Appendix A

THE PUBLIC AND THE TAVERN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY
OF LOG CABIN AT TWEEDS TAVERN SITE

Tweeds Tavern Archaeological and Log Cabin Site

Hockessin — The Delaware Department of Transportation announces a significant archaeological discovery of a 1700's era log cabin within the former Guthrie-Giacomelli House. The log cabin was discovered as part of the Route 7 dualization project and the Valley Road/Route 7 intersection improvements that have recently started in the Hockessin area.

Known locally as the “Tweeds Tavern”, the site is located at the north west corner of the intersection of Valley Road and State Route 7/Limestone Road. The site was recently discovered when DelDOT was granted access and ownership to the property for evaluation prior to the road improvement project.

An archaeological consulting firm, Hunter Research, Inc. of Trenton NJ, was hired to verify the presence of the log cabin as well as exterior subsurface archaeology needs. Interior walls and plaster within the center portion of the house were selectively removed. Discovered within the horse hair and plaster walls were supporting posts and beams of a log cabin. From what can be determined, the log cabin is a two story structure with a rubble stone cellar area, that was built around 1790. As it stands relatively intact, further archaeological work and recordation of the log cabin structure and surrounding area is ongoing.

In addition, as part of DelDOT's federal regulations under historic preservation and transportation funding requirements, the Department is investigating the structural viability of the historic structure. A structural engineering analysis will be undertaken to determine if the structure can be moved, and at what cost. The current transportation improvements planned for the area require that the log cabin be moved, removed, or relocated, as a whole or in pieces to a nearby location. Sections or pieces could also be salvaged, sold, auctioned, or donated.

As part of this project's archaeological outreach, DelDOT welcomes the public to visit the site and take a guided look at the Tweeds Tavern. Archaeologists and architectural historians have prepared and secured the site so that the public may stop by, ask questions, and learn about the early part of northern Delaware's history.

An open house will be held for the public on October 2, 1999, from 8 am to 5pm.

####
September 27, 1999

John H. Schields, Jr.
MacDermid Imaging Tech
1 Norman Drive
Wilmington, DE 19808

Re: Tweed's Tavern, 520 Valley Road, Hockessin (Intersection of Route 7 and Valley Road)

Dear Mr. Schields:

I am writing to you in your capacity as a member of the Newcastle County Review Board to invite you to visit the combined archaeological and architectural investigations we have been undertaking on the Tavern Site. You will recall that this has been the subject of discussion at the Review Board on a number of occasions.

Hunter Research Inc. is carrying out the investigations on behalf of the Delaware Department of Transportation with a view to establishing in what manner the log building may be preserved. We have undertaken extensive documentation and exposure of the log building and associated archaeological deposits in the last few weeks.

On Saturday October 2nd we are holding an Open Day at the site so that the public can visit and see the results. This would be a good opportunity for you to inspect the work, but if another time would be more convenient please contact me so that we can make arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Burrow
Vice President

cc Kevin Cunningham DelDOT Planning
Richard Hunter
What’s Going On Here?
A team of archaeologists and architectural historians are exploring a recently-discovered log building of about 1800. This log building is “hidden” inside the house you see standing today, which is called the Gutherie Giacomelli House. The log building was probably built as a tavern to serve travelers making their way from Pennsylvania towards the Delaware River and Wilmington. This is such a historically important building that the Delaware Department of Transportation is exploring the possibility of moving the building to another more permanent site.

At the same time as the work on the building, archaeologists are excavating the foundations of one of the now-demolished outbuildings which may be associated with the historic tavern. Initial archaeological work a few months ago found a lot of kitchenware (redware pottery) in this area, and we have reason to think that there was probably a separate kitchen on the property this might be it. We hope to find out what the building was, and to locate artifacts and other information which will throw more light on the lives of the people who owned, operated and used the tavern almost 200 years ago.

How is the Work Being Done?
Inside the building, the team is removing more of the modern interior wall covering to expose as much of the log structure as possible. The exposed timbers will be photographed and drawn to provide a permanent record of the building. At the same time, structural engineers and architects will be assessing the feasibility of moving the log building in one piece to another location to preserve it.

The archaeological work outside involves the careful removal of each layer of soil in and around the remains of the building. We are excavating an area of about 250 square feet. Most of the work is done with trowels, so that the subtle differences in the soils can be more easily seen, and small artifacts identified. Just like inside the log building, a lot of time is spent in making a record of what is found.

What’s Next?
- Check here for information sheet updates
- Come to our Open Day on Saturday October 2nd, when we will have guided tours and family activities.
- For more information call Ian Burrow at Hunter Research, Inc. 609-695-0122 or Kevin Cunningham at the Delaware Department of Transportation 302-760-2125
House: Historians examine 200-year-old log structure

DelDOT engineers discover 200-year-old log home at site of road-widening project

**Historians Saturday will conduct public tours of a newly discovered 200-year-old log house. The house is at 420 Valley Road in Hockessin.**

This historic log home, which was found during road-widening work, is the first known example of a log structure in Delaware. The house, built in the 18th century, is a rare find and offers important insights into the history of early Delaware.

The house is being preserved by the Historical Society of Delaware. Visitors can tour the house and learn about its construction and significance.

**Projects Page 81**

Historians also examine a 200-year-old log structure at the site of a new road project. The house was discovered during excavation and is being preserved for future study.

**See HOUSE -- B6**

**House: 200-year-old log structure discovered by DelDOT engineers**

The house, which was built in the 18th century, was discovered during road-widening work in Hockessin. It is the first known example of a log structure in Delaware and offers important insights into the history of early Delaware.

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**Projects Page 81**

Historians also examine a 200-year-old log structure at the site of a new road project. The house was discovered during excavation and is being preserved for future study.

**See HOUSE -- B6**
Welcome to the Guthrie-Giacomelli House also Known as Tweed's Tavern

Tweed's Tavern

Figure A.1. Open day interpretive sign.
Plate A.1. Visitors lined up for open day (Photographer: Vivian Braubitz, October 1999) [HRI Neg. # 99037/19:29]
Plate A.2. Screening at open day (Photographer: Vivian Braubitz, October 1999) [HRI Neg. #99037/19:33].
Plate A.4. Artifact display at Open Day (Photographer: Vivian Braubitz, October 1999)[HRI Neg. #99037/19:35].
To Kevin Cunningham and Mike Hahn, DelDOT

I wanted to report to you that the Open Day at Tweed’s Tavern on Saturday was a success well beyond our expectations. We estimate that at least 500 people visited the site. The first visitors arrived before 10 am and there was still a long line of people waiting to get into the tavern at 4 p.m.

Excellent coverage in the Home Journal and on Channel 6 Action News at 5:30 on Friday obviously had a major effect in getting the word out, and the DelDOT press release did its job well.

Visitors came in alongside the excavations at the rear of the house and were introduced to the archaeological aspects of the project there. Children were encouraged to help screen for artifacts in the soils from the early 19th century trash deposit which was under excavation. This was very popular!

Inside the tavern handouts on the project were available (until we ran out of them in the mid-afternoon). Artifacts were on display, together with some of our archaeological graphics. Hard-hatted groups of 12-15 people were taken through the tavern by Damon Tvarayanas and myself, and this actually resulted in some new observations which will be helpful in the analysis.

We had many takers among the younger children for building with Lincoln Logs, mending ceramics and drawing and coloring activities. All our cookies and sodas were consumed.

We were also really pleased to meet several members of the Neiffer and Giacomelli families who lived in the house from the 1930’s to the late 1980’s: Elmer and Jackie Neiffer, who moved in to the house in about 1935, gave us lots of information about the building and the property before World War II. Their daughter Joan showed us interior and exterior photographs from the 1930’s-1950’s, and is going to scan these and send them to us. Elmer and Jackie’s niece Norma Giacomelli also gave us a lot of information.

We also met a local artist, Kathy Ruck, who wants to do a reconstruction view of the tavern, and Anne Copley, who lives in a NR log house on Yeatman Mill Road in Newark. We also learned of an Amish group based in Elizabethtown Pa who specialize in dismantling and re-erecting timber buildings.

Professional visitors included Wade Catts, Barb Silber (McCormick Taylor) and John (and Debbie) Martin (Gannett Fleming).
DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL
INVESTIGATIONS AT TWEED'S TAVERN, ROUTE 7 AND
VALLEY ROAD, NEWCASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE

INFORMATION SHEET #2

What's Going On Here?
This is the second information sheet on this ongoing project. A team of archaeologists, architectural historians, architects and engineers are exploring a recently-discovered old log building believed to be approximately 200 years old. Enveloped within more modern additions, the house, historically known as Tweed's Tavern, was probably constructed in the years around 1800. Throughout much of the 19th century, the tavern served travelers (probably chiefly drovers) making their way along the well-traveled Limestone Road from Pennsylvania towards the Delaware River and Wilmington. This is such a historically important building that the Delaware Department of Transportation is exploring the possibility of moving the building to another site.

Something About Log Buildings
There was a strong tradition of log building in Colonial and early 19th-century America. The "log cabin" summons up ideas of early pioneers making homesteads in the wilderness, and of course frontiersman Abraham Lincoln was born and raised in log cabins Kentucky and Illinois.

The tradition of log building appears to have been brought into the Middle Colonies of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware by immigrants from the Germanic parts of Europe (what are now Germany and the Scandinavian countries). It was a different tradition from that brought by English settlers, who built houses using open frameworks of hewn timbers.

The log building tradition was, however, very useful in the New World, where timber was plentiful and log building was a simpler and quicker way to make a comfortable house. So it was soon adopted by people not of Germanic heritage.

Architectural historians make a distinction between log cabins and log houses. In log cabins the timbers are left round and jointed at the corner by "saddle" notches. Log houses are made of square-hewn timbers which are carefully jointed together at the corners with a range of joint types. These are shown on the illustration. Tweed's Tavern is a log house, with v-notched corner joints.

As you go around the building you will see how the timbers have been squared and the corner joints made. Gaps between the horizontal timbers are filled with "chinking" or stones and mortar.
Within the building, much of the modern interior finish has been removed to expose large sections of each of the original log walls. This work has revealed the locations of the original door and window locations and has shown that it is likely that the height of the building has been increased from a one and a half-story structure to a full two-story building. Architects are preparing accurate floor plans of the tavern showing the location of significant early building components. The building is also being thoroughly photographed, utilizing a large format camera in order to provide a permanent record of the structure. Structural engineers are currently in the process of assessing the feasibility of either moving the building intact or dissembling the historic components of the tavern and reconstructing them at another location.

Archaeology Update

Simultaneously with the work on the interior of the building, archaeologists are investigating remains initially thought to be the foundations of one of several now-demolished outbuildings. These stone remains have now been further exposed and much to our surprise they turned out to be part of a complex stone drainage system. The drain probably originates from the rear of the room attached to the west side of the tavern, and seems to have originally been built in about 1850 primarily to carry water from a nearby spring which would naturally have drained towards the tavern. The drain runs perpendicular to the building draining into a natural basin about 25 feet across, close to the head of an un-named stream immediately west of the tavern. This ancient basin was frequented by Native Americans, as is shown by our discovery of several projectile points (arrow or spearheads) in this part of the site.

Before the drain was constructed, this basin appears to have been used as a trash disposal area for the tavern, and soils from the surrounding area were probably washing into it continuously. Historical records do refer to this area as "Mudford" in the 19th century, but whether this referred to the character of the place or is just a family name is not certain at present.

At some point after the construction of the drain it was decided to seal off the basin with a thick deposit of clay. The drain was still needed and a new section was built, diverting water further to the west. Large holes for posts were dug in this area after the drain was diverted. Their purpose is not certain, but they may have been intended to fence off the still muddy area.

What's Next?

- We will soon be completing work both inside and outside the building and then decisions will be made on the future of the building.
- For more information call Ian Burrow at Hunter Research, Inc. 609-695-0122 or Kevin Cunningham at the Delaware Department of Transportation 302-760-2125
Group wants to save historic Tweeds Tavern

Log structure dates back to 1790s

By MARY KERZAT HUTCHINS Special to The News Journal

HOCKESSIN — For more than 200 years, Tweeds Tavern was a common stopping place for travelers from New Castle and Wilmington. The tavern, which is known as Tweeds Tavern, sits on the corner of State Street and Main Street. The building that is now known as Tweeds Tavern was built in 1796 by John Crow, a farmer from New Castle. He built the tavern as a place for travelers to rest and relax. The building was later purchased by Charles Tweed, who owned the land. The tavern was later acquired by the state and is now open to the public for visitors to enjoy.

The building is a two-story log structure that is located on the corner of State Street and Main Street. The building was built in 1796 by John Crow, a farmer from New Castle. The building was later purchased by Charles Tweed, who owned the land. The tavern was later acquired by the state and is now open to the public for visitors to enjoy.

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May 18, 2000

Dr. Ian Burrow  
Mr. Damon Tavaryanas  
Hunter Research, Inc.  
120 West State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608-1185

Dear Dr. Burrow & Mr. Tavaryanas:

I am writing to congratulate you on your award from the New Castle County Historic Review Board for conducting an excellent public education program on the archaeological investigations on the site of Tweed's Tavern in Hockessin. I know that some of my constituents felt very strongly about saving the Tavern, and with your help, the Tavern was saved and will be used for the public to enjoy for years to come.

Thank you and again, congratulations!

Very Truly Yours,

Richard L. Abbott  
County Councilman  
Third District
Tweed’s Tavern needs an owner — today

No one has applied to acquire 200-year-old travelers’ lodge

BY ROBIN BROUSS

The Department of Transportation has committed to moving the historical Tweed’s Tavern in a last-ditch effort plan to find it an owner.

The new owner, however, has only today to apply for ownership of the former travelers’ lodge, which dates from 1796.

The deadline for applications is March 30. DelDOT’s historic specialist, Michael Hahn, said, “None has been submitted.”

Tweed’s, with a log cabin core, must be moved from the corner of Valley Road and Del. 7 because it sits in the way of Del. 7 road improvements.

If no one submits an acceptable application to buy and move Tweed’s, DelDOT will use a last-ditch plan to find an owner who can manage and restore it.

That plan has several possible steps:

- DelDOT could move the building at its own expense, estimated at $40,000.
- DelDOT could put the building on adjoining state-owned land just north of where it is now, on a site not directly affected by the roadwork.
- The state might offer about an acre of land with the structure.
- The building could be sold for $1.

In any case, the new owner would pay for the foundation, site preparation and security after the building move.

That plan grew from suggestions by the county’s Historic Review Board. Eastern DelDOT’s final options were moving or offering Tweed’s for salvage.

Board members appointed to advocate for preservation in the public interest, bailed when DelDOT initially applied for a county demolition permit.

Del. 7 road improvements hit Hockessin, must be moved or razed. The 1796 travelers’ lodge in the way of road improvements on Del. 7.

Tavern: Preference is a local nonprofit group

FROM PAGE B1

“Even at that point” Hahn later said, “we hoped to move it.” By law, the permits allow moving or tearing down. The board can delay such permits up to nine months on old buildings, but released Tweed’s permit for moving only.

“I would like to thank the department for stepping up to the plate,” board Chairman John H. Shields Jr. said.

Transportation Secretary Anne P. Conly recently said DelDOT would follow its hierarchy of preferences for a new Tweed’s owner.

First preference is a local nonprofit group. Last are people or businesses that want the building for private profit.

DelDOT also advertised Tweed’s in Historic Preservation magazine. The national ad prompted calls from all over the East Coast and as far as Michigan.

The Friends of Tweed’s Tavern, formed by the Greater Hockessin Area Development Association, pushed to save Tweed’s and voiced interest in ownership. People from Hockessin and Chester County, Pa., also inquired.

In 1796, entrepreneur John Cow built its two-story log cabin as a travelers’ lodge. Most guests were farmers building produce by wagon from the Lancaster, Pa., region to Wilmington’s port. John Tweed bought the lodge in 1822. With stables, a blacksmith shop and other services, business continued for most of the 1800s, according to historical accounts.

Later, Tweed’s was used as a home. It stood vacant for about 18 years. About two years ago, DelDOT bought the site for its road work job.

* Reach Robin Brouss at 856-3189 or rbrouss@hockesin.com
Hard work reaps rewards
Preservation advocates honored by the Historic Review Board of New Castle County

By ROBIN BROWN

On the eve of today's Day in Old New Castle, preservation advocates honored the city for renovating a former trolley barn to house its maintenance operation.

The project was completed with the help of city administrator Bob Martin.

The awards presented at historic Greenbank Mill reflect a wide range of projects. Prominent preservationists Sidney S. Craven and Bayard Marin won awards for decades of work, from preservation efforts to organizing citizen groups.

"Preservation is about quality of life," Martin said. "We need to help more developers understand that it makes good financial sense."

A bridge, a community hall, a gas station, a church, a theater, a teacher's lesson plan received recognition.

A developer's attorney and a pair of Delawareans dedicated to the preservation movement were among the honorees.

"We celebrate your dedication and success," said John H. Shields Jr., board chairman appointed to act in the public interest in preservation issues.

An emotional favorite in the winners' circle, Joe and Tony's Gulf Service on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont.

"We are delighted to recognize this superb example of commercial archaeology," presenter Frank McKelvey said "... Improvements over the years have always been made with the preservation of the original character of the building uppermost."

Michael DeCristofono, who owns and runs the station with his brother John and wife, Shirley, said Gulf Co. just notified them that the station is the nation's longest continually operating Gulf station.

"That building's been good to us," he said. "We think we owe it something."

Other honors:
- Colonial School District teacher Terri Hanson, who received an award for a lesson plan about the county-owned Bechtel House. When she was a student teacher at Talley Middle School, she "fell in love with that building uppermost." Hanson's work has been compiled in a book that will be sold.
- Attorney Daniel P. Johnston, who honored for his work representing Pulte Homes. He worked for months with the developer and the Historic Review Board to spare the Whiteman House in Pike Creek. He also was honored for drafting voluntary preservation restrictions on the land's deed, which are now used as a model.
- Thomas and Edith Lamb, who were honored for saving Overlook Colony's 1920s school and civic hall on Commonwealth Avenue in Claymont. It now houses five apartments and three shops, including Dawn Lamb's "Lamb's Left" resale store.
- Nonprofit Associated Community Talents Inc. was honored. The nonprofit bought Middletown's Everett Theater and has been restoring it. The award acknowledged "the work of all who have contributed to this important project."
- Hunter Research Inc. won for archaeological work at Tweed's Tavern near Hockessin. The group spared the 1700s log tavern from razing.
- University of Delaware won for preserving and reusing the 1843 Saint Thomas Episcopal Church as a concert and lecture hall.
- The Delaware Department of Transportation and individuals were honored for restoring Wilmington's Van Buren Street Bridge. DelDOT was praised for listening to those who pressed for its restoration, not replacement.
- The Wilmington Waterfront Corp. was honored for preserving old Dravo Shipyard cranes.
- McKelvey called the cranes "gargantuan rusting giants that were compelling reminders of the men and women of Dravo who fought World War II from Wilmington's waterfront."

Wheels of progress rescue historic building

By ROBIN BROWN

Bugs swarming in massive numbers at a bustling crowd near the Historic Tweed's Tavern on Limestone Road in Hockessin, were safety before dawn Sunday.

"You're seeing history movement in front of your eyes," said William William of Hockessin Historic Preservation Delaware Inc.

"A band of people has had to be moved from its site of more than 20 years at Limestone and Valley roads to make way for improvements to the busy intersection." Preservation Delaware Inc. and the newly formed Hockessin Historical Society plan to restore the building on the hillside site.

William and his wife, Nancy, joined a small crowd that watched Advanced House Movers of Mount Holly N.J. maneuver the building up on beams and wheels. It is now on its way to its final site of more than 50 years in the vicinity of its original site.

Frank Ormiah of Odessa bought his sons Nick, 14, and John, 12, to watch the move even if it was past bedtime. "You don't see this every day," he said.

DelDOT's Michael Hahn, who has been involved in trying to find a new owner for the building, was on site. "It's a beautiful building that they're moving," he said.

The building had to be moved from its site of more than 50 years in the vicinity of its original site.

"Two hours and six minutes," Mulken said at 6:06 a.m. "Not bad."

The nonprofit groups expect the restoration to take two years. Tax-deductible donations, marked for Tweed's Tavern, may be sent to Preservation Delaware, 106 Greenhill Ave., Wilmington, DE 19806.
Plate A.6. Foundation after tavern removed (Photographer: Michael Murphy, June 2000)[HRI Neg. #0006/3:8).
Plate A.7. Tavern on blocks (Photographer: Michael Murphy, June 2000) [HRI Neg. #0006/3:17].
Plate A.8. Tavern at new location on Limestone Road (Photographer: Michael Murphy, June 2000)[HRI Neg. #0006/4:23].
Treasure hunt heats up at tavern site

Latest finds renew hope that more historic items will be uncovered

By ROBIN BROWN
Bear Bureau reporter

Archaeologists dug Tuesday around a hole in the ground where Tweed's Tavern stood for two centuries.

Movers hauled the 200-year-old tavern Sunday from Limestone and Valley roads to a nearby lot because it was in the path of roadwork.

"This is the final checkout, to see if there is any more information we can get out of the site," said Ian Burrow, an owner of Hunter Research Inc., hired by the Delaware Department of Transportation.

Today, the archaeology team will continue digging and heavy equipment will scoop fieldstone from the inn's original foundation, according to Bill Stewart, state construction supervisor on the Del. 7 project. The stone will be taken to the new site, two-eighths of an acre owned by DelDOT about 850 yards north.

Preservation Delaware Inc. and Hockessin Historical Society — which plan to restore the building as a museum and local history center — will use the old stone, perhaps in walls at the new site.

The state authorized additional digging this week after Sunday's predawn building move produced a few more artifacts, including two bottles and a horseshoe.

DelDOT's Michael Hahn said those finds hinted that more might be found around the oldest part of the building. Built about 1796, the oldest part of the building is a rare, two-story log house of about 1,000 square feet, built of hand-hewn hardwood with V-notched corners.

"While log buildings were once very common in this region," said Susan Siemionko of the Hockessin Historical Society, "Tweed's Tavern is significant due to the rarity of examples of this early and ephemeral form of construction."

Tweed's was a lodge — with a detached kitchen and stable — mainly for people hauling grain by covered wagon from Pennsylvania to the Delaware and Christina rivers to be sold or shipped.

Later owners who used the building as a home added to the house and coated it with stucco. The first floor of the log structure was modified heavily during the additions. "It has been pretty much chopped up," Hahn said, adding that the second floor of the log section is in good condition.

The historic preservation groups that are working on the project with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Sen. Lilane M. Sorenson and Rep. Joseph E. Miro, still must give DelDOT $1 before the house is transferred to their ownership.

The price of the new site will set after an appraisal.

The state got nearly three dozen inquiries from potential new owners for the building. Applicants, including some responding to DelDOT's national advertising of the building's availability, wanted to use Tweed's as an office, restaurant and salvage source.

Preservation activists, including members of the Historic Review Board of New Castle County, have praised how DelDOT handled the building, once its extensive history was researched. In addition to providing the new site, DelDOT put top priority on finding a non-profit group to reuse Tweed's Tavern in the public interest and paid for the inn's move.

The restoration is expected to take about two years and a major fund-raising campaign.

The highway improvements will be completed in early 2002. Archaeologists found historic pickings amid earlier finds such as a two-prong fork with a bone handle, a girl's dress and a tin toy teapot. "And there was a mummified rat in the wall," archaeologist Sue Fenrebach of Odessa said.

The latest finds include foundation stones, nails, porcelain and pottery.

A bit of a blue-and-white saucer was of interest to Fenrebach: "I've been assembling bits of the saucer that we found earlier and this is one of the missing pieces."

Archaeologist Michael Murphy of Philadelphia said the decal pattern on the piece dates it as far back as the late 1700s. "After the War of 1812, it really came in an abundance after we opened our trade with England," he said.

HOW TO HELP

Tax-deductible donations for the Tweed's Tavern restoration may be sent to Preservation Delaware Inc., 1405 Greenhill Ave., Wilmington 19806. Checks should be made payable to the project. For more information, call 651-9617.
Tweed’s may be state’s first brewery
Owners made stout in the tavern’s cellar in 1790s, preservationists discover

By ROBBIE BROWN
New Castle reporter

Developing restoration plans to make the historic 18th century Tweed’s Tavern a showpiece now include what could be the state’s first brewery.

Experts from Preservation Delaware Inc. say researchers learned the owners of Tweed’s, built on Limestone Road in the 1790s, made stout in their cellar brewery. And it’s part of the region’s history they plan to exhibit to the public when the tavern is restored as a local heritage center.

“We believe it’s one of the oldest, if not the oldest, brewery in the state,” said John H. Shields Jr. of Preservation Delaware and chairman of the Historic Review Board of New Castle County. “It may be Delaware’s original micro-brewery.”

In June, Tweed’s, around which later owners built a more modern house, was moved a half-mile north of its original site at Limestone and Valley roads, to make way for road improvements. The nonprofit preservation group and Rockwood Historical Society formed to help save Tweed’s from the wrecking ball, are starting grant applications and fund-raising for restoration, expected to cost about $450,000.

The dark, rich stout made in the tavern’s cellar with local grain was “a staple of their diet,” Rockwood-area historian Joe Lake said.

The eventual restoration will feature no opportunities for Colonial-style guzzling of stout, but organizers such as Lake hope interpreting the brewery will help people understand the era and learn where grain farmers driving wagons bunked before their next day’s ride to the port at Christians in the 1790s, researchers have learned.

HOW TO HELP
Tax-deductible donations toward restoration of Tweed’s Tavern may be sent to Preservation Delaware Inc., 1405 Greenhill Ave., Wilmington 19806. Checks should be marked for the Tweed’s Tavern project.

The cost already are higher than expected, however.

Shields said drainage problems complicated sewer installation, which was expected to cost $3,000 to $5,000 but cost $7,000.

Costs already are higher than expected, however.

Shields said drainage problems complicated sewer installation, which was expected to cost $3,000 to $5,000 but cost $7,000.

The land was appraised at $30,000, said Michael Hahn of the Department of Transportation.

A crowd watched the pre-dawn move in June, when the tavern was hauled a half-mile north to a DelDOT lot near an aerie.

“You’re seeing history move, right in front of your eyes,” said neighbor Eileen Wellman. “It’s wonderful that they’re saving it.”

The new lot has been approved for its sale to Preservation Delaware, Hahn said. “The whole price will be $50,000, including a dollar for the building.”

Hahn shepherded an extended effort to find a new owner for the building after the Historic Review Board of New Castle County rebutted a demolition application.

Archaeological research at the original site yielded typical pottery bottles and horseshoes. The big find: foundations of an original stone kitchen and blacksmith stable.

Eventually, we’d like to rebuild those as well,” Lake said. The Colonials ate mainly beef, poultry and “anything they could dig.” Vegetables, stored in the cellar, usually were ground beets and potatoes, Lake said.

If the dirt was bad, the bedding was comparable.

“They squeezed in as manyunks as possible,” Lake said, standing recently in the site’s lone guest room. “Accommodations were far from comfortable.”

Lake said one thing about Tweed’s Tavern remains a mystery:

“We still don’t know why it has two front doors.”

For more detail, visit the site at www.delawarehistory.com.