



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BC132

Site Name: 826-830 Mechanics Court

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief Description:

3 19th century African-American house foundations and backyard features

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 7

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.2931

Longitude -76.5995

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 8 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) Northwest Branch of Patap

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 875 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

Y

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

Y

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

Y

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? Urban

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

rowhouses

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 Floral, Faunal



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BC132

Site Name: 826-830 Mechanics Court

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

3 19th century African-American house foundations and backyard features

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 Mtn	<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 Cr	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<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		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"/>	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

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

Dated features present at site

19th-20th century rowhouses and privies

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	431	Activity item(s)	879
Glass (all)		Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	916	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	15	Misc. kitchen	3055
Arms	14	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	28	Misc.	715
Personal items	46	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

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



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BC132

Site Name: 826-830 Mechanics Court

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

3 19th century African-American house foundations and backyard features

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

826-830 Mechanics Court (18BC132) is the archeological remains associated with three 19th century African-American house foundations and associated backyard features in a neighborhood north of the Inner Harbor in downtown Baltimore, Maryland. At the time of the site's discovery (in the late 1990s), it occupied the western portion of a triangular asphalt-surfaced parking lot and storage yard for the adjacent Hillen Tire Company. It is situated along Mechanics Court, a former alleyway within Baltimore's Old Town area, immediately east of the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83). The landscape surrounding the site is heavily developed and the soils are intensely modified from their native state. Soils mapped for the area are classified as "Urban Land" meaning that 80% of the surface is covered either by buildings or by impervious surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Mechanics Court was known as Mechanical Street. Until 1812, most of the property in this area was owned by Jacob Stansbury who, together with his brother-in-law and business partner, John Edwards, controlled virtually all of the block bounded by Gay (or Bridge), High, Hillen, and Front streets. Stansbury willed his property within this block, which already had been subdivided, to his four siblings, William, Abraham, John, and Elizabeth and/or their heirs. Abraham's children subsequently sued the other three to gain possession of specific lots that had been assigned to their father.

Depositions and exhibits filed in connection with the case included a copy of Jacob Stansbury's will, which listed all the lots he owned in the area. These lot descriptions not only provided significant information about the configuration of the block, they also suggested that development of individual parcels had begun. The metes and bounds of 13 individual parcels all included frontage on Mechanical Street. One Mechanical Street parcel had been developed with a brick dwelling and 7 others already had been rented to tenants. Tenants for the lots on Mechanical Street included William Massey, Benjamin Meeds, James Nelson, Runyon Harris, Benjamin Watters, and Daniel Hutchins (an African American). The three parcels that would eventually encompass Site 18BC132 were allotted to John Stansbury.

By 1824, both the configuration of the lots in the area and the ownership of the parcels within it had begun to change. Mechanical Street had become Mechanics Court, suggesting that development of the Bull Head Tavern property to the west (see synopsis report for 18BC139) may have closed the alleyway's outlet to Front Street. The Stansbury heirs had begun to sell their Mechanics Court properties. A mixture of owner-occupied and tenant-occupied dwellings characterized the area. Ethnically, the number of African-Americans living in the block appears to have declined. The northern side of the Court was lined with four brick dwellings and one frame dwelling.

By 1837, the Stansbury family had divested itself of nearly all of its parcels along Mechanics Court. Only John Stansbury retained a 25 X 75 ft lot on the south side of the court. Three parcels were owned and occupied by African-Americans: Robert Murray a "colored musician", John Bailey a "colored barber", and Thomas Wilson a "colored man" identified as a laborer in the city directories. The remaining parcels along Mechanics Court belonged to absentee property owners and appeared to be vacant. The parcels encompassing Site 18BC132 had been purchased from John Stansbury by Thomas Hume, a grocer who maintained a store that later became a wholesale liquor and produce distributorship, at the intersection of Hillen and High Streets. Hume had subdivided his portion into four separate, narrow parcels and had constructed two-storey brick dwellings on each side. However, none of these were tenanted in 1837.

The earliest available Sanborn maps (1890) of the Mechanics Court area depicted the dwellings on the northern side of the alley as 15 ft wide houses on 60 ft deep lots. Each had a single storey structure, probably a privy, at the rear of the lot. The interior configurations of these homes probably approximated those of similarly small dwellings of this period, consisting of a living room and dining/kitchenette room on the first floor and two bedrooms accessed by stairs in the midsection of the house, possibly a small attached rear porch, and a backyard that included a pump and a privy at the rear of the yard.

During the next decade, development and population density within the Mechanics Court intensified. Many more properties were occupied, mostly by tenants, and the percentage of African American occupants more than doubled. For the most part, the property owners were local people: George Gillingham a grocer at Lombard and Exeter, George Clap a hatter who lived on Hillen Street, the Reverend Andrew Cross editor of the Maryland Temperance Herald who resided at 73 N. High Street, and Washington Brown who lived at 121 N. High. Although an 1845 city directory identified only two African-American tenants on the north side of Mechanics Court (Henry Snowden a laborer and Henry Williams a washer), property tax records for the following year show that the number of African-Americans owning property or living in the court had jumped to a total of 8. Two of Thomas Hume's four parcels had been rented to Levin Murray and William Kent, both African-American.

The post-Civil War period showed a continuing trend towards increasing population density, with African Americans forming the majority of the Court's residents. This trend was almost certainly due to the general post-bellum exodus of free blacks from Southern plantations, often to form their own communities and neighborhoods in urban areas.

Individual household listings of the 1880 and 1900 Federal population censuses documented the increasingly segregated nature of the residential patterns within the Court. Six of the 7 dwellings on the north side of Mechanics Court were occupied by African-Americans, the majority of whom were Maryland natives, while all of the members of the 7th family were first-generation Irish immigrants. A significant change was the subdivision of the small dwellings into multiple-family housing. Six of the 7 households included members either of extended families or, more commonly, "boarders" or "lodgers". All of the breadwinners were employed in unskilled occupations as whitewashers, wagon drivers, servants, or laborers, suggesting that the socioeconomic status of the Court's residents had continued to decline. George Watkins, a grain runner, and his wife, lived at #826 with a boarder, Hannah Murray and her two sons. Francis Gownes, a huckster, occupied the house at #828 with his wife and a second household composed of Samuel Kelly, his wife, and a boarder. An Irish immigrant laborer, Peter McSorley, lived at #830, with his wife and one Irish immigrant boarder. All rented their properties.

Despite assertions of the Baltimore City directory to the contrary, housing conditions in most of the city's alley and minor street communities bordered on the abysmal by the early 20th century. The continuing conversion of part or all of the properties in the surrounding neighborhoods to commercial space, compounded by increasing population pressures, caused substantial deterioration of housing stock. In 1907, a Special Committee of the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor and the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore contracted Janet Kemp (a sociologist who had done similar work in the District of Columbia) to compile a study of housing conditions in the city. Although Mechanics Court was not included in the sampled areas, Kemp characterized the general quality of life in Baltimore's alleys as squalid and dominated by "dampness and dilapidation, bad sanitation, and insufficient water supply". However, in terms of open space, she admits that alley dwellers might have been somewhat better off than other city dwellers.



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BC132

Site Name: 826-830 Mechanics Court

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

3 19th century African-American house foundations and backyard features

Sanitation was the single-most pressing issue dealt with by the Kemp study. Water for drinking, bathing, and cooking was supplied by "hydrants", pump-like structures often located in the middle of the court and shared by all of its residents. Toilet facilities were almost universally provided by privies, which could be lined with various materials ranging from wood to stone and concrete. Eight of the 600 households that Kemp studied used privies that simply were holes in the ground. Only 9 homes studied for the report had indoor sanitation. Privies were often shared by multiple families. In one case, the party vault privy was shared by two alley households and the occupants of the tenement on the adjacent main street. Privies, particularly those associated with alley dwellings, were not cleaned out very often. Alley configurations like Mechanics Court often lacked rear access to privies because their back lot lines were coterminous with the back lot lines of other properties like those on Hillen Street. In any case, overflowing privies frequently drained into partially paved or unpaved back yards, and the resultant sewage mixed with layers of discarded rubbish that "could build up two or three feet in rear yards. Moreover, various types of livestock, including dogs, chickens, geese and ducks, habitually were kept in backyards or in cellars, and horses also sometimes were stabled in frame structures at the rear of domestic lots.

In such an atmosphere, entire families, often of African-American or immigrant origin, were crammed into living quarters. In the Hughes Street/Mayer Court dwellings in South Baltimore, for example, anywhere from 3 to 8 people were observed to live, sleep, cook, eat, and dress in a single room. Given such crowded, often fetid conditions, the toll on the residents' health obviously was severe, and typhoid and tuberculosis were common.

An interesting sidelight of the sections of the study on alley dwellings was mention of the overtly racist caricature of African-Americans painted by the media. Blacks were described as "gregarious, shiftless, light-hearted, [and] irresponsible", with an "entirely undeveloped moral sense", particularly regarding their sexual behavior and their fondness for alcoholic beverages. Alley dwellers were said to compensate for lack of money to purchase necessities either by "scrounging" through trash dumps and demolished buildings for firewood, frequenting second-hand stores for discarded household items, utilizing hand-me-down clothing, and (on occasion) stealing from their employers or from local businessmen (particularly the owners of the small grocery and general stores that serviced the alleys themselves). In general, the study's author seemed to blame these moral failings, as much as poor housing conditions or heartless profit-seeking, absentee landlords for the plight of many African-American residents of Baltimore.

The recommendations in Kemp's report ranged from requiring registration and inspection of all tenement buildings and prohibiting the erection of any more tenements on alleys or minor streets, to providing separate toilet facilities for each apartment or dwelling. However, it is questionable whether any of the recommendations were carried out. A 1934 study of Baltimore communities recommended that blighted areas of the city, especially the myriad of alleys, "fall to progress" and that the resultant spaces be professionally landscaped.

These demographic patterns continued to characterize the occupation of Mechanics Court into the early 20th century. By the 1920's, however, expansion of the surrounding commercial enterprises, particularly the Rice Baking Company, had all but eliminated residential occupation on Mechanics Court. Although the 1920 Census listed no occupants on Mechanics Court, an anonymous newspaper reported 3 years later that two "sorry" dwellings survived, and that one was occupied by "an old Negro woman".

The site was first investigated beginning in 1996 as part of a combined Phase I, II, and III archeological investigation undertaken at the site of a new Juvenile Justice Center in Baltimore, MD. The site of the (then) proposed Baltimore Juvenile Justice Center encompassed two heavily developed blocks which encompassed Site 18BC132. A total of eight archeological sites were the subject of the investigation at the Phase I/II level of inquiry and at 18BC132 work would eventually expand to a Phase III level of inquiry. These investigations were required under the terms of Section 83-B, Paragraphs 6-517 and 5-618, of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and pursuant to the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement concluded between the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

In order to locate sites, fieldwork initially employed the mechanical removal of overlying modern features or surfaces, followed by the excavation of 5 m long mechanized trenches to assess stratigraphy and site integrity of the underlying deposits. The size of trenches were sometimes altered to better delineate features and to accommodate conditions in the field.

At 18BC132 a single mechanized trench was initially placed across the site to test for features. Removal of the overlying asphalt parking lot surface revealed the intact remains of an articulated mortared brick foundation, four to five courses in depth, that supported one or two row houses. The feature was oriented roughly perpendicular to Mechanics Court. This complex of foundations corresponded roughly to the former location of the dwellings at 826-828 Mechanics Court. Portions of this foundation may have constituted a curtain wall between two buildings. After the discovery of this feature, the limits of the original trench were broadened to expose additional surface area and so that test units could be manually opened up over identified features.

Stratigraphy within each mechanically excavated trench and manually excavated unit was recorded on excavation unit sheets, utilizing standard pedological nomenclature and Munsell readings. Stratigraphy and features within each unit were also drawn in plan and profile (as appropriate) and were photographed in both black and white and color. To reduce the potential for sampling bias, a uniform 15-gallon volumetric sample was recovered from each mechanically excavated natural/cultural stratum. These soils were screened through hardware mesh and all cultural materials recovered from this procedure were retained for analysis. Test units were opened up over the two features identified: a 1.5 X 6 m trench/test unit over a portion of the exposed foundation complex (Feature 1) and a .5 X 1 m trench/test unit over an associated builder's trench (Feature 2). All excavated soils were screened and all cultural materials were retained.

The features exposed within the mechanical trench and test units confirmed the integrity of archeological deposits in this portion of the Juvenile Justice Center project area. The features and artifact assemblage obtained during the investigation supported an interpretation of two or more domestic alley structures that were built and initially occupied during the first third of the 19th century. Because of the documented association of these dwellings with members of Baltimore's early African-American community, it was felt that the site could potentially answer significant research questions related to the development of Baltimore's urban core as well as questions related to minority and African-American populations in the city at this time. Phase III work was recommended and subsequently carried out.

The Phase III research orientation for Site 18BC132 focused on providing an additional database for cultural remains associated with 19th and early 20th century African-American urban occupations and on defining potential ethnically-specific patterns of urban land-use and site organization through time.

To reach these goals, an approximately 13.72 X 18.29 m (45 X 60 ft) area around the previously identified foundations was stripped mechanically to expose occupational surfaces corresponding to one or more house lots. The asphalt and underlying sand and gravel beds at the surface were 12.7 cm thick across the site. However, the initial mechanical removal of the asphalt parking surface, its underlayment, and disturbed overburden exposed subsoil within most



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BC132

Site Name: 826-830 Mechanics Court

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief Description:

3 19th century African-American house foundations and backyard features

Unknown

portions of the site, indicating that the area had been graded before the installation of the asphalt surface. Therefore, additional exposure of deeper surfaces was not deemed necessary.

A number of features were exposed by the mechanized removal of the upper deposits including structural remains related to the brick walls found during the earlier phases of the study. The more fully exposed brick remnants revealed that they were the remains of foundations for two rowhouses and the eastern half of a third rowhouse. Additional features exposed included a trash midden under a compacted surface east of the easternmost rowhouse, several posthole/postmold features, a barrel privy and a brick-lined privy at the back of the rowhouse lots, a utility pipe trench running across the center of the site, and a hole along Mechanics Court filled with modern construction debris. The cleared area encompassed four lots: three with rowhouses or other connected structures, and one empty lot. The features and foundations were then cleared manually and a detailed map was made of all surface features and foundations within the exposed area. Selected features, deposits, and activity areas were then manually tested, either through bisection or through sampling of surface deposits. The two privy features were excavated completely.

A summary table of all artifacts recovered from the site is not provided in the full site report, however, a tables of functional artifact types are provided for certain excavated features. Artifacts reported include 879 activity items, 916 architectural artifacts, 28 clothing items, 15 furniture items, 3486 kitchen-related artifacts (including 23 creamware sherds, 66 pearlware sherds, 46 porcelain sherds, 60 whiteware sherds, 162 ironstone sherds, 16 yellowware sherds, 41 redware sherds, 17 miscellaneous stoneware sherds, and 484 faunal remains), 46 personal objects, 14 arms objects, and 715 miscellaneous objects.

A limited number of samples of ethnobotanical and faunal remains from the privies encountered during Phase III work were subjected to macrobiotic analysis. Floral remains included peach pits, watermelon seeds, tomato seeds, clover seeds, blackberry/raspberry seeds, squash seeds, and seeds from large cultivated grapes. Faunal material included 514 specimens, 286 of which were from the brick lined privy. These included: 1 shad, 8 brown bullhead, 1 possible trout, 63 spotted seatrout, 7 Atlantic croaker, 4 flounder, 10 crab claw fragments, 2 rabbit, 12 rat, 38 cat, 2 artiodactyl, 96 pig, 6 cow, 6 sheep/goat, 2 unidentified bird, 3 chicken, 1 turkey. The barrel privy feature yielded 227 faunal specimens, including 4 crab claw fragments, 1 American shad, 52 brown bullhead, 1 possible trout, 2 spotted seatrout, 11 Atlantic croaker, 6 rabbit, 18 rat, 1 artiodactyl, 48 pig, 4 cow, 10 sheep/goat, 11 unidentified bird, 1 goose, 35 chicken, 7 turkey, and 11 rock dove.

Excavation and stratigraphy both indicated that subsequent episodes of construction across the site area apparently had been accompanied by wholesale removal of former living surfaces (i.e. additional mechanized trenching showed that the entire area had been truncated). Grading and removal of surface deposits was found to have been most severe toward the rear of the house lots and least severe immediately adjacent to the alleyway (Mechanics Court). Only one area of surface midden, apparently lying east of the easternmost boundary of #830 Mechanics Court, remained. This generalized midden deposit represented a minimally disturbed early 19th century occupation surface not directly associated with the rowhouses that were under study.

Within the rowhouse lots, only the partial foundations of the three rowhouses (826-830 Mechanics Court) remained, mostly in disarticulated condition. The only testable features found in the backyard areas consisted of an amorphous utility trench, several remnant postholes that marked the divisions between property lots, and two privies the intruded into subsoil. As a result, development of a diachronic view of landuse or definition of specific functional areas that might have been elucidated through systematic exposure and testing of stratigraphically differentiated surfaces or fill episodes was not feasible.

Comparison of the assemblage from 18BC132 to other African-American sites revealed that in most respects, the materials being used at Mechanics Court were similar to those being used by black households in other parts of Maryland. One notable difference was the greater variety of local goods used by the Mechanics Court residents compared to their counterparts in Annapolis, who preferred national or international brands. Baltimore's more urbanized setting and wider variety of independent merchants appears to have given them more choice than their counterparts in Annapolis.

Site 18BC132 proved to contain intact archeological features and artifact deposits. The site was a significant archeological resource for understanding the lives of Baltimore's 19th and early 20th century African-American inhabitants. Today, however, the site is the location of the Baltimore Juvenile Justice Facility and the site has been destroyed. Its remaining research potential lies in the extant collections obtained in the late 1990s.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

97000183