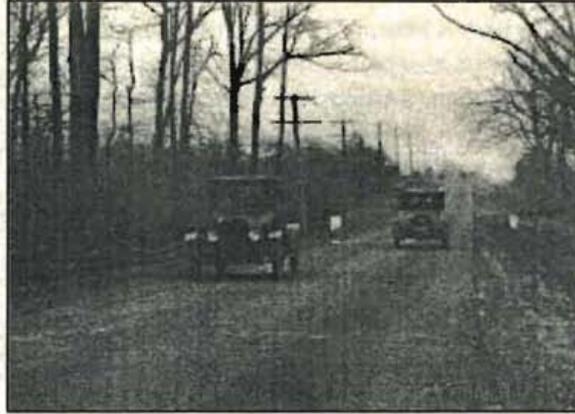


**Cultural Resource Study of the
Choptank Road
Transportation Improvement
Project
St. Georges Hundred
New Castle County, Delaware**



A Glimpse into the Past

As part of the planning process, various environmental studies are conducted for each DelDOT project. Together, engineers, scientists, preservation specialists, historians, and environmental planners use the findings of the studies to develop functional and creative designs that are sensitive to our state's natural, social, and cultural resources.

In addition to studying the effects of the project on the environment, these studies present a unique opportunity to explore Delaware's remarkable past. Studies of above ground and below ground cultural resources, that is, historic buildings and archaeological sites, help us to understand the cultural landscape in which we live.

Peaches and Prosperity

As southern New Castle County continues to grow and prosper in the 21st century, vestiges of the 19th century dot the landscape, particularly along scenic roads like Choptank Road near Middletown. Above ground structures contain information about the agricultural past and prosperity of the area with its array of exquisite farmsteads and buildings. These cultural resources, which had 19th century names such as Wheatland and Peach Blossom, may enlighten us further about past activities and people of St. Georges Hundred.

Many of the 19th century buildings that stand adjacent to Choptank Road's tree lined route are excellent examples of the agrarian and affluent past of the area. Several of these properties, with place names such as Rosedale and Choptank-Upon-the-Hill predate 1830 and are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Through these remaining buildings we know that the former owners and occupants of these houses took pride in their farms, were successful in their trade, and formed the roots of a proud community.

Early and mid-20th century contributions to the landscape are key features that will also be looked at in this study as we continue to learn about the area and how it has adapted to changing times.

The Ground Beneath our Feet

Like history, archaeology is the study of people, situations, and events of the past. An archaeological site is a place where physical evidence of past human activities can be found. By examining the remains of what people have left behind, and most importantly, where they left them, archaeologists can reconstruct the past.

Archaeological data can take on many forms. Information is not just the things we find. The ground we find them in is important too. Disturbances caused by human activities, such as the construction of a building, the lighting of a campfire, or the planting of a garden, leave important clues to how people lived.

As today's households reflect the technological advances, trends, fashions, diets, health conditions, and quality of life during modern times, the households we uncover provide a glimpse into the past. By studying how people once lived, worked, and played, we can learn about the people that helped shape the unique and diverse cultural heritage of New Castle County.

Humans have lived in present-day St. Georges Hundred for over 10,000 years. The first groups to the area were Native Americans. Southwest New Castle County once contained a wide variety of plants and animals, which would have attracted people to the area. Studies of Native American archaeological sites can help us to understand past Native American lifeways such as settlement patterns, food gathering techniques, as well as stone tool and ceramic pottery manufacturing.



The historic period of St. Georges Hundred begins quite early. By 1825, Middletown was well established as a crossroads town as part of the land route between Appoquinimink Creek and Bohemia Landing. By 1850, various farmsteads could be found around its outskirts. Today, many of these farmsteads continue to function as active agricultural properties. Archaeological materials associated with these farmsteads, as well as others that no longer exist, contribute to our understanding of every day life in 19th century St. Georges Hundred.



Whether or not archaeological sites associated with Native American habitation or St. Georges' agricultural past will be encountered during the archaeological study of the Choptank Road Improvements project is not yet known. Archeologists will strive to locate sites through careful documentary research, systematic field work, and thorough laboratory analysis.

What Happens During a Cultural Resource Survey?

The Choptank Road cultural resource survey includes historic architectural and archaeological studies. During the architectural study, outside photographs and detailed notes of buildings 50 years or older will be taken to study architectural styles and construction methods. During the

archaeological study, a visual inspection of the ground will first be conducted to look for signs of archaeological materials. This inspection will allow archaeologists to decide if and where digging is necessary. If so, holes about one foot in diameter will be hand-dug about 50 feet apart to check for underground archaeological materials. When done, the archaeologists will refill any holes.

While these activities may be inconvenient, researchers will work hard to ensure that properties will not be harmed. Every effort will be made to restore examined properties to their original conditions. Any holes will be filled and the sod will be replaced.

Why Cultural Resources?

Progress is important, but so is our cultural heritage. Like many of the DeIDOT's other archaeological and historic preservation projects, the Choptank Road Improvements project will seek to protect our heritage while improving Delaware's roadway system. Federal Regulations exist to aid in protecting our past. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on cultural resources. Once it is decided that resources will be affected, DeIDOT and consulting parties work together to minimize the effects of the project on those resources. This process allows the public and DeIDOT to exchange ideas, alternatives, and solutions that result in a better future while protecting the past.

A Note of Thanks

We thank you for your patience and cooperation as DeIDOT conducts the cultural resources studies for the Choptank Road Improvements project. Any information that may help us to gain insight on the history of the area would be much appreciated.

For more information please contact:

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**Information about other DelDOT projects
can be found at:**

www.deldot.net/public.ejs

**To learn about federal regulations
regarding cultural resources please
consult:**

The Advisory Council on Historic
Preservation
www.achp.gov

The U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
www.fhwa.dot.gov

The Delaware State Historic Preservation
Office
www.state.de.us/shpo/index.htm

