

## SEGMENT 5: THE NEWTOWN ROAD ALIGNMENTS

This segment of the project area comprises the three proposed routes for the Newtown Road Alignment, and is located south of Christina Creek, between Route 896 and Route 72 (South Chapel Street Extension). As presently proposed, the three Newtown Road Alignments would begin at the Four Seasons Parkway, west of Route 896, and extend eastward for approximately 1 mile to the vicinity of the intersection of Route 72 and Reybold Road (County Road 385) (Figure 79). Two of the alignments are planned to cross the agricultural lands, woodlands and borrow pit operation located south of County Road 386 (Eggerts Road) and the third alignment is to closely follow Cooch's Bridge Road (County Road 408) for approximately 3000 feet, then cut eastward to Eggert Road and along its course for about 1100 feet, then across the DP&L substation property to the Reybold Road intersection. The proposed alignments cross no major drainages within the projected ROW, but Muddy Run and Sunset Lake, a nineteenth century mill-pond, are located within 200 feet of Alignment 1. Alignments 1 and 2 do cross a small intermittent stream approximately 1000 feet east of the intersection of Cooch's Bridge Road and Route 896, and there are several low, wet swampy areas located within the agricultural fields included in the proposed ROW. These drainages and wet environmental settings are considered to have high potential for the location of prehistoric microband camps and/or procurement sites, as determined by Custer (1986) and Custer and DeSantis (1986). The Newtown Road Alignments are considered necessary by DelDOT to relieve the high volume of traffic and congestion presently found on Old Baltimore

Pike, and to provide a viable route around the Cooch's Bridge Historic District.

The Cooch's Bridge Historic District (N-190) includes within its boundaries the eighteenth century Cooch House (N-1469), the nineteenth century Dayett House (N-1470), and the Dayett Mill (N-1468), as well as an additional 57 structures or contributing features (Benenson and Bower 1987). Besides being representative of a rural milling locale, the District also commemorates the Battle of Cooch's Bridge, fought September 3rd, 1777, between lead elements of the British Army, under Sir William Howe, and an American light infantry corps commanded by Brigadier General William Maxwell (Cooch 1940; Munroe 1978B; Catts 1973). The British Army, numbering about 17,000, had invaded the upper Delmarva Peninsula in the late summer of 1777 with the intent of capturing the rebel capital, Philadelphia. To combat this threat, and to annoy the British and their German allies, General Washington created a special corps of hand-picked light infantry chosen from the state brigades from North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey. In all, the corps numbered perhaps 700 continentals and 300 militia. General Maxwell selected the Cooch's Mill vicinity as his headquarters, and, understanding that his corps was only an advanced guard, utilized his troops in hit-and-run and harassing attacks designed to deprive the British of supplies and room for maneuver. Thus the stage was set for the only Revolutionary War battle fought on Delaware soil.

As established by Heite et al. (1972), the limits of the Historic District reflect the traditional view of how the battle was fought (Cooch 1940; Munroe 1978b). No first-hand American

accounts of the battle are known, but British and Hessian narratives indicate that the battle was joined along the road about 1/2 mile north of present-day Glasgow (the vicinity of the DuPont Complex on Route 896). According to Captain Fredrich von Muenchausen, a Hessian aide-de-camp to General Howe, the vanguard of the British column, consisting of Hessian and Anspach jaegers (literally "hunter"), were fired upon by Americans from concealed positions along both sides of the road. Howe subsequently ordered two battalions of British light infantry to support the jaegers on either flank; the battalion on the right became mired in "deep morass" (Kipping and Smith 1974:28) called Purgatory Swamp, and the one to the left became engaged with American militia stationed on Iron Hill, perhaps in defensive positions guarding the more direct road from Head of Elk. Though Howe's intended reinforcements did not relieve the Hessians, von Muenchausen indicates that the battle was soon ended:

Before General Howe arrived at the front with the two grenadier battalions, the jaegers had already finished the whole affair themselves, chasing the rebels through the thick woods, then across the barren hill and the Christiana Creek bridge, which led them across a second creek and a deep ravine. The rebels stopped at this second creek and made music with half-moons and other (wind) instruments (Kipping and Smith 1974: 28).

It is clear from von Muenchausen's description and the accounts of other participants (Montresor 1881; Andre 1904; Tustin 1978, Robertson 1931) that the battle was fought over a wide area of land, from Iron Hill on the west to Purgatory Swamp on the east, north to the Welsh Tract Baptist Church and southwards to near Glasgow. Maxwell, in command of a small,

newly-raised, multi-state corps, may have arranged his troops in several successive, prepared defensive positions based on natural topographic features in order to negate his obvious weaknesses in men and organization. The use of supporting defensive lines was utilized by Maxwell with great effect eight days later (September 11, 1777) at the Battle of Brandywine (Smith 1976). Based on the British accounts of the battle, it would seem that the Americans were drawn up in similar positions. The detailed diary of Johann Ewald, the Hessian captain in command of the extreme advanced detachment of the British Army, presents an excellent account of the battle from one who participated in it from start to finish:

"The army marched past Amborn to Aiken's Tavern in the Welsh district of Pennsylvania. At daybreak the army halted here momentarily. The Quartermaster General gave me six dragoons and ordered me to march at once to the left, where I should follow for five to six hundred paces a road which led to Iron Hill and Christiana Bridge. I took the dragoons with me to find the road that I had to take, and had not gone a hundred paces from the advanced guard when I received fire from a hedge, through which these six men were all either killed or wounded. My horse, which normally was well used to fire, reared so high several times that I expected it would throw me. I cried out, "Foot jagers forward!" and advanced with them to the area from which the fire was coming. My horse followed the men, but I did not observe that the good animal, which had carried me the whole day, was wounded in the belly; it died in the evening. At this moment I ran into another enemy party, with which I became heavily engaged. Lieutenant Colonel von Wurmb, who came up with the entire Corps assisted by the light infantry, ordered the advanced guard to be supported.

By this time it was broad daylight and we saw the mountain, which was overgrown with woods, rising up like an amphitheater and occupied by enemy troops. The Commander in Chief himself appeared and ordered Lieutenant Colonel Wurmb to drive the enemy off the mountain. The charge was sounded, and the enemy was attacked so severely and with such spirit by the jagers that we became masters of the mountain after a seven-hour engagement" (Tustin 1978:77-78).

Although the American light infantry corps gave a good account of itself, it was eventually forced to retreat in disorder, and retired to the American lines on Red Clay Creek near Newport. There are conflicting accounts as to the number of casualties on each side, but losses appear to have been equal, with both forces inflicting 50 killed or wounded. The British remained in possession of the field, and established their camp around Cooch's Bridge. The British Army remained in this location for five days, and on the 8th of September marched through Newark on its way to Hockessin and Kennett Square. Figure 80 is a map prepared by Major John Andre, a British engineer, showing the camp at Cooch's Bridge (Andre 1904). A portion of Segment 5 crosses the vicinity of the encampment of Stirn's Hessian Brigade. The traditional view of the archaeology of battlefield and temporary military camps is that they will contribute little to the history of an area other than artifacts of little cultural value (Noel-Hume 1975:183-188). Though this viewpoint is now being re-evaluated following the work of several researchers on nineteenth century battlefields (Scott 1985, 1987; Braley 1987), in this case, the potential for actual cultural resources within the proposed ROW is considered to be low, due to both the nature of the engagement, the short duration of the British encampment, and the present land use of the project area.

In addition to the Cooch's Bridge Historic District, the BAHP site files contained information regarding three prehistoric and one historic known cultural resources in the immediate vicinity of the project area. 7NC-D-25 (N-3745), 7NC-D-4 (N-3758), and 7NC-D-16 (N-3744) are the prehistoric sites. One of

these, 7NC-D-25 is of little comparative value, consisting of an unknown quantity of surface collected materials. It is located in what is now a borrow pit; therefore, this site is no longer extant. 7NC-D-16, located just north of the intersection of County Road 386 and Cooch's Bridge Road, consists of a surface collection of 7 flakes, 4 bifaces and 4 cores, of undetermined age. Finally, 7NC-D-4 is also the result of surface collecting, and included the recovery of 14 projectile points and 23 bifaces from a location on the western margin of Sunset Lake. The site dates from the Woodland I/II Periods. Of the three sites, 7NC-D-25 is bracketed by the paths of the proposed ROWs of Alignments 1 and 2. The other two sites are outside of the limits of the project area.

#### **S. Wright House (N-3996)**

This site was recorded in the BAHP files in 1978, and was demolished soon after that date. It was located on Eggerts Road, approximately 2100 feet east of the intersection of that road and Cooch's Bridge Road. In 1978 the structure was in poor condition, and was a 2 1/2 story frame house built on a rough stone foundation with a cellar. The dwelling was present by 1849, when it is shown as the house of S. Wright (Figure 8). The Wright's owned the property for the remainder of the nineteenth century (Figures 9, 10, and 11). The road that the house fronts on, Eggerts Road, was established in 1815 and ran from Eccles' Mills to the road from Cooch's Bridge to Glasgow (New Castle Court of General Sessions 1815). The grist mill complex at the southern terminus of the road was in the

possession of W. McNamee in 1849 (Figure 8). By 1868 it was owned by Adam Dayett, and he continued to operate the mill, known in 1893 as "Valley Mills," until the end of the nineteenth century (Figure 11). Local informants have indicated that the ruins of the mill foundations and of a supporting structure are still extant at the site; this information, however, was not field checked.

No Phase I subsurface testing was conducted on either the S. Wright House Site or the Valley Mills Site, because of the locations of both of these sites beyond the boundaries of the proposed ROWs. Both sites contain the potential to yield valuable information concerning the rural historic patterns of nineteenth century Delaware. At present, these historic sites lie outside of the proposed ROW and will not be impacted by proposed construction; therefore, no further work is recommended.

Due to the agricultural nature of the project area and the 80 to 100% visibility which this afforded, Phase I testing for all of the proposed ROWs consisted only of a pedestrian survey. This reconnaissance found that for the most part the project area consisted of moderately to severely eroded silty loams in the fields, and that substantial ground disturbance resulting from extensive borrow pit and gravelling operations have considerably altered the archaeological resource potential of the project area. This disturbance was present in both field and woodland settings, and included deep borrow pits and spoils piles, particularly located in the ROWs of Alignments 1 and 2. The ROW of proposed Alignment 3, which closely followed Cooch's Bridge

Road, was found to be too narrow and disturbed to allow Phase I subsurface excavations. The topography traversed by Alignment 3 was considerably altered by recent house construction and landscaping, and the presence of buried utility lines within the existing ROW. Additionally, background research found no evidence of historic structures within the proposed ROW of Alignment 3. No historic artifact concentrations suggestive of site locations were seen, and the historic artifacts observed were the result of field scatter and nineteenth to twentieth century agricultural practices. No prehistoric artifacts or sites were observed within the bounds of the three proposed alignments. The DP&L substation Tract was not subjected to Phase I archaeological investigations due to denied access.

**Muddy Run Site (7NC-D-154, N-10253)**

One prehistoric site was identified during the Phase I pedestrian survey (Figure 79). This site is located in the easternmost agricultural field and is approximately 500 feet south of Alignment 1. Artifacts recovered consisted of a quartz notched projectile point and a quartz core, both found within 50 feet of each other on a small rise surrounded by several low, water retaining basins. The site is probably a small Woodland II procurement site. Its location beyond the limits of the proposed ROW negated the need for any subsurface investigations, and the eligibility of the Muddy Run Site to the National Register is not known. No additional archaeological work is recommended at this site.