



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18AN964

Site Name: Clark Branch Button

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Field Site #2,BWI Hiker-Biker Trail, Section 3

Historic

Brief Description:

early 20th century shell paved road

Unknown

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 7

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.1614

Longitude -76.6746

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 33 m

Site slope

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

### Ownership

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

### Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Clark Branch

#### Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Spring

#### Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 10 m

## 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

#### 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

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

### Historic context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

N

Shell species analysis



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## Diagnostic Artifact Data:

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

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

Historic Sherd Types		Ironstone		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
<b>Earthenware</b>		Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	4	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porcelain</b>	3	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		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

Dated features present at site

early 20th century shell paved road

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	11	Activity item(s)	783
Glass (all)	47	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	46	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture		Misc. kitchen	11
Arms		Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing		Misc.	25
Personal items		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

The Clark's Branch Button Site (18AN964), also known as Field Site #2 of the BWI Hiker-Biker Trail, Section 3, is a preserved remnant of an early 20th century shell paved road. The name of the site stems from the recovery of button blanks amongst the shell used to pave the former road. The site is situated near the Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport in northern Anne Arundel County on a parcel of low sloping bottom land adjacent to the Clark Branch wetlands. Clark Branch drains the otherwise broad moderately rolling uplands that surround the site into nearby Stony Run. Most of the surrounding landscape is manicured grass with some stands of deciduous trees (primarily Maple). Soils at the site are Galestown and Evesboro loamy sands underlain by Cretaceous period sand and gravel deposits.

The site was first identified in early 1995, during a Phase I survey near BWI Airport. This work was carried out for a (then) proposed Hiker-Biker Trail through the area. This trail project entailed the construction of 5,491 meters (3.35 miles) of a 3.05 m (10 ft) wide bituminous concrete trail. The 1995 survey methods included the excavation of shovel test pits (STPs) along four transects following the course of the proposed hiker-biker trail. A total of 213 STPs were excavated along the trail path. The shovel tests measured approximately 40 cm in diameter and were excavated to depth between 30 and 120 cm depending on conditions in the field. The majority of STPs were excavated into the culturally sterile C horizon, except where deep fill or otherwise disturbed deposits were encountered. All soil was dry sifted through hardware cloth. Stratigraphic profiles of each STP were measured and recorded and all artifacts collected were washed and cataloged on standardized forms.

A total of 11 STPs were excavated at roughly 10 meter intervals in two transects in the general vicinity of the site. Six of these revealed a concentration of clam shell cut for pear button manufacture. Based on the distribution of shovel tests with cut shell remains, the site area measures 25 meters east-west and approximately 9 meters north-south, with the site extending possibly as far as Clark Branch. This shell deposit was within the top three strata, between 10 to 50 cm below the surface, and lies on top of a buried topsoil horizon. A dense concentration of almost solid shell material, including unfinished buttons, was identified between the top two strata. The shell fragments and artifacts were from large fresh water clams, with many of the larger pieces exhibited multiple circular cuts, indicating shell button manufacture.

Artifacts recovered during the 1995 Phase I project included 1 partially completed shell button, 13 button blanks, 253 fragments of mostly drilled clam shell, 3 undrilled pieces of clam shell, 71 undrilled oyster shell fragments, 5 square nails, a piece of window glass, a whiteware sherd, 6 colorless glass bottle fragments, 2 solarized bottle glass fragments, a piece of bone, and 3 unidentified metal objects. The shell fragments were counted as activity items due to their association with button manufacture and/or road paving. The only datable artifacts found with the shell were two shards of solarized bottle glass made between ca. 1880 and 1917. If the bottle shards were dumped with the shell, then the shell deposit probably does not date any later than the mid-1920s. There were also oyster shells in the deposits, but none of them had been drilled.

Based on these findings, it was posited that the site might represent the dumping of button blanks produced for sale to a factory or button company. Additional research was warranted to better understand the nature of the site and to attempt to locate architectural remains which might reveal something about the nature of the deposits. Phase II work, again, associated with the construction of the hiker-biker trail was undertaken in the spring of 1995.

Phase II research entailed both fieldwork and archival research. The archival work revealed that a number of large seventeenth and eighteenth century estates originally encompassed the BWI Airport area. It is not known when or where houses were established on these estates, but, by the late 17th or early 18th century, the area was in all likelihood under cultivation. By the early 19th century, farms are documented to be present in the general vicinity. By 1860, what is now airport property contained about 31 relatively large, scattered farms with houses of log, wood, brick, or stone. Outbuildings included domestic-related structures, slave quarters, varied outbuildings to hold a variety of crops, and older tobacco barns. A series of roads crisscrossing or bordering the airport property served the farm wagons that hauled the grains and ever-more-popular market garden and orchard crops to market. In general, the area probably did not look much different in 1940 than it had in the 19th century.

The only known historic use of the area around Clark Branch Button Site (18AN964) is as a farm. The area was part of the holdings of farmer Hezron N. Kelly, who apparently first acquired property in the area in the mid 19th century. Kelly owned 113 unimproved and 80 improved acres of land, upon which he conducted mixed farming, raising swine, Indian corn, peas and beans, potatoes, and orchard products. By 1870 his holdings had increased to 150 acres of woodland and 120 improved acres, upon which he primarily cultivated Indian corn, sweet potatoes, and orchard products. The property remained the family farm up until 1947 when it was sold to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the future BWI Airport.

The deed and various census records that document the history of the farm make no mention of button production taking place there. The only occupations listed in census records after family member names are "farmer" and "farm laborer". Lodgers on the farm who appear in the census records are listed as "farm hands". Additionally, more broad-ranging research uncovered no evidence of a shell button industry existing in the area or in Anne Arundel County in the 19th or 20th centuries. Local historians know of no shell button manufacturing taking place on or around the Airport property. One possible explanation for the presence of buttons and blanks is that one or more of the seasonal agricultural workers or "pickers", or a member of his/her family, produced buttons for extra income. More likely, though, the presence of buttons and blanks can be explained by import from other areas along with other discarded shells to pave local roads. One local informant stated that the shell could have come from "Old Dorsey Road" which meandered quite near the site (by her recollection). She also recalls that she and her schoolmates used to occasionally find shells with holes in them on the local shell-paved roads.

Phase II fieldwork consisted of systematic shovel testing and the excavation of three test trenches placed across the shell feature. A total of 38 STP were excavated, 27 of which were placed at 20 meter intervals, and 11 supplemental STPs were excavated at 10 meter intervals across the site. The shovel test survey was conducted to further define the limits of the cut shell feature and to identify any structural or other components of the site.

The test trenches were .5 to 1 m wide by 4 or 5 meters long and placed perpendicular across the east-west trending shell feature. The first trench, placed within the hiker-biker trail right-of-way, consisted of three 1 X 1 m test units connected by three 1 X .5 m test units. All the soil from the three 1 X 1 m units was screened through hardware cloth. All shell from the feature in two of the 1 X 1 m units was collected, sorted, and weighed in the field. After consultation with Stat Highway Administration staff, a decision was made to screen within the 1 X 0.5 m test units only the soils from the shell feature itself. In addition, most shell was discarded, though a sample was retained for further analysis. Materials such as coal and slag were also noted, but discarded. The remaining two trenches were placed within the BWI Airport property and each consisted of up to five 1 X .5 m test units. From these units only the shell feature fill was



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early 20th century shell paved road

Unknown

screened. All shell was collected, sorted and weighed from one of the units, but again, in consultation with SHA staff it was determined that collecting shell from the other units would be unnecessary and redundant given the quantity of shell within the historic feature. Minimally, one complete wall from each of the three test trenches was photographed and profiled.

Artifacts recovered during the Phase II excavations at 18AN964 included 441 activity items, 40 architectural artifacts, 47 kitchen-related artifacts, and 22 miscellaneous objects. The activity items were 2 pieces of iron wire, 18 triangular file fragments, a padlock, a shingling axe head, 390 shell button blanks, 20 drilled mussel shell fragments, 1 other mussel shell fragment, 5 oyster shell fragments, a piece of tar/asphalt, a redware flowerpot fragment, and a bike tire fragment. The architectural artifacts were a salt-glazed sewer tile fragment, 3 brick fragments, 2 polished marble fragments, 11 window glass fragments, a square nail, 17 cut nails, 4 wire nails, and a round nail fragment. The kitchen-related artifacts were 3 porcelain sherds, a semi-porcelain sherd, 3 whiteware sherds, a white granite sherd, a hotel ware sherd, a buff-bodied crock sherd, 27 glass bottle fragments, and 10 tin can fragments. The miscellaneous objects were a snail shell, 2 tin plate scraps, 13 iron fragments, 5 cinders, and a small black rock.

The results of the Phase II fieldwork indicated that the shell feature was a thin road surface composed of both freshwater mussels cut for buttons and uncut marine oyster shell. Based on the artifacts recovered in association with the shell road fill and on historic research, the road was in use into the 1920s. The shell was composed of various species of interior fresh water riverine mussels which were not indigenous to the area. Rather, they would have been shipped in either as fill or as the raw material for button manufacture from the Mississippi and/or St. Lawrence River drainages. The manufacturing source for the cut mussel shells within the road bed could not be determined, but probably originated from a shell button factory in the Baltimore area. The oyster shell was probably from a local source in the Chesapeake area. It was unclear whether the two shell deposits were mixed together before they were laid down as road fill. The additional shovel testing in the area indicated that there was no historic domestic site or any additional features located in the vicinity of the shell road.

The shell road is not associated with any significant local or regional events or individuals, and represents a common transportation feature within this region of Maryland. Further the shell road was not directly associated with local shell button manufacturing, nor was there any clear linkage between the cut shell within the road bed and local historic occupations. Therefore, the site does not have potential to yield any additional important information in local or regional history, beyond what has already been collected during the Phase II archeological investigation.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00000776, 00000783