

PHASE III EXCAVATIONS AT THE H. WILSON-LEWIS TENANT FARM SITE

The H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site is located on a 180 acre parcel on the northwest side of the Dover to Leipsic road. Archival research indicates that a house was built on the property between 1852 and 1859. The property was part of a larger 208 acre parcel first set off from the original 300 acre tract in 1788. The site consists of the remains of a predominantly tenant-occupied structure associated with K-2070, an extant mid-nineteenth century, predominantly owner-occupied house approximately 3000 feet to the east. Site K-2070 appears on both Byles and Beers atlases as a structure associated with "H. Wilson".

The H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site was occupied from 1859 when a structure appears on Byles' Atlas until sometime before 1889 as the structure does not appear in an Orphans Court evaluation of the property. The structure does not appear on the 1906 USGS topographic map of the Dover area. This mid-to-late nineteenth century occupation of the H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site indicated by archival research is consistent with the artifact assemblage recovered by archaeological testing. No eighteenth century occupation was located by archaeological testing or archival research.

The H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site is located on the same 180 acre parcel as the Lewis-E Historic Site. The early history of the parcel is summarized in the site history of the Lewis-E Site.

Henry L. Wilson inherited the 180 acre H. Wilson-Lewis Site parcel in 1852 upon his father Gustave Wilson's death. Gustave Wilson was ca. 72 years old when he died. According to the 1850 population census, 13 year old Henry Wilson shared his home, K-2070, with his parents Gustave (age 70 years) and Ann (age 57 years), his brothers Andrew I. (age 21 years) and Robert K. (age 19 years), and his sister Catharine (age 17 years). A 17 year old black servant named Victorine Moor also lived with the Wilsons.

In 1852 the Kent County Orphans Court assigned the lands of Gustave Wilson to his minor son Henry L. Wilson. The Orphans Court described the property as a farm of about 110 acres of land and K-2070 as:

"a one story frame house and kitchen adjoining both in tolerable repair yard fence--wants about \$10 spent on house and yard fence; also a corn crib and smoakhouse in good order. No stable, one badly needed would cost about \$50 to build one large enough for the use of the farm. No other repairs necessary on the other buildings, a young orchard of about 30 trees..."
(Kent County Orphan's Court S-156)

Only one structure is described in 1852 which indicates that the H. Wilson tenant house was built between 1852 and 1859 when the structure appears on Byles atlas. In addition, the H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm may have been built by Andrew I. Wilson, Gustave's son, who was a house carpenter according to the 1850 population census. Andrew Wilson then settled on land south of the H. Wilson Site where he appears on Beers' 1868 Atlas.

Henry L. Wilson owned the 180 acre tenant farm until his death in 1889 and is the "H. Wilson" who appears on Byle's and Beers' atlases. In 1860, Wilson was assessed for 180 acres in the tenure of William Ennis. The property was improved with a one story dwelling (K-2070), cribs, and stable all of which were in "tolerable repair." At his death in 1889, the Kent County Orphans Court ordered the sale of Wilson's land at public auction. According to the Orphans Court, improvements to the property consisted of a one story frame dwelling, barn, stable, and other outbuildings which describes K-2070. No other structure is described by the Orphans Court which indicates that the tenant house on the property was gone by 1889.

John Denny purchased the property at public sale in 1890. The H. Wilson Tenant structure does not appear on either the 1906 USGS topographic map or Bausman's 1939 land classification map of Kent County which is consistent with the occupation of the site indicated by archival evidence and archaeological testing.

In conclusion, the H. Wilson-Lewis Tenant Farm Site consists of the remains of a mid-nineteenth century tenant structure associated with K-2070. The site was predominantly tenant-occupied although a short owner occupation is indicated. Archival research indicates that a structure existed from ca. 1859 until ca. 1889 and that the site was occupied from the mid to late 19th century. These dates of occupation are consistent with the results of the Phase I and II excavations which are presented next.

Phase II testing consisted of the excavation of 31 3' X 3' test units in the area of highest artifact density identified by the Phase I survey and identified the limits of the site.

Phase I and II testing located two areas of relatively high artifact densities. Area I consists of the core of the site and is characterized by an area of medium to high artifact density recorded at the site. Area II contained a consistent artifact density of less than five artifacts per shovel test. Two intact subsoil historic features were identified at the H. Wilson Tenant-Farm Site. The two features, Features 6 and 8, are the remains of a two historic posts.

All of the artifacts recovered during Phase I and II testing are consistent with the mid-to-late nineteenth century occupation of the site indicated by archival research. A total of 2250 historic artifacts and 51 prehistoric artifacts were recovered

during Phase I and II testing and this assemblage is smaller than assemblages recovered at other comparable historic sites.

In conclusion, archaeological testing and documentary research has identified the H. Wilson Tenant Farm Site as a mid-to-late nineteenth century tenant house site. No conclusive structurally-related features were identified although the remains of two posts were identified. One of these appears to be a fencepost. Although no structurally related features were found at the site, domestic refuse was recovered which dated the occupation to the mid-to-late nineteenth century. It is likely that the structure stood on wooden piers or wooden, brick, or stone supports which were laid upon the surface and thus no structural remains could be recovered archaeologically. The fence post(s) indicate that a yard division may be present at the site and analysis of fence lines would contribute to an understanding of the spatial segregation of yard activities and functions during the period of occupation.

This site may also contribute to an overall understanding of this farmstead through time. Recent excavations at site 7K-C-362, approximately 900 feet north and also in the proposed right-of-way of the Relief Route, have revealed the presence of another dwelling site on the Wilson-Lewis farm. This site has yielded eighteenth and early nineteenth century scratch blue stoneware, creamware, and pearlware ceramics, a well feature, and a large trash-filled pit which may be the remains of a midden or cellar hole. The farmstead containing the existing Lewis farmhouse (dating to the nineteenth century and possibly earlier) and archaeological sites 7K-C-375 and 7K-C-362 together form a physical record of the owner and tenant occupation of the farmstead through time. The archival record indicates that the number of dwellings on the property changed through time, suggesting change in the farm labor structure through time as well. The study of site 7K-C-375 would also aid in understanding the inter-relationship of the sites on the farmstead and, on another level, how this farmstead, as a unit of owner-occupied and tenant dwellings, functioned in the economy and social structure of the Dover area. A similar study was conducted by Day for the Bittner Farm of New York (Waldbauer 1986). In this manner, site 7K-C-375 can contribute to the understanding of a farm in a broader contextual form as well as in a site-specific manner.