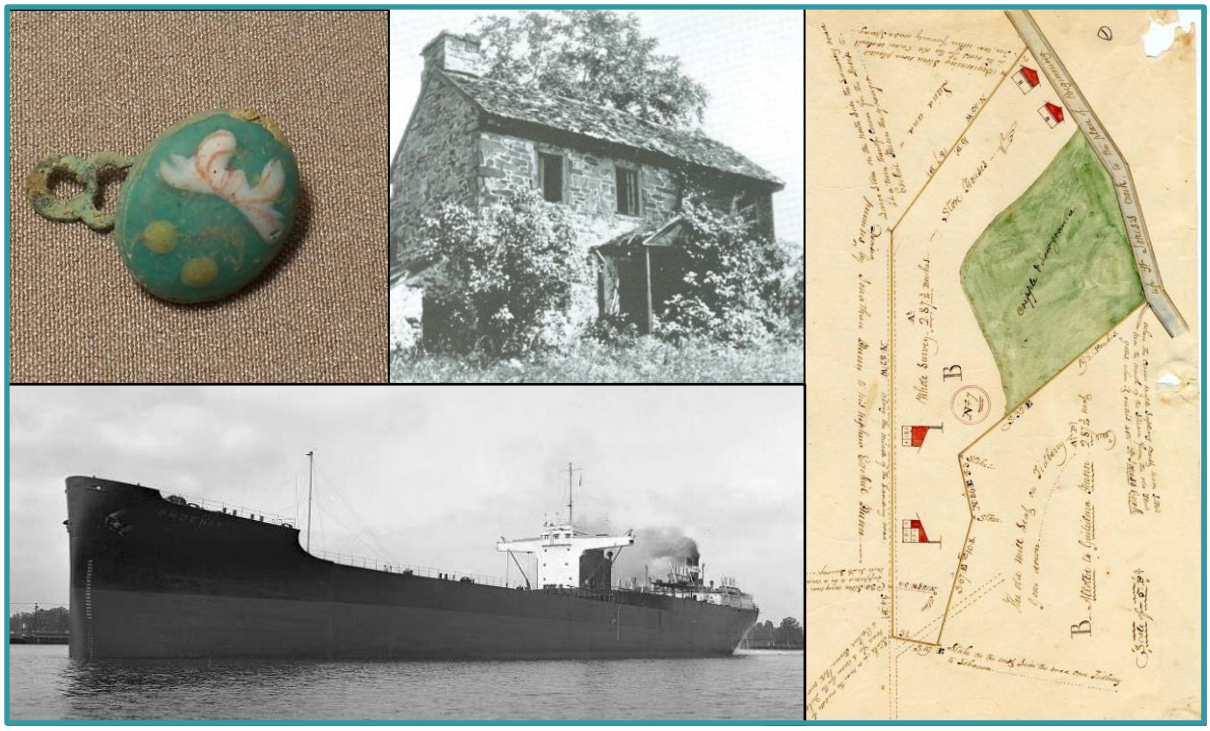
# The Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Delaware



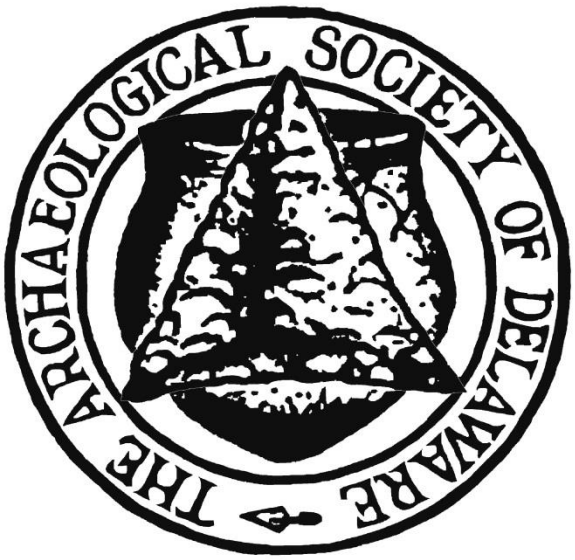
**Number Forty-Six,**
**New Series**

**2009**

*On the Cover (Clockwise from Top Left):*

Cufflink from the Houston-LeCompt site (Barile et al.); Eighteenth-century tenant house in Southeastern Pennsylvania (Becker); Circa 1822 Orphans Court map of Ezekiel Hunn (Lukezic); and the PhoenixTanker (Howe).

# *The Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Delaware*

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# AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE AT WILDCAT MANOR AND HUNNTOWN

**Craig Lukezic**
Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
Dover, Delaware 19901
craig.lukezic@state.de.us

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, Kent County Parks Division has acquired the property known as Wildcat Manor. The farm complex and associated acres are the remains of the eighteenth-century seat of one branch of the Hunn family in Delaware. Situated along the St. Jones River, Wildcat Manor Farm lies southeast of Dover, Delaware (Figure 1). A section of the tract located adjacent to Sorghum Mill Road is called "Hunntown," a recognized free African American community during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. A historical narrative of the tract is presented in Katherine Karsner's book, *Wildcat and the Hunn Family* (2005).

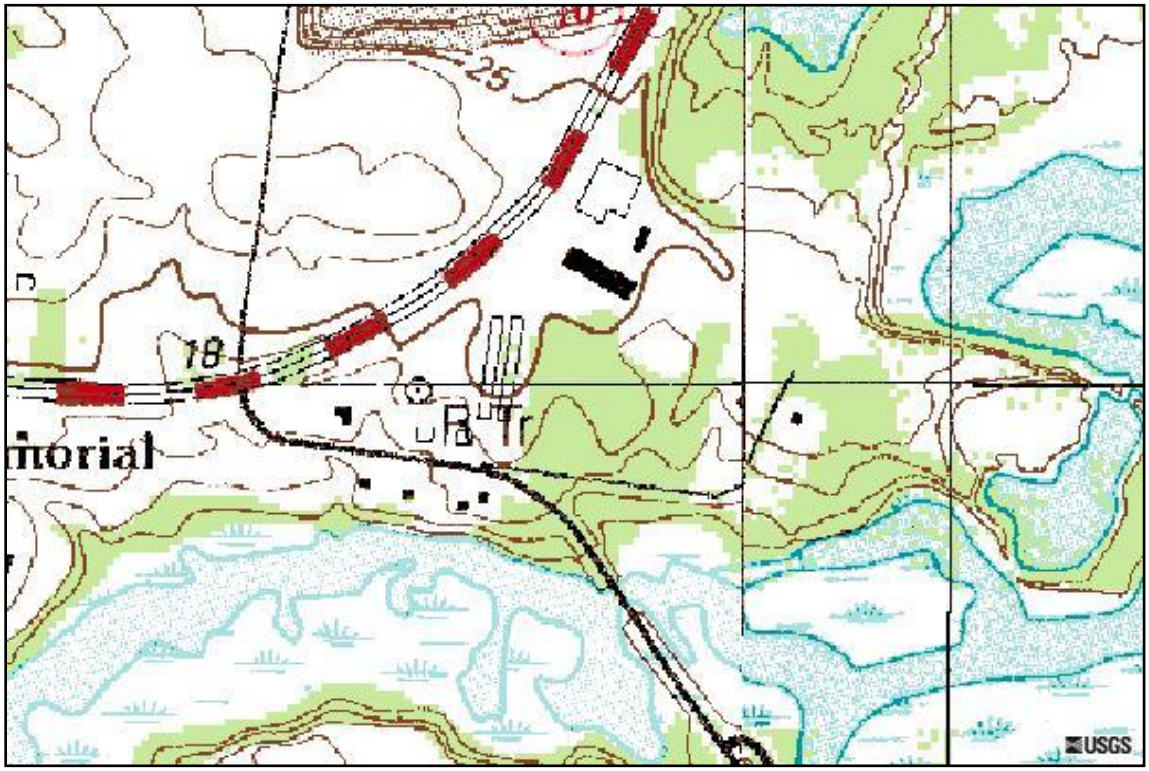


Figure 1: U.S.G.S. Map Depicting the Environs of Forest Landing.

In order to form a development plan for the park, Mr. Carl Solberg of the Kent County Parks Division, requested an archaeological survey of the western half of the tract. The results of this survey will be used to define areas of archaeological sensitivity. These areas should be kept clear of construction or soil disturbing activities until further archaeological testing can be performed. The project area is west of the Manor House and lawn. The volunteers of the Archaeological Society of Delaware engaged this project with the support and guidance of the staff of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. The field work was performed by the Sussex Chapter and the Peoples Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Delaware over several weekends in the spring of 2006. This report attempts to present the methods and result of the archaeological survey.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The surviving section of the Wildcat Manor farm complex lies in a horseshoe bend in the Saint Jones River, south of Dover (Figure 2). With the exception of the yard area in front of the house, most of the property is currently covered by secondary forest growth. The project area north on the entrance lane supported a soybean crop and an orchard throughout the twentieth century. An old tree line, the border of the agricultural field, can still be seen along the northeastern border of the project area.

Figure 2: Current Aerial Photograph of Wildcast Manor/Forest Landing.

The land was well suited for agriculture. The soils are classified as Sassafras silt loam, which is considered to be prime farm land. This soil type is well known to have hosted Native American and historic period archaeological sites across the region. The soils that have been disturbed by the plow are a medium yellow brown silt loam. This zone appears to vary between 9 to 12 inches (22.9 to 30 cm) in depth. This variation probably resulted from the shifting of soils from the plow action. The soils beneath this layer are very similar, with a slightly lighter color and a firmer, more compact texture.

## METHODS

In order to locate the archaeological resources in the forested landscape, we opted to use shovel test pit strategy (Figure 3). The entire study area was surveyed and mapped using Total Station and laid out in a 50-foot (15.2 m) grid framework (Figure 4). A shovel test pit was excavated at each grid point. In order to collect a finer resolution of the Hunntown area, a known occupation site, the intervals were shortened to 25 feet (7.6 m) between test pits.

Figure 3: Crew at Work.

The shovel test procedure consists of digging a hole to the depth and width of a round nose shovel blade. Roughly, this created a hole about 1-foot (0.3 m) wide by 1-foot (0.3 m) deep. The soil color and texture was recorded, along with any observable strata. The soils extracted were placed in a wire screen with ¼-inch (0.6-cm) mesh. All artifacts, including coal and brick fragments, were collected.

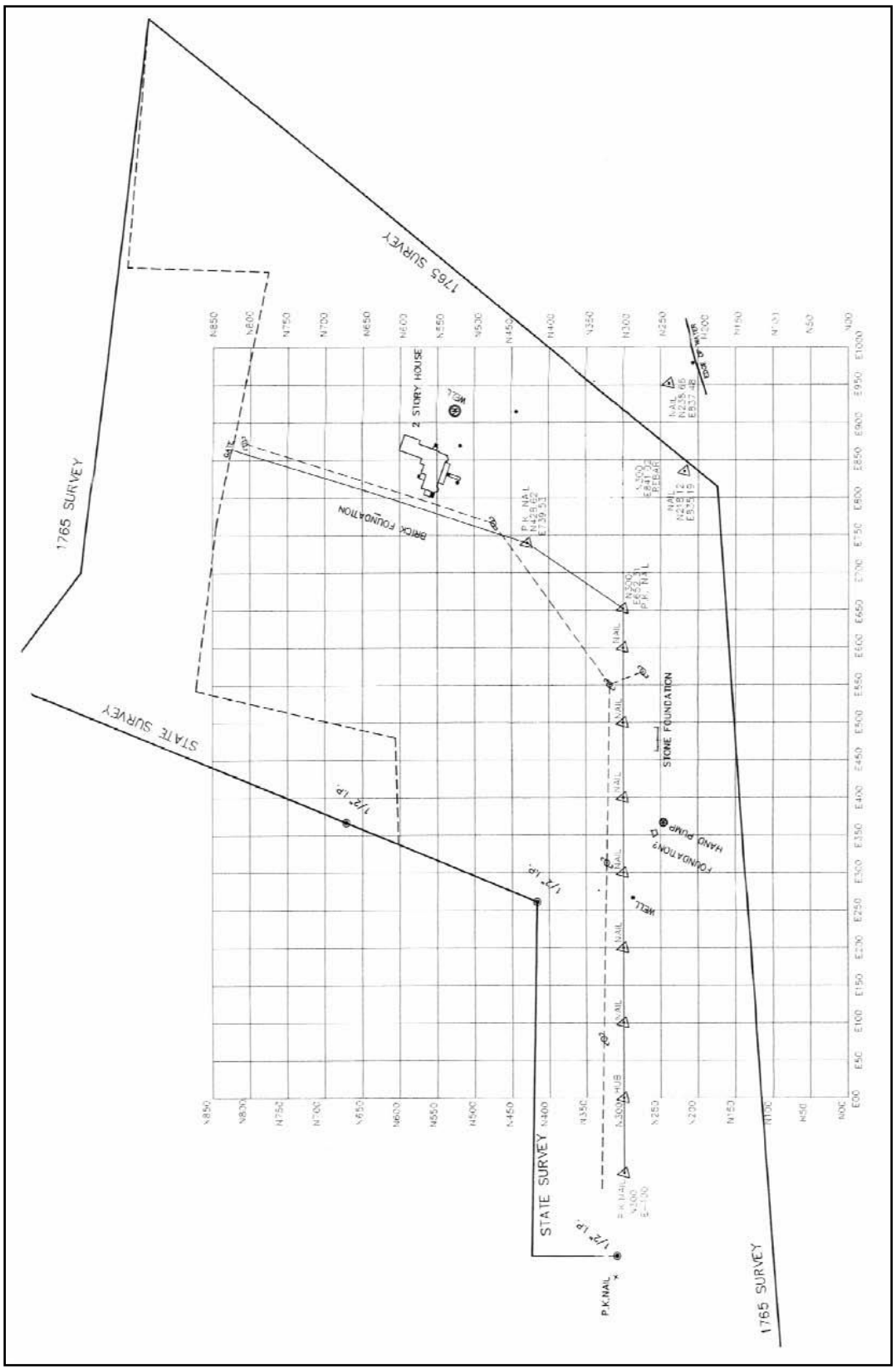


Figure 4: Base Map of Wildcat Manor with Grid System.

In the laboratory, the artifacts were cleaned, sorted and re-bagged by the volunteers. Then, the artifacts were cataloged by unit provenience.

The distribution maps were created by Tim Mancl of Heite Consulting with Vectorworks 12.0 Software. The artifacts were separated and plotted by the basic class related to their function. In order to locate the prehistoric resources, the lithic material, pottery, and fire cracked rock (FCR) were plotted out as one class. The footprint of Hunntown was defined by using two artifact classes; the ones related to nineteenth-century architecture and those related to kitchen functions. The architectural class included brick fragments, mortar fragments, cut nails, and window glass. The kitchen group contained the ceramics and glass, both food preparation and tableware. The eighteenth-century group consists mostly of ceramics. There was little that could be identified exclusively as eighteenth-century architectural artifacts as only one hand wrought nail was recovered.

## RESULTS

The prehistoric occupation components were readily observable (Figure 5). Although Native American artifacts were scattered in most sections of the project area, a major concentration occurred in an area devoid of historic settlement. A rough oval-shaped foci, measuring 350 feet (106.7 m) north to south and 300 feet (91.4 m) east to west, was observed on the same slight ridge as the Wildcat Manor house, but to the northwest of the structure. The concentration begins at grid point North 600/East 650, and extends in a fan-like form to the northern edge of the project area. This concentration contains all of the pottery and FCR observed in the project.

Another slight concentration on the north side of the bend of the lane was found at East 600 to East 700. It extends over 100 feet (30.5 m) to the east/west and 50 feet (15.2 m) by the north and south axis. This area appears to be at least one episode of lithic tool manufacture or maintenance.

One can expect to find an eighteenth-century component in the Wildcat Manor yard and in the Forest landing area (Figure 6). These known locations are outside of the project area, and no testing was performed in the vicinity of them. However, a concentration appears in the Hunntown area as well. A notable concentration is observable along the East 300 axis from North 200 to North 400. The historic lane bisects this cluster, so it appears there may be two separate but related foci on each side of the road. It is probable later nineteenth-century occupation of Hunntown has overprinted much of the earlier activity on the southern side of the lane. Almost all of these observations are based on the presence of eighteenth-century ceramic fragments. Only one distinctively eighteenth-century architectural item was recovered: a hand wrought nail from North 250/East 275. Also, only one fragment of a white clay pipe stem was recovered. It was found in the nearby shovel test North 225/East 300.

A heavy nineteenth- and twentieth-century occupation can be seen at Hunntown, which was south of the lane (Figure 7). Easily observable are concentrations of artifacts from both classes along the east-west line of the North 250 transect. Also, sheet refuse of both classes of artifacts cover the terrace area between the edge of the St. Jones River and the lane.

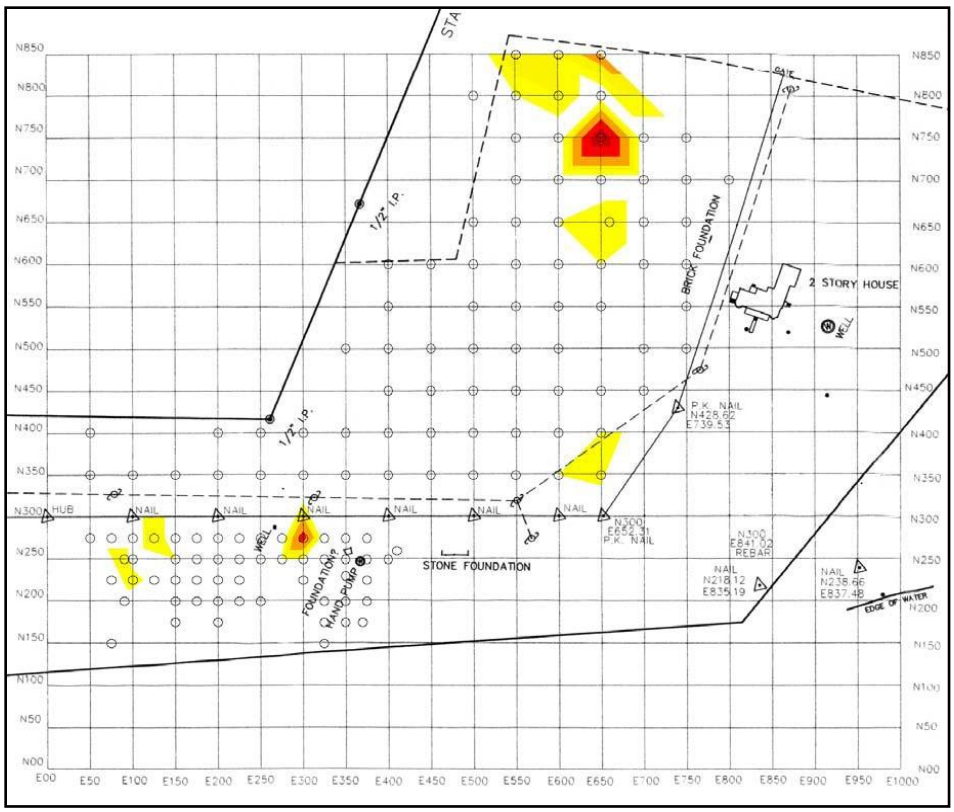


Figure 5: Location of Native American Occupation.

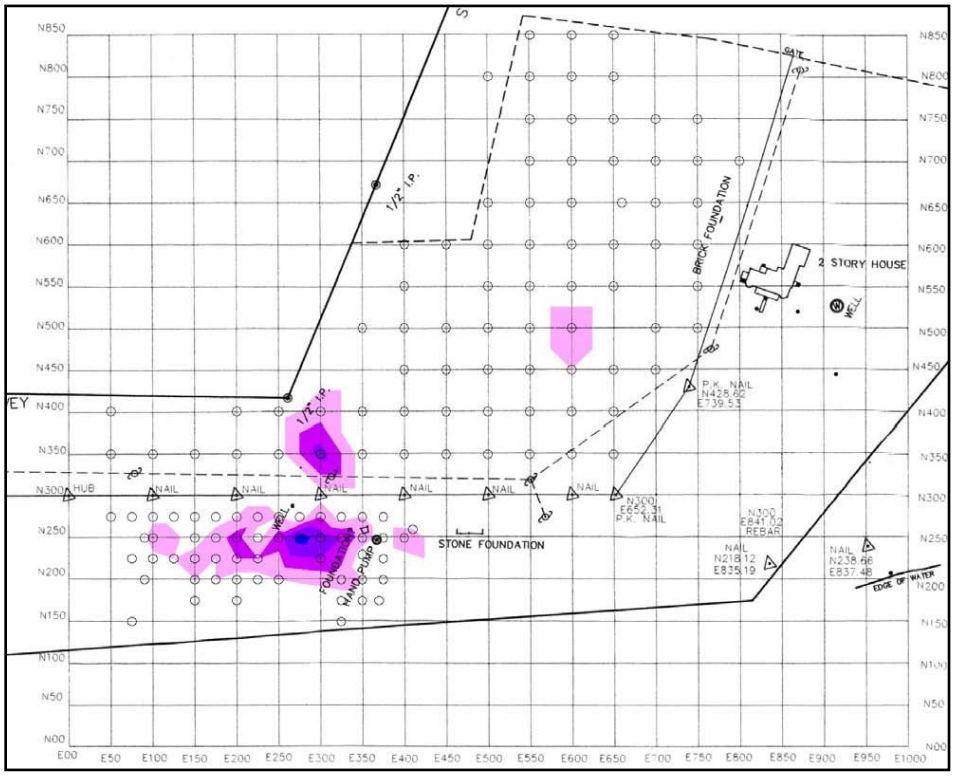


Figure 6: Location of Eighteenth-Century Artifacts.

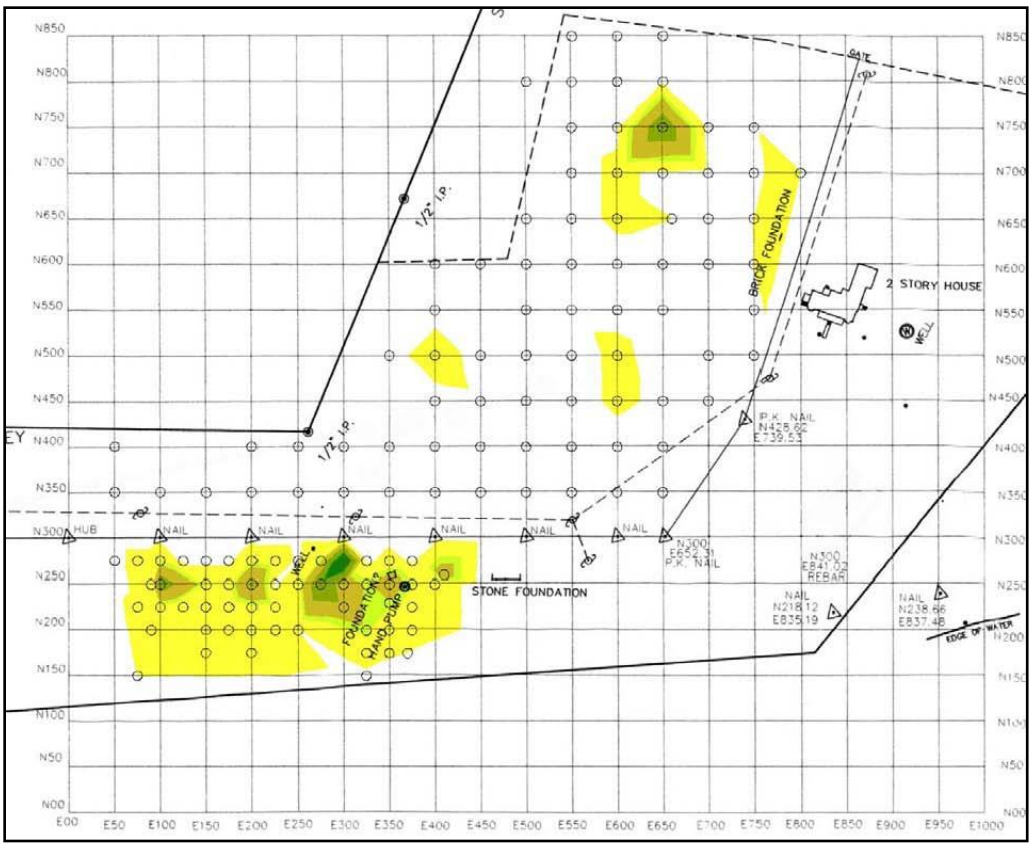


Figure 7: Location of Nineteenth-Century Artifacts.

There appears to be concentrations focused around test pit North 250/East 300 and another at North 250/East 200, and a possible one at North 250/East 100. The remains of two foundations were noted in this area (Figure 8). A probable cellar hole and foundation were observed at North 250/East 350. A scatter of architectural debris, including early cinder block fragments, was observed in an area measuring 30 by 20 feet (9.1 by 6.1 m) at North 235/East 245. A notable area of soil, small section of loose, un-compacted soil was seen at North 250/ East 100. While the area is no larger than 3.3 square feet (1 sq m), it could be the remains of a privy or a 3.3 by 3.3-foot (1 by 1 m) test unit excavated by Ned Heite in 1989.

The survey methods provided information on known and unknown archaeological sites with minimal disturbance to the property. While the evidence of nineteenth-century Hunntown was notable from the surface, the earlier occupations were unknown (Figure 9).

## EVIDENCE IN THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

The tract containing Wildcat Manor was a part of a holding called Great Geneva. It was patented to Alexander Humphreys in 1682. Although there is no direct record of a structure on Wildcat during this period, one might assume the Forest Landing site was being used as such in the seventeenth century. The landing was mentioned as a tax collection point in 1693 (Charles Fithian, pers. comm.). It is possible that a wharf or storehouse may have been built at Forest Landing at this time, but there is little evidence as yet to confirm this conjecture.

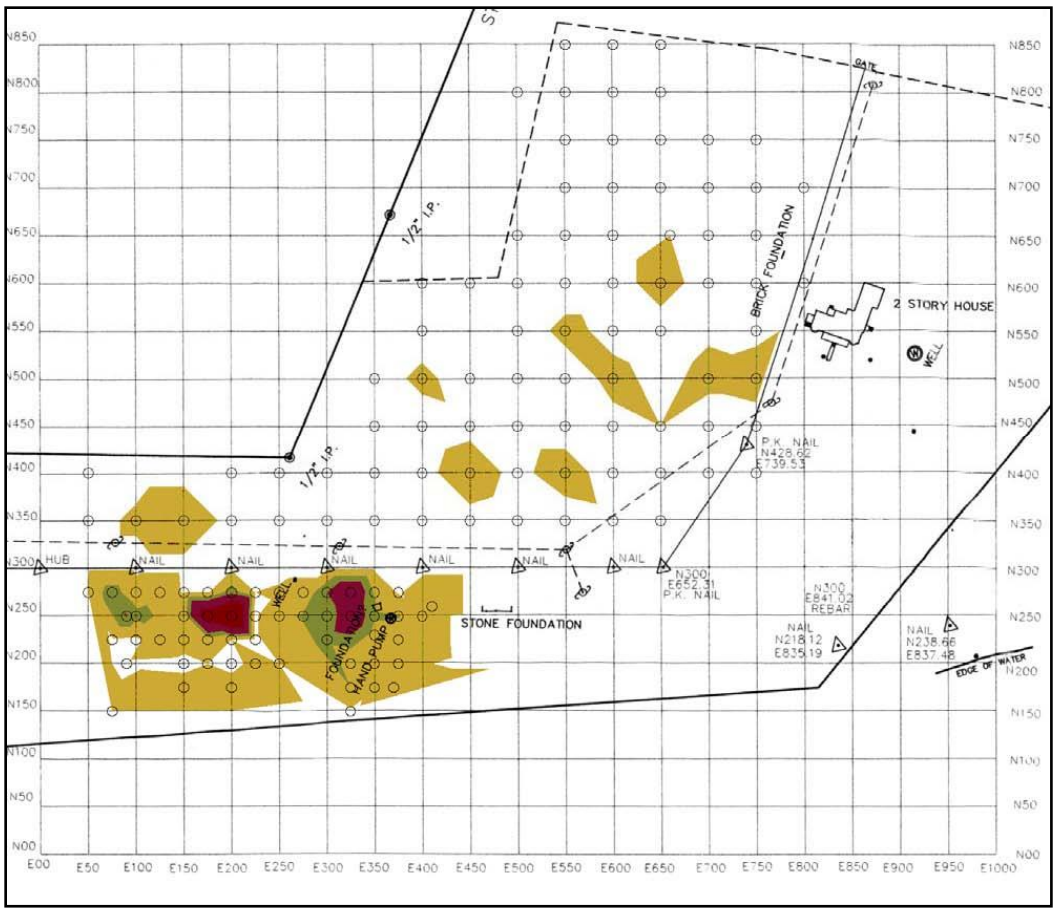


Figure 8: Location of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Architectural Artifacts.

By 1748, Humphreys had subdivided his holdings and three parcels were sold to Robert Wilcox. Wilcox constructed a mansion house "a short distance above the mouth of Tidbury" creek (Scharf 1888:1132). According to William Hunn, as recorded in Wildcat and the Hunn Family (Karsner 2005), Jon and Raynear Hunn purchased Wildcat Farm and Forest Landing from Robert Wilcocks in 1761. A survey plat that documents the transaction depicts a two-story, three-bay structure near the present seat of the Wildcat Manor house and/or Forest Landing. There verbal description mentions a store house at Forest Landing as a geographical reference. If these indications can be taken at face value, we may conclude there were at least a dwelling structure at Wildcat Farm or Forest Landing and a store house at the landing. When this generation passed away, sections of the property were left to Ezekiel and Nathaniel Hunn.

When Nathaniel Hunn died, he left a number of properties to his minor heirs, Ann and Elizabeth (Orphan's Court Docket; Nathaniel Hunn, 1796 to 1808). In "the Value of the Rents" paper, the first item is a plantation near Forest Landing now under the occupation of Jeremiah Register that contained 230 acres (93.0 ha) of land, with 180 acres (72.8 ha) cleared for agriculture. The property featured a one-story tall dwelling house, 16 by 32 feet (4.9 by 9.8 m), one log smokehouse, a stable and a corncrib, all in middling repair. They did not recommend any improvements to be made except for "filling in the kitchen part of the

aforesaid house with brick." They concluded that "this farm with a [Hening Farmery?] attached, was worth 30 pounds per year". It is possible this is a late-eighteenth-century description of the Wildcat Manor Farm. This assumption is strengthened by the apparent retrofitting the kitchen cellar at Wildcat Farm with brick (Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 9: 1937 Aerial Photograph.

When Ezekiel Hunn died in 1822, he left no will. A complicated docket was left in the Orphan's Court records that detailed the disposal of his extensive holdings and the care of his offspring. Wildcat Farm and the Forest Landing parcels were dealt with separately. The nephew Ezekiel owned the Wildcat Farm, while Guliema Hunn inherited the Forest Landing, which was the tract south of the entry lane, bordered by the landing on the east, and the road to Dover to the west (Orphan's Court Docket; Ezekiel Hunn, 1822). Figure 12 is a wealth of information. It depicts two identical structures (granaries or storehouses?) at the water's edge and two dwelling houses. It is likely the remains of these two dwellings appear as artifact cluster as seen in Figure 7.

Figure 10: Photograph of Kitchen of the Manor House, circa 1930.

Figure 11: Photograph of the Manor House, circa 1930.

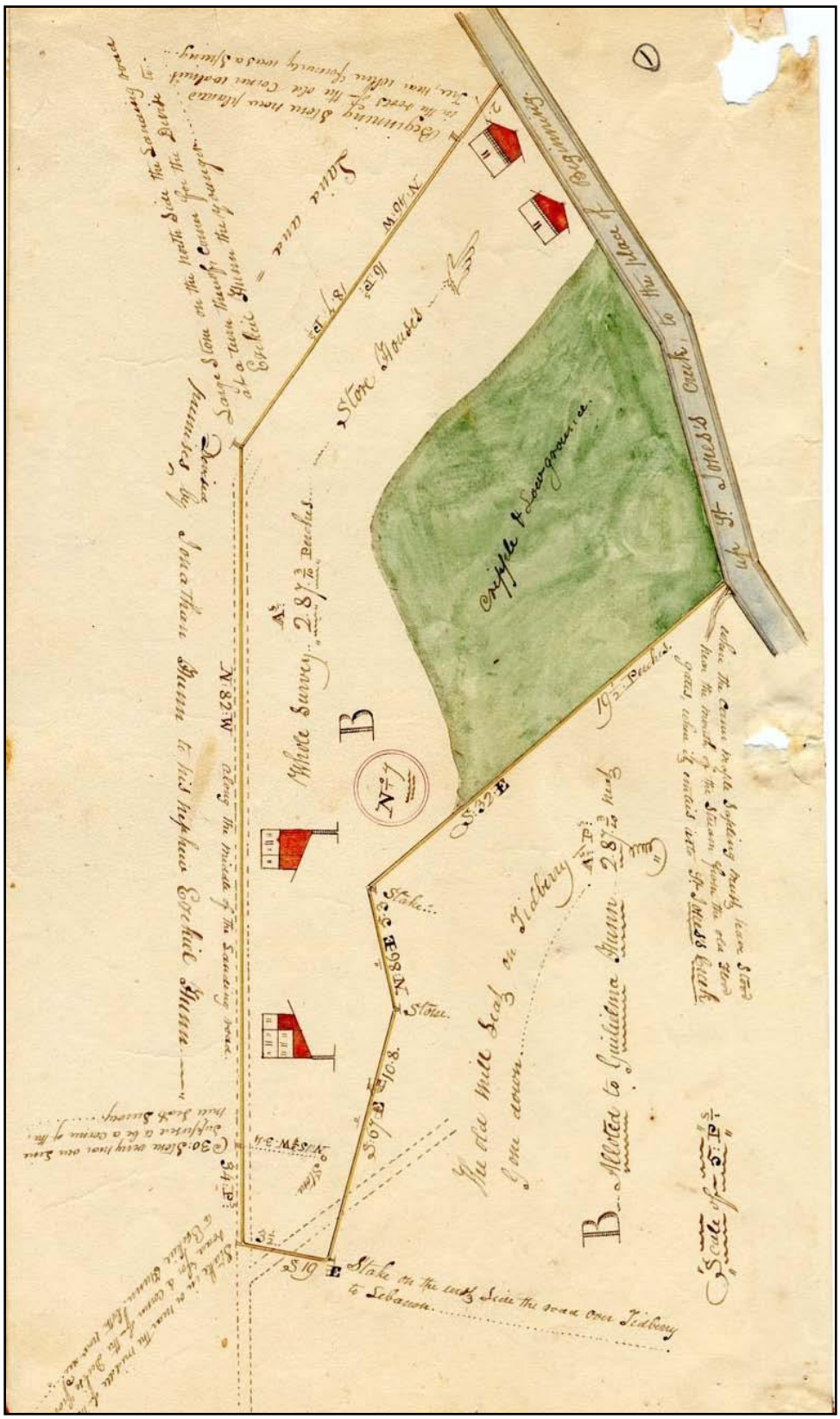

Figure 12: Plat from Orphan's Court Docket; Ezekiel Hunn, 1822.

Other references from this case and similar ones give us a glimpse into the situation at Forest Landing. Joseph Rowland was the appointed guardian for Guliema Hunn. In his 1822 account for his expenses, he claimed to have spent $7 for digging a well at the Landing. He charged both Jonathon Rowland and Jonathon Jenkins $60 for annual rent for use of the granary at the landing. In 1823, he collected $30 of annual rent from a W. Hollingsworth for the hipped roof house. Also, he collected $20 of rent from Samuel [Dubors] for the small house.

In another document of this case, Warner and Daniel Mifflin assessed the value of rent of Ezekiel's properties in 1822. The third item is stated to be a frame granary at Forest Landing. They describe it to be 24 by 30 feet (7.3 by 9.1 m), in complete repair, and underpinned with a stone foundation. Currently, one can still observe a stone foundation in the Forest Landing area. One might speculate it is the retrofitted foundation of the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century storehouse recorded in the 1761 deed.

From this documentary evidence, it appears that the Wildcat Farm around 1800 was an unimpressively small to middling farm that consisted of one dwelling house, a smokehouse, a corncrib, and stable in a "middling" state repair. Perhaps the farm was overshadowed by neighboring Forest Landing, with two substantial storehouses earning high rents. The two dwelling houses were augmented by latter investments.

In the next generation, Ezekiel Hunn gave Wildcat Manor and Forest Landing to his bride, Lydia Hunn. She took out a succession of policies on the properties in the 1860s and 1870s. The first policy describes the Wildcat Manor farm when Jabez Jenkins lived on site as a tenant.

## WILDCAT MANOR AS DESCRIBED IN THE 1866 KENT COUNTY MUTUAL INSURANCE POLICY TO LYDIA HUNN OF MURDERKILL HUNDRED

> 1 a 2 story frame dwelling (18' by 52') with a back buildings 2 stories attached (16' by 18'); with front porch 10 by 30 feet. It had a back open porch that measured 8' by 38'. There is 3 chimneys and 7 fireplaces, warmed with the same stoves. A pump is in the yard & the nearest building 16 feet…occupied by John Jenkins as a [Farmer House.] 2 A frame meat house (12' by 12') 3 Frame barns and cribs (24 by 31 feet) all new. 4 A frame stable, (12 by 29 feet) all in good repair 5 Frame House (10' by 12') occupied as a tool house 6 A 2 story cow house (20 by 31 feet) all new. 7 Frame Barn, (20' by 31') Old

The manor house appears to have expanded since the beginning of the century when Nathaniel passed away. A smokehouse, corncrib, and stables appear to be still present or replaced. New barns and livestock oriented structures were built.

## WILDCAT MANOR AS DESCRIBED IN THE 1868 INSURANCE POLICY TO LYDIA HUNN OF CAMDEN

The following policy was drafted two years later, in 1868. It mentions a tool shed and ice house that appears at the time of the Jenkins tenancy. For the first time, she included the property at Forest Landing or Hunntown in the lower section. The hipped roof house and small dwelling first listed in 1822 are still functioning, along with three granaries (or store houses).

> Manor House? Two story frame dwelling (18' by 52') with a back building attached (16' by 18') It had a back open porch that measured 8' by 38'. Frame [Cook Hood] Shed then House (12' by 55') A frame meat house (12' by 12') A Frame Tool House (12' by 14') with Ice House beneath Frame Granary 30' by 24' with shed carriage house attached (12' by 30') Frame Barn, (20' by 30') with Hayhouse attached (20' by 59) shed attached (16' by 40') Frame House (10' by 12') wagon shed (16' by 45')
>
> Hunntown? Hip roof House (16' by 24') shed kitchen (12' by 16') ½ story frame dwelling (16' by 18') shed kitchen (12' by 16') Frame Granary (20' by 37') Frame Granary (22' by 25') Frame Granary (22' by 30')

The following policy taken out by Lydia in 1872 is of a farm "near Lebanon." The description shows the old Forest Landing tenet properties converted into "Hunntown" The two original structures were converted into duplexes, and a third structure appears. The duplexes match the descriptions and photographs presented in Karsner (2005) of the African American tenant community during the 1930s. It appears that after the close of the Civil War, Lydia Hunn actively invested in increasing the capacity of the low income tenant housing at Forest Landing. Hunntown continued to be an active community after the passing of Lydia, well into the first half of the twentieth century.

## KENT COUNTY MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY NOVEMBER 23, 1872, EZEKIEL AND LYDIA HUNN FOR $1,320

> 1 A Hip roof Dwelling House, being a double House (48' by 16') with a shed kitchen at each end (12' by 16') warmed by stove fired pipes entered a brick chimney and flue. Occupied by Thos. Wallace in the eastern half and the west half not quite finished. 2 A one story double frame house (36' by 12') with a shed kitchen at each end (12' by 16') now in the tenure of James Patten and E. Cook. Warmed by a stoves as in no. 1 (above) 3 A hip roof double frame dwelling (30' by 22') Warmed by a stoves as in no. 1 (above) At present in tenure of John Fisher and Isaac Turner. These are all tenant houses [+ not] or [that] closely situated as to each other 4 A frame stable and carriage house a short distance west of number 1.
>
> This Property as also all the property named in the said Policy No 3060 owned by Lydia Hunn, wife of Ezekiel Hunn I her own right.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The tract known as Wildcat Manor or Forest Landing contains archaeological resources that attest to thousands of years of human occupation. By creating a public use park for this tract, Kent County has embraced the opportunity for meaningful stewardship of the county's cultural heritage. We recommend that any future construction activity in this tract avoid the areas of archaeological activity as identified in Figures 4 through 7. If these area must be disturbed, then further archaeological testing should be performed in order to test the integrity of these deposits.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of the archaeological testing and the documentary research testify to the changing use of the Wildcat Manor/Forest Landing tract over time. During the prehistoric period, it was used as a camp by the Native Americans. In the early-Colonial Period, it was a commercial landing and agricultural complex. By the nineteenth century, the Hunn family was involved with small scale industry with the neighboring sawmill and low income housing. In the twentieth century, Wildcat Manor was a country retreat residence, a public landfill, and a small African American community. Finally, in the twenty-first century, the tract will become a public park.

## PRIMARY SOURCE REFERENCES

Photographs from the Hunn family were provided by the Kent County Parks Division. These primary sources were found at the Delaware Public Archives:

Orphans' Court cases for Ezekiel Hunn [1822] and Nathaniel Hunn. Kent County Mutual Insurance Association

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Fithian, Charles
2006 Personal Communication. Dover, Delaware.

Karsner, Katherine Hunn
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Scharf, J. Thomas
1888 History of Delaware (1609-1888).2 vols. L.J. Richards & Company, Philadelphia.

Soils information from the University of Delaware Spatlab, available at: http://www.udel.edu/FREC/spatlab/oldpix/nrcssoilde/Descriptions/kentdemeta.htm.

# IMH AND ASD 2009 REPORT ON THE UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE OF THE HISTORIC HARBOR AT LEWES

**David Howe, Secretary**
Institute of Maritime History
P.O. Box 108
Tall Timbers, Maryland 20690
www.maritimehistory.org

With outstanding support from The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (DHCA), the City of Lewes, and the Lewes Historical Society, the Maritime Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Delaware and the Institute of Maritime History (IMH) continued our underwater archaeological reconnaissance of the historic harbor at Lewes. The project dates were from October 3–20, 2009. Due to high winds and rough seas we were only able to work one full day in the Harbor of Refuge and a half day each in Breakwater Harbor and the Broadkill River. We finished the area in Breakwater Harbor that was left undone from our 2007 project, but we found nothing there. The nautical chart shows three wrecks in the Broadkill (Figure 1). We saw no sign of one charted between the Coast Guard Station and the Fish and Wildlife pier, nor any sign of one charted on the south bank of the river above the confluence of Old Mill Creek. A small boat launching ramp now stands there. We confirmed the wreck on the north side of the river in that area. It is submerged and appears to be less than 40 feet (12.2 m) in length.

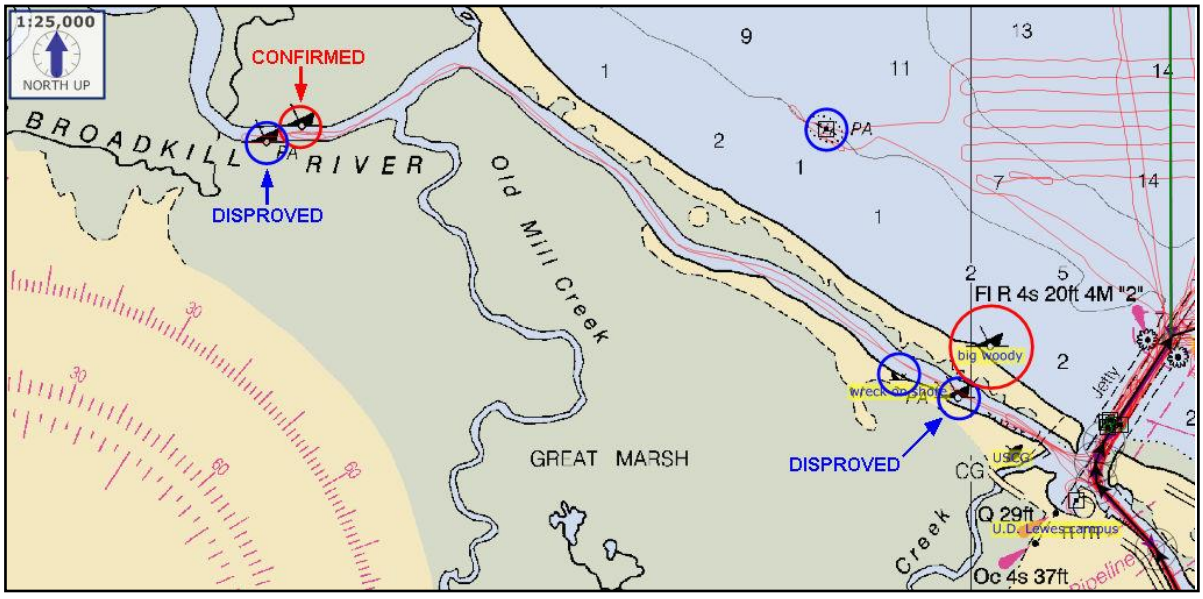


Figure 1: Confirmed Shipwrecks in Red; Disproved Shipwrecks in Blue.

A large, unidentified, wooden wreck in the red circle on Figure 1 lies on the shore at Beach Plum Island just west of Roosevelt Inlet. The Delaware Marine Archaeological Society and Dr. Susan Langley of the Maryland Historical Trust surveyed it several years ago for the State Historic Preservation Office. Since then, it has broken into two visible sections. We did not map them on this project.

The nautical chart also shows another wreck off Beach Plum Island, in the blue circle on Figure 1 with the note "PA" (Position Approximate). If that wreck exists, our sonar did not find it. We confirmed one charted wreck in the Harbor of Refuge and found three other anomalies that might be cultural. One of them appears to be a cluster of protruding objects, possibly timbers, on the north face of the inner breakwater; the second is some protruding structure; and the third is a deep and highly reflective hole between Cape Henlopen and the eastern end of the inner breakwater, which might be natural or might be a sunken hull forming a sort of walled crater in the sand. Only some dives can tell, but due to the depths, currents, and boat traffic it is a dangerous place to dive. The weather was better on the trip from Maryland to Lewes on October 2–3, and again on the return trip to Maryland on October 22–23. We were able to find many wrecks and obstructions in the Delaware between Lewes and Reedy Island. One of the wrecks is at least 300 feet (91.4 m) long and may be the passenger ship *Mohawk*, which burned in January 1925. Another may be part of the tanker *Phoenix* (Figure 2), which burned after colliding with the tanker *Pan Massachusetts* (Figure 3) in the C & D Canal in 1953. An excerpt from the initial report listing the places where we found wrecks or possible wrecks on sonar are listed in Table 1. They include seven definite wrecks.

Figure 2: Phoenix Tanker.

The positions listed in Table 1 and shown in Figures 4–13 have been rounded off to the nearest mile to allow distribution of the list while still affording some protection from looters and souvenir hunters. The “SHIPNo” column cross-references each image to our database and charts, while the “Recommend” column shows our proposals for future work on each site. Some of the more interesting sidescan images follow the list. The left-hand side

of each image is a down looking "fishfinder" that looks directly under the boat, with depths in feet. The blue right-hand part is the sidescan sonar. In all images shown in Figures 4–13, the sidescan was set to a maximum range of 240 feet (73.2 m). The images with black backgrounds were taken at night when the screen was darkened so as not to blind the helmsman. Some images clearly show wrecks or structure. In others, the anomalies protrude only slightly from the mud and consequently are faint and rather amorphous—but they are clear enough to justify diving to determine if they are wrecks.

Figure 3: Pan Massachusetts Tanker.

Table 1: An Excerpt from the Full list of Anomalies Identified During the 2009 Survey.

| Image | Date | SHIPNo | Lat. | Long. | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SO1508 | 10/22/09 | DE0700 | 39°26'N | 075°33'W | Small, definite shadow |
| SO1604 | 10/22/09 | DE0551 | 39°00'N | 075°12'W | Wreck (Mohawk) |
| SO1611 | 10/22/09 | DE0566 | 39°06'N | 075°14'W | Wreck |
| SO1615 | 10/22/09 | DE0571 | 39°08'N | 075°16'W | Wreck |
| SO1616 | 10/22/09 | DE0581 | 39°09'N | 075°18'W | Possible wreck |
| SO1630 | 10/23/09 | DE0679 | 39°21'N | 075°28'W | Wreck |
| SO1637 | 10/23/09 | DE0680 | 39°21'N | 075°27'W | Wreck |
| SO1656 | 10/23/09 | DE0700 | 39°26'N | 075°33'W | Wreck |
| SO1661 | 10/23/09 | DE0708 | 39°28'N | 075°34'W | Structure |
| SO1674 | 10/23/09 | DE1115 | 39°32'N | 075°32'W | Wreck (Phoenix) |

Unrelated to the project, at the request of the City of Lewes dockmaster, we also mapped some shallow spots that were reported in Roosevelt Inlet, and mapped the depths at the mouth of the Overfalls lightship berth for the museum. We also viewed but could not approach a wreck on the north side of the Leipsic River approximately 0.25 miles (0.4 km) below the Route 9 Bridge. A local resident says the wreck is a 46-foot (14.0-m) long fishing boat that was abandoned circa 1965. A wreck seems to appear in that location on this aerial photograph, which is said to date from 1937 (Figure 14). The nautical chart does not show this wreck, but it does show another wreck 1 mile (1.6 km) downriver.

Volunteers on the project included Dawn Cheshaek of the Maritime Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Delaware; and Isabel Mack, Debbie Nelson, Gabriel Gerow, Lee Nelson, Kirk Pierce, and me of the Institute of Maritime History. Better weather would have brought more people and allowed more work to be done. Next year! The two societies will coordinate to ground-truth and map some or all of these sites on future projects.

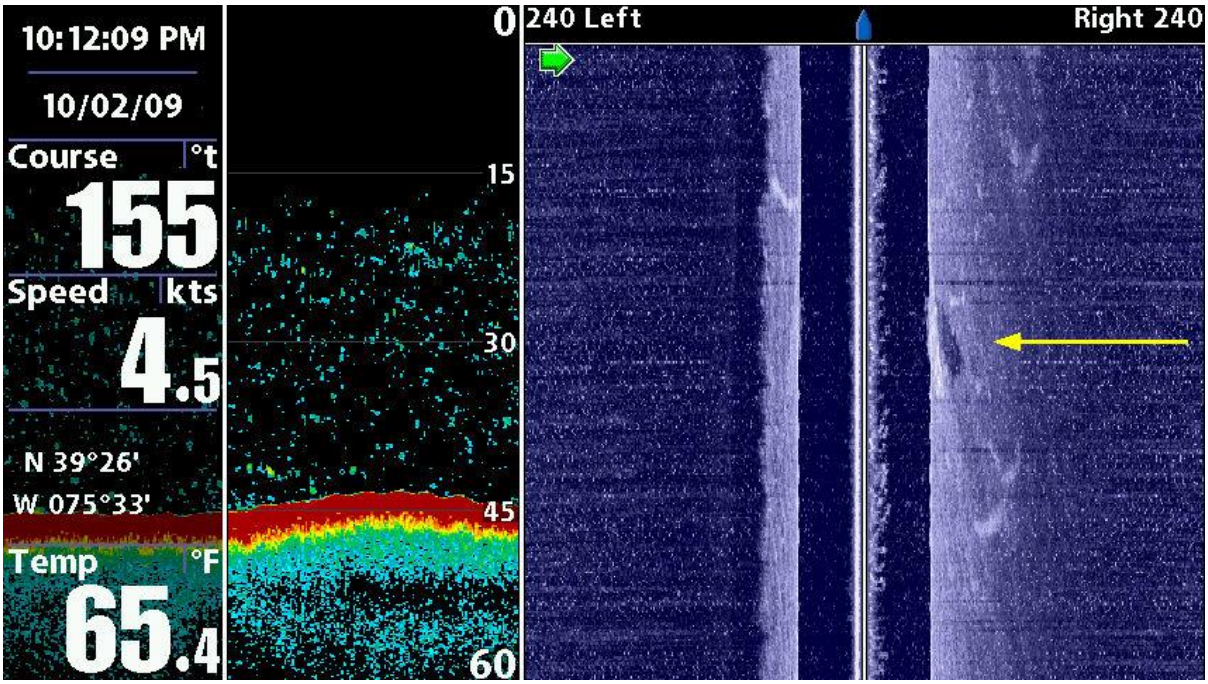


Figure 4: SO1508 Small Definite Shadow.

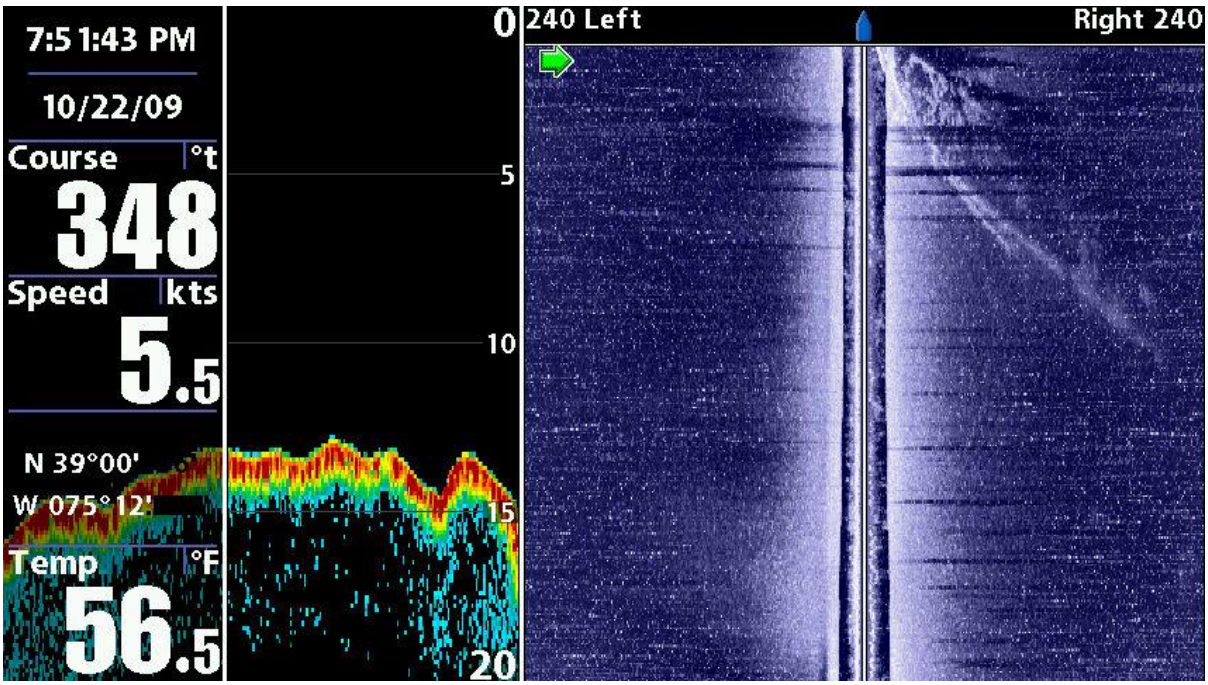


Figure 5: SO1604 Definite Wreck, Possibly the Mohawk.

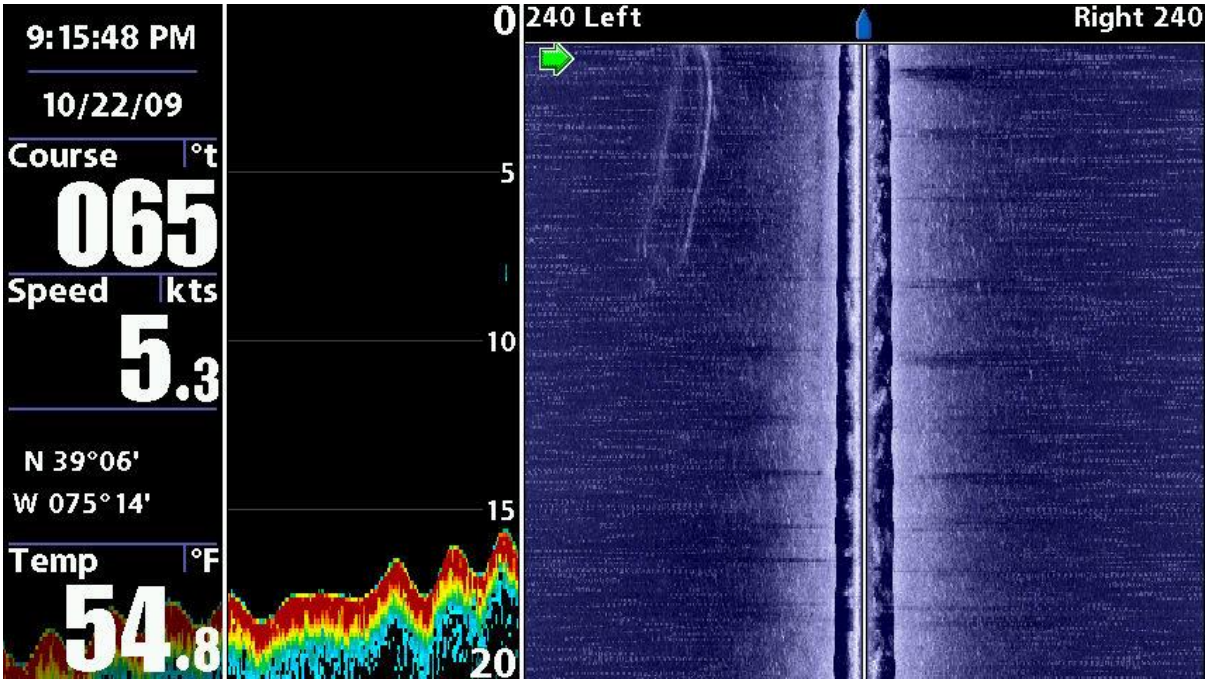


Figure 6: SO1611 Definite Wreck.

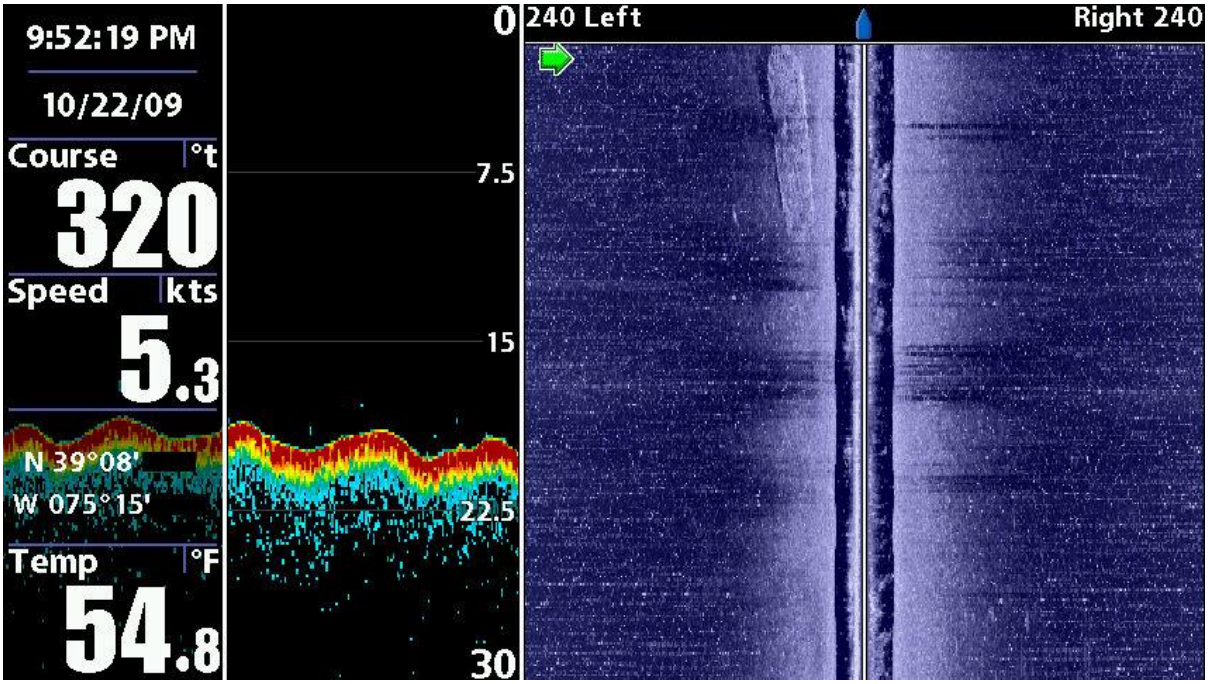


Figure 7: SO1615 Definite Wreck.

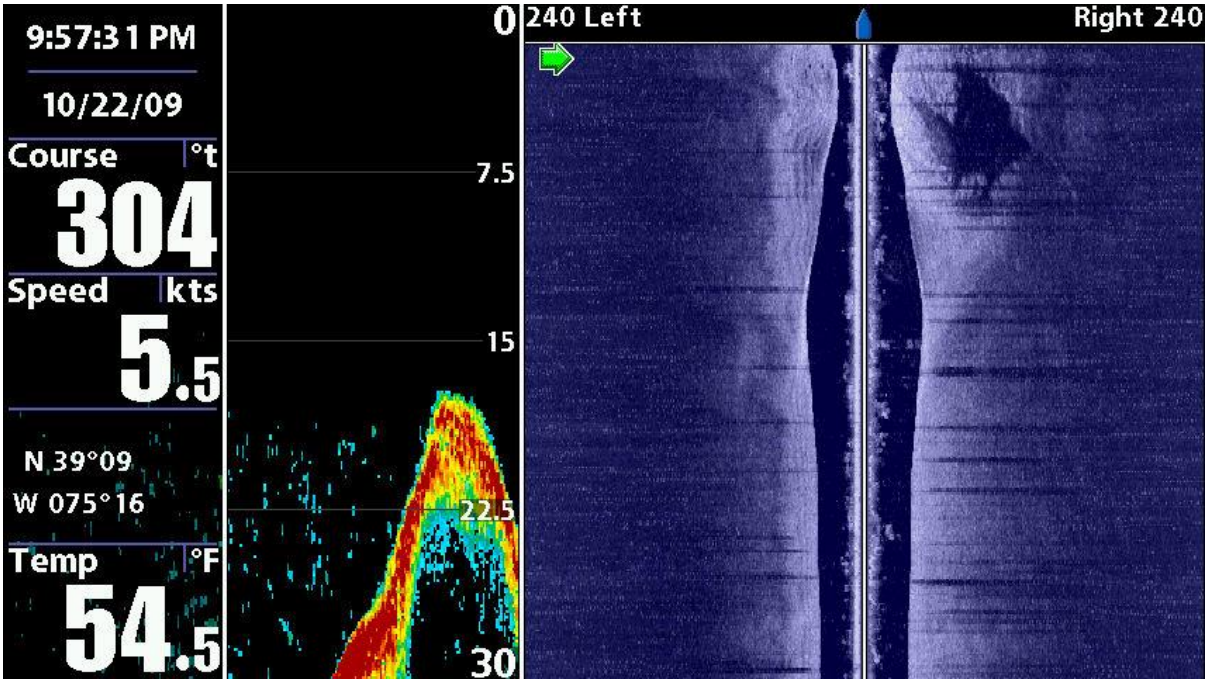


Figure 8: SO1616 Possible Wreck.

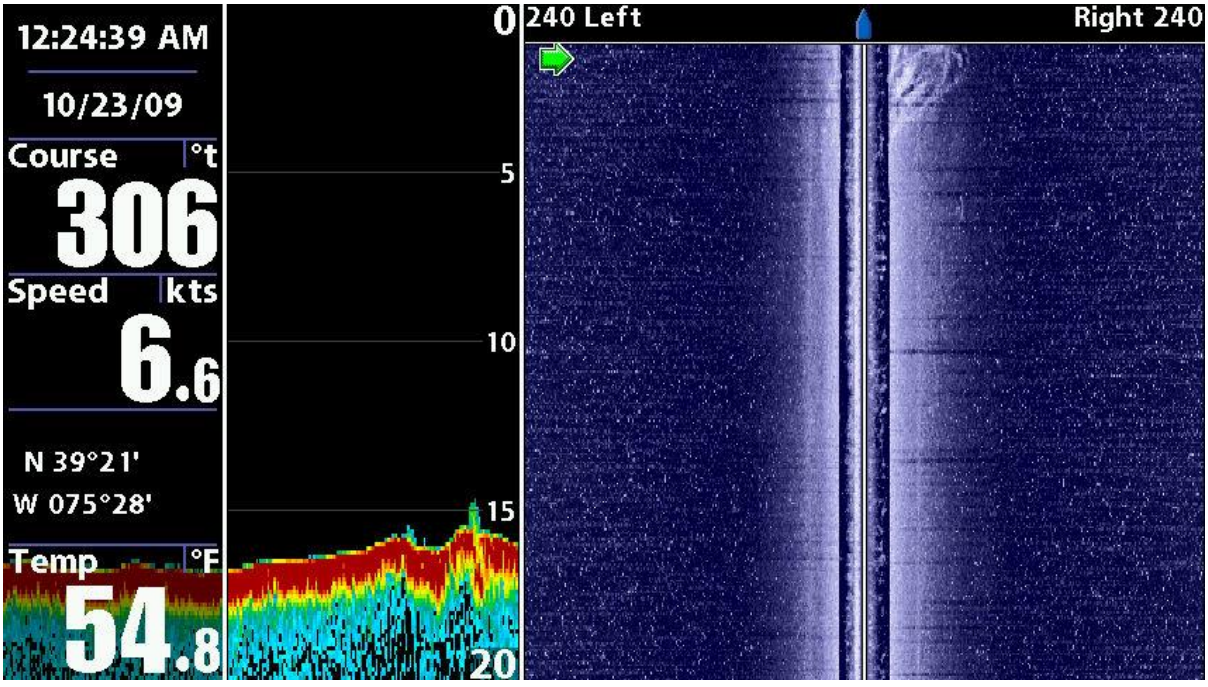


Figure 9: SO1630 Definite Wreck.

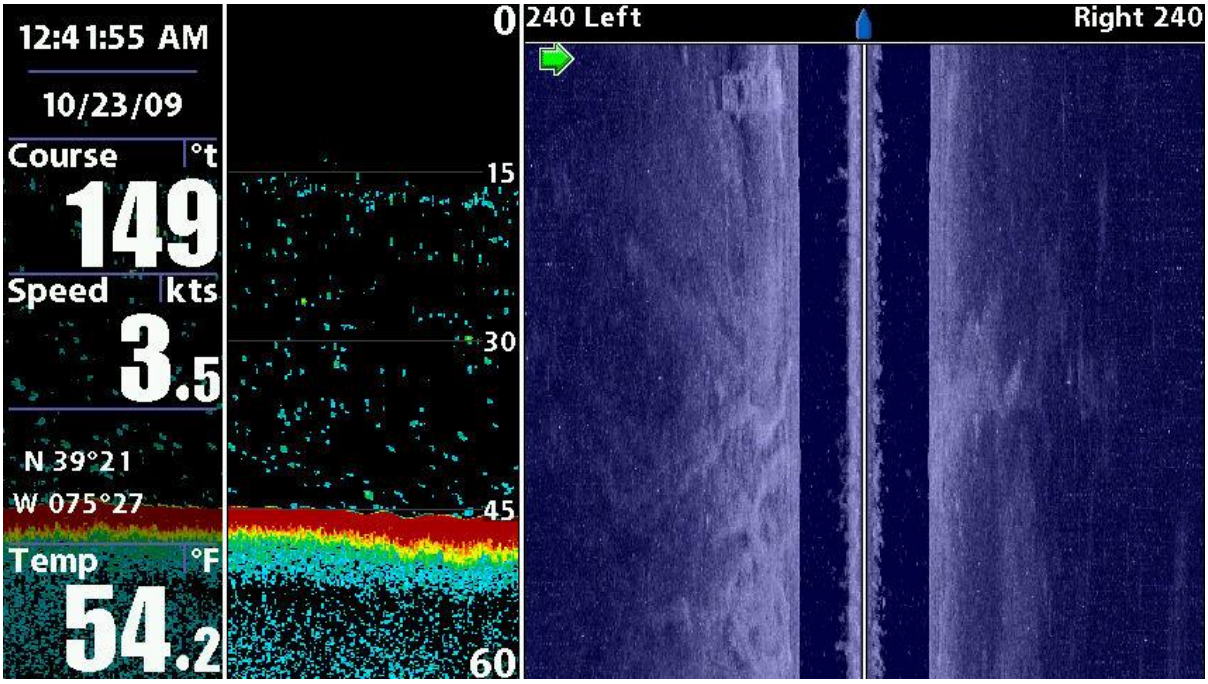


Figure 10: SO1637 Definite Wreck.

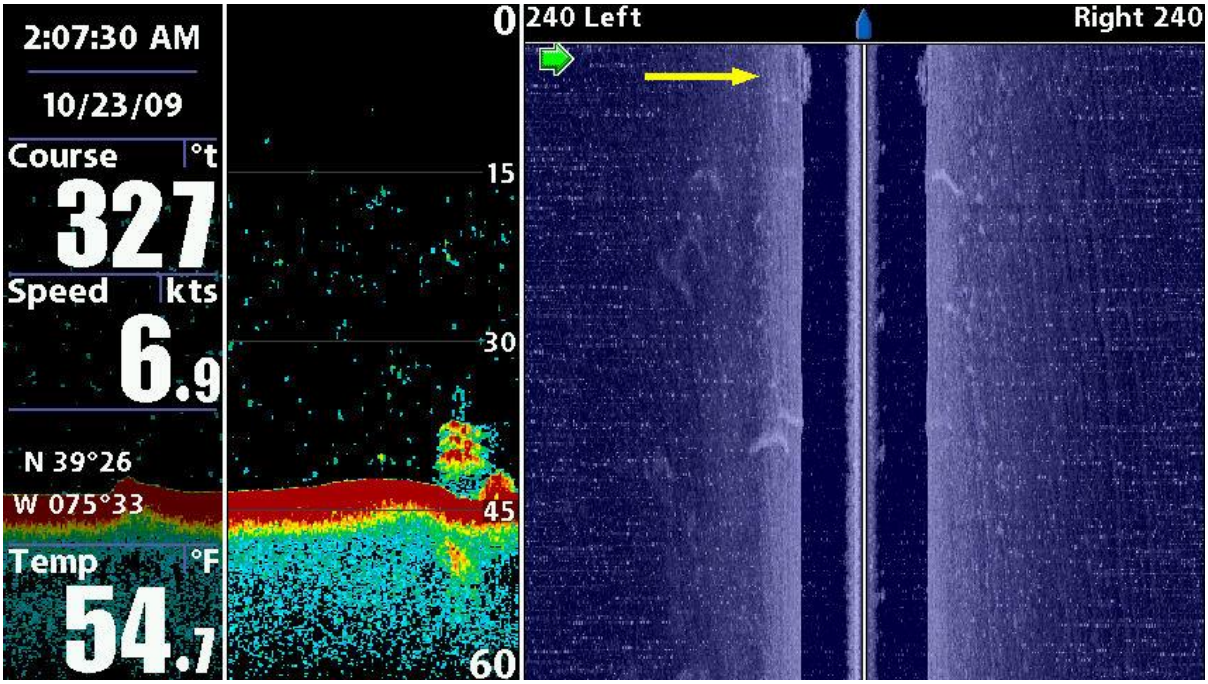


Figure 11: SO1656 Definite Wreck, Small.

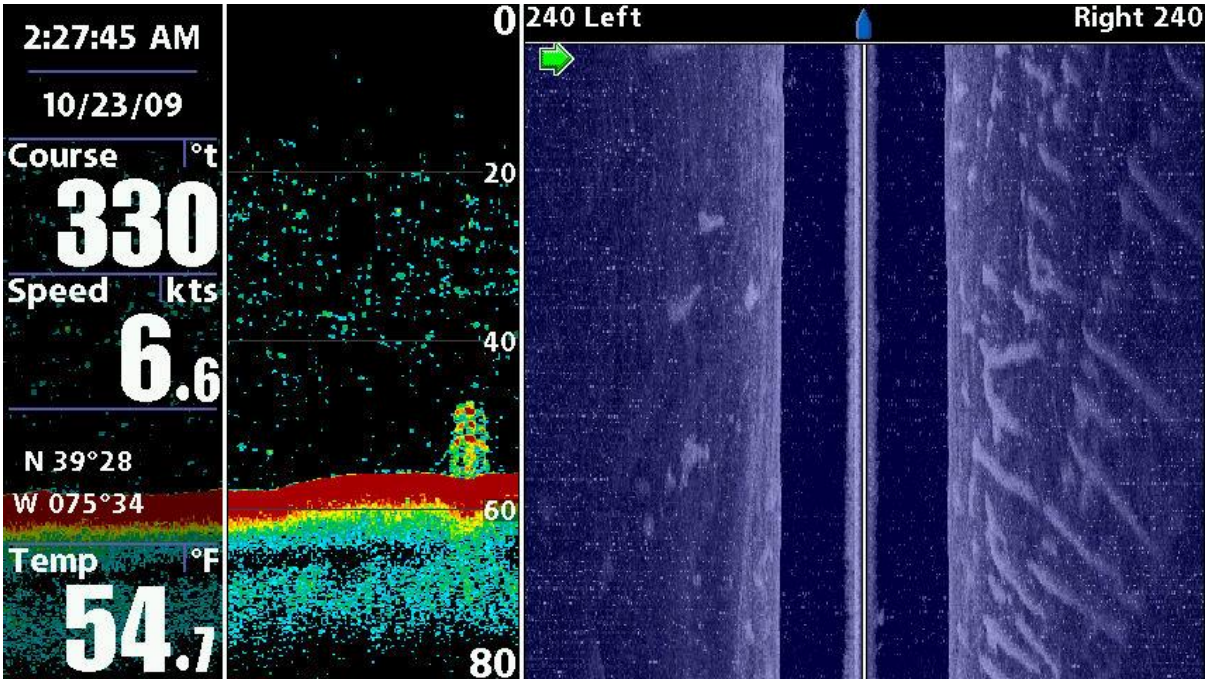


Figure 12: SO1661 Definite Structure.

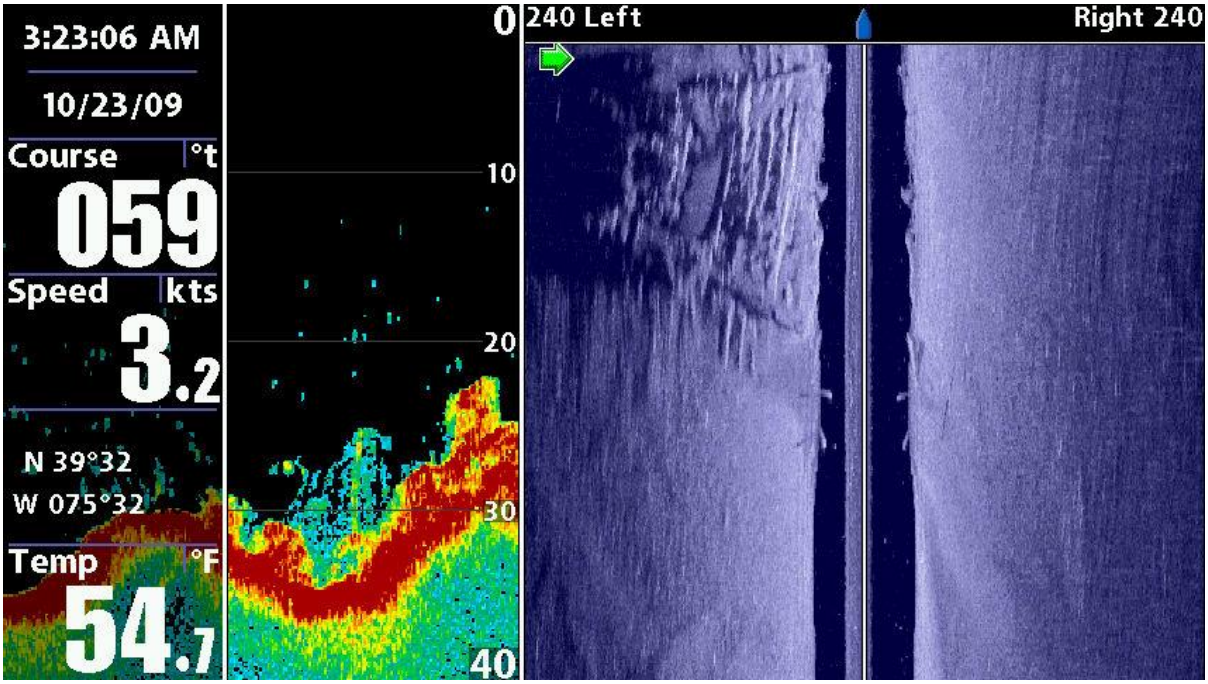


Figure 13: SO1675 Definite Wreck, Possibly the Phoenix.

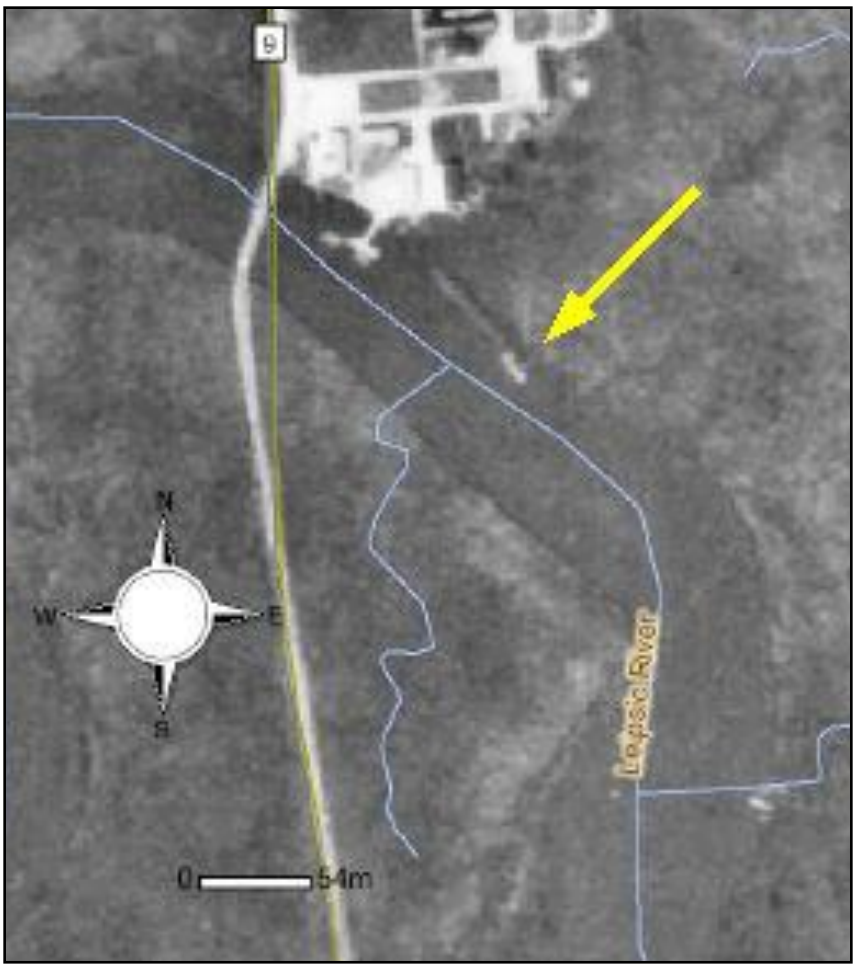


Figure 14: Wreck on the North Side of the Leipsic River.

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# COMMON NO MORE: DIGGING THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT SITE IN NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE

**Kerri S. Barile, Kerry S. González and Danae Peckler**

Dovetail Cultural Resource Group
300 Central Road, Suite 200
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401
www.dovetailcrg.com

## ABSTRACT

*In the summer of 2012, a dozen Dovetail archaeologists and scores of volunteers including Archaeological Society of Delaware members toiled in the sun to excavate the Houston-LeCompt site, located along the newly proposed Route 301 corridor in central Delaware. Using test units, backhoe scraping, feature excavation, and artifact and ethnobotanical analysis, the team recovered an astounding amount of data on the Houston family and generations of subsequent tenant farmers who worked the land. House cellars, kitchen refuse pits, wells, and work areas contained thousands of artifacts highlighting the 200-year occupation of this parcel, all in remarkable condition. Ranging from Mary Houston's late-eighteenth-century furniture hardware and decorative ceramics to early-twentieth-century jewelry and utilitarian jars, the remains document the shift from an owner-occupied residence to tenant-based dwelling in what was then the Delaware rural countryside.*

*Delaware's roads were once lined with them: small, one- or two-story wood dwellings built in centuries past. Some had been lived in by the same family for generations, while others had a continually revolving roster of residents working as tenant farmers. Each group left a distinctive agricultural, social, and material legacy, and many of their homes are now gone. The Houston-LeCompt archaeological site (7NC-F-139), located north of the community of Middletown, embodies the early traditions and tangible remains of both family-based and tenancy farming in this region.*

## INTRODUCTION

The site was first identified during investigations by Archaeological & Historical Consultants, Inc. (A&HC) in 2010 (e.g., Diamanti 2010, 2011). Located near the center of the planned Route 301 corridor (Figure 1), the area was noted as a high potential locale for past activity after historic maps and a subsequent surface collection noted the presence of a historic residence on this parcel. Thousands of artifacts were uncovered during the initial fieldwork, prompting A&HC and the project sponsors, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), to return to the site in 2011. Phase II testing revealed the foundation of a house with a brick cellar, several

additional features, and even more artifacts (Diamanti 2011). The physical remains spanned the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries and highlighted the history of all of the site's former occupants (Diamanti 2011).

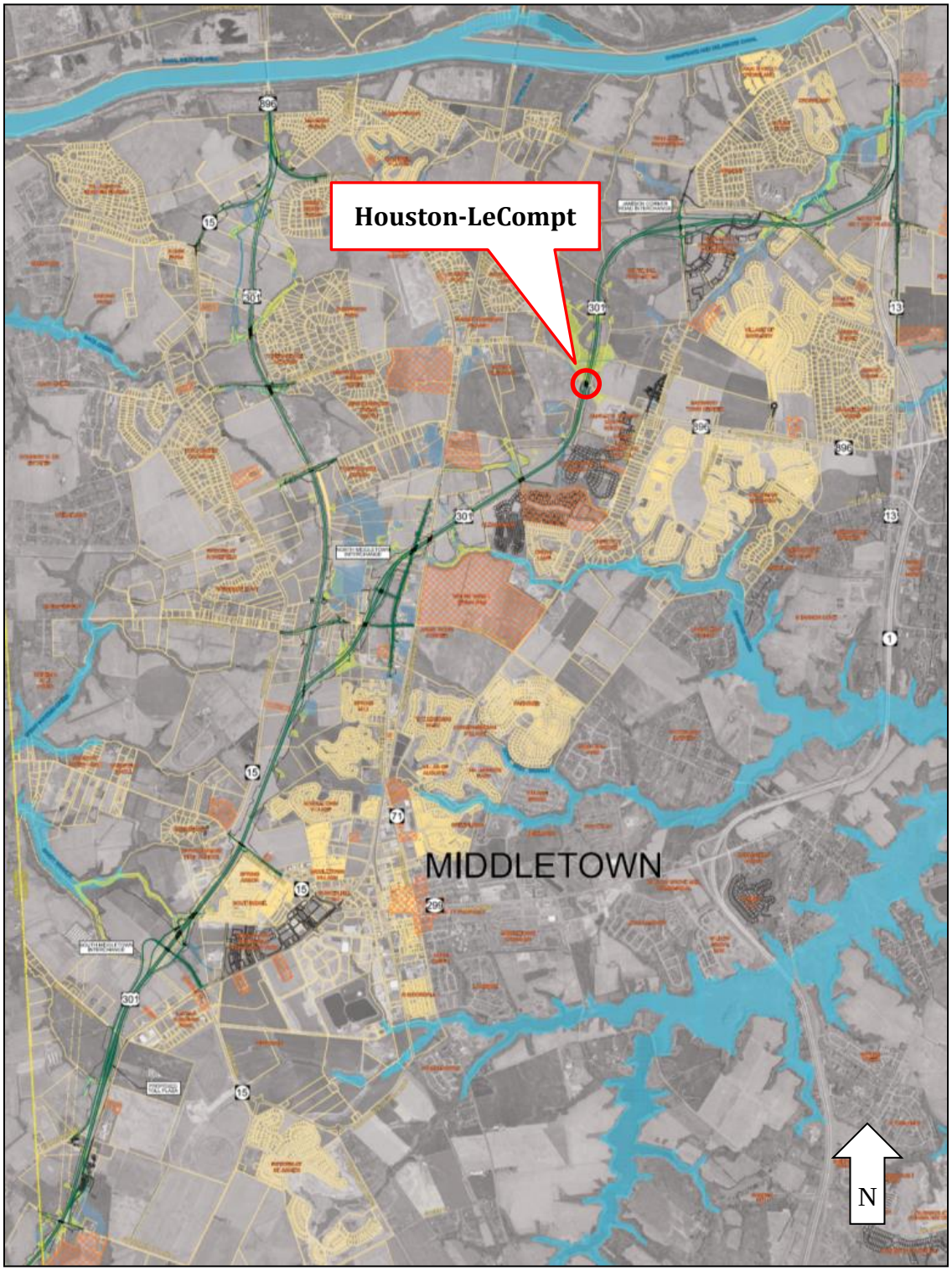


Figure 1: Location of the Houston-LeCompt Site Along the Proposed Route 301 Corridor.

## HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT SITE

The Houston-LeCompt site is situated on a parcel of farmland that has largely served agricultural purposes since the eighteenth century. The earliest known occupants of the parcel were members of Jacob Houston's family in the late 1700s. However, it is possible that Samuel Guthrie's family (also spelled Guthry, Guthery, Guttery, and Guttrie) farmed the 106-acre (42.9-ha) tract on which the Houston-LeCompt site is located as early as 1732. Following his application in June 1737, Samuel "Guthry" sought to obtain a legal warrant to 100 acres (40.5 ha) of vacant land on a branch of Drawyers Creek "whereon he hath settled and still dwells…" (New Castle County [NCC] Warrants and Surveys, A56).

Archival data connects Jacob Houston to the property as early as 1780 when the New Castle County tax assessment for St. Georges Hundred levied on him what was an above-average sum of 34 pounds suggesting that he owned land at that time. In 1782, a tax and census report for the state noted Jacob Houston as living with three males under the age of 18, one girl under 18, and one woman over 18. Jacob Houston died in 1793. In 1797, the Direct Tax Assessment of New Castle County credited widow Mary Houston with 130 improved acres (52.6 ha), 70 unimproved acres (28.3 ha), two houses, a barn, stables, and a crib. However, the entire value of this real estate was set at $500, less than neighboring parcels with fewer buildings and smaller acreage. By 1816, the Houston farm contained just one wood dwelling. Wood construction was common in the area's architecture at that time, but land ownership was not. "According to 1816 tax assessment, the majority of buildings in St Georges Hundred were built of wood. Of 567 taxables, only 30% owned both land and dwellings." (Herman et al. 1985)

It is not clear how Mary Houston's estate was managed after her death on May 20, 1816, as no probate records were uncovered to detail her possessions. In August 1819, Mary's eldest son, James, made a petition to the Orphans Court requesting division of her estate between her four children: James, Jacob, George, and Mary, noting James was entitled to one-half share as he had purchased George's interest in February 1817 (New Castle County Deed Book [NCCDB] T3:376). In 1828, another petition was filed for partition of Mary Houston's estate, noting that her daughter, Mary, passed without legal issue and requested that the property be divided among the remaining heirs. This division was made, and a large portion of the land was allocated to James Houston (Figure 2). James' property contained 130.7 acres (52.9 ha) and was noted as where he, "now resides and occupies" (New Castle County Orphans Court [NCCOC], Mary Houston case file).

James Houston is believed to have resided on his family's farm until his death in 1849. He is not known to have married nor had children. Census records indicate that James Houston housed various family members during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In addition to owning land, James Houston owned enslaved African-Americans. Two young slaves were reported in the census of 1820, both under 14 years of age and likely in domestic service. In 1830, four enslaved individuals were recorded in Houston's house, but James did not pay taxes on them which suggests that he did not own them (Ancestry.com [Ancestry]; NCC Tax Assessment St. Georges Hundred 1825, 1837–1840).

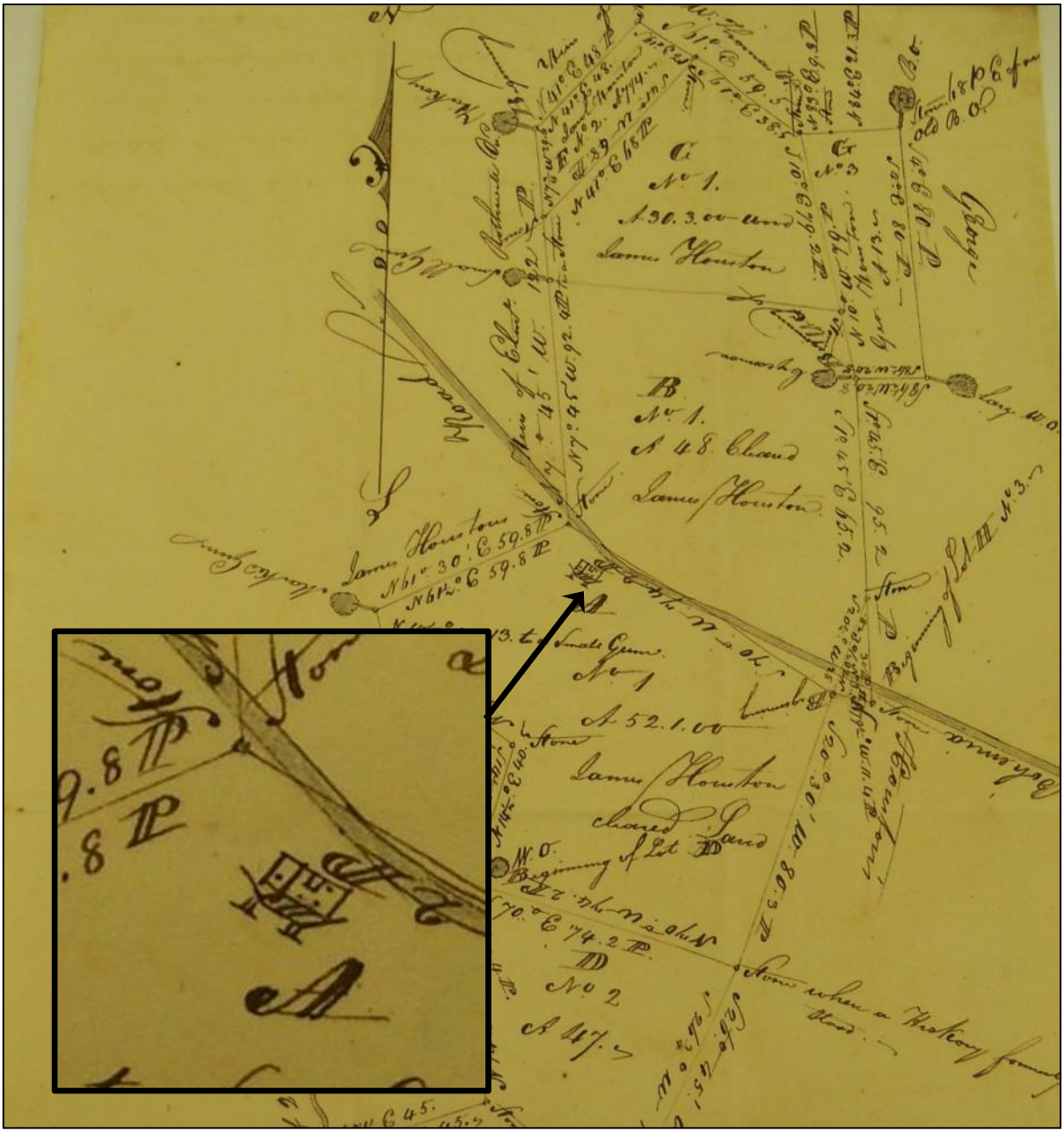

Figure 2: Orphans Court Survey of Mary Houston Estate, 1829
(On File at Delaware Public Archives). Detail of house inset.

It appears that Houston was in considerable debt by the time of his death in 1849 and his property was divided amongst distant heirs (Figure 3). After his estate was settled, the lot containing the original Houston house was eventually sold to Richard W. Mulford, a Methodist minister living in nearby Summit Bridge (NCCDB N6:31). Mulford appears to have rented this portion of the Houston farm during his ownership, purchasing insurance on the property in March 1865 with the Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Company (FMFIC) for $1,450 to cover a two-story, weather-boarded, log house with a frame kitchen attached

(valued at $600), a frame carriage house ($300), shed ($50), and a frame barn divided into a granary and stables ($500) (FMFIC Policy #2678).

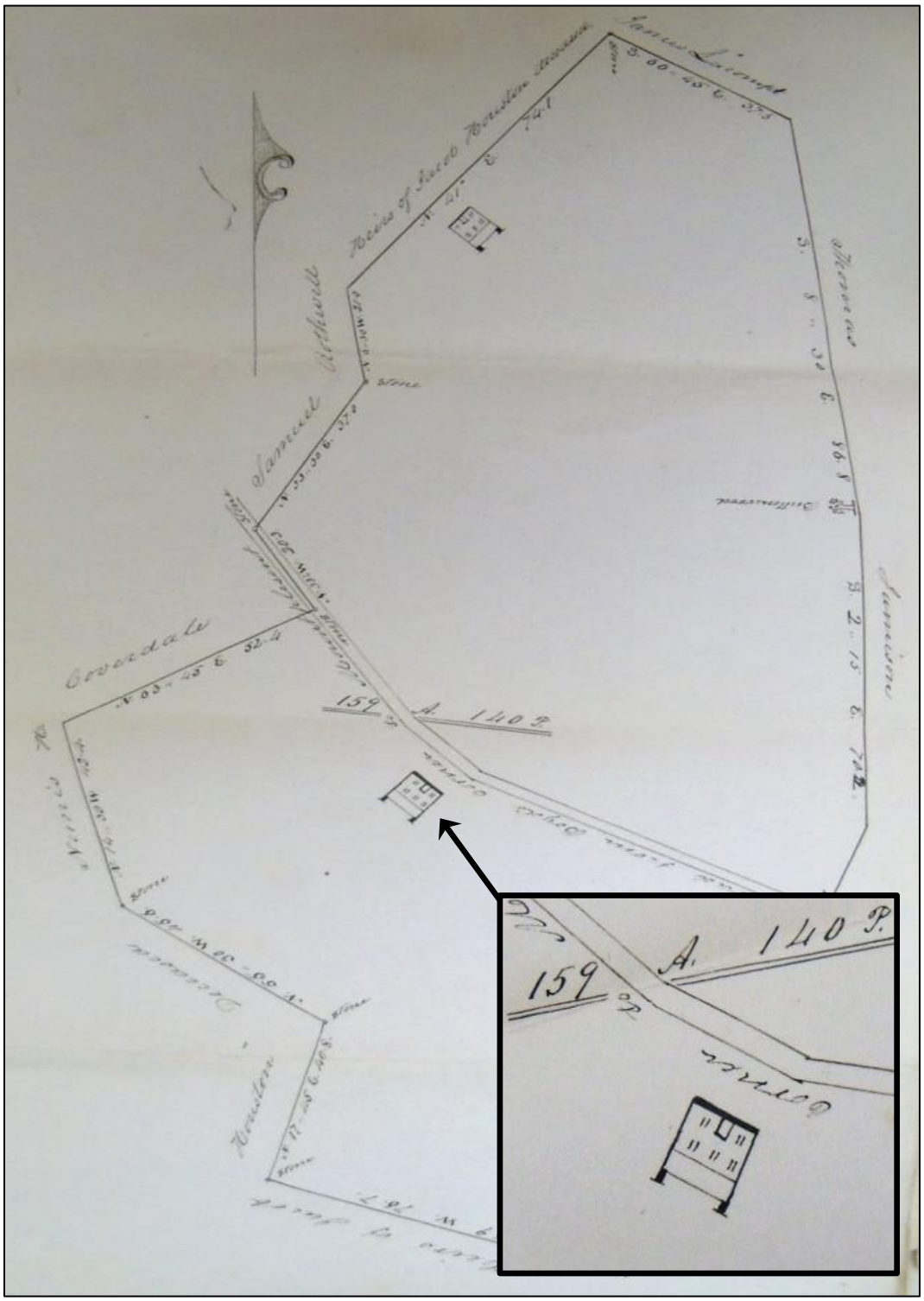


Figure 3: Orphans Court Survey of James Houston Estate, 1851. (On File at Delaware Public Archives). Detail of Houston dwelling, rotated and inset at bottom.

Four months later in July 1865, R.W. Mulford sold the farm to James LeCompt (also spelled LeCompte), a neighboring farmer who began purchasing land in St. Georges Hundred in the vicinity of the archaeological site in the mid-1840s (NCCDB H13:41). It is likely that LeCompt rented the house on Houston's estate and constructed another for himself on the north side of Mount Pleasant Road (now Boyds Corner Road), across from the original Houston dwelling, by the late 1860s. Tax records note a significant increase in value shortly after LeCompt's purchase of the property, suggesting that he may have made improvements at that time (NCC Tax Assessment, St. Georges Hundred 1869–1872).

At his death in 1884, LeCompt's heirs sold the 47-acre (19-ha) tract to Harriet Houston, a devisee of Mary's son Jacob Houston, brother of James. Census records indicate that Harriet Houston was residing in the town of Odessa with three servants in 1900, and identified herself as a farmer by occupation (Ancestry). Harriet Houston died in 1907 and her niece, Ida Holton, became the administrator of her estate, selling the 47-acre (19-ha) parcel associated with the Houston-LeCompt archaeological site to Fred S. Robinson, a farmer of Cecil County, Maryland (NCCDB K22:563). Robinson's family owned the property until 1948, after which the parcel passed through a series of owners in the later-half of the twentieth century. The Houston-LeCompt house and outbuildings were demolished prior to 1937 when aerial photographs reveal an open lot where they once stood.

## REDISCOVERING THE INHABITANTS OF HOUSTON-LECOMPT

Building upon work conducted by A&HC, Dovetail Cultural Resource Group (Dovetail) conducted a data recovery excavation at the site during the summer of 2012 (Barile et al. 2013). The goals were to uncover extant features located on the parcel, explore the artifact assemblage, and learn more about the Houstons and subsequent tenant farmers who lived on and worked the land. Archival research confirmed that the Houston home was a two-story, log dwelling clad in weatherboard and topped with a side-gabled roof. A once-freestanding kitchen became appended to the dwelling as the household grew, and the surrounding yard was dotted with outbuildings including, at various times, a barn, a stable, a corn crib, a carriage house, and a shed, among others. But how was the lot arranged? How was the house put together? And what could the artifacts tell us about the historic residents?

The Dovetail archaeological data recovery included three tasks: the excavation of large test units to sample the plow zone across the site, mechanical removal of the plow zone, and the excavation of a sample of subsurface features. The fieldwork uncovered over 300 features, more than 50,000 artifacts, and an abundance of data. Among the most notable features were the 1770s Houston house cellar, the appended kitchen root cellar, a possible stable/carriage house area, a kitchen work pad, a roasting pit, a later 1870s tenant house, and three wells (Figure 4).

### The Houston House Cellar and Kitchen Root Cellar (1770s–1870s)

The main house comprised two distinct features: a brick-lined house cellar (Feature 509) and an associated kitchen root cellar (Feature 667). In an 1865 FMFIC policy taken out by R. W. Mulford, resources on the property included a log house with an attached frame kitchen

valued at $600 (FMFIC Policy #2678). Although written almost 100 years after the parcel was first occupied by the Houstons, archaeology has confirmed that the main house and attached kitchen mentioned in the document were the original Houston home, which, indeed, comprised these structural elements.

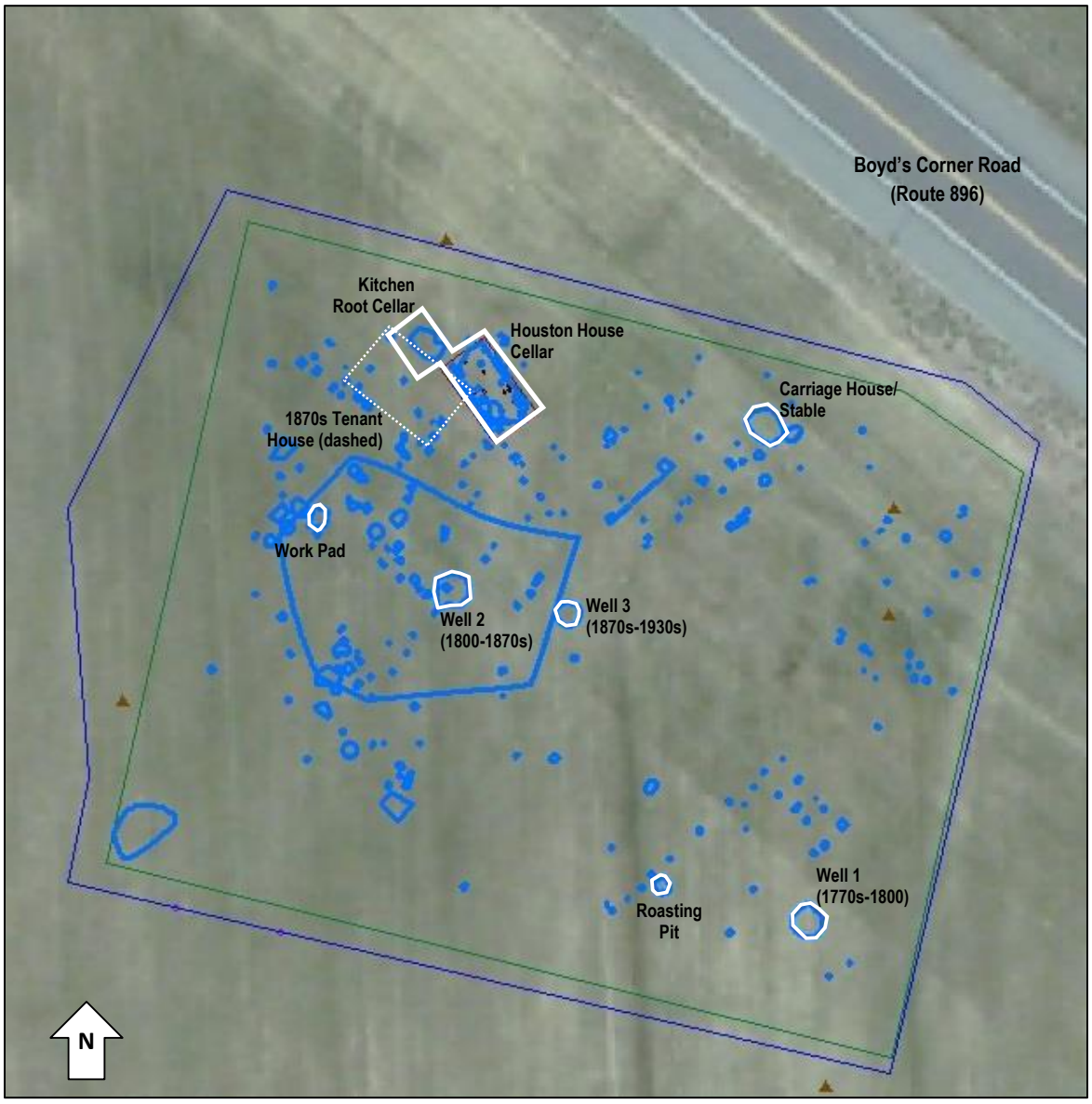


Figure 4: Notable Features at the Houston-LeCompt Site.

There were, in general, four levels or occupation periods within the cellar fill (Figures 5 and 6). The top level of cellar fill consisted of overburden: soils that were both purposefully deposited and that subsequently gradually accumulated over time to level out the slump left after cellar filling. A deconstruction layer containing dense rubble was underneath the overburden, full of bricks (whole, bats, and fragments) and uncut stone. This layer represented the late-1860s/1870s removal of the Houston home. Intact foundation walls were found directly below this rubble, approximately 8 inches (20 cm) below ground

surface. The walls of the cellar were formed of handmade brick fastened by mud mortar and laid in a Flemish bond, where bricks are laid in an alternating pattern of headers and stretchers. Purposeful cellar fill was found under the rubble and within the remaining intact cellar walls. The fourth and final layer was a living surface, located above the base of excavation.

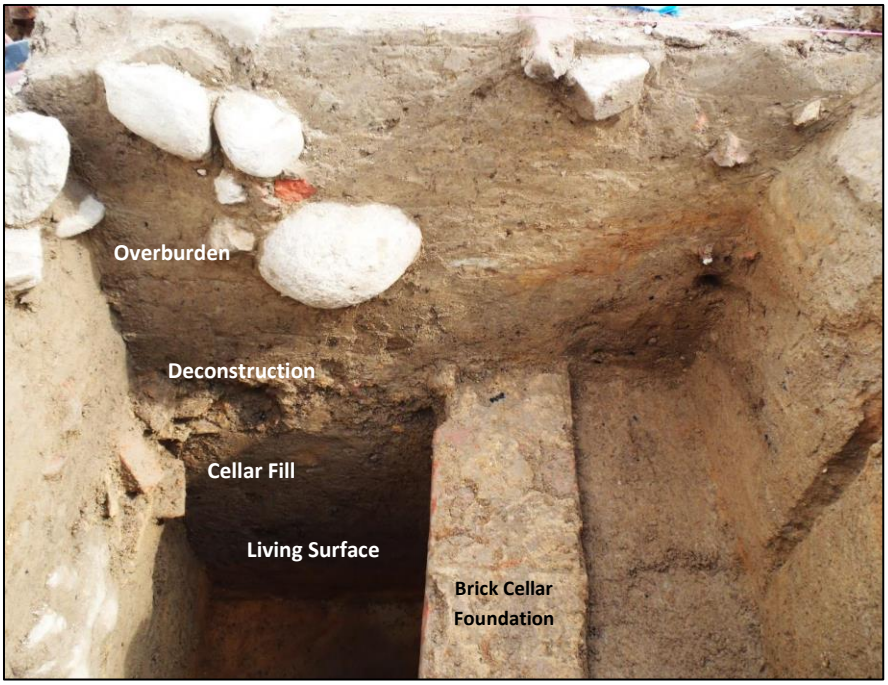


Figure 5: South Profile of EU 3 in the House Cellar (Feature 509).

Figure 6: Dovetail Staff Excavating Cellar, Looking Northwest.

Over 2,100 artifacts were collected in the house cellar. Organics (20 percent; n=365) consisted of oyster shell and bone from various animals. Ceramics spanning the early-eighteenth through the late-nineteenth century were recovered in a moderate amount (32 percent; n=582). Of the refined earthenwares, creamware was seen more frequently than the later-made pearlware. However, pearlware was recovered in notable amounts as was various types of glazed and slipped redware. Other types of ceramics found within the cellar were salt-glazed stoneware, tin-glazed earthenware, and Staffordshire slipware.

Architectural debris primarily consisted of handmade brick fragments, as well as smaller densities of wrought nails, mortar, plaster and window glass. Rough counts of the nails found in this location put the nail total at approximately 188 from Feature 509. Initially, this is a seemingly surprising number for a house cellar that includes a demolition layer, but actually fairly accurate given that the eighteenth-century house was of log construction, a method requiring very few nails in comparison to a frame home.

Immediately west of the main house and oriented at the same angle, a root cellar associated with the attached kitchen was excavated as Feature 667. The feature included both the actual wood-lined root cellar box and a larger surrounding construction hole excavated to build the root cellar box (Figure 7). The wood lining was first noted approximately 11.8 inches (30 cm) below the ground surface. Although most of the wood has disintegrated, a linear feature about 1inch (2.5 cm) in width with wood fragments represented the box location. Wood analysis determined the species as southern yellow pine (McKnight 2012). While archival documents clearly state that the kitchen was "attached" to the main house, the archaeological work could not determine if the kitchen was directly appended to the main structure or if an enclosed hyphen connected these two buildings.

**Houston Stable/Carriage House (1770s–circa 1900)**

Another building noted in historic records is a stable/carriage house. Mary Houston's 1797 tax roll lists her home, a stable, a barn and a crib amongst the extant structures on her property at that time. Although no conclusive evidence was noted during the excavation, an outbuilding contemporaneous with the main house was recorded east of the house and near the road that contained numerous equine artifacts. The outbuilding comprises a shallow pit (Feature 501) and numerous surrounding post holes likely marking the extent of this post-in-ground structure. An increase in gravels, charcoal, and corroded metal persisted throughout feature excavation.

Feature 501 contained 194 artifacts. The assemblage contained a relatively even distribution of ceramics, glass, metals, animal bone, architectural debris, and lithics. Bottle glass was found in a slightly higher concentration and was primarily represented by colorless bottle glass of various styles. Ceramics spanned the occupation of the site with creamware (1762–1820), pearlware (1779–1830), whiteware (1820–2000), yellowware (1830–1910), and ironstone (1840–2000) being recovered. Metal items consisted of an iron alloy handle and large ring (possibly horse tack), unidentifiable thick flat pressed metal fragments, and a brass barrel tap or spigot with "SI" or "ST" engraved on the top (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Plan of the Root Cellar, Looking West. White dashed line notes wooden cellar box liner.

**Work Pad and Roasting Pit (nineteenth century)**

South of the main house, the team relocated a feature originally documented by A&HC in 2010. Three test units were dug in this area during the Phase II study, revealing burned clay and oxidized soils. Circular in shape and measuring 2.6 feet (80 cm) in diameter, Feature 724 was excavated by Dovetail field crews to reveal burned clay and oxidized soils. At least 20 artifacts were collected during excavation, including ceramics, window glass, brick and nails. The presence of a charcoal layer, ash layer, oxidized soil and the location of this feature to the house cellar suggest that this area was continually exposed to heat. Excavation in the northwest quadrant revealed probable tri-pod leg features, indicative of a kettle stand

or some type of heating apparatus (Figure 9). Given this, it is probable that this feature represents an open summer kitchen and work area where various household activities were performed, such as candle and soap making, animal fat rendering, laundry, and general cooking on warm summer days.

Figure 8: Brass Barrel Tap/Spigot (Approximately 2 inches [5.1 cm] in length).


Figure 9: Work Pad/Possible Summer Kitchen Overview, Looking North.
Tri-pod holes can be seen in the upper-left quadrant.

Similarly, a probable early-nineteenth-century roasting pit (Feature 585) was identified southeast of the main house, immediately on the other side of what would have been a northeast-southwest fence line bounding the house lot. Designated a roasting pit due to the presence of an abundance of burned bone, wood and oxidized soil, over 42 artifacts were collected from the northeast and southeast quadrants, most of which were rather large in size compared to other fragments noted across the site. Excavated to a maximum depth of 1 foot (31 cm), the roasting pit was bordered by two post holes along the eastern edge. A whole turtle shell was noted at the bottom of the pit.

**LeCompt Tenant House (1870s–1930s)**

By the time James LeCompt purchased the property in 1865, the main dwelling was almost 100 years old. Tax records referred to the building as a "lil old frame house" during most of his ownership (NCC Tax Assessments). Archaeological excavations suggest that the cellar of the 1770s Houston house was filled in during the 1870s. This could have occurred during James LeCompt's ownership or upon purchase of the property by Harriet Houston in 1885. It appears that a new frame dwelling was erected in the same vicinity as the original Houston house, with the northeast corner of the foundation system intruding in the fill of the Houston house cellar. The high quantity of repair holes in this area emphasizes the poor architectural decision to place major structural elements within cellar fill!

The archaeological studies determined that the new post-in-ground tenant structure had a frame structural system, was fastened with cut nails with cut heads, and had a standing-seam metal roof. The interior walls were plastered, some of which were painted blue. Interestingly, several fragments of burned marble were also found in deposits related to this new building. It is possible that architectural decorative elements from the old Houston house were married into the new tenant house, such as fireplace surrounds or tiling.

**The Site's Three Wells**

The three wells at the site directly reflect the periods of site occupation (see Figure 4). The oldest well, located furthest from the main house, was used by Jacob and Mary Houston in the late-eighteenth century. The corner posts of this box-framed well were formed of white oak while the side and base planks were made from southern yellow pine. Some framing members still retain their original fastening pegs. This well was only used for a few decades, likely rendered impractical due to its excessive distance from the house. It was filled in around 1800.

The Houston's constructed their second well much closer to their dwelling. Also a box-frame system, the white oak corner posts were cleaved and pinned. A 4-inch thick (10 cm) wood base slab functioned as a filter to help keep the sandy soil out of the water. Lime, found all around the well, was used to help purify the deposits.

By the 1870s, the original Houston log house was demolished, and a new frame building was erected on the site of the original home. To accompany this update, the second well was infilled and a new well was constructed. This new edifice, just east of the second well, was the ultimate in recycling. An old yellow pine wood barrel was used as the base of the well

shaft in lieu of a box frame, and the upper shaft was formed of handmade brick salvaged from the original Houston house cellar before demolition (Figure 10). The sturdy form of the brick-lined well, the third on the site, provided accessible water for 60 years. When the later dwelling was demolished in the 1930s to make way for additional crop land, the occupants turned to the third well as a convenient spot for architectural refuse. Pressed roofing tin, cut stone, and other materials packed the upper stratum, thus preserving the well remains below.

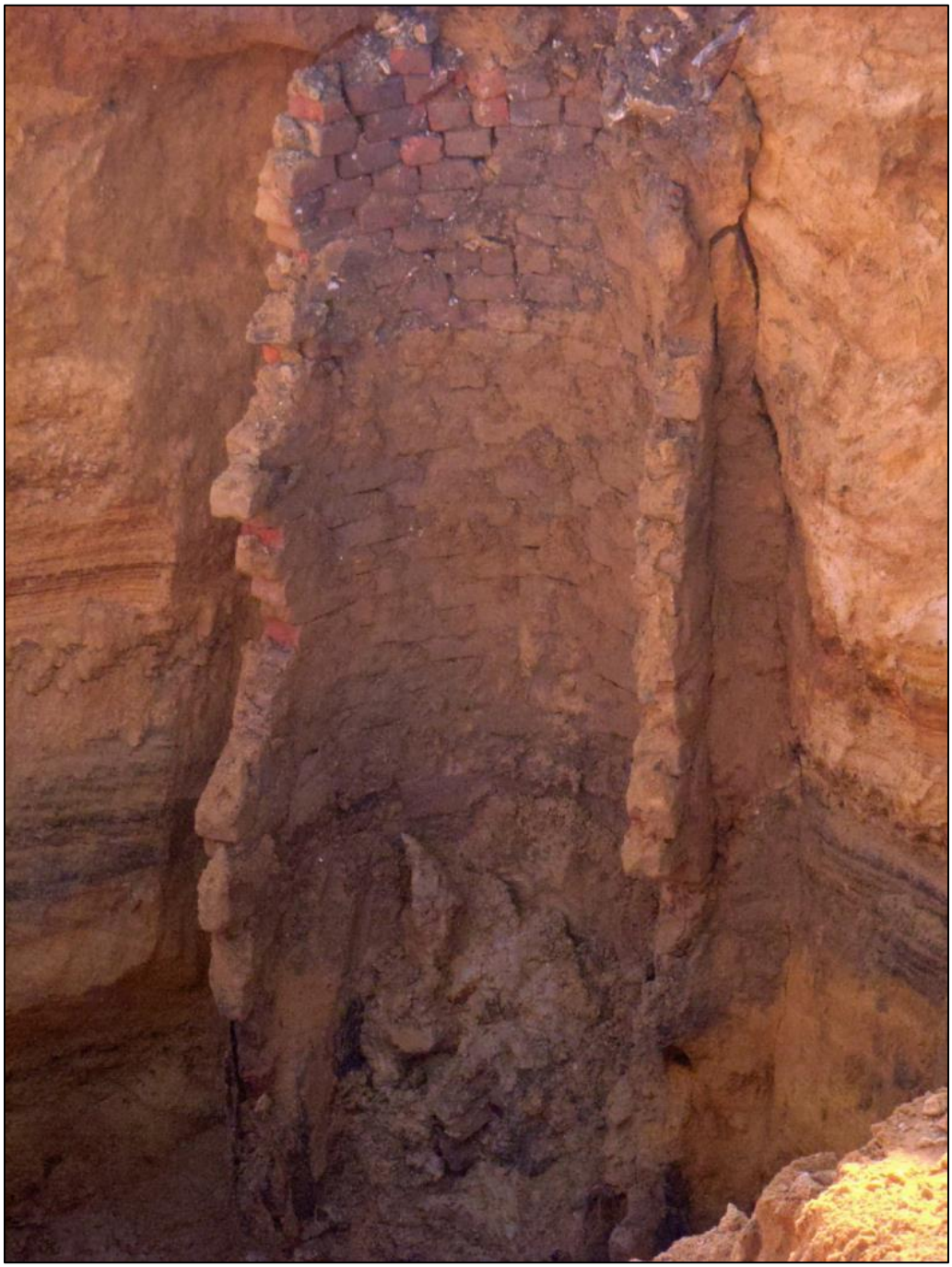

Figure 10: Post-1865 (Latest) Well. Note the Barrel base and the use of handmade bricks robbed from the Houston cellar for the shaft.

Dovetail retained 14 wood samples from the wells for temporary conservation. The wood is cleaned by hand weekly and re-submerged in clean water in specially designed tubs awaiting conservation and curation.

## ARTIFACTS TELL THE REAL TALE

Over 11,000 artifacts were recovered from the Phase III excavation at the Houston-LeCompt site. Many of the artifacts are typical for a site that spans three centuries. Ceramics fragments of various types of redware, creamware, pearlware, and whiteware were recovered in pieces large and small, many of which were mendable (Figures 11 and 12). Additional artifacts include low densities of nails and window glass, which coincides with the known log construction of the eighteenth-century home.

Personal effects, especially adornment pieces, were found in rather high quantities from both the Houston period (1779–1849) and the tenant farmer occupation (1849–1930s) (Figures 13 and 14). In particular, sleeve links were found not only during the Phase III but also during the Phase I and II surveys. The recovery of items such as sleeve links can be of particular interest because they offer insight on consumer choice. The turquoise sleeve link in Figure 13 found at the Houston-LeCompt site is very similar to ones found at George Washington's Ferry Farm in Fredericksburg, Virginia and the African Burial Ground in New York City (Bianco et al. 2006). Other notable artifacts include bone utensil handles, furniture hardware, and a plethora of coins (Figures 15–18).

Figure 11: Lead-Glazed Redware Chamber Pot (8-inch [20.3-cm] diameter).

Figure 12: Sample of Different Ceramic Types. From Top Left Clockwise: Petaled Redware, Enameled Creamware with Floral Motif, Pearlware Finial, Slipped Redware (Fragments approximately 0.5–2 inches [1.3–5.1 cm)

Figure 13: Mid-Eighteenth Century Sleeve Links (0.6 and 0.57 inches [1.5 and 1.4 cm]).

Figure 14: Stone (1-inch [2.5-cm]), and Sleeve Link with Inset Missing. (0.7-inch [1.7 cm]).

Figure 15: William and Mary-Styled Escutcheon Plate, 1680–1720 (4 inches [10.1 cm).

Figure 16: William and Mary-Styled Drawer Pull (6 inches [15.2 cm]).

Figure 17: Carved Bone Handles (Top- 5 inches [12.7 cm]; bottom- 3.5 inches [8.9 cm]).

Figure 18: 1737 George II Coin (1.1-inch [2.8-cm] diameter).

While this assemblage initially appears typical for a historic domestic site, the near absence of two particular items commonly found in high quantities on comparable sites puzzled archaeologists during the fieldwork. The collection shows a very low density of pipe bowls/stems and wine bottle glass, a commonly found artifact type. While wine bottle glass and smoking-related artifacts were recovered to some degree, the near paucity has spurred some questions. Is it possible that the residents stayed away from smoking and drinking by choice? Or did Mary Houston prohibit such activities during her reign of the home? As Dovetail works through the artifact identification process that information will be woven with the historic research to shed light on the lives of the different residents of the Houston-LeCompt site (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Portion of White Clay Effigy Pipe Bowl. Apparent Native American profile (Approximately 1.5 inches [3.8 cm]).

## THE COMMON BECOMES UNIQUE: THE LOST HISTORY OF A RURAL FARM

Together, the archival research and the archaeological data recovery determined that the site was continually occupied for almost 200 years. An abundance of information was gathered on the built environment of early Delaware residents, the materiality of nineteenth-century tenancy, and the transition to a twentieth-century mechanized farmstead. Although the parcel may have been occupied as early as the 1730s, the earliest features on the site date to the late-eighteenth century Houston occupation. Jacob Houston and enslaved laborers built a two-story log home over a brick-lined cellar. A stone fireplace adorned one of the building's elevations. The dwelling was later clad in weatherboard. Outbuildings were constructed to support the daily operation of the inhabitants and their farming operation, including a carriage house/stable, corn crib, barn, kitchen, and well. Some structures proved to be a success, while others provided a learning experience as the occupants grew to understand their natural environment. The original well, placed far from the home and down a hill, was only used for a few decades—its distance from the dwelling and placement in bottom lands adjacent to a continually inundated wetland rendering it unsatisfactory. Fence lines crossed the land, dividing the house lot from the surrounding agricultural fields.

Although this part of Delaware was not extensively populated at this time, the Houston family did have several "neighbors." The Jamisons, Rothwells and Reeds all lived on nearby plantations, and small rural dwellings lined many of the area's primary transportation routes. Most are now gone. Only a handful of the larger, more elaborate homes remain (Figure 20). While these elite dwellings represent a significant part of the area's historic population, like many regions, they present a very skewed view of residential life of area farm families. The vast majority of people lived in a home that was much smaller and less ornate than those that have been retained. As such, everyday homes, once commonplace, are now unique on the central Delaware landscape.


Figure 20: Rothwell House on Boyd's Corner Road.
The right section was built in the early-nineteenth century.

The tidy complex was owned by members of the Houston family until 1849. Richard Mulford, James LeCompt and Harriet Houston, all owners of the land in the second half of the nineteenth century, used the parcel as an investment property, renting the home lot and agricultural fields to tenant farmers. Unfortunately, we do not know the tenant's names. But we know a great deal about their daily consumption, their home, and their attempts to eke out a living as their worlds changed. Late-nineteenth century central Delaware transformed with the world around them as road systems improved, technology was embraced, and new communities were founded at newly established crossroads, such as Middletown to the south, established in 1860. Gradually, these improvements—once a benefit to the tenant farmer—became the undoing of this rural way of life. No longer could the tenant live amongst his crops in small dwellings. The land once used as the homelot quickly became valuable agricultural property in its own right, and improvements in transportation allowed the farmer to live farther from their crops. Small farmstead dwellings were demolished and

replaced with harvested fields. This was the fate of the Houston-LeCompt site, as the 1870s tenant house and surrounding outbuildings were demolished in the 1930s and the land was quickly planted.

Beyond the data on landscape changes, the dig at the Houston-LeCompt site distinctly stares down the pervading trope of the unkempt rural farmer. Personal adornments and high-end decorative items dominated the artifact collection. From jewelry and hair pieces to escutcheon plates and pickle plate, both the Houstons and the late-nineteenth century tenant farmers surrounded themselves with material goods above what their social status would otherwise suggest. Several studies have been done correlating the increase of material possessions such as knick-knacks with emancipated African-Americans after the Civil War (see, e.g., Mullins 1999) and in the early-twentieth century Ozarks (Brandon nd), but no similar studies have been conducted in this portion of Delaware or the surrounding Delmarva region. Moreover, the high percentage of upper-end material remains at this site does not just correspond to late-nineteenth century technological changes in material production and availability, but rather it starts in the late-eighteenth century and continues for 200 years. The tradition of expansive materiality at this site is long and vast, pervading ownership type and farming milieus. The reason is unknown.

Continued research on the Houston-LeCompt area history and the archaeological findings will render more details on the 200-year occupation of this site. Beyond its tale about the Houstons and its tenant occupants, the data can be married with other studies from this region to begin to explore material signatures among the emerging historic central Delaware middle class—a group that has been somewhat marginalized in written histories but not forgotten.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would, first and foremost, not have been completed without the support and guidance of the Delaware Department of Transportation. A&HC began this adventure and initially identified the site. Their records and field notes allowed us to rediscover the features and find more information on the site's history. The fieldwork was done by a relentless Dovetail crew, who continued digging on 100 degree days. Lastly, several members of the Archaeological Society of Delaware and the general public came out to the site to help with the excavation and support our efforts. A huge thank you goes out to you all!

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# A QUAKER FARMSTEAD IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY: RESEARCH AT THE TAYLOR BURYING GROUND SITE (36-CH-117) REVEALING CHANGES IN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND CULTURE DURING THE AGRARIAN-INDUSTRIAL TRANSITION

**Marshall Joseph Becker**
19 West Barnard Street
West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19383
Mbecker@wcupa.edu

## ABSTRACT

*Ethnohistoric reconstruction of a past society depends on the use of anthropological models. The analysis of the vast numbers of historical documents recording events in every county in the Delaware Valley is a daunting task. Archaeological investigations provide additional information, further complicating the process of analyzing the data. Archaeological materials, however, are essential to the verification of hypotheses established through other research procedures. The archaeological record often offers unexpected views of the lifeways of peoples of the past.*

*Numerous questions concerning settlement patterns of farmers, as well as inheritance, descent and family relations during the later Colonial (1680–1787) and early Federal (1788–circa 1850) Period, may be considered through examination of data gathered from a single farm and its cemetery. During a brief but intensive salvage excavation prior to land development, and linked to historical investigations for the Colonial farmstead, evidence was gathered that sheds much light on agrarian life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Excavations at the Taylor Burying Ground site (36-CH-117) provided direct biological evidence of nutrition and status of Quaker settlers through subsequent studies of the skeletal remains of these people. However, to understand the basic biological situation, some knowledge of the specific individuals involved was gathered. Significant genealogical research revealed the complexities in relationships, reproduction and inheritance. From the historical record we also needed to distinguish the members of the Taylor family of Westtown Township from another, apparently more prosperous, Taylor family living north of the area that became incorporated as the borough of West Chester in Pennsylvania.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1969, students living in a colonial farm house in Westtown Township, Chester County and dating from the period circa 1720–1730 reported that the owner planned to sell the entire tract

to developers. The existing tract was nearly identical to the original 200-acre (80.9-ha) property bought by one Thomas Taylor at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The purchasing Thomas Taylor was not the first Thomas in the line, which is traced to Worthenbury in Flintshire, Wales and may then have included many earlier generations of Thomas Taylors. Soon after study began in 1969 we located a lineal Thomas Taylor, perhaps the fifteenth or sixteenth in the family with this name in America, and his son Thomas, then about nine or 10 years of age. The tract had been purchased by the immigrant Thomas or his elder son, also Thomas, as part of William Penn's great real estate enterprise, or land development program (cf. Kilikoff 2000). The 200 acres (80.9 ha) of the original purchase had largely remained in the hands of the family of the original family until circa 1927. The original stone house and a larger but somewhat later house were threatened with destruction. During early archival research note was made of a cemetery, later found to date from at least 1751. All these features were threatened by any large scale development effort.

The first goal of this research project was to establish who inhabited this specific plot of land and to document how they lived through archaeological and archival research (see Becker nd A). This project expanded to include a listing of who was buried in the "farm cemetery" (private burying ground) on this property. Together these data may provide a basis for ethnohistoric reconstruction of a family, and a way of life, in an area where Quakers once formed the dominant ethnic group. At this time I note that the specific meeting to which the Thomas Taylor family belonged has not been confirmed, but it is believed to have been the Birmingham Meeting, not far from the Taylor farm under discussion. By the 1750s the Quaker population of which the Taylors had been part was regularly marrying out of meeting, breaking down the ethnic boundaries once so important to this tight community. While participation in the French and Indian War (1755–1763) is not yet documented among specific people in southern Chester County, members of this Taylor family were very active in the American Revolution. This added to the serious strains within the community, strains that had originated before 1750. By the 1800s these Taylors had become complexly intermingled with people from other Christian denominations. The Taylors also were embedded within an economy that was rapidly overshadowed by the Industrial Revolution.

## RESEARCH AT THE TAYLOR BURYING GROUND SITE (36-CH-117): PRELIMINARY NOTES

A two-story, four-room Colonial Period stone house and the remains of several outbuildings located in Westtown Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania attracted archaeological attention when the owner indicated that he believed the house to be one of the oldest in this area. A long abandoned graveyard associated with the farmstead later was located. The site is situated north of Pennsylvania Route 926 and east of Pennsylvania Route 202, in the center of an area where original land grants date from the time of William Penn's original charter. The site location, along the upper reaches of the Chester Creek, also provides an opportunity to compare a farm community of the period with mill communities at present being investigated further down on the same waterway (Wallace 1972) (Figure 1).

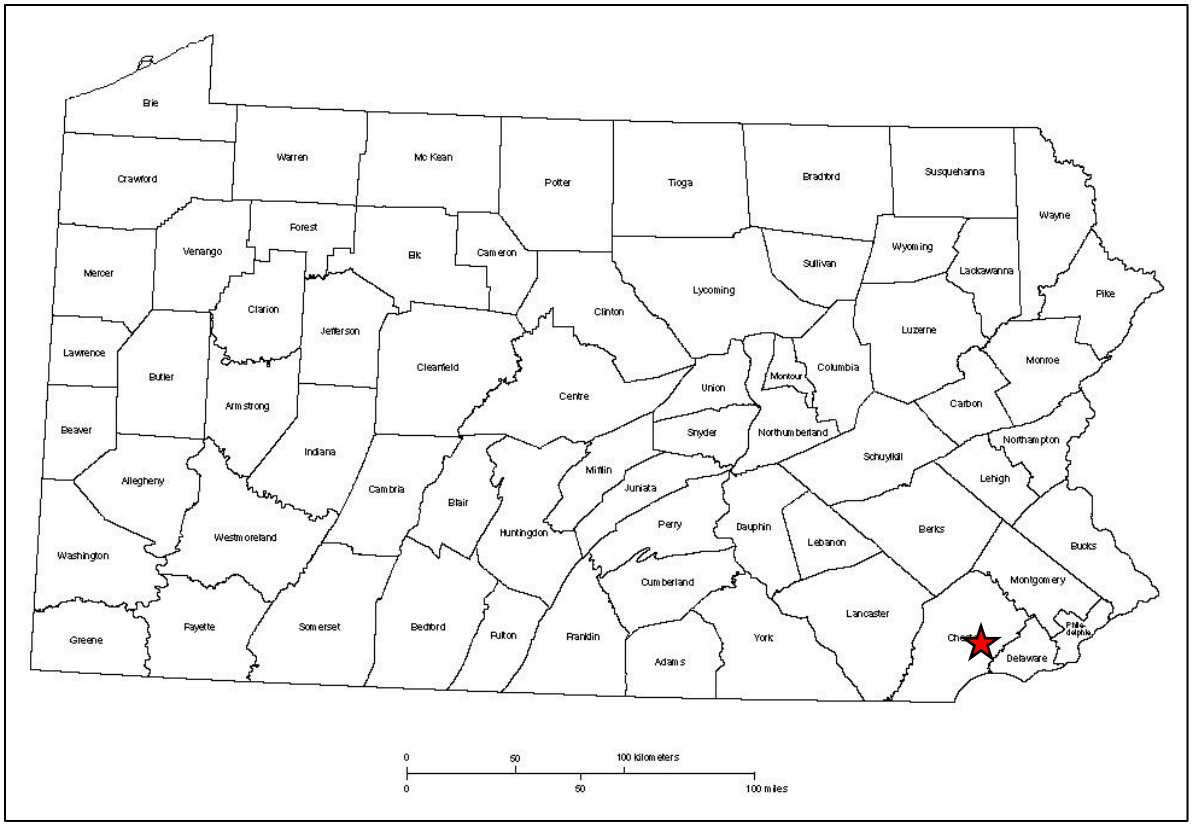


Figure 1: Westtown Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania (Base: Yellow Maps 2013).

Preliminary investigations at this site included two phases. First, an historic account of the land, through cadastral survey, was undertaken. Parallel research in the archives enabled us to compile considerable information about the owners of this property as well as some information about immediate neighbors. Second, an archaeological survey and excavations were undertaken answer problems posed by data collected in the first phase of the research. In particular, questions concerning mortuary behavior in Chester County were explored and compared with the archaeological evidence from the site. The ethnohistorical and archaeological data were continually compared. The reference materials at the Chester County Historical Society (CCHS) are largely unpublished and are cited here by the file name at the CCHS. The author collected photocopies of documents relating to the Taylor family and discovered some new examples in private hands. A list of these will appear at a later date. The preliminary reference sources for the various Taylor families were Futhey and Cope (1881) and a typed but anonymous manuscript entitled "Descendants of Thomas Taylor and Frances Yardley," which is in the Taylor Family file (CCHS). Together with Futhey and Cope this manuscript provided a rudimentary outline for the Taylor genealogy. Subsequently, most of the material was verified or corrected through the use of original sources (wills, deeds, etc.). Some details remain undocumented from original sources.

Five research objectives were developed during the first phase of study. These areas of archaeological and documentary inquiry were as follows:

1. Recording the stone structure by survey and drawings. Search for foundations of original outbuildings.

2. Locating outbuildings mentioned in wills and other documents, as well as features not indicated in the historic literature. The "barn", torn down early in this century, is noted as a milking shed in some documents, and, on the basis of excavations, appeared indeed to have been an open-sided shed rather than an enclosed "barn", or structure with four walls.

3. Locating the cemetery that had fallen into disuse by the 1870s. The original stone wall surrounding the cemetery (Marshall Jones, pers. comm. 1971) had been obliterated during the early 1920s. The recovery of a skeletal population became a major focus of this project, in order to record biological information to augment a reconstruction of the account of the farm and the community of which it was part. The limited cemetery excavations were conducted as a salvage project. Specific data on changing burial patterns from the Colonial to Federal Periods was sought.

4. Reconstructing area demography, social structure and changes in social organization during the past 300 years.

5. Determining the interaction between this farm population and the urban areas before and during the period of the American Revolution.

The last three of these questions required that a genealogy be constructed for the Taylor family resident on this land for well over 200 years. Space limitations prevent this extensive genealogy (see Becker nd) from being included here. The general program of genealogical research had to be extended to other residents who had lived on the Taylor property or on nearby farms, as some of these people are documented as having been buried in the graveyard. Only by identifying specific individuals as historic figures can one determine with accuracy what was happening on the site. Furthermore, these terminal activities of the residents—their deaths and burials—may be investigated by archaeological as well as historic techniques, giving considerable dimension to the ethnohistoric data elicited from the documents.

## PRELIMINARY SITE CONSIDERATIONS: THE LAND

Quite possibly the sons of the original Thomas Taylor, father of the first Taylor to own the Westtown tract, settled in Thornbury about 1700. No record exists of the place of death or burial of this Thomas Taylor, who died in 1705, but it certainly is not in Westtown since the lands there were purchased by his son Philip much later. Quite possibly Thomas, the father of the two Taylor boys, may never have left England. Philip Taylor (1680–1732) purchased the 200-acre (80.9-ha) tract in Westtown in 1719.

> Richard Whitpaine, of London, butcher, purchased a large amount of land in Pennsylvania, some of which was located in what is now Montgomery County, where there is a township bearing the name. His land in Westtown extended from the present School Farm westward to the Collett tract. He died in 1689, whereupon his creditors assumed the care of his lands in Pennsylvania. The survivor conveyed to Wm. Aubrey in trust, and he, in the next year (1713) to

> Rees Thomas, of Merion, and Anthony Morris, Jr., of Philadelphia, brewer, to whom patent was granted by the commissioners of property, July 10, 1718. Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris conveyed a 1/3 interest in the land to John Whitpaine, of Philadelphia, grandson of Richard of London; and he dying, his widow and executrix disposed of his interest in the land, by deeds of lease and release, to settlers. Thus on March 30 and 31, 1719, she sold an undivided third part of 400 acres to James Gibbons, to whom, on the same dates, R. Thomas and A. Morris conveyed the other 2/3 interest. The said parties also sold to Thomas Mercer 401 acres west of Gibbons; to Richard Eavenson, 219; to John Yearsley, 290; to Philip Taylor, 200; and Joseph Hunt, 252 1/2 acres adjoining Collett's line. (Futhey and Cope 1881: 17; emphasis added).

Philip's son John inherited this 200-acre (80.9-ha) tract in 1732 (at age 23), thereby becoming the founder of the family in Westtown. John (1709?– ?) had already married by 1729, and he and his wife may have been living on the Westtown property in 1732 when he inherited it. An alternate possibility is that John and his wife were in residence with the Taylor family in Thornbury until the house at Westtown was finished. The stone house may date from about 1730. The disposition of the land over more than 100 years is largely within the Taylor family. However, by 1860, a farm map indicates that the land is largely farmed or occupied by S. Hulme. The Few family appears to have been resident in the southwestern corner of the original tract, but who they are and where they came from is not yet known. By 1873 James Rhoads had purchased most of the land, but the residence of Stephen Taylor is noted in the southwestern corner of the tract which was once all property of the Taylor family. In 1883 Moses Taylor held only the 21 acres (8.5 ha) in the southwestern corner of the original tract. James Smithe then held a larger plot in the northeastern corner, and James Rhoads owned 172 acres (69.6 ha) of the original 200 acres (80.9 ha). Early in the 1900s, most of this land came into the possession of the Jones family. In 1969 Marshall Jones, who sold his acreage in 1972, graciously extended his permission to survey and to conduct excavations on the property during the final years of his ownership, and then during a brief tenancy prior to the initiation of the development of the tract.

## THE ORIGINAL STONE HOUSE, OUTBUILDING, AND CEMETERY

Of the small stone house that appears to have been the first built on the property, little is known. It probably dates from about 1730, based on architectural style and the period during which the land is first cleared and cultivated. This house, situated in a low spot just below the hill on which the cemetery later was located, may have been built over the spring that still flowed in the 1970s. The inventory of the estate of Thomas Taylor (1757?–1811) made on April 6, 1811 notes a back room downstairs, two rooms upstairs (small room, front room) and a kitchen. However, this kitchen may be the downstairs front room, or it may be an attached cooking shed built of wood. Two other constructions were noted in the 1811 inventory: a shed with loft and a milk house with loft. We now suspect that the “shed” noted in 1811 was a large, open fronted building that served as a barn which stood immediately adjacent to the house (Figure 2).

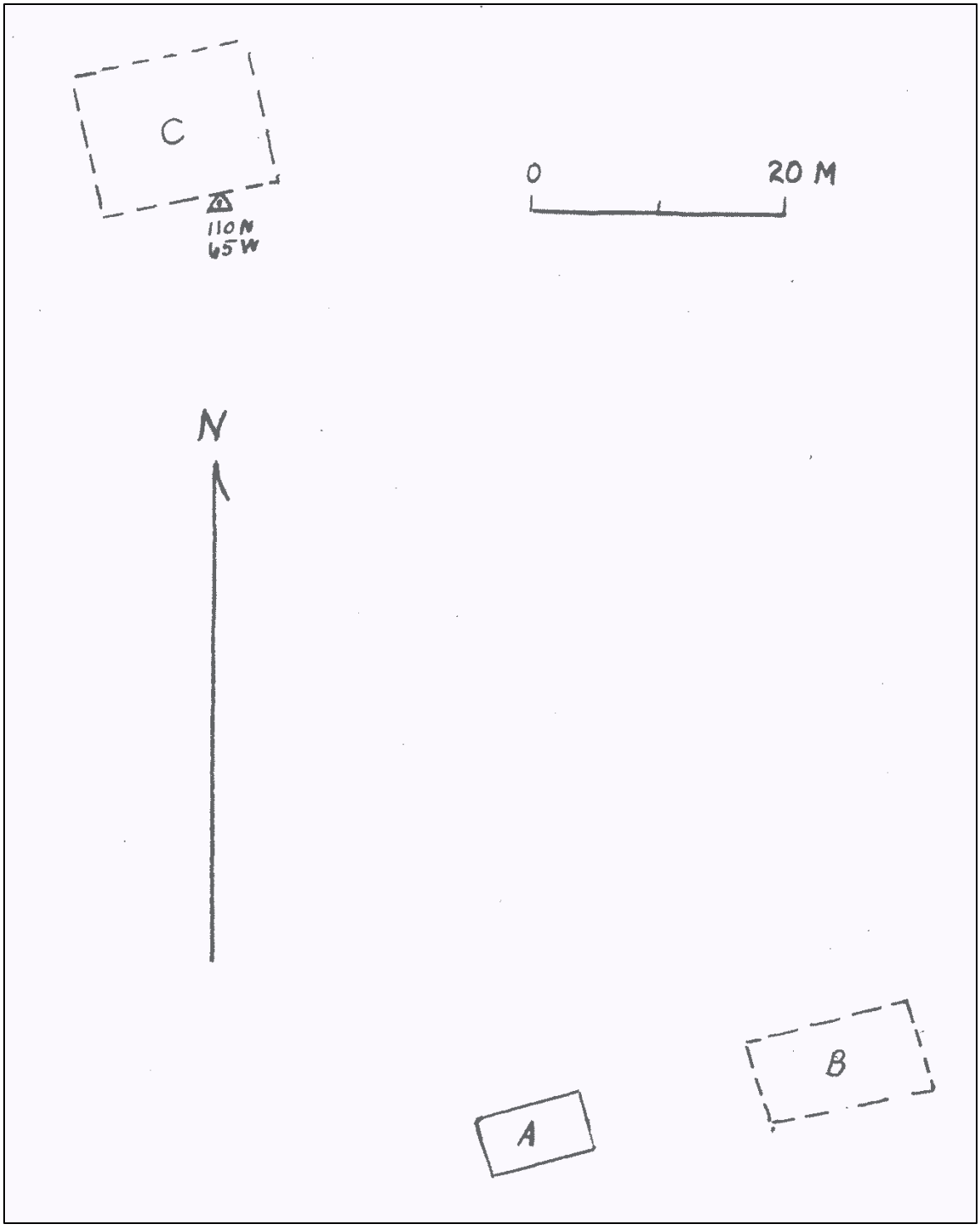


Figure 2: Plan Locating the Taylor house (A) at an Elevation of 375.7 feet (114.5 m), Built Over a Spring. The cellar was dug down to level of that spring and functioned as a "spring house." The shed-barn (B), located to the east of the house, was placed on a level area at a location nearly 10 feet (3 m) lower than the house. The cemetery (C) was located 262.5 feet (80 m) up the hill to the north of the house, at 388.1 feet (118.3 m) elevation.

I had thought that our testing program around the original stone house would reveal foundations of what seemed to be a major structure, the shed with loft. This was not the case. The discovery of the stone foundations for the posts (only) of the structure identified in the document as a "shed" resulted from judicious observation of the "landscape" surrounding the original stone house. Searching on foot in the vicinity of the house for the shed and milk house noted in 1811, I noted that a large oval area, larger than the footprint of the stone house, was indicated by unusually lush weed growth. Inferring this to be the location of a typical dirt-floored barn, we initiated a brief exploration along a rectangular plot within the overgrown oval. The long axis of the inferred structure ran east-west. A series of small stone foundation pillars were soon identified, and interpreted as supports for the posts on which a large "shed" or open-fronted barn had stood. The north wall and sides were certainly closed, but the south side may have been open or sealed with large doors.

Of particular note in the testing around the original farmhouse was an apparent absence of any features that could be called middens. The area immediately outside the rear door had a low density of small redware ceramic bits, in a pattern that extended for perhaps 10 feet (3 m). This "concentration" appears to reflect use of broken wares to surface the path that led away from the house, perhaps toward an outhouse. At no other location did we encounter even single sherds, let alone any assemblage of artifacts that would reflect regular discards. This pattern was also the case with West Chester University test excavations at the circa 1704 Brinton house, located about 2.2 miles (4 km) to the south of the Taylor Farm. The Brinton site had been settled perhaps as early as 1685, with the manor house occupied by 1704. Extensive testing in search of the earlier habitation on the site was remarkable for the paucity of artifacts recovered.

At the Taylor site a larger stone house was built on higher ground than the original at a later date—high on the hill overlooking the spring and the original stone house (Figures 3 and 4). The larger house is noted in the will of Job Taylor (1770–1845). I now believe that the later and larger house was probably built by 1785, a date possibly confirmed by data from the glass tax. A number of elements in the architecture of this house, such as rounded margins in the walls at the sides of window apertures, had at first led me to infer a date of construction in the early 1800s. The various architectural elements of an earlier period I originally believed reflected culture lag in this farm area. This later farmhouse, which was still standing south of the original house until the land was "developed," had numerous additions that submerged the original structure. I now believe that this structure was built toward the end of the eighteenth century, leading me to assign a date of about 1785.

Linda Stine (pers. comm. 2010) notes that in the American South earlier structures might become the kitchen to a later house built at a close distance, or converted to a slave dwelling. I have no record of this progression from this Chester County, but verbal reports of such sequences abound in southeastern Pennsylvania. The Taylor farm had what may be considered a variation of this theme, in the progression of "function" in the use of structures. Stine's important observations regarding the sequence of function in farm buildings may have relevance at the Taylor site. Marshall Jones, who was the owner of this Taylor tract in 1970 (pers. comm. 1970), noted that around 1920, when his parents purchased the property, "negro tenant farmers" were living in the smaller stone house that was the original farm house. These people may have been descendants of slaves from this area or immigrants from the South.

Nowhere in the records of the Taylor family have we found any mention of slaves. As Jones recalled, these tenant farmers occupied that house until about 1945. Neither Jones nor anyone who was still resident in the area in 1973 recalled the names of these tenants. No further effort was made to gain information relating to this family through a review of census information or local records, but their lives merit a separate study. The original stone farmhouse never had indoor plumbing or piped water of any type, even when occupied by students in the 1970s. Those students, in effect, replaced the tenant farmers in providing a resident workforce that could be called upon during times of need, such as during the harvest.

Figure 3: A House of Similar Form and Date to the Taylor Farm House, also Located in Southeastern Pennsylvania (Raymond 1977:plate 68). The house shown by Raymond is identified as a tenant house at Warwick Furnace, also in Chester County. Raymond's collection of photographs reveals that every variation on this construction theme had been used in this region. She photographed two to two-and-a-half story houses with one to four bays, indicating that they were common throughout the region. The larger, more manorial versions of these English structures tend to have survived to this day.

After careful consideration of their possible historical significance, both of these stone buildings were torn down by the developers in 1974. At that time the entire area scheduled for "development" was re-contoured in an extensive operation that obliterated the surface of the entire area around the site. The cemetery area, lying on higher ground, was preserved by the developers, who recognized its archaeological significance at a time when other developers could ignore these matters. The surface, however, was so extensively altered that I could not recognize any of the original features of the land.

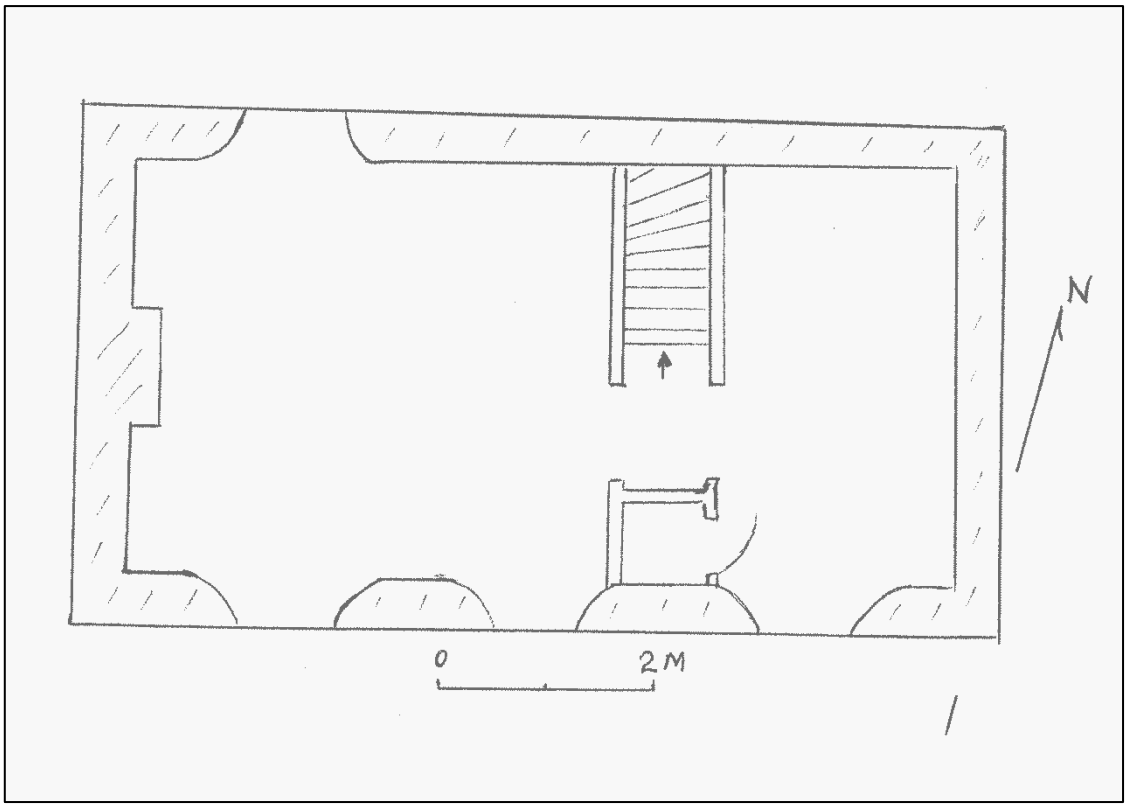


Figure 4: Plan of the Second Floor of the Circa 1720 Taylor Farm House. The house at this elevation measured 27.6 by 15.4 feet (8.4 by 4.7 m). The second floor had three windows at the front (south side) and one at the rear or northern surface. The window openings had curved walls. The stairway, curved at the bottom, divided the area into two rooms, the larger twice the size of the smaller. A closet set against the south wall and between two windows was directly opposite the stairway. The closet door opened into the smaller room. The front central window was somewhat narrower than the other three windows. The only chimney, with fireplaces on both floors, was centered at the west end.

## FOCUS ON THE CEMETERY

After testing in the area of the original stone farm house, and locating the adjacent "shed," test excavations were directed toward locating the cemetery area. In addition to attempting an ethnohistoric reconstruction of the culture(s) in which the Taylor family participated, consideration was given to an archaeological salvage excavation of the long abandoned cemetery. The cemetery on the property was noted in several documents and also appears on early maps of the farms in this area. This phase of the research not only fixed the location of the cemetery, but also provided a relatively specific project that could be handled by a small and closely supervised student field crew. The crew members rapidly gained experience and several went on to careers in archaeology. Each feature of the cemetery was to be treated as a separate unit to be located, plotted into the site map, drawn, and excavated. In theory, each student could learn basic field techniques from each burial situation.

The cemetery at the Taylor farm was situated on a level area of higher ground, up the hill from the house, in a location that must have been cleared of forest at a date soon after the tract was purchased. Earlier burials may have been made at this location, but the first recorded example

known is dated from 1751. As is invariably the case in archaeology, what we found in the ground differed vastly from what had been expected. Rather than locating well-spaced and discrete graves we found at least three "ragged" rows of individuals in "stacked" graves (Figure 5). Each "grave" was a general location having four or five or more coffins buried one above the other. We should consider that this now "open" landscape was entirely uncleared land in 1700. For anyone who has wrested "open" space out of a forest, using only hand tools and pigs plus oxen, the value of each square foot of cleared or "developed" land can be appreciated. Stacked graves in early Chester County, where the clearing of land and the building of a stone fence were labor intensive, were matters intended to save considerable effort. Cleared land was as valuable on the Taylor farm as it was in the City of Philadelphia, where the stacking of graves in cemeteries was also common.

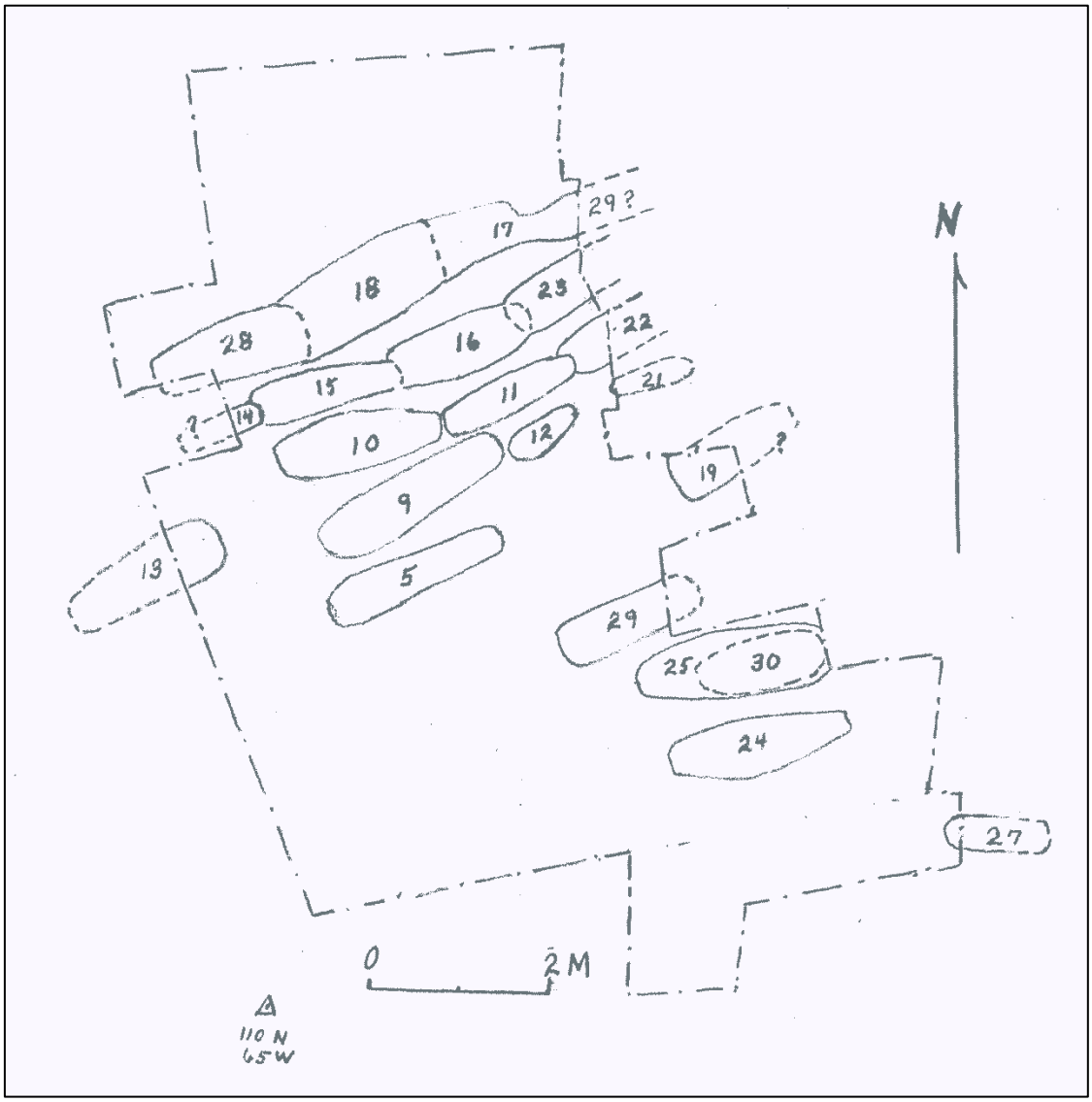


Figure 5: Plan of the Excavated Portion of the Cemetery Revealing the Extent to which Later Graves Were Cut Through the Heads and Feet of Earlier Graves. The stacking of graves, up to five deep, here is only suggested by Burial 25, overlying Burial 30. Modern farm activities influenced the pattern of grave excavation.

A more interesting and totally unexpected feature of the Taylor cemetery was the extent to which the feet and even the heads of these individuals had been cut off by subsequent grave digging operations (Figure 6). We found only a few of the later (uppermost) graves to be relatively intact, with the earlier and lower examples extensively damaged by later intrusions. The pragmatic people using this cemetery placed an emphasis on disposing of the dead with the least expenditure of any cleared area, land that could be used for planting. In order to conserve valuable cleared land, graves generally were stacked five deep, and crammed side by side in a series of rows. The moist soils quickly dissolved the organic aspects of these interments and soon turned bones and wooden coffins to soft, easily cut materials. Hydration of the bones, in addition to the damage done by the acidic soils that demineralized the bones, rapidly created a situation where the local grave diggers usually encountered bones that were indistinguishable from the surrounding earth, as I can attest from extensive experience in the excavation and analysis of graves (e. g. Becker 1992b, 2005). In effect, the excavators of these grave shafts could not easily identify any earlier grave from the wood of the coffin, if any had been used, or the bone of the skeleton. Thus only a skilled field crew could detect these grave features, by a thin line of color that traced the remains of coffin wood, in those cases where a coffin was used, and to map in all finds of rust from the iron nails that reflect the pattern revealing the size and shape of the coffins (cf. LeeDecker 2001) (Figure 7).

The speed with which these graves "returned" these bones to the earth, and the regularity of the "stacking" of the graves reveals a great deal about the order in which the burials were made! We suspect that these colonists identified a new "individual" grave site, and dug down to about 6 feet (1.8 m) in order to place the first burial. The next person to be interred in this cemetery would have been buried directly above the first, where the coffin or board covering was as yet intact and easily identified by grave diggers. This "procedure" would continue until that grave site was "filled." The next adjacent grave site would then be identified and dug to the "full" depth for the first of the graves at that location. And so the burials continued until the entire row of grave locations had been filled. At that point, many years later, the grave diggers would return to a location at the far end (beginning) of the original row. The intervening years had allowed the original stack of coffins and their contents to become so "at one" with the soil that they could not be easily recognized. In an effort to conserve space, the second row of graves would have been placed tight against the feet of the people in the first row. Presumable the feet of the occupants of the original row would be cut off without being noticed by the grave diggers. Complete excavation of this cemetery could provide the evidence needed to identify the earliest from the latest graves and to reconstruct the sequence in order. Comparisons of the age and sex information within this sequence with our genealogical evidence might enable us to identify specific individuals.

This series of interments was seen as providing means by which temporal differences could be distinguished by some seriation technique, such as through the accompanying shroud pins or other items buried with these people. With some idea as to where the interments fit in time an attempt might be made to identify specific individuals known through our ethnohistoric statement. Furthermore, the period 1750 to 1850 overlaps some of the more significant periods in local history including change from Colonial to Federal Periods, from agrarian to industrial technologies, and most interestingly for this family, a shift from Quaker to Baptist religion. The possibility of recognizing these changes in mortuary customs also provided an incentive to salvage this area.

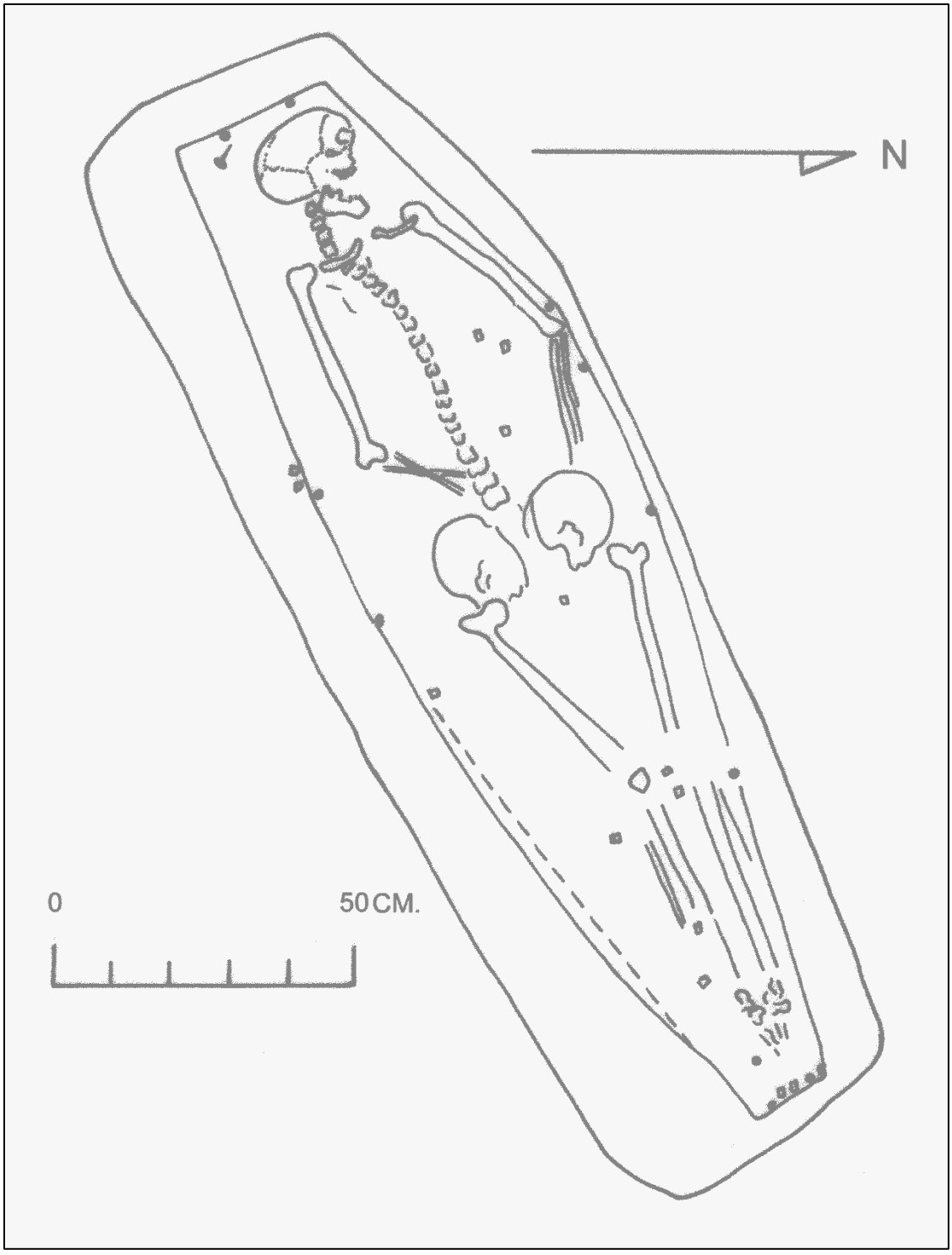


Figure 6: Burial 1. The grave cut is considerably larger than the coffin, indicating that it was dug by non-professionals. The base of the grave, however, was remarkably flat. The arrangement of the 12 screws (dark circles plus one horizontal example behind, or to the south of the skull) suggests that the lid had been screwed to the box. The 15 nails depicted here (small rectangles, see also Figure 7) reflect coffin construction, perhaps indicating a two-piece, tented lid or some other carpentry technique. The distortion in the coffin "lines" (location of wood where it decayed) resulted from compression of the earth fill around the box and the collapse of the wood as it rotted.

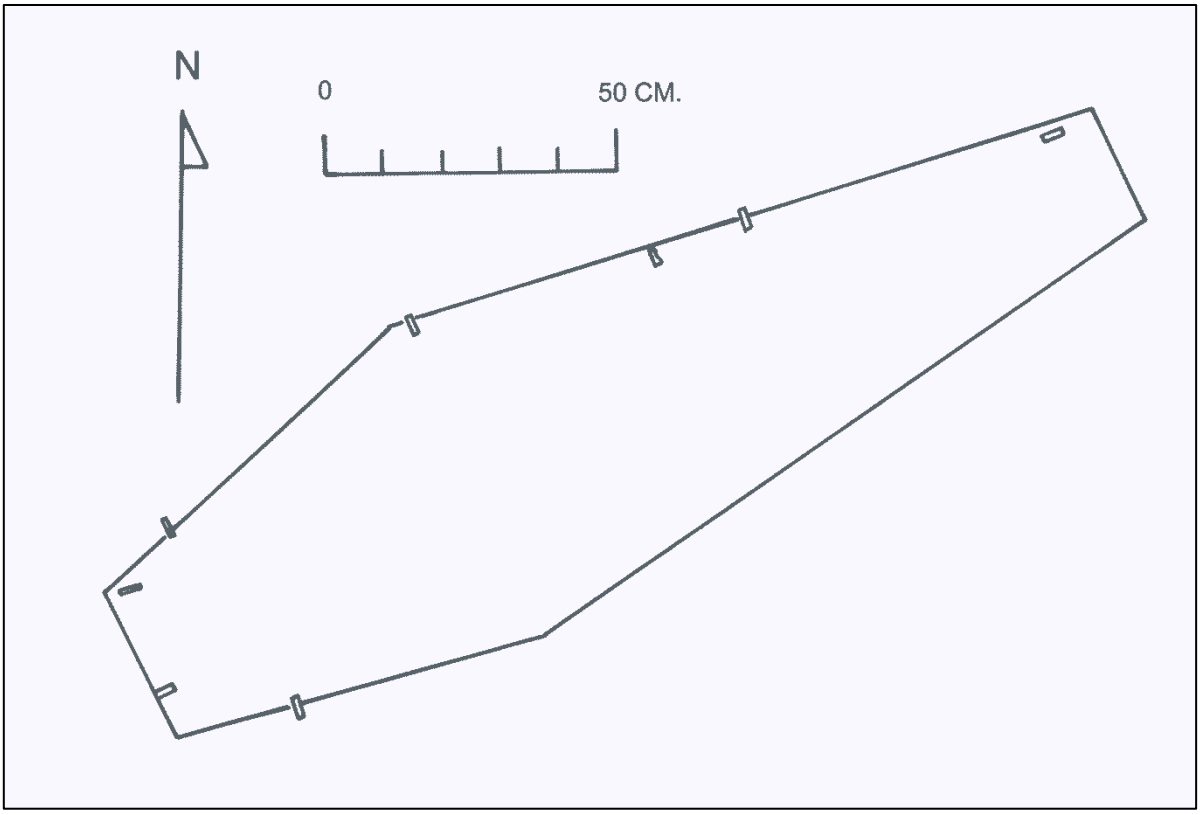


Figure 7: Burial 1, as Seen at the Bottom of the Coffin Revealing the Hexagonal Form. The image also shows eight nails found at the lowest level of its base (cf. Figure 6), presumably use to assemble that portion of the box.

Prior to initiating work in this portion of the site consideration was given to the possible legal implications of our research. The Coroner of Chester County was contacted and asked for a written statement concerning the situation that could be involved in possible disturbance of human skeletal remains. The Coroner consulted his legal advisors who indicated that the area of concern was technically an "abandoned cemetery." That is to say, the area was no longer marked on the surface, having been plowed for some 50 years, and no longer appeared on U.S.G.S. maps or other local maps, and had no markers, tombstones, or other indications of original function. As such the area did not specifically fall under existing laws governing the disturbance of human remains. Their conclusion was that a salvage operation by an educational institution, cautiously and respectfully conducted, would not be in specific violation of the law. During the nearly 40 years since that ruling, a period in which I have served as advisor to the Coroner's Office regarding finds of bone (hard tissue), there have been no changes in the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that would impact such cemeteries.

With this statement from the Office of the Coroner in mind, a thorough search of the literature specifically relating to mortuary practices in this area of Chester County was undertaken. The focus for this research project then shifted to the Taylor Burying Ground that was found to be noted on early maps of the local farms and to be mentioned in early documents related to these properties.

An undated and unidentified newspaper clipping in the Taylor family file (Taylor Family nd) at the CCHS gives an interesting general account of this old burial ground. The report, dating from about 1890 (after both Moses and Stephen Taylor had died), indicates that the farm is owned by James S. Rhoads. Rhoads owned the farm at least from 1873 to 1883. This helps place the date of the report, and indicated that no more burials were being made by the late 1800s. The account, with all its journalistic inaccuracies and fantasies, reads as follows:

*An Interesting Place Where Some of the Ancestors of the Faucett Family Rest*

> Down on the farm of James Rhoads, Westtown is an old graveyard, known as the Taylor Burying Ground, that is older, perhaps, than any others that are to be found on private property. It is known to have been in existence more than two hundred years, in fact there is one grave marker there to prove that it is almost that old, as a rude, flat stone bears "Thomas Taylor, died February, 1708, aged 49 years." While this is called the Taylor ground the above described stone is the only one that can be seen bearing the name of Taylor. Old residents of the name are interred there.
>
> The majority of the stones or markers now visible bear the name of Faucett, while a few show the resting place of the Few family, with here and there a stone bearing the strange name, probably that of a relative.
>
> The following is a list of those bearing the Faucett name: George Faucett, died 1840; Mary Y., wife of George, died 1848; Ann Faucett, 1830, Henry Faucett, 1826; Hannah Faucett, 1830. Other stones still there are: Jacob Few, who died in 1838; E. Strode, 1805; and Valentine Kirgen 1838. The last name is the best preserved of all. All the headstones, with the exception of that of Thomas Taylor, are much like those of the present day, except that they are wider and stand higher than the average. (Taylor Family File, CCHS).

This newspaper account offers many important clues to the use of this cemetery and by whom it was used. But first we need to consider if this reference to Thomas Taylor relates to the Thomas Taylor believed to have died in 1705. If this were the case, this evidence would place the earliest use of this cemetery more than 40 years before any other known written record to its beginnings.

No burials are known to have been made near the Westtown house until after 1750. John Taylors (1709? –?) son Thomas (1732–1782) may be the Thomas whose tombstone is noted in this undated newspaper account. Thomas Taylor (1732 –1782) is the first person to be documented as buried in this plot, but his own son Philip (1754–1760?) may have been buried there before him. Since this Thomas Taylor (1732–1782) was 49 or 50 at the time of death, the eroded tombstone read more than a century ago as "1708" could have been "1782." This is another aspect of the newspaper account that remains to be verified. However, I believe that the year "1708" is a misreading of the date. The property was not purchased until 1719, and the genealogy of the Taylor family fails to indicate the death of any Thomas in 1708. The Thomas Taylor (1732–1782) stone is noted as "flat," suggesting that it had either fallen, and been reset,

or that it was a simple Quaker-style marker. The other markers all may have belonged to persons of the Baptist faith.

The author of this newspaper note may have read the death date of a Thomas Taylor as "1708," but I suspect that this is the Thomas Taylor who died in 1782 (see Becker nd). This account includes many other pieces of information that are also of major importance, such as the good condition of the stone walls enclosing the cemetery and the relative absence of verses on the tombstones. Several observations may be made from this account. If the "majority" of the markers bear the name of Faucett, and only five Faucetts are listed, the total number of stones still standing about 1900 must have been few. The markers also may reflect significant religious, or at least familial, differences in the ways that a grave should be marked, if at all.

Only four other names are listed in the newspaper account, thus producing a total of nine "identified" graves. This may have been the total number of legible markers at that time. The number nine also is close to the Marshall Jones' recollection in 1969 that only a dozen markers were standing about 1920 when his father bought the property. Those markers noted in the newspaper account, perhaps also seen by the young Marshall Jones, and the stone wall surrounding the small cemetery, did not last very long after the elder Jones purchased the property. Whether they were all torn down by the elder Jones to increase productivity of the field, or removed in order to provide Marshall Jones with a landing strip for his private plane, is irrelevant.

Protection for cemetery areas in Pennsylvania is provided by custom if not state laws. Protection as well as access to the Taylor cemetery, which included many graves of neighbors, was stipulated in the will of Thomas Taylor (1757–1811) notes the family cemetery in his will

> Item, my will is that the bury-ground on one corner of my place containing three perches and twelve feet one way and three perches and four feet the other way be reserved forever for a burying place with free liberty to pass to and from the same. (Photostat of will: CCHS Vol. 4: October 28, 1803–April 8, 1811)

As a linear measurement a perch (or rod or pole) is 16.5 feet (5.0 m) in length. As a land measurement the area of a perch is formed by a square that is one perch on a side, or 30.25 square yards (25.3 sq m). Calculating one perch at 5.5 yards (5.0 m), the cemetery may be calculated at about 61.5 by 53.25 feet (18.75 m. by 16.23 m) in 1811. The land deed of Lydia Taylor, acting for the estate of her late husband Thomas Taylor, to Job Taylor, dated 27 March 1823, locates the cemetery plot along a line running North 60 degrees, 30 degrees East, an orientation verified by our excavation. The access provided in this will suggests that others in the immediate area may also have used this yard to bury their dead and pay respects. Certainly the Faucetts, who lived on land northwest of the Taylors in the 1800s used it extensively as indicated by historic records and by newly located fragments of tombstones. The 1847 farm map of the area still noted the "Taylor Burial Ground." An elaborate plan of the cemetery, supposedly from the Taylor family bible in the CCHS (Photocopy of the map), indicates an area of about 50 feet (15.2 m) on a side, enclosed by a stone wall. The actual limits of the cemetery were not determined in the course of the limited archaeological work at the site circa 1970, but it is stated again in Job Taylor's will.

Job Taylor's will (1770–1845) repeats the dimensions of the cemetery as in the Thomas Taylor will. This exemption reappears in the deed of sale of the land by Stephen W. Taylor, Job's son, to Isaac Cochrane, March 31, 1864. In the sale of 172 acres (69.6 ha) by Cochrane to James S. Rhoads (March 13, 1870) the graveyard is again excepted, and noted as containing 12 perches (303.5 sq m). The same exemption from sale is written into the deed of the land from Rhoads to George Fox in 1917. Soon after 1917 this property passed to the Jones family, but that document or bill of sale remains elusive. If there was any legal obligation on the part of the Jones family to maintain the walled-in cemetery on their property, it was ignored. According to Jones (pers. comm. 1969) only the east wall of the cemetery was still standing in the 1920s. The stone wall was destroyed and the stone markers taken down. At least two of these markers survived intact, being cemented face down in the basement of the original stone house as the two lowest steps descending into the wet, spring fed location. When those stones were "re-used" is not known. These were pried loose and recovered intact as part of our program. A number of fragments of tombstones were found in the overgrown hedge row marking the property line near the cemetery, along with the stones that had once formed the walls of the cemetery. Other bits were found in testing around the house. The 12-square rod (303.5-sq m) cemetery patch became part of the surrounding fields, in a section that later was used as a landing strip for a private plane. That plane remained in the barn in the early 1970s.

A newspaper account (Anonymous 1890) indicates that the walls of the cemetery were then "remarkably well preserved" and well built. The account also indicates that Jacob Few's stone is the only one with an inscription besides the name. Jacob died in 1838, and that stone was missing when we excavated the site and has never been located. The newspaper account records the inscription: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." The stone of Elizabeth Few was noted as located in my notes, and has a more elaborate inscription. Her marker is not noted in the newspaper article, and its location in 2010 is unknown. The inscriptions on the tombstones set up for members of the Few family, and possibly the shapes of the stone, may mark them as non-Quaker in an area at that time still largely inhabited by people who were Quakers or of Quaker descent.

The most significant aspect of this information concerning the Taylor Burying Ground is that all those interred there are not Quakers. Therefore, the information regarding the site as a whole covers a period of religious change during which many of the Quaker families of long residence in the county are breaking traditional ties and converting to the Baptist faith. Furthermore, this period also marks the inception of the Industrial Revolution, and the relationship between religious and technological change provides a useful consideration in the ethnohistoric reconstruction of this farm community.

## COLONIAL BURIALS: LOCATIONS & CUSTOMS IN THE WESTTOWN AREA

At the time when the Taylor Farm field project began, very little information concerning the details of historic burials of any kind was to be found in the literature. Unpublished excavations have been conducted in Colonial cemeteries by Harry Shapiro (American Museum of Natural History) and Alan Mann (University of Pennsylvania). Shortly after this program of excavation ended, Sharon Burnston (1982) gathered some useful data on Quaker mortuary practices during the second half of the eighteenth century, with her focus on those of southeastern Pennsylvania.

Around 1970 and for many years after cemeteries used for African Americans received impressive and expensive attention while the burial grounds that had been used for whites of all classes were not recorded or simply bulldozed away. In recent years this imbalance has been somewhat addressed (e. g., Lawrence et al. 2001, 2009; LeeDecker et al. 1995).

What little data was then available for this area is reported here to provide some background to the study. A burial at the Bradford meeting (December 5, 1801) was noted by Abiah Taylor, who is not related to our Taylors but is an historian of the period between the American Revolution and the War of 1812, as "being the first person buried there with a cover of strong planks placed over the coffin" (Futhey and Cope 1881:738). This suggests that previous burials may have had thin-board covers, or most likely employed no coffin at all. In these latter cases "planks" were used to cover the shroud wrapped body that had been placed into a narrow slot at the base of the grave pit. The planks would then be used to cover this slot, and the grave pit then filled above them. No direct evidence exists to confirm or negate such a hypothesis for the Bradford meeting. At the Taylor Burying Ground all of the burials identified were in coffins that had completely decomposed, but some definitely had lids. This is not confirmed for all the graves nor is it specifically negated in any case. Diary accounts may shed some light on this question. The possibility that some burials were made using open coffins does not seem reasonable.

During this early period clothing was not buried with people as it was too valuable (see Lydia Taylor will, etc. in Becker nd). Shrouds were probably made by repurposing worn sheets or other simple fabrics, but they may have been purchased or made especially for burials. A single brass shroud pin was found in the thoracic area in several of the graves in this cemetery. Some of the "washing" expenses incurred during the funeral period involved the washing of the deceased's clothes, worn at the time of death and prepared for reuse by others, and possibly some related to the washing of the corpse.

Soldiers killed at the Battle of Brandywine (September 11, 1777) are reportedly buried in many locations (Ashmead 1884:63–64; see also Futhey and Cope 1881:63–64, 77). The British had some 16,000 troops of whom 600 to 2,000 may have been killed. The Americans had about 11,000 troops, with some 400 to 800 killed. Most probably were buried where they fell, but several reports note other locations where the dead from that battle were interred.

a. Buried in a pit, later uncovered, location unstated (Brinton nd:56).

b. "Buried on the spot" (Ashmead 1884:64).

c. "Pitched into gullies and shallow excavations" (Brinton nd:57–58).

d. "Soldiers buried on the spot" (Brinton nd:120). In 1859 uncovered a skeleton at Williamsons, East of Wilmington Road (Brinton nd:57–58).

e. Birmingham Meeting (Futhey and Cope 1881:77).

f. Soldiers under General Wayne, killed and buried Northeast of Harvey's House (Brinton nd:133).

g. Taylor burial ground; the cemetery discussed in this text and only 3 miles (5 km) from the battle site (see here and Becker 2012).

No casualties from the conflict are mentioned by Benjamin Hawley (nd), and no burials of the war dead are noted. Although Quaker cemeteries located at their many Meeting Houses may have been used for war casualties. Not a single verifiable account of such an interment has been found. We also do not know how many members of each meeting were actually buried at meeting house cemeteries and what proportion of all interments were actually members. Not until the middle of the nineteenth century did "urban" or church affiliated burials become more common in this area. Apparently in this region, as throughout much of agricultural America, family burial plots were common. This seems supported by the vast numbers of local burial plots that can be identified by even the most preliminary research. Generally neighbors were also interred in any area that one farmer had removed from possible plowing. Hilltops appear to have been common sites, possibly in areas once kept wooded for future lumber as well as for firewood.

References to family burial grounds abound in the literature. Most have been long since plowed over, but at one time they may have been the chief depositories for the last remains of our colonial ancestors in southern Chester County. A major question concerns the use of markers in these situations. The discovery at the Taylor cemetery of many, if not most individuals who had lost their heads and/or feet during later grave excavation activity suggests that markers, if any, were evanescent items. Lauren Cook (pers. comm. 2010) believes that during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries markers may have been used in some Quaker meeting cemeteries, but later they may have been removed as being too ostentatious.

After the American Revolution, veterans were buried in no special places reserved for them as a category. The CCHS has a card index identifying the graves of soldiers who had fought in the American Revolution and subsequently were interred within Chester County. This index had been prepared by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). The CCHS also has nearly 200 applications for war pensions made in their own writing during the 1820s and 1830s. Circa 1975 Conrad Wilson, as Director of the CCHS, called for a survey of the graveyards to identify the last resting places of these pensioners. Titus Taylor (1755–1825), the son of Thomas Taylor (1732–1782), was one of these applicants. The family members associated with this farm had long been unaffiliated with the nearby Quaker meeting.

## SUMMARY: MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

The major portion of the Taylor farm rescue operation related in one way or another to the mortuary activities of these early Chester County settlers. This reflects the archaeological focal point for this research, with the excavations concentrating on the burial ground of the farm. The cemetery served as a point of field activity, with the related orientation towards the people who had lived on or near the property. Thus considerable ethnohistoric data was gathered in an effort to understand the lives as well as the biology of these people. Studies of the bones have yielded some complex biological data, with no resolutions available as of this date. The wills or letters of administration of these individuals reflect lineage rights, inheritance, land use, and numerous other behaviors rarely noted in other sources. Since all estates had to be handled by legal process, good records of many cultural behaviors are directly provided. From these sources one may go on to reconstruct family histories, and infer behaviors which will allow a recreation of the life ways of these inhabitants of the former settlers in the Westtown area. Such

ethnohistorical accounts serve both to verify indications offered by the archaeological record and to pose problems, such as economic motivation and specific processes (cf. Wurst 2009), that in turn can be tested through the use of archaeological techniques.

Trends can be noted in several areas, including reproductive patterns and inheritance modes. Each of these might serve as an avenue of research for the reconstruction of one aspect of Colonial life. The direct biological evidence provided by the skeletal remains also might be compared with skeletal data from the areas of the English Midlands from which specific families were descended (Galenson 1978; Salerno 1979). The standard of living at the Taylor farm, as suggested by skeletal evidence for stature and by goods listed in estate inventories (cf. Carr 1992), can be measured directly. Evidence from the countryside surrounding Philadelphia helps fill in the blanks left by previous studies (see Horn 1988). These areas of research pursued in relation to the effort at the Taylor farm not only provide historic information, but may serve as primary indicators of the behaviors which have led to orientations and structures found in contemporary society. Some of these considerations or areas for future research projects are as follow:

*One*: Settlement of southern Chester County (since 1789 divided into Chester and Delaware Counties) by the Religious Society of Friends reflects their preference for agricultural land very similar in topography and climate to that of their homes in southeastern England (see also De Cunzo 2001, 2004). The sale of lands in the northern portions of this part of the county to German farmers correlates with the Germans from an area of more rugged terrain and heavy clay soils. Thus settlement patterns within Chester County and subsequent development of political institutions may directly reflect cultural traditions brought from Europe.

*Two:* Family relations (social structure) in the Quaker settlement, as expected, directly follow from English models. Growth of a complex society from these early settlements appears to correlate with the Baptist revitalization (Becker 1973, 1975). This religious movement also correlates with the process of industrialization in the 1830s and the change from a homogeneous agrarian population to a heterogeneous and "urbanizing" population. A railroad line from Philadelphia reached West Chester, already a crossroads center for agricultural commerce, in the late summer of 1832, and was officially opened by September! This early connection to Philadelphia, attesting to the importance of West Chester, entered the borough from the northeast, through a line from Philadelphia through Malvern. A second line, that passed through Westtown very close to the Taylor Farm, opened in November of 1858 (Jones 2003, 2006). In 1859, a Westtown carpenter named Marshall J. Taylor, husband of Elizabeth, helped construct the Westtown Station along that rail line. He later became the station agent; his wife Elizabeth tended a small store inside the building.

*Three:* Changes in social structure from a strong patrilineal to a bilateral system followed the technological changes and the development of a "modern" economic system in the early 1800s. Wallace (1972) deals with these changes within mill communities, which may be the prime source of change in Chester County. Changing divorce laws and proceedings also follow from he believed were changes in social structure, turning "private family matters" into "public legal events." In fact, colonial divorce laws made the procedure a "public legal event" and gradually these laws came to be increasingly private matters, with repercussions for the support of children and spouses.

*Four:* Burial customs may reflect local patterns. By 1969 when the Excavation at the Taylor property had begun, large numbers of "farm cemeteries" and some rural "Negro" church burial plots had already been abandoned and lost for decades. Many had been totally obliterated. This trend seemed to be slowing, but only church affiliated cemeteries of considerable size seemed to be protected as traditional places for interment. The rise of commercial cemeteries appears to have been a recent development.

*Five:* Population growth in this agrarian zone has only recently created a dense settlement pattern. The rapid population increase among the colonial farmers led to continuous clearing of the woodlands, followed by emigration well beyond Chester County both to the south and west.

*Six:* The Quaker origins of the Taylor family may have had relatively little effect on the form of the burials in this plot and their apparent lack of stone markers. The apparent absence of early grave markers made of stone, and possibly any stone markers associated with the Taylors themselves, may reflect a Quaker trait, or perhaps the behaviors of conservative farmers. Linda Stine (pers. comm. 2010) indicates that the Quaker burials in her part of North Carolina included stone markers (n=300+). Quakers had reached that area by the mid-1700s, or about the time of the first documented interments at the Taylor site.

The simple coffins found at the Taylor site appear to have been standard for the area, being of the hexagonal shape used by Europeans as well as local Native Americans in their own cemeteries after circa 1720 (Becker 1992a). The use of shroud burials may have been common to Quakers, both prosperous and poor, as well as in general use in a society where clothing represented valuable artifacts.

## AFTERWARD

The archaeological program at the Taylor Farm lasted barely three years before arrangements for the sale of the property were finalized. The purchasers of the property were very prompt to consult with me, as archaeologist-historian, regarding the importance of the two eighteenth-century houses on the property and their importance to Chester County history. The developers were completely unaware of the cemetery area found during this research, but were extremely responsive to its importance. I estimate that no fewer than 150 burials had been stacked within the stone walls marking the cemetery, in three rows each with ten or more graves side by side and all probably five graves deep. This important resource, containing the bones (and possibly the DNA) of these early Welsh and English colonists form a store of information worth preserving.

The developers who had bought the property generously offered to site the individual house plots in locations where the cemetery would not be disturbed by land contouring or house foundations, and would be least likely to be impacted by sewer or water lines. They requested that we provide the location of the cemetery on their maps, and confirmed with us that the burials would be as distant as possible from house foundations, straddling a property dividing line. Subsequent land remodeling and building strongly altered the landscape, but the 120 or more graves that we believe remain unexcavated are available for future study—barring the natural processes of bone destruction that by 1970 had already made skeletal recovery so difficult.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many years ago Bryn Hammarstrom and the many other students of anthropology at West Chester University (then West Chester State College) began the preliminary research for this study at the CCHS. They benefitted enormously from the aid of the late Dorothy Lapp, then the librarian at the CCHS. Special thanks are due to Denise Baccino Tyler whose efforts to manage field operations and sustain this research are deeply appreciated. Thanks also are due Sarah Jane Ruch, and many other students who labored at the archaeological site and in the archives to assemble the data summarized here.

The identification of a "lost" cemetery on the property, and subsequent excavation of a small series of the many burials, was facilitated with the advice of the Coroner of Chester County, Pennsylvania. The aid of Thomas L. Whiteman, Legal Counsel to the Office of the Coroner, was particularly helpful. Steve Grossi's expertise in skeletal recovery was of particular importance at this site as well as at a Native American site excavated soon after. The years of research at the Taylor Farm were sustained entirely by the interests and labor of these willing students, entirely without benefit of grants or other forms of financial support. Those were the good old days!

Thanks are due the late Marshall Jones, former owner of the property, who allowed us to excavate at the site after he had put the property up for sale. Our verbal agreement with Mr. Jones included termination of our activities when he had identified a potential purchaser. The interests of Cynthia Taylor in this research are very much appreciated. Her concerns over the years, long after excavations had ended, provided gentle reminders that this research should be made known to all.

An earlier version of this paper was summarized in a presentation at the 2004 meetings of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology held in Clarion, Pennsylvania. My thanks are due to Dr. Mark A. McConoughy for his aid in making those arrangements and for many other kindnesses over the years. Special thanks are due to Prof. Linda F. Stine (UNC-Greensboro) and to Lauren Cook for their careful reading of this manuscript and their many important comments and suggestions. Thanks also are due to Prof. Lu Ann De Cunzo (University of Delaware) for her generous sharing of information relating to farmsteads in this region and for her encouragement in the production of this manuscript. Thanks also are due to Dr. Daniel Bailey, Mark Grover, Prof. Jim Jones, Dr. Julia King, Dr. Stephen Shephard, Dr. LouAnn Wurst (Western Michigan University), and Richard Ervin. In particular, my thanks are due Dr. Joseph K. McLaughlin (International Epidemiology Institute) for a timely grant that enabled this information to be processed for publication. My thanks also are due the Congress of the United States of America for the encouragement provided by the tax laws that support this research. The ideas presented here, as well as any errors of interpretation or presentation, are entirely the responsibility of the author.

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