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DelDOT

BYWAYS TO THE PAST



Delaware Department of
Transportation
Division of Highways
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FACT SHEET

CUBBAGE POND MILL SITE (7S-C-61)

December 3, 1997

COUNTY
Sussex

PROJECT
Replacement of Bridges
3-936 and 3-937 on Road
214 over Cubbage Pond

HIGHLIGHTS
Phase II Archeology

THE ARCHEOLOGICAL FIND

While construction was underway to replace Bridges 3-936 and 3-937 over Cubbage Pond in Sussex County, highway construction workers discovered a deeply buried brick foundation. The structure is located along Road 214, and was built atop an old earthen dam across Cedar Creek. Alert to the possibilities of unearthing deeper archaeological clues to Delaware's past, the workers ceased construction and contacted DelDOT's archeologist, Kevin Cunningham.

DelDOT's check-and-balance system for preserving Delaware's historical past was put into place, and archeologists and historians were enlisted to examine the recorded history of activity and ownership of the mill and uncover clues to the importance of the site.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND—THE CUBBAGE POND MILL SITE

To DelDOT's archeologists, the remnants of the brick foundation at Cubbage Pond appears to be related to the grist mill owned by William Draper as early as 1808. The locals called it the "Old Mill," then. It appears that the "Old Mill" may have burned down and been reconstructed at least once during the 19th century. Historic research also revealed that the mill was still operating during the first decade of the 20th century, under the ownership of F.W. Davis.

HISTORY—ABOUT DELAWARE'S MILLS

After the American Revolution, Delaware's population moved from farming communities to industrial centers, where jobs were more plentiful. Grist mills, cotton mills, saw mills, and woolen mills rapidly became industrial hubs surrounded by taverns, shops, and stores to serve workers and their families.

(over)

A number of grist and saw mills were formerly located along Cedar Creek in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Mills require a stream as a water source which, when dammed, creates a mill pond to drive water wheels and, in turn, power the mill. Mill dams often became ready-made causeways for travelers who needed to cross the mill pond.

Because few mills have been studied in Delaware's Lower Coastal Plain and most town-centered mills were abandoned by the early 20th century, the opportunity to examine the Cabbage Pond Mill Site is especially meaningful. Additional study will enhance our interpretation of early industry in the area of Cedar Creek Hundred during this time period.

In the interest of understanding and recording this meaningful "byway to the past" for Delaware's future generations, DelDOT has temporarily halted bridge reconstruction at this site until clues to the past have been revealed.

As archeological excavations uncover evidence of the mill at Cabbage Pond, we will all gain information about the importance of water-powered industries on Delaware's past inhabitants—information that might otherwise be lost forever.

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CABBAGE POND MILL SITE

SUSSEX COUNTY

DELAWARE