

## *HISTORY ONLY MAKES SENSE IF WE INCLUDE EVERYONE*

All are welcome to assist and respectfully view the Lenape past. Come and excavate, take a tour, or stop by for a brief visit.



Site Tours and Volunteer Opportunities. Everyone is welcome (both groups and individuals) Mon-Fri 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

Enter via Cedar Chase Drive, drive past leasing office to rear of apartment complex, and park.

**DelDot Public Information Office 1-800-652-5600.**



**URS**

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## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT THE BEECH RIDGE SITE**

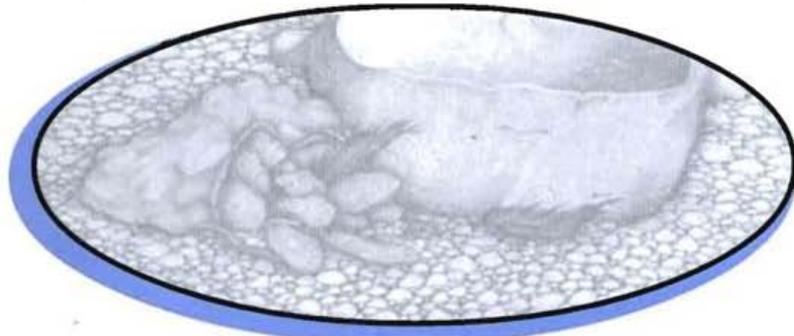
### *WHOSE PAST IS IT?*

**T**he historical past exists independent of our knowledge or interpretation. All of us in some way attempt to reclaim the past—by restoring antique cars, collecting historic dishes, reading diaries, listening to family stories, refinishing grandparent's furniture, watching old movies, reenacting past events, etc. Archaeologists try to reclaim the past by excavating and analyzing artifacts. In the United States, an archaeological report is often evaluated not by the story told but by the scientific methods used to excavate a site. Native Americans consider the scientific collection of technological and environmental data to be insufficient, arguing that human interactions cannot be reduced to



a system that oversimplifies the lives of a particular group of people. Some past events can be observed beyond the archaeological record in continuing folk practices. Cultural, environmental, and technological information—in other words, traditional tribal knowledge—has been passed down from generation to generation through the medium of oral tradition.

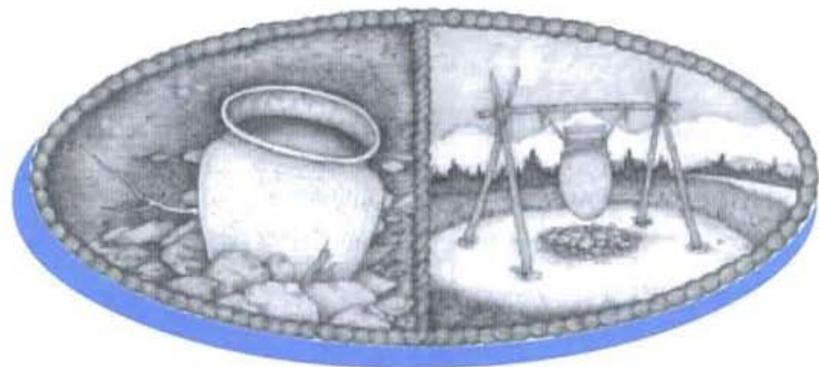
The prehistoric Native American's life and experience is often invisible to the contemporary non-Native American. Written records have not survived or were never created. In the eyes of European descendants, native individuals remain unnamed and obscured as part of groups usually termed bands or tribes. Archaeological excavations



at the Beech Ridge Site in Dover, Delaware, are an attempt to better view individual lifeways and present information about Lenape tribal behavior and group activities that occurred at the site. Their activities will be reconstructed from the elements excavated from the site in the form of potsherds, stone tools, seeds, shell, pits, and hearths—the material items identified with ancestral groups of Lenape. These elements and the story they tell are now part of the archaeological record, but, as the Lenape insist, these reminders have long been a part of traditional tribal knowledge.

Through time, the Lenape developed and maintained a reflexive relationship with the surrounding landscape and its diverse resource base, as well as relationships with neighboring peoples. Such relationships are also reflected in the rich oral histories that continue into the present day. Lenape interaction with the landscape and other groups changed over time, resulting in a shifting focus on various plants, animals, and people. Archaeologists define specific events and shifting patterns through analysis of stone tools, ceramics, and plant and animal remains to mark such relationships, while the tradition of oral history enlivens chronological time with a rich context of people, myth, and cosmos. Both can be brought together to create a meaningful past.

The various activities of these groups were continued for generations because such practices proved very successful. The Lenape's link to the past begins to unfold when the buried information their ancestors left behind is linked to traditional tribal knowledge. It becomes a privilege for the professional archaeologist to decipher and present such information.



These issues and more will be explored by URS Corporation and Delaware Department of Transportation at the Beech Ridge Site in Dover Delaware.