INTRODUCTION

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This report documents the investigations related to an archaeological excavation conducted from March to July in 1980 within the Delaware Park Site (7NC-E-41) in New Castle County, Delaware. The Delaware Park Site, a prehistoric occupation site, now partially located within the right-of-way (ROW) of a new highway construction project, contained artifacts and sub-surface features of a Late Archaic and Early Woodland derivation. The excavation of this site resulted in the recovery of a considerable amount of information about the prehistoric inhabitants of the area and will contribute to a better understanding of the prehistoric subsistence and settlement systems of the Middle Atlantic area as a whole.

Reseach Contract Data

The Delaware Park Site is located partially within (see Figure I-2) a State Route 7 relocation project and is on the exact site of a planned bridge abutment which will carry traffic over the main line of the Amtrak Northeast Railroad Corridor. As a consequence of Federal involvement in the funding of the State Route 7 and other nearby projects, the Delaware Department of Transportation (Del-DOT) commissioned a Location and Identification Archaeological Survey. Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc., during the carrying out of that study, determined that the proposed ROW would include prehistoric resources located within a tract of land then owned by the Delaware Park Standard Horseracing Association. An intensive survey was then authorized by Del-DOT and carried out by Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc. (MAAR). This survey provided sufficient data for Del-DOT to receive a positive Determination of Eligibility from the Keeper of the National Register and led to negotiations on a Memorandum of Agreement for mitigation of the impact of the highway project.

As has been standard practice in such matters, Del-DOT sought the assistance of the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the State of Delaware, the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer. Del-DOT, the Bureau (BAHP) and the Advisory Council determined that the appropriate mitigation in this case should involve data recovery archaeological investigations. A Research Proposal (Appendix A), submitted by MAAR and modified in consultation with Del-DOT and the BAHP, was approved as part of the Memorandum of Agreement and authorization to proceed with the data recovery operation was given.

On February 22, 1980, "Supplemental Agreement No. 190-2-1: Location and Identification Survey for Delaware Route 7" was signed between Del-DOT and MAAR. This agreement extended the terms of the earlier Location and Identification agreement and defined the terms of the mitigation effort. The agreement referred to the need to mitigate the impact of the highway construction "...per the 106 consultation process" (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966: 16 U.S.C. Section 470 f, as ammended, 90 Stat. 1320). The initiation of investigations followed and a field crew initiated field excavations in April.

Site Location and Description

The Delaware Park Site is located near the town of Stanton, New Castle County, Delaware. The Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates for the site are Zone 18, Easting 443940, Northing 4394730 and it is located on the USGS 7.5' Series Newark East Quadrangle Map (see Fig. I-1). The site is just west of Delaware Route 7 approximately one and a half miles north of Interstate 95 (Interchange 4N). The excavation area can be accessed from Route 7 through the parking lot of Connelly's Farm and Garden Store immediately north of the Amtrak Railroad underpass.

The site is situated on a knoll of Comus soil overlooking an oxbow of the White Clay Creek. The White Clay Creek is a small drainage system which begins in the Piedmont Plateau and breaks through the "Fall Line" only about three miles northwest of the Delaware Park Site. The stream wanders through the Delaware Coastal Plain only a few more miles before it enters the Christina River, a major northern Delaware stream which enters the Delaware River at Wilmington, some eight miles downstream from the White Clay Creek confluence.

The knoll of Comus soil forms a wide curve roughly paralleling the White Clay Creek for a short distance. The soil type is relatively well-drained and composed of both sand and clay. The knoll rises only a few feet above the surronding low land but drainage characteristics emphasize the difference between the low-lying wet-lands and the well-drained uplands. The site appears to be defined by soil and elevation as well as by modern destruction of adjacent areas, which may or not have contained occupational evidence (see Figure I-1 and following section)

Nature of the Project

The purpose and objectives of the Delaware Park Site data recovery operations are outlined in the "Research Proposal". The following is abstracted from that proposal (see Appendix A).

The focus of the research design proposed by MAAR was on several problems which were discussed in detail in that proposal. These problems included ones of chronology and cultural component definition; of subsistence activities; and of such settlement problems as seasonality, intra-site organization and catchment area analysis.

The purpose of the project was to recover information which would pertain to each of these problems. Excavation procedure was designed to maximize this recovery. A "Blueprint for Action" (see Appendix B) was developed to specify the exact steps to be taken to assure that such data would not be lost. The section on research design and field methodology details the steps taken in accordance with the "Blueprint for Action"

This report is intended as a final archaeological research report on the investigations and the data recovered. It is written primarily to satisfy the needs of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as well as the archaeological profession. A supplemental report, abstracted in part from the present report, is being prepared for distribution to public information sources. The following report summarizes the current research and contains recommendations for more detailed analyses.

Organization and Personnel

The data recovery operations were authorized by the Bureau of Project Planning of the Delaware Department of Transportation. Key personnel in that Bureau are Joseph Wutka, Chief Planner, Nick Blendy and Kevin Cunningham, Archaeologist. Review functions have been provided by the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the State of Delaware, Daniel R. Griffith, Chief. Faye Stocum, of the Bureau, acted as primary reviewer. Mr. Michael Otto of the Federal Highway Administration represented that agency.

Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc., of Newark, Delaware, acted as prime consultant on the Delaware Park Site operations. Mr. Ronald A. Thomas, SOPA was Principal Investigator. Cooperating with MAAR, as prime sub-contractors in the field research tasks, was DeLeuw, Cather and Company (DCO), of Washington, D.C. DeLeuw, Cather provided personnel, financial, and material management services in the performance of the field research tasks and in the administration and control of a variety of support subconctractors. Mr. David M. Harlan served as DCO Officer-in-Charge, Mr. Gary L. Groat as DCO Project Manager, Mrs. Janice Artemel as DCO Technical Advisor, and Martha J. Schiek was DCO Field Supervisor. All personnel are listed, by organization in Appendix C.

The "Blueprint for Action", as well as the Research Proposal, was prepared by the Principal Investigator. These documents were reviewed and modified by Daniel R. Griffith and Faye Stocum and approved by Joseph Wutka. All field and consultant services were carried out by DeLeuw, Cather & Company with Janice Artemel approving the procedures prepared and carried out by Martha J. Schiek. Field crew members were supervised by Ms. Schiek and research procedures were approved and reviewed by the Principal Investigator, Ronald A. Thomas. The final research report, as well as laboratory and analytical procedures, were periodically reviewed in depth throughout the course of the program by a team composed of representatives of all organizations involved in the project.

All artifacts, field notes, photographs, slides, maps, and other information pertaining to the project will be permanently housed, with the approval of all organizations involved, at the Island Field Archaeological Museum and Research Center in Kent County, Delaware. Here, this information will be stored to be accessible to all interested and serious investigators. Material suitable for display will be included in an educational exhibit to be prepared by the staff of the Delaware Bureau of Museums and Historic Sites.