

## **XI. Summary**

McCormick Taylor, Inc. completed Phase III archaeological data recovery excavations at the Weldin Plantation Site (7NC-B-11) for the Blue Ball Properties Area Transportation Improvement Project, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, the results of which are presented in this report. The archaeological investigations were performed by McCormick Taylor for the Delaware Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

The project involves improvements to the Route 202 (Concord Pike) corridor between the Interstate 95 interchange and the project's northern terminus at the AstraZeneca corporate entrance, just north of Delaware Route 141. The proposed project includes the construction of a new alignment for Delaware 141 between the existing Astra Zeneca plant and Rockland Road to a new end at the interchange with U.S. 202 and Delaware 261. Proposed West Park Road will travel between Augustine Cut-off and Delaware 141 to the west of U.S. 202 and proposed East Park Road will be built between Augustine Cut-Off and Weldin Road to the east of U.S. 202. New overpasses are planned for Concord Pike over relocated Delaware 141 and relocated Delaware 261 (Foulk Road). The proposed project also includes the creation of active and passive recreational areas.

The Federal Highway Administration determined that the project would have an adverse effect on the Weldin Plantation Archaeological Site, 7NC-B-11, an eighteenth through mid-twentieth century farmstead which contains above ground ruins. The site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D for the information it contains about historic lifeways in Delaware. Mitigation for the adverse effect included Phase III archaeological data recovery excavations as well as an extensive public outreach program. McCormick Taylor excavated a total of 89 test units during the Phase III excavations. These included 14 test units placed in the basement of the foundation; three additional units in the west yard; 15 test units in the south yard; 12 test units in the east yard; and 48 test units in the north yard. Specialized analyses included mortar analysis, soil sample analysis, and botanical analysis. Significant information about farmstead layout and how it reflected changing trends in the region and about the socioeconomic status of tenant versus owner occupant dairy farmers in the nineteenth century was gained during the investigations.

The landscape, layout, and use of space across the Weldin Plantation Site can be understood in terms of trends that were occurring nationally, regionally, and locally at the time. Ideals associated with the Georgian mindset, progressive farming, and the innovations resulting from the evolving dairy industry area all reflected to some degree at the site, with the spatial design reflective of dairying farming most predominant. Two of those three components of infrastructure considered to be necessary for successful dairy farming, outbuilding construction and new farmstead layouts, are reflected by the wide-spread improvements that Weldin undertook when he purchased the property, essentially completely rebuilding the entire barnyard and all of its outbuildings.

Both John Bradford, who was a tenant farmer, and Jacob R. Weldin, who was an owner occupant, were large scale commercial dairy farmers, and both families both appear to be

affluent farmers. They both had butter production that was well above average and both families had hired help. In addition, both had successful production of a wide variety of other types of livestock, such as sheep and pigs, and crops, such as hay and oats, although Weldin appeared to have been somewhat more focused on his dairy operation. Substantial improvements were made to the property during both of their tenures: construction of the western half of the main house during Bradford's occupation, and substantial improvements to the entire farmyard complex during Weldin's. Both farmers used marsh and fast lands for hay and grazing. The Bradfords and the Weldins both followed progressive farming techniques and strove to modernize to increase productivity.

The archaeological record also indicates that the pre-Weldin and Weldin period occupants of the site more well-off than average. The ceramic assemblage at the site appears to reflect a middle class standard of living for both periods. During the Weldin period, more evidence appears for participation in consumer behavior, such as the adoption of glass jars instead of ceramic storage vessels and the purchasing of patent medicine. However, the lack of these items for the pre-Weldin period does not indicate that the Bradfords were necessarily less affluent, as these items were becoming more popular and available to local farmers later in the nineteenth century.

The excavations the Weldin Plantation Site provided insight to consumer behavior and economic status for both the early occupants and the Weldin family, which was comparable to research on other eighteenth century and nineteenth century farmsteads within New Castle County and Kent County. The occupants during that time were of similar economic status as the occupants of Whitten Road Farm, and were not as well off as the Strickland family or as poor as the tenants at the Grant Tenancy Site. The assemblage that was deposited by the Weldin family was reflective of moderate to high economic status, which was also reflected at the Buchanan-Savin Farmstead, with the exception of a possibly better diet for the Weldin family than the Buchanan family, and was in contrast to the low economic status reflected at the W. Eager Farm.