



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BA282

Site Name: Banneker

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Benjamin Banneker farmstead

Historic

Brief Description:

Early 18th through early 19th century African-American farmstead

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 14

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.2760

Longitude -76.7694

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 116 m

Site slope 0

Ethnobotany profile available

Maritime site

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Unnamed stream

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

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

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



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

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

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>	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"/>	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 Cr	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware						Stoneware					
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>	127	
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>		Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	105	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>		Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>		Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	844	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	1837	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>		Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>	56	Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>	23
			Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>	868				Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	129

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts				
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	81	Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>		Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>		Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	80	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>		Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Dated features present at site

Features 10 and 22 were interpreted to be cellar holes that represented the earlier Banneker family occupation and the later Banneker occupation.

Historic Artifacts					
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	13812	Tobacco related	<input type="checkbox"/>	766
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	3803	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	448
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	5486	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	13	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	177	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	3483
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	116	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	12454
			Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Historic Features

Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 MAC Lab

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Banneker Site (18BA282) is the location of an early 18th-early 19th century African-American farmstead. The archeological site is approximately 5.5 acres in size. It is situated in the woods, just west of a former clearing, near the town of Oella in Baltimore County. It is located in the Benjamin Banneker Homestead site (MIHP #BA-1141) within the boundaries of the B. Banneker Historical Park and between two other 19th century homesteads. Freshwater streams and stream-fed springs are located in the vicinity of the site and Cooper's Branch, a tributary of the Patapsco River, flows nearby. Soils in the site area are predominately Glenelg loam (3-15% slope). These are deep, well-drained soils suitable for farming. Numerous fruit trees are located in the immediate site area.

Intensive occupation of the site area really began in the mid-18th century when the Banneker family moved to the locale. Benjamin Banneker was born a free black in 1731 to Mary (a freed half black/half white slave) and Robert (a freed black slave) Banneky. Robert adopted his wife's surname upon their marriage and the name was eventually fixed as Banneker. Benjamin was taught to read and write and attended school for a short time. The Banneky's were tobacco farmers and by 1737 Robert had accumulated enough capital to purchase part of a tract of land in the Upper Patapsco Hundred known as "Stout". It is not known if the land was cleared, farmed, or settled prior to their occupation. Robert Banneky built a log cabin on the 100 acre tract and started his farm. When Robert died in 1759, Benjamin inherited the property. By the early 1770s, Benjamin had become a successful farmer. In addition to his tobacco crops, he reportedly kept a vegetable garden, had an assortment of fruit trees, and kept bees. He also had two horses and several cows. When the Ellicott brothers moved into the area in 1771 to start their flour mill, they made a deal with Banneker to supply the mill workmen with food and other provisions. When the Ellicotts established a store where local residences could purchase staples and manufactures goods, Benjamin and his then aged mother were among the first clients.

Benjamin Banneker became acquainted with George Ellicott who shared many of Banneker's interests including machinery, mathematics, and astronomy, and who lent Banneker books and equipment. By the age of 22 Benjamin had already built his first wooden striking clock. It has been postulated that Banneker stopped cultivating tobacco as a cash crop sometime before 1790 in order to devote more time to his scientific endeavors. As early as 1785, Banneker began selling parcels of his family land to relatives and neighbors. He sold 20 acres to his nephew in 1785 and 10 acres to his neighbor John Barton in 1792. Several smaller parcels totaling about 6 acres were also sold in the 1790s. In the late 1790s, he arranged to sell the remainder of his farm to the Ellicotts, with terms that provided him with an annuity of 12 pounds sterling per year or its equivalent in goods from the Ellicott's store, and life tenancy on the then 72 acre farm. In 1791, Banneker was commissioned by Maj. A. Ellicott to assist in calculating the astronomical projections necessary to survey the Federal Territory (Washington, DC). Banneker created a table of the positions of the heavenly bodies which he incorporated into an almanac published in 1792. He produced almanacs in succeeding years, with the last one published in 1797. Little is known about the last years of Banneker's life leading up to his death in 1806. Few of his possessions survive, the majority thought to have been destroyed in the fire that consumed his cabin on the day of his funeral.

Benjamin Banneker was buried in an unmarked grave in his family's cemetery. The cemetery was described as being located a few yards to the southeast of the house. A description of the house was provided in a volume of manuscripts compiled in 1836 by the daughter of Susanna Mason who had visited Banneker's home in 1796. Mason described Banneker sitting under a large pear tree next to the dwelling which was a very modest one-story log building surrounded by an orchard. When Mason's daughter tried to revisit the spot in 1836, she learned that the house had burned down and all that remained was the pear tree and orchard. A later account indicated that the cabin was one room with a loft, in the corner of which was hung Banneker's wooden striking clock. When Banneker's house site and grave site were visited in 1845, it was reported that the house was marked only by a shallow cavity, at the southeastern end of which stood a tall Poplar tree that was said have overshadowed the gable end of his house. The gravesite was situated a few meters to the southeast of the house site. Although Banneker's grave was located in 1845, no monument was ever erected at the site, and to this day the exact location of the cemetery is unknown. In the 1850s, George Ellicott began selling off tracts from the parcel. Portions of the 1792 Barton purchase and an adjacent 1851 purchase were ultimately combined into a large 42.8 acre parcel owned by J. William and Betty Lee Treuth. Mrs. Treuth sold the parcel to Baltimore County in 1985 with the stipulation that the property be utilized for outdoor recreation or open space purposes.

In 1972, the definitive biography of Benjamin Banneker was published. The author, like many others, tried to locate the grave and house site but was unsuccessful. In 1976, through exhaustive research, the boundaries of the Banneky/Banneker parcel were pieced together. The locations of a few parcels of land that Banneker sold from his 100-acre tract after 1785 were also identified. In 1979, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Historical Trust got a group of largely amateur archeologists interested in locating the Banneker home site. A survey was conducted that utilized the boundary markers established in 1976. During that survey, the most likely location for the site was determined to be on a ridge that paralleled Oella Avenue near its intersection with Old Frederick Road. A 2.4 m² (8 ft) test unit was excavated not far from what was probably a 19th century farm complex. Unfortunately, the search was abandoned in early 1980 for personal reasons. No record of the results of the test unit excavation was available.

In 1982, a group of individuals investigated three areas on the Banneker property, each thought to be the Banneker house site. The purpose of the survey was to locate the Banneker house site and to record other sites encountered on the property. Three 19th century sites were identified during the work: Sites 18BA241, 18BA242, and 18BA283. The 18th century Banneker house site was not located.

In 1983, a portion of the original Banneker property was put up for sale. The Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks (BCDRP) approved the purchase of the Treuth parcel for development into a commemorative park provided that Banneker home site could be located. Archeologists from the Maryland Historical Trust received a request from the County to locate and define the limits of the Benjamin Banneker house site known to be somewhere within the boundaries of his former parcel. An initial Phase I survey was conducted in the summer of 1983. Areas excluded from testing included low-lying soils adjacent to streams and drainages that may have been subject to periodic flooding. For purposes of field testing, the study area was divided into 4 zones (Survey Areas 1-4) based on natural topographic features. Survey Areas 1 and 2 (SA 1 and SA 2) were then subdivided into smaller survey areas (SA 1, SA 1 A, SA 1 B, SA 2, SA 2 A, SA 2 B). This resulted in seven study areas. Field methods included minimal surface reconnaissance and the excavation of shovel test pits (STPs) at 15.24 m (50 ft) intervals. Additional 3.048 m (10 ft) interval testing was done in areas where high artifact densities were observed in order to define activity areas. Surface reconnaissance involved measuring and plotting surface scatters and collecting a representative sample of datable artifacts from those scatters. All excavated soils were screened through 0.635 cm (1/4") mesh and all artifacts were recorded but only datable materials were retained.

Site 18BA282 was identified in SA 1 through the excavation of approximately 49 positive STPs. Results of the shovel testing indicated that the site contained at least two distinct concentrations of material dating from Banneker's occupation of the farm. The smaller cluster, interpreted to possibly be an outbuilding,



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was found on the east side of the site. It measured about 9.144 m (30 ft) in diameter. A small scatter of 18th-early 19th century artifacts was also recovered from the surface of a woods road situated just a few meters from the small cluster. The larger, more extensive scatter, postulated to be the location of the Banneker dwelling, was found approximately 45.72 m (150 ft) to the west of the smaller scatter. The concentration of artifacts encompassed an area of about 21.3x12.19 m (70x40 ft). Much of the area between the 2 scatters was in cultivation as recently as 1959; it was suggested that this field be cleared of vegetation and subjected to a more intensive Phase I study. Furthermore, more intensive Phase II investigations were recommended for the areas around the identified artifact scatters prior to any construction at the site.

A total of 92 historic artifacts were found in the course of the 1983 STP excavations. All artifacts were recorded in the field but none were retained. All of the artifacts were listed in the data table above. Only 10 architectural items were noted (1 piece of window glass and 9 wrought nails). A total of 74 kitchen-related artifacts were observed (6 bottle glass fragments and 68 ceramic sherds-1 Rhenish, 2 white salt-glazed stoneware, 2 English brown salt-glazed, 4 slipped earthenware, 6 creamware, 5 pearlware, 1 whiteware, 34 glazed and 10 unglazed redware, 3 cream-colored earthenware). The 8 tobacco-related items were 7 white clay pipe stem fragments and 1 bowl fragment. Diagnostic artifacts dated the assemblage to the 18th and 19th centuries. It was suggested by the excavator that some of the 19th century materials may have come from nearby site 18BA241.

During the 1983 archeological investigations, Site 18BA241 (the Treuth/Lee Farmstead) and Site 18BA283 (the Treuth Residence) were also located within the project area. As a result of the identification of the Banneker house site, BCDRP finally purchased the property in January 1985 for development of the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park. Site development plans included construction of a caretaker's residence and nearby maintenance area, a visitor's center and picnic and parking areas, and improvements to the Treuth Residence Site (18BA283). Other plans included the reconstruction of a home lot with associated dwellings, outbuildings, and fields, and the stabilization of the Treuth/Lee Farmstead ruins (18BA241).

Archeological investigations were required ahead of proposed development at the park, and were conducted at the site in 1985 and 1986. The object of the investigations was not to excavate the complete site but instead, the project was designed as a management tool to create a balance between the research efforts and long-term site preservation. The 1985 survey focused on the identification and preliminary study of the components of the Banneker farmstead. The study focused on: 1) identifying the archeological components of the Banneker homestead; 2) determining the spatial organization of the site through its archeological remains; 3) determining subsistence and dietary patterns from food remains and residues; and 4) developing an economic model of Banneker's lifestyle as compared with his contemporaries. The 1986 investigation expanded upon the data collected during the previous year's work to address more specific problem-oriented research issues including location choice, architectural style and construction, spatial organization, habits and changes in material consumption, and economic status. In 1985, shovel tests were dug on a 6.096 m (20 ft) grid pattern to define artifact concentrations and identify areas of cultural activity. A second phase of shovel testing at 3.048 m (10 ft) intervals was conducted in areas of high artifact density in order to more accurately delineate activity areas. In conjunction with the 1985 shovel testing, a remote sensing survey was conducted to detect possible locations of subsurface anomalies. In 1986, additional STPs were dug at 3.048 m intervals and soil samples were taken for chemical analysis to further refine the boundaries of activity areas. The 1985 and 1986 sampling strategy included the collection of a 500 to 800 milliliter soil sample from the plowzone of each STP. Select soil samples were later analyzed for phosphate, calcium, magnesium, potash, and relative Ph levels. A total of 552 systematically placed STPs were excavated in 1985 and 1986.

Based on the results of the shovel testing and chemical analyses, several 1.524 m² (5x5 ft) test units were excavated at the site (approximately 55). During excavations, several natural and cultural features were located. In 1985, selected small features were completely excavated. In 1986, a quadrant of all excavated features was left unexcavated for future investigations and reinterpretation. Soil samples from each level within an excavated feature were collected for soil, pollen, and flotation analyses to aid in determining the feature's nature and function. The remaining soils were water screened using 0.16 cm (1/16") mesh hardware cloth. Few of the cultural features identified during the 1985 and 1986 investigations were sampled.

During the archeological testing, the large and small artifact concentrations previously identified in 1983 were enclosed within a survey area measuring 91.44 x 121.92 m (300x400 ft) and designated as Area 1. The report on the 1985/86 testing suggested that a third artifact cluster had been previously identified to the west of the Area 1 which was designated as Area II in 1985. This may have referred to the small scatter of 18th-early 19th century artifacts that were reportedly recovered from the surface of a woods road situated just a few meters from the small cluster; no exact location was given. According to the 1983 report, no STPs were dug in the area identified as Area II in the 1985/86 report but it may have been subject to surface reconnaissance. A road was identified on the 1983 survey area map but it was located to the north of, not west of, the artifact concentrations. In any case, no significant artifact concentrations were identified in Area II in 1985 and no supplementary work was conducted there in 1986.

Some general site patterning was observed as a result of the shovel testing and soil analysis. Artifacts recovered from the northeast corner of the site that dated to the 19th and early 20th centuries were determined to be associated with the nearby Treuth/Lee Farmstead Site (18BA241). The northeast corner of the site corresponded to the location of a former agricultural field edge and a former Lee Farm outbuilding that had at one time been adjacent to the Banneker site. High levels of calcium and phosphate observed in this area were likely attributable to Lee Farm activities. Other artifacts recovered from the northeast corner of the site likely dated from the 18th century Banneker occupation. Architectural materials possibly relating to the Banneker occupation were found primarily in the western section of Area 1. This area also roughly corresponded with high levels of potash and magnesium. Domestic artifacts dating from the 18th century Banneker occupation were found in 2 general clusters in the southeastern and southwestern site area and in 1 cluster on the northwestern site area. More modern materials (20th century) were found mixed with 18th and 19th century artifacts in the southeastern section of Area 1. Modern trash deposits may have accounted for the high calcium and phosphate levels recorded in this area. The locations of artifact clusters and identified chemical concentrations were used to guide where test units would be placed. Remote sensing techniques were not useful for interpreting the locations of possible features at the site.

Based on artifact concentrations recognized during the shovel testing and results of the soil analyses, 4 activity areas were identified within Area 1, which were designated as Areas 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D. Areas 1A, 1B, and 1D formed a rectangular block on the west side of the site, with Area 1A to the north and Area 1D to the south. Area 1C was located in the southeast quadrant of the site.

Area 1A contained the highest concentration of 18th and early 19th century artifacts within the project area. Within the 15 test units dug in 1985, 6 natural and 10 cultural or possibly cultural features were identified. There were 20 possible posthole and/or post mold features. Feature 2, interpreted as a posthole with post mold, was excavated. The configuration of post mold Feature 119, which cut into the western end of Feature 2, and posthole and post mold features 121 and 120, along with Feature 2, suggested the location of a fence line. Feature 117, identified as an L-shaped ditch, formed a straight line with 2 postholes suggesting the location of either a fence or an earth-fast foundation support for an outbuilding. Artifact distributions around the house site suggested that a doorway existed along the eastern side of the structure's north wall. The recovery of window glass fragments supported the presence of at least one glazed



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window opening. The relatively high numbers of artifacts found east and northeast of the house site indicated that a path may have connected the house to other activity areas on the farmstead.

Feature 10 (F10) was identified in Area IA by a 27.43 cm (0.9 ft) deep concentration of stone. The feature was interpreted to be a filled cellar hole, which may have served as a storage cellar, dating to the early years of the Banneker occupation. In plan view, it measured 2.29 x 1.92 m (7.5x6.3 ft). The north half of F10 was excavated, although large stones protruding from the south wall profile were recorded and removed. There was a small extension on the west side of the cellar that may have accommodated a ladder for access to the cellar from the floor above. In all, 26 separate natural and arbitrary layers, lenses, and levels were identified in the north half of the feature. Fill Layers 23, 24, and 25 resulted from the gradual buildup of material while the cellar was being utilized. Artifacts recovered from occupation layer 23 indicated that those deposits occurred sometime during the early part of the third quarter of the 18th century. Based on the types of artifacts recovered from Layer 22, which resulted from intentional fill of the cellar after abandonment, it was postulated that the cellar was abandoned sometime around the middle or third quarter of the 18th century. Layers 5 through 21 represented a combination of filling and natural wash lenses. Although diagnostic material was limited from those layers, a date in the third quarter of the 18th century was suggested for the deposits. The top layers (Layers 1-4) represented the major filling episode of the cellar. It appeared that after the abandonment and dismantling of the structure, the stone foundation supports were pushed into the open cellar hole. These layers contained 2 ceramic sherds dated to the last half of the 18th century, the date when the cellar was filled.

A band of burned subsoil encountered at the eastern edge of Feature 10 was tentatively identified as the remnants of a hearth. The hearth feature was formed from the oxidation of the natural soil caused by prolonged, intense burning. The presence of small pieces of fire-reddened earth from the fill of Feature 10 indicated that portions of the hearth eroded into the cellar. Dimensions of the hearth feature were determined to be 1.524 m wide and 0.457 m deep (5x1.5 ft). Fragments of burnt clay or daub found around the hearth suggested that a mud and stick or wattle and daub chimney was once located on the exterior gable end of the house. Several burnt stones were also recovered from the cellar fill which further suggested that the chimney may have had a stone fire box. Exterior to what was hypothesized to have been the east gable wall, remains of a mud and stick chimney, or the remains of scaffolding used to construct the chimney, were identified. Also, a posthole and mold feature located in line with the center of the east wall was possible evidence for the presence of a post used to support the chimney stack. Historical accounts indicated that mud and stick chimneys often had supports because they were angled away from the house in case of fire. If a chimney fire happened, then the chimney could be toppled away from the house by removing the post.

In 1986, 21 contiguous test units were excavated around Feature 10 yielding 49 natural and cultural features. Stone foundation piers or pilings associated with the north wall of F10 were uncovered. Five posthole/mold features were encountered adjacent to the cellar hole along its north and west sides. It was postulated that they represented the remains of small posts used to shore up the structure's floor joists. Two of the features, placed 60.96 cm apart, may have also been support posts for a trap door into the cellar. Several other features, primarily postholes, were noted around F10 but none could be associated with structural wall supports.

In 1985, flotation samples taken from Feature 10 cellar fill were submitted for analysis. Of the seeds recovered from Levels 1-7, 41 were grape, 3 were pokeweed, 1 was identified as chenopodium (known as lamb's quarter or goosefoot), and 1 was a milkweed seed. Only 1 charred seed, possibly a walnut, was recovered. Chenopodium is a green available in the early spring, but as the plant matures in the late summer it produces thousands of tiny black seeds that can be eaten as is or added to flour for baking. Various parts of the milkweed plant provide food from early spring through late summer. Poke berries could be used for dye and medicine. Only the grape seeds, chenopodium, and walnut were likely to have been found in a storage context; however, there is no evidence that Banneker actually did store these items and they may have entered the archeological context without his knowledge or intent. The plants would have grown unattended and did not require any specialized tools for procurement and processing. In 1986, 46 flotation samples were processed with 27 samples deriving from Feature 10, Levels 8-26. A total of 243 seeds were found in the samples. Of those, 105 were maple seeds and 22 were raspberry seeds determined to be modern in origin and thus eliminated from further study. Two seeds were unidentified. Of the analyzed seeds, there were 78 grape seeds, 17 chenopodium seeds, 4 pokeweed seeds, 12 purslane, and 1 each of milkweed, oxalis, and bean (either Phaseolus spp or Strophostyles spp). The purslane and oxalis are both edible herbaceous plants. The samples collected from all levels of Feature 10 were representative of useful, locally available, and historically documented food plants that would have been a part of the Banneker farm landscape. However, there is no direct evidence that the plants were actually used by him.

In Area IB, test units excavated in 1985 revealed a large subsurface feature (Feature 22) that extended across 3 test units. This feature was interpreted to be a second filled cellar hole, which represented a later structure than the one identified by Feature 10. A total of 16 test units were excavated over and around Feature 22 (F22) to expose its horizontal extent and to test the areas to the north and east of F22. In 1986, the block excavation to expose F22 included the excavation of an additional 8 units. Only the top 30.48 cm of the fill was excavated from a portion of the feature. The fill contained a large amount of stone rubble and domestic and architectural materials. Remains of a stone foundation were encountered in the south/southwest section of the feature. The foundation was composed of a linear arrangement of undressed field stones that comprised a wall measuring 0.609 m (2 ft) wide. The southeastern corner of the foundation was found but the east wall appeared to have collapsed. Units excavated adjacent to the south side of the stone foundation revealed a narrow extension of F22. It was postulated as being associated with the construction phase of the structure or possibly associated with a shed addition to the house. Due to time constraints, deep and extensive excavation of the cellar was not possible. A total of 270 probes were placed across the feature on a 0.304 m grid pattern in order to identify the extent of the foundation. The stone foundation was determined to be a rectangle that measured 4.876 m (16 ft) north-south by 4.267 m (14 ft) east-west. Along the exterior of the north wall, a solid stone foundation measuring 2.13 x 1.524 m (7x5 ft) was interpreted as an exterior chimney base situated along a gable wall. The types and dates of the diagnostic artifacts recovered, some of which were melted or burned, provided the basis for postulating that Feature 22 represented a house site that burned in the early 19th century, such as the Banneker house.

Two segments of a linear grouping of stones (possibly remnants of a single wall) were found in the northeast section of F22; however, the association with F22 was unclear.

Several features were located in the area outside of the cellar and the stone foundation. These were primarily determined to be postholes or rodent burrows. Posthole Feature 94 located about 4 m east of the structure, and posthole Feature 157 located about 1.8 m to the southwest of the structure may have been related to former fence lines.

In 1985, 2 flotation samples from Feature 22 were analyzed. Only 1 grape seed, 1 pokeweed seed, and 1 modern maple seed were recovered. In 1986, a further 7 flotation samples were submitted for analysis. From that collection, 35 modern maple seeds and 162 modern raspberry seeds were eliminated from further analysis. Of the remaining specimens, there were 37 grape seeds, 41 pokeweed seeds, 1 chenopodium seed, 1 cherry pit, 1 violet seed, and 1 possible hackberry seed. It was suggested that the cherry seed was significant because Banneker was known to have planted an orchard before his death.



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BA282

Site Name: Banneker

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Benjamin Banneker farmstead

Historic

Brief Description:

Early 18th through early 19th century African-American farmstead

Unknown

Results of the excavations in Area IB indicated that Feature 22 represented the site of the Benjamin Banneker house. Artifacts found in the upper layers dated occupation of the structure to the last half of the 18th century and into the early 19th century. The condition of the assemblage further supported accounts that the dwelling was destroyed by fire. Construction details related in historical accounts were also supported by the archeological evidence; the dwelling was apparently a one-room log structure. Artifact distribution showed that the majority of domestic activities took place on the east side of the structure, and indicated that the entryway to the house may have been located along the east wall. Quantities of recovered melted glass indicated the presence of glazed windows and it was suggested that the nails recovered during the excavations were used for securing the roofing and flooring.

Area ID was located north of several extant farm buildings associated with the Treuth/Lee Farmstead (18BA241). Three units excavated in the western portion of the area encountered 5 features, all tentatively identified as natural. None were excavated. Three small 20th century trash deposits were also noted, which were associated with the Lee Farm. There was also evidence of secondary soil deposition resulting from downslope erosion and run-off from agricultural cultivation. Excavations in Area ID failed to disclose significant evidence of activity related to the Banneker occupation.

The excavation of units in Area IC revealed artifacts dated from the period of the Banneker occupation as well as concentrations of 19th and 20th century debris. In 1985, several features were identified in the test units but due to time constraints none were sampled. Three small evenly spaced features that formed a semi-circle were found in a unit on the east side of the area. Six more features were located in an adjacent unit but no determination was made as to the function of this group of features. In 1986, the excavation of additional test units located 6 cultural features, 2 of which were excavated. Probing in the area of Feature 105 revealed the corner of a possible stone foundation. The artifact assemblage contained several items that post-dated the Banneker occupation and so it was determined that the feature related to the Lee Farmstead (18BA241). Another feature identified was a wheel rut, located in the road that led to the site. Other features encountered in Area IC were a posthole and mold, possibly representing the location of fence post, a pit, and a large, irregularly shaped pit of unknown function that contained charcoal flecks and pieces of oxidized or burnt clay. Although the presence of 18th and early 19th century artifacts suggested substantial cultural activity in Area IC, the function of the activity could not be determined. It is possible that the activity centered on one or more farm-related outbuildings.

A total of 38,842 historic artifacts were reported in the artifact inventory as having been recovered during the 1985 and 1986 archeological investigations at the Benjamin Banneker Site. Over 17,500 of those artifacts dated from the Banneker period of occupation, the 18th and early 19th centuries, although artifacts associated with the property's 19th and 20th century occupations were also found. Only the artifacts related to the period of Banneker's occupation were subjected to detailed analysis in the body of the report; however, all artifacts listed in the inventory were counted and given in the table above.

Activity items (n=448) found at the site included 9 slate pencil fragments (4 were recovered from Feature 22) and 9 possible slate writing tablet fragments, a ground glass lens that would have been in a telescope or other optical instrument, 1 grubbing hoe of a type found at 17th and 18th century sites in the Chesapeake region, 6 glass pipettes, 2 test tube fragments, 1 rivet for a tool handle, 1 stone marble, 3 porcelain doll parts, 23 plastic toy fragments, 1 carriage lamp fragment, 107 light bulb parts including glass, 90 miscellaneous wire fragments, 3 lead weights, 122 pieces of barbed wire, 1 metal support for wire, 20 pieces of chain link fencing, 2 terra cotta flower pot sherds, 32 staples, 1 steel cable clamp, 2 battery parts, and 1 iron hollow box. Other activity-related artifacts included 11 stable items such as 1 oxen shoe, 1 horse shoe fragment, 4 harness ornaments, 3 harness buckle fragments, and 2 possible harness strap glides.

A total of 5,476 architectural items were recorded. There were 462 brick fragments, 509 pieces of daub or possible daub, and 17 fragments of mortar or rough plaster. Only small fragments of brick were found at the site and were probably locally produced. The daub may have been used for coating or lining wooden chimneys or in securing stone or wood chinking between log walls. Five fragments of the daub were thought to possibly be deteriorated prehistoric ceramic sherds and another fragment had visible fabric impressions and grit temper. The mortar/plaster was composed of fine sand mixed with crushed, burnt oyster shell. There were 3,671 nails (2,252 hand wrought, 16 cut, 15 wire, and 1,389 unidentifiable). The wrought and cut nails were recovered primarily from the plowzone. Feature 10 fill yielded 45 more wrought nails and Feature 22 yielded 231 wrought nails. The majority (99%) of the wrought nails derived from contexts in Areas IA and IB. Most wrought nails were of the rose head variety but a few were L-head nails. The majority of the cut nails were recovered from Area IC, near the 19th century Lee Farmstead. A total of 674 fragments of early window glass were recovered from the site. Of those, 3 window glass shards were recovered from Feature 10 fill but 355 window glass shards (123 that were melted) were found in Feature 22 fill. In ad

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00007683, 00005431, 97001211