RESEARCH METHODS

Each of the study areas within the proposed corridor was subjected to a preliminary reconnaissance to determine the surface visibility of the ground and to determine the percentage of the area that was wooded and could not be adequately studied through a surface survey. All locations targeted for surface and subsurface study were identified, landowners and/or tenants notified of our intentions, and permission requested from each. The majority of landowners granted access; however, where access was denied, the land was not surveyed. In order to organize the reconnaissance survey, the study areas were divided according to property tracts, and each tract was given a separate three-digit designation. The first number represents the study area or segment location (one through fourteen). The second number (after the decimal) represents a property tract within the segment. The tract may consist of one or more tax parcels, but only one owner. The letter represents the sites located within the survey area; thus A is the first site, B the second site, and so forth (Figure 6).

Surface, or pedestrian, surveys (Plate 1) of the locations within the study areas consisted of walking the fields in regularly spaced intervals (Fasham et al. 1980). The percent surface visibility, estimated for each field, expresses the

PLATE 1

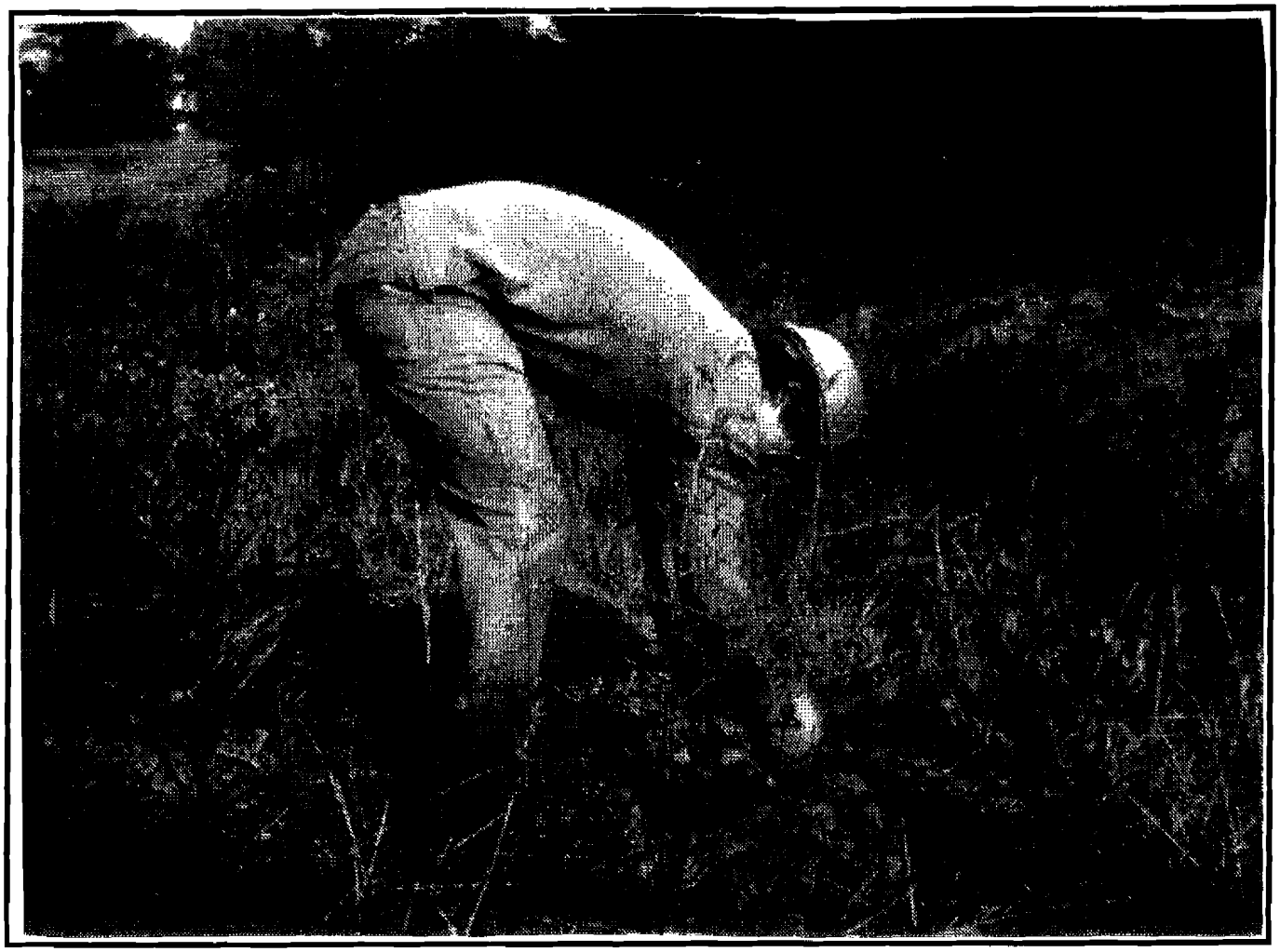
Surface Collecting Artifacts Example

visible ground surface versus the vegetated surface and is an impressionistic figure best considered as a relative, rather than absolute, measure.

Where pedestrian survey was not possible, due to woods or field vegetation, subsurface testing consisting of shovel test pits excavated at regular intervals was conducted (Plate 2). The intent was to overcome any bias in the pedestrian survey introduced by the selection of farmers for arable land, to provide some indications of site locations within untilled or wooded areas, and to specifically examine some areas where potential sites were known to be present. It was also hoped that the wooded locations would locate prehistoric sites in unplowed settings. Areas that had slopes that were too steep for testing or that (more often) were poorly drained, were considered unlikely settings for prehistoric sites, and were not tested.

PLATE 2

Excavating Shovel Test Pits Example



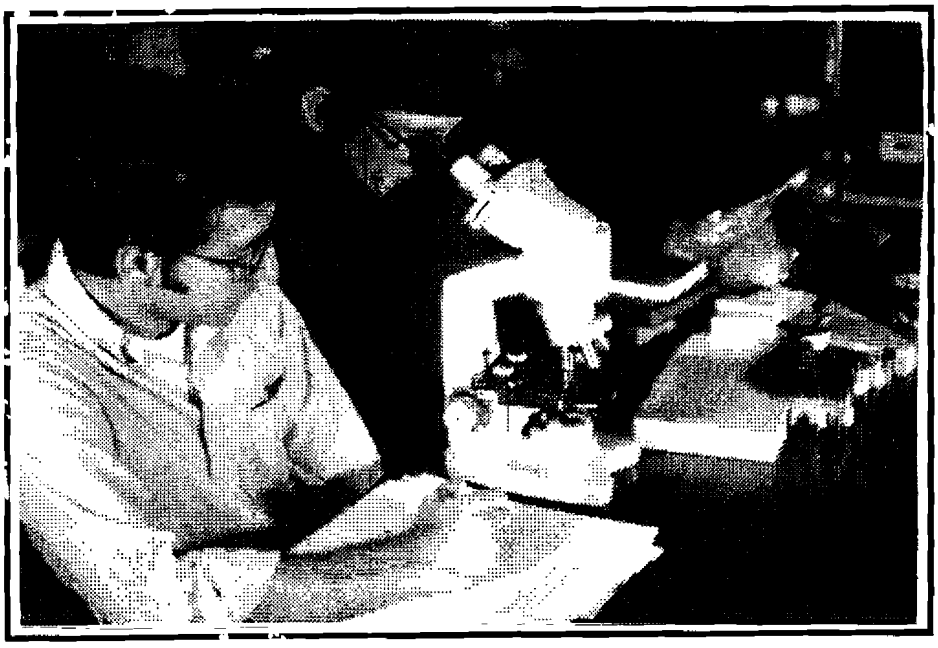
During both pedestrian and subsurface testing, all artifacts, whether historical or prehistoric, were marked and collected; this is a departure from the field methods used during the planning survey of the State Route 1 Corridor, where historical artifacts from pedestrian surveys were noted, but not collected (Custer and Bachman 1986a; Custer, Bachman, and Grettler 1986).

All archaeological sites found during the planning survey were given State of Delaware Cultural Resource Survey (CRS) numbers and archaeological site numbers, and Delaware archaeological survey site forms were completed and filed with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Dover. All artifacts recovered were washed, marked, and cataloged (Plates 3 and 4) with Island Field Museum accession numbers in accordance with SHPO policies and guidelines on artifact processing and curation.

Example

PLATE 3

Cataloging Artifacts

PLATE 4

Examining Artifacts Under Low Power Magnification