4.0 WOODLAND I PERIOD CULTURAL SETTING

4.1 Dividing Time: Archaeological Constructs

Beginning in the 1930s in the eastern United States, archaeologists were realizing that the established descriptive types (e.g., Hopewellian ceramics, Mississippian ceramics) based on cultural similarities were chronologically indicative as well (Willey and Sabloff 1980:103). From this realization, came the means of ordering and discussing the pre-contact period by dividing it into the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland periods based on the identification of similar lifeways and adaptations with spatial and temporal integrity. Archaeologists working in Delaware have altered and refined the basic tripartite temporal system for the state to include: the Paleoindian period (*ca.* 10,000 B.C. to 6,500 B.C.), the Archaic period (*ca.* 6,500 B.C. to 3,000 B.C.), the Woodland I period (*ca.* 3,000 B.C. to A.D. 1000), and the Woodland II period (*ca.* A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1600).

The majority of archaeological evidence from Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) indicates that the site location was used during the Woodland I period. "The use of 3000 B.C. as the date for the beginning of the Woodland I period and, indeed, use of the term 'Woodland I' represent a departure from the traditional literature" (Custer 1986:86). The end date defined for the Woodland I period in Delaware is A.D. 1000 (Custer 1984:30). As defined, the Woodland I period in Delaware overlaps the traditional Late Achaic, Early Woodland, and Middle Woodland chronological periods. Within the Woodland I period, Custer (1984:30) delineates four complexes, the Clyde Farm, Wolfe Neck, Carey, and Delaware Park, for the Piedmont portion of Delaware. The definition and delineation of these Woodland I complexes is based on projectile point and ceramic types, which represent "specialized adaptations to local biosocial environments" (Custer 1984:78).

4.2 Woodland I Lifeways

Custer (1986:84) describes the beginning of the Woodland I period in Delaware as the time which marks the "most pronounced change" in pre-contact period lifeways, including a shift from a more "mobile lifestyle using rapidly portable tool technologies and simple exchange systems" to relatively "sedentary lifestyles with less portable storage technologies and non-transportable facilities, larger population aggregates, stratified societies, elaborate exchange systems, and complex burial patterns." The Woodland I period is a temporally broad span,

which is characterized by stable and intensive estuarine and riverine adaptations that produced large macroband base camps in the zone of freshwater/saltwater interface and along the major drainages; population growth at single-site locations that produced sites much larger than those known for the Archaic period; the appearance of foraging and collecting adaptations in areas less productive than the estuarine and riverine settings; participation in geographically expansive raw material and finished artifact exchange networks; and occasional participation in complex mortuary ceremonies that created cemeteries with extensive associated grave goods (Custer 1984:77).

The tool kits of pre-contact Woodland I period peoples differed from the Archaic tool kits in that they included stone and ceramic vessels, and a greater abundance of tools associated with plant harvesting and processing. "Large, stemmed projectile points with narrow blades comprise the majority of the projectile point types for the Woodland I period of Delaware" (Custer 1984:78). Bare Island/Lackawaxen projectile points are the type names given to these narrow-blade stemmed forms. Sometime after 2,000 B.C., broadspear projectile point forms, such as Lehigh/Koens Crispin, Savannah River, Perkiomen, and Susquehanna, are added to the Woodland I tool kit (Coe 1964; Kinsey 1972:423-430). Custer (1984:79) views the differences between the two types of projectile points as functional (based on morphology), with the Bare Island/Lackawaxen projectile points more suited for penetration and broadspears more suited for cutting. Archaeological evidence outside of Delaware in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Maryland indicates that the two projectile point types are at least partially contemporaneous (Gardner 1976; Kinsey 1972:395-396; Kraft 1970:55). By approximately 1,000 B.C. "Orient fishtail points, a special style of stemmed points, were added to tool kits in Delaware; however they were not as common as the broadspear forms and do not date to later than about 750 B.C. By about 500 B.C. the stemmed points with narrow blades were somewhat reduced and are termed *Rossville*, or simply *stemmed points*" (Custer 1984:82).

Other projectile points associated with the Woodland I period in Delaware include side- and corner-notched forms manufactured from distinctive Ohio cherts, small basal notched forms associated with Mockley ceramics, large broad-stemmed Fox Creek forms commonly found in Kent and Sussex counties, corner-notched and pentagonal Jack's Reef forms, generalized side-notched forms which vary in size and shape, and some large triangular forms similar to Levanna projectile points (Custer 1984:82-83). These triangular projectile point forms appear to enter the Woodland I period tool kit during the latter part of the period and persist into the Woodland II period. The Woodland I period triangular projectile points appear to be larger than those associated with the Woodland II period.

In addition to projectile points, steatite bowls and different ceramic styles, including Mockley, Wolf Neck, Susquehanna, and Selden Island, are indicators of temporal subperiods within the Woodland I period. Research in the Southeast and the greater Northeast suggests that there were various cultural trajectories associated with the adoption of ceramic and steatite vessels. Recent dates indicate that ceramics pre-dated steatite vessels in many areas of the eastern United States. In Delaware, the Woodland I period was the time when clay pots and steatite vessels were adapted into the material culture of native groups. However, since Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) did not contain any steatite or ceramic artifacts, the details of these artifacts as temporal and functional indicators are not germane to the site discussions.

4.3 Overview of the Lithic Scatter Issue

The title of this report – *A Few Hours in the Piedmont* – was chosen to specifically reflect the nature and intensity of pre-contact period people's behavior at Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House). This site was not a village, a hamlet, or even a single-house settlement. This site was not intensively utilized again and again. Instead, on several occasions during the Woodland I period (3,000 B.C.-A.D. 1000), one or a few individuals made brief stops at this Piedmont location. These visits probably ranged from one to several hours in duration, and the composite refuse from the activities of the visitors became archaeological site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House).

There are two basic research approaches to sites defined as lithic scatters. The first approach is to offer generalized interpretations about the site as a whole, based on the low artifact frequencies and lack of cultural features. It is thought that the spatially and temporally limited activities represented at these sites and common post-depositional disturbances limit or prohibit the activity-specific interpretations that can be gleaned from the study of such sites. With this approach, these lithic scatters are interpreted as resource extraction stations, kill sites, limited lithic reduction sites, or trail-side stops without detailed interpretation of individual activities. Only generalized interpretations are considered with this approach. It must be acknowledged that this first approach is often dictated by the presence of post-depositional disturbance at the site (e.g., plowing, grubbing) which obscures and mixes originally discreet artifact clusters, strata, and cultural features into amorphous, homogenized deposits. As well, relic collector activity on lithic scatters (i.e., arrowhead hunting in plowed fields) often has removed the artifacts necessary to assign an approximate temporal affiliation to the sites.

The second research approach to lithic scatters, which is the one followed in this study, views the archaeological remains resulting from limited activity visits as the means to address specific site-visit functions. Especially on non-plowed lithic scatter sites such as Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House), the clarity of the record allows the analytical separation and study of each discreet artifact cluster/activity area. In such a situation, rather than fall back on generalized site characterization, it is possible to bring analytical techniques to bear on specific questions about what people were doing at Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) when they visited the location. For the present study, several lines of evidence are carefully integrated and evaluated in order to offer probabilistic statements about what happened during those few hours in the Piedmont.