

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the extended Phase II and Phase III archaeological excavations at the site of the Blue Ball Tavern, located in New Castle County, Delaware. The investigation was conducted by Thunderbird Archeological Associates (TAA), Inc., for the Location and Environmental Studies Office, Division of Highways, Department of Transportation, State of Delaware (DelDOT). The project was carried out as part of DelDOT's planning study for the proposed widening of U.S. Route 202, in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, and Section 13B of the Federal Highway Act. The project area, shown in Figure 1, lies approximately two miles north of the city of Wilmington on the west side of Concord Pike and about 250 feet south of the intersection of Rockland Road with Concord Pike (U.S. Route 202). The site had been identified during a Phase I/II survey of the area in 1980 (Thomas et al. 1980). The tavern site, long considered a local landmark, was later part of the Blue Ball Dairy, which belonged to the du Pont's Nemours Estate. The early twentieth-century dairy barn and milk house still stand on the property. Although the focus of the fieldwork was on the remains of the tavern, which had been converted to a tenant farmhouse during the second half of the nineteenth century, features relating to the tenant farm and the dairy were also found within the excavation area. Figure 2 shows the boundaries of the study area. The tavern/house foundation and 99 features were identified and excavated.

Field investigations were conducted by TAA during 1996 and 1997. William M. Gardner, Ph.D., served as principal investigator, while Heather A. Wholey, M.A., and Sally C. Anderson, M.A., served as archival researchers and field supervisors. Christoff Bachhuber, Ellen Biederman, Joelle Browning, Elizabeth Clark, Antonia Davidson, Andrea DeNight, Jennifer Flippo, Phillip Hart, Michael Heilen, Andrew Lee, Leslie Mitchell-Watson, Jim Moses, Christopher Mundy, William Oberlin, Michael Owens, Michael Petrakis, Janet Pinkham, Kelly Scanlon, Catherine Skocik, James Skocik, Nicole Slovak, and Alan Watson served as field crew. Joan Walker, Ph.D., acted as project coordinator and report editor. Kimberly A. Snyder, M.A., supervised and participated in the lab work, assisted by Gwen J. Hurst, C. Lanier Rodgers, Leslie Mitchell-Watson, Katherine Janney and Kimberly Weinberg. Wholey, Anderson, Walker and Gardner contributed to the report.