4. HUMAN HISTORY

PEOPLE ARRIVED in the Delaware Valley near the end of the last (Wisconsin) glaciation (Kraft 1986:31). Glaciers entrapped so much water that the ocean lay fifty miles east of the present Sandy Hook, New Jersey. As glaciers retreated and the ocean advanced, area ecology changed.

During the ten millenia before European settlement, Delaware's climate evolved from glacial tundra to temperate hardwood forest. Man's adaptation to the changing climate was marked by gradual cultural evolution. Custer and DeSantis (1986) have provided a useful table that correlates human and climatic change:

PREHISTORIC CHRONOLOGY

Dates	Environmental Episode	Cultural Period
8080 BC	Late Glacial	Paleo-Indian /Early Archaic
6540 BC	Pre-Boreal/Boreal	
	Atlantic	Middle Archaic
3110 BC	Sub-Boreal	Late Archaic
810 BC	Sub-Atlantic	Woodland I
AD 1000		Woodland II
AD 1600		

These changes in climate have forced changes in man's subsistence strategies, family structure, and social organization .

PREHISTORY

Mammoths, musk ox, horses, caribou, and walrus provided food for dire wolf, short-faced bear, and other predators. Man was among the smaller competitors in the tundra food chain, but his skills compensated for his physical shortcomings. Nomadic people of this Paleo-Indian period were among the most skilled makers of stone tools in the world. They would travel great distances to quarry the best flinty cobbles from which they made exquisite spearpoints, knives, and small tools.

Paleo - Indian hunting - gathering society lasted until about 6,500 BC, when the Atlantic climate episode and the Archaic period of prehistory began (Custer 1984:31). Northern hardwood forests had replaced the tundra, the ocean had risen, and the climate was warmer. Pleistocene megafauna were replaced by smaller game, which required different hunting techniques and tools.

Archaic people fashioned tools made of quartz, a material that is less tractable than the flinty materials that Paleo people had favored. Ground stone axes and other heavy tools appear during this period.

By 3,000 BC, prehistoric society was decidedly different. Because people had stopped moving around so much, regional cultural differences began to appear in the artifact assemblages. Sedentary lifestyles ultimately led to horticulture, complex religious practices, and the accumulation of more, less portable, material goods. The last prehistoric period, the Woodland, is characterized by larger groups of people living together in villages, using pottery and other heavy or fragile goods that would have been difficult to move from place to place. Woodland people tended to form more or less permanent settlements at places with abundant multiple resources. They sent out hunting parties, but they seldom dispersed whole populations to live off the land in the manner of their hunter-gatherer ancestors.

COLONIAL NEW CASTLE COUNTY

New Castle County was first settled by Europeans during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, first by Swedish settlers and then by the Dutch. Settlement reached the project area after the English takeover in 1664. It was the Quakers, who flooded the colony with settlers after Penn's takeover in 1682, that brought Western civilization to the project area.

Under the Dutch and the Duke of York, local courts had charge of parcelling out the unclaimed land, but the new proprietor soon concentrated authority in his own land office at Philadelphia. The ensuing period was marked by large grants to Philadelphia merchants and speculators, including members of the Penn family, who effectively controlled access to vacant land for another century. One of these tracts was the Manor of Rockland.

The upper Brandywine, including the project area, was one of the areas settled by the first wave of Penn's Quaker settlers. During the eighteenth century, the creek's abundant water power gave rise to flour, saw, and fulling mills, which were followed in the nineteenth century by paper, powder, and textile mills.

Delaware's Piedmont remained largely agricultural during the nineteenth century, in spite of industrialization and urban housing types in the river valleys. The non-farm population tended to live in closely-packed rows of houses around the milling centers, such as Rockland. Suburban sprawl, a characteristic of later periods, was unknown.

The surrounding farmlands were as much a part of the industrial scene as the mill villages. Even though the valley was served by short-line railroads, most industrial transportation still depended upon horse power. Every factory had its stables, pastures, and hayfields to support its draft animals.

In a larger sense, the upper valley mills can be interpreted as rural industry serving Philadelphia and even wider markets, beyond the purely local mills found elsewhere. Some of the mills were grist and saw mills, serving the needs of nearby farmers, but others functioned to process raw materials from distant sources for distant markets.

Thus it is difficult to distinguish between rural and industrial features of the landscape or to discuss the villages in isolation from their surrounding farms. One of the sites in the present project is part of a mill property in a "rural" setting, while the other, a short distance away, is a "village" environment. Both are decideldy industrial.

Much of the land in the area belonged during the nineteenth century to the duPont powder business, which was then a family-owned partnership. Members of the family appropriated the farms as estates, creating the nucleus of what has become known as "chateau country," the vanguard of suburbanization. Best known of these estates is Winterthur, which the last duPont owner endowed as a museum of early American decorative arts. Part of the Winterthur tract became Brandywine Creek State Park, while the family's first home at Eleutherian Mills became part of the Hagley Museum.