

Summary of Phase I and II Investigations

A Phase I level archaeological survey of portions of the Choptank Road corridor was conducted in 2001 by the firm of McCormick & Taylor, Associates (MTA). DelDOT engaged Kise Straw & Kolodner (KSK) to assess the data produced during this Phase I survey and formulate recommendations for the completion of the study. Historical atlases (Hopkins 1881, Baist 1893) of the project area illustrated the locations of two structures within the area of disturbance for the proposed project. The 1931 USGS topographic map shows only one structure at this location, and no structures are shown on later maps. MTA's testing corresponded to the historical locations of these buildings, situated south of the intersection of Choptank Road with Bohemia Mill Road. MTA identified no structural elements during their subsurface investigation, although several historic artifacts were collected from the shovel test pit (STP) placed in the proposed area of disturbance. Following the completion of this survey, engineering of the roadway was modified, thereby necessitating another survey of the corridor, performed by KSK (Morrell and Glumac 2008). KSK's subsequent Phase I testing of this area, specifically within that portion of the project area located immediately south of a tributary of Great Bohemia Creek, required the excavation of 14 close-interval STPs (25 feet/7.62 meters) (Figure 5.1). The proposed road alignment in this segment of the project area was sufficiently wide to permit the placement of two staggered transects of subsurface STPs.

A wide scatter of cultural material with a distinct concentration of historic artifacts was identified during this portion of KSK's Phase I survey. The cultural material was distributed across the proposed alignment from the extant roadway to the limit of construction (LOC) and extended southward approximately 270 feet from a northern treeline to the crest of a gentle slope. The historic artifact concentration within this scatter of material was situated toward the northern end of the test area and was limited to an approximately 75-foot north/south by 40-foot east/west presence. This site was designated "KSK 14" for internal reference prior to the assignment of a Delaware site number.

Phase I testing resulted in the collection of a total of 82 prehistoric and historic artifacts from the plowzone, with the prehistoric artifacts limited to the plowzone at the crest of the upslope and the historic material dispersed across the entirety of the site. The two prehistoric artifacts collected from this site during Phase I consist of a single fragment of thermally altered lithic and a chert decortication flake. Radial STPs in the vicinity of the prehistoric artifact-bearing STP were sterile. Historic material consisted of both architectural and domestic artifacts, including brick fragments, nails (both cut and wire), window glass, bottle glass, mollusk shell, and a variety of ceramics.

Phase II testing of this site location employed excavation of a total of five units measuring 5 x 5 feet (Figure 5.2). The excavation units (EUs) were placed within the site as it was defined by the Phase I testing results (Choptank Road Station 75 + 15 to 77 + 85). Phase II excavation units were specifically located within the identified high artifact density portion of the site in an attempt to define the nature of the historical deposit, as well as locate any possible remnants of the historical structures.

EU 1 was placed adjacent to the Phase I STP yielding the highest artifact density. The unit revealed a plowzone approximately 0.9 feet in thickness overlying an undisturbed B horizon. EUs 2 and 3 were placed 20 feet and 45 feet, respectively, to the north of EU 1 and revealed similar soil profiles. All three units had high densities of historic artifacts, ranging from approximately 839 to 1,912 per unit. Prehistoric artifacts were found only in EU 2, where five pieces of quartz and jasper debitage, a quartz biface, and a possible sandstone axe fragment were found. The biface was identified as a possible Rossville point dating to the Woodland I period.

Because of the high density of historic material and the presence of prehistoric material in EU 2, EU 4 was excavated immediately to the south. The unit revealed a mortared brick wall (Feature 15/16) extending in an east/west direction across the unit. The uppermost course of the brick wall had been impacted, presumably via plowing, and several bricks were scattered within the unit. The fully exposed foundation revealed three courses of mortared machine-made bricks. The base course was laid as a header row, with the placement of glazed bricks at semi-regular intervals to create a decorative effect. A builder's trench (Feature 15A) was identified along the south side of the wall, but contained few artifacts, none of which were chronologically diagnostic. EU 4 produced 1,622 historic artifacts and one prehistoric jasper flake.

The footprint of the foundation was delineated through systematic exploration of the area with a tile probe and was estimated to encompass 16 x 26 feet, with the short axis of the foundation fronting on Choptank Road. EU 5 was placed to the north of what was considered to be the southern wall of the structure. Removal of the plowzone revealed the foundation wall and a builder's trench along the southern edge. The unit produced 723 historic artifacts and three pieces of prehistoric debitage. Included within the assemblage was a metal hair straightening comb with a "Kentucky Maid" makers mark (patent date 1894). This comb is still in production and is advertised as a product commonly used in the African American community.

A total of 5,978 prehistoric and historic period artifacts were recovered during the Phase II investigations. The combined Phase I and II assemblage consisted of 14 prehistoric and 6,046 historic artifacts.

Prehistoric artifacts comprise a minor component of the total recovered assemblage, with only 12 lithic items recovered during the Phase II investigation of 7NC-F-94. Lithic debitage produced during tool manufacture comprised 11 of the 14 prehistoric artifacts found during the Phase I and II surveys. A single tool—a contracting stem quartz biface tentatively assigned to the Woodland I Rossville association—was the only diagnostic artifact within the prehistoric assemblage. Thermally altered sandstone and a possible mid-section of a sandstone axe comprised the remainder of the prehistoric cultural material collected during the Phase II investigation. Locally available materials (i.e., quartz, jasper, and sandstone) are exclusively present, with quartz constituting all but one piece of the tool production remnants. A relatively high incidence of the collected prehistoric material was encountered in undisturbed contexts below the plowzone ($n=6$); however, no discrete concentrations of in situ artifacts were observed within the overall site. No prehistoric ceramic material or evidence of prehistoric features was encountered during the Phase II investigation. The ephemeral nature of the prehistoric component at the Wilson Farm Tenancy Site was determined to be ineligible for inclusion on the NRHP and, as such, was not targeted for further study under the data-recovery plan.

Historic-period artifacts were distributed in variable densities throughout the tested portions of the Wilson Farm Tenancy Site, both within and outside the in situ brick foundation remnants. Concentrations of artifacts occurred at the northwest corner of the structure, on both the interior and exterior of the wall, and continued in high quantities across the gradual down slope of the adjacent yard area to the north. Neither the southeastern interior corner of the structure nor the area immediately outside the opposite southern corner contained comparable quantities of material, although artifact class representation was similar.

The historical artifact assemblage from the five Phase II excavation units, each measuring 5 x 5 feet square, consists of a total of 5,966 artifacts. Together with the Phase I artifacts, the historic assemblage numbered 6,046 (Table 5.1). In general, the composition of the historic period artifact assemblage recovered during Phase I and II excavations consisted of a mix of architectural and domestic artifacts with manufacturing dates generally of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Within the immediate vicinity of the foundation, architectural material is present in large quantity, including cut and wire nails, brick fragments, and window glass. Artifacts within the domestic class include a broad range of material attributable to many of the elements of daily life, including food consumption (faunal material, baking soda container, condiment jar fragments), agricultural practices (horseshoes, harness elements, plow pieces), entertainment (marbles, dolls, gaming die), and elements of personal accoutrement (buttons, buckles, jewelry beads). Included within the assemblage are several artifacts that may be specific to age, gender, and race (i.e., suspender buckles, marbles, a doll fragment, collar stud), as well as a hair comb commercially marketed to African Americans.

Table 5.1 Historic Artifacts from Phase I and II Investigations

Group	Artifact Type	Total	Percentage
Architectural	Brick	2	0.03%
Architectural	Window Glass	2010	33.25%
Architectural	Nail	1184	19.58%
Architectural	Mortar	29	0.48%
Architectural	Spike	3	0.05%
Architectural	Tile, Roofing	7	0.12%
Architectural	Barbed Wire	16	0.26%
Arms	Bullet	23	0.38%
Hardware		82	1.36%
Household Ceramic	Porcelain, Chinese Export	1	0.02%
Household Ceramic	Porcelainous	1	0.02%
Household Ceramic	Yellowware	7	0.12%
Household Ceramic	Rockingham	27	0.45%
Household Ceramic	Whiteware	180	2.98%
Household Ceramic	Whiteware/White Granite	144	2.38%
Household Ceramic	White Granite	194	3.21%
Household Ceramic	Redware	5	0.08%
Household Ceramic	Porcelain, Hard Paste	13	0.22%
Household Ceramic	Unidentified Refined Earthenware	11	0.18%
Household Ceramic	Ironstone/Stone China	20	0.33%

Table 5.1 Historic Artifacts from Phase I and II Investigations (Cont'd)

Group	Artifact Type	Total	Percentage
Household Ceramic	Salt Glazed, Gray/Buff Bodied	10	0.17%
Household Ceramic	Slip Glazed Stoneware	7	0.12%
Household Glass	Unidentified	4	0.07%
Household Glass	Pressed	69	1.14%
Household Glass	Mold Blown	1206	19.95%
Household Glass	Machine Made	55	0.91%
Household Glass	Mouth Blown	16	0.26%
Household Glass	Two Piece Mold	4	0.07%
Household Metal		11	0.18%
Personal	Pipe Stem	2	0.03%
Personal	Unidentified	1	0.02%
Personal	Clothing	22	0.36%
Personal	Milk Glass Jar	1	0.02%
Personal	Bead	1	0.02%
Personal	Comb	4	0.07%
Personal	Jewelry	2	0.03%
Personal	Rivet	7	0.12%
Tack	Horseshoe	2	0.03%
Tool	Scissors	2	0.03%
Furniture	Mirror Glass	4	0.07%
Furniture	Lamp Glass	125	2.07%
Furniture	Furniture Part	1	0.02%
Furniture	Figurine	3	0.05%
Medical		26	0.43%
Electrical		2	0.03%
Toy		9	0.15%
Activities	Ceramics	10	0.17%
Activities	Other	4	0.07%
Activities	Gaming Piece	1	0.02%
Activities	Pencil	3	0.05%
Fauna	Other	1	0.02%
Fauna	Bone	112	1.85%
Fauna	Oyster	27	0.45%
Fauna	Tooth	43	0.71%
Commercial	Coin	1	0.02%
Fuel	Coal Fragment	5	0.08%
Transportation		1	0.02%
Unidentified		283	4.68%
Total		6046	

Features documented during the Phase II investigation can be characterized as either occupation or agriculture related. A single feature directly associated with the structure consisted of a narrow builder's trench observed on the inside of the brick foundation. Three shallow soil anomalies (Features 15B, 15C, and 15D) within the foundation footprint were subsequently

determined to be evidence of rodent activity. To the immediate south of the structure, subsurface evidence of a medium-sized tree was identified. Whether the occupation period of the structure and the life of the tree were contemporaneous is unknown; however, this juxtaposition of tree and house suggest possible historical land use and yard arrangement. A series of undated postholes (Features 10, 13, 14, and 17)—likely fence remnants that postdate the occupation period of the structure—were documented both outside of and within the brick foundation footprint.

Given the relatively recent date of this historical site, there was some degree of preservation of the faunal assemblage. Most of the recovered bones were fragmentary, although identifiable within the assemblage are skeletal elements of unidentified birds, turtle carapace fragments, and oyster shell. The majority of the faunal material collected during the Phase II excavations at 7NC-F-94 is comprised of fragmentary mammal bone, including an extremely limited presence of cow and pig bone. Very few bones exhibit evidence of having been reduced using a saw as the finishing implement, although for the majority of the faunal material, the bones are too fragmentary to be able to comment with certainty if they were sawn versus butchered with a cleaver/axe. Small mammal remains appear to be substantially present in the retrieved assemblage; however, for this stage of investigation, no formal faunal analysis was conducted on the assemblage to further define the species comprising the remains.

Site 7NC-F-94 was interpreted as potentially representing a tenancy occupation from the latter half of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. The site contains a largely intact structure foundation, as well as a significant quantity of associated historical domestic and architectural material. Based on both cartographic evidence and the manufacturing dates of the retrieved artifact assemblage, Site 7NC-F-94 appeared to date from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth. The investigators concluded that additional background research could reveal the identities of the inhabitants of this structure, as well as shed light on whether or not the structure was occupied on a year-round or a seasonal basis, and whether the occupants were the same individual(s) throughout the period of the structure's use and existence.

The historic component at Site 7NC-F-94 was recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP based in part on its potential to produce information regarding subsistence and consumer practices of turn-of-the-century tenant families in Delaware. Additionally, opportunity for comprehensive site excavation and analysis during roadside archaeological investigations—such as the Choptank Road/SR 15 Improvement Project—is frequently somewhat constrained, due in part to the narrow areas of investigation that are often limited to general front yard areas. In the instance of 7NC-F-94, the predominantly intact physical remains of the structure's foundation contained entirely within the proposed limits of construction provide an opportunity to investigate not only the well-defined interior of the building's footprint, but also the surrounding front and side yard areas. Research opportunities for intrasite patterning and intersite comparisons are abundant with regard to this turn-of-the-century agricultural site.

The complete prehistoric assemblage collected from 7NC-F-94 totaled 14 artifacts and consisted of a relatively narrow array of lithic materials and artifact categories, with quartz and jasper well represented among the collected prehistoric material. A relatively high proportion of the lithic

material at 7NC-F-94 was encountered in the B horizon, in contrast to the results of testing elsewhere within the Choptank Road alignment. The only temporally diagnostic artifact was a quartz Woodland I projectile point. Despite the presence of a partially undisturbed prehistoric component within the B horizon of 7NC-F-94, this element would likely not produce an assemblage with a sufficient number of tools and other artifacts to determine site function. No evidence of prehistoric features has been encountered. Therefore, the prehistoric component of 7NC-F-94 was recommended as not contributing to the NRHP eligibility of the site.