

4.0 HISTORIC OVERVIEW



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4.1 Regional Historic Setting

The post-contact history of the Middle Atlantic region begins with the explorations of numerous Europeans in North America. In general, the history of Delaware is divided into five time periods, beginning with exploration of the area and concluding with modern urbanization (De Cunzo and Catts 1990). Time periods pre-dating the Exploration and Frontier Settlement (1630-1730) period are not addressed in this report. However, they will be discussed in the forthcoming archaeological report for the SR 1 Little Heaven Interchange project.

4.1.1 Exploration and Frontier Settlement (1630-1730)

Early exploration of the Delaware Bay offered much promise for colonizing the new land. Navigators such as Henry Hudson and Samuel Argall briefly sailed in the Delaware Bay, yet neither man could portend the growth and conflict that would arise in the area. The introduction of Dutch settlements at High Island in 1624 and Lewes in 1631 opened the area to initial colonization, but these outposts did not survive for more than two years (Weslager 1961:11).

In March 1638, the first Swedish colonists in America disembarked at the confluence of the Christina and Brandywine rivers in what is now Wilmington, Delaware (Munroe 1979:21). Peter Minuit, leader of the expedition, safely brought the party across the stormy Atlantic and helped to establish a foothold in Delaware. With his departure in June 1638, Mans Kling guided the growth of the colony and within a few years a church, fort, and farming community evolved to form the first European settlement in Delaware (Weslager 1961:181).

That same year, the Swedish settlers reportedly brought an African servant with them known in court records as “Black Anthony”. Records indicate that Anthony likely held the distinction of indentured servant rather than a slave held for life (Reed 1947:571). During this period, and up until the beginning of the eighteenth century, few differences existed between African-American and Caucasian servants. In Delaware, however, an act in 1700 began to change the status of African Americans. This act imposed harsher penalties on African Americans for offenses, prohibited them from bearing arms, banned them from assembly, and established a separate jury

system for the trial of African Americans. This judicial system instituted a trial conducted by two justices of the peace and six freeholders rather than a jury. Restrictions continued in 1807 when the Delaware State Legislature excluded “Free Negroes” from entering the state.

The presence of this Swedish colony posed a challenge to the Dutch colonial interests in the Delaware Bay area. Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor of New Netherland, resented the Swedish presence in Dutch territory and the fact that Fort Nassau, a Dutch post constructed in 1626, predated the Swedish settlement. As a result, in 1651 Stuyvesant established Fort Casmir, near present-day New Castle. A series of military conflicts ensued, with the victorious Dutch establishing the town of New Amstel (New Castle) near Fort Casmir in 1656 (Weslager 1961:12).

English influence began in the Delaware Valley region in 1664 with the takeover of the Dutch colonies by Sir Robert Carr. Carr, on behalf of James Stuart, Duke of York and Albany, confiscated the lands, houses, and personal possessions of the Dutch officials. Despite the hostile nature of Carr’s actions, the transfer of authority went smoothly. The English leadership sought to maintain existing land ownership, political structure, and trading privileges among the remaining colonists. New immigrants, including English and Scotch-Irish, joined the remaining mixed populace of Swedish, Finnish, and Dutch colonists.

In 1681, William Penn received proprietary rights over Pennsylvania from King Charles II. While the new colony served him well, this province was lacking in one essential detail—access to the ocean. In 1682, the settlement along the St. Jones River were incorporated as St. Jones County and was renamed Kent County soon after. Penn appealed to the Duke of York to give him the land between Pennsylvania and the ocean, and in 1682, the Duke of York conveyed the three Delaware counties, New Castle, Kent, and Sussex, to Penn. Penn’s hold over a newly expanded Pennsylvania, however, was soon tested by disputes between the three Pennsylvania counties and the three Delaware counties. The colonists of the three Lower Counties, generally members of the Church of England, often found themselves in disagreement with the Quaker-majority Pennsylvania counties over voting power, appropriations, and religious character. Political dissension and mistrust eventually lead to a separate government and relative autonomy

for Delaware in Fall 1704. Despite the political rift, social and economic ties were maintained between the Lower Counties and Philadelphia throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Munroe 1984).

By the mid-1680s, the population was spreading rapidly; however, the Lower Counties and Kent County in particular saw only modest population numbers, possessing only 99 tithables in the center county (Scharf 1888:1030). Settlement patterns in Delaware shifted from the closely spaced Dutch and Swedish villages along the Delaware River to scattered farmsteads along internal drainages and along emerging roads. Two major drainages near the project area are the St. Jones and Murderkill rivers. Both the St. Jones and Murderkill were navigable for 30.0 and 20.0 miles, respectively, from their mouths at the Delaware Bay (Conrad 1908:661). The word Murderkill first appears on Linstrom's map dating to 1654-1655, as *Mordare Kijhlem*, or Murderer Creek. Murderkill is often written as *Murtherkill* or *Motherkill* in early historic records, and both are a variant of *murder*. Perhaps it is in reference to a slaying of a person or persons long ago. A second possibility to the derivation of the word represents mother, or main stream, below the first fork (ibid.:42). According to Conrad, the first tract of land settled in the area known as South Murderkill Hundred¹ was "Whitewell's Delight" located between the St. Jones and Murderkill creeks at present-day Bowers Beach (Conrad 1908:661).

The tract was located and settled by Francis Whitwell under grant from Governor Edmond Andros in 1676. The land was subsequently patented to William Frampton in 1686, as Dover Peere. The tract contained 1,300.0 acres (ibid.:661). These large plantations were typically made up of a dwelling house and outbuildings with a surrounding patchwork of farmed fields. Structures present at these plantations included small dwellings built of wood or, less frequently, brick. Large portions of the property were likely kept in marsh or woodland for livestock forage. Another large tract in the area was that of "Caroone Manor". This actually consisted of two tracts: "Croone", a 1,200-acre parcel; and "Croone Manor", consisting of 800.0 acres. Joshua Barkstead received a grant for this land between 1683 and 1689. The manor tract contained two villages: Magnolia and Barker's Landing (often referred to as Florence). These communities

¹ South Murderkill Hundred was formed from South Murderkill election district that bore that name from 1855 to 1867 when it was made a Hundred (Conrad 1908:660).

remain today, and are located only one to one and one-half miles northwest and northeast of the project area.

Transportation routes in late-seventeenth- to early-eighteenth-century Delaware were often dictated by natural waterways, as existing roads were few and in poor condition. In 1660, “Herman’s Cart Road”, located between Appoquinimink (present-day Odessa) and Bohemia Manor in Maryland, offered one of a select few overland routes connecting the Delaware Bay to the Chesapeake Bay (Scharf 1888:991). However, water transportation provided a cheaper, more efficient method to transport goods from the remote hinterland to urban markets along the Delaware River. As a result, the port cities of Philadelphia and Wilmington, and to a lesser extent New Castle, grew steadily and took over a dominating commercial role in the growth of Delaware.

4.1.2 Intensified and Durable Occupation (1730-1770)

Delaware witnessed an increase in population and commercial expansion by the middle of the eighteenth century. Small hamlets located along riverine settings and at crossroads underwent rapid growth.

The development of commercial agriculture was reflected in changing farmstead patterns. New towns developed to serve the Atlantic Coastal trade. This expansion accommodated the increase of the settler population and the agricultural commodities that were brought in from the surrounding farms for transport to Philadelphia and Wilmington. These commercial towns, such as Smyrna, Odessa, Dover, and Port Penn, served as focal points for the local society and economy (Ames et al. 1989:47). Maritime-related activities such as ship and boat building, oystering and fishing were often concentrated at these population centers.

Farming remained the most important economic activity in Delaware during the eighteenth century. This activity accounted for 80 to 90 percent of colonial Delaware’s population (Egnal 1975:201). Wheat constituted the primary crop, followed by rye, corn, barley, oats, and garden vegetables. Many farms also contained at least one fruit orchard, with apples and peaches predominating. Livestock husbandry supplemented the income produced from field crops

(Passmore et al. 1978). Land use patterns increased with regard to the tillage of the farm's total acreage. Lands once reserved as forest or marsh were cleared and incorporated into the crop cycle. A system of crop rotation was used on farms, spurring larger harvests per acre. The increased need for larger tracts of land forced new buyers to purchase and cultivate property once reserved as marginal grounds.

One of the earliest established communities in Delaware is the town of Frederica (Figure 3). It is laid out on the part of "St. Collom" that was originally warranted to Benoni Bishop in 1681 as a tract of 1,400.0 acres. It was originally known as "Johnny Cake Landing" and "Indian Point" (Conrad 1908:664-5). The small ship landing gradually grew into a shipbuilding center and homeport for vessels engaged in both coastal and international trade. The town was first surveyed and laid out in lots by John Emerson in 1772. The town was incorporated by the legislature in 1826; however, that charter was repealed, then reissued in 1865 (Bevan 1929:848).

In 1736, the first ship to have been built and launched on the Murderkill was the *Hopewell*, a 10.0-ton sloop. The construction of Schooner-style ships began in the mid-eighteenth century. The port of Frederica continued to expand as a shipbuilding center during the mid- to late nineteenth century, utilizing local white oak and pine. The first steamboat to navigate the Murderkill to Frederica was the *Egypt Mills* in 1857 (Scharf 1888:1160). The construction of the Delaware Railroad created an efficient means of overland transportation through the inland portion of the state, and served to divert shipping away from coastal routes.

4.1.3 Transformation from Colony to State (1770-1830)

Early Swedish settlers quickly recognized the value of the rich soil and favorable climate that the Delaware region offered. The Swedes cultivated tobacco, corn, pumpkins, rye, barley, watermelons, and wild turnips, among other crops (Hoffecker 1977:18). By the eighteenth century, Delaware, along with the rest of the middle colonies, emerged as the "bread colonies" of the New World (Schlebecker 1975:40).

The American Revolution brought much disarray to the region at the beginning of this time period. British activities on the Delaware River and Bay disrupted the maritime economy of the area, impacting all manner of trade. British, French, and Continental forces passing through Delaware made for disruptive travel to farmer and merchant alike. Social and political unrest in the colony further heightened an already tense atmosphere.

Colonists witnessed a variety of military forces pass through Delaware during the Revolutionary War. British and Hessian troops marched from Cecil County, Maryland and skirmished in the Fall 1777 with American forces at Cooch's Bridge, south of Newark. The American forces were forced to retreat, and the British seized Wilmington. The control of Wilmington shifted frequently throughout the winter of 1777-1778. In 1781, Lafayette's French troops disembarked at Christiana, then proceeded to march west toward Tidewater, Virginia.

After the Revolutionary War, the population of Delaware grew rapidly, while its agricultural productivity dropped. The population of Kent County was estimated at 18,920 in 1790 (Munroe 1993). A decrease in soil fertility, coupled with competition for good farming land and a decline in wheat prices, forced many farmers with small operations to sell off their holdings to larger, wealthier farms. A shift in rural settlement patterns was observed as farms began to move from the older coastal settlements to the upland areas in the middle of the state. Factors such as an improvement in agricultural technology and crop rotation allowed for greater crop yields in these upland fields.

Agriculture continued to be important throughout the eighteenth century and into the first half of the nineteenth century. Many dispossessed farmers left Delaware during the 1820s and 1830s, or sought occupation in the numerous urban and industrial centers where employment was readily available. Manufacturing and commerce prospered under the influence of an increased labor force. Textile manufacturers in the cotton and woolen mills along Red Clay Creek, White Clay Creek, and Brandywine Creek produced the finished raw fabrics that were in high demand at the time (Pursell 1958). In 1825, fur and silk hats manufactured by Lewis and Thomas Lockwood in Frederica provided jobs and income for residents in the community (Coverdale 1976:13).

Religion in Southern Kent County. Methodism began in England as a movement within the Church of England led by John and Charles Wesley. As members of the Methodist Societies immigrated to the American colonies, Methodism began to increase its following in the colonies. Between 1768 and 1774, John Wesley sent Francis Asbury and seven other Methodist lay preachers from England to minister to the growing societies. When the Revolutionary War broke out, only Asbury and James Dempster chose to remain in America. Dempster withdrew to upstate New York, where he remained for the rest of his life; thus Asbury became the effective leader of American Methodists.

Toward the south end of the Little Heaven project area in the southern half of Kent County is Barratt's Chapel. Barratt's Chapel was built in 1780 on land donated by Philip Barratt, a prominent political figure in the county. Barratt, who had recently become a Methodist, wanted to build a center for the growing Methodist movement in Delaware. Barratt's Chapel is the oldest surviving church building in the United States built by and for Methodists and is known as the "Cradle of Methodism" (Barratt's Chapel website, accessed 10 November 2003).

The Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church is located in Little Heaven on the west side of Skeeter Neck Road. The A.M.E. Church is a branch of John Wesley's Methodist movement in the Colonies. Wesley ordained Dr. Thomas Coke, an Anglican priest, who created the General Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in December 1784. Richard Allen, founder of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, and who would eventually lead the Methodist group of the Free African Society, was present at the Conference (A.M.E. Church website, accessed 17 June 2004).

The A.M.E. Church became organized after the St. George's Methodists Episcopal Church in Philadelphia segregated Caucasian and African-American members in 1787. The Free African Society was created following this event, which then produced two groups: the Episcopalians and the Methodists. Richard Allen led the Methodist group, and in 1816 the A.M.E. Church was formed by a General Convention that convened in Philadelphia (A.M.E. Church website, accessed 17 June 2004). The Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church was incorporated in Dover on April 14,

1873 through the leadership of Richard Allen. The church was to have been sponsored by Barratt's Chapel (Reynolds 1982:177).

The specific incorporation date for the Mt. Olive Church in Little Heaven is unknown; however, local author Hazel W. Reynolds states that: "Little Heaven had a strong Negro congregation since early days. They got a church of their own, but the burial ground remained at Barrett's (Reynolds 1982:177). The 1868 Beers Atlas shows an "Af. Ch." (presumably meaning "African Church") slightly north of the present Mt. Olive Church along Skeeter Neck Road (Figure 4). A CRS form (CRS #K-2730) was prepared for this property in Summer 1980. According to Reynolds, the church was abandoned the following year in 1981 (Reynolds 1982:177). The plain, gable-roofed building is currently boarded up and overgrown by woods, but a plaque was observed on the façade with the inscription: "Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church, Rebuilt August 1906". The property is owned by Greater Love Temple Church of Dover. This property is outside the limits of the APE for this project.

4.1.4 Industrialization and Capitalization (1830-1880)

The effects of the Industrial Revolution led to significant advances in transportation, urbanization, and industrialization in northern Delaware. By the early 1830s, a significant number of transportation improvements were underway. The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, finished in 1829, opened a direct route from the head of the Chesapeake Bay to the Delaware River, eliminating the long water journey around the Delmarva Peninsula. The shortened travel time fostered more business between the major urban centers of Baltimore and Philadelphia. In 1837, 100,000.0 tons of cargo passed through the C & D Canal, while in 1872, the peak tonnage year, 1,318,772.0 tons were transported (Snyder and Guss 1974). The towns of St. Georges and Delaware City grew rapidly and became social and economic points for the local community as a result of the commercial traffic from the canal.

Commercial Navigation on the St. Jones and Murderkill Rivers. Similar to many other sections of Colonial America, Delaware's creeks and rivers served settlers as the first highways, providing anyone with a flatboat or other shallow-draft vessel an opportunity to participate in

early commerce. Writing in his 1888 two-volume work, *History of Delaware 1609-1888*, author J. Thomas Scharf mentions numerous early landings along these waterways, including the St. Jones and Murderkill rivers [both formerly named as a creek]. The St. Jones River played a major role in determining the location of Dover, the eventual state capital. The city is located 16.0 to 18.0 miles upstream from the waterway's mouth near Bowers Beach. Scharf states that, "Dover, the capital of the State, finds an outlet for its commerce to the Delaware by a very circuitous route through St. Jones' Creek, a distance of thirty miles. It is navigable as far up as Dover for vessels and steamers of two hundred tons burden" (Scharf 1888:2). Other notable navigation locations along the St. Jones River included Forest Landing. In June 1793, a bill passed the legislature allowing the Hunn family to erect a forge and sawmill at this landing. By 1818, the dam had been breached and the millpond for the forge and sawmill drained (ibid.:1132). Scharf writes:

In 1850, and a long time previous, vast quantities of cord-wood, staves, black oak and Spanish oak bark and grain were bought by the merchants and shipped from the "Forest Landing" and Lebanon to Philadelphia and New York. But with the advent of the railroad in 1856 all this changed. The people, who had before hauled their products ten, fifteen and even twenty miles to find a market, now found a market at their very doors. In those days there were two hotels. The hotels were mainly indebted to the old stage line between Lewes and New Castle, and the stage line to Dona Landing and to Short's Landing, in connection with steamboats to Philadelphia. (ibid.: 1132)

Downstream from Forest Landing is the village of Lebanon, which is located a distance of

. . . three and one-half miles southeast of Dover, and about two and one-quarter miles east of Camden, and has long been noted as a shipping point for grain, wood, lumber, ship-timber, staves, bark, canned and evaporated fruits. Large quantities of coal, lime, fertilizers, soft-wood lumber and general merchandise are imported to this point for the merchants of Lebanon, Camden and Rising Sun . . . (ibid.:1131)

Much closer to the current project area, Barkers Landing near Florence and Magnolia served as a shipping point for grain. Prior to 1800, Thomas Barker constructed a warehouse that became known as the "Red Granary" (ibid.:1156).

In 1830, an enterprising merchant and horticulturalist named Jehu Reed reportedly introduced market-based peach culture to Kent County through planting a large orchard to which he added annually (ibid.:1152). His “Reed Farm” was located in what is known today as Little Heaven and was later owned by his son, Jehu M. Reed. According to Scharf, Reed was “the first in the county to grow the peach on budded trees. A few years later he shipped the first peaches grown on budded trees in the country round-about that were sold to markets outside of Delaware (ibid.: 1155).

Evidently, Reed caught and bought horseshoe crabs from Bowers Beach and used the ground-up crustaceans as fertilizers for his peach trees. He introduced the surrounding countryside to the method of planting pine trees to reinvigorate depleted soil. After the trees matured, Reed cut them for cordwood and shipped this product to market from Warren’s Landing and transformed the previously poor soil into garden farms within 20 years of cutting the trees. Subsequent to his first peach harvest, Reed shipped his fruit to market in “fast-sailing vessels to Philadelphia, and he received his pay in gold to such an amount that it astonished some of the citizens of Murderkill Hundred of those days” (ibid.:1157). Reed’s financial return led many others Delaware farmers and nurserymen to grow market peaches (ibid.). Scharf further defines Reed’s shipping method on a subsequent page:

In 1846 he began to send his peaches to the Philadelphia market by a line of fast-sailing boats, of light draft, chartered and manned expressly for his own fruit... Mr. Reed continued this plan with abundant success for about ten years, or until the Delaware Railroad reached Wyoming. The boats discharged their cargoes bound to New York at Camden, New Jersey, where it brought more money than in Philadelphia....Mr. Reed’s peaches and wood were shipped from Warren’s alias Gray’s Landing, on Jones’ River, which empties into the Delaware Bay at the northwest end of a pretty beach, once covered with oak and walnut trees to the verge of an abrupt shore of gravel and tenacious yellow clay. This place, at first called Whitwell’s Delight, has been known for many years as Bowers’ Beach, and extends to the mouth of Murderkill Creek, about two-thirds of a mile. (ibid.:1169)

The Antebellum in Kent County. In a continuation of the earlier restrictions that excluded “Free Negroes” from entering the state, the Delaware Legislature enacted further constraints in 1852, which imposed voting restrictions, barred African Americans from holding public office, and prohibited them from testifying against Caucasians unless competent Caucasian testimony did

not exist. In the same year, they also issued laws protecting the property of African Americans and their right to seek redress in the court system for injury to property. Two years prior to the Civil War, the state enacted a Jim Crow law that prohibited African Americans from riding in any Delaware railroad car used to convey Caucasian passengers (Reed 1947:576).

In the Antebellum period, one demographic characteristic set Kent County apart from the two counties in Delaware and the rest of the United States. The 1860 census, the last taken before passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, enumerated 7,721 free African Americans living in Kent County. This accounted for over 26 percent of the total population of the county at a time when free African Americans made up approximately 15 percent of Delaware's population and only 1.5 percent of the total U.S. population (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). No other county in the nation boasted such a high percentage of free African Americans.

While slavery did exist in all three Delaware counties, census takers counted only 203 slaves in Kent County in 1860. One of the key reasons for the relative absence of slavery was economic. Rather poor or poorly drained soil combined with a comparatively short growing season prevented the development of the kind of single-crop, labor-intensive economic system that made slavery economically viable elsewhere. Therefore, in Kent County, farmers and other employers found it more cost-effective to hire African-American workers on a seasonal basis.

Political factors may also have induced free African Americans to settle or remain in Kent County. The laws, regulations, and social customs of the state reflected both the need for "Negro labor" and a firm belief in the dogma of Caucasian superiority. This resulted in an ambivalent record of race relations in the state. Delaware became the first slave state to abolish the domestic slave trade, and the Delaware courts developed a doctrine that presumed persons of color free unless proved otherwise. It was the only slave state to implement such a policy. However, Delaware also passed Jim Crow laws very early—prior to the Civil War—and African Americans could neither vote nor hold political office (Hoffecker 1977:90-96). After the Civil War, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution were soundly

rejected in the State Legislature; Delaware did not ratify them until early in the twentieth century.

African Americans and Public Education during the Nineteenth Century. Despite severe racial discrimination, a significant number of African Americans resided in Kent County throughout the nineteenth century. During the first half of the twentieth century, however, the percentage of African Americans in Kent County dropped to 18 percent of the total population. While there was a small decline in the absolute number of African-American residents, the percentage decrease is largely attributable to an increase in the number of Caucasians moving into Kent County. African Americans, who numbered 7,745 in 1900, dropped to 6,859 by 1950, while the number of Caucasians increased nearly 6,000 in that same period (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). During the second half of the twentieth century, the population of Kent County, which had increased by just over 5,000 in the first half of the twentieth century, quadrupled. By 2000, residents of the county numbered nearly 127,000, and the over 26,000 African Americans comprised nearly 21 percent of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000:22, 70).

The racial discrimination ubiquitous in every aspect of Delaware society extended to an already poor public education system. During the early years of the republic, few educational opportunities existed for residents of Kent County, Caucasian or African American. Delaware provided very little support for public schools until 1829, when the state legislature passed a free school act. The act provided for the formation of school districts that could receive state money for public education (Bevan 1929:667-669). The state, however, in spite of collecting tax dollars from all residents regardless of color, provided education to Caucasians only and did not fund schools for African-American children. As a result, the education of African-American children was the work of philanthropic or religious organizations.

Prior to the Civil War, only seven schools dedicated to the education of African Americans existed in Delaware. The Society of Friends organized all but one of these schools (Skelcher 1999:3). During the post-Civil War era, the Democratic Party, referred to by many as “the White Man’s Party”, dominated Delaware politics. Democrats firmly opposed anything that smacked of

Reconstruction (to which this slave-holding Union state was not subject) and any measure that provided for the public education of African Americans. Religious groups, such as the Methodists and the Quakers, fervently believed that education provided the best hope for African Americans and fought for educational and racial equality throughout this period. In the face of fierce Democratic opposition, most religious leaders concluded that African-American education could only come from philanthropic sources (Skelcher 1999:6-7).

The Post-Civil War Era. On the eve of the Civil War, the cash value of farms in Delaware totaled nearly \$31.5 million dollars. During the same year, the entire value of manufacturers in Delaware totaled approximately \$9.9 million (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998); approximately \$680 million and \$215 million, respectively, in 2004 dollars). These statistics, however, belie the differences that existed within the state between New Castle County in the north and Kent and Sussex counties in the south. Northern portions of the state quickly became industrialized and economically progressive, while the southern portions remained agricultural. In many respects, during the Antebellum period, Delaware reflected larger sectional differences that existed between the North and South. New Castle County accounted for over 90 percent of the total value of manufacturing products in Delaware. The value of manufacturing products for Kent and Sussex counties combined totaled less than \$1 million (approximately \$20 million in 2004 dollars). New Castle also boasted of greater agricultural output than the two southern counties combined (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). This production reflected the transportation and technological advantages that New Castle County enjoyed during the nineteenth century.

Builders completed the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in New Castle County by 1830, and by the late 1850s, tonnage on this route exceeded the half-million mark (Taylor 1951:41-42). The canal, along with the completion of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad (PW & BRR) in 1838, provided the necessary transportation linkages with major markets and assured the economic success of the City of Wilmington and New Castle County (ibid.:78).

Kent County, however, did not enjoy the same transportation advantages. As a result, Kent's economy and population remained static for most of the nineteenth century. During the period

from 1790 to 1850, the population of Kent County increased from 18,920 to 22,816, an increase of only 21 percent. During the same period, the population of New Castle County increased 117 percent from 19,688 to 42,780 (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). As New Castle County prospered during the first half of the nineteenth century, Kent County suffered from economic stagnation. Intense farming of the land, coupled with a lack of soils conservation, completely exhausted the soil in the southern parts of the state by 1850. Wheat yields per acre in Kent County fell to five bushels (Hoffecker 1977:44).

New Castle County, despite having nearly 15,000.0 fewer acres and over 250 fewer farms than Kent County, boasted of a cash value of all farms of nearly \$17 million in 1860. This figure amounted to almost \$8 million more than the value of Kent County farms (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). New Castle County more than doubled Kent's output of wheat, and more than quadrupled its output of rye and oats. New Castle also exceeded the amount of butter and cheese Kent produced by 580,000 pounds (New Castle produced 769,915 pounds, Kent produced 189,091 pounds), and surpassed the hay tonnage by 20,000 tons (New Castle produced 24,417 tons; Kent produced 4,109 tons) (DeBow 1854:208-209). In addition to its transportation advantages, New Castle County boasted of a progressive farming population. New Castle farmers formed the "Agricultural Society of the County of New Castle" in 1819. This organization sought to help county farmers improve agricultural production and efficiency. The Society provided a forum for the dissemination of modern farming practices including crop rotation, use of labor-saving machinery, and labor management (Herman 1987:117). Many New Castle farmers also introduced new animals, such as merino sheep herds, and experimented with new crops (Hoffecker 1977:47). Their progressive thinking, cooperative spirit, and use of new technologies ensured that New Castle County sustained a profitable agricultural economy throughout the nineteenth century.

The port of Frederica continued to expand as a shipbuilding center during the mid- to late nineteenth century, utilizing local white oak and pine. The first steamboat to navigate the Murderkill to Frederica was the "Egypt Mills" in 1857 (Scharf 1888:1160). This riverside town on the Murderkill River is clearly depicted on the 1868 Beers' Atlas of Delaware (Figure 3).

Prior to the coming of the railroad in the late 1850s, Frederica had been a busy shipping port (Bevan 1929:848). The construction of the Delaware Railroad created an efficient means of overland transportation through the inland portion of the state and served to divert shipping away from coastal routes. Once the railroad overtook shipping, Frederica became even more isolated, as the railroad did not pass through the town (Institute for Public Administration 2004:2-3). However, canneries and other industries soon began in the town. Today Frederica has retained much of its character-defining qualities as a nineteenth-century commercial town.

Transportation Improvements and the Rise of the Peach in Kent County. Two mid-nineteenth-century developments changed the fortunes of the southern portion of Delaware. The first was the extension of the PW & BRR to southern portions of the state. As early as the 1830s, elected officials and financiers envisioned a rail line that would link Wilmington with the southern half of the state. However, periodic downturns in the economy stalled the project for years. Not until the PW & BRR supported the project did the idea become reality. The Delaware line finally opened late in 1856, with the southern terminus located at Seaford and the northern terminus linked with major rail networks at Wilmington (Hoffecker 1977:46).

The second development that aided the economic growth of southern Delaware was the introduction of peach orchards. Successful peach farmers such as Jehu Reed, who had introduced market-based peach culture earlier, stood to make a handsome profit from the fruit. One 400.0-acre orchard in Delaware netted the owner \$38,000 in one growing season (nearly \$700,000 in 2004 dollars; Rutter 1880:81). Farmers in southern portions of the state planted peach orchards in anticipation of the railroad's arrival. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, large-scale peach production would have been nearly impossible. Transportation of peaches, a fruit easily damaged, over nineteenth-century roads would have made the venture unprofitable. The railroad, however, offered a mode of transportation that conveyed the product to market with minimal damage and spoilage.

Between 1860 and 1870, the value of Kent County's orchard products jumped from \$35,694 to \$489,283 (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998), which is approximately \$775,000 and \$12 million, respectively, in 2004 dollars). During the 1870s,

farmers in Kent County also began organizing Grange Halls. As in other parts of the country, the Grange offered a forum for the discussion of scientific crop management and techniques. The Grange also consolidated the buying power of the local farmers to obtain favorable prices on fertilizers, equipment, seed, and shipping rates (Delaware Humanities Forum 1984:19). With these improvements in techniques, organization, and technology, agriculture in Kent County quickly became a profitable venture.

The Jehu Reed House, constructed in the 1770s, is located on the west side of SR 1 at the intersection of Bowers Beach Road (Photograph 5), and is a landmark in Little Heaven and was featured in the Works Progress Administration's *American Guide Series* for Delaware. Compiled by the Federal Writers' Project, the Guide was published in 1938 and was subsequently reprinted. Jehu Reed was an early pioneer in the propagation and growing of peaches and other fruits. He began growing peaches in 1827 and began to expand his orchard, and soon began to sell plum, apple, and quince trees in addition to grape vines (Reynolds 1982:374).

Jehu Reed's choices of peach varieties was extensive and included: Early York Opening; Early Heath Opening; Old Mixon's Early Cling; Red Cheek Malacatoon; Pine Apple Peach Improved; Columbia; Morris White; Late Rare Ripe; Lemon Cling; and Late Heath or English Cling Improved (Scharf 1888:1170). At one point, Reed had 10,000 peach trees and 1,000 apple trees. He also produced great quantities of potatoes and corn (Reynolds 1982:377-8). He grew mulberry trees in the areas where the soil was poor due to excessive plantings. The leaves of these trees were used to sustain silkworm habitat for the production of silk (Scharf 1888:1169).

The *Guide* tells us that the name of Little Heaven "was applied to a group of cabins built about 1870 by Jehu Reed and his son Jehu M. Reed for Irish laboring families brought here to work in the orchards" (Works Progress Administration [WPA] 1948:372). Apparently to serve the Irish residents of the community, a Roman Catholic church had been planned for the area, but it was never built. Local author Hazel Wright Reynolds remarks in her book that Catholicism never flourished in the area, and that it was the dominant Protestant establishment that began to refer to the settlement as "Little Heaven". As there was no nearby church, Catholics who stayed on would need to travel to the Holy Cross parish in Dover (Reynolds 1982:365). Around the same



Photograph 5: K-137 Jehu Reed House, view looking southwest (November 2003).

time, an African-American settlement was started near the Jehu Reed lands, and was owned by another fruit grower named Jonathan Willis. This settlement came to known as “Little Hell” (WPA 1948:372; Reynolds 1982:365).

4.1.5 Suburbanization (1880-2000)

The Demise of the Peach Orchard. Peaches presented many difficulties to growers, which ultimately led to the demise of the industry in Delaware. Orchards required intensive maintenance of the soil, and the productive life of a peach tree lasted approximately 20 years. Despite these obstacles, peaches remained a cash crop in Kent County for decades. An outbreak of a disease known as “peach yellows” infected many orchards during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. The yellows appeared in the region as early as 1806, but did not hit the newly planted orchards in southern Delaware until the late nineteenth century. The disease caused fruit to mature rapidly, tainted the flavor, turned foliage yellow, and ultimately destroyed the tree within two growing seasons (Rutter 1880:11). By 1890, the yellows infected many of the orchards in nearly all parts of the state. By this time, however, growers in the south began diversifying their crops (Delaware Humanities Forum 1984:21).

As a result of the peach yellows, many growers destroyed their peach trees and planted apple trees. In 1909, the state still enumerated nearly 1.4 million peach trees. Fifteen years later, that number dropped to approximately one-half million, although the state still harvested over 355,000 bushels of peaches in that year. During this same period, the number of apple trees rose from less than 700,000 to nearly 1.1 million, and the number of bushels harvested rose to over 824,000 (Bevan 1929:761). The switch to apple orchards in the early twentieth century made Kent County the largest fruit and nut-producing County in Delaware. The value of the crop rose from \$231,803 in 1910 to nearly \$1.3 million in 1920. The yearly value of the crop continued to grow over the next decade, exceeding \$1.6 million in 1930. By 1950, however, the value of fruit and nut products fell to \$388,000 (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). Area farmers continued to harvest orchard products, but never again would it figure so prominently into the economic success of Kent County.

Commercial Navigation. In 1887, a group of local men organized the Lebanon Steam Navigation Company to operate steamers between stops along the St. Jones River and Philadelphia. The line “...carried sturgeon and peaches in season to Philadelphia, and streetcar horses to Kent County, destined to end their days as farm horses” (DelDOT archaeology website, accessed 22 June 2004). A new corporation, the Dover and Philadelphia Navigation Company, assumed control of the earlier Lebanon steamer firm during 1907. This concern continued scheduled steamer operations on the St. Jones River until about 1917, when the line could no longer compete with the railroad (ibid.; Elliott 1970:36; Blagg 1980:72-73).

By 1904, the St. Jones River had become fouled with shoals, even though the federal government had funded channel dredging, creating a channel from 40.0 to 100.0 feet wide and 6.0 feet deep at low water, extending from the mouth to 18.0 miles north at the City of Dover. The channel became narrowed and shoaled subsequent to the dredging, making navigation difficult. The 1904 *Coast Pilot*’s final descriptive sentence admonishes any would-be mariner: “Strangers should not enter without a towboat or pilot” (*United States Coast Pilot* 1904:60). However, the 1916 edition of the *Coast Pilot* indicates that the Army Corps of Engineers had completed some improvements in the river: “Dover has railroad communication, and Lebanon and the landings below have communication with Philadelphia by a passenger steamer (*United States Coast Pilot* 1916:80). The last steamboat operated on the waterway in 1938 (DelDOT archaeology website).

The Murderkill River enters Delaware Bay just below the St. Jones River and once provided a navigable waterway into Frederica, located just under 8.0 miles upstream (Scharf 1888:2). The first steamboat to arrive at Frederica carried the name *Egypt Mills* and brought merchandise for James S. Buckmaster (ibid.:1160). The March 2004 Town of Frederica Comprehensive Plan notes that:

The steamship service of Frederica, owned and managed by the Frederica and Philadelphia Navigation Company, provided transport at a price and speeds competitive with the railroad, allowing the town to hold into [sic] its Philadelphia markets well into the twentieth Century. ...With the onset of the Great Depression, the steamer found its prospects for the future diminished. The improvement of U.S. Route 113 in the mid 1920s had resulted in the construction of a causeway across the Murderkill at Barratt’s Chapel, which effectively cut the town off from the bay. The improvement of local roads meant that the citizens of

Frederica could get to Harrington, Dover, and Wilmington more easily and were not so dependent on their connection with Philadelphia. Business for the steamer fell off, with the railroads getting the last of the produce items. (Institute for Public Administration 2004:2-3)

African Americans and Public Education in the Early Twentieth Century. The Delaware Association, private donations, constant fundraising by African Americans, and support from local churches all played significant roles in providing for the education of African-American children during this period. By the close of the nineteenth century, there were over 80 African-American schools in Delaware (Skelcher 1999:35). Though their existence was a tribute to the dedication of the African-American community and the philanthropists who supported their efforts, the schools were still extremely small in most cases and grossly under funded in all cases. During the 1890s, Delaware took measures to organize African-American schools under state control. The ratification of a new state constitution in 1897 merged the organization of the still-segregated schools and codified comprehensive Jim Crow laws across Delaware (Skelcher 1999:56).

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, while other areas of the country sought to reform and expand schools, the quality of public education in Delaware deteriorated even further for both African-American and Caucasian students. Delaware was the last state in the union to provide higher education for women, so the pool of trained teachers was inadequate, as were funding, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Despite the ascent of the Republican party, the Democratic legislators, who had long adamantly opposed higher education for women, were also able to block any educational initiatives that diminished local control or increased expenditures because imbalanced apportionment and Republican infighting gave the obstructionists disproportionate voting power in the State Legislature. While some legislators had fought and won the battle for college education of Caucasian women, even more liberal-leaning legislators were not inclined to risk their political careers for the seemingly hopeless cause of “colored schools”. So while legislators quarreled, funding stagnated and education declined steadily.

In 1917, the U.S. Bureau of Education published a report that ranked Delaware as 39th of the 48 states in public support for education. The publication of this report prompted many

Delawareans, most notably Pierre S. du Pont, President of the du Pont Company and Chairman of General Motors, to organize and fund the Service Citizens of Delaware.

In 1919, the Service Citizens of Delaware scored their first major political victory with the passage of a new School Code. This measure equally distributed (still desperately inadequate) state funds for schools, established uniform tax rates, made school attendance compulsory for children under age 14, and provided school transportation to Caucasian children in rural areas. School districts, however, did not have to raise property taxes in order to pay for education. In Kent County, many public officials had opposed the Code's enactment, and they often did as little as possible to implement it while awaiting what they wrongly expected to be its speedy repeal. As a result, funding for schools in lower income areas remained low and attendance was correspondingly poor (Skelcher 1999:63-65). Increasingly frustrated with the lack of government initiative to improve schools, especially those for African Americans, du Pont decided to take action.

Du Pont resigned his key business positions later that year and assumed the Vice Presidency of the Delaware State Board of Education. He promptly convinced the Board to conduct an investigation of the current conditions of state schools and consider ways in which they could be improved. This investigation, conducted by a team of researchers from Columbia University Teachers College, looked at all schools in Delaware, Caucasian and "colored". Though the investigation found almost nothing to be proud of, it revealed that conditions in African-American institutions were particularly appalling. In response to the report, du Pont founded the Delaware State Auxiliary Association (DSAA), created a trust fund for its work, and provided \$2 million to begin construction of separate schools for African-American and Caucasian children. Ultimately, du Pont would give \$6 million to public education in Delaware and effectively build the state's entire school plan; such a gift remains unique in the history of the United States (Taggart 1988:15-18).

Under du Pont's leadership, Caucasian schools districts were consolidated so that more children in more grades from wider geographical areas could benefit from the broader curricula of larger schools. Those for African-American and Native American students, on the other hand, remained small (usually one- or two-room), local, and limited to the elementary grades. While no serious

consideration was given to integration, this segregated scheme was intended to improve access to educational opportunities for students of color by minimizing the economic impact of their school attendance. Particularly in Kent County, African-American children worked in farm fields, orchards, and canneries. Significant disruption of that workforce would have caused financial hardship for the children's families and met with the disapprobation of Caucasian employers and legislators who saw little need for—and some danger in—the education of African Americans under any circumstances.

Once he had dedicated his considerable energies to the cause of public education in Delaware, du Pont took the same approach to solving its problems that he took to business. After organizing activist groups with corporate-style boards and management structures, assessing the situation, and providing the necessary financial means to begin work, he sought out the country's top school architects to design the best, most progressive new schools. That search led him to James O. Betelle of the Guilbert and Betelle architectural firm in Newark, New Jersey and the faculty of Columbia University Teachers College. Betelle was a consultant to state school boards in New Jersey and California. After serving on a Columbia survey team in Delaware, he wrote a two-part article for *The American Architect* on du Pont's proposed school building program in Delaware. Betelle had also lived in Delaware and was familiar with its workings. When du Pont and his colleagues were accused of being “outsiders”—an unforgivable transgression—he pointed to Betelle as a fellow native. Betelle was very sensitive to the context of his designs and devised school buildings for his former home in the well-known and popular domestic Colonial Revival style to provide a comfortingly familiar appearance and impart a home-like atmosphere for learning. At the same time, he incorporated the most up-to-date thinking on all practical areas of the buildings—including classroom arrangement, lighting, ventilation, heating, and sanitation. Though the cost of carrying out his original plans proved prohibitive, many of his key ideas survived in the construction of both “colored” and Caucasian schools (Skelcher 1999:72-99).

Betelle designed the Mt. Olive School in Little Heaven (CRS #K-2685), located on the west side of SR 1 (Photograph 6; also see DOE form for CRS #K-2685 in Volume II). While significant elements of the design of Mt. Olive and the 24 similar two-room “colored” schools were common



Photograph 6: K-2685; Mount Olive School, view looking northeast (November 2003).

to Betelle schools for Caucasian students as well as those of color, the particular combination of plan, elevation, and detail at Mt. Olive is found only in schools for African-American and Native American students. The distinctive banked nine-over-nine awning windows, wood-shingle siding, deep cornices with gable returns, and pedimented porticos were used in most du Pont schools, but the two-room variations do not appear to have been built for Caucasian students. As Caucasian schools were almost all consolidated, and those that could not be usually had unique, often one-room, and sometimes portable buildings, it is not surprising that this specific type would be built only for students of color.

By 1928, the Auxiliary Association had completed 89 schools for African-American children at a cost of nearly \$2.2 million. These new schools improved the education of African-American children in Delaware dramatically. State funding for African-American students equaled that of Caucasian students, thanks in large part to the appointment of Pierre du Pont, who was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine for his efforts as state tax commissioner. While significantly improved, African Americans still did not have the same access to education that their Caucasian counterparts did. Segregation limited opportunities for African Americans desiring a secondary or post-secondary education. The State College for Colored Students in Dover remained the only institution of higher learning for African Americans until 1948, when the University of Delaware opened a few of its programs to African-American students. The *Brown v Board of Education*, *Topeka* decision ended legal segregation in 1954, but the U.S. Civil Rights Commission did not certify Delaware's school desegregation until 1968 (Skelcher 1999:117-118). In the interim, schools built by du Pont housed almost all of the state's African-American students. The buildings also continued to serve as community centers for many African-American communities even after the students had moved on, as Betelle had intended.

Changing Settlement Patterns. By the early twentieth century, the pattern and density of settlement in Delaware had spread from localized urban centers to interlocked suburban communities across the state. Small communities were replaced by commercial and industrial "strip" development along major roads. The introduction of the automobile gave people a means to travel beyond the confines of a train or boat in a short period of time. Improvements to the state road system expanded manufacture, commerce, and agriculture throughout the state. The

Du Pont Highway (US 13/US 113), opened in 1924, connected northern and southern Delaware and shifted the state's agricultural production permanently toward non-local markets. The Du Pont Highway is designated US 13 from Wilmington to Dover and US 113 from Dover on southward to the Maryland border. Named for T. Colman du Pont, who personally financed the project, the Du Pont Highway was the first modern, paved road to run the entire length of Delaware (The Du Pont Highway website, accessed 12 November 2003).

The area known as Little Heaven served as a nineteenth-century crossroads community for travelers passing on the roadway from Milford to Magnolia. Farming served as the main occupation for most of the residents living in the community, with large tracts often surrounding a centralized farmhouse and outbuilding cluster.

In the mid- to late 1920s, some of the enterprises to appear along the roadway in Little Heaven were businesses catering to the “truckers heading north with produce and poultry” (Reynolds 1982:365). One of the first roadside businesses was that of Cleaver Moore, who established a market along present-day SR 1 in Little Heaven (Reynolds 1982:365). Early roadside markets were composed of only small stands and sheds. In the early 1930s, Cleaver Moore's son opened a gas station on the site of his father's roadside market that serviced trucks transporting poultry and produce to northern markets (Reynolds 1982:365). A large gas station (now demolished) was built in the 1920s opposite the Jehu Reed House (ibid.:366) at the intersection of Bowers Beach Road. According to Reynolds, this facility “did a flourishing business on Sunday evenings catering to sunburned fishermen on their return to Pennsylvania from Bowers Beach and other shore places to the south” (ibid.:366). The station, at one time known as the Roop property, is visible on aerial photographs from 1937 (Geiger 2003).

USGS maps from both 1936 and 1949 (Figures 5 and 6) show that the project area continued to be lightly populated, with relatively few houses and other buildings; land use in the area continued to be primarily agricultural. A 1954 aerial photograph (Figure 7) shows that the project area continued to remain rural, with only scattered buildings and large expanses of agricultural fields. Around 1958, High Point, a mobile home park, was built along the western side of US 113A, opposite the Mt. Olive School. James Conley began selling trailers in the area

between the two highways, and the mobile home park to the west began to flourish (Reynolds 1982:366). Today, the park constitutes one of the largest residential concentrations within the Little Heaven area. Little Heaven also supports a small number of residences along secondary roads surrounding US 113/SR 1. The widening of US 113 during the third quarter of the twentieth century required that some of the commercial and residential structures be shifted east of the proposed roadway. The grading of the new highway alignment and the movement of particular structures has likely caused extensive disturbances along the margin of the roadway. More recently, residential structures have been built along the south side of Mulberrie Point Road, toward the northeastern portion of the project area (see Figure 1).

At the close of 1940, Kent County remained a largely rural, agricultural area. This is shown clearly on a 1936 topographic map of the area (Figure 5). The 1940 census enumerated nearly 3,000 farms in Kent County with an average farm size of over 100.0 acres. In the 60-year period from 1880 to 1940, the population of Kent remained almost unchanged, while the population of the rest of Delaware grew rapidly. During this period, the population of Kent rose from 32,874 to 34,441, an increase of less than five percent. The population of the rest of the state, however, more than doubled from 113,734 to 232,064 during the same period (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center 1998). These statistics reveal the intense agricultural nature of Southern Delaware. Agricultural land remained too valuable to destroy for residential or industrial development. The Second World War and the subsequent Cold War brought changes to Southern Delaware and forever altered the landscape of Kent County.

African Americans in Kent County in the Mid-Twentieth Century. Despite the high percentage of free African Americans, the state of Delaware offered very few rights to that portion of the populace. The state did not extend voting rights to African Americans, nor allow them to hold political office (Hoffecker 1977:90-96). During the first half of the twentieth century, the percentage of African Americans in Kent County dropped from 24 percent to 18 percent of the total population. The percentage decrease is more properly attributed to an increase in the number of Caucasians moving into, rather than an exodus of African Americans moving out of, Kent County. African Americans, who numbered 7,745 in 1900, dropped to 6,859 by 1950 while the number of Caucasians increased by nearly 6,000 in the intervening years (U.S. Historical

Census Browser, 1999). The population of Kent County, which increased by just over 5,000 in the first half of the twentieth century, increased dramatically during the last half of the twentieth century. By 2000, residents of the county numbered nearly 127,000; over 26,000 of those were African Americans, nearly 21 percent of the total population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000:22, 70).

Dover Air Force Base. Dover Air Force Base began life as a municipal airport on the eve of World War II. Government officials, sensing the military threat posed abroad but sensitive to the isolationist sentiment in the United States, looked for ways to prepare for a possible conflict while maintaining a semblance of neutrality at home. The Civilian Aviation Administration (CAA), in an attempt to provide for future coastal defense, gave financial aid to state and local governments for the construction of municipal airfields. The City of Dover accepted the offer and purchased 537.0 acres of land for the sum of \$35,000 (Lauria 2000:4). The construction on three airfields and one hanger began in March 1841, but progressed slowly until the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. After the attack, the U.S. quickly prepared for the impending conflict by increasing defense spending and securing locations for military installations.

Within two weeks of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the War Department leased all three of the airfields in Dover and stationed the 112th Observation Squadron there. The Army Corps of Engineers took charge of the construction and worked on it 24 hours a day to bring it up to wartime standards. The Army Air Corps stationed three B-25 squadrons here in 1942. Later on, seven P-47 fighter squadrons were stationed at the base. In 1944, the Air Technical Service Command used the base to conduct classified rocket tests, which resulted in air-to-surface weapons that they deployed in both European and Pacific theaters (Lauria 2000:4-5). At the conclusion of the War, the base faced an uncertain future. The Army placed the facility in caretaker status in 1946 and did not reactivate it until February 1951. By April 1952, the Military Air Transport Service, recognizing the strategic importance of Dover's location, assumed control of the base and assigned the 1607th Air Transport Wing to the facility.

During the last half of the twentieth century, the presence of Dover Air Force Base dramatically altered the landscape of Kent County. The immediate project area, however, continued to remain

agricultural as shown in a 1954 aerial photo (Figure 7). Some families that were employed at the base located to the Little Heaven community, just a short distance south (Northrop, personal communication July 2004). Near Dover, to the north of the project area, the number of military and civilian personnel employed by the base required an increase in housing. Ancillary businesses also developed to provide goods and services to those working for the Department of Defense.

Since the mid-twentieth century, Kent County has experienced the normal shift away from agrarian pursuits. The major employers in the county now include state and local government and the Dover Air Force Base. The majority (approximately 28.5 percent) of the total employed civilian population of Kent County are engaged in management, professional, and related occupations. Approximately 26.9 percent are engaged in sales and office occupations; 17 percent are engaged in educational, health, and social services; 15.3 percent are engaged in production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and 11.6 percent are engaged in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations. Presently, only 0.7 percent is engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing occupations (Kent County, U.S. Census Bureau website, accessed January 2004).