

PHASE III EXCAVATIONS OF THE LEWIS-E HISTORIC SITE (7K-C-362)

The Lewis-E Historic Site (7K-C-362, K-6385) was identified as a significant cultural resource during the Phase I/II testing of the site by the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research. The Lewis-E Historic Site is located in Little Creek Hundred, Kent County, Delaware, in a cultivated field one mile north of Dover, Delaware.

The Lewis-E Site is located on a 180 acre parcel on the northwest side of the Dover to Leipsic road (present Kent 331). The site is approximately 900' northwest of the H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site (K-6414, 7K-C-375). Both sites are located on the same parcel but are neither contiguous nor represent contemporary occupations.

The Lewis-E Site parcel was originally part of a larger 568 acre tract called "Wheel of Fortune." This tract was first warranted to Richard Wilson and Richard Williams in 1687, but reverted back to the provincial government of Pennsylvania after both men died without heirs. John Housman then warranted and received title to the land in 1735. Housman apparently lived in the area as he appears as a witness and administrator of a number of local wills and estates. Housman, however, also owned a number of other properties in the area and it is not known if he was residing on the Wheel of Fortune tract.

John Housman died in 1754. According to his will made earlier that year, Housman left all of his real and personal property to Benjamin Chew, the administrator of his will. Chew, a noted local landowner who later moved to Philadelphia, divided the Wheel of Fortune tract in 1765 when he sold 337 acres to Andrew Lackey (the Elder). This 337 acre parcel from the western portion of Wheel of Fortune included both the Lewis-E Site and the H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site. No structures are shown on the Wheel of Fortune property in the 1743 survey. The lack of any structures, however, should not be interpreted as concrete evidence that no houses existed as surveys from this period typically do not show structures.

The 337 acre parcel purchased by Andrew Lackey in 1765 remained in the Lackey-Wilson family until the end of the nineteenth century. Andrew Lackey (the Elder) died in 1787 and willed 208 acres to his son Andrew Lackey (the Younger) on the condition that if his son should die without legal heirs, the property should go to his grandson Gustave (Gustavus) Wilson. Gustave Wilson was the son of Lackey's daughter Mary and her husband Samuel Wilson. Mary Wilson, and Lackey's other daughter, Ann Wills, each received one half of an adjacent 170 acres. According to Lackey's 1787 will, each of the two 85 acre parcels contained tenant farms; Mary received the land where John McCalups lived and Ann received the property where "Charles Chadwick now lives."

The 208 acres that Andrew Lackey (the Elder) left to his son and grandson included one dwelling, the house in which he then dwelled. This structure was of unknown construction, and judging from Andrew Lackey's inventory, included an entryway, parlor, "little back room," "common room," kitchen, and two rooms over the parlor and common room. This description describes a building much larger and more substantial than that indicated at the Lewis-E Site. Lackey's estate was substantial (valued at L451 in 1788) and he owned eight slaves, of which one named Moses was manumitted at Lackey's death. The exact location of the structure described by Lackey's 1788 inventory is not known but appears to be at or near the site of K-2070 approximately 2900 feet to the east of the Lewis-E Site.

Andrew Lackey (the Younger) died shortly after his father and the land passed to Gustave Wilson. In 1797 Gustave Wilson, still a minor, was assessed for two thirds (138 acres) of the 208 acre parcel. The remaining 170 acres of the original 337 acre tract was in hands of Mary Wilson and Ann Wills. In 1797 the 208 acre Lackey-Wilson farm consisted in 1797 of 120 acres of cleared land and 83 acres of swamp and woodland. At least two dwellings are indicated on the property: one "tolerable wooden" house in the tenure of Benjamin Winn and another such house in the tenure of a widow, Rachel Chicken. Rachel Chicken was also the widow of both William Strickland and Thomas Cahoon and at one time occupied the Mannee-Cahoon Site (7K-A-117, K-6446) near Smyrna. One of these houses appears to have been the seven room house in which Andrew Lackey lived and which is described in his 1788 inventory.

The two adjacent 85 acre parcels, the remaining 170 acres of the original 337 acre Lackey tract, also contained houses in 1797. Mary Wilson's, the mother of Gustave Wilson, 85 acre farm contained three log houses. These houses were in the tenure of William Bennett, Moses Simmons, a black man, and Stephen Sparkman, a mullattoe. Ann Will's 85 acre farm is not listed in the 1797 census, but probably still had a tenant house on the property.

The Lewis-E Site appears to be one of five wooden tenant houses described in the Andrew Lackey's 1778 will and the 1797 tax list. At least one of these structures is the house dates to at least 1765 when Andrew Lackey (the Elder) purchased the property. This same structure is probably the substantial, seven room house where in Lackey lived at the time of his 1788 inventory. This structure is probably located at the site of K-2070 and is not the Lewis-E Site.

The Lewis-E Site is probably the remains of one of the four wooden tenant structures on either one of the two 85 acre farms or the 208 Gustave Wilson farm. No historic maps showing the division of the 337 farm into the three parcels or the location of any of the five houses on the property has been located. Furthermore, Gustave Wilson eventually inherits parts of all three parcels obscuring any subsequent deed references to the

Lewis-E Site. Seven different eighteenth century tenants are known for the Lackey property: Benjamin Winn on Gustave Wilson's 208 acres; Charles Chaddrick on Ann Will's 85 acres; and William Bennett, Moses Simmons, and Stephen Sparkman on Mary Wilson's 85 acres.

Few diagnostic nineteenth century ceramics have been found at the Lewis-E Site and the site does not appear to have been occupied into the nineteenth century. No structure is listed in the 1803 assesment of Gustave Wilson. By 1803, Wilson was 23 years old and had claimed his two-thirds share of his grandfather's 208 acre parcel. By 1810 Gustave received the widow's remaining third as he was assessed for 198 acres of land. Wilson's farm included one "old farm house in bad repair." This house is probably not the Lewis-E Site and was probably K-2070 located on the adjoining widow's portion he obtained after 1803.

Gustave Wilson formally received his mother's 85 acres in 1840, but was paying taxes on both of their lands as early as 1822. In that year Wilson was assessed for 281 acres of land worth \$15 dollars an acre, a rate almost double that of the \$7 rate used in 1803 and the \$8 per acre rate of 1810. Part of this increase may have been due to improved structures on the farm--the 1822 tax list describes a "frame dwelling, log stables and c." in the tenure of a tenant named Shaw. This house described in 1822 appears to be K-2070. It is likely that Wilson himself was also living on the property with Shaw as a number of livestock, silver plate, and one 21 year old male slave that Wilson owned and his own personal tax was included in the assessment.

Gustave Wilson owned the 180 acre Lewis-E Site parcel until his death sometime between 1850 and 1852. After his death, the Kent County Orphan's Court awarded the parcel to his son Henry L. Wilson in 1852 when he turned 16 years of age. It was Henry L. Wilson who subsequently built the small tenant house comprising the nearby H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site.

The Lewis-E Site was initially identified during Phase I testing. Prehistoric and historic artifacts were recovered. Phase I testing consisted of a total of 23 shovel test pits (STPs) excavated on a 10 meter grid. Historic artifacts were recovered in 18 of the 23 STPs and the artifacts included mid-late eighteenth century creamware and scratch-blue stoneware fragments. Other historic artifacts recovered included brick fragments, wrought nails, and locally-made redware fragments. These densities suggested more than just artifacts that had been scattered by the plow. Prehistoric artifacts were recovered in five STPs. The artifacts included three FCR, two jasper flakes and one black chert stemmed point basal fragment.

Phase II testing defined the limits of the site on the basis of the historic artifacts found. The prehistoric occupation of the site was not considered to be significant and the site was determined to be historic. A total of 31 one meter by one meter

test units and 82 additional shovel test pits were excavated during Phase II. All Phase II tests were laid out along the existing Phase I grid. Historic artifacts from the last half of the eighteenth century were recovered from the remains of a well and other historic features.

The Lewis-E Site has yielded, and is likely to yield further information important to history. Specifically, the site appears to be a small tenant- or owner-occupied farm and could be used to study the critical social and economic changes that occurred in central Delaware in the late eighteenth century. Central Delaware was part of the agricultural hinterland of Philadelphia and prospered with the strong foreign trade centered there. Increased demand for Delaware wheat beginning in the 1760s peaked in the 1790s transforming central Delaware as Philadelphia merchants supplied Carribean and European ports. High grain prices encouraged extensive grain cultivation, high land prices, and widespread tenancy. Lindstrom (1978), Hancock (1947), Munroe (1984), and Ball (1975 and 1976) note these changes in Delaware and other parts of the Philadelphia hinterland. Data from the Lewis-E Site, particularly if it proves to have been tenant-occupied, would help to archaeologically document these changes.

Small domestic sites from the late eighteenth century tend to be poorly preserved in central Delaware. Tenant houses in particular are poorly preserved. Further research on the Lewis-E site could yield additional significant data on tenant and owner-occupied sites and local and regional factors in site-specific changes at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Food remains, trash disposal patterns, artifact assemblages, and site layout patterns in particular are likely to yield significant information.