

## ABSTRACT

Final archaeological investigations were conducted at the Mermaid Tavern Blacksmith Shop (7NC-D-106B) and Wheelwright Shop (7NC-D-106C) in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The shops were associated with the Mermaid Tavern and Hotel (7NC-D-106A), a National Register property located on Limestone Road (Delaware Route 7), directly across the road from the shops. The blacksmith shop site was occupied as a smithy from the mid-eighteenth century until the first decade of the twentieth century, and the wheelwright shop was used from the middle of the nineteenth century until 1912. Despite recent road construction and landscaping activities, archaeological features and artifacts associated with the shops were still present. Archival research about the Ball and Walker families provided detailed information about the occupants of the Mermaid property. Additional documentary research in censuses, account books, and assessments concerning the trades of blacksmithing and wheelwrighting in New Castle County during the nineteenth century provided necessary historical information that helped to place the Mermaid shops in an overall historical context. The Mermaid shops seem to have been primarily used for local agricultural and transportation-oriented repair and maintenance during the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century the shops provided service for the customers of the Mermaid Hotel, and for the draft teams and wagons from the nearby limestone quarries.