

INTRODUCTION

Between January and March of 1993, a Phase I and II archaeological survey was undertaken at the Lisbon Tract of the Dover Air Force Base (DAFB). The Lisbon Tract is located between the St. Jones River and U.S. Route 113, north of and adjacent to base housing (Figure 1, Plate 1). DAFB and the U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command (AMC) requested an archaeological survey and evaluation of known and potential sites in this section of DAFB, under the requirements of Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The survey was conducted by archaeologists from the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research (UDCAR), under contract with the Delaware Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, because proposed construction of Delaware State Route 1 would adversely impact portions of existing base housing, and this housing would need to be replaced in the Lisbon Tract area.

Environmental Setting

The project area is located in Kent County within the Low Coastal Plain physiographic province (Figure 2). The Low Coastal Plain is underlain by sand deposits of the Columbia Formation (Jordan 1964:40), and reworking of these sediments has produced a relatively flat and featureless landscape. Elevation differences on the Low Coastal Plain range up to 30 feet (10 meters), and these minimal differences are moderated by long and gradual slopes. However, elevation differences are sufficient enough to cause differential distributions of plant and animal species. Water courses, such as the St. Jones River located to the west of the project area, are tidal and brackish along their middle and lower reaches with extensive fringing marshes prevalent along their lower reaches. Continual agricultural use of the land in the Low Coastal Plain has resulted in severe erosion and soil deflation in many areas.

The Lisbon Tract is the location of a former historic farmstead on the west side of U.S. Route 113, bounded to the east by that road (known historically as the road to Kitts Hummock), on the south by DAFB housing, on the north by a trailer court, and on the west by the St. Jones River (Figure 1). Most of the tract consists of fallow or cultivated fields. Several access roads or trails cross the tract from Route 113 west towards the St. Jones River. Currently, the property is used by DAFB personnel for garden plots. Small incised streams with fringing woods are located along both the southern and northern boundaries of the property, and extend eastwards for a short distance. Archaeological testing by UDCAR was confined to an area approximately 12 acres in size, located in the eastern half of the tract, and did not extend to the St. Jones River. The testing also focused specifically on the historic farmstead because planned construction was to take place in that area. The western 12-acre section of the tract containing 7K-D-26 was recently archaeologically surveyed by MAAR Associates, and the results of that investigation are discussed in a separate report (MAAR Associates 1994).

Regional Prehistory

The prehistoric archaeological record of the project area, and the Delmarva Peninsula in general, can be divided into four major periods. A fifth time period, the Contact Period, from A.D. 1650 to A.D. 1750, is transitional between prehistoric and historic times and includes the final Indian habitation of southern Delaware. The short summary that follows is taken from the state plan for management of prehistoric archaeological research in Delaware (Custer 1986a), and other research summaries (Custer 1984a, 1987; Bachman, Grettler, and Custer 1988; Riley, Watson, and Custer 1994).

Paleo-Indian Period (12,000 B.C. - 6500 B.C.). The Paleo-Indian Period begins during the final phases of Pleistocene glaciation in Eastern North America. A mosaic of deciduous, boreal, and grassland environments would have provided productive habitats throughout central Delaware. Distinctive features of the Paleo-Indian life style were an adaptation to cold, and alternately wet and dry, conditions, and a hunting and gathering subsistence base that was focused on animals that may have included now extinct megafauna and moose. Paleo-Indian tool kits reflect the emphasis on hunting, and high quality lithic materials were preferred for making stone tools (Custer 1984b). A mobile lifestyle and flexible social structure based on single and multiple family bands throughout the 5500-year time span of the Paleo-Indian Period has been hypothesized. The main types of Paleo-Indian Period sites known for the study area are base camps, base camp maintenance stations, and hunting sites. The riverine settings of the St. Jones River and its major tributaries would be the expected locations for base camps, while poorly-drained interior swamps and bogs would be the foci of maintenance and hunting sites.

Archaic Period (6500 B.C. - 3000 B.C.). The Archaic Period is characterized by adaptations to changing environments dominated by forests of hemlock and oak. Browsing animal species, such as deer, flourished. Human adaptations became more generalized with plant foods playing a more important role in subsistence. Archaic Period tool kits were less specialized and included plant processing tools, such as grinding stones, mortars, and pestles. A mobile lifestyle continued with a wide range of resources and settings used on a seasonal basis. A recent study of Archaic Period site distributions on the Delmarva Peninsula (Custer 1986b) indicates that although there were changes in adaptations between the Paleo-Indian and Archaic time periods, the basic site location patterns remained the same.

Woodland I Period (3000 B.C. - A.D. 1000). The beginning of the Woodland I Period can be correlated with dramatic changes in local and regional climates and environments. A pronounced warm and dry period ended ca. 4000 B.C., and sea-level rise created extensive brackish water marshes which were especially high in biological productivity throughout much of central Delaware. The changes in environment and resource distributions caused a radical shift in prehistoric human adaptations. Important areas for settlements included the major river floodplains and estuarine areas. Large base camps and more sedentary lifestyles are evident in central Delaware at sites such as Barker's Landing, Coverdale, Hell Island, and Robbins Farm. Social organization probably became more complex as population density increased (Custer 1982).

Woodland I Period tool kits include plant processing tools suggesting intensive harvesting of wild plant foods. Also, non-local lithic raw materials indicate that trade and exchange with other groups were developing (Custer 1984c). First stone, and then ceramic, containers allowing more efficient cooking also appear during the Woodland I Period.

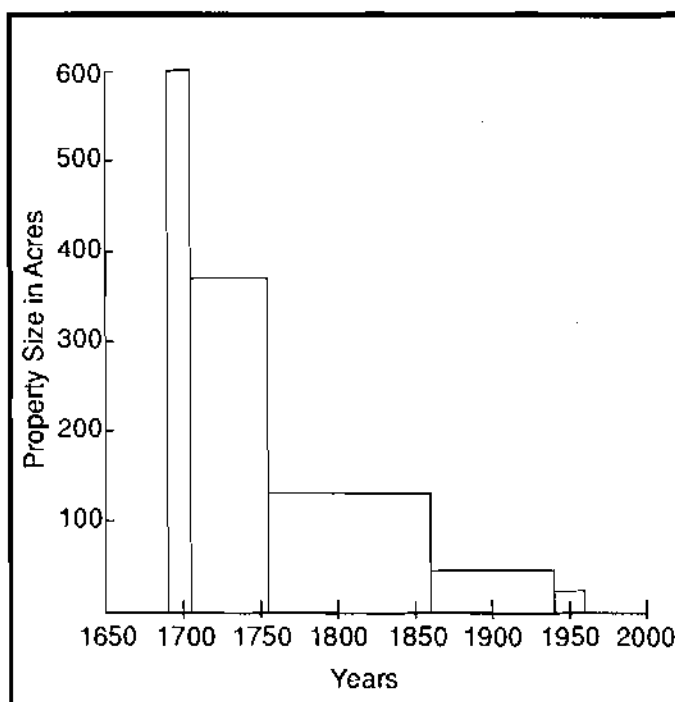
Woodland II Period (A.D. 1000 - A.D. 1650). In many areas of the Middle Atlantic, the Woodland II Period is marked by agricultural and large-scale village life (Custer 1986a). In central Delaware, however, the change in lifeways is not as pronounced. There have been some finds of cultivated plants in Delaware, but cultivated food remains are far less common than wild plant foods. In general, Woodland II Period subsistence patterns in central Delaware are similar to those of the Woodland I Period with the addition of minor amounts of cultivated plant foods. Changes in ceramic technology and projectile point styles identify Woodland II Period archaeological sites. Triangular projectile points, the only type found in Woodland II tool kits, appear about A.D. 1000; Woodland II Period ceramics of central Delaware are classified within the Townsend series (Griffith 1982) and have more complex decorations than Woodland I ceramics including incised lines and cord-wrapped stick impressions.

Contact Period (A.D. 1650 - A.D. 1750). There are few Native American archaeological sites that clearly date to the Contact Period in Delaware (Custer and Watson 1985). In southern Delaware, Contact Period occupations have been reported for the Townsend Site (Omwake and Stewart 1963); however, the associations of European and Native American artifacts are questionable (Custer 1984a:177). Numerous Contact Period sites are known in southeastern Pennsylvania and on the Maryland Eastern Shore (Davidson 1982; McNamara 1985; Davidson, Hughes, and McNamara 1985). Native American groups in Delaware apparently did not interact much with Europeans and were probably dominated by the Susquehannock Indians of southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Kent 1984). Only a few remnant groups of Native Americans remained in Delaware by the end of the Contact Period.

Regional History and Site History

The regional history for Kent County and the Dover area has been previously presented elsewhere (Bachman and Catts 1990; Heite and Heite 1989; Heite 1990; Grettler et al. 1991) and will not be repeated here. Instead, the focus of this historical context summary will be focused on the Lisbon Tract itself and how it changed over time. The history of the project area can be divided into five parts, based on the gradual reduction of the tract size over 300 years, from a 600-acre parcel in the seventeenth century to a 24-acre property in the twentieth century (Figure 3). Appendix I contains a summary of the property transactions for the Lisbon Tract, showing names of buyers and sellers, date of purchase, purchase price, tract size, and the historic references for these data. Archival sources studied included agricultural censuses, historical atlases, court records, tax assessments, deed transcripts, and probate inventories for Kent County. There were no apparent gaps in the historic records for the property.

FIGURE 3
Decline of Size of Lisbon Tract,
1680-1970



The project area was originally part of a 600-acre tract called Lisbon (or Lisbona) warranted to John Brinckloe by William Penn in January 1680. In 1706, when Brinckloe sold the property to Robert French of New Castle County, the Lisbon Tract was 370 acres. It remained at 370 acres for the next 54 years, when the heirs of Robert French sold 132 acres to John Edingfield of Kent County.

Between 1760 and 1866 the Lisbon Tract was owned successively by the Edingfields, Parkes, Frazers, Gordons, Laws, Kimmeys, Jones, Becks, Smithers, and Cators. Byles' **Map of Kent County** (1859) shows William Beck as the owner of the farm (Figure 4). Most of these purchasers during this 106-year period were local residents. Tax assessments during this period suggest that the farm was used for livestock raising (Appendix II). In 1816, George Laws, a Philadelphia tanner, was assessed \$2250 for the land, containing a "wooden dwelling and other buildings in middling repair", tenanted by Robertson Walker (Kent County Tax Assessment 1816; hereafter KCTA). Walker in turn was assessed for 45 head

of livestock, including 18 sheep, 15 shoates, sows, heifers, oxen, and horses. Fourteen years later, in 1828, James Kimmey resided on the property in a "log dwelling" with other outbuildings in "tolerable repair." Like his predecessor, Kimmey had a large livestock herd, nearly twice the size of Laws', including 25 sheep, 20 young cattle, 20 shoats, 7 calves, 8 cows, and horses, colts, mules, and oxen (KCTA 1828).

By 1850, when Kimmey sold the property to Richard Jones of Newark, New Castle County, the tract was no longer used for extensive livestock raising. The U.S. Agricultural Census for that year shows the Jones farm to have been used mainly for agricultural production. Jones had about 80% of his acreage improved and raised wheat, Indian corn, oats and potatoes. The percentage of improved acres for the Lisbon Tract had not substantially changed since 1816. Jones' livestock herd had diminished to only five animals. By 1860, the U.S. Agricultural Census recorded that Lisbon's owner, Richard Jones and Andrew Smithers had about 88% of their land improved. Like earlier farmers, the Jones-Smithers farm grew wheat, Indian corn, oats, and potatoes.

Harvey Cator of Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York bought the Lisbon Tract in the fall of 1865 for \$12,000, the highest price the farm had sold for throughout its history. Fifteen months later he sold 45 acres of the tract to Lester F. Benton of Vergennes, Addison County, Vermont. Benton's ownership begins the third major period of the site's history, when it was reduced from 130 acres to 45 acres. Benton is shown as the property owner on D. G. Beers' *Atlas* (1868), but he may have been an absentee owner (Figure 5); in the spring of 1868 Benton (recorded in the deed as a resident of Brandon, Rutland County, Vermont) sold the 45-acre tract to Daniel L. Rockwell of Norwalk, Connecticut.

Between 1868 and 1934 the 45-acre Lisbon Tract was bought and sold 15 times, or roughly once every 4 1/2 years. During this period, absentee owners predominated, and it seems that few, if any, of the owners actually lived on the property. In 1870, Daniel L. Rockwell's entry in the U.S. Agricultural Census showed that the Lisbon Tract was producing modest amounts of Indian corn, potatoes, and molasses. Livestock consisted of one milk cow and six pigs.

Daniel L. Rockwell bought and sold the land six times between 1868 and 1897; Rockwell's place of residence was variously listed as Dover, New York City, and Brooklyn. Other owners from New York and Brooklyn included William Campbell, Robert J. Ross, and Norman G. Baker. Baker eventually resided in Chicago, Illinois and Muscatine, Iowa. Nearby owners included Charles Paradee of Magnolia, Harriet Rash of North Murderkill Hundred, Arley Magee of Dover, Thomas White and Leonard Willis of Wilmington, and William F. Biter of Dover. Initially, the purchase price of the property was \$8000, but this gradually decreased to \$2500 in 1897, rose to \$5500 in 1914, then declined rapidly. By 1920, when William Biter of East Dover Hundred purchased the land, it was sold for only \$600.

The final period of the Lisbon Tract history began in 1934 when William F. Biter sold 24 acres of the Lisbon Tract to William and Dora Richter of Dover for \$1100. Four years later the Richters sold the farm to Oswald Saringer and his wife Bertha, and Karl F. Saringer, all of Hartly, Delaware. The Saringers owned the land until 1970 when Karl sold the tract (all that remained of an original 600-acre Penn warrant) to the U.S. Government for \$110,000. By the early 1980s, any structures on the tract had been removed or demolished, and the land used for garden lots for Dover AFB personnel (Plate 1). No data on these structures are available.

The history of the Lisbon Tract is unique compared to other tracts, such as Aberdeen and Troy, that have been studied by other archaeological projects in the State Route 1 Corridor (Bachman and Catts 1990; Grettler et al. 1991). The predominance of absentee owners at Lisbon is not seen on either Troy or Aberdeen, both of which neighboring tracts settled at the same time as Lisbon. Instead of being repeatedly subdivided (like Lisbon), the Aberdeen and Troy parcels remained fairly intact over time and were farmed by the owners or farm managers well into the twentieth century. Clearly, a different process of development prevailed at Lisbon.

During the nineteenth century the growth of the canning industry, steamboat travel, and the presence of the railroad through Dover may have had a significant impact on the development and use of the Lisbon Tract (Heite and Heite 1989; Grettler et al. 1991). Absentee owners of the property, particularly those from New York and Brooklyn, may have had economic interests tied into the canneries and transportation routes in the Dover area. The history of the Lisbon Tract's deeds after the Civil War, with short ownerships, straw man deals, and repeated owners and mortgages, suggests that the land was used at times by the owners for speculation, investment, and perhaps tax evasion. Such financial maneuvers were directly related to the changing industrial and agricultural systems in the county. Absentee ownership and tenant occupation were common in central Delaware, comprising about one-half of all farms in Little Creek and Murderkill hundreds between 1860 and 1900. Native-born Delaware farmers were also the rule rather than the exception. Research by De Cunzo and Garcia (1992:25-232) into agriculture and farm life in Delaware between 1830 and 1940 shows that during that period only about 15-17 percent of Murderkill Hundred farmers were born outside of Delaware.

Significantly, the portion of the larger 600-acre Lisbon Tract warranted in 1680 to John Brinckloe and investigated for this archaeological survey retained the title of Lisbon throughout the nineteenth century. For example, the property is called Lisbon on both Byles' **Map of Kent County** in 1859 and on Beers' **Atlas** in 1868 (Figures 4 and 5), even though Lester Benton, and possibly William Beck, were absentee owners. The retention of the old tract name by out-of-state owners suggests that in order to feel part of the Dover Hundred community, these absentee owners used the tract title as a means of validating their presence, or at least their ownership. By keeping the property name, the landowners, although they were "foreigners" (ie., not from Kent County), they recognized the significance of the past to the local community, and used the name Lisbon to place themselves within that community.