

## II. HISTORIC CONTEXT

The archaeological sites covered by this report were occupied between about 1750 and 1980. They represent people living in different worlds: the heavily wooded colonial frontier, the busy farm landscape of the nineteenth century, and the twentieth-century world of automobiles, electrification, and expanding suburbs. To understand the finds from these sites and evaluate their importance, some background in the history of New Castle County is essential. Prehistoric artifacts were also found on these sites.

### A. REGIONAL PREHISTORY

#### 1. *Chronology*

Custer (1984, 1989) has divided the prehistory of Delaware into four periods: the Paleoindian period (circa 12,000 BC to 6500 BC), the Archaic period (circa 6500 BC to 3000 BC), the Woodland I period (circa 3000 BC to AD 1000), and the Woodland II period (AD 1000 to AD 1650). The European Contact period (circa AD 1600 to 1750) marks the final years of Native American occupation of the area during early European colonization of the state. Although Custer's chronology uses the traditional Paleoindian/Archaic/Woodland cultural stages, his bracket dates differ significantly from those used by most archaeologists in the surrounding region. Custer's chronology differs most significantly from the prevailing regional model in the truncation of the Archaic period. Most investigators bracket the Archaic period from roughly 8000 to 1000 BC, and divide the Archaic into Early, Middle, and Late subperiods. Custer includes most of the Early Archaic period (circa 8000 to 6000 BC) in the Paleoindian period, and he subsumes the Late Archaic period (circa 3000 to 1000 BC) into the Woodland I period.

#### 2. *Paleoindian Period*

The Paleoindian period marks the initial occupation of the state by small groups of nomadic Native American hunters and gatherers. Their presence coincided with the amelioration of late Pleistocene glacial environmental conditions throughout eastern North America and the beginning of early Holocene conditions, i.e., cold temperatures and alternating periods of wet and dry conditions. The economic system of the Paleoindians was based largely upon the hunting of large, cold-adapted animals, including both migratory and nonmigratory species. Although direct evidence of Paleoindian use of non-mammalian food resources is lacking in the archaeological record of Delaware, paleoenvironmental data indicate that their exploitative territories included habitats in which plant foods and other edible resources were available. Palynological and geomorphological data suggest that the vegetation in Delaware during the Paleoindian period consisted of a mosaic of deciduous and boreal forests and grasslands that would have provided grazing, browsing, and shelter for a variety of small and large mammals. In conjunction with various surface water settings, these habitats would have been focal points for Paleoindian foragers.

Custer, following Gardner (1974, 1977), views the Paleoindian settlement pattern as highly focused on sources of high-quality lithic material. Based on Gardner's work on the Flint Run Complex, Custer defined a variety of Paleoindian site types: quarry sites, quarry reduction stations, base camps, base camp maintenance stations, outlying hunting sites, and isolated point finds. Custer discusses two alternative Paleoindian settlement pattern models that would reflect

differential regional distribution patterns of lithic raw material. The cyclical model would be most applicable to settings that contain a single lithic source area, and the serial model would be applicable to territories that include a number of widely separated sources.

The stone toolkit of the Paleoindians was characterized by a limited number of bifacial and unifacial implements that suggest heavy emphasis on the procurement and processing of animal resources. These implements include projectile points, hafted and unhafted knives, scrapers, and less formalized flake tools. Of these, the fluted point is the diagnostic hallmark of the Paleoindian period. Other point styles indicative of the later part of this cultural period include both unfluted triangular forms and notched and stemmed points. The distributions and environmental settings of Paleoindian sites and isolated point finds suggest that these people maintained a way of life that consisted of relatively frequent movements of single- or multiple-family groups to and from resource-rich habitats. It appears that this basic settlement/subsistence strategy persisted with only minor variations for approximately 5,500 years.

Custer has identified a concentration of Paleoindian sites along the Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide of the Delmarva Peninsula. Using modern LANDSAT imagery, it was found that Paleoindian site loci were strongly correlated with poorly drained or swampy areas. The Hughes Complex in Kent County exemplifies this Paleoindian site distributional pattern. This complex includes a series of six surface finds located on low, well-drained knolls in or adjacent to a large freshwater swamp and other poorly drained areas (Custer 1989). No Paleoindian sites have been identified in the vicinity of the project area.

### 3. *Archaic Period*

The Archaic period is characterized by a series of changes in prehistoric Native American technologies, subsistence, and settlement. These shifts are interpreted as gradual human responses to the emergence of full Holocene environmental conditions. The landscape was dominated by mesic oak and hemlock forests, and the reduction in open grasslands brought about by warm and wet conditions resulted in the extinction of certain cold-adapted grazing animal species (i.e., caribou and bison) that were the favored prey of Paleoindian groups. An alternative interpretation is that these vegetational changes were favorable to browsing animals, such as deer, which flourish in forest settings (Custer 1984, 1989). The toolkits of Archaic peoples include several different styles of spear point as well as grinding stones for plant processing and axes for working wood.

A rise in the sea level and an increase in precipitation at the beginning of the Holocene would have facilitated the development of inland swamps in the Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide, as well as the first tidal marshes in the Mid-Drainage zone. At that time Native American populations in these areas shifted from the more hunting-oriented foraging pattern of the Paleoindian period to one in which plant foods became a more important part of their economies. In southern Delaware large swamp habitats such as Cedar Swamp and Burnt Swamp would have served as locations for the first large residential base camps, possibly occupied by several different family groups. Associated with these larger group camps are more numerous and smaller procurement sites situated in various settings that would have been favorable for hunting and gathering activities during different seasons of the year.

Based primarily on the work of Gardner (1987), studies by Custer define three types of Archaic sites: macroband base camps, microband base camps, and procurement sites. The three site types are distinguished, in this account, by their environmental settings, the size of the occupant group, and the range of activities carried out at the site. Macroband base camps are located in settings that afford access to the greatest range and quantity of resources, and they exhibit evidence of occupation by relatively large groups that carried out a broad range of activities. Procurement sites represent the opposite end of the Archaic site type continuum. They exhibit evidence of occupation by small groups that carried out a limited range of activities, and they are located to afford access to a specific resource (Custer 1984, 1989).

Recent excavations at several Delaware sites suggest that they formed from repeated visits by small groups over an extended period of time rather than from the presence of a large group of people (LeeDecker et al. 2005; Petraglia et al. 1998, 2002; Versar 2011a, 2011b). “Macroband” camps may therefore be largely artifacts of our perceptions. Where it is possible to identify discrete occupation areas that date to a relatively short time span (decades), these are quite small. Some of the features that Custer believed indicated a “macroband camp,” such as pit features and grinding stones, have also been found at small sites away from large wetlands.

#### 4. *Late Archaic and Early to Middle Woodland Periods*

After 3000 BC, in what Custer called the Woodland I Period and what is known elsewhere as the Late Archaic, there are major changes in the archaeological record. Especially along the tidal portions of Delaware’s rivers, the Late Archaic and Early Woodland periods reflected a dramatic change from earlier times. Very large sites appear, with dense accumulations of artifacts. Among these large sites are the Delaware Park Site, the Clyde Farm Site, the Crane Hook Site, and the Naamans Creek Site (Custer 1984, 1986, 1989; Thomas 1981). Evidence of ritual life also increases, culminating in the rich burials of the Delmarva Adena Complex and the Webb Complex burials at Island Field. Some sites have produced good evidence of long-distance trade. This includes large quantities of rhyolite and argillite from above the falls of the Delaware found at the Barker’s Landing and Coverdale Farm Sites; at Barker’s Landing imported stone makes up nearly 90 percent of the debitage. Delmarva Adena sites have produced a handful of artifacts made of Flint Ridge chert and other stones imported from the Ohio Valley.

Pondering these large sites along the river, some archaeologists have posited that people were becoming more sedentary in the Late Archaic and Early Woodland, spending more time at base camps and less roaming the hinterlands. However, small sites of this period are still widely distributed across the landscape in many settings, from coastal middens to bay/basin ponds and small streams. There must have been a large increase in population in this period.

The toolkits of Late Archaic and Early Woodland groups are generally similar to those of the Middle Archaic with the addition of such items as heavy woodworking tools, soapstone and ceramic containers, broad-bladed points, and netsinkers. The increased abundance of plant processing tools in this period suggests more intensive use of plant foods, which by Middle Woodland times may have approached incipient agriculture. Tools were made from both local cobbles and imported stone. At small, interior sites most material came from cobbles, except near the quarries around Iron Hill.

The inferred reduction in overall group mobility, the presence of certain artifact types indicative of intensified resource processing, the possible generation of food surpluses, the presence of artifact caches, and the possible existence of increased interregional exchange networks as inferred from the presence of nonlocal lithic raw materials are interpreted as indicators of the initial development of ranked social organization as opposed to earlier egalitarian systems.

##### 5. *Late Woodland Period*

The Late Woodland period (AD 1000 to 1650) in the Middle Atlantic region is marked primarily by increased sedentism and the development of horticulture. During this period settlements became larger and more permanent and tended to be located adjacent to areas with easily worked floodplain soils. This period is also characterized by an attenuation in the interregional trade and exchange systems. The shift to agricultural food production effected important changes in the Late Woodland settlement pattern, although the settlement pattern included the basic site types established during the Archaic period—macroband base camps, microband base camps, and procurement sites. Two Late Woodland complexes have been defined for Delaware. In southern Delaware the Slaughter Creek Complex is characterized by the presence of Townsend ceramics, triangular projectile points, large macroband base camps, and possibly fully sedentary villages with numerous food storage features. Most major sites assigned to the Slaughter Creek complex have been identified in the Delaware Shore, Mid-Drainage, and Coastal/Bay physiographic zones of southern Delaware (Custer 1984, 1989).

In northern Delaware Custer calls the dominant Late Woodland culture the Minguannan Complex (Custer 1989:311-316). The identifying characteristics of this complex include Minguannan ceramics (a hard, grit-tempered, high-fired variety similar to Potomac Creek), small triangular points, and frequent storage pits. Although agriculture and settled village life developed in this period in southern Delaware and in the Middle Atlantic region generally, there is no evidence of either of these important changes in northern Delaware. The large sites of the Late Woodland in northern Delaware are in the same environmental contexts as those of earlier periods, oriented toward wetlands rather than toward good agricultural land. In many cases sites from the Early and Middle Woodland continued to be occupied in the Late Woodland, including the Hell Island, Delaware Park, and Clyde Farm sites (Custer 1984; Thomas 1966, 1981). The evidence suggests that there was no major change in lifeways in northern Delaware in this period, and that the inhabitants continued to rely on hunting and gathering, especially in marsh areas, for their sustenance. Ethnographic data about the Lenape, who occupied the area at the time of European contact, tend to support this conclusion (Stewart et al. 1986; Weslager 1972).

The European Contact period is marked by both the initial contact between the Native American inhabitants of Delaware and European colonists and the subsequent total collapse of traditional native lifeways and sociopolitical organization. The picture is further complicated by the paucity of sites in the state dating to this important period. However, historical sources indicate that resident Native American populations had minimal interaction with European settlers and were subjugated by the Susquehannocks of southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. A small number of descendants of the original Native American inhabitants of Delaware still reside in the state today.

## B. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Ames et al. 1989) divides the history of Delaware into five named time periods: the Period of Exploration and Frontier Settlement (1630 to 1730), the Intensified and Durable Occupation Period (1730 to 1770), the Early Industrialization Period (1770 to 1830), the Period of Industrialization and Early Urbanization (1830 to 1880), and the Period of Urbanization and Early Suburbanization (1880 to 1940). The discussion of Delaware history presented below follows this chronological framework.

### 1. *Exploration and Frontier Settlement (1630 to 1730)*

The first European to explore the Delaware River was Henry Hudson, who visited both the Hudson and Delaware rivers on his famous voyage of 1609. The English were slow to follow up on Hudson's discoveries, but in 1610 Dutch traders plied the Delaware River. In 1631 the Dutch West India Company, formed to administer Dutch land claims in North America, established a fishing and agricultural settlement called Swanendael, near modern Lewes. The settlers came into conflict with a local Native American group called the Sickoneysincks, and the settlement was abandoned in 1632. In 1638 the Swedish government, acting in consort with dissident Dutch merchants, "purchased" the land on both banks of the Delaware River from Cape Henlopen to modern Trenton from various Native American groups and established a settlement called New Sweden. The center of the colony was Fort Christina, constructed at the confluence of the Christina River and Brandywine Creek in modern Wilmington. Swedish and Finnish immigrants set up scattered farms in the nearby countryside (Weslager 1961).

The Dutch West India Company, which still claimed the entire coastline from New York to the Chesapeake Bay, prepared to dispute the pretensions of the Swedes, and in 1651 they established Fort Casimir at the present site of New Castle. After five years of back-and-forth military struggle, the Dutch captured Fort Christina in 1655, and New Sweden ceased to exist as a political entity. Swedish and Finnish settlers remained in the region, however, and the log cabin of the American frontier seems to be derived from their traditional building techniques. In the years that followed, the Dutch established other settlements in the region, including New Amstel at the old site of Fort Casimir. To resist the incursions of English settlers from the Chesapeake Bay region, a fort was constructed at modern Lewes, an area the Dutch called the Whorekil. In 1663 the Dutch West India Company handed over the administration of all its colonies in North America to the city of Amsterdam.

In 1664 English forces, acting on behalf of the Duke of York, brother of King Charles II, attacked and pillaged the Dutch settlements on the Delaware and Hudson rivers. Political control of the colonies passed from Amsterdam to the Duke of York, but his agents allowed Dutch and Swedish settlers to retain their lands and Dutch magistrates to keep their offices under his authority. The Dutch reoccupied Delaware in 1673, but in 1674 they officially relinquished their claims, and from that point on English rule was secure. The Dutch had divided their lands on the Delaware River into three jurisdictions: Upland (present-day Chester County, Pennsylvania), New Amstel (New Castle County, Delaware), and Whorekil (Lewes, Delaware). In 1680 the English divided Whorekil, creating the separate jurisdiction of St. Jones, and the three modern divisions of Delaware were established.

Control over the land between the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware River was then disputed between two English claimants: the Duke of York and Lord Baltimore, the proprietor of Maryland. In 1682 the situation was further complicated when Charles II, to settle an old debt, granted William Penn a charter for Pennsylvania. Penn's grant included all the land west of the Delaware River between 40 and 43 degrees north latitude. Lest this grant be found to interfere with the Duke of York's claims, a clause was inserted excluding all land within 12 miles of New Castle, the origin of modern Delaware's peculiar arched border. Thinking that his new colony was too far from the sea, Penn then acquired Delaware from the Duke of York. Modern Delaware became the "three lower counties" of Pennsylvania, with political control based in Philadelphia. Lord Baltimore still maintained his claim, however, and he made many land grants within Delaware; the boundary dispute between Maryland and Delaware was not settled until 1770. The residents of the lower counties became disgruntled with their status in the Pennsylvania legislature, and in 1704 they broke away and created the new colony of Delaware (Munroe 1993:42).

The Dutch/Swedish/Finnish population of Delaware was never very large, and initial English immigration was slow. In 1677 the New Castle jurisdiction contained only 307 tithables (adult males), 130 of whom had English names (Reed 1947:73). Settlement was mainly concentrated around tidal rivers and creeks.

## 2. *Intensified and Durable Occupation (1730 to 1770)*

The eighteenth century was a time of enormous population growth in Delaware, as in most of British North America. The population grew from perhaps 500 settlers in 1682 to 64,273 in 1800. The new immigrants came from Britain, Ireland, and Africa, and from other, more crowded colonies, particularly Maryland. Dissenters, such as Presbyterians, Quakers, and Methodists, were a majority among these new arrivals, reducing the official Anglican church to minority status. The main settlements of the colony were the ports of Wilmington, chartered in 1739, New Castle, and Lewes, with smaller hamlets growing up at places such as Christiana Bridge, where roads crossed the larger streams. Most of the residents were farmers, whose homes were mostly scattered along the rivers and later along the main roads. These farmers practiced a mixed, highly commercialized agriculture, raising grains, especially wheat and corn, and livestock. Wheat was the most important export. Over the course of the eighteenth century most of the good agricultural land in Delaware was cleared, plowed, and planted, and farms were established.

Roads were developed to carry traffic between the towns, of which one of the most important was the north-south road from Wilmington to Lewes, which had been established by 1764 and passes near the project area along the route of modern U.S. Route 13.

Another important transportation route was the crossing between the Chesapeake and Delaware Bay watersheds. The Herrman family, mapmaker Augustine Herrman and his sons, took the lead in laying out cart roads from their properties on the Bohemia and Elk Rivers to landings on the Appoquinimink River and near the mouth of Augustine Creek (Burrow et al. 2010) (Figures 3 and 4). These roads were used for smuggling Maryland tobacco, which after 1661 could legally be sold only to English merchants, from the well-policed Chesapeake Bay to the Delaware. Dutch ship captains had great experience on the Delaware and many friends, making it much easier for them to do business. It was only 9 miles from the head of navigation on the Bohemia



SOURCE: Burrows et al. 2010

FIGURE 3: Bohemia Cart Road in 1748

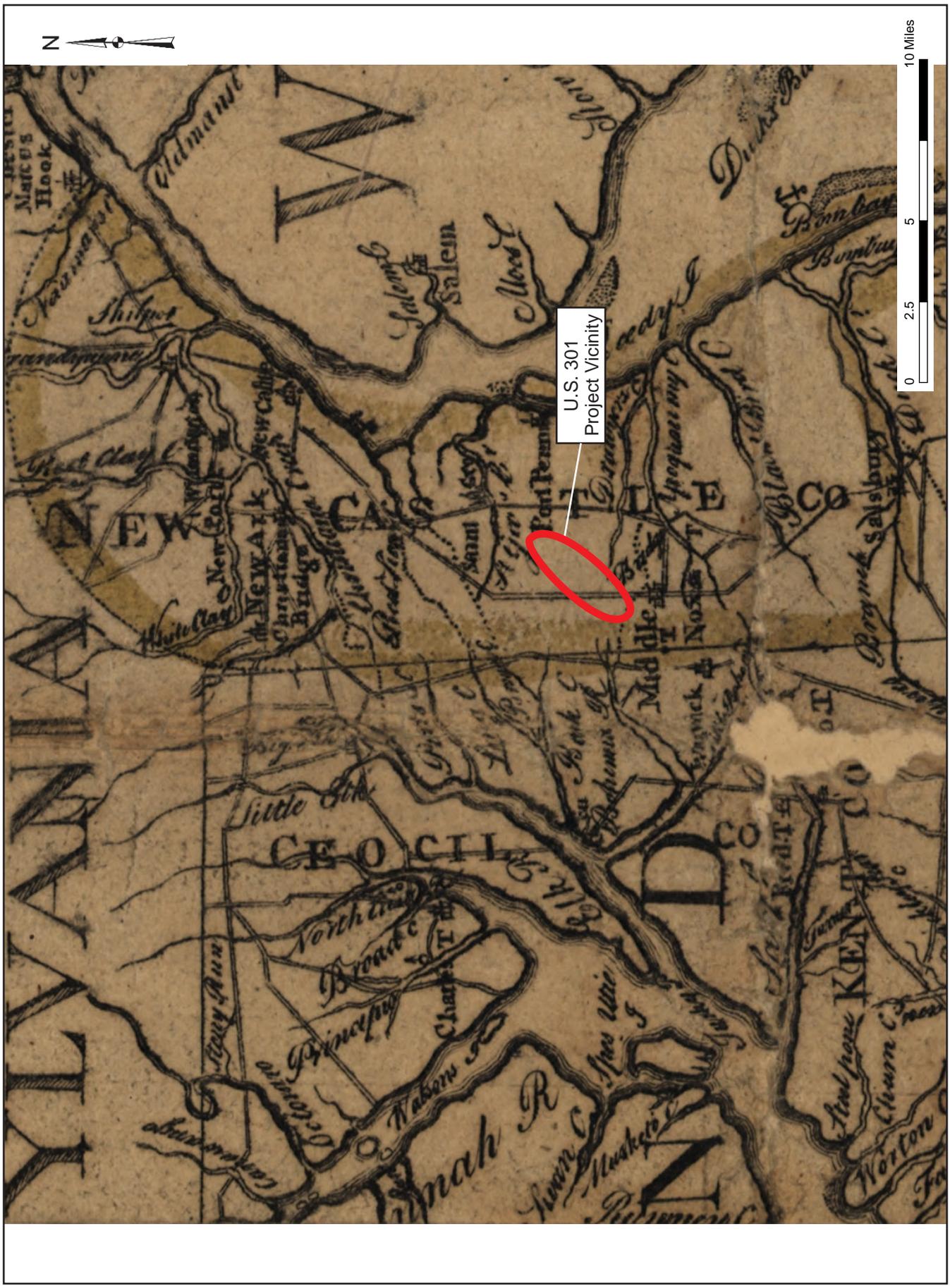


FIGURE 4: Project Vicinity in 1778  
SOURCE: Churchman 1778

River to Cantwell's Bridge (now Odessa) on the Appoquinimink, an easy enough haul with ox carts. One witness even said that the smugglers loaded whole boats on carts and dragged them overland without unloading them. This route seems to have declined after the Revolutionary War and was no longer prominently featured on maps, perhaps because Maryland planters began shipping their tobacco and wheat to Baltimore.

### 3. *Early Industrialization (1770 to 1830)*

Although the colony had become independent of Pennsylvania, eighteenth-century Delaware retained close economic ties with Philadelphia, and many of the colony's leaders also had social and family ties to the city. Those ties led the leaders of Delaware into supporting the political ferment that preceded the Revolutionary War, even though Delaware had suffered no atrocities at British hands (Munroe 1993:62). Only one Revolutionary War battle was fought in Delaware, at Cooch's Bridge near Scottsborough, during the campaign that led up the Battle of Brandywine in 1777.

After the Battle of Brandywine, a British victory, the British occupied Wilmington and threatened the state capital at New Castle. To escape the threat—and also because many Kent and Sussex residents were unhappy with the leadership being provided by New Castle men during the crisis—the capital was moved to Dover. For a time the legislators met at various places around the state on a rotating basis, but in 1781 Dover was made the permanent capital.

In the early Federal period Delaware farmers were buoyed by inflated wheat prices, brought on by the Napoleonic wars. After the return of peace in 1819, however, the state experienced an agricultural decline, as careless farming practices exhausted the land and many residents moved farther west (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:24). To arrest the decline, progressive farmers formed agricultural societies and experimented with new crop rotation methods, and their efforts led to more productive and less destructive agricultural practices later in the century (Herman 1987:8). Industrial production increased, mostly in the Piedmont region, where water power was available to drive gristmills, fulling mills, and snuff mills. Wilmington prospered as an industrial and mercantile city, and its population grew from about 1,500 at the time of the Revolutionary War to 7,000 by 1830. An interesting feature of Delaware society in this period was the large number of free blacks, who made up more than 75 percent of the black population of the state in 1810. Politically, Delaware, which had been the first state to ratify the constitution, remained staunchly Federalist throughout the period (Munroe 1954).

After decades of argument about a route, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal was opened in 1829. The canal provided improved market access for farmers in St. Georges Hundred, and helped bring prosperity back to the region.

### 4. *Industrialization and Early Urbanization (1830 to 1880)*

The increasing urbanization and industrialization of the eastern seaboard, along with steamships, the railroad, and other improvements in transportation, had a major impact on Delaware. Wilmington grew into a major city, with important manufacturing industries. Although grain remained an important crop, agriculture shifted toward the production of fruits and vegetables for Wilmington, Philadelphia, and other cities. Starting in about 1830, a boom in peach growing

made many fortunes in New Castle County. The agricultural expansion led to a great rebuilding in the county, and many fine, large farmhouses survive from the period (Herman 1987). The Civil War had no great impact on the economy of the region, since the state saw little fighting, and free black labor was already far more important than the relatively few slaves.

Detailed statistics available for this period allow some generalizations about the social side of agriculture in Delaware (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992). Approximately half of Delaware farms were occupied by their owners, the other half by tenants. Some tenants paid cash rents, others a share of their crops. In all areas farm ownership was strongly correlated with age. Older men were much more likely to own farms, suggesting that many tenants were able to accumulate enough capital to buy their own farms later on. Farm laborers, who worked for cash and board, outnumbered operators in all parts of the state but especially in the south. A few blacks owned farms in this period, and a few more were tenants, but the great majority of the rural black population were laborers. The few black-owned farms were almost all on inferior land, valued at much less than the land of the average white farmer.

#### 5. *Urbanization and Early Suburbanization (1880 to 1940)*

Trends begun in Delaware in the 1830 to 1880 period continued in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Wilmington continued to grow, and in 1920 it held nearly one in two residents of the state. The peach orchards never recovered from a devastating blight in the 1870s, and much of the less productive farmland was abandoned. The farm population began to fall as mechanization made agriculture less labor-intensive and competition squeezed out many smaller farms. However, on Delaware's better soils, grain and truck farming remained profitable, and Delaware farmers benefited from the worldwide surge in food prices that enriched so many American farmers in the 1890 to 1920 period (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:28). New crops, such as strawberries and asparagus, helped many farmers.

#### C. THE PROJECT AREA IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Each of Delaware's three counties is subdivided into smaller political units called "hundreds" that are the equivalent of the townships or parishes of other eastern states. There are 10 hundreds in New Castle County, and the U.S. Route 301 project is mostly within St. Georges. St. Georges Hundred is bounded on the north by the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, which follows the route of the old St. Georges Creek, and on the south by the Appoquinimink River.

The first European settlement in St. Georges Hundred was established by Dutch and Swedes from New Castle who patented land along the Appoquinimink River in the 1650s. The Appoquinimink River was important to the Dutch as part of a natural portage from the Delaware River to the Chesapeake Bay; in the seventeenth century it was less than 5 miles from the head of navigation on the Appoquinimink River to the head of navigation on the Bohemia River, and an important trade between the Dutch in Delaware and the English settlers in Maryland was carried out along this route. The patents of the Dutch settlers were so-called "long lots," stretching from the Appoquinimink River to Drawyer Creek. A few lots were also established on the northern bank of Drawyer Creek. These settlements were conceived of as a town, called Appoquemenes. Although the houses of this town were scattered on the various lots, the town was a functioning administrative unit and probably also an important social reality. The Dutch patents were confirmed by the English conquerors in 1671. The English granted further patents in the area,

using their own “metes and bounds” system instead of the Dutch long lots. Because of the new settlement pattern and other administrative changes, the old town of Appoquemenen effectively disappeared, and there is very little continuity between it and the future towns that occupied the same location (De Cunzo 1993; Heite 1972).

An archaeological site occupied during this period was excavated on the Appoquinimink River near Odessa during the SR 1 project (Bedell et al. 1999). The Appoquinimink North Site, or the McKean/Cochran farm, included the cellar of a house with a cellar and stone foundations measuring 15x18 feet (Figure 5). This cellar produced a large collection of artifacts that appear to date to the 1690 to 1770 period. The early material includes numerous vessels made of decorated Delftware and etched stemware (drinking glasses), suggesting a degree of wealth and material comfort.



FIGURE 5: Eighteenth-Century Cellar at the Appoquinimink North Site

SOURCE: Bedell et al. 1999

In the eighteenth century a new town grew up in at the site of Appoquemenen, called Cantwell’s Bridge, after a bridge constructed over the Appoquinimink River in 1731 by Richard Cantwell. Cantwell, son of the first English sheriff of New Castle County, owned extensive lands that included about half of the current town of Odessa. The town grew very slowly until the 1760s and 1770s, when several large brick houses were constructed along the Middletown Road not far from the bridge. Two of these, one built in 1774 by William Corbitt, who operated a tannery at the bridge, and the other built by David Wilson in 1769, are still standing in Odessa. A frame tidemill was situated at the eastern end of town. Settlement also increased in the surrounding area, and most of the available land was brought under cultivation in this period.

Archaeology along the U.S. Route 301 corridor has shown that the area was densely populated by the mid-eighteenth century. Numerous farm sites dating to the 1730 to 1770 period have been identified. At the time much of the land was in the hands of speculators who each owned

thousands of acres, and majority of the residents seem to have been tenants of these absentee landlords. It seems likely that the presence of the Bohemia Cart Road and the associated smuggling route helped draw settlers to the area.

Although agriculture suffered throughout much of the eastern United States in the early national period, the prime wheat lands in southern New Castle County prospered and Cantwell's Bridge served as the port for that grain. In 1825 six large granaries, holding about 30,000 bushels, could be seen on the Appoquinimink River waterfront, and up to 400,000 bushels of grain were shipped annually through the port in the 1840s (Scharf 1888:1005). In the busy season six sloops traveled weekly to Philadelphia, and three coasting schooners went to Boston (Watkins n.d.). By 1800 Cantwell's Bridge contained 26 dwellings and boasted a population of 211 (Rogers and Easter 1960:62). The villagers lived in houses arrayed on either side of the road that ran down to the landing. The dwellings ranged from brick mansions to one-room hewn-log houses. Each dwelling possessed outbuildings that typically included stables, carriage houses, smokehouses, and kitchens. Merchants' and local artisans' shops were interspersed among the outbuildings, and taverns provided lodging for travelers and spirits for all. At the western end of town was a Quaker meetinghouse, established in 1785. Farmers came to town often for business purposes and market days (Herman 1987:81).

West of Cantwell's Bridge was the village of Middletown, which appears on maps by 1778. Middletown remained a tiny place until the 1850s, when the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad was built through the town. The first detailed map of New Castle County was published by Samuel Rea of Philadelphia in 1849 (Figure 6). Cantwell's Bridge was clearly the most important town in the vicinity at that time, still significantly larger than Middletown. However, by the time the 1868 Beers *Atlas of the State of Delaware* was made, Middletown had surpassed Cantwell's Bridge as the biggest town in the area (Figure 7). The Beers map also shows that numerous houses had been built along all the roads in the area.

The population of southern New Castle County remained stable over the course of the nineteenth century. The archaeological record of the project area shows that there was no population decline, with many domestic sites identified for all parts of the nineteenth century. The prime wheat-growing lands around New Castle remained very valuable, supporting both a class of large farmers and numerous agricultural laborers and craftsmen. Maps and archaeology both show farms and houses in numerous settings, with increased density around road intersections.

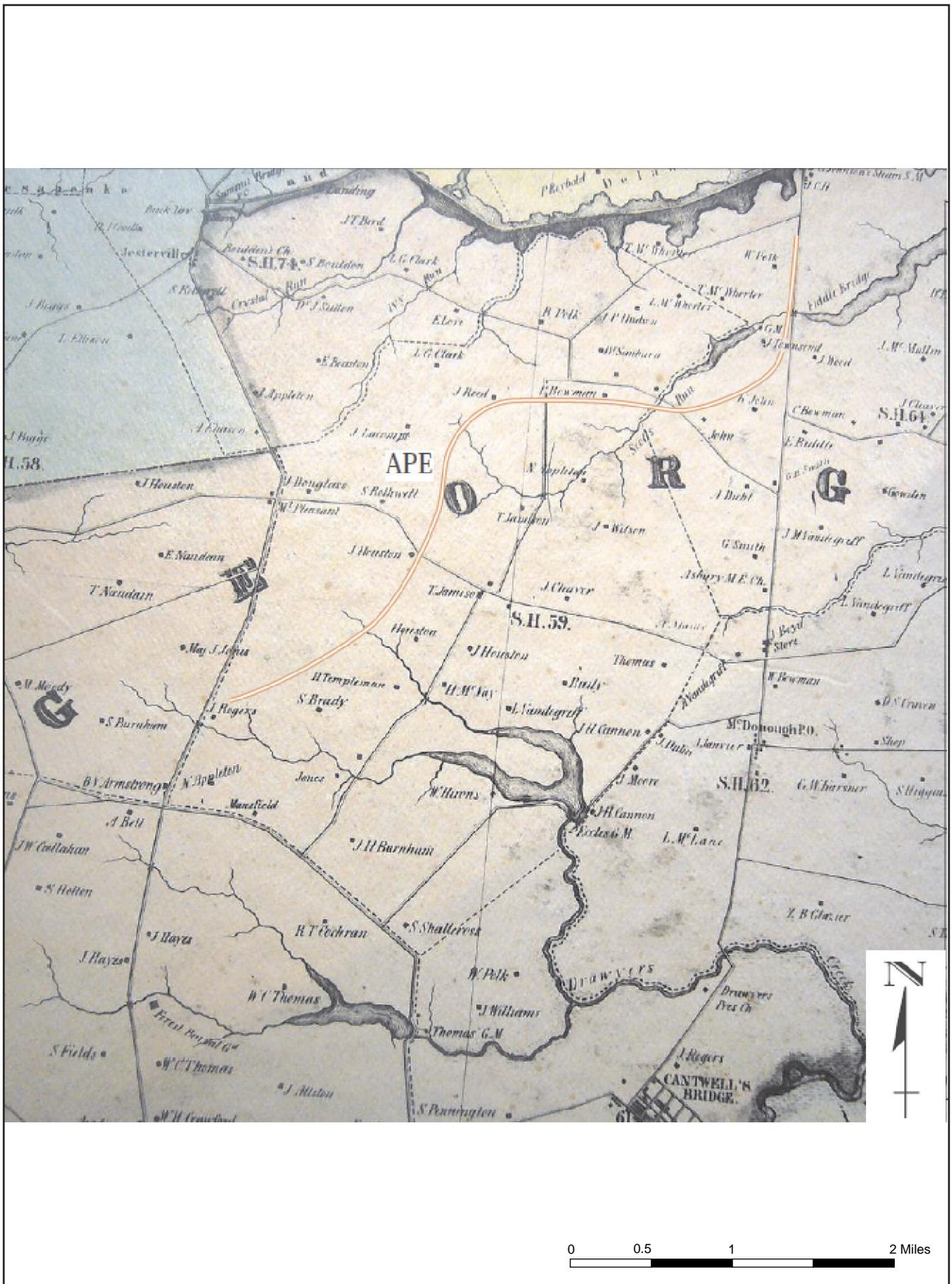


FIGURE 6: Project Vicinity in 1849

SOURCE: Rea and Price 1849

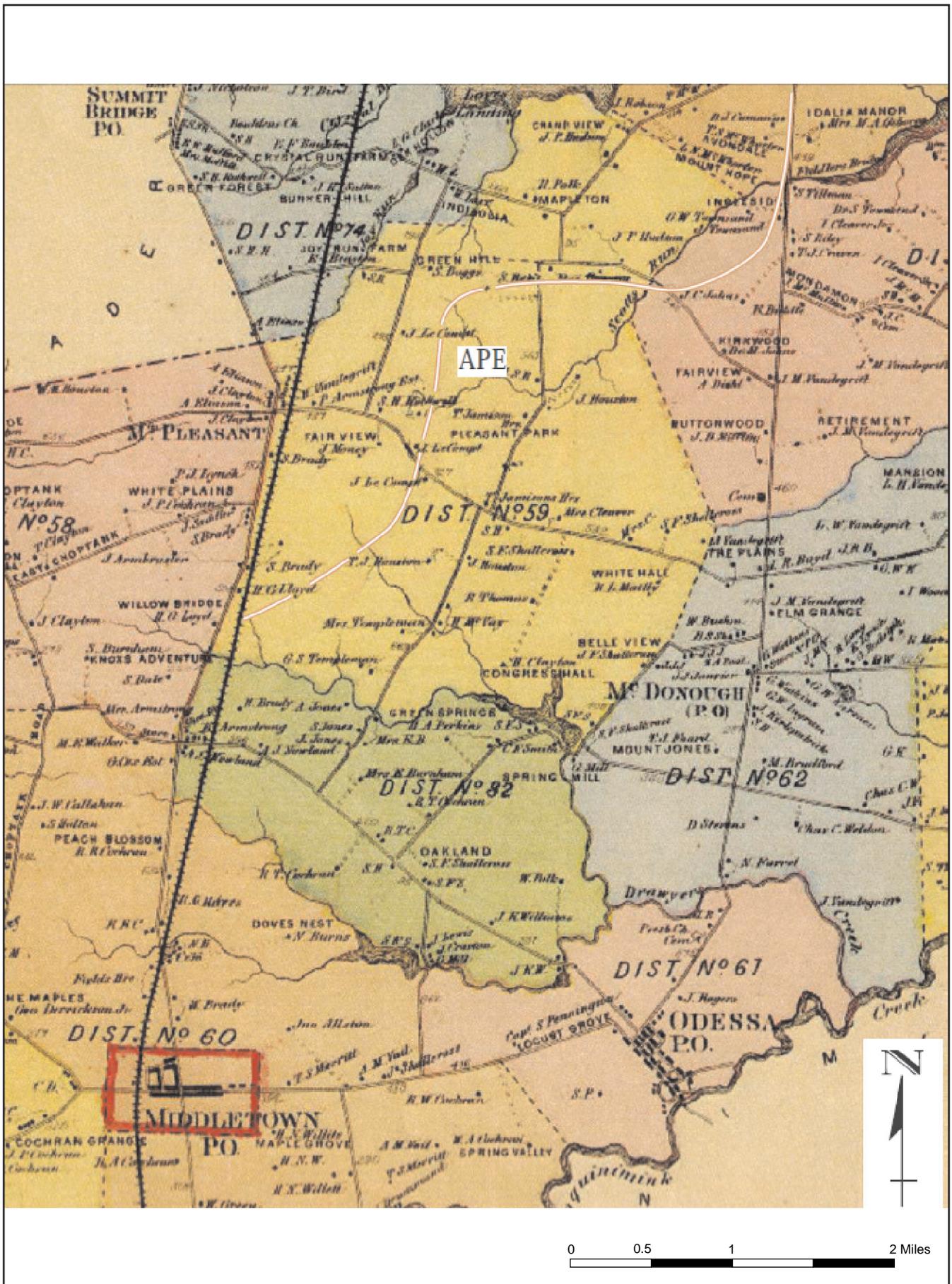


FIGURE 7: Project Vicinity in 1868

SOURCE: Beers 1868