

INTRODUCTION

This report presents a summary of the findings of intensive Phase II test excavations at the Wilson-Slack Agricultural Works Complex, Chestnut Hill Road-Route 4, Newark, Delaware (Figure 1). The final research was conducted by archaeologists from the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research (UDCAR) and funded by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), acting to satisfy Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Bureau of Archeology and Historic Preservation (BAHP).

The Wilson-Slack site was located within Pencader Hundred, New Castle County, approximately 500 feet west of the intersection of State Routes 4 and 72 (Figures 2). Prior to clearing of the right-of-way (ROW) for the Route 4 roadbed widening and dualization, the site had retained a rural character, even though it was surrounded by encroaching residential developments, gas stations, and a shopping mall (Plate 1). A two-story frame dwelling (Plates 2 and 3), a barn (Plate 4), and an agricultural works shop (Plate 5) were demolished in September 1983. At the time of demolition, other nineteenth-century structures no longer extant were a machine shop/grist mill, smaller barn, chicken house, granary, smoke house, privy, and several small sheds. The site had been occupied for approximately 130 years by members of the Wilson family, who had retained extensive nineteenth-and twentieth-century family and business records. The most informative and interesting are ledger books pertaining to Alexander Wilson's wheelwright and blacksmithing business (1851-1896) and the grist mill and blacksmithing business operated by his son, John T. Wilson, from 1898 to the 1920's.

The goals of these cultural resource investigations were: 1) excavation of a 10 foot interval shovel/postholer and soil sample grid across the entire property, 2) excavate test units adjacent to extant structures, 3) analyze the business

documents of the site's inhabitants, 4) provide interpretations of the Wilson/Slack complex within the context of local and regional studies of Delaware's history, and 5) determine the eligibility of the site for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Appreciation for their support, administration, research and services is extended to all the involved individuals:

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PLATE 2

WILSON-SLACK HOUSE, FRONT VIEW



PLATE 3
WILSON-SLACK HOUSE, SIDE VIEW



PLATE 4
WILSON-SLACK BARN

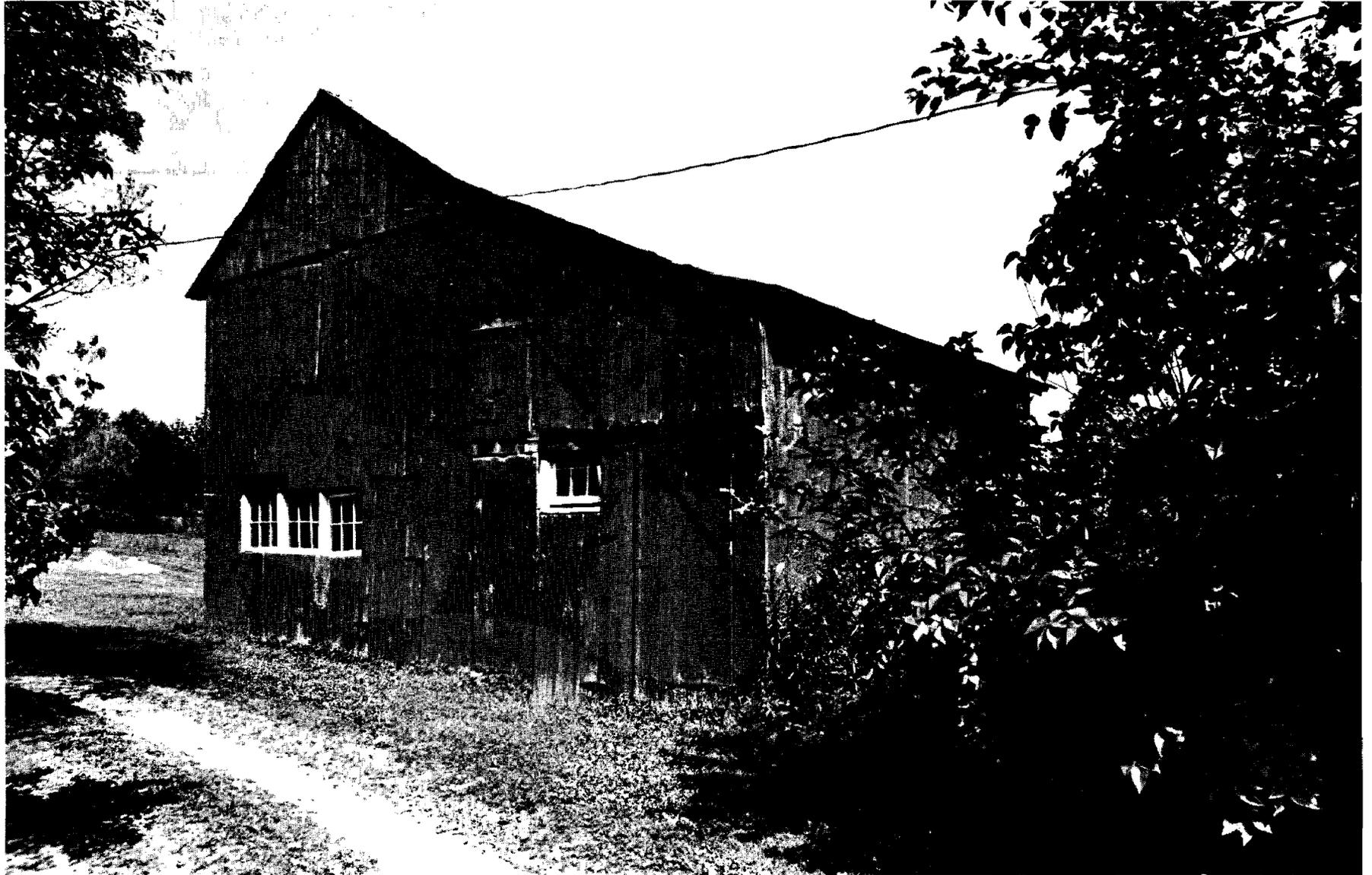


PLATE 5

WILSON-SLACK BLACKSMITH SHOP

