

LOWER DELMARVA REGIONAL CENTER FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

SALISBURY STATE COLLEGE
SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21801

RECEIVED

July 30, 1981

AUG 8 1981

Dear Sue,

OFFICE OF PLANNING
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

I liked the Historic Research Design alot, and I am at somewhat of a loss to make any general suggestions for improving it. I will offer up a few particularistic observations based on my experiences down here, however. I hope they will be of some use. First, it is apparent on Marylands lower shore that bridging points on rivers skew road systems very markedly and concomitantly affect settlement patterns. Bridges seemingly are much more efficient movers of peoples and goods than river ferries. Most early towns down here developed not at the mouths of rivers but at the lowest points on rivers that could be easily bridged. With the exception of Cambridge the towns that grew were towns on bridges, not towns on ferries. Second the limited availablity of water power down here had a very great effect on settlement, not so much initially but from 1750 on. Areas with low water power potential consistently loose population to areas with high water power potential. Third, as far as long distant water transportation is concerned, speed and regularity of service were very important to the kinds of goods transported. The beginnings of steam navigation on the Cheasapeake Bay changed marketing patterns for the lower shore by making Baltimore accessable faster and on a more regular basis. The shift from grain to fruit, vegetables and seafood that occured on Marylands Lower Eastern shore between 1800 and 1870 was apparently triggered initially by improved water contacts with Baltimore. This shift was intensified by the coming of the Railroad later on. Fourth, as far as earliest settlement is concerned, the most important factor seems to have been accessability to water, but the next most important factor was the drainage characteristics of the soil. Areas with good access to navigable waterways are settled first if they are well drained, but if land is poorly drained then despite water access settlement is delayed by about a generation. A similar delay in settlement is seen with

interior areas that have good drainage but no water access. Apparently the difficulty of moving goods on land just about balanced the difficulties created by the farming of poorly drained land. As the road system developed of course, interior lands of high agricultural potential increased in desirability relative to accessible but poorly drained lands. Congratulations on the research design.

Yours,

Tom Davidson