As revealed by the extremely disturbed nature of the remaining soils present at the site, and the lack of any stratigraphic context for the recovered artifacts, it is evident that this site underwent considerable landscaping, grading and filling when the house structure was demolished and during the construction of two gas stations. Therefore, this site is considered not to be eligible for listing on the National Register under any criterion, due to severe disturbance from several sources which have compromised its integrity as a cultural resource. No further work at the site is recommended.

John Ruth Inn Site (7NC-D-126, N-10892)

The John Ruth Inn site is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Red Mill Road and Route 4/273 (Figures 22, 29, and Plate 1). The William E. Heisler Tenant House site is located across Red Mill Road from the John Ruth Inn site. Background research indicated that the initial Phase I/II survey by Thomas (1980) failed to located or identify this site. Background archival research employing deed record and prior design maps for several episodes of Rt 4/273 construction enabled the prediction of this structure's location. The site was found to be the location of a structure constructed by 1849 (Figure 8) and most likely was the site of an inn/tavern functioning as early as 1790 (Coleman and Custer 1985). The Phase I and II testing was assisted by information from several sources: 1) informant information from Bernard Lyman including a map of the site (Figure 30) which he drew from memory; 2) photos of the house and site, ca. 1953, taken by a former resident (Plates 5 and 6); and 3) 1938 DelDOT design maps (Figure 26) which located

FIGURE 29

John Ruth Inn Site, (N-10892, 7NC-D-126),

Phase I and Preliminary Phase II Testing

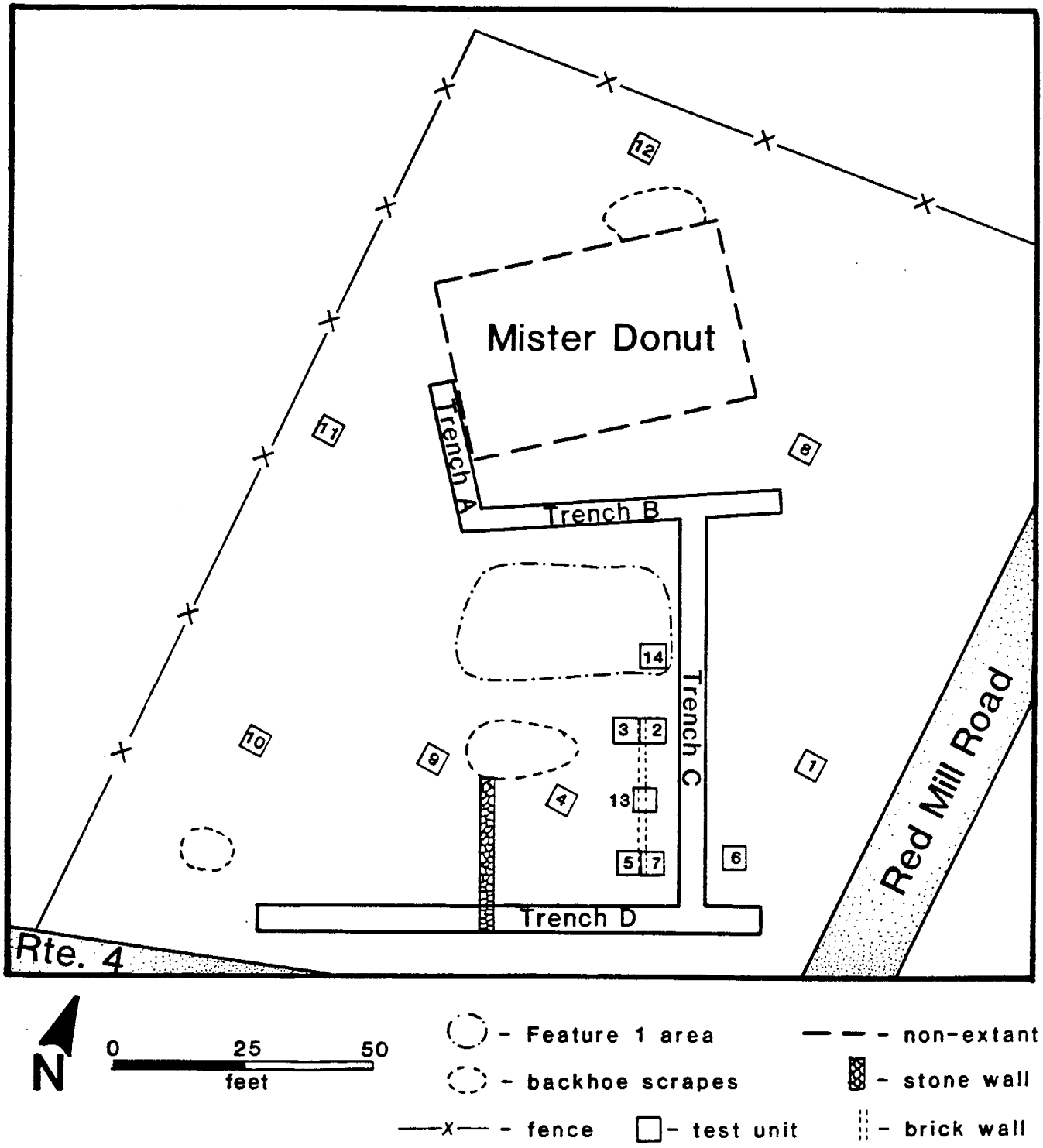


FIGURE 30

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

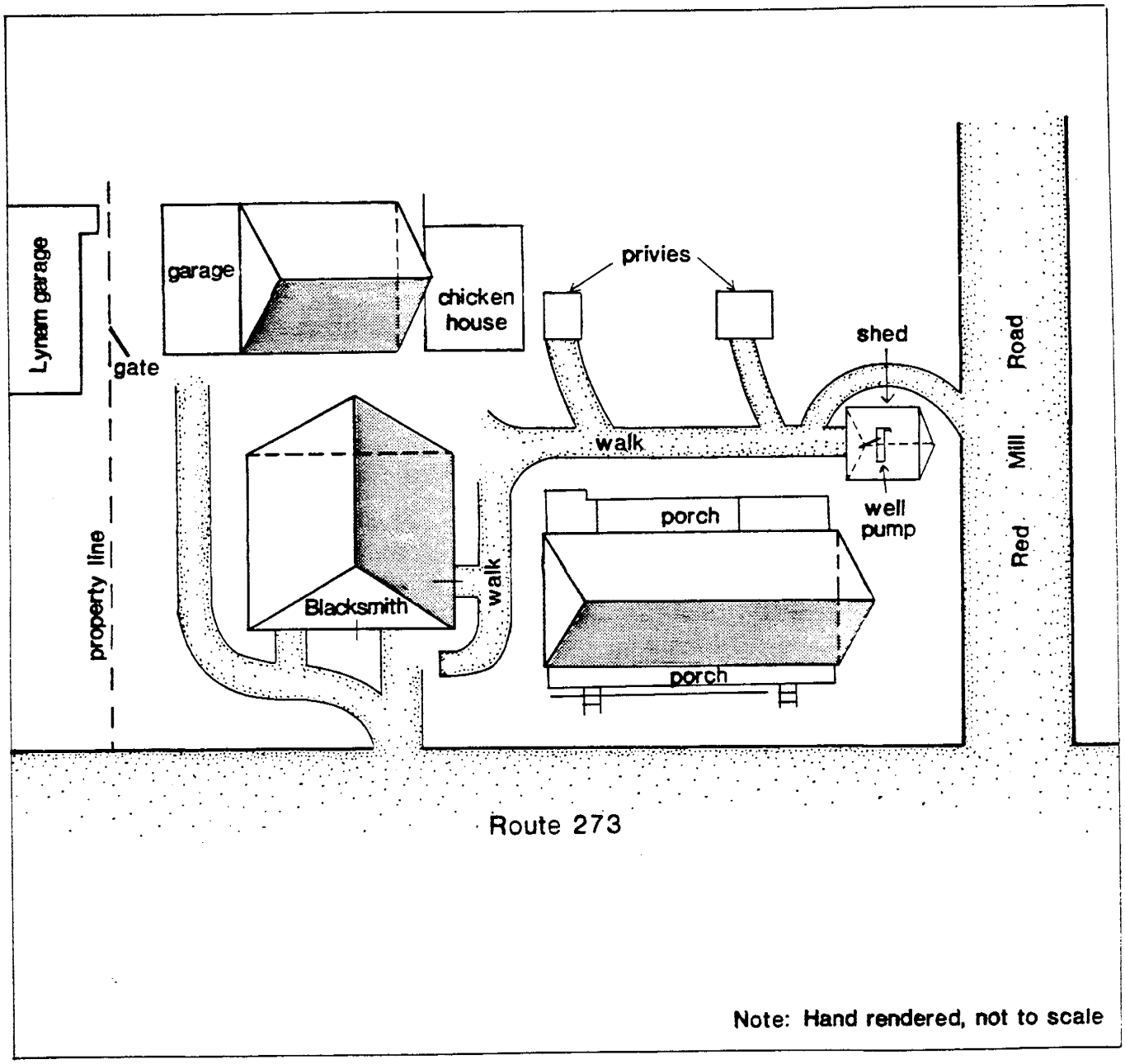


PLATE 5

John Ruth Inn, ca. 1952, Front View, Looking North

ROUTE 4

PLATE 6

John Ruth Inn, ca. 1952, Rear View,
Looking Southeast

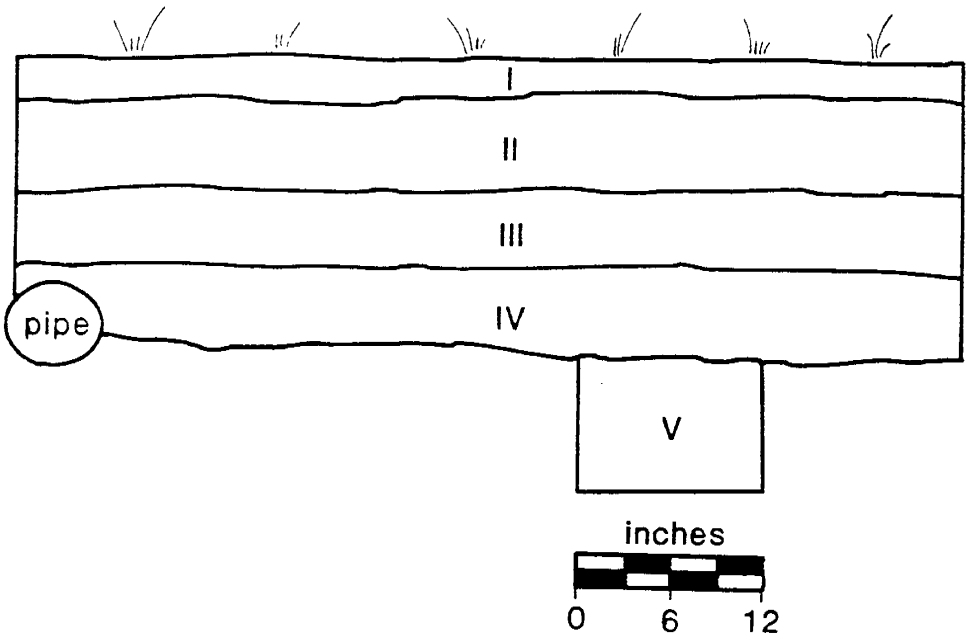
the main house structure.

Phase I testing of the site began with the stripping by backhoe of the 8" thick asphalt and gravel layer which represented the parking lot of the Mister Donut occupation. A total of 13 5' x 5' units were then excavated within the site area so as to sample and determine the integrity of the archaeological deposits associated with the house foundation, a late 19th-early 20th century machine shop, various outbuildings, and the side and rear yard areas associated with the main house (Figure 29). Six of the seven units (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 13) were placed on suspected foundation walls, with a single unit (no. 4) located between walls to test for the presence of crawlspace deposits.

Excavation outside of the foundation area, in the east yard area (Unit no. 1), revealed a thin topsoil level approximately 4" thick which was composed of a mixture of topsoil and demolition debris. The west yard area, tested through excavation of Unit no. 9, showed the same demolition intermixture (Figure 31). Unit no. 10 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 (no. 11) located a recently excavated feature, approximately 5' in depth and extending diagonally across the unit from SW to NE. Informants identified this as the eastern edge of a 10' wide trench excavated for the emplacement of a New Castle County sewer line. The former garden/rear yard area was tested by Unit 8 and excavation of this unit revealed a stratigraphy of 5" of mixed topsoil underlain by sterile sand as had other units in the east

FIGURE 31

John Ruth Inn Site, (N-10892, 7NC-D-126), Test Unit 9, North Wall Profile



Soil Descriptions

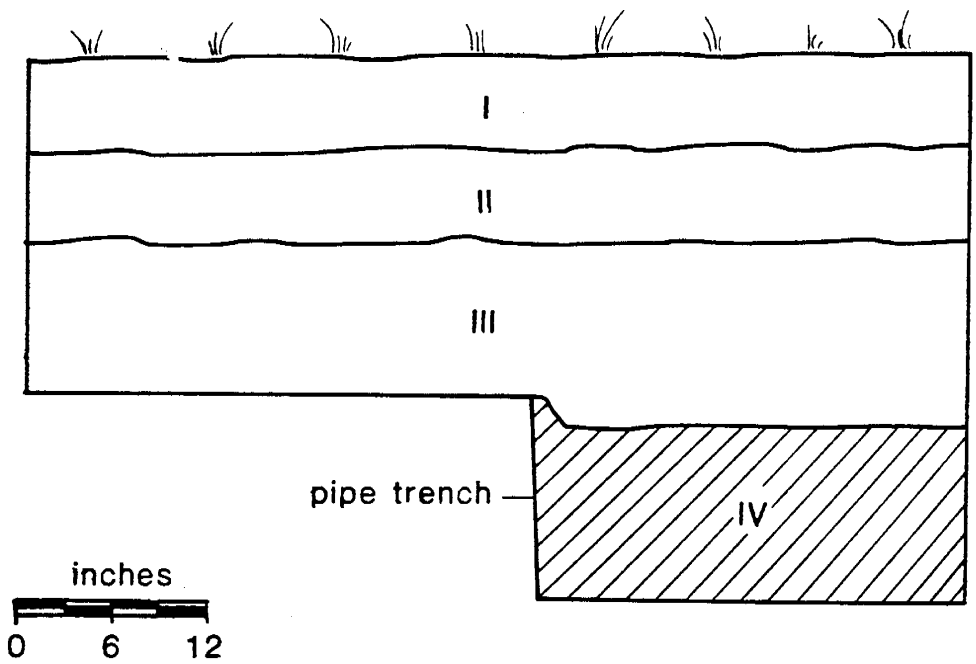
I -Gravel fill
II -Dark brown hard packed loam
III -Mottled light and dark brown sandy loam
IV -Light brown sand
V -Orange sand

and west yard areas. In sum, these units revealed that approximately 60% of the site areas had suffered disturbance during the parking lot construction. The disturbance consisted of 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 the site area. Unit no. 12 encountered a buried plowzone related to the former garden plot (Figure 32).

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 (Plates 5 and 6). Off the front area of the structure were porches supported on brick piers. Units 5 and 6 were placed abutting on the outside of the foundation wall of the full basement to locate any builder's trench. Neither of these units were successful in locating a builder's trench feature after approximately 1' of excavation. Artifacts recovered from these units consisted of a mixture of 19th and 20th century artifacts. Unit no. 7 was placed inside the full basement section to confirm informants' reports that the cellar fill consisted of large demolition debris. Unit no. 4, located within the structure encountered a similar stratigraphy to that encountered in the other yard areas, a thin mixed topsoil horizon underlain by sterile subsoil. Test Units 2 and 3 were excavated adjacent to the rear porch brick foundation area. In Unit no. 3 a 2' wide linear feature was located which upon further excavation was determined to be a trench excavated for the emplacement of a ceramic drain pipe, probably an outflow pipe for the house's

FIGURE 32

John Ruth Inn Site, (N-10892, 7NC-D-126), Test Unit 12, North Wall Profile



Soil Descriptions

I -Crush and run gravel and topsoil

II -Intermixed orange sandy clay and topsoil

III -Dark brown sandy loam, buried topsoil (pz) containing artifacts

IV -Pipe trench feature, running North-South in the unit

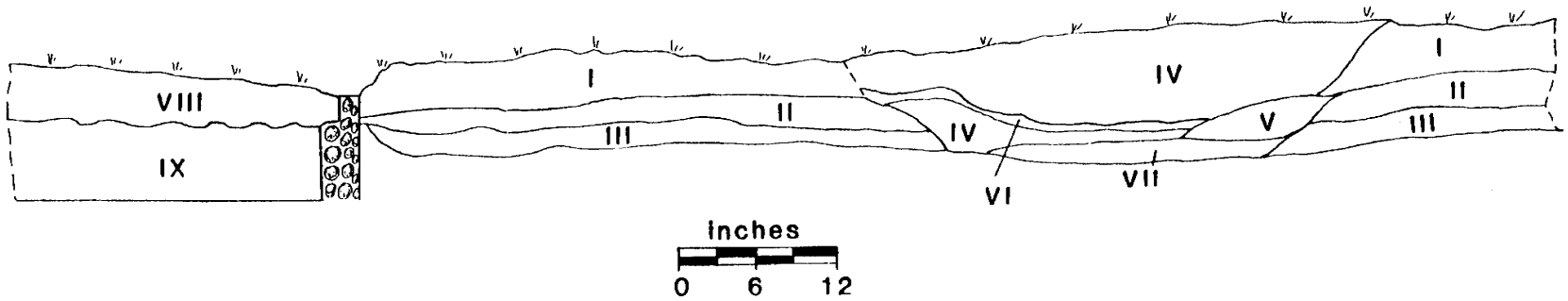
septic system. The rear wall of the structure was tested by Unit no. 13 which was unable to locate any traces of the wall due to high levels of disturbance indicated by the presence of wood fragments and other building debris intermixed with topsoil within a 6" thick horizon. Thus, based on the Phase I testing within the foundation area and yard areas no undisturbed and/or significant archaeological contexts were located and the results of the Phase I testing showed that little in the way of 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 (Figure 29). 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 examine 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 with no possibility of the presence of intact cultural deposits. Trench B, which provided an east-west transect across the rear yard area, showed a mixed and disturbed topsoil horizon. 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 same area, located a deep trough-shaped midden feature extending approximately 15' north-south along the western wall of the trench (Figure 33). The bottom of the feature was defined by a one-half inch thick layer

FIGURE 33

John Ruth Inn Site, (N-10892, 7NC-D-126), 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

of charcoal. The midden fill soil was a dark brown sandy loam and the artifacts found in this feature are described below (Figure 34). Trench C also located the rear wall of the main house full basement section. Trench D further defined the front foundation wall and the 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 29) confirmed the completely disturbed nature of the backsmith shop area and the fact that an 8' deep hole 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.

A mid-18th century artifact assemblage was obtained from Test Unit no. 14, which was placed adjacent to Trench C to sample the exposed midden feature. While three-fourths of the unit was found to be disturbed by a pipe trench, the surrounding area yielded an undisturbed, and possibly stratified, sequence of mid-18th to mid-19th century artifacts. The predominant functional types recovered consisted of glass and ceramic drinking vessels and flatware manufactured primarily in England. Among the ceramic types recovered were white salt-glazed stoneware, "Staffordshire" earthenwares (Plate 7), tin glazed earthenwares (Plate 8), Whieldonwares, stonewares (Plate 9) including Fulham Brown Salt-glazed mugs, Nottingham and American Brown Banded, American Westerwald, and variously decorated creamwares and

FIGURE 34

John Ruth Inn Site, (N-10892, 7NC-D-126), Pipe Trench, West Wall Profile of Feature 1

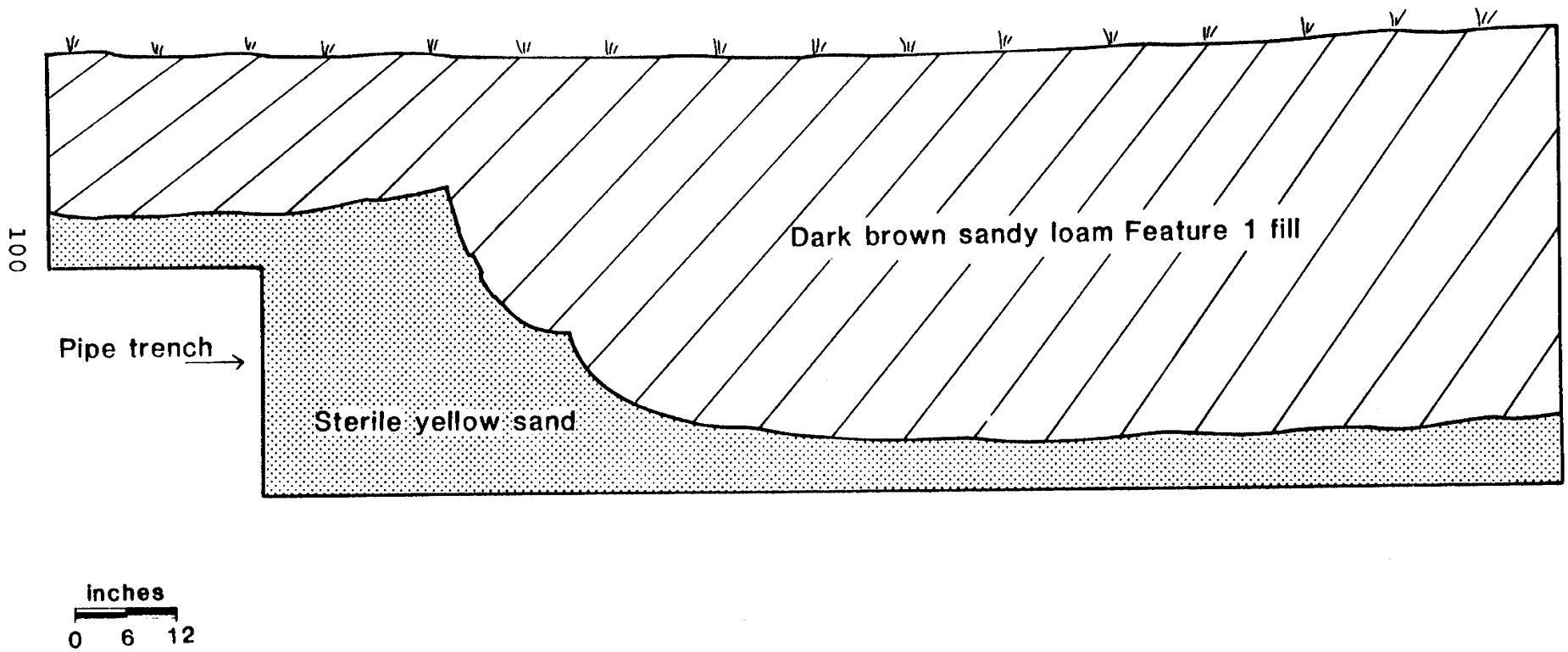


PLATE 7

Artifacts from Phase I Investigations
at the John Ruth Inn Site–Staffordshire Ceramics

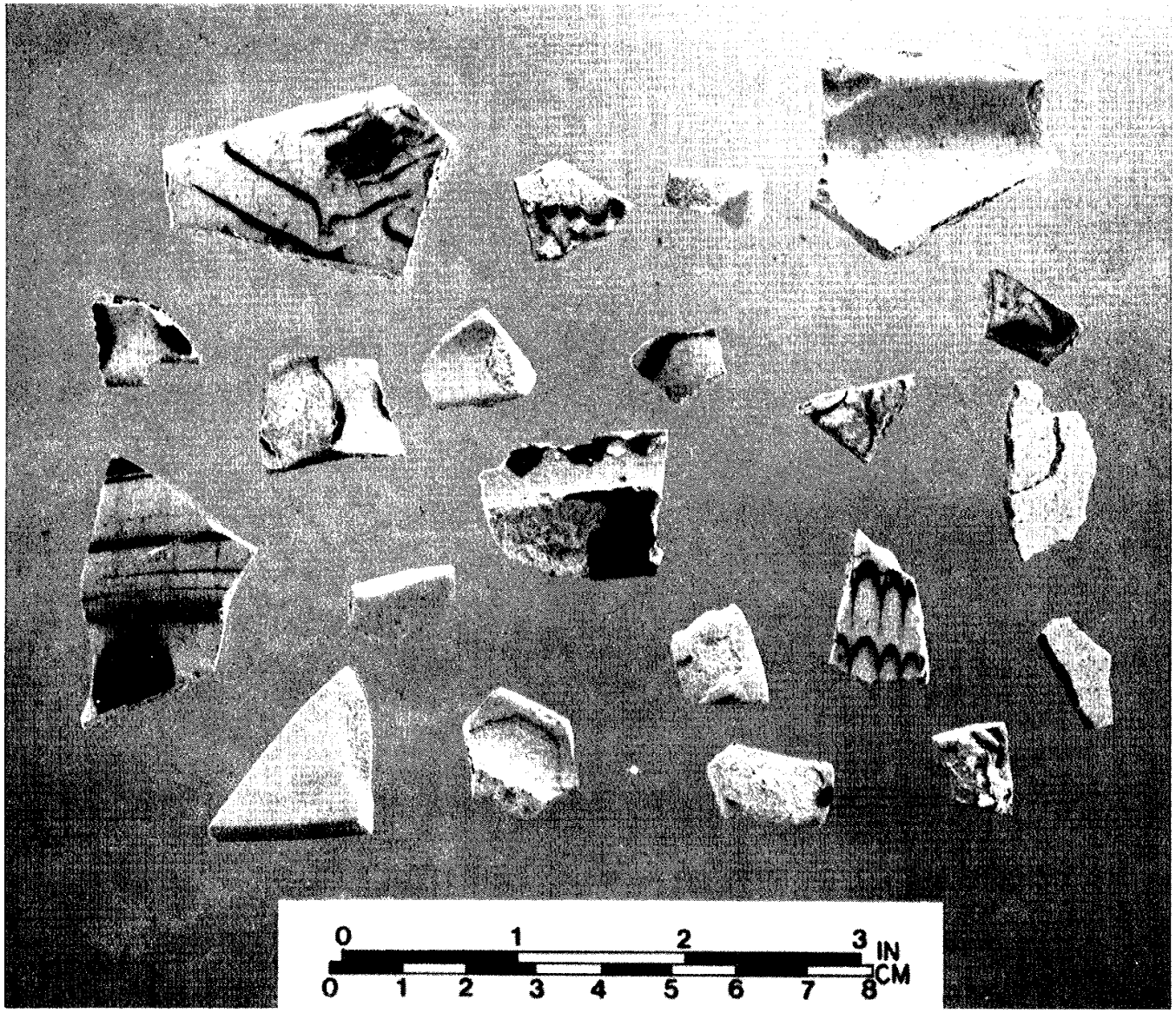


PLATE 8

Artifacts from Phase I Investigations at the John Ruth Inn Site–Tin Glazed Ceramics

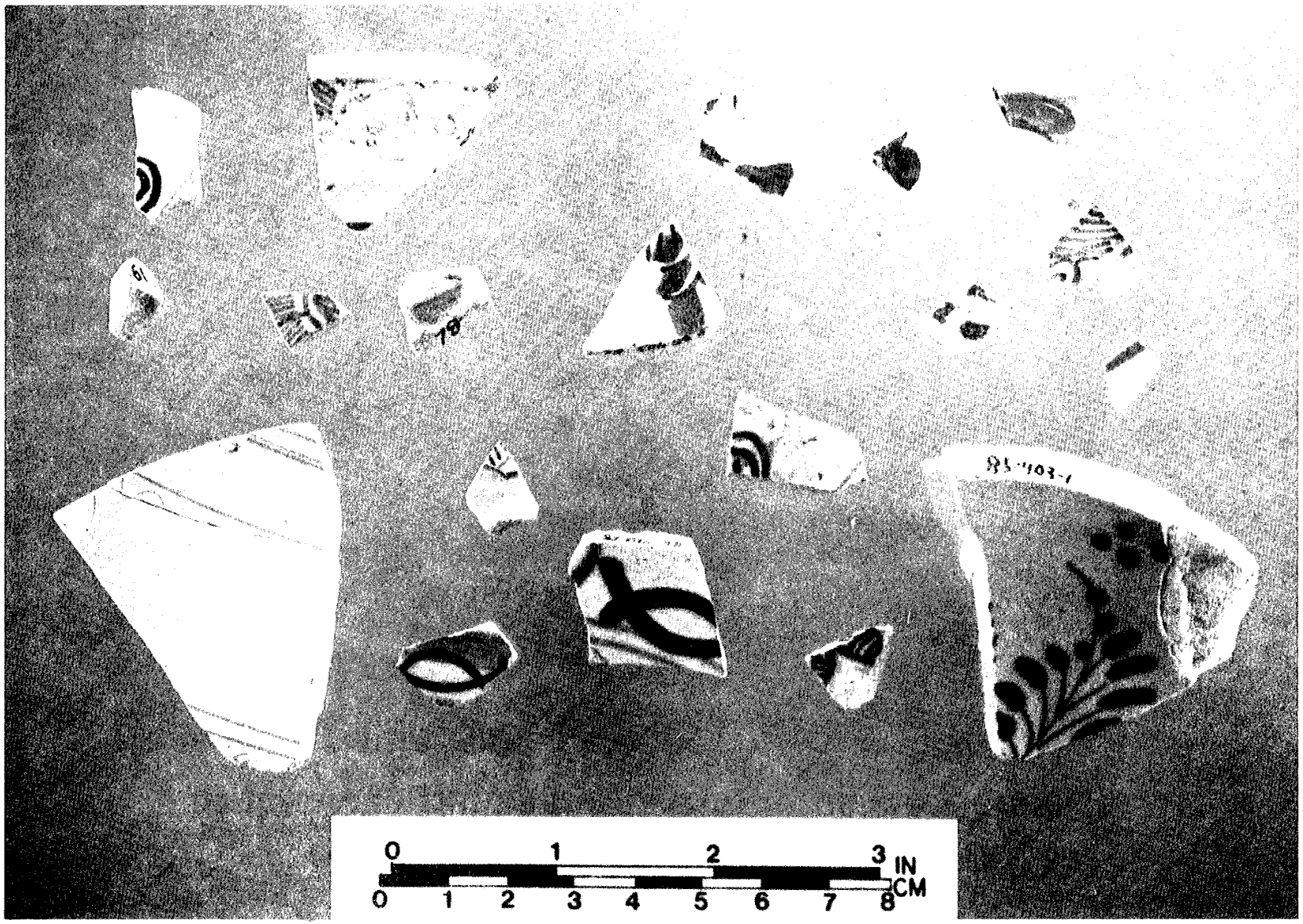
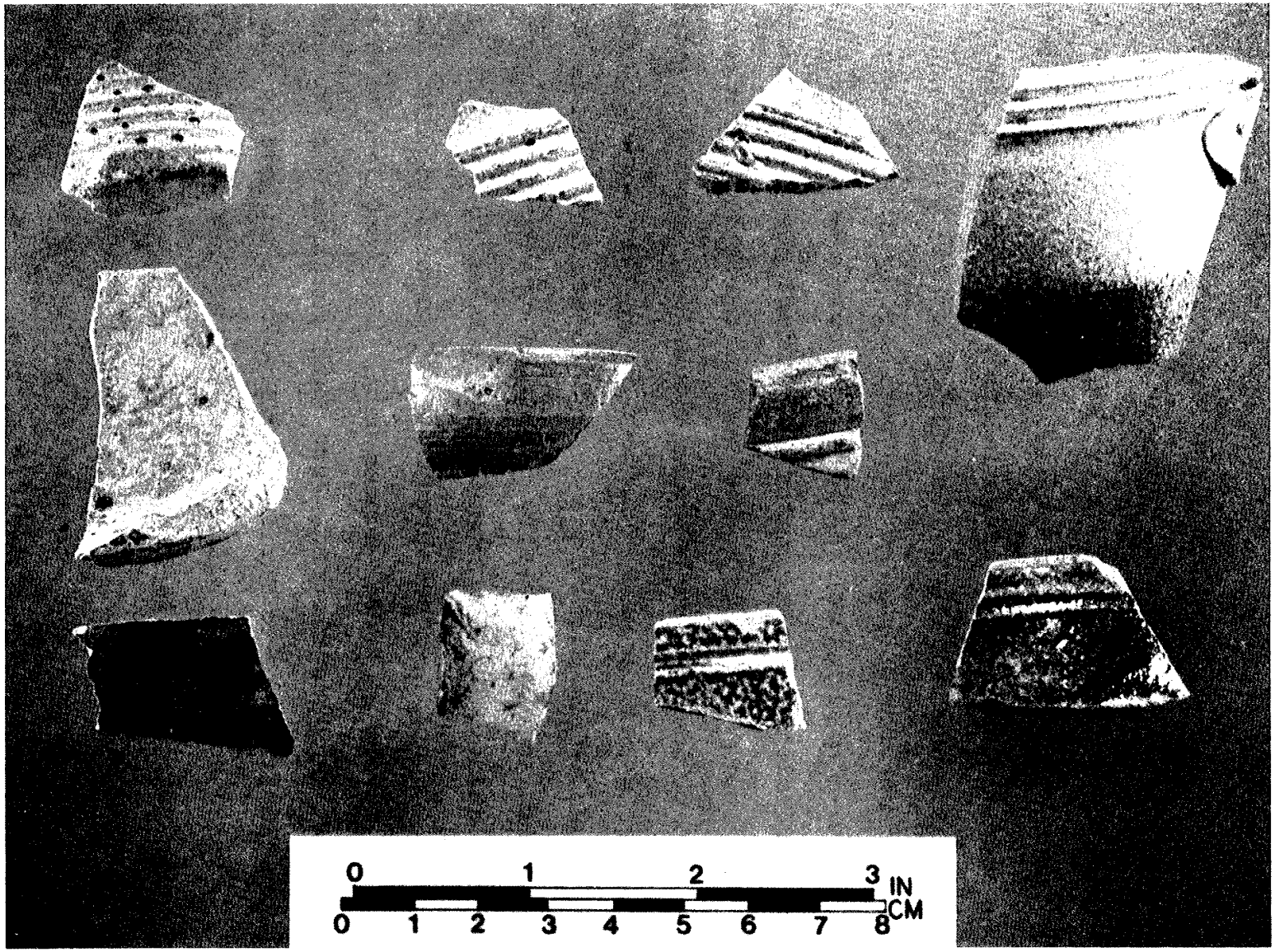


PLATE 9

Artifacts from Phase I Investigations
at the John Ruth Inn Site–English Stoneware



pearlwares (See Appendix II for a complete inventory).

Additional background research indicated that this feature may be associated with the John Ruth Inn which probably served as the social and economic center for the surrounding community from the late 18th until the late 19th century. A similar social role for tavern sites is shown by research on other taverns within the Route 7 corridor (Catts et al. 1986), in Stanton (Thompson 1987), and at other tavern sites in the eastern United States (Rockman and Rothschild 1984). 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." An 1811 re-petition by Samuel Hopper states the reason for establishment of a tavern because "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, Samuel Hopper wishes to convert his house to one of public entertainment." Tax assessments list the owner of the tavern as Samuel Hopper until 1828 when John Ruth became the owner and proprietor. John Ruth continued to run the tavern until its sale to Christopher Brooks et al. and in the same year (1844) to Absalom Willey in 1844/5 (Table 5). Tax assessments for the period 1828-1845 indicate a stable value of $400 for the property which includes a 2 story 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

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF DEED TRANSACTIONS FOR THE JOHN RUTH INN SITE, 1803-1983

Transaction	Date	Deed Reference	Acres
George Reed,Esq. to Samuel Hopper	1803	I-3-214	1
Samuel Hopper to John Ruth	1827	F-4-336	1
John Ruth to Christopher Brooks and John Peach	1844		1
Christopher Brooks and John Peach, Jr. to Absalom Willey	1844	O-5-70	1
Annie E. Nowland et al. to Eliza Wiley	1867	M-8-2	
and			
Jennie Willey to Eliza Wiley	1872	T-9-24	
Eliza Willey to James Dougherty	1883	U-12-65	
William Dougherty et al. to James Tibbitt	1888	G-14-466	
and			
Giles Lamborn,Shff. to James Tibbitt	1888	H-14-395	
James Tibbitt to Charles and John H. Wiggins	1890	Y-14-238	
Sarah Wiggins and John H. Wiggins to James Stafford	1891	F-15-476	
James Stafford to James Tibbitt	1893	B-16-450	
James Tibbitt to Charles I. DeGroft	1910	C-23-190	
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

TABLE 5 (cont.)

Transaction	Date	Deed Reference	Acres
Saul Savitch to Donald Savitch	1980	Y-112-345	.51
Donald and Elsie Savitch to Donald Savitch	1981	R-113-304	
Donald Savitch to State of Delaware	1983	Q-123-189	

document provided the most detailed description of the site's layout for the 19th century (Figure 35). Following the purchase of the property by Eliza Willey, 1867, the tavern continued in operation until circa 1870 when at that date it 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 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.

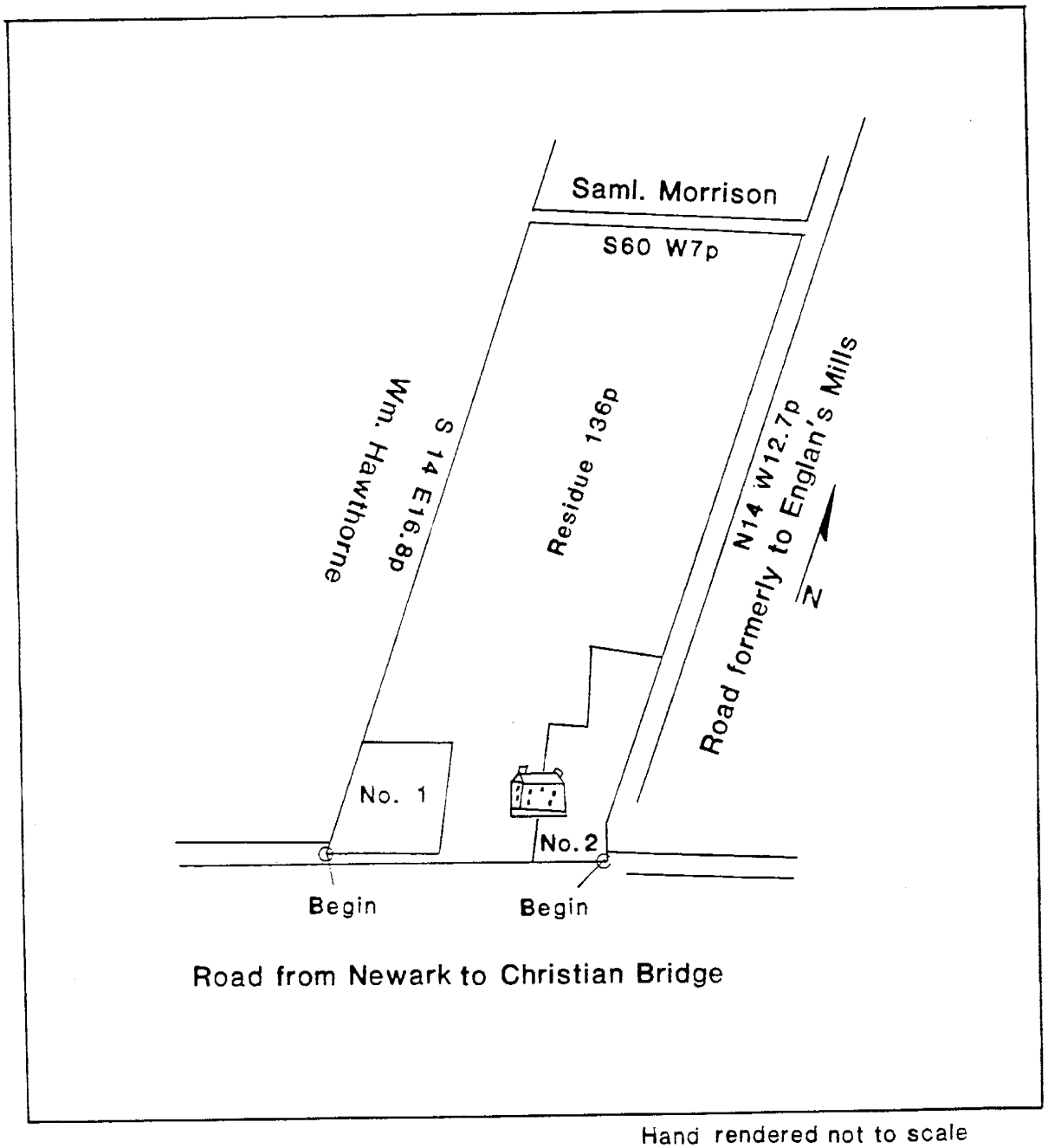
Further Phase II testing was recommended for the section of the site associated with the possible John Ruth Inn site. The additional Phase II testing for this site will be described in a forthcoming volume.

Thomas Ogle Site (7NC-D-69, N-215, N-5309)(prehistoric component)

The prehistoric component of the Thomas Ogle site was discovered during testing of a prominent knoll approximately

FIGURE 35

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



Hand rendered not to scale