

PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The H. Grant Tenancy site was discovered during Phase I and II archeological investigations conducted during the fall of 1983. Archival research had indicated the presence of a structure, apparently located in the approximate location of the site, on a map of the vicinity of Philadelphia published by Pomeroy and Beers in 1860. This map covered the Wilmington and Brandywine Railroad routes for New Castle County, Delaware and Delaware and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania.

A large quantity of artifacts were noted in the plowzone during the Phase I and II investigations, and testing isolated several subsurface features which suggested the presence of a structure. The site's placement in the early to mid 19th century was based primarily on the high percentage of pearlware in the assemblage (Barse 1985).

As a result of the intensive survey excavations, the H. Grant Tenancy site was determined to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion D, 36 CFR, Part 800 (Appendix I). It was considered to be significant in that intact subsurface archeological features were present which were felt to contain potential information concerning changing economic patterns observed in the early part of the 19th century. In addition, based on the hypothesis that the site represented a tenant house, it was felt that the assemblage could provide valuable information concerning the nature of small tenant sites, as these are poorly known, both archeologically and historically (Barse 1985). The tenant house hypothesis was based on the results of the archival research which showed the name H. Grant associated with several properties in the area.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was drawn from the original hypothesis that 7NC-B-6 was a tenant farm.

In response to changing economic conditions in the beginning of the 19th century, land tenure became consolidated into the hands of fewer individuals near urban areas (Bidwell and Falconer 1941:242). Landowners often had business interests connected with industrialization or commerce in urban centers and frequently lived in the city. To maintain agricultural production, a system of tenancy was employed. Tenants were probably drawn from groups of lower economic status in both urban and rural population, but very little historic research has been devoted to these individuals and little is known of their economic or cultural background. Likewise few remnants of their material culture, including their housing, have survived. Based on the findings of the Phase I and Phase II studies (Barse 1985), it was originally felt that the H. Grant Tenancy site represented the remains of such tenancy and that an examination of the material culture could provide valuable information about such sites. Because the site was felt to contain structural remains,

it was felt that it might be possible to learn more about the spatial arrangement and relationships of the dwelling and other service buildings such as storage sheds, animal pens, privies, etc. to show how these compare to the large complexes of the owners, many of which are still extant. It was also felt that an examination of the discarded material possessions from the site would allow a more precise characterization of the social and economic status of the occupants.

The methodology (which will be discussed in more detail in the Methodology section) was designed to gather data to address these and other questions. The archival research was designed to attempt to identify the occupants of the site and to develop a more general set of data concerning the social and economic conditions under which the occupants, hypothesized as tenant farmers, lived. It was expected that excavations would provide information concerning the characteristics of refuse disposal patterns for 19th century sites such as this. Machine stripping of the area was designed to uncover a maximum number of undisturbed features and deposits which would increase the data base on intrasite patterning and gained from the controlled surface collection. The controlled surface collection preceded the machine stripping and was used as a guide for this activity as well as for providing an independent data set regarding internal structure. An examination of patterning in the distribution of economically significant attributes in the artifacts was made and then compared to data from other sites to see if there are broad patterns which reflect the economic conditions of the occupants.

REGIONAL CULTURE HISTORY

The following is a brief synopsis of the regional cultural prehistory and history.

Delaware's regional prehistory has been subdivided by Custer (1980, 1983) into four major time periods. They are the Paleo Indian Period (ca. 12,000 B.C. - 6500 B.C.), the Archaic Period (6500 B.C. - 3000 B.C.), the Woodland I Period (3000 B.C. - A.D. 1000) and the Woodland II Period (A.D. 1000-1650). The Contact Period, dating from A.D. 1650 to 1750, follows the four major time periods. After about 1750, the aboriginal population in Delaware had ceased to exist as a relatively unacculturated way of life.

Paleo Indian Period

This time period dates to the terminal Late Pleistocene and early Holocene climatic eras, a time that marks the final retreat of the glaciers and the gradual development of modern climatic regimes. The Paleo Indian climate consisted of alternating wet and dry conditions characteristic of the Late Pleistocene and early Holocene and which supported the various extinct species of large game mammals such as mastodon, mammoth and moose. These animals were adapted to the various vegetational communities that