Delaware Department of Transportation

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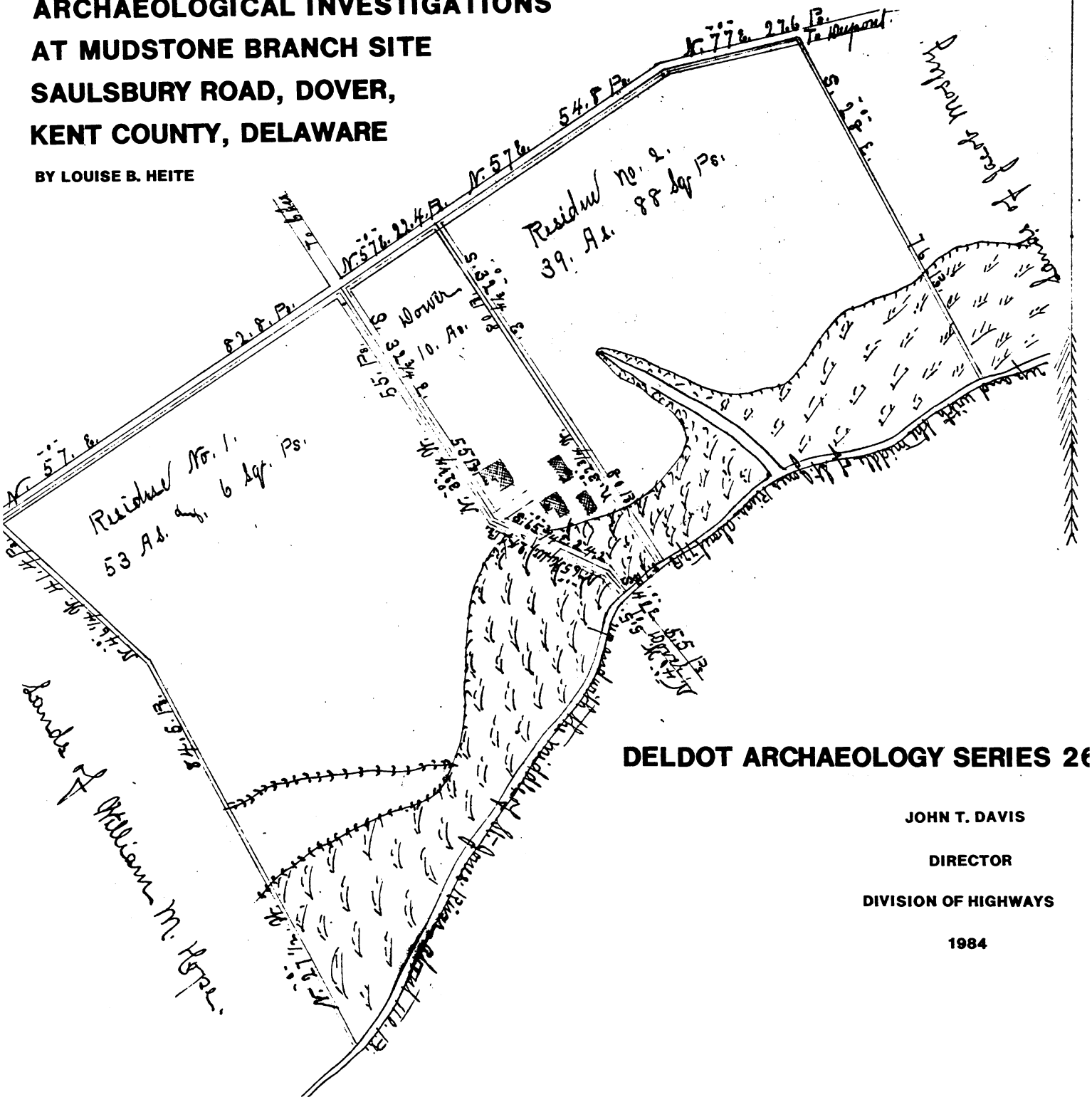
of Transportation

Federal Highway
Administration

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT MUDSTONE BRANCH SITE SAULSBURY ROAD, DOVER, KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

BY LOUISE B. HEITE



DELDOT ARCHAEOLOGY SERIES 26

JOHN T. DAVIS

DIRECTOR

DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

1984

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

AT THE

MUDSTONE BRANCH SITE

SAULSBURY ROAD

DOVER, KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

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DELDOT PROJECT 74-12-ØØ2 ARCHAEOLOGY SERIES No. 26

FHWA FEDERAL AID No. DPS-34(3)

by

Louise B. Heite

Submitted to

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

and

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration

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John T. Davis
Acting Director
Division of Highways

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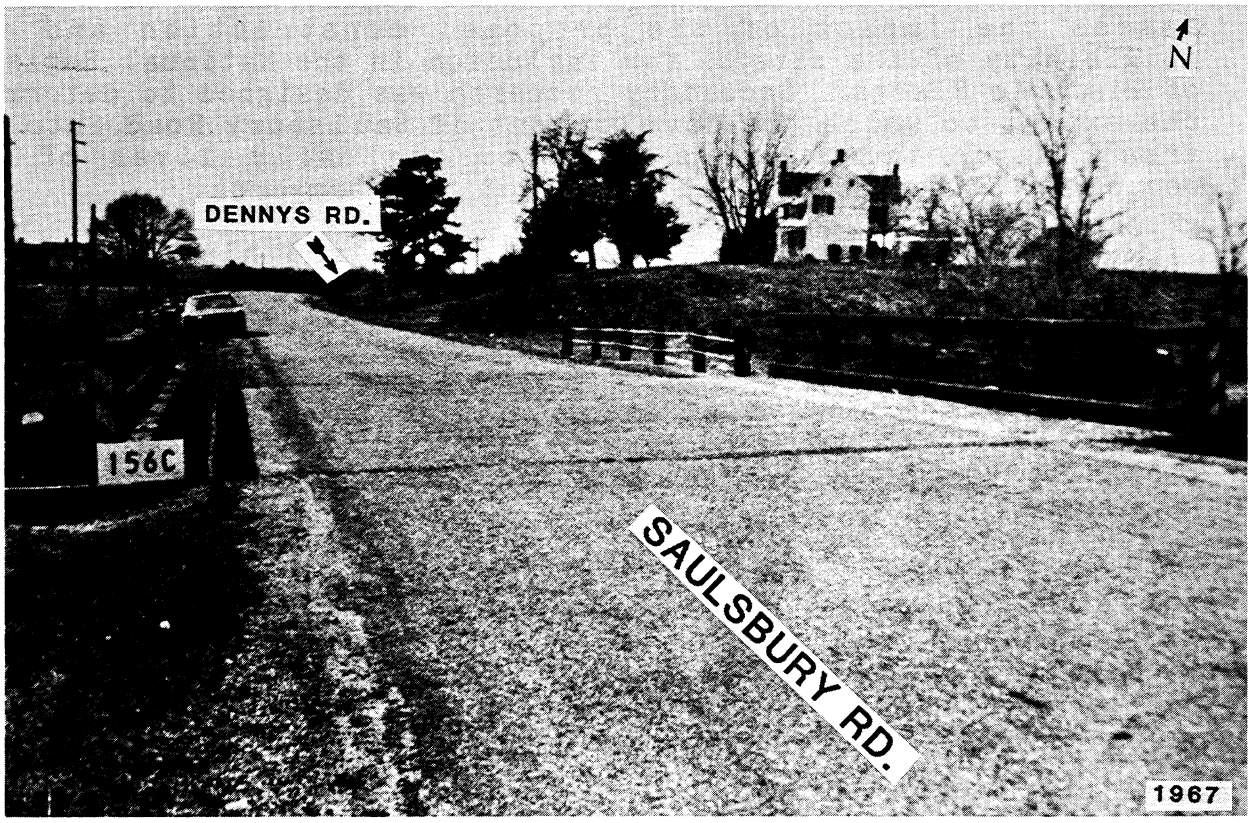
STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
P. O. BOX 778
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

SAULSBURY ROAD - MUDSTONE BRANCH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE



A phase I & II cultural resource survey is being conducted by the Delaware Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, and the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with Heite Consulting of Camden, DE, at the Saulsbury Road - Mudstone Branch archaeological site located southeast of the intersection of Saulsbury and Denny's Roads, Dover. The proposed widening of Saulsbury Road and realignment of the intersection of Saulsbury and Denny's Roads necessitate this cultural resource survey.

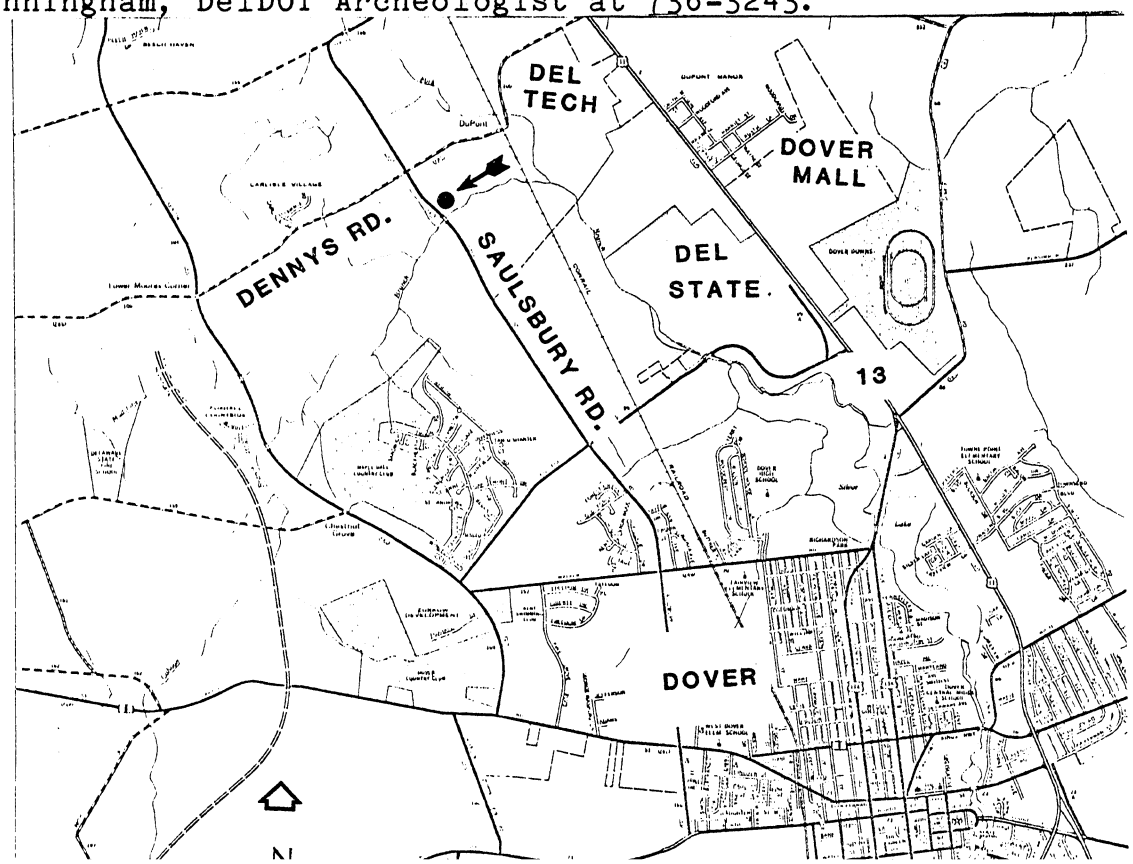
Preliminary archaeological evidence suggests that the knoll upon which the site lies was occupied by prehistoric peoples which may date to the Late Archaic Period (3000 B.C.). Documentary evidence suggests that the farmstead had been occupied at least since the 1840's by both tenants and resident landowners. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, the farmstead was occupied by the William McKee family.

The accompanying photograph shows the house which once stood upon this site as it was in 1967. The building was a standard Delaware vernacular house, a five-bay, two-story structure, one room deep, with a long back wing.

Originally, one entered the farmstead by a long lane leading from Denny's Road. In this photograph, the main entrance to the farmstead is on Saulsbury Road, and the original back porch seems to be the functional main entrance. Also, the main barn is near the front door, which is quite unusual in Delaware farmyard layout.

The primary goals of the site testing investigations are to determine the site(s) antiquity, horizontal and vertical extent, function/use through time, and overall significance in order to assess the impact of the proposed construction and the eligibility of the site(s) for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Secondary research was designed to determine the extent to which the development of Saulsbury Road into the area's major thoroughfare affected the daily lives of the occupants of the house, and layout of the farmyard.

To date, along with the prehistoric and historic period artifacts, the locations of several outbuildings have been located as well as several late nineteenth century and early twentieth century garden plots.

The combination of existing photographs, historic records and archaeological remains presents an opportunity to investigate the lifeways of the prehistoric and historic peoples of central Delaware.

If you would like further information concerning this cultural resource project, please contact Louise Heite, Principal Investigator, at the site on weekday mornings or Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT Archeologist at 736-3243.