

APPENDIX K

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that Indians did. Archaeologists and historians tend to talk about the biggest, most exciting types of archaeological sites. You hear about digs at villages (where many families lived together), burial mounds/cemeteries (where the dead were ceremonially buried), or rockshelters (where one family lived each winter for generations). Although these sites are interesting and educational, a focus on such sites overlooks the literally millions of other archaeological sites in what is today Delaware. For every village site, there are many, many more small, limited-activity sites.

Archaeologists from Skelly and Loy, Inc., and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) studied a series of short-term visits to archaeological site 7NC-B-54. This site was identified as part of the Blue Ball Area Transportation Improvements project located in New Castle County, Delaware. Four portions of the site, each of which represents a visit of one to a few hours, were completely excavated. By studying the types of stone tools and the wear patterns on the tools, we were able to suggest four different reasons for the visits.

This interesting result – the same place in New Castle County was used four different ways during the Woodland I period (ca. 3,000 B.C. to A.D. 1000) – led us to consider the many activities that Indians did away from their home camps that were not being recognized in the archaeological record. Rather than rely purely on the traditional models – Indians went to the woods to kill deer and gather nuts – we explored the historic accounts, reviewed findings from other sites, and spoke with Lenape and Nanticoke people to compile a list of one

hundred things that Indians did. To be included on this list, the action must have taken less than four hours and must have resulted in only a few artifacts having been lost or discarded.

Although we label these activities “One Hundred Little Things,” they are only “little” in relation to the amount of time each occupied and the impact to the archaeological record. The importance of each of these activities should not be underestimated in considering the survival of pre-contact peoples in Delaware. Indeed, the little sites are much more frequent than large, long-term sites. As you read these One Hundred Little Things, consider how important knowledge of these small sites is to our understanding of the way people lived in Delaware throughout history.



For more information about DeIDOT Historic Preservation and Delaware History:

<http://www.deldot.gov/archaeology/index.shtml>

<http://www.state.de.us/shpo/index/htm>

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1-800-652-5600

1. Stopped to repair his moccasins. Stone tools and a bone needle were used to re sew a seam.
2. Set a series of rabbit snares. An Indian could easily set 50 rabbit snares in a single day.
3. Rested, fiddled with contents of her pouch.
4. Gathered medicinal herbs, barks, and roots.
5. Checked the hickory grove to gauge when the nuts would fall.
6. Found a suitable cobble of quartz and stopped to make some tools.
7. Selected and girdled a cypress tree for eventual use in making a canoe. Certain processes took literally years, and it was important that Indians were anticipating their future needs.



8. Stopped to rest an ankle that was twisted when crossing the stream.
9. Gathered Indian Paint Root for use in making a red dye.
10. Gathered mushrooms to add to stew.
11. Harvested a meal of cattail roots. Cattails were available in wetlands throughout the state and were eaten as a snack year round.



12. Collected pine pitch from an oozing knot in a tree for eventual rendering into glue. It was generally easy to find an appropriate pine tree when resin/glue was needed.
13. Mother stopped to point out several important plant species to her daughter in training. Important information was transferred generation to generation by word of mouth.
14. Saw a turtle and stopped to collect it for food and the shell, which would make a nice rattle.
15. Gathered wood to repair the fish weir in anticipation of the spring run.

16. Field-cleaned a deer that had been shot with bow and arrow or snared.

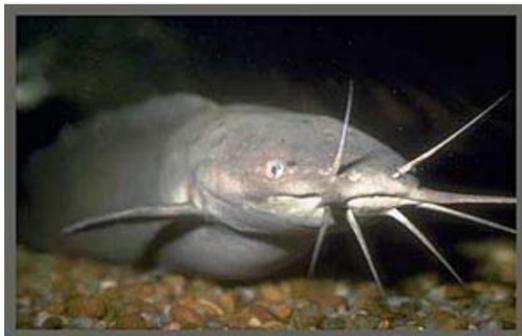


17. Gathered cattail stalks for use in weaving mats for wall coverings.

18. Collected poplar trees for use as frog/fish spears; removed bark to lessen carrying weight. Striped poplars were straight, light, and strong.

19. Using cordage and an arrow tip, removed a decayed tooth.

20. Gutted and cooked two catfish speared in the creek.



21. Knapped a new knife to replace a broken one, and hafted it onto a handle. On the spot repairs were important to a person far from the camp.



22. Watched the trail for northern traders reported to be moving this way. There were no telephones or the postal service, but word-of-mouth was an amazingly good way to spread news.

23. Rearranged a skin pouch used to carry recently dug clay for making pottery.

24. Performed the appropriate ritual after seeing a totem animal. The experience of seeing their totem animal was important and demanded proper ceremonial response. Upon seeing a gray fox, a member of the fox clan might be required to leave a meal and some tools for his brother.

25. Heard a turkey calling in the creek bottom, and waited on the uplands for him to come up to roost.

26. Gathered sassafras twigs for use as a toothbrush. This was not a vital activity, but rather something to do on an otherwise slow day.

27. Gathered hickory nuts and walnuts. Due to their numbers, the ease of collection, high nutritional content, and ability to be stored, nuts would have been an important part of the diet.

28. Upon hearing mobbing crows, waited to see if a fox or other animal would be chased this way by the crows.

29. Found a flock of passenger pigeons roosting for the evening, and made a long club to knock them from the branches

30. Sought solitude from the noise and smoke of the camp.

31. In response to a dream, came to make prayers or offerings. Archaeologists are poorly equipped to understand the spiritual use of the forest.

32. Scouted the ridges for a good winter camp location. Camps were located carefully, and it was important to know conditions in various locations before making a decision.

33. Field-dressed ducklings captured in the nearby pond

34. Stopped to clean the recently harvested Tuckahoe roots.



35. Rested and watched for other children during a lengthy game of crows and owl. Child's play is hard for archaeologists to predict.

36. Cleaned a sore caused by an imbedded greenbrier thorn, and prepared a mud-pack to relieve the swelling.

37. Collected smooth round stones of the appropriate size from the stream to use in the sweat.



38. Rescued a dog from a rabbit snare. Without fences or leashes, the Indians had little control over what entered their traps.

39. Bartered salt with a trader for an albino raccoon pelt.

40. Found an old, broken arrowhead on the trail and stopped to rework the point into a usable tool. It was often easier to rework an old tool than to start from scratch and make a new one.

41. Stopped to cut up a rabbit carcass for use as marten trap bait.

42. Made a smoky fire to fog the bees living in a hollow tree and gather the honey.

43. Constructed a maternity hut in anticipation of an upcoming birth. In certain Indian groups, the women left the camps to give birth.

44. Butchered a 20-pound snapping turtle found while moving to a new wetland. Put the meat in the cleaned shell, which would be saved and used as a container.



45. Quickly gathered echinacea for treatment of son's snake bite.

46. Stopped for meal of corn cakes. This light weight "bread" was often used on long journeys.

47. Picked several gourds, which would later be dried and used as containers.

48. Found and cut a boll from a tree, from which a wooden bowl was to be carved. The skilled carver could

recognize a suitable tree, envisioning the bowl he could carve from it.

49. Split and wove oak for an eel trap to be used at Brandywine Shoal. The Nanticoke and Lenape made and used traditional eel traps well into the twentieth century.



50. Knapped a handful of fresh stone flakes and left them on the trail to let others who came that way know that you are trapping in this area. Modern hikers often use small stone cairns (piles) at key locations to let their friends know where to go.

51. Constructed frame pack to transport two deer hindquarters to camp. Indians relied on their ability to make necessary items when the need arose.

52. Collected and shucked oysters for a quick lunch.

53. Gathered pine knots for use as torches in night hunting and fishing. The nighttime was the best opportunity to

capture certain species, such as spearing flounder. Pine knots served as torches.

54. Did absolutely nothing, in preparation of coming of age ceremony. Focus, clarity, and purity were important in Indian ceremonies.

55. Watched rotting carcass, in hopes of shooting a wolf or fox that came to scavenge. Hunting was more successful when animals came to the hunter, rather than the hunter looking for the animal.

56. Courted a girlfriend, beyond the eyes of the community. A great thing about small community life is that everybody knows everybody. A bad thing about small community life is also that everybody knows everybody.

57. Repaired a deadfall trap.



58. Recognized and collected a hickory branch of the proper shape to make a sturgeon spear. The Indian could not go to a store to find the materials he or she needed. Instead, they learned to recognize when a particular branch or sapling would be good for future use.

59. Stopped to note an active beaver dam on a deer hide sketch map. Although the pre-contact period Indians of Delaware did not have a written alphabet, they were excellent geographers and map-makers.



60. Applied white and red clay, as body paint, in preparation for a raid into mountains. Indian warfare was not designed to conquer communities, but rather to humiliate and/or warn the opponents.

61. Collected water from a seep or spring.

62. Stopped to twist some new cordage to temporarily replace a piece torn when it got snagged on some brambles.

63. Hooted and waited. Outsiders, such as traders, would be rude to simply walk into the village of others. Instead, they would make their presence known, and then wait nearby to be invited into the village.

64. Cleared treefall from a well used walking path.

65. A group of hunters stops to rest and recounts stories of past successful hunts.

66. Made a frame and stretched a newly acquired deer hide. Hides needed to be stretched before they began to dry and harden.



67. Stopped for the night when the moon set. In many seasons, a traveling Indian would simply sleep on a deer hide on the ground.

68. Revamped emergency kit. Before departing on an extended trip, the Indian would refurbish his emergency kit, making sure he had sufficient stone flakes, a hammerstone, an axe, one or more hafted knives, several projectile points, sinew, pitch, and fiber. This refurbishing would be completed when raw materials were at hand.

69. Carved a ceremonial mask. Special items often appeared mysteriously in a village, and the effect was lost if everybody saw you carving a mask.

70. Traveling to visit relatives, a group stopped to rest in the heat of the day and the children played and climbed on fallen trees from the previous night's storm.

71. Collected wild crabapples for their juice, which would set their dyes.

72. Dug Wild Bean tubers to eat.

73. Hollowed out a small log to replace a rotten one used to catch maple sap.

74. Cut and stockpiled long thin flexible saplings for use in building a new house.

75. A mother sat down to nurse her small child.

76. A father walked a dry stream bed with his son and nephew to search for cobbles useful for making stone tools. He would teach the boys how to recognize the best stones.

77. Spied a duck's nest in a clump of grass along the marsh and foraged for the eggs it contained.

78. Carved a deer call from a small piece of cedar.



79. Paused during fishing and used the small coarse polishing stone carried in his pouch to sharpen and polish a new bone fish hook.

80. Dug clay from the stream bank.

81. A young boy recovered a porcupine from a trap, knowing that his mother

will be pleased to have the quills for decorating their clothing.

82. A husband skinned a snake so the skin could be prepared and used by his wife as a hair tie.

83. Girdled several trees to make it easier to fell them at a later date.

84. Dug sassafras roots to steep tea, which was thought to help cure a sore throat.



85. Sharpened two mussel shells to use as tweezers to pluck facial hair so the skin would be smooth for applying paint for the important upcoming ceremony.

86. Scavenged the claws from an already dead bird to use as fish hooks.

87. Waited while other boys flushed rabbits toward you. It was important that young boys practice and master hunting skills, including communal activities and shooting the bow and arrow.



88. Gathered firewood.

89. Collected rushes from the marsh. These were woven into mats that were used in the households for various purposes, including the serving of meals.

90. Collected bark, which was used in houses and for lining storage pits.

91. Hunted and killed a bear. Bears were important as sources of food and clothing. Bear grease was also used in the hair to make it shiny.

92. Carved a shell into an ornament while fishing.

93. Sat out a snowstorm in a tree-fall basin. A sudden snow fall would capture a record of tracks of animals, and would allow Indians to identify potential dens. It would be important to hunt as soon as the visibility cleared, but before the snow had a chance to melt.

94. Gathered hemp to repair a torn fish net that had become snagged while it was being dragged.

95. Stopped to smear some mud on his arms to help keep the mosquitos from biting as he worked around the marsh.

96. A father constructed a small bow and some arrows away from the camp so he could surprise his son with them.

97. Men on a hunting trip rest and scratch some markings onto a stone to ensure the straight flight of their arrows.

98. Cut a red osier dogwood stem and scraped off the outer bark with a stone flake, so the bark could be carried back to camp to be dried and then smoked.

99. Warmed an acorn bread cake in the ashes of a fire. Indians knew which foods traveled well and provided needed energy.



100. Stopped to rest in the shade while on a hike.

These One Hundred Little Things are a small sample of the many, diverse activities that the Indians pursued in locations other than their main home camps. Most of these activities would have produced only limited numbers of remains, and of those limited remains, fewer still would have preserved in the archaeological record.

These One Hundred Little Things, performed over the 10,000 years of pre-contact occupation of Delaware, would have resulted in the formation of millions of sites. For example, if a single trapper trapped for 30 winters and set or re-set 50 traps a day for the approximately 100-day season, he alone would have created sites at 150,000 locations. These would just be the actual trap locations, and there would have been additional sites where he skinned his catch, prepared bait, and processed hides.

At times, often to the surprise of many people, it appears that there are archaeological sites everywhere in Delaware. This is not far from the truth, but the vast majority of these sites saw only extremely limited use once or a few times during the 10,000 years of the pre-contact period. As informative as village sites may be, it is the sites of the One Hundred Little Things that best capture the diversity of people's activities in Delaware throughout history.