

## VI. CONCLUSION

Understanding the cultural history of the Delaware Valley will require the efforts of generations of archaeologists and historians. Their efforts will be made easier by the work that has been done in the past decade on farm and rural dwelling sites in Delaware. The excavations described in this document provide a basis for understanding the material culture of Delaware's farm households in

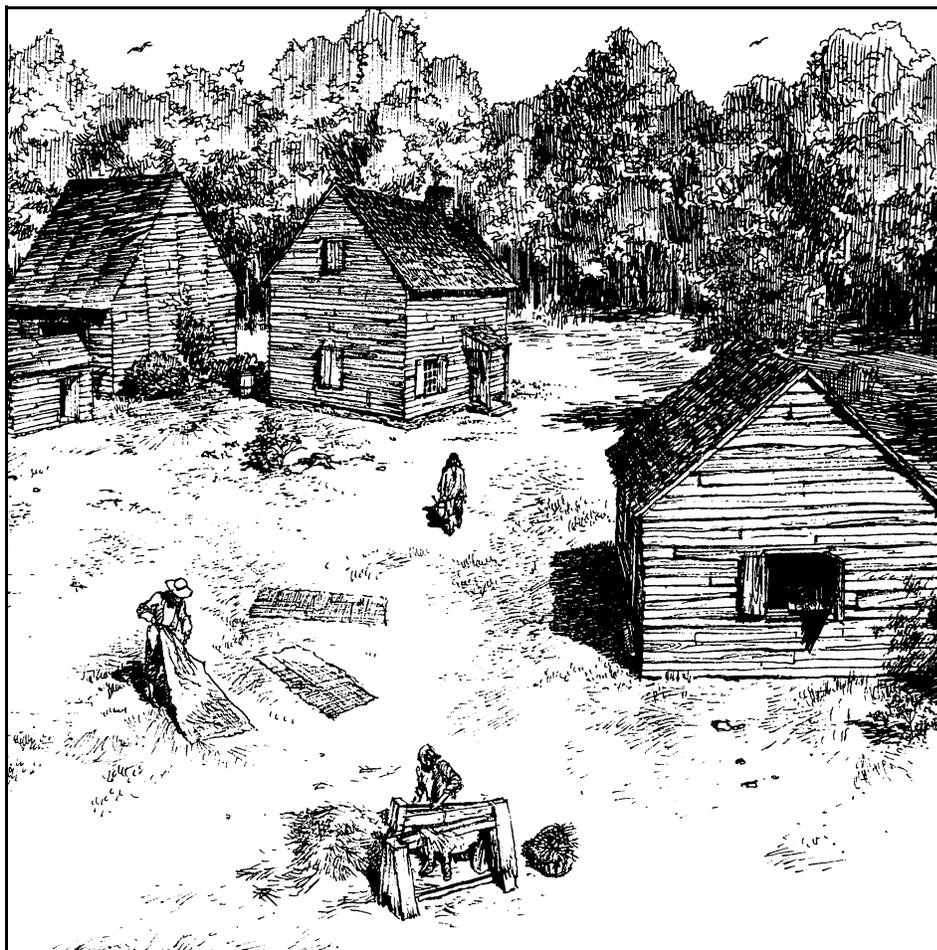


FIGURE 27: Breaking Flax and Bleaching Cloth in the Sun at the Augustine Creek South Site, circa 1745

the period between 1730 and 1830, and for investigating the cultural world the farmers inhabited (Figure 27). We now know enough about farm and rural dwelling sites in Delaware to move beyond simple description of the sites and their attributes. We can begin to investigate how the culture of the Delaware Valley was formed from diverse European, African, and Native American elements, how it evolved over time, and how it was shaped by the great changes taking place in the Atlantic world in the eighteenth century. Since we know something about what all these

sites have in common, we can better focus on the things that make them different, and on what those differences tell us about ethnic identity, regional variation, and simple human individuality. The existing data base is now so large that reviewing the material has become a major challenge in itself. The site summaries and the artifact tables in this document are intended to serve as a guide to the material in the individual site reports, not to subsume or replace those reports. Each site has complexities that cannot be described in a brief abstract, and many individual artifacts have unique features that defy inclusion in simple tables. Just as the archaeology we have done to date is only a beginning in our effort to understand the past, this document is only an introduction to that archaeology.