



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CA88

Site Name: Thomas

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Thomas Site Ossuary; Gilpin Point Indian Burial Site

Historic

Brief Description:

Late Woodland ossuary, Archaic and Woodland artifact scatter

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 4

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 38.8122

Longitude -75.9018

Physiographic province Eastern Shore Coastal P

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation -10 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) Choptank River

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 153 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Contact period site

ca. 1820 - 1860

Archaic site

MD Adena

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

Early archaic

Early woodland

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

Late archaic

Late woodland

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown prehistoric 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
- 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

ossuary, artifact scatter

Historic

Urban/Rural?

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

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken Y

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

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	10	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" 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	2	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	2	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	2	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

Dated features present at site

Burial Pit feature; A charcoal sample was taken from the burned base of the grave pit.

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

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 295 +/- 65 years BP Reliability Mod Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

B-34556: charcoal sample from the ossuary (exact location unknown)

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/JPPM

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Thomas (18CA88) is the site of an aboriginal ossuary. The site is located on a low terrace above the Choptank River in Caroline County. No report has been completed on the excavations conducted at the site. Specialist reports and minimal other information was available in the Site Files and in a single published source. Given that, several comments can be made regarding the archeological investigations of the ossuary. During the construction of a house basement, workmen encountered a mass of bones. Initially believing the bones to be those of animals, work continued until human skulls came to light. At that point, work was suspended but already approximately 50% of the ossuary had been disturbed. In March and April of 1989, the undisturbed portion of the ossuary was excavated by archeologists from the Maryland Historical Trust. The purpose of the excavation was to define and salvage the ossuary feature.

It was observed during excavation that the bottom of the ossuary pit was burned. However, it was unclear what significance the burning played in the preparation of the pit for burial. Based on the intact portions, the original grave pit was estimated to measure approximately 1.8 by 1.9 meters. Two charcoal samples were submitted for radiocarbon dating. One of the samples was identified as modern. The other sample had a date of 295±65 BP, or AD 1447-1681 calibrated to 2-sigma. This suggests a Late Woodland date for the burial.

Analysis of the human remains indicated that the burial pit contained at least 27 adults, 2 adolescents, 6 children and 2 infants. Of those individuals who could be aged and sexed, there were 5 adult males aged between 21 and 45+, 6 adult females, 2 of who were 45+, 1 adolescent aged between 12-15, 1 adolescent aged between 17-21, 5 children aged between 2 and 8, and a 6 month old infant and a newborn or fetus. There was no significant sign of disease in the adults. Arthritis, common to hunting and gathering populations, appeared on a few adult bones. The incidence of dental caries was generally quite low (though slightly higher among children). Both adolescents showed incidences of moderately severe hypoplasia, indicating several bouts with nutritional stress or infection. Few teeth of the children were recovered so it was impossible to tell if the pattern might also be observed in them. Some of the children's teeth were calcified, possibly indicating a nutritional deficit. One female apparently died of a blow to the skull, probably from a weapon, which resulted in a 15 mm hole in the occipital area. Cut marks, presumably from defleshing, were noted on one of the skulls.

An ethnobotanical analysis was conducted on 55 flotation samples that were taken from the site. The primary goals of the analysis were to delineate prehistorically utilized floral specimens, to examine the ecosystem as reflected by the recovered floral material, and to understand means by which the botanical specimens became incorporated into the ossuary. A total of 63,909 seeds and macrospores were recovered from the test samples under study. Twenty-one different plant species were recovered. In theory, only charred native seeds could be considered a legitimate constituent of a prehistoric floral assemblage. Approximately 99% of the floral assemblage, or 63,699 specimens, was uncharred, and considered modern in origin. These included blackberries, pigweed, sedge, spikerush, chufa, goldenrod, knotweed, spurge, switchgrass, and waterweed. Fifteen of the 21 recovered taxa were not represented by any charred specimens. An additional four taxa were recovered both in the charred and uncharred state. Non-native taxa included carpetweed, crabgrass, copperleaf, purslane, chickweed, and an uncharred grass seed, all likely modern in origin.

Potentially utilized charred specimens included fern, catchfly, germander, and bedstraw. The largest component of the assemblage were macrospores from the fern family (n=191). These plants are an edible green and have been used for medicinal purposes. Catchfly (n=3) is not an important wildlife food genus but the plants are eaten by a few species of birds and small mammals. The root has been used in the treatment of intestinal worms. A single germander seed was recovered. A member of the mint family, it has been described as useful in the treatment of rheumatism, gout, fever, and intestinal worms. Bedstraw (n=3) was used by the Indians medicinally as a diuretic. Charred samples of purslane (n=2) and carpetweed (n=10) were also recovered, but these are non-native species. It was suggested that the charred native botanicals which were incorporated into the ossuary soils were likely to represent the environmental setting original to the ossuary formation. Fern, catchfly, germander, and bedstraw are all plants which thrive in moist woods along riverbanks.

The only diagnostic artifacts recovered during the 1989 excavation of the ossuary were 2 Late Woodland period Rappahannock Fabric-Imprinted pottery sherds. These were likely incidental inclusions in the pit fill. Other materials present at the site included 10 flakes, 2 fire-cracked rocks, 2 other lithics, and oyster shell. The total counts are minimum estimates; no counts were stated for the oyster shell because it is unclear if any was collected from the site. The property owner non-systematically surface collected the 2 acre parcel containing the ossuary for several years. His collection included Archaic and Late Woodland period lithic artifacts and Late Woodland period ceramics.

Thomas (18CA88) is the site of an aboriginal ossuary. The Thomas ossuary is one of only a handful of this site type identified in the Choptank Drainage. Unfortunately, the site was severely disturbed before a salvage operation was initiated. Fortunately, it appeared that all of the human remains were recovered. As the site no longer exists, no further investigation is warranted for the immediate area. However, there is always the likelihood of a related hamlet site in the vicinity of the ossuary. The relationship between ossuaries and settlement should be a consideration if further earthmoving activities occur in the general location.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00007531, Site Files