



**PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT  
National Register Eligibility  
Cedar Creek Mill Farm  
(Hall Farm)**

Cedar Creek Hundred, Sussex County,  
Delaware

John Milner Associates, Inc.  
March 2005

intended for project team use



**JMA** architects  
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John Milner Associates, Inc.

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NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY  
CEDAR CREEK MILL FARM (HALL FARM)  
CEDAR CREEK HUNDRED, SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE**

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Submitted by

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**INTENDED FOR PROJECT TEAM USE**

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**March 2005**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In February 2005 JMA personnel undertook a preliminary architectural survey and field assessment of the Cedar Creek Mill Farm (the Nelson Hall farm) located approximately 1.5 miles east of Lincoln (Figure 1). The purpose of this preliminary assessment was to determine if the Hall Farm is likely eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historical research entailed a land use and development history of the farm, and included examination of deed records, tax assessments, court records (orphans court and probate documents), maps, and other visual records, as available. The field assessment included a site visit in order to develop a preliminary assessment of the architectural and historical integrity of the farm. Repositories consulted included the Delaware Public Archives and the Sussex County Deed Office. Knowledgeable individuals with information about the history and development of the farm were contacted, including the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Hall.

A summary of JMA's findings is presented below, beginning with a physical description of the property, followed by a historic overview and our recommendations regarding the likely National Register eligibility of the Cedar Creek Mill Farm.

## 2.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

[All building dimensions are taken from Sussex County assessment cards for the property.]

The buildings of the northwest section of Cedar Creek Mill Farm are grouped near the center of a 125-acre agricultural tract, located on west side of Cedar Creek Road at its intersection with Route 30 (Figure 1). This tract is one of four comprising the 500-acre farm. The farm is located on both the east and west sides of Cedar Creek Road and also includes the 28-acre millpond. A second group of buildings is located on the east side of Cedar Creek Road opposite the millpond. These include the nineteenth-century, wood-framed mill, a tenant house, and several agricultural outbuildings. [These buildings are outside the study area for the present investigation and are not addressed in this document.]

Extant buildings in the northwest corner of the farm include two brick and wood-framed Gothic-roofed barns, one with attached silo; three single-story, gabled-roof, wood-framed, metal clad equipment sheds; and a one-and-one-half story, side-gabled, wood-framed residence. According to the present owners of the property, the two barns were built in the mid-1930s.

### 2.1 THE DAIRY BARNS

The largest building is the brick and wood-framed dairy barn that measures 122 feet long by 38 feet wide (Plate 1). A fine example of a twentieth-century barn type, it is dominated by a Gothic-arched roof. The ground floor walls of the longer elevations are fenestrated with closely spaced, nine-light, wood sash windows. The south elevation of the barn includes two, sliding, vertical board doors on the ground floor. Three additional vertical board doors are placed in the second story wall, while two, nine-light windows are placed at the west end of the wall. Exterior stairs provide access to the west door on the south wall. The east end wall of the barn contains two vertical board, top-hung, sliding entry doors and a paired, central sliding, top-hung doors. A sliding, loft door is centered above the central doors. The upper portion of the end walls are sheathed in wood shingles. A hood projects over the hay track at the apex of the roof. Two side-hinged vertical board doors provide access to the apex of the hay mow. These doors are flanked

by replacement, six-over-six, double-hung, sash windows. The north wall (Plate 2) echoes the fenestration patterns of the south wall. Two, sliding, vertical doors are placed in the ground floor, while three sliding doors are spaced across the second story wall. Closely spaced, nine-light, wood-framed windows are placed in the ground floor wall, while two six-light windows are placed at the west end of the second floor wall. The west end wall has single, wood-framed, six-light windows placed in the ground and second stories at either end of the wall. The upper wall is sheathed in wood shingles. Two, six-over-six, double-hung, sash windows are placed at the top of the wall.

A shed-roofed, single-story block connects the barn to the concrete stave silo to its west (Plate 3). This brick block with a concrete-slab roof has a vertical board door in its south wall.

The lower walls of the barn are constructed of oversaw bricks, laid in Flemish bond. The roof of the barn is sheathed in asphalt shingles. Three galvanized steel ventilators project from the roof peak. The original wood soffits have been replaced by aluminum.

The ground floor of the interior was viewed. The hay loft was inaccessible. The barn is divided longitudinally into three aisles. The two outside aisles originally accommodated cows in stanchions (Plate 4). Waste troughs extend the length of the concrete floor in both outer aisles. Portions of the stanchions are still visible. The central aisle is flanked by concrete feed troughs (Plate 5). The ground floor has brick interior walls and has wood post-and-beam interior construction. The ceiling is constructed of flush boards. Remnants of the hay chute are intact at the west end of the space (Plate 6).

A concrete stave silo is situated immediately west of the barn. This silo, which measures 35 feet in diameter and 50 feet high, no longer functions and lacks its original metal hemispherical cap. Adjustable steel hoops hold the staves together.

Immediately west of the dairy barn is a second barn, a smaller version of the main barn (plates 7 and 8). This barn measures 34 feet long and 29 feet wide and apparently used to house the mules employed on the farm (Nelson Hall 2005). It too has brick lower walls, laid in Flemish bond, and wood-clad upper walls. Its south wall (Plate 7) has a central, sliding, vertical board door, flanked by pair, six-light, wood-framed windows. The second floor wall on the south side contains two, sliding, vertical board doors. Its north wall (Plate 8) contains four, equally spaced, six-light, wood-framed windows, surmounted by a central loft door. Its east end wall has a central ground-level, sliding, vertical board door, flanked by six-light, wood-framed windows. A sliding, vertical board loft door is placed above this central door. The upper wall, sheathed in wood shingles, is pierced by replacement, six-over-six, double-hung, sash window. A hood projects over the hay track at the apex of the roof. Paired side-hinged doors originally provided access to the hayloft. This door opening has been enclosed. The west end has two, six-light, wood-framed, ground floor windows and a replacement, six-over-six, double-hung, sash window in the loft peak. The roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles and has replacement aluminum soffits. A galvanized steel ventilator projects from the center of the apex of the roof. The interior of this barn was not viewed.

## **2.2 EQUIPMENT SHEDS**

A shallow, gabled-roof, wood-framed equipment shed, sheathed in corrugated metal, is oriented east-west along the south side of the farmyard. Much of the north wall is open and is divided into seven equipment bays (Plate 9). The east end of the wall is enclosed. A portion of the enclosure consists of a sliding, wood garage door. The gable end walls of the shed are blank. The rear wall

is largely blank except for a series of single-light, wood-framed windows at its east end (Plate 10). The roof is sheathed in corrugated metal sheet. According to the owner, this building was probably erected in the 1960s.

A second gabled-roof equipment shed is situated on the north side of the graveled parking area, west of the house and east of the main barn. According to the present owner, this shed was constructed in two sections with the eastern portion constituting a later addition. The west portion may be contemporaneous with the dairy barns. This wood-framed building has been re-sided in vinyl siding. The west bay of the south wall is open, while the central two bays have tall, side-hinged equipment doors (Plate 11). The east bay has a steel roll-down door. The rear elevation has two groups of three casement windows in the west bay, a single window is placed in the central bay, while the west rear bay is blank (Plate 12). The gable end walls are blank.

The third equipment shed is oriented perpendicularly to the other two and marks the west side of the gravel parking area (Plate 13). This shed has an end gabled-roof with east lean-to. The south end wall is open, revealing the wood-framing. The shed is sheathed in recent and older sheet metal siding. It was recently reroofed in corrugated metal. The building may have been erected at about the same time as the dairy barns.

## 2.3 THE HOUSE

The façade of the one-and-one-half story, wood-framed house faces east. It is five bays wide with a central entry that adjoins a concrete stoop (Plate 14). The rear (west) elevation features a single-bay, flat-roofed stoop projecting from the south end of its west wall (Plate 15). Fenestration consists of single and paired one-over-one, double-hung, sash windows. Windows are flanked by ornamental, wood, louvered shutters. Its roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles, and a brick chimney projects from the center of the roof ridge.

The current house was rebuilt in 1982 on the site of a former house that was destroyed by fire. According to the present owners, the former house, a wood-framed farmhouse, was erected in the later nineteenth century (Dorothy Hall 2005).

## 3.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The earliest identified owner of the property was William V. Coulter (18 August 1796- 18 April 1875). Coulter, the son of Thomas Coulter and Hessy Mustard, was a member of a long-time Sussex County family. He lived a portion of his life in Cedar Creek Hundred and a portion in Milton, and had property holdings in several areas of Sussex County. He married Ruth Wilson Jones Maston on October 24, 1826 in Coolsprings, Sussex County (Anonymous n.d.A:2) In October 1838, Coulter acquired the Cedar Creek grist mill and 222 surrounding acres from Lemuel B. and Charity Shockley for \$4,020 (Sussex County Deed Book 48:125-126, October 17, 1838; hereafter SCDB). The mill burned the following year, and a new mill was erected in 1839. This mill, now lacking its machinery, apparently still stands on the east side of Cedar Creek Road opposite Cedar Creek Millpond (W. Nelson Hall 2005). In 1852, a saw mill was erected on the same parcel. This property was retained by Coulter and his son Thomas until 1885 (Scharf 1888).

Census schedules provide a profile of both Coulter's mill and his Cedar Creek Hundred farm. In 1850, Coulter owned a grist mill with invested capital of \$2,000. Inputs included 10,000 bushels of corn valued at \$4,500. The water-powered mill employed one hand and produced corn meal

valued at \$5,300. This mill had the largest production of the five grist mills enumerated in Cedar Creek Hundred in that year (U.S. Census Bureau 1850; GAI 2003:41). In 1860, William V. Coulter was shown as the owner of two mills, one producing meal and flour and the other producing lumber. The grist mill had \$5,000 of invested capital and consumed 3,200 bushels of corn and 3,000 bushels of wheat in the preceding year. The water-powered mill employed one person and produced 3,200 bushels of meal valued at \$2,200 and 600 barrels of flour valued at \$4,200. The monetary value of its production was the highest of six enumerated gristmills in Cedar Creek Hundred. The lumber mill, with invested capital of \$3,000, used 100,000 feet of logs valued at \$1,000. Production was 100,000 feet of lumber valued at \$2,000. The value of lumber produced was the highest of five sawmills in Cedar Creek Hundred (U.S. Census Bureau 1860a; GAI 2003:41).

At the time of the 1850 census, Coulter was listed as a farmer with holdings valued at \$15,000. In his will dated March 28, 1870, he devised all his real property located in Cedar Creek Hundred to his son Thomas J. Coulter. Coulter died on April 19, 1875 (U.S. Bureau of Census 1850; Sussex County Will Book N, folio 385 ff; DPA death index).

By 1870, Thomas Coulter was indicated as the operator of the grist mill. The mill represented invested capital of \$3,000 and was powered by a water wheel that generated 20 horsepower. The mill employed one hand and used 1500 bushels of corn valued at \$1,200 and 800 bushels of wheat valued at \$1,000. Production included meal and flour valued at \$3,100 (U.S. Census Bureau 1870b). Thomas Coulter was also indicated as the mill operator in 1880. At that time, the mill represented invested capital of \$1,500. The 50-bushel capacity mill included two runs of stone and used a six foot falls on Cedar Creek. Power was generated by a Howard wheel, five feet in breadth. It revolved 30 times per minute and generated six horsepower. Inputs included 2,000 bushels of wheat and 1,000 bushels of corn, while production included 400 bushels of wheat flour, 54,000 pounds of corn meal and 200 pounds of hominy (U.S. Census Bureau 1880c).

In addition to operating the grist mill, Thomas Coulter apparently managed his father's farm properties in Cedar Creek Hundred. In 1870, Coulter was listed as responsible for 250 acres of improved land and another 50 acres of woodlot. The farm was valued at \$5,000, while farm implements and machinery were valued at \$200. Farm laborers were paid a total of \$200 in wages. Livestock on the farm included one horse, two mules, two milch cows, two working oxen, five other cattle and 12 swine. Total value of livestock was \$500. Farm production included 130 bushels of winter wheat, eight bushels of rye, 800 bushels of Indian corn, 10 bushels of Irish potatoes, and 50 bushels of sweet potatoes. Orchard produce totaled \$25, while 100 pounds of butter was produced. The farm also produced \$250 dollars in farm products. The total value of all farm products was \$1,400 (U.S. Census Bureau 1870a).

By 1880, Thomas Coulter owned 100 acres of tilled land and 580 acres of woodland and forest in Cedar Creek Hundred. The total value of the farmland was \$4,000, while the value of implements and machinery was \$200. Livestock was valued at \$300. Livestock included two horses, two working oxen, three milch cows, three other cattle, four swine, and 50 chickens. The farm produced 100 pounds of butter and 150 dozen eggs. Forty acres was planted in Indian corn and yielded 400 bushels, while 25 acres was planted in wheat, yielding 130 bushels. One acre was planted in Irish potatoes yielding 25 bushels, while one acre was planted in sweet potatoes yielding 40 bushels (U.S. Census Bureau 1880b).

Thomas Coulter, a farmer in Cedar Creek Hundred, was born in 1838. He married Elizabeth Clendaniel on December 29, 1874, and they had four children: Robert L. (b. c. 1873), James H.

(b. c. 1876), Cornelius (b. c. 1879), and Thomas James (b. c. 1869) (Anonymous n.d.A; U.S. Census Bureau 1880a; DPA marriage card file).

In 1885, Isaac Wooten Loate, sheriff of Sussex County, offered the real estate of Thomas J. Coulter for sale at Smoot's Hotel in Milford to satisfy a judgment rendered in the suit of William H. Ratcliff, assignee of George Russel against Thomas J. Coulter. The 125-acre property was purchased by Sylvester John Abbott of Milford for \$1,803.75 (SCDB 102:575, November 3, 1885).

Abbott, a farmer in Cedar Creek Hundred, was the son of William W. Abbott, a Cedar Creek Hundred farmer and Mary C. Abbott (U.S. Census Bureau 1860b). He was one of the incorporators of the Delaware Electric Traction Company, established to construct and operate electric railways in seven towns in southern Delaware (Anonymous 2002). Abbott owned the farm property until 1919. In that year, he and his wife, Frances Rosalie, sold the property to Thomas E. Mills for \$8,000 (Sussex County Deed Book 216:132, July 24, 1919). Mills, born March 8, 1890, was the son of M.J. Mills and Malinda M. Emery. A farmer in Cedar Creek Hundred, he married Lydia Ellen Shepherd on January 12, 1911. At the time of the 1930 census, he lived on the farm with his wife, 38, his 10-year-old son Thomas; and his five-year-old daughter Frances. Also residing in the household was 65-year-old Lemuel Shockley, a farm laborer (U.S. Bureau of Census 1930; DPA birth index).

In 1937, Mills and his wife, Lydia E., then residing in Cedar Creek Hundred, sold the farm parcel to John Sudler Isaacs for an undisclosed sum (SCDB 313:34, December 27, 1937). According to his daughter, Dorothy Hall, Isaacs had the two barns erected, one for milk cows and the other for mules, shortly after his acquisition of the property. Isaacs also combined four adjacent farm parcels on both sides of Cedar Creek Road and operated them as a single farm (Dorothy Hall 2005).

Isaacs (b. 1889) was a noted Sussex County farmer. The son of John P. Isaacs and Almeda Webb, he was raised near Greenwood and began his farming there in 1910. By the 1930s he owned and operated 8,000 acres of farmland and also owned town property. His agricultural interests included an extensive poultry business in which he raised a million fryers and broilers. He also operated a cannery and a cold storage house, the largest of its kind in southern Delaware. This company employed about 250 people and packed asparagus, peas, lima beans, corn, and frozen poultry. A director of the First National Bank of Milford, he served as county treasurer and receiver of taxes from 1929 to 1933. He married Mary C. Lofland of Greenwood on November 25, 1909 (Reed 1947: 443; DPA marriage card files). In 1948, he sold 79 tracts of land (the property in question being tract 25) to John S. Isaacs and Sons, Inc. (SCDB 380:541, November 10, 1948). In 1962, the firm sold 20 tracts to Dorothy I. Hall, John and Mary Isaacs's daughter, for an undisclosed amount. The property in question was designated about parcel #6 (SCDB 545:327, March 12, 1962). The farm parcel has been owned by Dorothy Hall, her husband W. Nelson Hall, and their two sons since that time.

Until his retirement, Nelson Hall farmed the approximately 500-acre tract comprising the farm. Hall never raised dairy cows. For much of his tenure as a farmer, he raised beef cattle, and for a shorter period, hogs. Hall and his family never lived on the parcel. Currently the house and farm fields are rented (Nelson Hall 2005).

### 3.1 DELAWARE DAIRY BARN DESIGN

Dairy barn design in the eastern United States changed significantly as the result of sanitary reforms implemented in the first half of the twentieth century (cf. Fletcher 1955:215, 218; Russell 1982:299; Schneider 1994:32-34). The reform of milk, cheese, and butter production began during the post-Civil War years in states like Wisconsin and New York. By the early decades of the twentieth century dairying reforms had begun to affect farms in Delaware (McMurry 1995:180-186; 215-220; Shannon 1961:254-259). The *First and Second Annual Reports of the [Delaware] State Board of Agriculture, 1901-1902* focused on poor sanitary conditions of dairy barns and ways to improve them:

It is still too common to find milch cows stabled in a dark, close basement, three sides of which are under ground, thus precluding the admittance of a proper amount of light and air. The interior of such a stable is usually festooned with ancient cobwebs loaded with dust and dirt, the accumulations of years.<sup>1</sup>

Recommended improvements included concrete floors, because of ease of cleaning, introduction of lights and ventilation systems, and whitewashed interior walls (Fletcher 1955:218; Shriber 2002:22). The major change in barns as the result of sanitary regulation was in the flooring and interior wall surfaces. Prior to reforms, barn floors typically consisted of packed earth or wood planks (Shriber 2002:25).

In 1913, Alfred Hopkins, author of *Modern Farm Buildings*, wrote that “all projections and moldings should be eliminated: the walls and ceilings plastered in cement, and the floors made of concrete, never of wood.” He also recommended that the long axis of the barn should run roughly northwest-southwest for optimal exposure, that hay and cows should be kept in the same building only if the floor between them was fireproof, and that the barn should be furnished with numerous large windows for proper ventilation (as cited in Lanier and Herman 1992:241-242).

Many barns were erected to designs either purchased or acquired free of charge from a farm supply company. These plans, designed by architects, resulted in sanitary and economical barns that efficiently met milk industry standards (Shriber 2002:28).

Twentieth-century United States dairy barns can be classified into three types, based upon roof shape: gable, gambrel, and Gothic. As noted in a twentieth-century farm supply catalog:

The chief aim in modern roof design is to get as large an unobstructed area as possible in the mow for the storage of hay, and at the same time obtain a roof of great strength and rigidity to withstand the onslaughts of wind and weather (as cited in Shriber 2002:42-43).

Gable roofs were the primary roof form for barns from the 1700s until the early 1900s and reemerged as the preferred roof form from the 1950s to the present. Gambrel roofs were typically used in barn construction from the 1910s to the 1950s and replaced gable roofs as the dominant roof type for dairy barns during the period. Gothic roofs, a curvilinear form of the gable roof in which the rafters join to form a pointed arch, were constructed contemporaneously with gambrel roofs, but were not as popular. While this roof form was used in Delaware, it never became common in the state because of cost and construction complexities (Shriber 2002:43).

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<sup>1</sup> W.H. Bishop, “The Production of Clean Milk,” 83. As cited in Shriber 2002:22.

The gambrel-roofed barn achieved popularity as a means to increase hay storage without increasing the height of the barn. This barn form offered a ground level stable solely for dairy usage. Designs employed concrete floors and walls, ventilation systems, stanchions, mangers, and troughs. Braced timber framing methods were initially used in construction but were replaced by balloon framing in the early twentieth century (Shriber 2002:46).

The primary rationale underlying the use of gambrel and Gothic roofs in dairy barns is that they eliminate the need for posts and trusses in the hayloft. In the Gothic barn, a concrete foundation and walls supported prefabricated laminated rafters. Gothic-roofed barns are characterized by a long, narrow plan with concrete floors, foundations and walls. Original construction included ventilation systems and windows (Shriber 2002:49, 51).

## **3.2 THE GOTHIC-ROOFED BARN**

According to historian Lowell Soike, the use of curved-Gothic, laminated-roof construction initially dates from the nineteenth century. Joshua Secrest's curved-rafter octagon barn, built in 1883 in Iowa, the huge 1878 barn of a Muscatine, Iowa lumber baron, and the curved rafter barns in Isabella County, Michigan, which dated from as early as 1885, were among the earliest examples. Other Gothic roof experiments occurred in scattered places, but it was not until the twentieth century that this design began to attract wide interest (Soike 1995:161).

Early in the twentieth century, Gothic-roofed barns were still being constructed on individual farmsteads with northern Michigan being a locus of this construction. For example, Earnest Alfred Seager's 1906 barn in Osceola County, Michigan, is a timber-framed structure with its roof using framing constructed of one inch by four inch sapling slats to form the roof radius (Leik n.d.).

The primary initial method used to create curved rafters was sawed construction. This type typically used one-inch boards, eight-to-twelve inches wide and three-to-four feet long, from which the outside edge was sawed to the needed curvature. Three or four plies were laminated together side by side with nails, with the splices staggered to get the curve needed.

The second method used was bent or sprung rafters. In bent rafter, four or five plies of one-by-four-inch strips were used. Tightly clamping the strips in the curved form with the joints staggered at least four feet apart, the builder then nailed them together from top and bottom with twelve-to sixteen-penny nails (Soike 1995:161).

Gothic-roofed barns were typically designed to mail order plans. In 1917, Gordon-Van Tine first advertised a Gothic-roof barn in its farm building catalog (Soike 1995:161). Capitalizing on a farmer's uncertainty of making the rafters themselves, the company noted: "The rafter radius must be very carefully figured" and concluded that "unless you care to risk the chances of structural weakness, order this barn from us and let us assume the responsibility" (Soike 1995:162).

Bent-rafter Gothic construction, although more economical in labor and materials, proved less rigid than the more expensive sawed type. Many farmers adopted a combination of the two with sawed-type rafters spaced every eight to twelve feet and bent rafters spaced between. Other manufacturers took a different approach to offset structural weakness. The Loudon Machinery Company substituted a patented, curved, reinforcing truss that ran continuously from plate to

plate at intervals of eight feet. Louden also introduced the idea of having rafters span the entire space from one foundation sill to the other, thus avoiding the weak point where the bent rafters joined the upper wall plate (Soike 1995:162).

The Gothic roof reached its final phase of innovation with Henry Giese, an agricultural engineer, playing a pivotal role. Working with the Rock Island Lumber Company, Giese sought the best curve for the Gothic barn to withstand wind forces and reduce back pressures and also explored the use of modern glues to yield a stronger bent rafter. By 1938, Weyerhaeuser marketed these factory-built, glued, bent rafters under the trade name "Rilco" (Soile 1995:162-163).

Framing for Gothic barns was constructed either on the foundation, the hay mow floor, or the building plate. Most Gothic barns were built from the mow floor up, resting on a glazed tile or concrete block basement (Harper and Gordon 1995:224).

Two of the leading manufacturers of ground-level stable barns with truss-supported roofs were the Louden Machinery Company of Fairfield, Indiana and the James Manufacturing Company of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. A 1927 article discussed the merits of the Gothic roof barn:

The advantages of the Gothic roof, in providing a greater amount of hay space, with a given floor area, are self evident. The question of whether or not someone prefers to construct this type of roof depends entirely upon whether the additional hay space is worth the extra cost. With hay chutes in each end of the barn, the labor of hay feeding is reduced to a minimum (as cited in Visser 1997:101).

Other Gothic-roofed barns have been documented to have used standard barn plans. For example Alden Hopkins's barn near Jimstown, Sussex County, was built in 1936 to a plan obtained from a farm supply company in Pennsylvania (Shriber 2002:51). A 1929 barn in Newark Valley, New York was apparently erected using a combination of two Sears Roebuck barn models (Nizalowski n.d.).

Gothic-roofed dairy barns are uncommon features of the Delaware agricultural landscape. Among other examples are the Bullock barn, a wood-framed structure with appended outbuildings in Whittlesburg vicinity, Kent County; the Ryan barn, a wood-framed structure with appended milkhouse in the Smyrna vicinity, Kent County; the Hopkins barn in the Jimstown vicinity, Sussex County; and the Liston barn in the Thomas Landing vicinity, New Castle County. According to Dorothy Hall, her father John Isaacs was responsible for the erection of a brick and wood-framed, Gothic-roofed dairy barn similar to that on the Hall farm south of Slaughter Beach Road in Slaughter Neck. This barn is still standing (Dorothy Hall 2005; Figure 16).

## 4.0 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

In his Preservation Brief on historic barns, Michael J. Auer considered aspects of integrity of historic barns.

- Setting. Barns belong of farms, where they can be seen in relation to the surrounding fields and other structures in the farm complex. Contributing to the setting are fences, stone walls, roads, paths, barnyards, corrals, and ancillary structures such as windmills and silos.

- Form. The shape of a barn is of great importance in conveying its character. For example, round barns are defined by structure shape, and gambrel and Gothic roof barns are defined by roof shape.
- Materials. The survival of original or historic materials such as weathered wood siding, irregularly shape stones, roughhewn logs, and dressed beams contributes to the significance of a barn.
- Openings. Barns generally have few openings for windows and doors. Typically, large wagon doorways and openings to the hayloft are critical to barn character.
- Interior spaces. Typically, the barn is a combination of confined spaces on the lower floor and a large open space above. To retain integrity, these spaces should retain their original character.
- Structural framework. The exposed structural framework is a major component of the character of most historic barns. To retain integrity, elements of the framework that were initially exposed should remain exposed (Auer 1989).

The Cedar Creek Mill Farm barns retain a high degree of integrity. Although no longer a dairy farm, the surrounding parcel remains in agricultural use. Therefore, the barns retain integrity of setting. In addition, the original form, materials, openings, interior spaces, and structural framework of the barns are basically intact. Alterations, including replacement of gable end windows and installation of aluminum soffits, have not compromised the historic character of the buildings. The two Gothic-roofed barns are currently used for storage.

The barns are likely eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for their architecture as representative of well-preserved and uncommon examples of twentieth-century Gothic-arched dairy barns.

The house was built in 1982 to replace an earlier building destroyed by fire. The equipment sheds were constructed at varying times from the 1930s through the 1980s. All have been altered, and none conveys strong associations with the era of construction of the barns. Therefore, no other building contributes to the significance of the property.

Farm fields still surround the building cluster. These fields are cultivated using equipment stored in the buildings of the cluster. However, the farm is no longer used for dairying. Crops raised are not raised for either cow feed or pasture. Therefore, the current croplands no longer are associated with the original, historic use of the barns. Therefore, they do not appear to contribute to the significance of the barns.

## **5.0 RECOMMENDED BOUNDARY**

Selecting a National Register boundary of an agricultural property requires a consideration of extant buildings, landscapes, and structures, and the interrelationships among the three. The two barns, the dairy barn and the mule barn, clearly possess the architectural significance necessary for National Register eligibility. The remaining clustered buildings and farm fields do not. Therefore, the recommended National Register boundary of the farm includes a portion of Sussex County tax parcel 3-30 15.00 71.00 containing the two brick and wood-framed barns and consists of a polygon drawn around the outer walls of these two buildings (Figure 2).

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## FIGURES

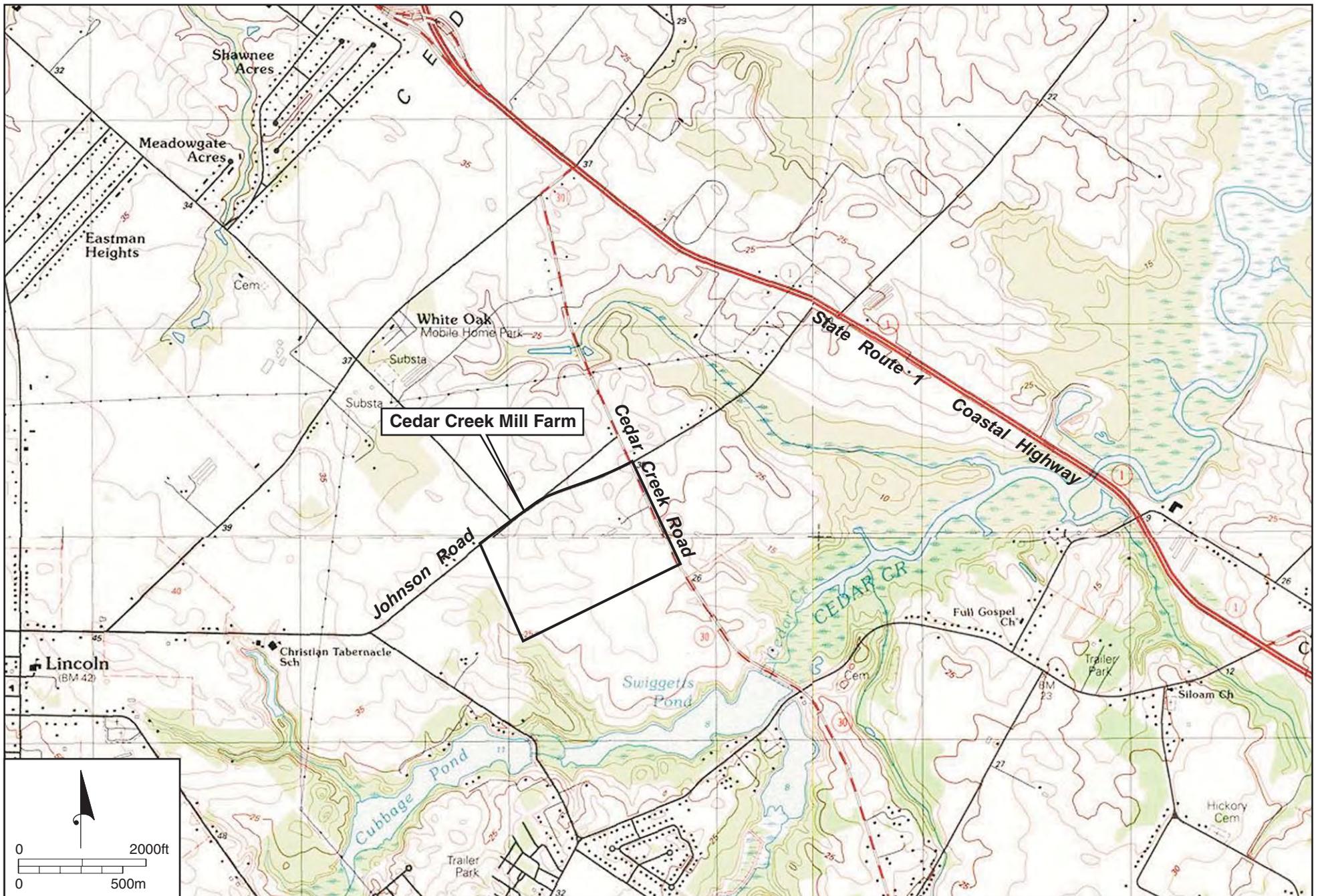


Figure 1. Location map. *Ellendale* 7.5-minute series, USGS quadrangle, 1992.

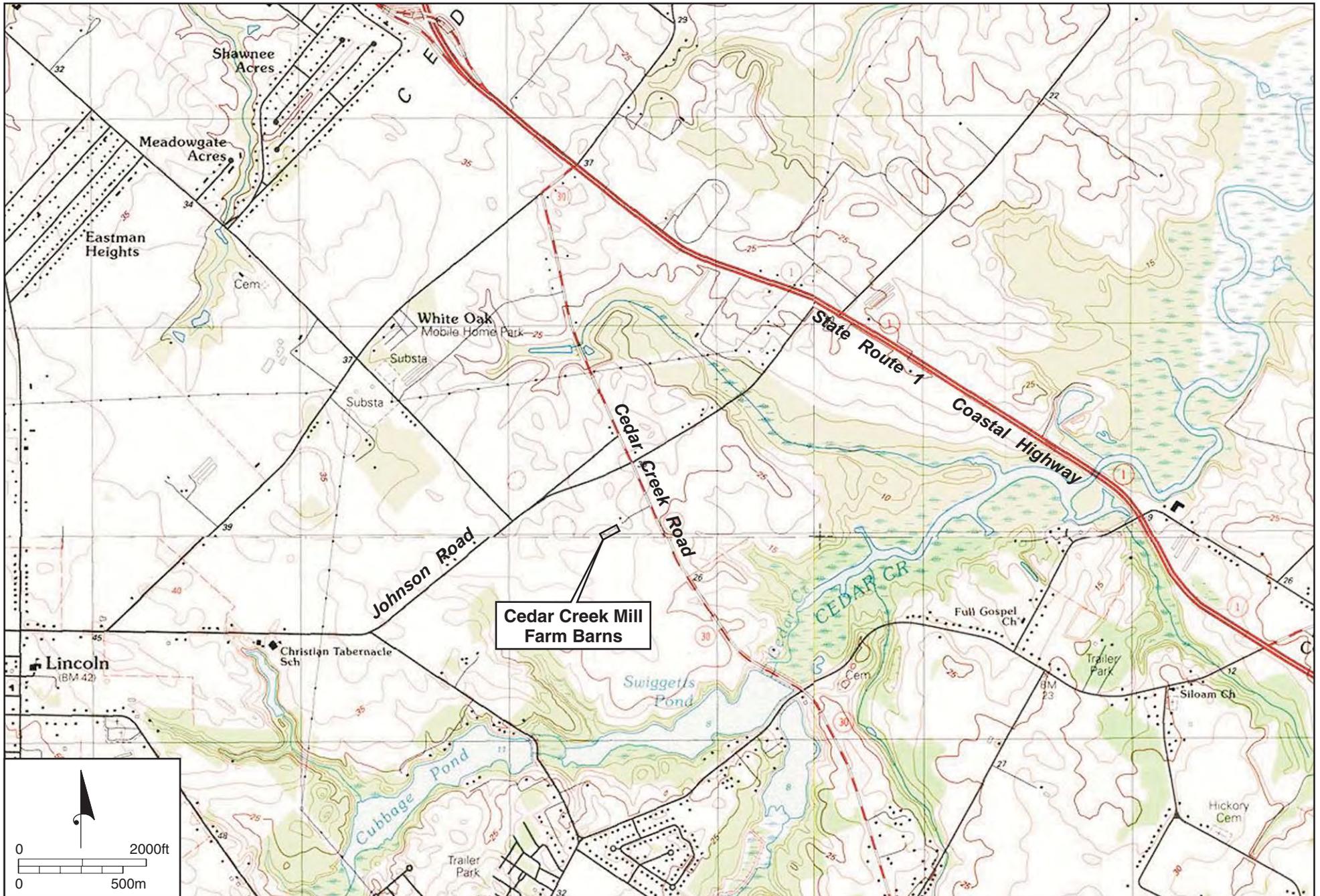


Figure 2. Recommended National Register boundary of Cedar Creek Mill Farm barns.

# PLATES



Plate 1. Main barn. South and east elevations toward northwest.



Plate 2. Main barn. North elevation toward southeast.



Plate 3. Main barn. Small block connecting barn to silo. South side toward north.



Plate 4. Main barn. Interior, ground floor. South aisle toward northeast.



Plate 5. Main barn. Interior, ground floor, central aisle toward east.



Plate 6. Main barn. Portion of hay chute. Ground floor, west end, toward southwest.



Plate 7. Mule barn. South and east elevations toward northwest.



Plate 8. Mule barn. North and west elevations toward southeast. Note concrete stave silo at rear



Plate 9. Equipment shed. South side of farmyard. North and west elevations toward southeast.



Plate 10. Equipment shed. South and west elevations toward northeast.



Plate 11. Equipment shed. North side of farmyard. South and west elevations toward northeast.



Plate 12. Equipment shed. North and west elevations toward southeast.



Plate 13. Equipment shed. West side of farmyard. South and west elevations toward northeast.



Plate 14. House. East façade and south elevation toward northwest.



Plate 15. House. West and south elevations toward northeast.



Plate 16. Slaughter Neck farm barn. Located south of Slaughter Beach Road. West and south elevations toward northeast.