

3.0 HISTORIC OVERVIEW

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This section provides an overview of the historical development of Christiana Hundred, New Castle County, and the Piedmont zone with a focus on the project area for a period extending from 1630 to the present. The majority of information presented herein was compiled from a review of previous historic contexts and studies prepared for this area (presented in the References section of this report). Additional research was conducted to supplement the existing data review on an as-needed basis.

3.1 1630-1730±, Exploration and Frontier Settlement

The European settlement of Delaware was initiated by the competing colonial powers of Sweden and Holland in the 1620s and 1630s. They established several small, fortified settlements along the Delaware River and Bay. Following a series of military conflicts, the Dutch took control of Delaware in 1656 and established the town of New Amstel (New Castle) near Fort Casimir (Weslager 1961:12).

Prior to 1680, settlers in Delaware's Piedmont zone tended to establish homesteads along or in close proximity to waterborne transportation routes, such as the Christiana and Brandywine Rivers, due to the lack of an established network of roads. Early settlers were of Dutch and Swedish origins, along with some Finnish and a few French; and they engaged in hunting, fishing, and fur trapping (Herman et al 1989:1, 3).

During the period of Dutch and Swedish occupation, water transportation was the primary mode of conveyance; primitive paths were used for limited overland transport (Scharf 1888:413). Similarly, as English settlers moved into what would become New Castle County during the late seventeenth century, they established plantations along or near navigable waterways for a ready transportation modality. Initially, the settlers undertook road construction to move goods to landings along the streams, to gain access to mills for processing, to attend church or meetings, or to travel to larger communities on market days or for government business (Fox 2003:7). However, colonial government authorities quickly observed the need for roads and established standards for their construction (Scharf 1888:413-416).

In 1680, William Penn began issuing land grants in the region and English and Welsh immigrants began settling in the area. While these initial settlers also engaged in the early occupations of hunting, fishing and fur trapping, Penn's opening up of land in the region also spurred the start of an agricultural-based economy (Herman et al 1989:2-3). Settlers in Christiana Hundred (formed in 1682) found that this area contained some of Delaware's most fertile, well-drained, and highly productive soils (Herman et al. 1989:1). Farmsteads ranged in size from 150 to 200 acres during this time period and wooded lands were cleared and transformed to fields and meadows. Livestock was raised and farming centered on wheat and corn. No extant structures from this period are found within the APE.

3.2 1730-1770±, Intensified and Durable Occupation

The mid-eighteenth century in Delaware's Piedmont Zone was a time of intensified population growth, maturation of the rural economy, establishment of local agricultural service center towns, improvement to the transportation network, and expansion of market-oriented farm production. During this period, farming dominated Delaware's colonial economy, as it did in the wider Mid-Atlantic region, with 80 to 90 percent of the population engaged in agriculture (Egnal 1975:201). The built environment became a much more prominent and permanent element of the rural landscape during this period.

The connected system of early roadways and waterways became increasingly important in the rural development of the Piedmont Zone. Roadways also improved during this time. Similar to today, the transportation system directly affected where settlements were established. This was particularly true for crossroad areas and creek landings. After the chartering of Wilmington in 1739, demographic patterns for the area begin to develop with small towns and villages being constructed on trade routes laid out for the transportation of goods to larger centers, such as Wilmington and Philadelphia.

Mills, the backbone of rural industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, became a much more common sight in the rural landscape of Christiana Hundred during this time, particularly with its western boundary formed by Red Clay Creek. The expanding agrarian economy and the ever-improving transportation network spurred the growth of the milling industry. Mills produced products for local use as well as for export. However, it would be a few more years before a mill was established in the vicinity of the project area at present-day Marshalltown (see next section). No extant structures from this period are found within the APE.

3.3 1770-1830±, Early Industrialization

During this period the location of resources related to agriculture and transportation continue to develop in non-nucleated areas. Resources related to industry and community development begin to center on small mill towns near major waterways or crossroad communities on transportation routes.

The area to the west of the present study was greatly influenced by the establishment of mills along Red Clay Creek. Around 1765, Solomon Hersey established a grist mill at present-day Marshallton (west of the APE). A small hamlet, likely consisting of only the grist mill and a few dwellings, was known as Hersey Bridge (Village of Marshallton website, accessed on March 28, 2008). Farming further intensified during this period, particularly in those areas, including the APE, away from Red Clay Creek. Farmers practiced mixed farming, centered on grain production, predominantly wheat and corn. However, scientific agricultural principles, chiefly four- to nine-field crop rotation systems, began being applied during this time. Also, market-oriented livestock holdings increased significantly after the Revolution (Passmore et al. 1978:34-35). Mathew Carey's 1796 map of Delaware depicts a rudimentary road system that radiates out of Wilmington (Carey 1796). Within the next several decades, the region's network of roads began to develop as bridges were constructed over the major creeks in the area, including Red Clay Creek (Herman et al. 1989:9). Authorized in 1808, the Gap and Newport Turnpike (present-

day Newport Gap Road, located northeast of the study area) provided a connection from the Lancaster Turnpike in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to shipping facilities in Newport, Delaware (located southeast of the study area) (Anonymous 1941:6). No extant structures from this period are found within the APE.

3.4 1830-1880±, Industrialization and Early Urbanization

The extension of the railroad into the area, improved farming techniques, the adoption of new agricultural products, and the blossoming of major markets in the industrial cities of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions prompted an economic boom in Christiana Hundred. In 1836, John Marshall purchased Solomon Hersey's mill on Red Clay Creek and expanded it. This mill is identified as "C. & J. Marshall's Rolling M[ill]" on Rea and Price's 1849 map of New Castle County (Figure 4). Other industries in the area included "D. Smith's Cot[ton] Fac[tory]" (southwest of the APE, at the intersection of Kiamensi Road and Red Clay Creek). This map also reveals that the backbone of the area's network of road is in place by this date; present-day Newport Road; a road south of the APE, Kiamensi Road; and several roads north and west of the APE, including the Gap and Newport Turnpike (present-day Newport Gap Pike), Stanton Road, and Duncan Road are present. It is unclear when Newport Road was first laid out, but no buildings front the roadway as of 1849, and served to connect the developing village of Marshallton with Newport, a shipping point to the southeast. The lone farm in the area (in the vicinity of the present-day Delcastle Technical High School is attributed to "F Sawdon." Farms remain scattered throughout the area while manufacturing enterprises remain clustered around natural power sources defined by waterways like the Brandywine River, Mill Creek, Red Clay Creek, and White Clay Creek (Herman et al. 1989:11).

A map of Christiana Hundred dating to 1868 illustrates a largely unseated APE occupied mostly of farmlands (Figure 5; Pomeroy and Beers 1868). A few residences and a schoolhouse were located west of the APE, and a farmstead attributed to "S. Cranston" was located at the site of the present-day Delcastle Technical High School. One other dwelling, attributed to "E. Williams" was located along present-day Newport Road. This dwelling, in the vicinity of present-day 1419 Newport Road, is no longer extant. This map, however illustrates, the agricultural nature of the APE, as opposed to the mill-based economies along Red Clay Creek to the west and southwest.

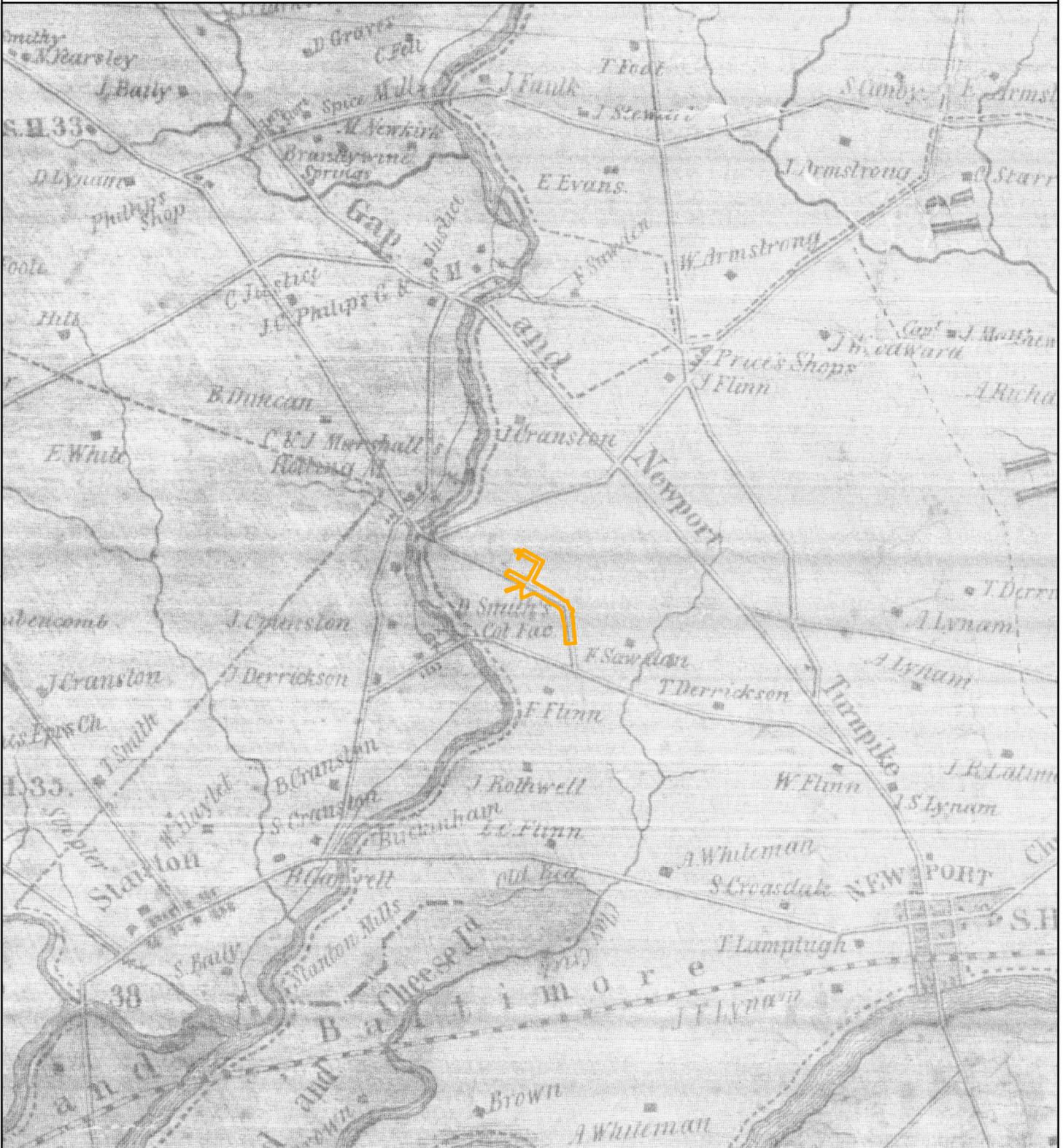
Innovations in the transportation system, particularly the establishment of railroads, were critical to the economic expansion of the United States during the mid-1800s. This was true for the agricultural economy of Christiana Hundred as well. About 1872, the Wilmington and Western Railroad (W&WRR) was laid out north of the APE (Ames et al. 1989:13). A rail stop on this line, known as Kiamensi Station (later known as Marshallton Station), was located just northwest of the APE, near present-day Old Capitol Trail. This rail line provided a market route from Wilmington to Landenberg in nearby Chester County, Pennsylvania. No extant structures from this period are found within the APE.

3.5 1880-1940±, Urbanization and Early Suburbanization

During this period, industry and manufacturing greatly expanded in Delaware. A reciprocal decrease in the number of people employed in agriculture also occurred. With this change, a

Figure 4 1849 Rea and Price Map of New Castle County

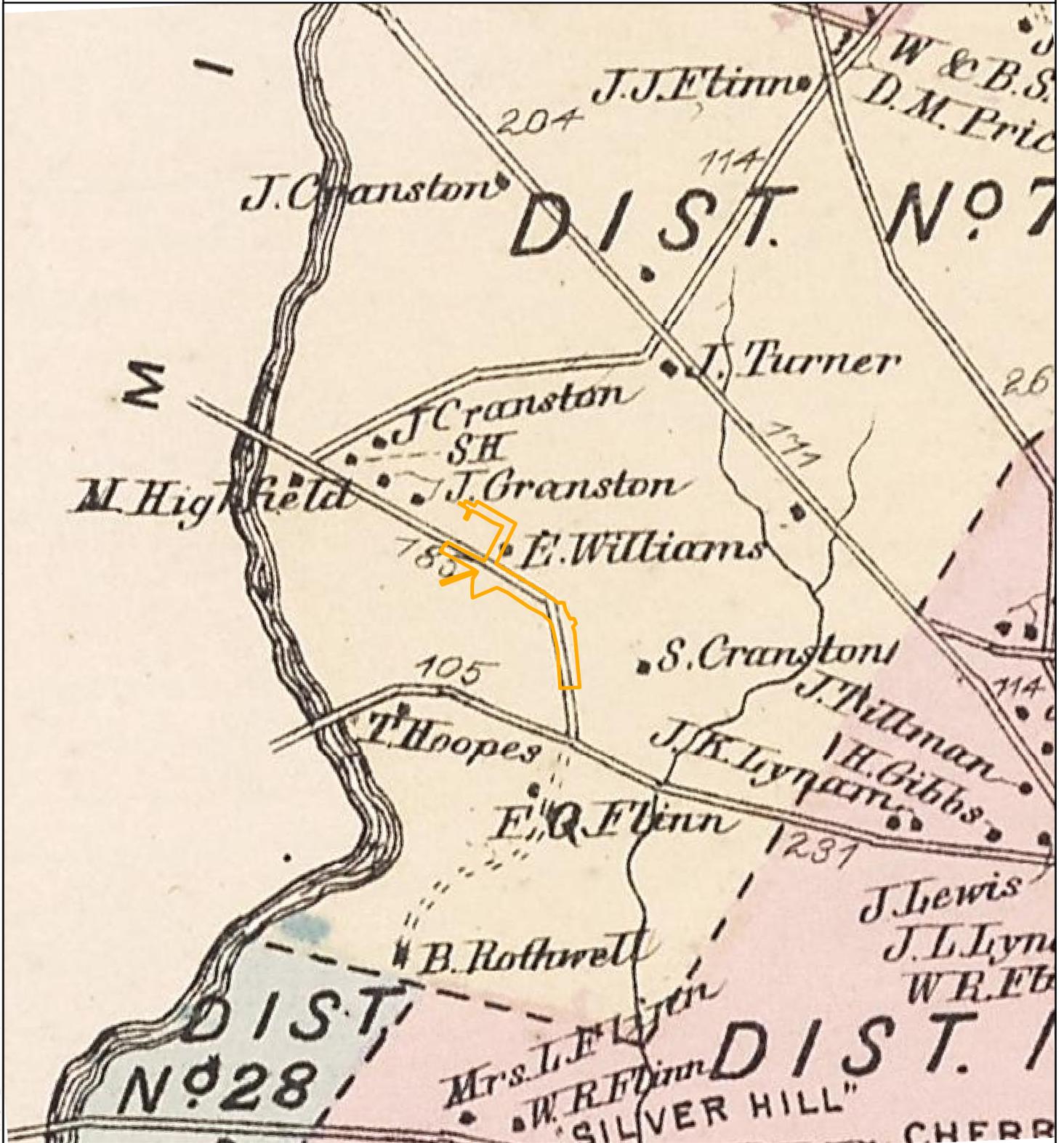
Bridge I-65I on Newport Road over CSX
Christiana Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware



2,000 0 2,000
Feet

 APE

Figure 5
1868 Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of New Castle County
 Bridge I-65I on Newport Road over CSX
 Christiana Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware



greater percentage of the state's population resided in cities rather than in rural areas. Important improvements in transportation occurred; improved roads, emerging railroads and mass transit coupled with a growing professional middle class contributed to the early development of suburban commuting (Herman et al. 1989:15). By 1900, commercial agriculture, urbanism, and light industry were all growing in Delaware. Farmers in this "automobile age" further diversified their products, moving towards dairy, poultry, and garden vegetable/orchard farming. Toward the end of the period, suburban communities began developing outside of urban centers.

Hopkins' 1881 *Map of New Castle County* illustrates the project area at the beginning of this new period (Figure 6). Due to its proximity to Red Clay Creek, the majority of development in the surrounding study area was largely concentrated along the creek and at small town centers such as Marshallton (west of the study area) and Stanton (southwest of the study area). A network of roads was in place by this date, and the W&WRR supported a station at Kiamensi (north/northwest of the study area). Newport Road was sparsely settled, with only Schoolhouse "No. 77" and two dwellings shown west of the APE. The map indicated that "E. Williams" was still associated with a dwelling near the eastern edge of the APE (in the vicinity of present-day 1419 Newport Road) (Hopkins 1881).

In order to gain an independent route to New York via Philadelphia, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) organized a new company, the Baltimore & Philadelphia Railroad in 1883, that would utilize some existing routes including the Philadelphia and Reading and Bound Brook Railroads. The newly formed company also acquired the W&WRR. New trackage laid out about 1886 diverged from the W&WRR northeast of the study area and transected the APE (Scharf 1888:432). This new line operated as the Philadelphia Division of the B&O and provided another viable means of transporting local goods to larger markets in Wilmington, Philadelphia, and Baltimore (Ames et al. 1989:13).

This rail line is depicted on Baist's 1893 *Atlas of New Castle County* (Figure 7). The atlas also reveals that the APE and study area are still relatively undeveloped, with the exception of a few farmsteads and dwellings along Newport Road.

Over the next several decades, the landscape of the APE would drastically change with the laying out of subdivisions and further residential development along Newport Road. About the same time of Baist's map, members of the St. Barnabus Protestant Episcopal church purchased a small lot at the southeast corner of Newport Road and a road leading to the Kiamensi Woolen Mills (present-day Kiamensi Avenue and west of the APE) and erected a place for worship (New Castle County Deed Book C16:198). This church is evident on a map of the area published in 1904 (Figure 8; USGS 1904). Again, the map reveals a largely agricultural APE with little residential development. About fifteen years after their initial purchase, the members of the St. Barnabus Protestant Episcopal Church purchased an additional L-shaped lot of land surrounding their church for expansion and the laying out of a small cemetery which contains graves dating from the 1920s through the 1960s (New Castle County Deed Book L22:296).

The vastly improved transportation system and technology of the late 1800s and early 1900s had a profound effect on community development across the state. New paved roads and public transportation, such as the trolley lines from the center of Wilmington as far out as Yorklyn (well

