2. MAN IN THE PROJECT AREA

PEOPLE MAY HAVE entered the Saint Jones valley as early as 14,000 years ago, during the Late Glacial climatic episode. Seasonal variation was not pronounced during this period because of the proximity of the continental ice sheet.

As climate moderated, food, groundcover, and sea levels changed. These climate changes, in turn, forced changes in people's subsistence strategies, family structure, and social organization.

PALEO-INDIAN PERIOD BACKGROUND

Mammoth, musk ox, horses, caribou, fish, and walrus provided food for dire wolf, short-faced bear, and other Pleistocene predators. Man, who entered the area as the climate warmed at the end of the Ice Age, was among the smaller competitors in the tundra food chain, but his intelligence compensated for his physical shortcomings. Paleo people, moving with the resources in small family-size bands, probably hunted the remaining Pleistocene fauna (Catts, Custer and Hoseth 1991:11).

PREHISTORIC CHRONOLOGY

Dates	*Environmental Episode*	*Cultural Period*
8080 BC	Late Glacial	Paleo-Indian /Early Archaic
6540 BC	Pre-Boreal/Boreal	
	Atlantic	Middle Archaic
3110 BC	Sub-Boreal	Late Archaic
810 BC	Sub-Atlantic	Woodland I
AD 1000		Woodland II
AD 1600		Contact

Nomadic hunters of this Paleo-Indian period were among the most skilled makers of stone tools in the world. They would travel great distances to quarry the best flinty stones from which they made exquisite spearpoints, knives, and small tools.

Delmarva's sandy soil did not offer much raw material for these people's projectile points. Instead, archæological evidence suggests that they travelled to piedmont quarry sites for occasional resupply. The question of lithic sources has been prominent among the research issues addressed by archæologists in stone-poor Delmarva.

Some implements were made from the local "pebble" jaspers and cherts. Such pebbles might contain barely enough material to create a misshapen, undersized, tool that was nonetheless sufficient for the moment. In other cases, people of the Paleo period abandoned their preferences and used quartz to make their distinctive fluted projectile points.

Paleo-Indian settlement on Delmarva appears, from the chronicle of reported chance finds, to have been concentrated west of the project area, along the mid-peninsular drainage divide (Custer 1984b). At least four phases of Paleo-Indian culture have been identified in Delmarva, in spite of the paucity of artifacts (Meyer and Kingsley 1990:9).

ARCHAIC PERIOD BACKGROUND

The Archaic cultural period began about the same time as the Atlantic environmental episode. Withdrawal of the glaciers prompted development of marked seasonal variation, while rising sea level caused development of tidal marshes, increasing the variety of environmental settings available for exploitation. Around the project area, bay/basin features would have filled with water during this period.

Paralleling this increased environmental and seasonal diversity, the Archaic Period is marked by an increase in the number and variety of tools in use. Of particular interest during this period is the introduction of ground stone tools, including axes, gouges, grinding stones, and other implements for exploiting plant resources (Catts, Custer and Hoseth 1991:14).

Archaic people built houses, some of which have been detected archæologically through postmold patterns. A house at the Hockessin Valley Site in New Castle County was built five millenia ago around a central hearth; it is the second-oldest human habitation reported from the region. The Hockessin Valley house was built on flat

ground, but semi-subterranean pit houses are also known from the area. Pit houses in Delaware are known from the period circa 2000 B.C. to circa A.D. 1400, with most postdating A. D. 1000 (Custer and Hodny 1989:57).

During the Archaic period, lithic preference shifted. An increasing number of artifacts were made of quartz and quartzite, which can easily be quarried from the cobble beds found throughout Delmarva. Settlement systems of the Archaic were less likely to be centered around visits to upland sources of cryptocrystalline silicates such as jasper and chert (Custer 1986:64). Beds of quartz cobbles are exposed near the project area and elsewhere in Delmarva.

In central Kent County, Archaic Period sites are most likely to occur in association with bay/basin features. The sand ridge along the southern side of the basin called Simon's Savannah, east of the river, is a typical location for Archaic period procurement sites. Excavation there in 1990 (Heite and Blume 1992: 42, 67) demonstrated stratification and changes in lithic preference through time.

WOODLAND I PERIOD BACKGROUND

The beginning of the Woodland I cultural period coincides with the beginning of the Sub-Boreal episode, a period when environmental conditions were generally drier than during the preceding Atlantic episode. There was also considerably more variation in climatic patterns than during previous periods.

Large base camps developed in the floodplains of major streams and adjacent to major swamps, where the food supply was more reliable because of the variety of resources available. Small procurement sites also were established along streams and adjacent to bay/basin features. In general, the focus appears to have been upon the utilization of a wide variety of resources. This is reflected in the introduction of specialized tools and in the introduction of stone bowls, and later, of ceramic vessels.

During this period, trade is evident in the archæological record. Exotic artifacts and introduced religious practices indicate that people traded both goods and ideas over a wide territory. The Island Field Site, near the mouth of Saint Jones River, became a focus of trade around the end of the Woodland I period.

Near the project area, a variety of large and small procurement sites are likely to be found, as well as an occassional small base camp. Headlands overlooking the floodplain and areas adjacent to bay/basin features are likely to have been used for settlements during this period.

WOODLAND II PERIOD BACKGROUND

The beginning of the Woodland II period was marked by a change in emphasis, rather than by any dramatic change in cultural patterns. Base camps continued to grow in size, but procurement sites were smaller and fewer in number. The tool kit left by these people is less varied than it was during the Woodland I period, but the frequency of storage features increased, even on smaller sites.

It is likely that the project area was used during the Woodland only for small scale hunting forays. Small procurement sites can be expected, particularly in the wooded upland bluffs overlooking the stream valleys.

CONTACT PERIOD IN CENTRAL DELAWARE

The contact period was the time of initial interaction between European colonists and Native American groups. It began with the first, indirect, experience of Delaware Native Americans with European trade goods and diseases and ended with the disappearance from Delaware of recognizable organized tribal groups.

Native people did not "disappear" or "fade away" from Kent County, however. Only the distinctive physical evidence of their original culture disappeared or became difficult to recognize. The people remained on the land and became part of a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. Their descendants live around the project area today, and one owned the site during the twentieth century.

At some yet-undefined time during the seventeenth or eighteenth century, each local Native American group gradually passed from a "contact" mode on the perimeter of European society into a state of acculturation, during which the introduced

alien culture began to dominate every aspect of life.

Today's Delmarva Native American descendants are ministers, journalists, government officials, or businesspersons, who occupy every niche in the homogenized society. While recent generations have consciously sought to restore and preserve their heritage, few actual cultural survivals have passed through the acculturation process from the pre-contact society.

EUROPEANIZATION ON THE ST. JONES

Even though the upper Saint Jones was not colonized during the Dutch period, several leading families in the project vicinity bore Dutch ancestry, including such families as Loockerman, Comegys, and Boyer. After the English takeover, settlers from Virginia, Barbadoes, and New England came into the present Kent County; among the Virginia immigrants were some who proposed around 1670 to establish a town at the mouth of Saint Jones River.

THE LOOCKERMAN ESTATES

Nicholas Loockerman (1697-1769), scion of a wealthy New York Dutch merchant family, moved to Kent County about 1723 and established himself as a resident planter on part of Hirons' Range. Within a few years, he had acquired lands on both sides of the headwaters, some farmed by tenants and some cut for timber. He built a sawmill near where College Road crosses the head of Silver Lake (Scharf 1888:1081-1082).

His only son Vincent (1722-1785) continued to accumulate land in the neighborhood. In 1757, Vincent bought a piece west of the river and part of the Range, 150 acres, from the heirs of David Griffin, a Philadelphia joiner. In 1764, Vincent bought 89 acres west of the Dover River from Edmund Badger, a cordwainer, who had inherited it from his father. These tracts, among others, were bought from absentee owners, generally heirs of Philadelphia people who had invested in Kent County real estate during the first generation's land rush.

Vincent Loockerman and his wife Susannah had one son, called Vincent the younger. After the death of his first wife, Vincent, the elder, married Elizabeth Pryor, who was to bear him two additional children, Elizabeth and Nicholas. He provided for Vincent, the younger, by granting him all his land in Dover Hundred.

The 1782 deed described 500 acres, assembled from several parcels, west of Dover River and east of Charles Ridgely's Fox Hall tract, including the Badger tract and the Griffin purchase among others. The south boundary was Spring Branch, a stream that crosses McKee Road south of today's College Road. Four tenants were identified in the deed.

When Vincent the younger died, his daughter Susannah inherited 746 acres, including the project area. An Orphans Court valuation in 1796 described two miserable tenant farms, one containing 100 arable acres farmed by William Farmer, a Negro. Near Fox Hall was an un-fenced farm with 50 acres and an old one-story house, plus a 20-acre field that was to be combined with it. Four tenants in 1782 had dwindled to one tenant and an unrented farm fourteen years later.

While still a minor, Susannah married James Stoops of Philadelphia, and died childless without reaching her majority. Her share in the parental estate was divided into shares among her siblings, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Vincent.

THE GEISER FARM

The project area lies in the northern third of the Susannah Stoops share of the Loockerman estate. This farm fell to her sister Sarah. It was described in the 1804 survey as 191 acres, 122 square perches of woodland, cleared land and cripple. Boundaries of the tract were Maidstone Branch on the north, the present line between this and the Ford farm to the south, and the Fox Hall tract to the west. The division map shows at least three roads crossing Maidstone Branch over this property. Improvements consisted of two log cabins occupied by the Negro Abraham.

Sarah Loockerman married Nicholas G. Williamson of Wilmington. They mortgaged the property to Joseph Grubb in 1807 and redeemed it in 1809. In 1815, the Williamsons sold several of her inherited properties to John Reed and Arthur Johns.

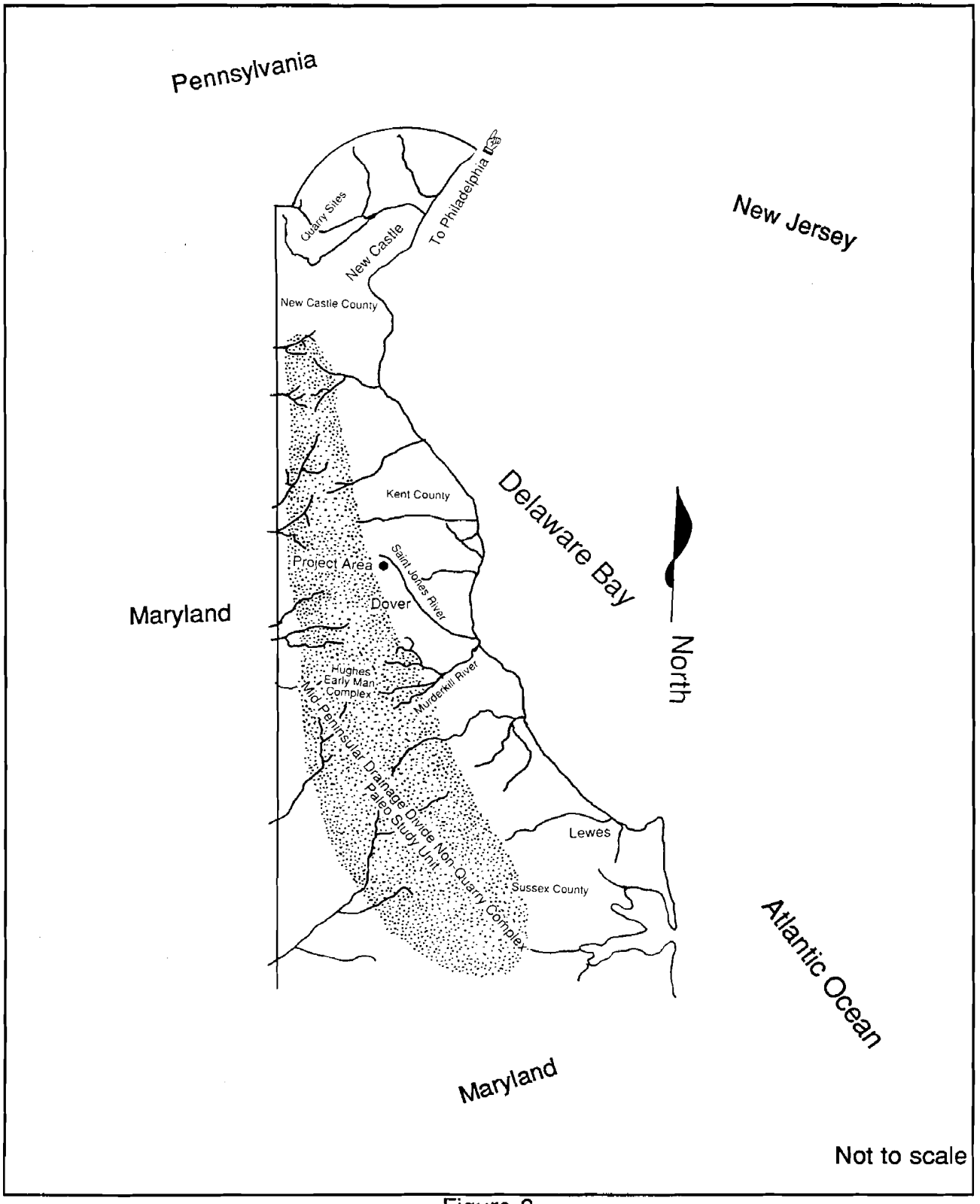

Figure 2
Delaware map, showing places mentioned in this chapter

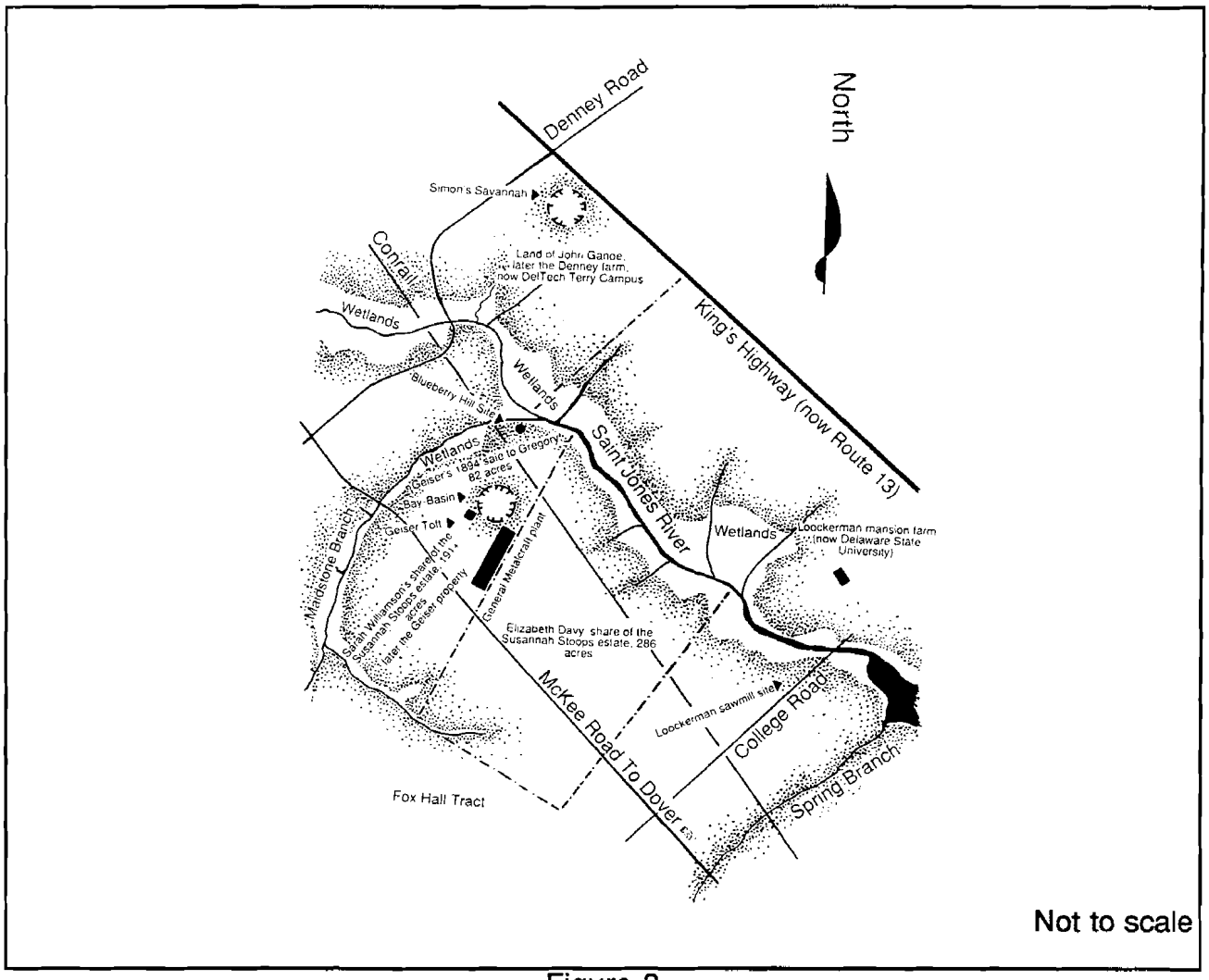

Figure 3
Local map, showing features mentioned in text

John Reed died in 1844. When his estate was divided in 1846, the parcel containing the project area went to his daughter Elizabeth. Acreage was calculated at 213 acres 12 square perches. At that time, a tenant named N. Costen [Cosden?] was living in a house on the western end of the tract, where most of the arable land was located. The eastern end, containing the project area, contained only a small area identified as "arable."

Commissioners appointed to make an annual valuation for the Orphans Court determined that 153 acres were "brush" land, and the rest was improved with an orchard, a small frame dwelling house in "tolerable" repair and an old log crib "which should be repaired."

Elizabeth married Daniel Cowgill, Jr., son of Ezekiel Cowgill. In 1855, they conveyed it to George Jones and George McCorkle. They, in turn, sold it to Zadoc and George Townsend in 1857. In 1860, the property was deeded to George R. Townsend, Zadoc's son.

The Delaware Rail Road may have prompted some of this upstate activity. When the railroad came through in 1856, upstate industrialists followed.

The sheriff sold the property in 1877 to Margaret Stuart of Wilmington, who held it a month and conveyed it to Walter Cummins, also of Wilmington. Cummins sold it in September 1878 to Catherine Miller of Dover. She moved to Allentown,

Pennsylvania, and sold it in 1880 to Lewis Geiser of Dover. Soon after he bought the land, the county opened a road, called the "McKee and Geiser Road" that eventually became the present McKee or Saulsbury road.

The new public road divided the property, creating an eighty-acre tract east of the right-of-way. Geiser sold the part east of the road in 1894 to William H. Gregory of New York. The tract was sold in 1899 by the sheriff to his widow, Anna, in her own right.

In 1900, the sheriff again sold the farm, this time to Pennell Emerson. At the time, the farm was improved by a two-story frame dwelling, apple, and pear orchards. Emerson sold the property in 1903 to Charles Gruner of New York City. He was resident in East Dover Hundred when he sold the property three years later to Amos Nolt of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Nolt had moved to East Dover by the time he sold the property to Joseph Neville of Canada in 1908. Neville moved to East Dover Hundred, where he resided a month later when he conveyed it to Louis Kesselring.

Kesselring did not settle on the Geiser farm, which he sold in 1911 to David Mosley, who in 1905 had bought the western part of the Geiser tract. Mosley lived across the road in a community subdivided from another part of the Loockerman property. Mosley sold the farm in 1915 to Joseph T. Vance, formerly of Bison, Oklahoma, but then of Kent County. He, in turn, sold it two years later to James E. Vaughn, of Little Creek Hundred, who held it six months before he sold it to Elmer Outten, of Dover.

Outten conveyed it in 1920 to Leroy Eikenberry; the same day, Eikenberry conveyed it to Arthur Heggan of Camden County, New Jersey. When Heggan sold the property to Herbert W. Savage of Poland, Clay County, Indiana, in 1930, he was a resident of East Dover Hundred. Savage did not move to East Dover Hundred. He was still a resident of Indiana when he sold the property in 1933 to Margaret E. Downs of Philadelphia. She held the property until 1939, and built the present frame bungalow, which was "nearly new" when she sold the property to John Edward Allen of New York. Allen was a local resident in 1942 when he conveyed the land to Walter P. Allen of New York City. Walter P. Allen died June 22, 1951, leaving the property to his son. In 1958, Walter P. Allen, Jr., of Broomall, , Pennsylvania, sold the tract to the Ches-Del Corporation.

Out of this tract in 1974, the corporation sold off the present site of the General Metalcraft plant. Ches-Del Corporation conveyed the remainder in 1986 to Calvin and Valerie Boggs, Harold and Frances Remley, and John and Carol Krieger. They, in turn, sold the remainder to the present owners, John and Janis Beiser. A truck terminal was built on the north side of the tract, leaving only about forty acres in the farm, no longer under cultivation.

Agricultual history suggests that archæology of Geiser farm fields should reflect marginal standards of cultivation and husbandry, since the property has seldom been cultivated by a long-term resident owner. Excavation ultimately provided interesting evidence in this connection.

REGIONAL PREHISTORY RESEARCH

Modern archæology in Delaware began with the establishment of the agency originally known as the Delaware Archaeology Board in 1965. Since 1980, the University of Delaware Department of Anthropology, through its center for archæological research, has conducted an aggressive research program. The Delaware Department of Transportation has engaged 17 different consultants to conduct archæological surveys.

A recurring theme in the work of Delaware agencies has been constant reference to the influence of environmental factors on human settlement patterns. Prehistoric people in Delaware moved in annual cycles within the region to exploit seasonal resources, evidently in a regular pattern that included base camps and procurement stations. Systematic study of settlement patterns produced a set of models for each period in prehistory (Thomas, Griffith, Wise and Artusy 1975).

These models have been considerably refined subsequently through detailed

regional surveys, notably Custer's 1987-1990 study of the Atlantic Coast zone (Custer and Mellin 1987 and 1991) and in southwestern Delaware during 1987-1988 (Custer and Mellin 1989).

In Northern Delaware, archæological research has been concentrated on prehistoric quarry sites around Iron Hill and the rich environment of Churchman's Marsh. This resource-rich locality was one of the first resources surveyed by the University of Delaware unit (Custer 1982). Among the deposits identified at Churchman's Marsh were two episodes of æolian soil deposits, corresponding to dry periods in regional prehistory.

Custer (1984b) surveyed previously-reported Paleo-Indian fluted points and observed a substantial collection of finds in the drainage divide area roughly southwest of the project site. Stone tools and projectile points from that area, which includes the Hughes Early Man Complex, are characteristic of areas with poor lithic resources. Such areas are marked by tools that have been reworked many times, husbanding the meagre resources. The picture that emerges is a game-rich area in the center of the peninsula, far from sources of lithic raw materials. Only one of the Paleo-Indian sites on Custer's list was in the Saint Jones drainage.

Planning for construction of the "Route 13 Relief Route," now called State Route 1, produced a burst of archæological research centered at the University of Delaware (Custer, Bachman, and Grettler 1987). In order to maintain intellectual control over such a large project, it was necessary to engage in considerable planning, which in turn has led to detailed refinement of both historic and prehistoric settlement models (Grettler, Bachman, Custer and Jamison 1991).

PRIOR RESEARCH IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA

Blueberry Hill site was discovered in the course of a survey of the Saint Jones valley conducted by archæologists from the University of Delaware. Without excavation, they identified this as a procurement site of unknown cultural affiliation (Custer and Galasso 1983).

Louise Heite in 1983 conducted test excavations at a farmstead site on the north side of Maidstone Branch, on the east side of McKee and Geiser Road. In the midst of the historic site, she found prehistoric remains (7K-C-111) consistent with a procurement site (Heite 1984).

In 1984 and 1985, she investigated another nearby area, west of Fork and Chance's branches and north of Denney's Road. On a bluff overlooking the west bank of Fork Branch, she tested a shallow site (7K-C-113) that yielded Archaic projectile points and one sherd of pottery (Heite and Heite 1985).

East of the project area, in connection with the State Route 1 project, three prehistoric sites (7K-C-360, hills A and B, and 7K-C-365) recently have been excavated by University of Delaware researchers. These sites lay in the mid-drainage zone, and represented occupation during the Paleo-Indian, Archaic and Woodland I periods. These sites were identified as transient camps, larger than procurement sites but smaller than base camps.

At Hill A, many (49%) of the unretouched utilized flakes contained some cortex, prompting the investigators to conclude that the local prehistoric people made a sizable quantity of their tools from relatively small locally-obtained materials. Large numbers of quartzite cores were reduced at Hill B. Other tools, of argillite, rhyolite, and chalcedony, apparently were obtained from more abundant sources to the north.

Remarkable among the artifacts recovered from Hill A was a spherical stone object, possibly of chert, with a diameter of about an inch. It was found in an undisturbed context between 40 and 50 centimeters below grade. Another sphere was later found at Blueberry Hill at similar depth (FIGURE 30, page 55, below).

From 1989 to 1992, Edward Heite and Cara Blume conducted Phase I and Phase II surveys through the Scarborough Road corridor (Heite and Blume 1992). Several sites were identified for further study and possible nomination, including the previously identified site that is the subject of this report.