

CONCLUSIONS

Phase III data recovery operations were completed at three predominantly tenant-occupied farms in central Delaware occupied from ca. 1765 to ca. 1937. From north to south, the three farms were the Moore-Taylor Farm Site (7K-C-380), the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy Site (7K-C-362), and the Wilson-Lewis Farm Site (7K-C-375). All three farms were occupied by a succession of relatively poor owners and tenants. The remains of three houses and associated wells, agricultural outbuildings, and privies were identified.

The Moore-Taylor Farm Site was a small tenant- and owner-occupied farm inhabited from ca. 1822 to ca. 1937. All of the occupants lived on the edge of insolvency and the farm never appeared on any agricultural censuses because it produced less than \$100, the minimum value for each census. By 1930, the farm had been sold at public auction three times. At the center of the farm was a one and a half story frame house with an attached shed kitchen. Surrounding the Moore-Taylor Farm were 10 post-and-rail fences. Other buildings on the farm included three small outbuildings, the largest of which was a barn or stable. All of these outbuildings date to the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The farm also included two privies and five wells. All five wells were used sequentially and probably no more than two wells were in use at any one time. By the beginning of the twentieth century, at least one well also supplied water to nearby outbuildings.

The second most recent well at the site, Feature 285, was probably used as a household dump by the Leonard family. The Leonards were the last identifiable occupants of the site and owned the farm from 1894 until 1931. The well was filled-in ca. 1895-1905 and represents the only long-term primary deposit found at any of the three sites. The most recent well, Feature 90, received a large amount of material from unknown tenants during a major "cleanup" event when the site was abandoned ca. 1937. The Lewis family purchased the farm in 1931 and rented it to unknown tenants until ca. 1937 when the farm was abandoned.

The material culture assemblages of the two identifiable contexts at the Moore-Taylor Farm Site indicated a major shift in consumption patterns between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As late as 1905, when Feature 285 was filled, the Leonard family was still relatively self-sufficient. The presence of 19 baking powder bottles and numerous canning jars indicates that they prepared and stored their own food. A variety of patent medicine bottles indicate that they ministered some of their own illnesses. Some level of brand loyalty may be reflected by the number of bottles for the same products, namely baking powder and patent medicines. Conspicuously absent from the deposit were soda bottles, liquor bottles, cosmetic containers, and other consumer goods. The ceramics the Leonards used were relatively inexpensive white granite wares. These wares, however, were not the cheapest ceramics available and some effort seems to have been made to purchase small sets of matched goods. As the small sets were used and inevitably broken, other ceramics of similar patterns were purchased individually.

By 1937, when the site was abandoned, the last tenants occupying the Moore-Taylor Farm were purchasing a wide range of consumer goods. The ceramic and glass assemblages deposited in the wells when the site was abandoned were very different from the material deposited 30 to 35 years earlier in Feature 285. By the 1930s, these tenants were purchasing prescription drugs from local pharmacies, and consuming a variety of commercial products. These commercial products included bleach, cosmetics, liquor, and white shoe polish. Archival research suggests that these new goods did not result from wealthier occupants. As many of these consumer goods were bottled, one of the major changes appears to have been the introduction of cheap, machine-made bottles after the development of the fully automated bottle blowing machines in 1903.

Additional analysis of the historical and archaeological evidence of the Moore-Taylor Farm Site revealed significant changes in activity areas and trash disposal. While the layout of the major buildings on the farm remained stable, household debris marked by high concentrations of early nineteenth century pearlwares were found near the house and adjacent front and side yards. By the late nineteenth century, however, what little household debris remained on-site was being spread over the entire site as very small fragments. Areas near the house that had received trash, including pearlwares, early in the nineteenth century, ceased to receive household debris after whitewares and white granite wares became popular in mid-century.

The change in trash disposal appears to be related to the continual and increasing off-site disposal of trash at the Moore-Taylor Farm Site. The primary evidence of off-site disposal is the very small portion extant of glass and ceramic vessels in feature contexts and the presence of large, low-density scatters of ceramic artifacts, glass, and other domestic debris in the surrounding agricultural fields. Post-occupation plowing of the site is partly responsible for these scatters, but a major factor appears to have been the use of mechanical manure spreaders and the conscious disposal of household trash more than 100 feet from the house. Additional evidence of careful management of manure resources was evident in the distribution of soil chemicals, particularly phosphorous.

The Benjamin Wynn Tenancy Site (7K-C-362) was a small tenant farm and rural blacksmith shop occupied from circa 1765 to circa 1820. The farm was located less than a quarter mile south of the Moore-Taylor Farm. The Benjamin Wynn Tenancy was probably abandoned before the Moore-Taylor Farm Site was occupied. The Benjamin Wynn Tenancy Site property was owned by the related Lackey and Wilson families and tenanted by a number of different families. In 1797, the tenant and blacksmith on the property was Benjamin Wynn. Wynn lived in a small wooden house expanded with several shed (or porch) additions. These additions made the house larger than most contemporary owner-occupied houses and almost all tenant houses. Nearby was the wooden blacksmith shop. The shop was roughly half the size of the house and included an open work area probably containing a forge and anvil. Wynn drew water from two wells and kept his livestock in two small outbuildings. Trash was routinely disposed of in casual sheet deposits and small trash pits along the edges of the property.

The activities of the rural blacksmiths at the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy Site are difficult to reconstruct. Very few tools and pieces of worked iron were recovered. In a period when iron utensils were valued primarily by how much iron they contained, Benjamin Wynn, like other rural blacksmiths, carefully conserved and reused metal stock. Only a few, very poorly preserved tools were found. All of these tools were heavily utilized and were discarded only after several episodes of reuse. Similarly, only very small scraps of iron bar and round stock were found at the site. No evidence of nail-making or other light manufacturing was found. It is likely that the blacksmiths at the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy spent most of their time repairing agricultural equipment. The blacksmiths probably also shod horses and other livestock, but no horseshoes, horseshoe nails, hoof files, or other specialized equipment was found.

As the blacksmith shop became a more important part of the site, the primary locus of activity and trash deposition shifted at the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy. While white salt-glazed stonewares and other diagnostic mid-eighteenth century wares were concentrated near the tenant house, creamwares and other later eighteenth century wares were concentrated around the blacksmith shop 20 feet to the north. This shift in activity areas could not be discerned through soil chemical analyses because of post-occupation contamination.

None of the features at the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy had artifact assemblages that could be associated with known occupants. Several tenant families, including Benjamin Wynn, occupied the site, but no concrete connections between specific deposits and site occupants could be made. As with the people living on the Moore-Taylor Farm, the tenants at the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy consistently used the cheapest decorated ceramic wares available. The decorated wares used at the site were slightly more expensive than undecorated wares. No evidence of any conscious attempts to purchase or maintain sets of matched ceramics was found at either site. Some effort, however, may have been made to replace broken ceramics with similarly decorated wares purchased individually. Unfortunately, this consumption pattern could also have resulted from the purchases of different families occupying the site.

The Wilson-Lewis Farm Site (7K-C-375) was the location of a small tenant farm occupied from circa 1852 to 1889. Henry Wilson, a relatively prosperous landowner, added this small, one to one and a half story tenant house to his 180-acre farm between 1852 and 1859. Wilson built the house in a crook of a tight bend along the road from Dover to Leipsic. Prior to construction, the area was at best marginal land—relatively poorly drained and probably wooded. When first built, the Wilson-Lewis tenant house was small even by contemporary standards—a 20- x 20-foot frame building with at least two interior rooms and probably a half-story loft above. Three shed and porch additions added later, however, almost doubled the size of the house. By the time these additions were complete, the Wilson-Lewis house was larger than most tenancies in the area, but was still substantially smaller than most owner-occupied homes.

As with the nearby Moore-Taylor house, the Wilson-Lewis house was heated with a stove, although only one of the downstairs rooms may have been heated. Water was drawn from one of two wells near the front of the house. The wells were covered by a small structure that also served as the western end of a fenceline, defining the southern edge of the house's yard. Similar structures may have been constructed over the five wells at the Moore-Taylor Farm Site. North of the Wilson-Lewis tenant house was a simple frame stable nearly half the size of the house. The stable was located only 20 feet from the Dover to Leipsic Road. Soil chemical analyses determined that animals were penned in a small fenced area along the north side of the stable. This area marked the northern limit of the farmyard and trash was regularly deposited there.

The tenants of the Wilson-Lewis Farm Site were also relatively poor. The poverty of these tenants is reflected in the paucity of material culture recovered. Less than a thousand sherds of historical ceramic artifacts were recovered from the site. Minimally decorated whitewares and white granite wares of the cheapest varieties available predominated.

The Moore-Taylor Farm, Benjamin Wynn Tenancy, and Wilson-Lewis Farm sites represent occupations that span nearly 175 years. All three sites were located in a small area of central Delaware between two relatively small towns, Dover and Leipsic. All three sites also reflect key changes in the local economy. As tenancies, all three sites were especially vulnerable to economic change, especially land prices. For example, all three sites were constructed during brief periods of prosperity when rising land prices and strong regional markets encouraged agricultural tenancy.

The first site, the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy, was initially occupied ca. 1765, during the height of the French and Indian War. The site was one of five agricultural tenancies on Andrew Lackey's 337-acre farm. Lackey had inherited both land and wealth from his father and was able to improve his

holdings with a large brick house and numerous small tenant farms. Each of these tenant families probably worked for shares of the crop. Both Lackey and his tenants, however, would have been able to grow wheat more profitably because of the increased availability of labor during critical harvest periods. With access to more predictable labor, Lackey and his tenants could exploit high war time prices for foodstuffs.

The first period of prosperity in central Delaware lasted until the end of the Revolutionary War. The four decades between 1783 and the Panic of 1819 were difficult times for Delaware farmers. The most important change in this period was the loss of a prosperous colonial economy and its replacement by a growing, but increasingly volatile national economy. The population of central Delaware declined significantly between 1820 and 1840. Cheaper, more available western lands lured thousands of Delawareans west. Especially hard hit were tenants who had even less stake in staying in Delaware than landowners. Similar conditions encouraged outmigration in other parts of the country, particularly New England (Barron 1984; Atack and Bateman 1987).

The end of occupation of the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy ca. 1820 is consistent with known changes in the local economy. It is not known if Benjamin Wynn or the other last tenants of the site moved west, but the close correlation between the regional economy and tenancy rates remains. As a tenant farm on marginal land, the Benjamin Wynn Tenancy was a sensitive indicator of local economic conditions. Occupying the site was probably only feasible during periods of high land values and crop prices when tenancy was a more attractive, or necessary, alternative to land ownership. Similar conditions affected tenancy at other central Delaware farms including the Dickinson Plantation (Guerrant 1987).

By the 1850s, however, the regional economy had recovered and land prices once again rose in central Delaware. The completion of the Delaware railroad in 1854 was an important stimulus to agriculture. Improved transportation brought regional urban markets, including Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore and even as far west as Pittsburgh into reach of Delaware farmers. Cheap commercial fertilizers, including gypsum and imported Peruvian guano, helped farmers to compete and remain profitable. More importantly, improved transportation encouraged specialization in perishable, but potentially profitable, orchard and dairy products.

While the Moore-Taylor and Wilson-Lewis farms did not specialize in these products, both farms benefited from the improved economy. Rising land prices and the growth of both Dover and Leipsic encouraged settlement on poorly-drained, marginal locations such as those of the Wilson-Lewis and Moore-Taylor Farm sites. Between 1860 and 1900, the number of farms in Kent County increased by 44 percent. One of these new farms was the Wilson-Lewis Farm Site. Although the Moore-Taylor Farm was settled slightly earlier, it was occupied in this period by George Moore for 14 years, the second longest occupation by the same family.

One important factor in this late nineteenth century growth was the expansion of the two nearest towns, Dover and Leipsic. Both of these towns, especially Dover, grew significantly and provided additional markets in this period. This urban growth not only provided new markets for local crops, but also provided new job opportunities off the farm. The owner and tenant families living at both the Moore-Taylor Farm and Wilson-Lewis Farm sites probably supplemented farm production with wages from regular jobs. The effects of urban growth is especially clear at the Wilson-Lewis Farm Site. The tenant farm was built by Gustavus Wilson, a well-to-do butcher in nearby Leipsic. At least two of the tenants of the Moore-Taylor and Wilson-Lewis Farm Site were butchers who probably worked for Wilson.

The sensitivity of marginal farms to local economic changes is also reflected in the abandonment of the Moore-Taylor Farm and Wilson-Lewis Farm sites. Both sites were abandoned during sharp downturns in the economy. The Wilson-Lewis Farm Site was abandoned ca. 1882 and the Moore-Taylor Farm Site was abandoned by 1937.

One other change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century economy of central Delaware affected the occupants of the Moore-Taylor Farm and Wilson-Lewis Farm sites. This change was the increased availability of commercially produced consumer products. The development of these products occurred around two key economic changes. First, increased demand for consumer goods from a growing urban population increasingly willing, and able, to pay for everyday items.

The second key economic change was the increased availability of cheap consumer goods with major commercial and technological changes in production. Improvements in machine-made glass bottles, particularly the Ashley and Owens machines, had a major impact on consumer patterns (Fike 1987:4-5). Based on the glass bottle assemblages from the Moore-Taylor Farm Site, store-bought bread and pharmacy-prepared medicines quickly replaced baking powder bottles and patent medicines over the first two decades of the twentieth century. While other variables were at work, particularly the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, the tremendous changes in glass assemblages between the last two wells at the Moore-Taylor Farm indicate significant changes in consumer behavior.

In conclusion, data recovery operations at the Moore-Taylor Farm, Benjamin Wynn Tenancy, and Wilson-Lewis Farm sites have produced significant data on the everyday lifeways of farm owners and tenants from the mid-eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. The occupants of all three sites were sensitive to changes in the local and regional economy. Intact archaeological features, including the remains of houses, agricultural outbuildings, wells, trash pits, and fencelines were tested. Through comparisons of the various occupations of all three sites with other local and regional historical sites, changing patterns in site layout, trash disposal, architecture, and socioeconomic status were identified. Understanding these changing patterns adds significantly to our understanding of Delaware's past.