



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18AN85

Site Name: North River

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Snowdon's (Snowden's) Landing, Shell Hill

Historic

Brief Description:

Middle & Late Woodland stratified shell midden, possible Contact site, 17th-18th-century domestic site

Unknown

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 7

SCS soil & sediment code 22) MVE

Latitude 38.9804 Longitude -76.6120

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m Site slope 0-5%

Ethnobotany profile available  Maritime site

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

### Topography

- Floodplain  High terrace
- Hilltop/bluff  Rockshelter/cave
- Interior flat  Hillslope
- Upland flat  Unknown
- Ridgetop  Other
- Terrace  Shoreline
- Low terrace

### Ownership

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/county/city
- Unknown

### Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) North River

#### Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 15 m

#### Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site  Woodland site

Archaic site  MD Adena

Early archaic  Early woodland

Middle archaic  Mid. woodland

Late archaic  Late woodland

Unknown prehistoric context

Contact period site  ca. 1820 - 1860

ca. 1630 - 1675  ca. 1860 - 1900

ca. 1675 - 1720  ca. 1900 - 1930

ca. 1720 - 1780  Post 1930

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown context

### Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American  Asian American

African American  Unknown

Anglo-American  Other

Hispanic

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

## Site Function Contextual Data:

### Prehistoric

Multi-component  Misc. ceremonial

Village  Rock art

Hamlet  Shell midden

Base camp  STU/lithic scatter

Rockshelter/cave  Quarry/extraction

Earthen mound  Fish weir

Cairn  Production area

Burial area  Unknown

Other context

### Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural

#### Domestic

Homestead

Farmstead

Mansion

Plantation

Row/townhome

Cellar

Privy

#### Industrial

Mining-related

Quarry-related

Mill

Black/metalsmith

Furnace/forge

Other  possible ired

#### Transportation

Canal-related

Road/railroad

Wharf/landing

Maritime-related

Bridge

Ford

#### Educational

Commercial

Trading post

Store

Tavern/inn

#### Military

Battlefield

Fortification

Encampment

#### Townsite

Religious

Church/mtg house

Ch support bldg

#### Burial area

Cemetery

Sepulchre

Isolated burial

#### Bldg or foundation

Possible Structure

Post-in-ground

Frame-built

Masonry

Other structure

#### Slave related

Non-domestic agri

Recreational

Midden/dump

Artifact scatter

Spring or well

Unknown

Other context

## Interpretive Sampling Data:

### Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken

### Historic context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken



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## Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types			
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Koens-Crispin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

## Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/> 58	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## Historic Sherd Types

<b>Earthenware</b>		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Stoneware</b>	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porcelain</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts			
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 258	Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/> 71	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/> 524
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Oyster shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 137	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> glass bead	

## Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## Lithic Material

Jasper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts			
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tobacco related	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
		Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iron	

## Historic Features

Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1:  +/-  years BP Reliability  Sample 2:  +/-  years BP Reliability  Sample 3:  +/-  years BP Reliability

Sample 4:  +/-  years BP Reliability  Sample 5:  +/-  years BP Reliability  Sample 6:  +/-  years BP Reliability

Sample 7:  +/-  years BP Reliability  Sample 8:  +/-  years BP Reliability  Sample 9:  +/-  years BP Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



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## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at Anne Arundel County Planning and Zoning, MAC (1972)

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

The Snowdon's Landing site (also known as Shell Hill, North Branch, North River, and 18AN85) is the remains of a multi-component oyster harvesting and resource procurement campsite with evidence of its heaviest occupation in the later portions of the Woodland period. The site is located along MD-450, near the Lusby Crossroads area in Anne Arundel County. It is situated at the top of a hill overlooking the floodplain at the confluence of the North River and Tarnans Branch. Much of the surrounding landscape is shallow freshwater marsh and wooded swamp. The hill itself is wooded with mature deciduous trees. Soils at the site are Annapolis fine sandy loams.

The site has been known to local collectors since at least the mid-1930s. These early excavators described the site as a stratified open shell midden that had been exposed by an eroding river bank, but the extent and exact location of their work is not well-known. In 1977, an archeological survey was conducted of the South River drainage basin. At that time vegetation reportedly obscured the site and it could not be located, however, artifact collections from some of the early amateur collectors at the site were examined and reported.

Artifacts observed in local collections included a rhyolite point tip, 1 Orient fishtail, 1 Calvert point, 1 Rossville point, possibly 1 fluted point, 1 leaf-shaped point, Marcey Creek Plain sherds (minimally estimated at 2 sherds), a coarse quartz-tempered ceramic (minimally estimated at 2 sherds), at least 15 shell-tempered sherds (Mockley and both incised and fabric-impressed Rappahannock), 2 bone awls, a bear metatarsal, a tubular blue glass bead, and unidentified early historic finds. The site received no additional (documented) attention until 2009, when it was the subject of a state-sponsored survey.

In 2009, a multi-year study was begun to examine the Middle Woodland time period of prehistory. The Lost Towns Project, based out of Anne Arundel County, was awarded a non-capital grant from the Maryland Historical Trust to further examine the period with a focus on Anne Arundel County and Central Maryland. The site was visited in February of that year as part of the initial reconnaissance stage of the project. All of the known 169 previously recorded Middle Woodland sites in the county were re-visited and their potential to yield additional information was assessed. Literature review was also conducted as a means of background research.

After the initial reconnaissance, Lost Towns determined that 18AN85 had significant potential and included it in the list of eight sites that they would be revisiting to conduct more rigorous testing. Ultimately, time and budget constraints would only permit the researchers to re-visit four of the planned 8 Middle Woodland sites, but 18AN85 was one of the sites that was tested.

In July of 2009 a Phase II-level of investigation was carried out at Snowden's Landing. The 2009 work entailed unsystematic surface collection, the excavation of 6 shovel test pits (STPs), and the excavation of a single 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) test unit on the east face of the hill. The entire site and surrounding area was walked over to search for materials on the surface as well as those eroding out of the hill. Three shovel tests were excavated near the crown of the hill, in the "core" area of the shell midden. Two STPs were excavated on the floodplain to the east and 1 was excavated on an opposing bluff to the south. No description of the excavation methods is provided in the project report, but presumably soils were screened through hardware cloth. The report does note that there is a bias in the faunal assemblage due to the fact that 100% of animal bones were collected, while only whole oyster shells with "female" hinges were collected.

No plowzone was detected in any of the STPs, but an upper organic horizon containing shells was noted in the STP excavated on the main bluff itself. This lay atop the main artifact-bearing strata of less-organic strong brown sandy loam, which extended to a depth of 40-52 cm (1.3-1.7 ft) below ground surface. These 3 STPs produced Townsend and other shell-tempered sherds, flakes, oyster shell, 3 mammal bones, charcoal, and fire-cracked rock. The STP on the opposite bluff was very similar in profile, but with less oyster shell recovered. The assemblage was also quite similar, but with sand-tempered pottery and some historic objects recovered. The two STPs in the floodplain did not produce prehistoric artifacts. These STPs were excavated to a depth of roughly 91 cm (3 ft) and still did not encounter subsoil. The only artifact recovered was a white clay pipe fragment.

Again, the 1 formal test unit was placed on the east-facing slope of the main bluff, partially in an area of active soil erosion. Excavation revealed clear evidence of stratification (as was seen in the bluff-top STPs) and also revealed a number of small, dark circular soil stains. Stratum 1 produced Townsend and unidentified gravel-tempered ceramics. Stratum 2 (the midden layer) produced Townsend, Mockley, and other shell tempered sherds, as well as a Levanna point. The only diagnostics in Stratum 3 were Popes Creek net-impressed sherds. And Stratum 4 produced an un-typed side-notched point. This configuration suggests a fairly intact cultural deposit.

The soils stains clustered in the northeastern corner of the unit and were just below the artifact-producing Stratum 3 that was encountered below the shell midden. Fire-cracked rock and darkened soil was encountered just to the south of the circular stains. Several of the potential features were excavated and very tentatively identified as shallow post holes. Their proximity to the fire-cracked rock and darkened soil suggests a potential cooking hearth on the bluff that predated the shell midden. Limited artifacts were encountered in a fourth artifact-bearing strata before hitting subsoil. A historic clay pipe fragment was recovered in this fourth strata, but was believed to have fallen from the profile wall during excavation.

The artifact assemblage recovered during the 2009 studies at 18AN85 consisted of 984 prehistoric artifacts and 14 historic objects. The historic assemblage from the site consisted of 3 brick fragments, 2 square nails, 2 white clay tobacco pipe fragments, 5 pieces of sheet metal, and 2 modern un-burned seeds. Based on these finds and the recovery of a blue glass bead and unidentified "early historic" finds in the early 20th century at 18AN85, a contact period component may be present.

The prehistoric assemblage consisted of 2 projectile points (a quartz Levanna and a rhyolite side-notched point), a scraper or graver, a possible spokeshave, 225 flakes, 23 pieces of shatter, 71 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 5 other lithics, 56 Townsend sherds, 3 Mockley sherds, 3 Pope's Creek sherds (2 rimsherds), 22 shell-tempered sherds, 6 sand-tempered sherds, 3 gravel-tempered sherds, 25 other ceramic sherds or crumbs, 243 mammal bones, 24 turtle shell fragments, 169 gar fish scales, 53 pieces of oyster shell, 2 clam shells, 2 snail shells, 30 other faunal objects, and 15 pieces of charcoal. Lithic raw materials include quartz (220 objects), rhyolite (49), quartzite (41), chert (7), sandstone (2), jasper (2), serpentine (1), and ironstone (1). Quartz and quartzite could be obtained locally, while other materials would have to be acquired through trade or travel for direct procurement.

The evidence suggests that 18AN85 served as an oyster-harvesting station and resource procurement during several periods of prehistory. The heaviest use



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of the site seems to have occurred during the Middle and Late Woodland periods based on the large proportion of shell-tempered sherds recovered. The site is situated in a very productive environmental setting at an embayment where freshwater and saltwater meet and form a marsh. It also would have been a good location for trade and travel. The identification of possible features and apparently intact strata (and no plowzone) suggest that the site is fairly undisturbed. Site 18AN85 should be considered a significant prehistoric resource capable of addressing research question related to the Middle and Late Woodland and potentially other periods of Maryland prehistory.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

95001190, GISTool, Site Files