CHAPTER 3:

Historic Context

Settlement to Society (1607-1750)

In June 1608, Captain John Smith and a party of explorers from Jamestown stumbled onto what would later become Middlesex County. Smith and his men were returning from exploring the Chesapeake Bay when their boat ran aground at the easternmost tip of Middlesex County. While awaiting the next high tide, Smith and his crew passed their time spearing fish with their swords in the shallows. Smith was stung by one of the fish after which his arm swelled, and he feared for his life. His men prepared Smith's grave on the nearest island, which they called Stingray after the unfortunate incident. Smith recovered later that day but the island, actually the tip of land which is now Middlesex County, kept the name Stingray and is today called Stingray Point (Rutman and Rutman 1984:44).

Over the next few decades, others would explore parts of Middlesex County and attach the names Rappahannock, Piankatank, and Dragon Run to the rivers and swamp that border it. However, these explorers left no other record of themselves. Other men blazed trees to mark future claims to

land. Two of these were John Mattrom and Thomas Trotter who claimed 1,900 acres and 500 acres, respectively, in 1642 (Rutman and Rutman 1984:45).

Settlement was stalled briefly when the Indian treaty of 1646 acknowledged the land of Middlesex County to belong to the Indians. Only two years later, however, the restrictions to settlement were removed and land patents were granted. One of the largest land grants was to Ralph Wormeley in 1649 for 3,000 acres (Rutman and Rutman 1984:46). His estate would be called "Rosegill" and the original house circa 1650, though much enlarged, stands today and is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register (Middlesex County, Virginia 1994:48).

Middlesex was an extension of York County until 1651. In that year, all the unorganized lands on the Middle Peninsula were joined to create Lancaster County. Much of the county was settled at the same time. Through intermarriage, many of the county's inhabitants were related (Rutman and Rutman 1984:49). In 1657, the inhabitants of Middlesex County petitioned and received permission to form their own parish separate from Lancaster (Rutman and Rutman 1984:52).

Petition was made in 1668 to the House of Burgesses to divide Lancaster County to form Middlesex. The date of the first court of record in Middlesex is 1673 and is considered the date the county was formed (Chowning 1994).

In 1680, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act establishing trading towns in counties on deep water creeks. Urbanna was to become one of those towns. The first mention of a new town in the county court records occurs in 1706, referring to the "Burgh of Urbanna." The Courthouse was moved from Stormont to Urbanna in 1748 (Chowning 1994).

Worship began in the county in 1650 near the site of the Lower United Methodist Church. In 1647, for the second time, Lancaster County was divided into two parishes. The parish on the south side of the Rappahannock River was further divided into the Lancaster and Peanckatank parishes. In 1657 Edward Dale, Clerk of Lancaster County, affixed his name to a seal in an agreement reached at Henry Corbin's house that authorized Samuel Cole, the parish clerk, to serve as officiating minister every other Sabbath so long as he remained in the colony. The southern parishes were rejoined in 1666 and became coterminous with the boundary of Middlesex County when it was formed in 1673 (Chowning 1994).

The mother church at Christ Church, built in 1666, is believed to have been of wood construction and paved with stone. The current brick church, which has survived storms, wars, neglect, and abandonment, was constructed in 1714, and is today the only Episcopal Church in Middlesex County. In 1717, the Lower Church was completed (Chowning 1994).

Even though the land that was to become Middlesex was Indian territory in 1646, the English had pushed the Indians

out by the late 1640s. This meant more land for the growing of tobacco. Tobacco was the mainstay of the county's economy well into the early eighteenth century (Chowning 1994).

Urbanna's birth sprang from the economic troubles harassing Virginians in the late 1600s. A consensus emerged among the large planters that towns could diversify Virginia's economy away from tobacco. Towns could provide immigrant shopkeepers and craftsmen alike a place to locate. As the towns grew, markets would develop for food crops, like corn and wheat, etc. In 1730, it became law that all tobacco must be inspected and brought to warehouses in towns so designated. Urbanna was one of those towns. It was during this time that trade from all over the world came through Urbanna Harbor (Chowning 1994).

For most of the colonial era in Middlesex, schooling was primarily for the well-to-do. Early on, young men of wealthy families, such as the Wormeleys, Robinsons, Churchills, Corbins, Grymes, etc., were sent to England for their schooling (Chowning 1994).

Sometime in the 1700s, these wealthy families began hiring tutors and building small schools to educate their children. At the same time, other families with some means would send their children to these schools. One of the oldest remaining school buildings from this era is at Deer Chase. This buildings rafters bear the same Roman numeral markings that are found on the rafters of the main house, which is

believed to have been built around the 1720s. A reference to "furniture for the schoolhouse" is found in the 1772 inventory of the estate of Thomas Kemp. This school was functioning as late as 1868, for a latin book which belonged to W. W. Woodward stated that at that time he was attending Deer Chase Academy (Chowning 1994).

For the most part though, early Middlesex residents were illiterate. In the 1600s, girls were seldom sent to school, most young white men, unless very wealthy, did not attend school, and slaves were hardly ever educated. There were laws against teaching slaves to read, write, and cypher. However, it should be noted some slaves did learn to read and write (Chowning 1994).

Education was a precious commodity among white Middlesex County residents as well. The size of a man's library indicated wealth and power. One of the greatest libraries in the entire colony was at Rosegill where Ralph Wormeley II resided. In 1686 a French Huguenot immigrant, M. Duval, described Wormeley's library as one of the finest in Virginia (Chowning 1994).

Higher education (secondary and college) was left for the very wealthy. There were no secondary schools in Middlesex until the 1900s. However, several of the men of wealthy families in Middlesex were instrumental in starting the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Christopher Robinson of Hewick was one of the first trustees of the

college. William and Mary became the main educational institution of higher learning for the colony (Chowning 1994).

Colony to Nation (1750-1789)

In 1771, John Waller, a pioneer Baptist preacher, was imprisoned in Urbanna Jail for publicly preaching in the county without a license. While awaiting trial, he with other jailed brethren, continued to preach from the windows of the jail. They drew listeners in spite of the steady, loud beating of drums to silence the sermons. Waller returned to the county in 1772 to help other deserters from the Church of England organize Glebe Landing Church, near Laneview (Chowning 1994).

Middlesex County supplied officers and men to the Revolutionary War effort through a District Committee of Essex and Middlesex County formed on February 20, 1776. The militia in Middlesex was under the command of Philip Montague whose troops were called to the battle of Yorktown. Middlesex was attacked and robbed during the war by British privateers and barges, which anchored at the mouth of the Rappahannock and Piankatank rivers (DeBusk et al. 1982:5).

The Revolutionary War marked the end of the large foreign ships coming into Middlesex. The tobacco trade with England was crippled, and the soil in Middlesex had by now been pretty much depleted (Chowning 1994).

Early National Period (1789-1830)

The Rosegill estate was attacked during the War of 1812 by the British Navy under the command of Admiral Cockburn (DeBusk et al. 1982:5).

The Hermitage at Church View, a Baptist Church, was constructed in 1789. Another early Baptist Church, Zoar Baptist in Deltaville, was constructed in 1808. In the 1820s, another Baptist Church, Clark's Neck Meeting House, was built in Saluda. Forest Chapel was constructed in 1840, the first place of worship for Methodists in the county (Chowning 1994).

By 1804, the Wormeleys of Rosegill had given up on tobacco, but small grain, wheat, and corn was to take its place. As the local population grew, the need for consumer goods also grew. Gristmills to grind the wheat and corn became centers of commerce and Middlesex had gristmills up and down the county. Rosegill Mill, Healy's Mill, Conrad's Mill, Barrick's Mill, Burches' Mill, and Captain Henry Washington's (Hillard's) Mill were the names of several in Middlesex (Chowning 1994).

It is probably safe to say that the people of Middlesex endured hard times right after the Revolutionary War and into the early 1800s. However, the steamboat marked a new beginning for commerce in the county (Chowning 1994).

Education in the county grew from small plantation academies, and this concept lasted into the twentieth century. Early schools were mostly funded by the wealthy, but as time passed and the colonial gentry began to disappear from the county, community academies began to spring up. Some of these schools may have had some public support, but they were mostly funded by the parents of the students who attended (Chowning 1994).

Antebellum Period (1830-1860)

The Methodist churches Clarksbury in Amburg and Lower Church were started in 1857. In 1859 the Baptist church Harmony Grove was built in Harmony Village (Chowning 1994).

By the 1840s, Urbanna was a regular stop for steamboats and the steamboat Matilda was stopping weekly at Palmer's Wharf in Urbanna. The steamboat and the development of big cities such as Baltimore and Washington fired new life into the economy of Middlesex. Points along the Rappahannock and Piankatank rivers were regular stops for steamboats. North End, Burhams, Urbanna, Remlik, Water View, Bay Port, Conrad's,

Stampers, etc., were points of landing for the steamboat in Middlesex (Chowning 1994).

As towns and cities grew, the lumber business throughout the Chesapeake region developed to supply wood to build houses and store buildings. During this era, the local timber business made several Middlesex natives wealthy. Several owned portable sawmills and would ship their lumber to Baltimore and Norfolk on sail-driven vessels. Middlesex men owned several of these vessels (Chowning 1994).

This also marked a busy time for agriculture in the county as pickle, tomato, and other canning factories were scattered throughout Middlesex. The sailing vessels were the main means of hauling produce and other goods to Baltimore (Chowning 1994).

Civil War (1861-1865)

A Middlesex man, Judge Robert Montague, was Lieutenant Governor of Virginia and president of the Secession Convention at the time when Virginia seceded from the union. However, Middlesex County's biggest contribution to the Civil War was the men it supplied to the Confederate States Army, primarily to the Fifty-Fifth Virginia Regiment which participated in most of the major battles on the Eastern Front. Little took place within the county's borders during the war except for

the occasional foray by Union troops searching for supplies and two relatively minor military actions.

The first of these two maneuvers was the capture of two qunboats, the Satellite and Reliance, Rappahannock River, by Confederate forces on August 22, 1863. The capture involved 30 sharpshooters and others under the command of Col. Thomas L. Rasser, Fifth Virginia Cavalry. They marched from their encampment near Fredericksburg 82 miles to Saluda where they met with the Confederate States Navy and participated in the capture. The troops then disembarked at Urbanna for their march back Fredericksburg.

The second action took place from May 11 through 14, 1864 and resulted in casualties on Middlesex soil. The Thirty-Sixth U.S. Colored Infantry, under the command of Col. Alonzo G. Draper, landed at Mill Creek on the morning of the twelfth. They exploded a number of bombs left by Confederate troops before burning the mill of Henry Barrack, a supposed accomplice of those who placed the bombs. From there they marched in two detachments toward Stingray Point, uniting at one point and exploding four more bombs. Suspecting the presence of Confederate troops nearby, the Union infantry spread out three miles across the peninsula in a skirmish line and continued toward Stingray Point. Five or six men in the skirmish line encountered nine Confederate troops from the cavalry and marines under the command of B. G. Burley and John

Maxwell, acting masters, C. S. Navy. In the ensuing clash four Confederates were killed and three captured, while another escaped. One Union trooper was killed and three were wounded. The Union troops crossed the Piankatank out of Middlesex on the morning of May 13 (DeBusk et al. 1982:6-7).

Reconstruction and Growth (1865-1914)

The Methodist Church, Bethel, which is no longer standing or in existence, was located near Laneview, and was started in 1865. Before the Civil War, blacks were worshipping with whites. Glebe Landing still has the balcony where blacks were required to worship. After the war, four black churches were started within a year. In 1866 the black Antiock Baptist Church was formed from Clark's Neck Meeting House. In 1867, Grafton was formed from Harmony Grove, First Baptist Church of Amburg from Zoar, and Union Shiloh Baptist Church in Laneview from Glebe Landing. Philippi Christian Church was founded in Deltaville in 1871. It is still the only Christian church in the county. Urbanna United Methodist Church was started in 1881. In 1883, the Methodist church, Centenary, was started in Saluda (Chowning 1994).

Middlesex suffered another economic setback in 1860 as the War Between the States began. The war devastated the local economy but at the end of the war, the oyster industry flourished and the steamboat and schooner trade rebounded quickly (Chowning 1994).

From the very beginning of Middlesex's history, seafood has played an important role in its economy, but right after the Civil War, it made a tremendous impact. Northern oystermen had come to the Chesapeake before the war to buy and catch Chesapeake oysters because their oyster beds had been depleted. When the war ended, they came back and encouraged the local people to catch oysters for them. This was a Godsend in a time when there was little to no economy at all. The Rappahannock River grows some of the best oysters in the world and very quickly the families in Middlesex began to mend their economic woes by tonging oysters and selling to the schooners coming down from New York, New Jersey, etc. (Chowning 1994).

Soon, local men built their own shucking houses and, instead of selling all their oysters to the Northerners, they sold to local people and the economy grew. Stores began to spring up again, carpenters could make money by making shafts for tongs, blacksmiths by making the metal heads, farmers could sell their flour to watermen, and watermen could sell their oysters to farmers (Chowning 1994).

In the early twentieth century, the boatbuilding industry in the Deltaville area began to grow. Chesapeake Bay watermen needed strong, sturdy work boats to harvest seafood from the bay. For many years, log canoes had been the vessel of choice

of fishermen. The Poquoson area was a center of log canoe building. However, when watermen began to use frame-built vessels, Deltaville became a center of commercial boatbuilding (Chowning 1994).

After the Civil War, Virginia and other southern states passed Reconstruction laws giving blacks the same freedoms that they would enjoy in the North. These laws eventually led to the formation of public schools for blacks and whites. Middlesex Courthouse records tell of land being set aside for public schools as early as 1867, two years after the Civil War (Chowning 1994).

One of the first black public schools was started in Jamaica District. The school was located on Route 605 next door to the present-day St. Paul Baptist Church. It should be noted that after the Civil War public schools and black churches evolved about the same time and the church played an important part in establishing and running these small, publicly funded, black schools. These one-room black schools had grades one through seven (Chowning 1994).

The white schools were not much different. Many of the old one-room and two-room academy schools continued on as white schools with public funding. Several of these schools are still standing today. Such names as Frog Pond Academy, Deer Chase Academy, Bradley Swamp School, Urbanna Academy, Springdale Academy, etc., are well known to older Middlesex residents (Chowning 1994).

In 1905, the first high school was started in what is today Deltaville. It was named Unionville School and the school building was completed in 1907. Grades went from 7th to 11th. Shortly thereafter, secondary schools were built at Laneview, Church View, Urbanna, Saluda, and Syringa. These schools were all segregated (Chowning 1994).

It was around the turn of the twentieth century that secondary education became available to blacks in some parts of Virginia, but not in Middlesex. Around 1900, Rappahannock Industrial Academy in Essex County and the Northern Neck Academy were started to educate blacks on a secondary level. These schools may have had some public support, but were primarily supported by the funds coming from black churches throughout the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck (Chowning 1994).

Few black families in Middlesex could afford the \$5 a month boarding fee that went with the Rappahannock Industrial Academy. However, if a relative lived close by this could be avoided. Very few students who attended the post-Civil War elementary schools were fortunate enough to go away to high school. Yet some of those who did would come back to help educate the rest of the black community (Chowning 1994).

The steamboat and schooner era continued on until the 1930s and 1940s. Steamboats came to an end in 1933 when the August Storm destroyed most of the docks on the bay. The schooners were to last a few years longer. Good roads and trucks would finally take all the work from the old sailing craft (Chowning 1994).

The first black secondary school in the county was Middlesex High School. It was founded in 1918 and located at Syringa. In 1936, the school burned and students were moved to Locust Hill to the old Rappahannock Elementary School that had been abandoned. In its 28 years, the old Middlesex High School had three names-Langston Training School, Middlesex Training School, and Middlesex High School (Chowning 1994).

When considering education in Middlesex, Christchurch School can not be overlooked. The school founded in 1921 is still in operation. Over the years, it has attracted students from across the country. The church school was founded by the Diocese of Virginia along with several other schools in the state for boys and girls. For many years, the school was an all-boys institution (Chowning 1994).

In 1938, St. Clare Walker High School was finished at Cooks Corner. This was an all-black high school until 1969. As consolidation of schools began to take place, some of these early secondary schools were converted to elementary schools.

An example is Unionville High School. It was converted to an elementary school in 1943 which was used until replaced by Wilton Elementary School in 1962 (Chowning 1994).

World War II to Present

Today, there are 13 black churches in the county, and all are Baptist. Remlik Wesleyan Church in Remlik and the Catholic Church of the Visitation, on Route 3 near Hartfield, were completed in September 1985 (Chowning 1994).

There are at least two new fundamentalist churches in the county, a black church between Cooks Corner and Urbanna and a white church at Topping. A new Baptist Church (Friendship Baptist) has been built and is in operation near Hartfield (Chowning 1994).

In the 1950s, local people began to see city folks coming down to "enjoy" the river. As the overall economy began to improve after World War II, people had more free time. Boating and recreational businesses are now an important part of the local economy (Chowning 1994).

The traditional trades, however, such as farming, forestry, and working the water are still carried on by many people living in the county. Although few boats are built there now, commercial fishing boats are still being constructed in the Deltaville area today (Chowning 1994).

Total consolidation of the white secondary system took place in the late 1950s when Middlesex High School was built at Saluda, near the site of the old Saluda High School. The town and community elementary schools continued on until the mid-1960s when an expansion was made at Middlesex High School for elementary students and Wilton and later Rappahannock Central Elementary School were built. The present-day Wilton Elementary School was built at Hartfield in 1962 (Chowning 1994).

Ironically, school integration began in Middlesex in 1963, exactly 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Lincoln. Total school integration took place in 1969. Black students then attended Middlesex High School at Saluda and the St. Clare Walker facility was made into a middle school. In 1994, Middle school students at the former St. Clare Walker facility were moved into a brand new facility at Locust Hill. Today, Christchurch is a boarding school for boys, and area girls and boys attend as day students (Chowning 1994).

CHAPTER 4:

Assessment of Archaeological Resources

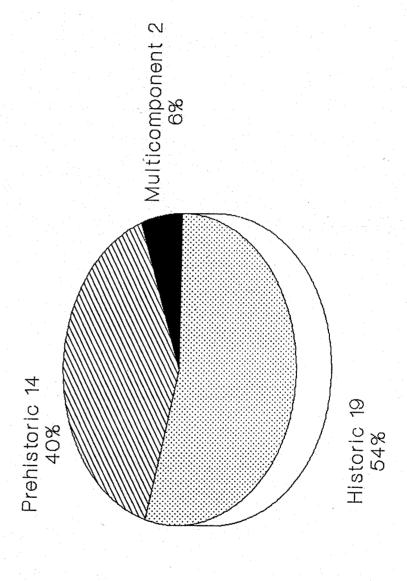
Introduction

The following discussion presents the results of the resource assessment and highlights trends in the distribution of recorded archaeological sites in Middlesex County by space, time, and type according to the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) format (Department of Historic Resources 1992). While there are some gaps in the available site data, this section provides planners with a basic summary of the Middlesex County site inventory files. As stated earlier, the assessment employs known site data and the results of historical research. It cannot be used in place of a Phase I archaeological survey.

There are 35 archaeological sites within Middlesex County listed in the files at the DHR (Appendices A and B) (Figure 4). The earliest, 44MX1, was filed in 1969. Prehistoric sites account for 14 of the total, 19 are historic, and 2 are multicomponent. Multicomponent sites are those with at least one prehistoric and one historic component present. Unless specifically noted, the data summary treats multicomponent sites as part of the total count of historic and/or

FIGURE 4



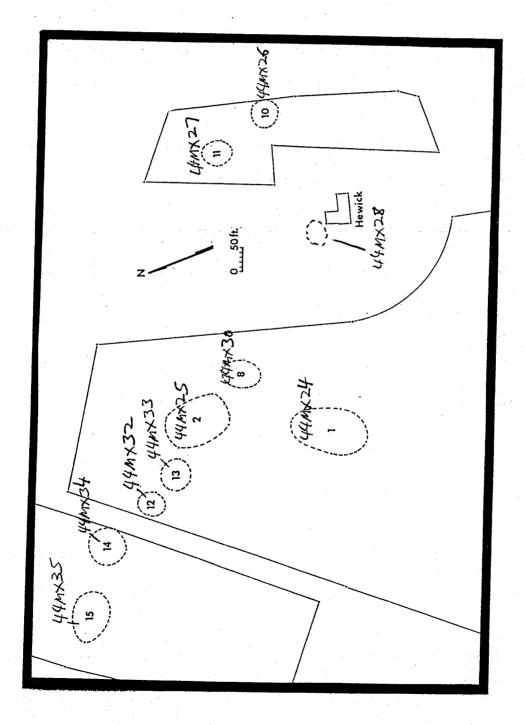


Summary of all sites: Prehistoric, Historic, Multicomponent

prehistoric sites. Currently, Middlesex County has no archaeological sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

There are six archaeological reports on file at the DHR for Middlesex County (Appendix C) Four of these reports are Phase I archaeological surveys. Only one article on Middlesex County archaeology has appeared in the Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia (see Appendix C). The article was published in 1966 and discusses a ground stone artifact (Kerby 1966:115).

As previously noted, one-third of the sites recorded in the county are located at Hewick Plantation near Urbanna. Hewick property was owned and occupied by Christopher Robinson in the late seventeenth century. Robinson and his descendants played important roles in Middlesex County history. Archaeologist Theodore R. Reinhart of the College of William and Mary was attracted to the site in 1989 by Hewick's owners, Ed and Helen Battleson. The Battleson's hospitality and Hewick's connection to the College of William and Mary (Christopher Robinson was a trustee of the college) has kept Reinhart and his students excavating at Hewick to this day (Reinhart 1993). The sites on the Hewick property include numbers 44MX24-44MX35 (except 44MX29) and consist of historic sites from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries (Figure 5) (Reinhart 1993). The Hewick Plantation, through Dr.



Site Map of Hewick Plantation (Reinhart 1994)

Reinhart, has generated numerous archaeological papers by both him and his students (Appendix D).

Another Middlesex County plantation with a cordial owner and high site potential is Prospect. Located near Hummel Field, Prospect has been in Pat Perkinson's family since the eighteenth century. In the seventeenth century, the property was owned by Major Robert Beverly, a man well-known in both county and colony politics. Mrs. Perkinson has collected numerous artifacts on her property dating from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries (Pat Perkinson, personal communication 1994). Prospect is just one of many areas of Middlesex County deserving of archaeological investigation.

The county should also be aware of the presence of underwater archaeological sites within its boundaries. One site, 44MX18, a log canoe, has already been reported. A 1994 assessment of Virginia's submerged sites indicates a reported submerged prehistoric site off the eastern tip of the county. Others likely exist since 283 underwater sites are recorded in the site files of the DHR (Blanton and Margolin 1994). Any possibly destructive activities in Middlesex County waters should take this possibility into consideration.

Another important resource for future archaeological research in Middlesex County are its historic structures. One hundred sixty-two historic buildings are described in "A Heritage Tour Development For Middlesex County, Virginia," published in 1994 (Chowning 1994). Many, if not all, of these

buildings probably have an archaeological site associated with them. The Department of Historic Resources in Richmond maintains architectural files in its archives with photos, plans, descriptions, and histories of 59 buildings in Middlesex County which may also be helpful to archaeological researchers (Department of Historic Resources n.d.:a).

Middlesex County's location along two major tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay virtually ensures the presence of numerous unrecorded prehistoric sites. Since there has been little development in the county to date, planners should be aware that all undeveloped riverfront property has a high potential to yield significant prehistoric data. Other areas of high potential for prehistoric sites are those adjacent to inland streams and the Dragon Run Swamp.

Criteria and Methodology for Data Classification

Several biases affect the spatial, temporal, and thematic distribution of sites on file at the DHR. For a number of reasons, there are inconsistencies within and between these documents that presented problems in classifying data about known archaeological sites in Middlesex County.

Since the investigators of Middlesex County sites have possessed various degrees of archaeological skill and knowledge, some have been more thorough in their research and classifications than others. Also, over the approximately 25

years that sites have been recorded for this area, archaeological principles and methods have changed. Therefore, many early site inventory forms do not contain information that is now standard.

The Phase I reports are of limited usefulness since they do not, by definition, go beyond a preliminary identification of archaeological sites. The linear nature of many of the surveys, performed for projects such as roads, powerlines, and pipelines, may also bias site location and distribution information.

Another factor influencing the accuracy of the site data is that some of the sites were never field checked by an archaeologist. In most of these instances, these sites have been reported to professional archaeologists by amateurs. Without professional confirmation, these data are tentative. In some cases amateur archaeologists, and some professionals, have not been thorough in their collection and/or reporting of site data. Information such as site coordinates, site size, and/or drainage system has not been included on some forms. The early forms generally do not include any information on soils, and most forms do not include a site map, or have one of very poor quality. Locational data on site forms is not always accurate or complete. Some amateur archaeologists only collected and reported the most interesting, complete, or valuable artifacts, thereby biasing the data. Likewise, artifact descriptions that are included range from very

general (i.e., pottery, stone chips) to very complete. Furthermore, collections of artifacts have likely been sold and lost. The combination of these factors is responsible for most of the "undetermined" designations in the assessment. Explanations of certain data categories follow.

Drainage System

Using topographic maps, two drainage systems have been identified in Middlesex County: the Rappahannock River and the Piankatank River. A site was considered a part of a drainage system if it was located within the actual body of water, along its banks, or within its basin as defined by major drainage divides.

Size

Site size was not recorded on seven of the site record forms. All site area measurements were converted to square meters.

Prehistoric Component

Temporal designations for prehistoric sites are given according to DHR format. A specific temporal designation does not imply that a site was occupied throughout that period. For example, a prehistoric site may have only been occupied during the Late Archaic period, but research to date may only be able to place it in the larger Archaic period. In most cases, temporal designations defer to the recorder's expertise. A designation may have been changed if the artifact inventory was in direct conflict with the recorder's designation. If no specific context was given for a site, it was assigned based on the contents of its artifact inventory (when available).

<u>Historic Component</u>

Temporal designations for historical sites are generally given by century. Assigning a site to a particular century does not imply continuous occupation throughout. For example, a site with a time frame between 1600 and 1800 was not necessarily occupied from the beginning of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century. As with prehistoric sites, if no specific context was given for a site, it was assigned based on the contents of its artifact inventory (when available). Other date ranges were expanded if they had