HUNTER RESEARCH

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PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY INVESTIGATIONS
SOULIE GRAY FARM
LOCI A AND G (SITES 7K-F-163A AND 7K-F-163G)
MURDERKILL HUNDRED, KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE
ETEA-K150(21) 92-110-17

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

A. Introduction

Between April 3 and May 29, 1996 Hunter Research Inc. conducted a Phase I archaeological survey of Loci A and G (Sites 7K-F-163A and 7K-F-163G) at the Soulie Gray Farm, Murderkill Hundred, Kent County, Delaware. These two loci are located in the southeastern portion of the State-owned Soulie Gray tract, which is located just south of Barratt's Chapel on the east side of U.S. Route 113 (Figures 1 and 2). Locus A (Site 7K-F-163A), an 18th-century domestic deposit, formed the principal focus of the survey and was subjected to detailed historical research and a limited program of archaeological fieldwork involving systematic collection of artifacts from the ground surface and shovel testing. As part of the historical research work component, the nearby 19th-century James R. Lofland House Site (Locus D [Site 7K-F-163D]) was also considered, since this resource occupies the same tract of land as its 18th-century predecessor. Locus G represents a zone of prehistoric occupation along the rim of the bluff overlooking the Murderkill River and surrounds the area defined as Locus A (Figure 2).

B. Background Research

Background research initially commenced with a review of the site files of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office and was followed by more detailed research into both primary documents and secondary materials. Primary documents consulted included Kent County deeds, wills and inventories and the Kent County warrant and survey records. Historic map research centered on the Byles map of Kent County in 1859, the Beers Atlas of Delaware published in 1868 and U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps. Secondary sources consulted included Scharf's History of Delaware, published in 1888, and the Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware (The Historical Society of Delaware 1911).

The 18th-century domestic deposit and the James R. Lofland House Site are both currently located on a 171-acre parcel of land that was sold by William Henry III to the State of Delaware in 1994 (Kent County Deed D-100 232). From the early 18th century up until the present day both of these sites were contained on the same tract of land. Initial settlement of this area may have taken place as early as the first quarter of the 18th century within Locus A, where a pioneer farmstead apparently existed with a landing on the Murderkill River used for general

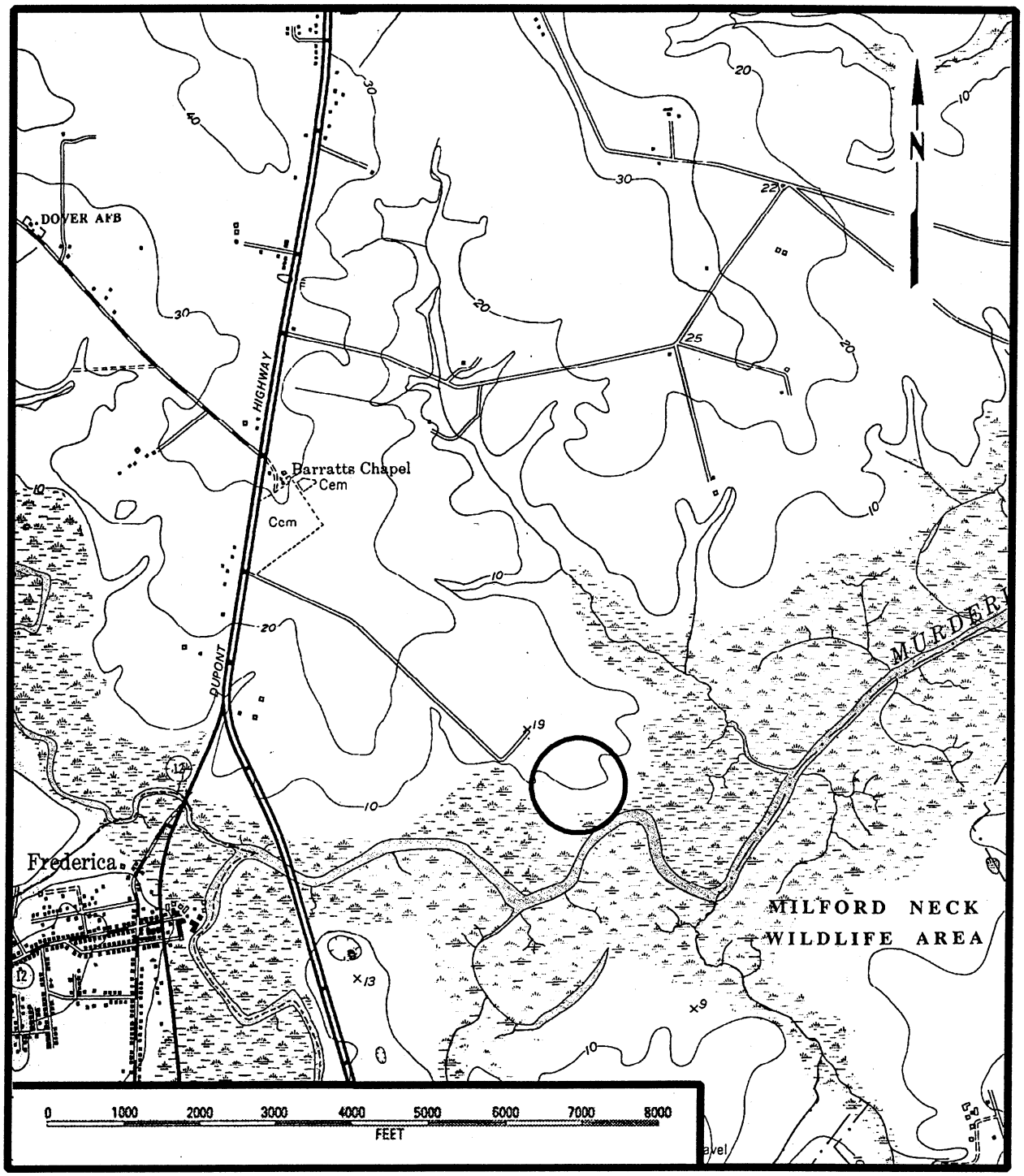


Figure 1. Location of Study Area (circled). Source: USGS 7.5' Topographic Series, Frederica, Del. Quadrangle (1956 [Photorevised 1982]).

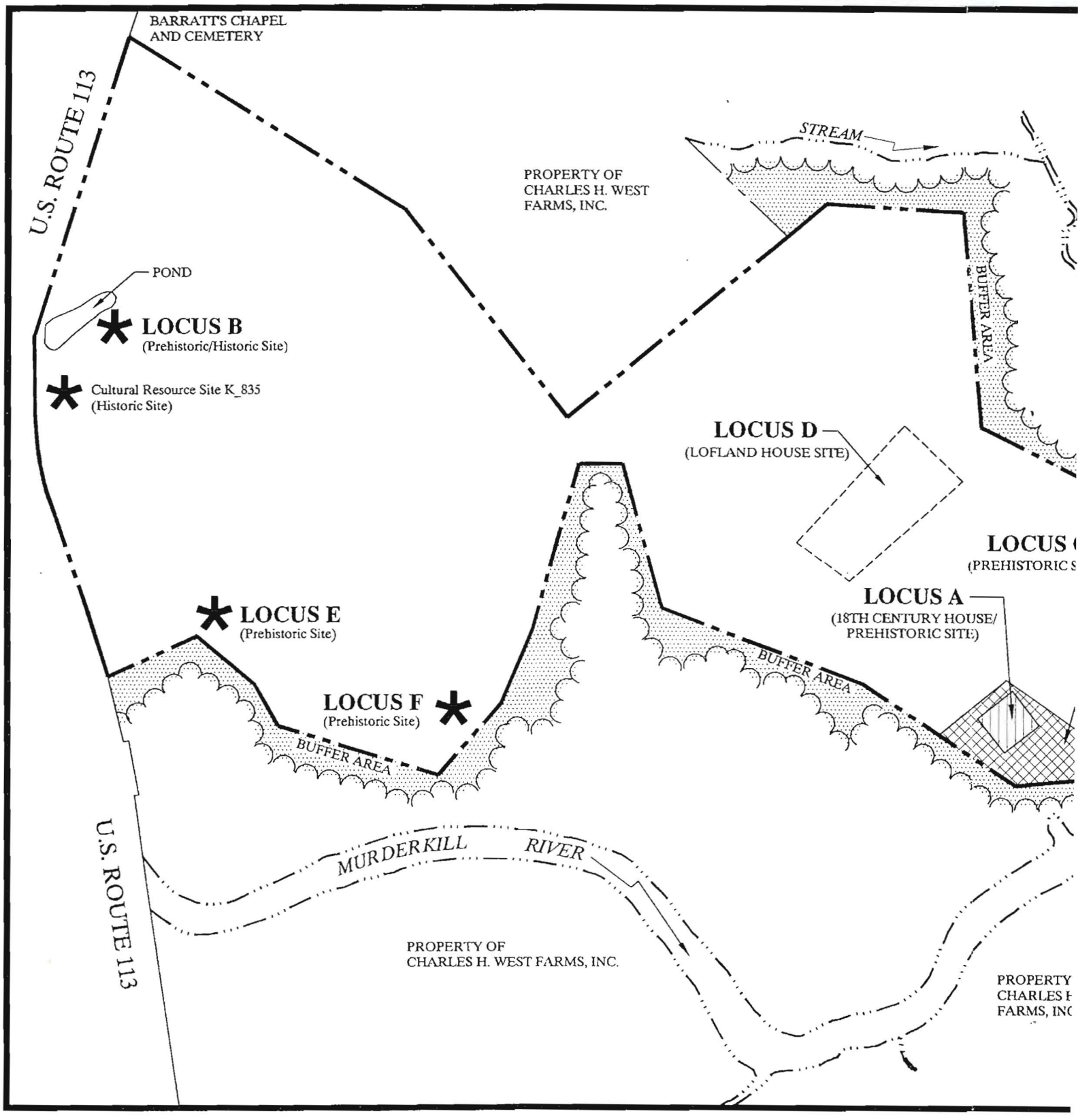
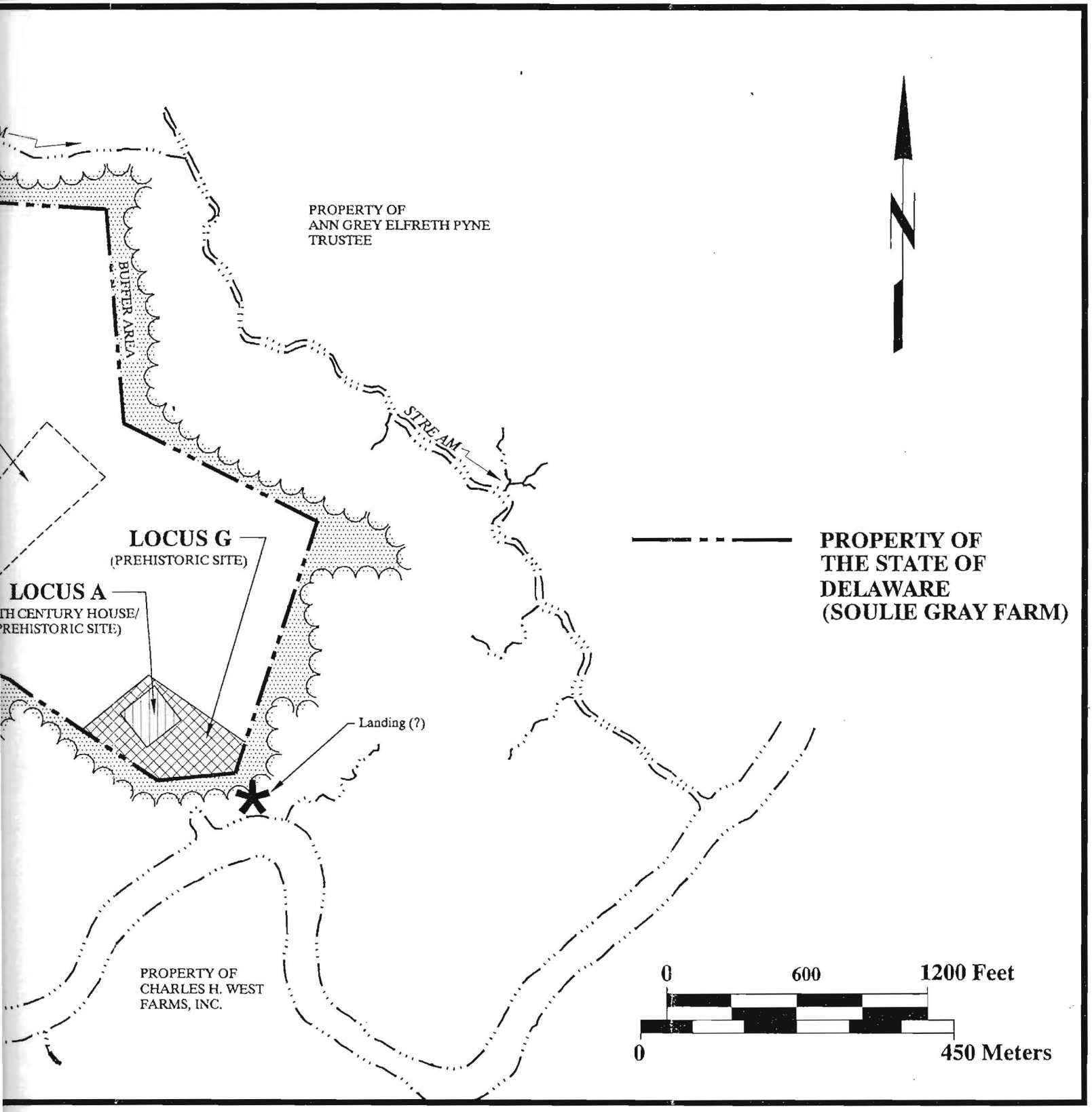


Figure 2. Site 7K-F-163, Project Plans Show



163, Project Plans Showing Location of Loci.

transportation purposes and the shipping of agricultural products. This site was occupied into the early Federal period when it appears to have been abandoned. Sometime during the first half of the 19th century either the Downe or Lofland family erected a new house in Locus D, to the northwest of the earlier site.

During the 1680s both sites lay within a 600-acre tract of land that was granted to Thomas Williams on January 20th, 1680. This property, known as "Williams Chance," was situated in Kent County, on the north side of Murder Brook (the present-day Murderkill River) (Figure 3). The immediately subsequent ownership history of this tract, from the original grant to Williams in 1680 up until 1740, was obtained from a 1740 conveyance for a 150-acre property, being part of "William Chance," which passed from John Newton to John Price (Kent County Deed Book M-1 86). This latter 150-acre parcel is believed to have contained the 18th-century archaeological deposits. Unfortunately, none of the early deeds from the 1680-1740 period were located, so the chain of title given in the 1740 deed cannot be verified for its accuracy. According to this document, by the mid-1680s, "William Chance" was divided into several tracts such that, by 1685, William Darval owned a tract containing the two sites that form the subject of this study. In November, 1689 Darval sold the property to Richard Drasgale, who was described as a citizen of London. The 1740 deed indicates that Darval was formerly a resident of Pennsylvania. In 1699, Drasgale sold the property to Thomas Bishop and Thomson Hudson, also both Londoners. In 1724, Bishop and the heirs of Thomson Hudson sold "... all those several tracts of land & premises with their appurtenances ..." to James Logan, a resident of the County of Philadelphia. James Logan, an important colonial figure in the Mid-Atlantic region, was the provincial secretary for William Penn. In 1739, Logan sold 150 acres of his land to John Newton of Kent County, who in turn sold it to John Price one year later (Kent County Deed M-1 86).

Prior to 1739, the property containing the 18th century deposits was owned by individuals who were living outside the area and who probably never set foot on the land. It is likely that sometime during the first quarter of the 18th century the property may have been rented out and a tenant farm was established. The first owner of the property to have actually occupied the land was probably John Price and his family.

The property remained within the Price family until 1770. A conveyance of the property in that year indicates that, sometime during the preceding 30 years, John Price had died and devised his property to his wife, who enjoyed the right to remain there until her death (see Kent County Deed T-1 12). The deed further stated that after his wife's death the property descended to John Price's grandson, Joseph Price, Jr., who lived there for a number of years until his death in 1770. In that year, Joseph's father, Joseph Price, Sr. and his two children, William and Elizabeth, sold the 150-acre tract to Philip Barratt, thus bringing to an end the Price family ownership (Kent County Deed T-1 12).

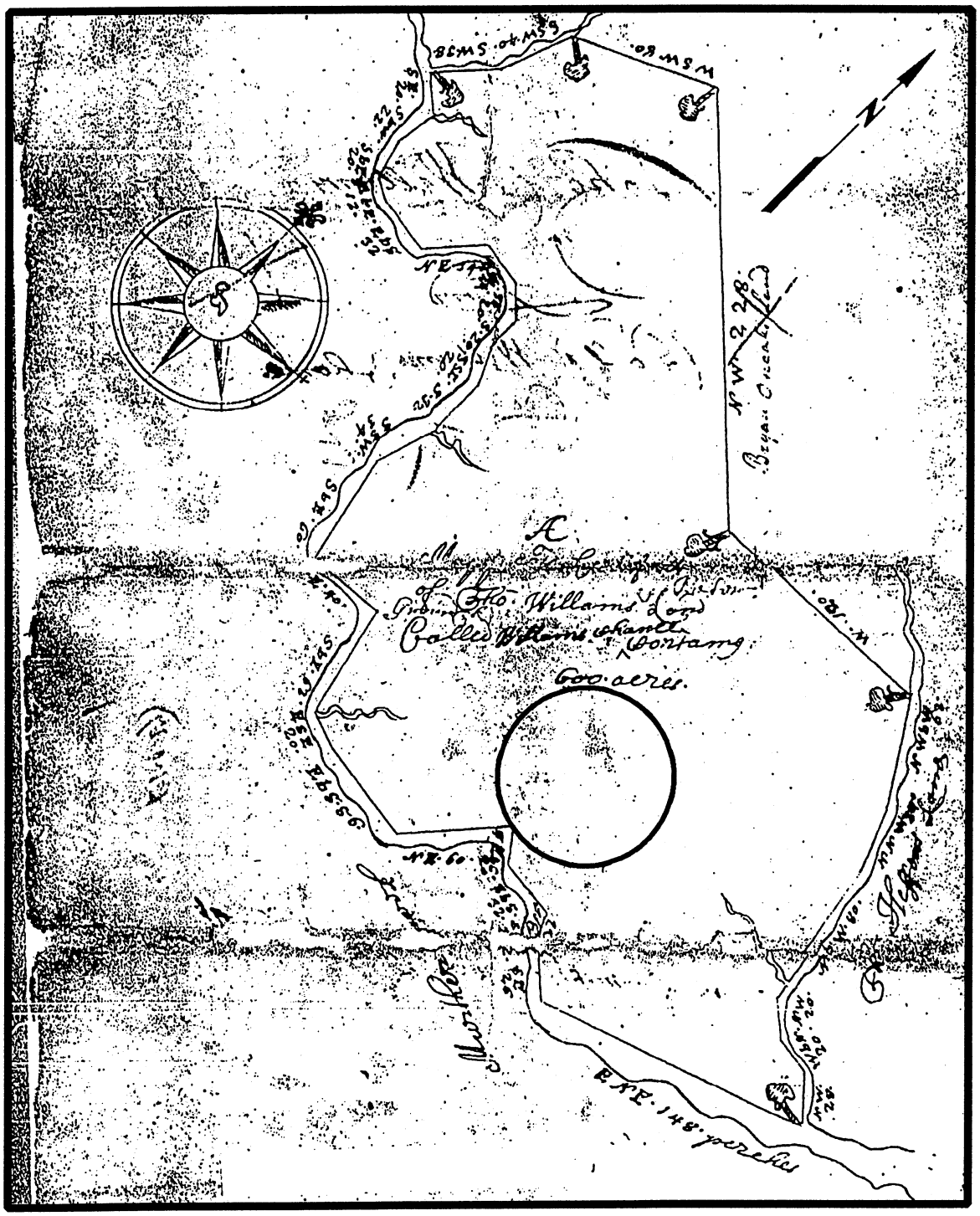


Figure 3. Survey of the Land of Thomas Williams Known as "William Chance." Scale 1 inch: 500 feet (approximately). Source: Kent County Warrants and Surveys W^5 29. Study Area Circled.

Philip Barratt was the Sheriff of Kent County from 1775-1779 and played an important role in the spread of the Methodist faith in the colonies. In 1780 Barratt donated the land for the building of a house of worship that became known as Barratt's Chapel. During his lifetime, Barratt was the owner of 800 acres of land surrounding the chapel, including the 150 acres he bought from the Prices. His main residence was reputedly a building that still stands today to the north of the study area along Road 372. Another Barratt family member or a tenant may therefore have been living in the house located within the study area (Locus A). Philip Barratt owned two sloops, the "Friendship" and the "Dolphin," which were used to ship pork, beef, corn, bark and grains to Philadelphia via the Murderkill River which ran through his plantation (Scharf 1888:1156; Historical Society of Delaware 1911:17-23).

Philip Barratt died in 1783, leaving his estate to his children, Judge Andrew Barratt, Dr. Elijah Barratt, Nathaniel Barratt, Philip Barratt III, Miriam Barratt and Lydia Barratt. The 150-acre parcel of land bought from the Price family was bequeathed to his two sons, Philip and Elijah Barratt (Scharf 1888:1156). In 1791, Elijah Barratt sold his share of the 150-acre property to his brother, Philip Barratt III (Kent County Deed C-2 236). Philip III owned the property until 1810. In that year he sold it to Jonathan Downes (Kent County Deed L-2 170).

Sometime between 1810 and 1859 James Rush Lofland acquired the property. It is believed that, shortly after the Barratt family relinquished title to the property, the 18th-century farmstead was abandoned. Sometime during the first half of the 19th century either Jonathan Downes or James R. Lofland erected a new house located to the northwest of the earlier farmhouse. The Byles map of Kent County in 1859 (not illustrated) shows "J.R. Lofland" as owning a house to the northwest of the area where the 18th-century archaeological deposits have been located. The Lofland house is also depicted on the Beers Atlas of Delaware published in 1868 (Figure 4).

The Hon. James Rush Lofland (1823-1894) enjoyed a long and illustrious career in local, state and federal public service. After the completion of his schooling in 1848, he set up a law practice in Milford, Delaware. Shortly thereafter, in 1852, he was elected to his first office, Clerk of the State Senate. In the same year he was married to Sallie B. Brown, daughter of Joseph Brown of Philadelphia. In 1854, he was appointed by Governor P.F. Causey to the post of Secretary of State. With the outbreak of the Civil War he was appointed to various positions within the Union Army. In 1862, he was elected as the secretary of the United States Military Academy. In 1863, upon the formation of the First Delaware Cavalry, he was elected its Major. Later that year he was appointed to the position of paymaster of United States troops, with the rank of major. This appointment took him to New Orleans, Washington, Columbus, Ohio and Vicksburg, Mississippi. In 1867, upon his retirement, President Lincoln conferred upon him the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel for faithful and meritorious service. After returning to Delaware he was sent as a delegate to the 1868 Republican National Convention in Chicago, which nominated General Grant as its Presidential candidate. In 1872, he served as the Chairman of the Delaware delegates which nominated Grant for a second term. Later the same year, James Lofland was elected to the 41st Congress and served on the Committee of the District of Columbia. He failed in his attempt to be re-elected in 1874. He again served as the Chairman of the delegates to the Republican Conventions of 1876 and 1880 (Scharf 1888:587).

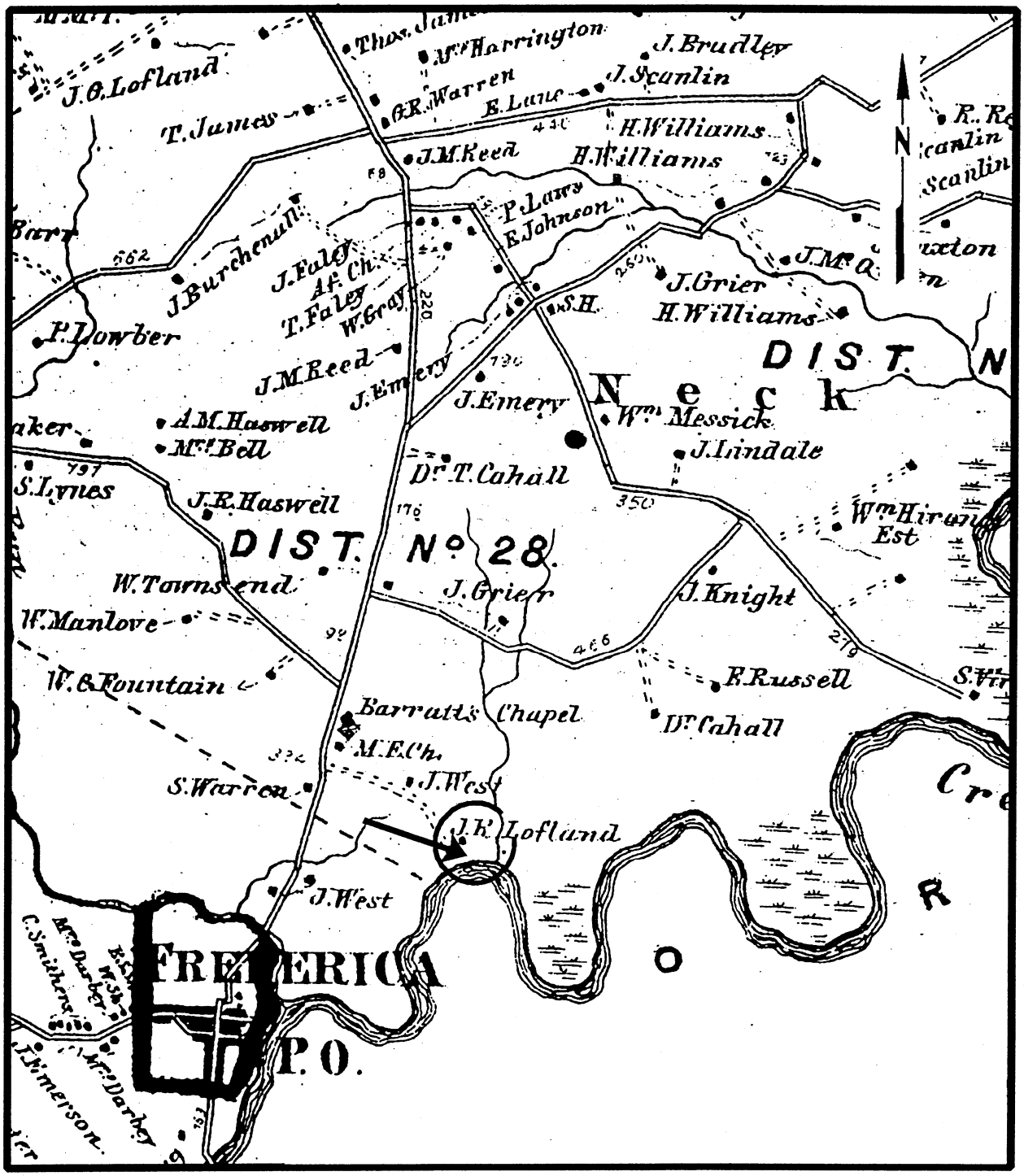


Figure 4. Beers, D.G. Murderkill Hundred. Atlas of the State of Delaware. 1868. Scale 1 inch: 2,800 feet (approximately). Study Area Circled and Indicated with an Arrow.

The Hon. James R. Lofland died in 1894 and his property was passed to his wife, Sallie B. Lofland (Kent County Will Z-1 77). She occupied the property until her death in 1899. She left only one surviving heir, a daughter, Josephine Bruff of Ohio. In 1907, Bruff and her husband, Joseph E. Bruff, who were now living in Montclair, New Jersey, sold the property to Howard Hudson (Kent County Deed M-9 55). At this time the land containing the Lofland house was surveyed at 196 acres. The Hudson family remained in the possession of the house until 1943. In that year it was sold Emory Lynch and his wife, Sarah (Kent County Deed I-16 56). The deed of conveyance indicates that the property had been reduced to a 171-acre parcel of land; the property has remained this size to the present day.

The Lynch family occupied the property for the next 14 years. In 1957, they sold it to Jester A. Gray and his wife, Soulie B. Gray (Kent County Deed Y-18 8). Jester died on July 12, 1962 leaving the property to his wife. One year later, Soulie Gray sold the property to Jane Gray Hazzard of Pennsylvania, Sarah Gray Wilson of New Jersey and Mary Katherine Gray Wilson of Wilmington, Delaware (Kent County Deed I-23 277). The three were probably sisters. It is speculated that Soulie B. Gray was the last person to occupy the Lofland House. Sometime between 1971 and 1982, while under the ownership of the three sisters, the house was abandoned and eventually demolished.

C. Field Investigations

1. Previous Fieldwork

In June of 1994 a volunteer crew made up of staff members of the Delaware Department of Transportation and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office conducted a surface inspection of the Soulie Gray Farm property and identified six potential archaeological site locations (Loci A-F) (Figure 2). An 18th-century archaeological site (Locus A), previously reported by an avocational archaeologists, was relocated based on a dark organic stain, L-shaped in plan, and a concentration of historic artifacts including wine bottle glass, a wrought nail, a gun flint fragment, ceramics, shell and bone. This area was reported to measure approximately 120 by 140 feet, and was designated on a recent aerial photograph of the property as Locus A of Site 7K-F-163. This aerial view is included as part of the Phase I draft report on file at the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. Within the southern portion of the property, adjoining Locus A, a continuous light scatter of prehistoric artifacts was noted adjacent to the woods (Locus G). The only diagnostics recovered from this area were a side-notched projectile point base and a pestle. No temporal or cultural affiliation was assigned to the prehistoric artifacts recovered from this area. To the northwest of the 18th-century site, another field scatter of 19th-century cultural materials was identified as the Lofland House Site (Locus D).