

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES—COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

7S-D-10

AND/OR COMMON

Wolfe's Neck Site (Preferred)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Lewes

One

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Delaware

10

Sussex

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT	USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

J.G. Townsend, Jr. and Company

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 430

CITY/TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgetown

Delaware

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Sussex County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

The Circle

CITY/TOWN

Georgetown

STATE

Delaware

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs, Section of Archaeology

DATE

1954 and 1974

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Island Field Archaeological Museum and Research Center

CITY/TOWN

Box 126, R. D. 2, Milford

STATE

Delaware 19963

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) APPEARANCE

Part of the site is presently in plowed fields while the remaining portions are wooded. Some erosion is occurring in the fields and on the banks of the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal. Portions of the site have been altered through the 1961 and 1965 excavations of the Sussex Society of Archeology and History.

The site was first mentioned in literature in C. A. Weslager's Delaware's Buried Past. He noted the discovery of numerous "fire hearths" seen from the surface but does not say whether they were excavated. In 1962, members of the Sussex Society of Archeology and History conducted test excavations of a hillside shell midden, approximately 26' X 107'. This revealed ceramics in stratified positions along with associated refuse. They again tested this midden in 1965. Approximately 50% of the midden remains and many of their test units are still visible so that future workers may concentrate on undisturbed areas. At least five other shell deposits have been reported in the area. Weslager (1941) reports the excavation of a deposit on the west bank of the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal. Several other distinct middens were located nearby. None of them have been completely excavated, with the possible exception of the one on the west bank of the canal. Valuable information remains at most of these sites.

In the fall of 1975, the Section of Archaeology conducted some test excavations at the Wolfe Neck midden in the area of the Sussex Society of Archeology and History's work in 1965. This work was intended to clarify the stratigraphic sequences and to obtain material with adequate provenience for dating. The test work was successful on both counts. A discernible, if somewhat irregular, sequence of physical strata was discovered and associated ceramics were dated. In addition to this testing, several other middens buried by slope wash were discovered along the northeast bluff of the site leading down into the marsh. These remain to be assessed as to their depth, extent, and cultural affiliation. A report is in preparation covering the 1975 excavations.

The early occupation of the site was apparently a small seasonal camp. The later occupation may have been a more permanent village.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE—CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATION	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-		<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES C-14 dates

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

505 B.C., 375 B.C., 325 A.D., 330 A.D.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Surveys of Wolfe's Neck for the past 30 years have indicated an almost continuous prehistoric occupation through the Early, Middle and Late Woodland periods. The 1975 excavations at one of the hillside middens produced a dated sequence of ceramics from 500 B.C. to 330 A.D. The lowest level contained a crushed quartz tempered ware with net impressed and cord-marked types. A date of 505 B.C. has been obtained for this level. The overlying strata contained an untempered ceramic ware that also had net and cord-marked varieties. This dated to 375 B.C. The upper level of this particular midden contained a shell-tempered, net impressed ceramic known elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic as Mockley net-impressed. The two dates of 325 A.D. and 330 A.D. correlate well with other dates for Mockley in Delaware and on the western shore of the Chesapeake.

In addition to this Middle Woodland sequence, Late Woodland middens occur on the west bank of the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal. It seems probable that this midden represents some type of seasonal shellfish procurement location related to the large late Woodland Townsend Site (a National Register nomination) nearby.

The Wolfe Neck Site has a complex prehistory and is capable of answering a wide range of questions concerning Delaware's prehistoric occupants. The site has already demonstrated the existence of datable cultural sequences. Further work along these lines will contribute to the further clarification of these problems. In addition, a lengthy series of problems related to subsistence and settlement can be answered due to the excellent faunal preservation in these shell middens and the partial horizontal stratification of the components.

The site also has the potential for understanding general man-environment relationships within the constantly changing eco-system of this coastal lagoon. The Lewes Creek Marsh was an active tidal lagoon that formed around 1200 B.C. and gradually silted in by Contact. The human response to this appears to be mirrored nicely in the existence and location of the shell middens, but further work is necessary in order to clarify this aspect.

## The Wolfe's Neck Site (S-547)

Addendum to the National Register nomination at request of O.A.H.P. (April 1978)

By Daniel R. Griffith

Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

### Boundary justification & internal composition

The boundaries of the Wolfe Neck nomination encompass the entire distribution of significant cultural material as determined by surface survey and excavation. The trapezoid marking the boundaries of the nomination represents the entire area where cultural material relating to the main occupation occurs. The northern boundary (line A-B) and the eastern boundary (line B-C) includes all the well-drained soil within the nomination, as well as the associated tidal marsh to those lines.

Shell middens of varying thicknesses and densities occur throughout the well-drained area and hillside shell middens, at least one of which is known to be stratified, extend down the slopes of the well-drained hills and out under the present marsh surface to varying distances. Along the eastern boundary the line B-C marks the western edge of the Lewes and Rehoboth canal where several shell middens have been observed eroding into the canal. The southern (line C-D) and western (line D-A) boundaries of the nomination were determined by surface survey. Shell middens in these cultivated fields extend to the northern half of line D-A. The southern half of line D-A and line C-D mark the limit of cultural material in the form of Middle and Late Woodland ceramics and lithic debris outside the shell concentration. Several buried shell middens have been mapped along the northeastern face of the well-drained soils and others most probably exist (refer to sketch map for details).

### Bibliography

The bibliography should be amended to include the following piece of research:

Griffith, Daniel R. and Richard E. Artusy.

1977 "Middle Woodland Ceramics at Wolfe Neck, Sussex County, Delaware". In The Archeologist, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 1-29.

