

The Hon. James R. Lofland died in 1894 and his property was passed to his wife, Sallie B. Lofland (Kent County Will Z-1 77). She occupied the property until her death in 1899. She left only one surviving heir, a daughter, Josephine Bruff of Ohio. In 1907, Bruff and her husband, Joseph E. Bruff, who were now living in Montclair, New Jersey, sold the property to Howard Hudson (Kent County Deed M-9 55). At this time the land containing the Lofland house was surveyed at 196 acres. The Hudson family remained in the possession of the house until 1943. In that year it was sold Emory Lynch and his wife, Sarah (Kent County Deed I-16 56). The deed of conveyance indicates that the property had been reduced to a 171-acre parcel of land; the property has remained this size to the present day.

The Lynch family occupied the property for the next 14 years. In 1957, they sold it to Jester A. Gray and his wife, Soulie B. Gray (Kent County Deed Y-18 8). Jester died on July 12, 1962 leaving the property to his wife. One year later, Soulie Gray sold the property to Jane Gray Hazzard of Pennsylvania, Sarah Gray Wilson of New Jersey and Mary Katherine Gray Wilson of Wilmington, Delaware (Kent County Deed I-23 277). The three were probably sisters. It is speculated that Soulie B. Gray was the last person to occupy the Lofland House. Sometime between 1971 and 1982, while under the ownership of the three sisters, the house was abandoned and eventually demolished.

C. Field Investigations

1. Previous Fieldwork

In June of 1994 a volunteer crew made up of staff members of the Delaware Department of Transportation and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office conducted a surface inspection of the Soulie Gray Farm property and identified six potential archaeological site locations (Loci A-F) (Figure 2). An 18th-century archaeological site (Locus A), previously reported by an avocational archaeologists, was relocated based on a dark organic stain, L-shaped in plan, and a concentration of historic artifacts including wine bottle glass, a wrought nail, a gun flint fragment, ceramics, shell and bone. This area was reported to measure approximately 120 by 140 feet, and was designated on a recent aerial photograph of the property as Locus A of Site 7K-F-163. This aerial view is included as part of the Phase I draft report on file at the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. Within the southern portion of the property, adjoining Locus A, a continuous light scatter of prehistoric artifacts was noted adjacent to the woods (Locus G). The only diagnostics recovered from this area were a side-notched projectile point base and a pestle. No temporal or cultural affiliation was assigned to the prehistoric artifacts recovered from this area. To the northwest of the 18th-century site, another field scatter of 19th-century cultural materials was identified as the Lofland House Site (Locus D).

2. Initial Field Inspection

In early April, 1996, in preparation for the formal Phase I field survey, Glen Mellin of Hunter Research, Inc. conducted a cursory surface examination of the southeastern corner of the Soulie Gray property in the vicinity of Locus A, where the early 18th-century house site had been previously identified. Over 600 historic and prehistoric artifacts were marked in place with wire nails and orange flagging. The historic artifacts included, in descending order of frequency, shell (oyster and clam), red brick fragments (some glazed), tobacco pipe stem fragments, ceramic sherds, bone and wrought nails, all broadly datable to the first half of the 18th century. Prehistoric artifacts were represented mainly by fire-cracked rock fragments and debitage, although a grooved axe fragment was also recovered. The concentration of artifacts covered an area measuring roughly 200 feet by 200 feet. This area was roped off to prevent additional plowing which was scheduled to begin the following week.

3. Surface Collection

In May, 1996, a formal surface collection of Locus A at Site 7K-F-163 was conducted by a three-person archaeological field crew. The locations of every artifact both inside and outside the previously marked 200-foot-square area were mapped with symbols being used to distinguish the various artifact types (Figure 5). Two concentrations were noted in the field: a large brick scatter thought to be the location of the house; and a scatter dominated by shell and bone, apparently a trash midden. A less dense scatter of artifacts extended from the roped off area southeast to a relict feeder stream near a bend in the Murderkill River; this may reflect the location of an early landing site. A small quantity of 19th-century artifacts was intermingled with the 18th-century materials. These later artifacts most likely relate to the early to mid-19th century Lofland house site located about 1,000 feet to the northwest. A moderate amount of prehistoric artifacts were also lightly scattered across the 200-foot-square area. A concentration of prehistoric artifacts dating to the Clyde Farm II phase of the Woodland I Period (circa 4000 - 3200 BP) were recovered from the surface of the field to the south of Locus A along the edge of the marsh. This latter portion of the site has been assigned to Locus G.

4. Subsurface Testing

A total of 98 shovel tests were excavated within Locus A. Thirty-nine tests were placed inside the 200-foot-square core area and 59 were placed outside this zone (Figure 6). Shovel tests outside the core area were located at 15-foot intervals along transects spaced 50 feet apart. The only historic artifacts recovered from these tests were found in the plowzone. No historic artifacts or features were found below the plowzone. The artifacts recovered outside the core area demonstrate that the site boundaries extend on average an additional 60 feet or so beyond the originally defined 200-foot-square core area. Shovel tests within the core area were also placed at 15-foot intervals along transects spaced 50 feet apart.