

## METHODS

The purpose of the architectural investigation was to examine buildings and structures of potential architectural significance that would likely be affected by proposed widening and relocation of Route 896 between Summit Bridge and State Route 4. The investigation was carried out through implementation of these steps:

1. Preliminary data collection, through examination of historic maps, U.S.G.S. maps, previous surveys, published historical works, and files of the Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
2. Intensive field survey during which 11 properties were recorded on field inventory forms designed to collect basic physical data about each structure.
3. Site-specific historical research, focusing primarily on potentially significant properties, to obtain additional information about their history. Deeds, wills, inventories and tax lists were the principal sources consulted.
4. Assembly of site-specific data on location, physical characteristics, and historical associations; preliminary evaluations of significance.
5. Review of survey data with DelDOT, FHWA, and BAHP.
6. Preparation of Determination of Eligibility forms,

updated BAHP Cultural Resource Survey forms, and a report summarizing the findings of the architectural investigation.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The architectural resources examined in this study are situated on or near that portion of Delaware Route 896 between Howell School Road and County Road 408 in central Pencader Hundred, New Castle County (Figure 2). Pencader Hundred is located in the interior lowlands of Delaware's Atlantic Coastal Plain, just below the Piedmont uplands. The coastal plain is characterized by small elevational ranges over relatively flat terrain which is drained by shallow streams (Lothrop 1986:4).

Permanent settlement of this area is associated with William Penn's 1701 grant of 30,000 acres south and west of Newark (in what are now Pencader Hundred and Cecil County, Maryland) to three Welsh immigrants, who in turn initiated the process of subdividing the land and selling agricultural tracts to others (Scharf 1888:950). As was the case in much of New Castle County, the evolving agricultural economy was based on a system of mixed farming, in which were combined growing of grains (chiefly wheat, corn, barley and oats) with livestock raising (Lothrop et al. 1986:18). Of these products, wheat in particular emerged early in

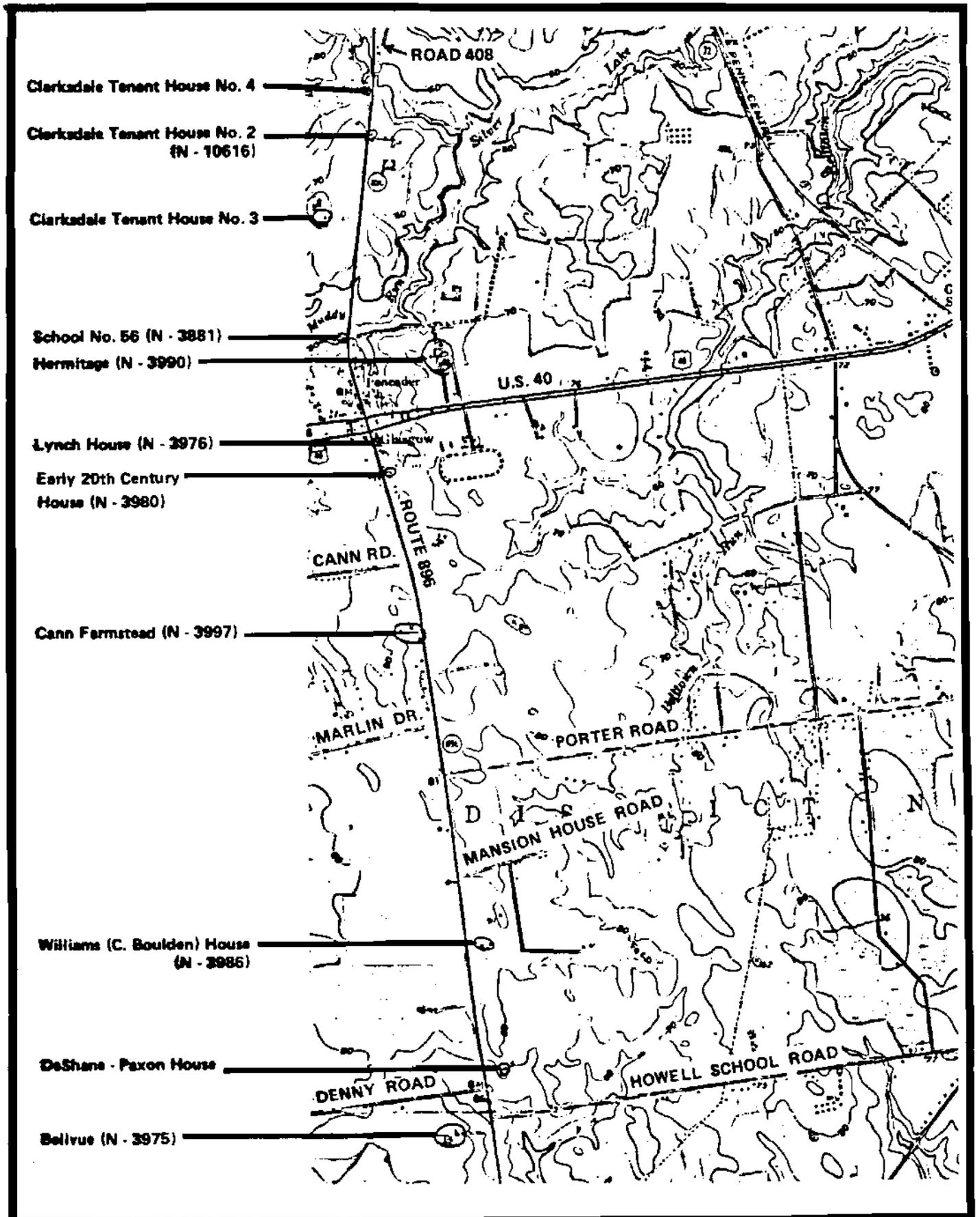


FIGURE 2: Project Area and Location of Recorded Architectural Resources

SOURCE: USGS St. Georges  
 Quadrangle, Delaware

the 18th century as a highly marketable commodity, one that supported not only the region's farmers but also those who operated grist mills, for example, Thomas Cooch on the Christina River.

The built environment associated with north-central New Castle County's developing 18th century agricultural economy was predominantly one of wooden (usually log) structures grouped on dispersed farmsteads. Situated in Delaware's "middle" vernacular building zone (which included most of New Castle County below the fall line and northern Kent County), this area would have displayed, in the forms and construction methods of its architecture, influences from regions to the north (in particular southeast Pennsylvania) as well as from more southerly locations including the eastern shores of Maryland and Virginia (see Herman 1982:179-181). House forms would thus include single-pile hall, hall-parlor and (particularly toward the end of the 18th century) center passage plans, as well as the 3-room "double pile" plan variously associated with Quaker and Germanic settlement in the Delaware Valley region. Although log construction predominated, a few individuals in rural areas built in more durable materials, typically brick, employing the same general house forms but often with more attention to internal finishes.

The principal north-south route through Pencader Hundred was variously known as the Newark Road or Glasgow Road (Figures 3,4, and 5). It extended from Newark via Cooch's Bridge, south to Buck Tavern in St. Georges Hundred, and was in existence from at least the mid-18th century (Lothrop et al. 1986:17). Two important

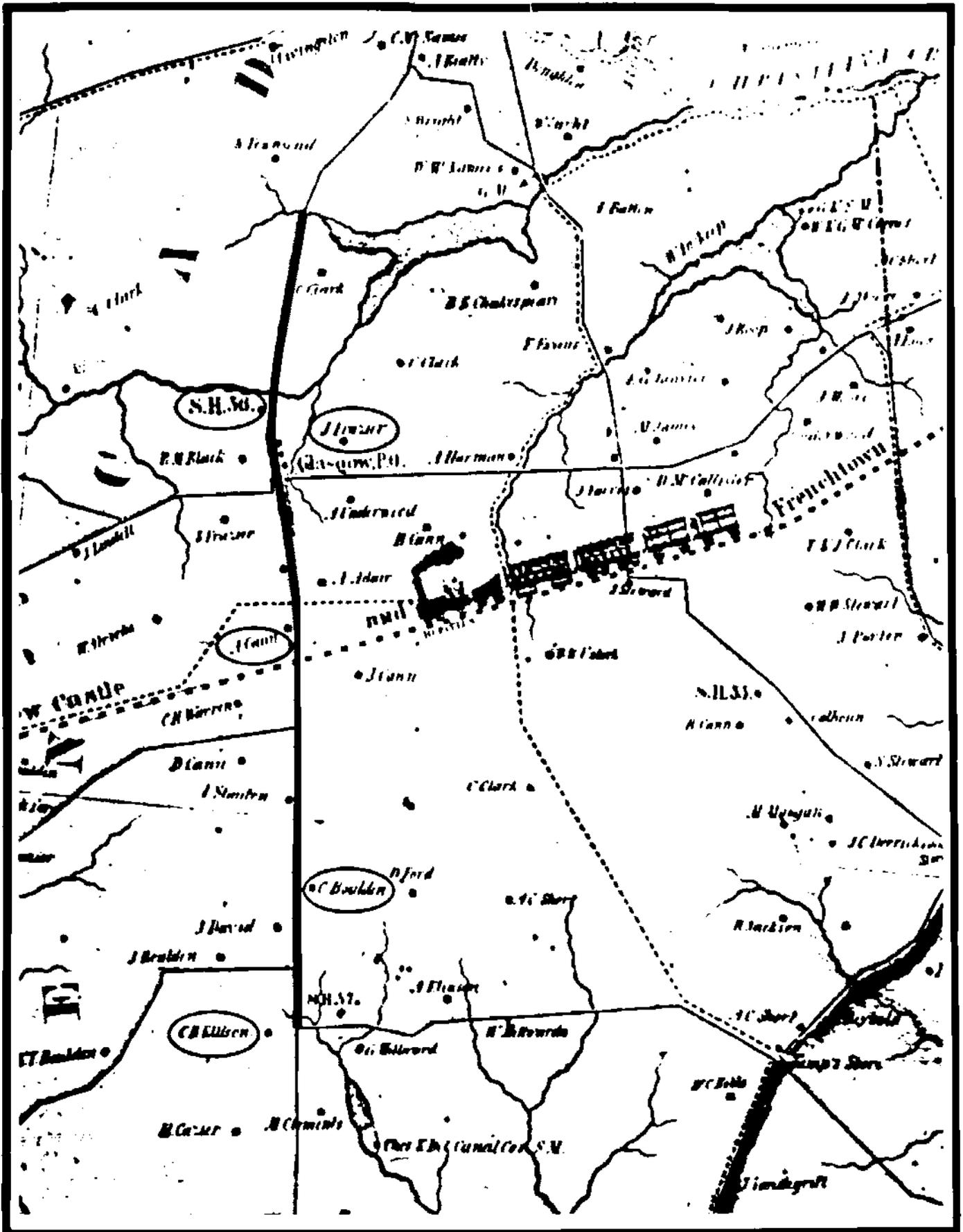


FIGURE 3: Project Area Map, 1849

SOURCE: Rea & Price, "Map of New Castle County, Delaware", 1849



FIGURE 4: Project Area Map, 1868

SOURCE: D.G. Beers "Atlas of the State of Delaware", 1868



east-west roads were one from Christiana through Cooch's Bridge to the Elk River in Maryland, and from New Castle through the middle of Pencader Hundred to Frenchtown. In the early 19th century, both routes were developed as turnpikes, known as the Elkton-Christiana (completed 1817) and New Castle and Frenchtown (completed 1815) respectively. The intersection of the Newark Road and the latter turnpike (now U.S. Route 40) became the nucleus of a small crossroads community at which was located the Pencader Presbyterian Church, organized by 1710, for which land had been given in 1742 (Scharf 1888:955). The earliest known hotel at this location was established in 1791 by Mathew Aiken, from whom the hamlet derived its early name of Aikentown (Scharf 1888:958; see also Heite 1976). By 1794, it was also known as Glasgow (NCC Tavern Petition, William Nelson, 1794). The hamlet functioned as a small service center for both the area's agricultural population and travelers, with a hotel, store, blacksmith and wheelwright shops, and eventually, a post office (Scharf 1888:958; Beers 1868; Hopkins 1881) (Figure 6). In addition, after passage of Delaware's Free School Act in 1829, the school for District 56 was established near Five-Mile Run (presently known as Muddy Run) a short distance north of the Glasgow intersection. Another church, the First Methodist Episcopal, was built in the village in 1832 (Scharf 1888:954, 956).

Glasgow was destined to remain a hamlet, as important 19th century transportation developments passed it by. The Chesapeake

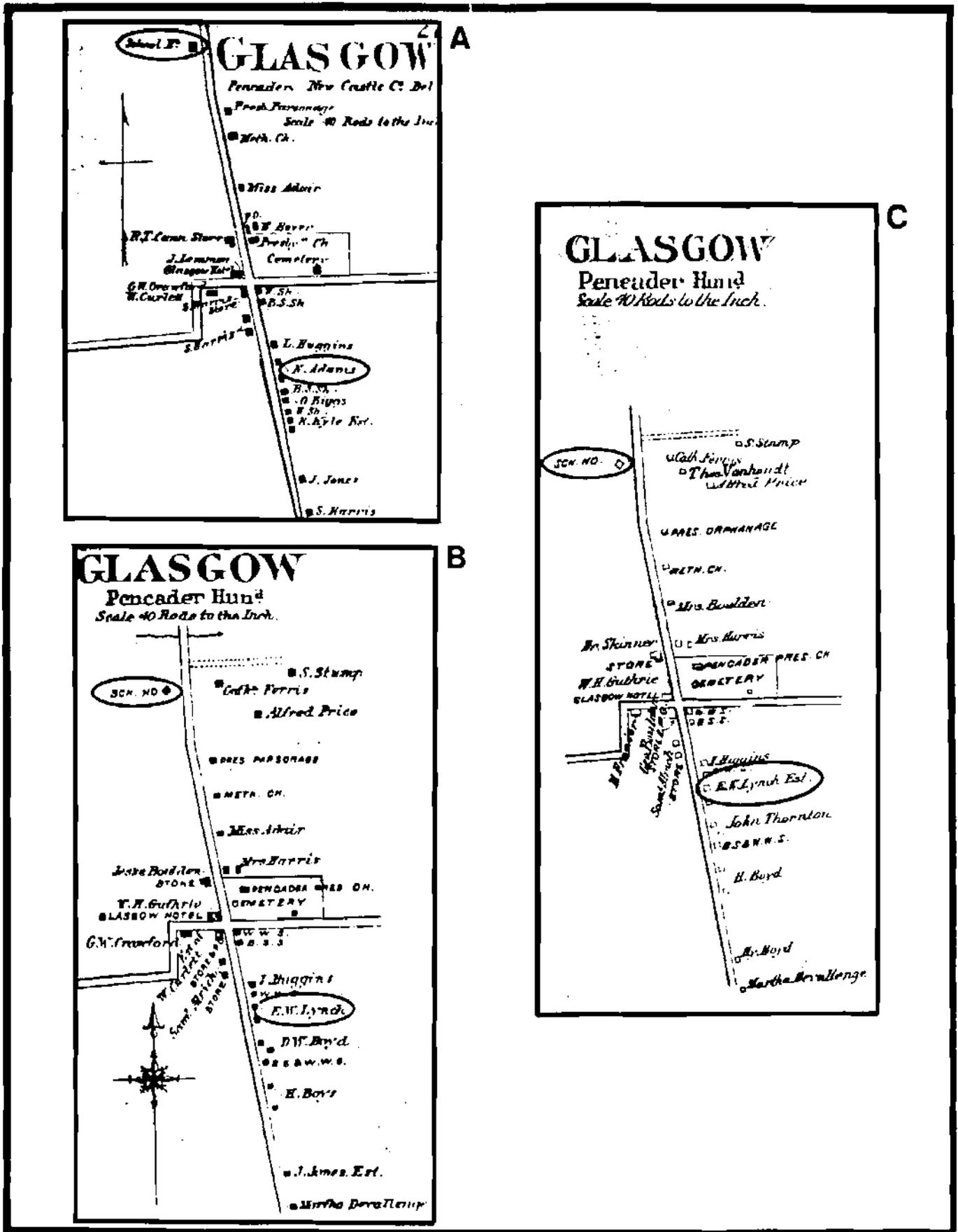


FIGURE 6: Hamlet of Glasgow

SOURCES: A) Beers 1868, B) Hopkins 1881, C) Baist 1893

and Delaware Canal was completed across the state, passing near the southern border of Pencader Hundred, in 1829. In 1832, the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad line was completed through Pencader Hundred, running roughly parallel to the turnpike of the same name, but it too, passed Glasgow by, although less than a mile to the south (Heite 1972). This line was discontinued in 1851, and the nearest rail line became the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore, built in 1837 with stations at Porters and Kirkwood (originally St. Georges Station) to the east (Lothrop et al. 1986:17).

As the 18th century came to a close, the agricultural economy of central New Castle County declined significantly, due primarily to the existence of too many farms too small to be productive, and to farming practices that overworked the soil without also incorporating "restorative actions" (Herman 1984:5). In the first two decades of the 19th century, a general population decline occurred in rural areas as inhabitants left the land that seemed no longer able to support them. As they left, however, those who remained quickly set about acquiring the farms of their former neighbors, thereby assembling large tracts which, to an increasing extent over the century, were placed in the hands of tenants to operate and maintain (Herman 1984:5). At the same time, the organization of the New Castle County Agricultural Society in 1818 fostered improvements in agricultural practices, for example crop rotation and application of lime to depleted soils (Jicha and Cesna 1986). Finally, the major improvements in

transportation represented by the canal and railroads offered greatly improved access to regional markets (Wilmington, Philadelphia, Baltimore) for the agricultural produce that flowed from agrarian reform.

The middle decades of the 19th century were a period of rebuilding of both the agricultural economy and the agricultural landscape of north central Delaware. This rebuilding, which "left no farm untouched" (Herman 1984:5) included transformation of existing structures (where they were not completely removed) as well as erection of completely new structures, both domestic and agricultural. This period saw the introduction of the crib barn/granary and the bank barn (the latter already well established in the Piedmont region to the north) into the architectural vocabulary of farm builders in the area. It also saw increasing use of center-passage dwelling plans, and incorporation of specific functions, such as cooking, within houses, often by locating them in rear ells (Herman 1984:6; Herman 1987: 146, 148, 206). The predominant form, however, remained the I-house, with its two stories, single-room depth, and side-gable orientation with interior gable-end chimneys. The reconstruction also extended to houses of tenant farm managers and laborers, as earlier log and frame "tenements" were replaced with new dwellings which could, particularly for managers, resemble those of a middling farm owner in size and finish (Herman 1987:162).

Toward the end of the 19th century, competition from agricultural areas of the midwest and plains troubled the agrarian economy of many areas of the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions.

North central Delaware farmers responded with a shift toward diversification, with increasing emphasis on fruits and vegetables. In addition, the introduction of pasteurization and improved methods of refrigeration enabled a significant expansion of the dairy industry throughout northern Delaware (Passmore 1978:41-2). Whereas in the Piedmont uplands this development was expressed, architecturally, by expansion of existing bank barns with large hay sheds (see Jicha and Cesna 1986), it was represented further south by the use of a "new" material (concrete) and erection of new barns, specifically for dairy activities, and remodeling of existing structures with concrete block ground stories and concrete floors.

The landscape along the Newark Road remained agricultural until the mid-20th century. In the 1930s, the New Castle and Frenchtown Pike was dualized, and Newark Road realigned to bypass Cooch's Bridge, but these developments did not materially alter the prevailing rural character of the area. In the 1960s, however, the increasing "suburbanization" of New Castle County was manifested in Pencader Hundred with the construction of the Dupont Corporation's large plant and office complex north and east of Glasgow. The entire area of architectural investigation is now undergoing radical transformation as agricultural lands are redeveloped for commercial, light industrial and intensive residential purposes. While a few farms remain, however temporarily, under cultivation, the practice of agriculture as a way of life and a feature of the landscape along the Newark Road is to all intents and purposes at an end.