

PREHISTORY OF THE DOVER BY-PASS

Paleo-Indian

The Paleo-Indian manifestation in Delaware is defined by the presence of fluted points.

In the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, this cultural period is generally believed to date between 10,000 - 11,000 B.P. Little is known in Delaware of their social life or their subsistence and settlement activities, though their population density was surely sparse as only fifty fluted points have been reported for the entire state.

There is no evidence of Paleo-Indian occupation within the study area of the Dover Bypass corridor. This is not surprising in that distributional studies of fluted points conducted by Thomas (Thomas n.d.) indicated the Paleo-Indian occupations are predominantly concentrated at the headwaters of the major drainages.

Archaic (10,000 - 3,000 B.P.)

The Archaic has traditionally been divided into early, middle and late periods based on projectile point stylistic differences, the addition of new artifact types into the inventory and interpreted changes in the subsistence and settlement systems. Throughout the period, the inhabitants of the Delmarva Peninsula became increasingly efficient hunters and gatherers.

The Early Archaic is marked by the appearance of the first non-fluted projectile points such as the corner-notched (Kirk, Palmer, etc.) and bifurcate (LeCroy, Kanawha, etc.) point forms. Accepted dates for these complexes range from near 10,000 B.P. to 7,000 B.P. (Gardner 1974:38A) Occupation intensity was greater than during the Paleo-Indian period. A seasonally mobile hunting and gathering type of adaptation within a restricted territory is inferred based on these scattered but relatively numerous sites. The Dover Bypass corridor was the scene of light and sporadic occupation throughout the Early

Archaic. One specimen of the corner-notched type (a Kirk related form) was located at site 7K-C-33, while two specimens of the bifurcate and related types were found at 7K-F-56, one at 7K-F-51 and one at 7K-E-108. The two at 7K-F-56 were located over 100 meters apart suggesting a light occupation density at any one site or the periodic revisiting of the same site by small groups of people.

The remainder of the Archaic is marked by increasing population densities as more modern environments were established across the East. Projectile point styles are characterized by regional traditions, locally reinterpreted and identified as local style zones. Settlements became increasingly more permanent. The introduction of more efficient hunting, gathering and storing techniques contributed to this population increase as well as permitting each settlement to be occupied for longer periods of time through the year.

The Middle Archaic (7,000 - 4,500 B.P.) within the By-Pass is recognized by several projectile point styles that have been found in dated contexts in Pennsylvania and New York. Projectile points in Groups IV and VII may partially belong to this time frame. Members of these groups, however, were used for a long period so that some specimens may be considerably more recent than the Middle Archaic. Sites 7K-F-45, 7K-F-47, 7K-F-53, 7K-F-56 (2), and 7K-C-33 contain points potentially assignable to this period. The maximum total of eight points assignable to this period demonstrates the gradually increasing prehistoric utilization of this area through time.

The Late Archaic may be divided into two periods. In the early part of the Late Archaic a contracting stem and short stemmed point tradition developed. Projectile points of Groups XI and XII indicate a heavy utilization of this area early in the Late Archaic. These point groups, however, may

have members that have a temporal range into the Early Woodland. The settlements appear to correspond to a series of seasonal camps located in high resource areas. Sites 7K-F-12, 7K-F-49, 7K-F-55, 7K-F-44, 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-53, 7K-F-56, 7K-F-52, 7K-C-57, 7K-C-32, 7K-C-33 and 7K-C-17 were occupied at this time. The latter part of the Archaic known as the Terminal Archaic/Transitional period began somewhere around 4000 B.P. It is recognized by the appearance of the broadspear and "fishtail" tradition projectile points of Groups V and X. Toward the end of this period, soapstone vessels were also added to this inventory. This period appears to have been the culmination of the basic Archaic hunting and gathering economy. The first intensely occupied semi-permanent base camps appear at this time. In central Delaware such camps were located near the fresh water/ salt water boundary along the major rivers. Smaller procurement sites are found at the headwaters of the major rivers and sporadically along the coast. Sites 7K-F-12, 7K-F-49 and 7K-F-55 probably represent such base camps while 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-47, 7K-F-56 (1 & 2), 7K-F-53, 7K-C-32, and 7K-C-71, appear to be hunting, gathering and/or fishing sites of shorter duration.

Woodland (3,000 - 400 B.P.)

The Woodland period in the East has been divided into early, middle and late periods. It can generally be characterized by: the practice of plant cultivation, the manufacture and extensive use of ceramics, an increasingly sedentary settlement pattern and an increase in the importance of religious functionaries especially as seen in mortuary ceremonialism (Thomas 1974B: 17).

The Early Woodland period (3,000 - 2500 B.P.) in the Mid-Atlantic is recognized by the appearance of ceramics in the cultural assemblage and the consequent disappearance of soapstone vessels. Flat-bottomed ceramics appeared between 3,000 - 2,900 B.P. and is known as Marcey Creek and its variants. Early Woodland conical forms such as Accokeek, Vinette I,

and Early Series cordmarked appeared shortly after the flat-bottomed variety. The basic adaptation seems to have changed little from the late Archaic, though occupation density seems to have been somewhat greater. Early Woodland occupations along the Bypass corridor occurred at 7K-F-55, 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-53, 7K-F-56 and 7K-F-52 as identified by the presence of the above ceramics. The associated projectile points are not known with certainty, though members of Groups XI and/or XII may be associated with the above ceramics.

Middle Woodland (2,500 - 1,100 B.P.)

The Middle Woodland period represents an amplification of the basic Early Woodland attributes. Ceramics diversified considerably with the introduction of new styles and technological features. Several Middle Woodland types have been identified for the Dover Bypass and presumably represent various cultural groups within the broad time span of the Middle Woodland. During the early Middle Woodland (2,500 - 2,000 B.P.), the Coulbourne and Quartz Net ceramic types are one of the first ceramic groups to appear abundantly in central Delaware. Along the Dover Bypass, these ceramics occur at 7K-F-55, 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-47 and 7K-F-56 (#1). It should be noted that these ceramics, as well as all other ceramic categories, occur on the lower portions of Spring Creek and Double Run precisely where the Terminal Archaic/Transitional base camps were first established. This again suggests that these locations served as base camps intermittently throughout the Woodland Period. The location of Woodland type projectile points at various sites farther north on the Bypass indicates the location of special purpose hunting and/or gathering camps away from the base camps. It is during the early Middle Woodland period that the first mortuary complex known on the Delmarva Peninsula occurs. The so-called Delmarva-Adena complex consists of

large cemeteries containing many exotic grave goods imported from the Ohio Valley Adena cultures. The Murderkill River system has revealed one such cemetery and it is likely that the inhabitants of these early Middle Woodland sites along the Bypass participated in that social system, though none of the exotic grave goods were located within the study area.

The period between 2,000 - 1,600 B.P. is known in central Delaware as the Carey Phase. Shell tempered ceramics, related to the Mockley series of Maryland, first appear at this time. It has been assumed that horticulture played an increasing role in subsistence, though no direct evidence has been found in Delaware. These people were still basically highly efficient hunters and gatherers and their numerous campsites along Spring Creek and Double Run attest to their intense utilization of the area. Sites 7K-F-44, 7K-F-55, 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-53, and 7K-F-56 (#2) exhibited Carey Phase occupation. No ceremonial/burial site has been located that relates to the Carey Phase.

The latter part of the Middle Woodland has been divided into two sections based on excavated sites in Delaware. This division is based not on the continuity of ceramics between the periods, but rather on the change in associated projectile point forms. This type of point style change occurs at a slightly earlier period in the New York area where many of the Delaware ceramic and lithic styles originated in the late Middle Woodland. The earlier part, tentatively defined from a Bypass site (7K-F-46) consists of Hell Island Cord Marked and Fabric Impressed pottery associated with Group III projectile points. The tentative time placement is from 1600 - 1400 B.P. Very little is known of their subsistence and settlement in Delaware, thus making 7K-F-46 a very important research site for this period. Sites 7K-F-55, 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-53, 7K-F-47 and 7K-F-56 (#1, 2, & 3) contain this occupation.

The terminal Middle Woodland (1400 - 1100 B.P.), known as the Webb Phase, has been defined at the Island Field Site in South Bowers, Delaware. The definition there is based on the mortuary complex and associated tools (Thomas, 1970). Elaborate mortuary practices and exotic grave goods imported from many sections of the Northeast comprise this complex. Associated ceramics are unknown at the Island Field Site though other research has indicated that Hell Island Cord Marked and Fabric Impressed pottery with group I and/or IX projectile points should occur at Webb Phase occupation sites. Projectile points of Groups I and IX of the Webb Phase occurred at the following Bypass sites: 7K-F-54, 7K-F-55, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-56 (2), 7K-F-12, 7K-F-44, 7K-C-71, 7K-F-51, 7K-F-52, 7K-F-50 and 7K-F-48.

Late Woodland (1,100 - 400 B.P.)

The Late Woodland Period in Delaware exhibits several continuities and some major breaks from the earlier Woodland periods. Group I points, for example, continue throughout the Late Woodland to the virtual exclusion of all other forms. Additionally, the shell tempering of some Middle Woodland types continues in the Townsend Series ceramics. A major break, however, does occur in the subsistence and settlement system. The first true permanent base camps were established somewhere around 1000 A.D. in Sussex and Kent counties. These sites exhibit a large amount of surface debris and many sub-surface storage, refuse and house pits. Smaller coastal and inland sites related to these "villages" appear to represent short term food procurement activities. None of these large, permanent base camps occur along the Dover Bypass corridor. Sites 7K-F-55, 7K-F-54, 7K-F-45, 7K-F-46, 7K-F-56 (#1,2, &3), 7K-F-12, 7K-F-44, 7K-C-71, 7K-F-51, 7K-F-52, 7K-F-50, 7K-F-48 and 7K-F-47 represent short term occupations. In a general way, those sites along Spring Creek and lower Double Run appear to represent seasonal procurement of such resources as anadromous fish, while the remaining sites are probably very short term hunting camps.