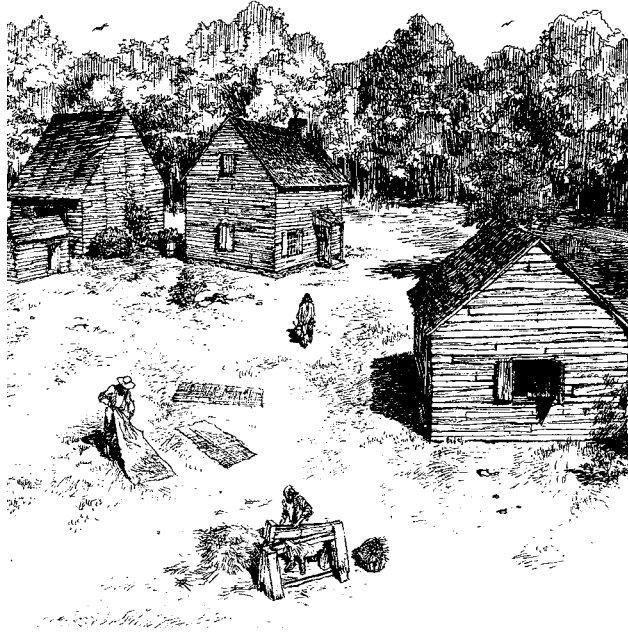


**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

**THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF  
FARM AND RURAL DWELLING SITES  
IN NEW CASTLE AND KENT COUNTIES, DELAWARE  
1730-1770 AND 1770-1830**



By

**John Bedell**

**THE LOUIS BERGER GROUP, INC.**  
East Orange, New Jersey

**Delaware Department of Transportation Series No. 162**



**Delaware  
Department of Transportation**

Carolann Wicks, Director  
Transportation Solutions  
Chief Engineer



**U.S. Department of Transportation  
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Prepared For

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Division of Highways

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## ABSTRACT

In 1990, when Lu Ann De Cunzo and Wade Catts wrote their *Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources*, only three eighteenth-century farm sites had been fully excavated and reported in New Castle and Kent counties: the William Hawthorne, Whitten Road, and Thomas Williams sites. By 1999, nine more sites had been added to the list: the William Strickland, John Powell, Charles Robinson, Benjamin Wynn, McKean/Cochran, Bloomsbury, Augustine Creek North, Augustine Creek South, and Thomas Dawson sites. The excavation and publication of nine farm sites in nine years represents a remarkable burst of archaeological activity. Eight of these excavations were funded by the Delaware Department of Transportation. DelDOT's road building has therefore financed a quadrupling of the available archaeological data on eighteenth-century Delaware, adding enormously to our knowledge of Delaware's past.

The new information has moved the archaeology of eighteenth-century Delaware beyond the exploratory stage and onto the threshold of an exciting new era. It is becoming clear that the lower Delaware Valley had a distinct culture in this period, and that many features of this culture are visible in the archaeological record. The sites already excavated have established many basic patterns, so that the excavation of each new site is no longer a leap into the dark. Expectations have been built up concerning the kinds of houses, outbuildings, farm layouts, ceramic assemblages, and faunal collections likely to be found on farm sites in this region. Future studies can therefore begin to focus on deeper questions about the culture. Areas where meaningful research is now possible include the origins of the Delaware Valley culture, its evolution in the eighteenth century, the location and nature of its boundaries, and the variations within it. With a large base of comparative data, it is now possible to identify the unique features of each site, and to investigate which of these unique features might be related to such factors as ethnicity, locality, and household life-cycle.

Before launching this new phase, it is necessary to take stock of the enormous body of existing data. The present document is intended to assist in that stocktaking. It has been written in the form of a historic context on farm and rural residence sites in Delaware in two periods defined by the state plan, 1730-1770 and 1770-1830. It therefore encompasses a group of early nineteenth-century sites—the Grant Tenancy, Charles Allen, and Darrach Store sites—as well as those dating to the eighteenth century. It also includes one site, Loockerman's Range, that was excavated only to the Phase II level. It provides a summary description of the archaeological excavations performed to date at all of these sites. It provides a guide to the reports on those sites, and lists the various extra studies undertaken as part of the research on the sites (documentary and comparative research, for example). It describes the research questions that have engaged archaeologists working in Delaware, and makes suggestions about how such research might be extended. It also suggests criteria for determining whether farm sites dating to these periods should be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and how the excavation of such sites should be planned.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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