Chapter 3

DESIGN FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

A. PHASE II HISTORICAL RESEARCH: SITE AND OWNERSHIP HISTORY

1. Summary

A program of primary background research was carried out prior to the Phase II field investigations. The main objective of this research was to establish the configuration of the property and the roads through time. U.S. Route 13 currently follows the alignment of the DuPont Highway of 1917-1923, which in turn occupied the site of the "State Road" established in 1796 (see John Milner Associates, Inc. 2005:5, 14, 16). The history of widening and dualization of the road is important in establishing the degree of past encroachment of the highway onto, or the effect of construction on, the Boyd Property. Sources of this information included road returns, the Delaware Department of Transportation Annual Reports, and as-built drawings of this section of the road. Review of the as-builts provided to the consultant by DelDOT show a house, barns, a windmill and other structures still standing in the1920s and 1930s. The current southbound lane of U.S. Route 13 is on the line of the original DuPont Highway. The road was dualized in, or shortly after, 1932 by adding the northbound lanes to the east.

The history and configuration of the Boyd property was researched through deed and census research, and through review of secondary historical sources and aerial photographs. This research revealed John Boyd immigrated from Coleraine, County Londonderry, Ireland, to New Castle, Delaware in 1791. He subsequently married Mary S. Read, the daughter of Thomas Read, a Presbyterian minister and himself the son of Irish immigrants. In 1812 Thomas Read sold a large parcel of land to John Boyd, land that Read had purchased piecemeal beginning in 1790. Boyd's Corner is on this land, which remained in the family for three generations until 1877.

The 1849 Rea and Price *Map of New Castle County, Delaware* (Figure 3.1) shows the intersection with John Boyd's house and a store located to the northwest of the intersection. The 1868 Beers map (Figure 3.2) shows the Boyd family still in possession of the intersection. By 1881 the location had been named Boyd's Corner and is shown as such on the Hopkins map of that year (Figure 3.3). In 1923/5 (the final digit is illegible) and 1932, when the DuPont Highway was dualized, the Boyd compound was drawn in detail, containing a house and six outbuildings: a chicken house, garage, barn, pump shed, windmill and a frame barn, arrayed from south to north on the west side of the highway. Mrs. Thelma Sartin, the wife of G.W. Sartin remembers her husband's childhood home (the former store) being moved east of U.S. Route 13, behind the Wawa convenience store. She also remembered the house later being demolished as a result of the construction of State Route 1.

Repositories consulted included the State Historic Preservation Office, the Delaware State Archives, the Delaware Historical Society, DelDOT, the University of Delaware and the Odessa Library. Records of the store's ownership were identified. A large number of store license documents were located in the Delaware State Archives.

2. Early Deeds and the "Appoquinimink Road"

Discussion with Gladys Lester and review of her research on the property and the area raised some interesting issues about the location of the property and the earlier alignments of U.S. Route 13. These proved to be directly relevant to some of the recovered archaeological data.

In 1697, William Patterson sold 150 acres on the south side of the Augustine Creek in St. George's Hundred to Thomas Rothwell. These 150 acres were conveyed in two adjacent tracts that were bounded on the north by the Augustine Creek and on the west by the "Appoquinimink Road," a rough predecessor to U.S. Route 13 (New Castle County Deeds B1/185 and T1/211). Nearly every subsequent deed of sale for this 150-acre farm, until 1884 when Charles S. Boyd sold the property to James Raymond Claghorn, described the road as the *western* boundary of the property (New Castle County Deed X10/39). On the surface, this would seem to place the modern northwest quadrant of Boyd's Corner outside of the bounds of the land being transferred – and therefore outside of Boyd family ownership- since the road runs on the *east* side of the site.

These deed bounds contradict most other available evidence. A title search on the lot at the northwest corner of Boyd's Corner produced a chain of title that clearly and definitively linked the modern parcel to the 1697 and subsequent deeds in which the road is described as the western boundary. Moreover, historic map evidence undoubtedly shows the Boyd family owning land on the northwest corner of the intersection. What then accounts for the discrepancy? Did the Boyd family actually own land at the northwest corner of Boyd's Corner?

A deed executed in 1759 provides a clue. In 1759, the sheriff of New Castle County seized the 150-acre tract, which was then owned by Francis Land. The sheriff then sold 70 acres out of those 150 acres to James Piper. The deed offered a description of this new tract in which one line of the property is described as traveling in a northeasterly direction to the "Kings Road" (New Castle County Deed T1/211). This most certainly transferred property on the ***west*** side of King's Road from Francis Land to James Piper. James Piper eventually acquired the rest of the 150-acre tract as well, and in subsequent deeds of sale, the 150-acre tract was again described according to its original account as bounded on the west by the Kings Road/Appoquinimink Road.

A shifting road alignment, rather than shifting property boundaries, is the most viable explanation for the inconsistency in the property descriptions. In the 17th century the "Appoquinimink Road" was apparently situated to the west of modern-day U.S. Route 13 and shifted to the east sometime before the description of the 70 acres was written in 1756. Thus the modern northwest corner of Boyd's Corner was once indeed situated within the boundaries of the 150-acre farm.

3. Ownership to 1812

There is no firm evidence to suggest that any structures were situated on the northwest corner of Boyd's Corner before 1812. Samuel Mahoe owned the property from 1727 to 1733. Archaeological investigations in advance of the construction of State Route 1 established the location of what was probably his house on the south bank of Augustine Creek, well to the north of Boyd's Corner. The archaeological study concluded that the house went out of use after the Mahoes sold the property (Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. 1998).

This certainly makes sense. Subsequent owner James Piper, a shopkeeper, lived outside of the farm in a house at the intersection of the Kings Road and the Road from Bohemia Manor to Reedy Island – which was then probably located well to the south of the present intersection of U.S. Route 13 and Boyd's Corner Road, although currently ongoing research for the U.S. 301 project may modify this conclusion (see Hunter Research Inc. 2009 Chapter 4)

After James' Piper's death, his wife Susannah continued to live in the area until her death around 1780. There are three possibilities for the location of her home: first, she may have stayed in the family home to the south of present Boyd's Corner. Although this had been sold to John Golden, a deed was not formally executed until 1784, and Susannah could have remained in the home as a condition of the original purchase (New Castle County Orphans Court Records F1/303; New Castle County Deed F2/98). She may have lived briefly in the old Mahoe house on Augustine Creek, or she may have lived elsewhere on the 70 acres that James Piper had purchased in 1759, possibly within the project area (New Castle County Deed T1/211).

Upon James Piper's death, his land was divided among his children: John, Ruth, Hannah, Mary and Margaret. In the following years the Reverend Thomas Read purchased the Pipers' shares piecemeal. In 1790 Ruth sold her interest directly to Thomas Read. Subsequently, John and Mary sold their shares to Robert Haughey whose estate sold the interest to Thomas Read. Likewise Hannah and Mary sold their shares to William Frazer who transferred interest to Thomas Read (New Castle County Deed N3/128). Thomas Read's daughter Mary S. married John Boyd and thus, in 1812 Thomas Read sold full interest to the entire property to Boyd (New Castle County Deed N3/128).

4. The Boyd Ownership (1812-1877) and After

John Boyd built a "stone house" and a store on his property shortly after he purchased it in 1812 (New Castle County Board of Assessments 1813, 1816). The store was certainly in operation in 1831, for that year Charles Foster, collector of St. George's Hundred, wrote "A list of the number of retailers of furren [*sic*] goods & merchendize [*sic*]" stating that John Boyd ran a store "near the Trap." Boyd is the only merchant listed in this location; the others were located in Middletown, Cantwells Bridge, Port Penn, and Summit Bridge (Foster 1831, and see below, Chapter 6). Boyd likely operated the store until his death in 1837, as the following year an inventory of his goods lists "sundry items in store room" but does not, unfortunately, provide details (New Castle County Probate Records, John Boyd).

In his will, John Boyd divided his real estate amongst his four sons. Thomas J. Boyd received one half of one-eighth interest, John R. Boyd received three-eighths interest, a two-eighths interest passed to William S. Boyd and the last two and one-half eighths interest was left to Charles S. Boyd (New Castle County Probate Records, John Boyd). Though his brothers retained interest in their father's property at Boyd's Corner, John R. Boyd seems to have actually settled on the property and continued running the store, as indicated on Rea and Price's *Map of the State of Delaware* published in 1849. John R. Boyd purchased the full interest in the property from his siblings in two deeds executed in 1852 and 1860 (New Castle County Deeds K6/442 and I7/121).

Boyd remained on the property until 1875. While he continued to farm the 150 acres, it is uncertain how long Boyd's store remained in operation. The United States Census of 1850, 1860 and 1870 listed farming as his primary occupation and Boyd was indeed a prosperous farmer – by 1870, his farm was valued

at $20,000 (United States Census 1850, 1860, 1870). During this time, Boyd was able to enlarge and alter his home at Boyd's Corner and also to build another house farther to the east, outside of the project area on the other side of the King's Road.

Charles Boyd, of Philadelphia, owned the property briefly until 1877 when he sold it to James Raymond Claghorn (New Castle County Deed X10/39). A deed executed between Claghorn and James Padley in 1884 lends further support to the idea that the Boyds certainly owned land on the modern west side of U.S. Route 13. The deeds of sale for the modern parcel at the northwest corner of Boyd's corner can be traced directly to this 1884 deed which clearly describes the 150-acre farm as "being divided into two lots by the road from Odessa to St. George's" (New Castle County Deed F13/500).

5. The Sartin Ownership (1910-1966) and After

The farm passed through a number of hands until 1910 when George W. Sartin purchased the property. At this time, the property contained a frame dwelling house and other buildings (New Castle County Deed D23/76). The Sartins' house and outbuildings remained on the site of the former Boyd Store until the mid-20th century. The house was removed from the site between 1968 and 1988 in advance of road improvements at the intersection of U.S. Route 13 and Boyd's Corner Road (New Castle County Deed L77/506). The site of the former Boyd Store then became and remains a vacant lawn associated with the Parkway Motel, which had been built to the north between 1952 and 1954 (New Castle County Deed N52/111; Delaware DataMil 1954).

B. HISTORICAL RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE DATA RECOVERY

Since few records were identified during the Phase I and II stages of archaeological investigation that shed light on the details of the commercial enterprise at the Boyd Store and House Site, other options were considered for better understanding the role of the store within the wider contexts of the mercantile activity in St. George's Hundred and New Castle County during the period that the Boyd Store is believed to have been in operation.

One of the options was the analysis of store account books from the store of Outten Davis in Cantwell's Bridge (later Middletown), surviving in the Winterthur Library for the years between 1802 and 1813, and those of Andrew Ford of the village of St. George's, for the years 1808-1818 and held at the Delaware Public Archives. This study would have complemented the earlier statistical analysis of the account books of Jonathan Allee and Benjamin Combe of Duck Creek Hundred, Kent County (De Cunzo et al. 1992), and analysis of the account books of William Polk's General Store in St. George's, Delaware (Fanelli 1981). On examination of the manuscript documents, it was determined that the statistical analysis of either the Davis or the Ford account books, to the extent undertaken by De Cunzo et al. or Fanelli, would be extremely time-intensive and would only increase our knowledge of store operations in a minute, incremental manner.

During the process of Phase II research on the Boyd Store, archival materials related to the licensing of Delaware stores were encountered at the Delaware Public Archives. These records were found to contain material useful for the present research project for the years between 1822 and *circa* 1835. This important

and largely untapped source was therefore subjected to the detailed analysis described in Chapter 6 below. In addition, two store inventories from the 1820s were transcribed and analyzed, and additional research undertaken on regional store architecture.