma Chambers White.* Rutland, Vermont: 1941

Wise, Cara L. *Cultural Resources Management Plan for White Clay Creek Preserve in Delaware.* Dover: Division of Parks and Recreation, 1986

Zebley, Frank R. *Churches of Delaware.* Wilmington, 1947

THE CHAMBERS HOUSE ( N-6770)  
NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DE  
Tax Parcel Number: 09-002.00 007

Scale 1" = 200'



15.23 AC.  
13.39 AC. ±

CREEK ROAD (CO. ROAD 311)

WHITE  
CLAY  
CREEK

HOPKINS ROAD

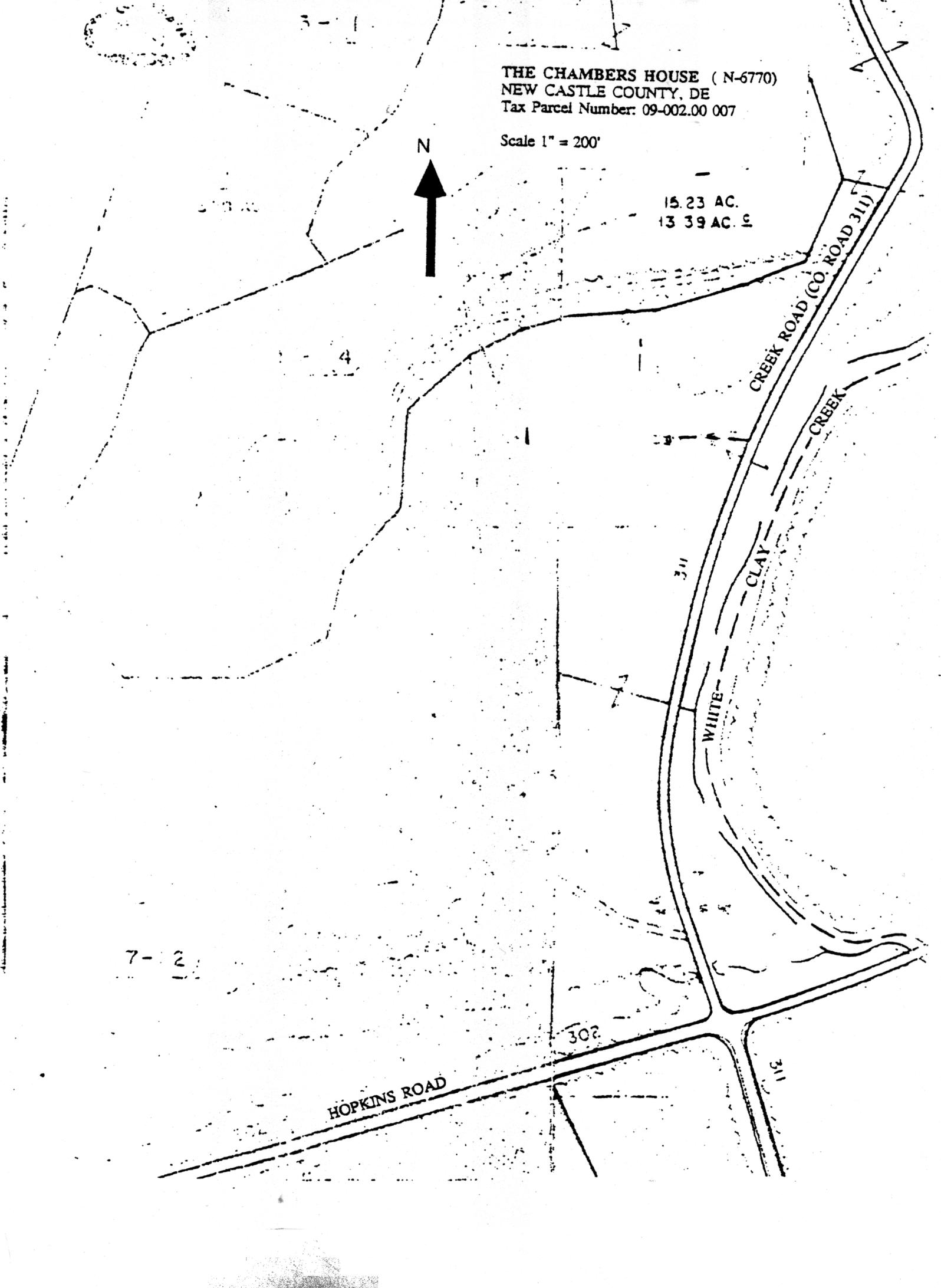
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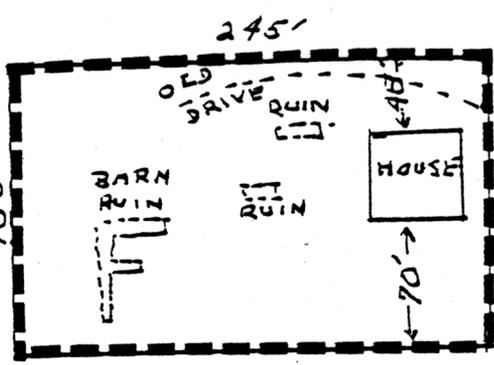
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THE CHAMBERS HOUSE (N-6770)  
 NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DE  
 Tax Parcel Number: 09-002.00 007

Scale 1"=100'

311

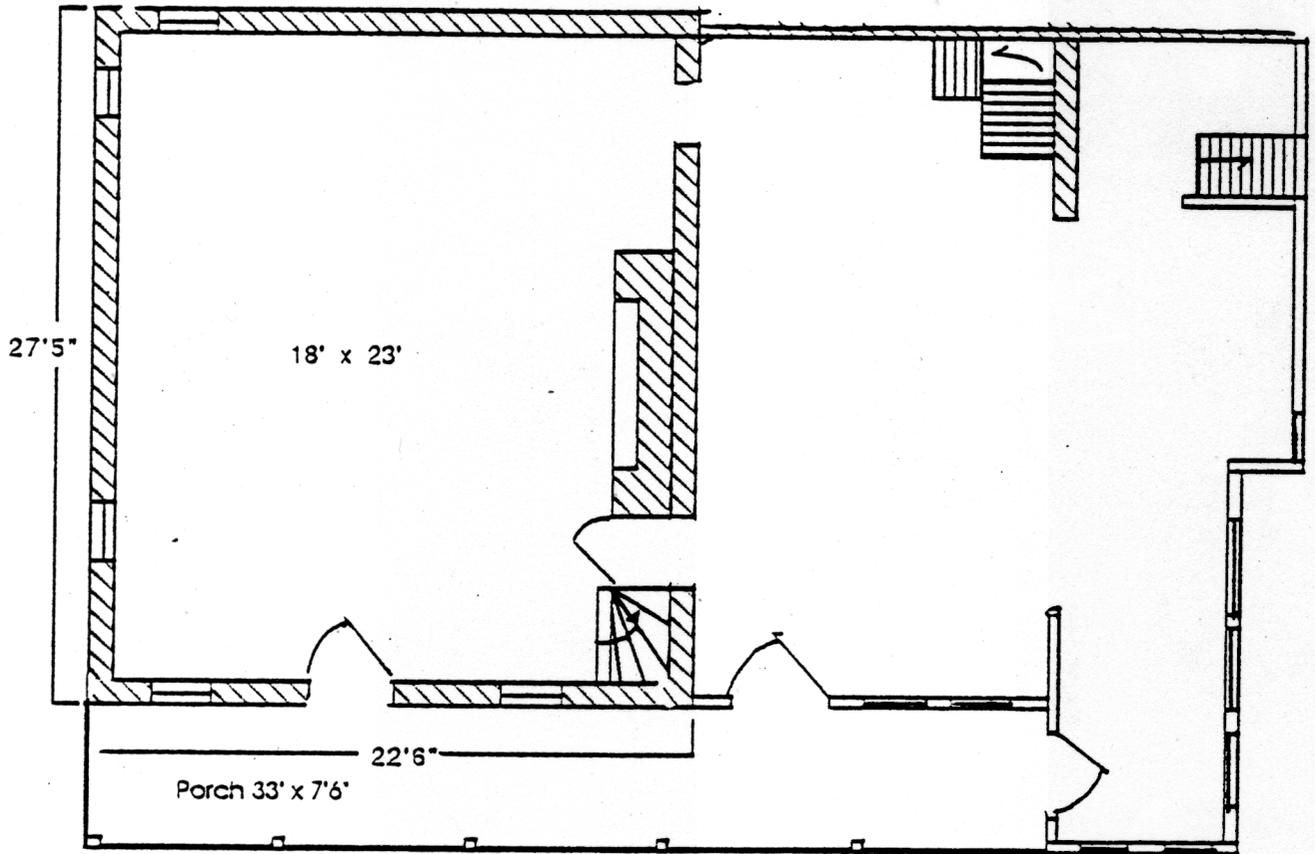
CLAY

WHITE

CREEK ROAD

MAIN BLOCK

ADDITION



Basement Level

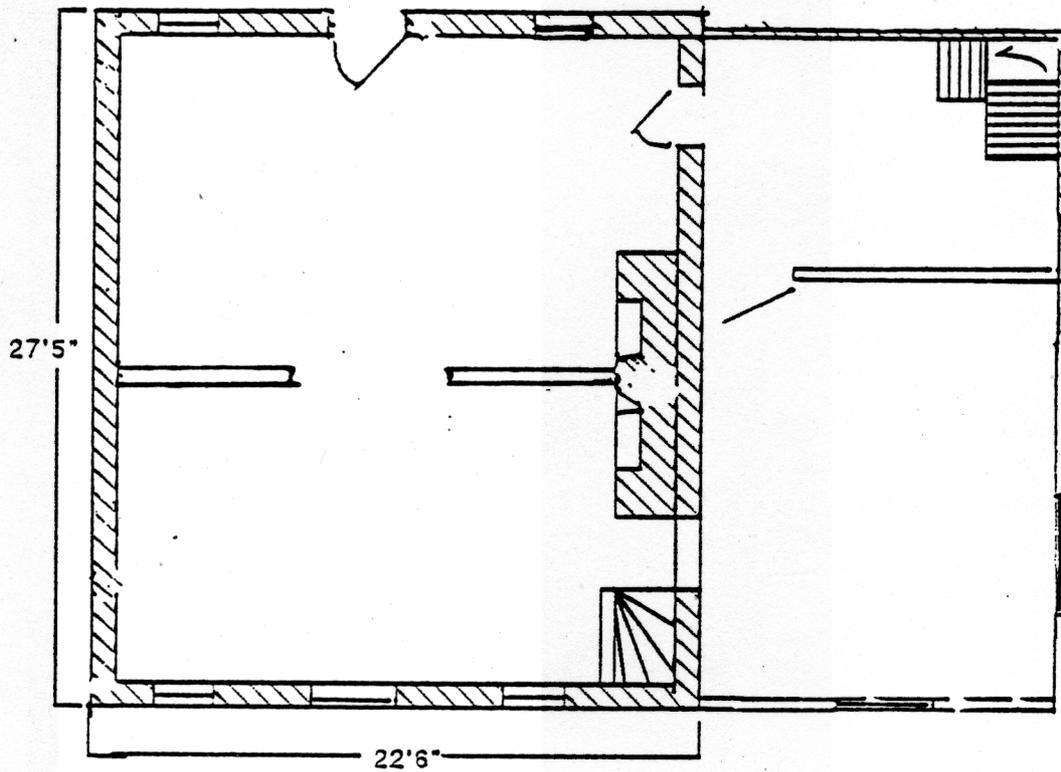


Plan is not to scale

**THE CHAMBERS HOUSE**  
NEW CASTLE CO., DELAWARE  
N-6770

MAIN BLOCK

ADDITION

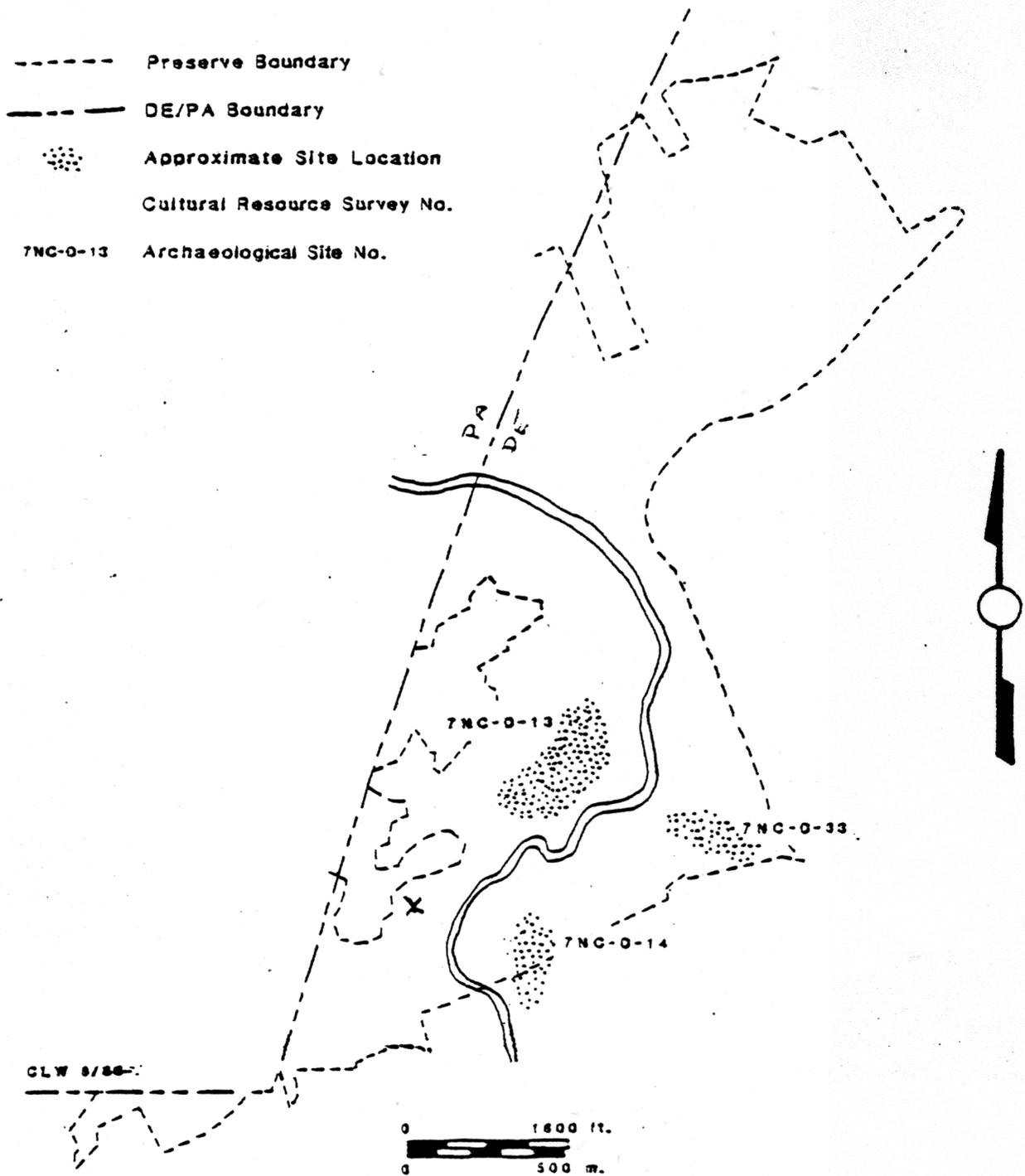


MAIN LEVEL



Plan is not to scale

THE CHAMBERS HOUSE  
NEW CASTLE CO., DELAWARE  
N-6770



Chambers house (X)  
 Copy of Map in Cultural Resources Management Plan  
 (N-6770)

White Clay Creek Preserve  
 Cultural Resources Survey

**Figure 3**  
**PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT**

Pomeroy and Beer's New Topographical Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia, Pomeroy & Beers, 1868. Note L. Pyle

**NEWARK BUSINESS DIRECTORY.**

**Hotels.**

Jan. Manney... Proprietor of Washington Hotel.  
Philip Merrill... Proprietor of Delaware House.

**Merchants.**

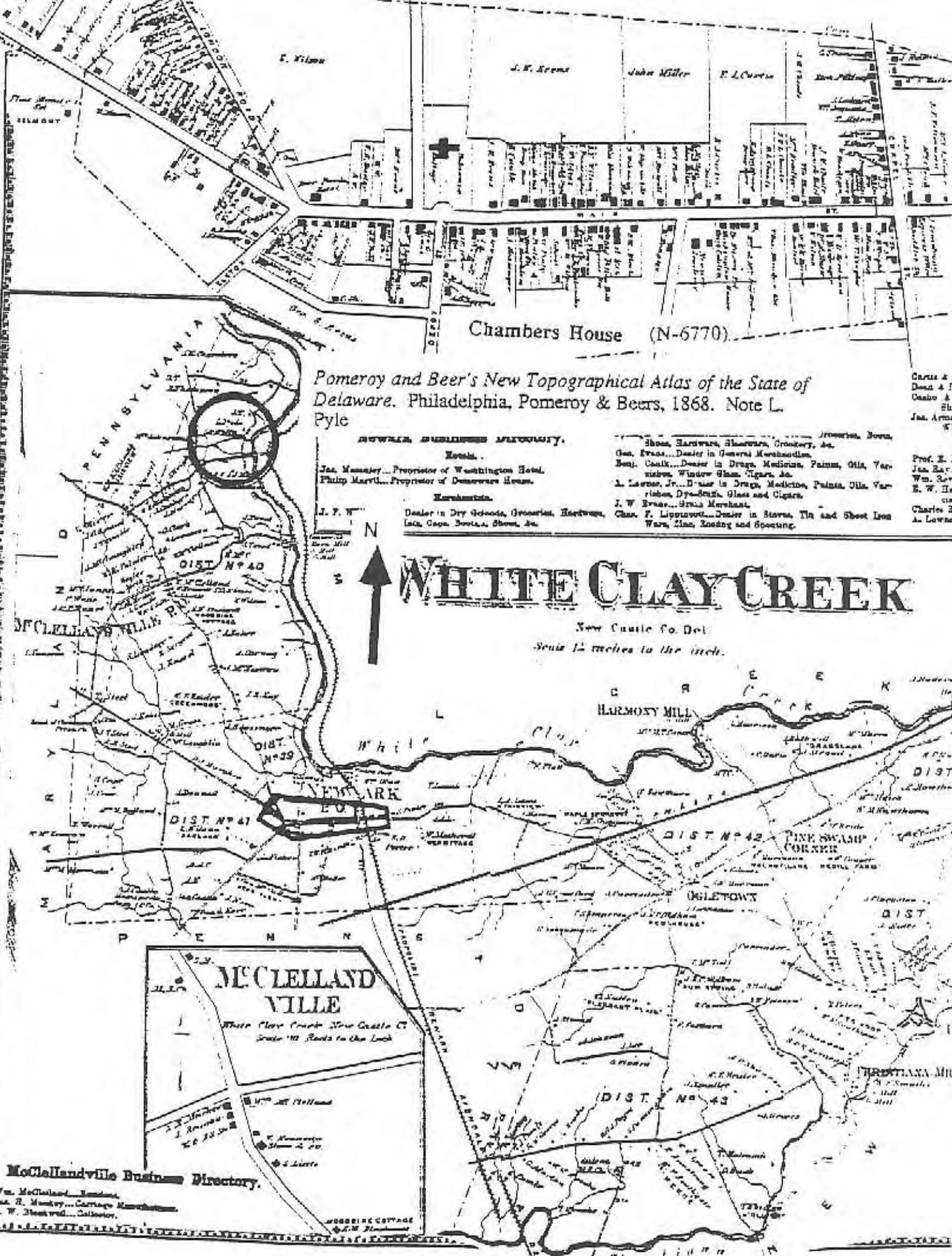
Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Lace, Caps, Boots, & Shoes, &c.

Shoes, Hardware, Groceries, &c.  
Gen. Store... Dealer in General Merchandise.  
Best. Cook... Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oil, Yarns, Window Glass, &c.  
L. Lawrence, Jr... Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oil, Yarns, Window Glass, &c.  
J. W. Evans... Dealer in Groceries, &c.  
Chas. F. Lippincott... Dealer in Groceries, Tin and Sheet Lead Ware, Zinc, Knives and Sporting.

Carte & P...  
Dean & P...  
Osato & B...  
Jan. Ar...  
Prof. E. L...  
Jan. Bar...  
Wm. Bar...  
E. W. H...  
Chas. B...  
A. Law...  
Wm. Bar...  
Wm. Bar...  
E. W. H...  
Chas. B...  
A. Law...

**WHITE CLAY CREEK**

New Castle Co. Del.  
Scale 1 1/2 inches to the inch.

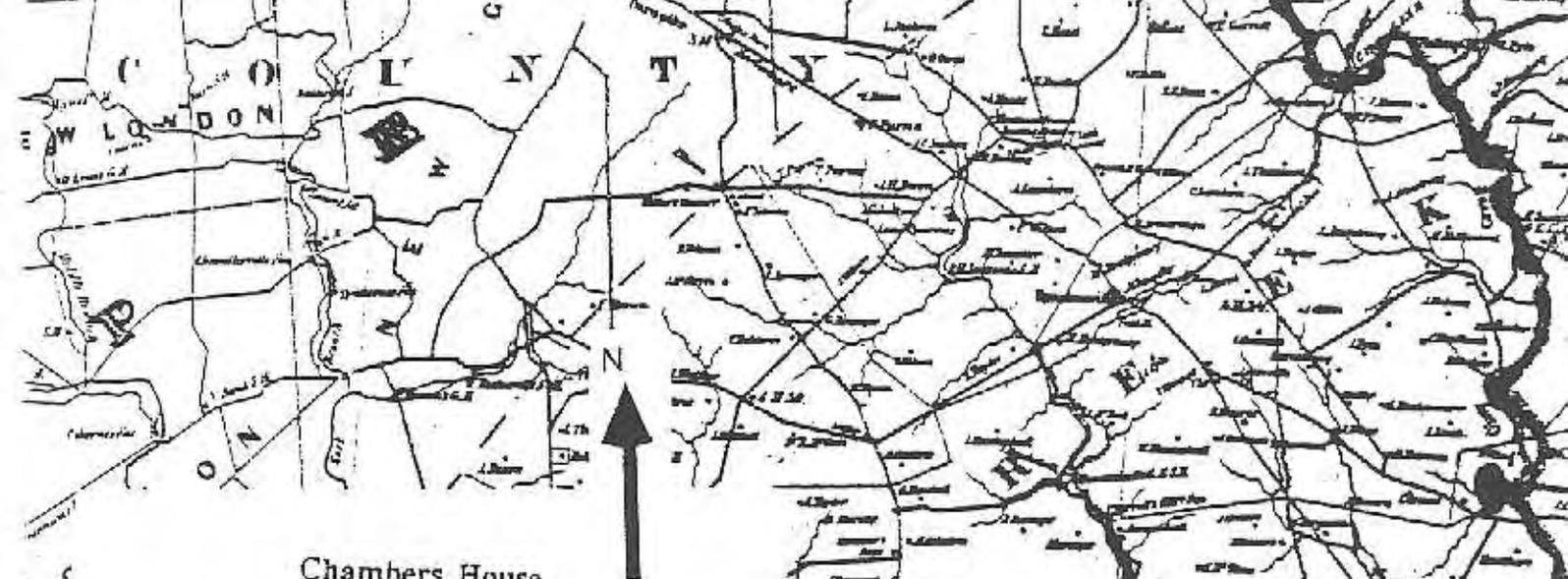


**MCCLELLANDVILLE**  
White Clay Creek New Castle Co.  
Scale 1 1/2 Miles to the Inch

**McClellandville Business Directory.**

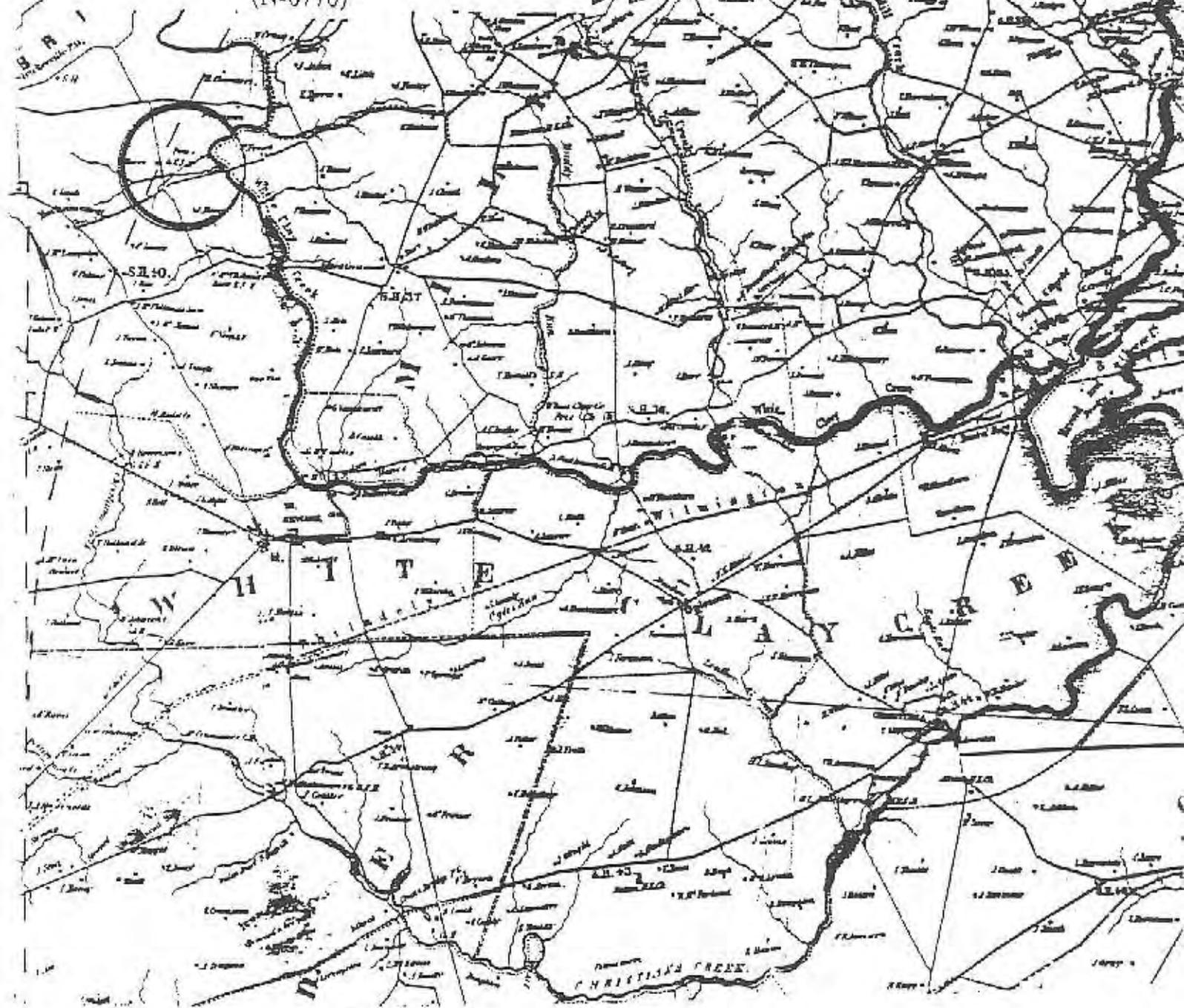
Wm. McClelland...  
Jan. R. Manney... Carriage Manufacturer.  
E. W. Stewart... Collector.

WOODING COFFAGE  
G. W. Stewart



Chambers House

Price and Rea. *Map of Delaware*. 1849. Note Pyle  
(N-6770)





**NEWARK WEST QUADRANGLE**  
**MARYLAND—DELAWARE—PENNSYLVANIA**  
**7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)**

NE 1/4 ELKTON 15' QUADRANGLE

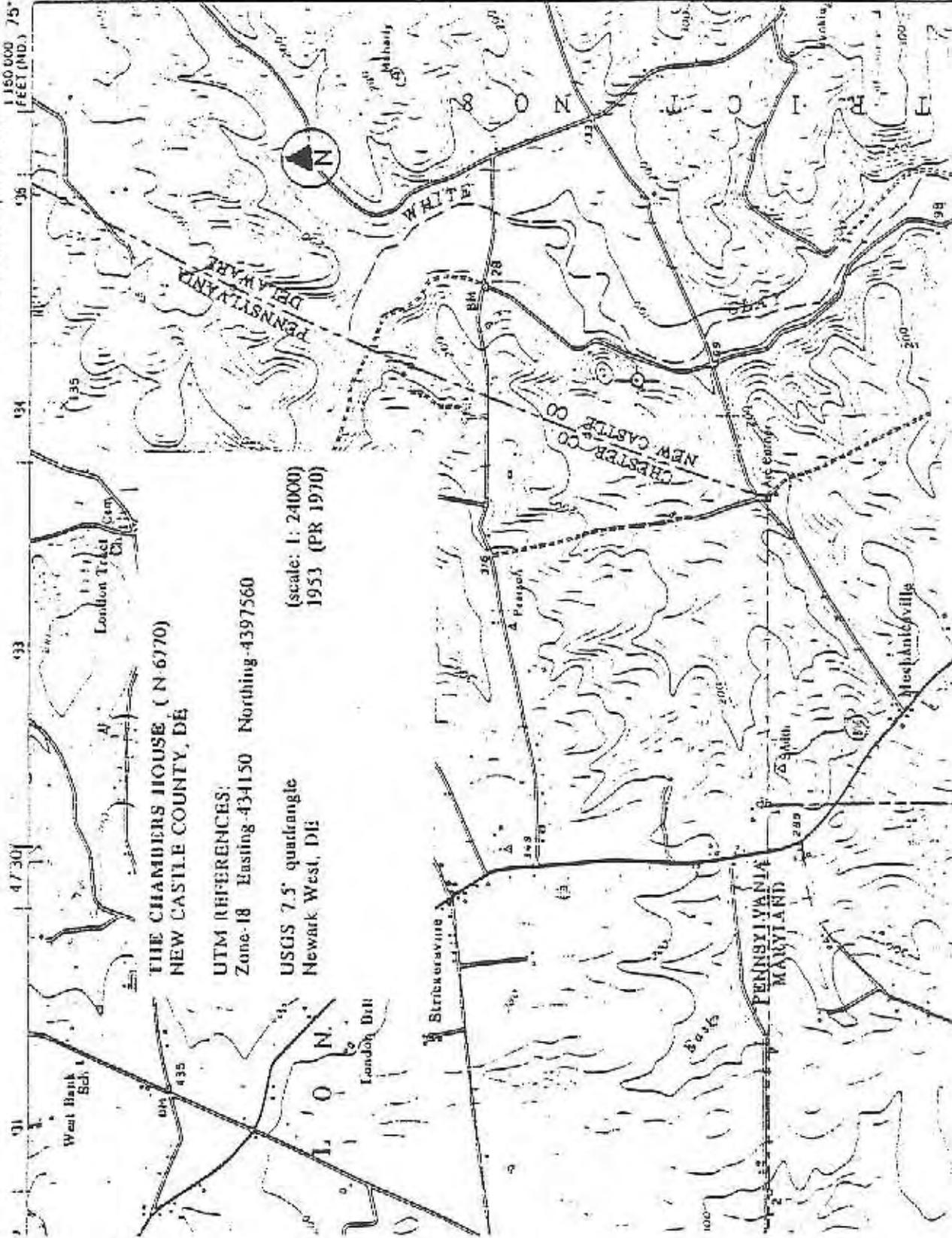
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**THE CHAMBERS HOUSE (N-6770)**  
**NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DE**

**UTM REFERENCES:**  
 Zone-18 Easting-434150 Northing-4397560

**USGS 7.5' quadrangle**  
 Newark West, DE

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