

5. A LARGER ETHNIC COMMUNITY

At least three Bloomsbury households belonged to a distinct local ethnic enclave. Similar, related, communities existed along the Eastern Seaboard

The preservation planning regime requires that each property must be considered in terms of its larger cultural and historical context. An obvious context for the subject property is the post-contact history of “isolate” populations of Native American descent in Delaware, not previously noticed by the planning process. While creation of a new full-blown planning context is not appropriate in a site-specific study, some information is necessary in order to place the site in its own proper ethnic milieu.

An ethnic group may be defined by any combination of such traits as consanguinity, shared foodways, settlement patterns, and common customs. A Kent County isolate community included several Bloomsbury residents. By some definitions, this closed community can be described as a distinct ethnic group, part of a series of similar, interrelated, ethnic enclaves along the eastern seaboard.

Members of Delaware’s racial isolate communities have been known by a bewildering variety of labels over the years. Labels have shifted, depending upon the era and individual points of view. It is useful to analyse the meaning behind these labels, remembering that they reflect observer bias.

As the local group developed, similar communities were coming into existence up and down the Atlantic seaboard. Genealogical research firmly connects the local community with nearby groups. On a larger scale, similar circumstances and surname similarities suggest that there was, at an early date, an informal network of such communities over long distances. In any case, research for this project indicates that the local “isolate” community was not an isolated or a unique phenomenon.

These isolate groups share certain characteristics that are consistent from North Carolina northward at least to New Jersey. Shared attributes of the various communities include:

1. Iberian surnames appear in all the communities as early as the seventeenth century, and always before the middle of the eighteenth century.
2. Families with documented Native American heritage are related to at least some members of each community. Some of the documented Native American families are found among several communities, and migrations can be traced.
3. At least by the middle of the eighteenth century, each community had begun to intermarry, thereby removing themselves from the larger local pool of prospective marriage partners.
4. People moved among the communities and married, thereby suggesting that they early recognized and embraced one another as similar cultural communities.
5. Aside from the term “Mulatto” applied with increasing frequency as time passed, most community members were not identified racially until after the Revolution.

WHAT IS RACE OR ETHNICITY?

Nineteenth-century scholars attempted to classify mankind among a hierarchy of “races” that could be clearly defined and recognized by superficial characteristics. These attempts at imposing system culminated in the eugenics movement, which ultimately spawned the tragic distorted racial concepts that killed so many people during the twentieth century.

Because “race” is so difficult to define, and because of its rhetorical baggage, the term has become unfashionable, while retaining some utility.

In spite of its ghastly outcomes, the concept of separate groups of people has historical validity; stated bluntly, people have grouped themselves throughout history. If a "race" is defined as a self-defined community who intermarry freely and share cultural traditions, then a "race" is relatively simple to define in terms of a group, regardless of any particular individual's genetic makeup, outward appearance, or antecedents.

For purposes of census and enforcement of discriminatory laws, race in America has been defined by the subjective opinion of the person keeping records. In the case of Indians living in a society where everyone was either black or white, subjective racial assignments varied through the spectrum.

While the house at Bloomsbury was standing, the economic, legal, and social status of Native American descendants in Delaware was slipping from a largely undifferentiated white or "not black" designation to a status legally indistinguishable from free Negroes. Partly as a consequence of this change in designation, native-descended people became poorer, less literate, and almost invisible. This slippage has been documented by an earlier study in this series (Heite and Heite 1985).

Isolation and alienation had possible beneficial cultural effects, however. During nearly three centuries, Indian-descended remnant communities managed to retain separate identities, some social structure, and the oral heritage of a native ancestry (clipping, pages 84-86).

At least two tenants on the Bloomsbury property, John Sisco [Francisco] and Thomas Conselor, are known to have been members of a local population sometimes called "moors" or "high yellows," historically centered around the present town of Cheswold in Little Creek and Duck Creek hundreds of northern Kent County. Two of the European-American owners, Patrick Conner and Francis Denney, were identified with these people through close business and

personal relationships. Another family on the property, the Loatmans, also are related to the same community.

It is therefore appropriate to consider the Bloomsbury site in terms of a larger context of race, or more properly, race designation, and isolate communities.

LITERATURE OF ISOLATE GROUPS

Racially ambiguous communities, sometimes collectively called *isolates* or, in former times, *tri-racial* isolates, are found throughout the United States, but they are best known in the upper South, including Delaware. These groups typically are self-defined and are recognized by the larger communities that surround them. Sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and genealogists have studied these communities from several complementary points of view.

The first published overall survey of isolate groups in the upper South was a sociological study by Brewton Berry, *Almost White* (Berry 1963). The most recent scholarly study is a genealogical survey by an historian (DeMarce 1992, 1993). Published scholarly accounts of individual communities are appearing regularly (Cissna 1986). Some studies are fragmentary and others remain unpublished (such as Segal 1976), leaving the field wide open for future researchers.

Genealogical and anthropological scholarship has shed light on the isolates' origins, but researchers generally recognize that much basic data must yet be gathered before the subject can be adequately understood (DeMarce 1993:39). Before the advent of modern DNA studies, there were several attempts to quantify in genetic terms the racial makeup of the isolate groups (Pollizer 1972) by looking at gross perceived racial characteristics.

As details have fallen together, it has become apparent that the isolate groups are, in fact, remnant Native American communities that have remained outside the official system of recognized tribes.

HISTORY OF "OFFICIAL" RACE

Among the first laws issued by the English under the Duke of York was a law forbidding freedom of worship for Native people (Linn 1879:33):

"No Indian whatsoever shall at any time be Suffered to Powaw or performe outward worship to the Devil in any Towne within this Government."

The same law, however, required settlers to help fence Indians' corn fields against wandering cattle, and to compensate Indian farmers for crop damage from settlers' cattle. Strong liquor was not to be given to Indians, except for medicinal purposes.

A Delaware law of 1740 (13 George II Chapter LXXIV) acknowledged that Indians were still present, since they were exempted from deer-hunting regulations. Implicit in the exemption was the proposition that an Indian was, among other characteristics, a non-Christian person who depended upon wild deer meat. A Christian farmer who kept livestock and ate beef and pork presumably could not be an Indian, regardless of ancestry.

In 1770, the Delaware legislature declared (*Minutes*: 270), in response to a letter from other colonies about regulating Indian trade:

"...Upon which we beg Leave, to observe, that the Inhabitants of this Government have at present no Commerce or Intercourse whatsoever with the Indians, and from their Situation cannot expect to have any with them hereafter; ..."

The official position, then, was that there were no Indians in or near the three Delaware counties by 1770. Two years earlier, the legislature had appropriated £16/6/1 to pay for accommodating "a Parcel of Indians." (*Minutes*: 151) who were just visiting.

The 1770 communication reflects a further definition of an Indian, not only as a non-Christian person subsisting on wild meat, but as a person living in a "Situation" far from Delaware, on the frontier.

Settlement of the disputed boundary with Maryland in 1760 had brought into Sussex County areas where the last official Maryland Eastern Shore Indian towns had existed, but the Delaware legislature ignored any remaining Indians in the new territories.

From the end of the seventeenth century, until the last decades of the nineteenth century, no Indians were legally identified in local Kent County government records. Census, tax, and school records maintained by state offices contain no record of any race other than "colored" or white during nearly two centuries (Heite and Heite 1985).

Before the United States census of 1790, there was no legal requirement in America to classify everyone by race, and there was no generally-accepted standard for racial identity. Racial designations appear in the record only on an *ad hoc* basis, determined for each occasion.

The Constitution required a decennial census, that would identify whites, slaves, free persons of color, including everyone except "Indians not taxed." Indians not taxed were those who lived on reservations set aside by the U. S. government or by the colonies before the Revolution.

Taxed Indians and mixed-blood people of any sort were enumerated in the census together with African Americans under the classification of "free persons of color." Some were classified as white. Because there were no reservations in federal-period Delaware, where untaxed Indians would reside, an Indian could be either black or white, but not "red." The 1800 census of Delaware (the 1790 returns having been lost) did not list any person identified as an Indian.

During the half-century before the Civil War, increasingly strict laws controlled the actions of blacks and mulattoes. Because Delaware was a slave state, these restrictions were relatively onerous. Some of the families with Native American descent moved to other areas, farther west, where they some-

times appear in the records as Native Americans (CITATION).

Some families moved to more hospitable places, including the last known Bloomsbury occupant, who moved to New Jersey; his son and widow moved to Indiana eventually.

Some Delaware community members evidently retained connections with the Indian families that had moved away. In 1892, a Philadelphia newspaper reported that a man of the Cheswold community born in 1811 had lived as a young man among Lenape emigrants then living near Peru, Indiana (clipping, pages 84-86), even after their supposed removal to Kansas following the Treaty of St. Marys.

Official silence concerning race during the eighteenth century has complicated the historian's task of making a racial or cultural identification of these people during a critical period in their history, which was the time when this site was occupied.

The concept of "race" presents some problems to the historian working in Delaware records. If "race" is defined by genealogy, or pure descent from a core population, very few people can be classified as belonging to any single race.

The Maryland state historic preservation plan assumes that Native Americans ceased to exist in the colony at some time. A research question in the plan is, "Why did indigenous Native American populations largely disappear from Maryland after European settlement began?" In fact, they are still there, but they were consistently missed by contemporary authorities and later by historians, largely because of the misleading "mulatto" tag (Maryland Historical Trust 1986:282).

FACTORS IN RACE PERCEPTION

During the period when race designations became mandatory, late in the eighteenth century, many factors contributed to

race perception, or to the lack of pejorative designation.

Rich folks could be defined as white, or at least not called mulattoes, regardless of their appearance or ancestry. John, Charles, and Lydia Francisco are a case in point. They were well-off and generally literate.

John Francisco was the son-in-law of John Durham the elder, who apparently was regarded as white. Both appear in the 1782 census and assessment without racial designation. When John Francisco died in 1791, his movable estate was worth nearly a thousand pounds.

John's son Charles lived in a six-room house and left an inventory worth more than £700 when he died in 1800. John's daughter Esther called herself a "free woman of color" in her 1810 will. His sister Lydia left silver spoons and an indentured boy's time. These are all decidedly indicators of substantial middle-class economic status indistinguishable from their well-off white neighbors.

Other Francisco family members, who were not so well off, were treated as mulattoes and looked down upon. Another descendant of John Durham, who apparently was regarded as white, died and left a substantial estate.

Elijah Conselor, another well-off member of the community, is listed in the 1800 census without "n" after his name, in a household of 11 free nonwhites. Another "free person of color" with no "n" after her name was his sister-in-law Elizabeth (Letitia?) LaCount.

These apparent contradictions provide a clue to the racial nature of the community at the end of the eighteenth century. The interrelated community consisted of lines with varying degrees of white and Indian lineage, and race perception was tempered by a certain deference to wealth and status.

Delawareans identified as Indians in federal Sea Protection papers

In spite of the fact that state government did not recognize anyone as an Indian, it was sometimes necessary to identify people by their apparent ancestry. Between 1790 and 1862, American seamen could protect themselves against impressment by the British by carrying protective papers issued by the federal government. These papers included physical descriptions. Betty Harrington Macdonald has abstracted Delaware entries (Macdonald 1992:63-64). The men listed here were members of families related to the northern Kent County isolate community that included occupants of the Bloomsbury site.

<i>Applicant's name</i>	<i>Date of decal- ration and age</i>	<i>Computed year of birth</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>	<i>Physical description as recorded</i>	<i>Witness</i>
Nathaniel Clark	1827 23	1804	Sussex Co.	a colored man of the Indian race	James Lord
James Hansor	1831 17	1814	Sussex Co.	Indian complexion	Cary Hansor
Elihu Ridgeway	1846 28	1818	Indian River	Indian complexion	William Shorter
Benjamin Norwood	1853 30	1823	Indian River	Indian complexion	Capt W. H. Lingo
John Dean	1853 27	1826	Smyrna	of Indian descent	Capt W. H. Lingo
Eli Herman (Harmon?)	1853 24	1829	Indian River	Indian complexion Indian, black straight hair (crew list)	George Brown
T. Robinson Hanzar	1858 19	1839	Indian River	Indian complexion	
Charles Dunning	1859 28	1831	Dagsboro	Indian complexion	
Stephen Morris	1860 21	1839	Lewes	Indian complexion	
Thomas Harmon	1860 28	1832	Sussex Co.	Indian complexion	

A PROBLEM OF INVISIBLE INDIANS

Public policy in the southeastern states was essentially biracial before the Civil War. One was either white or non-white, which, in the popular mind, meant black. Native American remnant groups fought for recognition as a separate race outside the biracial system throughout the segregation era, sometimes successfully (Williams, ed., 1979:23).

Cultural disappearance appears to have been a survival strategy for remnant communities throughout the east during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. This system of documentary invisibility has been developed and perpetuated by scholars working with interracial studies on the East Coast.

In Virginia, Indians eventually adopted an Anglo-American way of life, native languages died out, and most of the community members were living off the three reservations that survived after the Revolution. The communities kept to themselves and were lumped for government purposes with other "free persons of color" until after the Civil War (Rountree 1990, 1996:187-189).

Precisely the same course of events occurred in Delaware. With the exception of John Dean (chart, this page) no individual in the Kent County community was identified in an official record as an Indian.

The first recorded recognition in the popular press of the Indian element in Kent County did not appear until 1892, and then only in a newspaper article (pages 84-86). This article is an important historical clue, since it contains a first-person description of the community during the period when Bloomsbury was occupied.

For the Indian descendant population, the process of joining European society included renunciation, or at least subordination, of Indian identity. In the minds of many settlers, one could not be a Christian Indian, or a civilized Indian. Those who converted became mulattoes in the eyes of law and society.

The best-documented seventeenth-century Indians in central Delaware were the ones who sold the territory to European settlers. Between Duck Creek and the St. Jones, land was sold by an Indian with the curious name of Christian, also known as Petticoqewan, who claimed to be lord, owner, and

chief sachem of Mitsawokett. Between 1677 and 1684, he conveyed thousands of acres to settlers, often in trade for powder and shot or for drink, or for clothing (Kent County Deed Books A-1: 10, 14; B-1: 2, 8 10-13, 20-21, 36).

The territory of Mitsawokett became northern Kent County, encompassing the hundreds of St. Jones, Little Creek and Duck Creek, but the name of Christian or Petticoquewan is missing from the records after about 1684.

For another century, references to people identified as Indians in Delaware are sparse and fleeting. An Indian named Samuel Boarman was bound by the Kent County court in 1719 to serve three years as payment for medical care following a gunshot wound (Hancock 1974:49). He may have been the last officially identified Indian in the county records for another two centuries.

Some people in the community have borne family names that are firmly documented in other localities as Indians, but not in Kent County. People named Francisco (Sisco), Norwood, Cambridge, and Puckham are known from records elsewhere to have been recognized as Indians during their lifetimes, but their relatives in Mitsawokett did not press the claim.

Indirect references to "Indian" origins are found in personal physical descriptions, including the narrative of Judge Fisher. A James Dean of Smyrna was described in an affidavit filed in 1853 as "of Indian descent" as part of the program of seamen's protective papers (Macdonald 1992).

FORMING A COMMUNITY

Scharf's *History of Delaware* states that group members claimed that the Kent County "moor" community began about 1710, maintaining a separate society from the start. (Scharf 1888:1124).

This claim is consistent with the genealogical and historical record. Because

genetic background was not an issue, nobody bothered to identify these people by race, even though they obviously identified one another as being similar.

During the seventeenth century, landowning families named Butcher and Conselor (Gonsela, etc.) settled in Little Creek Hundred. In 1686 Adam Butcher recorded an earmark in Kent County, which indicates that he was farming and had livestock running on the common.

Progenitors of the community appeared in the Kent County records without racial identification, generally literate and financially well off, by 1693. Over the next century and a half, their descendants declined in wealth and status. Perhaps most significant was the decline in literacy among the community.

The 1800 manuscript census is the oldest official extant documentation of an attempt (the 1790 census being lost) to define everyone in Delaware by race. Three categories of nonwhite people were identified by the federal enabling law: Indians not taxed, free colored persons, and slaves. In each hundred, the local census taker applied his own criteria. The census was tallied differently in each county, too. In Sussex County, the tally contains a list at the end of each hundred's list titled "Free Negroes & Mulattos & C," while in Kent, the letter "N" was placed after certain names.

The ambiguity is well illustrated in the project vicinity by the cases of Elizabeth LaCount and Mary Durham.

Mary, widow of Isaiah Durham, is listed in the 1800 census of Little Creek Hundred as "N" with only free persons of color in her household. When she married John Sisco, also listed as "N" in the census, her surety on Isaiah's estate, a white man, demanded to be released from his bond because she had married a mulatto! Clearly Mary was perceived as belonging to a "superior" racial group, above the mulatto Sisco, while in another record both are de-

scribed as negroes. In the 1800 census, Isaiah's brother William Durham is listed as white, or at least not nonwhite. His sisters married members of the Sisco (Francisco), Conselor, and LaCount families, who were listed as "N."

Thomas LaCount married Letitia Durham, sister of William, in 1789. Elizabeth [Letitia?] LaCount is listed without the "N" after her name in the Duck Creek census, with only free persons of color in her household. Samuel LaCount appears as white in the Mispillion Hundred census of 1800.

Creation of a public school system led to a monopoly of literacy reserved for whites alone, while private schools were dissolved or absorbed. Academies in Dover, Camden, Newark, Middletown, and other towns became public schools with a strict color line. There was no longer employment for private teachers or for the less formal schools that might have been less racially exclusive.

Male literacy was a powerful indicator of a household's economic prospects (chart, this page) In those days before free public education for all races, literacy was a commodity that required disposable income and, preferably, access to schools. A poor family in the backwoods, unable to reach or afford access to private schools, had few prospects of improvement.

THE CONSELOR FAMILY

In 1693, Thomas Conselor (Gonse-lah), already a resident of the county, occupied 120 acres on the north side of Little Creek, in Little Creek Neck. He died in 1720. His origin is undocumented except for his Iberian surname

His descendants formed the nucleus of the interrelated community that still clusters around the village of Cheswold. As early as the second decade of the eighteenth century, families that later became the core community had begun to intermarry among themselves. Folklore cited by Scharf (1888) identifies the same era for the community's establishment.

By the time the second Thomas Conselor died in 1739, the incipient community's families already had begun to intermarry. His will indicates that Conselor's daughters had married a Butcher and a Francisco (Sisco), both "core" families of the community.

A third daughter had an apparently illegitimate or orphaned son, named William, who became the chief beneficiary of the grandfather's will. This William Conselor probably was to become the grandfather of the Thomas Conselor who later lived at Bloomsbury.

LITERACY AND PROSPERITY IN THE CHESWOLD POPULATION EARLY GENERATIONS BASED UPON PROBATE RECORDS AT THE DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES					
<i>Year of death</i>	<i>Name of Deceased</i>	<i>Was he literate?</i>	<i>Name of Widow</i>	<i>Was she literate?</i>	<i>Value of inventory</i>
1732	David Francisco				£27/1/6
1748	Thomas Francisco		Patience	no	£18/16/6
1767	William Handsor	yes	Sarah	no	£71
1780	William Conselor	yes			£65/4/0
1786	Daniel Durham	no	Ellinor		£116/19/6
1788	John Durham	no			£233/7/6
1791	John Francisco	yes			£942/6/3
1793	Whittington Durham	no	Ruth	no	£132/10/3
1795	Thomas Durham		Mary		£103/6/3
1796	Thomas LaCount		Hester	no	£39/1/1
1798	Charles Francisco	yes	Elizabeth	yes	£706/5/2.5
1797	William Durham	yes	Mary	no	£129/12/3
1800	Isaiah Durham		Maria	no	£195/11/10
1801	Daniel Durham	yes	Nicey (Unity)	no	£185/11/0
1801	Elijah Conselor	no	Hannah	no	£501/17/4
1810	Benjamin Durham		Elizabeth	no	\$250.39
1815	Daniel Durham	no			\$161.06
1811	Jeremiah Conselor	no	Elizabeth	no	\$656.895
1839	Jesse Dean	yes	Rebecca		\$576.12
1864	Elisha Durham	yes	Priscilla		\$352.03

Francisco (Sisco) is the only surname among the earliest Kent County generations that was then associated in other contemporary documents with Native Americans. Specifically, the surname appears among the Nanticoke leadership when the tribe was living on the upper Susquehanna (Weslager 1948). The name appears in the Kent County community before 1739, already intermarried with Conselors and Butchers.

By the beginning of the Revolution, the community of interrelated families centered around the head of Fork Branch had grown to include people named Butcher, Conselor, Durham, Loatman, Dean, Francisco, Miller, Handsor and Hewes, none of whom had been racially identified in the official Records.

HANDSOR DESCENDANTS

Virtually the whole northern Kent County isolate community descends from John Durham and William Handsor, who married into an existing group of families around the middle of the eighteenth century. The last two Bloomsbury families are descended from them.

William Handsor patented Jolley's Neck, on Chance's Branch of St. Jones River, in 1737. When he died in 1768, he left effects that speak of a decidedly prosperous life, including a sword, a fiddle, shoemaker tools, and carpentry tools.

Historians have never definitively established the origins of the community. Weslager (1943:74-78) traces the Hansor family to Aminidab (born 1688), son of Aminidab (born c.1664) and Rose Hansor. His will, dated 1717, mentions his brother Samuel and his daughters Ann and Mary. His aged parents were still living, and his father was his executor. William is presumed to be his son, but this presumption is based only upon later documents in which he is associated with Samuel.

In 1716, a William Handsor owned land in Indian River Hundred, and was listed

Community surnames

These surnames appear in the records concerning members of the community of which Bloomsbury was a part, both before and after the site's period of occupancy. Surname lists are frequently used by community historians as a "first test" or crude measure of relationships between communities. The families listed here are connected to the families who lived at Bloomsbury.

Bass	Butcher	Cambridge
Carney	Carter	Clark
Coker	Conselor	Cott
Coursey	Dean	Drain
Durham	Greenage	Han[d]sor
Harmon	Hughes	Jackson
Johnson	Kimmey	LaCount
Loatman	Miller	Morgan
Mosely	Munce[y]	Norwood
Puckham	Ridgeway	Read(Reed)
Sammons(Salmon)	Saunders	Seeney
Sisco(Francisco)	Sockum	Songo
Spark[s]man	Street[t]	Thompson
Wright		

as white, or at least not black. If this is the same William who later lived at Jolley's Neck in Kent County, he could not have been the son of the younger Aminidab, who was only 29 in 1716.

The elder Aminidab Hansor is said by some sources to have been the illegitimate son of Mary Vincent (born c.1650), an English girl of fourteen, and a servant called Aminidab "Haw" of Nandua Creek, Virginia (Deal 1993). Actually, they appear to have been unrelated, but very closely allied.

Mary and her husband John Oakey (born c.1640) had a son named John, born about 1669, and a daughter Mary, as well as a minor relative named Aminidab Oakey.

Aminidab [Hanger or Hamsworth] the elder was a witness in 1685 to a power of attorney that was part of the conveyance of 775 acres called "Cheat" on Indian River to William Burton of Accomac County, Virginia. The Oakeys and the Handsors helped John Barker bring Burton's cattle from Virginia to the Sussex County Burton property in 1687, and testified at length when there

were allegations of rustling (Horle 1991: 433, 606-608). Mary Oakey was also a witness of the will of John Burton, who left a legacy to Aminidab Handsor.

William Handsor is believed by some of his descendants to have been an Indian, but the earliest written reference to him as a "mulatto" was written a generation after his death. William Handsor left grown sons in Sussex. In Kent County, he was married at least once, possibly twice again. One wife was John Durham's sister in law.

John Durham and William Handsor were prosperous farmers who lived near the head of St. Jones River and controlled some of the best farmland in the county. We cannot know precisely their racial origins, but most of their grandchildren were identified as mulattoes when racial designations began to appear regularly in the record. Some of John Durham's descendants, however, were identified as white, which has led some researchers to speculate that the Native American element entered his family through some of his children's marriages into the existing community of interrelated families who were, by implication, nonwhites.

Other "core" families appear in the Kent County record around the same time, about a generation after some of the same names first appear in Sussex County documents. In the cases where origins can be traced, each original "core" family can be identified as coming from Sussex, or having close relatives there. Even in Sussex, less than a third of the community surnames appear in the court records before 1710 (Horle 1991).

When racial labels began to appear consistently in the public record, early in the nineteenth century, members of the community were arbitrarily assigned such labels as "mulattoes" or "free persons of color" and sometimes "Negroes." There was absolutely no consistency among the record keepers when it came to reporting race.

RELATED ISOLATE COMMUNITIES

More than a hundred identifiable self-identified "tribal" groups are not recognized by the Department of the Interior. Most surviving Native American descendants along the eastern seaboard settled outside the "recognized" or "reservation" system. Without government recognition, tribal groups have had little success in asserting their Indian identity. Ironically, the "citizen" or "non-reservation" Indians, descendants of members of "removed" tribes who did not emigrate, probably number more than 115,000 (Porter, ed., 1986:2).

Indians in the east are here because their ancestors consciously masked their native culture. During the removal period, Indians who chose to retain their traditional way of life were packed off to a sequence of distant reservations. Those who chose to stay in their home territories adopted European ways and acculturated as quickly as possible. Rather than live on tribal reservations, they acquired land in the European tenure system, and became landowners indistinguishable on the record from their white neighbors.

The late John Witthoft suggested that, in the Penn colonies, native groups survived on the personal manors of the Proprietors, which were effectively baronial estates exempt from local political forces (Witthoft 1994; Porter, ed., 1986:73). There was a manor, called Frieth, on the upper reaches of Duck Creek, in Kent County, Delaware, immediately northwest of the area where the progenitors of the Cheswold community lived during the eighteenth century.

Those who stayed behind gradually adopted characteristics of the dominant society. The rate of acculturation never has been measured. Nor have scholars been able to determine how much of Native culture survived, or for how long (Porter, ed., 1986: 27).

Because it was not legally or socially possible to proclaim Indian identity, rem-

nants were called “mulatto” or even “negro,” but more often “colored.” Until 1830, free nonwhite communities were tolerated or ignored in most localities by the dominant European culture.

Race and status are indefinite and internally contradictory in colonial records. John Oakey is an illustrative example. He patented a tract he suggestively named “Mulatto Hall” on Blackwater Creek in Sussex County in 1684. This is the earliest racial reference among the community’s documentary history. Oakey had served as a county constable, indicating that he was recognized as a full member of European-American society, whatever his racial origin.

He was in Somerset County, Maryland, as early as 1662, when he was claimed as a headright in a land claim (Shearer and Schaeffer 1993). He was associated in many of his legal and business dealings with members of families with native relations, but we still do not know his origins.

“MULATTO” DEFINED

During the entire first half of European-American history, there was little or no incentive to legally define the precise racial origin of a person who was otherwise culturally indistinguishable from the European-American community. Before the Revolution, only Virginia and North Carolina legally defined race in terms of ancestry.

The ambiguous term “mulatto” is the most frequent term used to describe the “high yellow” people of the isolate communities throughout the Middle Atlantic. While each colony had its own racial definitions, there was a certain consistency among them.

Rarely were people explicitly labelled “Indians” during the eighteenth century in Delaware. An exception was on a militia muster roll (McClughan 1858), where two members of the Norwood family are listed, one of them as an Indian, and another person’s occupation was given as “Indian.” A decade later, an “Indian” Norwood became a “mulatto” when his child was bap-

RACE PERCEPTION IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>identified as</i>	<i>source</i>
1684	John Oakey	mulatto?	his patent to Mulatto Hall
1747	John Ridgway	mulatto	St. George Chapel baptism
1758	Daniel Norwood	brown Indian	muster roll
1758	Nathan Norwood	brown	muster roll
1758	James Westcote	brown, occupation “Indian”	muster roll
1760	Abraham Siscoe	Nanticoke	delegation to Pa Governor
1768	Bowen son of Nathan Norwood	mulatto	St. George Chapel baptism
1771	Saunders & Mary Oakey	mulatto	St. George Chapel baptism
1773	Joseph & Ann Sammon	mulatto	St. George Chapel baptism
1782	Charles Francisco (Sisco)	white	state of Delaware census
1800	William Durham	white	Little Creek Hundred census
1800	John Francisco (Sisco) “N”	negro	Little Creek Hundred census
1800	Mary Durham, widow, “N”	negro	Little Creek Hundred census
1806	John Francisco (Sisco)	mulatto	court petition
1810	Esther Francisco(Sisco)	free woman of color	her probate
1813	Thomas Consealor	mulatto	Benjamin Coombe accounts
1820s	Noke Norwood	copper-colored	Judge Fisher’s article
1827	Nathaniel Clark	Colored man of Indian race	Passport declaration
1831	James Hansor	Indian complexion	Passport declaration
1839	Jesse Dean	colored man	his will
1841	Daniel Coker	free yellow man	his deed to land
1853	John Dean	of Indian descent	Passport declaration
1892	John Sanders	self-identified as an Indian	newspaper interview
1895	Cornelius Hansor	Indian or Moor	Judge Fisher’s article

tised at St. George's Chapel, the home church to many in the community.

All free nonwhites were classified in the 1800 census as free persons of color, lumping blacks, mulattoes, Indians all together in a category that subsequent historians have erroneously chosen to lump together as "free blacks." The fallacy of interpreting entries labelled "mulatto" as synonymous with "African" has led to serious misperceptions among scholars, up to and including the present generation (Davidson 1991: 7), who have cited Indian examples to illustrate statements about free blacks.

In 1740, the Delaware legislature declared that "...it is found by experience, that free Negroes and Mulattoes are idle and slothful, and often prove burthensome to the neighbourhood wherein they live, and are an evil example to slaves;..." (13 George II Chapter LXXVII).

A member of this community, Stephen Sparksman, otherwise described as a mulatto, was classified as a Negro by modern historians on the basis of his inclusion in the nonwhite census category and his identification as a mulatto (Grettlar, Miller, Catts, Doms, Guttman, Iplenski, Hoseth, Hodny and Custer 1996:104).

Another historian, laboring under the same misperception, counted the entries for free persons of color in the 1800-1850 census, and presumed that all were black. He then used these totals to derive statistics regarding freedom and slavery, and the relationship of free versus slave blacks (Bendler 1993). So universal is this misperception that it casts doubt on any compiled historical statistics dealing with race in Delaware, and any conclusions derived from such compiled statistical reports.

In another recent report, a historian described a household as containing whites and African-Americans in the 1840 census, when in fact the census described whites and *free persons of color*, without specifying the color. This misinterpretation masked not only the true ethnic nature of the mixed-race

household but the racial dynamics of a family's evolving racial history (Andrzejewski 1995:75).

The cumulative effect of this top-down lumping of all nonwhites has been to eliminate from the historical literature all distinctions among "mulatto" groups who may have been Indian or part-Indian.

Part of the ambiguity in Delaware may derive from the fact that its legal code came rather late to the game of defining rights in race terms. The 1734 election law (7 George II, Chapter 41) made no mention of any voter qualifications except residence and property. The 1792 state constitution narrowed the franchise to white male freeholders or their young sons over 21.

Although it is today taken to mean mixed black and white, the word "mulatto" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries generally applied to anyone with dark skin who was not a Negro. In the West Indies, the term was applied also to mixed black-Indian individuals. Another meaning was a person who was "half-Christian," born of a union between a Spaniard and a non-Christian. In one 1709 example, a person was described as both a mulatto and an Indian (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1971). Definitions in Delaware official documents were no more precise (Heite and Heite 1985).

Virginia law of 1705 defined the child of an Indian as a mulatto, but it stated that the child, grandchild, and great-grandchild of a Negro would be a mulatto legally. For Indian/white unions, the taint of mulatto status would disappear when the issue of such a union married a white person. For Negro/white unions, the taint was effectively permanent. While the progeny of Indian/white unions mated among themselves, Virginia law would identify the offspring as mulatto. Maryland had a similar definition, which was not explicitly stated (Cissna 1986:204-205).

The Pennsylvania Assembly set terms of service for [white] indentured servants whose indentures could not be found.

Those who came into the colony without papers would be assumed to serve five years if they were between seventeen and twenty-two years old [later changed to sixteen and twenty-one], or until the age of twenty-two if they were under seventeen (Linn 1879: 153, 237).

The law, which at first was disallowed by the Crown, would not apply to Africans. A “taint” of African blood would therefore significantly alter a servant’s status. In this regard, “mulatto” status was legally independent of any African connection, as the case of Jacob Frederick illustrated.

In June 1698, a “Molattoe Boy” named Jacob Frederick complained to the Sussex County court that “hee Came Not of nigroe Parentage,” and therefore could not be held as a slave for life. Frederick argued that he had been bound as an apprentice for a term, and could not be held as a slave for life under Delaware law. He succeeded in his plea, but in 1704 he was again in court, sentenced to twenty lashes and six weeks of additional service to his mistress for beating John Morgan. Frederick was a witness in 1709 for the defense when Samuel Dickinson was accused of horse stealing (Horle 1991: 1049, 1195, 1291). Although the definition of “mulatto” was not spelled out by Delaware legislation, the Frederick case probably reflects extension of the Virginia definition to our courts.

Between the Revolution and the Civil War, racial definitions became more detailed and more important, as legal restrictions on nonwhites became progressively more oppressive (Mencke 1976:8). Those who were defined as Negroes or mulattoes found their civil rights eroded, while Indians were forced off their land and into the west. Racial definition became a matter of survival.

DEFINITIONS OF “INDIAN”

There have been many legal and traditional definitions of the term “Indian.” A

Census Bureau definition calls anyone an Indian who is registered in a federally recognized tribe, or who is one-fourth Indian. The Bureau of Indian Affairs defined an Indian as a person entitled to its services, and the Public Health Service definition is different still. As little as $1/256$ Indian blood has been recognized as conferring tribal rights (Berry 1963:7). Each state and locality where Indian remnant groups reside has produced a new solution to the problem of defining them.

Legally many attempts at defining race are obsolete, of course, because race no longer defines a person’s access to voting, schooling, marriage partner, or public facilities. Released from the spectre of legal repercussions, researchers can now ask questions that previously would have been taboo, even inside the community.

Apprenticeship was traditionally a way to ensure that a son would be taught a trade as well as basic arithmetic and literacy. The exact terms of an apprenticeship indenture depended upon the child’s parentage. When a poor orphan child was bound by court order, the master seldom was obliged to provide education. On the other hand, well-off parents often negotiated apprenticeships with education included for their children. Girls and black boys seldom were indentured with an education requirement. Eventually Delaware law allowed masters to pay their black apprentices a fee in lieu of education (Hancock 1974). Clearly, even though Delaware did not have a law against education for nonwhites, there was an assumption that education would be rationed on a racial basis.

For whatever reason, the local isolate community declined in status and literacy during the first half of the nineteenth century, as measured by signatures on official documents. Literacy is important for a family’s short term and long term economic survival. Male literacy is vital in a business and legal environment, but female literacy ensures a family’s future because mothers

teach reading and writing to children when schools are not available (Murray 1996). Thus paternal illiteracy may limit a family's immediate prospects, but maternal literacy determines the next generation's prospects.

After the Civil War, Delaware reluctantly instituted free public education for nonwhites on the biracial model, which originally excluded the possibility of a third racial school system. Public education in Delaware for blacks emerged after a segregationist white element threatened to keep their children from school rather than attend classes with nonwhites (Hoffecker 1974:52-63).

A few "moor" or "Indian" schools eventually were established within the colored system, but only at the elementary level. Some went without education rather than attend segregated black schools; others moved away to less segregated states, or sent their children to schools in unsegregated jurisdictions (Heite and Heite 1985).

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

Native American remnant groups exist in all parts of the Middle Atlantic, but their historical records are nearly invisible. Historians have tended to uncritically accept old racial labels, so that the history of these people has been masked. Some writers, notably Deal (1988) and Davidson (1991), have swept the study of local Native Americans into "black" history, continuing a long tradition of misperception.

There is, clearly, a need for in-depth revisionist histories of the Native American remnants. A few steps have been taken along this path by genealogists, by the revived tribal organizations, and by a few academic historians whose points of view are neither afrocentric nor eurocentric (Rountree 1990).

In the present project, Bloomsbury provides an opportunity to study in detail the domestic situations of people who may or may not have inherited their Native American ancestors' food preferences, hunting methods, handcraft skills, or religious beliefs. The

project also provides an opportunity to examine the society of a neighborhood where people from three racial backgrounds met and interacted.

Archaeologists often are reluctant to seek evidence of ethnicity in material remains. Small tools and other surface indications of culture may or may not betray deeper-held beliefs and inheritances. Such large artifacts as the hominy mortar identified by Weslager (1943:189-190) may or may not be a pure product of Native heritage.

A purpose of this project was to see if there are ways to identify physical evidence of ethnicity in the artifact collection.

Community is an equally elusive concept, not necessarily visible in the physical record. One mark of community might be similarity of housing, as was demonstrated in the Mosely community on McKee Road (Heite 1993).

While genealogy is an excellent tool for defining community, other historical research methods can be employed. For example, probate records contain names of witnesses, bondsmen, and people who bought items at the estate sale. These individuals, in the aggregate, are part of the community, who reappear in association with a defined group of other individuals.

These techniques were employed in this project to define the social and ethnic context for Bloomsbury's inhabitants. In an appendix to this report is a biographical directory of the people in the community who were alive when Bloomsbury was occupied, and their known ancestors.

During the course of genealogical research, relationships with other, similar, communities became apparent. In some cases, family names recur elsewhere, suggesting a connection. In other cases, individuals can be identified who moved between communities, married, and left descendants. Tracing these people among the

isolate communities provides a clue to a social structure and semblance of organization between similar groups up and down the eastern seaboard. Most closely related of these communities was a group of families in lower Sussex County, several of whom migrated to Kent County and became progenitors of the local community.

RELATED SUSSEX COUNTY FAMILIES

Frank Speck, an anthropologist who studied the people identified in Sussex County as Nanticoke, concluded that in 1748, when the Nanticoke emigrated, they left behind some of their people in Delaware. He identified the Sussex County remnant as an authentic Nanticoke community, even though their documented connection with today's Canadian Nanticoke tribe is tenuous (Cohen 1974:219).

In April 1762, Maryland officials reported that about 120 Indians still lived on reservations, including some territory now in Delaware. These people, almost certainly Nanticokes, reportedly lived in good relations with their European-American neighbors, and no longer traded with other Indians. This is the first documentation to indicate that the people who stayed behind were merging into the larger population (Cissna 1986:209).

William Handsor, who moved to Kent County and became an ancestor of some Bloomsbury occupants, also left descendants in Sussex County. During the federal period, some Handsor descendants moved between the two communities and intermarried in both places.

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VA.

Racial segregation and legal nuances of race played a major role in the history of minority populations in Northampton County, Virginia.

During the seventeenth century, there were families identified by later historians as "Negro" whose backgrounds and surnames appear to indicate Iberian cultural,

if not racial, origins. Among these "Negro" families were people named Rodrigus (Driggus or Drighouse), Ferdinando, and Francisco (Sisco), as well as such non-Iberian names as Payne and Harman. The possibly Portuguese surnames have been interpreted to indicate a Dutch connection, since the Dutch were contending with the Portuguese in Brazil and Angola. The surname Francisco also was found in the "Negro" population of New Amsterdam (Breen and Innes 1980:69).

All three races lived intimately together, both inside and outside bondage or wedlock, during the seventeenth century in Virginia's Eastern Shore. Servants or former servants, who might have been either African, Native American, or some mixture, not infrequently mated across racial lines. White servant women often married or bore children by fellow servants of other races (Deal 1993).

In the Eastern Shore counties of Virginia, settlers' relationships with the natives differed from the rest of the colony. Debedeavon, the "laughing king" of the Accomack, welcomed young Thomas Savage and granted him a substantial tract in 1620 near the present county seat town of Eastville.

In 1640, the tables were turned, and surviving Virginia Eastern Shore Indians were given a 1500-acre reservation, which shrank to 650 acres when it was actually conveyed to them. The tract, Gingaskin, apparently included some of the acreage that had been given twenty years earlier to Thomas Savage (Whitelaw 1968:281-286).

The Gingaskin tribe of Indians dwindled and became destitute. Their neighbors considered them a nuisance, and charged that they had become mixed with the local black population. Trustees were appointed to protect them, and finally in 1786 the tribe petitioned the Virginia legislature for relief against encroachments. In 1792, the Virginia General Assembly ordered the Indian town land to be divided among surviving members of the tribe. This was finally accom-

plished in 1813, after a second law was passed. The 690-acre tract was divided into 27 lots that were allocated to the surviving tribal members, among whom were people named Drighthouse and Francis, which may be corruptions of Driggus and Francisco (Whitelaw 1968: 286).

MARYLAND CONNECTIONS

The Kent County isolate community during the late eighteenth century was clearly in touch with Native families from the Eastern Shore counties of Worcester and Somerset. One contact, the Puckhams, is one of the few that can be identified with a specific, named, seventeenth-century Maryland Native American ancestor.

John Puckham, an Indian, was baptised in 1682 and married a “mulatto” named Jone [Joan] Johnson shortly thereafter. The name Puckham may be an anglicized version of the name of his village, in northern Somerset County, probably now Sussex County, Delaware.

Their sons, John and Richard, aged 13 and 10, were bound as apprentices in 1699. Apprenticeship for a child’s minority was a child-rearing and education option open to white orphans, seldom if ever to African-American children. Voluntary apprenticeship to a white master with provision for education may be taken as an indicator that the child was not African.

During the eighteenth century, Puckhams appear without racial designation on the public records in Stepney Parish of Somerset County. Abraham Puckham was called a “planter” in 1723 and was married to a transported white felon named Honor Norgate. This was not the family’s only documented white liaison; at least two Puckham females had illegitimate children by white men in Somerset County. It can be determined from the tax rolls that Richard Puckham’s wife was either white or mulatto, and not black (Davidson 1991:32 - 37).

Even though their only documented non-white liaison was the “mulatto” Joan

Johnson, eighteenth-century Puckhams have been grouped by historians with free blacks, possibly because later members of the family were classified as free persons of color. Matthew Puckham, called a carpenter, sold his Maryland farm in 1771 (Davidson 1991: 37). A George Puckham was among the “Indians” named in connection with the Winnesockum conspiracy of 1742.

Matthew apparently moved to Kent County and joined the Native American remnant he found there. A Matthew Pucherm, “free negro,” appears in the St. Jones Hundred tax records in 1782, while Matthew and Richard Puckham were listed in Broadkill Hundred without racial designation, which usually meant white. These almost certainly are the Matthew and Richard who were in Somerset County a few years earlier, and who have been identified as free blacks by Davidson (1991).

Puckhams joined the Kent County community at about the same time. Among the accounts in the 1782 estate settlement of Thomas Murphey [who also had married into the community] were Ellinor and Ephraim Puckham. Ellinor Puckham witnessed John Durham’s will in 1788.

In 1815, Hugh Durham administered the estate of Rachel Handsor in Kent County. The sureties for his bond were Angelica Loockerman and Susan Durham, who was Rachel’s daughter. The two heirs, who shared equally, were Susan Durham and George “Pookham,” an heir-at-law who must have been either a son or a son-in-law. Some of Puckham’s descendants continue to claim Native ancestry (Roth 1997:14-22).

Small patents to “mulattoes” for former Indian land may actually represent distributions of assets among resident Indian families who were legally “mulattoes” under Maryland law. The dissolution of the Askibinakansen Indian town may provide insights into the origin of remnant communities.

In 1748, according to Davidson, a free “mulatto” named William Cambridge

Hunt, later known as William Cambridge, patented land that had been part of the Askibinakansen Indian town near the present settlement of Taylor Gate in Worcester County. The Indian town tract had been occupied during the same decade, and may still have harbored some Indian remnants; another patentee on the town lands was Samuel Collick, also identified as a "mulatto" (Davidson 1991:82).

Cambridge died in 1787, leaving a widow, two sons and a daughter. The family sold their Worcester County farm in 1801. People named Cambridge were part of the Cheswold community before 1813, when Mary Cambridge received a payment from the estate of Benjamin Durham. A miller named Frederick Cambridge is recorded in a probate account doing business with members of the community about 1841. Later, a William Cambridge married Mary Dean, daughter of Hester Carney and Jesse Dean, who was the great grandson of John Durham.

Benjamin Cambridge of Worcester County provides an example of the racial ambivalence of the 1800 census enumerators (chart, pages 65-66). He was listed in 1800 as a white person with one juvenile white male and a slave in the household. In the 1810 census he was identified as a free Negro with three free nonwhites in the household. By 1820 the Cambridge surname is missing from county census returns.

Even though Davidson included the Cambridge, Collick and Puckham families in his study of "blacks" on the lower Eastern Shore, circumstances indicate a probable Indian (or mixed) origin for all three families.

A person of Native American descent was an "Indian" as long as he lived on a reservation, or stalked deer in the forest for a living. Once the "Indian" took up a regular land holding, went to church, and used money, he became a "mulatto," as these cases illustrate. The best illustration of this perception is the 1758 muster roll reference

to James Westcote, whose occupation was listed as "indian," without racial reference in his description.

The name Driggus, associated with people of color throughout Delmarva, provides an example of the racial confusion in the records. Today many people named Driggus classify themselves as African-American, but historically the name has occurred among all races.

A Driggus family is reported as white, or at least not nonwhite, in the 1800 census for Murderkill Hundred, Kent County, Delaware. Davidson lists the Driggus family of the lower Maryland shore as blacks, but the same name, spelled Drighouse, was a major component of the Northampton Indian tribe when the reservation land was distributed in 1812.

All probably were descended from Emanuel Driggus (Rodriguez). He and his first wife, Frances, came into the Virginia colony as bondservants. She died before attaining her freedom and he was free in 1660. His second wife, Elizabeth, was white. Emanuel's pedigree is unknown, but his name suggests he may have come from a Portuguese or Spanish colony. He certainly was never considered to be a slave for life.

His grandson, Azaricum, died a well-off slave-owning planter in 1738. Azaricum, or Rica, Drighouse was apprenticed to a farmer who was obliged by the indenture terms to pay for two months of schooling a year; such provisions were common in white children's indentures. Clearly, then, Rica was not regarded as a Negro by the local officialdom (Deal 1988: 289).

The name evolved into Drighouse in some areas, including the Virginia Indian reservation, and Driggus in other areas. Members of the family, including the ones who lived on the Indian reservation, were called mulattoes or negroes in Virginia and Maryland records, and recent historians have chosen to identify all as black (Deal 1988: 275-283). The family is found in the Ches-

wold community early in the nineteenth century.

PORTUGUESE CONNECTION

In the Southern Appalachians, from West Virginia to Georgia, are dark-skinned people called Melungeons, whose eighteenth-century ancestors reportedly claimed to be Portugese, even though they bore English and German surnames.

Like the other isolate groups, these people first became evident as a distinct community in the public records during the middle years of the eighteenth century. The group's home territory is in East Tennessee, along Newman's Ridge in Hawkins County, where they had lived forty years or so before 1844 (DeMarce 1993:31).

Certain Melungeon family names came from other areas. The Bowling and Collins families, for example, may descend from Saponi remnant families of the same names that lived in Orange County, Virginia as late as 1742-1743 (DeMarce 1992:11).

The notion of Portugese ancestry, formerly dismissed as folkloric, has recently been reexamined with more respect (Deal 1993). Surnames with known Iberian connection, including Francisco and Driggus, are found among other isolate communities, but no genealogical connection to the Melungeons has been documented.

ADDING THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIMENSION

During the first half of the twentieth century, amateur and professional historians and anthropologists sought to document Native American connections with the people who now live in northern Kent County. As Weslager's study was being published, alleged Native American artifacts were paraded before the public. The corn mortar in question is supposed to have been in use at the time the Bloomsbury property was occupied.

Ancient Corn Mortar Made by Delaware Indians Found

Part of a clipping dated September 27, 1943, courtesy Harry Muncey

Perry Hughes

An ancient corn mortar, made by Delaware Indians and still in the possession of a tribal descendant - a cultural rarity of a bygone era - was uncovered by C. A. Weslager, president of the Archaeological Society of Delaware, while he was gathering data for a new book to be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

The book tells the life history of the so-called "Moors" of Cheswold and the Nanticokes of Indian River Hundred whom Mr. Weslager terms Delaware's "forgotten folk," and the rare mortar is owned by Perry Hughes, one of the "Moor" farmers.

A descendant of the Indians who once roamed Kent County, Mr. Hughes owns a farm on the outskirts of Cheswold near the site where his ancestors built their wigwams. Many stone Indian relics have been plowed up on his and adjacent farms.

Passed Down in Family

The mortar was passed down to him by Perry Cork, his maternal grandfather, the last full-blooded Indian to live in Kent County. He had inherited it from his forebears about 150 years ago. Mr. Hughes' father, the prior owner of the mortar, used it during his lifetime, and at this death passed it down to his son, who used it himself until a few years ago when modern invention made it obsolete.

At present it is carefully stored away in the attic of one of his farmbuildings.

Now in his late seventies, Mr. Hughes is strongly Indian-like in complexion and feature, and is well informed on Indian custom and folklore which are part of his family traditions.

The mortar, chopped from a sturdy gum log, has withstood the ravages of time and bears the marks of the crude tools used for its manufacture. The concavity in the log was hollowed out by first burning the wood and then chopping away the charred embers with a stone axe. The mortar is 32 inches high, 51 inches in circumference, and taxes a man's strength of lift it.

Note: According to family sources, the mortar was lost in a vandal-set fire after the death of Mr. Hughes.

DOCUMENTATION

Native American awareness in Kent County first was expressed publicly in an article published in 1892, based on an interview with a person who was born when the Bloomsbury site was occupied. He described a vanished local life-style that was distinct, and mentions connections to emigrant Lenape communities. This is the only memoir yet discovered that provides first-hand descriptions of the community in which the Bloomsbury inhabitants lived.

Times, Philadelphia, May 19, 1892¹

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KENT COUNTY'S MOORS

-
A CURIOUS DELAWARE
COMMUNITY AND ITS
HISTORY

-
LENI LENAPES OF TO-DAY

-
Leni Lenapes they claim to be but perhaps there is another side of the story. What a tradition of the countryside says.

Every American knows that his country is a very big one and that what he calls "the American poeple" is a conglomeration of nearly every race and nation on the face of the earth, but he seldom realizes that, in hundreds of places, scattered here and there all over the land, there are to be found hundreds of colonies of peculiar races, families or tribes, many of which were planted long before the Revolution, that have preserved through many decades the habits, peculiarities of mind or physique, often the very language of their ancestors.

It was lately the good fortune of the writer to discover one of these little communities within three hours' ride of Philadelphia, and he promptly interviewed every neighbor and every "oldest inhabitant" who seemed likely to prove a source of information in regard to it. It was in the vicinity of the village of Cheswold, in Kent county, Del., that a certain race or clan of people were heard spoken of under the name of Moors. They were described as having a light brown complexion,

sharp or clean-cut features, eyes usually blue and hair in many cases of a distinctly red tinge. There was no difficulty in finding the house of one of them. The master received us civilly. He was about the color of a dark mulatto, apparently about 50 years of age and his bushy whiskers were streaked with gray. His iron-gray hair was nearly straight, with a slight wave running through it, and his eyes were a dull bine.

Except his color he had none of the characteristics of a negro, and might otherwise have been taken for a well-bred white American.

-
"There are a great many of our people scattered about here," he said, "but really I don't know much about our origin. Most people call us mulattos, but we are really nothing of the sort. I don't know just what you would call us, though. My father's grandfather was a Frenchman and his wife was an Indian squaw; my own grandfather and my father married among their own people. I never bothered about the matter myself, and never thought it made any difference to any one where we came from. But I'll tell you where you can find out as much about it as anyone knows. You go to see old John Sanders. He's pretty old, and has lived about here nearly all his life, and probably he can tell you more about it than anybody else. But I'm not sure that he can tell you much, either. I can't read or write myself, and I have to carry everything in my head, so I don't try to put anything in it that I am not likely to have a good deal of use for. Perhaps I may have heard something about my foreparents, but if I have I've forgotten it. If I had been one of your reading and writing people I suppose I would have had it all down on paper long ago."

Though he asserted his inability to read and write, his language was excellent, and he spoke with the intonation and pronunciation of a well educated man. There was none of the usual negro thickness of tongue and mouthing of words among them, and their fluency of speech and clearness of enunciation might be envied by half the white men one meets.

John Sanders' house was found after a walk of about a mile over such perfectly level country as only Delaware can show. The old man was at home, and was glad to see visitors. He must have been a remarkably fine-looking man in youth, and has not yet lost all pretensions to good looks. Though he is 80 years of age, he walks as straight as ever; his eyes are clear and strong, his voice full, and his straight black hair, thick and heavy, is only slightly streaked with gray. Our modern American curse of baldness has passed him by, and he might easily pass for thirty years younger than he is. And his [...damaged...] a lean face, broad forehead, high cheek-bones, and prominent but thin nose, with a downward curve.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you much about our people," he said, but you are welcome to the little I know. No, we are not Moors, neither are we mulattos. We are Indians, and we belong to a branch of the great Delaware Nation, which used to hold all this country from New York to Cape Charles. Down in Sussex county, on the backbone ridge of the Peninsula, the head waters of two rivers come close together – one of them, the Nanticoke river, flows west into Chesapeake Bay, and Indian river, the other, flows east and empties into the ocean; and it was at the place where these two rivers rise that our clan had its chief seat, and it

¹ Transcribed from a copy provided by Mrs. May Belle Bordley.

is still the centre of our people. When this part of the country was first settled by the white men most of the Indians were either killed or driven away to the West and South, but some of our people clung to the soil; they settled down, adopted many of the ways of the white men, and lived in peace and friendship with their despoilers. In time they adopted the names of their white neighbors, and the principal names in our tribe now are Harmon, Norwood, Sanders, Street, Ridgway, Jack, Mosely, Durham and Hughes – all unmistakably of English derivation. They settled all over the country in squads in the same way. You can find them almost anywhere if you know how to look for them, and in Accomac and Northampton counties, Va., at the extreme lower end of the Peninsula, there are any number of them.¹ And down there they have kept more to themselves than they have elsewhere, and they look and live more like the Indians did when I was a boy. I am 80 years old, and I can remember a good way back.

“I was born in 1811, not two miles from here.² My father, while a boy, was bound out to a man named Jefferson, who brought him up here from Sussex, so that I claim kindred with the old families down there. He settled here and lived here all his life; so did I, except some years that I spent out West, mostly in Indiana. At that time there was quite a large colony of Indians living along the Wabash river, near Peru, Indiana, and they were much lighter in complexion than our people here.³ I can remember the time when our people

¹ This assertion is startling in light of the contentions by Whitelaw, Deal, and others, that the separate Indian identity had disappeared from the Eastern Shore of Virginia almost a century before this article was written.

² This may be the same John Saunders who married Martha Dean, daughter of Hester Carney and Jesse Dean, Jr.

³ The Lenape settlement along the Wabash River, in theory, was to be vacated under the 1818 treaty of Saint Marys. Since Mr. Sanders was only 7 at the time, he may be referring to people who stayed behind in central Indiana after the tribe removed to Missouri. See Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History*, page 351. In spite of the removals, many Native American people stayed in the Wabash.

about here all lived together in a squad; but now it is as if a tornado had struck them, and they are scattered all over the country. At that time they used to intermarry; they would have nothing to do with either whites or blacks, and kept entirely to themselves. I suppose it was later intermarriages that caused the tribe to diminish so fast in number; there were a great many more of us fifty years ago than there are now. But after they came to be so few they became more or less mixed up with other races, so that now they might be called almost anything; they are like Jacob's cattle – some white, some black, and some ring-streaked. We older ones are pure-blooded, but the younger generations have got badly mixed.

“But we still keep much to ourselves, and when we marry outside the tribe it is usually with some one whiter than we are. Most of us belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church and we have our own church buildings and government. Little Union Church,⁴ near here, has members of all races and colors, but our own Manship Chapel⁵ doesn't admit any but our own people. Others may come as often as they choose and are quite welcome and a good many do come, but no strangers are admitted to membership or can have any voice in the management. A number of years ago the Methodist Conference succeeded in taking one of our churches from us, down in Sussex,⁶ but our people immediately built another for themselves with the

⁴ The Fork Branch or Little Union church (Plate 8) was established as a branch of the Little Creek Methodist congregation about 1850, and the present church was built in 1883. For a history of Fork Branch community, see Louise and Edward Heite, *Fork Branch/ duPont Station Community*, Delaware Department of Transportation *archaeology series* 37, 1985.

⁵ According to Scharf, *History of Delaware*, page 1119, “Manship African M. E. Church is located at Bishop's Corner, and was built about 1830. In 1876 a very neat building was erected, and the old name of Sutton's Chapel was changed to Manship Chapel, in honor of Rev. Andrew Manship.”

⁶ Harmony M. E. Church in the late 1870s split racially, leading to establishment of Indian Mission M. P. Church, originally Johnson's Chapel, in 1881. See Zebly, *Churches of Delaware*, pages 297, 298, and Weslager, *Delaware's Forgotten Folk*, page 90.

Methodist Protestants. That is why we want no strangers to join our church here; that occurrence was a lesson to us. A few years ago the conference cited us for trial because we refused to admit the black people to membership, but we proved to them that it had always been the custom for whites and blacks to have separate places or worship, and that we, as not being either, had always had our own churches, though in the old days we always had white men to preach to us. When they saw the ground we took and that we were not going to be forced to submit to them, they quietly dropped the whole thing and didn't allow it to really come to trial. Ever since then we have gone on our own way quietly, and nobody has said a word to trouble us.

“My father and mother and all my foreparents were Indians. There are not many of the pure blood about here now, though there used to be a great many. It is strange how people have forgotten about us. Sixty years ago every one knew who and what we were; there never was any question about it, and no one ever thought of taking us for Africans. Look at me!” said the old man as he drew himself up to his full height of six feet two inches. “Do I look like a negro?” He certainly looked like almost anything else. “Well, all our people looked like me then. None of them were ever slaves; we were as free as the whites, and every one knew it. But since that time most of the old families have either died out or moved away. The people about here now are all newcomers. Of course they knew nothing about us and never troubled their heads to inquire. There were plenty of mulattos about and the newcomers thought every one with a dark skin must be a mulatto. So they don't know any better. Of course we feel ourselves superior to the negroes and mulattos and generally hold ourselves aloof from them and we would prefer not to be confounded with the useless mulatto lot that are found loafing everywhere. But we have become accustomed to it and don't mind it so much now, for it

really doesn't matter much what you call a man, provided you don't call him a thief or a liar.

"I really don't know how we came to be called Moors. I have heard, though, that a good many years ago a family of genuine Moors settled somewhere in this part of the country, but I have never seen them, and never heard anything more about them. They certainly had no connection with our people, who are the ones usually known by that name. But if the story is true, the newcomers about here, whom I spoke of, may have got us confused with them, or attached their story to us.

There are quite a number of families by the name of Moor or Moore living about here, and this village used to be called Moorton until a few years ago. But the Moore families are mostly white people and none of them have ever been connected with us in any way, and I never heard whether the village was so named on their account or ours. Probably it was on theirs, for the settlement, the original one, is a pretty old one and must have got its name long before we were ever called Moors, and while our descent was well known. In my young days we were called 'planters.' We belonged to the Delaware tribe of Indians, but I don't know what was the name of our clan, probably nobody does now. But I know that our last chief was buried somewhere in the neighborhood of Millsborough, in Sussex County, and I have heard that when they were building the railroad from Lewestown down to Snow Hill, in Maryland, they had to dig through the place where he was buried, so they took up what was left of his bones and buried them somewhere else. He must have died more than a hundred years ago, for we had no chief when my father was a boy."¹

¹ The Delaware portion of the Breakwater, Frankford and Worcester Railroad, a branch or extension of the Junction and Breakwater, was built in 1874 between Georgetown and Selbyville. See John Hagman, *Rails along the Chesapeake*, page 34. Another story, published by Scharf (1888:21) states that bones were found in an ossuary along a small

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But sons of the toil tell yet another tale, which they claim to have received from their forefathers. And these men say that about the middle of the last century there dwelt in Ireland a lady of more or less noble blood, with certainly a large amount of property, whose temper was a match for her own fiery locks. And that this same temper of auburn hue led her to quarrel with her family and indulge in an animated "discussion wid sticks" in the course of which the fair lady's relatives used such forcible arguments as to disgust her with her present surroundings. So she converted all her property into a portable form as soon as might be, and fled her away to the far West of those days. What is now known as Sussex county, Delaware, was fortunate enough to find favor in her eyes, and the goods she brought with her to the Land of Promise were quickly exchanged for an extensive tract of land. In due time the land was cleared, houses and barns built and all was ready for the vast crops that were certain to repay a slight amount of cultivation. But the country was new and sparsely settled; every free man had a tract of his own and found it more profitable to farm it for himself than to become a day laborer on the lands of another man. So, in default of other labor, she did as her neighbors had done, and she imported large numbers of negroes ... [mutilated] ... as my informant expressed it, who was soon promoted to the position, first, of "driver" or "field boss" afterward of overseer of the whole plantation. The nearest white neighbor lived miles away. Milady was still young enough to feel that "it is not good for man - consequently or woman also - to be alone." The color line and race antipathy were not as strongly marked as they are in our own day; and before many years were flown Madame had married her big

stream a mile from Laurel by men digging fill for a mill dam early in the nineteenth century. Old persons of the neighborhood allegedly reported on this occasion that the departing "last of the Nanticokes" (of circa 1748) had reburied their dead here before moving to Pennsylvania.

"Congo nigger." The population increased, both on the plantation and in the neighboring country, and as the country filled up the people became accustomed to seeing dark brown boys and girls with the red hair and blue eyes that they had inherited from their Celtic ancestress. They kept much to themselves, affecting to despise the other negro population. Some of them married white husbands or wives, and the whole clan so intermarried for so many generations, that they have now as fixed racial characteristics as any race or tribe in the world. Yet there are still some prejudiced ones among their neighbors who stubbornly refuse to forget that their Saracen blood was imported by way of the Congo, and who consider these "American Moors" as of exactly the same race and racial standing with the mulattos whom the "Moors" themselves despise so heartily.