

VI. PHASE II EVALUATIONS

A. SITE 7NC-G-144, THE AUGUSTINE CREEK NORTH SITE

1. *Site Description*

The Augustine Creek North Site was an eighteenth-century domestic site located on the northern bank of Augustine Creek, just north of Boyd's Corner, Delaware (see Figure 18; Figures 62 and 63). The site was initially identified during a Phase I survey of the Scott Run to Drawyer Creek segment of the SR 1 corridor (Bedell 1995b). At that time, the field in which the site was located had recently been plowed, and surface visibility was excellent. The survey was therefore carried out by surface inspection. During the surface inspection, the site was identified as a concentration of eighteenth-century artifacts, especially brick, redware, and creamware, measuring approximately 30x60 meters (100x200 feet). A single line of shovel test pits was excavated across the site at 20-meter intervals. A few prehistoric artifacts were also recovered, including an unusual chert triangular knife. Site 7NC-G-144 was considered potentially significant because of the paucity of historic sites dating before 1770 in the region, and Phase II testing was therefore recommended.

2. *Environmental Setting*

Augustine Creek is a small, swampy drainage that flows east toward the Delaware River. Although the stream is not navigable now, it was known in the seventeenth century as "Canoe Branch." Before the waterway silted up as a result of intensive agricultural activity in the area, small craft may have been able to reach Site 7NC-G-144. Near the site, the southern bank was a steep bluff approximately 10 meters (30 feet) high. The northern bank, adjacent to the site, was more gradual. A nearly flat terrace, approximately 10 meters (30 feet) wide, was present adjacent to the creek, and the site then sloped upward to the south at a rate of approximately six percent (Plate 10). The site was situated in an active agricultural field, and at the time of the Phase II testing, a corn crop had been recently harvested. The site was located approximately 100 meters (330 feet) east of U.S. Route 13, which follows the route of the eighteenth-century Wilmington to Lewes Road, the most important north-south route in Delaware. The location of the site thus seems to depend on two factors: proximity to the stream and to the highway. The closest town in the eighteenth century was Cantwell's Bridge (Odessa), approximately 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) to the south.

3. *Historical Background*

Historical research carried out on the Augustine Creek North Site (Site 7NC-G-144) has traced its ownership to a John Pierce, who lived there in the early eighteenth century (Table 10). Pierce had been in Delaware since at least 1680, since he appears in a jury list from that year. He is

TABLE 10 **LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS**
SITE 7NC-G-144

DATE	TRANSACTION
1981	Gentleman Farmer's Restaurant, Inc., from Earle J. and Mary K. Lester (NCC Deed Book O-113:308)
1977	Earle J. and Mary K. Lester, inherited from Claude N. and Edith C. Lester (NCC Deed Book H-97:267)
1955	Claude N. Lester, from Elizabeth D. Sheppard and Lina D. Cherry (NCC Deed Book C-56:464)
1931	Lina D. Cherry, Elizabeth D. Sheppard, and Hetty M. Dennison, inherited from Olivia C. Dennison (NCC Deed Book V-37:323)
1902	Olivia C. Dennison, inherited from James M. Vandegrift (NCC Will Folder 571)
1845	James Vandegrift, inherited from Jacob Vandegrift (Scharf 1888:988)
1811	Jacob Vandegrift, from Elizabeth Green, Mary McLane, and George Pearce Daines, heirs of Sarah Daines (NCC Deed Book W-3:21)
1790	Sarah Daines, inherited from Abraham Pierce (NCC Deed Book M-2:332)
1769	Death of Abraham Pierce (NCC Orphans' Court Record D-1:238)
1760	Abraham Pierce, from William Pierce et al.; the children of John Pierce, intestate, quit claim their rights to their father's plantation (NCC Deed Book U-1:102)
c. 1743	Death of John Pierce (NCC Orphans' Court Record C-1:21)
1723	John Pierce, from Thomas Pierson et al.; other children of John Pierce, intestate, quit claim their rights to their father's 150-acre tract fronting on Canoe Branch (NCC Deed Book G-1:356)
1701	John Pierce, from William Penn; warrant for 150 acres in the Manor of Rockland (NCC Warrants and Surveys Folders P2 #16 and 16a)

In 1701, John Pierce, described as a resident of New Castle County, received a warrant from the Penn Proprietors for 150 acres in the "Manor of Rockland" (NCC Warrants and Surveys Folder P-2:16). The tract was duly surveyed, and a draft survey was recorded in 1703. The tract was nearly square, 160 perches (2,640 feet) by 150. This warrant notes that Pierce was already "seated" (occupying) this tract at that time. A 1723 quitclaim, which established John Pierce's son, John Pierce II, as the sole owner, states that the parcel fronted on Canoe Branch, an early name for Augustine Creek (NCC Deed Book G-1:356). John Pierce was one of the petitioners who asked that Thomas Penn establish Wilmington as a town in 1736 (Ferris 1987:207). John Pierce II died intestate around 1740, and an inventory of his estate survives. The inventory included equipment for the manufacture of linen cloth, carpenter's tools, £85 worth of livestock, a net, and a periauger, a boat resembling a canoe (NCC Probate File: John Pierce 1740).

In 1748, one of John II's sons, Abraham Pierce, had the deed to the property copied and recorded in New Castle (NCC Warrants and Surveys Folder P-2:16a). In 1760, Abraham Pierce became sole owner of the property, which was then said to include 270 acres, bounded on the south by "Augustine's Creek alias Canoe Branch" and on the west by the King's Road (U.S. Route 13) (NCC Deed Book U-1:102). Abraham Pierce died in 1769.

After a period of administration by the guardians of Abraham Pierce's minor children, and a lengthy dispute among the heirs, the Pierce estate was divided among the heirs in 1790 (NCC Orphans' Court Records D-1:247, 275; F-1:207, 210, 219). They appointed five freeholders and a surveyor to divide their father's real estate, which was calculated to comprise 147 acres and 119 perches of land. The freeholders returned with a partition containing seven lots, each lot adjoining either Canoe Branch or the King's Road. Site 7NC-G-144 was included in Lot No. 3, a parcel of cleared land lying along Canoe Branch, with no frontage on the King's Road. It contained 18 acres and 59 perches of land and included an apple orchard. No house or other structure is mentioned in the deed. Lot No. 3 was assigned to Abraham's daughter, Sarah Daines (NCC Deed Book M-2:330). Since Site 7NC-G-144 was almost certainly occupied during this period of guardianship and disputed ownership, the absence of a structure from the description of the property in 1790 is surprising. (The only house mentioned is on Lot 1, fronting the Wilmington to Lewes Road several hundred yards north of 7NC-G-144.) The omission argues that the site was occupied by a tenant, since the residence of one of the disputants would certainly have rated a mention. Perhaps the tenant house by the apple orchard on Lot 3 was not occupied in 1790, or had even fallen into ruins.

Sarah Daines retained ownership of Lot No. 3, part of her father's farm, until her death. There is no evidence that she resided on the property, or, indeed, anywhere else in New Castle County. Because she died intestate, the property descended to her three children, Elizabeth Green, Mary McClane, and George Pearce Daines. In 1811, the children sold Lot No. 3, with another lot their mother had inherited, to Jacob Vandegrift for \$350 (NCC Deed Book W-3:21). Jacob Vandegrift was a member of a one of the earliest families to settle in St. Georges Hundred. Leonard Vandegrift, of Dutch descent, is believed to be the progenitor of this branch of the family, settling in St. Georges Hundred by 1708 (Scharf 1888:988).

Jacob Vandegrift was about 47 years old when he was enumerated as the head of a household in St. Georges Hundred in 1820, listed next to his father, Christopher Vandegrift. Other members of the household included a woman, older than 45 years; three males between 10 and 26 who might have been his sons, John, Jacob, and James M.; and two females between the ages of 10 and 26, who might have been his daughters or a daughter-in-law. One of the sons was probably married, since two small children also lived in the household. Jacob Vandegrift's enumeration also included two female slaves, one over 45 years old and the other under 14 (U.S., Bureau of the Census, New Castle County 1820:159).

When Jacob Vandegrift died in 1845, at the age of 82, his son James Vandegrift, who was 31, inherited a farm called "Retirement" that included Site 7NC-G-144 (Scharf 1888:988). James had probably been living with his father at "Retirement" during the census of 1840, when the

household included a man in his twenties. The household also included a man in his forties, and two women in their twenties, one of whom must have been Jacob's unmarried daughter, Jane (U.S., Bureau of the Census, New Castle County 1840:299). In 1886, James Vandegrift bought the rest of the old Pierce estate east of the Wilmington to Lewes Road, a 52.62-acre tract belonging to Edward L. Mifflin (NCC Deed Books A-14:422, U-14:125).

James Vandegrift married Mary Adeline E. Cochran, the daughter of John Cochran, the year before inheriting "Retirement." They had three daughters: Olivia, who married George W. Dennison, a merchant in Little Rock, Arkansas; Lina, who married Colonel B.S. Johnston, of Little Rock, Arkansas; and Margaret, who married William P. Mifflin in 1877 (Scharf 1888:988). The 1850 census enumeration listed the value of James M. Vandegrift's real estate as \$19,000. Aside from his wife and two young children, his household consisted of five African-Americans; four men, ranging in age from 27 to 50, were farm hands, and a young girl, 14-year-old Elizabeth Morris, was probably a domestic servant (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule, New Castle County 1850:199).

In 1857, James M. Vandegrift moved his family to Odessa. He returned to active farming in 1860, when he bought "Elm Grange," a 200-acre farm just north of McDonough (Beers 1868). Unlike many of his neighbors who concentrated on fruit production, he turned his efforts to cereal crops and raising livestock. Mary Vandegrift died in 1868. Four years later, James M. Vandegrift married Angeline C. Cleaver, the daughter of a prominent merchant in Port Penn (Aldine Publishing and Engraving Company 1882:389-390; Scharf 1888:988).

James M. Vandegrift died in April 1902. His main heirs were his daughters, who had all moved to Arkansas (NCC Deed Book V-37:323; NCC Will Folder 571; NCC Will Record C-3:7). They and their daughters held onto their Delaware property until 1955, when it was sold to Claude N. Lester, of St. Georges Hundred, for \$10. After Claude, and his wife, Edith, died, their three sons, Claude, Richard, and Earle, divided up the farm between themselves. Site 7NC-G-144 was included in a tract of 235.2127 acres conveyed to Claude E. and Helen M. Lester in 1977. This tract is currently owned by a limited partnership established by the Lesters in 1995 (NCC Deed Books C-56:464; H-97:267; K-75:605; L-74:196; O-113:308; 1911:196).

4. Phase II Testing

The Phase II testing of Site 7NC-G-144 was carried out by the excavation of 22 test units, an approximately one percent sample of the site. A 10-meter interval grid was established for the placement of test units, covering a 40x50-meter area (see Figure 62). Because the Phase I survey and a general evaluation of the geological circumstances of the site indicated no likelihood that artifacts would be recovered below the plowzone, all test units were terminated at the base of the plowzone. Phase I and II investigations recovered 3,067 historic artifacts from Site 7NC-G-144, of which about two-thirds were small brick fragments (Tables 11 and 12). All artifacts were recovered from the plowzone.

Plowzone soils were loam, with increasing clay content toward the base of the slope, closer to Augustine Creek. Rounded pebbles and small cobbles were frequent at the upper reaches of the

**TABLE 11 ARTIFACT PATTERN ANALYSIS
SITE 7NC-G-144**

ARTIFACT GROUP/CLASS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
KITCHEN		
Ceramics	783	79.3%
Bottles	57	5.8%
Tumblers/Wine Glasses	1	0.1%
Kitchen - Other	21	2.1%
<i>Kitchen Subtotal</i>	862	87.2%
ARCHITECTURAL		
Window Glass	19	1.9%
Nails, Spikes, etc.	80	8.1%
Plumbing, Toilet, Sink Fixtures	1	0.1%
<i>Architectural Subtotal</i>	100	10.1%
ARMS		
Ammunition	1	0.1%
<i>Arms Subtotal</i>	1	0.1%
CLOTHING		
Clothing Fasteners	1	0.1%
<i>Clothing Subtotal</i>	1	0.1%
TOBACCO PIPES		
White Clay Pipes	22	2.2%
<i>Tobacco Subtotal</i>	22	2.2%
ACTIVITIES		
Activities, Other	2	0.2%
<i>Activities Subtotal</i>	2	0.2%
SITE TOTAL*	988	100.0%

*Not including 9 unidentified, 39 faunal/floral, and 1,979 misc. building material (brick, etc.)

slope, and decreased in size and number downslope. The stratigraphy revealed in test unit profiles indicated a thickened plowzone toward the base of the slope, due to colluvial deposition (slopewash). Plowzone depth ranged between 20 and 30 centimeters at the northern margin of the site (upslope), increasing to nearly 135 centimeters at the lower elevations. This massive deposit is composed of a series of stacked plowzones, which have been progressively buried by the downward movement of slopewash.

The artifact sample included a variety of ceramic types, including redware; creamware; white salt-glazed stoneware, some with scratch-blue decoration; Westerwald stoneware; pearlware; and porcelain. Most of the specimens were small, the result of two centuries of plowing. Among other artifact types found at the Augustine Creek North Site were flat glass, green bottle glass,

**TABLE 12 HISTORIC CERAMICS
SITE 7NC-G-144**

CERAMIC TYPE/VARIETY (Date Range)	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
COARSE EARTHENWARE		
Redware	55	18.1%
Red-bodied Slipware (1670-1850)	32	10.5%
Buff-bodied Slipware (1670-1795)	13	4.3%
<i>Coarse Earthenware Subtotal</i>	100	32.9%
WESTERWALD STONEWARE		
Sprigged and Incised (1620-1750)	2	0.7%
Incised only (1620-1775)	3	1.0%
General (1620-1775)	7	2.3%
<i>Westerwald Subtotal</i>	12	3.9%
WHITE SALT-GLAZED STONEWARE		
Plain (1720-1805)	11	3.6%
Scratch-Blue (1744-1775)	4	1.3%
<i>White Salt-glazed Stoneware Subtotal</i>	15	4.9%
MIDLANDS MOTTLED (1680-1750)	9	3.0%
ENGLISH BROWN STONEWARE (1690-1775)	2	0.7%
REFINED REDWARE	3	1.0%
DELFTWARE		
Plain (1640-1800)	4	1.3%
Hand-painted (1680-1800)	2	0.7%
<i>Delftware Subtotal</i>	6	2.0%
CREAMWARE		
Plain (1762-1820)	90	29.6%
Overglaze Hand-painted (1765-1810)	1	0.3%
Clouded Glaze (1740-1770)	1	0.3%
<i>Creamware Subtotal</i>	92	30.3%
PEARLWARE		
Plain (1775-1840)	46	15.1%
Underglaze Hand-painted (1795-1825)	18	5.9%
Shell-edge, Green (1775-1840)	1	0.3%
Dipped (1790-1890)	2	0.7%
<i>Pearlware Subtotal</i>	67	22.0%
YELLOWWARE, ROCKINGHAM (1812-1920)	1	0.3%
SITE TOTAL	304	100.0%

hand-wrought nails, pipe bowl and pipe stem fragments, and miscellaneous metal fragments (see Table 11). No cultural features or structural elements were detected. The artifacts suggest a date range of 1730 to 1800. A mean ceramic date of 1776 was derived from 307 datable sherds (see Table 12).

Artifact frequencies were highest in Test Units 13 (N=538) and 16 (N=372), which were 10 meters from the base of the slope (see Figure 63). A composite profile along this line of test units, N210 on the site grid, showed a progressive thickening of the plowzone from west to east. The plowzone increased from a thin 25 centimeters on the western edge of the site, to 45 centimeters in Test Unit 13, to a maximum of 70 centimeters in Test Unit 16. The direction of the thicker plowzone suggested that colluvial deposition, in combination with continuous plow smoothing, had filled in an old drainage slough or shallow ravine. The high artifact densities found in Test Units 13 and 16 may be the product of domestic trash disposal into this drainage.

At the base of the slope, artifacts were recovered throughout the deep colluvial deposits. Test Unit 21 yielded artifacts to a depth of approximately 100 centimeters, Test Unit 12 to 75 centimeters, Test Unit 20 to 70 centimeters, and Test Unit 22 to 80 centimeters. The excavation closest to Augustine Creek, Test Unit 17, revealed a thick deposit of colluvium containing artifacts to a depth of 130 centimeters. Standing water was reached 134 centimeters below ground surface. Light gray mottling within the basal stratum indicated an oscillating water table responding to the fluctuations of stream load in Augustine Creek. Groundwater levels at this location suggested that the domestic structure was located further upslope, and the moderate artifact count, considering the depth of the deposit, suggested that the residents did not dump trash into the swamps along the stream.

No evidence was uncovered during the Phase II excavations to indicate the location of a house or other structure on the site. The site location, at the foot of a slope, adjacent to a swampy creek, is a very unusual one for a colonial house. The large quantity of brick recovered, along with the large number of artifacts, effectively ruled out a simple refuse disposal area, so there must have been a house somewhere on the site. The possibility was considered that the house was on the crest of the slope, and the artifacts had been washed down the slope, but this seems highly unlikely. The pebbles in the plowzone show the reverse pattern from the artifacts, since they are more abundant higher on the slope. If erosion has left large numbers of pebbles high on the slope, it should have left substantial numbers of artifacts as well. Therefore, it still seems likely that the house was located near the center of the artifact scatter.

Some prehistoric material was recovered from the excavations, almost all nondiagnostic lithics (Table 13). The total count of prehistoric artifacts recovered was 5,251 lithics and one ceramic. The highest total, 11, was recovered from Test Unit 4. Two other units yielded five each. This thin, plowed lithic scatter appears to represent a procurement site of unknown date.

TABLE 13

SUMMARY OF PREHISTORIC LITHIC ASSEMBLAGE
SITE 7NC-G-144

ARTIFACT TYPE	RAW MATERIAL						TOTAL
	Chalcedony	Chert	Jasper	Quartz	Quartzite	Not Assgn*	
Bifaces							
Early-Stage Bifaces	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Late-Stage Bifaces	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Unifaces							
Utilized Flakes	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Cores							
Tested Cobbles	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Debitage							
Flake Fragments	.	4	2	3	1	.	1
Block Shatter	.	5	8	.	.	.	13
Decortication Flakes	1	1	1	1	.	.	4
Early Reduction Flakes	.	3	4	4	3	.	14
Indeterminate Flakes	.	2	.	.	.	.	2
Hammerstones	1	.	1
Fire-Cracked Rock	3	3
TOTALS	1	17	16	9	5	3	51

*Not Assigned; usually refers to fire-cracked rock

5. Summary

Phase II testing of the Augustine Creek North Site has confirmed the likelihood that an eighteenth-century residence stood on the site, probably a house with rather flimsy brick foundations, possibly piers. However, no foundations of this house, or any other cultural features, were found during the testing. Substantial numbers of eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century artifacts were recovered, all from plowzone contexts. The site's most striking feature is its topographic setting. Across Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, European settlers usually built their houses in level, well-drained, upland locations, beyond the reach of flooding. An example of such a preferred setting would be that occupied by Site 7NC-G-145 on the other side of Augustine Creek. The Augustine Creek North Site breaks this pattern in two ways: it is situated on a slope, and in a low-lying area that was probably subject to flooding and was certainly very close to wetlands that eighteenth-century Europeans regarded as unhealthy. The occupants presumably felt that proximity to the creek outweighed these disadvantages. The artifacts from

the site indicate occupation in the 1730 to 1800 period. During most of this period the property belonged to members of the wealthy Pierce family, who probably resided elsewhere, so the site was probably occupied by tenants. The ethnicity and background of the site's occupants therefore remain unknown.

B. SITE 7NC-G-145, THE AUGUSTINE CREEK SOUTH SITE

1. *Site Description*

The Augustine Creek South Site (7NC-G-145) had both historic and prehistoric components. The historic component was a scatter of domestic and architectural artifacts, probably representing a small farm, dating to the 1730 to 1770 period. The prehistoric component was a thin scatter consisting mostly of undated lithic debitage, but including three small ceramic sherds that indicate a date in the Woodland I or Woodland II period. The site straddled the boundary between the SR 1 corridor and the adjacent Norvell/Coleman Wetland Replacement Area, on the southern bank of Augustine Creek, approximately 450 meters (1,500 feet) northeast of Boyd's Corner (see Figure 19; Figure 64). Site 7NC-G-145 measured 125 meters along an east-west axis parallel to Augustine Creek, with a maximum north-south dimension of approximately 60 meters along its eastern margin (400x200 feet).

The Augustine Creek South Site was discovered during a Phase I survey of the Scott Run to Drawyer Creek segment of the SR 1 corridor (Bcdell 1995b). Shovel testing located scatters of both historic and prehistoric artifacts on a high terrace south of the creek. The artifact assemblage included architectural material (brick), indicating the former presence of a structure. Because a preliminary evaluation of the artifacts indicated that the historic occupation of the site probably dated to the second half of the eighteenth century, Phase II significance evaluation was recommended.

2. *Environmental Setting*

The Augustine Creek South Site (Site 7NC-G-145) was situated on the southern bank of Augustine Creek, a small, marshy stream that flows east toward the Delaware River. The Augustine Creek North Site was located directly across the stream on the northern bank. The site was located on a hill, with a steep bluff more than 10 meters (30 feet) high leading down to the stream. The historic component was concentrated at the crest of the hill, which was at the eastern end of the site, while the prehistoric component was concentrated on the lower slopes farther west. At that point the hill overlooked a manmade pond that appeared to be fed by springs. The presence of these springs may have been a factor in attracting prehistoric peoples to the site. As with the Augustine Creek North Site (Site 7NC-G-144), the historic occupants were probably attracted to the site by the proximity of the creek itself and by the Wilmington to Lewes Road, which was located approximately 180 meters (600 feet) to the west. At the time of the testing, the site was located partially in active agricultural fields and partially in an abandoned field growing up in brambles and mimosa trees.