

ABSTRACT

The Wrangle Hill Site (7NC-G-105) is located in the High Coastal Plain of northern New Castle County, Delaware, at the confluence of two minor ephemeral streams. Final archaeological investigations were focused on understanding the site's role in regional settlement patterns and studying the organization of ceramic and lithic technologies at the site. The Wrangle Hill Site attracted human settlement for more than 8000 years. Prior to ca. 3000 B.C. the occupations were ephemeral and the only signs of the site's earliest inhabitants are scattered projectile points. These early hunters and gatherers probably briefly camped at the site and procured resources from the rich wetlands found adjacent to the site.

The use of the Wrangle Hill Site by its later inhabitants was somewhat different from that of earlier inhabitants. After ca. 3000 B.C., the site seems to have been inhabited for longer periods of time, perhaps for more than one season of the year. These later Woodland Period people constructed semi-subterranean pithouses and dug storage and processing pits. However, the site was still used by relatively small groups of people. The site almost certainly was never inhabited by more than one family at a time. The houses were small, and could not have enclosed more than a single family. There seems to have been little change in the way that the site was used from approximately 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1500.

The prehistoric people who lived at the site probably brought a series of stone tools with them when they came there to live. As these tools were used and broken, new replacement tools were manufactured from the flat plates of ironstone that naturally occur at the site. Use of the ironstone required special lithic reduction techniques and left very distinctive stone debitage scattered across the site. Ceramic vessels were also used for cooking, storage, and processing. When the vessels were broken, they were discarded in the pit features. The excavations described in this report constituted data recovery excavations at the site and no further archaeological work is recommended.

Cover Illustration: The cover illustration shows a series of projectile points found at the Wrangle Hill Site.