

# CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY AND EVALUATION REPORT



MILTON • DELAWARE



# **Cultural Resource Survey and Evaluation Report**

**Town of Milton  
Sussex County  
Delaware**

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**For**

**Town of Milton**

**and**

**Delaware State Historic Preservation Office**

**Center for Historic Architecture & Design  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware**

**2009**



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## Abstract

This report is a survey and physical evaluation of historic properties outside of the National Register of Historic Places Milton Historic District in the Town of Milton, Sussex County, Delaware (S-1110). The purpose of this report is four-fold: 1) to report the initial documentation of the historic properties in the form of a cultural resource survey; 2) to identify the properties potentially eligible for inclusion in an expansion of the existing National Register district; 3) to identify properties that should be protected for the good of the town by a local historic zoning ordinance; 4) and to expand the historic background of the survey area into the late twentieth century and to recognize the roles played by people of color. The Town of Milton hired the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), University of Delaware, to conduct this survey in two phases, from September 2007 through January 2009. Funding for the work was provided by the town, a matching funds CLG grant from the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, and matching funds from CHAD.

The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places listed the existing historic district in Milton in 1982. At that time, boundaries drawn for the district included the four principal streets in the town of Milton during the nineteenth century: Union and Federal streets, which run generally north and south, along with adjacent blocks of Chestnut Street; and Broad and Mill Streets, which run generally east and west. The area encompasses a wide variety of residential, commercial, religious, and public buildings built between the late eighteenth century and the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Over a quarter of a century later, the National Register Historic District inventory and nomination is in need of review. Historic resources have been demolished, moved, or altered, and new structures have been built. In addition, later periods of the town's development are now considered significant elements of its history. This report builds upon the original nomination by expanding the context to include discussion of two more recent chronological periods (Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940+/-, and Suburbanization and Early Ex-urbanization, 1940-1960 +/-) and to address the historic resources related to workers' housing, particularly that of African Americans and Native Americans.<sup>2</sup>

This report includes information gathered from historic background research and field surveys to determine the potential significance of 265 historic properties in Milton. Based on this work, it is clear that expansion of the existing historic district in Milton is possible, potentially adding 178 properties to the current local historic zone and/or the National Register Historic District. In North Milton, the boundaries could be expanded to include 25 properties along both sides of Union Street from Atlantic Avenue to Tobin Street, west to Hazzard Street; 27 properties to the west in the area of Mulberry Street, from Lake Drive and Magnolia north to the intersection with Willow; 6 properties along Reed and Tilney streets; and 38 properties on the north end of town between Mulberry and Union, from Tobin Street to Route 16. In South Milton, the boundaries could be expanded on the east to incorporate 40 properties along Coulter, Collins, Walnut, and Chestnut from Front to Atlantic, many of which relate to the non-white communities in Milton; secondly, it could be expanded to add 25 properties south along both

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<sup>1</sup> Carter et al, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Milton Historic District (S-1110)*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> DESHPO, *Environmental Review and Compliance Evaluation Sheet for National Register Eligibility: Architectural Resources, Potential Milton Historic District Expansion*, 2007.

sides of Federal Street and Chestnut from Sand to Park, and 17 properties along Chestnut Street south of Railroad Avenue. The historic properties catalogued in these areas show common developmental patterns tied to the history and growth cycles of Milton from the time of its naming in 1763 through 1960. A majority of the newly surveyed surviving properties represent the Industrialization and Early Urbanization period (1830-1880+), the Urbanization and Early Suburbanization period (1880-1940 +/-), and the Suburbanization and Early Ex-urbanization period (1940-1960 +/-), all of which include episodes of economic decline and expansion.

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## I. Introduction

The Town of Milton, Delaware, contracted with the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), University of Delaware, in 2007 to conduct an evaluation level architectural survey for the Town of Milton, covering the areas outside of the existing Town of Milton National Register of Historic Places Historic District (S-1110). This multi-phased project began in September 2007 and concluded in June 2009 with this report. Rebecca J. Sheppard, Associate Director of CHAD, served as principal investigator. Stephanie Shaw and Victoria Walker, CHAD graduate students and professional staff, conducted the survey fieldwork and research between September 2007 and August 2008, assisted by a number of other CHAD graduate and undergraduate students.

Between 1979 and 1982, a group of Milton citizens undertook the first historic property survey for the Town of Milton. The historic property survey was the basis for the nomination of 198 properties as the Milton Historic District (S-1110), which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register in 1982. At that time, boundaries drawn for the district included the four principal streets in the town of Milton during the nineteenth century: Union and Federal Streets, which run generally north and south, along with adjacent blocks of Chestnut Street; and Broad and Mill Streets, which run generally east and west. The area encompasses a wide variety of residential, commercial, religious, and public buildings from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. Areas of significance for the Milton Historic District include: Architecture, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Commerce, Education, Maritime History, Social History, and Transportation.<sup>1</sup>

In 1995, the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DESHPO) determined that a potential expansion of the Milton Historic District was possible. At that time, boundaries drawn for the potential district expansion incorporated many streets surrounding the present historic district, including: Walnut, Atlantic, Collins, Coulter, Mulberry, Orchard, Betts, Broad, Reed, Tilney, Chestnut Street from Mill to Front and from Sand Street to the town limit, Union Street from Route 16 to Atlantic Avenue, Federal Street from Sand Street to the town limit, and Lake Drive. Potential historic themes and chronological periods beyond those addressed in the original nomination included: workers' housing, African American and Native American properties, and architecture representing the Urbanization and Early Suburbanization period (1880-1940+/-) and the Suburbanization and Early Ex-urbanization period (1940-1960 +/-).

This report is a survey and physical evaluation of historic properties outside of the National Register of Historic Places Milton Historic District in the Town of Milton, Sussex County, Delaware (S-1110). The purpose of this report is four-fold: 1) to report the initial documentation of the historic properties in the form of a cultural resource survey; 2) to identify the properties potentially eligible for inclusion in an expansion of the existing National Register district; 3) to identify properties that should be protected for the good of the town by a local historic zoning ordinance; 4) and to expand the historic background of the survey area into the late twentieth century and to recognize the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Carter, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Milton Historic District (S-1110)*.



roles played by African-Americans and Native Americans. The Town of Milton hired the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), University of Delaware, to conduct this survey in two phases, from September 2007 through January 2009. Funding for the work was provided by the town, a matching funds CLG grant from the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, and matching funds from CHAD.

This report includes information gathered from historic background research and field surveys in the Town of Milton to determine the significance of 265 historic properties that lie outside of the boundaries of the existing historic district. The main body of the report provides general background information on the region around Milton, details the research methodology, chronicles the town's growth and development, discusses the overall findings of the survey, and gives recommendations for the survey areas based upon all elements of the research and field survey. Appendix A provides a compendium of all the sites surveyed in Milton. The Appendix begins with a chart of the surveyed properties, followed by descriptions of the properties, and a photograph of each main building. All photographs were taken by CHAD staff.

Based on this work, it is clear that expansion of the existing historic district in Milton is possible and would add 178 properties to the district. In North Milton, the boundaries could be expanded to include 25 properties along both sides of Union Street from Atlantic Avenue to Tobin Street, west to Hazzard Street; 27 properties to the west in the area of Mulberry Street, from Lake Drive and Magnolia north to the intersection with Willow; 6 properties along Reed and Tilney streets; and 38 properties on the north end of town between Mulberry and Union, from Tobin Street to Route 16.

In South Milton, the boundaries could be expanded on the east to incorporate 40 properties along Coulter, Collins, Walnut, and Chestnut from Front to Atlantic, many of which relate to the non-white communities in Milton; secondly, it could be expanded to add 25 properties south along both sides of Federal Street and Chestnut from Sand to Park, and 17 properties along Chestnut Street south of Railroad Avenue. The historic properties catalogued in these areas show common developmental patterns tied to the history and growth cycles of Milton from the time of its naming in 1763 through 1960. A majority of the newly surveyed surviving properties represent the Industrialization and Early Urbanization period (1830-1880+), the Urbanization and Early Suburbanization period (1880-1940 +/-), and the Suburbanization and Early Ex-urbanization period (1940-1960 +/-), all of which include episodes of economic decline and expansion. The majority of the 90 properties considered non-contributing to the potential district expansion were built after 1960.

**Level of Survey.** In accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, this report employs an intensive level of survey in order to make informed decisions regarding protection and preservation of the historic properties outside of the existing Milton Historic District. According to *Guidelines for Architectural and Archaeological Surveys in Delaware*, an evaluation level survey is the most intensive level of survey.<sup>2</sup> This level of study includes an evaluation of the potential National

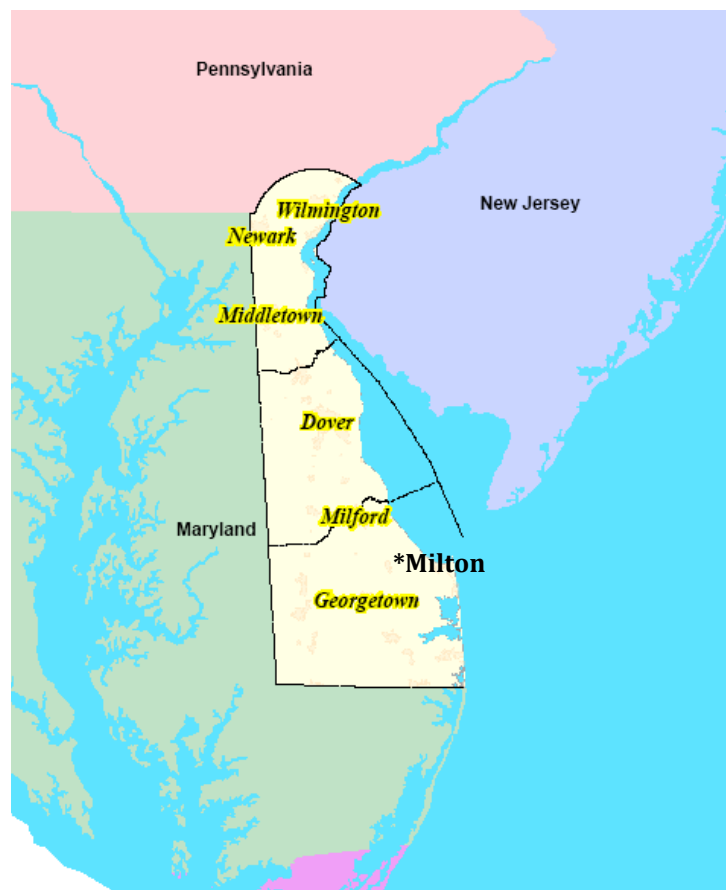
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<sup>2</sup> Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, *Guidelines for Architectural and Archaeological Property Surveys* (Dover, DE: DE SHPO, 1993), p. 10.

Register eligibility of properties for the treatment or protection of the eligible historic properties.

**Project Location and Size.** All of the historic properties in the survey area are located within the town of Milton, Sussex County, Delaware. A map of Delaware shows Milton's location within the state (Figure 1).

All surveyed properties surround the existing historic district, stretching from the boundaries of the district out towards the current boundaries of the town. Modern land use includes mostly single-family dwellings, but also encompasses a variety of small commercial buildings and community-related properties such as schools and churches. A parcel map shows the boundaries of the survey areas, divided into North and South Milton for greater clarity (Maps 1 and 2).



**Figure 1:** Map of Delaware showing location of Milton. (Source: Delaware Datamil)



# North Milton

## Cultural Resource Survey Area, 2007-2009



### Milton, DE

#### Milton Addresses

#### HD

- Surveyed Area
- Historic District
- Surveyed Area Addendum

Sussex Parcels

Roads

Milton Boundary

0 0.045 0.09 0.18 Miles

Center for Historic Architecture and Design

June 26, 2009

Map created by John Laznik, Stephanie Shaw, Laura Schmidt and Genevieve Lodal



# South Milton

## Cultural Resource Survey Area, 2007-2009



### Milton, DE

#### Milton Addresses

#### HD

- Surveyed Area
- Historic District
- Historic District Addendum
- Sussex Parcels
- Roads
- Milton Boundary

0 0.0375 0.075 0.15 Miles

Center for Historic Architecture and Design

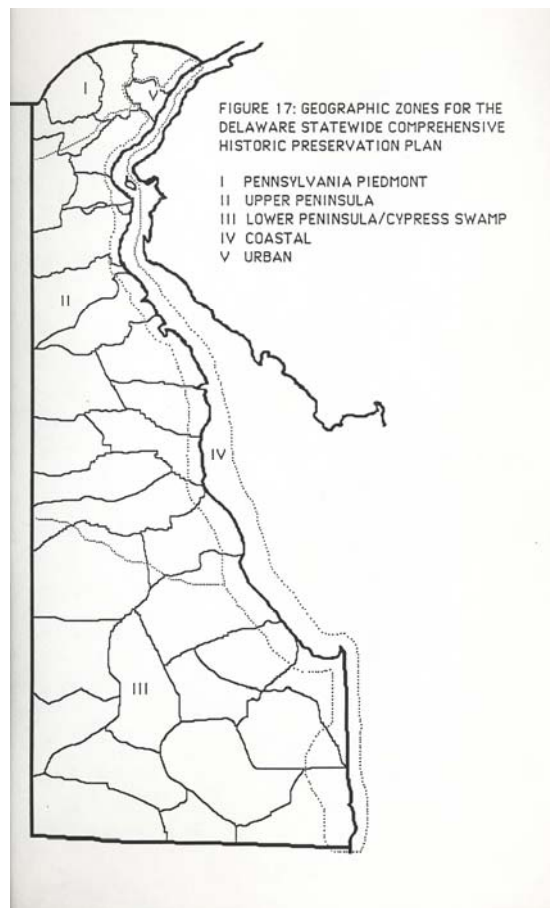
June 26, 2009

Map created by John Laznik, Stephanie Shaw, Laura Schmidt and Genevieve Lodal



## II. Background Research

Located in the southeastern portion of Sussex County, the southernmost county in Delaware, and southeast of the county seat, Georgetown, the town of Milton lies within Broadkill Hundred and the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone, as defined by the 1989 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Figure 4). Neighboring hundreds include: Cedar Creek, Lewes and Rehoboth, Georgetown, Indian River, and Nanticoke. The “southern portion of the state becomes increasingly flat, poorly drained, and very low in elevation, actually merging with the Atlantic continental shelf. Since the tidal shoreline extends from the Pennsylvania border along the coast of Delaware Bay to Cape Henlopen, and then along the Atlantic Coast to the Maryland border, Delaware was linked to, and greatly influenced by, a larger maritime world.”<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 4:** Map of Delaware’s Geographic Zones. Source: *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*.

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Ames, Mary Helen Callahan, Bernard Herman, and Rebecca J. Siders, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1989), p. 31.

The flat and swampy land of the freshwater Cypress Swamp postponed early settlement in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone until the later decades of the eighteenth century, except along the rivers that fed into the Delaware River and Bay. Later, a system of ditches enabled proper drainage of the land. The soil, commonly described as a sandy clay or loam, has supported a variety of natural flora and crops. Historically, forests covered much of the land, including Atlantic white cedar, cypress, tulip, magnolia, maple, ash, pine, and oak. Crops have ranged from tobacco in the seventeenth and eighteenth century to a variety of fruits and vegetables, which supported the Sussex County tradition of canning and food processing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Besides the Cypress Swamp, the Lower Peninsula Zone contains other waterways, most notably the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek, which empty into the Chesapeake Bay, and the headwaters of Indian River, which drains into the Atlantic Ocean. The town of Milton began to develop in the early eighteenth century, at the head of navigation of the Broadkill River.<sup>2</sup>

The geography of Milton reflects attributes common to southern and coastal areas of Delaware and the numerous small towns that make up its landscape. The historic properties of Milton are located throughout the core of the town, and demonstrate its expansion from the original principal streets of Union and Federal, and the early cross streets of Broad, Front, and Mill. The town is primarily residential, but a strong commercial and community element exists, particularly on Union and Federal Streets. The shipyards that once formed a major economic element of the town were located along Front Street and the Broadkill River, but exist now only as potential archaeological sites. Unprecedented growth in eastern Sussex County over the past decade has affected Milton, bringing both opportunities for commercial expansion as well as the threat of residential development. Subdivisions such as Cannery Village, located on the site of the Draper Cannery on Mulberry Street, potentially threaten the historic character of the town.

The town is relatively flat, with the Broadkill River bisecting the town, flowing under Union Street and Mulberry Street slightly south of Magnolia Road into Wagamon's Pond. The primary north-south corridor in the town is Route 5, which connects the town to Route 1, and becomes Union Street as it runs through Milton. Route 16, also known as Broadkill Road or Beach Highway, runs east-west and serves as the northern border of the town.

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<sup>2</sup>Ames et al., *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, pp. 31-36; Bernard L. Herman, Rebecca J. Siders, David L. Ames, and Mary Helen Callahan, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary* (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1989), p. 38; Susan A. Mulchahey, Rebecca J. Siders, Gabrielle M. Lanier, Nancy K. Zeigler, and Bernard L. Herman, *National Register of Historic Places Eligibility Evaluation: Baltimore Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware* (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1990), p. 5; Dean A. Doerrfield, David L. Ames, and Rebecca J. Siders, *The Canning Industry in Delaware, 1860-1940 +/-: A Historic Context* (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1993), p. 11; Harold B. Hancock, *The History of Sussex County, Delaware* (Georgetown, DE: Sussex County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), pp. 1-2.

Most properties in the survey area feature residential buildings set back at a uniform distance of five to ten feet from sidewalks. Most residences do not have their own driveways. Those that do have driveways are located at the side of the house. Older properties are closer to the road than those built in later periods, possibly due to use of the backyard for kitchen gardens. Dwellings constructed in twentieth century styles such as Bungalows tend to have larger front yards.

### **Regional and Local History of Milton**

Prior to European contact, several Native American tribes inhabited Delaware, including the Lenni Lenape, Nanticokes, Assateagues, and the Sickoneysincks. European contact and settlement of lower Delaware began in 1631, when the Dutch established a community in Lewes; colonization attempts by the Swedish and English followed shortly thereafter. Most early settlements occurred along Delaware's shoreline and waterways, with very few attempts to populate the interior. The English eventually prevailed in the perpetual conflict between the other nations, and Proprietor William Penn named Milton's home county, Sussex. Lewes served as the county's center of commercial and political activity from 1631 until residents' complaints prompted officials to move the seat of government to Georgetown in 1791.<sup>3</sup>

In the mid-eighteenth century, the settlement that would become Milton was known first as "Osborne's Landing" and then in fairly swift succession as "Conwell's Landing" and "Upper Landing." By 1760, Milton was one of the largest villages in Sussex County. The village's geographical positioning on the head of the Broadkill River led to its next name, "Head of the Broadkill," in 1763. The early settlement grew quickly due to its protected inland location, while its position near water transportation routes encouraged the export of products from both the forests and farms. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, a shipbuilding center began to grow in Milton, expanding throughout the nineteenth century until it reached its peak in 1880. By 1809, Milton was a well-established town containing four stores, seven granaries related to the shipping of grain, numerous gristmills, and several saw mills. This economic growth continued through the nineteenth century, supported by the shipbuilding industry; historic maps from 1868 and 1887 show intense residential and commercial on Union, Front, Broad, Mill, Chestnut, Walnut, Atlantic, Coulter, Mulberry, Tilney, and Reed Streets.<sup>4</sup>

The decline of the shipbuilding industry in the late nineteenth century slowed the pace of development in the town, but other industries, such as canning, button-making, and shirt-making, eventually took its place. The twentieth century brought improvements in the highway system and supported a period of growth in auto-related properties,

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<sup>3</sup> DeValinger, Leon, "Burning of Whorekill 1793," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 74 (1950), p. 473; Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, pp. 5-6, 58.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia T. Atkins, "History of Milton," in *Milton's First Century, 1807-1907* (Milton: The Milton Historical Society, 1982), p. 7; The Historical Society of Delaware, *Chronological History of Delaware*, 2008, 18 January 2008 <http://www.shgresources.com/de/timeline/>; Town of Milton, *Milton History and Character*, <http://www.ci.milton.de.us/history/>; Carter, *Milton Historic District*, pp. 4, 41.

residential architecture, and community properties such as schools and churches. Thus, over the centuries, the town experienced periods of intense growth that produced booms in construction and periods of stagnation, both of which can be read in the surviving stock of buildings.

Milton's history as a nineteenth-century shipbuilding and manufacturing town is well researched. However, less is known about the minority populations of Milton, which were quite sizeable, and their role in the town's development. By the early nineteenth century, Milton had a strong community of non-whites, including both African-Americans and Native Americans. Both groups established families and rented or owned their homes. They worked as farmers, laborers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, ship carpenters, and sailors. For most of the nineteenth century, they lived alongside whites in Milton, with the town divided by socioeconomic class and occupation rather than race. By the first quarter of the twentieth century, the town became more segregated with distinct African-American and Native American communities. These communities surrounded the core of the town and were primarily in outlying areas along the edges of town.



### III. Research Design

The primary objectives of this research were: 1) to survey the historic properties in Milton located outside of the current historic district; 2) to expand the historic context for the town to include twentieth-century chronological periods through 1960 and the role of African-Americans and Native Americans within the town; 3) to assess the physical integrity of the surveyed properties according to the *National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation*, under Criterion C (Architecture); and 4) to make recommendations about possible expansion of the existing National Register historic district and the creation of a local historic zone.

**Methodology.** In order to accomplish the research objectives both documentary research and field-oriented research were undertaken. Numerous secondary sources about Milton were consulted, including: the *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Milton Historic District (S-1110)*, *Milton's First Century*, Thomas J. Scharf's *History of Delaware*, Harold Hancock's *History of Sussex County, Delaware*, and the *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary* that accompanies the 1989 *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*.

A variety of primary sources were used to develop a better understanding of the town's population and its physical development. First, we collected aggregate census data for the town to understand population growth over time. Second, we created a database of population data from the United States Population Census Manuscript Returns for the years between 1850 and 1930. This database focused on collection information about households, including their total numbers and average size, as well as occupational data for heads of household. Third, we reviewed historic maps that showed the physical growth and development of Milton, including Beers Atlas (1868), the 1887 map of Milton, Sanborn Insurance Maps (1911, 1923, and 1937), and modern aerial maps from the Delaware Datamil for the period from 1954 to the present. We also consulted the research files of the Milton Historical Society for historic photographs and other materials.

On the basis of all these sources, we created a geographic information systems (GIS) map of the town showing data including tax parcels, streets, and probable date of construction among other variables. This map also included the current historic district boundary in order to assist in determining which properties needed to be surveyed as part of the current project.

Fieldwork consisted of walking the entire town of Milton, working out from the existing National Register District, to identify and survey properties that meet the National Register of Historic Places fifty-year age criteria. Fieldwork was done in two phases. The first phase, which took place in the fall of 2007, included 31 properties in South Milton on Walnut, Coulter, Collins, and Atlantic streets. The second phase occurred during June and July 2008, and included 234 properties in both North and South Milton on Chestnut Street from Mill to Front and from Sand Street to the town limit, Union Street from Route 16 to Atlantic Avenue, Federal Street from Sand Street to the town limit, as well as Mulberry, Orchard, Broad, Betts, Waples, Reed, Tilney, and Lake Drive (see Maps 1 and 2).

The actual survey fieldwork included the completion of appropriate Delaware State Historic Preservation Cultural Property Survey forms with the necessary data for each property (CRS-1, CRS-2, and CRS-9). In some cases, properties had been surveyed for previous projects such as Section 106 compliance and in those cases, survey forms included only an update form (CRS-10). For some properties, additional information was gained by talking to the owner or the Director of the Milton Historical Society, Melinda Huff. Each property, along with associated outbuildings and objects, was photographed in digital format. Survey forms were reviewed to make sure all information was included and CRS numbers were assigned in cooperation with DESHPO staff. Digital photographs were logged and labeled using the appropriate forms (CRS-12 and CRS-13). All properties were mapped on the GIS map and cross-referenced against the full series of maps to confirm dates of construction; the date of the map that first showed the property was included in the attribute table for the GIS map.

Lastly, the guidance contained in *National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation* was used to make determinations about physical integrity under Criterion A (Architecture) and to decide whether the property should be considered a contributing or non-contributing property in the National Register historic district or locally-zoned historic district. Many of the buildings have seen changes to their exterior, which include new siding, windows, doors, additions, or enclosed porches; each property was analyzed individually using the seven attributes for physical integrity. Next, four main elements were examined when considering whether a building or structure contributed to the district: 1) physical integrity; 2) connection to historical trends in Milton; 3) the architectural style of the building and the survival of features that expressed that style; and 4) the property's location in the landscape (specifically whether it was physically separated from Milton's historic core). Altogether, 178 of the 265 properties were found to have sufficient integrity to be considered contributing to either an expanded National Register historic district or a locally-zoned historic district.

**Expected Results.** After conducting the background research and a brief walk through the town, the majority of properties were expected to be mid-nineteenth through early-twentieth-century dwellings. Architectural styles such as Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, Colonial Revival, American Four-Square, and Bungalow were anticipated. A limited number of twentieth-century commercial and industrial buildings were also expected, along with schools and churches, within the survey area.

#### IV. Historic Background on the Town Of Milton

This section of the report describes the historical trends that shaped the development of Milton from the time of its earliest settlement through 1960. Organized into sections that focus on chronological periods identified by the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, the chapter identifies activities and property types related to major historic themes such as Settlement Patterns, Agriculture, Religion, Architecture, Manufacturing, and so forth. Maps 3 and 4 show the physical development of the town based on a series of historical maps.

##### Exploration and Frontier Settlement, 1630-1730 +/-

**Settlement Patterns:** The town of Milton is located in Sussex County, the southernmost county of Delaware. Long before Milton was founded, the site on which it stands was inhabited by Lenape and later Nanticoke Indians. These semi-nomadic Native American tribes sustained themselves through hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering, as well as cultivating corn, pumpkins, beans, squash, sweet potatoes and tobacco. Besides walking, they mainly traveled the waterways in dugout canoes. The arrival of Europeans to the New World in 1609 set in motion a cycle that devastated the native population through the transmission of disease as well as the disruption of their communities and ways of life. European settlers introduced the concept of land ownership to the Indians, eventually forcing the majority of Indians to migrate north and west.<sup>1</sup>

In 1609, Henry Hudson explored and documented the Delaware Bay and the Broadkill River. A little more than two decades later, in 1631, the Dutch first settled in southern Delaware in a place called Zwaanendael, or the “Valley of Swans,” near Lewes Creek, which eventually became the town of Lewes. Their patent listed the intent to raise tobacco and grain, and harvest whales. This early attempt at colonization failed when Native Americans destroyed the settlement within a year. The colony was abandoned and new settlement attempts did not begin until 1658, several years after the defeat of New Sweden by the Dutch. By 1660, the Dutch built a trading post at Lewes with a blockhouse and ferryboat operation to New Jersey. With the purchase of the colony by the City of Amsterdam in 1663, fresh Dutch settlement began.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, in 1664 King Charles II of England granted all the land from New Scotland, New York to the Delaware River, to his brother James Stuart, Duke of York & Albany, Earl of Ulster. The English soon occupied the Dutch settlement near Lewes Creek. The Dutch settlers could pledge allegiance to the new English rulers and remain, or leave unharmed within six months. Lord Baltimore of nearby Maryland plundered the settlement in 1672, and the Dutch regained the colony in July 1673.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas J. Scharf, *History of Delaware* (Philadelphia: L.J. Richards and Company, 1888), p. 8b-23; Joana S. Donovan, *It Began With a River: An Illustrated History of Milton and the Broadkill* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company Publishers, 2007), p. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, p. 11-15.

<sup>3</sup> Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, p. 14-15.

When the king granted land to the Duke of York, a border dispute arose between Lord Baltimore, proprietor of Maryland, and the Duke of York, controller of Delaware, a dispute that would not be resolved until the late-eighteenth century with the creation of the Mason-Dixon line. In the midst of this dispute, the King of England and Duke of York passed ownership of the land to William Penn in 1681. At this time, southern Delaware became Sussex County, and Lewes, the only seventeenth-century town in the area, received its permanent name. In 1682, William Penn divided Delaware into twelve hundreds for taxation purposes, five each in New Castle and Kent County and two in Sussex County. Around 1675, English settlement began in what became the town of Milton. In 1704, Pennsylvania was growing so large that the representatives from the northern and southern counties of the colony began to meet separately, one group in Philadelphia and the other in New Castle. The southern three counties would eventually become the state of Delaware.<sup>4</sup>

The roots of Milton began to develop in the late seventeenth century at the head of the Broadkill River, in Broadkill Hundred, located in the northeastern part of Sussex County. The Broadkill River is one of the principal rivers along the eastern bay coast of the state. It was named by the Dutch and is often referred to in the earliest deeds as “The Broad Creek.” According to Scharf, the name of the hundred “is derived from the creek of the same name, which flows through the central portion of the Hundred and is navigable as far as Milton.” The town of Milton is located at the head of navigation for the river, a common pattern among early towns on the Delmarva Peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

The beginning of the eighteenth century brought stability and increasing prosperity to the colony. At the turn of the century, the population, focused mostly near Lewes and eastern portions of Sussex County, was most likely less than 1,000 individuals. Sussex County residents began to meet in public assembly with representatives from New Castle and Kent counties in New Castle beginning in 1704. In this same period, the economy in the region shifted from primarily hunting and trapping to agriculture. The early 1700s also witnessed the first European durable settlement along overland transportation routes and in areas suitable to agriculture.<sup>6</sup>

In 1680, Richard Dawson received a warrant for 1000 acres of land located at the head of the Broadkill River, but he failed to use the land and it reverted to the Penn Proprietors. In 1686, James Gray was granted rights to the same land, which he named “Milford” and on which Milton now stands (Figure 3). By the early eighteenth century, the portion on the south side of the Broadkill came into the possession of George Conwell, while William Perry owned the land on the north side. Both Perry and Conwell were members of early families in the hundred. Conwell and Perry shared their resources to some degree and laid out portions of their lands adjacent to the Broadkill River in lots,

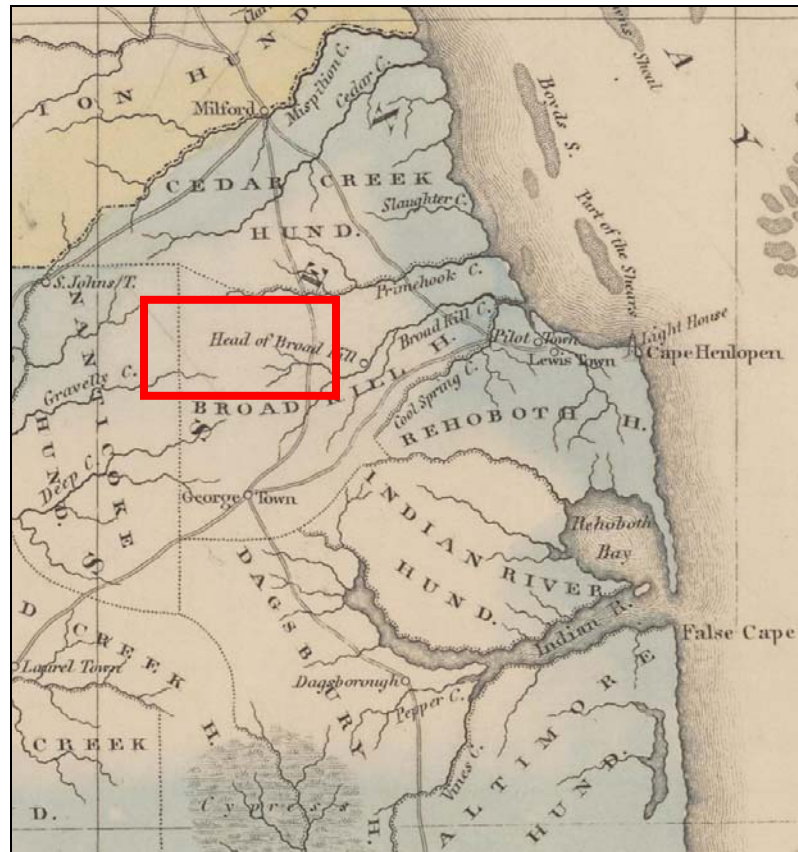
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<sup>4</sup> *Delaware Counties and Hundreds*, July 1997, Delaware Genealogical Society, 2008 <http://delgensoc.org/delhund.html>; *Milton History and Character*, 2005, Town of Milton, Delaware, <http://www.ci.milton.de.us/history/>; *History of Sussex County*, Sussex County Delaware Government, 2008 <<http://www.sussexcountysde.gov/about/history/index.cfm>>.

<sup>5</sup> Scharf, *History of Delaware*, p. 1255; Carter, *Milton Historic District*, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, p. 21-25; Ames et al, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, p. 45-46.

which they put up for sale. By the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, a small village had developed.<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 3:** Map showing location of Milton (Head of Broad Kill) in Sussex County, Delaware (1816). Source: University of Delaware Digital Map Collection<sup>8</sup>

**Religion:** Religion was important even to the earliest settlers of the Broadkill region and the first church in the area was built prior to 1729. St. John the Baptist P. E. Church in the Wilderness was erected at the “fording-place of Long Bridge Branch in the forest of Broadkill where the road crossed that stream, and which was at that time the main thoroughfare leading to the lower part of the County and into Maryland.” The church was built from native white oak and cypress and located about two and one-half miles from Milton. The church was under the charge of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Lewes, and it operated until 1800, when it was converted into a schoolhouse. Later, this

<sup>7</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, p. 14; Scharf, *History of Delaware*, p. 1262; Carter, *Milton Historic District*, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Fielding Lucas, “Delaware, 1816,” University of Delaware Library Digital Collections, <[http://cdm.lib.udel.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/hmc&CISOPTR=70&REC=1](http://cdm.lib.udel.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/hmc&CISOPTR=70&REC=1)>.

congregation held services in the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant churches of Milford.<sup>9</sup>

**Agriculture:** Agriculture became Sussex County's largest occupation by the end of the Exploration and Frontier Settlement period. Staple products included tobacco, lumber, corn, wheat, and rye. "To earn extra money, farmers sometimes worked for their neighbors, prepared cypress shingles, dressed timber, and sailed on shallops carrying produce, corn, and lumber to Wilmington and Philadelphia." Other occupations seen in Sussex County included pilots, merchants, tanners, bricklayers, carpenters, blacksmiths, attorneys, ship carpenters, and physicians. For farm labor, settlers relied primarily on themselves and their families, as Sussex County contained relatively few slaves or free blacks.<sup>10</sup>

**Property Types:** Many different property types are associated with this early period in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone, including unoccupied virgin timberland swamp; increased arable land laid in two- and three-unit field patterns, contact Native American sites, early durable housing, and little inland settlement. Agricultural property types most likely during this early period include impermanent farm buildings and tobacco sheds. Most buildings were impermanent and earthfast in construction, framed on timber blocks or posts in the ground. Property types from this period in the project area almost exclusively represent archaeological resources rather than standing buildings.<sup>11</sup>

### **Intensified and Durable Occupation, 1730-1770 +/-**

**Settlement Patterns:** Towns developing around Lewes began to see significant settlement in this period. Society developed hierarchically with major landholders at the top, lesser landholders, farm managers, and forest overseers below them, and tenants, laborers, and slaves at the bottom. Many Native Americans who survived initial European contact and did not leave the area gradually became acculturated to European customs and beliefs. Prosperity and stability came to Sussex County as a direct result of control by the Penn family, and produced trade opportunities with neighboring colonies.<sup>12</sup>

During the first decades of the eighteenth century, Sussex County's population likely reached about 2,000 people, both free and slave, but by the beginning of the 1770s, the population increased dramatically as a result of immigration from Great Britain and a steady influx from neighboring territories. By 1775, one estimate suggests that Sussex County contained 13,928 inhabitants. At the time, the colony held 2,000 African

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<sup>9</sup> Scharf, *History of Delaware*, pp. 1264-1265; Donovan, *It Began with a River*, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, p. 21; Ames et al, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, pp. 23-24, 45-46.

<sup>11</sup> Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, pp. 39-41.

<sup>12</sup> Ames et al, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, p. 46; Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 46.

Americans, almost equally divided between the three counties. This population included slaves brought from Maryland and Virginia and those imported through the slave trade.<sup>13</sup>

From its earliest history, Sussex County dealt with political instability involving its borders. After the English fully gained control of Maryland and Delaware, the dispute between the Penn family and the Calverts of Maryland took center stage. The Indian River and Bay had previously served as the north-south boundary between Delaware and Maryland. Located about 14 miles north of the Indian River and Bay, the settlement of Milton was clearly in Penn's control. By the 1730-1770+/- period, the back country of present day Broadkilln, Baltimore, Indian River, and Cedar Creek hundreds had been significantly settled.<sup>14</sup>

Political instability and the high water table of Sussex County fostered the moving of buildings, and enabled residents to reuse their portable structures. In *The Stolen House*, Bernard L. Herman posits a theory for the development of this tradition:

While other areas on the Eastern Shore enjoyed a measure of political and economic stability, the lands of Sussex County and those along the Delaware-Maryland border remained in dispute. Border quarrels, which left issues of property ownership and legal jurisdiction in doubt, hindered the development of a durable architectural tradition until the late eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

House moving and insubstantial foundations became ways for the residents of Sussex County to deal with this instability. Herman notes that conservative house forms and architectural furniture also reflect this trend. Eighteenth and nineteenth century house movers had to use labor-intensive methods to move a building from one site to another, such as the use of sled-like wooden runners and teams of oxen to jerk the sled forward. The methods "did little to preserve fragile architectural features such as interior plaster or window glass."<sup>16</sup>

Milton was first known as "Osborne's Landing" and then in fairly swift succession as "Conwell's Landing" and "Upper Landing." The village's geographical positioning on the head of the Broadkill River led to its next name, "Head of the Broadkill," in 1763. The early settlement grew quickly due to its protected inland location, while its position near water transportation allowed residents to access products from both the forests and farms. By 1760, approximately 35,000 people lived in Delaware. Although early census data does not survive, early written accounts describe Milton as one of the largest villages in Sussex County.<sup>17</sup>

The earliest landowners in Milton included James Hood, Elizabeth Jones, Burton Hall, David Hazzard, Mary Furgus, Edwards Evins, Benjamin Benson, Richard

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<sup>13</sup> Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard L. Herman, *The Stolen House* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992), p. 182.

<sup>16</sup> Herman, *Stolen House*, pp. 183, 203.

<sup>17</sup> Scharf, *History of Delaware*, p. 1256; Virginia T. Atkins, "History of Milton," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 7; *Milton History and Character*.

Blockson, Nehemiah Lofland, Joseph Maull, Bevins Morris, Samuel Paynter, Thomas Rogers, Able Vent, and Samuel Wright. These early settlers all owned lots and houses; commercial enterprises included stores, granaries, and a tannery. Mill Street was the earliest principal street running along the south side of the Broadkill, while Broad Street was the principal street on the north side of the river. The first bridge connecting North and South Milton at Union Street was not built until 1793. The majority of the earliest structures in Milton were located along Broad, Union, and Mill Streets, although none of these earliest buildings survive.<sup>18</sup>

**Religion:** As in the earlier period, religion continued to be important to early settlers in Milton. Although there is no record of a church in Milton proper at this time, there were quite a few located in close proximity to town, including St. John the Baptist P. E. Church in the Wilderness, and the Cool Spring Friends Meeting House built on the Cool Spring Branch of the Broadkill River in 1742.<sup>19</sup>

**Economy:** During the Intensified and Durable Occupation period, arable land increased in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone as the forests were cut down. Unfortunately, the soil was very poor for agricultural purposes so farming occurred only at a subsistence level. With this said, Milton's earliest local economy was based on agriculture and the lumber industry. Large timber resources in the area including pine, cypress, oak, gum, and white cedar trees were cut down and used primarily for shipbuilding. Gristmills, sawmills, and bark mills began operating during this period, and local merchants started shipping lumber and grain. Milton's location on the river, with easy access to the mouth of the Delaware Bay, made it a prime location for shipbuilding and the first ship and boat yards were established in the late eighteenth century. Perhaps Baptis Lay, a German by birth, built the first vessel "Broadkiln" on the Broadkill in 1737. Edward and Nathaniel Naws of Sussex County bought this first vessel.<sup>20</sup>

**Property Types:** Property types in Milton from this period include roads, farm buildings, corn cribs, grist mills, saw mills, lumberyards, tanneries, shipbuilding facilities, stores, early churches, and dwellings.<sup>21</sup> There are no surviving resources for this time period in Milton or the project area; as with the earlier period, property types represent archaeological resources rather than standing buildings.

### **Early Industrialization, 1770-1830 +/-**

**Settlement Patterns:** Settlement spread throughout the entire Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone during this period. By 1790, the population of Sussex

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<sup>18</sup> William H. Welch, "History of Milton," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 16; Atkins, "History of Milton," p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 48, 52.

<sup>20</sup> Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 44; Carter, *Milton Historic District*, pp. 40-41; Atkins, "History of Milton," p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ames et al, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, p. 47; Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 43.



County had reached 20,488 people: 15,773 whites, 690 free non-whites, and 4,025 slaves (Table 1). Over the next forty years, the population of Sussex County increased by 32 percent, reaching a total of 27,721 individuals. During this period, the growth of the white population paralleled that of the entire county, increasing steadily each decade for a total of 28 percent by 1830. At the same time, however, Sussex County's non-white population demographics demonstrated the impact of manumission pressures. The free non-white population grew by 550 percent between 1790 and 1830, an increase that was matched by a parallel decline in the slave population, as hundreds of slaveowners freed their slaves. Broadkill Hundred followed this pattern, with the free non-white population increasing by 390 percent and the slave population decreasing by one-half between 1800 and 1830. By 1830, 80 percent of the total non-white population in the hundred was free.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, by the early nineteenth century, Milton had a strong community of free non-whites, including both African-Americans and Native Americans. By this time, the local Native American population of the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone was fully acculturated, although period accounts describe the preservation of some native customs and beliefs. By 1830, free non-whites, like their white neighbors, established families, and rented or owned property. Jobs for the white population included those in agriculture, maritime, and manufacturing. In a similar fashion, many free non-whites worked as farmers, laborers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, ship carpenters, and sailors.<sup>23</sup>

Life was not easy for those living in Broadkill Hundred during the late eighteenth century. One resident, Aletta Clarke, kept a diary in which she described everyday life in Broadkill Hundred during this time, revealing details about items such as the weather, church services, school, fishing, hunting, outings at Broadkill Beach, weddings, and social visits. Her journal also reveals the reality of life and the high frequency of illness

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<sup>22</sup> Ames et al, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, p. 49; Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 50. It is important to note here that the manuscript population census uses a variety of terms over the course of the nineteenth century to describe non-whites, ranging from "free colored" to "free black" to "mulatto," and that the use of these terms is often inconsistent even within a single document. The picture in Milton is further clouded by the presence of Native American, primarily Nanticokes, who are rarely identified as such in the period records. For this reason, in this report, we use the term "free non-whites" to encompass this range of classifications. It is not our intent to suggest that these populations were identical, but rather to reflect the nature of the information provided by period sources.

<sup>23</sup> 1800, 1820, 1830 U.S. Census of Population, Manuscript Schedule, Broadkill Hundred, Sussex County, DE; 1810 U.S. Census of Population, Manuscript Schedule, Baltimore, Dagsboro, Indian River, Lewes, Rehoboth and Broadkill Hundreds, Sussex County, DE; Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 52. Anne Yarbrough, "Milton Historical Society Panel Text: Slavery and Freedom" (Milton, Delaware: Milton Historical Society, n.d.); the panel text cites a variety of sources and illustrations including Joseph Hazzard's 1807 manumission from the Delaware Public Archives, Sea Protection Certificates, Population Schedules, Bethel A.M.E. Church graves and records, an 1836 survey showing James Gumby's land on Federal Street, and the Rising Sun Archives.

and death. Within the space of a year, her sister and father both died, as did several children and neighbors. The illnesses that led to their deaths were often sudden, painful, and short-lived.<sup>24</sup>

This population growth impacted the landscape in several ways. First, extensive deforestation cleared new land for agriculture while improvements in overland transportation routes offered ways to move products to market. The late eighteenth century saw many petitions for new roads as well as road improvements in the vicinity of Milton. During the early nineteenth century, Milton began to develop a clearer identity as a town. In 1807, the village formally changed its name from Head of the Broadkill to Milton. Eighteen inhabitants of Milton signed the petition to change the name, including Cornelius Coulter, one of the earliest shipbuilders in Milton, carpenter Samuel Paynter, Samuel Wright, and David Conwell.<sup>25</sup>

By 1815, a substantial town had developed (Figure 4). A bridge connected north and south Milton, a number of houses were identified in the historic core of the town along Union, Broad and Mulberry Streets and lots were plotted for future development spreading out from that core. By 1818, the pace of development prompted the citizens of Milton to request that surveyors lay out the streets, lanes, and alleys of Milton in a more regular way and produce an accurate map of the town.<sup>26</sup>

**Agriculture:** During this period, the pursuit of agriculture in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone remained economically marginal. Principal crops included corn and hogs, supplemented by wheat, oats, tobacco, and cotton. Milton residents often complained about swine running at large around the village, decimating wheat and corn as well as breaking fences.<sup>27</sup>

**Commerce and Manufacturing:** Much of Milton's early economy focused on shipping raw materials and manufactured goods to markets throughout the Atlantic economy and providing imported goods to local farmers. By 1809, the town contained four stores, numerous gristmills, seven granaries to store grain before shipment (annually an average of 500,000 bushels of grain shipped from Milton), and several saw mills. Between 1815 and 1825, Milton residents operated two tanneries, extracted iron ore from the swamps and shipped it to foundries on the Maurice River and in Egg Harbor, New Jersey, and manufactured castor oil and textiles. Many of these industries required water power, prompting Joseph Maull, John S. Conwell, and William W. Coulter to construct a dam across the Broadkill Creek in 1815, and subsequent construction of a gristmill, a sawmill known as 'Draper Mill', and a bark mill for the tanneries. This work sparked a

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<sup>24</sup> Aletta Clarke, "Aletta Clarke's Book: Life in the Broadkill Hundred, 1798-1793," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, pp. 40, 45.

<sup>25</sup> Carter, *Milton Historic District*, p. 40; Atkins, "History of Milton," p. 8; Hancock and McCabe, "Petition to Change Name to Milton," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> Hancock and McCabe, "Petition to Lay Out the Streets," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 89.

<sup>27</sup> Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 48; Hancock and McCabe, "Petition to Restrict Hogs from Running at Large," *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 93.

great deal of controversy among the local community, with petitions demonstrating that some residents adamantly opposed the new construction.<sup>28</sup>

Another industry that played a large role in Milton's development was shipbuilding. It began in a limited way as early as the mid-eighteenth century and continued through the nineteenth century, peaking in the period from 1870 to 1890. Cornelius Coulter engaged in shipbuilding by 1800 and his brother, William Coulter, succeeded him in 1825. Milton-built sailing vessels were allegedly used during both the American Revolution and the War of 1812, although the village's importance as a port generally surpassed its role as a shipbuilding center through the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

**Religion:** Religion played a role in the creation of more permanent settlements in Sussex County during this period and in Milton. The St. John the Baptist P. E. Church in the Wilderness closed in 1800 and was later used as a school. Churches constructed in Milton during this period include the Methodist Episcopal Goshen Church, built in 1802 on Chestnut Street and incorporated in 1807. Prior to the construction of that church, the Methodist Society congregated in homes around Broadkill Hundred. Aletta Clark willed land to trustees to build the Old Zion Church in 1818, located in the Broadkiln Neck. One of the earliest independent black churches in Sussex County, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, was first organized in 1820, on a half-acre lot located on the road to Broadkiln Beach.<sup>30</sup>

**Education:** In the early part of the period, schools in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone were held in private homes as well as Sabbath Day Schools. Sabbath schools, run by churches in the town, provided instruction for both children and adults. Following this pattern, early schools in Milton were held in private homes with neighbors, family members, and clergy teaching. The first public school in Milton was built in 1819 as the Milton Academy. The one-story frame building stood on the corner of Appletree (now Chestnut) and Coulter streets and accommodated 30 children. By the end of the period, however, the area was divided into formal districts that still used many of the original private schoolhouses. In 1829, the first school laws were passed, which offered some financial assistance to organizing schools into districts. Milton had two districts, #8 and #12, on the north and south parts of town respectively. The students in north Milton went to Milton Academy (located in south Milton), until another schoolhouse was built in the 1830s.<sup>31</sup>

**Property Types:** Property types found in Milton during this period include roads, impermanent and durable architecture, agricultural buildings, churches, schools, stores, granaries, grist mills, saw mills, bark mills, tanneries, and shipbuilding yards. Surviving resources are located primarily within the historic core of Milton, along Union and Federal streets. Most surviving properties in Milton of this time period are already included in the National Register of Historic Places Historic District for Milton. For

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<sup>28</sup> Welch, "History of Milton," pp. 15-16; Atkins, "History of Milton," pp. 10, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Atkins, "History of Milton," p. 9; Carter, *Milton Historic District*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, p. 52; Frank Zebley, *The Churches of Delaware* (Wilmington, Delaware: s.n., lithographed by William N. Cann, Inc., 1947), p. 273.

<sup>31</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, p. 38; Atkins, "History of Milton," pp. 10-11.

example, David Hazzard, Governor of Delaware from 1829-1833, owned the house at 327 Union Street (S-1110.108). Hazzard's house was a three-bay, side-hall and parlor-plan house with an end chimney and federal interior detailing. The house has since had numerous additions including a large late-nineteenth century colonial revival porch. Another surviving resource is the Robert Hood Carey Store at 302 Union Street (S-1110.21). The Carey Store is a late eighteenth- or very early nineteenth-century commercial structure with late-nineteenth-century alterations, and is an excellent example of a rural gable-front store (Figure 5). The front displays late-nineteenth-century shop windows and door and is now used as an ice cream shop.

Other surviving dwellings include the G.H. Warren House (S-1110.104) and the Draper-Atkins House (S-1110.39) on Federal Street. The Draper-Atkins House, built c. 1830, is a late Federal style, two-and-a-half story, center-hall-plan dwelling with a rear kitchen. Early nineteenth century homes on Union and Federal Streets as well as the Endeavor Lodge 17, AFAM (S-1101.153) on Chestnut Street also survive.<sup>32</sup>

The town may contain additional surviving resources from this period outside of the historic district. Several extant houses appear on historic maps by 1868, and it is possible that some of these buildings were built by 1830. These resources include dwellings along Atlantic Street, Broad Street, Chestnut Street, Mulberry Street, Reed Street, Sand Street, Union Street, and Walnut Street, all in close proximity to the existing Milton Historic District. Houses built during this time period were predominately three-bay vernacular dwellings, with Federal, Georgian, or Greek Revival detailing.

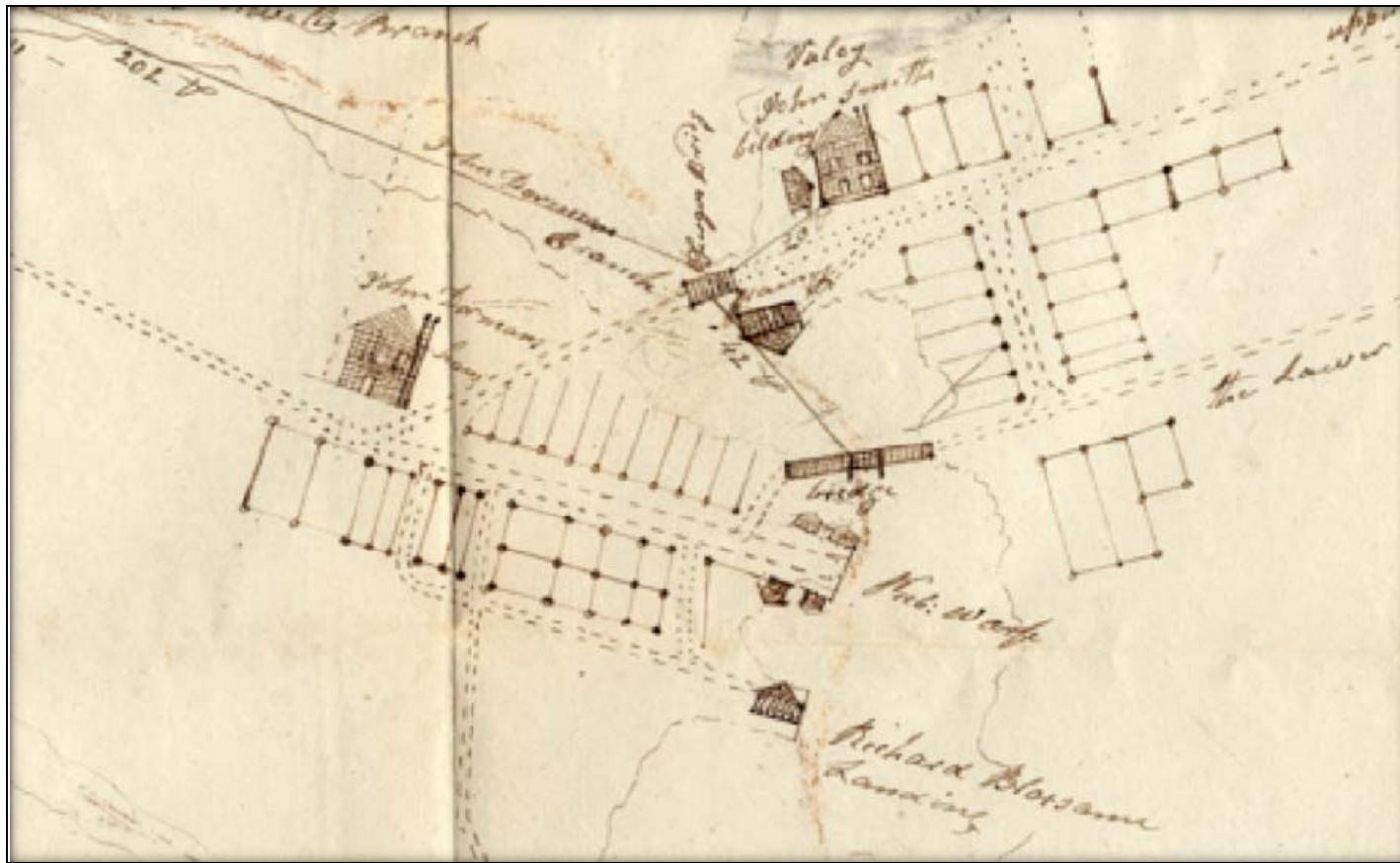
**Table 1: Population of Sussex County and Broadkill Hundred, 1790-1830**

	<b>1790</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>1830</b>
<b>Sussex County</b>	20,488	19,358	27,750	24,057	27,721
Whites	15,773	16,390	21,747	N/A	20,155
Free Non-whites	690	1,268	3,601	N/A	4,476
Slave	4,025	2,830	2,402	N/A	1,918
<b>Broadkill Hundred</b>	N/A	2,577	N/A <sup>33</sup>	2,963	3,893
Whites	N/A	2,182	7,689	2,516	3,096
Free Non-whites	N/A	140	1,470	303	685
Slaves	N/A	255	948	144	112

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1790-1830

<sup>32</sup> Carter, *Milton Historic District*, pp. 10, 24, 15, 29.

<sup>33</sup> The population of Broadkill Hundred was combined with the populations of Baltimore, Dagsborough, Indian River, and Lewes and Rehoboth hundred in the 1810 Federal Census.



**Figure 4:** Map of Milton, 1815. Source: Milton Historical Society



**Figure 5:** Robert Hood Carey Store, 302 Union Street. Source: Milton Historical Society.

### **Industrialization and Early Urbanization, 1830-1880 +/-**

**Settlement Patterns:** During this period, Milton experienced significant economic expansion, paralleled by increases in the population and the built environment. The total population of the town grew steadily over this period, increasing by 48 percent between 1840 and 1880 (Table 2). Most of this increase, however, occurred in the white population. The non-white population actually decreased from 160 to 148 individuals in the same period, likely due to the migration of many free blacks to urban locations such as Wilmington and Philadelphia that offered greater economic opportunities. Over this period, the landscape of Milton gradually became more highly segregated by race rather than occupation.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The 1840 Census of Population was the first to separate the town of Milton from the larger Broadkill Hundred. This census continued to list just the names of heads of household, with only a count of those living in the household by race, sex, and age. Furthermore, it does not list street names, making it difficult to know where people are located within the confines of the town. It is only possible to locate clusters of or single non-white households in relation to white households. Furthermore, it did not list

Milton had a large Native American population, mostly Nanticoke, which intermarried with both the black and white populations in the town. One of the most well-known Nanticoke families in the community were the Sockums, identified by Nanticoke tribal history as among the oldest Native American families of the area. Isaac Sockum moved to Milton from the Indian River area circa 1837, when the ship building industry created new opportunities for work, and purchased land just west of Aaron Marshall's wharf at Front Street. Sockum's large parcel of land at the corner of Walnut and Front Streets marked an area of Milton that later became known as Sockumtown. Members of the Sockum family were active in the Rising Sun Lodge No. 4, a gathering of the Masonic Order established in 1853. The first meetings of the Lodge were held in the home of Lott Purnell, a black sailor.<sup>35</sup>

Between 1830 and 1860, slavery remained a factor in the labor system of Sussex County, and in Broadkill Hundred, which contained 142 slaves in 1860. In Milton, slavery was less prevalent than in the agricultural landscape; by 1860, only 12 slaves lived in the town. Slave owners in 1850 and 1860 included Aaron Marshall (merchant), George Atkins (sailor), Joseph Atkins (sailor), John West (ship carpenter), Robert M. Hall (tailor), William C. Prettyman (ship builder), Peter Jackson (physician), Kendal S. Warren (laborer), Nehemiah D. Welch (farmer), Noble C. Ellingsworth (farmer), and Sarah Waples. None owned more than 3 slaves.<sup>36</sup>

Growth in the built environment paralleled the boom in population, funded largely by the successful shipbuilding industry. Between 1840 and 1880, the total number of households in Milton increased 64 percent, from 137 to 225.<sup>37</sup> Once again, most of this growth occurred in houses built for whites; while the households of non-whites increased between 1840 and 1850, they declined after that point, returning in 1880 to the same number (28) as in 1840. By 1880, white and non-white households appeared side by side, often clustered by occupation and socioeconomic class, rather than strictly by race. However, there were a few areas in the town that were predominately occupied by non-whites, indicating a trend that would intensify in the next decades.

By 1840, the total population of Milton reached 692 people, which included 160 free non-whites (23 percent of the population). The built environment comprised 137 households, with 28 non-white households mingled among those of whites. White

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specific occupations, rather aggregating them into categories of agriculture, manufacturing, ocean navigation, and commerce.

<sup>35</sup> Census records for the Sockum family demonstrate the difficulty with relying on census designations to identify Native Americans. From one census year to another, the Sockums were variously identified with an M for mulatto or mixed race, or a B for Black, depending upon the interpretation of the census-taker. Anne Yarborough, "Sockumtown: A Lost Milton Neighborhood," (Milton, DE: Milton Historical Society Display Panel Text, n.d.).

<sup>36</sup> 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Broadkill Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware.

<sup>37</sup> A household is defined as a social unit composed of those living together in the same dwelling.



households dominated certain areas of town, especially the main thoroughfares of Union and Federal streets. Many of those white households included slaves or other non-white domestic servants or laborers. Non-white households existed as scattered individuals within the white community (4), as small clusters of two to three households (11), and as one large group of 10 households, possibly located at the south end of Federal Street. The location of non-white households appears to have been linked to occupation and potential employers as well as to the availability of rental housing. The one large group of non-white households focused around two individuals, farmer George Gumby and brickmaker Joseph Oliver, both of whom could have offered employment to fellow non-whites.

Between 1840 and 1850, the total population of Milton grew slightly, by only 5 percent and included 150 households (116 white and 34 non-white). During this decade, nearly one-third of the non-white households (10 of 34) continued to be interspersed among the white households, often in the vicinity of whites with similar occupations. For example, farmer Charles Norwood and laborer Thomas Morris (both black) lived next door to white farmers and laborers. Similarly, William Salmons, Elisha Prettyman, Sylvester Hazzard, and Absolom Watson, all black laborers, lived next door to white laborers. Daniel Oney, a black sailor, lived on Walnut Street in an area dominated by those in maritime occupations.

At the same time however, nearly two-thirds of non-white households could be found in two major clusters. The first (9 households) continued to focus on Gumby and Oliver, while the second (8 households) included surnames that represented new non-white households in Milton (Holland, Burton, Harmon, Morris, and Jack). In fact, the increase in the number of non-white households overall likely coincides with an increase in manumissions of slaves in the area and the growth of employment opportunities linked to the shipbuilding industry in Milton.

The total population of Milton continued to grow through 1860, reaching 780 people, but the population of non-whites decreased in the same period, to only 129 people. This change in the population was accompanied by an increase in the number of white households (to 168) and a decrease in non-white households (to just 23). Most non-whites rented rather than owned their homes, but at least four had entered the ranks of homeowners by 1860. Significantly, three of the four were either house or ship carpenters, suggesting that this occupation generated a level of income that supported the acquisition of land, and two owned farm land in addition to their town lots. Two of the landowners were located on Federal Street, representing the core of the non-white community in that area. Carpenter George Gumby owned a house lot and a farm of 100 acres, while brick mason Joseph Oliver owned a house lot with two dwellings. Carpenter Elisha Prettyman owned a house with 4 acres on Chestnut Street, along with at least 1 tenant house and 14 acres of farmland. Ship carpenter Isaac Sockum had begun to build his family compound at the corner of Walnut and Front Streets with one house on rented ground.



**Table 2: Population of Sussex County, Broadkill Hundred, and Milton, 1840-1880**

	<b>1840</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>1860</b>	<b>1870</b>	<b>1880</b>
<b>Sussex County</b>	<b>25,093</b>	<b>25,936</b>	<b>29,615</b>	<b>31,696</b>	<b>36,018</b>
Free Whites	19,137	20,320	23,904	26,258	30,326
Free Non-whites	4,319	4,067	4,370	5,438	5,692
Slaves	1,637	1,549	1,341	0	0
<b>Broadkill Hundred</b>	<b>3,741</b>	<b>3,617</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>3,480</b>	<b>2,677</b>
Free White	2,884	2,906	2,580	3089	N/A
Free Non-whites	753	562	267	391	N/A
Slaves	104	149	142	0	0
<b>Town of Milton</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>1,026</b>
Free White	521	552	651	711	878
Free Non-whites	160	172	129	113	148
Slaves	N/A	11	12	0	0

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1840-1880

**Table 3: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1850**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	11	3	-	-	-	-	<b>14</b>
Artisan	11	1	-	-	-	-	<b>12</b>
Clergy	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Construction	7	1	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>
Domestic Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Laborer	21	16	4	-	-	-	<b>41</b>
Manufacturing	2	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Maritime	32	5	2	-	-	-	<b>39</b>
Professional	4	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
Railroad	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Retail	10	-	-	-	-	-	<b>10</b>
Services	2	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
None	2	1	-	10	2	-	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>147</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1850

The practice of living near one's place of employment, or in a neighborhood of residents with similar occupations continued in the 1860s. During this time Milton became known as a shipbuilding center, and this trade remained most profitable for a period of twenty years. Many shipbuilders and sailors lived in the area of Front, Walnut, Broad, and Mill Streets, some likely renting from their employers. James Ponder owned several enterprises that offered potential employment to both whites and non-whites. In 1863, he built a steam saw and bark mill on Front Street to prepare ship timber for his shipyard, also located on Front Street. Ponder operated a hotel on Front Street, as well as a store near Front and Union Streets. Samuel Martin owned a shipyard on Front Street between Chestnut and Federal Streets. Ponder, Martin, and ship carpenter Isaac White all owned multiple small residential lots on Front Street, Walnut Street, and Broad Street that were rented out. John H. Lank, James White, and Daniel Oney all worked as ship carpenters or sailors and lived in the same block on Walnut Street. John H. Lank's house remains on Walnut Street today (Figure 6).<sup>38</sup>

By the 1860s, Milton had developed into a substantial town, and on March 17, 1865, the state legislature passed an act incorporating Milton as a town. At this time, the limits of the town were defined as: "North Milton – "starting from the bridge eight hundred yards up the Main Street; then six hundred yards each way, east and west, from thence to creek on east side, and to the mill pond on west side, east and west sides to run parallel with Main Street;" and South Milton – "Starting from the creek at the foot of Main Street; thence twelve hundred yards up said street; thence west to mill-pond on one side, and on the other side to Robert Carey's line, following said line to Round Pole branch and down said branch to creek".<sup>39</sup>

Between 1860 and 1880, the population of Milton continued to grow, reaching 1,026 by 1880 (878 whites and 148 non-whites), as the shipbuilding industry reached its peak. While both white and non-white populations grew, non-whites represented an increasingly smaller proportion of the total population. In this period, many non-whites, especially free blacks, relocated to urban areas such as Philadelphia and Wilmington in search of greater economic opportunities.

In 1870 and 1880, non-whites continued to live throughout Milton, interspersed among the white community and generally in proximity to their employment, but a few discrete communities could be clearly identified. One neighborhood was located in the northern section of Milton, near the intersection of Broad and Mulberry streets. With the exception of one man who worked in a shoe shop, these heads of household were all sailors, and most likely lived in rental housing owned by Isaac White, a white ship carpenter. A second non-white cluster continued to exist at the south end of Federal Street and included both landowners such as George Gumby and Joseph Oliver and other sailors who rented from merchant Aaron Marshall. The third community of non-whites was found near the shipyards at the end of Mill Street and the corner of Walnut and Front streets and would eventually become known as Sockumtown. Surviving examples of

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<sup>38</sup> This discussion is based on a close comparison and analysis of Beers' 1868 map of Milton and the 1860 U.S. Population Census, manuscript schedules, Milton, Delaware. D.G Beers, *Atlas of the State of Delaware* (Philadelphia: Pomeroy and Beers, 1868.)

<sup>39</sup> Scharf, *History of Delaware*, p. 1263.

houses in these neighborhoods indicate that they were mainly simple, three-bay vernacular dwellings, such as Elizabeth Tingle's house located at 313 Walnut Street (Figure 7).<sup>40</sup>

**Economy:** Economic growth in Milton during this period was due largely to the success of the shipbuilding industry and to the commercial activities that supported the larger community. The breadth of the economy can be seen in the variety of occupations held by Milton residents and in the businesses shown on the 1868 Beers Atlas of Milton (Tables 3-6; Figure 8).

In this period, between one-third and one-half of the male heads of household worked as ship carpenters, sailors, river pilots, ship captains, sawyers, and shipwrights, participating directly in the construction or operation of sailing vessels. By 1880, the vessels built on the Broadkill reached the maximum dimensions for travel up the waterway fully loaded. For example, the *Anna L. Ponder* was built in 1892; she measured 80' long and weighed 97 tons. The other type of vessel commonly built on the Broadkill was intended for deep water and was led out to the Delaware River completely empty. These vessels, like the *George Taulane, Jr.* (1882) measured 151.3' long and weighed 465 tons. Shipbuilding was a family business in many cases; families engaged in the industry included the Ponders, Lanks, Atkins, Blacks, Conwells, Coulters, Davidsons, Duttons, Megees, Mustards, Prettymans, Russells, and Whites. Most lived in south Milton, and owned significant amounts of land used for both shipyards and for housing.<sup>41</sup>

Many seamen applied for Sea Protection Certificates, which listed scars, smallpox marks, warts and other identifying features. This custom started during the Napoleonic wars when British ships tried to impress American seamen by claiming that they were British subjects. Although these certificates were granted as early as 1804, the majority of those granted in Milton occurred between 1840 and 1860. In that period, 37 whites, 39 free blacks, and 8 mulattos (those of mixed descent) from Milton received certificates, further illustrating the prevalence of maritime occupations in the community, especially among non-whites.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> This discussion is based on a close comparison and analysis of Beers' 1868 map of Milton and the 1870 U.S. Population Census, manuscript schedules, Milton, Delaware.

<sup>41</sup> T.C. Conwell, "Shipbuilding on the Broadkill," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 139-162.

<sup>42</sup> Harold Hancock and C. Russell McCabe, eds., "Sea Protection Certification Applications," in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 64. The Milton Historical Society collection contains copies of eighty applications for seamen born in and around Milton.

**Table 4: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1860**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	10	-	-	-	-	-	<b>10</b>
Artisan	18	-	-	1	-	-	<b>19</b>
Clergy	3	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Construction	15	3	-	-	-	-	<b>18</b>
Domestic Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Laborer	9	5	-	-	-	-	<b>14</b>
Manufacturing	2	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Maritime	57	8	2	-	-	-	<b>67</b>
Professional	3	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Railroad	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Retail	16	-	-	1	-	-	<b>17</b>
Services	4	-	-	1	1	-	<b>6</b>
None	2	1	-	17	2	-	<b>22</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>181</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1860



**Figure 6:** John H. Lank House, Corner of Walnut and Coulter Streets



**Figure 7:** Elizabeth Tingle House, 313 Walnut Street

The remainder of the population engaged in occupations that supported the shipping industry and the urban population. Farmers, storekeepers, tailors and seamstresses, butchers, shoemakers, hotelkeepers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, coach makers, tinsmiths, coopers, druggists, and merchants provided goods and food both for the local population and for export. Physicians, teachers, clergymen, undertakers, and public officials such as a justice of the peace and postmaster offered much-needed professional services. The arrival of the railroad in the 1860s even brought a railroad conductor. Carpenters, brick makers, brick masons, painters, and plasterers built and finished the new housing needed by the increasing population. The range of occupations open to non-whites was much narrower than for whites; most worked in the maritime or construction trades or in agriculture, but few at a level above day laborer.

The Delaware Railroad Company formed in 1852 and completed the full north-south track by 1856. The extension of the railroad down into the Delaware peninsula sparked new economic growth and architectural development in the latter half of this period. By 1868, a second branch connected Harrington to Lewes. Although the railroad did not run directly through Milton at this time, its proximity to the town enabled many Miltonians to use it. The rise of the canning industry in Delaware, which began in the 1830s, was fueled in part by the completion of the railroad, which allowed rapid transport of fresh or canned fruits and vegetables to urban markets. By the 1880s, peaches, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and other produce were processed in canneries throughout Sussex County. The canning industry would continue to grow in the next decades.<sup>43</sup>

**Education:** Between 1830 and 1880, Milton maintained two schools for white children; one located in north Milton and the other in south Milton. However, the Civil War brought changes. First and most obviously, it eliminated slavery as a form of labor in the state. Increasing numbers of non-whites began to seek certain amenities for their families, and one of these was education for their children. On August 31, 1867, African Americans in Milton began construction on a schoolhouse with lumber supplied by the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands and other building materials supplied by four trustees. The school was built outside the town, on land that adjoined William Warren and William Mosley's properties, probably to the north of Milton.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ed Kee, *Saving Our Harvest: The Story of Mid-Atlantic Region's Canning and Freezing Industry* (Baltimore: CTI Publications, Inc, 2006), p. 59-60; *Chronological History of Delaware*; Carter, *Milton Historic District*, p. 41.

<sup>44</sup> Bradley Skelcher, *African American Education in Delaware: A History through Photographs, 1865-1930* (Wilmington, DE: Delaware Heritage Press, 1999), p. 24.

**Table 5: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1870**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	8	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>
Artisan	15	-	-	1	-	-	<b>16</b>
Clergy	2	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Construction	11	2	-	-	-	-	<b>13</b>
Domestic Services	-	-	-	1	1	-	<b>2</b>
Laborer	14	6	-	-	-	-	<b>20</b>
Manufacturing	6	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>
Maritime	51	6	3	-	-	-	<b>60</b>
Professional	8	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>
Railroad	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Retail	18	-	-	-	-	-	<b>18</b>
Services	6	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>
None	1	-	-	1	-	-	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	141	12	3	3	1	0	<b>160</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1870



**Table 6: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1880**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	11	1	-	-	-	-	<b>12</b>
Artisan	14	-	-	1	-	-	<b>15</b>
Clergy	3	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Construction	19	2	-	-	-	-	<b>21</b>
Laborer	15	12	-	-	-	-	<b>27</b>
Manufacturing	2	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Maritime	69	5	3	-	-	-	<b>77</b>
Professional	6	-	-	1	-	-	<b>7</b>
Railroad	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
Retail	25	-	-	1	-	-	<b>26</b>
Services	6	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>
None	4	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1880



**Religion:** Coinciding with population and economic growth, Milton saw growth in its religious buildings, with the construction of at least 5 new churches in town and another 4 in the surrounding area. In 1834, the Presbyterian congregation of Milton built a church on Chestnut Street in order to avoid traveling seven miles to the nearest Presbyterian church. In 1839, White's Methodist Chapel was erected on Route 1. In 1857, Grace Methodist Protestant Church, a one-story frame church was built on Union Street (S-1110.24). The congregation of Goshen M. E Church, previously located on Chestnut Street, built a new church on Federal Street in 1877. Also in 1877, St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church on Federal Street was consecrated. Churches built outside of the town in this period include Sand Hill Church (1859), Burton's Chapel on Route 1 (c. 1870), Reynolds M.P. Church on Route 30 (c. 1870), and Zion United Methodist Church on Route 16 (c. 1873).<sup>45</sup>

**Property Types:** Property types for this time period in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone include corn houses, orchards, stables, barns, sawmills, lumber yards, small factories, stores, attorney and surveyors offices, wharves, landings, roads, ships, bridges, railroad tracks and stations, and arable land. Other property types include hall-parlor or stair-passage plan houses, service wing additions, Italianate, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, and Greek Revival buildings, churches, public schoolhouses, mills, canneries, tanneries, and shipyards.<sup>46</sup>

The property types seen in Milton in this period include farms, stores, shoemaker's shops, blacksmith shops, wharves, roads, ships, bridges, railroad tracks, coach making facilities, wheelwright shops, dwellings, summer kitchens, service wings, churches, mills, and shipyards.

Settlement between 1830 and 1880 continues close to the historic core of Milton. The project area along Walnut Street and Atlantic Street includes five surviving resources from this period, all of which fall into the property type of the 3-bay vernacular dwelling and several include rear service wings. They include: M.C. Darby House (209 Walnut Street); J.H. Lank House (301 Walnut Street); 210 Atlantic Street; 208 Atlantic Street; and J.L. Lank Duplex (211 Atlantic Street). Throughout the rest of the survey area, there are 28 properties built by 1868 and another 22 properties built by 1887. These properties are located on Broad Street, Chestnut Street, Mulberry Street, Reed Street, Tilney Street, Union Street, and Walnut Streets. Buildings constructed during this period were largely 3-bay vernacular dwellings with Italianate, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, and Federal detailing. Many retain their original service wings or incorporated summer kitchens.

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<sup>45</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 48-53; Zebbley, *History of Delaware Churches*, p. 272; Scharf, *History of Delaware*, p. 1265.

<sup>46</sup> Herman et al, *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, p. 53-59.

## Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940+/-

**Settlement Patterns:** Between 1880 and 1930, the population of Milton remained between 900 and 1,100 people, fluctuating up and down in small amounts but never repeating the levels of growth seen in the mid-nineteenth century (Table 7). This absence of growth was due largely to the decline of the shipbuilding industry; although other industries attempted to fill the gap, none provided the economic impetus of shipbuilding. John Hazzard's 1887 map of Milton shows the town early in this period (Figure 9).<sup>47</sup>

The population of non-whites in Milton continued to develop in certain areas of the town. In 1910, Mulberry Street contained the largest community of non-whites, with 14 households, while Walnut Street was home to another 10 households. Smaller communities were located at Federal and Front streets, and on portions of Chestnut Street, Atlantic Street, East Avenue, Lavinia Street, and Bay Avenue, mirroring the earlier patterns of dispersed small clusters and isolated households. This dynamic changed slightly in 1920, when a new cluster formed on Mill and Reed Streets. Milton Terrace also contained a new non-white community numbering 8 households. As in other small towns with free black communities, many families owned their homes (14 out of 33 households in 1920). By 1930, segregation could be seen more clearly in the town, with very few non-whites living interspersed throughout the town, but rather concentrated into communities along Mill, Mulberry, Walnut, and Front streets. The pattern of home ownership continued, with 19 of the approximately 30 non-white households owned by their inhabitants.<sup>48</sup> Figures 5 and 6 show growth in the town, moving out from the historic core to the peripheries.

In 1909, a disastrous fire struck Milton, destroying much of the commercial district at the intersection of Union and Federal Streets and leaving only 3 commercial buildings standing. Along with able-bodied citizens, the fire departments of Milton, Georgetown and Lewes all helped fight the fire.<sup>49</sup>

**Manufacturing:** Early in this period the shipbuilding industry continued to fuel other sorts of economic expansion in Milton, especially in the area of retail activities to fulfill the needs of the population. In 1888, Milton's commercial district along Union and Federal Streets boasted eleven general stores, three grocery stores, two clothing stores, four millineries, two drug stores, one hardware store, one jewelry store, three confectionary stores, four wheelwright shops, five blacksmith shops, two shoe shops, and one barber shop.<sup>50</sup>

However, the shipbuilding industry declined during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As the demand for larger and larger vessels increased, Broadkill Hundred forests could not produce trees large and straight enough for the bigger masts,

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<sup>47</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Milton, Sussex County, DE.

<sup>48</sup> 1900-1930 U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Milton, Sussex County, DE.

<sup>49</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 56-57; *Sussex Journal*, August 14, 1909.

<sup>50</sup> Scharf, *History of Delaware*, p. 1263.

so vessels were brought to Philadelphia for completion. By 1910, there were only three ship carpenters left in Milton, and Milton's final vessel was built in 1915. Many of those former ship carpenters may have shifted their focus to building houses, as there was a corresponding rise in house carpenters after 1880, with 23 in the town by 1910.<sup>51</sup>

The Milton Brick Manufacturing Company opened just outside of town in 1887 and employed fifteen men for seven months each year. The 1910 census shows a large number of African American men working as brick yard laborers. While white males worked in the brickyard, the census records of 1910 indicate that African Americans as well as immigrants played an important role in the brick manufacturing industry. Walker Wright of Atlantic Street and William P. Scott of Walnut Street both worked in the brickyard. Paul Heffer, of German and Danish descent, lived on Mulberry Street and worked as a laborer in the brickyard. A local resident living on Hazzard Street reported that a few of the brick houses on the street, including 409, 411, 413, and 415, were built with Milton brick.<sup>52</sup>

**Table 7: Population of Sussex County and Milton, 1890 to 1930**

	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>1930</b>
<b>Total Sussex Population</b>	38,647	42,276	46,413	43, 741	45,507
Whites	32,662	35,504	38,473	36,083	37,985
Non-whites	5,985	6,762	7,938	7,257	7,519
<b>Total Milton Population</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>1,038</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>1,130</b>
Whites	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,008
Non-whites	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	122

Source: U.S Census of Population

<sup>51</sup> Conwell, "Shipbuilding on the Broadkill," p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Census of Population, 1910, Manuscript Schedules, Milton, Sussex County, Delaware.



**Figure 9:** Map of Milton by John C. Hazzard, 1887, Sussex County Archives.

Two industries that appeared to fill the employment gap in the early twentieth century were button-making and shirt-making (Figure 10). The Douglass White Shirt Factory was in operation off Atlantic Avenue by 1910, employing almost 40 workers. Most of these employees were women, seeking to supplement their family's income, particularly in periods when men found fewer opportunities for work. Shirt factory employees lived on Federal Street, Chestnut Street, Atlantic Street, Walnut Street, East Avenue, Mill Street, Union Street, and Bay Avenue. The neighborhood around the shirt factory included a number of small houses on Bay Avenue, occupied by those with jobs in farming, milling, or factory work.

By the 1930s, Milton became a major center for the cutting of pearl buttons, with more than 60 individuals employed as button cutters in 1930. The Lippincott Button Company, Leo H. Hirsch Company, Excelsior Pearl Works, and smaller shops on Magnolia Street, Bay Avenue, Collins Street, and Chestnut Street were all active in the mid-twentieth century. The Lippincott Button Factory, located on Union Street, hired over 100 people each year, many of whom supplemented their factory income by cutting button blanks in their backyard sheds (Figure 11). The Richards and Tyndall Pearl Button Factory, built in 1938, was located on Railroad Avenue, and by 1950 employed 25 men and women to cut mother of pearl and later plastic buttons. Those listed as button cutters in the 1930 census lived in many locations in town, including Federal Street, Chestnut Street, Mill Street, Mulberry Street, Walnut Street, Front Street, Atlantic Street, Chandler Street, Berringer Avenue, Hazzard Street, and Broad Street.<sup>53</sup>



**Figure 10:** Employees of the Douglass White Shirt Factory circa 1900. Source: *Milton History and Character*.

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<sup>53</sup> Kathryn Pippin, "The Button Industry in Sussex County," *Shore Living Magazine* (Sept. 2005), p. 3-6; manuscript census records, U.S. Population Census, 1920 and 1930.



**Figure 11:** Button cutters at work. Source: *Milton History and Character*.

**Agriculture:** With the decline in shipbuilding, Milton survived largely through agriculture and its related activities, such as canning. Several canneries operated in the town during this period, processing the fruits and vegetables (strawberries, tomatoes, peas, beans, sweet potatoes) grown by farmers in the surrounding area. Prior to World War II, peaches were grown in abundance and there were several evaporators in Milton. Picking and processing the crops was seasonal work that attracted both local residents (especially women and children) seeking to supplement their household income as well as migrant crews from urban areas such as Baltimore and New York City. “While there is plenty of labor in Milton to meet average requirements, when it comes to hulling peas, a few more children are needed, particularly when this vegetable is brought to the factory in wagon loads containing nearly 100 bushels each.” For this reason, few individuals listed canning work as their primary employment in the census; in 1910, there were only four people, all white males, who worked in a cannery.<sup>54</sup>

The *Wilmington Morning News* reported in January 1881 that M.H. Davis opened a canning factory shortly outside Milton, which employed many people from Milton. The Draper family opened another cannery in the area in the 1880s, while a third cannery, Reynold & Co., canned tomatoes, peaches, meat, and poultry for only a short time. In 1890, Jacob B. Counselman & Company established a cannery in town,

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<sup>54</sup> Kee, *Saving Our Harvest*, p. 61; 1910 U.S. Census of Population, Manuscript Schedule, Milton, Sussex County, Delaware.



employing twenty workers to make cans in the spring of 1890 and 200 people in 1891. In 1893, Milton gained another canning factory, under the name of Broadkill Packing Company, which stood between Chestnut and Walnut streets. Both Counselman and Broadkill Packing continued to operate through the 1890s. The Counselmans sold their cannery to A.B. Robinson in 1900 but it burned down shortly after the sale. Canning continued to be a driving factor in the economy of Milton throughout the early to mid-twentieth century (Figure 12).<sup>55</sup>



**Figure 12:** Milton Canning Company, circa 1925. Source: University of Delaware Postcard Collection.

Many Sussex County farmers entered the holly wreath business during this period in order to supplement their incomes. The industry began around 1900 and lasted until the 1960s, and was particularly important during the depression years. Originally, farmers simply shipped their holly to merchants in Wilmington and Philadelphia. In 1906, Charles G. Jones, from Milton, organized the business commercially. “In 1936 Delaware shipped two million wreaths, 6,000 cases of holly, and other Christmas greens, amounting in value to almost \$200,000.” At this time, the industry employed about 9,000 people in Delaware. According to Hancock, Christmas time transformed whole towns into virtual wreath factories. The process often involved the entire family, with one family producing as many as 1,000 wreaths per week.<sup>56</sup>

**Religion:** The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Church, first organized in 1820, was in use until the 1890s. In 1896, the congregation purchased a lot on Mulberry and Clifton Streets and erected a new church. That building burned down and in 1920 the present building was constructed. The building measures approximately

<sup>55</sup> E.D. Bryan, “The Canning and Fruit Drying Industries of Milton,” in *Milton's First Century 1807-1907*, p. 163-165; Kee, *Saving Our Harvest*, p. 60; Sanborn Insurance Company maps of Milton, 1911 and 1923.

<sup>56</sup> Hancock, *History of Sussex County*, p. 102-103; *Our History*, Historic Milton Delaware, September 2008 <http://www.historicmilton.com/history.html>.

30' by 50' and has Gothic Revival characteristics. In 1892, the African American Union M.E Church the Presbyterian Church built in 1833 on Chestnut Street and used it as a church. Later in the 1930s, the building was purchased by the Rising Sun Lodge No. 4.<sup>57</sup>

Other churches built in and around Milton at this time include Conway's M.E. Chapel on Route 88 (c. 1885), Weigand's M.P. Church on Route 88 (c. 1887), St. Johns U.A.M.E Church located just north of Milton (c. 1908), Milton Wesleyan Church on Union Street (c. 1926), First Congregational Church on Route 16 (c. 1927), and Mount Zion Holiness Church on Front Street (c. 1939).<sup>58</sup>

**Education:** Milton Academy on Appletree Street (now Chestnut) and Coulter Streets was used as a school until 1890. In 1891, 20 Milton residents (including David Hazzard, Nehemiah Lofland, Joseph Cary, W. Ponder, and Peter Wright) signed a petition to the General Assembly requesting incorporation. These residents wished to combine the schools of North and South Milton and after their petition was approved, construction was started on a new school located on Walnut Street. It was completed in 1892 but was set on fire before it could be used. By 1894 another school was built on Chestnut Street, named Milton High School #8. This school operated until it closed in 1933. The new Milton Consolidated School on Federal Street was built in 1933 and still stands today. Between 1922 and 1925 the Delaware Auxiliary Association supported the building of a two-room school, the Milton DuPont Colored School, to improve the education of African-American children in Delaware.<sup>59</sup> Other smaller schools such as Cave Neck School, and Dutton School were also used during this period.<sup>60</sup>

**Property Types.** Property types in Milton in this period included: canneries, brick yards, stores, wharves, roads, ships, bridges, railroad tracks, churches, schools, churches, mills, and shipyards. During this period the dominant house type in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp Zone became the two-story, three- to five-bay, single-pile dwelling with a rear service wing; this pattern was consistent in Milton as well. Outbuildings included garages, smokehouses, milk houses, and detached summer kitchens. A wide range of new architectural styles also appeared, including Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Bungalow, and Colonial Revival.

Many buildings from this period are located outside of, but within close proximity to the current Milton Historic District. An example is a home on 218 Atlantic Street which is a five-bay, one-and-a-half story, side-gabled Bungalow constructed between the years of 1911 and 1923 in the Craftsman style. The dwelling is an excellent example of the Craftsman style which was popular in Milton from the early 1920s to the late 1930s, and retains historic integrity of materials, workmanship, design, location, and setting (Figure 13). The Bethel A.M.E. church on Mulberry Street is a one-story, front-gabled Gothic Revival style church constructed between 1887 and 1911 using rusticated concrete blocks. The church is an important resource for the preservation of African

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<sup>57</sup> Zebley, *History of Delaware Churches*, p. 273.

<sup>58</sup> Donovan, *It Started with a River*, pp. 48-53.

<sup>59</sup> Bradley Skelcher, *African American Education in Delaware: A History through Photographs, 1865-1930* (Wilmington, DE: Delaware Heritage Press, 1999), p.102.

<sup>60</sup> Atkins, "History of Milton," pp. 10-11; Donovan, *It Started with a River*, pp. 38-44.

American history in Milton, as well as exhibiting the use of the popular Gothic Revival style in vernacular architecture (Figure 14).

Other surviving buildings are 508 Federal Street (S-12104) , a five-bay, two-and-a-half story, Colonial Revival style brick dwelling constructed between 1923 and 1937; 517 (S-12118) and 708 (S-3470) Chestnut in the Queen Anne style; and Craftsman Bungalow homes on 207 (S-12085) and 209 (S-12086) Collins Street.



**Figure 13:** 218 Atlantic Street, Craftsman style Bungalow.



**Figure 14:** Bethel A.M.E. Church, Parcel 49, Mulberry Street.

**Table 8: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1900**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	259	37	-	8	-	-	<b>304</b>
Artisan	8	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>
Clergy	3	1	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
Construction	25	1	-	-	-	-	<b>26</b>
Domestic Services	-	-	-	-	4	-	<b>4</b>
Laborer	31	10	-	-	-	-	<b>41</b>
Manufacturing	19	-	-	2	-	-	<b>21</b>
Maritime	42	12	-	-	-	-	<b>54</b>
Professional	10	-	-	-	-	-	<b>10</b>
Railroad	7	-	-	-	-	-	<b>7</b>
Retail	25	-	-	1	-	-	<b>26</b>
Services	21	-	-	3	3	-	<b>27</b>
None	17	4	-	46	5	-	<b>72</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>609</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1900

**Table 9: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1910**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	Total
Agriculture	17	4	1	1	-	-	23
Artisan	10	-	2	1	-	-	13
Clergy	3	1	-	-	-	-	4
Construction	36	5	-	-	-	-	41
Domestic Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laborer	27	11	2	1	-	-	41
Manufacturing	23	4	-	4	-	-	31
Maritime	18	3	-	-	-	-	21
Professional	12	-	-	-	-	-	12
Railroad	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Retail	25	-	-	-	-	-	25
Services	18	-	-	2	2	-	22
None	18	-	-	50	1	1	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>307</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1910

**Table 10: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1920**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	18	2	1	-	-	-	<b>21</b>
Artisan	8	1	-	4	-	-	<b>13</b>
Clergy	1	1	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Construction	34	-	-	-	-	-	<b>34</b>
Domestic Services	-	-	-	2	1	-	<b>3</b>
Laborer	25	12	3	-	1	-	<b>41</b>
Manufacturing	29	5	-	2	-	-	<b>36</b>
Maritime	11	1	-	-	-	-	<b>12</b>
Professional	11	-	-	-	-	-	<b>11</b>
Railroad	3	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Retail	38	-	-	-	-	-	<b>38</b>
Services	21	1	-	3	-	-	<b>25</b>
None	16	2	1	41	3	-	<b>63</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>5</b>	-	<b>309</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1920

**Table 11: Occupations of Heads of Household in Milton, 1930**

	White Males	Black Males	Mulatto Males	White Females	Black Females	Mulatto Females	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture	18	5	-	-	-	-	<b>23</b>
Artisan	3	1	-	2	-	-	<b>6</b>
Clergy	4	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
Construction	51	2	-	-	-	-	<b>53</b>
Domestic Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
Laborer	13	9	-	-	-	-	<b>22</b>
Manufacturing	73	3	-	2	-	-	<b>78</b>
Maritime	7	-	-	-	-	-	<b>7</b>
Professional	10	-	-	1	-	-	<b>11</b>
Railroad	3	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Retail	46	3	-	-	-	-	<b>49</b>
Services	32	2	-	1	1	-	<b>36</b>
None	35	1	-	39	1	-	<b>76</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>369</b>

Source: U.S Census of Population, 1930



### Suburbanization and Early Ex-urbanization, 1940-1960+/-

**Settlement Patterns:** In this period, the town of Milton began to expand again, both in terms of population and the built environment, mirroring to some extent changes in the population of Sussex County. Both the county and the town witnessed an increase in the total population of 35 to 40 percent (Table 12). A significant portion of that growth occurred in the non-white population, which increased 220 percent at the county level and 150 percent in the town of Milton. This population growth likely occurred in response to continued expansion of the canning and freezing industries as well as the rise of the poultry industry. Many new dwellings were constructed to house the new residents, filling in empty lots on existing streets, especially in areas outside the historic core of the town.<sup>61</sup>

There was little growth in the town during the years of the Great Depression; the total population increased only six percent between 1930 and 1940, and the non-white population did not change at all. By 1940, Milton contained a total of 419 dwelling units, only 392 of which were occupied; 59 percent (231) were owner-occupied and 41 percent (161) were rental units. The static nature of the non-white population could be seen in the fact that they occupied only 33 dwellings, roughly the same number as in 1850.<sup>62</sup>

With the end of World War II, many veterans returned to Milton and the economy began to grow again. By 1950, the population of Milton increased to 1,321 people, a 10 percent increase from 1940, and a 45 percent rise in the non-white population. Ten years later, in 1960, the total population rose another 22 percent while the non-white population increased by an astounding 71 percent. Changes in the built environment support this growth, with the construction of 56 new dwellings in Milton, a level of expansion that rivaled the height of the shipbuilding industry. Again, these numbers suggest that both whites and non-whites found opportunities for employment and economic advancement in Milton during this period.<sup>63</sup>

Noble Prettyman's recollections of this period illuminate the life of the African-American community in Milton during this period. Some areas of town, like Clifton and Reed Streets, were occupied primarily by non-white families, and the earlier practice of interspersing non-white families among whites virtually disappeared. As in other parts of the state and the nation, segregation and racial prejudice impacted the lives of non-whites in various ways. For example, African-Americans were required to sit in the balcony at

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<sup>61</sup> Discussion of Milton's population is difficult for this period since the manuscript returns are not available. The only data available is aggregate census data, which does not include occupation statistics.

<sup>62</sup> 1940 U.S. Census of Population, Milton, Sussex County, Delaware.

<sup>63</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 98-110; 1950, 1960 U.S. Census of Population, Milton, Sussex County, Delaware.

the movies, could only visit certain sections of the beach, and attended different churches and schools.<sup>64</sup>

Many African-American families were entrepreneurial, operating businesses from their own homes. The Prettyman family ran an ice business, supplying ice to the entire town. Noble Prettyman's mother did hair at their home and the Clark family had a wallpapering and painting business. Members of the community relied heavily on one another, trading goods and services if payment was a problem.<sup>65</sup>

**Table 12: Population of Sussex County and Milton, 1940–1960**

	<b>1940</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>
<b>Total Sussex Population</b>	52,502	61,336	73,195
Whites	43,106	49,939	36,234
Non-whites	8,899	11,000	28,409
<b>Total Milton Population</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>1,321</b>	<b>1,617</b>
White	1,067	1,132	1,312
Non-whites	122	178	305

Source: U.S Census of Population

**Religion:** As in earlier periods, the founding of new congregations and the construction of new places of worship accompanied episodes of intense population growth. This period also witnessed the replacement of several early churches with new buildings. Weigand's Methodist Protestant Church on Route 88 was torn down in 1940. In 1943, the 1873 Zion United Methodist Church burned; two years later the congregation occupied their new building on Route 16. The First Congregational Church received its official name, First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in 1957. The Grace Methodist Protestant Church was closed in the 1950s and was later converted into the Lydia B. Cannon Museum, now operated by the Milton Historical Society. Other churches built around this period include Grace Church on Union Street (c. 1963) and Landmark Baptist Church on Route 16 (c. 1968).<sup>66</sup>

The church remained a focal point in the lives of African-Americans in Milton. The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was known as a place of fellowship, song, and prayer; observance of their faith and celebration of the family

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<sup>64</sup> Noble Prettyman, oral interview by Stephanie Shaw, June 2008; digital recording, Center for Historic Architecture and Design Archives, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

<sup>65</sup> Prettyman interview.

<sup>66</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 48-53.

dominated Sundays for most of that population. Their Sundays began with a large breakfast of pancakes and sausage and culminated in fried chicken for dinner.<sup>67</sup>

**Education:** By the 1940s, Milton operated two schools, one for white students and one for black students. Schools were open from 9am to 2pm, closing for two weeks in the late spring and early summer to allow children to help during the canning and planting seasons. Differences in size and construction materials between the two schools were typical of those built throughout the state and reflected period attitudes about race and segregation. Not until the 1960s, when state law required the desegregation of schools, did the white and non-white students of Milton and Broadkill Hundred receive their education in the same schools.

According to Prettyman, the black school in Milton received left-over books and equipment from the white school, but despite the school's lack of cash, the children got a good education because their teachers and parents cared about their success. At the Milton Colored School 196-C (Figure 15), most of the teachers had bachelors or masters degrees. The student body included blacks and Native American children and they were required to dress up for school, always looking their best. The classrooms were very crowded, but well disciplined.<sup>68</sup>



**Figure 15:** The Milton DuPont Colored School (196 C). Source: *Milton History and Character*.

The Milton Consolidated School was built on Federal Street in 1933 to house grades 1 through 12 for white children (Figure 16). Population increases strained the capacity of the building by the early 1950s to accommodate an enrollment of 591 pupils. In 1955 the school received a four-classroom addition, and in 1956, a new school, H.O.

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<sup>67</sup> Prettyman interview.

<sup>68</sup> Prettyman interview.

Brittingham Elementary, was constructed on Mulberry Street. The new school accommodated 633 pupils and 27 staff members during its opening year.<sup>69</sup>



**Figure 16:** Milton Consolidated School, 1940. Source: *Milton History and Character*.

**Agriculture:** During this period, the processing of agricultural products remained an important part of the economy in Milton. By the early 1950s, Sussex County farmers were top producers of fruits and vegetables used in canning with 20, 295 acres planted in these crops. The canning industry continued to operate in the town, along with new facilities for freezing produce. In the late 1940s, the Chandler Orchard employed people to help with apple harvesting and packing. In 1947, the Draper Canning Company began its freezing operations, and in 1948, Calton Clifton and Sons Canning Company built a cannery 5 miles outside Milton. More than 30 men from Milton worked as tongers in the oyster industry in 1951, a million dollar industry in Delaware.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1930s, the poultry industry began to expand and processing plants were built in many Sussex County towns to handle the broilers grown on local farms. In 1945,

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<sup>69</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 45, 107-108.

<sup>70</sup> For information on Canning in Sussex County, see Kee, *Saving Our Harvest*.

the Milton Poultry Company established a processing plant on Front Street that employed about 250 men and women to dress up to 15,000 birds per day.<sup>71</sup>

**Manufacturing:** Holly wreath making and button making continued to be popular throughout this period. In the period after World War II, a new industry, hosiery production, arose in Milton. The Milton Manufacturing Company opened on Atlantic Street in 1946. The Hosiery Mill on Federal Street, owned by Alfred M. Lofland, opened in 1950, followed soon after by the Portland Hosiery Mill Company on Bay Avenue and the Siegfried Hosiery Mill on New Street.<sup>72</sup>

**Property Types:** Major property types in this period include houses, schools, churches, commercial buildings, and manufacturing plants. During this time period, 56 new homes were built in Milton, concentrated in areas along the outer border of the existing development in town. The houses built during this time included more examples of the traditional 3-bay vernacular, but also represented a variety of newer, modern styles such as Ranch, Shotgun, Four-Square, Cape Cod, Minimal Traditional, and Bungalow. Many of the smaller houses could potentially be kit houses from Sears or Aladdin, or houses built by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA was established in 1934 and built houses for low-income citizens through the 1970s. Commercial buildings also appeared during this period, many related to the increasingly popular automobile, such as gas stations.<sup>73</sup>

One of the earliest FHA dwellings in Milton is located on 610 Federal Street and is a three-bay, one-and-a-half story, brick FHA style Minimal Ranch dwelling with an overall T-shape plan constructed between 1937 and 1954 (Figure 17). Commercial buildings reflect the growing population of Milton during the 1950s and the need for more commercial properties within the town. An example from this time period is a warehouse on 110 New Street, which currently serves as Siegfried Machine and Supply Company, and consists of two structures which were built between 1937 and 1954 (Figure 18).

Other buildings from this period are a Duplex Cape Cod dwelling on 305-307 Union Street (S-12075); a Craftsman style Shotgun house on 111 Beach Highway (S-11920.03); and a Gas Station at Parcel 62 on Beach Highway (S-11913).

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<sup>71</sup> For information on the Poultry business in Sussex County, see Williams *Delmarva's Chicken Industry: 75 Years of Progress*.

<sup>72</sup> Donovan, *It Began with a River*, pp. 78-110.

<sup>73</sup> The Federal Housing Administration, September 2006, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, April 2008, <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/fhahistory.cfm>>.



**Figure 17:** 610 Federal Street, FHA Minimal Ranch style.

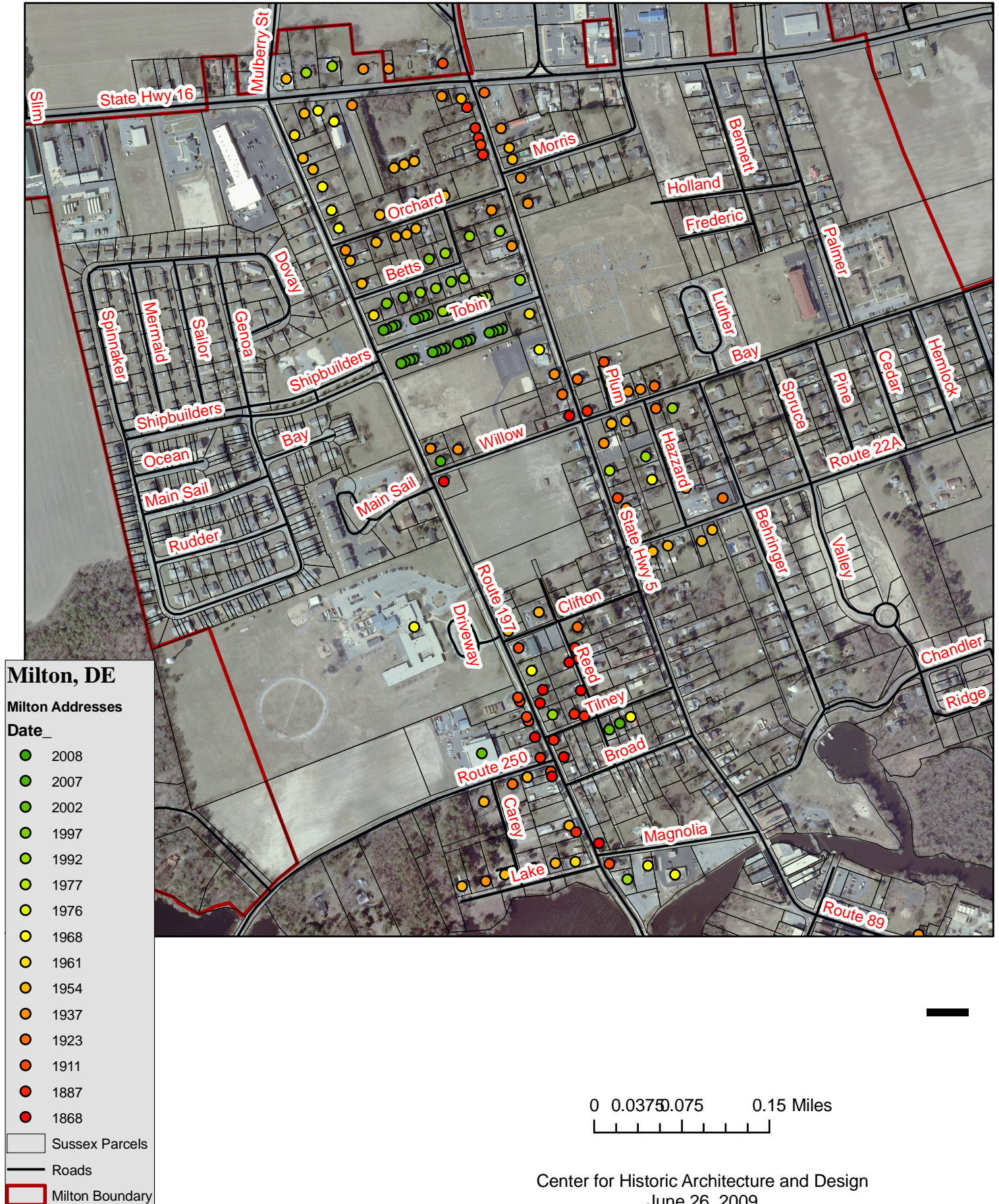


**Figure 18:** 110 New Street, Commercial Property.



# North Milton

## Dates of Surveyed Properties



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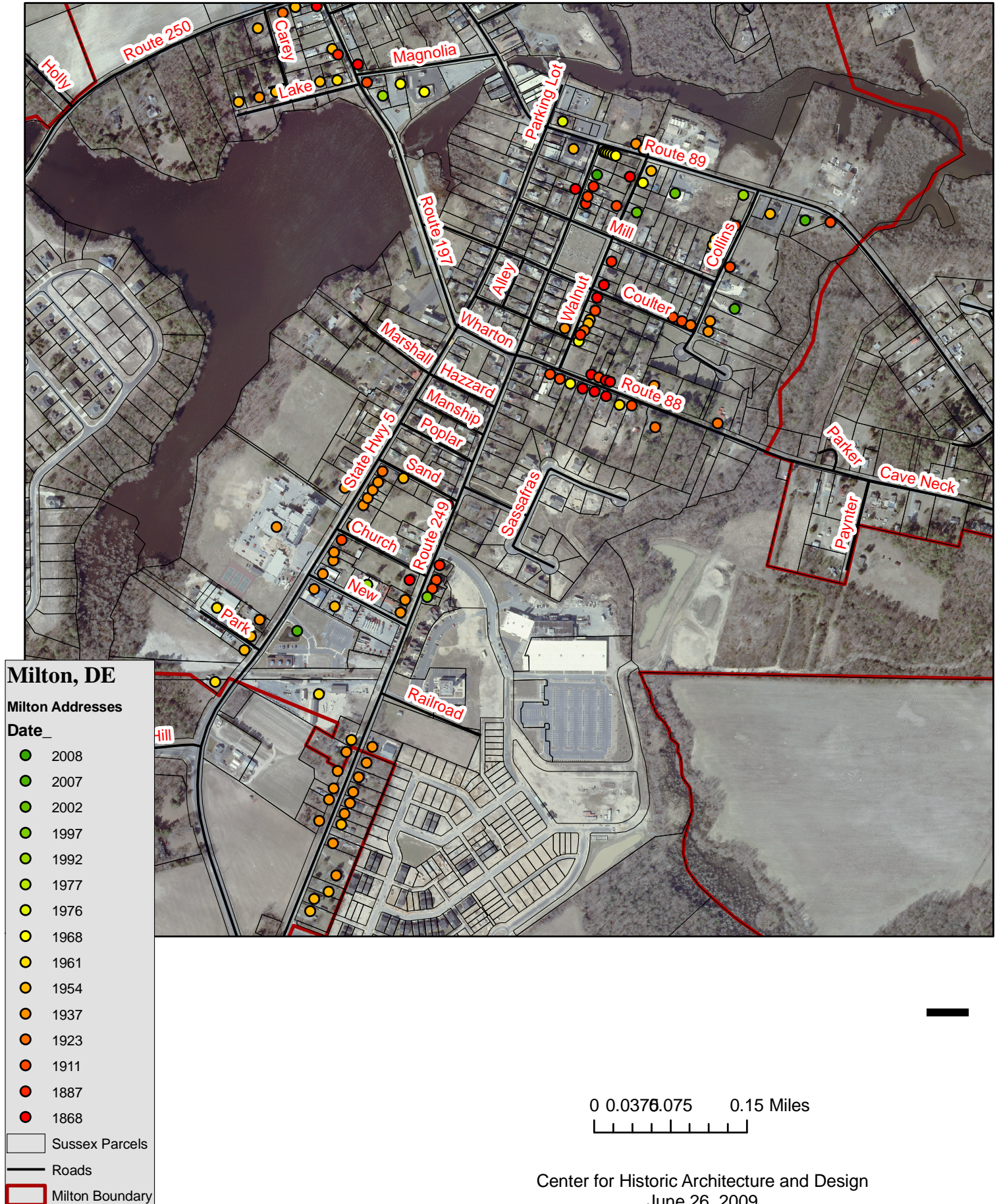
June 26, 2009

Map created by John Laznik, Stephanie Shaw, Laura Schmidt and Genevieve Lodal



# South Milton

## Dates of Surveyed Properties





## **V. INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

From the historical research and architectural field survey, the following conclusions have been reached:

- The Town of Milton retains a significant concentration of historic properties within the boundaries of the town, largely due to the economic decline during the second half of the twentieth century. Modern construction (post-1960) has so far been confined to the outer edges of the town and has not yet altered the historic character of the town's core. The only exception to this is the area along the northern end of Mulberry Street, where a majority of the land is now used for modern residential and industrial purposes. This more recent activity is typical of the threats now facing Milton's historic landscape.
- The historic properties in Milton demonstrate a long-term connection between historical periods of economic boom and bust and the development of the built environment. Areas of workers' housing developed at different times in response to the construction of new manufacturing facilities, while the wealth acquired by factory and business owners was reflected in dwellings built in the latest architectural styles.
- Development of the town occurred in a compact fashion, with the main streets seeing the initial growth in an area only one block wide, and side or cross streets appearing slowly over time. Thus, the areas between Union and Mulberry streets in North Milton, and between Federal and Chestnut streets in South Milton, filled in from north to south before the areas on the eastern and western edges of town.
- African-Americans and Native Americans built and rented dwellings and other buildings in Milton from early in the nineteenth century. Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their settlement pattern changed from one of multiple small clusters and individual households dispersed across the town, to concentrations in certain areas, particularly around Walnut, Collins, and Coulter streets. Three-bay vernacular dwellings were most common among this population, with little decorative detail; another common feature were small frieze-style windows in the second story.
- Architectural styles in the town range from the high-style, ornately decorated examples of formal styles such as Italianate, Queen Anne, and Gothic Revival along Union and Federal streets, to the more common three-bay vernacular dwelling with muted decorative details reflecting the formal styles of the period.
- Most historic commercial buildings remain in commercial use, but many have been remodeled, renovated, or expanded to meet the contemporary needs of their owners.
- Many of the properties have been modified by their owners with the addition of modern siding, modern windows and doors, enclosed porches, and additions.

- The changes made to a building affect certain integrity issues such as workmanship, materials, and design. Depending on how minimal or how drastic these changes are, they affect whether a building is considered a contributing or non-contributing resource.
- A small percentage of buildings may have been moved to their current locations, either from original locations within the town or from outside locations.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Out of 265 properties surveyed in Milton, 178 warrant inclusion in local historic zone and/or an expanded National Register Historic District. The majority of the 87 properties considered non-contributing were built after 1960. Contributing and non-contributing properties are shown on Maps 5 and 6.
- This report recommends that the Town of Milton expand their current local historic zone (which coincides with the boundaries of the 1982 National Register Historic District) to afford protection to all historic properties and streetscapes within the town boundaries, regardless of whether the National Register Historic District boundaries are expanded.

In North Milton, the boundaries could be expanded to include 25 properties along both sides of Union Street from Atlantic Avenue to Tobin Street, west to Hazzard Street; 27 properties to the west in the area of Mulberry Street, from Lake Drive and Magnolia north to the intersection with Willow; 6 properties along Reed and Tilney streets; and 38 properties on the north end of town between Mulberry and Union, from Tobin Street to Route 16.

In South Milton, the boundaries could be expanded on the east to incorporate 40 properties along Coulter, Collins, Walnut, and Chestnut from Front to Atlantic, many of which relate to the non-white communities in Milton; secondly, it could be expanded to add 25 properties south along both sides of Federal Street and Chestnut from Sand to Park, and 17 properties along Chestnut Street south of Railroad Avenue. The historic properties catalogued in these areas show common developmental patterns tied to the history and growth cycles of Milton from the time of its naming in 1763 through 1960. A majority of the newly surveyed surviving properties represent the Industrialization and Early Urbanization period (1830-1880+), the Urbanization and Early Suburbanization period (1880-1940 +/-), and the Suburbanization and Early Ex-urbanization period (1940-1960 +/-), all of which include episodes of economic decline and expansion.

- This report also recommends that the Town of Milton consider expanding the current Milton National Register Historic District to include the 178 additional historic properties discussed above that relate to the period from 1850 through 1960.
- Many of the buildings have been altered by their owners over the years, but based on National Register Criterion A, the properties should be considered contributing because of their association with certain historic trends in the town such as the shipbuilding industry, the canning industry, and the construction of housing for workers in various industries.
- The majority of the 87 properties considered non-contributing were given that designation because of their date of construction. A few were determined to be non-contributing due to massive changes in their physical integrity, to the extent that they no longer represent the historic periods with which they were associated.

- Settlement patterns of African-American and Native American residents in Milton are more recognizable now based on the census research and mapping work conducted in this study. However, this report highly recommends that further research be carried out on the specific history of individuals, families, businesses, parcels of land, and buildings owned or occupied by these groups. Title trace research on individual properties, linked with sources such as tax assessments, probate inventories, and census records will significantly expand knowledge of the important role played by these groups in Milton.
- Further research is also necessary on the topic of industry and manufacturing in Milton during the twentieth century, along with survey of the area known as the “New Development” (see Map 7). This area provided housing for many of the workers employed by the hosiery company and will greatly enhance understanding the evolution of Milton in the twentieth century.
- One aspect of architectural research that has not been fully explored in Milton is the role of ship and house carpenters in the construction of houses in the town. Many of the high-style dwellings on the main streets of Federal and Union display common characteristics of trim, detail, and carpentry that could be used to identify individual carpenters.

# North Milton

## Potential Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties



### Milton, DE

#### Milton Addresses

#### Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties

- # Non-Contributing Property
- Historic District
- ## Non-Contributing Properties
- ## Contributing Properties

- Sussex Parcels
- Roads
- Milton Boundary

0 0.035 0.07 0.14 Miles

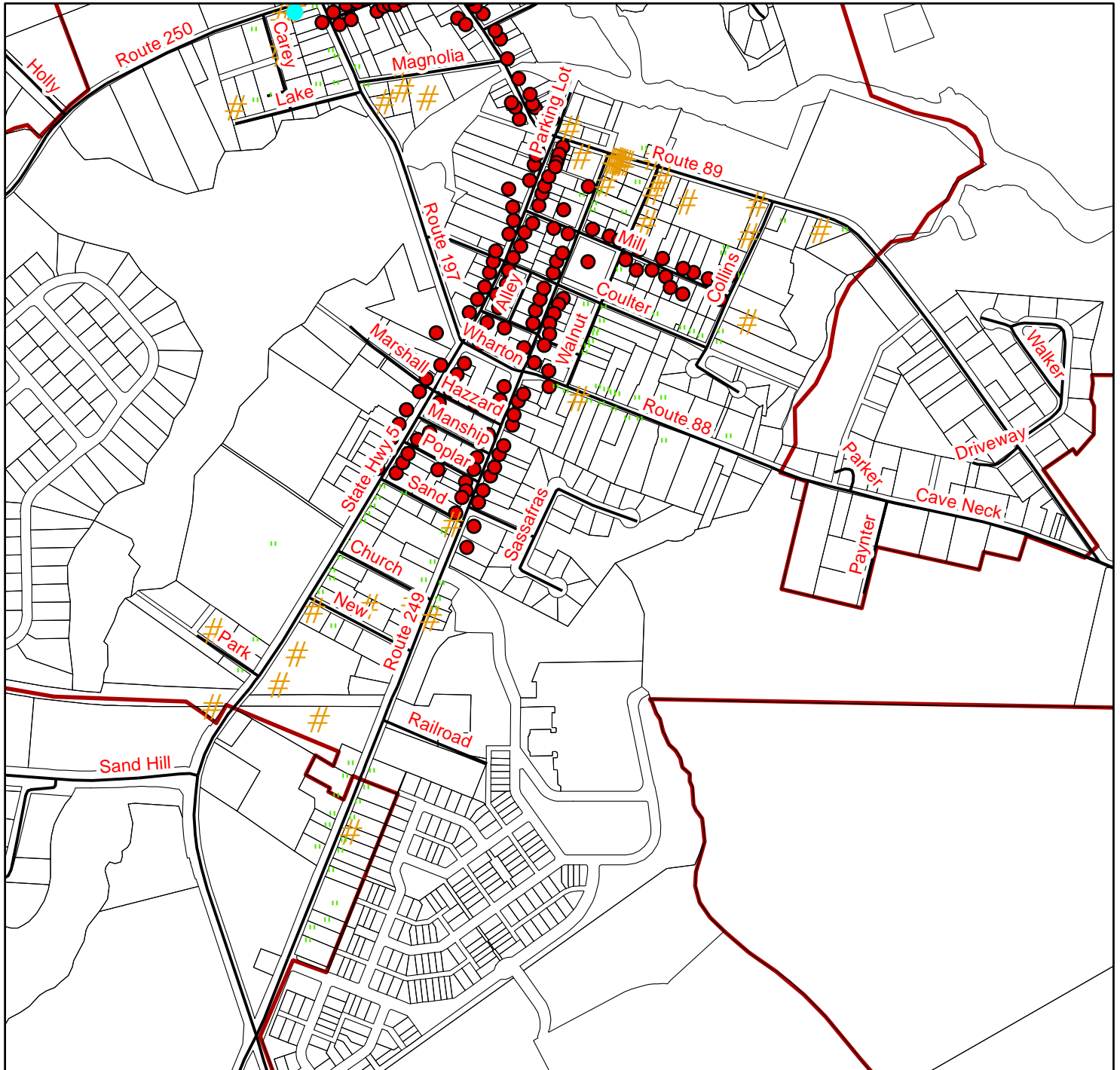
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June 26, 2009

Map created by John Laznik, Stephanie Shaw, Laura Schmidt and Genevieve Lodal

# South Milton

## Potential Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties



### Milton, DE

#### Milton Addresses

#### Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties

- Historic District
- # Non-Contributing Properties
- ## Contributing Properties
- Sussex Parcels
- Roads
- Milton Boundary

0 0.045 0.09 0.18 Miles

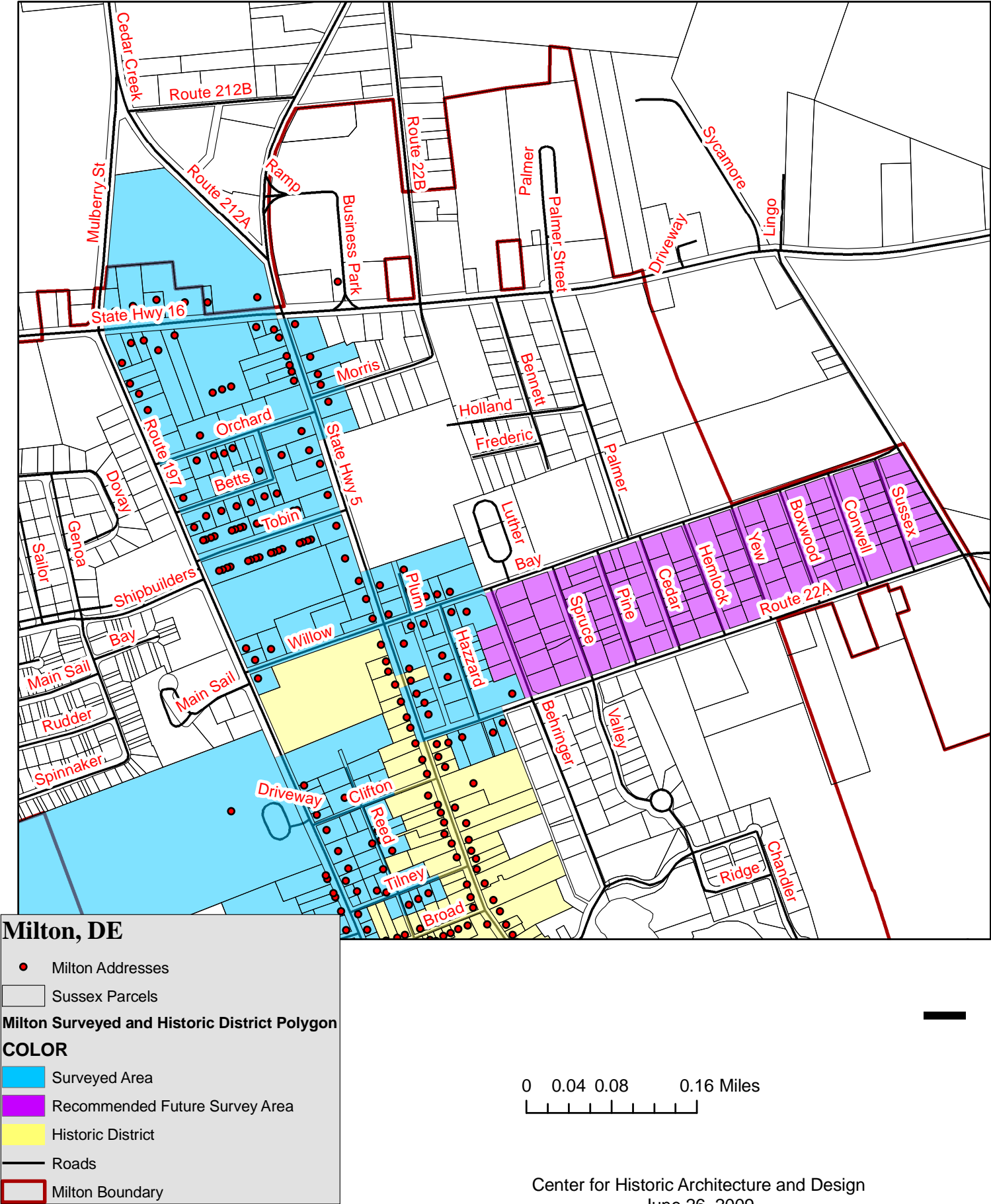
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# North Milton: Recommended Future Survey Area



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