

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ALONG THE PROPOSED
DUALIZATION PROJECT OF STATE ROUTE 10, KENT COUNTY

On April 21, 1976, the Division of Highways and the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs signed an agreement providing for an archaeological survey of an area proposed for the construction of two eastbound lanes of State Route 10 between the St. Jones River bridge and County Road 356A. While the agreement called for a two phase project, it was determined that only one phase was necessary to accomplish the objectives of the archaeological survey. Consequently, this report of Phase I should be considered a final report.

The cooperation of the Division of Highways and the Federal Highways Administration should be acknowledged. Their assistance in facilitating and supporting this survey has resulted in the gathering of knowledge concerning the distribution of prehistoric and early historic resources across the landscape. It has also allowed the efficient continuation of a Statewide cultural resources management program.

Procedure

The initial task of the survey team working on the Route 10 project was to establish a data recording grid mapping system. This was done by surveying a 690 meter long base line beginning at the Route 10 St. Jones bridge and continuing along the present southbound lane to the west edge of the project area. Thirty meter segments were marked and used in recording provenience of artifact discoveries.

The survey began with the removal of top soil by a Division of Highways road grader. A crew from the Section of Archaeology of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs directed the grader operation to assure that no cultural features were disturbed. A strip to subsoil, several grader cuts wide, was made and examined before it was recovered and the next strip cut. In this fashion, all sensitive areas along the right of way were examined.

After the stripping of the top soil and its replacement by the road grader, the area was allowed to lay undisturbed until a heavy rain fall could wash any heavy cultural material clean of dust. A careful walking examination of the surface was then made and all cultural material properly recorded.

The final step in the investigation involved the examination of all recovered cultural material. A brief description of the pieces has been prepared. Identification with known time periods or cultures has been made and reported.

Cultural Data

Very few items associated with prehistoric or early historic cultural periods were found during the survey. Several projectile points of the late Archaic Period, flaking debris and some historic ceramics and a single nail complete the inventory.

Both projectile points found at the project location were of the same cultural style. This style, typical of the Late Archaic Period of approximately 5,000 years ago, is closely related to the Popular Island and Bare Island types identified in the lower Susquehanna River valley. One specimen was manufactured from a metamorphosed siltstone known as argillite while the other was milky quartz. Both materials were apparently brought into Delaware from the north. The two projectile points were broken in the same manner. Their tips were missing indicating that they were probably broken during hunting activities.

Two jasper debris flakes, several small quartz pebble cores, and a large sandstone cobble obviously used as a pitted hammerstone complete the prehistoric inventory.

The historic artifacts found during the survey include two ceramic sherds, one of which appears to be twentieth century in age and a hand cut nail of the middle nineteenth century.

Immediately north of Route 10, cultural material had previously been found. Information derived from a brief study of that material suggests a later prehistoric occupation of that area. No evidence of a historic structure in the project area has been uncovered.

Summary and Recommendations

A survey of the proposed eastbound lanes of Route 10 failed to produce a significant concentration of artifacts of either prehistoric or early historic derivation. Those items that were recovered appear to be incidental losses and do not necessarily indicate occupation of the immediate area.

Although it is possible that buried cemetery material of an early period might exist, it is our recommendation that the environmental assessment be worded to indicate that no cultural resources will be adversely affected by the construction operations. It is requested that the Section of Archaeology be notified of the project schedule so that monitoring of the area during stripping operations can be conducted.

May, 1976
Section of Archaeology
Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
State of Delaware