

V. HISTORIC CONTEXT NARRATIVE

A. Introduction

The plethora of documents, surviving buildings, landscapes, other material culture, oral history, and the archaeological remains of New Castle and Kent counties' farms of the 1830-1940 period have made creating this historic context no mean task. Many sources remain untapped and the potential of many others barely explored. Other scholars and the context's authors have mined some sources in greater depth. They form the basis of the following historic context narrative. The primary documentary sources and the methods of analysis employed in the present project are outlined in II. PROJECT METHODOLOGY.

That this is an historic context for the archaeology of agriculture and farm life in New Castle and Kent counties between 1830 and 1940 has influenced both the context's organization and its content. Specifically, the historic context narrative aims to lay a foundation upon which to establish the associated archaeological property types, research questions, criteria for evaluating individual archaeological resources, and goals and priorities for identifying, evaluating, registering, and treating the property types. Each time period, 1830-1880 and 1880-1940, is discussed separately. For each period, the narrative begins with a section on Agricultural Production and concludes with discussion of the Sociocultural Context. The former encompasses such issues as farm numbers, acreage, value, production, farming practices, and the material culture of farming (especially architecture and landscape). The latter emphasizes demography and other social, ethnic, economic, and ideological characteristics of the farming population. While the sources utilized to construct the context differ for each major section and between time periods, the sections of the narrative exhibit parallel structures. Discussion moves from the general--the state as a whole and each county--to the specific--from studies of several sample hundreds to studies of individual farms.