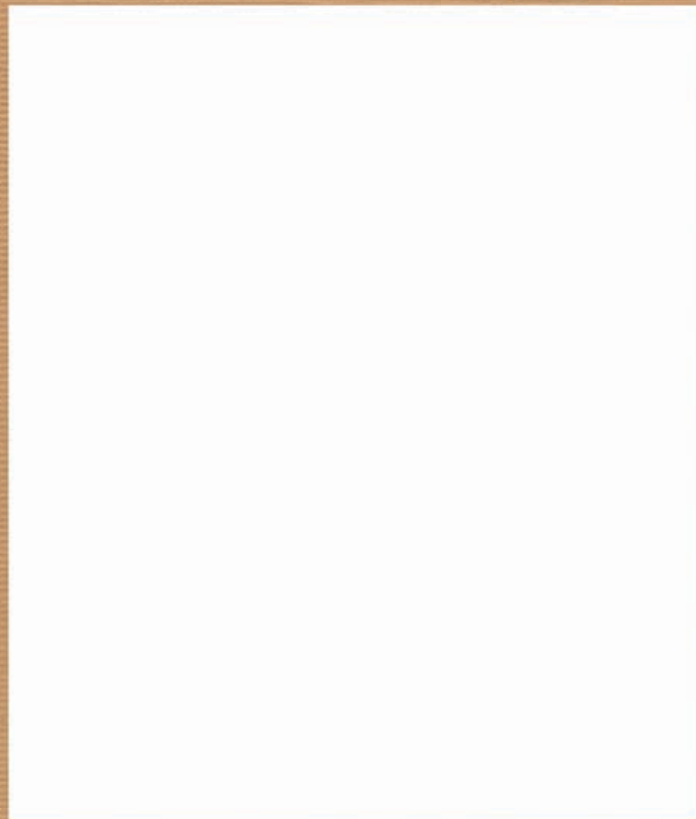




Please come visit, tour, and practice archaeology with us,
and help us interpret what people were doing at this
site over the past 288 years! We need you!

Blue Ball Properties Area
Transportation Improvement Project



Project sponsored by:

Delaware Department of Transportation 

Federal Highway Administration 

Archaeology performed by:

McCormick, Taylor & Associates, Inc.

For further information contact:

Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT Archaeologist
KCunningham@mail.dot.state.de.us
302-760-2275

Barbara Shaffer, MTA Archaeologist
bjshaffer@mccormicktaylor.com
717-540-6040

The Meldin Plantation Archaeological Site 1715-2003



Archaeologists are like detectives of the past - we study clues left by people who used to live here to unlock history's mysteries. The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) has archaeologists to find archaeological sites before they begin construction projects. We've discovered a very important and interesting site: the Weldin Plantation Archaeological Site.



The basement of the house.

Euro-Americans first lived at the Weldin Site almost 300 years ago! They left their remains in the ground. These include stone foundations for houses and buildings, and holes that they dug into the earth. We know the families were here because we can see the stone foundations that were formerly their house, barn, barn yard, and sheds. When we excavated into the ground we found different layers

of soil, called strata, that were left by the people who lived here. The deepest layers have artifacts which belonged to the first residents of the property.

The Weldin Site was always a farm, but it was also much more than that. The families who occupied the farm did a lot of other things here, such as blacksmithing, wood working, weaving, and all of the other things that people would have needed to do for survival. We believe that the first inhabitants were Israel Peterson and his family. Later the farm was sold, and it was rented to farmers who wanted to cultivate the land. These people are called tenant farmers. After several generations of tenancy, the farm was purchased by Jacob Weldin in the 1860s. He decided to live here and run the farm. Mr. Weldin built many new farm buildings and probably put a big addition on his house. The original house was built in the early 1700s, but all of the other foundations we can see were built by Mr. Weldin and his family. They wanted to turn the farm into a large commercial dairy operation, and they were very successful! By looking at the foundations that still exist today, we can imagine what the farm looked like when it was in its heyday and bustling with activity!



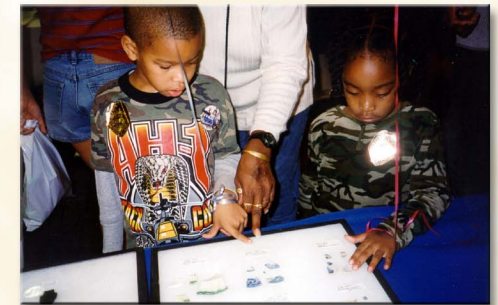
Animals and wagons would have used this ramp to enter the bank barn.



Come have fun and help us untangle the mysteries of the Weldin Site!

One person's trash is an archaeologist's treasure. We are excavating the Weldin Site looking for artifacts they threw away or dropped on the ground. We are finding datable artifacts such as broken pieces of ceramic, glass, and nails. These artifacts give us clues about how the site's occupants conducted their lives for the last 288 years.

We are also doing research to investigate the families that lived here. We are looking at tax records, deed records, wills, newspapers, local and county histories, and talking to the actual descendants of the people who worked the farm! It is also very important that the public be involved. We want to include as many people as possible in this exciting project. We need your help in telling us what your reactions are and what you know about the history of the site and the community which surrounds it.



We need to know what you think!

When we are done excavating, DelDOT will build a road that will impact a small part of the site. DelDOT and DNREC are planning to preserve and turn the rest of the site into an interpretive park so that everyone can come and enjoy themselves at this special community place forever.



The public's vision of the site's preservation.