



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

OFFICE OF THE
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**U.S. ROUTE 7 NORTH - MILLTOWN TO THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE LINE
CULTURAL RESOURCES PROJECT**



The Delaware Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, and the Federal Highway Administration have proposed to dualize Delaware's Route 7 along a 5.3 mile segment between Milltown Rd. and the Pa. border. The University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research is conducting a Phase I and II cultural resources survey which will identify historic and prehistoric sites within the proposed right-of-way and determine the extent of significant data to be recovered.

The segment of Route 7 within this project area lies in the hilly piedmont district of northern New Castle County, and traverses Mill Creek Hundred, which was recognized by early European colonists as being marvelously fertile. Mill Creek was navigable at the time and soon became the setting of an active trade route and several highly-productive mills.

The highway itself, traditionally known as Limestone Road, was an important route for teamsters, who were said to have preferred it over the nearby turnpikes because the grades were easier and there were no tolls. They hauled corn and wheat from farms as far north as Lancaster, Pa. to mills along the Creek and in Stanton. From the Hundred came mill produce for entry into the trade network along the Christina River and beyond, as well as limestone to be used in fertilizer and mortar. From the appearance of farmsteads along the Limestone Rd., their owners could well have afforded merchandise brought by the teamsters on their return trip from towns to the south. A number of these settlers were members of prominent Delaware families, and some of their descendants are living in Mill Creek Hundred today.



The teamsters and their Conestoga wagons were reknown for their hardiness, but it was not uncommon for a wheel or axle to give, and it was only to be expected that a team member might throw a shoe at any time. As much a part of everyday life as these periodic setbacks, however, were the wheelwright and blacksmith's shops, which were conveniently located at two of the major crossroads along this road. Together with the Mermaid Hotel and John Tweed's tavern, which offered refreshment and lodging to travellers, these establishments comprised self-contained commercial and social communities. Roughly midway between them lies the Harmony Schoolhouse, where children residing in District 32 were educated.

Preliminary research indicates that a number of the historic structures merit further investigation. During the 1980 field season, the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research conducted a Phase I survey which identified a cluster of prehistoric sites dating to the Late Archaic/Woodland I periods. Two of these may be impacted by the dualization of Route 7 and will require additional study. A combination of archival and archaeological research will be employed in order to better understand the material cultures and lifeways of the people whose activities have become part of the heritage of this project area.

If you have questions or request further information, please contact Jay Custer at 451-2821 or Kevin Cunningham at 736-4644.