



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BA475

Site Name: Oella School

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

19th-20th century mill town schoolhouse

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 14

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.2726

Longitude -76.7771

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 73 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) tributary of Patapsco River

- | Saltwater | | Freshwater | |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Estuary/tidal river <input type="checkbox"/> | Stream/river <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Swamp <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidewater/marsh <input type="checkbox"/> | Lake or pond <input type="checkbox"/> | Spring <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Minimum distance to water is 9 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

- Paleoindian site
- Archaic site
- Early archaic
- Middle archaic
- Late archaic
- Woodland site
- MD Adena
- Early woodland
- Mid. woodland
- Late woodland
- Unknown prehistoric context

- Contact period site
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1860 - 1900
- ca. 1900 - 1930
- Post 1930
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American
- Hispanic
- Asian American
- Unknown
- Other

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric

- Multi-component
- Village
- Hamlet
- Base camp
- Rockshelter/cave
- Earthen mound
- Cairn
- Burial area
- Misc. ceremonial
- Rock art
- Shell midden
- STU/lithic scatter
- Quarry/extraction
- Fish weir
- Production area
- Unknown
- Other context

Historic

Urban/Rural? Urban

Domestic

- Homestead
- Farmstead
- Mansion
- Plantation
- Row/townhome
- Cellar
- Privy

Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith
- Furnace/forge
- Other

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

schoolhouse

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		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"/>	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 Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
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	13	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	3	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	25			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	9	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"/>	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

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	133	Activity item(s)	12
Glass (all)	275	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	552	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	110
Arms	2	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	2	Misc.	48
Personal items	1	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	sheet	
Hearth/chimney	<input checked="" 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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Brief Description:

19th-20th century mill town schoolhouse

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Oella School site (18BA475) is the location of a 19th-20th century mill town schoolhouse. It lies within the 19th century historic village of Oella in Baltimore County, Maryland. The schoolhouse parcel occupies a wooded lot on a moderately steep slope on the south bank of a small tributary of the Patapsco River. This area is just upstream of the textile mill and core of the mill community. Soils at the site are moderately eroded loams of the Manor series (8-15% slope). The total site area measures approximately 31 m². Surface inspection of the site revealed recent evidence of grading and sewer line installation and sheet wash which may have damaged archeological deposits. Areas of fill to the south and east of the site indicate late historic modification of the landscape. The site remained undeveloped and unused throughout most of the 20th century as a result of its size, slope, and location impeding most agricultural uses.

The village of Oella, named after a woman who was reputedly the first female to have spun cotton in America, grew out of Ellicott City, a commercial and industrial center. Oella was created in 1808 but was not so named until 1811. In 1808 and 1809, the Union Manufacturing Company purchased nearly 364 hectares (900 acres) on both sides of the Patapsco River from Charles Ridgley of Hampton and from the Ellicott's. The Company enlarged and resurveyed its holdings in 1811 and 1838. In 1875, the Union Manufacturing Company bought the Granite Manufacturing Company's property as part of its expansion and in 1887 the W.J. Dickey Company acquired all the Union Manufacturing Company's assets. The Dickey family held the land until 1972, when it was extensively damaged during hurricane Agnes. It is currently owned by the Oella Company.

Local lore stated that the schoolhouse was constructed ca. 1830. A detailed map of the area dating from 1850 did not mention the school. The Oella School finally appeared on a map dated to 1877, then again on maps dated to 1898, 1906, and 1915. Photographic evidence indicated the building had been dismantled by 1938. Further archival research indicated that a brick schoolhouse, or a predecessor, possibly dated to ca. 1830, was located in the vicinity of "Union Factory" (the early name for Oella) but the exact location is not known. The most secure date for the construction of the school was found in an 1874 report by the Secretary for the Baltimore County Board of Education which noted the completion of several new schoolhouses in 1873 including the Oella School. Reportedly, a two-room stone schoolhouse measuring 14.63 x 7.92 meters (48x26 ft) and 3.65 or 4.26 meters (12 or 14 ft) high was built on a lot donated to the school board by the Union Manufacturing Company. It was to seat 100 pupils. The school was constructed with a cellar under the vestibule for the keeping fuel, and was furnished with new furniture including a large blackboard and wall map. Plan drawings of the foundation remains indicated there was a central stone wall, which suggested that a partition wall may have run lengthwise down the middle of the structure. However, this could not be verified, nor would that have been a common floor plan for such a building. The building occupied a fenced lot with 1 or 2 outbuildings, presumably privies. In 1897, a frame addition with separate entrance was added to the main structure. The local informant, and former pupil at the school, stated that in the early 20th century the schoolhouse was divided into 3 rooms. The 1897 frame addition possibly formed the 3rd room for use by the older students. The informant also indicated that the boys in the school took turns going to the cellar for coal every morning. However, no evidence of a cellar was found during the Phase II testing at the site. This may simply be a result of the area of the vestibule not having been excavated. The archival evidence did indicate the cellar was located under the vestibule. The Oella School was closed in 1924 when a new schoolhouse was constructed a short distance away on Westchester Avenue.

During an historic overview of the Oella area conducted in 1980 by personnel from the Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning, the proposed construction of sewer and water lines as part of the Oella Sewer Project was determined to potentially impact cultural resources in the site area. In February 1981, a Phase I/II scope of work within the proposed right-of-way (ROW) was undertaken. It involved archival research and field reconnaissance. The site area was located within the Oella Avenue West section of the Phase I survey area. This section of pipeline right-of-way consisted of a relatively flat area with above ground structural ruins. At that time, the site was identified simply as a stone foundation. The excavators suggested that the foundation was related to a non-extant residence. However, the schoolhouse was identified at the location on a map of a walking tour of Oella dated from 1976. Furthermore, an examination of the available maps indicated that the foundation was situated in the footprint of the Oella schoolhouse. Nine shovel test pits (STPs) were excavated south and east of the foundation with STP 1 placed approximately 9.144 meters (30 ft) south of the foundation's southeast corner. With the single exception of a sherd of manganese-glazed red earthenware, the materials recovered from the STPs all dated to the 20th century. Based on the Phase I study, it was suggested that no cultural resources (in the immediate area of the site) would be found in the sewer line ROW. In all, a modest 12 artifacts were collected from the STPs. The only architectural items included 5 fragments of asbestos shingles. The remaining artifacts were kitchen-related and consisted of the manganese-glazed redware sherd and 6 glass bottles and bottle fragments.

Several years after the installation of the sewer and water lines, the Oella Company proposed the residential development of Lot 1, a 0.30 hectare (0.75 acre) parcel and the site of the historic Oella School. In anticipation of the site demolition, the company proposed salvaging the stone from the school's foundation in order to fulfill its need for building stone to complete restorations in the village. As a result of these proposals, in early 2000 a Phase II research strategy was employed that focused testing on the extant ruins and its immediate surroundings in partial compliance with a special condition of the 1993 US Army Corp of Engineers permit. Wetlands, sewer, and utility easement limited construction to the southern tip of the parcel and construction would intrude upon the 9.144 meter archeological buffer zone established by the US Army corps around the extant foundation. The permit stipulates that prior to any ground disturbance within the zone, the applicant must consult with the Maryland Historical Trust and sponsor a Phase II archeological testing to evaluate the site's eligibility for listing to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Phase II archeological study was concerned with identifying, analyzing, and interpreting archeological, archival, and architectural data that pertained to the founding, use, and final abandonment of the Oella School, as well as evidence of earlier occupations and post-abandonment uses of the site. While the intact foundation had the potential to reveal information on the building interior and sequence of construction, the surrounding yard had less potential for providing useful information. A sewer line encroached within 3.048 meters (10 ft) of the southeast corner of the building and by the early 20th century it appeared that the north and west yards were devoid of any structures. A short distance from the north façade of the building, the land slopes steeply downward to the stream below. Flooding in the 19th and 20th centuries also undoubtedly affected the archeological deposits. More generally, it is unlikely that numerous archeological residues would have been left behind in a small factory village schoolhouse yard.

A 3.048 meter grid was established across the site with grid north at approximately N30°E. Prior to subsurface testing, a surface examination was conducted of the site and visible archeological features were mapped. A series of 45 STPs were excavated that measured about 40.6 cm in diameter. The site was defined as the area within and 9.144 meters around the foundation. Rubble precluded testing within 1.524 meters of the foundation exterior and throughout the foundation interior. In addition to the STPs, two 1.524 m² test units were excavated in the 1897 addition (TU 1) and within the in the original structure (TU 2). Limited wall clearing defined the complex and sequence of wall construction. Through probing and augering a 0.9144 x 1.219 meter (3x4 ft) pavement of stone



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Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief

Description:

19th-20th century mill town schoolhouse

Unknown

with one or two brick bats and some lime mortar was revealed about 9.144 meters east of the northeast corner of the foundation. The relationship between this feature and the schoolhouse is unclear.

Mapping of the schoolhouse foundation suggested that the original structure measured (outside to outside) 8.22 x 15.85 m (27 x 52 ft) and a separate antechamber (possibly referring to the vestibule) measured approximately 2.43 x 7.315 m (8x24 ft). The 1897 addition measured approximately 7 x 7.3 m (23x24 ft) with a separate 1.83 x 3.81 m (6x12.5 ft) antechamber/ vestibule. What may have been a brick chimney base was partially articulated and mortared into the east wall of the core structure, about 4.57 m (15 ft) south of the northeast corner. On the north side exterior of the building there was a coal pile that measured about 9.144 m long and 3.048 m and about 0.304 m high. The excavator suggested that this may have at one time been the location of a coal shed, and since the land slopes downward there, the roof of the shed may have been lower in elevation than the floor of the schoolhouse. The coal pile may have consisted of sweepings and ashes, with the coal stored in a cellar beneath the vestibule as indicated in the report on the 1873 construction of the Oella School.

Subsurface excavations indicated that soils were fairly consistent across the site. The soil stratigraphy was comprised of a sandy loam humus and a sandy clay, moderately micaceous subsoil. Coal and ash deposits ca. 7.5 cm thick were encountered immediately below the humus north and west of the building foundation and clay fill that was likely related to the sewer line installation was encountered on the east side of the foundation.

In all, 323 artifacts were recovered from the STPs as reported in the Artifact Inventory of the original text. There were 2 activity items (1 fragment of slate pencil and 1 staple). The 100 architectural materials consisted of 26 pieces of window glass, 22 pieces of other flat glass, and 52 nail fragments (2 wire, 11 cut, 39 indeterminate). The only clothing item recovered was a glass button. Kitchen-related materials included 65 vessel glass shards, 4 pieces of milk glass, 79 ceramic sherds (13 glazed and unglazed red earthenware, 44 white earthenware, 8 transfer-printed whiteware, 2 annular whiteware, 9 pearlware, 3 porcelain), and 5 bone fragments (2 calcined). Miscellaneous materials consisted of 20 unidentified metal objects, 2 pieces of metal wire, 18 pieces of flat tin, and 1 piece of hard plastic. The single personal item retrieved was a plastic bead. There were 2 tobacco items (white clay pipe fragments). The only arms-related artifacts found were 2 bullet casings. Distributional analysis of the material recovered from the STPs revealed only site-wide patterns of demolition, with the ceramics and glass possibly representing community activities or an earlier domestic occupation closer to the road that was destroyed by recent road and sewer line construction. Nothing suggestive of children at play was identified.

A possible single quartz flake and 5 other pieces of quartz debitage were the only prehistoric artifacts found.

Following the STP testing, the 2 larger units were excavated. Test Unit 1, placed in the southwest corner of the 1897 addition, produced 4 separate strata. The top stratum (Stratum 1) consisted of loam that had formed inside the foundation since the demolition of the building. In the northeast corner of the unit, Stratum 4 was identified as sandy clay subsoil. Stratum 2 was uncovered in the southeast corner of the unit and was identified as clay with mortar and artifacts. Stratum 3, a builder's trench fill, covered the west half of the unit. The fill contained a mix of 18th century and 19th century diagnostic architectural and domestic materials. A thin deposit of Stratum 2 was found beneath Stratum 3 which suggested that the trench had been re-excavated, possibly for wall repairs, and the Stratum 2 material was redeposited upon completion of repairs. Strata 2 and 3 were underlain by Stratum 4 subsoil.

Test Unit 2 was placed in the central portion of the original structure against the west side of the central foundation wall. This unit had a more complicated soil stratigraphy than TU 1. Stratum 1 was a sandy loam humus layer on top of which laid a number of disarticulated and unmortared bricks and brick fragments. It was suggested that this represented recent collapse from the adjacent stone wall, or the presence of a support pier or a hearth to support a coal hearth. Stratum 2 was a thin lens of sandy clay and coal. The majority of artifacts collected from the stratum were cut nails (65) possibly indicating very little accumulation occurred post-deposition. Four iron fragments from school desks were also found in this stratum. Stratum 3 contained fragments of white-washed plaster and mortar with lesser amounts of sandy clay occurring throughout. There were very few artifacts in this stratum. All of the material was likely deposited at the time of demolition and the plaster probably derived from a partition wall. Stratum 4 was described as sandy clay subsoil and it contained very little artifactual material. Augering into the dense clay failed to reveal any underlying deposits. A builder's trench was identified along the base of the stone wall.

Excavation of the test units produced 727 historic artifacts as reported in the Artifact Inventory of the site report. Activity-related items included 4 cast iron scroll fragments from a school desk, 4 slate pencil pieces, 1 bucket handle, and 1 metal ashcan lid. Architectural materials consisted of 28 window glass shards, 21 other pieces of flat glass, 383 nails (61 wire, 278 cut, 44 indeterminate), 1 cut spike, and 14 other metal hardware objects. The only clothing item recovered was a plastic button. Kitchen-related materials consisted of 103 vessel glass sherds, 53 ceramic sherds (19 lead-glazed red earthenware, 14 white earthenware, 2 transfer-printed whiteware, 1 annular whiteware, 16 pearlware, 1 domestic stoneware) and 1 metal can. There were 68 bone fragments in the assemblage that mostly representing one opossum. Although possibly intrusive, the bone was listed in the table above with the miscellaneous kitchen material. Miscellaneous objects included 1 piece of lead, 16 unidentifiable metal objects, 4 pieces of metal wire, and 22 pieces of flat tin. It is possible that the domestic materials collected represented either the remains of community events held at the site or a sheet midden from one or more adjoining mid-19th century domestic sites. The architectural debris was consistent with construction, demolition, and salvage at the site.

Three pieces of quartz were the only possible prehistoric artifacts collected.

The Oella School site (18BA475) is the location of a 19th-20th century mill town schoolhouse. The school was part of a statewide public school reform movement enabled through the constitutional reforms of 1865 and 1867. Topographic and plan view mapping recorded a foundation layout that corresponded to the last photograph taken of the school in the 1920s and it corresponds to plans published as an appendix to the State Superintendent of Public Schools Instruction's report to the General Assembly in 1874. Archival research indicates that an addition was put onto the main structure in 1897; however, there was no archeological data precisely pinpointed to that time. The artifacts recovered during archeological testing were consistent with use of the site during the mid-19th century and later. The overall lack of material suggested that the structure was gutted prior to being dismantled and most of the partially dressed stone from which the original structure was built was removed from the site. Due to the relative lack of data, lack of site integrity and limited research potential it was determined that the Oella School site did not possess the qualities necessary for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. No further research was recommended for the site. Since the archeological undertaking, a house has been built on the parcel, just south of the foundation.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005429, 97000290