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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Jacob Wills House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Brick Road, west of Evans Road  not for publication  
city, town Marlton, Evesham Township  vicinity  
state New Jersey code 034 county Burlington code 005 zip code 08053

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> objects
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic Resources for Evesham Township, New Jersey  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
[Signature] 11/28/89  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature] 11/1/90  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingAgriculture

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

GeorgianOther: Corner Passage PlanOther: Delaware Valley Vernacular

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls BrickWeatherboardroof Woodother Asbestos wall shinglesAsphalt roof shingles

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Jacob Wills House is a well-preserved example of the eighteenth-century Flemish "checkerboard" brick farmhouses of Evesham Township that were part of the Delaware Valley architectural tradition. The vernacular late-Georgian building is comprised of a 2 1/2-story, 3-register brick block erected in 1789; a 2 1/2-story, 2-register frame wing dating from circa 1850 with origins that predate the brick section; and a 1-story shed addition built in the early twentieth century.

The 1789 brick block is constructed on a stone foundation, the basement of which has two replacement windows. A watertable of common bond brick sets off the upper floors of the main (south) facade which is laid up in Flemish bond with glazed headers as "checkerboard." This decorative treatment is limited to the main facade, the secondary elevations being of common bond with headers every sixth course. A modern, screened-in porch fronts the first floor of the main facade. Evidence of an earlier porch survives above the side entrance which is composed of a glazed and paneled door with molded surrounds and a four-light transom. Windows on the first and second floor are 9/6 double-hung, some with original crown glass glazing. Shutters having original wrought iron strap hinges, lock bars, and shutter dogs, are paneled at both floors. A belt course between floors is comprised of Flemish bond with plain red headers.

The side (east) and rear (north) elevations, of common bond brick, are also fenestrated by 9/6 double-hung windows with paneled shutters, except at the first floor rear where shutters are missing. The rear elevation has a porch-fronted, side transomed entrance with a glazed door. A wooden pent with an ogee recta molding wraps around three facades of the brick house. Above the pent, the east gabled end features the initials "W.I.M." and the date "1789" in patterned brickwork between flanking 4/4 double-hung windows. The gable roof, sheathed with asphalt over earlier wood shingles, has a central brick chimney parged with cement.

The 2 1/2-story frame west wing is also constructed on a stone foundation, the south and west walls of which indicate an earlier structure. Evidence of a prior 1 1/2-story building is also seen in the attic, where scarring on the adjacent brick wall outlines a gabled roof line below the pent that would have spanned the west wall of the 1789 house. Based upon massing and interior Greek Revival finishes, the existing frame wing likely dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The south elevation is fronted by a later Victorian porch with turned posts and jigsaw brackets. The facade is clapboarded, with a change in the boards at the first floor west bay where a projecting bay was removed in the 1950s. The central entrance has a glazed and paneled door. Windows are 6/6 double-hung throughout the frame wing, the rear and west elevations being shingled with asbestos. An interior end chimney, parged with cement, is located along the west wall.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture

Period of Significance  
1789

Significant Dates  
1789

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Jacob Wills house is a significant survivor of Evesham Township's domestic architecture from 1690 to 1810, a period identified in the Evesham Township Multiple Property Nomination. The house is an exemplary representation of a Flemish bond brick farmhouse in the Delaware Valley architectural tradition. The architecture of the house, which retains its integrity, reflects an early prototype for residential dwellings in Evesham Township and makes this property eligible under Criterion C.

The Wills' family history in the township and title to the lands on which the house and former farm were built date back to the early eighteenth century. An 1883 history of Burlington County lists the Wills family, along with the Heulings, Eves, Evans, Inskip and Lippincott families, as the early settlers to Evesham Township.<sup>1</sup> The majority of these families were original numbers of the Friends Meeting at Cropwell, the township's first meeting house near Marlton. Many of the Friends who immigrated to West Jersey in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came to escape religious persecution in England and Wales. Dr. Daniel Wills, the first member of the Wills family to settle in America, had converted to the Quaker faith early in his life. As a result he had been imprisoned for "conscience sake" in 1659, 1660 and 1666.

Dr. Wills and a partner, Thomas Olive, purchased from William Penn in 1676 the right to locate approximately 17,000 acres or 1/9000 of all of West Jersey.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Wills' role in the settlement of the lands in New Jersey was an assigned London Commissioner and Signer of Concessions and Agreements, with the right to purchase and settle lands. Upon arriving in the colonies in 1677, Dr. Wills located 600 acres in the southwest corner of Northampton Township (today Westhampton Township) on the Rancocas Creek. He named the township after his home in England, Northampton.

Dr. Wills' descendants were important in the settlement of Evesham Township. His grandson<sup>3</sup>, James, was the first of the family to settle lands (1,888 acres) in what is today known as Evesham Township. James Wills had two sons known to have held land in Evesham. One of his sons, Micajah, had a son Jacob. It is this Jacob that built the Jacob Wills House in 1789. The Jacob Wills House is not the home that is historically referred to as the Wills' homestead. The homestead, which was given to Jacob's brother, Zebedee, was located off North Locust Road, but has since been demolished.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # NJ-597
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Library of Congress, Washington, DC

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 1.7 acres Moorestown, NJ Quad

UTM References

A 

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5	0	8	5	0	0
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4	4	1	4	1	7	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated as Lot 12A of Block 26 in the Township of Evesham, New Jersey.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire lot associated with the property. This lot includes the house and the outbuilding dating from the period of significance.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Carol A. Benenson/N. Catherine Claypoole date 24 March 1989, Revised 25 May 1990  
 organization KKFS telephone (215)561-1050  
 street & number 219 N. Broad St., 9th Floor state Pennsylvania zip code 19107  
 city or town Philadelphia

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Jacob Wills House, Evesham Township,  
Burlington County, New Jersey

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In the early twentieth century a 1-story frame shed addition was added to the west. Similar to the frame wing, it is sheathed with clapboards on the front and asbestos shingles on the side and rear, and is fenestrated by 6/6 double-hung windows.

The 1789 house is organized around a corner-passage plan having direct access to the front parlor and the kitchen located behind the enclosed winder stairs. (The original kitchen would have been in the shed addition.) Floors throughout the house are of random width heart pine boards. The stair hall features original baseboards with evidence of eighteenth-century paint treatment in the continuation of dark baseboard paint across the bottom of the parlor door and door surrounds. The original chair rail is intact as are the strap hinges and rim lock of the front door.

The parlor, dining room, and kitchen have had their perimeter walls furred out for insulation in the early twentieth century and new baseboards added at that time. Of particular note in these rooms are the paneled doors and wall finishes of the Georgian era. Built-in cupboards flank the parlor mantel which has uncommon slides on either side, scalloped shelves, and drop handle hardware. The fireplace has a brick hearth, plastered surround, bolexion molding, and an applied molded mantel. The dining room has a smaller and simpler corner fireplace, also with a bolexion molding and an original brick hearth. In the kitchen, the corner fireplace features a paneled breast above the brick hearth and bolexion molding surrounding the opening. The south wall of the kitchen has an unusual series of cupboards flanking and above the door to the hall. These cupboards with raised panels retain their original H-hinges.

The high quality of Georgian paneling is carried out at the second floor which is organized as three bedrooms in line with the first floor plan. The bedrooms have beaded cedar paneling and built in closets. The front bedroom has a fireplace with brick hearth.

The interior of the frame wing is a single open space at the first floor, originally partitioned. It has a beaded beam and board ceiling, restored after 1986. A large fireplace is located along the west wall which has new beaded paneling. A stairway to the basement has been sealed over with flooring and converted into a closet. The walls are partially covered with beaded paneling and finished with molded baseboards. Greek Revival window surrounds with bosses embellish the front windows. The floors are of original and replacement boards. The second floor is divided into front and rear rooms, simply detailed with plaster walls. Evidence behind the wall indicates wood framing with brick nogging in the southwest corner, which might be remnant of an earlier period of construction. The shed addition is an open space with simple surrounds, a built-in pantry, and beaded board door leading to the basement. The basement, which has both dirt and brick flooring, has an enormous brick and stone arched fire breast in the frame wing and an eighteenth-century pantry in the brick section. The pantry, built into the brick arch supporting the fireplace and hearth above, is a rare eighteenth-century survivor and retains its original beaded board door with strap hinges and shelves. Overall, the interior as well as the exterior survives with an unusually high degree of integrity.

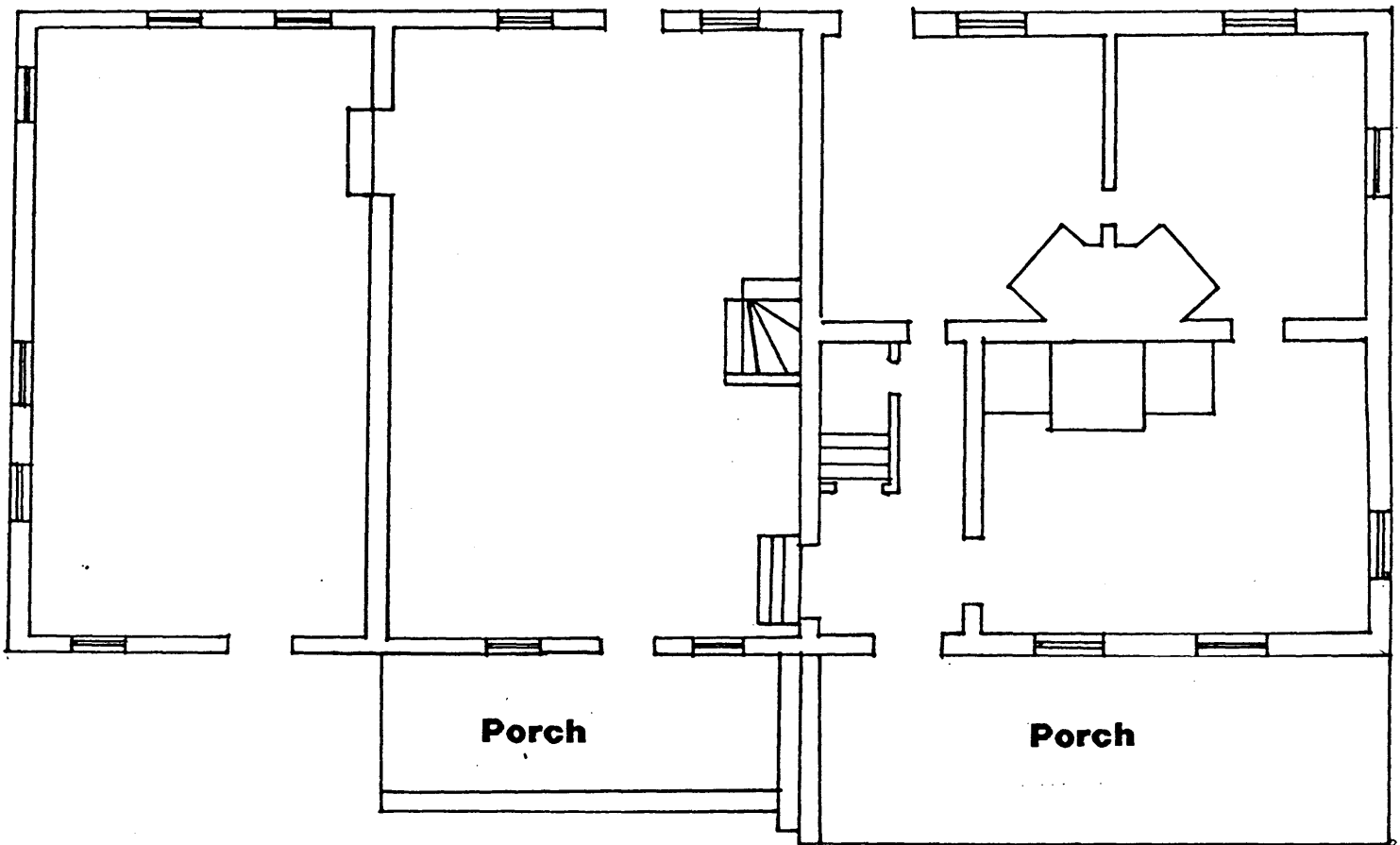
Nearly all of the original agricultural outbuildings have been demolished. Surviving is a combination brick smokehouse/outhouse from the early nineteenth-century with strap hinged doors and a window opening to the outhouse. A modern frame and metal shed is also on the property.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Jacob Wills House, Evesham Township,  
Burlington County, New Jersey



## JACOB WILLS HOUSE

Building Plan

Scale 1/8" = 1'



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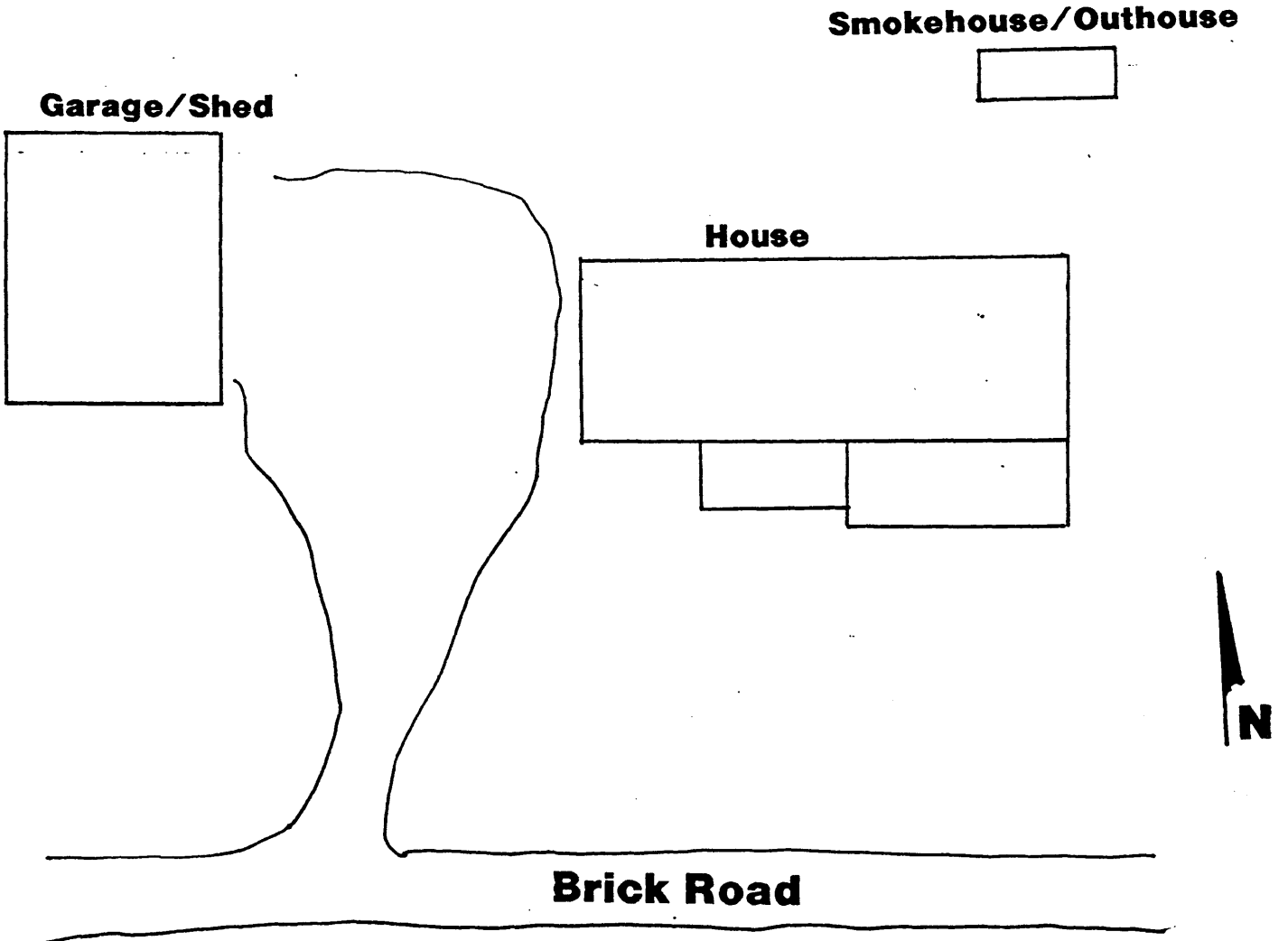
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Jacob Wills House, Evesham Township,  
Burlington County, New Jersey

## JACOB WILLS HOUSE

Site Plan (not to scale)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2Jacob Wills House, Evesham Township,  
Burlington County, New Jersey

The Wills' had extensive landholdings in Evesham Township, and Jacob built his home on a tract of land which he inherited from his father in 1797. At that time, Micajah bequeathed to Jacob "the plantation where on he (Jacob) now lives in Evesham."<sup>4</sup> The brick work in the gable end of the home credits Jacob "I" and Mary "M" his wife, Wills "W" as building the brick house in 1789, adding onto an earlier frame section to the west.

Jacob Wills died in 1803 at the age of 55. He had been a member of the New Jersey militia, listed in the 1793 enrollment. In 1806 his wife, Mary, died. At the time of her death the Wills' two youngest children, Joseph and Sarah, were minors, and therefore, divisions of the estate had to be made by the court. To Jacob's son, Micajah, the court conveyed 47 acres including the Jacob Wills House. The remainder of the tract was divided between his eight children, as were the additional lands which had been owned by his wife.

In 1835, the tract with the brick 1789 house was given by Micajah to his sons William S. Wills and Samuel S. Wills of Evesham and Joseph C. Wills of Philadelphia. The tract remained in the Wills family until 1906 when it was sold to George Olt for \$7,084.80.<sup>5</sup> It continued to be run as a farm by tenants until the mid-twentieth century. Only recently was the 88-acre parcel reduced to the 1.7-acre parcel on which the house now stands.

The Wills' land in Evesham Township, both the homestead and the Jacob Wills House properties, were agricultural establishments throughout the nineteenth and, in the case of the Jacob Wills House tract, the mid-twentieth centuries. The rich soil of the northern portion of the township and the discovery of marl created fertile land and a profitable livelihood for the settlers in the township. The township's agricultural opportunities, combined with the infrastructure of schools and houses of worship that the Wills and other families established, continued to attract immigrants to the area and contribute to Evesham Township's growth.

The brick construction of the Jacob Wills home is of Flemish bond with glazed headers, a fashionable form of construction for this region of New Jersey in the eighteenth century. The brick section of the house was added onto an earlier clapboarded 1 1/2-story frame structure which was enlarged and added onto by the mid-nineteenth century. The house is significant among the other survivors of its type for the high degree of integrity on both the exterior and interior. Despite the loss of the early porch, the exterior has been altered minimally, displaying original panes of crown glass and shutters with wrought iron strap hinges, lock bars, and shutter dogs. The interior, also well-preserved, contains several rare surviving features of note: an eighteenth-century basement pantry with beaded board door and shelves; scalloped shelves and slides in parlor cupboards, and drop handle hardware. Throughout the house, raised paneling on cupboards and doors and bolection moldings and brick hearths of the several fireplaces convey the character of the region's stylish Georgian houses. Although only a period smokehouse/outhouse remains of the outbuildings associated with the agricultural history of the property, the house documents an important architectural form in southern New Jersey that has been vanishing over the years.

The Evesham Township Multiple Property Nomination identifies "dwellings" as significant landmarks of the township's architectural heritage and growth as an agricultural community. The architectural heritage



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Jacob Wills House, Evesham Township,  
Burlington County, New Jersey

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referred to is the Delaware Valley tradition, displaying Georgian forms and Flemish bond brickwork. Because the Jacob Wills house is an important and well-preserved survivor of this characteristic eighteenth-century domestic architecture in Evesham, it appears eligible for the National Register as part of the Evesham Township Multiple Property Nomination under Criterion C.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. Major E.M. Woodward, History of Burlington County, New Jersey (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1883), p.316.
2. Woodward, p. 504.
3. Historical accounts differ on James' relationship to Dr. Daniel Wills. He has been recorded as both Dr. Wills' son and grandson.
4. Surrogate's Office, Burlington County Courthouse, Mt. Holly, New Jersey, Will Record Book 37, Page 30, 1797.
5. U.S. Recorder of Deeds, Burlington County, Courthouse, Mt. Holly, New Jersey, Deed Book 420, Page 173, 1906.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 2

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