

3.0 CULTURAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE CONTEXT

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Given that no precontact archaeological deposits were identified in the APE, attention is primarily paid in this section to the evolution of landscape use in the APE during the historic period. Relevant and detailed publications about precontact-era occupation in the broader project area may be found in the Puncheon Run Site report (Leedecker et al. 2005) or the Hickory Bluff Site report (Petraglia et al. 2002). Precontact sites in the area have been identified as large base camps that are situated adjacent to the St. Jones River and Puncheon Run (such as the Puncheon Run and Hickory Bluff sites). Smaller, temporary camp sites are generally located on lower-order tributaries nearby. In addition to the publications noted above, the reader is also encouraged to consult the following publications regarding precontact history in the project area: Barse and Marston 2007; Custer 1984, 1989, and 1994; Custer and Galasso 1983; Stewart et al. 1986, and Weslager 1972.

No registered historic archaeological sites exist within the APE. Historic sites are concentrated in or near the historic center of town at The Green (Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. 2009). These sites generally date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The closest site to the Clarence Street Extension APE was identified by the Richard Grubb & Associates field team in 2009. The site is located approximately 0.25 mile to the southeast and consists of an eighteenth-century occupation and a nineteenth- to twentieth-century occupation. The investigation concluded that the site may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

A.D. Marble & Company previously prepared a detailed historic context for the project area (2010). It provides an overview of the historical development of East Dover Hundred, Kent County, and the Upper Peninsula zone with a focus on the APE for a period extending from 1630 to the present. The author of the report notes that two major themes relevant to understanding the use-life of the APE are Industry and Commerce and African-American History and Culture. Each of these themes is discussed within the historic period contexts in the Determination of Eligibility report. The historic periods relevant to the archaeological resources encountered during the Phase I archaeological survey are:

- 1830 to 1880+/-, Industrialization and Early Urbanization;
- 1880 to 1940+/-, Urbanization and Early Suburbanization; and
- 1940 to Present, Commercialization and Suburbanization.

The evolutions of these themes within their time periods are thoroughly reviewed in the Determination of Eligibility report and are not repeated in this document.

The following section outlines the evolution of occupational use-life of the APE as evidenced by historic mapping. These maps provide information about where historic structures were located (or remain standing). Based on the 1868 Beers atlas map, Thomas Slaughter owned the property where the APE is located (Figure 4). A single historic structure was located outside the southeast corner of the APE at that time. A small fraction of the APE traverses the eastern margin of the African-American subdivision of “Accretio” (Figure 5 [see Lots 59 and 60]). Figure 5 shows the location of the structure belonging to Slaughter adjacent to the east of the southeast corner of the APE.

Background research revealed that Accretio Lot 59, which is today known as 701 Slaughter Street, contained a dwelling built ca. 1874 by James Kerbin (Kent County 1874 Deed Book R5:230; Roe 1887). The Roe atlas map of 1887 depicts a dwelling in Lot 59 occupied by “Henry” (Figure 6). A dwelling is also present in the adjacent Lot 60 occupied by “Mrs. Brinkley”; however, it is located outside the APE in the southwestern corner of the lot. Lewis Geiser conveyed Lot 60 to Sarah Brinkley in 1873 for a total of \$100 (Kent County Deed Book Q5:198). Roe’s map from 1887 confirms that Sarah Brinkley owned the lot and depicts a structure located at the southern end of the parcel fronting Slaughter Street, but it is outside of the APE (Roe 1887). John Sullivan purchased the lot in 1906 (Kent County Deed Book G9:460-468). Based on aerial photos, the structure appears to have been razed some time after 1968 and before 1992. Currently, the parcel is vacant.

The 1919 Sanborn mapping shows that the structure formerly associated with “Henry” is present at the intersection of Clarence and Slaughter streets (Figure 7). The building is a two-story frame dwelling, and a single-story frame stable is located north of the house. The 1929, 1950, and 1969 Sanborn maps show the same dwelling, but the stable is no longer depicted (Figures 8 to 10). The dwelling is not depicted in the 1992 aerial (<http://datamil.delaware.gov>, accessed September 20, 2010); therefore, the structure was demolished after 1969 and before 1992.

The 1969 Sanborn documents residential development of the portion of the APE north of Forest Street. The 712 and 716 Forest Street properties contain relatively large two-story dwellings that were constructed ca. 1920 and 1925, respectively. The 1968 aerial verifies these same structures, but also shows that the flanks of Tar Ditch had been heavily modified, apparently mechanically (<http://datamil.delaware.gov>, accessed September 20, 2010). The aerial presumably depicts exposed subsoils that appear as a bright white area surrounding the ditch (Figure 11). If true, this helps to explain why the field team encountered deep fill deposits containing massive concrete rubble and asphalt chunks and no intact B-horizon in the STPs excavated at this location. The Field Results section of this report elaborates on this hypothesis.

In sum, areas with nineteenth- to twentieth-first-century dwellings are present near the northern and southern ends of the tested portion of the APE. Archaeological potential in these areas was considered to be moderate to high. The east-central margin was used for industry throughout its use-life. The majority of the central portion of the APE appears to have never witnessed residential or industrial development. However, based on aerial mapping, the section of the APE near Tar Ditch appears to have been extensively disturbed ca. 1968. Therefore, the archaeological potential of this part of the APE was considered to be low to moderate (<http://datamil.delaware.gov>, accessed September 17, 2010).