

V. National Register Evaluations

All identified archaeological sites were evaluated for eligibility in the National Register of Historic Places. A property is eligible for the National Register if it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association and meets one of the following criteria (Little : 2000):

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Associated with persons significant in our past.
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A. The Weldin Plantation Site (7NC-B-11)

Within the context of farmstead archaeology in Delaware, the Weldin Plantation Site (7NC-B-11) possesses a number of unique and exceptional features that make it eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D. The following sections will address criteria defined by De Cunzo and Garcia (1992: 299-301) as relevant to the determination of eligibility for historical archaeological sites in Delaware. In addition, a National Register Nomination Form was completed for the site (*Appendix G*).

1. Historical Documentation and Oral History

As has been demonstrated by the Phase I report generated by Taylor (1989), there is a great deal of documentary evidence concerning the site and its occupants. Deeds for the site show a clear chain of ownership back to the original survey in 1680. Most of the proprietors drafted wills that provided at least partial descriptions of the property and their possessions (excepting Israel Peterson 1722-?). Fire Blotter Records from 1796 and 1803 provide a good description of the farmhouse and outbuildings during the property's period of tenancy. Census information from 1790 provides information on the household and possessions of one of the farm's tenants, William Little, who occupied the site as early as 1796, and as late as 1799. Tax assessments on Albanus Logan (husband of Maria Dickinson and co-owner of the property in the mid-nineteenth century) dating to 1837 and 1852 provide information on the size of the property and buildings. In addition, data from the Brandywine Hundred tax assessments (1849, 1852, 1861) and U.S. Agricultural Census of 1850 and 1860 provide information on the household, stock, and crop yields of John Bradford, tenant-occupant from 1849-1861. A Land Survey from 1743-1745 provides the metes and bounds of the property as originally surveyed in 1680. Historic Maps (Rea and Price 1849, Beers 1868 and Baist 1893) provide general information as to building location and general development of the area through time. In addition to these primary resources, Scharf (1888); Thompson (1984); Passmore (1975); and Runk (1899); and Talley (1899), provide personal/historical information on several of the site's owners.

The researchers were also able to make contact with Mr. Thomas Weldin, a family descendant who worked on the farm as a child in the 1920's and early 30's. Mr. Weldin has stated that he

would be happy to relate his recollections of the property from that time period. There is therefore a high probability that an oral history of a period in the property's life can be created.

2. Archaeological Integrity

The site was occupied continuously from its first occupation in the early eighteenth century through its abandonment in 1934. There is some evidence of dateable, spatially discrete deposits (particularly later deposits), although Jacob R. Weldin and son appear to have engaged in a great deal of earth-moving during the mid to late nineteenth century. Some excavated contexts demonstrate mixing of artifacts dating from the mid eighteenth through the mid nineteenth century, probably a result of these activities.

Since only a small portion of the site has been sampled, the knowledge of the site assembled thus far is still fragmentary in this regard. The farmstead proper is large, and only a small portion has been sampled. There is potential for earlier, intact middens, privies and other features in the side and rear yards, as well as under Weldin Road. Future excavations should be geared towards revealing potential deposits, perhaps through mechanical stripping.

The physical integrity of the site is excellent. While the identification of the location of all of the early structures is incomplete at this stage, the remains of many structures dateable to (at least as early as) the mid-nineteenth century are visible at the ground surface. Preliminary excavations have also revealed evidence of post-constructed buildings in the rear yard, buried foundation remains of a separate room or building on the north side of the dwelling, and footings from possible porch features on the north and south side of the dwelling. The extant stone foundation walls to four buildings are evident on the surface. The corral walls and the bank (of the former bank barn) are extant. The site artifact assemblage thus far consists of 13,555 artifacts from the most recent excavations and an as yet undetermined number of artifacts from earlier excavations by Thunderbird, Inc. (No complete inventory was available at the time of this writing.) On the basis of the information collected during the excavations at the Weldin Plantation Site, it is clear that the site contains artifacts from all periods of occupation, as well as a wealth of faunal remains.

3. Representativeness

The site is located on an upland setting on the Piedmont Plateau Physiographic Province. The mapped soils are Talleyville silt loam, with 2-5% slopes, moderately eroded (TaB2), a well drained soil (Mathews and Lavoie 1970). The Weldin Plantation Site is an historic farmstead that may date to the early eighteenth century and was occupied until the mid-twentieth century. The site was identified previously and is discussed in greater detail in *Archeological Investigations of the Proposed Dualization of Route 141 (Centre Road), From Route 100 (Montchanin Road) to U.S. Route 202 (Concord Pike), New Castle County, Delaware*, Thunderbird Archeological Associates, Inc., 1989.

Because the site may date to the 1710s, it could have been occupied throughout each of the periods described in the *Management Plan for Delaware's Historic Archaeological Resources*. During the Exploration and Frontier Settlement Period, the *Management Plan* indicates that dispersed English farmsteads are located along the major creeks. Information relating to

domestic economy, manufacturing and trade, landscape interaction, and social group identity, behavior, and interactions might be obtainable from excavations at this site.

The Intensified and Durable Occupation Period continues to provide a context for domestic economy for farmsteads that may have slaves or indentured servants. The evolution of the site throughout the Transformation from Colony to State, Industrialization and Capitalization, and Urbanization and Suburbanization Periods may allow a unique opportunity to compare the occupation of one site during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The property was owner occupied at various times throughout its history and tenant occupied during other times. Comparison of different occupations, with presumed differences in economic status, may provide important data concerning socioeconomic patterns throughout the history of this site.

Farm use at Chestnut Hill varied through time. During its first seventy-five years of existence it was owner occupied. No historical data is available concerning farm produce from that era. However, it seems likely that the site followed known agricultural patterns and focused on market wheat production. During the farm's tenancy period, the property was almost certainly devoted principally to the raising of livestock, with perhaps some attention to dairy farming. The importance of dairy farming increased in the area towards the middle of the nineteenth century. The documentary evidence regarding the early to mid-nineteenth century tenant, John Bradford, indicates increasing emphasis on dairy farming. The documentary and archaeological evidence (size, nature and layout of structures, dairy related ceramics, glass) demonstrate a shift towards dairy production in the mid-nineteenth century until the site's abandonment in the twentieth century.

4. Research Questions and Needs

a. Landscape

The extant ruins of the Weldin Plantation Site can reveal a great deal about the arrangement of daily activities on a large nineteenth century dairy farm. Other farmsteads excavated in the region (cf. William Strickland Site [7K-A-117], Whitten Rd. Farm [7NC-D-100]. W. Eager Farm) have lacked the integrity of Weldin's structural remains and as a consequence have required more substantial field efforts to identify and map building locations and layout. Because the stone foundations of many of the structures at Weldin are still evident on the surface, such work is not necessary. The visible evidence provides us with a "key" to the activities carried out on the farmstead.

Aside from providing a base map for intra-site activity, the Weldin structures can also provide us with a sample of the layout of a large, apparently successful, owner-occupied farm that can be of value in discussing such properties on a regional level. Detailed data generated at the Weldin Plantation Site can be compared to that collected at other farmsteads to interpret differences and similarities of farm layout across spatial, temporal, and socioeconomic lines. Potential comparisons may be made to the William Strickland Site (7K-A-117); the Whitten Road Farm (7NC-D-100); the W. Eager Farm; The Grant Tenancy Site (7NC-B-6); and the Buchanon-Savin Farmstead, for example.

In addition to the known structural remains - most of which are associated with the mid-nineteenth through twentieth centuries - further excavations would certainly yield evidence of other, perhaps earlier, building remains. Evidence for one such building appears to have been identified on the north side of the extant dwelling remains, where buried foundation walls were discovered. Excavations near this wall, in the north yard (backyard of the dwelling) revealed the site's greatest number of early artifacts (plain white salt-glazed stoneware and scratch-blue; delft; early glass) and a notable lack of late-nineteenth century artifacts in the buried strata. Howard Weldin, a descendant of the site's owner-occupants from the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, also recalls that there was a stone-lined well in the field on the north side of Weldin Road. Considered together, this suggests that early architectural/landscape remains are likely to be found in the north yard, as well as under the existing Weldin Road.

The size of the buildings, their style (as much as can be determined from the remains), layout, materials, and construction methods, provide a wealth of information that can be interpreted with relation to the ideas, beliefs, and values of the site's most significant (and well-known) occupants, Jacob R. Weldin and his son, J. Atwood Weldin. As recent research has shown (Mascia 1996; Grettler 1991; Siders 1991; Herman 1989), middle nineteenth century architecture and farm layout indicates much about the ideology of a site's occupants. When considered in tandem with issues such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and other factors, the size of a site's buildings, their durability, style, and layout all take on added significance. The question is phrased more explicitly by De Cunzo and Catts (1990: 132):

How do socioeconomic status and aspirations, level of technological development, household economy, ethnicity and ideology, values and beliefs all influence the construction of domestic buildings and the use and improvement of the land? (132).

This research topic seems especially suited to the Weldin Site, since both Jacob and his son Atwood invested so much in their farm's structures. It can be examined at a functional level (what are the functional attributes of massive, durable outbuildings, the choice of a bank barn etc.), and at an aesthetic level (the Weldin Plantation Road Entrance, wood-framing over the stone house, possible addition of porches, planting of trees, etc.).

To better answer questions as to why the Weldins "dressed" their farm as they did, it would be useful to examine the literature pertaining to progressive farming at this time. Information on the Weldins themselves, contained in Scharf (1888); Runk (1899); and Talley (1899) will also be vital to developing the type of personal details on the Weldins that will be necessary to address questions of ideology. Grettler's (1991) work on rural reform and its archaeological manifestations will provide important perspectives as well. Finally, historical analyses that deal with such topics as the economic and social implications of progressive farming in the region (cf. Michel 1985; Passmore 1978; Passmore 1975) and the consideration of "elite" agricultural families in New Castle County, particularly in the late nineteenth century will provide excellent cross-disciplinary perspectives.

Again, the archaeological evidence and interpretation of ideologically motivated choices can be compared to that seen at other sites in the region, across temporal, socioeconomic and ethnic lines. If earlier structures can be positively identified at the site level at the Weldin Plantation,

then the data these present can be compared with the mid- to late-nineteenth century architectural remains at the site to construct a better picture of the interplay of ideology and architecture at the site during earlier periods.

It should be noted that any discussion of ideology is highly interpretive. However, there appears to be adequate historical research to "reconstruct" a good picture of the Weldins as well as some of their predecessors at Chestnut Hill. Combined with archaeological evidence of architecture and farm layout, we believe that the Weldin Plantation possesses excellent potential for research on this theme.

b. Socioeconomic Phenomena

Because of the changes that occurred in the local agricultural economy during the period of time the Weldin Plantation Site was occupied, and because the farm was both tenant- and owner-occupied over the course of its history, the site presents a significant resource that may yield important archaeological data regarding the shift in the product focus of the farm over time, the changes in its relative emphasis on subsistence vs. market production, and the contrast between the household assemblages associated with its tenant occupants vs. those associated with resident owners. The farm's history appears to reflect the agricultural trends seen more generally in the region: initial (probable) emphasis on wheat production in the early to late eighteenth century under a resident owner, more generalized farm production during the years of its tenancy (1785-1862), followed by a shift during the Weldin family's ownership to large-scale dairying, which continued up to the first quarter of the twentieth century. This very closely parallels the pattern evidenced in northern Delaware as a whole (Bidwell and Falconer 1941; De Cunzo and Catts 1990; Munroe 1978).

As noted above, the historical record provides sufficient information to construct a fairly detailed view of the Weldins' farming activities and, to a lesser extent, those of the previous occupants of the farm (Scharf 1888; Runk 1899; Taylor et al. 1989). Although the Weldins' extensive construction activities have substantially disturbed some areas where the evidence of earlier buildings and other archaeological features might have been found, there are still several parts of the site that were unaffected by this work. In addition, because the orientation of the access road to the property changed over the time of its occupation, the orientation of the farm's structures is likely to have changed as well, increasing the likelihood that subsurface evidence of previous activities remains intact in areas the Weldins would have found logistically less advantageous. The identification of such features and the interpretation of their function should yield information that would be of use in identifying the specific agricultural activities undertaken at the site, as well as shedding light on the domestic lives of the farm's residents over the years. This data, when considered in conjunction with the available textual records, should yield valuable information regarding the character of the lives of the residents of the farm during discrete periods, both before and during the Weldins' occupation.

De Cunzo and Garcia (1992) suggest that the comparison of households in an area with regard to their class status and role in the agricultural economy ("Large land-owning agriculturalists vs. tenants vs. small subsistence agriculturalists vs. small commercial, diversified agriculturalists, etc." [pg. 277]) represents an important avenue for historic archaeological research. The

conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data collected at the Weldin Plantation Site will be ideal for use in such a higher-level study. Because the site promises to yield information relative to comparisons across a variety of dichotomous socioeconomic classifications, it should be of use in comparative studies that include other sites in the region across a fairly wide spectrum of site types and chronological periods.

B. The Ronald McDonald House Site (7NC-B-54)

The Ronald McDonald House Site (7NC-B-54) represents a valuable resource with regard to developing a better understanding of the exploitation of the Delaware Piedmont during the Woodland I Period. The discussion below places the site within the appropriate context within the Delaware Piedmont. In addition, a National Register Nomination Form was completed for the site (*Appendix G*).

7NC-B-54 is located on an upland setting on the Piedmont Plateau Physiographic Province. The site is located within the Brandywine River Drainage, an area in which the potential for the existence of Woodland I Period procurement sites is high (Custer and DeSantis 1986).

The Piedmont comprises a small %age of Delaware; therefore, most known sites in the state are located on other physiographic provinces. In consultation with the SHPO, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to use information about recorded archaeological sites on the Piedmont in Delaware and Chester Counties in Pennsylvania that date from the same time period. These sites provide a background in which 7NC-B-54 can be evaluated.

In Pennsylvania, there are 138 Late Archaic (equivalent to early Woodland I) located on the Piedmont in Chester and Delaware Counties. Some of these sites are within a few miles of 7NC-B-54. Most of these sites are located in similar topographic settings; i.e. they are on located in upland settings on well drained or somewhat well drained soils near wetlands or low order streams. Most of these sites are not known to contain features. The lithic artifact density varies from low to high.

7NC-B-54 is an early Woodland I low density lithic scatter. Our interpretation of the site is that it was utilized repeatedly over a period of time to exploit wetland resources. The site is located between a wetland and an intermittent stream. The low density of artifacts, lack of features, and absence of fire cracked rock (FCR) indicate that the site was not used for habitation. It appears that the Native Americans may have stopped briefly at the site to procure resources, then left quickly. The high %age of tools in relation to debitage indicates that almost no tool manufacturing and little tool maintenance was being conducted on the site. This supports the theory that visits to the site were brief and once a specific task was completed, the site was abandoned again.

In 1994, 51 archaeological sites dating to the Woodland I Period were recorded in New Castle County (Custer 1994). The majority of the pre-contact sites with known cultural affiliations in Delaware have Woodland I components. In 1994 there were no recorded Woodland I archaeological resources within New Castle County Block B, where 7NC-B-54 is located. This is probably due to the fact that this area has not been surveyed as extensively as some other

blocks. Only 12 recorded sites existed within Block B in 1994, while over 200 sites were recorded in Blocks D and E, located immediately to the south of Block B.

Custer and DeSantis (1986) divide northern Delaware into four different categories, based on existing data and potential for significant sites. The area in which 7NC-B-54 is located is delineated Zone III. It is considered to be third in terms of research priorities, due to the high quality of the existing archaeological data. The data quality for Woodland I procurement sites on the Piedmont Uplands is also described as good. These sites occur on “upland slopes adjacent to ephemeral streams, low order swampy floodplains, and lithic sources” (Custer 1986). 7NC-B-54 is located on a slight rise between an intermittent stream and a wetland.

Wetlands were attractive to pre-contact populations for resource procurement. A wide variety of plant and animal resources are available for procurement in and around wetlands. Wetlands with the largest diversity of species were most likely to attract Native Americans. Certain wetland resources, such as cattails, are available year round, in contrast to most other plants. The productivity of wetlands is higher than any other available environment in the Northeast and the reliability of the resources available is also very high. Wetlands tend to produce a stable, wide variety of floral and faunal species throughout the year (Nicholas 1991). Native Americans would have visited wetlands repeatedly for resource procurement during all seasons of the year.

Custer (1994) has outlined research priorities for Woodland I Period archaeological sites in Delaware. The highest priority should be given to Woodland I sites located in areas that do not have extensive Woodland I Period site data. As noted above, there are numerous recorded archaeological sites similar to 7NC-B-54 recorded on the Piedmont Uplands. The site does not fall within areas delineated by Custer as priority survey areas. The second priority discussed by Custer are Woodland I sites in the Atlantic Coast region because of the differential preservation of organic remains in shell midden sites found in this region. 7NC-B-54 is not located in this region.

The pre-contact archaeological deposits at the Ronald McDonald House Site represent a valuable resource with regard to developing a better understanding of the exploitation of the Delaware Piedmont during the Woodland I Period. The site retains a high degree of integrity; it shows evidence of only minimal plow disturbance, and that to a relatively shallow depth. Based on the areal distribution of the deposits encountered at other similar sites in Delaware, the Ronald McDonald House Site offers the opportunity to identify discrete activity loci. In those instances in which diagnostic artifacts are recovered from these loci, temporal affiliation can also be established. The lithics recovered from the site include an unusually high %age (25.71%) of tools, and diagnostic projectile points represent both the Early and Late Woodland I Period. Blood residue and use wear analyses performed on these tools will yield information regarding subsistence activities. While locally available quartz and quartzite represents over 77% of the lithic assemblage, other materials are also present, (most notably argillite), thereby providing indications of curation/exchange of non-local lithic resources. The site should also provide information regarding site hierarchies within the immediate area and should shed light on the exploitation of wetland resources.

The Piedmont represents a relatively small part of the state of Delaware. While the sites associated with the coastal plain are numerous, and many have been studied in some detail, those

of the Piedmont are less well understood. Because much of the Piedmont has been farmed for centuries, pre-contact sites that have been subjected to relatively little plow disturbance are especially rare. As a consequence, the Ronald McDonald House Site represents a particularly valuable resource. An examination of the soil column at several location throughout the site performed by Dr. Daniel Wagner, a pedologist, indicated that the area was probably plowed only a small number of times, and that by a plow pulled by animal traction.

Because of the relative integrity of the soils within the site area, the artifact distributions more closely reflect the spatial patterning created during the primary depositional episodes. As a consequence, discrete loci associated with specific activities can be distinguished. In those instances in which diagnostic artifacts are also recovered, these loci can be attributed to specific temporal periods. This provides an opportunity to compare the deposits recovered from different loci with respect to the nature of the activities represented and the changes or similarities over a fairly large time span, ranging from the Early to Late Woodland I Period.

The high %age of tools in the assemblage recovered from the site indicates that the focus of the activities undertaken at the site had to do with resource procurement/subsistence. Blood residue and use wear analyses will help establish exactly what animal and plant resources were being exploited, as well as indicating the specific tasks the pre-contact people who used the site were engaged in. Morphological analysis of the recovered debitage will yield further information regarding the activities undertaken at the site.

The material composition of the artifacts indicates that, while the locally available lithic materials (quartz and quartzite) predominate, non-local chert, jasper argillite and chalcedony are also represented in the assemblage. These indicate the curation of materials collected from far outside the vicinity of the site and/or participation in a regional exchange network. This is of particular interest both with respect to the sources of this non-local material as well as to the changing frequency of use of exotic lithics over time. The assemblage recovered to date includes seven diagnostic artifacts: three argillite Lackawaxan points, two quartz Bare Island points and two Jack's Reef Corner Notched points, one each of quartz and quartzite. It is only the Early Woodland I projectile points that indicate the use of non-local material, i.e. argillite, which is likely to have originated in the lower Delaware River Valley.

Because of its high degree of depositional integrity and fine resolution of activity loci, the Ronald McDonald House Site offers a unique opportunity to consider a procurement site in the context of the broader network of sites within the region. Using projectile points as indicators of rough contemporaneity, the Ronald McDonald House Site can be viewed in the context of a set of temporally related sites, along with macroband and microband base camps, that collectively reflect the subsistence strategy of Woodland I people in the area. Rather than presenting a "smear" of artifacts in a plowed field, the deposits at the Ronald McDonald House Site represent temporally and spatially discrete activity areas. The behaviors these areas represent can be viewed in the context of the broader impressions of the lifeways of Woodland I people, particularly with respect to the utilization of wetland resources.

C. The Augustine Cutoff Site (7NC-B-49)

The Phase II Evaluation Testing failed to identify the structural remains for the two houses known to exist on the property containing the site. Based on the review of historic photographs and maps, the locations of these structures, which were adjacent to Concord Pike, are within the zone of construction for Concord Pike when it was widened from two lanes during the time the site was occupied, to seven lanes later in the twentieth century. Widening of the road occurred primarily to the west of Concord Pike, due to the location of Porter Reservoir, which is adjacent to the east side of the road. In addition to the road widening, the installation of modern underground utilities along the west edge of Concord Pike further disturbed the site. Although a high level of disturbance was documented in the tests excavated north of the cistern and east of the depression/shed, Feature 1 (a refuse pit), located outside the area of disturbance, appeared to date to the period when the houses were occupied. The heavy fill layers identified within the site are probably associated with the demolition of the buildings or twentieth century utility installation and the subsequent preparation of the field for agriculture.

The site was a holding of the du Pont family, who were very influential in northern Delaware during the early twentieth century. It appears that the buildings associated with the Augustine Cutoff Site represent DuPont employee housing. Research concerning economic trends, settlement patterns, and demographic change for those working for the du Pont family can provide significant information under Criteria A, B, and C of the National Register (Herman 1989). Settlement pattern and demographic change data is considered to be among the most important data that can be retrieved from an historic archaeological site in Delaware (Ames 1989). It would appear that the site, if it contains sufficient integrity, might meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register since it was occupied during a short period of time during the early twentieth century, providing a “snapshot” into the Urbanization and Suburbanization Period in Delaware.

However, the integrity of 7NC-B-49 has been compromised to the extent that the site does not have the potential to provide that information. Although Feature 1 contained a relatively high quantity of late nineteenth century/early twentieth century artifacts, this trash pit appeared to be on the periphery of the site, and the buildings associated with it have been disturbed beyond recognition. Furthermore, it is likely that the majority of the significant features associated with the site were destroyed during the widening of Concord Pike in the twentieth century. The subsequent placement of utilities along the edge of the western roadway resulted in additional disturbance to the site. Therefore, the Augustine Cutoff Site (7NC-B-49) is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.