

Artifacts that might be encountered include stone tools and pottery made by Native Americans and that mark the location of a former campsite. Long vanished historic residences could be identified by the ruins of old foundations, concentrations of brick, nails, or window glass, or by fragments of commonly used household items like bottles, ceramic plates, or food refuse such as discarded animal bones.

Once found, artifacts from these sites will be carefully collected, thoroughly studied, and used to help tell the stories of the people who lived here before us. Ultimately, the goal of this and similar investigations is to rescue some part of these fragile and irreplaceable historic resources - and through them, to begin reconstructing the missing pages of our shared history.



KSK would like to enthusiastically encourage anyone with knowledge of Native American or historical sites in the vicinity of the Choptank Road project area to contact Kise Straw & Kolodner at the number below and to share your information

For more information please contact:



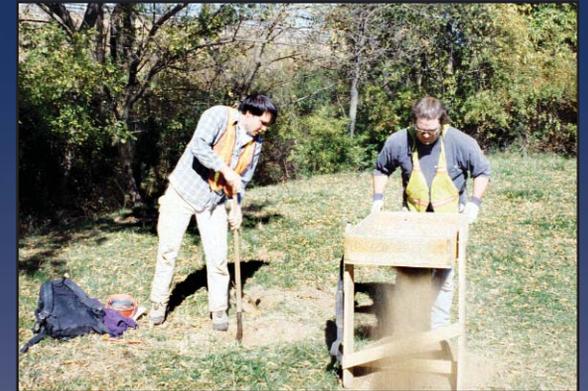
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Archaeology Along Choptank Road



As you may be aware, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) is planning to improve a section of Choptank Road in the vicinity of Middletown, Delaware. However, you may not know that as part of that project DelDOT is required by federal law to conduct an archaeological survey prior to the start of road construction.

The goal of this study is to discover any potentially important archaeological sites located near the current road that might be damaged or destroyed by construction activities. If such sites are present, efforts will be made to record as much information about them as possible and to use this knowledge to learn more about the people that lived in this area hundreds, or even thousands of years ago. This brochure was designed to provide members of the community with information about this project and was produced as part of DelDOT's long-term efforts to promote and encourage public participation in the discovery of Delaware's rich history and heritage.

The planned improvements to Choptank Road

involve that section located between Bethel Church and Bunker Hill Roads, as well as a 1000-foot stretch of Bunker Hill Road west of Choptank Road. Proposed safety improvements include the widening of this entire length of roadway, the construction of paved roadway shoulders, the straightening of a number of curves, and the construction of roundabouts at the Bethel Church Road and Bunker Hill Road intersections.



Little pieces sometimes tell a big story. Native American pottery fragments, such as those shown above, have decorative markings made by impressing the wet clay.

The Choptank Road vicinity has a long and varied cultural legacy and could contain many important historic and prehistoric archaeological resources. Native American peoples were the first to live in this area and are known to have established campsites and villages along the banks of the Choptank River, Back Creek, and other nearby streams between about 10,000 B.C. and 1650 A.D. During the Colonial and early Federalist eras this area witnessed the establishment of scattered farmsteads, mills, hotels, stores, taverns, and schools by adventurous souls of Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, and English descent. One early school, known as Schoolhouse #58, or the “Eight Square School” was built along the west side of Choptank Road near the B.T. Biggs estate by at least 1849.



An octagonal school house like the “Eight Square School”

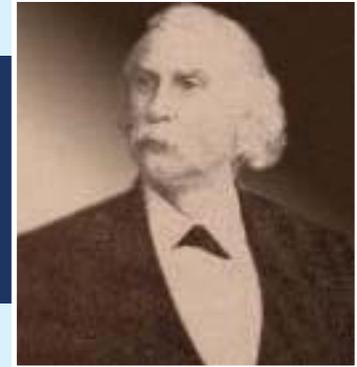
Among the prominent early individuals who once lived along Choptank Road are members of the Clayton family. Joshua Clayton originally settled here during the 1770’s. After serving in the Revolutionary War, he was elected to the Delaware General Assembly, served as state treasurer and, in 1792, became the State’s first popularly elected governor. Joshua’s son, John, also had a distinguished political career as Delaware’s Secretary of State and Attorney General, and later as a U.S. Congressman and U.S. Senator. In the latter 1800’s the third and fourth



“Rosedale” (c. 1847) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located within the project area.

generations of Claytons, headed by Colonel Joshua Clayton, established a series of estates along Choptank Road and became prosperous farmers.

Another prominent local family was the Biggs, who first established farms along Choptank Road in the 1840’s. The family’s most famous son, Benjamin Thomas Biggs, was a member of the Delaware State Constitutional Convention in 1853, was elected a U.S. Congressman, and from 1887-1891 served as the State’s 48th Governor.



Governor Biggs

The search for evidence of this area’s buried past will be carried out by a team of experienced professional archaeologists and will involve looking alongside Choptank Road for artifacts that have been left behind by earlier people. This search will entail examining the ground surface as well as digging of a series of small evenly spaced holes, called shovel tests, and the recovery of artifacts from immediately below the ground surface.



Artifacts, like this projectile point, help the archaeologists reconstruct what life was like for the original inhabitants of the area.