

Why Do We do Archaeology?

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) is planning to make improvements to the intersection of Airport and Churchmans Roads, in Duross Heights, New Castle County. As a project funded in part by Federal money DelDOT is required, by the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, to conduct a Cultural Resource Survey of the construction area prior to the start of roadway work. The purpose of these studies is to find out if there are any potentially important historical or prehistoric Native American sites present in the work zone that might be damaged or destroyed by construction activities. If such sites are present, efforts are then made to record the historical information these places contain, and to use this knowledge to improve our understanding of the people and past events that helped shape our present day lives.



Churchman's Road

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This brochure was designed to provide members of the community with information about this project and was produced as part of DelDOT's continuing efforts to promote, and involve Delaware residents in the discovery of the state's

rich historical heritage. Historic Architecture and Archaeological studies for this project are being performed by Kise, Straw, & Kolodner (KSK) for Whitman, Requardt & Associates (WRA), the engineering firm contracted to oversee the project, and for DelDOT.

History

The Duross Heights vicinity has a long and varied historical legacy, and contains many important architectural and archaeological resources. Native American peoples were the first to live in this area and established many campsites and villages along the shores of the Christina River between about 10,000 B.C. and 1650 A.D. During the Colonial Era this area witnessed the establishment of Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, and English settlements along the banks of Churchman's Marsh and the Christina River, and the growth of early milling and shipbuilding industries. Later in the 19th and early 20th



(Source: Baist, Map of New Castle County, 1893)



An example of the types of historic artifacts found during archaeological surveys

settlements along the banks of Churchman's Marsh and the Christina River, and the growth of early milling and shipbuilding industries. Later in the 19th and early 20th

centuries the Duross Heights vicinity grew in prominence as a central component of Delaware's developing fruit, grain, and agricultural market. Unfortunately, much of this earlier history has already been lost amid the expansion of commercial and residential construction following World War II.



Phase I Survey

An example of the types of prehistoric artifacts sometimes found

Initial Phase I Cultural resource Surveys of the Airport and Churchmans Road project area were completed in the fall of 2001 and spring of 2002. KSK personnel conducted limited archaeological testing within the construction zone and inspected standing structures bordering the intersection. As a result of these investigations it was determined that roadway construction would not negatively effect any buildings that were old enough to list in the National register of Historic Places. The archaeological team, however, discovered evidence of several prehistoric campsites and collected numerous stone



tools and artifacts used by Native Americans.

carbon-14 dating, will be used to more accurately determine how old the site really is. A team of specialists, including geomorphologists and paleobotanists, will attempt to reconstruct the local environment at the time the site was occupied by studying the physical and chemical characteristics of site soils, and the remains of long decayed plants preserved within the ground. During the analysis of the site's discoveries, experiments will be conducted in an effort to recreate how stone tools were made and to determine the purposes for which they might have been used. Finally, information regarding Delaware's historic Native people, along with the findings from other nearby archaeological sites, will be used to help interpret Site 7NC-E-152's finds and to reveal important information about the ways in which Native Americans interacted with, and adapted to, the natural world around them.



Quartz endscraper, a stone tool used by Native Americans, found at site 7NC-E-152



KSK would like to encourage anyone with information regarding other Native American sites within the vicinity of Duross Heights to contact Kise Straw & Kolodner at the number below.

For more information please contact:



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DISCOVERING PREHISTORIC NEW CASTLE COUNTY:

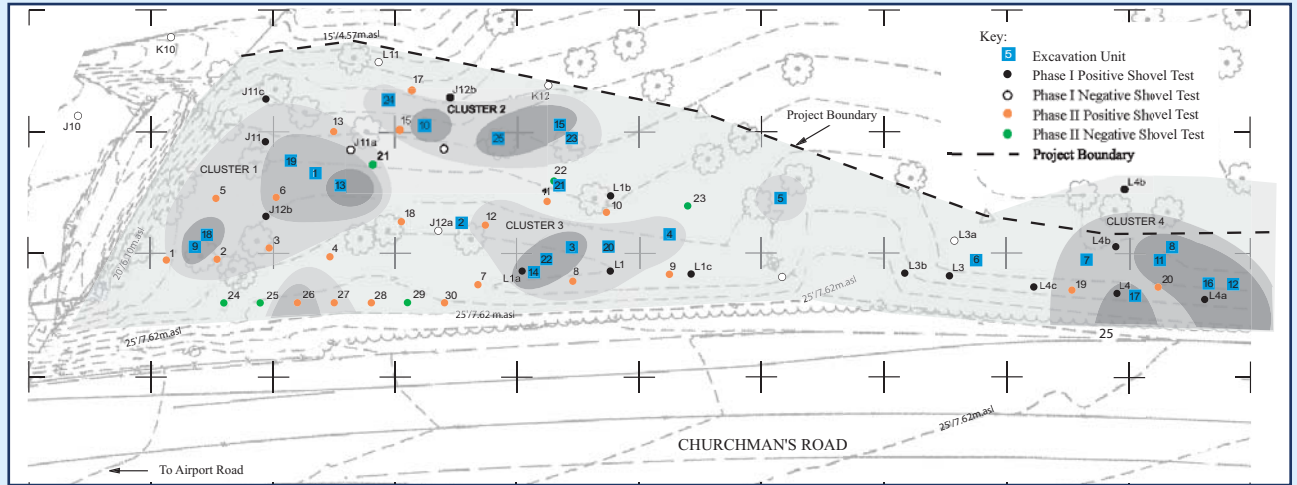
Phase III Archaeological Excavations of Site 7NC-E-152 Duross Heights, Delaware



**Have you ever wondered what life
in New Castle County was like
several thousand years ago?**

Or were curious about what Native American cultures in this area were like long before the arrival of Europeans? Archaeologists are currently trying to find answers to some of these very questions through the conduct of archaeological investigations at Site 7NC-E-152, located in the vicinity of Duross Heights. These excavations are sponsored by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and are being performed as part of that organization's long commitment to rediscovering and promoting Delaware's rich historic heritage.

Site 7NC-E-152 was initially found in the spring of 2001 during preliminary archaeological studies of areas to be affected by proposed improvements to the Airport and Churchmans Roads intersection. More extensive excavations performed in 2002 turned up hundreds of stone tools and other artifacts, and led DeIDOT and Delaware State Historic Preservation Office archaeologists to believe that Site 7NC-E-152 represented an important archaeological discovery that was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



Site map drawn by the archaeologists to help them analyze the site.

those of today gradually moved into the area. At the same time, Native American groups throughout the region were also going through changes as they adapted their cultures to these new circumstances.

As the local environment evolved,

Native people started to rely more heavily on foods that were previously unavailable - in particular those that could be found in and around newly formed inland swamps, like Churchmans Marsh - and slowly adopted a less mobile, more settled way of life. At the same time, they formed widespread trade networks with populations in other areas and, in some locations, began to establish more complex and elaborate forms

of social organization. Unfortunately, because not many sites of this age have been identified in Delaware, the specific ways in which local groups adapted to the numerous natural and cultural challenges that confronted them remains poorly understood.



The purpose of the current investigation

is to learn more about the people who made this site by studying the objects and evidence they left behind. This process involves a combination of careful excavation and the intensive analysis of unearthed artifacts. Particular efforts will be made to reconstruct the activities that took place here thousands of years ago by studying the tools and patterns of artifacts found throughout the site. Specific types of artifacts, like the projectile point shown to the left, in tandem with



A KSK Archaeologist uses a trowel to carefully excavate the site.



Even the smallest artifact deserves careful inspection. Above, a KSK archaeologist demonstrates excavation methods to local children.

Based on those earlier excavations, the site is thought to represent a temporary hunting or food processing camp dating to the Archaic through early Woodland I culture periods, between about 6000 and 1000 B.C. During this period the environment was going through many changes as Ice Age conditions disappeared and plants and animal populations like