3.0 CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3.1 PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD OVERVIEW

The following brief, general discussion provides an outline of the prehistoric cultural record of the Delmarva Peninsula as it is currently understood (e.g., Custer 1984a, 1986a, 1987, 1989, 1994; Thomas et al. 1975). The prehistoric archeological record of the Delmarva Peninsula can be divided into five major periods:

- the Paleoindian Period (circa 14,000 – 8,500 yrs. BP);
- the Archaic Period (8,500 – 5,000 yrs. BP);
- the Woodland I Period (5,000 – 1,000 yrs. BP);
- the Woodland II Period (1,000 – 350 yrs. BP; and
- the Contact Period (A.D. 1650 – A.D. 1700).

3.1.1 PALEOINDIAN PERIOD

Native Americans first inhabited Delaware sometime after 14,000 yrs. BP, based on dates from Paleoindian period sites in the eastern United States (Custer 1989:81-86). It is believed that small family groups of Paleoindians lived a wandering existence, hunting in the shifting woodland and grassland mosaic of the time. Game animals may have included musk ox, caribou, moose, and the extinct mastodon; however, modern game animals, such as white-tailed deer, were also present in the region (Custer 1989:95-98). Skeletal evidence of extinct megafauna (mastodon, mammoth) and large northern mammals (e.g., moose, caribou) has been recovered from the drowned continental shelves of the Middle Atlantic region (Emory 1966; Emory and Edwards 1966; Edwards and Merrill 1977). The Paleoindian stone tool kit was designed for hunting and processing animals. Wild plant foods supplemented the diet. Distinctive "fluted" points, characteristic of the early Paleoindian period, show a preference for high quality stone (Custer 1984b). Use of coastal resources during the Paleoindian period is not known primarily because sea-level rise has drowned the contemporaneous shore (Fletcher 1988; Kellogg 1988; Solecki 1961). Knowledge of the Paleoindian period is, therefore, limited and skewed to the interior of the North American continent.

3.1.2 ARCHAIC PERIOD

The beginning of the Archaic period in Delaware is marked by major changes in human adaptations (Custer 1989:122). By 9,000 yrs. BP, northern species of plants and animals had migrated out of the Middle Atlantic region. Temperate plant and animal species were more common, and climate patterns had become more like those of the present. Few Archaic sites have been excavated in Delaware, however, so what is known is largely extrapolated from other areas (Custer 1989:127-129, 1995). In the last few years, however, our knowledge of the Archaic Period has expanded with the recently completed investigations of the Frederick Lodge Site complex along State Route 1, the excavations at the Beech Ridge Site in Kent County, and the work at Site 7NC-E-152 in New Castle County. Reports on these projects are in the process of completion.

The archeological record of the Archaic period includes a wider variety of tools. From this it has been inferred that human adaptations became more generalized during the Archaic period, and that foraging for plant food resources was an important activity. Archaic period tool kits were also less specialized than the earlier Paleoindian tool kits, and included plant processing tools such as grinding stones, mortars, and pestles. A seasonal, mobile lifestyle exploiting a wide range of resources and

settings was probably common. Custer (1986b) found that Archaic sites occur in a wider variety of settings than Paleoindian period sites. Archaic period sites appear to have been occupied for longer periods of time, perhaps on a seasonal basis by flexible kin-based groups (Custer 1989:129). Exchange of stone for tools tied people together across large areas of the eastern United States, enabling more elaborate exchange networks later in time (Custer 1989:140).

Excavations at two sites for which reports are available have added to our knowledge of Archaic period occupations in Delaware. The Blueberry Hill site (7K-C-107), located near Dover, Kent County was occupied during late Paleoindian/Early Archaic times (Heite and Blume 1995). Evidence of site occupation was sealed and separated by sediments moved by winds during a period of drier climate. The site was situated on a low knoll overlooking a stream confluence and was infrequently occupied for short periods of time, probably as a hunting and gathering camp. The Two Guys site (7S-F-68), located in Sussex County in the US Route 113 North/South Study Area, was probably first visited intermittently during Paleoindian times and more intensively during the Early Archaic and Late Archaic periods (LeeDecker et al. 1996). The site is situated on a sandy ridge in an area of extensive, upland wetlands. Evidence for Middle Archaic period occupation of the Two Guys site is sparse (LeeDecker et al. 1996).

3.1.3 WOODLAND I PERIOD

The Woodland period in Delaware has been subdivided into the Woodland I and the Woodland II (Custer 1984a:28, 1989:33-38, 1994:4-6). The Woodland I period, circa 5,000 to 1,000 yrs. BP, is the first period that is well-represented on the Delmarva Peninsula. As defined by Custer (1984, 1989, 1994) the Woodland I spans three chronological time periods identified for the larger Middle Atlantic region: the Late Archaic, the Early Woodland, and the Middle Woodland. The Woodland I cultural period is characterized by:

- the use of estuarine and coastal resources and population growth—both resulting in larger and more intensively used sites;
- foraging and collecting adaptations in less productive areas;
- participation in regional exchange networks; and
- exposure to and participation in complex mortuary rituals (Custer 1994:4).

During the Woodland I period, distinctive cultural complexes have been identified on the basis of artifact styles and regional or local variability (Custer 1994:18-45). Recent work on the Delmarva peninsula has led to revisions of the earlier cultural complexes and their distributions in time and space (Custer 1994:18-22). Woodland I occupation of the Delaware coastal plain, including the project region, is characterized by the Barker's Landing complex, which largely corresponds to the Late Archaic period. After 2,500 yrs. BP, the Wolfe Neck complex dominates the low coastal plain, while the Delmarva Adena complex dominates farther north on the high coastal plain, although there is some overlap. The Carey complex, which corresponds to the Middle Woodland of the larger region, dominates the coastal plain. The low coastal plain, including the project area, was dominated chiefly by Late Carey complex cultures during the last 500 years of the Woodland I period. The Barker's Landing complex can be divided into three successive units—I, II, III—characterized by distinctive types of projectile points and associated ceramics. Exotic lithic materials also distinguish the Barker's Landing complex from the contemporaneous Clyde Farm complex of the northern Delmarva Peninsula (Custer 1984a:134). The Carey and late Carey complexes are distinguished from the earlier Barker's Landing complexes largely by shell-tempered Mockley ceramics.

Prehistoric occupation during the Woodland I period was focused on the major streams draining into the Delaware River and Bay. As sea level continued to rise, the stream basins became drowned and salt water began to intrude upstream with the tides. Site locations apparently shifted upstream as the head of tide migrated (Custer 1994:95-102). Thus, prehistoric archeological sites are spread out along the streams, and occupation appears to have intensified over time. The Woodland I period may have ended with the migration of Algonkian-speaking groups into the eastern United States (Custer 1994:151).

3.1.4 WOODLAND II PERIOD

The Woodland II period, circa 1,000 yrs. BP to A.D. 1600, is characterized by increasing sedentism (Custer and Mellin 1987) and a breakdown in the exchange systems which existed in Woodland I times. The reasons are not well understood, but it has been suggested that population pressure may have played a role (Custer 1989:300). Although sedentism is often associated with the introduction of agriculture, which can provide a steady and reliable subsistence base, there is little evidence for prehistoric agriculture in Delaware. Archeological investigations in the Sussex County coastal region have produced remains of probable cultivated plants (e.g., corn, amaranth seeds), and at the Two Guys site evidence of a cultivated variety of sumpweed (LeeDecker et al. 1996:136-138). Estuarine and marine food resources were probably more important than cultivated foods during the Woodland II period.

3.1.5 CONTACT PERIOD

The archeology of the Contact period, circa A.D. 1600 to 1700, is very poorly understood because no clear Contact period sites have been reported in Delaware. Although areas in which Native Americans and Europeans interacted are known, sites in Delaware lack artifacts clearly associated with the fur trade that mark contact in other regions. Local peoples were apparently marginalized by other Native American groups that dominated the trade, or local Contact period archeological sites have been covered over or destroyed by historic and modern development. Another possible explanation for the absence of Contact period sites is that contact was short-lived and usually ended in violence. A third explanation for the lack of Contact period sites is that archeologists have failed to recognize the subtle combinations of aboriginal and European characteristics and artifacts that would indicate Native American communities or occupations separate from European settlements.

3.2 POST-COLONIAL PERIOD OVERVIEW

Delaware's recent past, comprising approximately three centuries, has been organized into five temporal study units, as defined by the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Ames et al. 1987). These units form the basis for an appropriate chronological framework for the investigation of the state's historic resources. In an effort to coordinate the study of historic archeological and architectural resources, these temporal study units were adopted unaltered in the *Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources* (DeCunzo and Catts 1990:119).

The following regional historical summary is presented to provide a brief background on important local and regional historical events that shaped and affected the inhabitants of the project area. Descriptions of regional historical events are based in large part on the works of Munroe (1978, 1984), Hoffecker (1977), Hancock (1976a and 1976b), and Scharf (1888).

3.2.1 EXPLORATION AND FRONTIER SETTLEMENT (1630 TO 1730)

The earliest colonial settlement in Delaware known as Swanendael ("valley of swans") was made at present-day Lewes in 1631 under the sponsorship of patrons of the Dutch West India Company for the purpose of whaling and raising grain and tobacco. About a decade earlier the Dutch West Indian Company had established a trading post on the west side of Delaware Bay (then called Godins Bay after Samuel Godyn, a company supporter) (Weslager 1969). This venture was privately financed, but it ended when a miscommunication and lack of cultural sensitivity led to the deaths of all of the Dutch settlers by the local Indians, the Sickoneysincks, in 1632. After the destruction of the settlement, the Dutch abandoned any attempts to settle the lower Delaware valley for several decades and focused instead on their holdings in New Amsterdam (modern New York) (Zebooker et al. 1996).

Farther north in the Delaware Valley, a group of Swedes in the employ of the New Sweden Company built Fort Christina in 1638 in what is now part of the present city of Wilmington establishing the first permanent European settlement in Delaware. The Swedish government supported the venture, and Fort Christina became the nucleus of a scattered settlement of Swedish and Finnish farmers known as New Sweden. Within a few years, this Swedish settlement included a fort, church, and small farming community. For most of the years that this settlement existed, Sweden had great difficulty finding people who were willing to immigrate to the colony on the Delaware, due to war, prosperity in the homeland, and the difficulties of the Atlantic voyage. Most of the early Swedish settlers were either employees of the company, bond servants, or convicts, and few of these individuals intended to become permanent inhabitants of the Delaware Valley. By 1647, after almost a decade of settlement, the colony of New Sweden consisted of less than 200 people, and in the six years between 1647 and 1653 no ships, individuals, or letters arrived in colony from Sweden (Munroe 1978:25-27). The last expedition to arrive in New Sweden in 1654 contained approximately 350 settlers and soldiers.

By 1647, the Dutch West India Company in New Amsterdam recognized that, despite its small size, the Swedish settlement in the valley posed a potential threat to their colonial interests along the Delaware, or South, River, especially with regard to control of the fur trade. Accordingly, they reoccupied Fort Nassau on the east side of the Delaware River and erected a new fortification, called Fort Beversreede, at the mouth of the Schuykill River in southeastern Pennsylvania (Myers 1959:43; O'Callaghan 1858:58). Essentially the Dutch claimed the land that the Swedish colony occupied — from the Schuykill River south – by right of prior discovery. In 1651 the Dutch West India Company responded to the Swedish colonization by building Fort Casimir at the Sandhook, the present site of New Castle. The Swedes, recently reinforced, retaliated by seizing the fort in 1654 and renaming it Fort Trinity. A year later, in 1655, the Dutch reacted by dispatching a large military expedition (seven ships and over 300 men) to the Delaware Valley. The expedition not only recaptured Fort Trinity, but also captured Fort Christina, the principal Swedish garrison in the colony (Dalhgren and Norman 1988). As a result, New Sweden ceased to exist as a political entity. Nonetheless, many Swedish and Finnish families remained in the region, continuing to observe and maintain their own customs and religion.

In 1657, as a result of peaceful negotiations, the City of Amsterdam acquired Fort Casimir from the West India Company, founding the town of New Amstel near the fort. This was a unique situation in American colonial history — a European city became responsible for the governance of an American colony. Two years later the Dutch erected a small fort near the mouth of the

Delaware Bay (modern Lewes), known as the Whorekil (also spelled Hoerenkil, Horekill, and Hoorekill) for the purpose of blocking English incursions. The Dutch were most concerned with English settlers from the Chesapeake and Virginia, since Lord Baltimore considered the lands on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake and extending to the western shore of the Delaware River as part of his Proprietorship (De Cunzo and Catts 1990:30).

For the decade that they maintained it, the Dutch colony along the Delaware River centered on their settlements at New Amstel (present-day New Castle), and at the Whorekil. Like the Swedes, the Dutch settlers appear to have resided on dispersed, subsistence farms where they engaged in general farming and animal husbandry.

English hegemony of the lower Delaware Valley began in 1664 when Sir Robert Carr, acting on behave of James Stuart, Duke of York, commanded a military expedition that attacked and captured the Dutch settlements at New Amstel and Whorekil. Following the English takeover, settlers began to move into the project area from Virginia and Maryland (Kenton 2001:7). In 1680, people living in the upper part of Kent County, then part of Whorekill County, petitioned Governor Andros to create a new, smaller county to be called St. Jones County. In 1682, the "Lower Counties" were conveyed to William Penn and annexed to Pennsylvania. In 1704, Delaware became a separate colony with the establishment of its own Assembly but retained close ties with Pennsylvania until the American Revolution.

Under English rule, both the Dutch and the Swedes were permitted to maintain their own languages and customs. However, the English initiated many changes in colonial administration resulting in the development of new settlement patterns. The English established a court system accessible to all inhabitants of the region with sessions meeting at Upland (Chester) in Pennsylvania and at New Castle in Delaware. The establishment of courts at these locations served as stimuli to the development of these settlements into regional market towns.

The English also attempted to impose order on the landholding system by instituting a system of surveys and patents and by requiring that all land transactions between individuals be certified by the courts. As a result of these changes in landholding policy, many early settlers acquired formal title to land that they or their families had occupied for several decades. During the process of recordation, ancient boundaries were often altered, holdings reduced in size, and place names Anglicized or changed. In 1671, the Duke of York made the first land grants in the area of present Kent County. With water transportation the major mode of travel and commerce in the late seventeenth century, most, but not all, of the lands granted in Delaware had frontage on navigable waterways. In the Milford area early settlements included a 2,000-acre tract called "Saw Mill Range," patented in 1680 to Henry Bowman (the site of North Milford today), and tracts in Cedar Neck in 1676 and Slaughter Neck in 1677 (Hurley 1962:9; Kenton 2001:7).

The English also instituted a program of public works that included the construction of roads, bridges, and ferries (Scharf 1888). The development of land-based transportation not only permitted better communication between existing settlements but also permitted settlement of the inland areas of Delaware not readily accessible to navigable streams. Overland travel was extremely difficult in the region throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with heavily wooded and marshy areas constituting major obstacles. The sparseness of the population and corresponding lack of accommodations for travelers added to the discomfort and dangers of overland transportation.

In 1682 the first surveyors of highways and bridges were appointed for Sussex County. At this time the county was heavily forested and swampy, and settlement in the county for much of this

period was confined to an area within about 10 to 12 miles of the coastline, extending inland along a line running roughly from modern Milford-Milton to Harbeson-Millsboro-Dagsboro. Grist mills were established in Lewes in 1676, on Broadkiln creek (Milton) by 1695, and on Bundick's Branch soon thereafter.

Lewes was the only town of any size in the county, and it became a political, maritime, and commercial center for the region. Anglican, Presbyterian and Quaker houses of worship were established in Lewes by the end of this period. Yards for ship building were present in Lewes by the early 1680s (Hancock 1976b:21).

The population of Sussex County has been estimated to have been less than 1,000 persons by 1700. The majority of the inhabitants were farmers, raising crops of tobacco (the primary medium of exchange), corn, wheat, and rye. Hogs and cattle were also raised. The exporting of cattle, by driving them overland from Lewes to New Castle, appears from the records to have been a significant source of income for the settlers of Sussex (Munroe 1978:198).

3.2.2 INTENSIFIED AND DURABLE OCCUPATION (1730-1770)

By the middle of the eighteenth century, population increases and commercial expansion stimulated the growth of towns and the development of transportation and industry. Dover and Smyrna emerged as the two largest towns in Kent County, with markets, landings, and central locations attracting new settlers. A census taken privately in 1760 gave the population of Kent County as 7,000 individuals (Conrad 1908:580).

The median size of land warrants granted in 1735 in Kent was between 200 and 300 acres, with the typical grant close to 200 acres (Eastburn 1891). Larger grants, however, were not uncommon. If New Castle County and southeastern Pennsylvania can be used as rough comparisons, the density of rural settlement in northern Kent County was approximately five households per square mile (Ball 1976:628). Whether this density is applicable to southern Kent and Sussex Counties is not currently known.

Waterways were important to transportation and commerce as early roads were limited in number and of poor condition. The few existing roads led to landings on rivers and the Delaware Bay where produce and goods were shipped by cheaper and more efficient water transport. The Delaware River and Bay served as a major focus of water transportation because the majority of Delaware's streams flow eastward to these bodies. For this reason, the large port city of Philadelphia, and to a lesser extent Wilmington and New Castle, exerted major commercial influence on the Delaware counties throughout the eighteenth century and later. Wilmington, New Castle, and Lewes were also ports for ocean-going vessels involved in export trade. Overland transport was limited to a few major roads, such as the eighteenth century post road connecting Philadelphia-Wilmington-New Castle-Odessa-Middletown-Dover-Lewes with a western branch at Milford linking it to the Chesapeake Bay.

In an attempt to improve the roads in the Lower Counties, the General Assembly in 1752 and again in 1761 called for the repair of the "King's Road" between the New Castle-Kent County border and Lewes which was present in the 1680s. The eighteenth century laws called for the road to be 40 feet wide with all but ten feet cleared. The King's Highway passed through the village of Milford, crossing the Mispillion River at the headwaters of Silver Lake (Kenton2001:9).

Milford was founded in 1787 by Joseph Oliver at the confluence of the Mispillion River, Bowman's Branch and Clark's Branch. The village grew from a landing site and later included a dam and grist mill along the Mispillion River. The original part of Milford, "old town" or North Milford, was located along the north side of the Mispillion, within Kent County. Milford obtained a town charter in 1807 (Kenton2001:7).

Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the agrarian Delmarva Peninsula was considered an area of production and transshipment between the Chesapeake Bay markets (Annapolis and Baltimore) and the Delaware River and Bay markets (Philadelphia and New York). As local markets prospered, so too did the hamlets and other unplanned towns that had sprung up at crossroads and around taverns, mills, and landings. Landings, as well as towns and hamlets in the study area, formed, grew, and sometimes declined according to local and regional economic conditions.

Throughout Delaware's agricultural history farm labor has been a valued commodity. In the colonial period, enslaved African Americans and indentured servants were the primary farm laborers. By the mid-eighteenth century, indentured servants were as numerous as enslaved African Americans. According to the Federal censuses, by 1790 slightly less than one-half of the African Americans in the state were free; however, by 1810, less than one-quarter of African Americans were enslaved. Free African American labor played an increasing role in farm production in Delaware as ethical and economic factors reduced the profitability of slavery prior to the Civil War. After Emancipation, African American labor continued to be a significant factor in farm production.

3.2.3 EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION (1770-1830) AND INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION (1830-1880)

In the study area the start of these periods witnessed the increase of settlement of new farms on marginal lands since good quality; well-drained lands with access to markets were becoming scarcer. The move inland from navigable waterways apparent by the late eighteenth century began with the influx of new populations, particularly from England. This period of growth from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, however, was short-lived with the study area population declining during the second quarter of the century. Given the natural increase of the population that remained during this period, the number of people leaving and "passing through" the county is even greater. The rapid population growth of the first decades of the nineteenth century in Delaware also forced many farmers off the land. Competition for prime land forced many new farmers to clear and till land of poor or marginal quality. Many of these farmers were then hard pressed to turn a profit from their farmsteads and thus became part of the outward migration from Delaware.

A decline in wheat prices and increased competition for good land was accompanied by a significant decrease in the fertility of agricultural lands throughout the state. Poor farming methods, erosion, and simply exhausted land contributed to the economic woes of Delaware farmers. Increased opportunities in urban areas and the West also served to draw people from Delaware. As more and more people left Delaware, the resulting labor shortage made the cultivation of marginal and exhausted lands even less profitable. Thus, even more people moved away from the study area.

The economic crises of the first decades of the nineteenth century helped to spur the beginning of an agricultural revolution throughout Delaware. The first agricultural improvement society in

Kent County was formed in 1835. In the 1820s the discovery of marl, a natural fertilizer, during the construction of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in New Castle County enhanced the productivity of Delaware agriculture. The opening of the canal in 1829 further encouraged the production of market-oriented crops by providing for more efficient transportation of perishable goods. Existing water-based transportation systems were complemented in 1839 with the opening of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, a railroad that provided transportation of northern Delaware produce to growing eastern markets. For southern Delaware, rail service came gradually during the next two decades. When the Delaware Line extended rail service to Dover, and later Seaford, in the 1850s, a vast agricultural hinterland was opened and agricultural production for markets increased significantly.

Prior to 1832, Delaware's agricultural products were primarily grains. Fruit and vegetable crops were of lesser importance. However from the 1830s to the 1870s, Delaware was the center for peach production in the eastern United States. Rich soil, favorable climate and rainfall, excellent transportation facilities, and strategic locations near large markets made peach production a lucrative enterprise. The peach industry was hindered in Kent and Sussex counties until the 1850s due to transportation limitations. Early attempts there failed because producers could not move fruit to market economically. Rail service into the area and the absence of the peach blight in the southern counties made peaches profitable into the 1870s. By the end of the "peach boom," massive harvests were being shipped by rail and steamship lines to New York where the produce was readied for resale to the northern states. The spread of a disease known as the "Yellows" devastated orchards throughout the state and brought an end to the boom. However, until the peach blight curtailed production, the peach industry proved profitable for a large number of peach growers, as well as a variety of support industries (Hancock 1932; 1947).

Throughout the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth, agriculture in Delaware continued to focus on perishable products with a decrease in staples. The planting and harvesting of more diverse crops, including tomatoes, apples, potatoes, and other garden produce increased in response to the demands of markets in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and other cities. The number of acres cultivated in Kent County rose from approximately 283,000 acres in 1850 to 338,000 acres by 1900. Poultry and dairy production also increased significantly in this period in Delaware, particularly in Kent and Sussex counties. Concurrent with the rise in importance of truck crops and dairy products in the late nineteenth century was the improvement of transportation throughout the state. The completion of the Delaware Railroad trunk line through to Seaford in 1856 encouraged the production of such goods by providing quick and cheap access to regional markets. Prior to the Delaware Railroad, steamboats and other water craft provided areas of Kent County with cheap and efficient transportation.

Tenant farming was common in the eighteenth century and became even more prevalent in the nineteenth century. Large landowners, having acquired much of their holdings during the hard times of the 1820s and 1830s, leased their land to tenants. Most of the landowners and tenants were white, although a number of tenants and farm laborers, particularly in Kent and Sussex counties, were African Americans.

Industrialization in Sussex County still lagged behind that seen in New Castle and Kent counties. By 1860 there were a total of 141 manufacturers of all kinds located in the county, including thirty-seven grist mills, fifty-six lumber mills, fifteen blacksmith shops, and six shipyards in Sussex, with smaller numbers of boot and shoe manufacturers, leather works, agricultural implement shops, fisheries, wagon and carriage shops. The majority of these industries were oriented towards intra-county services, though shipbuilding touched all areas of the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and the lumber industry was nationally known. By the end

of this period shipbuilding in villages like Frederica, Milford and Milton had reached its peak (Eckman et al. 1938:375, 416), and the number of flour and grist mills, though still important in the County, had declined to twenty-six (Passmore et al. 1978:24).

After the Civil War, Milford was regarded as one of the largest and most active towns in Delaware, competing for the honor of second largest town with Smyrna. The town benefited from its excellent water and rail connections that permitted regional farming and timber production. By 1875, Milford businesses included grist, saw, and flour mills; two newspapers; several fruit evaporators; and two machine shops, schools, churches and thriving businesses (Hancock 1976a:64).

In Sussex County two formally planned towns were established after the Civil War. "Lincoln City," today known as Lincoln, was initially envisioned by Abel Small in 1865. When officially laid out in 1867, the town was on the line of the then railroad, and contained streets and parks "on a grand scale" (Eckman et al. 1938:378). Small apparently had great hopes for Lincoln, considering it to be "the future metropolis of southern Delaware" (Eckman et al. 1938:378). A second planned community, Ellendale, was also laid out in 1867 by Dr. John Prettyman on the line of the railroad. Prettyman named the town after his wife. Following its establishment, most of the residents of the nearby cross-roads village of Federalsburg (originally Fleatown), moved to Ellendale (Eckman et al. 1938:417). Both towns owed their survival to the railroad, and shipped lumber and market products to northern communities.

3.2.4 URBANIZATION AND SUBURBANIZATION (1880-1960)

The agricultural trends identified in the late nineteenth century continued relatively unchanged well into the twentieth century. Corn and wheat declined in importance due to competition from the western states. By 1880, alfalfa, legumes, and truck crops were increasing in importance, and by the mid-twentieth century had become more profitable than wheat. Dover was still the largest city in Kent County, although smaller than Wilmington and Newark.

By 1900, over 50 percent of all farmers in Delaware were tenants or sharecroppers. Tenancy remained a dominant but locally variable farming practice into the first half of the twentieth century in Kent and Sussex counties. For example, in 1935 approximately 43 percent of Kent farms were tenanted compared to about 32 percent of Sussex farms (Bausman 1940:42; Bausman 1941:31). Conversely, owner-occupied farms were more common in Sussex County than in Kent. The vast majority of rural residents within the study area on the eve of the Second World War were native Delawareans, and in most cases were farming within the county where they were raised (Bausman 1941:46). This characteristic of the study area has been steadily declining as large numbers of people from other parts of the country relocate to Sussex.

During the twentieth century the size and composition of agricultural communities along the Eastern seaboard in general fluctuated during the year as different crops matured in each region. In the 1920's, the seasonal agricultural work force in Delaware was principally composed of white women. Over the next twenty years however, they were replaced by thousands of migrant farm laborers, both black and white, traveling north from Florida following the potato, vegetable, and berry harvests into Delaware (Miller et al. 1997; Taylor 1937). In addition to these migratory crews, local teenagers and African Americans who had "fallen out" of the migratory "stream," worked seasonally in Kent and Sussex counties (Miller et al. 1997).

Beginning circa 1910, reliance on cash-crops and grains declined and production of truck crops steadily increased on Sussex and Kent County farms, especially on farmland formerly used to produce small grains and fruits. Regionally, broad-scale production of Irish potatoes began circa 1940, on lands that had previously produced grains, orchards, vegetables and dairying. By the early 1970s corn and soybeans had replaced most of the grain farming and were also grown in many areas previously used for subsistence farming. This change to corn and soybeans was especially pronounced in the western part of Sussex County, following the rapid drainage ditch improvements that began circa 1955 (Matthews and Ireland 1971:2; Ireland and Matthews 1974:2).

By 1880, Milford was identified as the "most considerable point in the state south of Wilmington (Hancock 1976a:64). With a population of 3,719 Milford was the fourth largest community in Delaware by the end of the period (Eckman et al. 1938:208). In 1900 Milford was reputedly growing faster than any other community in Kent County and was said to be progressive in its outlook (Hancock 1976a:64). While Milford had expanded to the south side of the river (South Milford) into Sussex County in 1819 (Eckman et al. 1938:209) that portion of the town was not incorporated until 1887 (Davis, Bowen & Friedel 2003:17). At the turn of the twenty-first century, the population in this relatively industrialized town reached approximately 7,500 (Kenton 2001:8).

During the nineteenth century shipbuilding became an important industry in Milford, particularly during the period from 1850 to 1890 (Davis, Bowen, & Friedel 2003:16). Most of the ships built at that time were two and three-mast schooners, which were used for coastal shipping and trade (Emory 1997; Scharf 1888:1190).The portion of Milford situated in Sussex County, known as South Milford, especially became known as a shipbuilding area. By the start of the twentieth century over 400 wooden schooners and sloops were constructed along the Mispillion (Hancock 1976a:63). In addition to shipbuilding, Milford was also a center of a fruit and vegetable canning industry that served the larger regional farming community.

The Coleman du Pont Highway — now known as US Routes 13 and 113 — is the focal point of the present Study Area, and indeed has served in that capacity since its creation in the second decade of the twentieth century. The road was intended by its creator to be a superhighway and as originally conceived by du Pont would require a right-of-way of 200 feet (Rae 1975:171). DuPont, a leader in the national Good Roads Movement, envisioned a highway on a grand scale that would b be the "straightest, widest, and best road in the country" (LCE 2000:9). Within its right-of-way du Pont proposed a center roadway for high-speed motorized traffic, electric trolley tracks, and separate lanes for heavier motorized vehicles, unpaved lanes for horses and horse-drawn traffic, and finally sidewalks for pedestrians (Rae 1975:171). The road was eventually scaled-down to a narrower right-of-way and a two lane concrete road surface. The first section of the road from Selbyville to the Appenzellar Farm six miles south of Milford was completed in 1917 (Eckman et al. 1938:80). Thereafter the planning and construction of the road from Wilmington to Ellendale was undertaken entirely by the newly created State Highway Department, with Coleman du Pont contributing slightly less than 4 million dollars to the overall construction of the highway (Eckman et al. 1938:81; Rae 1975:178).

The emerging highway system, with the Du Pont Highway as its backbone, was as significant a factor in the economic development of southern Delaware as the construction of the Delaware Railroad in the mid-nineteenth century (Munroe 1984:203). Beginning in the 1920s, the road improvements in the state marked a decided shift in agricultural production strategies (LeeDecker et al. 1992:22). The highway system allowed farmers to get produce to urban areas such as Wilmington and Philadelphia (and their expanding suburbs) far easier than the more restrictive

railroad system. Sussex and Kent county farmers adjusted their agricultural produce to meet the needs of the urban market, for example, shifting to broiler production and liquid milk production (Munroe 1984:203).

The construction of the Du Pont Highway on a new alignment away from the main streets of established villages and towns such as Frederica, Milford, Ellendale, Lincoln, Georgetown, Millsboro, Dagsboro, and Selbyville, introduced the concept of a bypass into Delaware highway construction. As described in the State Highway Department's annual report for 1917-1920, the value in bypass construction was that it "would be more convenient for the through traffic and less dangerous for the residents of the towns. This seems to be the latest approved method of dealing with the increasing trunk line traffic. A local example of the excellent results is shown in the Du Pont Road between Selbyville and Georgetown" (Rae 1975:179). Viewed by some contemporary critics as detrimental to the economic health of the towns, the construction of bypasses did alter the locations of residential housing and commercial development within the study area, shifting the focus of these activities beyond the railroad connections of the towns and out to the highway access points of the road. "Where once towns clustered around railroad depots," maintains one Delaware historian, "now the most valuable land was that with access to the highway... developments downstate stretched communities out into the countryside" (Munroe 1984:204). In a departure from the initial design as envisioned by du Pont that intended to create a completely new alignment, in some sections of the highway, such as the stretch between Milford and Georgetown, the road used a combination of new and old alignments. In this area the road followed the course of the old State Road between Milford and Georgetown (initially established in 1796) northwards from Sharp Hill School to near Redden Crossroads where the road moved to a new alignment parallel and slightly west of the old road (LeeDecker et al. 1992:24).

Throughout its historical development, the pattern and density of settlement in Delaware, and the study area specifically, have been strongly influenced by several factors: 1) an agrarian economy; 2) the commodity demands of larger regional markets, and 3) transportation facilities. The completion of the du Pont Highway linked the northern and southern sections of the state and helped to complete the shift in agricultural production towards non-local markets and open new areas to productive agriculture. Improved transportation in the twentieth century also brought a decline in the importance of the many small crossroad and "corner" communities that had sprung up in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Study Area was still predominantly rural and agricultural, but small industries were present that utilized agricultural and woodland produce and residential growth in the form of suburban developments became more commonplace (Ireland and Matthews 1974:2). Beyond the bounds of the Study Area the development of resort communities in the area from Cape Henlopen south to Maryland has profoundly influenced the settlement and land use patterns not only of the region but also of the Study Area. During the second half of the twentieth century, including recreational and part-time residential development has expanded away from the immediate vicinity of the beaches and waterfront areas, and currently affects much of the Study Area.