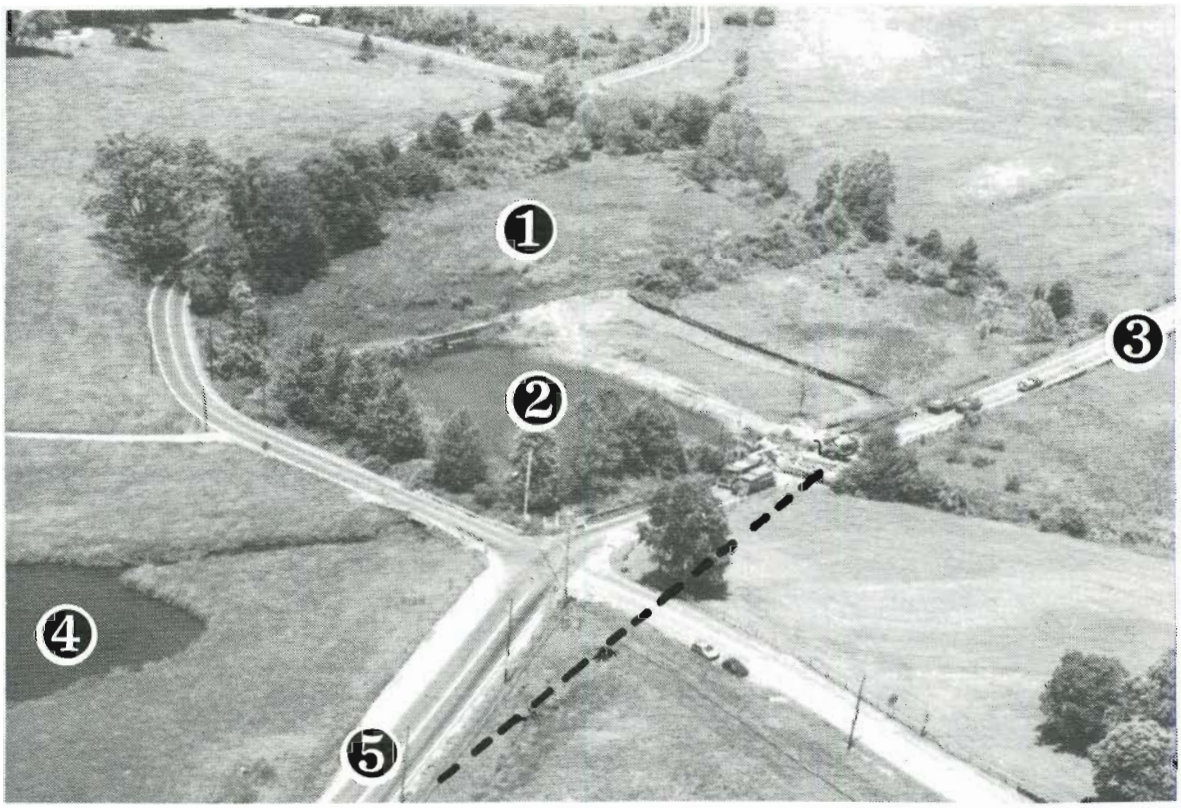
2. Project Area Location and Description

THE PROJECT AREA lies in the Piedmont uplands valley of Brandywine Creek northwest of Wilmington, in Christiana Hundred.

It is served by a road system radiating northwestward from the city into the Pennsylvania hinterland. Route 100 is not one of the arteries; instead it was created administratively from a series of interconnecting county roads that eventually meander through the countryside to the vicinity of West Chester, Pennsylvania.

On either side of the project area are larger roads, Kennett Pike (State Route 52) and Concord Pike (US 202), former turnpikes along the ridgetops that linked the Chester County hinterland with the port and market of Wilmington.

Parts of the study area are connected by a very old local road from Centre Meeting to the Brandywine crossing at Rockland. Now called Route 232, the road follows the valley of Wilson's Run. It has most frequently been called Adams' Dam Road or the road to Centre Meeting. A segment is part of Route 100, causing some confusion of nomenclature.



North

Plate 1

Ærial view of the Adams Dam project area, looking northwest

Photograph by Tim O'Brien during the replacement of Bridge 70, 1989

The last pond that powered the mill (1) is in the top center. The impoundment adjacent to the bridge (2) is recent. Road 92 (3) is at center right. The pond at left (4), on the property of the Winterthur Museum, is a recent addtion. In left foreground (5) is Route 100. The proposed new road is shown by the dashed line.

Soils and Drainage

Soils belong to the Neshaminy-Aldino-Watchung association, "level to steep, well drained, moderately well drained, and poorly drained, medium-textured soils formed over dark-colored gabbroic rocks; on uplands " (Soil Conservation Service 1970).

Above the Route 100 intersection, the soil is mapped as Codorus silt loam, a moderately well drained soil that occurs on piedmont floodplains. The project site itself is mapped as Hatboro, a class of "deep, wet soils that occur on the Piedmont Plateau." These soils developed on materials that washed from areas of micaceous rocks.

Environment and Site Location

The Delaware Piedmont physiographic province is a fertile area of gently-rolling hills underlain by igneous and metamorphic rocks.

The fall line of the Brandywine is not an abrupt cataract. Instead, the stream falls gently through New Castle County to tidewater at Wilmington, providing power for mill seats along the way. This widely-distributed source of cheap and reliable power was the creek's main geographical advantage

Numerous outcrops along the Brandywine provided ready quarries for building stone, from earliest colonial times. Stone houses were being built during the seventeenth century. Brandywine "granite" was used widely for rubble fill, in such projects as the breakwaters at the mouth of Delaware Bay.

The creek also is a source of fresh drinking water for the population of Wilmington. The creek's pure water was also used by the Rockland paper mill.

Previous Investigations

Previous investigations in the project area include the cultural resources management plan for the Brandywine Creek State Park, which is liberally quoted herein (Blume, Clark, and Dunn 1990).

The authors of that plan investigated resources throughout the park, and have identified critical areas. In the vicinity of the Adams Dam, they found no evidence of prehistoric activity. Aside from the mill race, the park plan identified no resources in the project area.

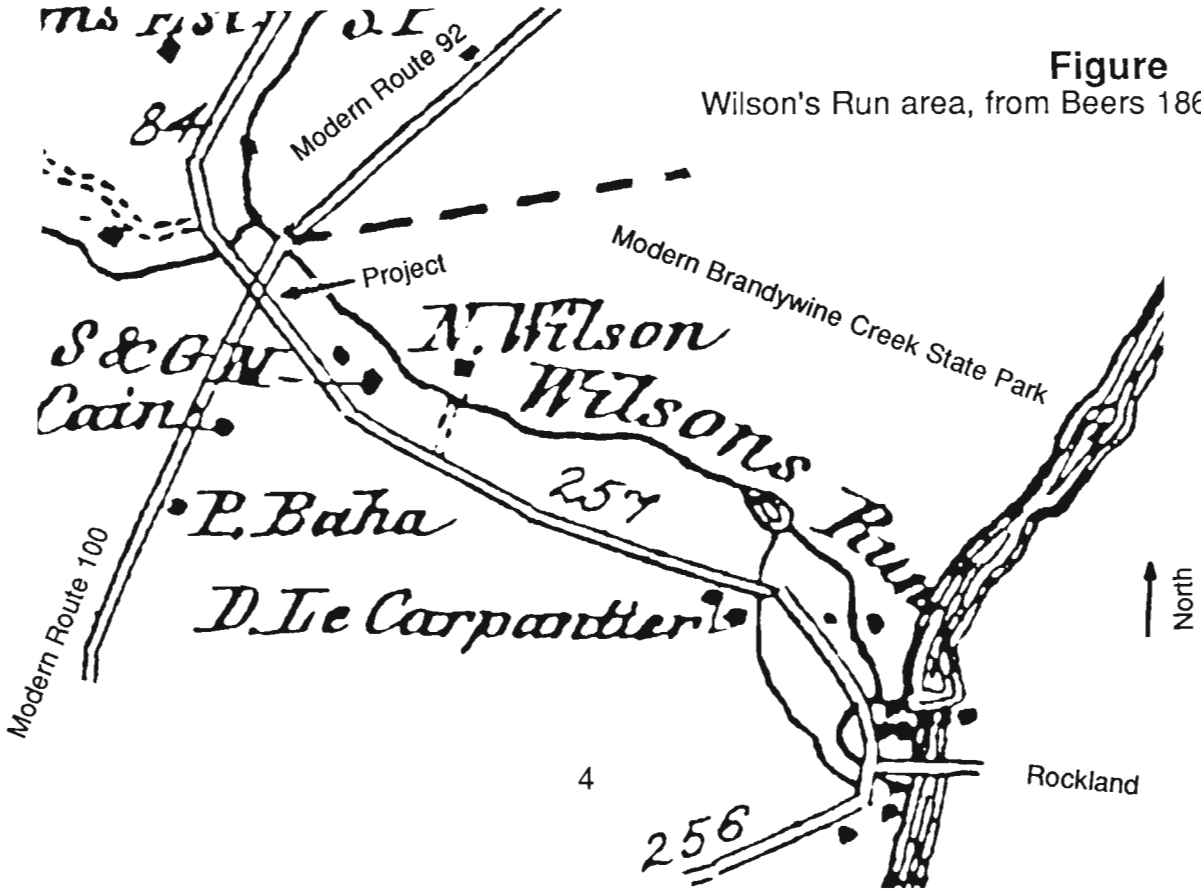


Figure 3
Wilson's Run area, from Beers 1868