

## 4.0 HISTORICAL RESEARCH CONTEXTS

Research contexts provide the basis for determining the kinds of data collected and the analyses performed given the specific characteristics of the resource and the nature of the investigation. Research contexts also establish a standard for assessing the research potential of archaeological resources which are usually evaluated for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Broad research contexts must be identified and specific research domains, themes, and questions must be defined. Research contexts indicate the types of site information that may be important and the level of site integrity required for eligibility determinations. The research contexts provide the framework to assess the information potential of the Jones site (7NC-J-204), and focus the types of data collected and the kinds of analyses performed.

### 4.1 HISTORIC RESEARCH CONTEXTS

With the goal of contributing knowledge to the broader cultural patterns contained within the research domains, the Jones Site was investigated within temporal, spatial (i.e., geographical), and thematic historical contexts. The time periods pertaining to the Jones Site may include *1730-1770 – Intensified and Durable Occupation*, but clearly includes *1770-1830: Transformation from Colony to State* and *1830-1880: Industrialization and Early Urbanization* (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). The geographical area is the Upper Peninsula.

#### 4.1.1 1730-1770 – Intensified and Durable Occupation

During this period, Delaware transitioned from a frontier to a commercial agricultural colony. Settlement moved inland from the coast and the early trading centers of Philadelphia, Wilmington, and New Castle. The population of the region grew, agricultural techniques and trade networks were became increasingly sophisticated, especially with the establishment of the Brandywine Mills near Wilmington in the mid- to late 1700s. Some of the Phase II historical ceramics recovered from the site were manufactured by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the brick clamp was more than likely constructed prior to 1850.

The key foci for this period are the interrelated topics of architecture and land use, foodways, and self-sufficiency and market participation (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). Organization of the landscape includes not only identifying activity areas, but also use, disuse and reuse of landscape features. Items produced on-site versus use of trade goods will contribute information on trade and transport networks, household economic strategies, market participation, and self-sufficiency, and will assist in placing the household in a regional context. Household composition will be addressed primarily through archival research and supported by the identification of gender-, age-, and/or ethnic-related artifacts.

While we can't rule out occupation of the site from this period, on the whole, the evidence points to people using the site during later periods.

#### 4.1.2 1770-1830 – Early Industrialization

De Cunzo and Catts (1990) consider the discussion for the prior period to be applicable to the study of all later periods, while identifying additional trends and processes. The agricultural economy recovered following the American Revolution, then declined due to soil depletion, while industrial development expanded. The Jones Site was studied for evidence of change during the 1770-1830 period, e.g., changes in farming type due to environmental factors or to changes in ownership and/or tenancy; socioeconomic changes of occupants; perhaps even farm abandonment. These changes have implications for community growth, particularly with the growing influence of the mercantile middle class.

The Jones Site was compared to other farms of the period in an attempt to reconstruct the operation of farms during and after an agricultural crisis. A corollary focus was to study the effects of the growth of industry on the farm and on the nearby community, as reflected in changing settlement patterns, and through availability of new products resulting from improved transportation and trade networks. In addition, the brick clamp at the site was compared to other such features both in Delaware and other states.

We did find evidence that the site was used during this time period. People made bricks on the site on at least one occasion, and dug a well lined with barrels that may have provided water for work surrounding farm out buildings as well as the brick making. The site seems to have been abandoned for a time following the 1820s.

#### 4.1.3 1830-1880 – Industrialization and Early Urbanization

This period was remarkable as an era of change. De Cunzo and Catts (1990) identify several benchmark influences, including: 1) the transportation revolution, beginning with the construction of turnpikes and canals, and ending with the coming of the railroad (i.e., the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad in 1832; and the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad in 1839); 2) the transformation of the agricultural economy, replacing grains with dairying and the raising of fruits and vegetables; 3) the Civil War and emancipation; and 4) the Industrial Revolution. The improvements in transportation made a wider variety of products available quickly, and irrevocably altered demographical distribution when towns sprang up along railroads. The technological innovation of mass-production made products available at a lesser cost. The end of the war irrevocably altered the agricultural base, replacing slave labor with wage labor, and leading to the establishment of free-black communities.

After a period of abandonment, the Jones site seems to have been reoccupied at about mid-century, when several parcels were combined to form a larger farm called “Australia.” The owners or their tenants, or farm hands dug a new well during this period, and possibly erected a set of fences. They may also have installed ceramic drains to help improve the soil.

## 4.2 HISTORICAL RESEARCH TOPICS

Four research domains are pertinent to potential types of occupations at the historical resources located along the Smyrna to Pine Tree Corners corridor: Domestic Economy, Manufacturing and Trade, Landscape, and Social Group Identity, Behavior, and Interaction (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). Research themes, questions and datasets applicable to these domains for specific time periods have been identified (Bedell 1999, DeCunzo and Catts 1990, DeCunzo and Garcia 1992) (Table 4-1).

The period of significance for the Jones Site is 1767 – through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the ceramics recovered from the site date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and taking into consideration ceramic time-lag, could have been disposed of well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Jones family owned the property containing the site from 1768-1805, and may have been responsible for the disposal of at least some of the artifacts – if not by direct occupation of the land, perhaps by the processes of making improvements to the property.

The Jones Site qualifies as an Agricultural Tenancy property type (De Cunzo and Catts 1990; Siders et al. 1991). The landowners throughout the period of significance for the Jones Site lived elsewhere, so domestic material within site boundaries relates to tenant activities. The Jones Site is located within 600-800 feet west of the now defunct Old King's Highway, a major transportation route established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Location within proximity to major overland transportation routes was a critical factor in the siting of farmsteads during the late-18<sup>th</sup> century and increasingly throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of the brick clamp and clay mixing pit on the north end of the site attests to rural brickmaking; the small size of the clamp suggests short-term use and/or production of a limited amount of brick for a hearth or chimney. Only one other rural brick clamp has been recorded in Delaware (Custer 1981); as such, this resource provided a rare opportunity to explore this type of home industry.

Data recovery investigations at the Jones Site focused on the following objectives: 1) to determine the chronology of historical occupation and eventual abandonment; 2) to generate demographic, ethnic and socio-economic information regarding the site inhabitants; 3) to locate and describe any structures which may have existed within the site during the period of significance; 4) to determine site function and land use; and 5) to identify patterns which may reflect the prevailing behavior of the community and/or the region.

Data obtained from the Jones Site were viewed within the broader historical perspectives of 1) increasing agricultural tenancy in central Delaware; 2) the evolution of agricultural change and reform as an outgrowth of agricultural crisis, beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; and 3) the impact of agricultural reform and improved transportation networks on local and regional economic development. Comparative studies of tenant-occupied sites in Delaware includes the William Strickland Plantation (Catts et al. 1994), Benjamin-Wynn and Wilson-Lewis Farmsteads (Grettlar et al. 1996), Thomas Williams Site (Catts and Custer 1990), and Robert Ferguson House (Coleman et al. 1983), as well as owner-occupied sites such as the Moore-Taylor Farm Site (Grettlar et al. 1996), Buchanan-Savin Farm (Scholl et al. 1994) and Wilson-Slack Site (Coleman et al. 1985). Sites containing a manufacturing and/or industrial component were examined for inter-site comparisons.

#### 4.2.1 Domestic Economy

Data recovery at the Jones Site examined the impact of agricultural growth until 1800, followed by agricultural decline and industrial development after 1800. The artifact assemblage mainly suggests site occupation beginning in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century and extending into the 20th century; datable contexts allowed for separate occupations to be isolated, however, too little domestic material was recovered to explore household consumption patterns; in fact, it is unlikely that the site was a dwelling site at all. Soil chemical testing was expected to assist in defining specialized activity areas, which may include features such as trash pits, privies, sheet middens, or wells. Chemical analysis of the brick found on site was analyzed to explore a link with the brick clamp.

#### 4.2.2 Manufacturing and Trade

This research domain encompasses rural farm sites as places of production. Site location and use, alterations of the landscape, and structural features composing the physical site are identified as the key aspects included in studying manufacturing sites (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). This includes viewing the site both as a workplace, where the archaeological record may contain evidence of raw materials and finished products; and as a locus of agricultural production. Brick making took place on the site on at least one occasion, probably between 1760 and 1820. Although the archival record lacks specifics, the site was used in some capacity for agricultural production. In addition, the presence of an intact wooden barrel at the bottom of a barrel-lined well (Feature 268) provides some information on cooperage, or barrel manufacture. Evidence of local rural manufacturing processes was concentrated in Block A, associated with a possible brick clamp complex. Data was obtained on the form, construction, and siting of the brick clamp structure, which would have been influenced by technology, environment, and local customs. Archaeological research conducted at other Delaware manufacturing sites such as the Wilson-Slack Site and the Mermaid Sites (Coleman et al. 1985; Catts et al. 1994) were used for comparisons. Brick clamp studies from Virginia sites were examined, including at the Westover Site in Charles City (Heite 1967) and at the John Page Site in Williamsburg (Metz et al. 1998), and one identified in Maryland during the Milfield Survey at St. Mary's City (Riordan 1992).

The brick clamp site is unusual as it may be the only clamp discovered containing all of the elements usually associated with this site type (i.e. mixing pit, production area, and firing location). The information derived from the archaeological investigations can be compared and integrated to other states and research issues. Relevant research goals for study of a brick clamp include:

- determining the type of kiln and other processes utilized;
- determining the size of the kiln in order to estimate production volume;
- identifying details of the operation such as wood used for firing, and the nature of associated structures; and

- obtaining sufficient and appropriate samples to use for technological analyses of the bricks, in order to address questions concerning trade network patterns and brick source for specific buildings (Wayne 1993:98).

### 4.2.3 Landscape

This research domain was explored both from an intra-site perspective (i.e., land use; yard proximics) and through inter-site comparisons with other tenant-occupied, owner-occupied, and manufacturing sites. The Jones Site contained evidence of ephemeral historical occupation related to overlapping themes of agricultural tenancy and historical settlement patterns, and rural manufacturing processes. The brick clamp complex in Block A represents a discrete manufacturing location for brick; however, the clamp itself is relatively small suggesting, perhaps, limited production, limited manpower, a single episode, or all three. The archaeological remains in Blocks B and C suggest either an ephemeral occupation such as a short-term tenancy or may indicate outlying features associated with a more extensive occupation beyond the project area. However, the features in Blocks B and C may not be related to domestic use at all and may be a supporting extension of the brick manufacturing activities occurring in Block A, or other agricultural outbuildings. The major focus of this research was to examine variables of site selection related to the activity areas, to identify the interrelationships between the two activity areas whether they are industrial, domestic, a combination of both or neither, to demonstrate the types of archaeological and chemical signatures associated with small ephemeral historical sites, and to define the research parameters of such sites. Basic analyses to address the interwoven research issues of agricultural tenancy/settlement patterns and rural manufacturing included feature, artifact and spatial analyses. Comparisons to other sites assisted in interpreting findings at the Jones Site, as well as contributed to our understanding of local and regional settlement patterns of middling tenant farms.

Soil chemical testing at the Jones Site was expected to produce valuable results from two perspectives. First, distributions of datable contexts and artifact types in conjunction with soil chemical analyses (phosphorus, calcium, potassium, magnesium, and pH level) could assist in defining spatial patterning (e.g., brick firing, livestock enclosures, building locations, processing, trash disposal, domestic yards). Second, soil sampling at the Jones Site tested the patterning identified at other sites (e.g., Thomas Williams Site, William Strickland Plantation, Buchanan-Savin Farm, and Wilson-Slack Agricultural Works Complex) where specific chemicals are consistently associated with particular activity areas. The impact of agricultural crisis and reform on the landscape was explored, suggested by the use of fertilizers and new machinery, changes from crop to dairy production, or even farm abandonment.

Table 4-1. Historic Research Domains, Themes, Questions and Datasets

| Research Domain  | Theme                   | Research Question   | Dataset  |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| Domestic Economy | Agricultural Production | <p>What types of French drain systems were utilized in Delaware?</p> <p>Did the construction of a French drain at the Jones site contribute to higher agricultural yields?</p> <p>Was the cost of the French drain system offset by the increase in agricultural yield?</p> | <p>Datasets needed to address agricultural production and French drain usages include archival records of French drain use and construction, temporally discrete and intact French drain systems demonstrating construction techniques and layouts, and associated temporally and functionally diagnostic artifacts.</p>   |
|                  | Agricultural Tenancy    | <p>Were the types of occupations at the Jones Site related to owner occupants or tenants?</p> <p>Was there a difference in the types of agricultural production between the owner occupants and the tenants?</p>  | <p>Economic practices through time are investigated by studying the layout of a rural farmstead complex, as represented by building foundations and archival information. Other archaeological and historical investigations in Delaware have compared the layout and square footage of tenant and owner occupied rural houses, as well as the configuration of the farm complexes from which they stemmed (e.g., Scholl et al. 1994; Grettler et al. 1996). Datasets required to address economic practices include archival research (i.e., deeds, tax records), archival maps identifying building function, discrete clusters of temporally and functionally diagnostic artifacts used to determine building function (i.e, refuse disposal areas), vertical stratigraphy with datable contexts, horizontal distribution of temporally and functionally diagnostic materials, and discrete soil chemical analysis.</p> |

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
|                         | Consumer Behavior/<br>Lifeways  | What types of food consumption patterns are evident from the different occupations of the historical sites? Were food choices based on cost, ethnicity, time period or site function? Were more food items produced and processed locally at different periods of time? Were more food items procured from town at different periods of time? Were containers reused and adapted or discarded? | Datasets required to address consumer behavior include archival research (i.e., deeds, tax records), discrete clusters of temporally and functionally diagnostic artifacts used to determine consumption patterns (i.e. refuse disposal areas), vertical stratigraphy with datable contexts, horizontal distribution of temporally and functionally diagnostic materials, economic indexing of vessel remains, and faunal and floral remains including butchering marks on bone (e.g., farm butchered [chopped or hand sawn] versus commercial butchering [electric saw]). |
| Manufacturing and Trade | Trade and Exchange Networks     | To what extent were the occupants engaged in local and regional markets? Did this change through time as a result of increasing accessibility or socio-economic factors?   | Datasets needed to address trade and exchange include industrialized goods such as cookware, serving ware, bottles, and personal items with established locations and dates of manufacture.  |
|                         | Rural Industry-Brick Production | How were brick production facilities organized? What functions did they serve? Did technology vary by expertise or intent of use? What types of brick production facilities occur in rural areas? Was brick produced for local domestic needs or for regional commercial use? What was the volume of brick production at the Jones Site?   | Datasets needed to address brick production include archival research (i.e., deeds, tax records), temporally and functionally discrete features, bricks with maker's marks or discrete chemical composition to trace distribution and use, and functionally discrete artifacts associated with production activities.  |
|                         | Rural Industry-Cooperage        | Were barrels produced locally or regionally? Were barrels recycled on a regular basis for food storage or wells? Were specialized forms of barrels constructed for wells?  | Datasets needed to address barrel production include archival research (i.e., deeds, tax records), barrels with intact characteristics such as maker's and manufacturing marks, hoops and nails, barrel measurements, and functionally discrete artifacts associated with production activities.   |
| Landscape               | Site and Social Organization    | Did the organization of site activities change through time at the Jones Site? Do variations in site organization reflect shifts in agricultural practices, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or environmental factors?  | Distributions of temporally and functionally diagnostic features and artifact types provide information concerning site function as a residence, specialized activity area (e.g., livestock raising; tool maintenance), or primary   |

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|-----------------|-------|--|--|
|                 |       | Does the variation in well construction indicate temporal, technological, or social factors? | <p>or secondary disposal areas. Datasets needed to address site function and land use include archival records of farm building layout, locations of temporally and functionally discrete features, and discrete clusters of temporally and functionally diagnostic artifacts suggesting specific use areas.</p> <hr/> <p>Datasets needed to address well construction include archival records of well construction, temporally discrete and intact well features demonstrating construction techniques, and associated temporally and functionally diagnostic artifacts.</p> |