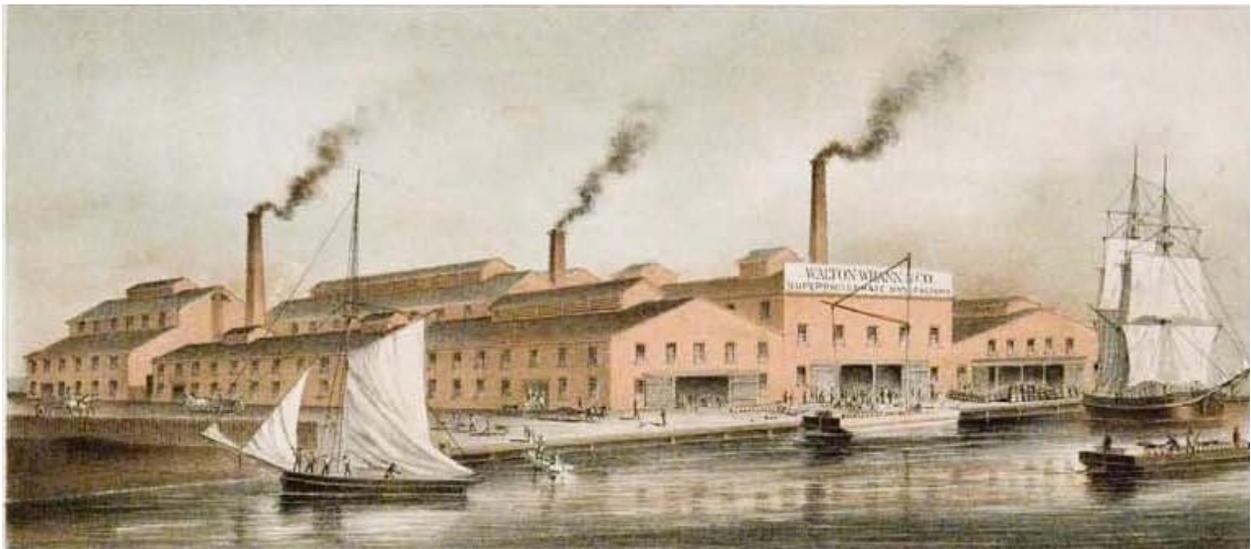


PHASE IA ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Christina River Bridge New Castle County, Delaware



Prepared for:



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
800 Bay Road
Dover, Delaware 19901

Prepared by:



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October 2011

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AGREEMENT NO. 1538, WORK ORDER #2

PREPARED FOR:

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ABSTRACT

The Delaware Department of Transportation sponsored a Phase IA archaeological investigation for the Christina River Bridge project in Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware. The proposed project provides a pedestrian and vehicular link within the Wilmington Riverfront area, which has been undergoing a program of urban revitalization. The purpose of this Phase IA study was to assess the likelihood that important archaeological sites might be present in the general study area, particularly in the Orange B alignment, which is the preferred alternative among various alternatives that have been evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act. The area of potential effects for Orange B was defined as the area of direct construction impacts and additional areas for temporary activity, such as staging and storage yards for the bridge construction.

The study methods focused on archival research and cartographic analysis, using a broad variety of sources. The primary sources examined include previous cultural resource studies; maps, atlases, and fire insurance maps; city directories; river dredging records; and various planning documents. Many of the maps were converted to a Geographic Information System to allow comparison of historical and modern conditions. Field investigation consisted of a walkover survey.

The study area was outside the Wilmington city limits until the 1980s, as it generally consisted of low-lying marsh that flanked the Christina River. Industrial development of the western side of the river began in the late nineteenth century after construction of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad (PW&B). Notable properties that developed in the study area include the Jessup & Moore Paper Company and the Walton, Whann & Co. Superphosphate Works. Jessup & Moore Paper Company purchased 70 acres in 1879 and began producing pulp for papermaking. Served by a siding from the PW&B and a wharf on the Christina River, the sprawling industrial complex employed 130 workers and produced 24 tons of pulp per day by 1888. The Walton, Whann & Co. Superphosphate Works began as a bone mill as early as 1861 and developed into a major producer of fertilizer. The works covered a 6-acre tract on the Christina River, where it received raw material from oceangoing vessels that carried sulphur from Italy, bone from Texas and South America, and phosphate rock from South Carolina. Today, this area could be characterized as a redeveloped brownfield, with no trace of its historical industrial character, save for a few cranes, railcars, and remnants of industrial structures that decorate the revitalized landscape.

On the eastern side of the river, the study area remained largely undeveloped until the early twentieth century. Lacking a railroad connection, this area developed after construction of the Wilmington Causeway (South Market Street). Commercial roadside development and light industry accelerated with the expansion of automobile traffic on South Market Street. Urban renewal is expanding from Wilmington's historical downtown area but has not yet overtaken the eastern side of the study area.

This study concludes that there is little, if any, likelihood that significant archaeological resources are present in the study area. Some features associated with nineteenth- and twentieth-century industries may be present, particularly on the western side of the Christina River, but these resources would not be expected to retain sufficient integrity or information potential to warrant archaeological documentation. No further archaeological investigations are recommended for the Orange B alignment of the Christina River Bridge project.

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