

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kent, Thomas, Jr., Farm

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

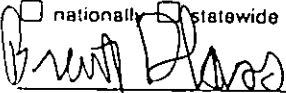
street & number 208 Laurel Run Road N/A not for publication

city or town Waynesburg (Franklin Township) N/A vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Greene code 059 zip code 15370

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

 Brent Glass, Ex. Dir. 3/11/98

Signature of certifying official/Title PA Historical and Museum Commission

Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Kent, Thomas, Jr., Far

Name of Property

Greene County, PA

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 4 | 1 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| 3 | 0 | structures |
| | | objects |
| 7 | 1 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic/single dwelling
- Domestic/secondary structure
- Agriculture/subsistence/storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic/single dwelling
- Domestic/secondary structure
- Agriculture/subsistence/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation stone
- walls brick
- roof asphalt
- other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1851-1928

Significant Dates

c. 1851

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 102 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 57 0 5 00 4 4 14 4 2 0
Zone Easting Northing
2 17 57 0 5 0 0 4 4 13 6 2 5

3 1 7 5 7 14 0 0 4 4 14 4 2 0
Zone Easting Northing
4 1 7 5 7 14 2 0 4 4 13 6 2 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clinton E. Piper, Preservation Consultant

organization Historic Preservation Consulting date January 1998

street & number RR #4, Box 89A telephone 412.537.2738

city or town Latrobe state PA zip code 15650

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Laurine and Murray Williams

street & number 208 Laurel Run Road telephone 724 412.627.8441

city or town Waynesburg state PA zip code 15370

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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*Kent, Thomas, Jr., Farm
Greene County, Pennsylvania*

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The 102 acre Thomas Kent, Jr., Farm is located in central Greene County, 2.6 miles south of Waynesburg and three-tenths of a mile west of the intersection of US 19 and Laurel Run Road. The farm is topographically located on the eastern slope of a small ridge which terminates near Laurel Run, just east of the property boundary. Five contributing buildings comprise the Kent Farm complex, and they are located in the southeast portion of the property near a small tributary run to Laurel Run. The buildings include: a circa 1851 Greek Revival-influenced brick house, a circa 1850 frame barn, a circa 1850 drive-through corn crib, a circa 1920 shed, and a circa 1928 two car garage.¹ The farm has one contributing structure, a circa 1928 pond.² The only non-contributing building is circa 1850 shed/wash house which has been significantly rebuilt. It is directly north of the main house. Farms surround the Kent Farm on three sides, while several late twentieth century houses line Laurel Run Road. The Kent Farm is intact, and it reflects the architectural and agricultural trends common to Greene County farms.

The Kent Farm has a remarkable rural setting composed of a pond, fields, lanes, fences, wood lots, and runs. (*Photos #6, #11 & #12*) The main complex of buildings sits in a valley surrounded with low, cultivated fields defined by barbed wire fencing. To the south and east of the Kent House and lining the entrance road to the farm, is split-board fencing. The bulk of the farm is comprised of open fields. Extending northwest from Laurel Run Road is a tree-lined farm lane which leads to a small frame barn. (*Photo #8*) Beyond the barn, to the northwest and west, are mature wood lots historically part of the landscape. An area approximately 200 feet to the west of the rear of the house was historically an orchard.

Small-scale landscape features not included in the resource count are: a spring dug-out north of the Kent House, the foundation of a summer kitchen west of the house, and a stone retaining wall on the north side of the house. (*Photo #7*)(*Photo #1*) North of the main complex is a large pond fed by a two springs approximately 200 feet further to the northwest within the tree line. From the pond, a run extends to the south joining a second run from the west. Together, the two runs empty into a second pond on the adjoining property to the southeast. A neighboring farmer maintains the outbuildings and fences of the property in exchange for growing hay and grazing cows on the land. As a result of this exchange, the Kent Farm retains the appearance of an actively-used farm with little evidence of modern development.

The focal point of the Kent Farm is the 2 ½ story Kent House, a 43'-0" x 36'-0" common bond brick house with two-story rear ell and brick end chimneys built circa 1851. (*Photo #2*) The house

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has five openings across the facade, and it is oriented roughly to the east. Historically, the house had two porches: a three bay, symmetrically-placed porch on the facade and an ell-infill porch at the rear. The front porch has four original square wood columns and two engaged columns supporting the hipped roof. The square-based, tapered columns rest on a wood deck and have simple Doric capitals. The original ceiling of the porch is painted tongue and groove wood. The porch rests on tall stone piers dating to the late 1970s. The space under the porch is open and edged in stone. The stone piers replaced an earlier, deteriorated set of wood piers which were enclosed with bead board siding, perhaps original to the house. A late 1970s set of wood steps lead to the front door. (*Photos #2 & #4*)

To the rear of the house is a two-story, L-shaped porch which has been enclosed over a period of years. In the 1930s, part of the first floor of the porch was converted into a kitchen³ (*Photo #4*) In the 1970s, a portion of the second story porch, directly above the 1930s kitchen was enclosed. It consists of a full bathroom and hall. In the late 1970s the remaining open portion of the porch's second floor was enclosed for a bedroom. Currently a portion of the first floor of the porch remains open with simple metal post supports. In 1985, a one-story sun room was built on the south elevation of the house. (*Photo #3*) The exteriors of the enclosed rear porch and sun room are both sided in aluminum. These changes to the house have been minimal; they do not negatively impact the overall historic feel of the house.

The original front door has seven recessed panels comprised of three long narrow panels above one long horizontal panel with three additional panels below. At the center of the door is an original knocker with an original door knob below. Flanking the door are sidelights and a transom composed of original glass and muntins. A decorative three-part band of trim extends across the top of the door, under the transom, and around to the paneled reveals. The three-part trim, which extends over the architrave trim of the door, creates the appearance of pilasters with the trim serving as the capital. The reveals of the door and the lower portions of the sidelights are paneled. A modern wood frame storm door protects the original paneled door. (*Photo #13*) Above the door, at the second floor, is a tripartite window that mirrors the front door and sidelights. The window retains its original muntins.

All the door and window openings of the Kent House have sandstone lintels and sills. The original six-over-six windows were replaced in circa 1980 with six-over-six double-hung wood sash,

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sympathetic to the original design. The south elevation has small square windows at the attic while the north elevation has no windows at the attic. Intact behind the sun room addition, on the first floor of the south elevation, are a window opening and transomed door. *(Photo #3)* The symmetrically-placed door and window openings on the first and second floors of the rear west and north elevations of the brick portion of the house remain intact.

The present asphalt shingle roof has a low-pitch, no overhanging eaves, and three interior end chimneys. Shingles originally covered the roof.⁴ One chimney, on the south elevation, has a semicircular flue liner. The house, built into a hillside, sits on a raised basement of cut sandstone. The basement's east elevation has two small window openings with stone lintels aligned with the outer windows of the first floor above. On the south elevation is a door to the basement with a stone lintel. *(Photos #2 & #3)*

A parlor and dining room flank the first floor central hall of the house. The rear ell, originally the kitchen, currently contains a family room. South of the family room is a sun room and adjoining half bathroom. The present kitchen is located north of the family room, at the west end of the central hall, in an enclosed portion of the rear porch. Detailing of the main floor of the Kent House includes original pine floors protected underneath carpet, original four panel doors with intact molded surrounds, original porcelain doorknobs, intact baseboards, plaster walls, and molded window surrounds. Walnut, butternut, and poplar woods are used throughout the house.

In the central hall is an elegant, open-string walnut stair. The single-run stair rises fourteen steps to the second floor landing. The steps become wider and slightly curved near the top. A secondary set of two steps turns west to the second floor rear hall. The main stair has wall stringer, paneled spandrel, and a continuous round handrail which terminates in a simple tapered newel post. Each stair tread has two round balusters. A paneled walnut door leads to the basement stair underneath the main stair. *(Photos #15 & #22)*

The 15'-6" x 16'-0" parlor has original horse-hair plaster walls, molded window and door surrounds with corner blocks, and a fireplace. The simple mantel has carved pilasters. *(Photos #16 & #17)* The 15'-6" x 16'-0" dining room and the 15'-6" x 17'-0" family room both have similar fireplaces flanked by original built-in cupboards. The Greek Revival-influenced three-part detailing of the mantels in these rooms is the same decorative motif used over the front door of the

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house. In the dining room, the flanking cupboards are composed of a set of square doors over a set of longer rectangular doors. (*Photo # 18*) Lighter bands of poplar and butternut wood accent the walnut doors. The present owners have painted the dining room floor, and they installed crown moldings.

In the family room, north of the fireplace, is a single built-in cabinet with an adjacent set of steps to a four paneled walnut door. The door conceals an original set of winder steps to the second floor. On the south side of the fireplace is a set of cabinets similar those in the dining room. Unlike the dining room, the small, square door cabinets are on the bottom with the tall rectangular doors opening at the top. (*Photos #19 & #20*) On the south wall of the family room is an original transomed door opening and an original window opening. North of the family room is a modern kitchen. A door on the north side of the kitchen opens to the rear porch.

The second floor of the Kent House follows the same central hall plan as the first floor. Flanking the hall are equally-sized bedrooms with fireplaces. The south bedroom, the rear hall, and the winder stair provide access to the west bedroom. The rear hall, full bathroom, large closet, and small bedroom comprise the remainder of the second floor. The overall detailing of the second floor is a simpler version of the first floor.

In the north bedroom the plaster walls and original woodwork are painted. Original closets with double, four-paneled doors flank the fireplace. The fireplace and mantel are off-center, aligned instead to the side with the trim of the east closet. The fireplace, with metal insert, is small with a simple wood mantel. On the west wall of the north bedroom is an original window opening subsequently converted to a door. (*Photos #24 & #25*)

The south bedroom has an intact fireplace behind the plastered wall. This room also has a modern, pull-down stair to the attic space above. The west bedroom, like the north bedroom, has an original fireplace. (*Photo #26*) The small opening has a simple unpainted mantel. Flanking the fireplace to the south, is a built-in closet with two-paneled, double doors. On the north side of the fireplace, is a winder stair with simple square newel posts, balusters, and handrail. (*Photo #27*) The north wall of the bedroom retains an original door opening to the rear hall, originally the porch.

As stated earlier, the attic stair is accessible from the south bedroom. The attic, used for storage, is

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floored, and it follows the original L-shape of the house. A door under the main stair, on the first floor, opens to a basement stair. The basement has two rooms which extend under the parlor and dining room. Between the rooms, near the stair, is a circa 1930 bathroom.⁵ When the current owners purchased the house, a portion of the basement floor was dirt; it was subsequently covered with concrete. The foundations of the chimneys are visible at both the north and south ends of the basement.

Four contributing outbuildings immediately surround the Kent House. Approximately 400 feet to the north is a circa 1850s, roughly 30'-0" x 40'-0", wood frame, gable-roofed barn. It has a late nineteenth century lean-to addition to the southwest. Standing seam metal covers the barn roof. On the northwest elevation of the barn is a door to the loft with a projecting roof above. (*Photo #6*) A corn crib is 150 feet south of the Kent House. This 1850s frame building has a gabled roof of metal. A lean-to tractor drive-through was added to the building in the early twentieth century. The corn crib is raised off the ground slightly by concrete blocks, which replaced the original stones. (*Photo #5*) Approximately 100 feet north of the house is a small square concrete block shed with a gable roof dating from circa 1920. Nearby is a circa 1928 two car, glazed tile block garage. In 1928, as part of an agreement with the local gas company to run lines on the property, a small pond was built northwest of the barn.⁶ Behind the house, to the west, is a non-contributing circa 1850 rectangular shed/wash house. The building retains its original form and some original interior framing members, but has been significantly altered with new windows, wood siding, and an asphalt shingle roof. It is used for storage.

The Thomas Kent, Jr., Farm is representative of rural, mid-nineteenth century, Greene County farms. Many of these farms have similar Greek Revival-influenced brick houses and supporting utilitarian outbuildings. The Kent House retains many original interior details including a walnut stair, paneled walnut doors, elaborate front door with sidelights and transom, and fireplaces with Greek Revival-inspired mantels flanked by built-in cupboards. Additions and alterations to the house have been relegated to the side and rear of the house, following the original lines of the house; they do not significantly compromise its integrity. The setting of the Kent House and outbuildings is composed of unspoiled rolling hills, mature woods, runs, and a pond. Clearly, the Kent Farm and farmstead have integrity and evoke the feeling of a working farm.

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The Kent Farm is significant under criterion "A" of the National Register for associations with mid nineteenth to early twentieth century agricultural practices in Greene County, Pennsylvania. The farm outbuildings and associated lands convey a strong sense of agricultural use and significance from the establishment of the farm by the Kents in 1851 to 1928, at which time the farm was sold for bankruptcy to an owner whose primary income did not come from agriculture. The land, however, continued to be worked by tenants and neighboring farmers. The farm is also eligible under criterion "C" for architecture as an example of typical mid-nineteenth century Greene County farm house architecture. The house, outbuildings, and rural landscape of the Kent Farm provide an important connection to Greene County's agricultural and architectural history.

Family/Ownership History

Thomas Kent, Sr., was born in 1748 in Derry, Ireland, emigrating to the United States in circa 1770. Kent became associated with Ralph and Thomas Smith in Cecil County, Maryland. With members of the Smith family, Kent went to Morgan and Franklin Townships of what was then Washington County, Pennsylvania.⁷ Kent and the Smith brothers planted rye and corn on land along Eckerlin Run which later became known as Smith Creek. They also established a water-powered mill. The Smiths eventually purchased large tracts of land along Smith Creek for farming.⁸ Kent went on to become a member of the Pennsylvania Militia. He served under Captain John Ralston, and he subsequently married Ralston's daughter Ann in 1778.⁹

Thomas Kent, Sr., returned to Washington County and obtained a tract of land called "Fogaronian" which is now part of the western portion of Waynesburg. Thomas and Ann's first eight children, William, Mary, George, Thomas Jr., Nancy, Catherine, Elizabeth, and Sarah were born at "Fogaronian" before Thomas sold the property in 1791. Thomas moved the family several miles south of Waynesburg to a 248 acre tract along Smith Creek where their other five children, James, Rebecca, John, Jesse, and David were born. He erected a log house on the property, which was torn down in 1991. Thomas Kent, Sr., died in Franklin Township in January of 1835, and Ann died in April of 1835.¹⁰

Thomas Kent, Jr., born in November of 1783, married Olive Smith of Franklin Township in December of 1805. They were the parents of seven children, William, John, Thomas III, George, Harriet, Marion, and Hiram.¹¹ Thomas Kent, Jr., and Olive likely resided on the senior Kent's land until Kent, Jr., purchased a nearly 300 acre tract of land on Laurel Run in Franklin Township from Thomas Inghram in April of 1820 for \$3,000.¹² It is believed that Thomas Kent, Jr. and his

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family lived in a cabin erected soon after the purchase of the tract; he subsequently constructed the present brick house in circa 1851.

Hiram, the youngest son of Thomas Kent, Jr., was born in 1817. He married Nancy Whitlatch in 1839. Hiram and Nancy had five children: Harriet, Albert, Thomas, J.B., and Margaret.¹³ Hiram did most of the farming of his father's property, and he was apparently making payments toward the eventual purchase of the farm. Upon his father's death in December of 1862, Hiram received the farm, the brick house, outbuildings, and some adjoining tracts of land.¹⁴ Unfortunately, Hiram Kent died at the age of forty-six in 1863. Hiram's farm was roughly divided into 100 acre tracts between his widow, Nancy Whitlatch Kent, his son Albert, and daughter Harriet Kent Hiller and husband Samuel Hiller.¹⁵ Nancy Kent subsequently married Benjamin Long. Nancy resided on the farm with Long, and her niece, Nanny Kent, until she died in 1900.¹⁶ Nanny Kent sold the approximately 102 acre property to Isaac and Elizabeth Stewart.

During the early twentieth century the farm had a number of owners. Isaac Stewart sold the property to George Phillips in April of 1901.¹⁷ James Stewart purchased the farm, and he later sold it to Thomas Riley Huffman in 1909.¹⁸ Huffman owned and farmed the land until he went bankrupt by 1928. The farm was sold at auction to R. Snowden Kiger, a schoolteacher who subsequently worked for the Equitable Gas Company.

R. Snowden Kiger, who resided on the farm with Mary, his wife, was the first owner to work outside the farm for his primary income. After his initial purchase of 102 acres, he bought four additional acres, just west of the house, from Lucy Brock in 1934. Kiger had tenants, who resided in a small log house no longer standing, to work the land and keep cows and sheep in the fields. Kiger had the pond built north of the house when the gas company was installing lines on the farm, and he erected the glazed tile block garage.¹⁹ After Kiger died in June of 1965, his heirs retained approximately four acres of the original Kent property to the northwest of the house. It was on this land that the log tenant house stood. The 102 acre farm, which included 97 acres of the original Kent Farm and the four acres Kiger purchased in 1934, was sold to Laurine and Murray Williams in 1977. The Williams restored and improved the Kent House and its surrounding outbuildings over a period of seven years. They maintained a business and residence in suburban Pittsburgh prior to retiring to the Kent Farm. A neighboring farmer grows hay, maintains the fences and outbuildings, and grazes cows on the Williams property.

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Agricultural History/Trends

The focus of Greene County's economy has been subsistence farming, stock raising, and extraction of minerals such as coal, oil, and gas.²⁰ Greene County's heavily-cultivated tracts of rich land supported basic crops of corn, wheat, hay, and oats. Eventually, the hilly, well-drained terrain was found to be more profitable for stock raising since it prevented detrimental hoof problems caused by wet, undrained land. Major stock in the county consisted of sheep, cows, horses, oxen, and swine. A conducive climate and a general lack of major transportation networks across the county provided stock raisers with a strong local market. It was not until 1877 that the railroad reached the county and opened it to larger markets.²¹ By 1900, the extraction of important minerals from Greene County's farm land was vital to fuel Western Pennsylvania's heavy industrialization even though the majority of the industry was outside county lines. Finally, a national agricultural depression in the 1920s led to a similar depression in Greene County causing a general farm decline.

The Kent Farm had consistently productive subsistence crops. In 1850, Thomas Kent, Jr., had 18 tons of hay, 300 bushels of oats, 150 bushels of wheat, and 200 bushels of corn. In 1880, the Kent Farm's yields increased in every category except for oats; the records do not list any oats for Kent. Albert Kent had 21 tons of hay, 420 bushels of wheat, and 800 bushels of corn. It is interesting to note that the 1870 townships records show, for the first time, that the farm had an orchard with a profit of \$20, however the types of trees were not specified. In 1880, the orchard was comprised of 50 apple trees and 25 peach trees, and it made a profit of \$65.²²

The Kent Farm and Franklin Township both had increasingly large tracts of actively farmed land, representative of the agricultural economy's strength. Thomas Kent Jr.'s original tract of nearly 300 acres grew slightly when Hiram Kent took over farm and acquired new lands, but it was divided into roughly three 100 acres tracts upon Hiram's death in 1863.²³ Subsequently, two of these tracts were farmed by one of Hiram's sons and his son-in-law. Nevertheless, the number of improved acres at the Kent Farm was greater than the unimproved acres. The amount of improved land in Franklin Township gradually increased from 14,006 acres to 18,939 acres. Apace with this was an increase in the total number of farms. Franklin Township reported 137 farms in 1850, and 167 farms in 1880. In 1850 there were 9,363 unimproved acres and by 1880 there were 5,951 acres. The average farm size in 1850 was 171 acres which decreased to 149 acres by 1880.²⁴ The continued dominance of agricultural practices in Greene County is apparent

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in the 1890 census in which nearly 90 percent of the population resided on farms and derived income from farm-related activities. The county was economically stable and prosperous; many farmers owned their farms and were debt-free.²⁵

The most significant agricultural trend apparent at the Kent Farm was stock sheep raising. By 1881, sheep farming became the primary revenue-producing activity in the county with over 100,000 sheep. Greene and Washington Counties became the national leaders in sheep production, and their high quality merino wool won gold medals for quality abroad as well. Thomas Kent, Jr., had 35 sheep in 1850, and Franklin Township had 3,141 sheep. The number of sheep increased in the township each decade until the 1880 peak of 16,232 sheep. In 1880, Albert Kent is recorded as having one sheep on hand, purchased 30, and sold 75. His sale of sheep comes at a time when sheep were likely capturing high prices, and he would have made a substantial profit.²⁶

A severe drought in 1894, repeal of an 1867 tariff on foreign wool, and competition from lower-priced western wool caused wool prices to decline resulting in lower profits and less economic mobility for farmers. For the majority of stock raisers who continued to raise sheep, improved transport and the resultant new markets helped offset some of the changes. Nevertheless, agricultural production in general and sheep raising in particular, declined from its 1880s peak, although Greene and Washington Counties have continued to lead the state in sheep raising.²⁷ Franklin Township had 6,938 sheep in 1924 and 6,781 sheep in 1927, revealing that large-scale stock sheep raising had been reduced to levels below the 1880s peak. In terms of the Kent Farm, it had past its peak and was declining since sheep were not recorded for the farm in either 1924 or 1927.²⁸ Although greatly reduced, sheep raising in Greene County continued to be substantially higher than the rest of the state. 1994 records reveal that Washington County remained the state leader with 11,000 sheep and Greene County was second with 10,600 sheep.²⁹

While not as heavily industrialized as other Western Pennsylvania counties, Greene County also felt the impact of industrial development when many farmers sold coal, gas, and oil rights to many large, Pittsburgh-based companies.³⁰ The Kent Farm also contributed to the county trend in mineral extraction during the early part of the twentieth century. In 1902, during the Stewart ownership, the rights to the underlying Pittsburgh coal seam were sold to E. L. Denny.³¹ In 1928, during R.S. Kiger's ownership, gas lines were placed on the farm.³²

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The present agricultural landscape of the Kent Farm physically conveys its present and historic agricultural significance in many ways. It retains a core of utilitarian outbuildings, including a barn for animal and equipment storage, drive-through corn crib for unloading and storage of corn for animals, and a storage shed for additional equipment. The farm also still has fields for growing hay and grazing cows. A pond and a small run provide water for the cows. The property is still defined by barbed wire and split-board fence which confines the cows to the farm. Stands of historically associated wood lots on the northern portions of the farm are intact. The farm's rural context reinforces the strong agricultural character of the property. The Kent Farm is a strong example of the broad trends of farming history in Franklin Township and surrounding Greene County. The farm developed over a period of years with subsistence farming, mid to late nineteenth century specialized sheep farming, and extraction of minerals to support industry.

Architectural Significance

The Kent House is an example of Greek Revival style farm house architecture common to Greene County. The Kent House resembles other similar era houses typically built by groups of English descent. Most farm houses in the county are brick or frame with only a small number of stone examples. The brick houses have end chimneys, a low-pitched gable roof with the gabled ridge parallel to the facade, sandstone lintels and sills, and a three-part doorway with a tripartite window above. The use of square attic windows flanking the chimneys is also typical of this period. The interior features of the Kent House, common to this house type, include wide plank floors, a switch back stair with continuous walnut railing and nearly round balusters, and cupboards to one or both sides of the fireplace. In most cases, these farm houses have a central hall plan, rear ell, two story rear porch, and supporting outbuildings.

Another farm house with a similar floor plan, but very different architectural style, is the John Rex House on Route 188 east of Jefferson in Jefferson Township. The Gothic Revival house has steeply pitched cross gables and dormers, but its basic floor plan is very similar to the Kent House. It has a central hall flanked by a parlor and dining room. Centered on the rear of the house is an ell with similar detailing to the original kitchen of the Kent House. The ell has a fireplace flanked by a cupboard and a door opening to a closed set of winder steps to the second floor. In both the Kent and Rex Houses, modern kitchens were added by enclosing the rear porch. Subsequently, the original kitchens were converted to family rooms. The Rex House has a different, more decorative architectural style than the Kent House. The Kent House, however, is more typical of the large

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number of rural farm houses built across the county. Both houses share similar groupings of outbuildings including barns and sheds.

Less than a mile from the Kent House, at the corner of Route 19 and Gordon Hill Road, is a similar farm house. The Thomas Inghram House, according to its date stone, was built in 1856 of common bond brick. It is reported that the bricks for the Kent House, the Inghram House, and another brick house in the area, were made on the Kent Farm property. Like the Kent House, the Inghram House is 2 ½ stories on a stone foundation. It has five openings across the facade accentuated by sandstone lintels and sills. The ridge pole of the roof is parallel to the facade. The pitch of the roof is slightly lower than the Kent House, and the roof has overhanging eaves with returns. The roof has end chimneys, but lacks attic windows in the gable ends. Rather than a tripartite window over the front door, the Inghram House has paired sash. The front door has intact sidelights, and the transom has dentils which extend across the architrave of the door. The present porch appears to be a twentieth century addition. A large two story brick addition with a shed roof was made to the rear of the Inghram House. A second, one story addition was made to the side of the house. The interior follows a center hall plan. Several frame barns and outbuildings also exist on the property. The Kent House additions, in comparison to those of the Inghram House, are less conspicuous. The rural agrarian surroundings of the Kent House convey a more complete sense of a working farm than the Inghram House, which is located at the intersection of two main roads.

Two-story, vernacular brick houses were common not only to the Greene County area, but to other Western Pennsylvania counties as well. In Washington Township, Westmoreland County, is the National Register listed John Walter House at 166 Mamont Road.³³ The Walter House is a 2 ½ story, common bond brick house from 1848. It has a slate roof, a front door with elaborate transom and sidelights, a tripartite window, sandstone lintels and sills, and original functional shutters. Similar to the Kent House, the Walter House had a two story L-shaped rear porch which has subsequently been enclosed. The house has a central hall plan and rear ell. The Walter House has an adjoining barn and spring house. As with the Kent House, the Walter House draws upon the Greek Revival style with use of a trabeated front door with a tripartite window above. While the basic house form used in Greene County is similar to that of surrounding counties like Westmoreland, the Greene County houses vary slightly in their extremely simple, plain execution of detailing which suggests connections to other building traditions of nearby West Virginia and

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Maryland. It may also be linked to Greene County's lack of heavy industrialization and prominently rural agrarian character.

In addition to its typical farm house architecture, the Kent Farm retains outbuildings that represent the agricultural use of the property, particularly a circa 1850 corn crib and barn. The farm also has intact barbed fence, split-board fence, a pond, tree-lined farm lane, two streams, and a rolling farm landscape. Another comparable sheep farm in North Strabane Township, Washington County is the National Register listed, James Thome Farm.³⁴ The farm has a stone and frame house and a group of outbuildings. This farm, unlike the Kent Farm, evolved over a period of years and represents distinct periods of farm history. The Kent Farm is emblematic of typical architectural and agricultural trends of mid nineteenth and early twentieth century Greene County farms.

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ENDNOTES

1. Dates for the Kent House are based upon physical evidence and consultation of Kent Farm deeds, tax records, and census records at the Greene County Courthouse, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania.
2. Laurine Williams, Kent Farm owner and Genealogist, interviewed by Clinton Piper, 13 January 1998, notes in possession of author.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Doris Kent Baker, *Thomas Kent (1748-1835) and His Descendants* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1995), 6.
8. W.F. Horn, *The Horn Paper: Early Westward Movement on the Monongahela and Upper Ohio 1765-1795* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: The Herald Press, 1945), 493.
9. Doris Kent Baker, 7.
10. Ibid., 8.
11. Ibid., 131.
12. Thomas Inghram to Thomas Kent, Jr., 3 April 1820, Deed Book 73, page 72.
13. Doris Kent Baker, 289.
14. Will of Thomas Kent, Jr., 17 March 1854, #2034, Greene County Courthouse.

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15. Will of Hiram Kent, 25 April 1863, #2058 Greene County Courthouse.
16. Laurine Williams.
17. Isaac Stewart to George E. Phillips, 6 April 1901, Deed Book 116, page 391.
18. George E. Phillips to James Stewart, 29 September 1902, Deed Book 152/153 page 107 and James Stewart to T. Riley Huffman, 1 April 1909, Deed Book 198, page 29.
19. Laurine Williams.
20. G. Wayne Smith, *History of Greene County, Pennsylvania*, (Morgantown, West Virginia: Morgantown Printing and Binding, 1996), 31.
21. Dan Freas, Executive Director, Meadowcroft Museum of Rural Life, Interviewed by Clinton Piper, 13 January 1998, notes in possession of author.
22. *Agricultural Schedules, Pennsylvania, Federal Decennial Censuses 1850-1880*, (National Archives Microfilm Publication T 11380), Franklin Township, Greene County: (The National Archives and Records Service General Service Administration, Washington, 1970). All figures used in the text are approximate; it was difficult to read the original survey information.
23. Summary of Kent Deeds, 1850-1863, Greene County Courthouse.
24. *Agricultural Schedules, Pennsylvania, Federal Decennial Censuses 1850-1880*.
25. Smith, 92.
26. *Agricultural Schedules, Pennsylvania, Federal Decennial Censuses 1850-1880*.
27. Dan Freas.
28. *United States Department of Agriculture Farm Census, Division of Crop Reporting*, Franklin Township Greene County, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Archives),

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1924 and 1927.

29. Smith, 1067.

30. Ibid., 267.

31. Deed, Stewart to Denny, 4 February 1902, Deed Book Volume 130, page 150.

32. Laurine Williams.

33. Historic Preservation Consulting, *National Register Nomination for the John Walter Farmstead*, Washington Township, Westmoreland County, May 1995.

34. Historic Preservation Consulting, *National Register Nomination for the James Thome Farm*, North Strabane Township, Washington County, November 1996.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries for the Kent Farm correspond to the legally recorded boundaries for parcels #1-#3 recorded on page 55-64 of Record Volume Book 618 in the Greene County Courthouse, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the Kent House, historically associated farm outbuildings, sites of outbuildings, and all surrounding farmlands and woodlands belonging to the nominated parcel. Since it was divided among Hiram Kent's heirs in 1863, the property has had only minor boundaries shifts.