A HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE MERMAID INTERSECTION

The historical research presented below will focus on the Mermaid Tavern intersection and its role in the social and economic life of Mill Creek Hundred. Specific references will be made to the blacksmith shop and the wheelwright shop at the intersection, and their relation to the Tavern across the street. Also, the role that these shops in particular, and that blacksmiths and wheelwrights in general, fulfilled in the daily, monthly, and yearly rhythms of the agricultural cycle that characterized Mill Creek Hundred from its initial settlement until the very recent past. A more general historical discussion of the area can be found in the Phase I and II archaeological reports (Catts et al. 1986:12-30; Catts and Bachman 1987), and in the architectural survey of Route 7 North (Bowers 1986).

The political entity called Mill Creek Hundred was created by the colonial legislature in 1710, although settlement had already extended up the Mill Creek, Pike Creek (or Peeck Creek), and Red Clay Creek drainages several decades earlier. Large tracts of land, ranging from 100 to 700 acres were granted by the Pennsylvania government to the initial settlers to the area, and by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the main overland transportation route in the Hundred, the "Great Limestone Road" had been laid out.

The Mermaid Tavern intersection was located on this "Great" road, close to the geographic center of the Hundred. The property containing the tavern was originally warranted to Joshua Morgan in the fall of 1702 (see Table 3 for a listing of the property transactions for the project area). Morgan's tract, just over 100 acres in size, was sold at some time in the next twenty years; by 1723/24 William Anderson, a glover (or leatherworker) from Octoraro Creek in Chester County, had purchased the land "by turf and twig, before witnesses." Anderson held the property for a very short time and sold it in February of 1723/24 to John Ball Sr., a blacksmith from Mill Creek Hundred (NCCD Z-1:108). John Ball's purchase began the history of the Mermaid Tract, for several generations of the Ball family would own and operate the shop and tavern over the next century. Blacksmithing as a vocation was passed from father to son over the following 102 years, and there were often two Ball relatives that were smithing at the same time. In fact, the Ball family was quite prolific, and had a tendency to repeat and reuse the names John, Joseph, William, Sarah, Mary, James, and Jeremiah, making it difficult to know precisely who and what generation is being referred to (Table 4).

TABLE 3

Summary of Property Transactions for the Mermaid Intersection

1702 - 1988

Summary of property transactions for the "Mermaid" tract

Date	Transaction	Acreage	Price	Reference
October 2, 1702	Warrant from the Pennsylvania Commissioners of Property to Joshua Morgan; George Deakyne, surveyor	103	none	NCCLS page 363
Unknown; between 1702 and 1723/4	Joshua Morgan to William Anderson of Octoraro Creek, Chester County, Pennsylvania ("by turf and twig, before witnesses")	100	?	NNCD K-1:349 Z-1:108
February 4, 1723/ 4	William Anderson to John Ball, Sr., blacksmith, of Mill Creek Hundred	100	?	NCCD Z-1:108
April 29, 1735	John Ball, Sr., blacksmith, to William Ball, blacksmith (son of John Ball, Sr.)	100	L60	NCCD K-1:349
October 28, 1746	Resurvey by George Stevenson of the tract formerly of Joshua Morgan for William Ball	111	?	NCCLS pages 39-40
August 17, 1747	William Ball wills the "place I now live on" to his son, John Ball (not yet 21 years old)	111?	—	NCCW G-1:41
August 22, 1772	Joseph Ball, William Ball's son (and John Ball's brother), buys the land at Sheriff's sale, after John Ball cannot pay a debt	116 acres, 92 perches	L233, 3 shillings	NCCD Z-1:645
May 14, 1801	Joseph Ball and Hannah, his wife, to William Ball (their son), a blacksmith	116 acres, 92 perches; 2 acres	5 shillings	NCCD Z-2:137
June 21, 1821	William Ball to his heirs	116+ acres; 2 acres	—	NCCO L-1:90
April 19, 1826	Mortgage by William Ball, weaver, to Joseph Derrickson	1/6 part of Mermaid property		NCCD D-4:215
July 11, 1826	William Ball to Joseph Derrickson	same 1/6 part	$300	NCCD D-4:416
March 25, 1826	Mortgage by John and Hannah (Ball) Engle to Joseph Derrickson	1/6 part of Mermaid property		NCCD D-4:327
January 30, 1827	John and Hannah (Ball) Engle to Joseph Derrickson	same 1/6 part	$300	NCCD E-4:210
May 2, 1826	Joseph Ball, blacksmith, to Joseph Derrickson	1/6 part of Mermaid property	$300	NCCD D-4:326
March 20, 1829	Joseph Derrickson to Samuel C. and Sarah Ann Walker, of Chester County, PA.	116 acres; 2 acres	$4,000	NCCD H-4:138
November 2, 1831	Samuel C. and Sarah Ann Walker to George Walker	116+ acres; 2 acres	$3,500	NCCD U-5:243
circa 1839	George Walker dies intestate; land is left to his wife, Rebecca (Warner) Walker, and 5 children: Samuel C., Rebecca, Jerome, Josiah, and Elizabeth			
May 14, 1839	Samuel C. Walker, of Wilmington, to Rebecca Walker: Samuel C. signs over his 1/5 part of the estate in trust to his children: Dixon, Jefferson, Julia Ann, William Wilson, and George	1/5 part of Mermaid property	$5.00	NCCD C-5:156
March 3, 1874	Rebecca J. Brown, Administratrix for Rebecca Walker, deceased, to Aquila Derrickson	2 parcels received from Orphans Court, September 1, 1873	$445	NCCD E-10:291
March 3, 1874	Rebecca J. Brown, administratrix for George Walker, deceased, to Aquila Derrickson	116+ acres; 2 acres	$6,040	NCCD E-10:294
April 3, 1874	Aquila Derrickson to Rebecca J. Brown and Elizabeth A. Walker, all of Mill Creek Hundred	the parcels sold in preceding two transactions	$7,000	NCCD E-10:289

TABLE 3 (cont.)

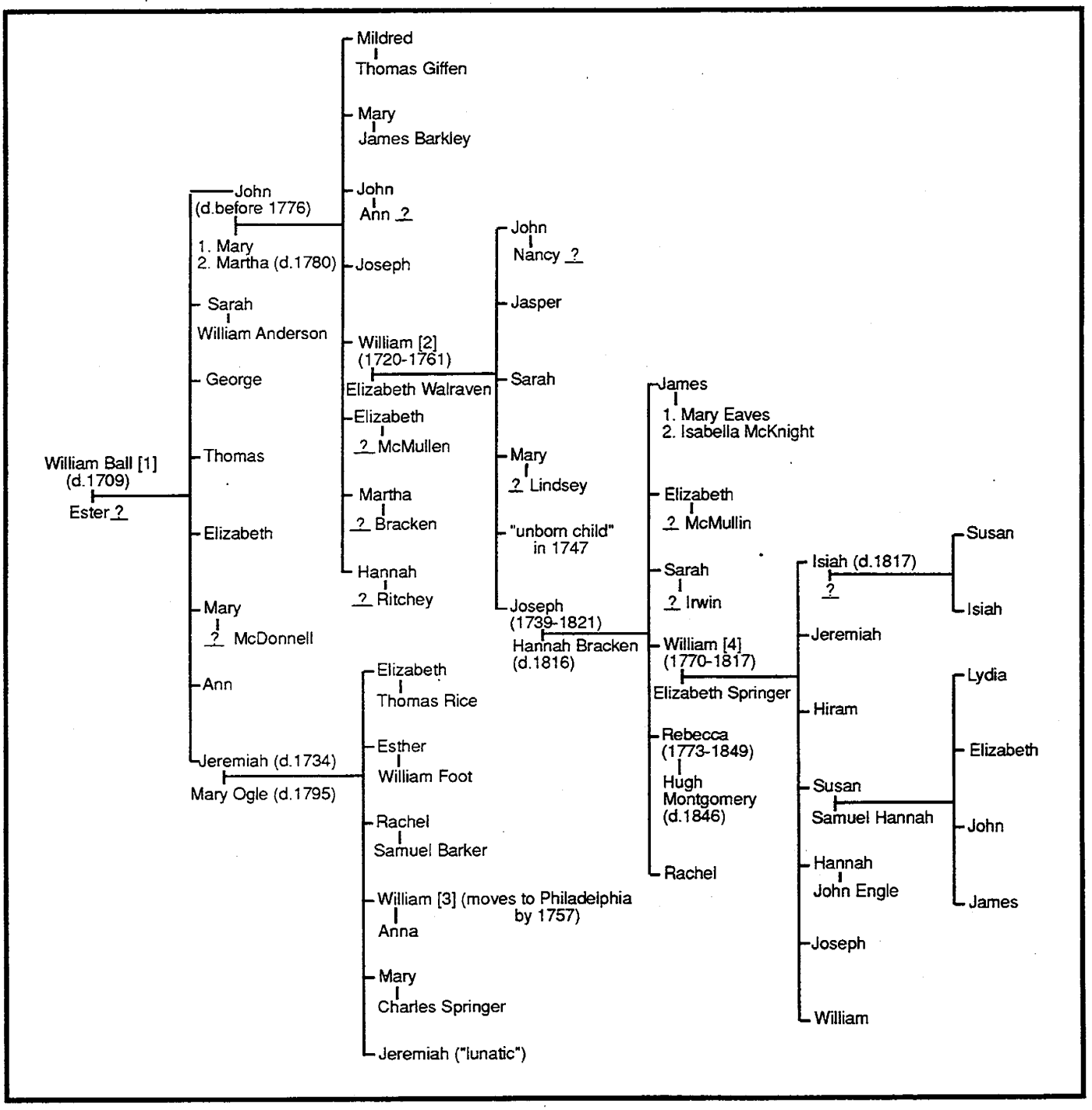
Summary of Property Transactions for the Mermaid Intersection

1702 - 1988

March 27, 1895	Elizabeth A. Walker, single woman, Evelyn W. Wilmer (granddaughter of Rebecca J. Brown), and Daniel Wilmer, her husband, to James H. Walker	4 parcels that comprise the "Mermaid" property	$7,000	NCCD T-16:6
January 21, 1934	James H. Walker to Emma W. Pennington, by will, Emma charged with certain payments to Clarence L.Walker	"Mermaid" property		NCCW U-5:467
September 12, 1938	Clarence L. Walker releases the premises for debt of monies	his portion of the estate		NCCD Z-40:473
September 12, 1938	Clarence L. Walker and Ethel J. Walker, his wife, quit-claim all interest for the property to Emma W. Pennington, wife of Lawrence H. Pennington			NCCD C-41:101
December 12, 1955	Emma W. Pennington wills property to James Walker, Martin B., and Helen Mae Pennington, and Sara Albina Pennington-Evans, as trustees of an active trust			NCCW Number 53952
May 12, 1982	James Walker and Martin B. Pennington, and Sara Albina Pennington-Evans, as Trustees of the will of Emma W. Pennington, and Martin B. Pennington, individually, to Limestone Road Associates	1.8917 acres; Blacksmith Shop property	$50,000	NCCD K-118:209
Summary of property transactions for the Blacksmith Shop parcel				
April 3, 1874	Aquila Derrickson to Elizabeth A. Walker, and Rebecca J. Brown	4 parcels comprising the "Mermaid" tract	$7,000	NCCD E-10:289
March 27, 1895	Elizabeth A. Walker, single woman, Evelyn W. Wilmer (granddaughter and only heir of Rebecca J. Brown), and Daniel G. Wilmer, her husband, to James H. Walker	same	$7,000	NCCD T-16:6
January 21, 1934	James H. Walker dies January 21, 1934; wills the property to his daughter Emma W. Pennington	same		NCCW U-5:467
August 15, 1968	Emma W. Pennington dies August 15, 1968; wills land to J. Walker Pennington, Martin B. Pennington, and Sara Albina Pennington-Evans	same		NCCW 53952 (see NCCD Z-40:473 C-41:101 F-83:425 E-116:306
May 12, 1982	J. Walker Pennington, Martin B. Pennington, Sara Albina Pennington-Evans, as trustees of the will of Emma W. Pennington, and Martin B. Pennington, individually, to Limestone Road Associates	1.8917	$50,000	NCCD K-18:209
Summary of property transactions for the Wheelwright Shop				
April 3, 1874	Aquila Derrickson to Elizabeth A. Walker and Rebecca J. Brown			NCCD E-10:289
March 27, 1895	Elizabeth A. Walker, single woman, Evelyn Wilmer (granddaughter and only heir to Rebecca J. Brown), and Daniel G. Wilmer to James H. Walker	4 lots that comprise the "Mermaid" tract	$7,000	NCCD T-16:6
January 21, 1934	James H. Walker dies, wills the land to his daughter Emma W. Pennington			NCCW U-5:467
August 3, 1951	Emma W. and Lawrence H. Pennington to James Walker Pennington	1 acre	$10.00	NCCD M-51:422
September 30, 1955	Emma W. Pennington, widow , to James Walker Pennington and Leah R. Pennington	3 acres	$10.00	NCCD S-56:572
July 12, 1978	J. Walker Pennington and Leah R. Pennington to Oliver Schuler and Emilie A. Schuler, his wife	2 acres; part of the above	$10.00	NCCD X-101:329
November 21, 1983	J. Walker Pennington and Leah R. Pennington to Oliver Schuler and Emilie A. Schuler, his wife	2 acres	$60,000	NCCD Q-124:199
July 29, 1988	Oliver F. Schuler and Emilie A. Schuler to Carmen J. Bellini, Jr., and Judith Bellini, his wife	2 acres	$599,000	NCCD 739:174

TABLE 4

William Ball Family Geneaology



In the summer of 1703, John Ball Sr. purchased a 202-acre parcel on the north side of Mill Creek which was part of a larger tract called "New Design" (NCCD B:1-243). In a court deposition recorded in 1735, John stated that he was 60 years old (therefore born in 1675), and had lived for four years along the Elk River before moving to Mill Creek Hundred in 1703. Local tradition records that he

operated a bloomery furnace near St. James Church (Swank 1884:142, 179). John's father, William Ball [I], had purchased a 400-acre tract called "Wilbourn" in the fall of 1689, a parcel located close by to "New Design." William [I] was also a blacksmith, and in his will dated 1709 (Appendix III) he bequeathed his land to his sons George and Jeremy, as well as his "Smith Tools & one pare of Plow Horses one yoke of Oxen two plows & plow Irons two Iron touthed Harrowes and all other the Geares tackling for Plows & Carte or Harrow belonging to said Plantation," all to be divided equally between them (NCCW 1709).

William [1] was apparently not as kind to his eldest son John, nor to his eldest daughter Sarah Anderson. In his will he left each of them one shilling "Starling money of Great Britain,"stating that they and their heirs were to have no further claim on his estate. It is possible that Sarah Anderson was married to William Anderson of Octoraro Creek, the man from whom John Sr. had purchased the land in Mill Creek Hundred; this would make them brothers-in-law.

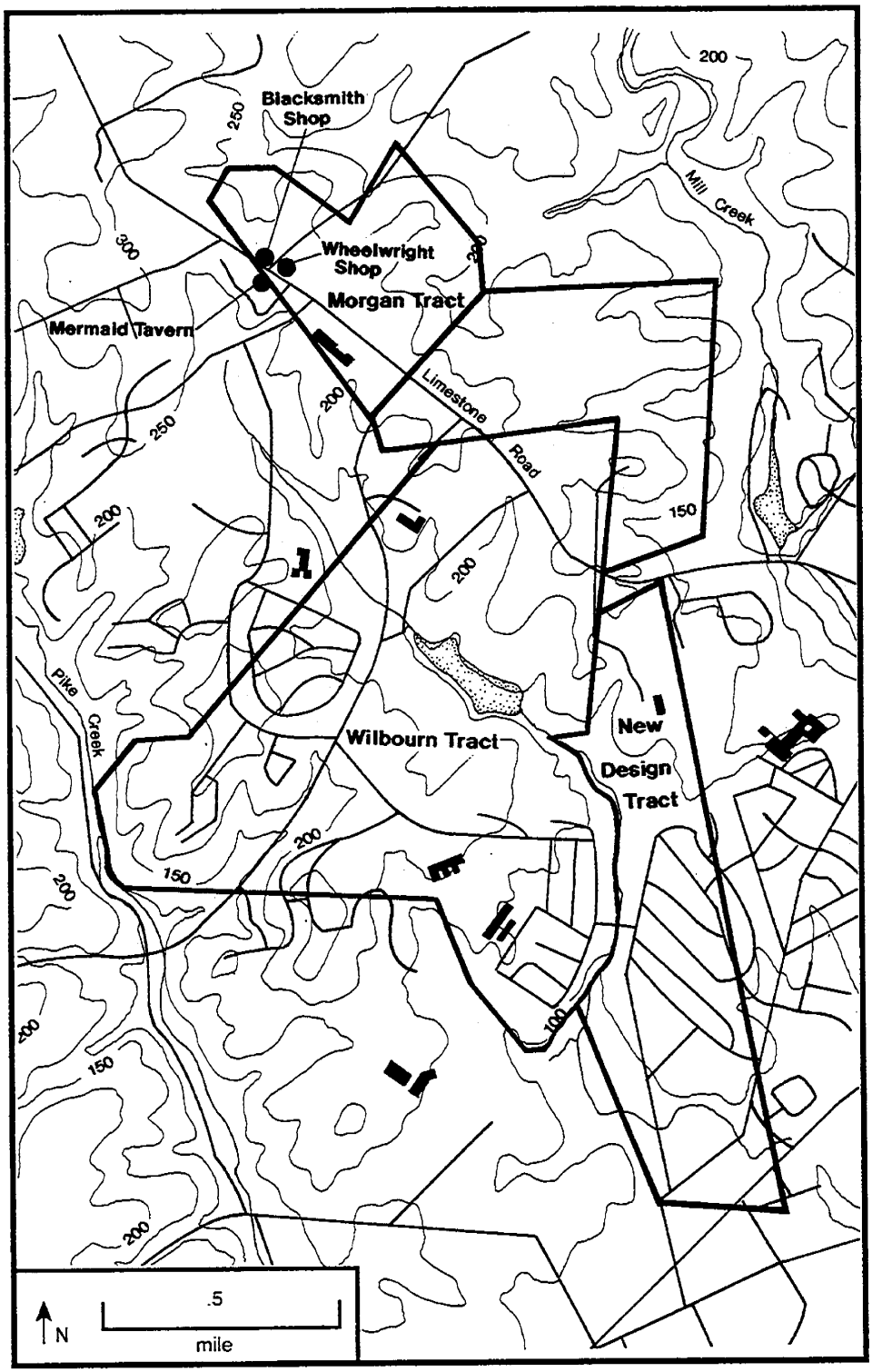
The apparent disbarment of John Sr. and Sarah by their father may be more imaginary than real; it is likely that both of these children were already established and well-off on their own farms and with their own families. William [1] was simply insuring the economic survival of his other children; sons Thomas, George and Jeremy, his daughters Mary McDonnell, Elizabeth and Ann, and his wife Esther.

In the spring of 1735, John Ball Sr. and his wife Mary sold the 100-acre tract that would be known as the Mermaid property to their son William Ball for sixty pounds (NCCD K-1:349) (Table 3). In the deed both men were recorded as blacksmiths. Architectural evidence from the Mermaid Tavern structure suggests that the eastern stone section of the building was constructed sometime between the years 1723/24 and 1735, or when John Ball Sr. purchased the land and subsequently sold it to his son William. Eleven years later, in 1746, William had the property resurveyed and it was found to contain not the previously supposed 100 acres, but rather 111 acres (NCCLS:39-40) (Figure 8).

According to documentary sources, there appears to have been two William Ball's, both of whom were blacksmiths operating in Mill Creek Hundred in the middle of the eighteenth century. From the distance of over two-and-a-half centuries, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. They were undoubtedly related; possibly they were uncle and nephew, or more likely cousins. One of them (William [2]) seems to have been the son of John and Mary Ball (see NCCD M-1:161); the other

FIGURE 8

The Mermaid Vicinity, circa 1746



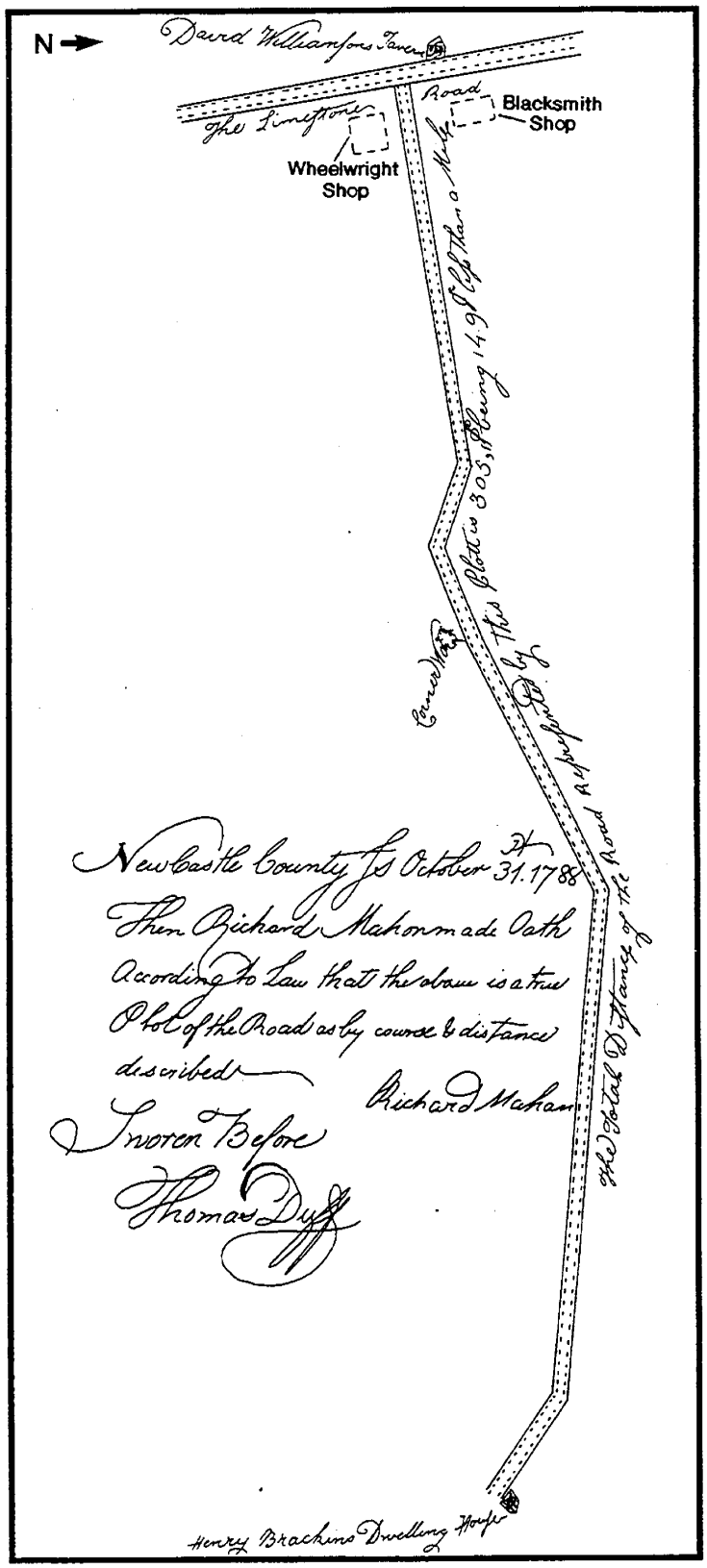
apparently (William [3]) was a cousin and the son of Jeremiah Ball (NCCD W-1:87), who married Mary Ogle in 1717, and died by 1744 (NCCOC C-1:47). Both John and Jeremiah were the sons of William Ball [1] discussed above. John was the disbarred son, and Jeremiah inherited his father's smithing tools.

William [3] was one of six children: Elizabeth, Esther (who married William Foot), Mary (who married Charles Springer), Jeremiah (referred to by the Orphans Court in 1744 as "distracted or in Lunacy"), and Rachel (who married Samuel Barker) (NCCOC C-1:47; D-1:18; NCCD W-1:87). On 29 July 1756 William [3] advertised in the Pennsylvania Gazette for the sale of two 200-acre plantations, "one of which is, and has been, a noted tavern, and lies on the great road leading from Newport to Conestogoe." William [3] was selling the two parcels that he had inherited from his father Jeremiah, and that had been held jointly by himself and his Uncle George. Both were part of the "Wilbourn" tract (NCCD W-1:87; HSD Land Records). A year later William [3] advertised in the paper that he was living on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia, that he had "formerly lived in New Castle County, and kept Tavern there on the Lime-stone Road", and that he was operating a tavern in Philadelphia called "the sign of the Duke of Cumberland"(Pennsylvania Gazette 6 June 1757). Contemporary deed records from Mill Creek Hundred indicate that William [3] continued to follow blacksmithing while in Philadelphia (NCCD W-1:87; S-1:330).

It is tempting to interpret the 'noted tavern' that William [3] kept on Limestone Road as the Mermaid Tavern; unfortunately the documentary evidence neither supports nor refutes this contention. The land where the tavern stood was clearly owned by William [2], a cousin; possibly William [3] operated the tavern and the smith shop as a tenant until his inheritance in 1744. William [2] married Elizabeth Walraven and fathered six children: John, Joseph, Jasper, Mary, Sarah, and an unborn child as of the summer of 1747, when he prepared his will (NCCW G-1:41). In his will (Appendix IV), William [2] left his son John "the place I now live on" and to his son Joseph "the other place." This "other place" was a 103-acre tract that William [2] had purchased from his father in 1738 (NCCD M-1:161). William [2]'s remaining children received money, but no land. Settlement of William [2]'s estate dragged on until 1774, possibly due to financial difficulties (NCCOC D-1:492).

FIGURE 9

Detail of a Plot of a Road from Henry Brackin's Dwelling House to the Limestone Road (1788)

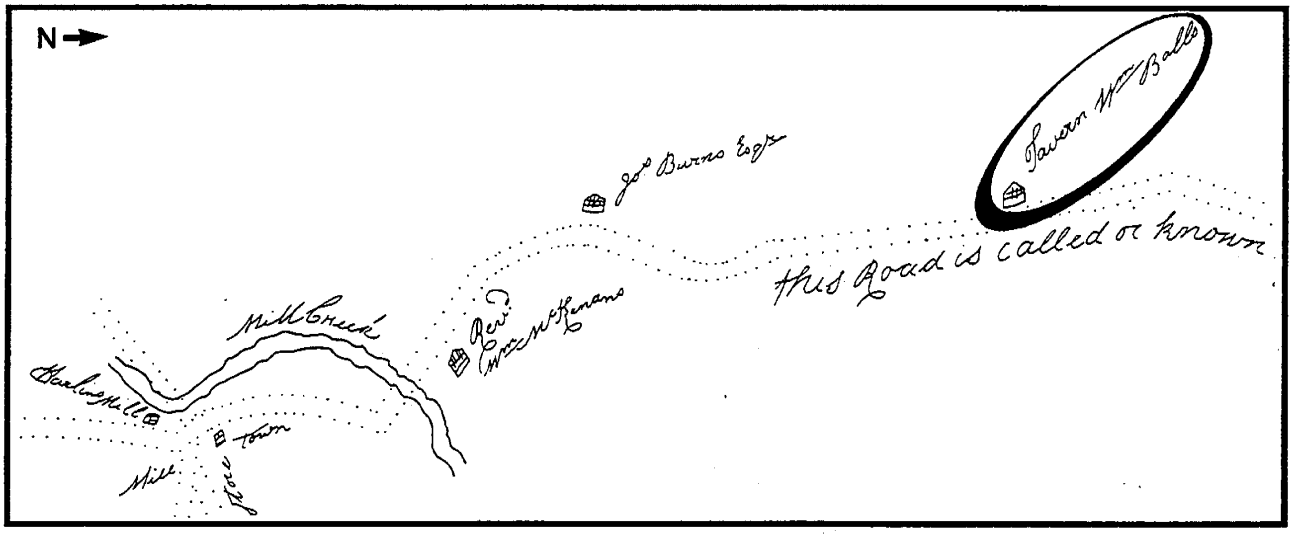


John Ball, a blacksmith, apparently operated the tavern and shop until August of 1772, when the 116-acre Mermaid parcel was sold at a sheriffs' sale to fulfill a debt (NCCD Z-1:645) (Table 3). The land sold for over £233, but remained in the family because it was purchased by Joseph Ball, John's brother. By the 1780's Joseph Ball was probably not operating the tavern. A road plat prepared in 1788 recorded that a David Williamson was running the tavern (Figure 9). Like William Ball [3] before him, Williamson was a tenant tavernkeeper.

Joseph Ball owned the land until the spring of 1801, when he, now recorded as a yeoman, and his wife Hannah "for and in consideration of the natural love and affection which they...bear unto his son William", sold William Ball [4] the Mermaid parcel and an additional 2-acre parcel, for the sum of 5 shillings (NCCD Z-2:137). William Ball [4] was born 10

FIGURE 10

Detail of a Plot of the Roads Leading Through Mill Creek Hundred, 1804

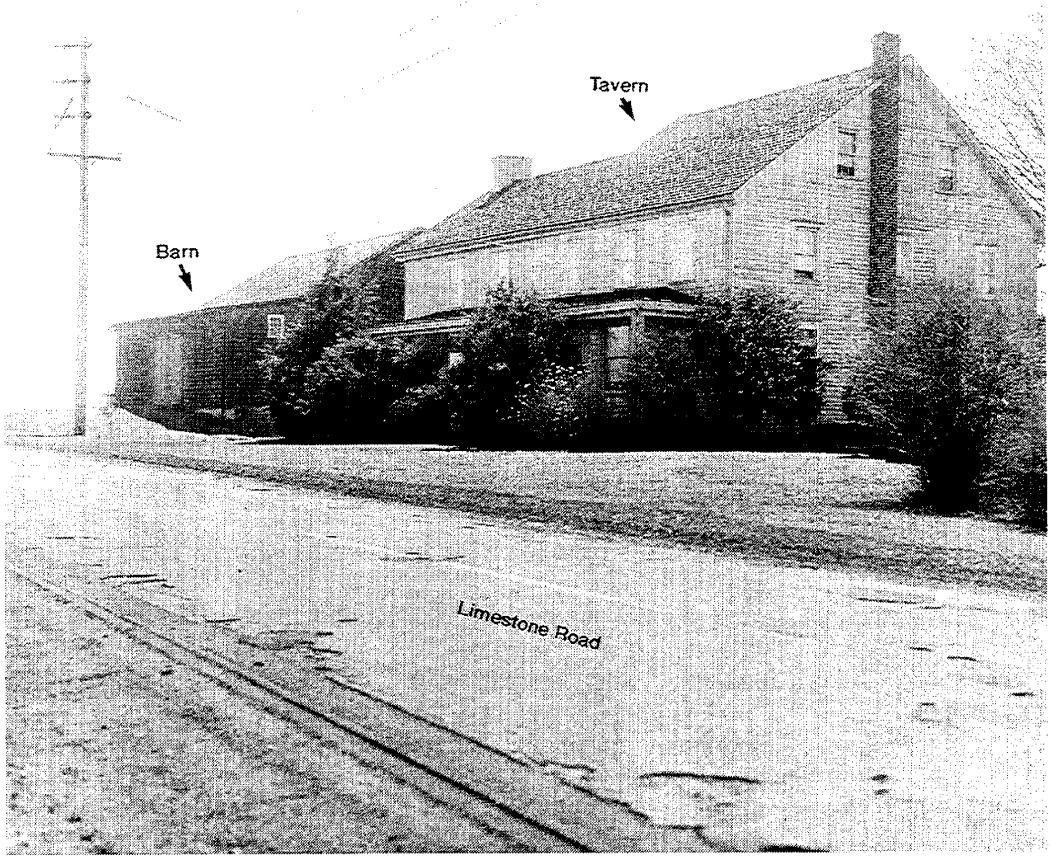


September 1770, so by the time he purchased the Mermaid parcel he was thirty-one and married to Elizabeth Springer. They had nine children. Four years after William [4] received the Mermaid property the County assessed the land for $475 -- it contained a house and kitchen, both constructed of stone and log, and "stone sheds". William [4]'s total assessment was $720 (NCCTA 1803/04). That same year a road plat illustrating the Limestone Road showed the location of "Tavern Wm. Ball's" (Figure 10). That same year Ball constructed a large stone barn to the south of the tavern, on the west side of the road (Plate 2). He placed his initials and the date in the gable end.

By 1816 William Ball's holdings were valued at $3451, and the Mill Creek Hundred tax list for that year recorded "one stone and wood dwelling, a stone barn, stable and smith shop, and frame shed" on his 118 acres of land. In that year there were four other blacksmiths in Mill Creek Hundred, and a comparison of their assessments suggests something of the smithing business in a rural New Castle County hundred (Table 5). Ball was neither the wealthiest nor the poorest of the smiths. John Stilwell's shop located in Stanton, was assessed the least valuable, while Ezekiel Reed's shop (location not known) was assessed for over $5600. The average assessment for these five shops was $3362, a little below Ball's assessment. All of the smiths except for Stilwell were assessed above $1435, the median assessment for Mill Creek Hundred, and Ball, Dickson, and Reed were even assessed above the mean

PLATE 2

The Mermaid Tavern and Barn, 1964



for the Hundred ($2053). The mode in 1816 for the five hundred and nineteen inhabitants of Mill Creek Hundred was $200 (NCCTA 1816).

William [4] died within a year of the 1816 assessment at the age of 47. He was survived by his wife, Elizabeth, six children (Susan (Ball) Hanna, Hannah (Ball) Engle, Joseph, William, Jeremiah, and Hiram), and two grandchildren (Susan and Isiah), the children of his dead son Isiah (NCCOC M-1:241). In 1821 the New Castle County Orphans Court appointed several neighbors, William Montgomery, Andrew Ford, and Caleb Harlan, to view the Mermaid property and determine its annual value for the purpose of income. They reported that the Mermaid property "consists of 116 acres of land, one large dwelling house, part log and part stone, occupied as a Tavern, One Stone Barn, Stone Stables and sheds, stone blacksmith shop and spring house, one small log tenement, the buildings, in tenantable repair, an

TABLE 5

Blacksmiths in Mill Creek Hundred, 1816

	Real Estate	Livestock	Heal tax	Total
1. William Ball	$3186	$115	$150	$3451
2. Joseph Drummond's Establishment	$1500	--	--	$1500
3. John Dickson's Establishment in tenure of Mary Dickson	$5250	--	--	$5250
4. Ezekiel Reed	$5160	$351	$150	$5661
5. John Stilwell (in Stanton)	$700	$100	$150	$950
Total	**$15,796**	**$566**	**$450**	**$16,812**

indifferent Orchard land not of the first quality, fencing in good repair, no land necessary to be cleared..."(NCCOC L-1:90). They assessed the annual rental value of the property at $190.

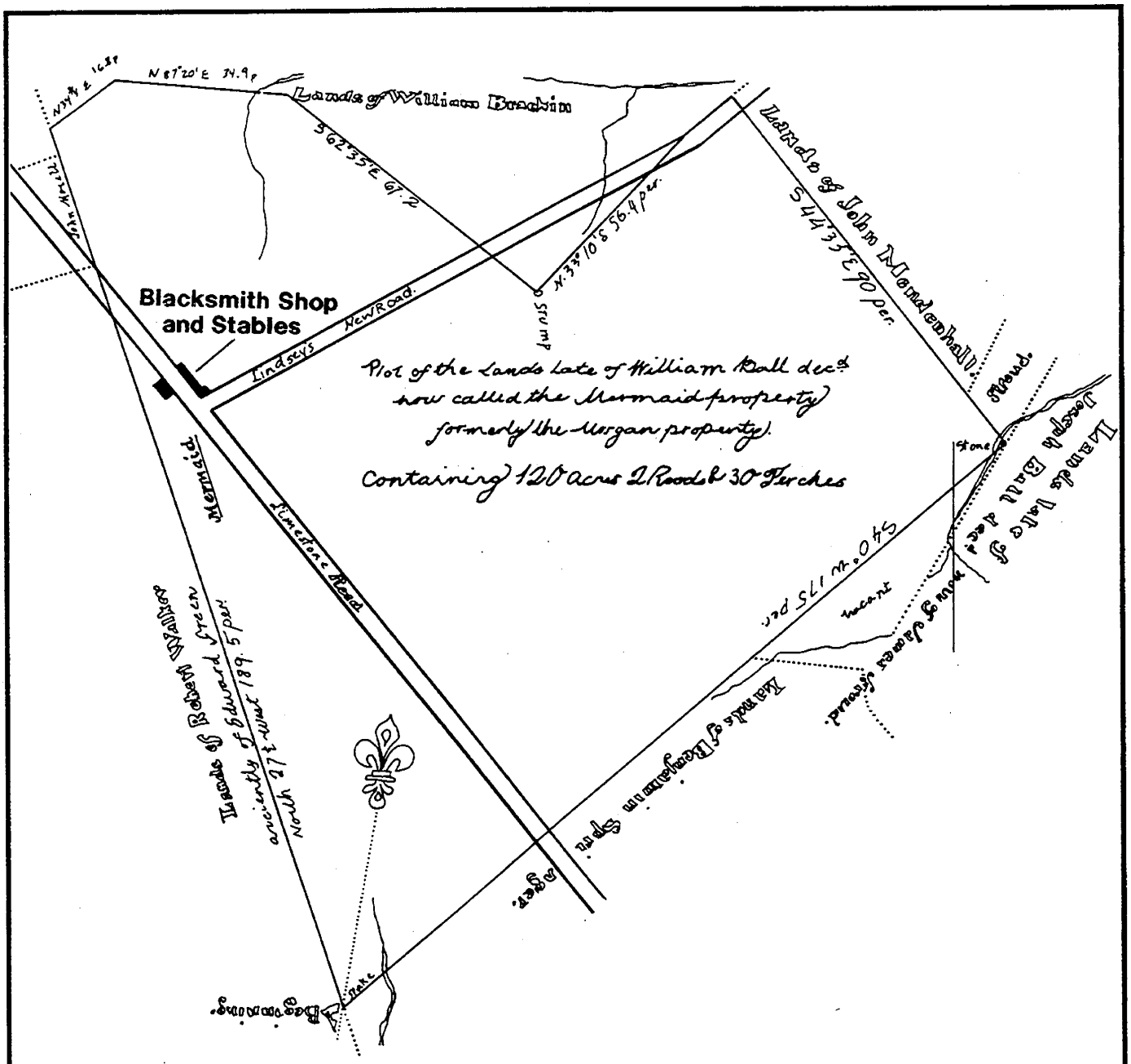
An inventory of William [4]'s estate was prepared that spring (Appendix V). Included among the items of the estate were several entries related to the blacksmith shop and its operation. There were five sets of smith tongs, valued at $1.00, a "shoeing box and sundries for shoeing", also valued at $1.00, and "Bellows, Anvil hammers and Sundries in Shop" valued at $20.00. Fuel for the forge was provided by 87 bushels of charcoal, appraised at 8 cents per bushel, for a total of $6.96.

The Ball family estate was not settled until 1827, ten years after William [4]'s death. The Orphans Court prepared a plat map of what by then was titled "the Mermaid Property, formerly the Morgan Property" (Figure 11). Directly at the northeast corner of the intersection was the stable for twenty-four horses, and abutting this to the north was the blacksmith shop. Across Limestone Road to the west was the Mermaid Tavern itself (NCCOC M-1:243). An earlier road plot clearly showed the stable and shops by 1822 (Figure 12). The court valued the land at $19.60 per acre; for 120 acres, two rods and thirty perches that amounted to $2,365.47 1/2. Interestingly, the size of the Mermaid tract had been mysteriously growing over the last century, from 103 acres in 1723 to a little over 120 acres by 1827 (Table 3). This phenomenon was probably related to the vagaries of surveying techniques employed during the period.

In July of 1827 the estate was finally settled, with Joseph Derrickson, the assignee of the eldest son Joseph Ball (by this time deceased), receiving a portion of the property outright, and paying off the remaining heirs for their parcels (NCCOC M-1:245; M-1:247; NCCD D-4:210; D-4:215; D-4:326; D-

FIGURE 11

Return of the Division of William Ball's Estate (1827) New Castle County Orphans Court (M-1-243)

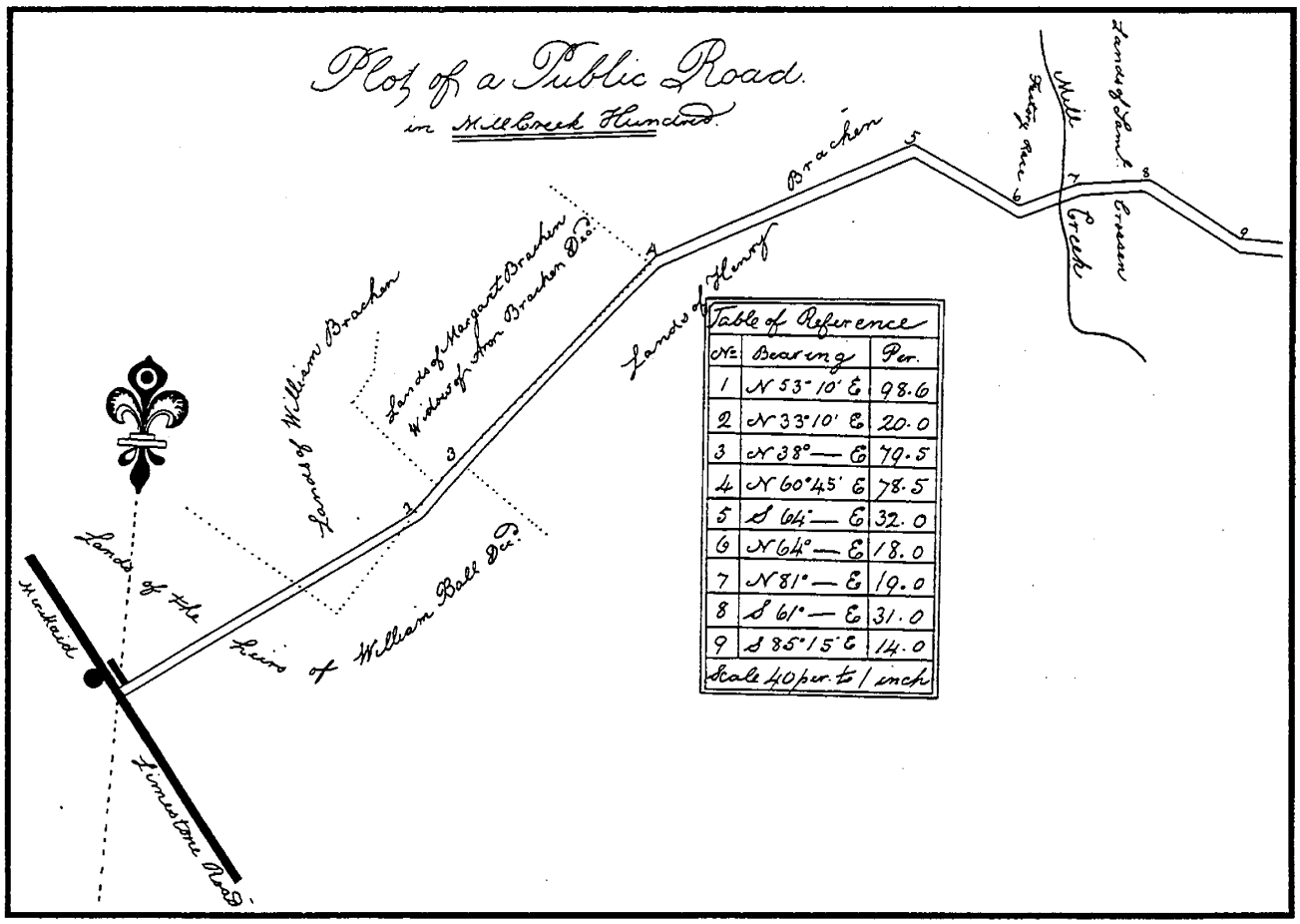


Redrawn fron New Castle County Orphan's Court record M-1-243

4:327; E-4:210). The purchase of the property by Derrickson ended the ownership of the Mermaid Tavern and blacksmith shop by the Ball family. Their century of occupation had seen the initial European settlement of Mill Creek Hundred, the development of Limestone Road, and the great

FIGURE 12

Detail of a "Plot of Public Road in Mill Creek Hundred" Showing Mermaid and the Shop and Stable at the Intersection (1822)

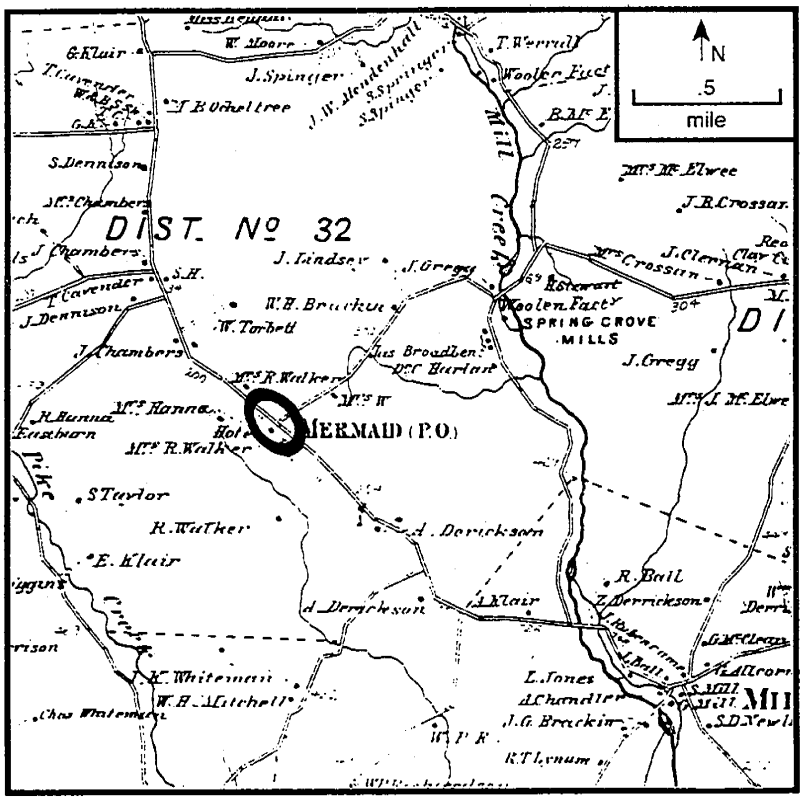


transformation of the landscape from forests to agricultural lands. The tavern and shop were crucial in the growth of the area, supplying manufactured goods, repairs, food and accommodations to scores of travelers through the region.

Joseph Derrickson only owned the Mermaid property until March 1829, when he sold it to Samuel C. and Sarah Walker of Chester County for $4,000 (NCCD H-4:138). The Walker family and its descendants owned the Mermaid property including the tavern, blacksmith shop and wheelwright shop, for the next 160 years, and continue to own the tavern property today (Table 3). During the middle decades of the nineteenth century the Mermaid Tavern intersection served as an important meeting and socializing place in Mill Creek Hundred. The tavern (later termed a hotel) lost its license in 1869, but the hotel continued to function until 1880 (Figure 13). The tavern was the polling place for

FIGURE 13

Detail of Limestone Road, Mill Creek Hundred, from D.G. Beers' "Atlas of the State of Delaware" (1868)



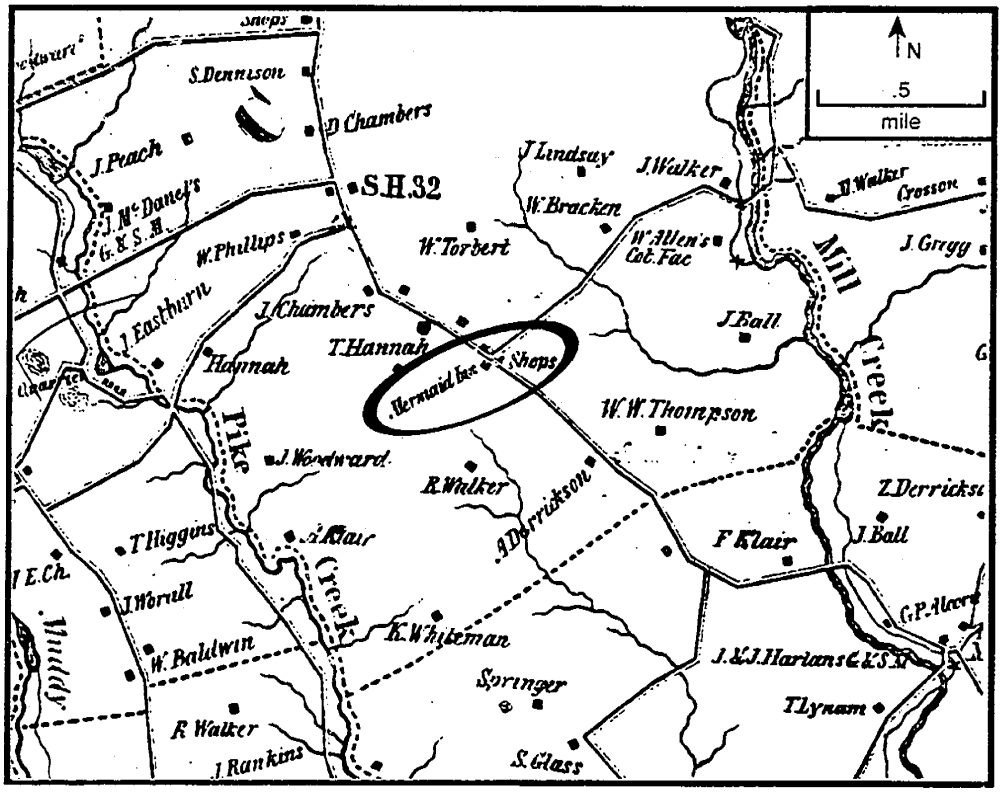
the Third Election District between 1830 and 1891, and the Mill Creek Hundred Road Commissioners met there between 1832 and 1866. The Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company was formed at Mermaid in 1839, and the Harmony Grange met in a room above the blacksmith shop in 1874. Most importantly the tavern was a U.S. Post Office from 1848 to 1900 (Scharf 1888; Cooch 1936).

Samuel Walker's death around 1839 left his wife Rebecca (Warner) Walker and five children as the owners of the Mermaid Property. Documentary evidence suggests that within ten years of this date the Mermaid Wheelwright Shop was constructed; the Rea and Price "Map of New Castle County" (1849), shows the Mermaid Inn and "shops" located at the intersection (Figure 14). Although the Walker's continued to own and operate the tavern, it is likely that they rented or leased the blacksmith and wheelwright shops.

By 1850 Milton Steele seems to have been the blacksmith at the Mermaid shop. Along with eleven other men and women, Steel was recorded in the 1850 census as residing at the Mermaid Hotel (in the ownership of Rebecca Walker), and in that year was listed with the occupation of blacksmith (U.S. Census, Mill Creek Hundred, 1850). Steel was still a resident of the Hotel a decade later, but in that year he was listed as a "machinist", not a blacksmith (U.S. Census, Mill Creek Hundred, 1860). The change in occupation may be related to the type of work Steel was conducting. The 1828 edition of Noah Webster's dictionary defines machinist as "a constructor of machines and engines, or one well

FIGURE 14

Detail of Limestone Road from Rea and Price's "Map of New Castle County, Delaware" (1849)

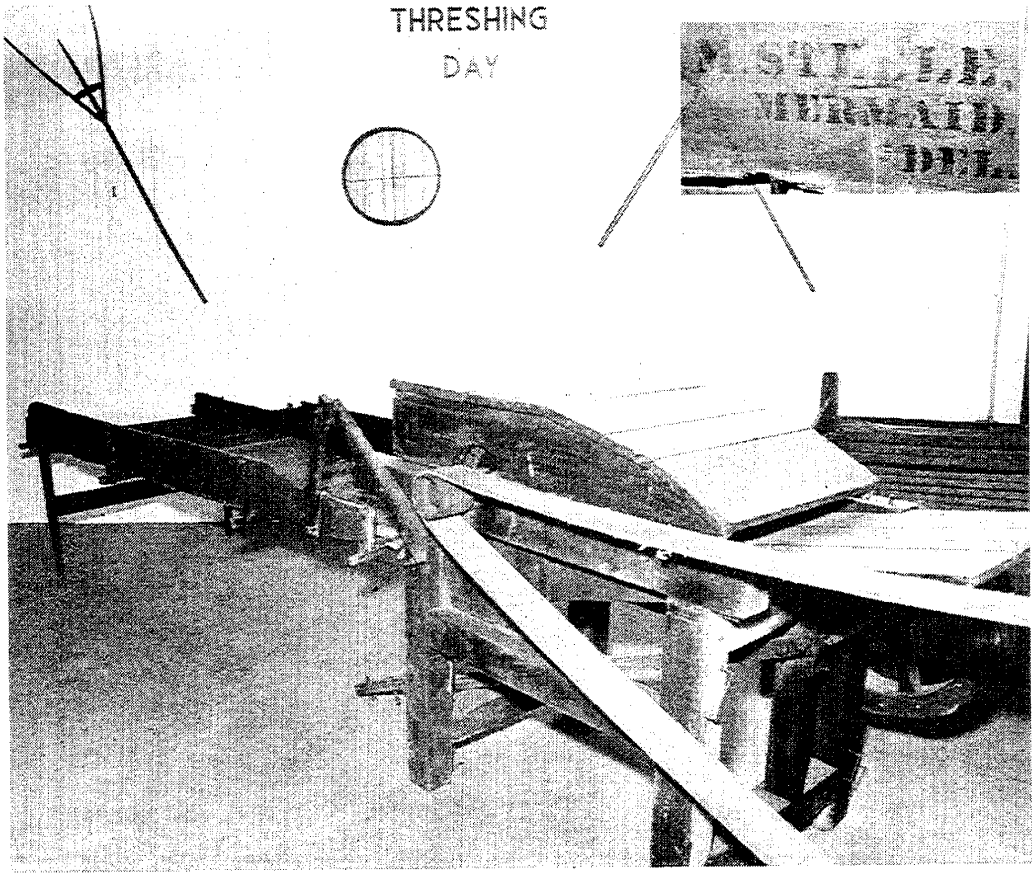


versed in the principles of machines" (Webster 1970). In the collection of farming equipment at the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village in Dover, there is a horse-powered ground hog thresher that is attributed to Milton Steel of Mermaid, built between 1850 and 1860 (Plate 3). Steel clearly had other abilities than those of a rural blacksmith. Changing his title from blacksmith to machinist perhaps reflected the elevated status or prestige that the latter occupation may have held in mid-nineteenth-century Delaware.

Milton Steel continued to live at Mermaid, but between 1872 and 1882 he was recorded in the state directories as the post master, not as a blacksmith or machinist. Only in 1888, after a new post master was appointed, did Steel again re-adopt his title of machinist (Delaware State Directories 1872-1888). During this time he probably continued to operate the blacksmith shop. It is clear from Rebecca Walker's inventory, dated October 1872, that both the blacksmith and wheelwright shops were in operation, because in addition to all of the objects needed to operate a farm and hotel, she was appraised

PLATE 3

Ground Hog Threshing Machine, Built by Milton Steel of Mermaid, ca. 1850-1860

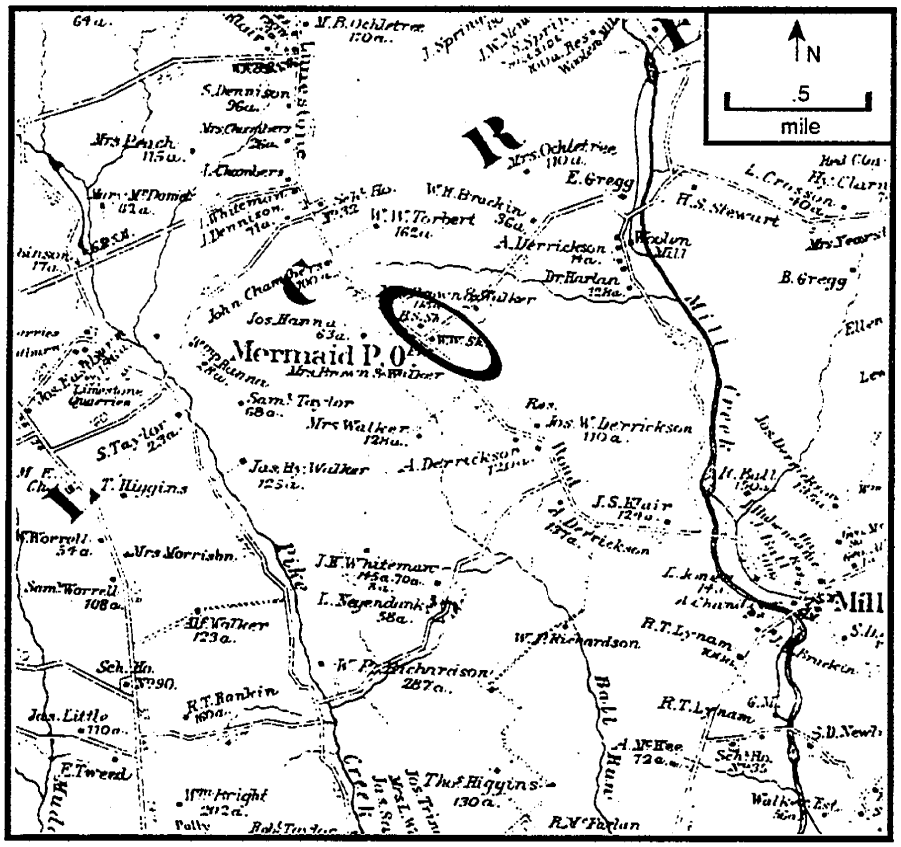


for an "anvil and bellows", "chest of tools", and "one turning-lathe", altogether valued at $9, from the total appraisal of $1062.00 (Appendix VI). Also included in the inventory was "one horse power'd thresher" valued at $75, probably the one constructed by Steel.

With the death of both George and Rebecca Walker in the 1870s, the property very briefly passed from the heirs of the Walkers to a local landholder, Aquila Derrickson (NCCD E-10:291; E-10:294). Within one month the property was sold by Derrickson to Rebecca J. Brown and Elizabeth A. Walker, relatives of George and Rebecca Walker (NCCD E-10:289). The late nineteenth-century atlases and maps for New Castle County record "Mrs. Brown and Walker" as the owners of the land (Figures 15 and 16). In 1895 the property was sold to James H. Walker for $7,000, and he retained ownership until 1934. In 1912 Walker demolished the wheelwright shop and erected the 2-story frame

FIGURE 15

Mill Creek Hundred, from Hopkins' "Map of New Castle County" (1881)



structure that occupied the southeast corner of the intersection. Twelve years earlier, he had removed the stone blacksmith shop and sheds.

The land remained in the ownership of Walker family descendants until the 1.89 acres containing the blacksmith shop were sold to Limestone Road Associates in 1982 (NCCD K-118:209). The wheelwright shop property was sold out of the family in 1988 (Table 3).

MERMAID BLACKSMITH SHOP AND STABLE (7NC-D-106B)

RESULTS OF FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

The proposed Right-of-Way at the intersection of Limestone Road and Old Mermaid-Stoney Batter Road that contained the blacksmith shop site was approximately 70' in width east of the existing road edge. DelDOT road improvements in 1964 disturbed the first 30' of the proposed Right-of-Way