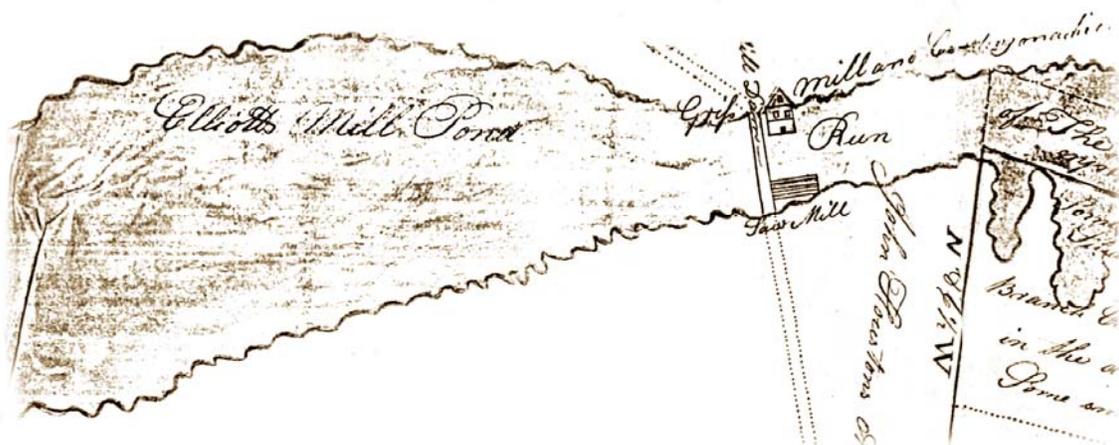


Bridge 3-368, Sycamore Road over Elliott Pond Branch, Replacement Project
Broad Creek Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware

PHASE Ia ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Prepared for:

Delaware Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 778
Dover, Delaware 19903

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PHASE Ia ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

by

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and

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August 2011

ABSTRACT

This report documents the results of a Phase Ia Archaeological Survey conducted for the proposed replacement of Bridge 3-368, which carries Sycamore Road over Elliott Pond Branch in Broad Creek Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware. The project area is located in the Lower Coastal Plain Physiographic Province. Bridge 3-368 comprises three 8-foot diameter corrugated steel pipes approximately 62 feet in length. Installed in 1977, these pipes are now experiencing advanced corrosion as well as some section loss. The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) proposes replacing this structure with a rigid frame, three-sided concrete arch bridge. Rip rap will be installed along the channel bottom and side slopes to stabilize disturbed areas or existing scour holes. Stream diversion is not anticipated. Reconstruction of the roadway approaches will likely occur on the same footprint. The guiderail will be replaced as necessary. While no roadway widening is expected to occur, temporary and/or permanent easements are possible on an adjacent tax parcel. This cultural resource work was performed for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Archaeological potential within the Bridge 3-368 Project APE is low. While there is documentary evidence of Sycamore Road crossing a tributary of Broad Creek in this vicinity atop an existing dam breast as early as the 1790s, and while additional records document the presence of a sawmill and a gristmill with associated carding machine operating on the south side of the mill dam during the first half of the nineteenth century, there is no evidence of any mill-related structures surviving into the twentieth century. Indeed, a USGS map published in 1915 indicates the absence of both a dam breast and a serviceable bridge in this location. Those conditions may have resulted from one or more flooding events. Such conditions may have been prolonged or even worsened by a flood in August 1933 that “destroyed nearly all the dams in the Laurel area” (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:14). Additional disturbances within the APE were effected in 1938 when previously-unpaved Sycamore Road was paved and improved under DelDOT Contract 591 of Federal Aid Project FAS33A. On that occasion, a 7-foot concrete span over “Grays Branch” was replaced with a 16-foot creosote-coated timber bridge. Three borings taken as part of this project reached “elevation 9.50” and “showed four feet of sand, two feet of fine gravel, and six feet of sand” (Delaware Department of Transportation 1938). It is likely that at least some of these materials were imported to the APE as a road-carrying berm was built up earlier in the twentieth century. Additional disturbances in the APE were effected in 1977 when the present corrugated steel pipe bridge was installed by Sussex County maintenance workers (Jon Schmidt, personal communication, August 25, 2011).

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INTRODUCTION

This report documents the results of a Phase Ia Archaeological Survey conducted for the proposed replacement of Bridge 3-368, which carries Sycamore Road over Elliott Pond Branch in Broad Creek Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware (Figure 1; USGS 1992). The project area is located in the Lower Coastal Plain Physiographic Province. Bridge 3-368 comprises three 8-foot diameter corrugated steel pipes approximately 62 feet in length. Installed in 1977, these pipes are now experiencing advanced corrosion as well as some section loss. The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) proposes replacing this structure with a rigid frame, three-sided concrete arch bridge. Rip rap will be installed along the channel bottom and side slopes to stabilize disturbed areas or existing scour holes. Stream diversion is not anticipated. Reconstruction of the roadway approaches will likely occur on the same footprint. The guiderail will be replaced as necessary. While no roadway widening is expected to occur, temporary and/or permanent easements are possible on an adjacent tax parcel. This cultural resource work was performed for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

This Phase Ia Archaeological Survey was conducted in accordance with federal and state laws that protect significant cultural resources, including historic and archaeological sites. Federal and state mandates for cultural resource protection include: The Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended in 1968; the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) (as amended); Executive Order 11593; and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974. This legislation requires that the effect of any federally assisted undertaking on historically significant buildings, structures, objects or sites be taken into account during project planning. All work was performed in accordance with 36 CFR §800, and Guidelines, and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DSHPO), *Guidelines for Architectural and Archaeological Surveys in Delaware* (DSHPO 1993, revised 2010).

The research and field analysis for this project were undertaken in August 2011. The work was performed by Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc. (CHRS) of Lansdale, Pennsylvania. Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D. served as the project's Principal Investigator. Historical research and site assessment were performed by Philip Ruth. Graphics for the report were prepared by Crystal Hall, and editorial work was executed by Kevin Quigg and Maria Rossi of the CHRS staff (Appendix A).

An assessment of archaeological potential within the Bridge 3-368 Project Area of Potential Effect (APE) is presented at the conclusion of this report. Because a preliminary review of several modern and historic maps turned up evidence of historic milling-relating structures within or near the APE, and because cultural resource investigations conducted as part of DelDOT projects elsewhere in Sussex County have encountered numerous historic mill sites, research and field analysis was performed with two primary aims: to determine if any cultural resources—milling-related or otherwise—have been, or still are, present within the APE; and to ascertain the historical significance of any such cultural resources. At DelDOT's direction, the results of this historical research are presented below in a narrative format geared for general readers.

Cartographic Clues of Milling Activities in the Bridge 3-368 Project Area

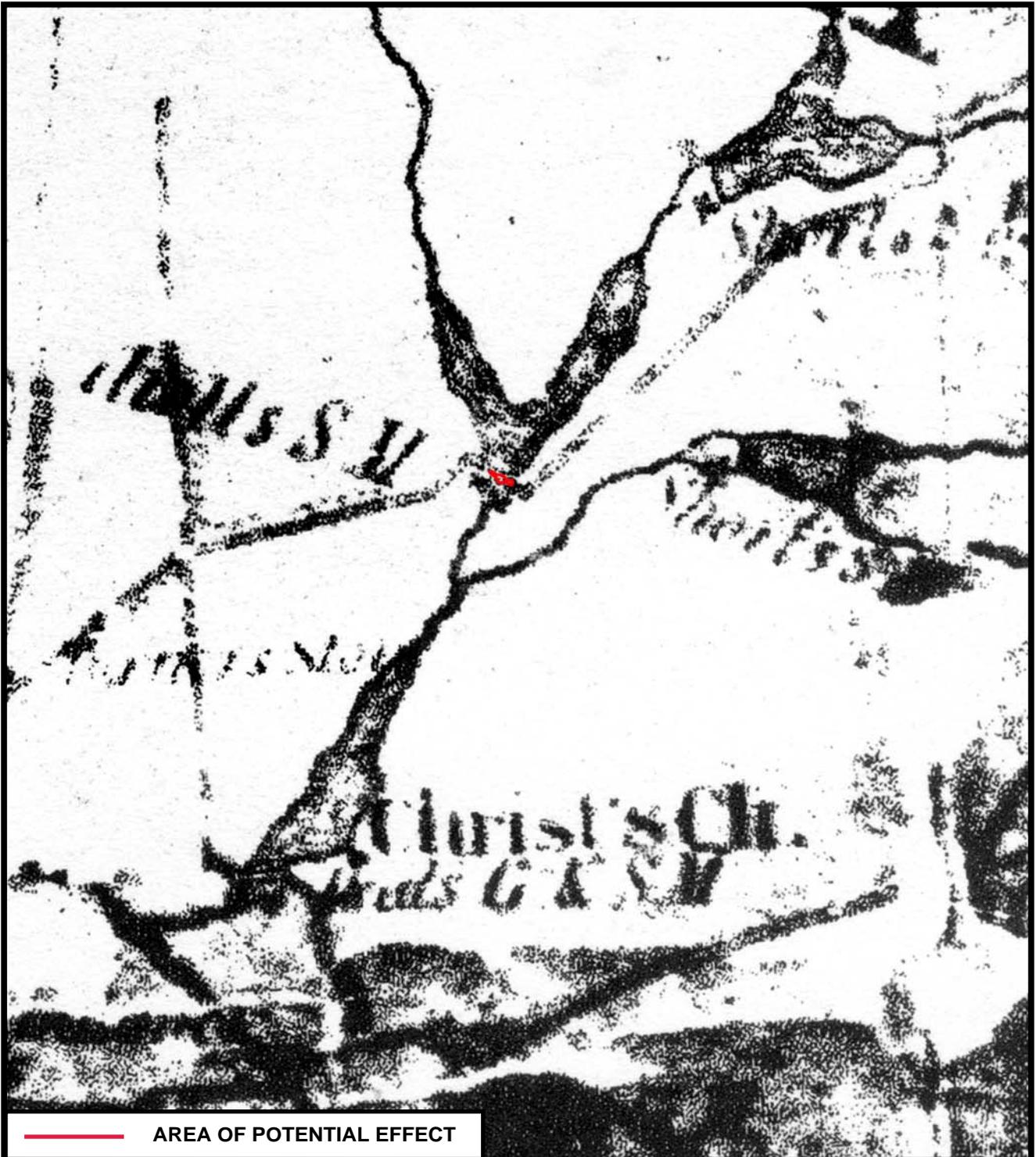
Maps of Sussex County's Broad Creek Hundred published in 1850, 1868, 1915, and 1946 offer important, though limited, evidence of mill-related structures in the Bridge 3-368 Project Area.

Blotches obscure large sections of an 1850 *Map of the State of Delaware* reproduced on microfiche in the collection of the Delaware Archives, but the area northeast of Laurel is clear enough on this map that a road on the approximate alignment of present-day Sycamore Road can be seen zigzagging through the Bridge 3-368 Project Area as it crosses an unlabeled, southwestward-flowing tributary of Broad Creek (Figure 2; Price and Rea 1850). The depiction of a V-shaped pond with its point resting on the north side of this crossing implies that the road zigzags here in order to cross the waterway atop a dam breast. That implication is bolstered by the denotation of a pair of mill structures ("x x") on the south side of the crossing. A partly-observed attribution to the left of the structures identifies one or both of them as "Illiotts SM." It is clear from other attributions on this map that "SM" is an abbreviation of "sawmill." Other records (discussed below) will reveal that—before the 1850 map became disfigured—"Illiotts" had read "Elliotts."

On a map of Broad Creek Hundred published 18 years later (in 1868), the mid-nineteenth-century version of Sycamore Road and the V-shaped pond on its north side are depicted in a configuration similar to that depicted on the 1850 map (Figure 3; Beers 1868). Two narrow waterways are shown flowing southwestward from the implied dam breast, merging into a single stream approximately 500 feet southwest of the road crossing. Elsewhere on this map, similar depictions of two narrow waterways emanating from dam breasts indicate that at least one waterway in each pair serves as a mill race. The other waterway serves either as a second race (for a second mill) or as a waste weir or spillway, discharging water from the associated mill pond. Curiously, at the Sycamore Road crossing of the unlabeled Broad Creek tributary, no associated mill structures are depicted on the 1868 map near the dam breast and its two outflows. The structure depicted closest to the dam breast is a dwelling denoted approximately 200 feet east of the dam breast's eastern end. Located on the east side of Sycamore Road, this dwelling is attributed to "Mrs. M.A. Collins."

On a USGS topographical quadrangle surveyed in 1902 and 1911-12 but not published until 1915, no building is denoted where the "Mrs. M.A. Collins" dwelling had been indicated on the 1868 map (Figure 4: USGS 1915). No dam breast is denoted in this vicinity, nor is a mill pond depicted north of Sycamore Road. A relatively rare denotation ("∩") at the Sycamore Road crossing of "Grays Branch" (referred to on a 1992 USGS quadrangle as "Elliott Pond Branch" [Figure 1; USGS 1992]) indicates that a serviceable bridge was not in place when the site was visited by USGS surveyors in 1902 and 1911-12. This situation must have been especially problematic in that travelers on a new east-west road opened sometime after 1868—known today as "East Elliotts Dam Road"—were briefly routed over Sycamore Road where it encountered "Grays Branch."

A topographical quadrangle published by the United States Army Map Service in 1946 indicates that a serviceable bridge was in place by that time to carry Sycamore Road (and travelers on East Elliotts Dam Road) across "Grays Branch" (Figure 5; United States Army Map Service 1946). No buildings or other mill-related structures are denoted on this map within 2,500 feet of the Sycamore Road crossing.

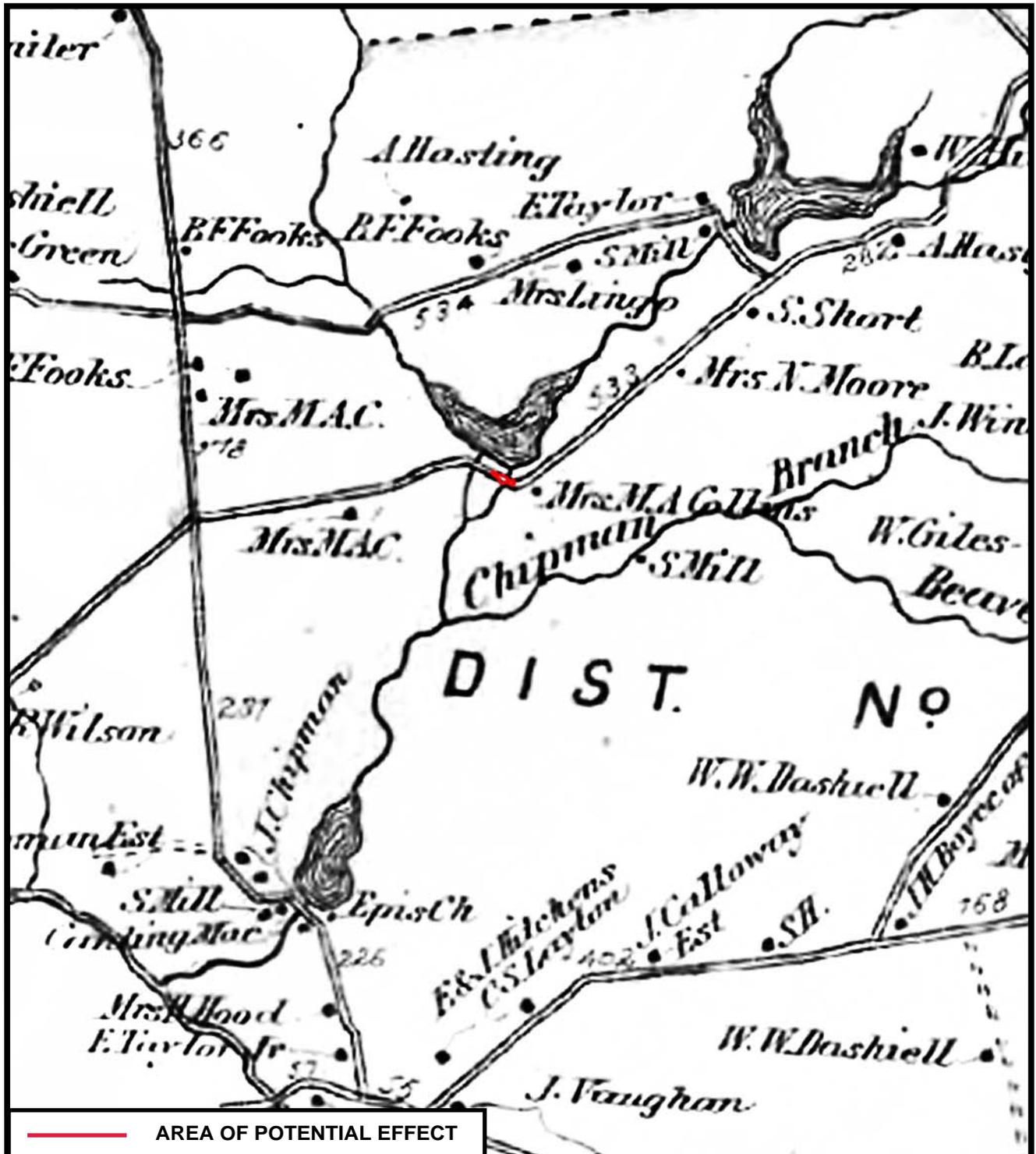


— AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

	SCALE	SOURCE
	<p>0ft 2000ft</p>  <p>0m 609.6m</p> <p>Prepared by CHRIS, Inc.</p>	<p>PRICE AND REA 1850</p>

PROJECT AREA CIRCA 1850

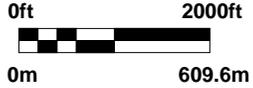
FIGURE 2



— AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

SCALE

SOURCE

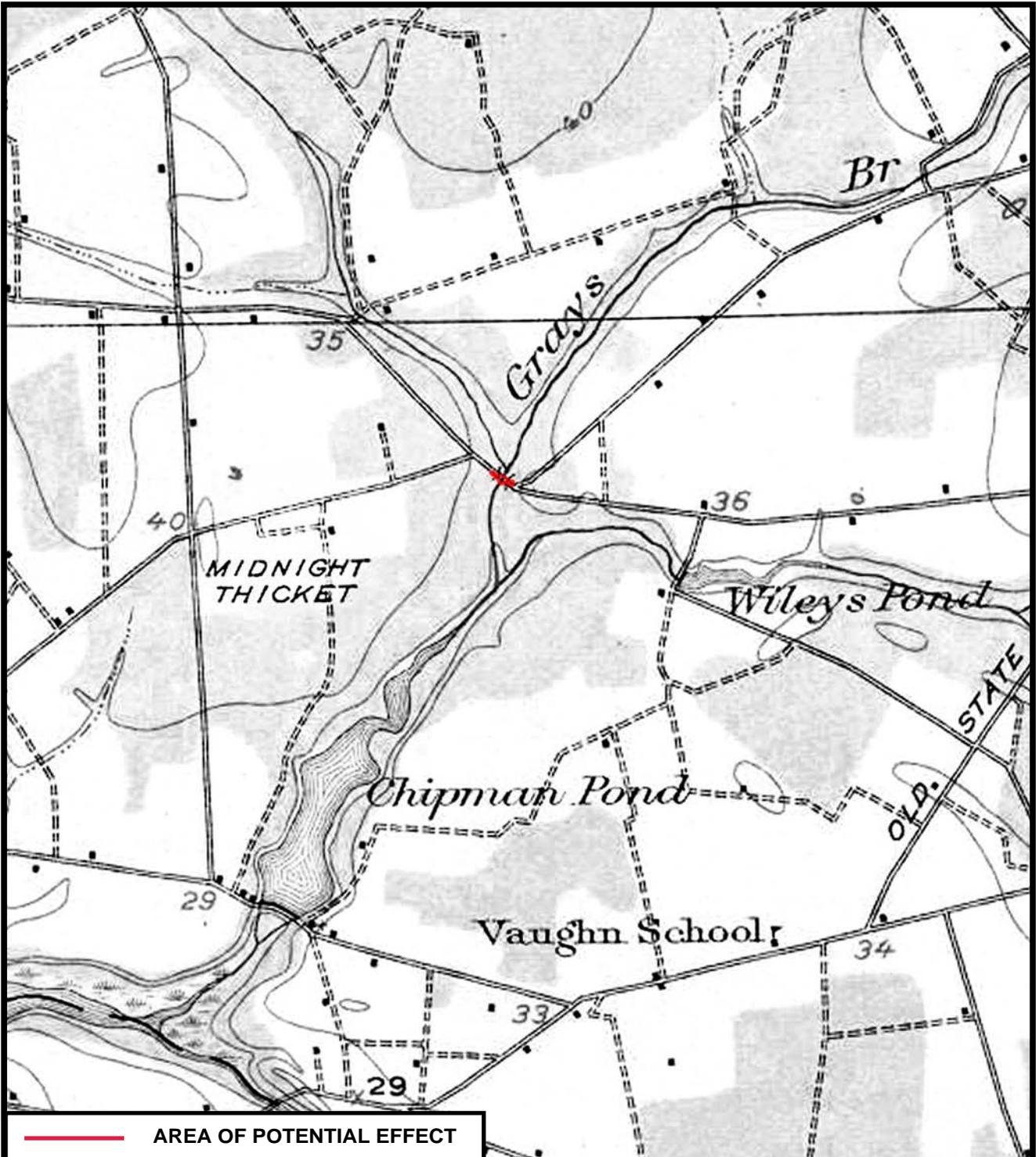


BEERS 1868

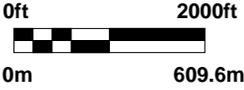
Prepared by CHRS, Inc.

PROJECT AREA CIRCA 1868

FIGURE 3

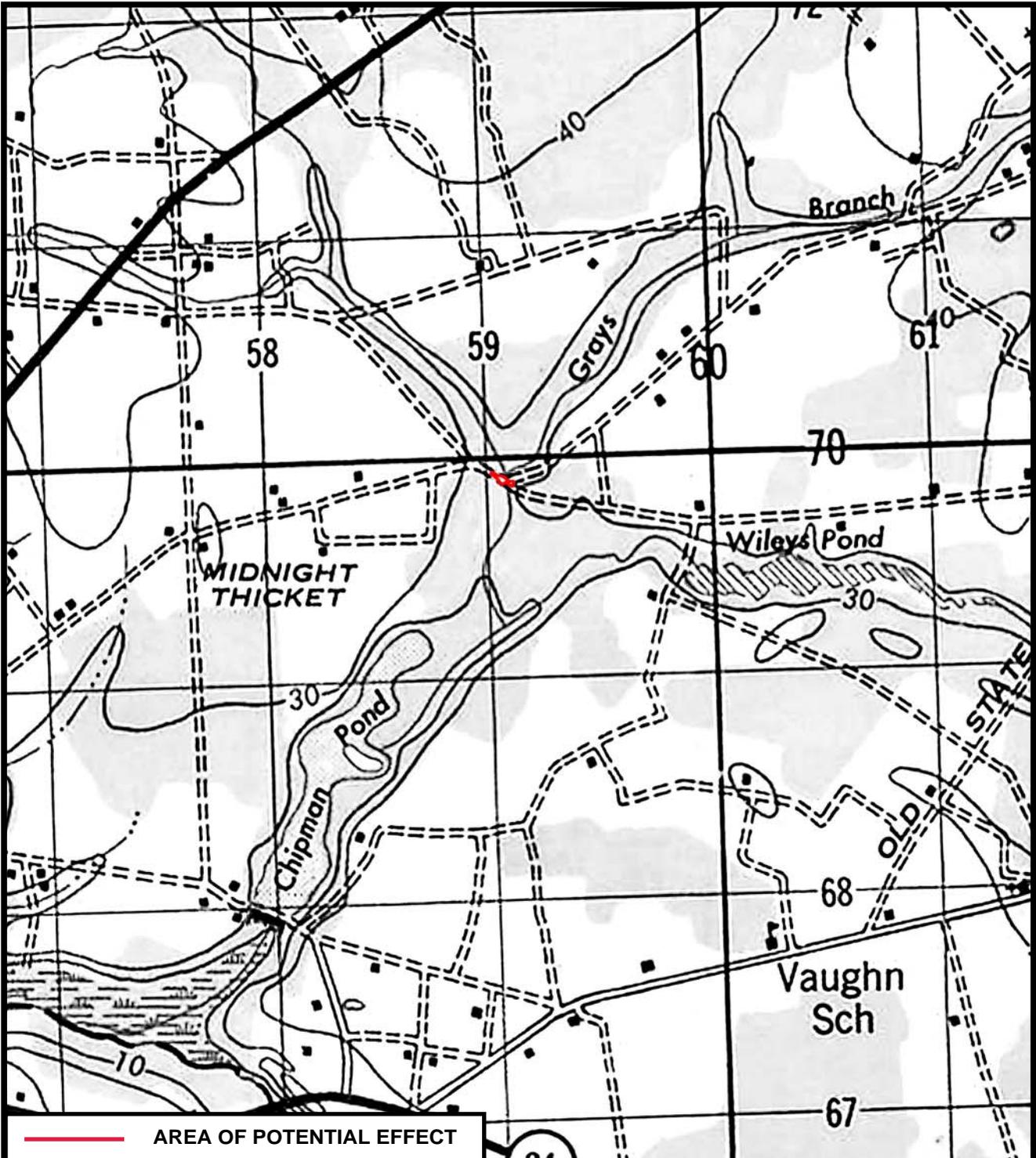


— AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

	SCALE	SOURCE
	 <p>0ft 2000ft 0m 609.6m</p> <p>Prepared by CHRIS, Inc.</p>	<p>USGS 1915</p>

PROJECT AREA CIRCA 1915

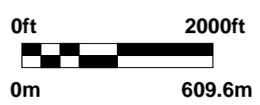
FIGURE 4



— AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

SCALE

SOURCE



UNITED STATES
 ARMY MAP SERVICE
 1946

Prepared by CHRS, Inc.

PROJECT AREA CIRCA 1946

FIGURE 5

Examined in chronological succession, the 1850, 1868, 1915, and 1946 maps offer evidence of the following historical scenario: A road on the approximate alignment of present-day Sycamore Road was opened through the Bridge 3-368 Project Area prior to 1850, and this road was routed in such a way that it crossed the Broad Creek tributary now known as “Elliott Pond Branch” atop a dam breast. Two mills—with one or both of them identified as “Elliotts” sawmill—were located on the southwest side of the road-bearing dam breast as of 1850. These mills were no longer present or operative in 1868, but the road-bearing dam breast, associated mill pond, and two narrow outflows remained from the earlier era. A dwelling owned by Mrs. M.A. Collins stood close enough to the former mill seat in 1868 to suggest a close relationship. This dwelling was no longer present by 1915, nor was the neighboring dam breast. With no dam breast to carry Sycamore Road over Elliott Pond Branch, and no serviceable bridge in place, travelers on both Sycamore Road and the more recent East Elliotts Dam Road were forced in 1915 to either ford the Branch in this location or take an alternate route. This situation was remedied by 1946, as some sort of span was provided in the location presently occupied by Bridge 3-368.

Fleshing out this bare-bones historical scenario, and extending its reach backward in time, is information gleaned from deeds, wills, census schedules, tax assessments, Orphans’ Court records, road books, genealogies, regional history publications, knowledgeable area residents, and cultural resource investigation reports. From such sources emerges a story involving members of several prominent eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Sussex County families, and their engagement in an industry that figured extensively in the region’s post-Revolution development.

A Houston Foothold in the Broad Creek Watershed

The first of these families were the Houstons, who pronounced their surname “house-tun.” Their settlement in the Broad Creek watershed was spearheaded by farmer (“planter”) John Houston in the mid-1730s, when the area was part of Maryland’s expansive Somerset County. Prior to 1736, John had lived with his wife Rhoda and perhaps a child or two for a number of years along the Pocomoke River (south of the present Delaware-Maryland State line), on land John had inherited in 1720 from his father Robert Houston. In May 1736, John and Rhoda Houston acquired a 50-acre tract in what would become Broad Creek Hundred, Sussex County. The Houstons eventually moved northward to occupy this tract, and over the course of the next three decades John added “other adjoining tracts” to the Houston foothold in the Broad Creek watershed, becoming “a large landholder” who also “owned and operated mills” (Shirk 1927:103).

Milling was among the region’s earliest industries, tied closely to the spread of settlement. The connection was summarized as follows by the authors of a *Historic Architectural Resource Survey and Determination of Eligibility* report prepared in 2005 as part of DeIDOT’s Bridge 3-362 at Chipmans Pond Replacement Project, located 1.25 miles southwest of Bridge 3-368, also over Elliott Pond Branch:

Settlement increased in [what would become] Sussex County and Broad Creek Hundred during this period [1730-1770], as more emigrants followed the rivers and streams into the area. One of the first priorities of the new settlers was to clear the land for farming and to build houses for shelter. The area’s abundant timber resources provided the

necessary raw materials for houses and agricultural buildings. To exploit the resource, settlers established water-powered sawmills, which generally were post-and-beam buildings supporting an up-and-down saw. Getting sufficient head to power the mills was problematic, however. Although streams abounded, the flat topography generally did not provide the necessary fall to power a waterwheel. Consequently, settlers had to dam existing ravines to create millponds (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:7-8).

One such pond and sawmill was located by 1770 beside what is now the dam breast of Chipmans Pond, about a mile east of Laurel, along the Broad Creek tributary known today as Elliott Pond Branch (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:8). The mill was owned at that time by John Houston's son, Robert, a prosperous farmer, ship-builder, and mill-owner. It is unclear if John Houston established this mill seat, or if it was inherited by Robert following his father's death early in 1768, along with the Houston "home plantation and other tracts" in that vicinity (Shirk 1927:103). In any case, local tradition holds that "Houston's mill" produced the lumber that Robert Houston and his ship carpenters used in 1770-72 to erect a church (now referred to as "Old Christ Church") for local Anglicans a few dozen yards east of the dam breast (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:8) (Robert and his parents were themselves members of Broad Creek's Presbyterian congregation; Shirk 1927:103).

Through inheritances from his father and his own acquisitions, Robert Houston amassed landholdings in Broad Creek Hundred and neighboring hundreds totaling roughly 2,000 acres (Shirk 1927:103). These holdings included land along Elliott Pond Branch between "Houston's mill" (beside Old Christ Church) and the present site of Bridge 3-368. In addition to farming, milling, and ship-building, Houston was "a justice of the peace, a delegate to the State Assembly, a trustee of the county poor," and, in 1791, one of Sussex County's charter Commissioners (Shirk 1927:103). As reported by one genealogist:

Robert Houston, of Broad Creek, Sussex co., Del, planter and miller, was thrice married. First, to Sally Simmon Minors, who died before 6 June, 1776, leaving one child, Sally Minors Houston (Worcester co. Deeds, F., p. 493), who married her first cousin, Littleton Houston (son of [Robert's brother] John). His second wife is believed to have been Agnes Laws. Five of her children survived him. He married, third, 5 March, 1787, Ann Owens, and had by her five children. . . He was one of the Commissioners, appointed 29 Jan., 1791, to select and buy ground near the center of Sussex co., for a new county seat; to lay off the town and sell building lots, to build a courthouse and prison; and thus he became one of the founders of Georgetown. He "was a man of great strength of character, was highly respected, and lived a noble and exemplary life" ([Scharf 1888:541]). He died intestate 28 Oct., 1794, of yellow fever contracted at Baltimore; and the Orphans' Court of Sussex co., 27 April, 1795, appointed a commission to partition his estate. The widow's third included the part of the manor plantation whereon she lived, 350 acres, and a fourth interest in a sawmill; about 2,000 acres were divided among the children (Shirk 1927:103).

A concise genealogical accounting of the Houston family in the decades following Robert's death (published by the same author) reflects the family's further integration into the upper echelons of central Sussex County society:

The widow, Ann (Owens) Houston, married, 18 Nov., 1799, Jesse Griffith, and died 28 Oct., 1819. Robert Houston's children, as far as known, were Sally Minors Houston, who died before her father, without issue; Agnes Houston, who married in June, 1791, Asahel Phelps, and left issue; Dr. Robert Houston, who married Mary, daughter of Colonel David Hall (commander of the Delaware line during the Revolution, and was afterwards Governor of the State), and left issue; Peggy Houston, who married William Ellegood (died 23 Oct., 1822), and left issue (her will was proved 11 Feb., 1851); Nancy Houston, who married Colonel Seth Griffith (died 1814), and left issue (her will was proved 9 March, 1833); John Houston, born 29 Sept., 1780, married Elizabeth of Cornelius Wiltbank, and left issue (one of their grandsons, Robert Griffith Houston, late collector of the port at Wilmington, Del., has kindly given information of the family); Polly Houston (probably first child of the third marriage), born 4 Sept., 1788, married William Talbott; Littleton Townsend Houston, born 19 Oct., 1791, married 19 Oct., 1813, Patsey Tilford (born 3 June, 1793), and left issue, Sally Houston, bore 25 Oct., 1789, died in infancy; Henry Houston, born 18 Jan., 1793, living in Scott Co., Ky., 1814, when he sold Delaware land inherited from his father; William Houston, born 22 June, 1795, died before 3 Nov., 1797 (Shirk 1927:103).

This register proves invaluable to anyone trying to make sense of a document preserved by Laurel resident and local history enthusiast Edward L. ("Ned") Fowler. Dated December 27, 1821, this document is labeled "Robert Houston Dec^d Report and Valuation of 1/3 of his Real Estate." It refers to Ann Owens Houston's receipt of one-third of Robert's real estate—as a widow's dower—through a partition effected through an order of an Orphans' Court following her husband's untimely death (which, as noted above, occurred in October 1794). Ann had since died (on October 28, 1819) without composing a will, and her heirs had petitioned an Orphans' Court to divide up her 580-acre tract on the west side of Elliott Pond Branch, north of the former "Houston's mill." A survey of this tract and adjoining lands was conducted by Robert Harris on December 9-10, 1821, and a "true draught of the same survey" was appended to the Orphans' Court report two weeks later (Figure 6; Harris 1821).

Important information and clues concerning late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century developments in the Bridge 3-368 Project Area can be gleaned from this detailed draught (or map) (Figure 6; Harris 1821). The road known today as "Sycamore Road" was already laid out as the "Road from George Town to Laurel." Where Bridge 3-368 now carries Sycamore Road over Elliott Pond Branch, the "Road from George Town to Laurel" passed over a "mill dam" separating "Elliotts Mill Pond" on the north from the "Run of the Branch" on the south. On the south side of the dam breast, two structures were depicted: a "Saw Mill" hugging the western bank, and a "Grist Mill and Carding machine" hugging the eastern bank. Land adjoining the west side of the mill seat, on either side of the "Road from George Town to Laurel"—formerly part of "John Houstons Allotment" following the partition of Robert Houston's real estate in the late 1790s—was "Meshack Elliotts" as of December 1821.

The passing of the "Road from George Town to Laurel" over the breast of Elliotts Mill dam implies that the road was laid out after the dam was built. As noted above, Robert Houston had helped located the new County Seat of Georgetown on vacant land in 1791, so there would have been no need for a road to or from Georgetown before that year. It comes as no surprise, then, that a

record in *Sussex County Court of General Sessions Road Book 1763-1794* indicates that on November 9, 1791, “sundry inhabitants of Sussex County” submitted a petition to the Court of General Sessions “for a road from the Broad Creek bridge to George Town” (*Sussex County Court of General Sessions Road Book 1763-1794*:138). While this petition was reportedly granted, an associated return was not recorded in this volume. It may be assumed, however, that the earliest version of today’s Sycamore Road was laid out as the “Road from George Town to Laurel” soon after 1791. Perhaps Robert Houston was still alive to encourage a routing of this road over a mill dam on his property along Elliott Pond Branch. If that was the case, the dam depicted on the December 1821 draught as carrying the “Road from George Town to Laurel” past Elliotts sawmill, gristmill, and millpond was likely in place prior to 1791. It also follows that if a dam was in place here prior to 1791, it must have powered at least one associated mill. As of this writing, details of this mill seat’s establishment prior to 1791 have not been recovered.

“Elliotts Mill”

Deeds and genealogical records provide a wealth of data concerning Meshack Elliott and how he came to own and operate a sawmill, gristmill, and carding machine in the Bridge 3-368 Project Area by December 1821. People hearing Meshack’s name for the first time might wonder if he—like the Meshach in the biblical Book of Daniel—had brothers Shadrach and Abednego. Indeed he did, though parents John Elliott and Mary Cannon typically spelled the boys’ names “Shadrack” and “Abednigo.” Married in their native Sussex County around 1778, John and Mary Elliott became parents to not only Shadrack (born circa 1779), Meshack (1787), and Abednigo (circa 1788), but to a fourth son (John) and two daughters (Mary and an unidentified sister) (Riggin 2007:n.p.; *Sussex County Will Book FC:307*). Like most of his neighbors in Broad Creek Hundred, John Elliott made his living principally as a farmer. Deeds indicate that at least by the early years of the nineteenth century he had branched out into sawmilling, perhaps as a means of providing employment for one or more of his four grown sons. On September 12, 1805, John acquired from Robert Houston’s son John Houston a one-quarter interest in the sawmill located beside the dam that also served as a bridge carrying the “Road from Laurel to Georgetown” over Elliott Pond Branch (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011). This mill was described in a deed composed several months later as “adjoining the plantation of the said John Elliott in Broad Creek Hundred” (*Sussex County Deed Book 25:408*). Five days after acquiring the first one-quarter interest, John Elliott acquired a second one-quarter interest in this mill from Samuel Tulley, who had recently acquired it from some Houston heirs (*Sussex County Deed Books 23:414, 25:183*). Elliott owned two quarter-interests in this mill until May 2 of the following year (1806), when he acquired the remaining half-interest from Broad Creek Hundred residents William Huffington and his wife Lovisa (*Sussex County Deed Book 25:408*). In consideration of Elliott’s payment of \$350, the Huffingtons conveyed to him “one equal undivided half-part of the sawmill adjoining the plantation of the said John Elliott in Broad Creek Hundred, together with one equal half part of all the yards, ways, waters, water courses, and priviledges [*sic*] of every kind to the same belonging.” To clarify the mill property’s location, a description of the property was included in the associated deed as follows:

Beginning at a marked Pine Sapling standing on the east side of the Pond of said mill adjoining the land of Isaac Short, thence along a marked division line South ten degrees and a half east, across the Point of land to an old mill Pond, thence along the edge

thereof to the North westward to a post a corner of Uriah and Isaac Short's land, on the west side of said stream, thence along the lines of said land and the lands of John Houston and John Chipman up the said Pond as far as the Priviledges [*sic*] of said Pond extends by the original article of Agreement between John Houston and John Collins; and down the lines of Isaiah Short's land to the place of beginning (Sussex County Deed Book 25:408).

It is worth revisiting the December 1821 partition draught (Figure 6; Harris 1821) to note that the area on the east side of Elliott Pond Branch in this vicinity is labeled "Huffingtons Land"; the area immediately west of the mill is labeled "John Houstons Allotment now Meshack Elliotts"; the area south of the Houston farm and "Dwelling House" is labeled "Littleton Houstons Allotment Now John Chipmans"; and areas west of the house—on the west side of the "Road from Concord to Chipmans Mills" (present-day Fire Tower Road)—are described as "John Elliotts land" and "John Collins land," later acquired by Meshack Elliott. Regarding "Chipmans Mills," historian John Scharf reports: "Chipman's Mills . . . was built by John Chipman about the beginning of the present century [circa 1800]. They include a saw-mill, grist-mill and carding-machine" (Scharf 1888:1292). The "John Collins" from whom John Elliott and later Meshack Elliott acquired land has not been definitively identified, but he may have been the John Collins (1776-1822) who was a charter Sussex County Commissioner with Robert Houston, and who had in November 1801 married Jane Hall, a daughter of soon-to-be Delaware Governor David Hall. Through this marriage, John became a brother-in-law of Robert Houston's son Dr. Robert Houston (Shirk 1927:103; Anonymous 2010:n.p.). As will be discussed below, more direct links between this John Collins and the Elliotts would be forged in 1812 when Abednigo Elliott married John Collins' sister Mary, and in 1818 when John Collins' son Theophilus married Meshack Elliott's daughter Mary Ann.

John Elliott lived only a year-and-a-half after acquiring full interest in "Elliotts Mill" in the spring of 1801. Evidence suggests that during that time the sawmill was managed or operated primarily by his son Meshack, the mill's future owner. Shadrack, Abednigo, and John Elliott were developing interests in milling and forging about five miles to the north, along Gravelly Branch in Nanticoke Hundred, in the area where John Collins' father had been operating a mill and forge since the mid-1790s (Scharf 1888:1300).

John Elliott had only hours to live on November 3, 1807 when he composed his last will and testament (Sussex County Will Book FC:307). After bequeathing "unto my beloved wife Mary Elliott one horse and carriage, together with a negro girl named Maria," then bequeathing a bond to his eldest son Shadrack and sums of money to five grandchildren, John directed that "all the rest of my estate to be equally divided between my four sons, Shadrack, Meshack, Abednigo and John." Having appointed Meshack and Abednigo to execute his will, John Elliott "set his hand and affixed his seal" to the will. Within hours he was dead.

John Elliott's will was probated six weeks later (on December 15), but only after his wife Mary had entered a claim to her widow's "dower, or third part of all the deceased [*sic*] real estate, according to law" (Sussex County Will Book FC:307). In the coming months, Meshack and Abednigo oversaw the distribution of their father's assets to the heirs. Shadrack appears to have used at least some of his inheritance to buy over 200 acres at the mouth of Gravelly Branch. This property included a "milldam and dwelling-house," and Shadrack promptly erected nearby what

became known as “Gravelly Delight Forge.” He would operate this little industrial complex for about a decade with the help of his brother John (Scharf 1888:1300).

Meshack Elliott’s Mills

John Elliott’s widow Mary died sometime prior to December 5, 1814, on which date 27-year old bachelor Meshack Elliott bought out his brothers’ claims to their mother’s dower (Sussex County Deed Book 31:193). Just over three years later, Meshack married Margaret Boyce, a daughter of Concord storekeeper Robert Boyce (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011) (Scharf 1888:1290). Margaret was at least a decade younger than Meshack. As recorded in an inscription on a gravestone in the Elliott Family graveyard (located 2,700 feet southwest of Bridge 3-368, beside the site of the “Dwelling House” depicted on the 1821 partition draught [Figure 6; Harris 1821]), Margaret gave birth on January 23, 1819 to a baby girl, and named her “Mary Ann.” The Elliott family of three was recorded living along Broad Creek Hundred’s Elliott Pond Branch in a national census conducted in 1820 (United States Bureau of the Census 1820). Living with them were two white women—presumably domestic servants—classified as “foreigners not naturalized.” Living next-door to the Elliotts was the young family of Meshack’s brother John, who had apparently moved back into the area after he and Shadrack gave up their forge operation in Nanticoke Hundred (Scharf 1888:1300). It is possible that in 1820 either Meshack or John’s family occupied a miller’s house located approximately 200 feet east of the Elliotts Mill dam breast. That structure—which would be gone by 1915—was denoted on the 1868 map of Broad Creek Hundred, and attributed to Meshack and Margaret’s daughter Mary Ann, who by that date was known as “Mrs. M.A. Collins” (Figure 3; Beers 1868).

On March 6, 1822 (a matter of weeks after the lands of the Houston heirs had been partitioned), Meshack acquired from David Houston 380 acres and a one-quarter interest in the Elliott sawmill. This acquisition purportedly included the Houston “Dwelling House,” as depicted on the 1821 partition (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011) (Figure 6; Harris 1821). If Meshack’s family had not already moved into the Houston house, they would do so at this time. Meshack and Margaret’s only other child, William Turpin Elliott, was born there in 1828 or 1829, as recorded on a gravestone in the burial plot walled off from a surrounding field a few dozen yards southwest of the Elliott residence. A transcription of gravestone inscriptions in this plot indicates that the first burial there was occasioned by the death on January 29, 1845 of William Turpin Elliott, “aged 16 years, 7 months and 20 days” (Stow n.d.:n.p.). His death left Meshack and Margaret with only one surviving child: Mary Ann.

As reflected on the December 1821 partition draught, Meshack Elliott was operating by that time a “Grist Mill and Carding machine,” in addition to his sawmill (Figure 6; Harris 1821). This was not a rare diversification for the region, as explained in the *Bridge 362 at Chipmans Pond, Historic Architectural Resource Survey and Determination of Eligibility* report:

Like their predecessors, . . . emigrants [to Broad Creek Hundred during the period 1770-1830] were primarily subsistence farmers, although the types of crops grown had changed. Tobacco, grown in large quantities in the early eighteenth century, was now largely replaced by corn and livestock, with more limited cultivation of wheat, oats,

tobacco, and cotton. . . . The switch to corn and grains stimulated a need for gristmills to process the crops. Millponds that formerly supported a sawmill now might also run a gristmill, and new ponds and sawmills and gristmills were started as the swamplands were drained and the existing timber was cut down. The mills became the focal point of the local community. In Broad Creek Hundred and neighboring Little Creek Hundred, more than 30 ravines had been dammed by 1800, to furnish power for more than 50 mills (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:8-9).

Meshack Elliott's operation of a wool carding machine, using the same waterflow that powered his gristmill, was less common in Broad Creek Hundred because it required a higher investment and involved more complex machinery. A simple description of the industry reads as follows:

Carding wool is the process by which wool fibers (or cotton, for that matter) are separated and prepared for spinning. It can be done by hand or by machine. Carding wool by hand takes practice. The carder takes two carding combs, which have upstanding teeth, and loads one with the wool fibers. Using a back and forth motion, the person places one carder on top and "combs" the carder through the wool on the lower carding comb. When all the carding wool has been transferred from the bottom carder to the top, the carding combs are flipped over and the process is reversed. When the wool is light, airy, the fibers separate and free from tangles, the mass is formed into a rolag, or roll of fiber, for use on a spinning wheel. . . . Carding wool by machine doesn't take as long, and obviously, more wool can be carded at one time. When carding wool by machine, the operator puts the wool fibers on a drum with very coarse teeth. The wool is then transferred over a series of rolling drums, each with successively finer teeth. When the operator takes the wool off the last drum, it is separated into individual fibers and is ready to go to another machine to be spun into thread. The carding wool technology has changed little in the past several years, mostly because the drum method is the most efficient way to get large amounts of wool fiber carded and ready for use in garments in a relatively short time (Conjecture Corporation 2011:n.p.).

The operation of a wool carding machine on Elliott Pond Branch "meant that someone in the area . . . was raising sheep. Sheep were, in many ways, ideal livestock for intensively farmed western Sussex County. Sheep subsist on forbs and grasses and, compared to cattle, require small amounts of pasture land. They could easily be raised for their meat and fleece on the more marginal portions of Sussex County farms." This explanation was offered in the *Bridge 362 at Chipmans Pond, Historic Architectural Resource Survey and Determination of Eligibility* report, because the operator of Chipmans Mill in 1852 also operated a carding machine (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:10).

By 1830, 43-year-old farmer and miller Meshack Elliott was one of Broad Creek Hundred's most prosperous businessmen. The Elliott plantation on the west side of Elliott Pond Branch was home in that year to 16 persons, 11 of whom were slaves (United States Bureau of the Census 1830). Meshack continued to expand his business interests in 1832 when he acquired from Theodore Mitchell a half-interest in the Laurel Mills (gristmill and sawmill), located 2.5 miles southwest of the Elliott Mills, on Broad Creek. This mill seat had been established by John Mitchell "sometime previous to 1800" (Scharf 1888:1318-19). It is unclear how active the mills were in 1832 when Meshack Elliott acquired a half-interest, but by the mid-nineteenth century the Laurel Mills

would be the largest and most productive in Broad Creek and Little Creek Hundreds (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011).

Given Meshack Elliott's social prominence, it is not surprising that his daughter Mary Ann was courted by a son of Nanticoke Hundred's illustrious John Collins, who had risen to the highest office in the State in 1820. Governor Collins' term had been cut short by his death at the age of 46 on April 16, 1822 (as noted on a gravestone in the Collins Family graveyard). At the time of his death, he and his wife Jane (Hall) were the parents of six children, including eldest son Theophilus, who was then 14 years of age. After his father's death, Theophilus inherited the Collins Forge in Nanticoke Hundred, and was engaged in that operation on June 17, 1839 when he married Meshack and Margaret Elliott's 20-year-old daughter Mary Ann (Stow n.d.:n.p.; Scharf 1888:1300). The newlyweds set up housekeeping on the Collins property in Nanticoke Hundred. Four months after the marriage, 52-year-old Meshack Elliott composed a will in which he named his prosperous new son-in-law Theophilus to serve as executor (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011).

By the early 1840s, Meshack had begun to concentrate his milling interests more on the Laurel Mills than the Elliott Mills, perhaps because the Laurel Mills' town location attracted greater business. He had apparently given up management of the Elliott Mills by September 17, 1842, on which date he signed "Articles of Agreement" with miller Peter Russum of Nanticoke Hundred, leasing to Russum "the Mill property situate in Broad Creek Hundred . . . , on the road leading from Laurel to George Town consisting of a sawmill and grist Mill, dwelling house and lot of ground" (document in the collection of Ned Fowler). The terms were as follows:

The occupancy and use of which [is] to commence on the first of January 1842 [*sic*] and continue for three months next ensuing the date hereof for which the said Russum agrees to pay to the said Elliott the sum of twenty five dollars. The said Russum further agrees to keep up the usual repairs when the same shall not exceed at any time the sum of one dollar, and pay attention to the water so far as in his power lies, to take care of it, and if through want of attention any damage shall happen to the said Mill property the said Russum makes himself accountable therefore and further it will be expected for the said Russum to use slab wood for fuel from the sawmill and cut no green wood from the woods. . . . The said Russum is to be entitled to the use of the aforesaid property to the end of the year 1842 by paying the sum of twenty five dollars at the end of each quarter or three months.

The fate of the Elliott Mills after this lease was signed on September 17, 1842 is unclear, but two pieces of evidence strongly suggest that the mills ceased to operate over the course of the next two years. When taxes were assessed in Broad Creek Hundred in 1844, the only mill-related assets attributed to Meshack Elliott were "½ the mills and lots belonging at Laurel valued at \$1,500" (his real estate in this assessment was said to total 700 acres). The absence of reference to the Elliott Mills in this 1844 record jibes with a contention made by historian Scharf 44 years later that "the Elliot Mill which was owned by Meshack Elliot, and which included a saw and grist-mill and carding-machine, and was situated on the same stream as Chipman's mill, went down over forty years ago" (Scharf 1888:1292). Additional details concerning the apparent vacating of the Elliott mill seat in the mid-1840s have not been discovered. By 1847, Meshack Elliott's attention was entirely on the Laurel Mills. In January of that year, he and his partners Elias Taylor and Solomon

Short considered a Memorandum of Agreement drawn up by Joseph J. Whitney to have Whitney “build, erect, and put in operation in the grist mill . . . one of Parson’s Percussion, overshot, reaction waterwheels” (document in the collection of Ned Fowler). Later that year, Taylor and Short sold their half-interest in the mills to Levin W. Dulaney, who “soon sold to Meshack Elliott, thus vesting in him the entire title” (Scharf 1888:1319).

Meshack Elliott was identified as the owner of the Laurel Mills in a census of manufactures compiled in 1850 (United States Bureau of the Census 1850). During the year leading up to the census enumeration, those mills had processed 2,300 logs, 800 bushels of corn, and 4,000 pounds of wool. There does not appear to be any reference to the Elliott Mills in this enumeration, which is further evidence of the Mills’ demise. The denotation of “lliotts SM” on the site of the Elliott Mills on the 1850 map may mean that the area was surveyed well in advance of the map’s publication, and/or that enough of the mill seat survived in 1850 to warrant reference on the map (Figure 2; Price and Rea 1850).

In the early 1850s, the aging Meshack Elliott sold the Laurel Mills to David W. Moore and James Shipman (Scharf 1888:1318-19). Meshack made no mention of mills in a will he drew up on February 15, 1853, replacing an earlier will that had included bequests to his since-deceased son William Turpin Elliott (document in the collection of Ned Fowler). Meshack again named as his executor son-in-law Theophilus Collins, who by now was the father of four children: Margaret Jane (born January 23, 1843); William Turpin (born five months after his uncle and namesake William Turpin Elliott); Sarah Catherine (October 27, 1846); and Mary Ida (September 1, 1848). A fifth and final child, John Meshack, was born to Theophilus and Mary Ann Collins in Nanticoke Hundred on June 18, 1853 (Stow n.d.:n.p.).

On February 5, 1856, after composing yet another will, Meshack Elliott died. As noted on his stone in the Elliott Family graveyard, he had “departed this life . . . in the 69th year of his age. He was a kind and affectionate Husband and Father, a devoted and beloved friend, an intelligent and useful Citizen, and an [illegible] member of the M.E. Church for over 50 years” (Stow n.d.:n.p.). Through his will, Meshack provided for the setting free and remuneration of six slaves. Beyond that, his “beloved wife Margaret” was to receive “all the rest and residue of my estate, real, personal and Miscel, during her natural life and widowhood and at her death, I give and devise all the aforesaid rest and residue of my said estate, to my daughter Mary Ann, now the wife of Theophilus Collins” (Sussex County Will Book L:11).

The Collins Era

Meshack’s widow Margaret ended up out-living her son-in-law Theophilus, who died at only 49 years of age on September 15, 1857 (as noted on his gravestone in the Collins Family burial ground; Stow n.d.:n.p.). Mary Ann Collins took some time to arrange the sale of Theophilus’ extensive holdings in Nanticoke Hundred, then moved her five children back to her childhood home along the west side of Elliott Pond Branch, where they were welcomed by Mary Ann’s widowed mother (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011). As of June 1, 1860, according to a census enumeration conducted on that date, the Elliott household in Broad Creek Hundred comprised 60-year-old “farmer” Margaret, 36-year-old Mary Ann, the five Collins children ranging

in age from 7 to 17, and a 43-year-old boarder or domestic servant named Henriet Wooten (United States Bureau of the Census 1860).

Margaret Elliott died during the 1860s, and Mary Ann Collins moved her family off the farm and into a stylish “town house” in Laurel. Deed and probate records indicate that for many years “Mrs. M.A. Collins” maintained ownership of the former Elliott farm on the west side of Elliott Pond Branch, along with other properties in Broad Creek and Little Creek Hundreds, including the former miller’s house beside the former Elliott Mills. Her ownership of the miller’s house as of 1868 was reflected on the map of Broad Creek Hundred published in that year (Figure 3; Beers 1868).

When she composed a will on March 19, 1897 at the age of 87, Mary Ann Collins bequeathed her “home farm” in Laurel to her son John, and the farm on Elliott Pond Branch—“supposed to contain four hundred and seventy eight acres”—to her daughters Margaret Jane, Sarah Catherine, and Mary Ida, all of whom had married. Mary Ann died five years later, on August 23, 1902, and was buried beside her parents and two infant grandsons in the Elliott Family burial ground (Stow n.d.:n.p.). By that time, the Elliott Mills were a distant memory. As reflected on the USGS map surveyed in 1902 and 1911-12, the former miller’s house was gone, and there was no serviceable bridge carrying Sycamore Road over Elliott Pond Branch—absences that may have resulted from one or more flooding events (Figure 4: USGS 1915).

Few developments are documented on and around the site of the former Elliott mills after Mary Ann Collins’ death in 1902. Land on either side of Sycamore Road in this vicinity was conveyed by Collins’ daughters and their husbands in a pair of abutting 76.5-acre and 75-acre tracts to Laurel resident Minos E. Culver in 1912 and 1913 (Sussex County Deed Books 185:509; 187:496-496). By a deed dated December 31, 1920, Culver conveyed those 151.5 acres (“lying and bordering on the south side of the Public Road leading from Laurel to Georgetown”) to Gola C. Dolby and Jackson H. Dolby of Broad Creek Hundred (Sussex County Deed Book 227:38). Jackson conveyed his half-interest in the real estate to Gola by a deed dated November 22, 1927 (Sussex County Deed Book 267:4030). On an aerial photograph of the vicinity taken in 1937, land on either side of Sycamore Road in this vicinity appears to be wooded (USDA 1937). “Agribusinessman” and racehorse breeder Gola Dolby, along with his wife Sallie, owned the land on either side of Elliott Pond Branch south of Sycamore Road and Bridge 3-368 until March 26, 1964, when they conveyed a 5-acre parcel on the east side of Elliott Pond Branch south of Sycamore and East Elliotts Dam Road to Laurel area farmer Horace G. Short and his wife Linda (Sussex County Deed Book 573:316; Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011). Three years later, by a deed dated October 13, 1967, the Dolbys conveyed to the Shorts a 3.25-acre parcel on the west side of Elliott Pond Branch, south of Sycamore Road (Sussex County Deed Book 624:1068). The latter acquisition gave the Shorts 8.25 acres on both sides of the Branch, and set the stage for the Shorts to relocate a circa-1888 house from the south end of Georgetown onto a clearing immediately southeast of Bridge 3-368 (Jon Schmidt, personal communication, August 25, 2011). This was not the only house relocation associated with the former Elliott mill seat. In the mid-1970s, newlywed Ned Fowler oversaw the moving of the Houston-Elliott mansion house from the west side of Elliott Pond Branch down into Laurel, where he and his wife restored it to its late eighteenth-century condition (Ned Fowler, personal communication, August 9, 2011).

Horace and Linda Short occupied the property southeast of Bridge 3-368—making numerous structural additions and alterations—until January 30, 1994, when Horace died. On June 30, 1997, his widow (having remarried) conveyed the parcels on either side of Elliott Pond Branch to the current owners: Michael S. and Jennifer S. Myers (Sussex County Deed Book 2212:261).

Assessment of Archaeological Potential Within the Bridge 3-368 Project APE

Archaeological potential within the Bridge 3-368 Project APE is low. While there is documentary evidence of Sycamore Road crossing a tributary of Broad Creek in this vicinity atop an existing dam breast as early as the 1790s, and while additional records document the presence of a sawmill and a gristmill with associated carding machine operating on the south side of the mill dam during the first half of the nineteenth century, there is no evidence of any mill-related structures surviving into the twentieth century. Indeed, a USGS map published in 1915 indicates the absence of both a dam breast and a serviceable bridge in this location (Figure 4: USGS 1915). Those conditions may have resulted from one or more flooding events. Such conditions may have been prolonged or even worsened by a flood in August 1933 that “destroyed nearly all the dams in the Laurel area” (Skelly & Loy, Inc. 2005:14). Additional disturbances within the APE were effected in 1938 when previously-unpaved Sycamore Road was paved and improved under DelDOT Contract 591 of Federal Aid Project FAS33A. On that occasion, a 7-foot concrete span over “Grays Branch” was replaced with a 16-foot creosote-coated timber bridge. Three borings taken as part of this project reached “elevation 9.50” and “showed four feet of sand, two feet of fine gravel, and six feet of sand” (Delaware Department of Transportation 1938). It is likely that at least some of these materials were imported to the APE as a road-carrying berm was built up earlier in the twentieth century. Additional disturbances in the APE were effected in 1977 when the present corrugated steel pipe bridge was installed by Sussex County maintenance workers (Jon Schmidt, personal communication, August 25, 2011). This cultural resource work was performed for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

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APPENDIX A

QUALIFICATIONS OF RESEARCHERS

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Principal Investigator: Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D.
Professional Experience: 32 years
Education: Ph.D. Anthropology, Temple University
M.A. Anthropology, Temple University
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Project Responsibility: Administration, report writing and review

Senior Historian: Philip Ruth
Professional Experience: 25 years
Education: M.A. English, University Of New Hampshire
B.A. English, Goshen College
Project Responsibility: Historical research, review, analysis, and report writing

Graphic Illustrator: Crystal Hall
Professional Experience: 2 years
Education: Advertising Design, Hussian School of Art
Social Services, Bucks County Community College
Project Responsibility: Graphics preparation

Editor: Kevin Quigg
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Education: M.A. English, Beaver College
B.A. Communications, Temple University
Project Responsibility: Report editing

Editor: Maria Rossi
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Education: B.A. English with Communications, Gwynedd-Mercy College
Project Responsibility: Report editing

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1: East-southeastward view of Sycamore Road and Bridge 3-368 from the APE's western limit.



Photograph 2: West-northwestward view of the south side of Bridge 3-368.



Photograph 3: Southeastward view of Bridge 3-368 (far left), a pond on the south side of the Bridge, and the Myers residence.



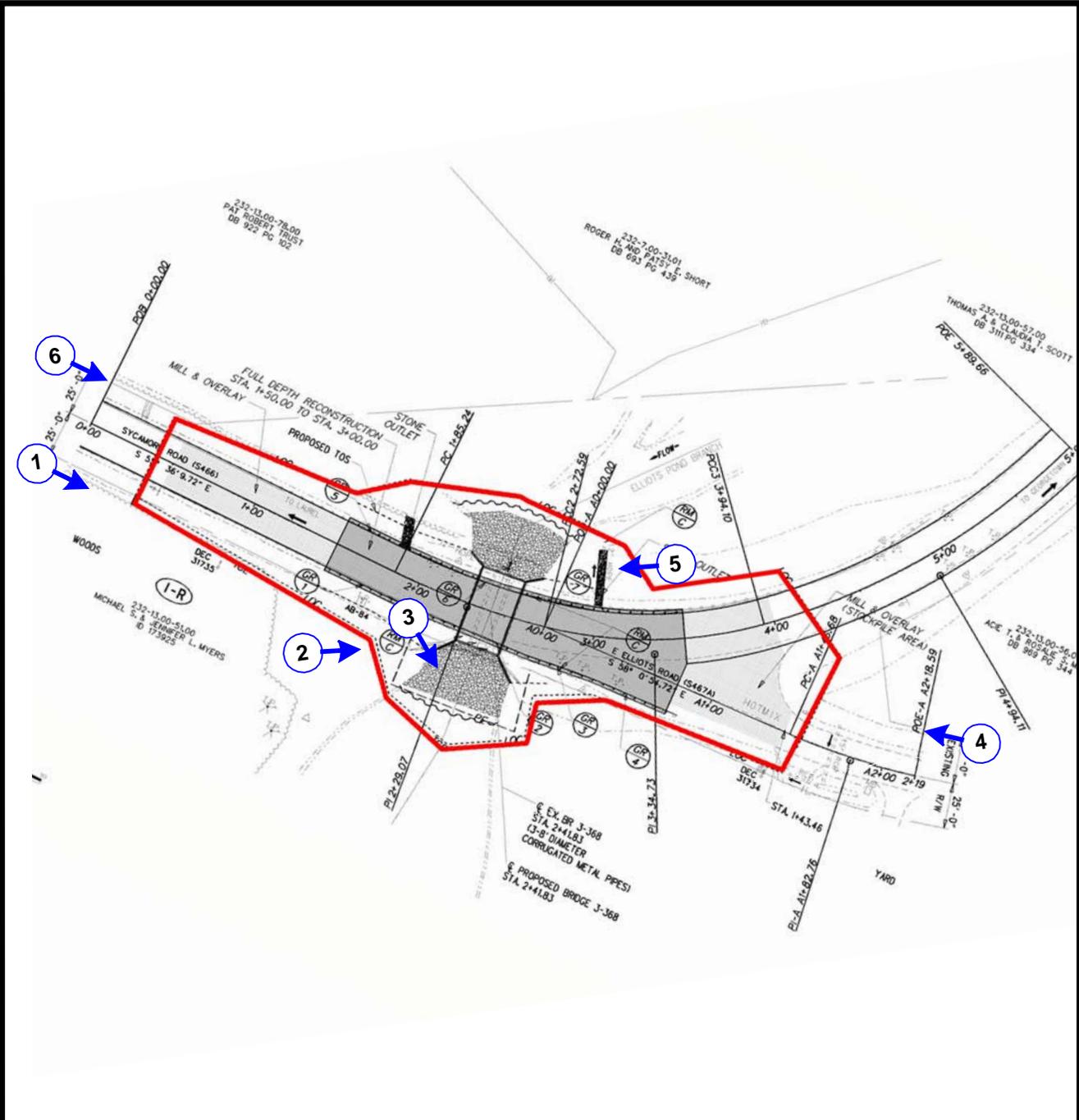
Photograph 4: West-northwestward view of the eastern intersection of Sycamore Road (right) and East Elliotts Dam Road (left), with Bridge 3-368 in the center.



Photograph 5: West-southwestward view of the north side of Bridge 3-368.



Photograph 6: East-southeastward view of the north side of Sycamore Road and Bridge 3-368 from the APE's western limit.



 AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT
 PHOTO LOCATION

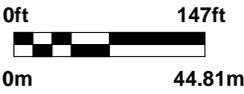
	SCALE	SOURCE
	 <p>0ft 147ft 0m 44.81m</p> <p>Prepared by CHRS, Inc.</p>	<p>DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 2011</p>

PHOTO LOCATION MAP

