



STATE OF DELAWARE  
*DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION*  
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**May 1993**

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GOVERNOR

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION HANDOUT**

### **CULTURAL RESOURCE PROJECT INTERSECTION OF U.S. ROUTE 13 AND STATE ROUTE 72**

A prehistoric and historic cultural resources survey of the Route 13 and Route 72 intersection is being conducted by the Delaware Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, and the Federal Highway Administration, in conjunction with the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research. Proposed improvements of the Route 13 and Route 72 intersection necessitated the cultural resources survey, providing an opportunity to study the lifeways of prehistoric and historic peoples of Delaware.

The history of the Route 13 and 72 intersection includes both old and important prehistoric and historic settlement areas in the High Coastal Plain of Red Lion Hundred, New Castle County Delaware. The earliest known human occupation in Delaware was during the Paleo-Indian Period, from about 12,000 B.C. - 6,500 B.C. These people probably led a nomadic existence, collecting foods and hunting now extinct large game animals. The Archaic Period (6,500 B.C. - 3,000 B.C.) saw the establishment of oak and hemlock forests over the landscape, with people adapting to present-day plant and animal forms. The settlement pattern for this period consisted of large base camps and outlying hunting sites. The Woodland I Period (3,000 B.C. - A.D. 1,000) saw a flourishing of stone tool types and an increase in the number of large sedentary base camps located near water sources such as the present-day Christiana Creek, Leipsic River, and Silver Run, a tributary of Dragon Creek located one mile from the project area. Woven baskets and stone and ceramic vessels were used for cooking and storing harvested wild plant foods. An increase on plant reliance and shellfish utilization during the years between A.D. 1,000 and A.D. 1,600 is characteristic of the Woodland II Period. The Contact Period (1650 - 1750) is the time when European settlers (Dutch, Swedes, and English) entered the region.

Present-day Route 13, once referred to as the "King's Road", was established by at least the 1680's. The road served as the major transportation route between Philadelphia, Wilmington, Dover, and Lewes. Rural development of the central portions of Red Lion Hundred during the late eighteenth century was centered around the "King's Road" to Dover (also called the "State Road"). The origins of present-day Route 72 began in 1804 when a group of landowners petitioned the Court of New Castle County for a road leading from the State Road beginning at the head of Dragon Neck to the Road from Bear to Glasgow (present-day U.S. Route 40). In 1812, Alexander Bowers bought a one acre parcel of land on the northwest corner of the intersection where he established a house and smith shop. Bowers continued to purchase parcels near the area and by 1832, when the eastern portion of present-day Route 72 was constructed, the small community centered around the intersection was known as "Bowersville".



Through the years many changes have taken place at the Bowersville crossroads. Today, travelers who pass by the busy intersection of Route 13 and Route 72 may know this area as Wrangle Hill and may see the extant brick dwelling situated on the southwest corner of the intersection that was once owned by a neighbor of Alexander Bowers. Through systematic archaeological excavation, examination of deeds, wills, maps, aerial photographs, and interviewing local residents the prehistoric and historic cultural development of the area can begin to unfold.

If you have any questions or request further information, please contact Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT archaeologist at 739- 3826.