

**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION**

NPS Form 10-900USD/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**MINISINK HISTORIC DISTRICT**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name: **MINISINK HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Other Name/Site Number: **N/A**

**2. LOCATION**

Street & Number: **[REDACTED]** Not for publication: **X**

City/Town: **Bushkill** Vicinity:           

State: **PA** County: **Pike** Code: **PA 103** Zip Code: **18324**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

Ownership of Property  
Private:             
Public-local:             
Public-State:             
Public-Federal: **X**

Category of Property  
Building(s):             
District: **X**  
Site:             
Structure:             
Object:           

Number of Resources within Property  
Contributing

  8    
            
  8  

Noncontributing

           buildings  
  12   sites  
           structures  
           objects  
  12   Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register:           

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: **Historic Contact: Early Relations Between Indian People and Colonists in Northeastern North America, 1524-1783.**

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register
- \_\_\_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register
- \_\_\_\_\_ Removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: Domestic  
Commerce

Sub: Village Site  
Sub: Trade

Current: Recreation and Culture  
Landscape

Sub: Outdoor Recreation  
Park

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

MATERIALS:  
Foundation:  
Walls:  
Roof:  
Other:

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**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

Unless otherwise cited, information in the following section is abstracted from Kraft (1978).

**PROPERTY LOCATION AND HISTORY**

The Minisink Historic District (hereinafter referred to as Minisink) [redacted] within the northern portion of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (hereinafter DWGNRA) in Sussex County, New Jersey and Pike County, Pennsylvania (Figure 7.1). Cultural resources located within this District have yielded and have the potential to yield information of national significance on historic contact between Indian and European people in Munsee Country, a region stretching from southern New York across northern New Jersey to northeastern Pennsylvania. Minisink, a Delaware word variously translated as "Hilly Country" and "Island," was the most important Munsee Indian community for much of the 17th- and 18th-century. Today, Minisink remains one of the most extensive, best preserved, and most intensively studied archeological locales in the Northeast (Heye and Pepper 1915; Kraft 1977, 1978, and 1991; Marchiando 1972; Orr and Campana 1991; Puniello 1991; Puniello and Williams 1978; Ritchie 1949; Williams, Puniello, and Flinn 1982). Archeological properties and a standing structure preserved within District boundaries (Figure 7.7) contain information capable of providing further insights into written records documenting Minisink as a major center of an Indian social network stretching from the Connecticut Valley to Ohio Country, the most prominent and best documented Munsee Indian community of its era, and the single most important Indian community in the upper Delaware River valley during historic contact times.

The following properties are located within Minisink Historic District Boundaries:

**Contributing Archeological Properties:**

- 28-Sx-19 (the Bell-Browning-Blair site)
- 28-Sx-29 (the Bell-Philhower site)
- 28-Sx-48 (the Minisink site)
- 28-Sx-255 (the Pratschler site)
- 28-Sx-256 (the Bena Kill-Mine Road site)
- 36-Pi-4 (the Manna site)
- Fort Westbrook Archeological Site

**Non-Contributing Archeological Properties:**

- 28-Sx-15 (the Brace site)
- 28-Sx-20 (the Alfred Boehme site)
- 28-Sx-21 (the Carter Upper site)
- 28-Sx-22 (the Carter Lower site)
- 28-Sx-23 (the Groflick site)
- 28-Sx-28 (the Minisink Island site)
- 28-Sx-30 (the Nelson site)

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28-Sx-49  
 28-Sx-54 (the Splendora site)  
 36-Pi-19 (the Ludwig site)  
 36-Pi-28 (the McCarty site)  
 36-Pi-132 (the Model Farm site)

## Contributing Standing Structures:

The Westbrook-Bell House

## Non-Contributing Standing Structures:

None

All contributing properties have been shown to possess intact cultural resources associated with historic contact. Although extant documentation indicates that non-contributing properties have the high potential to provide further information on relations between Indian people and colonists at Minisink, further studies are needed to demonstrate their character, condition, and extent. Non-Contributing properties possessing no known associations with historic contact within the Minisink Historic District also may be found to possess significance in other thematic areas.

The Minisink Historic District ~~is located within the northernmost~~  
~~portion of the Delaware River Valley, bounded by the Delaware River~~  
~~both banks of the upper Delaware River from point 1.5~~  
~~miles above the Delaware Water Gap to point 2.5~~  
~~miles south of the Delaware Water Gap. Established by Act of~~  
 Congress in 1965, ~~the District~~ comprises lands acquired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the since-deactivated Tocks Island Dam project. Questions arising over the proposed reservoir's environmental and economic feasibility resulted in its indefinite postponement and the transferral of project lands to the National Park Service in 1978 (National Park Service 1987:1).

Minisink is situated in and around Minisink Island in a broad area of lowland approximately 400 feet AMSL (above mean sea level). Minisink Island itself is a generally level island rising some 20 feet above the river level. Divided by shallow channels into three parts known as the Great Minisink Island, Lesser Minisink Island, and Wequashe's Island, Minisink Island is separated from the New Jersey mainland by the Bena Kill (from the Dutch *Bennen kil*, "inner channel"). ~~Both Minisink Island and its~~  
~~adjacent lowlands lie between steep Potosi Plateau hills rising~~  
~~800 to 900 feet above just west of U.S. Route 999 on the~~  
~~Pennsylvania side of the river and Kittatinny Ridge foothills~~  
~~beginning just east of the Old Mine Road on the New Jersey side.~~  
 These foothills ultimately rise to a maximum elevation of 1800 feet AMSL two miles east of the District. This area collectively encompasses the largest expanse of level arable soils in the otherwise constricted Delaware River valley north of the Water Gap (Figures 7.1-7.3).

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District soils primarily consist of deep, level, well drained, mildly acidic, and generally fertile Chenango-Atherton Braceville loams. Most are glacial outwash deposits derived from gray sandstones, shales, siltstones, and lesser amounts of limestone and igneous rocks. In profile, the plowzone level generally consists of dark brown gravelly fine sandy loams extending from nine to 12 inches below ground level. This layer is underlain by a 20 to 30 inch thick layer of dark yellowish-brown gravelly sandy loam or gravelly loamy sand. A dark to grayish brown 30 to 40 inch thick substratum of loose gravelly loamy sand occurs below the subsoil. Low elevations are subject to periodic flooding. Major floods completely inundating Minisink Island have been recorded in 1888, 1903, 1936, 1949, and 1955 (Ritchie 1949:156; Kraft 1978:21).

Oak, pine, chestnut, sycamore, and catalpa presently predominate in low-lying settings along the Delaware River at Minisink (Figure 7.5). Oak-chestnut forests primarily cover upland areas. Over 1,100 plant species currently are known to be present within the DWGNRA (National Park Service 1987:76-77). Although historically-documented elk, wolf, lynx, and mountain lion have been extirpated, the number of animal species recorded at Minisink generally has remained constant over the course of the last 2,000 years.

During this time, the area's moderate climate, deep fertile soils, abundant flora and fauna, and strategic location at the junction of major trails passing over one of the region's major rivers resulted in Minisink becoming a major focus of human occupation in the Northeast. Navigable by canoe for more than 200 miles above the limits of tidewater at Trenton, New Jersey, the Delaware River has long been a major communication link between the Appalachian Highlands and the Atlantic Coast. The 1747 James Turner Map (Figure 7.6) and contemporary projections show Minisink Island as the terminus of the Minisink Trail or Path extending from the Delaware River south and east across northern New Jersey to where the Navesink River flows into the Atlantic Ocean. On the Pennsylvania side, this path extended north and westward to the Wyoming Valley on the Susquehanna River around the present site of the city of Wilkes-Barre (Wallace 1965:101-102). Another trail, known as the "Minsi Path," paralleled Delaware River shores from Philadelphia to Minisink Island (Wallace 1965:102-103).

The 20 cultural resources presently inventoried within the Minisink Historic District collectively preserve a record of nearly 8,000 years of human occupation at this strategic locale. Minisink archeological sites comprise an almost continuous deposit extending from the New Jersey shoreline across Minisink Island to the bottomlands below the line of steep cliffs paralleling the river on the Pennsylvania side. Singularly dense deposits located on the southernmost portion of the New Jersey side of the District contain intact features dating from late prehistoric to early historic times associated with the historic Munsee Indian community of Minisink (Figure 7.7-7.8).

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Archeological deposits constitute the only presently known record of Indian occupation at Minisink at the time when Dutch and English settlers began colonizing the lower Delaware River during the first decades of the 1600s. Located on waters not navigable by European vessels and far from their colonial centers, Minisink is not noted in the earliest European records. The word itself first appears in 1650 denoting upper Delaware Valley lands on the earliest known version of the Jansson-Visscher map series (the 1655 van der Donck *Nova Belgii* map is the most widely known version of this series) under the legend *Minnessinck ofte t'Landt van Bachom*, "Minisink or Bachom's Land" (Campbell 1965). Although subsequent European reports mention Minisink people and their country with increasing frequency throughout the remaining years of the colonial era, no eyewitness account of the Minisink community predating Arent Schuyler's February 7, 1694 visit to "Minnessinck" is known to exist (Grumet 1991:225-238; a published transcription of Schuyler's report is reproduced in Kraft 1977:29).

Schuyler's account corroborates other sources reporting periodic Iroquois assaults upon Minisink and Delaware people symbolically regarded by the Five Nations as "women" and compelled to pay tribute to them. Acquiescing to other Iroquois demands, many people from Minisink also moved to new Indian communities established under League supervision guarding the southern frontiers of Iroquoia at Wyoming and other Susquehanna Valley locales during the late 1600s and early 1700s. The earliest known written reference to Munsees, a term meaning "People from Minisink," documents a group of these emigrants on "an Eastern Branch of Sasquehannah" on September 27, 1727 (in Grumet 1991:230).

Many Minisink people unwilling to live under Iroquois domination moved farther west to the Allegheny and Ohio Valleys. Others moved north and east to rocky Hudson Highland and Berkshire Mountain upland valleys as yet unsettled by Europeans. Still others, such as the "Menissen" people encountered at the mouth of the Maumee River near modern Toledo, Ohio among a large group of Northeastern Indian expatriates by Sieur La Salle in 1681 or the members of a large "Minnessinke" party travelling south to Florida that same year, ventured farther afield (Grumet 1991:186-188).

Minisink's strategic location astride major communication routes in an area still far from colonial settlement also made the place an increasingly desirable locale for growing numbers of Indian people displaced from ancestral lands during these years. Many of these new immigrants were Hudson and lower Delaware Valley Indian people forced to sell their homes to Europeans expanding into their territories during the mid to late 1600s. Increasingly unable to make their livings on the poor lands left to them, many of these people became nomads in their own homeland. Moving from place to place, many of these people came to regard Minisink town as a vital focal point and important way station in a network of highland Indian settlements stretching from the Connecticut Valley to Ohio (Grumet 1991:185-188).

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Other immigrants travelled eastward to Minisink along another network of relations established during earlier Munsee visits to the Ohio Valley. Schuyler's 1694 visit, for example, was in part prompted by the province of New York's concern over the hundreds of Ohio Shawnees who had recently moved south of Minisink at the Delaware Water Gap. French allies when King William's War broke out between France and England in 1689, the Shawnees had been devastated by attacks from Iroquois warriors allied with the English. Minisink people periodically travelling to Ohio invited the Shawnees to settle among them for protection, guided them to their country, and helped them make peace with the Iroquois and the English when they got there.

Although they appreciated Minisink hospitality, the Shawnees lived restively under Iroquois domination. Embroiled in conflicts with European settlers moving to the Water Gap in 1727, the Shawnees finally moved away from Minisink later that year after being ordered to relocate farther west by the Five Nations. The Iroquois were not the only people trying to assert sovereignty in the upper Delaware River valley at this time. Rival colonists from nearby provinces also claimed the land for themselves. Both the origins and the relative lateness of these disputes may be found in the region's remoteness from the early centers of colonial expansion. Located in rugged interior uplands initially considered stony waste lands by Europeans, Minisink country was rarely visited by colonists and was almost unknown to Europeans until the late 1600s.

European settlers managed to acquire title to nearly all Indian lands in the Hudson Valley by the 1690s. Turning westward, East and West Jersey proprietary authorities began buying land from Indians in the upper Delaware Valley during the last decades of the 17th-century. New Yorkers also began purchasing land around Minisink during the late 1690s and early 1700s. By 1730, New Jersey and New York provincial governments were contending with Munsee owners, independent-minded squatters moving south from Ulster and Orange Counties in New York, and each other for Minisink lands on the eastern shore of the Delaware River.

Expanding northward, Pennsylvanians claiming the entire western bank of the Delaware for themselves under the terms of the still-controversial Walking Purchase of 1737 contested Jersey claims in the area. Refusing to move, Munsee people finally were ordered off their land by Iroquois acting at the request of Pennsylvania authorities in 1742. Continuing to dispute Pennsylvania's claims, Minisinks placed a cloud over the province's title by selling the same land in 1754 and 1755 to Connecticut settlers claiming rights to the territory under a "sea to sea" charter granting them rights to all lands between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans at their colony's latitude.

Much of what exists in the way of descriptions of Minisink town appears in records documenting these disputes. Although no detailed description of the settlement survives, archeological deposits corroborate observations made by visiting surveyors of a large community of bark or mat-covered longhouses situated on



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small farmsteads scattered across Minisink Island and the adjacent New Jersey and Pennsylvania shores. The town's population evidently varied considerably during these years. At times, Minisink seemed to be the home of many hundreds of Indian people. At others, the settlement seemed to be almost deserted. Visits to other communities or periodic emigrations may account for some of these fluctuations. Documented population ranges also may reflect the effects of epidemic disease and shifting political conditions.

Although several sources, such as local folk traditions of a Dutch copper mine at Pahaquarra near the Water Gap, suggest possibilities of earlier penetration, extant records indicate that Europeans did not begin settling at Minisink until the 1720s. Several earlier deeds to Indian lands in the upper Delaware valley, such as Arent Schuyler's 1697 patent confirming purchase of 1,000 acres of the lands he visited three years earlier at Minisink, show that Europeans began staking claims to Minisink territory as early as the 1680s (a transcription of Schuyler's Patent is reproduced in Kraft 1977:30-31). The earliest documented evidence of European occupation in the area appears in an Indian deed dated June 3, 1700 acknowledging William Tietzort's purchase of land recently settled at Maggackemack north of Minisink town in what is now Port Jervis, New York.

Tietzort soon was followed by other Ulster and Orange County, New York settlers driven farther south and west by high prices and rents charged by manor lords along the Hudson. Many of these people were poor German refugees brought to New York by Governor Robert Hunter as indentured servants to produce naval stores during the late 1710s. All but abandoned when the scheme failed soon after their arrival, many of these settlers moved with other Dutch and English families to frontier areas where they purchased land directly from Indian owners in defiance of provincial laws forbidding the practice. One of these, a December 28, 1730 deed from *Scyacop, Indian of Minissinck* to Johannes Westbrook conveying title to 100 acres of previously surveyed land at and around Westbrook's house and barn for the sum of five pounds, represents the earliest known direct evidence of European settlement at Minisink (transcript reproduced in Kraft 1977:39-40).

Extant records clearly show that Indian people continued to live alongside Westbrook and their other European neighbors for many years at Minisink. Relations, however, gradually worsened as Minisink Indian people gradually were forced out of the area by settlers purchasing their last lands, cutting down the forests, slaughtering game, building dams and roads, and fencing in newly cleared farmlands. A small colonial village subsequently grew up around the Indian town. Construction of Fort Westbrook, a fortified stone house built near Westbrook's home to shelter village residents in case of attack sometime after 1730, stood as mute testimony to deteriorating Indian relations until Charles Philhower and other Valley residents scavenged most of the fort's last easily accessible stones during the early 1940s.

Growing numbers of Minisink Indian people spent increasing amounts of time away from the upper Delaware valley in the decades following the founding of the European Minisink town. Many visited friends and family at Wyoming and points farther west. Others travelled north and east to Indian towns in the Hudson Highlands and new missions built in the Berkshires by Presbyterians at Stockbridge, Massachusetts in 1736 and by Moravians in Dutchess County, New York in 1742.

Most Indian people finally moved away from Minisink entirely just before the Munsees and their Delaware and Shawnee allies went to war against their erstwhile British allies when hostilities between France and Great Britain again broke out at the beginning of the Seven Years War in 1755. Munsee warriors from towns along the Susquehanna and Ohio Valleys repeatedly struck homesteads all along the upper Delaware River. Settlers horrified by these raids helped create and carry on local folk traditions centering around the exploits of an implacable Indian-hater named Tom Quick. Although the Indians compelled Delaware Valley settlers to erect lines of forts north and south of Fort Westbrook along both banks of the river, they could not drive the Europeans from their lands. Making peace with the British at the Treaty of Easton in 1758, most Munsee people moved to the Ohio Valley after selling all but their hunting and fishing rights in northern New Jersey for 1,000 Spanish dollars.

Some Indian people continued to make their homes above Minisink at places like Cohecton town in present-day Damascus, Pennsylvania in the years immediately following the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. Living uneasily with their European neighbors, most of these people ultimately aligned themselves with the British when war broke out between Great Britain and the colonies in 1775. Many people from Minisink subsequently joined British and Indian columns attacking the New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania frontiers. Again unable to drive the settlers away, nearly every Indian family remaining in the Delaware Valley finally was compelled to leave following the end of the war in 1783.

Not possessing the raw materials or the abundant sources of water-power attracting industrial development elsewhere, and located to the north of the main Delaware Valley resort area around the Water Gap, Minisink was ultimately bypassed by canals and railroads built farther north and south. This does not mean that Minisink remained a quiet wooded backwater during the 19th- and early 20th-centuries. Photographs and other evidence show that the area was intensively cultivated up until federal purchasing agents began acquiring land around Minisink for the Tocks Island Dam project during the late 1960s (Figure 7.4). Although the overall intensity of cultivation has since diminished somewhat, farmers continue to plant crops at Minisink on leased park lands and remaining private inholdings within DWGNRA boundaries.

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**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Local farmers had been inadvertently plowing up Indian artifacts for over a century when a University of Pennsylvania classics professor named Maxwell Somerville conducted the first known systematic excavation at Minisink in 1899 (Ritchie 1949:161). Ten or so years later, a Branchville, New Jersey physician named Edward S. Dalrymple uncovered the graves of 15 Indian people near the same locale on what was then the Burson W. Bell farm on the New Jersey mainland directly across from Minisink Island (Ritchie 1949:161). One of these interments, the grave of an Indian child, was accompanied by unmistakable evidence of contact in the form of a copper kettle, a silver spoon, two glass beads, 11 thimbles, a bell, a bone comb, and eight copper bracelets (Heye and Pepper 1915:17-18). Although extant documentation indicates that Somerville and Dalrymple dug at and around sites 28-Sx-48 and 28-Sx-255, neither the exact locations of their excavations nor the whereabouts of their field notes presently are known.

Acquiring Dalrymple's artifacts, George G. Heye, founder of the Museum of the American Indian (today's National Museum of the American Indian), subsequently sponsored excavations of his own at what he regarded as the Munsee Cemetery at Minisink during the spring and summer of 1914 (Figures 7.8 and 7.19; Heye and Pepper 1915). This site currently is inventoried in New Jersey State Museum archeological inventory files under the Smithsonian trinomial designation 28-Sx-48 (Williams 1992). Arrested, convicted, and fined \$100 by local authorities for wanton removal of human remains (a conviction subsequently overturned on appeal), Heye's excavators ultimately unearthed 19 pits, 2 dog burials, and 68 human inhumations, including the grave of an individual identified as Nordic or Scandinavian buried in a flexed position with a piece of quartz in his mouth (Figures 7.8 and 7.19). Heye donated a substantial portion of these remains to the Smithsonian Institution, where Ales Hrdlicka used them as a major component in his seminal study of Eastern North American Indian physical anthropology (Hrdlicka 1916).

Heye's excavations encountered what remains today the largest and most extensive assemblage of artifacts yet found in any archeological site in Munsee Country. Numerous stone tools, aboriginal ceramics, and shell and bone objects were encountered in site features and overlying plowzone deposits (Figures 7.23-7.24). Many graves also were found to contain such objects of European origin as glass beads, iron axes and adzes, "brass kettles, bracelets, bells, a spoon, and beads; wire ornaments, probably also of brass; a spoon of German silver; a copper chain; mirrors, fire-steels; pewter and clay pipes, and textile fabrics" (Figures 7.25-7.26; Heye and Pepper 1915:49).

Publication of Heye's findings stimulated widespread interest in the site. Local residents like Rudolph Ludwig soon began collecting artifacts from newly plowed fields at locales like 28-Sx-28 and 28-Sx-49 on Minisink Island and 36 Pi-19 (the Ludwig site) on the Pennsylvania mainland (Figure 7.7). A second Museum of the American Indian field crew, led by Edward Coffin,

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conducted still-unpublished excavations at Minisink in 1925. Archeologists Alanson Skinner and Max Schrabisch also surveyed sites on both banks of the Delaware River at Minisink during these years (Schrabisch 1915 and 1930; Skinner and Schrabisch 1917). Other avocationalists, like Philip J. Launer, who discovered a brass or copper finger ring and a chipped blue glass heart-shaped pendant with aboriginal deposits at the Bena Kill-Mine Road Site (28-SX-256), also occasionally reported their finds (Figure 7.7; Launer 1962).

None of these investigators proved to be as persistent or as destructive as Charles A. Philhower, a school teacher who ultimately became superintendent of the Westfield, New Jersey school system. Purchasing the western portion of the Bell farm in 1922, Philhower's holdings included sites 28-Sx-29 (the Bell-Philhower site), 28-Sx-255 (the Pratschler site), and the westernmost portions of 28-Sx-48 (Figures 7.7-7.9). Indiscriminantly digging trenches and pits throughout this area (Figure 7.10) in what he thought was the historically chronicled site of the "fortress of t'Schicktehacki," Philhower gradually discovered, damaged, or destroyed hundreds of pits and human burials over the course of nearly 40 years (Ritchie 1949:161; Kraft 1977:6-15). Although Philhower's collections presently are under the care of the New Jersey State Museum, his failure to keep even the most cursory field notes severely limits their usefulness to present-day investigators. Philhower, for example, indiscriminantly mixed finds from Minisink with Indian artifacts collected from other sites and regions. Like most of his contemporaries, Philhower only was interested in "perfect" Indian "relics." Uninterested in "broken" or "imperfect" objects, he further regarded all but the most extraordinary or unusual European artifacts as intrusive objects of little intrinsic merit. Because of these predilections, Philhower's collection consists mainly of idiosyncratically-selected undocumented objects of Indian origin.

In 1947, William A. Ritchie, then an archeologist on the staff of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences (the present Rochester Museum and Science Center), conducted excavations at the site of Heye and Philhower's earlier digs (Figures 7.8 and 7.19). Ritchie was drawn to the site by its potential ability to yield new evidence capable of confirming or invalidating *Walam Olum* origin legends allegedly documenting Delaware Indian migrations from Asia to their historic homeland (Ritchie 1949). Ritchie's crews found 99 pits, several hearths and postmolds, 3 dog burials, and 3 human interments containing diagnostic stone and ceramic artifacts primarily dating to Late Woodland times (ca. A.D. 1000-1750). Although many of these features contained incised collared pottery dating to late prehistoric or early historic times, none contained objects of European origin.

Attention again was drawn to Minisink when the site was threatened with destruction by then-proposed Tocks Island Dam construction. In 1967, New Jersey State Museum excavators led by Patricia Marchiando located intact deposits at a site first recorded by Max Schrabisch within what he termed the Minisink

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Island site complex (Schrabisch 1915:30). Known as the Bell-Browning site (28-Sx-19), it is located in a field just north and east of the Westbrook-Bell House Bell Farm land then owned by Colin Browning (Figures 7.7-7.8 and 7.19; Marchiando 1972:131-132).

Working during summer field seasons from 1967 to 1969, Marchiando's excavators located "293 features [including 270 fire, cache, storage, refuse, and burial pits and 23 post molds], 10,402 stone, bone, and ceramic artifacts, and more than 10,000 stone waste flakes" (Figures 7.11-7.12; Marchiando 1972:135). Substantial amounts of deer bones and lesser amounts of bear, beaver, rabbit, and shad remains, more than 20 pounds of freshwater mussel shells, quantities of charred walnut and chestnut shells, and smaller amounts of charred corn, bean, and squash remains were found in site features. A small brass vessel, a larger copper alloy bucket, an iron axe and hoe, a triangular sheet brass projectile point, some brass tinkler cones or beads, other sheet brass fragments, a sherd of delftware, and a number of glass beads dating to the third quarter of the 17th-century also were found with incised Munsee series pottery and other artifacts in several pits (Figures 7.14-7.18).

No European materials were found in the five flexed human interments, the three dog burials, and the grave of a bear cub lying on its back with its arms folded across its chest and its legs extending vertically (Marchiando 1972:137-138). Another interment containing the remains of an individual and a dog found during the 1969 field season was reported but not described in Marchiando's report (Marchiando 1972:158)

Working at the same time, another New Jersey State Museum team led by J. Revell Carr began excavations at the nearby Westbrook Fort site (Carr 1969). Carr's crew located the Fort's intact foundations and documented the possible survival of other associated deposits (Figure 7.31).

During these years, director of Franklin and Marshall College's North Museum, Prof. W. Fred Kinsey, III, also surveyed and examined artifact collections gathered from the Medwin site (36-Pi-3 and 36-Pi-16), the Ludwig site (36-Pi-19), the Manna site (36-Pi-4), the McCarty site (36-Pi-28), and the Wolf site (36-Pi-29) on the Pennsylvania side of the river opposite Minisink Island (Figure 7.7; Kinsey n.d.). Assisted by Vernon Leslie and other local collectors, Kinsey documented the presence of Late Woodland ceramics or triangular chipped stone projectile points at each of these sites. Terminal Late Woodland ceramics used by historically chronicled Indian people noted as "Tribal Series" wares in this survey further were found at the Ludwig, Manna, McCarty, and Medwin sites. A glass container identified as a wine bottle in a collection gathered from the Manna site represents the only clearly identified object of European origin associated with historic contact found at these locales during this survey (Kinsey n.d.:22-23).

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Five years later, Seton Hall University archeologist Herbert C. Kraft conducted two consecutive summer's of field work at Minisink (Figures 7.7-7.8 and 7.19-7.22). Interested in verifying Philhower's alleged discovery of a fortress on his land and convinced that archeological deposits located there still contained intact information capable of addressing outstanding questions on historic Minisink community structure and relationships, Kraft started by working in the area of the Munsee "cemetery" earlier excavated by Dalrymple and Heye (28-Sx-48 and 28-Sx-255). Expanding his excavations into an adjoining unexcavated area, he subsequently conducted additional test excavations at site 28-Sx-29 on and around the grounds of Philhower's since demolished summer home and on nearby portions of Minisink Island (Figures 7.8 and 7.19).

These investigations, which showed sites 28-Sx-29, 28-Sx-48, and 28-Sx-255 to be a single continuous resource, ultimately resulted in the discovery of 411 truncated pits, large numbers of postmolds, several dog burials, and 22 human interments at what Kraft has collectively named the Minisink site (Figures 7.19, 7.22, and 7.29). Coming across a number of partially excavated features first found by previous investigators, Kraft discovered intact deposits beneath several skeletons and at the bottoms of several pits (Figure 7.20).

No identifiable diagnostic artifacts were found in 225 of the pits examined by Kraft's field crews. Objects of European origin were found with terminal Late Woodland Minisink series incised collared ceramics in five of the 186 pits containing diagnostic artifacts. Another 23 pits contained Minisink series ceramics dating from late prehistoric to early historic times. Earlier Late Woodland ceramics dating to the Intermediate (ca. A.D. 1350-1450) and Pahaquarra (ca. A.D. 900-1350) phases were found in the remaining 158 datable pits. Analysis of seasonality indicators found in the substantial assemblage of bone, shells, antler, and floral remains preserved in many of these pits suggests that Minisink was occupied near all year-round throughout Late Woodland times.

Concentric oblong postmold lines measuring 13 feet in diameter found without associated diagnostic artifacts represented the only clearly discernable house pattern identified by Seton Hall excavators (Figure 7.19 and 7.21). Lower portions of severely truncated pits were the only identifiable features in the highly disturbed area where Philhower reportedly found his fortress. A visit by Bryan Stuart, a colleague of Philhower's who had frequently helped him dig up Indian remains at the site, finally cleared up the mystery of fortress t'Schicktewacki. Stuart pointed to an area where he and Philhower had unearthed a rectangular postmold pattern measuring 20 feet by 12 feet during the summer of 1946. Excavating the entire "stockade" to a depth of 6 feet, both men completely destroyed all vestiges of this structure. Far too small to be the site of a fort, this postmold pattern probably represented the remains of a small longhouse (Kraft 1977:11-13).

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Kraft's examination of human burial data at Minisink also permitted reevaluation of earlier findings. Using the sample of 22 burials found during his field work as a control, Kraft contrasted Heye and Pepper's map of the 68 burials uncovered during their 1914 excavations (Heye and Pepper 1915:21) with descriptions of the burials published elsewhere in the report (pp. 19-31). Heye and Pepper's map showed all bodies in extended positions facing southwest. Kraft discovered that only 28 of these people were buried in extended positions. The majority of the remaining burials were interred in flexed positions.

Noting that individuals buried in extended positions were interred with European artifacts or nothing at all, Kraft was able to corroborate other sources identifying extended burials as a post-contact phenomenon at Minisink. Discoveries of European goods in graves of 14 individuals buried in extended positions and 5 flexed interments further showed that Minisink Indian people employed both traditional and innovative interment techniques during historic contact times. Noting that nearly all individuals interred at Minisink during Late Woodland times faced southwest, a widespread historically-chronicled Munsee practice almost unknown among linguistically similar but culturally different Delaware people living farther south, Kraft found further evidence linking historic Minisink people with their prehistoric ancestors.

New Jersey State Museum Upper Delaware Valley Research Project personnel supervised by Curator of Archaeology Lorraine E. Williams also began conducting excavations at Minisink during the summer of 1974 (Puniello and Williams 1978). Like other investigators, Williams had long been aware of the fact that more than 90 percent of all cultural information thus far recovered from Upper Delaware Valley sites had been found in pits. Noting that the Bell-Browning site contained large numbers of such features, Williams selected the site as an ideal locale for testing new methods for assigning component identities to non-diagnostic body sherds overwhelmingly dominating ceramic assemblages recovered from pit features. Contrasting ceramics recovered from two intensively excavated pits during 1974 excavations with previously collected Bell-Browning site assemblages, New Jersey State Museum investigators were able to find evidence suggesting the existence of distinctive culturally-diagnostic body surface treatments (Figures 7.11 and 7.13). Enabling investigators to identify components in several previously undatable deposits, such findings can provide useful new chronological controls to archeologists interested in charting evidence of continuity and change in regional site deposits (Puniello 1991).

Using this technique to trace changing ratios of animal bone and floral remains found in pits dating to different Late Woodland phases, project investigators found new evidence indicating that corn, beans, and squash cultivation increased in importance at Minisink during the protohistoric Late Woodland Minisink phase (Puniello and Williams 1978:154-160). Evidence of seasonality present in site floral and faunal remains also suggested that

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Bell-Browning was most intensively occupied from late August to early April during terminal Late Woodland times (Puniello and Williams 1978:165-166). Studies examining European white clay tobacco smoking pipes and glass beads found in eight of 15 pits containing objects of European origin found at Bell-Browning further indicated that Indian people in contact with Europeans lived at the locale between 1650 and 1720 (Puniello and Williams 1978:125-130). New Jersey State Museum investigators further found Minisink series ceramics in close association with historic European goods in five of the above mentioned eight pits.

Williams's findings corroborated those made by Kraft and other investigators indicating that Minisink was a decentralized community rather than a large nucleated fortified town. Discovery of substantial numbers of human interments and pits containing diagnostic artifacts dating to every phase of the Late Woodland period further showed that far from being a cemetery, Minisink more properly was a place where Indian people had been both living and burying their dead for more than 500 years prior to direct European intrusion into the area.

All salvage excavations were halted at Minisink and other locales within the DWGNRA shortly after Tocks Island Dam preparations were put on hold in 1975. Utilizing findings made during these investigations, National Park Service personnel were able to identify Minisink as one of the park unit's most significant historic resources in the DWGNRA General Management Plan (National Park Service 1987:81). Gathering data needed for appropriate management of cultural resources within park unit boundaries, Mid-Atlantic Region archeologists presently are testing previously unexamined areas above 400 foot AMSL at and near Minisink as part of the five-year 1990-1995 Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Upland Archeology Survey. Discoveries of glass beads and metal utensils with stone tools, ceramics, and other deposits made during the first phases of this project show that intact deposits documenting historic contact between Indian people and colonists continue to survive in and around the Minisink Archeological District (Orr 1992).

Collectively, findings made over the course of nearly a century of archeological investigation at Minisink show that properties located within District boundaries contain a complex array of archeological deposits capable of providing significant new insights into the history of human occupation along the Upper Delaware River valley. Although materials dating to historic contact times have been reported in low lying areas on Minisink Island and the Pennsylvania shore, nearly all systematically excavated historic contact deposits found at Minisink have been recovered from deposits located in New Jersey along the line of high terraces overlooking Minisink Island. Perhaps the most intensively examined landform in the DWGNRA, documented deposits in this terrace area almost entirely consist of more or less truncated pits, postmolds, and other features extending into culturally sterile subsoil strata. Discoveries of artifacts dating from Early Archaic to historic contact times mixed together in terrace plowzones indicate that living floors at



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Minisink have been scraped away by more than two centuries of intermittent plowing.

Although many features show clear evidence of reuse, all presently datable pits contain diagnostic Late Woodland period artifacts. Investigators discovering earlier artifacts predating a pit's most recent component generally regard such finds as evidence of redeposition.

Earlier mentioned artifacts dating from Early Archaic to historic contact times reported on Minisink Island and adjacent portions of the Pennsylvania floodplain largely have been collected from newly plowed field surfaces or from washed out areas exposed by periodic floods. Although amateur archeologists have reported findings of buried deposits throughout District floodplains, truncated features found by Kraft on Minisink Island in 1975 represent the only presently clearly documented record of surviving shallow buried intact features in the District. Recent discoveries of very deeply buried intact deposits at Upper Shawnee Island and other locales within DWGNRA floodplains, however, suggest that comparable findings may yet be made in low lying locales within the District (Stewart 1991).

As mentioned earlier, archeological resources are not the only properties yielding or having the potential to yield nationally significant information relating to historic contact surviving at Minisink. The house mentioned in Scyacop's 1730 deed, now known as the Westbrook-Bell House, presently is maintained by DWGNRA as a park staff residence (Figure 7.30). Retaining its original walls and foundation, this historic building is the oldest surviving standing structure at Minisink. Both it and the archeological remains of nearby Fort Westbrook were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 3, 1980 as contributing properties in the Old Mine Road Historic District (Bodle 1980). Although the two barns presently on the Westbrook-Bell property give every appearance of great age, future research is needed to determine if either contains identifiable elements of the barn also mentioned in the 1730 deed.

#### PROPERTY TYPES

##### General Habitation Sites

Decentralized, Large, Multiple Structure, Long-Term Town

Physical evidence of Indian and European occupation at Minisink corroborates documentary evidence alluding to the existence of large permanent decentralized towns encompassing Minisink Island and adjacent portions of the New Jersey and Pennsylvania mainland. Both peoples constructed small farmsteads and tended fields near their dwellings. Indian people living at Minisink constructed round-ended longhouses made of perishable wood and bark, used slash and burn agricultural techniques, largely relied on locally available game for food and skins, generally followed seasonal settlement-subsistence patterns, and tended to disperse to remote or relatively inaccessible areas during troubled times.

The European version of this property type, typified by the Westbrook-Bell House and Fort Westbrook properties, tended to center around masonry or frame buildings and the practice of plow agriculture and animal domestication (Figures 7.30-7.31). Europeans tended to rely upon nearby fortified houses for protection during wartime, and conducted extended movements away from farmsteads only under extraordinary circumstances.

#### Spiritually Significant Sites: Burials

Burials in the form of human graves and intentional interments of dogs and a bear cub presently represent the most identifiable spiritually significant property type at Minisink. Most consist of primary interments of individuals buried separately in flexed and extended positions. A small number of secondary bundle burials also have been found. Formal burials of dogs and at least one bear cub preserve evidence of historically documented "White Dog Sacrifices" and "Bear Ceremonialism" culminating in ritual interment of animals believed to possess spiritual power (Figure 7.29). Discoveries of interments intermingled among pit and post mold features suggests that Indian people living at Minisink generally buried their dead in and around dwellings rather than in separate cemetery areas.

Pecked into cobblestones, incised into pot collars, or modelled onto clay tobacco pipes, larger numbers of effigy face representations have been recovered at Minisink than at all other sites in Munsee country combined (Kraft 1978:77-81). Although their exact significance is not clearly understood, similarities with ethnographically documented wooden masks and house posts suggests that some or all of these effigy faces may represent powerful spirit beings known among Delaware and Munsee people as *Mesingw* (Figures 7.27-7.28).

Indian people living in New Jersey and nearby states regarding Minisink as a spiritually significant locale presently conduct religious observances at the site of what Heye and Pepper identified as the "Munsee Cemetery" in 1914. Held in accordance with the terms of use permits granted by DWGNRA authorities, such observations do not negatively impact culturally resources at this locale.

#### PROPERTY INTEGRITY

##### Archeological Deposits

Soil erosion, farming, amateur collecting, professional archeological excavation, and property development have impacted cultural resources at Minisink. Salvage excavations in the Minisink site complex area damaged portions of sites 28-Sx-19, 28-Sx-29, 28-Sx-48, and 28-Sx-255 (Figures 7.8, 7.11, and 7.19). Severe flooding in 1949 and 1955 is known to have washed away many artifacts on Minisink Island and exposed others later removed by local collectors. Further damage was done when local landowners mechanically removed as much as three feet of topsoil

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in the areas of the noncontributing Minisink Island site (28-Sx-28) at the northern end of Minisink Island and the McCarty site (36-Pi-28) on the Pennsylvania floodplain opposite the lower portion of Minisink Island in anticipation of inundation of their land by the now cancelled Tocks Island Dam project (Figure 7.7).

Surface finds and buried deposits reported in similar landforms elsewhere in the upper Delaware River valley indicate that intact deposits may be preserved at or near the surface in unplowed areas along currently wooded terrace edges on the banks of the Delaware River, the Bena Kill separating Minisink Island from the New Jersey Mainland, and the small streams running through portions of Minisink Island. Deposits possessing high integrity like those encountered at the Bell-Philhower and the Bell-Browning sites also may be found beneath plowzone deposits in unexcavated District areas. A high potential also exists for the survival of deeply buried deposits beneath displaced overburden or disturbed strata at extensively impacted areas like the westernmost reaches of the Bell-Philhower site devastated by Philhower's summer digs and portions of Minisink Island and the adjacent Pennsylvania mainland mined for their topsoils.

#### Westbrook-Bell House

Reviewing documentation on file in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service historical architect Bonnie Halda reports that:

"The Westbrook-Bell House is a one-and-one-half story, L-shaped masonry dwelling with a small frame kitchen addition. Some preservation work was done on the house in the late 1970s, including repointing the masonry walls, installing a wood shingle roof, and slightly regrading the surface area around the main building (National Park Service 1977). Overall, extant documentation indicates that the structure appears to be in good condition and retains a high degree of exterior integrity" (Halda 1992).

The Westbrook-Bell House currently serves as the residence of a Park ranger. Both this ranger and other DWGNRA personnel regularly patrol all Park lands in and around the Minisink Historic District. Administering all National Park Service preservation policies and programs within the DWGNRA, park unit personnel preserve and protect the integrity of intact deposits capable of yielding significant information within the Minisink Historic District.

#### PRESENT APPEARANCE

Farming and outdoor recreation presently constitute primary land uses at the Minisink Historic District (Figures 7.2-7.3). Hiking, boating, and fishing are the major recreation activities carried on in this area. Park personnel maintain river fronts and high terrace areas used by hikers, boaters, and fishermen in a semi-wild state. Most of these areas are covered by woodland

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or fields (Figure 7.5). Dirt trails and small well-marked unimproved campsites and landings are the only facilities available in this area.

Lands located near the northern and southernmost limits of the District in New Jersey, on most low lying areas on Minisink Island, and on the Pennsylvania mainland presently are cultivated by farmers possessing permits issued by DWGNRA. Although farmers use small dirt roads and paved roads ~~located on the island~~, all other support and storage facilities are maintained on private lands located beyond District boundaries.

## SECTION 7 FIGURES

- Figure 7.1: Minisink Historic District (Milford PA.-N.J. Quadrangle, USGS 7.5" Series Map).
- Figure 7.2: Panoramic View of the Southern Portion of the Minisink Historic District Looking Southeast (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft, 1975).
- Figure 7.3: Panoramic View of the Northern Portion of the Minisink Historic District Looking Northeast (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft, 1975).
- Figure 7.4: View of the Bell-Philhower Site Facing West at the Time of the Heye and Pepper Excavations in 1914, Minisink Historic District (Hrdlicka 1916: Plate 2).
- Figure 7.5: View of the Bell-Philhower Site Facing West in 1992, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Robert S. Grumet, July 21, 1992).
- Figure 7.6: James Turner Map of 1747 Showing Minisink Island and "The Path from Navesink to Minisink" (Map 8 in Kraft 1977:16).
- Figure 7.7: Minisink Historic District, Showing District Borders, Cultural Resources, Private Inholdings, and Topsoil Removal Areas.
- Figure 7.8: Bell-Philhower and Bell-Browning Site Excavation Areas, Minisink Historic District (Map 6 in Kraft 1978:17).
- Figure 7.9: Hand drawn Map Showing Artifact Collection Areas Drawn by Charles A. Philhower in 1936, Minisink Historic District (Map in Kraft 1977:17).
- Figure 7.10: Charles A. Philhower Pothunting Pit, Bell-Philhower Site, 1992, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Robert S. Grumet, July 21, 1992).

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- Figure 7.11: Bell-Browning Site Plan, 1967-1969 and 1974 Excavations (Puniello and Williams 1978: Figures 2a and 2b).
- Figure 7.12: Bell-Browning Site Excavations, 1968, Minisink Historic District (Puniello and Williams 1978: Plate 1b).
- Figure 7.13: Features 1 and 2, Bell-Browning Site, 1974 Excavations, Minisink Historic District (Puniello and Williams 1978: Figure 3).
- Figure 7.14: Munsee Series Incised Collared Pottery In Situ, Bell Browning Site Excavations, 1968, Minisink Historic District (Puniello and Williams 1978: Plate 1c).
- Figure 7.15: Glass Beads from Pit 35, Bell-Browning Site (1967-1969), Minisink Historic District (Puniello and Williams 1978: Plate 22).
- Figure 7.16: Metal Artifacts Recovered from the Bell-Browning Site (1967-1969), Minisink Historic District. Top: Iron Ax from Pit 61; Left to Right: Iron Hook from Pit 45, Brass Triangular Projectile Point from Pit 43, Iron Adze from Pit 43, Iron Knife with Bone Handle from Pit 69, Iron Ball Padlock from Pit 43, and Iron Pistol Flintlock Frizzen from Pit 35 (Puniello and Williams 1978: Plate 23).
- Figure 7.17: European White Clay Tobacco Smoking Pipebowls Recovered from the Bell-Browning Site (1967-1969), Minisink Historic District. Top: Pipe Recovered from Pit 242; Bottom: Pipe with Incuse "EB" on Heel Recovered from Pit 220A (Puniello and Williams 1978: Plate 25).
- Figure 7.18: "Delft" Ceramic Sherd Recovered from Pit 61, Bell-Browning Site (1967-1969), Minisink Historic District (Puniello and Williams 1978: Plate 24).
- Figure 7.19: Field Map Showing a Composite of Known Excavations at the Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Map 7 in Kraft 1978:19).
- Figure 7.20: 1974 Seton Hall University Excavations at the Bell-Philhower Site Locale Showing Intact Features Below 1914 Heye-Pepper Excavation Levels (Pedestaled Features), Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft, 1974).
- Figure 7.21: Circular Postmold Housepattern Revealed During 1974 Seton Hall University Excavations at the Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Map 8 in Kraft 1978:22).

- Figure 7.22: Plan View, 1974-1975 Seton Hall University Bell-Philhower Site Locale Excavations, Minisink Historic District (Map 9 in Kraft 1978:24).
- Figure 7.23: Shell Artifacts Recovered from the Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District. Top Right: Beaver Pendant found with Skeleton 59 (Figure 17 in Heye and Pepper 1915:43; Top Left: Fish Pendant found with Skeleton 53 (Figure 14 in Heye and Pepper 1915:41); Middle: Gorget Restored from Crescents Found with Skeleton 29 (Figure 5 in Heye and Pepper 1915:34; Bottom: Bird Pendant found by Mr. Bell (Figure 12 in Heye and Pepper 1915:38).
- Figure 7.24: Bell-Philhower Site Locale Artifacts, Minisink Historic District. Top: Shell Gorget found with Skeleton 66 (Figure 7 in Heye and Pepper 1915:36); Bottom: Pewter Pipe with Conjectural Restoration found with Skeleton 57 (Figure 19 in Heye and Pepper 1915:51).
- Figure 7.25: Brass Kettles, Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft).
- Figure 7.26: Iron Adze (left) and Iron Ax (right), Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft).
- Figure 7.27: Pecked Human Effigy Face Cobbles, Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft).
- Figure 7.28: Human Effigy Face, Munsee Series Incised Ware, Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft).
- Figure 7.29: Dog Burial, 1974 Seton Hall University Excavations, Bell-Philhower Site Locale, Minisink Historic District (Photograph by Herbert C. Kraft).
- Figure 7.30: Westbrook-Bell House in 1992, Southwestern Elevation (Photograph by Robert S. Grumet, July 21, 1992).
- Figure 7.31: Fort Westbrook Site Excavation Plan, 1968 (in Carr 1969).

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide:      Locally:     

Applicable National Register Criteria:     A        B        C        D     

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):     A        B        C        D        E        F        G     

NHL Criteria:             6

NHL Theme(s):

Areas of Significance:             Archeology/Historic-Aboriginal

Period(s) of Significance:        c. AD 1500-1750

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):            N/A

Cultural Affiliation:             Munsee

Architect/Builder:                N/A

**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.****HISTORIC CONTEXT SUMMARY STATEMENT**

Regional Historic Context: "Historic Contact Between Indians and Colonists in the North Atlantic Region, 1524-1783," in Vol. 1, pp. 31-44.

Sub-Regional Historic Contexts: "Munsee Country," in Vol. 1, pp. 96-104.

**Significance and Thematic Representation**

Contributing archeological properties within the Minisink Historic District conform to National Historic Landmark Program significance criterion 6 by yielding or having the potential "to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States" (35 CFR Part 65.4). Cultural resources located within this District have revealed and continue to possess the potential to further reveal information of major scientific importance relating to Munsee Indian people. Minisink properties further shed light upon historic contact period occupations in Munsee Country, a region stretching from southern New York across northern New Jersey to northeastern Pennsylvania. As mentioned earlier, Minisink was the most important Munsee Indian community for much of the 17th- and 18th-century. Today, Minisink remains one of the most extensive, best preserved, and most intensively studied archeological locales in the Northeast (Heye and Pepper 1915; Kraft 1977, 1978, and 1991; Marchiando 1972; Orr and Campana 1991; Puniello 1991; Puniello and Williams 1978; Ritchie 1949; Williams, Puniello, and Flinn 1982). Archeological properties and a standing structure preserved within District boundaries contain information capable of providing further insights into written records documenting Minisink as a major center of an Indian social network stretching from the Connecticut Valley to Ohio Country, the most prominent and best documented Munsee Indian community of its era, and the single most important Indian community in the upper Delaware River valley during historic contact times.

Archeological deposits constitute the only presently known record of Indian occupation at Minisink when Dutch and English settlers first began colonizing coastal portions of Munsee country during the early 1600s. Excavators working at the Minisink site since the late 19th-century have recovered the largest, most extensive, and best documented assemblage of artifacts yet found in any archeological locale in Munsee country. Working in 1914, George Heye discovered extensive deposits associated with what he thought was the historic Munsee cemetery. Studying Heye's findings and conducting excavations of their own, William A. Ritchie and later Herbert C. Kraft found that the Munsee cemetery was in fact a substantial habitation area where Indian people had been making their homes and burying their dead for more than 500



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years before the first European settlement of the area during the early 1700s.

Excavations conducted by Kraft, W. Fred Kinsey, III, Patricia Marchiando, Lorraine E. Williams, and others in response to the projected inundation of the area by the since-cancelled Tocks Island Dam project during the late 1960s and early 1970s found that Minisink Historic District cultural resources still contained intact cultural resources capable of providing information addressing outstanding questions on historic Minisink community structure and relationships. Wide-area excavations conducted by Kraft, for example, showed that Minisink was a widely dispersed community rather than crowded walled fortress. Examining mortuary data from the site, Kraft further was able to show that burial positions and orientations identified in Minisink graves matched historically chronicled Munsee interment practices.

Intensively excavating specific pit features, New Jersey State Museum investigators sought to develop new ceramic identification techniques capable of dating previously undatable deposits. Studying floral and faunal remains recovered during their excavations, they were able to discern evidence indicating that corn, bean, and squash cultivation assumed increasing importance at Minisink during protohistoric and historic times.

Archeological investigations also uncovered the intact foundations of colonial Fort Westbrook, a fortified house used for protection by early European settlers in the area. Both this site and the Westbrook-Bell House, the oldest surviving standing structure at Minisink, have yielded and retain the potential to yield information on relations between Indians and early European settlers at Minisink, regional construction techniques, and 17th-century western European architectural styles and methods.

Collectively, information preserved in these and other contributing properties within the Minisink Historic District provide new insights into cultural developments of national significance associated with the following NHL thematic elements:

Theme I: Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations.

Sub-Theme I.D: Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations.

Facet I.D.1.i: Native Adaptations to Northeastern Environments at Contact.

No currently designated NHL represents this facet. The Minisink Historic District is one of six properties containing nationally significant early contact period resources currently being nominated as NHLs in the Historic Contact theme study. Like Minisink, the Fort Corchaug, Mashantucket, Nauset, and Ward's Point sites are located in the North Atlantic region. Minisink and Ward's Point are the only nominated properties located in Munsee Country. Ward's Point is located on the Atlantic coast at

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the southernmost portion of Munsee Country. Deposits preserved in Ward's Point reflect the site's coastal location in a transitional area between Delaware and Munsee territory. Minisink, by contrast, is the only nominated property associated with earliest contact located in the hilly interior of the Munsee heartland.

All archeological contributing properties locating within the Minisink Historic District contain Minisink phase incised collared ceramics considered diagnostic of protohistoric and early historic Munsee Indian occupation. Similar pottery has been found in contemporary deposits in sites throughout Mahican and Mohawk territory. Minisink deposits have the potential to yield significant new information needed to help archeologists more fully explicate identities of, and relationships between, makers and users of these stylistically similar wares in a large culturally diverse area stretching from the upper Delaware River across the Hudson Valley to the Mohawk River. Studies of Minisink pottery and other assemblage components preserved within Minisink Historic District archeological deposits may facilitate development of techniques capable of producing finer and more accurate chronological controls for sites in this area, help establish ethnic identities and affiliations of site occupants, and assist in the formulation of new methods for more clearly identifying site forms and functions.

**Facet I.D.2: Establishing Intercultural Relations.**

Documentary data link 24 NHLs and NPS Park Units with this facet. Archeological investigations document aspects of sub-facets associated with this facet at six properties; Boughton Hill, Fort Christina, Fort Stanwix National Monument, Fort Ticonderoga, Old Fort Niagara, and the Printzhof. Nearly all properties nominated in historic contact theme study possess archeological values documenting below listed sub-facets. Minisink and Ward's Point, however, are the only nominated properties presently documenting the Munsee role in establishing intercultural relations in the North Atlantic Region. Minisink Historic District resources have yielded or have the potential to yield nationally significant information associated with each of the below listed sub-facets:

**Sub-Facet I.D.2.i: Trade Relationships**

All contributing properties within the Minisink Historic District contain artifactual or biological evidence of trade relationships. Above mentioned stylistic similarities between Minisink series wares and contemporary ceramics produced by people living in the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys, for example, testify to continuing contacts with Indian people from these areas. Minisink sites further contain the single largest assemblage of imported non-Indian metalwares, glasswares, and other objects of European origin found in any known locale in Munsee Country. The Westbrook-Bell House and Fort Westbrook archeological site are locales associated with the earliest Europeans settling alongside and trading with Munsee Indian people at Minisink. Collectively, the Westbrook-Bell House and contributing Indian and European

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archeological sites preserved at Minisink have yielded and retain the potential to yield further information on changing patterns of trade relations between Indian people and European settlers at this strategic locale in the heart of Munsee Country during historic contact times.

- Sub-Facet I.D.2.a: Trapping and Fishing for Newcomers
- Sub-Facet I.D.2.j: Cash Cropping
- Sub-Facet I.D.2.k: Helping Foreigners Survive: Providing Food, Clothing, and Shelter

Discovery of earlier mentioned game animal bones, charred plant remains, and freshwater clam shells in deposits containing imported European metalwares and glasswares in well-dated intact protohistoric and early historic sites have the potential to explicate presently poorly understood aspects of Munsee Indian provision of supplies and foodstuffs to newcomers chronicled in colonial documents.

- Sub-Facet I.D.2.e: Defending Native Homelands
- Sub-Facet I.D.2.h: New Native Military Alliances

Minisink deposits have the high potential to yield information capable of providing significant new insights into how Indian people living at Minisink established military alliances with Shawnees and other refugees. Information preserved in Minisink sites also may shed further light on the diplomatic and military consequences of the symbolic status of "Woman" ascribed to the Munsees and Delawares by the Iroquois during the late 17th and early 18th-centuries. Minisink site information also may further illuminate still poorly understood aspects of political and military relations between Indian people living at Minisink and Dutch, Swedish, and English colonists. Analysis of settlement patterns reflected in sites containing gunflints, lead shot, chipped stone and metal triangular projectile points, and related materials may further explain why Indian people, unlike the first European neighbors, did not erect forts for protection against attacks documented in historic records.

- Sub-Facet I.D.2.f: Defending Native Religious Systems

Analyses of the contents, positions, and forms of flexed and extended primary inhumations, secondary bundled bone burials, and formal interments of dogs and bear cubs together with effigy faces in stone and pottery found within the Minisink Historic District have yielded and continue to have the potential to yield significant information on Munsee mortuary practices and spiritual beliefs during historic contact times.

- Sub-Facet I.D.2.g: Introductions to Foreign Religious Systems

As mentioned earlier, analyses of human interments at Minisink show a shift from flexed and bundled burials used by Owasco and Intermediate phase ancestors of historic Munsee people to the mixture of flexed and extended burials used by Munsees during protohistoric and early historic times. Further analysis of

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burial patterns at Minisink may provide data needed to test hypotheses attributing adoption of extended inhumations at Minisink and other Munsee sites to the influence of Europeans.

Facet I.D.3: Varieties of Early Conflict, Conquest, or Accommodation.

Sub-Facet I.D.3.a: Transfer of Technology to Native People

All contributing properties within the Minisink Historic District contain datable non-Indian white clay tobacco pipes, glass beads, or other diagnostic artifacts. These and associated imported wares, animal bones, and botanical remains have the potential to yield new insights into changing processes of technology transfer to Indian people at Minisink during the historic contact period.

Sub-Facet I.D.3.b: Forced and Voluntary Population Movements

Sub-Facet I.D.3.c: The New Demographics

Sub-Facet I.D.3.d: Changing Settlement Types

Several bodies of archeological evidence found within the Minisink Historic District document information associated with these sub-facets. House-patterns, pits, and other features preserved at Minisink have the potential to further illuminate historically documented demographic and settlement shifts in Munsee Country. The Westbrook-Bell House and Fort Westbrook also can furnish new information capable of shedding light on the effects of European colonization on Munsee Indian population movements, demographic profiles, and settlement type changes. Human burials preserved at Minisink also can yield otherwise unobtainable information of national significance illuminating presently poorly understood patterns of pathology, nutrition, and demography of potential importance to the Indian community in particular and the nation as a whole.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.  
(The Fort Westbrook Archeological Site and the Westbrook-Bell House are listed in the National Register.)
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # \_\_\_\_\_
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):  
Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.  
New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey  
Seton Hall University Museum, South Orange, New Jersey  
The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



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**Boundary Justification:**

Minisink Historic District boundaries encompass lands shown to contain archeological resources or standing structures that have yielded or have the potential to yield nationally significant information relating to historic contact between Indian people and European colonists in Munsee Country.

Inaccessible or unsurveyed known or potential associated resources may exist beyond current nominated property boundaries. Such resources should be considered for inclusion within property boundaries pending appropriate changes in survey or accessibility status.