Much of the reemergence and success of both industry and agriculture in Delaware can be attributed to improved transportation facilities beginning in the 1830's. The linking of Wilmington by railroad with Baltimore and Philadelphia in 1837 provided not only Wilmington but also its hinterland with excellent markets both for the purchase of raw materials and the sale of finished products. Contained within this hinterland was also a sizable population of skilled mechanics and machinists who were able to perform the skilled labor required by the new technologies. This combination of good transportation, a large trained labor pool, and a ready supply of raw materials allowed industry in northern New Castle County to grow and diversify very rapidly into the 20th century (Hoffecker 1977).

PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATIONS

PRELIMINARY ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

The John Ruth Inn Site is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Red Mill Road and Routes 4/273 (Figures 1, 2, and Plate 1). The site is within the ROW of proposed construction of the Ogletown Interchange area, Segment 1 (Coleman et al. 1987). Background archival research employing deed records and prior design maps for several episodes of Routes 4/273 construction enabled prediction of this former structure's location. The site was found to be the location of a building constructed by 1849 (Figure 7) and most likely was the site of an inn/tavern functioning as early as 1790 (Coleman and Custer 1985).

Phase I research consisted of two steps: 1) background and archival research, and 2) field survey. Background and archival research consisted of consultation with the staff of the Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (BAHP), review of all inventories of prehistoric and historic cultural resources maintained by the BAHP, review of historic atlases and maps, interviews with local landowners and experts in local history, review of archival materials such as deeds, tax assessments, probate records, road books, petitions, and other court records, and inspection of aerial photographs on file at the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Glasgow Office. Information from previous archaeological investigations within the project area was extensively consulted (Thomas 1980).

Background information indicated that the site had served as the social and economic center for the surrounding community from at least the late eighteenth and probably since the early to mid-eighteenth century until the late nineteenth century. A similar social role for taverns is shown by research on other taverns within the Route 7 corridor (Catts et al. 1986), in Stanton (Thompson 1987), and other tavern sites in the eastern United States (Rockman and Rothschild 1984). Background research suggests that the site may have been the site of a mid-eighteenth century tavern run by Thomas Ogle II as will be noted

in more detail later. The first formal petition for a tavern license dates from an 1808 petition by Samuel Hopper stating "such a place would be good for meetings of the Road Commissioners, supervisors and Hundred electors who have in the past have had to go to New Ark and Christiana Bridge" (New Castle County, Court of Common Pleas, Tavern License Petition, 1808). An 1811 re-petition by Samuel Hopper states the reason for establishment of a tavern as, "Ogletown is at the junction of the roads leading from Christiana Bridge to New Ark and from Newport to Elkton and is especially travelled by waggons going to and from the said villages" (New Castle County Court of Common Pleas, Tavern License Petition, 1811). The petition also stated that, "Samuel Hopper wishes to convert his house to one of public entertainment." The fact that the 1808 petition states that the meetings had formerly been held in Newark or Christiana-Bridge indicates that either the former tavern was too small or otherwise unsuitable for such meetings, or not extant during the memory of the petitioners. The 1811 petition indicates that the construction of the private residence of Samuel Hopper, the John Ruth Inn structure, was pre-1811. Tax assessments list the owner of the tavern as Samuel Hopper until 1828 when John Ruth became the owner and proprietor. The site name was derived from the 1828-1844 ownership by John Ruth and the presence of John Ruth's Inn on an 1832 road plat (Figure 6). John Ruth continued to run the tavern until its sale to Christopher Brooks et al. in 1844. The property was sold in 1844 to Absalom Willey (Table 1).

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF DEED TRANSACTIONS FOR THE JOHN RUTH INN SITE, 1739-1983

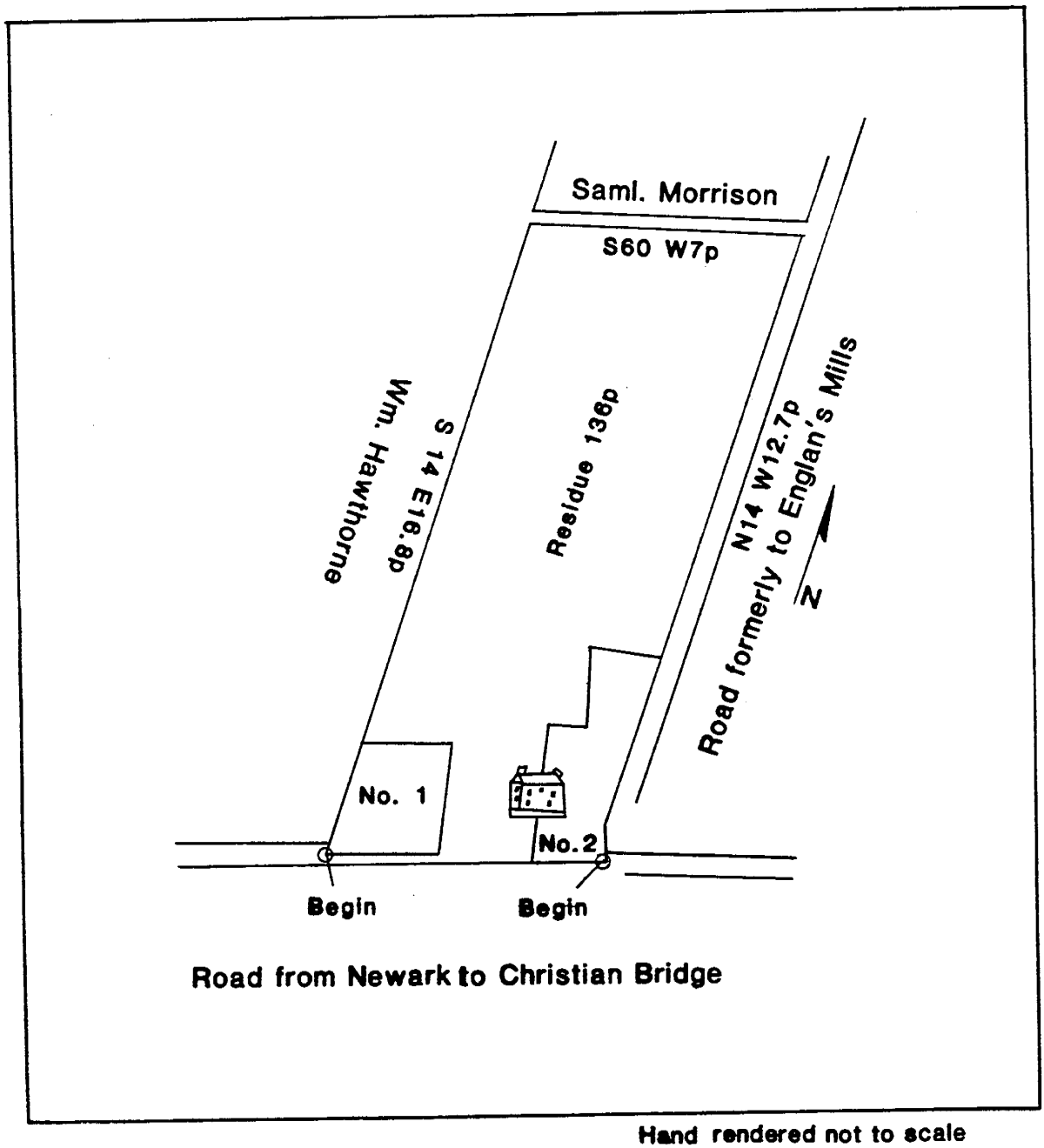
Transaction	Date	Deed Reference	Acres
Thomas Ogle to James Ogle	1768	Will	259
James Ogle to (Court of Common Pleas) Daniel Adams, Sherriff	1794/95	Court Order	259
Daniel Adams, Sherriff to John Dickinson	1794/95	-----	259
John Dickinson to Mrs. George [Gertrude] Read	June 25 1799	letter with deed	---
Wm. Read & wife, Matthew Pearl & wife to George Read	-----	-----	---
George Reed,Esq. to Samuel Hopper	1803	I-3-214	1
Samuel Hopper to John Ruth	1827	F-4-336	1

TABLE 1 (cont.)

Transaction	Date	Deed Reference	Acres
John Ruth to Christopher Brooks and John Peach	1844		1
Christopher Brooks and John Peach, Jr. to Absalom Wiley	1844	O-5-70	1
Annie E. Nowland et al. to Eliza Wiley	1867	M-8-2	1
and Jennie Wiley to Eliza Wiley	1872	T-9-24	1
Eliza Wiley to James Dougherty	1883	U-12-65	1
William Dougherty et al. to James Tibbitt	1888	G-14-466	1
and Giles Lamborn, Shff. to James Tibbitt	1888	H-14-395	1
James Tibbitt to Charles and John H. Wiggins	1890	Y-14-238	1
Sarah Wiggins and John H. Wiggins to James Stafford	1891	F-15-476	1
James Stafford to James Tibbitt	1893	B-16-450	1
James Tibbitt to Charles I. DeGroft	1910	C-23-190	1
Charles DeGroft to Edward M. Silvers et al.	1965	Q-75-679	.91
Edward M. Silvers et al.to Corner Stores, Inc.	1967	L-79-634	.91
Corner Stores, Inc. to Saul and Donald Savitch	1968	Q-81-324	.51
Saul Savitch to Donald Savitch	1980	Y-112-345	.51
Donald and Elsie Savitch to Donald Savitch	1981	R-113-304	.51
Donald Savitch to State of Delaware	1983	Q-123-189	.51

FIGURE 11

New Castle County Orphans Court Records (Z-1-197), Division of the Real Estate of Absalom Willey - 1866



Hand rendered not to scale

Tax assessments for the period 1828-1845 indicate a consistent value of $400 for the property which included a 2 storey frame house and frame stable. Following the death of Absalom Willey in 1853, an orphan's court plea was initiated in 1866 by Anna Eliza Nowland, the eldest daughter of Absalom Willey (Orphans Court Z-1-178, 197). This document provided the most detailed description of the site's layout for the nineteenth century (Figure 11). Following the purchase of the property by Eliza Willey in 1867, the tavern continued in operation until circa 1870 when the structure was converted to a general store under the proprietorship of Levi Ruth. At the time of the publication of Scharf's History of Delaware in 1888, the store was still kept by Levi Ruth. With the purchase of the property by James Tibbett, the property transferred its commercial orientation from general merchandise to a blacksmithing and a machine shop operation. With the sale of the property in 1910 the site reverted back to a residential use until the destruction of the buildings in 1965 for the construction of the Mister Donut restaurant.

FIELDWORK

The Phase I testing was assisted by information from several sources: 1) informant information from Bernard Lyman including a map of the site (Figure 12) based on memory; 2) photos of the house and site, ca. 1953, taken by a former resident (Plates 2, 3, and 4); and 3) a 1938 DelDOT design map (Figure 13) which located the main house structure, the John Ruth Inn. Phase I testing at the site consisted of an initial stripping by backhoe of an 8" thick asphalt and gravel layer representing the parking lot of the Mister Donut occupation. Then, fourteen 5' x 5' excavation units were purposively placed within the site area so as to sample the site's artifact assemblage and to test the integrity of the archaeological deposits associated with the house foundation, a late nineteenth-early twentieth century machine shop, various outbuildings, and the side and rear yard areas associated with the main house (Figure 14). Six of the seven units (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 13) were placed on and adjacent to suspected foundation walls, with a single unit (T.U. 4) located between the westernmost foundation walls to test for the presence of intact crawlspace deposits.

Excavations outside of the foundation area, in the east yard area (Test Unit 1), revealed a thin topsoil level (approximately 4" thick) which represented a mixture of topsoil and demolition debris. The west yard area, tested through excavation of Test Unit 9, showed the same demolition mixture (Figure 15). Test Unit 10 in an adjacent area revealed that neither the original ground surface nor the foundation remains of the machine shop had survived the building demolition and grading for the Mister Donut parking lot. Another unit (T.U. 11) located a recently excavated feature, approximately 5' in depth and extending diagonally across the unit from SW to NE. Informants identified this feature as the eastern edge of a 10' wide trench excavated for

FIGURE 12

Plan Drawing of John Ruth Inn Site (N-10892, 7NC-D-126), ca. 1950, by Bernard Lynam

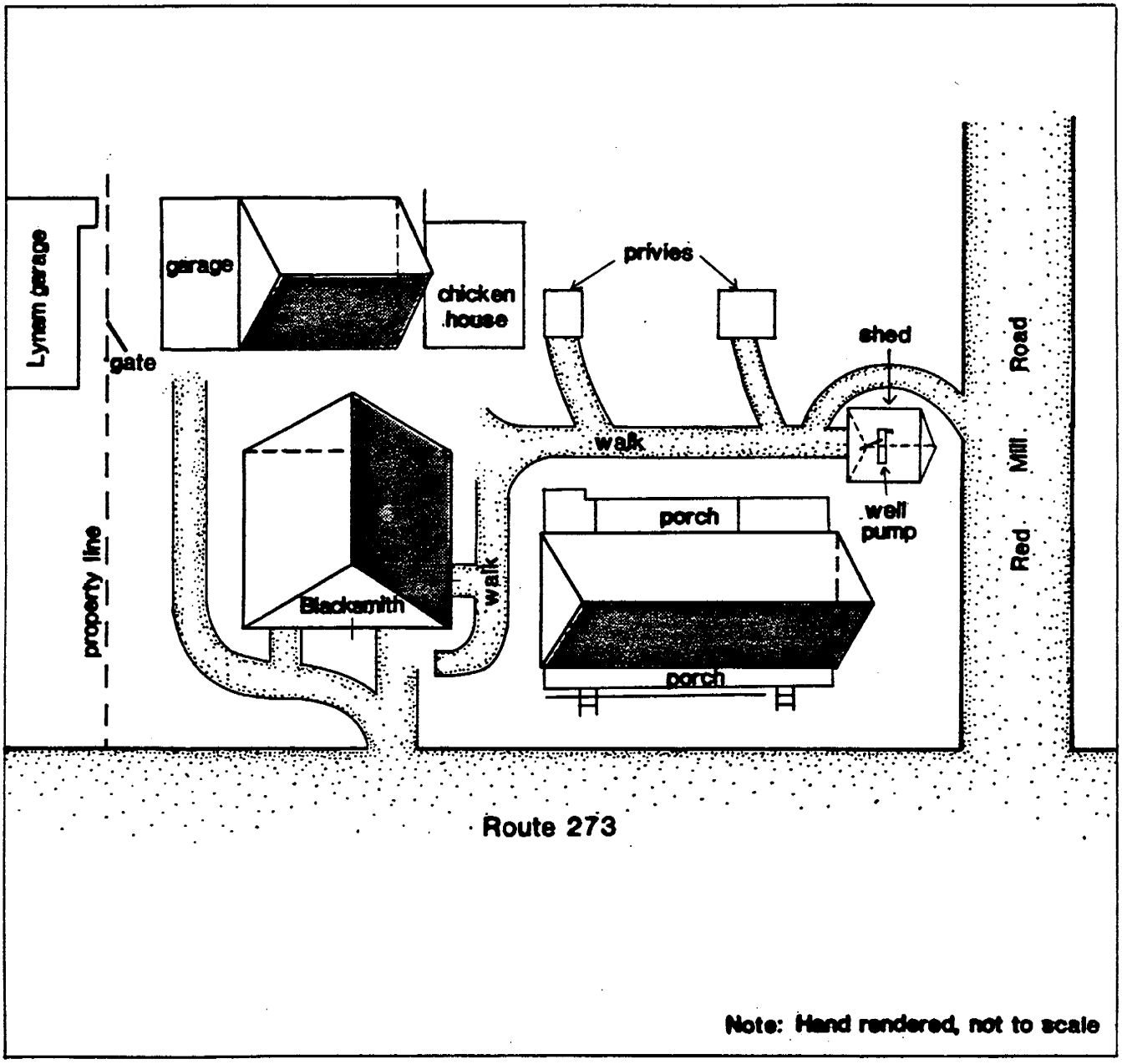


PLATE 2

John Ruth Inn, ca. 1952,

Rear View, Looking East

PLATE 3

John Ruth Inn, ca. 1952,

Rear View, Looking Southeast

PLATE 4

John Ruth Inn, ca. 1952,

Front View, Looking North

ROUTE 4

FIGURE 13

1938 Delaware Department of Transportation Design Map

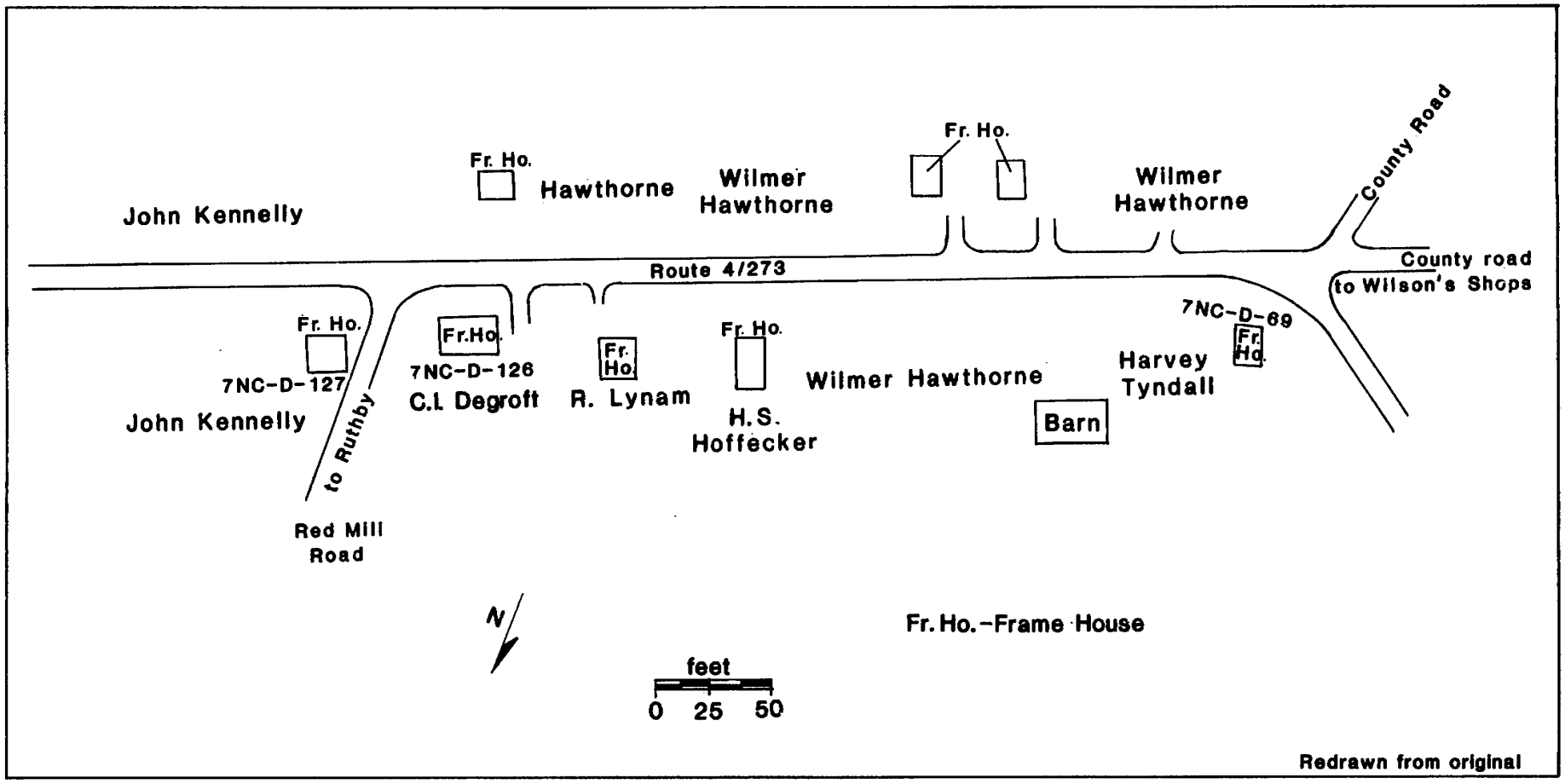


FIGURE 14

John Ruth Inn Site,

Phase I and Preliminary Phase II Testing

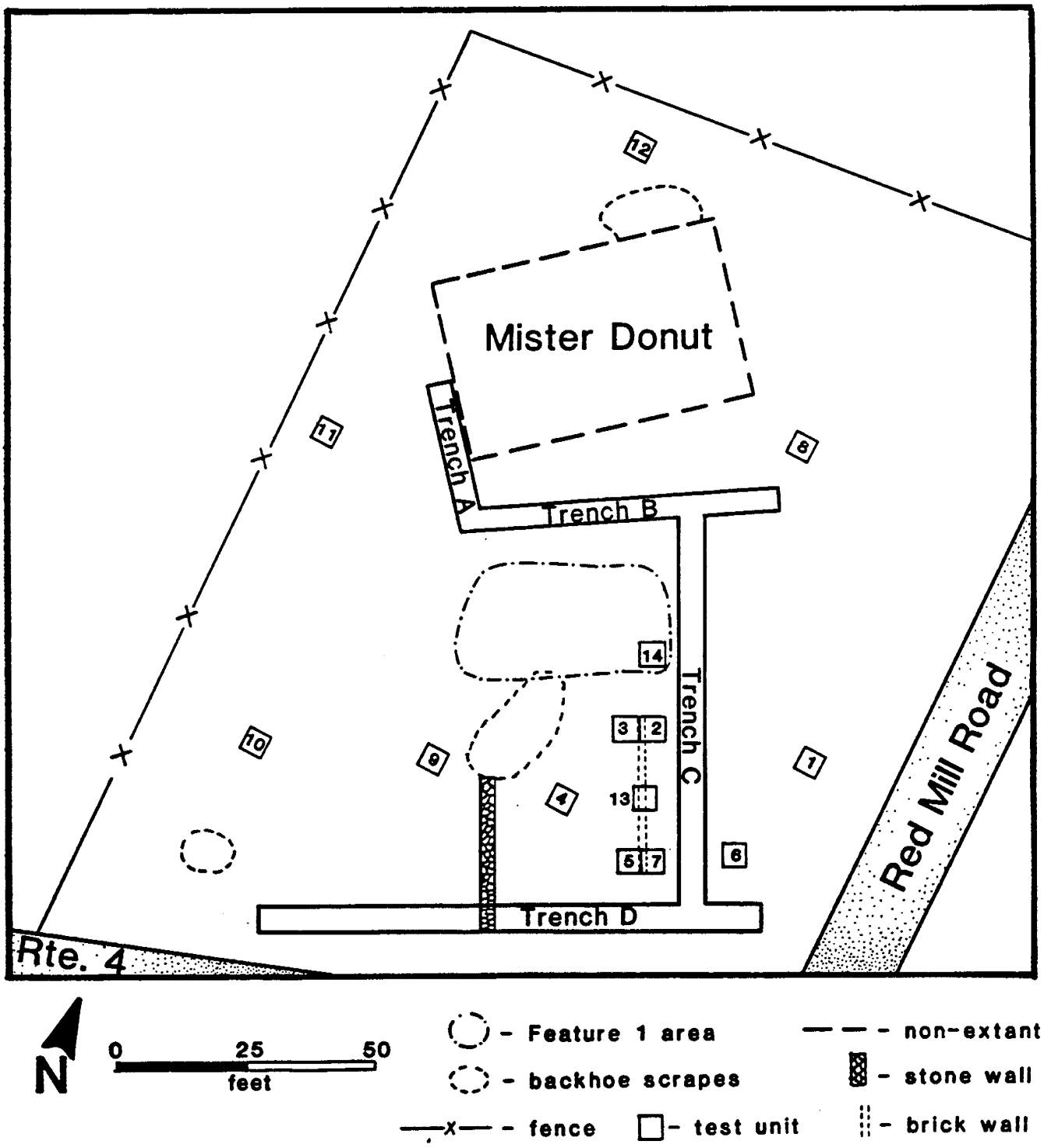
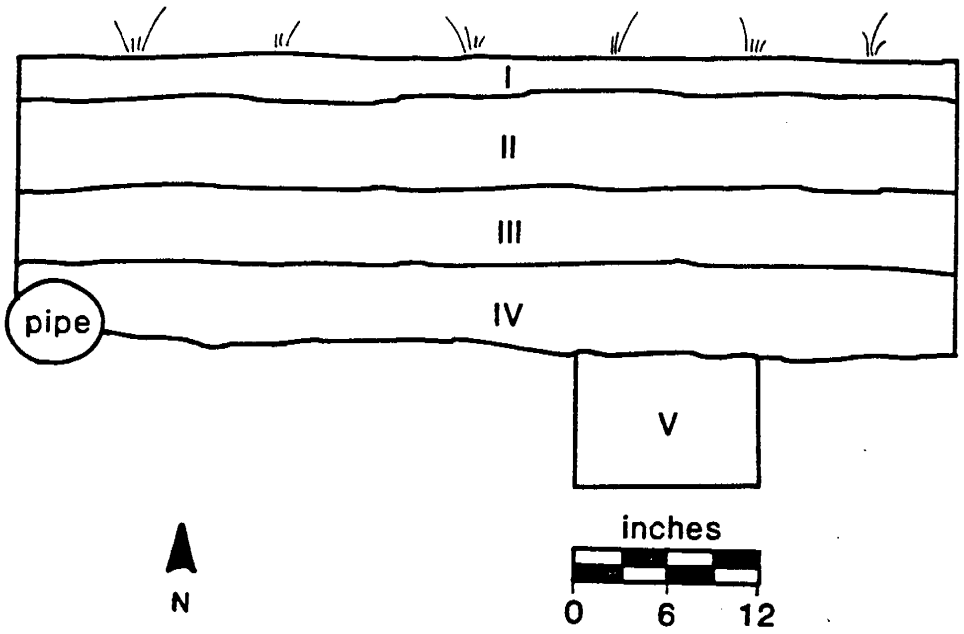


FIGURE 15

Test Unit 9, North Wall Profile



Soil Descriptions

I -Gravel fill
II -Dark brown hard packed loam
III -Mottled light and dark brown sandy loam
IV -Light brown sand
V -Orange sand

the emplacement of a New Castle County sewer line. This excavation completely destroyed this western section of the site. The former garden/rear yard area tested by Test Unit 8 encountered a 5" horizon of mixed topsoil underlain by sterile sand identical to that located by other units in the east and west yard areas. In sum, these units determined that approximately 60% of the site yard areas had suffered a similar disturbance during the parking lot construction through the removal by bulldozers of all the pre-existing topsoil and approximately 1' of sterile sandy subsoil, with a subsequent redeposition of a thin mixture of this soil across this site area. Test Unit 12, on the northern site boundary, encountered a buried plowzone associated with the former garden plot. This area represented the only intact deposits located by the initial thirteen 5' X 5' test unit excavations.

Based on informant interviews and photographs, the main house was known to have had a full basement in the western one-half with only a crawlspace located in the eastern one-half (Plate 4 and Figure 12). Across the front of the structure was a shed-roofed porch supported by brick piers. The widening of Route 4/273 was known to have completely disturbed the former front yard. Units 5 and 6 were placed abutting the outside of the foundation wall of the full basement to locate any builder's trench. Neither of these units was successful in locating a builder's trench feature after approximately 1' of excavation. Artifacts recovered from these units consisted of a mixture of nineteenth and twentieth century artifacts. Test Unit 7 was placed inside the full basement section to confirm informants' reports that the cellar fill consisted of large demolition debris and wood, and the results of the excavation confirmed this information. Test Unit 4, located within the structure's crawlspace, encountered a similar stratigraphy to that encountered in the other yard areas; i.e., a thin mixed topsoil horizon underlain by sterile subsoil. Test Units 2 and 3 were excavated adjacent to the rear porch brick foundation area. Test Unit 3 located a 2' wide linear feature, which upon excavation was determined to be a trench excavated for the emplacement of a ceramic drain pipe, probably an outflow pipe for the house's septic system. The rear wall of the structure was tested by Test Unit 13 which was unable to locate any traces of the wall due to high levels of disturbance indicated by the presence of wood fragments and other building debris intermixed with topsoil within an 6" thick horizon. Thus, based on the Phase I testing within the foundation area and yard areas, no undisturbed and/or significant archaeological contexts were located. The results of the initial Phase I testing indicated a low probability that intact deposits could exist within the areas tested.

In order to further determine the integrity of archaeological deposits within the central site area, four backhoe trenches were excavated as part of the Phase I testing. (Figure 14). Additional small backhoe scrapes were placed within the area of the machine shop, adjacent to the Mister Donut

foundation, and along the rear wall of the main house foundation in order to obtain deeper profiles within these areas.

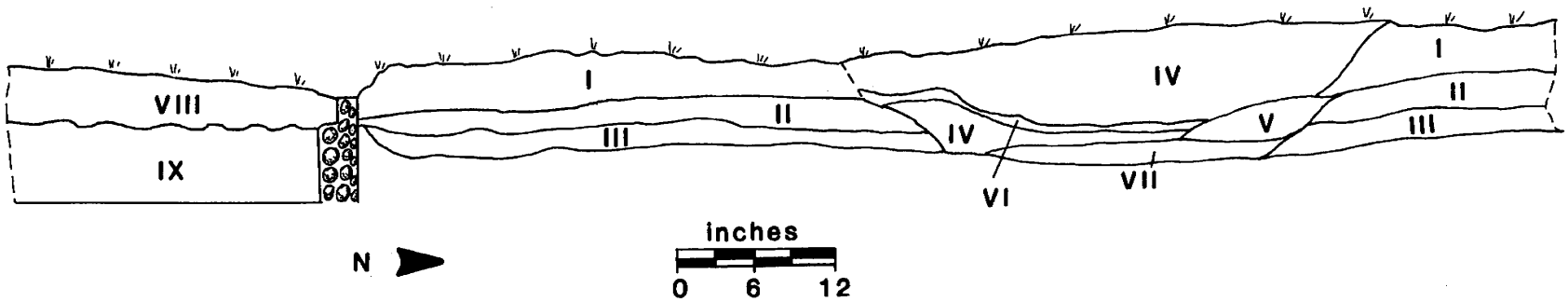
Trench A showed that in a 15' wide area adjacent to the concrete block footings of the Mister Donut structure deep disturbance was present which precluded the existence of intact cultural deposits. Trench B, which provided an east-west transect across the rear yard area, showed a mixed and disturbed topsoil horizon on the eastern end with the disturbance level increasing westward. This trench did locate a series of concrete-lined postholes which from photographs taken ca. 1955 are shown to form the northern boundary of the yard area. Trench C, providing a north-south transect of the central site area, located a deep trough-shaped midden feature extending approximately 15' north-south along the western wall of the trench (Figure 16). Near the bottom of the feature was located a one-half foot thick horizon of charcoal. The midden fill soil above and below this horizon was a dark brown sandy loam. Trench C also located the rear wall of the main house full basement section. Trench D defined the disturbance of the front yard area, and the foundation wall, and the lack of integrity of the associated artifact deposits. The western end of the trench verified previous opinions on the extensive disturbance in that area. The western one-half of the trench revealed a 10" thick level of buried topsoil which showed obvious signs of mixing during the demolition process. The small backhoe scrapes (Figure 14) confirmed the completely disturbed nature of the blacksmith shop area and the fact that an 8' deep hole at least 20' x 10' had been excavated at the northwest corner of the main house foundation and later filled with large debris created during the demolition process.

In order to sample the artifact content and contextual integrity of the exposed midden feature, a 5' X 5' unit was placed adjacent to Trench C. A mid-eighteenth century artifact assemblage was obtained from this unit, (Test Unit 14). While three-fourths of the unit were found to be disturbed by a pipe trench, the surrounding area yielded an undisturbed, and possibly stratified, sequence of mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century artifacts. While the upper 0.8' was mixed, approximately 3'-4' of an undisturbed deposit was noted. The predominant functional types recovered consisted of glass and ceramic drinking vessels and flatware of both local and foreign manufacture. Among the imported ceramic types recovered were white salt-glazed stoneware, "Staffordshire" earthenwares (Plate 5), tin glazed earthenwares (Plate 6), Whieldonwares, stonewares (Plate 7), including Fulham Brown Salt-glazed mugs, Nottingham, Westerwald, and variously decorated creamwares and pearlwares.

The Phase I/II program employing both backhoe and measured test unit excavations extensively tested the site. Only the central site area was found to be relatively intact. Test Unit 14 confirmed that the feature, located by Trench C, was approximately 15 feet wide and 4 feet deep in profile in association with a ~6" thick charcoal horizon. Test Unit 14,

FIGURE 16

Trench C, West Wall Profile



I-Medium brown sandy loam with gravels

II-Yellow orange sandy loam with gravels

III-Orange sandy loam with gravels

IV-Dark brown sandy loam with charcoal, brick and gravels

V-Dark yellow brown sandy loam

VI-Charcoal layer

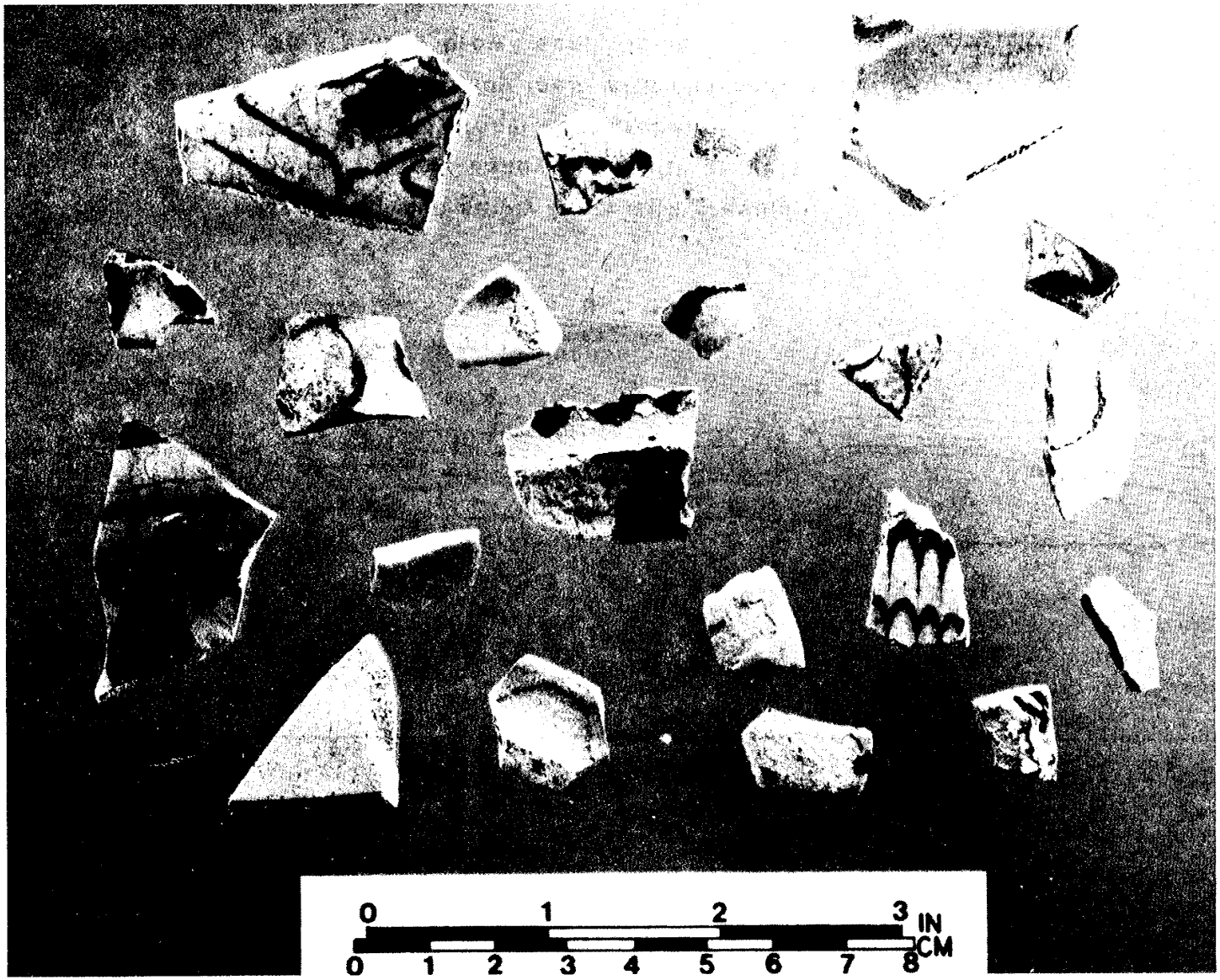
VII-Dark orange brown sandy loam

VIII-Wood and brown sand loam fill

IX-Wood and rubble

PLATE 5

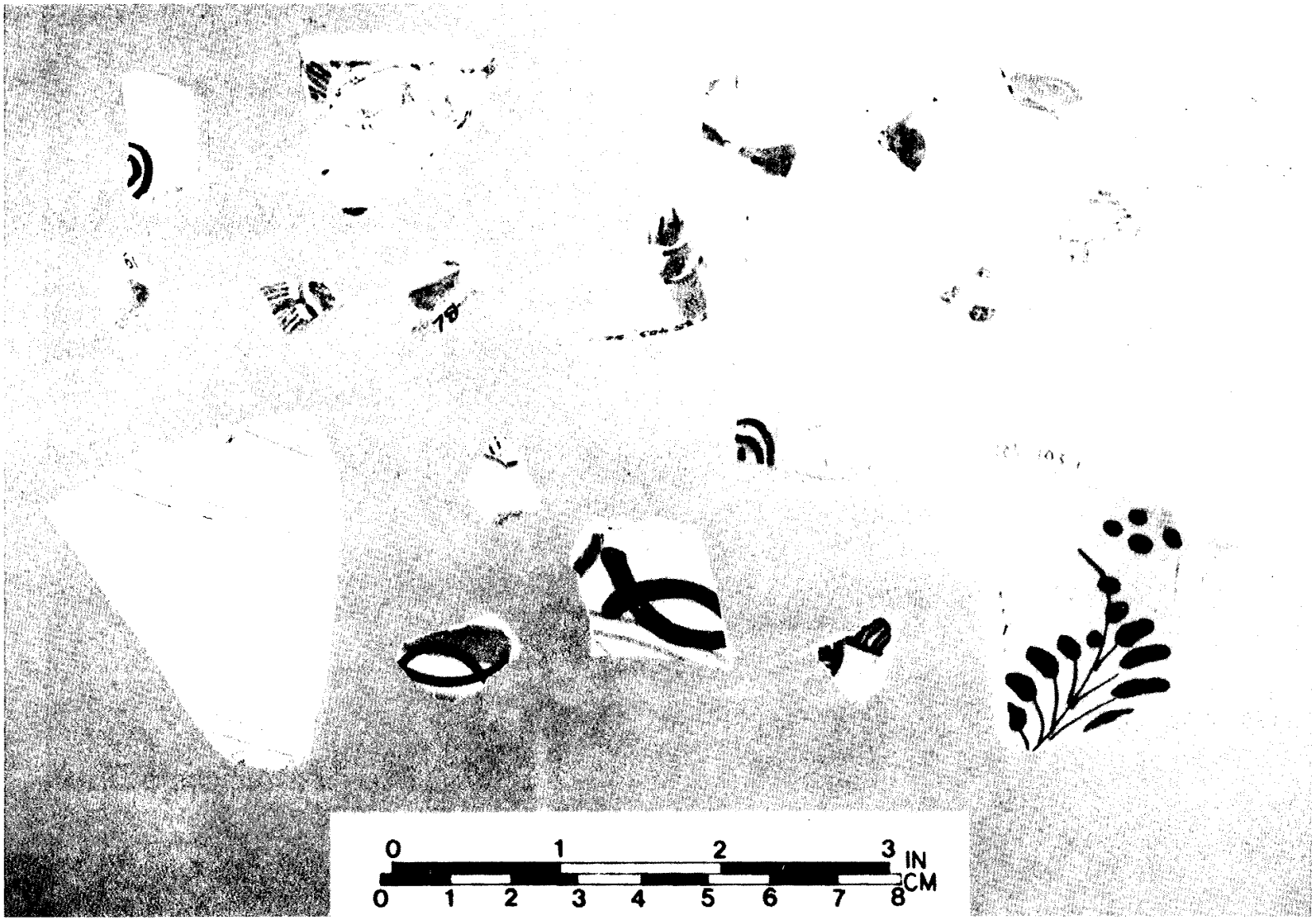
Artifacts from Phase I (Staffordshire)



Staffordshire plate, posset cup and bowl fragments

PLATE 6

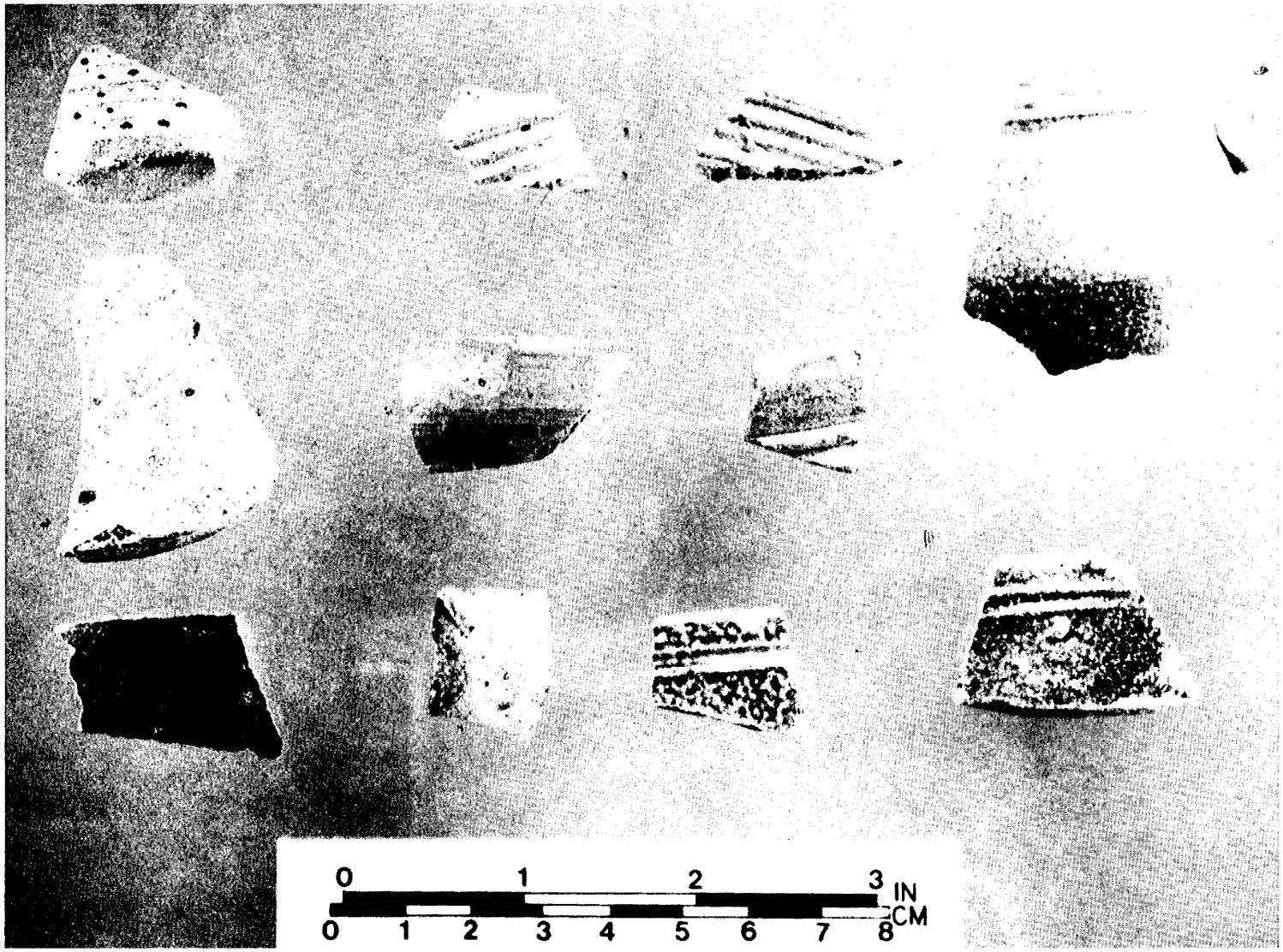
Artifacts from Phase I (Tin-Glazed)



English tin enameled earthenware

PLATE 7

Artifacts from Phase I
(English Stoneware)



English brown stoneware mug fragments

excavated adjacent to backhoe Trench C, confirmed that the soils deposited both over and beneath the charcoal horizon consisted of an artifact assemblage dating to ca. 1730-1780. Associated with these artifacts were significant amounts of faunal remains and other diagnostic artifacts; for example, a 1723 George I cent. A recommendation was made that additional testing was necessary in order to evaluate the eligibility of the site for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (Coleman et al. 1987). An archaeological research program was then implemented in order to establish the applicability of all National Register criteria to the site, and to provide the necessary information to develop a data recovery plan, if necessary.

RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of the additional Phase II testing at the John Ruth Inn Site was to gather additional information which would clarify the eligibility of the site for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and to provide the necessary information to develop a data recovery plan, if necessary. Specifically, additional Phase II excavations sought to determine if a majority of the artifacts were to be found in good stratigraphic context at the site. Also, the excavations sought to identify the extent of the previously identified feature located during the Phase I testing. Archival research associated with the Phase II research sought to determine the occupation dates and former occupants of the earlier, ca. 1730-1780, history of the site.

In the following discussion of archival and archaeological research at the John Ruth Inn Site, the research focus was the initial ca. 1730-1780 occupation of the site. For convenience of distinction, the site and artifact assemblage associated with the Thomas Ogle occupation, named for the site's owner ca. 1739-1771 will be called the Ogletown Tavern. The later occupation associated with the John Ruth Inn, for which the site was named occurred from 1790-1955 and will be referred to as the John Ruth Inn occupation. Archaeological deposits related to the John Ruth Inn were examined during Phase I/II research at the site (Coleman et al. 1987). The only intact features located by the excavation were the cobblestone foundation remains of a 50' x 35' 2 1/2 storey house, the John Ruth Inn, which contained a full cellar approximately 20' X 20' forming an eastern core. Outside of this core area, the exterior walls were supported by a shallow cobblestone foundation. A continuous brick foundation supported a porch across the rear of the structure. Yard areas to the west, east, and south had been extensively disturbed by demolition activities associated with the removal of the structure in 1955. The extent of the demolition to the north of the John Ruth Inn foundation was not completely known, and testing of the area was included in the additional Phase II excavation. Severe disturbance was known to exist for a distance