

3.0 CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3.1 PREHISTORIC CONTEXT

Current interpretation of the Native American past in the Eastern Woodlands is based on the organization of material culture into temporal sequences, with specific chronologies of site occupation developed from this ordering. The prehistory of the region is conventionally divided into three general periods, which are seen as reflections of widespread technological and social adaptation to evolving environmental conditions. Following Griffin's (1967) chronology for eastern North America, these periods are referred to as the Paleo-Indian (ca. 12,000-8000 BC), the Archaic (ca. 8000-1000 BC), and the Woodland (ca. 1000 BC-AD 1600). The latter two periods are typically subdivided into early, middle, and late sub-periods. An alternative chronology, focused more on evidence for perceived changes in adaptive strategies and cultural continuity than on diagnostic artifacts, has been proposed by Custer (1984, 1989) specifically for the Delmarva Peninsula. Much of the existing database for Delmarva, as well as various settlement pattern models derived from that data, result from work conducted by Custer and his associates (e.g., Custer 1984; Custer and Bachman 1986a; Custer and DeSantis 1985; Custer and Cunningham 1986), and regional interpretations are typically referenced to this chronology.

Since the predictive model developed for the 301 Project addressing St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County (Baublitz et al. 2005), uses the Delmarva chronology, this framework provides the primary reference in the summary provided below. The Delmarva chronology defines the Paleo-Indian period to have extended from 12,000-6500 BC and the Archaic period from 6500-3000 BC. Two later periods are recognized: Woodland I, from 3000 BC to AD 1000; and Woodland II, from AD 1000 to 1650. The discussion that follows summarizes the current understanding of these periods to provide a context for the interpretation of the archaeological remains at the Sandy Branch prehistoric site (7NC-F-122). While all of the temporal periods are mentioned, particular emphasis is paid to those with components occurring at the site, namely the Woodland I and II.

Paleo-Indian - 12,000-6500 BC

The generally accepted record of human habitation in the Middle Atlantic begins approximately 14,000 years ago. As previously detailed, the retreat of the glaciers brought a fairly rapid warming trend throughout the Middle Atlantic, a phenomenon directly reflected in the replacement of northern plant and animal species by southern types. Like much of the region, New Castle County was characterized by a relatively complex set of overlapping micro-environmental zones, providing a variety of subsistence resources for prehistoric populations. Archaeologists have in the past assumed that big game hunting was important in the subsistence economy of local populations in this period, based on analogies with big game hunting cultures in western North America. Yet the large Pleistocene grazing and browsing fauna that had earlier been present in the Middle Atlantic were for the most part gone by this point, and the woods and parklands of the region supported a wide range of flora and smaller fauna.

Consequently, big game hunting was probably not a critical part of Paleo-Indian subsistence in the region (Wesler et al. 1981; Johnson 1986; Custer 1989). Rather, Paleo-Indian peoples were likely "generalized foragers, hunters, and fishermen in a boreal forest environment" (Custer and Stewart 1990:314, cited in Baublitz et al. 2005).

Human social organization is believed to have typically included in small, mobile bands of hunter-gatherers, and the movements of these bands were scheduled seasonally to exploit different localized environments and resources within each band's territory. Site patterning seems to indicate a preference for riverine environments with sites located on high terraces or knolls overlooking rivers or streams (Baublitz et al. 2005; Leslie 1973; Marshall 1982; Custer 1989).

Archaeological sites dating to this period are usually identified by the presence of fluted stone projectile points, often highly curated and made of high quality, cryptocrystalline lithic material such as chert or jasper. Relatively few Paleo-Indian sites have been reported throughout the Middle Atlantic. A group of fluted point finds are reported in northeastern Cecil County, Maryland, and northwestern New Castle County, Delaware (Custer and Glasso 1980; Custer et al. 1986). Most of the Paleo-Indian locales reported in Delaware, such as the Hughes complex of sites (7K-E-10, 7K-E-24, 7K-E-33) in southwestern Kent County, occur in the central portion of the peninsula (Custer 1989). There are no recorded Paleo-Indian sites recorded in New Castle County (Baublitz et al. 2005).

Archaic - 6500-3000BC

By 6500 BC, the climate of the Middle Atlantic region had begun to approximate that of modern times (Baublitz et al. 2005). Local populations were exploiting the new floral and faunal resources appearing with the transformation of the mixed pine-oak forest to a temperate oak-hemlock deciduous forest. Although generalized foraging is assumed as the main resource procurement strategy, seasonally specialized, transient procurement stations have been noted, that have been proposed as support facilities for estuarine base camps (Gardner 1978; Custer 1986a).

One of the most important environmental changes affecting prehistoric populations throughout the Middle Atlantic region during the entire Archaic period was the gradual rise in sea level accompanying the retreat of the continental ice sheets. Beginning during the Paleo-Indian period, the Holocene marine transgression, as it is often referred to, led to rising sea levels and widespread lowland flooding of coastal areas. This flooding extended up many Pleistocene valleys, including those of the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers (Stuiver and Daddario 1963). Among the effects of the inundation were marked rises in local water tables, an increase in shoreline complexity associated with estuary development, and a consequent increase in floral and faunal resources in newly formed marsh or wetland areas (Potter 1982). Large marshes and swamps became important points of focus for settlement-subsistence during the period (Gardner 1978).

Archaic period artifact assemblages included projectile point forms such as several bifurcate types—St. Albans, LeCroy, and Kanawha (Broyles 1971)—along with the

stemmed types, Stanly or Neville. Early long- or broad-bladed forms, such as Guilford and Morrow Mountain, and the later, side-notched Halifax point, are also recognized in various regions (Coe 1964). Custer (1989:123-4) contends that only the bifurcated points have sufficiently unambiguous date ranges to be chronologically diagnostic for the period in Delmarva. The lithic tool kit during this period was further marked by the appearance of groundstone tools—the first artifactual evidence of extensive plant processing. Many Coastal Plain sites in the central part of the state, such as the Snapp site (7NC-G-101) (Custer and Silber 1995), the Leipsic site (7K-C-194A) (Custer et al. 1996), or Carey Farm (7K-D-3) (Custer et al. 1995b), are reported with diagnostic artifacts from the Middle Archaic period. At most of these sites, the temporal components were mixed and the artifacts recovered from plow zone contexts. Among the few sites with reported stratigraphic contexts from the middle part of the Archaic period is Blueberry Hill (7NC-K-107), at which Palmer and bifurcate points were recovered in levels at the base of a soil profile characterized by aeolian deposits (Heite and Blume 1995:53).

Woodland I - 3000 BC to AD 1000

At this time, regional environments were characterized by the prevalence of an oak-hickory forest. The rate of sea level rise slowed, allowing riverine and estuarine environments to form that were stable enough to support significant populations of shellfish and anadromous fish in larger streams. The focus of settlement shifted during the initial part of the period to these riverine and estuarine locales to take advantage of the increasingly predictable fish and shellfish resources (Custer 1978; Gardner 1978). A pattern of warmer and drier climatic conditions, referred to as the mid-postglacial xerothermic, led to the relatively rapid burial of certain Delmarva landscapes through aeolian or windblown deposition. The process has been observed in association with xeric soils throughout the Lower Coastal Plain and the Upper Coastal Plain (Curry 1980, 1992; Ward and Bachman 1987; Curry and Ebright 1989; Daniel 1993; Heite and Blume 1995).

A marked increase in site frequency is observed, suggesting both an overall population increase and population movements into new environmental zones (Turner 1978). Some sites in the riverine and estuarine areas tend to be larger and more complex than any occupied during previous periods, suggesting a trend toward sedentism and organized resource procurement strategies (Johnson 1986). Gardner (1982) maintains that in upland areas, particularly near the fall line, large, spring-and-summer base camps existed during the Late Archaic at which anadromous fish were harvested. Moreover, smaller, fall-and-winter base camps were situated along inland streams, while multi-seasonal, transient camps were located in a variety of environments, offering additional support to the base camp occupations. The pattern of settled occupation that developed in the Late Archaic out of the generalized foraging pattern of the Middle Archaic forms the basis for the segregation of the traditional periods in the Delmarva chronology: the Middle Archaic is referred to simply as the Archaic, while the Late Archaic is combined with the initial two sub-periods of the ensuing Woodland period, the Early and Middle Woodland, into a broad cultural period referred to as Woodland I (ca. 3000 BC-AD 1000), recognizing an extended interval of continuity in settlement systems (Custer 1989:141-2).

Chipped stone artifacts characteristic of the Late Archaic period included a wide range of broad-bladed, stemmed, and notched points. Custer (1994:144ff, Table 21) suggests that due to an apparent profusion of point types during the period, chronologies based on typical specimens are problematical and thus unreliable. In this view, point types which are considered to be useful temporal indicators include Otter Creek; broadspears such as Susquehanna, Perkiomen, Koens-Crispin, and Savannah River; and Fishtails. Other points, ranging from Vosburg and Brewerton, through Normanskill, Lamoka, Bare Island, and Piscataway, are considered to be of relatively little use in establishing chronological trends.

Certain tool associations have been documented for the Late Archaic period throughout the region. Specific broad-bladed point types were characteristically manufactured from particular lithic raw materials: for example, Susquehanna points were often made from rhyolite, and Koens-Crispin points from argillite. In addition, certain broadspears, such as Susquehanna, are often found in association with bowls carved from steatite. Based on artifact associations, it has been suggested that the wide-bladed points were designed in part to exploit new riverine resources present in the Late Archaic (Witthoft 1953; Ritchie 1965).

Around 1000 BC, techniques for pottery manufacture were introduced across the region. This innovation has traditionally defined the beginning of the Woodland period in the Middle Atlantic. Ceramics, which tend to have somewhat more discretely bounded time ranges during the Woodland than do projectile points, have become the primary temporal indices.

The deliberate and organized procurement strategies that developed during the Late Archaic period appear to have remained unchanged throughout that period. Nonetheless, there is evidence for an increase in sedentism as regional populations became more efficient in exploiting available resources. Gardner (1982) has postulated that, rather than breaking up into small base camps in interior freshwater settings, occupants of the large spring-and-summer base camps in anadromous fishing zones regrouped in the fall and winter near the freshwater/saltwater transition to take advantage of the abundant shellfish resources there. An increasing incidence of storage features from the period at sites such as Leipsic, Clyde Farm (7NC-E-6A) (Custer et al. 1985), or Pollack (7K-C-203) (Custer et al. 1995a), is widely assumed to represent archaeological evidence of the apparent trend in more organized subsistence rounds and more sedentary settlement patterns.

The earliest known ceramic in the area, used from about 1200 BC to 800 BC, is a steatite-tempered variety referred to as Marcey Creek ware, after its type site on the Potomac River, in Arlington County, Virginia (Manson 1948). A subsequent diagnostic ceramic type of the period is the crushed hornblende or gneiss-tempered Dames Quarter ware, for which a date of 1005 BC has been recorded at Clyde Farm (Artusy 1976). A series of five pit features containing Marcey Creek and Dames Quarter ceramics were dated between 980 BC and 1070 BC at the Blackbird Creek site (7NC-J-195D) (Parsons 2000). Custer (1989:176, Table 23) notes that the predominant projectile points accompanying these ceramic wares in Delmarva are long, stemmed points, referred to as Bare

Island/Lackawaxen, as well as various broadspears and fishtails. An additional ceramic type that occurs less frequently in Delmarva is Accokeek, a sand and grit-tempered, cord-marked ceramic, with an accepted date range in Delmarva of 700 BC to 400 BC (Stephenson and Ferguson 1963; Custer 1989:166-176).

In terms of broad chronological patterning, Custer further subdivides the latter part of Delmarva prehistory into a series of regional complexes, that he has described as “set[s] of archaeological sites showing similar adaptations to the bio-social environments with limited spatial and temporal distributions” (Custer 1989:36). These complexes, and their relationships within the Delmarva chronology and to conventional chronologies, are shown in Figure 3-2, beginning with the Late Archaic (the initial Woodland I). Dames Quarter ceramics and the stemmed, broadspear and fishtail points described above comprise part of a cultural complex designated as Barker’s Landing in the Upper Coastal Plain, and as Clyde Farm in the Piedmont/Fall Line zone. It has recently been proposed that a distinctive form of residential patterning developed during the Woodland I, originally as part of the Clyde Farm Complex (Custer 1994:46). Evidence of features characterized as pit houses has been reported in association with Woodland I period occupations at sites including Snapp, Leipsic, Pollack, and the Carey Farm and Island Farm (7K-C-13) sites (Custer et al. 1995b).

The latter half of the Early Woodland in Delmarva is highlighted by the Delmarva Adena Complex, in the Upper Coastal Plain, particularly in the watersheds of the St. Jones and Murderkill Rivers. This complex is typified by Adena notched points, and a series of clay-tempered ceramic wares, with type names such as Coulbourn, Nassawango, and Wilgus (Custer 1989:176, Table 23). Among the most important Adena sites reported in Delmarva are the Wilgus site (7S-K-21) (Artusy 1978); the Nassawango site (18WO23) (Bastian in Custer 1989); the St. Jones site (7K-D-1) (Thomas 1976:93); and the Killens Pond (7K-E-3) and the Frederica (7K-F-2) sites. Most of these sites contain numerous burials, caches of late stage bifaces of Flint Ridge (Ohio) chert, beads, pipes, and other characteristic grave goods. Recently investigated sites from this period with little or no evidence of burials are Carey Farm, Puncheon Run (7K-C-51) (Liebeknecht et al. 1997; LeeDecker et al. 2001), and Hickory Bluff (Petraglia et al. 2002).

Throughout the rest of the peninsula, a relatively thick ceramic ware, known as Wolfe Neck, appears to have been contemporary with Delmarva Adena, and gives rise to the name for the associated cultural complex, the Wolfe Neck Complex, in the Lower Coastal Plain and in the Piedmont/Fall Line regions. Wolfe Neck vessels were tempered with crushed quartz and had cord-marked or net-impressed exteriors. Radiocarbon dates for Wolfe Neck range from 505 BC, at the type site at Wolfe Neck Farm (7S-D-10), to 380 BC, at Dill Farm (7K-E-12) (Griffith 1982). While no specific projectile point types have been documented in association with these ceramics, a series of small, stemmed points made on locally available pebble materials frequently occur on sites with occupations from the early part of the Woodland period, particularly on the Coastal Plain (LeeDecker et al. 2001; Petraglia et al. 2002).

Evidence has been proposed for changes in regional settlement patterns during the final stages of the Early Woodland period, with semi-sedentary base camps, often referred to as macro-band base camps, increasing in size (Custer 1989, 1994:297). Studies indicate a shift in the locations of these base camps from small, creek floodplains to large, river floodplains. This proposed shift may have set the stage for the local development, or adoption, of horticulture (Snyder and Gardner 1979; Gardner 1982:78). On the Delmarva Coastal Plain, Custer (1986, 1994:95) notes a shift in base camp locations from confluence areas of freshwater streams and estuaries to locations farther upstream. Increased participation in trade and exchange networks is also noted, as is an assumed increase in societal complexity. Both processes are inferred from the appearance of exotic lithic raw materials as well as artifacts and burial ceremonialism associated with cultures from the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys (Custer 1989).

The break between Early and Middle Woodland periods is usually placed sometime after the beginning of the Christian era (AD 0). It is roughly correlated with the appearance of a new ceramic tempering agent—shell—first seen in Delmarva in a thick-walled, shell-tempered, often cord-marked or net-impressed ceramic ware known as Mockley. The date range for Mockley in Delmarva is approximately AD 110 to AD 450 (Artusy 1976). However, most Mockley sites cluster between AD 200 and AD 330, including at Carey Farm (7K-D-3), the Wilgus site (7S-K-21), the Hughes-Willis site (7K-D-21), the Wolfe Neck site (7S-D-10), and 18KE17, on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake in Kent County, Maryland (Custer 1989:Appendix 2). Lithic projectile points associated with the period include lanceolate and stemmed Fox Creek or Selby Bay, corner-notched or pentagonal Jack's Reef, and shouldered and contracting stemmed Rossville (Steponaitis 1980; Wanser 1982). A preference for argillite and rhyolite in the manufacture of certain lithic tools, particularly Fox Creek or Selby Bay points, is also noted during the period (Custer 1986b; Curry and Kavanagh 1989).

Custer (1989:Table 23) notes the presence of Mockley ceramics and Fox Creek points as hallmarks of the Carey Complex (AD 0–AD 600), which is recognized virtually throughout the physiographic zones of Delmarva. The beginning of the Carey Complex is marked by the retreat of Adena influence on the peninsula, including the abandonment of mortuary centers Custer (1989:277). Continuity is noted with the preceding Wolfe Neck Complex in terms of settlement and regional exchange patterns.

Other complexes are recognized in the Middle Woodland in Delmarva, including the Webb Complex, in the Upper Coastal Plain, and the Delaware Park Complex, to the north, in the Piedmont/Fall Line. The Webb Complex was identified at the Island Field site (7K-F-17) (Thomas and Warren 1970; Custer et al. 1990). Diagnostic artifacts included Hell Island ceramics, a crushed quartz-tempered and fabric- or cord-impressed ware with a date range of approximately AD 600—AD 1000. Associated lithics consisted of Jack's Reef pentagonal, Rossville, and a generalized side-notched point. In addition, burials and evidence of mortuary ceremonialism suggest renewed contact with extra-regional groups: a radiocarbon date of AD 740 was returned from a cremated burial at the site (Thomas and Warren 1970). Among other Webb Complex sites are the Hell Island site (7NC-F-7) and the Taylor Cedar Creek site (7S-C-17), the latter with a

date of AD 645 (Artusy 1976). A change in settlement patterns is associated with the Webb Complex. Few Webb Complex macro-band base camps are known. Thus, large macro-band base camps are presumed to have reached a threshold size during preceding periods, eventually fissioning into smaller base camps during the Middle Woodland (Custer 1989:292, 295-7).

Attributes of the Delaware Park Complex, the late Middle Woodland manifestation in the Piedmont/Fall Line, are described mainly through excavations at the Delaware Park site (7NC-E-41), where a number of large and small storage pits from the period were documented. Radiocarbon dates of AD 605 and AD 640 were obtained from two of the pit features (Thomas 1981). Associated with the features were Hell Island ceramics, Jack's Reef pentagonal, Rossville points, and a generalized side-notched point. A similar combination of Hell Island ceramics and Jack's Reef points was recorded at Clyde Farm (7NC-E-6) (Custer 1989:291). In comparison with the contemporary Webb Complex, relatively low levels of exchange have been inferred from a general absence of exotic artifacts.

Woodland II AD - 1000 to 1650

By approximately AD 900, horticulture began to achieve a significant role in the total subsistence system throughout much of the Middle Atlantic. Direct evidence of cultivation is rare and scattered on the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain, and has yet to be recorded on the Delaware Coastal Plain (Custer and Cunningham 1986:24). There is abundant evidence, however, of a pattern of focused collecting on a scale with earlier Woodland subsistence systems; therefore, agriculture is presumed to have remained a secondary activity (Custer 1989:300). Continually increasing sedentism is assumed on the basis of storage facilities and house structures that occur, particularly in the southern part of the peninsula. The disappearance of exotic lithics and non-local influences on mortuary practices, along with a marked period of cultural stability as evidenced in ceramic wares throughout the period, imply an apparent breakdown of the extensive trade and exchange networks operating during the earlier portions of the Woodland period (Stewart et al. 1986). Triangular points, interpreted as arrow or dart tips, became the exclusive diagnostic projectile points of the period (Custer 1984; 1989; Petraglia et al. 1998; Baublitz et al. 2005).

Two regional Late Woodland complexes are recognized in Delmarva, distinguished by characteristic ceramic wares, certain variations in settlement pattern, and artifactual evidence of cultural continuity from the Woodland I. In the northern portion of Delaware (including New Castle County), northeastern Maryland, and portions of Chester County, Pennsylvania, the Minguannan Complex is marked by a ceramic ware of the same name, which is characterized by sand, grit, or crushed quartz temper, and smoothed or cord-marked exteriors (Custer 1985). Minguannan ware is often decorated with incised or corded designs, which are occasionally found together in a variety referred to as Minguannan Compound Decorated (Griffith and Custer 1985). This pottery is similar in distribution and composition to Hell Island ceramics suggesting some level of cultural affiliation (Baublitz et al. 2005). Associated projectile point forms appear restricted to several triangular points. Little evidence of widespread sedentism has been discovered at

Minguannan Complex sites—there are no large villages, nor has a marked shift to fertile bottomlands been documented. As such, it is believed that sedentism was no more pronounced than during the Woodland I ((Baublitz et al. 2005; Custer 1984). And in fact, Minguannan components have been identified at many Black Rock sites, including the Clyde Farm (7NCE-6) and Crane Hook (7NC-E-18) sites in New Castle County (Baublitz et al. 2005).

The second Late Woodland cultural complex, Slaughter Creek, occurs mostly in coastal areas of the Low Coastal Plain, extending from the central peninsula south to Cape Charles, Virginia. The settlement was characterized by large macro-band base camps and villages, particularly south of the Mispillion River at sites such as Mispillion (7S-A-1), Slaughter Creek (7S-G-30), and Townsend (7S-G-2). These sites often have rich archeological deposits including ample evidence of settlement patterning and storage features (Baublitz et al. 2005). Diagnostic artifacts of the complex include thin-walled, shell-tempered, and fabric-impressed Townsend ceramics (Blaker 1950; Griffith and Artusy 1977). Both simple and complex decoration occurs on Townsend ware, applied either with incised lines or cording. This ware shares some characteristic of the Mockey pottery (Baublitz et al. 2005). As with the Minguannan Complex, associated lithics are restricted to several small, triangular projectile point types.

3.2 CONTACT PERIOD CONTEXT

At the time of European contact with the local Native Americans in the upper Delmarva peninsula, the Lenape tribe inhabited the land west of the lower Delaware River, north of Duck Creek in present-day Delaware. Their territory extended north into present-day Pennsylvania up to Tohiccon Creek, which flows south of and parallel to the Lehigh River, and inland as far as the sources of the feeder streams. The Native Americans who lived on the east side of the lower Delaware River in present-day southern New Jersey south of the Raritan River were known as the Jerseys. The Munsee occupied the upper Delaware River drainage. These three Native American cultures came to be known as the Delaware Indians (Becker 2011). The Lenape territory was bounded on the south by the Cinconicin whose main village was near present-day Lewes Delaware. To the west of the Lenape were the Susquehannock, a powerful culture in central Pennsylvania. The population of the foraging Lenape in 1600 has been estimated at 250 to 500 total (Becker 2011). It has been hypothesized that the Lenape had been in their territory for centuries by this date. The Lenape and the Jerseys spoke dialects of the same language in the Eastern Algonkian family but their language was distinct from that spoken by the Munsees. The Lenape probably had an egalitarian band-level or simple tribal-level organization without any large-scale supralocal organizations (Custer 1984). They were likely comprised of a dozen or more bands with territories along feeder streams into the Delaware River (Becker 1999:77).

European trade goods have been found in Susquehannock archaeological middens in southeastern Pennsylvania dating as early as ca. 1580 (Custer 1989:336). One of the first documented trade contacts between Europeans and Native Americans along the Delaware Bay took place in 1616. Cornelius Hendricksen wrote in his journal about trading with the Native Americans for skins of otter, mink, and bear (Delaware Living 2000).

Swedish settlers reached Delaware Bay in March 1638 after four months at sea in the Kalmar Nyckel. They built a fort at the site of present-day Wilmington, Delaware, and named it Fort Christina to honor the young Swedish queen. This became the first permanent European settlement in the Delaware Valley (Swedish Colonial Society n.d.). Twenty-four men were left at the fort to trade with the local Native Americans (Craig 2001). The New Sweden colony expanded into small settlements along both sides of the Delaware River into modern Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Some Swedish colonists purchased land from the Lenape to establish farms. Swedish farmers moved to lands throughout the lower half of the Lenape range and many Swedes married Lenape individuals (Becker 2011). Preferred lands were the abandoned Lenape summer fishing stations where small patches of forest had already been cleared (Becker 1999:78).

The fur trade between the Native Americans and the Swedish, Dutch, and English colonists in the lower Delaware valley was dominated by the Susquehannocks during the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century (Becker 2011). The Susquehannocks procured the fur, especially beaver pelts, processed, and transported the fur (Custer 1984). One trade route reportedly ran from the head of the Chesapeake Bay up the Elk River in Maryland and down Minquas Creek via a portage, through Lenape territory, to the lower Delaware River. Dutch traders had established a trading post along the Delaware River. The Lenape grew maize at their summer stations and sold excess to the colonists for cash between 1640 and 1660. The funds allowed the Lenape some access to European goods such as metal tools and guns. However, the political landscape changed in the mid-seventeenth century and the local grain market was dominated by imports from other colonies by 1660. The Dutch had taken over the New Sweden colony in 1655, renaming it New Amstel. The Dutch surrendered to the British in 1664 and the colony became part of the New York colony. English colonists began settling into Lenape territory, some buying land from the Lenape on which to farm (Becker 2011).

The Maryland colonists joined with the Seneca Indians and in 1674 they defeated the Susquehannocks. This left lands in central Pennsylvania and to the west open for the Lenape and many moved into this area which was largely unsettled by Europeans (Becker 2011). The time period beginning ca. 1675 has been termed the Refugee Complex of the Contact period, when Native Americans began to leave areas densely populated by Europeans to seek asylum with other Native American groups (Custer 1989:338). The era prior to 1675 has been termed the Early European Contact Complex (Custer 1989:339). William Penn was granted a charter for this region by the British Crown in 1681 and what is now Delaware became the “Three Lower Counties” of the colony of Pennsylvania. Penn took a personal interest in the local Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians after his arrival in the colony in 1682, meeting in council with Native American groups local to Philadelphia and learning their language (Pomfret 1970:9). Penn passed a law in 1682 “forbidding the sale or exchange of rum or brandy or any strong liquors at any time to any Indian within this Province” (Pomfret 1970:59). The penalty for breaking this law was set at five pounds. The three lower counties established an independent legislature in 1704 as the colony of Delaware.

The archaeological record appears to lack evidence of Native American groups in northern Delaware by the middle of the eighteenth century (Custer 1989:341). It is thought that the last of the local Native American groups were living near the headwaters of the Brandywine River in 1729, and left soon thereafter to join other Delawares living on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. Many of the Delawares moved to Ohio during the mid-eighteenth century, and later settled in Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma (Weslager 1973:29).

The first European Contact period (1600-1750) archaeological site to be excavated in New Castle County was Site 7NC-E-42, in the White Clay Creek drainage southwest of Wilmington (Custer and Watson 1985:97). The site was on a high terrace overlooking White Clay Creek near its confluence with the Christiana River. No evidence of former plowing was noted at the site, which is thought to date to sometime between 1630 and 1740 (Custer 1989:339). Some of the European artifacts at the site were found in undisturbed soil contexts in association with artifacts of Native American origin. This included hand-wrought nails, plus a copper coin or token with no remaining design due to extreme corrosion (Custer and Watson 1985:105-106). Other European artifacts included brick fragments, metal spike fragments, ceramic sherds, and glass fragments (Custer and Watson 1985:105). Some of the Native American ceramics from the site were Minguannan Corded variety, believed to date to the latter portion of the Late Woodland period (Custer and Watson 1985:112). Fragments of a roulette-decorated ceramic pipe were found at the site; although the date is uncertain, this type of decorated pipe has been recovered from Contact and early historic period sites in the Middle Atlantic. Lithic artifacts point to the manufacture of cores, triangular points, and preforms as main activities at the site (Custer and Watson 1985:112). Site 7NC-E-42 was unusual when compared to typical Contact period sites of the Middle Atlantic region in that it was smaller and contained fewer European artifacts. One hypothesis for the difference between this Lenape site and the Contact period large village sites in southeastern Pennsylvania of the Susquehannocks is the increased participation of the latter cultural group in the fur trade with Europeans.

3.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of the area near Middletown is discussed to provide further contextual information for interpretation of the sites 7NC-F-124, Shell Button and 7NC-F-126, Bunker Hill North, evaluated as part of this project. The sites are located to the west of Middletown in the western portion of St. Georges Hundred, in southern New Castle County, Delaware. St. Georges Hundred, bounded by Appoquinimink Creek on the south and by the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal on the north, spans the state from the Maryland line to the Delaware River. Contextual periods as outlined in the *Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Ames et al. 1989), are applied and specific attention is paid to those periods that are directly applicable to the evaluated sites.

1630-1730+/- Exploration and Frontier Settlement

At the time of European contact with the local Native Americans in the upper Delmarva peninsula, the Lenape tribe inhabited the land west of the lower Delaware River, north of Duck Creek in present-day Delaware. Their territory extended north into present-day Pennsylvania up to Tohiccon Creek, which flows south of and parallel to the Lehigh River, and inland as far as the sources of the feeder streams. The Native Americans who lived on the east side of the lower Delaware River in present-day southern New Jersey south of the Raritan River were known as the Jerseys. The Munsee occupied the upper Delaware River drainage. These three Native American cultures came to be known as the Delaware Indians (Becker 2011). The Lenape territory was bounded on the south by the Cinconicin whose main village was near present-day Lewes Delaware. To the west of the Lenape were the Susquehannock, a powerful culture in central Pennsylvania. The population of the foraging Lenape in 1600 has been estimated at 250 to 500 total (Becker 2011). It has been hypothesized that the Lenape had been in their territory for centuries by this date. The Lenape and the Jerseys spoke dialects of the same language in the Eastern Algonkian family but their language was distinct from that spoken by the Munsees. The Lenape probably had an egalitarian band-level or simple tribal-level organization without any large-scale supralocal organizations (Custer 1984). They were likely comprised of a dozen or more bands with territories along feeder streams into the Delaware River (Becker 1999:77).

European trade goods have been found in Susquehannock archaeological middens in southeastern Pennsylvania dating as early as ca. 1580 (Custer 1989:336). One of the first documented trade contacts between Europeans and Native Americans along the Delaware Bay took place in 1616. Cornelius Hendricksen wrote in his journal about trading with the Native Americans for skins of otter, mink, and bear (Delaware Living 2000).

Henry Hudson sailed up the Delaware River into the Delaware Bay during a voyage in 1609 on his way to discovering the Hudson River to the north. Soon afterwards, colonists began arriving in the peninsula and establishing a permanent presence. Dutch Captain Cornelis Hendricksen visited Delaware many times from 1614 to 1629, and in 1629, Patroons began to colonize near Cape Henlopen (Doherty 1997:3). The region of Delaware south of Bombay Hook was called Swaanendael (or Zwaanendael) and an attempted settlement by the Dutch in 1631 failed (Heite and Heite 1985:5).

Swedish settlers reached Delaware Bay in March 1638 after four months at sea in the Kalmar Nyckel. They built a fort at the site of present-day Wilmington, Delaware, and named it Fort Christina to honor the young Swedish queen. This became the first permanent European settlement in the Delaware Valley (Swedish Colonial Society n.d.). Twenty-four men were left at the fort to trade with the local Native Americans (Craig 2001). The New Sweden colony expanded into small settlements along both sides of the Delaware River into modern Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Some Swedish colonists purchased land from the Lenape to establish farms. Swedish farmers moved to lands throughout the lower half of the Lenape range and many Swedes married Lenape individuals (Becker 2011). Preferred lands were the abandoned Lenape summer fishing stations where small patches of forest had already been cleared (Becker 1999:78).

The Dutch established a settlement at Fort Casimir on the Delaware River near modern-day New Castle to block a Swedish advance into the rest of Delaware (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:9). New Amstel (New Castle) became the county seat under Dutch rule in 1654, and a Dutch military presence forced the Swedes to relinquish power to them in 1655, although many of the Swedish and Finnish settlers remained. The Dutch were soon inundated by English settlers, and tension between the two factions flared for many years. The Dutch surrendered to the British in 1664 and the colony became part of the New York colony. English colonists began settling into Lenape territory, some buying land from the Lenape on which to farm (Becker 2011). In 1669, Lord Charles Calvert I, third baron of Baltimore, created Durham County as part of Maryland encompassing much of present-day Delaware; this led to a hostile atmosphere between Maryland and Pennsylvania (Doherty 1997:51; Demars and Richards 1980:4-5). Durham County was never really operational or organized (Long 1996:74). The Dutch began to regain control of the area and New Castle County (originally titled New Amstel) was organized in 1673, extending from Christiana Creek to near Leipsic Creek (Long 1996:13).

The fur trade between the Native Americans and the Swedish, Dutch, and English colonists in the lower Delaware valley was dominated by the Susquehannocks during the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century (Becker 2011). The Susquehannocks procured the fur, especially beaver pelts, processed, and transported the fur (Custer 1984). One trade route reportedly ran from the head of the Chesapeake Bay up the Elk River in Maryland and down Minquas Creek via a portage, through Lenape territory, to the lower Delaware River. Dutch traders had established a trading post along the Delaware River. The Lenape grew maize at their summer stations and sold excess to the colonists for cash between 1640 and 1660. The funds allowed the Lenape some access to European goods such as metal tools and guns. However, the political landscape changed in the mid-seventeenth century and the local grain market was dominated by imports from other colonies by 1660. The Maryland colonists joined with the Seneca Indians and in 1674 the Susquehannocks were defeated. This left lands in central Pennsylvania and to the west open for the Lenape and many moved into this area which was largely unsettled by Europeans (Becker 2011). The time period beginning ca. 1675 has been termed the Refugee Complex of the Contact period, when Native Americans began to leave areas densely populated by Europeans to seek asylum with other Native American groups (Custer 1989:338). Prior to 1675, the era has been termed the Early European Contact Complex (Custer 1989:339).

Holland ceded many of its possessions extending from New York to Delaware to the English in 1676, when Delaware was placed under the jurisdiction of the Duke of York, with the top seat of government in New York (Harbeson 1992:17). The Duke of York, James Stuart, granted a large tract of the Delmarva peninsula to William Penn in 1682 (Doherty 1997:3-4; Custer et al. 1987:43). What is now Delaware became the “Three Lower Counties” of the colony of Pennsylvania. Penn took a personal interest in the local Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians after his arrival in the colony in 1682, meeting in council with Native American groups local to Philadelphia and learning their language (Pomfret 1970:9). Penn passed a law in 1682 “forbidding the sale or exchange of rum or brandy or any strong liquors at any time to any Indian within this Province” (Pomfret

1970:59). The penalty for breaking this law was set at five pounds. Goods for export could only be bought or sold in a public market. Penn required that the colonists plant the land surveyed for them within three years. When clearing land, one-fifth was to be left in woods, with oak and mulberry trees to be reserved for shipbuilding (Scharf 1888:76-77).

The first European Contact period (1600-1750) archaeological site to be excavated in New Castle County was Site 7NC-E-42, in the White Clay Creek drainage southwest of Wilmington (Custer and Watson 1985:97). The site was on a high terrace overlooking White Clay Creek near its confluence with the Christiana River. No evidence of former plowing was noted at the site, which is thought to date to sometime between 1630 and 1740 (Custer 1989:339). Some of the European artifacts at the site were found in undisturbed soil contexts in association with artifacts of Native American origin. This included hand-wrought nails, plus a copper coin or token with no remaining design due to extreme corrosion (Custer and Watson 1985:105-106). Other European artifacts included brick fragments, metal spike fragments, ceramic sherds, and glass fragments (Custer and Watson 1985:105). Some of the Native American ceramics from the site were Minguannan Corded variety, believed to date to the latter portion of the Late Woodland period (Custer and Watson 1985:112). Fragments of a roulette-decorated ceramic pipe were found at the site; although the date is uncertain, this type of decorated pipe has been recovered from Contact and early historic period sites in the Middle Atlantic. Lithic artifacts point to the manufacture of cores, triangular points, and preforms as main activities at the site (Custer and Watson 1985:112). Site 7NC-E-42 was unusual when compared to typical Contact period sites of the Middle Atlantic region in that it was smaller and contained fewer European artifacts. One hypothesis for the difference between this Lenape site and the Contact period large village sites in southeastern Pennsylvania of the Susquehannocks is the increased participation of the latter cultural group in the fur trade with Europeans.

Agriculture and the transportation network were dominant themes in the settlement and growth of the local region. Water-powered grist mills were some of the earliest industries in what would become New Castle County, and many became the hub of small hamlets or towns as early as 1658 (O'Connor et al. 1985:13-14; Shaffer 1988:15). Between 1666 and 1669, Augustine Hermann cleared trees from an Indian trail for a cartroad between Bohemia, Hermann's estate in Cecil County, Maryland, and Appoquemene or present-day Odessa (Delaware Federal Writers' Project [DFWP] 1938:73). The road became known as "Hermann's Cart-Road" and was the first major road in the region (Passmore 1978:10).

A second cartroad from Hermann's Bohemia Manor was cleared in 1671 to the settlement at New Castle per an agreement that each party would clear half of the road (DFWP 1938:72-73). A direct route from the Delaware, near the mouth of St. Augustine Creek (in St. Georges Hundred), was cleared to Herman's plantation of St. Augustine adjoining Bohemia soon afterward; travelers described the path as "a large broad wagon road" in 1678 (DFWP 1938:73).

Penn divided Delaware into townships that would contain 100 families, each of which contained approximately ten members. The townships were referred to as “hundreds”, a political designation originating in the Roman Empire over 1000 years ago, and have remained intact in Delaware to modern times (Zippe 1968:2). St. Georges Hundred was one of the original hundreds created for Delaware in 1682 (Doherty 1997:5).

Both Penn and Lord Baltimore claimed portions of Delaware. Dispute over control of Delaware between Pennsylvania and Maryland clouded the regional land patents for many years, and as a result, the south and west portions of Delaware were granted many Maryland patents (Russ 1966:12-13). Baltimore’s grants were contested by Pennsylvania authorities well into the 18th century, by which time Lord Baltimore’s son lost the claims (Demars and Richards 1980:4). Augustine Herman of Bohemia Manor claimed much of the land in St. Georges Hundred in 1671, calling it St. Augustine Manor. His title was found invalid and St. Georges Hundred was re-surveyed in 1686 to his son Casparus (Jasper) Herman, Edmund Cantwell, Samuel Vance, Peter Alrich, and Edward Green (Watkins c.1916). St. Georges Hundreds’ residents in 1683 numbered approximately fifty (Watkins c.1916).

Middletown’s name seems to relate to the town’s position about “midway on the ancient cartroad between the head of navigation on the Bohemia River, in Maryland, and the Appoquinimink Creek” (DFWP 1938:462). What became the town site of Middletown was deeded to Adam Peterson in 1678. Adam Peterson died in 1702 and his land was divided between his sons Adam and Andrew, and daughter Hermania (Watkins c.1916). Andrew Peterson was born in 1683 in New Castle County; he died in 1741, leaving eleven children from his two marriages (Bender 1989). Andrew’s widow, Hester Peterson, later married David Witherspoon, a native of Ireland and a merchant from Kent County, Maryland (Brown 1999:116). Witherspoon bought the Peterson Tannery in Middletown from the heirs of Adam Peterson (Scharf 1888:959, 993, 998; GenForum 2002).

The three lower counties established an independent legislature in 1704 as the colony of Delaware. The Assembly of the lower counties passed a number of regulations in the 1726-1727 session, including one prohibiting the construction of dams across rivers or creeks except in the case of mills (Scharf 1888:133). A special trial system was established in which two Justices of the Peace for each county would preside over trials of all negro or mulatto slaves. If a slave was convicted of a capital offense and suffered the death penalty, the county would reimburse his owner two-thirds of the slave’s appraised value (Scharf 1888:133). Slaves were prohibited from carrying arms or meeting in groups larger than six.

The archaeological record appears to lack evidence of Native American groups in northern Delaware by the middle of the eighteenth century (Custer 1989:341). It is thought that the last of the local Native American groups were living near the headwaters of the Brandywine River in 1729, and left soon thereafter to join other Delawares living on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. Many of the Delawares moved to Ohio

during the mid-eighteenth century, and later settled in Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma (Weslager 1973:29).

Estimated slave population in the three Delaware counties was 500 in 1721 (Newton 2011). Some slaves were trained in specialized trades and their services were rented out by their owners. John Dickinson, a prominent statesman from Kent County, offered to rent his plantation in 1762 including the services of slaves trained as tanners, shoemakers, carpenters, and tailors (Newton 2011).

1730-1770+/- Intensified and Durable Occupation

The King's Road was the main thoroughfare between Dover and the northern portions of the state by the 1730s. The Upper King's Road passed through the settlement named Petersons that is now known as Middletown; the Lower King's Road passed through what is now Odessa (Watkins c.1916). The residents of St. Georges Hundred had access to both the Wilmington and Philadelphia markets to the north, and the Chesapeake Bay markets to the west at Georgetown, Maryland (Evans 1752) (Figure 3-1). Regulations were passed in the early 1750s for the upkeep of roads (Scharf 1888:139). All King's roads were to be forty feet wide, of which thirty feet was to be kept cleared. Other public roads were to be thirty feet in width. The control of roads in the county was transferred to a board of commissioners in 1764. The five commissioners controlled the building and repair of roads (Scharf 1888:143-144).

Most of the residents of New Castle County in the 1700s were farmers, growing corn, rye, and wheat as principal crops. The rise of agriculture in Delaware was encouraged in that each farmstead could be located within twelve miles of a navigable river or creek (Munroe 1954:27). Much of southern New Castle County has been continuously cultivated for over 300 years (Passmore 1978:8). Eighty percent of New Castle County land grants from 1679 to 1700 were 300 acres or less in size, with 13 percent for 500 acres or more, mainly for land speculators (Shaffer et al. 1988:13-14). Farms of 100 acres or less were only 10% of the total. From 1701 to 1725, 85 percent of the land tracts were for 300 acres or less, similar to the late seventeenth century (Shaffer et al. 1988:16). Farms of 100 acres or less were now 27 percent of the total. In the 1800s, the average farm was about 200 acres, although many were 300 to 400 acres or more (Shaffer et al. 1988:25). The farms were successful and slowly the northern part of Kent and New Castle counties were able to shift from a subsistence oriented economy to a market-based economy by the middle of the 18th century; Sussex County was slower in economic development. The grist and flour mills of Brandywine Hundred near Wilmington helped to bring financial growth to northern Kent and southern New Castle counties in the mid-1700s, and are credited with helping establish milling interests in the United States (Welsh 1973:79).

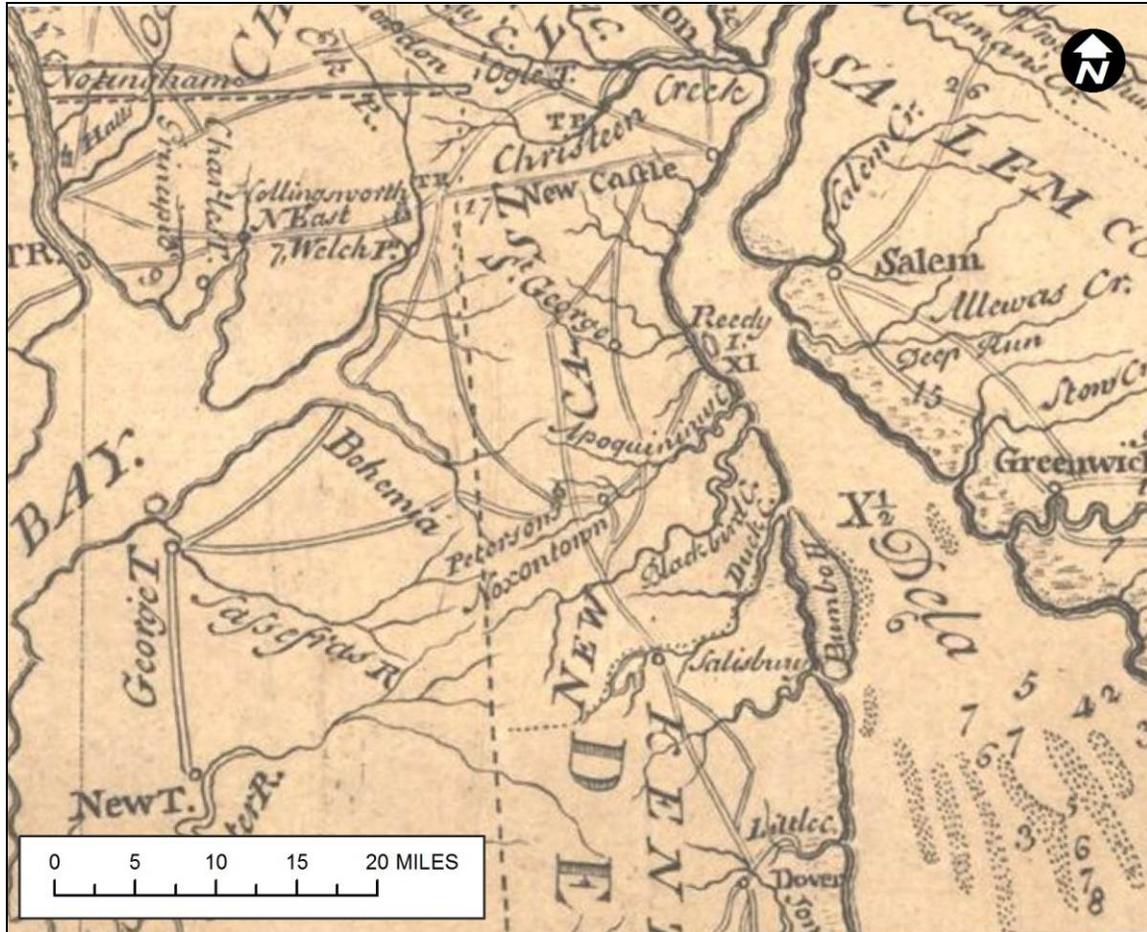


Figure 3-1. Map of Northern Delaware in 1752; “Petersons” is Middletown.

(Evans 1752)

According to contemporary periodical advertisements, Kent County and New Castle County farmers in the early to mid-18th century cleared an average of 30 percent of their land parcels; the rest of the tract was left in marsh, meadow or woods (Catts et al. 1995:98). Many farms were owned by absentee landowners, and the houses on the land were rented or leased to tenants. Advertisements appeared in the local paper for renters of farms with descriptions of the land and buildings (Hancock 1987:46-47).

The village in southern St. Georges Hundred that was originally referred to as Apoquemene, later became known as Cantwell’s Bridge (Schwartz 1974:6-7). Richard Cantwell, son of the first High Sheriff of New Castle County, Edmund Cantwell, was given permission to construct a ferry across the Appoquinimink Creek in 1731 and charge a toll (Schwartz 1980:20).

Iron deposits in New Castle County and bog iron deposits in Sussex County were discovered in the mid-1700s, and soon processing sites were established across Delaware (Harbeson 1992:18-19; Heite 1974:18). In 1673, the area known as Iron Hill in west Pencader Hundred was placed on a regional map, and evidence exists of Welsh mining activities in the eighteenth century (Shaffer et al. 1988:15). Samuel James established a

forge in New Castle County in 1723, supposedly the first in the mid-Atlantic (Shaffer et al. 1988:21). The forges required an immense amount of fuel, and since coal was not locally available, the primary forests were harvested to produce charcoal (Passmore 1978:14). Mine owners either purchased thousands of acres outright or at least the rights to work the land solely for the harvest of the timber. Blast furnaces for processing the ore were scattered across Delaware, the last one closing in 1836 (Passmore 1978:14). The need for charcoal, coupled with the need of lumber for ship and building construction, contributed to the rise to the number of saw mills.

In November of 1756 the three counties of Delaware organized militia to assist in the French and Indian War. By the end of 1757 the colony had organized about 4,000 men and begun construction of a battery and barracks (Scharf 1888:142). David Witherspoon built a tavern in the center of Middletown in 1761, at the southwest corner of what became Main and Broad streets. He managed the tavern until his death in 1763, when the tavern was inherited by his nephew, Thomas Witherspoon (Scharf 1888:1004). The village grew around the tavern; the building was expanded and later became the Middletown Hotel (DFWP 1938:462-3).

1770-1830+/- Transformation from Colony to State

When news of the Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts reached Delaware, an effort to raise money for a defense fund was undertaken. Members of New Castle County's committee who signed a resolution in May 1775 to tax citizens for this fund were justices of the peace and grand jurymen (Scharf 1888:222). The two delegates from Delaware voting on the Declaration of Independence in 1776 were Thomas McKean and George Read. Read refused to sign the document, and McKean sent a messenger to Delaware to summon Caesar Rodney so that Delaware would vote in the affirmative for independence (Scharf 1888:230). A Delaware Convention met later in 1776 at New Castle and adopted a constitution for governing the colony. The first of thirty articles declared that the government of the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex shall in all publications be known as "The Delaware State" (Scharf 1888:233). The 26th article forbade the importation of slaves from Africa and stated that no negro, Indian, or mulatto slave should be brought into the state for sale from any part of the world (Scharf 1888:234).

The Brandywine Mills were dismantled for a short period during the American Revolution to avoid capture by British troops, and after being refitted, by 1780 they were making profits like none seen up to that time. The northern half of Delaware was becoming prosperous and evolved into a market-based economy while the southern Delmarva region continued to lack a market-based economy (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:10).

Office of the County Assessor was created in 1766, and the earliest tax records for date to 1776. Available census records prior to 1800 are few, ranging from 1693-1697 and 1782, with the Federal Censuses beginning in 1790. Tax records in Delaware prior to 1797 only provide information on the value of the land in proportion to the amount the county needed to collect that specific year to operate. The tax amount was then computed against the value of the property, but no further information was recorded in the tax

records. The 1797 tax register for Delaware was the first tax poll that recorded detailed property information

Quakers in Delaware began to free their slaves in 1775 and others followed their example. The Delaware Revolutionary hero Caesar Rodney freed his slaves in his will; he died in 1784. In 1788 the Delaware Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery was established. Fifteen percent (nearly 9,000) of the total population of over 59,000 in Delaware in 1790 were slaves, with free African Americans totaling almost seven percent. The number of slaves in the state dropped by half in the next thirty years (Newton 2011).

The village of Petersons was referred to as Middletown as early as the 1770s. Middletown was described by the German historian Ebling in 1799 as a small village of about one hundred and twenty residents, most of whom were Presbyterians (Griffith 1795; Watkins c. 1916) (Figure 3-2). There was a stagecoach running twice a week from Cantwell's Bridge (now Odessa) westward through Middletown to the Bohemia River by the 1790s.

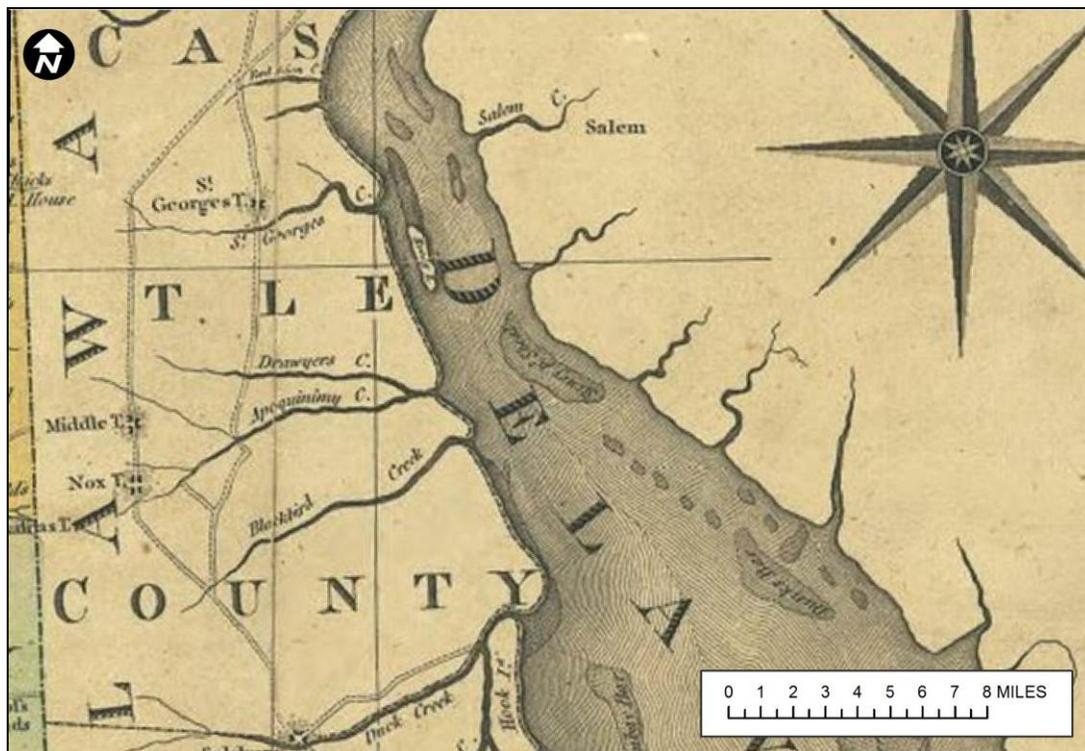


Figure 3-2. Map of the St. Georges Hundred Area of New Castle County in 1794.
(Thackera and Vallance 1795)

Several plausible canals were proposed to connect the Chesapeake Bay to the Delaware Bay around 1800, including one to connect the Chester River in Maryland to the Appoquinimink Creek just east of Cantwell's Bridge. However, only the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal was ever constructed across the entire state, cutting through central New Castle County. Completed by 1829, the canal afforded an all-water route

connecting Philadelphia and Baltimore (Munroe 1986; DFWP 1938:51, 74). St. Georges Hundred was the second largest hundred in the state by acreage, encompassing 42,100 acres in 1816 (Heald 1820). Nearly 61 miles of roads were present in the hundred, ranking behind three of the other eight hundreds in New Castle County (Heald 1820) (Figure 3-3). Middletown Academy was established in 1826 as a private school for the local children of country gentlemen (DFWP 1938:462).

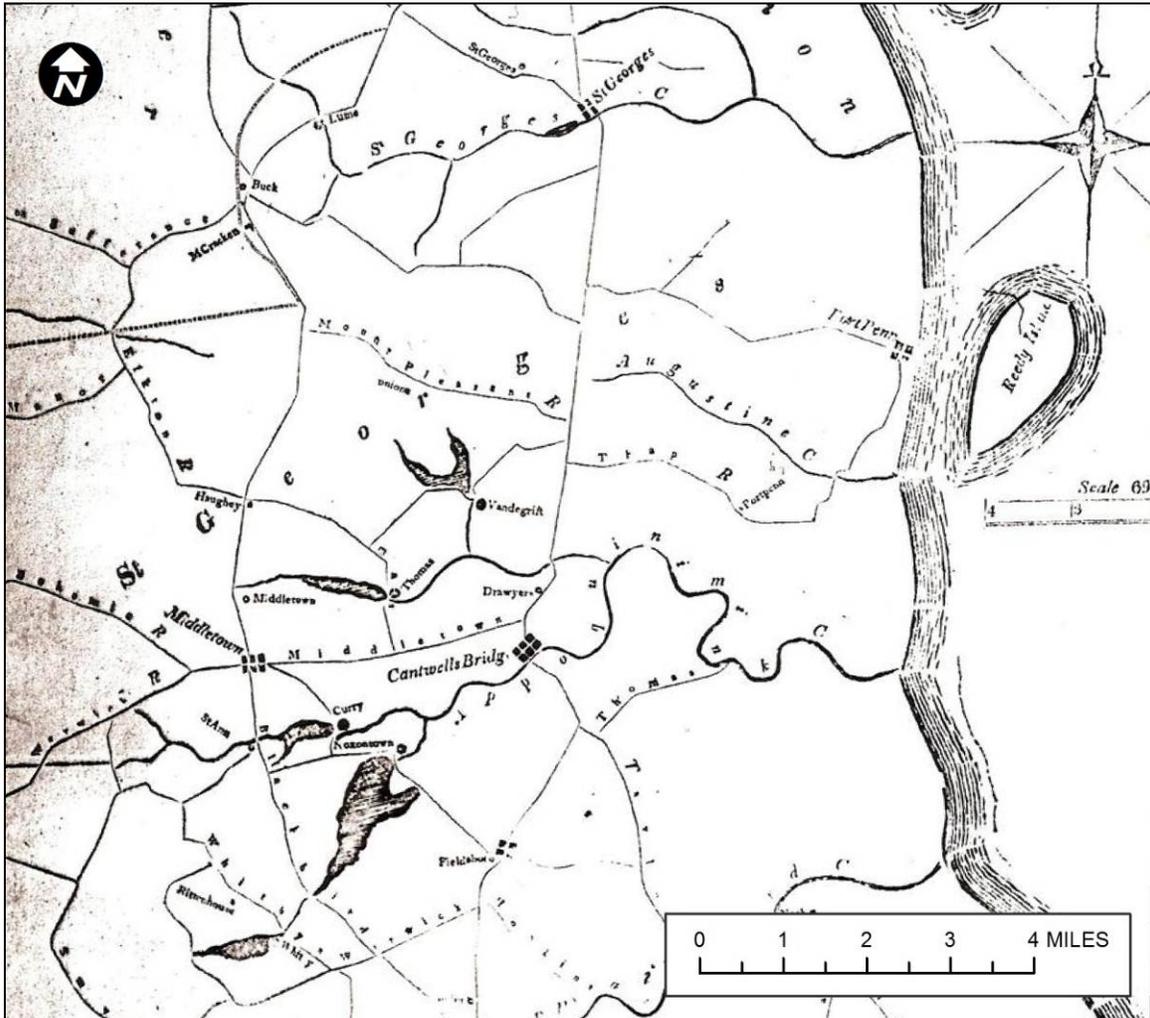


Figure 3-3. Map of St. Georges Hundred Vicinity in 1820.
(Heald 1820)

Cantwell's Bridge received local grains and other products for export from a twelve to fifteen mile radius (Schwartz 1980:32; Kushela n.d.:7). Six granaries with a total capacity of over 30,000 bushels were situated along the Appoquinimink Creek by 1825, and between 1820 and 1840, over 400,000 bushels of wheat were shipped through the community (Schwartz 1980:32).

1830-1880+/- Industrialization and Capitalization

The New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad cut across the narrow portion of the county by 1832, carrying people and goods for 16 miles between New Castle, Delaware and Frenchtown, Maryland (DFWP 1938:51; American-Rails.com 2012). Passenger coaches drawn by horses made the 16-1/2 mile trip between the Delaware and Elk rivers in 1 hour and 35 minutes (DFWP 1938:75). Steam-powered locomotives were introduced soon thereafter. The Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad became the second railway in the state in 1838. The state had 39 miles of railways by 1840 (American-Rails.com 2012).

Farmers learned in the early 1700s to rotate crops and tobacco was grown on freshly cleared ground while grains, such as wheat, corn, and rye, were grown mainly on previously tilled ground (Passmore 1978:22). However, farming practices in Delaware still quickly leached the sandy soils of the major nutrients and led to the almost complete destruction of the topsoils by the 1830s (Passmore 1978:16). James C. Booth's "Geological Survey of Delaware" provided insight to the Delaware farmers to reconstitute their soils, and he is praised with saving agriculture in the region (Pickett 1976). Booth correctly identified that the nutrients in the soils of the entire Delmarva peninsula were being depleted and he encouraged farmers to add burned and crushed oyster shell and marl to their fields (Passmore 1978:17). Marl, a compact clay-sand deposit containing ancient sea shells, had been discovered in New Castle County while dredging canals. From the early 1840s to the Civil War, marl increased crop productivity on almost all areas of application, sometimes as much as 400 percent (Passmore 1978:17). By the 1880s, other fertilizers, such as improved lime and ground crab, were used, and modern technological advancements in crop rotations and nitrogen fertilizers helped bring Delaware into the world agricultural markets (Passmore 1978:7-19).

By the early 1850s, a number of commercial establishments were operating in Middletown, including five general stores, one flourmill, one drugstore, and three physicians (Thomson 1851). In 1855 the name of the town of Cantwell's Bridge was changed to Odessa to reflect its prominence in the shipping of grains, similar to its Russian counterpart on the Black Sea (Schwartz 1974:9). The coming of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad through Middletown in 1856 enabled industries to expand at a fast growth rate (Beers 1868; Harbeson 1992:21) (Figure 3-4). The smaller towns in rural, non-coastal Delaware were then able to send their goods directly to interstate markets by train rather than by wagon and carts via the nearby seaports such as New Castle and Wilmington (Passmore 1978:7; Zippe 1968:83-84). The Citizens' Bank of the State of Delaware was chartered at Middletown in 1859; its first president was George Derrickson, a position he held until his resignation in 1871 (Scharf 1888).

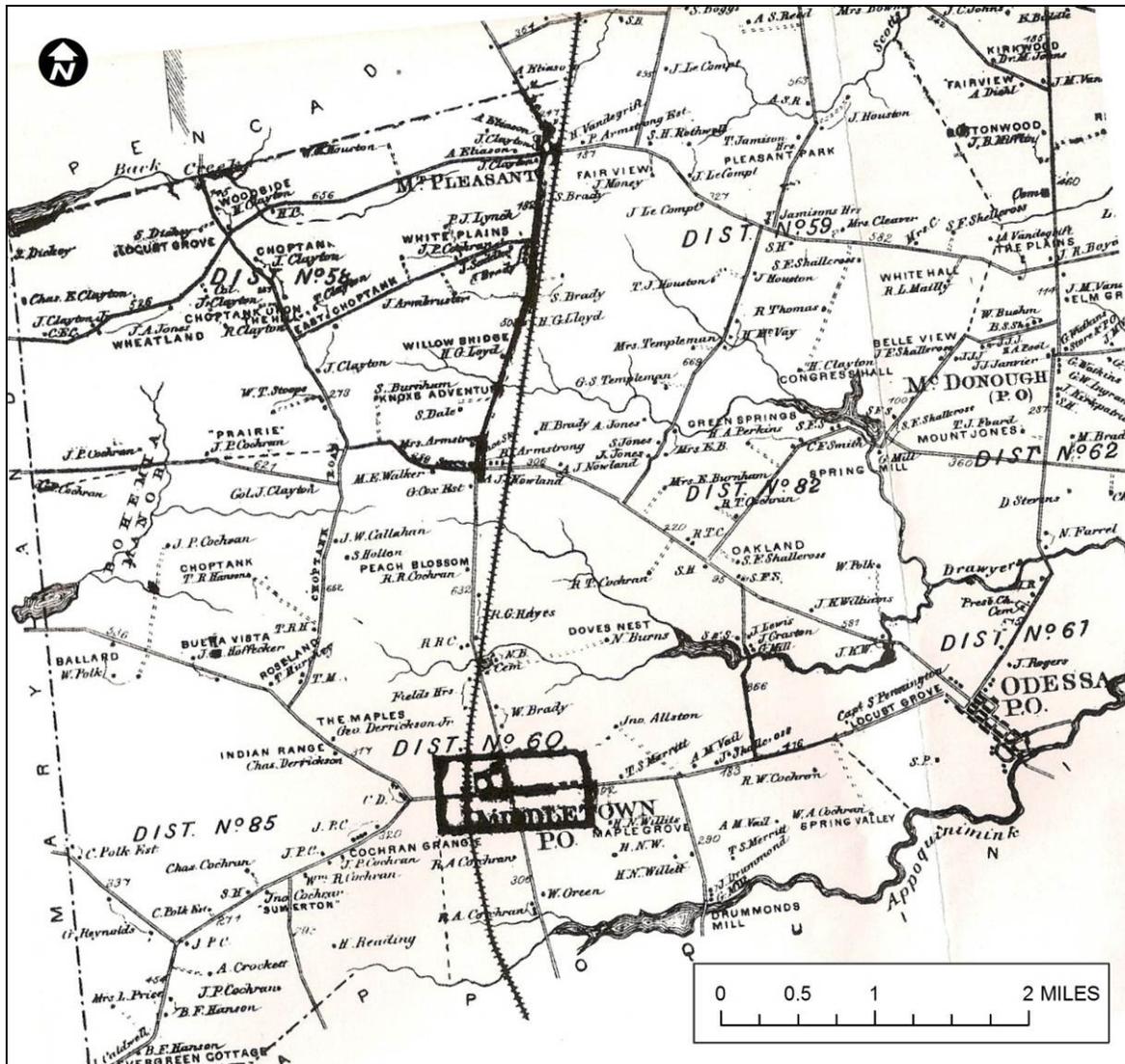


Figure 3-4. Map of the Western St. Georges Hundred Area in 1868.
(Beers 1868)

Delaware's residents numbered over 91,000 by 1850, with almost 43,000 in New Castle County. Included in the state's population were over 18,000 free Blacks and almost 2,300 slaves (DFWP 1938:52). The entrance of non-resident free Blacks into Delaware was prohibited in 1851 (DFWP 1938:52). The number of slaves in Delaware dropped to 1,798 by 1860, with the majority (1,341) of slaves in Sussex County. Kent County's slaves numbered 303 and those in New Castle County had dwindled to 254. The proportions were reduced for free Black Delawareans in 1860: of the nearly 20,000, over 8,000 resided in New Castle County. Free Blacks in Kent County were almost as numerous, totaling over 7,000, while those in Sussex County topped 4,000. The White population of Delaware in this time period was 90,589 (Newton 2011).

The Underground Railroad in Delaware came through New Castle County, although many residents were southern sympathizers (Pryor 1975:22). Daniel Corbett's Clearfield

Farm on the north side of Duck Creek and the Appoquinimink Friends Meetinghouse in Odessa were two places in the county harboring the runaway slaves en route to freedom (Blockson 1994:25, 29). Delaware chose to stay in the Union during the Civil War, but a number of its men chose to fight on the side of the Confederates (DFWP 1938:53).

Middletown was incorporated as a town in 1861. The National Hotel was built in 1862 in the town, with John Lippincott as its first proprietor. By the 1880s, the former tavern built in the center of town in 1761 was known as the Middletown Hotel; it had passed out of the hands of the Witherspoon family in 1835 to the Crawfords and then the Cochran family in 1844 (Scharf 1888). The local newspaper, *The Middletown Transcript*, has been published since January 1868 (Wikipedia n.d.). The Middletown Academy became the district's public school in 1876 (DFWP 1938:462).

1880-1940+/- Urbanization and Suburbanization

Delaware contained over 300 miles of railroad lines by the late 1880s (Hopkins 1881; Scharf 1888). Middletown was the third largest town in size in Delaware in the mid-1890s, after Wilmington and New Castle (Baist 1893) (Figure 3-5). The population in 1895 was 1,879 people. The main crops produced were wheat, corn, vegetables, and fruits. Two carriage factories were operating in town in 1895, as well as two canneries, one fertilizer works, one shirt factory, and one iron foundry (Costa 1895:217).

Wheat was the main agricultural crop in New Castle County during the colonial period, but as early as 1839, it was beginning to be replaced by the fruit industry (Passmore 1978; Schwartz 1980:32). The center for the peach industry was primarily in New Castle County, but by the 1880s, blight known as "the yellows" was destroying the industry (Zippe 1968). Kent County was known for apples, and the berry industry became popular in Sussex County. Sussex County grew more strawberries in 1902 than any other county in the country (Passmore 1978). People immigrated to Delaware for the new agricultural industry from as far away as Ontario, Canada. Delaware's population grew from approximately 147,000 in 1880 to over 184,000 by 1900 (Polk 1909).

Middletown had a population of 1,800 in 1909 (Polk 1909). The railway passing through town from north to south was the Delaware Division of the Potomac, Baltimore and Washington Railroad. The town featured an electric railway line to the town of Odessa and a daily stagecoach to Cecilton, Maryland (Polk 1909). The Middletown area's 112 farmers were listed in the 1909 directory, including a Charles and a George Derrickson; no Gibsons were mentioned (Polk 1909).

New Castle County contained 2,208 farms in 1910, with an average farm value of \$11,084.00 including the land, buildings, farm implements, and animals. Approximately half of the farms in the county were operated by their owners, while the other half were run by tenants. Of the tenant farmers, around 70 percent worked for shares of the farm products, while the rest paid the owner a cash rent. Most of the farm operators were white and native-born (n=1,961), while a lesser number were white and foreign-born (149) or black (98). Over 25,000 cattle lived on county farms in 1910, with an average of approximately 11 per farm (Atkinson 1914).



Figure 3-5. Map of Western St. Georges Hundred in the Early 1890s.

(Baist 1893)

Middletown's population dropped to almost 1,400 in 1914 (Atkinson 1914). In 1914, Charles Derrickson was listed in a New Castle County farm directory as being a farmer in Middletown (Atkinson 1914). George Derrickson also was listed as a farmer but he and

his wife, L. Fannie, lived in a house and lot on Main Street in Middletown (Atkinson 1914). There were a number of other Derrickson's farming in the county in 1914, but none were residing in Middletown. Other names associated with ownership of the project area farms in the early twentieth century included Gibson, Corbit and Rodney. A Joseph L. Gibson resided in Middletown in 1914 (Atkinson 1914). No Corbit's or Rodney's were listed as residents of the Middletown area (Atkinson 1914).

The 1920s and 1930s saw the development of the famous Delmarva broiler chicken industry in southern Delaware, which, since 1934, has produced over half of the farm income for Delaware farmers (Passmore 1978). Delaware contained over 10,000 farms in 1935, comprising over 900,000 acres and covering over 70 percent of the state's area. Wheat was the top crop in value produced, followed by corn, soybeans, and hay (DFWP 1938:84). Two-thirds of Delaware's farms were operated by the owners in the mid-1930s, with the remainder by tenants (DFWP 1938:89). However, in the Middletown area over 83 percent of the farms were operated by tenants in the mid-1930s; this was the highest proportion of tenancy in the state (DFWP 1938:463). The Middletown's area heavy soil was thought to be "unsuitable to raising melons, berries, broiler chickens and the other quick cash crops that enable down-State farmers to buy small farms" (DFWP 1938:463).

Middletown area farms sold for roughly sixty to one hundred dollars per acre in the mid-1930s (DFWP 1938:217). Few tenants could typically afford to buy the large area farms from their share of the wheat and corn crops, but could usually make a living from the dairy herds they were allowed to keep. The owners considered themselves lucky if their share of the crops paid for the taxes, insurance, and upkeep; most heirs of the owners of the old estates went to the cities to make a living (DFWP 1938:436).

Middletown's population numbered over 1,200 in 1938. The town was described in that year as a "comfortable town inhabited largely by the owners, widows of owners, and the agents of the great flat farms that surround the place and extend over into Maryland". It was notable for being "one of the few old Delaware towns not on a navigable waterway" (DFWP 1938:462).

The Labor Commission of Delaware compiled a list of manufacturing in Delaware in 1932. Dozens of products were being manufactured in the City of Wilmington. None of the remaining towns in the county even came close to the quantity of goods being produced in Wilmington; the largest number in any other town was eight, in Newark, Newport, and Middletown. The eight manufacturing establishments located in Middletown were:

- Baker Canning Company (cannery);
- W. Y. Ellison's flour mill;
- M. E. Gebhart's bakery;
- Middletown Flour & Feed Mill;

- Middletown Millwork Company (lumber);
- Middletown Transcript Company, Inc. (printers and publishers);
- Morning Star Packing Company (cannery); and
- Short & Walls Company (lumber) (Labor Commission of Delaware 1932:12).

Manufacturing and other industrial establishments in Middletown in 1942 included two flour or flour and feed mills, a bakery, a dyers and cleaners, three lumber suppliers, a printer and publisher, and three suppliers of milk products (Labor Commission of Delaware 1942:17). Tomato blight and competition after World War II ended the large scale fruit industries in much of Delaware (Pryor 1975:25).