

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH DOMAINS, CONTEXT AND CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the Phase I and II investigations, the Cazier site was determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "D". A data recovery plan was prepared to provide an overall research framework for the Phase III excavations. The main goal of the data recovery investigations of the Cazier site was to collect archaeological data on spatial organization, food preparation, and consumption, and artifact assemblage patterns for use in studying diachronic change on intra- and inter-site levels. Other sites in the Middle Atlantic Region with similar temporal periods of occupation, site function, or inhabitants were consulted for comparison. These sites included the Robert Ferguson House site (Coleman et al. 1983), the Howard-McHenry Tenancy (Hurly and Kavanaugh 1983), the late nineteenth century occupation of the Hawthorne site (Coleman et al. 1984), the Block 1191 investigations in Wilmington (Beidleman, Catts, and Custer 1986), the Temple site (Hoseth et al. 1990), and the Williams site (Catts and Custer 1990). The comparative data generated was to investigate questions about rural cultural change including:

1) Are changes present in refuse disposal processes and techniques? Can changes be observed in the patterns of artifact distributions and are these changes indicative of varied spatial utilization at the sites? Furthermore, can such changes in patterns be related to historically-documented economic and social changes in the surrounding area or to changes in a larger area?

2) Are there changes in the presence/absence, or frequencies, of certain artifact classes among the various historical sites? Can these changes be related to the socio-economic position of the site's occupants or to local and regional economic conditions?

3) Can changes in either of the above categories of data be analyzed for meaningful covariance?

In addition, the research generated from the Phase III investigations at the Cazier site was also incorporated into the broader statewide research program proposed in the Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). The statewide research program is organized along three parameters: time, space, and research domain. Of the five time periods discussed in the Management Plan, the Cazier site occupation spanned two periods: 1830-1880 Industrialization and Capitalization, and 1880-1940 Urbanization and Suburbanization. The Cazier site is located within the Upper Peninsula geographic region and in a threatened area of Delaware. The research domains applicable to the Cazier site are Domestic Economy and Landscape.

The initial data recovery plan research themes for the Cazier site intersected those proposed within the Delaware state plan's research domains; furthermore, the plan suggested additional themes. The integration of the two allowed for a restatement of the principal research themes and provided additional questions to be addressed by the Phase III investigations. This was accomplished by studying the changing domestic economy and landscape of the Cazier site and its inhabitants.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

The reconstruction of the household domestic economy is a principal research goal for the historical archaeological investigation of domestic tenant sites in Delaware (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). Background archival research conducted on the Cazier site indicated that it was occupied for approximately 90 years by at least three tenant families (two were known to be black families). The Cazier site dwelling was built in 1844 by Henry Cazier and occupied by black tenants until the house was demolished in 1935. Henry Cazier built the brick house at the entrance to a lane that led from Newark Road (Route 896) to his mansion house "Mount Vernon Place." Local history recounts

that the only “rent” Cazier charged his tenants was to open and close the wooden gate at the lane leading to “Mount Vernon Place.” Whether the tenant/tenants acted only as “gatekeepers,” or if they farmed portions of Cazier’s numerous land holdings is uncertain.

Little is known about the first tenants of the Cazier site. The identity of the tenants is not known until the 1880s when the brick dwelling was inhabited by an African-American, Nicholas M. Stevenson and his family. Mr. Stevenson worked as a horseman for J.B. Cazier until the early 1910s, when he moved to Buck Jersey Road east of Lum’s Pond. Rudolf and Ethel Stevenson, relatives of Nicholas Stevenson, then moved into the Cazier gate-house during the late 1920s. Rudolf worked for the government and Ethel worked as a laundress for the Biddle family (renters of the Cazier Mansion and surrounding farmland). Rudolf Stevenson and his wife moved from the gate-house in 1934. During the expansion of Route 896 in 1935, the gate-house was demolished, and the cellar was filled with demolition debris and surrounding soil.

The black occupations of the Cazier site provide an opportunity to study the spatial patterns and material culture processes of nineteenth century black tenant households in Delaware. The social and cultural history of postbellum rural blacks in Delaware is an important topic of study, yet has received comparatively little attention in the historical literature (Catts and Custer 1990; De Cunzo and Catts 1990). Catts and Custer (1990) suggest that a focus on urban and political events as well as a lack of documentary information, has resulted in virtually no studies of Delaware’s rural black population. Thus, who the tenants were, how they interacted with Cazier, how they earned their livelihood, and why Cazier felt it necessary to have a “gate-house” and a “gatekeeper” on his estate were basic research questions. Specific research questions included:

- 1) What were each household’s goals and how were they achieved?
- 2) To what extent did the household participate in local and regional social and economic activities?
- 3) How did these goals and activities change over time?

As outlined in the Delaware Plan, household goals can include survival and/or may be inspired by religious beliefs and values or other ideologies. Thus, the family/household’s production, reproduction, and consumption habits are considered as a strategy to achieve domestic goals (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:17).

LANDSCAPE

Changing farm practices and land utilization patterns can also be studied at the Cazier site. De Cunzo and Catts (1990) urge that data on farm landscapes—the social and environmental patterns of change—be recognized. Changes in farm structure size, site layout, outbuildings, fencelines, and equipment have all been identified as key historical and archaeological variables in the history of rural Delaware (Grettlar 1991; De Cunzo and Catts 1990:154-155).

The Delaware Plan suggests that study of the landscape must focus on the evolving settlement patterns by addressing the following specific research questions:

- 1) How does the shift in the agricultural economy and practices effect settlement patterns?
- 2) What role does the transformation of the transportation system via the C and D canal and then railroads play in the changing settlement patterns (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:157)?

The landscapes of late nineteenth century rural sites has also been comparatively unstudied. The primary reasons for the lack of research into sites dating after 1880 have been better documentary records and oral histories, and more importantly, the sheer number of late nineteenth and early twentieth century sites. With so many extant sites, many sites occupied from 1880-1940 have been deemed insignificant (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:159).

Recent suburban expansion in Delaware, however, has destroyed many late nineteenth century sites. De Cunzo and Catts (1990) recognize the rapid shrinking data base of late nineteenth century sites and identified two priorities for further research. The first priority was to research data on the increasing ethnic diversity of the population—the northern migration of blacks and the changing relation of blacks and whites in Delaware. The second priority was to research data on the development of automobile transportation and resulting suburbanization (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:161).

The research perspectives employed to interpret the Cazier site included both historical and archaeological research perspectives. Both perspectives are interrelated and data generated from each relied on the other to be most effective. The following research perspectives should be regarded as part of the broader themes of American history that were addressed through the historical and archaeological investigations of the Cazier site. The historical and archaeological research perspectives should be viewed as the framework of topics and issues of a narrower scope that, when combined together, help to define the overall interpretation of larger historical processes.