# VIII. SYNTHESIS

## A. THE HISTORIC OCCUPATION OF LOCUST GROVE

In this chapter some of the major historical archaeological findings resulting from the investigations of the Locust Grove Site (7NC-F-73) are examined and the results of the artifact, feature, and stratigraphic unit analyses synthesized with the historical information presented in Chapter V. The following discussion considers two of the research issues, landscape and domestic economy, developed for Delaware as presented in De Cunzo and Catts (1990), and as reviewed in Chapter IV of this report.

### *1. Landscape*

In 1761, Robert Meldrum purchased 125 acres of woodland from Richard Cantwell, his wife, Sarah, and his sister, Lydia, thus acquiring the core of what would later become Locust Grove. For the next 32 years, until his death in 1793, Meldrum apparently occupied and farmed his 125 acres. Almost nothing is known, however, about Meldrum's farm—what he raised, or even the location of his farmstead, although the deed information indicates that this original tract was located north of the Bohemia Cart Road (present-day SR 299). No evidence has come to light archaeologically to indicate that Site 7NC-F-73 was occupied during the second half of the eighteenth century, although some of the earlier ceramic wares found scattered across the site might be associated with the Meldrum occupation.

It is not until the first decade of the nineteenth century, after Samuel Pennington had acquired the property, that we are provided with any solid information concerning the farm. In 1804, Pennington's tax assessment listed a dwelling, a kitchen, a barn, a stable, and a crib (corncrib). The precise location and arrangement of the farmstead are still unclear. However, prior to the 1820s, outbuildings, whether household-related or farm-related, were usually placed in relatively close proximity to the farmhouse (Herman 1987:232). The four outbuildings on Pennington's farm are actually below the average number of six to seven that apparently characterized the farmsteads in St. Georges Hundred during the period from 1760 to 1820 (Herman 1987:62).

The free-standing kitchen was a typical feature of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Delaware farmsteads. The farm kitchen was usually of log or frame construction, consisting of one room and a loft. Kitchens, as Herman (1987:63) observes, were "spaces for rough domestic work—especially food preparation, but also spinning and weaving." They were also sometimes used to house slaves or servants, an arrangement that may have been true for Samuel Pennington, who owned four slaves early in the century. Stables were often of log construction and generally no larger than 24 feet square, the size required to shelter a team of horses or oxen. Barns were rectangular, built of log or frame, and were sometimes as large as 44 by 24 feet. Interiors were usually divided into three bays, an arrangement corresponding to the English or Yankee barn found elsewhere in the United States. Corncribs during the eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries could vary considerably in size, and were either long and narrow with lath or slatted sides, or were small rectangular log structures (Herman 1987:63-70).

By 1810, Pennington had more than doubled the size of his farm, to over 300 acres. A tax assessment six years later, however, lists only three structures on the property: a dwelling, a barn, and stables. The detailed Orphans' Court record made after Pennington's death in 1824 suggests that he had made a number of changes and improvements to his farmstead during the previous years. Referred to as "Meldrum Farm," it is described as having a one-story log house and kitchen under one roof, with an adjoining shed, a granary, a barn with stables, a smokehouse, and a wagon house. An 1827 Orphans's Court record describes the farmstead, at that time apparently occupied by a tenant, in much the same way. The reference to the house and kitchen is interesting. As early as the late eighteenth century, farmers had begun to incorporate kitchens into the overall house plan, and this trend came to be more common during the early nineteenth century as the difference between domestic space and the working farm was accentuated. Kitchens were sometimes moved to abut the house or were connected to it by the construction of an intervening room or passageway (Herman 1987:63).

Over the next 20 years, as Samuel Pennington, Jr., reached his majority and established a household at "Meldrum Farm," the house continued to be described in the tax records as a log dwelling, a description that is at odds with the Greek Revival section of the present house that was thought to have been built during the 1830s (Historic American Buildings Survey 1995). In any event, and almost certainly by the early 1850s, Pennington had constructed his new two-story center-passage dwelling on the northern side of the Bohemia Cart Road.

Although the exact location of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century farmstead associated with the Locust Grove property has not been positively identified, either historically or archaeologically, the likelihood is fairly high that it was situated in the vicinity of the current farm complex. Once established, farmsteads were generally left in place, due to the high cost in time, labor, and money involved in relocation (LBA 1994). This, of course, did not prevent farmers from reorganizing the structural core of their properties. Although nineteenth-century New Englanders provide the best-known example of farmstead reorganization (Hubka 1984), over the course of the nineteenth century farmers in southern New Castle County, particularly the wealthier landowners, were not averse to moving structures or replacing them with new buildings (Herman 1987).

Like many farmsteads in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic regions of the United States during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, Locust Grove shows a fairly strong association with the local transportation network (Allen 1852; Hubka 1984; Manning 1984; Robin 1783). Samuel Pennington, Jr.'s, Greek Revival dwelling, for example, is located within 150 feet of the former Bohemia Cart Road. Although the practice of locating the farmstead's principal structures near a public thoroughfare appears to have been a longstanding tradition throughout the Middle Atlantic region, in Delaware the association does not seem to be quite as strong, at least for wealthier farmers, who often set their dwellings back from the road. For Locust Grove, the presence of a slight rise in the topography, where the present house is situated, may also have

been a contributing factor in the siting of the farmstead, at least in its mid-nineteenth-century guise.

In contrast to the roadside orientation of Locust Grove, access to a source of surface water does not appear to have been an especially important variable in the choice of location. Although several ephemeral watercourses are located in fairly close proximity to the farmstead, the nearest perennial drainage is 2,000 feet from the farmhouse. Water for human and livestock consumption at Locust Grove would have been obtained from other sources, most likely a well or wells, although none were located during the archaeological investigations.

The spatial organization of the Locust Grove farmstead in the mid-nineteenth century is largely unknown, probably due to construction activities that have taken place over the past 50 or more years. Surviving architectural elements include, of course, the dwelling, and the smokehouse located to the rear. The Greek Revival section of the house was built during Samuel Pennington, Jr.'s, ownership of the property. Based on the tax records, it was constructed no earlier than about 1850, when this style of architecture was falling out of favor, and at a time when many other middle-class and elite farmers were reorganizing their properties and otherwise changing the architectural landscape of southern New Castle County (Herman 1987). This portion of the house was built perpendicular to the road, with its main entrance facing east. The orientation of the house is unusual for a period when middle-class or well-to-do farmers throughout the eastern United States were building (or, in some cases, moving) their houses to face the road, and were creating formal, refined, front yard spaces between the house and the public thoroughfares that fronted their properties. While it might be suggested that this section of the house had been built as an addition to an earlier structure, the archaeological evidence strongly suggests that it was the first building in this location.

In any event, it appears that the yard between the house and the road was used for the disposal of at least some of the refuse generated by the Pennington and Hoffecker households during the decades between about 1820 and 1870. The low percentage of ceramic vessel completeness, and the highly fragmented condition of the ceramics, glass, and faunal remains uncovered in Stratigraphic Unit E and in Feature 4, indicate that most of the household trash was discarded elsewhere on the property, probably to the rear (west) of the dwelling. This moderate-level discard in the front yard seems to have continued until the 1870s, when the Second Empire section of the house was built.

The construction of the new front section of the house was carried out during the lifetime of Samuel Pennington, Jr., apparently while his son, Franklin, was living, and farming, at Locust Grove as a tenant. The new structure was one element in a number of important alterations made to the landscape, and seems to have marked an important change in the way the Penningtons presented themselves to themselves and to their neighbors and other members of their social and economic class. The main entrance and front of the house now faced the road. The new front section itself, with its mansard roof and bay windows, was built according to one of the current architectural styles, the Second Empire, favored by the well-to-do during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The form of the house, its footprint, on the other hand, was fairly conservative, and was laid out according to the Georgian center-passage plan.

Along with the expanded and reoriented house, the front yard also seems to have taken on a new appearance. The results of the excavations indicate that considerable landscaping activity took place during the 1870s and 1880s. Portions of the front yard were filled; the yard midden represented by Stratigraphic Unit E was covered by a deposit of brick and thermally-altered cobbles (SU C1/Feature 11) that may have come from an end chimney attached to the Greek Revival section of the house. Two more layers of fill were subsequently added to level the front yard, truncating and covering Feature 4 in the process. Filling and leveling of the side yard also appear to have occurred during this general period. Feature 5, although containing the earliest ceramic assemblage recovered from the site, appears to have been formed during the 1880s. This ceramic material, along with late nineteenth-century bottle glass, may represent a house-cleaning event, or the redeposition of mixed refuse from another part of the property, put here to fill in a shallow depression in the yard. This deposit appears to have been quickly covered by two more layers of landscaping fill (SU A and SU B) to level the ground surface. Once the filling and leveling had been completed, a number of trees were added to the yards; several of the mature trees still standing at Locust Grove, particularly the spruces and horse chestnuts, probably date from this period.

By the end of the 1800s, the broad-scale disposal of household refuse in the front and west side yards—those portions of the property visible from the road—had largely ceased, although some trash, i.e., nails or bits of glass, was scattered across the yards as sheet refuse. In keeping with refined standards, trash was apparently disposed of out of sight, either behind the house or outside the bounds of the farmstead altogether. Aside from keeping up appearances, health and safety considerations may also have come into play as people became increasingly aware of the connection between sanitation and disease.

During the twentieth century, the house again appears to have been reoriented. At some point the walkway (Feature 1) leading from the front porch to the drive was covered over and planted with grass. The main entrance, for both the family and visitors, appears to have been one of the doorways in the old Greek Revival section of the house. The principal focus of the property for much of the twentieth century appears to have been the yard and drive east of the house and the areas, including the outbuildings, to the rear of the dwelling.

In contrast to the domestic core of the farmstead (or at least the house and front and west yards), very little is known about the working sphere of the property during the 1800s. Except for the smokehouse, which appears to be contemporary with the Greek Revival portion of the house, none of the nineteenth-century outbuildings have survived. All of the other standing structures at Locust Grove date to the twentieth century. Archaeological evidence of nineteenth-century support structures is equally lacking. A cement foundation located 300 feet north of the house appears to be the remains of a barn, probably constructed during the twentieth century. Although the outbuildings (which would have included a barn, a stable, and other structures) were probably arranged courtyard-fashion to the rear of the house, this cannot be demonstrated empirically. Little evidence was recovered behind the house to indicate activity or refuse disposal areas, or features such as privies or wells, dating to the nineteenth century. Any such evidence would almost certainly have been obliterated by the installation of the built-in pool, landscaping, and other twentieth-century construction.

*2. Domestic Economy*

As discussed in Chapter IV, domestic economy encompasses the range of means, including production, reproduction, and consumption, employed by a family or household to achieve its goals. These goals might include simple survival, or geographic, occupational, economic, and/or social mobility. Elements of a household's domestic strategy can include the composition and occupational structure of the family or household, home production, and consumer behavior (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:17).

*a. Architecture*

One of the principal capital investments that a rural household could make was the construction of a house and its accompanying outbuildings. Students of historic architecture have noted that, in general, house size varied with an individual's or a family's economic status: those who were better off built bigger houses, and furnished them accordingly, and those at the lower end of the economic scale made do with smaller, usually less well appointed, dwellings. For middle-class and elite nineteenth-century farmers, the farm dwelling, often along with the barn, was the principal outward sign of economic success and class standing.

By almost any standard, the house at Locust Grove was large, particularly in its expanded form near the end of the nineteenth century. This can be seen in Table 22, which gives the first-floor dimensions of a number of nineteenth-century houses in Delaware. The examples in the table have been drawn from several sources, including the floorplans in Herman's (1987) *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900*, and from a number of archaeological sites summarized in Grettler et al. (1996). While the houses included in Table 22 cannot be considered a truly representative sample, they do provide some idea of the range in the variation of house sizes in nineteenth-century rural Delaware, and provide a broader context for Locust Grove.

In terms of overall size, Locust Grove falls near the upper end of the group in Table 22. Except for Mayfield, occupied by a tenant/farm manager, all of the houses with over 1,500 square feet of first-floor space were owner-occupied and had been built by economically well-placed or elite families like the Cochrans, who commissioned numerous buildings in central Delaware during the nineteenth century (Herman 1987) and to whom the Penningtons were related by marriage. With the exception of Hedgelawn, which had been constructed all at one time, the larger dwellings had, in effect, grown by accretion. The original Greek Revival section of Locust Grove, built by Samuel Pennington, Jr., was actually fairly modest in scale and no larger than houses constructed by middling farmers like George Buchanan in Green Spring (see Table 22). At some point in the nineteenth century, Pennington built an addition onto the northern end of the original house, expanding it to 864 square feet. The major addition to the house, however, and a reflection of the Pennington family's economic success over the preceding decades, was the Second Empire section that was apparently built during the 1870s. The new section of the house nearly doubled the size of the dwelling, to 1,700 square feet; the earlier Greek Revival portion of the house appears to have been transformed into a kitchen wing, with living space on the second floor.

TABLE 22

FIRST-FLOOR DIMENSIONS OF LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY HOUSES IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL DELAWARE

| HOUSE/SITE | DESCRIPTION | DIMENSIONS (feet) | AREA (square feet) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Greenlawn[a] | Brick core | 23x47 | 1,081 |
| Owner-occupied | Brick addition | 14x28 | 392 |
| | Brick addition | 19x39 | 741 |
| | Brick addition | 19x22 | 418 |
| | | | 2,632 |
| Achmester[a] | Frame core | 44x19 | 836 |
| Owner-occupied | Frame wing | 41x19 | 779 |
| | Frame ell | 19x30 | 570 |
| | Frame pantry | 19x11 | 209 |
| | | | 2,394 |
| Geraldsville[a] | Brick core | 31x19 | 589 |
| Owner-occupied | Brick wing | 23x19 | 437 |
| | Brick ell | 17x21 | 357 |
| | Brick ell | 17x22 | 374 |
| | | | 1,757 |
| *Locust Grove* | *Original frame* | *18x37* | *666* |
| *(7NC-F-73)* | *Frame addition* | *18x11* | *198* |
| *Owner-occupied* | *2nd Empire addition* | *22x38* | *836* |
| | | | *1,700* |
| Muddy Branch[a] | Frame core | 33x18 | 594 |
| Owner-occupied | Frame addition | 28x26 | 728 |
| | Frame parlor wing | 20x18 | 360 |
| | | | 1,682 |
| Hedgelawn[a] | Frame core | 40x28 | 1,120 |
| Owner-occupied | Frame ell | 16x34 | 544 |
| | | | 1,664 |
| Mayfield[a] | Brick core | 44x20 | 880 |
| Tenant/manager-occupied | Brick ell | 35x18 | 630 |
| | | | 1,510 |
| C. Kimmey House[b] | Brick core | 27x20 | 540 |
| (7KC-D-119) | Frame kitchen | 33x16 | 528 |
| Tenant-occupied | Shed addition | 12x15 | 180 |
| | Shed addition | 8x6 | 48 |
| | Porch | 16x6 | 96 |
| | | | 1,392 |
| John Read House[b] | | 46x29 | 1,334 |
| (7NC-E-53) | | | |
| Owner-occupied | | | |

Table 22 (continued)

| HOUSE/SITE | DESCRIPTION | DIMENSIONS (feet) | AREA (square feet) |
|---|---|---|---|
| C.J. Biggs House[a] | Log core | 27x21 | 567 |
| Owner-occupied | Frame addition | 18x21 | 378 |
| | Frame addition | 17x21 | 357 |
| | | | 1,302 |
| Buchanan Tenant House[b] | Frame core | | 720 |
| | Frame kitchen | | 432 |
| | | | 1,152 |
| Hawthorn House[b] | Original log | 29x21 | 609 |
| (7NC-E-46) | Frame addition | 12x21 | 252 |
| Owner-occupied | Frame kitchen | 12x17 | 204 |
| | | | 1,065 |
| Buchanan-Savin House[b] | Frame core | | 320 |
| (7NC-J-175) | Frame kitchen | | 288 |
| Owner-occupied | Frame addition | | 384 |
| | | | 992 |
| Wilson-Slack House[b] | House | 32x30 | 960 |
| (N-6269) | | | |
| Owner-occupied | | | |
| Moore-Taylor House[b] | Original frame | 24x12 | 288 |
| (7K-C-380) | Kitchen addition | 20x12 | 240 |
| Owner-occupied | Porch | 30x7 | 210 |
| | Porch | 12x7 | 84 |
| | | | 822 |
| H. Wilson-Lewis House[b] | Original frame | 20x20 | 400 |
| (7K-C-375) | Addition | 8x12 | 96 |
| Owner-occupied | Porch | 6x30 | 180 |
| | Addition | 6x10 | 60 |
| | | | 736 |
| Temple House[b] | Original frame | 16x24 | 384 |
| (7NC-D-68) | Frame addition | 16x20 | 320 |
| Tenant-occupied | | | 704 |
| Ferguson House[b] | Original frame | 16x24 | 384 |
| (N-3902) | Frame addition | 18x15 | 270 |
| Tenant-occupied | | | 654 |
| W. Eager House[b] | Original frame | 30x20 | 600 |
| (7K-C-383) | | | |
| Tenant-occupied | | | |
| Cazier Tenancy[b] | Original brick | 17x17 | 289 |
| (7NC-F-64) | Addition | 17x9 | 153 |
| | | | 442 |

Table 22 (continued)

| HOUSE/SITE | DESCRIPTION | DIMENSIONS (feet) | AREA (square feet) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dickson II House[b] (7NC-E-82) Tenant-occupied | | 18x22 | 396 |
| Grant Tenancy[b] (7NC-B-6) | Original frame<br>Addition | 16x15.5<br>6x16.5 | 248<br>99<br>347 |
| Heisler Tenancy[b] (7NC-E-83) | Core | 12x21 | 252 |

[a] Measurements taken from floorplans in Herman (1987)
[b] Grettler et al. (1996)

### *b. Ceramics, Glass, and Other Items*

Among the various aspects of domestic economy/consumer behavior, foodways are one of the more amenable to archaeological interpretation. Ceramics played an important role in foodways, and several of the excavated deposits at Locust Grove, particularly those in the East Block, contained extensive ceramic assemblages comprising a wide variety of vessels relating to food service, storage, and preparation. Unfortunately, none of the deposits at Locust Grove could be tightly dated or attributed to a particular household. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the vessel assemblages covered time spans of 50 or more years, during which two or more households are known to have resided at the site—the households of Samuel Pennington, Jr., James Hoffecker, and, later, Franklin Pennington. Another consideration is the fact that domestic servants and farm laborers were also living and presumably taking meals at Locust Grove. It is possible that they were using cheaper tablewares than their employers and that this may also be reflected in the archaeological record at the site. Further complicating the picture is the extent of off-site disposal, not only of ceramics, but of glass vessels as well, a problem that has been noted at other nineteenth-century sites in Delaware (Grettler et al. 1996). All but 11 of the ceramic vessels are less than 25 percent complete, and most are represented by only one or two sherds. This suggests that the vessels are undercounted and that entire vessels are missing from the MNV counts. Despite the problems with assignability and vessel representation, several trends in the use of ceramics at Locust Grove during the nineteenth century are evident.

Ceramic vessels related to the storage and preparation of food (e.g., jars, baking dishes, milk pans, jugs, and pie plates) formed a significant percentage (15.8%) of the 981 vessels recovered from the site. The fact that many of the nearly 400 vessels whose function could not be determined were yellowwares, stonewares, and particularly coarse redwares that may have been used in the kitchen, suggests that the actual percentage of these vessels in the site assemblage was considerably higher. Of the 155 food preparation/storage/multifunctional vessels recovered from the deposits at Locust Grove, all but five are redwares. The high percentage of redwares among

the identifiable vessels (181, or 32.5%) is perhaps unusual for contexts dating from the 1820s through the 1880s; at the Moore-Taylor Farm (1822-1937), a small owner-occupied and tenant-occupied farmstead in Kent County, by comparison, only 11.7 percent of the 239 identifiable vessels were redwares (Grettler et al. 1996). On the other hand, only two of the redwares from Locust Grove are table forms (none were identified as teaware, representing less than 0.4% of the total assemblage), compared to 13.5 percent at the Moore-Taylor Farm (Grettler et al. 1996).

As noted, redwares dominated the food preparation and storage vessels at Locust Grove. Although yellowware utilitarian vessels became available on a nationwide basis after the mid-nineteenth century (Gates and Ormerod 1982), and by that time had largely replaced redware in the kitchen, this ceramic type was not as common at Locust Grove as might have been expected. Of the total number of vessels, 21 (2.1%) are yellowwares, while only two could be assigned to the multifunctional (food preparation/service) category, less than 0.4 percent of the identifiable forms. Extremely low percentages of yellowware have also been documented at other nineteenth-century rural sites in Delaware (Grettler et al. 1996; Hoseth et al. 1994; Scholl et al. 1994).

Taken together, the greatest percentage of the ceramic vessels discarded at Locust Grove during the nineteenth century consisted of teawares and tablewares, the vast majority of which were whiteware (see Chapter VII). Teawares purchased by the Locust Grove households during the nineteenth century included a relatively large number of cups and saucers with a variety of floral handpainted designs (used separately, for 'teas' [see below] or at mealtimes in conjunction with the numerous blue shell edge plates present in the assemblages), as well as a number of tea-service vessels with sponged decoration. Analysis of the ceramic assemblages also indicates that the site occupants purchased several examples, in at least eight different patterns, of fairly expensive transfer-printed teawares and tablewares at various times during the period, from roughly 1825 to 1864. The highly fragmented nature of the assemblage, unfortunately, does not allow us to conclude that these were purchased as sets. Following the popular trend in ceramics preferences, the Hoffecker and/or Franklin Pennington households appear to have acquired a set or sets of plain whiteware dinnerware in the latter half of the nineteenth century, possibly as replacements for their older transfer-printed wares, or for everyday use. Although they probably did not use elaborate table settings like the one illustrated in Jonathan Periam's (1884) *Home and Farm Manual* (Figure 25), the households that occupied Locust Grove during the mid-1800s do appear to have followed the practices of their middle-class and elite contemporaries in creating a genteel atmosphere at mealtimes.

The recovery of contrasting sets of tablewares suggests, and this is very tentative given the mixed deposits, an elaboration of family meals into more or less important events, a trend that Wall (1994) observed among early nineteenth-century middle-class households in New York City. As Wall notes, the contrasting sets of ceramic dishes were used as markers to rank the different level of importance of each meal (Wall 1994:146). For urban middle-class households, certain family meals, particularly dinner, became secular domestic rituals, in effect celebrating the reunion of the family whose male members now increasingly worked outside the home (Wall 1991, 1994). By the second half of the nineteenth century, the ritualization of meals had been adopted by some of the more "progressive" rural households, who "took notice of the standards of decorum being

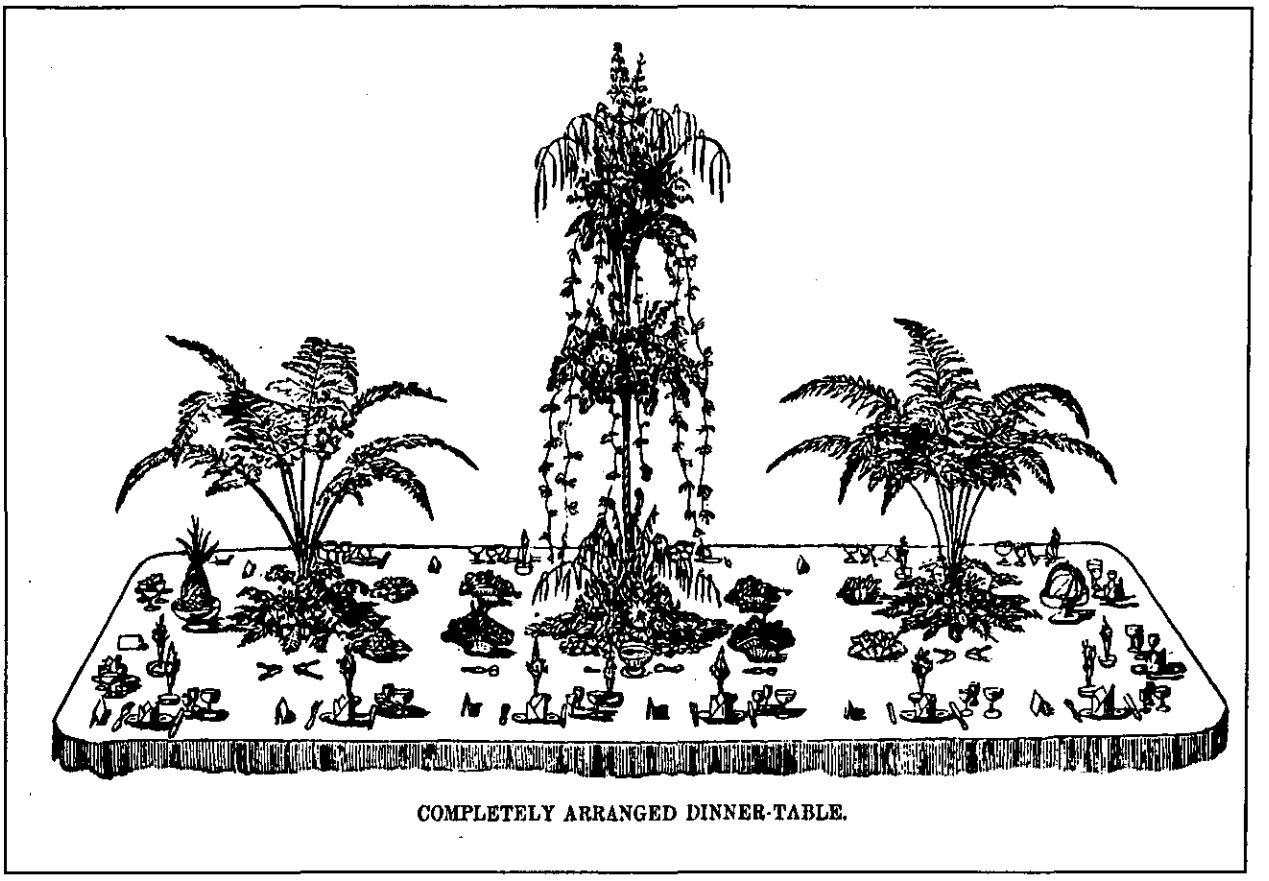


**FIGURE 25: Dinner Table Arrangement Recommended in Periam's *Home and Farm Manual*** *Source: Periam 1884*

fashioned in middle-class culture at large" (McMurry 1988:113), and such may have been the case for some of the households residing at Locust Grove. Similarly, middle-class and wealthier rural women also appear to have adopted the custom of taking afternoon tea. In general, these tea parties were probably less formal than their urban counterparts, serving as a reinforcement of the mutuality that linked neighboring farm families, rather than competitive displays designed to impress one's friends and acquaintances with the refined gentility of the hostess's household. The latter of course cannot be ruled out, particularly for the rural elite. The overall lack, at Locust Grove, of the more expensive porcelain or gilded teawares common during the early and mid-nineteenth century suggests the informality of such occasions—assuming of course that they were held at all. The transfer-printed forms recovered from the site, however, may have been used to reinforce class/social identity, as part of social teas with neighbors and friends or during family meals.

In marked contrast to the many and various shell edge, plain, and transfer-printed flatwares recovered from the excavations was the near absence of bowl forms that would have been used for the consumption of liquid or semiliquid foods such as porridges, soups, and stews. The vast majority of the tablewares were plates, suggesting a diet that would have been heavy on prime meat cuts such as steaks or roasts.

In addition to ceramics, the Locust Grove households during the nineteenth century also possessed a variety of glass tableware, although these formed relatively minor percentages of the recovered kitchen items. Among the identified glass tableware forms, tumblers were the most frequent; portions of several unidentifiable tableware forms were also present in the deposits. In contrast to the numerous inexpensive tumblers, which were probably used on a fairly frequent basis (possibly in conjunction with the shell edge plates), stemwares (e.g., water goblets and wine glasses) are virtually absent. Only three stemware vessels were recovered from the entire site.

Glass bottles and other containers used in the kitchen were also present in the Locust Grove deposits. However, like the glass tablewares discussed above, these vessels represent only relatively small percentages within any of the kitchen assemblages. One might expect kitchen-related glassware to increase over time (and to be reflected in the landscaping deposits laid down near the end of the century), given the wider availability and decreasing cost of these items after the mid-nineteenth century. Yet this does not appear to be the case at Locust Grove, suggesting that either the site's occupants did not make extensive purchases of glassware and bottled products, or that when these items were broken or their contents emptied, they were disposed of elsewhere on the site, away from the house. Given the fragmentary nature of the glass assemblage in the front yard deposits, the latter is a strong possibility.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the various households at Locust Grove made considerable expenditures for ceramic teawares and tablewares as well as more limited purchases of glassware and bottled products. The ceramics purchased over the period from roughly 1820 to 1880 ranged from relatively inexpensive shell edge plates for everyday use to more costly wares that were probably reserved for Sunday dinners or special occasions such as family gatherings.

In addition to kitchenwares, the Locust Grove households acquired, used, and discarded a variety of personal, clothing, furnishings, arms-related, tobacco, architectural, and activities-related items. Generally speaking, these small finds seem to be reflective of common nineteenth-century rural domestic assemblages, and it is evident that the Locust Grove households took advantage of new consumer goods as they became available. Overall, the household items recovered from the site suggest refined if not opulent furnishings. Fragments of several jardinieres used to hold flowerpots or planters (possibly used in the parlor/family room), sherds of glass bowls, the metal and glass drawer pull, and the brass-tipped fireplace poker all hint at the manner in which the house was furnished during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and point to well-to-do Victorian tastes.

*c. Dietary Patterns and Self-Sufficiency*

The archaeological assemblages from Locust Grove have provided only limited information concerning the dietary patterns that characterized the nineteenth-century occupation of the farmstead. Of the 530 teeth and bone fragments recovered from the site, for example, only 129 could be identified as to species, and all were from the major domesticates: pig, cow, sheep/goat, and chicken. Pig and cow were the most highly represented mammal species at the site; the

range of pig elements suggests the consumption of hams, which were either eaten as pork or consumed after curing on-site, while the diagnostic elements from cow suggest the preparation of roasts. Both chicken and sheep/goat remains were extremely limited in frequency and otherwise nondiagnostic, although the latter appear to include butchering waste. No fish or wild fauna were represented in the Locust Grove assemblage. The floral remains from the site are even more limited, but do suggest the consumption during the nineteenth century of hickory nuts, blackberries, nannyberries, and grapes.

The presence of butchering waste at Locust Grove points to a certain degree of self-sufficiency among the various households that occupied the site during the nineteenth century. The maintenance of some level of independence was a goal of many farmers throughout the Northeast and Middle Atlantic regions. While some embraced the expanding market wholeheartedly, most tried to strike a balance between market involvement and the traditional goal of economic independence (Clark 1990; Friedlander 1990; Merrill 1977; Vickers 1990).

Because butchering is directly relevant to the issues of domestic economy and self-sufficiency, discussion of the evidence of this activity at Locust Grove is appropriate in this context. It is assumed that the butchering of livestock on-site suggests some degree of self-sufficiency, while the purchase of butchered meats reflects a greater dependence on the growing market economy.

The overwhelming majority of the identifiable faunal remains recovered from the various depositional contexts at Site 7NC-F-73 appeared to consist of table refuse and processing waste (see Chapter VII). Butchering waste, related primarily to pig and cow, was encountered in relatively small quantities. Despite the overall paucity of identifiable faunal remains, the range of faunal elements (particularly the cranial elements and teeth) present in the deposits suggests that at least some of the animals consumed on the site during the nineteenth century were probably slaughtered there. Based on the faunal data, it appears reasonable to conclude that the Locust Grove households were, for the most part, self-sufficient in terms of meat consumption and, as the discussion below points out, in the production of other basic foodstuffs such as wheat and potatoes.

Farmsteads in the region at the beginning of the nineteenth century were largely self-sufficient agricultural enterprises characterized by a greater emphasis on home manufacturing and a greater orientation to local as opposed to interregional trade or market networks. However, within a decade or two, farm households, particularly in northern Delaware, were becoming less self-sufficient as they adopted market-oriented strategies based on the sale of wheat and surplus dairy products (Michel 1984, 1985). Northern farms were the most intensively cultivated in the state. More than three-quarters of the farmland in this region was improved, and the average farmer tilled two-thirds or more of his improved land. Farmers in the large farm belt, which includes St. Georges Hundred, used more labor per farm than in any other region, and bought more machinery for their labor forces to operate. As Michel (1984) observes, this employment of a substantial labor force allowed large farmbelt landowners to increase their income. As capital, this income would permit them to expand further, and as money, it would allow them to revolutionize rural life in Delaware, as they participated in the expansion of the capitalist market and became the state's rural middle class (Michel 1984).

The historical, architectural, and, perhaps to a more limited extent, archaeological data pertaining to Site 7NC-F-73 indicate that the farm and its occupants were in many respects typical of nineteenth-century St. Georges Hundred. By 1850, Samuel Pennington, Jr., had reversed his property's decline and created a prosperous agricultural enterprise based largely on the production and sale of wheat. The agricultural census data for the period 1850-1880 (see Table 2) indicate that the farm, under the management of Samuel Pennington, Jr., James Hoffecker, and Franklin Pennington, produced a variety of crops, including wheat, oats, Indian corn, and Irish potatoes. Like many of their contemporaries in Delaware, the Penningtons also participated in the peach boom which occurred in the central interior region of Delaware after the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1870, Locust Grove had produced $3,000 worth of orchard products, twice the average for St. Georges Hundred; 10 years later, the property contained 4,000 peach trees, again above the average for the hundred. Indeed, the income from peach cultivation may have helped provide the family with the wherewithal to build the new addition to their house. That the Penningtons hedged their bets in terms of the agricultural economy is evident in the yields for wheat and corn, which remained well above the mean for this part of the state.

In general, the crop selection at Locust Grove remained fairly stable throughout the period from 1850 to 1880 (see Table 2). The production of wheat, which was a staple for human consumption, fluctuated somewhat but increased from a low of 275 bushels in 1850 to a high of 900 bushels in 1880. Despite fluctuations in the composition and size of the Pennington households, which ranged between eight and 10 individuals, including family members, laborers, and domestic help (there is no information for James Hoffecker), the amount of wheat harvested would have been more than sufficient to meet the dietary needs of the farmstead occupants, with a considerable surplus that would have been sold on the market. Potatoes, which formed an effective alternative to bread for many northern farm households (see Larkin 1988:173-174), were grown in varying quantities throughout the period from 1850 to 1880. The quantity of potatoes harvested fluctuated from a low of 30 bushels in 1860 and 1880, to a high of 100 bushels in 1860 (see Table 2), and this crop probably formed a dietary supplement of varying importance throughout the period.

There was also a marked emphasis on animal feed, with a concentration on corn and, to a lesser extent, oats. Corn was produced throughout the period from 1850 to 1880, varying from 275 bushels in 1850, to 3,000 bushels in 1860 and 1870. Oats were reported only in 1860, during Hoffecker's tenancy, and in 1880, and averaged around 1,100 bushels.

According to the agricultural census figures, the size of the dairy herd at Locust Grove varied somewhat during the period from 1850 to 1880, ranging between four and 12 head (see Table 2). For this same period, the home manufacture of butter also varied, ranging between 450 pounds in 1860, and 200 pounds in 1880. Unlike his contemporaries, who, in 1880, averaged 4,269 gallons of fluid milk (see Table 3), Franklin Pennington reported no production of milk. The home production of butter or other milk products is evidenced materially at Locust Grove by the presence of at least 23 milk pans recovered during the archaeological investigations. For many farm households, although particularly in the dairying regions of New England and New York State, butter and cheese were dietary staples (Larkin 1988:171). In 1860, according to

Bateman (1978), the average per capita consumption of butter was roughly 25 pounds, while an average of just over five pounds of cheese per person was consumed (Bateman 1978:351-356). As shown in Table 2, the quantities of butter produced at Locust Grove during the 30 years covered by the agricultural census data were sufficient to at least meet the needs for home consumption and, on occasion, to yield an appreciable surplus that may have been put up for sale.

Up until the second half of the nineteenth century, dairying was generally the province of women, who milked the cows and processed the butter and cheese which formed a substantial portion of many farms' marketable surplus (Jensen 1980, 1986; McMurry 1988). On a well-to-do farm like Locust Grove, the farm wife (Mary Pennington, wife of Samuel Pennington, Jr., for example), may have been directly involved in dairying or may have supervised the work. We know that during the 1840s and 1850s, the household of Samuel Pennington, Jr., included a number of African-American females, like the 17-year-old Hannah Euphron listed in the 1850 census, who probably worked at a range of domestic chores. These individuals may very well have handled much of the dairying work, and it is at least possible that the milk pans recovered from Locust Grove are associated with their activities (see Yentsch 1991 for a discussion of gender roles and utilitarian ceramic vessels).

## B. PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES AT LOCUST GROVE

As noted previously, a limited number of prehistoric artifacts (including an Archaic-Woodland I Piney Island point) were recovered during the data recovery excavations at the Locust Grove Site (7NC-F-73). The occurrence of these items was somewhat unexpected, given the results of the Phase I and Phase II investigations. Except for a single piece of quartz block shatter collected from the subsoil in the western half of the East Block, all of this material was recovered from disturbed, i.e., historic, contexts. The East Block excavations also encountered an oval stain or feature (Feature 9) which, once excavated, bore some resemblance to the Type 2A or Type 1 Woodland I (3000 BC-AD 1000) pit house features described by Custer (1994) (Figure 26). Intact pit houses, as defined by Custer (1994), are shallow circular or oval depressions, forming a basement, with a deeper D-shaped pit, or sub-basement, at one end. On extensively disturbed sites the deeper pit is often all that survives. It is assumed that these sub-basements (similar in shape to Feature 9) would have functioned as storage pits. Excavations at the Snapp Site, roughly 10 miles north of Site 7NC-F-73, and the Leipsic Site, about 20 miles south of the Locust Grove Site, resulted in the recovery of artifacts from several of these sub-basement features, leading to the conclusion that once the materials within the storage pit had been consumed, the pit was used as a repository for household refuse (Custer 1994:50).

Other researchers (Mueller and Cavallo 1995; Thomas 1995), while acknowledging that pit houses are present in Delaware, have cautioned that many of the roughly 2,000 D-shaped pits uncovered in the state may in fact be caused by the uprooting of trees. Thomas (1995) has pointed out that a number of similar features, of non-Native American origin, have been excavated, and some of them have been found to contain historic artifacts. Mueller and Cavallo (1995), citing a number of sources on the impact of tree falls on forested environments, have argued that a variety of different depression shapes—some similar to the types defined by Custer—are produced by treethrows.

The excavations at Locust Grove strongly suggest that Feature 9 is not associated with Native American occupation of the site. The fact that only historic artifacts (including a fragment of broad window glass, dating from 1820 to 1926) were recovered from the first two levels within the feature, and that no cultural material whatsoever was found at the base of Feature 9, does not support the notion that it was used as a storage pit by Native Americans. A more likely explanation is that Feature 9 represents a historic treefall, possibly associated with the clearing of this portion of the property during the nineteenth century. The floral analysis of samples from Feature 9 was inconclusive; the recovered seeds are modern, and the wood charcoal could not be attributed to either the historic or the prehistoric occupation of the site. The OCR dates derived from the samples taken from Feature 9 and the sterile subsoil are also ambiguous. The control sample and the two samples from Level 2 of the feature were within 300 to 500 years of one another (5,569 to 6,100 years BP), and several hundred years too early for the Woodland I period. The most recent date, 3,700 years BP, which falls within the Woodland I period, was derived from a soil sample recovered from Level 1 of Feature 9, which also contained a number of historic artifacts.

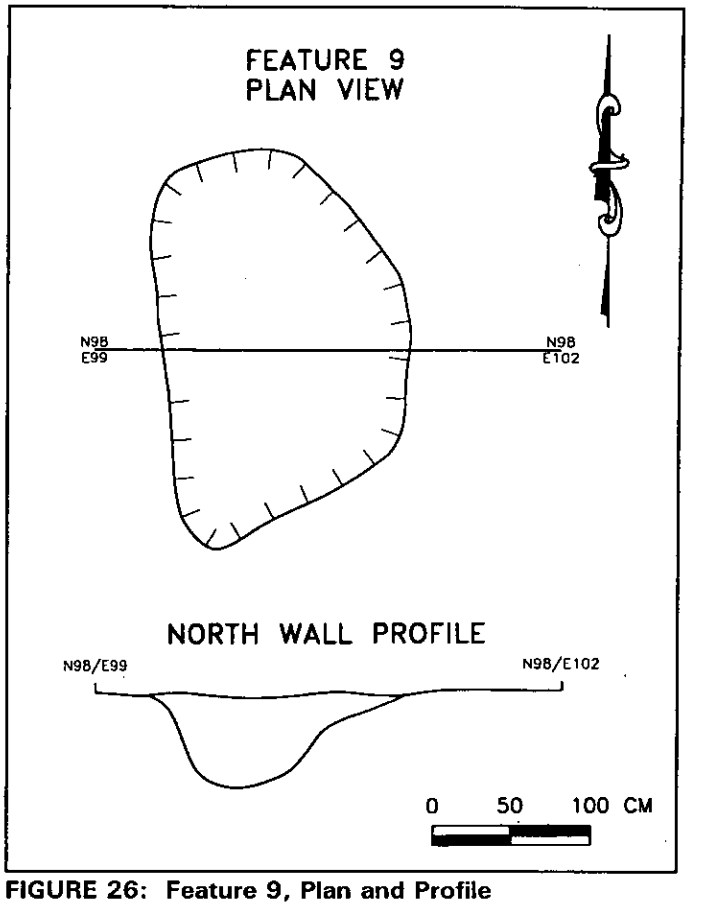

**FIGURE 26: Feature 9, Plan and Profile**

There is no doubt that Locust Grove was occupied by Native Americans, probably during the Woodland I period. However, the nature and duration of the occupation(s) cannot be ascertained based on the limited data recovered from the site, nor can any connection be made between the aboriginal occupation of the site and Feature 9.

## C. PROBLEMS AND PROMISES OF FARMSTEAD ARCHAEOLOGY: METHODS EMPLOYED AT LOCUST GROVE AND SOME DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Nineteenth-century farmsteads pose a unique, and often complex, set of challenges to the historical archaeologist, and Locust Grove proved to be no exception. The data recovery excavations at Locust Grove provided an opportunity to examine a historic archaeological site that had not been plowed and where the dwelling, dating to the nineteenth century, was still standing.

There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages to looking at a site of this type. On the minus side, sites like Locust Grove, which have been continuously occupied for extended periods, have often been extensively modified, with more recent activities disturbing or destroying earlier deposits or features. At Locust Grove, twentieth-century construction, particularly the installation of the in-ground pool, has disturbed or eradicated any earlier (i.e., nineteenth-century) archaeological remains located immediately to the rear of the house, normally an area at a domestic site where some of the richest archaeological features and deposits are found. Twentieth-century construction and landscape modification also appear to have masked the location(s) of nineteenth-century outbuildings and activity areas that were once located behind the dwelling. The archaeological sampling design, discussed below, also determined the visibility of nineteenth-century farmstead components. Therefore, as noted earlier, it has not been possible to delineate in any comprehensive fashion the spatial organization of the farmstead over time.

On the plus side, the archaeological deposits that formed at Locust Grove over the course of nearly two centuries, at least those relatively undisturbed by later construction, have not been churned and mixed by plowing, which often happens when a farmstead is abandoned and converted to farmland. We can thus trace, at least in part, the changes that occurred in the front and west side yards—changes that appear to be associated at various times with the construction, expansion, and reorientation of the Locust Grove house. The refuse deposits and landscaping episodes uncovered at the site therefore provide some evidence from which we can draw inferences about the residents' attitudes toward the disposal of household trash, their concepts of how the "public" space between the house and road should be organized, and the ways in which they expressed and reinforced their social identities through the medium of material culture. The archaeological remains at Locust Grove (the deposits, features, and artifacts), together with the house, which still retained much of its original fabric at the time of the fieldwork, thus provide us with an image—albeit incomplete and out of focus—of how the owners and occupants of the property viewed themselves and how they presented themselves to the world outside the household.

The archaeological fieldwork conducted at Locust Grove also provided an opportunity to evaluate some of the methods applied to the investigation of historic farmsteads. It is by now standard practice at most of the sites examined in Delaware to superimpose a close-interval shovel test grid over the known location of the farm complex during Phase II investigations in order to identify archaeological features and deposits. The Phase II shovel testing program was reasonably effective in this regard, resulting in the identification of several artifact concentrations that warranted evaluation through the excavation of test units. Several of these test units were later expanded into block excavations in the front and west side yards.

Unlike at many of the historic sites excavated in Delaware, no machine stripping was conducted at Locust Grove. This particular method is normally reserved for plowed sites; a certain percentage of the plowzone is systematically sampled through test unit excavation, and then the remaining plowed soil is removed by machine to uncover features that extend into the subsoil. Because of the somewhat more complicated stratigraphy in the front and west side yards, soil stripping of these portions of the site was not seriously considered; machine excavation was

initially planned for the rear areas of the farmstead, but difficulties with the property owner prevented this work from being carried out.

The block excavations, particularly those in the front yard, provided a suitable method for investigating the complicated sequence of landscaping deposits, pits, and refuse concentrations that characterized this part of the Locust Grove site. Use of the concepts developed by Edward Harris (1989) during the analysis phase of the project allowed the stratigraphic relationships between the various excavated contexts to be reconstructed with a fairly high degree of reliability.

Apart from the stratigraphic reconstruction of the front and side yard deposits, the results of the data analysis were rather mixed. For example, soil chemical testing at Locust Grove was inconclusive or, generally, served to confirm what was already evident from the excavations. It should be pointed out, however, that the soil chemical testing was focused mainly on the suspected prehistoric feature rather than on the historic contexts at Locust Grove. Similarly, the results of the floral analysis provided only limited information regarding the historic occupation of the site. Faunal remains recovered during the excavations were a bit more informative, yielding some data on the dietary habits and preferences of the site's occupants.

Analysis of the artifacts recovered during the excavations, on the other hand, has provided some valuable insights into the range of material culture used by the households that occupied Locust Grove during the nineteenth century. The ceramic minimum vessel counts demonstrated the overwhelming dominance of flatwares among the table forms, strongly suggesting the consumption of the more expensive cuts of meat. Based on their numbers, shell edge plates appear to have been used on an everyday basis for family meals, a function that may have eventually been taken over by the plain whitewares and ironstones. The more expensive transfer-printed wares may have been reserved for more formal occasions. The ceramic forms associated with beverage consumption consist exclusively of teacups (and their related saucers/bowls) in a variety of decorated styles, most of which were modestly priced polychrome handpainted or sponged teas. A much smaller number are transfer printed and may have been purchased as parts of sets. Most of the remaining identifiable vessels are food preparation/storage or food preparation/serving forms.

The analysis of the glass vessels recovered from Locust Grove was inconclusive, mainly due to their highly fragmented condition, which in most instances prevented conclusive functional identification, especially for the bottles. It is also suspected that bottles, once their contents had been consumed, were discarded elsewhere on the property. While inexpensive tumblers were present in some quantity, more costly stemwares were almost completely absent, suggesting that these forms were carefully curated and used only for special occasions.

In addition to ceramics and glass artifacts, the personal, clothing, activities, and other items collected during the excavations at Locust Grove help to fill out, even if imperfectly and incompletely, a picture of the material lives of the site's inhabitants during the nineteenth century.

What other types of analysis might be appropriate, in the future, for a site like Locust Grove? As discussed in Chapter IV, landscape studies have become increasingly important in historical

archaeology. Buildings, fencelines, features, and artifact concentrations are identified in the field using a variety of excavation techniques, while certain activity areas (animal pens, for example) can also be delineated using soil chemistry analysis. The latter can be particularly effective when samples are taken systematically over a large area, i.e., the entire farmstead, an approach used regularly on Delaware historic sites, particularly those that have been plowed. Another analytical method applicable to landscape archaeology is palynology—the study of plant pollen. While palynological studies have been applied successfully on historic archaeological sites (Bryant and Hall 1993; Kelso 1994), this type of analysis has not been regularly employed on cultural resource management projects in either Delaware or the surrounding states. Pollen grains often survive when other plant material does not, and are useful for tracking changes in the vegetation at and around a site through time, thus making it possible to address the issue of shifts in land use, the presence of ornamental plants, and so forth. For a site like Locust Grove, where the ornamental vegetation survived until nearly the end of the twentieth century, the use of tree borings might also prove informative. The ability to count growth rings, particularly those of the older and larger trees, would provide further data on the changes that have occurred to the landscape over time.

## D. CONCLUSION

The historical and archaeological investigations of Locust Grove (Site 7NC-F-73) have provided some important data regarding rural lifeways in northern Delaware during the nineteenth century, and have contributed information pertinent to the historic contexts and research themes developed for the state. In many respects, Locust Grove is probably fairly typical of the middle-class/elite farmsteads in southern New Castle County. In terms of settlement pattern and landscape, the site, as least as it was developed by Samuel Pennington, Jr. (the exact locations of Robert Meldrum's and Samuel Pennington, Sr.'s, farmsteads are uncertain), demonstrates a fairly strong roadside orientation common among farmsteads throughout the Middle Atlantic region.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Samuel Pennington, Jr., had created a prosperous agricultural operation, and like many of his well-to-do neighbors he chose to express his economic success, and his apparent embrace of their class values, architecturally with the construction of a new Greek Revival-style house. It also appears that he chose to orient his new house perpendicular to the road, a choice that was out of keeping with standard practice. Most farmers during the nineteenth century, whether in Delaware or elsewhere in the Middle Atlantic region or the Northeast, built their houses to face the road and created a refined, formal space between their dwelling and the public thoroughfare. In contrast, the front yard at Locust Grove appears to have been used for the disposal of some of the occupants' (probably the households of Samuel Pennington, James Hoffecker, and Franklin Pennington) kitchen refuse.

All this apparently changed during the 1870s. Near the tail end of St. Georges Hundred's building boom, the Penningtons built a new Second Empire addition to the house, this time with the front facing the road, and set about landscaping the grounds. Household trash was no longer disposed of in the front yard, at least not in the volume that it had been previously. Although we do not know where the household dumped trash after the 1880s, it was probably disposed of out of sight behind the house or in the fields.

For much of the nineteenth century, the various occupants of Locust Grove apparently managed a prosperous agricultural enterprise. Although the historical data pertaining to the management of the farm during the late eighteenth and the very early nineteenth century are only suggestive, by 1850, Samuel Pennington, Jr., was running a successful, diversified operation based on the cultivation of grain crops and the sale of wheat. By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the Pennington household was able to make some major capital improvements to their property, evidenced by the construction of the Greek Revival section of the house. They, and the families that succeeded them, were also to expend not inconsiderable amounts for household items, including several sets of ceramic teawares and tablewares. Although the archaeological investigations of Site 7NC-F-73 uncovered no evidence of agricultural structures dating to the nineteenth century, it is likely that during this same period the Penningtons made capital improvements to their agricultural operations, either through the construction of new outbuildings or the upgrading of existing ones.

The members of the Locust Grove households were avid consumers who evidently kept up with current trends in available household amenities, certainly in terms of the ceramic styles popular with other well-to-do families in other areas of the country during the mid-nineteenth century. The Penningtons also appear to have been cognizant of trends in architectural style, choosing to build a substantial addition to their house in the Second Empire form.

Like many farm households in the Middle Atlantic region during the nineteenth century, the Penningtons (and the Hoffeckers) were largely self-sufficient in terms of meeting their dietary needs. Wheat (baked into bread), as well as milk and butter, were probably staples of the diet, as were pig, beef, and to a lesser degree, chicken and sheep. Roasts, steaks, and hams were evidently consumed by the Locust Grove households, and were occasionally supplemented by soups or stews.

Disposable income realized from the sale of agricultural products allowed the occupants of Locust Grove to purchase a wide variety of mass-produced consumer goods, which were becoming more widely available by the mid-nineteenth century, largely as a result of improvements in the regional transportation system. These purchases, probably made at one of the local stores (perhaps in Odessa or Middletown), linked these households to both regional and international market networks, and provided them with the material means to express their social and class identity.