



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
P. O. BOX 778
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

WELCOME TO ARCHAEOLOGY ON SPRING ALLEY

The archaeological investigations that you see here today are being undertaken by DeIDOT archaeologists as part of a planning study for the proposed expansion of the South Wilmington Blvd. I-95 connector. Archaeological investigations are only one aspect of a highway planning study required by Federal legislation; other aspects include assessments of air quality, noise and traffic levels, and cultural resources other than archaeology (such as architecture).

DeIDOT has been supporting archaeological investigations in the South Wilmington Blvd. project area since 1979. Under contract to DeIDOT, Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc., conducted a Phase I location and identification survey of seven blocks along Front Street from Jefferson to King Street. Soil Systems, Inc., contracted with DeIDOT to conduct Phase II rescue excavations in this seven-block area. DeIDOT's own archaeological staff has been conducting Phase I investigations for the past four weeks along Front Street from King to Walnut and along Walnut from Front to Fourth.

Although these investigations have been unable to locate the house of Thomas Willing, founder of Wilmington, they have retrieved important information about the social, commercial, and industrial history of this early part of Wilmington.

The purpose of DeIDOT archaeological excavations on Spring Alley is to determine the types and extent of historical features below the surface. To date we have located parts of the stone foundations to three buildings (probably residences), and the brick flooring within a rear room of one of these structures (see display map). We have retrieved artifacts dating as early as 1740 and as late as the 1970s from our excavations. The artifacts you see on display are examples of the kinds of materials we expect to find as we continue our investigations.

Historical research conducted to date indicates that Walnut Street between Second and Third Streets was occupied by individuals holding skilled and unskilled jobs (ship carpenter, waterman, wheelwright, coachmaker, laborer) related to the waterfront and railroad yards two blocks south.

Results of DeIDOT's archaeological investigations and the historical research conducted by the University of Delaware and many other members of the community will contribute, along with the completed South Wilmington Blvd. interstate connector and the rehabilitated Amtrak railroad station to the revitalization of this crucial section of Wilmington.

Project Directors

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